

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0684007

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED SEP 1978  
DATE ENTERED DEC 22 1978

**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

*Thematic Resource*  
Parke County Covered Bridges Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

*Various locations in county*  
Various Points within Parke County

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana

CODE

018

COUNTY

Parke

CODE

121

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

*Thematic Group*

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER: not in use

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple Ownership - See Continuation Sheet

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

Parke County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Indiana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Survey

DATE

1972

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Department of Natural Resources

CITY, TOWN

Indianapolis

STATE

Indiana

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1. Parke County Commissioners (County owned); Courthouse; Rockville, Ind., 47872  
  
The following covered bridges, as identified by number, are the property of Parke County and under the jurisdiction of the Parke County Commissioners  
  
Numbers 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, and 39.
2. Parke County Park Board (County owned); Courthouse; Rockville, Ind. 47872  
  
The following covered bridges are county owned property under the jurisdiction of the Parke County Park Board:  
  
Numbers 8, 16, 21, and 26.
3. Indiana Department of Natural Resources; Turkey Run State Park; Marshall, Indiana 47859.  
  
Bridge No. 37 is cared for by Turkey Run State Park
4. Parke County Golf Course, Inc.; U.S. 41 North; Rockville, Ind. 47872  
  
Bridge No 13, located on the golf course, is county owned and under the jurisdiction of the Parke County Golf Course, Inc.
5. Joe Woody (privately owned); Tangier Road; Bloomingdale, Ind. 47832  
  
Bridge No. 27 is located on land owned by the Joe Woody family.
6. Lee Alan Bryant Health Care Facility, Inc., R.R. 1; Rockville, Ind. 37872  
  
Bridge No. 1 is located on land owned by the Lee Alan Bryant Health Care Facility, Inc., and is under their care.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Parke County Covered Bridge Historic District is a thematic district consisting of 35 covered bridges located in Parke County, Indiana. The existing structures were constructed between 1856 and 1920. The bridges range in length from the J. H. Russell Bridge (#27) measuring forty-two feet to West Union Bridge (#26) which is 315 feet long.

Twenty-four structures remain in use in the county road system. Five bridges remain on their original sites but have been bypassed by modern structures. Structures moved from their original locations within Parke County include Jessup Bridge (#2), Portland Mills Bridge (#4), Catlin Bridge (#13), and J. H. Russell Bridge (#27). The Jessup and Portland Mills Bridges were relocated in 1970 and 1961 in the place of other covered bridges which had collapsed or had been destroyed by fire. The Catlin structure was moved in 1961 and now crosses a stream in a golf course. The J. H. Russell Bridge was moved in 1970 and now rests in a field on private property.

The Jessup, Portland Mills, and Catlin structures were moved when new bridges were erected on their original sites. Failure to relocate the bridges would have meant demolition of those structures. The Russell Bridge was originally located on the land of J. H. Russell. In 1970 the bridge was in a weakened condition and is now for sale. The Parke County, Inc., an organization formed to preserve the Counties bridges has hopes of acquiring the Russell Bridge and moving it to a suitable locati

Most of the bridges are of Burr Arch Construction. Jackson Bridge (#58) has a Double Burr Arch. Phillips Bridge (#22) preserves the Multiple King Post design while the J. H. Russell (#27) is of Queen Post design.

All of the bridges have been altered by routine maintenance over the years, including repair or replacement of roofs, floors, and siding. All have been painted at various times. Known major alterations are noted below.

The following is a list of surviving covered bridges within the district. The numbering system was adopted in the 1950's; bridges which have been destroyed in the last twenty years account for the gaps in the numbers:

#1 State Sanitorium Bridge - 1 span, 154' in length, built in 1913 by J. A. Britton. Crosses Little Raccoon Creek. Burr Arch construction. On private property. A metal roof was installed in 1975.

#2 Jessup Bridge - This is the Jessup Covered Bridge located on the Adams Covered Bridge site. The original Adams Bridge fell in, October 31, 1969. In early 1970 the Jessup Covered Bridge was moved to its present location. It is 1 span, 154' length, built in 1910 by J. P. Van Fossen Construction. Crosses Little Raccoon. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Floor beams and flooring replaced in 1977.

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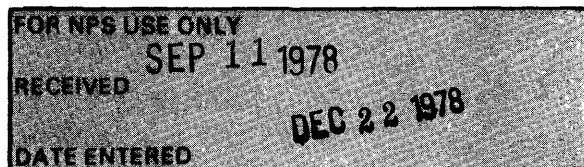
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- #4 Portland Mills Bridge - 1 span, 130' in length. Built in 1856 by Henry Wolf. Crosses Little Raccoon. Burr Arch construction. Relocated at present site in 1961 to replace Dooley Station Bridge, which was destroyed by fire in 1960. In county road system.
- #5 Mansfield Bridge - 2 spans, 247' in length, built in 1867 by J. J. Daniels. Crosses Big Raccoon Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system.
- #6 Big Rocky Fork Bridge - 1 span, 72' in length, built in 1900 by J. J. Daniels. Crosses Big Rocky Fork. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Floor beam and flooring replaced in 1977.
- #7 Conley's Ford Bridge - 1 span, 192' in length, built in 1907 by J. P. Van Fossen. Crosses Big Raccoon. Burr Arch construction. In county road system.
- #8 Bridgeton Bridge - 2 spans, 245' in length, built in 1868 by J. J. Daniels. Crosses Little Raccoon. Burr Arch construction. Retired from service in 1967. In county park system.
- #9 Jeffries Ford Bridge - 2 spans, 200' in length, built in 1915 by J. A. Britton. Crosses Little Raccoon. Burr Arch construction. In county road system.
- #10 Neet Bridge - 1 span, 143' in length, built in 1904 by J. J. Daniels. Crosses Little Raccoon. Burr Arch construction. In county road system.
- #11 McAllister Bridge - 1 span, 122' in length, built in 1914 by J. A. Britton and Son. Crosses Little Raccoon. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Floor beams and flooring repaired in 1977.
- #12 Crooks Bridge - 1 span, 132' in length, built in 1856 by Gen. Arthur Patterson. Crosses Little Raccoon. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Floor beams and flooring repaired in 1977.
- #13 Catlin Bridge - 1 span, 54' in length, built in 1907 by C. McDaniel. Presently located on golf course north of Rockville. Original site was across Sunderland Creek at Catlin. Burr Arch construction. It was moved in 1961 to the Parke County Golf Course. New wood shingle roof installed in 1976.
- #14 Nevins Bridge - 1 span, 155' in length, built in 1920 by J. A. Britton and Son. Crosses Little Raccoon Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Floor beams and flooring replaced in 1977.

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- #16 Thorpe Ford Bridge - 1 span, 163' in length, built in 1912 by J. A. Britton. Crosses Big Raccoon. Burr Arch construction. Retired from service and placed in county park system September, 1963.
- #18 Roseville Bridge - 2 spans, 263' in length. Built in 1910 by J. P. Van Fossen. Crosses Big Raccoon. Burr Arch construction. First bridge at this site was built by J. J. Daniels. In county road system. Abutment, floor, and beams repaired in 1975.
- #19 Harry Evans Bridge - 1 span, 65' in length, built in 1908 by J. A. Britton. Crosses Rock Run Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system.
- #20 Zacke Cox Bridge - 1 span, 54' in length, built in 1908 by J. A. Britton. Burr Arch construction. Crosses Rock Run Creek. In county road system.
- #21 Mecca Bridge - 1 span, 150' in length, built in 1873 by J. J. Daniels. Burr Arch construction. Crosses Big Raccoon Creek. Retired from service in 1965. Damaged beams replaced in 1977.
- #22 Phillips Bridge - 1 span, 43' in length, built in 1909 by J. A. Britton. Crosses Big Pond Creek. Multiple King Post construction. In county road system. Replacement of damaged floor beams and overhead "X" braces in 1977.
- #23 Sim Smith Bridge - 1 span, 84' in length, built in 1883 by J. A. Britton. Crosses Leatherwood Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Floor beams and flooring replaced in 1977.
- #24 Melcher Bridge - 1 span, 83' in length, built in 1896 by J. J. Daniels. Crosses Leatherwood Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Floor beams and flooring repaired in 1977.
- #25 Leatherwood Station Bridge - 1 span, 72' in length, built in 1899 by J. A. Britton. Crosses Leatherwood Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system.
- #26 West Union Bridge - 2 spans, 315' in length, built in 1876 by J. J. Daniels. Crosses Sugar Creek. Burr Arch construction. Longest 2-span bridge in Parke County. Retired from service 1964. In county park system. New metal roof installed in 1977; structural beams repaired in 1976.

