

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR 1/29/08

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 War Eagle Creek Bridge

other names/site number Site #MA0078, Bridge #15035, Bridge #267

2. Location

street & number Madison County Road 53 over War Eagle Creek not for publication

city or town Old Alabam vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Madison code 087 zip code 72740

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.)

Cassie Matthews 10/31/07
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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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:)

War Eagle Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Madison 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.)

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic Bridges of Arkansas

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/Open Spandrel Concrete Deck Arch Bridge

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.)

War Eagle Creek Bridge

Name of Property

War Eagle Creek Bridge

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.)

- 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)

Engineering

Transportation

Period of Significance

1925-1958

Significant Dates

1925-1958

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Meyer & Greenwald Construction Company, 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 State Highway and Transportation Department

War Eagle Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 437533 3997654
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____

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 Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date August 7, 2007

street & number 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 _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ 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, 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.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The War Eagle Creek Bridge is located on Madison County Road 53 (former Arkansas Highway 68, now U.S. 412) at the crossing of War Eagle Creek approximately one mile southwest of the community of Old Alabam. Comprised of two open-spandrel arch spans measuring 70 feet long each, the bridge has a total length of 206 feet.

ELABORATION

The bridge is accessed from both the northeast and southwest. The open spandrel concrete arch, a bridge type that has been built since at least the early 1900s, consists of two parallel concrete arches connected to each other by horizontal concrete beams. The arches are also connected to the bridge's deck with vertical concrete beams.

The War Eagle Creek Bridge consists of two open-spandrel arch spans measuring 70 feet long each; the bridge has a total length of 206 feet. The travel surface and overall width of the bridge is 18.2 feet. The deck surface is concrete. The abutments are also concrete. Resting on top of the deck, a pair of guardrails comprised of evenly spaced concrete posts and two rows of horizontal concrete beams run the entire length of the bridge on the northwest and southeast sides.

INTEGRITY

No structural alterations have been made to the bridge to compromise its integrity. Its location remains rural, and its setting remains pristine. The bridge still illustrates its original design and materials. In addition, the bridge is still in use for vehicular travel.

War Eagle Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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War Eagle Bridge # 267 Madison Co.

c.1926 photograph of the War Eagle Creek Bridge under construction.

War Eagle Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Section number 7 Page 3

*Br. 267 - War Eagle
Ar. 68
1926*



1926 picture of the War Eagle Creek Bridge

War Eagle Creek Bridge

Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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A pretty view of a Concrete Arch Bridge under construction over War Eagle Creek east of Huntsville in Madison County. State Highway No. 68.

Picture of the War Eagle Creek from the *Seventh Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements* (c.1926)

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

Constructed in 1925-1926 by the Meyer & Greenwald Construction Company, the War Eagle Creek Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as the only remaining example of an open spandrel concrete deck arch bridge in Madison County. The bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of vehicular transportation in Madison County. This nomination is being submitted under the multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas" and under associated historic context "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department Era: 1923-1939."

ELABORATION

Settlement began in the Madison County area in the first part of the nineteenth century when William Hawkins settled in the area in 1830 and opened a mill by 1838. People began arriving in increasing numbers in the subsequent years with David Phillips, John Phillips, Richard Withrow, and George W. Sanders all settling in the current Huntsville vicinity in 1831 and 1832. By 1836, there were enough people in the area to warrant the creation of the new county by the State Legislature on September 30, 1836.¹ The county was named after president James Madison.

Little is known about the history of Old Alabam. The settlement of Alabam, located approximately one mile north of Old Alabam, had a post office established in 1882, suggesting that Old Alabam was in existence before that.² The name likely refers to the fact that many of the early settlers in the area came from Alabama. However, it appears that Old Alabam, or Alabam for that matter, have not been much more than crossroads settlements.

