

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: State Highway 3 Bridge at the Colorado River
OTHER NAMES/SITE NUMBER: US 90 Bridge at the Colorado River; CD0027-01-001

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: US 90, 0.6 miles east of junction with Loop 329 NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
CITY OR TOWN: Columbus VICINITY:
STATE: Texas CODE: TX COUNTY: Colorado CODE: 089 ZIP CODE: 78934

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant __nationally
x statewide __locally. (__See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Scott J. Jernell
Signature of certifying official

9-6-96
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property x meets __does not meet the National Register criteria.
(__See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

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): _____

Edson A. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
10-10-96

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: public-State

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: structure

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	0	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	1	0 STRUCTURES
	0	0 OBJECTS
	1	0 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: Historic Bridges of Texas, 1866-1945

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Other: Parker through truss bridge

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION substructure: concrete piers and bents

WALLS N/A

ROOF N/A

OTHER superstructure: steel truss

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-1 through 7-4)

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Historic Bridges of Texas
State Highway 3 Bridge at the Colorado River
Colorado County, Texas

Section number 7 Page 1

Description:

The State Highway 3 Bridge at the Colorado River consists of three Parker through truss spans and five steel I-beam approach spans (see Photographs 1 and 2). The center truss span measures 200 feet and the exterior spans are each 150 feet long. The bridge is on US 90, former State Highway (SH) 3, just east of the town of Columbus, an agribusiness and oil field service center that also serves as the county seat for Colorado County. US 90 runs east-to-west straight through the center of town, serving essentially as the business loop of Interstate 10 (I-10) which bypasses Columbus to the south on its route between San Antonio and Houston. The bridge acts as a gateway to downtown Columbus, serving traffic between downtown and the intersection of I-10 about 1½ miles east of town (see Figure 1). Colorado County is located in southeast Texas, at the southern edge of the Post Oak Belt and the western edge of the Gulf Coastal Plains.

For the main truss span, Texas Highway Department (THD) engineers chose the THD T22-200 design for a riveted Parker through truss, one of many standard designs the Bridge Division developed. The T22-150 design was used for the two secondary trusses. The three truss spans rest on reinforced concrete piers consisting of battered cylindrical columns in a dumbbell configuration (see Figure 2). truss railing on all three spans consists of two rows of 9-inch deep channels placed 18 inches apart. The bridge's five I-beam approach spans, supported on a series of concrete bents, feature an approach railing made up of two rows of steel channels braced into concrete posts. the bridge's western entrance features a bronze plate affixed to the railing end post. In addition to naming the bridge contractor, this plate identifies THD and Colorado County officials involved in the project. A water level gaging station operated by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) is attached to the bridge's south side. A bronze plaque imbedded in the railing at each entrance to the bridge identifies the contractor, as well as the governmental agencies responsible for the project. The plaque reads:

1932
COLORADO RIVER BRIDGE
TEXAS HIGHWAY COMMISSION
W.R. ELY CHAIRMAN
CONE JOHNSON MEMBER
D.K. MARTIN MEMBER
GIBB GILCHRIST HIGHWAY ENGINEER
G.G. WICKLINE BRIDGE ENGINEER
R.E. SHILLER RESIDENT ENGINEER

COLORADO COUNTY
E.B. MAYES COUNTY JUDGE
COMMISSIONERS
A.L. McCORMICK F.A. SEIFERT
WILLA WALLA WALTER ADAMS
CONTRACTORS
AUSTIN BRIDGE COMPANY

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In 1931 and 1932, the Austin Bridge Company built the Colorado River bridge under contract to THD. No major repairs have been performed on this bridge. As such, it retains integrity of design, materials and workmanship. The bridge and its surrounding appear relatively unchanged since 1932, maintaining integrity of location, setting, feeling and association. Although no projects are currently planned for this bridge, its BRINSAP sufficiency rating as of July 1995 is 66.9, making the bridge eligible for rehabilitation but not replacement.

