

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED JUN 12 1979	
DATE ENTERED	AUG 3 1979

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

COVERED BRIDGES OF INDIANA COUNTY

*Thematic Resources*

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

— VICINITY OF

12

STATE

Pennsylvania

CODE

42

COUNTY

Indiana

CODE

063

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> thematic	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Indiana County c/o County Commissioners

STREET & NUMBER

Indiana County Courthouse, Philadelphia Street

CITY, TOWN

Indiana

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Indiana County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Philadelphia Street

CITY, TOWN

Indiana

STATE

Pennsylvania

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Pa. Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

February 1979

— FEDERAL  STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN

Harrisburg

STATE

Pennsylvania

# 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 Western Pennsylvania County of Indiana up until a few years ago had six covered bridges, today only four of them remain. All four are owned by the County and well maintained. Three of the four bridges have Town trussing systems the other has a Howe trussing system. Of the four, the three Town truss bridges are the shortest; 35 feet, 41 feet, and 52 feet. The Howe truss bridge is 62 feet. The bridges span feeder creeks in the Ohio Watershed area, Plum Creek and Crooked Creek. All four bridges are identical in styling with vertical siding, gable roof and open window area at roof line. The Kintersburg Bridge (Howe truss) has linear laid floor boards, the other three has width laid floor boards.

#### Bridge Inventory

Name: Trusal Covered Bridge  
(38-32-03)  
Stream: Plum Creek  
Truss Type: Town  
Year: 1870  
End Post to End Post Length: 35'  
Location: T406, Washington Township

*Willet mc*

Name: Harmon's Covered Bridge  
(38-32-04)  
Stream: Plum Creek  
Truss Type: Town  
Year: 1910  
End Post Length: 41'  
Location: T488, Washington Township

*Willet mc*

Name: Kintersburg Covered Bridge  
(38-32-05)  
Stream: Crooked Creek  
Truss Type: Howe  
Year: 1877  
End Post Length: 62'  
Location: T612, Rayne Township

*Kintersburg mc*

Name: Thomas Covered Bridge  
(38-32-06)  
Stream: Crooked Creek  
Truss type: Town  
Year: 1879  
End Post Length: 52'  
Location: T414, Armstrong Township

*Creekside mc*

# 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The use of covered bridges was an important developmental stage in the history of transportation in Pennsylvania. The necessity of crossing numerous streams and rivers in the transportation of goods and people created a need for a cheap and reliable type of bridge. The timber bridge filled this need as aptly shown by the estimated number of covered bridges Pennsylvania once had, over 1,500. These wooden spans played an important part in the transportation system of the state. Pennsylvania is fortunate in having many excellent examples of the covered bridge in existence.

As the demand for the covered bridge increased the many different types and styles of trussing systems were developed. The use of some such as the Burr arch, Kingpost and Queenpost systems became very popular in Pennsylvania. Other types, the Town, Howe, and Stringer were not as commonly used. The four covered bridges of Indiana County are examples of these rarer types and form a type of isolated colony in an area more noted for its Burr arch bridges.

Three of the Indiana bridges employ the Town type truss. This trussing system was designed and patented by Ithill Town in 1820. As of 1972 only 20 examples (including 3 in Indiana County) of this trussing type remain in Pennsylvania. (Covered Bridges)

The Howe truss is even rarer in Pennsylvania. This system was designed by William Howe, in 1840. As of 1972, only four Howe truss covered bridges remain in Pennsylvania.

The Covered Bridges of Indiana County are fine examples of a type of bridge which played an important part in the development of transportation systems in Pennsylvania. Their unusual trussing systems for Pennsylvania, make them a valuable Pennsylvania resource.

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Indiana County  
Covered Bridges of Indiana County

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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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Covered Bridges of Indiana County  
Indiana 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 exhausting 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

- Wilson, Raymond E. "Twenty Different Ways to Build a Covered Bridge." Technology Review, May 1971, p. 125-131.
- Shank, William H., Historic Bridges of Pennsylvania, Buchart-Horn, 1966. p. 3-16.
- Allen, Richard Sanders. Covered Bridges of the Middle Atlantic States. Battleboro, Vermont: Stephen Greene Press, 1959, p. 73-79.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .18

QUADRANGLE NAME Clymer and Ernest QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES See Cont. Sheet.

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Susan M. Zacher

ORGANIZATION

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

Box 1026

TELEPHONE

717-787-4363

CITY OR TOWN

Harrisburg

STATE

Pennsylvania

# 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

*Ed Weintraub*

TITLE

ED WEINTRAUB, Director  
Office of Historic Preservation

DATE

6-4-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

Aug 3, 1979

DATE

August 3, 1979