(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **REGISTRATION FORM**

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Don Gaspar Bridge

OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: El Puente de Los Conquistadores; Bridge 3023; NRM 14-D

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Don Gaspar Avenue, crossing over the Santa Fe River between Alameda and East De Vargas streets NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A **CITY OR TOWN:** Santa Fe VICINITY: N/A **ZIP CODE: 87501** CODE: NM **CODE:** 049

STATE: New Mexico

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 _x_meets _____does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____nationally _x__statewide _ _locally. (___See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

an U Boll

Signature of certifying official State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property <u>meets</u> does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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	Signature of the Keeper Signature of the Keeper San A. Beall	Date of Action
determined not engible for the National Register removed from the National Register other (explain):		

8/29/02

Date

Date

COUNTY: Santa Fe

1163

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Public-local

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Structure

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	Noncontributing
	0	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	1	0 structures
	0	0 objects
	1	0 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: $\boldsymbol{0}$

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: TRANSPORTATION/road-related

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: TRANSPORTATION/road-related

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: LATE 19th CENTURY AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Pueblo

MATERIALS:	FOUNDATION	CONCRETE
	WALLS	CONCRETE
	ROOF	N/A
	OTHER	CONCRETE; ASPHALT

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-7).

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- _x_A PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- **B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- _x_C PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- **D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: ENGINEERING; ARCHITECTURE; SOCIAL HISTORY

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1934-1952

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1934

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Van de Greyn, E. B., bridge engineer; Trent, Thomas, architect; Shufflebarger, F.D., builder.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-9 through 8-15).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheets 9-16 through 9-17).

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:

<u>x</u> State historic preservation office (*Historic Preservation Division, Office of Cultural Affairs*)

- _ Other state agency
- _ Federal agency
- _Local government
- _ University
- _ Other -- Specify Repository:

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES	Zone Easting	Northing
	1 13 414980	3949212

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The nomination encompasses the bridge from the extreme limits of the north wingwalls to the extreme limits of the south wingwalls.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION This boundary includes all of the elements of the 1934 constructed bridge.

11. FORM PREPARED BY NAME/TITLE: Historic Preservation Division Staff ORGANIZATION: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division DATE: July 2002 STREET & NUMBER: 228 East Palace Avenue, Room 320 TELEPHONE: 505-827-6320 CITY OR TOWN: Santa Fe STATE: NM ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS Santa Fe, N. Mex., 7.5-minute series map indicating the property's location (see attached).

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-18).

ADDITIONAL ITEMS N/A

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: City of Santa Fe, Public Works Department

STREET & NUMBER: PO Box 909

CITY OR TOWN: Santa Fe

STATE: NM

Telephone: 505-955-6621

ZIP CODE: 87501

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Don Gaspar Bridge Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Description:

The Don Gaspar Bridge, historically known as El Puente de Los Conquistadores, is located on Don Gaspar Avenue over the Santa Fe River south of the Plaza in Santa Fe. The 58'-long bridge is composed of a single reinforced concrete rigid-frame span and carries two lanes of traffic, with generous sidewalks provided on both sides of the roadway. The arched span reveals the Pueblo Revival style in its rounded end posts, stuccoed texture, and earth-colored scheme. With few modifications, the Don Gaspar Bridge has spanned the Santa Fe River for nearly 70 years, retaining much of its original appearance and integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

El Puente de Los Conquistadores is situated at the southern edge of the downtown area of Santa Fe. To the north is Alameda Street and businesses catering to the tourist trade of the city. Between the river and the street is a wide grassy area planted with mature evergreens and elms that is part of the linear Santa River State Park or Alameda. South of the river, ascending a slight rise, is the beginning of the Capitol Complex of state government buildings, including the 1937 New Mexico Supreme Court Building (HPD 1795) located just southeast of the bridge.

The Santa Fe River flows south and southwest through Santa Fe from its headwaters in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains northeast of the city, eventually converging with the Rio Grande near Cochiti Pueblo. Most of the river through the central core of the city is lined with concrete channel installed in 1935 as part of the New Deal Santa Fe River State Park. As two upstream dams govern the river's flow, the waterway is essentially intermittent in flow, with many periods when the streambed is completely dry.

