

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

385

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name FORT FLETCHER STONE ARCH BRIDGE

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 4.8 MILES SOUTH OF WALKER ON WALKER AVENUE not for publication

city or town WALKER vicinity

state KANSAS code KS county ELLIS code 051 zip code 67674

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D. Parkratz 3/1/01
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
State of 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 official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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): _____

Edson H. Beall 5/19/01
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
1	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	_____	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

MASONRY ARCH BRIDGES OF KANSAS

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: ROAD RELATED (VEHICULAR)
BRIDGE

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: ROAD RELATED (VEHICULAR)
BRIDGE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: MASONRY/STONE ARCH BRIDGE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____

walls _____

roof _____

other STONE: LIMESTONE, CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

The Fort Fletcher Stone Arch Bridge (c. 1935-1936) spans Big Creek in southeast Ellis County, Kansas, and is located 4.8 miles south of the town of Walker, Kansas. The bridge is located between Sections 26 and 27, Township 14S, Range 16W, and Sections 35 and 36, Township 14S, Range 16W.

The bridge measures one-hundred-fifty-six feet in length from north to south, with a deck width of twenty-nine feet, and a bridge roadway width curb-to-curb of twenty-four feet. The bridge has approaches on the north and south end of twenty-eight feet each. The bridge spans the creek with four thirty-five foot arches set on concrete pier bases. The underground components are unknown. The vertical stone face extends five feet above the top of each arch, creating a bridge rail the length of the bridge extending three feet above the roadway. A six-inch diameter pipe drain extends from the roadway at the bridge rail, to the top of each arch. The roadway surface is gravel over compacted earth fill.

The structure consists of native limestone blocks combined with concrete mortar. The fitted limestone blocks were quarried from an adjacent pasture. The Fort Fletcher Stone Arch Bridge was designed and constructed in the Roman arch style that relies on compression of the stones for structural strength. Compacted fill within the structure provides distribution of live and dead loads among the arches. Drainpipes allow for release of excess moisture from the roadway and within the structure.

The bridge was built jointly by Ellis County and the Works Progress Administration as a response to a petition from local residents to the Ellis County Commission concerned with crossing Big Creek. The construction was begun in 1935 and completed in 1936. Labor for the construction consisted of a local workforce skilled in limestone rock construction. A plaque is located on the south end of the east bridge rail and the north end of the west bridge rail that identifies the bridge as a WPA project.

While showing some significant deterioration from erosion of the limestone, the bridge has remained in use for public vehicular traffic since construction in 1936 to the present time, and is listed on the Federal Highway Administrations bridge inventory records in Ellis County. Structural inspections are performed biennially to evaluate the condition of the bridge.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENGINEERING

Period of Significance

1936

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION: ELLIS COUNTY

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property LESS THAN ONE ACRE

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 4	4 9 3 2 8 0	4 2 9 4 1 7 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title MICHAEL GRAF, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

organization ELLIS COUNTY, KANSAS date DECEMBER 15, 2000

street & number P.O. BOX 691 telephone 785-628-9455

city or town HAYS state KS zip code 67601

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name ELLIS COUNTY COMMISSION

street & number ELLIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE, P.O. BOX 720 telephone 785-628-9410

city or town HAYS state KS zip code 67601

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

SIGNIFICANCE

The Fort Fletcher Stone Arch Bridge (c. 1935-1936) is being nominated to the National Register under criterion C for its architectural significance as a limestone, four arch bridge and is to be included in the "Masonry Arch Bridges of Kansas" thematic resources nomination. The bridge is simple, yet functional in its four-arch design. It spans Big Creek, a major tributary to the Smoky Hill River, in southeast Ellis County, south of Walker. The bridge's native limestone construction is typical of structures built in the area and is representative of the immigrant citizens' skill and craftsmanship. The native limestone construction is also indicative of WPA projects in this area during the 1930s. The bridge is located over Big Creek at the point where Sections 26, 27, 34, and 35 of Township 14S, Range 16W intersect.

The Fort Fletcher Stone Arch Bridge takes its name from the military outpost located adjacent to this site in the 1860s. After being renamed Fort Hays, the post was destroyed by flooding and relocated to its current historic site south of Hays in 1866.

The construction was undertaken as a response to a petition from local citizens concerned with limited access resulting from flooding of Big Creek. In 1935, the Works Progress Administration approved the construction of the bridge as well as commitment of federal funds in the amount of \$7,614. The bridge construction, completed in 1936, cost a total of \$14, 913. The WPA, which was responsible for significant infrastructure development and improvements in the 1930s, provided much needed income for a workforce impacted by the Depression.

The Fort Fletcher Stone Arch Bridge is one of thirteen stone arch bridges in Ellis County, along with ten stone arch culverts that are smaller than a bridge, by definition. The native limestone components are typical of the construction methods used in the area for churches, schools, homes, and various infrastructure improvements, and with the use dating back to the first settlers in the area. Other WPA projects built with native limestone, include the stadium at Fort Hays State University, Hays Municipal Pool, and Ellis County Maintenance Shop. Abundant limestone along the Smoky Hill River Valley served as the quarry site for many of these projects

The Fort Fletcher Stone Arch Bridge remains a part of the public highway transportation system for Ellis County and is used for typical rural traffic. The structure had been considered for replacement in the 1980s, however, the Ellis County Commission voted to retain the structure as a response to local citizens concerned with the preservation of the bridge. The bridge has been routinely inspected, with a major rehabilitation effort scheduled for 2001 that should preserve the visual and structural integrity of the structure.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9, 10 Page 1, 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ellis County News. October 12, 1935; April 2, 1936; April 18, 1940.

Hays Daily News. September 22, 1999; September 23, 1999.

Land of the Post Rock. Muillenberg, Grace and Swineford, Ada (University Press of Kansas, 1975).

At Home in Ellis County, Kansas 1867-1992. (Taylor Publishing Co., 1991).

Fort Hays. Oliva, Leo E. (Kansas State Historical Society, Mennonite Press, 1980).

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property spans Big Creek in southeast Ellis County, Kansas, and is located where the SE/4 of Section 27, the SW/4 of Section 26, the NE/4 of Section 34, and the NW/4 of Section 35, Township 14S, Range 16W intersect. The bridge is located on the sixty-six feet wide existing road right-of-way. The structure, including the 28' approaches, measures 212' x 29'.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes only that area that is historically associated with the nominated property.