Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

PH0695815

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JAN 29 1979
DATE ENTERED MAR 21 1979

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Fort Sumner Railroad Bridge

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

2 mi. (3.2 Km) W of Fort Sumner over Pecos River

STREET & NUMBER Located two miles northwest of Fort Sumner, over the Pecos River, north of Highway 60 __NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Fort Sumner __X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
New Mexico	035	De Baca	011

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	X COMMERCIAL	__PARK
X STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		X NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Attn: R.K. Knowlton

STREET & NUMBER
80 East Jackson Blvd.

CITY, TOWN
Chicago __ VICINITY OF

STATE
Illinois

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. De Baca County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Fort Sumner

STATE
New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE
December 9, 1977 __FEDERAL X STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Historic Preservation Program

CITY, TOWN
Santa Fe

STATE
New Mexico

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	X UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The railroad bridge spanning the Pecos River at Fort Sumner is of standard plate-girder design common to the bridge plans adopted by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway at the turn of the century. The structure consists of fifteen one hundred foot Class AA Deck Plate Girders supported by fourteen concrete piers. At its maximum height the bridge measures seventy-seven feet in height. The length of the structure is approximately 1500 feet. The bridge is anchored by two concrete winged abutments, and the piers are jutted on the north base to prevent the collection of debris on the river bed.

The class A Plate Girder Span, the longest in the four classified divisions in this bridge design, were the lowest in cost. The depth provided for the least weight possible under the specifications. Each girder is composed of a web plate, four flange angles, and six cover plates. The top and bottom laterals are single angles riveted to connection plates equipped with plates at the intersections. The one hundred foot girder span holds a maximum flange stress of 130,200 pounds dead load and 344,700 pounds live load.

This standard plate girder bridge is equipped with ballasted floors and the girders are topped by a course of creosoted timber. The timbers measure ten inches in depth and the decking is fourteen feet wide. Walks were placed on each side of the bridge which measure two feet in clear width outside of the ballast deck. The walks are protected by three feet high angle iron hand railings.

Construction of the plate girder over the Pecos River was preceded by the building of a pile and trestle bridge which permitted the laying of track to expedite further westward construction. This structure also served as falsework for the erection of the steel superstructure.

In order to maintain good alignment and a grade suitable for heavy traffic, the gradation work was expensive at the approaches to the crossing of the Pecos River.

Though in constant use for more than seventy years, the Fort Sumner Railroad Bridge stands in very good condition at the present time.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	X ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	X COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	X TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1905 - 1906 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The development of modern Fort Sumner was a direct outgrowth of two important technological advances made in the area at the turn of the century -- the initiation of an irrigation system and the arrival of the railroad.

The 1500 ~~250~~-foot plate girder bridge built by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway at Fort Sumner proved to be the pivotal project in the railroad's legacy to the community. The bridge is the best preserved construction of this design in the State of New Mexico.

Before the arrival of the Santa Fe (1905-06), the only permanent inhabitants in the area lived in an adobe shanty town located near the old fort. However, following the onset of widespread irrigation and the coming of the railroad, the former community (Sunnyside) was all but abandoned in favor of permanent settlements west of the fort.

The bridge at Fort Sumner was one of the principal engineering works along the renown Belen Cutoff, a route devised by the Santa Fe to circumvent the difficult grading operations required to connect the main Kansas lines with the railroad west of the Rocky Mountains. With the acquisition of the Pecos Valley and Northeastern Railway and the later extension to Amarillo, Texas, a large section of the alternate route was already realized. The only remaining distance was a gap of approximately two hundred miles in eastern New Mexico.

