USA HIGHEST BRIDGE

Highest Bridge of Kentucky

The High Bridge is a railroad bridge crossing the Kentucky River Palisades, that rises approximately 275 feet from the river below and connects Jessamine and Mercer counties in Kentucky. Formally dedicated in 1879,[1] it is the first cantilever bridge constructed in the United States. It has a three-span continuous under-deck truss used by Norfolk Southern Railway to carry trains between Lexington and Danville. It has been designated as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.[2]

HISTORY

In 1851, the Lexington & Danville Railroad, with Julius Adams as chief engineer, retained John A. Roebling (who later designed the Brooklyn Bridge) to build a railroad suspension bridge across the Kentucky River for a line connecting Lexington and Danville, Kentucky west of the intersection of the Dix and Kentucky rivers.[1] In 1855, the company ran out of money, having built only stone towers and anchorages. The project was resumed by the Cincinnati Southern Railway in 1873 following a proposal by C. Shaler Smith for an innovative cantilever design, using Roebling's stone towers as anchors.[1] The bridge was erected with a three-span continuous under-deck truss, and was opened in 1877.[3] It was 275 feet (84 m) tall and 1,125 feet (343 m) long: the tallest bridge above a navigable waterway in North America and the tallest railroad bridge in the world until the early 20th century. Construction was completed using 3,654,280 pounds of iron at a total cost of $404,373.31.[1] In 1879 President Rutherford B. Hayes and Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman attended the dedication.[4]