

(Oct. 1990)

930

**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 Marion Memorial Bridge

other names/site number Hale's Bar Bridge, Marion County Memorial Bridge, Big Blue Bridge

2. Location

street & number U.S. Highway 41 at Nickajack Lake (Tennessee River) N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Haletown N/A ☐ vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Marion code 115 zip code 37347

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.)

Richard H. Tom
Signature of certifying official/Title

7/19/07
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

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:) _____

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

9.6.07
Date of Action

Marion Memorial Bridge
Name of Property

Marion County, TN
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	0	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**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: road-related (vehicular)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: road-related (vehicular)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Warren and Parker Truss Bridge

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Steel Truss

roof N/A
other N/A

Narrative Description

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

See Attached Sheets.

Marion Memorial Bridge

Marion County, TN

Name of Property

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 the National Register.)

☒ **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 NA

(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** moved from its original location.

☐ **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.)

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): N/A

☐ 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

ENGINEERING

Period of Significance

1929-1947

Significant Dates

1929-1930: Construction of Bridge (toll)

1947- tolls removed at bridge

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Tennessee State Highway Department

Grier-Lowrence Construction Company

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☒ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository:

Tennessee Department of Transportation

Marion Memorial Bridge
Name of Property

Marion County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property N/A Sequatchie, TN 100 SE

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>632452</u>	<u>3877002</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>16</u>	<u>632980</u>	<u>3876880</u>

3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
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 Paul Archambault/Historic Preservation Planner
organization Southeast Tennessee Development District date April 2007
street & number 535 Chestnut Street, 3rd Floor telephone 423-424-4266
city or town Chattanooga state TN zip code 37402

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 Tennessee Department of Transportation c/o Commissioner Gerald Nicely
street & number 505 Deaderick Street, Suite 900, James K. Polk Building telephone (615) 741-5367
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37243-0349

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

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Marion Memorial Bridge
 Marion County, TN

VII. Description

The Marion Memorial Bridge, on U.S. Highway 41(State Route 2), is located in the unincorporated community of Haletown, Tennessee, which is located approximately six miles southeast of Jasper and the Sequatchie Valley in Marion County, Tennessee. The bridge, constructed in 1929-1930, is a Parker and Warren Truss bridge. Its primary truss span is supported by five concrete piers, and its east/west approach spans are supported by a total of twenty precast, pre-stressed concrete slabs. Located directly north of U.S. Interstate 24 the bridge is surrounded by Cedar Mountain to the east, Raccoon Mountain to the west, Little Cedar Mountain to the southeast, and Sand Mountain to the south. The Marion Memorial Bridge served as a toll bridge from 1931 until 1947 as part of the Tennessee State Highway System. Further, the bridge was a primary link from Jasper to Chattanooga along the Wauhatchie Route, which was a section of the Western Division of the Dixie Highway.

The bridge, constructed by the Grier-Lowrence Company in 1929-1930, presently features two 365-foot Parker trusses and two, 140-foot Warren trusses with a total deck width of 23 feet and a curb-to-curb width of 20 feet that allows for two-lane traffic. The total length of the bridge is 1,870 feet with the main truss span length at 369 feet and the vertical clearance at 14.6 feet. The Marion Memorial Bridge crosses the Tennessee River at 429.8 miles above the mouth.

The original engineering plans for the bridge in 1928 called for a "four-span through-truss bridge, two long channel spans over the main stream with a short shore span at each end, concrete girder approaches." The horizontal clearance was 355 feet and the vertical clearance was 83 feet above normal water and 40 feet above high water.¹ The original bridge was 1,000 feet in length and included the main truss spans, five concrete piers, and approach spans.² A toll house (non-extant), constructed in 1931, remained in operation until 1947 and was removed in the 1950s.

The steel Parker and Warren trusses are supported by five concrete piers and have retained their integrity.³ The Parker truss, designed Charles H. Parker in the 1870s, was a popular style used by state highway departments in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Its prominent features include the polygonal top chord, diagonals in each panel, inclined end posts, and varying length verticals, which shorten outward from the central panel.⁴

¹ "Bridge Hearing To Be Dec. 20: Government to Consider Application of State for Span Near Jasper," *Sequachee Valley News*, 29 November 1928, Vol. 36, No. 20, p. 3.

² "New Road Work Pushed," *Sequachee Valley News*, 28 November 1929, Vol. 37, No. 20, p. 1.

³ Tennessee Department of Transportation. "Marion County Memorial Bridge, Marion County, Tennessee Offering Package: History of Marion County Memorial Bridge," 2000, p. 4.

⁴ Parsons Brinckerhoff and Engineering and Industrial Heritage. *A Context for Common Historic Bridge Types*. October 2005, "Parker Truss," Chapter 3, p. 35.

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Marion Memorial Bridge
Marion County, TN

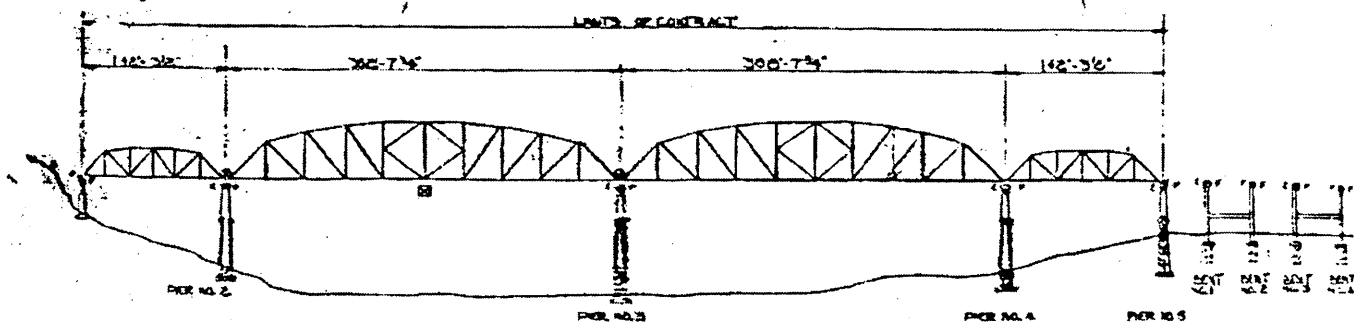
Elevation of Warren Truss



Elevation of Parker Truss



The Warren truss, designed in the late nineteenth century, was widely constructed among state highway departments in the 1920s and 1930s. A primary character-defining feature of the Warren truss is the diagonals connecting the top and bottom chords. The design is simply a series of equilateral triangles. Other prominent features include inclined end posts, stringers, and floor beams.⁵



ESTIMATED QUANTITIES	
ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION
1	CONCRETE
2	STEEL
3	PAINT
4	LABOR
5	TRUCKS
6	WATER
7	FOOD
8	TOOL
9	WASTE
10	WATER
11	FOOD
12	TOOL
13	WASTE
14	WATER
15	FOOD
16	TOOL
17	WASTE
18	WATER
19	FOOD
20	TOOL
21	WASTE
22	WATER
23	FOOD
24	TOOL
25	WASTE
26	WATER
27	FOOD
28	TOOL
29	WASTE
30	WATER
31	FOOD
32	TOOL
33	WASTE
34	WATER
35	FOOD
36	TOOL
37	WASTE
38	WATER
39	FOOD
40	TOOL
41	WASTE
42	WATER
43	FOOD
44	TOOL
45	WASTE
46	WATER
47	FOOD
48	TOOL
49	WASTE
50	WATER

1 ESTIMATED NO. STEEL PL. STEEL 204,142 lbs.
2 ESTIMATED NO. STEEL PL. STEEL 1,001,133 lbs.
3 ESTIMATED NO. STEEL PL. STEEL 2,122 lbs.

Bridge Plan

⁵ Ibid., "Warren Truss," Chapter 3, p. 39.

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Marion Memorial Bridge
Marion County, TN

Between 1964 and 1967, the Nickajack Dam was constructed by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). As a result, changes were made to the Marion Memorial Bridge. TVA conducted the following work on the bridge in the mid to late 1960s: raised the main truss spans, placed caps on top of the piers; installed twenty pre-cast, pre-stressed concrete slabs; constructed one new bent, new abutments, and new handrails.⁶ The deck of the bridge was raised fifty-seven feet to compensate for the rise in the water level created by the dam.⁷ The bridge's deck was raised to an elevation of 692 feet. During the same year, TVA erected a concrete span, approximately one-quarter mile south of the Marion Memorial Bridge, to carry traffic over the water along the new interstate (U.S. Interstate 24) they were building between Chattanooga and Nashville.⁸



This photo show the Big Blue Bridge on State Highway 41S at Halletown undergoing a renovation project in the mid-1960s.

"This photo show the Big Blue Bridge on State Highway 41S at Halletown undergoing a renovation project in the mid-1960s."

In 2000, the Marion County Memorial Bridge received a sufficiency rating of 45.70, which is a fair condition. The bridge is still in use but, because the present bridge cannot handle the load carrying capacity and cannot expand in width, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) proposed a new bridge for construction sixty feet upstream.⁹ No date for the construction of the new bridge has been officially determined.

⁶ TDOT, "Marion County Memorial Bridge Offering Package," p. 4.

⁷ After an article about the National Register nomination of the bridge, the Chattanooga *Free Press* received a call from Kenneth Cooper, who worked on the bridge in 1966, who said that the bridge was raised only twenty-one feet.

