

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Van Metre Ford Stone Bridge

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Across Opequon Creek on County Route 36

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Martinsburg

 VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

West Virginia

CODE

54

COUNTY

Berkeley

CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

State of West Virginia (Department of Highways)

STREET & NUMBER

1900 Washington Street, East

CITY, TOWN

Charleston

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

West Virginia 25305

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Berkeley County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

King and Queen Streets

CITY, TOWN

Martinsburg

STATE

West Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYSTITLE Berkeley County Historical Society and Berkeley County Historical Landmarks
Commission Survey

DATE

1973-74

__ FEDERAL __ STATE COUNTY __ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Berkeley County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Martinsburg

STATE

West Virginia

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This three-span, stone-arch bridge was built in 1832 by Silas Harry under contract with the Berkeley County Court. It was constructed in order to eliminate the fording of Opequon Creek when traveling on the Warm Springs Road.

The bridge is 165 feet long and is built of uncoursed ashlar limestone masonry. Each of the three segmental arches, delineated with smooth-surfaced, but irregular width, voussoirs, springs from low, round-ended piers that have cone-shaped buttresses carried into the solid masonry spandrels. The center arch spans 32 feet while each of the end arches spans 29.6 feet.

Parapet walls appear to have had cement capping added at some later time. Low pylons, also capped with cement, terminate the parapet walls at the approaches to the bridge. In plan, the structure is wider at the ends (22 feet) than at the center (16 feet). The stone work in the piers and buttresses as well as in the voussoirs is especially precise. Mortar erosion over the years has revealed closely fit joints.

The only changes to the bridge have been resurfacing of the road and repair to the walls above the roadline where automobile accidents have caused destruction. Although worn, the stonework has held up superbly to the stresses of load and the forces of the elements.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

1832

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Silas Harry

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Van Metre Ford Stone Bridge in Berkeley County, West Virginia, played a significant part in the development of the local transportation system and helped spur commerce and communication by making the crossing of Opequon Creek easier and less expensive. Constructed by a private bridge builder (a stone mason no doubt) under the auspices and guidance of a commission appointed by the county court, the method of proceeding with this type of improvement was important in its own right as indicative of the role of government in the field of transportation regulation and development. The product was a structure of utility and beauty, for the rise in height and constriction in width toward the center combined with the stout but graceful buttresses and purposeful but pleasing arches to provide a water crossing able to carry the heaviest load through what has always been a picturesque setting.

The opening of new land and the building of a new nation after the Revolutionary War found a literal and figurative barrier in the lengthy chain of mountains called the Appalachians, even while the cry for internal improvements emphasized the development of greater commercial accessibility to the hinterland. The first phase of the process, in many instances, was reaching the mountains from the cities and waterways of the eastern coastal areas. Roads, canals and eventually railroads became enterprises of benefit to more than just the subscribers to each effort, and the undertakings required the outlays of groups rather than individuals. This basically took the form of a variety of private, quasi-public and public companies, but all transportation development came in one way or another to call upon the resources of local governments.

Major links like the National Road, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and Baltimore and Ohio Railroad would be the outstanding and primary objectives, yet it was the local turnpike, waterway and railroad spur that touched small farmers, craftsmen and the general public most directly. Van Metre Ford Stone Bridge, though a minor, almost insignificant, element in the opening of the interior, represents effort on the local level that complemented the grand design.

Land along Opequon Creek where the bridge stands had been in Van Metre hands since the 1730s, and the Warm Springs Road traversed it early on. This road apparently stretched the distance between Alexandria and the Warm Springs (Bath or Berkeley Springs today), the latter a place frequented because of its quality mineral waters. Probably beginning as little more than a path, the road eventually became a main east-west artery of the area and carried much local commerce and communication. By the nineteenth century there was a need for a set and improved route to serve the visitors to the springs, travelers to eastern cities, mails, drovers headed for markets and the growing amount of local business enterprise. Among improvements decided upon was the upgrading of fords and construction of permanent bridges, and one of the latter was

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VAN METRE FORD STONE BRIDGE, MARTINSBURG, BERKELEY COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE two

scheduled for the Opequon at the old Van Metre Ford.

Not being a turnpike or legislated highway that had access to funds from subscriptions, special appropriations or lotteries, the Warm Springs Road through Berkeley County had to be improved at local expense. During the early 1830s, the county court established a commission composed of James Doll, Daniel Burkhart and Jacob Vandoren to study the Van Metre crossing and contract for the erection of a stone bridge. In 1832 they reported that a contract had been agreed upon with Silas Harry of Pennsylvania (he had done some bridge building in nearby Maryland). The commissioners were given \$850 early in the year and told to obtain stone, timber and other materials necessary. In late April, a local newspaper reported that the bridge would cost \$3700, but the matter-of-fact way it was mentioned indicates that the sum, apparently raised by a county levy, neither was viewed as excessive nor the project inappropriate.

Harry used limestone, a common building material of the area, to construct the triple-arch span. Engineering skills in the use of stone for bridges had evolved over a fairly long period, but the arches became wider and higher and piers narrower as new techniques developed and understanding of stresses and pressures progressed. In the Van Metre Bridge, Harry translated engineering skills into an attractive passage over the Opequon. The stonework itself was well executed, and the varied sizes of the blocks has provided an interesting backdrop to the seemingly smooth and proportioned voussoirs of the arches. All is complemented by the cone-shaped buttresses on the piers to either side of the main arch.

Since 1832 the Van Metre Ford Stone Bridge has served the area well, at first as a major crossing of an important waterway on a primary transportation route and more recently as a convenient (though narrow) crossing of a small stream on a secondary road. Modern highway development and bridge engineering have passed it by, but the strength of its stout construction has defied the destructive forces of the elements and man-made obstacles. Utility in purpose has now been transcended by attractiveness in setting and design in stone to make the structure a landmark unique in the area.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Martinsburg (Virginia) Gazette, April 26, 1832.
 Martinsburg, W.Va. Berkeley County Courthouse. Court Minute Book "O."
 Complete Record Book 1. Will Books 1 and 2.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	2,4,8,0,4,5	4,3,7,0,0,4,5	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James E. Harding, Historian

ORGANIZATION

West Virginia Antiquities Commission

DATE

October 7, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 630

TELEPHONE

(304) 296-1791

CITY OR TOWN

Morgantown

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

Edward M. Lewis

TITLE West Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE January 7, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

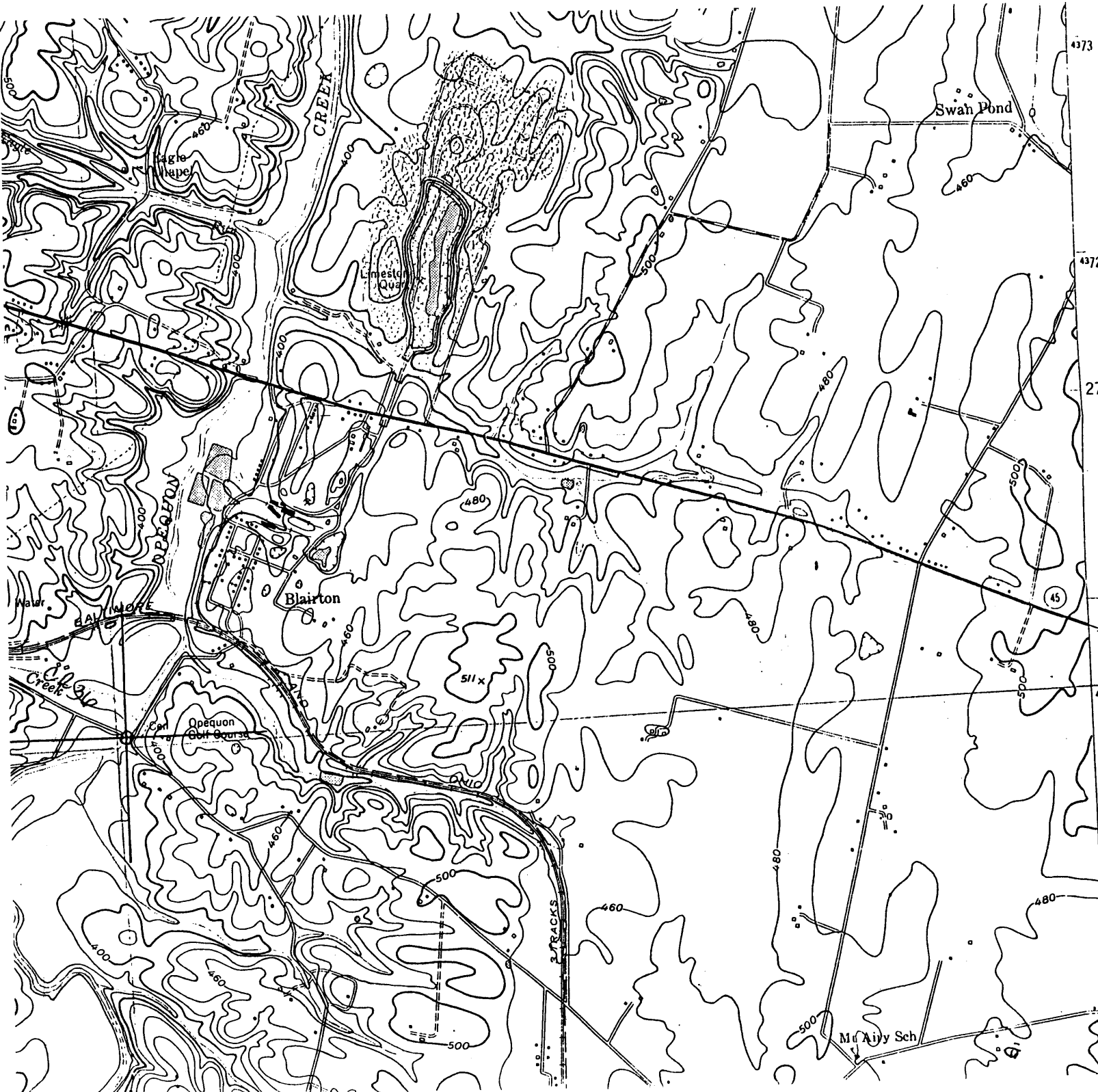
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER





VAN METRE FORD
 STONE BRIDGE
 MARTINSBURG VICINITY,
 BERKELEY COUNTY,
 WEST VIRGINIA
 UTM REFERENCES:
 18/248045/4370045

MARTINSBURG 7.5' QUADRANGLE