GENERAL SPECS

TRUSS TYPE: Parker through
THD STD. DESIGN: 1 - T22-200; 2 - T22-150
NO. TRUSS SPANS: 3
TRUSS SPAN LENGTH: 1 @ 200'; 2 @ 150'
ROADWAY WIDTH: 22'
DECK WIDTH: 24'
APPROACH SPANS: 5 - 52' I-beam spans
OVERALL LENGTH: 766'

SPECIAL FEATURES

BRIDGE PLAQUE: yes
APPROACH RAILING: steel/concrete railing
OTHER: none

SUPERSTRUCTURE

TRUSS DEPTH: 37' 0"
TRUSS PANELS: 8 - 25'0" panels
TOP CHORD & END POSTS: 2 channels w/ cover plate and lacing
BOTTOM CHORD: 2 channels w/ batten plates
VERTICAL POSTS: 2 channels w/ lacing
DIAGONAL MEMBERS: 2 channels w/ batten plates or I-beam
DECK TYPE: concrete

SUBSTRUCTURE

PIERS/INTERIOR BENTS: concrete piers and bents
THD STD. DESIGN: n/a
ABUTMENTS/END BENTS: concrete end bents
THD STD. DESIGN: n/a

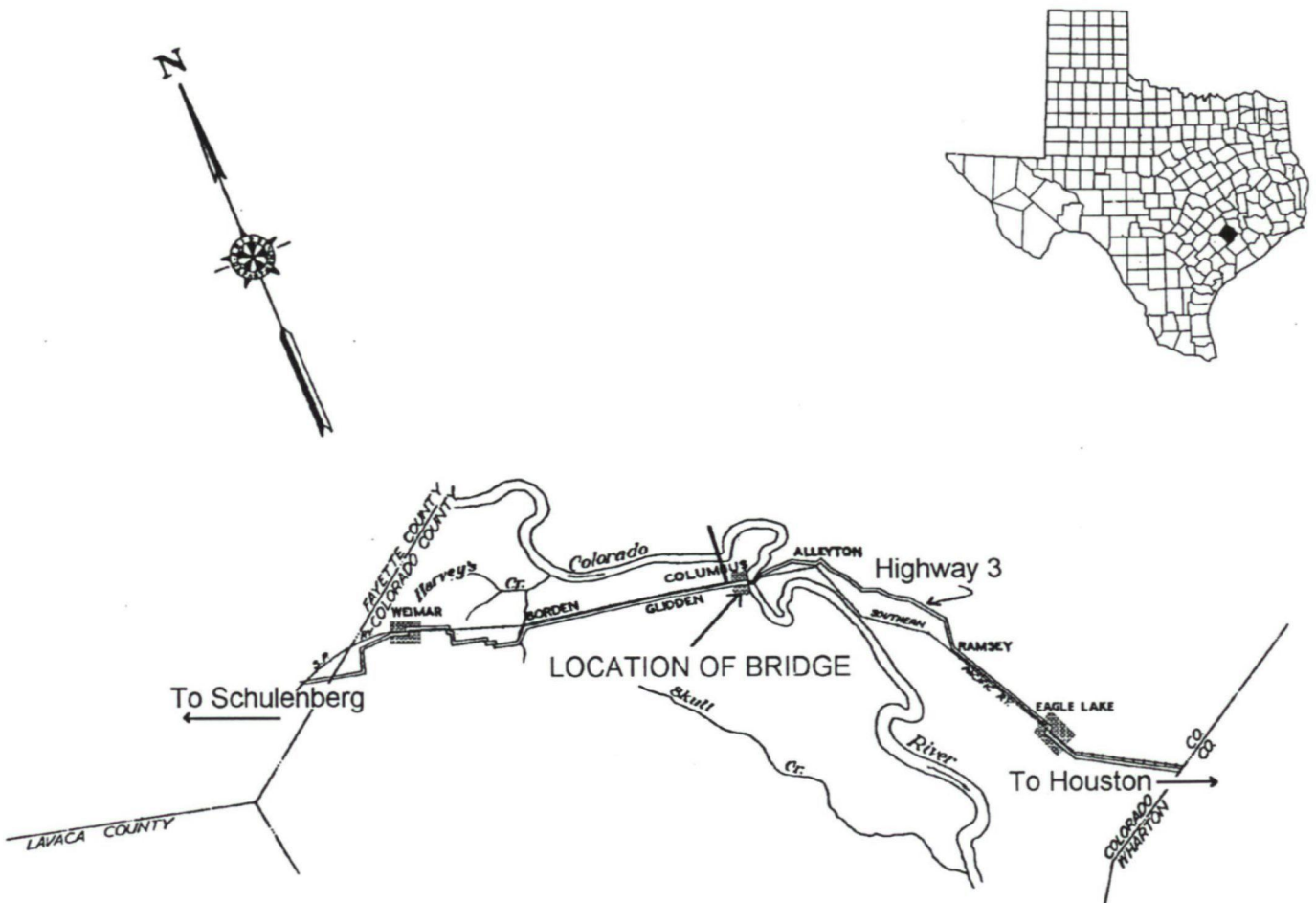
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Figure 1. Map of SH 3 near Columbus with the location of the Colorado River bridge as shown in the 1931 plans.



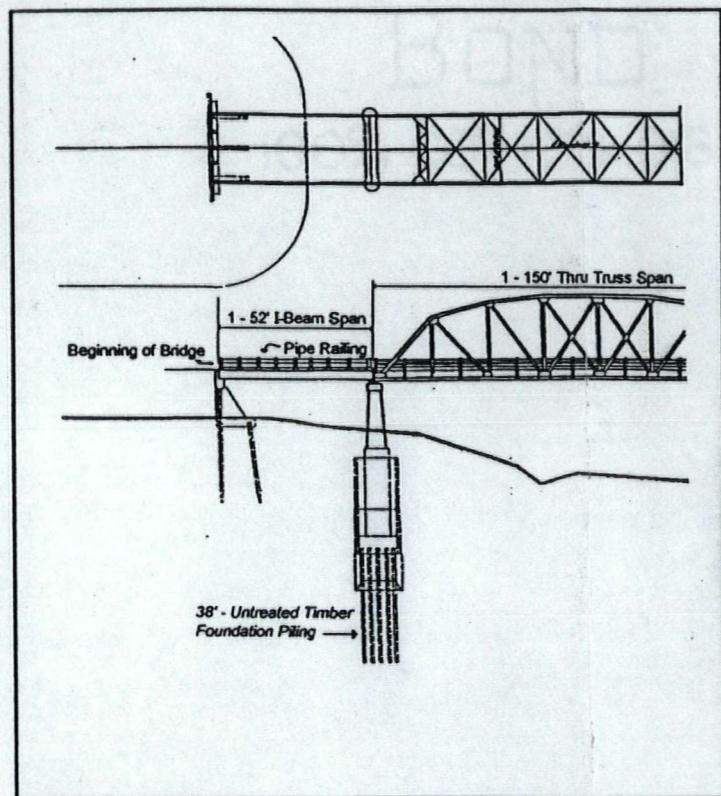
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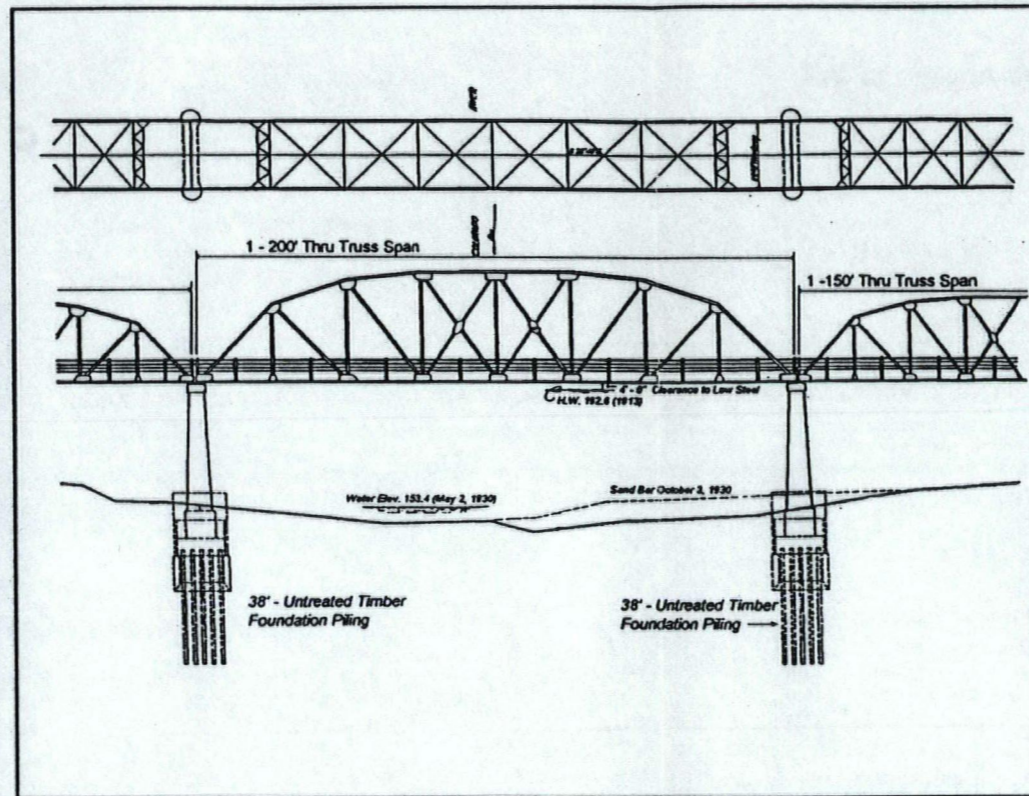
Historic Bridges of Texas
State Highway 3 Bridge at the Colorado River
Colorado County, Texas

