

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received **NOV 12 1980**
date entered **DEC 10 1980**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Virginia Street Bridge

and/or common Same

2. Location

Spanish Springs River

street & number Across Truckee River At Virginia Street _____ not for publication

city, town Reno _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district at large

state Nevada code 32 county Washoe code 031

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input 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 State of Nevada, Department of Transportation

street & number 1263 S. Stewart

city, town Carson City _____ vicinity of _____ state Nevada

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Same as above

street & number

city, town _____ state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nevada Historic Engineering Site has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes _____ no

Inventory
date 5/8/79 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records History of Engineering Program, Texas Tech University

city, town Lubbock _____ state Texas

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Built in 1905, the Virginia Steet Bridge is a two span bridge across the Truckee River at Virginia Street in Reno. The 146-foot-long bridge is built of reinforced concrete scribed to look like masonry. The traditional characteristics of masonry construction are suggested by the inclusion of pilasters and the indications of vouissours on the three center arches of the bridge. Above the arches the bridge is a concrete shell, earth filled to the roadway and sidewalk level.

The fifty-six foot wide roadbed carries extensive traffic, as Virginia Street is the main street of Reno. Sidewalks run along both sides of the roadbed. The railing includes concrete posts which top the pilasters of the main bridge structure. These posts are connected by low concrete sides and decorative ironwork, and are topped by iron, three--lamp street light fixtures that accent the arched structure of the bridge.

On the southeast post of the bridge is a bronze plaque with the following information: Virginia Street Bridge. Authorized by act of legislature approved March 15, 1905. T. K. Stewart, Engineer in Charge. Designer, John B. Leonard, San Francisco, California. Contractor, Cotton Brothers and Company, Oakland California. Construction commenced, July 17, 1905. Opened for traffic, November 12, 1905.

According to historic photographs, the bridge is unchanged from the original except for new paving. It has withstood numerous floods in the last seventy-five years.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input 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 1905 **Builder/Architect** Designer- John B. Leonard
Contractor-Cotton Brothers & Co.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Virginia Street Bridge, built in 1905, is the oldest functioning bridge in the city of Reno, and one of the oldest in the State of Nevada. The present structure is the fifth major bridge at this site. There have been bridges across the Truckee River at this point since 1859, long before the city of Reno was founded. The present structure has been a key element in the transportation network of Reno for three-quarters of a century.

The first bridge was built by C. W. Fuller in 1859. It was a crude log toll bridge that was washed away in the December 1861-January 1862 flood. Fuller rebuilt the bridge and sold it to Myron C. Lake in 1863.

Lake, a promotor and entrepreneur, improved the bridge into the log queen post structure seen in early Reno photographs. He also built a trading station with an inn and tavern which was known as Lake's Crossing. The bridge washed away in 1867, was rebuilt and served well until 1877, surviving two floods.

The Central Pacific Railroad came to Lake's Crossing in 1868 in search of a location for a depot. The railroad changed the community's name to Reno. With the coming of the railroad, Reno flourished. Soon Lake's toll bridge teemed with traffic and Lake himself collected hundreds of dollars a day in tolls. The county, responding to public protest over the toll collection, attempted to take over the bridge. The county acquired the bridge after a lengthy court battle and made passage free. It was obvious, however, that the growing town needed a newer, larger bridge.

In 1877, the county commissioners authorized the Wheelock and King Company of Des Moines, Iowa to build a \$15,700 iron bowstring arch truss bridge to replace Lake's wooden bridge. The bridge was in place by July, and carried Virginia Street's traffic until 1905, when it was moved east to Rock Street. It was destroyed in the 1950 flood.

Once again the growth of the town necessitated a larger bridge at Virginia Street. The 1905 concrete bridge was built by Cotton Brothers and Company of Oakland, California under the direction of T. K. Stewart, Engineer in Charge. The designer was John B. Leonard of San Francisco. The bridge, built in less than four months, was the first reinforced concrete bridge in the state of Nevada.

The handsome concrete arch bridge was both a practical addition to the town and a point of civic pride. It was the focal point of the small city, as the majority of traffic crossed the bridge daily.

It remains the center of Reno today. The bridge is still the major artery for downtown traffic. Virginia Street is as important a crossing today as it was in Myron Lake's time, as it is one of the few streets which traverse the entire town north to south.

The Virginia Street Bridge is also an outstanding visual feature of downtown Reno. A series of riverside walks and parks connect the various downtown bridges for the pedestrian. These areas enhance the vitality and beauty of the bridge, making a visually and esthetically pleasing addition to the busy downtown area.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Goodwin, Victor. Flood Chronology: Truckee River Subbasin; Lower Half; Carson River Subbasin; Calvada Subbasin, Eastern California-Western Nevada: 1861-1976.
Carson City: USDA, Forest Service, April 1977, Unnumbered report (cont.)

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.5

Quadrangle name Reno

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	1	2	5	8	3	2	0	4	3	7	8	6	2	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundaries for this nomination extend ten feet from the north and south ends of the bridge and ten feet out from each side of the bridge.

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 Sally Still Abbe Research Assistant

organization History of Engineering Program

date 8/30/79

street & number P. O. Box 4089, Texas Tech Univ.

telephone 742-3591

city or town Lubbock

state Texas

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Djime Redden

title Administrata

date 107 March 1980

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Forrest W. Ray
Keeper of the National Register

date 12/10/80

Attest: *Patrick Andrews*
for Chief of Registration

date 12/10/80

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 12 1980
DATE ENTERED	11 10 1980

Major Bibliographical
CONTINUATION SHEET References ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Reno Evening Gazette , July 4, 1945.

State of Nevada. Department of Highways. Bridge Index by Numbers. January 1978.