

**Capsule Summary:**

MIHP No. CE 1483

Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch Bridge, SHA No. CE-34  
Constructed c. 1940  
Bohemia Mills vicinity, Cecil County, MD  
Public

**Description:**

Bridge CE 34 carries Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch in eastern Cecil County just west of the Delaware State Line. The bridge is on a north-south alignment with an approximate 60-degree skew over the western flowing Sandy Branch. This single span, multi-beam, timber bridge, built c. 1940, has a timber superstructure and reinforced concrete abutments and wingwalls. It has an overall length of 23' and an out to out width of 24' with timber rub rails that leave a clear roadway of 22' 5". In 1996 half of the bridge was closed to traffic with aluminum W-beam guardrail.

**Significance:**

In 1933 the Maryland General Assembly passed an Act known at the time as the County Road Act. This Act made it optional for each of the respective Boards of County Commissioners to continue to maintain their county roads through local tax levies, or to turn such roads over to the State Roads Commission for maintenance. It also allowed the State Roads Commission to use the limited funds of the state more wisely. The use of these funds, combined with Bonds authorized by Chapter 463 of the 1933 General Assembly, allowed the state to create a program of major road construction to be performed under the directions of the Federal Government. This policy continued in much the same manner, with the state legislature granting approval every two years, until 1940.

The need to increase load capacity in rural areas became more important during the Second World War. By virtue of an Act of Congress approved November 19, 1941 entitled "An Act to Supplement the Federal-Aid Road Act approved July 16, 1916 as amended and supplemented to authorize appropriations during the National Emergency declared by the President on May 1941 for the immediate construction of roads urgently needed for the National Defense and for other purposes", the State Roads Commission embarked upon an unprecedented construction of roads and bridges. Projects that were in the preliminary planning stages could be bumped up for earlier construction under this new regulation, while other projects were halted.

Cecil County turned over the administration of its roads to the State in July 1933 and the state continued to maintain county roads well after the Second World War. It is unclear exactly when CE-1483 was constructed, however it is similar to other bridges built during the campaign to replace pre-existing timber bridges, which would date its construction at c. 1940.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Inventory No. CE- 1483

1. Name of Property

Historic name Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch Bridge  
\_\_\_\_common/other name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch  
\_\_\_\_not for publication \_\_\_\_city or town Bohemia Mills vicinity X  
state Maryland code MD county Cecil code 015 zip code \_\_\_\_\_

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

N/A

4. National Park Service Certification

N/A

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check all that apply)

- \_\_\_\_ private  
X public-local  
\_\_\_\_ public-State  
\_\_\_\_ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- \_\_\_\_ building(s)  
\_\_\_\_ district  
\_\_\_\_ site  
X structure  
\_\_\_\_ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing		Noncontributing		
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Is this property listed in the National Register?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Listing \_\_\_\_\_  
No X

=====  
 6. Function or Use  
 =====  
 Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)  
 Cat: \_\_\_\_\_ Sub: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)  
 Cat: \_\_\_\_\_ Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

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 7. Description  
 =====  
 Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)  
Structure \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)  
 foundation \_\_\_\_\_  
 roof \_\_\_\_\_  
 walls \_\_\_\_\_  
 other \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 7-1

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CE-1483

Section 7 Page 1

Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch Bridge  
name of property  
Cecil County, Maryland  
county and state

=====

Cecil County Bridge CE 34 carries Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch in eastern Cecil County just west of the Delaware State Line. The bridge is on a north-south alignment with an approximate 60-degree skew over the western flowing Sandy Branch. Areas around the bridge are lightly settled with nineteenth century farmsteads and 1950's ranchers. However, nothing is in the viewshed of the bridge.

This single span, multi-beam, timber bridge, built c. 1940, has a timber superstructure and reinforced concrete abutments and wingwalls. The overall length of the bridge is 23'. The out to out width is 24' with timber rub rails that leave a clear roadway of 22' 5". There are 16 13"d X 8" w timber beams that support the timber deck. The beams and the stringers are in poor condition. Several of the stringers have check, minor section loss, and areas of minor deterioration. The timber deck is in fair condition, though deteriorated with numerous checks.

The concrete abutments and wingwalls are in poor condition according to the 1997 Biennial Inspection. Moisture and road salt have contributed to section loss. The substructure has a large spall at the south abutment next to the seat. Both abutments have moderate scaling along the waterline with a few areas of heavy scaling. There are also several fine vertical cracks with some light scaling.

In 1996 half of the bridge was closed to traffic with aluminum W-beam guardrail. At this time some of the timber deck planks were replaced.

