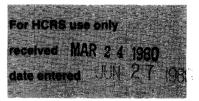
#### United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

#### National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



not for publication

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code 073

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms* Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic LAWRENCE COUNTY COVERED BRIDGES THEMATIC RESOURCES

and/or common

### 2. Location

street & number

city, town

state

\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

42

inity of congressional district

Lawrence

county

Pennsylvania

# **3. Classification**

				· · · ·
Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
district	public	occupied	agriculture	museum
building(s)	private	unoccupied	commercial	park
structure	both	work in progress	educational	private residence
site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	Accessible	entertainment	religious
object	in process	yes: restricted	government	scientific
	being considered	yes: unrestricted	industrial	transportation
	-	no	military	other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Lawrence County, Lawrence County Commissioners

code

street & number Court Street, Lawrence County Courthouse

city, town New Castlevi		_ vicinity of		state	Pennsylvania	1610	
5. L	ocation of	Legal De	scripti	on			
courthous	se, registry of deeds, etc	. Lawrend	e County	Courthouse		·	
street & n	umber Court S	Street					
<u>city, town</u>	New Castle				state	Pennsylvania	
6. R	epresenta	tion in Ex	isting	Surveys			
	ennsylvania In f Historic Plac		has this pr	operty been detern	nined e	legible? yes	no
date				federal	<u> </u>	ite county	local
depositor	y for survey records	Pennsylvani	La Histori	ical & Museu	um Co	mmission	
city, town	Harrisburg				state	Pennsylvania	

### 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
excellent	deteriorated	unaltered	original s	ite
<u>X</u> good	sats ruins	$\underline{X}$ altered	moved	date
fair	unexposed			

#### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Lawrence County has only two covered bridges remaining today. Both of these structures are located in the eastern part of the county.

The Bank's Bridge crosses Neshannock Creek in Wilmington Township northeast of New Castle. This bridge was built in 1889 and is the most recent of the two Lawrence County covered bridges. It uses the Burr arch trussing system and has interior portal walls similar to Bucks County covered bridges.

The McConnell's Mill bridge is located in Slippery Rock Township and crosses Slippery Rock Creek. Built in 1874 this bridge uses the Howe truss.

				• · · ·
<u>Name &amp; Number</u> '	· · · ·	<u>Year</u>	Truss	Length
McConnell's Mill Bank's	36-37-01 36-37-02	1874 1889	Howe Burr	96.5' 121'

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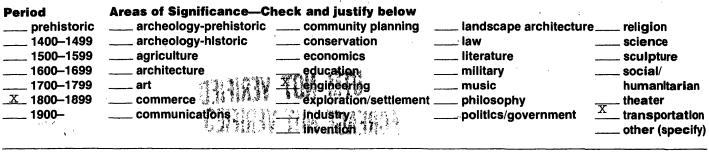
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#### 8. Significance



Specific dates.

Builder/Architect

#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bank's and McConnell's Mill covered bridges are the sole representatives of a period of American bridge building remaining in Lawrence County. The northwestern section of Pennsylvania during the 19th century was a large producer of lumber but the bridge technology in this area went from primitive log crossings to iron spans and skipped the covered bridge stage most common in the rest of Pennsylvania. This upper Ohio River watershed area even during the height to the covered bridge period probably had no more than 15 or 20 of these wooden spans.

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The few covered bridges that were built were notable, however, in the experimental use of the less common truss types. At Irvine, Warren County over the Brokenstraw Creek the little used Long truss developed by Colonel Stephen H. Long was used. The Kidd's Mill Bridge, Mercer County uses the little known Smith truss developed by Robert J. Smith of Ohio. This bridge is fortunately still standing. Indiana County has only 4 covered bridges remaining 3 Town truss and 1 Howe truss bridge.

Lawrence County probably had not more than a handful of covered bridges. The Breakneck bridge crossed the Slippery Rock Creek just south of the McConnell's Mill bridge. A double bridge known as the Black Bridge was once located at New Castle. The only remaining bridges are the Bank's and McConnell's Mill.

The Bank's bridge is a typical Pennsylvania style Burr arch bridge and has interior portal walls similar to the covered bridges of Bucks County.

The McConnell's Mill bridge is another of the less commonly used trussing systems. Built in 1874, the McConnell's Mill bridge used the Howe truss developed and patented by William Howe in 1840. Only four bridges using the Howe truss exist in Pennsylvania today.

<u>Name &amp; Number</u>			<u>Year</u>	Length
McConnell's Mill, Lawrence Co.	36-37-01	:	1874	96.5'
Kintersburg, Indiana Co.	36-32-05		1877	62'
Shade Gap, Huntingdon Co.	36-31-01		1889	65'4"
Thomas Mill, Philadelphia Co.	36-51-01		1855	78'

The 2 remaining Lawrence County covered bridges are rare survivals of the use of wooden truss technology in an area where the wooden truss was a rare and little used bridge building technique.

FHR-8-300A (11/78) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Lawrence County Covered Bridge Lawrence County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

DATE ENTERED

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The covered bridge is an important and significant historic structure

in the Commonwealth of Pa. Not only does Pa. have the most extant covered bridges today, it probably had the most during the height of the covered bridge period 1830 to 1875. Estimates have been made that Pa. once had at least 1500 covered bridges. (Allen, 1959: 51). Not only is the sheer number important but Pa. had the first known U.S. covered bridge, as well as the prototypes for most of the major truss types.

The first US covered bridge was located in Philadelphia over the Schuylkill, built in 1800 by Timothy Palmer, a master carpenter from Newburyport, Massachusetts. From the completion of this first bridge, the age of the covered bridge was upon Pa. Not only was the truss types of Burr and others first tried out in Pa. but the covered bridge spread as the local carpenter adapted it to the local problem of crossing the numerous small streams and creeks throughout Pa. The covered bridge is also important in the history of bridge building. The early stone arch bridges were really only practical on smaller streams and then in areas with an abundance of good building stone. The peak of the stone bridge is Pa. can be seen in the Rockville Bridge over the Susquehanna River built by the Pa. Railroad and contains a quarter of a million tons of stone. The covered bridge was the transition from the stone to the cast-iron in most places.

Since the heyday of the covered bridge they have been rapidly disappearing through neglect, flood, arson and progress. Prior to the Agnes Flood of 1972, Pa. had 271 covered bridges, spread across 41 of its 67 counties. Since that time the number has been decreasing at a fast rate. Because of their importance, the state level National Register Review Committee as well as the Office of Historic Preservation have embarked on a covered bridge survey and registration project. A survey form and inquiry letter were developed and mailed to county bridge engineers, historical societies, members of the Society of Industrial Archaeologists, the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Society and numerous others. To date we have information on approx. 3/4 of the 41 counties containing covered bridges. Our results to date show that the number of covered bridges is down about a third from the 1972 . figure of 271. Just since beginning our survey, two bridges have been destroyed by arson and one by an overloaded truck. It is because of

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY NOMINATION FORM	
Lawrence County Covered Bridges Lawrence County	
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this rapid disappearance rate, as well as their significance to Pa. in the history of transportation that we intend to nominate as many as possible to the National Register of Historic Places. Because of time and the immensity of the task a thematic nomination covering the whole state is impossible. We are therefore nominating these structures on a county or two county basis. All bridges constructed after 1930 have been excluded unless the bridge has a significance of its own. Bridge construction dates and builders are not always readily available, therefore after exhasting the files of the bridge engineers, historical societies and the archives, we have been lenient with the bridges for which we could find no dates, mainly on the view that very few have been built in the last 50 years and that the registration of all of these fast disappearing resource is valuable. Moved structures have been included in our nominations for several reasons; firstly in all cases if these structures had not been moved they would have been destroyed, secondly they still retain their significance as examples of trussing types and while they have lost their location they still retain an integrity of location in a rural setting. Therefore we have tended to nominate every eligible covered bridge in each county.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

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2. State Histo				ion
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5). I hereby nominate this property	y for inclusion in the Nationa ures set forth by the Heritage	e Conservation and I	<b>\</b>	
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