

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

RECEIVED

FEB 01 1993

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

NATIONAL
REGISTER

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic name: Colorado River Bridge

Other name/site number: Site No. 649

2. LOCATION

Street & number: 300 Block of South Richmond Road (US 59)

Not for publication: N/A

City/town: Wharton

State: TX *County:* Wharton

Code: 481 *Zip Code:* 77488

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property: Public - State

Category of Property: Structure

Number of Resources within Property: **Contributing Noncontributing**

<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Resources of Wharton,
Wharton County, Texas

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

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.

Laurie J. Jernell
Signature of certifying official

27 Jan. 1993
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

 See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

Delores Byrum

3/18/93

 determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the
National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain):

f

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Transportation: road-related (vehicular)

Current: Transportation: road-related (vehicular)

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: OTHER: Parker-through Truss

Materials: foundation Concrete
walls N/A
roof N/A
other Steel

Describe 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: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: Transportation

Period(s) of Significance: 1930-1942

Significant Dates: 1930

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Austin Bridge Company

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
 x See continuation sheet.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Colorado River Bridge
Wharton, Wharton County, Texas

Description:

The Colorado River Bridge is a 2-part, steel truss and concrete highway bridge crossing the Colorado River on a north-south axis. It consists of two Camelback Parker-through truss sections, resting on large concrete pylons, and connected on the north and south by single concrete sections with concrete curbs and precast concrete guard rails. The bridge is accessed along Richmond Road (Old U.S. Highway 59) which runs roughly two blocks west of the central business district.

The Colorado River Bridge is a 2-part, steel truss and concrete highway bridge crossing the Colorado on a north-south axis. It consists of two Camelback Parker-through truss sections. Each of the two sections is constructed of eight panels. Short approaches to the truss sections are along concrete decking with concrete curbs and pre-cast concrete guard rails. Large concrete pylons support the bridge with the largest pylon being approximately in the center of the Colorado River.

The bridge is on Richmond Road or Old U.S. Highway 59 which runs roughly two blocks west of the central business district and five blocks east of the railroad line. The two-lane road bed is covered in asphalt paving. The trusses are in good condition while the concrete approaches vary in quality.

The bridge is entered directly from the northern river bank and extends for some distance over rolling river bottom on the southern end. Some vegetation has grown under the bridge and along its approaches. The bridge is a major visual landmark of the community and perhaps the tallest structure in the community.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Colorado River Bridge
Wharton, Wharton County, Texas

Statement of Significance:

The Colorado River Bridge (1930) at the 300 block of South Richmond is one of two historic bridges remaining over the Colorado River at Wharton. It is significant for its role in opening up Wharton to vehicular traffic during its transition from rail to auto and truck access. The bridge retains its integrity and serves as a major visual landmark in the community. It is nominated under Criterion A in the area of transportation and associated with the context: *Community Development in Wharton, Texas, 1875-1942*.

The Colorado River Bridge was constructed by the Austin Bridge Company, a Dallas-based firm, that built bridges throughout the state in the early 20th century. The firm was one of the most successful bridge contractors in Texas at the time.

In 1929 the Texas Highway Department hired the company to build a bridge across the Colorado River at Wharton. A semi-monthly Company publication, The Span, wrote on July 3, 1929: "The Wharton job is the biggest job taken so far this year, as it will run nearly a quarter million dollars. The two main piers are to be sunk by the pneumatic process and will be subcontracted to the Randolph Construction Company of Kansas City." (Miller 1974: 10) A distinguishing feature of the Colorado River Bridge designed by G.G. Wickline, bridge engineer, Gib Gilchrist, state engineer, and J.M. Nagle, resident engineer, includes the double Camelback Parker-through trusses. The Wharton bridge was highly regarded by the firm because a rendering of the bridge was used for many years on the company's checks.

