

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Sulphur Fork Bridge  
Other names/site number Sulphur Fork Bridge at Port Royal State Park; HAER TN-27; TDOT Bridge #63-A0456-01.88  
Name of related multiple property listing N/A  
(Remove "N/A" if property is part of a multiple property listing and add name)

## 2. Location

Street & Number: 3300 Old Clarksville Hwy over the Sulphur Fork of the Red River  
City or town: Adams State: TN County: Montgomery; Robertson  
Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  X Zip: 37010

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting Official: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_ State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian-related

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Pratt Through Truss

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: IRON; LIMESTONE; CONCRETE

**Narrative Description**

The 1890 Sulphur Fork Bridge over the Sulphur Fork Creek is an iron, one span, pin-connected, 114' long Pratt through truss bridge located within Port Royal State Park. The bridge is oriented east-west across Sulphur Fork Creek and falls within Montgomery and Robertson Counties. The bridge is positioned approximately 120 yards south of the Sulphur Fork Creek's confluence with the Red River and once carried the Old Clarksville Springfield Road across the Sulphur Fork Creek. A portion of the Old Clarksville Springfield Road that is no longer used for vehicular traffic is covered in river rock gravel and leads to the bridge. The iron portions of the bridge are painted green and rest on two original piers made of block-cut limestone. There are also two c.1955 poured concrete piers and two c.1955 concrete abutments that support the roadway from beneath on either side of the bridge.<sup>1</sup> The c. 1955 piers and abutments are considered contributing elements to the bridge structure as they represent historic adaptations to meet modern infrastructure standards. In addition to the original limestone piers, the bridge retains original iron elements.

<sup>1</sup> Martha Carver, *Sulphur Creek Fork Bridge Photographs, Written Historic, and Descriptive Data Historic American Engineering Record*, HAER No. TN - 27 (Atlanta, GA: National Park Service Southeast Region, n.d.), 5.

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The bridge's original wooden decking was replaced with poured concrete due to normal road wear and changes in transportation infrastructure standards. The bridge retains integrity of location and setting due to its spatial relationship with the historic road, river, and creek. The integrity of the bridge's design, workmanship, and original materials (with the exception of the decking replacement) are all apparent and are retained due to the minimal changes over the years. Alterations, such as the addition of concrete piers and abutments, are historic adaptations that reflect changes in transportation infrastructure standards due to the demands of vehicular traffic, and later, pedestrian safety. These alterations therefore add to the bridge's historic and engineering significance. Considering the retention of the bridge's location, setting, extant original physical characteristics and historic adaptations, the bridge also retains its integrity of feeling and historic association.

### Setting

The Sulphur Fork Bridge is within the boundaries of Port Royal State Park on the line between Montgomery and Robertson Counties in northern Middle Tennessee. West of the bridge is the current pedestrian path (and former path of the Old Clarksville Springfield Road) leading to the bridge. This path is currently covered in river rock gravel. This path was also once the Main Street of the c.1790s town of Port Royal. The limestone foundation blocks of the early town's buildings are visible on either side of the former thoroughfare. There are small interpretive signs maintained by the state park on the north side of this path.

The river rock gravel path ends where the concrete deck girder span begins on the bridge's west side. On either side of this are poured concrete guardrails with metal handrails attached to the topside. The concrete decking and guardrail continue approximately 43' as they approach the historic metal truss span. North of the bridge is the confluence of the Red River and Sulphur Fork Creek. Extending from the east of the Sulphur Creek Bridge is a concrete deck girder span and guardrail in the same scale and design as on the west side. Just beyond this is the state park's boundary, marked with a c.1990 vehicle barrier. Beyond the barrier is a fenced, privately owned agricultural field. To the south is the Sulphur Fork Creek, flanked by deep banks on both sides, and surrounding forest. About 500 feet to the southeast is a c.1990 concrete bridge built to facilitate the realignment of the Old Clarksville to Springfield Road/Port Royal Road. The realignment and construction of the new bridge allowed the historic Sulphur Fork Bridge to be preserved.

### Sulphur Fork Bridge, Contributing Structure

The bridge's overall length is 231' long, measured between the outermost abutments which were constructed c.1955. The c.1890 span with stone piers beneath measures 114' 1.25'' with an approximately 11.5' wide deck, and the truss measures 18'9'' tall (a measured drawing of the bridge is found on the Continuation Sheet in Figure 1). Though there are no known records indicating whether the iron members comprising the bridge are cast or wrought, industry standards of the period suggest both were likely used. Cast iron is more brittle than wrought iron and has less tensile strength but is able to bear compression. Wrought iron is softer; its tensile strength enables it to stretch. In a Pratt truss, the diagonal members are in tension and often made of wrought iron while vertical members were cast.<sup>2</sup>

Iron beams were assembled into a Pratt through truss design, meaning vertical members are connected to one another by diagonal braces linking two columns at opposite corners. There are two top chords (comprised of channels with lacing underneath) that run the length of the bridge. At each end, the top chords are attached to

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<sup>2</sup> Eric DeLoney, "The Golden Age of the Iron Bridge," *Invention and Technology: The Magazine of Innovation* 10, no.2 (Fall 1994), <https://www.inventionandtech.com/content/golden-age-iron-bridge-1>.

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the end posts (also comprised of channels with lacing underneath) that angle outward and down to the ground at a 45-degree angle. There are four struts that run the width of the bridge and connect the top chords. Within the spaces created by the top chords and the struts, there are top lateral braces that run diagonally from the struts, forming an “X” in each space.

On each end of the bridge’s upper structure is a portal strut located where the top chord and 45-degree angle end post meet. Each of the two portal struts are composed of two thin beams attached at the ends by a strip of iron, forming a rectangle. This portal bracing is “latticed” with strips of iron riveted to the two beams. Two channel bars, one from each end post, rise to meet the portal bracing at 45-degree angle. This bracing mechanism is found on either end of the bridge.

There are four vertical supports (comprised of channels and lacing) on either side of the bridge that stand straight and extend from the bottom floor beam to the top beam or chord. The vertical supports are connected to the floor beams with a U-bolt. The verticals are spaced approximately fifteen feet from one another on each side. The vertical supports are comprised of two lengths of channel beams turned back-to-back and connected by several one-inch wide iron strips riveted into a latticed, or zig-zag pattern down the beam’s length. On at least two of the channel beams, one that comprises a vertical support and another comprising an end post near the bridge’s northwest corner, the word “Phoenix” is clearly visible, indicating Converse obtained these channel beams and likely others used on the bridge from the Phoenix Iron Works in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania (See figures 2 & 3). Diagonal bracing members made of two three-quarter inch rectilinear eyebars are located between the vertical supports and angle downward toward the center of the bridge, creating a pattern characteristic of Pratt trusses. In the middle panels on each side, these iron bars form an “X”.

The hip verticals, the vertical members at each corner of the truss, are made of single rectilinear eyerods. Their connections are unusual.<sup>3</sup> The eyerod connections are unusual because ordinarily the rod would end in one eyelet or loop where a pin would be inserted. These hip vertical connections on the Sulphur Fork Bridge each split into two eyelets at the bottom instead of one. At the base, the bars splinter into two eyelets through which a pin is secured. The pin is fastened with a U-bolt to the nearest floor beam. Two separate but parallel segments of rectilinear bars, the bottom chords, run the length of the bridge on either side and are pinned (through loop-welded eyelets) where vertical supports and hip verticals attach to the floor beams. The end of each vertical support and hip vertical is bolted between these bottom chords. The diagonal bracing members that run 45-degree angles between the vertical supports are also secured with a pin at the point where the two bottom chords are bolted to the vertical supports.

The bridge is a through truss, and as the name implies, conveyance occurs through the frame. As described previously, concrete guardrails flank the path leading up to each bridge portal. A c.1990 metal handrail, raised approximately 3.5’ from the roadway, is attached to the topside of these guardrails. The deck of the bridge measures approximately 11’5” wide. While wood planks were originally used for the bridge’s deck, the deck is currently made of concrete, as it was used to carry an active road over the fork until 1990. There are handrails about 3’ 7” high on either side of side of the bridge deck that were added c.1990 when the

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<sup>3</sup> Historic American Engineering Record, Creator, W H Converse, Converse Bridge Company, and Siskin Steel and Supply Company. *Sulphur Fork Bridge Spanning Sulphur Fork Creek on Spring Road, Port Royal, Montgomery County, TN*. Survey number: HAER TN-27. Montgomery County Port Royal Tennessee, 1968. Documentation compiled after. Photograph. <http://www.log.gov/item/tn0263/>.

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Tennessee Department of Transportation equipped the nominated bridge for pedestrian traffic when it realigned the Old Clarksville to Springfield Road, bypassing the Sulphur Fork Bridge, and built its replacement further south.

The bridge's underside is comprised of six floor beams (running perpendicular to the bridge's length), spaced approximately fifteen feet apart, that run the width of the bridge's deck. These floor beams are suspended from the previously described vertical supports. Connecting each of the six beams are lower lateral crossties made of iron bars that form an "X" between each beam. These crosstie bars are installed with turnbuckles to apply proper tension. Resting on top of the width beams are four stringers made of channel beams that are spaced about two feet from each other and run the length of the bridge's decking.

Two abutments and four piers support the bridge. The original two piers are made of cut limestone blocks (labeled as pier #2 and pier #3 in Figure 1 in the *Continuation Sheets*). The east pier stands approximately 15'4" tall; the west pier stands approximately 10' tall. The piers' bases are rectangular and taper slightly upward. Also beneath the bridge are two c.1955 concrete piers that elevate the former roadway leading to and from the bridge (labeled as pier #1 and pier #4 in Figure 1). There are also two c.1955 poured concrete abutments (also seen in Figure 1). These later additions do not affect the design of the c.1890 structure and were installed for safety. These contributing components represent another period of significance (1955), as the concrete piers and abutments illustrate the trend of Departments of Transportation altering older bridges to meet modern infrastructure and safety standards to accommodate increased automobile traffic.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

N/A

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION

ENGINEERING

**Period of Significance**

1890

1955

**Significant Dates**

1890

1955

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Converse, William H.

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

The Sulphur Fork Bridge is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for local significance in Transportation as well as Criterion C for local significance in Engineering. The third span for the regionally significant Old Clarksville Springfield Road at this location, the Sulphur Fork Creek Bridge is historically significant as it represents the evolution of safe conveyance across the Sulphur Fork Creek, contributing to the efficiency of the one of the area's main routes. The period of significance is 1890, as the bridge was constructed that year as the first bridge designed by what would soon become the Converse Bridge Company out of Chattanooga, one of only two major bridge companies in Tennessee at the time specializing in metal truss bridges. The Sulphur Fork Bridge's Pratt Through Truss design is an important example of its type within the local context. A secondary Period of Significance of 1955 recognizes the bridge's historic physical adaptation to meet modern infrastructure safety standards.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

**CRITERION A: TRANSPORTATION**

The Sulphur Fork Bridge has local significance under Criterion A for transportation. It served as a safe and efficient method of crossing the Sulphur Fork and directly linked Port Royal in Montgomery County to the Robertson County seat of Springfield via the Clarksville to Springfield Road. It also serves as a local example of a larger trend of the modernization of transportation infrastructure at the time of its construction.

Drawn by the area's waterways, the first permanent settlers arrived in Port Royal in the early 1780s, but the site served as a longhunter camp as early as 1775. By the time Port Royal was incorporated in 1797, it was a flourishing community and continued to grow as a center for trade and commerce largely because of its strategic location on the Red River, which provided access via the Cumberland River to the Ohio River and its commercial opportunities. In addition to serving as a central tobacco inspection point and regional warehouse, Port Royal was also a flatboat manufacturing hub. The flatboat's design became regionally accepted as the premier craft for the local waterways because of its ability to navigate shallow rocky shoals. These flatboats transported regional goods to larger markets, such as New Orleans and Natchez, thus making Port Royal well-connected commercially through its river access.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to its location at the junction of the Red River and Sulphur Fork, Port Royal also had access to road networks, which largely followed earlier routes established by Native Americans.<sup>5</sup> Port Royal was located at a major crossroads of the north-south "Great Western Road" stagecoach route and the regionally significant east-west Clarksville to Springfield Road.<sup>6</sup> The latter connected Port Royal to the westward Montgomery County seat of Clarksville, established in 1784, and the eastward Robertson County seat of Springfield, established in 1798.

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<sup>4</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Port Royal Road, Port Royal, Montgomery County, Tennessee, National Register #06001131.

<sup>5</sup> Ursula S. Beach, *Tennessee County History Series: Montgomery County* (Memphis, TN: Memphis State University Press, 1988), 20.

<sup>6</sup> "Port Royal State Historic Park," Tennessee State Parks, <https://tnstateparks.com/parks/info/port-royal> (accessed October 9, 2019).

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Because of Port Royal's location at the junction of two major roads and its location along the Red River and Sulphur Fork, this commercial hub had a strong history of bridge building. In the early-nineteenth century many creeks and rivers that transected roads were often crossed through the use of shallow fords or by ferries, yet these could not always be depended upon, particularly during inclement weather and high water levels. The same was true for the Sulphur Fork, which transected the Clarksville and Springfield Road at Port Royal. To eliminate the need to ford Sulphur Fork, a wooden bridge was constructed across the creek in 1842 and funded by local subscriptions. This bridge offered a safer and more efficient means of crossing the creek and allowed for a safer and more consistent passage between Port Royal and Springfield. Unfortunately, it was destroyed during a flood in 1847.<sup>7</sup>

Twelve years later, another bridge was constructed, partly funded by Montgomery County and partly by local citizens.<sup>8</sup> This bridge was constructed at a time when the region saw the beginnings of a great shift in transportation methods with the arrival of the Edgefield and Kentucky Railroad. The railroad was incorporated in 1852 with its line from Edgefield (east Nashville) to Springfield completed in 1857, its line from Springfield to Adams (located northeast of Port Royal) completed the following year, and its final line into Guthrie, Kentucky completed in 1859.<sup>9</sup> Over time, the introduction of rail transportation in the area shifted regional economic centers, such as Port Royal, to areas along the railroad. The railroad improved rural travel and helped facilitate the movement of goods and produce, including the region's significant tobacco crop, to more lucrative markets. Unfortunately, this second bridge over Sulphur Fork was short-lived like its predecessor and was destroyed in 1866, with portions of its ruins sold at auction the following year.<sup>10</sup>

While an emphasis was placed on the development of railroads in the 1850s and the following decades, road building and maintenance declined.<sup>11</sup> It would take nearly twenty-five years for the current bridge to be constructed over Sulphur Fork. Paid for by both Montgomery and Robertson counties, this bridge was built at the time of a nationwide trend to improve rural roads and bridges. Martha Carver, former historian and preservation specialist for the Tennessee Department of Transportation notes, "By the late nineteenth century due to increased rail transportation and improved roads, many communities like Port Royal began to die as reliance on water transport waned. In a sense, the Sulphur Fork Bridge symbolized this decline as its construction was an outgrowth of the general movement in the late nineteenth century to improve local county roads."<sup>12</sup> This movement, initially led by cyclists and later farmers, became known as the Good

<sup>7</sup> Carver, *Sulphur Fork Bridge HAER*, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Yolanda G. Reid and Rick S. Gregory, *Robertson County Tennessee: Home of the World's Finest, Celebrating 200 Years* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 54.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.; W.L.P., "A Correction," *Leaf-Chronicle*, Clarksville, Tennessee, March 11, 1890; "Sulphur Fork Bridge at Port Royal for Sale," *Clarksville Chronicle*, Clarksville, Tennessee, May 24, 1867

<sup>11</sup> Martha Carver, *Tennessee's Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges* (Nashville, TN: Tennessee Department of Transportation, 2008), 22

<sup>12</sup> Carver, *Sulphur Fork Bridge HAER*, 2.

