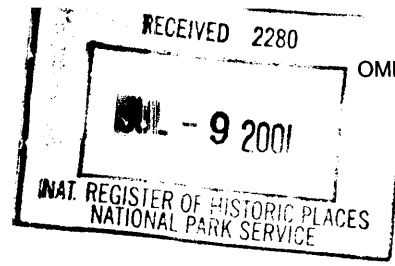


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



890

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Moore's Creek Bridge

other names/site number Tickle Tummy Hill, North 2nd Street Bridge

2. Location

street & number North 2nd St., between Avenues B & C n/a not for publication

city or town Fort Pierce n/a vicinity

state Florida code FL county St. Lucie code 111 zip code 34950

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Janet Snyder Matthews Signature of certifying official/Title Date June 28, 2001

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action 8.17.01

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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/Bridge

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/Bridge

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Single-span arch-deck bridge

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Concrete

roof N/A
other Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

Engineering

Period of Significance

1925

Significant Dates

1925

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Luten Bridge Company

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

Moore's Creek Bridge
Name of Property

St. Lucie, FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	6	6	6	4	0	3	0	3	6	3	4	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tim Harrington, V. I. S. T. A.; W. Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist; Brent A. Tozzer, Historian

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date June 2001

street & number R. A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough St telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Fort Pierce

street & number 100 N. U. S. #1 telephone (561) 460-2200

city or town Fort Pierce state FL zip code 34950

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 amend 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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

Moore's Creek Bridge, nicknamed "Tickle Tummy Hill," connects Fort Pierce's seminal residential district to the north of the creek with the historic waterfront downtown to the south. It was built in 1925 to replace a wooden bridge dating back to the turn of the century. The new bridge was a concrete arch deck structure of advanced design for the times. The bridge spans 46 feet, including approaches, and is 52 feet wide, including sidewalks and handrails. Its high arch distinguishes it from similar Florida bridges built by the Luten Bridge Company. Like other Luten-designed bridges, it is graceful, and aesthetically detailed. It is finished in smooth concrete. The handrails feature classical urn-shaped balusters. Decorative lampposts accentuate each corner. It was closed in 1988. In 1995 the bridge was tested and found to be structurally sound. A repair and restoration project was proposed and a historic resource impact assessment conducted. The report concluded in 1996 that there would be no significant impact to the historic structure as a result of the repair. The bridge was restored, and reopened on December 7, 1997. Moore's Creek Bridge is listed as FDOT Structure Number 945000 in the Florida Historic Bridge Inventory.

SETTING

Fort Pierce is on the east coast of Florida, approximately 238 miles south of Jacksonville and 58 miles north of West Palm Beach. The city consists of nine square miles of irregularly shaped land, surrounded by unincorporated areas of St. Lucie County. Fort Pierce is the county seat. It occupies the banks of the Indian River lagoon and the northern tip of Hutchinson Island, a barrier island separating the lagoon from the ocean. The city contains several residential neighborhoods, an oceanfront resort area, and the county's historic downtown. The major traffic arteries serving the city are Interstate Highway 95, U.S. Route 1, and Coastal Highway A1A. There is a small airport. A commercial seaport and the city marina can be reached from the Intracoastal Waterway and through the Fort Pierce Inlet to the Atlantic Ocean.

The bridge is located in the City of Fort Pierce on North 2nd Street between Avenue B and Avenue C. North 2nd Street connects the city's oldest residential neighborhood to the north and its historic downtown business district to the south. It crosses Moore's Creek, which flows into the Indian River, originally one block east, now two blocks east of the bridge. Many pioneer homes were built just north of the creek beginning in the 1870's, and a large hotel later stood on its north bank at the bridge. Its south bank became the site of the Fort Pierce Light and Water Utility Company, founded in 1912, predecessor of the present Fort Pierce Utility Authority on the same site. A half block north of the bridge still stands the house of Beanie Backus, a famous local painter, which dates from around 1900, built by the town's first resident physician, Dr. Platts.¹ On the north bank at the mouth of the creek was Backus' father's business, Backus & Son, Boat-Building Works,

¹Interview with Allan King, St. Lucie County Historical Museum, 1999.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

extending out on a long dock into the Indian River. Now, the Manatee Observation and Education Center occupies that spot, taking advantage of the water warmed by the power plant. Along a half-block south of the bridge are four wood-frame houses built in the early 1900's. The masonry vernacular building to their immediate south, on the corner of 2nd Street and Orange Avenue, marks the start of the city's historic commercial downtown. One block east on Avenue A stands the P. P. Cobb Building, the oldest commercial building in Fort Pierce, in continuous use since its construction as a trading post in 1882.

DESCRIPTION

The structure is a single-span, reinforced concrete, arch deck bridge with concrete abutments and sidewalks cantilevered off the main arch (Photos 1, 2). The overall length, including approaches, is 13.99 m. (46 ft.); the span is 9.144 m. (30 ft.) (Photo 3). The bridge is 15.84 m. (52 ft.) wide, which includes a roadway of 10.16 m. (33 ft.) and two sidewalks of 2.84 m. (9 ft.) each (Photo 4). The railing incorporates three panels of urn shaped balusters, with decorative lampposts at each corner (Photo 6, 7, 8). The arch is higher and more exaggerated than in similar Lutens-designed structures (Photo 3). The bridge also carries oil pipelines, a natural gas line and a potable water main for the Fort Pierce Utility Authority (Photo 2).

ALTERATIONS

Until the time of its repair and restoration in 1997, there had been no structural or aesthetic changes to the bridge since its construction in 1925. The bridge was closed in 1988 due to an advanced state of deterioration of the sidewalks and handrails which presented the city with an imminent danger to public safety² (Photo 11). This cut off an important path between business and residential districts of downtown. A repair project was undertaken, which, because the work was to be done over a public waterway, involved several permitting agencies: the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.³ The City of Fort Pierce has authority for the bridge by virtue of owning the right-of-way over which it is located. The city requested the consulting engineers to conduct a Historical Resource Impact Assessment of the project, which was reported on March 10, 1996.

The first step in evaluating the condition of the bridge was a load test on the arch. The arch had to be sound, or the repairs could turn out to be too costly or simply ineffective. The arch was also the most important feature of the bridge from a historical standpoint. It proved to be in good shape, capable of withstanding an H15 loading.

²Messler & Associates, et al., Historical Resource Impact Assessment for the Moore's Creek Bridge Repairs, 13.

³Ibid., 25.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

This also confirmed the results of an independent inspection by the Department of Transportation.⁴ To insure that restoring the sidewalk sections would not add any incalculable stress to unknown weaknesses in the material or reinforcing of the bridge, the cantilever beams were replaced with new beams, of like dimension, designed to minimize the moment of transfer to the existing arch structure walls.⁵

With the essential structural integrity of the bridge confirmed, engineers could focus their repair program on the accessory structures—the cantilevered sidewalks and their embellishments.⁶ A survey was made of all details, since the bridge exhibited “a high degree of architectural treatment.”⁷ This included field measurement and cataloguing the features photographically. During the survey, all of the balusters that remained were discovered to be badly deteriorated and could not be salvaged. Many had been pushed off the bridge and into the creek by vandals. One baluster in good condition was removed as a template for casting replacements. The replacement sidewalks, railings and balusters duplicate the external appearance of the structure as it originally existed. Modern technology in the fabrication of those elements allowed them to be brought up to current structural standards.⁸

Preservation of the original lighting on the bridge was more difficult because the original light standards and lamps had been vandalized. There were also no records of what they had been like, for the Luten Company’s actual plans have been lost. One of the original posts or standards was, however, found in the creek. It was seven feet long, and the shaft was fluted. The style of lamps used in the downtown area to the south was finally chosen because it was consistent with the 1925 period and provided continuity with Fort Pierce’s downtown preservation and revitalization program.⁹

The original dedication plaques were at the southwest and northeast corners of the balusters. The northeast plaque had been vandalized, so the southwest original was used as a template to reproduce the new northeast plaque (Photo 10). On the southeast and northwest corners, new plaques were mounted listing the city officials in office at the time of the restoration (Photo 9). These plaques were cast so as to resemble the originals in size, material, and style.¹⁰

⁴Ibid., 34-35.

⁵Ibid., 36.

⁶Ibid., 34, 35.

⁷Ibid., 32.

⁸Ibid., 33-34.

⁹Ibid., 36.

¹⁰Ibid., 31.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 4

MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

The report's conclusion follows: "Considering the nature of the proposed project ... the repairs to Moore's Creek Bridge will not alter the structure from its original configuration when the structure was constructed in 1925. The repairs will, in fact, restore the structure to its 'new' condition and provide a historically accurate restoration of the structure. There is no significant impact to the historic structure as a result of the repair of Moore's Creek Bridge."¹¹

¹¹Ibid., 36.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 1 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
NARRATIVE

SUMMARY

Moore's Creek Bridge is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Transportation/Engineering. A wooden bridge across Moore's Creek, a tributary of the Indian River, which the community straddled during its formative years, was an important thoroughfare and was high on the list of improvements slated for the city's boom time budget in 1925. The Luten Bridge Company of Palatka, Florida, was chosen to do the work. Daniel Luten was a pioneering designer of reinforced concrete bridges, who founded several subsidiaries across the U.S. to construct his designs. In addition to structural innovation, his work was noted for aesthetic appeal. Since Moore's Creek was used as a safe haven to fishermen during summer storms, the bridge was designed to provide clearance for boats. The result was a classic Luten bridge with a distinctive high arch. The sensation of crossing it at speed gave rise to its local nickname, "Tickle Tummy Hill." Moore's Creek Bridge is the only bridge in St. Lucie County on the Florida Department of Transportation's list of 208 historic bridges, and only one of fifteen concrete arch bridges that date from the period of the south Florida land boom.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The United States took possession of Florida from Spain in 1821. The Ais of the south-central coast and other prehistoric Indians were virtually extinct by then, their few descendants melding with the mixture of immigrant tribes and runaway slaves who became the Seminoles. There were about 5,000 in Florida at the time. Friction with surveyors and settlers culminated in the 1835 attack on plantations south of St. Augustine which set off the Second Seminole War (1835-1842)¹. The United States Army built a series of forts to counter the attacks and expedite the policy of Indian Removal. One was founded on a bluff, the highest point visible, on the west bank four miles south of the Indian River Inlet, near an Ais mound and a spring. This took place in late 1837 by some accounts; perhaps on the morning of January 2, 1838, according to the journal of Dr. Jacob Rhett Motte, physician to the party of scouts. They named it after their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Pierce, a career officer whose brother was Franklin Pierce, fourteenth President of the United States. The fort was deactivated after the war and burned down in 1843.²

The war stopped rather than ended, and settlers replaced soldiers under the Armed Occupation Act passed by Congress in 1842, providing for the homesteading of 160 acre lots of land. The sporadic pioneers of the 1840's along the Indian River often used the ruins of Fort Pierce as a reference point in describing claims.³ The first attempt of an "Indian River Colony" to settle an area a few miles north of the fort was interrupted by

¹Lucille Riele Rights, A Portrait of St. Lucie County, 29.

²Ibid., 30-31.

³Ibid., 36.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 2 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
NARRATIVE

the stabbing to death of John Barker, keeper of a trading post, by some Indians he had cheated.⁴ The family and neighbors escaped to St. Augustine, not to return until the 1850's, after the government had Fort Capron built near their homesteads, the site of present day St. Lucie Village. St. Lucie County had been created out of vast Mosquito County in 1844, the year before Florida became a state. The 1850 U.S. Census reported a county population of nearly 140, of whom 30 were soldiers and 27 slaves, commenting that "The inhabitants of the County were driven from it on account of the Indian hostilities and only a few of them have, as yet, returned."⁵

It was not until the 1870's that a settlement was founded that would be the beginning of Fort Pierce as a city. Alexander Bell had started a trading post at the site of the old fort in 1871, and later homesteaded the land between Taylor Creek to the north and Moore's Creek to the south.⁶ Moore's Creek remains the northern border of the commercial downtown. This would become Fort Pierce's first residential neighborhood. It was named Edgartown after the grandson of A.G. LaGow, one of the pioneers. Other founders were the families of Frank and James Bell, and Reuben Carlton.⁷ Edgartown had a post office, named after the first postmaster, Thomas C. Bass. School was taught by Miss Ella Bell in her home until the first schoolhouse was built in the form of a "one-room palmetto-thatched shack" in 1881.⁸

In 1879 Captain Benjamin Hogg and his wife Annie surprised and delighted the isolated settlers when they landed near Moore's Creek with a shipload of goods for sale. They considered the site of the old fort, about a mile and a half away, for setting up shop. But finally, in 1882, they built a two-story wooden building, with a long wooden dock stretching out into the river, about a block south of the mouth of Moore's Creek. Annie tended store while the Captain sailed his schooner between Fort Pierce, the Bahamas, and Jacksonville, trading green turtles and coconuts for goods with which to stock his trading post.⁹ Annie found a much-needed assistant in Peter P. Cobb, who came from Cazenovia, New York, in 1883.¹⁰

When some New England investors bought the building to start an oyster cannery in the mid-1880's, Cobb stayed on to run the store. They called the place "Cantown."¹¹ After a year Cobb bought the cannery out and

⁴Ada Coats Williams, A Brief History of St. Lucie County, 3.

⁵Lucille Rieley Rights, 36-41.

⁶Emily Lagow Bell, My Pioneer Days in Florida, 1876-1898, 25-29.

⁷Charles S. Miley, Miley's Memos, 3.

⁸Ibid., 3,8.

⁹Ada Coats Williams, 11.

¹⁰Charles S. Miley, 97.

