

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

562944

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Moro Bay Ferry

Other names/site number: Site #BR0161

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 6071 Arkansas Highway 600

City or town: Moro Bay State: Arkansas County: Bradley

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

 Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	<u>7-13-18</u> Date
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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:  Title :	Date  State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

*Jan Salt*  
Signature of the Keeper  
for

9.19.2018  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
<u>2</u>	_____	structures
_____	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/water-related

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STEEL, WOOD

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Moro Bay Ferry consists of a towboat built by the Barbour Metal Boat Works and a barge and is located at Moro Bay State Park in southwestern Bradley County. The ferry operated on the Ouachita River between 1965 and 1992 and ferried traffic across the river as part of Arkansas Highway 15 (now U.S. 63). The barge is 20 feet wide, 60 feet long, and 4 feet deep (minus the superstructure). The barge also has ramps at each end allowing vehicles to access the barge from the east and west landings. The towboat is 35 feet long, 9'6" wide and 3'6" deep (minus the superstructure) and is powered by a G.M. diesel engine. The Moro Bay Ferry is currently located approximately 300 feet south of the eastern landing and approximately 100 feet east of the riverbank, although it occasionally still floats in the river during floods.

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### Narrative Description

The Moro Bay Ferry consists of a steel towboat built by the Barbour Metal Boat Works and a steel barge and is located at Moro Bay State Park, a small park in southwestern Bradley County. The Moro Bay Ferry operated on the Ouachita River between 1965 and 1992 and ferried traffic across the river as part of Arkansas Highway 15 (now U.S. 63). The barge, which appears to have been designed by the Arkansas State Highway Commission, is 20 feet wide, 60 feet long, and 4 feet deep (minus the superstructure). The barge also has ramps at each end that are approximately 15 feet wide and 16 feet long, and allow vehicles to access the barge from the east

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and west landings. A steel hoist and cable system allowed the ramps to be raised and lowered before and after each crossing. Steel railings also line the barge on both sides.

The towboat is 35 feet long, 9'6" wide, and 3'6" deep (minus the superstructure) and is powered by a G.M. diesel engine. The superstructure has windows in the front pilot house section for visibility by the captain and windows in the lower rear section to allow access and ventilation for the engine. The Moro Bay Ferry is currently located approximately 300 feet south of the eastern landing and approximately 100 feet east of the riverbank, although it occasionally still floats in the river during floods.

### ***Tow Boat – Contributing***

The tow boat of the Moro Bay Ferry is 35 feet long, 9'6" wide, and 3'6" deep (minus the superstructure). The superstructure is covered in sheet steel. The pilot house is located near the front of the vessel and has a metal ship's wheel, which replaced the original wooden wheel. (The original wheel is hanging in the Moro Bay State Park visitor's center.) The pilot house has windows on all sides and has doors on both sides. A metal awning provides shade to the pilot house's front window. The boat's horns are on top of the pilot house.

To the rear of the pilot house, the superstructure is shorter and houses the boat's engine, a G.M. diesel engine. Windows on the sides of the compartment allow access and ventilation for the engine. The engine's driveshaft is connected to a single propeller located below the hull in the center of the rear. The ship's rudder is to the rear of the propeller.

The tow boat is connected to the barge by way of a large pin on the prow that connects to a fitting on the side of the barge. This mechanism allowed the tow boat to swivel and change direction to facilitate crossing the river while always facing forward.

### ***Barge – Contributing***

The barge of the Moro Bay Ferry is 20 feet wide, 60 feet long, and 4 feet deep (minus the superstructure). The barge has ramps at each end that are approximately 15 feet wide and 16 feet long, and allow vehicles to access the barge from the east and west landings. A steel hoist and cable system allowed the ramps to be raised and lowered before and after each crossing. A steel operator's booth shelters the ramp control lever, although when the ferry was initially put into service, it was out in the open. Steel railings also line the barge on both sides. The deck of the barge is mainly comprised of wood planks, although two metal pathways constructed of textured steel run the length of the barge. On the side of the barge opposite the operator's booth is the mechanism that connects the barge to the tow boat.

### ***Signs/Historic Markers/Approach Road – Non-Contributing***

When the Moro Bay Ferry was relocated to its current location in 1992, site improvements allowed easier access to the vessel, specifically with an approach path that was built to resemble a short section of asphalt road approaching the ferry. Four interpretive panels, two on each side of the path, present information on Moro Bay, the ferry, and travel in the area. At the northern end of the path, at the parking area, are six sets of road signs that are 2017 replicas of the original signs that people would have encountered when approaching the Moro Bay Ferry.

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### ***Integrity***

Overall, the Moro Bay Ferry maintains excellent integrity from the time of its construction. The barge has had some modifications since it was built, but they were done to improve the function and performance of the barge. The endposts of the barge, which hold the anchors and also serve as the hoists for the cables and ramps, were replaced at some point with much beefier endposts. In addition, a booth was later installed to protect the ramp control lever and provide shelter for the operator. It is likely that the wood deck was also replaced at some point during the barge's service life.

However, the biggest change to the Moro Bay Ferry is the relocation of the vessel out of the Ouachita River. In 1992, when the ferry was retired, the vessel was placed in a location approximately 300 feet south of the east approach to the river and approximately 100 feet east of the eastern riverbank, depending on the water level. This allowed the vessel to be accessed by visitors to the state park, and also allowed the preservation of the towboat's hull and the barge's hull. The current anchorage for the ferry also allows it to float when the Ouachita River floods in the area. It is also very easy to see the river from the ferry and it is also easy to see the eastern ferry landing from the vessel. The access to the ferry from the parking area was designed to resemble an approach road to the ferry and the road signs are replicas of the original signs that travelers would have seen approaching the ferry historically. As a result, in accordance with National Register Bulletin 20, the "setting will be maintained if the craft is associated with the water by means of a waterfront location."

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## **8. Statement of Significance**

### **Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1965-1968

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1965

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Barbour Metal Boat Works, Builder (Towboat)  
Arkansas State Highway Commission, Builder (Barge)

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Moro Bay Ferry is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its importance in the transportation history of Bradley and Union counties, Arkansas. The Moro Bay Ferry, from the time of its opening in 1965 until its decommissioning in 1992, provided an important transportation link on Arkansas Highway 15 between Warren and El Dorado. In addition, the Moro Bay Ferry is also being nominated with **local significance** under **Criterion C**. The towboat was built by the Barbour Metal Boat Works, an important builder of towboats in the twentieth century, and is the last remaining example of their work in Arkansas.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Bradley County was named after Captain Hugh Bradley who sailed up the Red River in 1818 on an exploration expedition. In the early 1820s, he reached Long Prairie, in Lafayette County, but became dissatisfied with the area. He headed east along with his companions and arrived in Bradley County c.1825, just as other early settlers Isaac Pennington and Aaron Johnston were also settling in the area. The population of the area continued to increase throughout the 1830s, and by 1840 enough people existed in the area to establish a separate county.<sup>1</sup>

Bradley County was formed on December 18, 1840, and at that time, encompassed much of the area that is now Ashley, Drew, Lincoln, Cleveland, Dallas and Calhoun counties. However, as the population in southeast Arkansas increased, parts of Bradley County were taken away to form other counties including Dallas County (January 1845), Drew County (November 1846), Ashley County (November 1846), Calhoun County (December 1850), Lincoln County (March 1871), and Cleveland County (April 1873), which brought the county to its present size.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1890, p. 741.

<sup>2</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1890, p. 742.



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Most historical accounts of the land that became Union County, Arkansas, begin in November 1541, when, according to local legends, famed Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto, accompanied by more than 500 men, marched into the area and established camp on a hill not far from what is now El Dorado. It was not until 1803 that the United States purchased Louisiana from the French, subsequently dividing it into two territories, Orleans and Louisiana. In 1812, the Louisiana Territory was reorganized as the Territory of Missouri of which what is now Arkansas was a part. The United States Congress named Arkansas a territory in 1819, and ten years later, in 1829, Union County was formed. The county's boundaries were vastly larger than the current ones, which were defined in 1852.<sup>3</sup>

In 1804, the Hunter-Dunbar expedition, which was one of four ventures commissioned by Thomas Jefferson to explore the Louisiana Purchase, explored the "Washita" River in what is now Louisiana and Arkansas. The Ouachita River was an important transportation artery between southern Arkansas and New Orleans, especially prior to the arrival of the railroads. On November 18, 1804, the records of the expedition described "Bay Morau" as "a large inlet on the right, which swells into a considerable lake during an inundation."<sup>4</sup>

The first ferry across the Ouachita River at Moro Bay, which was called Burk's Ferry, was operated by William Burk along with his family and slaves and opened in 1828. The ferry was operated by a cable system and the cost of a crossing was 12.5¢. The ferry kept operating, even though the ownership and design changed, up until 1948. By this time, the ferry was not a good economical venture to be operated by the private sector. Even after the original ferry closed, the local population still desired a crossing of the Ouachita River at Moro Bay. However, since funding was not available for the construction of a bridge, the state decided to build a ferry instead.<sup>5</sup>

Ferries were an important part of the Arkansas State Highway Commission's operations by the mid twentieth century. For example, by 1947-1948, the Henderson Ferry at Norfolk Lake alone cost the state \$117,981 to operate. In addition, the ferry carried a total of 189,956 vehicles for an average of 261 vehicles per day at an average cost of 62¢ per vehicle.<sup>6</sup>

By early 1965, when the Moro Bay Ferry was under construction, there were 15 ferries in operation in Arkansas and they had become an even more important part of the state highway

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<sup>3</sup> Taylor Smith, Sandra. "El Dorado Commercial Historic District, El Dorado, Union County, Arkansas." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Berry, Dr. Trey. "Hunter-Dunbar Expedition." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=2205>, and Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. "Moro Bay State Park." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1241>.

<sup>5</sup> Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. "Moro Bay State Park." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1241>.

<sup>6</sup> Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. *Historical Review: Arkansas State Highway Commission and Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1913-1992*. Little Rock: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1992, p. 64.

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system. "Of this number, 8 are operated as free ferries by the Highway Department, and 7 are independently operated toll ferries." Two of the seven independently owned ferries were in the process of being replaced by bridges by 1965. Of the ferries that were operating in early 1965, the number of vehicles that utilized them daily varied from an estimated 50 vehicles that used the White River ferry at Guion to over 700 vehicles that used the Norfolk Lake ferry in Baxter County.<sup>7</sup>

The tow boat for the Moro Bay Ferry was built as Hull No. 1150 by the Barbour Metal Boat Works of Missouri. The Barbour Metal Boat Works was originally named Barbour Metal Boat Company when it was founded in 1913. The founding of the company was noted in the May 8, 1913, edition of *The Iron Age* which reported "The Barbour Metal Boat Company, East St. Louis, has been incorporated with \$15,000 capital stock by George C. Barbour, Harry C. Wakefield and Charles P. Whitebread to equip a plant for the manufacture of metal motor boats, etc." In 1925, the name of the company was changed, and it also appears that the focus of the company changed from small-scale recreational boats to commercial vessels, with a heavy focus on tow boats. The company was originally located in Valley Park, Missouri, on the Meramec River, but the company moved to Oakville, Missouri, in 1950. After being in Oakville for nine years, the company moved to downtown St. Louis in 1959 and the company closed in 1985.<sup>8</sup>

According to the 27<sup>th</sup> *Biennial Report* of the Arkansas State Highway Commission, the Moro Bay Ferry and its approaches was Job No. 7618, and was located on Sections 2-3 of Highway 15. The money allotted for the project at the time was \$91,250.15. Also according to the report, \$2,030.17 of that amount was expended before July 1, 1964, and the remainder (\$89,219.98) was expended between July 1, 1964, and July 1, 1965. (In all, between July 1, 1964, and June 30, 1966, Arkansas spent a total of \$765,747.74 on ferry operations.)<sup>9</sup>

The process of getting the approval for the construction of a ferry was complex. The April 1965 issue of *Arkansas Highways* magazine gave the following description of the process:

After installation is authorized and allotments made, surveys are made of the proposed location and our bridge designers become "naval architects." Upon completion of the surveys, a sketch showing the location, ravine section, and type of operation is submitted to the Corps of Engineers with a request for a permit. If no objections are received from navigational interests after publication by the Corps, a permit is issued to the Department outlining the navigational requirements to be met.

Specification and detail plans, along with the navigational requirements of the Corps are submitted to the Office of Marine Inspection, U.S. Coast Guard for approval.

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<sup>7</sup> Mattox, Bob. "Ferry Boats in Arkansas.....A'plenty!" *Arkansas Highways Magazine*. April 1965, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *The Iron Age*. Vol. 91: No. 19. 8 May 1913, p. 1155, and Information on Barbour Metal Boat Works. Found at: <http://shipbuildinghistory.com/shipyards/small/barbourmbw.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Arkansas State Highway Commission. *27<sup>th</sup> Biennial Report 1965-1966*. Publisher unknown. 1966, pp. 69 and 101.

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During construction and after installation, the Coast Guard makes periodic inspections to insure that the construction and operations conform to the requirements set in the certificate of inspection for the boat and the license for the operator.<sup>10</sup>

The opening of the Moro Bay Ferry was covered by *Arkansas Highways*, the magazine of the Arkansas Highway Department. In its May 1965 issue, the magazine reported:

Moro Bay, a small community in the most far-reaching point of Bradley County, made its comeback as a boon to three south Arkansas counties on April 28 when the new Moro Bay ferry boat resumed business for the first time since the old hand-driven ferry was discontinued in the early 40's.

...  
Today, with the completion of the new, modern ferry, timber, petroleum products and travelers will be able to zip about from Union, Bradley and Calhoun counties with more ease on Highway 15.

...  
Governor Faubus dedicated the ferry system. A number of AHD officials were on hand, as were other state and county representatives. A luncheon honoring Governor Faubus was held at Gates's Sportsmen One-Stop on the Bradley County side of the river.

Walter Hicks, District 7 engineer, and in whose jurisdiction the ferry is located, said the total cost of the ferry is something over \$75,000. Hicks said the boat would operate from 6:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. on a seven-day week basis and two shifts might be used if warranted by traffic. The ferry will have a capacity of six cars or 64,000 pounds. The tow boat, built by the Barber [sic.], Co., of St. Louis, will propel the barge across the river at 12 m.p.h.

Resumption of the ferry means that Highway 15 will be open from its beginning at the Louisiana line to El Dorado, Warren, Pine Bluff, and finally to its end around England, Ark.<sup>11</sup>

As indicated, the opening of the Moro Bay Ferry was an important link in the transportation network of the Bradley County and Union County area. It provided an important crossing of the Ouachita River – prior to its completion, the closest crossing of the Ouachita River was at Calion on U.S. 167, approximately 11 miles to the west of Moro Bay.

Interestingly, the Moro Bay Ferry was likely the last ferry built in the state. By the 1970s, the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department began a concerted effort to replace the ferries

<sup>10</sup> Mattox, Bob. "Ferry Boats in Arkansas.....A'plenty!" *Arkansas Highways Magazine*. April 1965, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> "New Ferry Opens at Moro Bay." *Arkansas Highways Magazine*. May 1965, p. 2.

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remaining on the state's highway system with bridges. Due to the efforts, of the 13 ferries that were operating on the system in 1970, only six remained in operation a decade later in 1980.<sup>12</sup>

Although the Moro Bay Ferry was an important transportation link between Bradley and Union County, it did have drawbacks over using a bridge at the same location. As a result, planning for a bridge to replace the ferry began in the early 1980s. In 1986, Senator Dale Bumpers had a provision passed by the U.S. Senate that allowed Federal Bridge Replacement Funds to be used to replace ferries. Almost immediately after the resolution's passage, the preliminary work began to replace the ferry and the first of the contracts to replace the ferry with a bridge was let on August 24, 1988. After spending a total of \$10.9 million, the bridge over the Ouachita River opened on October 27, 1992. *Arkansas Highways* magazine reported:

The Moro Bay Ferry on Highway 15 made its historic "final run" just a few hours after the new Ouachita River Bridge was dedicated and opened to traffic on October 27. A crowd estimated at nearly 400 people, was on hand to witness the end of one era and the beginning of another.

...

Following lunch at Moro Bay State Park visitors were given a final ride on the ferry, which was then turned over to the Department of Parks and Tourism to become part of an interpretive exhibit to be built at the park. Highway and Transportation Director Maurice Smith passed the ferry's wooden steering wheel to Parks and Tourism Director Richard Davies following the ceremonial ride.

...

With the opening of the new bridge, only two ferry crossings remain in Arkansas. The ferry on Highway 160 at Springbank on the Red River in Miller County is the next scheduled for replacement. The other ferry is located on Highway 125 at Bull Shoals Lake in Marion County.<sup>13</sup>

Once the Moro Bay Ferry was turned over to the Department of Parks and Tourism, several things were done in order to prepare the vessel for exhibit. According to information at Moro Bay State Park,

It was moved from its working location of the ferry ramp by crane to an area on the river bank about 100 yards south of the ramp. At this point large concrete blocks were placed as a foundation for the ferry to sit on and two large steel poles were driven into the ground and welded to the ferry so that it can float up and down during

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<sup>12</sup> Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. *Historical Review: Arkansas State Highway Commission and Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1913-1992*. Little Rock: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1992, p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> "Bridge Opens at Moro Bay." *Arkansas Highways Magazine*. Winter 1992, pp. 14-15.

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periods of high water without being moved. A parking lot was constructed adjacent to the area. A short stretch of asphalt road was placed and sidewalk for visitors to walk from their vehicles up to the ferry for access and appeal. Guard rails were placed on the access ramp of the ferry to accommodate guests. Original signage was left at the top of the old ferry ramp and many of the original signs were moved to the ferry exhibit area to make it an appealing exhibit. Three wayside exhibit panels were placed near the access point of the ferry and 3 wayside panels were placed overlooking the river to the west of the parking lot to inform visitors of the history of the ferry.<sup>14</sup>

Changes to the Ferry have been minimal since it was placed in its current location in 1992. Repainting of the vessel occurred in November 2010 (exterior), April 2012 (interior), and June 2017 (exterior). However, the paint color used on the exterior is the same Omaha Orange that the Ferry was originally painted while in service on the river. In addition to repainting, “in March of 2016 the flooring in the deck hand box and the tug wheel house was replaced. Years of water and weathering created rust to the point of it being unsafe to visitors as an exhibit so we contracted a welder to replace the flooring as well as the lower half of the deck hand box as well as to create a window from the wheel house in the tug to view the engine room of the tug. Doors on the deckhand box were also replaced.”<sup>15</sup>

Today, only one ferry remains in use in Arkansas, and it carries Highway 125 across Bull Shoals Lake north of Peel in Marion County. However, the Moro Bay Ferry remains as a tangible reminder of the importance of ferries in the twentieth-century transportation history of Arkansas.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY**

From the earliest days of settlement in Arkansas, the state’s rivers and lakes have influenced its settlement patterns and travel routes. During the first part of the nineteenth century, ferries played a key role in allowing travelers to cross many of the rivers around Arkansas, and it was no different with the Ouachita River. From 1828 onwards, a ferry played a significant role in allowing travelers to cross the Ouachita River at Moro Bay and be able to more easily travel in the area that is today Bradley and Union counties.

Although the ferry suspended its operations in 1948, the importance of the crossing as a transportation link is illustrated by the fact that the Arkansas State Highway Commission reinstated ferry service in 1965. The Moro Bay Ferry allowed for a more direct route between Warren and El Dorado, which did not necessitate going to Calion to cross the Ouachita River,

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<sup>14</sup> “Moro Bay Ferry and Tug Boat Exhibit/Artifact Documentation of Records, Projects, and Changes to the Exhibit/Artifact.” In the files of Moro Bay State Park, c.2017. The road signs on display replaced the original signs in February 2017. The originals were placed in storage at the Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources in Smackover.

<sup>15</sup> “Moro Bay Ferry and Tug Boat Exhibit/Artifact Documentation of Records, Projects, and Changes to the Exhibit/Artifact.” In the files of Moro Bay State Park, c.2017.

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and also allowed for a shorter travel time between the two towns. The importance of the crossing was also illustrated by the fact that the ferry was replaced by a bridge in 1992.

The Moro Bay Ferry tow boat was built by the Barbour Metal Boat Works, an important regional boat builder that specialized in constructing tow boats. Although the company was founded in 1913, after 1925 until the company closed in 1985, the vast majority of their work was building tow boats. The Moro Bay Ferry tow boat is a good intact example of their work, and one of several tow boats that were built for ferries in Arkansas. However, today it is the last example of their work left in the state.

Due to its importance in the transportation history of Bradley and Union counties and as a good example of the work of the important regional boat builder the Barbour Metal Boat Works, the Moro Bay Ferry is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** and with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. Brochure for Moro Bay State Park. 2015. Found at: [https://www.arkansasstateparks.com!/userfiles/pdfs/Moro%20Bay\\_2017\\_web.pdf](https://www.arkansasstateparks.com!/userfiles/pdfs/Moro%20Bay_2017_web.pdf).

Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. "Moro Bay State Park." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1241>.

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. *Historical Review: Arkansas State Highway Commission and Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1913-1992*. Little Rock: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1992.

Arkansas State Highway Commission. *27<sup>th</sup> Biennial Report 1965-1966*. Publisher unknown. 1966.

Arkansas State Highway Commission. Architectural Drawings for the Moro Bay Ferry, Route 15, Sections 2-3. Drawings #12949-12951. 1964. In the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

Berry, Dr. Trey. "Hunter-Dunbar Expedition." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=2205>.

*Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1890.

Moro Bay Ferry  
Name of Property

Bradley County, Arkansas  
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“Bridge Opens at Moro Bay.” *Arkansas Highways Magazine*. Winter 1992, pp. 14-15.

Information on Barbour Metal Boat Works. Found at:  
<http://shipbuildinghistory.com/shipyards/small/barbourmbw.htm>.

*The Iron Age*. Vol. 91: No. 19. 8 May 1913, p. 1155.

Mattox, Bob. “Ferry Boats in Arkansas.....A’plenty!” *Arkansas Highways Magazine*. April 1965, pp. 2-3.

“Moro Bay Ferry and Tug Boat Exhibit/Artifact Documentation of Records, Projects, and Changes to the Exhibit/Artifact.” In the files of Moro Bay State Park, c.2017.

“New Ferry Opens at Moro Bay.” *Arkansas Highways Magazine*. May 1965, pp. 2-3.

Taylor Smith, Sandra. “El Dorado Commercial Historic District, El Dorado, Union County, Arkansas.” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2003.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Arkansas Department of Transportation

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** BR0161

Moro Bay Ferry  
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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one acre.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Or**

#### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 560586 | Northing: 3684583 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

#### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beginning at UTM point 15/560564/3684605, proceed northeasterly along the parking area for 157 feet to UTM point 15/560610/3684617, thence proceed southeasterly along Moro Bay State Park Road for 162 feet to UTM point 15/560620/3684569, thence proceed southwesterly for 157 feet to UTM point 15/560573/3684559, thence proceed northwesterly for 155 feet to the point of beginning.



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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundary includes the Moro Bay Ferry and its immediate surroundings.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator  
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
street & number: 1100 North Street  
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201  
e-mail: ralph.wilcox@arkansas.gov  
telephone: (501) 324-9787  
date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Moro Bay Ferry

City or Vicinity: Moro Bay

Moro Bay Ferry  
Name of Property

Bradley County, Arkansas  
County and State

County: Bradley County

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Ralph S. Wilcox

Date Photographed: January 10, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 14 . View of the Moro Bay Ferry Tow Boat and Barge, looking southwest.
- 2 of 14 . View of the Moro Bay Ferry Tow Boat and Barge, looking south.
- 3 of 14 . View of the Moro Bay Ferry Barge, looking southeast.
- 4 of 14 . View of the Moro Bay Ferry Tow Boat and Barge, looking northeast.
- 5 of 14 . View of the Ouachita River from the southwest end of the Moro Bay Ferry.
- 6 of 14 . View of the Moro Bay Ferry Tow Boat and Barge, looking north.
- 7 of 14 . View of the Moro Bay Ferry Tow Boat and Barge, looking west.
- 8 of 14 . View of the Moro Bay Ferry Tow Boat, looking southwest.
- 9 of 14 . View of the builder's plate on the Moro Bay Ferry Tow Boat, looking west.
- 10 of 14 . View of the deck of the Moro Bay Ferry Barge, looking northeast.
- 11 of 14 . View of the deck of the Moro Bay Ferry Barge, looking southwest.
- 12 of 14 . View of the Moro Bay Ferry Tow Boat from the deck of the Barge, looking south.
- 13 of 14 . View of the Moro Bay Ferry Tow Boat and Barge from the original ferry approach road, looking south.
- 14 of 14 . View of the road signs associated with the Moro Bay Ferry, looking south.

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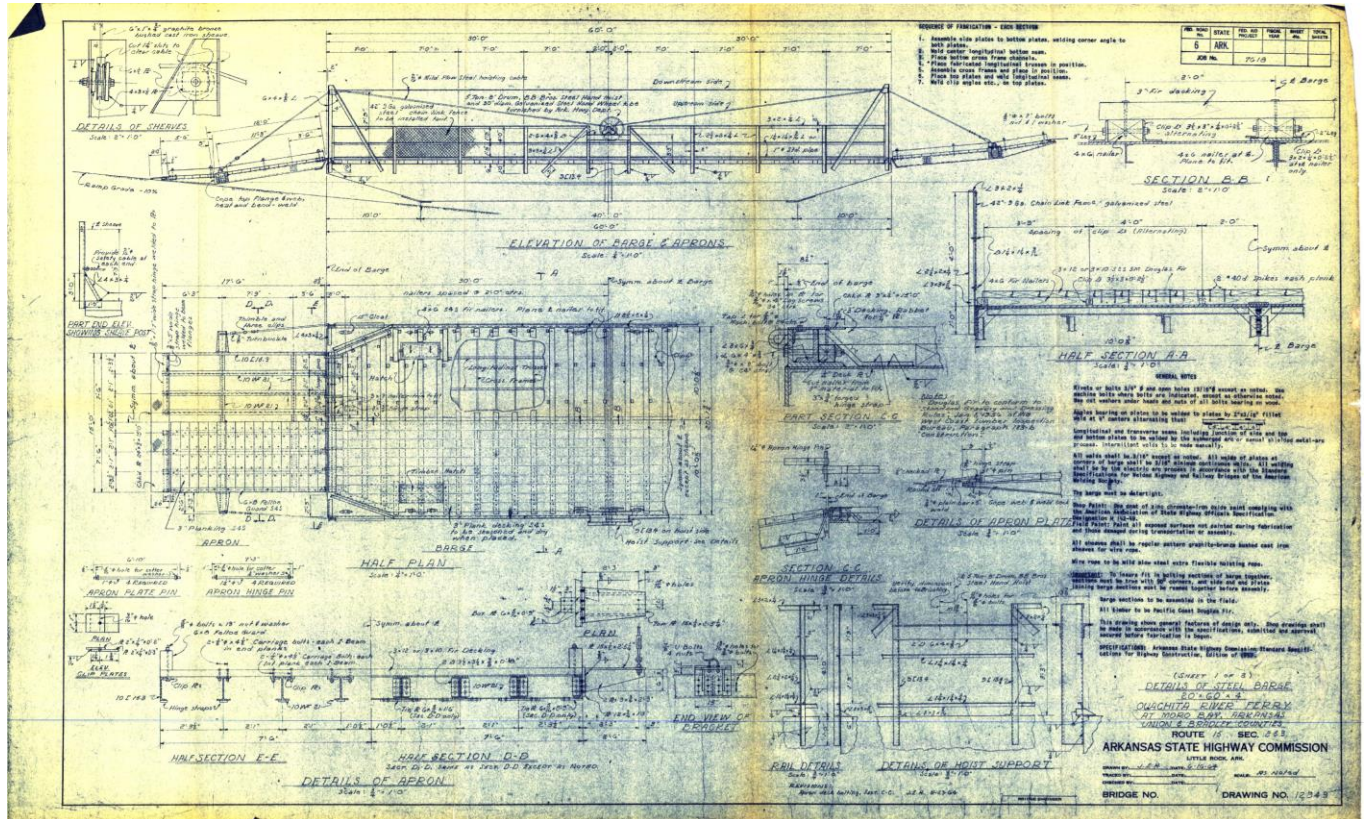


Figure 1: Plans for the steel barge of the Moro Bay Ferry. (From the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.)

Moro Bay Ferry  
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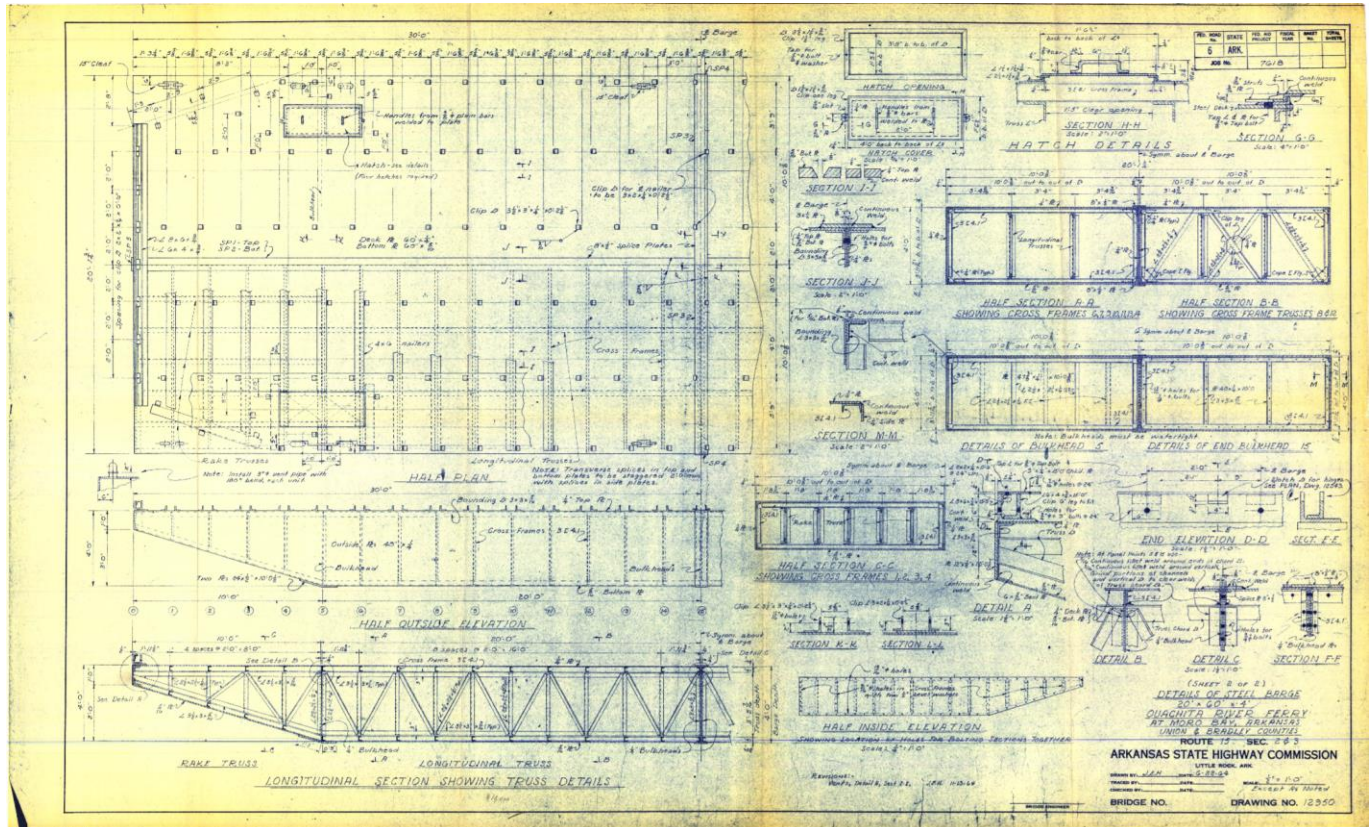
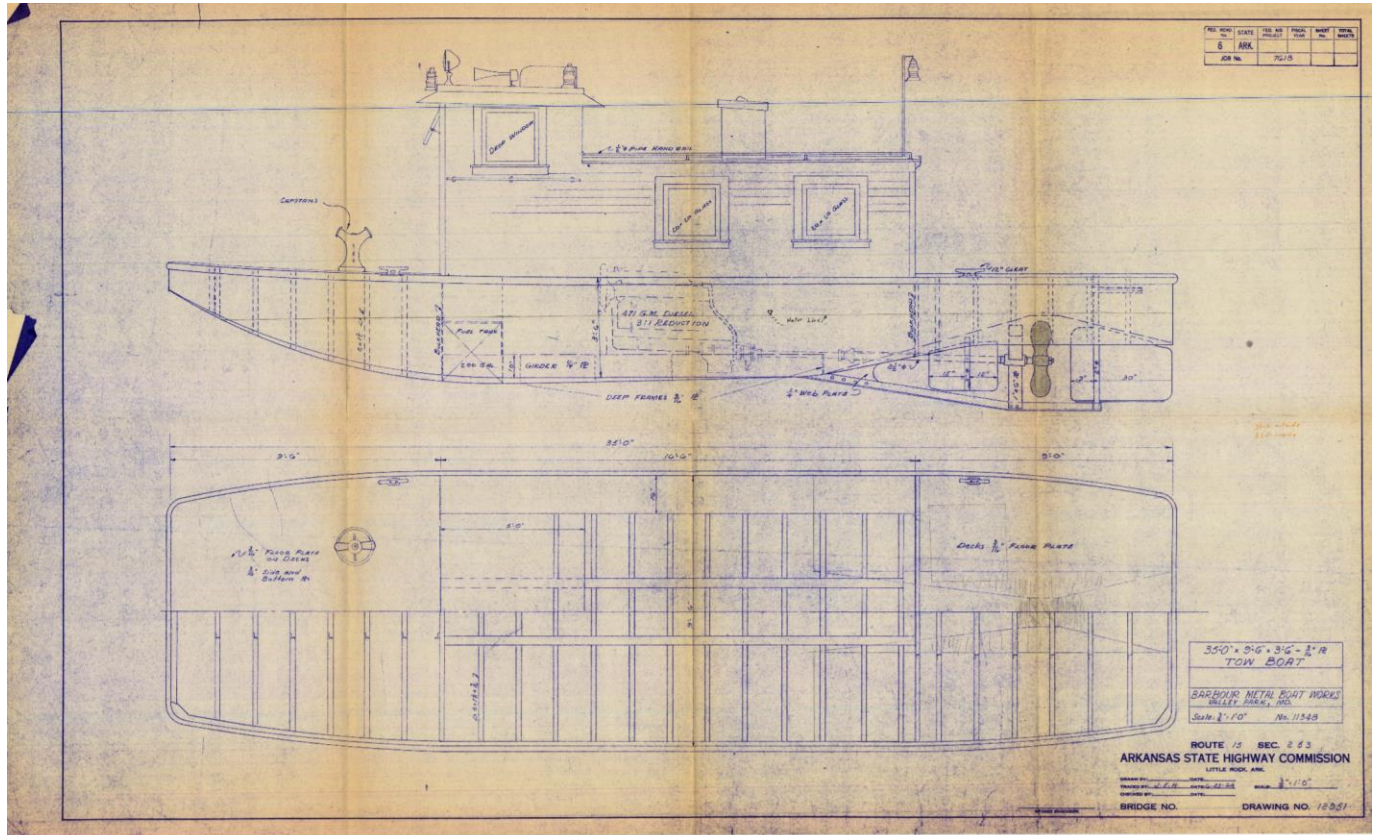


Figure 2: Detail plans for the steel barge of the Moro Bay Ferry. (From the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.)

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**Figure 3:** Plans for the tow boat of the Moro Bay Ferry. (From the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.)

Moro Bay Ferry  
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**Figure 4:** Photograph of the Moro Bay Ferry crossing the Ouachita River, c.1978. (From the files of Moro Bay State Park.)

Moro Bay Ferry  
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**Figure 5:** Photograph of a portion of the barge of the Moro Bay Ferry, c.1978. (From the files of Moro Bay State Park.)

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**Figure 6:** Photograph of the christening of the Moro Bay Ferry with tomato juice by Miss Nancy Herring, “Miss Pink Tomato,” of Warren, Arkansas, 1965. (From *Arkansas Highways Magazine*, May 1965.)



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**Figure 6:** Photograph of the Moro Bay Ferry on its inaugural crossing, 1965. (From *Arkansas Highways Magazine*, May 1965.)

Moro Bay Ferry  
Name of Property

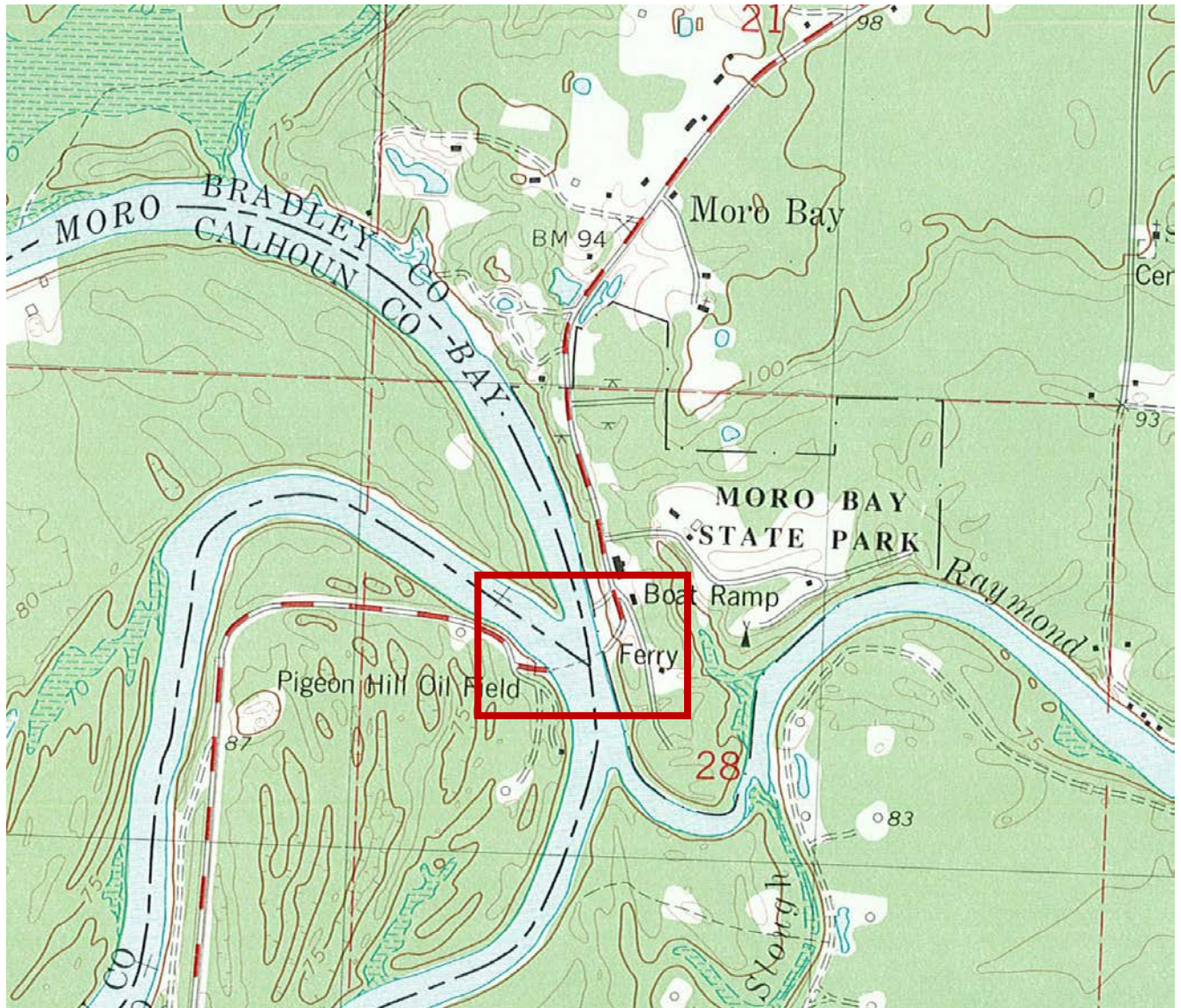
Bradley County, Arkansas  
County and State



**Figure 7:** Photograph of the Moro Bay Ferry on its final crossing, 1992. (From *Arkansas Highways Magazine*, Winter 1992.)

Moro Bay Ferry  
Name of Property

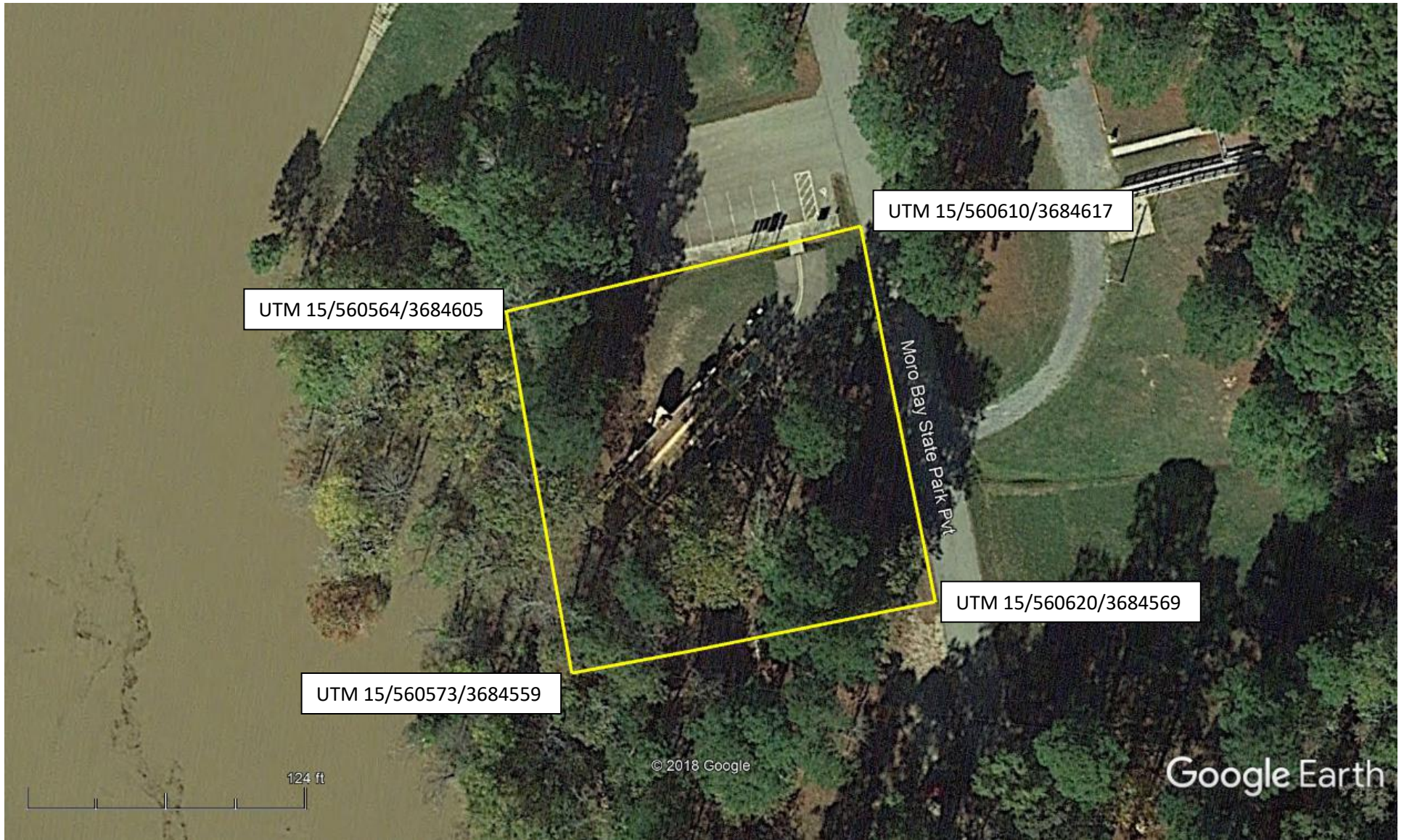
Bradley County, Arkansas  
County and State



**Figure 8:** Moro Bay USGS Topographic Map illustrating the location of the Moro Bay Ferry’s crossing on the Ouachita River.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Moro Bay Ferry - Boundary Map

Moro Bay, Bradley County, Arkansas

15/560586/3684583

↑ North

|-----124 feet-----|



Moro Bay Ferry

|-----163 feet-----|

Moro Bay, Bradley County, Arkansas

15/560586/3684583

↑ North



Moro Bay Ferry

|-----1000 feet-----|

Moro Bay, Bradley County, Arkansas

15/560586/3684583

↑ North





SHACHTON RIVER FERRY  
NEWPORT ST. LAURENCE, MS





OUACHITA RIVER FERRY  
HOMEPORT ST. LOUIS, MO.







MORO BAY TUG  
HAILING PORT  
LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

QUACHITA RIVER FERRY  
HOMEPORT LOUIS, MO





3411

LIFE PRESERVERS  
ADULT 12  
CHILD 3

34.11

BARBOUR METAL BOAT WKS

ST. LOUIS 29 MO.

HULL NO. 1150



OUACHITA RIVER FERRY  
HOMEPORT ST. LOUIS

TURN OFF MOTOR  
SET HANDBRAKE  
TURN OFF LIGHTS





OUACHITA RIVER FERRY  
HOMEPORT MOUIS, MO.

TURN OFF MOTOR  
SET HANDBRAKE  
TURN OFF LIGHTS



TURN OFF MOTOR  
SET HANDBRAKE  
TURN OFF LIGHTS



TRUCKS HAULING  
INFLAMABLES  
OR EXPLOSIVES  
MUST BE TRANSPORTED  
BY THEMSELVES

STOP

TURN  
LIGHTS  
OUT

WEIGHT LIMIT 32 TONS  
LENGTH LIMIT 60 FEET

MORO BAY FERRY  
OPERATING HOURS  
5:00 A.M. TO 10:00 P.M.  
7 DAYS PER WEEK

WAIT  
HERE  
FOR  
FERRY

DO NOT  
PULL ON  
FERRY  
IF MOTOR  
WILL NOT  
START

NO  
SWIMMING

BOARD  
FERRY  
ON  
SIGNAL  
ONLY

NO BOAT  
LAUNCHING



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 8/6/2018      Date of Pending List: 8/27/2018      Date of 16th Day: 9/11/2018      Date of 45th Day: 9/20/2018      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal           | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request     | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver           | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      9/19/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS  
**HERITAGE**

Asa Hutchinson  
*Governor*

Stacy Hurst  
*Director*



August 1, 2018

Joy Beasley, Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street., NW  
Mail Stop 7228  
Washington D.C. 20240

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural  
Heritage Commission

Arkansas State Archives

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars  
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

RE: Moro Bay Ferry – Moro Bay, Bradley County, Arkansas

Dear Ms. Beasley:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Moro Bay Ferry to the National Register of Historic Places. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Ralph S. Wilcox of my staff at (501) 324-9787. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hurst  
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:rsw

Enclosure



ARKANSAS HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION PROGRAM



1100 North Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201

(501) 324-9880  
fax: (501) 324-9184  
tdd: 711

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