

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS
**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Cumberland Covered Bridge

AND/OR COMMON

Matthews Covered Bridge

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

County Road 1000 East over Mississinewa River

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Matthews

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th

STATE

Indiana

CODE  
018COUNTY  
GrantCODE  
053**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Board of Commissioners for Grant County

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Grant County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Marion

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Indiana**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Records Office

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Grant County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Marion

STATE  
Indiana**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory

DATE

1972

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Department of Natural Resources, Div. of Historic Preservation

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT                       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                                 RUINS  
 FAIR                                  UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cumberland Covered Bridge is a Howe Truss single span across the Mississinewa River at the east edge of Matthews, Indiana.

The bridge is 175 feet long, rests on stone abutments, and has four foot overhangs at each end. A gabled shingled roof is supported by square portals which provide a clearance of sixteen feet above an asphalt roadbed. The structure is a Howe Truss with wooden cross braces which form boxed X's along the sides. The vertical posts of the boxes are iron rods. Vertical wood siding covers the truss skelton. A two foot opening along the top of the sides admits light and air to the bridge interior. The exterior is painted red with white on the portals; the interior is white.

The original floor consisted of white oak planks. Flood damage in 1913 resulted in several changes. The structure was raised by increasing the height of each abutment three feet. In removing and replacing the siding and roof, the only major change was the use of sheet metal instead of shingles for the roof material. Heavy snow caused the 1913 sheet metal roof to collapse on December 20, 1973; and the roof was replaced with shingles to match more closely the 1877 appearance. In 1976 steel barriers were erected at each entrance to limit traffic using the bridge. Other alterations have been restricted to painting and routine maintenance.

## 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 1877

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Robert W. Smith

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cumberland Covered Bridge is an important surviving example of engineering techniques used to meet transportation needs in the nineteenth century.

In March, 1863, forty petitioners appeared before the Grant County Commissioners to request that a bridge be erected over the Mississinewa River at New Cumberland. The Commissioners responded to the request and paid William F. Parks \$722 in 1865 to construct a wooden span. This first bridge was an open structure which rotted in ten years.

The County turned to the Smith Bridge Company of Toledo, Ohio to build a new bridge. The Smith Bridge Company was awarded a contract on August 8, 1876, to construct an open Howe Truss bridge. Robert W. Smith established this Ohio firm in 1867. Smith was a native of Ohio, and although he had little formal education, he developed engineering skills from his natural talent and brief years as an apprentice. In 1867 and 1869 he received design patents for what is known as the Smith Patented Truss. Earlier he had developed a self-supporting roof truss system for large barns. Until taken over in the early 1890's by the Toledo Bridge Company, the Smith Bridge Company was associated with at least 43 Indiana covered bridges. As a rule, after being cut and assembled in the Toledo yard, timbers were dismantled and shipped by rail or water to the bridge site. A local agent or carpenter from the Toledo yard would then make the final assembly.

The Smith Company charged \$18.50 per lineal foot to construct the Cumberland Bridge without siding and a roof. After the bridge was completed in 1877, Peter Millspaugh, a local carpenter, and his fifteen year old son William finished the bridge by adding siding and a roof.

The bridge served the village of New Cumberland which had been laid out in 1833. In addition to providing a route for farmers north of the Mississinewa River to come into New Cumberland, the bridge gave the village and farmers south of the river access to the larger town of Hartford City. As a transportation link, the structure became more important after the gas boom of the late 1800's created more towns and commercial activity in the area. The settlement of Matthews was founded in 1895 near New Cumberland. The brick and 23 glass factories in Matthews no doubt relied heavily on the covered bridge. When it was officially incorporated in 1902, Matthews was expanded to include the old village of New Cumberland.

Indiana suffered from major floods in 1913, and the Cumberland Covered Bridge was a victim of the disaster. On March 24, 1913, flood waters washed the structure about three quarters of a mile down stream. Upon examination it was determined that although the siding and roof had suffered considerable damage, the frame was sound. The County Commissioners decided to bring the structure back to its foundation, and they awarded the contract to...

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

Lemond used a winch, rollers, and a team of horses to return the wandering bridge to its original site. At this time each abutment was raised by three feet, and the roof and siding were replaced.

Covered bridges were developed in the nineteenth century to prolong the life of exposed wooden structures. Through proper care, a covered bridge could last well over a hundred years. The Cumberland Bridge preserves an important stage in bridge building techniques. The Howe Truss is a link between the earlier all wooden structures and the iron truss structures which reached their height at the turn of the century. The Howe system used vertical iron rods which added to the bridge's strength while reducing the weight required. The rods also made it possible to keep the frame aligned by tightening or loosening the tension. This combination of iron and wood was a basic step in the development from all wood to all iron bridges.

Records indicate that over 600 covered bridges were constructed in Indiana from 1820 to 1922. Of these only 102 are still standing. The Cumberland Bridge is the only remaining covered bridge in Grant County, and it is significant to the state as a surviving example of an element in the transportation system of the nineteenth century.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Ketcham, Bryan E. Covered Bridges on the Byways of Indiana. Oxford, Ohio: Oxford Printing Co., 1949.
- Gould, George E. Indiana Covered Bridges Thru the Years. Indianapolis: Indiana Covered Bridge Society, Inc., 1977.
- Marion Chronicle Tribune, June 22, 1969 "Bridge is 106 Years Old."  
(Con't)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre  
UTM REFERENCES

A	16	628605	4471770
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Matthews Lions Club, Howard Mitchenor, Historian

March 2, 1977

ORGANIZATION

Matthews Lions Club

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Matthews

STATE

Indiana

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

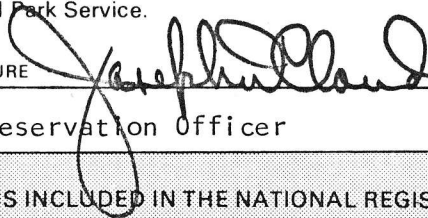
NATIONAL

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

1-24-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Form No. 10-300a  
(Rev. 10-74)

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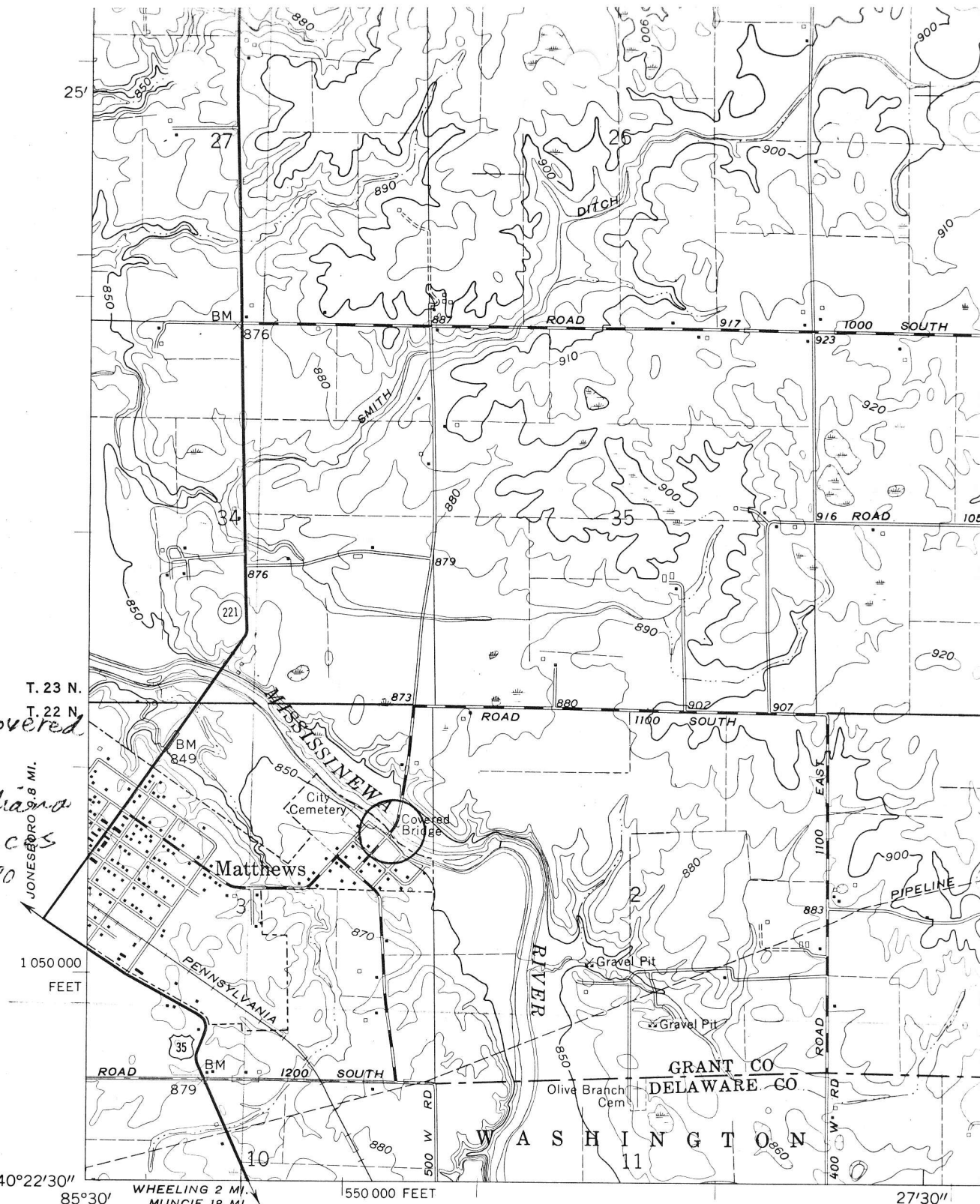
ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

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Whitson, Rolland L. Centennial History of Grant County, Indiana, 1812 to 1912.  
2 vols., Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1914.

*Cumberland Covered  
 Bridge,  
 Matthews, Indiana  
 U.T.M. Reference  
 16/628605/4471770*



*(GASTON)*

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods  
 Aerial photographs taken 1958. Field check 1960

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Indiana coordinate system, east zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
 zone 16, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
 generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

TRUE NORTH  
 MAGNETIC NORTH