

### **Cedar Crossing Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

Although not a true covered bridge as no truss is used for support, Cedar Crossing represents Oregon's commitment to a history rich in covered bridge lore.

Don Clark, former Multnomah County Executive, lobbied for the county to build a covered span. He suggested that the bridge "be over a stream where the foliage is thick and turns to shades of yellow and orange in the autumn and children can peer out windows to see the waters below."

One of Clark's ancestors, who had settled in Multnomah County, helped to promote a bridge across the Willamette. The location for the roofed bridge was found when engineers decided to replace the narrow, deteriorating wooden truss bridge crossing Johnson Creek in southeast Portland.

Work to demolish the old bridge began in November 1981, and soon after, workers cut the stone abutments to accommodate the greater width of the new bridge. The installation of the decking, siding, and roofing was completed within two months.

The span was dedicated in January 1982. After the ribbon cutting was completed and the commemorative plaque unveiled, a parade of vintage cars, horse-drawn buggies and wagons opened the span to public use. Although the day was cold and wet, the ceremony was far from dampened as Clark quipped, "If you ever wonder why they put covers on bridges, this weather will tell you."

The interior of the bridge is finished with knotty pine, and a five-foot walkway separates the pedestrian and bicycle traffic from the 24-foot roadway. Five large windows on each side provide light, ventilation and a place " for children to peer to the waters below."

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From I-205 exit Foster Road east. Turn south on SE 134 to Deardorf Road and travel for 1/2 mile. Cedar Crossing is on Deardorf Road over Johnson Creek.



### **Rock O' the Range** - Photo by: Bill Cockrell

Rock O' The Range is Oregon's only covered span located east of the Cascade Range and one of the few covered bridges built in the last two decades for private use.

It represents an architectural style unique to Oregon.

In developing a parcel of land north of Bend, William Bowen needed to build an access road across Swalley Canal to his property. He was inspired by Lane County's Goodpasture Bridge and decided that his bridge should be covered.

Bowers instructed Maurice Olson, a local contractor, to construct the bridge according to a picture of a covered bridge found on a calendar. Specially ordered Douglas Fir timbers were placed on concrete pilings to support both the dead weight of the bridge and the live load of passing traffic.

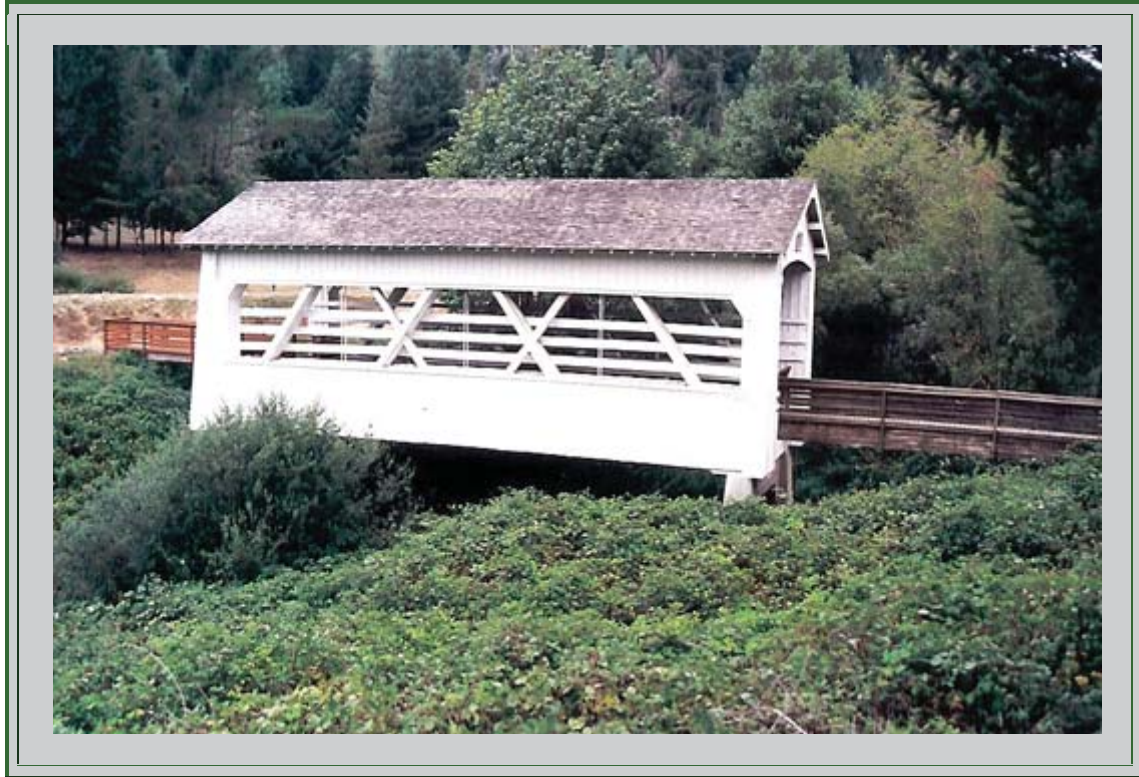
Although small timbers were added to help strengthen the span, technically a truss arrangement is not used. Cedar siding, a shingle roof and windows were added refinements.

The bridge was completed in 1963 for about \$4,500. Bowers has dedicated the bridge to the public. Maintenance cost for the bridge is borne by landowners who use the bridge for access to their property.

High loads have splintered the portal boards and cracked roof braces, prompting the posting of a sign to alert motorists of a 9-foot 1-inch vertical clearance.

Because the span is not actually supported by a truss, a letter has been added as a last character to the World Guide Number to denote that it is not a "true" covered bridge.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Travel two miles north of Bend on Highway 97 toward Redmond. The bridge is located on Bowery Lane, west of Highway 97



the **Sandy Creek Bridge** - Photo by: Bill Cockrell

The county's lone covered bridge near Remote was by-passed from auto-crossing in 1949 and now rests in a wayside park.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Finding the bridge is easy. Take highway 42 west from Roseburg to Remote. The bridge stands next to the concrete highway crossing.



**Chitwood Bridge** - Photo by: Judy Prindel

Not much activity occurs at Chitwood anymore. The Chitwood Bridge was once surrounded by several stores, a post office, a telephone office, and several houses. The boarded up remains of the Smith store nearby is a dim reminder of the vitality the community once had.

Logging in the area once boomed enough to support not only the stores, but also contributed to rowdy times in the Chitwood Dance Hall.

In the early 1900s Chitwood became an important rail stop for the steam locomotives from Yaquina to Corvallis, as the town was where the engines took on water and fuel, as well as passengers and freight.

The rails near the bridge are still used, but the train no longer stops at Chitwood. In 1982, Lincoln County officials announced that the bridge had been seriously damaged and would either be replaced or repaired. A public hearing concerning the future of the bridge influenced the commissioners to completely rehabilitate the structure.

Following environmental studies and engineering reports, a contract was awarded the following year to Aubrey Mountain Construction for the rehabilitation work. Supervision was provided by John Gilliland, who had helped build the covered Belknap Bridge in Lane County in 1966.

By December 1983, work had been completed on the roofing, flooring, siding and approaches, costing in excess of \$240,000. Dedication ceremonies in January 1986 included a recitation of history of the area and a parade of vintage cars.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5, take the Corvallis exit (228) west 38 miles through Philomath on US 20. The bridge adjoins Highway 20 near milepost 17. Alternately, travel east from Newport on Highway 20, 17 miles to Chitwood.



### **Drift Creek (Bear Creek) Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

The Drift Creek Bridge has a long history. Originally built south of Lincoln City only 1.5 miles from the coast, the bridge was considered the oldest remaining covered bridge in Oregon.

The span once served traffic on a main north-south route along the Oregon coast. New roads and highways were built later, thus diverting most of the traffic from the now remote site.

When the bridge was built in 1914, the community surrounding the bridge site was known as Lutgens, and in 1917, the name was changed to Nice. In all, at least eight name changes occurred in this community prior to the closing of the post office in 1919.

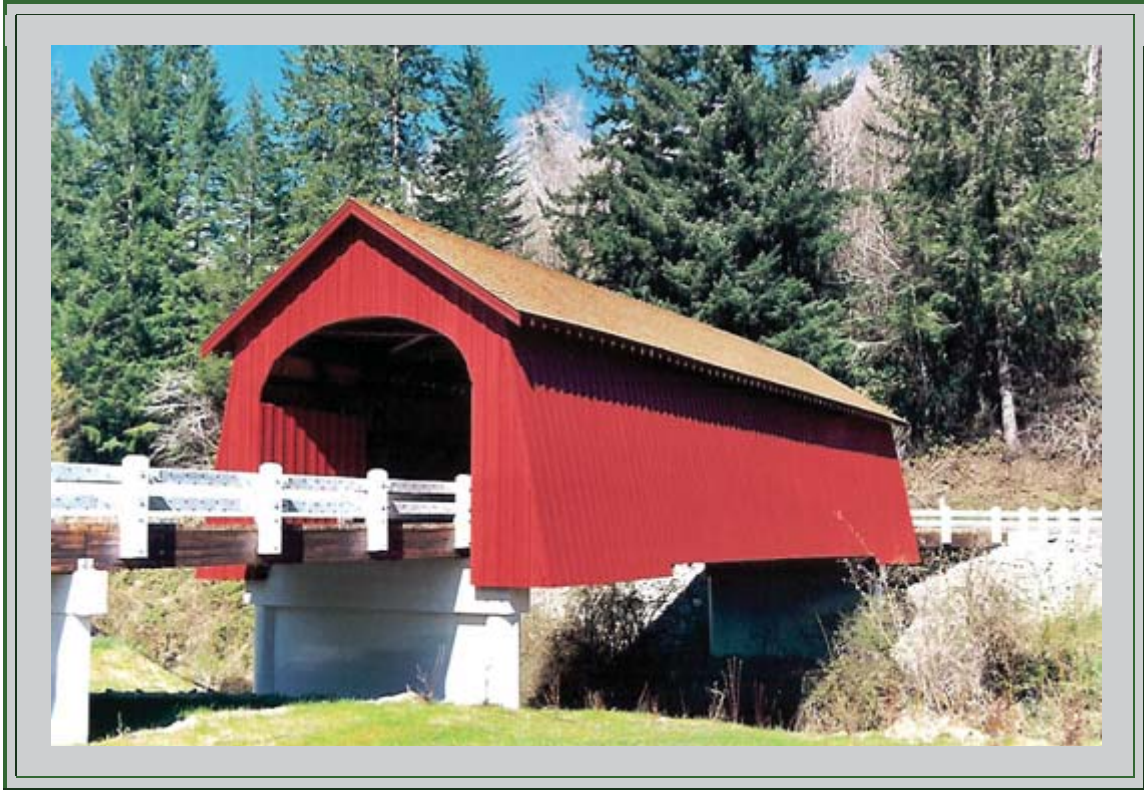
After the bridge was bypassed with a concrete span in the mid-1960s, Lincoln County passed an ordinance preserving the wooden structure as an historical memorial to the Lincoln County pioneers.

However, in early 1988, Lincoln County officials had to close the Drift Creek Bridge to pedestrian traffic due to the deteriorating condition of the span. Excessive rot and insect damage had weakened the bridge to a dangerous level. Steel beams were installed inside the bridge to keep it from falling into the water.

The area around the bridge was excavated in an effort to isolate the structure and limit access. This bridge was dismantled in late 1997. The County gave the timbers to the Sweitz family who owned land only eight miles to the north of the original site. Laura and Kerry Sweitz had envisioned the house being rebuilt over their concrete bridge that provides access to their property across Bear Creek. In the pioneer spirit that this bridge represents and through hardship and strife, their monumental efforts resulted in the resurrection of the bridge which now stands in a small, beautiful park-like setting.

The Sweitz family has given the public easement for heritage purposes for all time.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Lincoln City head north on Hwy. 101 to Hwy. 18. Travel east on Hwy. 18 to milepost 3.96. Exit Hwy. 18 and travel south on Bear Creek Road 0.9 mile. The bridge is located on the left.



### **Fisher School Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

The Fisher Bridge is located in the rugged foothills of Lincoln County. The structure spans Five Rivers, so named because of the five streams of Alder Creek, Cougar Creek, Buck Creek, Crab Creek and Cherry Creek which make up the stream.

According to a 1942 Lincoln County bridge report, the Fisher Bridge was built in 1927 at a cost of \$1,800. The dispute in the date of construction may have been due to the renovation of the span in 1927. Other county records show the cost to build the span in 1919 was \$2,500.

According to George Melvin, a workman who helped to build the bridge, a group of farmers aided in construction by cutting large trees in the area which they shaped into logs with the use of broadaxes. After the main framework was completed, it was enclosed with lumber cut at the saw mill operated by the Olsen brothers.

During the 1970s, residents of the Fisher community rallied to preserve the bridge, which was slated for demolition. Following construction of a concrete bridge a few feet away, Lincoln County invested about \$2,000 to replace the rotted siding on the covered span.

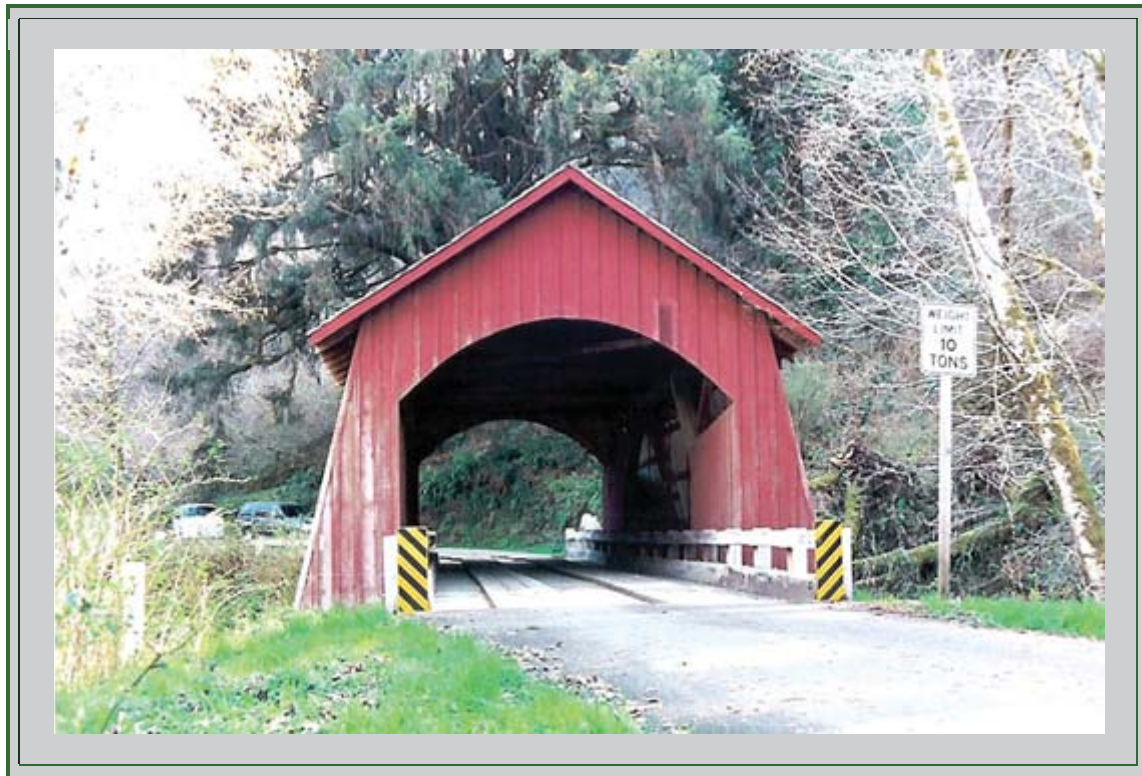
Among the supporters was Roy Olsen, a relative of the brothers who provided the lumber that was used to enclose the trusses during the original construction. Due to close proximity of the Fisher Elementary School, some refer to the covered bridge as the Fisher School Bridge.

The area around Five Rivers was the site of other covered bridges, including the 36-foot Buck Creek Bridge built in 1924 and located 2 miles north of Fisher, and the Cascade Creek Bridge, also a 36-foot span built in 1927, just 2 miles west of Fisher.

Only the Fisher Bridge remains. Design features include semi-elliptical portal arches, narrow ribbon openings under the side wall eaves, flared side walls and wood piers.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5, take the Corvallis exit (228) west 38 miles through Philomath on US 20. Follow Highway 34 southwest through Alsea and continue 20 miles west to the Five Rivers-Fisher Road (Forest Service Road 141). Turn

south at the fork at Siletz Road. Continue left past Buck Creek Road about one mile to the bridge. Alternately from Yachats, travel east on Forest Service Road 1560 about 20 miles. This route is not recommended because the road is extremely rough and steep. Note: Forest Service Road 141 connects to the Deadwood Bridge in Lane County.



### **North Fork Yachats Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

The rustic covered bridge spanning the North Fork of the Yachats cost the county only \$1,500 when built in 1938, and was the last covered span constructed by veteran bridge builder Otis Hamer.

Located just seven miles from the salt water of the Pacific Ocean, this trim little bridge is one of the few to escape the "graffiti artists" so common in many other covered bridges.

Since the covered span is the only access for families in the area, the bridge roof was removed to allow a mobile home to cross in the early 1980s.

In 1987, a loaded fuel truck crashed through a weakened approach on the bridge and the accident ruptured a fuel tank. Luckily, no fuel reached the river, and county crews soon repaired damage to the bridge.

The bridge was rehabilitated in 1989 when work crews replaced the trusses and approaches. A new roof and siding were also added.

A dedication in December 1989 officially re-opened the bridge to traffic. The engineer who designed the remodeling stated the bridge, with proper maintenance, should last another 50 years.

The nearby community was established in 1880 as Ocean View, and was changed to Yachats in 1916 in salutation to a local tribe. The name "Yachats," according to the tribe, means "at the foot of the mountain," an appropriate nomenclature for both the bridge and the community.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Yachats travel approximately 7 miles east on Yachats River Road to N Yachats River Road. At the intersection turn north and travel approximately 1.5 miles

### **Cavitt Creek Bridge -**

The Cavitt Creek Bridge, crossing Little River at the junction with Cavitt Creek, is another of the wooden structures built by Floyd Frear, noted Douglas County builder.

The design features Tudor arch portals to accommodate heavy log truck usage, and the upper and lower chords utilize raw logs as its members. Each side of the roofed structure sports three windows, and long narrow slits above each truss allow "daylighting" as well as ventilation for the bridge interior.

The bridge has a metal roof and a floor with longitudinal running planks. The covered structure sits on concrete piers. The area surrounding the bridge site was settled in the early 1880's and named for Robert Cavitt, who settled on a tributary of Little River.

This covered bridge was included in the thematic nomination of Oregon's covered bridges to the National Register in 1979, but was not listed at the request of the County.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Roseburg take Highway 138 east to Glide. Just before entering Glide turn south on Little River Road. The bridge is approximately seven miles south of Highway 138 at the intersection of Little River Road and Cavitt Creek Road (county roads 17 and 82).

### **Horse Creek Bridge -**

Built in 1930, Horse Creek Covered Bridge originally spanned Horse Creek in the vicinity of McKenzie Bridge in Lane County.

Although the bridge had been bypassed by a concrete span in 1968, it was not removed until December of 1987.

The bridge's wooden timbers were given to the City of Cottage Grove for salvage. Cottage Grove used some of the timbers to construct a small-scale covered bridge in their park.

The remaining lumber was donated to the City of Myrtle Creek in the spring of 1990.

The structure now spans the stream of Myrtle Creek, providing access from a parking area into the Mill Site Park in downtown Myrtle Creek.

Prior to removal, this bridge was listed on the National Historic Register.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Exit Interstate 5 at Myrtle Creek. Follow Highway 99, the main street through downtown. The bridge is to the west in Mill Site Park.



### **Milo Academy Bridge -**

The bridge at the Seventh Day Adventist Academy near Milo is one-of-a-kind in Oregon covered bridge history. The covering certainly is not a structural necessity but fills an aesthetic need, as it is Oregon's only steel bridge housed in wood.

The World Guide Number now ends with a letter, indicating the span is not a true truss supported bridge.

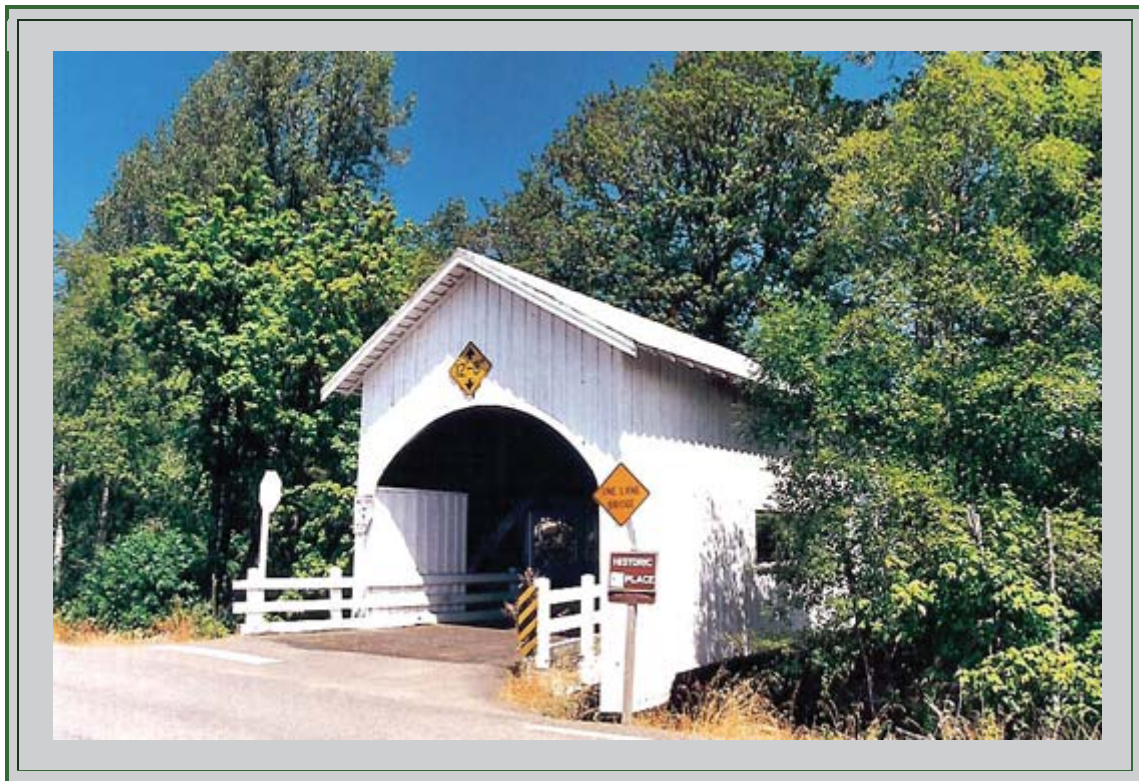
Since 1920, residents had a covered bridge serving the academy across the South Umpqua River. When the wooden covered bridge was replaced with a steel span, the community felt it had lost a part of its identity.

The steel structure was then modified to include the wooden housing, and today the white covered bridge stands as a reminder to the residents of their previous covered bridge.

The bridge is privately owned and maintained by the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The area was settled prior to the 1880s and the post office was established in 1884. Originally known as Perdue, the name was changed to Milo in 1923 when a community member suggested it be named Milo after her husband's birthplace in Maine.

The Milo Academy Bridge is one of only two covered bridges in the Oregon Covered Bridges Thematic Group which do not have a timber truss support.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Canyonville travel east on Third Street and continue through Days Creek to the community of Milo. The bridge is located east of Milo at Milepost 20.5



the **Neal Lane Bridge** - Photo by: Bill Cockrell

The Neal Lane Bridge, also known as the South Myrtle Creek Bridge, near the town of Myrtle Creek has at least two distinctions: it is one of the shortest covered bridges in Oregon, and the only roofed span in Oregon using a kingpost truss design.

The wooden bridge is just 42 feet long, and the addition of the narrow windows make it appear even shorter.

The bridge spans Myrtle Creek, a stream used heavily for irrigation. Travelers crossing the bridge will note its cross-wise plank flooring, a single window on either side, a metal roof and a 5-ton weight limit.

One local resident claims to have been a workman on the bridge in 1939, disputing the construction date of 1929.

The site at Myrtle Creek was originally settled in 1851. It was sold to John Hall in 1862, who established the town in 1865. The name Myrtle Creek was in recognition of the nearby groves of Oregon Myrtle, an evergreen tree distinguished by a strong camphor odor.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From the city center of Myrtle Creek travel south on Main Street to Riverside Drive. Head east on Riverside Drive to Day's Creek Cut Off Road. Travel South on Day's Creek Cut-off Road to Neal Lane.

## Pass Creek Bridge -

Although the official date of construction of the current Pass Creek Bridge is listed as 1925, members of the Umpqua Historic Preservation Society attest the span was constructed in 1906.

Mamie Krewson Matoon, who was born in 1894, remembered a covered bridge over Pass Creek as a child. "It was an old bridge at the time. Long before Drain had lights, we packed a lantern on dark nights when going through it in a hack drawn by two horses."

The original bridge at this site was built in the 1870s along the Overland Stage Route, as Drain was an important junction which linked the Willamette Valley and Jacksonville. An 1895-era photograph shows the wagon bridge and adjacent railroad bridge, both being covered. The wooden rail span was replaced soon after.

Old timers recall the Pass Creek Bridge provided excitement when a horse-drawn wagon crashed through the floor around 1920 while hauling supplies for a Thanksgiving turkey shoot. Although the wagon dropped below the decking, the only casualties were the words uttered by the driver, the drowning of turkeys and splashing of supplies into the creek.

It is probable the covered wagon bridge at this location was either rebuilt or replaced in 1925, displacing the earlier span. Holes in the lower chords indicate that it may have been salvaged from another bridge. Today a concrete bridge now crosses Pass Creek where the old wooden structure once rested.

In the fall of 1987, after the roof and siding of the covered bridge were removed, a 90-ton crane lifted the trusses and moved them one block away where the structure was reassembled the following year.

The wooden bridge had been closed to traffic since 1981, causing the handful of local residents surrounding the span to maneuver under a cramped railroad trestle to get to their homes.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Highway 99 (West B Street) in Drain, turn south onto 2nd Street and go one block to West A Street. Located in the city of Drain, behind Drain Civic Center at 205 W. A Street.

## Rochester Bridge -

The Rochester Covered Bridge, with its droopy-eyed appearance, sits just three miles northwest of Sutherlin among the farms surrounding the Calapooya River.

The design of this bridge is unique among Oregon roofed structures, featuring windows having graceful curved tops.

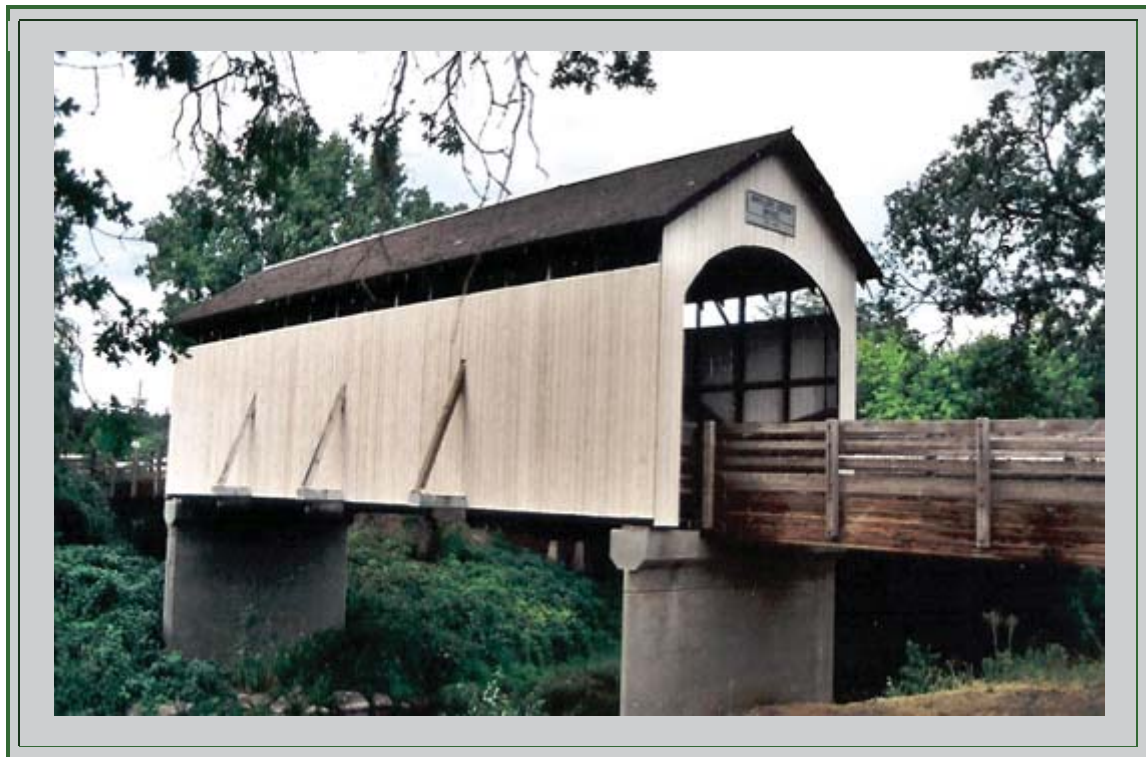
Built by veteran builder Floyd Frear, the bridge combines both beauty and strength offered by the wooden structure.

In the late 1950s, a nearby covered span was torched and destroyed by a county crew to make way for a new concrete bridge. Rumors had spread that the Rochester bridge would meet the same fate.

Many local residents, fearful that those same county workers who favored progress would wait until nightfall to burn the Rochester Bridge, sat through the night with guns and rifles to safeguard the dilapidated structure. With the arrival of daylight, the bridge was safe.

County commissioners then promised the residents the bridge would not be burned. The Rochester Bridge was remodeled in 1969 when county crews worked to replace portal boarding, the approaches and the abutments.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Sutherlin travel west on Highway 138 approximately two miles to Sterns Lane. Turn north on Sterns Lane to Rochester Road. The bridge is just north of the intersection of Sterns Lane and Rochester Road.



**Antelope Creek Bridge** - Photo by: Bill Cockrell

The bridge originally spanned Antelope Creek some 10 miles southeast of Eagle Point.

In August 1987, the structure was loaded onto a makeshift trailer and volunteers hauled it to the city of Eagle Point.

When the bridge was rebuilt at the new site, arched openings were cut into each side so school children could be watched as they crossed the span. This alteration caused the bridge to be removed from the National Register of Historic Places. Since then, the bridge has been re-sided in a fashion that represents the original design. Now only ribbon openings appear under the eaves.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Highway 62 in Eagle Point, turn east onto Linn Road (sign points to Eagle Point and Klamath Falls). Travel to South Buchanan Street and turn left. Turn right onto West Main Street and continue to Royal Avenue. The bridge is located in the city of Eagle Point at the intersection of Main Street and Royal Avenue

## **The Original Wimer Bridge**

Wimer Bridge: It was the only Jackson County covered bridge open to vehicle traffic, but collapsed due to traffic in July 2003.

On a hot summer afternoon, in the quiet community of Wimer, Oregon, local residents were startled to hear a giant crashing sound coming from the vicinity of their covered bridge. Customers at the Wimer Market, only a dozen paces away, rushed out to witness the unthinkable. The historic Wimer Covered Bridge in Southern Oregon had spontaneously collapsed into Evans Creek. Those who were the closest also heard shouts for help coming from inside the rubble and scampered down the bank, over the shattered shingled roof and lifted broken wooden beams to rescue a man and his two young grandsons. They were the last persons to stroll through the old covered bridge on that fateful Sunday.

The July 6, 2003 incident shocked and saddened a community. The weekly Rogue River Press expressed what many residents felt with the simple headline in its next issue: "It's Gone!"

Ironically, the covered bridge was scheduled for a major overhaul. Engineers had completed blue prints just two months earlier and the construction project was to go out for bid in September that year. Jackson County had acquired grants for over a half million dollars for the renovation that was due to begin in 2004. But the tired old structure couldn't wait and gave way in mid stream. Obviously, there has been a change in plans.

The original Wimer Covered Bridge was built in 1892 by J. W. Osbourne but, in 1927, was totally replaced by Jason Hartman, then Jackson County bridge superintendent. Over the years the Evans Creek crossing received numerous repairs, but time and use took its toll on the aging span. In 1962 attentive residents saved the bridge from destruction when a citizens effort rebuilt the weakening structure. Load limits were set at 3 tons with no heavy truck traffic allowed.

### **Planning to Rebuild**

On April 6, 2004 over 120 people from Wimer, Evans Valley and throughout Southern Oregon, gathered in the Rogue River High School gymnasium to initiate plans to rebuild the Wimer Covered Bridge. A half dozen Jackson County officials and engineers presented the Wimer Covered Bridge Feasibility Study which included architectural drawings, financial analyses, and six alternatives for replacement. Eighty-three percent of attendees at the public meeting voted to replace the original wooden truss covered bridge. For that choice, the financial analysis broke down like this: Initial Project Cost, \$887,000. Current federal funds from the National Historic Covered Bridge Presentation Program, \$407,000. Current Budgeted County Funding, \$146,000. That leaves additional funding required for the initial project in the amount of \$334,000. If the community is to have a new bridge just like the old one, it needs to pitch in with fund raising projects.

The Citizens for Rebuilding the Wimer Covered Bridge, now a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization, is dedicated and wants to recapture history. It took a year for the community to shake off the shock of losing its beloved old bridge, but now a revised Citizens committee has a mission and a goal. It is determined to build a new covered bridge, a replica of the old one. In a letter to the committee, a Jackson County Commissioner outlined what the community needs to do before the County can secure the federal portion of the funds for a new covered bridge: Either the community comes up with a fundraising Plan to raise the extra money, or the County will proceed with their own

plan to build the least expensive bridge. “That sounds like the County wants to build a boring old concrete bridge,” complained a Citizens committee member. “We’re not going to let them do that.” Headed by new Chairman Dan Roberts, a new board of directors and dozens of volunteers, the Committee has outlined a Master Plan of fundraising activities to raise its portion of the needed funds.

The bottom line is the community needs to raise \$334,000 if it wants another wooden covered bridge, and already that amount has been reduced. But the local community has a basic financial challenge. Half the residences, from Rogue River to Wimer, are made up of low-income households and the elderly. Additional funds can’t come from local sources alone, they need to be raised from the outside, from grants, from public and private donations and from covered bridge buffs all over the nation who also want to see the bridge replaced.

### **A New Covered Bridge**

In the past, history buffs, tourists and motorists of all stripes took the path less traveled and drove out to the rural reaches of Evans Valley to see the old covered bridge. Out-of-town visitors to the area created their own tradition and purposely went the extra mile just to drive through the bridge once more before returning home.

With a new covered bridge in place, locals and visitors will, as they have done before, stop to take pictures, enjoy bar-b-cue at the Wimer Market, relax in Mae Ellis Park below the span, maybe pick wild blackberries along the creek, wade in the cool water, and reminisce about their personal attachment to the area. In time the community of Wimer will, with a little help, have another covered bridge as its centerpiece. Their best assets are those among them who have a vision for the future. They know how it can be again.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** 7 miles northeast of Rogue River on East Evans Creek Road (turn right on Covered Bridge Road in community of Wimer).

### the **Antelope Creek Bridge** -

The Lost Creek Bridge, at 39 feet, is the shortest of all Oregon covered bridges. Since 1979, the structure has been closed to traffic with a concrete span handling the few vehicles each day.

Many Jackson County residents, including Shirley Stone, daughter of pioneer John Walch, claim the Lost Creek Bridge to have been built as early as 1878-1881. If authenticated, this would make it Oregon’s oldest standing covered bridge.

Johnny Miller, the builder of the Lost Creek Bridge, also roofed the nearby span at Lake Creek in the 1880s, thus lending credence to a sign nailed on the bridge: LOST CREEK BRIDGE, BUILT ABOUT 1881.

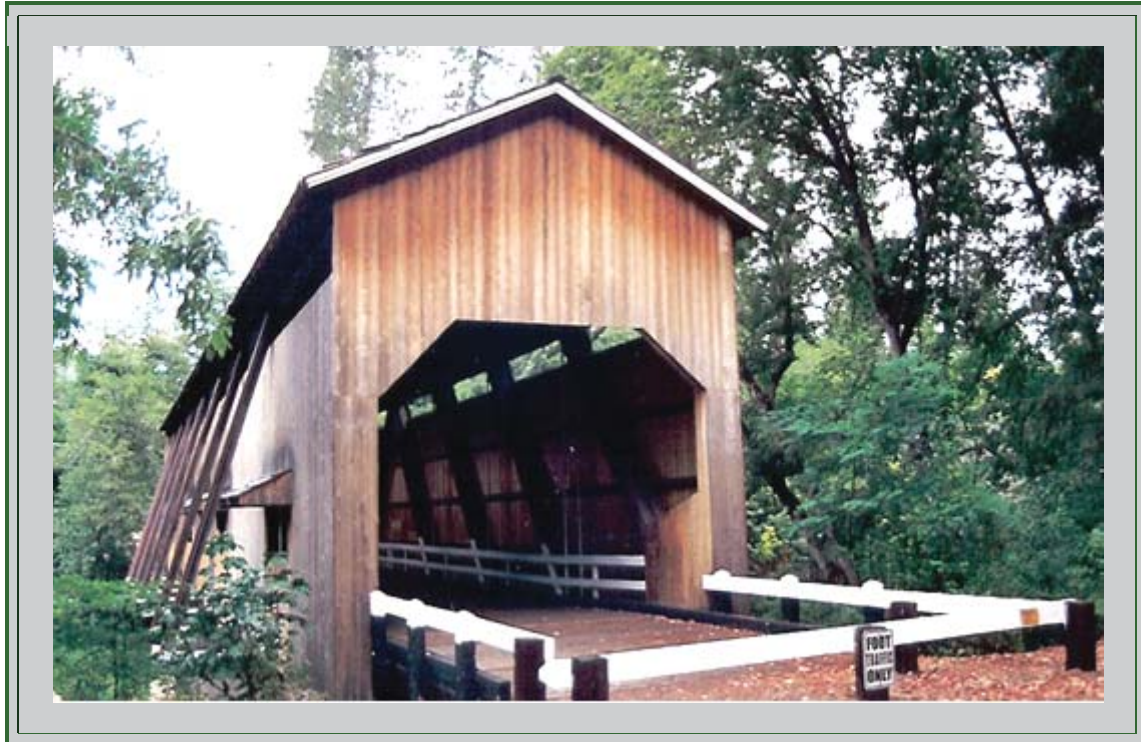
The span may have been partially or totally rebuilt in 1919, hence the official construction date in that year. Features of the bridge include the usual county Queenpost design, a shingle roof and flying buttress braces. The rough wooden flooring consists of diagonal planking, and hand hewn truss members provide structural stability.

A new roof was installed by local residents in 1985. Portal boards were added in 1986, restoring the look of the span in 1920 before accommodations were made for log truck traffic.

The Walch Memorial Wayside Park abuts the bridge site. Descendants of John and Marie Newsome Walch built and maintain the park, which includes picnic tables, a bandstand, cooking areas, an early 1900s outhouse, and manicured flower gardens.

The bridge was nearly lost in the 1964 Christmas flood. As swirling waters and heavy debris lashed at its piers, residents and concerned bridge enthusiasts prayed during the night that the bridge would be saved. According to a local newspaper, the skies opened and the water receded as morning came. The journalist questioned, "Was the bridge saved by prayer?"

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Eagle Point, continue southeast on Royal Avenue to Highway 140. Alternately, travel east on Highway 140 from Highway 62, Crater Lake Highway. Continue on Highway 140 to Lake Creek Loop Road. From Lake Creek Loop Road, travel south through Lake Creek on South Fork Little Butte Creek Road. Turn south on Lost Creek Road and continue approximately one half mile. Lost Creek Bridge is 4 miles south of Lake Creek.



the **McKee Bridge** - Photo by: Bill Cockrell

The rustic, well-known covered bridge spanning the Applegate River, just eight miles from the California border, was built in 1917 by contractor Jason Hartman and his son Wesley on land donated by Aldelbert "Deb" McKee.

The bridge was used from 1917 to 1956, originally serving the mining and logging traffic. In 1956, the bridge was declared unsafe for vehicular traffic.

The combined efforts, in 1965, of the Talisman Lodge, Knights of Pythias, Upper Applegate Grange, and the Jackson County Court restored the roof, thereby keeping the aging structure open for pedestrian use.

Little upkeep followed, and by the early 1980s County officials were worried about the strength of the bridge.

During the summer of 1985, more than \$40,000 in labor and materials were dedicated to repair the bridge and keep it open for pedestrians. Jackson County officials then announced that future County investment in the bridge would be impractical, and has looked to private efforts for ongoing preservation of the McKee span.

The McKee Committee was formed in January 1989 with the goal of raising \$25,000 for preservation and maintenance of the span. By mid summer, a major portion of the funds, or volunteer labor, had been generated. Included in the final fund-raising was the sale of memorabilia and the production of an historic quilt featuring a bridge motif.

Features of the McKee Bridge include a Howe truss design, flying buttresses, open daylighting windows at the roofline, and a shingle roof.

Lindsay Applegate, for whom the stream is named, prospected the area on the way to the mines in California. The discovery of prosperous mines caused a north-south route to be developed in the area, and the covered bridge was used as a rest stop, until 1919, because it was halfway between Jacksonville and the Blue Ledge Cooper Mine to the south.

The McKee Picnic Ground, a Rogue National Forest facility, is at the west end of the bridge along the Applegate River.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Medford travel west on Highway 238 through Jacksonville to Ruch. From Ruch head south on Applegate Road for approximately 8.5 miles

## Grave Creek Bridge -

The Grave Creek covered span at Sunny Valley, about 15 miles north of Grants Pass, can be seen by motorists traveling Interstate 5.

Features of the wooden structure include six gothic style windows on either side, concrete abutments, a Howe truss, rounded portals and a shake roof.

The old wooden river crossing is the last covered bridge on the northsouth Pacific Highway system. Existing records on the GraveCreek Bridge show a contract awarded by the Oregon State Highway Department to J. Elmer Nelson in April 1920.

Just four months later, traffic passed through its portals. The 105-foot Howe truss is supported by "dumb bell" concrete piers. Total cost of the construction, including the engineering fees, is listed at \$21,128.

When Interstate 5 was built nearby, ownership and maintenance of the Sunny Valley Loop Road, which includes Grave Creek Bridge, passed to Josephine County. In the late 1990s, the bridge was closed to traffic and was reopened in 2001 after repairs to the approaches and housing.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Grants Pass, travel 15 miles north in Interstate 5 to Sunny Valley exit. Turn left at Sunny Valley Loop Road and continue north for about one mile. Grave Creek can be seen from I-5 and is approximately 0.25 miles from the highway.

## the Harris Bridge

The Harris Bridge was built by H. W. Fiedler to replace a covered bridge at the same site.

Although Benton County records show 1936 as the construction date, some locals claim the span may have been built in 1929.

The Harris Bridge retains its rounded portal design and other features include narrow windows below the roofline to light the bridge interior and longitudinal deck planks.

The siding is board and batten style, and the roof is shingled.

Harris has been a community since 1890, bearing the name of a pioneer landowner. When the post office was established, residents petitioned for the name of Harris, but postal authorities feared confusion might develop with nearby Harrisburg.

The town was known as Elam, for Mrs. Gladys Elam, but the name of the community was later changed to Harris.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Corvallis take Highway 20 through Philomath to Wren. Exit the highway, turn right twice to head back under the highway (veering) to the right at the "Y". Continue to travel west on Harris Road for approximately 2.5 miles.



the **Hayden Bridge** - Photo by: Paul Deathereage

Spanning the Alsea River only two miles west of Alsea, the Hayden Bridge is one of the oldest in the state.