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8. Statement of Significance  
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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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- 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.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CE-1483

Section 8 Page 2

Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch Bridge  
name of property  
Cecil County, Maryland  
county and state

=====

In 1933 the Maryland General Assembly passed an Act known at the time as the County Road Act. This Act made it optional for each of the respective Boards of County Commissioners to continue to maintain their county roads through local tax levies, or to turn such roads over to the State Roads Commission for maintenance. All but Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Harford Counties accepted the state's offer. The law provided that the Commissions were authorized to apply a 1½ cent gasoline tax, previously available only for the construction of state roads, to finance the maintenance of county and municipal roads and the continued construction of state roads. It also allowed the tax to be used for debt service for both counties and municipalities. The act allowed the state to consolidate and control the funding for road and bridge construction during the Depression. The State Roads Commission would now absorb all personnel, overhead expenses, incidental charges, and engineering services furnished by the counties. The County Road Act allowed the State Roads Commission to use the limited funds of the state more wisely. The use of these funds, combined with Bonds authorized by Chapter 463 of the 1933 General Assembly, allowed the state to create a program of major road construction to be performed under the directions of the Federal Government. The State Roads Commission received approval for its program and received \$1,411,828.00 in 1933. By the end of 1934 sixty percent of this money had been spent. This policy continued in much the same manner, with the state legislature granting approval every two years, until 1940.

The need to increase load capacity in rural areas became more important during the Second World War. By virtue of an Act of Congress approved November 19, 1941 entitled "An Act to Supplement the Federal-Aid Road Act approved July 16, 1916 as amended and supplemented to authorize appropriations during the National Emergency declared by the President on May 1941 for the immediate construction of roads urgently needed for the National Defense and for other purposes", the State Roads Commission embarked upon an unprecedented construction of roads and bridges. Projects that were in the preliminary planning stages could be bumped up for earlier construction under this new regulation, while other projects were halted.

Cecil County turned over the administration of its roads to the State in July 1933 and the state continued to maintain county roads well after the Second World War. It is unclear exactly when CE-1483 was constructed, however it is similar to other bridges built during the campaign to replace pre-existing timber bridges, which would date its construction at c.1940.

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) asserts that the Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch Bridge is National Register-eligible under Criterion A as an example of State and Federal government road building projects. It is also eligible under Criterion C as an example of a wooden beam bridge, a form characteristic of bridges built on Maryland's Eastern Shore. An interagency committee made up of representatives from SHA, Federal Highway

Administration, and the Maryland Historical Trust has discussed the issue of timber bridges and their eligibility and decided that timber bridges could be eligible for National Register listing under Criterion C despite having had members replaced. The nature of the material is such that it must be replaced over the course of time. By replacing piece after piece over time there will eventually be a bridge with the form of the original bridge but without any of the original timber members. The committee decided that these bridges would still be National Register eligible, as replacement in kind meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch Bridge retains its significance as a timber beam bridge despite any replacement timbers in its superstructure and therefore maintains its eligibility under Criterion C.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW	
Eligibility recommended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eligibility not recommended <input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" 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: _____	
_____	
<i>James P. Kender</i>	Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services
7/21/99	
Date	
<i>Heit</i>	7/22/99
Reviewer, NR program	Date

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
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(Cite the books, articles, legal records, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

P. A. C. Spero & Company and Louis Berger & Associates. Historic Highway Brides in Maryland: 1631-1960: Historic Context Report.

Reports of the State Roads Commission. 1941-1942.

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property Less than one acre

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Located on Old Telegraph Road, Cecil County Bridge No. CE 34 spans the western flowing Sandy Branch in a north/south direction. This bridge is located in the vicinity of Bohemia Mills, MD west of the Maryland/Delaware State Line.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The bridge has been at this location since its construction c. 1940.

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Heather M. Confer, Architectural Historian, KCI Technologies, Inc. for
organization Maryland State Highway Administration date May 10,
1999 street & number 707 N. Calvert Street telephone 410-545-8560
city or town Baltimore state Maryland zipcode 21202

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12. Property Owner
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name Cecil County Department of Public Works street & number 129 East Main Street
telephone 410-996-5200 city or town Elkton state Maryland zip code
21921

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CE-1483

Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch Bridge  
name of property  
Cecil County, Maryland  
county and state

=====

**HISTORIC CONTEXT:**

**Geographic Organization:** Eastern Shore

**Chronological/Development Period (s):** Modern Period

**Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):** Transportation

**RESOURCE TYPE(S)**

**Category:** Structure

**Historic Environment:** Rural

**Historic Function (s):** Transportation

**Known Design Source:** State Roads Commission

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

NE/4 CECILTON 15' QUADRANGLE

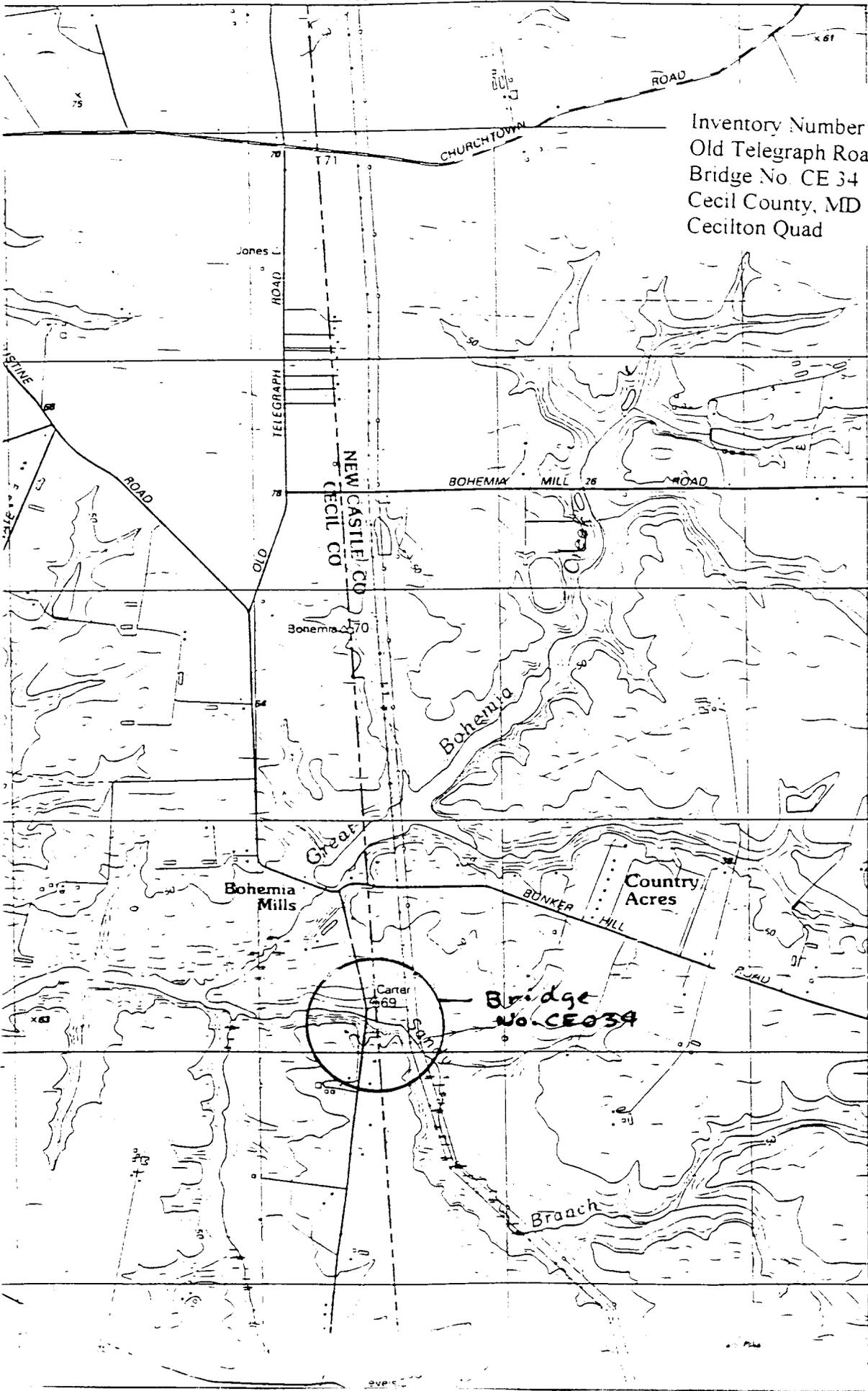
433

660 000 FEET (MD)

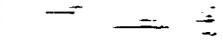
3 MI TO DEL

75°45'

39°30'



Inventory Number CE 1483  
Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch  
Bridge No. CE 34  
Cecil County, MD  
Cecilton Quad



4371

4370

660 000 FEET (MD)

4369

4368  
27'30"

4367



CE-1483

Old Telegraph Rd over Sandy Branch Bridge  
SHA NO. CE-34

~~Old Telegraph Rd over Sandy Branch~~

Cecil Campus, Maryland

Jim Duffy

12/31/98

MD SHPO

North approach, camera facing South

# 1 of 7



CE-1483

Old Telegraph Rd over Sandy Branch Bridge  
SHA No. CE-34

Cecil County, Maryland

Jim Duffy

12/31/98

MDSHPO

Downstream elevation / West side of bridge  
Camera Facing east

#2 of 7



CE-1483

Old Telegraph Rd over Sandy Branch Bridge

SHA No. CE-34

Cecil County, Maryland

Jim Duffy

12/31/98

MDSHPD

South Abutment, west side of bridge

Camera facing SE

#3 of 7



CE-1483

Old telegraph Rd over Sandy Branch Bridge

SHA No. CE-34

Cecil County, Maryland

Jim Doffy

12/31/98

MD SHPO

facing downstream from bridge, camera  
facing ~~to~~ west.

#4 of 7



CE-1483

Old Telegraph Rd. over Sandy Branch Bridge  
SHA No. CE-34

Cecil County, Maryland

Jim Duff

12/31/98

MDSHPO

UPSTREAM Elevation / East side of bridge  
Camera facing west

# 5 of 7



CE-1483

Old Telegraph Rd over Sandy Branch Bridge  
SITA No CE-34

Cecil County, Maryland

Jim Duffy

12/31/98

MDSHPO

facing upstream from Bridge, camera facing east

#6 of 7



CE\_1483

Old Telegraph Road over Sandy Branch Bridge  
SHA No CE-34

Cecil County, Maryland

Jim Duffy

12/31/98

MDSHPD

South approach, camera facing north

# 7 of 7