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 55
 419
 WEST CHESTER 3.6 MI.
 PA. TURNPIKE 13 MI.
 420
 (WEST CHESTER)
 5863 I NE
 WEST CHESTER 15 MI.
 PHILADELPHIA 26 MI.
 423
 5730"

West Chester Road

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Cope's Bridge

and or common

2. Location

street & number Route #162, Strasburg Road west of Creek Rd. not for publication

city, town Marshallton vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Chester code 29

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

street & number 200 Radnor Chester Road

city, town St. Davids vicinity of state Pennsylvania 19087

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Chester County Courthouse

street & number Market and High Street

city, town West Chester state Pennsylvania 19380

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places
Historic American Building Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1969 federal state county local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Library of Congress

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania
Washington, D.C.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The three arch stone bridge constructed by Chester County in 1807 at a cost of \$26,911.03 spans the east branch of the Brandywine Creek on Strasburg Road, State Road LR273, in East Bradford Township. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has designated the bridge as Station 63058. The bridge situated just west of Creek Road is subject to frequent flooding because the northeast bank terrain on the upstream side is very shallow and considered a flood plain between the Brandywine Creek and Creek Road. Whereas the northwest bank on the upstream side is steeper, beginning at the stream's edge, and acts as a floodwater deterrent. Both banks on the downstream side are very flat for several feet and then rise to create slopes.

The structure, 170 feet in length, has a 21 foot 4 inch cartway and the following wing wall lengths: southeast - 190 feet, northeast - 200 feet, northwest - 100 feet, and southwest - 100 feet. The southwest wing wall also has a pillar at the end. Built primarily of fieldstone with cut limestone for the arch rings, 2 feet, 10 inches in width, the center cell spans 59 feet, 9 inches, while both cells on either side have spans of 41 feet 11 inches. Other components include keystones in arch rings; cut stone pointed piers that provide support for the largest part of the spandrel walls and act as devices to deflect debris and ice; stone water table; parapet walls measuring 3 feet in height and 18 inches thick with concrete tops; and numerous buttresses with concrete copings on northeast and southeast wing walls. A datestone is still in place on the north parapet wall, which has been partially covered by the present roadway. Fieldstones, painted white, are placed randomly on the bridge's cartway edge as a means of protecting the parapet walls.

It also should be clarified that the basic bridge construction is the same on both the upstream and downstream sides, but each of the four wing walls are different as indicated above and illustrated in the site plan and photographs.

Periodically the bridge has been repaired according to County Bridge records. Between 1867 and 1895, the County Commissioners contracted Edge Cope, W. Cobourne, J. B. Woodward, J. M. Shaw, Joseph B. Cobourne, George H. Fisher, James O'Neil and others to expedite authorized repairs.

In 1927, H. K. Ellis, County Engineer, undertook major repairs because two pilasters were in bad condition and the spandrel walls were partially collapsed. The partial reconstruction included rebuilding all the spandrel walls, constructing a new northwest wing wall, adding two buttresses on the northeast wing wall and one on the southeast wing wall, resetting the stone water table, rebuilt parapet walls with 20 in. x 4 in. concrete top, and rebuilt the piers above the foot of the arch rings.

Photographic records from 1920 and 1927 illustrate the fact that the construction did not significantly hinder the bridge's architectural integrity.

At the present time the bridge is in good condition and is now the responsibility of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion	
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science	
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture	
1600-1699	architecture	education	military	social	
1700-1799	art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	music	humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater	
1900-	communications	industry	politics government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		invention		other (specify)	

Specific dates 1807 Builder Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Cope's Bridge over the east branch of the Brandywine Creek is located on Route #162 in East Bradford Township and represents one of Southeastern Pennsylvania's oldest and best early nineteenth century triple arch stone bridges. Since 1807 it has served as an important link in the county's east-west transportation corridor, namely, the Strasburg Road.

Between 1715 and 1810, area citizens evaluated and drafted proposals to solve changing transportation needs over the Brandywine Creek which adds credence to the bridge's significance. Prior to the first documented wooden bridge built in 1789, and known as Brandywine Bridge, the crossing was named Taylor's Ford. The road gained increasing popularity after construction of the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike to the north in 1793, because people, especially drovers, did not want to pay the tolls. Heavier and more frequent loads caused constant extensive and expensive repairs that became more acute in 1803 when the government authorized the carway to become a state road. Within months neighbors collected eighty-four signatures on a petition requesting "permanent Stone Arched Bridge erected on a well established foundation and well built of good materials which may last a long time and want little or no repairs." (Original Bridge Papers, vol. 1, p. 124) and presented it to the Court. Six prominent Chester County citizens were appointed by the Judge to view the situation and draft a recommendation. They concurred with the petitions, but the bridge, constructed from local stone, was not started until 1807. Upon completion a delineated expense accounting appeared in the July 12, 1809 issue of The Chester and Delaware Federalist newspaper.

The bridge's name was derived from a local prominent Chester County family who has contributed significantly to the area's economy and community life for several generations. In 1767, Samuel, Joseph, Nathan and John Cope were listed on a petition to construct a wooden bridge over the east branch of the Brandywine Creek. Buffington's Tilt Mill and Shop near the bridge were purchased by Edge T. Cope in 1842. For the next fifty years he and his two older sons manufactured nineteenth century farming implements and household tools and equipment. He lent his name to both the bridge and the ensuing hamlet.

Other important stone multi-span bridges over the Brandywine Creek built in the 1800's in central and southeastern Chester County include the Downingtown Bridge, Lenape Bridge and Mortonville Bridge. In 1801 the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike Company built the Downingtown Bridge, now incorporated within the Borough of Downingtown, as part of the country's first turnpike system. This magnificent structure, similar in design to Cope's Bridge, was demolished in 1921 and replaced with a concrete multispan thoroughfare. Mortonville Bridge also located on Strasburg Road several miles west of the bridge in question has remained unchanged except for repairs since its construction in 1826. In contrast, Lenape Bridge on Route #52 has had major reconstruction performed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Cope's Bridge, Chester Co., PA

Continuation sheet

Item number

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The Cope's Bridge is an excellent example of 19th century bridge architectural technology when the United States was relatively young and reflects a smooth blend of practical use, pleasant lines and a perfect environmental setting. For years the bridge has been the subject of numerous paintings and photographs as stated in the Historic American Buildings Survey reports. Increasing population density in West and East Bradford Townships draws attention to the fact that this valuable historic resource needs to be preserved.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Brinton, Francis D. "The Stone Which the Builders Refused," c1951.
2. Washington, D.C. Library of Congress. Prints and photograph division, Historic American Building Survey.
3. West Chester. Chester County Courthouse Archives. Original Bridge Papers, vol.1, p.124

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .99 acre

Quadrangle name Unionville

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name title Jane L. S. Davidson, Chester County Historic Preservation Officer

organization Chester County Historic Preservation Office date 1984

street & number 17 N. Church Street telephone (215) 431-6917

city or town West Chester state Pennsylvania

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration