

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Cornstalk Covered Bridge

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: County Road 1350 North over Cornstalk Creek.

City or town: Roachdale State: IN County: Putnam

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national       statewide       local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A       B       C       D

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>  <u>Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology</u>  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____  <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>Title :</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

Cornstalk Covered Bridge  
Name of Property

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

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**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Covered Burr-arch truss

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE  
walls: WOOD: Weatherboard

roof: METAL  
other:

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Cornstalk Covered Bridge, built in 1917 in Franklin Township, Putnam County, has a clear span of 82 feet over Cornstalk Creek. The single-span Burr arch sets atop concrete abutments. The bridge has board-and-batten siding and features a metal roof. The bridge continues to carry vehicular traffic on West County Road 1350 North.

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### **Narrative Description**

The Cornstalk Covered Bridge (photo 0001) was built in 1917 by J. A. Britton. The single-span bridge has an 82 foot free-span Burr arch truss that rests on concrete abutments rising approximately 16' above Cornstalk Creek below. The total length is 97' from face-to-face of portal. The bridge is approximately 20' wide with a portal approximately 16'-7" wide. The bridge is 19'-6" tall from the deck to the ridge. The bridge is positioned in an east/west alignment over Cornstalk Creek and carries Putnam County Road 1350 North before it turns and becomes 1400 North east of the bridge. The general terrain around the bridge is wooded with some agricultural land to the east and a low-flowing creek below the bridge. Modern metal guardrails are installed to each side of the road in front of the portals. The road approaches to the bridge are asphalt. The original concrete abutments that support the bridge are 12' tall on the west side and 8' tall on the east side (seen on left side of photo 05).

The heavy oak timber frame is composed of sawn lumber with the Burr arches spliced together (photo 03). Eight panels of oak timber X-bracing are below the bridge deck and overhead. Floor boards composing the bridge deck are perpendicular with the flow of traffic. Wood runners, parallel with the flow of traffic, form a wide lane atop the deck boards. A wood rail is attached to braces in the walls about two feet above the deck. The bridge's sides are covered with boards and narrow battens, painted red (photo 05). The top of the walls are left open for ventilation. Each end wall that forms the portal for the bridge has a gabled wall and shaped portal with clipped outside corners (photos 02, 06). The end walls are also covered with boards and battens. Rafters and spaced boards form the understructure of the roof on which the metal roof is installed. The roof and understructure was installed in 1990 at the time the bridge was rehabilitated. The bridge remains open to vehicular traffic on County Road 1350 North.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENGINEERING

TRANSPORTATION

**Period of Significance**

1917-1932

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person (last name, first name)**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder (last name, first name)**

Britton, J. A.

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### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins when the covered bridge was constructed in 1917. While the bridge continues to be used for local vehicular traffic, the period of significance ends in 1932, the year that State Road 234 opened for traffic, north of the bridge, and State Road 236 was under construction, south of the bridge, lessening the use of Cornstalk Covered Bridge.

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Cornstalk Covered Bridge, 1917, is a fine example of a wooden Burr arch bridge and is one of nine covered bridges extant in the Putnam County. The Cornstalk Covered Bridge is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places based on two criteria. Criterion A is applicable under transportation as an area of significance. The bridge, which created an important crossing over Cornstalk Creek in Franklin Township, embodies the importance bridges served to the development of transportation in the county. Criterion C is applicable with engineering as an area of significance. The bridge represents the development of the Burr arch in wood form, relatively late in its construction date, while the use of steel or concrete for bridge construction had been in full development. The relative rarity of surviving examples of covered bridges further establishes the significance of the Cornstalk Covered Bridge.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

#### ENGINEERING & TRANSPORTATION

The Cornstalk Covered Bridge is an example of the Burr arch with a free span of 82 feet rising about 16' above a narrow tributary of Cornstalk Creek, just north of the primary waterway. The Burr arch was the invention of Theodore Burr (1771-1822), an inventor-engineer from Connecticut, who patented the design on April 4, 1817 (patent no. 2769). The Burr arch functions in tandem with king post trusses for rigidity in the span. While there is some debate as to which member functions for loading versus providing rigidity, the arch or king truss, it is understood that the members must function together. The arch is generally capable of the span and load, but not without failure if not compensated with additional members for rigidity. The bridge type was used in the developing western part of the country and enjoyed significant use in Indiana.



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The oldest extant covered bridge in Indiana is thought to be the Ramp Creek Bridge that crosses Raccoon Creek at the entrance to Brown County State Park. The Burr arch bridge was built between 1836 and 1838 in Putnam County and moved to the park in 1932. This was one of two dual-lane bridges thought to be the first covered bridges constructed in Putnam County with public funds. The bridges were located on the New Albany-Crawfordsville Turnpike which is modern-day U.S. 231. The Ramp Creek Bridge spanned Ramp Creek near Fincastle near the Putnam-Montgomery County Line while the other bridge spanned Big Raccoon Creek near the small village of Raccoon.<sup>1</sup> There are estimated to have been 31 covered bridges constructed in Putnam County from the time the dual-lane bridges were constructed until 1922 when the last one was built over Little Walnut Creek.<sup>2</sup> While generally thought of as a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century method for bridge construction, Putnam County Commissioners continued to commission covered bridges into the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today, the county retains nine of its historic covered bridges dating to 1880 through 1922.

These are the following:

Cornstalk Covered Bridge (1917), Burr arch truss by J. A. Britton  
Pine Bluff Covered Bridge (1886), Howe truss by J. A. Britton  
Rolling Stone Covered Bridge (1915), Burr arch truss by J. A. Britton  
Baker's Camp Covered Bridge (1901), Burr arch truss by J. J. Daniels  
Edna Collins Covered Bridge (1922), Burr arch truss by Charles Hendrix  
Dunbar Covered Bridge (1880), Burr arch truss by J. J. Daniels  
Oakalla Covered Bridge (1898), Burr arch truss by J. J. Daniels  
Houck Covered Bridge (1880), Howe truss by Massillon Bridge Company  
Dick Huffman Covered Bridge (1880), Howe truss by E. Anderson & Sons

The Cornstalk Covered Bridge is one of those 20<sup>th</sup> century constructs. The bridge was built in 1917 and appears to have been an important crossing in the north part of the county as a continuation of a road that led along the east side of Cornstalk Creek in Montgomery County, connecting the Ladoga (Montgomery County) area south to the former turnpike (U.S. 231) into Greencastle. A crossing was in the general vicinity as early as the 1870s. The bridge is named for the creek, which is named for Chief Peter Cornstalk of the Eel River tribe of Miami Indians who once resided in the region. The prominence of the crossing likely lessened with construction of a crossing of the creek on Montgomery County Road East 1150 South which also led to the former turnpike. The Cornstalk bridge crossing's importance likely declined more so with construction of both State Roads 234 and 236, to the north and south, respectively. The state roads run parallel to the crossing and serve the communities of Ladoga and Roachdale. By 1932, State Road 234 through Ladoga had been built and the road that became State Road 236 through Roachdale was under construction. These improved routes offered more substantial crossings while also connecting to the former turnpike, by then designated Highway 43 (and would later become U.S. 231).

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<sup>1</sup> Romine, pg. 5

<sup>2</sup> Romine, pg. 6

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The Cornstalk Covered Bridge was constructed by Joseph Albert Britton (1839-1929), a native of Parke County, Indiana who constructed approximately forty covered bridges in a three-county area that included Parke, Vermillion, and Putnam Counties. Britton was the son of a carpenter and enlisted for military service during the Civil War. While he was admitted to the bar as an attorney in Indiana and Kansas, he returned to the carpenter's trade in Indiana and constructed his first bridge in 1882, known as the Narrows Bridge at today's Turkey Run State Park.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to 1855, most bridges in Indiana were either privately built by landowners or were constructed by private companies who may have required the payment of tolls. The state legislature authorized county governments to construct or financially assist with the construction of bridges in 1855. By 1870, county governments had the sole responsibility for constructing bridges, which is essentially still in place today. Crossing waterways up to this point was done either by fords or ferries. Eventually, open wood structures were built, then later, contractors built wood bridges on stone abutments. Stone arched bridges were being introduced at the same time.

Indiana's wood bridge builders often favored the Burr arch truss which combined king post trusses with a stiffening double wood arch. J. J. Daniels, active in Parke County, and the Kennedy Brothers, active in Rush County, both favored Burr arch trusses. The majority of surviving wood truss bridges in Indiana are Burr arch designs. The Howe Truss concept is more determinate in that specific members act in either compression or tension, while for the Burr Arch, the arches have a role that is difficult to determine, even today. Both truss types offered viable solutions to spanning Indiana's waterways before iron or concrete became the most sought after solutions.

Indiana has the third highest number of covered bridges in the nation. Between 1820 and 1922, it was estimated that 600 covered bridges were constructed of various truss patterns. By 1977, 102 were extant, which dwindled to 98 extant covered bridges by the early 1990s. The first covered bridge in Indiana was constructed around 1820 at Mooresville (now Floyd's Knob); several more followed through the late 1830s. Several covered bridges were constructed during this early time across the National Road (Richmond to Terre Haute) and then the Michigan Road (Madison to Michigan City). A litany of internal infrastructure improvements during the 1830s was brought to a halt during financial woes the state faced in the 1840s.

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### **Developmental History/Additional historic context information**

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<sup>3</sup> Felkner, Charles. *Parke County Covered Bridges Thematic Resource National Register of Historic Places form* (1978).

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Allen, Richard S. Covered Bridges of the Middle West. Bonanza Books, New York: 1970

archINform (website accessed January 23, 2023) Burr arch truss:  
<https://www.archinform.net/stich/2683.htm>

Atlas of Putnam County, Indiana. J. H. Beers & Co. Publishers, Chicago: 1879.

Black, Archibald. The Story of Bridges. McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York: 1936.

Boykin, Linda L. *The Wooden Age of Indiana's Covered Bridges*, Butler University Thesis, 1986.

Felkner, Charles. *Parke County Covered Bridges Thematic Resource National Register of Historic Places form* (1978).

Gould, George E. Indiana Covered Bridges Thru the Years. Indiana Covered Bridge Society, Indianapolis: 1977.

Indiana State Highway Maps: 1919, 1926, 1932, 1940.

Ketcham, Bryan. Covered Bridges on the Byways of Indiana. Oxford Printing Co., Oxford, Ohio: 1949.

Reed, Robert. Indiana's Covered Bridges. Arcadia Publishing, Chicago: 2004.

Romine, Malcolm S. *The Covered Bridges of Putnam County, Indiana*. Mitchell Fleming Printing, Knightstown, IN: 2021.

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### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

\_\_\_\_\_ State Historic Preservation Office

\_\_\_\_\_ Other State agency

\_\_\_\_\_ Federal agency

\_\_\_\_\_ Local government

\_\_\_\_\_ University

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** HB-2009

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one acre

Use the UTM system

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The south and north boundaries are lines parallel to and 10 feet south and north of the edge of the bridge and extend along the right-of-way for County Road 1350 North which is approximately 40 feet wide. Similarly, the east and west boundaries are lines parallel to and 10 feet east and west of the edge of the portals. Nothing in this boundary description should be construed as intent to include adjacent private property.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary described includes the outer extents of the covered bridge, its abutments, all parts of the wooden bridge, and the portion of County Road 1350 North alignment that features approaches to the bridge.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Kurt West Garner  
organization: Putnam County Heritage Preservation Society, Inc.  
street & number: 12954 6<sup>th</sup> Road  
city or town: Plymouth state: IN zip code: 46563  
e-mail: kwgarner@kwgarner.com  
telephone: 574-780-1423  
date: February 1, 2023

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Cornstalk Covered Bridge  
City or Vicinity: Roachdale  
County: Putnam State: Indiana  
Photographer: Kurt West Garner  
Date Photographed: July 18, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast at bridge from west side of crossing

1 of 6.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking east at west portal

2 of 6.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking east through bridge from west end

3 of 6.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest at bridge from east side of crossing

4 of 6.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast at bridge from west creek bank

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Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest at east portal

6 of 6.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

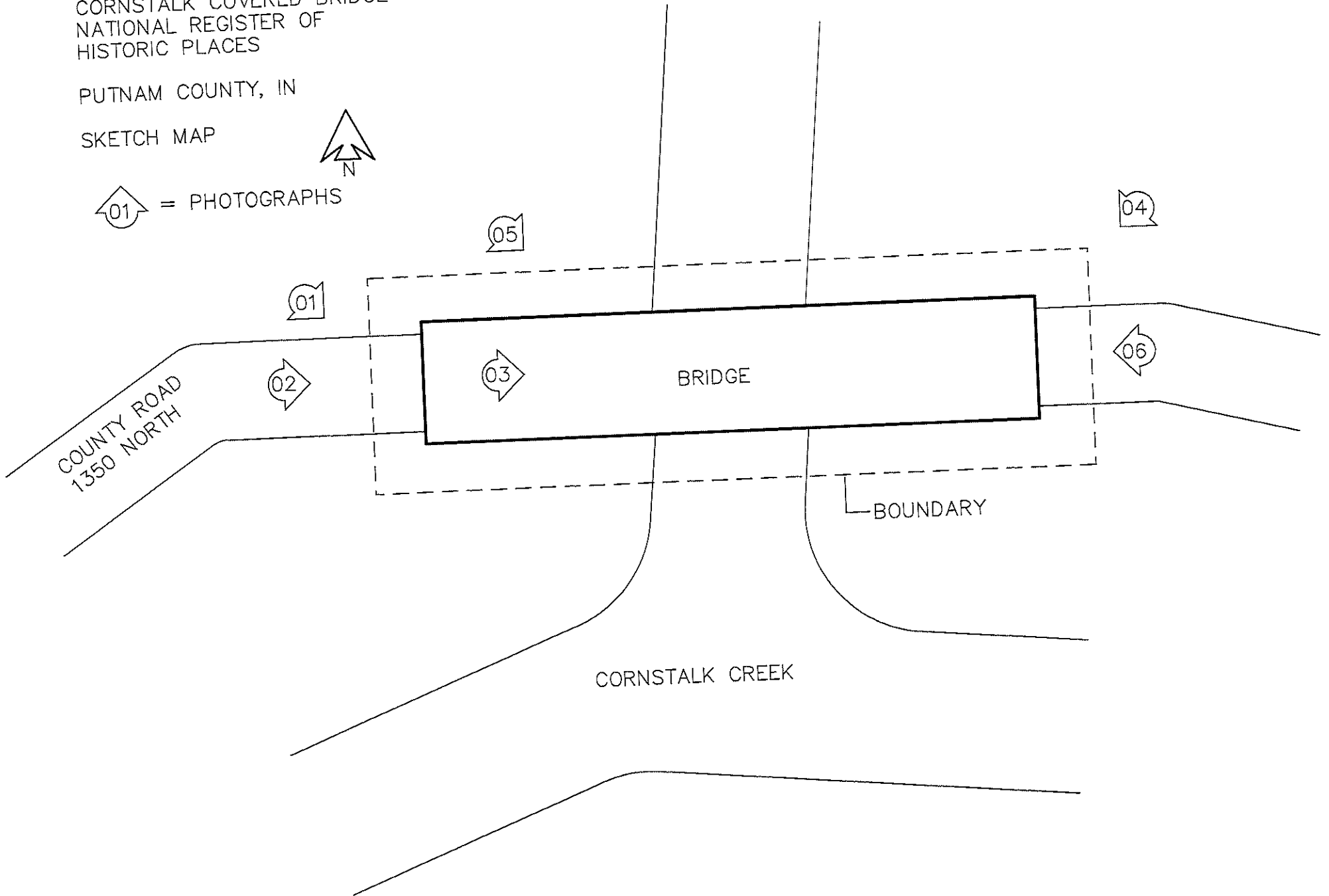
CORNSTALK COVERED BRIDGE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF  
HISTORIC PLACES

PUTNAM COUNTY, IN

SKETCH MAP



01 = PHOTOGRAPHS



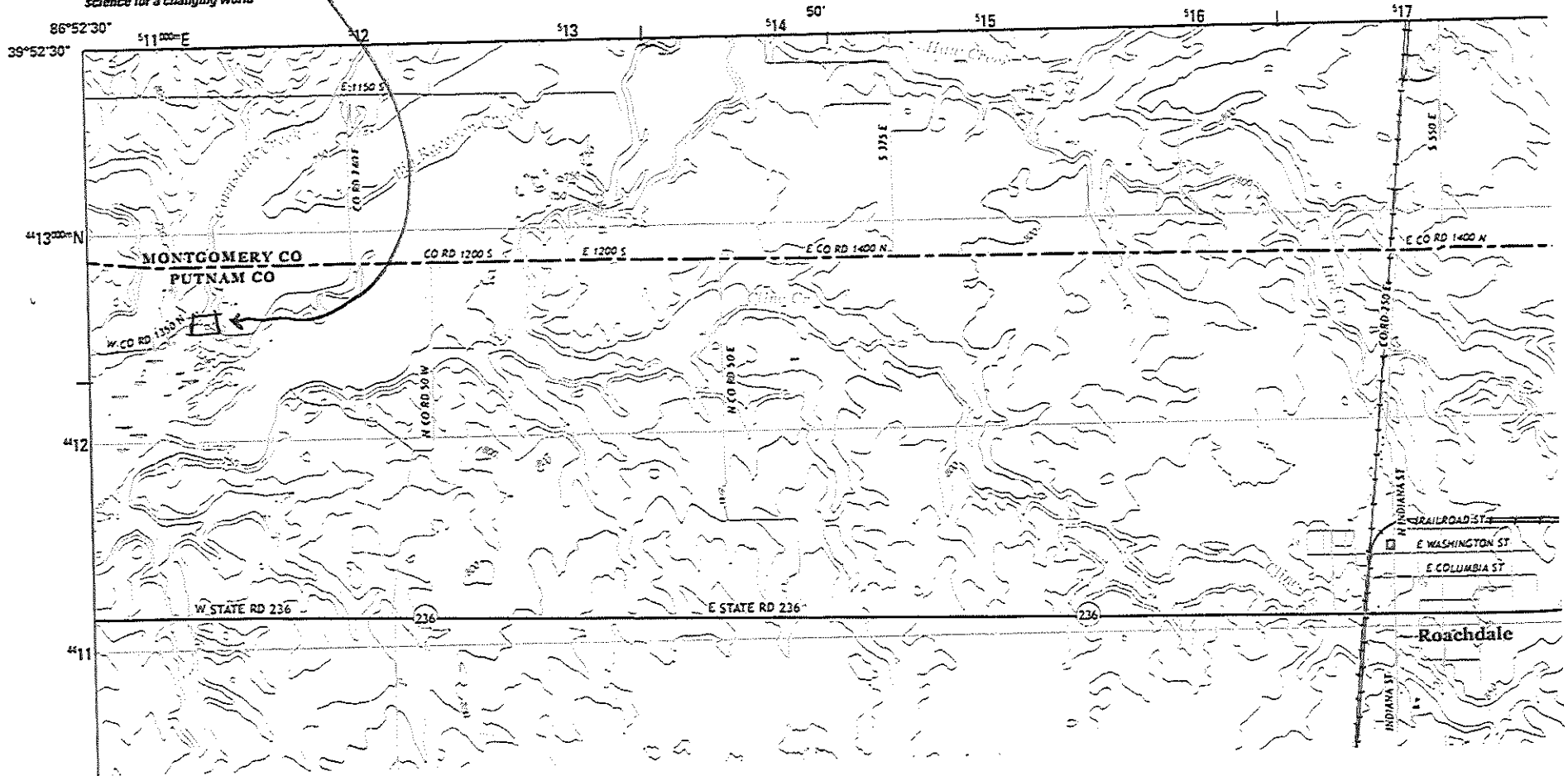


CORNSTOLK COVERED BRIDGE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PUTNAM Co. IN

EIGS 511213 N16544125'69



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY





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