

July 3, 2024

NR ITEM NO.: ONE

FILE NO.: NR2024-004

NAME: Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass

LOCATION: Hilaro Springs Road over Little Fourche Creek

APPLICANT/AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Ralph Wilcox
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
1101 North Street,
Little Rock, AR

City of Little Rock
500 W. Markham
Little Rock, AR



Figure 1. Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass, 2024.

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AREA: 0.18 acres

NUMBER OF LOTS: N/A

WARD: 2

HISTORIC DISTRICT: None

HISTORIC STATUS: Determined Eligible, PU11264

CURRENT ZONING: R2- Single Family

A. BACKGROUND

Location

The subject structure is located on Hilaro Springs Road over Little Fourche Creek, Little Rock, AR.

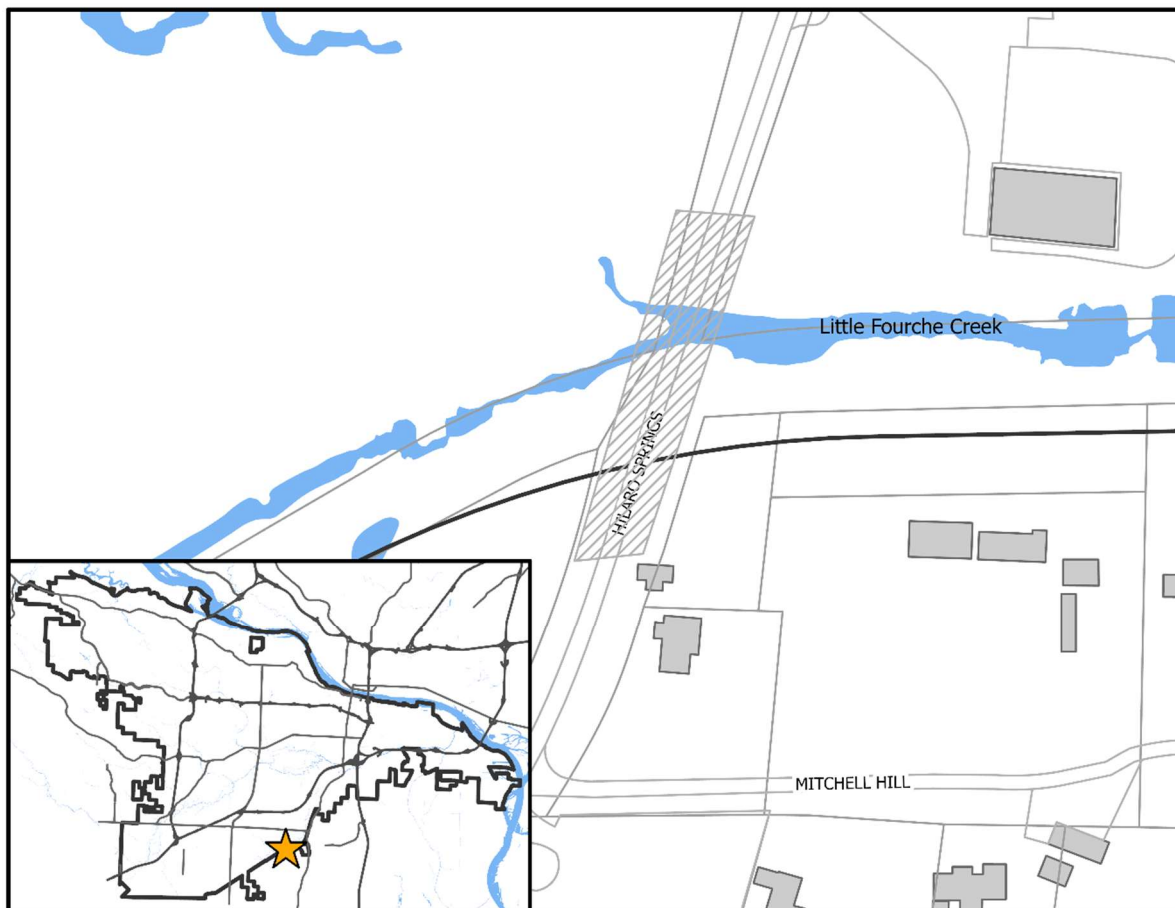


Figure 2. Location of Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass.

B. PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The application request to nominate the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass to the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion A for its associations with the efforts during the twentieth century to provide updated highway infrastructure around the state. Areas of significance are Transportation. The period of significance is 1936.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

See photos in Nomination (Attachment A).

D. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS:

At the time of distribution, there were no comments regarding this application.

All neighborhood associations registered with the City of Little Rock that surround the site were notified of the public hearing.

E. ANALYSIS:

The Nomination's Statement of Significance summary section states:

"The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass, which was built in 1936 by J. W. Hecker & Sons and W.L. Graves to carry Hilario Springs Road over Fourche Creek and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad line, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Transportation with local significance for its associations with the efforts during the twentieth century to provide updated highway infrastructure around the state. The bridge also reflects the State's efforts to provide safe and updated grade crossings. Even today, as the only elevated crossing over the former railroad line south of Little Rock, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass is an important part of the area's transportation infrastructure."

The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has set forth the "Arkansas Certified Local Government Procedures." In Section V of this agreement, "Certified Local Governments Participation in the National Register Nomination Process," Little Rock Historic District Commission's role is identified:

"B. CLG involvement in the National Register process

- 1. Within 60 calendar days of receipt of the nomination, the CLG shall inform the AHPP by submission of a report (see section V-A) as to its*

opinion regarding the eligibility of the property. The CLG shall also inform the property owner(s) using National Register criteria for evaluation, as to its opinion regarding the eligibility of the property.

- 2. In the event a nomination is received by the AHPP before submission to the CLG, the AHPP will forward a copy of the completed nomination to the CLG within 30 calendar days of receipt.*
- 3. If both the commission and chief elected official recommend that a property not be nominated because it does not meet the National Register criteria for eligibility, the CLG will so inform the property owner(s) and the State Historic Preservation Officer, the property will then not be nominated unless an appeal is filed with the SHPO in accordance with appeal procedures outlined in 36 CFR 60. Appeals must be received by the SHPO within 30 calendar days of the date the property owner receives notification by certified mail that the property has been determined ineligible for nomination by both the CLG and the Chief elected official. This is in accordance with Section 101(c) 2 of the NHPA.*
- 4. If the commission or the chief elected official of the CLG recommend that a property should be nominated, the nomination will be scheduled for submission to the Arkansas State Review Board. Scheduling will be in accordance with notification time constraints as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.*
- 5. The Arkansas State Review Board, after considering all opinions, including those of the commission and the chief elected official of the CLG, shall make its recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Either the local preservation commission or the chief elected official may appeal the SHPOs final decision.*
- 6. When a National Register nomination, that has been reviewed by a commission, is submitted to the National Park Service for review and listing, all reports or comments from the local officials will be submitted along with the nomination.*
- 7. The AHPP and the CLG will work together to provide ample opportunity for public participation in the nomination of properties to the National register. All reports submitted by the CLG to the AHPP*

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regarding the eligibility of properties shall include assurances of public input. The CLG shall retain a list of all persons contacted during the evaluation period and note comments that were received. If a public meeting was held, a list of those attending shall be included in the report.”

