NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 10024-0018

RECEIVED 2280

AUG 28 2001

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

**United States Department of the Interior**
**National Park Service**

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

104

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Cottonwood Creek Bridge

other names/site number Vincent Drive Bridge over Cottonwood Creek; CSG-H.01-15.11/ 5EP972

## 2. Location

street & number on Vincent Drive over Cottonwood Creek [N/A] not for publication

city or town Colorado Springs [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county El Paso code 041 zip code 80918

## 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 [ ] statewide [ X ] locally. ( [ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Georgianna Contiguglia State Historic Preservation Officer August 21, 2001
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Office, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.
( [ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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
[ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper: Entered in the National Register

Date of Action: 10/12/01

Cottonwood Creek Bridge
Name of Property

El Paso County, Colorado
County/State

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**
(Check as many boxes as apply)

[ ] private
[X] public-local
[ ] public-State
[ ] public-Federal

**Category of Property**
(Check only one box)

[ ] building(s)
[ ] district
[ ] site
[X] structure
[ ] object

**Number of Resources within Property**
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 0 | buildings |
| 0 | 0 | sites |
| 1 | 0 | structures |
| 0 | 0 | objects |
| 1 | 0 | Total |

**Name of related multiple property listing.**
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Function**
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/road-related

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/road-related

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: cantilevered concrete girder bridge

**Materials**
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls
roof
other concrete

**Narrative Description**
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Cottonwood Creek Bridge | El Paso county, Colorado
Name of Property | County/State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[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 values, 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
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

[ ] **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] **B** removed from its original location.

[ ] **C** a birthplace or grave.

[ ] **D** a cemetery.

[ ] **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[ ] **F** a commemorative property.

[ ] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Engineering
Transportation

### Periods of Significance
1923 - 1951

### Significant Dates
1923

### Significant Person(s)
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).
N/A

### Cultural Affiliation
N/A

### Architect/Builder
Colorado Department of Highways

### Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 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:

[X] State Historic Preservation Office

[ ] Other State Agency

[ ] Federal Agency

[ ] Local Government

[ ] University

[X] Other

Name of repository:
Colorado Historical Society
Colorado Department of Transportation

Cottonwood Creek Bridge
Name of Property

El Paso County, Colorado
County/State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** less than one

**UTM References**
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 13 | 516490 | 4308660 |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer R. Schaefer / architecture graduate student (edited by OAHP staff)

organization _____ date _____

street & number 9735 East Tom Tom Drive telephone 303-841-4724

city or town Parker state Colorado zip code 80138

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**
A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**
Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional Items**
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Colorado Springs (Department of Highway Engineers)

street & number City Administration Building, 30 South Nevada Avenue telephone 719-385-5407

city or town Colorado Springs state Colorado zip code 80901

## DESCRIPTION

Completed in 1923 and located at the northern periphery of Colorado Springs between Woodmen Road and Dublin Boulevard, the Cottonwood Creek Bridge is an example of a concrete deck girder bridge. The 213-foot long bridge is comprised of four 53-foot spans, supported continuously by reinforced concrete abutments and spill-through piers. Reinforced concrete wingwalls complete the substructure, while an asphalt overlay covers the concrete deck. The 20-foot wide roadway that crosses the bridge is presently named Vincent Drive, though it was originally part of the state highway system. The most significant structural aspects of the bridge are the arched haunches on the girders, indicating that they were cantilevered over the piers. The bridge is also noteworthy for its paneled bulkheads and the cast concrete balustrade with bush-hammered spandrels and distinctive urn-shaped balusters, that functions as a guardrail. Though still in use as a roadway bridge, nearby Interstate 25 has relieved most of the north-south traffic in the area, leaving Cottonwood Creek Bridge in good condition with very little alteration since its construction.

The roadway currently serves a light industrial and commercial area, which includes a fire station immediately south of the bridge. Cottonwood Creek, itself, is relatively shallow, and a gauging station is set up along the creek under the bridge. The banks of the creek are very steep, so little foot traffic occurs around the site. These features have kept the bridge almost entirely free of vandalism and the surrounding area fairly clear of debris. Despite the frequent freeze-thaw cycles of the Front Range, the concrete has weathered very well, and the asphalt roadway topping has been maintained. Beyond regular maintenance, there have been few alterations. Steel flex beams were added at the approaches around 1980. In 1996, emergency repairs were performed, which included reinforcing the footing with concrete to secure a pier that began shifting.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The Cottonwood Creek Bridge is eligible under criterion A for its association with the transportation history of Colorado, most notably the North-South Highway. During the 1910s and 1920s, the north-south route functioned as the main artery through the state, carrying nearly three-fourths of Colorado's highway traffic (Fraser). During this time, the Highway Commission made incremental improvements, which included grading, paving, re-building sections, and constructing bridges. Completed in 1923, the bridge was an integral part of the North-South Highway during this formative period. Although the bridge carried main line traffic until the late 1960s, the period of significance ends in 1951 in order to comply with the National Register's fifty year rule.

The Cottonwood Creek Bridge is also eligible under criterion C for its engineering significance as an intact, early example of Colorado Highway Department bridge design. The bridge, a cantilevered concrete deck girder bridge comprised of four 53-foot spans, is technologically distinctive. Although concrete girders can be built with spans in excess of 100 feet, girders built before the mid-1950s in Colorado rarely exceeded 50 feet (Fraser). During the 1920's the highway department designed and built several concrete girder structures that employed cantilevering to achieve long span lengths, which distinguished them from the scores of simply supported concrete slab and beam bridges built during this period. Along with the Cottonwood Creek Bridge, three other cantilevered girder bridges remain from the 1920s and 1930s: the 1931 Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Viaduct (5FN1693) in Fremont County, comprised of seven spans each 46-feet in length; the 1929 Colorado & Southern Railroad Overpass (5LA8185) in Las Animas County with a 60-foot main deck and two smaller decks; and the 1928 Raton Creek Bridge (5LA8187), an undistinguished single 39-foot span, also in Las Animas County. The first two bridges have bush-hammered spandrels and slotted cutout guardrails. The well-preserved Cottonwood Creek Bridge is significant for its early construction date, the multiple spans and their lengths, and the unusual urn-shaped balusters that form the guardrail. The bridge maintains a great deal of integrity of setting as the adjacent road has not been improved significantly since its original paving in 1923.

Historical Background

Clayton Fraser is the author of a well written, comprehensive Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled "Highway Bridges in Colorado 1880-1958" (draft on file in the Preservation Office). A survey of numerous bridges across the state was also part of this project. Much of what follows was taken directly from Fraser's draft MPDF and his historic bridge inventory form for the Cottonwood Creek Bridge.

Colorado has been historically crossed and re-crossed by all kinds of roads and highways. The focus of early travel through the region was primarily east-west, with routes such as the Santa Fe Trail and the Overland Trail carrying travelers through the territory. In the early 20th century, there were quasi-public automobile routes such as the Lincoln Highway, the Midland Trail and the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, which crossed the state on their way across America. But none of these early roads was more important

to Colorado's development than the north-south route that stretched along the Front Range. It was called the Great North and South Highway, and it linked many of the state's most important cities—Fort Collins, Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Trinidad—along a single strand from Wyoming to New Mexico.

Before the turn of the 20th century, the North-South Road had been developed on a piecemeal basis as a series of separate segments, with little effort by either individual counties or the state to coordinate construction and maintenance. This changed in 1907 when the State Legislature authorized "the construction of a highway beginning at the southern boundary of the state and running north through Trinidad, Walsenburg, Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Denver, Longmont, Loveland and Fort Collins to the Wyoming line." The act stipulated that the state engineer was responsible for locating, surveying and designing the road, in addition to approving plans for all bridges on it and supervising its construction. Despite these efforts, Colorado's roads were still in poor condition. To address this, the State Legislature established the State Highway Commission in January 1910 and its first goal was to designate a statewide road system linking the county seats and more populous towns.

That same year, the Highway Commission designated some 1,643 miles of primary roads in the state. This loosely knit network initially comprised of existing streets and roads, was a system in only the most general terms. Three of these first routes formed contiguous legs of the North-South Road—State Primary Road No.2 (from Denver to Fort Collins and later extending to the Wyoming state line), State Primary Road No. 3 (Denver to Colorado Springs), and State Primary Road No. 4 (from Colorado Springs to Pueblo). The Highway Commission soon began improving the Denver to Colorado Springs road through Douglas and El Paso counties. The roadway was graded and rerouted in a few troublesome places, and eight small concrete bridges were constructed. The Highway Commission began using the North-South Road as the principal trunk line through the state, to which east-west feeder routes would be connected. Although Colorado actively lobbied to have a east-west highway through the state, the north-south route would become "a more authentic interstate highway."

On 11 July 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Federal Aid Road Act into law, marking the first large scale federal participation in road and bridge construction. The act appropriated $75 million in federal funds to be distributed to the states for construction projects. By February 1918, Colorado had applied for federal funding on eight separate highway projects—a total of 172 miles at a cost of over $500,000. The first two undertakings involved work on the North-South Highway. Traffic on this highway dwarfed that of Colorado's other roads. Only the Lincoln Highway crossing the state's northeast corner compared in traffic volume with segments of the road between Fort Collins and Walsenburg.

In 1922, the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads approved Colorado's first federal aid highway system and the North-South Road was re-designated as State Highway 1, a reflection of its importance. In 1925, the Highway Department again renumbered the state's routes to integrate with the newly designated federal highway network. The North-South Road was incorporated into U.S. Highway 85 from the New Mexico state line to Denver, and into U.S. 285 from Denver north to Fort Collins. Mile by mile, the Highway

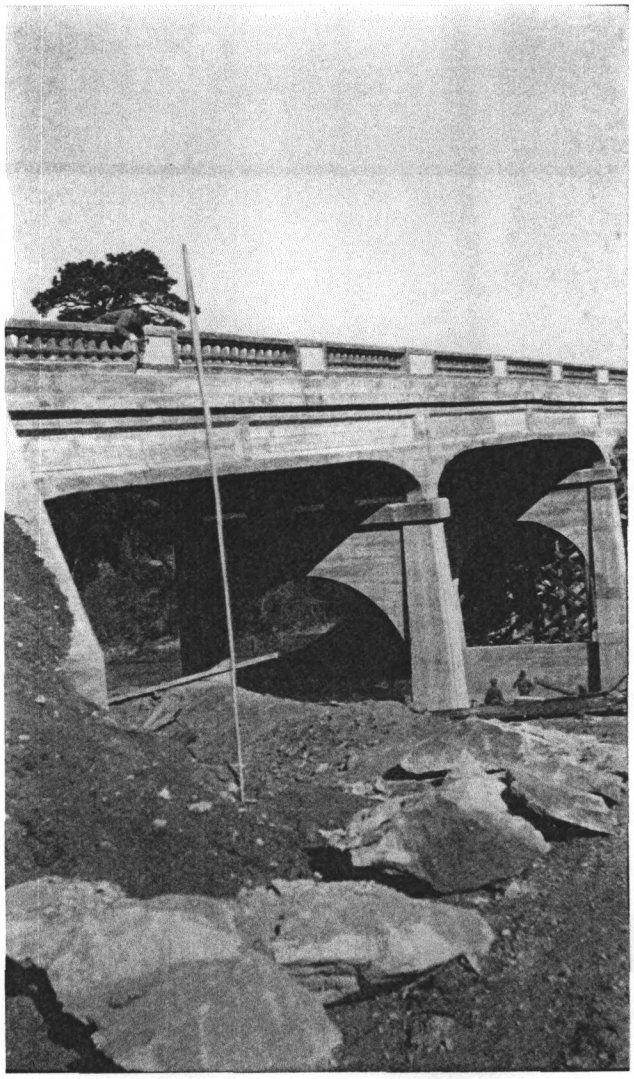
Department slowly upgraded the North-South Highway during the 1920s, with an emphasis on the stretch between Denver and Colorado Springs. Built under sixteen separate federal aid projects between 1917 and 1928, the Highway Department ceremoniously opened the last 17-mile section between the two cities in August 1928. According to the Highway Department, this 73-mile long concrete highway was the fourth longest unbroken length of concrete paving in the world.

One of the bridges built during this period was the multiple span concrete structure over Cottonwood Creek, which replaced an earlier pony truss bridge built by El Paso County. As delineated by Colorado Highway Department engineers, the bridge consisted of four 53-foot deck girder spans, supported continuously by reinforced concrete abutments and spill-through piers. This bridge's overall length was 213 feet, its roadway width 20 feet. The most noteworthy structural aspect of the bridge was the arched haunches on the girders, indicating that they were cantilevered over the piers. The bridge was distinguished architecturally by its bush-hammered concrete treatment on the spandrels and cast concrete balusters for the guardrails.

The Highway Department funded construction of the bridge and about four miles of adjacent concrete-paved highway as Federal Aid Project 116-A and let the contract to Standard Engineering and Construction Company for $177,822 in November 1922. A Standard gang completed the concrete paving portion, while a local mechanical engineering firm—L. H. Phelps and Son from Fowler, Colorado—carried out the structural work. Completed the following year, Cottonwood Creek Bridge carried mainline traffic until construction of Interstate 25 in the late 1960's. Since then it has functioned in place in essentially unaltered condition.

The bridge during construction. Historic photograph from the collection of Harvey W. Phelps.

Putting on the finishing touches--bush-hammering the spandrels of the guard rail. Historic photograph from the collection of Harvey W. Phelps.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bank, Jerry. [Colorado Springs Department of Highway Engineers] Telephone interview, 17 May 2001 with Jennifer Schaefer.

Fraser, Clayton. "Highway Bridges in Colorado 1880-1958 Multiple Property Documentation Form" March 2000. Draft on file at the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

Fraser, Clayton. Historic Bridge Inventory Form for Cottonwood Creek Bridge (5EP972). On file at the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

Phelps, Harvey W. Written correspondence from November 2000 and March 2001 with Dale Heckendorn and Jennifer Schaefer. On file at the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The bridge is located on Vincent Drive over Cottonwood Creek, within the W1/2 of the NW1/4 of the SW1/4 of the SW1/4 of Section 8, Township 13 South, Range 66 West, 6th P.M. The nominated parcel, encompassing the bridge and its abutments, consists of a rectangle 213 feet long and 100 feet wide, specifically 50 feet from the centerline of the roadway.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary was drawn to include the entire bridge and its abutments, along with the 100-foot right of way.

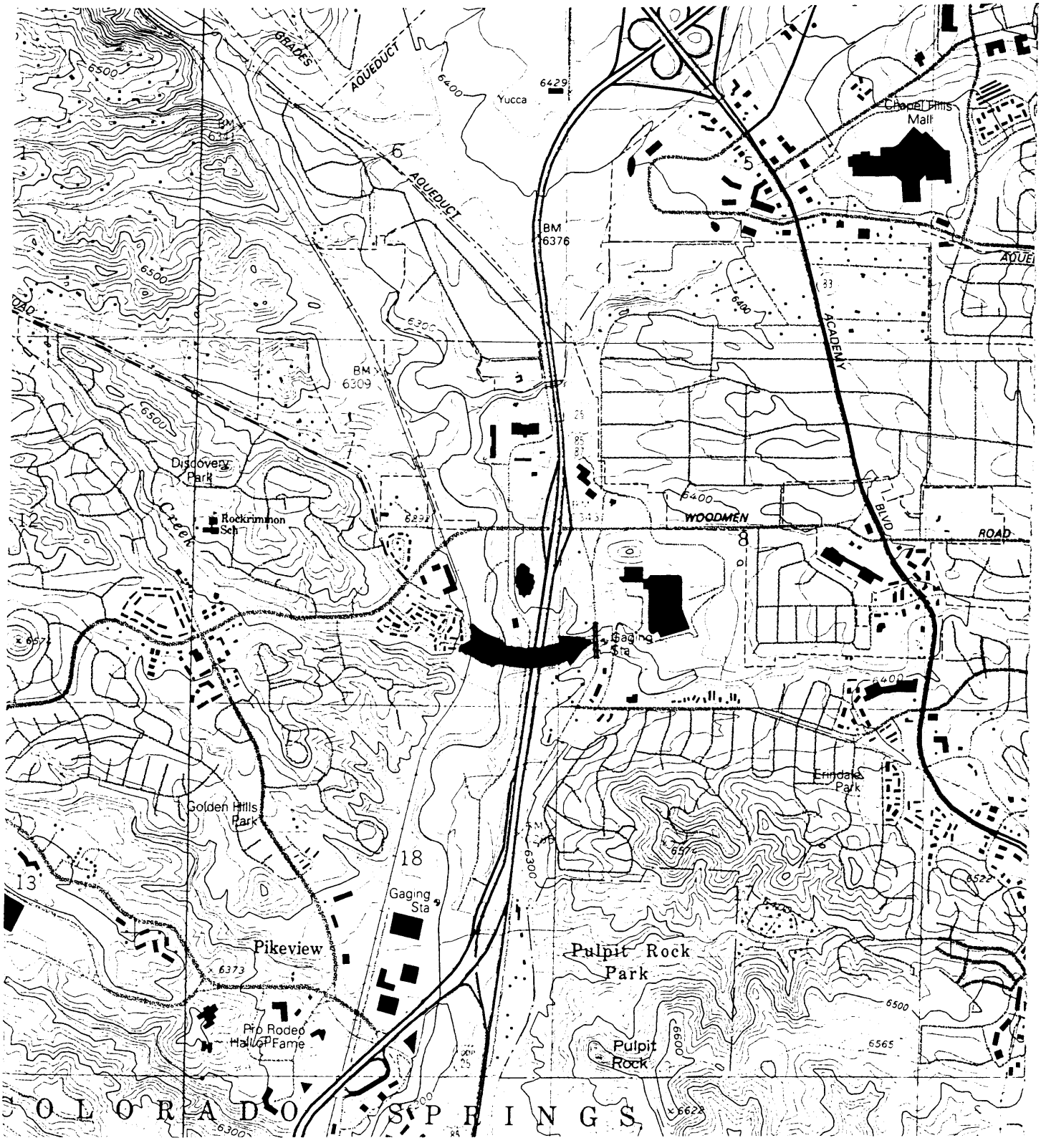
## PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information applies to all photographs:

name: Cottonwood Creek Bridge
city/county/state: Colorado Springs, El Paso County, Colorado
photographer: Jennifer Schaefer
photograph date: 7 April 2001
location of negatives: OAHP, Colorado Historical Society

| | |
|---|---|
| photo #1 | West elevation (looking east) |
| photo #2 | East elevation (looking west) |
| photo #3 | substructure (looking south) |
| photo #4 | balustrade deatil, east side of bridge |

**U.S.G.S. MAP** -- Pikeview Quad (1986, revised 1994)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Cottonwood Creek Bridge

MULTIPLE NAME: Highway Bridges in Colorado MPS

STATE & COUNTY: COLORADO, El Paso

DATE RECEIVED: 9/16/02 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/31/02
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 01001104

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| APPEAL: | N | DATA PROBLEM: | N | LANDSCAPE: | N | LESS THAN 50 YEARS: | N |
| OTHER: | N | PDIL: | N | PERIOD: | N | PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: | N |
| REQUEST: | N | SAMPLE: | N | SLR DRAFT: | N | NATIONAL: | N |

COMMENT WAIVER: N

_✓_ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Additional Documentation Accepted

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER Edson Beall DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE _____ DATE 10/31/02

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

[NRIS #01001104]

The Cottonwood Creek Bridge meets the registration requirements of the "Concrete Slab and Girder Bridge" property type as delineated in the **Highway Bridges of Colorado** Multiple Property Documentation Form.