F-7-139

Monocacy Crossing (Washington Road, Georgetown Turnpike, Urbana Road)

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

All material is property of the Maryland Historical Trust.

Last Updated: 10-11-2011
Capsule Summary

**Inventory No. F-7-139**
Monocacy Crossing
Urbana Pike and Monocacy River
Frederick County, MD
Ca. 1750-present; 1864
Access: Public

Monocacy Crossing consists of a collection of road traces and existing roads, a ferry crossing site, fording place and the current steel truss bridge which carries Maryland Route 355 across the Monocacy River. These crossings date from as early as the mid 18th century and continue to the mid 20th century for the bridge that remains in daily use. On the segment of the Monocacy that flows through the battlefield are two fording places that were known as early as the 1730s. One was located just below the mouth of Ballenger Creek and the other a short distance downstream from the present Maryland Route 355 bridge. The Ballenger Creek area ford was used by Confederate forces during the Battle of Monocacy. The other ford is recorded on land plats and the trace of the old road leading to it is still evident on the landscape. Until the 1830s, when the B&O Railroad was constructed, there was ferry service at this upper ford. The battlefield landscape is largely pastoral, with wooded hillsides and fields of hay, corn and wheat, as well as pasture lands for dairy cattle. The Monocacy River bisects the scene. The battlefield is also bisected with I-270 a busy commuter route to Washington DC, which crosses the Monocacy approximately ¼ mile south of the historic crossing place. Outside the limit of the battlefield the surrounding landscape is fragmented, lost in places to intense commercial and residential development. Therefore the most intact remnants of this early road and crossing network survive within the Monocacy National Battlefield.
The Monocacy Crossing, approximately 3 miles south of Frederick, is a significant collection of transportation structures connected by their crossing of the Monocacy at a point used since the middle of the 18th century (National Register Criterion A). The crossing includes the historic road trace, a ferry site, turnpike road, steel truss bridge (potentially eligible under Criterion C), concrete overpass, and an early 20th century highway. Transportation was a constant and deep concern among the farmers of Frederick County and the merchants of Frederick City. Because the dream of transporting agricultural products over a Monocacy River canal to the Potomac never materialized, and the B&O Railroad passed south of Frederick, the need for economic land-based transportation became a paramount motivator for improvements to road travel.
Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

1. Name of Property
   (indicate preferred name)
   historic  Monocacy Crossing (preferred); Washington Road; Georgetown Turnpike; Urbana Road
   other     Maryland Route 355; Urbana Pike

2. Location
   street and number  Urbana Pike and Monocacy River  not for publication
   city, town        Frederick  X  vicinity
   county            Frederick

3. Owner of Property
   (gives names and mailing addresses of all owners)
   name               National Park Service, Monocacy National Battlefield Site/State of Maryland  MD DOT
   street and number  4871 Urbana Pike  telephone  301-662-3515
   city, town         Frederick  State  Maryland  zip code  21704

4. Location of Legal Description
   courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.  Frederick County Courthouse  liber multiple folio
   city, town          Frederick  tax map  tax parcel  101-09  tax ID number

5. Primary Location of Additional Data
   X  Contributing Resource in National Register District
   __  Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
   __  Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
   __  Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
   __  Recorded by HABS/HAER
   __  Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
   __  Other: ________________________

6. Classification

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<td>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</td>
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7. Description

Condition

- **excellent**
- **deteriorated**
- **good**
- **ruins**
- **fair**
- **altered**

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

**Description Summary:**

Monocacy Crossing consists of a collection of road traces and existing roads, a ferry crossing site, fording place and the current steel truss bridge which carries Maryland Route 355 across the Monocacy River. These crossings date from as early as the mid 18\(^{th}\) century and continue to the mid 20\(^{th}\) century for the bridge that remains in daily use. On the segment of the Monocacy that flows through the battlefield are two fording places that were known as early as the 1730s. One was located just below the mouth of Ballenger Creek and the other a short distance downstream from the present Maryland Route 355 bridge. The Ballenger Creek area ford was used by Confederate forces during the Battle of Monocacy. The other ford is recorded on land plats and the trace of the old road leading to it is still evident on the landscape. Until the 1830s, when the B&O Railroad was constructed, there was ferry service at this upper ford. The battlefield landscape is largely pastoral, with wooded hillsides and fields of hay, corn and wheat, as well as pasture lands for dairy cattle. The Monocacy River bisects the scene. The battlefield is also bisected with I-270 a busy commuter route to Washington DC, which crosses the Monocacy approximately ¼ mile south of the historic crossing place. Outside the limit of the battlefield the surrounding landscape is fragmented, lost in places to intense commercial and residential development. Therefore the most intact remnants of this early road and crossing network survive within the Monocacy National Battlefield.

**Description:**

The current bridge is a double Parker steel truss structure dating from c.1930. The interior ends of the two structures rest on a stone pier in the center of the creek. The stone walled side abutments appear to remain from a preceding bridge. The present structure is at least the third on the site. Prior to construction of the first bridge in 1828, the older road and crossing was approximately 500 feet south of the present road and bridge. A rope ferry operated at this older site from the 18\(^{th}\) century and its location is marked on property boundaries which show a notch to accommodate ownership of the crossing place. The trace of this earlier road remains on the landscape, connecting with Araby Church Road on the east side and eventually merging with the present road on the west side. In addition there is a road trace paralleling the river on the east side and there are documentary references to an early road paralleling the river on the west side. The west side of the river is flat bottom land, while on the east side steep slopes rise from a narrow plateau of bench.

**Resource Count:**

- 1 contributing site—ferry crossing
- 4 contributing structures—current bridge, 18th century road trace, current road (1828), concrete overpass.
8. Significance

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</tbody>
</table>

Specific dates: c.1750-present; 1864
Architect/Builder: unknown
Construction dates: 1828; c.1930

Evaluation for:
- National Register
- Maryland Register
- X not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

**Summary of Significance:**

The Monocacy Crossing, approximately 3 miles south of Frederick, is a significant collection of transportation structures connected by their crossing of the Monocacy at a point used since the middle of the 18th century (National Register Criterion A). The crossing includes the historic road trace, a ferry site, turnpike road, steel truss bridge (potentially eligible under Criterion C), concrete overpass, and an early 20th century highway. Transportation was a constant and deep concern among the farmers of Frederick County and the merchants of Frederick City. Because the dream of transporting agricultural products over a Monocacy River canal to the Potomac never materialized, and the B&O Railroad passed south of Frederick, the need for economic land-based transportation became a paramount motivator for improvements to road travel.

**Resource History:**

The early Native American paths and colonist emigration routes through what would later become Frederick County were all known as “Monocacy Roads” because of their proximity to the Monocacy River. Research done by Dr. Grace Tracey and John P. Dern indicates that the main north-south route first crossed the Monocacy River at Ogle’s Ford, remaining on the east side of the river until the path crossed to the west bank at Hughes Ford (near Linganore Creek). Between these two fords, on the west side of the river, Daniel Dulaney platted Frederick-Town in 1745. Frederick-Town’s Market Street connected with the Monocacy Road at Hussey’s Ford to the northeast. However, Hughes Ford was due east of Frederick, so a new road running south from Frederick would cross the river at a new crossing just above Ballenger Creek and continuing southward to the seaports of Georgetown and Alexandria. It appears that this “middle ford” or ferry was in operation by 1750, as noted by 1880s historian Thomas Scharf quoting a

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1749 Frederick County court record, in which “Daniel Ballinger contracted to keep one [ferry] over the Middle ford on Monocacy for ten pounds.”

