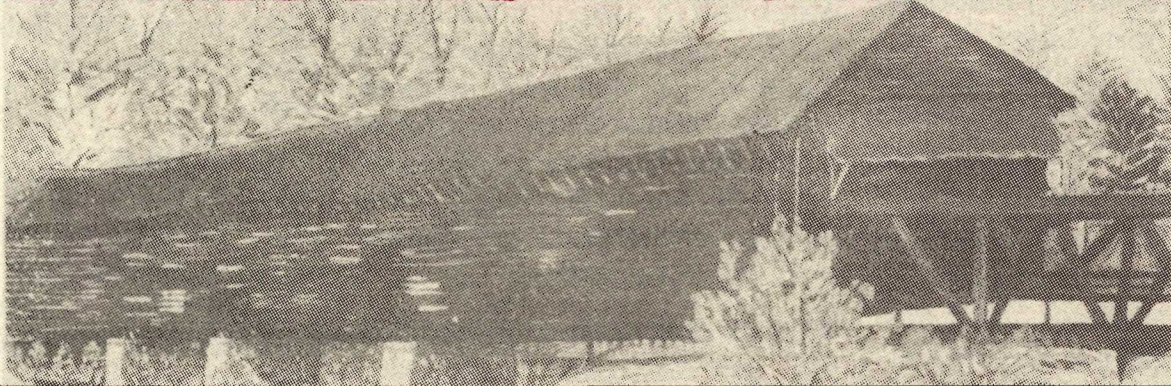


MILLER COVERED BRIDGE

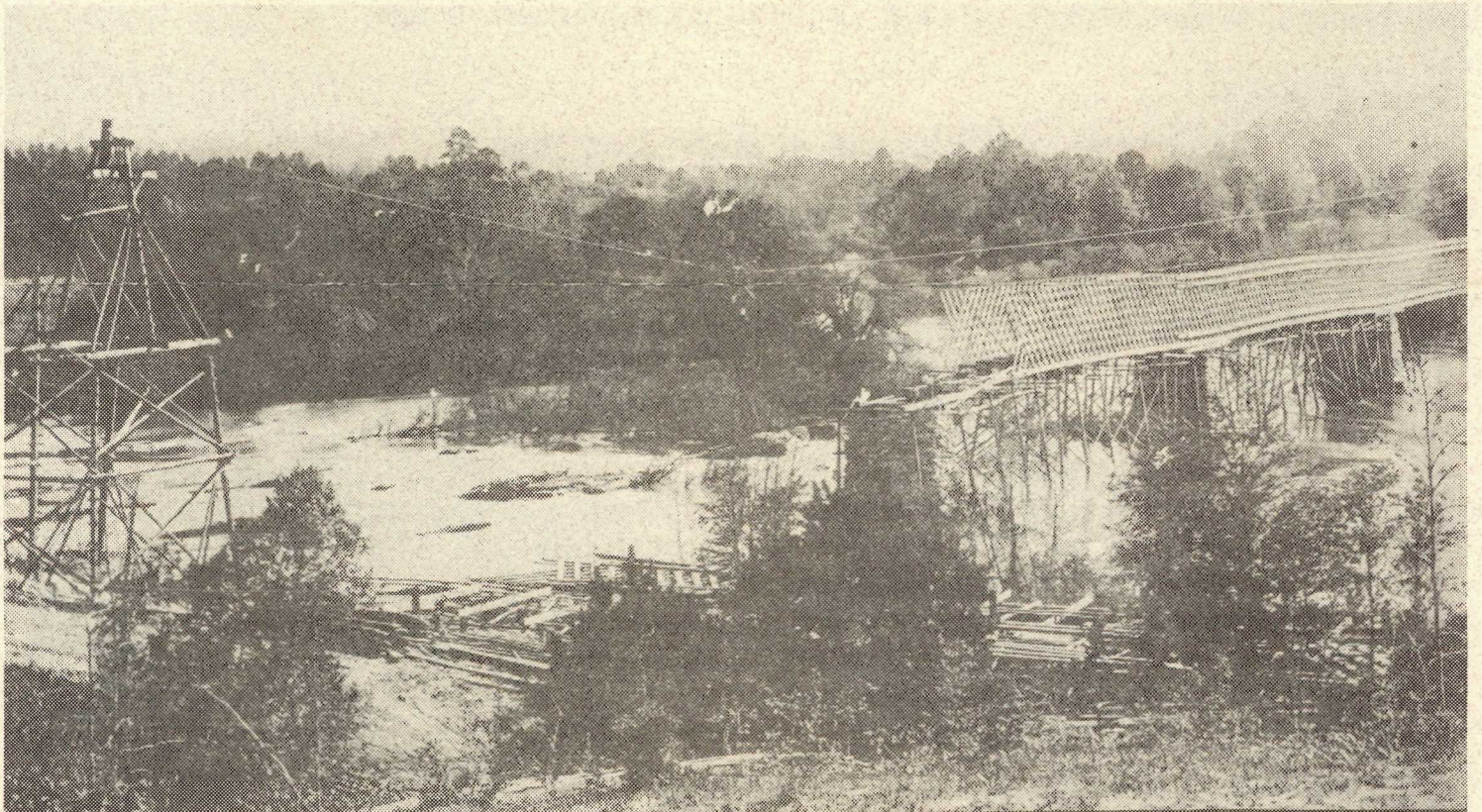
Horseshoe Bend
National Military Park



Miller Ferry

Prior to 1908 the only way that a traveler could cross the Tallapoosa River between New Site and Dadeville was by way of the Miller Ferry. The

ferry, which operated on land owned by Mrs. Nora E. Miller of Dadeville, was located just a few yards downstream of the Horseshoe Bend.



Miller Bridge

In May 1907, plans for the construction of a bridge across the Tallapoosa River near the Horseshoe Bend were approved. The contract for building of the bridge went to W. H. Wynn and his son Will of Dadeville, for \$13,896.

Rocks from the north bank of the river were used in the construction of five support pilings above the river. Heart pine timber, some nearly twenty feet in length, were cut and hewn nearby and then fitted together to form a lattice tower

truss. Weatherboards and a wood shingle roof originally covered the framework of the bridge. Due to the high costs of nails, 1600 oak pegs were used to hold the bridge together.

The bridge, built along the same principle as other covered bridges, was enclosed in the belief that being covered from the weather and the wind would extend the life of the wood.

The covered bridge was completed in 1908 and named in honor of Mrs. Nora Miller. It measured just over 858 feet from bank to bank and was the longest

covered bridge in Alabama at the time. It was also one of the longest spans in the United States.

The bridge's romance included ghosts. It is said that when the bridge was still standing, anyone walking through its length at night might hear the clip-clop sounds of a horse or mule's hooves beating upon the sturdy wooden timbers. But when the person turned to see what was thought to be an approaching buggy or wagon, he would see nothing at all and the mysterious clip-clopping sound would stop.

Demise of the Bridge

The Miller Covered Bridge served the people of Tallapoosa County for forty-seven years until progress caught up with her. Larger cars and heavier trucks brought an end to the era of the covered bridge.

In 1955 a modern steel and concrete bridge was built over the Tallapoosa River. This new bridge, built next to the wooden structure, took over the duties of the old bridge.

Once it fell into disuse, the bridge began to deteriorate. Wind blew portions of the tin roof, which replaced the earlier wood shingle roof, into the river. Cracks began to appear in the stone pilings and the support beams began to rot.

With the creation of Horseshoe Bend National Military Park in

1959, the National Park Service looked into the possibility of restoring the Miller Bridge as a historic and scenic walkway. An architectural firm was hired to assess the costs of such a restoration project. To make the bridge safe to walk across required an estimated \$125,000. Complete renovation would cost up to \$267,000. If the bridge were to be saved outside help would be needed.

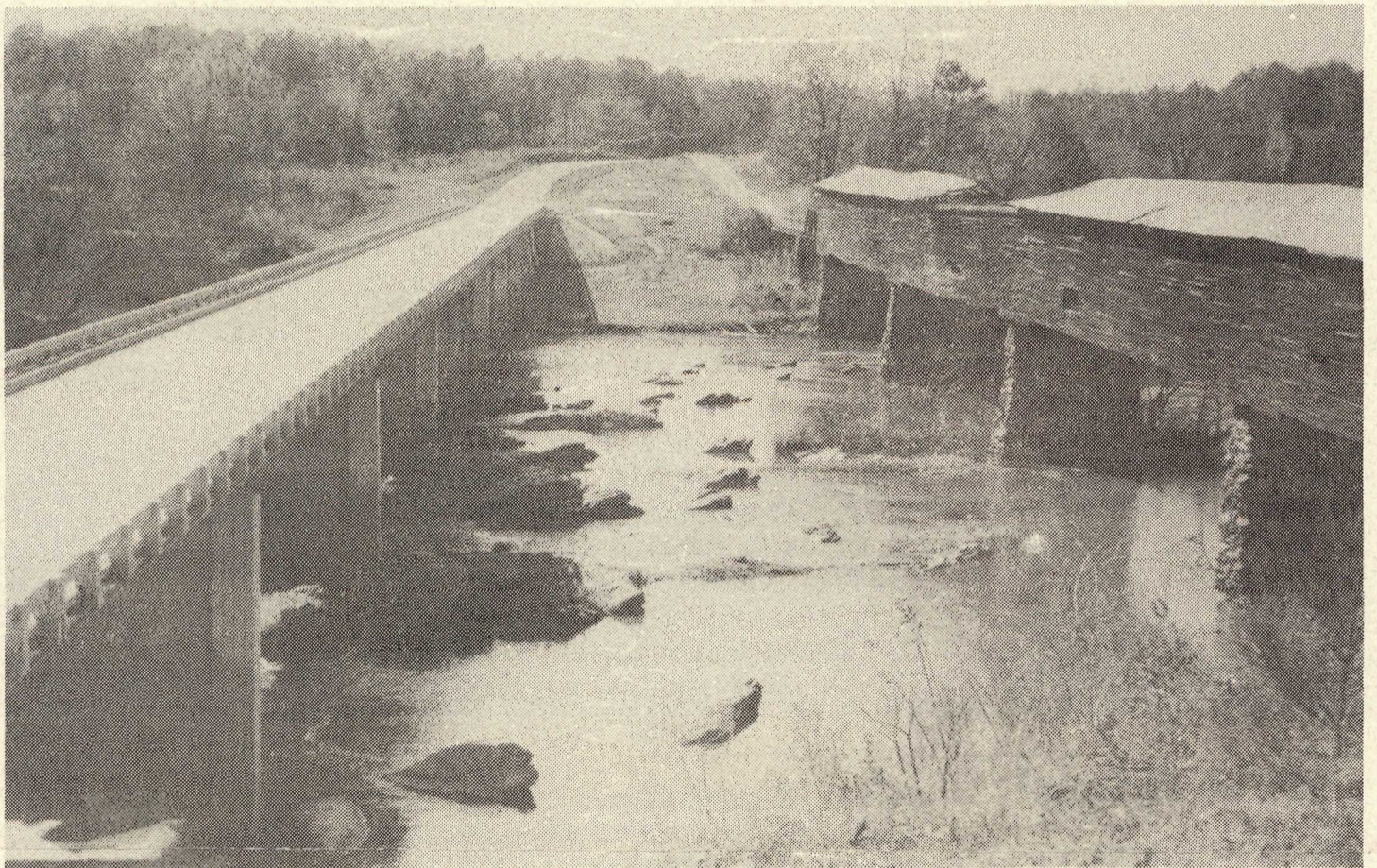
State and private groups could not generate the necessary funding required for the restoration of the covered bridge. Public support for the project was lacking and several donation drives ended in failure. Faced with lack of funding, the Park Service reluctantly abandoned the restoration project.

In 1963, the hot and humid weather took its toll on the old bridge. A large crack formed

causing one side of the bridge to sag dangerously. Park Rangers closed both approaches to the structure.

Early Sunday morning, June 23, 1963, part of the Miller Covered Bridge collapsed and fell into the river.

Recent rains had added too much weight to the already dry rotted support beams causing the bridge's demise. The National Park Service contracted a firm to remove the remains of the bridge, which were piled in the bottom of the south bank of the river. Many people came to watch the dismantling of the old landmark, and memories of having to cross the long, dark creaky bridge on a moonless night or of a kiss stolen from a sweetheart in the dark prompted many to ask for an old peg or a piece of the bridge.



Tallapoosa River

Originating from its headwaters in Georgia, the Tallapoosa River flows southwest into Alabama where it merges with the Coosa River to form the Alabama River. The River takes its name from the Choctaw or Alabama Indian phrase meaning "crushed rock" or "sands".

Although several dams controls

its flow, the Tallapoosa is generally, a slow moving, shallow river. Approximately 3.5 miles of the river flows through the boundary of Horseshoe Bend National Military Park. The park administers a boat ramp on the south bank of the river, near the old entrance site to the covered bridge.

Visitors wishing to boat or fish

are required to comply with both state and federal boating and fishing regulations. A permit is required for use of the boat ramp area after hours, and can be obtained at the Park Visitor Center.

All natural and historic features are protected by law and collection is strictly prohibited.