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- #27) J. H. Russell Bridge - 1 span, 42' in length, built in 1897 by P. Weaver. Queen Post construction. Located on private property. Taken out of service in 1970.
- #28 Jackson Bridge - 1 span, 207' in length, built in 1861 by J. J. Daniels. Crosses Sugar Creek. Double Burr Arch construction. This is the longest single-span bridge in Parke County. In county road system. Repair of floor system runners, floor boards, swag bracing, and floor beams and repair of abutments in 1977.
- #29 Marshall Bridge - 1 span, 56' in length, built in 1917 by J. A. Britton. Crosses Rush Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Floor beams and flooring repaired in 1977.
- \* #30 Rush Creek Bridge - 1 span, 77' in length, built in 1904 by Wm. Hendricks. Crosses Rush Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Floor beams and flooring repaired in 1977.
- #31 Mill Creek Bridge - 1 span, 92' in length, built in 1907 by D. M. Brown. Crosses Mill Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Floor beams and flooring repaired in 1977.
- #32 Bowsher Ford Bridge - 1 span, 72' in length, built in 1915 by Eugene Britton. Crosses Mill Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Floor beams and flooring repaired in 1977.
- #33 Coal Creek Bridge - 1 span, 170' in length, built in 1869 by J. J. Daniels. Crosses Coal Creek at Lodi. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Flooring repaired and floor beams replaced in 1977.
- #35 Wilkins Mill Bridge - 1 span, 102' in length, built in 1906 by Wm. Hendricks. Crosses Sugar Mill Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Flooring repaired and floor beams replaced in 1977.
- #36 Cox Ford Bridge - 1 span, 176' in length, built in 1913 by J. A. Britton. Crosses Sugar Creek. Burr Arch construction. In county road system. Flooring repaired and floor beams replaced in 1977.

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- #37 Narrows Bridge - 1 span, 121' in length, built in 1882 by J. A. Britton. Crosses Sugar Creek at Turkey Run State Park. Burr Arch construction. Retired from service 1957. It is a part of the State Park. A brown asphalt shingle roof has been installed.
- #38 Beeson Bridge - 1 span, 55' in length, built in 1906 by Frankfort Construction. Crosses Roaring Creek. In county road system. Burr Arch construction.
- #39 Billie Creek Bridge - 1 span, 62' in length, built in 1895 by J. J. Daniels. Crosses Williams Creek. Burr Arch construction. Located within Billie Creek Village. In county road system.

# 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 checked="" 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 1856-1920

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Parke County Covered Bridge Historic District is nationally significant for its large number of covered bridges. Between 1847 and 1920, 58 known covered bridges were constructed in Parke County. Of the original 58, 35 bridges built between 1856 and 1920 have survived; Parke County is reputed to have more covered bridges than any other county in the Nation.

Covered bridges were developed to answer the needs of spanning larger streams and rivers with structures which would be lasting without incurring the expenses involved in stone structures. The enclosed bridge protected the principle features of the structure from natural elements; thus, a maintained covered bridge could last indefinitely while open wooden structures might last only ten to twenty years.

A number of basic designs were used on covered bridges in Indiana. Three represented in the Parke County District are the Queen Post, Multiple King Post Truss, and the Burr Arch Truss. The Queen Post design was used in shorter spans and had two vertical posts connected by upper and lower cords. Two Queen Post bridges were erected in Parke County; only the J. H. Russell structure (#27) has survived. Only five known Queen Post structures were built in Indiana; of these three have survived.

The Multiple King Post was an improvement on the King Post and Queen Post Trusses to allow for longer spans. The Multiple King Post consisted of a series of vertical posts with diagonal braces sloping away from the center. Two bridges of this design were built in Parke County; only the Phillips Bridge (#22) has survived.

