

Neighboring Counties' Newspapers – Clay Riley



THE SAN SABA NEWS

May 15, 1924

BRIDGE SPAN FALLS IN WITH FATAL RESULTS

Father Is Injured, Son is Killed and Several Head of Cattle Lost When Regency Bridge Span Falls

One of the most shocking tragedies in the history of this county was that at the Regency Bridge last Friday morning between eleven and twelve o'clock. Luther Jernigan, who lives near Ridge in Mills County, with his two sons were driving a bunch of cattle across the bridge, as the report goes. Johnnie Brown and some other San Saba men had helped to drive the cattle from the R.C. Turner pasture in Cotton Wood Creek, where they were turned over to Mr. Jernigan and the San Saba men came to town. It is reported that there were 90 cattle in the herd. The cattle were crossed in bunches and the last bunch were being taken over, when the approach span on the San Saba side of the river gave way hurling cattle, horses, riders and all headlong to instant death and wreckage. Raymond Jernigan, the youngest son, about 11 years old, was killed instantly. The father was penned between two large timbers and it was some time before he was released. Malcom Jernigan, the other son escaped unhurt. Some nine head of cattle were killed and others were crippled.

The end of the span next to the bridge piers is supposed to be 60 feet high and the earth below is covered with boulders which made the fall more fatal.

The current bridge at the Regency Crossing of the Colorado River is the third bridge at the site. The first was built in 1903 and collapsed in 1924 under the weight of cattle crossing in May of 1924, as detailed in the newspaper report above. A second bridge was built, opened in 1931 and washed away in the flood 1936.

The current bridge was built in 1939 and restored in recent years. It's a single lane suspension bridge with wooden planks for the roadbed. It is the only suspension bridge still open to auto traffic in Texas.


