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

**NAME**

**HISTORIC**

THE COVERED BRIDGES OF COLUMBIA AND MONTOUR COUNTIES

**AND/OR COMMON**

### LOCATION

**STREET & NUMBER**

**CITY, TOWN**

**STATE**

Pennsylvania

**COUNTRY**

Columbia/Montour

**CODE**

42

**COUNTY CODE**

037/093

### CLASSIFICATION

**CATEGORY**

- District
- Building(s)
- Structure
- Site
- Object

**OWNERSHIP**

- Public
- Private
- Both

**STATUS**

- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Work in Progress
- Accessible
- Yes: Restricted
- Yes: Unrestricted
- No

**PRESENT USE**

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government
- Industrial
- Military
- Other

### OWNER OF PROPERTY

**NAME**

Multiple

**STREET & NUMBER**

**CITY, TOWN**

**STATE**

### LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.**

Columbia County Courthouse/Montour County Courthouse

**STREET & NUMBER**

35 West Main Street / 28 Mill Street

**CITY, TOWN**

Bloomsburg / Danville

**STATE**

Pennsylvania

### REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**TITLE**

Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

**DATE**

1972-74

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

**CITY, TOWN**

Harrisburg

**STATE**

Pennsylvania
Of the twenty-eight covered bridges of Columbia and Montour Counties, one is shared by Montour and Northumberland Counties and three are shared by Columbia and Northumberland Counties. All four of these bridges were nominated with the nomination known as, Covered Bridges of Northumberland County. They will be mentioned and included in this nomination merely to present the total picture of these two counties. They are:

**Columbia/Northumberland**
2. Krickbaum (38-19-32, 38-49-12)
3. Richards (38-19-01, 38-49-07)

**Montour/Northumberland**

The majority of the bridges (24) are evenly divided between the Queen-post truss type and the purr arch truss type. The remaining truss types include one Kingpost, and three Warren. A comparison of their lengths, types and dates of construction can be seen on the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>QUEENPOST</th>
<th>BURR</th>
<th>KINGPOST</th>
<th>WARREN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Rohrback (64'4&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-31</td>
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<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rupert 185'4&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-33</td>
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<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stillwater (151')</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38-19-21</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>E. Paden (75')</td>
<td>W. Paden (112')</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38-19-11</td>
<td>38-19-12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Davis (87'1&quot;)</td>
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<td>38-19-16</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hollingshead (116'10&quot;)</td>
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<td>38-19-34</td>
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<tr>
<td>YEAR</td>
<td>QUEENPOST</td>
<td>BURR</td>
<td>KINGPOST</td>
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<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Wagner (56'5&quot;)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c1860</td>
<td>Snyder (60'2&quot;)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-14</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parr's Mill (84'3&quot;)</td>
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<td>38-19-29</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td>Riegel (107'3&quot;)</td>
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<td>38-19-29</td>
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<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td></td>
<td>Welles Hess (126'')</td>
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<td>38-19-13</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td></td>
<td>J. Ness (105'2'')</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38-19-10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PATTERSON (81'8'')</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-26</td>
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<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>L.Knoebel (40')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S.Eckman</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38-19-39, 38-49-13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>65'2&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38-19-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>Judd Christie 55'10&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Krickenbaum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>62'2&quot;</td>
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<td>38-19-32</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38-49-12</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Richards (68'8&quot;)</td>
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<td>38-19-01, 38-49-07</td>
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<tr>
<td>YEAR</td>
<td>QUEENPOST</td>
<td>BURR</td>
<td>KINGPOST</td>
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<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Shoemaker (49')</td>
<td>Gottlieb Brown</td>
<td>86'8&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-06</td>
<td></td>
<td>38-47-01, 38-49-11</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kramer (50')</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-23</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creasyville (44'6&quot;)</td>
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<td>38-19-36</td>
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<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Furnace (100'10&quot;)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Johnson 60'9&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-20, 2 spans</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-37</td>
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<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wanich (98'9&quot;)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Fowlersville (40')</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-05</td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>&quot;Y&quot; (76')</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38-19-22</td>
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</table>
The procedure for planning and building a new bridge in these two counties was as follows: A petition was presented by the inhabitants of a township; then, arrangements were made for appointed viewers to inspect the site and decide if a bridge was necessary. The Grand Jury's approval was sought, and if granted, a bridge letting was scheduled for bids on a contract. The successful bidder was given a completion date (from 1870 a performance bond was also required). When a structure was built, the workmanship was inspected and payment was made in accordance with the progress of construction.

Of the twenty-eight bridges nominated here the builder is known for 26 of them.
The twenty-eight covered bridges of Columbia and Montour Counties are the largest best preserved (after Lancaster County) group of the wooden covered bridges in Pennsylvania. Each bridge offers a unique example of the art of wooden engineering with examples of every truss type, except Town truss, ever used in Pennsylvania. These bridges meet the National Register criteria in the areas of engineering and transportation. These bridges were needed to facilitate travel and as a link in the commercial transportation system of the counties.

An unusually large number of creeks and streams flow through Columbia County, winding their way either north or south on route to the Susquehanna River. It is easy to believe that, in 1914, the county had over two hundred bridges to keep in repair. Even then many of the smaller ones were being replaced by concrete and iron structures which did not require so much maintenance. Today Columbia County is left with 26 old, wooden, covered bridges.

Montour County has fewer streams, with Chillisquaque Creek being the principal tributary. Consequently, not as many bridges were built, and, only two are still standing today.

The river bridges over the Susquehanna at Catawissa, Danville, Bloomsburg, and Berwick began their existence as wooden covered bridges of extraordinary lengths. Even the railroad bridges began as lattice-work wooden structures, but were soon replaced by trestles.

Bridges were needed to facilitate travel, when a complex network of roads took shape in the early history of the county, especially between fast-growing towns. At first, open wooden bridges were popular, but their short life span of ten or fifteen years was impractical; and those that did not rot away, were often removed by floods.

The routes to and from the saw mills and grist mills, most often near creeks of good size, were always busy. In Orange Township, a bridge was requested over Green Creek near James Patterson's saw mill "at or near the flat log crossing." Many of the remaining bridges bear witness to this traffic: The Hollingshead, Parr's Mill, Krickbaum, and Jud Christie in Columbia, and the Keefer, near Geringer's mill in Montour. Such bridges were named for nearby businesses, residents,
The commissioners were entrusted with the job of building and maintaining the county bridges. Their Minute Books convey the urgency in repairing damaged or worn bridges. Often a commissioner would leave the office at once to check a report of damages, notify the carpenters, and have the work completed quickly. Large repairs were described as "rebuilding." When a bridge had to be replaced, a contract was allotted. It is sometimes difficult to determine from the records when extensive repairs were made, and/or when a new bridge was erected.

The maintenance records began about 1870. The biggest repairs were installation of new flooring and roofs and filling around abutments.

In the second half of the century, whenever a new bridge was considered, or an old one rebuilt, a covered bridge was preferred. There were a variety of plans from which to choose (all types are described in great detail, accompanied by measured drawings, and preserved in Columbia County's Bridge Books). The contractors followed the commissioners exact specifications, except for the portal, which was not included in the plans and presumably was left to the builder's imagination. The portals of Columbia County's remaining bridges are not particularly distinctive, but in other regions they display the skill and artistry often associated with the folk artist. Montour's Keefer bridge has a unique portal consisting of a creative facade.

The Columbia County bridge records and the commissioners' minutes identify by name the contractors of almost every county-owned bridge. Montour County's records provide similar information, but are less comprehensive. The builders included prestigious men, politicians, speculators, contractors, school teachers, and, in most instances, farmers--to whom carpentry was second nature.

The year 1887 saw the last flourish of wooden covered bridges with six being built within the two county area. With the rapidly increasing cost of a wooden bridge and with the realization that iron and concrete made more substantial and durable structures, the era of the wooden covered bridges was quickly drawing to a close.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
Allen, Richard, Covered Bridges of Middle Atlantic States
Columbia and Montour Historic Transportation Study, June 1976. Columbia-
Montour Joint Planning Commission.
The Covered Bridges of Columbia County, Pa., Columbia County Historical

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.88 Total
QUADRANGLE NAME
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
Boundaries for all bridges are calculated by adding 20' to each length
and 10' to each width (15' used when width not known) to include
abutments.

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE
Bill Pennesi / Susan Zacher

ORGANIZATION
Columbia County Planning Commission / PHMC

STREET & NUMBER
Columbia County Courthouse, 35 W. Main Street

CITY OR TOWN
Bloomsburg / Harrisburg

STATE Pennsylvania 17815/17120

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
TITLE Ed Weintraub, Director
Office of Historic Preservation

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE
Robert Ethridge, Editor, Covered Bridges of Middle Atlantic States.
Columbia and Montour Historic Transportation Study, June 1976. Columbia-
Montour Joint Planning Commission.
The Covered Bridges of Columbia County, Pa., Columbia County Historical

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACCREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.88 Total

* .16 3 bridges nominated with Northumberland Co.

QUADRANGLE NAME

ACCREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.88 Total

UTM REFERENCES

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

A

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

E

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

F

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

G

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Boundaries for all bridges are calculated by adding 20' to each length and 10' to each width (15' used when width not known) to include:

abutments.

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STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

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NAME / TITLE

Bill Pennesi / Susan Zacher

ORGANIZATION

Columbia County Planning Commission / PHMC

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CITY OR TOWN

Bloomburg / Harrisburg

STATE

Pennsylvania

DATE

17815/17120

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STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Ed Weintraub, Director

Office of Historic Preservation

DATE 9/21/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION