

BRIDGES

Portland is a city of bridges. Ten bridges span the Willamette River in or near Portland's center and six of these are described below. The world's only telescoping double-deck vertical lift bridge (Steel), the world's oldest lift bridge (Hawthorne), and America's longest tied-arch bridge (Fremont) are all in Portland. Below are statistics and historical highlights regarding some of the city's best-known spans. The bridges are listed in the order a boater would encounter them while heading inland from the coast (north to south) on the Willamette River.

Much of the information in this section is courtesy of Sharon Wood Wortman, author of *The Portland Bridge Book* (illus. by Jay Dee Alley, Oregon Historical Society Press, 2001) and creator of Bridge Tours & Urban Adventures. Bridge Tours & Urban Adventures offers walking tours of several Portland bridges. Call 503.222.5535 for more information.

St. Johns Bridge

Opened: June 13, 1931

Cost: \$3.9 million

Type: Two-tower cable steel suspension, steel deck half-through truss

Main span: 1,207 feet long

Owner: State of Oregon

Highlights

- Portland's only suspension bridge, St. Johns was the longest rope-strand suspension bridge in the world at the time of its construction.
- The St. Johns Bridge was designed by internationally renowned bridge architect David B. Steinman. Steinman considered this Gothic-towered beauty to be his masterpiece.
- Originally, aviation authorities and government officials wanted the span to be painted yellow and black, bumblebee fashion. However, county commissioners disregarded the advice and waited until St. Patrick's Day, two months before the bridge opened, to announce that it would be painted green.
- The bridge is named for the community at its east end, which was originally named in honor of settler James Johns. Johns had started a local ferry system near this spot with just one rowboat in 1852.
- A \$38 million project to rehabilitate the bridge began in March 2003. Completion is scheduled for 2005.

Fremont Bridge

Opened: November 11, 1973

Cost: \$82 million

Type: Steel three-span half-through tied arch, with orthotropic upper deck

Main span: 1,255 feet long

Owner: State of Oregon

Highlights

- The Fremont, the newest bridge to span the Willamette River, is America's longest tied-arch bridge. It also has the longest main span of any bridge in Oregon.
- Using 32 hydraulic jacks, the bridge's "rainbow" arch was raised into place from the river below. Lifting the arch's 6,000 tons set a world record.
- The bridge is named after explorer and army officer John Charles Fremont. Fremont, nicknamed "The Pathfinder," was given federal funds to survey the Oregon Trail in 1842. He later opened a route to California from The Dalles. In the 1856 presidential election, Fremont ran as a Republican and anti-slavery candidate.

Broadway Bridge

Opened: April 22, 1913

Cost: \$1.6 million

Type: Double-leaf Rall bascule drawbridge, steel-through truss

Main span: 278 feet long

Owner: Multnomah County

Highlights

- The longest drawbridge in Portland, the Broadway Bridge was the longest double-leaf bascule drawbridge in the world when it opened.
- The bridge is named for one of the streets with which it connects.

Steel Bridge

Opened: July 21, 1912 (trains); August 9, 1912 (automobiles)

Cost: \$1.7 million

Type: Steel-through truss (Pratt), telescoping double-deck vertical lift

Main span: 211 feet long

Owner: Union Pacific Railroad (railroad section) and State of Oregon (automobile section)

Highlights

- The design of the Steel Bridge features two decks (the lower deck for freight trains; the upper for automobiles and MAX light rail). The lower of the two decks can move independently of the other. This unique design has never been duplicated.
- To accommodate river traffic, the lower deck can be raised a remarkable 45 feet in 10 seconds; the upper deck, 90 feet in 90 seconds. Before the mid-century decline in streetcar use, the upper roadway deck accommodated Portland's first electric trolley cars.
- In 1986, following a \$10 million upgrade, the Steel Bridge became the cross-river link for Portland's MAX light rail system.
- When the predecessor of the current Steel Bridge was built in 1888, wrought iron was the most common building material available for bridges. Bucking tradition, however, local contractors fashioned Portland's new bridge from steel. The descriptive name stuck. When the existing Steel Bridge was built in nearly the same location as the older structure, the name transferred.
- The lower deck of the Steel Bridge was recently fitted with a \$2.5 million pedestrian and bicycle crossing that links Gov. Tom McCall Waterfront Park to the new Eastbank Esplanade and its 1,200-foot floating walkway.

Burnside Bridge

Opened: May 28, 1926

Cost: \$3 million

Type: Steel double-leaf Strauss bascule drawbridge

Main span: 252 feet long

Owner: Multnomah County

Highlights

- The bridge is closed each June for a few hours during the Portland Rose Festival to accommodate the Grand Floral Parade.
- The street with which the Burnside Bridge connects was named after Vermont native Dan Wyman Burnside. A prominent Portland businessman and a member of Portland's social elite, Burnside helped raise funds to launch the Corps of Engineers on a 17-foot Willamette River channel dredging project in 1866.

Morrison Bridge

Opened: May 24, 1958

Cost: \$12.9 million

Type: Steel double-leaf Chicago-style fixed trunnion bascule drawbridge

Main span: 284 feet long

Owner: Multnomah County

Highlights

- As part of the Willamette Light Brigade's project to light all of Portland's downtown bridges, this bridge was the first to be illuminated (1987).
- The bridge was named after Scottish immigrant John L. Morrison, who served as a lieutenant in the Oregon Rangers.

Hawthorne Bridge

Opened: December 19, 1910

Cost: \$500,000

Type: Steel-through truss (Parker), vertical lift

Main span: 244 feet long

Owner: Multnomah County

Highlights

- The Hawthorne, which gained national recognition for its design, was one of three such bridges in the Portland area built by the inventor of the vertical-lift drawbridge, John Alexander Low Waddell.
- The Hawthorne is the world's oldest vertical-lift bridge.
- The bridge is named after Dr. J. C. Hawthorne, who helped to found the Oregon Hospital for the Insane, which was originally located on Asylum Street in East Portland. Asylum Street was renamed Hawthorne Street five years after the hospital relocated to Salem.
- In the spring of 1998, a year-long renovation project closed the Hawthorne Bridge. Sidewalks were widened, lift systems were upgraded, and the steel grated deck was replaced – to name just a few of the improvements.

Marquam Bridge

Opened: October 4, 1966 (lower deck); October 18, 1966 (upper deck)

Cost: \$14 million

Type: Double-deck steel through cantilever truss

Main span: 440 feet

Owner: State of Oregon

Highlights

- The Marquam is the busiest of Portland's bridges, as well as the busiest bridge in Oregon.
- Listed in 1987 as the third-longest continuous truss bridge in North America, the Marquam was also the first double-deck vehicle-only bridge built in Oregon.
- Built for utility rather than beauty, this span closed the final gap in the California-to-Washington interstate highway system.
- The bridge is named after Phillip A. Marquam, a Multnomah County judge who was elected to the Oregon Legislature in 1882.

FOUNTAINS

The Benson Bubblers

Designed by A. E. Doyle, architect of the Multnomah County Central Library and the Meier & Frank Building, the Benson Bubblers were commissioned in 1912 by lumber baron and civic leader Simon Benson. Benson, who also hired Doyle to design his elegant Benson Hotel, donated 20 of the bronze fountains to the city (the city installed an additional 20 in later years). The teetotaling Benson, who wanted to offer his workers something cold to drink on the streets besides alcohol, once boasted that saloon sales dipped 40 percent after the bubblers were installed.

David P. Thompson Memorial Fountain (“Elk Fountain”)

David P. Thompson, one-time governor of the Idaho Territory, ambassador to Turkey and Portland’s mayor from 1879-1882, presented the city with the Plaza Fountain (later renamed the David P. Thompson Memorial Fountain) as a watering trough for horses. The bronze elk sculpture that sits atop the base was sculpted by Roland H. Perry, whose spectacular *Fountain of Neptune* graces the front of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Southwest Main Street between Southwest Third and Fourth avenues

Ira C. Keller Memorial Fountain

Facing the Keller Auditorium, this fountain features two levels that reflect the beauty of nature. The top level is made up of brooks that run through a tree-shaded plaza. The brooks taper down and overflow to create a waterfall. Those who don’t mind getting a little wet can rest on a bench just behind the waterfall.

Southwest Third Avenue between Market and Clay streets

Jamison Square Fountain

Located in Portland’s posh Pearl District, Jamison Square is the first of three parks scheduled to open in this former industrial district turned hip enclave. Surrounded by galleries, restaurants and lofts – and with its own Portland Streetcar stop – Jamison Square is a magnet for Pearl District residents and visitors, especially those with children. The park’s main feature is its kid-friendly fountain, whose water tumbles out of a stack of rocks in a series of mini-waterfalls. The water cascades into a large pond that – designed to mirror the ebb and flow of the ocean tide – periodically drains and then refills.

Northwest 11th Avenue and Johnson Street; www.portlandparks.org/Parks/JamisonSq.htm

Lovejoy Fountain

Named for Asa Lovejoy, a co-founder of the city of Portland, this fountain was designed to evoke the rivers of the High Sierras. Centered in the middle of a park, the fountain spouts water from a concrete mountaintop to a canyon and wading pool below.

Portland Center Building, Southwest Hall Street between Third and Fourth avenues

Rebecca at the Well/Shemanski Fountain

Recounting the biblical legend of Abraham's search for a bride for Isaac, this bronze and sandstone fountain/sculpture was designed in 1926 by Oliver Barrett and Carl Linde. Rebecca's gracious act of drawing water for the camels of Abraham's servant identified her as the bride-to-be. Located in Portland's Cultural District, the fountain was a gift to the city from Joseph Shemanski.

South Park Blocks between Southwest Salmon and Main streets

Salmon Street Springs

Located in Gov. Tom McCall Waterfront Park, this fountain was designed by Robert Perron to celebrate city life. Its 185 jets are programmed to change with the city's mood. At full capacity, the fountain recycles 4,924 gallons of water per minute. This interactive water wonder is a popular place for kids (and adults) to cool off on hot summer days.

Gov. Tom McCall Waterfront Park: Terminus of Southwest Salmon Street at Naito Parkway

Skidmore Fountain

For the Skidmore Fountain's grand opening in 1888, brewer Henry Weinhard offered to pump beer from his brewery (via Portland's fire hoses) into the fountain's pipes. This festive suggestion was vetoed, however, by city leaders who feared residents would help themselves to the beer by poking holes in the city's only set of fire hoses. Today, as it did on opening day, the Skidmore Fountain runs with water. The fountain's upper bowl is supported by four female figures. The bottom pool, once a place for residents to quench their thirst, still has the brass rings that held copper cups. Four lower troughs, filled by spillover from the bottom pool, were designed for the convenience of dogs and horses. The fountain, which is the oldest piece of public art in Portland, is inscribed "Good Citizens are the Riches of a City."

Southwest First Avenue and Ankeny Street at Ankeny Plaza