

Macomb's Dam Bridge and 155th Street Viaduct

Individual Landmark

West 155th Street and St. Nicholas Place to 162nd Street and Jerome Avenue Bronx

Designation Date: January 14, 1992

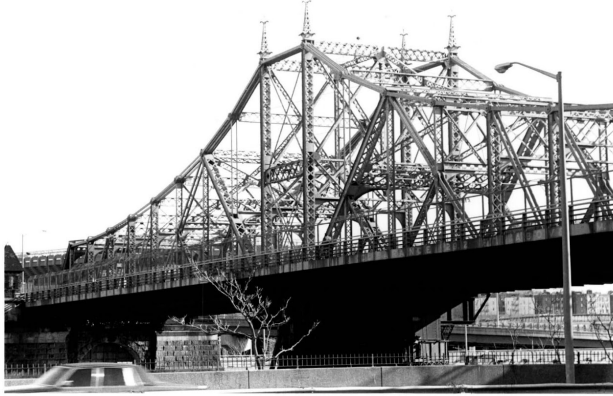


fig. M: Macomb's Dam Bridge, central swing span

Credit: Shockley, LPC

fig. N: Macomb's Dam Bridge, central swing span

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The Macomb's Dam Bridge (formerly Central Bridge) and 155th Street Viaduct, constructed in 1890-1895 to the designs of eminent structural engineer Alfred Pancoast Boller, for the NYC Departments of Public Parks and Public Works, was a considerable municipal undertaking as well as a significant feat of engineering. The Macomb's Dam Bridge is the third oldest major bridge in New York City (after the Brooklyn and George Washington Bridges) and is also the city's oldest intact metal truss swing-type bridge, a bridge type most often employed in New York City along the Harlem River between the 1880s and 1910.

The bridge's steel central swing span was considered at the time to be the world's heaviest moveable mass. Boller successfully overcame the various difficult challenges involved in the construction of the bridge and viaduct, particularly in the placing of the foundations, while producing an aesthetically noteworthy design. The Passaic Rolling Mill Company, of Paterson, N.J., and the Union Bridge Company, of Athens, Pa., contractors for the critically acclaimed bridge, were leading steel and iron bridge manufacturers.

The long steel 155th Street Viaduct provides a gradual descent toward the bridge from the heights of Harlem to the west, while the long Jerome Avenue approach viaduct of the bridge, consisting primarily of steel deck truss spans carried by masonry piers, with a subsidiary camelback truss span, was built over what was then marshland in the Bronx. The appearance of the bridge and viaduct is enhanced by the central swing span truss outline, the steel latticework, the steel and iron ornamental details (including the Eighth Avenue stairs, sections of original railing, and several lamp posts), and the masonry piers, abutments, and shelter houses. Following a succession of bridges at this site since 1815, the Macomb's Dam Bridge and 155th Street Viaduct continue to provide an historically important connection between upper Manhattan and the Bronx.

[Read the full NYC LPC designation report here.](#)