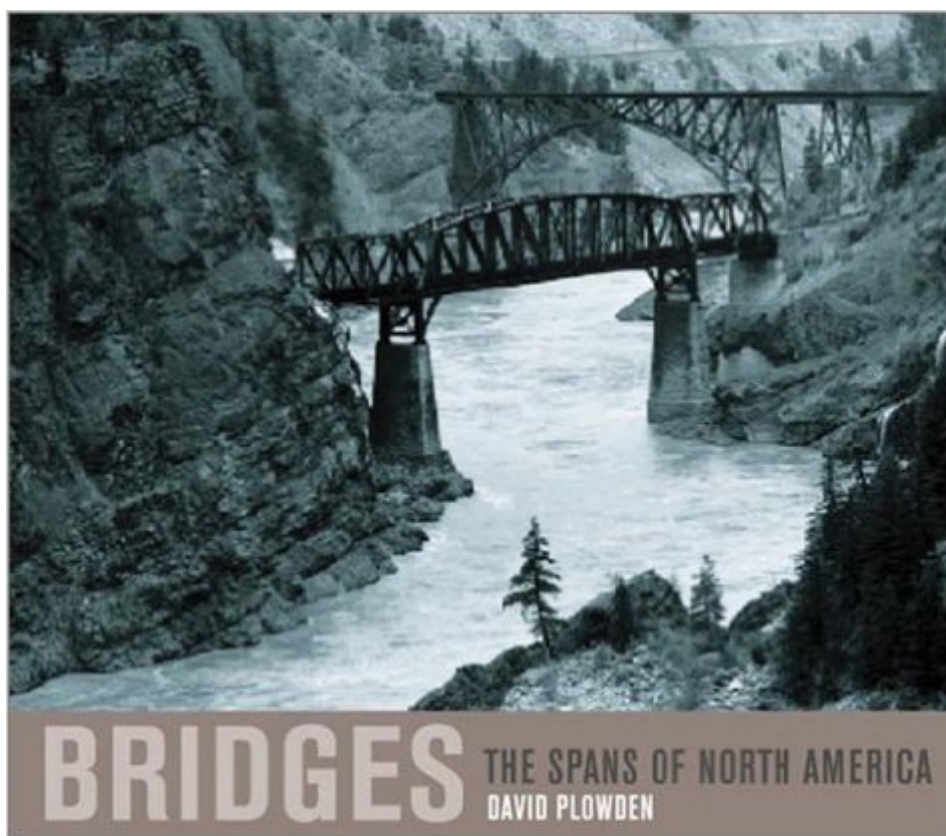


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# Bridges: The Spans Of North America



## Synopsis

Whether built of stone, brick, wood, iron, steel, or concrete, bridges have captivated our imaginations more than any other man-made structures. Whether built of wood, stone, iron, steel, or concrete, bridges have captivated our imaginations more than any other man-made structures. In David Plowden's words, "there is no more overt, powerful, or rational expression of accomplishmentâ of man's ability to build." And Americans, in particular, have excelled in this structural art. This book explores in depth how, when, where, and by whom the most important North American bridges were built. Over 185 of Plowden's superb photographs allow us to dwell on the most important scientific and aesthetic qualities of each bridge. In addition, Plowden has included original designs and drawings of structuresâ some unbuilt, gone, or dramatically alteredâ illuminating less obvious aspects of these engineering marvels and introducing us to bridges we otherwise would never have seen. In his extensive text, Plowden vividly records the discoveries, misconceptions, struggles, failures, and triumphs of the men who dedicated their energies to bridge design and construction. In the more than twenty-five years since this classic book was first published, bridges have been lost, and others have been built; some of the best examples of new bridges are included in this new, revised edition. All the photographs have been reprinted to achieve the best duotone reproduction. With this new edition, *Bridges* is the most thorough and beautiful volume ever published on the subjectâ a passionate and powerful argument for our continued reverence of these wonderful structures. Over 185 photographs

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

We bridge difficulties. We like a bridge over troubled waters. We needed a bridge into the new millennium. Bridges have a hold on us in a way that other examples of civil engineering do not. And we often don't notice them as we use them. Although I had traveled on the Natchez Trace Parkway many times, upheld by a bridge in Franklin, Tennessee, I had never looked down and appreciated the span until alerted to it a couple of years ago. It is a beautiful, big, parabolic concrete arch which I now get off and admire fairly often. According to *\_Bridges: The Spans of North America\_* (Norton) by David Plowden, I am not alone. This bridge "is unlike any heretofore built in America and has been the recipient of innumerable awards." Calling attention to the bridges we take for granted, and telling a history of American bridge building, Plowden's book is fittingly big, and displays his beautiful black and white pictures in large format, splendidly reproduced. It is properly sized for the coffee table, but the text is appropriately comprehensive, and as worth reading as the pictures are worth admiring. *\_Bridges\_* is divided into chronological sections based on the materials used: stone and brick; wood; iron; steel (divided into three time periods, since there are so many steel bridges); and concrete. Erecting a stone bridge was expensive and time consuming, especially compared to using wood. There are more miles of wooden bridges than any other type in America, although Plowden has little good to say about the "cult of the covered bridge" which has obscured the trusswork he thinks is the important part of these wooden bridges. Iron was used for bridges for only a short time, and iron bridges are the rarest of bridge artifacts.

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