

A Note on Quantification

Although quantification of results is anticipated to be included in the comprehensive survey of Maryland's historic bridges, this historic context report does not include detailed tabulations or numerical counts of historic bridges within the state. Such tabulations and numerical totals have not been included because any counts based upon existing sources of data would be flawed.

Existing data sources on historic bridges include the following:

- Prior historic resource survey forms, including those generated during the 1980-1981 State Highway Administration bridge survey.
- The 1993 *Bridge Inventory*, published by the State Highway Administration Office of Bridge Development, which lists all state-owned bridges in Maryland.
- The 1993 list of county-owned bridges in Maryland, a computer database located at the Office of Bridge Development of the State Highway Administration.

While each of these sources has been used in preparation of this historic context report, each source possesses serious limitations if it is to be used to provide definitive numerical data for extant historic bridges. These limitations include the following:

- Prior historic resource survey forms are not up to date regarding the existence or condition of bridges described and do not include consistently detailed bridge descriptions or photographs.
- The 1993 *Bridge Inventory* does not offer detailed or exact identification of bridge types for historic resource tabulation purposes. Metal truss bridges, metal girder bridges, and concrete arch bridges are not distinguished by type or subtype. Additionally, the *Bridge Inventory* lists only state-owned highway bridges and does not indicate how post-construction repairs may have affected the historic fabric of older bridges.
- The 1993 list of county-owned bridges in Maryland includes only county-owned spans and does not adequately distinguish the types and subtypes of historic bridges. A large number of bridges on the list are of unknown or

undetermined construction date; many of those are listed simply as "1900" or "Pre-1900."

Without verification of bridge types, construction dates, and existing conditions resulting from field survey, numerical tabulations are meaningless. The cumulative result of the database limitations is to preclude reliable use of the resources to tabulate historic bridge types without results of a field survey.