Frederick County Land Records indicate that James Marshall, who began purchasing land along the south/east bank of the Monocacy in 1759, owned the ferry crossing just south of Frederick. After Marshall’s death in 1803, his son William inherited the ferry property, which he sold at public sale shortly after. By 1828, the wagon road leading from Frederick to Georgetown, was well traveled and the ferry appears to have been insufficient for the traffic. In the Frederick-Town Herald dated May 24, 1828, an advertisement for “Bridge builders and Turnpike Road-makers” was posted:

Proposals will be received...for building A Bridge across the river Monocacy, and for making between Three and four miles of Turnpike, On the road leading from Frederick to Georgetown. The Bridge to be about 300 feet in length, with stone abutments and pier 30 feet in height, and of proportionate thickness – the width of the bridge to be 26 feet, with two wagon ways not less than 13 feet in the clear from the floor; the frame or chords of the bridge to be covered with white pine or cedar shingles and weather-boarded, with sufficient number of side lights, the floor to be of good white oak plank, 3 inches thick, the outside of the wood work to be painted.

The grade of the road not to exceed three degrees of elevation, to be stoned 20 feet wide, with side tracks [?]. The ground over which the road is to be made being very level, requiring but few culverts and lime stone in abundance on the whole distance. Persons disposed to offer proposal will make their calculations, one, on the Mac Adams plan, the stone not to exceed in weight 6 oz. The road to be covered 15 inches deep in the center diverging to 12 inches on the sides.

The other on the old plan of making Turnpikes, the stone not to exceed in weight 10 oz. To be covered of the same thickness as above.

At the same time that construction began on the Georgetown Turnpike and bridge, plans for the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, along the Potomac River, and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad were underway. Canal directors and local promoters considered virtually every Potomac tributary as a potential location for a “feeder” canal to bring more paying traffic to the C&O and development beyond the river’s edge. A route along the Monocacy was surveyed in 1829 and even some ambitious discussion took place of a canal link from the head of Monocacy to the

Frederick Co. Land Record F/654; Survey Record THO 1/52.
Microfilm collection, Maryland Room, C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick, MD.
Susquehanna. Frederick citizens were not willing to foot the bill for the work, and the C&O never could spare resources beyond its main line so, instead, roads and railroads led to the canal. Although the Monocacy Canal never materialized, an elegant survey map detailed the Monocacy Crossing area, showing the old road trace, the "Rope Ferry," the new bridge and turnpike road. Later maps (see Civil War era maps attached) show a jog in the road south of the bridge where the new turnpike road reconnected with the old road right-of-way. Within two years, the B&O Railroad crossed the Monocacy River just to the east of the turnpike bridge (see MIHP "Frederick Junction," F-3-140).

The Georgetown Turnpike served for many years as an over-land connection to the C&O Canal as well as a direct route to the nation's capitol, Washington, D.C. During the Civil War, Confederate General Jubal Early's invading army followed the turnpike south in an effort to threaten Washington. On July 9, 1864, they met resistance from Union General Lew Wallace on the banks of the Monocacy River just south of Frederick. Francis Mantz, train superintendent at the B&O Frederick Junction, described some of the action in a July 9 telegraph to his counterpart in Annapolis:

"...Enemy opened on us heavy this morning with artillery and pressed hard on our forces to get position. They seem determined. I think the force is larger than has been estimated. We did not leave until the very last moment. I fear they have too much artillery for us. I think my house is burned, the station house or the large wood bridge over the Monocacy on Washington Road. The troops ought to be sent forward."

The battle and burning of the road bridge was described by local Frederick resident, Jacob Engelbrecht, in his diary entry of Tuesday July 12, 1864:

Monocacy Junction battle—When the Rebels advanced on Saturday morning last (July 9, 1864) toward the junction our men were on the other side of the Monocacy on the hill over the bridge (iron bridge) & the Rebels commenced their batteries and they kept skirmishing & shelling all day & part of Sunday. Our loss in killed was men & wounded. The Rebel loss was killed men & wounded. The wounded of both parties are now in our hospital at the Barracks.

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6 "Frederick Town canal plan," n.d., Engineering Office, Frederick City Hall, Frederick, MD.
7 This jog in the road can still be seen today where Araby Church Road runs southwest from Rt. 355 and then turns southeast. This is the historic trace of the Georgetown Turnpike and the old road to Washington.
Our men burnt down the Georgetown Monocacy Bridge to prevent the Rebs from crossing but the Rebs tried their best to batter down the railroad iron bridge but could not. They however succeeded in burning all the railroad building (at) the junction, the dwelling house occupied by Frank Mantz agent of the railroad, all the Sheds, the water stations or rather engine to pump the water out of the Monocacy for the engines. They also burnt the turnpike bridge over the railroad &c. The main army & wagons are pushing down towards Edwards’ ferry near Poolesville to cross the Potomac & our men will try to prevent their crossing.  

Both the turnpike bridge over the Monocacy and over the railroad were rebuilt after the battle.

With the growing popularity of the automobile in the early 20th century, the Georgetown Road and bridges were again upgraded. The bridge over the Monocacy River was constructed of steel using the truss technology developed by C.H. Parker in 1868 and 1871 known as Parker Truss. Maryland Route 355 replaced the old Georgetown Turnpike, straightening the route by bypassing the jog at Araby Church Road. It remains a busy route to Washington, D.C. to this day.

Note: For Historical Context please refer to A Transportation History of Mid-Maryland, a Maryland Historical Trust grant funded context development project administered through The Catoctin Center for Regional Studies, 2002-2003.

Jacob Engelbrecht’s Diary, Frederick County Historical Society, CD ROM, pages 952, 998.

This was reportedly the style used by the Maryland State Roads Commission in the 1930s; “Metal Truss Bridges in Maryland,” p. 73, www.sha.state.md.keepingcurrent/mainainRoadsBridges/bridges/OPPE/historicBridges.
9. Major Bibliographical References

Frederick Co. Land Records, Frederick Co. Courthouse, Frederick, MD.
"Metal Truss Bridges in Maryland." www.sha.state.md.keepingcurrent/mainRoadsBridges/bridges/OPPE/historicBridges.
Newspaper microfilm collection, Maryland Room, C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick, MD.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property N/A
Acreage of historical setting N/A
Quadrangle name Frederick and Buckeystown Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary begins at the northern extent of the Route 355 right-of-way through Monocacy National Battlefield and continuing south through the battlefield property following the east side of the highway right-of-way including the concrete overpass over the railroad and the bridge over the Monocacy River, then turning southwest along the east side of Araby Church Road, then crossing to the west side of Araby Church Road at the intersection with Baker Valley Road and returning northward along the west side of the Rt. 355 right-of-way just south of the Best Farm lane, then continuing along the west side of the road to the northern boundary of the Monocacy National Battlefield, then crossing the road to the east side, the point of beginning.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title Paula S. Reed, Ph.D., Architectural Historian and Edie Wallace, Historian
organization Paula S. Reed & Assoc., Inc.
street & number 105 N. Potomac St.
city or town Hagerstown date June 2003 telephone 301-739-2070
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
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600
Map of the Battle of Monocacy (Jedediah Hotchkiss, 1864)

Figure 7
No. 15.
Sketch of the Battle of Monocacy, Frederick Co., Md., Saturday, July 9th, 1864.
To accompany Report of JED. HOTCHKISS, Top. Eng' Ing., V. D.
Scale: 2 inches to Mile

Top Eng' Office, A. & D., Dec., 1864

F-7-139 Monocacy Crossing
Rt. 355 Frederick Co., Md
1864 Monocacy Battle Map

Accompanying the report of Capt. Jed. Hotchkiss, C.S. Army,
Top. Eng'Ing. 24 Corps, A.N.Va. (Valley District)
SERIES VOL. XIII, PART 1, PAGE 1020.
F-7-139
Monocacy Crossing
FR CO | MD
Merry Stinson 3/03
MD 7 St PO
S. side of bridge
1/6
F-7-139
Monocacy Crossing
FR CO MD
Merry Stinson 3/03
MD #5 PO
old road w/side of Monocacy

2/12
F-7-139
Monocacy Crossing
FR 60 MD
Merry St Ann 3/03
MD 59#PO
bridge: N Side

5/6
F-7-139
Monocacy Crossing
FR Co MD
Merry Stimson 3/03
MD SHPO
bridge 3 NE abutment

#4