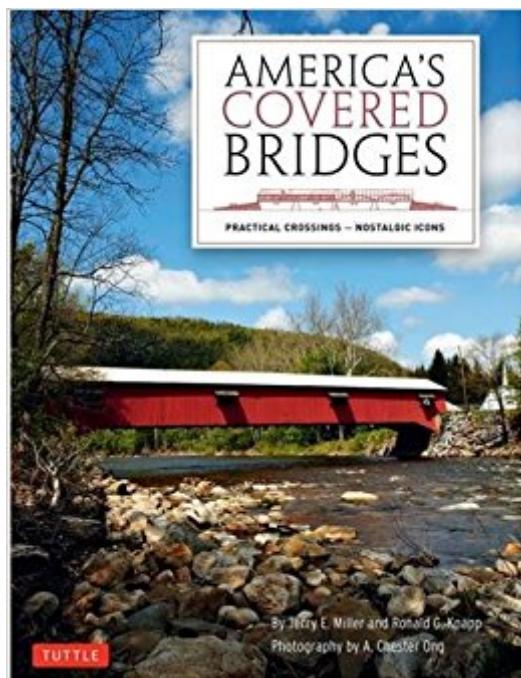


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# America's Covered Bridges: Practical Crossings - Nostalgic Icons



## Synopsis

As many as 15,000 covered bridges were built in North America over the past 200 years. Fewer than 1,000 remain. In America's Covered Bridges, authors Terry E. Miller and Ronald G. Knapp tell the fascinating story of these bridges, how they were built, the technological breakthroughs required to construct them and above all the dedication and skill of their builders. Each wooden bridge, whether still standing or long gone, has a story to tell about the nature of America at the time—not only about its transportational needs, but the availability of materials and the technological prowess of the people who built it. Illustrated with some 550 historical and contemporary photos, paintings, and technical drawings of nearly 400 different covered bridges, America's Covered Bridges offers five readable chapters on the history, design and fate of America's covered bridges, plus related bridges in Canada. Most of the contemporary photography is by master photographer A. Chester Ong of Hong Kong. 55 photo essays on the most iconic bridges including: Cornish-Windsor Bridge between Vermont and New Hampshire, Porter-Parsonsfield Bridge, Maine East Paden and West Paden (Twin Bridges), Pennsylvania Philippi Bridge, West Virginia Hortons Mill Bridge, Alabama Medora Bridge, Indiana Rock Mill Bridge, Ohio Knight's Ferry Bridge, California Perrault Bridge, Quebec, Canada Hartland Bridge, New Brunswick, Canada. Over time, wooden bridges eventually gave way to ones made of iron, steel and concrete. An American icon, many covered bridges became obsolete and were replaced; others simply decayed and collapsed. Many more were swept away by natural disasters and fires. America's Covered Bridges is absolutely packed with fascinating stories and information passionately told by two leading experts on this subject. The book will be of tremendous interest to anyone interested in American history, carpentry and technological change.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"America's Covered Bridges is a book every covered bridge enthusiast will want to own. Amongst numerous other virtues, the book is profusely illustrated with both historic and contemporary photographs, the latter permitting readers to assess the current condition of many of our covered bridges." •David W. Wright, President, National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, Incorporated

"The authors offer a wealth of historical documentation in this book, which would be hard to find anywhere else. Their coverage of recent change in the field of covered bridge preservation is especially valuable. The photography is first-rate." •Joseph D. Conwill, historian and author, editor of Covered Bridge Topics magazine

"America's Covered Bridges has set a new standard of excellence for books on the topic. The authors' exhaustive research and uncommon storytelling skills, along with a willingness to offer candid observations, has resulted in a publication like no other." •David A. Simmons, President, Ohio Historic Bridge Association

"America's Covered Bridges is an informative, frank, and enthralling overview of America's venerable yet vulnerable covered bridges, richly illustrated with stunning photography. The authors have collaborated and combined their vast knowledge, expertise, and research and teamed up with photographer A. Chester Ong to produce a volume that will undoubtedly become a must-have reference for pontists as well as covered bridge enthusiasts." •Thomas E. Walczak, covered bridge historian and former president, Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Society of Pennsylvania

"America's Covered Bridges deals with the subject of covered wooden bridges from new angles. The authors reflect on what a covered bridge is and what it should be in our society. They do not simply enumerate a succession of historical facts or present only romantic images. Rather, this book considers the value we grant to this legacy when replicas of covered bridges and summary restorations are the order of the day." •Gerald Arbour, Author, *Les ponts rouges du Quebec*, Montreal, Canada

"America's Covered Bridges is an accurate documentation and splendid pictorial of these timber structures, a physical reminder of a simpler time. The book is a valuable testament that tells the stories of the bridges and their builders, as well as the proper techniques for restoration. I hope that this work will raise awareness to save this important legacy." •Arnold Milton Graton, Master Covered Bridge Wright, Ashland, New Hampshire

"This book is a much needed resource answering questions that are frequently asked by those touring the

bridges from all over the world. The pictures and illustrations are excellent." •Morris Tippin, President, Indiana Covered Bridge Society

