

Waco Suspension Bridge
Waco
McLennan County
Texas

HAER No. TX-13

HAER
TEX,
155-WACO,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO
WACO SUSPENSION BRIDGE
Texas Historic Bridges Recording Project
Spanning Brazos River at Bridge Street
Waco
McLennan County
Texas

HAER No. TX-13

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1-

BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY
XEROGRAPHIC COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
1849 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: Spanning the Brazos River at Bridge Street, Waco, McLennan County, Texas.
UTM: 14/677780/3493120
USGS: Waco West, Texas, quadrangle (1975).

Date of Construction: 1868-1869.

Designer: Thomas M. Griffith.

Builder: Thomas M. Griffith.

Present Owner: City of Waco.

Present Use: Pedestrian bridge.

Significance: When completed in 1869, the 475'-0"-long Waco Suspension Bridge was the state's first major suspension bridge. The first bridge to span the Brazos River, it originally featured two castellated pink brick towers. The span opened as a toll bridge on January 7, 1870. Its toll houses feature stepped gable roofs, parapets, and round arched openings. Financed by the Waco Bridge Company, it is an example of a bridge built at the initiative of local business leaders during the Reconstruction when local governments had difficulty funding large capital projects. McLennan County purchased the bridge in 1889, freed it of tolls, and turned it over to the city of Waco. It was reconstructed by the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company between 1913 and 1914. The Waco Suspension Bridge was closed to vehicular traffic in 1971. The original structure was designed by Thomas M. Griffith, an engineer who had worked for the John A. Roebling's Sons Company. The Waco Suspension Bridge was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1970.
Source: T. Lindsay Baker, *Building the Lone Star State: An Illustrated Guide to Historic Sites* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), pp. 260-62.

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Historian: Estella M. Chung, August 1996. Revised August 1998.

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