

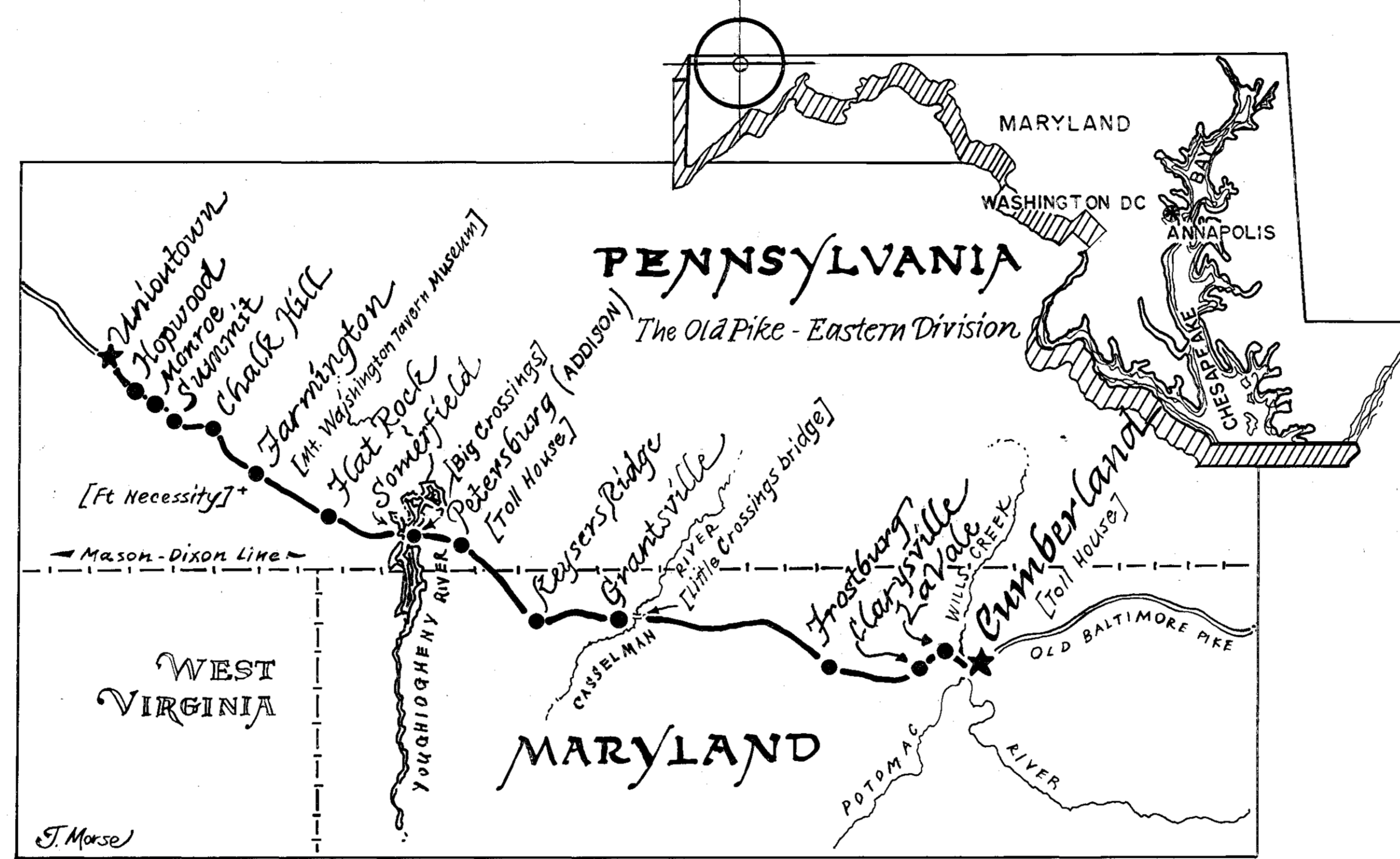
Drawing Adapted From Photograph By John Nicely, IHTIA, 1994

LITTLE CROSSINGS BRIDGE

GRANTSVILLE • 1815 • MARYLAND

The Cumberland Road was built by the U.S. government from Cumberland, Maryland to Wheeling, (West) Virginia, as America's first interstate highway. For such a route built through some of the most rugged terrain in the eastern United States, the issue of bridging rivers and streams became critical. Although the 131-mile road did not in itself embody state-of-the-art construction techniques, it contained some of the nation's finest bridges and culverts. The first major span erected along the Cumberland Road was Little Crossings Bridge (now more commonly known as the Casselman River Bridge), located one-half mile east of Grantsville in Garrett County, Maryland. Little Crossings Bridge carried the Cumberland Road over the Little Youghiogheny, or Casselman River.

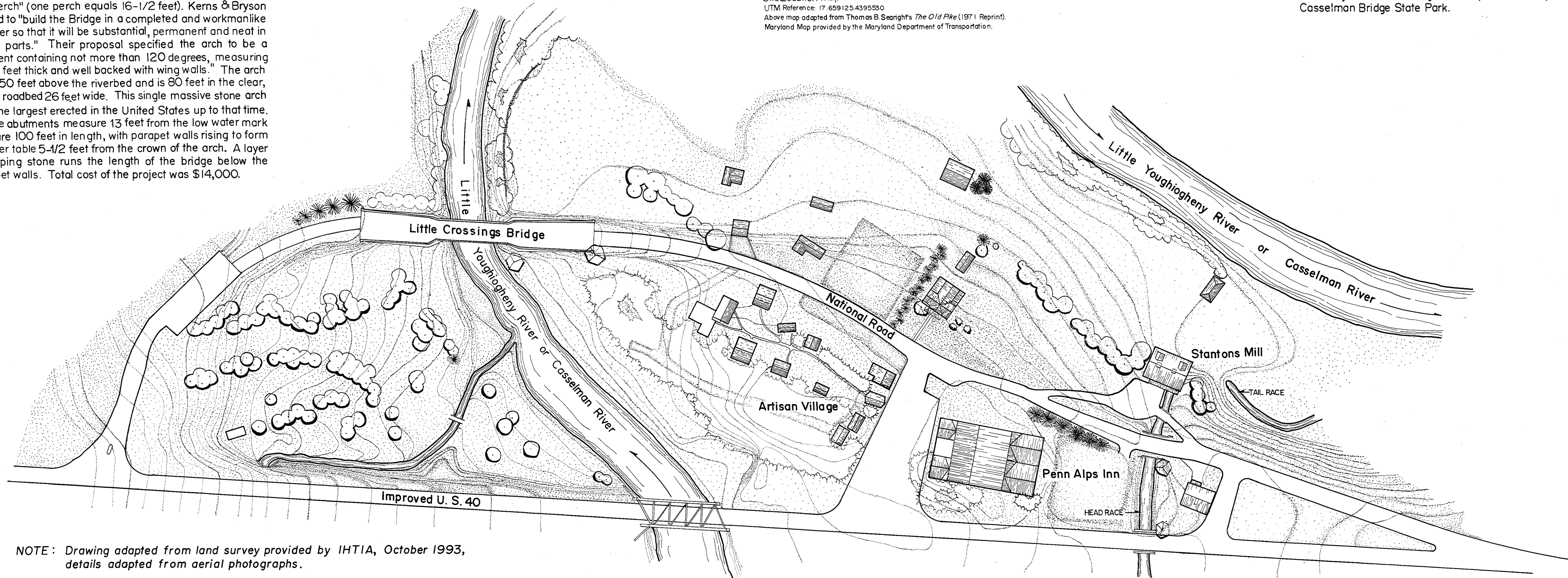
Construction of the Cumberland Road began in the east at Cumberland in 1811, and progressed to the Little Youghiogheny River by 1813. The contract for a bridge at "Little Crossings" was awarded to the construction firm of Abraham Kerns & John Bryson in August of 1813 after their successful bid to erect a stone arch bridge "for the sum of nine thousand dollars," or "by the perch at twenty five cents per perch" (one perch equals 16-1/2 feet). Kerns & Bryson vowed to "build the Bridge in a completed and workmanlike manner so that it will be substantial, permanent and neat in all its parts." Their proposal specified the arch to be a segment containing not more than 120 degrees, measuring "three feet thick and well backed with wing walls." The arch rises 50 feet above the riverbed and is 80 feet in the clear, with a roadbed 26 feet wide. This single massive stone arch was the largest erected in the United States up to that time. Bridge abutments measure 13 feet from the low water mark and are 100 feet in length, with parapet walls rising to form a water table 5-1/2 feet from the crown of the arch. A layer of coping stone runs the length of the bridge below the parapet walls. Total cost of the project was \$14,000.



Site Location Map
 UTM Reference: 17 659 125 4395 030
 Above map adapted from Thomas B. Seagrath's *The Old Pike* (1971 Reprint)
 Maryland Map provided by the Maryland Department of Transportation.

Bridge construction began in late 1813 and proceeded through the summer of 1814 despite several delays due to incessant rains. On November 16, 1814, workers successfully turned "the largest and we think the most permanent stone arch in the United States." Shortly thereafter, William Aull received a contract for filling the bridge with rubble stone. By 1815, the fill had been deposited and settled sufficiently to allow the first wheeled vehicles across the bridge. Little Crossings Bridge remained in use until the end of the 19th century when it fell into a state of disrepair. After being fully restored in 1911 for automobile and truck traffic, it continued in service until 1933 when a steel truss bridge was erected nearby for newly-aligned U.S. 40.

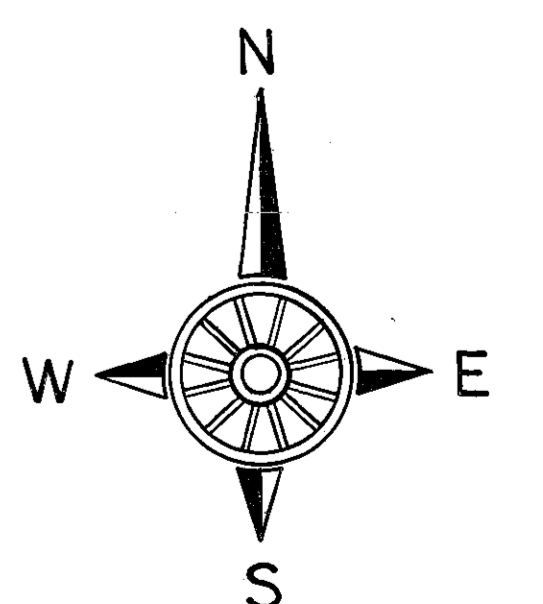
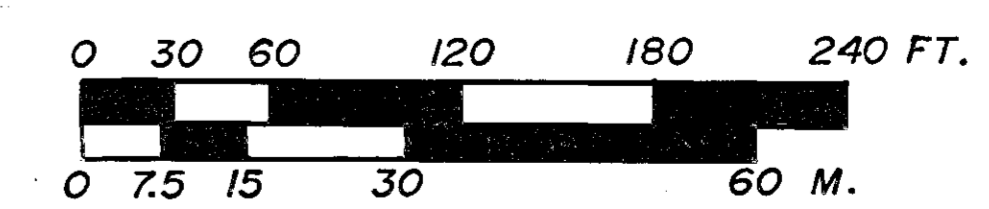
In its 118 years of service, countless freight and passenger vehicles, pedestrians, and livestock crossed Little Crossings Bridge on America's first federally-funded and built highway. In recognition of its outstanding contributions to our nation's heritage, Little Crossings Bridge was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1963. It is owned by the State of Maryland and preserved as part of the Casselman Bridge State Park.

