

**10. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE**

State Bridge Number 708

**11. PHOTOS (W/ FILM ROLL & FRAME NO.) AND SKETCH MAP OF LOCATION**

12B:27-36A

13B:0-2



13B:0

Mack, Warren W. "A History of Motor Highways in Delaware", in Reed, Henry Clay, Delaware: A History of the First State, vol.2, pp.535-550 (NY: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1947).

Delaware State Program. Delaware State Highways; The Story of Roads in Delaware.... [Newark, Delaware: Press of Kells, 1919].

Federal Writers Project. Delaware: A Guide to the First State. (New York: Viking Press, 1938).

Carter, Dick. The History of Sussex County. Georgetown, Delaware: Community Newspaper Corp., 1976.

Hancock, Harold Bell. The History of Sussex County, Delaware. [s.l. : s.n.] 1976.

Delaware State Archives. Sussex County Road Papers 1875-1940.

Delaware DOT records: Annual Reports; contract files.

Plans on file at Delaware DOT: Contract #643A, 69-040-04

**12. SOURCES**

**13. INVENTORIED BY:**

**AFFILIATION**

**DATE**

P.A.C. Spero & Company with Kidde Consultants for Delaware DOT

April-November 1988

# HABS/HAER INVENTORY

See "HABS/HAER Inventory Guidelines" before filling out this card.

## 1. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

State Bridge Number 708

## 2. LOCATION

Route 24 over Love Creek  
Marshtown, Sussex County, Delaware

## 3. DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION

1939

## 4. USE (ORIGINAL/CURRENT)

Vehicular

## 5. RATING

TB

## 6. CONDITION

Good

Delaware State Bridge 708 is a 21 span timber bridge, 400'-0" long. The spans are equally spaced 18'-9" apart. The bridge was built along a vertical curve. It is composed of 8" x 14" timber beams spaced 1'-6" apart. A 6" deep concrete deck has been placed atop the bridge's timber frame and deck. The superstructure rests on timber bents comprising 12" x 12" beams on piles 12"-15" in diameter and has straight timber wing walls. The bents are braced diagonally. There is a timber pedestrian walkway, 4'-0" wide, cantilevered on the west elevation. The walkway has a timber outside rail 3'-0" in height. The bridge is 33'-0" wide and carries two lanes of traffic and a 4'-0" sidewalk on one side. The vehicular railing measures 3'-6" high and consists of timber posts, a 2" x 6" top rail and a metal intermediate rail.

The Delaware Department of Transportation's records state that Bridge 708 was built in 1939 and underwent alterations or repairs in 1983. Original drawings dated 1938-1939 note this bridge replaced a 1933 "creosote structure" at this site. This bridge was constructed under contract 643A (Federal Aid Project 167-C). As originally constructed it consisted of simple timber spans comprising stringers on bents. The timber deck was covered by a thin bituminous concrete wearing surface. The contract was awarded on June 16, 1939, to Spear-Jones and Company, Inc., of Dover, Delaware, for \$24,814.90. It provided for the removal of the existing 135' structure. Treated timber and piles were supplied by the James I. Wells Company of Salisbury, Maryland, and treated at the plant of Morris and Wells in the same city. Drift pins were supplied by the Key City Bolt and Spike Works of Long Island City, New York; Dietrich Brothers of Baltimore provided the galvanized spikes, and the American Steel and Wire Company of Baltimore furnished wire mesh reinforcement. The structure was designed with an estimated pile length of 44'-5", but it was found that the piles needed to be increased to an average of 53'-10" long in order to develop adequate bearing. Studies for various lengths were made for this replacement bridge; alternatives included a 172' bridge, a 210' bridge costing \$31,000 and a 400' bridge. A.G. Livingston, Highway Department Bridge Engineer wrote to W.W. Mack, Chief Engineer that the 400' length was chosen due to the soft ground at the site and the desirability of a concrete wearing surface; he also noted that the proposed cost of the longer bridge was only \$2000 more than the 210' bridge. The original Love Creek Bridge was 135' long, and removal was a part of the replacement contract costing \$1000.00. The Love Creek Bridge was noted in the 1939 Highway Department Annual Report as one of the year's highlights in Sussex County. Part of a major improvement to a highway carrying "very heavy traffic of pleasure-bound motorists, bound for Rehoboth and Oak Orchard during the summer months, ..the building of Love Creek Bridge and its approaches has eliminated one of the danger spots on this road. The alignment on this section has been eased and the bridge widened."

The majority of bridges surveyed on secondary roads in southern Delaware are simple timber bridges, consisting of timber stringers on pile bents with wood decks and railings. These bridges represent a specific engineering response to conditions characteristic of the region. Most date to the 1930s, although some are attributed earlier dates by the Department. These bridges represent a specific engineering response to conditions characteristic of the region: they present a low-cost solution to the need for short spans crossing the numerous small waterways of southern Delaware. State Bridge No. 708 is an exceptionally long, multiple span example of this type of structure. The individual spans are representative of the type, and the bridge's history illustrates the economy of the type even as a multiple-span structure. Comprising 21 spans, it measures 400 feet long; most timber girder bridges in southern Delaware consist of only one span, usually less than 20 feet long. Bridge 708 is significant as an unusual variation of a common type, and for its association with the development of the road network in Sussex County during this period, when efforts were directed toward facilitating travel the growing seaside resorts.