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Roads Movement, which began around 1880 and ended in the mid-1920s.<sup>13</sup> Joseph Hyde Pratt, former President of the Southern Appalachian Good Roads Association, argued:

When railroading was first begun in this country many people had the idea that there would be little use for the public road in those sections of the country that were traversed by the railroad. Time has demonstrated, however, that railways are simply the main arteries of travel, and public roads are the veins, each being a necessary part of the other in our system of transportation, and that without good public roads, railroads fail in accomplishing what is required and demanded of them.<sup>14</sup>

Proponents of the Good Roads Movement argued that the improvement of roads that connected rural areas to railway stations, known as “farm-to-market roads,” such as the old Clarksville to Springfield Road, would lower transportation costs for farmers and rural manufacturers to the nearest railway stations. As a result, this would boost the farmer’s or manufacturer’s profits while reducing rural poverty and uplifting the state’s agriculture and industry. In addition to pushing the improvement of rural roads, the Good Roads Movement promoted the construction of bridges to replace dangerous and unreliable ferries and fords.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the national morale for bridge building and seemingly obvious benefits of having reliable conveyance over Sulphur Fork, sourcing the funds to erect one was a cumbersome local matter exacerbated by the necessary involvement of Montgomery and Robertson Counties. Martha Carver summarizes the initial struggle between the two counties regarding funding the Sulphur Fork Bridge:

Between 1885 and 1890, Robertson and Montgomery Counties repeatedly tried to reach an agreement regarding a bridge here. The source of contention, as might be expected, was money: Montgomery County wanted each to pay half, and Robertson County wanted each to pay based on the number of voters in each county (which would be cheaper for it). The counties finally agreed to Robertson’s plan with Montgomery County paying \$1,340 and Robertson County paying \$960.<sup>16</sup>

The Sulphur Fork Bridge was completed and opened in 1890 to much excitement and fanfare. The *Clarksville Democrat* described it as “the only iron bridge in the county” and expressed hope that it would become a model for many more “for there are many little creeks and streams in the county which should be spanned by these light and durable structures.”<sup>17</sup> The Sulphur Fork bridge not only safely and directly connected Port Royal and its surrounding area to the Robertson County seat of Springfield, but it was also an early example of the re-focus on and improvement of rural roads and overland travel in Tennessee during the late-nineteenth century and part of the nationwide trend to improve many of America’s roads at the time.

<sup>13</sup> Howard L. Preston, “Historic Highways,” *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, March 1, 2018, <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/historic-highways/> (accessed November 4, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Hyde Pratt, “Good Roads Movement in the South,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 35, no. 1 (January 1910), 105-106.

<sup>15</sup> Kim Trevathan, *Paddling the Tennessee River: A Voyage on Easy Water* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 209.

<sup>16</sup> Carver, *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*, 375.

<sup>17</sup> “The Port Royal Bridge,” *Clarksville Democrat*, Clarksville, Tennessee, May 8, 1890.

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CRITERION C: ENGINEERING 1890; c.1955

Built in 1890 by the Chattanooga-based Converse Bridge Company, the Sulphur Fork Bridge has local significance under Criterion C for engineering as an excellent local example of an early Pratt truss bridge and an early example of a bridge constructed by the Converse Bridge Company. The bridge falls within Montgomery and Robertson Counties and is the only extant metal truss bridge in Montgomery County, and the only extant Pratt truss bridge in Robertson County.

A truss can be described simply as an “interconnected framework of beams that holds something up.”<sup>18</sup> Patterns made by vertical members and specific stress distribution distinguish different types of truss bridges and are often named after their developers, such as the Warren, Pratt, or Howe truss.<sup>19</sup> Invented by Caleb and Thomas Pratt in 1844, the Pratt truss “became the most widely used pattern for metal truss bridges” in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century due to its practicality and effectiveness. When built as an all metal bridge as opposed to a combination iron and wood bridge, the Pratt truss, with its vertical members in compression and only its diagonal members in tension, required less iron, was easier to erect, and thus was a more economical choice for local municipalities who were seeking to improve their transportation infrastructure.<sup>20</sup>

In early 1890, Montgomery County officials contracted with William H. Converse to build the Sulphur Fork Bridge over Sulphur Creek for \$2,300. By July of the same year, the bridge was completed and “is assumed to be one of the first he [William H. Converse] erected after starting his own firm.”<sup>21</sup> The bridge is a typical Pratt truss in that there is a tension diagonal in each panel and these diagonal members slant downward and toward the middle panel, an easily recognizable hallmark of Pratt trusses (See Figure 1 on *Continuation Sheet*). With the diagonals in tension, the vertical members are in compression and the end posts are inclined outward. All of these characteristics are hallmarks of typical Pratt truss design.

While the Sulphur Fork Bridge is a typical Pratt truss, there is one feature that speaks to its early build date. Martha Carver, former historian and preservation specialist for the Tennessee Department of Transportation, asserts that the unusual bottom connections of the nominated bridge help substantiate its status as an early Converse-built structure. Carver notes, “The bottom connections of the hip verticals are not typical for most 1890s bridges in Tennessee.”<sup>22</sup> Instead of each eyerod ending in one tear-shaped hole or eyelet, the eyerods that comprise the hip verticals on the Sulphur Fork Bridge “split at the bottom” into two separate eyelets through which a pin attaches the hip vertical to the floor beams and bottom chords.<sup>23</sup> According to Carver, similar fastening style was used on the late 1880s Riggins Mill Bridge (TDOT Bridge #63-A0448-00.82, collapsed 1984) over Yellow Creek in Montgomery County thought to have been built by the Wrought Iron Bridge Company, for whom Converse once worked. As a result of his prior familiarity with it, Carver notes,

<sup>18</sup> DeLoney, “The Golden Age of the Iron Bridge.”

<sup>19</sup> Carver, *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*, 260.

<sup>20</sup> Anthony J. Bianculli, *Trains and Technology: The American Railroad in the Nineteenth Century, Volume 4: Bridges and Tunnel Signals* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 47; Mansfield Merriman and Henry S. Jacoby, *A Text-book of Roofs and Bridges: Part III Bridge Design Fifth Edition* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1920), 10.

<sup>21</sup> Carver, *Sulphur Creek Fork Bridge HAER*, 1.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

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Converse “may have decided to use this atypical feature” since bridge company agents sometimes “started their own firms, frequently reusing features or motifs originally associated with another company.”<sup>24</sup>

A survey of historic bridges potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places was conducted by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) during the 1980s. According to the report, the Sulphur Fork Bridge was one of two metal truss bridges in Montgomery County. The other metal truss bridge was a c.1922-25 K & 2 Warren truss over the Cumberland River which was demolished in 1986, leaving the Sulphur Fork Bridge as the only extant metal truss in Montgomery County. In Robertson County, the only other metal truss bridge is a c.1905 Camelback truss over a different section of Sulphur Fork Creek. While metal truss bridges were once common, the Sulphur Fork Bridge at Port Royal is the only extant bridge of the popular Pratt truss design in the surrounding area.<sup>25</sup>

#### c. 1955 Addition of Concrete Elements

Over its century-long use as a span on a main thoroughfare, the Sulphur Fork Bridge underwent routine maintenance and reinforcement for safety. The original wood decking of the Sulphur Fork Bridge was replaced with concrete at an unknown date, while the reinforced concrete piers and abutments were added c.1955 and represent another period of significance associated with transportation departments altering older bridges so they could stay in service.<sup>26</sup>

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the construction of metal truss bridges had waned dramatically due to the less labor-intensive construction of deck girder bridges made of steel and concrete. While countless metal truss bridges were demolished and others relocated for use in a new location, many remained in their original locations on the landscape at least in part due to their ability to be adapted for safety and new conditions. The Sulphur Fork Bridge, with its c.1955 concrete alterations, illustrates this trend.

While the superstructure, or metal truss, remained much the same during these alterations, transportation authorities could alter or rebuild the substructure’s piers and abutments to extend the useful life of the metal truss. Carver notes this “flexibility” when pointing out that several truss bridges were “raised to accommodate higher water levels” brought on by projects of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Valley Authority.<sup>27</sup> This was accomplished by adding “concrete caps” on top of the original substructure. Examples of metal truss bridges that were raised include the Scott Fitzhugh Bridge in Henry and Stewart Counties and the Calvin Ward Bridge in Roane County.

In other cases, a completely new substructure was built for an existing metal truss. Because of this, Carver explains a bridge’s “substructure is usually not a reliable indicator of a bridge’s age.”<sup>28</sup> There is no evidence

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 158, 375.

<sup>25</sup> Carver, *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*, 335-336.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 275; Martha Carver, “Sulphur Fork Creek Bridge Photographs, Written Historic and Descriptive Data,” *Historic American Engineering Record Report*, HAER No. TN – 27. Atlanta, Georgia: National Park Service Southeast Region, n.d.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 134, 141.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 284.

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that the Sulphur Fork Bridge was raised during its c.1955 alteration but the addition of low cost, low maintenance elements made of reinforced concrete – which was not yet popularized when the bridge was constructed in 1890 – certainly enabled it to remain in safe use for nearly a century. That the substructure’s alteration retained the original masonry piers next to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century concrete piers conveys the older age of the bridge and illustrates the evolution of bridge building technology and materials.<sup>29</sup>

As part of its regular bridge inspections, TDOT slated the bridge for replacement in 1989. Instead of razing the nominated bridge or abandoning it, the Tennessee Department of Conservation accepted responsibility for its maintenance. After completing a new bridge just south and within the viewshed of the c.1890 metal truss bridge, the Federal Highway Administration, TDOT, and the respective county governments closed the historic Sulphur Fork Bridge in 1990 to vehicular traffic, added vehicle barriers (one of which is still seen at the eastern portal and informs visitors of the Port Royal State Park boundary) and new pedestrian safety railing “in character with the truss,” and sandblasted and painted the metal portion of the bridge. The structure was then incorporated into adjacent Port Royal State Park.<sup>30</sup>

#### History of Converse Bridge Company

Originally from Ohio, William H. Converse arrived in Chattanooga in the 1880s to work as an agent for the Ohio-based Wrought Iron Bridge Company and later the Ohio-based King Iron Bridge Company. He set out on his own in 1890, making the Sulphur Fork Bridge one of his early works. He incorporated his business as the Converse Bridge Company, later known as the Converse Bridge and Steel Company, in 1893 in the community of Ridgedale near Chattanooga. In this way, Converse was part of a major trend that came to characterize Chattanooga’s urbanization and industrialization in the decades after the Civil War as opportunity and economic potential drew business interests and people from northern states. Considered a “locally prominent citizen” Converse served on the Walnut Street Bridge building committee as well as the committee appointed to oversee the 1891 remodel and expansion of Chattanooga’s courthouse. In addition to William H. Converse, the company’s officers also included F.J. Converse, with Dethic Hewitt Wood and William serving as the company’s engineers.<sup>31</sup>

Though large, national bridge building companies kept branch offices in Tennessee until the American Bridge Company (U.S. Steel) consolidation in 1901, several Tennessee firms opened, “worked for a few years and then vanished” between 1890 and 1910.<sup>32</sup> Converse operated much longer and was one of only two major Tennessee-based companies to specialize in metal truss bridges.<sup>33</sup> The other major company, the

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.,237. Carver explains the execution of the concept of reinforced concrete improved especially near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and that the use concrete in general for transportation infrastructure was popularized especially after World War I.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 375.

<sup>31</sup> Carver, *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*, 171; Zella Armstrong, *The History of Hamilton County and Chattanooga, Tennessee, Volume I* (Chattanooga, TN: The Lookout Publishing Company, 1931), 226; Tim Ezzell, *Chattanooga, 1865-1900: A City Set Down in Dixie* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 6-8.

<sup>32</sup> Carver, *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*, 152.

<sup>33</sup> Carver, *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*, 154. There were certainly other, smaller bridge building companies based in Tennessee, such as the Chattanooga Bridge Company, the Cope Bridge Company, and others. Carver provides

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Nashville Bridge Company, is understood as the more prolific bridge-building institution in Tennessee, particularly in Middle Tennessee, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Despite this, Converse too played a notable role in helping to modernize the state and larger region's transportation infrastructure, using Chattanooga, a strategically located industrial city, as a base for its manufacturing plant and headquarters. In addition to its growing population and labor supply, Chattanooga's status as a railroad hub played a key role in Converse's efficiency and success, as rail lines enabled Converse to send materials it manufactured to other parts of the region where bridge crews were on hand to assemble and erect the bridges.<sup>34</sup>

The nominated bridge's location in Middle Tennessee lends to its status as an early structure built by Converse. During the Tennessee Department of Transportation's late 20<sup>th</sup> century survey of historic bridges in Tennessee, it identified twenty-six as having been built by the Converse Bridge Company (See Figure 4). The agency admits its list is not complete as it does not account for bridges no longer extant during survey as well as historians' inability to definitively attribute various bridges to a specific builder. All but three of the twenty-six were located in East Tennessee. The three Converse-built bridges in Middle Tennessee were also the earliest of the Converse-built list as they were erected before the late 1890s freelance work of Arthur Dyer and Dyer's early 1900s establishment of the Nashville Bridge Company. After it opened for business, the Nashville Bridge Company dominated metal truss bridge-building in Middle Tennessee.<sup>35</sup>

Much of Converse's work were projects outside of Tennessee. The company sent salesmen throughout the Southeast to pursue bridge contracts as well as steel supply contracts during an era in which road-building and modern transportation infrastructure were emerging as key components of the South's new industrial growth and optimistic vision. As they did in Tennessee, metal truss bridges played an important role in the modernization of river-crossed regions' transportation infrastructure by replacing worn, wooden, and/or washed out spans with higher, sturdier bridges made of iron and steel. By the mid-1890s, Converse had completed several bridge contracts in other states, including North Carolina and Alabama.

While it is unknown where or whether Converse Bridge Company documents exist, regional newspapers and industry journals provide a glimpse into the company's impact. In 1897, the *Journal and Tribune* out of Knoxville reported the Converse Bridge Company expanding its plant "due to the pressure of heavy business" from within and outside of the state.<sup>36</sup> In 1900, Converse secured a contract with Madison County, Alabama to "build five large steel bridges at various locations..."<sup>37</sup> All five new spans were to replace wooden structures. In 1901, Converse completed a drawbridge over the Paint Rock River near New Hope,

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short histories of companies who were active in Tennessee (both those head-quartered in-state and those who were not) in chapter 3 of the *Survey Report*.

<sup>34</sup> Parson Brinckerhoff and Engineering and Industrial Heritage, "A Context for Common Historic Bridge Types," National Cooperative Highway Research Program, October 2005, 2-19; *The Age of Steel*, October 11, 1902, vol. XCII, no. 15, 27.

<sup>35</sup> Carver, *Tennessee's Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*, 192.

<sup>36</sup> *Journal and Tribune*, Knoxville, Tennessee, December 4, 1897.

<sup>37</sup> "Contract for Steel Bridges," *Tennessean*, Nashville, Tennessee, June 18, 1900.

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Alabama, said to be “one of the finest public bridges in northern Alabama.”<sup>38</sup> Around the same time, Converse secured several more contracts in Alabama including projects near Florence and Montgomery.<sup>39</sup>

In 1902, A *Chattanooga Star* article titled “Converse Bridge Company Proof of South’s Prosperity,” boasted not only of the stability and employment the factory offered local workers, but noted that the amount of work the company had indicated how many “Southern communities [were] able to make and pay for substantial improvements.”<sup>40</sup> An industry journal based in St. Louis reported in 1902 that Converse was “completing the erection of a large addition to their plant” and explained, “The demands of the company have increased to such an extent in the last few years that it was necessary to make this addition.”<sup>41</sup> The journal continued to report the company’s installation of a “new 120-horse power engine for driving the machinery of the plant” and referred to Converse Bridge Company as “one of the largest of its kind in the South.”<sup>42</sup>

According to the 2004 *Historic Highway Bridges of Florida* report published by the Florida Department of Transportation, the Converse Bridge Company “ranked among the leaders [of bridge manufacturers] in Florida until the Great Depression.”<sup>43</sup> At least two Converse bridges still exist in northern Florida, including the 1912 Pratt pony truss over the Steinhatchee River in Lafayette County and the 1914 Pratt through truss Bellamy Bridge over the Chipola River near Marianna in Jackson County. Converse extended business deeper into the state, having built bridges in Ft. Lauderdale and Miami.<sup>44</sup> The company was also active in Indiana, Arkansas (c. 1905, National Register-listed Ward’s Crossing Bridge, vicinity of Plainview in Yell County), and Mississippi (extant c.1908, National Register-listed Gatesville Bridge over the Pearl River in Copiah and Simpson Counties).<sup>45</sup>

Converse’s new, reliable bridges rendered many things to the residents in the places they were erected, including convenience, mobility, and better access to economic opportunity. A Wilmington, North Carolina paper anticipated that a new bridge built by Converse would meet a “long felt need for [the] county and we will all rejoice.”<sup>46</sup> A 1905 article in a Wetumpka, Alabama newspaper claimed a new Converse-built bridge

<sup>38</sup> “Huntsville,” *Tennessean*, Nashville, Tennessee, August 16, 1901.

<sup>39</sup> “Florence,” *Tennessean*, Nashville, Tennessee, August 26, 1901; *Montgomery Advertiser*, Montgomery, Alabama, April 14, 1900.

<sup>40</sup> “Converse Bridge Company Proof of South’s Prosperity,” *Chattanooga Star*, Chattanooga, Tennessee, January 17, 1908.

<sup>41</sup> *Age of Steel*, 27.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Environmental Management Office, Florida Department of Transportation, *Historic Highway Bridges of Florida* (Florida Department of Transportation: Tallahassee, Florida, 2004), 34-35.

<sup>44</sup> “No Bids Were Filed With Commissioners,” *Miami News*, Miami, Florida, March 2, 1909; “Contract for Fine Steel Bridge Has Been Met,” *Miami News*, Miami, Florida, October 24, 1904.

<sup>45</sup> *Semi-Weekly Messenger*, Wilmington, North Carolina, April 19, 1901; Lola Bennett, *Ward’s Crossing Bridge Historic American Engineering Record*, HAER No. AR – 70 (Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 2005),

[https://www.arkansashighways.com/historic\\_bridge/HAER%20Documents/AR-](https://www.arkansashighways.com/historic_bridge/HAER%20Documents/AR-70%20Ward%27s%20Crossing%20Bridge%20(17693).pdf)

[70%20Ward%27s%20Crossing%20Bridge%20\(17693\).pdf](https://www.arkansashighways.com/historic_bridge/HAER%20Documents/AR-70%20Ward%27s%20Crossing%20Bridge%20(17693).pdf); National Register of Historic Places, Ward’s Crossing Bridge, Plainview, Yell County, Arkansas, National Register #08000491; Jack D. Elliott, Jr., “Gatesville Bridge,” Crystal Springs vicinity, Copiah and Simpson Counties, *Mississippi Historic Bridge Survey*, October 3, 1988,

<https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/nom/prop/5624.pdf>; “Bridge Company Suit,” *Indianapolis News*, Indianapolis, Indiana, February 29, 1908.

<sup>46</sup> “Dunn News Notes,” *Semi-Weekly Messenger*, Wilmington, North Carolina, April 19, 1901.

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in Montgomery over the Alabama River provided “a new avenue of trade and commerce with Elmore and Autauga counties.”<sup>47</sup> An Asheville, North Carolina newspaper noted Swannanoa citizens’ excitement about a new Converse-built bridge: “The people...are very much pleased over the fact of not having to wade the river very much longer.”<sup>48</sup>

Converse’s other work included providing steel for other types of projects, aiding in the growth of new, modern industrial and commercial infrastructure. In the early 1900s, Converse supplied the steel for Knoxville’s seven-story Arnstein Building (listed as a contributing building in the National Register as part of the Market Square Commercial Historic District),<sup>49</sup> described as a “modern commercial palace” and “up to the minute in all its details.”<sup>50</sup> Converse also supplied the steel work, along with the local Morris-Sherman Manufacturing Company, for the 1906-1907 construction of the James Building (listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of a Multiple Property Submission),<sup>51</sup> one of Chattanooga’s early skyscrapers.<sup>52</sup>

In 1908, Chattanooga’s Southern Car Manufacturing and Supply Company contracted with Converse to supply the structural steel of its main foundry building. The “new plant” was intended to be a “model industry.”<sup>53</sup> Soon after, Converse provided steel building frames to the Chattanooga and Tennessee Power Company’s new transformer house and the Knoxville Railway and Light Company’s power plant expansion.<sup>54</sup> Converse also won a contract, along with the Chattanooga Machinery Company and the Casey-Hedges Manufacturing Company, to erect a steel and concrete double saw mill for the Rodman Lumber Company in Rodman, Florida. The *Tennessean* boasted, “It will be the first saw mill of steel and concrete ever erected in the state of Florida, and will be one of only two or three of its kind in the south.”<sup>55</sup> A 1912 *Tennessean* article noted the East Tennessee River Company ordered one million pounds of steel from Converse to finish the upper dam on the Ocoee River in Parkersville, Tennessee.<sup>56</sup> Shortly after and for reasons presently unclear, the company claimed bankruptcy in 1914. William Converse relocated to Florida but remained connected to the company. Chattanooga native Dethic Hewitt Wood became president, P.H. Wood became vice president, an C.J. Wilhoite treasurer.<sup>57</sup>

Converse’s bridge and steel work continued after the reorganization, including providing steel for the rebuilding and expansion of the Lenoir Car Works, which produced railcar wheels and freight cars and was

<sup>47</sup> “To Have a Bridge,” *Weekly Herald*, Wetumpka, Alabama, October 5, 1905.

<sup>48</sup> “New Bridge for the Swannanoa,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Asheville, North Carolina, April 2, 1902.

<sup>49</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Market Square Commercial Historic District, Knoxville, Knox County, Tennessee, National Register #84001138.

<sup>50</sup> “The New Arnstein Building, A New Commercial Palace,” *Journal and Tribune*, Knoxville, Tennessee, April 8, 1906.

<sup>51</sup> National Register of Historic Places, James Building, Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee, National Register #80003814

<sup>52</sup> “Handsome New James Building: Chattanooga’s Most Modern Skyscraper,” *Chattanooga Star*, Chattanooga, Tennessee, September 21, 1907.

<sup>53</sup> “Many Plants Kept Right On,” *Chattanooga Star*, Chattanooga, Tennessee, March 28, 1908.

<sup>54</sup> “Contracts Are Awarded,” *Tennessean*, Nashville, Tennessee, April 3, 1909; “Power Furnishing Capacity Will Be Doubled,” *Knoxville Sentinel*, Knoxville, Tennessee, July 22, 1910.

<sup>55</sup> “Chattanooga Concerns Given Big Contracts,” *Tennessean*, Nashville, Tennessee, April 21, 1911.

<sup>56</sup> “Upper Dam on the Ocoee: Order Placed for One Million Pounds of Steel,” *Tennessean*, Nashville, Tennessee, June 29, 1912.

<sup>57</sup> Carver, *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*, 171.

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“once the largest and most important business in Loudon County.”<sup>58</sup> After the company’s wooden shops burned in the mid-1920s, Converse provided the steel for its new 125x130’ steel car erection and steel fabrication shop.<sup>59</sup> This enabled Lenoir City Car Works to adapt to industry standards after wooden cars were deemed unsafe which allowed the company to maintain its role as an important economic driver.

Though Converse had been providing steel for various major projects in addition to bridge building, the Great Depression saw Converse shift its focus to steel contracts. The Mississippi Valley Steel firm out of Illinois bought Converse in 1957. Later, the Siskin Steel & Supply Company in Chattanooga bought Mississippi Valley Steel. Efforts were made to locate any surviving Converse Bridge Company documents that may have been passed down to the purchasing companies but none have been located.<sup>60</sup>

### Prior Documentation

The Tennessee Department of Transportation completed a statewide survey of historic bridges in order to take advantage of funding authorized by the Surface Transportation Act of 1978 and comply with the Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The purpose of the survey was to determine each bridge’s potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The TDOT survey took a thematic approach and sought to assess metal truss, timber truss, masonry arch, concrete arch, metal arch, and suspension bridges built before 1941 (parameters later extended through 1945). The report also identified bridges that were not historically significant, and thus ineligible, in order to help streamline bridge replacement projects’ compliance with federal preservation law. Decisions about eligibility were made in consultation with the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office. The results of the bridge survey, which began in 1981, and the historical context used to evaluate eligibility, was compiled and published as *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges* in 2008.<sup>61</sup>

In the report, TDOT identified the c.1890 Sulphur Fork Bridge (TDOT Bridge #63-A0456-01.88), that falls within the boundaries of both Montgomery and Robertson Counties, as one of two potentially National Register-eligible bridges located in Montgomery County. The other was the 1922-25 K & 2 Warren through over the Cumberland River (TDOT Bridge #63-00973-03.88 – demolished in 1986). Similarly, in Robertson County, TDOT identified only two eligible bridges during its survey (in addition to the nominated c.1890 Pratt through), an extant c.1905 Camelback through truss over Sulphur Fork Creek (TDOT Bridge #74-00979-01.58) and the extant c.1841 Cheek Stand Bridge with masonry arches over the Red River (TDOT Bridge # 74-NonHighway-1).<sup>62</sup>

The TDOT survey report states the c.1890 Sulphur Fork Bridge is “significant under Criterion C as an early Pratt through truss by the Converse Bridge Company.”<sup>63</sup> To date, the Sulphur Fork Bridge is the earliest

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<sup>58</sup> Joe Spence, “Lenoir Car Works,” *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/lenoir-car-works/>, accessed October 9, 2019.

<sup>59</sup> “Lenoir City Car Works Enlarged and Rebuilding,” *Knoxville Journal*, Knoxville, Tennessee, August 10, 1925.

<sup>60</sup> Carver, *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*, 171.

<sup>61</sup> Carver, *Tennessee’s Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*, 2.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 335-336.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

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extant bridge in Tennessee identified as having been built by William Converse and what would become the Converse Bridge Company. (See Figure 4 on the Continuation Sheet). The only other National Register-listed bridge in Tennessee identified as having been built by the Converse Bridge Company is one nominated in the Ketner's Mill and Bridge National Register nomination that was built in 1910.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Ketner's Mill and Bridge, Victoria, Marion County, Tennessee, National Register #77001279.

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"Dunn News Notes," *Semi-Weekly Messenger*, Wilmington, North Carolina, April 19, 1901.

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“Handsome New James Building: Chattanooga’s Most Modern Skyscraper,” *Chattanooga Star*,  
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Previous documentation on file (NPS):		Primary location of additional data:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)	<input type="checkbox"/>	State Historic Preservation Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously listed in the National Register	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other State agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously determined eligible by the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	designated a National Historic Landmark	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local government
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	<input type="checkbox"/>	University
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # HAER TN-27	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository: TDOT	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): MT-89			

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 **USGS Quadrangle** Sango, TN 303 SW

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.554117 | Longitude: -87.140742 |
| 2. Latitude: 36.554081 | Longitude: -87.140734 |
| 3. Latitude: 36.554315 | Longitude: -87.140002 |
| 4. Latitude: 36.554279 | Longitude: -87.139989 |

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Sulphur Fork Bridge is located within Port Royal State Park and straddles the Montgomery and Robertson County lines as it spans the Sulphur Fork Creek which marks said county boundaries. The boundaries of the nominated bridge create a rectangle and include the superstructure and substructure: the bridge's entire 231' span which encompasses the c.1890 metal superstructure and two block-cut limestone piers, two c.1955 concrete piers, and two c.1955 concrete abutments. The corners of the rectangle correspond to the reference Latitude/Longitude coordinates noted above.

**Boundary Justification**

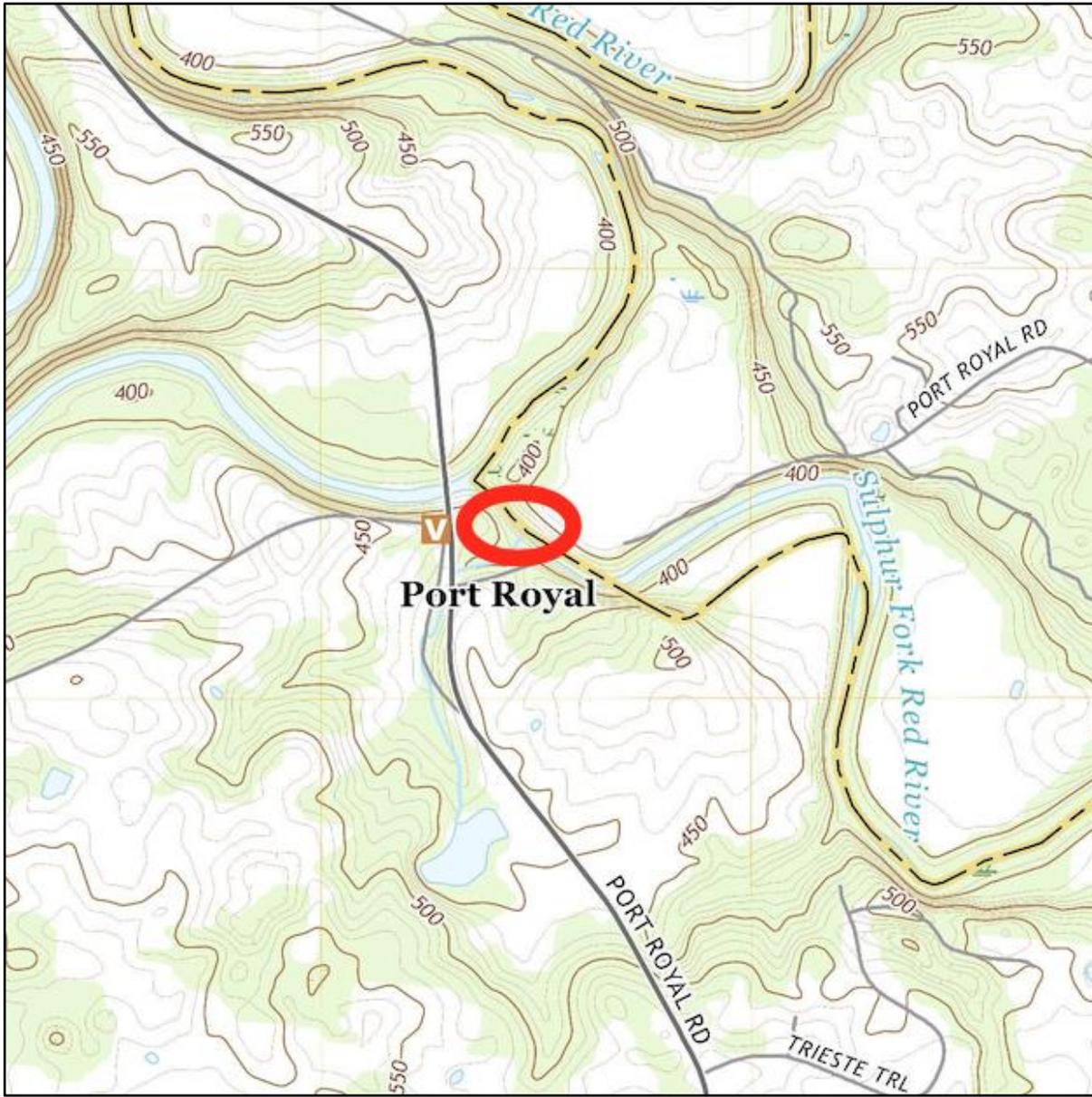
The boundaries for the nominated property encompass the entire contributing resource, including the superstructure and substructure from abutment to abutment.

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**USGS Topographic Map indicating the Location of the Sulphur Fork Bridge**



2019 USGS map Sango quadrant 7.5 minute series (cropped to provide detail of Port Royal)  
Original Map Scale 1:24 000

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**Aerial Boundary Map**



National Register Boundaries Depicted by Red Rectangle. Imagery Courtesy of Google, 2020. **N**

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**11. Form Prepared By**

Name Savannah Grandey, Amy Kostine, and Harris Abernathy (CHP at MTSU), David Britton  
(Manager, Port Royal State Park)

Organization Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University;  
Port Royal State Park

Street & Number 3300 Old Clarksville Hwy Date January 2020

City or Town Adams Telephone 931-645-0622

E-mail David.Britton@tn.gov State TN Zip Code 37010

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Photographs** (refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints)
- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. should be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Sulphur Fork Bridge

Montgomery and Robertson  
Counties, Tennessee  
County and State

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Name of Property

---

County and State

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**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Sulphur Fork Bridge

City or Vicinity: Adams

County: Montgomery and Robertson

State: Tennessee

Photographer: Savannah Grandey

Date Photographed: February 5, 2019 and August 21, 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

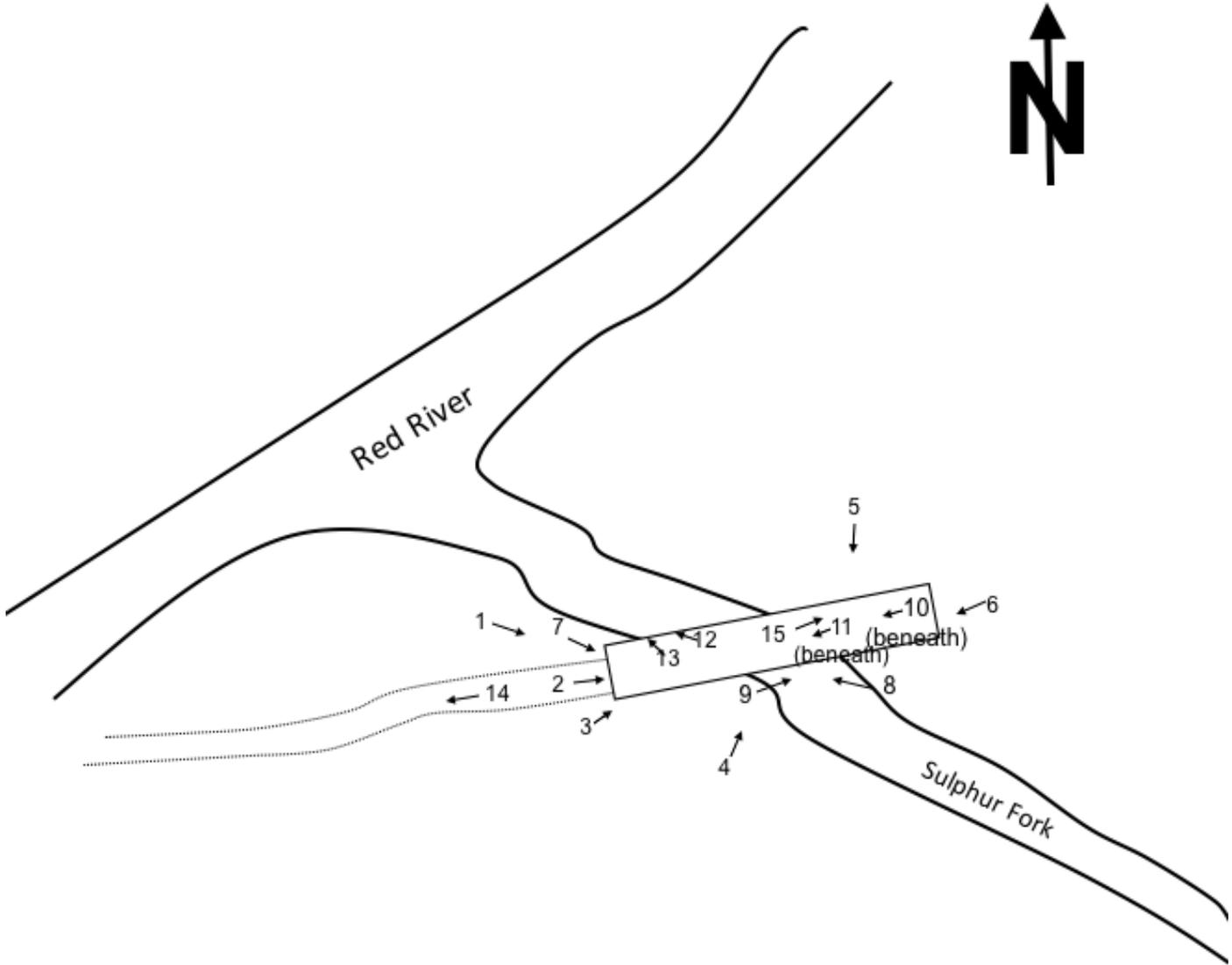
- 1 of 15. Wide view of bridge and setting showing northwest oblique. Photographer facing southeast
- 2 of 15. View of bridge's western portal and setting. Photographer facing east.
- 3 of 15. Bridge's western portal. Photographer facing northeast.
- 4 of 15. View of bridge's south side. Photographer facing northeast.
- 5 of 15. Wide view of bridge and setting showing northeast oblique. Photographer facing southwest.
- 6 of 15. Bridge's eastern portal. Photographer facing west.
- 7 of 15. West face of western stone pier. Photographer facing southeast.
- 8 of 15. East face of western stone pier. Photographer facing west.
- 9 of 15. West face of eastern stone pier. Photographer facing west.
- 10 of 15. East face of eastern stone pier. Photographer facing west.
- 11 of 15. Underside of bridge. Photographer facing west.
- 12 of 15. Connection at base of vertical support near northwest corner of bridge. Photographer looking down towards ground.
- 13 of 15. Connection of northwest hip vertical. Photographer looking down towards ground.
- 14 of 15. View west of bridge. Photographer looking west.
- 15 of 15. View east of bridge beyond park boundary. Photographer looking east.

Sulphur Fork Bridge

Montgomery and Robertson  
Counties, Tennessee  
County and State

Name of Property

Site Plan with Photos Keyed



Map not to scale

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Sulphur Fork Bridge
Name of Property
Robertson & Montgomery, Tennessee
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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#### Additional Figures

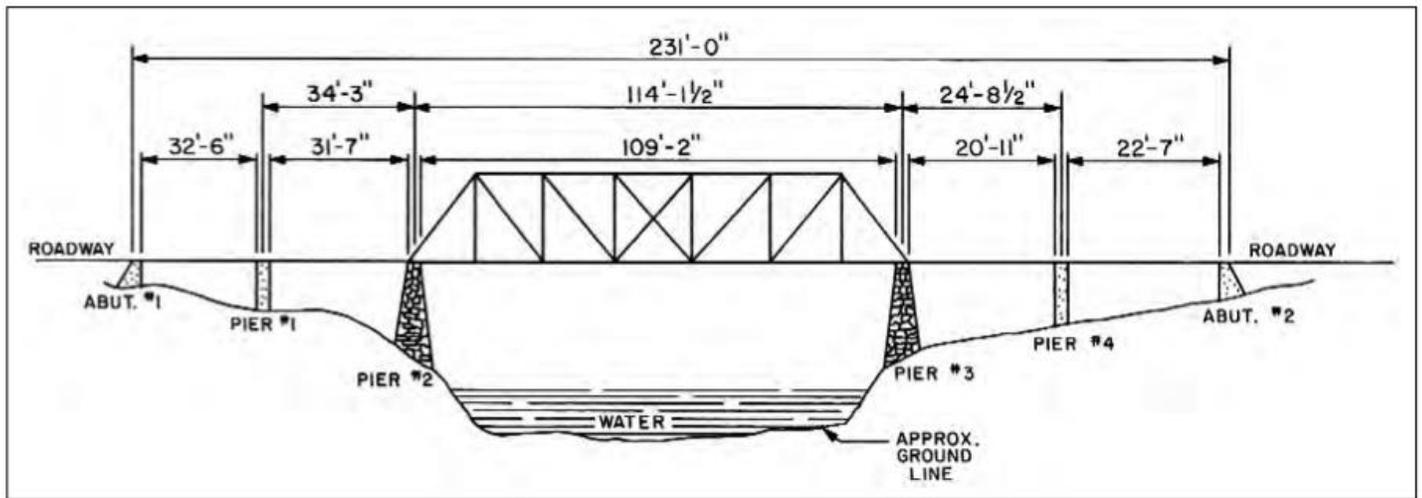


Figure 1. Drawing of Sulphur Fork Bridge from Tennessee Department of Transportation's *Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Sulphur Fork Bridge
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Figure 2. Part of the word "Phoenix" visible on vertical channel beam above U-bolt connection near northwestern corner of bridge

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Figure 3. "Phoenix" on northwestern end post

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**TABLE III-10: BRIDGES BUILT BY CONVERSE BRIDGE COMPANY**

HISTORIC? # IN CH. 6	COUNTY	BRIDGE NUMBER	CROSSING	DATE BUILT	DESCRIPTION
Yes: #21;	Montgomery	63-A0456-01.88	Sulphur Fork Creek	1890	1 Pratt Through
No	Montgomery	63-01853-07.84	Barton's Creek	1893	1 Pratt Through
No	Montgomery	63-A0458-03.62	Yellow Creek	1893	1 Pratt Through
No	Greene	30-02590-00.10	Lick Creek	1906	1 Pratt Through
No	Marion	58-A0510-02.56	Battle Creek	1906	1 Pratt Halfhip Pony
No	Marion	58-A0191-00.00	Sequatchie River	1907	1 Pratt Through
No	Campbell	07-A0137-01.98	Capuchin Creek	1908	1 Pratt Through
No	Carter	10-A0797-00.01	Elk River	1908	1 Camelback Through
No	Greene	30-A0930-02.18	Lick Creek	1908	1 Pratt Pony
Yes: #60	Greene	30-A0934-00.16	Lick Creek	1908	1 Pratt Halfhip Pony
Yes: #64	Grainger	29-A0051-00.06	Flat Creek	1909	1 Pratt Halfhip Pony
No	Hamblen	32-A0507-02.73	Nolichucky River	1909	3 Pratt Through
No	Polk	70-01154-02.67	Ocoee River	1909	1 Parker Through
No	Blount	05-A0860-00.00	Nine Mile Creek	1910	1 Pratt Through
No	Marion	58-A0060-01.29	Sequatchie River	1910	1 Pratt Through
No	Grainger	29-A0410-01.87	Richland Creek	1911	1 Pratt Halfhip Pony
No	Cocke	15-A0386-00.01	Pigeon River	1912	3 Pratt Through
No	Grainger	29-02548-01.80	Indian Creek	1912	1 Pratt Halfhip Pony
No	Greene	30-B0061-02.83	Lick Creek	1912	1 Pratt Halfhip Pony
No	Sullivan	82-02593-03.21	South Fork Holston River	1912	4 Pratt Through
No	Carter	10-A0144-00.01	Sinking Creek	1913	1 Pratt Halfhip Pony
No	Carter	10-A0299-00.01	Storage	1913	1 Pratt Halfhip Pony
No	Greene	30-A0912-01.95	Lick Creek	1913	1 Pratt Pony
No	Greene	30-B0091-00.96	Lick Creek	1913	1 Pratt Pony
Yes: #75	Sullivan	82-C0539-00.01	South Fork Holston River	1913	3 Pratt Through
No	Marion	58-A0189-00.70	Sequatchie River	1916	1 Pratt Through

Figure 4. Table of bridges identified in the TDOT survey that were built by the Converse Bridge Company.  
 From *Tennessee's Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*

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National Park Service

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Sulphur Fork Bridge
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Figure 5. c.1968 HAER TN-27 photo of Sulphur Fork Bridge, photographer facing south

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Figure 6. c.1968 HAER TN-27 photo of Sulphur Fork Bridge, approaching view looking east

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Figure 7. c.1968 HAER TN-27 photo of Sulphur Fork Bridge, approaching view looking west

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Figure 8. c.1968 HAER TN-27 photo of Sulphur Fork Bridge, underside of bridge west pier

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Figure 9. c.1968 HAER TN-27 photo of Sulphur Fork Bridge, underside of bridge east pier

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Figure 10. c.1968 HAER TN-27 photo of Sulphur Fork Bridge, stringers and bottom lateral bracing east end

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Figure 11. c.1968 HAER photo of Sulphur Fork Bridge, stringers and bottom lateral bracing, first connection from pier east end

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N/A
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Figure 12. c.1968 HAER photo of Sulphur Fork Bridge, lattice portal bracing northwest corner

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N/A
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Figure 13. c.1968 HAER photo of Sulphur Fork Bridge, vertical bracing north side

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N/A
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Figure 14. c.1968 HAER photo of Sulphur Fork Bridge, vertical, bottom chord, beam, and eyerod connection south side

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Figure 15. 1899 photo of Converse Bridge Company employees at the Converse plant in Chattanooga.  
*Courtesy of Chattanooga Public Library Digital Collection.*

**Property Owner:**

(This information will not be submitted to the National Park Service, but will remain on file at the Tennessee Historical Commission)

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Name State of Tennessee, c/o Jim Bryson, Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Parks and Conservation  
Street &  
Number 312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue Telephone 615-532-0001  
City or Town Nashville State/Zip TN, 37243

**SULPHUR FORK BRIDGE**

National Register Listed  
SG100005366  
7/20/2020

**ADAMS, MONTGOMERY AND ROBERTSON COUNTIES, TENNESSEE**

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2 OF 15

**SULPHUR FORK BRIDGE**

National Register Listed  
SG100005366  
7/20/2020

**ADAMS, MONTGOMERY AND ROBERTSON COUNTIES, TENNESSEE**

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