Section number 7 Page 4

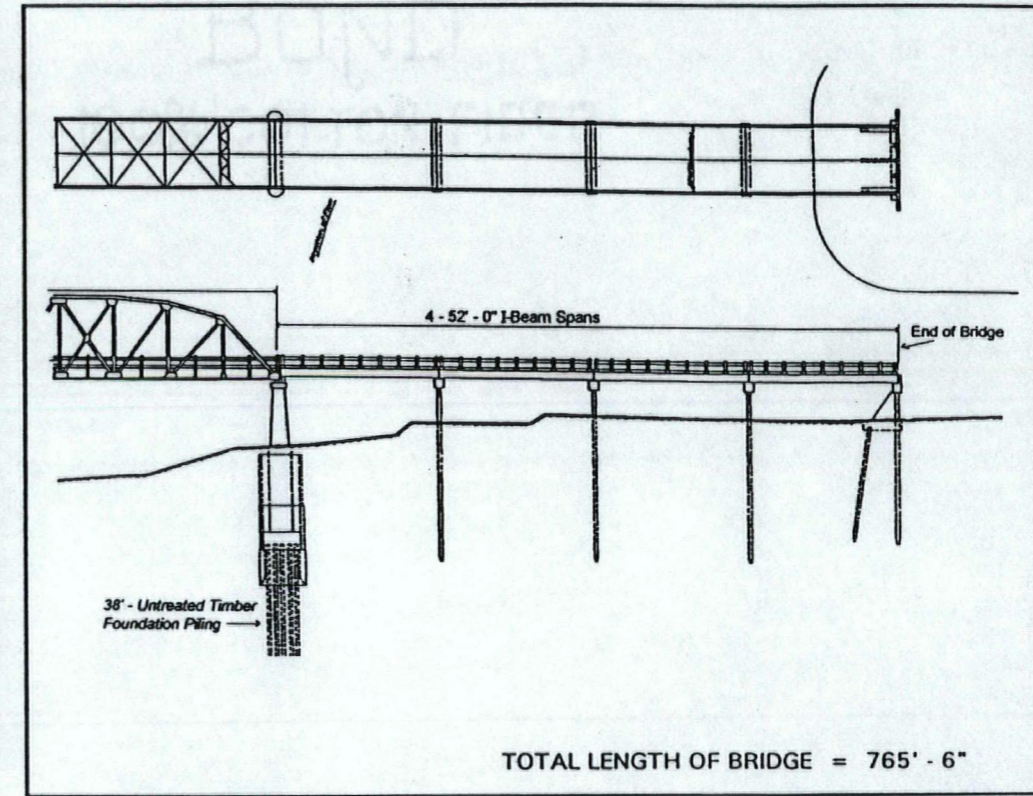
Figure 2. Elevation of the State Highway 3 Bridge at the Colorado River as shown in the 1931 plans.



PLAN SHEET 1 OF 3



PLAN SHEET 2 OF 3



PLAN SHEET 3 OF 3

TOTAL LENGTH OF BRIDGE = 765' - 6"

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- 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 VALUE, 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: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Engineering

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1931-1932

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1931-1932

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Bridge Designer: Texas Highway Department
Truss Fabricator: Mosher Steel & Machinery of Dallas, Texas
Bridge Builder: Austin Bridge Company of Dallas, Texas

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-5 through 8-6)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-7)

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 (*Texas Department of Transportation*)
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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Statement of Significance:

The State Highway 3 Bridge at the Colorado River, built from 1931 to 1932, is significant for embodying the defining characteristics of a THD truss bridge. In particular, it is representative of THD's practice of combining standard designs to span long crossings in Texas. The bridge meets National Register Criterion C in the area of Engineering at a state level of significance.

The Colorado River bridge was built on SH 3, also known as the Southern National highway, which linked Del Rio, San Antonio, Houston, Beaumont and Orange. From Seguin to Houston, the route paralleled a branch of the Texas & New Orleans Railroad (also known as the Southern Pacific Railroad). By about 1930, the route was actually designated SH 3/US 90, and by 1938 the original SH 3 designation had been dropped.

The bridge replaced an unsafe truss bridge dating to about 1898. In 1928, a highway department truck passing a gravel truck on the old bridge fell through the bridge deck after the floor beams failed. One man was killed and another injured. As a result, the county stepped up pressure for a new bridge but was unwilling to pass bonds to help pay for it, believing that it was the state's responsibility. Finally, after THD repairs to the old bridge failed, the state proceeded with a federal aid project to construct a new bridge to the north of the original structure.

The new bridge was situated on an improved alignment, eliminating a sharp turn on the approach roadway. It also provided an increased roadway width over the previous bridge. THD and Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) engineers agreed to the town's request to keep the approach route on Walnut Street, the main street through downtown, provided the town would grant additional right-of-way to facilitate widening the street. BPR inserted a special clause into the project agreement requiring THD to replace a nearby railroad overpass when the volume of traffic demanded it. The existing overpass, located just to the east of the bridge, was below the high water level and was susceptible to flooding. THD prepared the plans for the new Colorado River bridge and, because it was a federal aid project, BPR reviewed and approved them. The THD resident engineer in Columbus supervised the construction, which engineers from both THD and BPR inspected.

In keeping with THD's preference for using standard designs to minimize costs and facilitate ease of construction, THD bridge engineers used a combination of standards truss designs (T22-200 and T22-150) for the long crossing over the Colorado River, thereby avoiding the need for a custom design. The T22-200, used for the main span, was designed about 1930. It is one of 25 THD standard designs for Parker truss spans the Bridge Division developed; only 11 of these designs are represented by Texas bridges today. The Colorado River bridge is one of only three examples of this standard design surviving in Texas. It is one of only four multiple span truss bridges surviving in the state that displays a combination of different THD standard design trusses.

The Texas Highway Commission opened bids for the construction of the Colorado River bridge on July 30, 1931. After reviewing the five bids submitted, the commission awarded the contract to the Austin

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Bridge Company of Dallas, which submitted the low bid of about \$125,000. The Mosher Steel & Machinery Company of Dallas fabricated the truss span.

Work on the Colorado River bridge began on October 24, 1931, and was completed November 14, 1932. Several episodes of high water and the presence of compacted shale and large boulders in the subsoil hindered construction of the bridge substructure. Despite these difficulties, the bridge was completed on schedule at a cost of just over \$128,000.

THD engineers, in an effort to achieve the best appearance possible for the bridge, implemented a field change to use steel channel railing on approach spans instead of the pipe railing called for in the original construction plans. The 9-inch channel railing matched that used on the truss spans. THD also required the contractors to use creosoted pine posts for guard fence rather than more irregular cedar posts that the contractor had ordered.

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Bibliography:

- Texas Highway Department. *General Information on Texas Highways*. Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1919.
- Texas Highway Department. Plans of Proposed State Highway Improvement. Control-Section-Job No. 0027-01-004, located at TxDOT headquarters in Austin.
- Texas Highway Department. Project Correspondence Files. Control-Section-Job No. 0027-01-004, located at TxDOT headquarters in Austin.
- Zlatkovich, Charles P. *Texas Railroads*. Austin: University of Texas at Austin, 1981.

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nomination boundaries encompass the complete structure, State Highway 3 Bridge at the Colorado River, including the approach spans and approach railing, as well as the ground upon which the structure stands.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes all components historically associated with the property.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>738410</u>	<u>3288570</u>	3	—	—
2	—	—	—	4	—	—

(— see continuation sheet)

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-7)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-7)

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE:	text by Regina A. Lauderdale graphics by Pat St. George	
ORGANIZATION:	Texas Historical Commission/ Texas Department of Transportation	DATE: September 1996
STREET & NUMBER:	Texas Historical Commission P.O. Box 12276	TELEPHONE: 512/463-6094
CITY OR TOWN:	Austin STATE: TX	ZIP CODE: 78711

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS

PHOTOGRAPHS

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME	Texas Department of Transportation	
STREET & NUMBER	125 East 11th Street	TELEPHONE 512/416-2606
CITY OR TOWN	Austin STATE TX	ZIP CODE 78701

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: State Highway 3 Bridge at the Colorado River

MULTIPLE NAME: Historic Bridges of Texas MPS

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Colorado

DATE RECEIVED: 9/09/96 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/24/96
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/10/96 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/24/96
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 96001111

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 10.10.96 DATE

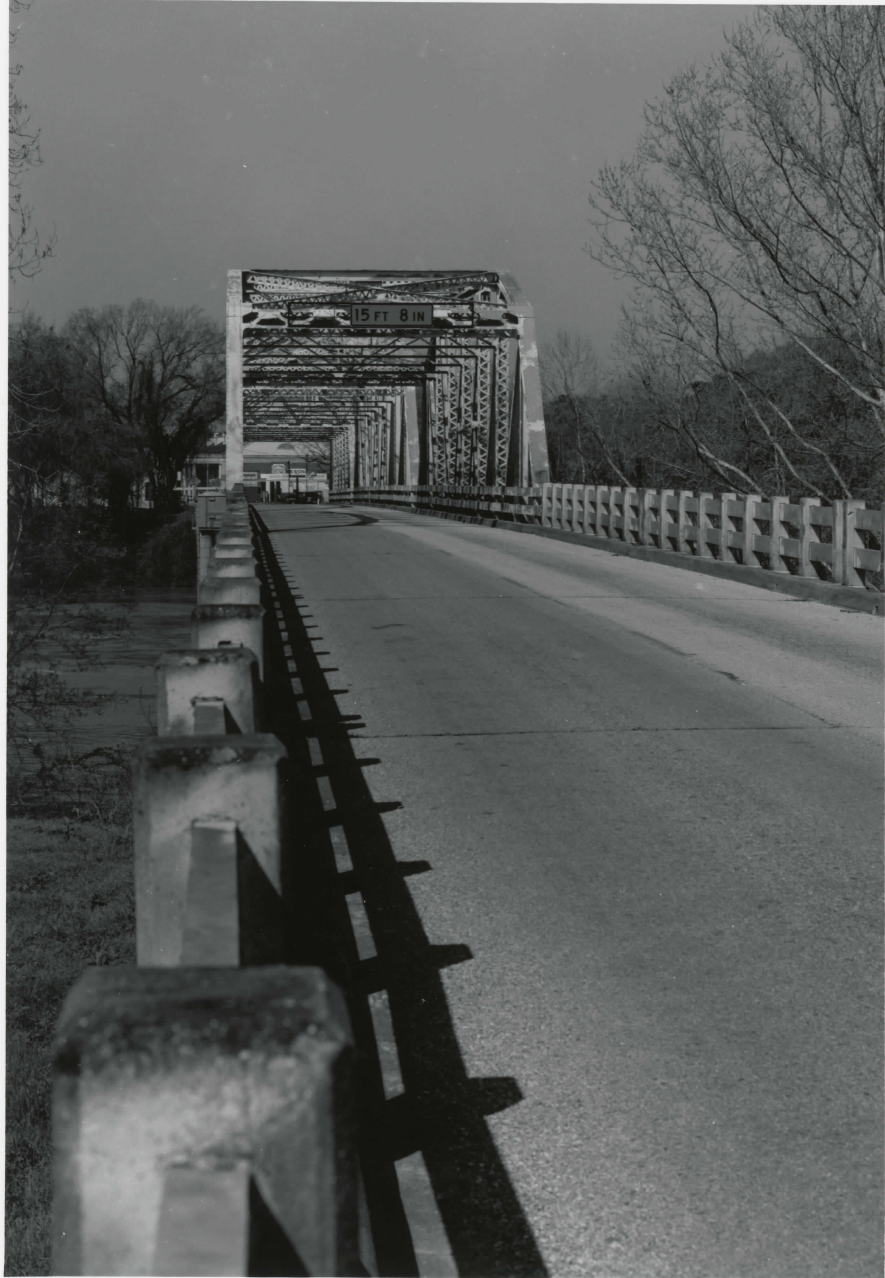
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

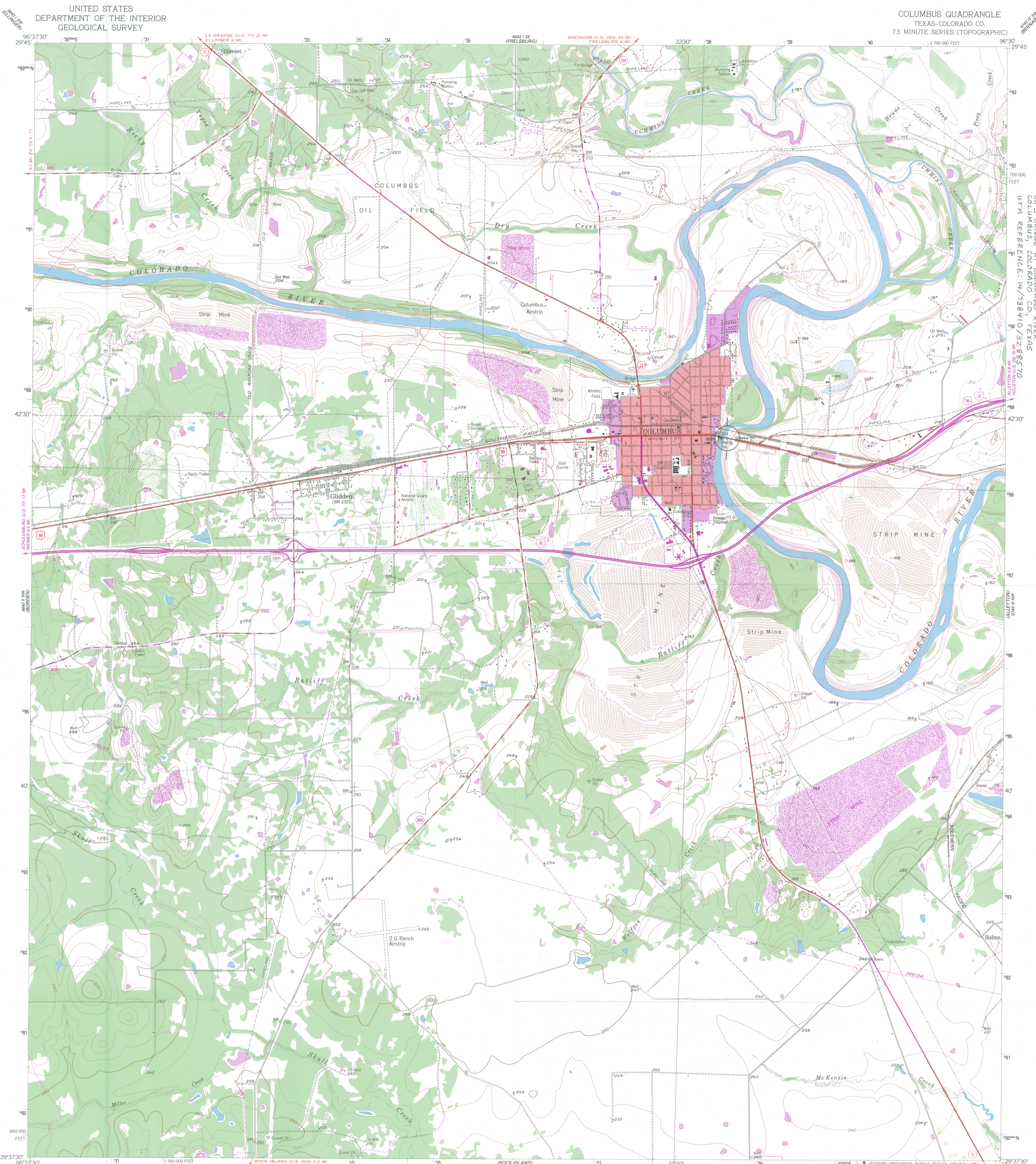
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



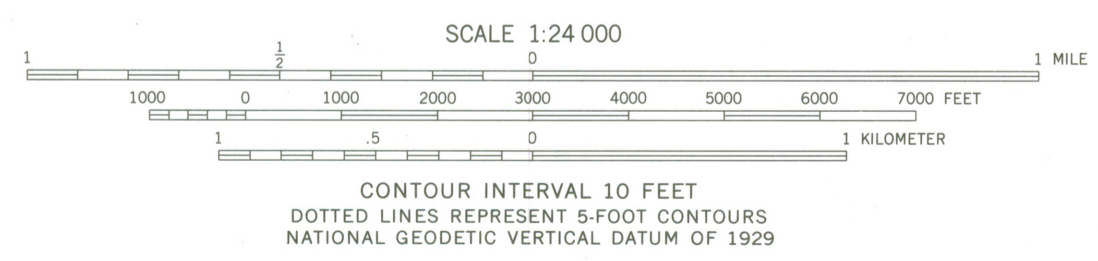
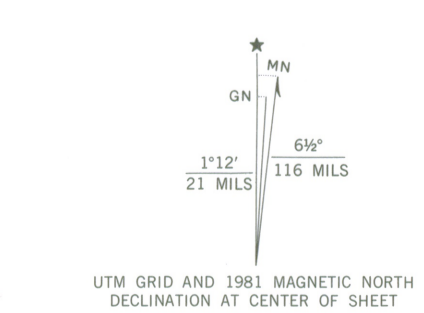
SITE NO. CD0027-01-001
SH 3 BRIDGE AT COLORADO RIVER
HISTORIC BRIDGES OF TEXAS
COLORADO CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 1 OF 2



SITE NO. C00027-01-001
SH 3 BRIDGE AT COLORADO RIVER
HISTORIC BRIDGES OF TEXAS
COLORADO CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 2 OF 2



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods
and by plane-table surveys 1957. Aerial photographs taken 1956 and 1957
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
south central zone
1,000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 14, shown in blue
Red tint indicates area in which only
landmark buildings are shown
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 20 meters south and
25 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route	State Route
Interstate Route	

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

2996-314

COLUMBUS, TEX.
N2937.5—W9630/7.5
1957
PHOTOREVISED 1981
DMA 6645 II NE—SERIES V882

HISTORIC BRIDGES OF TEXAS
SH 3 BRIDGE AT COLORADO RIVER
COLUMBUS, COLORADO CO., TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 14T738410/3288570
SITE NO.: CD0027-01-001