

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: North Washington Street Bridge

Other names/site number: AR0364

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic Bridges of Arkansas

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: North Washington Street over Holt Branch

City or town: DeWitt State: AR County: Arkansas

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

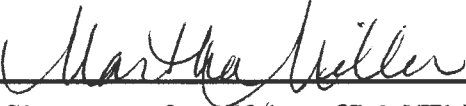
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B X C D

 Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	<u>12/5/13</u> Date
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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official: Title :	Date State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
<u>1</u>	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)/bridge

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)/bridge

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/No style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The North Washington Street Bridge is a concrete deck girder bridge that spans Holt Branch on the north side of DeWitt, Arkansas County, Arkansas. The bridge was built by Graham & Boles in 1910. The bridge has two spans and also rests on cast-concrete abutments. It has guardrails with decorative concrete posts and metal pipe railings. The bridge is simply ornamented with recessed rectangular panels on the sides of the deck.

Narrative Description

The North Washington Street Bridge is an approximately 40-foot long concrete deck girder bridge that spans Holt Branch on the north side of DeWitt, Arkansas County, Arkansas. The bridge's deck is approximately fifteen feet wide.

The bridge was built by Graham & Boles in 1910. The North Washington Street Bridge is a two-span bridge that is approximately 40 feet long and 15 feet wide. The bridge's spans are all concrete deck girder spans. The bridge's deck is also constructed out of concrete and has a continuous concrete curb on each side. The bridge is simply ornamented with recessed

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rectangular panels along the edge of the deck. The bridge also has concrete abutments and wingwalls.

The guardrails of the bridge are comprised of concrete pillars, three on each side of the bridge, with recessed rectangular panels and slightly projecting concrete caps. Metal pipe railings comprised of two horizontal pipes and two vertical pipes in each panel span the spaces between the concrete pillars. A metal plaque is located on each end pillar and they read: "BUILT IN 1910 / L.C. SMITH COUNTY JUDGE / GRAHAM & BOALS / CONTRACTOR."

Integrity

The bridge retains excellent integrity. The bridge is unaltered from the time of its construction in 1910, with the exception of some repair to the pipe railings on the bridge's guardrails. The bridge still exhibits its original construction and still possesses many of its decorative characteristics.

The setting around the bridge also reflects its period of significance. The area immediately around the bridge remains a relatively rural area, and DeWitt remains a small town as it was at the time that the bridge was built in 1910. The bridge is still open to vehicular traffic.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Engineering

Period of Significance

1910

Significant Dates

1910

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Graham & Boals, Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The North Washington Street Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance** as a good example of early twentieth-century bridge-building technology. The North Washington Street Bridge, which is the oldest known concrete bridge in Arkansas, illustrates early concrete bridge design in Arkansas, and the decorative detailing gives the bridge a level of architectural style that was not normally found in bridges of the period, especially in the state's smaller towns.

The North Washington Street Bridge nomination is being submitted under the multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas" and under associated historic context "Early Transportation Era."

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

Systematic European settlement of Arkansas County did not occur until the early nineteenth century. Henri de Tonti established the first trading post in Arkansas at Arkansas Post in 1686, and French settlers soon moved into towns in the area, including DeWitt.¹ In the latter half of the nineteenth century, thanks to the construction of a rail line connecting it to Stuttgart and beyond, DeWitt began to grow rapidly. From 1850 to 1889, DeWitt and its surrounding area went from a population of 3,245 to 11,640.² With population growth inevitably came the development of more sophisticated transportation networks, especially in the early 1900s when the automobile's popularity was increasing.

Most Arkansas roads prior to statehood were usually old trails established by animals and then used by Native Americans or hunters. These routes simply followed "the path of least resistance" and avoided harsh terrain. More permanent settlements in Arkansas led to more carts and wagons traveling throughout the state. To accommodate this change in transportation, roads needed to be made wider than the old trails. The federal government and military supported the creation of wider roads, though for their own reasons. These institutions sought better quality roads to link the eastern centers of commerce and government to the western trading and military posts. Most states, including Arkansas, could not provide the labor necessary to construct such roads. Thus, the government used the military to build many "military" roads across the country.³

¹ Goodspeed, 634-5.

² Goodspeed, 636; Steven and Ray Henley, *Arkansas County* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 66..

³ *Arkansas State Highway Commission and Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Office: 1913-1992*, 6.

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The first road built by Arkansans themselves, John Pyeatt's Road, connected to Arkansas County. Around 1807, John Pyeatt and his neighbors constructed this road from Cadron to Arkansas Post, passing through Crystal Hill. The road was completed by 1836 — that is, trees had been cleared and ditches had been dug. Only horses and light wagons could use the road in good weather.⁴

Thanks to pressure from bicyclists and the few automobile owners in the state, the National League for Good Roads was founded in 1892. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also established the Office of Public Road Inquiry. The *Arkansas Gazette* was a strong supporter of the good roads movement and, in 1896, Governor James P. Clarke responded by holding a Good Roads Convention in Little Rock. At the convention, a ten-man committee was appointed to “act on all matters relating to the good roads movement.”⁵ DeWitt joined the reform movement and created the “Five Thousand Booster Club,” which was designed to “upbuild” the city and advertise its resources abroad.⁶

Although support existed for building roads in Arkansas County, the county's geography made it difficult. The *Third Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*, with respect to Arkansas County, said that, although a road district was in the process of organizing, that:

There is no good road material in Arkansas County. The surface is level. The soil is not adapted to road building and the maintenance of earth roads is difficult. The main roads have been well graded and are in fairly good condition in favorable weather.

The only solution for the road problem in this county is the construction of hard surface roads with imported material, and efforts are being made in this direction.⁷

The situation was the same in DeWitt. The 1913 and 1919 Sanborn maps for DeWitt indicated that the city's streets were not paved, and by 1933 there was “about three miles of asphalt and gravelled streets.”⁸

However, it was not just geography that created problems with road construction in Arkansas County. Problems also arose when it came to the actual funding of road and bridge construction, however. City dwellers wanted those in the rural parts of the state to pay for the roads because they thought the farmers would benefit the most, but 95% of Arkansas's population was rural at the time and such ideas were quickly rejected.⁹

⁴ Highway Commission, 7

⁵ Highway, 10-11

⁶ *A Historical Review of Arkansas County*, 34

⁷ *Third Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*. Publisher unknown, c.1918, p. 19.

⁸ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for DeWitt, Arkansas: 1913, 1919, and 1933.

⁹ Highway, 11.

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In 1899, Act 200 was passed to clarify who was in charge of funding and building roads and bridges. The Act stated that once a county had approved a public road tax, the county court hired one county resident as the road commissioner. The road commissioner would then divide the county into different road districts. All bridges and roads of the first class — that is, public roads running centrally through the county and used most — were constructed first and were built and maintained by the county itself. Second class roads and bridges — all other public roads — were the responsibility of their respective district's road overseer. Both kinds of roads were constructed by prisoners.¹⁰ Due to its location, the North Washington Street Bridge would have most likely fallen into the second class category.

In the early twentieth century, the State Highway Department had started to develop standard bridge plans to be followed across the state. These plans incorporated a need for stronger bridges to carry heavy loads. The *Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements* stated:

In order to have bridges and structures designed and built to meet present and future traffic and to comply with the Federal aid requirements, it has been necessary during the past two years to revise some of the old standard plans and to make many new plans.

Loads have increased to such an extent that the bridges and culverts upon all main roads must be designed to carry safely a load not less than that of a 10-ton truck, and in many cases a 15-ton truck, together with the impact caused by these heavy loads moving rapidly over the structures.¹¹

Most of these new plans, however, called for metal truss bridges. No concrete standard plans were in development during the 1910s, when the North Washington Street Bridge was being built.¹²

The North Washington Street Bridge was built by the company of Graham & Boals. Research on the company has revealed very little about Graham & Boals other than they apparently constructed more than just bridges. A notice in the April 28, 1910, edition of the *DeWitt New Era* stated that “Mr. T.J. Davis and Mrs. Pattie Hereford have closed a contract with Graham & Boales (sic.) for the erection of a brick building 50x80 feet, one story high, adjoining Mr. Davis’ building on the corner of court square and South Main Street. The second story of a building like that would make a fine opera house.”¹³

The City of DeWitt undertook the construction of several bridges around 1910, including the Maxwell Street Bridge (NR-listed April 8, 2011) and the North Jackson Street Bridge (NR-listed April 8, 2011) along with the North Washington Street Bridge. However, the North Washington

¹⁰ Highway, 11-13

¹¹ *Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements* (publisher unknown, c.1920), 131.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ “New Building,” *DeWitt New Era*, 28 April 1910, p. 3.

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Street Bridge, unlike the others, was much more elaborate in design. With its decorative guardrails and concrete pillars, and recessed panels on the sides of the deck, the North Washington Street Bridge exhibited a level of detail that was unusual for small-town bridges of the period in Arkansas.

The North Washington Street Bridge is a good reflection of 1910s concrete bridge building technology in Arkansas. Interestingly, unlike several other bridges around the state, the bridge's guardrails did not employ diagonal panels at each end to help prevent cars and trucks from running into the creek. However, the guardrails were quite decorative for a small-town bridge compared to others from the period, employing decorative concrete pillars and the pipe railings. Like other concrete bridges of the time, however, the guardrails did employ the relatively delicate proportions that were common.

Given the early date of construction for the North Washington Street Bridge, the bridge illustrates some relative unfamiliarity with the use of concrete for bridge construction. The deck, for example appears to be massively thick showing that Graham & Boles may have been still under the belief that more material meant more strength. In addition, the piers are solid concrete also illustrating this belief. This belief would continue to be illustrated in the bridges built in Arkansas up until the mid to late 1920s.

Today, the North Washington Street Bridge remains an important crossing on North Washington Street on the north side of DeWitt.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

When the North Washington Street Bridge was constructed, the use of concrete for highway bridges was still a relatively new practice. The novelty of this method of construction is illustrated in the design of the bridge. The decorative detailing and the delicate proportions of the bridge illustrate the small amount of traffic that the bridge needed to handle. However, the thickness of the deck and the use of two spans to cross the relatively short distance of Holt Branch illustrate the limited knowledge of concrete bridge construction that was available at the time.

As a good and unusually elaborate example of early twentieth-century bridge-building technology, the North Washington Street Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance**. The North Washington Street Bridge nomination is being submitted under the multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas" and under associated historic context "Early Transportation Era."

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. *Arkansas State Highway Commission and Arkansas State Transportation Office: 1913-1992*. Little Rock: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1992.

Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways, and Improvements. Publisher unknown, c.1920.

Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Eastern Arkansas. St. Louis: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1890.

Henderson, J.Y. *A Historical Review of Arkansas County*. Publisher unknown, 1968.

"New Building," *DeWitt New Era*, 28 April 1910, p. 3.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for DeWitt, Arkansas: 1913, 1919, and 1933.

Third Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements. Publisher unknown, c.1918.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department

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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): AR0364

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.300656 | Longitude: -91.333324 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 653377 | Northing: 3796751 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beginning at a point in the center of North Washington Street 20 feet north of the north end of the North Washington Street Bridge, the boundary includes the area within 20 feet of each side of the centerline of North Washington Street to an ending point 20 feet south of the south end of the North Washington Street Bridge.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes the North Washington Street Bridge and its immediate setting.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail ralph@arkansasheritage.org
telephone: (501) 324-9787
date: September 3, 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: North Washington Street Bridge

City or Vicinity: DeWitt

County: Arkansas

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Ralph S. Wilcox

Date Photographed: July 25, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 7. View of the bridge, looking south.
- 2 of 7. View of the bridge, looking southeast.
- 3 of 7. Detail of the builder's plaque, looking west.
- 4 of 7. Detail of the central guardrail pillar, looking west.
- 5 of 7. View of the bridge, looking northeast.
- 6 of 7. Detail of the bridge's deck, looking southeast.
- 7 of 7. Detail of the guardrail's pipe railing, looking northwest.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



North Washington Street Bridge
Arkansas County, Arkansas

Latitude: 34.300656 Longitude: -91.333324

|-----758'-----|



North





BUILT IN 1910
L.C. SMITH COUNTY JUDGE
BRAHAM & BOALS
CONTRACTORS.







