

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

APR 10 1989

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 West Prestonsburg Bridge  
other names/site number n/a Site # FD-72

2. Location

street & number crosses Levisa Fork at West Prestonsburg n/a  not for publication  
city, town Prestonsburg n/a  vicinity  
state Kentucky code KY county Floyd code 071 zip code 41653

3. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historic Resources of Prestonsburg

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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.

David L. Morgan 3-30-89  
Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Commonwealth of Kentucky  
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.  
 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Delores Byen Entered in the National Register 5/18/89  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: Road Related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: Road Related

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

n/a

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other Other: Concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**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    n/a

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Engineering

Other: Community Development

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

Period of Significance

1928

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

Significant Dates

1928

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

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

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

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Steel and Lebby Contracting Company

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

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

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See Overview Form

- Previous documentation on file (NPS): n/a
- 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
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other

Specify repository:  
Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, KY

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less Than One Acre

UTM References

A 

1	7
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3	4	3	0	6	0
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4	1	7	0	7	4	0
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Zone      Easting      Northing

B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Margaret Warminski, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date December 1988

street & number 340 East Second Street telephone 606/581-2883

city or town Newport state Kentucky zip code 41071

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

West Prestonsburg Bridge, Historic Resources of Prestonsburg

Section number 7 Page 1

The West Prestonsburg Bridge (c. 1928) connects the city's North Prestonsburg neighborhood with the relatively isolated West Prestonsburg area. Like its counterpart, the Town Branch Bridge, is is an example of an open-spandrel fixed through-arch bridge, constructed of reinforced concrete. The West Prestonsburg Bridge is distinguished for its graceful appearance and its prominence in the landscape. Although its integrity has not been disturbed by modern improvements, it suffers from lack of maintenance.

The West Prestonsburg Bridge is an example of a concrete through or "rainbow" arch single-span bridge, constructed c. 1928. Although now utilized as a pedestrian bridge, it was originally a highway span, built to carry a single lane of traffic. As built, it was a single-lane highway bridge. The West Prestonsburg Bridge's approach spans and arch rest on concrete piers and abutments, with the arch itself constructed of reinforced concrete. Its slender vertical supports are reinforced concrete tension hangers that tie into the floor beams to support the deck. The floor beams are also of reinforced concrete. Horizontal ties connect the arch's top chords. The bridge has an overall length of 400 feet; the arch is 100 feet long. The roadway is 20 feet wide.

The design of the West Prestonsburg Bridge is nearly identical to that of the Town Branch Bridge, a concrete through arch span constructed four years later. However, the post and rail balustrade of the West Prestonsburg Bridge, composed of chamfered and paneled vertical and horizontal members, lacks the Art Moderne influence exhibited by that of the other span, and suggests an earlier construction date. Although both bridges are important elements in the landscape, the West Prestonsburg Bridge, because of its location and long, straight approaches, enjoys greater visual prominence and can be seen from a much greater distance.

The West Prestonsburg Bridge exhibits a grace that surpasses many examples of their type. Since many through arches are characterized by a squat, sturdy appearance, the delicacy of the West Prestonsburg's overall appearance, and the slenderness of its vertical members is noteworthy. The soaring height of the arch and the sharp radius of its curve are dramatic in impact.

The West Prestonsburg Bridge's integrity has remained undisturbed by modern improvements or structural modifications. However, years of neglect have taken a severe toll on the structure. Large sections of concrete have spalled and the floor deck is badly deteriorated. Numerous reinforcing rods are exposed and several are broken.

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

West Prestonsburg Bridge, Historic Resources of Prestonsburg

Section number 8 Page 1

The West Prestonsburg Bridge (c. 1928), one of two nearly-identical open-spandrel through arch bridges in the city of Prestonsburg, is significant at the state level under Criterion C and the theme of engineering as a rare survivor of a once-common bridge design: it is one of the few spans of its type still in existence in Kentucky. The West Prestonsburg Bridge is a work of the Steel and Leiby Contracting Company, a prolific bridge-building firm of Knoxville, Tennessee. The bridge is also significant under Criterion A in the context of the community development of Prestonsburg because of its importance in the development of the city's transportation system. The West Prestonsburg Bridge and its counterpart, the Town Branch Bridge (c. 1932), the city's first modern highway bridges, were constructed during the city's greatest period of growth and expansion. The two bridges' importance in this context is discussed further in the context statement.

The West Prestonsburg Bridge was one of three concrete through or "rainbow" arch bridges constructed in the Prestonsburg area during the late 1920's and early 1930's, during and just after the city's greatest period of growth and expansion. Of these three spans, two are still standing. A third at the nearby settlement of Harold was replaced in the 1970's. Prior to their construction, the only bridges in the area were primitive wire suspension spans. Both the West Prestonsburg and Town Branch Bridges originally displayed bronze plaques listing their construction dates, builders' names, and other pertinent information, but these features have since been removed. However, their history has been well documented by local residents. The West Prestonsburg Bridge was built by the Steel and Leiby Contracting Company of Knoxville, Tennessee, who also oversaw the construction of the Town Branch Bridge four years later.

According to local tradition, the West Prestonsburg Bridge was commissioned by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad to provide easier access to its passenger and freight depot in West Prestonsburg, a somewhat isolated neighborhood located on the west bank of the Levisa Fork. The bridge served its original function until the 1960's when a new four-lane highway span was constructed approximately one-quarter mile to the south. At that time the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet relinquished responsibility for the West Prestonsburg Bridge and it became the property of the City of Prestonsburg. In the 1970's the bridge was closed to auto traffic because of increasing deterioration. It still serves as a pedestrian link between Prestonsburg and West Prestonsburg.

During the 1910's and 1920's the through arch bridge enjoyed great popularity with highway bridge builders. This was especially true in Ohio where a standardized design for such bridges, based on a patent granted to engineer James Marsh in 1912, was developed by the state highway department in 1921. Although the basic form of the West Prestonsburg Bridge clearly derives from Marsh's patented design, and resembles the standardized type developed by the Ohio highway department, the West Prestonsburg Bridge is distinguished

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

West Prestonsburg Bridge, Historic Resources of Prestonsburg

Section number 8 & 10 Page 2 & 1

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for its longer length and greater height. It is also noteworthy for its "fixed arch" design, in which the arch flows below deck level and is anchored into the abutments. This sub-type represents a departure from the more common "tied" arch form, utilized by the majority of the the through arch spans in Ohio's historic bridge inventory, in which the arch does not continue below deck level and is not tied into the abutments.

The West Prestonsburg Bridge was not included in Kentucky's statewide historic bridge survey, conducted in 1982, because it is no longer owned by the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Other through arch bridges may also survive that have yet to be documented because they, too, they are owned by local (city or county) governments. Based on current information, the West Prestonsburg Bridge is clearly significant as a very rare surviving example of its type. The Town Branch Bridge, which it closely resembles, was found during the course of the survey to be the only concrete through arch bridge still in use on a state highway. It was later judged eligible for listing in the Register on that basis. Based on the unusual physical design of the bridge within Kentucky, and in comparison with evaluations of through arch bridges in neighboring states, the West Prestonsburg Bridge is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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10. Geographic Information

Beginning at the eastern terminus of the West Prestonsburg Bridge, which is west of North Arnold Avenue; then proceeding in a westerly direction approximately 600 feet to the bridge's western terminus. The nomination includes the approach spans, piers and primary span.

This boundary includes the property visually associated with the bridge. Since there are no natural or man-made boundaries to enclose the nominated area, an imaginary boundary was drawn for this purpose.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Section number**        **Photos**        **Page**       

West Prestonsburg Bridge  
Historic Resources of Prestonsburg MPS, Floyd Co., KY

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Photo 11

Prestonsburg Multiple Properties Submission (same for all photos)

West Prestonsburg Bridge

crosses Levisa Fork at West Prestonsburg (same for photos 11 through 14)

Prestonsburg, Kentucky (same for all photos)

Margaret Warminski (same for all photos)

February 1988

Negative location: Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Kentucky (same for all photos)

Overall view of bridge, looking east toward Prestonsburg from the Chesapeake and Ohio  
Railroad Bridge in West Prestonsburg.

Photo 12

West Prestonsburg Bridge

February 1988

View of bridge arch from deck below, looking west toward West Prestonsburg.

Photo 13

West Prestonsburg Bridge

February 1988

View of bridge lower structure from adjoining hillside.

