

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

JUN 3 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic MAYSVILLE-ABERDEEN BRIDGE

and/or common Maysville Bridge/Simon Kenton Memorial Bridge

2. Location

street & number ^{spans} Ohio River between Maysville, ^{KY} and Aberdeen, ^{OH} not for publication

list twice

city, town Aberdeen, Ohio
Maysville, Kentucky vicinity of

state Ohio code 039 county Brown County, Ohio code 015
Kentucky code 021 county Mason County, Kentucky code 161

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"/> commercial |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | NA in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | NA being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name The Commonwealth of Kentucky, Department of Highways

street & number State Office Building

city, town Frankfort vicinity of state Kentucky

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Commonwealth of Kentucky, Department of Highways

street & number State Office Building

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(MS-M-196)

title KY Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky 40601

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Simon Kenton Memorial Bridge, spanning the Ohio River between Maysville, Kentucky, and Aberdeen, Ohio, is located 55 miles down river from Portsmouth, Ohio, and 60 miles up river from Newport, Kentucky. It is the only bridge spanning the Ohio River between Portsmouth and Silver Grove, Kentucky, a distance of 110 miles.

Constructed in 1930-1931, the Maysville Bridge is a single deck, steel suspension bridge with Warren deck trusses. The bridge consists of a main through span 1060' tower to tower, and two anchor spans of 465'. There are a total of 12 approach spans, five on the Kentucky shore and six on the Ohio. Including the approaches, the total length of the bridge is 2,865', making it the longest suspension bridge in Kentucky and one of the longest on the entire Ohio River waterway.

Two diagonally braced, riveted steel towers, constructed on reinforced concrete and ashlar limestone piers act in compression. The slightly arched deck is supported by tension hangers suspended from the main cables. A stiffening truss is located on the deck to evenly distribute moving loads along the length of the bridge. The 20' wide roadway is constructed of reinforced concrete.

As either end of the bridge stands a massive concrete anchorage. Designed in a style reminiscent of the Art Deco, these imposing anchorages are used to hold the cables in tension. Bronze commemorative plaques are located on both anchorages.

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates 1930-1931 **Builder/Architect** Kentucky Highway Commission, Builder; Modjeski and Masters, Engineers

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Maysville-Aberdeen Bridge, built in 1930-1931 by the Kentucky Highway Commission, is significant as an important example of a twentieth century steel suspension bridge designed and engineered by the firm of Modjeski and Masters. During the period from 1925 to 1940, Ralph Modjeski and F. M. Masters ranked among the nation's foremost bridge consultant engineers. This Harrisburg, Pennsylvania based firm was active during a decade that witnessed construction of some of the nation's most famous bridges. Modjeski and Master's bold plan for a steel cable suspension bridge between Maysville and Aberdeen represented a major departure from earlier bridge design. Rather than construct a cantilever or Warren truss span, Modjeski and Masters utilized the cable suspension type that had been successfully engineered by John Roebling nearly a century earlier. The Maysville bridge, in contrast to many of its predecessors, utilized the riveted tower and concrete anchorage in its structural design. The aesthetic handling of the anchorage abutments was inspired by Louis Kahn, an associate of Paul Cret and the younger brother of Albert Kahn.¹ Because of its strength and aesthetic simplicity the Maysville-Aberdeen bridge became a prototype for some of Modjeski and Masters most important later works, including the Huey P. Long (1933-1936) and the San Francisco-Oakland Bay (1933-1937) Bridges. Even the Golden Gate Bridge (1933-1936) had associations with Modjeski and Masters, as Joseph B. Strauss, its chief engineer, was an early assistant to Ralph Modjeski.²

For fifty years the Maysville-Aberdeen Bridge has provided a strategic link between southern Ohio and northeastern Kentucky. Beginning with its founding in 1784, Maysville, Kentucky, has been a focal point for interstate commerce and transportation. Aberdeen, settled only slightly later, was the terminus of Zane's Trace, an early Ohio trade route that linked the Ohio River with the National Road at Zanesville.

In 1798 ferry service between Aberdeen and Maysville was begun by Nathan Ellis, and it wasn't until the Kentucky State Highway Department began building the bridge in 1930 that the ferry was closed. Construction of the span was made economically feasible by passage of the Murphy Toll Bridge Act of 1928, which was subsequently amended and approved by Congress in 1930. The bridge, completed in 1931 at a cost 1.57 million dollars, was financed through the sale of Bridge Revenue Bonds. The bonds were redeemed in 1945 through the collection of tolls. In 1949 the Commonwealth of Kentucky renamed the bridge the Simon Kenton Memorial Bridge, in honor of one of Mason County's earliest and most famous settlers. By 1982 the bridge had an average daily traffic count of 13,173 vehicles, still being the only bridge crossing the Ohio River between Cincinnati and Portsmouth.

¹In 1928 Paul Cret had designed the Art Deco pylons for the Louisville Municipal Bridge, a cantilever span engineered by Modjeski and Masters.

²It is not known whether Strauss collaborated in engineering the Maysville Bridge.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Collins, Lewis. Historical Sketches of Kentucky (Maysville, By the Author, 1847).

Program of Celebration Freeing of Maysville Toll Bridge. Project Number 2, KY Dept. of Highways, Maysville, Kentucky, October 1, 1945.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property app. 1.5 acres

Quadrangle name Maysville West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at the south terminus of the Maysville Aberdeen Bridge, which is between Second and Third Streets, proceed N-NE approx. 2,000' to the Ohio-Kentucky state line. Then proceed in the same direction approx. 900' to the Aberdeen terminus. The nomination includes the approach spans, anchorage abutments, piers,

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries and the three primary spans.
state OHIO code 039 county BROWN code 015

state KENTUCKY code 021 county MASON code 161

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Doug Loescher, Main Street Manager & Steve Gordon, Senior Historian

organization City Maysville date February 1983

street & number Third & Bridge Streets telephone 606/564-9411

city or town Maysville state Kentucky 41056

12. 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 *Mary Gordon*

title *State Historic Preservation Officer* date *3-22-83*

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Jelores Byers
Keoper of the National Register
Entered in the National Register date *6/30/83*

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

W. Ray Love Ohio SHPO 5/4/83

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MAYSVILLE-ABERDEEN BRIDGE

Continuation sheet Brown Co., Ohio; Mason Co., KY Item number 9

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The History of Brown County, Ohio. Chicago: W. H. Beers & Co., 1883.

Wilkey, Henry and Elsie. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects. Los Angeles:
Hennessey and Ingalls, 1970.

Information provided by Marty Hedgepeth, Louisville Landmarks Commission, containing
communication from John Harbeson; Harbeson, Hough, Livingston, and Larson, Architects,
Philadelphia. October 1976.