Throughout Wharton's history, the Colorado River played an important role in the community's development. The river was a determining factor in the town's founding, as it was considered a possible means of transporting goods to and from Wharton. However, the Colorado River, like most Texas waterways, was not conducive to shipping and few successful business operations were able to exploit this natural resource.

The Colorado River instead became something of a hindrance to Wharton because of the periodic flooding and because it proved to be a physical barrier that impeded transportation to the south which limited Wharton's trade territory. A ferry provided a means of transporting both goods and people across the river but land on the south bank and beyond remained relatively isolated and inaccessible to Wharton.

In 1893, county commissioners rectified the situation when they funded the construction of an iron bridge across the Colorado River at present-day Sunset Street. The opening of the bridge greatly facilitated local trade and enabled Wharton's trade territory and road network to expand.

The 1893 bridge was used until 1930 when the Austin Bridge Company erected this one a few blocks east along Richmond Road. Although not the first bridge to cross the Colorado River at Wharton, it is a symbol of the developing technology that contributed to the development of Wharton by allowing vehicular access to the town.

The bridge remains in use as the north to south lane of U.S. 59. It is a significant visual landmark of Wharton and retains its integrity.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See bibliography of historic context statement.

☒ See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ 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 (Texas Historical Commission)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	14	781340	3245460	B	_____	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: The width of the ROW of US 59, including the bridge structure and its approaches.

Boundary Justification: The property includes all areas historically associated with the bridge as built.

11. FORM PREPARED BY (assisted by Dwayne Jones, Preservation Planner, THC staff)

Name/Title: Ed Galloway and Ralph Newlan

Organization: Hardy-Heck-Moore

Date: July 1989

September 1992

Street & Number: 2112 Rio Grande

Telephone: 512-478-8014

City or Town: Austin

State: TX Zip: 78705

2/1/97

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Wharton MRA

TEXAS

Wharton County

Date Listed

COVER Substantive Review

2/18/93

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------|
| 1. Abovitz, Leon, House | DOE/OWNER OBJECTION
Substantive Review | 3/18/93 Determined Not |
| 2. Banker, Willie, Jr., House | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 3. Bernstein, Moses, House | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 4. Bolton--Outlar House | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 5. Colorado River Bridge | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 6. Croom, Wiley J., House | Substantive Review | 3/18/93 |
| 7. Dannon, F. F., House | Substantive Review | 3/18/93 |
| 8. Davidson, Dr. Green, House | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 9. Davis, Ben and Mary, House | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 10. Elkins, Nettie, House | Substantive Review | 3/18/93 |
| 11. Elliott, E. Clyde and Mary, House | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 12. First Methodist Episcopal Church South, Old | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 13. Garrett, Henry B., House | Substantive Review | 3/18/93 |
| 14. Garrett, John A. and Sophie, House | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 15. Gifford, George C. and Annie, House | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 16. Hamilton, Joseph Andrew, House | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 17. Harrison, Gerard A., House | Substantive Review
Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 18. Harrison--Dennis House | Substantive Review
Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 19. Hawes, Edwin, House | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |
| 20. Hawes, Edwin, Jr., House | Entered in the
National Register | 3/18/93 |

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Colorado River Bridge

MULTIPLE NAME: Wharton MPS

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Wharton

DATE RECEIVED: 2/01/93

DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/16/93

DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/04/93

DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/18/93

DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 93000117

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N

OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N

REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 3/18/93 DATE

Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____

DISCIPLINE _____

DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

___count ___resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

___historic ___current

DESCRIPTION

___architectural classification
___materials
___descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

___summary paragraph
___completeness
___clarity
___applicable criteria
___justification of areas checked
___relating significance to the resource
___context
___relationship of integrity to significance
___justification of exception
___other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

___acreage ___verbal boundary description
___UTMs ___boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

___sketch maps ___USGS maps ___photographs ___presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



COLORADO RIVER BRIDGE
SITE No. 649
WHARTON CO., TEXAS
23 OF 39

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64500657