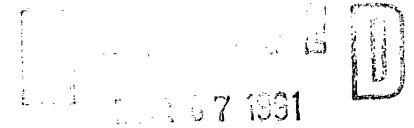


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name MERRETT PARKWAY
other names/site number Connecticut State Highway Route 15

2. Location

street & number see continuation sheet not for publication
city, town see continuation sheet vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county Fairfield code 001 zip code see continuation sheet

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>10</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>67</u>	<u>12</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>81</u>	<u>13</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: none

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register none

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
John W. Shannahan 3/5/91
Signature of certifying official John W. Shannahan, State Historic Preservation Officer Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Betty R. Surge 4-17-91
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain): _____
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/road-related

(vehicular)

Landscape/Park

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/road-related

(vehicular)

Landscape/Park

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Moderne, Art Deco, Colonial

Revival, Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other stone, metal, concrete, brick,
wood, plant materials

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

lime content which has contributed to its fertility, making it productive farmland. (1)

Taking a course from west to east, the Parkway climbs and falls often. Elevations vary from 270 feet above sea level at the New York state line in Greenwich to - moving east and noting approximate elevations at the town lines - 220 feet at Stamford, 260 feet at New Canaan, 210 feet at Norwalk, 100 feet at Westport, 200 feet at Fairfield, 250 feet at Trumbull, and 150 feet at the Stratford line, beyond which the elevation falls to 100 feet at the intersection with Route 110 and down to ninety feet crossing the bridge over the Housatonic River.

The Parkway is hilly because it crosses several watershed areas. As Warren M. Creamer (1895-1979), Project Engineer for the Parkway, noted in 1936:

... generally in Southwestern Fairfield County the water courses run north and south, ridge and valley lines consequently have this direction but the Parkway traverses the territory from west to east. In view of this topographic condition we were obliged to cross ridges either diagonally or at right angles.

Therefore, as Creamer continued, it was not possible to "follow the natural contour of the ground to avoid cutting and filling." (2)

By the 1920s, cutting and clearing by immigrant people who had been farming in Fairfield County for nearly 300 years had eliminated most large virgin stands of coniferous trees such as balsam, cedar, hemlock, and pine as well as quantities of deciduous trees including ash, basswood, beech, birch, buttonwood, chestnut, elm, hickory, maple, oak, pepperidge, poplar, sassafras, sycamore, walnut, whitewood, and wild cherry. (3) Still, representatives of these native varieties remained, most notably ash, cedar, dogwood, hemlock, laurel, maple, oak, pine, and rhododendron.

In the 1920s and through the years of the Parkway's construction, Fairfield County was home to twenty-five per cent of the state's population, but it still had working farms and open fields. The drawing by George L. Dunkelberger (1891-1960) reproduced here as Figure 1 suggests how he, the architect of the Merritt's bridges, perceived that openness and the general appearance of some of the countryside flanking the Parkway. There also remained wooded areas like those visible in **Photograph 1**, where a farm with its farmhouse is seen on the right, beyond

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

the road. The Fairfield County region through which the Parkway was to pass was described in 1936 by its chief engineer:

Its excellent facilities for residential purposes, its diversified physical features with lakes, salt water, picturesque wooded areas, rolling fields, its many spots unchanged since Colonial days have given it a charm which is almost unrivalled. (4)

Historic Physical Appearance:
The Roadways

According to the Highway Commissioner's Biennial Report for the Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 1939 and June 30, 1940, the road as built

consists of two reinforced concrete pavement strips, each twenty-six feet in width between curbs, and each carrying two lanes of traffic. These two strips are separated by a landscaped park with a normal width of twenty-two feet. (5)

The roadways lay north of the center line of the 300-foot right-of-way, reserving the southern half for possible future expansion. No definite plans for expansion ever seem to have been made.

Access to the Parkway was limited; of the sixty roads that it crossed, only twenty-one had entrances to or exits from it. **Photograph 11**, an early aerial view, shows a cloverleaf interchange. Another set of entrance and exit roads is clearly shown in **Photograph 3**. In the middle distance of that photograph, a cross-over lane is barely visible running through the median. A better illustration of a cross-over lane appears as **Photograph 4**.

In an article of 1936, Warren M. Creamer, Project Engineer for the Merritt, gave specifications for the horizontal and vertical alignment of the roadways:

... the banks used allow a safe speed varying from 45 miles per hour for a 1 degree - 00' curve to 30 miles per hour for a 7 degree - 00' curve. The length of transition from a normal tangent section with its rise is generally not less than 200 feet or over 300 feet.

Vertical sight line of 500 feet or more is planned throughout with the frequent use of long,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

sweeping vertical curves and the minimum use of tangent grades.

The ruling curvature planned is seven degrees (7 degrees - 00'), the ruling gradient seven per cent (7%) ... (6)

Photograph 2 shows a relatively flat straight surface created through a cut, **Photograph 3** shows another flat straight stretch of road, **Photograph 4** shows a curve on a hill where cutting had been necessary, **Photograph 8** shows a curve with a vista to a bridge, and **Photograph 10** shows the road running through a valley where filling had been required, and on up a substantial hill.

In his article of 1936, Creamer gave other specifications:

the total graded width from edge of shoulder to edge of shoulder in cuts is eighty-four feet eight inches (84'-8") and on fills ninety-two feet four inches (92'-4").

An eighty-foot wide subgrade was prepared. Creamer detailed the process:

Where rock is encountered in excavation, it is taken out to a depth two feet below subgrade. Backfill to provide suitable foundation is made either by placing 24" of gravel fill sub-base under the paved lanes ... or 6" of gravel fill on top of 18" of stone fill sub base.... Under the park, earth backfill is placed to within 10" of the surface, and loam backfill is used to bring it to grade.

In earth cuts material is taken out to a depth of 12" below subgrade and backfill is made by placing 12" of gravel fill sub-base under the paved lanes... (7)

The newly built concrete surfaces are pictured in **Photographs 2-5, 8, 10, and 11**. In the very earliest photographs (**Photographs 2, 3, 4, 10**), no painted lines marking lane divisions or edges of the roadway are visible on the road surfaces. However, within a very short time, they were added (**Photograph 8**).

To finish the pavement strips, specifications published in 1936 called for

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

a rise of one (1) inch width [sic: probably for "with"] concrete gutters on either side, three (3) feet in width, dropping three (3) inches from the edges of pavement to the faces of the curbs. (8)

The specifications also gave details about the curbing: On the median the curbs

... are eight (8) inches in width at the gutter elevation, four (4) inches in height, and two and seven-eighths (2 7/8") in width at the top, the curb faces battered at an angle of forty-five (45) degrees and becoming tangent to the arc of a circular curve having a radius of two and three-quarter inches (2 3/4"). (9)

Early concrete curbing is well illustrated in **Photograph 8**. To outline these curbs, the use of "cat's eye reflectors" was an innovation announced with publicity, and later mentioned with pride by engineers of the Parkway in their official reports. A headline of October 1, 1937, proclaimed "Parkway Curb to be Lighted" over an article that went on to detail that the engineers were "placing reflectors along the curbing so that they will shine under the beams of auto lights and outline the limits of the roadway." (10)

A great deal of attention was paid to problems of surface drainage to handle four lines of longitudinal water concentration. Storm sewers of reinforced concrete pipe were placed in the center of the median, connected by reinforced concrete pipes to catch basins, with discharge into storm sewers outletting through cross culverts. Early drains placed along road's edge are visible in many of the Highway Department's early photographs of the Merritt now in the collection of A. Earl Wood, and at the State Archives. A stone drain for a culvert several feet off the roadway can be seen in **Photograph 4**.

Current Physical Appearance:
The Roadways

Although there have been incremental changes along the roadway, and more drastic rebuilding of some short stretches, the roadways of the Merritt Parkway still retain much of their historic integrity.

Minor straightening and widening of the roadway has been

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 6MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

observed and reported by frequent users, and the road has been rebuilt in Trumbull where it crosses State Routes 8 and 25. Here interchanges on the scale of modern interstate highways were built in 1980-1983, as well as ingress and egress lanes with long approaches. Similar work is in progress (October 1990) at the intersection with State Route 7 in Norwalk.

Repaving has occurred along much of the roadway, so that dark gray aggregate surfaces, rather than the light surfaces of the original reinforced concrete, are visible over most of the way. Bituminous concrete has been used where the road has been rebuilt in Trumbull. In many places, old curbs have been almost covered by repaving and by growth of grass and weeds. This condition can be seen at road's edge in **Photographs 9, 12, and 13**. In other places, new bituminous concrete curbs, built up from the paving surface, have been created. In **Photograph 13** a typical new drain is also visible.

The original cross-over lanes were extremely short-lived. Public and officials alike early recognized that they were dangerous and they were eliminated within the first few months of operation of the Parkway.

Historic Physical Appearance:
The Designed Landscape
Plantings and Road Furniture

Photographs 2, 4, 10, and 11 are copies made from the many taken for the State Highway Department to record the appearance of portions of the Parkway as they were completed. All document abundant planting of young trees, both coniferous and deciduous, in the median and along the sides of the roadway.

It is possible to reconstruct a detailed inventory of the species represented in these photographs by using the extant bid requests for plants, sent from the State Highway Department to nurseries, now in the possession of Weld Thayer Chase. The bid requests specify numbers and sizes of plants, identifying them by both common and Latin names. Most of the bid requests include instructions about delivery points along the length of the Parkway. A plant list compiled from these bid requests is included as part of the Resource Inventory in Section 7.

Oriental bittersweet vine, now overgrown along the Merritt, was among the plants ordered. Scotch pines, red cedars, pin oaks, birches, maples, dogwoods, and Canadian hemlocks dominate these lists.

Working from seventy-three landscaping contracts, Thayer Chase has totalled the numbers of plants actually ordered.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 7MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

He has counted 47,700 laurels on these contracts, more than any other species. The impact of their spring bloom was to be augmented by that of 3,777 dogwoods. Chase's calculations show more orders for evergreens than for deciduous trees. He counted 6,459 pines, 3,095 cedars, and 2,037 hemlocks in these contracts.

The earliest bid lists, for the first stretch of the Parkway opened in Greenwich, include more exotic species, such as azaleas, than do later lists. Generally speaking, the earlier lists also suggest a greater use of shrubs and vines, in addition to trees, than do the later lists, on which trees predominate. Photographs made just after the opening of the first section in Greenwich, now in the collection of A. Earl Wood, including **Photograph 5**, provide additional documentation for the earlier choice of plant materials, and show small woody shrubs densely planted in clumps in the median. They were also planted near the edges of the roadways.

Drawings and annotations detailing placement of plant materials were made in the field by Weld Thayer Chase (1906-), the State Highway Department's landscape architect for the Parkway, on copies of the 24" X 36" engineers' contract plans for the roadways, at 40 scale. (11) The writers of this nomination have not seen these landscape plans, nor determined whether they survive within the records of the State Department of Transportation, or in the State Archives.

The State Highway Department's Bureau of Roadside Development was careful to photograph some stretches of the Parkway before and after landscaping, as in the case of an area known as the "Ripples Cut," which was recorded in 1936, in a photograph showing the finished roadside subgrade (**Photograph 1**), and again in 1939 after paving and landscaping (**Photograph 2**). This pair and other matched pairs of "before and after" photographs make it clear that the naturalistic appearance today of the Parkway is very much the product of artifice. Comparison of these two photographs reveals not only the extensive introduction of young trees, but also careful infilling of the jagged rocks exposed in such cuts with soil and with plantings designed to soften their edges and disguise the extent of the engineers' change of the terrain. **Photograph 2** shows open spaces of the type purposely left between plantings to give travelers glimpses into the countryside beyond the right-of-way.

Flowering trees and shrubs, especially "Thousands of Dogwood, Laurel Plants," were donated by ten Fairfield garden clubs and civic groups in the two months just before completion of the full length of the Parkway. (12) A typical garden-club planting of laurel is pictured in **Photograph 6**, a scene at the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 8MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Sport Hill Road (State Route 59) Bridge in Fairfield, where a boulder with a bronze plaque commemorates landscaping by the Easton Garden Club. At least seventeen such boulders with plaques were placed near plantings by the various garden clubs, and photographs of them survive in the State Archives and at the Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich. Three boulders can be easily seen on the Parkway today (see Resource Inventory and **Photograph 7**); others may lie hidden in the underbrush.

Signs on the Parkway (**Photograph 3**) were wood, stained dark green, with white letters. They were low and rustic, in keeping with the ideal of blending with nature, as were the wooden "rustic guide rails," as period documents call them (Clearest in **Photograph 8**, but also visible in **Photographs 2,4**). The very earliest were squared-off oak posts into which thick oak rails were tenoned. These were later supplemented and replaced by guard rails made of creosote-stained native oak bollards joined by metal cables or chains. Cat's eye reflectors were set into bollards so they could better serve as guide posts.

Colonial Revival service stations opened in 1940 in New Canaan and in 1941 in Greenwich (**Photograph 45**) and Fairfield. In New Canaan, a maintenance garage (**Photograph 44**) was built behind the service station at the same time. (13) Toll booths (**Photograph 46**) were installed in 1939 in Greenwich. Rustic wooden structures replaced these in 1940, and similar ones were installed in Milford at the eastern end of the Housatonic River Bridge when it opened. While the Milford booths were not technically on the Merritt Parkway (which stopped at the western abutment of the bridge), tolls for travel on the Merritt were collected at them.

An additional landscape feature was described in a report issued by the commission that supervised the Parkway in 1947:

Old wood roads, surveyors' lines, footpaths, and logging trails have been joined together to make a continuous bridle path throughout the length of the Parkway. (14).

Historic Physical Appearance:
Past Changes in Plantings and Road Furniture

In a telephone interview of October 11, 1990, A. Earl Wood, Engineer of Roadside Development for the Merritt, recounted how many of the smaller plantings were lost during winter maintenance of the first four or five years after the Parkway was opened. He

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 9MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

fixed the blame on brine from salt, used to melt snow, thrown "way off" the roadways by snow plows moving too fast, under pressure from impatient motorists. A comparison of **Photographs 6 and 7**, both taken near the Sport Hill Road Bridge in Fairfield, reveals that most of the laurel plantings recorded in the earlier view around a commemorative boulder have disappeared in the later view, in which the same boulder is visible.

In the same interview, Wood estimated that for the first eight years after it was opened, the Merritt was "picturesque," and that after that, the appearance of the landscaping declined. Weld Thayer Chase also talked about the appearance of the Merritt's landscaping over time in an interview of October 26, 1990. He recalled that for the first several years the roadside crew, "who were gifted" landscapers, cared for the plantings beautifully. Then as money got tight, "they were thrown out. It all just went into maintenance" - by untrained road crews.

In 1956 a visitors' center was erected at the Greenwich Rest Area. It was moved here from the Post Road, where it had been built in 1935 to serve as the official Greenwich information booth for the Connecticut Tercentenary celebration. Designed by Frederick G. C. Smith, the small saltbox-shaped structure was intended to be a replica of a New England home.

In 1957 mature trees in the median and near the edges of the roadway were cut down. Fatal accidents in which motorists had run into trees marked other trees as menaces to public safety, and despite some protest in newspapers, they were felled.

When collection of tolls was ended in 1988, the rustic wooden toll booths were removed. (15)

**Current Physical Appearance:
Plantings and Road Furniture**

Today the mature trees and rampant growth of vines along the Merritt Parkway give travellers a sense of driving through what some have called a "green tunnel." Trees grow thickly along both edges of the road, often to within a few feet of the roadway itself, and there are mature trees within the median strip. Most of them are pines, cedars, oaks, and maples, with some laurels and birches. Comparison of **Photograph 8**, made shortly after the Parkway opened in 1940, with **Photograph 9**, recently made to include in its middle-and background the earlier scene, shows how the trees have matured, obscuring the earlier vista of the bridge. Vistas into the adjacent countryside are now almost entirely overgrown. The view of Putnam Lake, planned for the pleasure of motorists on the Parkway, is now almost completely

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 10MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

obscured (Photograph 14).

Occasionally the grass verge opens up to give a hint of a field, and at some of the exits traces of the original landscaping are more apparent (Photograph 7). But for the most part, driving through the Parkway now seems like going through a forest thick with trees, and overgrown. The original landscapers' use of native plants makes it difficult to tell which plants are theirs and which have grown up naturally.

Where bridges have recently been repaired, the underbrush has been cleared away to allow for access. No new plantings have been made in those spots, however. Where the Parkway has been rebuilt for new interchanges with State Routes 8 and 25 in Trumbull (Photographs 42,43), the old plantings have been cleared out entirely. Grass predominates there, and young trees have been planted.

