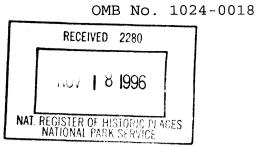
NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property				
	MILL BROOK BRIDGE			
	N/A			
2. Location				
	Blissville Road at Mill Brook			
city/town:	not for publication: N/A Lisbon vicinity: N/A			
state: CT county:	New London code: 011 zip code: 06759			
3. Classification ====================================				
Number of Resources with	hin Property:			
Contributing Noncontributing				
 	<pre>buildings sites structures objects Total</pre>			
Number of contributing Register:0_	resources previously listed in the National			
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A				

	Federal Agency Certification		
As the desof 1966, a request for standards Historic I set forth does	signated authority under the Mas amended, I hereby certify to be determination of eligibility for registering properties in Places and meets the proceduration 36 CFR Part 60. In my opin not meet the National Register	National Historic Presentation this X nomination of the Mational Register al and professional reduction, the property X er Criteria See of 10/28/96	ervation Act ion tion of quirements meets
John W. Sha	of certifying official nnahan, Director, Connecticut Histor	Date rical Commission	
State or I	Federal agency and bureau		
In my opin Register (nion, the property meets criteria See continuation	does not meet the on sheet.	e National
Signature	of commenting or other offici	al Date	
========	Federal agency and bureau		
enter deter Nat: deter Nat: remove	certify that this property is red in the National Register See continuation sheet. It is mined eligible for the sional Register See continuation sheet. It is mined not eligible for the sional Register wed from the National Register (explain):	Bet for Source	
========		,	of Action
6. Function			=======================================
Historic:	TRANSPORTATION		
Current:	NOT IN USE		

7. Description				
Architectural Classification:	====			
Other: masonry arch				
Other Description: N/A				
Materials: foundation N/A roof N/A walls STONE other				
Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See contin	uation			
sheet.				
8. Statement of Significance				
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property relation to other properties: <u>state</u> .				
Applicable National Register Criteria: C,A				
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A				
Areas of Significance: ENGINEERING TRANSPORTATION				
Period(s) of Significance: <u>1790-1915</u>				
Significant Dates: N/A				
Significant Person(s): N/A				
Cultural Affiliation: N/A				
Architect/Builder: NOT KNOWN				
State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.				

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description Mill Brook Bridge

Lisbon, New London County, CT

Mill Brook Bridge (Photographs 1 and 2) is a single-span stone arch bridge that probably dates from the early 1790s. The bridge formerly carried Blissville Road across Mill Brook, but in 1915 the State Highway Department relocated the road about 50 feet to the south, crossing the brook with a new concrete and steel beam bridge. The area around the stone-arch bridge is mainly residential, with its immediate setting now largely overgrown with trees and brush. Although the bridge is no longer in use, the course of the original roadway remains plainly visible (Photograph 3).

The bridge takes the form of a segmental semicircular arch constructed of irregular flat pieces of rough-hewn fieldstone; each stone is generally rectangular in shape and measures about 16 x 10 x 5 inches (Photographs 2 and 4). Although one local name for the structure is "Keystone Bridge," there is in fact no difference in size between the stones at the apex of the arch and the other stones in the arch ring. The stonework was laid up dry (without mortar). The arch spans 10 feet between its rubble abutments and rises about four feet above the surface of the stream, which typically has a depth of about two feet. The bridge is about 18 feet in width. There is about two feet of earth fill, now partially eroded, above the arch.

Near the bridge are numerous stone foundations marking the site of waterpowered enterprises active in the 18th and 19th centuries, including a sawmill and gristmill to the south and a small cotton mill to the north. The latter, known as the Kimball and Harvey Mill, was powered not by the brook itself but by a penstock leading from Blissville Pond located about 500 feet to the east.

7-1

8-1

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Mill Brook Bridge Lisbon, New London County, CT

Summary

The Mill Brook Bridge is significant as a well-preserved example of stone-arch construction (Criterion C), a once-common bridge-building technology that drew upon the traditional skills that were available in nearly every Connecticut community in the 18th and 19th centuries. The stonework itself is typical of the dry-laid fieldstone masonry of the period and resembles contemporaneous foundations, field walls, and chimney stacks found throughout the Connecticut countryside. The significance of the bridge as an example is heightened by its plausible claim to a late 18th-century date of construction, which would make it the earliest known stone-arch bridge in the state. Finally, the Mill Brook Bridge has significance in the history of transportation in Connecticut, since it represents an improvement of a major colonial route that was upgraded in the late 18th century, first as a post road and then as a turnpike (Criterion A).

Historical Context

Blissville Road was once part of a major road that ran through eastern Connecticut. In 1717 Lathrop's Bridge was built across the Shetucket River, about 1/4 mile west of the Mill Brook Bridge, as part of a highway that accommodated people travelling from Norwich to Plainfield and on to Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Continuing eastward through the Town of Lisbon and up the steep slope of Bundy Hill, the road crossed Mill Brook, the fast-running waters of which would have necessitated the building of bridges.

After the Revolution, the route was designated a post road, bringing mail stages and travellers through Lisbon and leading to the opening of a number of taverns and inns in the town. Perhaps mindful of these economic advantages, the Town of Lisbon undertook substantial improvements to the road around 1790, including some structures built in stone. A report to the General Assembly submitted in October 1792 by a committee appointed to "view the Stage Roads and Lands thro' which they pass" specifically mentioned "the new built Stone Causey [causeway] which had been constructed by the town on the eastern side

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Mill Brook Bridge Lisbon, New London County, CT 8-2

of Bundy Hill."¹ The existence of stone improvements on the east side of Bundy Hill suggests that the bridge across Mill Brook on the western slope of Bundy Hill may well have been reconstructed in stone at the same time. The bridge's masonry is consistent with such a date; although bridges continued to be built with similar rubble stonework throughout the 19th century, there was an overall tendency toward more use of cut stone and mortar in later bridges.

The 1790 date is further substantiated by a memorial to the General Assembly submitted by several Lisbon residents two years later in which they asked the legislators to take notice that:

the Post Road from Norwich to Providence through the Towns of Norwich & Lisbon in New London County runs over ground naturally rough, but by great Expence hath been rendered Convenient, [and] that the situation of the Inhabitants in said Town of Lisbon is such that the great Repairs on said Road will be lost unless some provision is made to preserve said Road in repair.²

In addition to noting the "great Expence" of the unspecified improvements the town had made to the road, the petition went on to request the General Assembly to declare the road a turnpike and allow the setting up of toll gates to collect the fees needed for continued upkeep.

In May 1795 the General Assembly established the state's first turnpike company, the New London and Windham County Turnpike Society, granting a group of private investors 1200 pounds to set up toll gates and maintain improvements along a route that included the former post road from Norwich to Plainfield. In 1849 the turnpike company was dissolved and the road reverted to the towns, continuing in use as the principal route between Norwich and towns to the north and east. In 1915 the old turnpike road was straightened by the Connecticut Highway Department, requiring a new bridge over Mill Brook a short distance to the south. In the 1960s the state highway, known as Route 12, was moved south of Mill Brook, with the 1915 alignment retained as a local road.

¹Report of the Committee to View the Stage Roads, October 1792, New London County Court, Travel Papers, manuscript, Connectict State Library, Hartford.

²Public Records of Connecticut, Vol. VIII, p. 219.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance Mill Brook Bridge

Lisbon, New London County, CT

Technological Significance

Along with timber-truss bridges, stone arches represented one of two traditional methods of providing a crossing over medium-sized streams and rivers. Although they were more expensive than wood, stone bridges lasted longer because they were not subject to decay and because they were more robust in case of floods. Because of the expense, stone bridges were mostly reserved for important roads or ones that were subject to washout from nearby mill dams, both of which conditions applied to the highway carried by the Mill Brook Bridge.

