

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 COVERED BRIDGES OF THE DELAWARE RIVER WATERSHED *Thematic Resources*

and/or common

2. Location

street & number

not for publication

city, town

vicinity of

congressional district 10/11/15/8

Luzerne, Carbon, Northampton

state Pennsylvania

code 42

county

Lehigh & Bucks

code 079/025/09

3. Classification

077/017

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
☐ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military

☐ museum
☐ park
☐ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☒ transportation
☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multiple: See Continuation Sheet

street & number

city, town

state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Inventory
of Historic Places

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

date

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg

state Pennsylvania

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Location of Legal Description

Luzerne County Courthouse
North River Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

Carbon County Courthouse
Broadway & Susquehanna Streets
Jim Thorpe, PA 18229

Lehigh County Courthouse
Hamilton Street
Allentown, PA 18101

Northampton County Courthouse
7th & Walnut Streets
Easton, PA 18042

Bucks County Courthouse
Court Street
Doylestown, PA 18901

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	Bucks Co. #38-09-05 c.1959
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	Carbon Co. #38-13-01 c. 1970
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Delaware River watershed extends in Pennsylvania from the foothills of the Catskill Mountains at the New York - Pennsylvania border, Southward to the Pennsylvania border with Delaware. Officially the watershed includes the Delaware River, Lackawaxen River, Lehigh River and Schuylkill River. It includes the following Pennsylvania counties from north to south: Wayne, Pike, Luzerne, Monroe, Carbon, Northampton, Schuylkill, Lehigh, Berks, Bucks, Montgomery, Chester, Philadelphia and Delaware. This nomination of 23^{1/2} covered bridges involves five counties: Luzerne, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton and Bucks. The other counties are excluded from this nomination for the following reasons:

Wayne County: no historic covered bridges (one c. 1971 CB)

Pike County: no covered bridges

Monroe County: no historic covered bridges (2 bridges c. 1956)

Schuylkill County: 2 historic covered bridges listed on NR (1-3-78)

Berks County: 5 historic covered bridges - will be nominated when data from survey available

Montgomery County: no historic covered bridges (3 modern CB)

Chester County: 15 historic covered bridges, will be nominated when survey data available

Philadelphia County: 1 historic covered bridge - listed on NR - Fairmount Park (2-7-72)

Delaware County: no historic covered bridges (one 1952 CB)

After the Susquehanna River watershed the Delaware River watershed was the richest in number and types of covered bridges. Today only a third of these wooden spans remain. Of the 26 bridges described below there are:

- 1 Queenport truss bridge
- * 0 ~~1~~ Kingpost truss bridge
- 10 Burr arch truss bridges
- 13 Town truss bridge
- 1 Howe truss bridge

Their ages vary from 1832 to 1888 with the breakdown as follows:

1832 - 3 bridges	1871 - 2 bridges
1840 - 1 bridge	1872 - 1 bridge
* 1841 - 2 3 bridges	1873 - 2 bridges
1842 - 1 bridge	1874 - 2 bridges
1855 - 1 bridge	1875 - 1 bridge
1858 - 1 bridge	1882 - 2 bridges
1860 - 3 bridges	1888 - 1 bridge
1870 - 1 bridge	

* See continuation sheet received 10/2/80

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Because of the scarcity of bridges remaining, it is difficult to identify any regional characteristics except in Bucks County. The most common remaining Bucks County Bridge has the following characteristics:

Town Truss
Stone abutments (usually capped)
Gable roof
Full height vertical outer siding
Triangular or oval portal openings
Inner walls in portals

<u>Name</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>County</u>
Bittenbender	38-40-01	1888	QP	68'8"	Luzerne
Harrity (See continuation sheet received 10/2/80)	38-13-01	1841	KP	66'	Carbon
Little Gap	38-13-02	c.1860	Burr	73'	Carbon
Zimmerman*	38-54-01	c.1860	Burr	55'	Schuylkill
Rock*	38-54-02	1870	Burr	50'	Schuylkill
Bogert	38-39-01	1841	Burr	145'	Lehigh
Wehr	38-39-02	1841	Burr	117'	Lehigh
Manasses Guth	38-39-03	1882	Burr	108'	Lehigh
Rex	38-39-04	1858	Burr	150'	Lehigh
Geiger	38-39-05	1860	Burr	112'	Lehigh
Schlicher	38-39-06	1882	Burr	108'	Lehigh
Kreiderville	38-48-01	1840	Burr	100'	Northampton
Haupt's Mill	38-09-01	1872	Town	107'	Bucks
Knecht's	38-09-02	1873	Town	110'	Bucks
Van Sant	38-09-03	1875	Town	86'	Bucks
Erwinna	38-09-04	1871	Town	56'	Bucks
South Perkasio	38-09-05	1832	Town	93'	Bucks
Sheard's Mill	38-09-06	1873	Town	130'	Bucks
Mood's	38-09-07	1874	Town	120'	Bucks
Uhlerstown*	38-09-08	1832	Town	110'	Bucks
Frankenfield	38-09-09	1832	Town	110'	Bucks
Cabin Run	38-09-10	1871	Town	82'	Bucks
Loux	38-09-11	1874	Town	60'	Bucks
Pine Valley	38-09-12	1842	Town	81'	Bucks
Twining Ford	38-09-13	?	Town	150'	Bucks
Thomas Mill*	38-51-01	1855	Howe	78'	Philadelphia

(* On National Register)
Schuylkill County Bridges listed in FR as Schuylkill
County Brides Nos. 113 and 114

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/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Delaware River and its watershed area of fourteen counties once had the most and some of the earliest covered bridges in Pennsylvania. At one time the Delaware River itself was crossed by twenty-one interstate covered bridges. All but the railroad bridge at Easton were built originally by companies interested in the tolls that could be collected.

Three top covered bridge architects built across the Delaware River; the 1806 Theodore Burr, bridge between Morrisville and Trenton, second oldest covered bridge in the United States; the 1806 Timothy Palmer bridge at Easton; and the 1814 Lewis Wernwag bridge at New Hope. None of the 21 bridges remain.

The northern watershed area of Wayne, Pike, Luzerne and Monroe Counties had only a handful of covered bridges originally and only one of these, the Bittenbender bridge in Luzerne County still remains.

In the Lehigh River area the covered bridge was more abundant. Carbon County has only two remaining bridges, one of which was saved only by its removal by the Beetzville Dam project area. Lehigh has retained six of its original wooden spans but Northampton only one.

Bucks County today retains 13 of its original 35 or 37 covered bridges. The strict usage of the Town truss within the county is unusual and represents the largest number of Town truss bridges anywhere in the State.

The lower watershed area has seen the greatest disappearance of the covered bridge. Originally six wooden bridges spanned the Wissahickon Creek alone, today only the Thomas Mill bridge remains.

In an area that saw the birth and development of the covered bridge, these rare survivors are the only remaining examples of an important stage in the development of bridge technology and history.

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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.

9. Major Bibliographical References

County Bridge Records
PHMC Survey of PA Covered Bridges
Allen, Richard S. Covered Bridges of the Middle Atlantic States
Brattleboro, VT: Stephen Greene Press, 1959, p. 51-61.

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property 1.45 **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**
Quadrangle name See index **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** Quadrangle scale 1:24,000
UMT References See Continuation Sheets

A	<div>Zone</div>	<div>Easting</div>	<div>Northing</div>	B	<div>Zone</div>	<div>Easting</div>	<div>Northing</div>
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheets

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 PHMC date

street & number Box 1026 telephone

city or town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania 17120

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

ED WEINTRAUB, Director
title Office of Historic Preservation date 3/10/80

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

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration