

Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure  
Spanning Elm Waterhole Creek  
San Antonio  
Bexar County  
Texas

HAER No. TX-118

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

**HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD**  
Southwest System Support Office  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 728  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

## HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Joe C. Freeman, Photographer, March 2010

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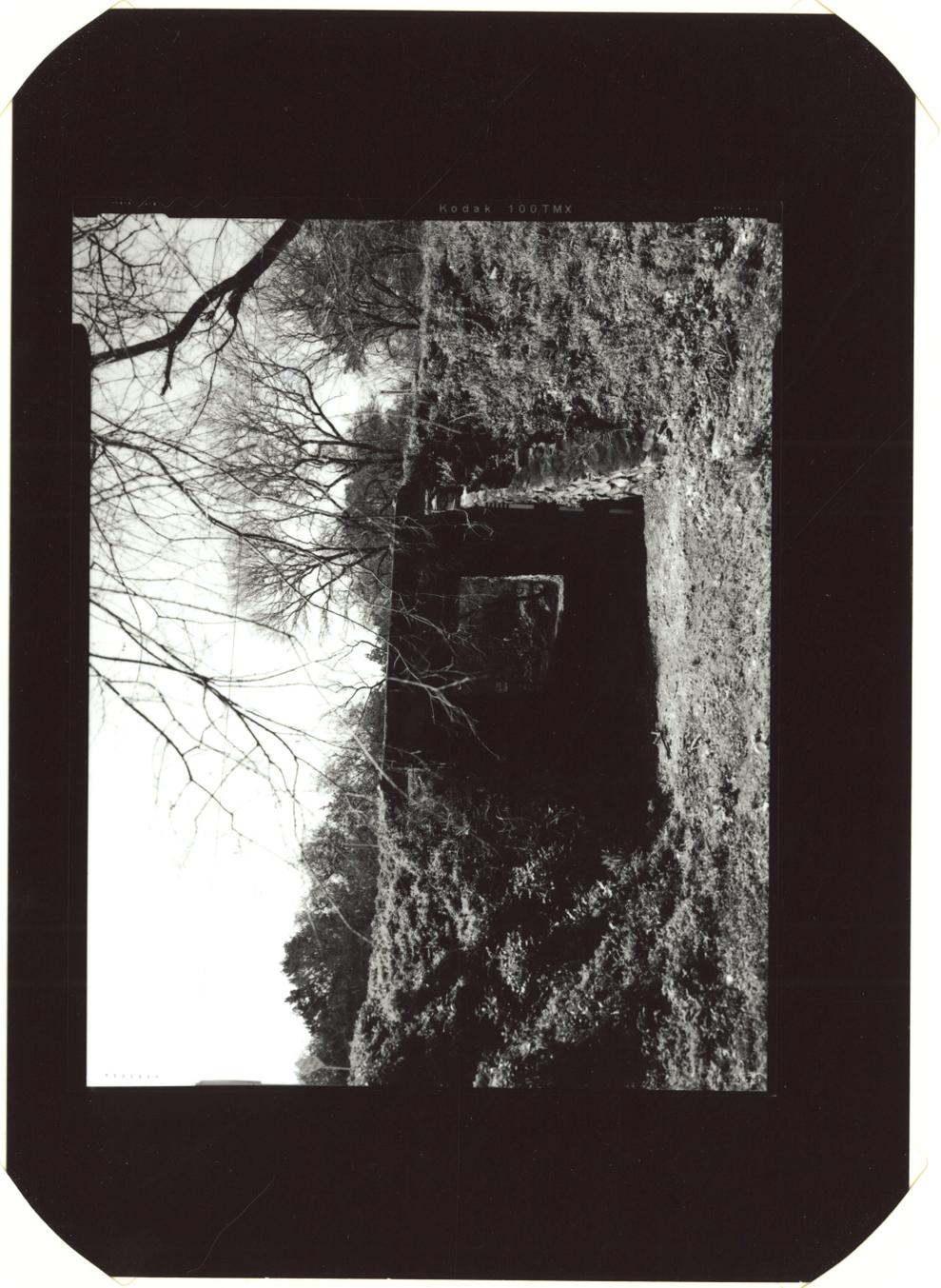
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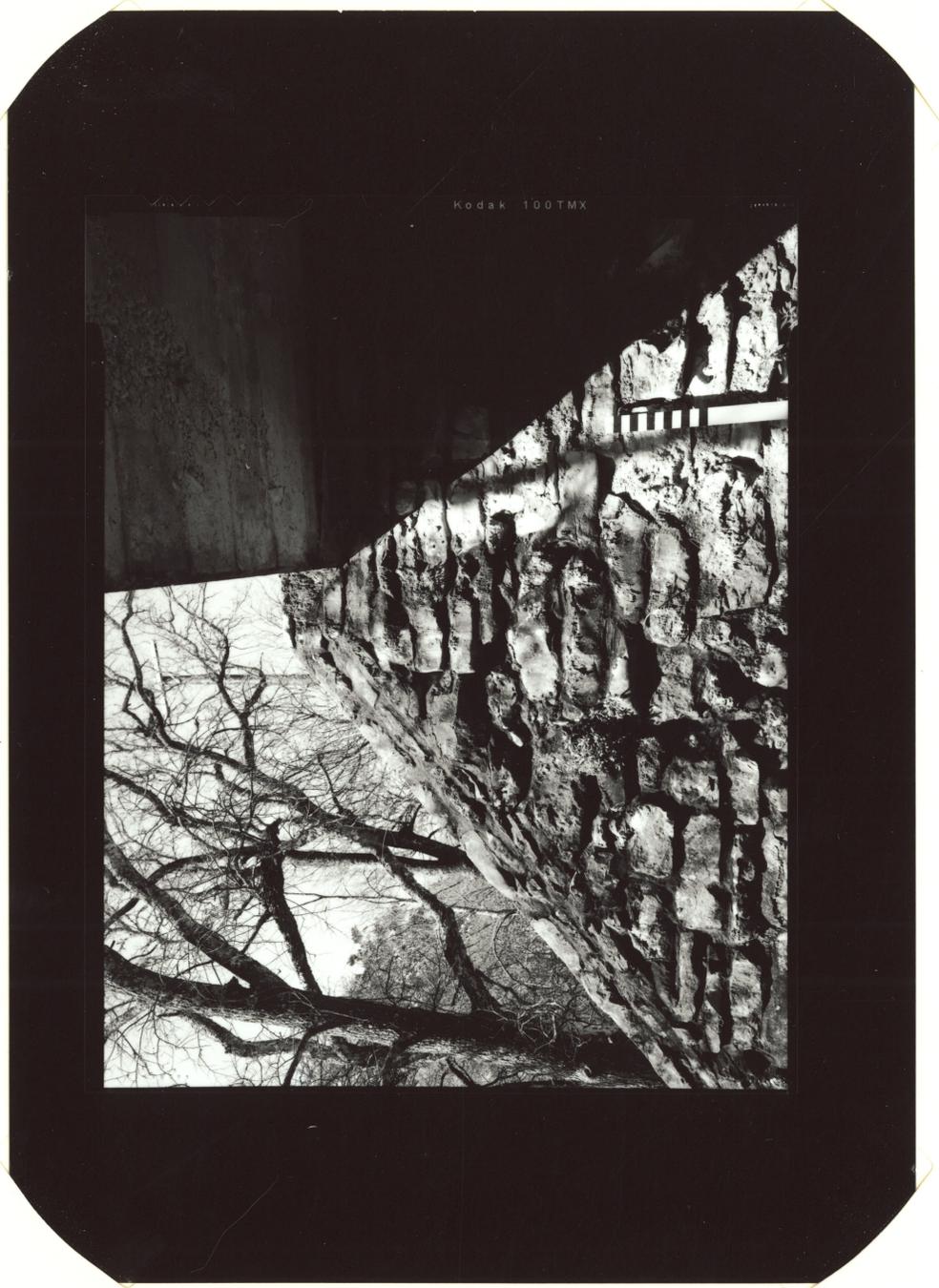
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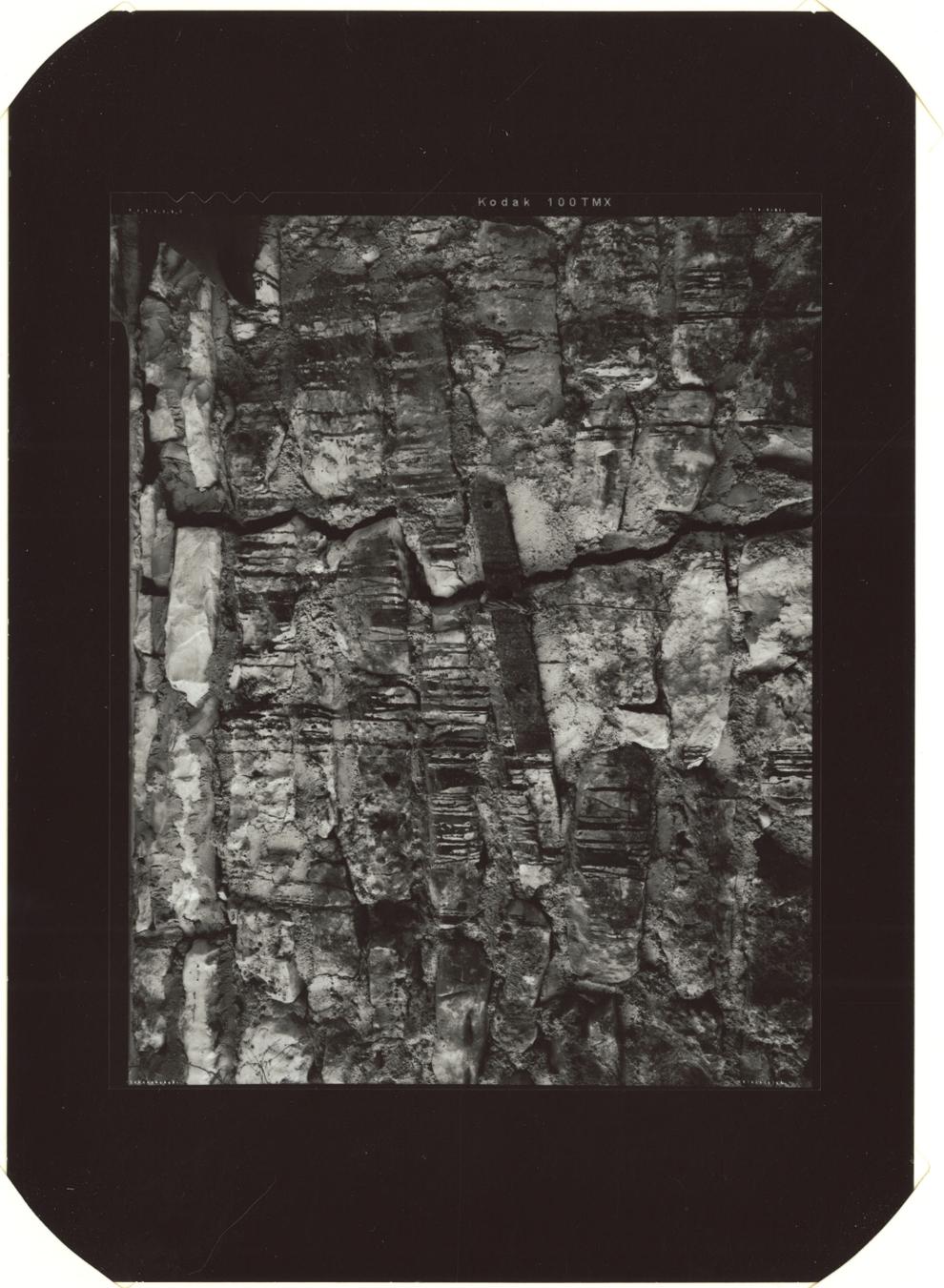
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

EVANS ROAD CATTLE PASS ROCK STRUCTURE

HAER No. TX-118

**Location:** Spanning Elm Waterhole Creek, an intermittent stream as determined by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, at Evans Road, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

The Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure is located at latitude: 29.6480, longitude -98.4118. The coordinate represents the structure's southwest corner. This coordinate was obtained on March 10, 2010 by plotting its location on a 2010 Google aerial map. The accuracy of the coordinate is +/- 6 meters. The coordinate's datum is North American Datum 1983. The Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure location has no restriction on its release to the public.

**Present Owner:** Bexar County

**Present Use:** The Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure is used as a drainage structure spanning Elm Waterhole Creek, an intermittent stream as determined by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, on a two-lane public road.

**Significance:** The Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure was constructed to function as a cattle pass for the Steubing ranch and as a drainage structure along Elm Waterhole Creek, an intermittent stream as determined by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, which flows under the road. The rock structure demonstrates an innovative solution to problems faced by both ranchers and vehicular drivers as land use began to shift to accommodate multiple and varied needs. The rock structure also demonstrates a rustic aesthetic common in the 1930s-1940s. The Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure was recommended eligible under Criterion A for its significance in demonstrating the pattern of events associated with the local ranching industry and the development of transportation, and under Criterion C as a good representation of a 1930s-1940s rustic structure.

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**Project Information:** Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) Level III documentation was performed in March 2010. Joe C. Freeman, Architect, conducted the on-site recordation and Tanya McDougall compiled historical information. During the on-site recordation, large format photographs were taken of the structure, observations on existing conditions were noted, and sketches were drawn. The HAER recordation serves as mitigation for the demolition of this structure.

## **PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

### **A. Physical History:**

1. **Date of Construction:** ca. 1941
2. **Architect/Engineer:** Not Known
3. **Builder/Contractor/Supplier:** Not Known
4. **Original Plans:** The Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure is on a two-lane road spanning Elm Waterhole Creek. The structure retains its original configuration of two stone support walls supporting a concrete slab. The stone walls are constructed of local fieldstone. The fieldstone is a dense limestone, is irregular in shape, and some of the stone has been worked.
5. **Alterations and Additions:** The structure remains unaltered except for several layers of joint repointing on both of the fieldstone walls.

### **B. Historical Context:**

#### **1. Transportation Development in San Antonio**

San Antonio is located in southcentral Texas at the head of the San Antonio River in Bexar County. The city is situated between the Edwards Plateau to the northwest and the Gulf Coastal Plains to the southeast. The area was first inhabited by the Coahuiltec Indians long before the arrival of the first permanent European settlement built by the Spanish (Stephens and Holmes 1989:13). After 1821, San Antonio had become a Mexican stronghold in Texas until the Texas Revolution. After Texas joined the U.S. in 1846, the population of San Antonio grew, which was due to a strong U.S. military presence tasked with maintaining the U.S. border with Mexico, and the establishment of the U.S. Postal Service that required federal involvement in creating and maintaining roads (Hemphill 2001). By 1847, the heightened protection from the military presence and established routes allowed for a stagecoach service from San Antonio to Houston. In the following decades San Antonio emerged as a thriving trade center with several

stagecoach routes leading west. However, the arrival of the Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio Railway in 1877 rendered the stagecoach obsolete for the transport of goods, diminishing its use to local travel (Hemphill 2001).

The arrival of the railroad in 1877 was the most important event in San Antonio during the post Civil War period (Fox 1989:90). The railroad was responsible for changing San Antonio from a trading center into a major distribution point for cattle and farm products and brought with it an improved means of transportation for both people and merchandise (Webb 1952:540). Goods for local consumption became readily available in the area, and access to outside markets further stimulated local industries. The ease of travel also contributed to continued immigration with the population doubling from 20,000 in 1880 to 40,000 by 1890 (Reese et al. 1994:40).

By 1900, San Antonio was the crossroads for five railroads and had a population of 53,321; the population of Bexar County as a whole stood at 69,000 (Taylor et al. 1966:118; Webb 1952:540). At that time, major industries included flour mills, foundries, and breweries; educational institutions included 29 private schools and colleges (Webb 1952:540). Subsequent to 1900, the overall economic expansion of Bexar County and San Antonio was rapid.

In the early 1900s, the automobile was introduced to San Antonio and by 1904, a city ordinance was passed that all automobiles be numbered (*San Antonio Sunday Light* 31 July 1904:7). The increase in motorized vehicles pushed the movement for better roads, and in 1903, citizens formed the "Good Roads Association." Also in 1903, citizens began to demand a bureau of highways in Texas, though it was not until 1916 that the Federal Aid Road Act provided for the establishment of state highway departments. The State Highway Department, now known as the Texas Department of Transportation, was established in 1917 with San Antonio being one of six office headquarters (*Handbook of Texas Online* 2002a).

From 1900 to 1930, San Antonio had developed a relatively diversified economy, which included manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism; however, the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s, dramatically affected life in Texas with one-fifth of its citizens needing government relief payments to survive. Governments at all levels increased public-works spending to slow the economic decline and provide employment (Conan 2000:45-46). Many public works projects were associated with road improvements. For example, the Emergency Act of 1930 temporarily waived the requirement that all states match federal highway funds dollar for dollar. In 1932, Congress passed the Emergency Relief and Construction Act which gave more money to public works, and in 1933, passed the National Recovery Act, allowing the use of federal-aid funds to construct and improve urban and secondary roads (Texas Department of Transportation 2009).

During this time, Texas quickly seized the opportunity to upgrade the state road system to national standards. Projects included the pavement of dirt roads, and the construction of bridges and culverts. Culverts are defined as a structure used as a stream crossing, underpass, or grade separation that is designed to support the dead load of the soil as well as live loads of traffic (White et al. 1992:315). Concrete, timber, and stone were common materials used for such projects. Stone, however, was particularly common

because it was a cheap building material and it fit with the “rustic” aesthetic sought after by architects and landscape architects in the 1920s and 1930s (Mitchell 1997:5).

Although the widespread road construction occurring in Texas certainly helped expand the growth of the city, it also had a great impact on the rural areas. New and improved roads could cut off a rancher’s access to pasturelands. One solution was to construct a cattle pass under the roadway, most often in conjunction with a road project. The cattle pass would provide road access to motorists while allowing cattle to cross safely under the road to pasture.

Following World War II the Highway Department developed the farm-to-market road and interstate highway systems, which impacted San Antonio and Bexar County by developing a vast and interconnected transportation network (Stephens and Holmes 1989:52). During this time, roads throughout the area were paved and linked to enable tourists and a growing population to travel in the safest and most efficient manner. Today San Antonio is served by a network of interstate highways, U.S. highways, and state highways that extend beyond the city and state boundaries.

## **2. Development of Evans Road**

Evans Road runs from Stone Oak Parkway, just west of US Highway 281 in northern San Antonio, east to Interstate Highway (IH) 35 in Selma, Texas. The Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure is located at the crossing of Elm Waterhole Creek and Evans Road between Old Fossil Road to the west and Loma View Road to the east. Based on historic maps and newspaper articles discussing the construction of Evans Road, it appears that the western portion of Evans Road (from Bulverde Road running east to Green Mountain Road), was completed ca. 1941, while the eastern portion of the road developed in conjunction with the town of Selma ca. 1847 (Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection 1928-1953).

Selma was founded in 1847, by a few settlers running herds of cattle on the open range (*Handbook of Texas Online* 2002b). In 1850, the Harrison and McCulloch Stage Stop opened in Selma at the corner of the Old Austin Road (now known as IH-35) and Hill Street (now known as Evans Road). Evans Road was used as a link between the Old San Antonio Road, which ran through the Cibolo Valley just west of Selma on what is now Nacogdoches Road, and the Old Austin Road (Bexar County, Texas History and Genealogy 2000).

Evans Road was most likely named after Robert Evans a prominent landowner in the area. Robert Evans moved from Tennessee to California in 1849, where he made his money panning for gold. In 1865, Robert Evans bought land on what is now Evans Road and married Rebecca Murchison, the daughter of a local prominent farmer (Texas Historical Commission Atlas 2009).

Prior to the construction of the present Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure, an earlier Evans Road was constructed sometime prior to August 1888. It is unknown where this Evans Road was located in comparison to the present road; however, according to a newspaper article, the San Antonio County Commissioners Court appointed a jury to oversee road improvements of Evans Road, including the

construction of bridges and culverts<sup>1</sup> (Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection 1928; *San Antonio Daily Express* 14 August 1888).

Although cattle passes were a necessary structure as early as 1900, records indicate that the Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure was constructed ca. 1941. According to a 1935 deed, Ida Steubing, widow, granted Bexar County a 60' wide strip of land to construct the new Evans Road. Per the deed agreement, the county would construct two 12' x 9' cattle passes and one 6' x 7' cattle pass, so that the ranch could access pastureland cutoff by the road (Bexar County Clerk, 1935). Of the two 12' x 9' cattle passes constructed, the Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure over Elm Waterhole Creek is the only one remaining.

The portion of Evans Road running east from Bulverde Road towards Selma appears as a road for the first time on the 1938 USGS topographic map; however, the road was not completed until ca. 1941 (Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection 1938). According to San Antonio newspaper articles, the San Antonio County Commissioner's Court began proceedings in 1938, to grant a warrant to fund road improvements, including Evans Road; however, funding to proceed with road improvements was not granted until 1941 (*San Antonio Express* [SAE] 30 December 1938:A10; *SAE* 19 April 1941:A2). It is most likely that the rock structure, referred to in the 1935 deed, was constructed at this time.

The review of historic maps reveals that after improvements were made to Evans Road ca. 1941, the surrounding area remained undeveloped for several years, most likely due to the continued dominance of ranching in the area. In 1966, new roads and structures begin to appear on topographic maps east of Bulverde and just south of Evans Road. The review of aerial photographs reveals that the construction of new structures was concentrated to the south side of Evans Road, and did not spread until after 1986 (Earthexplorer 1966-1986). The increase in the number of buildings in the area is indicative of the suburbanization that was taking place. Today, several housing developments exist in the area surrounding the Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure with the likelihood that the encroachment will continue.

## **PART II. STRUCTURAL/DESIGN INFORMATION**

- A. General Description:** The Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure is a combination drainage culvert and livestock underpass that spans Elm Waterhole Creek. Evans Road is elevated above the drainage on earthen berms that abut the walls of the drainage structure. Evans Road runs east-west while the structure accommodates the north to south drainage of the creek.

The structure consists of parallel stone walls that support a flat reinforced concrete plate. The concrete plate spans approximately 11'- 4". The structure is about 33'- 0" in length with battered stone wing walls that project approximately 10' - 0" beyond the overhead concrete plate. It is estimated that the stone walls are about 1' - 8" thick and are constructed

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<sup>1</sup> H. Steubing, a local ranch owner, whose name appears on the 1928 topographic map as a property owner abutting the Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure site, was appointed as a member of that jury (*San Antonio Daily Express* 14 August 1888).

of load-bearing, local fieldstone. The fieldstone, a dense limestone, is irregular in shape and some of the stone has been worked. The stone is set in a cement mortar of a hard and dense consistency and has been roughly applied. The stonework coursing is rough and irregular. The battered wing walls were originally capped and finished with flat stones that follow the line of the battered walls. The caps remain intact on the two projections at the south end of the structure but are missing on the two north end projections. The stone walls each have two wall ties that consist of scrap iron plates held by woven steel cables. These wall ties appear to be attached to "deadman" anchors beyond the walls and were installed as part of the original construction to make the walls more stable.

The reinforced concrete plate is at least 1' - 0" thick and bears on the full thickness of the supporting stone walls. Form marks remain as imprints of 1 x 8 boards on the underside of the deck. Guard walls run the width of the concrete plate at the north and south ends of the spanning plate and are 2' - 0" high when measured from the bottom of the plate. The guard walls are 8" thick and the edges are chamfered. Above the concrete plate, road base and asphalt paving of undetermined thickness was noted.

1. **Character:** The rock structure is simple in design and demonstrates a rustic aesthetic, which is indicative of its rural setting and practical functions as a cattle pass and a culvert. The structure is a standing testament to the importance of ranching in the area and continues to be a functional road structure. The course stone support walls demonstrate a rustic aesthetic common in the 1930s-1940s.
2. **Condition of Fabric:** The Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure retains its character and integrity. The structure shows evidence of normal deterioration due to exposure to the elements. Noted deterioration includes two vertical cracks on the east stone wall and missing and loose stones from the northwest wing wall stone cap. Asphalt drips on the stone walls and metal flashing at the top of the walls indicate attempts to prevent moisture from the roadway above from penetrating the tops of the supporting walls.

- B. Site Information:** The immediate area surrounding the Evans Road Cattle Pass Rock Structure is undeveloped. The northern landscape is an open clearing that abuts a forested area. The southern landscape is covered by native vegetation. East and west of the structure are several subdivisions that were constructed post-1986.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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