Covered Bridges of Columbia and Montour Counties Pennsylvania

History

Columbia and Montour Counties are located in Central Eastern Pennsylvania and contain a rich heritage from an era long since past. Of the counties many historical attributes, probably the most prominent are the existence of twenty-four (24) nineteenth century covered bridges, and one (1) twentieth century covered bridge. Below is a brief history of each bridge and directions to help you find it and see it in person.

East and West Paden (The Twin Bridges) *left*- The only twin covered bridges in the United States are located in Fishing Creek Township, Columbia County. The bridges can be found spanning Huntington Creek just east of Pa. Rte. 487 and east of Forks, off 1020.

The Twin Bridges were constructed in 1884 by W.C. Pennington for $720. They were named after John Paden who operated a nearby sawmill. Twin Bridges County Park was created in 1963 when the new road (1020) bypassed the structures. **Truss:** Queenpost, Burr

Josiah Hess Bridge *right* - is located on Huntington Creek, in Fishing Creek Township, Columbia County. This bridge is located between Forks and Jonestown on Twp. Rte. 363, off 1020.

The bridge was constructed in 1875 by Joseph Redline, at a cost of $1,349.50. It was named after the Hess family who owned a sawmill and farm nearby. **Truss:** Burr

Stillwater Bridge - is located on Big Fishing Creek in the Borough of Stillwater, after which it was named. It can be found on Twp. Rte. 629, east of Pa. Rte. 487.

This bridge was built in 1849 by James McHenry for a cost of $1,124. McHenry's family was among the first to settle in the Stillwater area. **Truss:** Burr

Patterson Bridge *above* - spans Green Creek and is located on Twp. Rte. 575 between Orangeville and Rohrsburg, off 4041. Green Creek flows into Fishing Creek in Orange Township, Columbia County.

This bridge was constructed by Frank Derr in 1875 at a cost of $804. It was named after Patterson's sawmill, which was located nearby. **Truss:** Burr

Kramer Bridge - this bridge crosses Mud Run, a tributary of Green and Fishing Creeks. It is located southwest of Rohrsburg on Twp. Rte. 572, which is off Twp. Rte. 595.

C.W. Eves built the Kramer Bridge in 1881 for $414.50. It was named after Alexander Kramer, a local farmer who also bid on its construction. **Truss:** Queenpost

Shoemaker Bridge - spans the West Branch Run which flows into Little Fishing Creek in Pine Township, Columbia County. It is located on 4027, near Rte. 442, northwest of Iola.

This bridge was also built in 1881 by T.S. Christian and cost only $322. It was named after Joseph Shoemaker, a nearby farmer and lumberman. **Truss:** Queenpost

Sam Eckman Bridge - is located on Little Fishing Creek between Pine and Greenwood Townships, Columbia County. It can be found on Twp. Rte. 548 north of Millville and Iola, near 4031.

This bridge was built in 1876 for $498 by Joseph Redline and is named after Samuel Eckman. Mr. Eckman was a prominent businessman who operated a farm, shingle mill, birch oil factory, and later established the Millville Creamery. **Truss:** Queenpost

Jud Christian Bridge *right* - also crosses Little Fishing Creek between Jackson and Pine Township and is located on Twp. Rte. 685, between 4031 and 4039, north of Millville and Iola.

Built in 1876 by William L. Manning for $239, the bridge was named after a nearby farmer and lumberman–Jud Christian. The bridge is in near-perfect condition: the stone and mortar abutments are solid; the wood ribbing of the roof is uniform; the wooden pegs (trunnels) are still in evidence, and the wall covering is in excellent condition. **Truss:** Queenpost

Creasyville Bridge - crosses Little Fishing Creek between Jackson and Pine Townships in Columbia County. It is located on Twp. Rte. 683 off 4031, north of Millville and Iola. This bridge was built in 1881 by T.S. Christian for a cost of $301.25. It is located near Iram Derr's sawmill and is thought to have first been known as the Derr bridge. **Truss:** Queenpost

Fowlersville Bridge - is located on a branch of Briar Creek in North Centre Township, Columbia County. This bridge was named after the Fowler family, who settled in the area after the Revolutionary War. The Fowlersville bridge was built by Charles Krug in 1887, at a cost of $397 and was one of the last bridges built in the County.

