VLR- 2/18/75 NRHP- 6/10/75

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
Virginia	
COUNTY:	
Botetourt	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

1. NAME

COMMON: Phoenix Bridge

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Over Craig Creek, 2.6 miles northwest of Eagle Rock, .8 mile northwest of confluence of Patterson Creek and Craig Creek.

CITY OR TOWN:		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:	
(Eagle Rock vicinity)		Sixth (M. Caldwell Butler)	
STATE: Virginia	CODE: 51	COUNTY: Botetourt	CODE: 023

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☐ Building ☐ Site ☒ Structure ☐ Object	☒ Public ☐ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☐ Restricted ☒ Unrestricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☐ Park	☒ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other (Specify)	
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY Douglas B. Fugate, Commissioner

OWNER'S NAME: Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation

STREET AND NUMBER: 1401 E. Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Richmond	Virginia	51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation

STREET AND NUMBER: 1401 E. Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Richmond	Virginia	51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1973 ☐ Federal ☒ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 221 Governor Street

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Richmond	Virginia	51

STATE: Virginia

COUNTY: Botetourt

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)		
	☐ Excellent ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed		
	(Check One)	(Check One)	
	☐ Altered ☒ Unaltered	☐ Moved ☒ Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Phoenix Bridge crosses Craig Creek which joins the James River just above Eagle Rock in Botetourt County. The iron superstructure rests on two ashlar granite piers although one of the piers has been filled in on the bank side to form an abutment. The bridge is a trapezoidal Whipple truss with rolled wrought-iron "Phoenix post" compression members (composed of four flanged segments riveted together) and round and rectangular tension rods with pinned joints. The use of wrought iron for all parts except the joint boxes is a mark of bridges built after 1880, while the use of rods and riveted joints is an archaic feature retained in many smaller bridges built in remote areas to facilitate their erection. The bridge retains its wooden roadway.

The terminal portals of the bridge display considerable decorative work. At the top at each end is a spandrel with a cast panel embellished with anthemions and garlands and bearing the legend "Built by Phoenix Bridge Co., Phoenixville, Pa. 1887". Crowning the posts on either side of these panels are small urnlike finials. Other spandrels, about three feet below the upper ones, are pierced with quatrefoils and trefoils. The bridge's rural setting is unusually scenic and unspoiled.

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 15th Century
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 17th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [x] 19th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)* 1887

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- Aboriginal
  - [ ] Prehistoric
  - [ ] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [ ] Architecture
- [x] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [x] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [x] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other *(Specify)* _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Phoenix Bridge survives as a notable example of the prefabrication of bridges for rural America in the nineteenth century. The product of one of the most important prefabricated bridge manufacturers, the Phoenix Bridge Company of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, the bridge is a pinned flexible structure incorporating a Whipple truss and the firm's Phoenix posts. Architecturally, the bridge is a relic of an era when much effort was spent in decorating the products of industrial America. Its structural elements are ornamented with fanciful decorative elements including anthemions, finials, quatrefoils and trefoils. The structure is given added interest by its location in an unusually scenic setting at Eagle Rock along Craig Creek in Botetourt County.

The change from timber to iron bridge construction began in 1840 with the erection of two iron bridges across the Erie Canal in New York State but was retarded somewhat by the collapse of an iron railroad bridge in 1850, prompting the hasty replacement of many proven iron spans with wooden ones. Iron gradually recovered its prestige, however, and was back in use by the War Between the States.

After the Civil War, improved iron-working technology combined with a greatly increased demand for new railroad and highway bridges to create a boom in bridge building. Many new companies were formed to avail themselves of the opportunity either to exploit a new form of truss invented by the companies' owners, or to market patented varieties of bridge building elements, using truss forms licensed from their inventors. One of the largest of such firms was the Phoenix Bridge Company which was licensed to use the famous Whipple truss conceived by Squire Whipple of Utica, New York. Whipple was the builder both of one of the two 1840 bridges across the Erie Canal as well as the railroad bridge which collapsed in 1850 and was the author of several books on the theory of bridge design. The Phoenix Company's distinctive product was the Phoenix post, a compression member composed of four flanged segments riveted together, which is used in the Botetourt bridge. Such posts, formed of rolled wrought iron, copied the forms of, but in the 1870s replaced, the cast members used earlier. Phoenix posts were one of the two most popular varieties of these new wrought members.

In the 1880s, the flexible pin-connected structure such as the one in Botetourt County was considered to be the standard American bridge-building form. It was objected to on the grounds of durability, and the more rigid

(see continuation sheet #1)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

riveted plate form of construction was known and used for railroad and highway bridges after 1861. However, the older pinned form with round and square rods continued to be employed because it was light, could easily be prefabricated at the factory and shipped to remote locations like Eagle Rock, and because it required less time, equipment and skilled labor to erect on the site.

