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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 through truss

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 14.7 miles east of Valentine, the Brewer Bridge spans the Niobrara River in a rural Cherry County setting that has changed little since the structure's period of significance. Although the truss has been moved from its original location, it has functioned in place in its current position for more than 50 years and has developed a sense of time and place. The bridge remains otherwise unaltered as it continues to carry vehicular traffic. The Brewer Bridge today retains a high degree of integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. A description of the structure follows:

span number:	1	construction date:	1899
span length:	150.0'	construction cost:	\$4580.00
total length:	152.0'	current condition:	good
roadway wdt.:	14.0'	alterations:	truss moved in 1921

superstructure: steel, 8-panel, pin-connected Pratt through truss

substructure: concrete abutments and wingwalls

floor/decking: timber deck over timber stringers

other features: upper chord: 2 channels with cover plate and lacing; lower chord: 2 looped rectangular eyebars; vertical: 2 channels with lacing, 1 looped square eyebar with 2-pronged lower chord eyes; diagonal: 2 square looped eyebars; counter: 2 round eyebars with turnbuckles; lateral bracing: round bar with turnbuckles; strut: 2 channels with spacers; floor beam: I-beam, U-bolted to lower chord pin at vertical; guardrail: welded steel pipe

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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)	B
Areas of Significance	Engineering
Period of Significance	1899 (The period of significance is derived from the original construction date.)
Significant Dates	1899; 1921
Cultural Affiliation	N/A
Significant Person	N/A
Architect/Builder (Designer)	Wrought Iron Bridge Company, Canton OH
(Fabricator)	Jones and Laughlin Steel Company, Pittsburgh PA
(Builder)	Wrought Iron Bridge Company, Canton OH

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations and areas of significance noted above.

In November 1898 the Cherry County Commissioners received a complaint about the deteriorated condition of the Berry Bridge over the Niobrara River, located about ten miles east of Valentine, the county seat. They met in special session at the bridge site and condemned the existing structure as unsafe. In January 1899, the county advertised for competitive bids for a new 150-foot steel truss, to be supported by new steel cylinder piers. Two months later, proposals were received from a dozen major regional bridge contractors. Submitting no less than six different plans that ranged in cost from \$3790 to \$5970, the Wrought Iron Bridge Company of Canton, Ohio, received the contract for \$4580. A Wrought Iron Bridge crew began work on the structure that spring, completing it by early October. The Berry Bridge was one of four trusses over the Niobrara River in Cherry County that survived the 1916 flood intact, due in large part because its abutments had been extended in 1904, raising the bridge higher over the river. In 1919, however, the county began considering its replacement. A new 150-foot truss (NEHBS No. CE00-225) was completed in June 1921, and the county moved the 1899 truss to the site of the old Brewer Bridge (one of the casualties of the 1916 flood) some five miles east. The Pioneer Construction Company of Omaha, contractor for the new Berry State Aid Bridge, moved the truss to the new site, where it has carried vehicular traffic to the present in unaltered condition.

The Wrought Iron Bridge Company was one of the two largest vehicular bridge erectors in the country during the late 1900s, rivaling the giant King Iron Bridge Company in its nationwide trade. Though not as active in Nebraska as King, Wrought Iron Bridge did erect spans in the southeast part of the state and in Cherry County. Few Wrought Iron Bridge trusses are known to have survived in the state, however. The Ohio-based contractor maintained an extensive catalog of steel and iron spans, ranging from the standard to the esoteric. With its pinned Pratt configuration, the Brewer Bridge represents the former more than the latter. It is technologically significant as the oldest remaining of Cherry County's remarkable group of trusses and one of the oldest remaining vehicular trusses in the state. Although the structure has been moved from its original location, it has functioned in place at its current site for more than 50 years, and has developed a sense of time and place.

Because this bridge has been moved since its period of significance, Criteria Consideration B has been applied. Significant under Criterion C for its engineering value, the structure still retains the essential technological features that make it a good representative example of its type, period and method of construction.

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 C001611805; Cherry County Commissioners' Record, Book B: 9 November 1898 (page 268), 10 January 1899 (page 289), 21 March 1899 (page 297), 3 October 1899 (page 332); Book C: 30 July 1904 (page 129), 25 July 1915 (page 162), 18 February 1916 (page 209), 23 February 1916 (page 209), 29 February 1916 (page 210), 29 December 1919 (page 495), 30 January 1920 (page 504), 18 June 1920 (page 522), 17 August 1920 (page 525), 17 September 1920 (page 531), 15 January 1921 (page 558), 18 January 1921 (page 558), 15 February 1921 (page 562), 30 March 1921 (page 573), 17 June 1921 (page 581), 20 June 1921 (page 581), 21 June 1921 (page 582) located at Cherry County Courthouse, Valentine, Nebraska; M.F. Black, Nebraska Bureau of Roads and Bridges Division #2 Engineer, to Cherry County, correspondence, January 1920, located at Cherry County Courthouse, Valentine, Nebraska; field inspection by Clayton Fraser, 25 April 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    S33, T34N, R25W  
USGS Quadrangle       Sparks, Nebraska - South Dakota (7.5 Minute Series, 1983)  
UTM References        zone 14    easting 396580    northing 4747630

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is a rectangular shaped parcel measuring 152 feet by 16 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	Clayton B. Fraser, Principal	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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