

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: statewide

Applicable National Register Criteria C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) N/A

Areas of Significance Engineering

Period of Significance 1914-15 (The period of significance is derived from the original construction date.)

Significant Dates 1914-15

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Significant Person N/A

Architect/BUILDER (Designer) Nebraska Bureau of Roads and Bridges

(Builder) Lincoln Construction Company, Lincoln NE

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations and areas of significance noted above.

By 1912 the existing timber pile bridge over the North Platte River north of Sutherland had deteriorated beyond repair. Voters in Birdwood Precinct in which the bridge lay voted a bond issue in April 1912 and again the following year, and the county sought financial assistance from the newly formed state aid bridge fund. Early in 1914 the Nebraska State Engineer produced six alternate concrete designs for a multiple-span structure at Sutherland. The designs delineated fourteen 50-foot concrete arches or twenty-three 33-foot concrete girders, with a variety of substructures and either 16-foot roadways or 12-foot roadways with a wider 20-foot turnout at the bridge's center. When Lincoln County solicited bids in April for the Birdwood Bridge (so named for the precinct), it received responses from six bridge contractors: the Midland Bridge Company of Kansas City, Missouri, Monarch Engineering Company of Falls City Nebraska, Omaha Structural Steel Works, Central Construction Company of Colorado Springs Colorado, and J.L. Mullen and the Lincoln Construction Company, both of Lincoln Nebraska. The county awarded the contract to the Lincoln Construction Company for the arches on wood pile foundations. Soon thereafter, the Lincoln-based firm began assembling a large crew at the site. Work progressed throughout the remainder of 1914 and into the following year. At the end of December, 1915, the immense structure, by now called the Sutherland State Aid Bridge, was completed. Total cost: \$36,345. The Sutherland Bridge has carried traffic since, in unaltered condition.

The significance of the Sutherland State Aid Bridge to the history of Nebraska bridge building can hardly be understated. This remarkable structure is significant as perhaps the best remaining example of the state aid bridges. Although some 77 structures were built throughout the state under this program between 1912 and 1936, only 17 remain in use. Of these, only the Carns State Aid Bridge (NEHBS No. R000-72) and the Cambridge State Aid Bridge (NEHBS No. FN00-98) predate Sutherland, but both of these have been altered. The Sutherland Bridge is also technologically significant as the best example in the state of concrete arch construction. Moreover, of the 17 multiple-span concrete arch bridges built under the state aid program in the 1910s and 1920s, all but the Sutherland Bridge have been destroyed or substantially altered, leaving this structure as the sole intact example of this important construction trend. The Missouri River bridges aside, the Sutherland State Aid Bridge is the most important vehicular span in Nebraska.

For further contextual information regarding bridge building in Nebraska, registration requirements, and property types, see related multiple property listing "Highway Bridges in Nebraska, 1870 - 1942."

Duane  
Joe  
Willis

while researching Sutherland North  
& found this, thought it interesting.

J. L. Williams

See continuation sheet