The Don Gaspar Bridge gracefully spans the Santa Fe River by a 50'-long elliptical arch expressed in the Pueblo Revival style (see Photo 1). Measuring 57'-10" in total length, the bridge carries two lanes of traffic over a 41'-6"-wide concrete roadway (see Photo 2). Seven-foot wide sidewalks are provided on both sides of the structure. The handrail, or parapet, is composed of a solid concrete wall continuing above the arch and treated with a pebbled-dash finish. The walls terminate with heavy concrete posts rounded at the corners to reflect the blunted parapet ends of the Pueblo Revival style (see Photo 3).

El Puente de Los Conquistadores is composed of a rigid-frame design, with the superstructure and substructure of the bridge poured monolithically as a single unit so that the load-bearing members are continuous with the legs or vertical supports. The frame, composed of an elaborate pattern of reinforcing bars, is 18" deep at its crown and 48" at its haunches, creating a 5'-6" rise along the elliptical curve (see Figure 7-1). Its footings are carried deeply 14'-6" below the springline into a foundation of concrete conglomerate. This method of construction permitted the thick shoulder joints of the bridge to absorb the load normally carried by the deck, resulting a thinner deck floor and narrow arch profile. Skewed wingwalls terminate the bridge at its northeast and southeast ends; the northwest corner has a straight wingwall, while the southwest corner joins

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Don Gaspar Bridge Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

directly with the concrete retaining wall. Drop inlets draining into the Santa Fe River are located below the curb line at the southwest and southeast corners of the bridge. Currently, a small water line attached by three metal brackets, runs along the west side of the bridge. Because of its small size and the extensive vegetation of the drainage way, this minor intrusion does not affect the historic integrity or appearance of the bridge.

Though much of the setting to the north has changed over the years from that of an area of earlier automobile-related businesses to a commercial strip of small shops and restaurants, El Puente de Los Conquistadores has survived remarkably intact amidst development in a city that has grown from a population of 20, 227 in 1940 to 78,976 in 2000. Its sturdy construction, wide roadway, and harmonious design, have guaranteed its survival to carry the traffic needs of the modern city, with little change to its historic appearance or design.

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Don Gaspar Bridge Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Figure 7-1:Plan Profile of Don Gaspar Bridge (courtesy New Mexico State Highway and
Transportation Department Records Control, Santa Fe, New Mexico)



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Don Gaspar Bridge Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Statement of Significance:

Dedicated on June 23 1934, the Don Gaspar Bridge opened a new crossing to the emerging Capitol Complex south of the Santa Fe River. Designed in the Pueblo Revival manner, the bridge is important for consciously applying the so-called "Santa Fe style" to a utilitarian structure. Made of a rigid-frame design, the bridge was the first of its type in New Mexico and became the standard for subsequent spans over the Santa Fe River. Because of its significance as the first rigid-frame bridge erected in the state and its artistic expression of the Pueblo Revival style, the Don Gaspar Bridge is eligible to the National Register at the state level under Criterion C in the areas of Engineering and Architecture. The bridge is additionally significant as an example of a notable New Deal work-relief project and, therefore, eligible under Criterion A in the area of Social History at the state level of significance.

History of Crossing

Prior to the construction of the 1886 Territorial capitol, the area occupying the south side of the river near the Don Gaspar Bridge consisted mainly of agricultural fields and scattered adobe compounds.¹ Land use, however, would change after the United States' occupation in 1846 when the area was selected as the site for a new Territorial capitol. The Territorial government temporarily used the Palace of Governors as its governmental offices while constructing a new capitol to the north in 1853. Beset by a constant lack of funds, when finished in 1889, the building was considered more suitable for use as a federal courthouse than the Territorial capitol.² In 1884 the Legislative Assembly voted to construct another capitol building south of the Santa Fe River. Choosing a parcel of farmland between present-day East De Vargas Street and Manhattan Avenue. The new edifice consisted of a formidable, four-story Beaux-Arts style building, designed by Chicago architect E.S. Jenison. This building burned to the ground in 1892, presumably by arson. After many delays, a second capitol of Neo Classical style was erected on the same site in 1900.

The construction of the 1886 capitol coincided with a plan to extend Don Gaspar Avenue, then a short dirt road terminating near the north side of the river, southward along the future capitol grounds, with the intention that the new road would become a prosperous business thoroughfare, advancing development south of the Plaza.³ Because of problems acquiring right-of-way, the extension was delayed for many years, and not considered again until 1929, when the State Highway Department proposed rerouting U.S. 66 and U.S. 85 along Don Gaspar Avenue. Even during the time of the bridge's construction in 1934, Don Gaspar Avenue south of the river was a narrow road, with the landscaped grounds of the Capitol and Governor's Mansion to the west

¹ Lt. José Urrutia Map of 1766-1768; Lt. J. F. Gilmore Map of 1846.

² Corrine P. Sze and Beverly Spears. Santa Fe Historic Neighborhood Study. Santa Fe: City of Santa Fe, 1988: 47.

³ Corrine P. Sze and Beverly Spears. Santa Fe Historic Neighborhood Study. Santa Fe: City of Santa Fe, 1988: 75.

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Don Gaspar Bridge Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

preventing any expansion of roadway. It was only with the demolition of the Governor's Mansion in 1955 and the subsequent development of the master plan for the Capitol Complex, that Don Gaspar Avenue expanded to its current wide roadway.

The first span of any significance at this crossing was constructed in 1902 when the Santa Fe County Commissioners approved a design for a stone bridge. Designed by engineer David M. White, the two-span arch bridge was constructed entirely of stone and featured two elliptical arches, each 30' in length. The stone bridge replaced a derelict wooden span, and was erected quickly with convict labor in order to open before the next legislative assembly convened.⁴

The handsome stone bridge was adequate for this crossing until the late 1920s, when increased tourist and local traffic made travel across its narrow roadway difficult. Situated near the garages and gas stations that fueled the tourist trade of Santa Fe, including the large 120-car Closson & Closson Garage at the northwest corner of Alameda and the multiple bay Koury's Service Station across the street, the bridge became a shortcut for drivers moving between the Plaza and the southbound connection of U.S. 66 and U.S. 85 at Cerrillos Road. The stone bridge had also become a liability because its massive center pier collected drift during periods of high water, resulting in a flooding of its roadway. The bridge's limited road width and a history of flooding played a large part in replacing the relatively intact structure with a modern reinforced concrete span.

New Bridges and the New Deal

Construction of the Don Gaspar Bridge is tied directly to a New Deal program aimed at improving municipal transportation during the Depression. Created by Executive order of June 16, 1933, under the National Industrial Recovery Act, the program provided \$400,000,000 to states for highway construction. Based solely on its population, New Mexico received \$5,7929.35 of the allotment for 1933.⁵ Under the act, 25 percent of the funds were to be used to extend federal aid system highways through municipalities. Titled the National Recovery Municipal (NRM) program, the program provided cities and towns federal funds to repair and improve their roadways that would have otherwise gone unattended during the Depression. In New Mexico NRM funds typically paid for road resurfacing projects, but included more substantial undertakings, such as the Don Gaspar Bridge, and large reinforced concrete railroad overpasses in Union, Otero, and Lincoln counties.

As part of a Federal Aid Project (FAP 7), the Don Gaspar Bridge was to play a pivotal role in rerouting U.S. 64, locally known as the Santa Fe-Espanola Highway, through Santa Fe. This highway, which essentially follows present-day Old Taos Highway north to Espanola, served as the main north-south link between Santa Fe and Taos, and an important conduit of tourist and trucking traffic in and out of the city. Under the program, the

⁴ "A Modern Stone Bridge: Plans For a Structure That Should Be Built Across the Santa Fe River." Santa Fe New Mexican 11 April 1902: no page.

⁵ G.D. Macy. "New Mexico's Recovery Road Program." New Mexico July 1933: 14+.

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Don Gaspar Bridge Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

highway was divided into north and southbound traffic, with the northbound diverting from the original road to follow Water Street to Shelby, and then along the north side of the Plaza to Lincoln Avenue, where it joined North Federal Place and crossed Arroyo de las Mascaras on the Grant Avenue Bridge (HPD 545).⁶ The Don Gaspar Bridge, south of the Plaza, joined both the north and southbound traffic of U.S. 64 to its connection with U.S. 66 and U.S. 85 at Cerrillos Road, thus relieving the congestion of the three highways that formerly crossed the river at Old Santa Fe Trail. As such, the new bridge was designed with an extremely wide roadway and the ability to carry a 15-ton live load.

Bridge Design

The design of the Don Gaspar Bridge introduced a relatively new and sophisticated spanning technology to New Mexico, where most bridges up until that time were simple span types of modest engineering. The rigid-frame design has its origins in late 19th century Europe, where bridge engineers sought through theory, rather than as Americans in empirical application, the elasticity of reinforced concrete to render a thinner bridge span and, therefore, a more pleasing profile suitable for aesthetic treatment. The rigid-frame is unique in that the superstructure and substructure are integral. This method of construction allowed for the thick shoulder joints of the bridge to absorb the load normally carried by the deck. Civil Engineer Arthur G. Hayden introduced the rigid-frame bridge to the United States in the early 1920s for the creation of a system of parkways in Westchester County, New York. During the 1930s and 1940s, rigid-frame bridges became a popular choice for short spans in urban areas, parks, and underpasses, and railroad grade separations, where a clear span and a slender arch profile were required.

Because of the unusual nature of the design, and the fact that it was to be constructed as part of a Federal Aid Project, the New Mexico State Highway Department and the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads designed the bridge jointly. State Bridge Engineer E.B. Van de Greyn prepared the structural layout plans, which were then reviewed by J.A. Elliot, District Engineer of the U.S. Bureau of Public Road's Denver office. An unusual stipulation of the contract was that the bridge had to harmonize "with the Spanish type of architecture peculiar to this vicinity."⁷ To satisfy this requirement, National Park Service architect Trent Thomas, designed the architectural treatment for the bridge's arch ring and handrails. Thomas, a Santa Fe resident and a former a staff architect for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), went on to become the Assistant Architect for the Santa Fe office of the National Park Service between 1938 and 1941, and of many projects during the New Deal, worked on the design for the New Mexico School for the Deaf and supervised the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) in New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah.

Thomas' design, featuring the raised arch ring, curving handrail, and rounded end posts, was selected over several layouts reviewed by architect noted regional John Gaw Meem and Jesse Nusbaum, then of the State

⁶ John L. Slye. Letter to G.D. Macy, State Highway Engineer. 29 Jan. 1934.

⁷ W.J. Keller. "Memorandum for Chief of the Bureau" 18 Jan. 1934: 4.

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Don Gaspar Bridge Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Park Commission, for compatibility with the Santa Fe style of architecture. Although city records for this period are no longer extant, it is assumed that the issue of its architectural treatment went before a form of public review, as State Highway Engineer G.D. Macy in a letter to J.A. Elliot states that the bridge design "meets with the approval of the Town, especially Architects and Artists who favor the Santa Fe style of Architecture."⁸

Bridge Construction

An agreement between the State Highway Commission and the Secretary of Agriculture was approved in July 1933, and survey of the site began in September. Bidding on the contract opened on January 30 and was awarded to Frank D. Shufflebarger. Shufflebarger, an Albuquerque-based general road contractor, was also building a concrete portion of Don Gaspar Avenue (NRM 14-C) north of the bridge, and had previous experience constructing highway bridges, including the 1925 Rio Puerco span along U.S. 66 (HPD 1662) west of Albuquerque. After completing the Don Gaspar Bridge, Shufflebarger continued working on New Deal projects, including in 1937 the monumental Central Avenue Underpass in Albuquerque.

Construction of the bridge began on February 6, 1934, with an estimated 40 men employed to build the span by its 120-day required completion date. Workers were taken directly from the local county relief rolls and paid 75 cents per hour for skilled labor and 50 cents for unskilled work. Work began with crushing concrete aggregate and removing the stone arch bridge. After its removal, construction crews erected special "cribbing" formwork along the outer edge of the spandrel walls and began assembling the intricate frame of reinforced steel (see Figure 8-1). Upon completion of the frame in late March, workers spanned the bridge by temporary wood walkways and poured fill directly over the frame. Completing the fill in April, workers poured the concrete floor (see Figure 8-2). Finishing work began in May, and the bridge opened for traffic on June 16 (see Figure 8-3). In total the \$37,000 bridge required 755 cubic yards of concrete, 56 tons of reinforcing steel, 3,406 pounds of structural steel, and 1,200 square yards of concrete.⁹

A New Span For the City Different

At its dedication, before a crowd of 1,500, Governor A.W. Hockenhull, declared the bridge to be another achievement of Santa Fe, the "City Different." With the bridge festooned with colored lights, the crowd was treated to the music of the Conquistadores band and commemorative speeches given by Governor Hockenhull, State Highway Engineer G.D. Macy, and Henry Dendahl, President of the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce on the bridge's merits, which was enthusiastically noted as "constructed without any cost whatever [sic] to the city of Santa Fe."¹⁰ Miss Jean Barker officially christened the bridge El Puente de Los Conquistadores, which the

⁸ G.D. Macy. Letter to J.A. Elliot. 13 Nov. 1934.

⁹ Pierre Woodman. "Santa Fe Dedicates 'El Puente de Los Conquistadores."" New Mexico July, 1934: 13.

¹⁰ "Nearly 1,500 See Big Bridge Dedicated Saturday Night." Santa Fe New Mexican 25 June 1934: 3.

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Don Gaspar Bridge Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Santa Fe New Mexican described as "a monument to the harmonious living together in a seat of Spanish civilization of two diverse cultures."¹¹

The popularity of the Don Gaspar Bridge soon spread beyond Santa Fe. On August 13, 1934, State Highway Engineer Macy received a letter from *Engineering News-Record*, requesting an article on the construction of the bridge for a future publication in the journal. In the letter, W.G. Bowman, praised the bridge as "one of the best examples of indigenous architecture that has come to our attention" and concluded, "Certainly no other rigid frame bridge quite like it exists."¹² The offer to run a story on the bridge was a great compliment to the State Highway Department, as it was the first transportation-related structure in New Mexico to receive any national attention. Macy responded positively, and an article penned by Assistant Bridge Engineer, William E. Strohm, appeared in the October 25, 1934 issue of the magazine.

During the ensuing years, El Puente de Los Conquistadores continued to play an important role as the gateway between the old downtown and the evolving capitol district and automobile suburbs south of the river. With the construction of the 1937 Supreme Court Building and the completion of the State Capitol Complex in the 1960s, the bridge became the only direct link between the old colonial Plaza and the postwar complex of state government buildings that increasingly defined the city's new economy and image. Because of its wide roadway and heavy load capacity, the bridge has never been considered for widening or replacement, whereas most other historic bridges spanning this section of the river have since been replaced. To this end, El Puente de Los Conquistadores has influenced the design of each new span over the Santa Fe River in downtown Santa Fe. With the exception of the historic 1928 Delgado Street Bridge, all city-built bridges, including the most recent 1986 Old Santa Fe Trail Bridge, are of the graceful rigid-frame design, proving the permanence and influence of New Mexico's first rigid-frame bridge.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² W.G. Bowman. Letter to G.D. Macy, State Highway Engineer. 13 Aug. 1934.

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Figure 8-1 Cribbing and Framework (courtesy New Mexico State Archives, Sue Barton Collection #1977-036, Box # 9234, Image #1129-4)



NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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Figure 8-2 Pouring the Floor, (courtesy New Mexico State Archives, Sue Barton Collection #1977-036, Box # 9234, Image #1129-2)



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Don Gaspar Bridge Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Figure 8-3 Completed Bridge (courtesy New State Highway and Transportation Department, Bridge Design Section Files, Bridge Inspection File # 3023)



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Don Gaspar Bridge Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Photo Log

Don Gaspar Bridge

Don Gaspar Avenue over the Santa Fe River Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico John W. Murphey June 2002 Negatives on file with Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Office of Cultural Affairs

Photo No. 1 of 3 East elevation Camera facing southwest

Photo No. 2 of 3 Roadway Camera facing south

Photo No. 3 of 3 Northeast end post Camera facing northeast