

**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 *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 DeGray Creek Bridge
other names/site number AHTD Structure 11085, Site #CL0960

2. Location

street & number County Road 50 over DeGray Creek not for publication
city or town Arkadelphia vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Clark code 019 zip code 71923

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

DeGray Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Clark County, Arkansas
County and State

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

Historic Bridges of Arkansas

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

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Pratt Pony Truss

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls N/A

roof N/A
other STEEL

Narrative Description

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

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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- D** a cemetery.
- 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.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

ENGINEERING

Period of Significance

1915-1960

Significant Dates

1915

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

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 Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department

DeGray Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Clark County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>485203</u>	<u>3779254</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See 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 Brian Poepsel, National Register Intern, Edited by Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date Jul 2009
street & number 323 Center Street, 1500 Tower Building telephone (501) 324-9787
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 location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

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 Arkansas Highway Department
street & number P.O. Box 2261 telephone 501-569-2000
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72203

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, gathering 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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property **DeGray Creek Bridge**

County and State **Clark County, AR**

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)
Historic Bridges of Arkansas

Section number **7** Page **1**

Summary

The DeGray Creek Bridge is a Pratt pony truss bridge carrying traffic along County Road 50/Blish Road near Arkadelphia, Arkansas. It consists of one, single-lane, 61-foot span over DeGray Creek. Concrete abutments support the bridge on either bank of the creek.

Elaboration

The primary structure of the DeGray Creek Bridge consists of two trusses 12' apart and 7' high. Each are identical, pin-connected Pratt Pony trusses, which support a steel deck substructure attached to the bottom chords of the trusses. One way automobile traffic is carried on a wooden plank deck. The bridge's single lane is accessed from both the north and south.

The Pratt truss was developed by engineer Thomas Willis Pratt, who is credited with numerous inventions including a steam boiler and a method of ship hull construction. The pin connected Pratt Truss, patented in 1844, was among the first engineered trusses to manage the tensile and compressive forces within a truss scientifically, aiding to the efficiency and economy of construction. Pratt trusses became standard for railroad and highway spans throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While riveted bridges were becoming more popular for their strength, Pratt pin trusses remained easy and inexpensive to assemble, maintaining their prevalence despite diminished load capacity.

Integrity

The bridge was moved around 1970 following the construction of the DeGray Dam, which created DeGray Lake, flooding the bridge's original location over DeGray Creek closer to the Caddo River. The bridge is still serviceable today, supporting local traffic in this largely rural area. Its original and present locations are both county roads, with similar rural settings. The DeGray Creek Bridge is the only known surviving pin-connected Pratt pony truss bridge in Arkansas.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property DeGray Creek Bridge

County and State Clark County, AR

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)
Historic Bridges of Arkansas

Section number **8** Page **1**

SUMMARY

The DeGray Creek Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with local significance for its association with the development of automobile infrastructure in the 1910s. The bridge is likely one of several prefabricated bridges purchased by the county to improve vehicular access throughout the county. The bridge is still in use today, serving rural traffic along County Road 50 near Arkadelphia.

The DeGray Creek Bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion C** with local significance as a good example of Pratt pony truss bridge, a fast and simple construction method for bridges of this nature. These bridges were built from standard plans or kits for rapid development. Its size and simple construction made it easy to place on the site and to move as necessary. It is also significant as the last remaining single-span Pratt pony truss remaining in Arkansas.

The bridge is being submitted with **Criteria Consideration B**, as it was moved from its original location around the time of the construction of DeGray Dam, which created a lake that now covers the roadway the bridge once served.

This bridge is also being submitted under the multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas" and under the associated historic context "Early Transportation Era."

ELABORATION

Early prehistoric hunters and gatherers were likely the first men and women to pass through the territory that constitutes modern-day Clark County. Before European settlement, the Caddo and Quapaw tribes flourished in this region. As French, Spanish, and English explorers began exploring the land west of the Mississippi River, these peoples resettled away from their white neighbors and were eventually forced to Oklahoma.¹ The earliest European explorers quickly developed treaties to take over native Quapaw lands to establish timber and agricultural efforts in the rich Missouri River delta lands.² Merriwether Lewis and William Clark were among the earliest explorers to

¹ *Clark County, Arkansas, Past and Present*. Arkadelphia: Clark County Historical Society, 1992. p. 9.

² *Ibid*, p. 9.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property DeGray Creek Bridge

County and State Clark County, AR

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Historic Bridges of Arkansas

Section number **8** Page **2**

survey the vast territory that made up Clark County- named after the explorer and governor of the Missouri Territory. Formed in 1818, Clark County was a part of the Missouri Territory, including lands that now make up fifteen counties in Arkansas and six in Oklahoma.³

Arkadelphia, the county seat and major local port town, developed several industries early and played a large role in supplying the Confederate army during the Civil War. While no major battles are directly associated with the area, Arkadelphia was a major supply depot for Confederate troops, shipping salt, clothing, and munitions to the Southern Army.⁴

River steamboats, coming from as far away as New Orleans, were the major method for shipping goods through Arkadelphia until after the Civil War. The first train arrived in 1873, bringing new industry and new people to the town. Previous land travel through Arkansas had included the Southwest Trail, an early military road that passed through Arkansas into Texas.⁵

By the beginning of the twentieth century, as automobiles became more prevalent in rural Arkansas, it was necessary to provide the necessary infrastructure for them. Roads had to be improved as did creek and river crossings. Fords that may have been sufficient in the nineteenth century were not conducive to automobile travel. As a result, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, bridges like the DeGray Creek Bridge, were an important component of improved roads for automobiles.

