

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property:

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historic name: Alderson Bridge

other name/site number: Alderson Memorial Bridge

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2. Location:

street & number: Monroe Street

not for publication: \_na

city/town: Alderson

vicinity: na

state: WV county: Greenbrier; Monroe

Code: 025/063

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public local

Category of Property: Structure \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
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_____	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
1	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
1	__0__ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: na\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_na

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Wm. J. [Signature]  
Signature of certifying official

10/16/91  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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5. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date  
of Action

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## 6. Function or Use

Historic: Transportation Sub: Road RelatedCurrent : Transportation Sub: Pedestrian Related

## 7. Description

## Architectural Classification:

other: concrete arch bridge

Other Description: naMaterials: foundation concrete roof na  
walls concrete other naDescribe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: STATEApplicable National Register Criteria: A, CCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) : naAreas of Significance: Engineering  
TransportationPeriod(s) of Significance: 1914 to 1941  
1992

Significant Dates : 1914

Significant Person(s): naCultural Affiliation: naArchitect/Builder/Engineer: Frank Duff McEnteerState significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  
X See continuation sheet.

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The Alderson Bridge is an impressive graceful concrete arch bridge located in the center of the Town of Alderson. The Town is located on the County line of Greenbrier and Monroe Counties, West Virginia. This is in the south eastern section of the state. The bridge spans the Greenbrier River, which is the county line. Therefore the bridge is in both counties, and was constructed as a jointly funded project.

The downtown section of Alderson lies predominantly on the south side of the river, in Monroe County. Here Railroad Avenue contains the Railroad Depot and a number of commercial structures dating from the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. The perpendicular street, Monroe, also contains a few commercial structures as well as the Town Offices, designed by West Virginia Architect, Walter Martens. On the north side of the river, along Riverview Drive, at the intersection of Monroe Street, there is a small number of commercial buildings. Historically, there was a bank, gas station and a few other businesses on this side of the river. The remainder of the town in Greenbrier County is mostly single family residential structures from the same time period as the downtown.

Monroe Street is the street that runs north and south and crosses the river on the bridge, connecting the two counties. The town is relatively flat along the river and for a short distance on either side, then gently slopes up away from the river basin. The town contains 549 acres and 1375 population (1988). At the bridge the river is 300 feet wide.

The bridge is 21 feet wide including the walkways and 453 feet long. There is some discrepancy in historic newspaper accounts as to the length of the bridge, but the original drawing by Frank Duff McEnteer computes to 452.75 feet. It has four arches in the length. The end arches spring from abutments on the banks of the river. There are three stone piers in the river. These, and the abutments, are originally from the 1882 steel truss bridge that spanned the river in this location. The arches are poured in place concrete and are filled with earth. The sidewalks and parapet walls are concrete also. The walls have recessed decorative panels at regularly spaced intervals. On the east side of the bridge, in the center two spans, the walls jog out towards the river approximately one foot. The walkways are supported by cantilevered concrete beams that taper at the ends. Original plans called for the wall to be an open balustrade, but

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the bridge was constructed as is extant.

The bridge was originally designed to carry vehicular traffic only, then a change order during construction was issued to include pedestrian walks. There is a five foot camber in the center of the bridge. The outside arches are 109 feet long and the center ones are 110 feet, center to center. The wall is 3 feet 3 inches tall and the walkway concrete is four inches thick. 10 electric lights were installed on the bridge when it was first constructed.

The old stone piers are parged with concrete to give the overall appearance of a smooth monolithic structure. There is some deterioration on the edges of the walkway and the wall, but this is not serious. The walls have been parged recently with a gunite type material, but retain their original form and design. This was done in 1977, when the bridge was removed from automobile service and a new one constructed downstream.

Electric street lamps, closely representing the originals, were restored to the bridge in 1988. The road surface is asphalt paving.

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The Alderson Bridge is significant under Criterion C as an example of important concrete engineering in the early 20th Century and for its association with the Clarksburg Concrete and Steel Bridge Company and Frank Duff McEnteer. It is also significant under Criterion A for its association with the transportation system in Greenbrier and Monroe Counties.

