

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Caplinger Mills Historic District

other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number Junction of Washington Ave. and Sac River [n/a] not for publication

city or town Caplinger Mills [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Cedar code 039 zip code 65607

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Claire F. Blackwell
Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

29 July 93
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [] entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- [] determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- [] determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- [] removed from the
National Register
- [] other, explain
See continuation sheet [].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

5 Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	0	1	buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	1	0	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	3	0	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	4	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6 Function or Use

Historic Function

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility
INDUSTRY/waterworks
TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

Current Functions

INDUSTRY/waterworks
TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian-related
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

NO STYLE
OTHER: Pratt through truss

Materials

foundation concrete
walls concrete
roof concrete
other iron

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

COMMERCE

INDUSTRY

ENGINEERING

TRANSPORTATION

Periods of Significance

1895-1943

Significant Dates

1895

1911

1925

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Chicago Bridge Company

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: Caplinger Mills Bridge
Preservation Society, P.O. Box 183, Stockton,
MO 65785

10 Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.5 acres

UTM References

A. Zone Easting Northing
15 429060 4183460

B. Zone Easting Northing

C. Zone Easting Northing

D. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11 Form Prepared By

name/title 1. Bob Estes/historian

organization Caplinger Mills Bridge Preservation Society date August 10, 1992

street & number P.O. Box 183 telephone 417/876-3563

city or town Stockton state Missouri zip code 65785

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FOP for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FOP.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

**Caplinger Mills Historic District
Cedar County, Missouri**

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SUMMARY: The Caplinger Mills Historic District is composed of one contributing site and three contributing structures, all intimately related to the development and use of water power in Cedar County, and one noncontributing building. The site is the foundation of a water powered grist mill. The structures are: the low dam associated with the mill, a hydro-electric power plant which utilized the dam, and a major iron bridge which facilitated access to the mill. The mill site, dam, power house and bridge form a logical and picturesque grouping on Sac River at the east edge of the unincorporated village of Caplinger Mills¹ - which owes its existence, as well as its very name, to these resources. The noncontributing building is a small, modern, shed-roofed, frame building constructed on the westernmost edge of the mill foundation. The mill last burned in 1953, but the remaining foundation on the west riverbank was constructed of well executed, dressed sandstone masonry with later repairs and additions having been accomplished in concrete. The old turbine is still present. The concrete dam, which replaced an earlier log dam, was hand built over a period of about ten years beginning in 1911. The hydro-electric plant, built in 1925 at the east end of the dam, was constructed of monolithic concrete. When the plant was deactivated in the mid 1950s, the twin turbines were removed. The district is dominated by the 1895 iron bridge, a double span Pratt with two pony truss approach spans. The bridge, the first iron bridge built in the county, forms the northern boundary of the district and provides a convenient vantage point from which to view the remainder of the area. Other than normal deterioration, the appearance and integrity of the proposed district have changed little since the destruction of the last milling building. Even now, long after the end of its productive life, this proposed district holds a strong attraction for tourists and residents who come to enjoy its beauty and power. No archaeological investigation has been conducted.

PRESENT AND PAST HISTORIC PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Mill: There have been at least four milling buildings on the same site at Caplinger Mills, all of which succumbed to fire. Little documented evidence of the early mills has been discovered. However, it is known that construction of the original mill spanned the years 1840-1843. It is obvious that the building was carefully situated on a low bluff on the west riverbank at a spot where the solid stone bed allowed construction of a reputed rubble dam which was probably about 190 feet long.

In 1851, Samuel Caplinger, then owner of the mill and dam, contracted with the Cedar County Court to build a wooden bridge across Sac River just below the dam. That project never came to fruition and when the mill burned in 1853, Caplinger was allowed to use some walnut timber (which had been cut for the bridge) in the reconstruction of the mill (County Court Records:A:333). That

¹Caplinger Mills was known as Sacville until around the turn of the century and for years afterward the two names were used interchangeably. To avoid confusion in this document the name Caplinger Mills is used in all references to the village. The name Caplinger's Mill refers to the actual mill. See appendix for a chronology of the proposed district.

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mill survived only until the Civil War when it was burned by Shelby's Raiders. It was probably during subsequent reconstruction by Andrew Masters that the original dam was replaced by a log dam. The rebuilt milling building stood until 1947 and is well remembered by locals. Photographs from the early 1900's show that mill to be a gabled roof, three and one half story frame structure about 58x28 feet with a gable end facing the river. A similar but smaller structure, about 14x20 feet and offset to the upstream side covered the water wheel on the east or river end of the building. There was a shed roof on the west or town end that sheltered the office and loading platform. It is said that the building was originally roofed with wooden shingles and the walls were sided with clapboards (which were eventually covered with "sheet iron" (CMBPS:Austin)). Later remodeling (ca. 1930s) added a 45X21 feet ell extending to the south. Bunk Whinrey, who bought the mill in 1893, maintained that the mill contained some of the old hand hewn walnut timbers which had been used in the mill which was destroyed during the Civil War. If that is the case, then they may well have come from the bridge timbers that "had been got out" in 1851 by Samuel Caplinger.

When this mill constructed by Masters was destroyed by fire in 1947 it was replaced with a modern corrugated metal building. Since the 1953 fire, which also destroyed this later building, only the concrete and masonry remain. Two square pedestals, which were used to mount large electric motors, jut from the concrete floor. Oversized and primitive steps lead down the north side of the foundation to the forebay which was constructed of masonry and concrete and which still contains the turbine used to operate the mill from the 1890's until the mid 1920's. The receipt for the turbine (which is the personal property of Julie March of the Museum of Ozarks' History in Springfield, Missouri) states that it is a Samson Model, 45 inch turbine which was ordered September 19, 1893, from the Leffel Turbine Company in Springfield, Ohio, at a cost of \$490 "cash".

On the westernmost edge of the concrete foundation which supported some of the mill's later additions, a frame, shed-roofed building is located. The building, constructed circa 1955, is clad in processed wood siding and partially recessed into the sloping hillside. There are single window openings centered in both the north and south elevations and one window and one door opening in the facade, or east elevation.

Dam: The present run-of-the-river dam is approximately 390 feet long. It consists of a straight section (ca. 1911) about 190 feet long and 10 feet high, which blocks the main flow of the stream. This portion of the structure shows signs of four different construction phases as evidenced by obvious seams and joints on its downstream face. This dam replaced a log crib dam (apparently a crib and deck overflow type - ca. 1867) which itself replaced what is reputed to have been an old rubble or coffer dam (ca. 1840) (CMBPS:Campbell). The so-called "steps" at the east end of this portion were a retaining wall for the current dam and its precedent log dam, but after a portion of the wall washed out in a flood (1919), the resultant widening of the river damaged the bridge and forced construction of the present east curved portion of the dam (ca. 200 feet in length). There was more damage the next year requiring the dam to be extended into the east river bank (and the

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bridge to be rebuilt). The curved portion was subsequently raised two feet with concrete, and the straight portion was temporarily raised twelve inches with wooden flashboards affixed to the top of the dam. Presently, some of the concrete on the downstream side of the curved dam is eroded, the "steps" have deteriorated and there is a leak through the old forebay; but the basic structure appears to be sound. The biggest threat comes from fluctuating water levels caused by intermittent and unpredictable releases from Stockton Lake.

Bridge: In 1895, under contract to the Cedar County Court, the Chicago Bridge and Iron Company completed construction of portions of the present iron bridge. This bridge was the first iron bridge to be constructed in Cedar County and was only four years younger than the first county bridge of any kind (a suspension bridge a few miles upstream that collapsed after only eighteen years of service).

