

Experience the Covered Bridges of Ashtabula County

Ohio Amish Country Marketing. 2010. <http://www.experience-ohio-amish-country.com/index.html>

Bridge information and history adapted from the Conneaut Community Guide published by Gazette Newspapers.

Additional information from Ashtabula County Covered Bridge Festival web site and various Star Beacon newspaper articles.

Ashtabula County is currently home to seventeen covered bridges including the longest one in the entire United States.

And now they are poised to make that number eighteen, along with claiming a second title, as bridge number eighteen will be the shortest functioning covered bridge in the United States - "measuring in" at a mere eighteen feet.



Photo by Rich McBride

The bridge is currently be constructed in Geneva, Ohio and will be replacing the deteriorating metal and concrete bridge on West Liberty Street.

Thus, Ashtabula County has appropriately been named the "Covered Bridge Capital of Ohio."

These majestic wooden masterpieces appear throughout the county's rolling hills and span some of the most beautiful, scenic, river valleys you'll see in the area.

Some of the more rustic bridges date back to the 1850's - others are modern marvels of current engineering. Seven of the bridges have been newly constructed since 1983. All are reminiscent of the time and style of a by-gone era.

In all, Ashtabula County has had 62 of these wooden-structured bridges. Unfortunately, many have long since been replaced by modern cement or steel bridges.

The old Forman Road Bridge, that was near Austinburg, was auctioned off and sold for \$5.00.

The purchaser cut the bridge in half, took the two halves to separate locations and actually converted each into a pizza parlor. One restaurant is in Kingsville, the other is in Andover.

Annual Bridge Festival

Ashtabula County holds an annual Covered Bridge Festival each fall, the second full weekend of October. The bridges are decorated and "hosted" by a volunteer to greet you and answer your questions.

The festival includes official souvenirs, crafts, entertainment, historic vehicles and engines, a farmers market, a quilt show, draft horses, contests, a parade, and great food all at the County Fairgrounds.



Root Road Bridge



Graham Road Bridge

Some of the bridges have special events and treats of their own during the festival days. These have ranged from special music, refreshments, bake sales, and special foods to a ride in an Amish buggy or on a pony cart.

There are several bridge tour routes for you to enjoy. These self-driven tours are available any time of the year by simply following the special bridge tour signs posted throughout the county.

Sixteen of the covered bridges are functioning, drivable bridges. The only non-used one, the Graham Road bridge, sits off to the side of the road for you to be able to walk through.

Ashtabula County Covered Bridges

Benetka Road Bridge - Sheffield Township

The Benetka Road bridge was built in the early 1900s. It was renovated in 1985 with the addition of a laminated arch. It spans 138 feet with a height clearance of 10-feet, 9-inches.



Caine Road Bridge - Pierpont Township

The Caine Road bridge was built in 1986. Built in honor of Ashtabula County's 175th anniversary, it was the first of only five bridges in Ohio featuring the Pratt Truss design.



Creek Road Bridge - Conneaut City

The construction date of the Creek Road bridge is unknown. It was renovated in 1994. Made with the Town Lattice design, it sits 25 feet above Conneaut Creek. Its height clearance is 9-feet, 3-inches.



Olin's Bridge or Dewey Road Bridge - Plymouth Township

The Olin bridge was built in 1873. Built with the Town Lattice design, it is the only bridge named after a family. It has a height clearance of 10 feet and a span of 115 feet.



Doyle Road Bridge - Jefferson Township

The Doyle Road bridge was built in 1868. This bridge features the Town Lattice design. A laminated arch was added in 1987 to strengthen the structure. It spans 94 feet and has a height clearance of 13-feet, 3-inches.



Giddings Road Bridge - Jefferson Township

The Giddings Road bridge was built in 1995. It is the third new bridge constructed in the County. Built with the Pratt Truss design it is 107 feet long and has a height clearance of 15-feet, 6-inches.



Graham Road Bridge - Pierpont Township

The Graham Road bridge was built in 1913. It was constructed from remains of a bridge that had been washed downstream by a flood. It sits off to the side of Graham Road on County Metroparks property. It is not able to be traveled through by vehicles.



Harpersfield Bridge - Harpersfield Township

The Harpersfield bridge was built in 1868. Until 2008, it was the longest bridge in Ohio at 228 feet long. The bridge's height clearance is 12 feet and is constructed with the Howe Truss design.



Mechanicsville Road Bridge - Austinburg Township

The Mechanicsville bridge was built in 1867. It is believed to be Ashtabula County's oldest covered bridge. With a span is 156 feet, its height clearance is only 8 feet. It is currently bypassed.



Middle Road Bridge - Conneaut City

The Middle Road bridge was constructed in 1868. It was reconstructed in 1984. At 136 feet long it has a height clearance of 11 feet.



Netcher Road Bridge - Jefferson Township

The Netcher Road bridge was built in 1999. It features a unique Neo-Victorian design with a timber arch and inverted Haupt walls. With a span of 110 feet and width of 22 feet it's height clearance is 14-feet, 6 inches.



Riverdale Road Bridge - Morgan Township

The Riverdale bridge was built in 1874. The floor was rebuilt in 1981 and the abutment was replaced in 1987. It too has a height clearance of a mere 8 feet.



Root Road Bridge - Monroe Township

The Root Road bridge was built in 1868. It was renovated in 1982-83. This bridge features the Town Lattice design and has a 9-foot, 4 inch height clearance and a span of 114 feet.



South Denmark Road Bridge - Jefferson Township

The South Denmark Road bridge was built in 1890. Bypassed in 1975, it spans Mill Creek and is on the south side of South Denmark Road near SR 11.



State Road Bridge - Monroe Township

The State Road bridge was built in 1983. It was the first new bridge constructed in the county and was designed by then County Engineer John Smolen. It is built with the Town Lattice design and has a clearance height of 16-feet, 2-inches.



West Liberty Street Bridge - Geneva City

The West Liberty Street Bridge is coming soon to Geneva, Ohio. See *Amish Country Happenings Article*.

Windsor Mills Bridge - Windsor Township

The Windsor Mills Bridge was built in 1867 and underwent renovation from 2002 to 2004. It is also known as the Wiswell Road



Bridge or Warner Hollow Road Bridge and crosses Phelps Creek in Windsor Township. It is constructed with the Town Lattice design. The bridge sits on a sandstone platform from a nearby quarry.

Smolen-Gulf Bridge, Ashtabula County Highway 25 - Ashtabula Township

The Smolen-Gulf bridge was built in 2008. This bridge claims the distinction of being the longest covered bridge in the nation and the fourth longest in the world by spanning a total distance of 613 feet.

A modified Pratt Truss, it rises over 93 feet above the river and can carry two lanes of traffic.

The bridge is 50-feet, 3-inches wide. This includes the 6-foot wide pedestrian walkways on each side. The clearance height is 14-feet, 6 inches.

Conceived in 1995 by then County engineer John Smolen, construction began in 2006 and was finished in 2008 at a cost of \$8 million.

