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

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." [109]

John E. Mathews Bridge
"Arlington Bridge"
Duval County
FDOT #720076, 8DU1554

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

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 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.[110]

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.

[109] Atkins, Stephen B. and William E. Keller, *Survey of Metal Truss, Swing, and Vertical Lift Bridges in Florida*, (Tallahassee, FL: FDOT, EMO, 1981).
[110] Noles, Tim, "Mathews Bridge Deck Replacement." SPANS, 5 (October 2007), 4.