Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74) PH0363324

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 2 2 1976
DATE ENTERED MAY 1 3 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC: Boardman's Bridge

AND/OR COMMON:

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Boardman Road at Housatonic River, __NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: New Milford __ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 6th - Toby Moffett

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Connecticut	09	Litchfield	005

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	XPUBLIC	XOCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
XSTRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	XYES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	XTRANSPORTATION
		__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

XFEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN: Washington

STATE: DC

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Boardman's Bridge is a single wrought-iron through lenticular truss span. The bridge was fabricated by the Berlin Iron Bridge Company, East Berlin, Connecticut, and was erected in 1888. Situated in a rural area, the bridge carries Boardman Road across the Housatonic River at a height of about 20'. The roadway is 15'6" wide and the bridge is 190' long between abutments, which are of rough stone laid as coursed ashlar.

The truss consists of two parabolic chords joined by uprights. The upper chord, or arch, rests upon the end columns, and like them, is constructed of box girders with one lattice side. The lower chord is suspended from the juncture of the end columns and arch and is a thirteen link chain of two parallel eye-bars. Lattice-girder uprights join the two chords at each link in the chain. The two sides of the bridge are tied together by lattice girders between the arches and between six pairs of uprights. Diagonals of tie-rods and turnbuckles connect the two sides of the bridge and also tie the truss together. As was usual, the major joints are pinned rather than rivetted.

The deck is suspended from the lower chord by means of eye-bars at each of the twelve junctures. The roadway itself is laid on corrugated sheets which are carried on I-beams parallel to the length of the bridge. The cross beams supporting them are tapered I-beams. The deck is stiffened by diagonal tie-rods and by lattice girders running between the ends of the cross-beams in the direction of the bridge.

The decorative effects are similar to other Berlin bridges. The lattice girder connecting the end columns is shaped so as to form an oval portal. The top edge slopes upward to a point where the builder's plate is attached. On either side of the plate is a cresting with a delicate interlocking floral design. A double railing of tubular iron serves as an approach guard rail (now supplemented by a modern steel strip guard). The guard along the inside of the bridge is a combination of four lengths of cable and a bumper strip. Some Berlin bridges had ornamental grillwork for guardrails and others, tubular rails like the approach rails to Boardman's Bridge; it seems likely that the original guardrail has been lost. The end columns have some punched plate ornament near the top (some of which has broken off) and are topped by bulbous orb-like finials.

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CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER	PAGE
Boardman's Bridge	6	one

Connecticut Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources
State - 1966

Connecticut Historical Commission
Hartford, CT

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	X ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	X TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1888 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Berlin Iron Bridge Company (William Douglas & Charles Jarvis)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Boardman's Bridge is an important historic resource because it is one of few remaining iron bridges and because its fabricator is of considerable significance in the history of American bridge-building. Although it was used for a relatively short period of time, iron as a material represented an immense advance over wood because of its strength. Iron became the standard for highway and railroad bridges until the advantages of steel were appreciated.

The importance of the iron bridge in the American landscape was more than as a way to cross rivers. The use of iron was seen as evidence of the continual progress, both material and intellectual, which was expected to bring about the moral uplift of humanity. The lightness and grace of Boardman's Bridge are the direct product of iron's structural strength; as such, it is an aesthetic expression of the Victorian's faith in progress.

The Berlin Iron Bridge Company was the last of a host of small pre-fabricators of iron bridges. It was also the most innovative. Because the company relied on numerous contracts for single highway bridges, it refined its marketing techniques to an almost legendary degree. Illustrated catalogs and public demonstrations were used to gain an edge in a highly competative field, in which the outcome depended on salesmanship as much as science. Part of the Berlin Company's appeal was their patented "parabolic truss." In the 19th century it was commonly and erroneously thought that the best bridges were those that combined different principles of support. By this standard, the Berlin bridge was the ultimate, since it was at once based upon arch, truss, and suspension theories. Although this undoubtedly appealed to the hundreds of towns which erected Berlin bridges, contemporary engineers were less than enthusiastic about exotic designs: "it is bordering on criminality to build any structure on a plan that no human being can tell definitely anything about, when there are so many plans we thoroughly understand."[1] Although he did not refer directly to the Berlin Company, Albert Boller could have been writing about the parabolic truss. On the other hand, a surprising number of Berlin bridges are still standing and in use. All of these, however, will require recognition and planning if iron bridges, an important part of the nation's heritage, are to be preserved.

[1] Alfred P. Boller, Practical Treatise on the Construction of Iron Highway Bridges (New York, 1876), 43.

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 the History and Evolution of Early American Bridges. Orono: 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

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	18	629150	4605560
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

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 State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 3/2/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 5/13/76

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 5.12.76

GPO 888-445