

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections):

STATE: INDIANA	
COUNTY: UNION	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
BROWNSVILLE COVERED BRIDGE

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
SPANS EAST FORK OF WHITEWATER RIVER AT WEST EDGE OF TOWN OF BROWNSVILLE

CITY OR TOWN:
BROWNSVILLE

STATE: **INDIANA** CODE: **18** COUNTY: **UNION** CODE: **161**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify) _____ _____ _____

Yes:
 Restricted
 Unrestricted
 No

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
UNION COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

STREET AND NUMBER:
COURTHOUSE

CITY OR TOWN: **LIBERTY** STATE: **INDIANA** CODE: **18** ZIP: **47353**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
OFFICE OF THE RECORDER

STREET AND NUMBER:
UNION COUNTY COURTHOUSE

CITY OR TOWN: **LIBERTY** STATE: **INDIANA** CODE: **18** ZIP: **47353**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS -- See also continuation sheet.

TITLE OF SURVEY:
SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES IN INDIANA

DATE OF SURVEY: **1972** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES; ROOM 612

STREET AND NUMBER:
STATE OFFICE BUILDING; 100 NORTH SENATE AVENUE

CITY OR TOWN: **INDIANAPOLIS** STATE: **INDIANA** CODE: **18** ZIP: **46204**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: **INDIANA**
COUNTY: **UNION**
ENTRY NUMBER: _____
DATE: _____
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The BROWNSVILLE COVERED BRIDGE, spanning the East Fork of the Whitewater River at the West edge of the town of Brownsville, Union County, Indiana, is a single-span covered timber bridge, 182'-0" long and 21'-6" wide. It was built by an Adam Mason during the years 1837-1840 and rests on a shelf occupied by the town on the east bank of the river. The high earthen approach required on the west-end may have been built at a later date.

The truss used in the bridge was designed in 1830 by Col. Stephen H. Long and was patented circa 1835. Viewed from the side, the LONG truss resembles a series of giant boxed Xs and needs no arch for support. In the Brownsville implementation, braces measure 8"x9", counterbraces are 8"x8", and panel posts 8"x12". Upper and lower chords (four members each) are roughly 6"x12" in cross-section.

In 1869, George Heim, a local craftsman, placed stone abutments and attractive balusters at both ends of the bridge. Until recently (c.1967) planks covered the lower half of the truss-work inside.

The gable roof is currently covered by galvanized steel roofing. Exterior sides are covered with 1"x12" unpainted siding with 1"x2" battens.

The Brownsville Bridge is the oldest timbered bridge in Indiana still on its original site.

No known alterations have occurred with respect to the main truss members since the bridge was accepted by the Union County Commissioners in January 1841.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE INDIANA	
COUNTY UNION	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries) BROWNSVILLE COVERED BRIDGE

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS, continued:

Survey Title: COVERED BRIDGES OF INDIANA
Survey Date: 1967 STATE WIDE (non-governmental)
Records at: INDIANA COVERED BRIDGE SOCIETY
965 BROADWAY NORTH DRIVE
PLAINFIELD, INDIANA 46168 Code: 18

Survey Title: COVERED BRIDGES
Survey Date: 1971 STATE
Records at: INDIANA STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT
LONG RANGE PLANNING SECTION
STATE OFFICE BUILDING
100 NORTH SENATE AVENUE
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204 Code: 18

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1837-1840**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> itarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The BROWNSVILLE COVERED BRIDGE, built in 1837-1840, by Adam Mason over the East Fork of the Whitewater River at the West edge of the town of Brownsville, is the oldest covered wooden bridge in Indiana still remaining on its original site. The only other older extant Indiana covered bridge, completed in 1838, is now located at the North Entrance to Brown County State Park.

The truss, designed by Col. Stephen H. Long in 1830 and patented by him a few years later, was the first all wooden truss into which a few mathematical calculations entered. Viewed from the side, the LONG truss resembles a series of boxed Xs and needs no arch for support.

The Brownsville structure is the only LONG truss covered bridge remaining in Indiana. It is one of very few ever built in the United States. Of the more than 1000 covered bridges still standing in the U.S. as of 1972, only 15 are known to use the LONG truss. Of those 15, only one is known to be older than the Brownsville Bridge. The stronger Howe truss, patented in 1840, and employing both wood and iron, was preferred throughout the remainder of the 19th century over the Long and the Town Lattice trusses which pre-dated it.

Locally this bridge was known as the 'Wagon Bridge' to distinguish it from a railroad covered bridge, just upstream, which was removed in 1911.

Begun in 1837 with an original county appropriation of \$1200, construction of the bridge required an additional \$400 which was appropriated (but never paid to Mr. Mason) on 3 May 1839 from the State 3% Fund. The bridge was completed in late 1840 and accepted by the Union County Commissioners in January 1841. (ref: Minutes of the County Commissioners, January 1841, Office of the Recorder, Union County, Liberty, Indiana).

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

INDIANA COVERED BRIDGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER, v.6, no.3, p.1 (July 1969) and v.6, no.4, p.2 (October 1969)

TWENTY DIFFERENT WAYS TO BUILD A COVERED BRIDGE, by Ray E. Wilson, National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, West Roxbury, MA.

UNION COUNTY COVERED BRIDGES, brochure by the Union County Historical Society, Liberty, IN.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	'	"	39 ⁰	39'	53"
NE	0	'	"	85 ⁰	00'	25"
SE	0	'	"			
SW	0	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: LESS THAN ONE ACRE

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
WM. H. BRANDENBURG (VICE PRESIDENT)

ORGANIZATION: **INDIANA COVERED BRIDGE SOCIETY, Inc.** DATE: **11 July 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:
965 BROADWAY NORTH DRIVE

CITY OR TOWN: **PLAINFIELD** STATE: **INDIANA 46168** CODE: **18**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Joseph D. Cloud

Title Indiana State Liaison Officer

Date August 10, 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS