

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 Atkinson Road Bridge

other names/site number County Bridge #305

2. Location

street & number Atkinson Road at Pidcock's Creek  Not for publication

city or town Solebury Twp  vicinity

state PA code PA county Bucks code 017 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 36 CFR 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.)

Brent D. Dlarz January 31, 2002  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

PA Historical & Museum Commission  
State of 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:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

5. Classification

<b>Ownership of Property</b> (Check as many boxes as apply)		<b>Category of Property</b> (Check only one box)	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b> (Do not include previously listed resources in the count )	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)		<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Non contributing</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure		1	0
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		0	0
			1	0
				<b>buildings</b>
				<b>sites</b>
				<b>structures</b>
				<b>objects</b>
				<b>total</b>

<b>Name of related multiple property listing</b> (Enter N/A if property is not part of a multiple property listing )	<b>Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register</b>
n/a	0

6. Function or Use

<b>Historic Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Current Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
Transportion/road-related	Transportation/road-related

7. Description

<b>Architectural Classification</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Materials</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
Other: 3-arched span bridge	foundation stone
	walls stone
	roof n/a
	other asphalt/concrete

**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

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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.

X 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Engineering

Period of Significance

1873

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

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 significance within the past 50 years

Architect/Builder

Ricard, James

Gibney, Mathew

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 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

x Other

Name of Repository

Heritage Conservancy

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet )

Lambertville Quad

1 18 501 800 4463 860  
Zone Easting Northing

2

**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 Michael May, Historic Preservation Specialist  
organization Heritage Conservancy date July, 2000, revised January 26, 2001  
street & number 85 Old Dublin Pike telephone 215 345-7020 ext. 109  
city or town Doylestown state PA zip code 18901

**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 County of Bucks  
street & number Court Street telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Doylestown state PA zip code 18901

**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 existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

**Estimated Burden Statement** Public reporting burden for this form 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 this 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.

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## **National Register of Historic Places**

### **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Atkinson Road Bridge, Bucks County, PA

The Atkinson Road Bridge, constructed in 1873, is a stone, multiple-span, single-lane structure located in a rural area of Solebury Township, Bucks County. The bridge's integrity is intact. Today Atkinson Road Bridge retains its original appearance and setting, and is in excellent condition.

Atkinson Road Bridge, also known as County Bridge 305, is found in southern Solebury Township at Pidcock's Creek. The creek, which is 20 to 30 feet wide at the crossing, feeds into the Delaware River about three miles to the south. Banks on both sides of the creek contain a wide swath of trees that screens the bridge from surrounding properties. The area remains essentially rural, with historic buildings, large new estate houses and open fields nearby. Overall the surrounding landscape appears very much as it did when the bridge was first constructed. Today the bridge continues to allow a small, narrow country lane known as Atkinson Road to connect to the well-traveled Street Road, approximately one-half mile to the west. A few hundred feet east of the bridge, Atkinson Road connects to Pidcock Creek Road, another rural country lane.

The bridge is a three-arch span of random rubble construction. Built of native fieldstone, it is one lane wide and approximately 60 feet long. A white marble date stone at the center of the bridge's inside south wall reads, "County Bridge, 1873". The bridge's roadway has a high arch, rising several feet above the roadbed at each end.

The bridge itself is divided into three sections of nearly equal size, including a central core, and two end sections that form the wing walls. The central portion of the bridge spans the creek bed and holds the three semicircular arches that allow for the flow of water through the structure. Each arch is about six feet across, with large, cut-stone voussoirs with keystones. Pedimented walls above the arches rise to a peak at the center of the bridge, forming a camelback. The parapets rise several feet above the bridge's roadway and are topped by concrete coping.

The end sections, or wing walls, are relatively long and extend well into the banks at each end. Near the top of the bridge, these walls are joined to the central portion at the same plane. Several feet below the concrete coping, the wing walls flare out slightly beyond the core and are buttressed. The walls of these end sections also are shortened as they move further from the central point of the bridge—in order to account for the structure's rise over the creek and the sloping banks. In plan, the wing walls on the north side of the bridge are flared, or set at a slight angle, while those of the south side are parallel with the central section.

