
NAME: Smith Covered Bridge
LOCATION: County Road 300 N. at Big Flatrock River, Rushville Vicinity
OWNER: Rush County Commissioners
ADDRESS: Rush County Courthouse, Rushville, Indiana 46173

DESCRIPTION:

The Smith Covered Bridge (see photo #3), which crosses the Big Flatrock Creek on the west edge of Rushville, Indiana, is a single span bridge of wood timber construction protected by a gable-roofed enclosure. This bridge was erected in 1877 by A. M. Kennedy and his son, Emmett, and uses a Burr arch truss system supported at either end by cut stone abutments. The bridge truss is 124 feet in length; the enclosure is 16 feet longer in order to provide an additional eight feet of protective overhang at either end. The bridge deck is 15.3 feet wide; vertical clearance from the deck is 12.5 feet. The portals have a rounded-arch configuration. Flanking the portals are pilaster corner boards which serve as the impost points for the portal arches. Vertical wood siding is used in the gable areas above the portals; horizontal shiplap siding covers the sides. No other decorative elements are employed on this structure. This bridge remains in good condition, with only minor deterioration of the arch timbers at their bearing points.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Smith Bridge is significant as an example of 19th century engineering techniques, as it is a wood timber Burr arch truss bridge with a protective frame enclosure. The second oldest of the six covered bridges remaining in the county, this structure was erected by Archibald and Emmett Kennedy in 1877. Construction of this bridge marked the end of a two year business slump for the Kennedys, for after building at least one bridge each year from 1870 to 1874, they had failed to win any contracts in 1875 and 1876. The building of the Smith Bridge reversed this trend, and marked the beginning of the Kennedys' busiest decade. From 1877 to 1888 they won one or more contracts each year, and during this time span ultimately constructed 40 bridges.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage: Less than one acre

Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

Quadrangle Name: Mays, Indiana

UTM References:

1 6 / 6 3 6 4 6 0 / 4 3 9 0 5 0 0
Zone Easting Northing

Boundary Description:

The boundary description includes the bridge, its abutments and 10 feet of the roadway at either end.