

Toelles Road Bridge
Toelles Road at Quinnipiac River
Wallingford-North Haven
New Haven County
Connecticut

HAER No. CT-20

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5-WALF.
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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Toelles Road Bridge

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Location: Spanning the Quinnipiac River on Toelles Road between Wallingford and North Haven, New Haven County, Connecticut

UTM: 18.679530.458880
Quad: Wallingford

Date of Construction: 1898

Present Owner: Connecticut Department of Transportation

Present Use: None (closed to vehicle traffic)

Significance: Constructed by the Berlin Iron Bridge Company, one of Connecticut's most noted bridge builders, this structure represents one of the company's original bridge projects using steel. The bridge is an unusual survivor of a once typical truss bridge system.

Project Information: Replacement of the Toelles Road Bridge is to be funded by the Federal Highway Administration. Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, mitigative documentation was undertaken by Maribeth M. Demma, Environmental Analyst for the Connecticut Department of Transportation in January 1982.

Transmitted by: Jean P. Yearby, HAER, 1985

The Toelles Road Bridge is a steel, double intersection Warren truss bridge with a span of 110 feet and a travelway width of fourteen feet. It was originally designed to carry an eight-ton load.

The bridge was designed and built in 1898 under the direction of C. F. Chase, chief engineer for the Berlin Iron Bridge Company of East Berlin, Connecticut. The Berlin Iron Bridge Company was one of Connecticut's foremost bridge builders, and the Toelles Road span was one of its initial bridge projects using steel.

The bridge is located on Toelles Road at the Quinnipiac River. The river divides the town of Wallingford on the east from North Haven on the west. Toelles road was a town road by at least the mid-nineteenth century when it appeared in early atlases and town maps. It was later named after the Toelles family who lived on the road in the late 1800s or early 1900s.

Originally, the road and bridge carried primarily local traffic. However, after World War II the Quinnipiac Valley in North Haven and Wallingford became heavily industrialized, and the bridge began to carry a substantial amount of commuter traffic.

An accident in 1968 caused structural damage to the bridge, which was repaired. However, because of extreme deterioration of the stringers, the bridge was posted for a four-ton load at this time.

In 1970, the bridge decking began to fail. Ten inches of lumber, steel plates, and layers of asphalt were removed and replaced with a new floor of 3/8-inch checkered plate and 1-1/2 inches of asphalt. At the same time, a metal beam railing was installed to protect the diagonal truss members from collision damage.

The bridge was closed to vehicle traffic in July 1981.

Sources of Information

Office of Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer

Matthew Roth: Connecticut, An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites (SIA 1981).