

1121

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: US 190 Bridge at the Neches River  
OTHER NAMES/SITE NUMBER: JP0213-08-074

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: US 190 at the Jasper and Tyler county line  
CITY OR TOWN: Jasper  
STATE: Texas CODE: TX COUNTY: Jasper CODE: 241  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A  
VICINITY: X  
ZIP CODE: 75951

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.)

*Curtis J. Russell*  
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):  
Signature of the Keeper: *Edson H. Beall*  
Date of Action: *10-10-96*

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**5. CLASSIFICATION**

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**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** public-State

**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** structure

<b>NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTING</b>	<b>NONCONTRIBUTING</b>
	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

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

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**HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:** TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:** TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

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**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)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic Bridges of Texas  
US 190 Bridge at the Neches River  
Jasper and Tyler counties, Texas

Section number   7   Page   1  

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### Description:

The US 190 Bridge at the Neches River consists of two truss spans, a cantilever I-beam unit with suspended span, and 27 I-beam approach spans. The primary truss span is a 240-foot riveted Parker through truss; the secondary span is a riveted camelback through truss span measuring 125 feet in length (see Photograph 2). The bridge, with its 24-foot wide roadway, carries two-way traffic across B.A. Steinhagen Lake on US 190 at the Jasper and Tyler county line. It links Jasper and Woodville, the Jasper and Tyler county seats, and also serves traffic between East Texas and Louisiana (see Figure 1). Located in the Piney Woods region of East Texas, the area's economy is based primarily on the timber and agricultural industries.

Texas Highway Department (THD) engineers developed a special design for the bridge's two truss spans. These truss spans rest on solid concrete piers with pointed ends (cutwaters). The steel I-beam approach spans rest on a series of steel bearing pile bents and four dumbbell piers. The cantilever unit consists of three steel I-beam spans: a center span measuring 90 feet between supports with a 65-foot span on each side. The 90-foot center span is comprised of two 17-foot arms, which cantilever from each of the adjacent spans, and a 56-foot suspended ("drop-in") span supported by the cantilevered arms (see Figure 2). Both the truss spans and the approach spans employ railing made up of 6-inch steel I-beams. On the approach spans, these rails are attached to concrete posts (see Photograph 1).

From 1941 through 1943, the Gaylord Construction Company built the Neches River bridge under contract to THD. In 1951, the Town Bluff Dam was completed just downstream from the bridge, forming the B.A. Steinhagen Lake. The bridge continued in service over the lake with no major alterations. In 1982, THD contracted a project to replace two vertical members and four struts on the camelback span. No other major alterations have been performed on this bridge. As such, it retains substantial integrity of design, materials and workmanship. Because the bridge remains in place serving highway traffic, it also retains integrity of location and association. Although the impoundment of the lake has compromised integrity of setting and feeling, the bridge retains substantial integrity overall. Although no projects are currently planned for this bridge, its BRINSAP sufficiency rating as of June 1994 is 34.9, making the bridge eligible for replacement under the federal Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Historic Bridges of Texas  
US 190 Bridge at the Neches River  
Jasper and Tyler counties, Texas

Section number 7 Page 2

GENERAL SPECS

TRUSS TYPE: Parker & camelback through  
THD STD. DESIGN: n/a  
NO. TRUSS SPANS: 2  
TRUSS SPAN LENGTH: 1 @ 240'; 1 @ 125'  
ROADWAY WIDTH: 24'  
DECK WIDTH: 29'  
APPROACH SPANS: 20 - 35'0", 5 - 40'0" & 2 - 55'0"  
steel I-beam spans;  
220' I-beam cantilever unit  
with suspended span  
OVERALL LENGTH: 1601'3"

SPECIAL FEATURES

BRIDGE PLAQUE: none  
APPROACH RAILING: steel/concrete railing  
OTHER: 125' camelback through truss span;  
3-span cantilever I-beam unit;  
solid piers with pointed ends

SUPERSTRUCTURE

TRUSS DEPTH: 42'9"  
TRUSS PANELS: 10 - 24'0" panels  
TOP CHORD & END POSTS: 4 angles w/ web & cover plates  
BOTTOM CHORD: 2 channels w/ batten plates  
VERTICAL POSTS: 2 channels w/ lattices 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 abutment bents  
THD STD. DESIGN: n/a

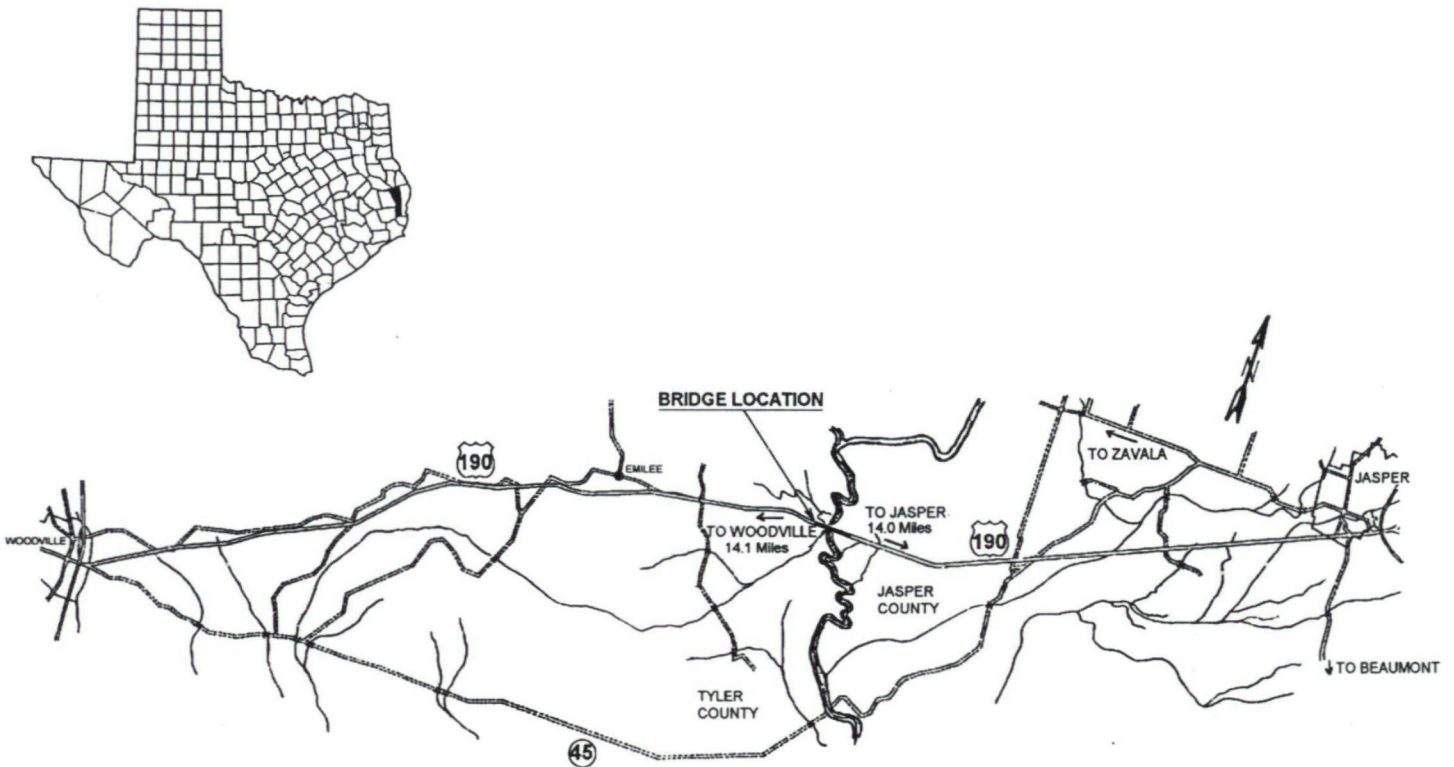
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic Bridges of Texas  
US 190 Bridge at the Neches River  
Jasper and Tyler counties, Texas

Section number 7 Page 3

Figure 1. Map of Jasper and Tyler counties with the location of the Neches River bridge as shown in the 1943 plans.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

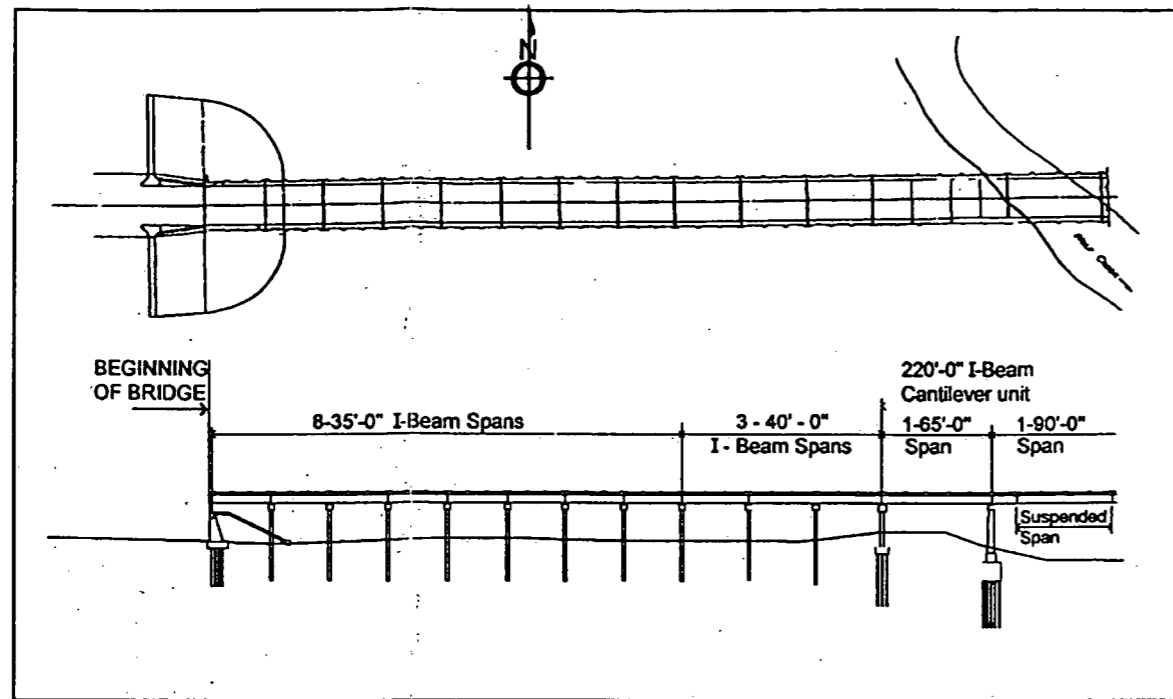
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

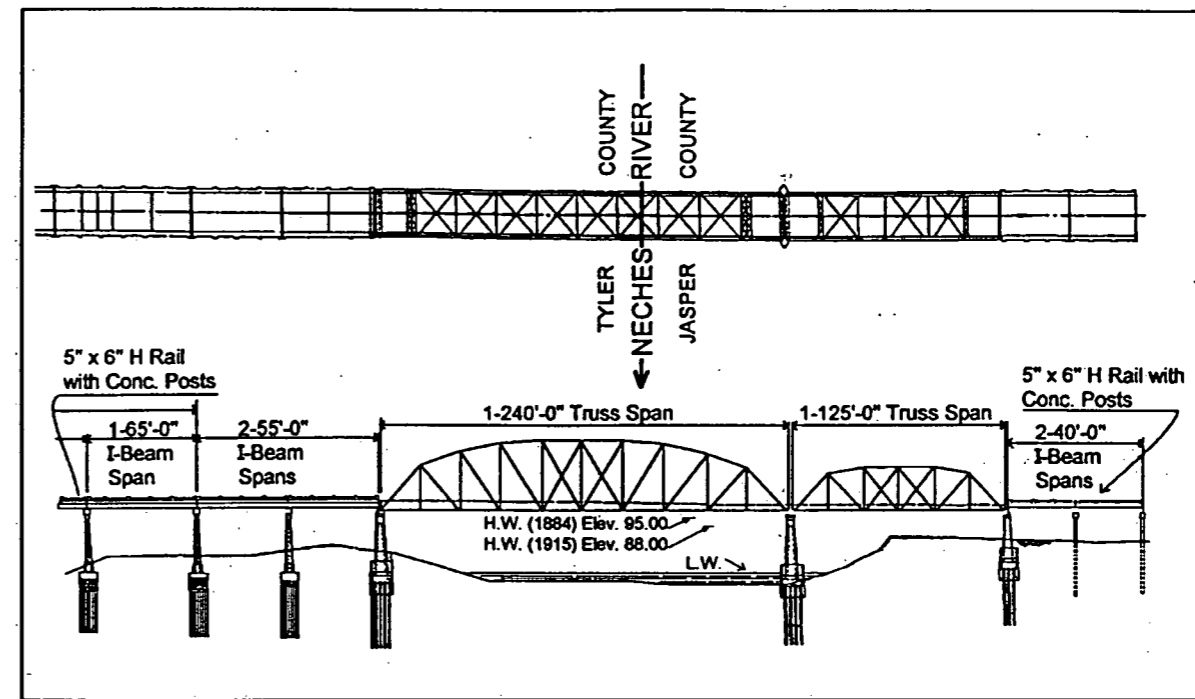
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Historic Bridges of Texas  
US 190 Bridge at the Neches River  
Jasper and Tyler counties, Texas

Figure 2. Elevation of the Neches River bridge as shown in the 1943 plans.

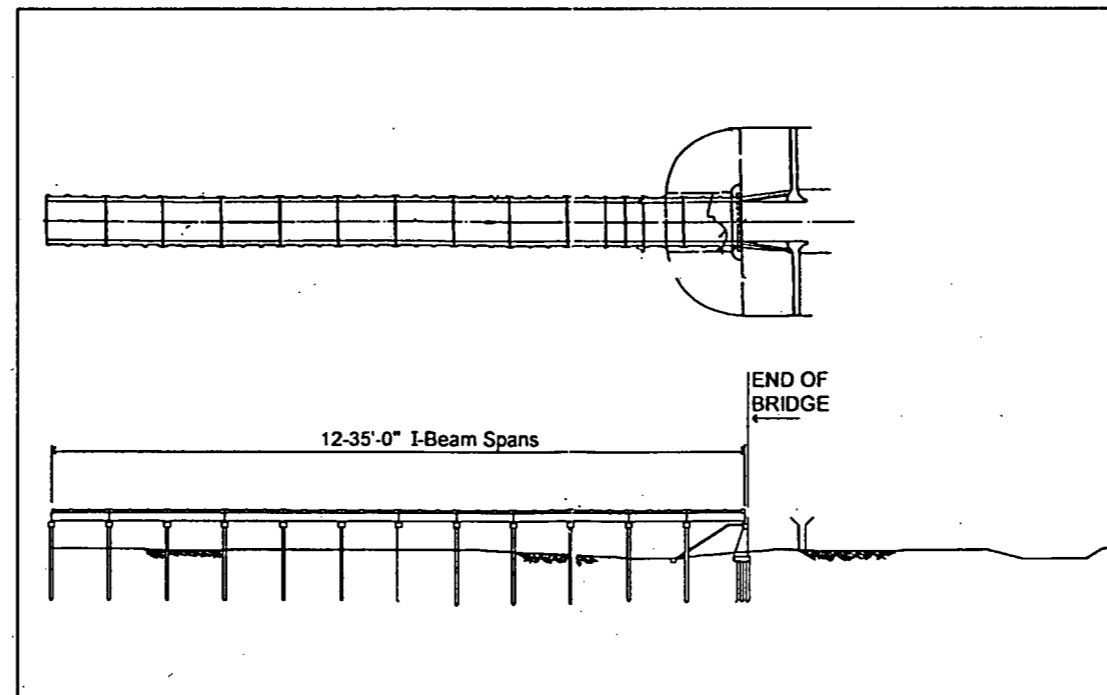


PLAN SHEET 1 OF 3



PLAN SHEET 2 OF 3

TOTAL LENGTH OF BRIDGE = 1601'



PLAN SHEET 3 OF 3

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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**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:** 1941-1943

**SIGNIFICANT DATES:** 1941-1943

**SIGNIFICANT PERSON:** N/A

**CULTURAL AFFILIATION:** N/A

**ARCHITECT/BUILDER:** Designer: Texas Highway Department  
Fabricator: Virginia Bridge Company of Roanoke, Virginia  
Builder: Gaylord Construction Company of Houston, Texas

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

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES**

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**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:



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetHistoric Bridges of Texas  
US 190 Bridge at the Neches River  
Jasper and Tyler counties, TexasSection number 8 Page 5

## Statement of Significance:

The US 190 Bridge at the Neches River was constructed from 1940 to 1943. As a custom-designed truss bridge employing an I-beam cantilever unit, the bridge is significant under Criterion C for "employing technically complex, advanced or innovative designs or construction methods." The bridge's camelback through truss span, as well as the cantilever unit, are unusual features and make the bridge additionally significant for rarity. As such, the bridge meets National Register Criterion C in the area of Engineering at a state level of significance.

The Neches River bridge was built on US 190, former State Highway (SH) 45. SH 45, also known as the East and West Texas Highway, linked Newton, Jasper, Woodville, Livingston, Huntsville and Bryan. By 1937, the route was designated SH 45/US 190, and by 1942 the original SH 45 designation had been dropped.

THD built the Neches River bridge as part of a continuing effort to complete US 190 (formerly SH 45) for service between Central Texas and Louisiana. Related THD projects covered grading and drainage structures for a relocated portion of US 190 between Woodville, in Tyler County, and a point in Jasper County 1.6 miles east of the county line. From 1939 to 1942, two separate projects covered the construction of one relief structure on the west side of the truss bridge and two relief structures on its east side. The Neches River bridge replaced the Town Bluff Toll Ferry, one of the last remaining toll ferries in the state. Throughout the 1930s, THD made eliminating toll ferries, either by eliminating the toll or replacing them with bridges, a high priority. The 1937 Burr's Ferry Bridge on SH 45 at the Louisiana state line was an earlier THD effort to eliminate toll ferries along the route (refer to nomination of Burr's Ferry Bridge, NW0214-04-005, NRHP 1995). The US 190 Bridge at the Neches River was the last of three bridges built to replace ferries on the Neches.

In April 1939 and again in July 1940, THD conducted site inspections with engineers from the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR). After the second inspection, engineers from both agencies agreed to change the truss lengths called for in the preliminary design. By replacing the two 190-foot spans with a 240-foot and 125-foot truss span, they could avoid positioning a pier in the center of the river and thereby allow a greater clear waterway opening. The relative ease of constructing piers closer to the river banks would partially offset the increased material costs. In order to provide greater vertical clearance above the high-water level, THD engineers designed a three-span I-beam cantilever unit. Such units employ relatively shallow I-beam members, so that the level of "low steel" is as high as possible above the water. In addition, solid piers with "lenticular nosing" (pointed ends) were used to help avoid drift accumulation. Only four examples of truss bridges using this pier type survive in Texas. Because test holes revealed that sand was present for 90 feet below grade, the engineers designed steel piling foundations for the caisson piers supporting the truss spans and for the concrete bents supporting the approach spans.

The bridge design also called for two 1½-foot sidewalks and a 24-foot roadway. This width corresponded to the roadway width of drainage structures being constructed on adjacent sections of US 190. BPR initially suggested that, because of the relative difficulty of widening a truss bridge, the Neches River

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Historic Bridges of Texas  
US 190 Bridge at the Neches River  
Jasper and Tyler counties, Texas

Section number   8   Page   6  

bridge should have a 26-foot roadway width. However, THD engineers decided not to increase the roadway width.

Rather than use a standard design, THD bridge engineers specially designed the bridge's two riveted truss spans. Nine other Parker truss bridges specially designed by THD survive today. The bridges 30 approach spans provide a lengthy approach of 1,230 feet, one of the longest series of approach spans for a truss bridge in Texas. Other unusual features include the cantilever unit with suspended span and the camelback through truss span. The Neches River bridge is the only documented Texas highway truss bridge incorporating a concrete cantilever unit. It is also the last surviving camelback through truss span designed by the Texas highway department and one of only seven structures with camelback through spans remaining in the state.

By the summer of 1940, related projects for roadway grading and relief structures on sections of US 190 adjacent to the bridge were well under way. In his September 11 letter to State Highway Engineer D.C. Greer, the district engineer in Beaumont urged that bridge plans be expedited:

We are very anxious to secure information as to the status of the plans for the bridge over the Neches River on U.S. Highway 190 between Woodville and Jasper. The [roadway] approaches to the river bottom in Jasper and Tyler Counties are very near completion. . . . Our investment in these two approaches, including the road from Woodville to the river, now approximates \$452,000.00, but this work will be of negative value to the traveling public until the river bridge is built. We anticipate that we will have considerable criticism if the bridge is not placed under construction immediately. . . .

It is the desire and recommendation of this office that these plans be completed and the contract let [awarded] at the earliest possible date. Will you please inform us when the bridge plans will be completed.

During the fall of 1940, THD engineers completed plans for the bridge and submitted them to the Public Roads Administration (PRA), which had by this time superseded BPR. On December 2, 1940, PRA authorized the plans, specifications, and estimate (PS&E) for the bridge. The project agreement included a provision whereby THD would be required to surface the roadway at a future date. PRA allotted the project \$265,000 from the 1941 Regular Federal Aid Program.

The Texas Highway Commission opened bids on December 20, 1940. In addition to the bridge project, the contract included two small projects for 0.3 miles of roadway grading immediately adjacent to the bridge. After reviewing the six bids received, the commission awarded the contract to the low bidder, the Gaylord Construction Company of Houston. The bid of just under \$240,000 was substantially under THD's preliminary estimate of \$262,350. The Virginia Bridge Company of Roanoke was subcontracted to fabricate the steel truss spans. Construction began on February 1, 1941. The THD resident engineer in Beaumont supervised the construction which engineers from THD and BPR periodically inspected.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic Bridges of Texas  
US 190 Bridge at the Neches River  
Jasper and Tyler counties, Texas

Section number   8   Page   7  

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The Neches River bridge was planned and constructed in the shadow of World War II. The October 1940 *Texas Parade* reported:

"Every resource is being strained to bring into being, arm, equip and train the largest peacetime army in the history of the United States. Industry is bringing to bear all its inventive genius and organizing ability to produce the thousands of things that are essential to a well-equipped army. Steel mills are working overtime to produce the metal needed by the armories for forging the guns, both large and small, needed by the expanded army.

Materials shortages affected the construction of the Neches River bridge, as evidenced in the January 30, 1941, letter from the Virginia Bridge Company to Greer:

We have been favored by the Gaylord Construction Company with their order for the structural steel for the two truss spans only, for the Neches River bridge between Jasper and Tyler Counties, consisting of 1-125' and 1-240' truss spans. Due to the present condition of the rolling mills, we wish to order the mill material immediately from the design drawings. We know of course, that the specifications say that we do this at our own risk pending approval of shop detail drawings, but if no major changes are contemplated in these two spans, we think it advisable for all concerned to place our mill order now.

In 1941, PRA began implementing federal mandates to conserve construction materials and prioritize projects with respect to their contribution to national defense. The February 1942 issue of *Texas Parade* reported that "to save critical materials needed in defense, the Highway Department has abandoned placement of bronze identification plates on bridges and major drainage structures." The August 8, 1942, Bridge Construction Inspection Report noted that a field change had been executed to eliminate name plates on the Neches River bridge.

The Neches River bridge was completed on February 6, 1943, at a cost of just over \$275,000, including the 0.3 miles of approach roadway grading. The bridge dedication was held on February 12, 1943. The invitation read:

The third and Final Bridge (sic) on the old State Highway 45 that extended from Burr's Ferry on the Sabine River to Roan's Prairie in Grimes County has been completed. Most of this route is now U.S. 190.

Due to the necessity of devoting our time and energies to War Work, it is not deemed proper or fitting to stage an elaborate celebration at this time, but we do want our friends along this highway to meet and say "HOWDY" to each other and express our appreciation to those who have rendered such splendid service in the completion of this program.

The invitation went on to list the relevant transportation officials and the Highway 45 Association directors.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic Bridges of Texas  
US 190 Bridge at the Neches River  
Jasper and Tyler counties, Texas

Section number   8   Page   8  

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From 1947 to 1951, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed the Town Bluff Dam four miles downstream from the bridge. The impounded river formed the B.A. Steinhagen Lake. With only minor improvements to the bridge's approach roadway embankments, the bridge continued in service over the lake in combination with the two relief structures built from 1940 to 1941 under a separate contract.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic Bridges of Texas  
US 190 Bridge at the Neches River  
Jasper and Tyler counties, Texas

Section number 9,10,2 Page 9

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### Bibliography:

- Texas Highway Department. Administrative Circular No. 6-42, January 26, 1942, located at TxDOT headquarters in Austin.
- 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. 0213-08-010, located at TxDOT headquarters in Austin.
- Texas Highway Department. Project Correspondence Files. Control-Section-Job No. 0213-08-010, located at TxDOT headquarters in Austin.
- Texas Highway Department. *Texas Highway Department, 1927-1937*. Austin, n.p.

### Verbal Boundary Description:

The nomination boundaries encompass the complete structure, US 190 Bridge at the Neches 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.

### Location:

The US 190 Bridge at the Neches River is located in both Jasper (241) and Tyler (457) counties.

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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**ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	385440	3413760	3	—	—
2	—	—	—	4	—	—

(— see continuation sheet)

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION** (see continuation sheet 10-9)

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION** (see continuation sheet 10-9)

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

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

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**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

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**CONTINUATION SHEETS**

**MAPS**

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

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**PROPERTY OWNER**

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY US 190 Bridge at the Neches River  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Historic Bridges of Texas MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Jasper

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: 96001121

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. JPO213-08-074**

**US 190 BRIDGE AT NECHES RIVER**

**HISTORIC BRIDGES OF TEXAS**

**JASPER CO. , TEXAS**

**PHOTOGRAPH 1 OF 2**



**SITE NO. JPO213-08-074**

**US 190 BRIDGE AT NECHES RIVER**

**HISTORIC BRIDGES OF TEXAS**

**JASPER CO., TEXAS**

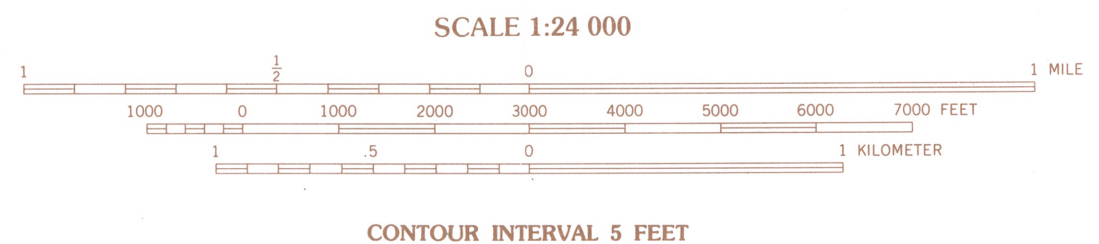
**PHOTOGRAPH 2 OF 2**

HISTORIC BRIDGES OF TEXAS  
 US 190 BRIDGE AT NECHES RIVER  
 VICINITY OF DAM B, JASPER CO., TEXAS  
 UTM REFERENCE: 15/385440/3413760



PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 CONTROL BY USGS, NOS/NOAA 1976  
 COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN 1976  
 FIELD CHECKED 1978 MAP EDITED 1984  
 PROJECTION LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC  
 GRID: 1000-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR  
 10,000-FOOT STATE GRID TICKS TEXAS, CENTRAL ZONE  
 UTM GRID DECLINATION 036° WEST  
 1984 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION 530° EAST  
 VERTICAL DATUM NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
 HORIZONTAL DATUM 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM  
 To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983, move  
 the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks  
 (17 meters south and 17 meters east)  
 There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of any  
 Federal and State Reservations shown on this map.

**PROVISIONAL MAP**  
 Produced from original  
 manuscript drawings. Infor-  
 mation shown as of date of  
 field check.



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3	1 Boggy Lake
			2 Pace Hill
			3 Jasper West
			4 Birdwell Lake
4	5		5 Beech Grove
			6 Kirkpatrick Lake
			7 Spanglers
6	7	8	8 Magnolia Springs

ADJOINING 7.5 QUADRANGLE NAMES  
3094-442

**ROAD LEGEND**  
 Improved Road  
 Unimproved Road  
 Trail  
 Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

**TOWN BLUFF, TEXAS**  
 PROVISIONAL EDITION 1984

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225  
OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

30094-G2-TF-024