NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Colclesser Bridge
other name/site number: Rath Bridge; Niobrara River Bridge; NEHBS Number SH00-42

2. Location

street & number: county road over the Niobrara River — N/A not for publication
city, town: 11.0 miles south of Rushville — x vicinity
state: NE county: Sheridan code: 161 zip code: 69360

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Sheridan County
Category of Property: structure

Number of Resources within Property	
Contributing	Noncontributing
0	0 buildings
0	0 sites
1	0 structures
0	0 objects
1	0 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0
Name of related multiple property listing: **Highway Bridges in Nebraska, 1870-1942**

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Bob Puschendorf DSHPO — 5/6/92
Signature of certifying official — Date

Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:)

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Function (enter categories from instructions)	Current Function (enter categories from instructions)
TRANSPORTATION/road-related	TRANSPORTATION/road-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)	
OTHER /wrought iron, pinned Baltimore through truss	foundation	N/A
	walls	N/A
	roof	N/A
	other	N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Located eleven miles south of Rushville, the Colclesser Bridge spans the Niobrara River in a rural Sheridan County setting. Originally part of the Columbus Loop River Bridge in Platte County, (erected in 1888) the truss was moved to its current site in 1933-34. Since that time, the bridge has served to carry vehicular traffic with no further alterations of note. The Colclesser Bridge today retains a high degree of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. A description of the structure follows:

span number:	1	construction date:	1888; moved 1933-34
span length:	166.0'	construction cost:	$38,000 (original cost); $6211.00 (re-erected)
total length:	167.0'	current condition:	good
roadway wdt.:	15.8'	alterations:	superstructure shortened by four panels and moved

superstructure: wrought iron, 8-panel, pin-connected Baltimore through truss
substructure: steel pile bent abutments with timber wingwalls
floor/decking: timber deck over timber stringers
other features: upper chord: 2 built-up channels with cover plate and lacing; lower chord: 2 punched rectangular eyebars; vertical: 4 angles with lacing; 2 punched rectangular eyebars; diagonal: 2 punched rectangular eyebars; 2 round eyebars with turnbuckles; lateral bracing: round bar with threaded ends; strut: 4 angles with lacing; floor beam: tapered, "fishtail" plate girder, field bolted to vertical above lower chord; guardrail: 2 angles; endpost stiffener: 2 channels with lacing; portal brace: lattice.

___See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

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	1888 (The period of significance is derived from the original construction date and extends through significant later alterations, as noted in the text below.)
Significant Dates	1888; 1933-34
Cultural Affiliation	N/A
Significant Person	N/A
Architect/Builder (Designer)	King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company, Cleveland OH
(Fabricator)	King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company, Cleveland OH
(Builder)	George E. King Bridge Company, Des Moines IA

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

When a massive ice jam carried away the existing bridge over the Loup River south of Columbus in November 1886, the Platte County Supervisors immediately began considering a replacement. They called a special county-wide election to authorize a bond issue for the new structure, and, after the referendum passed in October 1887, the commissioners solicited competitive bids from bridge companies. Proposals were received in December from eight bridge firms for both 4- and 5-span configurations. The county then awarded a construction contract for $38,000 to George E. King of Des Moines, western agent for the King Iron Bridge Company of Cleveland, Ohio. Consisting of four 248-foot through trusses, the Columbus Loup River Bridge was extensive, and King worked until October 1888 to complete it. The bridge carried heavy traffic - first as a county road, then the Lincoln Highway and finally on U.S. Highway 30 - until its replacement with another truss, completed early in 1933. That August heavy flooding washed out virtually all of the bridges over the Niobrara River in Sheridan County. The Sheridan County Commissioners purchased two of the spans of the Columbus Bridge and erected them to replace damaged structures. Four of the panels were removed from one of the trusses, shortening its span length to 166 feet, and it was erected at the Colclesser crossing, eleven miles south of Rushville, for $6211.00 by the General Construction Company. Now called the Rath Bridge, it has since carried light traffic without further alteration.

In its present location in the Sand Hills region, far removed from the Loup River of eastern Nebraska, the Colclesser Bridge has lost its early historical significance accrued by the original Columbus Loup River Bridge. But the structure has retained an exceptionally high degree of technological significance. Moreover, the bridge has functioned in place at its current site for more than 50 years, and has developed a sense of time and place. Although numerous wrought iron bridges were erected in eastern Nebraska in the 1880s, only a handful remain today. None of the others are on the scale of the Colclesser or Loosveldt trusses. Built in 1888 by a nationally prominent bridge erector, both structures are significant to the history of bridge building in Nebraska for their representation of the state's earliest iron truss construction.

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."

__See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Nebraska Department of Roads, Structure Inventory and Appraisal: Structure Number C008124905P; Platte County Supervisors' Record, located at Platte County Courthouse, Columbus, Nebraska, Book 2: 2 December 1886 (pages 52-53), 14 December 1886 (pages 56-57), 21 January 1887 (page 96), 16 September 1887 (pages 176-78), 12 December 1887 (pages 193-95), 13 December 1887 (pages 195-96, 208), 7 March 1888 (page 259), 13 June 1888 (page 270), 15 June 1888 (page 278), 2 October 1888 (page 313), 3 October 1888 (page 317); Sheridan County Commissioners' Record, located at the Sheridan County Courthouse, Rushville NE, Book E: 31 August 1933 (page 560), 16 October 1933 (page 571), 20 November 1933 (pages 578-79), 7 December 1933 (page 579), 16 April 1934 (page 607), 3 January 1935 (page 658); Myron Schievelbein, Sheridan County Engineer, oral interview with Clayton Fraser, 23 April 1990; field inspection by Clayton Fraser, 23 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:

__x__ State historic preservation office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
Other (specify repository:)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property	less than one acre
Cadastral Reference	S28, T30N, R44W
USGS Quadrangle	Rushville Southwest (7.5 Minute Series, 1966)
UTM References	zone 13 easting 706420 northing 4713790

___See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is a rectangular shaped parcel measuring 167 feet by 17.8 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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Clayton B. Fraser, Principal		
organization	**Fraser**design and Hess, Roise and Company	date	30 June 1991
street & number	1269 Cleveland Avenue	telephone	303-669-7969
city or town	Loveland	state	Colorado zip code 80537