The nomination is scheduled to be heard at the August 7th, 2024 State Review Board meeting.

F. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the nomination of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass to the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion A for its associations with the efforts during the twentieth century to provide updated highway infrastructure around the state. and the submission of the nomination as written to the State Review Board.

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Attachment A

Nomination



Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor
Shea Lewis
Secretary

May 30, 2024

Hannah Ratzlaff, Urban Designer
City of Little Rock
723 West Markham Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

Re: Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass – Little Rock vic., Pulaski County

Dear Ms. Ratzlaff:

We are pleased to inform you that the above referenced property will be considered by the State Review Board of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Division of Arkansas Heritage, for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of the preservation. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places provides recognition and assists in preserving our nation's heritage.

Listing of this property provides recognition of the community's historic importance and assures protective review of the federal projects that might adversely affect the character of the historic property.

Listing in the National Register does not mean that limitations will be placed on the property by the federal government. Public visitation rights are not required of property owners. The federal government will not attach covenants to the property or seek to acquire it.

We have enclosed a copy of the National Register nomination for your review. If you have any comments on the proposed nomination, please submit a letter with your comments, concerns, or concurrence to the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program at least 24 hours prior to the date of the State Review Board meeting.

You are invited to attend the State Review Board meeting at which the nomination will be considered. The board will begin meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, August 7th, 2024, at the Department of Arkansas Heritage headquarters at 1100 North Street in Little Rock.

If you have any questions regarding the State Review Board meeting feel free to call Ralph Wilcox, Travis Ratermann, or Megan Willmes at (501) 324-9880.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Scott Kaufman'.

Scott Kaufman
Director

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass

Other names/site number: Hilaro Springs Road Overpass, Site #PU11264

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: Hilaro Springs Road over Fourche Creek

City or town: Little Rock State: Arkansas County: Pulaski

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
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Object



Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings

sites

1

structures

objects

1

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/Reinforced Concrete and Steel I-Beam Bridge

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE, ASPHALT

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass is a ten-span reinforced-concrete and steel I-beam bridge that is 335.5 feet long and spans Fourche Creek and the right-of-way for the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad line south of Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas. The bridge was built by J. W. Hecker & Sons and W. L. Graves, both of Camden, Arkansas, in 1936. The bridge has a total of ten spans supported by cast-concrete piers (see Photos #4 and 13) and it also rests on cast-concrete abutments. The guardrails on the bridge consist of evenly-spaced cast-concrete uprights connected by horizontal cast-concrete beams (see Photo #6). The guardrails have solid concrete ends.

Narrative Description

The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass is a 335.5-foot long reinforced-concrete and steel I-beam bridge, which spans Fourche Creek and the right-of-way for the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad line south of Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas. The bridge's deck has an approximate width of 25 feet. Unlike several of the overpasses, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass doesn't have a sidewalk, but it's not surprising given the fact that the bridge is in a relatively rural area of Pulaski County south of Little Rock.

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass

Pulaski County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

The bridge was built by J. W. Hecker & Sons and W. L. Graves, both of Camden, Arkansas, and erected in 1936. The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass is a ten-span bridge that is 335.5 feet long and approximately 25 feet wide, including the street. The bridge's deck is also constructed out of concrete. The bridge rests on cast-concrete piers (see Photos #4 and 13) and it also has cast-concrete abutments.

The guardrails on the bridge consist of evenly-spaced cast-concrete uprights connected by horizontal cast-concrete beams (see Photo #6). The guardrails have solid concrete ends. The bridge also has metal plaques set into the northwest and southeast ends of the guardrails with information about the bridge name, builder, and date of construction (see Photos #2 and 9). The builder's plate reads: "C.R.I.&P. RY. / J.W. HECKER & SONS & / W.L. GRAVES, CONTRACTOR. / 1936 / BRIDGE NO. _____"¹

Setting

The setting around the overpass is densely wooded to the west of the overpass along Fourche Creek and the railroad right-of-way. The development in the vicinity of the overpass is varied. The bridge is located in what was a rural area of Pulaski County with gently rolling topography. As Little Rock has grown, there has been residential development in the area, and there are several residential developments to the north of the bridge. The area to the east and southeast of the bridge has some scattered light-industrial buildings along with the remnants of some inactive strip mines. Additional residential development is located to the south of the bridge. However, almost all of the development is not visible from the bridge due to the vegetation in the immediate area of the bridge. The area directly underneath the overpass is wooded with Little Fourche Creek and the former roadbed of the railroad line leading to the east and southwest.

Integrity

The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass retains excellent integrity. The bridge is virtually unaltered from the time of its construction in 1936. The bridge still exhibits its original construction and still possesses all of its original characteristics. The setting around the bridge also reflects its period of significance. The area around the bridge, which is located south of Little Rock, has gently rolling topography, with wooded vacant land to the west and light industrial buildings in the southeastern quadrant. In the northeastern quadrant, there is a commercial building along Hilario Springs Road. The area to the north of the bridge has several residential neighborhoods. The largest change to the overpass itself is that the approaches have likely been repaved at least once since they were built, and the deck has also been paved over with asphalt. Although the railroad line has been removed from under the overpass, the right-of-way and location of the railroad line are still easily discernible, allowing one to see what the original setting of the bridge would have been like.

¹ Although there is a space for a bridge number on the plaque, it was left blank.

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass

Pulaski County, Arkansas
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Name of Property

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1936

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

J. W. Hecker & Sons, Builder

W. L. Graves, Builder

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass

Pulaski County, Arkansas

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

The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass, which was built in 1936 by J. W. Hecker & Sons and W. L. Graves to carry Hilario Springs Road over Fourche Creek and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad line, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A: Transportation with local significance** for its associations with the efforts during the twentieth century to provide updated highway infrastructure around the state. The bridge also reflects the state's efforts to provide safe and updated grade crossing separation in order to help to eliminate accidents between cars and trains at grade crossings. Even today, as the only elevated crossing over the former railroad line south of Little Rock, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass is an important part of the area's transportation infrastructure.

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

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

European settlement in the Little Rock area began shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. Although surveying land and offering it for sale did not begin until 1815, a few settlers were in the area prior to then. Edmund Hogan, for example, who was originally from Georgia and came to Arkansas via Missouri, was living on the north bank of the Arkansas River opposite Little Rock where he operated a ferry by 1812. Another distinguished early settler was Wright Daniel who settled at the base of Big Rock Mountain prior to 1814 and opened a gristmill in 1815. When the Arkansas Territory was created in 1819, the state's first capital was at Arkansas Post. However, it was not the best location since it often flooded and was far away from the majority of the territory's population. In 1820, a new centrally-located site for the capital was chosen on the south bank of the Arkansas River at the Little Rock.²

Initial settlement and development in Little Rock was focused on the river. The original plat of Little Rock consisted of 88 square blocks stretching south from the river to what is now Eleventh Street. By the 1860s, however, the city began to expand beyond the original plat, notably with the platting of the Woodruff's and Masonic additions on the city's east side, the Wright's Addition on the south side, and the Capitol Hill Addition on the west side. Apparently, building sites on the city's west side were popular. An announcement in the November 21, 1872, issue of the *Arkansas Gazette* stated that "This property consists of twenty-seven full and fractional blocks, overlooking the Cairo and Fulton railroad as it leaves the city. ... This is a fine property, and from its geographical position, will soon become a portion of the city. Upward of one hundred lots in the addition have already been disposed of, and are at this time being improved."³

By 1891, when the earliest known topographic map was completed for Little Rock, the location of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass was in a very rural part of Pulaski

² Roy, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984, pp. 12-14.

