

= Cogan House Covered Bridge =

The Cogan House Covered Bridge is a Burr arch truss covered bridge over Larrys Creek in Cogan House Township , Lycoming County , in the U.S. state of Pennsylvania . It was built in 1877 and is 94 feet 2 inches (28 @. @ 7 m) long . The bridge was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 , and had a major restoration in 1998 . The Cogan House bridge is named for the township and village of Cogan House , and is also known by at least four other names : Buckhorn , Larrys Creek , Day 's , and Plankenhorn .

The Cogan House Covered Bridge was constructed by a millwright who assembled the timber framework in a field next to the sawmill , before it was reassembled at the bridge site . It was the only bridge on Larrys Creek that survived the flood of June 1889 , and one of only a handful that were left intact in the county . Although the bridge used to carry a steady flow of tannery and sawmill traffic , the clearcutting of the surrounding forests meant the end of those industries by the early 20th century .

Since then much of the surrounding area has reverted to second growth forest , and the one @-@ lane bridge is now on a dead end road in a remote valley with little traffic . It is the oldest and longest of the three covered bridges remaining in the county . Despite the 1998 restoration and other repairs , as of 2009 the bridge structure 's sufficiency rating on the National Bridge Inventory was 17 @. @ 2 percent and its condition was deemed " basically intolerable requiring high priority of corrective action " .

= = Names = =

The covered bridge is 1 @. @ 4 miles (2 @. @ 3 km) south of Pennsylvania Route 184 on Campbell Road (Township Road 784) , 0 @. @ 1 miles (0 @. @ 2 km) past the intersection with Covered Bridge Road . Its official name on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is " Cogan House Covered Bridge " . It is the only covered bridge ever built in Cogan House Township and the name comes from the township , as well as the village of Cogan House , which is northeast of the bridge . Cogan House Township and the village are named for David Cogan , who settled on Larrys Creek in 1825 . Cogan was one of the few settlers in the area for many years and grew tired of living nearly alone in the wilderness . In 1842 he abandoned his homestead , as did a neighbor named Carter . Their houses were used by hunters and travelers and the name Cogan 's House was given to the area . Cogan House Township was formed from parts of Jackson and Mifflin Townships on December 6 , 1843 .

Since the bridge 's 1998 restoration , the Lycoming County Commissioners have officially called it the " Buckhorn Covered Bridge " . The name comes from the bridge 's location at the base of Buckhorn Mountain , and from the road to the former village of Buckhorn , which crossed the creek on it . This is the name used on the official plaque erected by the commissioners to mark its restoration and placement on the NRHP , despite the different name used on the Register itself . The commissioners chose " Buckhorn Covered Bridge " based on one of the names used in Benjamin and June Evans ' 1993 book Pennsylvania 's Covered Bridges : A Complete Guide . Historically , the commissioners used " Cogan House Covered Bridge " as the official name .

Historian Milton W. Landis uses " Larrys Creek Covered Bridge " since it crosses Larrys Creek , and notes this was the name used by other local historians . Larrys Creek is named for Larry Burt , who was the first settler at the mouth of the creek when the surveyors came through in 1769 . Landis acknowledges the " Cogan House " name , and says the bridge has also been known by the names of " several tenants who lived in the little farm adjacent " to it .

While Landis does not give these different names , two other names for the bridge are known and may come from some of these tenants . The first of these is " Day 's Bridge " and it is clear that this is another name for the Cogan House Covered Bridge . The second of these , " Plankenhorn Bridge " , is a name in a list of existing and vanished covered bridges in Lycoming County . Although the association of this name with the Cogan House Covered Bridge is not made explicitly , it is described as still standing on Larrys Creek and being north of a bridge in Mifflin Township . This is

the only known covered bridge that meets those criteria .

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

The first covered bridge in the United States was built over the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia , Pennsylvania in 1800 . Some of the first Burr arch truss covered bridges were also built in the state . Pennsylvania is estimated to have once had at least 1 @, @ 500 covered bridges , and is believed to have had the most in the country between 1830 and 1875 . In 2001 Pennsylvania had more surviving historic covered bridges than any other state , with 221 remaining in 40 of the commonwealth 's 67 counties .

Covered bridges were a transition between stone and cast @-@ iron and steel bridges . In 19th @-@ century Pennsylvania , lumber was an abundant resource for bridge construction , but did not last long when exposed to weather and the elements . The roof and enclosed sides of covered bridges protected the structural elements , allowing some of these bridges to survive well over a century . A Burr arch truss consists of a load @-@ bearing arch sandwiching multiple King posts , resulting in a bridge which is both stronger and more rigid than one built using either element alone .

In 1850 a plank road was built in Lycoming County , from the mouth of Larrys Creek to the borough of Salladasburg , Pennsylvania . It was later extended north along the Second Fork of Larrys Creek as far as the unincorporated villages of Brookside and White Pine in Cogan House Township , and eventually went as far as the large tannery in the village of English Center in Pine Township on Little Pine Creek . Another branch of the plank road followed Larrys Creek itself north from Salladasburg . While its exact length is unknown , Landis reports it may have reached nearly to the site of the covered bridge .

Before there was a bridge , there was a ford at the site where the bridge was later built . Wagons of finished leather and raw hides came from and went to the English Center tannery via White Pine , seeking to avoid traffic on the plank road along the Second Fork . Other traffic went to and from a large sawmill at White Pine and other mills to the west and north . Traffic from the north crossed Larrys Creek , and continued either east over Buckhorn Mountain to the Williamsport and Elmira Railroad at the village of Cogan Station on Lycoming Creek , or south down the road along Larrys Creek . This road led to a tannery on Larrys Creek about 1 mile (1 @. @ 6 km) south of the ford , and to the plank road along the main branch of the creek . The plank road was a toll road and connected with another railroad , the West Branch Division of the Pennsylvania Canal , and the West Branch Susquehanna River at the creek 's mouth .

Because the ford was often impassable in winter or bad weather , or during high water , a petition from the citizens of Cogan House Township for a bridge to be built was filed in September 1876 . They asked the county to build the bridge as it was beyond the resources of the township to do so . The petition was read on September 30 , 1876 , and three viewers were appointed on November 3 to examine the site and report back . The viewers reported back in favor of building the bridge on November 25 . On January 23 , 1877 , the county grand jury approved the report and the construction of the bridge .

= = = Construction and description = = =

Landis is not certain if the bridge was built in 1877 or 1878 , but every other source that mentions the date agrees it was 1877 . Valentine (" Tine ") Meyers (or Meyer) , a millwright and resident of the hamlet of Quiggleville in Lycoming Township , built the bridge . The timbers for the bridge were cut at an " up and down " , steam powered sawmill owned by Robert Wood , a short distance north of the bridge site . The head sawyer at the mill was John Mecum . The wood used was pine , cut in nearby forests and hauled in ox carts to the mill . The largest timbers used in the bridge are up to 16

feet (4 @. @ 9 m) long .

Meyers is not believed to have had much experience building bridges and set about construction in a unique manner . The timber framework was first assembled in a field next to the sawmill , with each new piece bolted into place after being cut . If a piece did not fit , more careful measurements were made and a new piece was cut and tested . The outlines of the sections for curved beams for the Burr arch were first marked with chalk on the wood , then the saw crew lifted and guided it by hand against the sawblade to cut the curve . After the framework was completed in the field , it was taken apart , loaded onto the same ox carts used to bring the logs to the mill , and taken to the bridge site . There the framework was reassembled on the bridge abutments . Bolts were used to hold all of the large pieces together , while cross @-@ pieces and small braces were nailed in place .

The Cogan House Covered Bridge was added to the NRHP in 1980 and was listed on the 2009 National Bridge Inventory (NBI) . According to the NBI , the covered bridge is 94 feet 2 inches (28 @. @ 7 m) long , with a roadway 14 feet 5 inches (4 @. @ 4 m) wide , and a maximum load of 7 @. @ 2 short tons (6 @. @ 5 t) . According to the NRHP , the bridge 's " road surface width " is 19 feet 7 inches (6 @. @ 0 m) , the load is 4 @. @ 0 short tons (3 @. @ 6 t) , and the clearance height is 10 feet 6 inches (3 @. @ 2 m) . The width is only sufficient for a single lane of traffic . As of 2011 , the clearance height posted on the bridge itself has been reduced to 8 feet 6 inches (2 @. @ 6 m) , and the posted maximum load has been reduced to 3 @. @ 0 short tons (2 @. @ 7 t) . According to Landis , the top of the Burr arch is nearly 11 feet (3 @. @ 4 m) above the floor of the bridge .

The covered bridge rests on the original stone abutments , which have since been reinforced with concrete made of cement . The bridge deck is made of crosswise planking , overlaid with runners in the western half and lengthwise planking in the eastern half . The upper part of the portals and the clapboard siding is made of pine boards , and stops 3 feet (0 @. @ 9 m) below the roof line . Although the bridge was painted red as part of its 1998 restoration , in 1964 it was described as unpainted , and it does not seem to have been painted in 1980 , as the NRHP nomination form describes how " its rough horizontal siding ... help [s] this small bridge blend into the surrounding forest " . The roof was originally covered with wooden shingles . The bridge does not have parapets and has " no steel reinforcements " .

= = = Use and restoration = = =

The Cogan House Covered Bridge was the only one on Larrys Creek to survive a major flood on June 1 , 1889 , which washed out most other bridges throughout Lycoming County . A large fallen maple tree formed a dam across Larrys Creek , just upstream of the bridge ; this dam blocked debris and diverted the brunt of the floodwaters . The same flood destroyed the Larrys Creek plank road and the canal at the creek 's mouth . The same storm system also caused the Johnstown Flood , which killed over 2 @, @ 200 people .

After the flood the plank road was only reconstructed as far north as Salladasburg , so for a time all the traffic from the English Center tannery went over the bridge on the way to the railroad at Cogan Station . However , the virgin timber which supplied the local tanneries and sawmills was all clear @-@ cut within several years of the flood . Without timber , the industries that used the roads leading to the bridge closed and the local villages declined , or , in the case of Buckhorn , disappeared .

By 1900 , there were four remaining covered bridges on Larrys Creek : going upstream they were at the hamlet of Larryville in Piatt Township , at or near Mud Run in Mifflin Township , in Salladasburg , and in Cogan House Township . As of 2011 , the Cogan House Covered Bridge is the oldest and longest of three 19th @-@ century covered bridges remaining in Lycoming County (the others are the Buttonwood Covered Bridge in Jackson Township over Blockhouse Creek , and the Lairdsville Covered Bridge in Moreland Township over Little Muncy Creek) .

The bridge had " needed repairs " made in 1964 , and the original stone abutments were reinforced with concrete prior to 1966 . It was added to the NRHP on July 24 , 1980 in a Multiple Property Submission of seven Covered Bridges of Bradford , Sullivan and Lycoming Counties , and was "

painted and creosoted " in 1981 . The 1980 NRHP form and Zacher 's 1994 book both list the bridge 's condition as good . The Lycoming County Commissioners had the bridge " rehabilitated " in 1998 , at a cost of \$ 105 @, @ 493 . The general contractor for the restoration was Lycoming Supply Inc . , which replaced some structural beams with treated southern pine and the " Dutch lap " or clapboard siding with white pine . The purlins and rafters were reconstructed using treated yellow pine , and support a new roof of cedar shake shingles . The deck and floor of the bridge were solid and required few repairs . The bridge was painted red , and a stone pillar was built with plaques marking the restoration and the bridge 's inclusion on the NRHP .

Because the bridge is listed on the NRHP , the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission had to approve the renovation . Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds helped pay for the work done . The dedication ceremony was held on October 30 , 1998 , with Lycoming County Commissioner Russell Reitz and PennDOT Director of Municipal Services Thomas Lyons cutting a plank on wooden sawhorses with an old crosscut saw as the ribbon cutting ceremony . The other county commissioners and the local state representative and state senator were also present and spoke , as did a representative of the " Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Society of Pennsylvania " .

In August 2000 an inspection revealed that one of the timber arches of the Cogan House Covered Bridge was damaged by a vehicle which was over the weight limit crossing the bridge . A propane delivery truck making a delivery to the private hunting cabin served by the bridge is thought to have caused the damage . Lycoming Supply Inc. won the bid to do the repair work in December , at a cost of \$ 6 @, @ 300 . Before the repair the bridge remained open and was safe to use . The Evans ' 2001 book describes the condition of the bridge as excellent .

Despite the restoration and repairs , the 2009 FHWA National Bridge Inventory found the sufficiency rating of the bridge structure to be 17 @. @ 2 percent . The inventory found the condition of the bridge deck and the substructure was satisfactory , while the superstructure was poor . It further found that the bridge 's foundations were " determined to be stable for assessed or calculated scour conditions " , however the railings " do not meet currently acceptable standards " . Its overall condition was deemed " basically intolerable requiring high priority of corrective action " ; the 2006 NBI estimated the cost to improve the bridge at \$ 143 @, @ 000 .

The bridge is still used , although the public dirt road to it ends in a cul de sac on the east side . A gated private road continues to the private hunting camp and provides access to Pennsylvania State Game Lands No. 114 . The bridge has a posted speed limit of 10 miles per hour (16 km / h) and its average daily traffic was ten vehicles in 2009 . Pennsylvania 's Covered Bridges : A Complete Guide notes that despite being " located in a rather remote area , it is worth the trip to see this beautifully restored historic treasure . "

= = Bridge data = =

The following table is a comparison of published measurements of length , width and load recorded in five different sources using different methods , as well as the name or names cited . The NBI measures bridge length between the " backwalls of abutments " or pavement grooves and the roadway width as " the most restrictive minimum distance between curbs or rails " . The NRHP form was prepared by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) , which surveyed county engineers , historical and covered bridge societies , and others for all the covered bridges in the commonwealth . The Evans visited every covered bridge in Pennsylvania in 2001 and measured each bridge 's length (portal to portal) and width (at the portal) for their book . The data in Zacher 's book was based on a 1991 survey of all covered bridges in Pennsylvania by the PHMC and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation , aided by local government and private agencies . The article uses primarily the NBI and NRHP data , as they are national programs .

= = Note = =