**1. NAME**

**HISTORIC**

Interlaken Mill Bridge

**AND/OR COMMON**


**2. LOCATION**

**STREET & NUMBER**

Spanning the Pawtuxet River south of the Arkwright Mill complex in the village of Arkwright in the northeastern corner of Coventry.

**CITY, TOWN**

Coventry

**STATE**

Rhode Island

**CODE**

44

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

#2 Honorable Edward Beard

**COUNTY**

Kent County

**CODE**

005


**3. CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRICT</td>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
<td>OCCUPIED</td>
<td>AGRICULTURE</td>
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<td>PRIVATE</td>
<td>UNOCCUPIED</td>
<td>COMMERCIAL</td>
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<td>STRUCTURE</td>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
<td>WORK IN PROGRESS</td>
<td>PARK</td>
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<tr>
<td>SITE</td>
<td>IN PROCESS</td>
<td>ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td>EDUCATIONAL</td>
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<td>OBJECT</td>
<td>BEING CONSIDERED</td>
<td>YES: RESTRICTED</td>
<td>PRIVATE RESIDENCE</td>
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</table>

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

**NAME**

Arkwright Incorporated

**STREET & NUMBER**

Main Street

**CITY, TOWN**

Fiskeville, Cranston

**STATE**

Rhode Island

**CODE**

02823


**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.**

Coventry Town Hall

**STREET & NUMBER**

75 Main Street

**CITY, TOWN**

Coventry

**STATE**

Rhode Island


**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE**

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

**DATE**

both surveys 1977-1978

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission; Old Slater Mill, Pawtucket, R.I.; HAER, Washington, D.C.
The Interlaken Mill Bridge is located south of the mill buildings of Arkwright Incorporated on the Pawtuxet River in the northeastern corner of the town of Coventry. The bridge was built about 1885 to connect the new dye house and bleachery (1883) of the Interlaken Company on the north side of the river with the former Arkwright Mills (now demolished) on the south bank.

The Interlaken Mill Bridge is a Douglas and Jarvis Patent parabolic truss bridge. It is a pony, pin-construction, box-girder, lenticular truss bridge, consisting of a single span, 92 feet long, 18 feet, 9 inches wide, with a depth of truss of 11 feet, 3 inches. The term "lenticular" describes the bridge's distinctive lens-shaped appearance.

Each truss has six panels. The upper chord consists of sheet metal plates riveted together forming a box section. The lower chord consists of parallel wrought-iron bars pinned at 15-foot intervals from each other, to the vertical members and to hangers, with two bars located at each end panel.

The vertical members are lattice girders, pinned to the upper and lower chords. The diagonals are wrought-iron rods pinned to the upper and lower chords and tensioned by turnbuckles. The floor beams and plate girders are suspended from and pinned to the lower chord. The wooden deck rests upon lengthwise stringers placed upon the floor beams. The lower lateral bracing consists of six sets of two wrought-iron tie rods crossed diagonally forming an "X" shape connected at the pin locations. The bridge, resting on cut-stone abutments, carries a roadway as well as utility lines across the Pawtuxet River.

Although scaled down to one span, the Interlaken Mill Bridge replicates the principles and appearance of the five-span Aiken Street Bridge of 1883 in Lowell, Massachusetts, which is considered one of the finest late nineteenth century iron bridges in America.
The Interlaken Mill Bridge is the only lenticular truss bridge known to survive in Rhode Island.

The prefabricated metal truss bridge was an innovative engineering solution to the problem of spanning small rivers and streams during the last half of the nineteenth century. Such bridges were assembled from standard "shelf" components to match the specifications of local buyers. The lenticular or parabolic truss was designed and patented in 1878 and again in 1885 by William O. Douglas of New York.

The Interlaken Mill Bridge was built by the Berlin Iron Bridge Company of East Berlin, Connecticut, which had a virtual monopoly on this type of bridge. While the Berlin Iron Bridge Company held the patent rights to produce lenticular truss bridges, more than three hundred were erected all over the country—relatively few have survived.

The bridge was erected to connect the new dye house and bleachery of the Interlaken Company, on the north side of the Pawtuxet River, with the former Arkwright Mills on the south bank, which Interlaken, incorporated in 1883, had acquired. The Arkwright-Interlaken Company produced book cloths and Holland shades. They are now the country's largest producer of drafting cloth.

The bridge is in good condition, although in need of painting. It is not in use at present—the mills on the south bank have been demolished, as has the railway spur. Due to recent vandalism by motorcyclists, Arkwright Incorporated has erected gates at either end of the bridge preventing all access.
**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**


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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UTM REFERENCES</th>
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<tr>
<td>NORTHING 5678</td>
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</table>

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
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</thead>
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**FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE: Vivienne Lasky, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

STREET & NUMBER: 150 Benefit Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

STATE: Rhode Island

CODE: 02903

DATE: October, 1978

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**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL___ STATE X LOCAL___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: [Signature]

TITLE: State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE: October 30, 1978

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**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER