State Level Historic Documentation Report

State Project No. S314-28-22.27
Federal Project No. BR-0028(058)D

John Blue Bridge
Hampshire County

Prepared by:

Randy Epperly, Historian
Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
Engineering Division
Environmental Section

May 22, 2018
STATE LEVEL HISTORIC DOCUMENTATION
JOHN BLUE BRIDGE

Location: WV Route 28, Spanning South Branch Potomac River
Hampshire County
West Virginia
USGS Springfield Quadrangle

Date of Construction: 1936

Builder: Fort Pitt Bridge Works

Present Owner: West Virginia Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, Building 5, Room A-110
Charleston, WV 25305

Present Use: Vehicular Bridge

Significance: John Blue Bridge is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as a good example of a truss bridge and its association with a known builder, Fort Pitt Bridge Works. John Blue Bridge was formerly known as Grace Bridge and is listed on the 1990 Final List of Historic Bridges in WV.

Project Information: The project has been undertaken due to its poor condition and deficiencies of the structure. The project will provide a new bridge crossing the South Branch Potomac River. The existing bridge is posted for weight limits and trucks and buses must cross one at a time. The existing bridge warrants replacement. The documentation was undertaken in May 2018 in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, West Virginia Department of Transportation, and West State Historic Preservation Office. The bridge is scheduled to be replaced in 2020.

Original bridge plans are attached.

Randy Epperly, Historian
West Virginia Division of Highways
Charleston, WV 25305
May 22, 2018
John Blue Bridge, formerly the Grace Bridge, is located on WV Route 28 in Hampshire County, spanning the South Branch of the Potomac River in the Blues Beach area. The bridge consists of steel riveted pony trusses for the end spans and the main span is a steel riveted through truss. It is supported by two concrete abutments and two rectangular concrete piers. The overall length is 419 feet 6 inches and the overall width is 25 feet 2 inches. The Average Daily Traffic in 2015 was 3,054 Vehicles Per Day. The bridge was built in 1936 by Fort Pitt Bridge Works. The bridge was constructed as a replacement to a flood damaged bridge.

John Blue Bridge is listed on the 1990 Final List of Historic Bridges in WV under the name Grace Bridge, with a rating of 32. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its engineering significance (good example of a truss bridge) and its association with an important bridge builder, Fort Pitt Bridge Works.

The bridge is showing many signs of deterioration and contains fracture critical members. It is posted for weight limits and trucks and buses must cross one at a time. The steel superstructure contains heavy section loss, portal members have been damaged by vehicles, and both abutments show cracking and heavy deterioration. The concrete deck is cracking, the piers have underwater deterioration, and several steel members have been bent and twisted due to high water damage (WVDOH, 2017).

Camp Washington was built in 1861 by the Union on Washington Bottom Farm, home to ancestors of George Washington who surveyed the area. The camp was located near the Wire Bridge (located in the vicinity of the John Blue Bridge) and was used to secure the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The camp was later occupied by the Confederacy after the Union forces withdrew (Civil War Trails). In 1861 the Wire Bridge Engagement occurred as Union General Benjamin Kelly attempted to march from Keyser to Romney in order to occupy the town. Kelly was to attack from the west while Colonel Thomas Johns attacked from the north. Johns encountered enemy troops at the Wire Bridge and during the battle Johns’ troops had to take cover behind the bridge parapets. Johns withdrew to Maryland when he heard Kelly’s troops entering Romney. The Union took control of Romney for nearly 3 months before retreating over the Wire Bridge into Maryland as Stonewall Jackson arrived reinforcing the Confederacy (Civil War Trails).

The Wire Bridge was destroyed during the war. It would be rebuilt, and then demolished 2 more times before the current bridge was built. The bridge was named for John Blue, one of the first settlers in the area. He came to the area around 1725 and owned land where present day WV 28 is located (WV Legislature, 2003).

WV Route 28 roughly follows the alignment of the Moorefield and North Branch Turnpike, chartered in 1847. The turnpike crossed the river near the location of the current John Blue Bridge, but no remnants of the turnpike remain (Moorefield and North Branch Turnpike).

Fort Pitt Bridge Works was founded in 1896 and eventually sold in 1986 (Fort Pitt Bridge Works). Fort Pitt Bridge Works is known for its steel fabrications for bridges and steel used in both World Wars (Barnes, 2006). The company’s steel was also used for post offices, hospitals, schools, etc. (Mounts, 2006).
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Civil War Trails, West Virginia. Kiosk located along WV Route 28.

Fort Pitt Bridge Works, Pittsburgh, Pa., Records 1886-1949, AIS 1963.27, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.

Moorefield & North Branch Turnpike. Turnpike Files. West Virginia Division of Highways, Engineering Division. Charleston, WV.


John Blue Bridge  
WV Route 28  
South Branch Potomac River  
Hampshire County, West Virginia

Photographer: Randy Epperly  
October 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JOHN BLUE BRIDGE-1</td>
<td>View of John Blue Bridge looking south.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN BLUE BRIDGE-2</td>
<td>View of John Blue Bridge looking south.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN BLUE BRIDGE-3</td>
<td>View of John Blue Bridge looking north.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN BLUE BRIDGE-4</td>
<td>View of John Blue Bridge from riverbank looking southwest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN BLUE BRIDGE-5</td>
<td>View of bridge plate on northern end of the bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN BLUE BRIDGE-6</td>
<td>View of bridge plate on southern end of the bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN BLUE BRIDGE-7</td>
<td>View of through truss looking north.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN BLUE BRIDGE-8</td>
<td>View of pony truss approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN BLUE BRIDGE-9</td>
<td>View of bridge pier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN BLUE BRIDGE-10</td>
<td>View of bridge abutment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN BLUE BRIDGE-11</td>
<td>View of underside of bridge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Photo #5

1936
FORT Pitt BRIDGE WORKS
PITTSBURGH, PA.

Photo #6

W.P.H.   R.I.B.   D.
1936
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
BRIDGE  NO.1265
MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
BY AND AMONG
THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION,
THE WEST VIRGINIA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER
AND THE WEST VIRGINIA DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOHN BLUE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
PROJECT
STATE PROJECT #S314-28-22.27
FEDERAL PROJECT #STP-0028(060)D
HAMPShIRE COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
NOVEMBER 2017

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDODH), proposes to replace the John Blue Bridge, hereinafter referred to as the Project. The project will replace the existing bridge with a new bridge upstream and demolish the existing bridge; and

WHEREAS, the FHWA has determined that the Project will have an adverse effect upon the John Blue Bridge, a property eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); and

WHEREAS, the FHWA has consulted with the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer (WVSHPPO) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800 Implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; (16 U.S.C. 470f); and

WHEREAS, the FHWA has determined that the Project will not affect archaeological properties with WVSHPPO concurrence in a letter dated July 26, 2017; and

WHEREAS, The WVDODH has contacted the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, Historic Hampshire County, Seneca Nation of Indians, Pemunkey Indian Tribe, Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma, Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the Delaware Nation. The Historic Hampshire County responded to the letter with information regarding the project area and the Seneca Nation of Indians responded to potential archaeological resources; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with 36 CFR 800.6 (a) (1), the FHWA has notified the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (AHP) of its adverse effect determination providing the specified documentation, and the AHP has chosen not to participate in the consultation pursuant to 36 CFR 800.6 (a) (1) (iii);

NOW, THEREFORE, the FHWA, the WVSHPPO, and the WVDODH agree that the undertaking will be implemented in accordance with the following stipulations in order to take into account the effects of the undertaking on historic properties.
STIPULATIONS

The FHWA shall ensure that the following stipulations are carried out:

**John Blue Bridge Replacement Project**

I. The John Blue Bridge will be documented in its present historic setting. The documentation package will include 5"x7" black and white digital prints in accordance with the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Survey Photo Policy Expansion of January 2009.

II. A brief history of the structure will be included along with fully completed West Virginia Historic Property Inventory forms and copies of any available plan sheets and drawings of the bridge from WVDOH bridge files.

III. West Virginia Division of Highways staff will provide the Hampshire County Public Library in Romney a copy of the John Blue Bridge State Level Historic Documentation for references and educational purposes.

IV. 50 color brochures of the John Blue Bridge will be developed by the WVDOH and distributed to the Hampshire County Public Library in Romney. The WVSHPO will be given the opportunity to review all educational materials developed for this stipulation. A CD containing the brochure will also be given to the library to print brochures when the original total has been exhausted.

V. The John Blue Bridge will be documented on the West Virginia historic bridge website.

VI. **Duration**

This MOA will expire if its stipulations are not carried out within five (5) years from the date of its execution. At such time, and prior to work continuing on the undertaking, the FHWA shall either (a) execute an MOA pursuant to 36 CFR 800.6, or (b) request, take into account, and respond to the comments of the ACHP under 36 CFR 800.7. Prior to such time, FHWA may consult with other signatories to reconsider the terms of the MOA and amend it in accordance with Stipulation X below. FHWA shall notify the signatories as to the course of action it will pursue.

VII. **Post-Review Discoveries**

If any unanticipated effects to or discoveries of historic properties or archaeological sites, including human burial sites and/or skeletal remains, are encountered during the implementation of this undertaking, work shall be suspended in the area of the discovery until the WVDOH has developed and implemented an appropriate treatment plan in consultation with the WVSHPO pursuant to 36 CFR 800.13 (b).
VIII. Monitoring and Reporting

Each year following the execution of this MOA until it expires or is terminated, FHWA shall provide all parties to this MOA a summary report detailing work carried out pursuant to its terms. Such report shall include any scheduling changes proposed, any problems encountered, and any disputes and objections received in FHWA’s efforts to carry out the terms of this MOA.

IX. Dispute Resolution

Should any signatory or concurring party to this MOA object at any time to any actions proposed or the manner in which the terms of this MOA are implemented, FHWA shall consult with such party to resolve the objection. If FHWA determines that such objection cannot be resolved, FHWA will:

A. Forward all documentation relevant to the dispute, including the FHWA’s proposed resolution, to the ACHP. The ACHP shall provide FHWA with its advice on the resolution of the objection within thirty (30) days of receiving adequate documentation. Prior to reaching a final decision on the dispute, FHWA shall prepare a written response that takes into account any timely advice or comments regarding the dispute from the ACHP, signatories and concurring parties, and provide them with a copy of this written response. FHWA will then proceed according to its final decision.

B. If the ACHP does not provide its advice regarding the dispute within the thirty (30) day time period, FHWA may make a final decision on the dispute and proceed accordingly. Prior to reaching such a final decision, FHWA shall prepare a written response that takes into account any timely comments regarding the dispute from the signatories and concurring parties to the MOA, and provide them and the ACHP with a copy of such written response.

C. FHWA’s responsibility to carry out all other actions subject to the terms of this MOA that are not the subject of the dispute remain unchanged.

X. Amendments

This MOA may be amended when such an amendment is agreed to in writing by all signatories. The amendment will be effective on the date a copy signed by all of the signatories is filed with the ACHP.

XI. Termination

If any signatory to this MOA determines that its terms will not or cannot be carried out, that party shall immediately consult with the other parties to attempt to develop an amendment per Stipulation X, above. If within thirty (30) days (or another time period
agreed to by all signatories) an amendment cannot be reached, any signatory may terminate the MOA upon written notification to the other signatories.

Once the MOA is terminated, and prior to work continuing on the undertaking, FHWA must either (a) execute a MOA pursuant to 36 CFR 800.6, or (b) request, take into account, and respond to the comments of the ACHP under 36 CFR 800.7. FHWA shall notify the signatories as to the course of action it will pursue.

EXECUTION of the Memorandum of Agreement by the FHWA, WSHPO, the WVDOH and the Council, and implementation of its terms evidence that the FHWA has afforded the Council an opportunity to comment on the John Blue Bridge Replacement Project and its effects on historic properties, and that the FHWA has taken into account the effects of the undertaking on the historic properties.
John Blue Bridge
Memorandum of Agreement
Page - 5 -

Signatories Page

[Signature]
Federal Highway Administration

[Signature]
West Virginia Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

[Signature]
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Date

INVITED SIGNATORY:

[Signature]
West Virginia Division of Highways

Date
**WEST VIRGINIA HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Address</th>
<th>Common/Historic Name/Both</th>
<th>Field Survey #</th>
<th>Site # <em>(SHPO Only)</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Located along WV Route 28, spanning South Branch of the Potomac River, near Grace.</td>
<td>John Blue Bridge-common Grace Bridge-historic</td>
<td>HPI #1</td>
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<tr>
<th>Town or Community</th>
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<th>Negative No.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Exterior Siding / Materials</th>
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<td>Main Span: Steel Riveted Through Truss End Span: Steel Riveted Pony Trusses</td>
<td>Deck Material: Concrete</td>
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<th>Survey Organization &amp; Date</th>
<th>Part of What Survey / FR#</th>
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<td>WVDOH October 16, 2014</td>
<td>State County Route S314-28-22.27 Federal Route BR-0028(058)D</td>
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**Name:** John Blue Bridge  
**Survey #:** HPI #1  
**Survey / FR #:** State County Route S314-28-22.27 Federal Project #BR-0028(058)D

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<th>Present Owners</th>
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| WVDOH          | Capitol Complex Building 5  
Charleston, WV 25305 |

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<tr>
<th>Describe Setting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown -- &lt;1 Acres</td>
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<td>☐ Archaeological Artifacts Present</td>
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The bridge is located in a rural area in Hampshire County near Grace. The bridge carries WV Route 28 over South Branch of the Potomac River approximately 0.03 miles south of County Route 28/5. The bridge is situated between horizontal curves on each side.

| Description of Buildings or Site (Original and Present) | Stories  
Front Bays |
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<td>The structure was built by Fort Pitt Bridge Works in 1936. It consists of two 90 foot end spans and a 230 foot main central span. The end spans are steel riveted pony trusses and the main span is a steel riveted through truss. The bridge has an overall total length of 419 feet 6 inches. It is supported by two concrete abutments and two rectangular concrete piers. The overall width is 25 feet 2 inches. The bridge has a concrete deck. It is posted for weight limits and trucks and buses are restricted to cross one at a time. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) is 2,900 Vehicles Per Day (VPD) with a 20 year ADT projected to be 3,800 VPD.</td>
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| Alterations | ☐ Yes ☒ No  
If yes, describe |
<table>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Painting and routine maintenance work.</td>
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| Additions | ☐ Yes ☒ No  
If yes, describe |
|-----------|--------------|

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<tr>
<th>Describe All Outbuildings</th>
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<th>Statement of Significance:</th>
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<td>See Continuation Sheet.</td>
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<td>Fort Pitt Bridge Works, Pittsburgh, Pa., Records 1886-1949, AIS 1963.27, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.</td>
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<th>Form Prepared By:</th>
<th>Date: October 20, 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name/Organization:</td>
<td>Randy Epperly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Address: | WV Division of Highways  
Capitol Complex  
Building 5, Rm. 431  
Charleston, WV 25305 |
| Phone #: | 304-558-9385 |
Other than a general association with the history of the area, the John Blue Bridge has no important link with events or trends that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history. The bridge was constructed in 1936 to replace a bridge in the general location that had been damaged in the 1936 flood. This bridge was not built as a new linkage between major towns but was a replacement needed for a damaged bridge. Therefore this bridge is not eligible for the National Register under Criterion A.

The bridge was named for John Blue, one of the first settlers in Hampshire County. Blue came to the area around 1725 and owned the land where present day WV Route 28 is located. The bridge itself does not have a direct association with the family. The Blue family settled in the area and may have had a connection to the original wire bridge. The current bridge was built in 1936 and named in honor of John Blue in 2003. The bridge is also known as Grace Bridge and Blue Beach Bridge. The bridge is not associated with a significant person or significant person’s life and is not eligible under Criterion B.

The John Blue Bridge is a 419 foot 6 inch truss bridge consisting of a through truss and pony trusses. It was listed as Grace Bridge on the 1990 Final List of Historic Bridges for West Virginia. The bridge contains few alterations and remains a good example of a steel truss bridge. It was built by Fort Pitt Bridge Works, founded in 1896 and was eventually sold in 1986. Fort Pitt Bridge Works is known for its steel fabrications for bridges and also steel used in both World Wars. The bridge is eligible under Criterion C for being a good example of its bridge type and its association with a known builder.

The bridge is not likely to contain any important information that will contribute to our understanding of human history or prehistory. It is not eligible under Criterion D.
NOTES

Concrete in abutments shall be Class X.
Concrete in piers shall be Class XIII.
Reinforcing bars shall be made from new hot-rolled steel of intermediate grade or from round steel.

Place a #1 steel through abutments in each space between counterforts and one through each counterfort. Drawn to be placed at right elevation 140.

The backs of abutments from the base slab to within one foot of the top, excluding the top of the base slab, shall be waterproofed in accordance with Section 3 of Division 3 of the specifications, except that the protection course need not be applied. The contractor will, however, be responsible for and must make good any damages to the waterproofing.

The contractor shall submit a line drawing of the items shown on the estimate, and an alternate bid for reinforcement bars, Item 11.

Specifications by the State Road Commission, June 1938, with modifications and changes effective January 1939.

Special provisions governing bridge programs of Highway Funds adopted by the State Road Commission August 16, 1938, revised September 8, 1939, will govern this project.

For type of payment for reinforcing bars see note on sheet #8 of 15.

ESTIMATE

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<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit Cost</th>
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<td>1.2500</td>
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Item 11 is alternate for Item 11.