

PH 000847

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kentucky  
 COUNTY: Franklin  
 FOR NPS USE ONLY  
 ENTRY DATE: SEP 6 1974

1. NAME

COMMON: Switzer Covered Bridge  
 AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

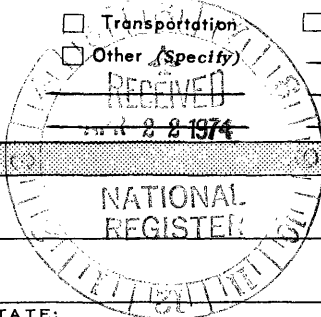
STREET AND NUMBER: Off Rocky Branch Road (Ky. 1262)  
 CITY OR TOWN: Switzer CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 06  
 STATE: Kentucky CODE: 21 COUNTY: Franklin CODE: 073

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		



4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Franklin County Fiscal Court  
 STREET AND NUMBER: St. Clair Street  
 CITY OR TOWN: Frankfort STATE: Kentucky CODE: 21

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Unknown  
 STREET AND NUMBER:  
 CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE: 21

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky  
 DATE OF SURVEY: 1971  Federal  State  County  Local  
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Kentucky Heritage Commission  
 STREET AND NUMBER: 401 Wapping Street  
 CITY OR TOWN: Frankfort STATE: Kentucky CODE: 21

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: COUNTY: ENTRY NUMBER: DATE: FOR NPS USE ONLY

SEP 6 1974

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent   
  Good   
  Fair   
  Deteriorated   
  Ruins   
  Unexposed

---

(Check One)

Altered   
  Unaltered

---

(Check One)

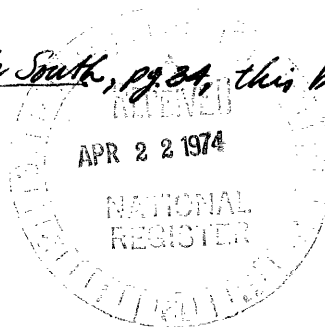
Moved   
  Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Switzer Covered Bridge, constructed around 1855, spans the North Elkhorn Creek near the town of Switzer in Franklin County. Resting on sturdy stone supports, the bridge is sixty feet in length and eleven feet in width. The exterior side walls are solid with the exception of a door placed midway along the length. Over the years these vertical side boards had been knocked out by people who found the bridge a convenient place from which to fish. It was hoped that by installing the door further similar damage would be prevented. The sides of the bridge terminate approximately two feet from the roof, exposing the interior wooden supports.

The vertical sides of the entrances slant outward from the bottom to the top. The entrance overhead is characterized by sawtooth edging.

*According to Allen's Covered Bridges in the South, pg. 84, this bridge is 126' long Howe Truss.*



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Switzer Covered Bridge, built by contractor George Hockensmith around 1855, is one of seventeen bridges still standing in the state of Kentucky. It is the only covered span remaining in Franklin County.

This remnant of days past once was extremely useful. The roadway was kept dry and, in the winter, free of snow. Most important, however, was the protection the covering over the bridge offered 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.

Although certainly utilitarian, the covered bridge was not without a romantic past. Within the walls are held memories of midnight rides and stolen kisses. Posters found pasted on the sides of the Switzer bridge advertising Gibson Girl shows, circuses, sewing machines, and corsets conjure up other pleasant recollections and images of days gone by.

Switzer citizens value this relic of a past century and were responsible for preventing the bridge's destruction in 1953 when the State Highway Department wanted to replace it with a new bridge. The department was persuaded to alter their plans and constructed the new span alongside the covered bridge. On the completion of the new bridge in 1954, the Switzer Covered Bridge was closed to automobile traffic.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Vance, Doug. "Switzer Bridge, Groups Optimistic About Saving It." State Journal, May 10, 1973.

Brandenburg, Phyllis and David. Kentucky's Covered Bridges: Vanishing Kentucky Scenes. Cincinnati: Harvest Press, 1968.

Kentucky Covered Bridge Association. "Fact Summary Sheet."

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

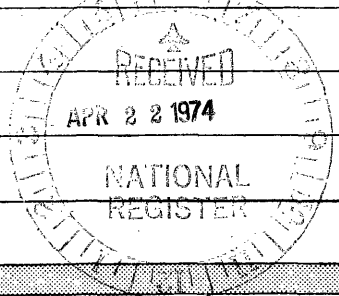
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		°	'	"
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "		38	15	14
SW	° ' "	° ' "		84	45	8

UTM  
167676670  
4225170  
03

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Gloria Mills, Historian

ORGANIZATION: Kentucky Heritage Commission DATE: 03-25-74

STREET AND NUMBER: 401 Wapping Street

CITY OR TOWN: Frankfort STATE: Kentucky CODE: 21

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Mrs Eldred W Meeter

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date April 18, 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

A. B. Swartz  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 9/6/74

ATTEST:

Charles D. King  
Keeper of The National Register

Date 7.6.74

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAY 10 1976

DATE ENTERED

Switzer Covered Bridge  
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

---

The Switzer Covered Bridge in Franklin County, Kentucky, is 120 feet in length  
(Allen, p. 47).

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
MAY 10 1976
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

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

Switzer Covered Bridge  
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

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.