

G-II-C-014

1813

Casselman Bridge, National Road
Grantsville vicinity
public (restricted)

Spanning the Casselman River, the Casselamn Bridge was built in 1813 as part of this country's effort to construct a National Road. The bridge, built of ashlar stone laid irregularly, spans some 354 feet. It is approximately 30 feet high, at the chord of the arc to the waterline below, while its width, at the entrances of the bridge, is about 48 feet. At the time of its construction, it was the largest single span stone bridge in America.

The bridge, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated by the U.S. Department of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark in 1964, is now owned by the Department of Natural Resources, State of Maryland. It is the focal point of a public park and picnic area which surrounds it. The bridge was recently restored, using both federal and state funds, made available through the Maryland Historical Trust.

DESCRIPTION

G-II-C-014

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<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 Casselman Bridge, a large single arch structure, erected in 1813, extends some 354 feet; the bridge spans the Casselman River. Stones are laid in an irregular ashlar style. The height of the bridge is approximately 30 feet, at the chord of the arc to the waterline below, while its width, at the entrances of the bridge, is about 48 feet.

The Casselman Bridge is at present in relatively sound condition though its appearance has been slightly defaced by the growth of foliage on the bridge as well as the graffiti of tourists who visit the adjacent park. In 1911 the bridge was repaired but today remains essentially unchanged from the time of its construction. Six steel columns support the structure on either side and do not overtly detract from its appearance. The old National Road has been supplanted by the new Route 40 and in actuality no longer exists. There is, however, a small portion of the old National Road on either side of the entrances to the Casselman Bridge. The area surrounding the bridge has been made a public park and picnic tables sit in the area adjacent to the bridge. This public park is very well maintained and campers are frequent visitors throughout the summer months.

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW					
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The National Road was the Federal Government's first experiment in public highway construction. Congress authorized the road's building in 1806 and by 1818 the road stretched from Cumberland, Maryland, to the Ohio River in what is today West Virginia. Because of the controversy regarding the propriety of the National Government's participation in public road construction the project was halted until 1828. The old National Road provided ready access to the trans-Appalachian Region and greatly stimulated its settlement and growth.

The Casselman Bridge was an integral part of the National Road. Probably the largest bridge of its type, at its completion, it possessed the largest stone arch in the United States. Built in the early 19th century, about 1813, the bridge remains a splendid paradigm of early American engineering prowess. A traveler of the period spoke of it in laudatory terms calling it simply "superb."

HISTORY

The Federal Government's decision to construct a road from Cumberland, Maryland, to the Ohio River was responsible for the erection of the Casselman Bridge. Cumberland had been chosen as the starting point for the new highway because a good road, the Frederick Pike, already ran from Baltimore to Cumberland. Construction of the National Road, or the Cumberland Road as Congress always referred to it, began in the spring of 1811 and the War Department exercised general supervision of the undertaking. Gangs of men, with their picks, shovels, oxen and horses, cleared the roadway leveled the hills and filled hollows. A path sixty-six feet wide angled its way northwest as the road moved toward the Pennsylvania border, climbing and descending one mountain after another. The actual roadway was thirty feet wide, and twenty feet of that width was covered with a layer of stones a foot to eighteen inches deep. The first ten miles had been completed by the fall of 1812, but the war of that same year delayed the building of the final fourteen and a half miles of the road to Pennsylvania.

No sooner had the Maryland section of the National Pike been completed, than a tidal wave of traffic moved across the highway. Great cargo wagons filled the road; some of them that passed over the Casselman Bridge were drawn by twelve horses and carried ten-ton loads. Smaller wagons, stage-coaches and droves of animals also crossed the bridge. Most movement on the

(Continued)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Casselman Bridge, National Road
CONTINUATION SHEET

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road ceased when night fell and the inns and taverns along the highway became crowded. One evening, an inn on Negro Mountain, its 2,328-foot summit being the highest mountain crossed in Maryland, not only gave hospitality to drivers and travelers but also had thirty-six horse teams in the wagon yard, a hundred mules in the barn, a thousand hogs in one enclosure and as many cattle and sheep in the adjacent fields. Traffic moved east and west over the artery with greater speed and ease than ever before, and probably numerous users of the road thought that "the goodness of God must surely have been in the Congress with the measures to finance the construction of the Cumberland Road."

The National Road in Maryland, as well as in other states through which it passed, required constant repair. In addition to the damage incurred from landslides and heavy rains, the constant movement of wagons tended to damage the pavement. Wagons that locked their wheels in descending the many hills cut deep ruts in the roads surface, for example. As a result, in the 1820's and early 1830's laborers practically rebuilt the road, especially during the later period. With the completion of the repairs undertaken in 1831, the United States turned that portion of the National Road located in Maryland over to the state.

The Casselman Bridge, like the road, continued to serve the traveler for many years after Maryland assumed control of her section of the National Road. Indeed, the bridge remained in use until 1933, when the state supplanted it with a concrete and steel structure. The Casselman Bridge now stands as a reminder of the era of the National Road in Maryland.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Beginning at the northeastern end of the new Casselman Bridge on Route 40, proceed in a northerly direction staying approximately 60 feet to the east of the eastern shoreline of the Casselman River, past the eastern end of the old Casselman Bridge continuing due north for about 420 feet to the northern shoreline of the Casselman River, this forms the eastern boundary; thence northwest approximately 180 feet to the 2200' contour, this forms the northern boundary; thence proceed south-southwest along the foot of the said adjoining mountain (along contour 2200 ft.) to the northern side of Route 40, this forms the western boundary; thence east along the northern edge of Route 40 to the point of beginning, this forms the southern boundary.

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Garrett County

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HISTORIC SITES THAT RELATE TO NATIONAL HISTORY

The Casselman Bridge near U. S. Route 40 just east of Grantsville.

In 1964 the Department of the Interior designated this bridge a Registered National Historic Landmark. The structure is a dramatic reminder of Route 40's great days, when, as the National Pike, running between Cumberland and Wheeling, the road was the first improved path of transportation across the mountains - whether for passengers or freight. The bridge is unused at present and to reach it the traveller must turn off on a spur from Route 40. This will bring him to the Bridge's east end - the west approach is cut off. He can then walk out on the Bridge floor, if he wishes, or he can obtain a rarely lovely view from the new bridge, which is only a short distance downstream. Camera fans will probably prefer this. Casselman Bridge is photogenic as well as historic.

It was built in 1813, and, at the time, was the longest single span bridge in the country. It is a fine example of the beautiful stone work that characterizes Western Maryland. It was over its graceful arch, now quietly framed in tall forest, that there passed the turbulent march of American expansion westward - drovers, freighters, waggoners, horsemen, stagecoach passengers, pedestrians - when the frontier was the Alleghenies.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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 Casselman River Bridge is the main feature at Casselman State Park located about one-half mile east of Grantsville on old U.S. Route 40, the National Pike, in Garrett County.

The bridge is a large single arched structure built of native brownish granular stones laid in even courses. The large arch is semicircular and is lined with cut stone voussoirs. Just behind the base of the arch the abutments flair outward at an angle. A stone corbel projects from the surface of the walls at the road level for the entire length of the bridge.

The bridge was built in 1817 for the national road at a place known as "Little Crossings".

The Casselman Bridge is not owned by DNR, belonging rather to Garrett County. The State owns 0.83 acre on which stands a modern comfort station. The Casselman Bridge picnic area is also County owned land which the State maintains picnic tables.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1817 (Bridge date) BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although the Casselman Bridge does not actually belong to DNR, it is being included in the survey for its great architectural and historical significance, and because of the Park's location adjacent to the bridge. The bridge is important as a record of early 19th century engineering skills and as an example of stone arched bridge architecture which is particularly prominent in northern Maryland and southern Pennsylvania. The bridge is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places and for a further description that nomination form may be consulted.

The site of Casselman State Park also has historical significance. Little Crossings is said to have been a camp site of Colonel Dunbar's brigade during the Braddock campaign of 1755. Later in the 18th century, and in the early 19th century, there was a store, a tavern and a grist and sawmill. Most of these structures were owned by Jesse Tomlinson, a noted early settler of the Grantsville area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since DNR owns so little property at the Casselman Bridge, there are few recommendations to be made. The primary resource in the area, of course, is the bridge and DNR, wherever possible, should encourage its continued preservation and proper maintenance. The small piece of land held by DNR should be developed in a manner compatible with the historic and scenic nature of the bridge. Perhaps additional research could be done into the appearance of "Little Crossings" in the early 19th century through archeological and historical study and the information provided on plaques or signs for visitors to the grounds.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND PHOTOS MAY BE ADDED ON SHEET OF SAME SIZE

1. STATE Maryland COUNTY Garrett County TOWN _____ VICINITY _____ STREET NO. Just west of Grantsville near U. S. 40 ORIGINAL OWNER _____ ORIGINAL USE River crossing PRESENT OWNER County Commissioners PRESENT USE of Garrett County WALL CONSTRUCTION (unused at present) NO. OF STORIES Stone construction		HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY INVENTORY G - II-C-014	
2. NAME Casselman Bridge, National Road DATE OR PERIOD 1813 STYLE _____ ARCHITECT _____ BUILDER _____		3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE	
4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION OPEN TO PUBLIC			
<p> "Casselman Bridge" was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964. The arch of the Casselman Bridge represents a one-hundred-and-fifty years engineering feat. Erected in 1813, of stone, it was at that time the longest single span bridge in the country. </p> <p> For decades, through the years of the American westward expansion, it was the link in the National Pike beyond Cumberland to the Alleghenies (later Route 40) and carried hundreds of passengers. </p> <p> The arched, stone span, is framed in timbered woods above the turbulent waters of the Casselman River. Parklike woods reach to the nearby Penn Alps, Inc., craft houses where handmade products of the Allegheny region mountains people are marketed at Grantsville. </p> <p> Within yards, to the south, the newer steel span carries the heavy burden of modern Route 40. </p>			
5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE Endangered Interior Exterior			
6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)		7. PHOTOGRAPH	
8. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC.		9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER Orlando Ridout IV Maryland Historical Trust DATE OF RECORD March 1968	