

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 20 1978
DATE ENTERED FEB 9 1978

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Tres Piedras Railroad Water Tower

AND/OR COMMON

Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Water Tower at Tres Piedras

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Off U.S. 285

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Tres Piedras

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico

CODE

035

COUNTY

Taos

CODE

055

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Ms. Edith P. Cozart

STREET & NUMBER

Box 776

CITY, TOWN

Tres Piedras

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Taos County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Taos

STATE

New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

December 9, 1977

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Preservation Section, New Mexico State Planning Office

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The water tower in Tres Piedras that served the Denver and Rio Grande Western line is a standard 22 ft. diameter structure with staves fifteen ft. high. The staves, approximately 2 5/8 in. thick, are slightly curved to conform with the circular shape of the tank. When full, the tank held 40,000 gallons of water, supplied from a well on Tres Piedras Arroyo, west of town. The water was pumped by a windmill halfway between the tank and the well until 1886; thereafter, it is not known whether this system was used or whether a steam or diesel pump replaced the windmill.

The eight vertical beams supporting the tank are connected to the frostbox (which prevented pipes from freezing in winter) by 5 in. x 8 in. beams and one-inch pipes. The pipes are bolted to the outside of the vertical beams and the inner facing of the frostbox. The vertical beams, 1 ft. x 1 ft. are set in a 2 ft. x 3 ft. concrete foundation. Eight horizontal beams support the water tank.

The tower proper overlaps the frostbox by approximately 6 ft. A wooden chute, about 6 in. wide, extends down the northwest side of the tank. This chute is the guide for the water level indicator. A small indicator attached by a chain to a float inside the tank moved up and down: when at the bottom of the guide, the tank was full. Bolted bands secure the tower staves and a water pipe extends from the structure at the west base of the tower. The frostbox, measuring 8 ft. x 8 ft., rests on a 9 ft. 8 in. x 9 ft. 8 in. concrete foundation.

The only severely damaged portion of the Tres Piedras tower is the octagonal roof, which is riddled with several large holes and has a number of slats missing. Also, the water spout, its supporting structure, counterweights, and a chain connected to the water valve inside the tank are missing. Despite the deterioration of the roof, the water tower is in fairly good condition and could be easily preserved with a minimum of repair and maintenance.

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 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 1888 - 1892

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad water tower at Tres Piedras is one of the best preserved historic railroad water tanks in New Mexico. It is the only significant structure of the line remaining intact along the branch route between Antonito, Colorado and Taos, New Mexico.

The D&RGW rail line holds a unique role in the history of railway development in the state. It is the only line that has always been narrow gauge with the single exception of the Farmington branch which at various times existed in both narrow and standard gauges. The nearest D&RGW trackage to New Mexico at the present time is the Alamosa - Antonito branch.

The plan of the D&RGW to extend a major line from southern Colorado to Mexico was aborted in 1879 when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway secured prior construction rights through Raton Pass. For a number of years the D&RGW was embroiled with the A.T. & S.F. in litigations over various routes in New Mexico and Colorado. Finally, in March 1880, the two companies signed an agreement limiting the areas of future construction for both parties over the ensuing ten years. Under the terms of the contract, all D&RGW development south of Espanola, New Mexico was discontinued. This proved somewhat costly, since the company had expended \$60,000.00 on grading operations in White Rock Canon of the Rio Grande and at Isleta Crossing.

The thirty-five mile gap between Espanola and Santa Fe was completed in 1887 by a newly organized company, the Texas, Santa Fe and Northern Railroad. Title to this property was transferred to the Santa Fe Southern Railway in 1889, and, following six years of further litigation, became part of the D&RGW.

Perhaps the best known route of the D&RGW was the celebrated "Chili Line." Passengers left Denver on the overnight standard gauge Pullman to Alamosa where transfer was made to narrow gauge coaches of the mixed train for arrival in Santa Fe late in the afternoon. Between 1888 and 1892 a short branch operated running west from two successive junctions near Tres Piedras, both known as Stewart Junction. The first Stewart Junction, 3.6 miles south of Tres Piedras, was in operation 1888-89, when timber for the D&RGW was supplied via a spur leading 2.1 miles west into the hills. By 1890, the spur was torn up and relaid from a point 2.8 miles north of Tres Piedras, and this also was called Stewart Junction. The lumber was milled in Tres Piedras at a sawmill located a mere 500 feet from the Tres Piedras Water Tank. This mill, with a capacity of 40,000 board feet daily, was in use until February 11, 1892, when it was destroyed by fire. That same year, the second Stewart Spur was torn up, as the timber stand was too depleted to warrant rebuilding the mill.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Athearn, Robert G. Rebel of the Rockies: A History of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962, pp. 94-96.
 (Available at Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/4 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,3	41,37,1,0	4,05,60,1,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for the watertower is a square that encloses the tower. The square is 25 feet on each side and thus includes only the tower.

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	DATE
William L. Cumiford, Project Manager	Jan. 31, 1978
ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE
History of Engineering Program	(806) 742-3591
STREET & NUMBER	STATE
Box 4089 Texas Tech University	Texas
CITY OR TOWN	
Lubbock	

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *Thomas W. ...*

TITLE *State Historic Preservation Officer* DATE *6-9-78*

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE <i>2-2-79</i>
ATTEST: <i>Marcella ...</i>	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE <i>2-2-79</i>

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Over the years the narrow gauge lines of the Rio Grande were widened or abandoned. By 1956, the only remaining narrow gauge lines were the 264 miles of railroad west of Antonito, extending to Durango, Silverton and Farmington. In 1967 the D&RGW requested the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to discontinue the entire narrow gauge line from Antonito to Durango and Farmington. Shortly thereafter, however, portions of the line were designated as a National Historic Site. Thus, despite the approval granted by the ICC for abandonment, part of the line remained in operation as a tourist attraction. Presently, a narrow gauge line, known as the "Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railway" makes seasonal daily trips between Chama, New Mexico and Antonito, Colorado.

The Tres Piedras water tower is significant in that it is the only intact structure of the D&RGW on the branch line to Stewart Junction.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

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- Beebe, Lucius and Charles Clegg. Rio Grande, Mainline of the Rockies. Berkeley: Howell-North, 1962. (Available at Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University)
- Chappell, Gordon S. Logging Along the Denver and Rio Grande, Narrow Gauge Logging Railroads of Southwestern Colorado and Northern New Mexico. Golden: Colorado Railroad Museum, 1971. (Excerpt on file at History of Engineering Program, Texas Tech University)
- Gjevre, John. A. Chili Line: The Narrow Trail to Santa Fe. Espanola, New Mexico: Rio Grande Sun Press, 1969. (Available at Library, New Mexico State University)
- Le Massena, Robert A. Rio Grande to the Pacific. Denver: Sundance Press, 1971. (Available at Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University)
- Myrick, David F. New Mexico's Railroads: An Historical Survey. Golden: Colorado Railroad Museum, 1970, p. 103. (Available at History of Engineering Library, Texas Tech University)
- New Mexico Railroader. Occasional publication of the Railroad Club of New Mexico, P.O. Box 4293, Station A, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106. (Available at Library, New Mexico State University)
- Interview with Mr. Herbert Taylor, Alamosa, Colorado by T. Lindsay Baker, July 23, 1971. (Interview notes on file at History of Engineering Program, Texas Tech University)
- Interview with Ms. Edith P. Cozart, Property Owner, Tres Piedras, New Mexico by William L. Cumiford and Wendell G. Bell, June 28, 1977. (Interview notes on file at History of Engineering Program, Texas Tech University)
- Interview with Dan Reiley, New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office, Santa Fe by William L. Cumiford, January 10, 1978. (Interview notes on file at History of Engineering Program, Texas Tech University)