

PHO 354121

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 10 1976
DATE ENTERED	SEP 27 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Nr
** Johnson Creek Covered Bridge

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

N of Mt Olivet on Ky 1029
Ky. 1029, 1 3/4 mile n.e. of Ky. 165 across Johnson Creek

CITY, TOWN

Alhambra

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

07

STATE

Kentucky

CODE

021

COUNTY

Robertson

CODE

201

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

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ENTERTAINMENT

__RELIGIOUS

__OBJECT

__IN PROCESS

__YES: RESTRICTED

__GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__NO

__MILITARY

OTHER: Unused

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Robertson County

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Robertson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Mt. Olivet

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE

1971

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Johnson Creek Covered Bridge in Robertson County can be reached by Kentucky Route 1029, 1 3/4 miles northeast of Ky. Route 165. With two spans it crosses Johnson Creek over an old buffalo trace, near Blue Licks Battlefield.

The bridge was constructed in 1874 by Jacob N. Bower and is of the Smith truss design. Around 1912, Jacob Bower's son Louis added an arch on each side to support the increased traffic using the bridge. The bridge is 114 feet in floor length and 16 feet wide, according to measurements by Louis S. Bower, grandson of Jacob Bower and a local covered bridge builder. At present it is closed to vehicular traffic and is in extremely poor repair.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1874

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown ?

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Johnson Creek Covered Bridge, constructed in 1874, is located 4.0 miles north of Blue Licks Battlefield State Park in Robertson County.

The bridge is important as being the only known example of Robert J. Smith's truss system in Kentucky and the only covered bridge extant known to have been built by Jacob N. Bower (1819-1906). Bower came to Kentucky from Virginia and is said to have constructed as well as repaired bridges in many states surrounding Kentucky, such as in Ohio and Indiana. His son and grandson, both named Louis, continued the tradition as builders of covered bridges.

The Johnson Creek bridge served heavy traffic in the early days of its construction by connecting old Route #68 with Mt. Olivet, county seat of Robertson County.

Arsonists have attempted to destroy the bridge at least once by fire and inadequate maintenance has left it in its present deteriorated condition. Action without delay will be necessary if Robertson County is to keep its only covered bridge.

At one time Kentucky had hundreds of covered bridges spanning her rivers. Just prior to World War II, sixty-five were still standing. By 1952, the numbers had shrunk to thirty-nine. Now only sixteen remain. These sixteen, which represent a variety of structural types, are concentrated in the central and northeast sections of the state in the small communities or rural areas of the state.

Many reasons have been offered to explain the construction of covered bridges in Kentucky during the 19th century. The road across the bridges were kept dry and free of snow in winter. Most important, however, was the protection the covering over the bridges provided against the deterioration of the wood. It permitted the timbered trusses and braces to season properly and kept water out of the joints. The life of the bridge was, therefore, significantly prolonged, averaging generally seven to eight times that of one left uncovered.

Many of the covered bridges owe their present survival to modern spans constructed nearby that relieve the covered bridges of heavy traffic. Six are now closed to vehicular traffic although, like the others, they are visited by large numbers of tourists. All but one are publicly owned. Few are well maintained and most are in need of immediate repair or restoration if their preservation is to be secured.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Allen, Richard S. Covered Bridges of the South, New York: Bonanza Books, 1970, p.47.
 Bower, Louis Stockton. Interview, April 22, 1976.
 Brandenburg, Phyllis and David. Kentucky's Covered Bridges. Cincinnati: Kentucky
 Writer's Guild, Inc., 1968.
 Department of Transportation reports.
 Kentucky Covered Bridge Association. Timbered Tunnel Talk, June 1972.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 acres

Longitude: 83° 58' 37.19"

Latitude: 38° 28' 51.5"

UTM REFERENCES

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John M. Johnson/Historian

GM

ORGANIZATION

Kentucky Heritage Commission

DATE

June 9, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

104 Bridge Street

TELEPHONE

(502) 564-3741

CITY OR TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Eldred W. Yelton

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

5/5/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Charles A. ...

