NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FILE
Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office

Listing Name:	Oneida and Western Bridge
Address:	O&W Road over the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River
City:	Oneida Vicinity
County:	Scott
Associated MPS:	N/A
Listing Date:	12/18/2026
Reference Number:	SG100012393

LISTED, 12/18/2025
(Clarksville MPS)

TENNESSEE, SCOTT COUNTY,
Oneida and Western Bridge,
O&W Road over the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River,
Oneida vicinity, SG100012393,
LISTED, 12/18/2025

TEXAS, ANDERSON COUNTY,
Bethel Baptist Church,
2849 County Rd 2608,
Tennessee Colony, RS100012086,
LISTED, 12/17/2025

TEXAS, TRAVIS COUNTY,
Lexington Apartments and Motor Inns,
3300 Manor Road,
Austin, SG100012467,
LISTED, 12/18/2025

WEST VIRGINIA, GREENBRIER COUNTY,
Lewisburg Historic District (Additional Documentation),
Irregular pattern along U.S. 60 and U.S. 219,
Lewisburg, AD78002795,
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED, 12/17/2025

WISCONSIN, MILWAUKEE COUNTY,
Mount Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church,
8633 West Becher Street,
West Allis, SG100012389,
LISTED, 12/18/2025

Key to Prefix Codes:

AD - Additional documentation
BC - Boundary change (increase, decrease, or both)
FD - Federal DOE property under the Federal DOE project
FP - Federal DOE Project
MC - Multiple cover sheet
MP - Multiple nomination (a nomination under a multiple cover sheet)
MPS - Multiple Property Submission
MV - Move request
NL – NHL
ADNL-Updated documentation (NHL)
OT - All other requests (appeal, removal, delisting, direct submission)
RS - Resubmission

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register Listed
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SG100012393

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: Oneida and Western Bridge

Other names/site number: O&W Bridge; TDOT 76-A0040-08.03

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: O&W Road over the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River

City or town: Oneida State: TN County: Scott

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: X Zip: 37841

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _X_ 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 _X_ 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** [X] **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria: [X] **A** [ ] **B** [ ] **C** [ ] **D**

9/25/2025

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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Oneida and Western Bridge — Name of Property

Scott County, Tennessee — County and State

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	x
Public – State	
Public – Federal	x

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	
District	
Site	
Structure	x
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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Oneida and Western Bridge | Scott County, Tennessee
Name of Property | County and State

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
TRANSPORTATION/rail-related	TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)
	TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian-related
	RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Other: Whipple Truss

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: METAL: Iron; STONE: Sandstone; WOOD

Narrative Description

The Oneida and Western (O&W) Bridge is located in a picturesque wilderness setting seven miles west of Oneida in Scott County. The bridge spans the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River. The structure is a wrought iron Whipple Truss Bridge with a two-hundred-foot span. The east entrance rests on an iron framework and concrete pillar while the west abutment rests on a natural sandstone boulder. The bridge has remained unchanged since its construction, except for its railroad ties and steel rails being replaced by wood decking and the addition of chain link fences on the side of the bridge in 2017 to facilitate its use as a pedestrian/vehicle bridge.

Setting

Once part of a thriving railroad line, the structure is located near the end of O&W Road seven miles west of Oneida. The access road to the bridge is a one lane gravel road. The bridge is located within the boundaries of Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area (NRRA) which is owned by the National Park Service. The location is a popular spot for hikers, horseback riders, campers, paddlers, and fishermen, and is the hub for several hiking and equestrian trails. There are no additional buildings or structures in the immediate vicinity. Originally, the O&W railway continued across the bridge into Jamestown and covered a

total distance of thirty-six miles. After the Oneida and Western Railway was abandoned in 1954, the rail bed and bridge were turned over to the Scott County Government. Fentress County received the portion of the old railway past the county line. Unlike Scott County, Fentress County did not maintain its section as a county road and instead deeded its portion to Big South Fork NRRA after the park's creation in 1974. Scott County maintains the O&W Bridge and the road approximately one mile west of the bridge, where it dead ends at White Oak Creek. Big South Fork NRRA maintains its portion past White Oak Creek as a hiking/equestrian trail.

O&W Bridge, 1915, Contributing Structure

O&W Bridge is a wrought and cast iron, Whipple Truss bridge design. The bridge, like most of the equipment used by the Oneida and Western Railway, was purchased second hand from the Nashville Bridge Company and installed over the river in 1915. Available information suggests that the bridge was originally built between 1847-1900, though its original location and use are unknown. The components of the bridge were built using a mixture of cast and wrought iron. It is one of a few, if not the only, surviving example(s) of the Whipple Truss bridge design in the state of Tennessee.

The Oneida and Western Bridge is two-hundred feet long from bank to bank. The eastern approach is supported by a riveted iron framework and a large concrete pillar. Twelve floor beams are attached to the stringers located beneath the deck. The western approach is supported by a large sandstone boulder roughly shaped to fit. The bridge is supported by two end posts at either end of the span, each set at roughly seventy-five-degree angles. Twenty riveted vertical supports measuring twenty-eight feet tall connect the lower and upper chords of the bridge. There are forty solid supports, each set at a forty-five-degree angle and measuring forty-feet long. These solid supports pull the weight off the center of the bridge. There are eight solid supports at the entrances, four on each side to pull weight. The structure contains sixteen screw type tension members measuring forty-feet long. These are also set at a forty-five-degree angle. The purpose of the screw type members is to distribute the weight evenly across the structure of the bridge. The tension members pass diagonally through multiple panels, a distinctive characteristic of the Whipple Truss design. The top is drawn in by eleven "x" screw-type tension members.

Integrity

The bridge retains its integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, association, and feeling. The bridge was constructed elsewhere before it was removed and installed at its current location in 1915. The bridge gained historical significance under Criterion A after it was installed over the Big South Fork River in 1915. Because the bridge was moved prior to its Period of Significance and has not been moved since, it retains integrity of location and does not need to meet Criterion Consideration B. The setting remains unchanged since the bridge's construction, with the surrounding lane and approaches to the bridge preserved thanks to the efforts of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. Integrity of workmanship, design, and materials are also retained. The only alterations to the bridge occurred in 2017 when the deck of the bridge was replaced with a pedestrian-friendly wood deck and chain link fences were installed near the bridge's lower chord.[1] These alterations do not affect the ability of the structure to communicate the important features of the Whipple Truss design, such as its diagonal tension members

[1] Scott County Chamber of Commerce, "O&W Bridge Reopens," April 12, 2017, accessed June 15, 2023, https://www.discoverscott.com/main/blog/ow-bridge-reopens/#:~:text=ONEIDA%2C%20Tenn.,national%20park%20draws%20its%20name.

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spanning multiple panels, trapezoidal shape, and vertical members. The bridge maintains its integrity of association to its historical importance in transportation. The retention of the aforementioned integrity aspects also means the bridge retains integrity of feeling.

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Oneida and Western Bridge
Name of Property

Scott County, Tennessee
County and State

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.)

- [X] 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

Period of Significance
1915-1954

Significant Dates
N/A

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder
Nashville Bridge Company

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Oneida and Western Bridge (hereafter referred to as the O&W Bridge) is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its local significance in Transportation.[2] Constructed by the Nashville Bridge Company sometime between 1847 and 1900, the O&W Bridge was installed at its current location over the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River in 1915. The O&W Bridge is a Whipple Truss bridge, which is characterized by its trapezoidal shape and diagonal supports spanning multiple panels. Upon its completion, the bridge played a significant role in the transportation history of remote Scott County. The completion of the bridge allowed the Oneida & Western Railroad Company access to the stands of previously inaccessible virgin timber and other raw materials. .This increase in industry and commercial activity also spurred the growth of towns and other stops connected to this new transportation route, such as Oneida and Jamestown. The Period of Significance is 1915-1954. This corresponds with the year the bridge was installed at its current location (1915) and the year the Oneida & Western Railway ceased operation (1954).

Narrative Statement of Significance

History of the Oneida and Western Railway's Development and Transportation Significance

While the Upper Cumberland Plateau is known today for its vast resources of coal and timber, there was no way to transport and market these resources until after the American Civil War. As industry boomed in the 1870s and railroads began snaking across the country, the City of Cincinnati, Ohio, endeavored to construct a railroad in the southern United States. Construction on the railway began in 1869 and was completed in 1880. The road stretched 336 miles and included twenty-seven tunnels and 105 bridges. The railroad ran from Cincinnati, southward through Frankfort and Danville, Kentucky, where it crossed the state line into Scott County, Tennessee. It proceeded southwest through Morgan County and Rockwood, into Sequatchie Valley where it terminated in Chattanooga. This remote and rugged section of Tennessee had been ignored by rail companies before the Civil War. The Cincinnati-Southern was touted as the "Shortest and Quickest Route" from northern cities such as Buffalo, Chicago, Detroit, and Niagara Falls to Charleston, New Orleans, Mobile, and Pensacola in the south.[3] With a mainline railway connecting the north and south, investors from these industrial centers moved into Tennessee to take advantage of the natural resources found there. Winfield (formerly known as Chitwood), Oneida, Helenwood, New River, and Glenmary were towns created along the railroad in Scott County and soon became local commercial centers for logging, mining, and coke-making operations beginning in the 1880s.[4]

Within a generation, several smaller railroads branched off the Cincinnati Southern to take advantage of resources further in the backcountry. The Oneida and Western Railway was chartered on August 5, 1913, by

[2] Despite being a locally important example of the Whipple Truss Bridge Design, the O&W Railroad Bridge is not being nominated under Criterion C. It was constructed in Nashville and then moved to its current location. To determine if a property meets Criterion Consideration B, information on the original site and setting of the resource is required. This information was not available at the time of the nomination. It was also not clear if the bridge had been changed in any way during the move. An essay on the bridge design type is located at the end of this nomination in Appendix A.

[3] Edward Mendenhall and the Cincinnati Southern Railway Company, *Map of the Cincinnati Southern Railway and Connections…Published for the Cincinnati Southern Railway*, Cincinnati, 1879, https://www.loc.gov/item/98688633/.

[4] *Dusty Bits of the Forgotten Past: A History of Scott County* by H. Clay Smith contains chapters relating to each of these towns and the industries that formed after the construction of the Cincinnati-Southern Railway

the Tennessee Stave and Lumber Company to extract the coal and timber along the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River. Businessmen from Tennessee and Ohio formed the leadership: O. H. Anderson was elected president and general manager; J.T Anderson and Hall Hagemeyer, vice presidents; Bartlett Hagemeyer, secretary; and W.C. Anderson, treasurer. A brick headquarters building (now the home of Highland Veterinary Clinic) and a wood depot (demolished) were constructed in Oneida adjacent to the Cincinnati Southern Railway. Construction began in 1914 and reached the South Fork of the Cumberland by June of 1915. Progress slowed as the railroad snaked westward through some of the most rugged terrain in the eastern United States. By 1921, the line reached the community of East Jamestown and was extended nine miles into Jamestown by 1930, though it never reached the proposed terminus in Albany, Kentucky.[5]

The builders of the O&W Railroad had to contend with some of the most rugged and isolated land east of the Mississippi River. The O&W Railway did not contain any tunnels because the railway was strategically placed along the watercourses in the South Fork's watershed. However, crews still had to dig their way through layers of ancient sandstone. One section called the Big Cut (measuring approximately one hundred feet long, thirty feet wide, and ninety feet tall) took significant effort to clear by hand. Work crews of local Appalachians and African Americans had to drill through sandstone with hand drills. One worker (the shaker) held the drill while another (the steel driver) struck the drill with a sledgehammer. The shaker turned the drill a quarter turn after each strike as the drill slowly pounded through the hard stone.[6] Once a series of holes was drilled into the rock face, dynamite was used to bring the sandstone down. The refuse was then shoveled into wheelbarrows and used as ballast along the road. Steam shovels were then used to grade the right of way, though many sections had to be dug and graded by hand. Rails were placed over hand hewn crossties and bolted together. Once the elevation of the track was set and the rails were placed at standard gauge, the steel rails were hand spiked to the crossties. Completed rail sections were then used to bring in additional ballast, tools, and rail sections.[7] In 1921 water boys earned fifteen cents an hour and section hands earned twenty-five cents an hour for a ten-hour workday.[8]

While the workers were changing the landscape to build a railroad, the railroad was changing the lives of local and imported workers. Labor was provided by African American, Italian, and local white laborers. All crews worked together to grade the line and lay track. Railroad construction was the first paying job that many southern mountaineers had. Subsistence farming, which their ancestors had practiced in this area since the late 18th century, was the only way of life that they knew. The opportunity to earn wages opened the mountain people up to economic stability. Joe Acres was a local man who began his career building the rail line as a member of the section crew (track maintenance crew). He eventually became foreman of a section crew that supervised five to seven permanent workers. At one time there were four section crews that had the job of maintaining track, refilling ballast, replacing crossties, working on bridges, and cutting brush along the thirty-six mile route. Many sons followed their fathers into railroad work. Joe's sons Milford, Arzo, and

[5] Benita J. Howell, *A Survey Of Folklife Along The Big South Fork Of The Cumberland River,* Report of Investigations No.30 (Knoxville: Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, 1981) p. 146
[6] This method of railroad construction was both backbreaking and time consuming. The Ballad of John Henry is based on this hard work and the experiences of those who built railroads in the unforgiving environs of the United States.
[7] Benita J. Howell, *Life And Work Along The Big South Fork: Human Responses To A Changing Economy,* 1981, Resource Management Division Collection, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Oneida, TN, p. 113.
[8] Howell, *A Survey Of Folklife*, p. 149.

Audney started out as water boys carrying water to the workers and moved into the section crew or became engineers.[9] The mining and logging operations that opened along the O&W provided work to mountain men, and many farmers supplemented their income by selling hand hewn crossties to the railroad.

A.M. Cook, a subcontractor who had also worked on the Tennessee Railway and the Kentucky and Tennessee Railway, recruited African American laborers from Georgia and Alabama to work on the O&W line. The Black laborers were segregated in their own camps and issued scrip that could be spent at company stores. Foremen were hired to ensure that they did not "run off," and many were abusive to the workers. Sam King, an African American worker, shot W.J. Hyde and Charley Flynn, two white O&W foremen, in October of 1914. Hyde and Flynn were walking on their way to the jobsite when they heard gunshots coming from a nearby tent. They approached the tent and found King involved in a domestic dispute with a woman. Flynn was shot in the hand and head, later dying in Somerset Hospital. Hyde fired into the tent and died instantly after he was shot by King. Hyde had been a guard at Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary while King was serving time. King had threatened W.J. Hyde after an unnamed wrong that the latter had done. Sam King made his escape and was shot by authorities in Oakdale, Tennessee a couple of days later.[10] His body was returned to Oneida and buried near the railroad right of way.[11] Incidents like this one caused racial tension in Scott County that persisted for decades. In 1921 a local vigilante group known as the "White Shirts" seriously injured two African Americans employed by the Oneida and Western Railroad after dynamiting their house. Railroad president O.H. Anderson was issued a death threat if he did not "quit upholding negroes."[12] Later census records show an out-migration of African Americans in the area. The 1900 census lists 337 people of African descent living in Scott County. By 1910, that number dropped to seventy-seven. In 1930, only nine African American lived in the county, and four of them were listed as servants or lodgers in the census information.

Critical to the completion of the O&W Railroad was conquering the crossing at the Big South Fork of the Cumberland, and much like the construction of the railroad itself, forging a span across the river was a tremendous undertaking. The rough nature of the river, remoteness of the bridge site, and natural topography presented the bridge builders with several challenges. Indeed, efforts to begin construction of the bridge met with immediate tragedy when a surveyor's assistant named Curtis Flynn drowned when his canoe capsized in the river on November 27, 1915, while surveying for the bridge location.[13] In the end, the O&W Railway purchased a large Whipple Truss bridge second hand from the Nashville Bridge Company. However, the bridge still had to be secured in its new location and incorporate the unique geography of the river crossing site. A large wooden trestle was constructed for workers to use while they installed the bridge. They formed concrete pillars by building a wood box in the river, pouring concrete in the boxes, and then draining the boxes with pumps while the concrete hardened.[14] Approach spans and an iron support frame were built on the eastern approach of the bridge. The western abutment was secured on a large sandstone boulder, roughly

[9] Howell, *Life and Work* p.113-115
[10] "Desperado Shot Down," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, October 18, 1914
[11] H. Clay Smith, *Dusty Bits Of The Forgotten* Past, (Huntsville: Scott County Historical Society, 1985) p.227-228
[12] "Competition to Ku Klux Klan Found - "Nashville Tennessean" - August 27, 1921," Newspapers on Microfilm, 43592, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Tennessee Virtual Archive, https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/3430, accessed 2023-11-22.
[13] H. Clay Smith, *Dusty Bins of the Forgotten Past* (Huntsville: Scott County Historical Society, 1985), p. 229.
[14] Howell, *A Survey of Folklife,* p.148.

shaped by hand to fit. Upon its completion, the O&W Bridge was the first bridge to cross the Tennessee section of the Big South Fork River.[15] It remained the only crossing until the construction of a concrete bridge at Leatherwood Ford by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 1980s. Trains crossing the bridge did so at a speed of eight miles per hour.[16]

The O&W Bridge was constructed in the Whipple Truss design and is one of the few remaining Whipple Truss bridges in the United States. The Whipple Truss design is a variation of the Pratt Truss, the major difference being that the tension members pass through two or more sections whereas the tension members on the Pratt Truss only pass through one section. The tension members on a Pratt Truss are also connected to the upright beams, whereas the tension members on a Whipple Truss bridge only pass through the sections and are connected to the base of the bridge. This made the Whipple Truss design more rigid than the Pratt Truss design. The rigidity of the bridge was an important factor because of the iron construction used in bridges at this time. Because a truss bridge had a skeleton framework that could support the weight of loads on the bridge, it was lighter and more graceful than arch bridges, which had to be built heavier to support the same amount of weight. Where an arch bridge relied on compression, a truss bridge operated on compression and tension. Working like a pair of suspenders on pants, the framework on a truss bridge stretched as the load passed over and distributed the weight evenly across.[17]

According to the popular bridge enthusiast website, Bridge Hunters, there are only fifty Whipple Truss bridges still standing. Most are located in the Northeast and Midwest which were more industrialized areas than the southern U.S. The O&W Bridge is the only known Whipple Truss Bridge in Tennessee. It is probable that more existed but were replaced by newer bridges over the years. The historic bridge still retains the defining characteristics of the Whipple design mentioned earlier and has not changed in the one hundred and ten years that it has spanned the South Fork of the Cumberland except for its deck replacement in 2017. Another interesting characteristic of the Oneida and Western Railroad Bridge is its sheer size. The bridge has a span of two-hundred-feet. Whipple Truss bridges were constructed measuring anywhere from seventy to three-hundred-feet, although very few were built measuring more than 150 feet.[18]

The completion of the O&W Railroad Bridge paved the way for the completion of the O&W line and jumpstarted the development of the towns, stops, and depots along its route. Large business, such as the Tennessee State and Lumber Company (who later changed its name to Tennessee Lumber and Coal Company), provided jobs to a population that had previously practiced subsistence farming methods. The major stops and facilities along the O&W from east to west are as follows:

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[15] Steven K. Hutchinson et al., *An Inventory and Evaluation of Architectural and Engineering Resources of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Tennessee and Kentucky* (report to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prepared by Environment Consultants Inc., 1982), p. 17. The Yamacraw Bridge, also located within the Big South Fork NRRA, was constructed by the Stearns Coal and Lumber Company near Rock Creek, KY in 1907. No bridge existed over the Tennessee section of the river until the O&W Bridge was erected.

[16] Elmer G. Sulzer, *Ghost Railroads of Tennessee* (Indianapolis: Vane A. Jones Company, 1975) p. 197.

[17] Brian Solomon, *North American Railroad Bridges* (St. Paul: Voyager Press, 2008), p.34.

[18] Steven K. Hutchinson et al., *An Inventory and Evaluation of Architectural and Engineering Resources of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Tennessee and Kentucky*, p. 179. An essay on the Whipple Truss design and its historical significance is located in the appendix of this nomination, "Photos, Plans, and Appendices," pages 34-37.

- **Oneida**: This town was the location of Oneida and Western's headquarters, depot, and repair shop. The railroad connected here with the Cincinnati-Southern Railway.
- **Verdun**: Located two miles west of Oneida, Verdun was the site of the Tennessee Stave and Lumber Company's band mill, a large commercial sawmill that used band saws rather than circle saws. Logs were collected from the stops along the railroad and brought here to produce marketable lumber.
- **Smith Switch**: A small spur line three miles from Oneida that brought lumber from small sawmills and crude oil from local wells to the rail line.
- **Gernt**: Located sixteen miles west of Oneida, the town was named for German immigrants who settled in Fentress County. This stop included houses and storage buildings for the railroad section crews, a school, and two inclines that brought lumber from sawmills along White Oak Creek to the railroad below.
- **Zenith**: A busy coal mine seventeen miles from Oneida. Top quality cannel coal was loaded from a tipple that spanned the main railroad track until the mine closed in the 1940s. O&W had a telephone shack that was used to communicate with other important stops. Zenith also had a gravity fed water tank. The coal mine was the scene of violent labor struggles in the 1930s.[19]
- **Stockton**: The original terminus for local freight and passenger travel, this station unloaded mail and freight from Oneida to western portions of Fentress County and Pickett County until the line was extended into Jamestown. This stop was also known as A. C. York.
- **Doss Spur**: This was the location of the Tennessee Stave and Lumber Company logging camp near Pall Mall. The company built a 2,800-foot incline to haul logs from the valley below.
- **Hugarth**: Located thirty-fives miles west of Oneida, Hugarth had a log and coal loading system. Barite, an ingredient in luminous paint, was mined nearby and shipped to Oneida.
- **Jamestown**: The final terminus for the Oneida and Western Railroad after the line was extended from Stockton. A wood depot (extant) received and loaded passengers and freight for the return trip to Oneida, thirty-seven miles away.[20]

As many as six daily round trips travelled over the O&W Bridge in the late 1920s. Exports from the Cumberland Plateau included timber and coal, hogs, cattle, sheep, turkeys, limestone, and barites. The O&W Railway also brought mail, hardware, and manufactured goods from Oneida to the outlying communities. Passenger service was offered between the rural hamlets. With the connection to the Cincinnati Southern Railway in Oneida, people in the hills around the Big South Fork were able to visit Knoxville, Chattanooga, or Cincinnati. During World War I, recruits from Jamestown used the O&W passenger service to travel to Oneida before catching the Cincinnati-Southern Railway to report for basic training. One nervous recruit who caught the train to Oneida was a conscientious objector named Alvin C. York, who later became the most decorated soldier of the Great War.[21] All of this traffic brought great profits to the owners of the railroad. In 1929, the O&W railway earned $57,077, or $1,012,482.93 in 2023 currency.[22]

[19] Sulzer, *Ghost Railroads of Tennessee*, p.135.
[20] Sulzer, *Ghost Railroads of Tennessee*, pp. 152-156.
[21] Sulzer, *Ghost Railroads of Tennessee*, pp. 190-191.
[22] CPI Inflation Calculator, https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl?cost1=57%2C077&year1=192912&year2=202306, accessed 2/27/2025.

The Town of Oneida is a good example of how the construction of the bridge and completion of the overall O&W line brought growth to this rural section of Tennessee. In 1916, Oneida was a hamlet consisting of a rough collection of buildings with a population of 500 people. By 1923 the town had grown to three-thousand people and included several hotels, stores, and diverse manufactories that produced hardwood flooring, hickory tool handles, wagon and automobile spokes, machinery and gasoline streetcars, wheat flour, and hosiery. Two brick churches and a modern high school also called Oneida home. The town owned their own electricity plant, sewer system, and local newspaper, *The Scott County News*, which was valued at $15,000. The fledging town also contained several wholesale grocery companies, fruit exporters, and a bottling company that produced Coca-Cola, Gayola, Orange Crush, and Nehi sodas.[23] Depot Street in Oneida faced the Cincinnati-Southern Railroad and was lined with brick stores and businesses. Local businessman H. F. Cooper, who also served as the general freight agent for the O&W, operated a department store building that housed a hardware store, general merchandise, confectionary, barbershop, motion picture theater, and funeral parlor.[24] Cooper's Store published a regional mail order catalog that boasted sales of $140,000 in 1924, approximately $2,537,382.36 in 2024.[25] There was a café open round the clock for the railroad workers. Oneida served as the headquarters and connections for both the Oneida and Western and the Tennessee Railway, another short line railroad that extended into the mountains of eastern Scott County and Anderson County. The stately, two-story brick office for the O&W was constructed at a cost of $30,000. O.H. Anderson and other O&W officials partnered with local businessmen in the founding of the town's bank, the deposits of which totaled over $500,000 in 1923. Southern Railroad officials called Oneida, "the best paying town on the Southern road." Period estimates state that the amount of business that Oneida did with the Cincinnati-Southern amounted to almost $750,000. O&W president O.H. Anderson was "one of the foremost factors" in the development of Oneida.[26]

The Oneida and Western struggled through the Great Depression. Passenger service disintegrated with the introduction of the automobile to the point that regular passenger and mail trains were replaced by a gasoline powered motor car that made one round trip daily. The Crown-Healy Company purchased the O&W in 1942, hoping to make money hauling the material needed for a proposed Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) dam on Wolf Creek in Fentress County. World War II stopped the dam project, and the O&W was left with a shoestring budget to get through the war. The O&W was left in poor condition and in 1946, Crown-Healy applied to abandon the railroad line.[27]

The Oneida and Western was acquired shortly thereafter by the Jewell Ridge Coal Corporation which hoped to reopen several coal mines along the line. Freight trains began operating only as traffic demanded and soon were only running two or three times a week. In February of 1953, Jewell Ridge submitted another application to abandon the line. Except for 1948, the railroad had been operating at a loss for fifteen years. Passenger and mail service were discontinued on June 30, 1953. Amid numerous protests from those

[23] "Oneida, Enterprising Town At Gateway To Cumberlands," *Chattanooga Daily Times,* September 16, 1923, Chattanooga, Tennessee.
[24] Smith, *Dusty Bins of the Forgotten Past*, pp. 331-333.
[25] Josetta Griffith, editor, "Horace LaFayette Cooper (1888-1967) – A Self-Made Man," accessed 6/13/2024, TNGenweb.org; CPI Inflation Calculator, https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl.
[26] "O.H. Anderson," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, Chattanooga, TN, September 16, 1923.
[27] Howell, *Life and Work*, pp. 132-133.

employed by the railroad, termination of service took place on March 2, 1954.[28] Better roads and cheaper freight hauling rates offered by trucks and trailers were blamed as the final death knell to the railroad. Veteran railroad man Audney Acres told local author Benita Howell:

> I'll tell you what hurt the O&W Railroad the most. Over at Clear Fork—you know where that big bridge is—that was a little bitty bridge, and they couldn't haul big loads over it. When they put that big bridge (Brewster Bridge on the southern border of Big South Fork NRRA) in, then they went to hauling their lumber, their coal, and everything by trucks. And that took all our railroad business away from us.[29]

Men who had spent their entire lives working for this local railway were now faced with the reality of losing their jobs. Several, like Milford Acres, were able to transfer to another railroad until retirement and at least one man was hired to reforest the O&W Railroad right of way. Still others quietly retired and took up farming to supplement their sparse railroad pension. The railroad right of way was turned over to Scott and Fentress Counties to be used as county roads. Fentress County deeded their portion to the National Park Service in 1974. Scott County still retains their portion as a county road to the termination at White Oak Creek. When Big South Fork NRRA took over management of the land around O&W road, many locals were hopeful that the National Park Service would rebuild the rail line as an excursion train between Oneida and Jamestown, but nothing came of this discussion. Today, the O&W Bridge stands as a silent sentinel guarding the history of this wilderness.[30]

[28] Sulzer, *Ghost Railroads of Tennessee*, p.194
[29] Howell, *Life and Work*, pp. 132-133.
[30] Howell, *Life and Work*, pp. 132-133

National Register Listed
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SG100012393

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):		Primary location of additional data:	
	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)		State Historic Preservation Office
	previously listed in the National Register		Other State agency
	previously determined eligible by the National Register	**X**	Federal agency
	designated a National Historic Landmark		Local government
	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #		University
	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #		Other
	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository: Big South Fork NRRA/ National Park Service	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A			

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .21 **USGS Quadrangle** Honey Creek, TN 37 NE

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

1. Latitude: 36.454238 Longitude: -84.651948
2. Latitude: 36.454105 Longitude: -84.651087
3. Latitude: 36.454003 Longitude: -84.651101
4. Latitude: 36.454135 Longitude: -84.651959

Verbal Boundary Description
The boundary of the property is rectangular and measures approximately two hundred and fifty feet long by thirty feet wide. The corners of the boundary correspond with the above coordinates. The boundaries are shown on the attached boundary map.

Boundary Justification
This boundary was selected to include the entirety of O&W Bridge which includes the substructure, superstructure, approaches, and abutments. It excludes any property not historically associated with the O&W Bridge.

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USGS Topographic Map

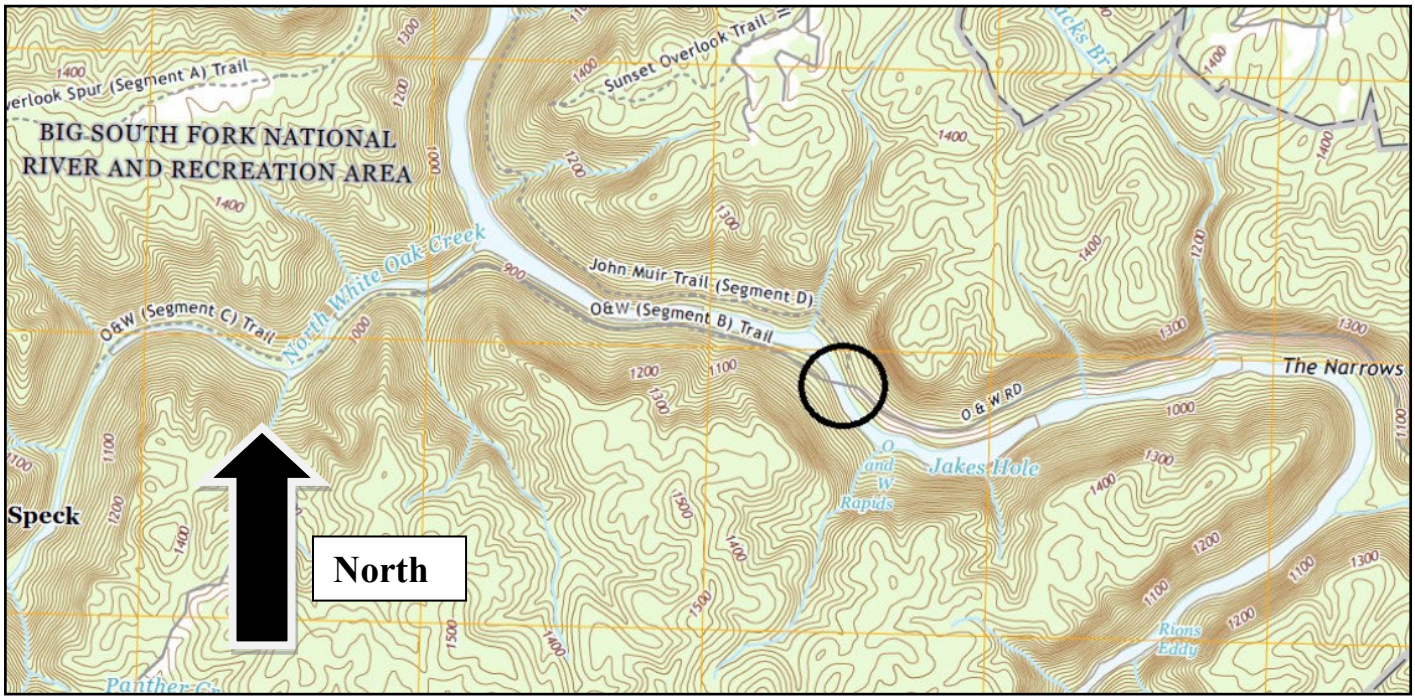

Figure 1: Honey Creek Quadrangle Map, 2019. Map is 1:24,000 scale. The location of O&W Bridge is shown by a circle. Map courtesy of the United State Geological Survey.

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Boundary Map

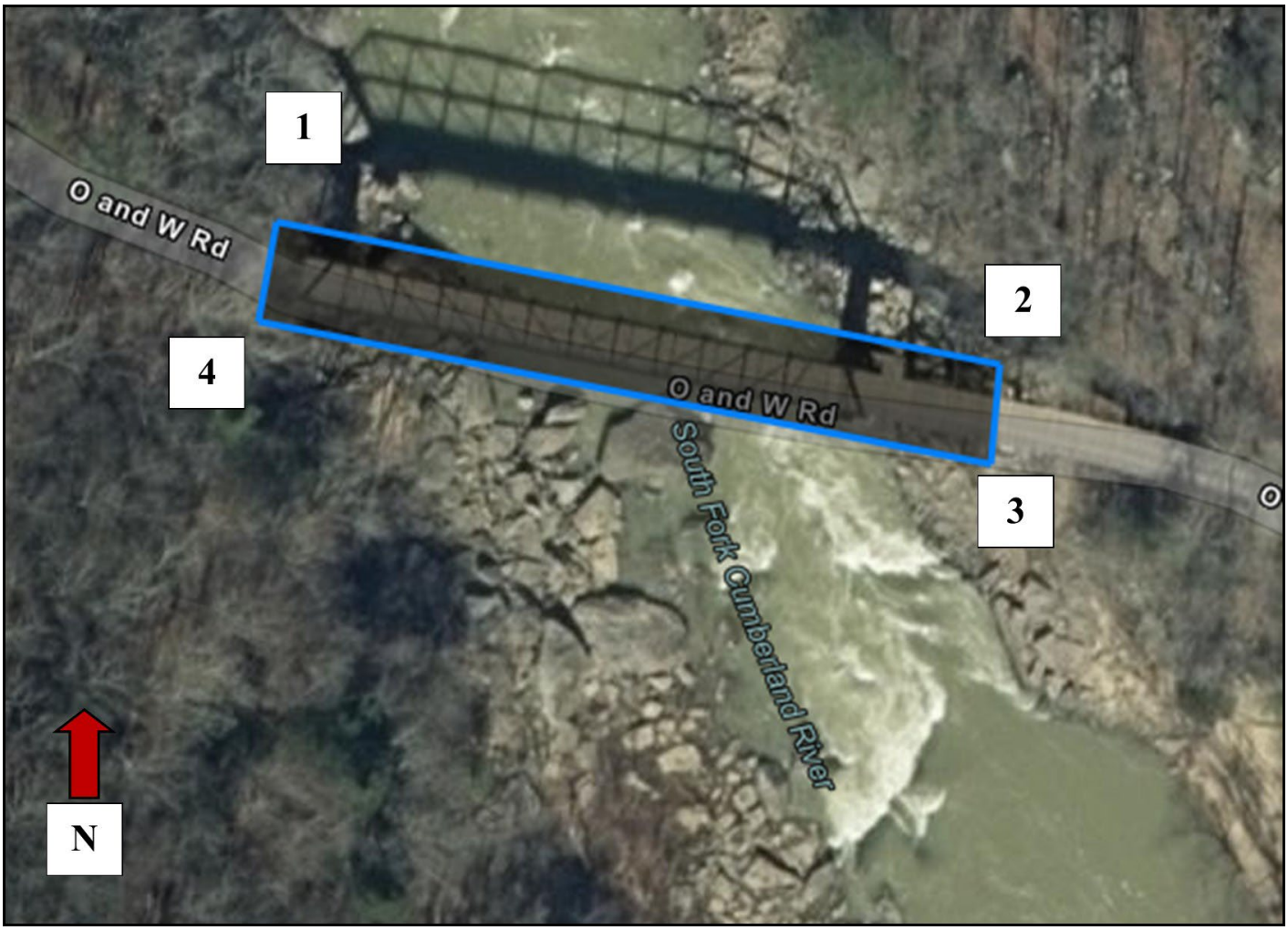

Figure 2: Aerial view of O&W Bridge location. Boundary is outlined in blue and numbers correspond with Section 10 vertices. Image courtesy of Tennessee Property Viewer, 2024.

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Oneida and Western Bridge | Scott County, Tennessee
Name of Property | County and State

11. Form prepared by

Name	Jordan E. Hughett		
Organization	Scott County Commission/Scott County Historical Society		
Street & Number	1334 Phillips Flats Road	Date	2/27/2025
City or Town	Oneida	Telephone	423-319-9303
E-mail	jordanhughett@gmail.com	State TN	Zip Code 37841

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Photographs (**refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints. Photos should be submitted separately in a JPEG or TIFF format. Do not embed these photographs into the form**)**

- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. can be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps. They can also be embedded in the Section 7 or 8 narratives)

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Photo Log

Name of Property: O&W Bridge
City or Vicinity: Oneida
County: Scott State: TN
Photographer: Jordan Hughett
Date Photographed: May 15, 2023

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

1 of 6. O&W Bridge Eastern Approach. Photographer facing west.

2 of 6. O&W Bridge Eastern Entrance. Photographer facing west.

3 of 6. O&W Bridge Northern Side. Photographer facing southeast.

4 of 6. O&W Bridge Southern Side. Photographer facing northwest.

5 of 6. O&W Bridge Western Entrance. Photographer facing east.

6 of 6 O&W Bridge Concrete Pier, iron support frame, and approach span. Photographer facing west.

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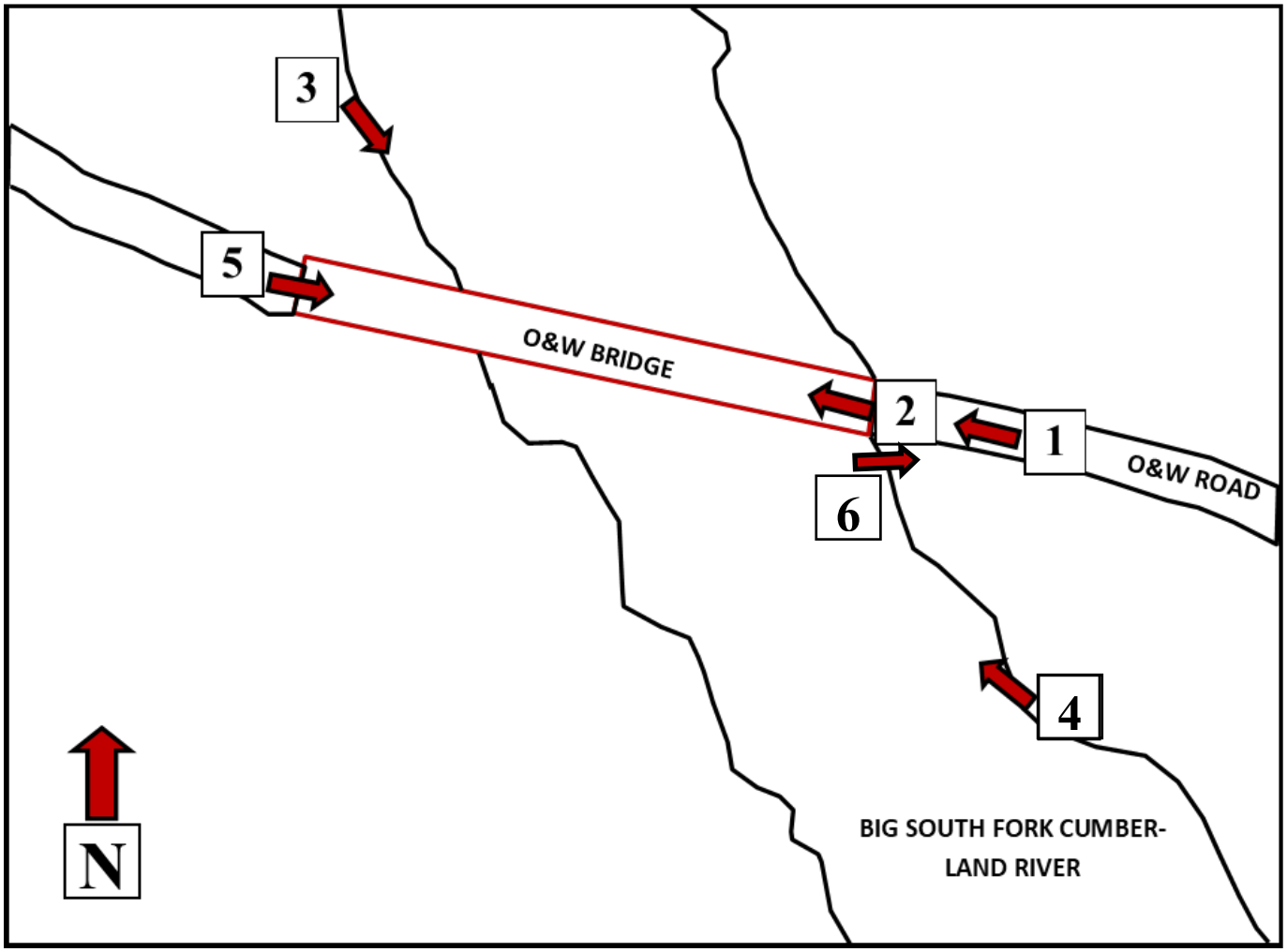
Keyed Site Plan (Not to Scale)



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Scott County, Tennessee
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N/A
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Figure 3. Map of the Oneida and Western Railway stops from Oneida to Jamestown. Images include (clockwise from top left corner) the M-4 passenger and mail bus, the depot at Oneida, and an engine that crossed the Big South Fork River on the O&W Bridge. Location of bridge is indicated by the red circle. From *Ghost Railroads of Tennessee* by Elmer G. Sulzer p. 196.

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Figure 4. O&W Bridge shortly after construction, circa 1920. Courtesy of the Scott County Historical Society

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N/A
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Figure 5. Aerial view of O&W Bridge, circa 1950. Note the rugged and remote surroundings. Courtesy of the Scott County Historical Society

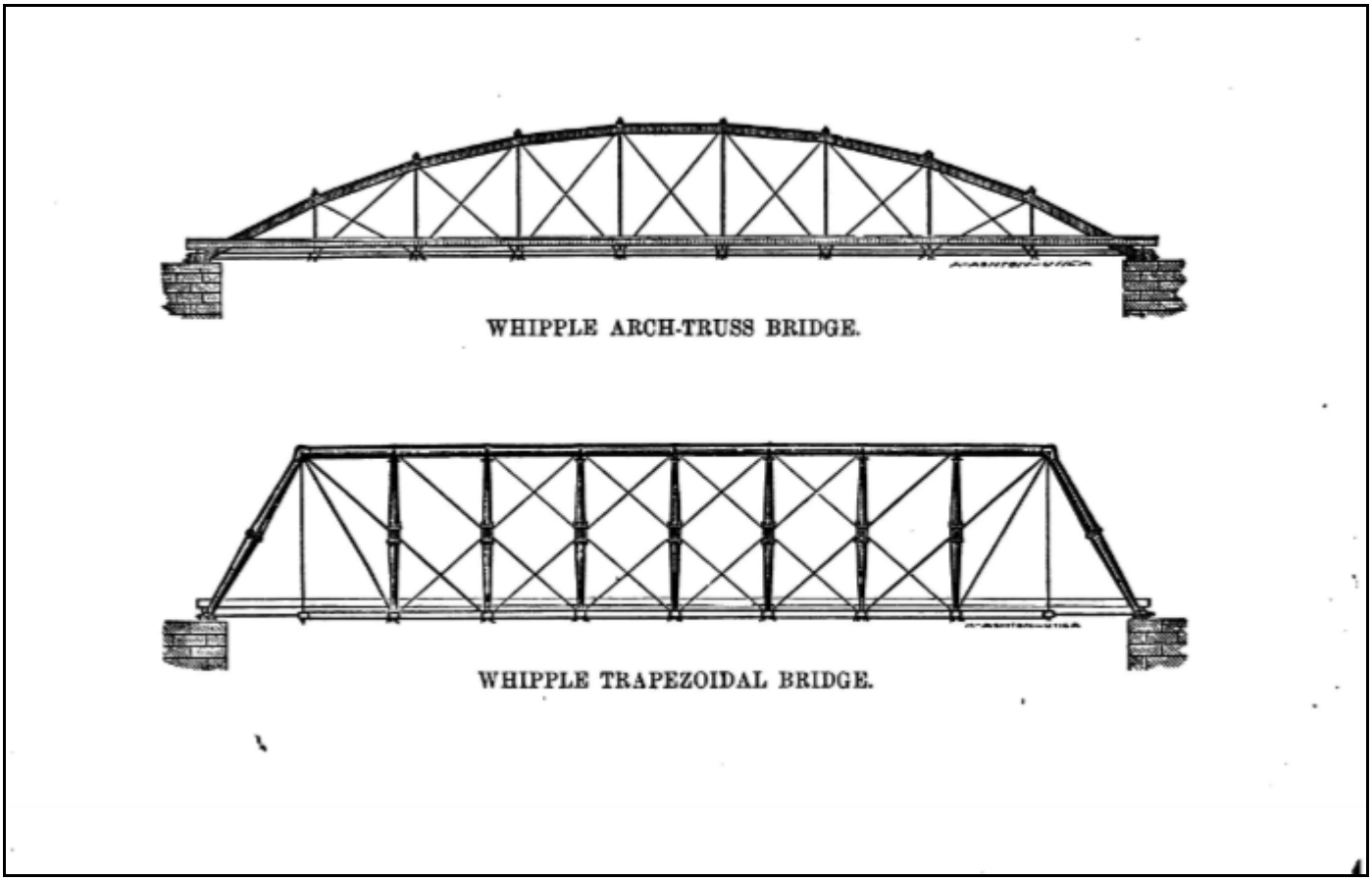

Figure 6. Two styles of truss bridges designed by Squire Whipple. O&W Bridge is a trapezoidal bridge. From *An Elementary And Practical Treatise On Bridge Building An Enlarged And Improved Edition Of The Author's Original Work*. 4th ed. by Squire Whipple, accessed through Archive.org.

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Figure 7. Steam shovel used to construct the Oneida and Western Railway, circa 1915. TNSLA 11453

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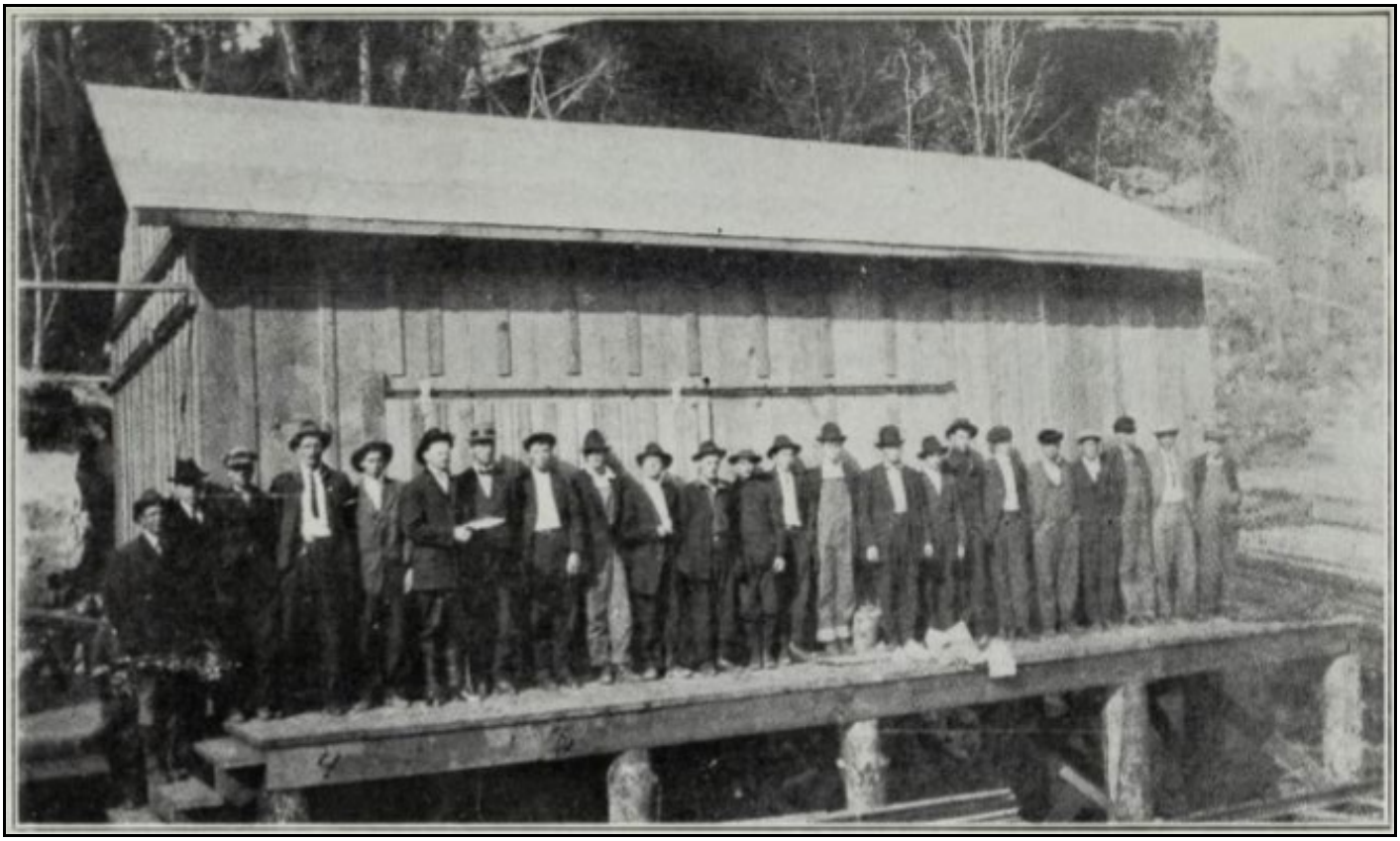

Figure 8. Alvin York (fourth from left) and other WWI recruits at the East Jamestown Depot ready to embark on the O&W railway for basic training. From *History of Fentress County, Tennessee World War Memorial Edition* by Albert R. Hogue, p.xiii. Accessed through Archive.org.

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Figure 9. Oneida and Western Railway, circa 1941. Note the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River gorge in the distance. TNSLA 14374

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Figure 10. Sgt. Alvin C. York bids farewell to Tom Watson Rich and John Shelby Crabtree as they travel in the O&W mail bus to report for military service during WWII. The O&W railway was the same route that York took to report to Camp Gordon during WWI. TNSLA 14722

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Figure 11. O&W M-4 mail coach delivering mail in Jamestown, TN. TNSLA 49993

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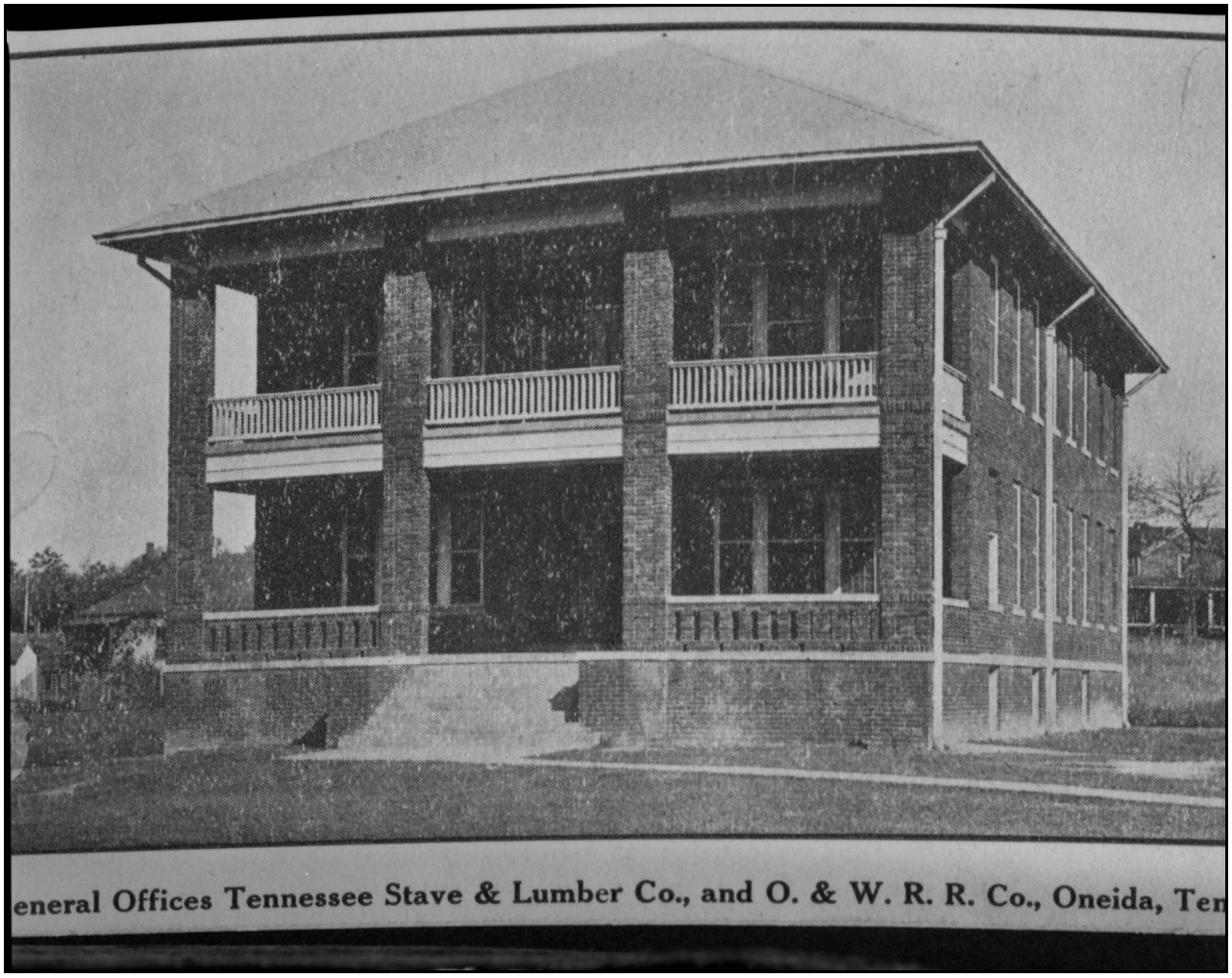

Figure 12. Headquarters of the Tennessee Stave and Lumber Company and the Oneida and Western Railroad. This building is still standing. TNSLA 11385

