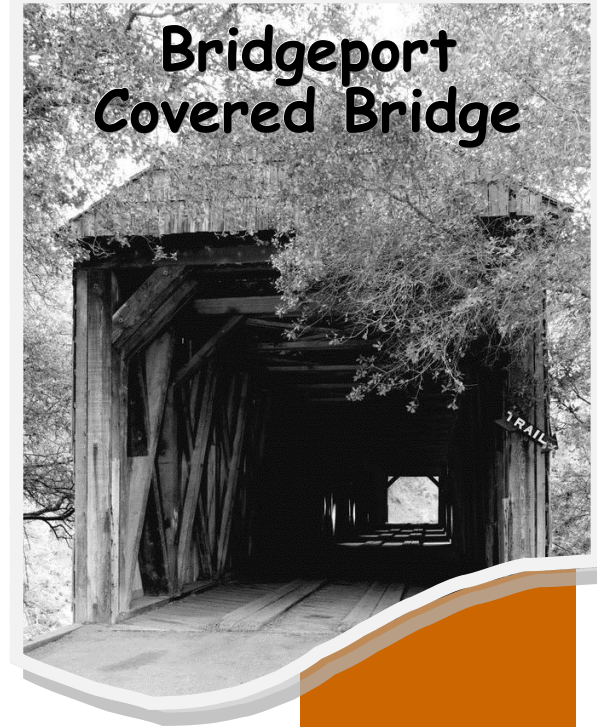


Bridgeport Covered Bridge



More Interesting Facts about the Bridge

While walking along the turnpike imagine if you can the noise and turmoil that was generated back in the 1860's when about 100 wagons a day, including teams of horses and wagon trains were coming and going through Bridgeport confined to the area between the rock walls. The sounds of wagon wheels echoing off the interior walls of the covered bridge and horses whinnying to their drivers commands must have been quite an experience.

The turnpike rock walls were most likely constructed to keep the wagons and horses confined to the turnpike so every party crossing the South Yuba River would cross over the Bridgeport bridge and pay their tolls. The Virginia Turnpike Company was a profitable venture charging tolls that varied from year to year. In 1863 total gross recorded toll revenue from the Bridgeport covered bridge was \$20,915.45. Quite a sum in those days. The established toll rates in 1862 were:

8 horses, mules or ox team—up or down	\$6.00
6 horses, mules or ox team—up or down	\$5.50
4 horses, mules or ox team—up or down	\$4.00
2 horses, mules or ox team—up or down	\$2.50
1 horse, mule or an ox—up or down	\$1.75
2-horse buggy, each way	\$1.50
1-horse buggy, each way	\$1.00
Horseman	\$.50
Footman	\$.25
Loose stock	\$.10
Hog or sheep	\$.05



In addition to the bridge, the turnpike company owned 11 miles of toll road which ran from Anthony House (under water at Lake Wildwood) to French Corral. The company also maintained 3 miles of roadway from French Corral to Sweetland, the junction of Pleasant Valley Road and Highway 49. This route was important to the miners seeking to work in the Comstock silver mines of Virginia City, Nevada via the Henness Pass route over the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

On June 28, 1972, Nevada County closed the historic Bridgeport bridge and turnpike to vehicle traffic. Traffic was rerouted over the new concrete bridge constructed just upriver from the covered bridge.

Built in 1862 the Bridgeport covered bridge is the world's longest single-span wood truss covered bridge and is both a State and National Historic Landmark.

For more information please visit
these websites

South Yuba River Park Association
southubariverstatepark.org



California State Parks
parks.ca.gov



South Yuba River State Park
Tel: (530) 432-2546
17660 Pleasant Valley Road
Penn Valley, CA 95946



History of the Bridge

Bridgeport covered bridge, named after the sites historic township, is one of only nine covered bridges remaining in California.

The bridge was designed by David I. Wood and built under his direction in 1862 by the Virginia Turnpike Company. Companies such as this were created as part of the 1853 State Legislative decision to authorize the formation of "Turnpike Companies" to build roads and bridges and collect tolls for profits. This helped develop the states transportation infrastructure and gave county governments toll taxes as revenue.

The first Bridgeport bridge was built in 1861 but washed away in the floods of 1862. Wood quickly went to work to rebuild his bridge using lumber from his sawmill 30 miles north of Bridgeport in Forest City. When completed in the summer of 1862 the current bridge was 249 feet long. Restored in 1971, the 10 foot weather wings on either side of the bridge were removed making it the current length of 229 feet (251 feet at the ridgeline). It has always maintained the original clear span of 208 feet.

Construction

The Bridge design consists of the patented Howe Truss utilizing timber trusses and iron rods and plates joined with an auxiliary Burr arch.



Theodore Burr first used this arch design for a bridge constructed over the Hudson river in 1804. The arch is bolted to the trusses and connects to the face of the abutments. The truss rests on the concrete abutments.

Seventy-five percent of the Douglas fir timbers used to construct the bridge in 1862 are original. When walking through the bridge you can smell the history of the aged wood mixed with the undertones of the Sugar Pine shakes

that cover the outside of the bridge.

Over 27,000 shakes are affixed to a light frame built over the bridge. These shakes protect the superstructure of the bridge and are the reason most of it's original beams remain today.

Restoration

In the summer of 1997 the bridge was restored again due to damage from another flood whose water levels matched those of the flood of 1862.

In this restoration large panels installed by Nevada County to discourage vandalism were removed, over half of the Sugar Pine shakes were replaced and repairs were made to the arch and cross supports under the bridge.

Currently the bridge is closed due to new structural issues making the bridge unstable. Repair estimates are over \$1.1 million dollars, in 2012 figures. Fundraising efforts continue and donations made to the South Yuba River Park Association will directly support the repair and reopening of the historic bridge. You can help: Visit www.southyubariverstatepark.org to donate.