Between 1900 and 1902 a number of railroads, including the Santa Fe Central and the Rock Island, were engaged in active construction in New Mexico, with Albuquerque as one of the potential objectives. Officials of the A.T. & S.F. determined that a crossing at Abo Pass, about twenty-five miles southeast of Belen, would provide the best passage point to the mountains east of the Rio Grande, given the position of the company's existing lines. In mid-1906 a rail line was extended between Texico and Belen. When the project was completed it inlcuded 279 miles of track, 249 of which joined Belen and Texico.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Brief History of Fort Sumner." Court Records, De Baca County, n.d. (Available at De Baca County Courthouse, Fort Sumner, New Mexico)

"The Eastern Railway of New Mexico." Santa Fe Employee's Magazine, Vol. I, No. 6 (May, 1907), 180-86. (Available at Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4 acres

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	13	568080	3815990
B	13	566570	3814900
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for Fort Sumner Railroad Bridge begins at the eastern end of the embankment construction (UTM reference 13/568080/3815990) and extends to the break in embankment construction across the river (UTM reference: 13/566570/3814900). The boundary includes 30 feet on either side of the track.

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
William L. Cumiford, Project Manager

ORGANIZATION
History of Engineering Program

DATE
March 2, 1978

STREET & NUMBER
Box 4089 Texas Tech University

TELEPHONE
(806) 742-3591

CITY OR TOWN
Lubbock

STATE
Texas

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

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 Neal

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE 1-25-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DATE 3-21-79

ATTEST: Marilee Sharp KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE 3-19-79

GPO 892.453

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Fort Sumner was one of the towns that developed rapidly after the arrival of the railroad. Prior to the construction of the bridge in 1906, the "town" of Sunnyside consisted of only several saloons, three restaurants and a number of tents. Even though Vaughn became the division point on the route, Fort Sumner continued to flourish following the arrival of the railroad.

The Eastern Railway of New Mexico (Belen Cutoff) is noteworthy not only because it linked the east and west lines of the Rio Grande by a direct, low grade freight line, suitable for heavy transcontinental traffic, but it was also one of the first major construction projects undertaken by the A.T. & S.F. after the company went into receivership at the turn of the century.

The Fort Sumner Railroad Bridge is the most impressive existing structure on the Belen Cutoff route, and is the premier historic engineering feature in De Baca County.

GPO 892 455

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Myrick, David F. New Mexico's Railroads: An Historical Survey. Golden: Colorado Railroad Museum, 1970, pp. 35-37. (Available at History of Engineering Library, Texas Tech University)

"Santa Fe Splinters." Correspondence Regarding Railroad Development on Microfilm, Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Vol. XXIV, 1902. (Available at Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University)

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Shinkle, James D. Fort Sumner and the Bosque Redondo Indian Reservation. Roswell: Hall-Poorbaugh Press, Inc., 1965, p. 85. (Available at Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University)

"Short-Span Railway Bridge Standards." Engineering Record, Vol. XLIII, No. 24 (June 15, 1901), 569-70. (Available at Library, Texas Tech University)

"Standard Plans for Bridges on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Ry." Engineering News, Vol. XLIX, No. 22 (May 28, 1903), 482-86. (Available at Library, Texas Tech University)

"Standard Short-Span Bridges on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway." Engineering Record, Vol. XLVIII, No. 20 (November 14, 1903), 598-600. (Available at Library, Texas Tech University)

Stanley, F. E.V. Sumner - Major-General, United States Army. Borger, TX: Jim Hess Printers, 1968, pp. 338-39. (Available at Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University)

Interview with Mrs. J.K. Barfield, Librarian, Fort Sumner, June 22, 1977. (Interview notes on file at History of Engineering Program, Texas Tech University)

Interview with Mr. Bob Parsons, Jr., local historian, Fort Sumner, June 22, 1977. (Interview notes on file at History of Engineering Program, Texas Tech University)

Interview with Mr. Jake West, Soil Conservation Service, Fort Sumner, June 22, 1977. (Interview notes on file at History of Engineering Program, Texas Tech University)

Telephone interview with Mr. Leslie Armstrong, Soil Conservation Service, Fort Sumner, June 17, 1977. (Interview notes on file at History of Engineering Program, Texas Tech University)

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