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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 Bell Bridge  
other name/site number Allen Bridge; Niobrara River Bridge; NEHBS Number CE00-22

2. Location

street & number county road over the Niobrara River N/A not for publication  
city, town 11.9 miles northeast of Valentine X vicinity  
state NE county Cherry code 031 zip code 69201

3. Classification

Ownership of Property Cherry County Number of Resources within Property  
Category of Property structure 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: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Highway Bridges in Nebraska, 1870-1942

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

[Signature] DSHP 5/6/92  
Signature of certifying official Date

Nebraska State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property        meets        does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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] 6/29/92  
Entered in the National Register

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Function (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related

Current Function (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)

OTHER /pin-connected Pratt through truss

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other N/A

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Located 11.9 miles northeast of Valentine, the Bell Bridge spans the Niobrara River in a rural Cherry County setting that has changed little since the structure's period of significance. Other than maintenance-related repairs, the bridge remains essentially unaltered as it continues to carry vehicular traffic. The Bell Bridge today retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. A description of the structure follows:

span number:	1	construction date:	1903
span length:	147.0'	construction cost:	\$5019.36
total length:	188.0'	current condition:	good
roadway wdt.:	13.8'	alterations:	none

superstructure: steel, 8-panel, pin-connected Pratt through truss with timber stringer approach spans  
substructure: stone and timber abutments with concrete-filled steel cylinder piers  
floor/decking: timber deck over timber stringers  
other features: upper chord: 2 channels with cover plate and lacing; lower chord: 2 looped rectangular eyebars; vertical: 2 channels with lacing; 1 looped square eyebar; diagonal: 2 looped rectangular eyebars; lateral bracing: round bar; strut: 2 angles; floor beam: I-beam field bolted to vertical; guardrail: timber; bridge plate: ALLEN BR.; portal-mounted builder's plate: 1903 THE CANTON BRIDGE CO. BUILDERS CANTON OHIO

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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

	statewide
Applicable National Register Criteria	C
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	N/A
Areas of Significance	Engineering
Period of Significance	1903 (The period of significance is derived from the original construction date.)
Significant Dates	1903
Cultural Affiliation	N/A
Significant Person	N/A
Architect/Builder (Designer)	Canton Bridge Company, Canton OH
(Fabricator)	Cambria Steel Company, Pittsburgh PA
(Builder)	Canton Bridge Company, Canton OH

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations and areas of significance noted above.

The Cherry County Commissioners began considering construction of a bridge at the Bell crossing of the Niobrara River when they visited the site in January 1902. Located twelve miles northeast of Valentine, the crossing was situated about midway between the existing Berry and Brewer bridges. The commissioners deferred action until the following March, however, at which time they received a petition from C.F. Callen for a new iron span here. After visiting the site on March 18th, the commissioners granted the petition and ordered a pinned through truss from the Canton Bridge Company of Canton, Ohio. A Canton crew began excavations for the abutments soon thereafter and, using steel rolled by Cambria, had completed the erection of this medium-span truss by November. Total cost: \$5019.36. Later called the Allen Bridge, the truss was one of four in the county standing intact after the February 1916 flood. It has carried vehicular traffic since, and has retained an excellent degree of physical integrity.

As one of the oldest, longest and best-preserved of Cherry County's remarkable group of through trusses, the Bell Bridge is an excellent example of what was once a mainstay vehicular truss type: the pinned Pratt through truss. It is today distinguished as one of the handful of pre-1916 trusses remaining intact in the county and one of the oldest intact through trusses in Nebraska.

For further contextual information regarding bridge building in Nebraska, registration requirements, and property types, see related multiple property listing "Highway Bridges in Nebraska, 1870 - 1942."

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Nebraska Department of Roads, Structure Inventory and Appraisal: Structure Number C001611605P; Cherry County Commissioners' Record, Book C: 18 March 1903 (page 69), 27 November 1903 (page 98), 20 June 1904 (page 129), 27 July 1915 (page 162), 18 February 1916 (page 209), 23 February 1916 (page 209), 29 February 1916 (page 210), 3 March 1916 (page 211), 24 March 1916 (page 213), 9 September 1916 (page 245), 10 September 1918 (page 404), located at Cherry County Courthouse, Valentine, Nebraska; field inspection by Clayton Fraser, 25 April 1990.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

\_\_\_ 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:)

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property    less than one acre  
Cadastral Reference    S25, T34N, R26W  
USGS Quadrangle        Sparks, Nebraska - South Dakota (7.5 Minute Series, 1983)  
UTM References         zone 14    easting 392040    northing 4749790

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is a rectangular shaped parcel measuring 188 feet by 15.8 feet, which is centered on the UTM point listed above. Included within this rectangular parcel are the bridge's superstructure, substructure, floor system, and approach spans.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated structure includes the bridge's superstructure, substructure, floor system, any approach spans and the property on which they rest. These boundaries encompass, but do not exceed, all of the property that has been historically associated with this bridge.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title	Clayton B. Fraser, Principal	date	30 June 1991
organization	Fraserdesign and Hess, Roise and Company	telephone	303-669-7969
street & number	1269 Cleveland Avenue	state	Colorado
city or town	Loveland	zip code	80537

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