
NAME: Forsythe Covered Bridge
LOCATION: County Road 650 South at Big Flatrock River, Rushville Vicinity
OWNER: Rush County Commissioners
ADDRESS: Rush County Courthouse, Rushville, Indiana 46173

DESCRIPTION:

The Forsythe Covered Bridge (see photo #7), which crosses the Big Flatrock River southwest of Rushville, is a single span bridge of wood timber construction protected by a gable roofed enclosure. This bridge was erected in 1888 by Emmett Kennedy, and uses a Burr arch truss system supported at either end by cut stone abutments. The bridge truss is 186 feet in length, making it the longest single span structure the Kennedy firm ever erected. The protective enclosure is 12 feet longer in order to provide an additional six feet of protective overhang at either end. The bridge deck is 16.1 feet wide; vertical clearance above the deck is 13.8 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. Vertical wood siding is used in the gable areas above the portals; horizontal shiplap siding covers the north and south sides. Intricate scrollwork is applied to the siding in the spandrel areas immediately above the corner boards. Wide, plain frieze boards appear below the gables and feature ornate cornice brackets used in pairs. This bridge is in fair condition with deterioration of the west end of the south arch causing some settling to occur. Repairs are being planned by the County Commissioners. ✓

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Forsythe Bridge derives its name from Asa Forsythe, who operated a gristmill in the area from 1870 to 1884. The Forsythe Bridge is thought to be the longest single span bridge ever attempted by the Kennedy firm, and at 186 feet is more than twice as long as the Offutt Bridge. The portal facades feature typical Kennedy detailing, including scroll sawn trim and paired cornice brackets. This was the only bridge erected by the Kennedy firm in 1888, as iron bridges were proving to be strong competition for the Kennedys and others in their trade. Only four more bridges would be constructed by the Kennedy family before this tradition came to an end.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Acreage: Less than one acre

Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

Quadrangle Name: Manilla, Indiana

UTM References:

1 6 / 6 2 6 3 2 0 / 4 3 7 5 0 0 0
Zone Easting Northing

Boundary Description:

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