



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: State Highway 71 Bridge at the Colorado River
OTHER NAMES/SITE NUMBER: State Highway 71 Bridge at the Colorado River (business loop);
FY0265-14-038

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: SH 71, 0.8 miles east of junction with FM 609 NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
CITY OR TOWN: La Grange VICINITY:
STATE: Texas CODE: TX COUNTY: Fayette CODE: 149 ZIP CODE: 78945

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.)

Laurie J. Jurell

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. Beal
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, bents and abutments
WALLS N/A
ROOF N/A
OTHER superstructure: steel truss

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

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic Bridges of Texas
State Highway 71 Bridge at the Colorado River
Fayette County, Texas

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Description:

The State Highway 71 Bridge at the Colorado River consists of five Parker through truss spans and eight steel I-beam approach spans (see Photograph 2). The bridge serves traffic on the business loop of State Highway (SH) 71 in La Grange, the Fayette County seat (see Figure 1). Fayette County is in Central Texas on the border of the Post Oak Savannah and the Blackland Prairie regions of Texas. The area's economy is based primarily on agriculture and oil production.

Texas Highway Department (THD) engineers developed a special design for the bridge's 200-foot riveted Parker through truss spans. These spans rest on reinforced concrete piers consisting of battered cylindrical columns in a dumbbell configuration. The bridge's eight steel I-beam approach spans are supported on aesthetically pleasing arched concrete bents (see Figure 2). Along its north side, the bridge features a 3½-foot wide pedestrian walkway with decorative steel railing. A single row of 6-inch steel H-beams is used for truss railing. At each end of the bridge, a bronze plaque affixed to a concrete monument identifies the bridge contractor, as well as the governmental agencies responsible for the project (see Photograph 1). The plaque reads:

COLORADO RIVER BRIDGE
BUILT IN 1941 BY THE
TEXAS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
— * —
FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
PUBLIC ROADS ADMINISTRATION
— * —
STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION
BRADY GENTRY CHAIRMAN
HARRY HINES MEMBER
ROBERT LEE BOBBITT MEMBER
D.C. GREER
HIGHWAY ENGINEER
AUSTIN BRIDGE CO.
CONTRACTORS

In 1940 and 1941, the Austin Bridge Company built the Colorado River bridge under contract to THD. No major alterations have been performed on the bridge. As such, it retains integrity of design, materials and workmanship, as well as location and association. Although the bridge's surroundings have changed somewhat with the development of La Grange, the bridge retains substantial integrity of setting and feeling. Although no projects are currently planned for the Colorado River bridge, its BRINSAP sufficiency rating as of June 1995 is 62.6, making it eligible for rehabilitation, but not replacement, under the federal Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP).

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GENERAL SPECS

TRUSS TYPE: Parker through
THD STD. DESIGN: n/a
NO. TRUSS SPANS: 5
TRUSS SPAN LENGTH: 200'
ROADWAY WIDTH: 26'
DECK WIDTH: 28'
APPROACH SPANS: 8 - 50'0" steel I-beam spans
OVERALL LENGTH: 1414'

SPECIAL FEATURES

BRIDGE PLAQUE: yes
APPROACH RAILING: steel railing
OTHER: pedestrian walkway with
decorative steel railing

SUPERSTRUCTURE

TRUSS DEPTH: 38'0"
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 or I-beam
DIAGONAL MEMBERS: 2 angles 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 abutments
THD STD. DESIGN: n/a