DATE

9/29/76

ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

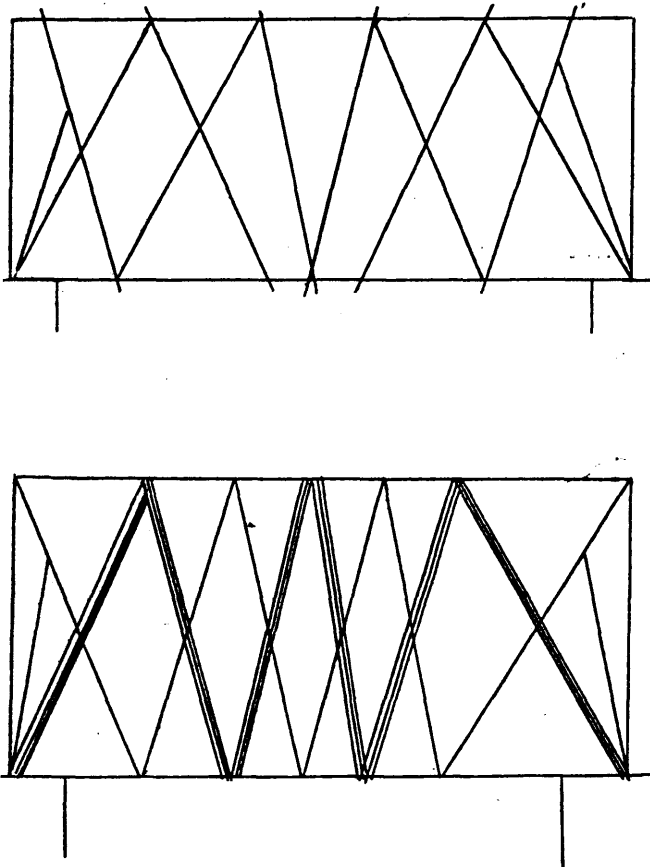
ATTEST:

Charles A. ...

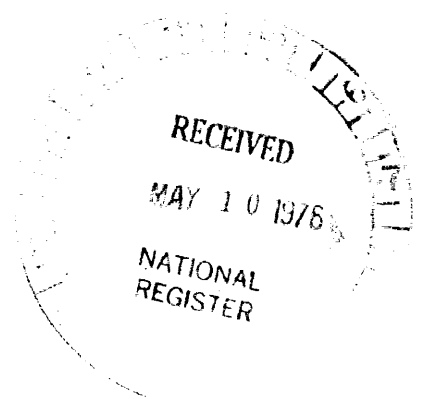
DATE

9/17/76

ACTING KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



15. **THE SMITH TRUSS.** The Smith Truss is a most interesting form of light but strong construction. It was designed by Robert J. Smith of Ohio, a successful inventor, builder, contractor, and promoter, who often provided prefabricated structures built at his mill in Tiptecanoe City, which he later moved to Toledo. He patented his first truss in 1867 and a second in 1869, and he later developed - but did not patent - reinforced (type 3) and further improved (type 4) versions. The 1867 type was probably never used. There are 27 covered bridges of the three other designs located in Ohio, Indiana, and (one each) Mercer County, Pa., and Santa Cruz, Calif. Type 2 is built of single timber diagonals with counterbraces set at 60 degrees and bolted to the upper and lower chords. The intersecting braces, set at 45 degrees, are arranged with ends against the counterbraces. The center panel has an open V. The end diagonals are braced and the roof framing is specially designed for rigidity. The reinforced type 3 is similiar to type 2 except that two braces have been added to the open-V center panel. The improved type 4 is of substantially different design and was not used till 1875. It consists of double diagonals the full length of the bridge, with a second set of single diagonals intersecting the first. All are set at 60 degrees, and the end diagonals are braced.



Johnson Creek Covered Bridge
Alhambra, Robertson County, Ky.
Kentucky Covered Bridge Association
June 1972, Photo 3, Diagram and
description of Smith truss.

SEP 11 1972

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER