

Charlotte Highway Bridge Update (August 20, 2007)

Vern Mesler, Project Manager for the restoration of historic bridges for Calhoun County Historic Bridge Park



The Charlotte Highway Bridge with bridge plaques and handrail.

The restored Charlotte Highway Bridge now spans the entrance of the Calhoun County Historic Bridge Park. Work was completed July 27th with the placement of the three bridge plaques. The fourth plaque has possibly been located in Russell, Kentucky.

As one approaches the bridge and sights down the length of the black handrail the long gentle camber of the bridge can easily be seen. The handrail was designed to expand and contract with the bridge. The Charlotte Highway Bridge is the fifth historic metal truss bridge in the park and will be the last bridge to be restored for the foreseeable future.

The four other historic metal truss bridges are the 133rd Avenue, 20 Mile Road, Gale Road, and Bauer Road Bridges.

For information on obtaining copies of the soon-to-be published book by MSU Press, “A Bridge Worth Saving: A Community Guide to Historic Bridge Preservation,” please contact Dennis Randolph, Managing Director of Calhoun County Road Commission, 800 781 5512 or drandolph@calhouncrc.net

Over the years the Calhoun County Historic Bridge Park has acquired several historic metal truss bridges for preservation. These bridges are now stored in a specially prepared storage area in Marshall, Michigan. They have already been dismantled and are available for communities interested in bridges for pedestrian trail ways and willing to restore them to preservation standards. The bridges available are:

- *Jones Road 1898, Baltimore truss, 217 feet*
- *Shaytown Road 1913, Warren truss, 120 feet*
- *Monroe Road 1894, Pratt truss, 120 feet*
- *Grand Ledge Island Park 1922, four Warren pony trusses 74 feet each*
- *Lowell Road, 1886, Pratt truss, 74 feet*
- *Saginaw Street Skywalk, 80 feet*

For information on the historic bridges, contact Dennis Randolph or Joanna Johnson at 800-781-5512.



Rob Denniston; Steve Ball, Operations Manager; Joanna Johnson, Assistant Managing Director; and Dennis Randolph, Managing Director of the Calhoun County Road Commission, inspecting work at the Marshall historic bridge storage yard.



Wayne Conklin and Rob Denniston stack parts from the Shaytown Road Bridge in the historic bridge storage area.

Due to the decision not to restore more historic bridges for the bridge park at this time, the restoration crew Wayne Conklin and Rob Denniston will no longer be working for the Calhoun County Historic Bridge Park. Their last assignment was the preparation of the storage area and restacking of the historic bridges in Marshall, Michigan. Conklin and Denniston have already found employment working in the welding field in the Battle Creek area.

The first historic bridge Conklin worked on was the 20-Mile Road Bridge, the second bridge placed in the park, an all-riveted pony truss. Conklin developed his skill as a riveter helping to drive over 2,000 rivets in the restoration of the 20-Mile Road Bridge.

The first historic bridge Denniston worked on was the Gale Road Bridge, the third bridge to be restored and assembled in the bridge park. The Gale Road Bridge was the first historic bridge that was assembled in the park with a gin pole.



Wayne Conklin and Rob Denniston lay out wood cribbing in preparation for assembling the Charlotte Highway Bridge. (Fall 2005)



Conklin and Denniston lay out and punch holes in the floor beams to bolt the stringer beams in place. (Winter 2006)



Conklin and Denniston lift in place with the gin pole the first inclined end post and portal. (Summer 2006)



Denniston and Conklin congratulate each other during the placing of the Charlotte Highway Bridge. (Spring 2007) Photo by Nan Jackson

The Marshall Community AD-VISOR – August 15, 2007

Hot riveting and other bridge related topics at upcoming program at Marshall Library

Marshall District Library will host Vern Mesler, Project Manager for Calhoun County Historic Bridge Park, as he presents “Historic Bridges” to adults at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, August 28, in the Meeting Room.

The Marshall [Michigan] District Library is located at 124 West Green Street. For information about this or any adult program contact the Information Desk at 269-781-7821 ext. 10 at www.marshalldistrictlibrary.org