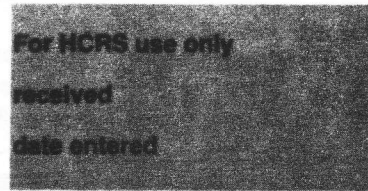


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic THE SPENCERVILLE COVERED BRIDGE

and/or common

2. Location

street & number DeKalb County Road 68 at the St. Joseph River _____ not for publication

city, town Spencerville _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district Fourth

state Indiana code 018 county DeKalb code 033

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 type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name DeKalb County Commissioners

street & number DeKalb County Court House

city, town Auburn _____ vicinity of _____ state Indiana 46706

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. DeKalb County Court House

street & number Auburn Square

city, town Auburn _____ state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records

city, town _____ state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Spencerville Covered Bridge, erected in 1873, spans the St. Joseph River on a minor road in DeKalb County. The bridge stands in a broad flood plain which requires the roadway approaches to be constructed of earth embankments and piers. In 1916 the original wood piers near the west abutment were replaced with poured concrete piers. In 1920 the concrete approach and additional waterway were installed on the west end. The original wood piers on the east end were replaced with concrete in 1922.

The bridge itself is a Smith Type 4 truss. The Smith truss, a variation on the Howe truss, was patented by Robert W. Smith of the Smith Bridge Company in Toledo, Ohio. The Smith truss rarely had vertical posts. The timbers between the two chords were braces set at a 45 degree angle and counterbraces set a 65 degree angle. Type 4 was the strongest, as it had further reinforcements of both double and single sets of diagonals. The Spencerville bridge has additional vertical metal rods.

The bridge is 146 feet long, according to the minutes from the September 1, 1873 session of the DeKalb County Commissioners. It is constructed of Michigan White Pine, as were most Smith bridges. Smith bridges were frequently precut, framed or assembled loosely, disassembled, and then shipped to the site for assembly.

The board and batten siding of the Spencerville Bridge is painted red. Openings in the sides near the east end enable a driver going east to see approaching traffic on the road. The side openings are protected by wood awnings. The siding stops short of the upper chord, allowing light and ventilation into the structure. The bridge is sheltered by a gabled roof, which was covered with new cedar shingles in 1970.

The gabled roof projects beyond the ends of the bridge, supported by knee bracing, and sheltering the entrances. This bracing is sheathed in board and batten siding, which continues a short distance inside the bridge, protecting the end panels from the elements. A sign above each rectangular opening says, "Spencerville 1873."

In 1954 the sills and flooring were replaced. The Spencerville Covered Bridge has been well maintained over the years, and is in good repair.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1873

Builder/Architect John McKay

Statement of Significance [REDACTED]

The Spencerville Covered Bridge is significant as the only surviving covered bridge in northeastern Indiana, and is one of only six remaining Smith trusses in the state.

From 1820 to 1922, some 600 covered bridges were constructed in Indiana, of which only 98 remain. The Smith truss was one of the less common types, with only twenty of them ever constructed in Indiana. The most common were the Howe and Burr trusses.

The Smith truss, a variation of the Howe, was patented by Robert W. Smith of the Smith Bridge Company (Toledo, Ohio) in 1867, and again with improvements in 1869. It is said that none of the bridges followed his patents exactly, as he continued to make improvements with each job. Bridges with the Smith truss were built in Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Oregon. Although Smith trusses are considered to be weaker than some others, the Spencerville bridge has survived continued use and several floods.

Spencerville was an important commercial center for the southeastern part of the county. The Spencerville grist and sawmills were located on the west side of the river. An 1863 map indicates that a bridge was located at the site of the present bridge, suggesting that this was a strategic location providing access to the grist and sawmills. The first legal notice for the Spencerville Covered Bridge appeared in the July 10, 1873 Waterloo Press. The contract was awarded to John A. McKay, who was one of the agents for the Smith Bridge Company. McKay had worked with Alpheus Wheelock on constructing the DeKalb County Courthouse ten years earlier, and on the Dills Covered Bridge, also a Smith truss, two miles upstream in 1868. The Spencerville bridge was essentially completed in December of 1873. This bridge, like many of the bridges from the Smith Bridge Company, was probably assembled from parts that were cut in Toledo and shipped.

The Spencerville Covered Bridge is in good repair, and is still in use. As the only covered bridge surviving in this part of the state, it is a significant resource.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Commissioners and Court Records

Gould, George E. Indiana Covered Bridges Thru the Years. Indianapolis: Indiana Covered Bridge Society, 1977.

History of DeKalb County Indiana. Chicago: Interstate Publishing Co., 1885.

Smith, Barbara Clark Covered Bridge Centennial. Auburn: Vanguard Publishing Co., 1973.

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Saint Joe, IN

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6
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6	7	4	6	7	0
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4	5	7	1	8	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

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 Mary Pifer Mountz and John Martin Smith

organization

date December 1, 1979

street & number 507 E. Houston and P.O. Box 666

telephone (219) 357-4220 & 925-4560

city or town Garrett and Auburn

state Indiana

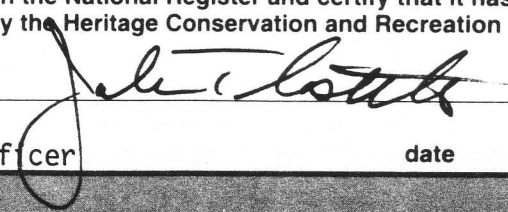
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date February 4, 1981

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

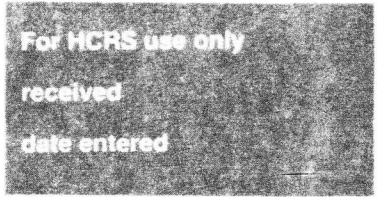
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

Auburn DeKalb Vanguard, July, 1973. Special edition commemorating Spencerville Covered Bridge Centennial.
Vanguard Publishing Company, Auburn, Indiana

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 2

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

SPENCERVILLE COVERED BRIDGE

DEKALB COUNTY, INDIANA

Part of the North one-half (1/2) of Section Thirty-three (33), Township Thirty-three (33) North, Range Fourteen (14) East described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the North right of way line of DeKalb County Road 68 and the East low water mark of the St. Joseph River, thence East along the North right of way line of DeKalb County Road 68 a distance of fifty (50) feet, thence South sixty (60) feet to the South right of way line of DeKalb County Road 68, thence West along the South right of way line of DeKalb County Road 68 to a point fifty (50) feet west of the West low water mark of the St. Joseph River, thence North sixty (60) feet to the North right of way line of DeKalb County Road 68, thence East along the North right of way line of DeKalb County Road 68 to the place of beginning.