
Inventory of the Tower Bridge (Sacramento, California) Collection, 1944-1946

Processed by Ellen Halteman; machine-readable finding aid created by Xiuzhi Zhou

California State Railroad Museum Library

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Collection number: MS 38

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Tower Bridge (Sacramento, California) Collection,

Date (inclusive): 1944-1946

Collection number: MS 38

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Sacramento, California 95814

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Gift of Earl Wendricks, 1981

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Collection Inventory

One bound ledger records maintenance to the bridge between March 1, 1944 to March 30, 1946. Colorful ink drawings embellish the endpapers. There are also a few clippings regarding the bridge's history. A few photographs have been filed with the Museum's pictorial collections.

Historical Background

The Tower Bridge, which spans the Sacramento River from the foot of Capitol Mall (M Street) to West Sacramento replaced an earlier swing-span bridge. Rails were first laid across that bridge in 1912 to carry the trains of the Sacramento & Woodland and the Oakland, Antioch & Eastern Railroads (which were later merged into the Sacramento Northern Railroad). During the sixteen-month construction period, automobile traffic was routed across the M Street Bridge, while the Sacramento Northern electric trains operated across a temporary wood bridge, located just adjacent upstream. The new

bridge was dedicated December 15, 1935. The last Sacramento Northern train over the Tower Bridge operated on November 15, 1962.

The Tower Bridge is the only lift draw bridge on the Sacramento River. The clearance between the towers is 186 feet and the lift span weighs 500 tons. Two rows of 12 cables attach each corner of the lift span to the balancing counterweights on each tower. Those 96 heavy cables pass over grooved wheels which are 12 feet in diameter set near the top of each tower. A 100 horsepower motor raises and lowers the bridge. It can be raised to its full height of 100 feet in one and one-half minutes.
