

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

THE BURNSIDE BRIDGE

ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD SITE

April 1964 - May

001063

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HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART B

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA SECTION

HISTORICAL DATA SECTION

ON

THE BURNSIDE BRIDGE

Antietam National Battlefield Site

A P P R O V A L S H E E T

RECOMMENDED

Harold L. Sessom Date 5/8/64
Superintendent

Robert E. Smith Date 5/27/64
Chief, EQDC Dr. L. Benson
arch.

Donald F. Lee Date 5/28/64
Regional Director, Northeast Region

APPROVED

E. J. Jensen Date 7/21/64
Director

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
PART I
ADMINISTRATIVE DATA SECTION
ON
THE BURNSIDE BRIDGE
Antietam National Battlefield Site

Prepared by
Harold I. Lessem
Superintendent
May 1964

PART I .

3. Administrative Data

a. Burnside Bridge

- b. Since the Bridge will function primarily as an "exhibit in place", its basic use will be interpretive. In addition it will serve as an authentic landmark on the historic scene.

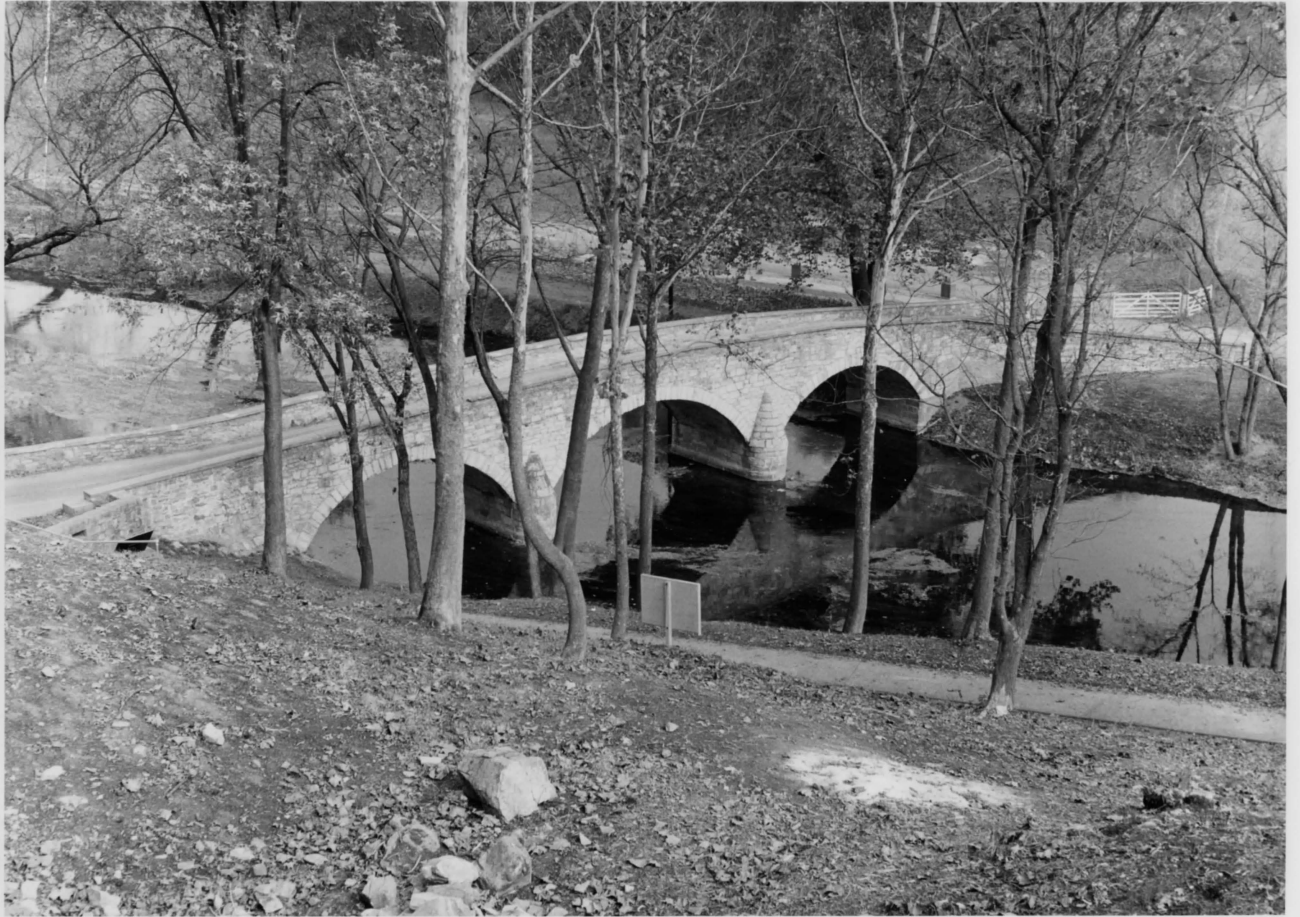
- c. To understand the Battle of Antietam tactically speaking, it is necessary to comprehend and appreciate what occurred at the Bridge on the morning of September 17, 1862.

McClellan's plan called for General Burnside's Corps to cross the Antietam, roll up the numerically weak right flank of the Confederate line and advance into Sharpsburg. If promptly executed this man would have deprived Lee of his only practical escape route to the Potomac. Burnside's failure to seize the Bridge until one o'clock not only upset McClellan's excellent plans but decisively affected the outcome of this bloody, bitterly fought engagement.

The Bridge, when studied in relation to the terrain on both banks of the Creek, demonstrates clearly and graphically why initial Union efforts to seize the structure failed. It is thus a valuable interpretive device. In addition it provides an authentic element to the historic scene which the Site is restoring and perpetuating.

- d. The Burnside Bridge will be operated exclusively by the Government. Interpretive personnel will normally not be required. A walk will conduct visitors from the overlook parking lot on the west side of the Creek to the structure. Interpretive panels and a message repeater at the overlook will relate the story. In addition, several permanent panels will be installed near the east end of the Bridge.
- f. The Bridge will more closely approximate its 1862 appearance when the proposed construction activity is completed. This project calls for repointing the masonry, elevating the parapet terminals, and substituting wood planking for the current concrete cover over the side walls.
- g. It is estimated that this work will cost \$10,700.00.

h.



Burnside Bridge

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

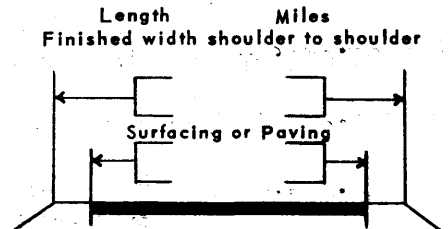
PROJECT CONSTRUCTION PROPOSAL

1. Statement of requirements, proposed work and construction data, justification, etc. (Use additional sheets as necessary.)

The purpose of this project is two fold:

1. Rehabilitation
2. Restoration

The Burnside Bridge is an extremely significant landmark on the Antietam Battlefield. It is proposed to repoint all joints and to stabilize the piers and abutments. The concrete coping on the walls of the structure will be removed and replaced with wooden members, thus restoring the bridge to its original appearance.



2. Land Status (if Govt.-owned, what agency), Water Rights, Research, Etc.

Government-owned

PCP Data Prepared by (Name, Title & Date) <u>A. W. Franzen</u> <u>1/23/64</u> Architect, EODC		4. Cross-reference PCP's to this Project: R-6-4 PCP numbers of previously completed portions: M-22-2	6. CLASS <u>B</u> ESTIMATE Construction..... \$ 8,900.00 Plans, Surveys, & Supervision..... 1,270.00 Contingencies..... 530.00 SUB TOTAL 10,700.00 Exhibits, Audio-Visual Installations, etc..... GRAND TOTAL \$ 10,700.00
		5. Construction by: Day Labor ☒ Contract ☐ Work supervised by: Park ☐ Reg. ☐ Design Office ☒	
		7. DISTRIBUTION OF COPIES	
		8. Recommended by Park Office (Signature, title, date) Harold I. Lessem, Superintendent 2/5/64	
		9. Approved by Regional Office (Signature, title, date) M. B. Christenson 2/26/64	
10. Reviewed by D&C Field Office (Signature, Title, Date) Wincent N. Mauro, Project Control Officer, EODC, 3/18/64			
11. Location within Area or Termini Over Antietam Creek		12. Master Plan No.	13. Bldg. or Rt. # and Sec.
14. Region Northeast	15. Park Antietam National Battlefield Site		
16. Project Rehabilitate Burnside Bridge		Washington (County) Maryland (State)	17. PCP Index No. B-9-1 18. P. S. & S. by BPR ☐ NPS ☒

CLASS ☐ (A) - Estimate based on working drawings
 CLASS ☒ (B) - Estimate based on preliminary plans
 CLASS ☐ (C) - Estimate based on similar facilities in other parks

ESTIMATE

Item	Quantity	Cost
Repointing	7,590 sq. ft.	3,250.00
Foundation work		4,620.00
Replace existing concrete coping with wood	380 lin. ft.	1,030.00
Estimate Totals		
Construction.....		\$ 8,900.00
Plans, Surveys, and Supervision.....		\$ 1,270.00
Contingencies.....		\$ 530.00
SUB TOTAL		\$ 10,700.00
Exhibits, Aud.-Vis.		\$
Installations, Etc.....		\$
GRAND TOTAL		\$ 10,700.00

Historical Data Section

Apart from the crucial role it played in the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, little is actually known of the Burnside Bridge. There is a dearth of primary or secondary material on both the structure and its designer-builder, John Weaver (sometimes spelled Wever).

In 1833 the Washington County Commissioners appointed a committee for "viewing the site of a bridge over the Antietam on the Sharpsburg and Maple Swamp road." Having selected a location, a \$2,300.00 contract was issued to "John Wever, bridge-builder, to build the same of stone, with width 12 feet in the clear" The date of this contract is unknown, but it is abundantly clear that Wever completed the contract in 1836.

Although now 128 years old, the Bridge has undergone relatively few changes. Shortly after the Civil War the ends of the parapets were squared to receive various forms of monumentation. These stone commemorative objects were removed in 1963. The only other alteration of importance was the replacement of the wood plank coping over the parapet walls by a layer of concrete. Economy no doubt dictated this substitution.

The Burnside Bridge remained in county ownership until November 1933 when it was deeded to the United States of America for the princely sum of \$1.00.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
PART I
ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION
ON
THE BURNSIDE BRIDGE
Antietam National Battlefield Site

Prepared by
Archie W. Franzen
Architect
April 1964

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION

ON

THE BURNSIDE BRIDGE

Antietam National Battlefield Site

A P P R O V A L S H E E T

RECOMMENDED

Superintendent Date _____

Robert S. Hall
Chief, EODC Date 4-15-64

Paul J. Lee
Regional Director, Northeast Region Date 5/28/64

APPROVED

Director Date _____

SURVEY REPORT FOR THE BURNSIDE BRIDGE

General

The Washington County Commissioners, early in the nineteenth century, appointed committees to select sites for bridges to span Antietam Creek. This resulted in some fourteen bridges being erected over a period of forty years starting in 1823. Various builders were employed among whom were the Lloyds, Silas Harry, Charles Wilson, W. H. Eierly and George and John Wever (sometimes spelled Weaver). Most of these bridges still remain attesting to the craftsmanship employed.

The Burnside Bridge, known before the Civil War as "Rohrback's Bridge", crosses Antietam Creek in an east and west direction within the Antietam National Battlefield Site. It was built in 1836 by John Wever who was also the builder of four other bridges of similar character spanning the Antietam. All are of faced rubble masonry, graceful in design, narrow according to today's requirements and vary in the number of piers used as the creek varies in width depending upon the topography of the sites. The roadbeds in all cases rise toward the longitudinal center of the bridges to provide proper drainage. In most cases, as at Antietam, the roads were constructed parallel to the stream flow.

At the Burnside Bridge the close proximity of the hill on the east forced the road to enter upon the bridge at an angle which

made it necessary to widen the approach by splaying the northeast parapet and its supporting abutment. The other end approach was similarly treated by splaying the southwest parapet and abutment. The clear width of the roadbed is 13'-4".

The parapets are waist high and during the Civil War had wood copings that were sloped to shed rain and snow into the stream. These were made of boards of varying widths run transversely to the parapet length and nailed to three rows of concealed timbers running lengthwise with the parapet. An apron scantling made the closure between the coping and the masonry on both sides of each parapet. The ends of the parapets were terminated in a simple manner and did not have the square piers now in place. These latter were added for supporting commemorative pieces following the war.

The bridge has three elliptical arch spans supported by the abutments and two six foot wide piers rising from the stream bed. The central span is 35'-6" clear between piers and the spans on either side measure 30'-0". The piers are deeper than the bridge width as they are rounded out past the spandrel and arch faces, from the spring line of the arches down to their bases, to ease floating debris past the piers. They are terminated at the top with stone laid up to form conical caps melding with the spandrel faces. The voussoirs of the elliptical arches were of a common height and a keystone as such was not employed.

Work To Be Accomplished

In 1955 the Service contracted for extensive repairs, of a stabilizing nature, to insure the load carrying capacity of the structure. No restoration practices were employed. The stone work was repointed using plain Portland cement which robs the masonry of the period appearance that is desirable. As the bridge has carried considerable traffic, up to the present work on the by-pass road, it was not feasible to reconstruct the wood coping at that time.

It is now planned to rake the stone joints and point with a mortar of appropriate color and texture. Samples of mortar should be obtained from the Hitt or "Upper Bridge" as this bridge was also constructed by John Wever and does not appear to have been worked over as extensively as the Burnside Bridge. It is located on the Antietam near Keedysville, Maryland not too far from Sharpsburg.

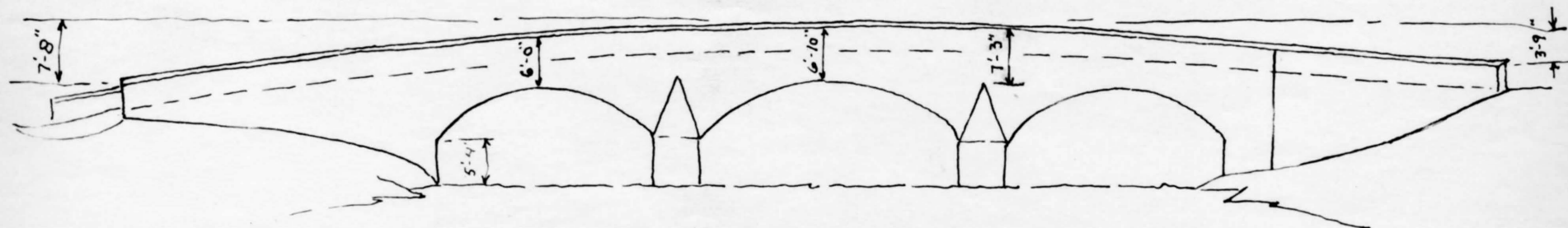
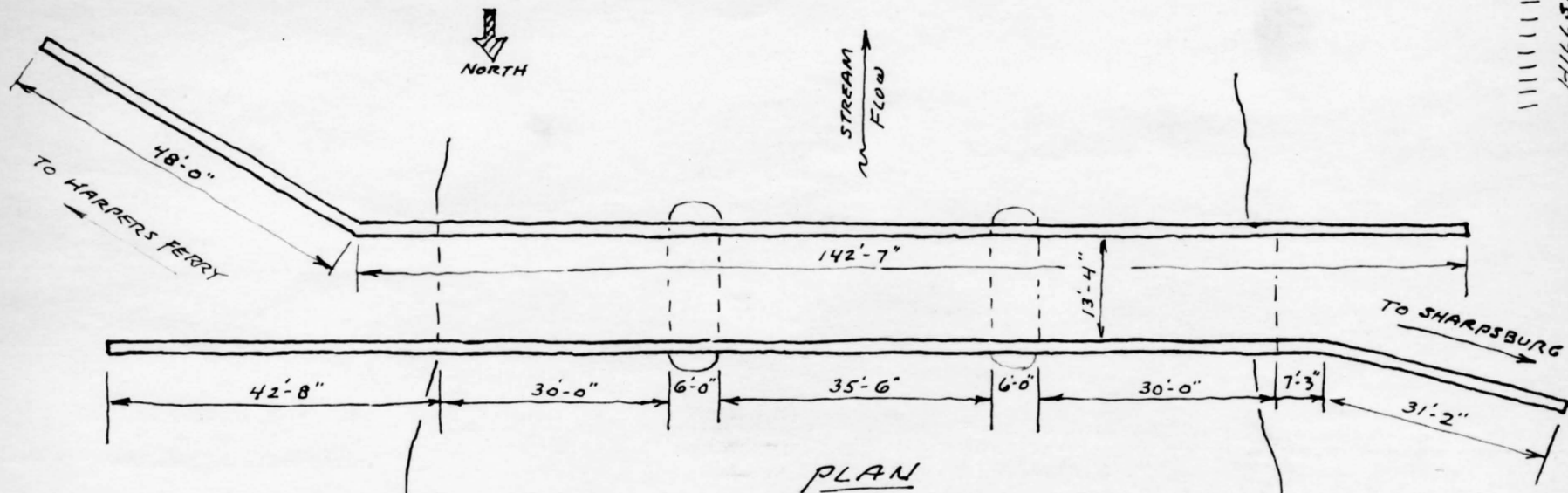
The accompanying sketches give general measurements taken recently of the Burnside Bridge as well as a detail of the wood coping for the parapets. Also attached are copies of Park photographs that show the wood coping and the simple terminations of the stone parapets.

(3)

SKETCHES

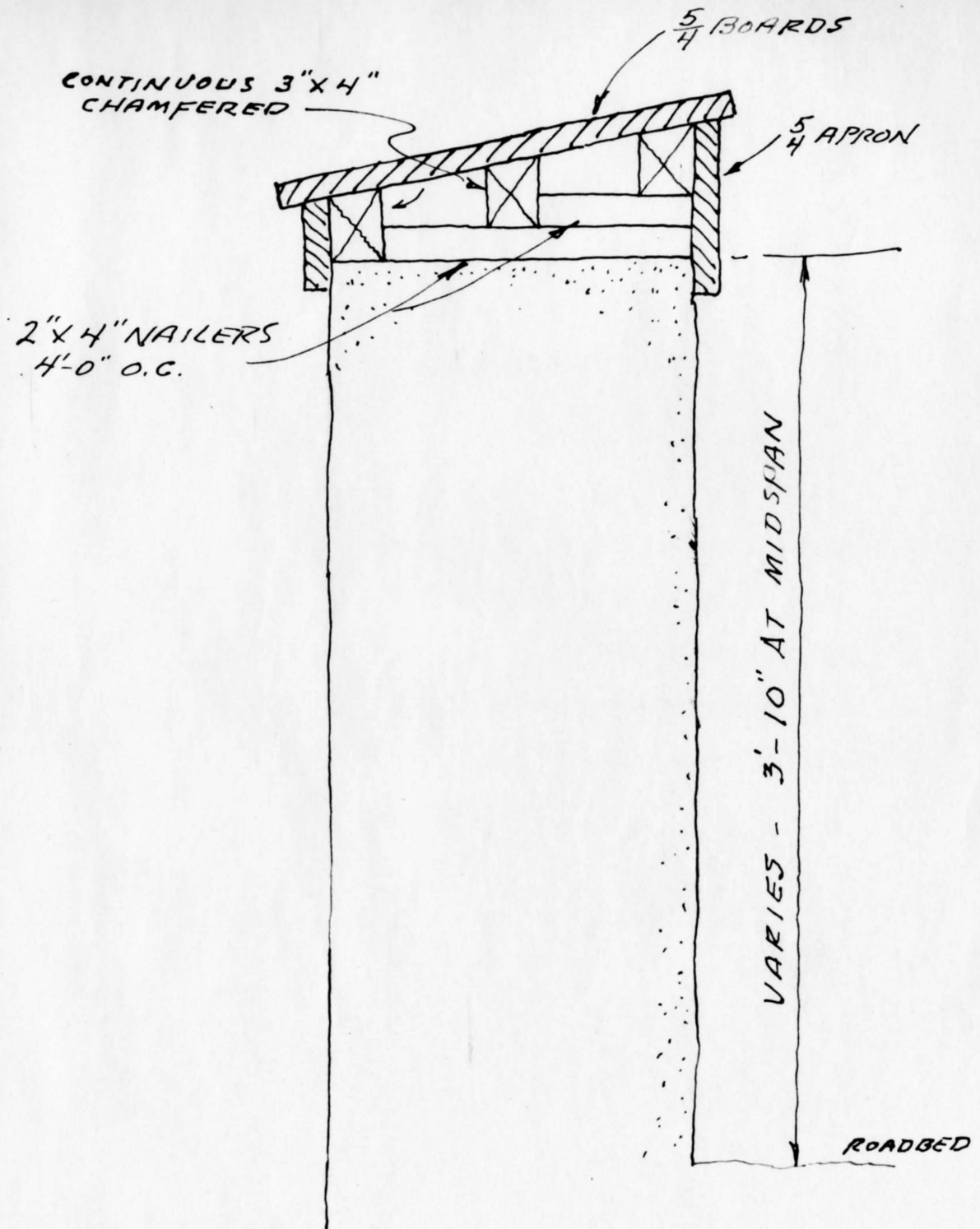
The following two sketches were prepared to show dimensional data taken at the site and to include a detail for the parapet construction.

