1 No. 10-369 10-1-

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62-27-3097-73 JURITUO STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

ATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **NVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM** 

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### SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## NAME

HISTORIC Old River Bridge

AND/OR COMMON

## OCATION

STREET 3 NUMBER

River Road and Sa	line River	NOT FOR PUBLICATI	ON .
CITY, TOWN		CONGRESSIONAL D	ISTRICT
Benton		Second	
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Arkansas	. 05	Saline	125
eir i			

### CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENTUSE
_DISTRICT	XPUBLIC	OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
BUILDING(S)	PRIVATE	X_UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
X_STRUCTURE	вотн	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
_OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	INDUSTRIAL	
		NO	MILITARY	X_OTHER:

## OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Saline County

STREET & NUMBER

Saline County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN Benton

VICINITY OF

### STATE Arkansas

## LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE. Circuit Clerk's Office REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, YOWN

Saline County Courthouse

Benton

STATE Arkansas

¢

## **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

USITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## DESCRIPTION

\_\_EXCELLENT

\_GOOD

\_FAIR

### CONDITION

\_\_RUINS

\_UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE \_\_UNALTERED

\_\_ALTERED

CHECK ONE

. . . . . .

\_\_DETERIORATED

\_ORIGINAL SITE \_\_MOVED

DATE.

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old River Bridge in Saline County spans the Saline River southwest of Benton on the Old Military Road.

The river's width is breached by two separate spans resting on six concrete filled cylindrical columns constructed on iron plate. From these columns spring the iron "flat" trusses of each span.

The trusses' vertical compression members are open webbed columns of riveted channel and plate. The vertical tension members are round iron rods connected with pinned connections. Top and bottom chords of the truss forms are box beams with webbs of channel iron and riveted iron plate flanges.

Each span consists of two truss configurations connected by "I" beams supporting the wooden roadway between.

the second s المالة فراحمتها والمحتم الالمترز الحمدي فالهارون والإطراب والمتحاصين فالمتحد والمتحد والمتحد والمتحد والمتحد والمتحد

Service Alternet

5x ... 1"

1 del mare

#### AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW PERIOD \_\_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE \_\_COMMUNITY PLANNING """"" \_\_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC ----RELIGION \_\_CONSERVATION \_LAW \_\_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC .....SCIENCE 1499 \_\_AGRICULTURE \_\_\_ECONOMICS LITERATURE \_\_\_SCULPTURE \_1500-1599 \_EDUCATION \_\_MILITARY \_\_\_1600-1699 \_\_ARCHITECTURE -SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN ×\_ENGINEERING \_\_MUSIC \_1700-1793 \_\_ART THEATER \*TRANSPORTATION X1800-1899 \_\_COMMERCE \_\_EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT \_\_PHILOSOPHY \_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT -COMMUNICATIONS \_\_INDUSTRY \_OTHER (SPECIFY) 1900-\_INVENTION SPECIFIC DATES BUILDER/ARCHITECT 1889

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE

The beginning of the building of bridges implied a fair degree of civilization and intelligence. It sprang from a desire to maintain and extend an orderly way of life with ready communication from place to place. The bridge, specifically, was a symbol of man's conquest of the river. Not only a channel for human migration and commerce, the river was a challenge and barrier to overcome. Bridges, like fire, represented an expansive force of man's conquest of nature.

It is not known when the first bridge was constructed, but at some time in the past, man lowered a log across a stream and built the first bridge. The oldest bridge on record was built in Egypt across the Nile River by Pharaoh Menes of the First Dynasty about 2650 B.C.

It was not until the 18th century that the first iron bridge was constructed. Designed by Thomas Pritchard, this bridge was constructed in 1779 at the village of Coalbrookdale, England. Iron birdges were slow to take hold in popularity. Although they were cheaper to construct than stone bridges, engineers had doubts about the structural safety of iron bridges. In the later part of the 18th century Scotsman Thomas Telford brought about a general adoption of iron bridges through his construction of several sound iron bridges.

The Old River Bridge in Saline County, Arkansas, is a significant historical structure as one of the oldest remaining bridges in the state. Constructed in 1889 at a cost of \$5,000, this iron brige over the Saline River represents a great deal of the history of the county.

The first recorded settler in Saline County was William Lockhart who came from North Carolina in 1815. After deciding that he did not want to settle his family around Little Rock he roved south along the Missouri Trail (later named "The Military Road"). At the point where the trail crossed the Saline River Lockhart chose to settle. For two years the Lockharts were the only settlers in the entire area. By 1819 a settlement consisting of about ten families had been established at the point where the trail crossed the Saline River. In 1827 Ezra M. Owen established a small settlement west of the Saline River and named Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

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it Collegeville. Early in 1831 a post office was established at the "crossing of the Saline" with William Lockhart as postmaster. The settlement was officially named "Saline."

The "Old Missouri Trail" became important as the connection between Collegeville and Little Rock and as a main road through the county.

It was made a military road in 1824 and there were constant requests for Congress to appropriate funds to improve it. In the early 1830's all that had been done to change the road from a barely passable trail was cutting of timber for the right of way. The argument was made to Congress that it was the main artery of travel from St. Louis and Memphis southwest into Texas and Mexico, and therefore a national concern. Besides a rough path to follow, the Saline River posed a problem, for during several months of the year it was impossible to ford it. In 1831 the Arkansas Legislature passed a law giving to William Lockhart an exclusive right to construct and operate a toll bridge over the Saline River at the point where it was crossed by the Military Road. The passage rates to be charged were to be fixed by "the proper court." Lockhart was to keep the bridge in good repair for the duration of this twenty year franchise.

The significance of the Military Road is exemplified by an article appearing in the November 30, 1830, Arkansas Gazette reading:

"The road on this side of the Mississippi is full of movers - principally emigrating toward the western counties of this Territory. The throng at the ferry at Memphis, we understand, is sometimes so great that movers are not unfrequently detained a day or two before their turn for crossing over arrives.\* \* \* \* The emigrants by this route are principally from Tennessee, Alabama, the Carolinas, and Georgia - and we learn from travelers that the rage for emigration to Arkansas from those States is still increasing.\* \* \* \* If the emigration to Arkansas continues at the rate it has for the last year, it will not be many years before our population will entitle us to an honorable admission into the Union without the necessity of "squeezing in", as some are anxious that we should do at the present time.\* \* \* \*It is estimated that 1500 souls have crossed at that ferry since last spring, who were destined for Washington county."

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# ONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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Lockhart was actively involved in making his community important. Through his efforts, within a four month period of time in 1831, a contract had been let for "cutting out and opening the road", the toll bridge franchise and the establishment of a post office on the site.

In 1830 a settlement five miles up the river had been started by Charles Caldwell. Benton, as it came to be known, began to grow and was named the county seat at the formation of Saline County in 1835. This expanded the importance of the Military Road but slowly lead to the decline of settlement in Lockhart's "Saline."

In 1889 the Saline County Court appropriated \$5,000 for the construction of an iron bridge over the Saline River at the Military Road Crossing. Constructed in that year, the bridge remained in use until April of 1974 when a truck loaded with concrete blocks severely damaged the floor of the bridge.

The community of Benton recognizes the historical value of the bridge and the site which it occupies and is taking steps to place there a marker with a sketch of the history of the site. Plans are also being made to utilize the bridge as a walkable reminder of the significance of the site.

As one of the oldest standing bridges in Arkansas, and as an area of strong historical significance, the Old River Bridge serves as a local landmark in Saline County.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES	
Benton Courier, Centennial Edition, 1937. Benton Courier, April 16, 1974. Billings, Henry. Bridges. New York: Viking Press, 19 Demuth, David. Telephone interview, October 28, 1976. Goodspeed Publishing Company. Biographical and Histor: Arkansas. Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company	ical Memoirs of Central
<b>MGEOGRAPHICAL DATA</b>	
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre UTM REFERENCES	
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10-16 mil 10-16 mil	sestan and easier Sector
	5 E U.F
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STA	TE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES
STATE CODE COUNTY	. CODE
STATE CODE COUNTY	CODE
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FORM PREPARED BY NAME/TITLE Dan Chapel, Architect and Sandra Taylor, Historian : ORGANIZATION	DATE
NAME/TITLE Dan Chapel, Architect and Sandra Taylor, Historian	DATE <u>12-14-76</u> TELEPHONE
NAME/TITLE Dan Chapel, Architect and Sandra Taylor, Historian : ORGANIZATION Arkansas Historic Preservation Program	12-14-76
NAME/TITLE   Dan Chapel, Architect and Sandra Taylor, Historian   ORGANIZATION   Arkansas Historic Preservation Program   STREET & NUMBER   Suite 500, Continental Building, Main and Markham	12-14-76 TELEPHONE 501-371-2763
NAME/TITLE   Dan Chapel, Architect and Sandra Taylor, Historian   ORGANIZATION   Arkansas Historic Preservation Program   STREET & NUMBER   Suite 500, Continental Building, Main and Markham   CITY OR TOWN	12-14-76 TELEPHONE 501-371-2763 STATE Arkansas RTIFICATION
NAME/TITLE   Dan Chapel, Architect and Sandra Taylor, Historian   ORGANIZATION   Arkansas Historic Preservation Program   STREET & NUMBER   Suite 500, Continental Building, Main and Markham   CITY OR TOWN   Little Rock   STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CE   THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITH	12-14-76 TELEPHONE 501-371-2763 STATE Arkansas RTIFICATION IN THE STATE IS: LOCAL_X Ation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665). 1
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Form No. 10-300a (Ruv. 10-74)

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CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER	9	PAGE 1

Herndon, Dallas, T. <u>Centennial History of Arkansas</u>. Little Rock: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1922.Silverberg, Robert. <u>Bridges</u>. Philadelphia: McCrae Smith Company, 1966. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM



### SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

NAME			
HISTORIC			
Old River Brid	lge		
AND/OH COMMON			
<b>LOCATION</b>			
CITY, TOWN	X_VICINITY OF	COUNTY	STATE
Benton		Saline	Arkansas
PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT Bob Dunn		DATE OF PHOTO	July, 1976
NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas His	coric Preservation P	rogram	
<b>IDENTIFICATION</b>		- ·	1
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRI	CT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREE	T	PHOTO NO.
Viewed from the north	nwest.		1

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Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER	R 9	PAGE 1	
	Centennial History of Ark ing Company, 1922.	tansas.	Little Rock:	s. J.
	Bridges. Philadelphia:	<b>-</b>		

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## ATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAPFORM

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### SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

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	HISTORIC						
		Old River	Bridge		· · ·		1
.•.	AND/OR C	COMMON					
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	CITY, TOW	IN		ÓF	COUNTY	STATE	
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TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. FROPERTY BOUNDARIES

2. NORTH ARROW

**3. UTM REFERENCES** 

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### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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(Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM



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### SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

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### **ARKANSAS HISTORIC**

### PRESERVATION PROGRAM



Suite 500, Continental Building, Main and Markham Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 Telephone: (501) 371-2763

November 10, 1976

NOV 1 7 1976

The Honorable Esmer Shell Mayor of the City of Benton City Hall Benton, Arkansas

### Re: Old River Bridge, Saline County

Dear Mayor Shell:

The staff of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program is preparing a National Register nomination for the Old River Bridge which will be presented to the Arkansas State Review Committee at their December meeting. If approved, the nomination will be submitted to the National Register office in Washington for final consideration.

The National Register of Historic Places is a listing of historic sites, buildings, objects and districts from all across the country that are worthy of preservation.

Entry in the National Register is an honor which places no obligation on a private owner. It does, however, provide protection through comment by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation from federally financed, assisted or licensed projects that might affect a National Register property.

If you have any questions concerning the program or your property's nomination, please contact Sandra Taylor of our staff.

Enclosed are two copies of this letter. Please complete the form below, sign and return the original to our office. The copy is for your files. We would appreciate receiving any comments you might have concerning the nomination of this property. If we do not hear from you within 30 days, your approval will be assumed.

Sincerely,

Barbara Woodar

Barbara Woodard, Deputy Director Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

BW:emf

cc: David Demuth

I approve of the above property being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Comments:

-15-16 :date

Yes No

(signature)