10. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE
State Bridge Number 123A

11. PHOTOS (W/ FILM ROLL & FRAME NO.) AND SKETCH MAP OF LOCATION
16B:16-19

16B:18

12. SOURCES

Mack, Warren W. "A History of Motor Highways in Delaware", in Reed, Henry Clay, Delaware: A History of the First State, vol.2, pp.535-550 (NY: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1947).
Delaware State Program. Delaware State Highways; The Story of Roads in Delaware.... [Newark, Delaware: Press of Kells, 1919].
Federal Writers' Project. Delaware: A Guide to the First State. (New York: Viking Press, 1938).
Hancock, Harold Bell. A History of Kent County, Delaware. (Dover, Del.: Dover Litho Printing Co., 1976).

Delaware State Archives. Kent County Road Records 1875-1940.
Delaware DOT records: Annual Reports; contract files.
Plans on file at Delaware DOT: Contract #

13. INVENTORIED BY: P.A.C. Spero & Company with Kidde Consultants for Delaware DOT
AFFILIATION
DATE April-November 1988

HABS/HAER INVENTORY

See "HABS/HAER Inventory Guidelines" before filling out this card.

1. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

State Bridge Number 123A

2. LOCATION

Road 123 over Kings Causeway Branch
Milford Neck Wildlife Area, Kent County, Delaware

3. DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION

1933

4. USE (ORIGINAL/CURRENT)

Vehicular

5. RATING

TB

6. CONDITION

Good

7. DESCRIPTION

State Highway Bridge 123A is a 13'-10" single span timber beam bridge with a timber superstructure and substructure. Beams, 4" x 12" in section, support the deck composed of 4" x 10" planks that have been paved over. There is a simple wood railing composed of 4" x 6" posts and 2" x 6" rails. The superstructure is supported by timber bents, each comprising seven piles 12" in diameter which support a 10" x 12" header. The straight wing walls are constructed of 4" x 10" planks. The bridge is 21'-8" wide and carries two lanes of traffic.

8. HISTORICAL DATA

Delaware Department of Transportation records state that Bridge 123A was built in 1933 under State Highway Department contract 297, as part of a project to construct a slag road between Thompsonville and Sour Apple Tree, a distance of 5.9 miles. This project involved the construction of the present bridge and the provision of 24 pipe culverts to improve drainage on the road, which was reported covered with standing water wherever the road went through a wooded section. The road construction contract was executed with the Wilson Contracting Company of Wilmington, Delaware, for a bid price of $16,740, of which an estimated $740 applied to the construction of the bridge. Bridge 123A replaced a previous timber structure at the same site. Original drawings, dated February 1933, are on file at the Delaware Department of Transportation. Notes on the drawings specify the use of creosoted timber piles and lumber; acceptable materials included southern yellow pine, douglas fir, southern cypress, and oak. The wood was treated with Grade 1 creosote oil under the full cell process. Like other small timber bridges of this period, Bridge 123A was designed for a 15 ton truck load, without impact. Handwritten notes on the drawings indicate that materials were supplied by the Century Wood Preserving Company of Newport, Delaware.

9. SIGNIFICANCE

The majority of bridges surveyed on secondary roads in southern Delaware are simple timber bridges, mostly single spans, consisting of timber stringers on pile bents with wood decks and railings. Their structural configuration is simple and represents the continued use of one of the most primitive types of early bridges. Most of the bridges surveyed in Delaware date to the 1930s, although some are attributed earlier dates by the Department. Historic photographs illustrate that the type was built widely prior to the 1920s; it continued to be built in the 1940s. These bridges represent a specific engineering response to conditions characteristic of the region: they present a low-cost solution to the need for short spans crossing the numerous small waterways of southern Delaware. The structural simplicity of the type, the use of readily available materials, and the speed of erection also made it an ideal choice for use as a replacement bridge in emergency situations, such as after the disastrous floods of September 1935 when approximately 100 bridges were destroyed in Delaware. State Bridge No. 123A is a typical southern Delaware timber bridge which appears to retain much of its original fabric; it was built as part of a project to improve the rural transportation network in Kent County. The nature of the timber bridge presumes frequent replacement of members as wear and deterioration take their toll, timber decking and railings are especially vulnerable. As long as the bridge retains the majority of its original superstructure and substructure, it was considered to retain sufficient integrity to be significant as a representative example of the type.