

APPENDIX C

THE AMERICAN BRIDGE COMPANY OF 1900

After more than a year of rumors and speculative articles the American Bridge Company was formally organized by J.P. Morgan and Company and incorporated in New Jersey on 14 April 1900. It was an independent company for less than a year as most of its stock was acquired by United States Steel Corporation, of which it became a subsidiary on 1 April 1901. However, this development did not affect its corporate organization. Statutory offices were maintained in New Jersey, and the headquarters were in New York City until 16 May 1901, then in Philadelphia until 1 April 1904, and finally in Pittsburgh.

Twenty-four companies, fifty percent of the nation's fabricating capacity, were purchased the first year. Those in New York State became part of a subsidiary, Empire Bridge Company, which started at the same time as its parent and existed until 2 July 1914. The others apparently reported directly to the main headquarters except, perhaps, for A. and P. Roberts Company (Pencoyd Iron Works) which had its own company officers, and the precise relationship here is not known. In addition to Empire Bridge there was another subsidiary, American Bridge Company of New York, which was responsible for all sales, contracts, and erection from 10 January 1901 until 31 December 1913. It is not known how the activities at each plant were fitted into this corporate structure, especially with A. and P. Roberts and Empire Bridge, but there was some degree of central control as shop drawings sometimes were made at one office and distributed to several different shops for fabrication.

As American Bridge's organization matured some shops were expanded, others closed, and the huge plant at Ambridge (formerly Economy), Pennsylvania constructed. When completed in 1903 its capacity was triple that of the previous record holder and was roughly equal to the combined capacity of the five largest companies bought by American Bridge. Part of the site had been purchased by Berlin Iron Bridge Company in 1899 for a western division, but the final plans were so much expanded that more land was acquired.

The twenty-four companies acquired in 1900 were:

- American Bridge Works, Chicago, Illinois
- Berlin Iron Bridge Company, Berlin, Connecticut
- Buffalo Bridge and Iron Works, Buffalo, New York
- Edge Moor Bridge Works, Wilmington, Delaware
- Elmira Bridge Company Ltd., Elmira, New York
- Gillette-Herzog Manufacturing Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Groton Bridge and Manufacturing Company, Groton, New York
- Hilton Bridge Construction Company, Albany, New York
- Horseheads Bridge Company, Horseheads, New York
- Keystone Bridge Works, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
(from Carnegie Steel Company, Limited)
- Lafayette Bridge Company, Lafayette, Indiana
- Lassig Bridge and Iron Works, Chicago, Illinois
- Milwaukee Bridge and Iron Works, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
(from J.G. Wagner Company)

APPENDIX C

New Columbus Bridge Company, Columbus, Ohio
Pencoyd Iron Works, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
(A. and P. Roberts Company)
Pittsburgh Bridge Company, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Post and McCord, New York, New York
Rochester Bridge and Iron Works, Rochester, New York
Schultz Bridge Iron Company, McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania
Shiffler Bridge Company, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Trenton Iron Works, Trenton, New Jersey
(New Jersey Steel and Iron Company)
Union Bridge Company, New York, New York
(plant at Athens, Pennsylvania)
Wrought Iron Bridge Company, Canton, Ohio
Youngstown Bridge Company, Youngstown, Ohio

Several other large fabricators--Passaic Rolling Mill, King Bridge, and Phoenix Bridge--had been linked to the new company in the speculative articles, but they remained independent.

To complete the history of American Bridge's expansion it is necessary to go into the twentieth century. The later additions were:

Toledo Bridge Company, Toledo Ohio (1901)
Detroit Bridge and Iron Works, Detroit, Michigan (1902)
Koken Iron Works, St. Louis, Missouri (between 1912 and 1916)
Virginia Bridge and Iron Company, Roanoke, Virginia (1936)

In 1955 United States Steel transferred three shops from its Consolidated Western Steel Division to American Bridge. All in Los Angeles, California, they originally were Baker Iron Works (founded 1872), Llwellyn Iron Works (1884), and Union Iron Works (1884). They had joined to form Consolidated Steel in 1928. This later became part of Consolidated Western Steel Corporation which United States Steel bought in 1948.

Alabama Bridge and Iron Company is listed as one of American Bridge's acquisitions in Talbot's American Bridge Company History and Organization. Although its date of incorporation is given as 4 August 1900, it was not listed in the American Iron and Steel Association directories of 1903, 1908, or 1916 as either an independent company or a part of American Bridge. For this reason, and also because a location is not given, the company is not included in the directory portion of this work or the list of acquisitions.

The AISA directories of 1903 and 1906 offer a puzzle concerning one of American Bridge's shops as they include 'Walker Plant, West Homestead, Pennsylvania, Annual capacity 16,000 tons. (Formerly operated by the Shiffler Bridge Company.)' Earlier directories: 1894, 1896, and 1898, do not include any such plant, and it would appear that Shiffler had started an expansion between 1898 and the formation of American Bridge. Perhaps this shop, which doubled Shiffler's capacity, and Berlin Iron Bridge's start of a second plant provided the impetus for the formation of the bridge combine.