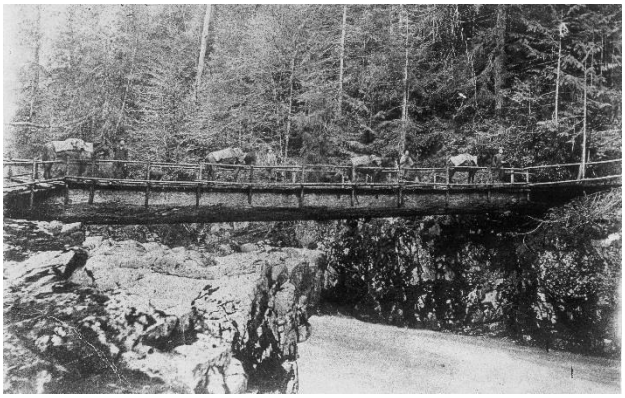
BRIDGES!

Washington State Archives is celebrating ***BRIDGES*** across the state, and asked that groups submit interesting items they may have available. Granite Falls Historical Museum submitted the following:

The Granite Falls Historical Museum has a large collection of photos that can be browsed online at www.gfhistory.org . I thought I'd share a quickly-organized set of some of the more unusual bridges in our area of Snohomish County. Should you want high-resolution versions of any of these images, just ask.

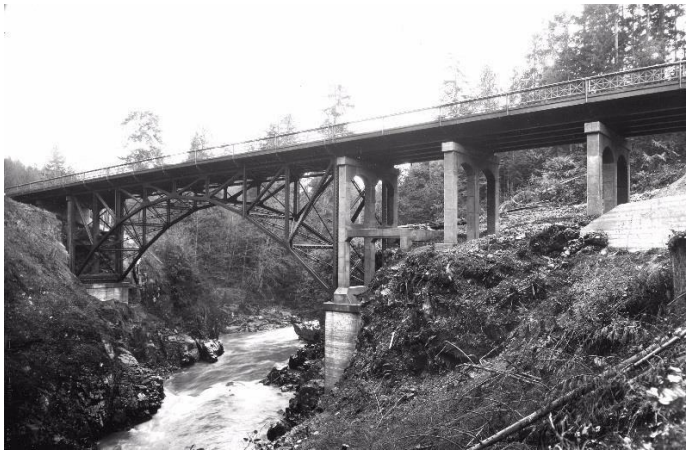


The bridge most economically important to Granite Falls was the bridge crossing the south fork of the Stillaguamish River. The first version was a very large log, and you can see four or five pack horses crossing at the same time (one-lane, one-way bridge ☺).

It was replaced in 1911 by a steel structure, built by a crew led by Charles H Glover, who led construction on many bridges throughout the county, and later became a County Commissioner. The crew is standing on the almost-completed bridge.

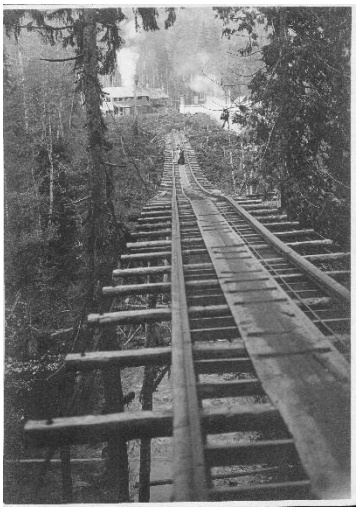
(The picture of Glover and the bridge crew was provided with permission from the Charles H Glover family)

That bridge was replaced in 1934 with another steel structure, known today as Bridge #102, having served now for over 80 years as the vital link to the Mountain Loop. It is scheduled for replacement in the next few years, but currently carries thousands of vehicle per day, hundreds of them being large dump trucks. Construction and completion below.



The 1911 bridge stood during construction of the current bridge. The bridge is the life-line to the Mountain Loop, and the critical link to the economic development of logging, quarrying, and tourism on the Mountain Loop.

Of course, some bridges were slightly less robust (but no less important). A good example was the suspension bridge that brought shingles from a mill on the far side to the railroad tracks on the near side of the river. It made a convenient, though seemingly risky, no-handrail pedestrian crossing (one pedestrian has only one leg and two crutches).



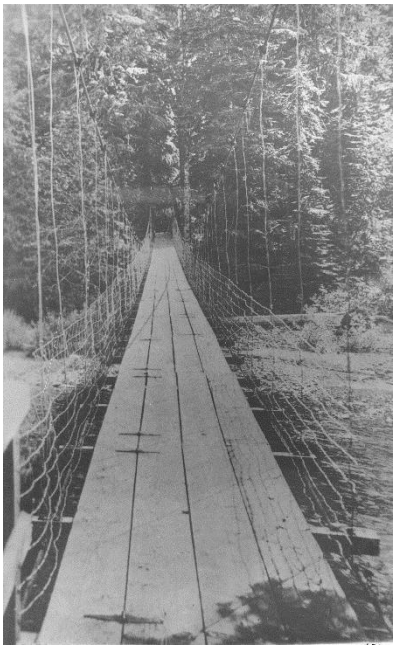
You can see the iron straps reinforcing the wood rails, to carry the loads of shingles across. The structure in the river was connected to shore by cables, and used to "sweep" shingle bolts into shore from the river.

Some bridges were subject to extreme wear and tear from the environment. "Red Bridge" (a highway bridge today) was once a rail bridge, but the pilings beneath it often washed out. As the rail traffic got lighter, the maintenance grew weaker. At one point, when the pilings washed away, leaving the rails and ties hanging, the "fix" was to string cables beneath the ties, erect wood towers at each end, string overhead cables across, and then connect loops to the cable beneath the ties – Voila! . . . a suspension bridge! Shown at right is one of the local vehicles (a model T Ford C-cab truck modified with railroad wheels) about to cross the bridge.

Ingenuity was important in bridge design, as well. Near the large Big Four Inn hotel was a bridge that allowed visitors to walk to the ice caves and beyond. A suspension bridge by design (unlike Red Bridge), it included hinges on its deck, to allow the deck to be folded back and lighten any snow load!

Bridge building was hard work, whether for rails, roads, or pedestrians, but vital to our local development.

We have a large Mountain Loop map (1940 vintage), with a collection of bridge images located on the map. The overall image is over 24MB, however, not something easily emailed. If you have an ftp location in which you'd like us to put it, we can do that. (Image included on next page).



Bridges Around Mountain Loop