

PH0363383

SECRET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAR 2 1976

DATE ENTERED MAY 1 3 1976

**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 *ML* **Lover's Leap Bridge**

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER **Pumpkin Hill Road at Housatonic River**

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

New Milford

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6th - Toby Moffett

VICINITY OF

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

COUNTY

Litchfield

CODE

005

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Town of New Milford

STREET & NUMBER

Town Hall - Church Street

CITY, TOWN

New Milford

VICINITY OF

STATE

CT

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

New Milford Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Church Street

CITY, TOWN

New Milford

STATE

CT

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE **New England: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites
Historic American Engineering Record**

DATE

1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

DC

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

Lover's Leap Bridge is a wrought-iron through lenticular truss bridge prefabricated by the Berlin Iron Bridge Company, East Berlin, Connecticut, and erected in 1895. It carries Pumpkin Hill Road over the Housatonic River, about 60' above the deep, wooded gorge from which the bridge received its name. The roadway is 19' wide and the single span is 173' long between the abutments, which are constructed of rough stone laid as coursed ashlar.

The bridge design, patented by William Douglas and Charles Jarvis in 1885, consists of arch, truss and suspension elements. The end columns and arch which rests upon them are box girders with one latticed side. From the same points where the arch rests upon the columns is hung a suspension chain with ten links of two parallel eye-bars. The upper and lower chords are formed into a truss by nine vertical lattice girders at each link. The deck is suspended from the lower chord with a composite eye-bar and lattice girder. As was the American practice, the bridge is pinned, not rivetted, together. The two sides of the bridge are tied together with lattice girders between the arches and between three of the truss uprights. Diagonals tying both the trusses and the two sides of the bridge are tie-rods with turnbuckles.

The roadway is laid upon corrugated iron sheets carried on I-beams paralleling the direction of the bridge. These in turn rest on the I-beam cross members suspended from the truss. Diagonal tie-rods connect the cross-beams.

The bridge is not without ornamental effects. Urn finials surmount the end columns. The lattice girder between them is shaped so as to form an oval portal, and the top edge gently slopes upward to a point where the builder's plate is attached. On either side of the plate is a cresting of delicate ironwork, in a fleur-de-lis motif. The guardrail, which runs the length of the bridge on both sides, has three tiers, the middle with uprights and the top and bottom with diagonals as well, with rosettes where they cross. There are only remnants of a tubular iron approach guardrail.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED	MAR 22 1976
DATE ENTERED	MAY 13 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER	PAGE
Lover's Leap Bridge	6	one

Connecticut Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources
1966 - State
Connecticut Historical Commission
Hartford, CT

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/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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1895

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Berlin Iron Bridge Company
(William Douglas & Charles Jarvis)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Lover's Leap Bridge is important because it is an iron bridge and because its fabricator, the Berlin Iron Bridge Company, in many ways represents the epitome of iron bridge-building. Iron was used for the shortest period of time of any building material and few iron bridges have escaped replacement, yet the material itself was a significant advance in strength over wood, and it became the standard for bridges until the advantages of steel were accepted.

Lover's Leap (1895) was one of the last bridges built by the Berlin Company. The Berlin Company built hundreds of highway bridges and was one of a myriad of pre-fabricating companies. Not only was it the last holdout against steel as a construction material, it was the most imaginative of iron bridge builders. At that time, aggressive marketing was necessary to secure from wary selectmen the contract for a bridge. Each company held a patent on a particular kind of truss, column, etc. which supposedly made its bridge superior. It was thought (mistakenly) that composite bridges combining features from arch, truss and suspension designs were inherently better. Only the Berlin Company managed to combine all three principles, however. Lest the subtleties of their patented "parabolic truss" be lost on rural customers, Berlin salesmen arrived with cardboard models of their bridges and competing designs, the latter collapsing in the course of the demonstration. Bridge-building in this era depended on salesmanship, not science. Of course, relatively speaking, quite a few of the Berlin Company's bridges are still in place.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, iron bridges became an integral part of the American landscape, even more than covered bridges had been. John Roebling, designer of the Brooklyn Bridge, explained the aesthetic of iron bridges:

The present age is emphatically an age of usefulness. The useful goes before the ornamental. No matter what may be charged against the material tendencies of the present age, it is through material advancements alone that a higher spiritual culture of the masses can be attained.¹

Lover's Leap Bridge embodies this principle. The bridge is bluntly honest and creates through its graceful chords and slender members a light, floating impression, expressing and made possible by the inherent strength of the iron. The attenuated ornamental ironwork merely reinforces the overall effect. The functionalism of Lover's Leap Bridge is not at odds with the rest of Victorian architecture: it is a product of the same optimistic and moralistic aesthetic.

¹Quoted in David Plowden, Bridges: the Spans of North America (New York, 1974), 123.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Boller, Alfred P. Practical Treatise on the Construction of Iron Highway Bridges. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1876.
- Edwards, Llewellyn N. A Record of History and Evolution of Early American Bridges. Orono, Maine: Maine University Press, 1959.
- Plowden, David. Bridges: the Spans of North America. New York: Viking Press, 1974.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES

A 1, 8 | 63, 28, 6, 0 | 4, 60, 01, 7, 0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Bruce Clouette, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

December 21, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

(203) 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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

John W. Shannahan

TITLE

John W. Shannahan
 State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

3/2/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

James F. Rogers
Charles [unclear]

DATE

8/13/76

DATE

5-12-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER