

Introduction

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The *Delaware Historic Bridges* publication is a result of the 1988-1991 state historic bridge survey and the 1996-1998 survey update undertaken by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) in response to the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987 (STURAA). The primary goal, mandated by STURAA, was to evaluate the National Register of Historic Places eligibility status of the state's bridges. The product of the survey and survey update has been the documentation and evaluation of over 680 bridges, all of the bridges built before 1957 in the state's bridge management database that is part of the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS).

The survey involved the preparation of historic contexts, the computerization of survey data, field visits to all bridges, and the production of survey forms with photos, slides, and maps. Based on the collected data, each bridge, except for those that are owned by private corporations such as railroads, has been evaluated on its own merits against the National Register criteria for evaluation as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.4. The data and evaluations are used by DelDOT, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office for planning and programmatic purposes. The survey documentation consists of several "white paper" reports and many boxes of survey files and photos housed at the DelDOT Location and Environmental Studies Office.

This volume is intended for a broad audience. It has been prepared with an eye to making the survey results available to the public interested in learning more about historic bridges and Delaware's transportation history. It has also been written with the intent that it will be found useful by many state officials, employees, and consultants, who have occasional need to reference the historic bridge survey and its recommendations. It is also hoped that the book serves in a small way to recognize the accomplishments of the individuals and organizations that have worked to build and maintain Delaware's transportation network over more than 200 years.

The book is organized into seven chapters and an appendix. It can be read from cover to cover, it may be browsed, or it may serve as a desk-side reference tool.

The first two chapters are historic contexts for the state's two most important transportation networks—roadways and railroads. The historic contexts acknowledge that the state's bridges do not stand in isolation but were built as part of the development or improvement of larger transportation systems that have played and continue to play an important role in moving people and goods in and through the state. The bridges carry the transportation systems over natural and man-made barriers. The transportation historic contexts are a critical and required component for evaluation of the bridges against the National Register criteria.

Chapter One, Delaware's Roadways, was written as a narrative with the first part focusing on the impact of roads on the cultural landscape and the state's pattern of economic and social development. The second part of the narrative delves into the strong influence of the Delaware State Highway Department from 1916 to 1956 on the state's highway transportation history. Special emphasis has been placed on the department's bridge division, and its role planning and designing bridges for the state highway system, which by the 1930s included most of the state's road mileage. The 1956 cutoff date was chosen because it marks the beginning of the interstate highway system, a new era in highway and bridge construction that is left for future research and evaluation.

Chapter Two, Delaware's Railroads, replaces the abbreviated railroad history that was a part of the previous edition of this book. This context was written to provide a fuller assessment of the significance of railroad lines and historic railroad-related resources, including, but not limited to, bridges.

Chapters Three through Seven – Stone Arch Bridges, Truss Bridges, Movable Bridges, Reinforced Concrete Bridges, and Girder Bridges – introduce the five historic bridge types present in the state. Each chapter begins with a definition of the bridge type, its history, and its application in Delaware. The historical and technological significance of the bridge type is con-

sidered with special emphasis given to when and by whom it was initially developed, and how it contributed to bridge building in Delaware. Variations in design and material are explained.

Each bridge type chapter ends with illustrations of significant extant examples of the type. *The individually presented bridges are all of those that were evaluated to meet the National Register criteria for having significance and integrity.* The narrative for each individual bridge serves as a justification of the National Register evaluation. Also provided are location maps, photos, and illustrations.

The Appendix is a complete listing of the more than 680 bridges that have been surveyed as a result of the historic bridge survey and update. It is a condensation of the data collected for the survey forms. The Appendix is organized by county and state bridge number. It provides date of construction, location, a brief description of the bridge, National Register eligibility recommendation, evaluation comments, plan or contract numbers, and Cultural Resource Survey Number that has been assigned by the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office. All users needing in-depth information about the historic bridge survey, including its methodology, criteria for evaluation, and individual bridge evaluations, are referred to the survey forms and reports maintained by DelDOT's Location and Environmental Studies Office.