⁸ "Marion County Memorial Bridge To Be Raised Because of Lake," *Jasper Journal*, 3 Nov. 1966, Vol. 28, No. 41, p.1.

⁹ Allison, Tammy. Tennessee Department of Transportation, "Documentation for the Proposed Replacement of Bridge and Approaches Over the Tennessee River, State Route 2, Log Mile 21.14, Marion County, November, 2000, p. 6.

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Marion Memorial Bridge
 Marion County, TN

VIII. Statement of Significance

The Marion Memorial Bridge, located six miles southeast of Jasper at Halletown, and directly north of U.S. Interstate 24, is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A and C for its local significance in transportation, politics and government, and engineering. The bridge serves as a physical reminder of the early efforts by the state highway department to provide well designed, adequate roads and bridges in Tennessee. In the area of transportation, the state highway department used bond money to construct a bridge and road to provide a safe, usable passage between Chattanooga and Jasper, and also, to reduce the distance between Chattanooga and Nashville. The state legislature, in 1927, designated a toll bridge site along the Tennessee River in Marion County and several other locations throughout Tennessee at water crossings along designated highways. Constructed in 1929-1930, the Marion Memorial Bridge, served as a toll bridge from 1931 until 1947. The two, 365-foot Parker trusses and two, 140-foot Warren trusses are representative of the type of bridge engineering that was prevalent among state highway departments in the 1920s and 1930s. Although changes were made to the approach spans and deck elevation in 1966, the Marion Memorial Bridge's Parker and Warren steel, truss spans retain their integrity.

Background

Several things occurred in the late nineteenth century and first part of the twentieth century that prompted road, and eventually bridge, construction in the United States. The Good Roads Movement, begun by bicycle enthusiasts, promoted a better transportation infrastructure. Automobiles became more popular, and eventually inexpensive, so a new group of enthusiasts began the promotion of adequate roads. The federal government in the nineteenth century had financed limited road construction; however, it was private organizations that were responsible for early roads and bridges.

In the South, an important factor in the Good Roads movement was the Dixie Highway Association. Incorporated in 1915 and headquartered in Chattanooga, the organization's primary goal was to increase interest in providing adequate roads and national highways, which would link the North and South. Judge Michael Allison, a resident of Chattanooga and native of Marion County, was a leading advocate for the construction of a regional highway. In 1916, the first Federal Highway Act was passed; in 1921, the act was renewed. The latter act increased funding and changed road building priorities. What began as a grass roots effort to get better roads, had become a more organized federal effort to get state governments involved in building roads. For many years the private and governmental efforts coexisted.¹⁰

In Tennessee, the state established a six-man highway commission and organized the state highway department in 1915.¹¹ Federal legislation soon required states to have departments or commissions in order to receive funds. In the 1920s, Governor Austin Peay overhauled the highway department, including floating highway bonds and forming a new highway commission. An example of road conditions in the area in 1925, is seen in studies that showed that of the farms in the three Sequatchie Valley counties of Marion, Sequatchie, and Bledsoe, only 629 were located on hard surface roads; 1,002 on upgraded dirt roads; and 1,015

¹⁰ Raulston, J. Leonard and Livingood, James W. *Sequatchie: A Story of the Southern Cumberlands*. University of Tennessee Press: Knoxville, 1974, pp. 215-216. See also, Society for Commercial Archaeology. "Drivin' the Dixie: Automobile Tourism in the South," 1998, p. A-2.

¹¹ Martha Carver, Personal Interview with SHPO staff, 2 February 2007.

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Marion Memorial Bridge
Marion County, TN

on dirt roads that were not improved at all. Further, studies in 1924 showed that there were 231 registered cars in Bledsoe County, 127 in Sequatchie County, and 821 in Marion County. Only a total of 86 trucks were registered in the three combined counties.¹²

Automobiles became common among the middle class in the 1910s, and by the mid-1920s, twelve well-known interstate highways were present in the South. The two most traveled highways were the Bankhead Highway, which spanned through the Atlantic Coastal States and the Dixie Highway, which connected the Midwestern states (Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana) with the southeastern states (Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida). Many rural county governments supported the local roads, which began at the county seats or rail stations and branched out to surrounding farms.¹³ However, most Marion County voters did not favor paying for matching funds for roads in the mid-1910s, when a road was proposed from Chattanooga to Jasper along Suck Creek Road. They felt that the road would only benefit travelers passing through, not the local residents and businessmen. The difficulty of travel due to the mountainous terrain coupled with the excessive costs to construct the road made this an unpopular subject in Marion County. Before state and federal aid programs, the counties had to provide the funding for road construction.¹⁴

Although Marion County residents remained reluctant to support state and federal aid for roads in the 1920s, the need for an adequate road extending into Marion County from the Wauhatchie Pike in Hamilton County became a main priority for the state highway department in 1927 and necessity for the Marion County seat in Jasper. The proposed State System of Highways called for the inclusion of 5,051 miles of road in Tennessee. The system intended to construct roadways to every county seat in the state. As of August, 1927, 941 miles of the system had been paved with 4,100 miles of unpaved road remaining.¹⁵ The passage of road and bridge bonds by the state legislature the same year created a new road and bridge that connected Chattanooga to Jasper and provided for a shorter route from Chattanooga to Nashville.

Marion Memorial Bridge

In April of 1927, a two million dollar bond issue bill was brought before Tennessee's state senate. Out of seventeen bridges planned, the bill provided funds for construction of three new bridges in East Tennessee.¹⁶ The sites along the Tennessee River that were designated for bridges included Kelly's Ferry in Marion County, Loudon in Loudon County, and Knoxville near the University of Tennessee Agricultural Campus in Knox County. The bridges also included toll houses, which would collect money from motorists until the bonds to erect the bridge were paid in full.¹⁷

¹² Raulston and Livingood, *Sequatchie: A Story of the Southern Cumberlands*, p. 216.

¹³ Society for Commercial Archaeology, "Drivin' the Dixie," pp. A-3, A-5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. E-1, E-3.

¹⁵ Editorial, *Sequachee Valley News*, 4 August 1927, Vol. 34, No. 3, p. 2.

¹⁶ According to "A History of Bridge Building in Tennessee: Survey Report for Historic Bridges" (Unpublished manuscript) seventeen bridges were included in the original bill, four more were added in 1929. Of the four added bridges, only the Montgomery Bell Bridge over the Cumberland River in Dickson and Cheatham counties was built. Pages 122 and 127.

¹⁷ "Bridge Will Be Built Over River: To Be Located at Kelly's Ferry, Lowering Distance to Jasper by Fifteen Miles," *Sequachee Valley News*, 14 April 1927, Vol. 34, No. 40, p.1. See also, "Toll bridges in Tennessee Suspended for 4 Years," *Jasper Journal*, 6 February 1947, Vol. 9, No. 49, p. 1. Note: While according to articles in the *Jasper Journal*, Tennessee, between 1930 and 1947, had a total of 21 toll bridges, the *Cleveland Herald* reported that there were only twenty bridges.

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Marion Memorial Bridge
Marion County, TN

According to Senate Bill No. 634, Section 1 the "General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, The Department of Highways, and Public Works of the State of Tennessee is authorized, directed and empowered to locate, design and cause to be built and put in operation bridges on the State Highway System at crossings on the following designated highways and streams." One of the twenty-one state toll bridges was selected to be built at a location over the Tennessee River along State Highway No. 2 between Chattanooga and Jasper.¹⁸ The chosen site at Kelly's Ferry would bring Chattanooga and Nashville approximately fifteen miles closer and serve as a convenient link to the Nashville-Kelly's Ferry Road from the Wauhatchie Pike, which in 1927, ended in Hamilton County (at the Marion County line). To complete the road in Marion County to the Kelly's Ferry Bridge, eight miles of macadam road would be necessary.¹⁹ Not everyone was pleased with the Kelly's Ferry site, particularly South Pittsburg residents in southern Marion County.

The citizens of South Pittsburg were disheartened that the legislature did not give the people of Marion County an opportunity to vote on the new bridge and road location. Walter Cameron, former state senator, led a delegation from South Pittsburg stating the "southern end of Marion County was, at the time, served by no passable roads, even though it paid over half the taxes of the county." Mr. Cameron argued further that the Kelly's Ferry route between Chattanooga and Nashville would be five miles longer than a road passage to South Pittsburg. As originally proposed, the new road leading to the Kelly's Ferry bridge would branch from the Wauhatchie Pike passing through the towns of Wauhatchie, Whiteside, Etna, Ladds, and Shellmound. Cameron believed this route, once it crossed the Tennessee River at Kelly's Ferry, would service a region that was "wild and almost impassable."²⁰

On Saturday, May 21, 1927, a bond election for road construction was held in Marion County. A majority of 1500 votes accepted the bill for road bonds with the citizens in Jasper voting unanimously for the bill. However, a large majority of the people in South Pittsburg chose not to exercise the right to vote - only nine people voted with eight voting for the bill and one against.²¹ This newly proposed road to the Kelly's Ferry Bridge would lead to the Marion County seat in Jasper, which was the primary intention of the State Highway System. In addition, the State Highway Department was bounded by law to build a bridge along the Tennessee River somewhere in between Chattanooga and Jasper.²² People in South Pittsburg were still determined to challenge the location of the toll bridge and road, or at least, plead their case for a sufficient road and bridge in South Pittsburg by going to the legislature in Nashville in the fall of 1927.²³

After hearing the arguments presented by representatives from South Pittsburg, a final decision was made in February 1928 whether or not the proposed bridge on State Highway No. 2 would be built between Chattanooga and Jasper or South Pittsburg. Attorney L.D. Smith made the decision to keep with the original plan and construct a bridge at Kelly's Ferry as it was indicated in the bill. Colonel Harry S. Berry, Commissioner

¹⁸ "Bridge Bill," *Sequachee Valley News*, 2 February 1928, Vol. 35, No. 28, p.1.