During the earliest days of settlement in Madison County, few roads existed in the area. *The History of Benton, Washington, Carroll, Madison, Crawford, Franklin, and Sebastian Counties, Arkansas*, indicates that "Two principal routes were traveled by the earliest settlers to Madison County, one following the Arkansas River to Fort Smith, and thence passing through Fayetteville; the other passing through Missouri, southwesterly from St. Louis through Springfield, to the extreme northwest portion of Arkansas."³ By 1839, the major road in the area came east out of Washington County near Richland Creek to Sevierville, which became Huntsville in 1840, before turning northeast and heading into Carroll County. A secondary road

¹ *History of Benton, Washington, Carroll, Madison, Crawford, Franklin, and Sebastian Counties, Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, pp. 422 and 434.

² Baker, Russell Pierce. *From Memdag to Norsk: A Historical Directory of Arkansas Post Offices, 1832-1971*. Hot Springs, AR: Arkansas Genealogical Society, 1988, p. 2.

³ *History of Benton, Washington, Carroll, Madison, Crawford, Franklin, and Sebastian Counties, Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 420.

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branched off to the northeast in between Richland Creek and Sevierville.⁴ By 1854, the number of roads in Madison County had increased dramatically, including a road that ran north and south through the county connecting Huntsville to St. Paul in the south and Carroll County to the north and east.⁵

By the late 1800s, there were road districts organized in Madison County. According to *History of Benton, Washington, Carroll, Madison, Crawford, Franklin, and Sebastian Counties, Arkansas*:

The public roads of the county are under the jurisdiction of the county court. For convenience in repairing and improving their condition they are divided into districts, over each of which an overseer is appointed. The present number of districts is about 100, and varies but little from year to year. The entire county was redistricted every second year. In 1873 the different townships were constituted road districts in the following order, the roads in each being divided into a number of sections: No. 1, War Eagle, 11 sections; No. 2, Prairie, 2 sections; No. 3, Piney, 1 section; No. 4, Marble, 3 sections; No. 5, King's River, 11 sections; No. 6, Whorton's Creek, 2 sections; No. 7, Bowen, 6 sections; No. 8, Hilburn, 8 sections; No. 9, Valley, 4 sections; No. 10, California, 4 sections; No. 11, Richland, 9 sections.⁶

By December 1924, the highway containing the War Eagle Creek Bridge had been designated Highway C-5. Highways with a "C" designation were connecting state roads, while highways with "B" designations were Secondary Federal Aid Roads and highways with "A" designations were Primary Federal Aid Roads.⁷ However, by April 1926, the road was redesignated Highway 68.⁸

As the roads were upgraded in Madison County with the new designations, it became necessary to build new bridges to handle the increased traffic and heavier loads. In 1925, the Department of State Lands, Highways, and Improvements sought to build two bridges in eastern Madison County, one over War Eagle Creek at Old Alabam and a second over the Kings River at Marble. Bids were received on September 25, 1925, and the

⁴ Burr, David H. *Map of Mississippi, Louisiana & Arkansas exhibiting the post offices, post roads, canals, rail roads, &c.* Map. London: J. Arrowsmith, 1839, and Baker, Russell Pierce. *From Memdag to Norsk: A Historical Directory of Arkansas Post Offices, 1832-1971.* Hot Springs, AR: Arkansas Genealogical Society, 1988, p. 200.

⁵ *Colton's Railroad & Township Map of Arkansas Compiled from the U.S. Surveys and Other Authentic Sources.* Map. Unknown Publisher, New York, 1854.

⁶ *History of Benton, Washington, Carroll, Madison, Crawford, Franklin, and Sebastian Counties, Arkansas.* Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, pp. 445-446.

⁷ *Map of State of Arkansas Showing System of Primary and Secondary Federal Aid Roads and Progress of Improvements.* Little Rock: Arkansas State Highway Department, 1924.

⁸ *State of Arkansas Showing System of State Highways.* Little Rock: Arkansas State Highway Department, 1926.

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Meyer & Greenwald Construction Company of Monroe, Louisiana, was selected to build the two bridges. The two bridges, which would have a total length of 490 feet, were anticipated to cost \$28,088.50 to build.⁹

When choosing the kind of bridge to be built at a certain location, the State Highway Commission looked at several different factors. According to the *Eighth Biennial Report*, "In choosing types and deciding on layouts, the principal considerations are Traffic, Maximum Stream Flow, Navigation Requirements, Economy, and last but of no minor importance, the consideration of Appearance, for with the natural beauty of many of our streams, no one would wish to waive this feature of the design."¹⁰

The use of concrete bridges seemed to be the preferable alternative to the State Highway Commission whenever possible. They wrote:

...The all-concrete bridge properly designed and constructed requires but little maintenance, and it seems decidedly the type to build where the comparative cost is not prohibitive and the foundation conditions as well as other stream requirements are satisfactory.

