Guide to the Bollman Truss Bridge Collection

NMAH.AC.1064

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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Bollman Truss Bridge Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.1064
Date: 1852-1986
Extent: 3 Cubic feet (4 boxes and 1 map-folder)
Creator: Vogel, Robert M.
   Engineering and Industry, Division of, NMAH, SI.
   Bollman, Wendell, 1814-1884
Language: English
Summary: Collection documents various aspects of the development, implementation and research value of the Bollman truss bridge design.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisiton
Collection assembled by Robert M. Vogel, curator, for the National Museum of American History, Division of Civil Engineering reference files.

Ownership and Custodial History
Robert Vogel assembled the collection from a number of sources, including historical societies, bridge enthusiasts, and descendants of Wendel Bollman. It was transferred from the Division of Engineering (now the Division of Work and Industry) to the Archives Center in 2007.

Processing Information
Collection is unprocessed.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions on Access
Collection is open for research. Unprotected photographs must be handled with gloves.

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Biographical Note

Wendel Bollman (1814-1884) was a self-educated engineer who began working for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad as a carpenter and devised a bridge-trussing system that was a series of independently supported floor beams, each carried by a double pair of eye-bar ties. He patented the system in 1852 and it became known as the "Bollman Truss". The Bollman truss was used on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, its subsidiaries, and several roads. It was the first bridge trussing system which all principal elements were made of iron. Bollman trusses were built until about 1875 and retained in service until about 1890.

Scope and Contents

Papers documenting various aspects of the development, implementation and research value of the Bollman truss bridge design. The collection includes correspondence, photographs, articles and clippings, schematics, diagrams, maps, and other printed materials. Also includes records of government agencies associated with Bollman truss structures, such as meeting minutes, and surveys receipts.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
- Bridges -- Maryland
- Civil engineers
- Patents
- Periodicals
- Railroad engineers
- Railroads -- United States
- Trusses

Types of Materials:
- Advertisements
- Blueprints
- Clippings
- Correspondence
- Diagrams
- Maps
- Minutes
- Photographs -- 19th century
- Photographs -- 20th century
- Specifications
Names:
Engineering and Industry, Division of, NMAH, SI.
Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1-2  Background information
Box 1, Folder 3-4  Miscellaneous notes
Box 1, Folder 5; Map-folder 1  Savage Bridge restoration, 1966-1967
Box 1, Folder 6  Savage truss, 1966-1985
Box 2, Folder 1  Historic American Engineering Survey files, 1966, 1970
Box 2, Folder 2  Vogel, Robert. "Speculations on the History and Original Appearance of the Last Bollman Truss" (manuscript), 1966, 1969-1970
Box 2, Folder 3; Map-folder 1  Lomabrd Street Bridge, Baltimore, Maryland, 1974-1987
Box 2, Folder 4  Bollman truss advertisements (photocopies), 1855-1860
Box 2, Folder 5  Lang, P.G. "Various Types of Railroad Bridges", 1921
Box 2, Folder 6  Bollman truss articles (photocopies), 1855-1869
Box 3, Folder 1  Valley Railroad of Virginia (Bollman trusses), 1923
Box 3, Folder 2  Illinois Central Railroad Bridge, Kankakee River, Kankakee, Illinois, 1955, undated
Box 3, Folder 3; Map-folder 1  Baltimore and Ohio Railroad
Box 3, Folder 4  Bollman Bridge, Union Mills, Maryland, 1968-1984
Box 3, Folder 5  Bollman Bridge, Hughes Run Road, Carroll County, Maryland, 1975-1979
Box 4, Folder 1  Bollman Bridge, Central Ohio Railroad, Muskingham River, Zanesville, Ohio
Box 4, Folder 2  Patents and correspondence, 1852-1879
Box 4, Folder 3  Quincy Bay Bridge, Mississippi River
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