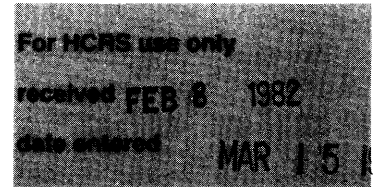


United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# 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** Wilson's Bridge

historic Conococheague Bridge, The Creek Bridge

and/or common Wilson's Bridge (PREFERRED), Wilson Bridge

## 2. Location

street & number Old U. S. 40, over Conococheague Creek  not for publication

city, town Hagerstown vic  
Wilson  vicinity of congressional district Sixth

state Maryland code 24 county Washington County code 043

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Not in use

## 4. Owner of Property

name Board of County Commissioners of Washington County

street & number Washington County Courthouse

city, town Hagerstown  vicinity of state Maryland 21740

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse

street & number West Washington Street

city, town Hagerstown state Maryland 21740

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Washington County Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1973-1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis, state Maryland 21401

# 7. Description

WA-V-001

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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

Wilson Bridge which is no longer open to traffic, carried the Hagerstown and Conococheague Turnpike over the Conococheague Creek, 7 miles west of Hagerstown near the village of Wilson in Washington County. It is located on a section of highway which linked the National Road with Baltimore. The 5-arch span built in 1819 is the largest and oldest of the 25 stone bridges remaining in Washington County. It is 210 feet long and constructed of coursed local limestone. A date tablet in the north wall records the builder as Silas Harry. The bridge appears symmetrical with the largest of its 5 segmental arches being at the center of the structure. The arches are lined with cut stone voussoirs and are supported by piers terminating with rounded projections. The bridge has received few alterations. Changes to the original structure include only some modern repointing, resurfacing of the 19th century road, and replacement of its original wooden coping with concrete. The bridge was bypassed by the present U. S. Route 40 when a newer span was built downstream circa 1935. Wilson's Bridge remained open to local traffic until June 1972, when it was damaged during hurricane Agnes. The bridge has experienced increased deterioration in recent years.

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

These boundaries were selected as the minimum land necessary to protect the bridge.

# 8. Significance

WA- V-001

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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** 1819 **Builder/Architect** Silas Harry, builder

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Applicable Criteria: A and C

SIGNIFICANCE

Wilson's Bridge is important for its architecture, its role in commerce and transportation and its contribution to knowledge of 19th century engineering. Architecturally the bridge is significant as the oldest and largest of 25 remaining stone arched spans in Washington County. Although it is not the only example of its type, it was the first and served as a pattern for other similar bridges in the area. While stone bridge construction was used elsewhere in the United States, there was a particular concentration of it in Western Maryland and Southern Pennsylvania. Built of limestone, the bridge is enhanced by the fact that the original builder's contract with construction and payment specifications is recorded among the County Land Records. Thus, the original appearance of the bridge is known. The bridge played an important role in commerce and transportation by aiding travel along the highway linking the famous National Pike with Baltimore. Also, it reflects the level of engineering skill at the time it was built. Having carried vehicles for more than 150 years and the heavy traffic of a major road for well over a century, Wilson's Bridge remains as a monument to the engineering capabilities of Silas Harry, bridge builder.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

An agreement recorded in Liber CC, Folio 394, among the Washington County Land Records, was made on December 31, 1817, between the President and Managers of the Hagerstown and Conococheague Turnpike Company and Silas Harry, David Fullerton and Joseph Culbertson of Franklin County, Pennsylvania for the construction of a bridge across the Conococheague Creek. According to the document, ". . . the said Silas Harry for the consideration hereafter mentioned, hath agreed to build and complete in a workman like manner, a stone bridge over the Conococheague Creek on the Hagerstown Turnpike Road near Witmer's Mill, of the width of twenty-four feet from out to out to consist of five arches of a size sufficient to answer the creek; and with sufficient wing and curtain walls - the curtain walls to be two feet thick above the bed of the road - the distance between the abutments to be two hundred and ten feet - the bridge walls to be covered over the good pine boards or shingles and to be painted in a complete manner with two coats of Spanish brown. Said Harry agrees to fill between the arches ready for turnpiking and to turnpike the road across the bridge in a workmanlike manner." The Hagerstown and Conococheague Turnpike Company agreed to pay Silas Harry \$9,100.00 for the work which has to have been completed on or before December 1, 1818. On June 18, 1819, Maryland Governor Charles Goldsborough commissioned Henry Shafer, William Gabby and Thomas Heller to examine the new bridge and report their findings. The examiners found the bridge to be adequate as recorded in Liber EE, Folio 343 of the Washington County

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

WA-V-001

UTM NOT VERIFIED

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Mason-Dixon Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A	1 8	2 5 5 6 5 0	4 3 9 3 4 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
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D			
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E			
---	--	--	--

F			
---	--	--	--

G			
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H			
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes only the land on which the bridge, its piers, and abutments rest. See boundary justification under #7 description.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paula Stoner Reed, Architectural Historian

organization Preservation Associates date March 1981

street & number 109 West Main Street, Box 202 telephone 301-432-5466

city or town Sharpsburg, state Maryland 21782

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

SEE JUNE 30, 1982 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

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 [Signature] 2-5-82

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

**For HCRS use only**

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

[Signature] Entered in the National Register date 3/15/82

Attest: [Signature] date

Chief of Registration

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number

8 and 9

Page

1

Wilson's Bridge  
Washington County, Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

Land Records. The Governor then licensed the Hagerstown and Conococheague Turnpike Company to erect toll gates at the bridge. Printed in the January 7, 1818 issue of the Maryland Herald and Hagerstown Weekly Advertiser, is a statement signed by "a stockholder" of the Hagerstown and Conococheague Turnpike Company, "The bridge is to be built of stone by Mr. Silas Harry of Chambersburg, who has built many bridges of the kind in Pennsylvania and has given general satisfaction. There is no doubt that the bridge will be built in a style of workmanship not inferior to any on this continent. Thus we shall have a turnpike road of seven miles and a stone bridge completed in two years, and the people from the westward will be enabled to travel to Baltimore on a good turnpike road by way of Harman's Gap, in a shorter distance than any route near the Potomac."

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Sword, Gerald T., Unpublished report on Wilson's Bridge, January, 1972.  
Includes extensive bibliography

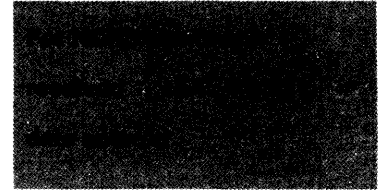
Washington County Land Records.

Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Survey: Washington County (WA-V-001).  
Paula Stone Reed, surveyor, 1981, Annapolis, Maryland.

Mish, Mary Vernon and David T. Cottingham. Bridges: Our Legacy in Stone.  
n.p.: published for the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, 1965.

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

WA-V-001



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Re: Wilson's Bridge  
Hagerstown vicinity  
Washington County

REVISIONS: 24 June 1982

Section 8: Significance

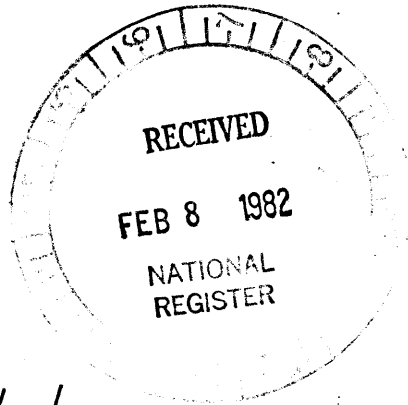
See below. Revised summary prepared by Paula Stoner Reed who prepared original application.

Section 12: SHPO certification

Evaluated significance is national instead of local.

REVISED SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

Wilson's Bridge is significant at the national level for its association with the National Pike, the first federally mandated and funded road in the United States. The National Pike as authorized by the federal government in Thomas Jefferson's administration ran from Cumberland, Maryland to Wheeling, West Virginia (then Virginia). However, shortly after that portion of the National Pike was finished, public roads and turnpikes between Baltimore and Cumberland were upgraded, linking the western parts of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia with Baltimore in a steady, smooth macadam surface. Wilson's Bridge which was erected as part of this upgrading process is one of the two oldest remaining bridges on the National Pike in Maryland. The other bridge, over the Casselman River in Garrett County was begun in 1813 and is now designated as a National Historic Landmark. Since Wilson's Bridge, dated 1819, has most of the same associations with the National Pike as the Casselman River Bridge, it also has national significance and eligibility for designation as a National Historic Landmark. Wilson's Bridge stands essentially as built except for its road surface which was paved. The significance of Wilson's Bridge is enhanced by the fact that the original contractor's specifications remain describing its original construction.



Wilson's Bridge  
Washington County  
Maryland

SKETCH MAP April 1981  
scale: approx. 1"=100'