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Section 7 Page 2 Atkinson Road Bridge, Bucks County, PA

The bridge's roadway is covered in asphalt and is narrow, allowing for one car to pass at a time. Overall the bridge appears to be in excellent condition, and its original materials, alignment and setting are intact. Its integrity remains, and only minor repairs and routine maintenance appear to have been made to the structure over the years. Today the bridge's survival is threatened due to its listing on the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's bridge replacement schedule.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1 Atkinson Road Bridge, Bucks County, PA

The Atkinson Road Bridge, constructed in 1873, is significant under Criterion C in the field of engineering as an excellent example of 19<sup>th</sup> century stone-arch bridge construction. Although many similar bridges were built in Bucks County, the Atkinson Road Bridge is today a rare example because the majority of these structures have been replaced. Most examples that remain have been altered or are much smaller bridges with lower spans.

County bridge records indicate that a petition for a superstructure over Pidcock's Creek in Solebury Township was first presented to the Court of Sessions in their December 1870 meeting. No action appears to have been taken regarding the petition, and the same document was reentered into the court documents on February 21, 1872. The 1870 and 1872 petitions include the names of 25 nearby inhabitants. They called for the construction of a county bridge on lands of Mahlon Atkinson and Mark Wismer due to "the ford there being frequently rendered impassable by reason of ice and high waters." Their petition also stated the cost of the bridge would be too much for the local residents to bear and asked the county to pay for its construction. The roadway and ford existed for many years prior to the construction of the bridge, and maps of the township as early as 1859 show the roadway and its nearby intersections as they exist today.

In Bucks County the petition of the Court of Sessions was the first step in the process of securing a bridge. Local residents would usually request the court to consider their crossing and point out the public need. More than one petition for a bridge was common, as was the case in the subject structure. If the court believed there could be a need for a bridge, they would appoint a jury to inspect the site. The jury would prepare a report and the court would rule on the petition. In many cases a bridge was often ordered within a month or two. Once a new bridge was ordered, bids for the construction of the structure were advertised and awarded. Competition for bridge construction was often fierce, and compromise sites were sometimes selected to meet the needs of as many residents as possible. The *Newtown Enterprise* reported on March 21, 1874, that the new Twining's Bridge in Bucks County was a compromise site between three possible crossings, and that the "public will not be satisfied until they have one (a bridge) at Scholfield's Ford".

On March 24, 1873, the court agreed to award a contract for the Atkinson Road Bridge, at a cost of \$1,719, to James Ricard, stone mason, and Mathew Gibney, contractor. Both men are listed in county directories for Doylestown Borough. Gibney worked on at least one other stone bridge. The November 12, 1872, issue of the *Bucks County Intelligencer* listed him as the contractor for a bridge on Pebble Hill Road in Doylestown Township. No other record of their involvement in bridge construction could be found. Bridge records for the 1870s suggest that this structure was a relatively expensive one to build. During that decade only a few county bridges were

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2 Atkinson Road Bridge, Bucks County, PA

constructed in Bucks County each year. In 1872, only five bridges were built in the county. In 1873, there were nine bridge contracts awarded, but only five of these bridges were stone superstructures. In 1872, a nearby stone bridge over Pidcock's Creek along the road to New Hope was contracted to Theodore S. Briggs and Jonathan B. Watson for only \$650. Most small, stone arched bridges for the period had similar costs, but a handful of larger bridges, mostly covered bridges, were also built during this time with several bridges ranging in price between \$3,000 and \$9,000. Bucks County expenses for 1873, advertised in *The Bucks County Intelligencer* on February 3, 1874, indicates that new construction and bridge repair was a high priority that year with bridge expenditures totaling over \$35,000. Other bridges completed in 1873 included Laurel Bend at a cost of \$837, Sheards Bridge (covered bridge) at a cost of \$3,770, Martin's Creek Bridge at a cost of \$1,444, and Slifer's Bridge (covered bridge) at a cost of \$8,533. In the September 1873 session of the court, the contractors for the Atkinson Road Bridge reported its completion, and in February 1874, the court announced the final inspection of the contractors' work.

The Atkinson Road Bridge is an excellent example of stone-arch bridge construction in the region during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is also significant as an example of a once common bridge form, now largely replaced. Stone bridges were the most common form found in Bucks County beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and continuing until about 1900 when stone was largely replaced by reinforced concrete or iron. Between 1820 and 1890 it appears that several hundred stone bridges were constructed in the county. The majority of stone arch bridges in Bucks County however, were single-arch spans over small streams. Stone appears to have been the construction material of choice for bridge construction, probably due to its easy accessibility. Most material for stone bridges was found close to the site as evident in a September 18, 1875, account in the *Newtown Enterprise* that reported that stone for the Sullivan Street Bridge in Newtown was "quarried off property the of M.V. B Sickel close to the bridge."

