

HA-1578

1931

Wilson Mill Bridge
Wilson Mill vicinity
public (unrestricted)

The Wilson Mill Bridge carries Maryland Route 161 over Deer Creek near Wilson Mill. It consists of a Parker steel through truss, 180 feet long, and a steel pony triangular truss, 81 feet long, to the south of the larger truss. The combination of a pony truss with a large central through truss is unique among Maryland's state owned bridges built before 1935. The remains of stone abutments and wingwalls are located near this bridge, and can reasonably be connected with an earlier crossing of Deer Creek.

This bridge is one of six historic truss bridges -- part of Maryland's state road system in Harford County, and one of 26 bridges of the same general structural type throughout the state road network -- identified by the Maryland Historical Trust for the Maryland Department of Transportation in a jointly conducted survey which took place during 1980-81.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Wilson Mill Bridge

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Wilson Mill

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st

--- VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Harford

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES, RESTRICTED
- YES, UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

State Highway Administration DOT

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

301 West Preston Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE, zip code

--- VICINITY OF

Maryland 21201

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Harford County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

---FEDERAL ---STATE ---COUNTY ---LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

11-1577

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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 Wilson Mill Bridge carries Maryland Route 161 over Deer Creek in a N-S direction. It consists of one Parker steel through truss, 180' long, and one pony triangular truss, also steel, 81' long, to the south of the large truss. The three central panels of the Parker truss have an additional horizontal member at their mid-point which is intergrated into the members which it intersects. All connections are riveted. The roadway is 20' wide. The junction of the two trusses rests on a concrete pier.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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	1931	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	
----------------	------	-------------------	--

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The combination of a pony truss with a large through truss is unique among Maryland's state owned bridges, at least in those built before 1935. The remains of some stone abutments and wingwalls were located near the present bridge, and can reasonably be connected with an earlier crossing of Deer Creek on a different alignment. (see M/DOT Survey general bridge significance, attached).

1-377

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Files of the Bureau of Bridge Design, State Highway Administration, 301 West Preston Street, Baltimore, Md., drawer 90.

Condit, Carl, American Building Art, 20th Century; New York, Oxford University Press, 1961.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

Quadrangle Name: Aberdeen, MD
Quadrangle Scale: 1:24 000
UTM References: 18.396860.4385700

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME TITLE

John Hnedak/M/DOT Survey Manager

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

1980

STREET & NUMBER

21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

(301) 269-2438

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

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

GENERAL BRIDGE SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of bridges in Maryland is a difficult and subtle thing to gauge. The Modified significance criteria of the National Register, which are the standard for these judgements in Maryland, as in most states, must be broadly applied to allow for most of these structures. In particular the 50 year rule which specifies a minimum age for structures can be waived, and is more commonly done so for engineering structures than for others. Questions of uniqueness and typicality, exemplary types, etc., must set aside for now, because they presuppose a wider knowledge of the entire resources than is presently available. Indeed, this survey is an initial step toward understanding the extent to which Maryland's bridges are part of her cultural resources. Aesthetic considerations may have to be side-stepped entirely, for such structures as these are generally considered mundane and ordinary at best, and sometimes a negative landscape feature, by the layman. It does take a specialized aesthetic sense to appreciate such structures on visual grounds, but a case for visual significance can be made. The remaining criteria are those of historical associations. The relative youth of most of these structures precludes a strong likelihood of participation to events and lives of import. The best generalization can be made for most bridges is that they are built on site of early crossings, developing from fords and ferries through covered bridges and wooden trusses to their present state. This significance inheres in the site, however, and in most cases would not be diminished by the absence of the present structure.

These criteria may also be addressed positively. The primary significance of these bridges, those which were built between the two World Wars, consists in their association with rapidly changing modes and trends in transportation in America during the period. The earliest of them saw the appearance of the automobile and its rise as the preëminent means of getting Americans from place to place. Roads were being improved for increased speeds and capacity, and bridges, as potential weak links on the system, became particularly important. The technology for producing them was not new, and would not change significantly during the period. Accordingly, great numbers of easily, quickly and relatively cheaply built concrete slab, beam and arch bridges were built to span the small crossings, or were multiplied to cover longer crossings where height was no problem.

