

NR listed 4/9/90

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Newport Bridge

other names/site number HAER No. AR-12

2. Location

street & number U.S. Highway 67, spanning the White River

not for publication N/A

city, town Newport

vicinity N/A

state Arkansas

code 05

county Jackson

code 067

zip code 72112

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic Bridges of Arkansas

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

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.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/Road-Related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/Road-Related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Warren Cantilever through-truss

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls steel

roof _____
other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

Spanning the expansive White River floodplain immediately west of Newport, Arkansas, the Newport Bridge is a two-lane, double cantilever truss, with 121 foot anchor-arms. Two cantilever-arms of 138 feet and a suspended span of 125 feet make the main truss span four hundred feet long. The top chord of the anchor-arms and cantilever-arms are polygonal, with a slight concave upward curve to a peak at 60 feet above the 24 foot wide road deck. The suspended span has a horizontal top chord at a constant height of 25 feet.

ELABORATION

The truss design uses the philosophy of a Warren truss, where diagonal members carry compressive and tensile forces. The vertical members brace the triangular web system. All panels are twenty feet wide. Most web members and chord members are one of two basic sections: four angles with lacing or two channels with lacing. The top chord in the two panels to either side of the peak is the exception to this rule because it uses four eyebars. Eyebars are used here to support the tremendous tensile forces imposed by the cantilevered suspension span. Large pins connect the top chord together and to the anchor-arm and the cantilever-arm. All other connections, except for the suspension joints, are riveted.

The suspension span is also hung by pins at U12 and L12 (see highway drawings) from the cantilever-arms. Member U12-U13 is referred to as an idle member because it carries no force. The suspension span acts as a truss which is supported at L12 and L20. The compression forces in its top chord are transmitted through member L12-U13, which acts as an impost, to the bottom chord. The forces from the suspension span are then distributed to the cantilever-arm by the bottom chord and web members.

The bridge is supported by reinforced concrete piers at the ends and underneath the two peaks. The concrete approaches are on fourteen inch square concrete pilings, extending an average of fifty feet into the ground. The west approach from Newport is 1278 feet long, and the other approach is 911 feet long. Electric lamps once lined the approaches.

The Newport Bridge has a twin, also over the White River, at Augusta, Arkansas. The two bridges differ only in their approach lengths. The cantilevered bridge at Clarendon over the White River is also similar, but has two more panels in the anchor arms.

The Newport Bridge is in good condition and is being maintained by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department.

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SUMMARY

The four hundred foot double cantilevered bridge at Newport was a major construction project in 1929 and 1930. The bridge, along with two similar bridges at Augusta (HAER No. AR-13) and Clarendon (HAER No. AR-49), Arkansas, was designed by well known bridge engineer Ira G. Hedrick and remains as one of three bridges of its type in the state. Fabricated by the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company and built by the Missouri Valley Iron and Bridge Company during the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department Era: 1923-1939, the bridge became part of a main interstate highway route. The Newport Bridge remains, according to the Highway Department, in fair condition and a little too narrow for modern traffic,¹ but its long span and approaches over the White River still command attention. As such, the Newport Bridge is nominated under Criteria A and C with statewide significance.

ELABORATION

In 1927, Arkansas Governor Martineau sponsored a bill to increase funding for the building of Arkansas highways and bridges. What the Arkansas legislature ended up passing was a law which would make \$52,000,000 in state funds available for highway improvement over the next four years. The law also had the state assuming many debts of counties who had been unable to handle the financial strain of road construction. One of the bridges that was partly funded by this legislation was the state-owned toll bridge at Newport, Arkansas.²

TOWN HISTORY

The White River is a tributary to the Mississippi River. It starts in the Ozarks of northwest Arkansas, and meanders into Missouri before coming back into Arkansas and growing to a navigable size about twenty miles upstream from Newport, the county seat of Jackson County in northeast Arkansas. Local folklore says that Newport was a town created out of spite in 1872 when the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad crossed the White River a few miles from Jacksonport—a town that had declined to help the railroad pay for a bridge. Existing records, however, show that Newport was present as early as 1835.³ By the 1920's, the railroads were the Missouri Pacific and a branch of the Rock Island Railroad, and the industries included lumber and cotton related products.⁴ One unique business in Newport was the making of buttons out of mussel shells pulled from the White River.⁵

Another river industry was the ferry service. Two ferries carried the traffic across the river at Newport. One of the ferries, the "upper" or Newport ferry operated right in Newport. The "lower" ferry was two miles downstream. In good weather and low water stages, an automobile could cross for twenty-five cents. When the water was much higher than normal, the automobile fee might be five dollars, provided one could cross at all.⁶

THE BRIDGE

The location of Newport was becoming more important because of Route 67, a major thoroughfare that was scheduled for improvements. On October 18, 1926, a franchise was given to Hamilton Moses of Little Rock and Steve Graham of Tuckerman to build and maintain a toll bridge over the White River at Newport. Because of their failure to start work on the bridge within the allotted year starting December 3, 1927, the franchise was revoked.⁷

By February of 1928, efforts were made to enable the Arkansas Highway Commission to build a toll bridge at Newport. U.S. Representative Oldfield's bill presented to the House requested authorization to bridge

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the navigable White River and also asked for federal financial assistance.⁸ There was some delay, however, as it was made clear by the Arkansas Highway Department that they would prefer that the federal assistance come in a "lump sum" rather than be specifically appropriated for the Newport bridge. Since a toll bridge could conceivably pay for itself and a road could not, the department wanted the authority to distribute the federal funds in a way that would, in the department's estimation, most benefit the other highway and bridge projects.⁹

As news of the proposed state-owned toll bridge spread, word reached the Delaware Viaduct and Bridge Company office in Hot Springs, Arkansas. They had acquired the Moses and Graham franchise and, not knowing that the franchise had been canceled, had developed plans and worked out traffic and earnings estimates. In late March, 1928, the company made a sales pitch to the bridge committee of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce. The bridge company proposed to build and operate a bridge for twenty-five years, at which time the bridge would be turned over to the county free of charge. Their suggested toll rates that were published shortly after were significantly lower than the state proposed rates.¹⁰

Just when the public was thinking a private bridge might be the path to follow, Justin Matthews, a member of the State Highway Commission, made a public appearance in Newport. On April 10, 1928, Matthews warned against private toll bridge companies who "would build a cheap bridge and timber approaches." The published rates would not be sufficient to cover costs and the company could go to court to get the rates raised later on, Matthews insisted.¹¹ Matthews was persuasive and with "almost unanimous public sentiment," the decision was made at the county level to let the State Highway Commission take care of the bridge.¹² A week after Matthew's public meeting, Senator Oldfield's amended bill was put before the House.¹³

Progress was looking promising as congressional approval was granted in June, 1928. Another delay, however, emerged when lawsuits were filed against the State Highway Commission for "exceeding its authority" in planning the Newport and several other state toll bridges. Various suits argued against the commission's "issuance and sale of highway notes," the impinging on county judges' authority and the illegality of state owned toll bridges.¹⁴

PLANS

The suits only managed to delay but not halt progress on the Newport bridge. In January, 1929, consulting bridge engineer Ira G. Hedrick and State Highway engineer C.S. Christian examined potential sites near Newport and had a preference for the spot where the Newport ferry ran in town. That site was favored in part because a concrete viaduct could be built over the Missouri Pacific tracks which lay close to the river.¹⁵ Besides the examination, the Arkansas Highway Commission had hired the consulting firm of Ford, Bacon & Davis, Inc. of New York to write up a report on the "Estimated Traffic and Revenue" of a Newport toll bridge. The firm had done traffic measurement in June 1928 and had the final report out February 15, 1929. The report considered factors like population growth, motor vehicle registration, and the increased traffic stimulated by a first class bridge and highway (Route 67) to figure the bridge's feasibility. It was understood that the ferries would be discontinued; consequently, some of the proposed bridge's competition would be eliminated. With an average toll of sixty cents (fifty for autos and more for the larger vehicles), the consultants estimated a net income of \$50,500 for the first year of operation, increasing to \$64,000 by the fifth year.¹⁶

Plans were drawn up by bridge engineer Ira G. Hedrick who had an office in Hot Springs. Hedrick had an impressive credential list by the time he was hired by the Arkansas Highway Commission to design several of the new toll bridges. He had studied in Arkansas for a short time around the turn of the century and his first wife was from Fayetteville, Arkansas. As a professional engineer, Hedrick was first an assistant and then a junior partner to bridge engineering great J.A.L. Waddell. Over the course of his life, he was a member of several engineering firms and also the American Society of Civil Engineers.¹⁷

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Hedrick's plan called for a double cantilevered arch bridge with a main span of 300 feet. Parts of the plans, such as this main span, were identical to another proposed toll bridge over the White River at Augusta, Arkansas. The two sister bridges were announced at the same time and bids were to be opened on the same day. For each bridge, the "bridge proper" and the approaches were to be separate bids. The hope was that by breaking the project up, the competition of smaller firms, who could not necessarily handle the whole project, would keep the price to taxpayers down.¹⁸

One more hurdle necessary before contracting was the approval of the War Department's Memphis engineering office in charge of the region's navigable waterways. Their approval was not granted to the planned location near the middle of town. There needed to be more clearance at that location than an arch bridge would allow. Rather than change the type of bridge to accommodate the chosen site, the site was move upstream one-half mile to accommodate the chosen bridge. The new site met with the War Department's approval by May 1, 1929.¹⁹

CONSTRUCTION

On May 15, 1929, bids were received for both the bridge and its approaches. With a low bid of \$218,662, the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company of Leavenworth, Kansas, won the contract for the bridge. This company contracted with the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company of Roanoke, Virginia to be the fabricator. The List and Weatherly Construction Company of Kansas City, Missouri had the low bid on the approaches for \$239,662.²⁰

The lack of contemporary newspaper articles to the contrary suggests that progress went fairly smoothly in the bridge's construction. The first project was pneumatically sinking two piers. By February 1930, the "overhead steel spans [were]. . . more than halfway across the river."²¹ In the beginning of April, all the main span's steel was in place.²² In the course of construction, it was decided that the west approach, as previously planned, was too steep and the approach was altered from a Second Street to a Third Street entrance. The west approach was also changed to concrete rather than the originally planned wood.²³

The bridge's construction was not without incident. In December of 1929, a construction worker was killed by a plummeting, disconnected "shaft" when working in the encasement for one of the main piers.²⁴ The following January saw the shooting and killing of a man by a guard at the bridge site, although the shooting appeared to be more of a personal conflict than over bridge related matters.²⁵

Since the Newport bridge was to be a toll bridge, provisions were made for the toll taker. A one-story "modern" house was erected by W.S. Upchurch of Little Rock at the base of the west approach on Third Street in August. Plans show that tolls were to be taken from traffic of both directions from an island that stood between the two lanes. All that remained in construction was the completion of the west approach.²⁶

COMPLETION CELEBRATION

The bridge was not quite finished yet when the scheduled opening celebration took place September 10 and 11, 1930. Celebrated together with the Jackson County centennial, the bridge's opening days was a well planned spectacle. A queen was crowned by U.S. Senator T.H. Caraway; there was a parade, fireworks, a street dance, and a queen's ball; National Guard planes dropped poppies and "taps" sounded in memory of the war dead; and a series of speakers included Highway Commission Chairman Dwight Blackwood and commission member Justin Matthews. Estimates suggested 7500 people attended the festivities.²⁷

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On the 12th of September, the public was informed that Robert Laird was to be the first supervisor of the bridge.²⁸ He and his wife moved into the new house and shortly after, Laird released the schedule of tolls. An automobile was listed at 50 cents. Truck prices ranged between 50 cents and one dollar. Livestock was 5 cents per head and a pedestrian was free.²⁹ The day after the toll list was released, the first traffic crossed the bridge. That first day, Thursday, September 18, 1930, 220 vehicles went across the new Newport bridge. Despite the fact that the Ford, Bacon & Davis consultants had been informed the state would eliminate the competing ferry business, on the bridge's opening day, it was reported that both ferries did some business.³⁰ It is conceivable that the state assumed the ferries would die a natural death after the bridge had operated for a while. In November, the toll was cut to 25 cents, the lowest price the ferries had charged at low water.³¹

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ENDNOTES

1. Arkansas State Highway Department, bridge inspection report, April 24, 1986.
2. "White River Bridge at Newport will Be Major Highway Project in 1928," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXVII, No. 38 (December 23, 1927), p. 1.
3. Virgil H. Holder, "Historical Geography of the Lower White River," The Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXVII, No. 2 (Summer 1968), pp. 132, 142.; Ernie Deane, Arkansas Place Names (Branson, Mo: The Ozarks Mountaineer, 1986), pp. 46-47.
4. Ford, Bacon & Davis, Inc., consultants, "Report: Estimated Traffic and Revenue, Proposed Toll Bridge Across the White River at Newport, Arkansas," February 15, 1929, p. 11.
5. Holder, p. 143.
6. Ford, Bacon & Davis, p. 9.
7. "Toll Bridge Franchise Canceled," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXVII, No. 36 (December 9, 1927), p. 1.
8. "Bridge Bill Introduced by Oldfield," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXVII, No. 47 (February 17, 1928), p. 4.
9. "Bridge Should be Constructed By State Commission," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXVII, No. 1 (April 6, 1928), p. 6.
10. "Privately Owned Toll Bridge Proposal Made at Meeting Yesterday," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXVII, No. 52 (March 30, 1928), p. 1.
11. "Many Attend Meeting at Courthouse," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 (April 13, 1928), p. 1.
12. "Toll Bridge in Hands of Commission," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (April 20, 1928), p. 1.
13. "Bridge Bill Introduced in Congress," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (April 20, 1928), p. 1.
14. "Court Actions Cause Delay in Highway Work," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXVIII, No. 30 (October 26, 1928), p. 6.
15. "Engineers in Favor of Locating Bridge at Newport Ferry," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXVIII, No. 43 (January 25, 1929), p. 5.
16. Ford, Bacon & Davis, p. 26.

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17. John William Leonard, Who's Who in Engineering, 1925, 2nd ed. (New York: Who's Who Publications, Inc., 1925), p. 937.
18. "To Save Money on Bridge Contracts," The Arkansas Gazette, Vol. 110, No. 173 (May 12, 1929), p. 6.
19. "Bids Received on Highway Projects," The Arkansas Gazette, Vol. 110, No. 177 (May 16, 1929) p. 12.
20. "Bids Received," p. 12.
21. "Bridge Work Continues to Move Rapidly," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXIX, No. 47 (February 21, 1930), p. 1.
22. "Bridge Span Over River Connected," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXX, No. 1 (April 4, 1930), p. 2.
23. "Bridge to be Landed upon Third Street," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXIX, No. 45 (February 7, 1930), p. 10.
24. "Falling Shaft Kills Negro at Bridge Site Here," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXIX, No. 36 (December 6, 1929), p. 7.
25. "Vester Stilwell is Shot and Killed by Missouri Youth," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXIX, No. 42 (January 17, 1930), p. 2.
26. "Bridge Toll House will be Finished Soon," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXX, No. 21 (August 29, 1930), p. 2. : Ira G. Hedrick, plans, "Bridge Over Main Street at Newport, Arkansas," no date.
27. "Newport Bridge Opened Formally," The Arkansas Gazette, Vol. III, No. 294 (September 11, 1930), p. 2.
28. "Bob Laird to Be Supervisor of New Bridge," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXX, No. 23 (September 12, 1930), p. 2.
29. "Newport Toll Bridge is Put in Operation," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXX, No. 24 (September 19, 1930), p. 1.
30. "220 Vehicles Cross Bridge on First Day," Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXX, No. 24 (September 19, 1930), p. 1.
31. "Bridge Tolls Reduced to 25 Cents for Those Purchasing \$2.50 Books." Newport Weekly Independent, Vol. XXX, No. 31 (November 7, 1930), p. 2.



NEUPONT BRIDGE

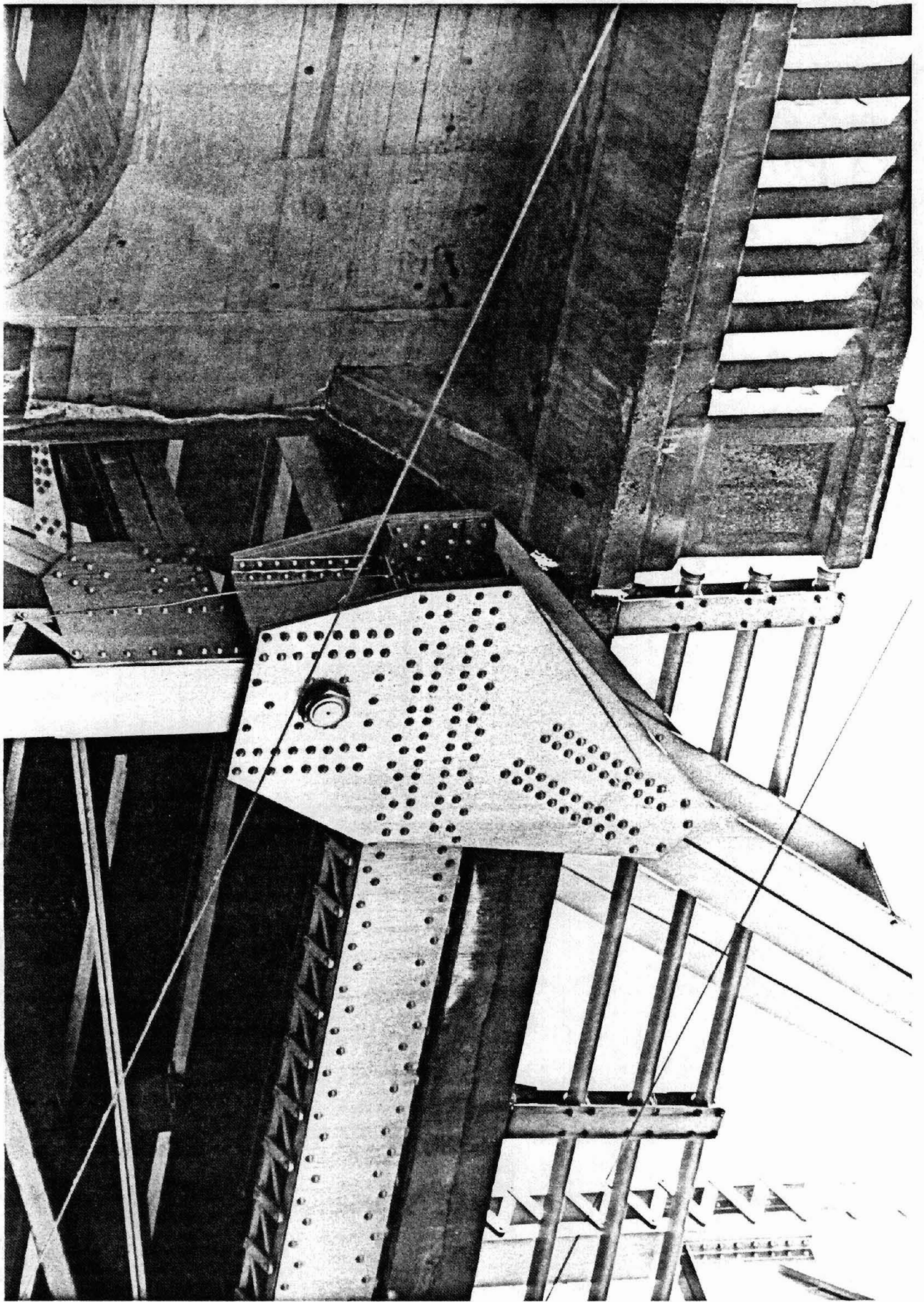
NEUPONT, ALABAMA

PHOTOGRAPHER, MICHAEL SWANOW

JULY, 1988

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT HHP?

DETAIL VIEW LOOKING NORTH, SOUTH PIER OF MAIN SPAN



NEWPORT BRIDGE

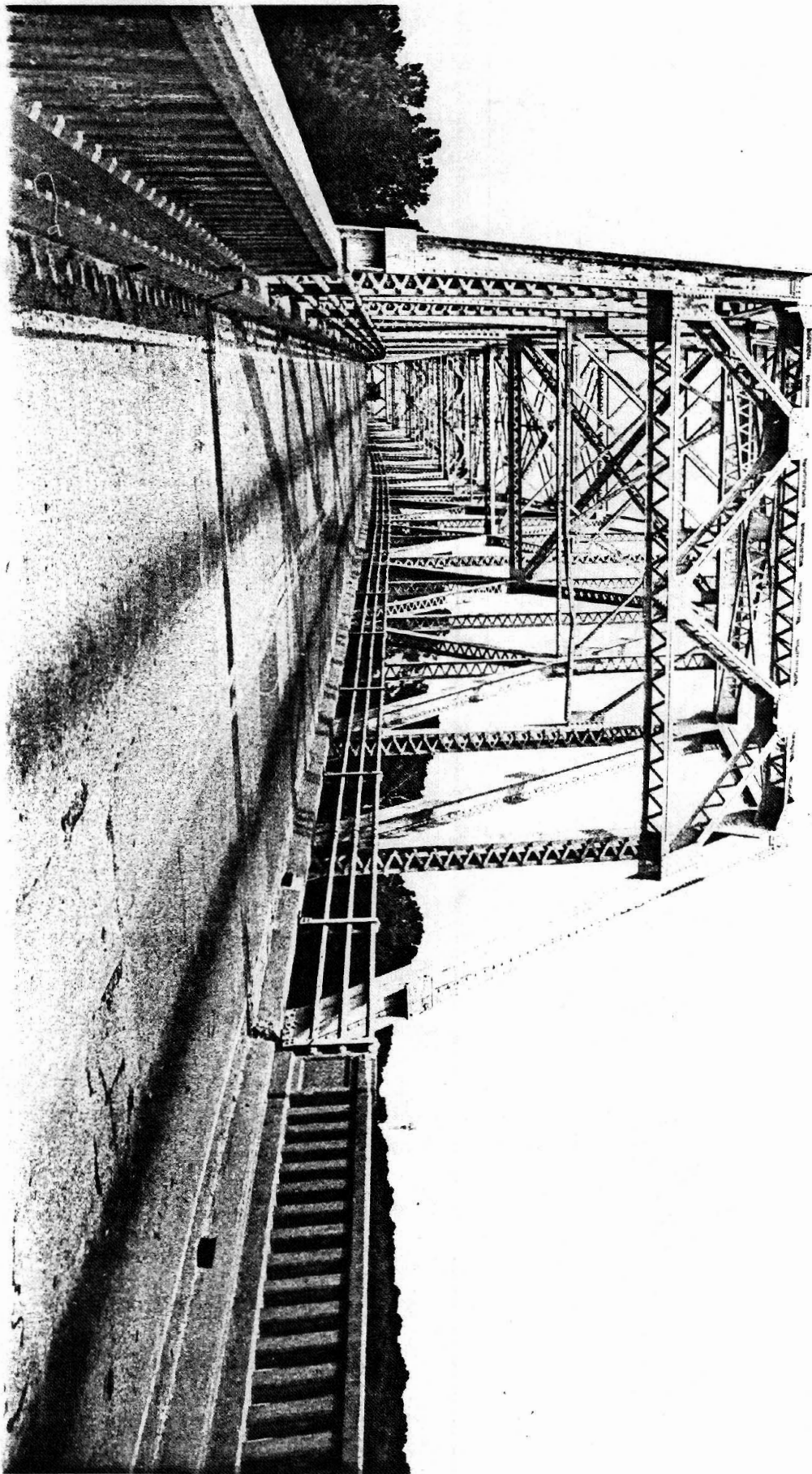
NEWPORT, ARKANSAS

PHOTOGRAPHER, MICHAEL SWANVIA

JULY, 1988

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP

DETAIL VIEW, SOUTH END OF MAIN SPAN LOOKING WEST



NEWPORT BRIDGE

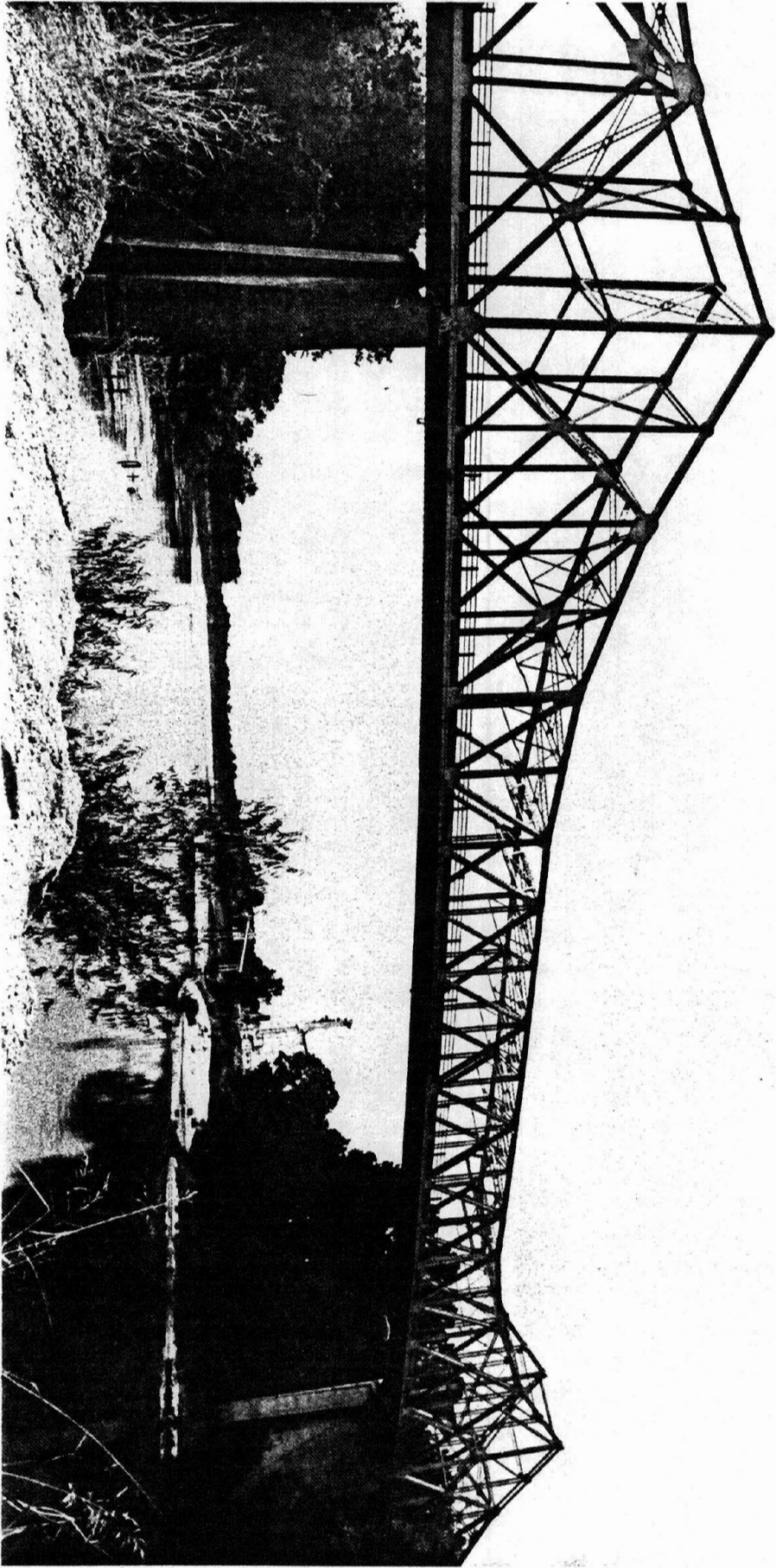
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PHOTOGRAPHED, MICHAEL SWANNA

JULY, 1968

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP

VIEW LOOKING NORTH



NEWPORT BRIDGE

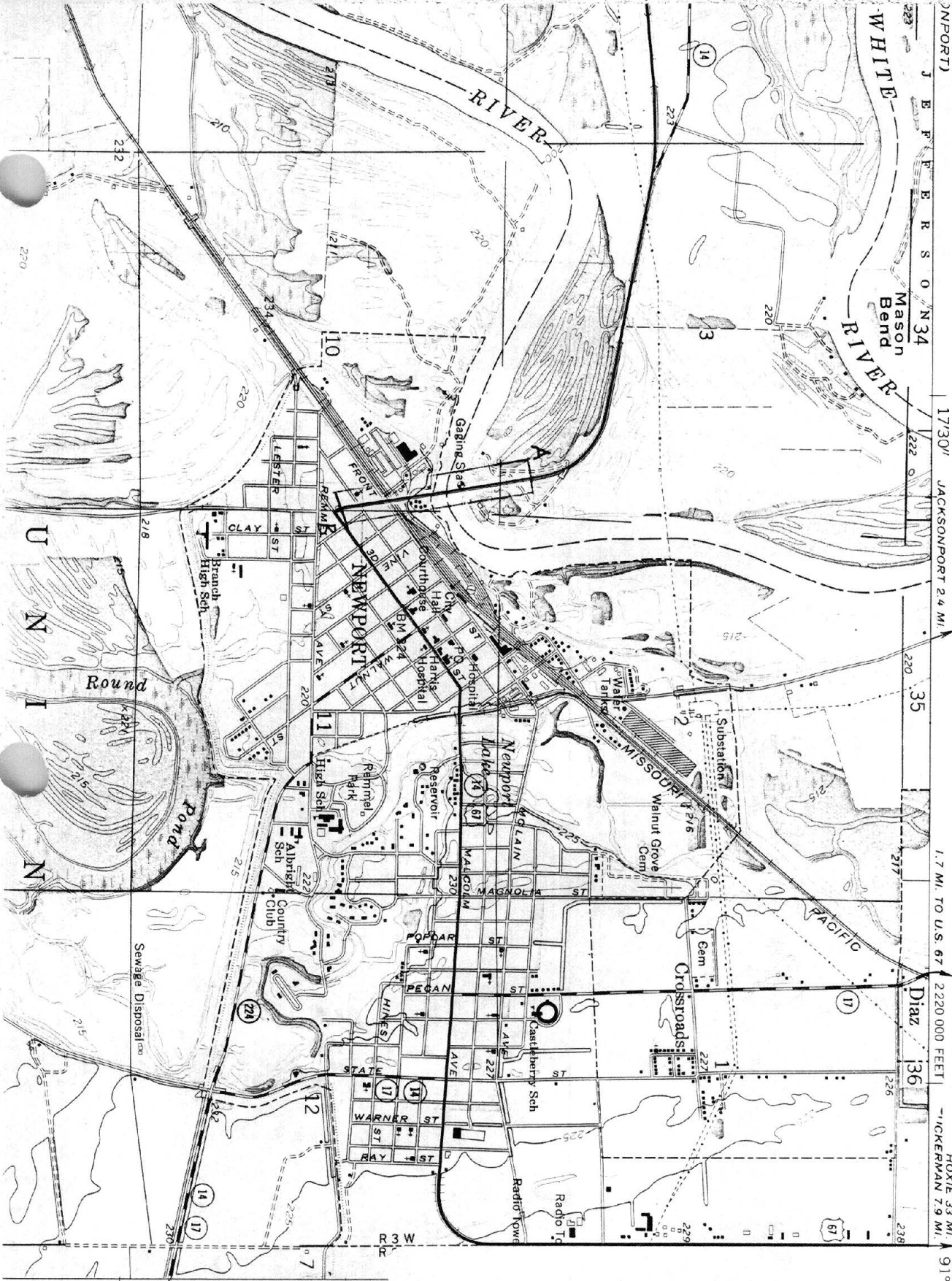
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PHOTOGRAPHER, MICHAEL SWANSON

JULY, 1988

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ANPP

VIEW LOOKING WEST



NEWPORT QUADRANGLE

ARKANSAS

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

SECTION 15, QUADRANGLE

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(TUCKERMAN 1:62,500)

Newport Bridge
 Newport, Arkansas
 Jackson County
 A) 15/654960/3941740
 B) 15/655110/3940895
 Newport Quadrangle
 1:24,000

2.4 MI. TO JUNC. ARK. 141& 17
 HARRISBURG (VIA ARK. 14) 30

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation
Engineering

Period of Significance

1930-1939

Significant Dates

1930

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect: Hedrick, Ira G.
Fabricator: Virginia Bridge & Iron Company
Builder: Missouri Valley Iron & Bridge Company

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Historic Bridges of Arkansas, Multiple Property Nomination, Section H.

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 # HAER No. AR-12

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

U.S. Library of Congress

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

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 Zone Easting Northing

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point approximately 100 feet north of the intersection of U.S. Highway 67 and 3rd Street, the boundary for the Newport Bridge starts here at the south abutment, then extends north across the White River for approximately 2,589 feet, where it terminates at the north abutment.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the main span, approach spans, piers and abutments that are historically associated with this property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Text by Kathryn Steen & Corinne Smith; edited by Michael Swanda, Survey Coordinator
 organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date February 5, 1990
 street & number 225 East Markham Street telephone (501) 371-2763
 city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201