

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

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

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

1. Name

historic Lamb-Fish Bridge

and/or common same as above

2. Location

E of Charleston

street & number Intersection of Paducah Wells Road and Tallahatchie River N/A not for publication

city, town Charleston *Ms.* vicinity of congressional district First

state Mississippi code 28 county Tallahatchie code 135

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name County of Tallahatchie, Jim Pennington, Supervisor

street & number Tallahatchie County Courthouse

city, town Charleston N/A vicinity of state Mississippi

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Chancery Clerk

street & number Tallahatchie County Courthouse

city, town Charleston state Mississippi

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Mississippi Department of Archives and History

city, town Jackson state Mississippi

7. Description

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved

date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Lamb-Fish Bridge, a simple verticle lift-span, is located ten miles east of Charleston, Mississippi where Paducah Wells Road crosses the Tallahatchie River. Cultivated farmlands border the riverbed and overgrown bushes obscure the entrance to the bridge.

The bridge is a single-deck three-span structure supported by four concrete piers. It is 186 feet long, including the single center 77 foot movable lift section. The actual lift-span superstructure consists of two towers 100 feet high (including piers), connected at the top by two parallel warren trusses, a series of pulleys and counterweights attached to the towers, and the movable road span. The rising road span was lifted vertically by concrete counterweights suspended from cables in the towers. Only one person was needed to operate the bridge.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1905 **Builder/Architect** American Bridge Company of New York City

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Lamb-Fish Bridge is significant to the history of engineering in Mississippi as the only known example of the verticle lift-span system of bridge design (criteria C). The Lamb-Fish Bridge symbolizes the evolution and increasing sophistication of Mississippi bridge types in the post Civil War period. Mississippi's ante-bellum bridges were simple wood and iron structures which were targets of destruction during the Civil War. Between 1865 and 1917 railroads in Mississippi, like the rest of the south, were greatly expanded. This expansion called for many new bridges, most of which were drawbridges, designed to accommodate the still popular river trade. Of the extant bridges of this era, the majority of drawbridges are either swing-span or bascule bridges. The Lamb-Fish Bridge, Mississippi's only documented verticle lift-span bridge, is a unique exception, and therefore one of the state's most significant engineering sites. As the only extant site associated with the once prosperous Lamb-Fish Lumber Company of Charleston, the bridge is also significant to local industrial history (criteria A). The Lamb-Fish Lumber Company, established as the Lamb-Bacon Lumber Company, ca. 1905, claimed to be the largest hardwood mill in the world. Products of the company were sold worldwide. The lumber industry brought industrial prosperity to the city of Charleston. By constructing the Lamb-Fish Bridge over the Tallahatchie River, the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad was able to reach Charleston. Its impact upon the community is indicated by the dramatic increase in the population, which grew from 300 in 1906 to ten times that amount in 1920. The Lamb-Fish Lumber Company was bought by a Tennessee firm in 1923, and nine years later a fire destroyed the plant. Only the Lamb-Fish Bridge survived the fire and is therefore the only extant site associated with Charleston's only conspicuous period of industrial prosperity.

The Lamb-Bacon Lumber Company was established in Charleston, Mississippi, ca. 1905 by Messrs. Lamb and Bacon of Delano, Minnesota.¹ Soon after founding the company Bacon sold his share to a Mr. Fish, also from Delano, and the company became known as the Lamb-Fish Lumber Company.² Initially, the lumber company consisted of a small saw mill which served a larger mill in Charleston. Within the year, the Lamb-Fish Lumber Company developed plans for expansion. Because they understood that railroad transportation was essential to the company's success, Lamb-Fish made an effort to bring a spur of the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad to Charleston. To entice this railroad to Charleston, the Lumber Company commissioned the American Bridge Company of New York City to construct a lift-span bridge over the Tallahatchie River in 1905. The Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad reached Charleston the following year.³ Without the Lamb-Fish Lumber Company, the advent of the railroad to Charleston would have been delayed, perhaps indefinitely. Therefore, when the Lamb-Fish Lumber Company constructed their bridge, they served not only themselves, but the city of Charleston.

Following construction of the bridge, the company expanded its work, and began construction of a saw mill plant which was "recognized as being not only the largest hardwood mill in the world, but also the most complete and up-to-date in equipment."⁴ The plant was completed in 1908. To supply its mill, the company owned 74,000 acres of lumber in the nearby Delta region. The average daily capacity of the mill was 150,000 feet of one-inch lumber.⁵ Through World War I and into the post-war boom of the 1920s, the Lamb-Fish Lumber Company prospered. "Agencies for the sale of their products were located in all of the principal countries

9. Major Bibliographical References

Gordon, P. Ana. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, On-Site Inspection,
10 August 1981.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Crowder

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A

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| 1 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

H

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|------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification 186' by 11':

Verticle left span bridge along Paducah Wells Road where the said bridge crosses the Tallahatchie River, including 4 concrete piers, access roadway approaches and right of way.

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

| state | N/A | code | county | code |
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|-------|------|--------|------|

11. Form Prepared By

name/title P. Ana Gordon, Historian

organization Miss. Department of Archives & History

date January, 1982

street & number P. O. Box 571

telephone 601-354-7326

city or town Jackson

state Mississippi

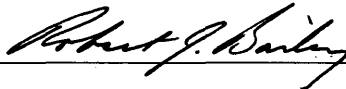
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date March 25, 1982

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Lamb-Fish Bridge
Tallahatchie County, Mississippi

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

8 - STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

of Europe. Their brands were known all over the world where hardwood lumber was used.⁶ The Lamb-Fish Lumber Company executives also formed the Charleston Chemical Plant and the Charleston Cooperage Company, two businesses which recycled waste from the Lamb-Fish sawmills.⁷

The economic impact of Lamb-Fish in Charleston was impressive. The population of the city rose from 300 in 1906 to ten times that amount in 1920.⁸ Fifteen to seventeen hundred workers, white and black, were employed at peak periods, drawing a monthly payroll of \$50,000--the largest in Mississippi at that time. To house the workers the company constructed over one hundred dwellings, known locally as "The White City." The company also built stores, a commissary, clubhouse, and a hotel named the "Lafisco," for the benefit of both employees and townspeople.⁹

In 1923 the May Brothers and Kellogg Brothers of Memphis, Tennessee bought out the Lamb-Fish Lumber Company. The Tennessee firm established themselves under the name Turner, Farber and Love Company, and ran the mills until 1930 when operations ceased and all of the machinery was transported to another plant in South Carolina.¹⁰ The loss of the lumber company ended the prosperity of Charleston as quickly as it had begun eighteen years earlier.

In 1932 a mysterious fire swept through the plant of the former Lamb-Fish Lumber Company. The mill, club house, commissary, and Hotel Lafisco were all destroyed.¹¹ The Lamb-Fish Bridge, linked to the lumber plant by miles of railroad track, survived the fire. With the loss of the lumber company, the railroad was no longer needed, and the bridge was abandoned. The span remained opened permanently to accommodate river traffic. In the 1950s the span was lowered, railroad ties were removed, and the structure was converted to a one-lane car and truck bridge.¹² Presently, the steel superstructure is in sturdy, though rust-ridden, condition. Metal railings on both sides of the bridge are in disrepair. The timber is either loose, rotting, or missing, and vehicular traffic has been discouraged. Minor vandalism has affected the concrete counterweights, and some parts of the wooden road surface have been set on fire and are charred.¹³ Despite its condition, the Lamb-Fish Bridge is a local historical landmark, and represents the only reminder of the industry which brought to Charleston its most prosperous era.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Lamb-Fish Bridge
Tallahatchie County, Mississippi

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

FOOTNOTES

¹Fonnie Black Ladd, Tape Recording Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 24 December 1980.

²Ibid.

³Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Work Projects Administration, Tallahatchie County, Industry Folder, p. 29.

⁴Lamb-Fish Lumber Company, The Hardwood Lumber and Farming Industries of Mississippi--As Shown in Moving Pictures (Memphis: Memphis Linotype Printing Company, 1915).

⁵Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Work Projects Administration, Tallahatchie County, Industry Folder, p. 8.

⁶Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁷Ibid., pp. 14-15.

⁸Southern Alluvial Land Association, The Call of the Alluvial Empire (Memphis: Hood Printing Company, 1919), p. 55.

⁹Ibid., pp. 10, 11.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 7.

¹¹Ladd, 24 December 1980.

¹²D. B. Pressgrove to Paul Newsom, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 19 January 1981.

¹³P. Ana Gordon, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, On-Site Inspection, 10 August 1981.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Lamb-Fish Bridge
Tallahatchie County, Mississippi

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 3

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ladd, Fannie Black. Tape Recording Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 24 December 1980.

Lamb-Fish Lumber Company. The Hardwood Lumber and Farming Industries of Mississippi-- as Shown in Moving Pictures. Memphis, Tennessee: Memphis Linotype Printing Company, 1915.

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Pressgrove, D. B. Correspondence to Paul Newsom, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 19 January 1981.

Southern Alluvial Land Association. The Call of the Alluvial Empire. Memphis, Tennessee: Hood Printing Company, 1919.