The span was either partially or totally rebuilt in 1945. Its portals, once rounded in design, have been enlarged to a more modern design to facilitate larger loads.

Vertical board and batten siding flares out at the base, similar to Lincoln County covered spans. A daylighting window strip below the roofline on both sides of the bridge illuminates the interior.

Alsea was a river community as early as 1850, known as Alseya Settlement. The name is derived from the name of



an Indian tribe living at the mouth of the river, originally pronounced in three syllables.

During the heyday of covered bridge construction, several of the covered structures were built close by on the Alsea River and its tributary.

Oregon's last covered span on a primary state highway, the Mill Creek Bridge on Oregon Highway 34, stood just two miles away. Only the Hayden Bridge remains.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Corvallis take Highway 34 southwest approximately 24 miles to Alsea and continue west 2 miles to Hayden Road. Turn left on Hayden Road and continue for several hundred yards to the bridge



the **Irish Bend Covered Bridge** - Photo by: Judy Prindel

The bridge was built using a standard Highway Division design dating back to the 1920s. Following its construction in 1954, the bridge provided access across the Willamette Slough on Irish Bend Road, approximately 15 miles south of Corvallis.

Following installation of two large culverts and realignment of the road in 1975, the Irish Bend covered span languished until it was dismantled in 1988.

The span may originally have been constructed over the Long Tom River about 30 miles to the south and later moved to the Irish Bend site, but research on this issue is not yet completed. Various plans had been proposed for use of the bridge, including floating it downriver to be relocated to a new site.

Through negotiations an agreement was reached between Benton County officials and Oregon State University to reconstruct it on university property in Corvallis. The Irish Bend Advisory Committee raised over \$30,000, with Benton County providing an equal amount in matching funds, for the relocation of the span.

Because no maintenance had been performed for more than 15 years, many of the timbers had rotted. New stringers were donated by a local mill, and an engineering firm provided the foundation without charge.

The bridge site is part of a path through the research farm between 35th and 53rd Streets on the west side of the OSU campus. While the property is owned by the university, maintenance will be carried out by the Benton County Parks Department, since the bridge is part of a bicycle and pedestrian path along Oak Creek.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Located on the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis. From I-5, exit 234 at Albany, travel southwest on Highway 20 to Corvallis. Follow Highway 34 southwest toward Philomath. Turn right (north) on 53rd Street and park in the County Fairgrounds on the west side of 53rd. Follow the foot path (Campus Way) on the east side of 53rd to the bridge

### the **Belknap Bridge** -

The Belknap Bridge occupies a site in which a covered bridge has been in continuous use since 1890. The neighboring community recognized the importance of a river crossing at that location and adopted the name "McKenzie Bridge."

In 1911 the first bridge was replaced by Lane County with another covered structure.

The third covered bridge at this site was erected in 1939 and was destroyed by the Christmas Flood of 1964. The current covered span was designed by Oregon Bridge Corporation of Springfield and built by contract let by the county. The bridge was opened in 1966.

Several years later, louvered windows were added to the bridge to give interior illumination and to reduce the "box effect" of the windowless span. Extensive repairs in 1992 and 2002 strengthened the structure, and a new roof was installed.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Springfield take Highway 126 east approximately 46 miles to the community of McKenzie Bridge. One mile west of the small town of Rainbow, turn south on McKenzie River Drive. Follow McKenzie River Drive for about 0.8 miles to King Road West.



### Original Chambers Bridge

the **Chambers Bridge** - Original Chambers Bridge Photos by: Bill Cockrell

The Chambers Bridge is the last covered railroad bridge in Oregon. It was built by the Oregon, Pacific and Eastern Railroad for a logging spur which brought logs to the Frank Chambers Mill in Cottage Grove.

The actual use for the bridge was short, as the sawmill burned in 1943 and rail traffic no longer crossed the bridge.

Although the bridge trusses are now exposed, at one time the siding completely enclosed the structure to afford maximum protection for the timbers. In the typical construction for railroad spans, truss members of herculean proportions were necessary to support the moving weight of rail payloads.

The hand hewn trusses in the Chambers Bridge, like others, were preferred over millsawed timbers because the wood fibers crushed by saw teeth allowed moisture to more readily enter the axe-formed surfaces.

The western approach to the bridge has been removed to make way for the easement of South River Road. Abandoned for years, the bridge has been a frequent target of arsonists, as the charred timbers attest. Fortunately, the bridge has not succumbed to fire.

Built to accommodate steam engines pulling logging trains, the sides of the Chambers Bridge reach much higher than highway covered spans and give the bridge an appearance of being much longer than its actual length.

The bridge was inspected under the 1993-95 Covered Bridge Program. The bottom chords show extensive decay, and in some places three of the four members are rotted. In several places all three members of the floor beams are rotted. Corbels are decayed and crushed, which makes the house lean as much as 12 inches to the upstream side.

### **Emergency Declared**

On February 9, 2010 it was discovered that the Chambers Covered Railroad Bridge had moved and creating additional leaning upstream. Apparently the bridge had moved as a result of the January 12, 2010 storm. The bridge was in danger of imminent collapse. On Tuesday, February 16, 2010 the Cottage Grove City Council held an Emergency Council Meeting to declare an emergency and authorize the immediate dismantling of the bridge. Upon adoption of the emergency resolution the City and consulting engineers (OBEC) began securing approvals from State and Federal agencies for the dismantling of the bridge. Clearances were received Friday, February 19, 2010 and onsite work began Monday, February 22, 2010.

### **Bridge Dismantling**

Bridge dismantling began February 24, 2010. The bridge was secured and a substructure under the bridge was built to stabilize the bridge during the dismantling. A platform was built on the downstream side of the bridge and rolled under the bridge. Once under the bridge the platform was raised to hold the bridge structure in place. The upper chords were anchored to the downstream substructure to further stabilize the bridge.

### **Rehabilitation**

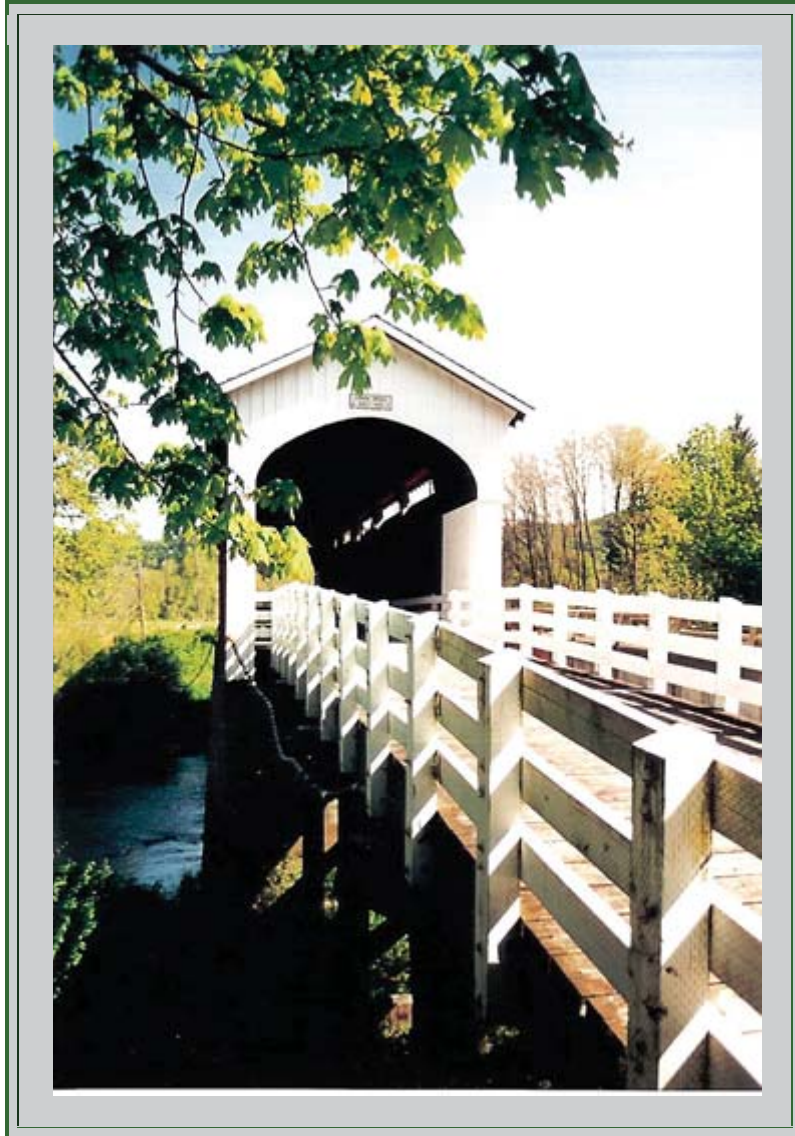
The reconstruction of the bridge began March, 2011. During the summer of 2011 materials were replaced on the site and the bridge was reconstructed. The restored bridge is scheduled for completion in November 2011. Dedication and re-opening of the bridge occurred December 3, 2011.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Exit I-5 at Cottage Grove. Travel south on Highway 99 to Harrison Avenue. Turn west on Harrison to Old River Road. Turn south on Old River Road. Chambers RR is off of Old River Road just south of Harrison.

## **Coyote Creek Bridge -**

Located on the first road in Lane County - the original Territorial Highway, built in 1851. The Howe truss bridge has also gone by the names Swing Log and Battle Creek Bridge.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Take Crow Road, which is 6 miles west of Eugene off of S.R. 126, to its intersection with Territorial Highway. Go south one mile on Battle Creek Road, then turn west to get to the bridge.



the **Currin Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

As with many Lane County landmarks, the Currin Bridge was named after an early pioneer family in the area. Nels Roney constructed the first covered bridge at this site in 1883 for \$1,935.

When it was to be replaced in 1925, Lane County again considered a contract for the bridge construction. The lowest bid was \$6,250. The county felt it could save money by building the bridge itself.

County employees, with the supervision of brothers Miller and Walter Sorenson, constructed the bridge for \$4,025, realizing a substantial savings for the county.

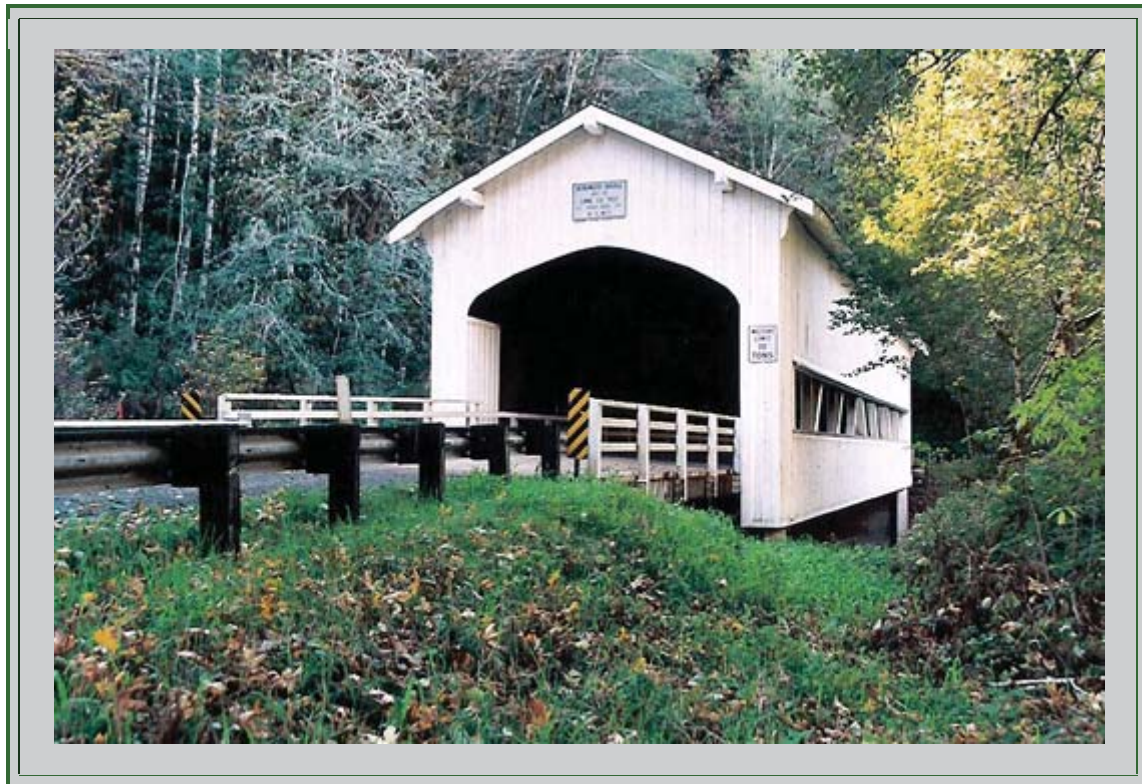
Architectural distinctions include single piece hand-hewn chords and cross-wise planking on the approach. It is Lane County's only covered bridge with white portals and red sides.

Lane County closed the bridge to traffic when it was bypassed by a concrete span that was built only an arm's length away, making the old covered crossing difficult to photograph. In late 1987, the bridge was mothballed by removing

an approach and placing a wire fence in the portal. Additional work included structural repairs and fumigating for insects.

During the 1993-95 Oregon Covered Bridge Program, Lane County received a \$48,000 grant to rehabilitate and re-open the bridge to pedestrian traffic. Work items included truss repairs, a new rail system, a new synthetic roof, repaired siding and house painting. The successful restoration of this bridge is another example of the dedication of the State and local governments to Oregon's covered bridges.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Travel four miles southeast of Cottage Grove on Row River Road to the intersection of Layng Road. The bridge crosses the Row River at this location and is located one mile from the Mosby Creek Bridge, also on Layng Road



the **Deadwood Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

Once considered one of Oregon's most dilapidated covered bridges, the Deadwood Bridge is now among the state's finest refurbished roofed spans.

Lane County bridge builder Miller Sorenson, who supervised the Deadwood Bridge construction in 1932, recalled the construction was unique. Flooring was installed on a slant so that traffic rounding the corner onto the bridge would travel more safely.

