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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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 Turkey Creek Bridge  
other name/site number NEHBS Number HN00-54

### 2. Location

street & number county road over Turkey Creek N/A not for publication  
city, town 2 miles west and 1 mile south of Ragan X vicinity  
state NE county Harlan code 083 zip code 68969

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Harlan 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  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  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria.

*Bob Auerbach DSHPO*  
Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date 5/6/92  
*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:)

Entered in the  
National Register

*Melona Byers*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date 6/29/92

*for*  
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 truss leg bedstead

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 2 miles west and 1 mile south of Ragan, the Turkey Creek Bridge spans Turkey Creek in a rural Harlan County setting that has changed little since the structure's period of significance. Other than maintenance-related repairs, noted below, the bridge remains essentially unaltered as it continues to carry vehicular traffic. The Turkey Creek 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:	1899
span length:	46.0'	construction cost:	unknown
total length:	47.0'	current condition:	good
roadway wdt.:	16.2'	alterations:	concrete abutments; steel gates bolted to east end of bridge

superstructure: steel, 3-panel, pin-connected Pratt truss leg bedstead  
substructure: truss legs embedded in concrete abutments with flared, sloped wingwalls  
floor/decking: wood deck over timber stringers  
other features: upper chord: back-to-back channels with cover plate and lacing; lower chord: 2 angles with battens (end panels), 2 square-section eyerods (center panel); vertical: 4 angles with lacing; diagonal: 2 square-section eyerods; counter: 1 circular-section eyerod with turn-buckle; floor beam: I-beam connected to superstructure by hanger plate; bottom lateral: cross-braced circular-section eyerods.

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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	1899 (The period of significance is derived from the original construction date.)
Significant Dates	1899
Cultural Affiliation	N/A
Significant Person	N/A
Architect/Builder (Designer)	Canton Bridge Company, Canton OH
(Fabricator)	Jones and Laughlin 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.

No exact references have been found to determine who built the bridge or when. The truss leg bedstead, however, was reportedly first used in Nebraska sometime around 1896, remaining popular until the early 1900s. According to county records, only one steel bridge was built over Turkey Creek in Scandinavia Township in the late 1890s. In September 1899 the County Commissioners ordered that an iron or steel bridge be constructed over the creek just west of "G. Abraham's." The contract was awarded to the Canton Bridge Company of Canton OH on September 5, 1899. Comprised of steel components rolled in Pittsburgh by the Jones and Laughlin mills, this bedstead is very likely that structure. Its legs have been partially encased in concrete, but the structure remains otherwise intact.

Though never as popular as the pony truss, the truss leg bedstead was a standard bridge type marketed in the late 19th and early 20th century by such midwestern firms as the Canton Bridge Company. The structure acts as a rigid frame, with its end posts extended below the truss itself to form the supports. This was both the strength and the weakness of the bedstead. The combined super-and substructure reduced erection costs somewhat, but they were prey to flood and collision damage and suffered from inherent structural weakness relating to compression stress in the lower chords. As a result all but a handful of the bedsteads built in Nebraska have since been demolished. The Turkey Creek Bridge is technologically significant as one of the few intact bedsteads remaining in the state.

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 C004211015; Proceedings of the Harlan County Commissioners, located in Harlan County Courthouse, Alma, Nebraska, Book 3: 8 August 1899 (page 515), 5 September 1899 (pages 517, 519); Ted Johnson, "Discussion of Steel Foundations for Steel Bridges Constructed in the Missouri Valley," **Nebraska Blue Print** 26 (February 1927): 11; field inspection by Demian Hess, 21 January 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    S22/27, T4N, R18W  
USGS Quadrangle        Ragan (7.5 Minute Series, 1970)  
UTM References        zone 14    easting 471740    northing 4460070

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is a rectangular shaped parcel measuring 47 feet by 18.2 feet, which is centered on the UTM point listed above. Included within this rectangular parcel are the bridge's superstructure, substructure and floor system.

\_\_\_ 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	Demian Hess, Research Historian	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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