

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property/District Name: Greensprings Road Toll Bridge Survey Number: AL-II-B-017

Project: Repair Oldtown Toll Bridge Agency: COE

Site visit by MHT Staff:  no  yes Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility recommended  Eligibility not recommended

Criteria:  A  B  C  D Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  None

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

Based on the available information, the Greensprings Road Toll Bridge, also known as the Oldtown Toll Bridge, located on Route 51 over the north branch of the Potomac River, adjacent to the C & O Canal, meets the National Register Criteria for listing under criterion A for commerce. The 11 span, steel stringer bridge was constructed in 1937-1938. Its appearance is marked by its massive concrete piers, timber deck, lack of parapets and narrow width. It is only 12 feet wide and 360 feet long. The bridge was constructed by Melvin R. Carpenter, variously described as a local sawmill operator or a tie inspector for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. He constructed the bridge as a public service to help residents in Oldtown, Maryland to reach work just across the river in Green Spring, West Virginia. Green Spring was, and still is, the home of a railroad tie manufacturing plant and several other small industries. Although in a remote location, the bridge was crossed over 100,000 times by trucks, cars, pedestrians and bicyclists in 1992. Users pay a toll ranging from 20 cents to \$1.50. The bridge was recently determined to be in hazardous condition and was closed to vehicular traffic, awaiting repairs. Minor repairs are scheduled for 1996.

The bridge is of great importance of to the area, promoting communication between the towns of Greenspring and Oldtown and ensuring access to work for many. It has attained landmark status in the community. As the only private toll bridge in Maryland and one of only a handful in the country, it is a late and rare surviving example of a private toll facility. Privately owned bridges, ferries, roads and canals were a common and necessary feature of the 18th and 19th centuries before governments assumed responsibility for building and maintaining the transportation infrastructure. We have little information regarding its construction, but assume that the bridge utilizes construction methods that were common for the period, if crudely applied. Thus, based on available information, do not believe the bridge to be eligible under criterion C for engineering.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Project File, Maryland Inventory form AL-II-B-017, article, Baltimore Sun (8/4/94), John Sherwood's Vanishing Maryland

Prepared by: Inventory form: John Nelson, Steve Beale, Joan Baldwin (9/1/76)

Elizabeth Hannold January 16, 1996  
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services Date

R program concurrence:  yes  no  not applicable  
Oliver B. Frazier 1-16-96  
Reviewer, NR program Date

*gmg*

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

- Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
- Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)
- Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
- Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

- Paleo-Indian 10000-7500 B.C.
- Early Archaic 7500-6000 B.C.
- Middle Archaic 6000-4000 B.C.
- Late Archaic 4000-2000 B.C.
- Early Woodland 2000-500 B.C.
- Middle Woodland 500 B.C. - A.D. 900
- Late Woodland/Archaic A.D. 900-1600
- Contact and Settlement A.D. 1570-1750
- Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815
- Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870
- Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
- Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present
- Unknown Period (  prehistoric  historic)

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

- Subsistence
- Settlement
- Political
- Demographic
- Religion
- Technology
- Environmental Adaption

IV. Historic Period Themes:

- Agriculture
- Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
- Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
- Government/Law
- Military
- Religion
- Social/Educational/Cultural
- Transportation

V. Resource Type:

Category: Structure

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Transportation--vehicular, pedestrian

Known Design Source: Melvin R. Carpenter

AL-II-B-017

GREENSPRINGS ROAD TOLL BRIDGE  
Greensprings Road over Potomac River  
Oldtown, Maryland  
1938

The Greensprings Road Toll Bridge runs across the Potomac River from Oldtown, Maryland to Green Spring, West Virginia, and has the distinction of being the only privately owned toll bridge in the United States which is engaged in inter-state traffic. It's overall length is approximately 200 feet, and is 10 feet wide, accommodating only one direction of travel at a time. Ten concrete columns supply the major support for the bridge, with steel beams covered with wooden planking comprising the rest of the construction. The toll booth is located on the Maryland side of the river.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

0101544817  
Al-II-B-017

CHECK ONE  
INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Greensprings Road Toll Bridge

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Greensprings Road over Potomac River

CITY, TOWN

Oldtown

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Allegany

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Charles O. Walters

Telephone #: 395-5183

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Oldtown

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Allegany County Courthouse

Liber #: 441

Folio #: 199

STREET & NUMBER

30 Washington Street

CITY, TOWN

Cumberland

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

AL-II-B-017

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The Greensprings Road Toll Bridge runs across the Potomac River, north - south, from Oldtown, Maryland to Green Spring, W. Va. It's approximately 200 feet long and 10 feet wide, and may accomodate only one direction of travel at a time.

The bridge is supported by 10 concrete columns running the width of the bridge and evenly spaced. Along the concrete columns are steel beams, which in turn support the wooden planking of the actual surface of the bridge. Guard rails line each side of the bridge.

Being constructed in 1938, the bridge retains its original construction materials and is still quite sound. Pedestrians as well as vehicles are charged to cross the bridge. The toll booth itself is located on the Maryland side of the river.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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/HUMANITARIAN       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                    | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE    | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS         | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)           |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |  |

SPECIFIC DATES 1938

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Greensprings Road Toll Bridge runs across the Potomac River from Oldtown, Maryland to Green Spring, W. Va., and has the distinction of being the only privately owned toll bridge in the United States which is involved in interstate traffic.

The bridge, which opened for travel in 1938, was built by Melvin R. Carpenter. At the time of its construction, Carpenter was a tie inspector for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Railroad ties are manufactured by the Koppers Company at Green Spring, W. Va., so Carpenter had to make many trips to that community. The only way to cross the river at that location then was by ferry. The above situation gave rise to the idea of having a free enterprise bridge.

Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter, now of Brookhaven, Mass., sold their toll bridge to Charles O. Walters of Oldtown in 1970 for around \$55,000.00. Walters is an excavation contractor, and was responsible for maintenance of the bridge all of the 15 years before he bought it.

An average of 78,125 cars per year use the bridge, which may also be broken down to 214 cars per day.

Source: The Cumberland Evening Times Newspaper, 1970

\*See Vertical File under Oldtown Bridge

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Allegany County Land Records, Cumberland, Maryland

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

SPECIFIC DATES

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY
Bridge crosses Potomac River from Maryland to West Virginia.

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John Nelson, Steve Beale, Joan Baldwin

ORGANIZATION

Allegany County Historical Site Survey

DATE

9/1/76

STREET & NUMBER

507 National Highway

TELEPHONE

777-8991

CITY OR TOWN

Lavale

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

MHT

AL-II-B-017

Form 10-445  
(5/62)

<p>1. STATE Maryland          COUNTY Allegany Potomac River          TOWN Oldtown VICINITY Md..W.Va.          STREET NO.</p> <p>ORIGINAL OWNER Melvin R. Carpenter          ORIGINAL USE to cross Potomac River          PRESENT OWNER Charles Walters          PRESENT USE to cross Potomac River          WALL CONSTRUCTION          NO. OF STORIES</p>	<p>HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY          INVENTORY AL-106</p> <p>2. NAME TOLL BRIDGE--OLDTOWN, MD.          DATE OR PERIOD built          STYLE Aug.11,1936          ARCHITECT began operation 1938          BUILDER</p> <p>3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE</p>
<p>4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION OPEN TO PUBLIC</p> <p>1936--Aug.11--began construction of "high-water" bridge          1938--began operation</p> <p>Mr. Walters has been operator for years.          1970--Sept. Charles Walters purchased the bridge from Melvin R. Carpenter (80 years of age)</p> <p>SAID TO BE "THE ONLY PRIVATELY OWNED TOLL BRIDGE IN U.S. INVOLVED IN INTERSTATE TRAFFICE 2,500,000 vehicles used this bridge since 1938 or the average of 214 vehicles a day, between Oldtown, Md. and Greenspring, West Virginia.</p> <p>5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE    Endangered    Interior    Exterior    Excellent</p>	
<p>6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)</p>	<p>7. PHOTOGRAPH</p>
<p>8. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages)          INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC.          Research, News clipping,          Sept. 1970 by          Phyllis Riggleman Brotemarkle</p>	<p>9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER typed by          Hazel Groves Hansrote, V.Chairman          Maryland Historical Trust and          Sec. Preservation Society          Allegany County          DATE OF RECORD Oct. 21, 1970</p>

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS MAY BE ADDED ON SHEET OF SAME SIZE





AI-II-B-025

AI-II-B-026

AI-II-B-021

AI-II-B-027 AI-II-B-020

AI-II-B-019

AI-II-B-018

AI-II-B-008

AI-II-B-012

AI-II-B-002

AI-II-B-009

AI-II-B-011

AI-II-B-007

AI-II-B-024

AI-II-B-013

AI-II-B-015

AI-II-B-014

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AI-II-B-016

AI-II-B-010

AI-II-B-017

Greensprings Rd. Toll Bridges

Greensprings Rd. (A-B-C)

USGS Oldtown Anad

1:24,000

1950

5263 II SW (PATTERSON CREEK)

CUMBERLAND 14 MI  
SPRING GAP 5.4 MI

32°30"

4370

4378

5000 FEET

16 MI  
6.4 MI

Trading

Shuttle

R.R.

CHESAPEAKE AND

MARYLAND CANAL  
WEST VIRGINIA

Water

Green Spring

ARNOLD

STOKES

Green Spring

TAIN

South Branch  
French Sta.

POTOMAC



AW-II-B-017

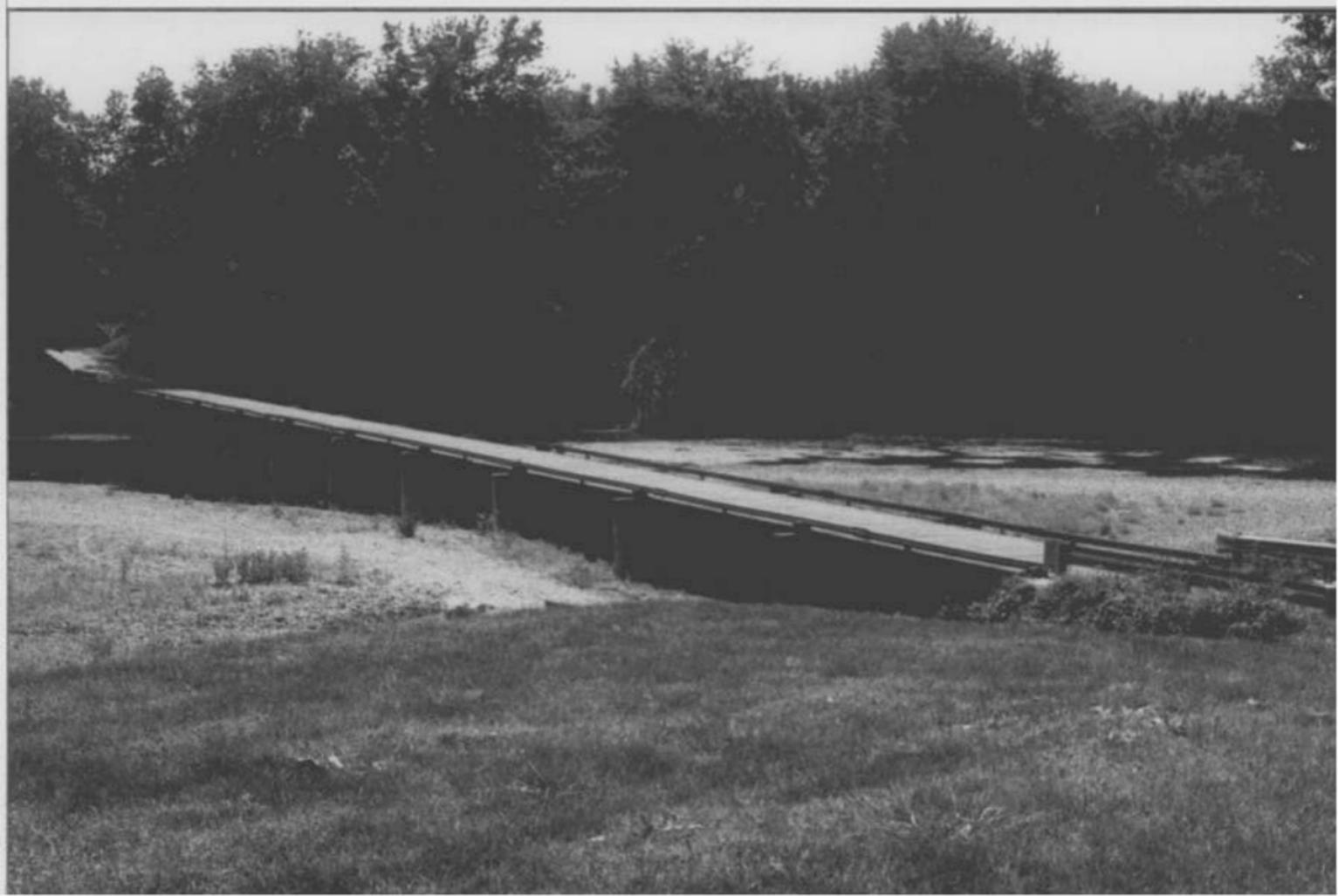


AZ-II-B-017

44

5074

WEST  
IN



GREENSPRINGS ROAD TOLL BRIDGE

AL-II-B-017

Greensprings Road over Potomac  
River

Oldtown

John Nelson

8/4/76

SOUTH WEST