

## **A History of Maclay Bridge from 1922 to 2012**

*(based on historic information from the Commissioner's Journals  
and archived bridge plans found by the County Surveyor's office)*

**1922** A bridge is constructed at the west end of North Avenue consisting of two Parker trusses over the Bitterroot River with one pier in the center of the river. (Note: a truss bridge is a bridge whose load-bearing-superstructure is composed of connected beams forming triangular units above the bridge deck to support the load.)

**1948** The 1922 bridge is destroyed by a major flood.

**1952** After many problems, a bridge is constructed at the site from parts of an old bridge abandoned in the Ninemile Prairie area in the Blackfoot River drainage. This "new" Maclay Bridge has reconstructed abutments and two new piers placed in the river. It is possible--although not clear in the record--that the new abutments and piers have pilings to support them since pilings are shown in some diagrams but not in others. The bridge is made of 3 components, with used parts from elsewhere: a west Parker truss, a center smaller pony truss, and an east short Parker truss. One of the trusses from the 1922 bridge may have been salvaged for the east span.

**1961** The east Parker truss is damaged by overweight vehicles and/or spring flooding. (It's not clear in county records what happened to this segment.)

**1964** The east Parker truss is replaced with a pre-stressed concrete bridge span and an additional (3<sup>rd</sup>) pier is placed in the east river channel to support it. This is the configuration still present in 2012: a west Parker truss, a center pony truss, an east pre-stressed concrete span, and 3 piers in the east half of the river.