

5. CLASSIFICATION**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** Public-Local**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** Structure

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	0	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	1	0 STRUCTURES
	<u>0</u>	<u>0 OBJECTS</u>
	1	0 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0**NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:** Route 66 in Texas MPS**6. FUNCTION OR USE****HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:** TRANSPORTATION: road-related / bridge**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:** TRANSPORTATION: road-related / bridge**7. DESCRIPTION****ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** NO STYLE**MATERIALS:** FOUNDATION CONCRETE

WALLS

ROOF

OTHER CONCRETE, METAL/steel

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 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 VALUES, 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: Transportation, Engineering

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1932-1957

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1932

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Parker, E.T (builder); Grady, M.L. (engineer)

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

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheets 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 (*TXDOT*)
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
1.	14	399364	3898736

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The nomination encompasses the complete structure from the extreme eastern portion of the bridge to the extreme western portion, including all of the superstructure and any substructure.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: The boundary includes all components of the bridge superstructure and substructure, including the approach spans and concrete deck.

11. FORM PREPARED BY**NAME/TITLE:** Philip Thomason and Teresa Douglas**ORGANIZATION:** Thomason and Associates**DATE:** February 2006**STREET & NUMBER:** 1907 21st Avenue S.**TELEPHONE:** (615) 385-4960**CITY OR TOWN:** Nashville**STATE:** Tennessee**ZIP CODE:** 37212**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION****CONTINUATION SHEETS****MAPS** (see continuation sheet 10)**PHOTOGRAPHS** (see continuation sheet Photo-12)**ADDITIONAL ITEMS** (see continuation sheets 11)**PROPERTY OWNER****NAME:** Texas Department of Transportation (Michael W. Behrens, Executive Director)**STREET & NUMBER:** 125 East 11th Street**TELEPHONE:** 512/416-2628**CITY OR TOWN:** Austin**STATE:** Texas**ZIP CODE:** 78701

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Route 66 Bridge over the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad
Shamrock vicinity, Wheeler County, Texas

DESCRIPTION

The Route 66 Bridge over the former right-of-way of the Chicago, Rock Island, and Gulf (CRI&G) Railroad is located along the Interstate 40 Frontage Road approximately eight miles east of the town of Shamrock, Texas. This section of Texas is located in the state's panhandle and is characterized by arid plains containing large cattle ranches and scrub vegetation. The bridge is approximately 5.5 miles west of the Oklahoma state line and twelve miles southeast of Wheeler, the county seat of Wheeler County. The bridge is approximately thirty feet south of the I-40 eastbound guard rail. The bridge is identified in the Wheeler County Highway Department identification system as # 25 242 0275-13-001.

This is a five-span, steel and concrete bridge built in 1932 over the now abandoned roadbed of the former CRI&G Railroad. The bridge was designed by M.L. Grady and constructed by contractor E.T. Prater. The bridge is 125' long and contains a 24' wide concrete roadway. It features a main span constructed of steel I-beams encased in concrete (Photos 1-2). The remaining spans are reinforced concrete girders resting on reinforced concrete pile bents. The bridge's railing is a standard concrete post and double beam design (Photos 3-4). Concrete slab retaining walls cover embankments on both sides of the bridge (Photo 5). The bridge deck is 27' in width and was originally of concrete and later paved with asphalt (Photo 6).

The bridge was constructed to span the railroad bed located approximately 25' below the bridge's deck. The railroad was abandoned in the late 20th century and the steel rails and cross ties have been removed. The bridge carried Route 66 traffic until 1960 when Interstate 40 was completed approximately 30' to the north. The historic roadbed of Route 66 then was designated as a frontage road for the interstate. The bridge continues to be used as part of the I-40 frontage road system.

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Route 66 Bridge over the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad
Shamrock vicinity, Wheeler County, Texas

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Route 66 Bridge over the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad near Shamrock, Wheeler County, Texas, is nominated to the National Register under Criteria A and C at the state level of significance for its historical and engineering significance. As part of Route 66, the bridge reflects the development and history of the national highway, which served as the main corridor from the Midwest to the West during the early to mid-twentieth century. The bridge's concrete encased steel I-beam design is noteworthy and is one of the few examples of this bridge type in Texas, and is the last vehicular bridge in Texas directly associated with Route 66. The bridge retains its original design, form, and materials, and meets the registration requirements for the property type of "Road Bridges" set forth in the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Route 66 in Texas MPS."

Construction of Route 66 through the panhandle of Texas began in the late 1920s. From the east, Route 66 entered Texas crossing the Oklahoma-Texas border just south of the North Fork of the Red River near the town of Texola, Oklahoma. In Texas, Route 66 was designed to follow the alignment of State Highway 75, which was along the general alignment of what was once the Postal Highway that traveled through New Mexico and Texas to Oklahoma City. State Highway 75 was renamed US Highway 66 and paving was undertaken on sections of the highway by the early 1930s.¹

This region of Texas featured an arid landscape and was relatively isolated from the rest of the state. Anglo-European settlement of the area occurred by the late-19th century and within a few decades extensive sheep and cattle ranches had displaced the Native Americans and buffalo herds which once dominated the region. During the 1920s, agriculture in the panhandle boomed and the oil industry emerged as a leading economic power. The oil industry generated substantial growth in Amarillo, which became a commercial and corporate center of the region, and led to significant highway development through the panhandle.²

Route 66 was the primary road in this development. Route 66 passed through numerous small towns in the Texas panhandle with centrally located Amarillo the only sizeable city through which it passed. The area was sparsely populated and towns typically had fewer than five hundred residents. An overview of the region written in 1940 for the Works Projects Administration, describes the area as follows:

US 66 slices through the center of the Texas Panhandle, east to west, crossing the High Plains through a region once occupied by great herds of buffalo and bands of Kiowas and Comanches... Today this level expanse is rich, producing oil, gas, wheat, small grain crops, and fine Herefords. At intervals the countryside is covered with a pall of smoke from factories and refineries... The population of the region is predominantly native-born white. Since settlement is comparatively new, any 25-year resident is considered an old-timer.³

¹ Michael Cassity, "Route 66 Corridor National Historic Context Study." (Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, National Trails System Office – Intermountain Region, National Park Service, Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 15, 2004), 76-78.

² Ibid.

³ "Route 66: Across 1930s Texas," from *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, compiled and written by the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Projects Administration for the State of Texas, 1940. Available online at http://members.aol.com/hsauertieg/rt66/wpa_tx.htm.

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Section 8 Page 7Route 66 Bridge over the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad
Shamrock vicinity, Wheeler County, Texas

As part of the improvements along Route 66, a new bridge was required to span the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad right-of-way. Constructed in 1932, the Texas State Highway Department's Bridge Division designed the structure. The Division originally proposed a conventional steel I-beam design with a central span for the site, but elected to proceed with an alternative proposal that called for a special design center span composed of steel I-beams encased in concrete. This design reduced both the height and weight of the structure, which in turn lowered the cost approximately \$5,000.⁴

Engineer M.L. Grady with the Texas State Highway Department's Bridge Division laid out the design, and contractor E.T. Prater constructed the bridge. Construction began in October of 1931 and the bridge was completed in July of 1932. The total cost came to \$28,568.74. The bridge is 126' long and features five spans. The main span is composed of steel I-beams encased in concrete, the others are reinforced concrete girder units resting on reinforced concrete pile bents. Encasing the steel beams in concrete helped to protect the structure from harsh weather and blast from the locomotives which passed beneath it. The bridge's railing is a concrete post and double beam design. Some time after the bridge's construction, the embankments on either side were covered with concrete slab retaining walls.⁵

The bridge contains a 24' wide concrete roadway that extends over the former right-of-way of the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad. This line was part of the larger Rock Island system out of Rock Island, Illinois, which formed in the mid-1850s. The Chicago, Rock Island, and Gulf Railway Company (CRI&G) was chartered in 1902 to build an extension of the Rock Island system between Fort Worth and Galveston. The following year the company laid thirty-two miles of track between Fort Worth and Dallas. It then acquired interest in another line to reach Houston and Galveston. In December of 1903 the CRI&G merged with three other Rock Island subsidiaries, which created a 334-mile system through the Texas panhandle. In 1910, an extension to the Texas-New Mexico border was completed and at this point the line connected with another line to Tucumcari, New Mexico, which through another connection ultimately led to the Pacific Coast.⁶ The CRI&G ceased operations on this section of the railroad in the late twentieth century and the track is now abandoned.

The bridge carried traffic on this two-lane paved section of Route 66 from 1932 until 1960. In 1939, a Texas highway map shows Route 66 as paved all the way across the panhandle.⁷ The construction of Interstate 40 in the late 1950s led to the completion of a new four-lane highway through the Texas panhandle. The section of Interstate-40 west of the Oklahoma state line was finished by 1960 and this construction included the completion of three new bridges over the railroad. These bridges were for the eastbound and westbound lanes of the interstate and a new frontage road north of the westbound lane. The original roadbed of Route 66 was relegated to serve as a frontage road on the south side of the interstate for local traffic. The bridge remains in good condition and continues to serve as a frontage road.

The Route 66 Bridge over the former right-of-way of the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad in Wheeler County, Texas is eligible under National Register criterion A for its role in the development and history of Route 66 in this region. It was one of only a few automobile bridges built on Route 66 through Texas and it has not been altered since its original construction. It carried traffic on Route 66 until 1960, when Interstate 40 was completed just to the north.

⁴ Historic Bridge Inventory, Texas Department of Transportation, August 31, 1999.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Nancy Beck Young, "Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railway," The Handbook of Texas Online.

<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/CC/eqci.html>; "A Brief Historical Overview of the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad," <http://www.simpson.edu/~RITS/histories/RIHistory.html>.

⁷ Texas State Highway Department, Texas Highway Map, 1939.

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Route 66 Bridge over the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad
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The bridge is also eligible under criterion C for its engineering design. The bridge was inventoried by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Texas Historical Commission in 1999 and was assessed as National Register-eligible. The bridge is one of only a few known examples in Texas with a concrete encased steel I-beam configuration and is also noteworthy for its Type D railing. The bridge maintains a strong degree of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and location.

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Texas Department of Transportation. Historic Bridge Inventory, Structure 25 242 0275-23-001. August 31, 1999.

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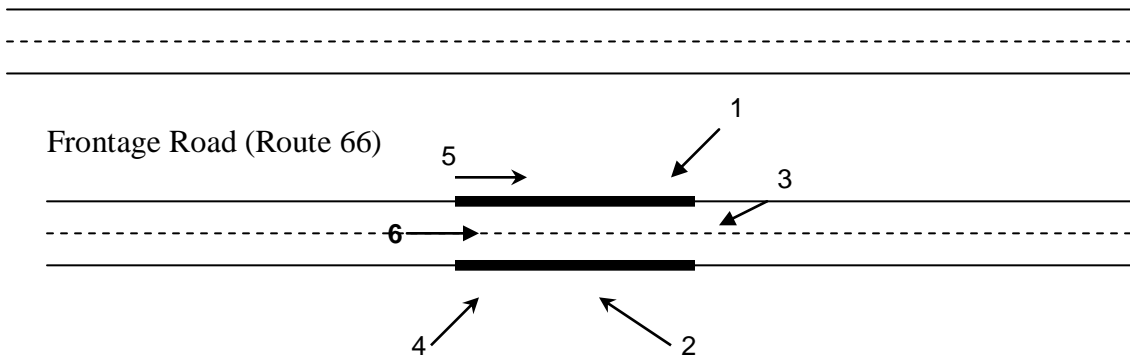
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Section FIGURE Page 11

Route 66 Bridge over the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad
Shamrock vicinity, Wheeler County, Texas

Site Plan and Photo Key (no scale).

I-40 Eastbound Lane



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Route 66 Bridge over the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad
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PHOTOGRAPHS

Route 66 Bridge over the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad
Shamrock vicinity, Wheeler County, Texas

Photos by: Thomason and Associates

Date: February 21, 2005

Location of Negatives: National Park Service, Santa Fe, New Mexico

- Photo No. 1: Route 66 Bridge, north elevation, view to the southwest.
- Photo No. 2: Route 66 Bridge, south elevation, view to the northwest.
- Photo No. 3: Route 66 Bridge showing railing and deck, view to the southwest.
- Photo No. 4: Route 66 Bridge, detail of railing.
- Photo No. 5: Route 66 Bridge showing north concrete abutment, view to the east.
- Photo No. 6: Route 66 Bridge, concrete deck, view to the east.