

## CHAPTER 5 - DESCRIPTION OF SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC BRIDGES

### INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 includes a description of selected examples of the NRHP-listed, previously determined eligible, and newly recommended eligible historic bridges identified during this update survey (**Table 4-3**). Descriptions and evaluations of individual bridges, organized by bridge type, are followed by a description of two unique resources, a tunnel and a ferry slip. Other significant bridges, treated thematically, are described in Chapter 6.

### FLORIDA'S SIGNIFICANT FIXED BRIDGES

Although Florida possesses a great number of navigable waterways, the majority of its bridges cross smaller bodies of water, rail lines, or roadways. In these cases, road builders used fixed bridges constructed of timber, steel, or concrete. Many of Florida's most distinguished truss, arch, frame, slab, beam, girder, and cable bridges, as well as culverts, are highlighted below.

#### Fixed Truss Bridges



**Photo 5-1. Steinhatchee Springs Bridge, Lafayette County (No. 334001)**

#### **Steinhatchee Springs Bridge**

Lafayette County

FDOT #334001, 8LF0021

Designed and constructed for Lafayette County in 1921 by the Converse Bridge Company of Chattanooga, the Steinhatchee Springs pony truss bridge is among the state's oldest bridges. It is the only wooden-decked version of this group that is still carrying traffic. Standing over the Steinhatchee River in the community of Steinhatchee Springs, the 223-foot long structure is composed of a 45-foot main steel truss span and nine wooden trestle approach spans. Standard features on the bridge include the channel bar

top chord and end posts, steel rods for the bottom chord, diagonals and counterbracing, and the pinned connections with cotter pins. In Florida bridges, the latter feature is associated only with the Converse Bridge Company, an important bridge builder throughout the Southeast. Timber and steel piles have been added as a support for the main span. A concrete abutment stands at one end, while two concrete-filled cylinder piers support the other. The Steinhatchee Springs Bridge was reconstructed in 1989 with in-kind substructure and superstructure materials.

The Steinhatchee Springs Bridge is Florida's only intact Pratt pony truss bridge; the condition of the other bridge of this type, the 1911 Apalahoochee River Bridge (No. 324302) could not be verified. Along with the 1911 Bellamy through truss bridge in Jackson County (No bridge number), the Steinhatchee Springs Bridge represents one of only two surviving examples of the work of the Converse Bridge Company in Florida. It is also distinguished as an early example of steel truss bridge design and construction featuring thin structural steel members, pinned connections, and lally column piers. Despite alterations, this bridge was determined NRHP-eligible in the 2000 survey. It is significant under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a rare example of a fixed Pratt pony truss bridge and for its association with the Converse Bridge Company of Chattanooga.



**Photo 5-2. Blountstown Truss Bridge, Calhoun County (No. 470029)**

**Trammel Bridge/  
Blountstown Truss Bridge**  
Calhoun County  
FDOT #470029, 8CA0037

Improvements in the science and technology of building continuous trusses led to greater acceptance of this bridge type in the 1930s. Florida's first example was the Blountstown Truss Bridge, which carries SR-20 over the Apalachicola River, a major state waterway. This bridge incorporates two steel truss designs: through and deck.

Completed in 1938, the structure measures 8,397 feet in length. A Warren truss configuration with verticals was used to construct the secondary deck truss sections and the central through truss that spans the river channel. Concrete and steel piers support 202 steel beam approach spans that extend the structure over a bluff on the east side and across marshland on the west bank. Despite the bridge's excellent condition, the narrow roadway (26 feet in width) hindered its ability to meet modern traffic demands. In the late 1990s, the truss was raised to a greater height above the bridge deck, and an adjacent higher modern concrete bridge was constructed.

The bridge was named for Blountstown, the seat of Calhoun County, which had long sought a bridge at that site. The county and the federal government, through the Depression-era Public Works Administration, jointly funded the project, which cost approximately \$936,000. The Allied Engineering Corporation provided the designs and the Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Company of Milwaukee built the structure.

The Blountstown Truss Bridge stands as a monument to Depression-era public works projects in Florida and represents the culmination of Calhoun County's drive to improve the regional economy through better transportation. The project gave work to a great number of unemployed people in a depressed area of northern Florida. By transforming SR-20 into a major secondary route between Tallahassee and western Florida, the bridge bolstered the local economy. The Blountstown Truss Bridge was determined NRHP-eligible in the 2000 survey. It is significant under Criterion A in the area of Transportation, and under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a rare example of a fixed continuous steel through truss bridge