Metal guardrails of the type clearly visible in the center of the roadways in Photographs 9, 12, and 13 have been placed in the median for most of the length of the Parkway, sometimes as a single structure dividing the center of the median, sometimes as two railings lining the edges of the median. These metal guardrails now also edge the roadways along much of their length, often running tight against - and obscuring from view - ornamental parapets and railings of overpasses. Wooden bollards with cables are still present on the Parkway, as is also evident in Photographs 9 and 12. A few of the bollards retain cat's eye reflectors of the type much-publicized when they were first used on the Parkway. Signs are now the standard ones used on Connecticut state highways, of the type seen in Photographs 39 and 42. None of the early rustic signs remains in place, and most of the plaques placed by garden clubs and civic groups on boulders in the midst of flowering trees and shrubs have disappeared. Among contributing features that occur regularly along the way are culverts of concrete, many with stone facing. The bridle and hiking trails are not marked today and are little-used and overgrown. Portions of them, however, can still be seen. Parking lots for commuters have been built in the centers of several exit loops.

Bridges

The bridges under which the roadway passes are the most prominent and most widely celebrated architectural features of the Merritt Parkway. They range from elaborately ornamented examples such as the Lake Avenue Bridge, Greenwich (Photographs 15, 16), to very simple and plain ones, as in the Metro North

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 11MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Railroad Bridge, New Canaan (visible near the center of **Photograph 10**). Each of the thirty-four contributing underpasses is different from every other.

Reinforced concrete is the major structural material used in all the bridges. On the surfaces of all but two underpasses, concrete is the principal finish material. Coloring in the body of the concrete plays an important role in the design of many, and coloring in concrete sgraffito work is a prominent ornamental feature in three underpasses. Of the underpasses, only the bridge carrying Guinea Road over the Parkway in Greenwich is entirely stone-faced. There is also stone facing on the abutments of the Lake Avenue Bridge in Greenwich, where the span is steel. The only other with a steel span - Clinton Avenue in Westport - has exposed concrete abutments. Four of the underpasses incorporate metal railings, and one, the Lake Avenue Bridge in Greenwich, has applied cast-iron ornament which originally had painted polychroming (**Photographs 15, 16**).

A variety of architectural styles animates the bridges that are visible to travellers on the Merritt Parkway: twenty-nine are examples of the Art Deco and Moderne styles developed during the era in which they were built. Among these, twenty-one bridges can be described as Moderne (**Photographs 17, 18, 21-24, 31-36**), and within this group 10 are examples of Modern Classicism (**Photographs 15, 36-38**), an early twentieth-century style derived from classical themes, freely adapting - sometimes simplifying, streamlining or abstracting - classical motifs, at other times adapting classical structural elements for strictly decorative uses, or taking other liberties with classical precedents. Art Deco (**Photographs 15, 16, 26-30**) is the major stylistic influence in eight bridges that pass over the Merritt. Four underpasses adhere more closely to historical models: Among these, one rustic stone-faced bridge (**Photographs 19, 20**) is based ultimately on classical sources, and three appear to have been inspired by fortified French bridges of the Gothic and Renaissance eras (**Photograph 25**).

The current visible surface condition of these bridges varies. As of 1990, ten of the original underpasses have been repaired by the State Department of Transportation, including some that have been rebuilt by recasting lost or crumbling elements and ornaments (**Photographs 17, 18**). In some of these cases, detailing has been simplified in rebuilding. Changes in color of the bridge surfaces have been especially apparent during this ongoing process; the concrete on them is now a gleaming white. Some have had their spans replaced entirely. Only one of the original bridges has been totally demolished: In 1979, the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 12MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Nichols Avenue Bridge was taken down to make way for intersection with State Route 8 in Trumbull. It was a concrete bridge of a single span, a segmental arch on piers that bore at its center the town seal of Trumbull set into the balustrade. Cast-iron ornamental panels from its abutments were reused on the Huntington Turnpike Bridge built in 1983 to replace it (Photograph 42). The Huntington Turnpike Bridge is one of seven new bridges that now cross over the Merritt Parkway in Trumbull: four were built in 1980 and three in 1983 (Photograph 43).

The thirty-five contributing overpasses carrying the Parkway over streams, railroads or other roads are less evident to the traveller on the Merritt, who generally sees only the parapets or balustrades atop them. They are more visible to the communities along the way, where they contribute to the local roadscape. The overpasses are for the most part simpler than the underpasses, though the same styles appear (Photographs 39-41). A few, however, do boast extravagant ornament, like the oversized applied metal flowers of the Route 110 Bridge in Stratford (Photograph 41), that rivals the most elaborate of the underpasses. Others, crossing small streams or railroad lines, are utilitarian (Photograph 37). Like the underpasses, these bridges are primarily built of reinforced concrete, with an occasional metal span or railing and, more rarely, stone facing. As of 1990, six of the overpasses have undergone or are currently undergoing renovation and repair work. Three new overpasses have also been built in Trumbull, two of them in 1980, and the other in 1983.

NOTES

1. Janice P. Cunningham, Historic Preservation in Connecticut. Vol. 1, The Western Coastal Slope: A Historical and Architectural Overview. Draft copy. (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Commission, June 1990), p. 1.
2. Warren Creamer, "The Merritt Parkway" The Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers, Inc. Annual Report ... 1936 Volume 10, p. 102 (hereafter cited as "Merritt").
3. Albert E. Van Dusen, Puritans Against the Wilderness: Connecticut History to 1763 (Chester, Connecticut: Pequot Press, 1975), p. 14.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 13MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

4. Creamer, "Merritt," p. 102.
5. Connecticut State Highway Commissioner, Biennial Report of the Highway Commissioner to the Governor. Hartford, Published by the State, for the Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 1939 and June 30, 1940, p. 130.
6. Creamer, "Merritt," p. 107.
7. Ibid., pp. 106-107.
8. Ibid., pp. 103-104.
9. Ibid., p. 104.
10. Clipping in scrapbook of A. Earl Wood. Newspaper source not given.
11. Interview of Weld Thayer Chase, October 26, 1990, by Catherine Lynn.
12. Hartford Courant, July 14, 1940.
13. The construction date for the maintenance garage is established by a photograph in the possession of Weld Thayer Chase which shows the maintenance garage under construction at the same time that the service station was being built.
14. Connecticut State Highway Commission, "The Merritt Parkway Highway Commission in Connecticut," (Hartford, 1947) as quoted by Northwest Greenwich Associates in "Merritt Parkway" Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places prepared in 1974 but not listed. State of Connecticut, Merritt Parkway Commission, "Rules and Regulations Governing the Use of The Merritt Parkway. (Effective October 28, 1946)," an eight-page published booklet in the collection of A. Earl Wood, includes as # 11: "Equestrians are permitted on the bridle paths of the Merritt Parkway."
15. Information on the visitors' center from newspaper clipping, "Tercentenary Booth in Colonial Style" dated September 6, 1935, from scrapbook of Roger Selchow, volume V, 119. One toll booth was preserved in Boothe Park in Stratford, Connecticut, and another at Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 14

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Resource Inventory

The Merritt Parkway includes the entire right-of-way of Connecticut State Highway Route 15 and its associated features from the New York border at King Street in Greenwich to the western abutment of the Housatonic River bridge in Stratford.

A list of roadway features located within the Merritt Parkway is provided below. Note that overpass means a bridge that carries the Parkway over a road, railroad, or waterway; underpass means a bridge through the Parkway passes under a road or railroad. Many State Highway Department documents call all bridges "grade separations." "FY" stands for State Fiscal Year, July 1 to June 30. The sequence of exit numbers continues from the Hutchinson River Parkway in Westchester County, New York. The first one in Connecticut is Exit 27.

The list is arranged in the following format:

Mile (measured from New York border)	Resource Status (C=contributing/ NC=noncontributing)	Brief description of of resource. Photo- graph Reference # (where applicable)
--	--	--

TOWN OF GREENWICH

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| 0.0 | C | Beginning of Merritt Parkway |
| 0.3 | C | Greenwich rest area
Service Station, northbound lanes.
<u>Construction:</u> 1941.
<u>Description:</u> Colonial Revival. 1-story building of random ashlar masonry, with slate roof. Small dormer with clock at center of roof. Recent stone addition for restrooms and food attached to original building at angle. Parking plan, gas pump layout remodeled 1947 and later. Recent canopy over gas pumps. Photograph 45 |
| | NC | Greenwich rest area
Visitors' center, to east of service station serving northbound lanes.
<u>Construction:</u> 1935, as Greenwich's Connecticut Tercentenary Visitor Center on the Post Road -- Frederick G. C. Smith, architect. Moved to this site, 1956. |

INC
Bldg.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Section number 7 Page 15

Description: Colonial Revival. Small, 1-story, clapboarded building in form of a saltbox house, with eyebrow windows in attic.

C **Boulder** beside the Visitors' Center bears a bronze plaque memorializing the donation of plantings.

C **Greenwich rest area Service Station, southbound lanes.**

Construction: 1941.

Description: Colonial Revival. 1-story building of random ashlar masonry, with slate roof. Small dormer with clock at center of roof. Recent stone addition attached to original building at angle. Parking plan, gas pump layout remodeled 1947 and later. Recent canopy over gas pumps.

1.7 C **Maintenance yard.** Access from SB lanes.

Description: Utilitarian. 2 buildings by gravel driveway. 1-story shed, part brick and part shingled, and shiplap-sided sand shed. Both seem to be contemporary with Parkway. Later trailers. Pine trees, some recently planted, screen yard from Parkway.

C **Byram Lake** (also known as Tollhouse Pond). To east of NB lanes. Gravel pit created during Parkway construction and transformed into a landscape feature in 1935 by filling with water. Vegetation now largely obscures it from roadway.

Photograph 46

1.75 C **Overpass, Byram River** (DOT #691).

Construction: c. 1935,6; widened 1956.

Description: Utilitarian. Concrete, single straight span. Original concrete balustrade on south side; later solid concrete parapet and steel railing on north side.

1.8 C **Overpass, Riversville Rd. and East Branch, Byram River** (DOT #692).

Construction: In progress, 1935,36.

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 16MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Description: Moderne/Modern Classicism. Twin double spans, supported by center piers between road and river. Rectangular and circular recessed panels on piers and span; simple balustrade. Recently repaired. **Photograph 5** (in background)

- 2.3 C **Overpass, stream and path** (DOT #693).
Description: Utilitarian/Moderne. Concrete arch bridge. Very simple; balustrade with chamfered balusters and pedestals with pyramidal caps. 1 section of balustrade on south side replaced by solid panel.
- 2.8 C **Overpass, stream** (DOT #694)
Description: Utilitarian/Moderne. Concrete. Straight span. Very simple; balustrade with chamfered balusters.
- 3.48 C **Underpass, Round Hill Rd.** (DOT #695). Exit 28.
Construction: Completed FY 1935-36. Contractor: Peter Mitchell.
Description: Moderne/Modern Classicism. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 24'. Concrete with cast-concrete ornament. Adaptation of classical arch with keystone on pylons. Balustrade abstracted from classical sources. Some repairs.
- C **Boulder** nearby bears bronze plaque: "1635-1935/ To Commemorate the tercentenary/ of the state of Connecticut the/ Garden Clubs of the township/ of Greenwich landscaped this portion/ of the Merritt Parkway"
- 4.69 C **Underpass, Lake Ave.** (DOT #696). Exit 29.
Construction: 1940.
Description: Art Deco. Double-arched rigid frame steel span resting on steel center piers. Abutments faced with random ashlar stone. Center piers and spans carry cast-iron ornament of grapevines and classicizing urns. Metal parts originally polychromed, now painted bright blue. Recently repaired. **Photographs 15,16**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 17

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

5.65 C *18, 19, 20*
Underpass, North St. (DOT #697). Exit 31.
Description: Moderne/Modern Classicism. Concrete cast to suggest rusticated masonry. Single span, segmental arch on piers. Abstracted, simplified classicism apparent in balustrade.

6.3 C *19*
Overpass, Taconic Rd. (DOT #698).
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37; dated 1936. Contractor: M. A. Gammino, Const. Co.
Description: Moderne/Modern Classicism. Concrete arch. High, round arch with small keystone, between tapered, obelisk-like pylons. Simple balustrade. Bas-reliefs of Connecticut State Seal on inner faces of pylons.

7.44 C *18, 19*
Underpass, Stanwich Rd. (DOT # 699).
Construction: Dated 1936; completed FY 1936-37. Contractor: A. I. Savin.
Description: Moderne. Concrete rigid frame bridge. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 64'. Bas-relief shield displaying winged wheel near top of each abutment. Cream-colored concrete with gray cast ornament. Recently repaired. **Photographs 17,18**

8.09 C *19, 20, 21*
Underpass, Guinea Rd., formerly Rocky Craig Rd. (DOT # 700).
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37; completed FY 1937-38. Contractor: Paul Bacco.
Description: Classical Revival/Rustic. Concrete arch bridge, 80'. Single span, segmental arch. Faced with rock-faced rubble stone and with rusticated voussoirs of rock-faced granite. **Photographs 19,20**

CITY OF STAMFORD

8.6 C *21, 22*
Underpass, Riverbank Rd. (DOT #702).
Construction: In progress FY 1936-37; completed FY 1937-38. Contractor: Mariani Construction Co.
Description: Moderne. Concrete rigid-frame bridge. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 63'. Faceted pylons; abstracted classical balustrades with enlarged faceted pedestals separating sections of plain balusters. Spot repairs. **Photographs 21,22**

19, 20, 21, 22

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 18MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

- 9.7 C **Overpass, Long Ridge Rd. (DOT # 703).** Exit 34.
Construction: Dated 1936; in progress FY 1935-36; completed FY 1936-37. Contractor: Paul Bacco.
Description: **Moderne.** Rigid frame concrete. Segmental arch on piers, 52'. Pleated parapet. Applied ornament in quarter-circle sunbursts and fountains, similar to Route 124 Underpass (see below). Northbound acceleration lanes improved here.
- 9.91 C **Underpass, Wire Mill Rd. (DOT #704).**
Construction: In progress FY 1936-37 and 1937-38. Contractor: Paul Bacco.
Description: **Moderne/Modern Classicism.** Rigid frame bridge. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 63'. Concrete, colored gray and yellow. Balustrade with cartouche at center of span bearing Connecticut State Seal. Arching approaches.
- 10.35 C **Overpass, Rippowam River (DOT #705).**
Construction: In progress FY 1935-36; completed FY 1936-37. Contractor: Paul Bacco.
Description: **Rustic.** Concrete arch, 56'. Rock-faced random ashlar facing.
- 10.95 C **Overpass, High Ridge Road (DOT #706).** Exit 35.
Construction: Completed FY 1936-37. Contractor: Mariani Construction Co.
Description: **Moderne.** Structural steel. Single span, segmental arch, 45'. Molded strip of geometric ornament at top of pylons; metal panels and filigree railings, now very rusted.
- 11.35 C **Underpass, Newfield Ave. (DOT #707).**
Construction: Dated 1936; completed FY 1937-38. Contractor: Mariani Construction Co.
Description: **Art Deco.** Concrete with cast concrete ornament. Single span, segmental arch on piers. Cartouche bearing Connecticut State Seal above center of span flanked by banding of geometric ornament with curving striations. Recently repaired; white.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 19

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

TOWN OF NEW CANAAN

- 12.3 C **Underpass, Ponus Ridge Rd.** (DOT #708).
Construction: Completed FY 1937-38. Contractor: Mariani Construction Co.
Description: **Moderne/Modern Classicism.** Concrete rigid frame bridge. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 63'. Cast-concrete ornament. Rusticated abutments; balustrade with cartouche bearing Connecticut State Seal at center of span.
- 13.2 C **Overpass, Old Stamford Rd.,** formerly Stamford Ave. (DOT #709). Exit 36.
Construction: Completed FY 1936-37.
Description: **Moderne.** Reinforced concrete, rigid frame. Single span, segmental arch, 45'. Vertically striated pylons and solid parapet of panels and pedestals. Bas-relief of Connecticut State Seal on inner face of pylons. Minor repairs.
- 13.33 C **Underpass, Metro North RR,** originally New York, New Haven and Hartford RR (DOT #710).
Construction: 1937
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete. Double span, segmental arches on piers, restrained ornament.
Photograph 10
- 13.55 C **Underpass, Lapham Ave.** (DOT #711).
Construction: In progress FY 1936-37, FY 1937-38.
Contractor: Paul Bacco.
Description: **Art Deco.** Rigid frame concrete with cast-concrete ornament. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 63'. Crenellated parapet. Cast panels with floral motifs ornament abutments. Grooved striations follow vertical and horizontal lines of abutments and span. West side recently repaired.
- 14.14 C **Underpass, South Ave., Rte 124,** formerly Darien Rd. (DOT #712). Exit 37.
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37.
Contractor: D. Deering & Co.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 20

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Description: Art Deco. Concrete with cast-concrete ornament. Single span, segmental arch on piers. Saw-toothed parapet. On abutments, exuberant bas-relief scrolls rise as from fountain.

14.2 C

**New Canaan rest area
Service Station, northbound lanes.**

Construction: 1940

Description: Colonial Revival. 1-story building of red clinker brick with clapboarded gables and slate roof. Clock in dormer on roof. White-painted brick addition with flat roof. Parking plan, gas pump layout remodeled 1947 and later. Recent canopy over gas pumps.

C

**New Canaan rest area
Service Station, southbound lanes.**

Construction: 1940

Description: Colonial Revival. 1-story building of red clinker brick with clapboarded gables and slate roof. Clock in dormer on roof. White-painted brick addition with flat roof. Parking plan, gas pump layout remodeled 1947 and later. Recent canopy over gas pumps.

C

Maintenance Garage.

Construction: 1940

Description: Colonial Revival. Located behind service station on SB side, partially screened by trees. Brick, with slate roof over office portion, flat roof over garages. Some garage doors bricked in. Ornamental brickwork -- quoins, octagonal inset panels, and Greek key.
Photograph 44

14.71 C

Underpass, White Oak Shade Rd. (DOT #713).

Construction: In progress FY 1936-37, FY 1937-38.
Contractor: M. A. Gamino Construction Co.

Description: Moderne. Concrete rigid frame, with cast-concrete ornament. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 63'. Saw-toothed parapet. On abutments, ornaments suggesting exfoliation of stone curl over vertical rods.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 21

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

15.13 C **Underpass, Marvin Ridge Rd, formerly Weed Ave.**
(DOT #714).
Construction: In progress FY 1936-37, FY 1937-38.
Contractor: M. A. Gamino Constr. Co.
Description: **Moderne/Modern Classicism.** Rigid frame concrete with cast-concrete ornament. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 63'. Inset panels with high relief urns on blue backgrounds near tops of abutments. Parapets have bas-relief panels imitating Roman grilles. Abstracted outlines of urns also inscribed under bridge. Recently repaired.

CITY OF NORWALK

15.9 C **Overpass, New Canaan Ave.** (DOT #715). Exit 38.
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37, 1937-38.
Contractor: Mariani Construction Co.
Description: **Late Gothic Revival.** Rigid frame steel span between concrete abutments, 45'. Triangular pylons with inset tracery panels; balustrade has low pointed arches between square posts. Shield on inner face of pylons.

16.53 C **Underpass, Comstock Hill Rd.** (DOT # 716).
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37 and 1937-38. Contractor: M. A. Gammino Construction Co.
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete rigid frame bridge with cast-concrete ornament. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 60'. Abutments have inset bas-relief panels depicting a Puritan and an Indian. Parapet of simple posts and panels. Recently repaired. **Photographs 23,24**

17.2 C **Overpass, Silvermine Ave.** (DOT #717).
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete, segmental arch on piers. Stepped pylons and simple balustrade.

17.4 C **Overpass, Perry Ave.** (DOT #719).
Construction: Completed FY 1936-37. Contractor: Mariani Construction Co.
Description: **Moderne/Modern Classicism.** Concrete rigid frame bridge. Single span, round arch, 30'. Prominent keystone. Simple balustrade. Bas-relief of Connecticut State Seal on inner face of pylons.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Section number 7 Page 22

- 15
- NC Overpass, NB Rte 15 to SB Rte 7. Flanking and to south of Perry Ave. bridge.
Construction: dated 1990.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel span. Part of new interchange with State Route 7 being constructed October 1990.
- NC Overpass, SB Rte 7 to SB Rte 15. Flanking and to north of Perry Ave. bridge.
Construction: dated 1990.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel span. Part of new interchange with State Route 7 being constructed October 1990.
- Landscape between here and Mile 17.6 greatly altered for new highway -- extensive blasting. New bridge will carry the Parkway over new highway.
- 17.6 C Overpass, Metro North RR (also called Winnipaug RR bridge) (DOT #720).
Construction: In progress FY 1936-37, completed FY 1937-38. Contractor: Mariani Construction Co.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete skew span, 37'. Segmental arch on piers with wing walls.
Photographs 11,37
- 17.65 C Overpass, Norwalk River.
Construction: In progress FY 1936-37 and FY 1937-38.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete triple-arch bridge, 86'. Rounded arches with buttressed center pier. Photographs 11,38
- 17.7 C Overpass, Main Ave., Route 7 (DOT #530). Exits 39, 40.
Construction: In progress FY 1936-37, completed FY 1937-38. Contractor: C. W. Blakeslee & Sons.
Description: Classical Revival/Rustic. Concrete rigid frame bridge. Twin single spans, segmental arches on piers, 62'. Random rubble facing with rock-faced granite voussoirs, quoins, and coping.
Photograph 11

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 23MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

- 18.07 C **Underpass, West Rocks Rd.** (DOT #722).
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37, FY 1937-38. Contractor: Paul Bacco.
Description: **Moderne.** Structural steel rigid frame bridge. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 64'. Restrained ornament. Split pylons. Crenellated molding. Recently repaired. Chain-link fence added at top.
- 18.47 C **Underpass, East Rocks Rd.** (DOT #723).
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37 and 1937-38. Contractor: Mariani Construction Co.
Description: **Moderne/Modern Classicism.** Concrete rigid frame bridge. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 77'. Balustrade with Connecticut State Seal on shield at center of span.
- 18.96 C **Underpass, Grumman Ave.** (DOT # 724).
Construction: In progress, FYs 1936-37, 1937-38.
Description: **Moderne/Modern Classicism.** Concrete rigid frame bridge. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 60'. Sgraffito panels at top of abutments depict neoclassical griffons flanking Connecticut State Seal. Classicizing grille design forms metal railing. Chain-link fence added along parapet.
- 19.5 C **Overpass, Chestnut Hill Rd.** (DOT #725).
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37.
Description: Concrete, simple balustrade.

TOWN OF WESTPORT

- 20.24 C **Underpass, Newtown Tpke.** (DOT #726).
Construction: In progress FY 1936-37, FY 1937-38.
Description: **French Renaissance Revival.** Concrete rigid frame bridge, 60'. Double span, rounded arches. Concrete cast and treated to imitate random ashlar stone facing. Apparently inspired by fortified bridge; historicizing details include solid parapet which, at the center of span, juts out around corbelled bracket or platform. **Photograph 25**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 24MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

- 20.9 C **Overpass, Wilton Rd. (DOT #727). Exit 41.**
Construction: In progress FY 1937-38.
Contractor: Mariani Construction Co.
Description: **Modern Classicism.** Concrete T-beam bridge, 52'. Wing walls with plain coping. Simple pylons and balustrade. Recently repaired/rebuilt.
- 21.1 C **Overpass, Saugatuck River (DOT #728).**
Construction: In progress FY 1937-38. Contractor: Mariani Construction Co. Parapet now dated 1989.
Description: **Moderne/Modern Classicism.** Steel arch span. Span appears to be original; rebuilt parapet has incised lines resembling drafted masonry, small piers carrying metal railing. Repaired; work in progress October 1990.
- 21.31 C **Underpass, Clinton Ave. (DOT #729).**
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37.
Description: **Moderne** with classicizing details. Concrete abutments, steel span and railing. Single span, segmental arch on piers. Tower-like abutments with waterspouts. Shield patterns in metal railing. Old photographs show bas-relief grille pattern near tops of pylons; it no longer exists. Abutments rebuilt, white concrete.
- 21.9 C **Overpass, Weston Rd., Rte 57, formerly Danbury Rd. (DOT #730). Exit 42.**
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37, FY 1937-38. Contractor: Peter Mitchell Co.
Description: **Moderne.** Rigid frame concrete bridge, 48'. Single skew span, segmental arch on piers. Simple forms with crenellated parapet. **Photograph 39**
- 22.1 C **Overpass, Easton Rd., Rte 136 (DOT #731).**
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37.
Contractor: Paul Bacco.
Description: **Moderne.** Structural steel rigid frame bridge, 60'. Single span, segmental arch on piers and wing walls. Piers, wing walls and concrete facing of span have bold incised lines suggesting drafted masonry. Solid parapet. Some repairs.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 25

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

22.47 C *1st time*
Underpass, North Ave. (DOT #732).
Construction: In progress FY 1936-37, FY 1937-38.
Contractor: Peter Mitchell Co.
Description: **Art Deco.** Concrete rigid frame bridge. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 60'. Fiddle-head fern motif appears in two-toned concrete sgraffito within vertical stepped panels on abutments and in wrought-iron railing. Ferns, flowers, and snail are depicted in sgraffito panels that terminate parapets. Sgraffito undercourse is aggregate of Wisconsin black onyx and Swedish emerald pearl. Chain link fence added to parapet. **Photographs 26,27**

23.2 C *1st time*
Overpass, Bayberry Ln. (DOT # 733).
Construction: In progress FY 1936-37.
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete, elliptical arch. Balustrade with flat posts bearing pyramidal raised panels.

TOWN OF FAIRFIELD

23.7 C *1st time*
Overpass, Cross Hwy. (DOT # 734).
Construction: In progress, FY 1937-38.
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete rigid frame. Single span, round arch, 36'. Built-up pylons have inset panels with naturalistic bas-relief flowers. Pierced parapet. **Photograph 40**

24.24 C *1st time*
Underpass, Merwins Ln. (DOT # 735).
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37, FY 1937-38. 1940.
Description: **Art Deco.** Concrete, double span with segmental arches on piers. Concrete of center pier and abutments cast in horizontal layers that resemble overlapping clapboards. Sculptural, free-standing concrete butterflies on abutments. Metal railing: spider webs in panels with cast spider applied in different place on each panel. **Photographs 28,29,30**

24.71 C *1st time*
Underpass, Redding Rd. (DOT #736).
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37.
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete, single span, segmental arch on piers. Crenellated parapet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 26MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

- 25.23 C **Underpass, Congress St.** (DOT #737).
Construction: In progress, FY 1937-38.
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete rigid frame bridge. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 60'. Towering skyscraper-like pylons flank a parapet with panels that project and recede in steps.
- 25.5 C **Overpass, Hillside Rd.** (DOT # 738).
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37.
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete parapet with simple balustrade.
- 25.98 C **Underpass, Burr St.** (DOT # 739).
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37. 1939.
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete, cast-concrete ornament. Single span, segmental arch on piers. Abutments vertically striated with deep grooves and have cast bas-relief panels depicting engineers working on Parkway. Concrete parapet is crenellated and pierced. Chain-link fence added to west side parapet. **Photographs 31,32**
- 27.0 C **Overpass, Black Rock Tpk., Route 58** (DOT #740). Exit 48.
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37, FY 1937-38.
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete, rigid frame bridge. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 61'. Balustrade.
- 27.76 C **Underpass, Morehouse Hwy.** (DOT #742).
Construction: 1939
Description: **Art Deco.** Concrete, cast-concrete ornament. Double span, segmental arches on piers. In cast concrete, grid of recessed lines suggests structure made of square blocks. Within squares, geometric patterning that features concentric quarter circles is concentrated on stepped, pierced parapet. Chain link fence added to parapet.
- 27.9 C **Overpass, Mill River** (DOT #743).
Description: **Utilitarian.** Concrete, segmental arch; no parapet or balustrade.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 27

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

28.4 C **Fairfield rest area.**
Service Station, northbound lanes
Construction: 1941.
Description: Colonial Revival. 1-story building of brick, 5-course American bond, painted buff/tan. Clapboarded gables and slate roof with clock in dormer. Addition also of brick and painted, at angle to original building. Parking plan, gas pump layout remodeled 1947 and later. Recent canopy over gas pumps. Parking area is separated from roadway only by low curb.

C **Fairfield rest area.**
Service Station, southbound lanes
Construction: 1941.
Description: Colonial Revival. 1-story building of brick, 5-course American bond, painted buff/tan. Clapboarded gables and slate roof with clock in dormer. Addition also of brick and painted. Parking plan, gas pump layout remodeled 1947 and later. Recent canopy over gas pumps. Parking area is separated from roadway only by low curb.

28.54 C **Underpass, Sport Hill Rd., Rte 59 (DOT # 744).**
Exit 46.
Construction: Advertised, FY 1935-36; in progress, FY 1936-37.
Description: Moderne/Modern Classicism. Concrete, single span, segmental arch on piers. Abutments have tall niches with grille-like ornaments at their bases. Balustrade is simple, classicizing.

105 C **Boulder with bronze plaque commemorating Easton Garden Club's donation of plantings, at center of exit loop to NW of bridge. Birch tree and laurel bush flank boulder. Photographs 6,7**

C **Sand shed to SE of bridge, set well back from Parkway. Frame construction, with shiplap siding painted brown. (See also Mile 1.7)**

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 28MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

TOWN OF TRUMBULL

- 29.23 C **Underpass, Park Ave.** (DOT # 745). Exit 47.
Construction: In progress, FY 1936-37.
Description: **Late Gothic Revival.** Concrete, single span, round arch. Bracket at center of span supported by foliate corbel. Drain spouts follow curve of arch. **Figure 1, Photograph 8**
- 29.6 C **Underpass, Plattsville Rd.** (DOT #746).
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete, single span, segmental arch on piers. Connecticut State Seal in cast concrete bas relief at center of span. **Photographs 8,9** (general shot of Parkway; taken from Plattsville Rd. bridge)
- 29.97 C **Underpass, Madison Ave.** (DOT #747).
Construction: 1939
Description: **Moderne.** Concrete, single span, segmental arch on piers. Concave vertical panels, each with a small recessed ornament centered near top, make up facing of bridge, including span. On each abutment, 2 panels fold out to form pier carrying, near top, flowers and scrolls. **Photographs 33,34**
- 30.59 C **Underpass, Main Street, Route 111** (DOT #748). Exit 48.
Construction: 1936; completed FY 1936-37.
Description: **Moderne/Modern Classicism.** Concrete, rigid frame bridge. Single span, segmental arch on piers, 60'. Concrete is cast in horizontal layers resembling overlapping clapboards. Bridge is topped by alternating sections of balustrade and solid parapet. **Figure 2**
- 31.05 C **Underpass, Frenchtown Rd.** (DOT #749).
Construction: completed 1942.
Description: **French Renaissance.** Double span, rounded arches. Concrete cast and treated to resemble random ashlar stone facing and chamfered voussoirs. Buttressed center pier. Solid parapet pierced with small square openings, suggesting fortified bridge.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 29MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

- 31.8 C **Overpass, Reservoir Ave. (DOT #750).**
Description: Moderne/Modern Classicism. Concrete rigid frame bridge. Single span; segmental arch on piers. Simple. Greek-key molding and balustrade with chamfered posts.
- NC **Overpass, NB Rte 15 to SB Rte 25.** Flanking and to south of Reservoir Ave. bridge. Exit 49 (here through 32.36).
Construction: 1980.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel span.
- NC **Overpass, SB Rte 25 to SB Rte 15.** Flanking and to north of Reservoir Ave. bridge.
Construction: 1980.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel span.
- 32.1 NC **Underpass, SB Rte 25 to NB Rte 15 (DOT #4375).**
Construction: dated 1980.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel beam span.
- 32.16 NC **Underpass, SB Rte 25 (DOT # 4364).**
Construction: dated 1980.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel beam span.
- 32.19 NC **Underpass, NB Rte 25 (DOT #4363).**
Construction: dated 1980.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel beam span.
- 32.36 NC **Underpass, NB Rte 25 to SB Rte 15 (DOT #4378).**
Construction: dated 1980.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel beam span.
- 32.41 C **Underpass, Rocky Hill Rd (DOT #751).**
Construction: Completed FY 1935-36. Contractor: Mariani Construction Co.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 30

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

- Description: Moderne/Utilitarian.** Concrete abutments, boxed steel span, 62'8". Built-up pylons. Panels and rivets of span seem to be designed at least partially for decorative appearance. Plaque at each end of span reading: "Built by/ McClintic-Marshall/ Corporation/ 1935" with small seal bearing the words "Bethlehem Steel". No longer in use.
- 123c
32.8 C **Overpass, White Plains Rd. (DOT #753). Exit 50.**
Description: Moderne. Concrete rigid frame; single span; segmental arch. Built-up pylons. Simple balustrade. Balustrade on north side being rebuilt, October 1990. Balustrade on south side has been filled in from behind.
- 154c
32.9 C **Overpass, Unity Rd. (DOT #754).**
Description: Moderne. Steel span with concrete abutments. Railing of horizontal strips with decorative posts and curling inserts.
- 117c
33.73 NC **Underpass, Huntington Tpke., Rte 108 (DOT #5294). Exit 51.**
Construction: 1983.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel beam span. Cast-iron ornamental plaques depicting grapevines reused from Nichols Ave. bridge, demolished 1979.
Photograph 42
- 154c
34.13 NC **Underpass, NB Rte 15 to NB Rte 8 (DOT #5294). Exit 52 (here through 34.15)**
Construction: dated 1983.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel beam span. **Photograph 43**
- 154c
34.14 NC **Overpass, Rte 8 (DOT #5293?).**
Construction: dated 1983.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel beam span.
- 154c
34.15 NC **Underpass, SB Rte 15 to SB Rte 8 (DOT #5292).**
Construction: dated 1983.
Description: Utilitarian. Concrete abutments with straight steel beam span.