Almost without exception, rural stone-arch bridges were built from locally available material, either quarried or gathered from the rich supply of fieldstone deposited by the last glaciation. The usual method of erection, where there was no natural ledge upon which the arch could bear, was to first construct low walls on either side of the stream. Next came a carefully constructed wooden form, called a centering, that replicated the shape of the desired arch. The ring stones were then laid upon the centering, either lifted in place by hand or with block and tackle (no derrick would have been necessary in the case of the Mill Brook Bridge). Larger spans required stone spandrels to be built out from the arch to the ends of the bridge, though small arches such as this could be completed simply with a layer of earth fill for the roadway.

Because it has been bypassed for more than 80 years, the Mill Brook Bridge has not suffered the repeated widenings, added guardrails and drains, and repointings that have affected the integrity of many of the state's other stone arches. Regardless of its date, the bridge stands as an unusually unaltered example of this important vernacular bridge-building technology.

8-3

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Bibliography

Mill Brook Bridge

Lisbon, New London County, CT

9-1

- Wood, Frederic J. <u>The Turnpikes of New England</u>. Boston: Marshall Jones, 1919, 337-37.
- Connecticut, State of. Connecticut Archives, 2nd Series, Travel. Vol. 7 and 14. MS, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, CT.
- Early Connecticut records, Vol. 51, Turnpikes. MS, State Library.
- Public Records of Connecticut. Vol. 8, xxii-xxiii, 219-20, 286-88; Vol. 9, 367; Vol. 10, 66-67, 159-60;
- New London County Court, Travel Papers, MS, State Library.
- Maps (in chronological order):
- Lester, William Jr. Map of New London and Windham Counties. New Haven, 1833.
- A Map of Norwich. New York, 1833.
- Walling, H.F. <u>Map of New London County, Connecticut</u>. Philadelphia, 1854.
- Beers, F.W. Atlas of New London County, Connecticut. New York, 1868.
- Topographical Map of the State of Connecticut. U.S. Geological Survey, 1893.
- Relocation of Blissville Road, plans, Connecticut Department of Transportation, 1915-1916.

=======================================	=======================================			
9. Major Bibliographical References				
X See continuation sheet.	=======================================			
Previous documentation on file (NPS):				
_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.				
_ previously listed in the National R				
_ previously determined eligible by the National Register _ designated a National Historic Landmark _ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #				
Primary Location of Additional Data:				
<pre>X State historic preservation office _ Other state agency _ Federal agency _ Local government _ University _ Other Specify Repository:</pre>	Connecticut Historical Commission 59 South Prospect Street Hartford, Connecticut 06106			
======================================				
UTM References: Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing			
A <u>18</u> <u>746820</u> <u>4604770</u> C	B			
<u>X</u> See continuation sh	eet.			
Verbal Boundary Description: See The nominated property includes railings.	continuation sheet. the bridge, approaches, roadway, and			
Boundary Justification: See cont The boundary includes only the c	inuation sheet. components of the bridge itself.			
======================================	=======================================			
Organization: <u>Historic Resource Cons</u>	Conn. Hist. Commission			
Street & Number: <u>55 Van Dyke Avenue</u>				
City or Town: Hartford	State: CT Zip: 06106			

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Photographs

Mill Brook Bridge

Photos-1

Lisbon, New London County, CT

All photographs:

- 1. Mill Brook Bridge
- 2. New London, New London County, CT
- 3. Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
- 4. June, 1994
- 5. Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission Hartford, CT

Captions:

Overview of bridge, camera facing northeast Photograph 1 of 4

Detail of stonework, south (upstream) face, camera facing north Photograph 2 of 4

Former roadway from west end, camera facing east Photograph 3 of $4\,$

Detail of stonework, north face, camera facing southeast Photograph 4 of 4