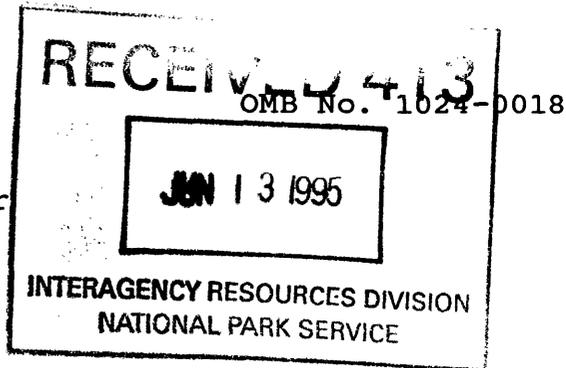


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NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name General Méndez Vigo Bridge

other names/site number Bridge #173, "Puente Río Las Minas"

2. Location

street & number SR 14, km. 30.4, Barrio San Ildefonso

not for publication

city or town Coamo vicinity X

state Puerto Rico code PR county Coamo code 043 zip code 00769

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Arleen Pabón PhD
Signature of certifying official

May 25, 1995
Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office
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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions

Cat: Transportation Sub: road-related

Current Functions

Cat: Transportation Sub: road-related

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification Other/ brick barrel vault

Materials

foundation	<u>N/A</u>
roof	<u>N/A</u>
walls	<u>N/A</u>
other	<u>superstructure - masonry</u> <u>substructure - masonry</u>

Narrative Description

Méndez Vigo Bridge lies beneath a curve corresponding to kilometer 30.4 of route 14 (Photo 1).

The arch, adorned with reliefs in geometrical design that resemble ring stones, rises from brick spring courses up to more than 20 feet over the beautiful Las Minas River. Projecting from the upper part of its spandrel walls, two corbels and a concrete slab support a cantilevered row of 19th century parapets bordered in brick, a roadway alteration that is minor in the context of the entire bridge, but that hides its presence from the public.

The plainly visible symbols in the keystones of the arch embody it's history. One side has a castle (Photo 2), symbol of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and the other side shows a legend indicating that the vault was reconstructed in 1898 by the First Regiment of the Fifth Battalion of the Corps of Engineers. Although the bridge's vault was reconstructed in 1898, its abutments are part of the original 1862 construction.

The setting of the bridge has remained unaltered since the period of significance. The bridge has high integrity of workmanship, setting, feeling, association, location and materials. Despite minor alteration, its design as brick barrel vault bridge has maintained its integrity as well. A description of the structure follows:

span number:	1	construction date:	1862
span length:	6.7 meters	superstructure:	masonry
total length:	6.7 meters	substructure:	masonry
construction cost:	15,405 "pesos"	current condition:	good
roadway wdt.:	7.30 meters		

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8. Statement of Significance
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Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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.
- 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

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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 engineering, transportation, military

Period of Significance 1898-1944

Significant Dates 1898

Significant Person N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder U.S. Corps of Engineers, First Regiment,
Fifth Battallion

Narrative Statement of Significance

General Méndez Vigo Bridge is named after General Santiago Méndez Vigo, Spanish governor of Puerto Rico from 1840 to 1844. The structure is the only masonry bridge extant in the southern segment of the Carretera Central. The original bridge was designed by the prominent Engineer Timoteo Luberza with a budget of 15,405 pesos and constructed in 1862.

During the Spanish - American War of 1898, the bridge's original vault was blown up by elements of the Spanish forces, under the direction of the Spanish Commander Rafael Martínez-Illescas to cover their retreat to the mountains north of the city of Coamo and to delay the advance of a U.S. Army column under the command of Major General Wilson approaching from the southern coastal town of Ponce. The bridge's demolition succeeded in slowing the advance of a battallion of the 2nd Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment.

Shortly afterwards, A Company, under Captain Brown, of the provisional battallion of engineers based in Ponce, started repairs to the General Méndez Vigo Bridge. However, as the plaque on the structure denotes, further work was carried out in 1898 by the First Regiment of the Fifth battallion of the U.S. Corps of Engineers. This unit of the U.S. Corps of Engineers rebuilt the bridge's vaulted arch using similar construction materials and techniques as those used in the original 1862 construction.

For further contextual information regarding bridge building in Puerto Rico, registration requirements, prominent and prolific engineers and firms, and property types, see related multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Puerto Rico".

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Pumarada O'Neill, Luis. Los Puentes Históricos de Puerto Rico. Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo, RUM, Mayagüez 1991.

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 # N/A

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency: **Puerto Rico Highway Authority**

Federal agency

Local government

University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus

Other

Name of repository:

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property less than one acre

Coamo, PR Quadrangle (7.5 minute series)

N 18°04'00" E 66°22'27"

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is a rectangular shaped parcel measuring 6.7 X 7.30 meters, which is centered on the coordinates listed above. Included within this rectangular parcel are the bridge's superstructure, substructure and floor system.

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 not exceed, all of the property that has been historically associated with this bridge.

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11. Form Prepared By
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name/title Luis Pumarada O'Neill, Ph.D. (Revised and edited by PRSHPO)

organization Arqueología Industrial Caribeña date July 31, 1994

street & number 3-D-37 Villa Interamericana telephone (809) 264-4024

city or town San Germán state PR zip code 00683

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Property Owner
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name Public Works Department, Puerto Rico

street & number Minillas Government Center telephone (809) 729-1529

city or town San Juan state PR zip code 00907