**State:** West Virginia  
**County:** Monroe  
**Entry Date:** 

### 1. Name

**Common:** Indian Creek Covered Bridge  
**And/or Historic:** 

### 2. Location

**Street and Number:** Along U.S. Route #219 near St. John's Church  
**City or Town:** Salt Sulphur Springs  
**State:** West Virginia  
**Congressional District:** Second  
**Code:** 54  
**County:** Monroe  
**Code:** 063  

### 3. Classification

**Category** (Check One)  
- District  
- Building  
- Site  
- Object  
- Structure  

**Ownership**  
- Public  
- Private  
- Both  
- Public Acquisition:  
  - In Process  
  - Being Considered  
- Preservation work in progress  

**Status**  
- Occupied  
- Unoccupied  
- Yes  
- No  
- Restricted  
- Unrestricted  

**Present Use** (Check One or More as Appropriate)  
- Agricultural  
- Commercial  
- Educational  
- Entertainment  
- Government  
- Industrial  
- Military  
- Museum  
- Scientific  
- Private Residence  
- Park  
- Transportation  
- Comments  
- Other (Specify) 

### 4. Owner of Property

**Owner's Name:** Monroe County Historical Society, Inc.  
**Street and Number:** 

**City or Town:** Union  
**State:** West Virginia  
**Code:** 54  

### 5. Location of Legal Description

**Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, etc.:** Monroe County Courthouse  
**Street and Number:** 

**City or Town:** Union  
**State:** West Virginia  
**Code:** 54  

### 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

**Title of Survey:** 

**Date of Survey:**  
- Federal  
- State  
- County  
- Local  

**Depository for Survey Records:** 

**Street and Number:** 

**City or Town:** 

**State:** 

**Code:** 

**Entry Number** 

**Date:**
Indian Creek Covered Bridge is a single-span, modified Howe truss structure. Built about 1898, the unit sits atop abutments of hand-shaped limestone blocks which were so designed as to fit without mortar. It is slightly more than fifty feet long and fourteen feet wide at the floor, with a clearance of eleven feet.

Structural framing of the bridge is in four sections, those in the center forming an "X" pattern while the ends are triangles. There are five vertical posts on each side. From the apex of the center post an arrangement of two beams with a space between projects to the base of the posts on either side. Through this open space passes a single beam from the top of the second and fourth posts to the base of the center. From the apex of the second and fourth vertical elements to the base of the first and fifth posts projects a stout beam of two timbers which are fastened together. These wooden structural timbers vary in size from 9" x 4" to 14" x 10". The whole is strengthened by 1/4" iron rods extending from the top to the bottom of each post and attached with sturdy bolts. Additional steel braces are placed along the beams between the first and second and fourth and fifth posts, one in a vertical position and the other at about a 45° angle from the floor.

Interior framing for the sides and roof is simple. It is constructed with the purpose of holding protective coverings rather than contributing to structural support. Siding is of vertical pine boards and the gable roof is covered with free-split shingles, the latter originally being of chestnut but now of red oak.

The bridge decayed to some extent after use ended about 1929, but when it was leased by the Monroe County Historical Society in 1965, restoration work was undertaken. Abutments and framing were intact at the time. A brother of the original builders was contracted to replace deteriorating materials and strengthen the structure. The supporting truss-work was solid and merely had to be touched up. Siding was replaced as necessary, a new floor was laid, and a new roof was put on. Restoration was to be as authentic as possible, but red oak had to be substituted for chestnut for the shingles and these were made on the site with a froe and mallet. An interesting sidelight to roof construction is that shingles were placed in the dark of the night under a moon (so they would not turn up!) in deference to ancient custom.

The Monroe County Historical Society continues to maintain the bridge and now uses it to house a collection of horse-drawn vehicles.
They developed their structure, but the interesting sidelights in the building show the ingenuity of the iron rods, nails and shingles. At first the county desired an arched setting up their own gas; the Indian Creek area south of Union and Salt Sulphur Springs, and a contract gave the young men a good start in business and bolstered the industrial growth of its young builders and a landmark in the developing rural transportation system in the area of Monroe County, West Virginia, about the turn of the twentieth century. The Weikel brothers, contractors for the structure, applied techniques acquired through self-education and common sense to design a bridge which would serve for about thirty years of continuous use and remain basically solid even to this day.

Monroe County, located in the extreme southeast of West Virginia, was quite rural and sparsely settled in the late nineteenth century. The natural barrier of Peters Mountain blocked much commerce to the east and south, and internal transportation was rudimentary except between the frequented springs resorts. Off the "beaten path" of main roads, railroads and waterways, what routes did exist were often narrow and dusty or muddy. This was compounded by natural barriers of terrain and water, the latter usually crossed at established fords.

As the twentieth century approached, Monroe County Court (administrative) was taking an increased interest in upgrading the road system and participated in funding several improvements. Farming of transportation maintenance was a growing practice as contracts for bridges at several locations were let when the cry rose for better roads. One such improvement was planned for the Indian Creek area south of Union and Salt Sulphur Springs, and a contract was awarded for the construction of a covered bridge by Oscar and Ray Weikel in 1898.

The Weikels were sixteen and eighteen years old, respectively, at the time, and their guarantee for the bridge was backed by their uncles who ran a sawmill in the county. The young men industriously undertook the task, setting up their own sawmill near the site and preparing all materials but the iron rods, nails and shingles. At first the county desired an arched structure, but the Weikels made their own plans and a level-floored bridge was agreed to.

Logs were delivered to their sawmill by oxen, and the finished products were transported to the construction location by horse and wagon. Some interesting sidelights in the building show the ingenuity of the brothers. They developed their own tool to lift the large timbers into place, a sort of double-geared, back-action cant hook which was attached to each end and handled by up to four men. After the bridge was completed and accepted by the county at a cost of about $400, the Weikels became established and continued in the lumber business in Monroe and Greenbrier counties for several years.

This contract gave the young men a good start in business and bolstered the transportation system of the area for at least thirty years. It was
about 1929 or 1930 when U.S. Route 219 was opened through the southern portion of Monroe County, and the old Indian Creek Covered Bridge was no longer needed. It served its purpose well, however, and now stands as a monument to the engineering skills of its young builders and the challenge of the transportation system in the rugged terrain of southeastern West Virginia.

Weikel, Oscar C. to Haskell Shumate, February 18, 1965. Copy on file with the West Virginia Antiquities Commission, Old Mountainlair, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia.


LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

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FORM PREPARED BY

C.E. Turley, Field Research Agent and James E. Harding, Research Analyst

West Virginia Antiquities Commission

December 19, 1974

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

[ ] National
[ ] State
[ ] Local

Name: Leonard M. Davis
Title: State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: December 20, 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date
**1. NAME**

COMMON: Indian Creek Covered Bridge

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: Along U.S. Route #219 near St. John's Church

CITY OR TOWN: Approximately 1½ miles south of Salt Sulphur Springs

STATE: West Virginia

**3. MAP REFERENCE**


SCALE: 1:62500

DATE: 1921

**4. REQUIREMENTS**

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.
16. INDIAN CREEK COVERED BRIDGE
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