

**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 Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge  
other names/site number Shirley Railroad Bridge, VB0166

**2. Location**

street & number County Road 125 over the Middle Fork of the Little Red River  not for publication  
city or town Shirley  vicinity  
state Arkansas code AR county Van Buren code 141 zip code 72153

**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

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 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing and 4 rows: buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION:Rail-related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION:Road -related (vehicular)

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Baltimore Through Truss

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Wood & Concrete, walls N/A, roof N/A, other Steel

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

LOCAL

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

ENGINEERING

Period of Significance

1908 - 1949

Significant Dates

1908

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wisconsin Bridge & Iron Company, Builder

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 # AR-76

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Dept.

Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge  
Name of Property

Van Buren County, Arkansas  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than an acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>561366</u> Easting	<u>3946394</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.)

**SEE CONTINUATION SHEET**

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Austin, under Ralph Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date June 8, 2009  
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street 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 Van Buren County  
street & number 451 Main Street telephone                       
city or town Clinton state Arkansas zip code 72031

**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 Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

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## Summary

The Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge straddles the Little Red River just north of Shirley, Arkansas, in Van Buren County. It is a Baltimore through truss with an interesting history, as it was originally a bridge for the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad, built in 1908, possibly by the Wisconsin Bridge & Iron Company. The rail line was abandoned in 1949, and the tracks that were supported by the bridge did not serve a function again until 1978, when they were covered by a concrete deck for vehicular traffic. Today, the bridge operates as a single lane bridge for County Road 125, connecting the northwestern corner of Shirley to Red River Road, which runs parallel to the western banks of the Middle Fork of the Little Red River. Spanning approximately 153 feet over the river, the bridge's total length is 339 feet. The bridge is 8 feet wide and 20 feet tall.

## Elaboration

The Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge was built in 1908, likely by the Wisconsin Bridge & Iron Company. It was part of a major enterprise, as the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad Company commissioned the Allegheny Improvement Company, in 1906, to build a line from Harrison to Helena, Arkansas. In 1907, the construction of a seventy-five mile stretch from Leslie to Pangburn, Arkansas, began, which would go through Shirley on its path. Shirley was originally an outpost for the timber and railroad industries. Along the route, the Middle Fork of the Little Red River flowed southeast, before it was dammed, in 1959, to make Greers Ferry Lake further southeast.

Van Buren's topography is made of the Ozark Mountains, with rivers forming valleys through the ranges. The Middle Fork of the Little Red River bends around the town of Shirley, flowing southwest, before bending around the south side of the town and continuing east. The bridge stands over the western flowing bend, with its length angled northwest, toward Leslie, which is where the old railroad came from.

The bridge is a Baltimore through truss, which is a subclass of the Pratt truss. Both are designs from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. The Pratt truss became one of the standardized designs that replaced wooden truss bridges as they had more strength and permanence for the established locomotive industry. The configuration consisted of metal members situated vertically for compression and diagonally for tension. After Thomas and Caleb Pratt patented their design in 1844, the Pratt truss was one of two bridge variations that were being constructed for the railroad lines.<sup>1</sup>

The basic Pratt form was later modified to make the Baltimore truss, as it was used extensively by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Developed by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1871, the Baltimore incorporated the use of sub-struts and sub-ties to stiffen the truss under heavy moving loads, as railroads increased in size and weight. It increased the structure's rigidity without increasing its overall weight.

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<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).

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation

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The Baltimore through truss that stands over the Middle Fork of the Little Red River is made primarily of steel, wood and concrete. It is pin-connected and spans 153'-8", with a total length of 339'-8" with the approaches. The approaches consist of simple steel I-beam spans. Its width is 8'-2", with the truss giving 20' of clearance to the top portal system that connects the sides. The bridge is supported by two large concrete piers that stand in the river.

The iron rails were eventually removed, yet, the wooden timbers of the railroad are still visible on the sides, as they now support a poured concrete deck. The bridge had the subsequent work accomplished in 1978 to make it a one-lane roadway, which connects Shirley to County Road 125. Metal guardrails line the sides of the deck on the southern side of the bridge.

### **Integrity**

The bridge functions today as a continuation of County Road 125 into the town of Shirley. Apart from the added concrete deck, the bridge's integrity has not been compromised. The original Baltimore truss members are evident and the bridge remains capable of supporting vehicular travel.

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## Summary

The Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as the only example of a Baltimore through truss in Van Buren County. The bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of transportation in Van Buren County.

## Elaboration

The Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge is connected to the town of Shirley, Arkansas, which was one of the many timber outposts in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that was along the route of the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad. Shirley was established in 1910, in between Leslie and Edgemont, Arkansas, which were the nearest depot towns for the rail line during its years of operation from 1909 to 1949. The M & NA company had a turbulent past, including economic upsets that led to a notorious strike against the company, which aided in the failure of the regional industry and the abandonment of the line.

Shirley is located in the northeast corner of Van Buren County. The county is in north central Arkansas, and a part of the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, with river valleys carving through the hills. Before western expansion, early settlement in the county was sparse. The rocky terrain was unappealing to anyone looking to make a homestead. However, after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, land prices for the region were considered prospective, and small communities were eventually established.

Many factors led to the continuing development of the county, which was developed in 1833. Arkansas became a state in 1836, and the following year the country underwent a recession that displaced many people living further east, causing many of them to migrate west. The new state became promising to those looking for a fresh start, and by the census of 1840 Van Buren County's population had grown to over 1,500 residents. The rising townships accomplished much, as they cleared timber to make farms and roadways, and the town of Clinton became the county seat in 1842. The region's terrain soon became a haven in the hills, as people would come to find healthier homes, away from fevers and diseases. By 1850, the county population had nearly doubled to over 2,800 people.<sup>2</sup>

The Civil War came and went, with little impact on the county. The timber industry, however, quickly followed, as it was a large resource during the Reconstruction. Arkansas's vast amount of forests were often an obstacle in establishing homesteads, as much tree clearing was needed to develop access and crop land. After the war, new mechanized tools were made to quickly assist in clearing trees, which became a business in itself. Sawmills were soon erected all over the state, as lumber entrepreneurs would purchase land, build their mills, clear the land and move on to the next, in a repeated process that evolved into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>2</sup> Sharon Baker "Van Buren County" Van Buren County Historical Society, *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture* online at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/> accessed 9 June 2009.

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The harvesting process required a lot of manpower, as it employed more people in the 1900s. Powered equipment aided in the expansion of lumbering operations, and employment grew to handle the machines. Along with the employment, the industry would also become a primary influence in the development of towns. Wherever a sawmill was constructed many new services and institutions—schools, churches, stores, police and fire departments, hospitals, newspapers, and utilities—were built along with the homes to support the growing numbers of employees and their families.<sup>3</sup>

Another large contributor to the Reconstruction era was the railroad industry, as they aided other industries in transporting goods throughout the country. Timber companies made beneficial business relationships with the railroad company, as railroads needed ties for their lines and timber needed to be transported to where it was needed. As a timber company would continue its harvesting process, they would build railroads into their parcel of land, which would ship the cut trees to the mill, then ship the lumber to its distributors.<sup>4</sup>

The historical involvement of the railroads in Arkansas and Van Buren County struggled through the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The residents of northern Arkansas were looking for a connection to the rest of the country, namely to be a part of the world commerce. The isolated people of Harrison, Arkansas, gave what they could and managed to raise \$40,000 toward the construction of a railroad. On May 17, 1899, the Arkansas Railroad Commission granted a charter to the St. Louis & North Arkansas Railroad, who would connect Eureka Springs to Harrison in March of 1901.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, the cost of locomotive operations was more expensive than realized, as it cost too much for trains to travel through the hills of the region. In 1906, with no profits to continue the train service and \$30,000 lost, the St. Louis & North Arkansas Railroad was reorganized as the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad.<sup>6</sup>

With the M & NA in control of the existing line in northern Arkansas, a contract was immediately negotiated with the Allegheny Improvement Company to continue the railroad south from Harrison to Helena, Arkansas, on the Mississippi River. The overall length of the railroad was 368 miles, and was likely the most expensive railroad ever built in Arkansas.

Built in segments between towns, railroad officials would file mortgages for the amounts needed to build the tracks from Harrison to Leslie, Leslie to Pangburn, Pangburn to Brinkley, and Brinkley to Helena. The

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<sup>3</sup> George W. Balogh "Timber Industry" (Conway, 2007), *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture* online at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/> accessed 9 June 2009.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Clifton E. Hull *Shortline Railroads of Arkansas* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), p. 50, 51.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

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venture was completed in March 1909. The engineering of the line faced a large amount of challenges, as they had to traverse the sloped terrain, which was of poor soil quality and had subsurface water deposits. These difficulties, along with the weather, set the construction back and added to the cost per mile.<sup>7</sup>

The segment built between Leslie and Pangburn was a 75-mile stretch that began in February, 1907. It traveled southeast, through Shirley, to reach Heber Springs. Fifteen-hundred laborers were employed to grade the road bed and lay the tracks from Leslie, through a natural pass in the Boston Mountains and into the swampy region near Searcy, Arkansas.<sup>8</sup> When the tracks came to the town of Shirley, the Middle Fork of the Little Red River required some engagement.

Shirley, Arkansas, was built as a supporter to the coexisting lumber and railroad industries. At the time, the area was simply known by the hamlet of Settlement, and it lied on the south bank of a large horseshoe-shaped bend in the Little Red River in northeastern Van Buren County. Then, it only consisted of a bank, post office, drugstore, five general stores, and a cotton gin. When the M & NA railroad came through in 1907, Settlement was hopeful to be a depot town for the railroad, but its topography was unsuitably placed. A construction camp was made across the river, to build the bridges and track within the horseshoe bend. In September 1908 a station house opened at the site of the construction camp, named Shirley, after a Cotton Belt agent who had an office in the building.<sup>9</sup>

Soon after the railroad went through J.R. Arnold and A. Brown, owners of Arnold & Brown general store in Settlement, purchased 80-acres of land around the Shirley station house. They relocated their store in Settlement to their new lot and sold the remaining lots to other Settlement residents, giving away one lot free with every purchase of five lots or more. Settlement was eventually abandoned while the new community grew rapidly, which became the town of Shirley in 1910. By 1920 the town's population was 349, and it continued to grow into the 1940s.<sup>10</sup>

Shirley was eager to become Van Buren County's new seat, as it was growing and had more business than Clinton, who had to haul their goods to Shirley in freight wagons. The town quickly prospered in the timber industry, as ten to fifteen sawmills operated in the industry after 1911. However, the industry in Shirley flourished then dwindled down, as they spent their parcels, to only three stands by the end of World War II.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> William D. Baker, *Historic Railroad Depots of Arkansas, 1870-1940* (Little Rock, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, \_\_\_\_), p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Hull, p. 61.

<sup>9</sup> Lawrence R. Handley "Settlements Across Northern Arkansas as Influenced by the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad" *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Winter 1974 (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 1974), p. 286, 287.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 287.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 288.

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The two bridges that were needed to cross over the horseshoe-shaped bend were the railroad's primary concern in the area, before Shirley was established. Engineers realized it would be cheaper to build steel truss bridges over the river, rather than tunnel through or build around it.<sup>12</sup> In 1907, a subcontract was likely made to the Wisconsin Bridge & Iron Company to construct the bridge on the north bend that was needed for the line to continue. WB&I was contracted to build all the necessary bridges between Harrison and Leslie, and they built a comparable Baltimore through truss in Beaver, but no other information has been found to confirm the fabricators of the bridge at Shirley.<sup>13</sup>

Construction began in 1908, as the Baltimore through truss bridge became erected. It was a single span, pin-connected steel truss on concrete piers, with the main span stretching 153 feet over the Little Red River. The bridge's overall length, with the approaches included, was 340 feet, along with an 8-foot width and 20-foot overhead clearance.<sup>14</sup>

The Baltimore through truss was a modification to the 1844 Pratt truss. The design was developed by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1871, while the name was established by its extensive use for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.<sup>15</sup> The Baltimore truss maintains the basic form of the Pratt truss, which is a series of vertical posts compressing between the base and top chord, and diagonal ties under tension between the posts. The Baltimore configuration developed more rigidity in longer, deeper spans without increasing structural weight, as it added sub-struts and sub-ties. Its development was due to the fact the locomotives were becoming heavier, along with their loads, and were gaining performance speed, which effected structural integrity.<sup>16</sup>

The Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge was completed in 1908, and the 368-mile M & NA line was completed in March of the next year. The tracks stretched from Neosho, Missouri to Helena, Arkansas, and regular service began in April 1909. However, the line was considered plagued with bad luck and the on-line business of the region could not produce enough to support a rail operation of that size. The Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad consistently lost money until it was forced into receivership in 1912.<sup>17</sup>

Under new management, the hard times continued for the line as a locomotive collided with a Kansas City Southern train south of Joplin, Missouri, in August 1914.<sup>18</sup> Later, management and maintenance standards

<sup>12</sup> Handley, p. 286.