Truss bridges with major structural members of compound beams, of either the Warren or Pratt types, while more expensive and considered more intrusive on the landscape, were built to span the larger gaps.

With an aesthetic which allowed concrete slab bridges to have classical balustrades, or the application of a jazz-age concrete relief; with the considerable variety possible in the construction of medium sized metal trusses; and with the lack of nationwide standards for highway bridge design, the resulting body of structures displays considerable variety. The sameness of appearance of currently produced highway bridges leads one to believe this variety will not reappear. For that reason alone it is wise to keep watch over our existing bridges. Regardless of ones taste and aesthetic preference, one must be admitted that these older bridges add their variety and visual interest to the environment as a whole, and that it is often the case that their replacement by a standard highway bridge results in a visual hole in the landscape.

In situations requiring decisions of potential effect on these structures, they should receive some consideration. As the recording and subsequent understanding of Maryland's Cultural resources grows, they will be recognized as a significant part of that heritage.

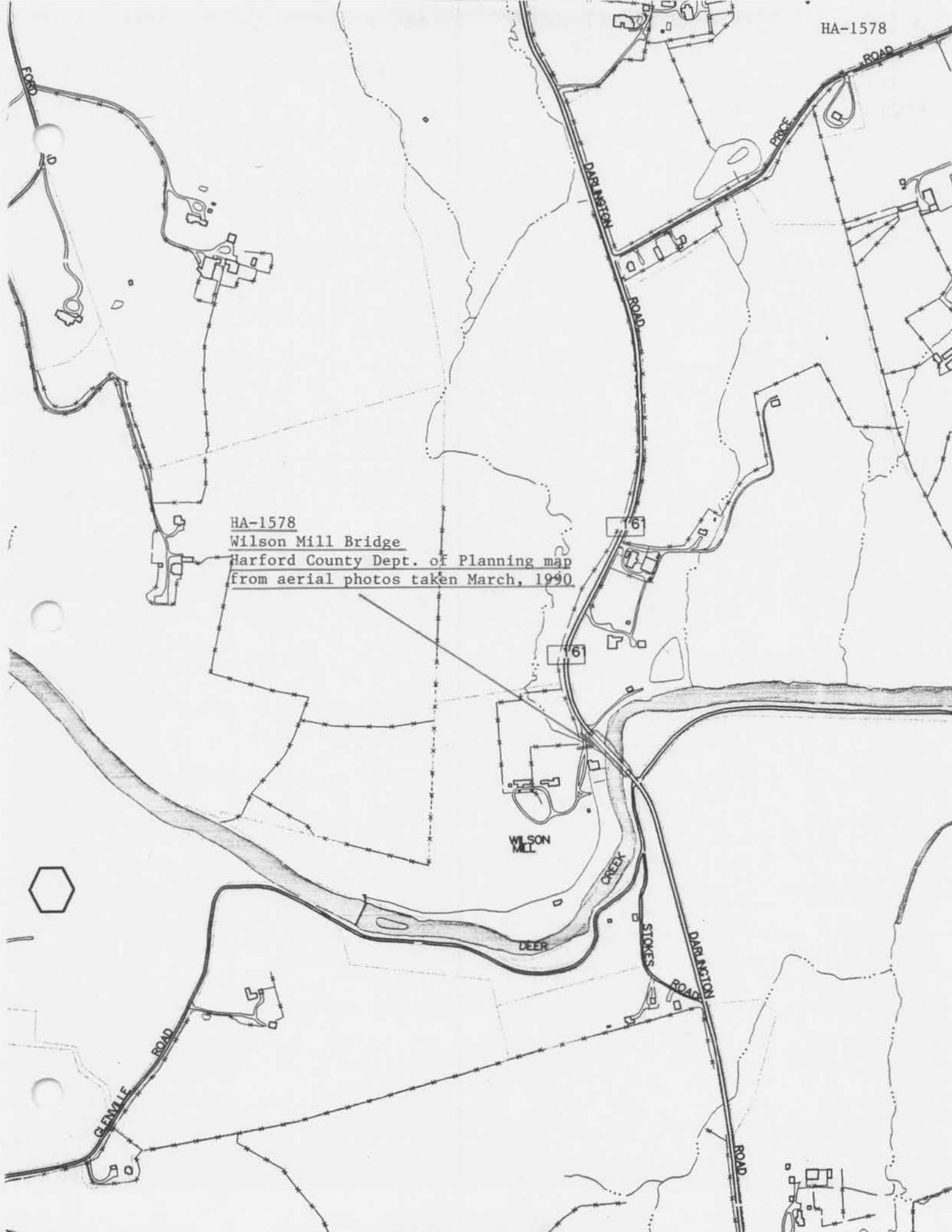
It should be noted that two non-negligible classes of structure have been omitted from this set. The first is the huge number of concrete slab or beam bridges of an average of twenty feet or less in length. These are so nearly ubiquitous and of such minor visual impact (they are often easy to drive across without noticing) that they were not inventoried. They are considered in the general recommendations section of the final report of this survey, however.

The second category is that of the "great" bridges, the huge steel crossings of the major waterways. While they are awesome and aesthetically appealing, they are not included in this inventory because they do not share the problems of their more modest counterparts. They do not lack for recognition, they have not been technologically outmoded, and are in no danger of disappearing through replacement. In a sense, they are not as rare; hundreds of

these great bridges are known nationally, and there is little doubt as to the position of any one bridge within national spectrum. There seems little point in including them with the larger inventory of bridges. From an arbitrary point of view, their dates are outside the 1935 limit which we set for the consideration of bridges. We have departed from that limit on occasion, but will not in this case. These bridges, too, will be considered in the final report.

Moveable bridges deserve a special note regarding their significance. They are rare, and all but the most recent of them have been listed by this survey by virtue of that fact alone. They are, by their nature as intermittent impediments to the smooth flow of traffic, threatened. We rarely tolerate disruptions to what we perceive as our progress. This has been demonstrated recently by the replacement of the drawbridge at Denton, on one of the major routes to the Atlantic Coast from the rest of Maryland.

However much we are inconvenienced by them, we must admit that moveable bridges contribute a share of interest to the landscape. As with significance judgements in general, we here enter a realm which is governed by taste and opinion. Some of us might not enjoy being forced to sit back for a while to look at the surroundings which we would otherwise totally ignore, especially if the engine is in danger of boiling over. But there are those who are fascinated by the slow rise of a great chunk of roadway, moved by quiet, often invisible machinery; who are amused by the tip of the mast which skims the top of the temporary wall; or who reflect on the nobility inherent in a river and the fact that we have not subdued every waterway with our autos, while knowing that we can if we want to.



HA-1578
Wilson Mill Bridge
Harford County Dept. of Planning map
from aerial photos taken March, 1990

