

**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 Lee Creek Bridge
other names/site number Bridge #19094 / Site # CW0395

2. Location

street & number West of West Rena Road over Lee Creek not for publication
city or town Van Buren vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Crawford code 033 zip code 72956

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

Lee Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Crawford 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)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Pratt thru-truss

OTHER/Warren pony-truss

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE, CONCRETE
walls N/A

roof N/A
other METAL/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

1898-1960

Significant Dates

1898, 1930

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

Lee Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Crawford 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> Zone	<u>373920</u> Easting	<u>3925422</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> 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 Jun 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 Crawford County
street & number 300 Main Street telephone 479-474-1511
city or town Van Buren state AR zip code 72956

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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Lee Creek Bridge

County and State Crawford County, AR

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

Section number 7

Page 1

Summary

The Lee Creek Bridge is located just west of a new Rena Road bridge crossing Lee Creek, just north of I-40. It is approximately two and half miles northwest of downtown Van Buren, Arkansas. Its primary span, a 126 foot Pratt thru truss, is accompanied by two Warren pony trusses, comprising a total 296 foot span.

Elaboration

The Lee Creek Bridge consists of a single pin-connected, seven panel Pratt thru-truss span measuring 126 feet and two Warren pony-truss spans for a total structure length of 296 feet. Three original stone piers support the bridge. Two are stone and the southernmost was replaced with concrete from a partial reconstruction in 1930. The fourth pier, between the two Warren trusses, was built out of concrete and added in 1930. The deck width is 10.8 feet, with a vertical clearance of 12 feet. The bridge is accessed from both the north and south.

The Pratt truss was first developed by Thomas and Caleb Pratt in 1844, and contains diagonals in tension and verticals in compression, while the Warren truss, which was patented in 1848, has diagonals that carry both compressive and tensile forces. The bridge carries its traffic load level with the bottom chords.

Integrity

The primary span Pratt thru-truss from 1898 is accompanied by two Warren pony trusses to the south, built in 1930 to replace an original second Pratt thru-truss. Now closer to encroaching suburban development, the Lee Creek Bridge was bypassed in 1995 by a modern concrete bridge at Rena Road just to the east. Although no longer in use, the bridge is intact, and it still reflects late-nineteenth century and early twentieth century bridge building technology.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Lee Creek Bridge

County and State Crawford County, AR

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

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

Summary

The Lee Creek Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with local significance for its associations with the development of transportation in Crawford County. As a partially reconstructed bridge, first built in 1898 and rebuilt in 1930, the Lee Creek Bridge was clearly important in the county for a crossing at this point. Its early construction and subsequent renovation allowed the bridge to carry traffic continually until 1995, when population growth and safety concerns necessitated a new crossing, still in the same relative location as the Lee Creek Bridge.

The bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion C** with local significance as a good example of a Pratt thru-truss bridge, a construction technique common on Arkansas roads during this period. As one of two Pratt thru-truss bridges remaining in Crawford County, the Lee Creek Bridge’s initial construction is one of only a handful of bridges of this type and age. The bridge is also significant for its Warren pony truss spans.

The Lee Creek Bridge is submitted under the multiple property listing “Historic Bridges of Arkansas” and under associated historic context “Early Transportation Era.”

Elaboration

The arrival of David Boyd, a logger, in 1818 is the first recorded event in Van Buren, a historically significant port along the Arkansas River. Development of a town site in present day Van Buren, Arkansas, began in earnest in the 1830s with the establishment of Phillips Landing by Daniel and Thomas Phillips in 1831, a wood yard supplying fuel for river steamboats. In the same year, a post office named for recently nominated Secretary of State Martin Van Buren was opened, lending the township its name.¹

Just a mile down the River, John Drennen and David Thompson established one of two general stores in a settlement called Columbus, remaining there until 1835. Realizing Van Buren was a better site for a town, Drennen bought the site from Thomas Phillips for \$11,000 in 1836. Drennen later represented Crawford County in the Constitutional Convention, helping to write the state constitution for Arkansas. With Drennen’s donation of land for the courthouse, Van Buren became the county seat in 1841.²

¹ Crawford County Bicentennial Commission. *An Historical Salute to Crawford County*. Van Buren, AR: The Courier, 1976.

² Ibid.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Lee Creek Bridge

County and State Crawford County, AR

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

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

Situated on the Arkansas River near the Oklahoma border, Van Buren developed throughout the nineteenth century as Arkansas's westernmost transportation center. Steamboat lines, and later stagecoaches and rail served the city of Van Buren. The coach route between Little Rock and Van Buren was among the best patronized land route across Arkansas in the early 1800s. In the 1849 California gold rush, these water and land routes were strained as Van Buren and Fort Smith served as taking-off points for thousands.³

Commerce continued to develop steadily thanks to river and train traffic through Van Buren. The first newspaper in Northwestern Arkansas, *The Intelligencer*, was first printed in 1842, an extremely early date for a township that far west.⁴ By 1878, Van Buren boasted a dozen general stores and numerous other businesses serving Crawford County citizens and the growing number of travelers passing through.⁵

After the Civil War, railroad transportation furthered the growth of Van Buren as a transportation hub. The Little Rock and Fort Smith Railway, led by president John Drennen, brought the first train to Van Buren on June 24, 1876. The Missouri-Pacific and Frisco Line railroads carried passengers and cargo through Van Buren, transferring goods across the Arkansas River on flat-bottom river boats to Fort Smith.⁶ Ferries connected Fort Smith and Van Buren over the Arkansas River until 1912, when the "free bridge" was built between the cities, carrying passenger streetcars across the river until the 1930s.⁷

The Lee Creek Bridge was constructed along one of the unpaved county roads that connected most of Crawford County to the county seat in Van Buren. First constructed in 1898, two Pratt thru-trusses crossed Lee Creek at this site. The Lee Creek Bridge carried traffic from Dora, Arkansas, and farmsteads west of town to the main road into Van Buren. The southern Pratt truss was replaced by two Warren trusses and a new pier in 1930.⁸ Records

³ Writer's Program of the Works Projects Administration. *The WPA guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987.

⁴ Goodspeed Publishing Company. *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwestern Arkansas*. Chicago: the Goodspeed Publishing Co, 1889. Reprint Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1978, p 542.

⁵ Goodspeed Publishing Company. *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwestern Arkansas*. Chicago: the Goodspeed Publishing Co, 1889. Reprint Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1978.

⁶ Crawford County Bicentennial Commission. *An Historical Salute to Crawford County*. Van Buren, AR: The Courier, 1976.

⁷ Crawford County Bicentennial Commission. *An Historical Salute to Crawford County*. Van Buren, AR: The Courier, 1976.

⁸ Gene McCluney- Crawford County resident, email to Bob Scoggin, June 2009.

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

Name of Property Lee Creek Bridge

County and State Crawford County, AR

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

Section number **8** Page **3**

from 1936 show this county road was graded, but still unpaved at this time, as were most of the routes traversing Crawford County.⁹

Used continuously until the 1990s, the Lee Creek Bridge had over 500 daily crossings by 1987. Now close to encroaching suburban development, the bridge was deemed structurally unsound and bypassed in 1995 by a modern concrete two lane bridge over Lee Creek at Rena Road less than 100 feet away. Lee Creek Bridge is now closed to all traffic.¹⁰

The 1930 reconstruction of the Lee Creek Bridge with a Pratt thru-truss and Warren pony-truss combination was highly unusual for roadways built at this time. By the late 1920s, deck girder bridges (either concrete or metal), or Parker pony trusses to a lesser degree, were the norm for new bridge construction on Arkansas state highways. In fact, data from the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department shows that nearly \$0.23 on the dollar was spent on concrete for bridge construction by 1930, while only \$0.02 was spent on structural steel.¹¹ The Lee Creek Bridge is one of 25 remaining truss bridges built during the 1930s in Arkansas. Its original structure dating from the 1890s is one of less than five surviving bridge structures built before 1900 in Arkansas. The two periods of construction and atypical structure of Lee Creek Bridge set it apart as an important and unique example of this type of structure.¹²

Statement of Significance

The Lee Creek Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with local significance for its associations with the development of transportation in Crawford County. As a partially reconstructed bridge- first built in 1898 and rebuilt presumably after a flood or accident in 1930, the Lee Creek Bridge was clearly important in the county for a crossing at this point. Its early construction and subsequent renovation allowed the bridge to carry traffic continually until 1994, when population growth and safety concerns necessitated a new crossing, still in the same basic location as the Lee Creek Bridge.

⁹ Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. *General Highway Map of Crawford County, Arkansas*, 1936.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Ninth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Russellville, AR: Russellville Printing Company, 1930, p. 51

¹² Robert Scoggin of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. Telephone conversation with the author, 24 November 2003.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Lee Creek Bridge

County and State Crawford County, AR

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

Section number **8** Page **4**

The bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion C** with local significance as a good example of a thru-truss bridge, a construction technique common on Arkansas roads during this period. As one of two Pratt thru-truss bridges remaining in Crawford County, the Lee Creek Bridge's initial construction is one of only a handful of bridges of this type and age.

The Lee Creek Bridge is submitted under the multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas" and under associated historic context "Early Transportation Era."

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Lee Creek Bridge

County and State Crawford County, AR

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

Section number 9

Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Lee Creek Bridge

County and State Crawford County, AR

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

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for the Lee Creek Bridge is 10 feet on either side of a line connecting UTM point 15/373916E/3925414N with UTM point 15/373963E/3925503N.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

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