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BURNSIDE BRIDGE

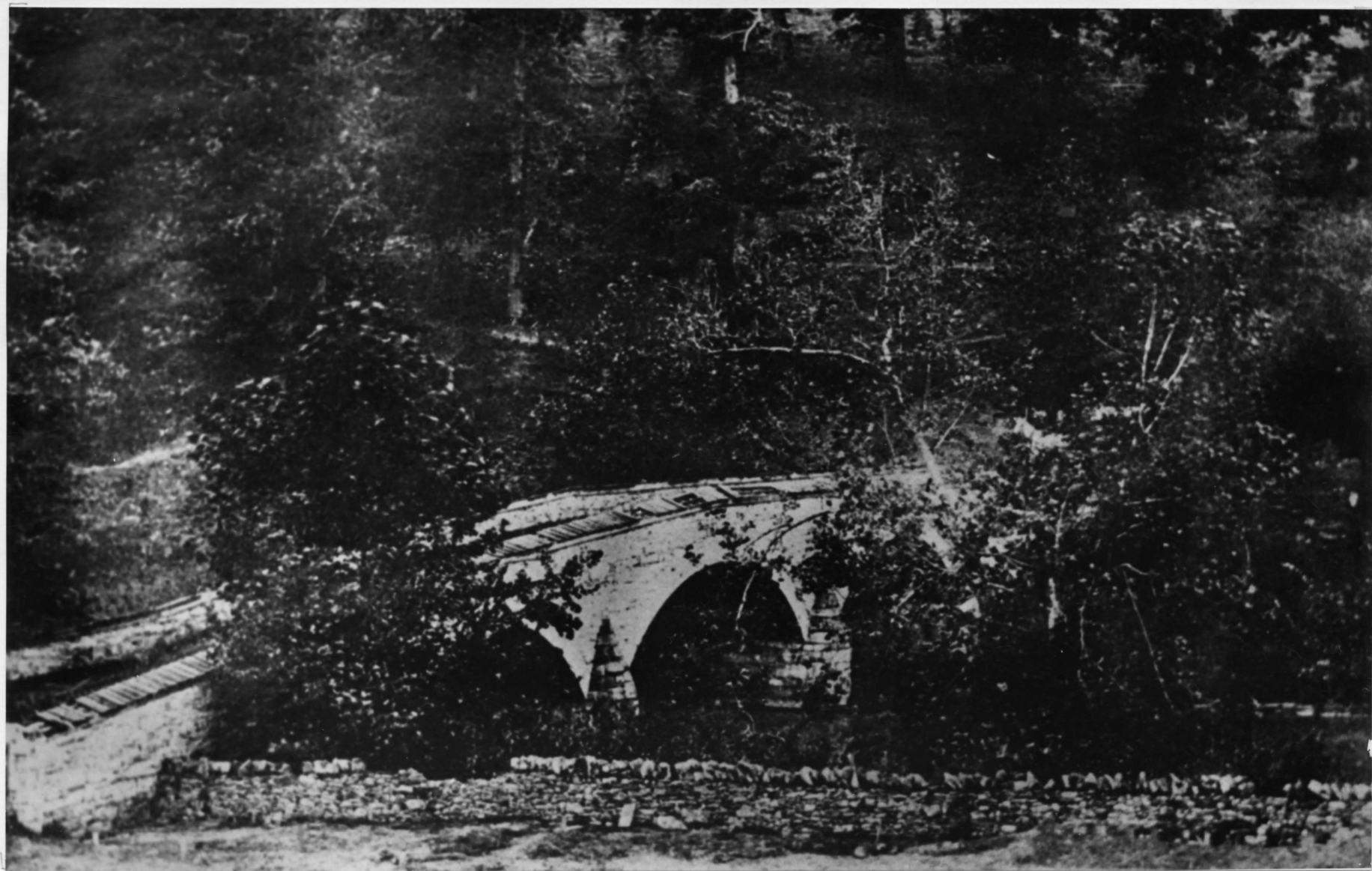
|||||
HILLSIDE
NEW OVERLOOK
ON CREST



PARAPET COPING DETAIL

PHOTOGRAPHS

The following two photographs are reproduced from photographs on file at the ANES headquarters. One shows the Burnside Bridge, probably shortly after the battle, with portions of the parapet fabric exposed. The other, later photograph, gives an indication of how the wood parapet, now lacking, would improve the period appearance of the structure.





A35- Burnside
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