

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUL 15 1975  
DATE ENTERED DEC 4 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

~~The~~ Otowi ~~Bridge~~ Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

25 miles north of Santa Fe, on State Highway 4, in the Grande Valley.

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

First

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New Mexico

35

Santa Fe

49

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Pueblo of San Ildefonso

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Pueblo of San Ildefonso VICINITY OF

New Mexico

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Santa Fe County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Santa Fe County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Santa Fe

New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

August 24, 1973

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

State Planning Office, 200 West DeVargas St.

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Santa Fe

New Mexico

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Otowi Bridge Historic District, situated some three miles south of the Pueblo of San Ildefonso, encompasses a wide, sandy crossing of the Rio Grande along the floor of the valley. From this region the river enters a narrow precipitous channel through White Rock Canyon to the south and drops to the Rio Abajo (Lower Valley). The district lies within the grant boundary of the Pueblo of San Ildefonso. Although there is evidence of various archeological sites in the district, probably ancestral Tewa, none of these have been surveyed or excavated. Existing structures within the district include: the 1886 "Chili Line" steel railway trestle with an 1895 water gauging station; the 1921 single-lane wood suspension highway bridge; a small hand-operated, open cable-car system paralleling the 1921 bridge; the 1947 two-lane span-through steel highway bridge; and four remaining adobe structures of Miss Edith Warner's once well-known guest house and "tearoom" establishment which was frequented by the scientists involved in the secret Manhattan atomic bomb project at Los Alamos during World War II.

Situated in the southwest quadrant of the district are the wood abutments on either side of the river and the center pile, which are all that remain of the narrow-gauge steel trestle erected by the Union Bridge Company in 1886 for the "San Juan Division" of the Texas, Santa Fe and Northern Railroad Company which later became a part of the Denver and Rio Grande Western "Chili Line" extension into Northern New Mexico. The trestle was dismantled when the extension was abandoned in 1941. The covered water gauging station, attached to the left side of the center pile by the Department of the Interior is still in use. Portions of the railbed which led to the trestle are visible.

In 1921 the New Mexico State Highway Department constructed a single-lane wood suspension bridge with concrete towers a short distance upstream from the railway trestle. Although no longer used, this bridge remains in good condition. Between the trestle and this highway bridge a simple, cable car system for water testing has been erected by the Department of the Interior in recent years. Rather than attempting to modify the first highway bridge, the Highway Department, in 1947, built the present larger bridge north of the 1921 structure to carry the traffic for State Highway 4 which bisects the district.

When Ashley Pond, founder of the Los Alamos Boys' School, made his 1917 agreement with the D&RG for the establishment of a railroad stop at the Otowi crossing, his freight and mail station consisted of a converted boxcar stationhouse and an eight-car siding. From that period to the mid-1940's, various buildings have been located, constructed and remodeled to form a complex in the northwestern part of the district north of the present highway. Shortly thereafter, "Shorty" Pelazu, hired by Pond to "manage" the station, moved his two-room frame house to a plot of land east of the box car which he had rented from San Ildefonso Indians, Julián and María Martinez. After the building of the 1921 highway bridge, Shorty used the front room of his house for a general store and added a room to the rear. In the meantime he had also dug a well on the southwest side of the house and installed a gasoline pump in front of the store. The box car stationhouse was removed and the siding taken up with the abandonment of the line in 1941.

A fourth room was added on the rear by Adam Martinez during his short residence after "Shorty's" hasty departure. Edith Warner reopened the

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1886; 1928; 1943

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The crossing at Otowi has been important to the history of New Mexico since earliest times and was named for the aboriginal ruins of the Tewa ancestors of the Pueblo of San Ildefonso which lie five miles to the west along the Pajarito Plateau. Otowi has long been familiar to the San Ildefonso Indians who know it as Poh-sah-con-gay, or the "place where the river makes a noise," as the waters of the Rio Grande leave the wide bed at this point for the narrow passage downstream through White Rock Canyon.

