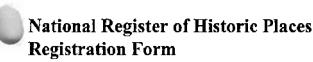
United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property
historic name Old Highway 16 Bridge
other names/site number AHTD Bridge # 01308; CE0025
2. Location
street & number Lakefront Resort Rd. (Old Highway 16) not for publication
city or town Edgemont 🛛 vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Cleburne code 023 zip code 72044
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this in 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title Date Arkansas Historic Preservation Program State or Federal agency and bureau
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau
4. National Park Service Certification
I hereby certify that the property is: entered in the National Register See continuation sheet determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National
Register.
other, (explain:)

Old Highway 16 bridge		Cleburne County, Arkansas		
Name of Property		County and State		
5. Classification				
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in count.)		
☐ private ☐ public-local ☐ public-State ☑ public-Federal	□ building(s) □ district □ site □ structure	Contributing Noncontributing	buildings	
EN PROTO TOUCH	object	1	structures objects	
		1	Total	
Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A		Number of Contributing resources previously in the National Register	listed	
6. Function or Use	<u></u>			
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		
TRANSPORTATION/road-	related (vehicular)	TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)		
		2		

	×			
7. Description				
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categories from instructions)		
OTHER/Closed Spandrel De	eck Arch	foundation CONCRETE		
		walls CONCRETE		
		roof N/A		
		other N/A		

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Old Highway 16 Bridge Name of Property	Cleburne County, Arkansas County and State		
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.)	Levels of Significance (local, state, national) Local		
A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) Engineering Transportation		
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.	Period of Significance 1936-1960		
□ 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.)	Significant Dates 1936		
Property is: A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.			
☐ B removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)		
 □ C birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance. □ D a cemetery. 	Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)		
☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.			
 ☐ F a commemorative property ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years. 	Architect/Builder O. B. Robbins, Builder N. B. Garver, Bridge Engineer		
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)			
9. Major Bibliographical References			
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one	or more continuation sheets.)		
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	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		

Old Highway 16 Bridge		County, Arkansas	
Name of Property	County and State		
10. Geographical Data			
Acreage of Property Less than one			
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)			
1 _15 _ 573539 _ 3940146	3		
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2	4 —		
	∐ Se	ee continuation sheet	
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)			
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)			
11. Form Prepared By			
name/title Charles Stuart; edited by Clint Pumphrey			
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program	date	March 5, 2010	
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center St.	telephone	501-324-9789	
city or town Little Rock	state AR	zip code 72201	
Additional Documentation			
Submit the following items with the completed form:			
Continuation Sheets			
Maps			
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's le	ocation		
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large act	reage or numerous r	esources.	
Photographs			
Representative black and white photographs of the property.			
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)			
Property Owner			
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)			
name			
street & number			
succi & humoci		telephone	
city or town	state	telephone zip code	

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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, athering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington. DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SUMMARY

The Old Highway 16 Bridge is located on Old Highway 16 Road, also known as Lakefront Resort Road, about 0.1 miles east of the intersection with the current Highway 16. The bridge was originally an overpass that carried traffic across the "Edgemont Cut," a major excavation done during the construction of the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad in 1908. Before crews employed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) constructed the bridge in 1936, the highway crossed the tracks at grade level one mile further downhill. The railroad ceased operation and the tracks were removed in 1949, but the rail company did not fill in the excavation and the bridge remained in service. When the Corps of Engineers completed Greers Ferry Lake in 1963 they rerouted the highway 100 yards to the north where they filled in the "Edgemont Cut" rather than building a replacement bridge. The Old Highway 16 Bridge is now unused except by local traffic.

ELABORATION

The bridge is accessed from the west and ends in a parking lot for the Lakefront Resort or in Greers Ferry Lake, depending on the lake level. A normal lake level of 461 feet above sea level (ASL) allows access to the parking lot. At lake levels above about 475 feet ASL, the road is flooded to the east end of the bridge. The road that crosses the bridge was gravel until crews surfaced it with asphalt in 1954. Sloping from west to east, the road is 481 feet ASL at the west end and 475 feet ASL at the east end. The Old Highway 16 Bridge is a closed spandrel deck arch bridge made of reinforced concrete and is 78.5 feet long and 24 feet wide. This type of bridge, which has existed since at least the early 1900s, is characterized by solid spandrel walls through which the bridge's load is dispersed. The guard rails are comprised of evenly spaced concrete posts and a single row of horizontal concrete beams stretching the length of the bridge. About 3 feet thick at the top of the arch, the bridge originally stood 22 feet above the railroad tracks. Water from Greers Ferry Lake now floods the old railroad bed below.

Integrity

The Old Highway 16 Bridge maintains a great deal of historic integrity. Its location remains rural, and the bridge itself remains intact, although it now has a lakefront location within the flood zone of Greers Ferry Lake. While it no longer carries highway traffic, the bridge still exemplifies the original closed spandrel deck arch design and retains its original reinforced concrete materials. The only addition to the bridge was a layer of asphalt from the paving of Highway 16 in 1954. The guardrail at the west entrance once featured a bronze plaque with information about the bridge, but chisel marks around its original location suggest vandals removed it. The Fall 1988 issue of "Oak Leaves", a publication of the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad

Old Highway 16 Bridge	Cleburne County, Arkansas
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Museum, featured a photograph of the plaque, which reads:

M. & A. RY
O. B. Robbins
Contractor
1936
Bridge No. [illegible]

Lake water has been known to reach the bridge deck, though this has happened only a very few times for short periods in the fifty year history of the lake. Considering its abandonment and its close proximity to the lake, the Old Highway 16 Bridge is in remarkably good condition.

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SUMMARY

Constructed in 1936 by contractor O. B. Robbins under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Old Highway 16 Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion C as the only remaining example of a WPA-built concrete deck arch bridge in Arkansas. The bridge is also being nominated with local significance under Criterion A for its association with the development of transportation in Cleburne County. The bridge was designed by the Arkansas Highway Commission with Mr. N. B. Garver as the Bridge Engineer, assisted by Mr. Louie Thompson of Heber Springs.

ELABORATION

Development of Transportation in Cleburne County

The area that is now Cleburne County was acquired by the United States from France as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Although land speculators bought and sold numerous parcels in the county during the 1820s, actual settlement did not begin until the 1830s. This is when the United States government began to deed land directly to settlers, at first offering 80-acre parcels, then, by 1932, 40-acre parcels at \$1.25 an acre. The 1840 census shows 60 families that had come to take advantage of this inexpensive land in what is now Cleburne County. Many of these early settlers managed to eke out an isolated living by clearing trees and farming the rocky soils of the uplands or the fertile bottomlands by the Little Red River.¹

One of the greatest difficulties of early settlement was travel. Early residents had to use faint Indian and wildlife trails to find new homesteads and to travel to nearby communities for supplies. The army improved some of these trails in the 1830s, but these "military roads" were still very crude, with rocks, stumps, and a lack of bridges impeding travel. The area that became Cleburne County was served by three military roads between 1840 and 1880. The Batesville-Clinton military road crossed the northern part of the county area, east to west, near the route of present-day State Highway 92. This road provided a link for the early settlers to the adjacent county seats at Batesville in Independence County and Clinton in Van Buren County. Beyond these locations, the road connected places as distant as Kentucky, southern Illinois, and southeast Missouri to the Arkansas River Valley and the Indian Territory, now known as Oklahoma. This road had added importance because Batesville was served by steamboat service on the White River for a time, and was on the Southwest Trail, a major route between Missouri to Little Rock. The other two roads were the Richwoods-Searcy Road, which crossed the eastern part of the Cleburne County area in a north-south direction, and the Little Rock road, which began near present-day Edgemont and went south to Little Rock. With improved roads came better access to outside markets, increased settlement, and mail routes; in 1860 all three post offices in what is now Cleburne County were located on these military roads.

Evalena Berry, Time and the River: A History of Cleburne County (Little Rock, Ark.: Rose Publishing Company, 1982), 25-27.

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Incorporated in 1882, the town of Sugar Loaf became the county seat when the state legislature organized Cleburne County in 1883. The new town, which citizens renamed Heber Springs in 1910, was part of Max Frauenthal and the Sugar Loaf Springs Land Company's plan to develop the mineral springs in the area. The location of the new county seat and the development of its mineral springs created a demand for better transportation corridors, and crews quickly constructed or improved roads to Sugar Loaf. The success of the health resorts in the town depended heavily on the construction of a railroad line to serve tourists. A strong campaign to get a railroad routed through Sugar Loaf came to fruition in 1908, when Missouri and North Arkansas (M&NA) Railroad crews completed a line from Searcy through Sugar Loaf and Edgemont. Though it played a significant economic role in Cleburne and other northern counties, the M&NA was never very successful as a railroad. Strikes, questionable management, lack of traffic, poor maintenance, and forbidding terrain plagued the line, which the company closed in 1946.²

One of the most formidable tasks in the construction of the M&NA was to cut through a steep ridge separating the town of Edgemont with the Middle Fork of the Little Red River. When the railroad first opened it used temporary tracks to bypass this project. Soon, the railroad brought in a large number of laborers from eastern Europe to complete what railroad historians would call the "Edgemont Cut." Local residents called these workers "Bulgarians," although it is uncertain from which country they actually emigrated. The local attitude towards these immigrants is evidenced in a certified bill presented to the Cleburne County Court in April 1908, reading, "in the matter of an inquest held over the dead body of Bulgarian # 4. Expenses were \$8 for W. C. Watkins, JP; 12 jurors at \$0.50 each; and three witnesses at \$0.50 each". Once crews completed the project, the deep cut proved to be an obstacle for existing travel routes. Major roads like the Batesville-Clinton road had to be rerouted so it could cross the new railroad at grade level.

Meanwhile, the automobile was increasing in popularity, requiring the construction of a number of new bridges and highways. A major obstacle to land transportation in the county was the Little Red River, which bisects the county from northwest to southeast. A number of small ferries operated on the river including Greers Ferry, run by Bud Greer and his family and located just north of Sugar Loaf. These operations were economically marginal because the river could be crossed at low water crossings for much of the year without paying a ferry toll. When M&NA completed the railroad in 1912, the economy of the county boomed, allowing county government to construct several suspension bridges across the Little Red River. Early roads in Cleburne County were under the jurisdiction of the County Court, which formed road districts and named overseers. Those who worked on the road crews were required to supply their own tools and equipment. Since crews used mainly horse-drawn equipment and simple hand tools, road quality was marginal at best and became virtually impassable in bad weather.⁴

² Evalena, 166-168, 187-190, 201, 248, 260.

³ James R. Fair, The North Arkansas Line: The Story of the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad (Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1969), 81.

⁴ Evalena, 331.

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Early road construction was often primitive and improvised according to an interview with Clyde and Cleston Martin in 2001. Their older brother, Clee Martin, worked on the construction of Highway 25 from the Independence County line to the Tumbling Shoals bridge across Little Red River. The tractor he used to pull the road grader was actually a surplus World War I Army tank. The gun turret had been removed but some of the armor plating was still on the sides. It was too heavy to cross the suspension bridge at Tumbling Shoals so they had to wait until the river was low enough so the heavy repurposed tank could cross. The county wages were important to laborers like Clee, who eventually saved enough money to buy a new 1923 Ford Model T car from O. B. Robbins Ford dealership in Heber Springs.⁵

The state government formed the Arkansas State Highway Department in 1913, but it was not until 1923 that the agency designated a system of state highways and the legislature appropriated sufficient funding to improve them. By 1936 Cleburne County had 84 miles of gravel state highways to service its 1,006 automobiles, as well as those traveling through the area. These included Highway 25, which crossed the county from southwest to northeast and Highway 16, which crossed the county from southeast to northwest, intersecting Highway 25 at Heber Springs. In 1938 crews laid the first pavement in the county: 1.5 miles of bituminous surfacing on the short stretch of highway between Main Street in Quitman and the town section of Heber Springs. Most state highways remained gravel, however, and though many streams were now spanned with culverts and bridges, maintenance was sporadic and travel remained difficult in the county well into the 1940s and 1950s.⁶

The WPA in Cleburne County

While many of Cleburne County's roads remained primitive throughout the 1930s and 1940s, there were some improvements made under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, a New Deal program created by the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935. This legislation established two agencies: the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). President Roosevelt laid out the responsibilities of these agencies in a statement issued on July 3, 1935. The PWA was to focus on large-scale projects like dams and bridges, where the aggregate cost upon completion was more than \$25,000. Smaller projects—those valued at less than \$25,000—would be completed by the WPA. Even though it only completed smaller projects, the WPA paid 8.5 million workers a total off \$11 billion nationwide during its eight-year existence.⁷

Clyde and Cleston Martin. Recorded interview, 2001.

Arkansas State Highway Commission, Twelfth Biennial Report. 1934-36, 44; Arkansas State Highway Commission, Thirteenth Biennial Report, 1936-38, 12-13.

⁷ Franklin Roosevelt, "Statement Fixing Jurisdictions of P.W.A. and W.P.A." 3 July 1935.

http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=14892. Accessed 24 June, 2010; Sam Morgan, "Works Progress Administration (WPA)." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. 24 February 2010.

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Arkansas's WPA program began in July 1935 under state administrator William R. Dyess and provided money for numerous social services and infrastructure improvement projects. Social programs in the state included the School Lunch Program, the Commodity Distribution Program, and the Adult Education Program. While these programs fed, clothed, and educated many Arkansans, the WPA is perhaps better remembered for the roads, bridges, and buildings it constructed. Pulaski County used the \$13.4 million it received from the federal government—more than any other Arkansas county—for projects like the Arkansas School for the Blind, the Pulaski County Hospital, and extensive improvements to Adams Field. The WPA also hired unemployed historians, writers, and other "white-collar" workers in the state to participate in the Federal Writers Project. These professionals completed projects like Arkansas: A Guide to the State (1941), which provided current and historical information about Arkansas. These workers also completed over 750 oral interviews with former slaves living in Arkansas, which became part of the nationwide project, Slave Narratives. All together, the federal government funneled \$117 million into Arkansas through the WPA.

The Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935 designated over six million dollars to the Arkansas State Highway Commission for WPA road projects in Arkansas, including \$3,352,061 for highway construction and \$3,574,060 for railroad grade crossing elimination. Among the WPA highway projects in Cleburne County were Highway 5 from Heber Springs to Rose Bud, Concord to Floral, and Heber Springs to Wilburn; as well as Highway 92 from Drasco to Edgemont. The Old Highway 16 Bridge, which shortened the highway by carrying traffic over the M&NA tracks at Edgemont, was built with grade crossing elimination money and WPA labor. This was the only such structure completed in Arkansas during that year and was the only overpass ever built over the M&NA in its 178 miles in Arkansas. All the other crossings were at grade level.⁹

The Arkansas State Highway Commission designed the Old Highway 16 Bridge at Edgemont and awarded the contract to prominent Heber Springs resident and contractor O. B. Robbins. On December 19, 1935, Robbins received the contract proposal for the bridge, listed as State Job #5195 and Federal Aid Project #WPGS 397-A. The amount of contract award was \$15,570.34 and estimated cost of engineering and contingencies was \$1,858.02 for a total commitment of \$17,428.36. The highway commission gave Robbins 180 days to complete the project, which called for a "reinforced concrete overpass, earth embankment and approach, gravel surfacing." The length of the embankment was 0.417 miles and the bridge length was 78.541 feet. The length of the embankment was 0.417 miles and the bridge length was 18.541 feet.

B Morgan, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=2284.

Arkansas State Highway Commission, Twelfth Biennial Report, 1934-36, 38; Arkansas State Highway Commission, Thirteenth Biennial Report, 1936-38, 21.

¹⁰ Arkansas State Highway Commission, *Twelfth Biennial Report*, 1934-36, 100; Arkansas State Highway Commission, *Plan of proposed bridge over Missouri and Arkansas Railway near Edgemont*, 1936. http://www.arkansashighways.com/historic bridge/old bridge plans.aspx. Accessed 10 June 2010.

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To complete the Old Highway 16 Bridge, Robbins used federally-financed WPA labor. On February 13, 1936, the Heber Springs Times-Headlight reported:

Mr. O. B. Robbins is contractor for construction of the new overpass to be built at Edgemont with Mr. Alvin Rogers as his superintendent. H. H. Southward is Timekeeper and Mr. Roy Griffin and Mr. Emmett Baldridge are also employed in an official capacity. Mr. Gould is the State Engineer. assisted by Mr. Louie Thompson, of Heber Springs. Considerable trouble has been experienced in trying to get started on this project, due to the local W. P. A. trying to get all relief labor properly listed. Some trouble has also arisen over the right-of-way at Edgemont, which has caused suspension of work until that can be straightened out. 11

After working out these logistical problems, Robbins, crew began construction and was easily able to finish the Old Highway 16 Bridge by the 180-day deadline. The Times-Headlight announced on July 16, 1936, that "[t]he new bridge and road are completed and are now open to the public". 12

Well-constructed and modern in its design, the Old Highway 16 Bridge was one of the best bridges in the Cleburne County for many years. When it was built there were no other bridges of that size and quality on the county road system. There were five suspension bridges across the Little Red River, all of which were built in the 1910s. These wooden, single lane bridges were poorly maintained and regularly traveled by vehicles far exceeding the posted weight limits. Most of these suspension bridges only served until the construction of Greers Ferry Dam in 1959-63, which necessitated rerouting of roads around the lake. While these bridges were replaced long ago, the Old Highway 16 Bridge remains in good condition, carrying traffic more than 70 years after its construction.

SUMMARY

Constructed in 1936 by contractor O. B. Robbins under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Old Highway 16 Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion C as the only remaining example of a WPA built concrete deck arch bridge in Arkansas. The bridge is also being nominated with local significance under Criterion A for its association with the development of transportation in Cleburne County. The bridge was designed by the Arkansas Highway Commission with Mr. N. B. Garver as the Bridge Engineer, assisted by Mr. Louie Thompson of Heber Springs.

¹¹ Heber Springs Times-Headlight, 13 February 1936.

¹² Heber Springs Times-Headlight, 16 July 1936.

Old Highway 16	i Bridge
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Morgan, Sam. "Works Progress Administration (WPA)." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. 24 February 2010. http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=2284. Accessed 24 June 2010.

Heber Springs Times-Headlight, February-July 1936.

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Continuation Sheet

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point in the center of Lakefront Resort Road, 20 feet north of the north end of the Old Highway 16 Bridge, the boundary includes the area within 20 feet of each side of the centerline of Lakefront Resort Road to an ending point 20 feet south of the south end of the Old Highway 16 Bridge.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary includes the Old Highway 16 Bridge and its immediate setting.

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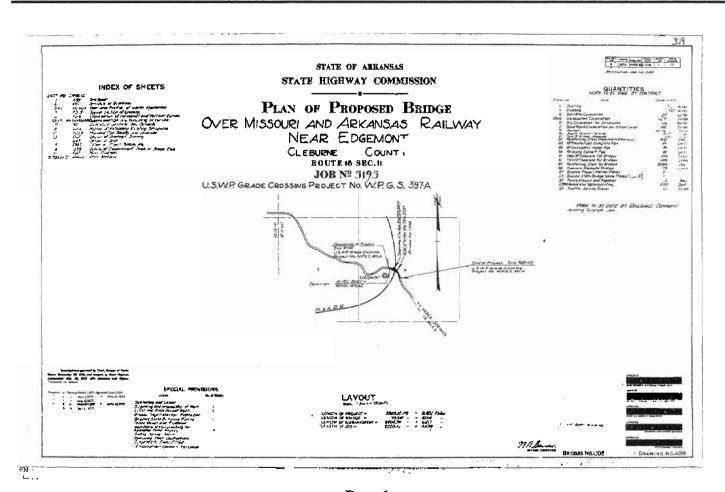
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Arkansas State Highway Commission Plan of proposed bridge over Missouri and Arkansas Railway near Edgemont Cleburne County, Route 16 Sec. 11

Job No. 5195, U.S.W.P. Grade Crossing Project No. W.P.G.S. 397-A

http://www.arkansashighways.com/historic bridge/old bridge plans.aspx

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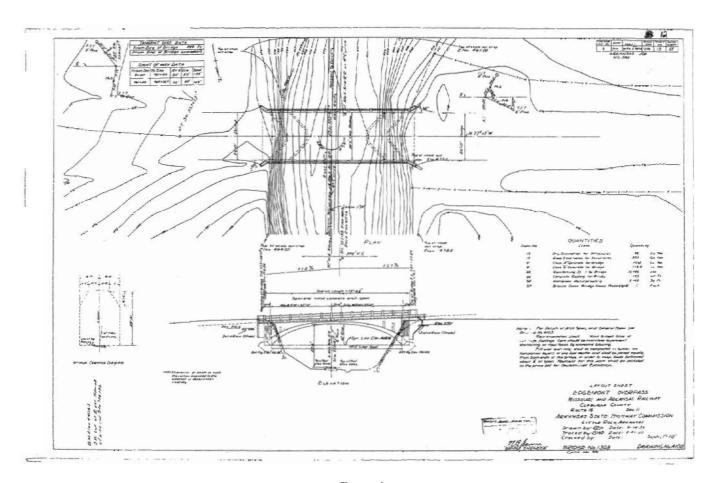
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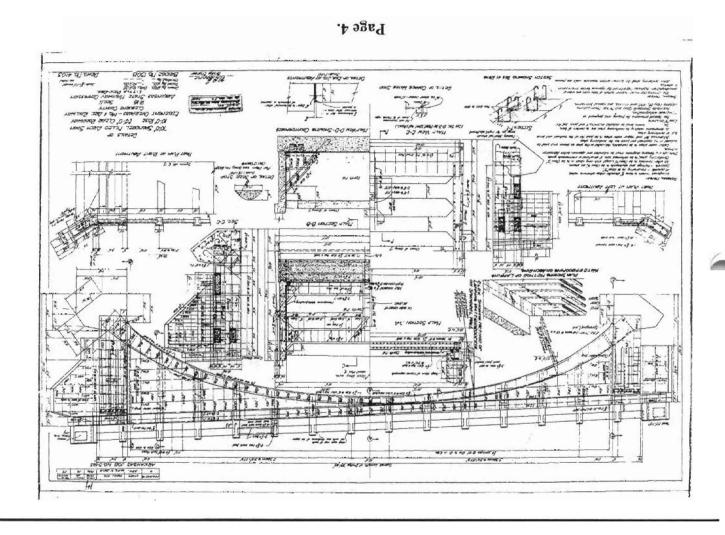
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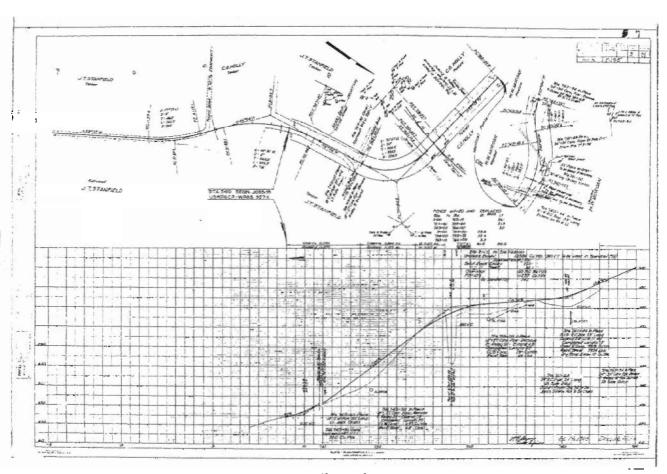
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Old	Highway	16	Bridge
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Cleburne County, Arkansas

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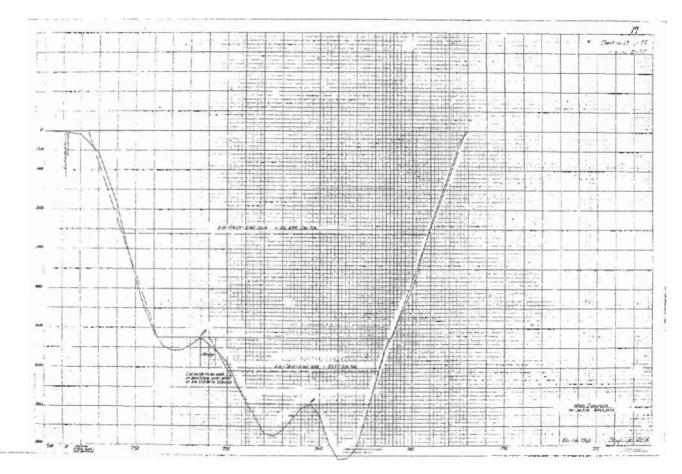
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