



## Feature Article

### The Bridges of Fall City

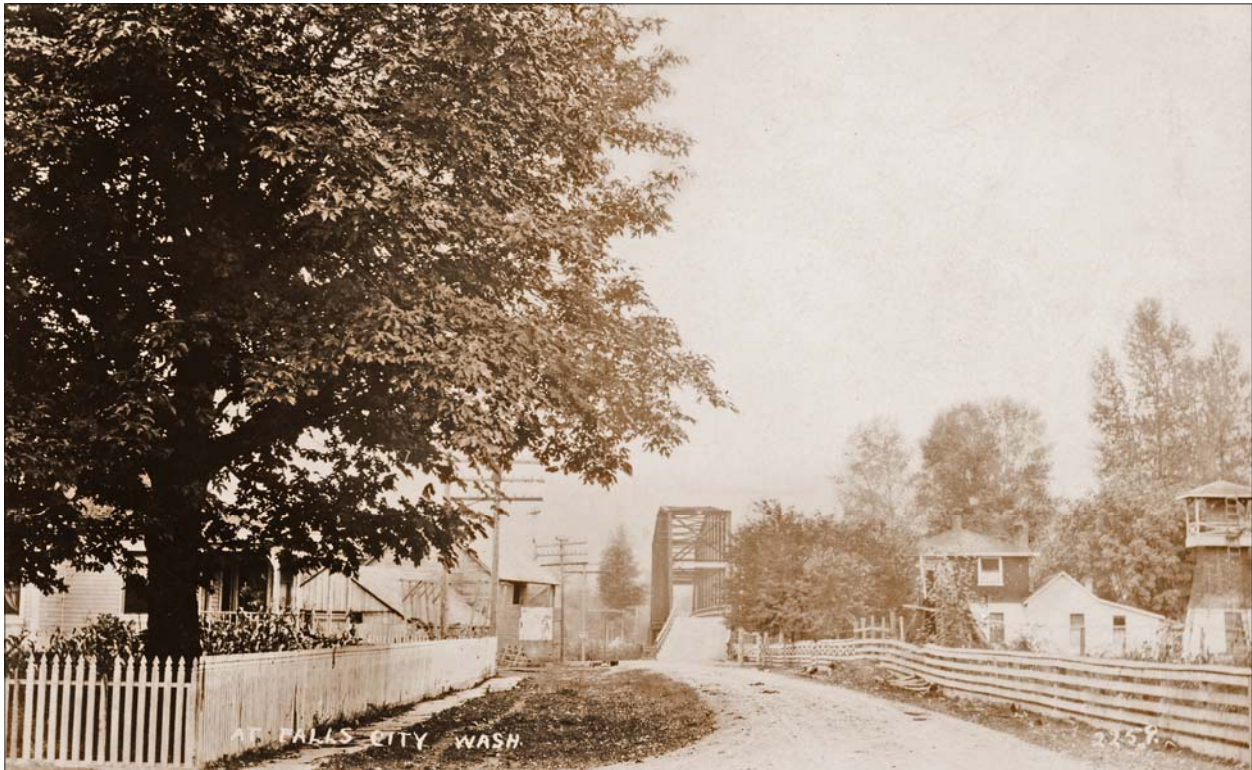
Some classic Fall City bridge photos were added to our collection in 2015. The “eras” of Fall City are closely connected to how one got across the Snoqualmie River. First came dugout canoes, then the river-powered ferry, followed by a series of three distinctive bridges. The “crossroads” personality of Fall City came from being located at this vital river crossing.

The first bridge constructed across the Snoqualmie River at Fall City was a wooden Parker truss bridge approximately 350 feet long and 16 feet wide. It was completed in the fall of 1889, and fell without warning in the spring of 1900. The bridge photos donated are not dated, but one might guess that the photo above left was after it collapsed in 1900 and was rebuilt. The sign at the entry to the bridge says: “\$10 FINE for riding or driving faster than a walk or driving more than 10 head of stock on the bridge at one time.” (There is also part of a “Baseball Park” sign visible at the far end of the bridge.) Coincidentally, the Fall City bridge was built the same year as the railroad trestle which crossed the Raging River and Preston-Fall City Road. The trestle also collapsed in 1900 and was rebuilt. Some strengthening of the Fall City bridge was done in 1908, as noted in the 6/12/1908 issue of the Issaquah Independent:

“Contractor Neff will nearly complete the work on the Fall City Bridge this week. The retimbering is complete and the new iron girders are being placed in position.”

(See next page for other wooden bridge photos.)



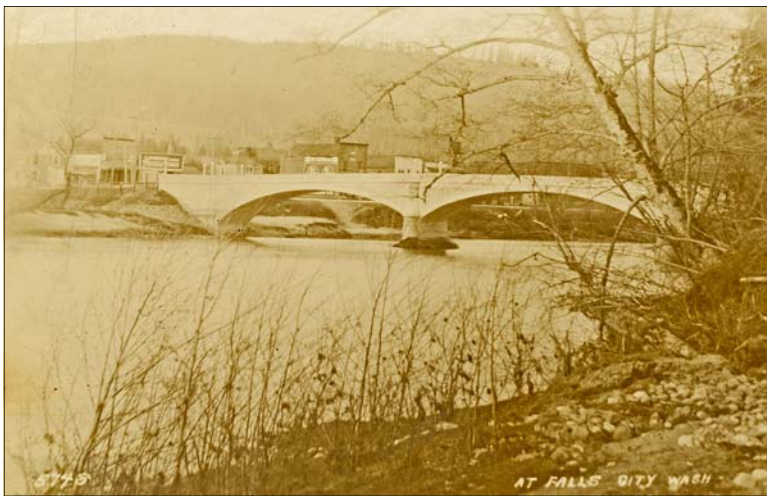


The photo above, looking north along the road which is currently Preston-Fall City Road, and the Howell photo below are particularly rich in that they shows the wooden bridge in context of the early town. The fences along the road may be in place because the driving of cattle and other livestock over the bridge was common in the early days. The lower photo emphasizes the very long span for a bridge constructed of wood.





Construction began in 1915, as shown at left, on the first concrete bridge, a Luton Arch bridge. It opened to a big fanfare in 1917. The lower photo again shows it in context of the early town. The presence of a new, modern bridge confirmed Fall City's vital place in the new era of road travel. In the photo at the bottom of the page, looking west, the new concrete bridge is at the left. The two new cross-country roads, the Sunset Highway and the Yellowstone Trail, came over Snoqualmie Pass and into Fall City, where the Sunset Highway proceeded south toward Is-



squah and the Yellowstone Trail turned west toward Kirkland. The photo is c1920, and the Fall City Brick School is visible at the far end of River Street.





## Attractive Concrete Bridge Spans Snoqualmie River at Fall City, Wash.

**S**INCE 1917 a three-span concrete arch bridge has carried traffic using the Sunset Highway across the Snoqualmie River at Fall City, Wash. The bridge consists of three arches with an overall length of 370 feet. The center arch span is 104 feet while the two end arches have a span of 97 feet. Spandrels are backfilled with earth. The grade of the roadway over the bridge approximates a parabolic curve 310 feet long, with a rise of 4 feet.



The stately strength of the Sunset Highway bridge as it crosses the Snoqualmie River at Falls City, is strikingly illustrated in this photograph.

Concrete footings were carried down to a depth of 12 feet below the lowest point in the river bed. Pier footings rest on 72 piles and abutment footings on 86 piles.

Ornamentation consists of bush-hammered panels in the plain panel railings and in the spandrel walls. Artistic lighting standards are placed on each railing at bridge ends and over piers and abutments.

The cost of the bridge, including the removal of the old structure and the provision of a temporary bridge during construction, was \$36,000.

This 1923 article praises the new bridge, and gives us an important clue as to its location...the last sentence indicates that it was probably constructed in the same location as the earlier wood bridge.



### *The changing of the guard, bridge-wise...1980*

A 35mm slide donated by Jack Kelley shows this overlap period when the first concrete bridge, built in 1917 and shown on the right in the photo, was still in use while the newer and currently used bridge was being constructed. As is shown, the first bridge was “a straight shot” over the river from Preston-Fall City Road, while the later one, as we experience today, veers off to the right (upstream) as one enters it. The earlier bridge is “showing its age” and, as shown in the photo below, its width was no longer adequate for both the size and the number of vehicles crossing it daily had increased significantly. It is probably amazing that it

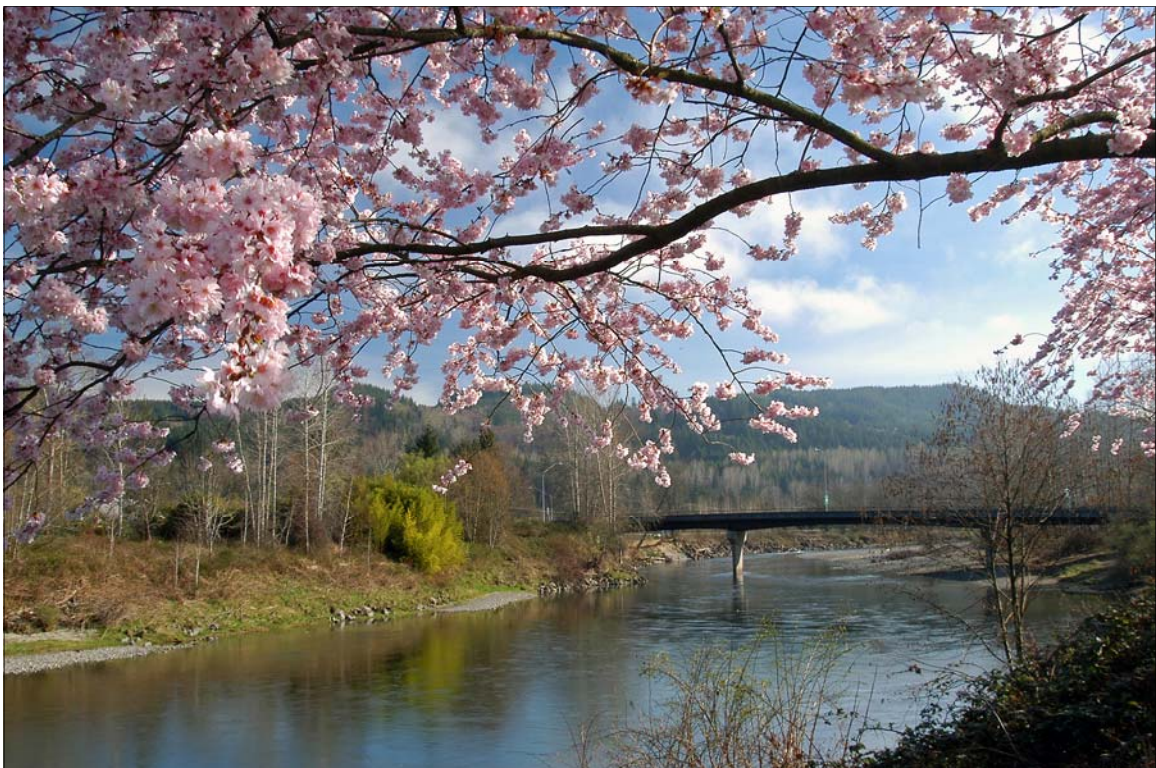


could still be used in 1980. Another concern was that in times of flood, the old bridge did not allow much space for water to pass, and could be impacted by logs and other debris.



The left photo, looking downstream, shows both bridges in place. On the right, folks turned out to watch the demolition of the first concrete bridge from the viewpoint of the new one. During the process, an interesting story unfolded...see 1980 *Valley Record* article on the last page of the article.

The new bridge serves us still, and is an important focal point for Fall City.  
(Photo below courtesy of Alan Bauer.)





This 1980 article from the *Valley Record* shares an interesting tidbit about the first concrete bridge...folklore that turned out to be true!

## Myth Is Fact

# Ashes Found In Fall City Bridge

By Mike McCluskey

What was thought to be myth is fact.

The so-called "myth" that the cremated remains of two former Fall City residents were placed in the old Fall City bridge was proven to be true last week when workers tearing down the old structure found the remains in two urns.

The two copper, rectangular-shaped urns were found Wednesday afternoon by Larry Watson, an employee of Dale Madden Construction. Watson said he found the smaller of the two urns in the main support in the middle of the bridge on the upstream side. At first he thought it was a battery, he commented, until someone was able to identify it.

The second, larger urn was found in the pile of fill which was being removed from the supports. This urn, about eight inches high and five inches long, had been broken during the removal of fill, but most of the remains were still intact. A small bone was visible through the opening.

The two urns were turned over to the Rev. Richard Coghill for burial. Jerry Kaasa and Hardin McCaffrey of the Fall City Cemetery agreed to donate a spot in the cemetery to place the remains, and burial took place Monday.

The old urns were placed inside new urns for the reburial after more than 60 years inside the bridge.

The *Valley Record* ran an article by Hugh Grew in the Dec. 13, 1979 edition that traced the history of the placing of the ashes in the bridge, but at that time it was uncertain if it was fact.

Grew got most of his information from local residents who were either around then or who had heard stories, including Mrs. Bob Hanson and Lon Ewing.

The story apparently began in the fall of 1913, when James Wiggle became the new teacher at Patterson Creek School, which was located near Fall City. The next year that school consolidated with two other schools to form a new school in Fall City.

During that time, Wiggle's wife, Anna Marriott Wiggle, was ill with tuberculosis and pregnant. Mrs. Wiggle was moved to Firlands Sanitarium and later gave birth to son Raymond on May 5, 1915. The boy lived for nearly one year, dying on April 30, 1916, and Mrs. Wiggle died on Aug. 1, 1916 at age 30.

Construction had begun on a new bridge across the Snoqualmie River at Fall City earlier that year. The two main supports standing in the water had hollow cores, which were filled with gravel, Grew wrote.

Wiggle's deceased wife had always liked the river, and he had been looking for a place to put her and his son's ashes where they would be safe.

The story told to Lon Ewing of Fall City, whose father worked on the bridge, was that Wiggle placed the urn in one of the bridge supports under some gravel when no one was around. Wiggle told the contractor what he had done after the bridge was completed.

No public announcement was made of the incident, but rumors of the story popped up later, continuing until last Wednesday, when the remains were found.