³ *Ibid*, pp. 19, 104.

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County. Even though Hilario Springs Road was in place by 1891, the railroad line had not been constructed yet, although it would be in place by 1935 (See Figures #3-4). A few named places existed, including Parkers Store and Ironton to the southeast, Altharp to the southwest, and Mabelvale to the west, but the majority of the area was undeveloped.⁴ Unlike the routes of most of the other overpasses that have been documented, the road where the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass is located was never a state or U.S. highway.

Even though Hilario Springs Road was not a state or U.S. highway, upgrading and improving the road over the railroad line made sense since southern Pulaski County was growing in population as a result of the growth of Little Rock. The fact that mining was also starting to occur in that part of the county (which meant increased truck traffic), in addition to the fact that there were no other elevated crossings over the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway in the area, meant that there was a need for an overpass. Although the railroad line was not in place when the first topographic map for the area was completed in 1891, it had been constructed by the time that the next map was completed in 1935. Interestingly, the crossing was also labelled "Brittain" on the topographic map, a name which would remain on the map until a new topographic map was completed in 1986, by which time the railroad line had been removed.⁵

Since Hilario Springs Road was a well-traveled road in southern Pulaski County, the crossing over the railroad line, which was brand new, and Fourche Creek was a perfect candidate for the construction of a new and updated overpass. Building the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass also fit into the Highway Commission's goal of addressing dangerous railroad grade crossings. Although the route of the road didn't change, the crossing would have been dangerous since the railroad line was new and whatever bridge previously spanned Fourche Creek was likely built in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The construction of a modern, up-to-date overpass would have meant much safer conditions for motorists on the road since a new overpass constructed of concrete and steel would have been much better able to handle the increase in traffic and the heavier cars and trucks that would have been using the crossing by the late 1930s.

During the late 1920s and 1930s, the State Highway Commission embarked on a large-scale campaign to upgrade Arkansas's roads. As a result, many miles of roads were paved or rebuilt and many bridges were built. At the same time, the Commission examined the issue of railroad grade crossings, which were becoming increasingly dangerous with the increased number of automobiles using the state's highways.

The dangers inherent with railroad crossings was an issue that the Highway Commission had already been looking at by the early 1920s. In the *Sixth Biennial Report*, in the section on traffic rules and regulations, railroad crossings were addressed. The *Biennial Report* noted that:

⁴ Little Rock, Ark., 1:125,000. *Map*. Washington, DC: U.S. Geological Survey, 1891.

⁵ Little Rock, Arkansas, *Topographic Maps*. *Map*. Washington, DC: U.S. Geological Survey, 1891, 1935, 1944, 1961, and 1986. It is unknown where the origin of the name Brittain came from, but it was likely a name given to the location by the railroad. As a result, once the railroad line was removed, the name was no longer needed or used. The *Twelfth Biennial Report* of the Arkansas State Highway Commission also indicates that the "Local Name of Project" for the overpass was "C. R. I. & P. Overpass at Brittain" (p. 100).

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Certain Vehicles to Stop at Railway Crossings. The operator of any motor vehicle carrying passengers for hire; the operator of any school bus; and the operator of any motor truck carrying explosive substances or explosive or inflammable liquids as a cargo or part of a cargo, when upon a State Highway, shall, before crossing at grade, the track or tracks of any steam or interurban railway, bring his vehicle, bus or truck to a full and complete stop within not less than ten feet and not more than fifty feet from the nearest rail or the track nearest to the front of such vehicle and after such stop and while so stopped shall both look and listen in both directions along such track or tracks for approaching trains, engines, cars or vehicles using such tracks.⁶

By the mid-1920s, the railroads and Highway Commission were already teaming up to build overpasses or underpasses at some crossings. In the *Seventh Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements* an overpass on Arkansas Highway 1 between Marianna and Forrest City was pictured as was an underpass on U.S. 67 in Pulaski County.⁷

Eliminating grade crossings continued to be an effort of the Highway Commission during the rest of the 1920s and beyond. In their *Ninth Biennial Report*, the Arkansas State Highway Commission wrote:

Realizing the dangers and evils attendant [sic.] to railroad grade crossings, considerable effort has been made during the progress of the present improvement program toward the elimination of this hazard. Since January 1, 1927, we find that the Commission has been successful in eliminating a total of 121 dangerous crossings, 105 by relocation of highways and 16 by structures, of which 3 were underpasses and the balance overhead crossings.

A recent survey indicates that 481 railroad grade crossings on the State Highway System are still existent. It is evident from the number cited that it is impracticable from a financial standpoint to eliminate all such crossings and that some burden of responsibility is upon the motorist to observe due care and caution that accidents be held to a minimum.

Careful and continued study is being given to this problem not only by the State Highway Commission but by the railroad companies as well, who have rendered cordial support and assistance in practically all instances where grade separations have

⁶ *Sixth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*. Conway, AR: Conway Printing Co., 1924, p. 136.

⁷ *Seventh Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*. Conway, AR: Conway Printing Co., 1926, after p. 88.

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occurred. Where the elimination of a grade crossing has necessitated a structure, agreements have generally been reached with the railroad that the cost of construction be shared equally with the state.⁸

Evidence indicates that the State Highway Commission seemed to prefer eliminating grade crossings through relocation rather than by constructing new structures. The Commission eliminated six crossings through relocation during the 1932-1933 program, 23 crossings in the 1933-1934 program, and it was estimated that they would eliminate eight crossings in the 1934-1935 program. On the other hand, no crossings were eliminated by structures in the 1932-1933 program, eight crossings in the 1933-1934 program, and it was estimated that they would eliminate only two crossings in the 1934-1935 program.⁹

Prior to the construction of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass, some other bridge existed at the overpass' site, although nothing is known about the previous bridge. However, it would still have been an important crossing to construct since it would have eliminated a bridge that may have dated to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and it would have also provided a stronger crossing that was likely wider than the previous crossing and would have been better able to handle modern cars and trucks. It also would have been an important crossing to upgrade, especially as automobile and truck traffic increased around the state in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. This was also true due to the fact that mining was starting to occur in the area, which would have meant an increase in truck traffic in the area. Due to the increase in traffic, by 1935, the Arkansas State Highway Commission began the process of coordinating a project to build the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass.

Many of the overpasses that were constructed during the 1930s and beyond were partially funded by the Federal government, specifically through relief through the various New Deal programs that existed or emerged out of the Great Depression. The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass was no different. According to the *Arkansas Department of Transportation Historic Bridge National Register Eligibility Evaluation Form* for the Rison Overpass, it was noted that:

...By 1935, the Federal Government stepped in with the U.S. Works Program Grade Crossing Project funded through the Provision of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935 to improve crossing safety and reduce fatalities. Per the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, Arkansas was allotted \$3,574,060 for grade separation projects. Grade separation projects were occurring in both rural and urban environments. As such, the location of each bridge informed the construction style and design. Rural bridges tended to be more simplistic in design

⁸ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Ninth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Russellville, AR: Russellville Printing Company, 1930, p. 32.

⁹ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Publisher unknown, 1934, p. 15.

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while urban bridges often had ornamentation. The number of projects increased as the volume of automobiles grew, and traffic made such construction a necessity. During WW II, the money allotted, and the number of grade separation projects were reduced.¹⁰

By early-December 1935, proposals were being received by the State Highway Commission for the construction of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass. One of the entities who submitted a proposal for the project was J. W. Hecker & Sons and W. L. Graves, both of Camden, Arkansas. The proposal that they submitted for the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass was received by the State Highway Commission on December 4, 1935. J. W. Hecker & Sons and W. L. Graves were ultimately awarded a contract for State Job No. 6195 [Federal Aid Project No. WPGS 398-A] for \$50,457.68. (For the original plans for the overpass, see Figures #1-2.) The project not only included the reinforced concrete and steel overpass, it also included the approaches. The concrete overpass encompassed 335.5 feet (0.063 miles) while the approaches encompassed 0.395 miles of work. It was estimated that it would take 210 working days in order to finish the project, meaning that the construction of the bridge was likely finished late in 1936.¹¹

The Public Roads Administration, which had evolved from the Bureau of Public Roads, also aided in the construction of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass. The Bureau of Public Roads provided funding through the Works Progress Administration to aid in the construction of new bridges, including several in Arkansas. The Bureau of Public Roads was created in 1918, and its task initially was to build roads in national parks and forests and assist states with road construction. It also helped to beautify highways and conduct transportation studies.¹²

However, during the New Deal, the Bureau of Public Roads' role in road building increased tremendously, encompassing two main types of projects under the Roosevelt Administration. First, the Bureau was involved in "work-relief highway projects," and it received funding for materials and equipment from the Public Works Administration, and funding for labor initially from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and later from the Works Progress Administration. Second, the Bureau worked on "loan-and-grant highway projects" which were projects in which federal money was loaned or granted to a state and the state would hire a private contractor to complete the work.¹³

¹⁰ Langmyer, Michael. "Arkansas Department of Transportation Historic Bridge National Register Eligibility Evaluation Form for the Rison Overpass." In the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation. July 7, 2020. The design of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass also reflects the philosophy of employing a simpler design in a rural area. The guardrails on this overpass are much less ornate than the guardrails that were built on the urban overpasses.

¹¹ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Publisher unknown, c.1940, pp. 100-101.

¹² Information on the Bureau of Public Roads found at: <https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/bureau-public-roads-bpr-1918/>.

¹³ Information on the Bureau of Public Roads found at: <https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/bureau-public-roads-bpr-1918/>.

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County and State

The Bureau of Public Roads had a tremendous impact on America's highway infrastructure during the 1930s. Between 1934 and 1939, the Bureau "supervised and administered at least 7,000 miles of work-relief highway projects and 17,000 miles of loan-and-grant highway projects." In 1939, the Bureau of Public Roads was renamed the Public Roads Administration and placed under the Federal Works Agency. The Bureau continued to exist until 1970 when its functions fell under the newly-created Federal Highway Administration.¹⁴

Since the completion of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass in 1936, it has remained an important crossing of the railroad line in southern Pulaski County. Today, the bridge still crosses the railroad right-of-way, although the tracks have been removed, along with Fourche Creek, and has allowed a safe and easy way for motorists to cross the railroad line since the overpass was built. The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass is an important part of the transportation network in Pulaski County and a reminder of the role of the Arkansas State Highway Commission in upgrading and improving highway infrastructure, including railroad overpasses, during the 1930s.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

When it opened in 1936, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass was an important part of Pulaski County's road system. The bridge provided a new and improved crossing of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad line, especially given the fact that the previous crossing likely dated to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. However, by the 1930s automobile traffic was likely increasing in that area of Pulaski County, and the fact that mines were starting to develop in the area of the bridge also meant an increase in truck traffic through the area. The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass, which employed concrete and steel construction and a modern design, was an important part of Pulaski County's infrastructure when it was completed, replacing a previous crossing that likely no longer met current highway standards. In addition, since it was the only elevated crossing over the railroad line in its area, it has remained an important crossing of the railroad line ever since. The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass is also the only highway overpass in rural Pulaski County that was built with the involvement of the Bureau of Public Roads.

Due to its importance in the transportation history in Pulaski County, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass, which was built in 1936 by J. W. Hecker & Sons and W. L. Graves to carry Hilaro Springs Road over the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad line, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A: Transportation** with **local significance**. The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass is being nominated with a period of significance of 1936 to coincide with when construction of the bridge occurred.

¹⁴ Information on the Bureau of Public Roads found at: <https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/bureau-public-roads-bpr-1918/>.

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Publisher unknown, 1934.

Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Publisher unknown, c.1936.

Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Ninth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission*. Russellville, AR: Russellville Printing Company, 1930.

Information on the Bureau of Public Roads found at: <https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/bureau-public-roads-bpr-1918/>.

Langmyer, Michael. "Arkansas Department of Transportation Historic Bridge National Register Eligibility Evaluation Form for the Rison Overpass." In the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation. July 7, 2020.

Little Rock, Arkansas, Topographic Maps. Map. Washington, DC: U.S. Geological Survey, 1891, 1935, 1944, 1961, and 1986.

"Layout of Overpass Over C.R.I.&P.R.Y. at Brittain, Ark., Pulaski County." In the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation. 1935.

Roy, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984.

Seventh Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements. Conway, AR: Conway Printing Co., 1926.

Sixth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements. Conway, AR: Conway Printing Co., 1924.

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: Arkansas Department of Transportation

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PU11264

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

2. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

3. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

4. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Or

UTM References

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

Name of Property

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 562093 | Northing: 3835244 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

Beginning at a point 50 feet northeast of the northeastern end of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass at UTM Point 15/562110/3835301, proceed southwesterly to a point 50 feet southwest of the southwestern end of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass at UTM Point 15/562070/3835174. The boundary includes 15 feet on either side of the Hilario Springs Road centerline.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass and its immediate surroundings.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 1100 North Street
city or town: Little Rock state: Arkansas zip code: 72201
e-mail: ralph.wilcox@arkansas.gov
telephone: (501) 324-9787
date: February 2, 2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

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

Photographs

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

Photo Log

Name of Property: Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass

City or Vicinity: Little Rock vic.

County: Pulaski

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Ralph S. Wilcox

Date Photographed: February 1, 2024

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

- 1 of 15. View of the overpass from the north end, looking southwest.
- 2 of 15. View of the builder's plaque on the north end of the western guardrail, looking south.
- 3 of 15. View of the east side of the overpass, looking southwest.
- 4 of 15. View of the underside of the overpass, looking south.
- 5 of 15. View of the west side of the overpass, looking southeast.
- 6 of 15. Detail view of the guardrail on the west side of the overpass, looking southwest.

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
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- 7 of 15. View of the overpass from the midpoint, looking southwest.
- 8 of 15. View of the overpass from the midpoint, looking northwest.
- 9 of 15. View of the builder's plaque on the south end of the eastern guardrail, looking northeast.
- 10 of 15. View of the overpass from the south end, looking northwest.
- 11 of 15. View of the overpass from the south end, looking northeast.
- 12 of 15. View of the west side of the overpass, looking northeast.
- 13 of 15. View of the underside of the overpass, looking north.
- 14 of 15. View of the east side of the overpass, looking northwest.
- 15 of 15. View of the east side of the overpass, looking northwest.

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
 Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
 County and State

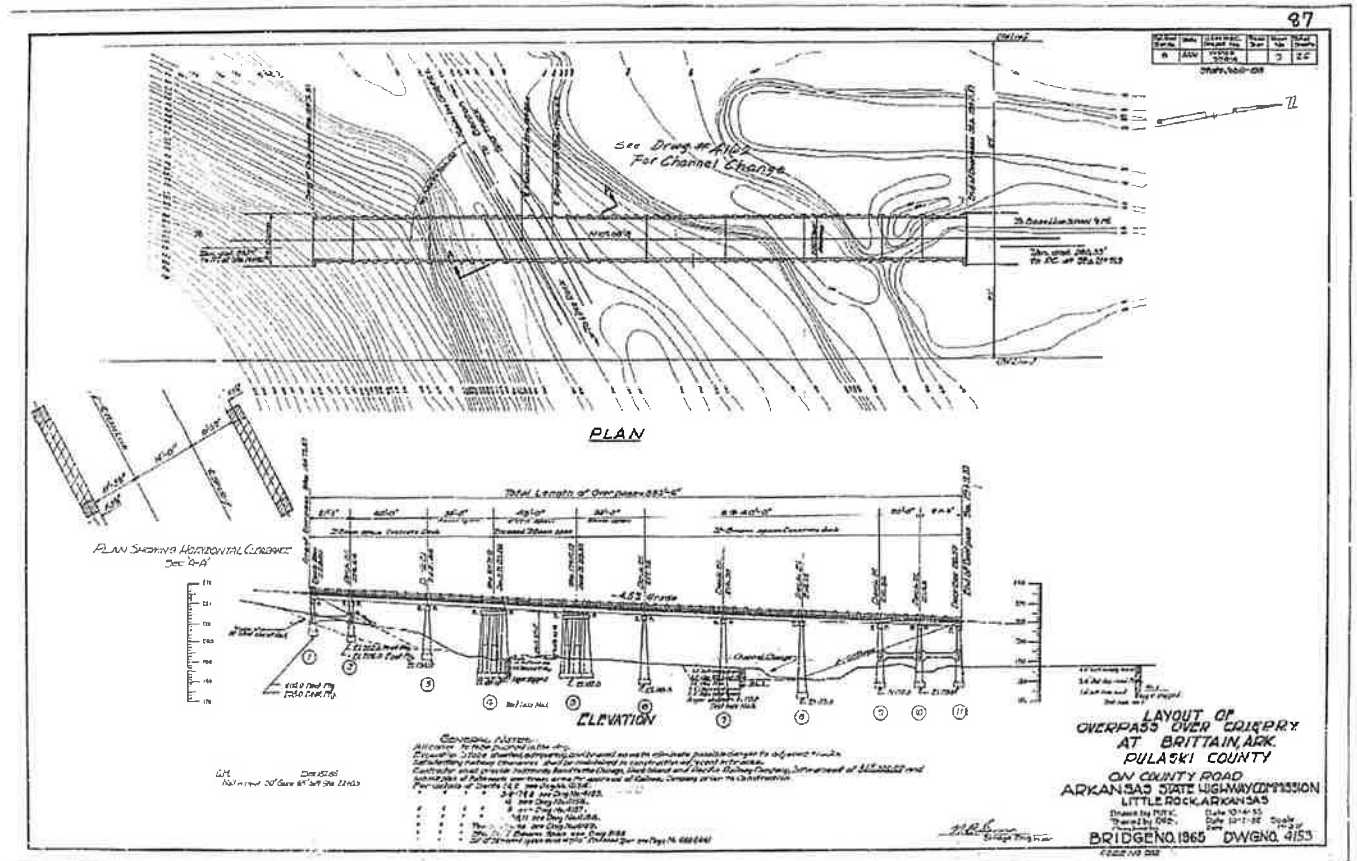


Figure 1: Sheet one of the original plans for the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass. From the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

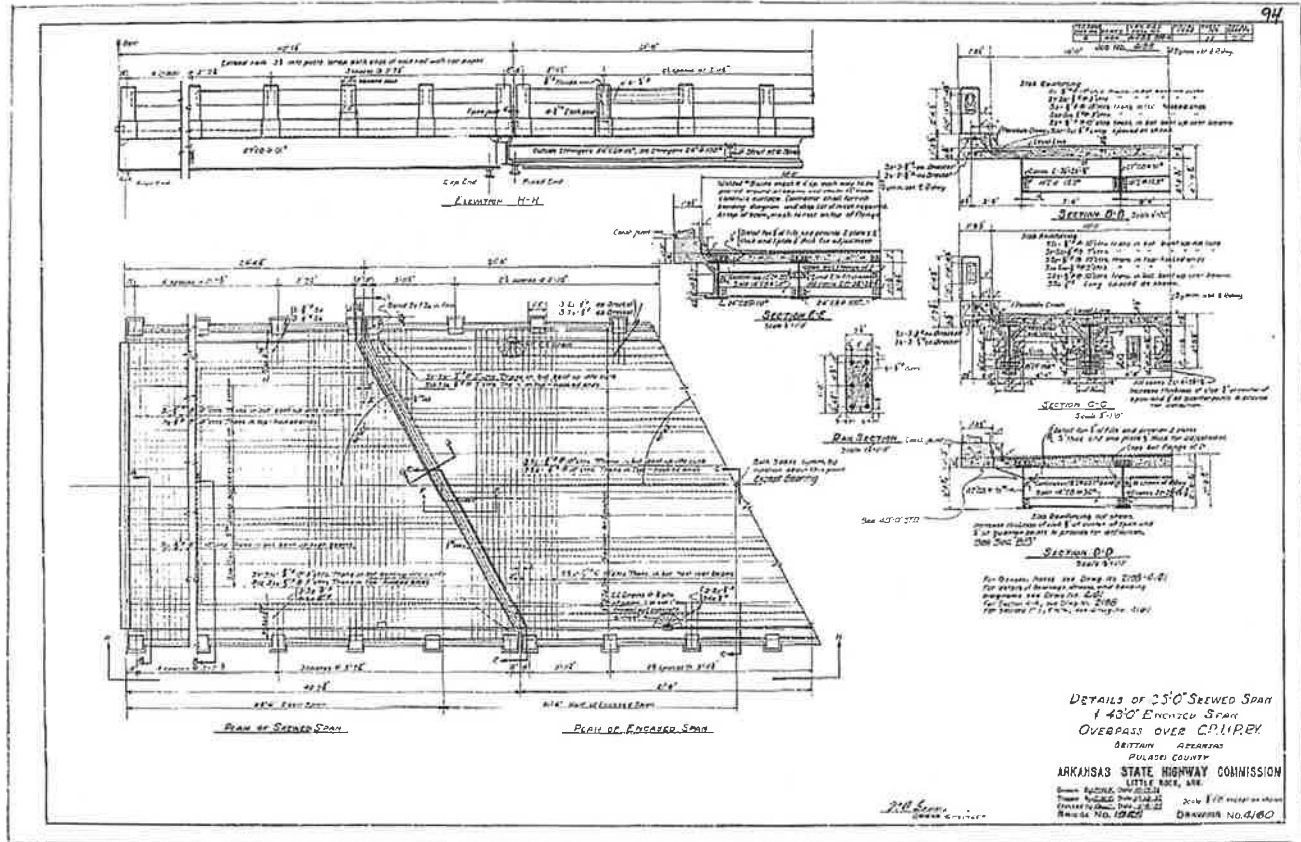


Figure 2: Sheet one of the original plans for the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass. From the files of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

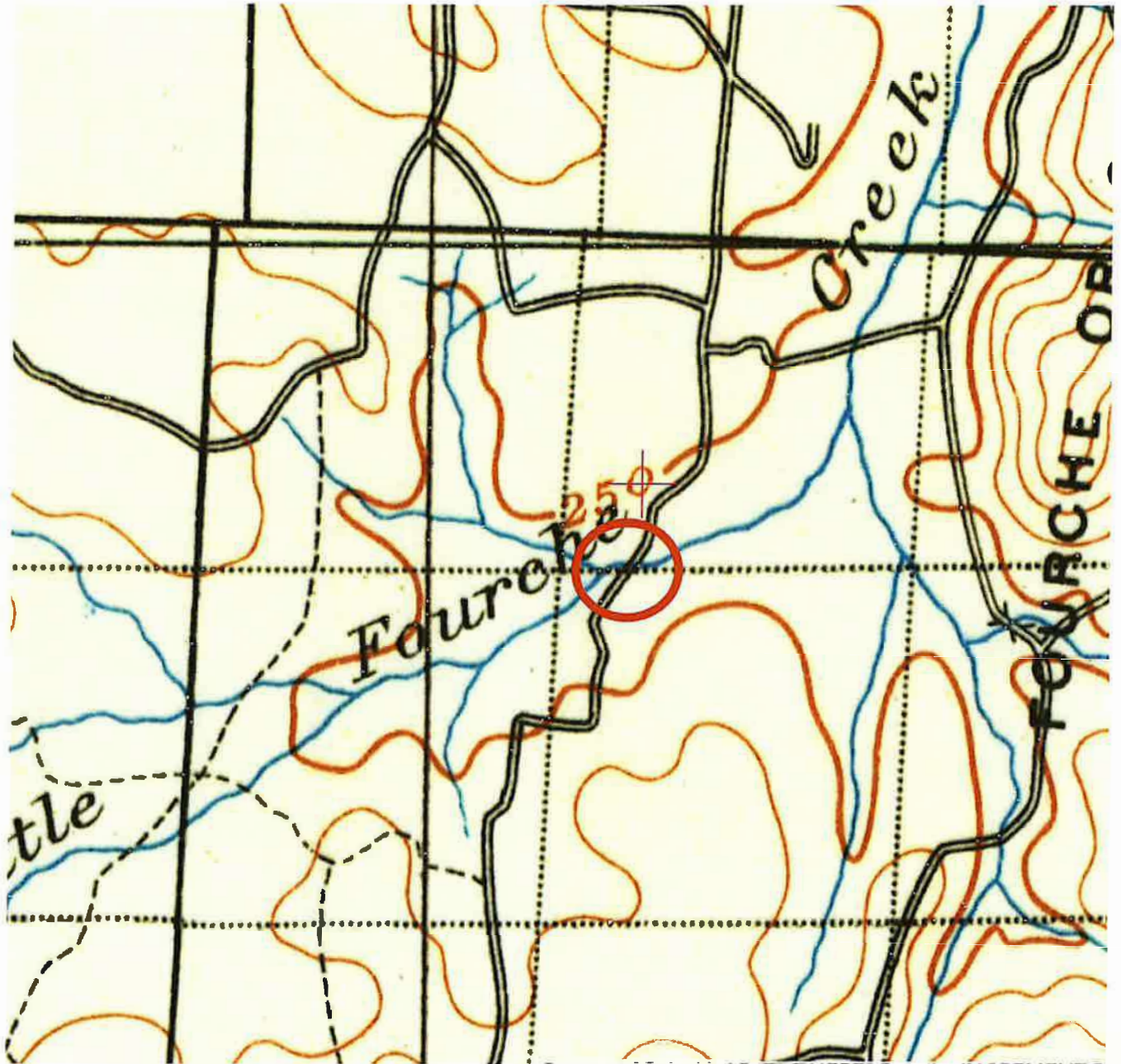


Figure 3: 1891 U.S.G.S. topographic map for Little Rock, indicating the location of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass.

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

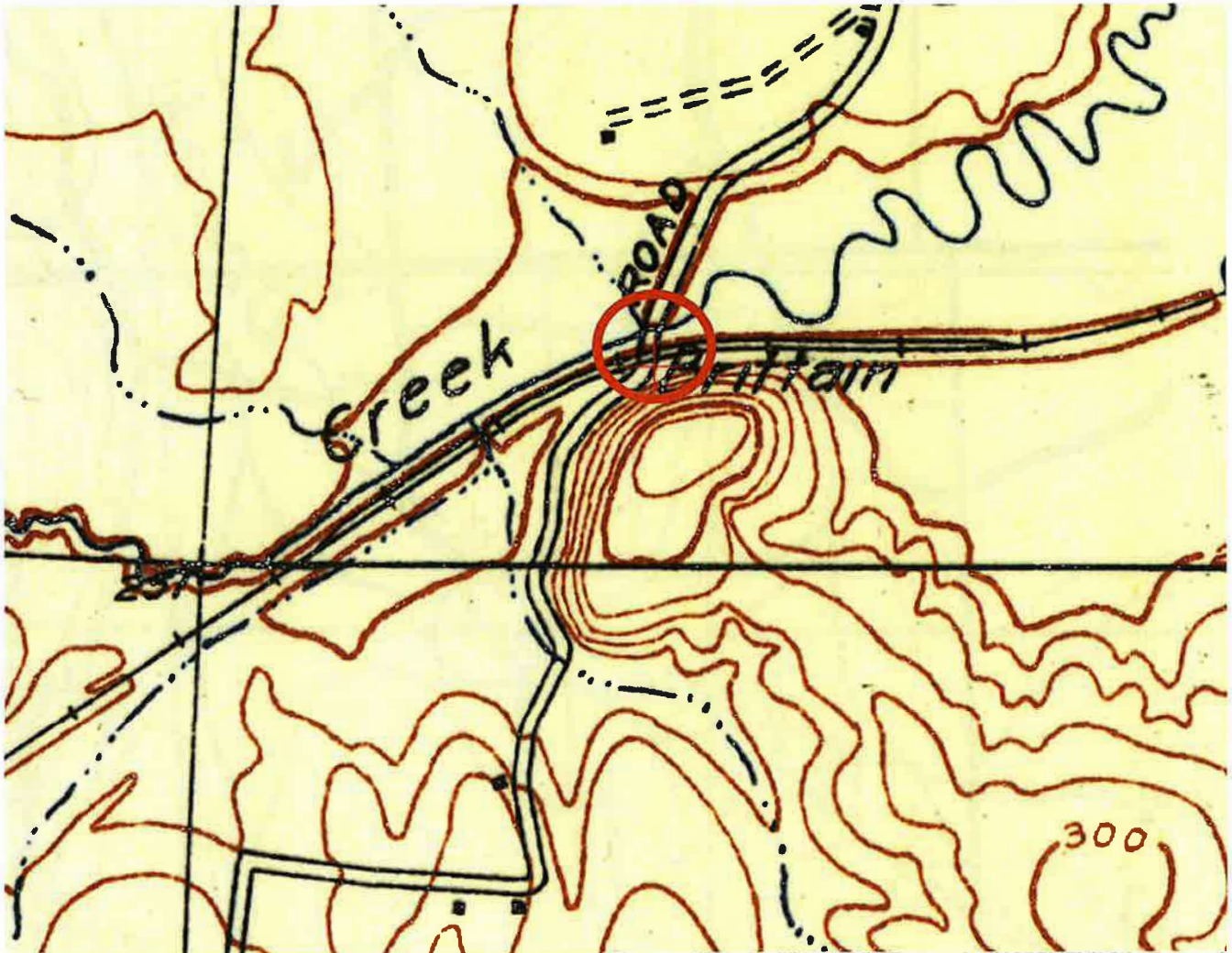


Figure 4: 1935 U.S.G.S. topographic map for Little Rock, indicating the location of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



|-----149 feet-----|

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Little Rock vic., Pulaski County, Arkansas

UTM: 15 562093E 3835244N

↑
North

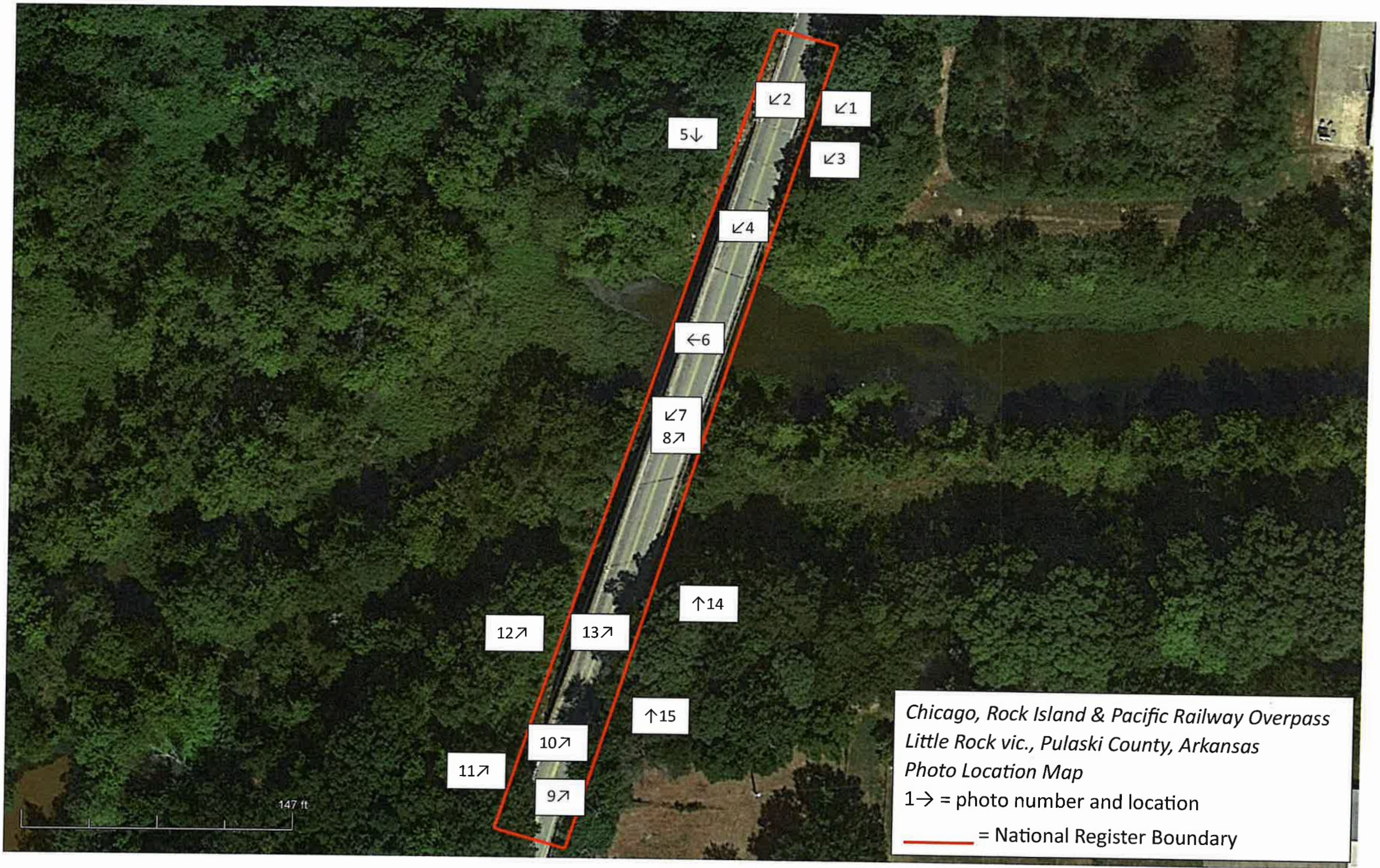


|-----892 feet-----|

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Little Rock vic., Pulaski County, Arkansas

UTM: 15 562093E 3835244N

↑
North



Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass
Little Rock vic., Pulaski County, Arkansas
Photo Location Map
1→ = photo number and location
— = National Register Boundary



D. H. L. & P. NY.

J. W. HEWES & SONS &
W. L. BRAYNE, CONTRACTOR.

1938

BRIDGE NO.

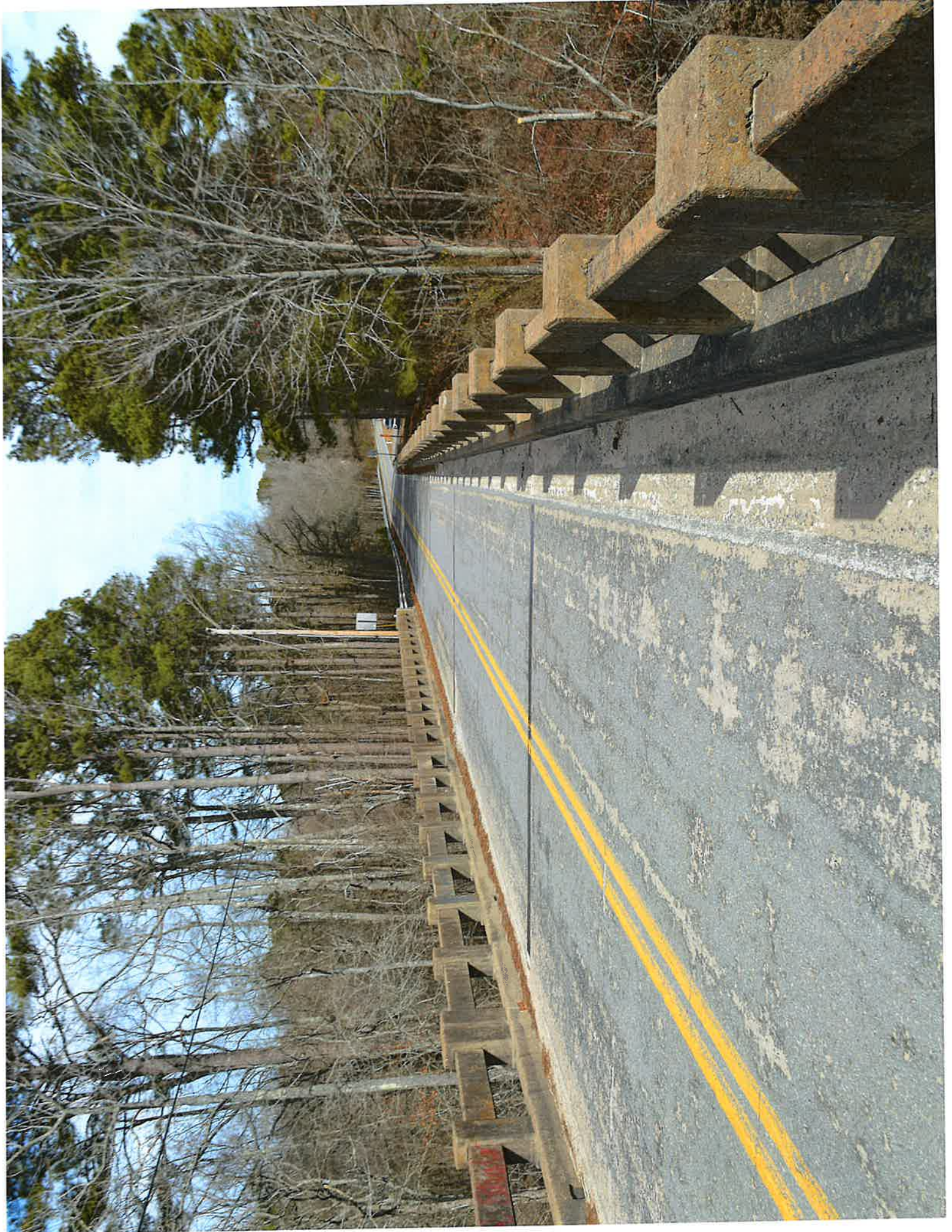












P. R. ...
G. R. ...
J. M. ...
M. L. ...

1938

1938

1938

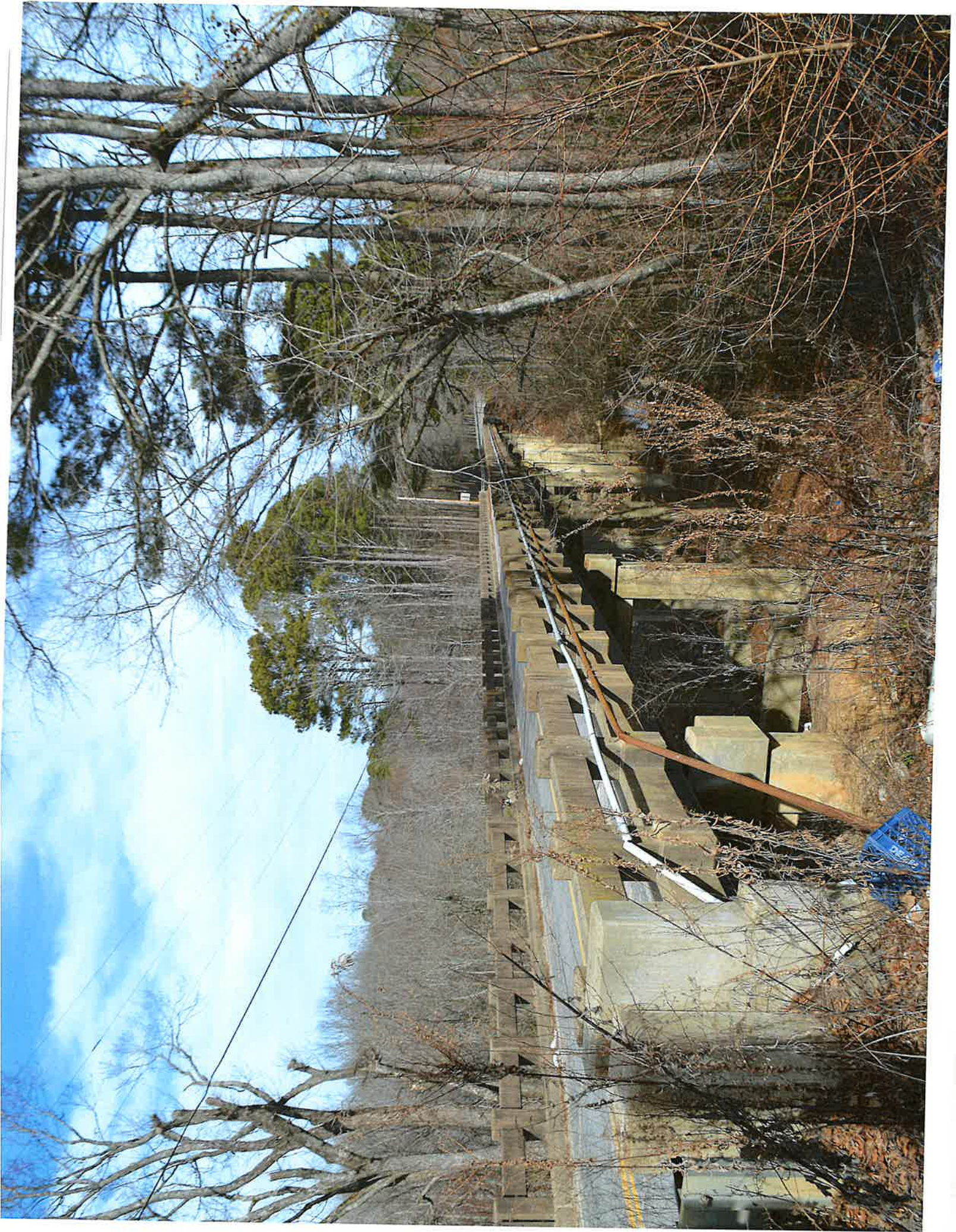




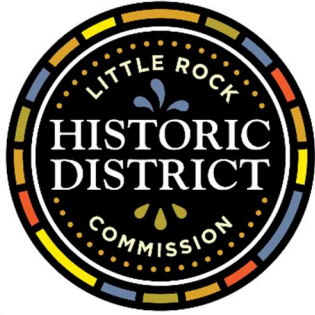








July 3, 2024



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

723 West Markham Street
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-1334
Phone: (501) 371-4790 Fax:(501) 399-3435
www.littlerock.gov

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION REVIEW

Name and Address of property:

Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Overpass

Name of Owner:

City of Little Rock

Project Sponsor:

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

CLG Name:

City of Little Rock, Arkansas

Date of Public Hearing by CLG:

July 3, 2024

Applicable Criteria:

Criterion A (Historic Events)

Criterion B (Important Person)

Criterion C (Architecture)

Criterion D (Archaeological)

The Little Rock Historic District Commission hereby recommends the above stated property for nomination.

Attest:

Chair

Date

Secretary/Staff

Date