¹⁹ "Bridge Will Be Built Over River," *Sequachee Valley News*, 14 April 1927, Vol. 34, No. 40, p.1.

²⁰ "Railroad vs. Road," *Sequachee Valley News*, 19 May 1927, Vol. 34, No. 44, p.2.

²¹ "People Vote Road Bonds," *Sequachee Valley News*, 26 May 1927, Vol. 34, No. 45, p.1. Note: Only 20 voters opposed the Road in Jasper.

²² "Build It For Marion," *Sequachee Valley News*, 26 May 1927, Vol. 34, No. 45, p.2.

²³ "Kelly's Ferry Route," *Sequachee Valley News*, 2 June 1927, Vol. 34, No.46, p.2.

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Marion Memorial Bridge
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of State Highways, stated that preparation for the proposed bridges was underway and a copy of the bill was sent to Washington, D.C.²⁴

State highway surveying crews began surveying the Kelly's Ferry site in April of 1928, and in August of 1928, advertisements for bids on the bridge project were placed and contracts for the construction of twelve miles of road leading to the bridge were established.²⁵ However, a moratorium was placed on the bridge construction in October of 1928, when engineers found that the footing for the piers would not be firm because it was believed there was quicksand at the bottom of the river. The engineers chose a new site one mile south of Hale's Bar Dam. Commissioner Berry felt that he could not risk money with a bridge built on quicksand and mud.²⁶ The new site complicated matters because Marion County was already divided about the original location. The engineers began testing the newly proposed site south of Hale's Bar Dam to make sure it would support the bridge. One point in favor of the new location was that the bridge would only be 800 feet shoreline to shoreline, where it would have been twice the length at Kelly's Ferry.²⁷

A hearing was held at the courthouse on December 11, 1928 to determine the status of the application by the state highway department to construct a bridge across the Tennessee River near Jasper. The engineering plans for the bridge called for a four-span through-truss bridge with short shore spans and concrete girder approaches at each end. The proposed bridge was set to cross the Tennessee River at 429.8 miles above the mouth. The horizontal clearance was proposed to be 355 feet and the vertical clearance, 83 feet above normal and 40 feet above high water.²⁸

It was decided in Nashville on April 12, 1929 that the Grier-Lowrence Construction Company of Statesville, North Carolina would perform the work necessary for the construction of the bridge near Hale's Bar Dam. The new estimated cost for the construction of the bridge was \$500,000. The originally proposed site at Kelly's Ferry would have cost the state one million dollars because of a longer bridge from shoreline to shoreline at that location.²⁹

Work on the bridge below Hale's Bar Dam began in May of 1929. As of late November 1929, with of crew of 125 men, three out of five piers in the river were under construction and the approaches, totaling approximately 1,000 feet in length, were almost completed. One of the piers had to be raised to thirty-five feet above the water level due to high water. In addition, a contract had been established for grading work on the stretch of road between Chattanooga and Jasper.³⁰

A twelve-mile stretch of highway from Chattanooga to Hale's Bar bridge, known as Kelly's Ferry Pike, was completed in September 1930. The road, constructed for a cost of \$1 million, was built by the Discus Broth-

²⁴ "Smith Decides Kelly's Ferry Route Settled," *Sequachee Valley News*, 1 March 1928, Vol. 35, No. 32, p.3.

²⁵ "To Stake Out Bridge Site: Work to Begin Soon on Structure Across Tennessee River at Kelly's Ferry," *Sequachee Valley News*, 19 April 1928, Vol. 35, No. 39, p.1, and "Great Road Progress," *Sequachee Valley News*, 16 August 1928, Vol. 35, No.5, p.1.

²⁶ "Kelly's Ferry Site Not Very Practical," *Sequachee Valley News*, 1 November 1928, Vol. 36, No. 16, p.1.

²⁷ "Unpleasant Duty" Says Berry of Bridge Change," *Sequachee Valley News*, 8 November 1928, Vol. 36, No. 17, p.2.

²⁸ "Bridge Hearing To Be Dec. 20," *Sequachee Valley News*, 29 November 1928, Vol. 36, No. 20, p.3.

²⁹ "River Bridge Contract Let," *Sequachee Valley News*, 18 April 1929, Vol. 36, No. 40, p. 1.

³⁰ "New Road Work Pushed," *Sequachee Valley News*, 28 November 1929, Vol. 37, No. 20, p.1, and "New Road to Bridge," *Sequachee Valley News*, 28 March 1929, Vol. 36, No. 37, p.1.

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Marion Memorial Bridge
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ers Company of Waynesville, NC. Approximately 500,000 cubic yards of earth and stone were moved for the construction of the new pike. The road, which began in December of 1929, was completed in half the allotted time. Judge Will Cummings of Hamilton County, a leading advocate for this road, and J.C. Dicus, owner of the contracting firm, were the first to travel the new road to the bridge. It was officially turned over to the State Highway Department in November.³¹

In approximately three years since the state reported its plan for just over 5,000 miles of roads, expectations were exceeded. The State Highway Department announced in April of 1930, that the highway system totaled 7,009 miles in Tennessee of which 928 miles were composed of Portland cement, 916 miles were tar-treated roads, 503 miles were asphalt, 335 miles were of bituminous macadam, and 239 miles were of rock asphalt with a rigid base. Other classifications of state highway road and their mileage were as follows: graded stone on rigid base, 103; sheet asphalt on rigid base, 37; rock asphalt on non-rigid base, 34; graded stone on bituminous concrete, 24; and crushed stone, 63. Miles of gravel road needed for improvement total 2,640 and graded and drained earth mileage totals 374 miles. Only 734 out of the 7,009 miles remained to be completed by the state highway department.³²

The new toll bridge near Hale's Bar Dam was completed in late October, 1930 and was officially dedicated in May of 1931 as the "Marion Memorial Bridge" in honor of the soldiers and sailors who died in World War I. Governor Horton attended and spoke at the dedication, however, the crowd at the dedication was small due to the feelings of Marion County residents about the bridge and road.³³ A toll house at the Marion Memorial Bridge opened in 1931. Several other bridges in the state had been collecting tolls since January, 1930.

The largest toll bridge in the state was located in East Tennessee in Loudon. In January of 1930, it collected the largest total in the state, which amounted to \$7,433.77. A total of five state toll bridges in Tennessee combined for \$13,144.92 in toll collections. Other bridges in the state and their January totals were as follows: Obion (near Union City), \$2,968.54; Kyle's Ford Bridge (upper East Tennessee), \$322.60; Niles Ferry Bridge, \$1,924.11; and the Decatur Bridge, \$520.64. January was of course one of the lowest months of motorist travel. However, based on these early numbers, it was believed that every bridge would be paid for in twenty years. Bridges that opened in 1930 were the Hales' Bar Bridge, Trotters Landing Bridge (State Highway 1), and the Savannah Bridge. These three bridges were predicted to rival the amount of travel at Loudon.³⁴ Other toll bridges that opened between 1930 and 1932 were the following: Perryville, Dover, Sneedville, Celina, Big Sandy, Kingston, and Hunter's Point.³⁵

³¹ "New Highway Now Opened: Former Cutting of Barrier Ribbon Marks Opening," *Sequachee Valley News*, 18 September 1930, Vol. 39, No. 10, p. 1.

³² "7,009 Miles of State Highway," *Sequachee Valley News*, 17 April 1930, Vol. 37, No. 40, p. 1.

³³ "Bridge is Dedicated: Governor Horton Makes Occasion One In Which To Defend Administration," *Sequachee Valley News*, 21 May 1931, Vol. 39, No. 45, p. 1., and "Bridge Nears Completion: Jasper Highway Link and River Bridge Will Be Ready for Travel in November, It is Announced," *Sequachee Valley News*, 25 September 1930, Vol. 39, No. 11, p. 1.

³⁴ "Tolls at Loudon Bridge \$7,433.77 for Month," *Sequachee Valley News*, 20 February 1930, Vol. 37, No. 32, p. 1.

³⁵ "State Bridge Tolls Decrease: Attributed Largely To Use of Commutation Tickets," *Sequachee Valley News*, 14 April 1932, Vol. 40, No. 39, p. 1.

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Toll rates for the use of the bridge were placed at the toll house or in highly noticeable places, such as the end of the bridge or the approaches. The toll-keepers were appointed and removed by the Commissioner of Finance and Taxation. Frequent users of the bridge were able to receive tickets at reduced rates. The standard toll rates for the use of designated bridges in the late 1920s were as follows: auto and driver: \$0.50, additional passenger, each: \$.05, motor truck or motor bus (one ton capacity or under) and driver: \$0.50, motor truck or motor bus (over one ton capacity) and driver: \$1.00, automobile trailer: \$0.50, motor bus and motor truck trailer: \$0.50, motorcycle and driver: \$0.25, one horse vehicle, with draft animal and driver: \$0.15, two horse vehicle, with two draft animals and driver: \$0.25, extra draft animals or horses or mules, each: \$0.05, cattle, sheep, hogs, or other than horses or mules, on foot, each: \$0.02, circus animals, other than those specifically mentioned above, each: \$0.25.³⁶

The Marion Memorial Bridge was one of the most traveled toll bridges in Tennessee because of its importance on the Wauhatchie Route between Chattanooga and Jasper. Out of a total of fifteen toll bridges constructed, the Marion Memorial Bridge ranked third with \$5,074 in tolls early in its existence in September of 1931. For the months of August and September, 1931, the total amount collected for the fifteen bridges was \$47,717.57 and \$39,575.26, respectively.³⁷ The toll system, based on early numbers in 1930-1931, appeared to be an effective system to pay for the bridge bonds. However, most of the tolls collected were used to pay off the state debt.

The toll bridge system turned out to be unsuccessful and eight tolls were removed from bridges in 1939. The bridge bonds were fully paid in 1937, because the state consolidated their debt. Most of the money that was collected at the toll bridge was placed in the sinking fund to pay off the state debt. For example, between July 1, 1945 and June 30, 1946, the state collected \$1,135,456.22. Out of that amount, \$1,080,908.27 was used for the sinking fund.³⁸ The profits collected from the tolls had never reached a total high enough to pay for the original investment and interest on the borrowed money to erect the bridges. In 1946-1947, the state government believed it would be best to free the eight remaining toll bridges. The Marion Memorial Bridge, one of the last remaining toll bridges, removed its toll in 1947.³⁹

Between 1947-1966, the "Marion Memorial Bridge" became known as the "Marion County Memorial Bridge." The TVA, in late 1966, constructed the Nickajack Dam, and made some changes to the bridge to compensate for the rising water levels due to the flooding of the Tennessee River to form Nickajack Lake. The bridge floor was raised to an elevation of 692 feet. Other changes included the following: caps on top of the piers; installation of twenty pre-cast, pre-stressed concrete slabs; construction of one new bent, new abutments, and new handrails.⁴⁰ However, the Parker and Warren steel trusses were not altered and have retained their original integrity. In the 1960s, TVA constructed a concrete span approximately one-quarter

³⁶ "Bridge Bill," *Sequachee Valley News*, 2 February 1928, Vol. 35, No. 28, p.1.

³⁷ "\$5,074 Tolls in September: Marion Memorial Bridge Takes Third Largest Sum of Any State Bridge," *Sequachee Valley News*, Vol. 40, No. 14, p.1.

³⁸ "Bridge Bonds Not Fully Paid: More Than One Million of Toll Bridge Earnings Go On State Debt," *Sequachee Valley News*, 31 October 1946, Vol. 54, No. 17, p.1. Note: The sinking fund was established to pay off bonds and other state debt.

³⁹ "Toll Bridges in Tennessee Suspended for 4 Years," *Jasper Journal*, 6 February 1947, Vol. 9, No. 49, p.1. Note: By 1931-1932, at least 15 toll bridges were constructed and in operation. The remaining six proposed bridges were most likely constructed between 1932 and 1937 because the bridge bonds were paid off in 1937 with borrowed money ("Bridge Bonds Not Fully Paid," *Sequachee Valley News*, 31 Oct. 1946, p. 1).

⁴⁰ "Marion County Memorial Bridge To Be Raised Because of Lake," *Jasper Journal*, 3 November 1966, Vol. 28, No. 41, p.1.

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mile south of the Marion County Memorial Bridge. The new bridge was erected to carry traffic over Nickajack Lake along the new interstate (U.S. Interstate 24) between Chattanooga and Nashville.

Today, the bridge faces possible demolition because engineering studies by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) have determined that the bridge is in fair condition and is no longer suitable to withstand the volume of traffic and load carrying capacity. A new bridge is scheduled for construction sixty feet upstream. An offering package for the bridge was prepared in 2000 but expired in June of 2001.⁴¹ Recently, in December of 2006, local support from Marion County governments and residents, has generated interest in preserving the bridge

The Marion Memorial Bridge remains as one of five remaining former toll bridges in Tennessee. The bridge is representative of the bridge bill passed by the 1927 state legislature and the work conducted by the State Highway Department to create a State Highway System to all county seats in Tennessee. The Parker and Warren truss bridge serves as a physical reminder of the trusses used by state highway departments during the 1920s and 1930s. Its historical and engineering significance makes this a valuable asset to Marion County.

⁴¹ Allison, TDOT, "Documentation for the Proposed Replacement of Bridge and Approaches Over the Tennessee River," pp. 13-14.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal boundary description:

The Marion County Memorial Bridge is located approximately 6 miles southeast of Jasper, Tennessee in Marion County. The bridge is located on U.S. Highway 41(State Route 2) at log mile 21.14 and spans across the Nickajack Lake (Tennessee River). U.S. Interstate 24 is located approximately one-quarter mile south of the bridge. The nominated boundaries include the 1,870-foot length and 23-foot width of the bridge with 5 supporting concrete piers and total of 20 pre-cast, pre-stressed concrete approach span supports.

Justification

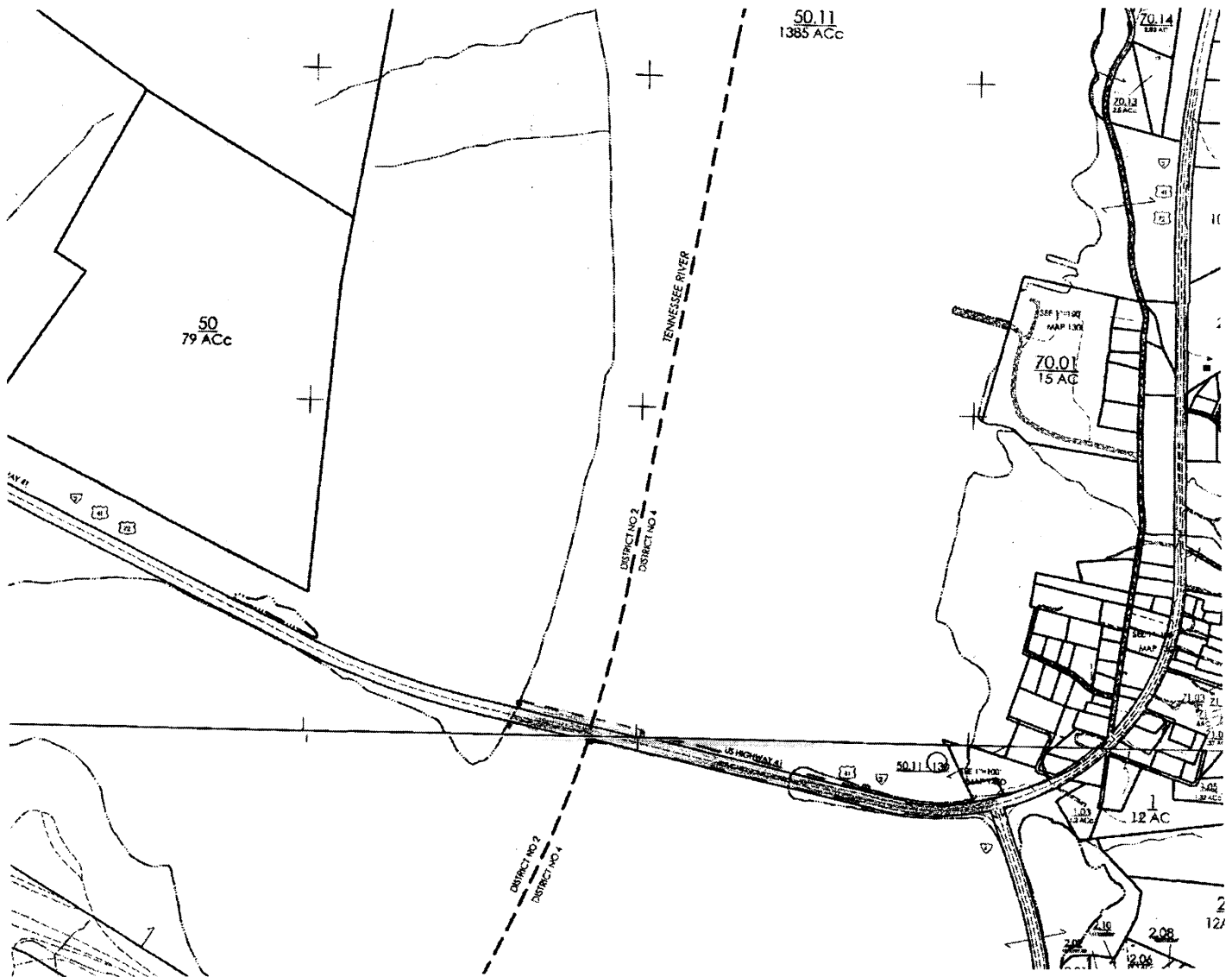
The nominated property includes the bridge and its 5 concrete support piers and 20 approach span supports.

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Marion County tax maps 145 and 130

North↑

1" = approx. 900'

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs by: Paul Archambault
Southeast Tennessee Development District
Chattanooga, TN 37402

Date: March 2007

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Marion Memorial Bridge, view NE

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Marion Memorial Bridge, view E

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Marion Memorial Bridge-Warren Truss, view E

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Marion Memorial Bridge and approach span supports, view W

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Marion Memorial Bridge approach span supports, view W

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Marion Memorial Bridge, view W

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Marion Memorial Bridge, view SW

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Marion Memorial Bridge, view NW

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Marion Memorial Bridge, view N

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Marion Memorial Bridge-Warren Truss (foreground) and Parker Truss (behind), view E