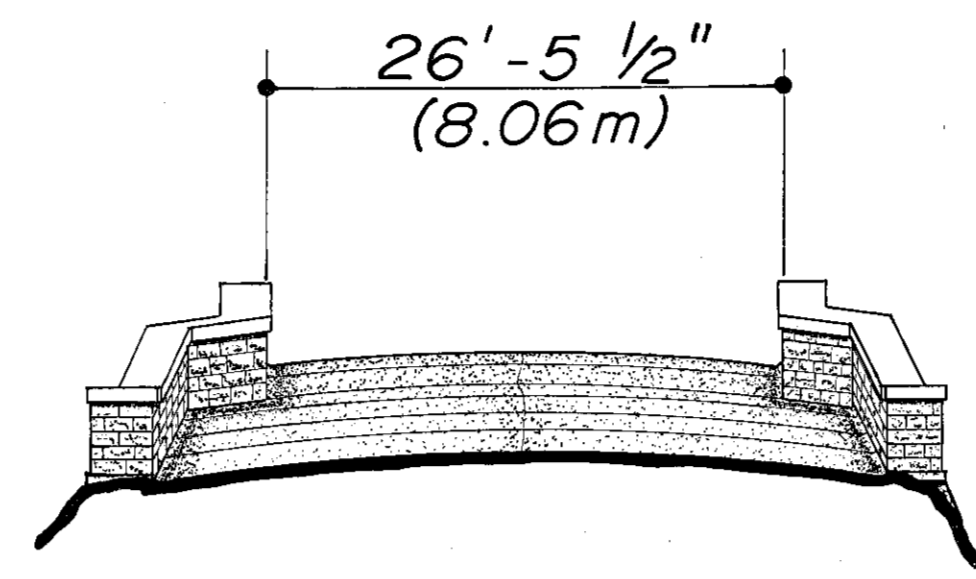


NOTE: Drawing adapted from land survey provided by IHTIA, October 1993, details adapted from aerial photographs.

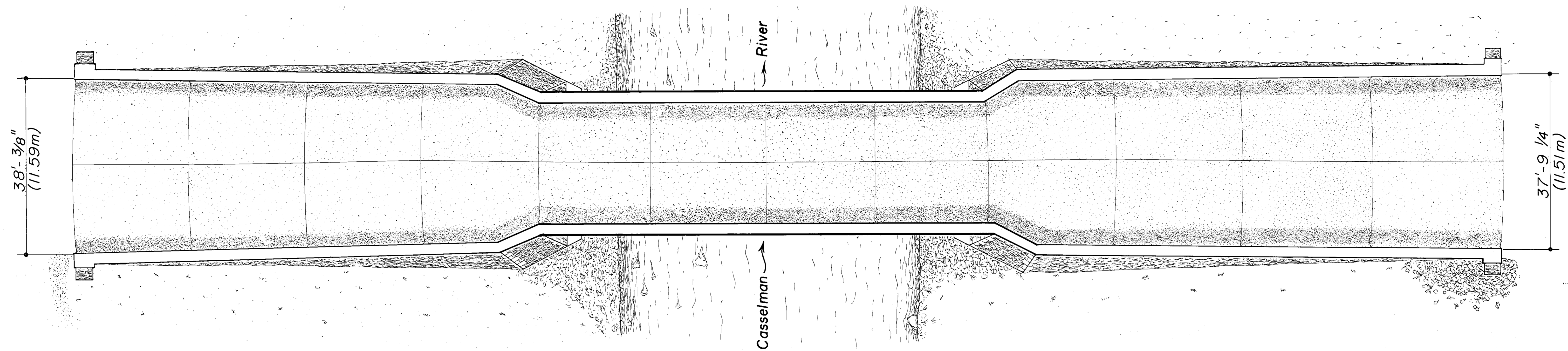
SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 60' - 0"

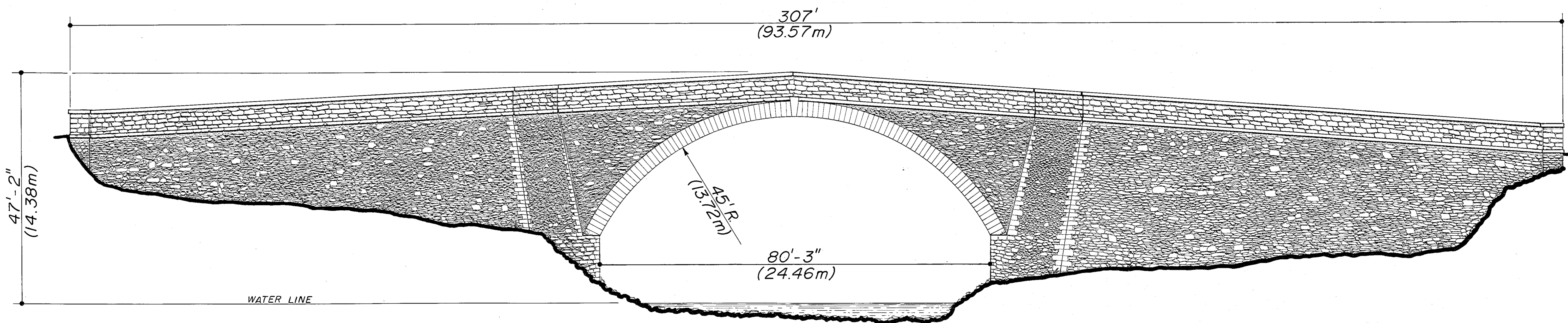




EAST APPROACH



PLAN VIEW



SOUTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 1" = 10' - 0"

