

Champ Clark Bridge

PIKE04

GENERAL DATA

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|------------------------------|--|
| structure no.: K 932R | city/town: Louisiana |
| county: Pike / Pike | feature inters.: Mississippi River |
| | cadastral grid: S18, T54N, R1W |
| | highway route: U.S. Highway 54 |
| | highway distr.: 3 |
| | current owner: Missouri Highway and Transportation Department; Illinois Department of Public Works and Bridges |

STRUCTURAL DATA

superstructure: steel, 14-panel, rigid-connected Pennsylvania through truss; 6 steel plate deck girder approach spans at the east end

substructure: concrete abutments, wingwalls and piers

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|------------------------------|---|
| span number: 5 | condition: good |
| span length: 420.0' | alterations: deck replaced |
| total length: 2248.0' | floor/decking : asphalt-covered concrete over steel stringers |
| roadway width: 20.0' | other features: upper chord and inclined end post: 2 channels with cover plate and double lacing; lower chord: 2 built-up channels with batten plates on top and bottom; vertical: 4 angles with lacing; diagonal: 4 angles with batten plates; lateral bracing: steel angles - bottom, 4 angles with lacing - top; strut: 4 angles with lacing; floor beam: plate girder; guardrail: 2 channels; portal plate: DEDICATED TO CHAMP CLARK MEMBER OF CONGRESS SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE; bridge plates (Missouri side): 1927 MISSISSIPPI RIVER BRIDGE ENGINEERS HARRINGTON, HOWARD AND ASH CONTRACTORS WISCONSIN BRIDGE & IRON CO. SUPERSTRUCTURE THE MISSOURI VALLEY BRIDGE & IRON CO. SUBSTRUCTURE; 1927 MISSISSIPPI RIVER BRIDGE MISSOURI-ILLINOIS BRIDGE CO... [long list of company officers]; builder's plate (Illinois side): BUILT BY WISCONSIN BRIDGE & IRON CO. NORTH MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 1927 |

HISTORICAL DATA

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| erection date: 1926-28 |
| erection cost: \$1,000,000.00 |
| designer: Harrington, Howard and Ash, Kansas City MO |
| fabricator : Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Company, Milwaukee WI |
| contractor : Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Company, Milwaukee WI (superstructure); Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company, Leavenworth KS (sub-structure) |

Champ Clark Bridge

references: Missouri Highway and Transportation Department, Structure Inventory and Appraisal: Structure No. K 932R; Missouri Primary System Bridge Record, located at the Missouri Highway and Transportation Department, Jefferson City MO; **Pike County Missouri: People, Places & Pikers**, compiled and edited by Karen Schwadron (1981), Pike County Historical Society; **Louisiana Press-Journal**, souvenir bridge edition (8 June 1988); "Seven New Mississippi River Highway Bridges," **Engineering News-Record**, 31 July 1930; field inspection by Clayton Fraser, 14 September 1990.

sign. rating: 72

evaluation: NRHP eligible (outstanding large-scale example of highway truss construction)

inventoried by: Clayton B. Fraser 26 March 1991

HAER INVENTORY

Missouri Historic Bridge Inventory

NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

Champ Clark Bridge
MHTD: K 932R

PIKE04

DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION

1926-28

LOCATION

U.S. Highway 54 over Mississippi River; S18, T54N, R1W
Louisiana; Pike County, Illinois / Pike County, Missouri

USE (ORIGINAL / CURRENT)

highway bridge / highway bridge

RATING NRHP eligible (score: 72)

CONDITION

good

OWNER

Missouri Highway and Transportation Department; Illinois Department of Public Works and Bridges

span number: 5
span length: 420.0'
total length: 2248.0'
roadway wdt.: 20.0'

superstructure: steel, 14-panel, rigid-connected Pennsylvania through truss; 6 steel plate deck girder approach spans at the east end
substructure: concrete abutments, wingwalls and piers
floor/decking: asphalt-covered concrete over steel stringers
other features: upper chord and inclined end post: 2 channels with cover plate and double lacing; lower chord: 2 built-up channels with batten plates on top and bottom; vertical: 4 angles with lacing; diagonal: 4 angles with batten plates; lateral bracing: steel angles - bottom, 4 angles with lacing - top; strut: 4 angles with lacing; floor beam: plate girder; guardrail: 2 channels; portal plate: **DEDICATED TO CHAMP CLARK MEMBER OF CONGRESS SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE**; bridge plates (Missouri side): **1927 MISSISSIPPI RIVER BRIDGE ENGINEERS HARRINGTON, HOWARD AND ASH CONTRACTORS WISCONSIN BRIDGE & IRON CO. SUPERSTRUCTURE THE MISSOURI VALLEY BRIDGE & IRON CO. SUBSTRUCTURE; 1927 MISSISSIPPI RIVER BRIDGE MISSOURI-ILLINOIS BRIDGE CO...** [long list of company officers]; builder's plate (Illinois side): **BUILT BY WISCONSIN BRIDGE & IRON CO. NORTH MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 1927**

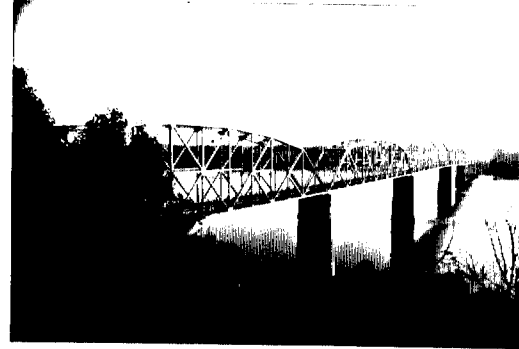
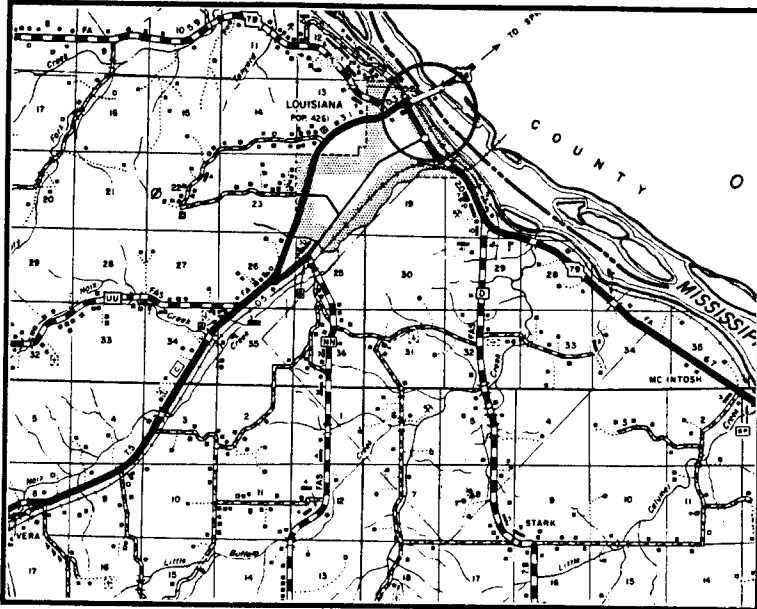
"Bring Illinois paved highways down to the river opposite Louisiana and we will take the pavement on to the Pacific Ocean." This was the message Louisiana's Chamber of Commerce sent to their counterparts in Pittsfield, Illinois, on February 12, 1926, thus beginning formal efforts to build the Champ Clark Bridge. Funding was arranged, in part through sale of stock in the Missouri-Illinois Bridge Company, and in March John Harrington of the Kansas City engineering firm Harrington, Howard and Ash surveyed proposed bridge sites. Harrington quickly proclaimed the Mansion Street site as an ideal location for a bridge. On May 5th President Coolidge signed H.R. 8918 into law, authorizing the bridge's erection. That October the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company began work on the substructure, and a year later all the piers were in place. In the meantime, the Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Company was hard at work erecting the superstructure. High water caused by heavy rains slowed construction in the spring of 1927, but the project was only slightly behind schedule until September 6, 1927. On that day falsework holding the second span gave way, and the partially completed truss fell into the river. One workman died in the mishap, and it took two months to remove the fallen bridge from the river. Following this major setback, the structure was completed without further incident. Opened to traffic on May 15th, the bridge was formally dedicated in a

lavish ceremony held June 9, 1928. A parade with some fifty floats and nine bands marched its way from Bowling Green to the bridge site, where a Saint Louis man swan-dived off the top of the bridge. Among other dignitaries, the governors of Missouri and Illinois and the mayor of Chicago were in attendance. Named for Champ Clark, former Missouri Congressman and Speaker of the House, the bridge operated as a toll crossing until June 1952, when its indebtedness was paid off. It has served as a free crossing since that time, with deck replacement and pier repair in 1981 as the only alterations of note.

Bridges over the Mississippi River comprise some of America's longest examples of vehicular steel truss construction. With over 400 miles fronting on the great river, Missouri possesses several notable Mississippi River bridges. Seven of these, including the Champ Clark Bridge, are included in the statewide historic bridge inventory, and are all individually eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Although typically configured, the Champ Clark Bridge ranks among Missouri's most monumental examples of steel truss construction. The crossing is also historically significant for its pivotal role as an interstate crossing over a major river.

NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE
Champ Clark Bridge

PHOTOS AND SKETCH MAP OF LOCATION



LOCATION MAP

TAKEN FROM MISSOURI HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP

SOURCES

Missouri Highway and Transportation Department, Structure Inventory and Appraisal: Structure No. K 932R; Missouri Primary System Bridge Record, located at the Missouri Highway and Transportation Department, Jefferson City MO; Pike County Missouri: People, Places & Pikers, compiled and edited by Karen Schwadron (1981), Pike County Historical Society; Louisiana Press-Journal, souvenir bridge edition (8 June 1988); "Seven New Mississippi River Highway Bridges," Engineering News-Record, 31 July 1930; field inspection by Clayton Fraser, 14 September 1990.

INVENTORIED BY
Clayton B. Fraser

AFFILIATION
Fraserdesign, Loveland CO

DATE
26 March 1991
