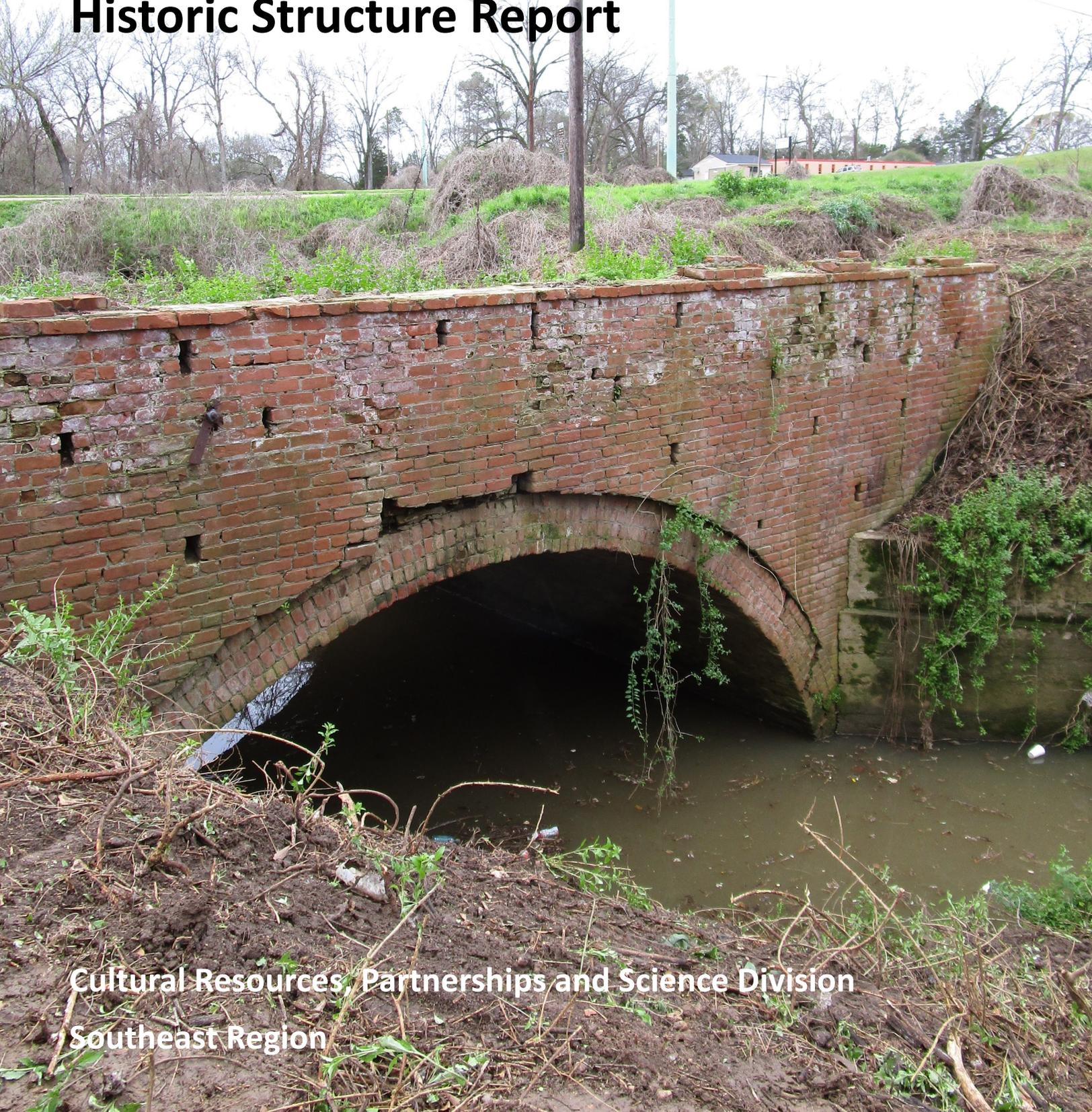




Forks of the Road Bridge

Historic Structure Report



Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science Division
Southeast Region

Forks of the Road Bridge

Natchez National Historical Park

Natchez, Mississippi

Historic Structure Report

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About the front cover: View of the Forks of the Road Bridge looking southwest, March 2018. Source: Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.

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Forks of the Road Bridge Natchez National Historical Park

Natchez, Mississippi

Historic Structure Report

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Foreword

We are pleased to make available this Historic Structure Report of the Brick Bridge, part of the ongoing effort to provide comprehensive documentation for the historic structures and cultural landscapes associated with the Forks of the Road, soon-to-become a component of the Natchez National Historical Park.

A number of individuals and institutions contributed to the successful completion of this work. We would particularly like to thank the staff at Natchez National Historical Park and the Historic Natchez Foundation for their assistance throughout this project. Also, we thank the staff of the Southern Regional Office of the National Park Service.

We hope that this study will prove valuable to park management team in ongoing efforts to preserve this historic structure and to everyone in understanding and interpreting this unique resource.

Kathleen Bond
Superintendent
Natchez National Historical Park
National Park Service

Management Summary

At the request of the National Park Service (NPS), Panamerican Consultants, Inc. and its subconsultants, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) and WFT Architects (WFTA), have developed this Historic Structure Report (HSR) for the Forks of the Road Bridge. The bridge is located near Natchez National Historical Park in Natchez, Mississippi. Refer to Figure 1 through Figure 3 at the end of this chapter for maps showing the location of Natchez and the Forks of the Road Bridge. Figure 1 is a map of Mississippi showing the location of the park and Natchez. Figure 2 is a partial map of the City of Natchez. Figure 3 is an aerial image showing the location of the Forks of the Road Bridge and surrounding roads.

The Forks of the Road Bridge is important for its association with the history of Natchez, the historic location of the Forks of the Road slave market, and as an example of a brick masonry bridge constructed in the late 1800s. The City of Natchez contains eight National Register of Historic Places districts, eleven national historic landmarks, though none of them incorporates the Forks of the Road Bridge.¹

Historical Data

The purpose of Natchez National Historical Park is to preserve and interpret the complex history and material culture of all of the peoples of Natchez, Mississippi, emphasizing European settlement, African enslavement, the American

cotton economy, and the civil rights struggle on the lower Mississippi River.² Ownership of the Forks of the Road site, which contains the Forks of the Road Bridge over Spanish Bayou at the former continuation of Old Washington Road, is anticipated to be transferred to the National Park Service in 2020. When the bridge is acquired by the NPS, it will be done with the idea of helping preserve and tell the story of African enslavement, especially the story associated with the Forks of the Road slave market, since no physical resources—ruins or other remains—likely exist from the second largest slave market in the Deep South.³

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Natchez, as a result of its location near the Mississippi River, was emerging as an important location for the inland trade including enslaved peoples. At that time, the planting and harvesting of cotton in the inland South was replacing the production of tobacco and indigo in the plantations of Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee as the leading agricultural commodities of the South. These new cotton plantations required workers as a result of the labor-intensive nature of cotton cultivation; however, the importation of

1. National Park Service, "History & Culture," Natchez National Historical Park website. Last updated December 13, 2017 <https://www.nps.gov/natc/learn/historyculture/index.htm>.

2. National Park Service, *Foundation Document Overview Natchez National Historical Park, Mississippi* (N.P.: National Park Service, n.d.), 2.

3. *The Meridian Star*, "Bridge to Forks of the Road donated to City," Meridian, Mississippi, May 15, 2015, accessed September 27, 2018, http://www.meridianstar.com/news/state_news/bridge-to-forks-of-the-road-donated-to-city/article_67f5ac70-fb08-11e4-bb20-7b57a7ce7ac5.html. It is not known whether or not archeological resources associated with Forks of the Road slave market are present.

Africans into the United States for use as enslaved people was outlawed in 1807. An answer to this labor problem was provided by the decline of the fertility of the tobacco plantations in the eastern states, which reduced their yields and lessened their need for enslaved labor. As a result these plantations could provide a seemingly inexhaustible supply of labor for the newly burgeoning cotton plantation economy in the inland South.⁴ Slave traders purchased enslaved laborers cheaply in the East then sold them for a premium in the markets of Natchez and New Orleans. Successful traders employed agents who moved throughout the tobacco and rice states gathering enough enslaved people for a large “coffle”—a line of humans fastened or driven along together.

Enslaved people were sold in numerous places throughout Natchez, but Forks of the Road, a site immediately on the eastern edge of the city limits at the busy intersection of Washington and Liberty Roads, became the most important market. In April 1833, due to the perceived threat of cholera, the City of Natchez passed an ordinance banning long-distance traders from selling enslaved people within the city limits, and the market at the Forks of the Road grew as a result. Washington Road connected Natchez to the town of Washington, the Natchez Trace, and ultimately northern Alabama and Tennessee.⁵ The market at Forks of the Road also sold other goods such as livestock and auctioned items such as household goods.

The importance of Forks of the Road as a slave market increased in 1833. Isaac Franklin rented or purchased the property inside the angle of the fork between St. Catherine Street and Liberty Street, and with his partner, John Armfield, they became the most active slave traders in the United States. They were among the first to take advantage of the differences in prices between the relatively low prices in Virginia and Maryland and the high

prices in Mississippi.⁶ Franklin and Armfield sent an annual overland coffle from Virginia to the Forks of the Road market. These coffles usually left Alexandria, Virginia, for Natchez travelling through Tennessee and down the Natchez Trace, which helped to earn the trace the name the “Slave Trail of Tears.”⁷ At the end of the trek, as the coffle was approaching the Natchez market, it had to pass over Spanish Bayou, a waterway that cuts deeply into the surrounding landscape. The traditional alignment of Washington Road seems to indicate that a bridge of some type was situated across the bayou since the route does not veer in its course.

After the Civil War, the Forks of the Road area began to change, as the city began to slowly grow to the east, and businesses and homes began to be established along St. Catherine Street. Historic documentation indicates that there has been a public bridge at Spanish Bayou and Washington Road (Old Court House Road or Second Creek Road) since 1830.⁸ However, the topography of the area—steep slopes to a bayou that can run swiftly with water during inclement weather—virtually mandates the existence of some type of bridge since early in the area’s history, especially as the Spanish Bayou is at the end of the Natchez Trace. Bridges are known to have been constructed on this site in 1858, 1862, and 1888.⁹

The first written account of a bridge at this site occurred in 1830, when a newspaper noted a bridge at the “fork at the road” had part of its arch fall, and it required repairs. In 1858, another bridge was constructed over the bayou on Washington Road by the order of the Adams County board of supervisors. On September 17, 1862, a different bridge was erected where the

4. Jim Barnett and H. Clarke Burkett, “The Forks of the Road Slave Market at Natchez,” *The Journal of Mississippi History*, Volume 63, Issue 3 (Fall 2001), 170.
5. *Ibid.*, 171.

6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, 181, and Edward Ball, “Slavery’s Trail of Tears,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, November 2015, accessed October 2, 2018, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/slavery-trail-of-tears-180956968/>.
8. *Mississippi Gazette*, May 15, 1830, 2.
9. *Mississippi Free Trader (Natchez)*, June 28, 1858, 2; *The Daily Courier (Natchez)*, Sept 17, 1862, 1; *Weekly Democrat*, August 15, 1888, 3.

bayou crosses with Washington Road. In 1883, complaints against the newer but “defective bridge” located over the Spanish Bayou on the Old Court House Road were detailed in *The Natchez Democrat*.¹⁰

During July 1888, advertisements for bids for the building of a new bridge were placed in engineering publications and possibly local papers as was customary at the time. During August of the same year, bids were received, with the construction contract awarded to L. Terrell on August 14, 1888. Terrell’s design was considered the “cheapest and best” option, and he was paid for the completion of the bridge on September 19, 1888. The bridge and surrounding landscape were subject to subsequent repairs and modifications for the next twenty years.

During the first decades of twentieth century, the urban landscape of Natchez was becoming increasingly crowded with cars and horses, which created congestion so great that some city streets were made one way.¹¹ Earlier, in 1902, the city had entertained building a new city street to relieve traffic on St. Catherine Street due to business growth and “automobile tracks.”¹² At the same time, automobile owners began to agitate for a well-maintained system of roads that connected the coasts and borders of the United States. From this agitation grew the US Federal Highway System also known as the US Numbered Highway System. Although the system is called the “US Federal” system, it was the states coming together to work out a system of roads connecting themselves to each other.¹³ The states began to

create a national highway system with standardized road signs and numbered highways.

In 1924, the US Secretary of Commerce created the Joint Board on Interstate Highways to begin the process of building a new standardized road system. One of the north-south highways established by this committee is US Highway 61, later portions of which were known as the Great River Road, which originally stretched from Wyoming, Minnesota, at the Canadian border, passing through Mississippi, to New Orleans, generally following the Mississippi River for 2,069 miles.¹⁴ US 61 was created to enter Natchez on existing road systems passing by Forks of the Road, which it still does. It is not clear at what date US 61 was designated and marked through Natchez or what street it was using. Any road changes—widening, culvert changes, etc.—would possibly affect Spanish Bayou and the brick bridge. It may be that the bridge was cut off from the Natchez transportation network at the time US 61 entered Natchez (see discussion of Bridge History in Section 2).

By the late 1950s or early 1960s, US 61 became a divided highway, and it was named US 61 / D’Evereux Drive, after the former estate house through whose land it now passes. If the original designation and changes to accommodate US 61 did not cut off the bridge and Old Washington Road, this change did. This straight, modern highway made no accommodations for idiosyncratic changes in roads or topography, and it moves smoothly to connect with St. Catherine Street traveling west and leaving Franklin Street extending east.

The brick arch bridge now stands in an open, weed-filled lot within the viewshed of Forks of the Road. The bridge is no longer associated with Washington Road, and, in fact, the name of the road has been changed to Old Washington Road, which now ends at South Concord Road. The bridge has been covered for many years by thick

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10. *The Natchez Democrat*, October 25, 1883, 1.
 11. Suzanne T. Dolensky, “Natchez in 1920: On the Threshold of Modernity,” *The Journal of Mississippi History*, Summer 2011, 124, accessed September 28, 2018, https://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/JMH_Summer2011.pdf.
 12. *Natchez Democrat*, December 4, 1902, 8.
 13. Richard F. Weingroff, “From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the US Numbered Highway System,” *AASHTO Quarterly*, Spring, 1997, n.p.

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14. Federal Highway Administration, “The Great River Road,” accessed September 28, 2018, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/byways/byways/>.

kudzu and brush and has been scoured by the waters of the Spanish Bayou.

Treatment and Use

The Forks in the Road Bridge is associated with historic Natchez and is an example of regional masonry bridge construction dating to circa 1888. The National Park Service anticipates receiving ownership of the bridge from the City of Natchez in 2020. After the NPS formally acquires the structure, it is anticipated the bridge will be stabilized, repaired, maintained, and interpreted. Although not yet listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the bridge is of historic interest and is potentially significant. The recommended overarching treatment for the bridge is *Preservation* to support interpretation by the park, while retaining and protecting historic character-defining features.

The bridge is generally in fair condition, with localized areas in poor condition. Stabilization and repairs are required to address localized collapse and weathering-related deterioration.

Administrative Data

Locational Data

Structure Name: Forks of the Road Bridge

Location: Spanish Bayou at the former continuation of Old Washington Road, Natchez, Mississippi

UTM Coordinates: R N: 3492404 E: 653583

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates: 31.556697° north, 91.381716° west

LCS Number: The bridge is not in the LCS.

Related Studies

Ronald L. F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez, 1720–1880: Special History Study*. Denver, Colorado: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1993.

Coleman, J. W., ed. *Final General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan/Environmental*

Impact Statement, Natchez National Historical Park. Atlanta, Georgia: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 1994.

Weekly Democrat, Natchez, Mississippi, August 15, 1888

Cultural Resources Data

Natchez National Historical Park is composed of discontinuous sites: the former Fort Rosalie site along the Mississippi River (adjacent to the park's primary visitor center, constructed in 1998); the Melrose estate; and the William Johnson House. All three historical sites are administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places due to their presence within the Natchez National Historical Park. In addition, the Melrose estate is a designated National Historic Landmark (1974), and National Register documentation exists for the William Johnson House (constructed 1840–1841 and individually listed). The Fort Rosalie site (constructed by the French in 1716 and abandoned by the United States in 1804) is included in the Natchez Bluffs and Under-the-Hill Historic District). Once the NPS receives ownership of the Forks of the Road site, which contains the Forks of the Road Bridge, the boundary of Natchez National Historical Park will be revised.

The Natchez National Historical Park was established on October 7, 1988. The legislation called for the park to consist of the Melrose estate as well as the lands associated with Fort Rosalie.¹⁵

On September 28, 1990, the park boundaries were expanded to include the William Johnson House at 210 State Street in Natchez.¹⁶

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15. "An Act to Create a National Park at Natchez, Mississippi," Public Law 100-479. October 7, 1988.
 16. "To provide for the acquisition of the William Johnson House and its addition to the Natchez National Historical Park, and for other purposes." Public Law No: 101-399. September 28, 1990.

On May 5, 2017, legislation was signed into law authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to acquire by donation or purchase, any lands at the site of the historic Forks of the Road slave market.¹⁷

Period of Significance: circa 1888¹⁸

Proposed Treatment: Preservation

Project Scope and Methodology

The goal of the Historic Structure Report is to develop planning information for use in the repair, maintenance, and preservation of historically significant buildings and structures. First developed by the National Park Service in the 1930s, HSRs are documents prepared for a building, structure, or group of buildings and structures of recognized significance. They are developed to record and analyze the property's initial construction and subsequent alterations through historical, physical, and pictorial evidence; to document the performance and condition of the structure's materials and overall physical stability; to identify an appropriate course of treatment; and, following implementation of the recommended work, to document alterations made through that treatment.¹⁹

This HSR addresses key issues specific to the Forks of the Road Bridge, including the history and construction chronology of the structure (as possible based on available archival documentation); the existing physical condition of

materials; and the historic significance and integrity of the structure.

The following project methodology was used for to prepare this study.

Research and Document Review. Archival research was performed to gather information about the original construction and past modifications and repairs for use in assessing existing conditions and developing treatment recommendations for the structure. Documents reviewed included maps, historic photographs, and other written and illustrative documentation about the history, construction, evolution, and repairs to the structure. The research for this study built upon prior historical and archival research completed by the National Park Service and others, as outlined in the bibliography provided with this report. Primary reference material for this study was obtained during research conducted in local archives during the site visit, and online research conducted remotely following the site visit.

Condition Assessment and Documentation. Concurrent with the historical research, a condition survey of the structure was performed and observations were documented with digital photographs, field notes, and annotations on sketch drawings prepared by the project team while on site. The condition assessment addressed the materials and features of the bridge.

Development of History, Chronology of Construction, and Evaluation of Significance. Based on historical documentation and physical evidence gathered during the study, a context history and a chronology of design and construction were developed. An evaluation of the significance was also prepared, taking into consideration guidelines provided by *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register*

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17. "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017" Public Law No: 115-31. May 5, 2017.
 18. The period of significance, 1888, focuses on the date of construction of the bridge, which was not present during pre-1863 slave trading activity at Forks of the Road. Refer to the Significance and Integrity chapter of this report for further discussion of this issue.
 19. Deborah Slaton, *Preservation Brief 43: The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, 2005).

*Criteria for Evaluation.*²⁰ This evaluation of history and significance provided the basis for the development of treatment recommendations.

Treatment Recommendations. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties guided the development of treatment recommendations for the significant features of the bridge. Following the overall treatment approach of *preservation*, which allows for work which will maintain the structures existing form, materials, and integrity, the focus of this work is on the repair and maintenance of the structure rather than new construction.²¹

Preparation of Historic Structure Report.

Following completion of research, site work, and analysis, a narrative report was prepared summarizing the results of the research and inspection and presenting recommendations for treatment. The HSR was compiled following the organizational guidelines of NPS *Preservation Brief 43: The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports*, with modifications made to the organizational structure as needed to meet the purposes of this project.²²

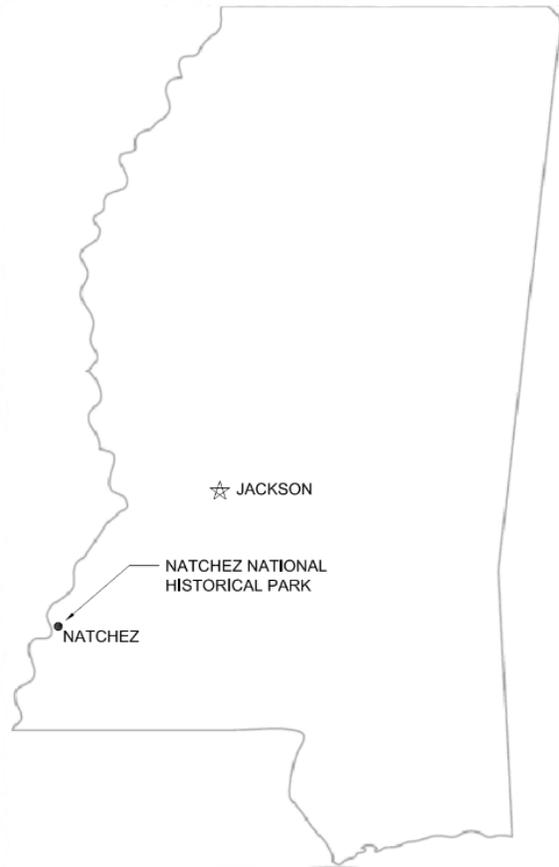


FIGURE 1. A map of Mississippi showing the location of Natchez and Natchez National Historical Park. (Source: US Census Bureau, modified by the authors)

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20. National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 1997).
 21. Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Historic Preservation Services, 2017).
 22. Slaton.

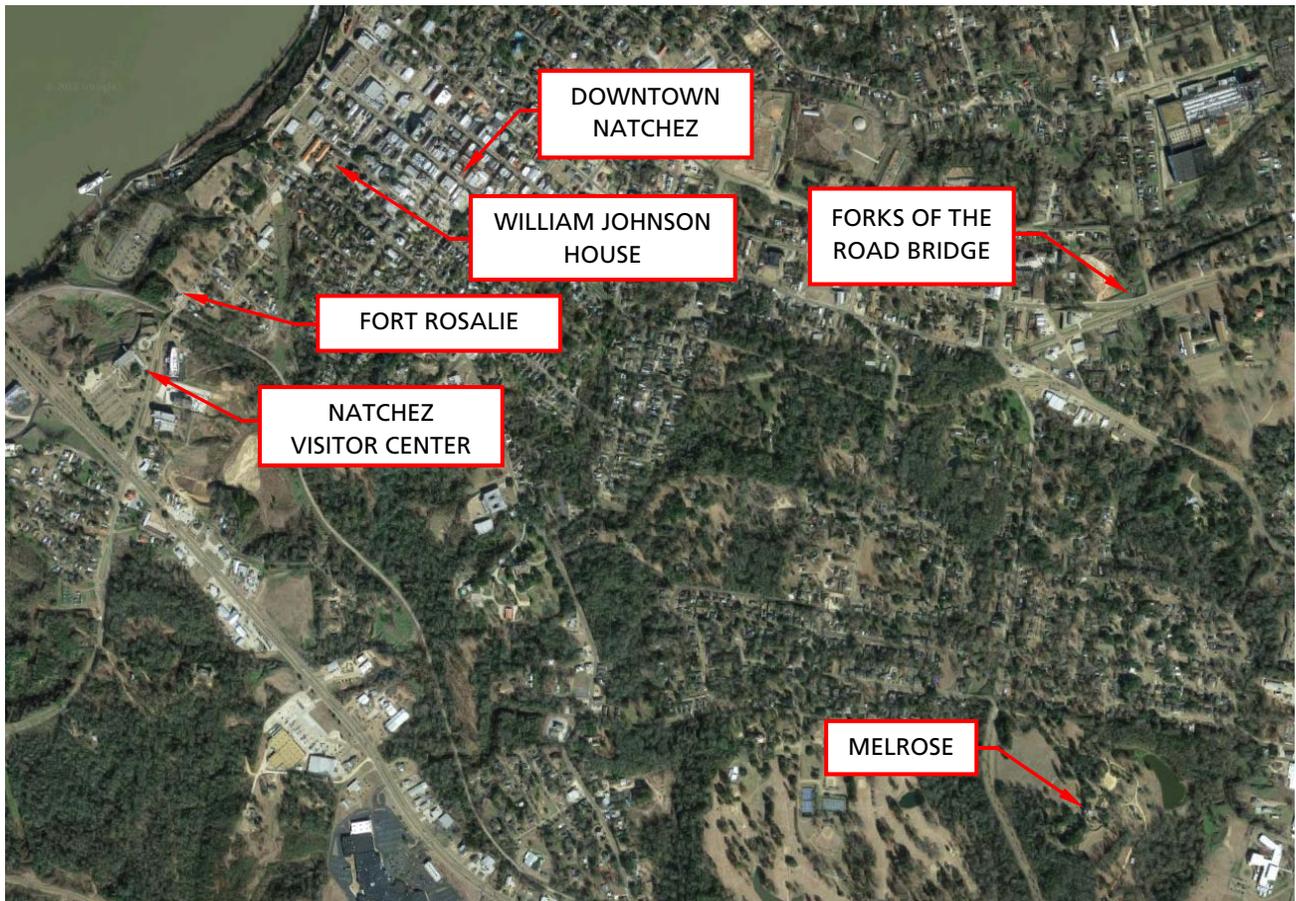


FIGURE 2. A map of Natchez, showing the location of the Forks of the Road Bridge and Natchez National Historical Park properties. (Source: Google Earth, annotated by the authors)

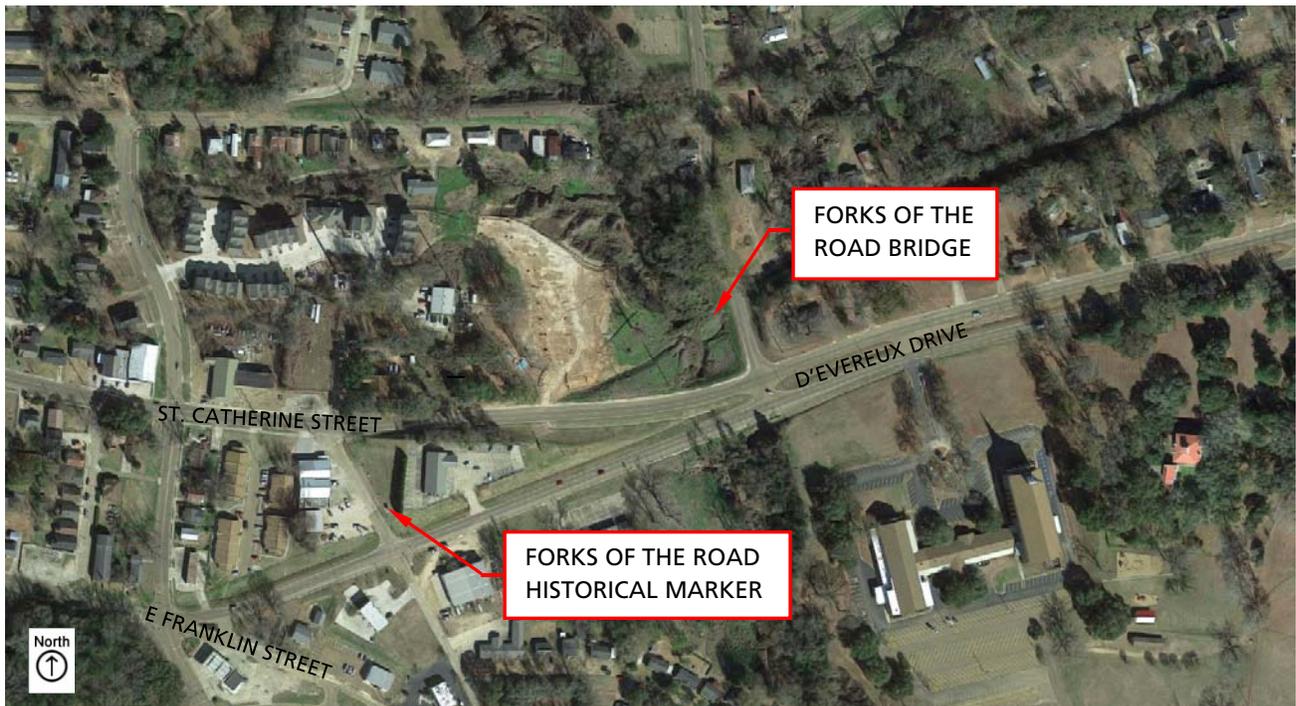


FIGURE 3. An aerial view of the Forks of the Road Bridge and environs. (Source: Google Earth, annotated by the authors)

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Developmental History

Historical Background and Context

The brick bridge over Spanish Bayou at Washington Road in Natchez, Mississippi, is located at Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates 15N 653598 3492435 (zone / easting / northing), +31.55669, -91.38169 (decimal degrees), and 31°33'24" N, 91°22'54" W (latitude / longitude). The bridge is immediately west of Old Washington Road, north of the west bound lane of United States Highway 61 / D'Evereux Drive, and northeast of Forks of the Road (Figure 4). The National Park Service anticipates receiving ownership of the site of the brick arch bridge in 2020 along with portions of the Forks of the Road slave market site.

Natchez National Historical Park includes Melrose, “one of the great houses of the American South, distinguished by its Greek Revival architecture, original furnishings, decorative arts, landscape, and outbuildings;”²³ the William Johnson House, which “provides a window into the life of a free man of color whose published diary and personal papers provide a detailed account of daily life in the antebellum South;”²⁴ and the former Fort Rosalie site along the Mississippi River, adjacent to the visitor center site. Other historic properties in proximity to the National Historical Park include Old Fort Rosalie Gift Shop, a log cabin which is the last remaining building of a fort-related Natchez tourist attraction built in the late 1930s; John McCallum House, a contributing building to the Natchez On-Top-of-The-Hill Historic District; and the

Stietenroth House, associated with the development of the emergent, post-bellum merchant class of Natchez. Once ownership of the Spanish Bayou bridge at Washington Road and the Forks of the Road Slave Market site is obtained the boundaries of Natchez National Historical Park will be expanded.



FIGURE 4. Brick arch bridge over Spanish Bayou at Washington Road, Natchez National Historical Park, Natchez, Mississippi, north side of bridge looking southwest. (Source: All photographs by the authors unless otherwise noted.)

The purpose of Natchez National Historical Park is to preserve and interpret the complex history and material culture of all the peoples of Natchez, Mississippi, emphasizing European settlement, African enslavement, the American cotton economy, and the civil rights struggle on the lower

23. *Foundation Document*, 2.

24. *Ibid.*

Mississippi River.²⁵ The brick bridge, which the NPS anticipates acquiring in 2020, will help preserve and tell the story of African enslavement, especially the story associated with the Forks of the Road slave market, since no physical resources—ruins or other remains—likely exist from the second largest slave market in the Deep South.²⁶

The brick arch bridge now stands in an open, weed-filled lot within the viewshed of Forks of the Road (Figure 5). The bridge is no longer associated with Washington Road, and, in fact, the name of the road has been changed to Old Washington Road, which now ends at South Concord Road. The bridge, which is in poor condition, has been covered for many years by thick kudzu and brush and has been scoured by the waters of the Spanish Bayou.



FIGURE 5. View of the bridge from Forks of the Road, looking northeast. (The bridge is in the hole in the center right of photograph.)

Brief History of Natchez Trace and the Forks of the Road Slave Market

During the period the Natchez Indians still occupied the area, French colonists were venturing into Natchez Territory from the cover of Fort Rosalie, north of which would eventually become the city of Natchez. A European trading road was becoming established during the early

eighteenth century along the east bank of the Mississippi River that followed old animal and Native American paths. The route linked Natchez to Nashville, both important hubs of commerce at the time.

After the American Revolution, commerce on the Mississippi River boomed. Nevertheless, the problem of shipping goods on the river before the advent of steam power was that goods could easily be floated down river, but it was almost impossible to go back up the river against the current. As a result, traders built flat bottom keel boats which they floated down river and sold for scrap at the trading destination, and then walked back home. Their trail of choice was the old animal / American Indian path extending northeasterly to Nashville, Tennessee, and running overland somewhat parallel to the river.

Soon the disconnected path became a single, continuous road—the Natchez Trace. It took about six weeks to travel its length by foot and four weeks by horse.²⁷ Although commerce escalated on the river after the Revolutionary War, the United States and Spain disagreed over the border of Florida and control of the Mississippi River, and Spain imposed taxes on the river's use. Spain, of course, knew the taxes were unpopular, and issues over the Florida border were becoming a problem. In 1795, fearing a United States-Great Britain alliance, Spain decided to settle the matters of the Florida border and control of the Mississippi River. As a result, through the Treaty of Madrid (sometimes called Pinckney's Treaty) the border between the United States and Spanish Florida was settled, navigation rights for American shipping was secured, and the Natchez area was ceded to the United States. In 1798, the newly acquired area between the Mississippi River and Georgia was organized into the Mississippi territory with Natchez as its territorial capital.

25. *Foundation Document*, 2.

26. *The Meridian Star*, "Bridge to Forks of the Road donated to City," May 15, 2015.

27. Steve Markos, "The Natchez Trace Parkway," *National Park Planner*, circa 2015, accessed June 20, 2018, <http://npplan.com/national-historic-trails/natchez-trace-parkway-park-at-a-glance/natchez-trace-parkway-history-of-the-natchez-trace-parkway/>.

In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte assumed power in France, and, in 1800, France gained control of the Louisiana Territory from Spain in the Treaty of San Ildefonso. With the Louisiana Territory back in French hands, New Orleans was no longer an open market. Many American politicians were ready to go to war to seize the port, but President Thomas Jefferson had a different idea. Napoleon's government was going broke as a result of the incessant war with Great Britain, and Jefferson offered to purchase the southern portion of the Louisiana Territory. Since France needed money, Napoleon decided to sell the entire territory to the United States for about \$11,000,000. On May 2, 1803, the deal was signed, and the "Louisiana Purchase" signified the United States was in possession of the entire Mississippi River and the areas surrounding it.