The iron bridge now crosses the water from the low bluff on the west to the bottomland on the east in five spans, of which the three on the west are original. As built, the west span was a queen post deck truss, 52 feet in length. The next two spans to the east were identical, eight panel, pinned, Pratt through trusses, each being 140 feet in length. These trusses retain their decorative finials, and the west span still has its emblem intact, reading "1895 Chicago Bridge Co". The original east, or fourth, span of the bridge was a deck supported by lattice beams projecting from the river bed. The length of this span is unknown but, since the original bridge was to have been 405 feet long, simple arithmetic implies that it was 77 feet in length (although some of this distance could have been an earthen approach ramp).

The original bridge was supported on abutments at each end, by a dumbbell pier beneath the center of the two through trusses, and by twin "X" braced vertical tubes at each end of these same trusses. The east span was subsequently dropped into the river by the aforementioned floods, and a lattice beam on the east high truss was buckled. Locals used hog wire to construct a temporary swinging footbridge across the gap. To repair the damage a replacement 70 feet, "class B" structure (a four panel, pinned, pony truss) was built (County Court Records:H:471), and the damage to the east high truss was mitigated by pouring concrete between the tubes of the east pier and by installing a patch plate on the southeast portal.

Formal repairs were completed, but within a few months flooding again washed out the east end of the bridge and the river channel was so widened that two spans were required to make the bridge serviceable. The downed span was replaced with a five panel, pinned, pony truss, 86 feet in length, and was supported by a new concrete pier. It is believed that the present east span; a four panel, pony truss of 70 feet is actually the downed span salvaged, moved to the east and reinstalled on a new wingwall abutment. The specifications called for the original bridge to be painted at the time of its erection, but there is now no hint of paint on the structure. The original dressed pine banisters were replaced by angle iron railings before 1919.

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The middle pier presently shows rust perforation close to water line, and drainage from the roadway has caused limited damage to the west span and old repairs are visible. Other than the periodic replacement of the wooden decking, the bridge has received little other maintenance. The Cedar County Court reported in January of 1981 that permanent repairs to the bridge would entail repairing rusted and frozen bearings and replacing some members. At present, only pedestrian traffic is allowed on the bridge.

Power Plant: By 1917, W.A. Whinrey had installed a dynamo in the mill to produce saleable electricity and wires were strung across the bridge to reach customers to the east of the river. In 1925, he sold his power rights to the Ozark Utilities Company which immediately built a power house into the east end of the dam. The new facility was constructed of monolithic concrete replacing a portion of the dam and forcing the water to run beneath it and through the turbines (one of 250 horsepower and one of 350 horsepower [Abbott:173]). The building was 44½ x 23½ feet with the long axis oriented east and west. The extant trash racks and control gates were on the south, or upstream side, and the water exited under the east span of the bridge. The transformers were located on the riverbank just to the south of the building. Hindsight shows that the inside of a sweeping river curve was not the best place to build a hydro-electric plant, and it was a constant battle to keep the intake channel from being blocked by silt. The plant was eventually taken over by the Empire District Electric Company, which closed it in the mid 1950s. The generating equipment was removed and the building, dam, and nearby park were sold to the City of Stockton (CMBPS:Carender). Currently, all wall openings on the east have been closed with concrete, the catwalk to the upper entrance has been removed, and all windows have been boarded up. A report for the Corps of Engineers (Gebhard:1981) reached the conclusion that, although the power plant building was intact, the expenses involved in clearing the channel, repairing deteriorated concrete in the dam, and installing new equipment made the benefit cost ratio unfavorable for putting the plant back into operation.

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Caplinger Mills Historic District
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SUMMARY: The Caplinger Mills Historic District, located at the east edge of the hamlet of Caplinger Mills,¹ on either side of and across the Sac River, Cedar County, is a picturesque assemblage of resources whose importance spans the period from 1895, with the construction of the extant bridge, to 1943, the arbitrary fifty year limit. The district, which consists of a mill site and its related structures--dam, hydro-electric power plant, and iron bridge--is significant under Criterion A in the areas of COMMERCE and INDUSTRY. The mill, represented by the largely intact foundations which still encase the mill turbine, served as the commercial focus of the hamlet of Caplinger Mills and was largely responsible for the creation and persistence of the community. The mill site and dam represent the enormous impact the seminal milling industry exercised on rural communities, often initiating their attendant community into a larger market economy. The associated power house represents an early and successful effort to bring electric power to a portion of rural Missouri, an effort which predated later and larger efforts by almost a decade. In addition, the bridge at Caplinger Mills is significant under Criterion C in the area of ENGINEERING and Criterion A in the area of TRANSPORTATION. The bridge, constructed in 1895, is a virtually intact example of a double span, pin-connected Pratt through truss constructed by the Chicago Bridge and Iron Company and the first iron or steel bridge constructed in the county, as well as the oldest bridge extant in Cedar County. The construction of the bridge emphasized the commercial importance of the Cedar County hamlet and recognized the need for access to the mill and its attendant industries.

NARRATIVE: Sac River is a major watershed of southwestern Missouri. It rises north of Springfield in two main forks and empties into the Osage River just above Osceola. Although the activities at Caplinger Mills on this same Sac River influenced a broader area the following discussion will, for the most part, deal with their impact on Cedar County, Missouri.

Historically, rural mills served as the nucleus around which a community often developed. In the early nineteenth century, there were an estimated 100,000 mills nationwide. In Missouri, with its primitive systems of transportation especially before 1870, mills proliferated. In 1840, there were 690 mills across the state. By 1860, the number had declined to 389, but increased to 840 in 1870 and 872 in 1880. Especially before the Civil War, mill location was dependant on water power. With the establishment of a mill, other industries were encouraged to similarly locate, in part because of their need for the same source of power, and in part because their products or services might be subsidiary to the mill operations, including such industries as blacksmiths, sawmills, cotton gins, distilleries, and breweries.

These mills were traditionally the economic and social focus of the small hamlets or communities which grew around the mill and relied on the mill for its services and access to a developing market economy. The presence of the mill often heralded that transition from a local system which relied heavily on barter and exchange to a wider economic network which tied the community to

¹See appendix.

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a system of supply which extended into neighboring counties and, frequently, into adjacent states. The miller served as important source of the cash required to purchase items not produced by subsistence or semisubsistence farmsteads (Evans: 319-321; and Brownstone: 103).

The Sac River was no exception and during the last century many mills were built along its drainages with the pattern of mill, dam, and bridge having been fairly common. However, most of these structures have succumbed to natural disaster, indifference, vandalism, and progress. Some leave few traces of their existence and remnants of many retain no integrity. Although the mill building at Caplinger Mills was never rebuilt after its last destruction, the massive foundations retain sufficient integrity of association to convey the importance of the mill to local commerce and are an integral component in the district which developed in connection with and dependant on the mill. With the exception of the absent mill, the proposed district has changed little change since 1925. Owen's Mill (below referred to as Crow's Mill) is the only extant milling assemblage in the county with which it can be compared - but it never had a hydro-electric plant and its milling building has also been destroyed.

In December of 1830, soon after Cedar County was carved from several adjoining counties, the first parcel of land was sold to one Joseph Whitman, who did not take up immediate residence. In November of 1832, the English and Graham families emigrated from Ray County, Missouri, to the new county of Cedar. As their route took them along the Osage River and up the west bank of the Sac River on the old Osage Trail, it is probable that they passed near the site of the future Caplinger's Mill (Abbott:6). These families are considered to be the first permanent settlers of record in Cedar County. They built primitive quarters upstream on Sac River and were so isolated that they had to travel sixty miles to Springfield to do their trading and to have their grain milled (Goodspeed:358). By 1835, a mill had been built some twenty or thirty miles to the east, in Polk County, on a fork of the same Sac River.

In July 1837, the John Williams family moved from present day Miller County, Missouri, to the still sparsely populated Cedar County where they settled on Cedar Creek, a tributary of Sac River, three miles to the west of the later Caplinger Mills. Here they built Cedar Mill, a water powered grist mill - the first in Cedar County. There was no other mill in many miles - none west between it and the Indian Territory, where the military post, Ft. Scott was not formally established until 1842 (Williams:14). The mill was described by Abbott as; "...the most widely known public place in all the county." It operated successfully for two years until it was destroyed by flooding.

Following the destruction of his mill by flood, Williams decided that he needed to rebuild in a more secure site for his mill and chose a spot three miles to the east on a promontory on the west bank of the much larger Sac River. The heights would keep him above "bluff-to-bluff" floods and the solid rock streambed would provide a good foundation for his new dam and, therefore, a more stable source of water power. During the years 1840-1842 Williams toiled on a much larger mill and dam.

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The machinery from Cedar Mill that could be recovered and that was fit to be used in another mill was taken to Sac river. The work of building another mill was diligently pushed forward, but, in 1842, when the work was nearing completion, some new men, the Caplingers, came from Tennessee and bought the mill. The Caplingers--there were two or three of them associated together in the ownership of the mill--returned to Tennessee, made preparations for moving and, in the next year, moved to Cedar County. With a large force of labor, they immediately began extensive enlargement of the mill property (Williams:22).

Crow's Mill (a.k.a. Owen's Mill) on Bear Creek, a tributary of Sac River a few miles upstream, commenced operations at about the same time and it is unclear which of the two mills was actually finished first. However, Crow's Mill was a saw mill and it is certain that Caplinger's Mill was the first water powered grist mill in the county on Sac River and that it was a direct outgrowth of the germinal mill on Cedar Creek.

At present, little is known of Williams'/Caplinger's first mill nor of its machinery. It is said that a rubble or "coffer" dam was built (CMBPS:Campbell), but there is no way to know for sure. There is some debate as to whether there was already a small settlement at the new location, but there is no doubt that the future success of the mill was to attract settlers to what was to become Caplinger Mills.

The county of Cedar was not politically organized until early 1845, and the town that was to eventually become Stockton, the county seat of government, was not laid out until a year later. By 1847, meetings were held in the settlement of Caplinger's Mill to form the first school district in the county (Abbott:205).

Caplinger's Mill naturally assumed a great significance in the lives of nearby settlers. Not only was it a place for them to procure cornmeal and flour or to have their own grinding done, it also provided a market for surplus grain at a time when transportation was extremely primitive. There is no doubt that the town of Caplinger Mills lived and died with the fortunes of its mill, the products of which eventually gained area wide fame and drew customers from as far away as Kansas and Colorado (CMBPS:Campbell).

The success of the mill also emphasized the need for improved transportation. Many of the early roads described in the county court records used the mill as a reference point. Caplinger's Mill (possibly not the actual building) had early become the polling place for all of Washington Township and, for people on the east side of the river, the only access to the mill was by low water ford and later by primitive ferry. The situation caused great agitation for a reliable river crossing. In 1851 Samuel Caplinger, then owner of the mill, contracted with the county to build two new bridges, which would have been the first in the county. One of them was to span the river below the dam at Caplinger's Mill. The contract was signed but for some unexplained reason the work was never performed (County Court Records:A:232).

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In 1853, Caplinger's Mill burned and was rebuilt, only to be burned again in 1863 by Jo Shelby's raiders. After the war, Andrew Masters bought the property and put the mill back into operation. "Masters' Mill", as it was known for a time, is the so-called "old mill" often remembered nowadays by locals. The method by which the mill harnessed and delivered the power of the water is unknown, but, according to references to milling in the general area, . . . mortars were superseded by hand-mills, those by horse mills, and the latter by water powered mills propelled by the old fashioned tub wheels (Goodspeed:273).

Tub wheels were a very inefficient precursor of the modern turbine and it is likely that this mill used such a wheel.

In 1893, when the Whinrey family, antebellum millers from Ash Grove, Missouri, acquired the mill, the dam was a log affair constructed of cribs filled with rocks. This dam may have been constructed by Masters who, in 1868, had obtained a Writ of Ad Quod Damnum allowing him to build a ten foot dam "sufficient to run the Machinery of a Grist and Saw Mill" (Circuit Court Records:C:754). The Whinreys soon installed a modern turbine to provide motive power and replaced the old fashioned horizontal millstones (one of which has been discovered in a nearby retaining wall) with roller mill equipment (CMBPS:Campbell).

The people of Caplinger Mills finally got their long deferred bridge in 1895 when the continuing success of the mill and the resultant prosperity of the nearby village led the Cedar County Court to advertise in the preceding year for either a wire (suspension) or iron bridge to span the river below the dam. The Chicago Bridge & Iron Company was the successful bidder and their contract called for a bridge of 405 feet at a price of \$3900. According to the court records:

. . . said bridge shall have good and substantial stone abutments [sic] built from a solid foundation . . . The roadway to be 14 ft in the clear [,] the joist 8 lines 2 1/2 in by 12 in white or burr oak [,] flooring 2 inches thick [,] binders 2x6 white or burr oak . . . approaches to be walled on sides and ends next to water with good and substantial rock walls [,] the bannisters [sic] to be made of good hard pine dressed and said bridge is to be completed and painted in good workman like order . . . (County Court Records:H:257).

This was the first iron bridge in the county and was the only bridge built by the Chicago Bridge and Iron Company during the flurry of bridge construction in the area from 1891 through the early 1900s, when roughly fifty-five bridges, large and small, were erected (Cedar County Republican: 8/7/1919). The Chicago company erected two 140 feet long, pin-connected, Pratt through truss spans, reached on the west side by a queen post deck truss and on the east side by a deck supported by lattice beams projecting from the river bed. The selection of the Pratt truss was unremarkable, since the type was widely preferred because of its strength, uncomplicated design, ease of assembly, and adaptability to a variety of conditions and situations (Jackson: 24). At least five similar bridges were constructed upstream on Sac River, but have been demolished and their locations flooded by the waters of Stockton Lake.

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Caplinger Mills Historic District
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The mill and its associated activities directly produced in Caplinger Mills a center of local commerce. The people who came to town to have their milling done quite logically brought cream and eggs and butter to sell for "cash money" at the stores up town and to obtain what goods they couldn't produce for themselves. Old records and recollections of aged residents vividly relate how shoppers crowded the streets on weekends. There are reports in the Cedar County Republican newspaper of how, at the turn of the century, the stores bought record amounts of eggs. An account of a visit to the village by the editor of the above newspaper in the 1890s, stated that there were two general stores, a hardware store, a drug store, a hotel, three blacksmiths, two doctors and, of course, the mill.

An unintended offshoot of the milling industry was the recreation provided by the waters impounded behind and rushing over the dam, which created a regionally renowned resort and fishing environment. The adjoining park witnessed circuses, wire walkers above the mill pond, baptizings, Memorial Day and Fourth of July celebrations, ice cream suppers, political gatherings, ice skating parties and most anything else one can imagine. Many people brought grain to the mill as an excuse to spend some time fishing or eating the popular meals at the local hotel which had come into existence after Leatha Ann Kennedy (widow of Thomas Caplinger, son of one of the original Caplinger Brothers) and her husband Tom (a local merchant), boarded the engineers overseeing the construction of the bridge.

By 1911, mill owner W.A. (Bunk) Whinrey, an innovative businessman always seeking ways to improve his milling operation, began work to replace the wooden dam. He and his concrete man, Jimmie Boyden, waited until the dry time of the year, then hired help and started building forms to pour a new dam eight feet high and one hundred ninety feet long. The water came up, forcing a hiatus, and it was not until the next year that the dam was completed, a wheelbarrow load at a time (CMBPS:Campbell).

This new dam provided more head pressure and Whinrey began to consider the idea of installing a dynamo in the mill so that he could produce and sell electricity. Materials and machinery must have been hard to procure during World War I, but Whinrey hired an "electrician" from Kansas City to design and install the system. By 1917, the project had come to fruition, and Whinrey was selling power to Caplinger Mills, Humansville, and Flemington, Missouri. The lines were strung across the bridge and down what is to this day known as the "power line road". The dynamo was placed in a shed above the turbine and it was operated by a large belt driven from a split wheel bolted onto the line shaft (CMBPS:Gannaway). There was an auxiliary steam powered generator in Humansville to feed the "grid" when necessary. The system apparently worked well, and Caplinger Mills had street lights and power at a time when, according to contemporary newspaper accounts, the county seat of Stockton had constant power problems, often being without electricity for weeks at a time. During this period there was much talk in Stockton of building a dam and hydro-electric system or of connecting to Whinrey's power, but no action was taken.

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Caplinger Mills Historic District
Cedar County, Missouri

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Whinrey's enterprise supplied power to Caplinger Mills and neighboring rural communities when the number of rural users in Missouri was very small, and his successful operation was very much in advance of more organized efforts. As late as seven years after Whinrey's dynamo was installed, in 1924, only 2,207 farms in the state were electrified; a Committee on the Relation of Electricity of Agriculture, sponsored by the Missouri College of Agriculture and charged with determining the feasibility of bringing electricity to the rural areas of the state, was not formed until 1926 (Blythe: 14).

Sometime between 1917 and 1919, Whinrey decided to raise the dam to a height of ten feet by adding two more feet of concrete to its top. This too was commenced by hand at low water in the summertime. Again, the waters rose and the job was not completed until the next year. In 1919, high water washed around the east end of the dam, causing much damage and increasing the width of the river so much that the dam had to be extended about two hundred feet to the east by building the curved portion of the now existing dam.

At the same time the dam was breached, the east abutment of the bridge was washed out, causing a span to tumble into the water and buckling the adjacent high truss. That this was an important river crossing is affirmed by the fact that within four days the County Court had, from the Pioneer Bridge Company of Kansas City, a signed contract to repair the bridge. The November 20, 1919, Cedar County Republican applauded the quick action stating that: "...No bridge in the county is used more each day than this one except the one east of Stockton [the county seat]." However, within a few months it became apparent that the integrity of the new east abutment was being compromised. An engineer for the Pioneer Bridge Company was called in, but, before repairs could be effected, the river washed out the east end of the curved dam, bringing down the new span. This time the river channel was so widened that two spans were required to make the bridge serviceable.

Whinrey must have tired of the headaches, expenses, and litigation involved with the production of electricity because, in 1925, he sold the dam and power rights to L.K. Green of the West Missouri Light and Power Company, which already had plants in Clinton and Pleasant Hill, Missouri. Green built a power house into the east end of the dam and began to produce power, at which time the grist mill switched to the use of electricity to operate its machinery. It appears that Green formed the Ozark Utilities Company, bought other plants and eventually provided power for the counties of Cedar, St. Clair, Polk, Dade, and Barton. Much of rural Missouri still remained without electric power during this period. Four years later, only 4.7 percent of the state's farms were electrified (Blythe: 14). The Empire Electric Company, which is still a producer of electricity, was the final operator of the plant.

Meanwhile, the vitality of the town of Caplinger Mills was such that, even after a six week period in 1929 when the stock market crashed, the bank was forced to close its doors and the only hotel burned, the town continued to survive. When the lone remaining general store burned in 1941, it was described by the Cedar County Republican as the largest general store in the county, and it was immediately rebuilt. This vitality can only be attributed to the activities of and around the mill and to the richness of the

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surrounding bottomland which provided "grist" for the mill. Unfortunately, the mill burned in 1947, was rebuilt as a "fire proof" building, and then burned again in 1953, not to be replaced. The power plant (then owned by Empire Electric) closed soon thereafter.

The final destruction of the mill in 1953 began the inevitable decline of the one industry village of Caplinger Mills but, down on the river, the aesthetic atmosphere remains and the area continues to be a favorite recreational venue. Its small riverside park (which formerly belonged to the local power company) is often filled with campers and fishermen who make their pilgrimages to enjoy fishing and water sports in this appealing and historic setting. Locals show a fierce pride and love for Caplinger Mills, as is evidenced by their total cooperation in the research for this nomination, and their devotion is further demonstrated by the formation of the "Caplinger Mills Bridge Preservation Society" as an agent in the successful acquisition of the old powerhouse, dam, and park. The fundraising activities of the Society have helped finance the preparation of this document and the goal of the Society is to protect and preserve this historic locale.

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APPENDIX

Caplinger Mills was known as Sacville until around the turn of the century and for years afterward the two names were used interchangeably. To avoid confusion in this document the name Caplinger Mills is used in all references to the village. The name Caplinger's Mill refers to the actual mill. For the sake of clarity, a short chronology follows:

- 1837 John G. Williams builds grist mill on Cedar Creek.
- 1840 Mill washes out and Williams buys mill site on Sac River and begins construction of new mill.
- 1842 Williams sells nearly completed mill to Caplinger Brothers who put it into operation.
- 1853 Mill burns.
- 1863 Shelby's Raiders burn mill during Civil War.
- 1866 Mill property sells at public auction to Andrew Masters who rebuilds mill.
- 1868 County Court gives permission for Andrew Masters and J.P. Tracy to build a 10 foot dam to operate a grist mill and saw mill.
- 1873 Sacville Flouring and Saw Milling Association is formed. Capital to be \$10,000.
- 1882 Sacville Mill Company is formed.
- 1893 Sacville Mill Company sells 1/4 interest in mill to Joseph H. Whinrey, 1/4 interest to William A. Whinrey and 1/2 interest to George S. Likens.
- 1895 Chicago Bridge Co. builds iron bridge of four spans.
- 1908 W.A. Whinrey is now sole owner of mill.
- 1911-1912 Whinrey replaces old log dam with concrete structure.
- 1917 W.A. Whinrey enters into an agreement with W.H. Mathis of Humansville to produce electricity in the mill.
- 1919 Retaining wall gives way and washes out east end of bridge. Pioneer Construction Co. of Kansas City repairs bridge. Whinrey builds curved dam to repair damage to the straight dam.
- 1920 Dam goes out and again takes down east end of bridge. Bridge is repaired and a span is added.
- 1925 Ozark Utilities Co. builds a powerhouse on the east side of the river.
- 1947 Mill burns and modern mill is built.
- 1953 Mill burns again and is not replaced.
- 1953-54 Empire Electric closes power plant.
- 1989 THE CAPLINGER MILLS BRIDGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY, INC acquires dam, park and powerhouse.

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Caplinger Mills Historic District
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**Caplinger Mills Historic District
Cedar County, Missouri**

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Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary of the Caplinger Mills Historic District is indicated as the heavy black line on the enclosed map entitled "Caplinger Mills Historic District on Sac River at Caplinger Mills, Cedar County, Missouri," approximate scale 1"=55'.

Boundary Justification: The boundary for the Caplinger Mills Historic District is drawn to include only the foundations of the mill and those structures most closely associated with the mill and its commerce and which were dependant on the mill during its period of greatest significance: the 1895 bridge, the 1911 dam and its historic extensions, and the 1925 power house. Recent construction and development south and west of the mill site and dam has been excluded.

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Caplinger Mills Historic District
Cedar County, Missouri

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Editor, items 1-11

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The following information is the same for all photographs, unless noted:

Caplinger Mills Historic District
Caplinger Mills, Cedar County, MO
Bob Estes
1989
Caplinger Mills Bridge Preservation Society
P.O. Box 183
Stockton, MO 65785

- #1. date of photo: 1979
aerial view, view from north
1 of 15
- #2. bridge, dam, and power house, view from northwest
2 of 15
- #3. bridge, dam, and power house, view from west
3 of 15
- #4. bridge, dam, and mill foundation, view from east
4 of 15
- #5. dam and mill foundation, view from northeast
5 of 15
- #6. bridge, view from west
6 of 15
- #7. bridge and power house, view from east
7 of 15
- #8. detail of bridge pin connection
8 of 15
- #9. mill foundation and turbine, view from northeast
9 of 15
- #10. power house control gates, view from southeast
10 of 15
- #11. bridge finials, view from west
11 of 15
- #12. power house, view from southwest
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Caplinger Mills Historic District
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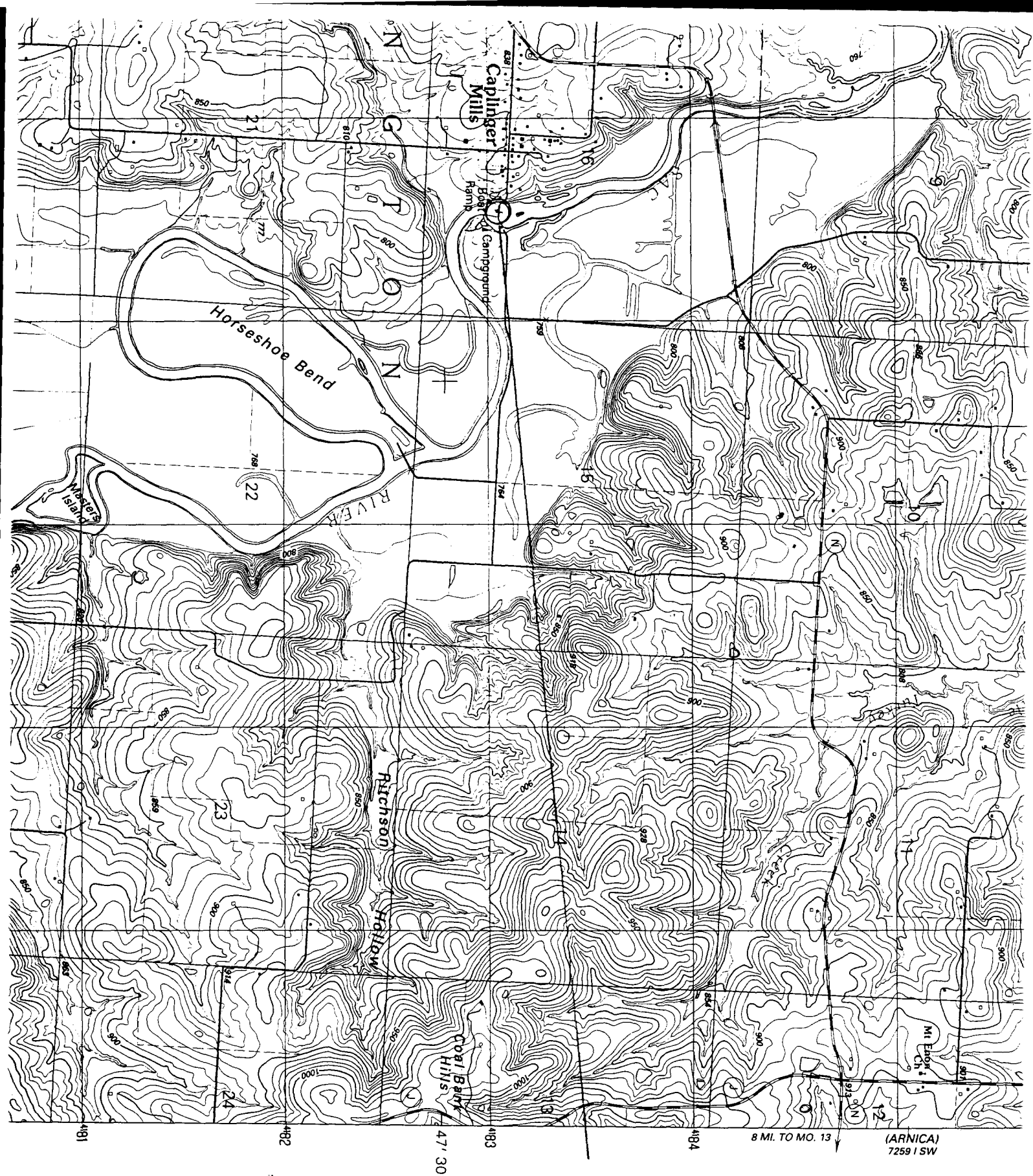
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- #13. Steven Mitchell
April 23, 1993
Missouri Cultural Resources Inventory
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65101
mill foundation and noncontributing building, view from northeast
13 of 15

- #14. Steven Mitchell
April 23, 1993
Missouri Cultural Resources Inventory
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65101
noncontributing building and mill foundation, view from southeast
14 of 15

