



Mulberry River Bridge  
Name of Property

Crawford & Franklin counties, Arkansas  
County and State

**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
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

Historic Bridges of Arkansas

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related(vehicular)/bridge  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related(vehicular)/bridge  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other/ Pratt through truss  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete, Steel  
walls \_\_\_\_\_  
roof \_\_\_\_\_  
other Steel  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B.** removed from its original location.
- C.** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Levels of Significance** (local, state, national)

Local  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

Engineering  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Transportation  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1929-1957  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1929-1957  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation** (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Lakeside Bridge and Steel Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Department  
\_\_\_\_\_



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**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

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### **Summary**

Located on County Road 67 or Wire Road in Franklin and Crawford Counties, the Mulberry River Bridge crosses the Mulberry River on County Road 67 and is a classic example of a Pratt through truss bridge. The bridge has three spans with the total length of 342 feet. It is located in the Pleasant Hill vicinity.

### **Elaboration**

Located northeast of Pleasant Hill on County Road 67, the Mulberry River Bridge is a three span pin-connected Pratt through truss that runs northeast to southwest. The basic design for a Pratt Truss was patented by Thomas and Caleb Pratt in 1844. Its design includes vertical steel beams that act in compression with diagonals that act in tension. It is probably the most common type of bridge built in the early twentieth century. Since it is a through truss, the floor elevation is near the bottom of the structure, and traffic flows through the truss members.

Three metal Pratt trusses were needed to build the 342 foot bridge, with each span measuring 105 feet and having a vertical clearance of 13 feet. The deck with a width of 12 feet. The bridge rests on caissons which are metal with concrete filling.

### **Integrity**

No structural alterations have been made to the bridge to compromise its integrity. Its location remains rural, and its setting remains pristine. The bridge still illustrates its original design and materials. In addition, the bridge is still in use for vehicular travel.

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### Summary

The Mulberry River Bridge was built circa 1929, and stands as a great example of a Pratt through truss bridge and the last remaining multi-span Pratt through truss bridge in Arkansas. For this reason it is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion C**. The bridge has a total length of 342 feet, with three metal Pratt trusses each measuring 105 feet with a vertical clearance of 13 feet. The bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion A** for its role with the development of automobile travel in Franklin and Crawford counties. It is also being nominated under the multiple properties listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas" and under the associated historic context "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department Era: 1923-1939."

### Elaboration

Franklin County was the thirty-eighth county formed and was taken from territory from Crawford County in December of 1837. It was named for Benjamin Franklin. The first known white settlements were by French settlers and they settled along the Mulberry River.

In the early days lumbering and coal mining were the principal industries. Farming is a big industry in Franklin County. Ozark is the county seat in the northern part and Charleston is the county seat in the south.

The first white settler to arrive in what is today Crawford County was David Boyd who arrived in Van Buren in 1818. Crawford County was established in 1820, and was the eighth county formed in Arkansas Territory. It was named in honor of William Harris Crawford, then Secretary of Treasurer, under President Monroe. The Arkansas River played a large part in settling Crawford County and it's commerce with steamboat landings in Van Buren. The steamboats carried crops up and down the river.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

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The railroad came to Crawford County in 1876 with the Iron Mountain Line, later known as Missouri Pacific Railway, and ran from east to west through the lower part of the county. The Frisco Line was the next line to come in 1882, and connected Van Buren to St. Louis and Kansas City. The Frisco built a railroad bridge across the Arkansas River and all the lines in Crawford County used it.

The introduction of the railroad brought the first boom in agriculture. Cotton was the first big cash crop, with the fertile soil in the river bottoms perfect for growing cotton, and some of the world's finest cotton was grown here. Cotton gins were built all over the county, but the farmers would soon learn that growing the same crop year after year tires the soil, and the cotton boom soon died out. The farmers went on to grow a number of fruits and vegetables. The railroad business soon slowed with the automobile and airplanes.

As automobile traffic became more prevalent, an increased number of bridges were needed to be able to carry the traffic over streams and rivers. The Mulberry River Bridge, built circa 1929, was one such bridge that was constructed to serve the residents of the surrounding area.

The Lakeside Bridge and Steel Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, erected the bridge in combination with Crawford County.

The bridge was originally only two spans, but when it was being assembled it was discovered it was too short. Crawford County contacted Lakeside and they manufactured another truss, so it was constructed from the new truss and the two existing trusses. This makes the bridge very unique because it's one of only four multi-span Pratt through truss bridges left in the state.

Since the completion of the Mulberry River Bridge in 1929, no structural alterations have been made to the bridge to compromise its integrity. Today, County Road 67 remains a local road, used mainly by the local residents of the area, and the Mulberry River Bridge

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has been a vital crossing on the road for the residents in the area for approximately 80 years. The Mulberry River Bridge remains an important transportation link in the area and a good example of an early twentieth-century Pratt through truss.

### Statement of Significance

The Mulberry River Bridge was built circa 1929, and stands as a great example of a Pratt through truss bridge and the last remaining multi-span Pratt through truss bridge in Arkansas. For this reason it is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion C**. The bridge has a total length of 342 feet, with three metal Pratt trusses each measuring 105 feet with a vertical clearance of 13 feet. The bridge is also being nominated under **Criterion A** for its role with the development of automobile travel in Franklin and Crawford counties. It is also being nominated under the multiple properties listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas" and under the associated historic context "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department Era: 1923-1939."

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### Bibliography

“2005 Steel Truss Reevaluation Section of the Arkansas Historic Bridge Inventory: Review and Evaluation Volume III.” Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. Copyright 2006. In the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program files.

*A Historical Salute to Crawford County*. Published by the Crawford County Bicentennial Commission. Van Buren, AR. 1976.

*Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwestern Arkansas*. Chicago, Nashville, and St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Co. 1890.

Comp, T. Allan and Donald Jackson, “Bridge Truss Types: a Guide to Dating and Identifying.” *History News*. Vol. 32, No.5: May 1977.

*Historic Bridges of the Midwest*, 27 July 2005, <<http://bridges.midwestplaces.com/ar/franklin/mulberry-67/>>

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### **Verbal Boundary Description**

From a point on the south side of County Road 67 10 feet southeast of the southeast corner of the Mulberry River Bridge, proceed northeasterly 375 feet, then proceed northwesterly 25 feet, then proceed southwesterly 375 feet, then proceed southeasterly 25 feet to the point of beginning.

### **Boundary Justification**

This boundary includes the Mulberry River Bridge and its immediate setting.