

Fromberg Bridge
Spanning Clark's Fork of
The Yellowstone River
Fromberg Vicinity
Carbon County
Montana

HAER No. MI-7

HAER
MONT.
5-FROBE.V,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Fromberg Bridge

MT-7

Location: Spanning the local road over the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River, just east of Fromberg, Carbon County, Montana.

Date of Construction: 1914

Present Owner: Carbon County
Carbon County Courthouse
Red Lodge, Montana 59068

Present Use: Vehicular Bridge

Significance: On March 9, 1914, C.A. Gibson, Carbon County Surveyor, reported to the County Commissioners that the old wooden Howe truss bridge at Fromberg was in bad condition and that it would cost as much to repair the old bridge as it would to build a new one. Gibson was ordered to prepare plans for a new concrete bridge. The only clue as to why the county would order a concrete bridge (more costly than the steel truss bridges that were being built over the Clark's Fork at nearby locations during that period) is that there was a fellow in Fromberg named John Gibson who had a concrete business and who had recently (1911) patented a culvert design. It is not known what, if any, relationship existed between John and C.A. Gibson. Plans for the bridge were completed April 9, 1914, and on May 8, 1914 (bidding against such established bridge building firms as Security Bridge Co. of Billings, Montana) Beley Construction Co of Livingston, Montana submitted the low bid at \$9731.50 and was awarded the contract. However, extra claims were submitted for the construction and the county ended up paying an additional \$6080.77. Concrete for the project was supplied by John Gibson's company. The county evidently learned its lesson, since the following year they denied a request for a concrete bridge by the citizens of nearby Bridger unless the Bridger Commercial Club would subscribe to the bridge and pay the difference between a steel and a concrete bridge. The Fromberg bridge stands today unchanged from the structure designed by

C.A. Gibson except that a bituminous wearing surface has been added over the gravel fill roadway. The bridge is of three barrel arch spans, each 56 feet long and 8 feet from the spring line to the top of the arch. The arches are supported by concrete abutments and two concrete piers. Concrete spandrel walls extend upward 3 feet beyond the roadway to form the railings. Spandrel walls and arches are well reinforced with 1/2" and 3/4" bars. Lateral bracing is provided to the spandrel walls by 3/4" rods tying the walls diagonally through the earth fill to the arches. The roadway is 15 feet wide. The bridge has one major crack where the spandrel meets the east abutment, the piers have experienced major scouring, and it is otherwise in fair condition. In 1914, it was the largest concrete bridge in Montana and remains today the oldest multi-span concrete arch bridge in the State.

Transmitted by:

Kevin Murphy, Historian HAER, 1984; from data compiled by Fredric L. Quivik, 1979

ADDENDUM TO
FROMBERG BRIDGE
Spanning Clark's Fork of
the Yellowstone River
Fromberg Vicinity
Carbon County
Montana

HAER No. MT-7

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National Park Service
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ADDENDUM TO
FROMBERG BRIDGE
Spanning the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River
On East River Street
Fromberg vicinity
Carbon County
Montana

HAER NO. MT-7

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Intermountain Support Office - Denver
National Park Service
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