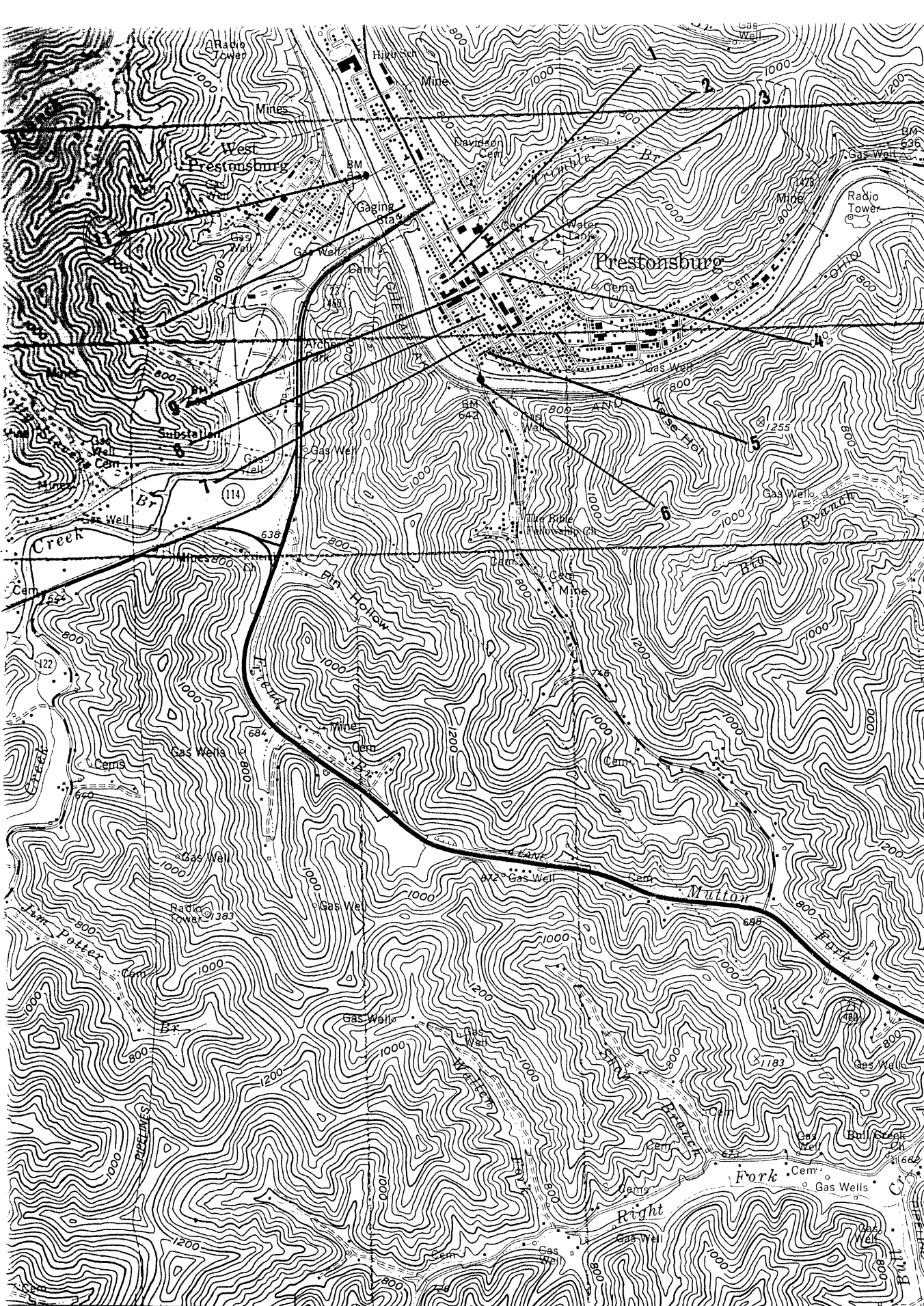
Photo 14

West Prestonsburg Bridge

February 1988

View of post and rail balustrade on east (Prestonsburg) approach, looking northeast from  
bridge deck.





#11 West Prestonsburg Bridge  
 Floyd Co., KY  
 17/343060 A170740

4171  
 40'  
 4170  
 4169  
 4168  
 4166000m.N.  
 37°37'30"

47°30' 342

343

● INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1978  
 344  
 345000m.E.

82°45'

1 MILE  
 0 FEET  
 ER

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road

(CHAROLD)  
 4458 11/5W