The single most popular truss design used in Parke County and Indiana is the Burr Arch. Patented in 1804 by Theodore Burr, this system used wooden arches attached to the Multiple King Post design. This truss was strong enough to bridge fairly long distances. The wide use of this design in Indiana and Parke County is due to the fact that the major bridge building firms and county commissioners preferred it. The Jackson Bridge (#28) is somewhat unusual in that double arches were used on both sides of the trusses.

Although there were ten different builders of the Parke County bridges, two men were responsible for twenty four of the structures. Joseph Albert Britton and his sons constructed fourteen spans, and J. J. Daniels was responsible for ten of the surviving bridges. These two men along with the A. M. Kennedy family, and Robert W. Smith were the builders of most of Indiana's covered bridges.



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Joseph J. Daniels was born in 1826 in Marietta, Ohio. His father was an agent for Stephan Long who had developed the Long Truss. Daniels assisted his father in the 1840's and then started his own bridge business. His first effort in Parke County was a span constructed in 1851. Two years later he became the construction engineer for the new Evansville & Crawfordsville Railroad and during the next eight years built a number of railroad covered bridges. After leaving the railroad, Daniels settled in Rockville in Parke County and resumed his own bridge business. Perhaps his most outstanding work was the 1861 Jackson Bridge (#28) measuring 207 feet and consisting of double Burr Arches. This is one of the longest single span covered bridges in the Nation and is still in use in the county road system.

Daniels actively sought bridge contracts. He promoted himself and his work by soliciting letters of praise from satisfied customers. Although he was educated on the Long Truss, he usually used the Burr Arch truss; while this switch may have been due in part to royalty fees, many county commissioners preferred the Burr Arch as cheaper and stronger. Daniels anticipated the development of the iron truss bridges by using more iron pieces and metal tension rods than most other builders. In his career he constructed some 60 bridges before completing his last one in 1904 (the Neet, #10) at age 78. He died twelve years later in Rockville at age 90.

Joseph Albert Britton, the other major Parke County bridge builder, also spent most of his life in Parke County. Born in 1839 near Rockville, he learned carpentry from his father, who was recognized as a skilled craftsman. After military service in the Civil War, he read law and was admitted to the bar in Indiana and Kansas. Dissatisfied with the life of an attorney, he returned in 1871 to Rockville and took up carpentry, constructing a number of houses until completing his first bridge in 1882 (Narrows Bridge #37). Britton's bridge building lasted some forty years and employed several of his sons in the business. Britton's earlier bridges were not as good as his later ones, and he usually concentrated on shorter spans in comparison to Daniels. Britton like Daniels preferred the Burr Arch and made use of metal tension rods. Reportedly, the Brittons built forty bridges in three counties; of 23 known bridges, 17 are still standing.

Several factors account for the large number of surviving covered Bridges in Parke County. The county's topography includes many streams and rivers which made the spans necessary to tie different portions of the county together. Farmers needed the bridges to obtain supplies and transport their goods to market. The presence of Daniels and Britton in the county was a factor since both campaigned actively for jobs. The competition between the two after 1882 no doubt increased their promotional efforts. The bridges have survived because the superior workmanship reduced the need to replace the structures, despite a number of floods and normal wear. Another factor was the inability of the county government to incur the expense of replacing all of the bridges.

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In 1957 a group of Parke County citizens recognized the value of the bridges and formed an organization to preserve them. Every October since 1957, a Covered Bridge Festival has been held and now draws 400,000 people from across the Nation, generating an estimated \$1.5 million in the county's economy.

One structure, the Leatherwood Station Bridge (#25) was declared eligible for the National Register in 1977.

The Parke County Covered Bridge District is nationally significant for its concentration of 35 covered bridges in one county. The structures are reminders of engineering and transportation techniques used in the nineteenth century.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 286,080

QUADRANGLE NAME See Continuation Sheet

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The District is bounded by the legal boundary of Parke County.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Charles Felkner, Executive Secretary

ORGANIZATION

Parke County, Inc.

DATE

December 12, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

East Ohio Street

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Indiana

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

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

TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

Aug 29<sup>th</sup> 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12.22.78

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

12.21.78

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