Where bed-rock projects above or is at a slight depth below the stream bed, the concrete arch span often proves less expensive than steel. In the mountainous sections bed-rock foundations are generally obtainable at reasonable depths for both concrete and steel bridges, while pile foundations are often resorted to in the delta section.¹¹

As a result, it was no surprise that a concrete bridge was the preferred choice for the War Eagle Creek crossing.

The design of the War Eagle Creek Bridge reflected other highway bridge designs used in Arkansas during the period. The Arkansas State Highway Department used open spandrel arches exclusively for their concrete bridges. (Along the same lines, they exclusively used the Parker truss design for metal pony-truss bridges.) Although the reason that the Highway Department used open spandrel arches exclusively is not exactly known, it may have been because of cost or that the design may have been able to support more weight.¹²

⁹ Seventh Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements. Conway, AR: Conway Printing Co., c.1926, p. 72.

¹⁰ *Eighth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*. Little Rock, AR: H. G. Pugh & Co., c.1928, p. 65.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 66.

¹² Scoggin, Bob. Telephone conversation with the author. 19 July 2007.

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The location of the War Eagle Creek Bridge on a winding section of Highway 68 and its narrow width of 18.2 feet meant that it would have been a relatively dangerous crossing, especially as cars and trucks grew in size during the 1930s and 1940s. As a result, the bridge was bypassed in 1950 by a new bridge and straighter alignment of the road to the southeast.¹³ (The bridge built at Marble over the Kings River was also replaced by a new bridge and new highway alignment to the south and the original bridge was subsequently removed.)

Since the completion of the War Eagle Creek Bridge in 1925-1926, virtually no structural alterations have been made to the bridge to compromise its integrity. (A portion of the northern guardrail at the eastern end has been removed, likely the result of an auto accident.) Today, Madison County Road 53 remains an asphalt and gravel road, used by the local residents of the area, and the War Eagle Creek Bridge has been an important crossing on the road for the residents in the area for approximately 85 years. The War Eagle Creek Bridge remains an important transportation link in the area and a good example of an open spandrel concrete deck arch.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1925-1926 by the Meyer & Greenwald Construction Company, the War Eagle Creek Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as the only remaining example of an open spandrel concrete deck arch bridge in Madison County. The bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of vehicular transportation in Madison County. This nomination is being submitted under the multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas" and under associated historic context "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department Era: 1923-1939."

¹³ Scoggin, Bob. E-mail to the author. 19 July 2007.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baker, Russell Pierce. *From Memdag to Norsk: A Historical Directory of Arkansas Post Offices, 1832-1971*. Hot Springs, AR: Arkansas Genealogical Society, 1988.

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Map of State of Arkansas Showing System of Primary and Secondary Federal Aid Roads and Progress of Improvements. Little Rock: Arkansas State Highway Department, 1924.

Scoggin, Bob. E-mail to the author. 19 July 2007.

Scoggin, Bob. Telephone conversation with the author. 19 July 2007.

Seventh Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements. Conway, AR: Conway Printing Co., c.1926.

State of Arkansas Showing System of State Highways. Little Rock: Arkansas State Highway Department, 1926.

War Eagle Creek Bridge

Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From a point 20 feet southwest of the southwest end of the bridge, proceed northeasterly along Madison County Road 53 to a point 20 feet northeast of the northeast end of the bridge. The width of the boundary includes 20 feet on either side of the road centerline.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary includes the War Eagle Creek Bridge and its immediate setting.







UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

7256 (11 NE)
(HINDSVILLE)

WAR EAGLE CREEK
BRIDGE
MADISON COUNTY, ARKANSAS

UTM:
15/437533/3997654

