United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property
   historic name Bridge No. L4013
   other names/site number Black Hammer Township Stone-Arch Bridge

2. Location
   street & number Twp. Rd. 126 over Riceford Creek
   city, town Black Hammer Township
   state Minnesota code MN county Houston code 055 zip code 55921

3. Classification
   Ownership of Property Category of Property Number of Resources within Property
   □ private □ building(s) Contributing Noncontributing buildings
   □ public-local □ district sites
   □ public-State □ site structures
   □ public-Federal □ structure objects
   □ object

   Name of related multiple property listing:
   Minnesota Masonry-Arch Highway Bridges
   Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this □ nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
   In my opinion, the property meets □ does not meet the National Register criteria. □ See continuation sheet.
   Signature of certifying official
   Ian R. Stewart
   Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
   State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society
   Date 5/14/98

   In my opinion, the property □ meets □ does not meet the National Register criteria. □ See continuation sheet.
   Signature of commenting or other official
   Date
   State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification
   I, hereby, certify that this property is:
   □ entered in the National Register.
   □ See continuation sheet.
   □ determined eligible for the National Register. □ See continuation sheet.
   □ determined not eligible for the National Register.
   □ removed from the National Register.
   □ other, (explain:)

   Signature of the Keeper
   Date of Action
6. Function or Use
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Transportation, road-related (vehicular)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Transportation, road-related (vehicular)

7. Description
Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Stone-arch bridge

Materials (enter categories from instructions)
foundation Stone, limestone
walls
roof
other Stone, limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Located in a wooded rural area of Houston County about 8 miles west of the City of Caledonia, the structure is a single-span, stone-arch bridge that carries an unpaved east-west road over a branch of Riceford Creek.

Built of coursed-ashlar, buff-colored limestone, the bridge displays a semicircular arch with a 12-foot, 6-inch span. The limestone matches farmstead foundations in the general vicinity, strongly suggesting a local origin. The quarry, however, has not been identified. The voussoirs are well blocked and uniform, measuring 8 inches in width and 12 inches in height. Joints are about 1-inch thick. Except for a few crude patches of repointing, the mortar has almost completely disintegrated from the intrados joints. The arch, however, retains its shape without any signs of settling. The arch springs about 4 feet above grade from sharply defined impost ledges that extend outward from the intrados about 6 inches. Constructed on a slight skew, the bridge has an overall width of approximately 18 feet. Spandrel walls are continuous with slightly flared wing walls.

To protect the foundations from the scour, the streambed under the bridge has been paved in concrete. Photographs from the 1950s and 1960s show stone parapet walls with pipe-metal railings on both sides of the roadway. These features have been removed, leaving a ragged masonry line flush with the roadway. None of the alterations affects the bridge's most significant elements, which are the design of the impost ledges and the configuration of the arch itself.
8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally  ☑ statewide  ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  ☐ A  ☐ B  ☑ C  ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  ☐ A  ☐ B  ☐ C  ☐ D  ☐ E  ☐ F  ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Engineering

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

Period of Significance

1915

Significant Dates

1915

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Rasmussen, Alfred J., engineer

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Bridge No. L4013 embodies engineering significance in the context of Minnesota masonry-arch highway bridges of the period 1870 to 1945. Constructed in 1915, the structure is important as the only surviving, authenticated example of an early twentieth-century, state-designed, stone-arch bridge. Since its design is replicated in other counties, the bridge provides strong evidence that the Minnesota State Highway Commission (MHC) attempted to standardize stone-arch bridge construction in much the same way that it sought to create uniformity in the design of steel and concrete bridges.

As the historical context points out (see Section E, pp. 6-7), the MHC was officially organized in 1905 to improve the quality of roads and bridges in the state. To fulfill its responsibilities, the MHC assigned field engineers to assist county governments with highway projects, and prepared a series of standard bridge plans, including " plans for beam spans, plate girders, low trusses and high trusses, reinforced concrete slab and girder bridges." Although MHC reports do not mention a stone-arch plan, the commission's field engineers apparently had at their disposal a standard short-span design appropriate for the limestone region of southeastern Minnesota. In January 1915, for example, Houston County requested Alfred J. Rasmussen, the MHC engineer for that county, "to make a survey and draw plans" for a bridge in Section 20 (southwest quarter of northwest quarter) of Black Hammer Township. The county approved the plans a month later, and, although county records provide no further information on the project, the bridge presumably was built by the end of the summer.

☑ See continuation sheet
In its basic design, Bridge No. L4013 is a 12-foot-span, semicircular stone arch with distinctive, 6-inch-wide impost ledges, which probably served as supports for the arch centering. Although it is perhaps not surprising that a nearby bridge in Black Hammer Township (Bridge No. L4009) incorporates the same kind of construction, it is remarkable that the design repeats itself on early twentieth-century, rural bridges in Fillmore County (L4770) and Wabasha County (Bridge Nos. L1122, 93741). The construction history of these bridges is unknown, but it is unlikely that Rasmussen was their designer. MHC records indicate that he was assigned only to Fillmore County, which hired him away from the state to fill the newly created position of county engineer in the summer of 1915, reappointing him the next year. By 1920, Rasmussen had relocated to Lacrosse, Wisconsin where he established a private business as "engineer and contractor." Instead of a single designer, the geographic range of the "impost-ledge type" of stone-arch bridge suggests the existence of a state-sponsored standard plan, which would have been in keeping with the MHC's general policy toward bridge design.

Notes


2. Proceedings of the Houston County Board of Commissioners, January 5, February 13, 1915. Houston County Courthouse.

9. Major Bibliographical References


Proceedings of the Houston County Board of Commissioners, January 6, February 13, June 22, 1915; March 29, 1916. Houston County Courthouse.


10. Geographical Data

Acres of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

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B Zone Easting Northing

D Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is defined by a rectangle measuring 15 feet east-west by 20 feet north-south, whose vertices coincide with the outside corners of the bridge's wing walls.

Boundary Justification

Based on field measurements, as well as measurements provided by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the boundaries enclose the bridge's superstructure and substructure, including wing walls.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeffrey A. Hess, Historical Consultant
organization
street & number 305 Grain Exchange Building
city or town Minneapolis
state Minnesota zip code 55415

date August 1988 telephone 612-338-1987
Black Hammer Township Stone-Arch Bridge in Houston County Is Entered on the National Register of Historic Places

The Black Hammer Township Stone-Arch Bridge, also known as Bridge No. L4013, recently was entered on the National Register of Historic Places. The bridge, which traverses Riceford Creek about 8 miles west of the city of Caledonia, was constructed in 1915. It is important as the only surviving, authenticated example of an early 20th-century, state-designed, stone-arch bridge. It is among 10 bridges throughout the state comprising a National Register multiple-property listing of "Minnesota Masonry-Arch Highway Bridges, 1870-1945."

The National Register of Historic Places now contains 1,364 listings from Minnesota, representing more than 4,870 buildings, structures, sites and objects. Properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of their association with significant persons and events, because of their architectural or engineering significance, or because they contain important information about our history or prehistory. Listing on the National Register recognizes that properties are worthy of preservation. Certain properties also may be eligible for federal tax benefits and grant funds. The National Register is maintained by the National Park Service and is administered in Minnesota by the State Historic Preservation Office at the Minnesota Historical Society.

For information about nominating properties to the National Register or to learn more about historic preservation in Minnesota, contact the State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, Fort Snelling History Center, St. Paul, MN 55111; phone (612) 726-1171.

END

Note to editors: For a copy of more background information on this property, contact Tim O'Donnell, Minnesota Historical Society, at (612) 296-4566.
Black Hammer Township stone-arch bridge entered on National Register of Historic Places

This Black Hammer Township stone-arch bridge recently was entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Black Hammer Township Stone-Arch Bridge, also known as Bridge No. L4013, recently was entered on the National Register of Historic Places. The bridge, which traverses Riceford Creek about eight miles west of the city of Caledonia, was constructed in 1915. It is important as the only surviving, authenticated example of an early 20th-century, state-designated, stone-arch bridge. It is among 10 bridges throughout the state comprising a National Register multiple-property listing of "Minnesota Masonry-Arch Highway Bridges, 1870 - 1945."

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MISSOURI
Franklin County
Furness Feed Store
445 S. Clay St.
St. Clair 705/90 90001023

St. Charles County
Huntsville Tobacco Company Factory
406 E. St.
Huntsville 705/90 90001024

NEBRASKA
Boyd County
White Horse Ranch
SE of Highway between the Nebras and Nebraska Rivers
Highway vicinity 705/90 90000094

Dawes County
Dawes County Courthouse
County Courthouses of Nebraska NPS
S. Rain St. between 4th and 5th Sts.
Chadron 705/90 900000105

Franklin County
Franklin County Courthouse
County Courthouses of Nebraska NPS
15th Ave. between N and E Sts.
Franklin 705/90 900000082

Custer County
Custer County Courthouse
County Courthouses of Nebraska NPS
507 3rd Ave.
Elmwood 705/90 900000061

Holt County
Holt County Courthouse
County Courthouses of Nebraska NPS
m. 4th St. between E. Clay and Benton Sts.
O'Neill 705/90 900000051

Kimball County
Kimball County Courthouse
County Courthouses of Nebraska NPS
114 E. 3rd St.
Kimball 705/90 900000071

Knox County
Knox County Courthouse
County Courthouses of Nebraska NPS
Rain St. between Bazzil and Bridge Sts.
Knox 705/90 900000072

NEW MEXICO
San Miguel County
San Jose de las Huertas
Address Restricted
Placitas vicinity 705/90 900001023

Torrance County
Henning's E. Martin, House and Studio Historic District
SE corner of Julian St. and Rat Carson Rd.
Torrance 705/90 900001023

NORTH CAROLINA
Cabarrus County
Bolick Historic District
Cabarrus County NPS
First Ave. S. between US 64/70 and 12th St.
Conover 705/90 900001023

Boat-Burris House
Cabarrus County NPS
Jct. of SR 1143 and SR 1164
Newton vicinity 705/90 900001031

Four-Clims House
Cabarrus County NPS
488 S. Main Ave.
Newton 705/90 900001034

Grace Reformed Church
Cabarrus County NPS
201-211 S. Main St.
Newton 705/90 900001035

Rock Barn Farm
Cabarrus County NPS
W side of SR 1705, 4 mi. N of jct. with SR 1715
Clarence vicinity 705/90 900001038

Self-Trinity-Hicketh House
Cabarrus County NPS
331 S. College Ave.
Newton 705/90 900001037

Uwharie County
Nyett, Leonard R., House
107 S. Blandworth St.
Ralsey 705/90 900001030

OHIO
Delaware County
D'O'Haggerty Dam and Bridge
Co. Rd. 125 between CR 15 and 245
Shawnee Hills vicinity 705/90 90000482
November 6, 1990

Mr. Norman Hoscheit, Chair
Houston County Board of Commissioners
Houston County Courthouse
304 South Marshall
Caledonia, Minnesota 55921

Dear Mr. Hoscheit:

RE: Bridge No. L-4013 (Black Hammer Township Stone-Arch Bridge), Township Road 126 over Riceford Creek, Black Hammer Township, (vicinity of Caledonia), Houston County

The above property has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register, as you know, is a listing of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects considered to be worthy of preservation. An information sheet describing the program is enclosed.

Your objection to this nomination was received prior to the State Review Board Meeting. Please note that federal regulations (36 CFR 60.6) which prohibit the listing of a property when the owner has objected to listing apply only to private property. In this case, your objection was considered during the review process. However, because the property was found to be significant under National Register criteria, and because it is public property, it was submitted for listing in accordance with the procedures. If you have any questions regarding this process, please do not hesitate to contact Dennis Gimnestad, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, at the above address and telephone number.

We urge that you consider the significance of this property as you plan for its future treatment; please let us know if we can be of assistance in this regard.

Sincerely,

Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer

encl: Copy of Nomination, National Register Program Sheet

cc: Alden Solum, Chair, Black Hammer Township, Route 2, Box 91, Spring Grove, MN 55974
    Mr. Raymond Halzworth, President, Houston County Historical Society, Brownsville, MN 55919
    Mr. Jeff Hess, Hess, Roise, and Co., 710 Grain Exchange Building, Minneapolis, MN 55415