Prior to the coming of the railroad in 1872 Alderson was a small rural community. Greenbrier County was formed in 1778, at which time the village of Alderson was completely located in that county. In 1799 Monroe County was formed, splitting the town down the middle. Residential development began in the area west of Monroe Street in 1856 by Reverend Lewis A. Alderson. George Alderson owned what is now the south and divided it for development in 1871. Following the arrival of the railroad the town prospered as a regional center for transportation and merchandising.

Prior to the construction of the first metal bridge over the Greenbrier, crossing the river was accomplished at Alderson's Ferry, about 100 yards upstream from the current bridge. Elder John Alderson established the Ferry in 1789 by legislative grant. This Ferry was recognized as the official crossing and no bridge was required when Indian Draft Turnpike was incorporated to connect to the Red Sulphur and Blue Sulphur Turnpike in 1838. There were few roads early on and they connected to Lewisburg and to the north. South of Alderson there were no roads other than those crossing at the Ferry.

The first bridge was considered by Greenbrier County in 1878 but was not constructed until 1881 when the two counties shared the cost of an iron bridge built by the Pittsburgh Bridge Co. Apparently, the town was not satisfied with the bridge as it continually complained and in 1913 petitioned the Counties to construct a new one. The Monroe County records of August 1913 indicate that the bridge was declared unsafe. The Prosecuting Attorney was instructed to work with Greenbrier County on investigating a new concrete bridge. Greenbrier County also agreed to fund a portion of the cost for replacement, if the Town of Alderson contributed as well. A meeting was established for March 2, 1913 with Greenbrier County, Monroe County and Alderson to discuss the replacement.

Greenbrier County records indicate that pursuant to a February

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12. 1914 order they met with Monroe County and agreed to construct a new bridge, with Alderson contributing to the construction of walkways. Bids were to be received for two alternatives, one a steel bridge, and the other concrete. E.B. Hubbard was appointed by the two counties to prepare preliminary plans for the bidders to work from. On May 20, 1914 there was a joint session of the two county commissions to open bids. The Farris Bridge Company, the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company, and the Concrete Steel Bridge Company submitted bids for the steel bridge. The Concrete Steel Bridge Company and the WC Requeath Company submitted bids for the concrete bridge. The Luten Bridge Company and Farris Bridge Company also submitted alternative bids prior to the opening day, but these were not reviewed. The successful bidder was then the Concrete Steel Bridge Company of Clarksburg and a contract was executed that day with F.D. McEnteer. The two counties inspected the completed bridge on May 19 1914 and accepted the project. The total contract amount of the bridge was \$20,600.00.

The town of Alderson voted to issue bonds to cover their portion of the bridge, the sidewalks. This levy passed in an election on May 26, 1914. The contract between the Concrete Steel Bridge Company and the Town of Alderson for the sidewalks totaled \$2,900.00 and was entered on October 30, 1914. The final payment by the town to the construction company was made in unsold bonds.

An interesting aspect of the construction of the bridge is that it was constructed on the existing piers from the old iron bridge. At first the old bridge was to be used during construction but a wooden foot bridge was constructed in its stead by the merchants of Alderson for the convenience of the citizenry.

Under Criterion A the bridge is significant for its association with the transportation system and development of Alderson as a connector between the two sides of the town. The bridges and this crossing location have always been important to Alderson. The town developed on both sides of the river and a link between North Alderson and South Alderson was important. On the south side was located the railroad depot, the main commercial portion of town, and the city hall. On the north side were one of the upscale residential sections, the major concentration of residences, the Hotel, one of the Banks, and many churches. The Old Greenbrier Baptist Church is mentioned in a 1916 History of NPS

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Greenbrier County as one of the reasons that the crossing was so important. The new church was constructed in 1935 on the same site as the original.

Also located in North Alderson was the Alderson Baptist Academy which was founded in 1901 and merged with Broadus College and moved to Philippi in 1932. The Greenbrier Male and Female Seminary, founded by Rev. B.E. Goode in 1885, later changed to the Greenbrier Seminary and Conservatory of Music, and closed in 1894, is another of the significant institutions of Alderson located on the north side.

The location of these residential and institutional sites in North Alderson illustrates the significance of Alderson's bridges to the connection of the two sides of town.

The Alderson Bridge is also significant under Criterion C for its association with the engineer Frank Duff McEnteer. McEnteer was born in 1882 in Reynoldsville, PA. After attending various schools he was graduated from Harvard with the intent of becoming a mining engineer. Due to a shortage of jobs he worked in the construction field, which eventually brought him to Clarksburg, West Virginia in 1911 to work on the Palace Furniture building. Here he began his work with structural reinforced concrete. Forming a partnership with PM Harrison, a representative of the York Bridge Company, he supervised the construction of the Fourth Street Bridge in Clarksburg, designed by the Luten Bridge Company.

He and Harrison formed the Concrete Steel Bridge Company in 1914 and embarked on a career of concrete bridge building throughout the region. They specialized in reinforced concrete bridges and built over 1000 in West Virginia, both large and small. The company expanded into Pittsburgh and Harrisburg Pennsylvania, Huntington West Virginia, Knoxville Tennessee, and even Florida. Unfortunately, the Depression spelled the end of the Concrete Steel Bridge Company with unexpected problems encountered during construction of the Hyner bridge in Pennsylvania. The company dissolved in 1931.

McEnteer then worked for the West Virginia State Road Commission and the firm of Johnson Piper and Drake in the Middle East during



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the Second World War. Following the war he returned to West Virginia as a consultant until his death in 1957.

McEnteer was a pioneer in the new field of structural reinforced concrete construction. Prior to the 20th Century concrete existed, but had not been extensively exploited in conjunction with the tensile strength that steel could provide. With this new composite material McEnteer could design graceful, functional structures. His work on the Alderson Bridge is an example of one type of design with massive earth filled arches and multiple spans. Although massive, it was also flowing and smooth. This was similar in design to the Fourth Street Bridge in Clarksburg that he cut his teeth on. They also designed lighter, open span-drel bridges such as those in Pike County Kentucky. The Alderson job, though, was a coup of sorts for the fledgling Concrete and Steel Bridge Company, winning the bid from one of their major competitors, Luten.

The bridge is also significant under Criterion C as an example of the reinforced concrete structural system that was to become popular in modern architecture and engineering. It is one of the earlier structures of its type in West Virginia. It is also one of the largest and at completion in 1915 was the longest earth filled concrete bridge in the state. It still stands as reportedly the longest in West Virginia.

In 1977 the bridge was threatened with demolition when the Highways Department replaced it with another downstream. The Alderson Bridge was removed from service. As early as 1975, the Alderson Bicentennial Commission and the Alderson Woman's Club, GFWC, had spearheaded the community effort to save the bridge for pedestrian use. The Woman's Club made this effort their Community Improvement Project for several years. By July 1, 1976 the Alderson Bridge Trust Fund was established, sponsored by the Bicentennial Commission. This Commission, and many local organizations, businesses, interested citizens and friends, and the Monroe and Greenbrier County Commissions channeled funds through the Trust Fund for the needed repairs. After much activity and perseverance, the bridge was saved and converted to pedestrian only use. In 1977, the Town Council designated it as the Alderson Memorial Bridge.

In 1978, the Town of Alderson received the National Trust for

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Historic Preservation President's Award, the first such Award for preservation efforts in West Virginia. Thanks to all of Alderson's preservation efforts, the magnificent concrete bridge still stands in service to the community. The Alderson Bridge Trust Fund continues to need financial support to assist the Town in bridge repairs, maintenance, and improvements.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

na preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)  
has been requested.

na previously listed in the National Register

na previously determined eligible by the National Register

na designated a National Historic Landmark

na recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

na recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State historic preservation office

\_ Other state agency

\_ Federal agency

X Local government

X University

\_ Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: .18 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

A	17	531440	4175130	B	_____	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point at the intersection of the south side of West Riverview Drive and the west side of Monroe Street; thence east across Monroe Street to the east side of Monroe Street; thence south across the Greenbrier River to the north side of Railroad Avenue; thence west across Monroe Street; thence north to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification: \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

These are the dimensions of the bridge and road itself.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Michael Gioulis - Historic Preservation Consultant\_

Organization: Same as above

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City or Town: Sutton

State: WV ZIP: 26601

VIRGINIA  
BY THE  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
AGENCIES

ALDERSON QUADRANGLE  
WEST VIRGINIA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)  
NW/4 ALDERSON 15' QUADRANGLE

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(ASBURY)



