

THE COVERED BRIDGES OF UNION COUNTY

All four historic covered bridges in Union County were designed and built by Reuben L. Partridge (1823-1900) and are based on a design he patented in 1872.

The Union County covered bridges all have “windows” cut into the sides, which were not part of the original design. The addition of windows was done to increase visibility with the advent of automobile traffic. These windows have roofs or awnings to protect the trusses from the elements.

BIGELOW BRIDGE

Also known as the Axe Handle Bridge

This historic bridge was built in 1873 and spans 114’ of Little Darby Creek. The bridge was named in honor of Eliphas Bigelow, a nearby resident. In 1990 the bridge underwent an extensive renovation. Massive nail-laminated

arches were seated into new concrete foundations. The arch system now carries the weight of traffic on this bridge. Be sure to examine the inside of this remarkable bridge! The bridge was painted red in 2008.

CULBERTSON BRIDGE

This 94’ bridge spans Treacle Creek and was built in 1868 by Reuben Partridge. There are canopies on both sides of the bridge and scrolls located at each end. The bridge was originally located on State Route 4 and was moved prior to 1953. In 1961 the bridge underwent repairs and piers were added to give extra support. In 1977 a “run around” was constructed for farm equipment and other large, heavy vehicles.

In 1987 the bridge was rehabilitated. Glue laminate girders were installed with glue laminated floor beams suspended from the girders.

POTTERSBERG BRIDGE

This bridge was formerly in the location of the North Lewisburg Road Covered Bridge. It was designed and built by Reuben Partridge in 1868. The full-length canopy was added in 1937. In 1949, extensive repairs were made. Three 6’ by 10’ I-beams were placed under each corner span. It was also reinforced with plumb and anchor rods.

In 2006 the 94’ bridge was moved and rehabilitated. This historic bridge now rests on a multi-use train which begins

in the village of North Lewisburg and ends at the bridge on the Union/Champaign County line near Inskoop-Cratty Road. The bridge was painted red in 2007.



SPAIN CREEK BRIDGE

Also known as the Inskoop-Cratty Road Bridge
This beautiful covered bridge spans 64’ over Spain Creek. The bridge was designed and built by Reuben Partridge in the 1870s. Beltz Grist Mill on Big Darby Creek was one of the earliest built in this township. Farther downstream, the Wetaeo Mill was built in 1848, and Hanes Finley set up a steam power saw on the Milford-Allen Center Pike. Spain Creek currently achieves criteria associated with the exceptional warm water habitat and cold water habitat use designations by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.



NORTH LEWISBURG BRIDGE

In 2006 a new covered bridge was built over Big Darby Creek Scenic River. This new bridge is a modified Pratt Truss with sub-structures built out of the creek. The bridge is 135’ in length with two lanes to accommodate recent increases in traffic.



BUCK RUN ROAD BRIDGE

This bridge replaces a steel Pratt bridge that was constructed in 1914. This new bridge, built in 2006, is a modified Pratt Truss and spans an impressive 160’ in length. This bridge is currently the longest single-span wooden bridge in Ohio. The new two-lane covered bridge was built to stand proudly for generations. From the bridge one can enjoy beautiful vistas of the Big Darby Creek!



STRENG ROAD TRUSS BRIDGE

This steel Pratt Truss bridge was built in 1914 and is presumed to have replaced a bridge that was likely destroyed in the flood of 1913. Union County received

special recognition for the renovation of this bridge in 1993. All of the original ornamentation and decorative elements are still in place. The bridge spans 200’ over the Big Darby Creek and is officially listed as an Ohio Historic Bridge. This is the only non-covered bridge in the nation to have received this recognition.



THOMPSON ROAD BRIDGE

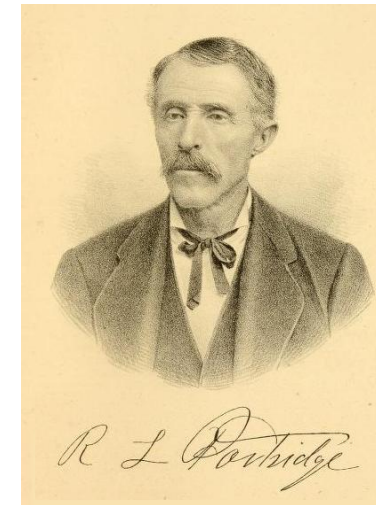
In 2010, a new bridge was built on Thompson Road replacing the 19213 bridge with a modern covered bridge in Mill Creek Township near the Delaware County line. In 1881, the first covered bridge was built on this location, but was destroyed in 1913. It is replaced by this modern day covered bridge that is much different than its predecessor, in that it has two lanes and can carry all modern-day traffic loads. The new bridge spans 125 feet. The inspiration for its architecture is the farm buildings in the area.



THE BRIDGE BUILDER OF UNION COUNTY

In 1855, Reuben L. Partridge accepted his first contract to build the first self supporting bridge in Union County. By 1866, Partridge was building bridges full time. In 1872, he received a patent for his truss design. By 1883, Partridge had built over 125 bridges, most of them were covered, wooden bridges following his patented design. He also built some iron bridges. Most of the bridges he built were in Union County. He also built some bridges in the surrounding counties.

Over the course of his life, Partridge served on the Marysville City Council, as the Paris Township Clerk, and as a Paris Township Trustee. He was a part of the first militia formed in Union County. He also was very active in raising money and support for service groups from Union County who served in both the Mexican War and the Civil War.



There are four Partridge covered bridges remaining in Union County in 2007. These include the Bigelow Covered Bridge, the Culbertson Covered Bridge, the Pottersburg Covered Bridge, and the Spain Creek Covered Bridge.

THE COVERED BRIDGES OF UNION COUNTY



Union County has five historic bridges of which four were built in the late 1860s and 1870s. Four are still in use as part of the county highway system and are currently being well-maintained by the Union County Engineer.

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One of the largest concentration of prairies occurred in the Darby Plains. Small, but excellent remnants of this prairie ecosystem can be seen today along the Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway.

The byway features access to the scenic river, nature preserves and parks. There are also several covered and historic bridges, century farms, cemeteries, and homes of interest along the routes as it passes by North Lewisburg and through Milford Center, Unionville Center and Plain City.

Main Route

- Turn southeast off of US-33 onto CR 57.
- Travel on CR 57 until you reach SR 245.
- Shortly after turning right onto SR 245, turn left onto Inskoop Cratty Rd (CR163).
- Turn onto CR 153, and travel north.
- Turn right to return to US 33.

Southern Loop in Unionville Center

- Before reaching SR 245, you'll approach Unionville Center. Turn right onto Unionville Rd (CR 55) to start traveling the Southern Loop.
- Head south on Unionville Rd to Boyd Rd (CR 42).
- Turn left onto Covnerse-Chapel Rd (CR 41).
- Travel north to SR 161, and turn right to return to the main byway route.

Northern Loop in Millford Center

- To take the northern loop in Millford Center, take US 36 south to Homer Rd (CR 86).
- Turn left and travel south till you reach SR 161, then turn left to Axe Handle Rd (CR 87).
- Make another left. You should now be traveling north.
- Take a right onto Savine-Bigelow Rd to Streng Rd.
- Turn left and cross over Middleburg/Plain City Rd.
- Turn right onto SR 38, which will take you back to Middleburg-Plain City Rd.