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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 Upper Bluffton Bridge

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

2. Location

street & number Ravine road over Upper Iowa River  not for publication

city or town Bluffton  vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Winneshieck code 191 zip code 52131

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 O'Leary DSITPO  
Signature of certifying official/Title

4-7-98  
Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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): \_\_\_\_\_

**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)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	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 Concrete/stone

walls

roof

other Wrought iron

**Narrative Description**

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

Located in Bluffton, the Upper Bluffton Bridge spans Upper Iowa River in a rural setting that has changed little since the structure's period of significance. A description of the structure follows:

span number: 1                      construction date: 1880  
span length: 116.0'                  construction cost: \$2831.23  
total length: 154.0'                current condition: fair  
roadway wdt.: 14.8'                alterations: partial substructural replacement

superstructure: wrought iron, 8-panel, pin-connected Pratt through truss; 3-panel pin-connected Pratt pony truss approach span at the west end

substructure: concrete and stone abutment and pier at the east end; steel pile bent abutment with timber back- and wingwalls at the west end

floor/decking: timber deck over steel stringers

other features: main truss: upper chord and inclined end post: 2 channels with cover and batten plates; lower chord: 2 looped rectangular eyebars; vertical: wide flange or I-beam (looped round eyebar the hip); diagonal: looped square or round eyebars with unslotted turnbuckles; lateral bracing: round rod with threaded ends - top, round rod with turnbuckle - bottom; strut: channel; floor beam: I-beam, U-bolted to vertical; guardrail: steel lattice; portal patent plate: **Wrought Iron Bridge Co. Canton, O Builders Patented Nov. 21, 1876; hip block plate: Patented 1876**

Other than maintenance-related repairs and alterations noted above, the bridge remains essentially unaltered as it continues to carry vehicular traffic. The Upper Bluffton 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**

1880

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

**Significant Dates**

1880 (construction date)

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

designer:

Wrought Iron Bridge Company, Canton OH

fabricator:

Wrought Iron Bridge Company, Canton OH

builder:

Wrought Iron Bridge Company, Canton OH

**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 587460 4806150  
zone easting northing2 \_\_\_\_\_  
zone easting northing**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated property is a rectangular-shaped parcel measuring 17 feet by 154 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 Michelle Crow-Dolby and Clayton Fraserorganization Fraserdesign date 31 August 1994street & number 1269 Cleveland Avenue telephone 303-669-7969city 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 Winneshiek Countystreet & number 201 West Main Street telephone 319-382-2951city or town Decorah state Iowa zip code 52101

**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**

Section Number 8 Page 1 Upper Bluffton Bridge Winneshiek County; Iowa

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In the 1870s Winneshiek County embarked on an ambitious bridge construction program, in which many of the earliest wooden structures were replaced with more substantial iron spans on stone substructures. Beginning in 1873, the county, under the direction of bridge commissioner George Winship, built several bowstring arch-trusses, most of which were supplied by the Wrought Iron Bridge Company of Canton, Ohio. Exhausted from the pressures of the job, Winship retired in January 1878. But by 1880 the county had erected a total of 32 iron bridges, all built under Winship's supervision. "The iron and stone bridges are erected with a view to permanency," an 1880 county almanac stated. "The abutments are invariably massive, and the superstructure of superior workmanship." That year the county contracted with WIBCo for two medium-span bridge superstructures. The first, used for the Lawrence Bridge in Jackson Township [WINN54], was an 84-foot pony truss. The other was a 166-foot-span Pratt through truss replacement structure for the Bluffton Bridge, placed over the Upper Iowa River on existing abutments. (The structure is now known as the Upper Bluffton Bridge, to distinguish it from a later truss [WINN41].) Costing \$2831.23, the Upper Bluffton Bridge featured a pin-connected Pratt truss based on patents held by David Hammond, WIBCo's president.

The Upper Bluffton and Lawrence bridges marked a watershed for bridge building in Winneshiek County. The county supervisors had contracted for small-scale, all-iron trusses in the 1870s (Pratt half-hips and bedsteads, primarily), but these two trusses marked the first time that the county purchased longer-span trusses instead of bowstrings for rural crossings. The bridges presaged the building trend in the county for the rest of the 19th century. Winneshiek County continued to build iron, and later steel, trusses on its rural roads in the 1880s and 1890s. This change in character of bridges occurred well within the mainstream of state and national trends, for after 1880 the bowstring was specified increasingly less frequently for roadway crossings. The Wrought Iron Bridge Company, at the forefront of bowstring innovation in the 1870s, was also a leader in the shift toward other structural configurations a decade later. David Hammond foresaw the decline of the bowstring in the mid-1870s, as his company was reaching its zenith on the basis of bowstring sales, and he directed his patent activities more toward straight-chorded trusses after that point.

WIBCo maintained an extensive catalog of bridge types that ranged from the exotic to the commonplace. With its pinned connections and patented Pratt web configuration, the Upper Bluffton Bridge represented the former rather than the latter. It was one of thousands of such pinned Pratts erected throughout Iowa in the late 19th century. The Upper Bluffton Bridge is technologically significant as a very early, well-preserved example of this mainstay wagon bridge type. In Winneshiek County it represented the first time the county used a truss rather than a bowstring for a rural crossing. A local harbinger of prevailing bridge trends, the Upper Bluffton Bridge is a significant transportation-related resource.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section Number   9   Page   2   Upper Bluffton Bridge Winneshiek County, Iowa

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Iowa Department of Transportation, Structure Inventory and Appraisal: Structure No. 348810.

James Hippen, ed., "Preliminary Report on 'Historic' Bridges in Winneshiek County, Iowa," unpublished paper, January 1971.

Winneshiek County Supervisors' Record, Book C: page 39 (11 January 1881), page 329 (9 January 1886), located at the Winneshiek County Courthouse, Decorah IA.

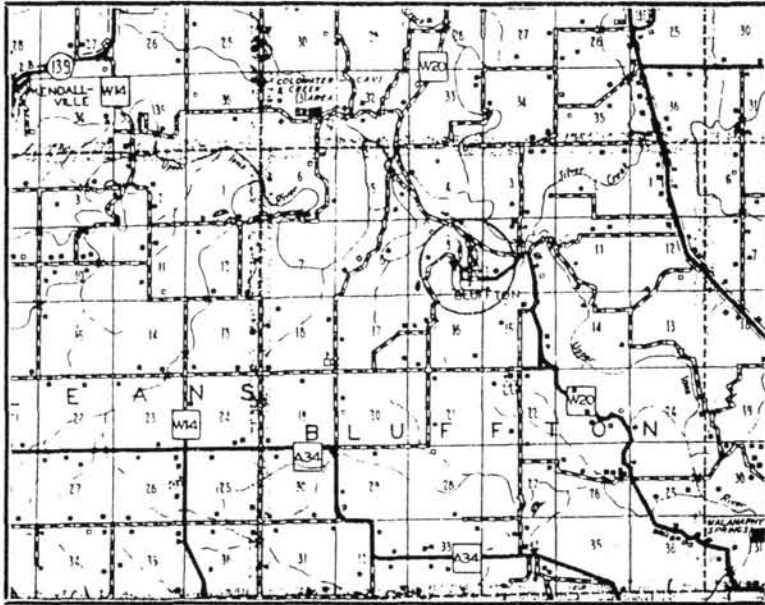
Winneshiek County Bridge Book Number 1, located at the Winneshiek County Engineer's Office, Decorah IA.

Field inspection by Clayton Fraser, 10 October 1990.

**NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE**

Upper Bluffton Bridge (Upper Iowa River Bridge)

**PHOTOS AND SKETCH MAP OF LOCATION**



**LOCATION MAP**

TAKEN FROM IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION MAP

**SOURCES**

Iowa Department of Transportation, Structure Inventory and Appraisal: Structure Number 348810; James Hippen, ed., "Preliminary Report on 'Historic' Bridges in Winneshiek County, Iowa," unpublished paper, January 1971; Winneshiek County Supervisors' Record, Book C: page 39 (11 January 1881), page 329 (9 January 1886), located at the Winneshiek County Courthouse, Decorah IA; Winneshiek County Bridge Book Number 1, located at the Winneshiek County Engineer's Office, Decorah IA; field inspection by Clayton Fraser, 10 October 1990.

**INVENTORIED BY**

Michelle Crow-Dolby and Clayton Fraser

**AFFILIATION**

Fraserdesign, Loveland CO

**DATE**

18 March 1992