¹¹Emily Lagow Bell, 29-30.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 3 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
NARRATIVE

turned it into P. P. Cobb's General Merchandise Store. He also expanded the pier into Cobb's Dock, which eventually extended twelve hundred feet into the Indian River, accommodating steam ships, fish houses, an oyster house, and tracks for carting ice out, and fish, back. Bass Post Office in Edgartown was closed down in favor of a new post office opened in the store in 1888, with Cobb as postmaster. The new post office was named "Fort Pierce". The commercial district that grew up around the river landing and general store followed suit. Throughout the pioneer period, when the Indian River settlements were only accessible by boat, the Hoggs' trading post and Cobb's store was famous from Eau Gallie to Jupiter. Its fame extended inland, too, both among Indians and cowmen, to Fort Drum and Okeechobee. It was the eastern origin of the cattle drives, along a route now designated the Florida Cracker Trail,¹² which ended with the sale of cattle in Fort Myers for shipment to Cuba from the port of Punta Rassa.¹³

The arrival in 1894 of Henry Flagler's railway, on its way south from Jacksonville, opened Fort Pierce to a new wave of settlers and a new range of economic possibilities. Pineapple growing was added to fishing and cattle raising. The city grew from a village to a town and was incorporated on February 2, 1901, with 53 out of 66 qualified voters present.¹⁴ The Indian River Telephone Company was established in 1902, with exchanges in Jensen and Fort Pierce, salvaging parts of the one-wire telegraph line laid by the army from one end of the Indian River to the other during the Seminole wars.¹⁵ The Fee family opened the Bank of Fort Pierce in 1903.¹⁶ In 1905 Fort Pierce became the seat of St. Lucie County, with a population of about 3000, recreated out of Brevard County, the seat of which was Titusville. The Florida East Coast Railroad had established a division point at Fort Pierce, boosting the job market. A proper county courthouse was built in 1909. The St. Lucie County Bank moved from Jensen to Fort Pierce in 1910 in recognition of the fact of the city's progress.¹⁷ It had become the center of commerce for the entire county. The population of the county was over 4,000; that of the city, just under 1,500. Citizens had electricity by 1912. In 1914 Fort Pierce High School was built, an outstanding example of Mission style architecture, which for many years housed the only high school from Stuart to Melbourne.¹⁸ Although the pineapple farming declined, the citrus industry took its place, followed by winter vegetables. Tourism was beginning to figure in the economy. By the end of the decade, the town had six churches, several hotels, a semi-weekly newspaper, a Golf and Country Club, a Rod and Gun Club and a

¹²The Tampa Tribune, September 9 & 10, 1987.

¹³Edward A. Fernald, Atlas of Florida, 101.

¹⁴Charles S. Miley, 5.

¹⁵Walter R. Hellier, Indian River, Florida's Treasure Coast, 39, 99.

¹⁶Ibid., 92.

¹⁷Ibid., 96.

¹⁸Mary A. Bennett, Fort Pierce Elementary, A School and Its History, 36.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 4 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
NARRATIVE

Chamber of Commerce with a dedicated promotional program. The Fort Pierce ocean inlet was being dredged and scheduled to open in 1921.¹⁹ The population was over 2,000 and growing fast. Fort Pierce was ready to take advantage of the land boom of the 1920's.

The early twenties saw plans under way for the opening of an ocean inlet and for a causeway to the barrier island. Symbolic of the optimism of the time, the Sunrise Theater was built by one of the town's leading entrepreneurs, Rupert Koblegard. It was, at the time of its construction in 1923, the largest theater between Jacksonville and Miami.²⁰ Fort Pierce began to call itself "The Sunrise City."²¹ The city capitalized on its growing population and expansion of revenues with a series of community improvements. Street paving and widening, sewers, canals, and bridges were given high priority.²² A water filtration plant, incinerator, parks, and wharves for the new port were planned. From 1921 to 1923 more than 200 houses, the theater, a school, and several business and office buildings were constructed at a cost of over \$1,000,000. In 1924 the population was 4,000 and expenditures on development were expected to exceed \$1,500,000.²³ Most of the local lawyers were busy with work for real estate dealers. The largest payroll in the city was still that of the Florida East Coast Railroad.²⁴ In 1925, the population peaked at 8,500. A new fire station, a jail, and an elegant Mediterranean Revival style City Hall were built. The county had 67 miles of paved road, mainly the Dixie Highway and Indian River Drive. The causeway from downtown to the beach on Hutchinson Island was complete. Among the luxury projects were: a casino built at the beach; a man-made island, in the manner of those between Miami and Miami Beach, on the drawing boards; and several grandiose subdivisions planned by private developers.²⁵

The city's own Venetian Island, and the Coral Gables-style developments like Indrio, turned out to be sand castles when the real estate market collapsed, exacerbated by the south Florida hurricane of 1926. In Fort Pierce an ingenious method was devised to put people to work for the city and pay them in scrip.²⁶

¹⁹Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce, Fort Pierce Florida, "The Golden Belt", 1921.

²⁰Nichols Schwab Inc. et al., Sunrise Theater, Architectural Assessment and Preservation Plan, 6.

²¹E. L. Adams, Centennial Reflections, 34.

²²Fort Pierce News-Tribune, June 19, 1925.

²³Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce, The Cat's Out of the Bag at Fort Pierce Florida, "The Sunrise City."

²⁴Judge Alto Lee Adams, The Fourth Quarter, 59-61.

²⁵Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce, Prosperous Fort Pierce—Where Ocean, River, Rail and Highway Meet, 1925.

²⁶Judge Alto Lee Adams, 69.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 5 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
NARRATIVE

Development continued at a slower pace, until the Bank of Fort Pierce closed in 1927; two hurricanes, back to back, hit closer to home in 1928; and the stock market crashed in 1929. The St. Lucie County Bank was saved. The port was finished, giving Fort Pierce the only important deep water harbor between Jacksonville and Miami. Completion of the Dixie Highway kept the city on the tourist map. The county built a 167 acre airport. The Chamber of Commerce, somewhat diminished in both resources and exuberance, continued to promote the Fort Pierce that was perfected during the golden age of the twenties.²⁷ In 1930 the population of the city had declined to under 5,000, but rose to over 6,000 in 1935.²⁸

In 1931 P. P. Cobb's store closed. The News Tribune wrote: "The closing of Cobb's store will mark the passing of a landmark, an institution that has been largely responsible for the development of this section. Thousands of families and individuals, both in pioneer and in later days, have been materially aided through the liberal but quiet generosity of its owner."²⁹ Only two significant buildings went up during the depression: the post office, in 1935, and the Coast Guard station, in 1937. Cattle ranchers and tomato farmers found a mutually beneficial arrangement whereby a pasture was lent to tomatoes one year and grass the next.³⁰ People who could went back to living off the land. For the average person, subsistence was the economic level; and barter, the medium of exchange. Nevertheless, community spirit was well: the beaches were pristine, there were always dances to attend and movies to see, and the fishing was still good.

In 1940 the city estimated its population at "8,000 in summer and 11,000 in winter."³¹ One of 17 State Farmer's Markets was built in Fort Pierce and opened in 1941, primarily to serve tomato growers.³² As the Second World War began, construction came to a dead stop, but the depression was banished. The Navy chose Fort Pierce for the site of an amphibious training base, and many servicemen became part of the community after the war. With its \$380,000 citrus pre-cooling and refrigeration plant, the port of Fort Pierce was rated fifth in importance in the state.³³ In 1946 the city's first radio station, WIRA, began broadcasting.³⁴ The marina, beaches, and fishing spots began to thrive again with tourists, and retirees discovered that the area was an

²⁷Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce, Economic Survey of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County, 1934.

²⁸Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce, 1935 Directory of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County.

²⁹Charles S. Miley, 97.

³⁰Interview with Pete Serra, Fort Pierce State Farmers' Market, 2000.

³¹R.L. Polk & Co., Polk's Fort Pierce City Directory 1940.

³²Pete Serra.

³³R. L. Polk & Co.

³⁴E. L. Adams, 66.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 6 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
NARRATIVE

affordable paradise. Post-war prosperity buoyed the economy throughout the fifties and sixties, although it brought with it serious new challenges to the city's viability.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Early photographs show the first Moore's Creek Bridge as a flat structure, level with the banks of the creek, with planks laid over beams supported on piles, and with some rudimentary hand-railing, all of wood. One photo, by Harry Hill, which shows the bridge fairly clearly, is estimated to have been taken between 1908-1910 (Attachment 1). Although the original date of its construction is unknown, it is thought to be the first bridge built west of the Indian River. The beginnings of dirt roads are visible in a photograph of Cobb's store taken from riverside soon after the establishment of a post office there in 1888,³⁵ although plat maps dating from around that time show no sign of a bridge.³⁶

Moore's Creek divided Edgartown, the northern, primarily residential part of Fort Pierce, from the city's commercial center, which grew up around the P. P. Cobb Store and Dock. The modest businesses scattered around Edgartown by 1886, apart from the palmetto-thatched school shack and Bass Post Office, included a six-room boarding house, a fish house, and a blacksmith shop.³⁷ In the 1890's Harry Hill, who had been taking pictures to illustrate The American Beekeeper, a magazine he published in Fort Pierce, was persuaded to open a studio in a small Edgartown house just north of the bridge. This became the Florida Photographic Concern, where Harry and his brothers Fred and Lowell documented much of the early history of Fort Pierce. George Backus brought his family to Fort Pierce at the turn of the century and built his boat works on the north bank of the mouth of Moore's Creek. His son, Beanie, would become a famous artist, and live and paint throughout the last decades of his life in a house across the street from the Hills' studio. A hotel was later built on the north bank of the creek, at the corner of 2nd Street and Avenue C, and the area filled out with homes. There were two successive one-room schools in Edgartown,³⁸ but when a proper two-story schoolhouse was built, it went up on the south side, where most businesses congregated. The city really straddled the creek during those formative years, and 2nd Street was "Main Street."

During the mid-twenties, Moore's Creek Bridge was still the small wooden structure of bygone days. It must have been high on the list of infra-structural items scheduled for improvement in the boom time municipal budget: "By July, 1925, the city had extensive plans for improvements. One bid for bridge and road

³⁵Kyle S. Van Landingham, A Pictorial History of St. Lucie County 1565-1910, 15.

³⁶Plat Maps of Fort Pierce, 1888 & 1893.

³⁷Emily Lagow Bell, 46.

³⁸Jerrell H. Shofner, History of Brevard County, Volume 1, 163.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 7 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
NARRATIVE

construction amounted to \$845,000. Just twenty years before this bid, the entire St. Lucie County budget for roads and bridges amounted to only \$356.”³⁹ Although there was considerable competition for the contract, City Commission minutes for August 13, 1925 state that the Luten Bridge Company was the lowest and best bid for the work of rebuilding Moore’s Creek Bridge. Founder Daniel Luten was a pioneer bridge designer who promoted the use of reinforced concrete bridges. His design for the Moore’s Creek project allowed for passage of fishing boats under the bridge and up the creek to safety during the summer storms that plagued the coast. The old bridge forced boats to crowd together for shelter at the mouth of the creek (Attachment 2).⁴⁰ Moore’s Creek Bridge was renamed 2nd Street Bridge in an era when colorful names were replaced with more practical alternatives. Pine Street, and Tropical and Seminole Avenues became 2nd Street and Avenues B and C. But due to its high arch, and the sensation it caused in the stomachs of passing motorists, the bridge gained an even more picturesque nickname: “Tickle Tummy Hill.”

The well-designed and well-built bridge functioned without alteration in structure or appearance from 1925 to 1988, when, at last, deterioration of and damage to the guard rails forced its closure. It was restored and reopened in 1997. The restoration of Tickle Tummy Hill was the first preservation project accomplished in accordance with a master plan made possible by the new momentum in public participation, stimulated by the restoration of Old City Hall in 1995. The short residential block just south of the bridge, which leads to downtown, maintains turn-of-the-century characteristics relating it to the residential blocks to the north. It leads directly into the traditional downtown. An aerial shot in the late 1930's is the only historic photo discovered to date in which the 1925 bridge appears, if at a distance; its relationship to Edgartown, the creek and river, and Cobb’s Store is clearly visible (Attachment 3). The bridge’s importance as a pedestrian and vehicular artery tying together these historical neighborhoods, and infusing residential life into a commercial downtown, has not changed. Nor has its place in the hearts of the citizens of Fort Pierce. Proof is in the confession of elderly residents that, as soon as the bridge reopened, they drove over to “try it out”—from both sides—just to be sure the old magic was still there.⁴¹

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Moore’s Creek Bridge was designed and built by the Luten Bridge Company, founded by Daniel Luten (1869-1946), a pioneer bridge designer who excelled in the use of reinforced concrete. A graduate of the University of Michigan, Luten taught at Michigan and Purdue until 1900, when he began a consulting business in Indianapolis. He wrote extensively on the advantages of concrete, the “permanence of stone”, and the economy

³⁹Messler & Associates, et al., 11.

⁴⁰Lucille Reiley Rights, 115.

⁴¹Interview with Jim Hefflefinger, 1999.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 8 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
NARRATIVE

of local materials and labor.⁴² In 1902 he formed the National Bridge Company, the parent of many subsidiaries, to build his designs, which were promoted as being superior to "tin bridges."⁴³ In 1907 he was recognized for the design of the longest concrete bridge in the world, a twelve-span 1,440 foot bridge over the Maumee River in Waterville, Ohio.⁴⁴ By the mid 1920's, he reputedly held 50 patents on reinforced concrete bridges, and had built more than 14,000 spans in the United States.⁴⁵

Luten's reputation in Florida was confirmed with the success of the Old San Mateo Bridge in Putnam County, in 1916. The county seat, Palatka, was soon chosen for the Florida office of the Luten Bridge Company, the largest of his corporations, headquartered in York, Pennsylvania.⁴⁶ The company's products became known for strength and reliability under Florida's hot, humid and salty conditions. Luten reinforced concrete bridges, as a group, are important in the history of bridge development in Florida. They represent work by a principal builder of concrete spans in the state, whose activity, in turn, reflected the efforts of state and local governments to keep up with the population growth of the 1920's.⁴⁷

Through innovative reinforcing, Daniel Luten was able to reduce the quantity of concrete in his bridges without sacrificing structural integrity. Ties were stretched between and into the abutments to improved flood-resistance. Sometimes rods were extended from the bridge under the stream bed, reinforcing weak banks and reducing the size of abutments. Such design details were significant for bridges along Florida's low-lying, hurricane-prone east coast.⁴⁸ Moore's Creek Bridge is typical of bridges designed by Luten: well-proportioned, solidly engineered structure; graceful arch; smoothly finished spandrel walls; classical balustrade styling, and decorative lampposts.⁴⁹ In a Luten bridge, structural innovation was never divorced from artistic appearance. Moore's Creek bridge "exemplifies Luten's belief that bridges should be aesthetically pleasing to the eye."⁵⁰

⁴²Messler & Associates, et al., 12.

⁴³Historic Highway Bridges of Florida, 45.

⁴⁴Messler & Associates, et al., 12.

⁴⁵Historical Highway Bridges of Florida, 17.

⁴⁶Messler & Associates, et al., 12.

⁴⁷Historical Highway Bridges of Florida, 45.

⁴⁸Historical Highway Bridges of Florida, 17.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 86.

⁵⁰Messler & Associates, et al., 13.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 9 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
NARRATIVE

The DOT evaluated almost 12,000 bridges in Florida to identify those with historical significance. Moore's Creek Bridge is the only bridge in St. Lucie County included in the resultant list of 208 historic bridges. It is one of only 15 concrete arch bridges that date from the 1915-1925 period, Florida's Boom Time. Although Moore's Creek Bridge has features in common with other Luten bridges on the DOT list, such as the Grande Canal Arch Deck in Fort Lauderdale, and the Fish Basin Bridge in Pinellas County, its high arch is unique.⁵¹

The Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, determined the Moore's Creek Bridge to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places on May 24, 1994. The Historical Resource Impact Assessment prepared for the City of Fort Pierce on March 10, 1996, determined that "there is no significant impact to the historic structure as a result of the repair of the Moore's Creek Bridge."⁵² The bridge was restored and returned to service on December 7, 1998.

⁵¹Historical Highway Bridges of Florida, 45, 86.

⁵²Messler & Associates, et al., 14.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 1 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, E. L. Centennial Reflections. Fort Pierce, Florida: First United Methodist Church, 1961.
- Adams, Judge Alto Lee. The Fourth Quarter. Fort Pierce: Published by the author, 1976.
- Bell, Emily Lagow. My Pioneer Days in Florida. Fort Pierce: Publisher and date unrecorded.
- Bennett, Mary A. Fort Pierce Elementary, A School And Its History. Fort Pierce, Florida: School Board of St Lucie County, 1985.
- Fernald, Edward A., ed. Atlas of Florida-The Revised Edition. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1997.
- Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce. 1935 Directory of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County.
- Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce. The Cat's Out of the Bag at Fort Pierce Florida. 1924.
- Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce. Economic Survey of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County. 1934.
- Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce. Fort Pierce Florida, "The Golden Belt." 1921.
- Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce. Prosperous Fort Pierce—Where Ocean, River, Rail and Highway Meet. 1925.
- Fort Pierce News-Tribune, "City Improvement Program Gathering Headway." June 19, 1999.
- Hellier, Walter R. Indian River, Florida's Treasure Coast. Miami, Florida: Hurricane House Publishers, Inc., 1965.
- Hill, Harry. Photographic Collection of the Florida Photographic Concern. Ft. Pierce, Florida: St. Lucie County Historical Museum.
- Hefflefinger, Jim. Photographer, St. Lucie County Historical Museum. Interview, 1999.
- The Historic Highway Bridges of Florida. Florida Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration. Tallahassee, Florida: Florida Environmental Management Office.
- King, Robert Allan. Historian, St. Lucie County Historical Museum. Interview, 1999.
- Messler & Associates, Inc. and Research Atlantica, Inc. "Historical Resource Impact Assessment for the Moore's Creek Bridge Repairs." Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, March 10, 1996.
- Miley, Charles S. Miley's Memos. Ft. Pierce, Florida: Indian River Community College Historical Data Center, 1980.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 2 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nichols Schwab Inc.; Jan Abell Kenneth Garcia Partnership, Architects; Killis Almond & Associates. Sunrise Theater: Architectural Assessment and Preservation Plan. Fort Pierce: St. Lucie Preservation, April, 1998.

Plat Maps of Fort Pierce. 1888–St. Lucie County Historical Museum; 1893–Brevard County Land Records Office.

Polk's Fort Pierce City Directory 1940. Jacksonville: R. L. Polk & Co., Publishers, 1940.

Rights, Lucille Rieley. A Portrait of St. Lucie County, Florida. Virginia Beach, Virginia: The Donning Company/Publishers, 1994.

Sanborn Map Company. Fort Pierce Florida, 1915, 1918, 1929. Fire Insurance maps. St. Lucie County Public Library files.

Serra, Pete. Manager, Fort Pierce State Farmers' Market. Interview in Fort Pierce, February 2000.

Shofner, Jerrell H. History of Brevard County. Stuart, Florida: Southeastern Printing Co., 1995.

The Tampa Tribune, "A Drive Into Florida's Past." September 9, 1987.

The Tampa Tribune, "Couple Makes Cracker Trail Their Destination." September 10, 1987.

Van Landingham, Kyle S. Pictorial History of St. Lucie County, 1565-1910. Ft. Pierce, Florida: Sun Bank of St. Lucie County and St. Lucie County Historical Society, 1976.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE CO., FLORIDA
BOUNDARY

Verbal Boundary Description:

The legal description of the property is:

“All that certain structure, lying and being in the North one-half of the North East one-quarter of Section 10, of St. Lucie, and State of Florida, being more particularly described as follows;

Commencing at a point, said point being the intersection of the centerline of Avenue “C” and North Second Street; thence from said point of commencement along the centerline of said North Second Street, S 22-345-52 E, a distance of 68.7 feet to a point; thence along same, S 24-26-55 E, a distance of 81.43 feet to a point in same, the northerly center of the North Second Street Bridge, and the Point and Place of Beginning; thence from said point of Beginning along the northerly face of said Bridge, N 58-18-34 E, a distance of 26.21 feet to a point at the Northeast corner of said Bridge; thence along the easterly face of said Bridge, S 57-37-31 E, a distance of 46.13 feet to the Southeast corner of said Bridge; thence along the southerly face of said Bridge, S 57-48-58 W, a distance of 53.04 feet to a point at the southwest corner of said Bridge; thence along the westerly face of said Bridge, N 32-21-40 W, a distance of 46.55 feet to the northwest corner of said Bridge; thence along the northerly face of said Bridge, N 58-18-34 E, a distance of 26.62 feet to the Point and Place of Beginning.

It is the intent of this description to locate the North Second Street Bridge, where it crosses Moore's Creek Canal.”

Boundary Justification:

The general historic boundaries of the bridge include the bridge as described above plus a distance of 10 feet from each face of the bridge as described above. See attached site plan.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 1

MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE CO., FLORIDA

PHOTOGRAPHIC INVENTORY

1. Moore's Creek Bridge
2. Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County, Florida
3. Trent Greenan
4. May 10, 1999
5. Planning Department, City of Fort Pierce
6. Aerial view-Camera facing southeast
7. 1 of 11

Item 5 is the same for photos 1 - 14.

3. Tim Harrington
4. June 24, 1999
6. Side view with power company beyond-Camera facing southeast
7. 2 of 11

Items 3 & 4 are the same for photos 2 - 10.

6. Side view showing arch and cantilever beams-Camera facing east
7. 3 of 11

6. View from roadway looking towards Edgartown-Camera facing northwest
7. 4 of 11

6. View of north sidewalk from center of bridge-Camera facing north
7. 5 of 11

6. View of northeast corner with Backus house beyond-Camera facing north
7. 6 of 11

6. South handrail detail-Camera facing south
7. 7 of 11

6. Baluster detail-Camera facing southwest
7. 8 of 11

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number Photos Page 2 MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE
FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE CO., FLORIDA

6. Dedication plaque listing current city officials-Camera facing southwest

7. 9 of 11

6. Dedication plaque listing historic city officials-Camera facing northeast

7. 10 of 11

1. Moore's Creek Bridge after closing due to unsafe conditions.

3. Nancy Ingle

4. June 1, 1993

5. Public Works Department, City of Fort Pierce

6. Camera facing southeast

7. 11 of 11

Attachments:

1. Moore's Creek Bridge

2. St. Lucie County, FL

3. Harry Hill

4. 1908-1910

5. St. Lucie Historical Museum

6. View of old wooden Moore's Creek Bridge- camera facing East

1. Attachment 1 of 3

1. Moore's Creek Bridge

2. St. Lucie County, FL

3. Harry Hill

4. 1908-1910

5. St. Lucie Historical Museum

6. View from Moore's Creek Bridge- camera facing East

7. Attachment 2 of 3

1. Moore's Creek Bridge

2. St. Lucie County, FL

3. Harry or Lowell Hill

4. 1935-1938

5. St. Lucie Historical Museum

6. Aerial view of Western shore of Indian River- camera facing Northwest

7. Attachment 3 of 3

MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE, FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE, FLORIDA



Attachment 1 of 3

The old wooden Moore's Creek Bridge, looking east towards Edgartown, 1908-1910.

Photograph by Harry Hill, courtesy of St. Lucie County Historical Museum.

MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE, FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE, FLORIDA



Attachment 2 of 3

**View from Moore's Creek Bridge, looking east towards the Indian River, 1908-1910.
Photograph by Harry Hill, courtesy of St. Lucie County Historical Museum.**

MOORE'S CREEK BRIDGE, FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE, FLORIDA



Attachment 3 of 3

Western shore of Indian River, looking northwest, showing Moore's Creek , the power company with the smokestacks, and the bridge just beyond. Across the creek, on the north bank is a hotel, to the northwest of which (Corner of North 2nd Street and Avenue C) is the Florida Photographic Concern of Harry, Fred and Lowell Hill. At bottom | left; is Cobb's Store. 1935-1938.

Photograph by Harry or Lowell Hill, courtesy of St. Lucie County Historical Museum.