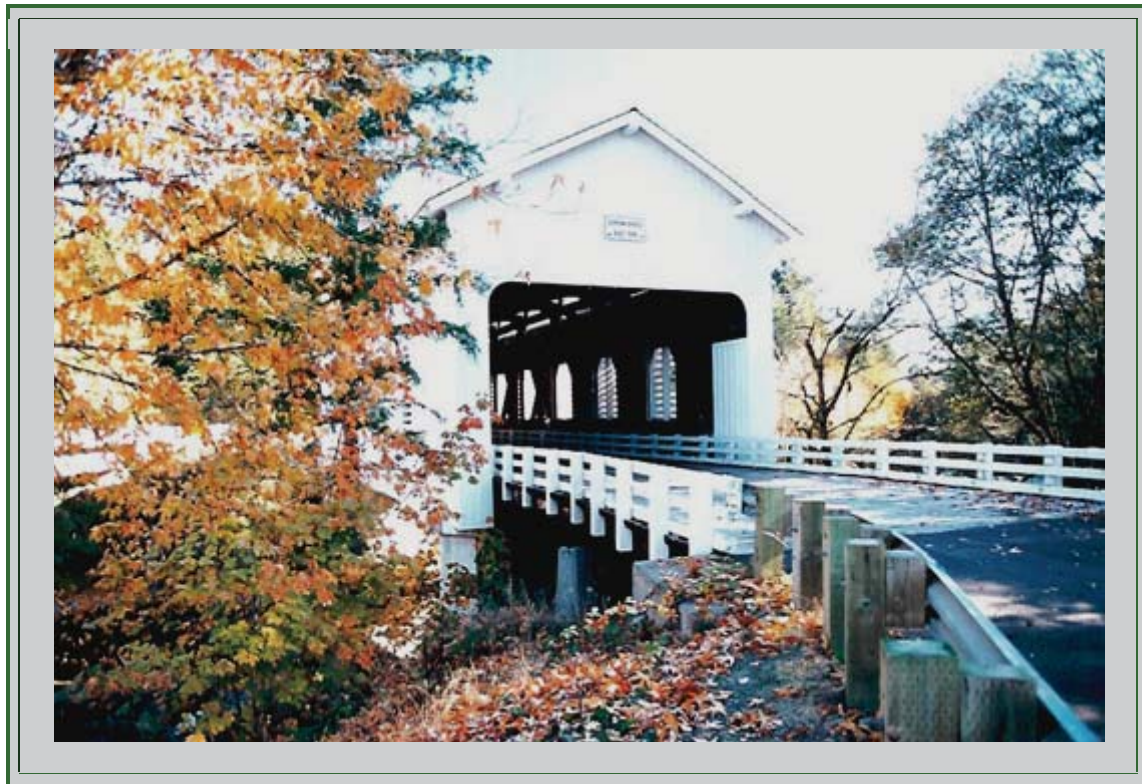
The cost to build the bridge totaled \$4,814, and the bridge became part of the state's secondary road system. The span was bypassed in the 1970s with a concrete bridge providing a more direct route on Deadwood Road about a half mile away, and little maintenance was given the covered bridge.

When the structural condition worsened in the early 1980s, county officials decided to rehabilitate the covered bridge. In 1986, workers replaced damaged siding, flooring and portal boards, along with work on the bracing, roof

and approaches. Following restoration to near mint condition, a dedication ceremony in October 1986 marked the reopening of the bridge to traffic.

All lateral bracing use steel tension rods. The top and bottom chords are made of one piece old-growth timber. The original house had portal openings that were semi-elliptical but the design was changed to a Tudor arch style when the bridge was restored. The house has a long window opening on the north side of the bridge.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Eugene, travel west to Mapleton on Highway 126. Continue northeast on Highway 36 through Swisshome 12 miles to Deadwood (or southwest from Junction City). Turn north on Lower Deadwood Road. Follow Lower Deadwood Road approximately 5 miles and turn right on Deadwood Loop Road. Deadwood Creek is on Deadwood Loop Road at Mile Point 0.3



the **Dorena Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

When Dorena Dam was built in 1946, plans were made to span the Row River at the upper end of the reservoir. Government Road along the west bank was completed in 1949, and the Dorena Bridge was built a year later, after the reservoir was filled, at a cost of \$16,547.

Miller Sorenson, Lane County bridge foreman, supervised the construction. The bridge is often referred to as the "Star Bridge" because it provided access to the nearby Star Ranch.

Once a large and proud estate, the ranch has been reduced to about 100 acres.

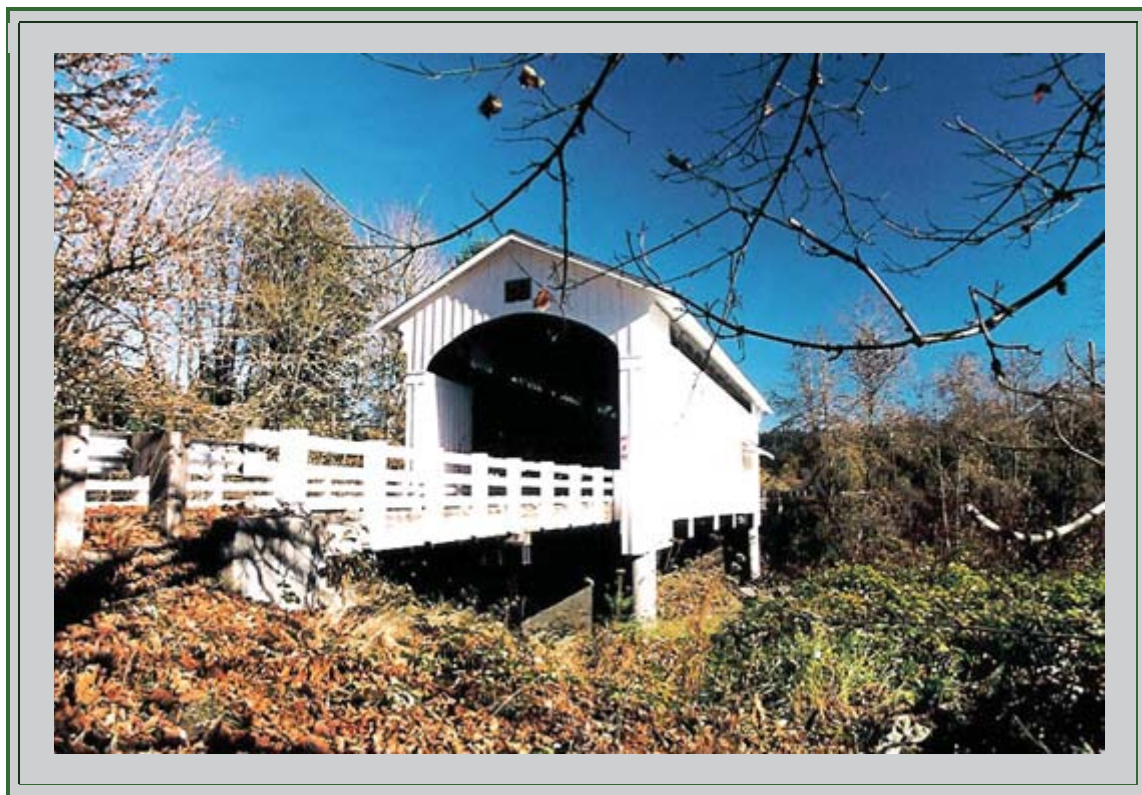
The state-designed bridge was bypassed in 1974 by a concrete span. Repairs were made to the structure in 1987, as part of the county's "mothball" plan for covered bridges. The asphalt flooring was removed, chords fumigated and other rehabilitation work was completed.

The original town site, named for Dora Burnette and Rena Martin (by combining parts of their first names) is underwater at the bottom of the reservoir. A railroad in the vicinity served the mining camps until the gold mines played out.

The lumber industry developed and used the rails to ship logs to Cottage Grove. Until 1987, the rails were used by a steam-powered excursion train. The cost of liability insurance increased too much to keep it going, and only freight traffic passes today.

Lane County requested and received grants from the Oregon Covered Bridge Program totaling \$59,000. These funds were used in the 1996 reconstruction of Dorena Bridge to create a wayside park. The project included replacement of the substructure, replacement of approach spans and extensive repairs to the covered span. When the house was resided, windows were installed for light and improved air flow.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Travel five miles east of Cottage Grove on Row River Road to the junction of Government Road. Continue east on Government Road seven miles to the bridge



the **Earnest Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

The Earnest Bridge enjoys the distinction of having appeared in the movie "Shenandoah," filmed in the Mohawk Valley during the mid-1960s. The movie company requested permission from the county to "alter" the bridge to reflect Civil War architecture, and promised to restore the bridge to equal or better condition.

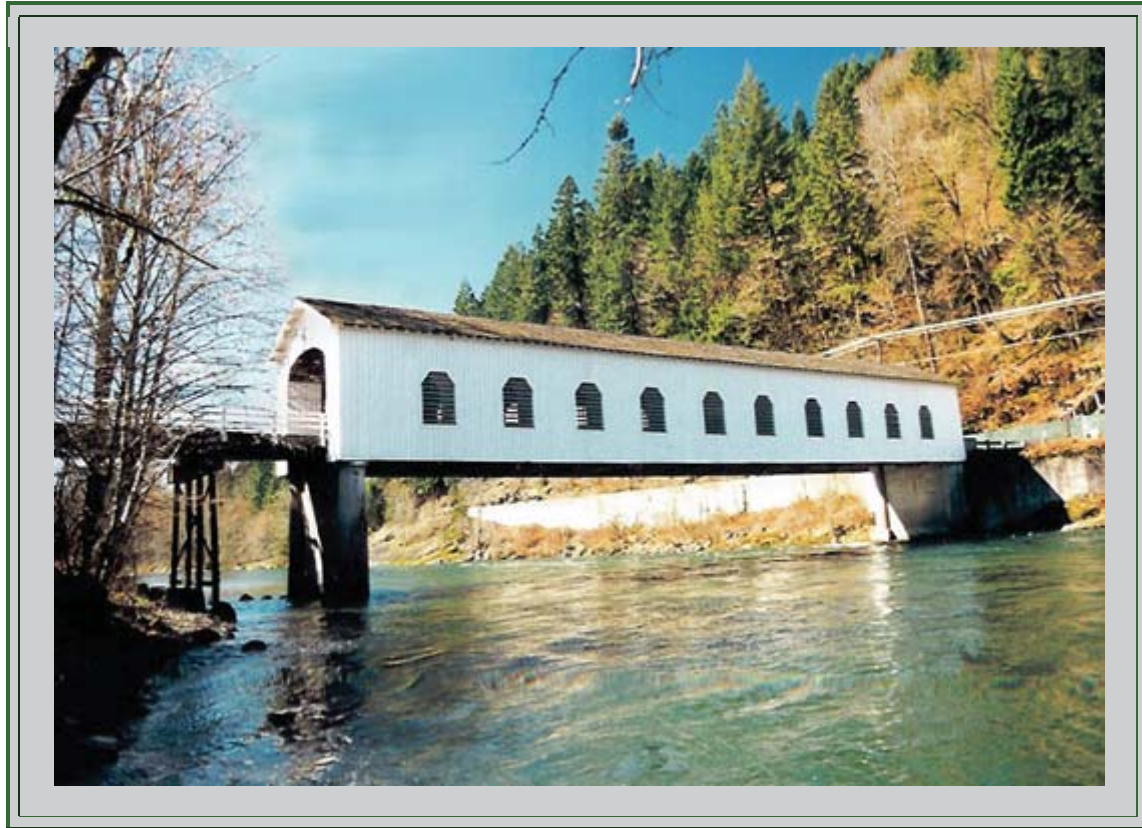
The promise was kept, and the span received new siding and paint in 1965.

The original covered bridge at this site, an 83-foot structure called the Adams Bridge, was erected by A.N.Striker in 1903. When it was replaced in 1938 by Lane County, the \$2,449 cost included \$72 for wrecking the old bridge.



The new bridge with upper chord dimensions of 12" x 12" x 50 feet and lower dimensions of 12" x 14" x 81.5 feet, was named after longtime residents of the area.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From I-5 exit I-105 east to Marcola Road. Follow Marcola Road approximately 14 miles. Earnest Bridge is located on Paschelke Road.



the **Goodpasture Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

The Goodpasture Bridge is one of the most beautiful and most photographed covered bridges in the state. Designed by the State Highway Department and built by Lane County, the classical and timeless architecture of this bridge is accentuated by Gothic style windows on both sides of the structure.

At 165 feet, the span is the longest covered bridge in Oregon still in daily use. Lane County spent \$13,154 constructing the Goodpasture Bridge and is still reaping the benefits of a good investment.

Unfortunately, both time and traffic have significantly weakened the span. By the early 1980s, rumors persisted that the Goodpasture Bridge would be closed with a new concrete span built to handle the local traffic.

Instead, Lane County agreed to repair the bridge, and work was completed in 1987 which included renovation to handle the daily loads of log trucks. In addition, the remodeling included a right-turn lane for traffic exiting Highway 126 onto the bridge, and a concrete retaining wall along the north bank of the McKenzie River.

Some \$750,000 was spent to complete work on the bridge, road, approaches and wingwall. The Eugene Register-Guard reported that Ole Halverson, who helped built the bridge in 1938, attended the dedication in April 1987 and liked what he saw. "They did an excellent job of strengthening it," Halverson said. "It looks the same as new."

The nearby town of Vida was once called Gate Creek, resulting in confusion with Gales Creek in Washington County. "Vida" was selected as an alternate name because it was also the name of the daughter of postmaster Francis Peport.

The Goodpasture family settled near the town of Vida and gave their name to the bridge

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Springfield travel east on the McKenzie River Highway (Oregon Highway 126) for about 25.5 miles. Goodpasture Bridge is on Goodpasture County Road at Highway 126 just east of Vida



the **Lowell Bridge** - Photo by: Wayne Fernandez

When Amos Hyland settled on the Middle Fork of the Willamette River in 1874, he plotted a small townsite and named it after his birthplace of Lowell, Maine.

Hyland operated a ferry across the Willamette near the present site of the Lowell Bridge until Nels Roney built the first bridge at Lowell in 1907. Roney was paid \$6,295 for the 210-foot span.

A truck mishap in the old Lowell Bridge in the early 1940s knocked the truss out of alignment. The Roney-built bridge was replaced at a cost of \$25,473 in 1945.

Two years later it was housed. In 1953, the whole bridge was raised six feet and the roadway rebuilt in anticipation of the flooding produced by Dexter Dam. The engineers' estimates were correct, and water has never risen closer than 2 feet from the bottom of the bridge.

Until 1981, some of the heaviest truck traffic in Oregon passed through the Lowell Bridge. It was closed that year when a modern concrete span was built paralleling the old wooden one. Prior to the closure, a dump truck passing through the bridge with its bed raised extensively damaged the span. Lane

County replaced broken lateral roof braces and portal boards, only to close the structure several weeks later when it was bypassed.

Western Federal Lands Highway Division, Lane County, Oregon Department of Transportation and the United States Forest Service are entering into an agreement to create an interpretive center for the Lowell Covered Bridge. This project will include restoration and rehabilitation of the bridge, as well as creating a parking area with bathrooms, developing interpretive features and signing. The total cost of the project is expected to be \$1.2 million.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5 take Highway 58 east to Lowell. Alternately, from Unity follow Jasper-Lowell Road about 3 miles to Highway 58. Lowell is on the south side of Dexter Lake

## **Mosby Creek Bridge -**

The Mosby Creek Bridge is Lane County's oldest covered bridge, having been built in 1920 at a cost of \$4,125 by Walter and Miller Sorenson.

Spliced chords and steel rod cross-braces on the upper chords of the bridge are modifications of the basic Howe truss design.

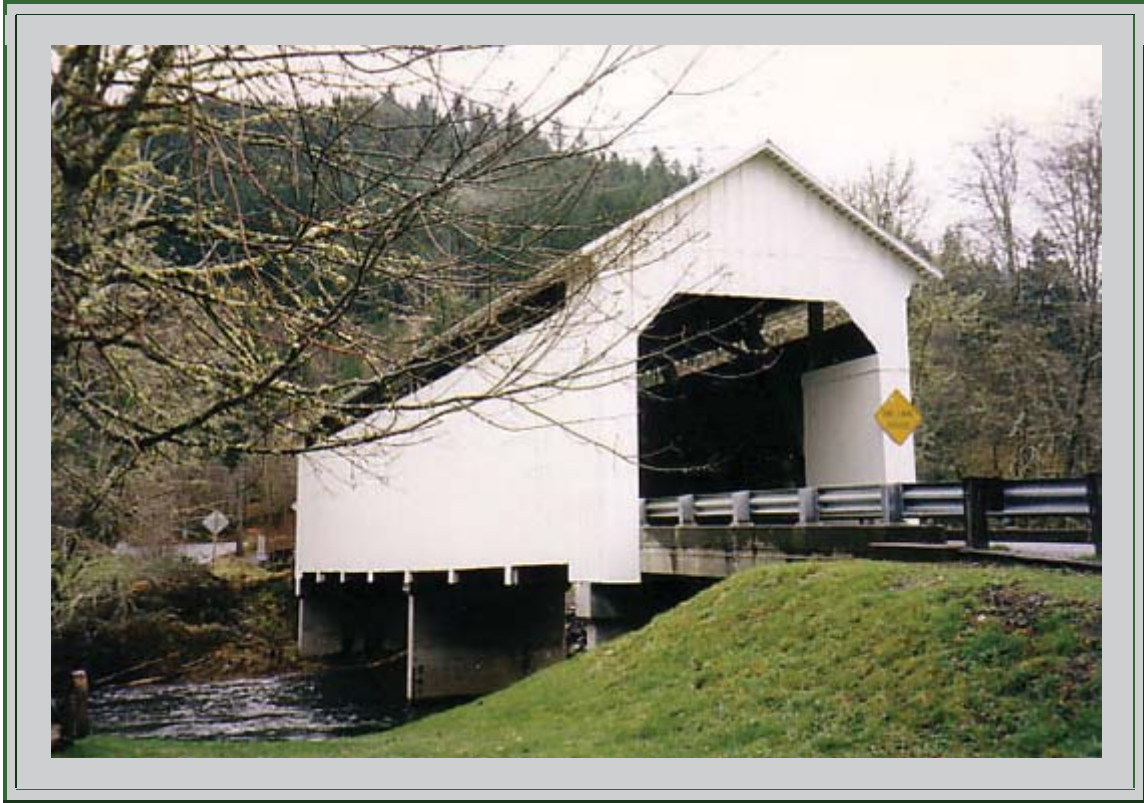
The span was capped with a corrugated metal roof. During the summer of 2002, the roof was replaced with synthetic roofing material, and other repairs were made at the same time.

The Mosby Creek Bridge was one of the bridges which could be seen from the Oregon, Pacific and Eastern steam excursion train, The Goose, prior to the sale of the locomotive to Yreka, California in 1987.

Design elements include semi-circular portal arches, ribbon openings at the roofline, and board-and-batten siding.

Mosby Creek was named for David Mosby, a pioneer of 1853 who staked claim to 1,600 acres east of the present city of Cottage Grove.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Travel one mile east of Cottage Grove on Row River Road. Follow the sign to Mosby Creek Road by turning right, and crossing the railroad track. Turn left on Mosby Creek Road and travel southeast two miles to the bridge. Alternately, from Currin Bridge continue southwest on Layng Road to Mile Point 0.2 to Mosby Creek Bridge.



the **Lake Creek Bridge** - Photos by:

The Lake Creek Covered Bridge is often referred to as the Nelson Mountain Bridge because it is located on Nelson Mountain Road. Like many covered bridges, both the upper and lower chords are one piece old-growth timbers. The lower timbers measure 14" x 14" x 111 feet and the upper timbers measure 12" x 12" x 79 feet.

The bridge was rehabilitated in 1984. Contractors replaced the wooden flooring with pre-cast concrete slab decking. Because the concrete flooring and center pier do not support the trusses, a crane was required to slide the slabs into place. The wooden abutments and trestle approaches were also replaced with concrete material.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Eugene, take Hwy. 99 north about 8 miles to Hwy. 36. Follow Hwy. 36 west about 30 miles to Nelson Mountain Rd. This bridge is located at mile point 0.8

## **Office (Westfir) Bridge -**

### **North Fork of the Middle Fork Willamette River (Office) Covered Bridge**

The Office Covered Bridge was built in 1944 by the Westfir Lumber Company and spans the North Fork of the Middle Fork of the Willamette River, once the site of a mill pond at the town of Westfir.

The wooden span was constructed for logging trucks and connected a lumber mill and its office; hence its name.

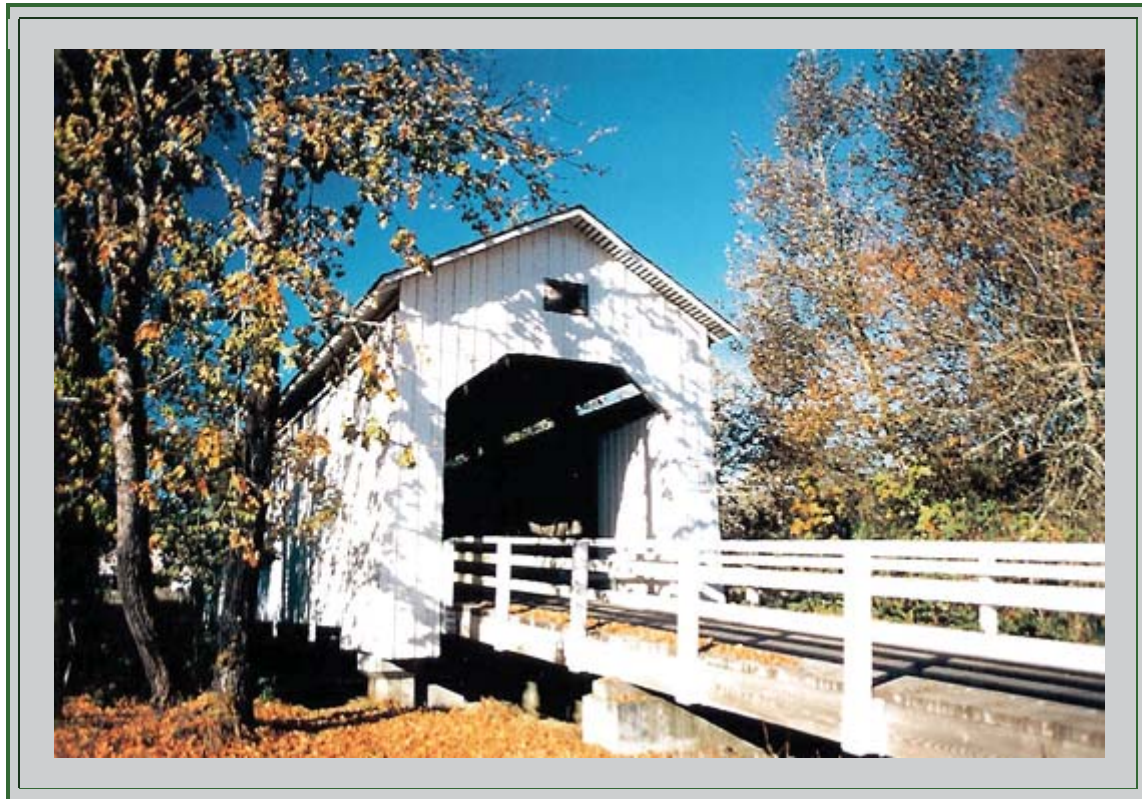
The Office Bridge is Oregon's longest covered span at 180 feet.

The company-owned town, including the bridge, were sold to an investment company in 1977. In the early 1980s the mill burned and the bridge was closed to traffic.

In 1992 the bridge became the property of Lane County through tax foreclosure. Extensive repair work in 1992 stabilized the bridge condition, and in 2002, a new roof was added.

A distinctive feature of the span is the covered walkway separate from the roadway. Because the bridge was built for carrying loaded log trucks, the truss members are gigantic with multiple tension rods and compound chord members. The house has horizontal shiplap siding.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5 take Highway 58 east towards Oakridge. Just before entering Oakridge, near milepost 31, turn west onto Westridge Ave. Continue to Westfir on County Road 6128. Travel about 2.5 miles to the mill site, community and bridge.



the **Parvin (Lost Creek) Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

The original bridge at this location was a 66-foot Howe truss span. In an inspection report in 1917 on the structure, bridge inspector J. W. McArthur noted: "An old bridge. Chords badly worm eaten, Downstream chord has been reinforced in middle by a timber bolted on. Wood is but little better than a powder from worm action. All signs indicate a new bridge in from 2 to 4 years."

Four years later, George W. Breeding erected the present 75-foot Howe span at this site. The cost of the structure was \$3,617 and included a 62-foot east approach and a 17-foot west approach.

The span was bypassed in the mid-1970s when the road was realigned, with only pedestrians able to cross the bridge.

Lane County decided to reopen the structure, with November 17, 1986, being a special day for the several dozen people which gathered at the dedication of the renovated span. Present for the dedication ceremony were two granddaughters of James and Salina Parvin who homesteaded in the area during the 1850s.

Several days after the dedication, the approaches were completed and traffic once again used the covered bridge. Repairs to the structure, which included new guardrails and paint, permit a load of 10 tons to pass through the portals.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From I-5 take Highway 58 east to Dexter, just west of Lowell. Turn south on Lost Creek Road. Turn right onto Rattlesnake Road from Lost Creek Road at Mile Point 1.8, and follow Rattlesnake west for 0.5 miles. Turn south on Lost Valley Lane to Parvin Road. Alternately, exit Highway 58 at Lost Creek Road and travel southeast to Parvin Road. Continue south on Parvin Road to the bridge.



the **Pengra (Fall Creek) Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

The Pengra Bridge contains two of the longest timbers ever cut for a bridge in Oregon. The timbers for the lower chords, 16" x 18" x 126 feet, were cut by the Booth-Kelly Lumber Company east of Springfield.

Since 18" timbers were too large to be run through a mill, they were rough-hewn in the woods, transported to the bridge site by truck and resurfaced before being set into place. The dimensions of the upper chord are similar proportions at 14" x 18" x 96 feet.

The use of one-piece chords simplified construction techniques and resulted in a stronger truss, but handling such large timbers was often difficult.

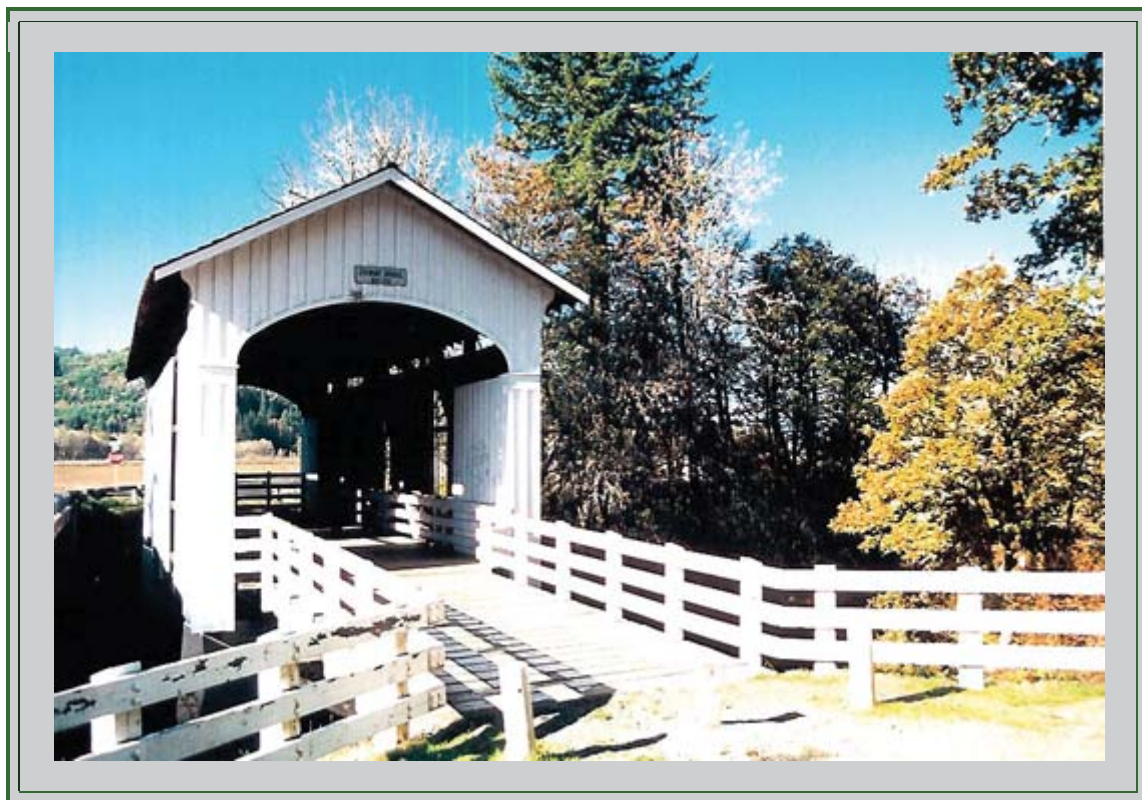
The Pengra Bridge replaced a 192-foot span built in 1904 which had been only a few feet upstream from the present structure. The effect of weather and increased traffic caused the county to close the bridge in 1979.

County officials had planned to reopen the structure, but readying a contract for work was delayed for several years. The bridge was repaired and re-opened to traffic by the county in 1995 with the help of a grant from the Oregon Covered Bridge Program.

Pengra was a station on the Cascade Line of the Southern Pacific Railroad and was named for B. J. Pengra, a pioneer who became general surveyor of Oregon in 1862. Pengra had surveyed the route of the Oregon Central Military Road to link the Willamette Valley with the Owyhee mining country of Eastern Oregon.

The road was finished to the summit of the Cascades in 1867 but was seldom used. The Pengra Unity Road lies on the old railroad grade and has been renamed Place Road.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From I-5 take Highway 58 east to Parkway Road. Follow Parkway Road north to the community of Jasper. Turn southeast on Jasper-Lowell Road for about 3 miles. Turn left (east) on Little Falls Creek Road and travel 1/4 mile to Place Road



the **Stewart Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

As with other wooden bridges in Oregon, the Stewart Bridge has had its share of woes. Heavy rains of the 1964 "Christmas Flood" brought water raging down Mosby Creek with the resulting force cracking the lower chords of the bridge.

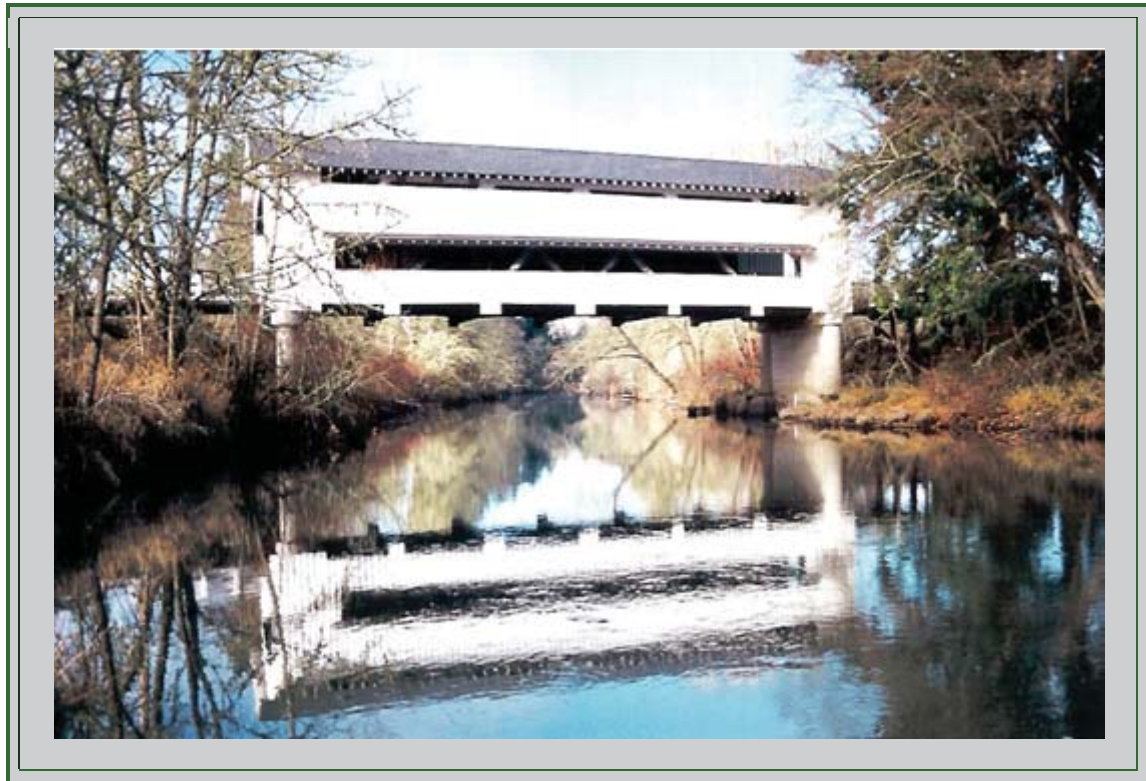
Just over four years later, a heavy snowstorm dropped more than three feet of snow on most of the Willamette Valley. The roof bracing gave way under the weight of the snow, and the entire roof caved in.

Repairs to the bridge once again made it usable, and it carried a 20-ton limit until it was bypassed in the mid-1980s by a concrete span.

The Stewart Bridge was officially "mothballed" in 1987, with one of the approaches removed, fumigation of timbers, and installation of a wire fence inside a portal for safety of pedestrians.

In the 1993-95 biennium, the Lane County received a grant of around \$48,000 from the Oregon Covered Bridge Program to restore the bridge.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Travel one mile east of Cottage Grove on Row River Road. Follow the sign to Mosby Creek Road, turning right and crossing the railroad tracks. Turn left (south) on Mosby Creek Road and travel approximately 3.5 miles to Garoutte Road.



the **Unity Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

In 1890, the first bridge across Fall Creek was constructed by Nels Roney. That 129-foot Howe structure cost Lane County \$2,925.

The original bridge was finally removed in 1953, having served as a foot bridge since 1936. A new covered span was built three-fourths of a mile upstream in 1936 at the community of Unity.

The county used a standardized 90-foot Howe truss design but added a full length window in the east side to give motorists a glimpse of oncoming traffic, adding an aesthetic effect to the structure. The county spent only \$4,400 in constructing the span.

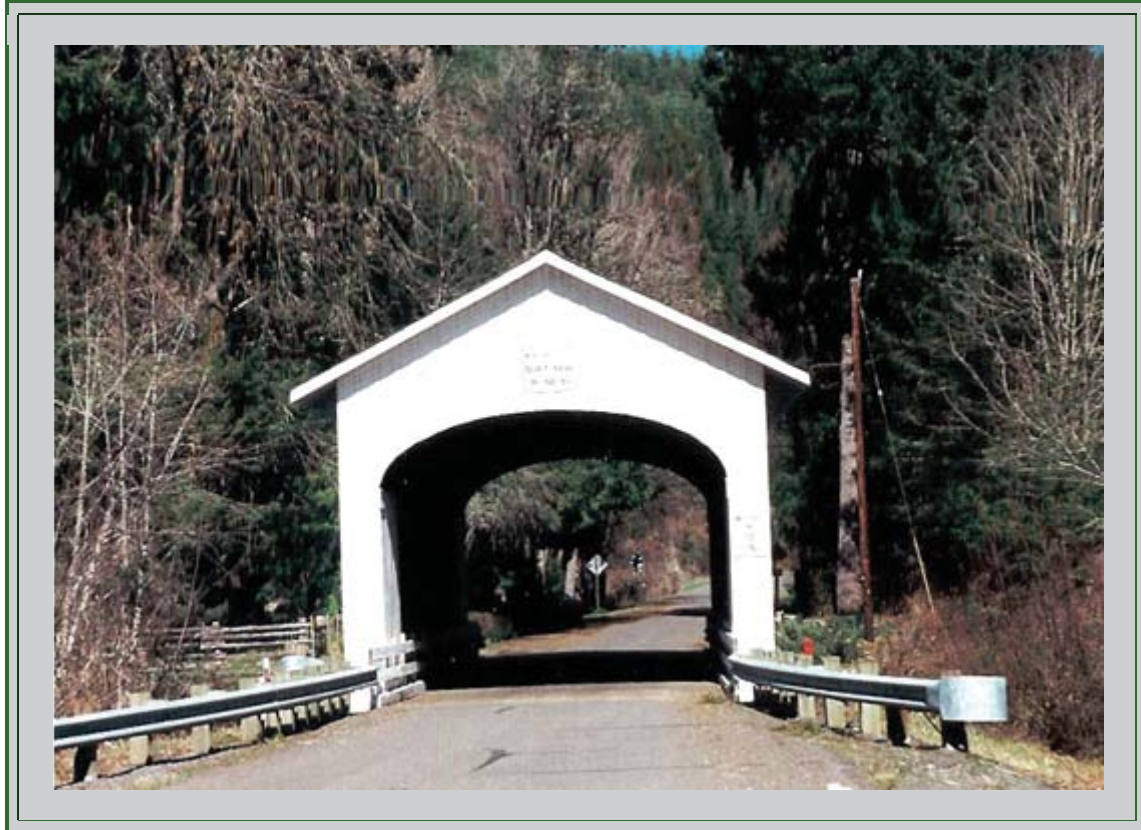
In July 1986, Lane County temporarily closed the bridge for repairs. In addition to replacing the flooring, other work included repair of the piers and guardrails, exterior painting, and removing evidence of vandalism.

The bridge crosses Fall Creek just a few miles from the Pengra, Lowell and Parvin covered bridges.



Bicycle tours often include this span in their rural routes.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5 exit Highway 58 and travel east to the town of Lowell. Turn left at the Lowell Covered Bridge and continue north through Lowell on County Road 6220 (Lowell-Unity Road) for two miles to Unity.



the **Wendling Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

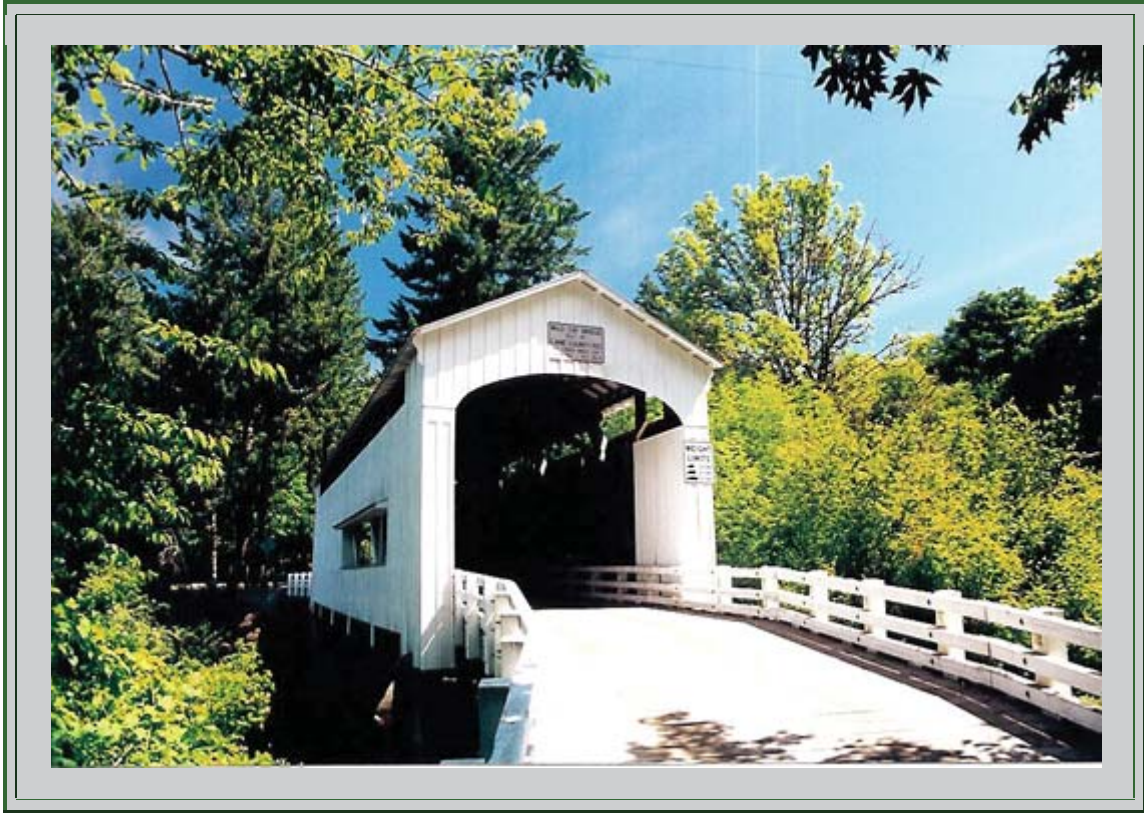
In the 1890s, George Wendling, director of Booth-Kelly Lumber Company, established a post office in the small town which bears his name.

The Wendling Bridge, built just prior to World War II, appears to be hidden on the winding road northeast of Marcola.

Like the nearby Earnest Bridge, the Wendling Bridge showed faded, peeling circus posters pasted on its walls between truss members until time, moisture and visitors removed them.

Lane County spent only \$2,241 to build the bridge in 1938. Like many other short span bridges in the county, it used single piece chords for the Howe truss.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Springfield, follow 14th Street in Springfield and travel northeast (as it becomes Marcola Road) to Marcola. At Marcola, turn right (east onto Wendling Road and follow the road to the bridge). Alternately, from Earnest Bridge, follow Paschelke Road about 1.3 miles to Wendling Road. Turn east on Wendling Road to Mile Point 3.5



the **Wildcat Creek (Austa) Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

The Wildcat Bridge is located on a small winding road a short distance from Highway 126.

From the bridge site where Wildcat Creek flows into the Siuslaw River, Stagecoach Road hugs the hillside until it drops into the narrow plain at Swisshome.

Stagecoach Road was the original road to the coast, but was bypassed after the Linlaw Tunnel and Mapleton Bridge were built in the 1930s.

The nearby Austa boat ramp provides access to the river for fishermen on the Siuslaw River.

The bridge was closed for repairs several times in the 1980s and in the autumn of 2000, when the structure was strengthened.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Travel 33 miles west of Eugene on Oregon Highway 126 to Whitaker Creek /Clay Creek Recreation Area turnoff. Exit the highway on the south side and follow the road back under the highway and railroad tracks (north) a short distance to the bridge.

### **Crawfordsville Bridge -**

The area of Crawfordsville was named for Philemon Crawford, who settled in the area and on whose land the town was established in the 1870s.

The Crawfordsville Bridge displays another version of Linn County's open truss style. The roofed span, built in 1932, shows a narrow slit window on both sides of the structure.

Originally the portals were rounded, but were later enlarged by State Highway employees to allow larger loads. Linn County turned the structure over to the Highway Commission when the road was designated a state highway.

In 1963, the bridge was bypassed and the state relinquished control to Linn County. The title has since passed to the Linn County Parks and Recreation Department.

Little upkeep or repair occurred in the 1970s. In 1976, crews involved with the filming of the television movie, *The Flood*, painted the span, and local residents repainted some of the bridge's interior in the early 1980s.

Growing brush, trees and weeds began to hide the bridge, and in the summer of 1986, volunteers from the Covered Bridge Society of Oregon organized a cleanup day at the bridge site.

In 1987, some \$23,000 in materials and labor were dedicated to renovate the bridge as a project of the Community Services Consortium, a federally funded program that trained and assisted in the job search for unemployed workers.

In the flood of 1996, the bridge sustained severe damage from drift which tore through the side skirting and hit a floor beam. Several of the one-inch diameter tie rods were broken or bent, leaving only two upstream tie rods and one downstream supporting the floor beam. The County received a grant from the Oregon Covered Bridge Program in the amount of \$24,400 to replace four floor beams, supporting tie rods, replace one corbel and paint the bridge.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5 take Highway 228 (exit 216) east through Brownsville to Crawfordsville. Crawfordsville Bridge is located at the west end of Crawfordsville, beside Highway 228.

## **Gilkey Bridge -**

The Gilkey Bridge spans Thomas Creek and until 1960, it proudly stood next to a covered railroad bridge.

Gilkey was once a town of some activity, as noted by a nearby sign: "Gilkey Station was established when the railroad arrived in 1880 and was named in honor of Allen and William Gilkey.

