

Boundary Footbridge
Rock Creek Park
Washington
District of Columbia

HAER No. DC-34

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DC
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576-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
BOUNDARY FOOTBRIDGE
HAER No. DC-34

Location: Boundary Footbridge is located on a pedestrian/bridle trail in Rock Creek Park, and spans Rock Creek at the District boundary line, approximately 100' northeast of Beach Drive, Washington, D.C.

Date of Construction: 1934-35.

Designer and Builder: Built by National Park Service, Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Designs.

Present Owner: National Park Service.

Present Use: Footbridge.

Significance: Boundary Footbridge is one of a series of eight footbridges built in Rock Creek Park during the Depression, of which Rapids Footbridge (HAER No. DC-14) is the most notable. All these bridges were Public Works Administration projects. The rustic style exemplifies the type of crossing advocated by Albert H. Good in his sourcebook, Park Structures and Facilities (1935).¹ Good recommended stone or wood as a construction material, and a rugged or informal appearance for bridges in park settings.² However, concrete was acceptable for reasons of economy, but only so long as the material was expressed honestly. In his book, Good illustrated the Rapids Footbridge, and described it as a "frankly concrete" bridge in Rock Creek Park.³

Project Information: The documentation of Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was undertaken as a two-year pilot project to help establish standards and guidelines for recording the structures and landscape features of park roads and parkways. This project was a joint effort of the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), a combined division of the National Park Service, Robert Kapsch, chief. The project was sponsored by the Park Roads Program of the National Park Service, John Gingles, deputy chief, Safety Services Division. The project supervisor was Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

The Washington-based summer 1992 documentation team was headed

¹ William Bushong, Historic Resource Study: Rock Creek Park, District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1990), 178.

² Albert H. Good, Park and Recreation Structures: Part I-- Administration and Basic Service Facilities (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1938), 175-76.

³ Good, 187.

by landscape architect Robert Harvey (Iowa State University-Department of Landscape Architecture) who served as field supervisor; the landscape architects were Deborah Warshaw (University of Virginia) and Dorota Pape-Siliwonzuk (US/ICOMOS-Poland, Board of Historical Palaces and Gardens Restoration); the architects were Evan Miller (University of Colorado-Boulder), Steven Nose (University of Maryland), and Tony Arcaro (Catholic University). The historians were Tim Davis (University of Texas) and Amy Ross (University of Virginia). Jack E. Boucher made the large-format photographs; Air Survey Corporation of Sterling, Virginia, produced the aerial photography and digital mapping from which the site-plan delineations were made.

Description:

This structure is a long, sweeping concrete arch supported by two stone piers, and creekside abutments with wingwalls. The overall length of the bridge and its abutments is 127', the width is 11'6". The masonry of the piers and abutments is square-cut ashlar stone laid in regular courses. The piers have a diamond-shaped batter, which progresses from 1/4" to 1'. Chamfered wood posts carrying simple flat rails are secured to the concrete deck with anchor bolts.

Prepared by:
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HABS/HAER Historian
Summer 1992

Bibliography:

Bushong, William. Historic Resource Study: Rock Creek Park, District of Columbia. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1990.

Good, Albert H. Park and Recreation Structures: Part I-- Administration and Basic Service Facilities. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1938.

Olmsted Brothers. Rock Creek Park: A report by Olmsted Brothers, December 1918. Unpublished manuscript.

"Parks Office is Complimented for Rock Creek Bridge Designs." Evening Star, 26 November 1933.