NAME
HISTORIC
COVERED BRIDGES OF NORTHERN MUNBERLAND COUNTY
AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
STATE
Pennsylvania

CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
DISTRICT
BUILDING(S)
STRUCTURE
SITE
OBJECT
X THEMATIC
OWNERSHIP
PUBLIC
PRIVATE
OTHER
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
IN PROCESS
BEING CONSIDERED
STATUS
X OCCUPIED
UNOCCUPIED
WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
YES: RESTRICTED
YES: UNRESTRICTED
NO
PRESENT USE
AGRICULTURE
COMMERCIAL
EDUCATIONAL
ENTERTAINMENT
GOVERNMENT
INDUSTRIAL
MILITARY
TRANSPORTATION
OTHER

OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME
Multiple
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Northumberland County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
Market Square
CITY, TOWN
Sunbury
STATE
Pennsylvania

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
The Central Susquehanna Valley is noted for its number of covered bridges, Northumberland County as of March 1979 has four wholly within the county and shares two with Columbia and two with Montour County.

The Northumberland Bridges are a fine collection with a full range of truss types and sizes from the nineteenth century.

The Rishel Covered Bridge is thought to be one of the oldest still standing in the United States with construction dates in some sources as c. 1812 but is more probably 1830. It is also the longest remaining covered bridge in the county. The Lawrence L. Knoebal Covered Bridge is unique with its attached covered walkway.

**Covered Bridge Attributes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Truss</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Stream</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rishel</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Burr</td>
<td>109'</td>
<td>Shamokin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard's</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>M. Kingpost &amp; Queenpost</td>
<td>64'</td>
<td>S. Branch of Roaring Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himmel's Church</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>M. Kingpost</td>
<td>44'</td>
<td>Schwaben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence L. Knoebal</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Queenpost</td>
<td>40'</td>
<td>S. Branch of Roaring Creek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bridge Inventory**

1. **KEEFER STATION COVERED BRIDGE WCB# (38-49-02) #83 Northumberland County Bridge**

   Location: T 698 off 283 East of Sunbury
   Stream: Shamokin Creek
   Truss Type: Burr Arch
   Builder: George W. Keefer
   Year: 1888
   End Post Length: 190'/09
   Clearance: 10'3"
   Width: 14'1"
   Load: 3 Ton
Northumberland County Covered Bridges

Description

This bridge is a single span covered timber truss bridge utilizing a multiple kingpost design with a double Burr arch. This bridge has a clear span of 93'6" between the stone masonry abutments and a total length of 109'. The roadway width inside the structure is 14'1" while the total structure width is 18'5". The floor consists of 3" longitudinal planks of varying widths. A vertical clearance of 12'3" exists at the center of the arched portal while 10'3" is the minimum clearance at the sides. The lowest timber member is 8'5" above the creek. Condition: Overall, Fair Condition.

Significance:

This bridge was built in 1888 by George W. Keefer near the farm of John G. Bright at a total cost of $882.00. It utilizes a multiple kingpost design with a 2 member Burr arch straddling the timber truss members. This type of combined arch and truss bridge was patented by Theodore Burr in 1817 and was especially used for longer spans. This was the most common type of covered bridge erected in this area.

2. Risdel Covered Bridge

#2 Northumberland County Bridge
WCB# (38-49-05)

Location: T 573 off 49054 east of Montandon
Stream: Chillisquaque Creek
Truss Type: Burr Arch
Builder: John Shriner, Jr. and Zacheus Braley
Year: 1830
End Post Length: 110'2"
Clearance: 8'
Width: 17'3"
Load: 3 Ton
Description

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.

Significance

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.
3. HIMMEL'S CHURCH COVERED BRIDGE
#58 Northumberland County Bridge
WCB# (38-49-06)

Location: T-442 off 49010 Northeast of Reubuck
Stream: Schwaben Creek (Formerly Green Briar Creek)
Truss Type: Multiple Kingpost
Builder: Peter Keefer
Year: 1874
End Post Length: 44'
Clearance: 10'10"
Road Width: 15'
Load: 3 Ton

Description:

This bridge is a single span covered timber truss bridge utilizing a multiple king post design. The bridge has a clear span of 28'8" between the stone masonry abutments and a total length of 44'. The roadway width inside the structure is 13'6" while the total structure width is 16'. The floor consists of 3" transverse planks of varying widths. A vertical clearance of 10' exists between the floor and the timber frame portal. The lowest timber member is 4'8" above the stream.