Gilkey served as a shipping point for farm products." Just about all but the sign and the bridge are now gone, and the sign is totally faded.

The familiar swimming rope is tied to the framework of the bridge, and during the summer swimmers enjoy this area of Thomas Creek.

Youngsters often grow tired of swinging on the rope and seek more excitement by climbing up to the roof and jumping into the cool water below. In 1997, the bridge had to be closed due to damage caused by an overloaded vehicle.

The load had overstressed the bridge and broke the timber shear keys in some of the lower chord joints. Temporary cables were installed to keep the bridge up under its own weight. Permanent repairs were designed and constructed in 1998 and the bridge was reopened to traffic.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5 exit 238 and travel east to Jefferson. Just east of the arch bridge over the Santiam River, turn right on South Main Street and continue until the street turns into Jefferson-Scio Drive. Continue east towards Scio and turn right (south) onto Robinson Drive. As Robinson Drive curves east, turn right on Goar Road and travel 1.5 miles to the bridge. Alternately, travel one-half mile south of Scio on Highway 226, then three miles west on Gilkey Road. Turn north on Goar Road and travel 0.5 mile to the bridge.

## Hannah Bridge -

The Hannah Bridge is the youngest of the five covered spans on Thomas Creek in Linn County.

The 105-foot housed Howe truss is exposed through the large side openings on the bridge.

Very attractive in appearance, the characteristic Linn County covered bridge design includes segmental portal arches, exposed beams at the gable ends, and white board-and-batten cladding.

Thomas Creek was named for Frederick Thomas, who obtained a donation land claim on the banks of the stream in 1846.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5, exit 238 and travel east to Jefferson. Just east of the arch bridge over the Santiam River, turn right on South Main Street and continue until the street becomes Jefferson-Scio Drive. Continue east into Scio and turn left onto Highway 226. Follow Highway 226 approximately six miles west to Camp Morrison Drive and turn right (south). Alternately, exit Highway 226 from Interstate 5 in Albany and travel to Scio.

## Hoffman Bridge -

Built primarily with hand tools, the upper timbers show adze marks where workers shaped them by hand. The bridge is painted white and has two Gothic windows on each side.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Scio, follow highway 226 south to Hungry Hill Road, turn right and proceed west to the bridge.

## Larwood Bridge -

The attractive Larwood Bridge was built to Highway Commission specifications which included a standard 105-foot length, partially exposed trusses, white-wash interior and rounded portals.

In 2002, the bridge was temporarily closed to repair the exposed diagonal timbers in the upstream truss. Water and insect damage had weakened the wooden pieces.

The covered span is located three miles north of Lacombe, next to Larwood Wayside Park. Roaring River, which empties into Crabtree Creek near the bridge, is the only river to flow into a creek, an oddity in U. S. geography that was featured in Ripley's Believe It or Not.

The Larwood community was named for William Larwood, who settled on the banks of Crabtree Creek and Roaring River in 1888. He platted the little town, built a store and blacksmith shop, and operated a post office from 1893 to 1903.

A prior covered bridge was built about this time over Crabtree Creek, and for a while, covered bridges spanned Roaring River and Crabtree Creek just a few feet apart. The town and old covered bridges are gone, but the rebuilt water powered mill and the present covered bridge are reminders of the area's previous activities.

The adjacent park is frequented by fishermen and swimmers.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From I-5 at Albany take Highway 226 (US Route 20) (exit 233) east to Crabtree. From Crabtree travel east on Highway 226 approximately 1 mile to Fish Hatchery Drive. Travel east on Fish Hatchery Road for approximately 6 miles.



**Shimanek Bridge** - Photo by: Tom Rogers

As Linn County's newest and longest covered span, the Shimanek Bridge offers an exception to the usual open-sided structure with rounded portals.

Red paint, portal design and louvered windows are features similar to the former span, which was built in 1927, and found on no other bridge in Linn County. Rods in the truss are grouped into a series of four instead of the usual three at each compression joint. The bridge shares the white painted interior of other Linn County bridges.

In 2002, a Linn County bridge crew repaired damage caused by the 1996 flood. The crew also replaced the horizontal housing material on the south end, and the structure was then repainted.

The first bridge built at this location is believed to have been constructed as early as 1861, while the first documented covered bridge was built in 1891 for a cost of \$1,150.

In 1904, the county rebuilt the bridge, only to have it washed out in 1921. Its replacement lasted until 1927, when high water damaged the piers and the span was replaced.

Trees were blown against the fourth covered bridge at this site during the Columbus Day Storm of 1962. The resulting damage forced the county to restrict the covered bridge to a 2-ton load limit with single lane traffic.

The bridge was destroyed soon after, and in 1966 the current Shimanek Bridge was completed, the fifth covered bridge to occupy this site. It has been rumored that the 1891 bridge had a welcomed accommodation of a two-hole toilet built into the foundation, a luxury not found at the current covered bridge.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5 exit 238 and travel east to Jefferson. Just east of the arch bridge over the Santiam River, turn right on South Main Street and continue until the street becomes Jefferson-Scio Drive. Continue east into Scio and turn left onto Highway 226. Follow Highway 226 two miles east and turn left (north) onto Richardson Gap Road.

## Short Bridge -

The Short Bridge is the sole survivor of the covered bridges which crossed the South Fork of the Santiam River and is one of the few remaining in the county to have a wooden shingle roof.

The span is Linn County's most eastern covered bridge. When the wooden-housed structure was built, the bridge was known more commonly as the Whiskey Butte Bridge but was renamed for a long-time area resident, Gordon Short.

Quite often visitors are surprised by ducks, deer and other animals in the vicinity of the bridge. During the summer, fishermen on and under the bridge cast lines into the cool waters of the South Santiam River.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5 at Albany exit US Route 20 (exit 233) southeast through Lebanon and Sweet Home for 37 miles to Cascadia. West of the city limits of Cascadia, turn left at High Deck Road. Alternately, exit Interstate 5 at exit 216 and travel east through Crawfordsville to Sweet Home. Turn right on Highway 20 and continue to High Deck Road.



the **Weddle Bridge** - Photo by: Bill Cockrell

The Weddle Covered Bridge is a typical example of Linn County's open-sided covered bridges. Many Linn County residents believed that this bridge was lost forever when it was yanked apart by workers in October 1987. The bridge had spanned Thomas Creek for 50 years.

It was bypassed in 1980 by a concrete bridge downstream, and neglected. The deteriorated bridge eventually became a safety issue, and the span was scheduled to be demolished.

This action sparked protests by local covered bridge enthusiasts. As the story goes, one person chained himself to a bulldozer to prevent the bridge's demise.

The covered bridge enthusiasts engaged Senator Mae Yih, a local legislator who became a leader in saving Oregon's covered bridges. Through her efforts, the Oregon Legislature created the Oregon Covered Bridge Program which helped fund covered bridge maintenance and rehabilitation projects throughout the state.

The Weddle Bridge became the first covered bridge project to receive grants under that program. In 1989, a Sweet Home group known as the Cascade Forest Resource Center was formed to rebuild the Weddle Bridge across Ames Creek in Sankey Park.

Much of the planning to rebuild the bridge was done with assistance from the Jordan Bridge Company, the group which rebuilt the Jordan Bridge in Stayton. Additional fundraising was inspired by the Jordan group and the Covered Bridge Society of Oregon.

Because of this grass-roots funding effort, coupled with community dedication, the Weddle Bridge restoration became a big success. In addition to the historic value, the bridge is the site for weddings and community events and now stands as an example of what can be done to preserve Oregon's covered bridges.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5 at Albany exit US Route 20 (exit 233) southeast through Lebanon to Sweet Home. From Highway 20 turn south at 12th Avenue. Turn east on Kalmia Street and then south on 14th Avenue for two blocks. Sankey Park is on the left. Alternately, exit Interstate 5 at exit 216 and travel east through Crawfordsville to Sweet Home.

## **Gallon House Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

The Gallon House Bridge, the last of Marion County's original covered bridges, is located over Abiqua Creek a little more than a mile northwest of Silverton.

The name Gallon House was due to the bridge's use as a "pigeon drop" for liquor at the north entrance. Operators at a liquor dispensary nearby sold "white lightening" whiskey by the gallon to Silverton residents. At the time, Silverton was "dry," not allowing liquor to be sold in town, while Mt. Angel was "wet."

The Gallon House along Abiqua Creek was in Mt. Angel territory. During the Christmas Flood of 1964, the bridge suffered considerable damage. The County Board of Commissioners, however, decided the bridge should be repaired and maintained as an historical landmark, as it was the only covered bridge in the county at the time.

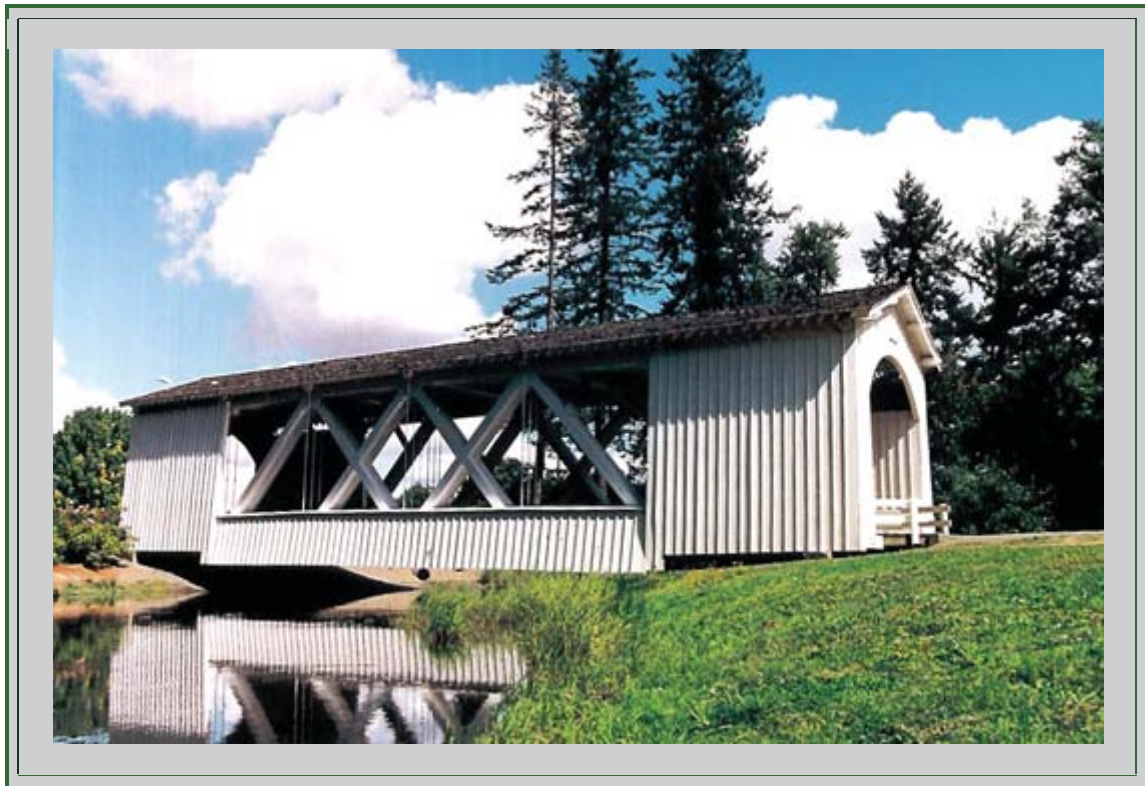
In 1985, the old wooden structure was closed to all traffic when a damaged chord rendered it useless. County road crews repaired the bridge to accept traffic up to a 10-ton limit by reinforcing a lower chord, as well as making repairs to the beams and flooring.

Also included in the renovation was a change in the size and shape of the portals. The revamped portals were hinged to allow them to be opened for taller loads when necessary.

In 1990, because of poor structural condition, the bridge was rehabilitated to mint condition and the hinged portals were removed.

Since its construction in 1916, the bridge has been repaired numerous times. Historian Ben Maxwell describes a prior bridge repair in 1960: "Marion County recently reconstructed the old Gallon House bridge near Mt. Angel just for the sake of preserving a landmark. It still looks like an overgrown doghouse - at least they could have painted it red for the sake of conformity."

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Salem travel north on Highway 213 (Silverton Road NE) about 14 miles to Silverton. At Silverton travel north on Highway 214 to Hobart Road. Turn west on Hobart to Gallon House Road (0.5 mi.). Turn north on Gallon House Road.



the **Stayton-Jordon Bridge** - Photos by: Bill Cockrell

Prior to 1986, the Jordan Bridge spanned Thomas Creek in neighboring Linn County several miles east of Scio. The original bridge location had once been the site for a dam, a cheese factory, two mills and a general store.

When Linn County announced the aging Jordan Bridge was to be replaced in 1986, Stayton residents asked if they could take title to the structure. A covered bridge preservation company was formed, enlisting the help of numerous volunteers and Marine Corps reservists for the 6th Engineering Battalion in Salem.

The span was rebuilt over the Salem Power Canal to serve as a foot bridge connecting two parks. The process of rebuilding the Jordan Bridge occupied nearly two years, culminating in a dedication ceremony in June 1988.

In the Tuesday, December 27, 1994, edition of The Stayton Mail, the headlines read "A community dream in ashes." The bridge had caught fire December 20th at 2 a.m. when Christmas lights ignited the roof. Photos of the still



standing charred trusses depicted the scene. The city decided to demolish the trusses and burn what remained of the bridge.

Local citizens toiled throughout 1997 and 1998 to construct a new covered bridge at the site. The new bridge incorporates glue laminated timbers for added strength and was dedicated in September 1998.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5 take Salem Exit 253 east on Highway 22 for 15 miles to the Stayton /Sublimity turnoff. Travel south one mile to Stayton. Turn east on Marion Street to Pioneer Park

## **Ritner Creek Bridge -**

Ritner Creek bridge was the last covered bridge on an Oregon state highway.

In 1976, the bridge was lifted from its foundation and relocated just downstream of its original site and replaced by a concrete bridge.

The bridge was constructed in 1927 by Hamer and Curry Contractors to Oregon State Highway Commission plans. The initial construction cost was \$6,964.

The original portal design was rounded at the edges but was changed to a square design in the early 1960s to accommodate larger loads to pass.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** From Interstate 5 exit 258 and follow Portland Road 5 miles to the junction of Highway 22 (Marion Street). Turn right (west) crossing the Willamette River, and continue 17 miles to Dallas. From Dallas travel south on Highway 223 approximately 12 miles through Pedee. Ritner Creek Bridge is approximately 3.5 miles south of Pedee.



Grays River

Location: Grays River, WA  
Lat. / Long.: N 46.35487 W 123.581096  
Built in: 1905  
Truss Type: Howe