

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH 0699594

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RECEIVED

FEB 14 1978

DATE ENTERED

AUG 10 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

COVERED BRIDGES OF JUNIATA AND SNYDER COUNTIES *Thematic*

AND/OR COMMON

*Resource***2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

CODE

42

COUNTY

Juniata/Snyder

CODE

067/109

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

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

## 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  
☐ COMMERICAL  
☐ EDUCATIONAL  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT  
☐ GOVERNMENT  
☐ INDUSTRIAL  
☐ MILITARY  
☐ MUSEUM  
☐ PARK  
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☒ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ OTHER:☒ thematic**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple (See continuation Sheet)

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Juniata County Courthouse/Snyder County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Main Street / West Market Street

CITY, TOWN

Mifflintown / Middleburg

STATE

Pennsylvania

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Pennsylvania Historical &amp; Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN

Harrisburg

STATE

Pennsylvania

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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

Juniata and Snyder Counties have a total of eight covered bridges; three in Juniata, three in Snyder and two between counties. All but one of these bridges employ a Burr type truss. The North Oriental/Beaver Covered Bridge has a multiple kingpost. The Academia, Pomeroy and the Lehman's, Port Royal bridges have two spans using two burr trusses. A breakdown by number of spans, truss type and length is shown below.

<u>Number</u>	<u>Spans</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Truss</u>	<u>Year</u>
1	2 (135')	270'	Burr	1902
2	1	100'	Burr	
3	2 (54')	108'	Burr	1888
4	1	62'	MKP	
5	1	90'	Burr	
6	1	95'	Burr	c. 1870
7	1	100'	Burr	1871 or 1878
8	1	60'	Burr	1884

In appearance all the bridges are the same with vertical plank siding, open rectangular windows at eave level, gable roof and cut stone abutments.

There is high preponderance of Burr truss type bridges in these two counties as compared to Washington and Greene Counties where only one of thirty-five covered bridges is a Burr. This may be tied to the practical reason of length, where Burr type trusses are used for spans over 100 feet or related to skill of local bridge builders.

### BRIDGE INVENTORY (Juniata County)

*NW of Spruce Hill*

Name: Academia Pomeroy Covered Bridge

#38-34-01

Stream: Tuscarora Creek

Truss Type: Burr

Year: 1902

Builder: James M. Groninger

End Post to End Post Length: 270'

(Two spans of 135' each)

Road surface width: 15' 6"

Condition: Excellent

Distinguishing Features: This large covered bridge has vertical siding, open windows at the eave level, a gable roof, and stone abutments.

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Name: Dimmsville Covered Bridge #38-34-02

Stream: Cocolamus Creek

Truss Type: Burr

End Post Length: 100'

Road Surface Width: 15'

Condition: Excellent

Distinguishing Features: The Dimmsville Covered Bridge has vertical siding, rectangular windows at eave level plus a square window midway, a gable roof and cut stone abutments.

Name: Lehman's, Port Royal Covered Bridge #38-34-04

Stream: Licking Creek

Truss Type: Double Burr

Year: 1888

End Post Length: 107'

Road Surface: 15' 6"

Load: 2 Ton

Distinguishing Features: Eventhough rebuilt, this bridge retains its integraty of location as well as construction. Covered bridges of two spans are very rare in Pennsylvania today, their increased length and the demand on load capacity usually resulted in their early replacement. The Lehmans, Port Royal Covered Bridge has a double Burr arch, vertical siding, rectangular windows at eave level and a gable roof. This bridge was badly damaged during the Agnes Flood of 1972 and rebuilt using original timbers and using the same style.

Name: North Oriental/Beaver Covered Bridge #38-34-05  
38-55-05

Stream: Mahantango Creek

Truss Type: Multiple Kingpost

End Post Length: 62'

Road Surface Width: 12'6"

Condition: good

Load: 9 tons

Distinguishing Features: The North Oriental Covered Bridge has vertical siding, rectangular window openings at eave level and a gable roof.

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Name: East Oriental/Sheaffer Covered Bridge #38-34-06  
38-55-06

Stream: Mahantango Creek

Truss Type: Burr

End Post Length: 90'

Road Surface Width: 15' 6"

Load: 2 Tons

Condition: Good

Distinguishing Features: The East Oriental Covered Bridge has vertical siding, rectangular window openings at eave level and a gable roof. Currently used for storage.

Name: Dreese's or Beavertown Covered Bridge #38-55-02

Stream: Middlecreek

Truss Type: Burr

Year c. 1870

End Post Length: 95'

Road Surface Width: 14' 8"

Load: 2 Tons

Condition: Good

Distinguishing Features: This bridge has vertical siding, open windows near eaves and a gable roof.

Y Name: Klinepeter's or Gross Covered Bridge (ON NATIONAL REGISTER)  
#38-55-03

Stream: Middlecreek

Truss Type: Burr

Year: 1871 or 1878

End Post Length: 100'

Road Surface Width: 16' 4"

Condition: Good

Load: 3 Tons

Distinguishing Features: This bridge has vertical siding, open windows at eave level, a gable roof and large stone abutments.

*By [unclear] and [unclear] 5/27/79  
W. J. [unclear] (9-27-79)*

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Name: Aline or Meiserville Covered Bridge

#38-55-04

Stream: North Branch of Mahantango Creek

Truss Type: Burr

Year: 1884

End Post Length: 60'

Road Surface Width: 18'

Load: 2 Tons

Condition: Good

Distinguishing Features: The Aline or Meiserville Covered Bridge has vertical siding, open windows at eave level, a gable roof and large stone abutments.

## 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 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 covered bridge is an important element in the development of transportation in the United States. Pennsylvania at one time had covered bridges in 64 of its 67 counties. The rural counties of Juniata and Snyder were two of the 64 counties with covered bridges.

Located in the Susquehanna River Watershed area, the majority of the covered bridges in this area are of the Burr arch truss type. The longest bridge remaining is the two-span, Academia, Pomeroy Bridge in Juniata County, it is also the newest being built in 1902. The shortest of the bridges is the Aline or Meiserville Bridge in Snyder County with a length of only 60 feet. The oldest remaining bridge, for which dates are known is Dreese's or Beavertown in Snyder County.

The eight bridges nominated here are the only remaining covered bridges in Juniata and Snyder Counties. They represent a type, the covered bridge which is fast disappearing in Pennsylvania. This group of bridges offers a fine comparative example of the trussing type developed by Theodore Burr. These counties show a high preponderance of the Burr arch truss as compared with the rural Western Pennsylvania Counties of Washington and Greene, even though both Juniata and Snyder are rural counties also. The use of the Burr arch maybe tied to two main reasons. Firstly, this truss type is usually used for longer spans of 100 ft. or more. Most of these eight bridges are 100 ft. or more. Secondly, located in the Susquehanna Watershed, the builders were able to draw upon the example of Theodore Burr himself. Burr built five major covered bridges across the Susquehanna River during 1812 to 1820 period. This group of well preserved bridges are not only important examples of the Burr truss type but are important in the development of the transportation system of the local area and the 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 in 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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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.



