

**McLean County Museum of History**  
**Camelback Bridge Collection**

Processed by  
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**Collection Information**

Volume of Collection:	One box
Collection Dates:	1902 to 2001
Restrictions:	
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Location:	Archives
Notes:	

## Historical Sketch

The Camelback Bridge is located in the northeast quarter of Section 33, Township 24 North, Range 2 East, Third Principal Meridian. It is also known as the Virginia Avenue Bridge, and is over the Town of Normal Constitution Trail (formerly the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad) between Broadway and Linden Street, in McLean County, Illinois. Virginia Avenue was originally called Sill Street.

A bridge appears on this site in the 1895 *McLean County Atlas*. A September 13, 1904 *Pantagraph* article claims that a bridge has been at this location since the railroad was first built through the area in 1856, but this is unlikely.

The current bridge is a King Post pony truss with timber stringer approach spans built in 1906. It is supported with Phoenix columns which are assemblies of four rolled quarter-round shapes of wrought iron patented in 1862 by the Phoenix Bridge Company of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. It is an eight span structure with the center two spans supported by a timber floor beam connected to the two timber trusses, and six simply supported spans, three on each side of the truss spans. The timber deck was replaced in 1991 and closed for renovation in 1999. It reopened September 17, 2001. The only original features to remain are the Phoenix columns and the Kingpost trusses. It entered the list of National Register of Historic Places in June 1997. The renovated bridge is about six inches shorter than its predecessor and is more curved. It is also wider; twenty-four feet as opposed to the former sixteen feet with a four foot sidewalk on the north side.

## Scope Notes

The Camelback Bridge Collection contains mostly photocopied materials from 1902 to 2001. Items in the collection include the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, newspaper clippings, book chapters, deed of ownership, color photos, black and white photos, line drawings, meeting minutes, and correspondence.

## Box and Folder Inventory

### Folder 1: Correspondence

- 1.1 To David Anderson from William Givens, January 28, 1991, 18 pp.
- 1.2 To Friends of the Bridge from Ann V. Swallow, September 16, 1993
- 1.3 Friends of the Bridge newsletter, May 1994
- 1.4 To Normal City Council from Robert L. Broad, May 2, 1994, 2 pp.
- 1.5 Friends of the Bridge newsletter, May 9, 1994
- 1.6 To Jeanne Howard from Tracy M. Shepard, June 14, 1994
- 1.7 To Friends of the Bridge from Lois Donovan, July 1, 1994, 2 pp.
- 1.8 To Friends of the Bridge from Marc Alan Lankin, August 10, 1994
- 1.9 To Newberry Library from Tracy M. Shepard, September 17, 1994, 4 pp.
- 1.10 To Friends of the Bridge from Josephine Rood, November 11, 1994, 2 pp.
- 1.11 To Friends of the Bridge from Charles F. Werner, November 15, 1994
- 1.12 To Friends of the Bridge from Ann V. Swallow, April 18, 1995, 2 pp.

- 1.13 To Friends of the Bridge from Sue Martyn, June 30, 1995
- 1.14 To Friends of the Bridge from Christopher T. Baer, August 18, 1995
- 1.15 To Mayor and Council from City Manager, October 26, 1995
- 1.16 From Tracy M. Shepard, November 13, 1995, 10 pp.
- 1.17 To Tracy M. Shepard from Ann V. Swallow, November 28-29, 1995, 16 pp.
- 1.18 To President Kent M. Karraker, Bayo Adanri from Ann V. Swallow, December 9, 1996
- 1.19 To Ann V. Swallow from Kent M. Karraker, February 9, 1997
- 1.20 To Jeanne Howard from Ann V. Swallow, March 3, 1997, 2 pp.
- 1.21 To Greg Koos from Tracy M. Shepard, January 2, 1998, 18 pp.

**Folder 2: Deed of Ownership**

- 2.1 Deed, photocopy, December 18, 1986, 3 pp.

**Folder 3: Meeting Minutes, Town of Normal Council**

- 3.1 Summaries of Town of Normal, Town Council minutes concerning the Camelback Bridge, 1902-1907, 5 pp.
- 3.2 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Normal Town council, April 18, 1955 to March 4, 1957, concerning the Camelback Bridge, 12 pp.
- 3.3 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Normal Town council, January 19, 1987, concerning the Camelback Bridge, 4 pp.
- 3.4 Map amendment - S-2 to S-3 – Camelback Bridge, April 8, 1991, 19 pp.
- 3.5 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Normal Town council, September 7, 1993, concerning the Camelback Bridge, 5 pp.
- 3.6 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Normal Town council, September 20, 1993, concerning the Camelback Bridge
- 3.7 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Normal Town council, March 21, 1994
- 3.8 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Normal Town council, April 18, 1994, 3 pp.
- 3.9 Proposed Agenda for Normal Town Council Meeting, November 6, 1995, 2 pp.

**Folder 4: Miscellaneous**

- 4.1 Photo (photocopy) of bridge that preceded the 1906 bridge, November 25, 1902
- 4.2 Photos (photocopy) of the bridge, undated, 4 pp.
- 4.3 Technical drawings of bridge, 1906, 3 pp.
- 4.4 Technical drawing of bridge, May 1994
- 4.5 *The legacy: A survey of the historical architecture of the Town of Normal*, 1990, 7 pp., (photocopy of the section, “The Camelback Bridge”, pp. 45-48.
- 4.6 Postcard (color) of the Camelback Bridge, 1992.
- 4.7 “Illinois Department of Transportation Historical Bridge Data Sheet”, c.1994, 4 pp.
- 4.8 “Observations”, an engineer’s report on the condition of the bridge, c. 1993, 8 pp.
- 4.9 “Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Structure Information System”, November 1, 1995, 2 pp.
- 4.10 Friends of the Constitution Trail calendar, 1996, see month of January for color photo of the Camelback Bridge.
- 4.11 Town of Normal invitation to the Grand Re-opening of the Historic Camelback Bridge, Monday, September 17, 2001. Picture of bridge on invitation.
- 4.12 WJBC Editorial Statement, To Jeanne Howard ISU Social Work, April 28, 1994
- 4.13 Outline signed by Dave Shields, undated

- 4.14 Camelback Bridge National Register of Historic Places Ceremony Invitation, Noon, October 8, 1997
- 4.15 "Illinois Central Gulf Railroad Company Resolutions of the Board of Directors", December 18, 1986
- 4.16 Notes of conversation with Steve Thompson, Illinois Historic Preservation Commission, December 14, 1995
- 4.17 A resolution amending a site plan for BroMenn Healthcare – Parking Lots, Parking Structure, and Medical Office Building, 2 pp.
- 4.18 Correspondence to Mark R. Peterson from Scott J. Kaminski, March 22, 1994
- 4.19 Correspondence to Scott J. Kaminski to David S. Anderson, March 25, 1994

**Folder 5: Newspaper Articles, 1904-1994** (*Pantagraph* unless otherwise noted)

- 5.1 "Suit over bridge", Morning, September 13, 1904
- 5.2 "Normal bids for new trestle", May 17, 1955
- 5.3 "IC turns back on bridge", September 5, 1956
- 5.4 4 articles from *Pantagraph*, 1904-1957
- 5.5 "Old bridge to get modern safeguards", March 1, 1957 and "Does bridge proposal need further study?", January 18, 1987
- 5.6 "Council to decide Normal bridge fate", February 16, 1987
- 5.7 "No decision on fate of camelback bridge", February 17, 1987
- 5.8 "Here's another option for Camelback Bridge", June ?, 1989, and "No need to try saving the Camelback Bridge", June ?, 1989
- 5.9 "Council lowers weight on Camelback Bridge", June 20, 1989
- 5.10 "Official says new bridge is needed", June 21 1989
- 5.11 "Normal council agrees to fix historic bridge", July 4, 1989
- 5.12 "There's still some time to save the Camelback", November 19, 1989, and "Goal has to be to save the Camelback Bridge", December 12, 1989
- 5.13 "Council seeks input on structure", December 26, 1989
- 5.14 "Public works programs put Normal in jeopardy", December 28, 1989
- 5.15 "Normal council expected to decide on bridge work, historic preservation", 1990?
- 5.16 "Normal to spend \$19,000 repairing Camelback Bridge", July 3, 1990
- 5.17 "Zoning plan for sorority given nod", April 5, 1991
- 5.18 "Building appearance rules getting test run in Normal", April 16, 1991
- 5.19 "Camelback Bridge deemed unsafe, closed", June 1993
- 5.20 "Camelback neighbors miss rumbles", July 1993
- 5.21 "Repairs to bridge favored", July 2, 1993
- 5.22 "Camelback options go to council", August 30, 1993
- 5.23 "Normal to restore Camelback Bridge", August 31, 1993
- 5.24 "Slow down march to repair Camelback", September 3, 1993
- 5.25 "Normal mulls temporary bridge fix", September 4, 1993
- 5.26 "Normal approves money for Camelback band-aid", September 8, 1993
- 5.27 "Stopgap Camelback repairs slated to begin next month", September 21, 1993
- 5.28 "Stop wasting our taxes on Camelback Bridge", October 6, 1993
- 5.29 "Camelback band-aid cost comes in below estimates", November 2, 1993
- 5.30 "Camelback almost back", December 7, 1993
- 5.31 "Camelback grant OK'd, subdivision, theater rejected", February 18, 1994
- 5.32 "Camelback Bridge may be moved", April 19, 1994
- 5.33 "Commission in middle on bridge", April 26, 1994, 2 pp.

- 5.34 "Safety, cost still key issues in Camelback Bridge debate", April 26, 1994, 2 pp.
- 5.35 "Camelback viewpoints at odds", April 28, 1994
- 5.36 "Lots of bumps in bridge's past", April 29, 1994
- 5.37 "Camelback Bridge divides council", April 29, 1994
- 5.38 "Camelback fight reunites neighborhood", May 1, 1994
- 5.39 "Use local money for bridge or forget about the project", May 2, 1994
- 5.40 "Hurling over Camelback can be hair-raising ride", May 5, 1994
- 5.41 "Camelback Bridge is part of our community, history", May 6, 1994
- 5.42 "Camelback Bridge topic of forum", May 9, 1994
- 5.43 "Camelback: Bridge links Normal past, future", May 9, 1994
- 5.44 "Keep Camelback Bridge exactly where it is today", May 11, 1994
- 5.45 "Bridge 'friends' suggest change for Camelback", May 11, 1994
- 5.46 "Make Camelback a park; close bridge to vehicles", May 12, 1994
- 5.47 "Camelback: Time to cross question of its future", May 15, 1994
- 5.48 "Don't miss opportunity to save Camelback Bridge", May 15, 1994
- 5.49 "Base Camelback decision on what's best for town", May 17, 1994
- 5.50 "22-foot move latest bridge option", May 17, 1994
- 5.51 "Bureaucratic hurdles could keep bridge from moving", May 18, 1994
- 5.52 "Southward shift for Camelback panned, praised", May 19, 1994
- 5.53 "State bureaucrats slower than traffic on Camelback", May 20, 1994
- 5.54 "Bridge decision Monday", May 21, 1994
- 5.55 "Normal council should keep Camelback pledge", May 22, 1994
- 5.56 "Camelback bridge to stay put", May 24, 1994
- 5.57 "Time for council to gauge support for Camelback"; "Enforce limits on bridge";  
"Friends of the Camelback committed to the future", May 31, 1994
- 5.58 "Let old Camelback Bridge go out 'in a blaze of glory'", June 29, 1994
- 5.59 "'Friends' to promote bridge history", August 10, 1994
- 5.60 "Flick Facts", October 11, 1994
- 5.61 "Camelback Bridge supporters meet", October 26, 1994

**Folder 6: Newspaper Articles, 1995-Present** (*Pantagraph* unless otherwise noted)

- 6.1 "Camelback repairs reach design hump", June 28, 1995
- 6.2 "Bridge net to nettle nasty nesters", September 29, 1995
- 6.3 "Camelback clears hump – for now", November 7, 1995, 2 pp.
- 6.4 "'Shameful abuse of power' seen in vote on Camelback", November 9, 1995
- 6.5 "Replace Camelback Bridge to get Normal over hump", November 12, 1995
- 6.6 "Camelback Bridge helps us remember a less hectic past", November 13, 1995
- 6.7 "Close the street and save Normal's Camelback Bridge", November 14, 1995
- 6.8 "Statutes say Normal immune from Camelback crash suits"; "Time for Normal to  
approve replacing Camelback Bridge", November 15, 1995
- 6.9 "Camelback Bridge flirts with history", November 30, 1995
- 6.10 "Camelback Bridge nears inclusion on national registry", 1995?
- 6.11 "Karraker lobbies to keep bridge ruling in Normal", December 13, 1995
- 6.12 "Support to keep bridge is falling flat", December 19, 1995
- 6.13 "Put Camelback in storage until there is a better use", December 27, 1995
- 6.14 "Mayor says letter could bridge gap", January 4, 1996
- 6.15 "State agencies bridge gap on preserving Camelback", January 21, 1996
- 6.16 "Agency OKs moving Camelback Bridge", May 14, 1996

