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Form 10-300 (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

STATE:	
KANSAS	
COUNTY:	
NEOSHO	
FOR NPS USE ON	ILY
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

Austin Bridge AND/OR HISTORIC: COMMON: STREET AND NUMBER: In the S.W. 2 of the S.W. 2, connecting lots 4 & 5, Sec. 2, Tsp. 28, R 18. CITY OR TOWN: 2 mi. E., 3 mi. S., 3/4 mi. W., of Chamtte, Kansas STATE CATEGORY (Check Care) OWNERSHIP CATEGORY (Check Care) Object: Building Public Public Acquisition: (Check Care) Object: Building Structure Both Being Considered Private Concepted Unaccupied Institute Insti		(Type all entries	s — complete applicab	le sections)			\neg	
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. DESCRIPTION					
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DESCRIBE THE P	RESENT AND ORI	GINAL (if known) PHYSICA	L APPEARANCE		

Austin Bridge, a bowstring arch, was built in 1877 by the King Iron Bridge Company of Cleveland, Chio. It is made of wrought iron, but apparently does have some stringers made of steel. The floor is wood planking supported by steel stringers.

The bridge spans the Neosho River and originally stood east of the city of Chanute, where Kansas highway 39 presently crosses the river. In 1910 A.M. Blodget was contracted to move the bridge three miles downstream to an abandoned townsite known then and now as Austin.

When constructed in 1877 the bridge, as evidenced by photographs dating before 1910, was supported at each end by a foundation made of stone. But when the bridge was moved it was lengthen by adding a girder span at one end and a Pratt (bedstead) truss at the other. Even so, no structural changes have ever been made to the bowstring arch itself.

On March 16, 1972, Austin Bridge was closed to vehicle traffic. The weakness found was not in the bowstring but in the Pratt truss. The bridge is, according to the Neosho County Engineer, perfectly safe when used as a foot bridge.

In the fall of 1976, after a new bridge was opened one mile downstream, the county removed the girder span and wood planking as a prelude to tearing down the bridge. Strong public outcry halted the plans to destroy the bridge -- the girder span and wood planking are being held by the county and could be put back in their place. No real harm has been done to the bridge.

There is a strong county wide effort being made to have the bridge preserved as a historical landmark and a small riverside park established at the site by the county.

See attachment for diagram of Austin Bridge.

RIOD (Check One or More as			
Pre-Columbian	🔲 16th Cemitury	18th Century	20th Century
☐ 15th Century	☐ 17th Century	🔀 19th Century	
PECIFIC DATE(5) (If Applicat	le and Known)		
REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Ch	eck One or More as Appropri	ate)	
Abor iginal	Education	☐ Political	Urban Planning
Prehistoric -	🔀 Engineering	Religion/Phi-	Other (Specify)
Historic	☐ Industry	losophy	
Agriculture	Invention	Science	
Architecture	Landscape	Sculpture	-
Art Art	Architecture	Social/Human-	
☐ Commerce	Literature	itarian	
Communications	Military	☐ Theater	
Conservation	Music	Transportation	

This application is being made due to the importance to our engineering heritage of the bowstring arched span of the Austin Bridge. This bowstring, built in 1877, is an early example of iron bridge construction and it and it is extremely rare to find a span of this length -- 160 feet. the.

The Austin Bridge is every last bowstring arched bridge still standing in the state of Kansas.

When Thomas Barr, Historic Sites Archeologist for the Kansas State Historical Society, saw this bridge in the spring of 1976 he recognized it as being a now rare example of bridge construction, but he was not sure as to how rare it was. Mr. Barr then checked with Richard L. Heisler of the engineering firm Cook, Flatt, & Strobel, Topeka, who does bridge surveys for the state. It was confirmed by Mr. Heisler that the Austin Bridge is the last of its kind in the state.

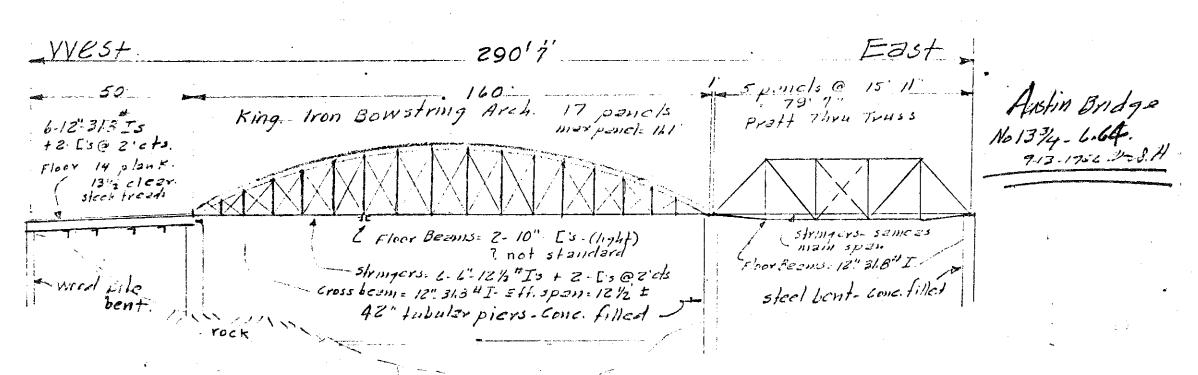
The Austin Bridge, when it stood at its original site, was one of the first bridges to span the Neosho River in Neosho County. It played a very important role in opening up -- making easy access -- the northwest corner of the county.

We believe that the Austin Bridge being an early example of wrought iron bridge construction, which has now become very rare, and being the last bowstring arched bridge in the state of Kansas it has become a very important part of our engineering heritage and should be entered into the National Register of Historic Places.

	Austin Bridge File in the office of the Neosho County Engineer, Neosho										
	County Courthouse, Erie, Kansas 66733.										
	Richard L. Heisler, engineer license #6331; Cook, Flatt, & Strobel,										
	6111 West 29th Street, Topeka, Kansas 66614.										
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12.	STATE	LIAISON OFFICER C	ERTIFICATION		4	N	ATIONAL	L REGIST	ER VERI	FICATIO	N
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	As the	e designated State Liais	on Officer for the	e Na-		I hereby	certify t	hat this n	ronerty is	included	in the
		Historic Preservation A	-			I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.					
		5), I hereby nominate thi				Mationa	1 Kegase				
ļ		National Register and o			-						
		ated according to the cri			- 11						
	forth by the National Park Service. The recommended			Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation					servation		
	level of significance of this nomination is:						•				
	National State Local L										
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	Name				-	ATTEST	r.				• 1
							- •				
	Title										
						Keeper of The National Register					
	Date					Date					
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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

## Austin Bridge Neosho County, Kansas



Neosho River