DTU

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Llewellyn, Nathaniel Edwards. A Record of History and Evolution of Early American Bridges. 1959.

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY						OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE			LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	37°	39'	17"	79°	50'	23"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"	17/602360/4167920 UTM					
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE: January 1975

STREET AND NUMBER: 221 Governor Street

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond

STATE: Virginia

CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name: Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Exec. Director

Title: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Date: FEB 18 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

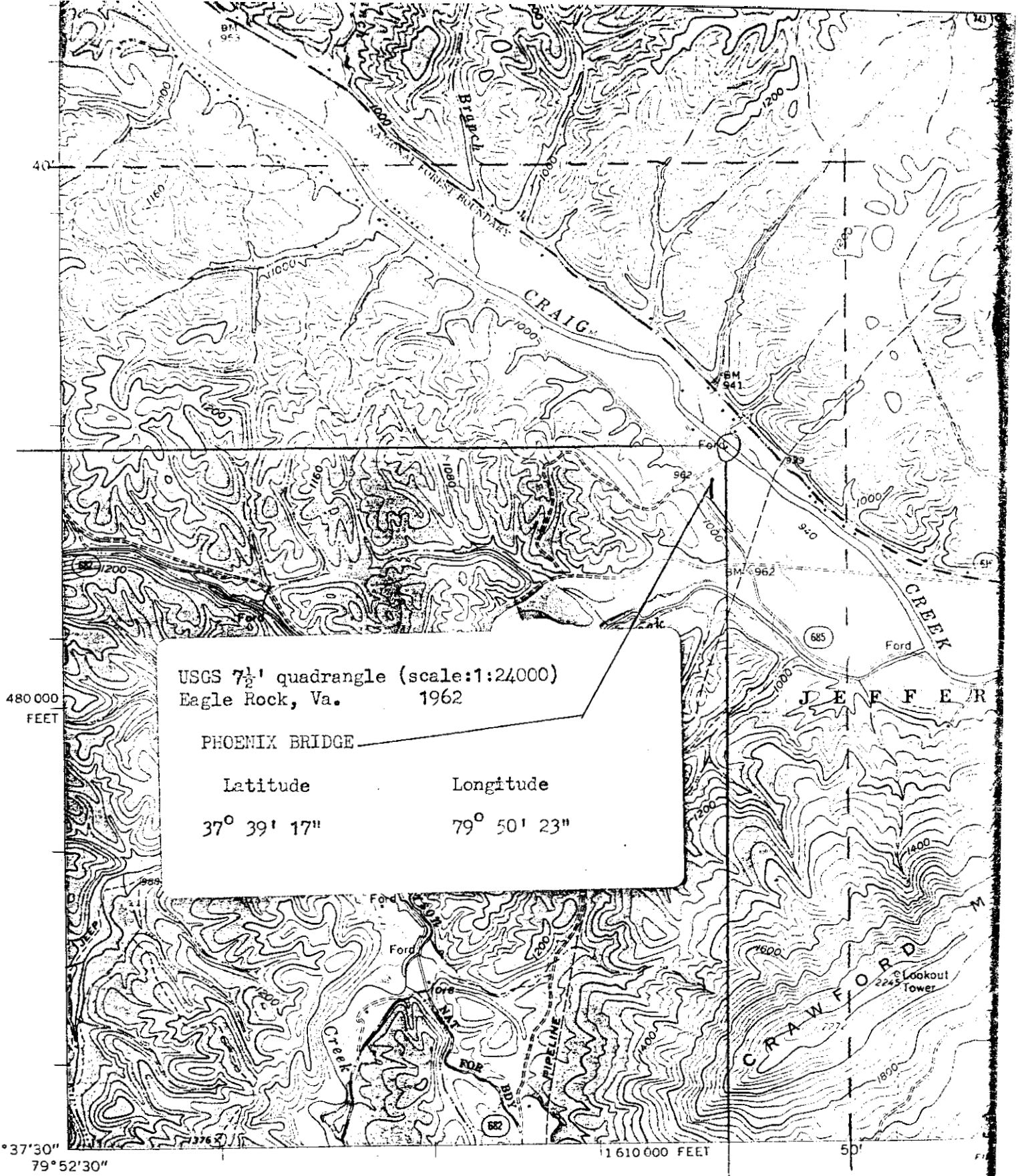
Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1960. Field checked 1962

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Virginia coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked