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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 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 Grand River Bridge

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number County road over Grand River Section 5  not for publication

city or town 5.7 miles west of Leon Butler Township  vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Decatur code 053 zip code 50144

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.)  
Patricia Churking DSHPO 5-16-98  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or 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 certifying 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 6-25-98

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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)

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total)

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Highway Bridges of Iowa

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

other: pinned Pratt through truss

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Timber pile

walls:

roof:

other: Wrought iron

Narrative Description

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

Located 5.7 miles west of Leon, the Grand River Bridge spans the Grand River in a rural Decatur County setting that has changed little since the structure's period of significance. A description of the structure follows:

span number: 2, span length: 128.0', total length: 235.0', roadway wdt.: 13.0', construction date: c1890, construction cost: \$2980.00, current condition: fair, alterations: none

superstructure: wrought iron, 7-panel, pin-connected Pratt through truss, with 4-panel, pin-connected Pratt pony truss/bedstead and timber stringer approach spans
substructure: timber pile bent piers and timber abutments, west; stone abutments, east; concrete-filled steel cylinder piers between main truss and pony approach span
floor/decking: timber deck over timber stringers
other features: upper chord / inclined end post: 2 channels with cover plate and lacing; lower chord: 2 punched rectangular eyebars; vertical: 2 channels with lacing; diagonal: 2 punched rectangular eyebars; counter: round eyerod with unslotted turnbuckle; lateral bracing: round eyerod with unslotted turnbuckle - top, round rod with threaded ends - bottom; strut: 4 angles with lacing and knee braces; floor beam: riveted, fishtail plate girder.

Other than maintenance-related repairs and alterations noted above, the bridge remains essentially unaltered as it continues to carry vehicular traffic. The Grand River Bridge today retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

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 continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENGINEERING

Period of Significance

c1890

(The period of significance is derived from the original construction date.)

Significant Dates

c1890 (construction date)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

designer: unknown

fabricator: Phoenix Iron Company, Philadelphia PA

builder: Daniel and Webster

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
other
name of repository:

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property less than one acre**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 15 426030 4508030 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
zone easting northing zone easting northing**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated property is a rectangular-shaped parcel measuring 15 feet by 235 feet, which is centered on the UTM point(s) listed above. Included within this rectangular parcel are the bridge's superstructure, substructure, approach spans and floor system.

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected)

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 the bridge.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Clayton B. Fraser  
 organization Fraserdesign date 31 August 1994  
 street & number 1269 Cleveland Avenue telephone 303-669-7969  
 city or town Loveland state Colorado zip code 80537

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**A **USGS map** (7½ or 15 minute series) indicating the property's locationA **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/title Decatur County  
 street & number 1306 South Main Street telephone 515-446-7131  
 city or town Leon state Iowa zip code 50144

**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**

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This medium-scale bridge carries a gravel-surfaced road across the Grand River west of Leon in central Decatur County. The structure consists of a pinned Pratt through truss over the main channel of the river, approached on the east by a peculiarly configured pony truss/bedstead hybrid span. A combination of stone masonry, timber pile bents and steel cylinder piers forms the substructure. County records are vague about the origins of the Grand River Bridge. It appears that the structure was fabricated and erected at this location circa 1890 by bridge contractors Daniel and Webster. Total cost: \$2980.00 for a 128-foot iron span with 100-foot approach. Located near the farm of David Springer, the bridge has carried vehicular traffic at this regionally important crossing for about 100 years, with only maintenance-related repairs to its deck, substructure and approaches.

Pin-connected Pratt configurations were used for virtually all of Iowa's wagon trusses in the late 19th century, executed first in wrought or cast iron and - after the early 1890s - in steel. Thousands of such pinned Pratts were erected throughout the state for crossings both large and small, and numerous examples remain in place today. The Grand River Bridge is distinguished among the surviving Pratts for its early erection date and its well-preserved condition. The bridge is further distinguished by its oddly configured approach span. With an inclined end post on one end and an upright end post on the other, this unique span is a pony truss/bedstead hybrid - the only one of its kind in Iowa and exceedingly rare elsewhere. The Grand River Bridge is thus technologically significant both for its representation of prevailing bridge construction trends in the late 19th century and for its unusual structural configuration.

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Continuation Sheet**

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Iowa Department of Transportation, Structure Inventory and Appraisal: Structure No. 137270.

Decatur County Bridge Inventory Cards: 1941-c1948, located at Decatur County Engineer's Office, Leon IA.

Decatur County Auditor's Bridge Register No. 1, located at the Decatur County Courthouse, Leon IA.

Field inspection by Clayton Fraser, 8 December 1990.