Bridge records indicate that stone bridges cost considerably less than wood-covered structures, the second most common form in the county during the period. Repair records also suggest that the cost of repairing stone bridges was less. The high cost of wooden structures and their upkeep is evident in an 1872 report. On May 7, 1872, the *Bucks County Intelligencer* reported that the county commissioners viewed the Spring Garden Bridge, a wooden structure built at a cost of \$7,000, and agreed that it was "too unsound for further repairing, although it was built from entirely new materials in the fall of 1865. A new superstructure will be built, the (stone) piers being considered pretty good."



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Section 8 Page 3 Atkinson Road Bridge, Bucks County, PA

Today the Atkinson Road Bridge--like the four stone arch bridges in Bucks County identified as significant in *Historic Highway Bridges in Pennsylvania* (index numbers S-6, S-7, S-8 and S-9 and all listed on the National Register) and located in Yardley, Newtown, Buckingham and Solebury--represents the long-established tradition of stone arch bridge construction in Pennsylvania. The bridge in Yardley (S-6), built in 1889, is only a small single-span structure and the one in Buckingham (S-8), a 20th century bridge, has six spans.

The Newtown Creek Bridge (S-7, LR 09042) was constructed in 1796 and expanded in 1875, is the county's earliest extant stone structures. The bridge is similar to the subject bridge in its use of random stone, but it is only two spans long and instead of a camelback wall, the Newtown Creek Bridge has stepped parapets and employs some square stone masonry.

The subject bridge is also similar to the Carversville Road Bridge (S-9, LR 09066) over the Paunacussing Creek. Constructed in 1854, the Carversville Road Bridge is smaller in scale than the subject bridge, with two arches and squared stone masonry with a belt course.

There are several county bridges that are similar in scale and design aside from the bridges identified in *Historic Highway Bridges in Pennsylvania*. A three-arched span bridge was constructed in Solebury Township in 1844 near Carversville. This county bridge (#127, also listed in the National Register as part of the Carversville Historic District), located at Fleecydale Road over the Paunacussing Creek, is similar to the Atkinson Road Bridge in its use of material, its length and its placement along the roadway. This bridge, however, is lower and smaller in scale than the subject, as are other extant stone bridges built later in the century in the area. These lower bridges most likely survived in part because they provide adequate sight distance due to their low arch.

The stone bridge (county bridge # 60, LR 09099 and listed on the National Register) at Dark Hollow Road over the Tohickon Creek between Bedminster and Tinicum township is perhaps most similar to the Atkinson Road Bridge in scale and height. Its location on a low-traffic road, like the Atkinson Road Bridge, is most likely why it has survived.

Today stone bridges are still found throughout the county, but only a few large spans, especially those with high arches and single lanes, remain. The majority of large stone arch bridges were replaced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to poor sight visibility. The camelback form used at Atkinson Road Bridge, once common, is now rare in the county. Atkinson Road Bridge most likely remains intact due to its remote location on a quiet rural lane.

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## **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9, 10 Page 1 Atkinson Road Bridge, Solebury Township, Bucks County, PA

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### **9. Major Bibliographical References**

Bucks County Bridge Petitions, Court of Sessions, Volumes 1-13.

Bucks County Intelligencer, newspaper, 1870-1874.

Historic Highway Bridges in Pennsylvania, PHMC. 1986.

Hughes, Mathew. Farm Map of Solebury Township. 1859

### **10. Geographical Data**

#### **UTM References**

#### **Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at the northernmost corner of the bridge, being a point in the bridge's wing wall; thence southwesterly along the northern side of bridge crossing Pidcock Creek approximately 60 feet to the western most corner of the structure, being a point in the wing wall; thence crossing the road approximately 20 feet to the bridge's southern most corner, being a point in the south wing wall; thence along the southern side of the bridge crossing Pidcock Creek approximately 60 feet to the easternmost corner; thence crossing Atkinson Road approximately 20 feet to the place of the beginning.

#### **Boundary Justification**

The boundary is the land upon which the bridge sits. It encompasses the bridge, including its wing walls.

