

NR 08/01/08

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 Wallace Bridge  
other names/site number Nimrod Bridge, #15731 / Site #PE0090

2. Location

street & number Perry County Road 18  not for publication  
city or town Nimrod  vicinity  
state Arkansas code AR county Perry code 105 zip code 72126

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Wallace Bridge

Name of Property

Perry 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.)

Table with columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total. Values: 1, 1

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/Camelback thru-truss

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation 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.)

Wallace Bridge

Name of Property

Perry County, Arkansas

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION
ENGINEERING

Period of Significance

1908-1958

Significant Dates

1908-1958

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Builder: Southwestern Bridge Company

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):

- Checkboxes for NPS documentation: preliminary determination, previously listed, National Historic Landmark, Historic American Buildings Survey, recorded by Historic American Engineering Record.

Primary location of additional data:

- Checkboxes for 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

Wallace Bridge  
Name of Property

Perry County, Arkansas  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Age of Property Less than one

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>494946</u>	<u>3865979</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Van Zbinden, National Register Historian  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 31 December 2007  
street & number 323 Center Street, 1600 Tower Building telephone (501) 324-9880  
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 Perry County  
street & number 310 West Main Street telephone 501-889-5128  
city or town Perryville state AR zip code 72126

**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

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

### Summary

The only Camelback through truss in Perry County, and one of only three remaining in the state, the Wallace Bridge is located on Perry County Road 18 where it crosses the Fourche La Fave River. The bridge is located approximately one and two-thirds miles southwest of Nimrod. A pin-connected, Camelback through truss main span measuring 180 feet long, the bridge has a total length of 213 feet.

### Elaboration

The Camelback through truss is a modification of the Pratt Truss. The Pratt truss was originally designed by Thomas and Caleb Pratt in 1844 and was one of the bridge designs that successfully made the transition from wood construction to metal. Their innovation was to simply reverse the standard method of bridge construction; in the Pratt design, vertical beams and the top chord took the compressive load of the bridge while the diagonal beams and bottom chord provided the tension load for the bridge. Prior to the Pratts' redesign, diagonal members carried both the compressive and tension loads for the bridge making them much more susceptible to buckling. The standardization of form possible with the multi-paneled design of the Pratt bridges made them highly economical. The form also proved to be very durable, versatile, and stronger than previous designs. Thomas and Caleb Pratt's invention was the most commonly built early twentieth century bridge design.<sup>1</sup>

Charles H. Parker modified the Pratt truss by designing a bridge with a polygonal top chord. This created a lighter structure, using the same amount of material, without losing strength. Pratt trusses had an area of dead load—an area where the structural members were not providing significant support in relation to their weight—on each end. Parker's design removed the dead load and provided more strength in the center of the main span. The fact that the structural members of the Parker truss were of different lengths, however, meant that there was some loss of standardization and a subsequent increase in cost.

The camelback design is an improvement on the Parker truss by more efficiently distributing stress loads and increasing standardization. In Charles Parker's design each panel connected to the top chord separately meaning that each panel of the bridge was a different height. The camelback truss was more standardized and improved center span strength by connecting the center panels to one top chord and limiting the top chord to only five slopes.

<sup>1</sup> T. Allen Comp and Donald Jackson "Bridge Truss Types: A Guide to Dating and Identifying" American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 95, *History News* 32, no.5 (May, 1977).

Wallace Bridge

Name of Property

Perry County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
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The Wallace Bridge consists of a single camelback through truss span comprised of ten panels, measuring 180 feet. The total structure length, including steel stringer panels on each end, is 222 feet. The overall width of the bridge is 17 feet. The roadway width is 15 feet. The deck surface is four inch by nine and one-half inch wood plank over the steel truss and the wearing surface, laid transversely across the deck, is made of three inch thick wood planks. The abutments are concrete. The bridge is accessed from the north and south.

### Integrity

No structural alterations have been made to the bridge to compromise its integrity. The bridge is located in a rural area, and its setting remains undisturbed. The bridge still illustrates its original design and materials. In addition, the bridge is well maintained and still in use for vehicular travel.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### Summary

The Wallace Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as the best example of a Camelback through truss in Perry County. The bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of transportation in Perry County. This nomination is being submitted under the multiple-property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas."