- #15. unknown
date unknown
historic mill and dam, view from northeast
15 of 15

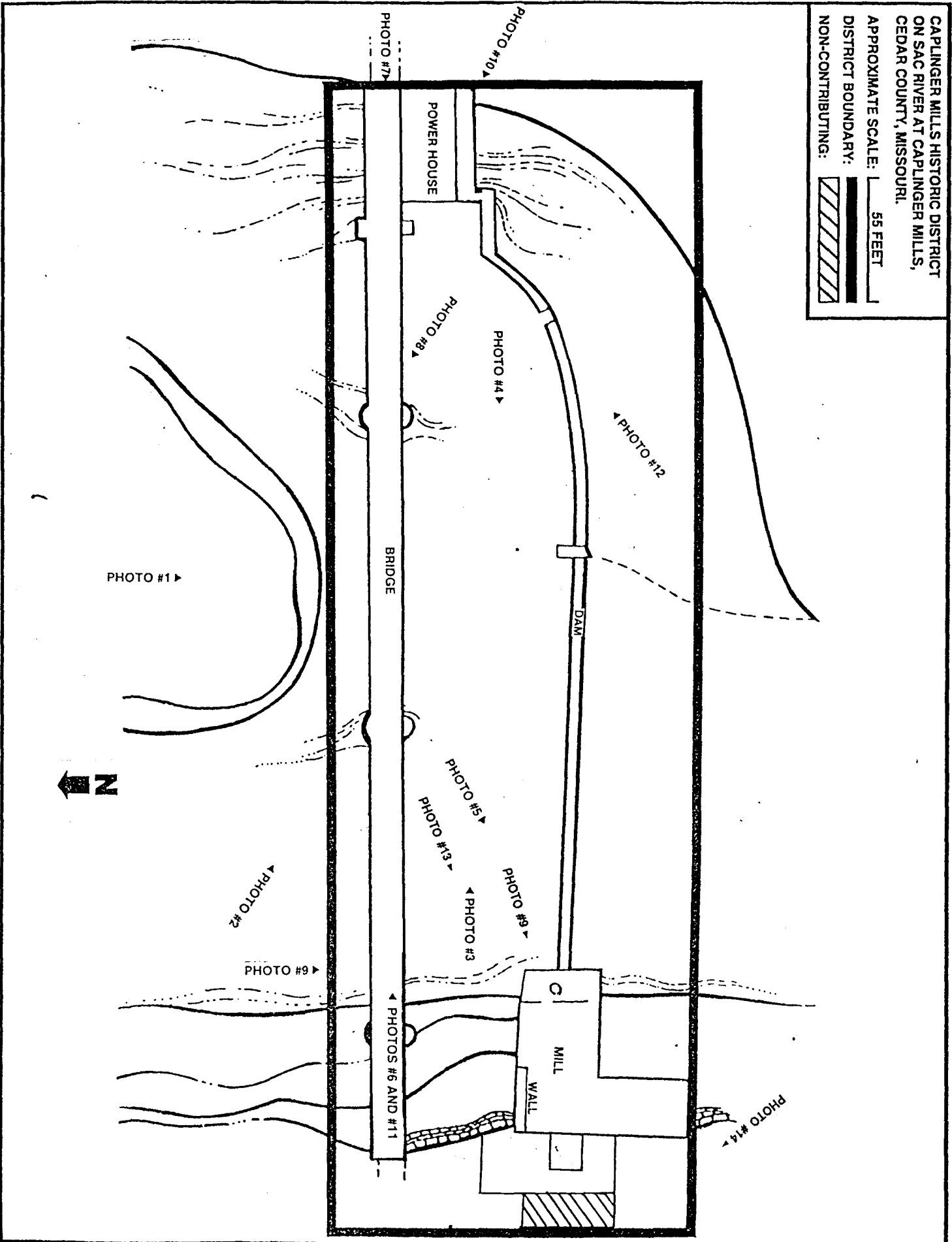
Note: All photos dated 1989 and earlier were field checked April 1993.



CAPLINGER MILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT
 junction of Washington Ave. and Sac River
 Caplinger Mills, Cedar County, mo
 15/429060 / 4183460

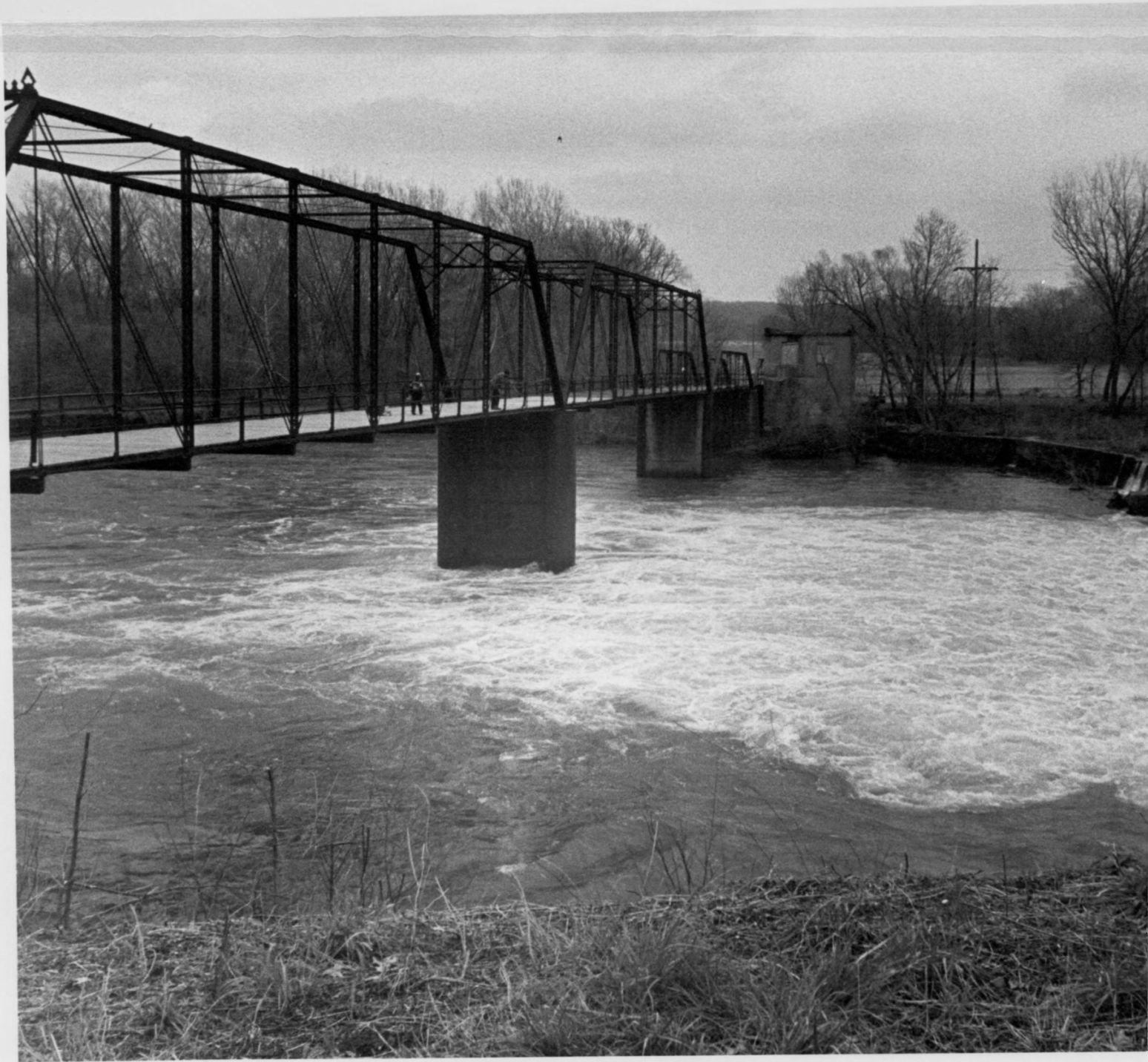
CAPLINGER MILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT
ON SAC RIVER AT CAPLINGER MILLS,
CEDAR COUNTY, MISSOURI.

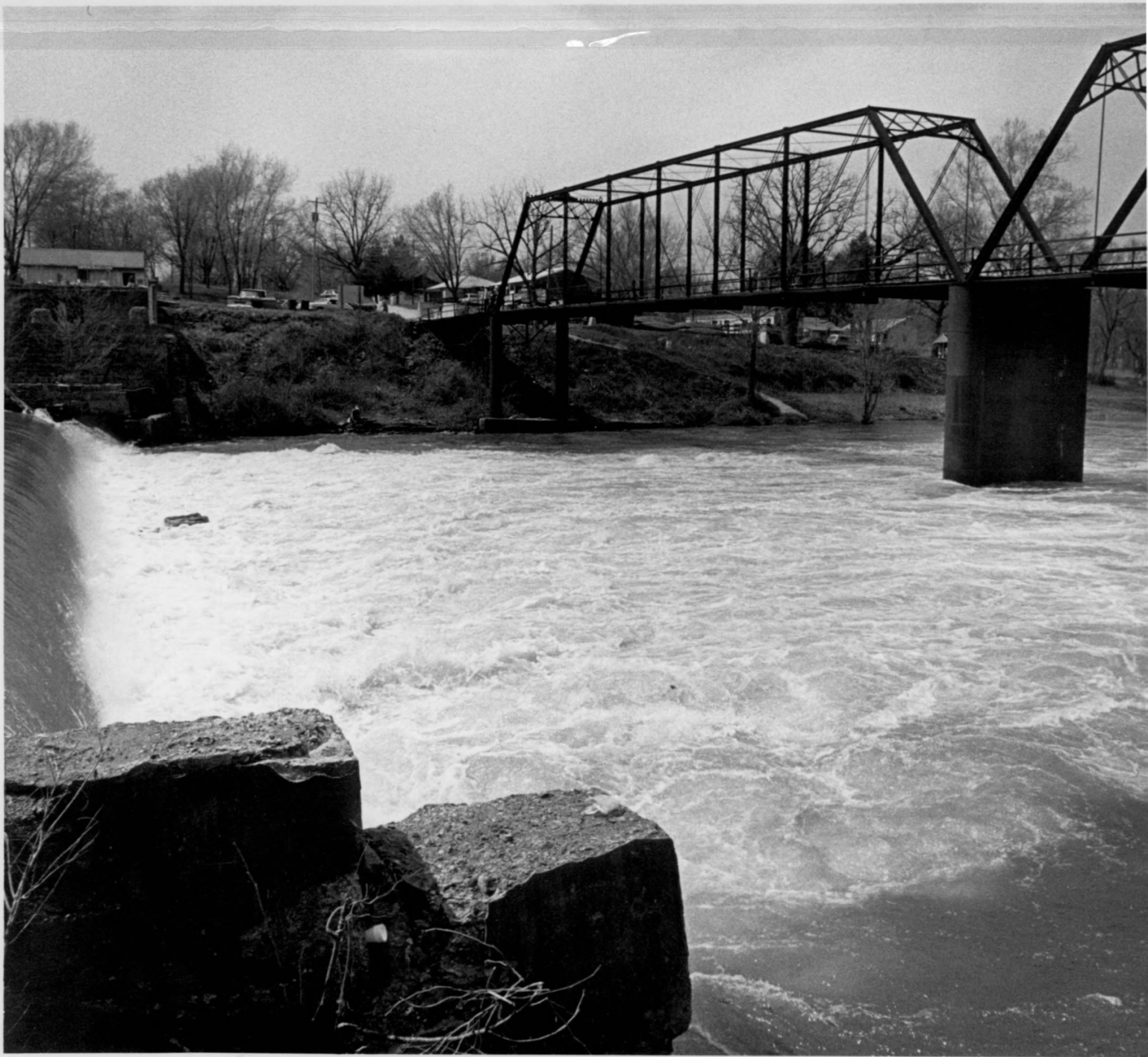
APPROXIMATE SCALE: 55 FEET
DISTRICT BOUNDARY:
NON-CONTRIBUTING:







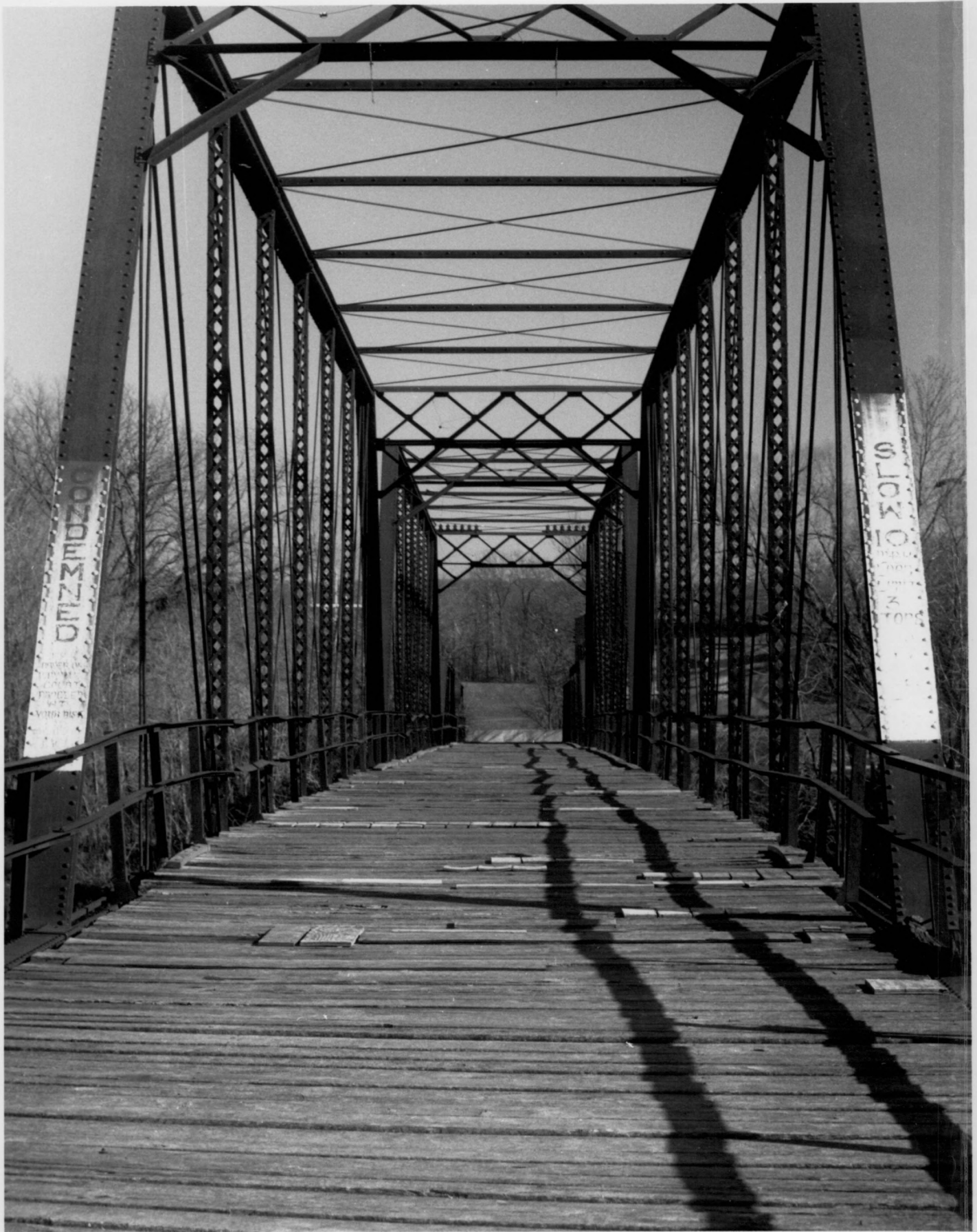






RIVER STAGE
ABOVE
NORMAL

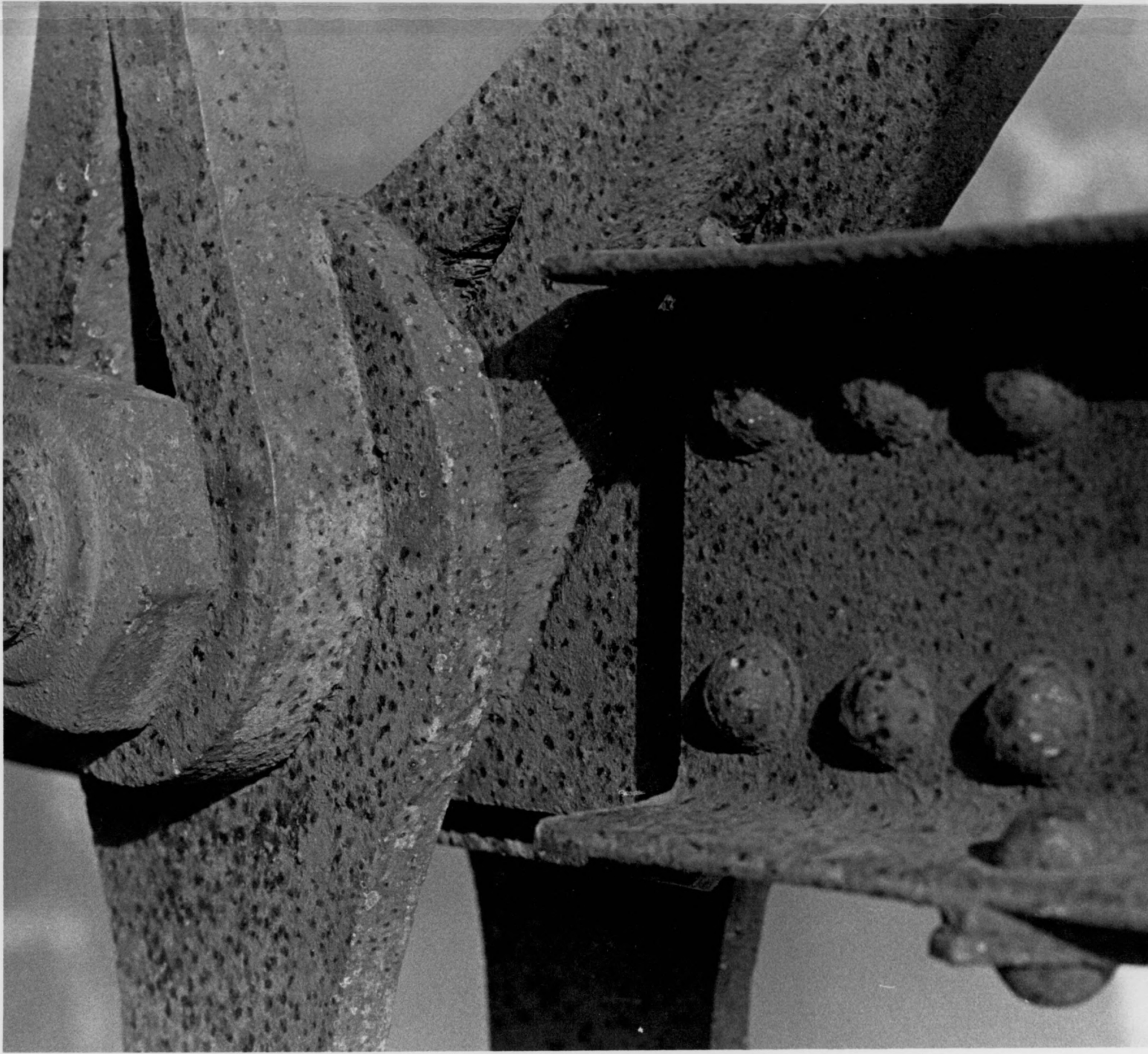
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DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
BRIDGE NO. 1000
AT WOODRIDGE

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS
BRIDGE NO. 1000
AT WOODRIDGE



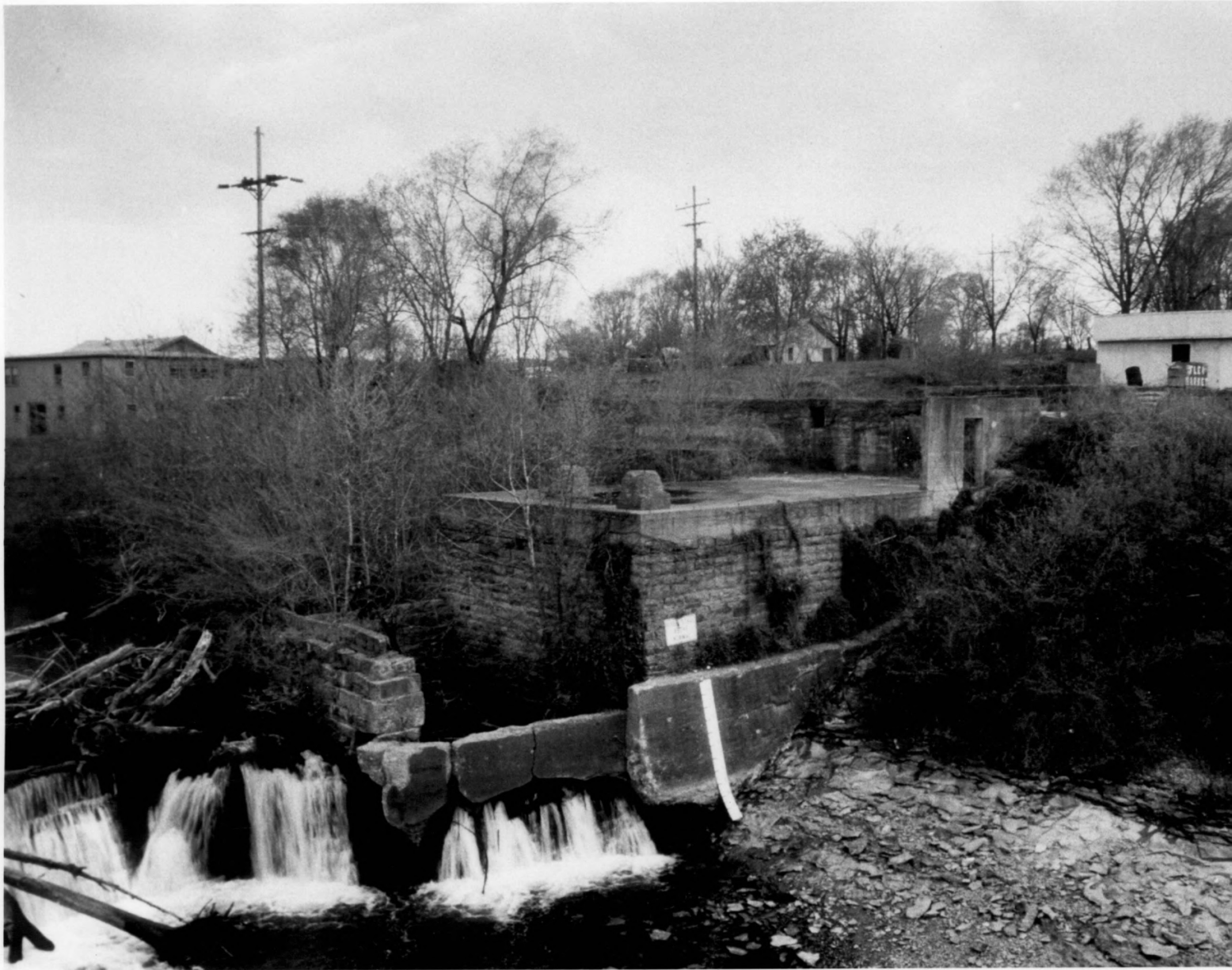
















EXTRA
PHOTOS