Of more recent historical importance was the role which the Otowi area played during the effort by the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railway to open a main line between Denver, Colorado, its point of origin, and Santa Fe, New Mexico. After the loss of Raton Pass to the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway in 1878, the narrow-gauge D&RG continued its line westward over La Veta Pass to Antonito, just north of the New Mexico-Colorado border. Restricted by the Boston Agreement of March 27, 1880 to a 90-mile extension south of the border, the D&RG laid a single track branch to the limit to present Espanola, New Mexico in December, 1880. Knowing earlier in the year that the capital city would not be included in a major route by either the D&RG nor the AT&SF, a number of leading citizens in Santa Fe formed the Texas, Santa Fe and Northern Railroad Company in that same month for the specific purpose of building a rail line to Espanola.

Refused the use of the D&RG's graded portion of White Rock Canyon in 1881, the TSF&N began the preparation of its 37-mile line north from Santa Fe, which was designated the "San Juan Division." The site for the Otowi trestle constructed in 1886 by the Union Bridge Company, was a part of the 66-foot right-of-way conveyed to the railroad by the Pueblo of San Ildefonso on June 14, 1882.

Completed in January, 1887, the San Juan Division was operated unprofitably by the TSF&N and succeeding companies until August 1, 1908 when it was bought by the expanding Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad and incorporated as part of the D&RG's "Chili Line" extension into northern New Mexico which provided tri-weekly service until 1941 when it was abandoned.

Though the steel trestle was dismantled when the tracks were taken up in 1941, the abutments and gauging station fixed to the main support pile by the Department of the Interior in 1895 remain. An agreement made in 1917 by Ashley Pond--the founder of the Los Alamos Boys' School, with the D&RG provided for the establishment of a stop at the Otowi crossing with a siding capacity of eight cars, where freight and mail for the school would be unloaded from the "Chili Line" express on its return trip from Santa Fe which it made thrice weekly. These goods were to be stored at the "stationhouse"--a converted boxcar, a common practice for stops along the line, labeled "Otowi," and then taken by truck to the school atop the Pajarito Plateau.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chappell, Gordon. "To Santa Fe by Narrow Gauge: The D&RG's 'Chili Line' Colorado Rail Annual 1969, Cornelius W. Hauck, ed., Issue VII.  
 Church, Peggy Pond. The House at Otowi Bridge, The Story of Edith Warner and Los Alamos. 1959, pp. 6-149.  
 Gjevre, John A. Chile Line, The Narrow Trail to Santa Fe. May, 1969, pp. 1-82.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 29 ~~sq.~~ acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,3	3,9,7	1,5,10	3,9	7,0	5,9,10	-B	1,3	3,9,6	8,5,8	3,9	7,0	3,10,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		
C	1,3	3,9,6	6,8,0	3,9	7,0	4,6,0	D	1,3	3,9,6	9,9,0	3,9	7,0	7,3,10
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael P. McCachren, Archivist I

ORGANIZATION

State Records Center and Archives

DATE

7/2/75

STREET & NUMBER

404 Montezuma Street

TELEPHONE

827-2321

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Thomas Wells Mark, State Historic Preservation Officer 7-7-75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Notarized

*[Signature]*

DATE

12/4/91

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

DEC 3 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 7 & 8 PAGE 5

7. general store and gasoline pump in 1928 and remodeled the middle two rooms of the frame house into her first "tearoom" for guests and a kitchen. Later, she built another bedroom on the east adjoining the room built by Adam Martinez, so that the house now had an "L" shape. The first tearoom proved to be inadequate for her distinguished guests from Los Alamos while the Manhattan Project was being conducted, and hence Miss Warner built a second tearoom, of adobe, in the elbow of the frame house in 1943. This room is all that remains of the original house at Otowi; the frame portions having been torn down in the 1950's and the material used in the remodeling of the guest house which she built in 1934. The well, complete with adobe housing built by Shorty, is still in use.

In 1934 Miss Warner built a single-story, three-room Pueblo-style adobe guest house on the southeast corner of her property. A living room, with adobe fireplace, was situated between the two bedrooms. About the same time a small garage and adjacent corral were erected on the north side of the compound near the D&RG tracks. These structures are still standing and in use, although the guest house has been somewhat remodeled since Miss Warner left her home in 1947 because of the traffic resulting from the building of the new highway near the compound.

8. Macario 'Shorty' Pelazu, a lumberjack who had worked at a site downriver from the crossing was paid for keeping an eye on the station. After the timber operation closed, he bought a two-room frame house from his former employer and moved it across the tracks and east of the boxcar on land rented from Julián and María Martinez, the famous potters of San Ildefonso. Hoping to lure the increasing auto tourist traffic from Santa Fe over a wood suspension bridge constructed at Otowi in 1921, he opened a store in the front room which carried a small variety of goods and installed a gasoline pump near the front porch. Within the first few months he had made additions to his dwelling. Shorty stayed during the first years of the Prohibition era and then disappeared without a trace, in all probability fearing the law's knowledge of his bootlegging activities.

Adam, the eldest child of Julián and María was the next to move into the house at the crossing. He and his wife added a fourth room at the rear of the house. After a short while they returned to the Pueblo and once again, the supplies were left unattended

Desperate over the safety of the goods, A. J. Connell, the new director of the Boys' School went to Santa Fe in hopes of finding someone, preferably a man, who would live at the crossing. At La Fonda Hotel he chanced to meet Miss Edith Warner who was preparing to return home after searching futilely for a job which would have allowed her to remain in Santa Fe. Much to the relief of Mr. Connell, she accepted the offer of a meagre \$25.00 a month, in addition to having local help in moving freight, and cheap rent for a nearby frame house.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 6

8.

Born in Pennsylvania, the eldest child of a Presbyterian minister, Edith Warner had taught school for several years, but had become increasingly dissatisfied with the profession. She then became an industrial secretary with the Y.W.C.A. in Easton, Pennsylvania, spending much time outdoors. During this period she suffered from a recurring ailment which eluded diagnosis and was ordered by her doctor to leave her environment and responsibilities for a year.

The thirty-year old teacher left for New Mexico in the fall of 1922 and there spent much of her time with John and Martha Boyd, who had a ranch at Frijoles Canyon, both of whom introduced her to the people and geography of the Southwest. Unable to secure a job at the end of her stay, she returned East, only to become ill again. She moved first to Denver then to Santa Fe where she met Mr. Connell. Miss Warner arrived at the Otowi crossing May 1, 1928, reopening Shorty's store and filling the gasoline pump. Customers soon appeared, Indians in covered wagons and shepherds who dropped in before driving their sheep across the bridge, as well as tourists from Santa Fe who stopped to fill the tanks of their Packards and Model T's.

Through Miss Warner's dealings with Adam and his cousin Martin, she renewed acquaintances with the San Ildefonso Indians to whom she had been introduced earlier by the Boyds, and they remained her friends. With the aid of Adam and his great-uncle Atilano Montoya she was able to remodel the middle room into a "tearoom" where she could serve meals to her guests. Mr. Montoya, who had once served as governor of San Ildefonso and had traveled extensively in his youth, soon afterwards moved into the other wing of the frame house in order to be of assistance to Miss Warner.

Always open, her kitchen served as a place where people might come and sit and talk over a fresh pot of coffee. Word of her hospitality spread beyond the Rio Grande Valley, and in 1934 she decided to build a guest house to accomodate her visitors. The two bedroom adobe house was completed within a year and offered a limited number of paying visitors quiet and solitude with their simple quarters and food.

The "Chili Line" tracks were removed in 1941, but the entry of the United States into World War II which resulted in the establishment of the Manhattan Project on the site of the Los Alamos Boys' School early in 1943 accounted for increased traffic across the wood bridge, and continuing activity for the "House of Otowi." Though the project to construct the Atomic bomb was carried out in the strictest secrecy, the necessity of allowing his fellow scientists to leave their isolated surroundings was recognized by Director J. Robert Oppenheimer, who occasionally permitted small groups to leave "The Hill" and eat at the "tearoom." Edith Warner had known Oppenheimer from earlier days when the young scientist had come over from his ranch in the Pecos River Valley to have supper in her tearoom. However, she never learned the real names of her brilliant and charming guests until the end of the war, and it was only after the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that she was

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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CONTINUATION SHEET #3 ITEM NUMBER 8&9 PAGE 7

8. able to write her friends telling them that such men as Bohr, Conant, Oppenheimer, Compton, Fermi, Allison, Teller and Parsons had spent long hours talking and eating in her tearoom.

In an effort to accomodate the increasing numbers of scientists and their families, she had an adobe dining room added to her frame dwelling in 1943. Miss Warner and Atilano had hoped for more seclusion and quiet with the end of the war, but following the news in 1947 that a steel highway bridge was to be built at the crossing, and that the new road would pass through her front yard, they both decided to move. An adobe house was erected a half-mile west of the compound with the combined help of both Indians and scientists and their wives under the direction of Atilano.

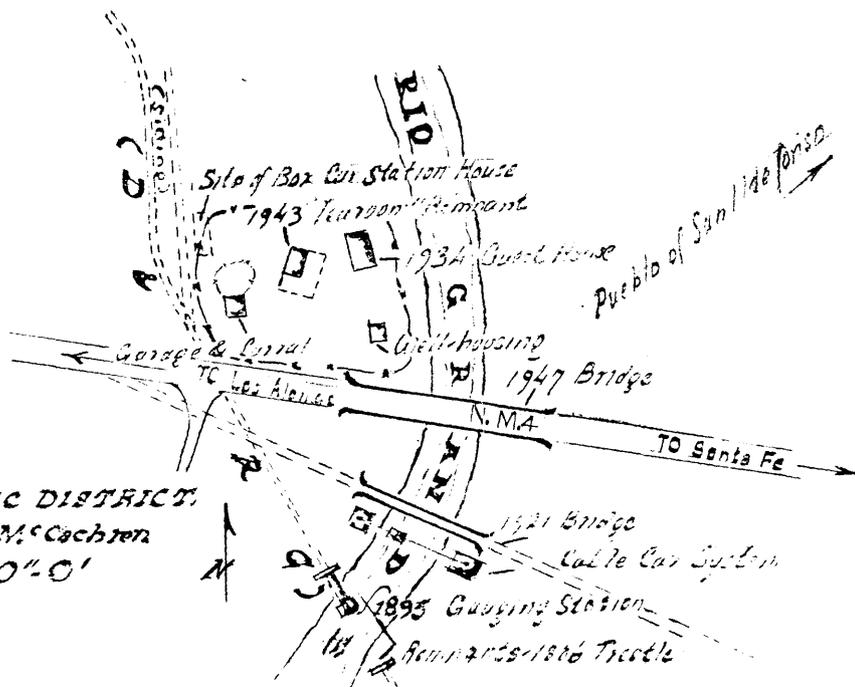
Neither Miss Warner or Atilano were to live long in their new home, where stricken with cancer, Edith Warner died in 1951. Within a couple of years, Atilano also died.

9. Hewett, Edgar L. Pajarito Plateau and Its Ancient People. 1938, pp. 21-182 "Handbooks of Archeological History" series.

Myrick, David F. New Mexico's Railroads - An Historical Survey. 1970, pp. 6-197

Deeds: D&RGRR, Santa Fe County Records, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Personal interviews of Michael P. McCachren with Mrs. Peggy Pond Church and Mrs. Benjamin Ludlow (sister of Edith Warner), both of Santa Fe, N.M., April, 1974.



OTOWI BRIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT  
NEW MEXICO, Plan: M.P.M. McCachren  
July, 1975 scales 0" = 0' 0"