### Elaboration

Perry County was formed in December 1840, from that portion of Conway County south of the Arkansas River. The county was named for Commodore Oliver Perry, the hero of a naval battle on Lake Erie during the War of 1812. In the northern part of the county are the Petit Jean Mountains, which traverse the length of the county east to west in an area between the Arkansas River and the Fourche La Fave River. On the southern boundary of the county, south of the Fourche La Fave River Valley, are the Maumelle Mountains. Thus the Fourche La Fave River Valley plays a significant role in the history of the county. Traditionally, farming has played an important role in the economic activities of the county.<sup>2</sup>

The Wallace Bridge spans the Fourche La Fave River, named for Peter Le Fevre, a French-Canadian who settled near Little Rock, AR, in 1818.<sup>3</sup> The river, which runs east to west across the central section of Perry County, has played a significant role in settlement and transportation in Perry County. European settlement of the river valley is attributed to have begun as early as 1808. Significant settlement of the Fourche La Fave River valley began in the 1830s, however Brown's Landing, Lewisburg (now Morrillton), and Little Rock, all on the Arkansas River, were the primary local trading posts.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Lynda Suffrage, "Perry County," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture* available online at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=796> accessed 4 December 2007. Goodspeed Publishing Company, *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas* (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1889; reprint, Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1978), 661, 663. Florence Crago, "Commodore Perry is County's Namesake," in Perry County Historical & Genealogical Society, *Perry County, Arkansas, Its Land and People* (Perryville, AR: Walworth Publishing, 2004), 42.

<sup>3</sup> Dallas T. Herndon, ed., *Annals of Arkansas, 1947, Volume II* (Little Rock, AR: The Historical Record Association, 1947), 705.

<sup>4</sup> Herndon, 705. Goodspeed, 662.



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Due to a lack of roads in the early period of European and American settlement of Perry County, travel, and trade was primarily accomplished by boat. The use of pirogues, a canoe like boat, was common for fishing, hunting, and personal travel.<sup>5</sup> Larger goods were transported up the Fourche La Fave on keelboats or flat-bottomed vessels. Freiderich Gerstäcker noted in memoirs of his travels in Arkansas that, "At the end of two months, Kean arrived early one morning with the news that Rutkin's and Haller's families were in a large flat-bottomed boat, at the mouth of the Fourche La Fave."<sup>6</sup>

The earliest steamboat to journey up this river was the *Inspection*; an appropriate name considering the boat was inspecting the condition of the river for navigation.<sup>7</sup> However, as Gerstäcker notes, steamboat travel on both the Arkansas River, and certainly the Fourche La Fave, was difficult at best. Gerstäcker relates, "Only now and then did a small boat dare to go any distance up river."<sup>8</sup> On one trip up river, Gerstäcker and a companion ignored the steamboat, *Fort Smith*, as being "unreliable" and took their own craft up river. "The next day the *Fort Smith* passed us once more, but not far from the estuary of the Fourche La Fave it ran aground again. We thus reached our destination [up the Fourche La Fave] earlier than the steamer."<sup>9</sup>

The Fourche River provided the easiest avenue for settlement of the interior of Perry County. When Gerstäcker and his companions arrived in Little Rock, seeking land to settle, they "heard Fourche La Fave very highly spoken of, particularly the land in its neighbourhood."<sup>10</sup> Growth in the county was quick; the 1850 census lists a population of 978, but by 1860 the population was listed at 2,465.<sup>11</sup> An *Arkansas Gazette* article from 1877 notes that there were 115 families living along the Fourche. Shoals, snags, and debris made it difficult to navigate the river and yet, this was the primary method of easily reaching these small farms.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Friederich Gerstäcker, in his narratives, frequently mentions the use of pirogues, or canoes, as a common method of transportation. For examples of their use on the Fourche La Fave see, *In The Arkansas Backwoods, Tales and Sketches* trans. James William Miller (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 216-225.

<sup>6</sup> Gerstäcker, 216.

<sup>7</sup> Herndon, 705; Goodspeed, 663.

<sup>8</sup> Frederich Gerstäcker, *Neue Reisen durch die Vereinigten Staten, Mexiko, Ecuador, West Indien, and Venezuela* (Jena, 1868); Volume I, *Nord America*, pages 277-315 speak directly to the conditions in Arkansas; edited and translated by Anita Burr Burkey and Evan Burr Burkey reprinted in "Arkansas After the War: From the Journal of Frederick Gerstaecker" *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* XXXII, No. 3 (Autumn 1973):260. Hereafter referred to as Gerstäcker (Burkey).

<sup>9</sup> Gerstäcker (Burkey), 261.

<sup>10</sup> Gerstäcker, 211.

<sup>11</sup> Suffrage, accessed 19 December 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Jackie Paul Myers, "River Roads Provided Vitally Important Transportation for Goods and People as the County was Settled" in *Perry County Historical & Genealogical Society, Perry County, Arkansas, Its Land and People* (Perryville, AR: Walworth Publishing, 2004), 26.



