### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Sect	ion number Page
	SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD
	NRIS Reference Number: 91001744 Date Listed: 12/10/91
	Skilton Road BridgeLitchfieldCTProperty NameCountyState
	N/A Multiple Name
	This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.
For	Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
ĺ	anded Items in Nomination:
	8. Statement of Significance: Area(s) and Criteria
	Criterion A applies to the documented historical significance of the property under the area of transportation.
	This information has been confirmed with John Herzan, National Register

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file Nominating Authority (without attachment)

Coordinator, CTSHPO, by telephone.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property	
historic name: SKILTON ROAD BRID	
other name/site number: <u>Bridge No. 4408</u>	
2. Location	
street & number: Skilton Road over Nonew	
city/town: Watertown	not for publication: <u>N/A</u> vicinity: <u>N/A</u>
state: CT county: Litchfield	code: <u>005</u> zip code: <u>06334</u>
3. Classification Ownership of Property: <u>public-local</u>	
Category of Property: <u>structure</u>	<del></del>
Number of Resources within Property:	
Contributing Noncontributing	
buildings sites structures objects  1 0 Total	
Number of contributing resources previous Register:0_	ly listed in the National
Name of related multiple property listing	: N/A

	=======================================			
4. State/F	ederal Agency Certificatio	n		
As the des of 1986, a request fo standards Historic P set forth does	ignated authority under the samended, I hereby certification of eligibication registering properties laces and meets the proced in 36 CFR Part 60. In my not meet the National Region of certifying official	e Nation y that the lity mee in the ural and opinion,	hal Historic Preser this <u>X</u> nomination ets the documentation National Register In professional requ on the property <u>X</u>	vation Act n on of irements meets nt. sheet.
	-			
State or F	ederal agency and bureau			
	ion, the property mee riteria See continua			National
Signature	of commenting or other off	icial	Date	
State or F	ederal agency and bureau			
=======		=======		=======
	l Park Service Certificati			
enter deter Nati deter Nati remov	ed in the National Registe See continuation sheet. mined eligible for the onal Register See continuation sheet. mined not eligible for the onal Register ed from the National Register (explain):	r		12-10-91
		J	gnature of Keeper	Date of Action
6. Functio				
	TRANSPORTATION			
Current:	TRANSPORTATION	Sub:	road-related	

7. Description			
Architectural Classifi			
other: masonry arch			
	<del></del>		
Other Description: N/	A		
Materials: foundation walls	N/A STONE	roof _ other _	N/A CONCRETE
Describe present and h sheet.	istoric physical	appearance	e. <u>X</u> See continuation
8. Statement of Signif	icance ========= s considered the	======= significar	e=====================================
Applicable National Re	gister Criteria:	C	
Criteria Consideration	s (Exceptions) :	N/A	
Areas of Significance:	TRANSPORTATION		
Period(s) of Significa	nce: <u>1865-1866</u>		
Significant Dates: _	c.1865		_
Significant Person(s):	N/A		
Cultural Affiliation:	N/A		
Architect/Builder: <u>Un</u>	known		
State significance of considerations, and ar X See continuation s	eas and periods o		

9. Major Bibliographical References
X See continuation sheet.
Previous documentation on file (NPS):
<pre>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 #</pre>
Primary Location of Additional Data:
State historic preservation office  X Other state agency
10. Geographical Data
Acreage of Property: <u>less than one</u>
UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
A <u>18 653350 4610020</u> B C D
See continuation sheet.
Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet. The nominated property includes the bridge, approaches, roadway, and railings.
Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet. The boundary includes only the components of the bridge itself.
11 Bank Despend De Designed by John Warre Web'r 1 De 'r 1 de 12 de
11. Form Prepared By Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator
Name/Title: <u>Bruce Clouette and Matthew Roth</u>
Organization: <u>Historic Resource Consultants</u> Date: <u>March 27, 1991</u>
Street & Number: 55 Van Dyke Avenue Telephone: 203-547-0268
City or Town: Hartford State: CT 7ID: 06106

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description

Skilton Road Bridge Watertown, Litchfield County, CT 7 - 1

Skilton Road Bridge is a single-span stone-arch bridge built in 1865 or 1866 (Photographs 1 and 2). It is located in a rural, residential part of Watertown, Connecticut, just downstream on the Nonewaug River¹ from a breached stone dam. The bridge spans 20 feet, with an overall length of 35 feet; the roadway is 16 feet wide. Skilton Road is carried about 30 feet above the river, which runs through a rocky, wooded gorge at this point. The bridge takes the form of a high stilted arch, springing from a ledge outcropping on the east end and a rubble wall about 15 feet high on the west end. The arch is approximately semi-elliptical in shape; because of the ledge, it is not bilaterally symmetrical.

The barrel of the arch is built of squared-up stone blocks of random sizes, while the stone that makes up the rubble spandrels shows little or no evidence of shaping. The stone appears to be locally obtained gneiss and was laid without mortar.

Alterations to the bridge include modern pre-cast concrete "Jersey"-profile roadway barriers (Photograph 3), two run-off drains leading to the underside of the arch (Photograph 5), and on the east end, rebuilding of some or all of the approach stonework, indicated by a partial concrete footing (Photograph 2).

The town-owned bridge is designated as Bridge No. 4408 in the Connecticut Department of Transportation's State Highway Bridge Log.

The local spelling Nonnewaug was not used because the Connecticut Department of Transportation bridge log, the <u>Connecticut Official Map</u>, and United States Geological Survey all use the spelling Nonewaug.

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Signficance

Skilton Road Bridge Watertown, Litchfield County, CT 8-1

Skilton Road Bridge is significant as a well-preserved example of stone-arch bridge construction (Criterion C). Stone arches represent a vernacular technology; they were built using traditional carpentry and masonry skills that were available in nearly every Connecticut community in the 19th century. The Skilton Road crossing was a more demanding situation than most. Because of the Nonewaug River's deep gorge and the presence of ledge on one side, the wooden falsework or centering which defined the shape of the arch must have been a challenge to plan and construct. The stonework itself, however, is typical of the rural dry-laid masonry of the period. Shaping of stone was limited to the arch ring itself, where the faces were cut to provide a better bearing surface. The spandrels, which did little more than support their own weight and resist the outward push of the roadway fill, were built of rubble not unlike that found in stone walls and house foundations throughout the Connecticut countryside. The name of the mason who built this bridge was not recorded in the town records.

In October of 1865 voters at the Watertown town meeting authorized the selectmen "to build an arched stone bridge or an iron bridge if they shall deem it expedient, across the stream near Cleveland's grist mill, within the following year." Stone arches were two or three times as expensive as wooden bridges. However, given the extra expense of erecting the bridge across the gorge, the eventual cost of a wooden bridge (which on average lasted less than 25 years) eventually would have exceeded the initial cost of stone construction. The millpond just upstream added another incentive to build in stone. Severe rainstorms would swell rivers and streams, causing milldams to burst, and the bridges downstream would be washed away. Although stone arches could be damaged by such floods, they were thought to hold up better than wooden bridges. Skilton Road was at the time the major route between Watertown and Bethlehem.

Similar stone arches were built throughout Connecticut from the 1790s to about 1900, wherever the importance of the road, difficult conditions, or the threat of flooding from nearby millponds justified the expense. Most have disappeared or been substantially altered, so that today only 20 comparable to Skilton Road Bridge remain. Only three intact examples of this important bridge-building technique remain in Litchfield County, of which Skilton Road Bridge is the earliest.<sup>2</sup>

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Signficance

Skilton Road Bridge Watertown, Litchfield County, CT 8 - 2

Modern alterations have had relatively little effect on the integrity of the bridge. Although the "Jersey barriers" have a strong visual impact from the roadway, their installation did not require the removal of historic stonework. Rural arches such as this typically had only a wooden rail fence as roadway protection in the historic period. The drains, while cut through the original masonry, address the problem of water running through the stonework, the principal cause of deterioration in 19th-century stone-arch bridges.

#### NOTES

- 1. It is interesting that the selectmen were authorized to purchase an iron bridge. Iron trusses were still relatively expensive at this point, rivaling the cost of stone, and the money would have gone out of the community rather than going to local builders. Eventually, however, as the bridge-fabricating industry became established, iron trusses dropped in price so much that they almost totally replaced traditional methods of bridge building.
- 2. Exclusive of railroad-built structures. Based on the Connecticut Historic Bridge Inventory, which identified 18 stone-arch highway bridges as having sufficient significance and integrity to make them eligible for National Register listing. Two stone arches, Pequabuck Bridge in Farmington and Main Street Bridge in Hartford, both built in 1833, are already listed on the National Register.

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Bibliography Skilton Road Bridge 9-1 Watertown, Litchfield County, CT

Connecticut Department of Transportation. Connecticut Historic Bridge Inventory, 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_. State Highway Bridge Log, 1985.

History of Ancient Westbury and Present Town of Watertown. N.p., c. 1907.

History of Litchfield County. Philadelphia, 1881.

Watertown Town Meeting Records, Vol. 2, 1849-1903, manuscript, Watertown Town Clerk, Watertown.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Photograph captions Skilton Road Bridge Photos-1 Watertown, Litchfield County, CT

### All photographs:

- 1. Skilton Road Bridge
- 2. Watertown, Litchfield County, CT
- 3. Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
- 4. March, 1991
- 5. Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission Hartford, CT

### Captions:

North elevation, camera facing south Photograph 1 of 5

South elevation, camera facing northwest Photograph 2 of 5

Roadway, camera facing east Photograph 3 of 5

Underside of arch, camera facing southeast Photograph 4 of 5

Detail of stonework, north elevation, camera facing south Photograph 5 of 5