

State Nomination
PHO 677272

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 28 1979
DATE ENTERED MAY 7 1979

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Mexican Canyon Trestle, Alamogordo and Sacramento Mountain Railway

AND/OR COMMON

Cloudcroft Railroad Trestle, Alamogordo and Sacramento Mountain Railway

2 LOCATION

NW of Cloudcroft off NM 83

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Cloudcroft

STATE

New Mexico

VICINITY OF

CODE

035

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2

COUNTY

Otero

CODE

0180

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*

U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Forest Service

STREET & NUMBER

Federal Building, 517 Gold Avenue, SW

CITY, TOWN

Albuquerque

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Otero County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Alamogordo

STATE

New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

December 18, 1970

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

New Mexico State Historic Preservation Program

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cloudcroft Railroad Trestle, also known as the Mexican Canyon Trestle, is located approximately one-half mile northwest of Cloudcroft, New Mexico. The structure is visible from a point on U.S. Highway 82 where a historical marker gives a brief description of "The Cloud Climbing Railroad." It is the most prominent remaining structure of the Alamogordo and Sacramento Mountain Railway which operated under various names from 1899 to 1947.

Built in 1899, the curved trestle has an overall length of 323 feet and rises 52 feet above the canyon floor. Vertical supports spaced 15 feet apart consist of 12" x 12" timbers. The rails (removed in 1948) and crossties were placed on 8"x16" stringers held together with three-quarter-inch bolts and cast iron spacers. In order to form the curve, the top part was built in 21 sections with 8"x16" timbers. There are 10 main timbers 15 feet in length in each of the 21 sections resting on footing blocks set 4 to 8 feet underground. Lateral, longitudinal, and diagonal wooden braces prevented sway and shifting of the trestle. A wooden guard rail ran along the track to keep the ties from bunching. Metal guard rails running outside the standard gauge rails prevented derailed trains from falling off the trestle.

This structure was one of 58 trestles built on the mountainous 32-mile route which also required a switchback and numerous sharp curves. After the route was abandoned in 1947, the rails were taken up and salvagers removed a few of the timbers. The trestle is still essentially intact, however, and is a striking feature of the landscape near Cloudcroft.

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 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 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
1899

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Alamogordo and Sacramento
Mountain Railway

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cloudcroft Railroad Trestle, located in Mexican Canyon approximately one-half mile northwest of Cloudcroft, is the most prominent remaining structure of the Alamogordo and Sacramento Mountain Railway. The railway, built 1898-1903, was a branch of Charles B. Eddy's El Paso and Northeastern Railway which was sold to the El Paso and Southwestern Railway, a system acquired by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company in 1924.

According to David Myrick's historical survey, New Mexico's Railroads, the railway known as the "cloud-climbing railroad" was one of the most spectacular in the west. The route began at Alamogordo, elevation 4,322 feet, and climbed a distance of 32 miles to Russia, elevation 9,069 feet. The mountainous route was designed by Horace A. Sumner who also laid out a number of mountain railroads in Colorado. It involved ruling grades of 6.4%, a switchback, and 58 trestles averaging 120 feet in length. Several of the trestles in various states of repair can still be found along the route including the trestle at Mexican Canyon near Cloudcroft.

The railroad served two main purposes: hauling timber from the Sacramento Mountains for the Alamogordo Lumber Company and carrying excursion trains from Alamogordo to the Cloudcroft Lodge and mountain resort cabins largely patronized by tourists from El Paso. The timber shipments were essential to the construction of the El Paso and Northeastern line from Alamogordo to Carrizozo, or, as Dorothy Neal states in The Cloud-Climbing Railroad, Charles Eddy "built a railroad to build a railroad." The excursion trains ran until 1930 and limited passenger service continued until 1938. The lumber company's shift to the use of motor trucks caused the end of the freight service in 1947. The rails were removed in 1948.

Many of the railroad structures were sold and salvaged for lumber, but several trestles remain, the most prominent of which is the one nearest Cloudcroft. It has become a trademark of the mountain resort area and in 1970 the New Mexico State Highway Department placed a historical marker beside U.S. Highway 82 overlooking the structure. The landmark was considered sufficiently important to local tourist industry that the Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce and the Cloudcroft Motel-Hotel Association prepared the nomination which led to its listing in the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties. The eighty-year-old structure is an attractive reminder of the Alamogordo and Sacramento Mountain Railway, a remarkable engineering feat which led to the development of the Cloudcroft area and provided lumber needed for the expansion of the El Paso and Northeastern Railway.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Historic Preservation Program for New Mexico: Volume II, the Inventory. Santa Fe: State Planning Office, 1973, p.74.

Mcgraw, Kate. "Famous Cloudcroft Trestle For Sale." El Paso Times, May 32, 1978, p.1A and 4A.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES

A	13	430200	3647300	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The area encompassed by this nomination extends to 50 feet on either side of the center line of the preserved remains of the trestle at the location shown on the accompanying map.

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

Wendell Bell, Program Manager

ORGANIZATION

History of Engineering Program

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 4089, Texas Tech University

CITY OR TOWN

Lubbock,

DATE

2-22-79

TELEPHONE

(806) 742-3591

STATE

Texas

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

Thomas W. Muhl SHPO 3-21-79
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local. E. Johnson

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST: Colebrook
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DATE

5-7-79
5/2/79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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RECEIVED	MAR 2 1979
DATE ENTERED	MAY 7 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Myrick, David F. New Mexico's Railroads: An Historical Survey. Golden, Colorado:
Colorado Railroad Museum, 1970, pp. 58-94.

Neal, Dorothy Jensen. The Cloud Climbing Railroad. Alamogordo, New Mexico:
Alamogordo Printing Company, 1966.

"Trestle Made State Monument." El Paso Times, January 13, 1971.