

**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 Miller Creek Bridge
other names/site number Bridge #14045 / Site # IN0236

2. Location

street & number County Road 86 over Miller Creek not for publication
city or town Batesville vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Independence code 063 zip code 72501

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

Miller Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Independence 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/Concrete arch

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls N/A

roof N/A
other CONCRETE

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

1914-1960

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Jack Handford & W.E. Fugett, Builders

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

Miller Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Independence 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>624550</u> Easting	<u>3960679</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 Independence County
street & number 192 E. Main St. telephone (870)793-8833
city or town Batesville state AR zip code 72501

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.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Miller Creek Bridge

County and State Independence County, AR

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

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

Summary

The oldest concrete arch bridge in the state, the Miller Creek Bridge is located along a county road that has been bypassed by AR 233 in Independence County, Arkansas. The bridge is just north of downtown Batesville, Arkansas, about .25 miles east of the AR 233 Miller Creek crossing. Two arch spans of solid filled, reinforced concrete cross Miller Creek.

Elaboration

Miller Creek Bridge’s arch structure is a form used in bridge construction since the Romans. In the early twentieth century, reinforced concrete developed by engineers in France gained popularity and more common use in construction, replacing cut stone in arched structures. In an arched structure, all components work in compression, a load well suited to concrete, which becomes stronger under this type of load.

The Miller Creek Bridge is the oldest remaining concrete arch bridge in the state. These earlier structures demonstrate the limited knowledge of concrete structure available at that time, limited in span and heavily constructed.

Originally built as part of a local county road, the Miller Creek Bridge crossing is now a part of County Road 86, or Miller Creek Rd. The 12 foot lane accommodates one-way traffic over a total length of 123 feet. Two arches spans cross the creek, the longer of the two spanning 70 feet. Decorative details, such as incised rectangles on the exterior, elaborate the integrated concrete guardrails of the bridge. An inscription on the bridge lists the names of county commissioners H.C. Wade and J.M. Reynolds; Engineer O.M. Frierson; County Judge M. Walby; Handford and Faucett, the builders; and the completion date of December 1914.

Miller Creek separates downtown Batesville from rural development and farms to the north. The former Missouri Pacific Railroad runs just south of the Creek. Today, Miller Creek Bridge carries local traffic on County Road 86, also known as Miller Creek Rd.

Integrity

No alterations have been made to the bridge to compromise its integrity. The bridge’s setting remains predominately rural, and today services only local traffic, with primary state highways crossing Miller Creek further upstream. The bridge still illustrates its original design and materials.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Miller Creek Bridge

County and State Independence County, AR

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

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

Summary

The Miller 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 early automobile infrastructure in the 1910s. Constructed in 1914, the bridge is among the earliest to be developed by the newly formed State Highway Commission, which was rapidly developing better accessibility for automobiles as they gained popularity in transportation. The bridge was the primary crossing in the area until a new bridge crossing Miller Creek was erected in 1936. Today, it continues to serve local traffic in Batesville, Arkansas.

Miller Creek Bridge is also nominated under **Criterion C** with local significance as an early example of reinforced concrete bridge design, a construction method typical of Arkansas state highway projects from this time period. As the oldest concrete bridge remaining in the state, the Miller Creek Bridge anticipates the expanding automobile trend in the early 1910s, as automobile registration in Independence County was growing exponentially. The relatively short span arches demonstrate the limited knowledge of the capabilities of concrete construction available at the time.

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

Elaboration

The territory that today forms Independence County was likely first explored by fur trappers and traders beginning in the 1810s. Located at a key point along the navigable White River, settlement in present day Batesville can be dated to the arrival of John Reed in 1812 and Sam Miller in 1813, the namesake of Miller Creek, which forms the northern boundary of downtown Batesville. Independence County was incorporated in 1820, with Batesville serving as the county seat.¹

¹ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*. Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 623-4.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Miller Creek Bridge

County and State Independence County, AR

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

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Hills and rocky ground dominate the landscape of Independence County, occupying the mineral belt of the state. Mining ores of iron oxide and manganese led to the extension of the Missouri, Iron Mountain, and Pacific Railroad from Batesville to nearby Cushman, situating Batesville as the mercantile center for the region. Batesville's railroad station and location along White River also contributed to its growth in trade. Steamboats traveling the river could only travel as far up as Batesville, where cargo was transferred to smaller river boats to continue up river.²

Rail and water dominated transportation through Batesville until the 1910s. The first automobile was registered in Independence County in 1910, signaling the coming excitement for cars and need for passable roads to navigate the region.³ The first state highway commission was created in 1913, empowering individual counties to develop roads.⁴ Commissioned in early 1914, the Miller Creek Bridge was influential in opening up accessibility to Batesville from northern regions of the county. Upon the formation of state and US highways, the bridge became part of a network linking Batesville to Little Rock and southern Missouri.

The bridge was engineered locally by D.M. Frierson, a math teacher at the local Presbyterian-run Arkansas College, known today as Lyon College.⁵ This local design of a concrete arch bridge differed from a trend toward metal truss construction, which the State Highway Commission had begun to standardize in 1919 and 1920.⁶ The State Highway Commission had developed a chief engineering staff and standardized bridge engineering to carry heavier loads and increase availability for federal funding. The Fourth Biennial Report of 1920 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.

² *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*. Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 625-8.

³ A.C. McGinnis, "A History of Independence County, Arkansas," *The Independence County Chronicle*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (April 1976): 99.

⁴ Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. *Historical Review*. AHTD, November 1992.

⁵ Letter from Mary M Frierson of Cabot, AR- Jun 6, 1988.

⁶ *Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*. Publisher unknown, c.1920.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Miller Creek Bridge

County and State Independence County, AR

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

Section number 8

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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.”⁷

The construction of the Miller Creek Bridge was highly anticipated by town citizens, featured in regular updates in the *Batesville Guard*, a newspaper still in circulation today. The *Guard* lauded the bridge’s construction as “a great addition to the county... open[ing] the way for persons living north of the creek to reach Batesville at all times in a convenient way.”⁸

As the need for road construction expanded through the 1910s and 1920s, US Highway 167 increased traffic through Batesville connecting Central Louisiana, Little Rock, and Southern Missouri.⁹ The Miller Creek Bridge still provided a vital local link to and from rural areas surrounding Batesville. In 1923 the Arkansas State Highway Commission began to administer highways at the level of the state rather than the county, and they further developed routes through Northern Arkansas.¹⁰ By 1936, increased traffic necessitated the construction of a “new” bridge crossing Miller Creek just west of the concrete arch bridge, diverting state and US highway traffic.¹¹ Today, Miller Creek Bridge serves local County Road 86, while highways AR 233 and US 167 cross the creek further to the west. Miller Creek Bridge remains the oldest concrete arch bridge in service in the state.

Statement of Significance

The Miller 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 early automobile infrastructure in the 1910s. Constructed in 1914, the bridge is among the earliest to be developed by the newly formed State Highway Commission, which was rapidly developing better accessibility for automobiles as they gained popularity in transportation. The bridge was the primary crossing in the area until a new bridge crossing Miller Creek was erected in 1936. Today, it continues to serve local traffic in Batesville, Arkansas.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “Bridge Almost Completed,” *Batesville Guard*, 3 December 1914: 1.

⁹ Weingroff, Richard Information Liason Specialist, Federal Highway Administration. *From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System. AASHTO Quarterly*, Spring 1997.

¹⁰ Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. *Historical Review*. AHTD, November 1992.

¹¹ Letter from Mary M Frierson of Cabot, AR- Jun 6, 1988.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Miller Creek Bridge

County and State Independence County, AR

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

Section number **8**

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Miller Creek Bridge is also nominated under **Criterion C** with local significance as an early example of reinforced concrete bridge design, a construction method typical of Arkansas state highway projects from this time period. As the oldest concrete bridge remaining in the state, the Miller Creek Bridge anticipates the expanding automobile trend in the early 1910s, as automobile registration in Independence County was growing exponentially. The relatively short span arches demonstrate the limited knowledge of the capabilities of concrete construction available at the time.

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Miller Creek Bridge

County and State Independence County, AR

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

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Bibliography

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"Bridge Almost Completed," *Batesville Guard*, 3 December 1914: 1.

"Bridge Contract Awarded," *Batesville Guard*, 11 July 1914: 1.

"Bridge Work to Begin," *Batesville Guard*, 21 July 1914: 1.

"Bridge Work to Begin," *Batesville Guard*, 29 July 1914: 1.

"Bridge Work Started," *Batesville Guard*, 29 July 1914: 1.

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Frierson, Mary M. Letter to the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 6 Jun 1988.

Pratt, Kenneth C. "The Autoculture of Batesville (1910-1920)," *The Independence County Chronicle*, Vo. 27, No 1-2 (October 1985-January 1986): 5.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Miller Creek Bridge

County and State Independence County, AR

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

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point in the center of County Road 86 20 feet north of the north end of the Miller Creek Bridge, the boundary includes the area within 20 feet of each side of the centerline of County Road 86 to an ending point 20 feet south of the south end of the Miller Creek Bridge.

Boundary Justification

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