

## INTRODUCTION

Oregon has the largest collection of covered bridges in the West and one of the largest in the nation. The covered-bridge-building tradition in Oregon dates from the 1850's. Out of necessity, pioneers built with the materials at hand. Douglas fir was abundant in western Oregon and well-suited to bridge construction. To increase their useful life, houses were constructed over the timber trusses to protect them from the damp western Oregon climate.

The heyday of covered bridge building in Oregon occurred between 1905 and 1925 when there were an estimated 450 covered bridges in the state. By 1977, this number had dwindled to 56.

This guide has focused on covered bridges designed or built for vehicular traffic. Based on this criteria, Oregon currently has 50 covered bridges.

Local naming of covered bridges can prove to be inconsistent, and many bridges have more than one name. Each bridge in this guide has a unique identification called the World Guide Number. During the 1950's, this system of identifying covered bridges on a national scale was developed by Betsy and Philip Clough. The World Guide Number has been adopted by the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges.

The assigned World Guide Number for each bridge is the combination of a state, county and bridge identifier. Oregon, being the 37th state alphabetically, dictates the first two digits of the identifier. The counties are also assigned numbers in alphabetical order. All bridges in Benton County, for example, contain the number 37-02- because Benton County is the second county in the state alphabetically. The third set of numbers are assigned to the actual bridge location, although the name of the bridge or stream is not a factor in the assignment. Many bridges have been destroyed since the adoption of the World Guide Number. Since the number is not reused or reassigned, some numbers are missing. Combinations of numbers and letters denote a bridge which does not use a true truss for support but is covered nonetheless.

We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information contained within this document. However, if corrections are required, please notify the Oregon Department of Transportation, Bridge Engineering Section, 355 Capitol St. NE, Rm 301, Salem, OR. 97301-3871, Ph: (503) 986-4200.

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