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NAME: Norris Ford Covered Bridge  
LOCATION: County Road 150 North at Big Flatrock River, Rushville Vicinity  
OWNER: Rush County Commissioners  
ADDRESS: Rush County Courthouse, Rushville, Indiana 46173

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DESCRIPTION:

The Norris Ford Bridge (see photo #8), which crosses the Big Flatrock Creek northeast of Rushville, Indiana, is a single span structure of wood timber construction with a gable roofed protective enclosure. Erected in 1916 by Emmett Kennedy and his sons, Karl and Charles, this bridge uses a Burr arch truss system and rests on cut stone abutments. The bridge truss is 154 feet in length; the enclosure is 16 feet longer so as to provide an additional eight feet of protective overhang at either end. The deck width is 15 feet, and the vertical clearance above the deck is 13.5 feet. The portals have a rounded arch configuration. Flanking the portals are pilastered corner boards which serve as imposts for the portal arches. Intricate scrollwork is applied to the siding in the spandrel areas immediately above the corner boards. Vertical siding is used in the gable areas above the portals; horizontal shiplap siding is employed on the north and south sides. Wide, plain frieze boards appear below the gables and carry the ornate cornice brackets used in pairs. This bridge is in good condition, structurally, but requires some siding repairs.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Norris Ford Bridge was the second to last bridge constructed by the Kennedy family. This structure was actually built in 1916, but the techniques employed were exactly the same as those that they had built 40 years earlier. The Burr arch truss system which was employed was, at that time, already over 100 years old, and the Italianate-style detailing on the portal facades was identical to that found on Kennedy bridges of the 1870's. Steel truss bridges were already common by the time this bridge was erected, and it must have seemed anachronistic even as it was under construction. This bridge is now the only 20th century Kennedy bridge extant, and demonstrates the consistency of the firm throughout its productive life. It is the only bridge in the county that was built when Karl and Charles Kennedy were with the firm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Acreage: Less than one acre

Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

Quadrangle Name: Mays, Indiana

UTM References:

1 6 / 6 3 5 9 0 0 / 4 3 8 8 0 6 0  
Zone Easting Northing

Boundary Description;

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