- 6.17 “Survey says Normal wants rec facilities”, June 1, 1996
- 6.18 “Bridge inspections to span entire city”, September 18, 1996
- 6.19 “Historic Normal bridge climbs back on agenda”, January 22, 1997
- 6.20 “Bridge clears hump toward salvation”, March 19, 1997
- 6.21 “Officially, it’s a bridge to the past”, June 11, 1997, 2 pp.
- 6.22 “Camelback friends ready for register ceremony”, October 4, 1997
- 6.23 “Bubbly for the bridge”, October 9, 1997
- 6.24 “Camelback to be closed up to a year”, October 6, 1999
- 6.25 “Camelback’s road to recovery tricky one”, November 12, 2000, 2 pp.
- 6.26 “Columns going up for new Camelback”, June 27, 2001, 2 pp.
- 6.27 “It’s Camelback!” September 9, 2001, 3 pp.

**Folder 7: National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

- 7.1 Complete Copy, October 3, 1996, 25 pp.
- 7.2 Nation Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet, 5 pp.
- 7.3 Registration Form (with notes), 34 pp.
- 7.4 Registration Form Draft, 9 pp.
- 7.5 Memorandum to President Kent M. Karraker, Bayo Adanri from Ann V. Swallow, December 9, 1996, 19 pp.
- 7.6 Correspondence to Tracy Shepard from Ann V. Swallow 5 pp.

**Folder 8: Historic Presentation Ordinance**

- 8.1 Ordinance 2 pp.
- 8.2 Zoning Historic District 3 pp.

**Folder 9: Historic Preservation Commission**

- 9.1 Historic Preservation Commission, Signed by Chris Koos January 21, 1997
- 9.2 Normal Historic Preservation Commission 1992 Annual Report

**Folder 10: Department of Transportation**

- 10.1 Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program, Project Nomination, “Camelback Bridge” 32 pp.
- 10.2 Statement of Significance Draft 24 pp.

**Folder 11: The Historical Importance of Normal’s Camelback Bridge**

- 11.1 Historical Importance Statement 20 pp.

**Folder 12: Community Improvement Committee**

- 12.1 Correspondence to Normal Mayor and Town Council from Community Improvements Committee, Town of Normal, includes a statement to the Mayor and Town Council of Normal, newspaper articles, a map, a map amendment, and an ordinance, August 26, 1993 58 pp.

**Folder 13: Friends of the Bridge**

- 13.1 Correspondence to Friends of the Bridge from Ann V. Swallow, September 16, 1993
- 13.2 “Friends of the Bridge Meeting” Minutes, May 7, 1994
- 13.3 “Friends of the Bridge – Update” community flyer, May 9, 1994
- 13.4 Correspondence to Friends of the Bridge from Lois Donovan, July 1, 1994, 2 pp.

- 13.5 Correspondence to Friends of the Bridge from Marc Alan Lankin, August 10, 1994
- 13.6 Correspondence to Friends of the Bridge from Josephine Rood, November 11, 1994, 2 pp.
- 13.7 Correspondence to Friends of the Bridge from Charles F. Werner, November 15, 1994
- 13.8 Correspondence to Friends of the Bridge from Ann V. Swallow, April 18, 1995, 2 pp.
- 13.9 Correspondence to Friends of the Bridge from Sue Martyn, June 30, 1995
- 13.10 Correspondence to Friends of the Bridge from Christopher T. Baer, August 18, 1995
- 13.11 "Friends of the Camelback Bridge" Fact Sheet, undated, 2 pp.
- 13.12 "Keep Our Bridge Where It Is!" Interested Friends of the Bridge, undated, 3 pp.
- 13.13 "Keep Our Bridge Where It Is!" undated community flyer
- 13.14 "Keep Our Bridge Where It Is!" undated Normal City Council contact sheet
- 13.15 Petition, undated 43 pp.

**Folder 14: Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council**

- 14.1 Correspondence to Jeanne Howard from Ann V. Swallow, March 31, 1997
- 14.2 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council, December 13, 1996, 2 pp.

**Folder 15: Fraunhoffer & Associates, P.C. Executive Summary**

- 15.1 Executive Summary, undated, 21 pp.