

Part of  
**Covered Bridges of Northumberland County TR**

Available at the National Park Service website  
<http://www.nr.nps.gov/nrcover.htm>

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COVERED BRIDGES

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 5

4. RICHARDS COVERED BRIDGE  
#17 Northumberland County Bridge  
WCB# (38-49-07)

Location: T 804 off PA 487, East of Elysburg  
Stream: South Branch of Roaring Creek  
Truss Type: Multiple Kingpost and Queenpost  
Builder: Obediah S. Campbell  
Year: 1852  
End Post Length: 64'  
Clearance: 11'6"  
Road Width: 11'9"  
Load: 3 Ton

Description

This bridge is a single span covered timber truss bridge utilizing a sub-divided Howe type truss with a single queen post. The bridge has a clear span of 59'7" between the stone masonry abutments and a total length of 64'. The roadway width inside the structure is 11'9" while the structure width is 15'8". The floor consists of 3" transverse planks of varying widths. A vertical clearance of 11'6" exists between the floor and the timber frame portal. From the streambed to the lowest timber member is an actual clear of 7'11".

Significance

The bridge was built in 1852 by Obediah S. Campbell and used a sub-divided Howe truss with a queenpost added for increased capacity. The queenpost construction was commonly used for relatively short spans and was evidently used in conjunction with the sub divided Howe truss as a replacement for the steel tension bars incorporated into the original Howe truss design and patented in 1840 by William Howe, the Massachusetts Architect who patented it. It appears that the builder varied the truss to suit his individual preference as was commonly done with many of the patented trusses of this time.

Condition: Good; structurally sound considering age of wood and floods of the creek.

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46  
12  
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

COVERED BRIDGES OF NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Pennsylvania

CODE  
42

COUNTY  
Northumberland

CODE  
097

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Multiple

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

USE THIS COPY  
FOR DUPLICATING

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Northumberland County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Market Square

CITY, TOWN

Sunbury

STATE  
Pennsylvania

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

2/23/79

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN

Harrisburg

STATE

Pennsylvania

# 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 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 a valuable Pennsylvania resource in the development of transportation and the various trussing systems used in bridges today. At one time Pennsylvania had over 1500 covered bridges and as of six years ago still had almost 300. Today the figure is closer to 200 but these remaining wooden bridges are an important link in the transportation history of Pennsylvania. The use of wood for bridges was a practical solution for spanning a waterway in a state where a major natural resource was lumber.

The Northumberland County bridges nominated here are the only remaining covered bridges in the county, in a county which as recent ago as 1972 had fourteen. Those bridges remaining are a fine collection of early bridges in the state, with one bridge considered by many writers to be the earliest remaining in the country. The trussing styles are representatives of all but two styles that were ever used in covered bridges in Pennsylvania,

Records of Northumberland County Bridge Engineers.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .38

QUADRANGLE NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
UTM REFERENCES

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			
E			
G			

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			
F			
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  
John W. Prosser, P. E.

ORGANIZATION  
Northumberland County Bridge Engineers

STREET & NUMBER  
2nd and Chestnut Street

CITY OR TOWN  
Sunbury

DATE

TELEPHONE  
717-286-7721 ext. 43

STATE  
Pennsylvania 17801

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

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

FDR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION