Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Number: WA-V-63

Name: MD 56 over Little Conococheague 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 ___X____ Eligibility Not Recommended _____

Criteria: ____A ____B ____C ____D Considerations: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G ___None

Comments:_____

Reviewer, OPS:__Anne E. Bruder_____ Date:__3 April 2001_____

Reviewer, NR Program:_Peter E. Kurtze_____ Date:___3 April 2001_____

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC BRIDGES
HISTORIC BRIDGE INVENTORY
MARYLAND STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION/
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

MHT No. WA-V-63

SHA Bridge No. 21023 Bridge name MD 56 over Little Conococheague Creek

LOCATION:

Street/Road name and number MD 56 (Big Pool Road)

City/town Clear Spring Vicinity X

County Washington

This bridge projects over: Road__ Railway_____ Water X Land _____

Ownership: State X County _____ Municipal _____ Other _____

HISTORIC STATUS:

Is the bridge located within a designated historic district? Yes _____ No X

National Register-listed district _____ National Register-determined-eligible district _____

Locally-designated district _____ Other _____

Name of district _____

BRIDGE TYPE:

Timber Bridge _:

Beam Bridge _____ Truss -Covered _____ Trestle _____ Timber-And-Concrete _____

Stone Arch Bridge _____

Metal Truss Bridge _____

Movable Bridge :

Swing _____ Bascule Single Leaf _____ Bascule Multiple Leaf _____

Vertical Lift _____ Retractile_____ Pontoon _____

Metal Girder_____:

Rolled Girder _____ Rolled Girder Concrete Encased _____

Plate Girder _____ Plate Girder Concrete Encased _____

Metal Suspension _____

Metal Arch _____

Metal Cantilever _____

Concrete X :

Concrete Arch X Concrete Slab_____ Concrete Beam _____ Rigid Frame _____

Other _____ Type Name _____

WA-V-63

DESCRIPTION:

Setting: Urban _____ **Small town** _____ **Rural** ____X____

Describe Setting:

Bridge 21023 carries MD 56 over Little Conococheague Creek in Washington County. MD 56 runs east-west and Little Conococheague Creek flows south. The bridge is located in the vicinity of Clear Spring, and is surrounded by open spaces and some scattered agricultural buildings.

Describe Superstructure and Substructure:

Bridge 21023 is a single-span, 1-lane, concrete arch bridge built in 1907. The structure is 50 feet long and has a clear roadway width of 12 feet 6 inches; there are no sidewalks. The out-to-out width is 14 feet 6 inches. The superstructure consists of 1 arch that supports a concrete deck and concrete parapets. The arch spans 50 feet and is of closed spandrel arch design. The concrete deck has a bituminous wearing surface. The structure has solid concrete parapets. A date plaque on the north parapet states that the bridge was built in 1907 by the Nelson Construction Company of Chambersburg and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The substructure consists of 2 concrete abutments. There are 4 u-shaped concrete wingwalls. The bridge is posted for 12 tons, and has a sufficiency rating of 44.

According to the 1996 inspection report, this structure was in satisfactory condition with light deterioration. The asphalt wearing surface has light cracks. The concrete arch has irregular cracks with light efflorescence and delamination. The abutments have severe scaling at the waterline. The wingwalls have been repaired in the past, but have fine surface cracks and some small areas of delamination. Also, the concrete parapets are spalling and have vertical cracks.

Discuss Major Alterations:

There have been no major alterations to this bridge.

HISTORY:

WHEN was the bridge built: ____1907____
This date is: Actual _____X_____ **Estimated** _____
Source of date: Plaque __X__ **Design plans** __ **County bridge files/inspection form** __ **Other (specify):**___

WHY was the bridge built?
The bridge was constructed in response to the need for more efficient transportation network and increased load capacity.
WHO was the designer? Unknown
WHO was the builder? Nelson Construction Company
WHY was the bridge altered? N/A
Was this bridge built as part of an organized bridge-building campaign?
There is no evidence that the bridge was built as part of an organized bridge building campaign.

SURVEYOR/HISTORIAN ANALYSIS:

This bridge may have National Register significance for its association with:
A - Events _____ **B- Person** _____
C- Engineering/architectural character ___X_____

This bridge was determined eligible by the Interagency Review Committee in February, 1996.

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

The advent of modern concrete technology fostered a renaissance of arch bridge construction in the United States. Reinforced concrete allowed the arch bridge to be constructed with much more ease than ever before and maintained the load-bearing capabilities of the form. As the structural advantages of reinforced concrete became apparent, the heavy, filled barrel of the arch was lightened into ribs. Spandrel walls were opened, to give a lighter appearance and to decrease dead load. This enabled the concrete arch to become flatter and multi-centered, with longer spans possible. Designers were no longer limited to the semicircular or segmental arch form of the stone arch bridge. The versatility of reinforced concrete permitted development of a variety of economical bridges for use on roads crossing small streams and rivers.

Maryland's roads and bridge improvement programs mirrored economic cycles. The first road improvement of the State Roads Commission was a 7-year program, starting with the Commission's establishment in 1908 and ending in 1915. Due to World War I, the period from 1916-1920 was one of relative inactivity; only roads of first priority were built. Truck traffic resulting from war related factories and military installations generated new, heavy traffic unanticipated by the builders of the early road system. From 1920-1929, numerous highway improvements occurred in response to the increase in Maryland motor vehicles from 103,000 in 1920 to 320,000 in 1929, with emphasis on the secondary system of feeder roads that moved traffic from the primary roads built before World War I. After World War I, Maryland's bridge system also was appraised as too narrow and structurally inadequate for the increasing traffic , with plans for an expanded bridge program to be handled by the Bridge Division, set up in 1920. In 1920 under Chapter 508 of the Acts of 1920 the State issued a bond of $3,000,000.00 for road construction; the primary purpose of these monies was to meet the state obligations involving the construction of rural post roads. The secondary purpose of these monies was to fund (with an equal sum from the counties) the building of lateral roads. The number of hard surfaced roads on the state system grew from 2000 in 1920 to 3200 in 1930. By 1930, Maryland's primary system had been inadequate to the huge freight trucks and volume of passenger cars in use, with major improvements occurring in the late 1930's. Most improvements to local roads waited until the years after World War I.

As the nation's automotive traffic increased in the early twentieth century, local road networks were consolidated, and state highway departments were formed to supervise the construction and improvement of state roads. With a diverse topographical domain encompassing numerous small and large crossings, Maryland engineers quickly recognized the need for expedient design and construction through the standardization of bridge designs.

The concept and practice of standardization was one of the most important developments in engineering of the twentieth century. In Maryland, as in the rest of the nation, the standardized concrete types became the predominant bridge types built. In the period 1911 to 1920 (the decade in which standardized plans were introduced), beams and slabs constituted 65 percent and arches 35 percent of the extant 29 bridges built in Maryland. In the following decade, 1921-1930, the beam (now the T-beam) and slab increased to 73 percent and the arch had declined to 27 percent of the 129 extant bridges; in the next decade (1931-1940), the beam and slab achieved 82 percent and arches had further declined, constituting only 18 percent of the total of extant bridges built on state-owned roads between 1931 and 1946.

Although beam and slab bridges became the utilitarian choice, it appears that the arch was selected when aesthetics as well as other site conditions were considered. The architectural treatment of extant arch bridges supports this assessment. Many of these bridges were multiple span structures with open spandrels or masonry facing. Another decorative feature of the concrete arch bridge was an open, balustrade-style parapet. Despite the popularity of ornamental arches and the increase in use of beam and slab bridges, examples of simpler, single and multiple span closed concrete arch bridges with solid parapets continued to be constructed throughout the early twentieth century.

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?

There is no evidence that the construction of this bridge had a significant impact on the growth and development of this area.

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

The bridge is located in an area that does not appear to be eligible for historic designation.

Is the bridge a significant example of its type?

The bridge is a significant example of its type, due to the early date of construction.

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

The bridge retains the character-defining elements of its type, as defined by the Statewide Historic Bridge Context, including concrete parapets, closed spandrel walls, concrete abutments, and wingwalls.

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

This bridge is a significant example of the work of the Nelson Construction Company of Chambersburg and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania..

Should the bridge be given further study before an evaluation of its significance is made?

No further study of this bridge is required to evaluate its significance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

County inspection/bridge files _____ **SHA inspection/bridge files** ___X___
Other (list):

Johnson, Arthur Newhall
1899 The Present Condition of Maryland Highways. In *Report on the Highways of Maryland.* Maryland Geological Survey, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

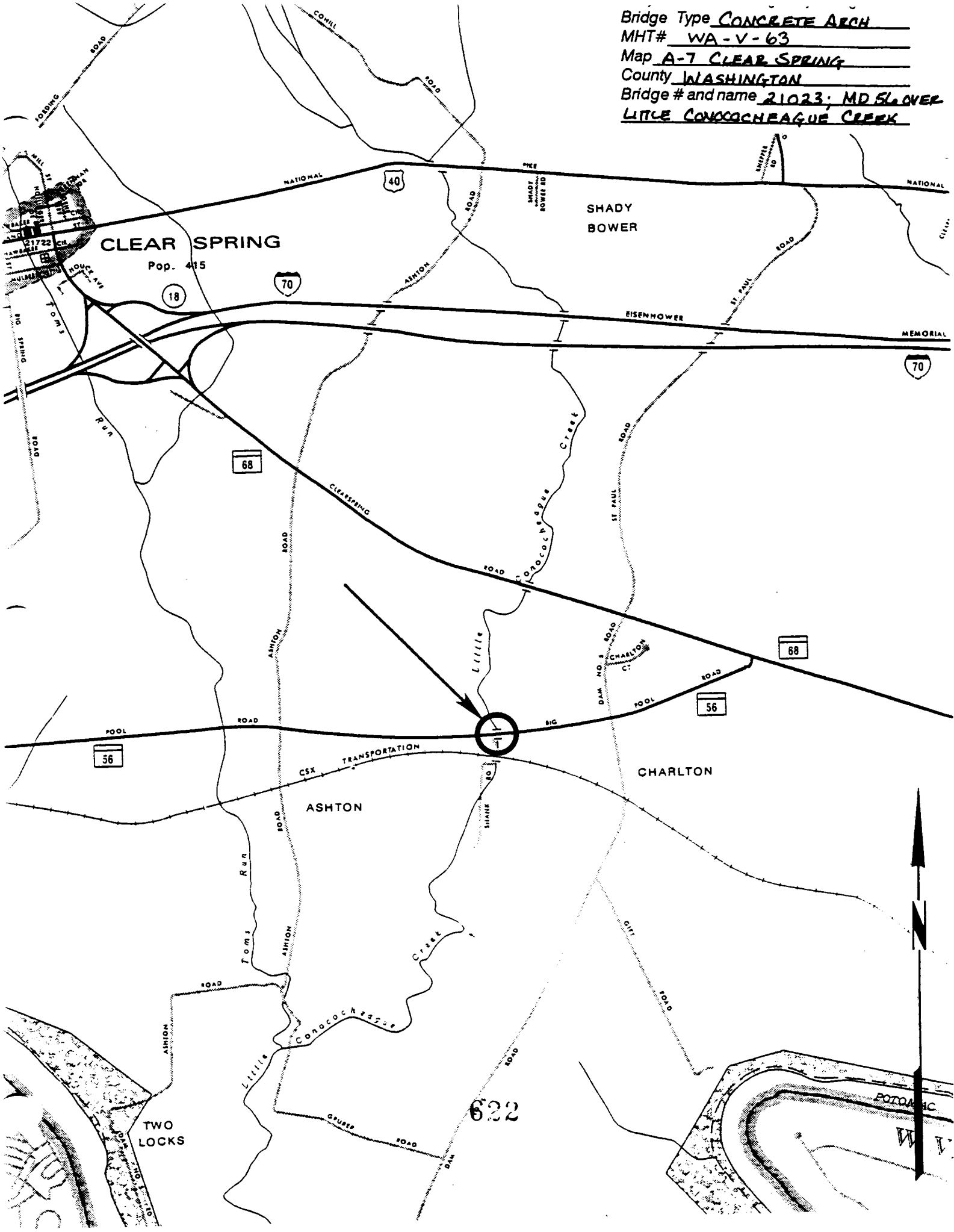
P.A.C. Spero & Company and Louis Berger & Associates
1995 Historic Highway Bridges in Maryland: 1631-1960: Historic Context Report. Maryland State Highway Administration, Maryland State Department of Transportation, Baltimore, Maryland.

Tyrrell, H. Grattan
1909 *Concrete Bridges and Culverts for Both Railroads and Highways.* The Myron C. Clark Publishing Company, Chicago and New York.

SURVEYOR:

Date bridge recorded December 1997
Name of surveyor Wallace, Montgomery & Associates / P.A.C. Spero & Company
Organization/Address P.A.C. Spero & Co., 40 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21204
Phone number (410) 296-1635 **FAX number** (410) 296-1670

Bridge Type CONCRETE ARCH
MHT# WA-V-63
Map A-7 CLEAR SPRING
County WASHINGTON
Bridge # and name 21023; MD 56 OVER LITTLE CONOCOCHEAGUE CREEK



SHANK RD
TED BRIDGE
LE UNIT
BS GVW
N UNIT
S GCW
STOP

WA-V-63

BR # 2102310

LITTLE CONOCOCHEAGUE CREEK

WASHINGTON CO., MD

DAVID KING

2/22/95

S.H.A

NORTH ELEVATION (UPSTREAM)

1 OF 5

RESTRICTED BRIDGE
SINGLE UNIT
24 000 LBS GVW
COMBINATION UNIT
24 000 LBS GCW

WA-V-63

BR # 2102310

LITTLE CONOCOCHEAGUE CREEK

WASHINGTON CO., MD.

DAVID KING

2/22/95

S. H. A

EAST APPROACH

2 OF 5

WA-V-63

BR # 2102310

LITTLE CONOCOCHEAGUE CREEK

WASHINGTON CO., MD.

DAVID KING

2/22/95

S. H. A.

WEST APPROACH

3 OF 5

WA-V-63

BR # 2102310

LITTLE CONOCOCHEAGUE CREEK

WASHINGTON CO., MD

DAVID KING

2/22/95

S. H. A.

SOUTH ELEVATION (UPSTREAM)

4 OF 5

BUILT BY
NELSON CONSTRUCTION CO.
1907
CHAMBG. & PITTSBG.

WA-V-63 BR # 2102310

LITTLE CONOCOCHEAGUE CREEK

WASHINGTON CO., MD.

DAVID KING

2/22/95

S. H. A.

PLAQUE ON NORTHERN PARAPET

5 OF 5

WA-V-063
District 4
Map 46
MAGI # 2212093717

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON
Concrete Arched Bridge

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Maryland Route 56 at Little Conococheague Creek

CITY, TOWN — X VICINITY OF Clear Spring — CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 6

STATE Maryland — COUNTY Washington

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
X STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	X TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Maryland State Highway Administration — Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Annapolis — __ VICINITY OF — STATE, zip code Maryland

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Liber #:
Folio #:

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Washington County Court House

STREET & NUMBER
West Washington Street

CITY, TOWN — STATE
Hagerstown — Maryland 21740

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE — __FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN — STATE

WA-V-063

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	X UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This reinforced concrete bridge has a single broad arch which carries Md. State Route 56 across the Little Conococheague Creek souhteast of Clear Spring.

A tablet in its side wall is inscribed with the date 1907 and the builder's name, the Nelson Construction Co., of Chambersburg and Pittsburgh, Pa. A tablet on the opposite wall gives the names of the County Commissioners.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

WA-V-063

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
_PREHISTORIC	_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	_COMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	_RELIGION
_1400-1499	_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	_CONSERVATION	_LAW	_SCIENCE
_1500-1599	_AGRICULTURE	_ECONOMICS	_LITERATURE	_SCULPTURE
_1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	_EDUCATION	_MILITARY	_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
_1700-1799	_ART	_ENGINEERING	_MUSIC	_THEATER
_1800-1899	_COMMERCE	_EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	_PHILOSOPHY	X TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	_COMMUNICATIONS	_INDUSTRY	_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)
		_INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1907 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Nelson Construction Co.,

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This concrete arched span is one of approximately three such structures extant in Washington County. These reinforced concrete structures are important as a relatively early use of this material. All were built during the first decade of the 20th century by the Nelson Company under its various names. The firm also apparently operated as Nelson and Buchannan and Nelson and Merydith, based in Chambersburg and Pittsburgh. The Nelson Company also built steel bridges in Washington County during the same period.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

WA-V-063

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

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
Paula Stoner, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION
Preservation Associates

DATE
July 1978

STREET & NUMBER
109 West Main Street, Box 202

TELEPHONE
301-432-5466

CITY OR TOWN
Sharpsburg

STATE
Maryland 21782

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

WA-V-063

Maryland Historical Trust

November 18, 1985

Mr. Louis H. Ege, Jr., Acting Chief
Bureau of Project Planning
Maryland Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 717
707 North Calvert Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21203-0717

Re: Bridge No. 21023
Maryland Route 56 over
Little Conococheague Creek
Washington County, Maryland
P.D.M.S. No. 213106

Dear Mr. Ege:

Thank you for your August 27, 1985 letter concerning the concrete arch bridge (WA-V-063) which SHA proposes to replace.

As you know, this office provided our opinion as to the eligibility of this structure for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in a letter to Ms. Rita Suffness of your staff, dated August 12, 1985. It appears to be the oldest concrete arch span bridge left on Maryland's state highway system.

You are correct in noting that this bridge was left out of the report on all M/DOT properties produced as a result of work the Trust did to assist the Department in meeting its historic preservation responsibilities under the 1978 Board of Public Works Policy Statement on the Preservation of Properties of Historic and Archeological Significance Owned or to be Acquired by the State. But this was a simple omission on our part, as the bridge had been surveyed by our Washington County Historic Sites Surveyor in July, 1978 (see enclosed survey form). Somehow, it was inadvertently left out of the final report which was transmitted to you. Although it was omitted from this report, the bridge is still a significant built resource, and one we feel is NR-eligible.

We also disagree with your statement that "this bridge is contemporaneous with six other concrete bridges which are still extant and in use on the Maryland state road system." The dictionary defines contemporaneous as "occurring at the same time." Clearly, this bridge is the oldest example of this functional bridge type (at 1907), when you compare its construction dates with the dates of concrete bridges

Shaw House, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21401 (301)269-2212, 269-2438
Department of Economic and Community Development

WA-V-063

included in our survey:

1)	BA-2070	Glyndon Bridge	1949
2)	CAR-257	Sandy Island Bridge	1919
3)	CE-998	US 40 over AMTRAK	1939
4)	M:37-6	195 over Sligo Creek	1932
5)	WA-II-476	US 40/Beaver Creek Bridge	1936
6)	WA-V-211	US 40/Conococheague Creek	1936

We also examined records produced by our field surveyors in the late 1970s to verify the dates of the other bridges which you referenced in your letter. Although our files were nonexistant for your bridge # 16065, 21049, and 5018, we were able to find construction dates for the following bridges:

7)	Bridge No. 1017	MD 746 over Jones Falls	1930
8)	Bridge No. 11024	US 29 over Youghiogheny River	1927
9)	Bridge 6024		1932
10)	Bridge 1033		1935

Therefore, within the context of concrete bridges on the state highway system, we have determined that this bridge <u>is</u> in fact the oldest of its type in existance, and represents the earliest use of this construction material/technology for a bridge serving the Maryland road system. We disagree with you that the Keeper would not believe these factors important in examining the resource's eligibility for NR listing.

In any case, we urge you to complete full DOE documentation for this structure, and request a formal determination by the Keeper of the National Register in this matter, if you disagree with the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Officer.

WA-V-063

Should you have any further questions in this matter, do not desitate contacting me at 269-2440. Please advise us of how you will proceed in this regard.

Sincerely,

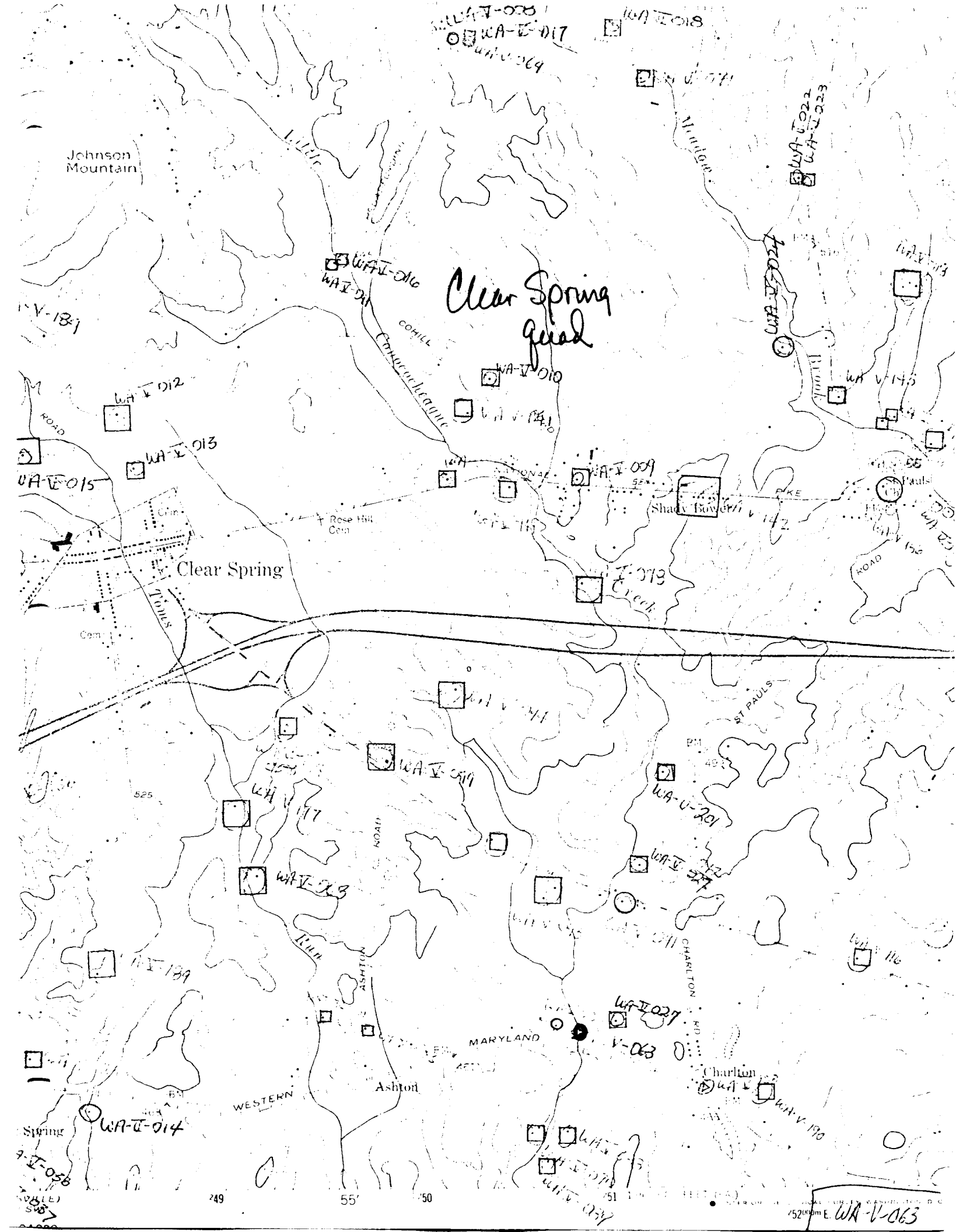
Mark R. Edwards

Mark R. Edwards
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

Enclosure

MRE/bjs

cc: Mr. Douglass Reed
Mr. David T. Cottingham
Ms. Pam Pendergrass



Clear Spring quad
Johnson Mountain
Clear Spring
Shady Bower
Rose Hill Cem
Cem
Tomes
Creek
Conococheague
COHILL
ROAD
ST PAULS
CHARLTON RD
MARYLAND
WESTERN
Ashton
Charlton
Spring
WA-V-063
WA-V-017
WA-V-018
WA-V-022
WA-V-023
WA-V-024
WA-V-016
WA-V-011
WA-V-010
WA-V-012
WA-V-013
WA-V-015
WA-V-009
WA-V-078
WA-V-201
WA-V-027
WA-V-014
WA-V-190
WA-V-189
WA-V-063
WA-V-058

WA-V-063
S.W.
March 1975

Concrete Arched Bridge

Md. Rt. 56 at Little Conococheague Creek
Clear Spring Vicinity

PAULA STONER DICKEY
CONSULTANT, WASHINGTON CO.
HISTORICAL SITES SURVEY

BUILT BY
NELSON CONSTRUCTION CO.
1907
CHAM BC. PITTS BC.

WA-V-063
Detail, S. wall
March, 1975

Concrete Arched Bridge

Md. Rt. 56 at Little Conococheague Creek
Clear Spring Vicinity

PAULA STONER DICKEY
CONSULTANT, WASHINGTON CO.
HISTORICAL SITES SURVEY

WA-V-063
Detail, N. wall
March 1975

Concrete Arched Bridge

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