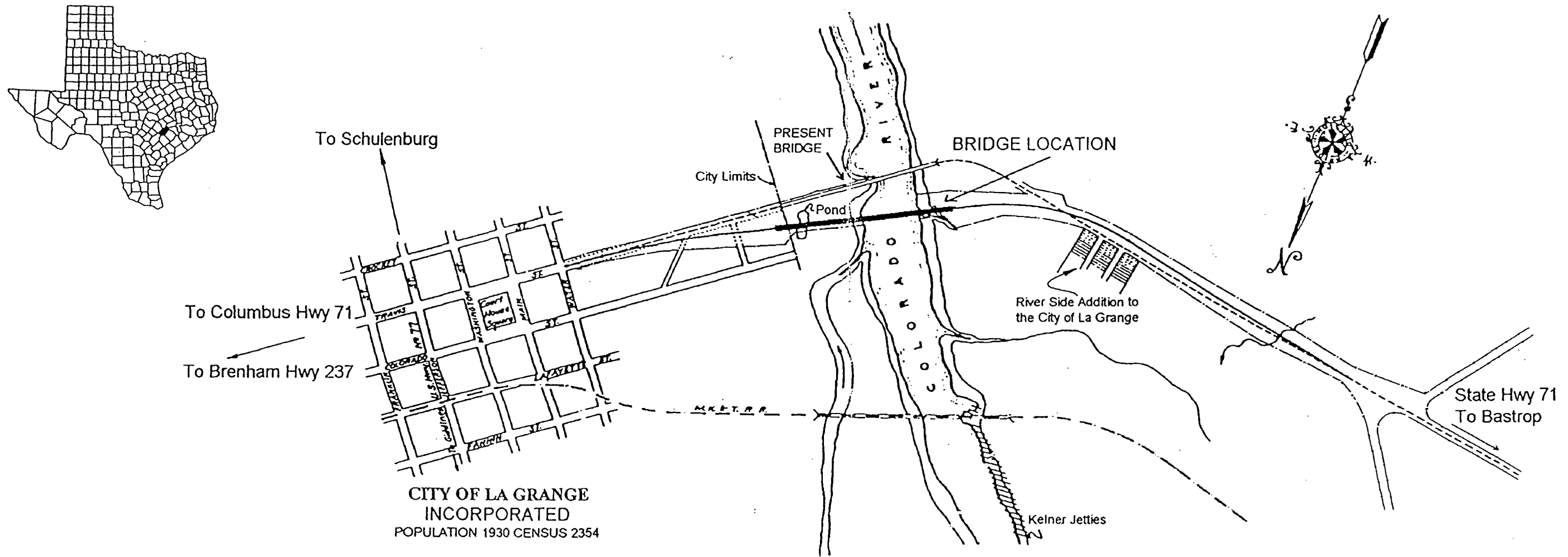
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Figure 1. Map of SH 71 west of La Grange with the location of the Colorado River bridge as shown in the 1940 plans.



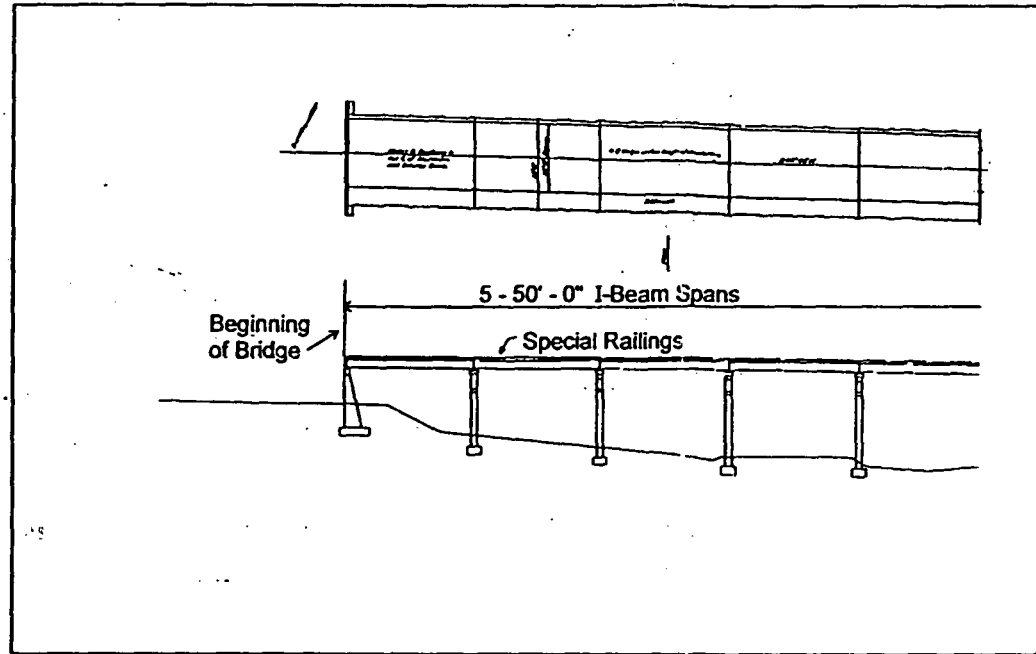
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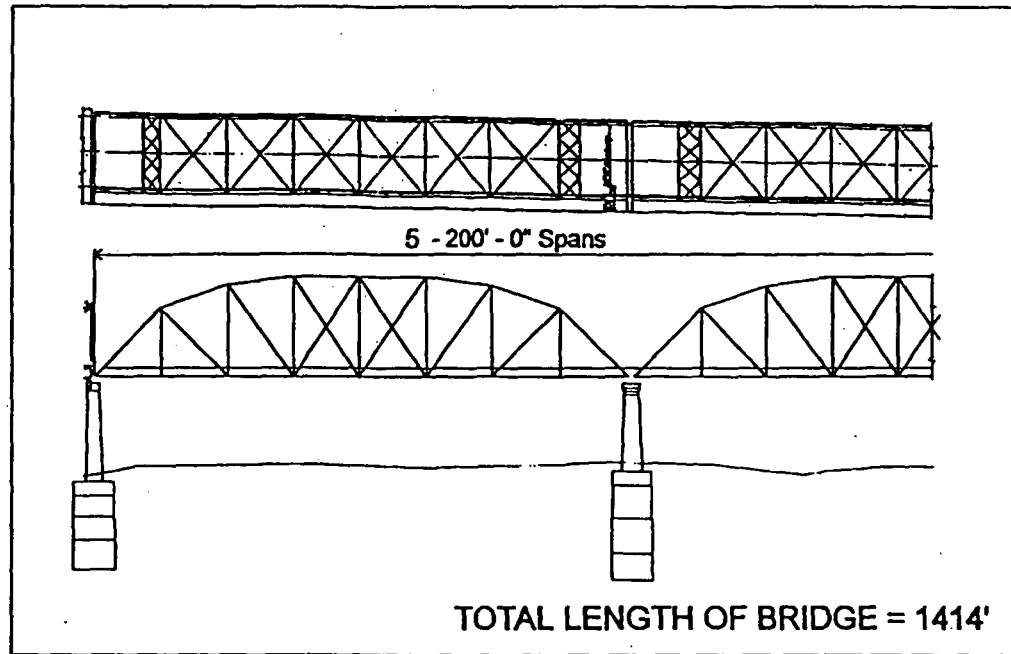
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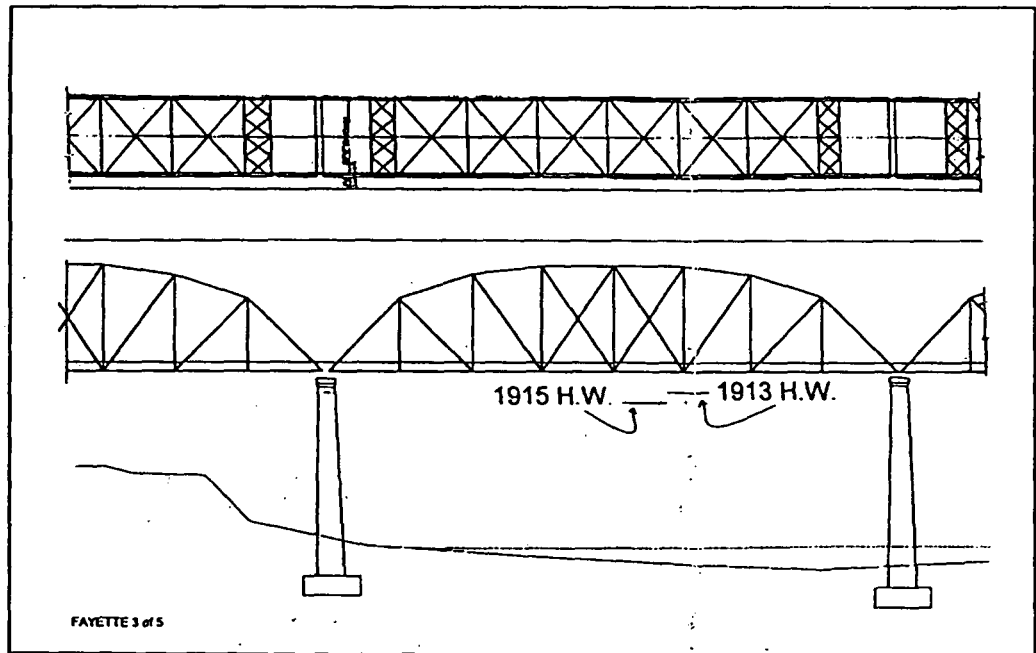
Figure 2. Elevation of the Colorado River bridge as shown in the 1940 plans.



