

Gervais Street Bridge



The Gervais Street Bridge is one of four open-spandrel arch bridges made of reinforced concrete in South Carolina. The Gervais Street Bridge spans the Congaree River and links Columbia to the western and southern parts of the state. Construction began in February 1926 and was completed in June 1928. At that time, the bridge was the widest roadway in the state. From 1928 until 1953, the Gervais Street Bridge was the only bridge over the Congaree River in Columbia. It is the earliest and most decorative of the three bridges that now cross the river.

The site historically has served bridges and ferries. Ferry service was replaced about 1791 by a toll bridge. A subsequent wooden bridge completed about 1827 was burned in 1865 in an effort to delay General W. T. Sherman's army. The bridge was rebuilt and privately owned until 1912 when it was purchased by Richland County in cooperation with Lexington County.

The 1,415-foot reinforced concrete bridge was constructed by Hardaway Contracting Company of Columbus, Georgia. It cost \$597,167 to construct. The bridge was designed by Joseph W. Barnwell of Charleston, and a bridge engineer for the State Highway Department. Above the flanking balustrades on the bridge are cast iron light fixtures. The decorative fixtures have the letter C and a palmetto on the bases, a vine pattern on the eight-sided post, and an acanthus leaf design on the necking. The bridge was added to the National Register on November 25, 1980.

(Information provided by the National Register nomination available at: www.nationalregister.sc.gov/richland/S10817740059/index.htm)

