

Xcel Energy/Saint Anthony Falls Hydroelectric Project Survey

Site Name: Stone Arch Bridge

Site Location/Address: Sixth Avenue Southeast at Mississippi River

Inventory Number: HE-MPC-0176

National Register Status: Contributing structure

Map Code: IB-20

1992 Boundary Study:

Architect/Engineer: Charles C. Smith. Date: 1883.

Diagonally crossing the Mississippi River to link the east-side and west-side milling districts, the Stone Arch Bridge originally comprised twenty-three limestone arches resting on granite piers and abutments. The individual arches varied in span from 40 to 100 feet. The bridge's total length was about 2,100 feet. In 1961, the bridge was altered to permit the passage of river traffic by replacing two arches near the western shore with a steel, Warren, deck truss. Although the alteration adversely affected the bridge's materials and workmanship, the structure's original design and fabric are sufficiently intact to retain historic integrity.

Planning for the bridge began in earnest in 1881, when Saint Paul railroad magnate James J. Hill organized the Union Railway Company to build a shortline across the Mississippi River into downtown Minneapolis, where the company also intended to construct a new Union Station. Although the new shortline and station would benefit several lines, it was especially valuable to Hill's Manitoba Road, which guaranteed the construction bonds for the project. To acquire the necessary right-of-way, Hill purchased the Saint Anthony Falls Water Power Company, which controlled most of the eastern shoreline at the falls. Designed by the West Point trained engineer Charles C. Smith, the Stone Arch Bridge was the most technically demanding part of the project--the structure's sweeping curve at its western terminus was a tour de force of masonry engineering. For many decades after its completion in 1883, the bridge was one of the city's most important visual symbols, reproduced on countless postcards and letterheads.

Absorbed by Hill's Great Northern Railroad in 1907, the Stone Arch Bridge continued to carry rail traffic until 1978. Trackage was removed in the early 1980s. In recognition of its historical significance, the Stone Arch Bridge was designated a National Historical Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1975.

This property consists of one contributing structure.

Saint Anthony Falls Rediscovered:

No entry.

MN Archaeology Part I:

No entry.

MN Archaeology Part II:

No entry.

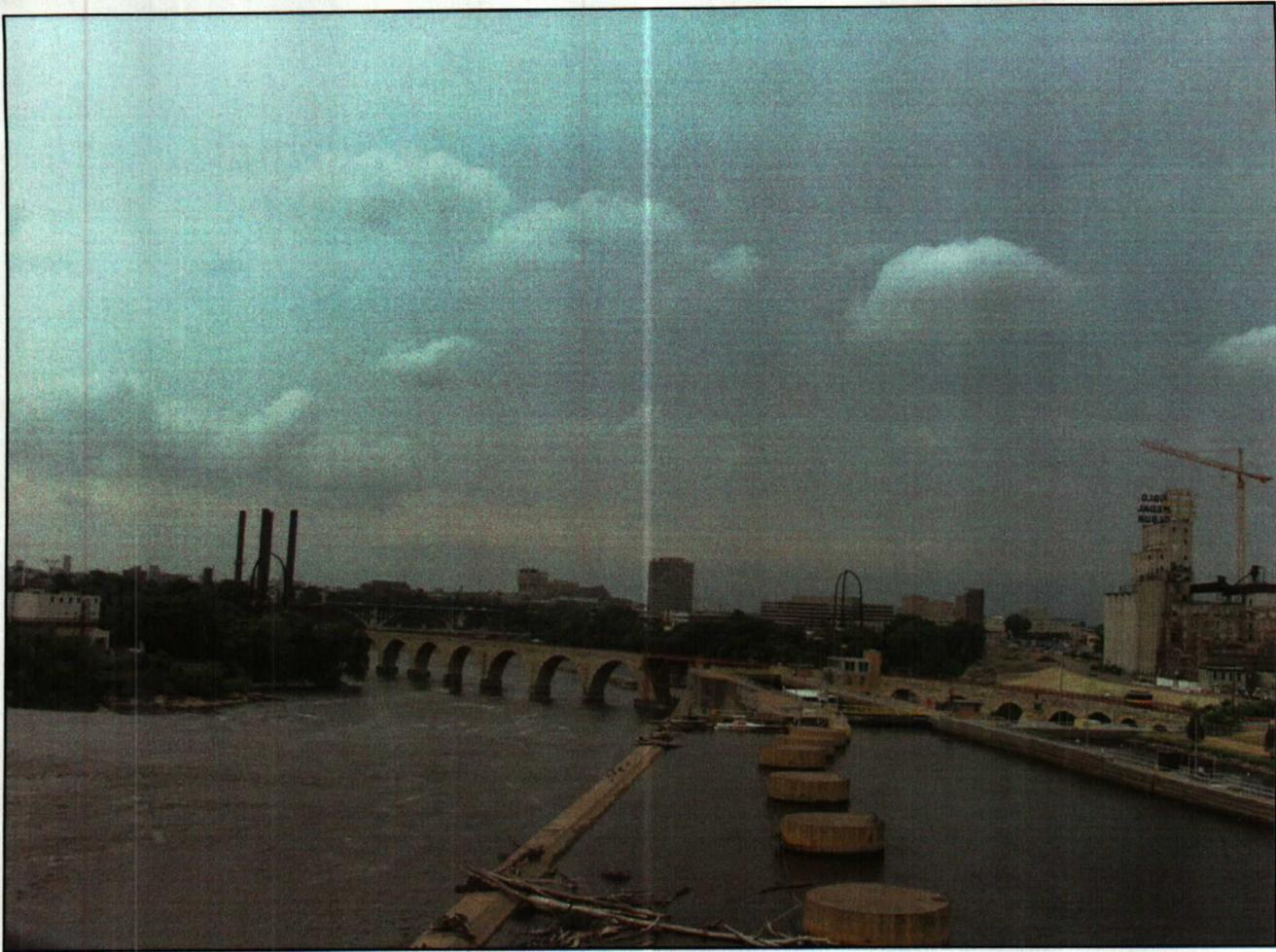
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Update on Condition:

No entry.

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North side, looking south.