

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic

and/or common Metal Highway Bridges of Fulton County Thematic Resources

2. Location

street & number See individual Inventory Forms not for publication

city, town vicinity of congressional district 19th

state IL code county Fulton County code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input 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 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	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> thematic			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name 1) Knox County Board of Supervisors, c/o Superintendent of Highways
2) Fulton County Board of Supervisors, c/o Superintendent of Highways

street & number 1) Box 159
2) P. O. Box 492

city, town 1) Knoxville
2) Canton vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fulton County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Canton state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Landmarks of Fulton County has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ no (London Mills Bridge)

date 1974 federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Illinois Department of Conservation

city, town Springfield state Illinois

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	SEP 2 1980
DATE ENTERED	SEP 29 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 2

Sites determined eligible for the National Register of Historic
Places - 6/6/79

London Mills Bridge

Depository - National Register of Historic Preservation, Washington,
D. C. 20043

Historic Fulton County: Sites & Scenes, 1973, County, Fulton County
Historical Society, Lewistown, Illinois.

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 topography of Fulton County is dominated by two river valleys.

The Illinois River serves as a natural southeastern boundary for the county and the Spoon River enters the county at the village of London Mills and splits the county in two. It then runs southerly until the unincorporated village of Bernadotte where it turns southeasterly to meet the Illinois River at Havana, along the Mason County border.

Due to this, the terrain is moderately hilly and forested. However, the majority of the forests have been cleared for agricultural development and, since its settlement, Fulton County has remained basically rural in character. This sparse population and agricultural base of the county is, for the most part, responsible for this excellent group of steel truss bridges remaining.

Nine steel through trusses constructed approximately between 1880 and 1915 remain extant on county and township roads over the Spoon River throughout the county. These bridges, which vary only slightly in construction methods, as a group, exhibit components of the early development of steel truss bridge construction in Illinois.

These through trusses are of the two most common types of early steel trusses, the Pratt and the Parker, and, due to the fact that they do vary within these types, as a group, the evolution of steel construction from its beginning through to the twentieth century bridges is clearly visible. For example, the London Mills bridge, a Pratt built in 1883, exhibits a pinned connection and double eyebars for the lower chord and diagonals, whereas, the Indian Ford bridge, another Pratt built in 1917, is rivet connected with I-beam lower chord and diagonals.

Materials, scale and massing are similar as well. All bridges are composed of steel, except possibly the Seville and London Mills bridges which, while over all are steel, may be partially composed of iron due to their apparent early date of construction. Bottom chords range in length from approximately 140' to 200' and widths average 16'. (Note: all measurements on attached forms are only approximations.) In massing, all bridges reflect the lightness characteristic of the metal bridges constructed during this era of bridge development, although the later, riveted, begin to adopt the newer massing of contemporary steel truss bridges.

This particular collection of bridges, typical of the several hundred nineteenth and early twentieth century truss bridges still extant throughout the state, has been chosen as a good representative sampling for several reasons. Foremost of these is the geographical relationship of these bridges to one another within one county and along one river. The northernmost bridge is located at London Mills where the Spoon River enters the county and the southernmost bridge

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	SEP 2 1980
DATE ENTERED	SEP 2 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

is located about one mile above the mouth of the Spoon at the Illinois River. The bridges are all located in rural settings along the river but, with one exception are all accessible by automobile, although most are on dirt roads and accessible only in dry weather. To have nine bridges in such pristine condition within one county and with such a visible relationship is rare.

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 checked="" 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	1880–1917	Builder/Architect	various-see attached forms
----------------	-----------	-------------------	----------------------------

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This group of nine steel truss bridges are important not only due to their age span as exemplary of this type of construction from its advent to the beginnings of modern truss bridge design, but, also because it is unusual, in Illinois, to find a concentration of early steel truss bridges in an easily definable geographical and political area. These factors, range in type and location, provide an excellent opportunity for interpretation of this important phase in bridge development. These bridges are a focus of tourism within the county and are featured in a motor tour of the county and a canoe trip along the Spoon River, a navigable waterway.

HISTORY

Excellent farming land was the major impetus for the settlement and subsequent development of Fulton County. As such, the Spoon River was important as a means of transporting goods to markets along the Illinois River. Due to this, settlements grew along the river to capitalize on this river traffic. Specifically, mills grew along ford and ferry sites which spurred further development at these sites. Eventually, bridges replaced these fords and ferries as the demand for better transportation routes increased. Several of these bridges, such as the bridge at Tartar's Ferry, reflect this trend. Fords, it seems, were replaced earlier than ferries as the bridge at Indian Ford is a replacement of an earlier iron bridge. The bridge at Bernadotte was a replacement, too, although it replaced a wooden truss. The bridge at Seville is also a reflection of settlement patterns in the county as it was built as the result of settlement at the conjunction of railroad and river.

Steel, as the most common material for truss bridge construction, replaced iron in the early 1880's. During the transition period, 1880–1885, many bridges were built with components of both iron and steel. This, then, opens the possibility of several of these bridges, which appear to have been built in the early 1880's, being constructed of a combination of materials.

These first steel bridges were still constructed in the same manner as the earlier iron bridges using eyebars for diagonals and bottom chord and utilizing the pinned method of connecting members which necessitated very little skilled labor at the construction site. Within only twenty years, the members of these smaller types of through trusses were riveted together such as the Bernadotte Bridge which was constructed in 1903. This method of construction demanded skilled labor but also permitted stronger, larger diagonals and bottom

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED SEP 2 1980	
DATE ENTERED	

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

chord. The Pratt and Parker trusses adapted well to this new method of construction due to their simplicity of design. Also, with the stronger steel more elaborate structures were simply no longer necessary; thus, the longevity of these particular designs. Another importance of this group of bridges, therefore, is as examples of surviving rather than obsolete truss patents.

This riveted method of assemblage did not replace pinned connections immediately, though, as the bridge at White's Ferry bears witness. However, by 1920 most bridges were built with heavier, more rigid members and riveted together. The bridge at Indian Ford, constructed in 1917, can be considered an early example of this "modern" age of truss bridge design which carried on through the 1930's.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Fulton County Historical Society, Historic Fulton County: Sites and Scenes, Past & Present, Mid-Century Press, Inc., Lewistown, 1973.
Fulton County Board of Supervisors. A History of Fulton County, Illinois in Spoon River Country, 1818-1968, Stevens Publishing Co., 1969.

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 in each instance

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UMT References

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual survey forms

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state _____ code _____ county Fulton code 057

state _____ code _____ county Knox code 095

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne E. Manuell, Cultural Resources Coordinator

organization Illinois Dept. of Conservation date 8/8/79

street & number 405 East Washington telephone (217) 782-3340

city or town Springfield state Illinois 62706

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Ill. Department of Conservation date 8/1/80

For HCRS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

date

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

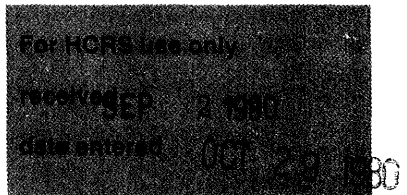
FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	SEP 2 1980
DATE ENTERED	

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

Steinman, David Bernard and Sarah Ruth Watson, Bridges and Their
Builders, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1941.
Whitney, Charles Smith, Bridges: A Study in Their Art, William
Edwin Ridge, 1929.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service****National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet Metal Highway Bridges of Item number 10

Page 2

Fulton County

UTM REFERENCES: Avon, IL Quadrangle/Scale 1:62500
London Mills Bridge Z:15 E:730 900 N: 4509 950
Indian Ford Bridge Z:15 E:729 000 N: 4507 700
Babylon Bridge Z:15 E:724 450 N: 4495 850
Buckeye Bridge Z:15 E:727 750 N: 4490 050

UTM REFERENCES UNAVAILABLE:

Smithfield, IL Quadrangle/Scale 1:24000
Seville Bridge
Tarter's Ferry Bridge
Bernadotte Bridge
Elrod Bridge

Havana, IL Quadrangle/Scale 1:24000
Duncan Mills Bridge