Significance:

The bridge was completed in 1874 by Peter Keefer and used only a multiple kingpost design since the span was so short. There are no modifications of the basic design.

Condition: Lower chords on south side were recently repaired. Overall, fair condition.
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.
5. KREIGBAUM COVERED BRIDGE
   #60 Northumberland County Bridge
   WCB# (38-49-12/38-19-32)

   Location: T459 East of Elysburg
   Stream: South Branch of Roaring Creek
   Truss Type: Queenpost
   Builder: George W. Keefer
   Year: 1876
   End Post Length: 62'1"
   Clearance: 11'9"
   Road Width: 13'8"
   Load: 3 Ton
   Condition: Overall, fair condition

   Description

   This bridge is a single span covered timber truss bridge utilizing a
   queenpost. The bridge has a clear span of 52' between the stone
   masonry abutments and a total length of 62'1". The roadway width inside
   the structure is 13'8" while the total structure width is 16'11". The
   floor consists of 4" transverse planks of varying widths with 2" longi-
   tudinal running boards on top. A vertical clearance of 11'9" exists
   between the floor and the timber frame portal. The lowest timber member
   is 7' above the stream.

   Significance

   This bridge was built in 1876 by George W. Keefer on the road leading
   from Bear Gap to Catawissa Road and used only a queenpost design. The
   queenpost design is very old and is actually a kingpost with an extra
   longitudinal top chord and was used for spans slightly larger than what
   the kingpost could handle.
6. GOTTLIEB BROWN COVERED BRIDGE (or Sam Wagner)
   #70 Northumberland County Bridge

Location: T 594 off 49057 East of Potts Grove
Stream: Chillisquaque Creek
Truss Type: Burr
Builder: George W. Keefer
Year: 1881
End Post Length: 86'8"
Clearance: 13'
Road Width: 15'
Load: 3 Ton
Condition: Overall, Fair Condition

Description

This bridge is a single span covered timber truss bridge utilizing a multiple kingpost design with a double Burr arch. The bridge has a clear span of 74'9" between the stone masonry abutments and a total length of 86'8". The roadway width inside the structure is 14'3" while the total structure width is 18'6". The floor consists of 3" transverse planks of varying widths. A vertical clearance of 13' exists between the floor and the timber frame portal while the stream is 8'10" below the lowest timber member.

Significance

This bridge was built in 1881 by George W. Keefer near the old Gottlieb Brown Farm at a total cost of $939.00 and utilized a multiple kingpost design with a 2 member Burr arch straddling the timber truss work on each side. This type of combined arch and truss bridge was patented in 1817 by Theodore Burr and was very popular for many years.
7. LAWRENCE L. KNOEBEL COVERED BRIDGE
   #38-49-13 - 38-19-39

   Stream: South Branch of Roaring Creek
   Truss Type: Modified Queenpost Truss
   Year: 1875 (moved 1935-7)
   End Post Length: 40'
   Clearance: 11'5"
   Width 15'
   Condition: Good

   The covered bridge at Knoebel's Grove, Elysburg, was built in 1875 over West Creek, near Benton. When road re-location by-passed the bridge in 1936, it was sold to Knoebel's Grove. Five men worked carefully for a week to dismantle the bridge. The timbers were then moved fifty miles to the Grove. Another week was required to rebuild it. No paint is used on the bridge and all repairs and supplementary construction are kept in harmony with the original structure. Wide boards were especially milled for the job. Wooden shingles are used for roof repairs. The underside of the bridge has been treated to protect against insects and dampness.

   When the bridge was dedicated in 1964 by the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Society of Pennsylvania, special tribute was paid to the Knoebel family for this preservation. With the consent of the family, the bridge was named the Lawrence L. Knoebel Bridge.
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.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUADRANGLE NAME</th>
<th>UTM REFERENCES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .38

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
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</table>

**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

STATE
Pennsylvania

17801

**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 WEINTRAJB, Director

Office of Historic Preservation

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION
Records of Northumberland County Bridge Engineers.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .38

QUADRANGLE NAME

UTM REFERENCES

A

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

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(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

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FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John W. Prosser, P. E.

ORGANIZATION

Northumberland County Bridge Engineers

STREET & NUMBER

2nd and Chestnut Street

TELEPHONE

717-286-7721 ext. 43

CITY OR TOWN

Sunbury

STATE

Pennsylvania

17801

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STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

ED WEINTRAUB, Director

Office of Historic Preservation

DATE 6-4-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION