

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

For HCRS use only

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

received APR 28 1981

date entered MAY 14 1981

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The County Farm Bridge

and/or common The County Farm Bridge

2. Location

street & number Old County Farm Road not for publication

city, town Wilton vicinity of _____ congressional district Second

state New Hampshire code 33 county Hillsborough code 011

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Wilton

street & number _____

city, town Wilton vicinity of _____ state New Hampshire 03086

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds

street & number 19 Temple Street

city, town Nashua vicinity of _____ state New Hampshire 03060

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The County Farm Bridge skirts the western edge of an adjacent field and crosses Whiting Brook, a small but permanent stream traversing the rural northwestern corner of Wilton, New Hampshire. Beginning at the southern edge of Burton Highway, the structure carries Old County Farm Road, an unpaved class six road leading to the site of the former Hillsborough County Farm*.

The bridge has two main components. The actual bridge section is a semi-circular arch of cut granite situated within a sloping stone causeway constructed of random-sized boulders. The arch is incorporated into the causeway approximately 250 feet south of its northern endpoint at the Burton Highway. The contrasting masonry of the two structures merges along an angular interface which slopes sharply upward from the base of the arch. As a result, the actual arch opening is centered within a "V"-shaped section of evenly-coursed stonework overlain by a narrow band of irregular boulders.

Regarding dimensions, the stone arch has a 17'11" span and a through measurement of 28'2". The semi-circular opening is outlined by 18" thick voussoirs which begin at a spring line 7'2" above the water's surface and rise to a central keystone at the apex, 15'10" above the water. The crown section measures 6'8", carrying the roadway a total height of 22'6" over the brook.

Apparently the arch was of completely dry-laid masonry construction when erected, as evidenced by the open joints in the spandrels. At a later date, the joints below the spring line and many within the barrel of the arch were pointed with a concrete mortar. In all other respects, the bridge remains in its original condition and stands in excellent physical condition.

The design and dimensions of the causeway correspond to the site's changing topographic profile, the terrain rising nearly 40 feet in elevation between the two endpoints. At its northern end, the causeway supports the roadbed approximately 4 feet above the adjacent field. It then rises with a constant 10% gradient towards the southern terminus. Overall, the causeway extends a total length of 430 feet, and averages 29 feet wide at the base, tapering slightly near the top.

In context, the causeway and bridge are a major visual element of the associated landscape vista which includes the magnificent barn on the old Hillsborough County Farm and a panoramic view of the Monadnock mountains. The stone construction and gradual incline harmonize with the stone walls and rock-strewn hillsides that characterize the surrounding environment.

* Nominated concurrently

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1885 **Builder/Architect** William H. Ward, The Ward Brothers

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The County Farm Bridge provides a well-preserved example of nineteenth century masonry construction. It is also closely associated with Wilton history. It was completely financed by the Town of Wilton, constructed of granite from a local quarry, and carried the access road to the Hillsborough County Farm. Additionally, since numerous stone arch bridges of similar design are found throughout southwestern New Hampshire, the County Farm Bridge is a resource of distinctive regional character.

Illustrating the predominant design of nineteenth century stone spans, the County Farm Bridge reflects the contemporary engineering practices. Because of its superior strength, the semi-circular arch form was universally applied until new designs and materials were incorporated into masonry bridges at the very end of the nineteenth century. However, traditional stone arch bridges were rarely constructed after the 1860's, the 1885 date of the County Farm Bridge making it a surprisingly late example of its type.

Stone bridges were most commonly utilized for railroad purposes and therefore primarily erected by railroad engineers. Accordingly, the County Farm Bridge was built by the Ward Brothers, a Lowell, Massachusetts firm employed as bridge contractors for the Boston and Lowell Railroad which operated the rail system in southwestern New Hampshire during the 1880's. The Ward Brothers' affiliation with the railroad presumably gave them some degree of local prominence.

Significantly, the bridge was built of granite quarried in Wilton. The stone was obtained from the Hesselton Quarry, operated by Joel and Charles Hesselton between the 1860's and 1890's. The bridge is one of many structures in Wilton built of Hesselton granite making it a ubiquitous element of Wilton's built environment. The foundation of the Wilton Town Hall and the stone walls that line Wilton's Main Street are other prominent examples.

Contributing to the bridge's local significance, it was totally financed by the Town of Wilton. The annual town report covering 1885 shows that the Ward Brothers were paid \$3,000 for rebuilding the County Farm Bridge which replaced an earlier structure destroyed by an excessively heavy rainfall during August of 1885. Although the bridge provided the main access to the Hillsborough County Farm, the reports of the County Commissioners covering the same period indicate no expenditure for the bridge, nor do they make any reference to its construction.

From an aesthetic perspective, the County Farm Bridge makes a major contribution to its natural setting and enhances the visual integrity of the adjacent County Farm property. Readily visible along the edge of an open field, the bridge visually correlates with the undulating terrain and stone walls that characterize the surrounding landscape and is integral to the scenic appeal of its rural environs.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Annual Report of the Town of Wilton, New Hampshire for the year ending March 31, 1886.

Putnam, Hamilton S., Historical Sketches of Wilton, New Hampshire, 1739 - 1939,
Cabinet Press, Milford, N.H., 1939

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Peterborough

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500
15' Series

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property consists of a rectangular parcel containing the bridge and causeway running in a generally north-south direction beginning at the south side of the Burton Highway, continuing southerly 430 feet and averaging 29 feet in width.

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger A. Brevoort - Architectural Historian

organization _____ date _____

street & number 9 Chestnut Street telephone 603/778-1609

city or town Exeter state New Hampshire 03833

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Commissioner, Department of Resources & Economic Development
title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date March 18, 1981

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

 date 5/19/81
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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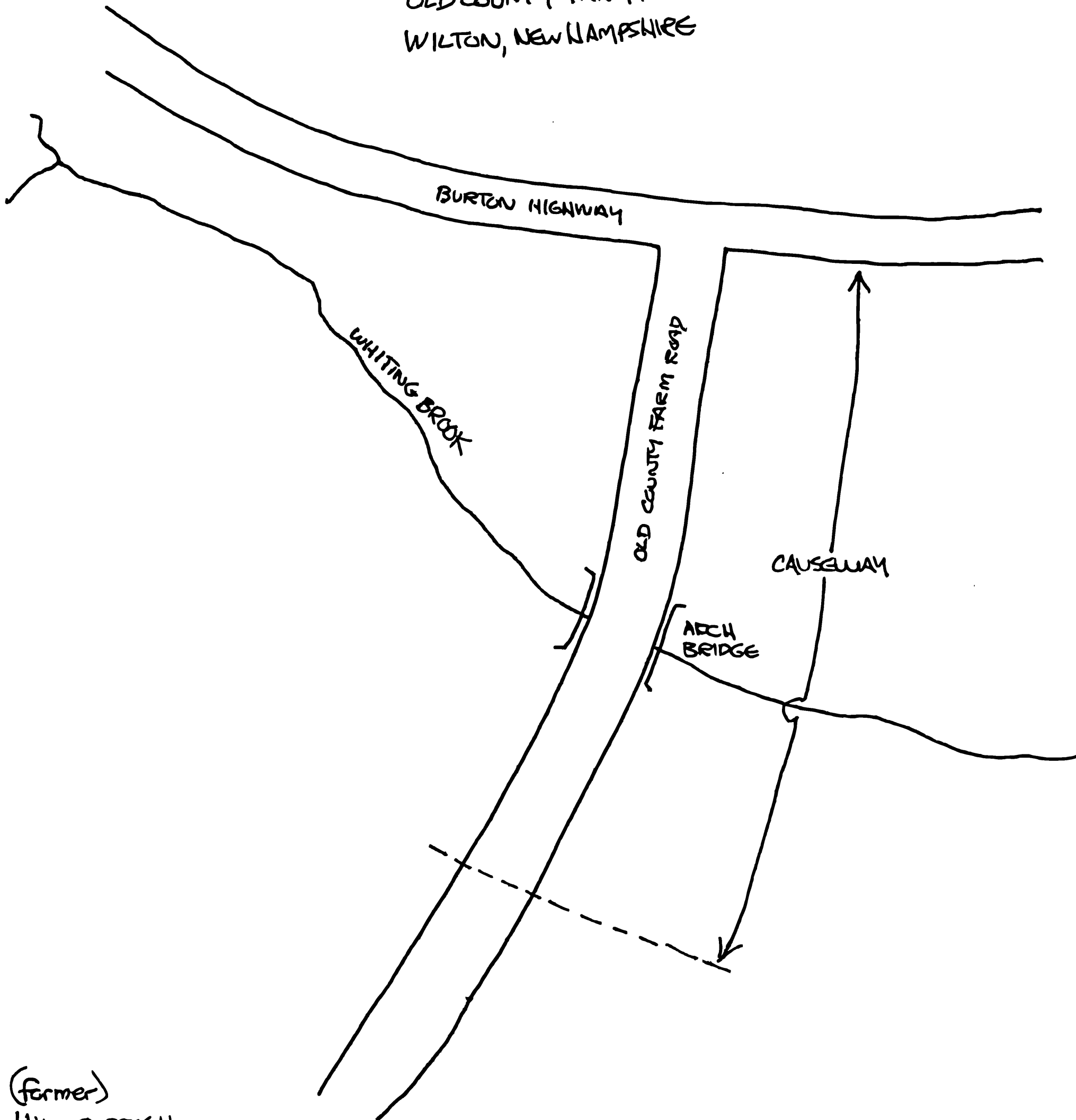
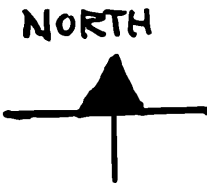
date entered MAY 14 1981

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

SKETCH MAP -
COUNTY FARM BRIDGE
OLD COUNTY FARM ROAD
WILTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE



(former)
HILLSBOROUGH
COUNTY FARM

APPROXIMATE SCALE