

Part of

# Covered Bridges of Northumberland County TR

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

# 38-49-05      **Name:** Rishel Covered Bridge  
**Location:** T573 off 4905<sup>4</sup> east of Montandon  
**UTM: Zone**      N      E      **Acreage:**  
**Owner:**

**Stream:** Chillisquaque Creek  
**Truss Type:** Burr Arch  
**Builder:** John Shriner, Jr. and Zacheus Braley  
**Year:** 1830

**End Post to**  
**End Post Length:** 110'2"  
**Clearance:** 8'

**Road Surface**  
**Width:** 17'3"  
**Load:** 3 Ton

**Distinguishing  
Features:**

This bridge is a single span covered timber truss bridge utilizing a Howe truss with a two member Burr arch straddling the truss. The bridge has a clear span of 90'8" between the stone masonry abutments and a total length of 110'2". The roadway width inside the structure is 17'3", while the structure width is 20'2". The floor consists of 3" transverse planks of varying widths with a 2" longitudinal running boards on top. A vertical clearance of 11'3" exists between the floor and the timber frame portal. There currently exists a vertical clearance barrier of 8'0" to try to limit usage to cars or light trucks. From the streambed to the lowest timber member is an actual clear of 11'0". Condition: Bowing and leaning upstream but still serviceable and used daily.

The bridge was built in 1830 by John Shriner, Jr. and Zacheus Braley and used the Burr Truss design which was used for the first time in 1804 in Waterford, New York, and patented by its designer Theodore Burr in 1817. In this bridge the arch does not foot as much below the stringer as usual, but was probably modified due to the low clearance and the need to protect the arch from floating debris during floods. This however, does not seem to affect the strength of this bridge as it has survived many floods and though not capable of carrying large trucks, does an adequate job of carrying passenger vehicles on a day-to-day basis. The regionalized use of this type of structure, and the damaging floods of the 1830's through New England, probably make this structure the oldest covered wooden bridge in the United States and the oldest example of one of the most important timber truss designs in our history.

050830

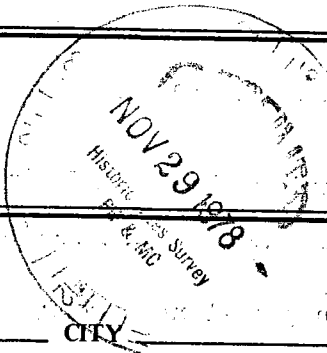
# Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Inventory of Historic Places

Official use only  
NUMBER:

SEE INFORMATION SHEET BEFORE FILLING OUT FORM  
PLEASE TYPE

## 1 HISTORICAL NAME OF PROPERTY:

Rishel Covered Bridge



## 2 LOCATION:

STREET T-573 CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
TOWNSHIP East & West Chillisquaque COUNTY Northumberland 108th  
Congressional District \_\_\_\_\_

## 3 CLASSIFICATION:

### PRESENT USE

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>OWNERSHIP</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Park
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious
<input type="checkbox"/> site			<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> object			<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation
	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: restricted		
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: unrestricted		
		<input type="checkbox"/> No		

## 4 OWNERSHIP:

NAME Northumberland County Commissioners STREET Northumberland County Courthouse  
CITY, TOWN Sunbury STATE Pa; ZIP 17801

## 5 LOCATION of LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Courthouse, Prothonotary Office, Quarter Session Dockets  
STREET 2nd & Market Sts. CITY, TOWN Sunbury, Pa. COUNTY Northumberland

## 6 REPRESENTATION in EXISTING SURVEYS:

TITLE OF SURVEY: Unknown  
DATE OF SURVEY: \_\_\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE  LOCAL   
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

**7****DESCRIPTION:**Check OneOriginal Site Moved  Date \_\_\_\_\_

Architectural Description: A written description including features such as stories in height, length and width, number of bays, alterations and additions to the main structure; type of roof, windows, door, chimney design and placement, materials and style of construction; and a floor plan, if possible.

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**SIGNIFICANCE:**

Statement: Write in your own words a brief statement of significance for each area checked.

**PERIOD**

1600 - 1699   
1700 - 1799

1800 - 1899   
1900 - Present

architect: \_\_\_\_\_  
builder: John Shriner, Jr.  
& Zacheus Braley

**AREA**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION   | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE            | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE           | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ART                    | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE               | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                    | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS         | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING     | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY               | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS              | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | _____  |

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**DESCRIPTION:**

Check One

Original Site

Moved  Date \_\_\_\_\_

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