

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 ELK FALLS PRATT TRUSS BRIDGE  
other names/site number 049-1570-0003

2. Location

street & number LOT 2 in the NE4-SE4, SW4, SE4, SE4, S. 3, T. 31S, R. 11E  not for publication  
city or town ELK FALLS  vicinity  
state KANSAS code KS county ELK code 049 zip code 67345

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.)  
Ramon Powers STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER, MARCH 23, 1994  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
State of 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:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action

Name of Property

County and City

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

- building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Contributing Noncontributing
buildings
sites
structures
objects
Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

METAL TRUSS BRIDGES OF KANSAS

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: Road related (vehicular);
Bridge

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: Pedestrian related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Pratt truss

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Limestone

walls

roof

other METAL: Iron

Narrative Description

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

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1892- 1893

Significant Dates

1892- 1893

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

KING BRIDGE CO., GEORGE E.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Property

County a \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** LESS THAN ONE ACRE

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 4	7 4 9 3 6 0	4 1 3 9 9 0 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title MARTHA HAGEDORN-KRASS, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

organization KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY date MARCH 23, 1994

street & number 120 W. 10th telephone 913-296-5264

city or town TOPEKA state KANSAS zip code 66612

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **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 ELK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

street & number ELK COUNTY COURTHOUSE telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town HOWARD state KANSAS zip code 67349

**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.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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## DESCRIPTION

The Elk Falls Pratt Truss Bridge (c. 1892- 1893) is a wrought iron, Pratt truss bridge that spans the Elk River at Lot 2 in the NE 1/4-SE 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, SE 1/4, S. 3, T. 31S, R. 11E in Elk Falls Township, Elk County, Kansas. The bridge stands at the east end of Montgomery Street, just outside the Elk Falls city limits.

The Elk Falls are located just west of the bridge. These falls give the community of Elk Falls its name, and are formed by the falling of water over a projecting ledge of rock ten feet high and about one hundred feet wide.

The Pratt truss is a truss having parallel chords, vertical members in compression, and diagonal members which slant toward the center in tension. The bridge is supported by two limestone block abutments built into each bank of the river. The superstructure of the bridge measures 130' long by 16' wide, with a 66' approach span. There is an approximate drop of 30' from the deck of the bridge to the water. Wooden decking provides the roadway for the bridge.

The Elk Falls Pratt Truss Bridge was taken out of service in the mid-1970s and left to deteriorate. Efforts to preserve the bridge began in 1991, when the Friend of Elk Falls Association began a campaign to refurbish the structure. The bridge is not completely refurbished, but is open to pedestrians.

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

The Elk Falls Pratt Truss Bridge (c. 1892- 1893) is being nominated to the National Register under criterion C for its architectural significance as a Pratt truss bridge and is to be included in the "Metal Truss Bridges of Kansas" thematic resources nomination. The Pratt truss is a truss having parallel chords, vertical members in compression, and diagonal members which slant toward the center in tension.

The wrought iron bridge spans the Elk River at Lot 2 in the NE 1/4-SE 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, SE 1/4, S. 3, T. 31S, R. 11E in Elk Falls Township, Elk County, Kansas. The bridge stands at the east end of Montgomery Street, just outside the Elk Falls city limits.

The Elk Falls are located just west of the bridge. These falls give the community of Elk Falls its name, and are formed by the falling of water over a projecting ledge of rock ten feet high and about one hundred feet wide.

The bridge is supported by two limestone block abutments built into each bank of the river. The superstructure of the bridge measures 130' long by 16' wide, with a 66' approach span. There is an approximate drop of 30' from the deck of the bridge to the water. Wooden decking provides the roadway for the bridge.

The Pratt truss was originally patented by Thomas and Caleb Pratt in 1844. In its earliest form, the Pratt truss was a combination wood and iron truss. The top chord and verticals acted in compression and were made of wood while the bottom chord and inclined members acted in tension and were made of iron. This combination pratt truss was built through the nineteenth century and was cited as a continued form by bridge engineers as late as 1908. The Pratt truss survived the transition to metal construction and was widely built as an all metal truss well into the twentieth century. In 1916, bridge engineer and historian J. A. L. Waddell claimed that the Pratt truss was the most commonly used truss type for spans under 250 feet.

In Kansas, the Pratt truss was one of the most commonly built bridges between 1883 and 1899. Approximately two hundred and sixty metal Pratt truss bridges have been identified. Many of these bridges were constructed by the Wrought Iron Bridge Company of Canton, Ohio.

On October 5, 1892 the Board of County Commissioners of Elk County appropriated \$2000 "to build a bridge across Elk River in Elk Falls Township across said River at the most practicable point." The commission considered the bids for the Elk Falls bridge, along with bids for the construction of four other bridges in Elk County on November 15, 1892.

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The following companies presented bids for the construction of five separate bridges in Elk County:

Chicago Bridge Co., Chicago, IL  
George E. King Bridge Co., Des Moines, IA

Detroit Bridge and Iron Works, Detroit, MI  
Wrought Iron Bridge Co., Kansas City, MO

Missouri Valley Bridge Co., Leavenworth, KS  
E. H. Nichols, Elk Falls, KS  
Sharp Brothers, Marion, KS  
J. K. Sawyer, contractor/bridge builder,  
Wichita, KS

Iron Substructure Co., Cleveland, OH  
King Bridge Co., Cleveland, OH  
Lane Bridge Co., Massillion, OH

The board awarded three contracts to the George E. King Bridge Co. of "Des Moines, Iowa," including the contract for the wrought iron superstructure at Elk Falls. The George E. King Bridge Co. also received the contracts for the wrought iron superstructures in Greenfield Township and Longton. The George E. King Bridge Co. operated in Des Moines, Iowa from 1891 until 1901.

Each of the three bridges constructed by the George E. King Bridge Co. cost \$2000 to produce. The cost of the bridge was split equally between the county commission and Elk Falls township commission. The township likely supplied the materials and labor for the approach work. The Elk Falls Pratt truss bridge was completed on July 1, 1893.

Elk Falls was founded in 1870, and served as the county seat of Howard County until 1875, when Howard was divided into Elk and Chautauqua counties. Elk Falls, situated in Elk County, relinquished the county seat to Howard.

In 1879, the Southern, Kansas, and Western Railroad extended west from Independence to Grenola, opening up rail service to Elk Falls. In 1880, this line was consolidated into the Kansas City, Lawrence and Southern Kansas Railroad Company, and in 1883 this line was consolidated into Southern Kansas Railway. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad bought the Southern Kansas Railway in 1899.

In 1883, Andreas wrote that the only manufacturing at Elk Falls was a grist and flour mill. The mill, which produced Queen Bee flour, was constructed in 1875, and was located just west of the Elk Falls Pratt Truss Bridge. The three-story building is no longer at the site, but parts of its limestone block foundation remain.

The Elk Falls Pratt Truss Bridge was taken out of service in the mid-1970s and left to deteriorate. Efforts to preserve the bridge began in 1991, when the Friend of Elk Falls Association began a campaign to refurbish the structure. The bridge is not completely refurbished, but is open to pedestrians.

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company. "Manual No. 88," 1984.
- Andreas, A. T. History of the State of Kansas. (Chicago: Andreas, 1883).
- Darnell, Victor C. Directory of American Bridge-Building Companies, 1840- 1900.  
(Washington, DC: Society for Industrial Archeology, 1984).
- Elk County Historical Society. Elk County: A Narrative History of Elk County and its People.  
1979.
- Elk County, Kansas. Board of County Commissioners of Elk County Journal "D," 5 October  
1892; 15 November 1892.
- Howard, Kansas Courant, 26 August 1892.
- Jochims, Larry. "Metal Truss Bridges in Kansas, 1861-1939." (National Register nomination,  
1989).
- Lockhart, Donald. "Early History of Elk Falls," Kansas State Historical Society Collections, V.  
XVII, 1926-1928, pp. 842-845.

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated property spans the Elk River at Lot 2 in the NE 1/4-SE 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, SE 1/4, S. 3, T. 31S, R. 11E in Elk Falls Township, Elk County, Kansas on a tract measuring 130 feet by 16 feet whose northeast corner is represented by the northeast corner of the bridge. Beginning at the northeast corner, the boundary proceeds 100 feet south, 16 feet west, 100 feet north, and 16 feet east to the point of beginning.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary includes only that area that is historically associated with the nominated property.



ELK FALLS PRATT TRUSS BRIDGE

UTM COORDINATES

- 14 749360 4139900 -

ELK FALLS QUADRANGLE  
KANSAS

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

107° 10' 15" W  
37° 22' 30" N

STATE OF KANSAS