While the DeGray Creek Bridge's location is still remote, it provides a necessary vehicular link in the area. The four-panel pin-connected truss is the last surviving of several similar bridges purchased by Clark County for roads during the feverous construction efforts of the 1910s associated with early automotive expansion.⁶ While the bridge's pin-connected structure has a lower load capacity than a riveted truss, this assembly method remained popular for its simplicity and economy. The Bridge's construction method dates the structure to the early 20th century. Clark County erected

³ Ibid, p. 1.

⁴ Ibid, p. 13.

⁵ Ibid, pp. 39-43.

⁶ Clark County Court Records, Book M: 183.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property DeGray Creek Bridge

County and State Clark County, AR

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Historic Bridges of Arkansas

Section number **8**

Page **3**

numerous steel bridges between 1907 and 1920, contracting bridge companies to erect the structures. Three bridges that fit the description of the DeGray Creek Bridge, although their location is not indicated, were purchased from the Hope Bridge Company and the Stupp Brothers Bridge & Iron Works in November 1915, at a cost between \$940 and \$1200.⁷ The length and structure type of these bridges fit the DeGray Creek Bridge.

As one of the largest engineering projects in the state of Arkansas, the DeGray Dam and the reservoir lake it forms are the most notable attractions in Clark County. Approved by the corps of engineers for flood control in 1950, the dam was constructed between 1962 and 1970, forming a recreational lake and hydroelectric power plant.⁸ The dam and lake are both named for DeGray Creek, a small creek which winds through the county emptying into the Caddo River just below the dam.⁹

The creation of this lake necessitated moving the DeGray Creek Bridge to form a new road crossing, as the original bridge location, along a county road crossing the creek closer to the Caddo River, is now under water.¹⁰

Although Pratt pony truss bridges were once common on America's roads, upgrading highways to meet modern traffic demands has meant that many of them have been demolished. The same trend has occurred in Arkansas. As a result, bridges of this type are much rarer, and the DeGray Creek Bridge is significant as a rare surviving example of this truss type. It is also significant for its illustration of the upgrading of roads to handle automobile traffic in the early 1900s.

⁷ Clark County Court Records, Book M: 183.

⁸ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DeGray Lake, Arkansas, Caddo River: Construction History, Dam and Dike (Vicksburg, Mississippi: USACE Vicksburg District, 1972.)

⁹ *Clark County, Arkansas, Past and Present*, p. 121.

¹⁰ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, "DeGray Lake," brochure (Vicksburg, Mississippi: USACE Vicksburg District, 2000).

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property **DeGray Creek Bridge**

County and State **Clark County, AR**

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Historic Bridges of Arkansas

Section number **8**

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The DeGray Creek Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** for its association with the development of automobile infrastructure in the 1910s. The bridge is likely one of several prefabricated bridges purchased by the county to improve vehicular access throughout the county.

The bridge is still in use today, serving rural traffic along County Road 50 near Arkadelphia. The DeGray Creek Bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion C** with local significance as a good example of Pratt pony truss bridge, a fast and simple construction method for bridges of this nature. These bridges were built from standard plans or kits for rapid development. Its size and simple construction made it easy to place on the site and to move as necessary. It is also significant as the last remaining single-span Pratt pony Truss remaining in Arkansas.

The bridge is being submitted with **Criteria Consideration B**, as it was moved from its original location around the time of the construction of DeGray Dam, which created a lake that now covers the roadway the bridge once served.

This bridge is also being submitted under the multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas" and under the associated historic context "Early Transportation Era."

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property **DeGray Creek Bridge**

County and State **Clark County, AR**

Name of multiple property listing (if
applicable)

Historic Bridges of Arkansas

Section number **9**

Page **1**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clark County, Arkansas, Past and Present. Arkadelphia: Clark County Historical Society, 1992.

Clark County Court Records, Book M: 183.

Historic American Engineering Record, DeGray Creek Bridge, HAER No. AR-81. Lola Bennet, HAER Historian, 2007.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DeGray Lake, Arkansas, Caddo River: Construction History, Dam and Dike (Vicksburg, Mississippi: USACE Vicksburg District, 1972.)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, "DeGray Lake," brochure (Vicksburg, Mississippi: USACE Vicksburg District, 2000).

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property **DeGray Creek Bridge**

County and State **Clark County, AR**

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Historic Bridges of Arkansas

Section number **10** Page **1**

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point in the center of County Road 50 20 feet north of the north end of the DeGray Creek Bridge, the boundary includes the area within 20 feet of each side of the centerline of County Road 50 to an ending point 20 feet south of the south end of the DeGray Creek Bridge.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary includes the DeGray Creek Bridge and its immediate setting.