

# MINNESOTA HISTORIC BRIDGE INVENTORY

Bridge No : 003130

County Name : Faribault

City/Township : Blue Earth City Township

Township : 102 Range : 27W Section : 29 NW-NW-NE

UTM Coordinates : 15:411374:4829699

411420 4829640

USGS Quadrangle : Elmore

Inventory Number : FA-BET-003

National Register Eligible : Yes

Criteria : C

Context : Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota

Period of Significance : 1920-1947

Retains Integrity : Yes

## Structural Data

Main Span Type : 106

number main spans : 01

number appr spans :

structure length : 63.10

deck width : 24.20

Superstructure : single-span concrete deck girder

Substructure : concrete abutments with flared wingwalls

Floor/Decking : concrete deck carried by 4 concrete deck girders

Other Features : solid-parapet concrete railings ornamented with recessed panels (rebar exposed on bottom edges of railings)

## Historical Data

Year built : 1920

Contractor/Builder : Babcock Brothers

Designer : Minnesota Highway Department

## Statement of significance :

Located about one-half mile south of Blue Earth in rural southwestern Faribault County, Bridge No. 3130 carries an unpaved township road across the <sup>Cow Creek</sup> Blue Earth River. The crossing consists of a 60-foot, concrete, deck-girder span with a 21-foot roadway between solid-parapet concrete railings decorated with recessed panels. In 1919, the Minnesota Highway Department prepared plans for two concrete-girder bridges on a state road south of Blue Earth, the seat of Faribault County. Bridge No. 3030, one-half mile south of the city, was to be a 60-foot, deck-girder span, while Bridge No. 3031, situated three miles further south, was to have two 30-foot, through-girder spans. Federal aid would partially subsidize the construction of both bridges and the improvement of the highway itself, with the state and county making up the balance of the expense. In 1919, the state legislature had invigorated federal-aid construction in Minnesota by permitting counties to issue bonds to cover their share of the costs. The result, according to the highway department's annual report for 1920, was that "road construction in Minnesota during the years 1919 and 1920 exceeded any previous period in the history of the state." In February 1920, the Faribault County Board of Commissioners opened four bids for the construction of Bridge Nos. 3030 and 3031 "on Federal Aid Project No. 36." The contract award went to Babcock Brothers, who had offered the lowest price for each structure: Bridge No. 3130 at \$10,944, and Bridge No. 3031 at \$9,811. Babcock also received "cost plus 20%" for removing the old bridges and for building temporary crossings. Both projects apparently were completed before the end of 1920, which is the construction date listed for the two bridges in a computerized bridge database compiled by the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

According to specifications issued by the state highway department in 1918 and 1921, the maximum suitable span length for concrete girder bridges was 60 feet. With its 60-foot

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span, Bridge No. 3030 is eligible for the National Register in the area of Transportation under Criterion C. The bridge fulfills "Registration Criterion No. 4" of the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form entitled "Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota." According to Registration Criterion No. 4, a concrete highway bridge is eligible for the National Register if it was "designed at the outer recommended limits for its span type," which, for concrete deck girders, was "50 feet and over, before 1921." Bridge No. 3030 is the best surviving, early example of the Minnesota Highway Department's standardized plan for concrete deck-girder bridges.

### References :

Bridge No. 3130 File, in Minnesota Department of Transportation, Waters Edge Building, Roseville, Minnesota; Bridge No. 3130 File, in Faribault County Highway Department, Blue Earth, Minnesota; Faribault County Board of Commissioners, Proceedings, 13, 14 February 1920, in Faribault County Courthouse, Blue Earth; Minnesota Highway Department, *General Provisions and Bridge and Culvert Specifications, 1918*, sec. 118; Minnesota Highway Department, *Trunk Highway Standard Specification, 1921*, sec. S11-1; Minnesota Highway Department, *Report, 1920*, 3; Minnesota Department of Transportation, Bridge Log, entries for Bridge Nos. 3130 and 3131; Robert M. Frame, "Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1988, sec. F, 8, in SHPO, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul; field inspection by Denis Gardner, 28 September 1996.

**Form Prepared By :** Jeffrey A. Hess