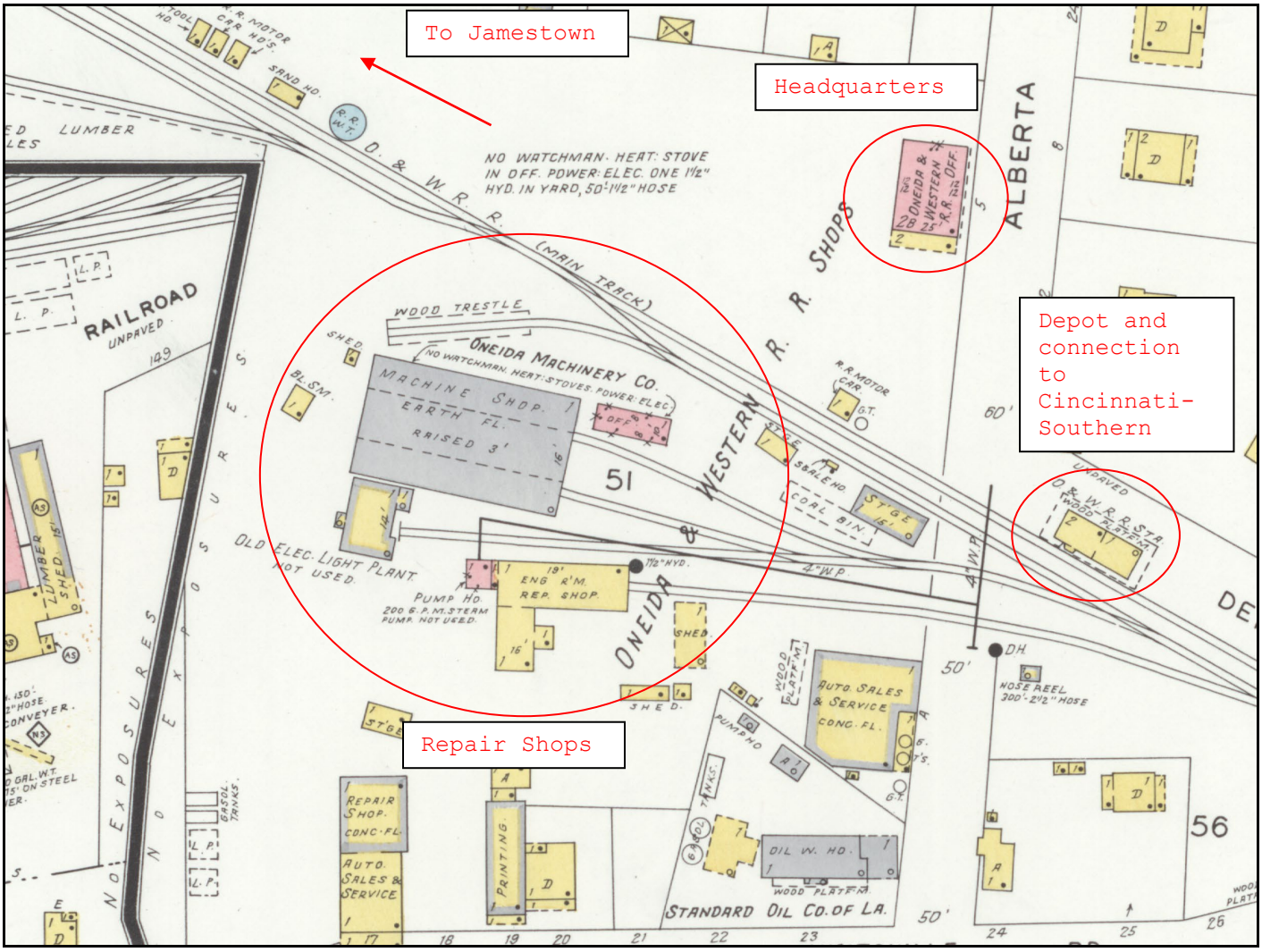

Figure 13. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Oneida, TN, 1933. Cropped to show the O&W Railroad facilities and connection to the Cincinnati Southern Railway. Annotations in red by Jordan Hughett. Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn08361_002/

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Name of Property
Scott County, Tennessee
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 14. Visitors exploring the old O&W Rail Line in the 1970s. Notice the absence of steel rails or safety guards along the sides. The bridge has new decking and a chain link fence on each side, making it far safer for current visitors. Photograph courtesy of the National Park Service.

APPENDIX A: ESSAY ON THE WHIPPLE TRUSS BRIDGE DESIGN

The following essay is designed to provide information on the Whipple Truss Bridge Design type, even though it is not being listed under Criterion C.

The Oneida and Western Railroad Bridge is a representative example of the Whipple Truss bridge design, a variant of the Pratt Truss design and part of the truss bridge family. The first practical truss bridge was developed by Andrea Palladio in 1590. The designs were not very popular until the late eighteenth century when there was a renewed interest in European truss bridge construction. Wood truss bridges became very popular in the United States because the material was easy to obtain, and the population was familiar with woodworking. Ithiel Town, bridge engineer, of Connecticut developed the first lattice truss bridge in 1820. It was constructed with numerous diagonals that were lighter and harvested from less substantial trees. Railroads implemented the truss design because it was easier to construct and had a very low cost compared to the masonry arch bridges constructed in the years prior.[31]

Despite its success, engineers began looking for alternatives to wood that would hold up better in the weather and reduce the fire risks associated with the steam locomotives that travelled over them. Builders began experimenting with cast iron bridge design starting in the eighteenth century. The first cast iron bridge spanned the River Severn in England in 1779. Early iron bridges were similar to masonry arch bridges. These early iron bridges were heavy and required more material than necessary to support the structure of the bridge and the relatively light loads that travelled across it. Cast iron held up under compression better than wrought iron and was resistant to corrosion. The production of wrought iron improved in the United States during the first decades of the 19th century and became the standard material for truss bridges. Wrought iron held up better under tension than cast iron, which made it the perfect material for the tension members that made up the skeleton of the truss bridge.[32]

The Whipple Truss design is a variation of the Pratt Truss, the major difference being that the tension members pass through two or more sections whereas the tension members on the Pratt Truss only pass through one section. The tension members on a Pratt Truss are also connected to the upright beams, whereas the tension members on a Whipple Truss bridge only pass through the sections and are connected to the base of the bridge. This made the Whipple Truss design more rigid than the Pratt Truss design. The rigidity of the bridge was an important factor because of the iron construction used in bridges at this time. Because a truss bridge had a skeleton framework that could support the weight of loads on the bridge, it was lighter and more graceful than arch bridges, which had to be built heavier to support the same amount of weight.

Where an arch bridge relied on compression, a truss bridge operated on compression and tension. Working like a pair of suspenders on pants, the framework on a truss bridge stretched as the load passed over and distributed the weight evenly across.[33]

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[31] Brian Solomon, *North American Railroad Bridges* (St. Paul: Voyager Press, 2008), p.30-31.
[32] Howell, *Life and Work*, pp. 29-34
[33] Solomon, p.34.

The inventor of this innovative design, Squire Whipple, was born in Hardwick, Massachusetts on September 16, 1804, to James and Electa Johnson Whipple. His father was a New England farmer who also operated a cotton-spinning mill in Greenwich. It was while watching his father work in these varied pursuits that young Squire became fascinated with construction and engineering. The Whipple Family later moved near Cooperstown, New York where Squire received a common school education. He later attended Fairfield Academy in Herkimer and Union College in Schenectady, New York where he graduated after one year. He began his civil engineering career in the 1830s while working for the Baltimore & Ohio and the New York & Erie Railroads. Whipple was involved in the enlargement of the Erie Canal and invented a weigh lock scale used to weigh boats on the canal. Capable of weighing a vessel up to three-hundred tons, Whipple's scale was the largest weighing device in the United States at that time.[34]

Whipple turned his attention to bridge building in the 1840s after a wood bridge over the Erie Canal failed and collapsed. Whipple sent a proposal to the commissioners of the Erie Canal that featured a series of iron bridges across the canal. The commission was hesitant because of the cost of material and over doubts that iron was strong enough to be used for bridge construction. To convince Erie Canal authorities of the strength of his design, Squire Whipple had an iron bridge constructed at his own expense. Satisfied with the result, the commission selected his bridge design and began constructing iron bridges for traffic that needed to cross the Erie Canal.[35] In 1873, he designed and build the first lift drawbridge on the canal.[36]

Whipple published his patented bridge designs in *An Elementary and Practical Treatise on Bridge Building in 1869*. The book was an expansion on an earlier collection of essays published in 1847. The introduction of the 1883 edition stated that his works "are believed to have aided considerably toward establishing the foundation upon which a knowledge of the principles involved, and the conditions required in the proper construction of TRUSS BRIDGES, has been built up, and carried to a high state of advancement."[37] Whipple was the first engineer to scientifically study the properties of wrought and cast iron under compression and tension. Engineers before this had worked on "rule of thumb" methods and guesswork to ensure that their bridges would not fail. Whipple found that wrought iron held up under tensile strength better than wood and even four times greater than cast iron.[38] Historian and engineer Henry Petroski stated that:

> It was this work-which explicated his method of determining the distribution of forces in the various members of a truss, thereby making it possible to determine the most economical sizes of the parts to manufacture and ship to the location where they would be assembled…The grandest dreams could be articulated and tested on paper, and thereby

[34] "Squire Whipple," Findagrave.com, accessed 10/9/2023, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/5788396/squire-whipple.
[35] "Squire Whipple," Institution of Civil Engineers, accessed September 8, 2023, https://www.ice.org.uk/what-is-civil-engineering/who-are-civil-engineers/squire-whipple.
[36] "Squire Whipple," Findagrave.com, accessed 10/9/2023, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/5788396/squire-whipple.
[37] Squire Whipple, *An Elementary And Practical Treatise On Bridge Building An Enlarged And Improved Edition Of The Author's Original Work*, 4th Edition (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1883), Introduction, accessed through archive.org https://archive.org/details/anelementaryand00whipgoog/page/n10/mode/2up.
[38] Solomon, *North American Railroad Bridges*, p.35.

communicated to those who would have to approve, support, finance, and assist in designing a project that could eventually take years…of planning and construction.[39]

For his effort and genius, he has been called "The Father of Iron Bridge Building In America" and is an honorary member of the American Society of Civil Engineers.[40] Squire Whipple died before the widespread implantation of his design during the Industrial Revolution. He passed away at the age of eighty-three on March 15, 1888, at his home in Albany, New York. His tombstone in Albany Rural Cemetery states "1804-Squire Whipple-1888" a humble epitaph for a remarkable person who single handedly changed the infrastructure and landscape of the United States.[41]

Whipple Truss bridges were some of the earliest iron bridges used in North America and they are extremely rare today. Soon after Squire Whipple patented his design, bridges of similar designs appeared on the landscape as engineers tried to improve on Whipple's design. What sets the Whipple design apart from the other designs is that the tension members that distribute the weight pass through more than one of the vertical uprights, making a series of trapezoidal triangles in the bridge profile. Warren and Pratt designs are similar in construction but the tension members in their designs only pass through one section. Pratt and Warren Bridges are more numerous than Whipple Bridges because many were constructed to replace the older Whipple Bridges. Whipple's design was earlier than either the Pratt or Warren design and is graceful and unobtrusive to view.

The Oneida and Western Railroad Bridge is one of the few remaining Whipple Truss bridges in the United States. According to the popular bridge enthusiast website, Bridge Hunters, there are only fifty Whipple Truss bridges still standing. Most are located in the Northeast and Midwest which were more industrialized areas than the southern U.S. The O&W Bridge is the only known Whipple Truss Bridge in Tennessee. It is probable that more existed but were replaced by newer bridges over the years. The historic bridge still retains the defining characteristics of the Whipple design mentioned earlier and has not changed in the one hundred and ten years that it has spanned the South Fork of the Cumberland except for its deck replacement in 2017. Another interesting characteristic of the Oneida and Western Railroad Bridge is its sheer size. The bridge has a span of two-hundred-feet. Whipple Truss bridges were constructed measuring anywhere from seventy to three-hundred-feet, although very few were built measuring more than 150 feet.[42]

[39] Henry Petroski, *Engineers of Dreams: Great Bridge Builders And The Spanning Of America,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995) pp.11-12
[40] "Squire Whipple," Institution of Civil Engineers.
[41] "Squire Whipple," Findagrave.com.
[42] Steven K. Hutchinson et al. p. 179.

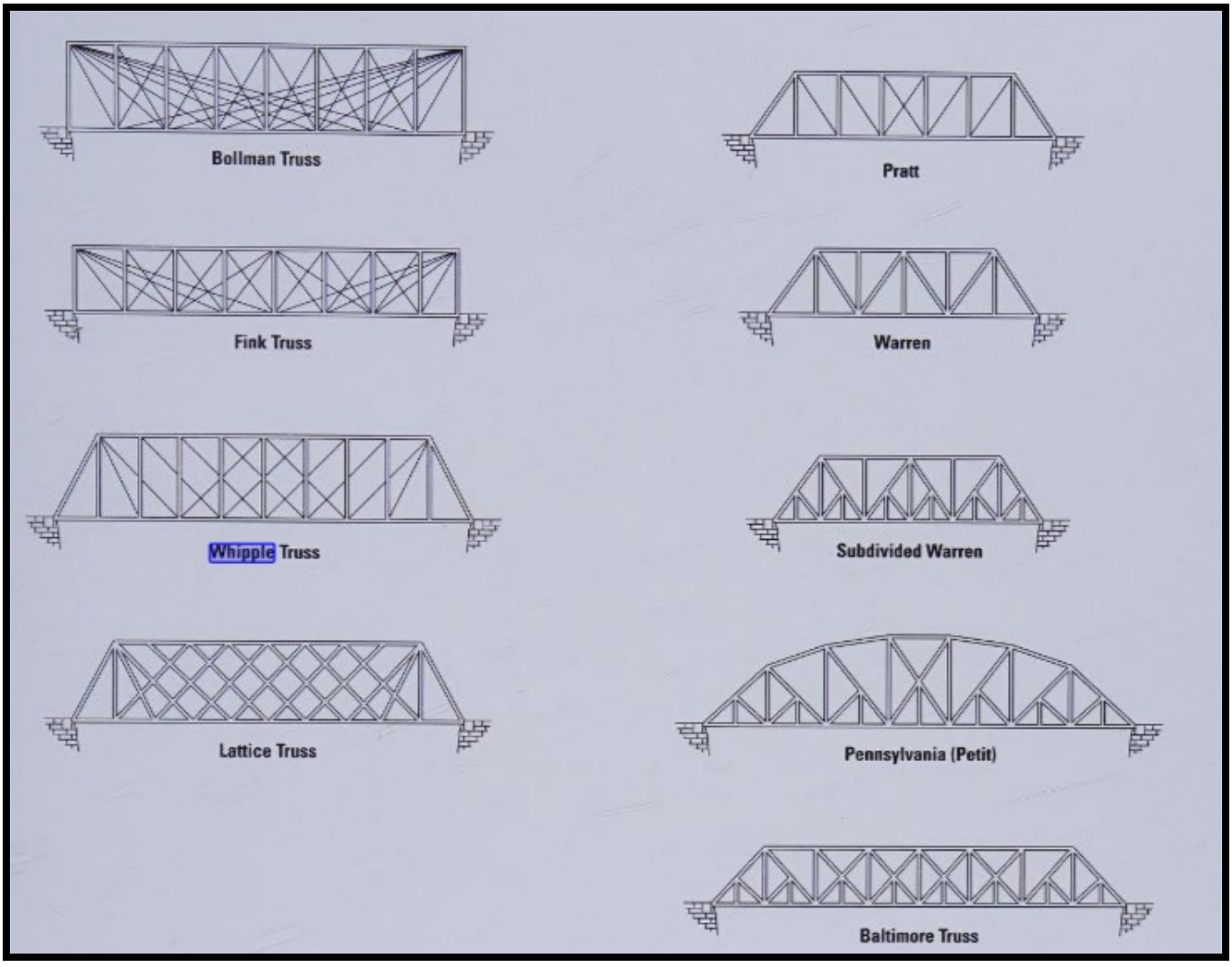
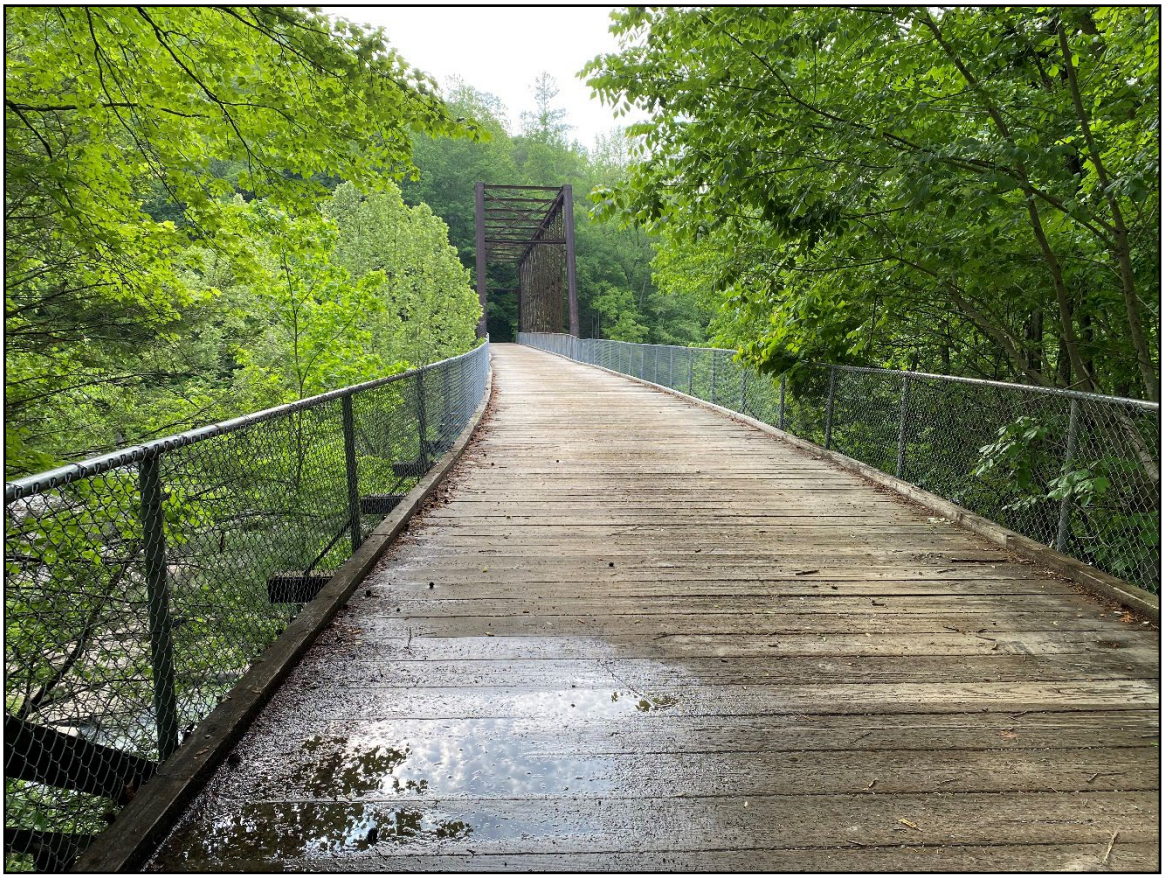


Image from *North American Railroad Bridges* by Brian Solomon, p.35

Of the Whipple Truss bridges listed on the Historic Bridges website only nineteen are as long as or longer than the O&W Bridge. The nearest Whipple Truss Bridge outside of Oneida is the Benson Creek Bridge near Frankfort, Kentucky. This bridge is smaller than the Oneida and Western Railroad Bridge, measuring 190 feet long. The Benson Creek Bridge was constructed in 1881 but there is no evidence that it was constructed for use by a railroad. The Benson Creek Bridge and the Oneida and Western Bridge are considered to be the only Whipple Truss Bridges known to be extant in the Southeastern United States and neither are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Oneida and Western Railroad Bridge is evocative of the industrial boom that took place in Tennessee after the Civil War and lasted until the 1930s and serves as an important reminder of this important era in the region's history.

ONEIDA AND WESTERN BRIDGE
ONEIDA, SCOTT COUNTY, TENNESSEE



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