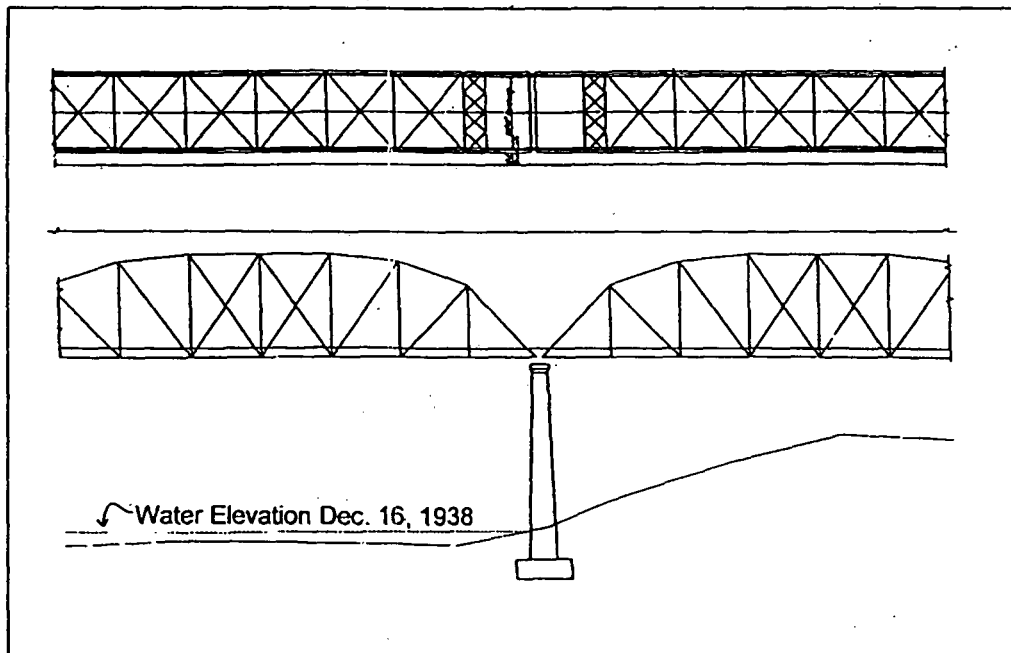
PLAN SHEET 1 OF 5



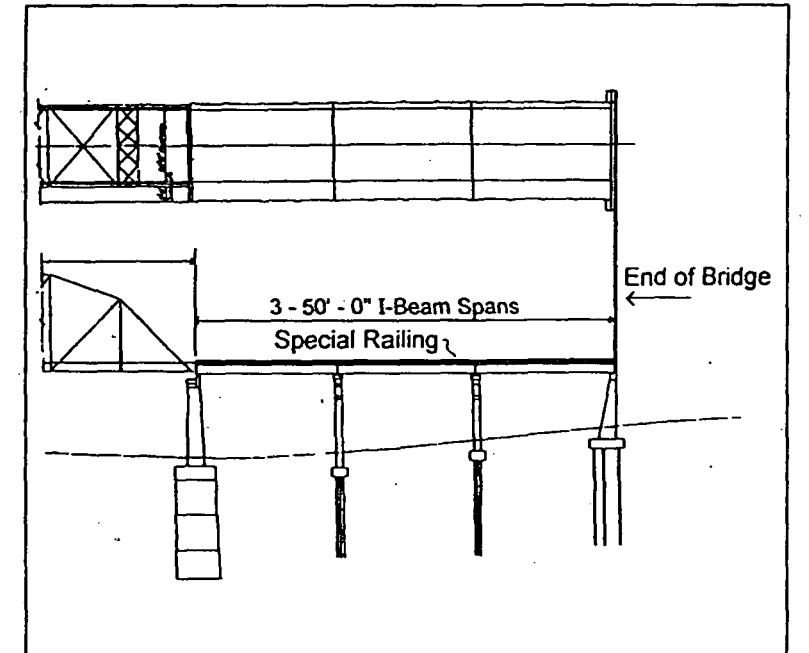
PLAN SHEET 2 OF 5



PLAN SHEET 3 OF 5



PLAN SHEET 4 OF 5



PLAN SHEET 5 OF 5

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: 1940-1941

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1940-1941

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Bridge Designer: Texas Highway Department
Truss Fabricator: Illinois Steel Bridge Company of Jacksonville, Illinois
Bridge Builder: Austin Bridge Company of Dallas, Texas

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

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-9)

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 71 Bridge at the Colorado River was built from 1940 to 1941. This custom-designed Parker through truss bridge with five spans and special decorative features is significant for embodying the defining characteristics of a THD truss bridge. As such, the bridge meets National Register Criterion C in the area of Engineering at a state level of significance.

The Colorado River bridge in Fayette County was built on SH 71, which originated in Austin and extended southeastward towards the Gulf Coast through Bastrop, La Grange, Columbus and El Campo. THD constructed the Colorado River bridge to replace the previous bridge damaged by heavy floods on July 27, 1938. THD inherited the old bridge, built by the county in 1884, when it designated the route a state highway in 1917. The old bridge accommodated a 17-foot roadway and consisted of the following spans:

- 4 75-foot pony truss spans
- 1 19-foot I-beam span
- 1 253-foot double-intersection Pratt through truss span
- 1 72-foot pony truss span
- 2 18-foot I-beam spans
- 2 80-foot truss spans
- 10 48-foot concrete girder spans, continuous over two spans

A caption in the September 1938 *Texas Parade* showing the damaged bridge reported: "Within ten days after the water receded, Texas Highway Department maintenance workmen had this bridge again opened to traffic." In the location report dated February 1, 1940, the assistant resident engineer assigned to the replacement project described the state of the old bridge:

The existing Colorado River Bridge was constructed by Fayette County in 1884, and has received numerous repairs by the Highway Department since that date. On July 27, 1938, during high water, an 80' section of this structure collapsed. This section was temporarily repaired by the maintenance forces, and consisted of 2-40' I-Beam spans on treated timber pile bents.

It was realized that this was only a temporary repair and that the service of this structure was limited. A request was made to the Public Roads Administration for a Federal Aid Project, covering the construction of a new bridge, to cover the construction of a new bridge, using emergency relief funds. This project was approved and has been placed on the [Emergency Relief] Program.

Before recommending a location for the replacement bridge and submitting it on a route sketch to the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), THD engineers conducted a comprehensive survey of roads in the region. The route sketch map produced as a result included "the entire distance from Bastrop to La Grange . . . including the present and proposed routing of all Highways through and adjacent to the towns of Bastrop, Smithville, and La Grange . . ." Three routes were considered for SH 71 through La

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Grange. The citizens of La Grange wanted to keep the previous route that ran east-to-west along Travis Street passing just southeast of the Courthouse Square. THD agreed to retain this route under the following conditions, as outlined in a June 23, 1939 letter from Julian Montgomery, State Highway Engineer, to Texas Senator L.J. Sulak of La Grange:

(1) The Highway Engineer would recommend to the Commission the approval of the route crossing the Colorado River near the present bridge and intersecting Travis Street west of Water Street and proceeding thence along Travis Street to the crossing of the T&NO Railway. The probable future route from this point would be down the south side of the MK&T Railway to a point southeast of the present underpass. The Highway Department would construct the River Bridge and other necessary construction to connect with the present highway on either side of the River.

(2) The City of La Grange would agree to construct pavement not less than forty feet in width at their entire expense extending from the intersection of the relocation with Travis Street and thence along Travis Street to Lester Street.

(3) The City of La Grange would agree to take proper steps to accomplish the removal of the T&NO Railway tracks now crossing State Highway No. 71 at or near Lester Street.

(4) The City of La Grange would agree to pass necessary ordinances and to enforce such ordinances requiring parallel parking along Travis Street throughout its length.

(5) The City of La Grange, the County of Fayette and other interested parties should signify their understanding that if this route is constructed at the present time, it does not mean a commitment by the Highway Department as to the permanency of such route. Present indications point to the possible development of a complete route around the town of La Grange at such date as traffic may require same. This should be understood definitely by all parties concerned.

On September 13, 1939, the La Grange City Council unanimously passed a resolution agreeing to the points outlined above, indicating the importance of keeping the route through the heart of downtown. Planning for the replacement bridge proceeded, with its location set at the end of Travis Street, but slightly shifted to the north of the existing bridge in order to keep it open to traffic during construction.

Although the bridge itself was to be built above the 1913 high water elevation, the highest on record for that site, the approach roadway on the La Grange side of the river was well below this level. As stated in the location report: "It is not considered practical at this time to construct this east approach grade above high water, due to existing improvements and to the fact that the recently constructed dams on the upper Colorado River may prevent recurrence of damaging high water." The report went on to recommend a 26-foot roadway and a pedestrian walkway:

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Due to the large volume of present traffic and the possibilities of increased traffic, it is recommended that the roadway width of the structure be 26' . . . and, due to the possible increase in pedestrian traffic as a result of the suburban improvements, west of the river, and due to the fact that the structure is near the urban area where sightseers might congregate on the structure during overflow periods to watch the water, it is recommended that a sidewalk of sufficient width be constructed on the outside of the bridge proper; that this sidewalk be constructed on the upstream side of the bridge in such a manner that pedestrians will not cross from the sidewalk to the roadway.

BPR engineers inspected the site and pointed out that if a sidewalk was provided on only one side of the bridge, some pedestrians would be forced to cross the road, producing a hazard at each end of the bridge. After much discussion between THD and BPR engineers, they agreed "that provision be made in the design for the installation of a similar sidewalk on the downstream side of the structure when pedestrian traffic warranted." To date this bridge remains with only its original walkway on the upstream (north) side.

Rather than use a standard design, THD bridge engineers specially designed the 200-foot riveted Parker through truss spans for use on the replacement bridge. Nine other Parker truss bridges that THD specially designed survive today. The State Highway 71 Bridge at the Colorado River is one of only two bridges with five truss spans surviving on a Texas state highway. As part of an effort to improve the aesthetics of bridge design, particularly for structures in or near urban areas, several decorative elements were incorporated into the design of the Colorado River bridge. The bridge substructure exhibits arched concrete bents and concrete piers with beveled copings. In addition, decorative steel railing flanks the 3½-foot wide pedestrian walkway. The posts are made up of H-beams placed vertically, then cut, bent and welded to form the curved top end of the post. The top handrail consists of 3-inch piping. Below, two rows of channels between the posts face down. Small square steel pickets hang from the pipe handrail to fill out the railing. These pickets run through holes in the three rows of steel channels and are welded in place. The result is an elaborate and labor-intensive decorative steel railing. This is the most decorative type of steel railing used on THD bridges. The Colorado River bridge is one of only three surviving THD truss bridges exhibiting a pedestrian walkway with this type of decorative steel picket railing.

In the meantime, THD engineers had applied for federal emergency relief funds from BPR to cover the cost of constructing a new bridge. The application covered two additional bridges destroyed by the July 1938 flood, including the Colorado River Bridge in Lampasas County (refer to nomination of US 190 Bridge at the Colorado River, LM0272-05-023, NRHP 1995). On November 28, 1938, BPR approved the use of emergency relief highway funds provided for under Section 3 of the Hayden-Cartwright Act of 1934. In addition to extending federal relief funding established under the National Industrial Recovery Act, the Hayden-Cartwright Act provided emergency funds for the repair or reconstruction of highways and bridges on the federal aid system "which have been damaged or destroyed by floods, hurricanes, earthquakes or landslides. . . ." The approval granted \$367,500 to cover 50 percent of the estimated construction cost for these three bridges. The cost of constructing the new bridge over the Colorado in La Grange was estimated at \$370,000, with \$185,000 to be covered by the federal funds.

The Texas Highway Commission held bidding for the Colorado River bridge in June 1940. After reviewing the six bids received, the commission awarded the contract to the Austin Bridge Company of

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Dallas. The company's low bid of just over \$269,000 was substantially lower than THD's estimate. The Illinois Steel Bridge Company of Jacksonville, Illinois, fabricated the steel truss span; the Mosher Steel Company of Houston manufactured the pedestrian railing.

Construction of the bridge began on July 20, 1940, and was supervised by the THD resident engineer in Yoakum. Engineers from BPR (which had recently changed to the Public Roads Administration of the Federal Works Agency) and THD performed periodic inspections. During construction of the bridge, an unusual field change was implemented, as described in the August 12, 1940, inspection report:

At pier No. 3 consideration was given during this inspection to the desirability of lowering the footing grade some 2' or 3' below plan grade in order to place this pier deeper into shale and avoid possibilities of future scour. The construction methods used, however, were such that the proposed lowering would endanger the entire cofferdam due to the fact that the cofferdam had "blown in" and was in danger of additional "blow ins" if the footing was deepened. It was therefore concluded that the best procedure would probably be to place the pier at plan grade and provide rip-rap around same to prevent scour. It is contemplated that a large quantity of rip-rap material can be produced on removing the concrete girder spans of the old bridge and also that rip-rap material may be obtained from the present rip-rapped bar under the old bridge. The use of the available rip-rap material around the piers of the new bridge is recommended.

The bridge was completed on August 15, 1941, at a cost of just over \$279,000. In 1991, THD completed the outer loop of SH 71 that circumvented La Grange to the north. The original roadway was retained as the business loop of SH 71. This configuration lightened the traffic burden on the bridge, allowing for its preservation in place.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: 1.1 acre

UTM REFERENCES	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	704280	3309590	3	_____	_____
2	14	703860	3309410	4	_____	_____

(___ see continuation sheet)

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-9)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-9)

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

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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. 0265-08-006, located at TxDOT headquarters in Austin.
- Texas Highway Department. Project Correspondence Files. Control-Section-Job No. 0265-08-006, located at TxDOT headquarters in Austin.
- "On Texas Highways." *Texas Parade*, August 1938.
- "On Texas Highways." *Texas Parade*, September 1938.

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nomination boundaries encompass the complete structure, State Highway 71 Bridge at the Colorado River, including the approach spans and pedestrian walkway with decorative steel railing, as well as the ground upon which the structure stands.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes all components historically associated with the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY State Highway 71 Bridge at the Colorado River
NAME:

MULTIPLE Historic Bridges of Texas MPS
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Fayette

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: 96001120

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



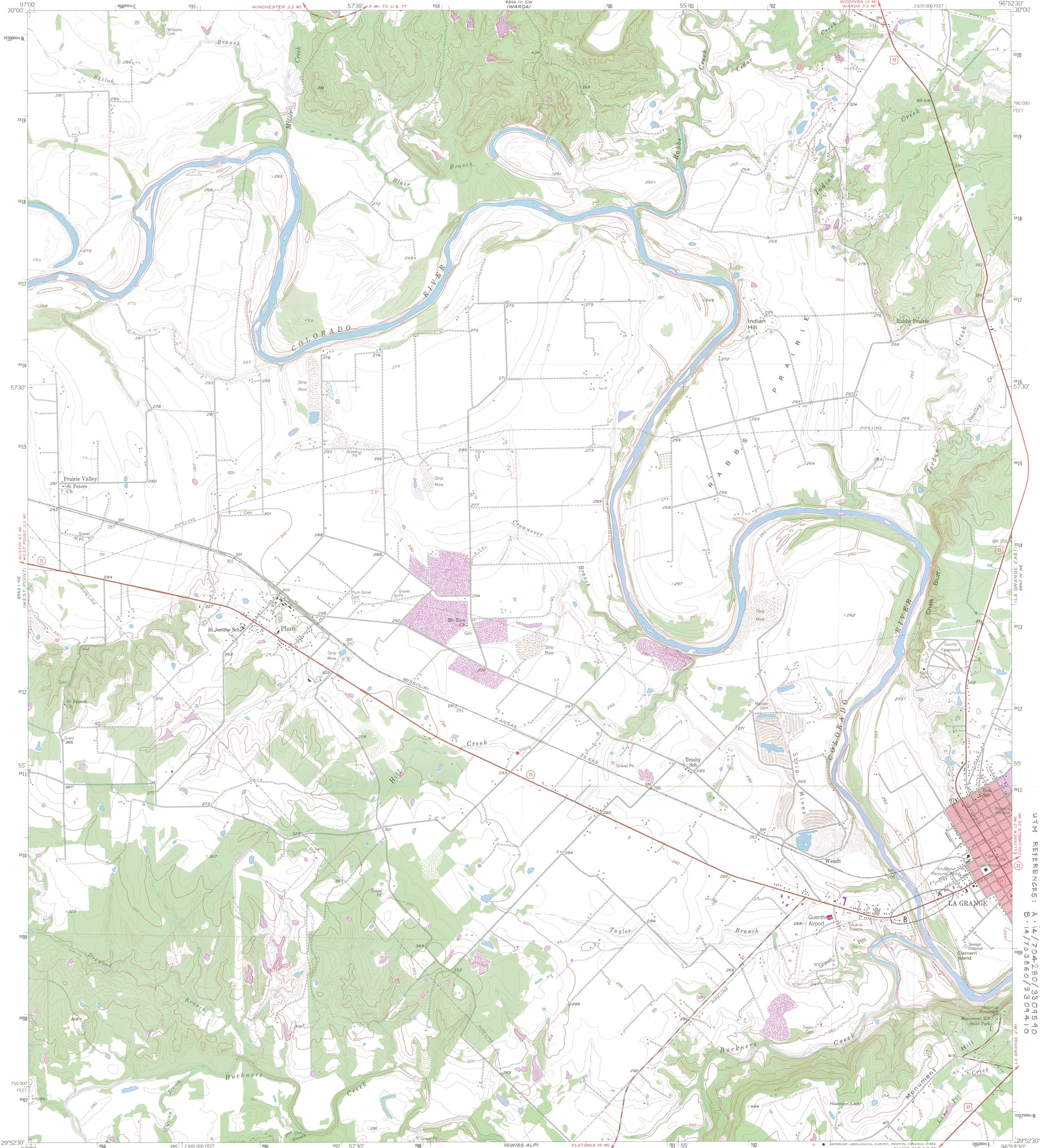
15 FT 8 IN

BRIDGE OVER RIVER
SPAN OF 15 FT 8 IN
DESIGNED BY THE
MISSOURI STATE ENGINEERS
CONSTRUCTION BY THE
MISSOURI STATE ENGINEERS
1910
MISSOURI STATE ENGINEERS
DESIGNED BY THE
MISSOURI STATE ENGINEERS
CONSTRUCTION BY THE
MISSOURI STATE ENGINEERS
1910

SITE NO. FY0265-14-038
SH 71 BRIDGE AT COLORADO RIVER
HISTORIC BRIDGES OF TEXAS
FAYETTE CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 1 OF 2



SITE NO. FY0265-14-038
SH 71 BRIDGE AT COLORADO RIVER
HISTORIC BRIDGES OF TEXAS
FAYETTE 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 planetable surveys 1958. Aerial photographs taken
1956 and 1957

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
south central zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 14, shown in blue

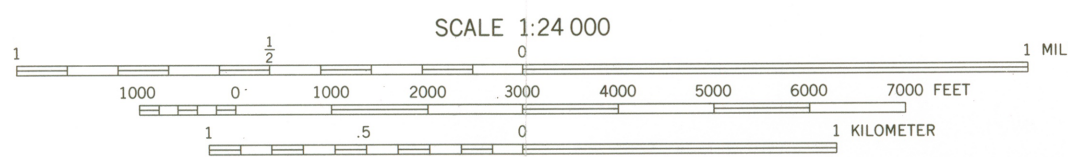
Red tint indicates area in which only
landmark buildings are shown

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 20 meters south and
26 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from
aerial photographs taken 1978 and other source data
This information not field checked. Map edited 1981

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

UTM GRID AND 1981 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DASHED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

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

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
U.S. Route ——— State Route ———



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

LA GRANGE WEST, TEX.
N2952.5—W9652.5/7.5

1958
PHOTOREVISED 1981
DMA 6643 IV NW—SERIES V882

2996-333

HISTORIC BRIDGES OF TEXAS
LA GRANGE WEST QUADRANGLE, FAYETTE COUNTY, TEXAS
UTM REFERENCES: E 14 / 704280 / 3309490
B 14 / 703860 / 3309410

SITE NO: FV0265-14-038
LA GRANGE WEST