

VLR-12/13/88 NRHP-8/8/89

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

HISTORIC SITE FILE: Orange and Alexandria
RAILROAD BRIDGE PIERS
PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib, Manassas, VA

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for not applicable. For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Orange and Alexandria Railroad Bridge Piers
other names/site number: N/A 70-235

2. Location

city, town: Manassas Park
state: Virginia code: VA county: Prince William code: 152
vicinity
zip code: 22111

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)		<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0

Name of related multiple property listing:
Civil War Properties, Prince William County, VA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 4

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

J. Bruce Mitchell
Signature of certifying official
Director, Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks
State or Federal agency and bureau

June 16, 1989
Date

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official
State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instruction 4):

Defense

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions):

Landscape: forest

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions): N/A

Material (enter categories from instructions):

foundation: sandstone

walls:

roof:

other:

Describe present and historic physical appearance. See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

 nationally statewide locallyApplicable National Register Criteria A B C DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Military
Transportation

Period of Significance:

1861-1865

Significant Dates:

1861-1865

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Significant Person: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
 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
 Other
Specify repository: DHL
221 Governor Street, Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: less than one acre

UTM References:

A /18/ /2.39.580/ /42.94.560/
Zone Easting Northing
C / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

B / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing
D / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description:

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries encompass what remains of the Civil War
period railroad bridge over Bull Run, i.e. the bridge
piers.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: L. Daniel Myers, Consultant Archaeologist
organization: Prince William County, Planning Office
street & number: 339 Fairhaven Road
city or town: Dunkirk

date: May 1989
telephone: (301) 257-3264
state: MD zip code: 20754

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Property Type: Mosby's Confederacy and Union Occupation

Summary Description

The vestiges of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad Piers bracket Bull Run about one mile from the present-day Manassas Park city limits. Two red sandstone structures stand on either side of Bull Run near Union Mills, with one pier in Prince William County and the other in Fairfax County. During the Civil War, these piers were the supporting structures of the railroad bridge. The piers, on which the bridge was rebuilt at least seven times between 1861 and 1865, were the scene of extensive fighting through the first half of the Civil War. More recently, these structures have been replaced to the immediate north by a concrete bridge constructed by the Southern Railroad Company. Because they are in large part intact, what remains of the piers is of high integrity.

Description

Physiographically, the site falls within the Piedmont Lowland, a region characterized by low relief and gently rolling topography drained by tributaries of the Occoquan River. Quartz veins, quartzite, and sandstone cobbles occur in the Lowlands streambeds. An oak-hickory-chestnut forest association is characteristic for this particular area, with sweet gum, pin oak, and white swamp oak in poorly drained areas. Species of oak, tulip poplar, cedar trees, poison ivy, honeysuckle, greenbrier, and Virginia creeper are typical today.

Two sandstone piers stand on the banks of Bull Run, which separates Prince William and Fairfax counties. Each consists of quarried red sandstone, approximately 35 feet in height, 12 feet wide, and 15 feet long. Each sandstone block or brick, averages 24 to 30 inches in length, 12 inches in height, and 12 inches wide. To the north, adjacent to the piers, is the more recently-constructed concrete bridge that replaced the old Orange and Alexandria Railroad bridge. The Fairfax County pier on the east side of Bull Run has more damage than the western pier on the Prince William County side.

There are two inscriptions on the south side of the Prince William County pier. The first is Confederate and reads "Warrior Guards Battery, July 19, 1861." Specifically, the Warrior Guards Battery refers to the Warrior Guards Company, 5th Regiment Alabama

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Volunteers, formed on January 15, 1861, in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama and led by Captain Robert D. Rodes. The 5th Alabama Regiment was part of Brigadier General R. S. Ewell's Second Brigade, which in turn was part of the First Corps of the Army of the Potomac commanded by Brigadier General P. G. T. Beauregard. Ewell's men guarded the bridge during the First Battle of Manassas.

The second inscription is Union and reads "Troy Guards, 12 P.R.V.C., February 13, 1864, EDP." This refers to the 12th Pennsylvania Reserve Volunteer Corps, under the general command of Brigadier General Samuel W. Crawford. The corps was called into service on August 10, 1861, and in 1864 was under the direct command of a Colonel Martin D. Hardin. It is suspected that the initials "EDP" referred to the person that chiseled the inscription into the sandstone brick.

During the Civil War, the railroad crossing at Bull Run was strategically important to both the Federal and Confederate forces. A topographic map (Figure 1) from 1862 shows the bridge and a blockhouse on the Fairfax County side. The blockhouse is on a hill northeast of the bridge. Upon field inspection of the piers, the ruins of another blockhouse located on the southwest hill in Prince William County was discovered. Jim Burgess of the Manassas National Battlefield Park confirmed that the ruins are what remain of a Civil War blockhouse. According to Burgess, Union forces built both blockhouses (per. com., June, 1988). The above mentioned map also shows an encampment just south of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad on the Prince William County side of the run. Doug Harvey, of the Manassas City Museum, claims that this was a summer camp. (per. com., June, 1988).

Destruction of the bridges at Union Mills was due to one of two reasons; natural or man-made disasters. In the first, a sudden overflow of a stream from a heavy rain or a thaw or freshet levelled the bridge. In the second, Confederate or Union forces destroyed part or all of the superstructure. Figures 2, 3, and 4 show the Bull Run bridge in various states of repair. During the war, in anticipation of the bridges being destroyed,

the standard size parts, ready prepared, were stacked in the railroad yards awaiting calls from the front. Cars were held always ready, and the parts ordered by wire were hurried away to the broken bridge as soon as a competent engineer had

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inspected the break and decided what was needed. The remainder of the work of the corps after this material reached the spot was a matter of minutes, or at the most of a few hours (Miller 1957: 300).

Adjacent to the Orange and Alexandria piers is a twentieth-century concrete bridge owned by the Southern Railroad Company. The pier on the Fairfax County side of the run is about 10 feet away from this new bridge and is joined to it by a concrete structure. The Prince William pier is separate from the new bridge and is about 20 feet to the south of it. Despite their closeness to the modern bridge, the integrity of the old sandstone piers to the south is high .

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Summary Significance Statement

The Orange and Alexandria Railroad Piers site is highly significant because of the role it played during the Civil War, particularly during the early part. On the banks of Bull Run near Union Mills, the piers stand as monuments to an era of battles fought in northern Virginia and to the men who fought them. As one of the chief modes of transportation in northern Virginia, the Orange and Alexandria Railroad played a major role in both the First and Second Battles of Manassas, the Battle of Bristoe Station, and smaller skirmishes led by Colonel John S. Mosby. Between 1861 and 1865, the bridge was rebuilt at least seven times and was guarded by both Confederate and Union forces at various stages of the war. The piers are what remain of these bridges that once spanned Bull Run.

Historical Background

The Orange and Alexandria Railroad Company was chartered in 1848, and the railroad, with all its bridges, was completed in the mid-1850s. Research does not indicate the year of completion of the Bull Run bridge and piers, nor the engineers who constructed them.

In May 1861 Lieutenant Colonel Richard S. Ewell was commissioned into the Confederate States Army and was assigned to duty at Ashland, Virginia. On June 17 he was made brigadier general and ordered to General Beauregard's Army of the Potomac. Beauregard's orders to him were to take part of his brigade, presumably including the Warrior Group Battery, to hold the Union Mills bridge over Bull Run. In a letter to Miss Lizzie Ewell, Ewell explained:

I am very sorry that I can not gratify your taste for blood and your ambition by any account of glory that I was to have reaped on the 18th or 21st [1861]. When we fell back from Fairfax Court-House Station [July 17th], my post had been assigned, in advance, at Union Mills on the extreme right flank of our position. I was, when directed to do so, at the critical moment, to take the road to Centreville to attack the enemy in flank, and the various other brigades, between this and the point of attack of the enemy, were also to cross the run and do likewise. On the 18th we all remained in position as the enemy did not make a decided attack. On the 21st we were roused before daylight with orders to hold ourselves in

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readiness at a moment's warning, and very soon we could hear the booming of artillery and the faint discharge of musketry far up the run towards the turnpike. About nine a.m. the next general above me sent word he had crossed and was advancing, sending me a copy of his orders which looked to my doing so, although nothing had come to me. I also moved forward, but we were all arrested by an order to fall back to our positions (Hamlin 1935: 105-106).

Ewell did not receive orders to advance and his brigade was not engaged. He remained at the bridge crossing and saw no action on July 21 (Hamlin 1935: 101).

Less than one year later, April 1862, Lieutenant Colonel Barton S. Alexander, stationed in Washington, D.C., wrote,

I think the bridge over Bull Run near Union Mills . . . should be rebuilt or thoroughly repaired, and that a small work [fort] or two or three open battery [sic] should be erected on the adjacent heights to protect it (1862: 65).

That the bridge over Bull Run was reconstructed at least seven times indicates the role of the railroad as a vital source of transportation (Hanson 1961: 59; Miller 1957: 298).

Under the command of a Colonel Hardin, the Union occupation forces sought to guard the bridge from attack by Colonel John S. Mosby's guerrilla bands between 1862 to 1864. "The guerrillas were very troublesome, and the greatest vigilance was required to guard against their sneaking and cowardly attacks" (Bates 1869: 886). So, "the presence of Mosby's guerilla bands gave rise to numerous skirmishes with the Pennsylvania cavalry, which was attached to the Reserve Corps" (Sypher 1865: 501-502).

[The bridge near Union Mills] was visited with fire and sword again and again by both Federals and Confederates, as the fortunes of war gave temporary possession of the desirable bit of ground, first to one side and then to the other (Miller 1957: 299).

From 1861 to 1865, the Orange and Alexandria Railroad bridge and piers near Union Mill were instrumental in maintaining the route of transportation of men and supplies by both Confederate and Union

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forces. The multiple rebuilding signifies the vital importance of the bridge complex during the war years. Today, only the piers exist to signify this "desirable bit of ground." Both inscriptions on the Prince Williams County pier are also significant in themselves. No where else in Prince William County do such inscriptions exist. Each acts to contribute, at a personal level, to our knowledge of the Civil War-era. The construction of the concrete bridge immediately north of the piers has not compromised the integrity of the remains of this vital Civil War bridge.

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1862 Memorandum to Chief Engineer Barnard. In The Official Record of the War of the Rebellion: General Reports. Series I, Vol. V, p.65. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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1869 History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-1865; In Compliance with Acts of the Legislature. Vol. I. Harrisburg: B. Singerly, State Printer.

Burgess, J.

1988 Personal Communication, June.

Davis, W. C.

1982 The Guns of '62: Volume Two of The Image of War 1861-1865. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc.

Hamlin, P. G., Capt.

1935 The Masking of a Soldier: Letters of General R.S. Ewell. Richmond: Whittit and Shepperson.

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McGarry, T.E.

1983a The Phase I Survey of the Proposed Park Development in the Signal Hill and Union Mill Tracts. Prepared for the City of Manassas Park, Prince William County, Virginia.

1983b Development Concepts for the Signal Hill and Union Mills Tracts. Prepared for the City of Manassas Park, Prince William County, Virginia.

Miller, F.T.

1957 The Photographic History of the Civil War: Forts and Artillery. New York: Castle Books.

Sypher, J. R., Esq.

1865 History of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps: A Complete Record of the Organization; and the Different Companies, Regiments and Brigades. Lancaster: Elias Barr and Company

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Figure 5 (1" = 200') shows the boundaries of the two piers at Union Mills. The Orange and Alexandria bridge piers are located approximately 20 feet south of the present-day Southern Railroad bridge over Bull Run. The northeastern boundary corner for the western pier (in Prince William County) is located where the southern edge of the modern railroad bridge pier meets the western edge of Bull Run. From this point the northern boundary line follows the southern edge of the existing railroad bed in a west-northwest direction for 50 feet. At this point, the boundary line makes a 90-degree turn and head in a south-southwest direction for 50 feet at which point the boundary line makes a 90-degree turn to the east-southeast. The southern boundary line is 50 feet south of and runs parallel to the southern edge of the modern railroad bed. The southern boundary line terminates at Bull Run, 50 feet south of the railroad bed. The eastern boundary line of the western bridge pier follows the western shore of Bull Run in a north westerly direction and ends at the southern edge of the modern railroad bed.

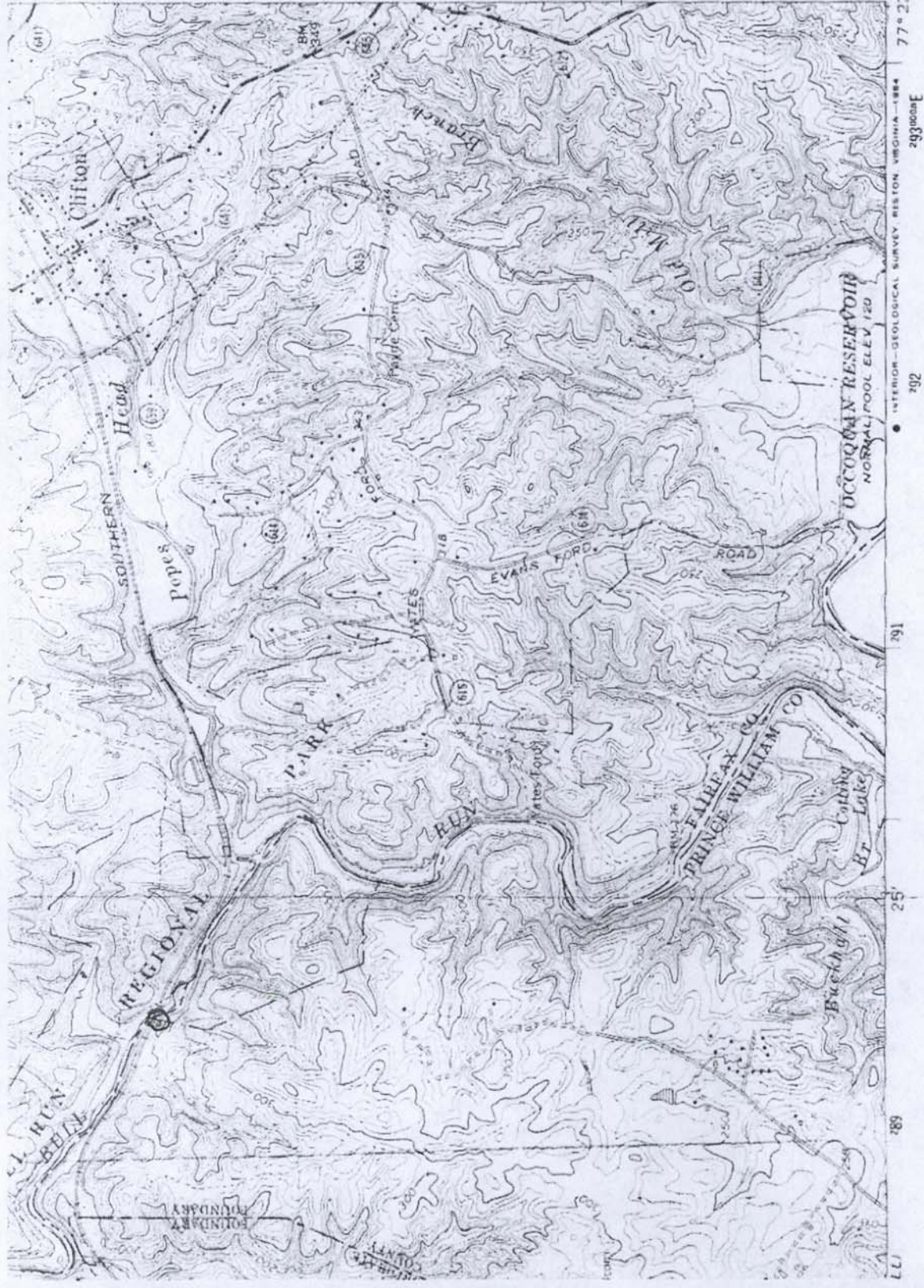
The northern boundary line of the eastern railroad bridge pier (Fairfax County) also corresponds to the southern edge of the modern railroad bed. The northern boundary line begins where the modern bridge pier meets the eastern edge of Bull Run. From this point the line heads in an east-southeast direction for 65 feet at which point it makes a 90-degree turn towards the south-southwest. The eastern boundary line goes to a point 50 feet south of the modern railroad bed and then makes a 90-degree turn towards the west-northwest (southeast corner). The southern boundary line parallels and is 50 feet to the south of the modern railroad bed. It terminates at the eastern shore of Bull Run. The western boundary of the eastern bridge pier follows the eastern shoreline of Bull Run and ends at the point where the modern bridge and Bull Run meet.



Figure 1. 1862 Topographic Map (Whiting/McComb)

CIVIL WAR PROPERTIES
 Prince William Co, VA
 Orange and Alexandria
 Railroad Bridge Piers
 Manassas, VA quad
 UTM References:
 18J289580/4294560

4293
 CIVIL WAR PROPERTIES
 Prince William Co., VA
 Signal Hill
 Prince William Co. VA
 Manassas, VA quad
 UTM References:
 18J289580/4291820
 4292000 N

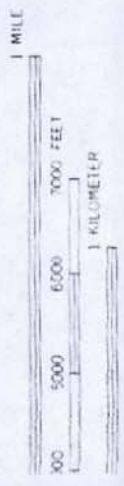


TOCCOQUAN
 SIGNAL HILL

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy-duty
- Medium-duty
- Light-duty
- Unimproved dirt

Interstate Route
 U. S. Route
 State Route



3 FEET
 ANUM OF 1925



MANASSAS, VA.
 38077-G4-TF-024

ACCURACY STANDARDS
 RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
 CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
 BOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1981 and other sources. This information not field checked

1966

National Register Nomination: Orange and Alexandria Railroad Bridge Piers, Prince William County