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2

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 31MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

TOWN OF STRATFORD

- 34.5 C **Overpass, Huntington Rd. (DOT #756).**
Description: Moderne. Concrete. Single span, segmental arch on piers. Faceted quoins adorn pylons and solid parapet.
- 35.2 C **Overpass, Cutspring Rd. (DOT #757).**
Description: Moderne. Concrete; single span, segmental arch. Simple. Solid panel of white concrete at center of balustrade.
- 36.06 C **Underpass, James Farm Rd (DOT #759).**
Construction: 1940.
Description: Moderne/Modern Classicism. Concrete, double span, rounded arches. Concrete cast to resemble rusticated masonry. Monumental pillars on each side of center pier support freestanding clusters, each made up of 4 sculpted wings. Pierced parapet suggests a balustrade. Cartouche on each abutment bears initials CHD, presumably for "Connecticut Highway Department". **Figure 3; Photographs 35,36**
- 36.8 C **Overpass, Route 110 (DOT #760). Exit 53.**
Description: Art Deco. Concrete abutments, metal span and railing. Single span, segmental arch on piers. Stripes of different-colored concrete continue lines of arch onto abutments. Giant sheet metal cut-outs of flowers and leaves ornament spandrels. Railing swells out. **Photograph 41**
- 37.5 Western abutment of Housatonic River Bridge; end of Merritt Parkway.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 32

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Plant Materials

(Taken from State Highway Department bid requests,
1936-1940, courtesy of W. Thayer Chase.)

Trees

Pinus strobus (white pine), 4'-18'
Pinus sylvestris (Scotch pine), 6'-16'
Pinus nigra (Austrian pine), 6'-16'
Juniperus virginiana (red cedar), 8'-26'
Tsuga canadensis (Canada hemlock), 5'-16'
Quercus palustris (pin oak), 6'-8'; 2.5"-5"
Quercus rubra (red oak), 1.5"-2"
Quercus alba (white oak), 1.5"-2"
Quercus coccinea (scarlet oak), 1.25"-4"
Liriodendron tulipifera (tulip tree), 1.5"-4"
Betula lenta (sweet birch), 10'-12'
Betula populifolia (gray birch), 10'-12'
Cornus florida (flowering dogwood), 2.5"-3" [occasionally
specifying either bushy or tree form]
Acer saccharum (sugar maple), 2.5"-6"

Acer rubrum (red maple), 2.5"-4" [occasionally specifying
"low branched preferred"]
Fraxinus americana (white ash), 2.5"-4"
Carpinus caroliniana (American hornbeam), 8'-14'
Platanus occidentalis (American sycamore), 2.5"-3.5"
Ulmus americana (American elm), 3.5"-7"
Liquidambar styraciflua (sweet or red gum), 3"-4.5"
Gleditsia triacanthos (honey locust), 2.5"-3.5"
Robinia gleditsia (honey locust), 8'-14'
Fagus americana (American beech), 2.5"-3"
Thuja occidentalis (American arborvitae), 6'-20'
Picea excelsa (Norway spruce), 10'-12'
Tilia vulgaris (European linden), 2"-2.5"
Salix babylonica (willow), 4"-7"

March 21, 1938: Highway Dept. requested bids for 24 trees of "any red-fruited variety of apple", for use on the Merritt at the intersection of the Cross Highway in Westport.

Shrubs

Kalmia latifolia (mountain laurel), 18"-36"
Juniperus pfitzeriana (Pfitzer juniper), 2'-8'
Juniperus horizontalis plumosa (plumed spreading juniper),
24"-26"
Rhododendron maximum (rosebay rhododendron), 3'-6'

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 33

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Evonymus radicans vegetus (big leaf wintercreeper), 12"-18"
Evonymus radicans carrierei (glossy wintercreeper), 12"-18"
Myrica pensylvanica (bayberry)
Comptonia peregrina (sweetfern)
Rhus canadensis (fragrant sumac), 2'-2.5'
Rosa palustris (swamp rose), 18"-24"
Rosa setigera (prairie rose), 18"-24"
Vaccinium corymbosum (highbush blueberry), 3'-4'
Cornus paniculata (gray dogwood), 3'-4'
Ilex verticillata (winterberry), 3'-4'
Ligustrum regelianum (regel privet), 3'-4'
Symphoricarpos racemosus (snowberry), 2.5"-3"
Viburnum prunifolium (blackhaw), 6'-8'
Lycium chinense (Chinese matrimony vine)

Climbing Vines and Ground Covers

Ampelopsis tricuspidata (Boston ivy) [also listed as
Ampelopsis tricuspidata veitchii]
Ampelopsis tricuspidata (Japanese creeper)
Ampelopsis quinquefolia (Virginia creeper)
Ampelopsis engelmanni (Engelmann creeper)
Lonicera halliana (Hall's honeysuckle) [also listed as
Lonicera jap. halliana, Hall's Japanese honeysuckle]
Celastrus scandens (American bittersweet)
Clematis virginiana (virgin's-bower)
Pachysandra terminalis (pachysandra)
Vitis labrusca (fox grape)
Vitis aestivalis (summer grape)
Vitis cordifolia (frost grape)
Vitis vulpina (riverbank grape)
Vinca minor (periwinkle)
Hedera Helix Baltica (Baltic ivy)

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1934 - 1942

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Connecticut Highway Department

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency State Archives
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: private collections

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1,382 acres

UTM References

A
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The Merritt Parkway includes the present right-of-way for Connecticut State Highway Route 15 between the New York state border at King St. in Greenwich and the western abutment of the Housatonic River bridge in Stratford. The right-of-way is approximately 300 feet wide, with the center of the present roadway running an average of 50 feet north of the center line of the right-of-way.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The boundary includes the complete Merritt Parkway as planned and built between 1934 and 1942. In it, the highway construction, bridge design and landscaping combine to form a whole. The adjoining Wilbur Cross Parkway is not included, since it was planned and constructed as a separate project, though one that was largely inspired by the Merritt. The Housatonic River bridge is not included since it is considered to be a connector between the Merritt and Wilbur Cross Parkways, but not truly a part of either.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Catherine Lynn, Director of Education, and Christopher Wigren, Project Manager

organization Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation date 22 February 1991

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****SUMMARY**

The Merritt Parkway is of national significance as an outstanding and largely intact example of the early twentieth-century parkways created as an outgrowth of the City Beautiful Movement. It was the first divided lane, limited-access road in Connecticut. The Merritt is significant in the history of transportation because it culminated a generation of experiments in combining the talents of engineers, landscape architects, and architects to create parkways that served recreational purposes and gave aesthetic pleasure while providing safe transportation. In it, all the best features developed in its predecessors were put together to create the quintessential parkway. Ironically, just after the defeat of Germany in World War II, American parkway ideals that gave priority to recreational motoring, and had been brought to a widely acknowledged degree of perfection in the recently completed Merritt, succumbed to a demand for high-speed travel over highways in which utilitarian priorities were derived from the German autobahn.

The Merritt Parkway was built to relieve congestion along the Boston Post Road (U.S. Route 1) in Connecticut. It also became an important link in a network of parkways and highways built to carry traffic around New York City. Since it provided a quick and pleasant way to travel from New York to relatively open countryside, it encouraged the creation of some of the most affluent American suburban communities of the mid-twentieth century, and has become a major commuter artery.

The bridges across the Merritt Parkway are architecturally significant and are justly celebrated for the quality and variety of their design. They include excellent examples of Art Deco and Moderne styles, as well as fine exercises in historical revival styles representative of American tastes of the 1930s. They bear witness to the great skill and inventiveness of their architect, George L. Dunkelberger.

Taken as a whole, the Merritt is a significant work of naturalistic landscape architecture. The planners of the Merritt's landscape, A. Earl Wood and Weld Thayer Chase, gave priority to fitting the roadways into their natural surroundings, to healing the wounds of construction, and to complementing the bridges. The admiration of thousands of travellers during the past fifty years is testimony to their success.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The National Context

The Merritt Parkway is part of a series of parkways built in response to the theory, expounded by leaders of the City Beautiful Movement, that it would help alleviate urban problems if the major cities were surrounded and linked with parks and other facilities to which city residents could have ready access over parkways. Parkway, generally defined as roads within landscaped parks, were built not only as means of transportation but also for recreation and aesthetic enjoyment. Recreational driving became an American pastime as more Americans bought automobiles. Parkway helped institutionalize the Sunday afternoon drive.

An important feature of parkways was the segregation of pedestrian walks from roads for recreational vehicles, and of both from commercial streets, by using grade separations. The benefits of grade separations were first effectively demonstrated in this country by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in New York City's Central Park, which they designed in 1858.

In 1906 the New York State Legislature authorized planning for the road system that resulted in the Westchester County parkways. Here, the aesthetic components were designed by Gilmore D. Clarke. The first of the Westchester parkways, the Bronx River Parkway, was completed in 1923, and by 1933 the Saw Mill River, Hutchinson River, Briarcliff-Peekskill, and Cross-County Parkways were also opened.

With the building of the earliest American parkway system in this New York county adjacent to Fairfield County, "parkway" began to acquire an accepted definition. During the same period, public understanding of the term rose with Robert Moses' widely publicized creation of a system of state parks and parkways for the Long Island State Park Commission. He also developed parks and parkways within New York City itself for Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia during the 1930s.

In the late 1930s the term "parkway" was more formally defined within National Park Service regulations. In large part, these had been evolved in building the Parkways of the National Capital Region, for which planning had begun in 1913. The Park Service differentiated parkways from ordinary roads by their

- (1) limitation to noncommercial, recreational traffic;
- (2) prohibition of unsightly roadside development and signs;
- (3) rights-of-way that were wider than average to provide buffers from abutting property;
- (4) granting of no frontage or access

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 3

rights, thereby encouraging preservation of natural scenery; (5) preference for a new site to avoid congested and built-up areas; (6) giving best access to native scenery; (7) elimination of major grade crossings; and (8) well-distanced entrance and exit points to reduce traffic interruptions and increase safety. This formalization of standards for parkways that had evolved in the early twentieth century around New York and Washington effectively summarizes the basic principles that lay behind planning for the Merritt Parkway. (1)

The Connecticut Context

The Merritt Parkway was not, however, like the most important of its predecessors, conceived as linkage between existing, publicly owned parks. Rather, its origins lay in the search for a solution to traffic congestion on U. S. Route 1, the only through highway that existed along the Connecticut shore between the New York State line and New Haven in the 1920s. Between 1923 and 1931, the State Highway Department had rebuilt to modern standards this highway that had been the old Boston Post Road. Still, accident rates on U. S. Route 1 remained high and were growing with growing volumes of traffic. In 1925, Governor John H. Trumbull endorsed a proposal for what was called through the early years of planning the "Parallel Post Road." The Connecticut Highway Department began reconnaissance for the new route in 1926. (2)

In 1927 the state General Assembly authorized construction of a new road across Fairfield County, using regular Highway Department funds. The county Republican organization proposed that it be named after Schuyler Merritt, (1853-1953), the United States Congressman from Fairfield County, who had promoted the new road. Other legislation of that same year naming the road "Merritt Highway" and appropriating \$1,000,000 toward the project was signed by Governor John H. Trumbull. In the next two years, while plans were actually taking shape, complaints of slow progress peppered local newspaper stories. State enabling legislation of 1931, approved by the new Governor Wilbur L. Cross, created a nine-member commission to supervise construction of the new road and named Schuyler Merritt its chairman. (3)

In the same year, on April 8, the first parcel of land was acquired. (4) Laying out the route was complicated by difficulties in purchasing land. Creamer, writing in 1936, described the process:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 4

many lines were tried, investigated and discarded. In Greenwich alone eight routes were considered, in other towns from three to five ... suffice it to say that winter and summer, spring and fall, every possible objection was raised to everything we tried by almost every owner on all of the routes and by others who chose to declaim against it without the slightest information as to where it was to go or what it was going to be like." (5)

In 1932, the difficulty of finding a route was acute. As one writer put it, "progress was so slow as to appear motionless." (6)

State law at the time did not allow land to be condemned for a parkway; it had to be bought outright. G. Leroy Kemp, a real estate agent from Darien, was hired to approach landowners quietly, to avoid publicity that could drive up prices. Instead, Kemp drove up the prices himself, enlisting other real estate agents to kick back part of their commissions to him. In some places, the state ended up buying land at fifteen times its assessed value. Robert A. Hurley, Commissioner of Public Works, pressed for the investigation which revealed all this. The Merritt Scandal was widely reported throughout the region. Only Kemp went to prison, but John Macdonald, the Highway Commissioner, retired in disgrace, and the scandal helped to end Governor Wilbur Cross' administration. (7)

When construction actually began, plans were in place to terminate the Parkway at its eastern end at the Washington Bridge in Stratford, where traffic would join that on the Route 1. However, that route was to be changed. (8)

Building the Parkway

The building of the Merritt Parkway was a significant event of the 1930s in Connecticut. It received substantial coverage in the newspapers, not only in Fairfield County, but elsewhere in the state as well, and in neighboring states. Through the years of construction, the New York Times reported and illustrated its progress, and gave it editorial coverage. (9)

The first construction contract was awarded March 1, 1934, to Peter Mitchell, Inc., contractors of Greenwich, Connecticut, for three and a half miles of road construction in Greenwich. (10) Groundbreaking at the site of the Riversville Road bridge took place on May 23, 1934, and actual construction began July 1. The following year, construction also began in Westchester

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

County, New York, to link the Hutchinson River Parkway with the Merritt Parkway at the Connecticut state line.

It was Schuyler Merritt who campaigned most vigorously for building the proposed highway as a parkway that would not only provide rapid transit but also beautify the countryside. The Fairfield County Planning Association, a citizen group formed early in the 1930s, vigorously joined in the campaign for a parkway closely modeled on the Hutchinson River Parkway in Westchester County. As Pam Allarah has written, "Much of the credit for the success of the design must go to the residents of Fairfield County ..." (11)

On June 13, 1935, Governor Cross signed the "Merritt Highway Bill" authorizing Fairfield County to issue \$15,000,000 in bonds to finance the immediate completion of the Merritt Highway and officially designating it a "Parkway." (12) It would appear that Schuyler Merritt's wishes had prevailed. In his campaign to create for Connecticut a modern parkway, he was joined by vocal allies, especially by Helen Binney Kitchel, President of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut who sat in the state's General Assembly and led an anti-billboard movement. According to her account published in The Greenwich Press for April 29, 1938,

it had been my privilege ... to walk over the right-of-way, following surveyors' stakes from King Street to Round Hill Road. The enthusiasm of my guide, a member of the landscape bureau, was infectious. He assured me that the highway department had made a comprehensive study of all parkways in this part of the country and that they intended to build in Fairfield County a parkway to surpass them all. (13)

Her guide was undoubtedly A. Earl Wood (1906-), Engineer of Roadside Development for the State Highway Department, who recalled the walk with Mrs. Kitchel fifty-six years later.

Wood was a leading member of the in-house team assembled within the State Highway Department to create the Merritt Parkway. He had attended forestry school at Syracuse University for three years. Working with him as landscape architect was Weld Thayer Chase (1908-), who had spent two years studying in the Graduate School of Landscape Architecture at the University of Massachusetts. Warren M. Creamer (1895-1979), Project Engineer for the Highway Department, was responsible for much of the roadbuilding, and Leslie G. Sumner was the department's

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Engineer of Bridges and Structures. (14)

George L. Dunkelberger (1891-1960), Senior Draftsman (and, after 1941, Highway Architect) for the Highway Department, designed the architectural features of all the bridges of the Merritt Parkway. Born in Camden, New Jersey, he had attended Philadelphia's Drexel Institute for two years, and the Industrial Art School there for another year. After jobs as a draftsman and estimator in several architectural and engineering offices in Philadelphia and Hartford, he had practiced architecture in Hartford during the 1920s in partnership with Joseph Gelman, before coming to work for the Highway Department in 1933. (15)

The Department was criticized in several newspaper articles for not hiring expert consultants to design the Merritt. Such consultants had been responsible for the Westchester and Washington area parkways. Gilmore D. Clarke was the most prominent among them, and his published criticism dogged the Merritt project. In May of 1935, Clarke was quoted in the Bridgeport Post:

For three years I cried from the housetops about highway planning to you people here in Connecticut. I knew that your highway commissioner would give you nothing but a common garden variety of highway, but you can see what good my talking did. (16)

More than fifty years later, Wood recalled that Clarke had wanted the job of designing the Merritt Parkway. Instead, the Highway Department relied on the talents of a twenty-seven year old landscape architect, Weld Thayer Chase, and his colleagues who were equally inexperienced in building parkways.

The guiding principle for these state employees working on Connecticut's great public project of the Depression era was to reconcile their work with its natural setting. Earl Wood recalls "The general objective was to help nature heal the scars of construction." (17) To do this, he organized a roadside development unit of 200 men, and had them use only native materials. Weld Thayer Chase had a similar concept for the planting: "I thought of it all as how to heal so Dame Nature could pull it all together" (Photographs 2, 3). With these preoccupations went conservation: as the roadway was built, trees were removed from its path and stored for replanting later; topsoil was scraped and saved for later use.

Thinking along similar lines, George Dunkelberger gave priority to the natural setting in planning for his bridges. He wrote in 1942:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 7

There is one principle which should be considered in the architecture of highways, sometimes either passed by as unnecessary, or not considered important enough to be made a part of the design, and that is, the incorporation of the existing landscape in the problem. (18)

To that end, he explained, he sought to blend his bridges with the surrounding landscape by emphasizing either horizontal or vertical lines and by varying the amount of embellishment, depending on the lay of the land.

As Wood had told Mrs. Kitchel, the team learned from the new parkways. Chase recalls "We went down and studied Robert Moses' parks and parkways." They also built scale models of the roadways and their landscaping at their field office in Trumbull.

Almost immediately after work began in Greenwich in 1935, roadbuilding also started in Trumbull. In May of that year the Fairfield County Planning Commission published a map proposing that the Parkway continue eastward, crossing the Housatonic River on a new bridge, rather than turn southwards to join the Post Road in Stratford where a bottleneck would surely be created. (19) This proposal was not finally accepted until 1938 when Federal funding from the Public Works Administration became available.

The first section of the Parkway, from the New York state line to Route 7 in Norwalk, opened on June 29, 1938. (20) The second section, from Route 7 to Route 57 in Westport, opened in November of that year. The third section, from Route 57 to the Huntington Turnpike in Trumbull, opened a year later. The fourth and final section, from the Huntington Turnpike to the Housatonic Bridge, opened on Labor Day, September 2, 1940. On that day, 54,163 vehicles passed through the Greenwich toll booths. The ten-cent toll had been instituted in 1939 to help pay for the Wilbur Cross Highway. (21)

Although the Parkway was substantially completed by Labor Day of 1940, the Frenchtown Road bridge in Trumbull was not finished until early in 1942. In the end, the total cost of the Merritt Parkway was \$21,000,000, of which \$6,560,000 was paid from the highway fund (including \$438,000 from Public Works Administration funds), and \$15,000,000 from Fairfield County Bonds. (22) While the state had perhaps paid too much for land, with the construction funds it got some bargains including plant materials and the embellishment of bridges. Weld Thayer Chase recalled: "Nurseries had a load of beautiful plant stock and they had to get rid of it. They unloaded beautiful trees and we got

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 8

them for a song." (23) Writing of the bridges in 1937, Leslie G. Sumner reported that the amount paid for all ornamental work "to date is ... not quite 1 per cent of the total cost of the bridge structures." (24)

Involvement in building the Parkway became something to which people would point with pride for years to come. In the midst of the Great Depression, it generated much-needed business for major contracting firms, at least five of which were still in existence in the mid-1980s. (25) Over 2,000 workers were employed in the Merritt's construction. Fifty years later, veterans of the project remembered that everyone gladly worked weekends without overtime pay when there were special tasks to be completed. Obituaries of the Merritt's designers feature their roles in the project. (26)

Despite the fulminations of Gilmore Clarke, the State of Connecticut took pride in the fact that the Parkway was designed by a team of state employees, rather than by outside consultants. The principal designers - Warren Creamer, A. Earl Wood, Weld Thayer Chase, and George L. Dunkelberger - all continued to work for the state for the rest of their careers. The experience they gained as young men working on the Merritt they continued to use in the development of Connecticut's roadways, as well as in its park system, and educational buildings. Creamer and Wood stayed with the Highway Department, Wood becoming, in the 1970s, the second Commissioner of the Department of Transportation, in which the old Highway Department had been consolidated; Dunkelberger, after designing bridges for the Wilbur Cross Parkway, worked for the Education Department; and Chase as Landscape Architect and later Assistant Director of the Connecticut State Park and Forest Commission. (27) Statewide pride extended beyond employees of the Highway Department to those garden clubs and civic groups mentioned above who contributed plantings and memorialized their donations along the roadside.

History Since 1940

The Merritt Parkway has attracted far greater volumes of traffic than its planners predicted. This has been true since the day the first stretch was opened in 1938. The Highway Department reported that average daily traffic during the fiscal year 1939 - 1940 was 13,600 vehicles. Initially, the Parkway did alleviate traffic on U. S. Route 1, the Boston Post Road, where a peak volume of 21,000 vehicles a day at the state line was recorded in 1936. According to William J. Cox, then highway commissioner, writing in 1945: "When the Merritt Parkway was

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 9MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

opened, that traffic load fell off immediately to about 15,000 vehicles a day ... But also it immediately began to build up, and by 1941 it was back around 19,000 vehicles a day." (28) During World War II traffic on the Parkway itself increased dramatically because blackouts were imposed along the coast and trucks carrying supplies necessary for the war effort, as well as military vehicles, were permitted to use the Merritt.

The building of the Merritt contributed to a broad pattern of mid-twentieth century American history: the growth of suburbs. Beginning in the mid-nineteen thirties, real estate advertisements in newspapers emphasized the Parkway's proximity as a selling point for property, and noted the ease of access it gave to New York City. (29) The opening of the Parkway was a boon to the real estate development that transformed Fairfield County's farmlands into suburban neighborhoods.

The Wilbur Cross Parkway Act of 1939 had authorized the building of another parkway to extend the Merritt northeast toward Hartford. That new parkway was financed by tolls collected first on the Merritt then on completed sections of the Wilbur Cross Parkway, and by five per cent of the gross Motor Vehicle funds (\$5,135,000) from July 1939 to September 1945. According to the Connecticut State Register and Manual of 1959:

The first element of the Wilbur Cross Parkway system,... was opened on the same day in 1940 that the last unit of the Merritt Parkway became available for use. One other portion of the Cross Parkway, from the Housatonic River to Route 34 (Derby Avenue) in Orange, was completed prior to the outbreak of World War II but other work on the facility had to be deferred until the end of that conflict... 10 years elapsed between the first and last of the 69 contracts required to complete the Wilbur Cross Parkway from Milford to Meriden. (30)

From Meriden to vicinity of the Charter Oak Bridge there was an existing road locally known as the "Berlin Turnpike." During the Second World War it was improved to provide access to the newly built Charter Oak Bridge. After the war the Wilbur Cross Highway, was opened from the Charter Oak Bridge to the Massachusetts line in Union, first as a two-lane highway open to all vehicles including trucks. Later it was widened to four lanes. The series of roads and bridges including the Merritt Parkway, the Housatonic Bridge, the Wilbur Cross Parkway, the Berlin Turnpike, the Charter Oak Bridge, and the Wilbur Cross

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 10

Highway were designated "Connecticut State Route 15" about 1950. (31)

After the War, traffic continued to grow. As early as 1945, Highway Commissioner Cox called for construction of a parallel road closer to Route 1 to carry local traffic. The Connecticut Turnpike, which opened in 1958, was intended to meet this need.

In 1973, the introduction of a bill in the Connecticut General Assembly to study modernization of the Merritt Parkway provoked formation of a Save the Merritt Association in Fairfield County. That organization worked with other local groups to defeat the most drastic changes proposed at that time. Major alterations to the Parkway since then have been restricted to three interchanges: Those with State Routes 8 and 25 in Trumbull, built in 1983 and 1980 respectively, and with State Route 7 in Norwalk, being rebuilt in 1990. The design of these new interchanges has conformed to that of contemporary interstate highways, with substantial regrading, wider roadways, gradual entry and exit ramps, and utilitarian bridges. The original landscaping has been removed, and grass and trees replanted. After tolls were removed in 1988, traffic statistics again increased suddenly.

SIGNIFICANCE -- TRANSPORTATION

The design of the Merritt Parkway represents the full flowering of the parkway type as it was developed in the 1920s and early 1930s. It meets every one of the defining criteria for parkways articulated by the National Park Service in the 1930s and listed above. The designers of the Merritt included many features characteristic of the earliest parkways, such as the emphasis on access to native scenery and the prohibition of commercial vehicles. And their program brought these parkway features together with the more recently tried separation of roadways and cloverleaf intersections, both of which eased flow of traffic and cut down accident rates. The Merritt continued a trend observed in early twentieth-century parkway building toward wider rights-of-way, in the case of the Merritt, 300 feet. Wider rights-of-way allowed for greater control of landscaping and views from within the parkway, and created space for other recreational uses, like those of the Merritt's bridle trails.

Study of earlier parkways determined the Merritt's builders to take hold of proven ideas and apply those ideas in a setting for which they seemed especially appropriate. Few specific innovations are associated with the Merritt -- only the cat's-eye

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 11

reflectors used to mark curbs and guardrails seem to have received much attention in the press for their novelty. Its detractors were certainly correct in noting that the layout of the roadways ignored current preoccupations with engineering for the highest-speed traffic. The year of the Merritt's full opening, 1940, witnessed as well the opening of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, a straight shot through a nearby state that was engineered to carry cars and trucks alike at seventy miles an hour. (32)

The narrowing of the Merritt's median under many of the underpasses was criticized, even in the 1930s, as a hazard at high speeds, and was partly responsible for the introduction of unsightly metal guardrails. Entrance and exit ramps are short by modern standards, requiring vehicles entering the Parkway to come to a full stop. These conditions are aggravated by the higher speeds now allowed on a Parkway that was built for travel at thirty to forty-five miles per hour.

Neither innovation nor extraordinary speed was what Connecticut was primarily after in building the Merritt. Rather, the ideal was The Parkway as characterized by landscape historian Norman T. Newton: "meant for comfortable driving in pleasant surroundings, not merely for getting from one place to another as fast as possible." Schuyler Merritt's own words confirm Newton's historical assessment. Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony in 1934, Merritt said:

It is not being built primarily to get one place to another as rapidly as possible, but is being built to enjoy as you go ... We must strive to see that this highway is so constructed as to become a joy and peace and a success to the homes of many generations of coming Connecticut citizens.

Profiting from all the experimentation on earlier parkways, the state sought to fulfill the parkway ideal, and, in large part, succeeded. It offered the city-bound public a quick route to refreshment of the eye and spirit in nearby countryside. It became a monument to the recreational possibilities of the automobile. (33)

At the same time, the Merritt met the practical necessities of linking up with the network of roads that moved traffic around New York City, and of providing a safer alternative to the Boston Post Road. The Merritt Parkway was the first divided lane, limited-access roadway in the state. When it was linked with the Wilbur Cross Parkway, the Berlin Turnpike, and the Wilbur Cross

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 12MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Highway when it was finally completed after World War II, the Merritt became a vital part of Connecticut Route 15, extending 116 miles as a four-lane divided roadway from the New York state line at Greenwich to the Massachusetts boundary at Union.

In the years after its completion, the Merritt literally became a textbook example of a modern parkway. Lawrence Ivy Hughes published photographs of the Merritt as the very last ones in his book of 1942, American Highway Practice, captioning them good examples of the modern four-lane highway. (34) At Yale University in 1941, the Bureau for Street Traffic Research put together a slide program called "Roads Leading North: An Aerial Story of the Merritt Parkway." The program, made up of eighty-four slides, accompanied by a lecturer's script, included views taken from the Goodyear Blimp, which drew comparisons between the Merritt and the Post Road to teach principles of highway engineering. Twenty sets of these slides were prepared for use in training city and state highway departments and traffic engineers. (35)

Sigfried Giedion, arguably the Modernist writer who had the greatest influence on a generation of mid-to-late-twentieth century architects, published two photographs of the Merritt in his Space, Time and Architecture. (36) In a caption, he calls it "A masterpiece of organic layout exemplifying the arrangement of the parkway - adaptation of the roadbed to the structure of the country, careful alignment of traffic lanes, separation of vehicular from all pedestrian traffic, and overpasses at junctions." Norman Bel Geddes, an influential figure at the time he designed the Futurama Exhibition for General Motors at the New York World's Fair of 1939, also singled out the Merritt for praise among the "highways today that strike us as excellent" in his book of 1940, Magic Motorways. (37)

But the Parkway also had its influential detractors. Christopher Tunnard and Boris Pushkarev described the Merritt in Man-Made America: Chaos or Control?: "Well known for its rich and sensitive landscaping, the road nevertheless cannot conceal the kinks in its alignment, composed of short curves and long straight lines." In comparing it to other parkways and turnpikes, they dismissed its design as obsolete. In a widely read book, The Architecture of Bridges, published by the Museum of Modern Art in 1949, Elizabeth Mock was perhaps the most scathing. She called the Merritt Parkway's bridges examples of the "gross indignities" possible in reinforced concrete. She singled out the Riverbank Road bridge in Stamford (**Photographs 21, 22**) as exemplary of the "elaborate foolishness of the pseudo-modern Connecticut underpass ... whose vulgar ornament is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 13

peculiar to our times and easy of achievement in this docile material." (38)

SIGNIFICANCE - ARCHITECTURE

The Merritt Parkway was a major late product of the City Beautiful Movement, discussed above, an important demonstration of the thesis that architects' concerns encompassed more than the individual, discrete building. Architects, landscape architects, artists, and planners were exhilarated by the movement's early illustration of the benefits of their collaborative efforts at the Columbian Exposition of 1893. Inspired with that vision, these designers pursued the goal of alleviating urban problems by creating American cities they deemed beautiful. Their ideals were shaped by the training of many of the movement's leaders at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris.

They recognized beauty as a great public amenity, important to every citizen. Therefore, they focused the best efforts of the best designers on monumental city and regional planning, and they persuaded elected officials to make enormous commitments of public funds to realizing those plans in projects like the Merritt Parkway. Their grand schemes encompassed whole cities, and they designed and built great public structures available to all citizens: buildings, parks, monuments, boulevards, and - over greater distances within and between major urban centers - parkways. (39)

The builders of the Merritt clearly saw their task in the terms articulated by this movement. A preliminary assumption of the necessity for collaboration between engineer, architect, and landscape architect is apparent in the State Highway Department's initial administrative decision to assemble the team of Creamer, Dunkelberger, Wood, and Chase. And we have the testimony that they studied the earlier parkways created by leading proponents of City Beautiful principles. They worked together to create a whole that is greater than its parts.

The most obviously architectural elements of this whole are the bridges. The bridges have received the most attention in print and are the objects of greatest popular affection. Each is different from every other, giving rise to the persistent legend that each had a different architect. Their silhouettes and details were determined by George L. Dunkelberger, while Leslie G. Sumner was responsible for engineering their structural aspects.

Dunkelberger, though he was little known after eleven years of architectural practice in minor Philadelphia and Hartford

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 14

offices, rose to the occasion when the Highway Department gave him such tremendous responsibility. At age forty-two, he proved not only competent in utilizing architectural styles current at the time, but also creative, even endlessly imaginative, in their use. His affinity for the Moderne is revealed in the majority of his designs here. Their details are drawn from stream-lined shapes that reflected the era's fascination with technology and unimpeded movement. While his specific sources are not known, his details partake of the styles that distinguished New York's newest skyscrapers like the Chrysler building of 1930, and the buildings of the Century of Progress Exhibition in Chicago of 1933-34.

Economic necessity forced Dunkelberger to use concrete, rather than stone, which was the most visible material on the much-admired bridges in Westchester County. However, concrete proved more amenable to variety of design, and especially to the sometimes curvaceous forms of Dunkelberger's Moderne mode (**Photograph 33**). He also shaped concrete into massive angular structures reminiscent of drawings published by the architectural renderer Hugh Ferriss in the late 1920s. (**Photographs 21,22**). In twenty-five Moderne bridges above and beneath the Parkway, Dunkelberger's variations range from these treatments to others that break the surfaces into small-scale angular units as well as to examples that leave surfaces broad, simple, and unbroken. Sometimes he introduced figurative panels (**Photographs 24, 32**).

The Moderne style was catholic enough to incorporate Classical references, and sixteen others among the Merritt bridges exhibit Dunkelberger's great skill in working within the mode most favored in this era for governmental projects, including post offices, courthouses, and the huge Federal Triangle project in Washington, D.C. - Modern Classicism. In his Modern Classical bridges, Dunkelberger skillfully incorporated the smooth, stripped-down, rationalized classical ornament characteristic of these buildings. (**Figures 2,3; Photographs 35, 36**)

The influence of Art Deco, a style deriving its name from the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes held in Paris in 1925, is apparent in nine of the Merritt bridges. Dunkelberger's Deco designs are sometimes hard-lined and geometric, at other times curvaceous and whimsical. For some, he borrowed popular Deco motifs, such as the fountain. In others, ornament celebrated the flora and fauna of the areas through which the Parkway passed. This is especially apparent in the flowers, ferns, and snails of the North Avenue Bridge (**Photographs 26, 27**), and the butterflies and spiders at Merwin's

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 15

Lane (Photographs 28-30).

In addition to these more contemporary styles, Dunkelberger also drew on historical sources as the bases for bridge designs along the Merritt. The variety of his choices attests to the endurance of an eclecticism most often associated with the nineteenth century. Gothic bridges, such as the one carrying Park Avenue in Trumbull, drew on sources of the same era that inspired the new Gothic colleges of Yale University. Others -- at Newtown Avenue and Frenchtown Road -- closely followed the lines of fortified French bridges of the late middle ages. Nor did the Parkway's builders ignore historical models closer to home. For the gas stations, the Colonial Revival received a rather generic rendering, interchangeably executed in brick and stone masonry, and lacking specific Connecticut references.

Dunkelberger himself, speaking on "Highway Architecture" to his engineer colleagues at a statewide professional meeting in 1942, revealed something of his attitude toward his stylistic sources by quoting Benjamin Franklin. Dunkelberger recited a saying from "poor Richard's Almanac" noting that it

applies very forcibly to the problems continually facing the designer. It is that "The ancients tell us what is best but we must learn from the moderns what is fittest." (40)

Regional motifs, such as the bas-reliefs of the Indian and the Puritan on the Comstock Hill Road Bridge, figure in Dunkelberger's bridge ornaments. The Connecticut State Seal appears on numerous bridges, and the grapevine motif of the Lake Avenue Bridge and the Nichols Avenue Bridge appear to be references to the grapevines depicted on the seal. Place names themselves seem to have inspired at least one visual reference: Frenchtown Road is carried across the Parkway on a bridge based on French Renaissance models.

Nearly all of the sculptural work for the bridges, including relief panels, state seals, and free-standing three-dimensional elements such as the two pairs of wings on the James Farm Road Bridge in Trumbull (Photographs 35, 36) were executed by the sculptor Edward Ferrari (1903-). Ferrari has described the process: George Dunkelberger sketched the sculptural details, which Ferrari then executed in clay and which were in turn cast either in concrete, by the Decorative Stone Company of New Haven, or in metal. Ferrari explained that as a subcontractor, he had to bid on every one of the works he executed, and that he won the contracts for all but one bridge. (41)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 16

SIGNIFICANCE - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

In this area, as in architecture, the Merritt Parkway's greatest significance resides in its successful demonstration of early twentieth century American planning principles. The designers' intentions can still be seen in the landscaping of the Parkway. The overall effect is still a pleasant one, affording the illusion of passing through a natural environment. Taken as a whole, the Merritt is a significant work of naturalistic landscape architecture.

The ancestry of the naturalistic style of planting, which was the landscape architect's principal contribution to the collaborative effort, can be directly traced to English Romantic sources, to the English "Landscape Gardening School" with its "professed imitation of nature." (42) Weld Thayer Chase, the chief landscape designer, was directly influenced by the English tradition. In the months just after finishing his graduate studies in landscape architecture at the University of Rhode Island, and before designing for the Merritt, he rode a bicycle all over England and western Europe visiting the great gardens, making his base the home of the head gardener at Kew Gardens. Chase has said that his thinking about landscape design was fundamentally based on the writings of Frederick Law Olmsted, who had studied the great English parks, and built a country park right in Manhattan. (43)

With the support of Schuyler Merritt and Mrs. Kitchel, and under the direction of A. Earl Wood, Chase, the man who actually designed the plantings, planned them to look as un-designed as possible. He wanted them to blend with the work of "Dame Nature," and to heal the scars of construction. "I'd try to continue what was there, if it was open, or swampy, or a treed area," Chase recalled. In swamps he said he planted willows and red maples. On abandoned farmland, he planted cedars and birches to match the trees that would naturally grow there first. "I'd group trees informally, not plant them solid," Chase recounted. He added: "I used 'weed trees,' like black birch -- to grow quickly. They just love rock ledges. In the laurel beds, I'd use black birches to give shade for the laurels and for hardwoods. Oaks would dominate later -- they'd give a canopy for the laurel." (44)

He used indigenous plant materials to knit the many parts of the complex structure that was the Merritt Parkway into a greater whole. His trees and shrubs were placed to look as if they "just grew there," but were also carefully calculated to lead the eye to views beyond and to enhance the handsome bridges.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 17

The extent to which the designers succeeded in blending the plants they introduced with those put there by nature is apparent in the natural look of most vegetation along the Parkway today. Maintenance of them has been minimal, and the general aspect is unkempt. However, the blasted rocks and bare soil displaced and replaced after construction were so successfully landscaped that the plant materials introduced by Chase and his crews appear to have been there always. Weld Thayer Chase still says: "It was a great satisfaction to me when people would ask, 'But what did you do?'" (45)

NOTES

1. Adapted from Sarah Amy Leach, "Parkways of the National Capital Region, 1913-1965," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1990, p. E-3.
2. Connecticut State Highway Commissioner, Biennial Report of the Highway Commissioner to the Governor (Hartford, Published by the State, For the Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 1939, and June 30, 1940), p. 126.
3. Connecticut Department of Transportation (signed WEK), News Release beginning "Connecticut's scenic Merritt Parkway, which has been described as the 'Queen of the Parkways' ..." (April 17, 1984), pp. 3,4.
4. E. F. Verplanck, "Paralleling Boston Post Road With a Superhighway," Engineering News-Record (March 14, 1935), p. 386 (hereafter cited as "Paralleling").
5. Warren M. Creamer, "The Merritt Parkway," The Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers, Inc., Annual Report ... 1936. Vol. 10, p. 102.
6. Helen Binney Kitchel, "Story of Merritt Parkway," Greenwich Press, April 7, 1938.
7. Newsclippings, most without information about sources, pasted in section headed "1937" in scrapbook of A. Earl Wood, among which see especially "Widen State Highway Probe" Bridgeport Post, December 23, 1937, "Cross Demands Parkway Data" Bridgeport Post, December 24, 1937, and "Merritt Highway Five Millions Prove Bonanza for Plunderboys," Sunday Herald (Bridgeport), December

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Section number 2 Page 1

2. LOCATION

street and number: The Merritt Parkway includes the right-of-way for Connecticut State Highway Route 15 between the New York state line in Greenwich and the Housatonic River bridge in Stratford. The right-of-way is approximately 300 feet wide, with the center of the present roadway running an average of 50 feet north of the center line of the right-of-way.

town: Greenwich, Stamford, New Canaan, Norwalk, Westport, Fairfield, Trumbull, and Stratford

zip codes: 06430, 06497, 06611, 06830, 06840, 06850, 06851, 06880, 06902, 06903, 06905, 06907

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 18

26, 1937. Also: Susan Houriet, "The Parkway at 50: Merritt remains a marvel," Stamford Advocate, September 2, 1990. Ellsworth Grant, "From the Past: Wilbur Cross," Connecticut Magazine, 53, no. 11 (November 1990), p. 64.

8. A map showing the original proposed route was published by Leslie G. Sumner in "Bridges on the Merritt Parkway," Engineering News Record (September 23, 1937), p. 502 (hereafter cited as "Bridges").

9. See Index of New York Times, 1934 - 1940, as well as clippings in scrapbooks of A. Earl Wood and Weld Thayer Chase.

10. Verplanck, "Paralleling," p. 386.

11. Obituary "Schuyler Merritt Dead in Stamford," New York Times April 5, 1953. Fairfield County Planning Association. Report of the Fairfield County Planning Association, Merritt Parkway Number (Bridgeport: Fairfield County Planning Association, Inc., February 1934). Pam Allarah, "The Bridges of the Merritt: Parkway Deco" (unpublished paper, 1977), 1.

12. "Merritt Highway Bill Passed in Legislature: Senator Bradley Guides New Bill to Unexpected Victory" Newsclipping dated June 2, 1935, in Scrapbook of A. Earl Wood (source not given). "Cross Signs Parkway Bill, Asks Speed in Construction," Bridgeport Post, June 13, 1935, also in Wood scrapbook.

13. Helen Binney Kitchel, "The Story of the Merritt Parkway," The Greenwich Press, April 29, 1938.

14. Job titles for Creamer, Wood, and Sumner are based on those listed in Biennial Reports of the Highway Department. Additional information on Creamer from his obituary, published in Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers ... Annual Report ... 1979, p. 85. Both A. Earl Wood and Weld Thayer Chase have provided oral and written information about their education and experience.

15. Obituary: George L. Dunkelberger, in Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers ... Annual Report ... 1960, p. 158. Additional biographical information about Dunkelberger based on research by David Ransom, Architectural Historian of Hartford, and by Judy Edwards, Director of Connecticut Society of Architects/AIA who located in the societies' archive Dunkelberger's application of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 8 Page 19

1953 for membership in the Connecticut Chapter of the American Institute of Architects including a typed single page summarizing his education, training, and experience.

16. "Calls Merritt Road Lay-Out 'Desecration,'" Bridgeport Post, May 4, 1935.

17. Susan Houriet "Engineer Nurtured Effort to Keep Merritt Parkway Green," Stamford Advocate, September 2, 1990.

18. George L. Dunkelberger, "Highway Architecture," The Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers ... Annual Report ... 1942. New Haven: Quinnipiack Press, 1942, p. 113.

19. "Here's First Map Showing Proposed Route of Merritt Highway ..." Bridgeport Post, May 20, 1935, p. 11.

20. Connecticut State Highway Commissioner, Biennial Report ..., 1937-1938, introduction.

21. Connecticut State Highway Commissioner, Biennial Report ..., 1939-1940, p. 127.

22. Itemized construction costs were published throughout the years of building in the State Highway Commissioner's biennial reports. In that for 1939-1940, an itemized summary was published, p. 127.

23. Interview, October 26, 1990.

24. Sumner, "Bridges," p. 506.

25. They were Peter Mitchell, Inc., Greenwich; A. I. Savin Construction Co., Newington; John Arborio, Poughkeepsie, New York; Deering Co., Norwalk; Arute Brothers, New Britain. Connecticut Department of Transportation, (WEK) News Release (April 17, 1984), p. 4.

26. Obituaries of George L. Dunkelberger, Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers, Inc., Annual Report (1960), p. 158, and of Warren M. Creamer, Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers, Inc., Annual Report (1979), p. 85. Interviews with A. Earl Wood and Weld Thayer Chase.

27. See Note 26.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Section number 8 Page 20

28. William J. Cox, "Plans for Future Parkways and Trunk Highways in Connecticut," Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers, Annual Report (1945), p 62.

29. Clipping from a newspaper, two columns of real estate advertisements under headline: "Connecticut's New Merritt Highway ... Now is the time to buy acreage," in scrapbook of A. Earl Wood, in section headed "1935," source not given.

30. Secretary of the State of Connecticut, Connecticut State Register and Manual (Hartford: The State of Connecticut, 1959), p. 457.

31. Larry Larned, Historian, Connecticut Department of Transportation, telephone interview with Christopher Wigren, November 30, 1990.

32. Dan Cupper, "The Road to the Future," American Heritage (May/June 1990), 102-111.

33. Norman T. Newton, Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 597 (hereafter cited as Design). Merritt is quoted in the Greenwich Historical Society Newsletter, Volume VI, number 1 (October 1984), 1.

34. Lawrence Ivy Hughes, American Highway Practice (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1942).

35. "Film Roads by Airship," New York Times, June 1, 1941.

36. Sigfried Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 5th ed., 1967 [1st ed., 1941]), p. 827.

37. Norman Bel Geddes, Magic Motorways. (New York: Random House, 1940).

38. Christopher Tunnard and Boris Pushkarev, Man-Made America: Chaos or Control? (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1963), 167. Elizabeth Bauer Mock, The Architecture of Bridges (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1949), 84.

39. For the City Beautiful Movement, see Newton, Design esp. 413-426; Spiro Kostof, A History of Architecture: Settings and

United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Section number 8 Page 21

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40. Dunkelberger, "Highway Architecture," p. 112.

41. Interview, February 14, 1991.

42. Newton, Design, 207.

43. Interview, October 26, 1990.

44. Interview, November 14, 1990.

45. Interview, November 14, 1990.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetMERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CTSection number 9 Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Section number 9 Page 6

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Chase Weld Thayer. Interview by Catherine Lynn at Chase's home, 101 Beverly Road, Wethersfield, Connecticut. October 26, 1990.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Section number 10 Page 1

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM References	(zone/easting/northing)
A	18/611310/4543470
B	18/611760/4544500
C	18/611265/4545070
D	18/612085/4548730
E	18/614400/4550280
F	18/615490/4549410
G	18/618030/4550660
H	18/620140/4550790
I	18/623515/4552740
J	18/625950/4552630
K	18/626570/4552550
L	18/628360/4553540
M	18/629630/4554620
N	18/632460/4555660
O	18/635260/4557820
P	18/636345/4558000
Q	18/637540/4557960
R	18/640960/4559330
S	18/642300/4560860
T	18/644640/4561900
U	18/646690/4564090
V	18/648665/4565860
W	18/649680/4565780
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Y	18/657140/4566770
Z	18/659280/4567580
AA	18/660050/4567250

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 1

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

LIST OF FIGURES AND PHOTOGRAPHS

FIGURES

1. identification: drawing published on cover of Biennial Report Of the Highway Commissioner, State of Connecticut, For the Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 1939 and June 30, 1940. Park Ave. bridge in foreground
 2. town, state: Trumbull, Connecticut.
 3. drawing by George Dunkelberger; signature "Dunkelberger 40" appears lower right.
 4. date: 1940
 5. Copy filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
 6. view from east
 7. Figure 1
-
1. identification: pen and ink drawing with caption, "'North Main Street Bridge,' Merritt Parkway, Long Hill, 1936."
 2. town, state: Trumbull, Connecticut
 3. Drawing by George Dunkelberger; from collection of A. E. Wood
 4. date: 1936
 5. Copy filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
 6. view from: N/A
 7. Figure 2
-
1. identification: Merritt Parkway, blueprint of bridge, labelled, "Proposed new design for Clinton Ave." and marked "Approved 3/15/38" Design was actually used for the James Farm Rd. bridge in Stratford.
 2. town, state: N/A
 3. blueprint of drawing by George Dunkelberger; courtesy of Renee Kahn
 4. date: 1938
 5. Copy filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
 6. view from: N/A
 7. Figure 3

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 2

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

1. identification: Map of Merritt Parkway, 1945
2. town, state: Greenwich, Stamford, New Canaan, Norwalk, Westport, Fairfield, Trumbull, and Stratford, Connecticut
3. Photocopy from brochure titled: "The Merritt Parkway: Rules - Information - Map," issued by the Merritt Parkway Commission.
4. date: 1945
5. copy filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from: N/A
7. Figure 4

1. identification: Historic Resource Map of Merritt Parkway
2. town, state: Greenwich, Stamford, New Canaan, Norwalk, Westport, Fairfield, Trumbull, and Stratford, Connecticut
3. original drawn by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. copy filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from: N/A
7. Figure 5

PHOTOGRAPHS

LANDSCAPE

1. identification: labelled: "Merritt Parkway - Greenwich/
This view is know locally as "Ripples Cut" and shows the finished roadway subgrade. Roadsides are newly seeded. Date 1936. See View Taken 3 years later."
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
3. photograph by Geo. E. Meyers, from collection of A. E. Wood
4. date: 1936
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from west
7. Photograph 1

1. identification: labelled: "Merritt Parkway - Greenwich "Ripples Cut" - Taken in 1939 (See 1936 View)" Same view as #1.
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
3. photograph by Geo. E. Meyers; from collection of A. E. Wood
4. date: 1939
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from west
7. Photograph 2

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 3

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

1. identification: Merritt Parkway at N.Y. state border
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut.
3. photograph by Connecticut Department of Transportation; courtesy Stamford Advocate.
4. date: ca. 1940
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from west
7. Photograph 3

1. identification: labelled: "Merritt Parkway - Town of Greenwich, One half mile east of N.Y. state line"
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
3. photograph by Geo. E. Meyers; from collection of A. E. Wood
4. date: 1939
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from east
7. Photograph 4

1. identification: labelled: "Merritt Parkway - Town of Greenwich, Looking west to Riversville Road Grade Separation. Photo taken 1939. For Comparison - Note Same view in 1936."
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
3. photograph by Geo. E. Meyers; from collection of A. E. Wood
4. date: 1939
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from east
7. Photograph 5

1. identification: Laurel bushes with boulder commemorating donation of plantings by Easton Garden Club. In background, Sport Hill Bridge.
2. town, state: Westport, Connecticut.
3. photograph from State Archive, Connecticut State Library, PG 170 Box 1
4. date: ca. 1940
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from northwest
7. Photograph 6

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 4

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

-
1. **identification:** Landscaping near Sport Hill Bridge, with boulder commemorating donation of plantings by Easton Garden Club. Approximately same view as #6
 2. town, state: Westport, Connecticut
 3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
 4. date: 1990
 5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
 6. View from northwest
 7. **Photograph 7**
-
1. **identification:** Merritt Parkway looking toward Park Ave. bridge
 2. town, state: Trumbull, Connecticut
 3. photograph from State Archive, Connecticut State Library, PG 170 Box 1
 4. date: ca. 1940
 5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
 6. view from southeast
 7. **Photograph 8**
-
1. **identification:** Merritt Parkway, general view from Plattsville Rd. bridge. Approximately same view as #8.
 2. town, state: Trumbull, Connecticut
 3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
 4. date: 1990
 5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
 6. View from southeast
 7. **Photograph 9**
-
1. **identification:** labelled: "Merritt Parkway, New Canaan Looking West toward railroad bridge at Stamford Avenue."
 2. town, state: New Canaan, Connecticut
 3. photograph from collection of A. E. Wood
 4. date ca. 1940
 5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
 6. view from east
 7. **Photograph 10**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 5

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

1. identification: aerial view, labelled: "Town of Norwalk showing access drives to U.S. Route #7 Norwalk Tire & Rubber Co."
2. town, state: Norwalk, Connecticut
3. photograph by Epstein?; from collection of A. E. Wood
4. date: ca. 1940
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from east
7. Photograph 11

1. identification: Merritt Parkway, general view showing matured vegetation, guardrails, and modern road surface.
2. town, state: Stamford, Connecticut
3. photograph by Mary W. Neustadter
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from east
7. Photograph 12

1. identification: Merritt Parkway, general view showing matured vegetation and a modern drain.
2. town, state: Norwalk, Connecticut
3. photograph by Mary W. Neustadter
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from east
7. Photograph 13

1. identification: Putnam Lake, near North Street Bridge
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
3. photograph by Mary Neustadter
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from north
7. Photograph 14

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 6

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

BRIDGES: OVERPASSES

1. identification: Lake Avenue Bridge, general view
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
3. photograph by Mary W. Neustadter
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from southeast
7. Photograph 15

1. identification: Lake Avenue Bridge, detail
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
3. photograph by Mary W. Neustadter
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from: N/A
7. Photograph 16

1. identification: Stanwich Rd. bridge, general view
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from east
7. Photograph 17

1. identification: Stanwich Rd. bridge, detail
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from east
7. Photograph 18

1. identification: Guinea Road bridge, general view
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
3. photograph by Mary Neustadter
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from east
7. Photograph 19

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Section number Photos Page 7

-
1. identification: Guinea Road bridge, detail
 2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
 3. photograph by Mary Neustadter
 4. date: 1990
 5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
 6. View from east
 7. Photograph 20
-
1. identification: Riverbank Road bridge, general view
 2. town, state: Stamford, Connecticut
 3. photograph by Mary Neustadter
 4. date: 1990
 5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
 6. View from west
 7. Photograph 21
-
1. identification: Riverbank Road bridge, detail
 2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
 3. photograph by Mary Neustadter
 4. date: 1990
 5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
 6. View from west
 7. Photograph 22
-
1. identification: Comstock Hill Rd. Bridge, general view
 2. town, state: Norwalk, Connecticut
 3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
 4. date: 1990
 5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
 6. view from west
 7. Photograph 23
-
1. identification: Comstock Hill Rd. Bridge, detail of abutment
 2. town, state: Norwalk, Connecticut
 3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
 4. date: 1990
 5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
 6. view from east
 7. Photograph 24

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 8

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

1. identification: Newtown Tpke. bridge, general view
2. town, state: Westport, Connecticut
3. photograph by Mary Neustadter
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from east
7. Photograph 25

1. identification: North Avenue bridge, general view
2. town, state: Westport, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from west
7. Photograph 26

1. identification: North Avenue bridge, detail of parapet
2. town, state: Westport, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from northwest
7. Photograph 27

1. identification: Merwin's Lane bridge, general view
2. town, state: Fairfield, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from northwest
7. Photograph 28

1. identification: Merwin's Lane bridge, abutment
2. town, state: Fairfield, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from west
7. Photograph 29

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 9

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

1. identification: Merwin's Lane bridge, detail of railing
2. town, state: Fairfield, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from west
7. Photograph 30

1. identification: Burr Street bridge, general view
2. town, state: Westport, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from west
7. Photograph 31

1. identification: Burr Street bridge, detail of abutment
2. town, state: Westport, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from west
7. Photograph 32

1. identification: Madison Avenue bridge, general view
2. town, state: Trumbull, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from southeast
7. Photograph 33

1. identification: Madison Avenue bridge, abutment
2. town, state: Trumbull, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from southeast
7. Photograph 34

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 10

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

1. identification: James Farm Road bridge, general view
2. town, state: Stratford, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from east
7. Photograph 35

1. identification: James Farm Road bridge, detail
2. town, state: Stratford, Connecticut
3. photograph by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from south
7. Photograph 36

BRIDGES: UNDERPASSES

1. identification: Metro North RR bridge
2. town, state: Norwalk, Connecticut
3. photograph by: Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from north
7. Photograph 37

1. identification: Norwalk River Bridge
2. town, state: Norwalk, Connecticut
3. photograph by: Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from north
7. Photograph 38

1. identification: Route 57 Bridge
2. town, state: Westport, Connecticut
3. photograph by Mary Neustadter
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from south
7. Photograph 39

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

Section number Photos Page 11

1. identification: Cross Highway Bridge
2. town, state: Fairfield, Connecticut
3. photograph by: Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from south
7. **Photograph 40**

1. identification: Route 110 Bridge
2. town, state: Stratford, Connecticut
3. photograph by: Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from south
7. **Photograph 41**

BRIDGES: NON-CONTRIBUTING

1. identification: Huntington Tpke. (Rte 108) bridge, with cast-
iron ornamental panels reused from Nichols Ave. bridge,
demolished 1979.
2. town, state: Trumbull, Connecticut
3. photograph by: Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from east
7. **Photograph 42**

1. identification: Route 8 interchange
2. town, state: Trumbull, Connecticut
3. photograph by: Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from west
7. **Photograph 43**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

MERRITT PARKWAY
Fairfield Co., CT

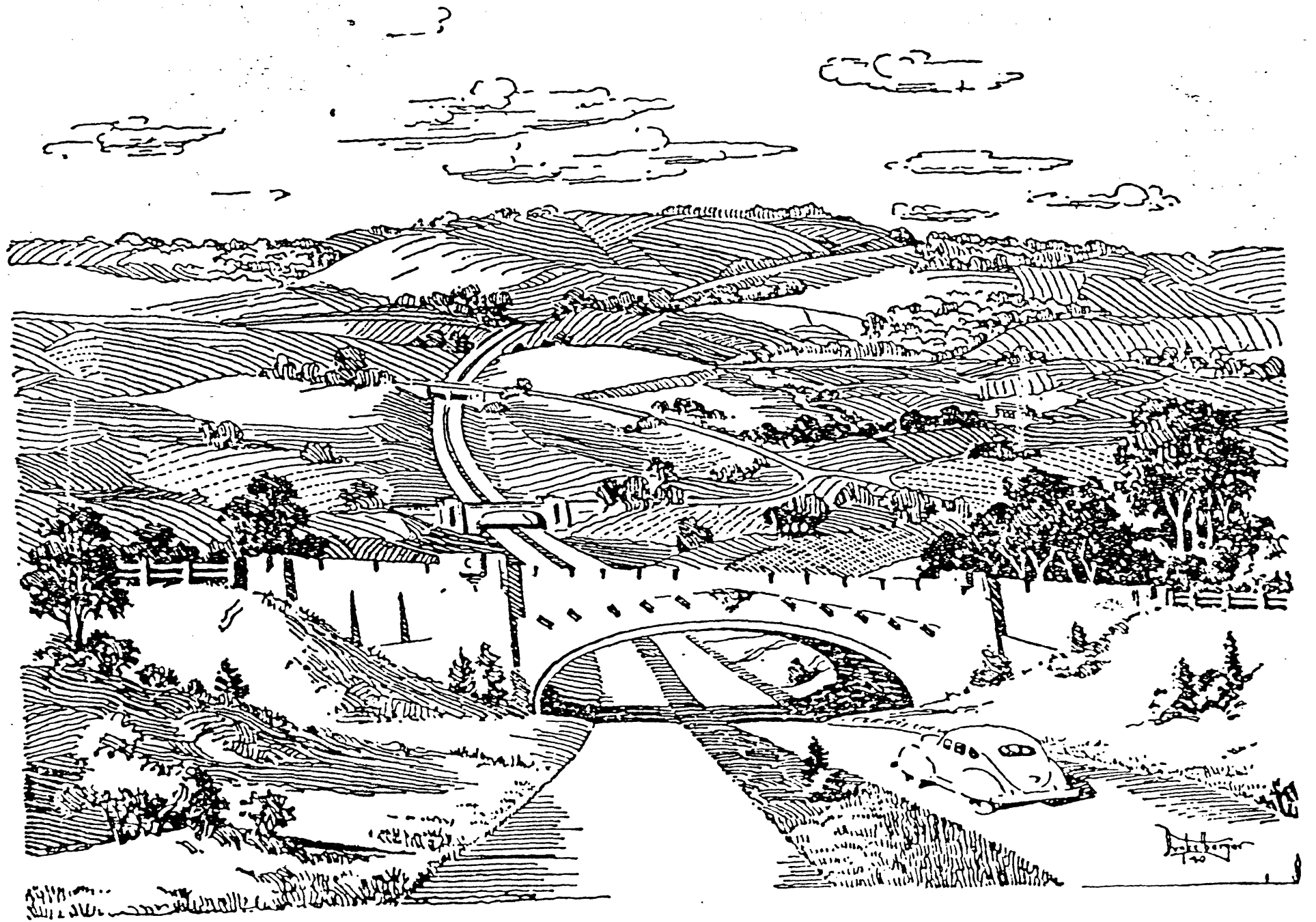
Section number Photos Page 12

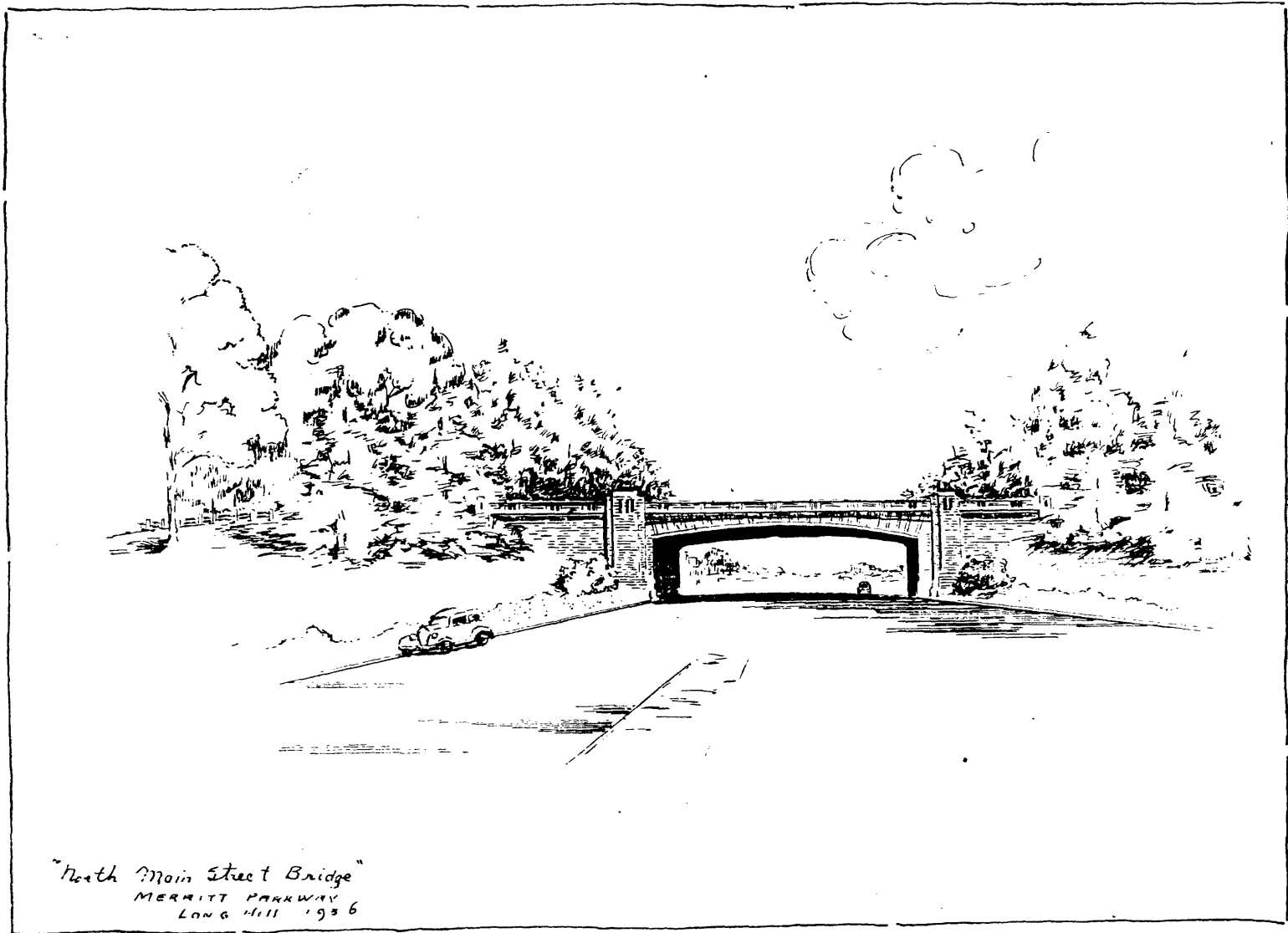
OTHER STRUCTURES

1. identification: Maintenance Garage at New Canaan Rest Area
2. town, state: New Canaan, Connecticut
3. photograph by: Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from south
7. Photograph 44

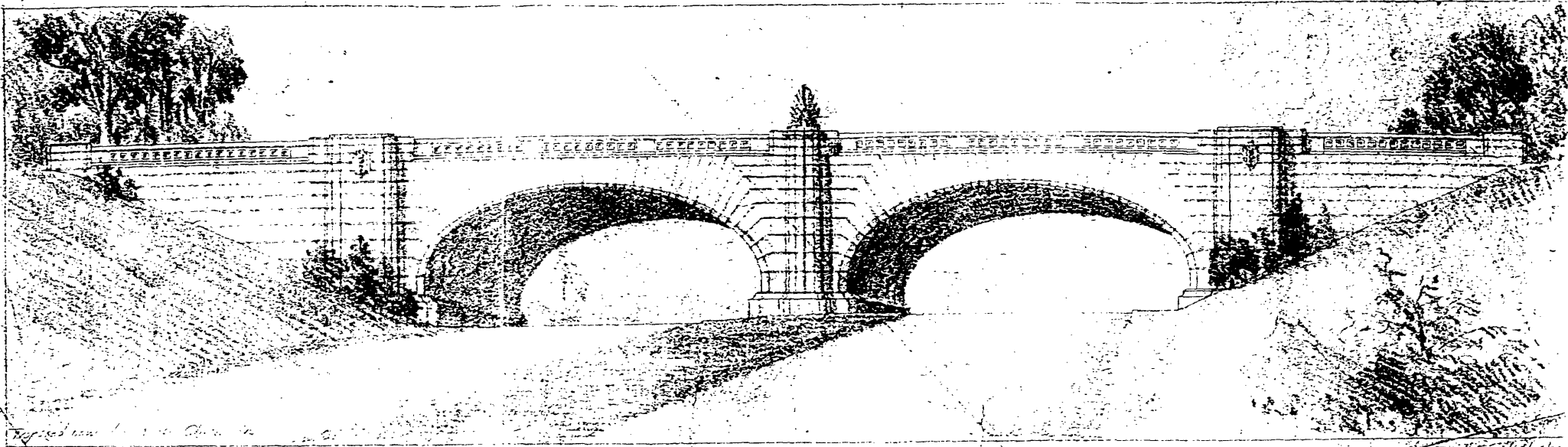
1. identification: Greenwich Rest Area, service station.
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut
3. photograph by Mary Neustadter
4. date: 1990.
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from northwest
7. Photograph 45

1. identification: tollbooth and pond
2. town, state: Greenwich, Connecticut.
3. photograph from State Archive, Connecticut State Library, PG 170 Box 1
4. date: ca. 1939
5. Negative filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
6. View from north
7. Photograph 46





"North Main Street Bridge"
MERRITT PARKWAY
LONG HILL 1956



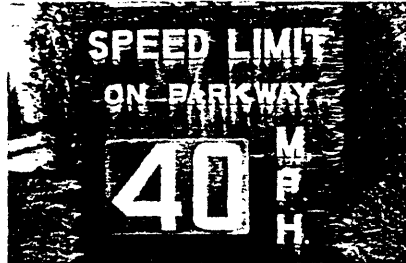
1. identification: Map of Merritt Parkway, 1945
2. town, state: Greenwich, Stamford, New Canaan, Norwalk, Westport, Fairfield, Trumbull, and Stratford, Connecticut
3. photocopy from brochure titled: "The Merritt Parkway: Rules - Information - Map," issued by the Merritt Parkway Commission.
4. date: 1945
5. copy filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from: N/A
7. Figure #4

OB EY T H E S E R U L E S O F T H E M E R R I T T P A R K W A Y C O M M I S S I O N

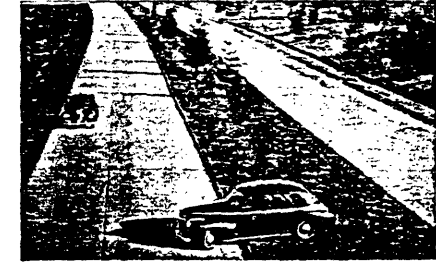


NOT ALLOWED
ON
PARKWAY

Trucks, Busses
Business Vehicles
Trailers
Animals, Bicycles
Pedestrians



DON'T SPEED
IN EXCESS
OF
POSTED LIMIT



DON'T
MAKE
U-TURNS



THE MERRITT PARKWAY

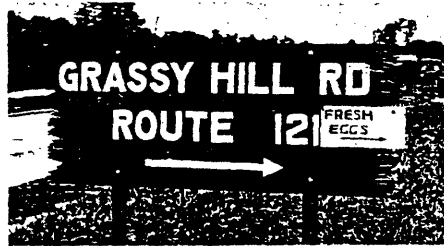
CONNECTICUT'S

ALL-YEAR GATEWAY TO NEW ENGLAND

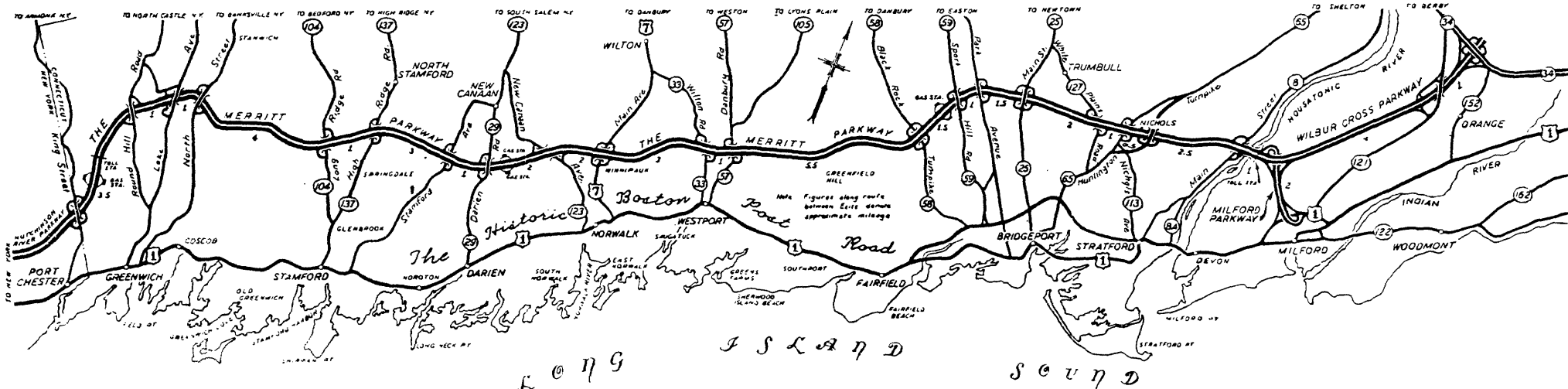
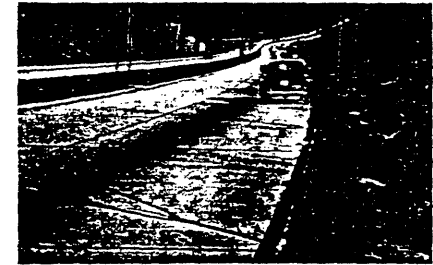
Welcome to our State. We want you to enjoy your stay here and to come again.

Raymond E. Baldwin
Governor

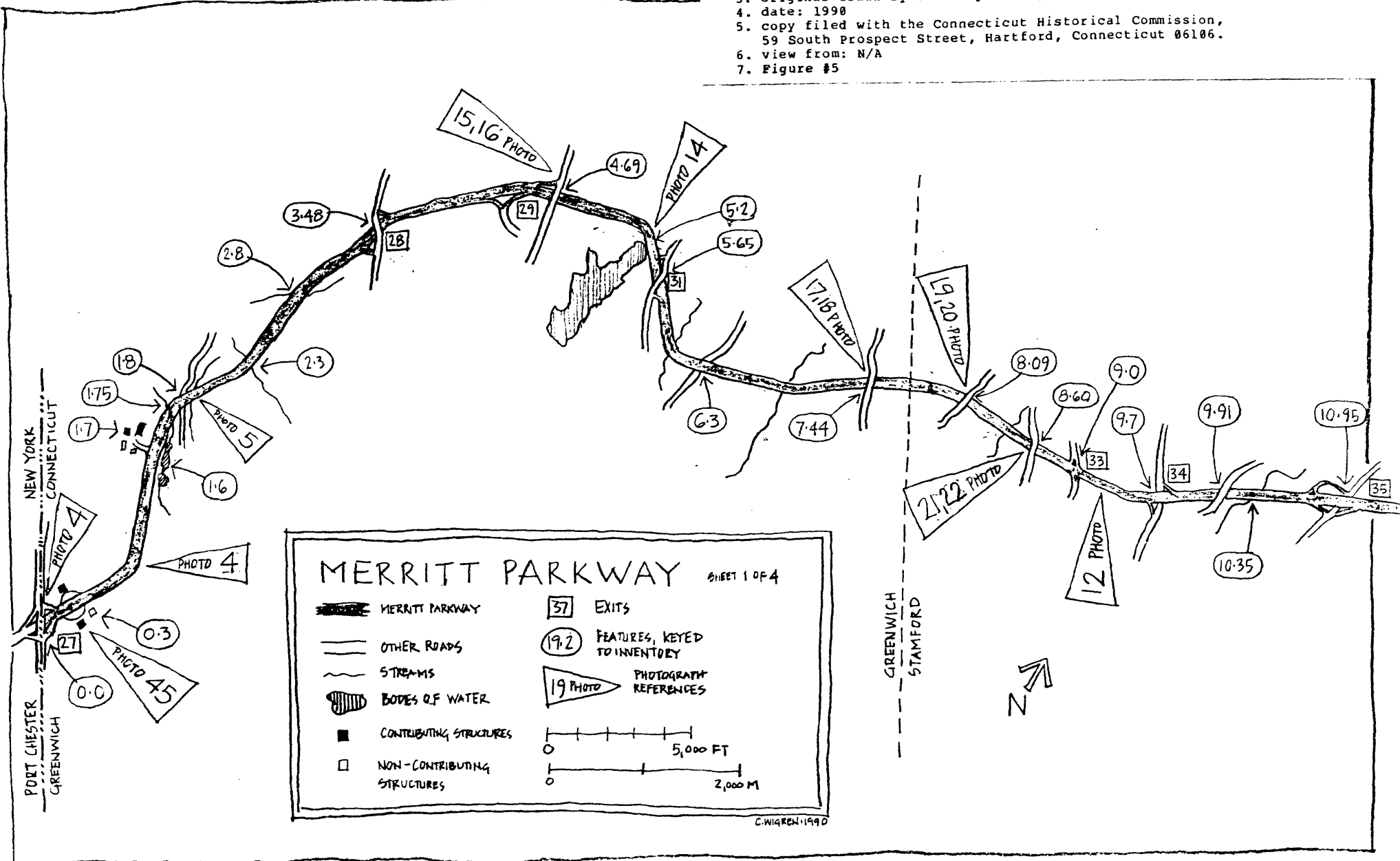
NO ADVERTISING
MATTER ALLOWED
WITHIN PARKWAY
RIGHT OF WAY



DON'T THROW
MATCHES
CIGARETTES
REFUSE
OR
PAPER



1. identification: Historic Resource Map of Merritt Parkway
2. town, state: Greenwich, Stamford, New Canaan, Norwalk, Westport, Fairfield, Trumbull, and Stratford, Connecticut
3. original drawn by Christopher Wigren
4. date: 1990
5. copy filed with the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.
6. view from: N/A
7. Figure #5

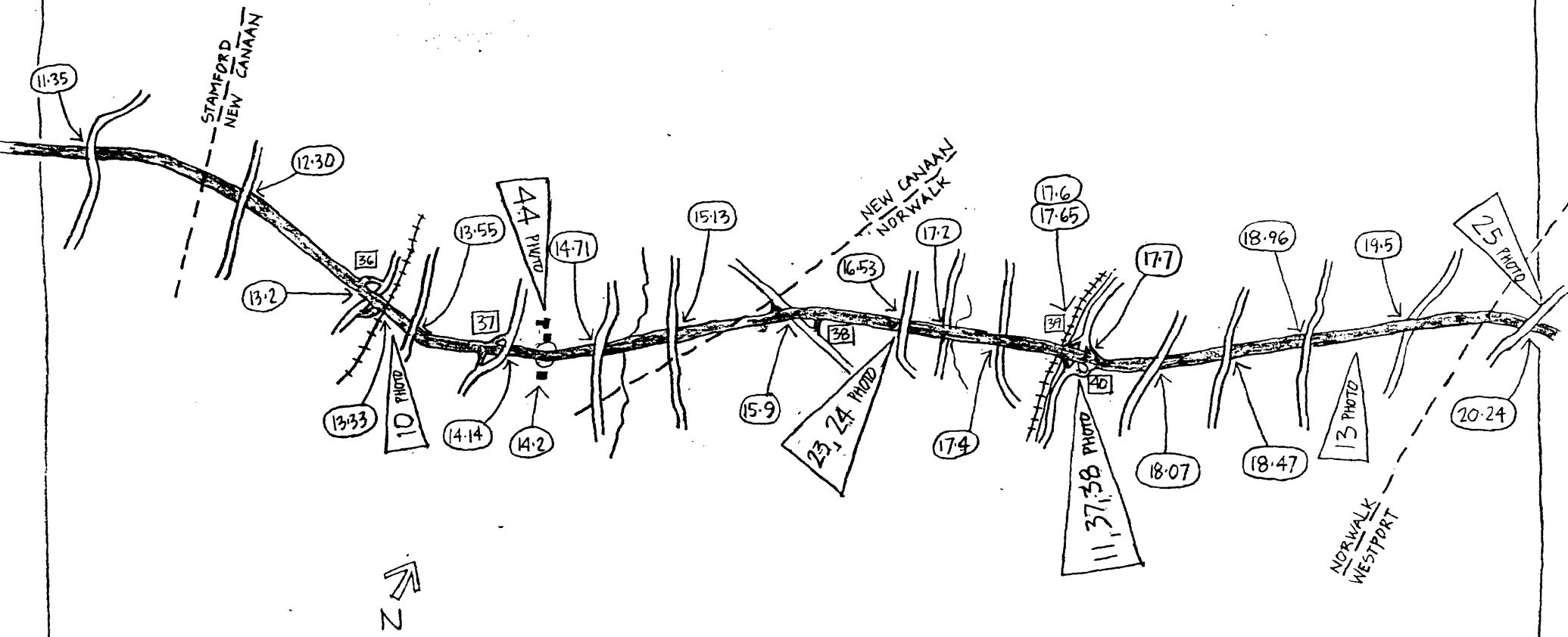


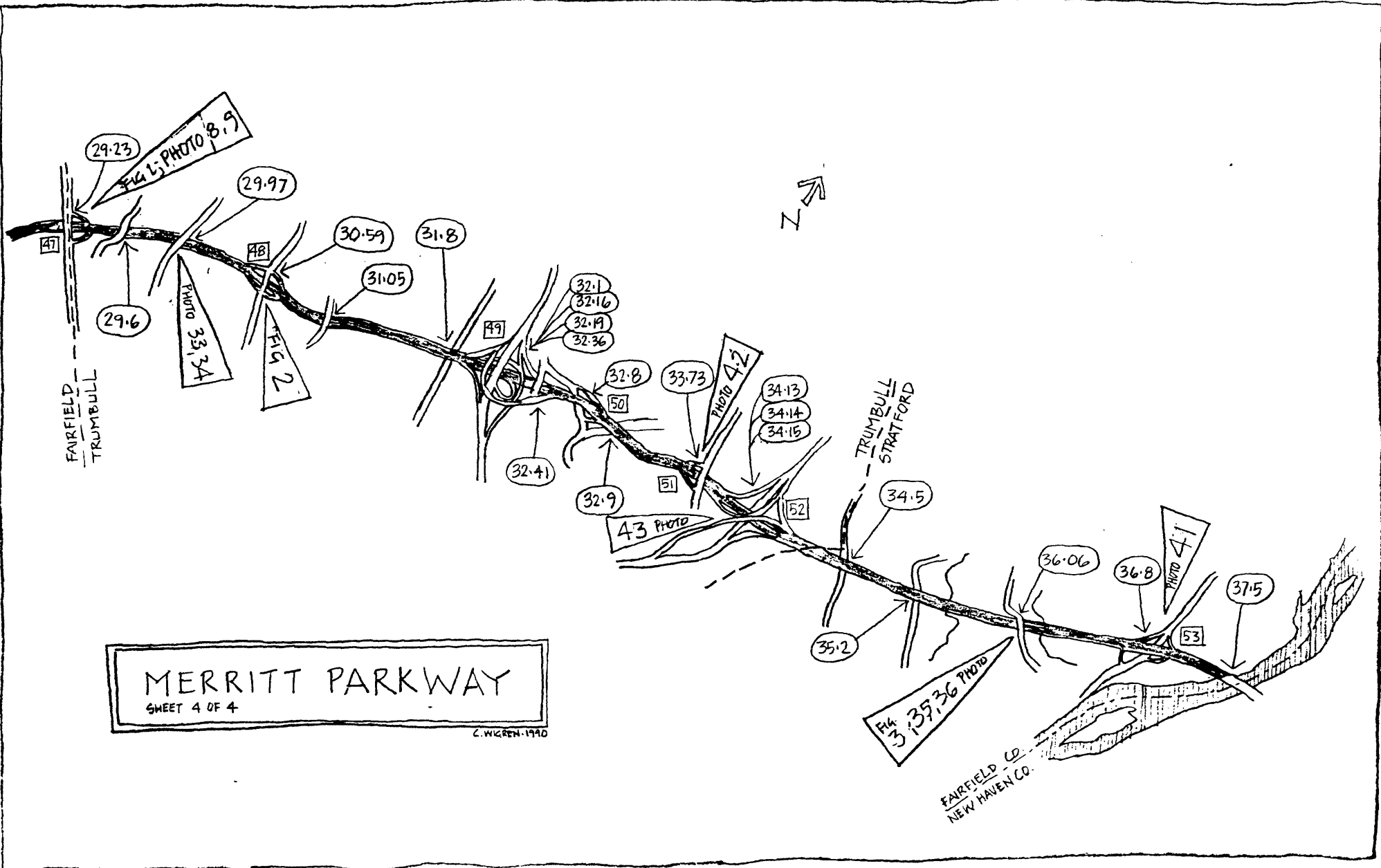
C. WIGREN 1990

MERRITT PARKWAY

SHEET 2 OF 4

C. WIGREH '90





MERRITT PARKWAY
SHEET 4 OF 4

C. WIGREN. 1940

FAIRFIELD CO.
NEW HAVEN CO.