<sup>13</sup> Historic American Engineering Record, "Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad Bridge," *HAER No. AR-76, Bridges 2005* (Washington, D.C., 2005).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</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).

<sup>17</sup> W. Baker, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup> Hull, p. 76, 77.

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declined through the 1910s. By the 1920s, financial upsets caused railroad employees to frequently strike.

In 1921, an employee strike in Harrison attracted national attention, as it became one of the longest railroad strikes in U.S. history. The railroad's general manager, C.A. Phelan, was considered grossly overpaid, which influenced walk-outs at the company. The strikers headquartered in Harrison, where the population would soon grow tired of the situation, as lack of railroad commerce brought on economic hardships. The strikers, who had formed the American Federation of Labor union, soon turned to violence and sabotage, as they began attacking M & NA sympathizers and burning railroad bridges. These conflicts continued into 1923, with over a dozen instances of sabotage, several accounts of mob violence, and unauthorized banishments.<sup>19</sup>

The M & NA struggle with disruptions was not over after the strike. While business for the line resumed, the Bureau of Locomotive Inspection frequently cited the company for unsafe and defective locomotives, and the rail lines and roadbeds had become neglected. By this time, the automotive industry was well established in the country, and roads in the Ozarks were expanding and improving. The competition with the automobile drove the railroad company into receivership again in 1927. It was not until 1935 when they foreclosed and sold for the low price of \$350,000. The name once again changed to the Missouri & Arkansas Railway.<sup>20</sup>

As a new operation, the M & A Railroad conducted business as usual for the next decade. After World War II, the country's men returned home, looking for a normal living with a respectable wage. Workers of the M & A line expected an increase in pay, which the management admitted could not be done. The result was another strike that led to abandonment of the line in 1946. The road was later bought up in sections from various capitalists, who would either allow their section to continue functioning as a line or were scrapped. The iron of the tracks from Leslie to Heber Springs was decidedly scrapped in 1949<sup>21</sup>, and the Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge lied dormant for the next thirty years.

With the railroad no longer traveling through Van Buren County, its steadily rising population began to dissipate to towns with more opportunity. In March of 1959, construction of the Greers Ferry Dam began across the Little Red River, east of Shirley. It was completed in 1962, and the Greers Ferry Lake was formed, bringing many changes to Van Buren County. Families and cemeteries were displaced, while the government's purchase of the land was reinvested in the county, and land purchases for business

<sup>19</sup> Guy Lancaster "Harrison Railroad Riot," (Little Rock, 2007), *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture* online at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/> accessed 9 June 2009.

<sup>20</sup> W. Baker, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Hull, p. 102.

opportunities were made. The lake added recreational value to the county, which influenced an increase in tourism and residency, causing land values to rise.<sup>22</sup>

Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge  
Name of Property

Van Buren, Arkansas  
County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Today, Shirley is home to 337 residents,<sup>23</sup> which make a small farming community that established a center to aid in the development of a sustainable source of agriculture. Through their Community Development Corporation, the community-based organization formed a plan to initiate short and long-term development programs for the town and the surrounding communities. Founded in 1988, the Shirley CDC has focused on economic development, educational enhancement, computer and business classes, youth job training and service projects that improve and strengthen the community. They are currently involved in projects that research and demonstrate the skills and techniques needed for production and marketing of specialty, agricultural crops. Their present focus is on log-grown Shiitake mushrooms, as a growing industry that is uniquely suited to the climate, hardwood forests and skills of the local people.<sup>24</sup>

In 1978, Van Buren County refurbished the Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge, as they refit it to support vehicular traffic.<sup>25</sup> After three decades of abandonment, the wooden ties, that once carried the M & NA rails, now sustain a concrete deck. The through bridge currently stands as a one-lane river crossing, which connects County Road 125 to the town of Shirley, Arkansas.

### Statement of Significance

The Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as the example of Baltimore through truss in Van Buren County. The bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of transportation in Van Buren County.

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<sup>22</sup> S. Baker.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Shirley town, Arkansas" (2007), *The U.S. Census Bureau* online at <http://factfinder.census.gov>, accessed 10 June 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Shiitake Center, "About Us" The Shiitake Center online at <http://www.shiitakecenter.com>, accessed 10 June 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Historic American Engineering Record.

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## Verbal Boundary of Description

From a point 20 feet northwest of the northwest end of the bridge, proceed southeasterly along County Road 125 to a point 20 feet southeast of the southeast 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 Middle Fork of the Little Red River Bridge and its immediate setting.