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Improvement of the Fourche La Fave River began in 1879 and the early efforts toward clearing the river by the Army Corp of Engineers provided year around access for steamboats to Perryville with high water access as far as Aplin. The movement of large amounts of agricultural products and the lack of good roads meant that the river remained an important aspect of the Fourche Valley economy even after the arrival of the railroad in Perry County.<sup>13</sup>

Early maps of Arkansas, not surprisingly, show few roads through Perry County. The earliest maps, like S. Augustus Mitchell's 1836 map of western Arkansas, show no roads or cities in Perry County.<sup>14</sup> Thomas Illman's 1835 map of Arkansas shows the Petit Jean and Fourche Mountains on the north and south of the Fourche River Valley as "Impassable Mountains."<sup>15</sup> One of the earliest maps to show roads in Perry County is H. L. Tanner's, 1841, *Arkansas State Map with Roads, Canals, and Distances*.<sup>16</sup> The map shows a road from Hot Springs to Lewisburg through Perryville. This road served as an important link from the north providing access to the waters at Hot Springs. Nevertheless, the Fourche Mountains and the Fourche River Valley proved to be formidable barriers on the southern edge of the county.

An antebellum map entitled *Route from Little Rock to Fort Smith, Ark.* shows the complete southern route of the Little Rock to Fort Smith Road. While it notes that the southern route is faster it also warns, "The road from Little Rock to Dardanelle on the south side is entirely impracticable for wagons."<sup>17</sup> This impracticable southern route was the primary route across the county to the east and west. Beginning at Little Rock the road followed both Little and Big Maumelle Creeks, crossing the Big Maumelle on a bridge just north of Falkner. The route wound its way through the gaps near the present day town of Thornburg and into the Union Valley before reaching the Fourche La Fave River on the south side of Perryville.

To reach Perryville from the south one originally had to ford the Fourche La Fave River, a dangerous and often impossible crossing. The first ferry on the Fourche La Fave River was started and owned by Dr. John L. Houston. Houston owned land along the Fourche La Fave River at Perryville. He was the first Postmaster, his home was the first county courthouse, and he, along with John Greathouse, donated the land for the later county courthouses in Perry County.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Meyers, 26, 27.

<sup>14</sup> James Callahan, *New Map of Arkansas* [map] Scale not given, (Philadelphia: S. Augustus Mitchell, 1836).

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Illman, *Arkansas* [map] Scale not given. (unknown: privately printed, 1835).

<sup>16</sup> H. L. Tanner, *Tanner's Universal Atlas: Arkansas State Map with its Roads, Canals, and Distances* [map], ¾"=10 miles (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1844).

<sup>17</sup> War Department, Office of the Chief of Engineers, *Route from Little Rock to Fort Smith, Arkansas* [map], 1:506,880, (Washington, D.C.: United States War Department, c.1860); 77-CWMF-Q115, RG 77, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>18</sup> Pearl Pennington, "County Courthouse is Local Landmark" in Perry County Historical & Genealogical Society, *Perry County, Arkansas, Its Land and People* (Perryville, AR: Walworth Publishing, 2004), 30.

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From Perryville the Little Rock to Fort Smith road ran west. Older maps, many times made without any type of formal survey, show various routes for the road. The United States War Department's map, *Route from Little Rock to Fort Smith, Arkansas*, shows the road running over Fourche Pinnacle to the northwest and on through the historical town of Petit Jean to Dardanelle. An 1849 map shows the Little Rock to Fort Smith Road crossing Perry County on a more westerly route across Fourche Pinnacle and up the Petit Jean River Valley to Danville in Yell County.<sup>19</sup> Alternately, Charles Desilver's 1856 map of Arkansas shows the road running west from Perryville up the Fourche La Fave River Valley through the present day towns of Aplin and Nimrod to Petit Jean.<sup>20</sup>

Regardless of the actual route of the Little Rock to Fort Smith Road it is reasonable to assume, given the various routes on map, that in the late antebellum period there were two east to west roads in Perry County. The more northern route ran up the valley of the Petit Jean River to the historical town of Petit Jean (near the present day town of Ola). The southern route ran up the valley of the Fourche La Fave River through the towns of Cherry Hill, Nimrod, and Aplin. On each side of the Fourche La Fave River is a relatively flat flood plain. This flood plain was hailed for its rich soils and bountiful crops.

Between 1850 and 1860 the size of improved and unimproved acreage in farms in Perry County increased greatly, as did the value of those farms. Indian corn, potatoes—both sweet and Irish, swine, and cattle were the largest agricultural commodities in antebellum Perry County. However, sparsely settled, with small farms, Perry County's farmers were primarily subsistence farmers. After the Civil War, farm size remained relatively the same though production of all agricultural commodities decreased and the amount of cotton acreage increased. By 1880, the average farm size was 131 acres and thirty-two percent of tilled land, about 5,000 acres, was devoted to cotton production.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> S. Augustus Mitchell, *A New Map of Arkansas with its Canals, Roads, and Distances* [map], ¾"=10 miles (Philadelphia: S. Augustus Mitchell, 1849).

<sup>20</sup> Charles Desilver, *A New Map of Arkansas with its Counties, Towns, Post Offices, &c.* [map], ¾"=10 miles (Philadelphia: Charles Desilver, 1856). Interestingly, this 1856 Desilver map shows a diverging route off of the Little Rock to Fort Smith Road crossing the Fourche La Fave River near the site of the Wallace Bridge.

<sup>21</sup> Census Office, Department of the Interior, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, 1853), 554-7. Census Office, Department of the Interior, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860: Compiled from Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington: GPO, 1864), 6-9. Census Office, Department of the Interior, *Ninth Census—Volume III, The Statistics of The Wealth and Industry of the United States, Table IV—State of Arkansas* (Washington: GPO, 1872), 100. Census Office, Department of the Interior, *Report of the Productions of Agriculture as returned at the Tenth Census* (June 1, 1880) (Washington: GPO, 1884), 32. R. H. Loughridge, "Report on the Cotton Production of the State of Arkansas, with a discussion of the General Agricultural Features of the State" in Census Office, Department of the Interior, *Report on Cotton Production in the United States, Part I—Mississippi Valley and the Southwestern States* (Washington: GPO, 1884), 4.

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Census records show a decrease in farm values and farm production after the Civil War. Both the cash value of farms and value of farm implements declines by approximately half in the decade during the Civil War. Raiding by bushwackers seemed to have a dramatic effect on the farms in the Fourche La Fave River valley. Freiderich Gerstäcker relates being stunned at the change. "Klingelhoefter told me a great deal about the last hard days of the war. The Fourche La Fave suffered terribly at the hands of outlaw gangs... The next day I shot my first buck and wild turkey and went looking for my old hunting grounds," he wrote in 1868.<sup>22</sup> "I set off going upstream on the left bank, but, my God, I no longer recognized the place. It seemed so wild and overgrown."<sup>23</sup> Farms Gerstäcker knew as occupied were now abandoned and returning to woods.

Though reading Gerstäcker's accounts gives the impression of a renewed, wild and completely desolate countryside along the Fourche La Fave, the county was primarily woodlands even before the Civil War. The Fourche Mountains on the south; Tom's Mountain, Round Mountain, Fourche Pinnacle, Ola Mountain, and Rose Creek Mountain on the north all with poor, shallow soils and steep grades inhibited productive agriculture. In fact, the major land owner in the county was the United States government. As late as 1889 the federal government owned 90,899 acres, approximately twenty-six percent of the county. Railroad land grants to both the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railroad; Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad, and the Santa Fe Pacific Railroad contributed to a lack of privately owned and productive land.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, by the end of the nineteenth century it was this wild land that attracted new growth to the county.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century lumbermen began to look to Arkansas for new business opportunities. The successful operations of the Saginaw Lumber Company near Malvern and the Wesson Lumber Company in Wesson, along with extensive areas of unclaimed federal lands brought increased attention by Northern and Midwestern lumbermen. By 1908, six large sawmills had been constructed in the Ouachita Mountains. One of the largest and most modern of these mills was the mill of the Fourche River Lumber Company built at Esau on the Fourche River. Esau was soon renamed Bigelow after the president of the Lumber Company. The modern mill had a double band saw and was capable of producing one hundred and twenty-five thousand board feet of lumber per day. The company owned 42,000 acres along the Fourche La Fave River and would use a railroad, the Fourche River Valley & Indian Territory, and the river to transport logs to their mill.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Gerstäcker (Burkey), 261.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Goodspeed, 663, 664. Kenneth L. Smith, *Sawmill: The story of Cutting the Last Great Virgin Forest East of the Rockies* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1986), 17, 22.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, 24.

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William Richard Abbot purchased 76,400 acres of land in Perry County in 1899. He used these to support the operation of his Fort Smith Lumber Company and its five sawmills in the county.<sup>26</sup> The turn-of-the nineteenth century brought a new economic boom to the county. Though the mills were what are often called cut-out and get-out mills their presence in the county was enough to raise the traffic load and tax base to necessitate and support road improvement.

It is unknown if there was a prior bridge at the current location of the Wallace Bridge. The well documented loss of county records prevents a detailed understanding of the historical locations and types of bridges in Perry County. At least one source notes that the first bridge built over the Fourche River was not constructed until 1902 at Perryville.<sup>27</sup> Though there is some agricultural land at the foot of the Fourche Mountains to the south of the Wallace Bridge and the road to the east connected with the historic town of Deberrie, site of an antebellum gristmill and sawmill, it is unlikely that there was a bridge at this location prior to the construction of the Wallace Bridge.

It seems more likely that the primary impetus for constructing or upgrading the bridge was to provide access to the woodlands south of the Fourche River. The Fourche River Lumber Company used the river as a means of floating logs to the mill at Bigelow. The bridge provided access to and from their logging areas to the river, and to the railroad on the north side of the river. There was the logging camp of Horace Isom, less than half mile from the bridge, whose sawyers and rafters cut and floated timber to the mill at Bigelow.<sup>28</sup>

The bridge also provided access, for the loggers and their families, to the businesses at Nimrod. At the beginning of the twentieth century Nimrod was the nearest post office to many of these logging camps and was home to several stores and professional services. One of the professional services to be found at Nimrod was the doctor. Dr. Charles T. Wallace was one of several doctors practicing in the area around Nimrod. Wallace was a member of the Wallace family, long time land owners in this part of Perry County. It is said that Dr. Wallace was the first person in Nimrod to own an automobile.<sup>29</sup> It is no surprise then that Dr. Wallace was appointed, in 1905, a commissioner, along with J. N. Stone and Asa Wright, to build a bridge over the Fourche La Fave River in the western part of Perry County.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Smith, 22. The Fort Smith Lumber Company had one mill at Abbott, three mills at Casa, and one more mill at Adona. These three mills had a capacity of 20,000 board feet per day. See Perry County Historical & Genealogical Society, 36.

<sup>27</sup> Lola Bennett, "Nimrod Bridge (Wallace Bridge)," *Historic American Engineering Record*, AR-66 (Summer 2005), 4.

<sup>28</sup> Peggy Sue Davis Byers, "Nimrod" in Perry County Historical & Genealogical Society, *Perry County, Arkansas, Its Land and People* (Perryville, AR: Walworth Publishing, 2004), 164.

<sup>29</sup> Byers in Perry County Historical & Genealogical Society, 163.

<sup>30</sup> Bennett, 4.

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The bridge at Gill Ford, built 1906, was the first of the bridges built by these commissioners. Subsequently the commissioners chose several other locations for the construction of bridges. Two of the locations selected were considered to be over navigable portions of the river and thus permission for a bridge was necessary from the Arkansas legislature. Permission for construction of the bridges was granted in 1907 and in 1908; the Virginia Bridge & Iron Company was selected to build bridges over the Fourche La Pave at Fourche, Houston, Aplin, and Nimrod. The Virginia Bridge & Iron Company lost the contract before any construction began and the Southwestern Bridge Company of Joplin, Missouri completed the work on the Wallace Bridge in 1908 at a cost of approximately \$10,000.<sup>31</sup>

This bridge, over the Fourche La Pave River near Nimrod, was of the latest design when built. The Parker through truss bridge was designed to carry heavy loads with minimal structural steel. The bridge is exemplary as the last remaining example of this type of bridge in Perry County and as one of only three remaining in the state of Arkansas.

### Summary

The Wallace Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as the best example of a Camelback through truss in Perry County. The bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of transportation in Perry County. This nomination is being submitted under the multiple-property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas."

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



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### Bibliography

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Wallace Bridge

Name of Property

Perry County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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### Verbal Boundary of Description

Beginning at a point, 34 degrees, 56 minutes, 11 seconds North by 93 degrees, 3 minutes, 19 seconds West, thence South 225 feet. Thence East 30 feet. Thence North 225 feet. Thence West 30 feet to the beginning. This being a part of Sections 5 and 6 of Township 3 North, Range 19 West.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all of the land historically associated with the Wallace Bridge over the Fourche La Fave River.

Wallace Bridge  
Name of Property

Perry County, Arkansas  
County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From a point approximately 37.5 feet southwest of the southwestern corner of the bridge, proceed east 105 feet, then proceed north 255 feet, then proceed west 105 feet, then proceed south 255 to the point of beginning.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary includes the Wallace Bridge and its immediate setting.