Terry E. Miller began visiting covered bridges with his father, Max T. Miller, in 1953 and has since visited more than 1,000 in the United States, Canada, Europe, and China, and researched the bridges of two Ohio counties from dusty handwritten journals. Miller spent his career teaching ethnomusicology at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, retiring in 2005. In addition to his research and writings on the music of mainland Southeast Asia, he is the co-author of the popular textbook *World Music: A Global Journey*.Ronald G. Knapp is a historical-cultural geographer at State University of New York at New Paltz, where he taught from 1968 to 2001. For the past forty-five years his research has focused on China's frontier history and Chinese vernacular architecture with many books that celebrate these traditions. His book, *Chinese Bridges: Living Architecture from China's Past* introduced China's covered bridges to Western readers and has served as the model for America's *Covered Bridges: Practical Crossings—Nostalgic Icons*.

This is a beautiful book, well-written with great photography. It is a book to return to, time after time to look at pictures and to learn from the practical and historical writing about covered bridges. The eye-catching photos will make this an ideal coffee-table book, but the wealth of information will sustain your interest for years.The authors have organized their book into "broadly conceived perspectives of the covered bridge as utilitarian objects, indicators of technological ingenuity and progress, obsolete nuisances, and nostalgic icons and symbols of the past." The book lives up to this daunting challenge and does so with engaging language, striking a balance between "erudite academic" and "down home." For me, the pictures and descriptions reveal a love of the subject matter. I was particularly taken with the speculative theories about how the bridges were constructed. People have wondered for centuries about how the pyramids were constructed and how Michelangelo painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. In an investigative spirit the authors present alternative ideas on how covered bridges could have been constructed long distances over rivers. The deductive reasoning from known facts and evidence to a reasonable theory guides the reader to a conclusion, with just the right amount of "ah ha" combined with skeptical insight.This book holds fascination for all types of readers. Casual readers may just want to browse the pictures while industrious readers will find descriptions and contemporary issues to ponder. In particular, chapter Five: Finding a Place for Covered Bridges in the Twenty-First Century grapples with combining nostalgia and historic preservation with the need for safety and practical use in a time of

bigger and heavier vehicles. This is a book to be enjoyed and from which readers will learn.

Reference books on covered bridges have been produced from the 1930s (when only a few people were interested) through today. A growing segment of the population has an interest in covered bridges now, due in part to the efforts of many previous authors, though most of the previous literature has been more oriented toward either the scenic value of the bridges or in providing images with a brief history or the locality details to encourage tourism of the bridges. Terry and Ron have achieved something rarely accomplished in this area by elevating the discussion on covered bridges to include much more information on truss types, terminology, evolution of design, and recognition of the relationship of covered bridges to their uncovered wood cousins. Despite the added focus on history of these bridges, there is also an abundance of high quality images provided. The new photography in the book is stunning. These images are blended with a large amount of historical imagery, something on the order of 550 historic photos, drawings, and etchings are included. This book is a delight to an advanced "bridger" and would also be an excellent way for almost anyone interested in covered bridges to elevate their level of understanding of this American icon.

This is an excellent book for covered bridge enthusiasts who love the old bridges. The author did a lot of research and had produced a superb account of them in this book. I highly recommend it!

I'm posting this negative review to get attention of the publisher. The photos of this book are low resolution (gritty) on my tablet, and I have not had this problem with other books. It's my hope that the publisher will update the Kindle version with higher resolution photos so that I can enjoy them as I read this book. This review does not reflect the content of this book, most of which I have not read yet. I will update this review when the photo quality issue is resolved.

I listened intently to stories my Mother told about growing up close to White's Bridge in Keene Township, Ionia County, Michigan. Her older brothers made a Bobsled that carried them down the steep hill onto the White's Bridge in winter. Her Aunt, an artist, made beautiful chalk drawings of both winter and summer White's Bridge scenes. I was excited to read "America's Covered Bridges" where Terry Miller not only tells about the location of these bridges but also details about when they were built, by whom, and their construction details. I've been collecting books about covered bridges for many years, but I have never seen any that compare to the quality of America's Covered

Bridges: Practical Crossings -Nostalgic Icons\_ White's Bridge, Fallasburg Bridge, and Ada Bridge in Kent County, Michigan are all part of my precious childhood memories, and through this book I have learned about so many more. This book is priceless!

American Covered Bridges *f* has the hallmarks of an instant classic, certainly for the connoisseur, but perhaps even moreso for those who have not given too much thought or notice to the subject. Be assured that few will emerge from their encounter with this thoroughly engrossing book without having formed a friendship with covered bridges that could well lead to further exploration. Co-authors Terry Miller and Ronald Knapp present a treasury of information via their absolutely engaging, fluent style, amply supported by the exquisite photography of A. Chester Ong, along with a wealth of diagrams and historic prints, the whole organized with the clarity of a well-marked highway. Cost-wise, the relatively modest price-tag of a publication that could easily command an exponentially higher amount is truly amazing.

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