
NAME: Offutt Covered Bridge
LOCATION: County Road 550 West at Little Blue River, Rushville Vicinity
OWNER: Rush County Commissioners
ADDRESS: Rush County Courthouse, Rushville, Indiana 46173

DESCRIPTION:

The Offutt Bridge (see photo #4), which crosses the Little Blue River northwest of Rushville, Indiana, is a single span structure of wood timber construction protected by a gable roofed enclosure. Erected in 1884 by brothers Emmett and Charles Kennedy, the bridge uses a Burr arch truss system and is supported at either end by cut stone abutments. The bridge truss is 85 feet in length; the enclosure is 16 feet longer so as to provide an additional eight feet of protective overhang at either end. The bridge deck is 16.1 feet wide, and the vertical clearance above 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. 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, with ornate cornice brackets used in pairs. This is probably the best-preserved bridge in the county, needing only very minor repairs to the enclosure.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Offutt Bridge was erected in 1884 by Emmett and Charles Kennedy; Archibald Kennedy had, by this time, begun his political career and had turned the business over to his sons. The bridge is significant as a premier example of the Kennedys' style, employing the Burr arch truss and featuring rounded arch portals, pilastered cornerboards, scrollwork, a plain frieze, and ornate cornice brackets used in pairs. The period from 1881 to 1884 marked the peak of the Kennedys' bridge-building efforts, with a total of 23 bridges constructed during this time span. Ten of these 23 were in Rush County; this is the sole survivor of this peak period in the county.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage: Less than one acre

Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

UTM References:

Quadrangle Name: Carthage, Indiana

16 / 625300 / 4390840
Zone Easting Northing

Boundary Description:

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