WILSON
MILL

DEER
CREEK

DARLINGTON
ROAD

ROAD

PRICE
ROAD

ROAD

6

6

DARLINGTON
ROAD

STOKES
ROAD

GLENVILLE
ROAD

ROAD

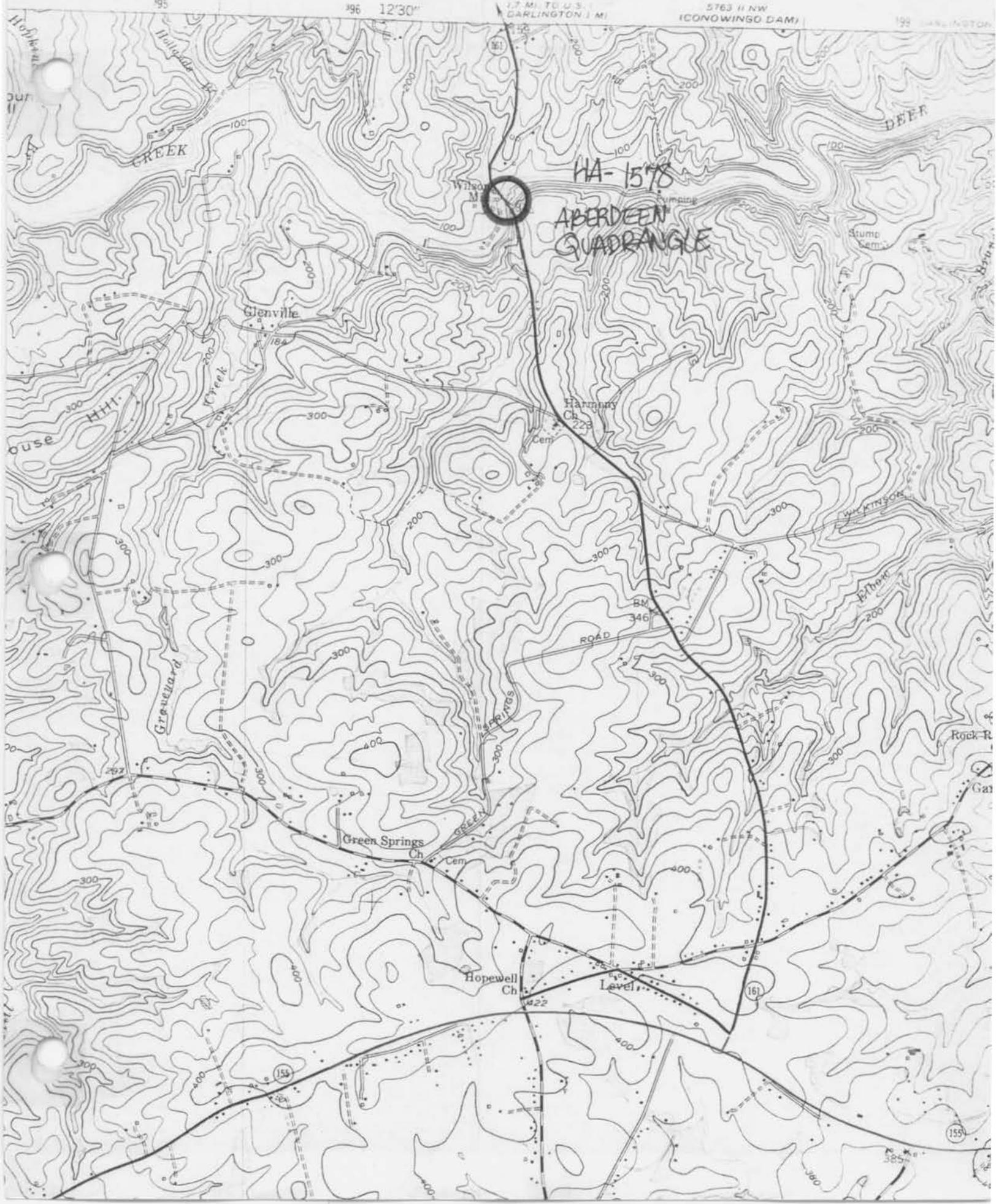
195

196 12'30"

1.7 MI. TO U.S. GARLINGTON (MI)

5763 II NW (CONOWINGO DAM)

199



HA-1578
ABERDEEN
QUADRANGLE

Glenville

Harmony

Green Springs

Hopewell

Level

Rock R

Gar

159

385



HA-1578

Wilson Mill Bridge

M/DOT

Hnedak

Winetr 1980



HA-1578
Wilson Mill Bridge
,/DOT
Hnedak/Meyer
Winter 1980



HA-1578

Wilson Mill Bridge

M/DOT

Hnedak/ Meyer

⌘ Winter 1980