American planners needed to improve access to the area and decided to turn the Natchez Trace into a National Road. After signing treaties with the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians, the government began the expansion of the road. The trace was used by variety of people, such as boatmen and general travelers, and for a variety of purposes, such as a military road and a postal road. The road, however, was quite dangerous and difficult to travel. Travelers generally went in groups for safety, and many parts of the road were muddy, filled with poison ivy, venomous snakes, and wild animals.²⁸

As the trace attracted more travelers, some people established "stands" or inns along the road. These inns were spaced about twenty miles apart, the distance that could be traveled by foot in one day, and money could be made by renting rooms and places on the porch or in the yard, and by serving meals.²⁹

By the 1820s, steam power arrived on the Mississippi, and the days of floating goods down the river and walking home ended.³⁰ It was now more efficient to traverse the interior of the

country by steamboat. More and better road systems were also created between towns, and it was no longer necessary to take a long road along the Mississippi River. During the Civil War, the trace was used as a military road, but by the end of the 1800s the road fell into disrepair.

The Forks of the Road Slave Market

Even as activity began to change and slow on the Natchez Trace, a new and notorious business discovered its usefulness—the slave trade. Although the buying and selling of enslaved people occurred in most markets of any size in Mississippi, Natchez was the largest.³¹ The markets were reached by steamship and by road, with many enslaved people forced to walk the Natchez Trace and enter the Natchez area from the trace's southern-most end, Washington Road, so named because the road ran six miles from the city of Washington, once the Mississippi Territory capital.

The development of the trade in enslaved people in Mississippi was brought about by several factors including the invention of the cotton gin in 1793, the invention of steam power for boats, the introduction of a new variety of cotton into the Deep South, and the decline of tobacco plantations in the eastern states during the late eighteenth century.³² The importation of Africans into the United States for use as enslaved people was outlawed in 1807, but the tobacco plantations of Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee provided a seemingly inexhaustible supply for the newly burgeoning cotton plantation economy. This enslaved labor made the cotton boom possible.³³

By the early 1800s, tobacco plantations of the Chesapeake Bay region had depleted the fertility of their land, reducing their yields, but the number of enslaved people on its plantations kept growing. Slave traders purchased enslaved laborers cheaply then sold them for a premium in the markets of Natchez and New Orleans. Successful traders

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.*

31. Barnett and Burkett, 169.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*, 170.

employed agents who moved throughout the tobacco and rice states acquiring enough enslaved people to create a large “coffle”—a line of humans bound together.

Enslaved people were sold in numerous places throughout Natchez, but Forks of the Road, a site immediately on the eastern edge of the city limits at the busy intersection of Washington Road and Liberty Road, became the most important market. Washington Road connected Natchez to the town of Washington, the Natchez Trace, and ultimately northern Alabama and Tennessee. Liberty Road (also known as Old Court House Road and Second Creek Road) connected Natchez to points south and east including south Alabama and Georgia.³⁴ The market at Forks of the Road also sold goods such as livestock and auctioned items such as household goods.

The Forks of the Road intersection appears on maps as early as 1801, but the first map illustrating the slave market dates from 1853 (Figure 6).³⁵ The map clearly showed two “Negro marts” and the City of Natchez “corporation line.” The importance of the Forks of the Road as a slave market increased in 1833 when Isaac Franklin, a Virginian, rented or purchased property inside the angle of the fork between St. Catherine Street and Liberty Street. He and his partner, John Armfield, also of Virginia, became the most active slave traders in the United States and were among the first to take advantage of the differences between the relatively low prices in Virginia and Maryland and the high prices in Mississippi.³⁶

To meet the demand for enslaved labor in the south, Franklin and Armfield, as well as many other dealers, sent an annual overland coffle from Virginia to the Forks of the Road market. These coffles usually left Alexandria, Virginia, for Natchez in the mid-to-late summer, travelling through Tennessee. From central Tennessee, at Nashville, to Forks of the Road, the coffle traveled down the Natchez Trace, which helped to earn the

trace the name the “Slave Trail of Tears,” borrowing from the mass Native American relocation named the “Trail of Tears.”³⁷ At the end of the seven-to-eight-week trek, just as the coffle was approaching the Natchez market, it had to pass over Spanish Bayou, a waterway that cuts deeply into the surrounding landscape. The traditional alignment of Washington Road seems to indicate that a bridge of some type was situated across the bayou since the route does not veer in its course. A bridge at this location seems likely since the route was also the primary connector road between Natchez and Washington, once the territorial and state capital and now a primary mercantile outlet.

An 1856 map of Forks of the Road showed Washington Road extending beyond the Natchez Corporation Line to the bridge crossing Spanish Bayou (Figure 7). This map indicated the names of the “Negro marts” were “Elam” and “James.” A third, large building, presumably a trading market, at the forks was unnamed.

By the summer of 1863, all trading in enslaved people ceased in Natchez as Union troops occupied the town. During that same summer, the buildings associated with the trade at Forks of the Road were demolished by members of the 12th Wisconsin infantry and the 58th Infantry of the United States Colored Troops.³⁸ Nothing associated with the sale of human beings was left standing. An 1864 Union Army map showed the Forks of the Road intersection without any buildings. A bridge was indicated crossing Spanish Bayou on Washington Road, but the bridge type was not noted.

34. *Ibid.*, 171.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*, 181, and Ball.

38. “101 Places to See in Mississippi Before You Die,” *Preservation in Mississippi*, Mississippi Press Blog, March 2019.

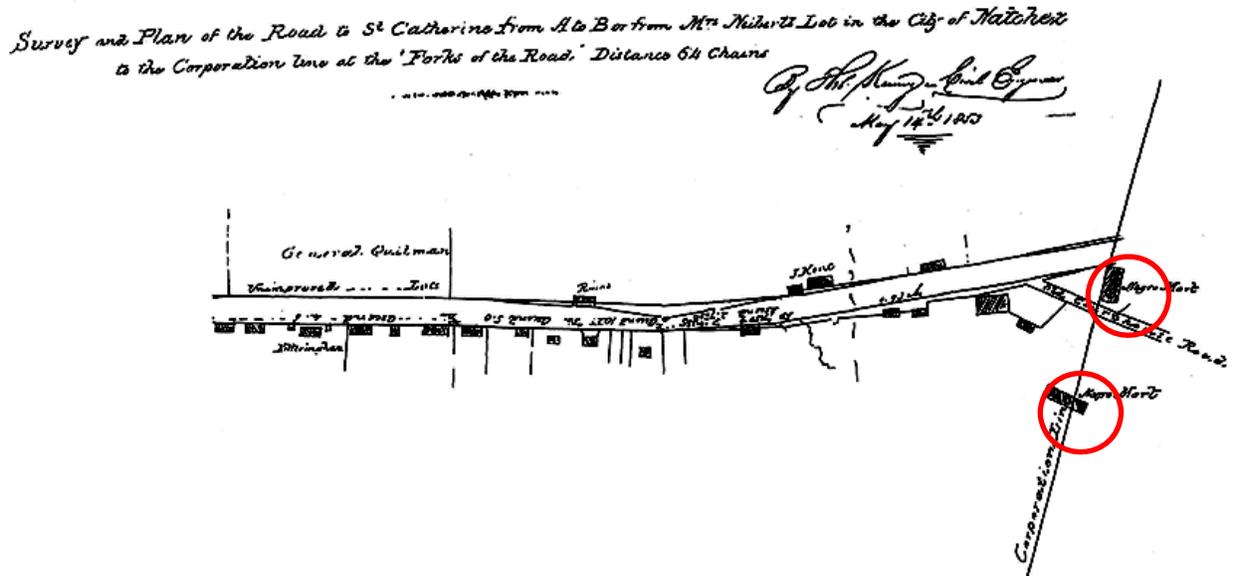


FIGURE 6. Portion of plan of St. Catherine Street showing the Forks of the Road slave marts (red circles), Road to Washington Street Catherine Street, 1853, 1853 Minute Book, City of Natchez. (Source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History)

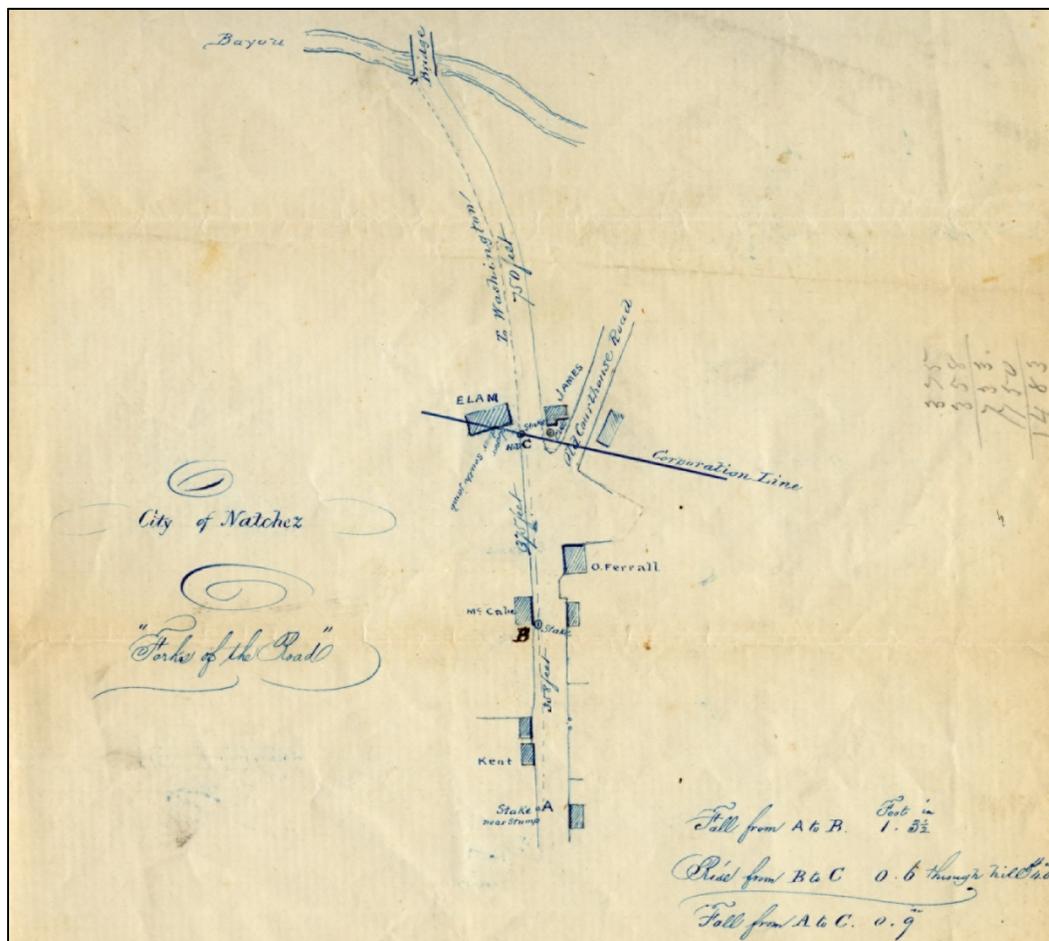


FIGURE 7. Forks of the Road, 1856, Thomas Kenney, Surveyor, City of Natchez, Mississippi, showed the slave market buildings of Elam and James and the extension of Washington Road across Spanish Bayou with a "Bridge" at the location of the current bridge. (Source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History)

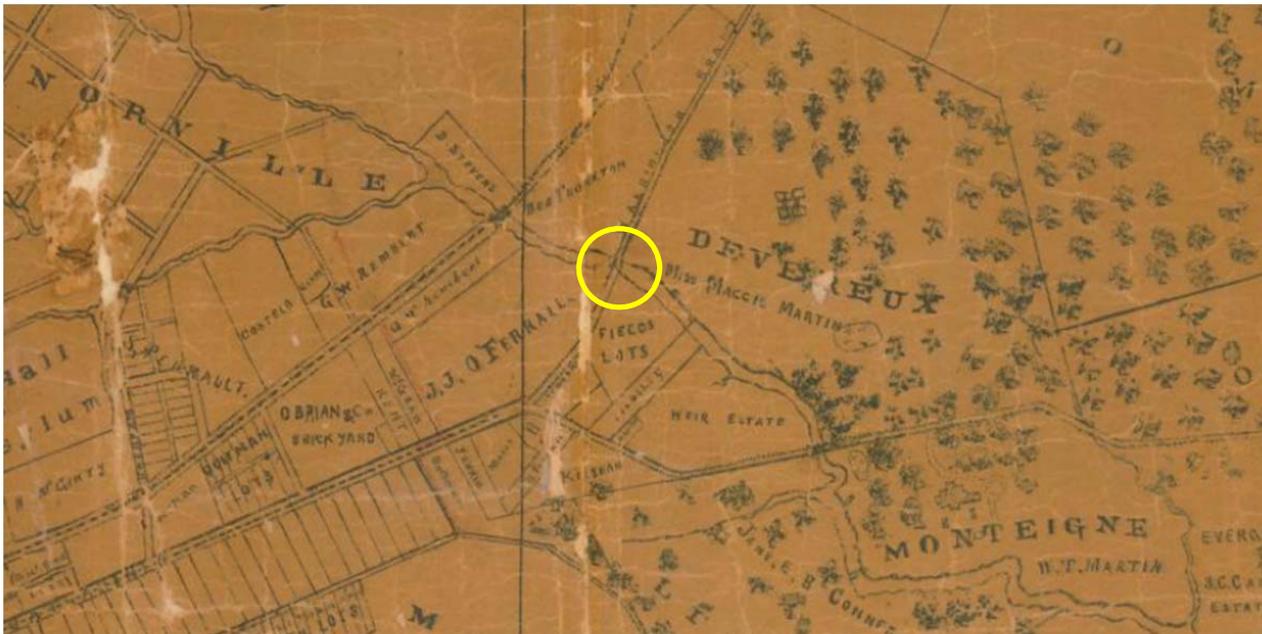


FIGURE 8. 1890 suburbs of Natchez showing the Forks of the Road Bridge area (yellow circle). (Source: Natchez National Historical Park)

The Evolving Forks of the Road Area

After the Civil War, the Forks of the Road area began to change. The city started to grow more rapidly to the east, and businesses and homes began to move out along St. Catherine Street. The once grand estates and houses that ringed the eastern edge of the city were becoming crowded by the new city. An 1890 map showing the suburbs of Natchez indicated a large brickyard was located on St. Catherine Street and residential lots had been created (Figure 8). Despite the new construction in Natchez, the city maintained its connection to its multitude of gracious antebellum houses.

When the automobile was invented in 1885, there was little idea of how much it would change America. In 1900, there were 24 million horses in the United States used on farms and for transportation of people and goods.³⁹ By 1929, there were 29 million cars and 3 million trucks in

the United States almost completely edging out horses from America’s cities.⁴⁰ In 1920, the urban landscape of Natchez was crowded with cars and horses creating congestion so great that some city streets were made one way.⁴¹ Earlier, in 1902, the city had already entertained building a new city street to relieve traffic on St. Catherine Street due to business growth and “automobile tracks.”⁴² Nationally, the automobile was also forcing states to look at the effects of interstate travel.

The idea of traveling across the United States in a car was appealing to many adventurous automobile owners. However, a national road system within the nation did not exist, and many of the roads that did exist were poorly maintained and identified. By the 1910s, automobile owners began to agitate for a well-maintained system of roads that connected the coasts and borders of the United States. From this agitation grew the US Federal Highway System also known as the US Numbered Highway System. Although the system

39. Andrew Nikiforuk, “The Big Shift Last Time: From Hose Dung to Car Smog,” *The Tyee*, March 6, 2013, accessed September 28, 2018, <https://thetyee.ca/News/2013/03/06/Horse-Dung-Big-Shift/>.

40. *Automotive News*, “1920s.” August 28, 2000, accessed September 28, 2018, <http://www.autonews.com/article/20000828/ANA/8280853/1920s>.

41. Dolensky, n.p.

42. *The Natchez Democrat*, December 4, 1902, 8.

is called the “US Federal” system, it was the states coming together to work out a system of roads to connect themselves to each other.⁴³ The states formed the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and began to create a national highway system with standardized road signs and numbered highways.

In 1924, the US Secretary of Commerce created the Joint Board on Interstate Highways to begin the process of building a new standardized road system. One of the board members was H. C. Dietzer, Mississippi’s State Highway Engineer. One of the north-south highways established by this committee is US Highway 61, portions of which became the Great River Road, which originally stretched from Wyoming, Minnesota, at the Canadian border, passing through Mississippi, to New Orleans, generally following the Mississippi River for 2,069 miles.⁴⁴ US 61 was created to enter Natchez on existing road systems passing by Forks of the Road, which it still does. It is not clear at what date US 61 was designated and marked through Natchez or what street it was using. It is also not clear if changes to the road were made to meet AASHTO specifications. Any road changes—widening, culvert changes, etc.—would possibly affect Spanish Bayou and the brick bridge. It may be that the bridge was cut off from the Natchez transportation network at the time US 61 entered Natchez (see discussion of Bridge History).

By the late 1950s or early 1960s, US 61 became a divided highway and was named US 61 / D’Evereux Drive, after the former estate house through whose land it now passes. If the original designation and changes to accommodate US 61 did not cut off the bridge and Old Washington Road, this change certainly did. This straight, modern highway made no accommodations for idiosyncratic changes in roads or topography, and the road moves smoothly to connect with St.

Catherine Street traveling west and leaving Franklin Street extending east.

Renewed Public Recognition of the Forks of Road Slave Market. While knowledge that Forks of the Road was the site of one of the largest slave markets in the South generally faded from memory, some natives of Natchez and the surrounding counties never forgot. During a period of boosterism across the United States and in Natchez during the 1920s, promoters of the city sought to separate the city from its antebellum past and urged everyone to look to the future and not the past.⁴⁵ Boosters sought new ways to lure in businesses and to promote economic growth. Seemingly no idea went unexamined, from a bridge across the Mississippi River to a baseball team, but the promoters ran into a seemingly impenetrable wall to all their plans: the old guard, those members of the old families who were content to live in the antebellum past. Finally, the boosters and the old guard accidentally hit upon an idea with which they both could agree — a spring “pilgrimage” of the grand antebellum homes of Natchez.⁴⁶

The pilgrimage, a series of open houses with guided tours by women dressed in period garments and “antebellum” gowns, evolved from a Garden Club event in 1931, and eventually became the best known in the South.⁴⁷ The Natchez pilgrimage was not the first, but it was the best organized, and it coincided with the town’s social season.⁴⁸ The event brought much needed funding for the restoration of many of Natchez’s antebellum homes as well as money into the coffers of the city’s merchants. The event created the exposure the boosters wanted and fed into the longing for the past that the old families craved. It seemed a good fit, but the pilgrimage also fed a fantasy world that did not include the brutal reality of the Forks of the Road slave markets.

43. Weingroff, n.p.

44. Federal Highway Administration, “The Great River Road.”

45. Dolensky.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., 137.

48. Ibid., 138.

During the civil-rights era in the United States, the state of Mississippi came under intense scrutiny, especially in the 1960s as African American citizens began to campaign for their civil rights, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. cast a spotlight on the country's systemic racial injustice. During the early 1960s, Natchez was home to one of the largest Ku Klux Klan chapters in the United States, which murdered and terrorized the city's black citizens.⁴⁹ In 1965, George Metcalf, the president of the Natchez chapter of the National Association for the Advancement Colored People (NAACP), was almost killed by a bomb planted under his car. Later, a protest march was organized against the Klan and the city's acceptance of their terror when demands by African American citizens were not met. However, the march ignored a local judge's ban on all forms of protest and more than 300 black citizens were arrested. All participants 12 years old and older were taken to Parchman Farm prison, a place noted for its brutal treatment of prisoners.⁵⁰ Tensions remained high.

The citizens of Natchez were watching political events and voting. In 1968, Tony Byrne, a popular Mississippi State University basketball player who sought racial harmony, was elected mayor of Natchez by a 1,000-vote margin in the face of stiff

opposition by the Klan.⁵¹ Byrne would go on to serve as mayor for two decades. With help from both black and white citizens, Byrne worked to ease racial tensions so that every decision did not "lead to a boycott by either black or white citizens."⁵² Byrne's tenure helped create a more racially-inclusive city government and a more racially-sensitive environment for the area.

While Natchez still holds the annual pilgrimage, conditions were shifting for African Americans. In 1976, President Gerald Ford officially called for the observance of "Black History Month" in the United States as has every president thereafter, helping to politically establish the right of African Americans to tell their history. Natchez began to seriously consider the role African Americans played in creating the city, and one native son, Ser Seshsh Ab Heter-C. M. Boxley, who had supported the more militant 1960s civil-rights organizations in Natchez while living in California,⁵³ returned to Natchez years later to "rediscover the Forks of the Road."⁵⁴

Ser Boxley formed the Friends of the Forks of the Road Society, and began a determined campaign to save what remained of the slave market area

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49. Jae Jones, "Natchez, Mississippi: Once Home to the Largest Ku Klux Klan Chapter in the U.S.," *Black Then*, September 10, 2017, accessed September 28, 2018, <https://blackthen.com/natchez-mississippi-home-largest-ku-klux-klan-chapter-u-s/>; and Ed Pilkington, "Families' wounds stay open as decades-old racist killings are left unsolved," *The Guardian*, March 20, 2015, accessed September 28, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/mar/20/wharlest-jackson-civil-rights-racist-killings-unsolved>.
50. Jones, n.p.

51. David Hamilton, "Former Mayor's Lasting Legacy is Bridging the Racial Divide," *The Natchez Democrat*, July 8, 2018, accessed September 27, 2018, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/mississippi/articles/2018-07-08/former-mayors-lasting-legacy-is-bridging-the-racial-divide>.
52. Hamilton, n.p.
53. The Black List Pub, "The 50th Anniversary of Ser Boxley's helping Natchez Deacons for Defense," *TheBlackList Pub*, November 7, 2015, accessed September 28, 2018, <http://theblacklistpub.ning.com/forum/topics/the-50th-anniversary-of-ser-boxley-s-helping-natchez-deacons-for-defense>
54. Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, "Forks of the Road curator Tells of His Journey in Making sure the Contributions of a People are Not Forgotten," *News*, September 15, 2016, accessed September 28, 2018, <https://www.siu.edu/news/2016/09/CuratorForksRoad.shtml>.

after years of road widenings and other alterations, city expansion, and real-estate development. While the Friends and Boxley concentrated primarily on the “V”-shaped area of land between the “forks,” the brick bridge also came under special scrutiny when an affordable townhouse development was planned for the site in 2012. The first phase of affordable housing had been constructed on a ridge just west of the bridge (Figure 9), and a second phase was due to commence that would negatively disturb the bridge and the remaining Washington Road bed. Ser Boxley believed more development was a “desecration” of the remaining acres of the slave market, and new development would “disturb the historic roadbed of the Old Washington Road, which was the original terminus of the historic Natchez Trace.”⁵⁵

In 2003, the City of Natchez began to seriously look at the Forks of the Road area as historic property. They obtained a onetime grant of \$130,000 from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History through an appropriation bill of the state legislature for preservation of important sites relative to African Americans.⁵⁶ This grant allowed the city to purchase properties around the forks of the road.

Ser Boxley and the Friends of the Forks of the Road Society turned to the National Park Service, which maintains the William Johnson house, the home of a Natchez free man of color who lived during the antebellum period, as part of the Natchez National Historical Park. The park was interested in Forks of the Road, but the property

was private, and it had no authorization for saving the site. In 2004, Ser Boxley appealed to Senator Thad Cochran for assistance. Senator Cochran chose to appropriate \$150,000 to Natchez Historical Park in 2005 to conduct a feasibility study of adding the Forks of the Road site to Natchez National Historical Park.



FIGURE 9. Affordable housing lines the west ridge above the Spanish Bayou and the bridge, looking southwest with south side of bridge in foreground.

In December 2004, President George W. Bush signed into a law a new federal spending bill that included the \$150,000 to assess the possibility of expanding Natchez National Historical Park and including the Forks area within it.⁵⁷ The National Park Service then initiated a study of the Forks of the Road site. Once it was proved that the Forks of the Road area should be included in an expanded National Historical Park, the next step was for the US Congress to create the legislation that would declare the Forks area as a part of the National Historical Park.⁵⁸ While the legislative process inched along, the bridge was still in peril.

55. *The Mississippi Press*, “Group Seeks to Preserve Forks of the Road Slave Market site in Natchez,” Gulf Life blog, September 21, 2013, accessed September 28, 2019, http://blog.gulflife.com/mississippi-press-news/2013/09/group_seeks_to_preserve_forks.html.

56. Patricia Leigh Brown, “New Signposts at Slavery’s Crossroads,” *The New York Times*, December 16, 2004, F00001, accessed February 7, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/16/garden/new-signpost-at-slaverys-crossroads.html>.

57. Ibid.

58. *The Mississippi Press*, quotes from Superintendent Kathleen Jenkins, NPS.

In July 2012, archeologists from the Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC) of the National Park Service monitored the construction site of the affordable townhouse community (Figure 10). The monitoring found “no definite material evidence of an antebellum occupation at the site . . . If deposits associated with the Forks of the Road exist within the project area, it would appear that they have been impacted by later occupations and episodes of destruction associated with an early-mid-twentieth century house, mid-twentieth century tire shop, and recent junk yard.”⁵⁹ The monitoring did not include the bridge site, but noted that it had been agreed that the bridge and its immediate area would not be impacted by the construction.⁶⁰



FIGURE 10. Land clearing at affordable housing site. (Source: National Park Service, circa 2012)

On May 10, 2014, Natchez declared the city-owned properties at Forks of the Road a city landmark in hopes that the National Park Service would develop the area into a park. The bridge was designated as “the only remaining intact bridge of its kind in southwest Mississippi” in its

landmark nomination form.⁶¹ The adoption of city landmark status ensured further development of the area would not happen on city-owned sites.⁶² However, part of the land, notably the parcel with the bridge, was owned by private parties. On May 18, 2015, Chartre Companies, the entity that owned the real-estate development threatening the bridge, transferred ownership of a portion of its land to the City of Natchez so that the bridge and the remainder of the historic road bed could be preserved.⁶³ Part of the land around the bridge was still owned by First Natchez Radio Group and some other business.⁶⁴ The donation of the land by Chartre Companies was met with much celebration and made newspaper headlines across the state. Speculation was rampant about the age of the bridge and the possibility that enslaved individuals walked across it on their way to the market.⁶⁵ If so, this would be the sole remaining physical evidence of the market.

In May 2017, the city aldermen entered into an agreement to donate “the abandoned section of Washington Road west of Concord Avenue, the brick bridge structure over Spanish Bayou and approximately 2.5 acres more of land” to the

59. National Park Service, “Construction Monitoring at Forks of Road,” SEAC Featured Projects, circa 2012, last updated March 21, 2018, accessed September 28, 2018, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/construction-monitoring-at-forks-of-the-road.htm>.

60. *Ibid.*, n.p.

61. Smokey Joe Frank, *Mississippi Landmark Eligibility Assessment Questionnaire, US Highway 61, Fork of the Fork, Spanish Bayou Bridge, Natchez, Mississippi*, circa 2015, on file Department of planning and Zoning, City of Natchez, Mississippi.

62. John Mott Coffey, “Forks of the Road: Remembering History Never to be Repeated,” *News Mississippi*, July 10, 2014, accessed September 28, 2018, <https://newsms.fm/forks-road-remembering-history-never-repeated/>.

63. Sarah Cook, “Former slave market bridge donated to Natchez,” *Hattiesburg American*, May 18, 2015, accessed September 28, 2018, <https://www.hattiesburgamerican.com/story/news/local/2015/05/18/natchez-bridge-donation/27541271/>.

64. Jan Griffey, “Natchez bridge donation for Forks of Road,” *The Natchez Democrat*, May 11, 2015, accessed September 28, 2018, <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2015/05/11/natchez-bridge-donation-forks-road/27105105/>.

65. *Ibid.*

National Park Service.⁶⁶ This marked the beginning of the process of transferring land from the city to the National Park Service.

On May 5, 2017, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, Public Law No: 115-31, authorized:

The Secretary of the Interior . . . to acquire by donation or purchase from willing sellers, any lands at the site of the historic Forks of the Road Slave Market, as generally depicted on the map entitled “Natchez National Historical Park—Proposed Boundary Addition,” numbered 339/116045, and dated April 2016. Upon acquisition of any land or interests in land, the Secretary shall revise the boundary of Natchez National Historical Park to reflect the acquisition and the land shall be managed in accordance with the laws and regulations applicable to the park site . . . (page 328).⁶⁷

An established map accompanied the 2017 legislation.

Natchez National Historical Park

Natchez National Historical Park was established on October 7, 1988 by Public Law 100-479 “to preserve and interpret the history of Natchez,” Mississippi.⁶⁸ The National Historical Park is in the city of Natchez on the east bank of the Mississippi River in southwestern Mississippi. The resources of the National Historical Park include: the Melrose estate; the William Johnson house; the Fort Rosalie Site; the visitor center; museum collections, and heritage gardens.⁶⁹

Natchez National Historical Park was expanded in May 5, 2017 by Public Law 115-31 which authorized the acquisition of land within an 18-

acre district associated with the Forks of the Road Slave Market which includes the Spanish Bayou bridge at Washington Road.⁷⁰ An established map accompanied the 2017 legislation.

Bridges in Mississippi

Historic documentation indicates that there has been a public bridge at Spanish Bayou and Washington Road since 1830.⁷¹ However, the topography of the area—steep slopes to a bayou that can run swiftly with water during inclement weather—virtually mandates the existence of a bridge of some type since very early in the area’s history, especially as the Spanish Bayou is at the end of the Natchez Trace, and the area is between the two significant cities of Natchez and Washington. Bridges are known to have been constructed on this site in 1858, 1862, and the last bridge in 1888.⁷² It is not known when or if the 1830 bridge was replaced.

Interestingly, the types of bridges constructed at the site and the materials used in their construction have not been noted. In 1895, a brick gutter was added to the bridge, but that was the only time construction materials were ever mentioned.⁷³ It is assumed that the bridges were located in the same place as they are all on Washington Road. It may even be that the builders used the same abutments. The builder of the current bridge, L. Terrell, originally planned to finish the bridge in one week, which seems to preclude any serious engineering or earth moving.⁷⁴

Masonry Arch Bridge. The immigrants who settled America brought with them a well-established tradition of constructing masonry arch bridges. The earliest stone arch bridge in the United States dates from 1697, and there were scatterings of stone arches throughout the

66. Lindsey Shelton, “Natchez aldermen vote to donate Forks of the Road to National Park Service,” *The Natchez Democrat*, May 11, 2017, accessed September 28, 2018, <https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2017/05/11/natchez-aldermen-vote-to-donate-forks-of-the-road-to-national-park-service/>.

67. Public Law No. 115-31, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, May 5, 2017.

68. *Foundation Document*, 4.

69. *Ibid.*

70. Public Law No. 115-31.

71. *Mississippi Gazette*, May 15, 1830, 2.

72. *Mississippi Free Trader*, June 28, 1858, 2; *The Daily Courier*, September 17, 1862, 1; *The Weekly Democrat*, August 15, 1888, 3.

73. *The Natchez Democrat*, December 5, 1895, 3.

74. *The Weekly Democrat*, August 15, 1888, 5.

colonies. Consistent construction of masonry arch bridges did not occur until the third decade of the nineteenth century, and it was limited to major projects such as canal, turnpikes, railroads, and water supply systems.⁷⁵

In the United States, the masonry arch bridge is constructed of brick or stone or a combination of both, and it is probably the oldest type of vehicular bridge since it can bear more weight than a wooden bridge. Stone and brick are more available than metal, and most communities had workers familiar with masonry construction techniques. While masonry bridges were more expensive to construct, they were more permanent than wood bridges.⁷⁶

Historic Bridges in Mississippi. In 1986, Mississippi undertook a historic bridge survey, inventorying bridges constructed between circa 1890 and 1940, a period when American wooden bridges were being replaced primarily with mass-produced steel bridges.⁷⁷ This survey produced a multiple-property nomination of 182 bridges with all but four bridges being steel truss types; only one was a brick arch bridge like the one over the Spanish Bayou at Washington Road.

The masonry arch bridge identified in the Mississippi inventory was the Confederate Avenue Arch Bridge spanning Halls Ferry Road, Vicksburg. It was constructed in 1936-1937 by the National Park Service as part of the Vicksburg Military Park to prevent additional congestion in

the area. The bridge is a single concrete arch with brick facing.⁷⁸

The Spanish Bayou Bridge at Washington Road will only be the second known brick masonry bridge in the state of Mississippi and will date from a much earlier period.

History of the Bridges over the Spanish Bayou, Natchez, Mississippi

Although there was probably always some type of bridge at Spanish Bayou on Washington Road heading into Natchez, since the bayou cuts deeply into the land and makes traversing it hazardous, the first written account of a bridge at this site does not occur until 1830. A bridge noted at the location at the “fork at the road” had part of the arch fall. *The Mississippi Gazette* opined that the bridge would need repairs quickly, and even a few days of neglect would run the risk of needing a whole new bridge. The paper ended their opinion with the ominous question, “Is the county at risk?”⁷⁹

By 1858, another bridge was constructed over the bayou on Washington Road, by the order of the Adams County board of supervisors. The construction of this bridge cost \$170 and was built by Mr. McGehee.⁸⁰ The type of bridge constructed was not specified.

On September 17, 1862, another bridge was constructed, type not specified, through the estate of R. M. Ayres, Sunnyside, where the bayou crosses with Washington Road. The bridge built in 1862 was erected by Isaac H. Henderson for \$170. Henderson also put down a bond of \$500 and stated that the bridge would stand for five years.⁸¹

75. Parsons Brinkerhoff and Engineering and Industrial Heritage, *A Context for Common Historic Bridge Types*, NCHRP Project 25-25, Task 15, Prepared for The National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Transportation Research Council, National Research Council (N.P., 2005), 3-47.

76. *Ibid*, 3-47-48.

77. Jack D. Elliot, Jr., *Historic Bridges of Mississippi National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi, September 27, 1988, Section 8, n.p.

78. National Park Service, “Halls Ferry Bridge” *Vicksburg National Military Park Tours*, Highways in Harmony, circa 2000, accessed September 28, 2018, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/hih/vicksburg/vicksburg10.htm.

79. *The Mississippi Gazette*, May 15, 1830, 2.

80. *Mississippi Free Trader*, June 28, 1858, 2.

81. *The Daily Courier (Natchez)*, September 17, 1862, 1.

It is interesting to note that the county was constructing bridges, which had served as part of the Natchez Trace's conduit for the movement of enslaved people to the Forks of the Road slave markets. By September 1863, the city had surrendered (on May 13, 1862) to the Union navy.⁸² Although Natchez was occupied by the Union army during most of the war, July 1863 – April 1865, the municipal chore of running the city continued.

In 1884, a contract for building a culvert at the bridge site was awarded to John Kiernan and put in motion by Mr. Rowan. This culvert was to be built across the Spanish Bayou on Washington Road, near O'Farrell's place for \$25.⁸³

Jane Turner sold a lot that was bounded on the west by Spanish Bayou and the south by Washington Road in 1885. This piece of land was sold to A. T. Johnson.⁸⁴ It is not clear if the lot included the bridge.

On August 11, 1886, a contract was made for a breakwater and straightening the channel at the bridge. These tasks were completed to prevent further caving issues.⁸⁵ Land caving issues were, and still are, of concern in the Natchez area and will continue to plague the Spanish Bayou bridge site.

On July 18, 1888, an advertisement for bids for the building of a new bridge and were placed in the *Engineering News and American Railway Journal*, and possibly other publications.⁸⁶ The *Weekly Democrat* (Natchez) announced the advertisement for bids indicating that a new bridge was needed since the old bridge had caved in the prior week.

The paper also noted that two people were crossing the bridge when it caved causing a "narrow escape from death."⁸⁷

On August 9, 1888, instructions for the contract were given out at the board meeting. The bids were presented after receiving the proposals during the following week.⁸⁸ The bids included L. Terrell's 60-foot bridge for \$241, a second design by Terrell for a 60-foot bridge at \$275, T. J. Kiernan's design for an 84-foot bridge at \$390, W. H. H. Fox's bid for an 80-foot bridge at \$285, and Jos J. Newsom's bids for two covered bridges, one at the cost of \$800 and the second at \$1,000.⁸⁹ Mr. Rowan, one of the members on the board of supervisors, made a motion that the board members visit the site before awarding the contract in order to choose the most feasible plan. The bid was awarded to L. Terrell on August 14, 1888. (Terrell's bid was the lowest.) Terrell's design was considered the "cheapest and best" option.⁹⁰

The board of supervisors was anxious to complete the new bridge since it was "of great importance to the mercantile community of Natchez as many country people enter the city on Washington road [sic]."⁹¹ The *Weekly Democrat* noted that Terrell was known for being a "hustler," meaning he would act swiftly to get the job done, and the newspaper considered this a good thing for the county and the city.⁹² Terrell originally planned to finish the bridge the same week the contract was awarded to him. However, the materials he needed were not located in Natchez which delayed the project.⁹³ Terrell was paid for the completion of the bridge on September 19, 1888.⁹⁴

In 1895, John Meath (1859-1915) was awarded a contract for \$12.50 to add a 60-foot brick gutter at

82. Ronald L.F. Davis, *The Black Experience in Natchez, 1720-1880* (Denver, Colorado: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1993), 145.

83. *Ibid.*, March 7, 1884, 1.

84. *The Weekly Democrat*, August 19, 1885, 1.

85. *Ibid.*, August 11, 1886, 5.

86. *Engineering News and American Railway Journal*. Volume XX, July-December 1888, Engineering News Publishing Company, N.P., 96.

87. *The Weekly Democrat*, July 18, 1888, 3.

88. *Ibid.*, August 8, 1888, 5, August 15, 1888, 3.

89. *Ibid.*, August 15, 1888, 3.

90. *Ibid.*

91. *Ibid.*, August 15, 1888, 5.

92. *The Weekly Democrat*, August 15, 1888, 5.

93. *Ibid.*

94. *Ibid.*, September 19, 1888, 5.

the Spanish Bayou on Washington Road.⁹⁵ Meath was awarded an additional contract of \$8 to tighten the bolts on the Spanish Bayou bridge.⁹⁶ In 1896, Meath received another contract for \$17.50 to repair the culvert at the Spanish Bayou. As part of that contract, Meath would do any brick work and hauling required. He would also furnish any nails required for the job. The county would supply any required materials.⁹⁷ Four years later, Meath did additional work at the Spanish Bayou bridge, when he was awarded the contract to build a culvert at the Spanish Bayou on Washington Road for \$12.⁹⁸ In 1902, Meath was awarded another contract for culvert work near the Spanish Bayou on Washington Road for \$20.

By 1902, the Adams County board of supervisors discussed the public need for a new road, to be named Quitman Street, from at or near the Spanish Bayou into the city. This road would parallel St. Catherine Street. The board of supervisors determined the new road would start “at or near the ron [sic] bridge over Spanish bayou on the Liberty Road or old Court House to the city limits just south of” forks of the road.⁹⁹ The need for a new road was addressed to the Honorable Board of Mayor and Alderman of Natchez from the Adams County board of supervisors. The Adams County board of supervisors asked the mayor and aldermen to “forego the opening of the new road from the Spanish Bayou to the city line, as the location of the new road might conflict with your views of the proper width and location of the new street.” Additionally, the board of supervisors noted that the city limits of Natchez would need to be extended before opening the new street and to obtain complete relief of congestion in the area. This discussion involved the safety issues on St. Catherine Street, which had become congested

due to car tracks and active businesses such as a saloon, public gin, and other stores near Forks of the Road. The public “demanded relief from the frequent blockades and dangers that existed on that street” [St. Catherine Street].¹⁰⁰ The city limits would eventually be extended beyond Forks of the Road.

In 1906, storms occurred in the Natchez area that washed away the bulkhead in the Spanish Bayou on the Washington Road. The storms involved a hail storm, and observers noted that some hail was “as large as bird eggs.” After the hail storm, rain occurred with an accumulation of up to 6.78 inches in twenty-four hours. This was the most rain the area had received in sixteen years. The bulkhead that was swept away in these storms contained 1,500 bricks, and the heavy tiling line was also lost in the heavy rains.¹⁰¹ Many cave-ins and wash outs were recorded throughout the city, county, and the state causing trees, telephone poles, and even rail lines to slide from their original positions.

In 1907, in an apparent round-up of special events in its final December issue, *The Natchez Democrat*, noted “one brick bridge (Spanish Bayou) as a permanent public improvement that was erected in the last 12 years.¹⁰² The cost was noted as \$948.75. Earlier in the year, a small dangerous cave “in the Washington Road just beyond the Spanish bayou” was noted in paper.¹⁰³

In 1917, A. G. Hootsell, the supervisor representing District 1, the district in which Forks of the Road was located, submitted a note to the Adams County board of supervisors that recommended repairs be completed “at once” to the bridge on the Spanish Bayou.¹⁰⁴ It is not known what happened as a result of this recommendation.

95. NatchezBelle.org, *Adams County, Mississippi Genealogical and Historical Research*, Catholic Hill Cemetery Tombstones, accessed October 2, 2018, <http://www.natchezbelle.org/adams-ind/NCC-db-m.htm>.

96. *The Natchez Democrat*, Dec 5, 1895, 3.

97. *The Weekly Democrat*, Jan 15, 1896, 5.

98. *The Natchez Democrat*, May 11, 1900, 3.

99. *Ibid.*, December 4, 1902, 8. It is not clear what the “ron bridge” is in the quote.

100. *The Natchez Democrat*, December 4, 1902, 6.

101. *Ibid.*, March 20, 1906, 1.

102. *The Natchez Democrat*, December 22, 1907, 11.

103. *Ibid.*, July 2, 1907, 3.

104. *Ibid.*, October 7, 1917, 12.

Between 1917 and the 1960s, the history of the bridge is not known. Sometime in the 1960s, US Highway 61 / D'Evereux Drive, was expanded to two divided lanes going east and west, funneling traffic off US 61/84 and US 98 directly into and out of the city of Natchez. It appears that at this time, Washington Road was cut off at South Concord Avenue and became Old Washington Road, forever severing a lingering link between Forks of the Road, the town of Washington, and the area's brutal past history (Figure 11).¹⁰⁵ The brick bridge, however, remained in place, but Old Washington Road was not extended across Concord Avenue, and attempts were made to obliterate the presence of any former road on either side of the bridge.

A large concrete box culvert was put in place at Spanish Bayou at the north edge of the west bound lanes of US 61/D'Evereux Drive (Figure 12). The old brick Spanish Bayou bridge with its various abutment and culvert additions became wildly overgrown, began to fall into disrepair, and was hidden from sight for most of the past forty years. About 2013, the bridge was recorded as the Spanish Bayou Bridge in BridgeHunters.com, and described as an "abandoned brick arch bridge (ID: BH 56352)."¹⁰⁶ The bridge is not recorded in the Federal Bridge Inventory since it is not an actively used bridge, nor was it recorded in the 1987 National Register of Historic Places Nomination of Historic Bridges of Mississippi.¹⁰⁷



FIGURE 11. The bridge area showing Old Washington Road, at yellow diamond shaped sign, on the left ending at South Concord Avenue; bridge is in the depression across from Old Washington Road, looking south east from Forks of the Road.



FIGURE 12. Large concrete box culvert on west bound US 61/D'Evereux Drive at Spanish Bayou, looking north west from the bridge deck.

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105. At some point, Old Washington Highway was cut off the Natchez Trace, probably in the 1930s when the National Park service was creating the current Trace configuration, and now ends at its eastern most point just east of Coral Avenue near Saint Catherine Creek.
106. BridgeHunter.com, Spanish Bayou Bridge, Adams County, Mississippi, last updated April 14, 2018, accessed September 28, 2018, <https://bridgehunter.com/ms/adams/spanish-bayou/>.
107. Elliot.

Spanish Bayou Bridge at Washington Road Timeline

1716	Earliest beginnings of both Natchez and what would become the Natchez Trace
1798	Mississippi Territory organized with Natchez as its capital
1801	Intersection of Forks of the Road appears on Natchez map
1803	Louisiana Purchase opened the entire Mississippi River to American trading
Circa 1810s	Natchez Trace becomes a National Road; stands—public inns—are set up along the road to service travelers
1812	Steam power comes to the river changing the way the trading is operated and who uses Natchez Trace
1817	Mississippi becomes a state with Natchez as its capital
1830	First written account of a bridge over Spanish Bayou at Washington Road Slave traders begin to use Natchez Trace to move significant numbers of enslaved people from old tobacco plantation areas in Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, and Kentucky to Forks of the Road, Natchez
1853	Map showing “Forks of the Road Negro Mart” is created
1856	Map showing the Elam and James properties is created
1858	New bridge constructed over Spanish Bayou at Washington Road, type and materials unknown
1862, May	City of Natchez surrenders to the Union navy and is occupied in the summer of 1863 for the remainder of the Civil War Trading in enslaved persons ends at Forks of the Road
1866, September	New bridge constructed over Spanish Bayou at Washington Road, type and materials unknown
1884	A culvert was built at the site
1886	A breakwater was created, and the channel straightened at the bridge
1888, July	Advertisements placed in <i>Engineering News and American Railway Journal</i> , <i>The Natchez Democrat</i> for bids for the construction of a new bridge—the current bridge on site
1888, August 9	Contract instructions for bridge given out at City Board Meeting
1888, August 17	Award given to L. Terrell for construction of bridge
1895	Sixty-foot brick gutter added to bridge

1906	Bridge bulkhead washed away in storm
1917	City alderman noted that bridge repairs were needed “at once” on bridge in annual report
Circa 1930s	US Highway 61 routed through Natchez, passes Forks of the Road, as part of the new federal highway system
1932	First Pilgrimage occurs in Natchez
1936	Confederate Avenue Arch Bridge constructed in Vicksburg, as part of the Vicksburg National Military Park, now on National Register of Historic Places
Circa 1960s	US 61 becomes a divided highway (east and west) and is named US 61 / D’Evereux Drive A large concrete culvert is put in on Spanish Bayou near bridge
1988, Oct. 7	Natchez National Historical Park established by Public Law 100-479
Circa 1990s	Friends of the Forks of the Road Society is formed by Ser Seshsh Ab Heter-C.M. Boxley to agitate for saving and preserving the Slave Market at the Forks of the Road
Circa 2013	Bridge is recorded in BridgeHunters.com
2017, May 5	Public Law 115-31 authorized the acquisition of land associated with the Forks of the Road Slave Market including the Spanish Bayou bridge at Washington Road

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Physical Description and Condition Assessment

Site

The Forks of the Road Bridge is located on the east side of Natchez, in Adams County, Mississippi. The bridge is east of the historic site of Forks of the Road, where a historical marker identifies the site of the former slave market. The Forks of the Road Bridge is located northwest of the intersection of D'Evereux Drive and Concord Avenue. The bridge is built over a small creek, which extends south toward D'Evereux Drive (Figure 13). The Forks of the Road Bridge is in line with and was likely once part of Old Washington Road, which terminates at Concord Avenue to the east.



FIGURE 13. The small creek that passes under the bridge.

The site is a grass field covered with overgrown vegetation (Figure 14). There is a recently constructed residential development to the west, adjacent to the site (Figure 15).¹⁰⁸ The top of the

Forks of the Road Bridge is concealed with vegetation, including kudzu, limiting visibility of the bridge from D'Evereux Drive. Within close proximity of the bridge are electrical poles, with power lines running parallel to the bridge below (Figure 16). Wall remnants from the bridge are scattered near the former road bed (Figure 17 and Figure 18).



FIGURE 14. The site surrounding the Forks of the Road Bridge has dense vegetation present.

108. The relationship of the new development to the bridge, and the location of sewer lines on the site, are shown in the drawing set by

CivilSouth Group entitled "Proposed StoneHurst Arms II," February 10, 2014. Copy provided to the authors by the City of Natchez, October 2019.



FIGURE 15. Residential structures adjacent to the site, with the bridge in the foreground.



FIGURE 16. Power lines run parallel to the bridge.



FIGURE 17. Remnants of walls adjacent to the old road bed.



FIGURE 18. Additional wall remnants.

Forks of the Road Bridge

Selected overall views of the bridge can be seen in Figure 19 through Figure 21.

The Forks of the Road Bridge is a masonry deck arch bridge. The span of the bridge measures approximately 40 feet in length, and the width of the arch is 26 feet 3 inches. The spandrel wall is 5 feet 10 inches in height above the center point of the arch, and 14 feet 1 inch in height above the spring points of the arch. The top of the spandrel wall is approximately 7-1/2 inches above the road surface.

The masonry is laid in a common bond brick pattern with a header course typically present every seventh course (Figure 22). On the northeast portion of the arch, there is a header every fourth course. Each brick is approximately 8-1/2 inches long by 3-13/16 to 4 inches high by 2-1/2 inches deep. Mortar joints are approximately 3/8 to 1/2 inch wide. Weep openings are irregularly spaced throughout the masonry coursing (Figure 23).



FIGURE 19. Overall view of the Forks of the Road Bridge from the north.



FIGURE 20. View of the Forks of the Road Bridge from the southeast. Note the infill has been exposed due to the collapse of the south spandrel wall.



FIGURE 21. View of the Forks of the Road Bridge deck from the east.



FIGURE 22. The Forks of the Road Bridge from the north.



FIGURE 23. A close-up view of the brick. Note the common bond pattern and the header course located every seventh course on the walls. Weep openings are irregularly spaced throughout the wall.

While the north wall of the bridge is largely in place, the south wall has collapsed, with little of the wall intact above the arch (

Figure 24). As a result, the fill present below the road bed is visible. Only the portion of the south bridge wall east of the arch remains. At the ends of the extant walls on the north and south side of the bridge, steel through rods and anchor plates are present (Figure 25). A piece of cast-in-place concrete is visible in the soil at the collapsed area of the south wall of the bridge. This piece may be part of a concrete placement for a former road that crossed the bridge, in which concrete cast in place at the top surface migrated down along the inside face of the masonry (Figure 26).

Parapets extend up past the road bed at the top of the north bridge wall and the remaining portion of

the south wall (Figure 27). The walls are approximately 14-1/2 inches thick. The top course of brick at the bridge walls extends approximately 3/4 inch outward from the face of the rest of the wall (Figure 28).

Atop the north wall of the bridge and the remaining portion of the south wall are a series of projecting brick features consisting of one to two courses of brick (Figure 29 and Figure 30). These features may have supported a railing; their original configuration and function are not documented in available archival materials.



FIGURE 24. The collapsed south spandrel wall.



FIGURE 25. The anchors located towards the end of the spandrel walls.



FIGURE 26. A piece of a cast-in-place concrete is visible on the south side of the bridge.



FIGURE 29. Projecting brick features are present on top of the bridge wall.



FIGURE 27. One of two parapets on either side of the bridge.



FIGURE 30. The remaining portions of the brick features on the top of the bridge wall.



FIGURE 28. A view of the parapets extending beyond the spandrel wall.

The arch of the bridge consists of four rowlock courses of brick masonry (Figure 31). The underside of the arch is constructed of brick set in a running bond pattern (Figure 32). The creek passing under the bridge extends most of the width of the arch, with dirt and mud between the creek and the base of the arch on the east side.

On the north side of the bridge, west of the arch, is an embankment wall constructed of cast-in-place board-formed concrete (Figure 33).

The road bed at the top of the bridge largely consists of dirt and vegetation, with remnant pieces of asphalt and concrete paving visible (Figure 34).



FIGURE 31. A series of rowlock brick make up the arch of the bridge.



FIGURE 32. The underside of the bridge consists of brick laid in a running bond pattern.



FIGURE 33. Concrete embankment walls located along the bridge to the northeast.



FIGURE 34. A view of the road bed, which is covered with dirt and vegetation.

At the west end of the bridge, a concrete-encased duct bank is visible (Figure 35). The duct bank appears to extend under the road bed to the east side of the bridge. The duct bank, which is not part of original construction of the bridge or functionally related to the bridge itself, once enclosed telecommunication lines. Based on research conducted for this study, there are currently no active telecommunication lines in the duct bank, as this utility was likely abandoned when the current communications utilities were relocated below the sidewalk on the north side of D’Evereux Drive. Following the abandonment of the utility lines, ownership of the abandoned utilities was likely transferred to the property owner.¹⁰⁹ Conduit was also visible passing through the bridge under the road bed.

An active high-voltage overhead electrical line crosses the creek above the bridge. The utility is currently maintained by Entergy Mississippi.¹¹⁰ The City of Natchez maintains a sewer line that runs parallel to the east side of the creek. A private sewer line serving the residential development west of the bridge site crosses the creek just north of the bridge. The private sewer line connects to

109. Correspondence by the authors with AT&T and the City of Natchez, September–October 2019.

110. Correspondence by the authors with the Natchez office of Entergy Mississippi, September–October 2019.

the public sewer at a manhole near the northeast corner of the bridge structure.¹¹¹



FIGURE 35. Remaining portion of a previous duct bank.

Condition Assessment

The following conditions were observed at the Forks of the Road Bridge:

- The bridge and the surrounding site are largely overgrown with vegetation. City of Natchez workers cleared some of the vegetation during the site visit for this study. Since the initial site visit, the bridge has become completely overgrown again (Figure 36).
- The south wall of the bridge has collapsed, exposing infill (refer to Figure 20). Documentation of the collapse of the south wall was not discovered as part of research conducted for this study, and it is not known when this collapse occurred. Factors contributing to the collapse of the south wall likely include soil pressure, lack of maintenance of the masonry wall, and overgrowth of vegetation.
- Some masonry components have fallen into the creek below (Figure 37).



FIGURE 36. A view of the bridge and site, which is completely overgrown, June 2019.



FIGURE 37. Elements of the south spandrel wall and brick piers have fallen into the creek due to the wall collapse.

- Corroded pipe conduit is visible as infill has eroded due to the collapsed south wall (Figure 38).
- The concrete duct bank exhibits cracking (Figure 39). The exact cause of the cracking is unknown, though it is likely related to the south wall collapse and subsequent movement of fill.
- The north spandrel was observed to be bowing outward over the arch (Figure 40). This condition was likely caused by soil pressure and lack of maintenance of the bridge masonry.
- Throughout the bridge, mortar joints are cracked and deteriorated (Figure 41). Openings in the mortar joints were visible.

111. Correspondence by the authors with the City of Natchez, September–October 2019.

Physical Description and Condition Assessment

- The underside of the arch is largely intact, with localized spalling of brick (possibly related to impact damage) at the outer edge of the arch at the south side. Mortar was observed to be spread over the face of the brick throughout the surface at the underside of the arch (Figure 42). Despite this minor damage, the arch appears to be in generally good condition based on a visual inspection.
- Face spalls were observed on the brick masonry, particularly at the upper portions of the bridge walls (Figure 43).



FIGURE 38. Conduit has been exposed and corroded from the southern spandrel collapse.



FIGURE 39. A cracked concrete duct bank is exposed at the west end of the bridge, along the south wall.



FIGURE 40. Bowing is apparent in the north spandrel.



FIGURE 41. Mortar joints have deteriorated in locations throughout the bridge.



FIGURE 42. Mortar has been spread over portions of the face of the brick at the underside of the arch.



FIGURE 43. Damaged brick and spalling in the spandrel walls. Note the step cracking.



FIGURE 44. Damaged brick and spalling present above the arch.

- At the north bridge wall, directly over the arch, pieces of brick have fallen from the wall, while cracked and spalled brick remain. (Figure 44).
- Damage to the arch, likely resulting from impact, was observed at the south side of the bridge (Figure 45).
- Extensive step cracking was observed on both the north and south bridge walls (refer to Figure 43). This cracking likely resulted from a lack of maintenance, moisture migrating through the masonry, and overgrowth of vegetation.
- Cracking was observed in the rowlock brick courses that comprise the arch (Figure 46).
- Organic growth including staining and vegetation was observed throughout the bridge, particularly at the walls and underside of the bridge (Figure 47).
- Efflorescence was observed at the parapets on the upper portion of the bridge walls (Figure 48).



FIGURE 45. Spalling is present on the south side of the bridge as well.



FIGURE 46. Cracking in the brick at the arch.



FIGURE 47. Some of the vegetation growth observed.



FIGURE 48. Efflorescence potentially caused by the exposure to moisture.

Materials Studies

During the site visit, small samples of mortar were obtained from the bridge by WJE and WFTA project team members for limited materials evaluation (Figure 49). Laboratory studies were performed by Hugh (Xiaoqi) Hou, petrographer in the WJE in-house Janney Technical Center laboratory in Northbrook, Illinois.

Three mortar samples were studied in the laboratory, as follows:

- Sample 1 – Arch, south side, west end
- Sample 2 – Top wall, north side, east end
- Sample 3 – Full brick with mortar, west end of south wall



FIGURE 49. Overall view of brick and mortar samples obtained from the Forks of the Road Bridge.

The samples were reviewed to characterize the mortar. In addition, when this Historic Structure Report project was initially undertaken, the date of construction of the bridge was not known. The mortar and brick were also reviewed to assist in obtaining a general idea of the possible construction date (e.g., pre- or post-1860s), to help understand whether the bridge may have been used by enslaved persons traveling to the slave market in Natchez.

Preliminary examination of Sample 1 and Sample 2 revealed the presence of portland cement, suggesting that the mortar was likely post-1870s.

Sample 3, which included mortar attached to a brick, was extracted and further studied petrographically. Archival documentation was not available to confirm whether the mortar samples represent original mortar or repair materials, and of the samples removed, Sample 3 was considered to have greater potential to represent original mortar for purposes of helping to identify an approximate date of construction of the bridge. However, as research for the Historic Structure Report progressed, archival documentation was found that indicated a date of construction of 1888.¹¹² The mortar components of all three samples, as understood from the limited petrographic evaluation, are consistent with what would have been used on a masonry structure of this type from this period of construction.

Based on the petrographic studies performed, variations in mortar composition were noted. Sample 1 was found to contain mainly portland cement with possibly small amounts of lime. Sample 2 was found to contain portland cement, natural cement, and hydraulic / poorly burnt lime. Sample 3 was found to contain mainly natural cement and hydraulic / poorly burnt lime, possibly with small amounts of portland cement (Figure 50 and Figure 51). Multiple repairs of the bridge may have occurred, using different mortar types. Based on this examination, Sample 1 is primarily portland cement, and may represent a repair. Sample 2 and particularly Sample 3 may represent the original mortar. Cement particles in Samples 2 and 3 generally appeared more fully hydrated than in Sample 1. (Refer to the Treatment chapter for discussion of repointing mortars for the masonry.)

The mortar was observed to contain coarsely crystalline clinker, in which carbonate (presumably calcite) has frequently replaced alite. Clinker particles observed are generally coarse, typical of early portland cement manufactured in the United States. Portland cement was fairly variable and clinkers were often incompletely burnt at the time, as early kilns were typically vertical rather than rotary units. The use of rotary

kilns, which were introduced in the United States in the 1890s, provided for more thorough and uniform burning, and better quality cement. Manufacture of portland cement in the United States began in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, particularly in New York, western Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Maine, and manufactured cement became more widely available throughout the country in the latter part of the century.¹¹³ Manufactured portland cement was also imported to the United States from Europe by the time this bridge was constructed, and could therefore have been available in Natchez at the time of construction.

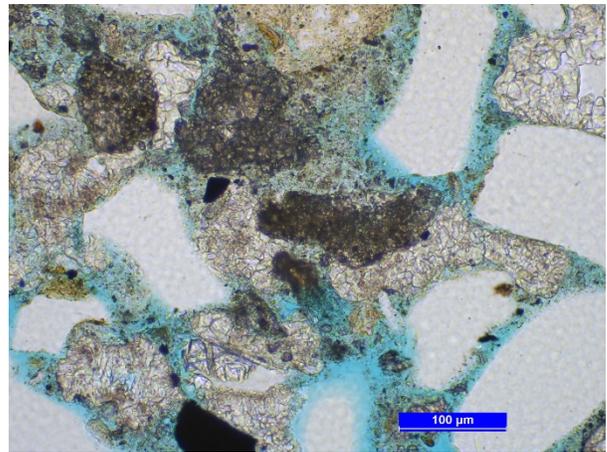


FIGURE 50. Thin-section photomicrographs of Sample 3 using plane-polarized light, showing poorly burnt portland cement, which does not exhibit the distinctive crystalline texture of modern cement (note three large, dark particles).

112. *The Weekly Democrat*, Natchez, Mississippi, August 15, 1888.

113. Edwin C. Eckel, "Portland Cement Materials and Industry in the United States," *Geological Survey: Bulletin* 522 (1913).

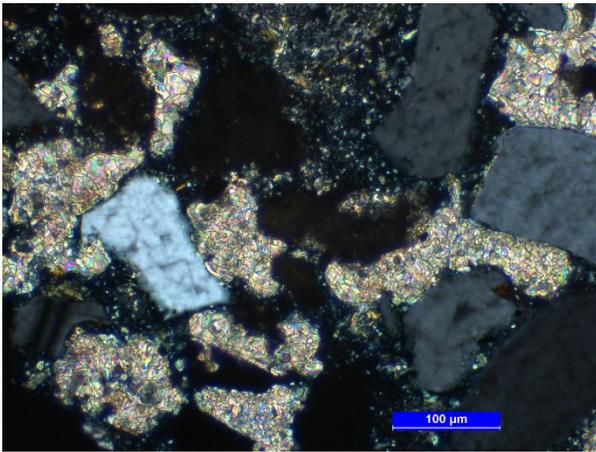


FIGURE 51. Thin-section photomicrograph of Sample 3, similar view to that above, taken using cross-polarized light. The likely cement particles are optically isotropic (appear black).

Brick units from the bridge were also reviewed briefly in the laboratory. The brick units examined represented two general types, generally characterized as “hard” and “soft.” The hard brick generally exhibits a dark red color, contains a thin vitrified exterior layer, and is relatively dense. The soft brick exhibits a bright or fresh red color, exhibits no vitrified layer, and contains substantial amounts of voids or pores. These differences suggest that the hard brick was likely fired at higher temperatures than the soft brick. The hard brick is thinner and also likely has a greater binder/sand ratio. Both types of brick contain fine quartz sand that is predominantly smaller than 60 microns in size. The different characteristics of the two types of brick examined suggest that they represent different manufactured lots. The harder brick may also be of later fabrication. The two types of brick represented by the samples were observed at various locations on the bridge, and are not visibly located in distinct areas of the structure.

Significance and Integrity

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.¹¹⁴

The significance evaluation identifies the important historical associations of the property, and comments on its architectural, archeological, and social value as they relate to the National Register of Historic Places. A property's significance is tied to a discrete period of time in which its important contributions were made, and to relevant national, state, and local historic contexts.

Significance Criteria

In order for a property to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, it must possess significance under one of four criteria. The Criteria for Evaluation for listing in the National Register of Historic Places state:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties *will qualify* if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- a. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- b. A building or structure removed from its original location but which is primarily significant for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or

114. National Park Service, "National Register of Historic Places," accessed May 22, 2019, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>.

- c. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building associated with his or her productive life; or
- d. A cemetery that derives its primary importance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- e. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- f. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or
- g. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.¹¹⁵

Based on the findings of this study, the Forks of the Road Bridge is potentially significant at a local level under National Register Criterion A for its association with the development of Natchez. Future cultural landscape documents may consider whether the overall site, including the bridge and road, is significance under Criterion C for association with the slave trade active in Natchez during the years before the Civil War (Figure 52 through Figure 56). The Forks of the Road market was one of the largest and busiest markets in the South for the sale and trade of slaves and livestock. The market was active up until 1863, when Union soldiers occupied Natchez. The bridge also represents the former extension of Old Washington Road that led toward the site of the Forks of the Road market. A previous bridge was located at this crossing of Old Washington Road at Spanish Bayou.

Additionally, the Forks of the Road Bridge is potentially locally significant under Criterion C, as an example of a largely intact masonry arch bridge constructed in the late 1800s.

National Register Status of the Forks of the Road Bridge

The Forks of the Road Bridge is important for its association with the history of Natchez, the historic location of the Forks of the Road slave market, and as an example of a brick masonry bridge constructed in the late 1800s. National Register documentation, however, does not exist for the bridge.

Ownership of the Forks of the Road site, which contains the Forks of the Road Bridge over Spanish Bayou, is anticipated to be transferred to the NPS in 2020. When the bridge is acquired, it will be done with the idea of helping preserve and tell the story of African enslavement, especially the story associated with the Forks of the Road slave market. The boundary of Natchez National Historical Park will be revised once the NPS received ownership of the Forks of the Road site.

115. *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 36, Part 60, "The National Register Criteria for Evaluation."



FIGURE 54. An excerpt of 1864 “Map of the Roads Leading to Natchez: drawn for Brig. Gen. Wirt Adams” (facsimile of 1864 map, D. H. Huyett, Mississippi, 1998). This excerpt shows the area around the Forks of the Road slave market (red oval) and the three primary roads leading into Natchez: Washington Road, St. Catherine’s Road, Old Courthouse Road (later Liberty Road). (Source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History)



FIGURE 55. A partial 1891 map showing the Forks of the Road Bridge (yellow circle). The site of the former slave market buildings is noted by a red oval. (Source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History)

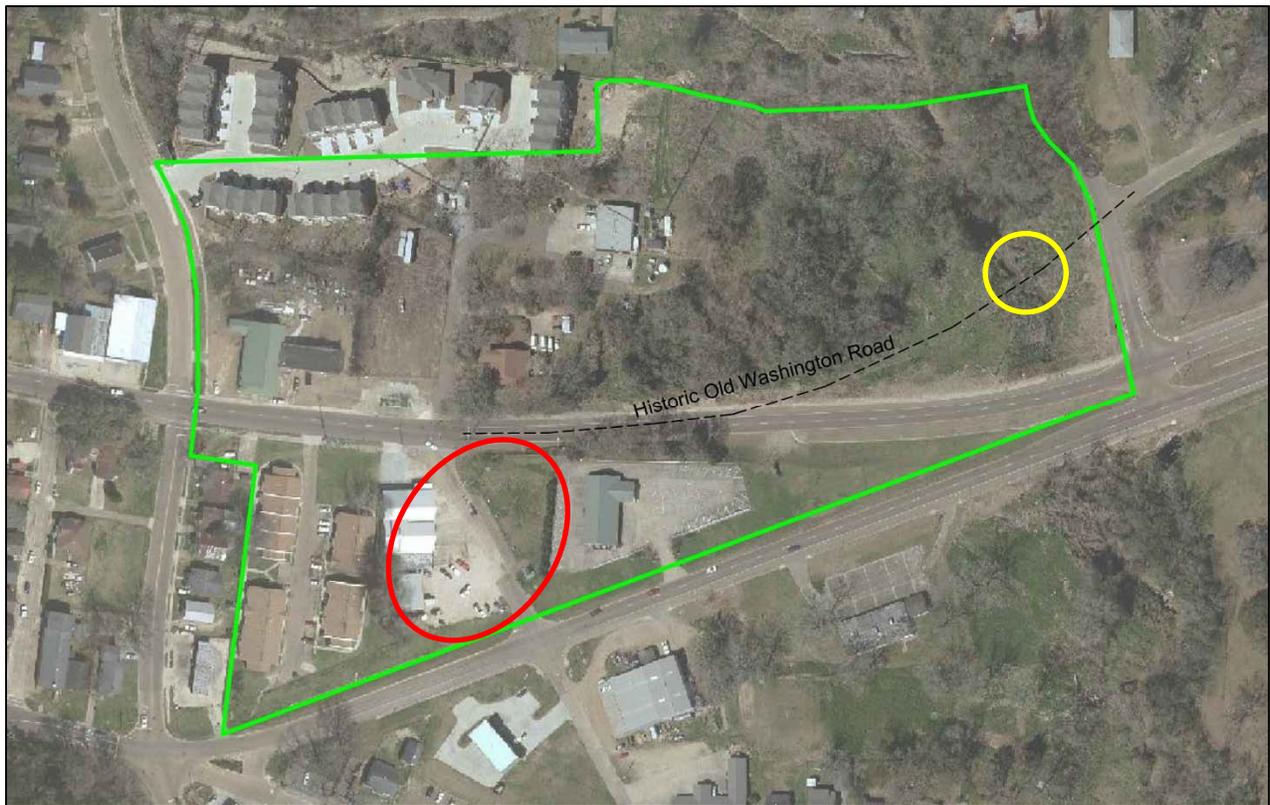


FIGURE 56. An aerial photograph showing the preliminary approximate boundary extension (green outline) of Natchez National Historical Park, the location of the Forks of the Road Bridge (yellow circle) and the former site of the Forks of the Road market buildings (red oval). The former alignment of Old Washington Road is also noted. (Source: Mississippi Automated Resource Information System, annotated by WJE/WFTA. Information about the preliminary approximate boundary extension provided by the National Park Service Southeast Regional Office)

Period of Significance

A period of significance of circa 1888 is proposed for the Forks of the Road Bridge, as this is the date at which the bridge was constructed. Based on the findings of this study, the significance of the bridge is related to its association with the history of Natchez and the slave trade there, specifically with the route leading to the Forks of the Road slave market. The bridge is also potentially significant as an example of a masonry arch bridge from the late 1800s. The construction of the current bridge postdates the period when the Forks of the Road market was active, as well as the conclusion of the Civil War. Although the period of significance for the bridge itself does not extend to the pre-1863 slave trading activity at Forks of the Road, the park may wish to interpret the context history of the site to address that period, noting that the extant bridge was not present at the time.

