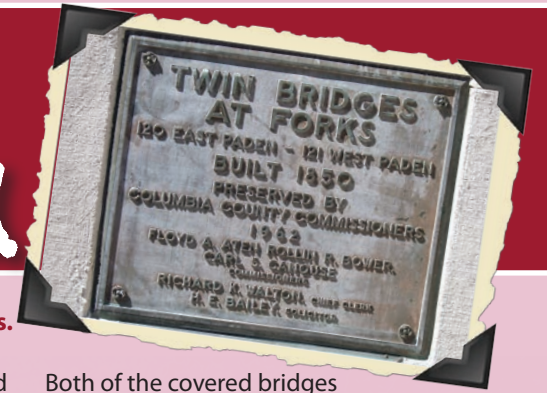


Discover What's Covered



The curiosity I had often led me to peddle my bike from Benton to the “**Twin Bridges**” of Columbia County. The twin bridges were constructed in 1884 by W. C. Pennington and named for sawmill operator, John Paden. These bridges--the 79-foot East Paden and the 103-foot West Paden--crossed Huntington Creek only a few feet apart.

Father told me that the bridges were covered out of necessity to keep the sun and the rain from destroying the bridge. He said that uncovered bridges would not last longer than 15 years, while a covered bridge would last for my lifetime. Farmers actually shoveled snow

onto the bridge for sleds and sleighs hauling logs and people.

Entering was like being transported to another world. The view through the tunnel of the bridge was lit up by pockets of sunshine through the beamed floor. As I gazed down the long corridor, I marveled at the almost identical space of the second bridge. There was always a breeze at the windows of the bridge, as if the cool summer air wanted to escape and the creek below hurried to join with Fishing Creek about a quarter mile downstream.

As I rode my bicycle across the bridge, I could hear the **planked wooden deck sounding**

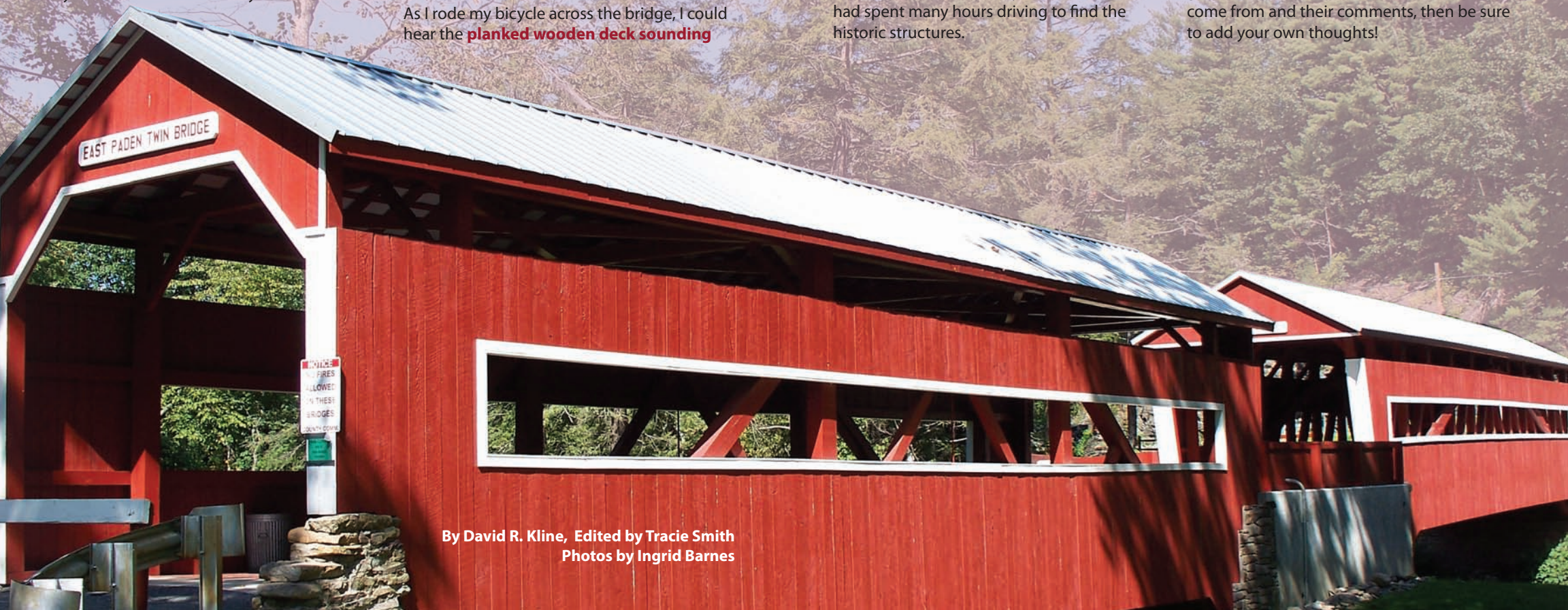
like a dance floor with hundreds of dancers.

Shadows played off the walls like a silent melody, and I usually sang a song as I traveled from one side of the creek to the other. The worn walls were covered with carved initials and declarations of love. I dreamed of the day when I would be old enough to somehow steal a kiss as Father and Mother did when they were growing up.

The purpose of my trip was to cast a line into one of the many eddies that formed under and around the bridge. I usually found a fisherman beside the bridge and would strike up a conversation. I always met people who had spent many hours driving to find the historic structures.

Both of the covered bridges are now listed on the **National Register of Historic Places**, and they are one of only two sets of twin bridges in the United States. As long as the twin bridges of Columbia County stand, there will be memories of a bygone era. There will always be visitors who flock to the Twin Bridges in an effort to bring simplicity back to life.

When visiting our timbered treasures, please be sure to take a moment to look through the guest book. Read where other visitors have come from and their comments, then be sure to add your own thoughts!



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