

favor in the late 1920s, and public money was spent to buy out owners and transfer ownership to the state.¹¹

Around 1915 the type of trusses used for shorter spans shifted from pin-connected Pratt pony trusses to half-hip, truss leg bedstead, and most commonly, the Warren pony truss with vertical members. Construction of bridges stalled with the United States' entry into World War I as labor and construction materials were reallocated to the war effort. After the war bridge construction resumed and transportation demands of the oil industry further spawned their construction. Steel truss bridges became the most popular choice for shorter spans, and were also used in combination with each other or with other span types for larger spans. Later, longer spans and heavier loads necessitated a further shift to the use of Parker through-trusses, and concrete pile trestles also saw wider use. In the 1920s, the camelback pony truss became the preferred type of state highway department engineers and was most commonly used from the 1930s through the 1950s on federally funded roads. This truss was also used in combination with other trusses such as K-trusses on larger spans. Automobile travel had arrived in Oklahoma in the 1920s and by 1926 there were 500,000 cars registered in the state. In 1924 Governor Martin Trapp established a state highway system to comply with a demand from the federal government for accountability for the funding it provided for roads; the newly created department was responsible for road construction and maintenance. The legislation also allowed for a gasoline tax and created the state highway commission. Roads in Oklahoma continued to expand, with asphalt, brick, and concrete roads replacing dirt roads. Even in the early 1930s, ferries and fords were still used, but had increasingly been replaced by bridges, and their types became more standardized as a result of more centralized control.¹²

During the Depression, construction of bridges and roads slowed, with the exception of those funded by federal programs like the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps. WPA grants amounted to over \$4 million in 1937 alone. Funds were typically allocated to smaller projects and repairs, and it also provided for dismantling and moving trusses to new locations; however, some of the largest bridges in the state were built during the Depression. In all, 24 bridges that each spanned over 700 feet were built during that period.¹³

Bridge and road construction again slowed as the United States entered World War II; 24 road projects were stalled, and maintenance was deferred even as roads saw increased heavy use. The budget for the highway department was cut to below 1922 levels, and older metal bridges were demolished for scrap for the war effort. Road and bridge work was restricted to military and oil field purposes, which did lead to the construction of 65 bridges during the war years. Interstate highways and state sponsored turnpikes were constructed in the state after the war to meet increased demand and repair infrastructure damaged by wartime use and even in 1955 twenty percent of Oklahoma roads were unpaved. Standardized highway and bridge designs became the norm in the 1950s; concrete was increasingly used for both, and the use of metal truss bridges declined. Oklahoma's economy was jolted by the booming oil industry, and so was its transportation infrastructure by the time that the 1956 Interstate Highway program was created. By 2000, Oklahoma had 10 turnpikes and two Interstate highways carrying goods and travelers across the state.^{14,15}