

Final  
FINAL

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ohio Street Bridge  
other names/site number Joan Marchand Overlook 163-196-53383

2. Location

street & number Ohio Street over Pigeon Creek N/A  not for publication  
city or town Evansville N/A  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Vanderburgh code 163 zip code \_\_\_\_\_

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 10/25/08  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Indiana 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 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
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.) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ohio Street Bridge

Vanderburgh IN

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: Road-Related (vehicular)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Pratt through truss

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls

roof

other IRON

Narrative Description

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

Ohio Street Bridge  
Name of Property

Vanderburgh, IN  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- 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, 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**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

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 significant within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical 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 if 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**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENGINEERING  
TRANSPORTATION

**Period of Significance**

1891

**Significant Dates**

1891

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Pittsburgh Bridge Company  
Eigenmann & Hollerbach

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory

Ohio Street Bridge  
Name of Property

Vanderburgh, IN  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

11	497260	4207
Zone	Easting	Northing

3 

Zone	Easting	Northing

2 

--	--	--

4 

--	--	--

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 Laura Thayer, Historic Preservation Consultant, for

organization Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation date September 5, 1997

street & number 3905 N. 500 W. telephone 812/375-2318

city or town Columbus state IN zip code 47201

**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 FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name James A. Haddan, Executive Director, Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation

street & number 100 E. Walnut Street, Lower Level telephone 812/424-6921

city or town Evansville state IN zip code 47713

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance to the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7

Page 1

Ohio Street Bridge

---

The Ohio Street Bridge (Vanderburgh County Bridge Cy3), completed in 1891, is located in Evansville, Vanderburgh County, Indiana. The bridge formerly carried Ohio Street across Pigeon Creek at the point where the creek flows into the Ohio River (photo 1). A replacement bridge was constructed 300 feet upstream in 1966. The historic bridge remains in its original location but is closed to traffic. Immediately adjacent to the bridge to the north is the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Bridge, a Parker through truss built in 1908 by the American Bridge Company (53384).

The Ohio Street Bridge is a single-span, pin-connected, Pratt through truss. It is seated on cut sandstone abutments and wing walls (photos 1, 6). The bridge has a span of 198 feet, a roadway of 24 feet, a vertical clearance of 21 feet and an underclearance of 29 feet. The top chord members and the portal frame diagonal members are compression members and are fabricated of plate and angles riveted together to form rectangular box sections. The top chords are two feet deep and one foot, 10 inches wide (photos 2, 3, 4).

Each truss has eleven 18-foot panels (photo 4). Each of the vertical members which define these panels is fabricated of two structural channels tied together with lattice bars on the flanges. A horizontal strut intersects at the mid-height of the vertical members of each truss. The diagonal tension members in the second, third, ninth, and tenth panels are steel eye bars. The diagonal members in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth panels are round steel rods with eye sockets at each end.

The bottom chord member of the truss are two steel eye bars that are attached to the steel pins at the ends of the floor beams (photo 6). The floor beams are 30-inch deep "T" beams. Eleven floor stringers span 18 feet from floor beam to floor beam and support the steel, open grate deck. The stringers were replaced in 1977. The deck was installed in 1963. The horizontal bracing in the pane of the bottom chord is steel rod "X" bracing. The top chord is strutted at each panel point with an "X" latticed strut. There is horizontal rod "X" bracing in the top chord plane.

There were originally two metal panels each on the portal struts (photos 2, 3). The left panel had the names of the county commissioners in office when the bridge was contracted. The right panel had "PITTSBURG BRIDGE CO. 1891." The right panels are extant on both portal frames. The left panels have been removed.

The bridge carries a city water line on the south truss, a sewage sludge line on the north truss, and a four-foot, grated, pedestrian walkway on each side. The north walkway (photo 5) has a lattice railing and decorative, cast-iron newel posts. The walkway on the south side (photo 1) is missing its railing. Otherwise, the structure has good integrity and retains most of its original members.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8

Page 2

Ohio Street Bridge

---

The Ohio Street Bridge is significant under Criterion C, in the area of Engineering; and under Criterion A, in the area of Transportation. The bridge is the longest single-span Pratt through truss in the state, and the oldest of a small number of extant historic iron bridges in Vanderburgh County. From the time of its construction until it was closed last year, it was an important link between the west and east sides of Evansville, which are separated by Pigeon Creek. The Ohio Street Bridge was rated "outstanding" by the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, conducted in Vanderburgh County in 1994. The statewide historic metal bridge survey, published in 1987, placed the structure in the Historic Bridge Pool.

### *History*

A ferry, kept by Mrs. Nellie Sweezer, was established at the mouth of Pigeon Creek in 1820. The first bridge was a wooden bridge completed in 1841. The 1841 bridge was replaced by a new wooden bridge in 1850.

In the ensuing years, Evansville became an important shipping and warehousing center as the city's transportation capabilities increased. An Ohio River port since its founding, it attracted several railroad lines starting in the 1850s, and became the terminus for the Wabash and Erie Canal in 1853. By 1870, with a population of 21,830, it had become the second largest city in the state (after Indianapolis), and was known for the manufacture and/or shipping of wholesale drugs, tobacco, hogs, coal, and a myriad of other products.

Additional bridges across Pigeon Creek were completed as the city expanded to the north. Wooden bridges were completed on Franklin Street in 1860 and on Maryland Street in 1870. The three bridges which handled the city's vehicular traffic across the creek were positioned about six blocks apart. In an 1888 bird's eye view, the three are shown as covered wooden bridges. In the same drawing, two iron truss railroad bridges cross Pigeon Creek, illustrating that the railroad companies were ahead of local governments in building iron bridges.

By 1890, the population of Evansville had reached 50,756, more than double the figure recorded for 1870. With such rapid growth, the need for reliable roads and bridges was great. Wooden bridges were frequently in need of repair. In the City Council minutes of 1889, the findings of a bridge inspection committee were recorded. The following excerpt reveals the condition of the old wooden bridge on Ohio Street:

"... we have visited the bridge in company with the city surveyor and made an examination of it. We find that the bridge is in a very bad condition. The trestles are

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8

Page 3

Ohio Street Bridge

---

badly out of line and out of plumb. The lower cords are in a very bad condition and have been spliced in many places. The East abutment is badly cracked and settled. One of the piers was washed out several years since and replaced with a wooden [?]. We find that the City Council condemned the bridge about three years since, it being very unsafe, but it was repaired by the City at considerable expense as the Commissioners would not erect a new bridge on account of a controversy in regard to the location, etc.”<sup>1</sup>

The Commissioners now had to concede that a new bridge was necessary. Within the next few months, specifications were prepared by the city surveyor, August Pfafflin (1857-1935). Pfafflin was a local civil engineer who served a number of times during his career as city and county surveyor.

An Evansville company, Eigenmann & Hollerbach, was selected to build the stone abutments for the bridge. John G. Eigenmann (1837-1907) was the senior partner of the firm, which built bridges, locks, dams, and dikes all along the Ohio River, as well as many of the brick streets of Evansville. Eigenmann & Hollerbach's bid for the work was \$30,000.

A large number of companies bid on the structure specified to replace the 1850 bridge. Among them are firms which are familiar names in the history of iron bridge building in Indiana: the King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company, the Massillon Bridge Company, and the Wrought Iron Bridge Company. The firm which was awarded the contract, however, was the Pittsburgh Bridge Company, a prolific bridge builder, but not in Indiana, where only a few Pittsburgh bridges were erected.

The present Ohio Street Bridge was completed in 1891. It was in continuous use until 1996. The City currently has plans to rehabilitate the structure and convert it for use as a pedestrian bridge in the proposed Pigeon Creek Greenway Passage. Storyboards illustrating the history and significance of the bridge will be placed in the vicinity. The structure will be named the Joan Marchand Overlook in memory of Ms. Marchand, who made a significant contribution to historic preservation in Evansville.

### *Transportation Significance*

The iron bridge was an important component of transportation improvements on Indiana railroads and highways in the late nineteenth century. Most of the early bridges had been wood. Wooden bridges became inadequate for the longer, faster trains in the late

---

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Committee on Sewers and Bridges, Minutes of the City Council, Evansville, Indiana, 16 September, 1889.

nineteenth century era of railroad expansion. The railroad companies laid the groundwork for the age of the iron bridge, hiring the engineers who designed the trusses, and providing business for the many companies which would be established to fabricate the spans. By 1870, the railroads were building iron bridges to the exclusion of stone or wood bridges.

County commissioners were slower to move from wood to iron. Because of a propensity for elected officials to economize, bridges often took long periods of time to be approved and built on roads under their jurisdiction. Good roads with adequate bridges, however, became a public concern as commerce and industry grew in the late nineteenth century. By the late 1880s, iron bridges were beginning to be preferred over wooden bridges. Until about 1905, nearly all highway bridges were constructed of metal.

Evansville was the second largest city in Indiana at the time the Ohio Street Bridge was constructed, in 1891. The bridge was an important crossing which connected the city's east and west sides. Located at the mouth of Pigeon Creek, it served commerce along the Ohio River, where a large number of industries and warehouses were located. The bridge was important both to vehicular traffic, and as a means for pedestrians to reach their workplaces.

Most pre-World War II spans in Evansville have been replaced. The remaining historic road bridges, in addition to the Ohio Street Bridge, are: the Franklin Street Bridge over Pigeon Creek (53730), a concrete bridge completed in 1932; and the Fifth Avenue Bridge over Pigeon Creek (535050), a Parker through truss built in 1936. The Fifth Avenue Bridge is scheduled for replacement by the County Engineering Department.

### *Engineering Significance*

The Ohio Street Bridge is a significant examples of a Pratt through truss in Indiana. At 198 feet, it is the longest single-span highway Pratt through-truss in the state. The bridge is also significant as the oldest, and one of a small number, of surviving historic iron truss bridges in Vanderburgh County. The bridge has good integrity and retains most of its original fabric. According to the HAB/HAER inventory form completed by Dr. James Cooper for the bridge in 1984, its "members are especially heavy and its special horizontal member is unique."<sup>2</sup>

Iron trusses were first widely used by the railroad companies in the late nineteenth

---

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, HABS/HAER Inventory Form for Vanderburgh County Bridge #3, Evansville, Indiana, 1984.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8

Page 5

Ohio Street Bridge

---

century. Starting in the 1870s, they were used on Indiana roads as well. Most of the major truss types were designed by civil engineers employed by railroads. The truss which would become the most popular type for railroad and highway bridges was designed in 1844 by Caleb and Thomas Pratt.

The Pratt truss resembled the Howe in appearance, but was structurally superior. A Pratt truss could be executed in wood or iron, and bridges of the latter were rare until after the Civil War. Improved variously over the years, the Pratt truss as employed for iron bridges had been perfected by the mid-1870s. A Pratt through truss has two trusses which are connected at the top. Each truss is composed of a top and bottom chord, inclined endposts, vertical posts, and counter bracing.

At the time the historic metal bridge survey was conducted, 350 Pratt through trusses were extant in the state. Three-quarters of the Pratt through trusses surveyed were pinned. They varied in length from about 70 to 200 feet. The oldest extant Pratt through truss identified was Martin County Bridge #79, which was built in 1877.

In the survey, 16 Pratt through truss bridges were rated NRL (National Register Listed) or NRC (National Register Candidate). At least eight of these have been removed since the survey was conducted. An additional 19 Pratt through truss bridges were identified in the survey as HBP (Historic Bridge Pool). At least seven of these have been removed since the survey was conducted. Two additional bridges with the HBP rating are scheduled for replacement.

In Vanderburgh County, the number of historic iron truss bridges of all types has decreased in the past few years. Of 10 such bridges identified in the county survey and/or the historic metal bridge survey, five are extant. Of the five which have survived, two are scheduled for replacement over the next two years: the Fifth Avenue Bridge over Pigeon Creek (53505), and the Maasberg Road Bridge over Buente Creek (05048).

Two historic iron truss bridges in the county - other than the Ohio Street Bridge - have not been replaced and are not now scheduled for replacement. The Heckel Road Bridge over Bluegrass Creek (15078) is a Pratt through truss built in 1893 by the Columbia Bridge Company. It was rated outstanding in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, and BSN in the historic metal bridge survey. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad Bridge over Pigeon Creek (53384) is a Parker through truss built by the American Bridge Company in 1908. It was rated outstanding in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, and HBP in the historic metal bridge survey.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section No. 9

Page 6

Ohio Street Bridge

---

"A. Pfafflin, 77, Engineer, Dies Early Monday," *The Evansville Journal*, 7 January 1935.

"Barricades Put on Two Bridge," *Evansville Press*, 23 January 1937.

"Bids Rejected," *Evansville Journal*, 8 August, 1890.

"Carbuncle Causes Death of Prominent Contractor," *Evansville Journal-News*, 30 April 1907.

Cooper, James L. *Iron Monuments to a Distant Posterity: Indiana's Metal Bridges, 1870-1930*. Indianapolis: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 1987.

Evansville City Council Records, 1889.

"Evansville's Popular City Engineer," *Evansville Journal-News*, 28 April 1912.

Gilbert, Frank M. *History of the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County, Indiana*. Chicago: The Pioneer Publishing Company, 1910.

Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. *Vanderburgh County Interim Report*. Indianapolis: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 1994.

*History of Vanderburgh County, Indiana*. Brant and Fuller, 1889.

Koch, John F.W., "Ohio Street Bridge Description," 16 April 1996.

"The New Ohio Street Bridge," *Evansville Journal*, 25 July 1890.

U.S. Department of the Interior, HABS/HAER Inventory Form for Vanderburgh County Bridge #3, Evansville, Indiana, 1984.

Vanderburgh County Commissioners' Records, 1839-1854, 1887-1893.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section No. 10

Page 7

Ohio Street Bridge

---

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the property consists of the bridge, abutments, and ten feet beyond the bridge at each end.

Boundary Justification

This is a sufficient boundary to define the resource.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Page 8

Ohio Street Bridge

---

Information for all photographs is as follows, except as noted:

1. Ohio Street Bridge
2. Evansville, Vanderburgh County, Indiana
3. Laura Thayer
4. April 1997
5. Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology  
402 W. Washington Street, Room 274  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Additional information for individual photographs:

Photo 1

1. Ohio Street Bridge (Louisville and Nashville Railroad Bridge on left)
6. Looking northeast
7. 1 of 6

Photo 2

1. West Portal
6. Looking east
7. 2 of 6

Photo 3

1. East Portal
6. Looking west
7. 3 of 6

Photo 4

1. Detail of truss
6. Looking southeast
7. 4 of 6

Photo 5

1. North walkway
6. Looking west
7. 5 of 6

Photo 6

1. Detail under north walkway
6. Looking southwest
7. 6 of 6

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

3460 II SW  
(KASSON)

87°37'30"  
38°00'

46°00'00"E

447

1 470 000 FEET (KY.) R. 11 W

35'

449 R 10 W

3  
KASSON 3.5 MI.  
EVANS

610 000 FEET  
(KY.)

4204 000 M

MT. VERNON 13 MI.

Extra  
UTM  
North

On east bridge  
403

Evansville  
Vanderburgh County, IN

216  
E 448380  
N 4203120



