NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

NAME
HISTORIC q Staats Mill Covered Bridge
AND/OR COMMON Tug Fork Covered Bridge

LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER Route 40 Feeder at Cedar Knob FFA PHA
CITY, TOWN Staats Mill CITY, TOWN
STATE West Virginia STATE
CODE 54 CODE
COUNTY Jackson COUNTY
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Third

CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
DISTRICT X DistRICT
BUILDING(S) PRIVATE
STRUCTURE BOTH
SITE PUBLIC ACQUISITION
OBJECT IN PROCESS
OBJECT BEING CONSIDERED
STATUS OCCUPIED
UNOCCUPIED
WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
YES RESTRICTED
YES UNRESTRICTED
NO

PRESENT USE
AGRICULTURE MUSEUM
COMMERCIAL PARK
EDUCATIONAL PRIVATE RESID
ENTERTAINMENT RELIGIOUS
GOVERNMENT SCIENTIFIC
INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORTATION
MILITARY OTHER

OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME West Virginia Department of Highways
STREET & NUMBER 1900 Washington Street, East
CITY, TOWN Charleston CITY, TOWN
STATE West Virginia STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Jackson County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER Court Street STREET
CITY, TOWN Ripley CITY, TOWN
STATE West Virginia STATE

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE
DATE
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN STATE
The Staats Mill Covered Bridge, constructed in 1887 across the Tug Fork of Big Mill Creek in Jackson County, West Virginia, is an impressive and historically significant example of a late 19th century timber covered bridge constructed on the patented Long truss system.

Constructed by H. T. Hartley, a prominent local builder of the era, the Staats Mill Covered Bridge has a total length of 97 feet, excluding the overhang of the eaves, and has a clear span between abutments of 85 feet 11 inches. The main structure of the Covered Bridge consists of two large timber trusses framed on the system patented by Stephen Long in 1830. The distinctive feature of Long trusses are the "X" braced diagonals in each of the panels. In the case of this covered bridge, there are 11 such panels; each 8 feet 7 inches long and 14 feet 3 inches deep. The timber work on the trusses is beautifully executed and is probably the most noteworthy part of the entire structure.

The bridge floor was originally framed with transverse timber floor beams supported at the panel points of the truss. These beams carries longitudinal timber stringers surmounted by a timber deck. Throughout the years the bridge has undergone a number of modifications. The latest, and most extensive, was carried out in 1971 when the entire deck was cut away and a new three span steel girder bridge was constructed inside the original truss work. During this modification two steel bents were also added in mid-stream to support the three span steel girders. A laminated 2 by 4 inch timber deck was installed on the steel floor beams and provided with an asphalt overlay as a wearing course.

Like most 19th century timber bridges, the Staats Mill bridge is, of course, covered. Vertical siding covers the entire truss work on both sides of the bridge except for a space under the eaves which acts as a clerestory to provide light to the inside of the bridge. The bridge was apparently painted, until recently, a traditional barn red. The Staats Mill Bridge is covered with a simple pitched roof sherardized with a standing seam metal surface supported on timber girters and rafters. Because of the large exposed side area, a horizontal truss was usually incorporated in the roof structure of covered bridges to resist lateral wind loads. These trusses traditionally consisted of transverse timbers and diagonal cross bracing firmly secures by wooden pegs, called "treenails," and wedges. It is practically certain that such a bracing was part of the original Staats Mill Covered Bridge structure. However, all that remains today are loosely fastened diagonals that serve little purpose for resisting lateral loads. This lack of horizontal stiffness at the level of the eaves has caused the main trusses to lean somewhat out of the vertical.

The abutments consist of full height cut stone, done locally, which supports both the original trusses and the new steel girders. This masonry work is a handsome adjunct to the timber trusses, vertical siding and pitched roof of the bridge.

The Staats Mill Covered Bridge is an excellent example of 19th century covered bridges, planned and executed locally to serve the transportation needed of a growing agricultural area.
The Staats Mill Covered Bridge is an excellent example of that unique American
development, one of the great American contributions to structural engineering; the
covered timber bridge.

When the Staats Mill Covered Bridge was constructed in Jackson County, West
Virginia in 1887, it was only the latest of many such wooden structures to dot
the countryside of West Virginia and the United States. Today, however, the Staats
Mill Bridge, indeed, covered bridges in general, are rapidly becoming an "endangered
species." In the past 25 years West Virginia has witnessed the disappearance of
more than 40 covered timber bridges. Of this once plentiful, even common, genre of
structures, only 18 remain in this state.

The Staats Mill community of Jackson County, West Virginia, was founded by the
Staats family. Abraham Staats (1750-1826) and his wife Ann King Staats (1755-1811)
were the progenitors of the Staats family in Jackson County. Abraham served in the
Revolutionary War. Their son Cornelius served in the War of 1812 and married Ann Carrie
They were the parents of Issac Staats, who built the first water powered mill on
Tug Fork of Big Mill Creek at the site that came to be known as Staats Mill. The
present covered bridge was built adjacent to the mill and near the store, both owned
by Enoch Staats, the son of Issac Staats. Thus, the bridge site has played an
important role in the history and development of Jackson County since the 18th century.

In 1887 the Jackson County Court, under the presidency of George W. Shinn,
appointed Shinn, George I. Walker, and S.M. Rader to select a site for the proposed
bridge over Tug Fork of Big Mill Creek. The bridge at Hardesty's Mill over Tug
Fork was adopted as a model and the stone work was built by Quincy and Grim, local masons
at a cost of $710.40. The wood superstructure was constructed by local builder
H. T. Hartley for $903.95, and Enoch Staats made the dirt fills for the approaches for
the sum of $110.00. The total cost of the Staats Mill Covered Bridge was $1,788.35.

The bridge was constructed according to the Long System, patented by Stephen Long
in 1830. For spans up to 100 feet Queen, King and multiple King Post trusses were
popular in the Virginias. For longer spans the familiar Burr arch-truss system was
the usual solution employed by the craft-trained bridge builders of the 19th century.
However, several notable bridges were constructed with Long trusses and for spans
over 100 feet these trusses were often combined with an arch to reduce deflections
caused by loads, creep and shrinkage of the wood and movement of the joints.

It is not known why H. T. Hartley selected the Long system for the Staats Mill
Bridge. In addition, he framed the bridge without the use of stiffening arches, despite the fact that the span was nearly 100 feet. The result was and is an outstanding example of a pure Long Truss covered bridge of notable span, executed by craftsmen of considerable skill. Its architectural beauty, as well as its utility in providing transportation for the region, made the Staats Mill Covered Bridge a source of pride for the people of Jackson County and West Virginia.
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY  1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Kenna

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A 1, 7 4 4, 5 5, 8, 0 4, 2 8, 8 2, 0
C 0 0 0 0
E 0 0 0 0
G 0 0 0 0

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Staats Mill Covered Bridge is located 8.7 miles southeast of Ripley, Jackson County, West Virginia, on Route 40 at Tug Fork of Big Mill Creek. The coordinates of the bridge are: Latitude 38° 44' 6" and Longitude 81° 37' 5".

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE
Michael J. Pauley, Historian

ORGANIZATION
Historic Preservation Unit
West Virginia Department of Culture & History

STREET & NUMBER
Capitol Complex

CITY OR TOWN
Charleston

STATE
West Virginia

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION
Maintaince Reports, Staats Mill Bridge, West Virginia Department of Highways.

11. STAATS MILL COVERED BRIDGE
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