Character-Defining Features

The historic nature of significant buildings and structures is defined by their character, which is embodied in their identifying physical features. Character-defining features can include the shape of a building; its materials, craftsmanship, interior spaces, and features; and the different components of its surroundings.¹¹⁶

The following list identifies existing character-defining features found on the Forks of the Road Bridge.

- Arch spandrel walls, including:

116. Lee H. Nelson, FAIA, *Preservation Brief 17: Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, 1988).

Significance and Integrity

- Common bond red brick that makes up the walls of the bridge and arch
- Weep holes spaced irregularly through the wall
- Corroded anchor rods located on both sides of the bridge at either end
- Barrel vault, including:
 - Barrel vault formed by the arched walls of the bridge
 - Four courses of brick laid in a rowlock pattern that make up the voussoirs
- Parapet, including:
 - Remains of what appears to be a guardrail system on top of the bridge
 - Parapet remains, consisting of two rows of brick that extend about 3/4 inch from the edge of the bridge

Assessment of Integrity

Assessment of integrity is based on an evaluation of the existence and condition of the physical features that date to a property's period of significance, taking into consideration the degree to which the individual qualities of integrity are present. The seven aspects of integrity as defined in the National Register Criteria for Evaluation are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. As noted in the National Register Bulletin, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*:

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. . . . Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. . . . Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. . . . Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. . . .

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. . . . Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. . . . Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.¹¹⁷

The property must retain the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historical significance. The essential physical features are those features that define both why a property is significant (National Register criteria) and when it was significant (period of significance). The *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* defines integrity as "the ability of a property to convey its significance."¹¹⁸

The historic integrity of the Forks of the Road Bridge has been assessed as follows:

Integrity of Location. The Forks of the Road Bridge retains integrity of location, as it remains in its original location, aligned with Old Washington Road to the east, near the historic site of the Forks of the Road market.

Integrity of Design. The Forks of the Road Bridge retains integrity of design. The general form of the bridge remains, despite the partial collapse of the wall on the south side of the structure.

Integrity of Setting. The Forks of the Road Bridge has a diminished integrity of setting. Nearby commercial development combined with recent residential construction have altered the setting of the bridge, as has the multi-lane D'Evereux Drive situated directly south of the bridge. Overgrown vegetation at and around the bridge has also resulted in diminished integrity of setting.

Integrity of Materials and Workmanship. The Forks of the Road Bridge retains integrity of

117. *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 44–45.

118. *Ibid.*

materials and workmanship. However, the partial collapse of the wall on the south side of the structure combined with cracking of the brick and adjacent mortar joints has resulted in diminished integrity of materials and workmanship.

Integrity of Feeling. The Forks of the Road Bridge retains integrity of feeling as the structure was constructed to serve as bridge, and still can serve as such, despite no longer being used by vehicles to cross the creek below. The loss of setting has diminished integrity of feeling.

Integrity of Association. The Forks of the Road Bridge retains integrity of association. Originally constructed to allow Old Washington Road to cross the creek below, the bridge maintains its alignment with the road, which now terminates to the east. Although no visible remnants of the Forks of the Road market remain, the former market site is marked. The bridge maintains its association with the route leading to the site of the former market. Integrity of association is also maintained by visual cues in the surrounding environment, such as the fork in the road after which the bridge is named.

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Treatment and Use

Requirements for Treatment and Use

The Forks of the Road Bridge is important for its association with the history of Natchez, the historic location of the Forks of the Road slave market, and as an example of a brick masonry bridge constructed in the late 1800s. National Register documentation, however, does not exist for the bridge.

Ownership of the Forks of the Road site, which contains the Forks of the Road Bridge over Spanish Bayou, is anticipated to be transferred to the NPS in 2020. When the bridge is acquired, it will be done with the idea of helping preserve and tell the story of African enslavement, especially the story associated with the Forks of the Road slave market. The boundary of Natchez National Historical Park will be revised once the NPS received ownership of the Forks of the Road site.

The findings of this study indicate that the Forks of the Road Bridge is potentially significant under National Register Criterion A, as part of the route along which enslaved persons walked to the Forks of the Road slave market prior to 1863. Although the extant bridge was not constructed until circa 1888, it is located in an area of Natchez associated with the slave trade during the years before the Civil War. Additionally, the Forks of the Road Bridge is potentially locally significant under Criterion C, as an example of a largely intact masonry arch bridge constructed in the late 1800s.

As such, treatment and use of the Forks of the Road Bridge should be considered within the context of the legal mandates and policy directives established by National Park Service *Cultural*

Resources Management Guideline (Director's Order 28) for the protection of cultural resources. The bridge should be understood for the association of its site with the history of Natchez, and as an example of late 1900s masonry arch bridge, and preserved for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Laws, Regulations, and Functional Requirements

Key laws, regulations, and functional requirements that apply to the recommended work include the following:

- National Park Service *Cultural Resources Management Guideline* (Director's Order 28), which requires planning for the protection of cultural resources on park property.
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which mandates that federal agencies, including the National Park Service, take into account the effects of their actions on properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and give the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment.

Treatment of the structure and site are also to be guided by the following:

- *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*
- Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS)
- International Building Code (IBC), 2018

Treatment and Use

- International Existing Building Code (IEBC), 2018
- International Plumbing Code (IPC)
- National Electrical Safety Code (NESC)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101: Life Safety Code (LSC), 2015 and NFPA 1 Uniform Fire Code
- NPS Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design

Natchez currently follows the International Building Code, 2009, and the National Electrical Code, 2011. In Mississippi, there is no statewide building code; municipalities and counties individually adopt and administer codes.

The National Park Service is self-regulating in terms of enacting and enforcing building code standards. The bridge is therefore not legally subject to local or state building code requirements. When undertaking repairs to historic structures, the National Park Service endeavors to have the work comply with model building code standards. At this time, the 2018 International Building Code is the model building code used by the National Park Service for design and construction. The 2018 IEBC includes the following statements in Section 507, Historic Buildings:

507.1 Historic buildings. The provisions of this code that require improvements relative to a building's existing condition or, in the case of *repairs*, that require improvements relative to a building's pre-damage condition, shall not be mandatory for *historic buildings* unless specifically required by this section.

507.2 Life safety hazards. The provisions of this code shall apply to *historic buildings* judged by the building official to constitute a distinct life safety hazard.

507.3 Flood hazard areas. Within flood *hazard areas* established in accordance with Section 1612.3 of the *International Building Code*, or Section R322 of the *International Residential Code*, as applicable, where the work proposed constitutes *substantial improvement*, the

building shall be brought into compliance with Section 1612 of the *International Building Code*, or Section R322 of the *International Residential Code*, as applicable:

Exception: *Historic buildings* need not be brought into compliance that are:

1. Listed or preliminarily determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;
2. Determined by the Secretary of the US Department of Interior as contributing to the historical significance of a registered historic district or a district preliminarily determined to qualify as an historic district; or
3. Designated as historic under a state or local historic preservation program that is approved by the Department of Interior.

507.4 Structural. Historic buildings shall comply with the applicable structural provisions in this chapter.

Exceptions:

1. The *code official* shall be authorized to accept existing floors and existing live loads and to approve operational controls that limit the live load on any floor.
2. Repair of *substantial structural damage* is not required to comply with Sections 405.2.3, and 405.2.4. *Substantial structural damage* shall be repaired in accordance with Section 405.2.1.¹¹⁹

Although a determination of eligibility or other National Register documentation has not yet been prepared for the Forks of the Road Bridge, findings of the current study suggest that the bridge is historically significant and that the IEBC exceptions noted above pertain to the bridge as a historic structure. (Refer to the Significance and Integrity chapter of this report.)

119. International Code Council, Inc., *International Existing Building Code 2018* (Country Club Hills, Illinois: International Code Council, 2018).

In addition, the National Park Service provides guidance on sustainability in work on historic structures, in terms of energy efficiency, technology, and sustainable preservation in practice, as described in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.¹²⁰

Since the Forks of the Road Bridge is a historic structure, alternatives to full prescriptive legislative and code compliance should be considered where such compliance would compromise the integrity of the character-defining features of the structure.

Also in response to these laws and regulations, threats to life safety, if present, should be addressed in the repair of structure. For example, deteriorated or partially collapsed masonry should be stabilized and repaired.

Alternates for Treatment and Use

The National Park Service has developed definitions for the four major treatments that may be applied to historic structures: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. The four definitions are as follows:

Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical,

and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.¹²¹

Of the four treatment approaches, *preservation*, which involves sustaining the structure in its existing form, is most appropriate for the Forks of the Road Bridge. Within this overarching approach, preservation of the bridge would include stabilization and repair of the masonry structure, retaining historic fabric where not too severely deteriorated for repair (and replacing in kind if needed), as well as preservation of the bridge for continued interpretation by the park. The treatment *preservation* permits selective restoration of character-defining elements where missing or altered, if appropriate archival documentation is available. Such selective restoration measures can be considered in the future as the park's program and budget permit. In addition, *preservation* permits minor alterations. (Refer to the Developmental History and the

120. Anne E. Grimmer with Jo Ellen Hensley, Liz Petrella, and Audrey T. Tepper, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, 2011).

121. Grimmer, 2017.

Significance and Integrity chapters for further discussion of character-defining features.)

Ultimate Treatment and Use

Guidelines for Treatment

Guidelines and recommendations for treatment for the bridge have been defined based on the preservation objectives and requirements for treatment and use outlined above. All treatment guidelines and recommendations were developed in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Preservation.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation are as follows:

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.¹²²

The basic guidelines for work on the Forks of the Road Bridge and its immediate setting are as follows:

- Undertake all work in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation.
- Retain the character of the historic site by protecting the bridge and significant associated site features.
- Ensure that proposed new elements or construction are compatible with historic character of the bridge and site.
- Protect adjacent natural resources during construction activities.
- Document through detailed as-built drawings, photographs, and written narrative all changes and treatments to the historic site and bridge. Maintain records of treatments and preserve documentation according to professional archival standards. Maintain a copy of the records in National Park Service archives.

122. Ibid.

- Retain features and materials of the bridge that date from the period of significance to the greatest extent possible.
- Incorporate sustainable design principles in all future projects that respect the preservation principles listed above.
- Loose and dislodged brick in the bridge walls and adjacent to the bridge, in areas other than those discussed above, should be removed and stored for future reinstallation.
- The bridge and surrounding site should be kept clear of overgrown vegetation. Care should be taken to not damage the bridge during maintenance of the adjacent landscape. Previous vegetation removal required the use of heavy equipment (i.e., a backhoe) located atop the bridge, which is of concern given the deteriorated condition of the bridge walls. Techniques for vegetation removal that do not require the placement of heavy equipment atop the bridge should be considered. Also, techniques used to remove vegetation from the bridge itself should be evaluated to avoid damage to the masonry. If new growth can be controlled as it emerges rather than after it has overgrown the bridge, this would assist in avoiding potential damage to the bridge. However, such control would require more frequent (although less extensive) removals. The park has indicated that chemical treatments are needed to control kudzu; if used, care should be taken to avoid introducing chemicals into the landscape and water.

(See also Recommendations for Further Research, below.)

Recommendations

The following specific recommendations for treatment of the Forks of the Road Bridge respond to the overarching treatment approach *preservation*, which involves sustaining the structure in its existing form. All work should be conducted in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation. These recommendations are presented in two phases: the first phase addresses emergency stabilization of the bridge to protect against further extensive deterioration or collapse, and the second addresses repair and preservation measures.

Phase 1: Stabilization

- Consideration should be given to limiting access to the bridge until stabilization repairs are implemented. (See further discussion of recommended repairs, below.)
- The outward displacement of the brick masonry above the arch at the north wall should be investigated. Localized rebuilding may be necessary at this location. If repairs will not be undertaken in the near term, the bridge wall at this location should be temporarily stabilized with braces or anchors.
- The remaining portion of the south wall of the bridge should be stabilized with bracing and anchors, if repairs will not be undertaken in the near term.
- Trash and any loose debris should be removed from the site. Any brick masonry or other materials that have fallen from the bridge should be retained by the park for salvage and potential future use in repairs to the bridge.

- Consideration should be given to conducting soils studies in the vicinity of the bridge. These studies would confirm whether or not hazardous materials have accumulated in the soils due to storm water runoff which could contain contaminants or upstream pollutants that may have been dumped into the stream over the years.

Phase 2: Repairs

- If not addressed as part of stabilization repairs (see Phase 1, above), the outward displacement of the brick masonry above the arch at the north wall should be investigated. Depending on findings of the investigation, repairs may include localized rebuilding with matching or salvaged brick, or installation of rods and plates to prevent further displacement.

- If not addressed as part of stabilization repairs (see Phase 1, above), the south wall of the bridge should be repaired, particularly if the bridge is to be reopened to the public. Repairs would include rebuilding missing portions of the wall using salvaged brick where possible. The reconstruction of the south wall would also assist in protecting the brick arch below.
- Where impact damage was observed at the arch on the south side of the bridge, damaged brick should be removed, salvaged or new matching brick installed, and joints repointed as discussed below. Based on visual inspection, the arch appeared to be in generally good condition.
- Where individual severely spalled brick are observed, consideration could be given to removing the brick and resetting it with the previously concealed face oriented to the exterior. If individual brick are too severely damaged to be used, consideration can be given to using salvaged brick that had previously fallen from the bridge, assuming it is in good condition. If this is not possible, consideration could be given to dismantling a small, less visible area and salvaging original brick for use on exposed, more visible surfaces, and providing new compatible brick for the concealed back-up construction. In some cases, depending on their location, individual damaged brick units may not require repair.
- Where individual displaced or loose brick are observed throughout the masonry bridge walls, loose brick should be reset, and missing brick should be replaced with brick to match the original, or brick salvaged from the bridge. If archival documentation is discovered to indicate the original configuration of the projecting brick features atop the walls, consideration could be given to reconstructing them. For purposes of repairs, the remaining brick should be reset if loose, and the brickwork repointed.
- Where continuous cracks have occurred through the brick masonry, the masonry should be repaired by rebuilding the brickwork along the cracks.
- Brick masonry should be cleaned where affected by biological growth such as lichen or algae, which are particularly extensive at the underside of the bridge. Prior to cleaning, trial cleaning studies should be conducted to address soiling and biological growth on masonry. When cleaning is necessary, it should be performed using the gentlest means possible. Although mild cleaners such as detergents will remove light soiling, a biocide cleaner can be used to help inhibit recurrence of biological growth. Biocide cleaners are products that remove biological growth from the substrate and inhibit its recurrence. Examples of biocide cleaners that are available at this writing include D/2 Biological Solution, manufactured by D/2 Biological Solutions, Westport, Massachusetts, and EnviroKlean ReVive, manufactured by Prosoco, of Kansas City, Kansas. Both of the above-mentioned products are quaternary ammonium solutions with surfactants that enhance cleaning.
- Open or eroded mortar joints in the brick masonry should be prepared and repointed. Non-deteriorated mortar from sound joints should not be removed. Where present, unsound mortar should be removed to a depth of 2-1/2 times the width of the joint, or to sound mortar, whichever is greater. Work should be performed using handheld, non-power tools. A skilled mason can sometimes accomplish joint preparation without damaging the adjacent substrate by using a small power tool to cut along the center of the joint, followed by use of a hand tool (chisel) to remove mortar adjacent to the center cut. This process, if properly implemented, can sometimes result in less potential damage to the masonry adjacent the joint than preparation using hand tools only, particularly for existing very hard mortar adjacent to eroded or spalled brick. A trial sample is always required to evaluate the skill of the mason and effectiveness of the repair.

Joints should be repointed where open or deteriorated using appropriate mortars. The use of overly hard mortars (relative to the strength of the masonry) should be avoided. New work should match historic mortar joints in color, texture, joint size, profile, and tooling.¹²³ Documentation should be prepared to record areas of repointing. Based on findings of this study, and noting the character of the brick and that existing mortars are cementitious, an ASTM Type O mortar (1 part cement to 2 parts lime to 9 parts sand) would be appropriate for this purpose. A contemporary mortar should be used rather than replicating the original mortar, which was inconsistent in composition.

- Consideration should be given to removing the damaged, non-historic concrete duct bank, assuming that all utilities present have been abandoned. AT&T has confirmed that the telecommunication lines have been abandoned. It is recommended that 811 and the City of Natchez be consulted prior to removal of the duct to confirm that the duct bank in fact abandoned. (See Recommendations for Further Research, below.)

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Additional archival research is recommended to inform understanding the history and the construction of the extant bridge, as well as the previous bridge at Old Washington Road. For example, it would be interesting to know whether the brick used to construct the bridge was manufactured locally, at the brick plant shown on the 1891 map of Natchez (see Significance Evaluation chapter).
2. Additional archeological research and investigation is recommended to determine whether any components from the previous bridge may be buried on site and whether foundations exist. Further investigation may

also indicate whether materials from the previous bridge were reused in construction of the current bridge. Although investigation conducted to date has not indicated that components of the previous bridge were reused in construction of the current bridge, period newspaper accounts suggest that the bridge was built very quickly, in a matter of weeks. Thus, further research and investigation in this regard is recommended.

3. Consideration could be given to conducting borings to determine the original road bed depth and the possible relationship of road levels to the location of the drainage holes.
4. Additional research should be conducted to confirm that the concrete duct bank has been abandoned and that utilities located in the duct are no longer in service.
5. Additional research is needed to determine when Washington Road was cut off from the Forks of the Road and became Old Washington Road. The reconfiguration likely occurred concurrent with the expansion and reconfiguration of D'Evereux Drive. USGS Quad maps dated 1975 and 1977 indicate that D'Evereux Drive became a divided highway in 1976.¹²⁴ Additional research to determine the extent of construction involved in the 1976 project and the condition of the road and bridge at that time would assist in further understanding the factors contributing to the current condition of the bridge. Documentation from the 1976 work including photographic, topological, geotechnical, and engineering surveys of the site could

123. Grimmer, 33-34.

124. US Geological Survey, *Natchez, Mississippi-Louisiana, SW1/4 Natchez 15' Quadrangle*, N3130-W9122.5/7.5 map series, 1975, 1977. Annotations on the map indicate that information about the road location is based on aerial photographs taken in 1976, but not field verified.

potentially inform understanding of the progression of the deterioration exhibited.¹²⁵

6. The names of multiple workers associated with the bridge, including L. Terrell, T. J. Kiernan, and John Meath (1859–1915), appear repeatedly in newspaper articles related to work in and around the city of Natchez during the late 1800s and early 1900s. To support efforts to interpret the political and social history of park, further research on these persons is recommended to determine their role in the growth of post-bellum Natchez, as well as their association with the bridge.
7. Consideration should be given to developing determination of eligibility type documentation for the bridge, to evaluate further its significance in terms of National Register Criteria A and C at a national or local level.
8. Once the boundary extension is confirmed, consideration should be given to developing a Cultural Landscape Report for the Forks of the Road slave market, bridge, and environs, including Old Washington Road and the route to the slave market. A Cultural Landscape Report would be helpful in assessing landscape features and also providing recommendations to address the cultural landscape surrounding the bridge. For example, one of the topics that could be addressed is treatment of the portion of Washington Road immediately west of and adjacent to the Forks of the Road Bridge. Additional research and analysis could potentially determine the historic appearance of the road and whether it would be appropriate to remove existing materials to expose or recreate the historic road bed.

125. The Mississippi Department of Transportation has no records relating to the work on the D'Evereux Drive expansion.

Resilience to Natural Hazards

Although Natchez National Historical Park is located in the southeast United States along the Mississippi River, the site is still considered vulnerable to current and future threats associated with climate change.

Increasingly frequent strong storms and heavy rainfall have been noted for several years in the southeastern United States. Studies of effects of climate change on the Gulf of Mexico coast and the State of Mississippi and the lower Mississippi River valley have also indicated a predicted significant rise in average temperatures and sustained humidity coupled with periods of intense rainfall and associated flooding.¹²⁶

Weather and climate-related threats to resources have already been felt in in the Gulf Coast region. For example, in 2005 Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damage that cost at \$108 billion in the region, primarily from storm surge, flooding, and wind. Structures such as the Forks of the Road Bridge are vulnerable to storm-related damage, as well as to damage and deterioration associated with flooding. The bridge is particularly vulnerable to flooding due to its location over a creek.

Although threats are more immediate to coastal historic sites, inland historic sites similarly require identification of the resources anticipated to be threatened—both buildings and landscapes—and planning for protection as well as mitigation in the face of increased storms resulting from climate change.

As loss of historic resource integrity may occur, suddenly or slowly, from conditions related to climate change, documentation is the first response to mitigate anticipated loss or diminishment, or to plan for the impacts associated with climate change. This Historic

126. Rebecca Beavers, Amanda Babson, and Courtney Schupp, National Park Service, *Coastal Adaptation Strategies Handbook* (N.P.: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2016).

Structure Report, including the historical narrative condition assessment, and recommendations, together with photographs and measured drawings, is an important part of the documentation process.

rising sea levels, and other impacts related to climate change should be anticipated and considered in planning for protection and maintenance of the site and its resources.

As part of future efforts to build on and update the documentation provided in this Historic Structure Report, the National Park Service should consider such approaches as more detailed documentation resulting from new three-dimensional scanning technology, monitoring weather-related deterioration, updating emergency and disaster planning to address climate change-related issues, and strategic planning for mitigation of the effects of climate change on park resources. The latter may include special protection, documentation, and interpretation measures to address resources that are especially vulnerable to damage or loss due to climate change-related conditions.

In addition to threats to the historic resources, climate change will affect visitation patterns. A park-specific brief has been prepared on this issue, and notes the historical relationship between visitation and temperature, finding that temperature was a significant predictor of visitation. The brief further notes that understanding this relationship, and taking advantage of continued study, will help park management “adapt to the effects of climate change and remain effective resource stewards while promoting visitor experience.”¹²⁷

Efforts conducted for the Natchez National Historical Park will benefit from coordination with other planning and documentation projects to address effects of climate change under consideration or in the process of being implemented by the National Park Service in the Southeast Region. Future severe weather events,

127. National Park Service, “Natchez National Historic Park: How might future warming affect visitation?” *Park Visitation and Climate Change, Park-Specific Brief* (N.P.: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Natural Resource Stewardship & Science, 2016).

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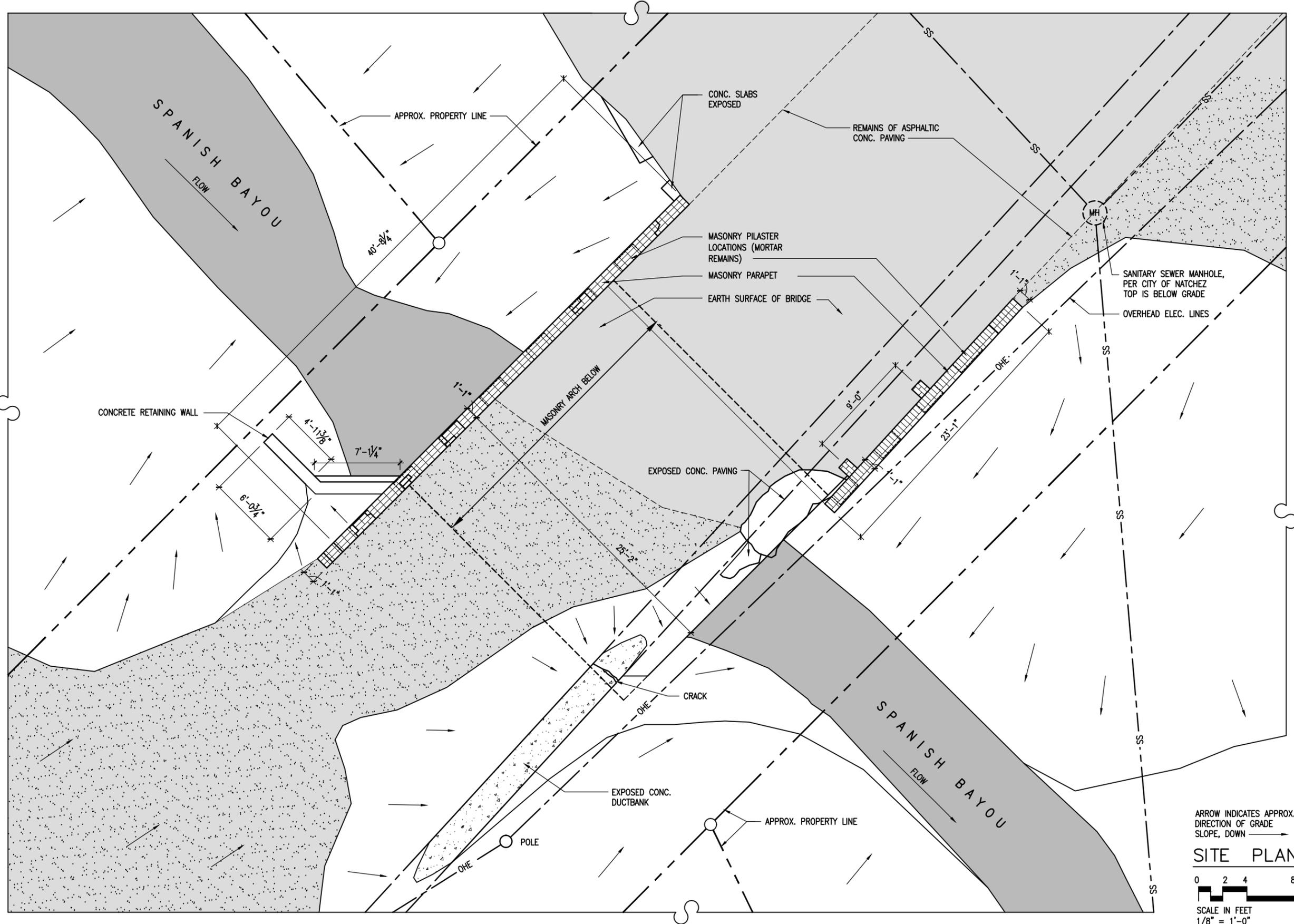
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Appendix A: Measured Drawings



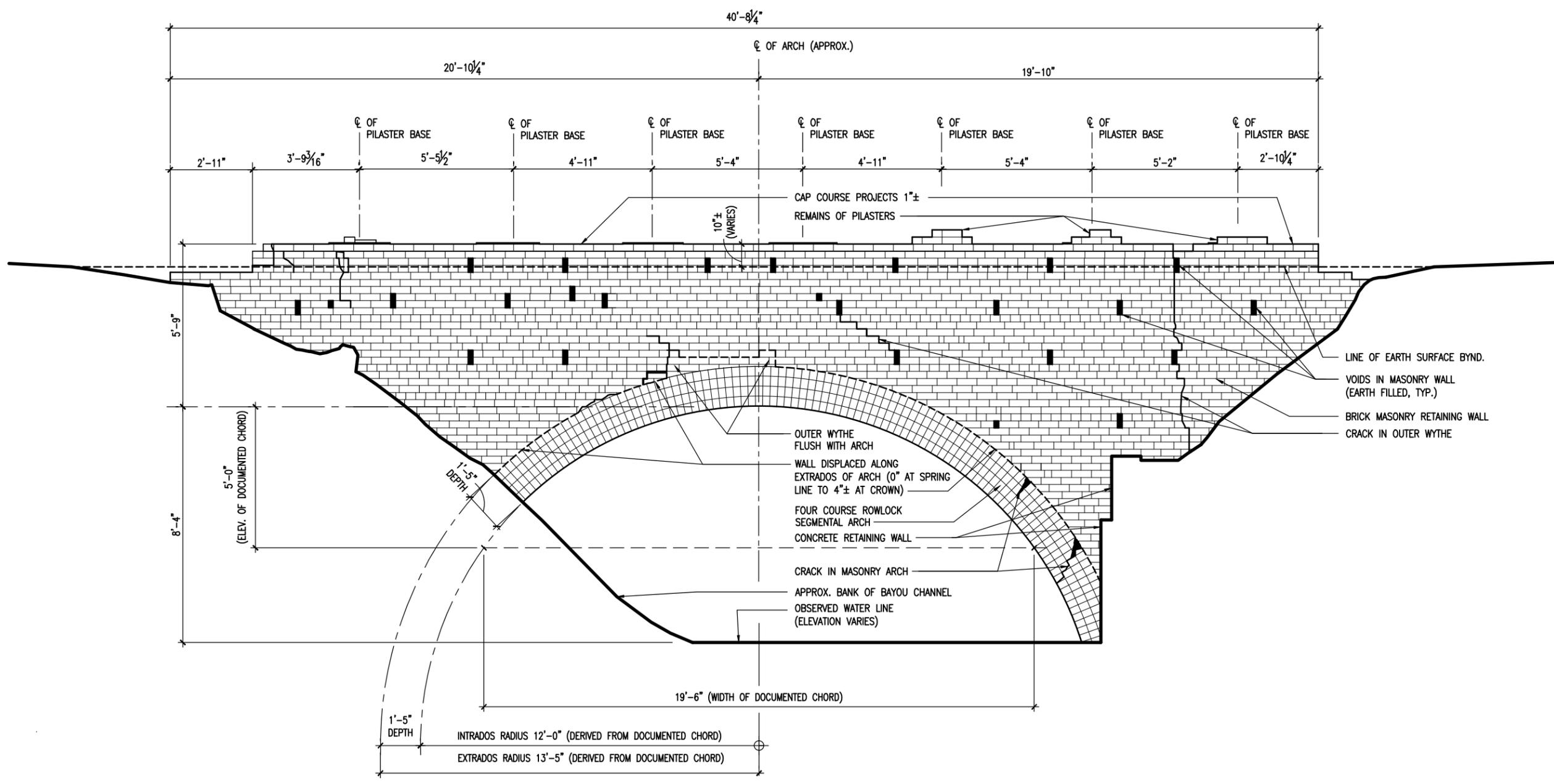
ARROW INDICATES APPROX. DIRECTION OF GRADE SLOPE, DOWN

SITE PLAN

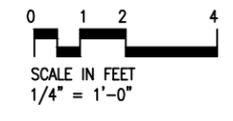
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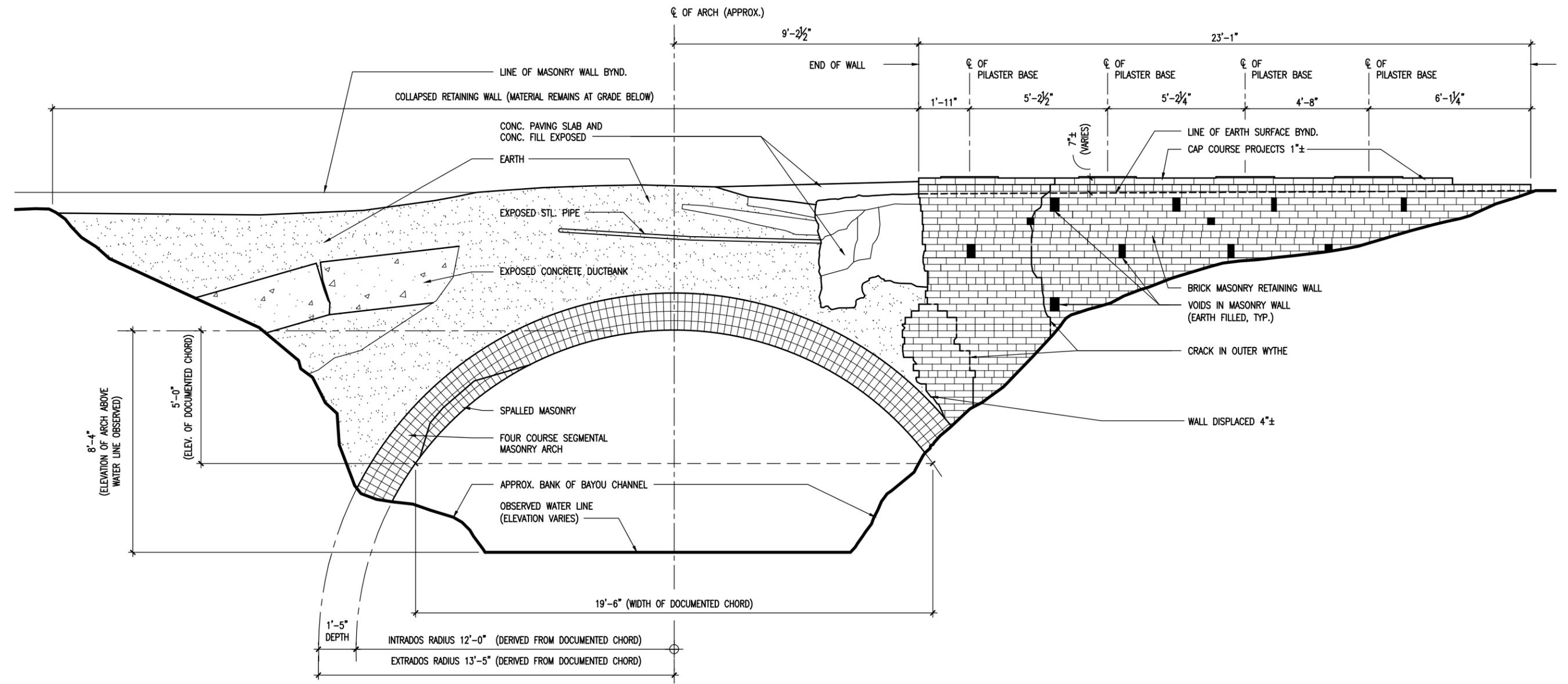
SCALE IN FEET
1/8" = 1'-0"

DRAWN BY: WFTA, OCTOBER 2019



NORTHWEST ELEVATION





SOUTHEAST ELEVATION
 0 1 2 4
 SCALE IN FEET
 1/4" = 1'-0"

DRAWN BY: WFTA, OCTOBER 2019

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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