

Georgia DOT Bridge No. 027-00268X-00678N  
County Road 268/Empress Road Spanning  
Piscola Creek  
Quitman Vicinity  
Brooks County  
Georgia

HAER No. GA-86

HAER  
GA  
14-QUIT.V,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Georgia DOT Bridge No. 027-00268X-00678N

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14-QUIT.V  
1-

Location: County Road 268/Empress Road spanning Piscola Creek  
3.0 miles south of Quitman,  
Brooks County, Georgia

U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute Baden, Georgia, quadrangle, Universal  
Transverse Mercator Coordinates:

<u>Northing</u>	<u>Easting</u>
3403720	254750

Date of Construction: 1924-1925. Completed in February 1925.

Engineers/Builder: Designed and constructed by the Luten Bridge Company of  
York, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Brooks County  
400 East Courtland Street  
Quitman, Georgia 31643

Present Use: Vehicular bridge to be demolished 1994.

Significance: GDOT Bridge #027-00268X-00678N is a Luten double-rib  
concrete arch type bridge that was constructed in  
1924-1925. Although the Luten Bridge Company built  
approximately sixteen concrete arch bridges in the state  
during the period from 1918 to 1936, the double-rib type  
is not commonly found in Georgia. GDOT Bridge  
#027-00268X-00678N is one of four Luten double-rib  
concrete arch bridges in the state, and one of two in  
Brooks County. It is significant for its design and  
workmanship, and for its role in the development of  
transportation and commerce in Brooks County.

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

Date: March 1994

GDOT Bridge #027-00268X-00678N is located on County Road 268/Empress Road spanning Piscola Creek three miles south of Quitman, Georgia, the County seat of Brooks County. This is the original location of the bridge. C.R. 268 is a two-lane roadway that connects Quitman with the communities of Empress, Georgia and Lovett, Florida. The area surrounding the bridge is rural, and is comprised of several old plantations and farmsteads.

GDOT Bridge #027-00268X-00678N was constructed in 1924-1925. The substructure is composed of reinforced concrete, with a concrete deck and concrete handrails. The bridge measures 270 feet in length and 18 feet in width, and retains its original materials and features, including two plaques which display the date of construction of the bridge and the names of the Brooks County Commissioners at the time of its construction.

Prior to the construction of GDOT Bridge #027-00268X-00678N, a wooden bridge, known as the Johnson Bridge, provided the crossing at Piscola Creek. This original bridge was reported to have been constructed in 1867, and was named for Wilson Johnson, a local farmer who owned much of the land surrounding Piscola Creek (1). The crossing at Piscola Creek was an important route as it provided access for the many farms and plantations located along C.R. 268 to the markets in Quitman. In the early decades of the Twentieth Century, the community of Quitman was a prosperous regional market center for the storage and transportation of local crops. Since the primary source of income for Brooks County stemmed from the production and sale of crops such as cotton, corn, tobacco, timber and peanuts, the benefits of improved transportation facilities could not be underestimated. Thus, beginning in 1917, Brooks County undertook the task of paving some of its county roads and replacing many of its old deteriorated wood bridges. The Johnson Bridge was one of the earliest old wood bridges in the County to be replaced with new concrete structures. In January 1924, the Brooks County Commissioners ordered the advertisement of bids for a contract to construct two new bridges over Piscola Creek and its overflow (2). In April 1924, the bid by the Luten Bridge Company was accepted, and construction of the bridges was completed in February 1925 (3).

The Luten Bridge Company of York, Pennsylvania was founded by Daniel B. Luten. Luten was educated at the University of Michigan, where he received a B.S. in Civil Engineering in 1894. Luten went on to teach at the University of Michigan from 1894-1895, and then at Purdue University from 1895 to 1900. In

1900, Luten settled in Indianapolis, Indiana, where he began his life-long career studying and designing concrete bridges (4).

The Luten Bridge Company constructed approximately sixteen concrete arch bridges in Georgia during the period between 1918 and 1936. The majority of these bridges were located north of the fall line, with concentrations in northwest Georgia. All but four of these bridges have solid spandrels (5). The remaining four possess the double-rib feature, which is distinguished by two relatively narrow arch rings on either side of the structure that resemble ribs. All of the concrete arch bridges built by the Luten Bridge Company are easily identified by an incised rectangular pattern on the concrete railings (6).

The construction of concrete bridges was introduced in Georgia in the latter part of the 1910s. Given the strength and durability of concrete, it readily became the popular material for the construction of new bridges. Between 1919 and 1922, the Georgia Highway Department constructed 255 new bridges throughout the State, 85 percent of which were of concrete construction (7). Although the type and method of construction exemplified by GDOT Bridge #027-00268X-00678N is no longer utilized, concrete bridges revolutionized bridge building throughout the State for decades to come.

Endnotes:

- 1) Jean Logan, local historian, Interview by Lauren A. Cotton, Quitman, Georgia, January 10, 1994.
- 2) Brooks County Commissioners' Court, Minutes, Volume 4, p. 313.
- 3) Ibid, p. 313.
- 4) Georgia Department of Transportation and Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Bridge Survey, 1981, pp. 51-2.
- 5) Ibid, p. 73.
- 6) Ibid, p. 73.
- 7) State Highway Board of Georgia, Fourth Annual Report of the State Highway Board of Georgia, 1922, p. 76.