

Bridgeport Covered Bridge

National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark



Completion Date

1862

Location

Nevada County, CA

39 17 34.2 N, 121 11 41.7 W

The Bridgeport Covered Bridge is the longest single span covered bridge (230 feet) west of the Mississippi River.

"Dropping to the South Fork of the Yuba River on the old route from the mines of French Corral and San Juan Ridge to Marysville, the traveler comes unexpectedly upon one of the most remarkable of covered bridges..."

—S. Griswold Morley, *The Covered Bridges of California*, 1938

A product of the Northern California Gold Rush, the Bridgeport Covered Bridge is believed to be the longest, single-span, wooden covered bridge in the United States. Crossing the south fork of the Yuba River at a span of 233 feet, the bridge was built by the Virginia City Turnpike Company as part of a 14-mile toll road authorized by the California state legislature. The toll road was an essential link connecting Virginia City, Nevada, and the silver-producing Comstock Lode with the centers of California commerce.

The Bridgeport Covered Bridge is unique in its design, a combination of truss and arch design apparently taken from a plan by bridge-designer Theodore Burr for a span across the Hudson River. One of only ten covered bridges remaining in California, the bridge is sheathed in more than 27,000 sugar-pine shingles. The laminated arches, anchored by massive granite blocks and built of Douglas fir cut by the Virginia City Turnpike Company, are visible from both inside and outside the bridge.

Facts

- In 1862, the price for crossing the Virginia City Turnpike Company's 14-mile section of roadway, including passage over the Bridgeport Covered Bridge, was \$0.25 for foot travelers, \$0.50 for horsemen, and \$6—the maximum toll—for a team of eight animals
- A National Historic Landmark, the Bridgeport Covered Bridge was acquired by the California Department of Parks and Recreation in 1986. It subsequently has become the centerpiece of the South Yuba River State Park, which allows pedestrians the opportunity to explore the bridge at leisure as well as swim below in the chilly waters of the Yuba River.

Resources

1. Elliott H. Koeppel, *The California Gold Country: Highway 49 Revisited*, Malacoff & Co., ISBN 093812112
2. Jeanne Baker, *An Undercover Story: The Covered Bridges of California*, Chapel Hill Press, 2000, ISBN 1888084923
3. S. Griswold Morley, *The Covered Bridges of California*, Reprint Services Corporation, 1992, ISBN 0781250668



Bridgeport Covered Bridge



Bridgeport Covered Bridge

lat: 39.2927390, lon: -121.1949060

17698
Pleasant Valley Rd

Bridgeport Covered Bridge Vicinity Map

NATIONAL HISTORIC
CIVIL ENGINEERING MONUMENT



BRIDGEPORT ~~1852~~ ————— ~~1852~~ 1852

ASCE 1979



BRIDGEPORT HISTORIC DISTRICT

BUILT IN 1862 BY DAVID J. WOOD WITH LUMBER FROM HIS MILL IN SIERRA COUNTY, THE COVERED BRIDGE WAS PART OF THE VIRGINIA TURNPIKE COMPANY TOLL ROAD THAT SERVED THE NORTHERN MINES AND THE NEVADA COMSTOCK LODE. THE ASSOCIATED RANCH AND RESOURCES FOR REST AND REPAIR PROVIDED A NECESSARY LIFELINE ACROSS THE SIERRA NEVADA. UTILIZING A UNIQUE COMBINATION TRUSS AND ARCH CONSTRUCTION, BRIDGEPORT COVERED BRIDGE IS ONE OF THE OLDEST HOUSED SPANS IN THE WESTERN UNITED STATES AND THE LONGEST SINGLE SPAN, WOODEN COVERED BRIDGE IN THE WORLD.

STATE REGISTERED HISTORICAL LANDMARK NO. 390

REGISTERED AUGUST 26, 1947

PLAQUE PLACED BY THE NATIVE SONS OF THE GOLDEN WEST, THE CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION, AND CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS REDEDICATED 2014, THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS



BRIDGEPORT (NYES CROSSING) COVERED BRIDGE

BUILT IN 1862 BY DAVID ISAAC JOHNWOOD WITH LUMBER FROM HIS MILL IN SIERRA COUNTY. THIS BRIDGE WAS PART OF THE VIRGINIA TURNPIKE COMPANY TOLL ROAD WHICH SERVED THE NORTHERN MINES AND THE BUSY NEVADA COMSTOCK LODE. UTILIZING A COMBINATION TRUSS AND ARCH CONSTRUCTION, IT IS ONE OF THE OLDEST HOUSED SPANS IN THE WEST AND THE LONGEST SINGLE SPAN, WOODEN-COVERED BRIDGE IN THE UNITED STATES.

**CALIFORNIA REGISTERED HISTORICAL
LANDMARK NO. 390**

PLAQUE PLACED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE PARK COMMISSION IN COOPERATION WITH THE NEVADA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE WM. B. MEEK—WM. M. STEWART CHAPTER NO. 10, E CLAMPUS VITUS, MAY 23, 1964.

References

[Bridgeport Covered Bridge, Nevada County, CA](#)

[Bridgeport Covered Bridge - Wikipedia](#)