#### **Photographs**

All photographs were taken by Michael May in the winter of 2000. Negatives are found in the Historic Preservation Department, Heritage Conservancy, 85 Old Dublin Pike, Doylestown, PA 18901

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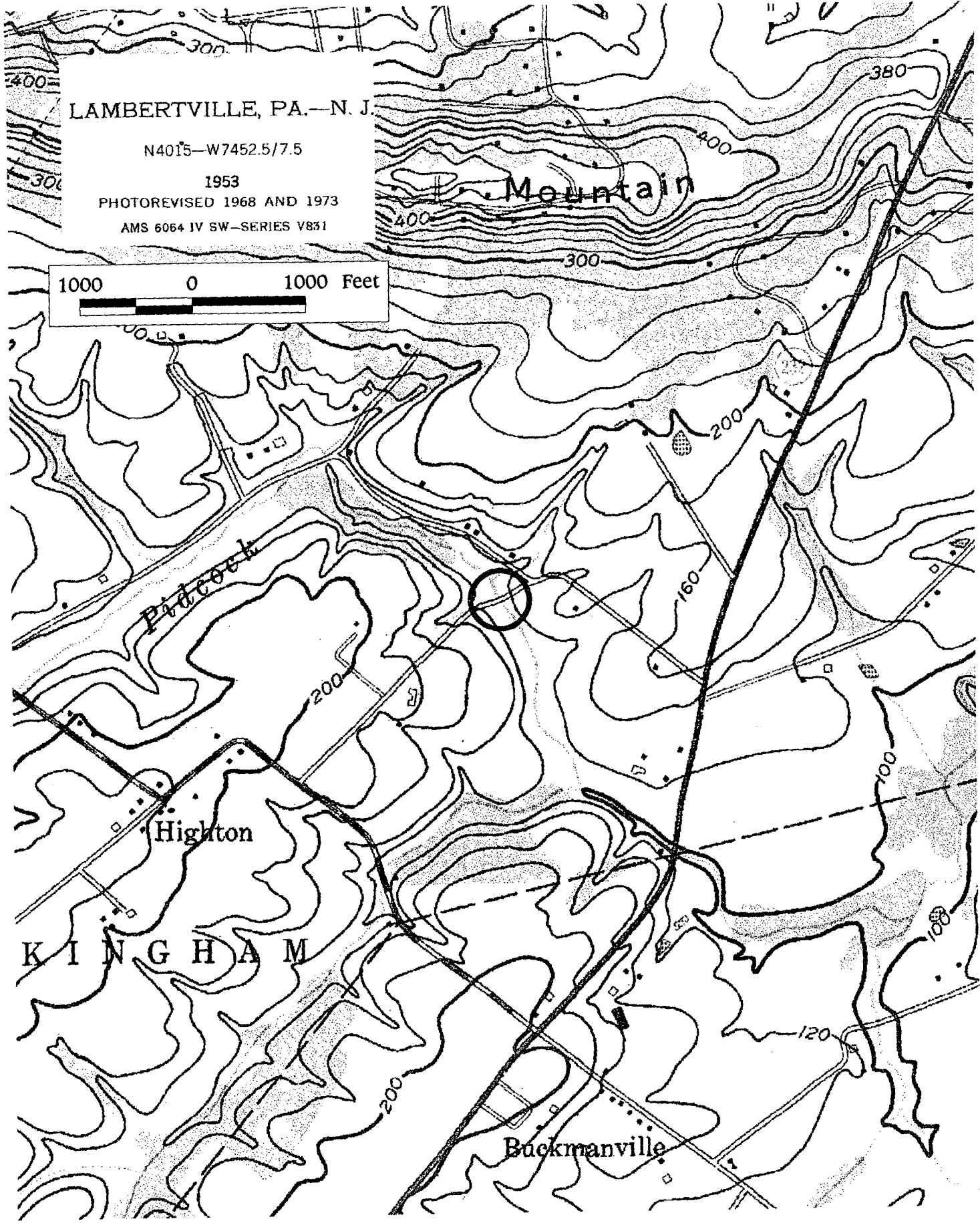
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Atkinson Road Bridge  
Bucks County, PA

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PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION SHEET  
ATKINSON ROAD BRIDGE, SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY

Photo. #	Description	Direction of Camera
1.	South elevation	facing northwest
2.	Bridge date stone at center of bridge	facing southeast
3.	North elevation	facing east
4.	Detail of central arch	facing east
5.	Bridge roadway	facing northeast
6.	Bridge roadway	facing southwest



LAMBERTVILLE, PA.—N. J.

N4015—W7452.5/7.5

1953

PHOTOREVISED 1968 AND 1973

AMS 6064 IV SW—SERIES V831

1000 0 1000 Feet

Mountain

Pidcock

Highton

K I N G H A M

Buckmanville