

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Number: D-707

Name: MD 795 OVER CAMBRIDGE CREEK

The bridge referenced herein was inventoried by the Maryland State Highway Administration as part of the Historic Bridge Inventory, and SHA provided the Trust with eligibility determinations in February 2001. The Trust accepted the Historic Bridge Inventory on April 3, 2001. The bridged received the following determination of eligibly.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST	
Eligibility Recommended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eligibility Not Recommended <input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	Considerations: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> None
Comments: _____	
_____	
Reviewer, OPS: <u>Anne E. Bruder</u>	Date: <u>3 April 2001</u>
Reviewer, NR Program: <u>Peter E. Kurtze</u>	Date: <u>3 April 2001</u>

*gms*

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties  
 Historic Bridge Inventory  
 Maryland State Highway Administration  
 Maryland Historical Trust

MHT No. D-707Name and SHA No. Cambridge Bridge (09008)**Location:**Street/Road Name and Number: MD Route 795 over Cambridge CreekCity/Town: Cambridge \_\_\_\_\_ vicinityCounty: Dorchester \_\_\_\_\_Ownership:  State  County  Municipal  OtherThis bridge projects over:  Road  Railway  Water  LandIs the bridge located within a designated district:  yes  no NR listed district  NR determined eligible district locally designated  other

Name of District \_\_\_\_\_

**Bridge Type:** Timber Bridge Beam Bridge  Truss-Covered  Trestle  Timber-and-Concrete Stone Arch Metal Truss Bridge Movable Bridge Swing  Bascule Single Leaf  Bascule Multiple Leaf Vertical Lift  Retractable  Pontoon Metal Girder Rolled Girder  Rolled Girder Concrete Encased Plate Girder  Plate Girder Concrete Encased Metal Suspension Metal Arch Metal Cantilever Concrete Concrete Arch  Concrete Slab  Concrete Beam  Rigid Frame Other Type Name \_\_\_\_\_**Description:**

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**Describe Setting:**

*Cambridge Bridge carries MD Route 795 over Cambridge Creek in a generally east-west direction. It is located in a mixed residential and commercial section of Cambridge. It connects East and West Cambridge.*

**Describe Superstructure and Substructure:**

*Cambridge Bridge is a double-leaf rolling lift bascule with an over-all length of 827 feet including approaches. A rolling lift bascule is one in which the center of rotation moves away from the opening as the span swings upward. Fenders built in the water at the corner of each movable span protect the spans from possible impact from ships passing through the channel. The Cambridge Bridge consists of seven spans supported by four timber pile bents, two bascule piers, and two abutments. The bents have a concrete pile cap which supports two concrete columns. From abutment to abutment, the bridge measures 371 feet; there is a 325-foot approach from Market Street and a 131-foot approach from Maryland Street; the draw span measures 72 feet from the center of one draw bearing to the center of the other. It has a clear roadway 25 feet wide with two sidewalks, each 4 feet wide. The bridge is constructed of concrete and steel; the draw span is steel. The parapet is pierced concrete except across the draw span, where it is metal.*

*The bridge tender's house is one-story above the level of the roadway. It is a restrained neo-classical style and appears to have had its roof line altered. What appears in early photographs as a stepped roof is currently flat. The windows on three sides are double sliding sash and appear to be replacement windows. The window on the west elevation contains six small lights with a transom and is probably original. The tender's house is concrete.*

**Discuss major alterations:**

*The bridge tender's house has had its original roof line altered to a flat roof and several of its windows replaced; these are the only major alterations that have been made. There have been routine repairs over the years, including placing protective jackets on all pier columns and around the bascule piers, and stone revetments have also been installed at the abutments.*

**History:**

**When Built:** 1939-1940

**Why Built:** *To replace a smaller bridge that was inadequate to handle the increased amount of traffic occasioned by the opening of the bridge across the Choptank River connecting Dorchester and Talbot Counties.*

**Who Built:** *Whiting-Turner Construction Company*

**Who Designed:** *Henry G. Perring Co., Engineering Consultants under the direction of W. G. Hopkins, State Roads Commission*

**Why Altered:** *Bridge stabilization and repairs*

**Was this bridge built as part of an organized bridge building campaign:**

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*The 1920s and 1930s saw an active bridge-building program to replace narrow and unsafe bridges on the major highways of the Eastern Shore. Since the Good Roads Movement of the 1880s, Maryland citizens had been increasingly vocal in their demands for better roads. While the Eastern Shore had long relied on navigable waterways to transport goods to market, the decline of steamboat traffic and the rise of faster, more efficient vehicular traffic forced the issue. With the growth in the number of automobiles and trucks early in the twentieth century, the need for better roads became particularly urgent. The program carried out in the 1920s and 1930s came in response to the shift from steamboats to trucks as the principal carriers of the region's agricultural produce to markets in Baltimore and beyond.*

**Surveyor Analysis:**

**This bridge may have NR significance for association with:**

- A Events     B Person  
 C Engineering/Architectural Character

**Was the bridge constructed in response to significant events in Maryland or local history?**

*Rivers and streams provided the primary means of transportation on the Eastern Shore before the twentieth century. If bridges were built across navigable rivers, they had to be either high enough to allow ships clearance beneath the bridge or they had to be movable to allow navigation on the waterway. High, fixed bridges required extensive approach work and very high grades; hence, movable bridges became the primary technological method for spanning the Eastern Shore's navigable rivers (Spero 1994:85).*

*The current bridge was constructed to replace an earlier bridge, believed to have been built in 1870, whose approaches were too narrow to accommodate increased traffic volumes, loads and speeds. The opening of the bridge across the Choptank River, connecting Dorchester and Talbot Counties provided the residents of Cambridge a shortcut to the north. The increased flow of traffic resulting from the shortcut overwhelmed the small, existing bridge, creating traffic jams on both the roadway and Cambridge Creek. The bridge keeper was forced to regulate the flow of boat traffic up the creek to permit drivers to continue on their way. The new bridge was necessary to accommodate this increased traffic.*

**When the bridge was built and/or given a major alteration, did it have a significant impact on the growth and development of the area?**

*While its precise influence on the growth and development of Cambridge at the time of its construction is not known with certainty, it is presumed that a wider crossing at this point, with a capability to handle increased traffic loads and speeds, would have had a positive impact on the city and its economy. Cambridge was an important maritime port and food-processing center on the Eastern Shore. The new bridge would have enabled the city's industries to continue and their products to reach market more quickly.*

**Is the bridge located in an area which may be eligible for historic designation and would the bridge add to or detract from the historic and visual character of the possible district?**

*Cambridge Bridge does not appear to be in an area that is currently eligible for historic designation. The surrounding buildings are late twentieth century.*

**Is the bridge a significant example of its type?**

*This bridge is a significant example of its type. It was built at the end of a period of major bridge-building on the highways of the Eastern Shore, but may be considered to belong to that group of bridges. It is significant under Criterion A for its role in the development of transportation on the Eastern Shore during the Modern Period, when vehicular traffic took precedence over steamboats to transport local agricultural and maritime products to markets in Baltimore and beyond.*

*Cambridge Bridge is significant also under Criterion C as one of only 20 remaining bascule bridges in Maryland. Bascule bridges currently are more common than other forms of movable bridges on the Eastern Shore. They were the earliest type of movable bridge built in Maryland, and although swing bridges, for a time, gained precedence, bascule bridges garnered renewed interest with the development by the State Roads Commission of standardized reinforced concrete bridges (Spero 1994).*

**Does the bridge retain integrity of the important elements described in the Context Addendum?**

*Despite alterations to the bridge tender's house, Cambridge Bridge retains its integrity of location, setting, materials, design, feeling, and association. It retains its fenders and dolphins as well as its operating bascule span.*

**Is the bridge a significant example of the work of the manufacturer, designer, and/or engineer and why?**

*Although little is known about the Henry Perring Company, Engineering Consultants, the bridge exhibits a visually pleasing style that complements its surroundings. The Whiting-Turner Construction Company is an old Maryland-based company that continues to operate today.*

**Should this bridge be given further study before significance analysis is made and why?**

*Further study of this bridge may provide answers to the question of its effect on the growth and development of the surrounding section of Cambridge. Further study may also answer the question of whether it is a significant example of the work of W. G. Hopkins and the Henry Perring Company.*

Provide black and white prints and negatives and color slides of bridge, details, and setting labeled according to NR Bulletin 16A and Maryland Supplement to Bulletin 16A.

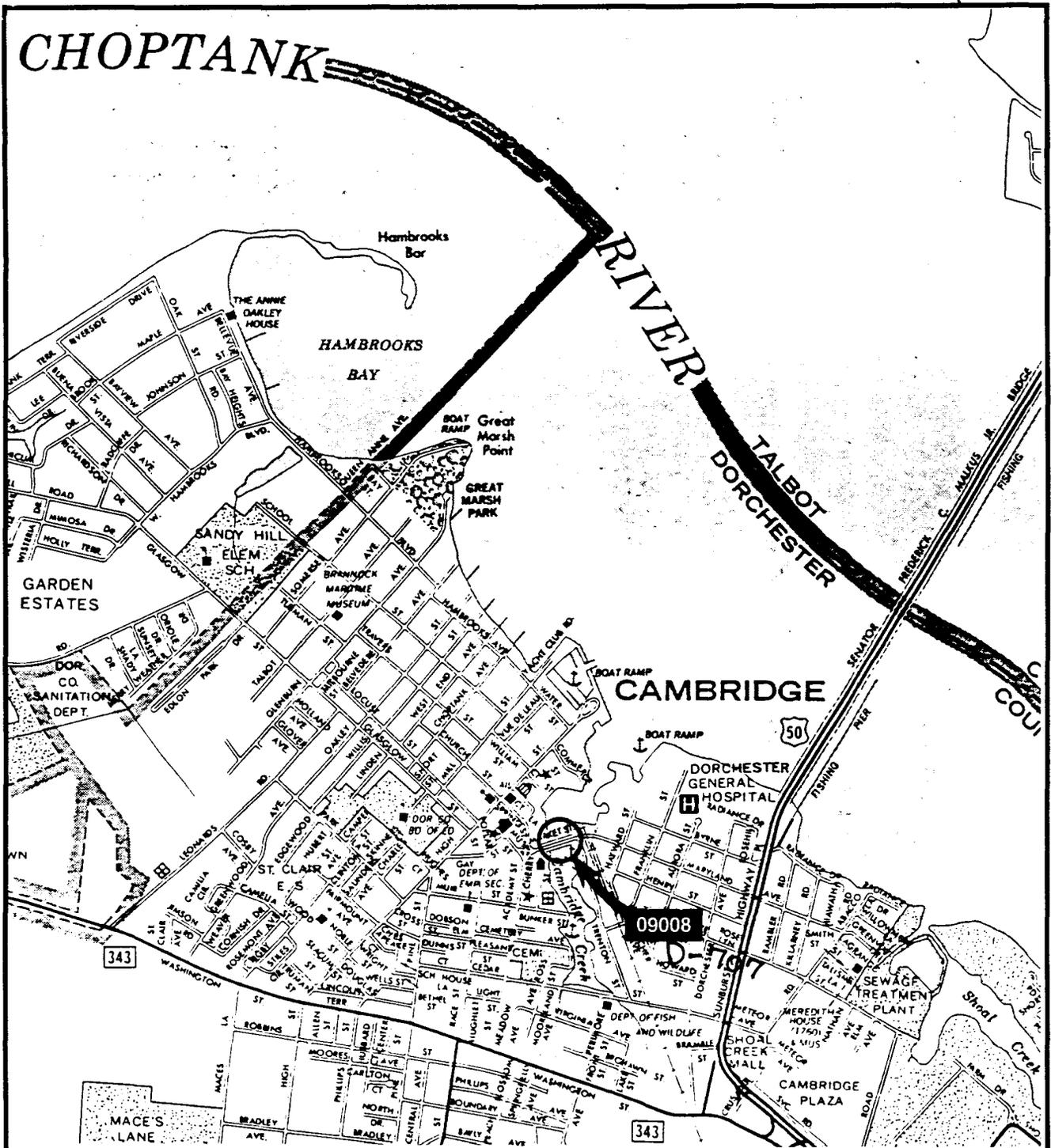
Provide a photocopy USGS map illustrating the location of the bridge.

**Surveyor:**

**Name:** Alice Crampton/Julie Abell      **Date:** 12/12/94  
**Organization:** Parsons Engineering Science, Inc.      **Telephone:** (703) 591-7575  
**Address:** 10521 Rosehaven Street  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030-2899

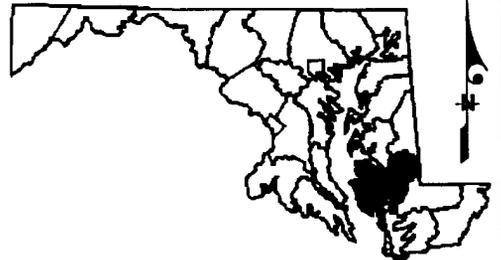
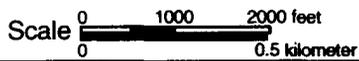
D-707

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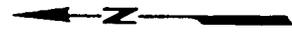


**Dorchester County - Bridge Number 09008**  
 MD 795 over Cambridge Creek (Cambridge Bridge)  
*(Determined National Register eligible by Interagency Review Committee)*

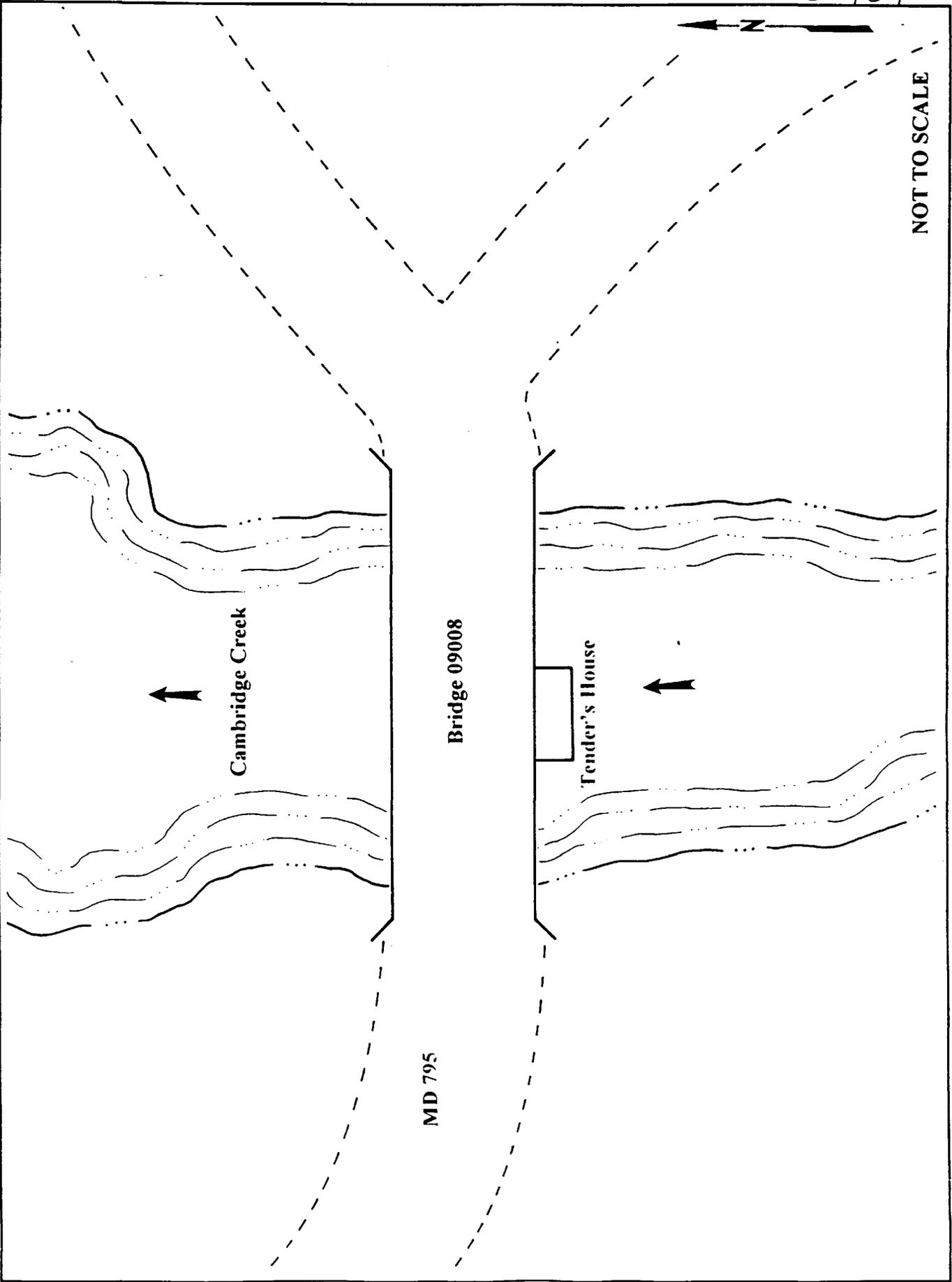
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D-707



NOT TO SCALE



Cambridge Creek



Bridge 09008

Tender's House



MD 795



D-702  
Cambridge Bridge (09008)

Dorchester County, Maryland

Julie Abell

12/94

Maryland State Highway Administration

South elevation

1 of 7



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Cambridge Bridge (09008)

Dorchester County, Maryland

Julie Abell

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Maryland State Highway Administration

South elevation, detail

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09008  
Cambridge Bridge (09008)

Dorchester County, Maryland

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North elevation

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D-207  
Cambridge Bridge (09008)

Dorchester County, Maryland

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Maryland State Highway Administration

North elevation, detail

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Cambridge Bridge (09008)  
Dorchester County, Maryland  
Julie Abell

12/94  
Maryland State Highway  
Administration  
Approach looking east  
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Cambridge Bridge (09008)

Dorchester County, Maryland

Julie Abell

12/94

Maryland State Highway Administration

Approach looking west

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Cambridge Bridge (09008)

Dorchester County, Maryland

Julie Abell

12/94

Maryland State Highway Administration

Bridge tender's house

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