

Georgia DOT Bridge No. 051-00025D-01986N  
(James P. Houlihan Bridge)  
U.S. 17/State Route 25 Spanning Savannah River  
Port Wentworth Vicinity  
Chatham County  
Georgia

HAER No. GA-114

HAER  
GA  
26-POWEN.V)  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Southeast Region  
Department of the Interior  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Georgia DOT Bridge No. 051-00025D-01986N (James P. Houlihan Bridge)

HAER  
GA  
26-POWEN.V,  
1-

HAER No. GA-114

Location: U.S. 17/State Route 25 spanning the Savannah River  
1 mile northeast of Port Wentworth, Chatham  
County, Georgia

U.S.G.S. Port Wentworth Quadrangle (7.5), Zone 17  
Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates:

<u>Northing</u>	<u>Easting</u>
3558580	485400

Date of Construction: 1922. Altered 1954.

Engineers/Builder: Designed and constructed by the State Highway  
Department, Bridge Office.

Present Owner: Georgia Department of Transportation  
2 Capitol Square, S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Present Use: Vehicular bridge to be rehabilitated in accordance  
with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for  
the Treatment of Historic Properties (rev. 1992),  
1997.

Significance: Georgia DOT Bridge No. 051-00025D-01986N (James P.  
Houlihan Bridge) was originally constructed in  
1922, and was a manually operated steel truss  
turn-span type bridge. In 1954, the bridge  
underwent several alterations, one of which  
included the addition of motors, controls and  
wiring to provide a mechanical means of operating  
the turn-span mechanism. This bridge is a late  
example of swing span technology, and one of only  
two remaining swing span bridges in the State of  
Georgia. It is significant for its design,  
materials and workmanship, and for its role in the  
development of transportation and commerce in  
Chatham County.

Report Prepared By: Lauren A. Cotton  
Transportation Planner II  
Georgia Department of Transportation  
Office of Environment/Location  
3993 Aviation Circle  
Atlanta, Georgia 30336

Date: July 1998

Georgia DOT Bridge No. 051-00025D-01986N (James P. Houlihan Bridge) is a 51 span steel bridge which is comprised of a swing span bridge with a through truss superstructure and T-Beam approach spans. It was originally constructed in 1922 as a manually operated turn-span bridge. At the time of its original construction, the roadway width measured eighteen feet. In 1954, the bridge was widened by removing the original swing span bridge and replacing it with a new twelve foot wider structure built by the American Bridge Company. The original T-Beam spans were retained but widened by T-Beam additions of six feet to each side. The original concrete balustrades were removed and replaced with standard concrete railings. Other changes included adding motors, controls and wiring to provide a mechanical means of operating the turn-span; adding an operator's house to the upper section of the truss; replacing the original truss members; widening the turn-span pivot pier; replacing the fender system and adding traffic arms and barrier gates. Subsequent changes to the bridge included the c. 1970 reconstruction of the exterior of the c. 1954 operator's house and the c. 1960 addition of a cinder block storage building on the south bank of the Savannah River.

Georgia DOT Bridge No. 051-00025D-01986N (James P. Houlihan Bridge) is located on U.S. 17/State Route 25 spanning the Front River channel of the Savannah River 1 mile northeast of Port Wentworth, Georgia in Chatham County. U.S. 17/State Route 25 is a two lane roadway, also known as Ocean Highway, that was developed by the State Highway Department and the Coastal Highway District as a 155 mile long link in a chain of highways running the length of the southern Atlantic seaboard. The route was completed in stages from north to south between 1922 and 1930 (1). Georgia DOT Bridge No. 051-00025D-01986N (James P. Houlihan Bridge) is part of a six bridge causeway over the Savannah River that was completed in 1922 and widened in 1954. The area surrounding the bridge is generally undeveloped.

Georgia DOT Bridge No. 051-00025D-01986N (James P. Houlihan Bridge) is named in memory of James P. Houlihan. Mr. Houlihan was a Chatham County Commissioner for over twenty years and the

---

(1) Lichtenstein and Associates. Historic Bridge Inventory Update. "Historic Contexts: Bridge Building Technology in Georgia." Unpublished manuscript on file with the Georgia Department of Transportation's Office of Environment/Location, Atlanta, Georgia, 1997.

President of the Georgia State Savings Association in Savannah (2). He died in 1961. A memorial plaque to James P. Houlihan is located at the east approach to the bridge.

Georgia DOT Bridge No. 051-00025D-01986N (James P. Houlihan Bridge) is significant as a late example of swing span technology, which reached its greatest period of popularity around 1900. It is also one of only two remaining swing-span type bridges in Georgia and the only remaining one of its kind in Chatham County (3).

---

(2) Pettus' Savannah City Directory, 1928, p. 449; Pettus' Savannah City Directory, 1942, p. 305; R. L. Polk and Company, Savannah City Directory, 1959, p. 315.

(3) Lichtenstein and Associates. Historic Bridge Inventory Update. "Historic Contexts: Bridge Building Technology in Georgia." Unpublished manuscript on file with the Georgia Department of Transportation's Office of Environment/Location, Atlanta, Georgia, 1997.