

and for its association with the Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Company. At the time of its completion, it was the “first attempt in long-span truss design in Florida.”<sup>109</sup>

**John E. Mathews Bridge**

“Arlington Bridge”

Duval County

FDOT #720076, 8DU1554

The John E. Mathews Bridge over the St. Johns River is a massive cantilevered steel, Warren through truss bridge. It measures 7,382 feet long, and consists of six main span panels and 59 steel stringer approach spans. The 810-foot cantilevered main span truss is flanked by two continuous span trusses. The bridge was designed by Reynolds, Smith and Hills (RS&H) of Jacksonville, fabricated by the



**Photo 5-3. Mathews Bridge, Duval County (No. 720076)**

Bethlehem Steel Company, and built between 1951 and 1953 by the Merritt-Chapman and Scott Corporation. The bridge was dedicated to Judge John E. Mathews, a Florida state legislator and Chief Justice of the 1955 Supreme Court, who had urged building on the site since the early 1930s and helped gather funding for construction.

In response to complaints about poor rideability, the original lightweight steel open grid deck of the main span was replaced with in-kind materials in 1997. In 2007, the grating was replaced with a solid deck surface designed by Hardesty & Hanover, LLP, RS&H, and BPA Associates, Inc. The work was done by PCL Contractors.<sup>110</sup>

The structure is historically notable for its type, contribution to the area's development, and landmark status in the city. The Mathews Bridge is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Transportation for its associations to the historic and continued development of Jacksonville. It is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a high-integrity example of a cantilevered steel Warren through truss bridge, and the only bridge of its type still in use. The Mathews Bridge was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP by the Florida SHPO in October 2007.

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<sup>109</sup> Atkins, Stephen B. and William E. Keller, *Survey of Metal Truss, Swing, and Vertical Lift Bridges in Florida*, (Tallahassee, FL: FDOT, EMO, 1981).

<sup>110</sup> Noles, Tim, “Mathews Bridge Deck Replacement.” SPANS, 5 (October 2007), 4.