In 1986 the Fowlersville Bridge was moved to the Briar Creek Park, north of Rte. 93 and east of 1017. Now, it is only seasonally open. **Truss:** Queenpost

Wanich Bridge - is located on Little Fishing Creek between Hemlock and Mount Pleasant Townships in Columbia County. It can be found on Twp. Rte. 493, off Pa. Rte. 42 North of Fernville and Bloomsburg.

George Russell built the Wanich bridge in 1844 at a cost of $500. The bridge was named after John Wanich who was a farmer that resided nearby. **Truss:** Burr

Rupert Bridge *above* - is located between the Town of Bloomsburg and Montour Township in Columbia County. Spanning Fishing Creek, the bridge can be found on Twp. Rte. 449, off 4001, and near Pa. Rte. 42, in the village of Rupert.

At a cost of $1,637, the Rupert bridge was built in 1847 by Jesse W. Beard. It was named after the nearby village which was settled by Leonard Rupert in 1788. Rupert established a ferry across the river and his home became a popular stop off place for travelers. **Truss:** Burr

Hollingshead Bridge - spans Catawissa Creek in Catawissa Township, Columbia County. It is on Twp. Rte. 405, southeast of Catawissa Borough.

The Hollingshead Bridge was built in 1851 by Peter Ent, for a cost of $1,180. The bridge was named for Henry Hollingshead, who owned a nearby mill.
Truss: Burr

Parr's Mill Bridge *right* - connects Franklin and Cleveland Townships in Columbia County. This bridge spans the North Branch of Roaring Creek and is on Twp. Rte 371, off 3003 and east of Pa. Rte. 487, just south of Catawissa.

F.L. Shuman constructed this bridge in 1866 at a cost of $1,275. In 1875, Washington Parr purchased the Willow Grove Grist Mill which was located near the bridge. After this purchase, Parr's Mill Bridge became its common name. **Truss:** Burr

Esther Furnace Bridge - spans the North Branch of Roaring Creek in Cleveland Township, Columbia County. It is on Twp. Rte. 373, in proximity to 3003, south of Catawissa.

This bridge was built in 1881 by C.W. Eves at a cost of $1,044.75. It is named after the Esther Furnace which was built in 1817 to smelt iron. **Truss:** Queenpost

Davis Bridge *left* - spans the North Branch of Roaring Creek in Cleveland Township, Columbia County. It is located on Twp. Rte. 371, off Pa. Rte. 42, south of Catawissa and west of Queen City.

The Davis bridge was built in 1875 by Daniel Kostenbauder at a cost of $1,248. In the late 1800s a Davis who lived on a nearby farm began repairs on the bridge and gave it his name. **Truss:** Queenpost

Snyder Bridge *right* - is located in Locust Township. Spanning the North Branch of Roaring Creek, the bridge is on Twp. Rte. 361 off 2001, east of Pa. Rte. 42 and east of Slabtown.

The construction date, builder, and cost of this bridge are unknown. It is listed in the County Bridge Book as being near John Snyder's grist mill. **Truss:** Queenpost

Knoebels Groves Bridge - spans the South branch of Roaring Creek and connects Franklin Township, Columbia County with Ralpho Township, Northumberland County. It is situated in Knoebels Amusement Resort and is located 100 feet downstream from the birthplace of the resort and the original Knoebels Bridge location. Turn of the century visitors came to the park to swim in the creek and jump from that bridge to the waters below.
The bridge was rebuilt in 1975 at a cost of $10,000 and utilizes the "Queenpost Design". The main roof beams were hand hewn in 1865 and came from the Berninger Grist Mill. The beams measure 14" x 16" and are 51 feet long. Reconstruction of the bridge was led by Dick Knoebel.
Truss: Queenpost

Lawrence L. Knoebel Bridge *left* – is located in Knoebel's Amusement Resort, connecting the park and campground, and spans the South Branch of Roaring Creek. This bridge connects Cleveland Township in Columbia County with Ralpho Township in Northumberland County. The park is located at the county line, off PA Route 487 between Catawissa and Elysburg.

Here's an interesting footnote, Dick Knoebel is the 4th generation of Knoebels directly involved with Columbia County Covered Bridges. Dick's great-grandfather was the builder of the Wagner Covered Bridge in 1874. In 1936, Dick's grandfather Hartman H. Knoebel purchased this covered bridge (originally constructed over West Creek, Benton, in 1881 by J.J. McHenry at a cost of $348) for $40. It was then moved and rebuilt in Knoebels Amusement Resort by Hartman and Lawrence Knoebel – Dick's uncle and father. **Truss:** Queenpost

Johnson Bridge *above* - spans Mugser Run, a tributary of the South Branch of Roaring Creek in Cleveland Township, Columbia County. It is on Twp. Rte. 320 east of Knoebel's Amusement Resort.

This bridge was constructed in 1882 by Daniel Stine for $799. The bridge was named after Adam M. Johnson a farmer in the area, who also owned a boot and shoe store near the site. **Truss:** Queenpost

Richards (Reichard) Bridge *above* - spanning the South Branch of Roaring Creek, this bridge connects Cleveland Township, Columbia County, with Ralpho Township, Northumberland County. It is located on Twp. Rte. 337, south of Knoebel's Amusement Resort.

The Richards bridge was built in 1880 by Columbia and Northumberland Counties at a cost of $565. The bridge was named after John Richards, who originally owned a farm near the site of the bridge. **Truss:** Queenpost with Kingpost.

Krickbaum Bridge *right* - spans the South Branch of Roaring Creek between Cleveland Township, Columbia County and Ralpho Township, Northumberland County. It is located on Twp. Rte. 302, northeast of Bear Gap.

George W. Keefer built this bridge in 1876 for a cost of $732. William Krickbaum's grist mill was once situated near the bridge site, therefore, the bridge was named after him. **Truss:** Queenpost

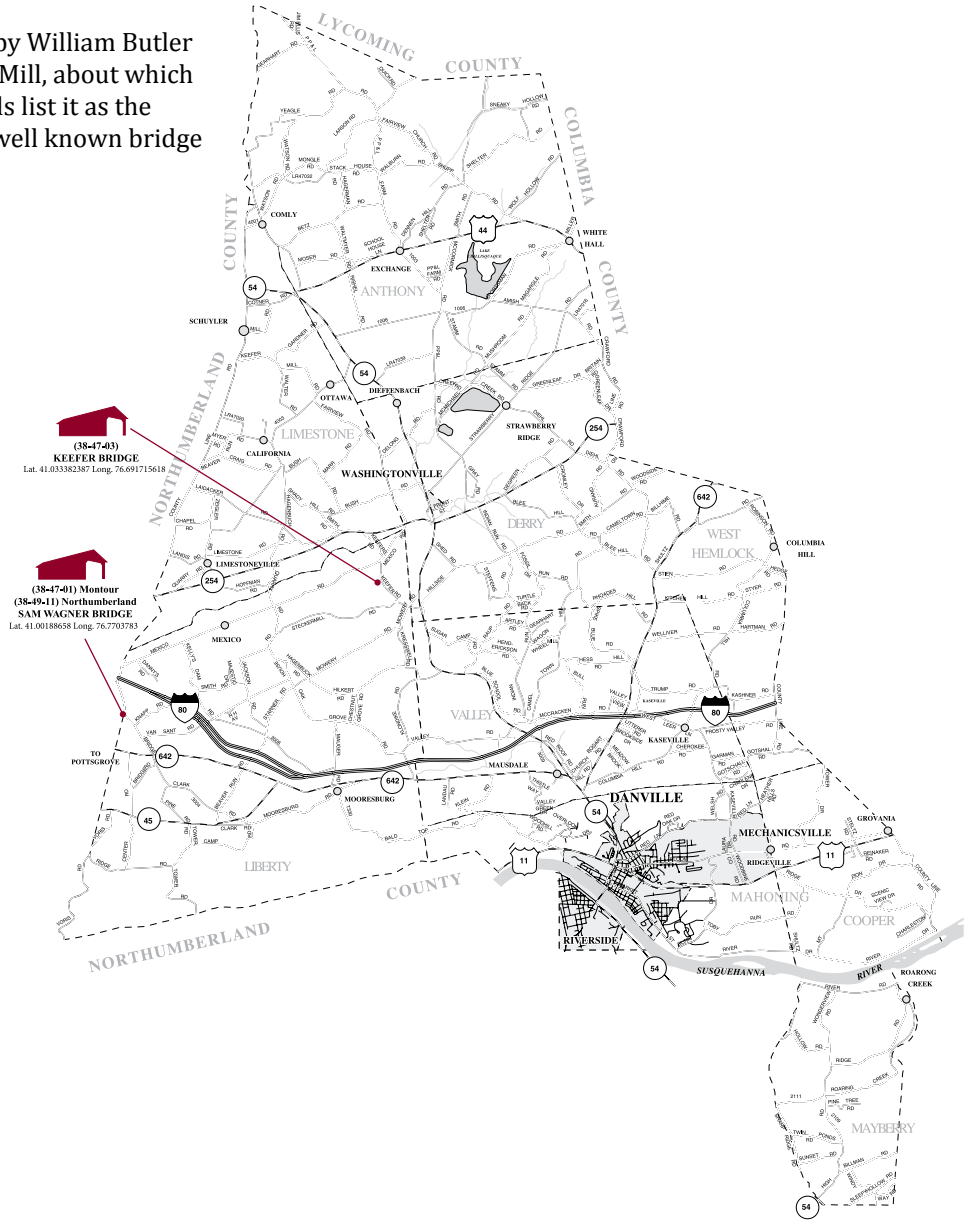
Sam Wagner Bridge - From Pottsgrove, travel east on Rt. 642 for .5 miles. Turn left (north) onto 1029 and proceed .8 miles to the bridge. This 78' Burr Truss bridge was built c.1881 and crosses Chillisquaque Creek between Northumberland and Montour Counties. **Truss:** Burr

Keefer Bridge *above* - located in Liberty Township, Montour County, spans Chillisquaque Creek. It is on Twp. Rte. 346 off 3012, near Washingtonville and east of Pa. Rte. 54.

The Keefer bridge was built in 1853 by William Butler for $498. The site was near Geringer's Mill, about which little is known. Montour County records list it as the Keefer bridge, possibly named after a well known bridge builder, George W. Keefer. Truss: **Burr**

Montour County Tour

Take I-80 to exit 224. Turn onto Rt 54 West. Travel approximately 5 miles to traffic light in Washingtonville. At traffic light, turn left onto Rt 254 West. Proceed .6 mile to Mexico Road. Turn left onto Mexico Road, for .5 mile, then turn left onto Keefers Mill Road. (You will pass a right turn for Keefers Mill Road. Do not turn). At Keefers Bridge, turn around and return to Mexico Road. At stop sign take a left onto Mexico Road, and proceed to stop sign at Follmer Road. Turn left and travel under overpass for I-80. Stay left. Sam Wagner Bridge is .5 mile ahead on Bridge Road. Cross bridge and continue on Bridge Road for approximately 1.4 miles to stop sign. Turn left onto 642 East. Follow 5 miles to intersection. A left turn onto 54 West will take you back to I-80.



Tour 1

From the Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau at exit 236 of I-80, take I-80 West (approx. 4 mi.) to exit 232, turn right onto SR42 N. At the stop sign, turn left and continue on SR42 N 1 mile. Turn right onto TR493, Covered Bridge Road and within sight is the **Wanich Bridge**. Return to SR42 N. Travel 8 miles and bear left onto SR442 W at Iola. Approximately 1 mile, turn left onto TR621, Chestnut Lane where the **Shoemaker Bridge** is in view. From Shoemaker Bridge, turn right onto SR442 S. Travel 1.0 miles and turn left back onto SR42 N. Continue for another 1.2 miles. Turn right onto SR4031/Sereno Road. Continue 1.7 miles to the **Sam Eckman Bridge.** Continue on SR4031 for 1.1 mile to a "T." Turn right. Continue on SR 4031 .5 mile. **Jud Christian Bridge** is on the right on TR685/Arden's Hill Road. Continue on SR4031 .6 mile to stop sign (intersection of Sereno Road and Austin Trail). Go straight on SR4039/Austin Trail. In .8 mile, bear left down to **Creasyville Bridge**. Turn around and retrace route back to intersection of Sereno Road and Austin Trail. At intersection, take left up the hill to stop sign. Turn right then quick left. Stay on SR4039/Austin Trail for approximately 4.2 miles to SR254. Turn left at the stop sign onto SR 254 and in just .3 mile make a right turn at the stop sign onto SR4041, Rohrsburg Road. Proceed for .7 mile and make a right turn onto SR456, Utt Road. Travel another 1/2 mile and turn left onto TR572, Turkeypath Road. Just ahead is the **Kramer Bridge**. After turning around, return to the stop sign and turn back onto Utt Road and return back to SR4041, Rohrsburg road. Turn right onto SR4041 and go 1 mile to the **Patterson Bridge**. It is located off SR4041 on TR575, Hartman Hollow Road. Stay on SR4041 and continue 1.7 miles to the junction of SR487. At the stop sign, turn left. Proceed north for about 2.9 miles. Turn right onto SR1020 at the steel gate bridge (There is a sign for the Twin Covered Bridges on the right side of the road.) and go .3 mile. You will arrive at the **East and West Paden (Twin Covered Bridges)**. From the Twin Bridges, continue on SR1020 and go 1 mile. You will arrive at the **Josiah Hess Bridge**, located to the left and closed to traffic. Turn around, bypass Josiah Hess and the Twin Bridges to return to SR487. Turn right on 487 N. Go 3.2 miles to the steel bridge in the village of Stillwater. Just after the steel bridge, turn right onto Lower Ravens Creek Road and take the first right. In view is the **Stillwater Bridge**. Return to SR487 and turn left onto SR487 S. In the town of Orangeville, turn left onto SR93 S. Continue for 6.7 miles to SR1017. Turn left on SR1017, Lake Road at the Stone Church. Continue on SR1017 and bear right at the stop sign. Proceed to the entrance of Briar Creek Park. Follow the park road until you arrive at the **Fowlersville Bridge**. Retrace your steps back to Orangeville. At Orangeville, turn left onto SR487 and that will take you back to the Lightstreet Exit 236 of I-80. Hop on the Interstate (westbound) to return to Buckhorn Exit 232.

Tour 2

From the Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau take I-80 West (approx. 4 mi.) to exit 232, turn left onto SR42 S. Travel 1.5 miles and turn left on SR4004 and another quick left at the stop sign onto SR4003, Red Mill Road and then quick right turn onto Hunt Club Drive where the **Wagner Bridge** is located. Originally located about 10 miles from here, it was dismantled 3/23/81 and put into storage. In recent years it was rebuilt at the entrance to the Foxtail Development. It was originally 62 feet in length when it crossed the North Branch of Roaring Creek and was built in 1874 by A. J. Knoebel. (This bridge is not on the map). From this bridge, retrace your steps to return to SR42. Turn left and continue on SR42 S. Follow signs to Catawissa. Travel 1.6 miles and turn left onto SR4001, Rupert Drive. Travel .2 mile. Turn left onto Train Street and to the left on Reading Street is **Rupert Bridge**, the longest remaining Covered Bridge in Columbia County. Return to SR42 S and proceed through the borough of Catawissa about 2.5 miles. Cross bridge and turn left. Less than .1 mile is the intersection of Mountain Road and Schoolhouse Road. Bear left on Mountain Road. Travel .6 mile, **Hollingshead Bridge** will be on left. Turn right onto Old Reading Road. Travel approximately 1 mile to yield sign. Turn right onto Schoolhouse Road. Travel .5 mile back to Rt 42. Turn left onto 42S and you will soon come to the junction with SR487 but stay on SR42 S (bear left at the junction). Proceed another 3.4 miles and turn left onto SR2001, Ideal Park Road (Mill Road). Continue another 1.3 miles and turn left onto TR361, Rarig Road. Just ahead is **Snyder's Bridge**. Turn around and pass through the bridge once again and at the stop sign turn right onto SR2001, Ideal Park Road (Mill Road). Retrace your steps back to SR42. Turn right on SR42 N. Travel 1.0 mile and turn left onto TR377, Queen City Road. Travel through thick woods for .9 mile. You will arrive at the **Davis Bridge**. Continue on TR377 for 1.0 mile you will come to a "T". Bear right and another quick right. Straight ahead is the **Esther Furnace Bridge**. Pass through the Bridge for 0.3 mile and at the "Y" bear left. At the next stop sign cross over SR3003 and turn left onto TR328, Parr's Mill Bridge Road to the **Parr's Mill Bridge**. (Note one side has vertical siding and the other has horizontal). Pass through the bridge, turn around, and come back through. At the stop sign, turn left onto SR3003. Go approximately .3 mile to the junction of SR487 S. At the stop sign, turn left on SR487 S. Travel 3.9 miles and turn left at the Knoebels Campground entrance (not the entrance to the park). Proceed into the park and in .4 mile the **Lawrence L. Knoebel Bridge** will be on your right. Within the park is the **Knoebels Grove Bridge**. It is located just a short walk from the Lawrence L. Knoebel Bridge past the swimming pool.

Use the new cement bridge (2008) into the campground, proceed up the hill. At the top of the hill turn left onto Campground Road. Travel 1.0 miles past the parking lot for Knoebels Park and at the next stop sign turn right onto TR337/ Pine Swamp Road. Travel .5 mile and turn right onto TR320/ Bethel Road. Just ahead is the **Johnson Bridge**. Retrace your steps back to Campground Road. Turn left at Campground Road, and follow 1.3 miles to **Richards Bridge**, also known as **Reichard Bridge**. Just before Richards Bridge, turn left onto Happy Valley Road. In .5 mile Happy Valley Road bears left. Then .6 mile bear to right at intersection of Happy Valley Road and Cleveland Road. (Green road sign on right). Go to stop sign. Turn right. In .6 mile, **Krickbaum Bridge** is on right on All Saints Road. Turn around and retrace Happy Valley Road to Richards Bridge. Pass through Richards Bridge and return to SR487. This is the end of the tour. Hope you enjoyed the bridges and the beautiful scenery. To return to Bloomsburg, follow the signs for SR487 N.

A set of pencil sketches of Columbia and Montour Covered Bridges is available for purchase in both of our Visitor Centers.

Each set includes sketches of 28 Bridges, some no longer in existence, and a brief history of each.

Only $10.00 per set! Pick up yours today.
($15 per set if mailed.)

Annual Covered Bridge and Arts Festival

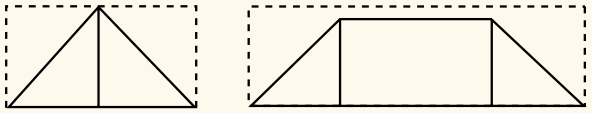
Every year in early October the Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau holds the Covered Bridge and Arts Festival. The festival is free and open to the public. The festival is held at Knoebels Amusement Resort Rt. 487 in Elysburg, PA. This event is always fun and enjoyable for the whole family.

Over 275 arts and crafts vendors will have their products for sale. There will also be demonstrations of making apple butter, jewelry, scroll sawing, chair caning and more during this three day festival. There is a variety of foods from breakfast to dinner or ethnic to seasonal, all of which are sure to satisfy any appetite.

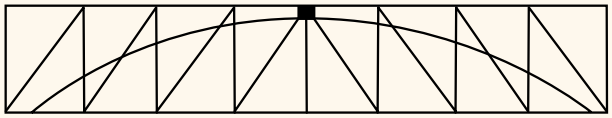
Come and listen to a variety of live music, watch the colorful square dancers, or ride the rides in the amusement park. There is a fun auction, a 5K run, fun bike tour and the main event is a tour of some of central Pennsylvania's covered bridges and breathtaking autumn foliage. Take the covered bridge tour and see bridges that are over 100 years old, along with the only Twin Covered Bridges in the United States.

For a **FREE** Columbia-Montour Visitors Guide or more information on the festival, area hotels, motels, and campgrounds, contact:

Truss designs used in the columbia and Montour Counties covered bridges.



Kingpost ***Queenpost***



Burr Arch

Columbia Montour Visitors Bureau

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Exit 236-I-80
Bloomsburg, PA 17815
570-784-8279

316 Mill Street
Danville, PA 17821
570-284-4455

1-800-847-4810 • www.iTourColumbiaMontour.com

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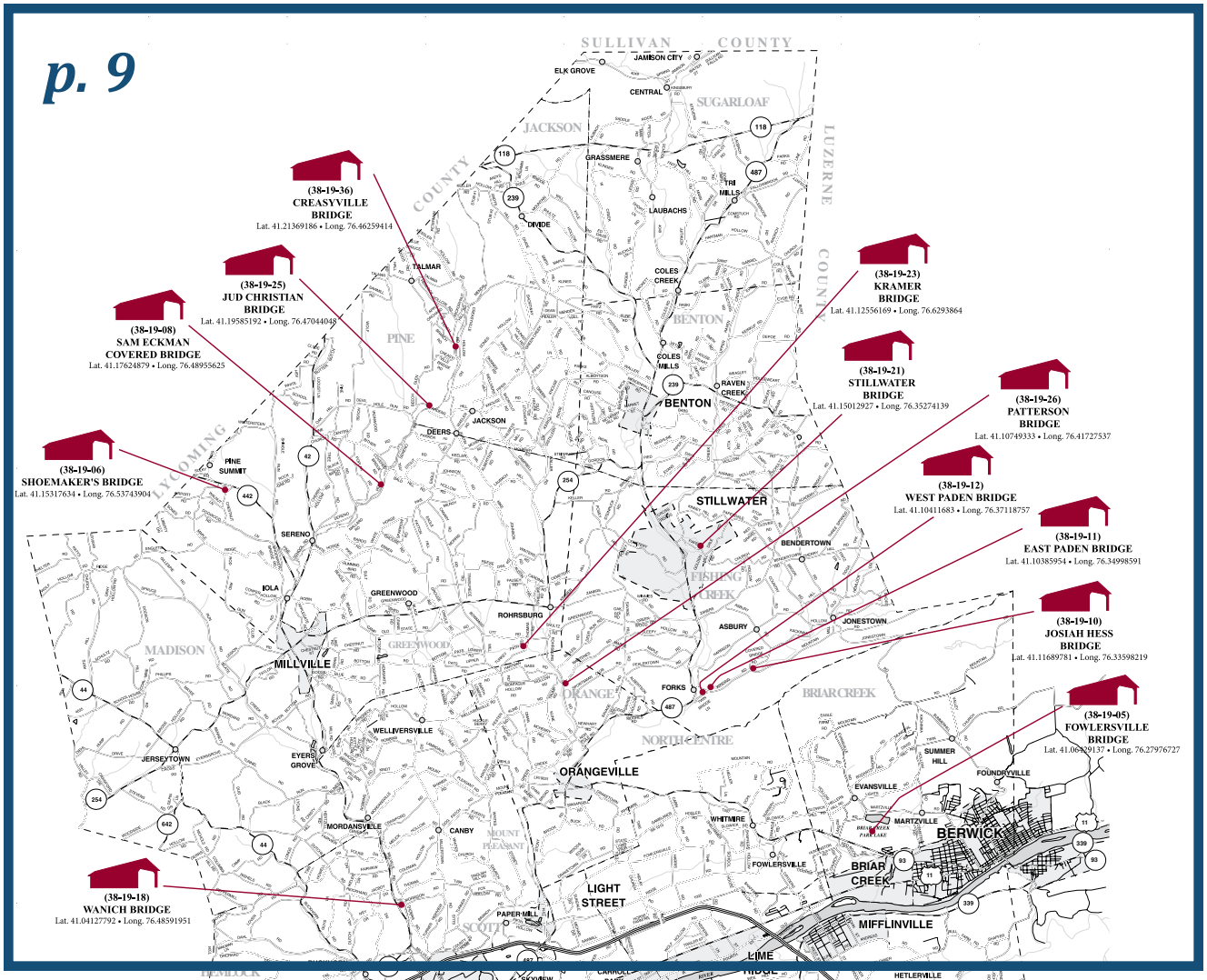
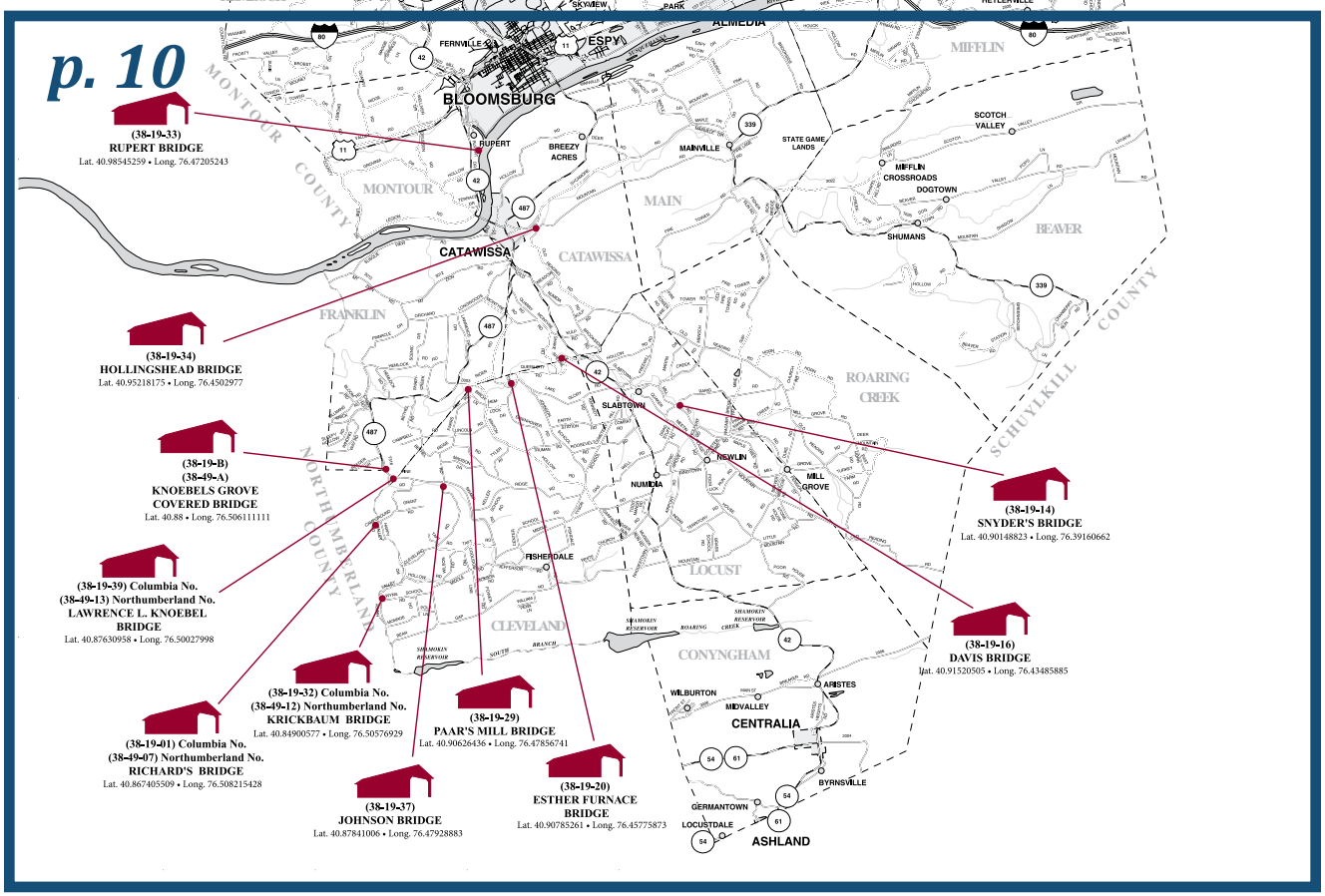
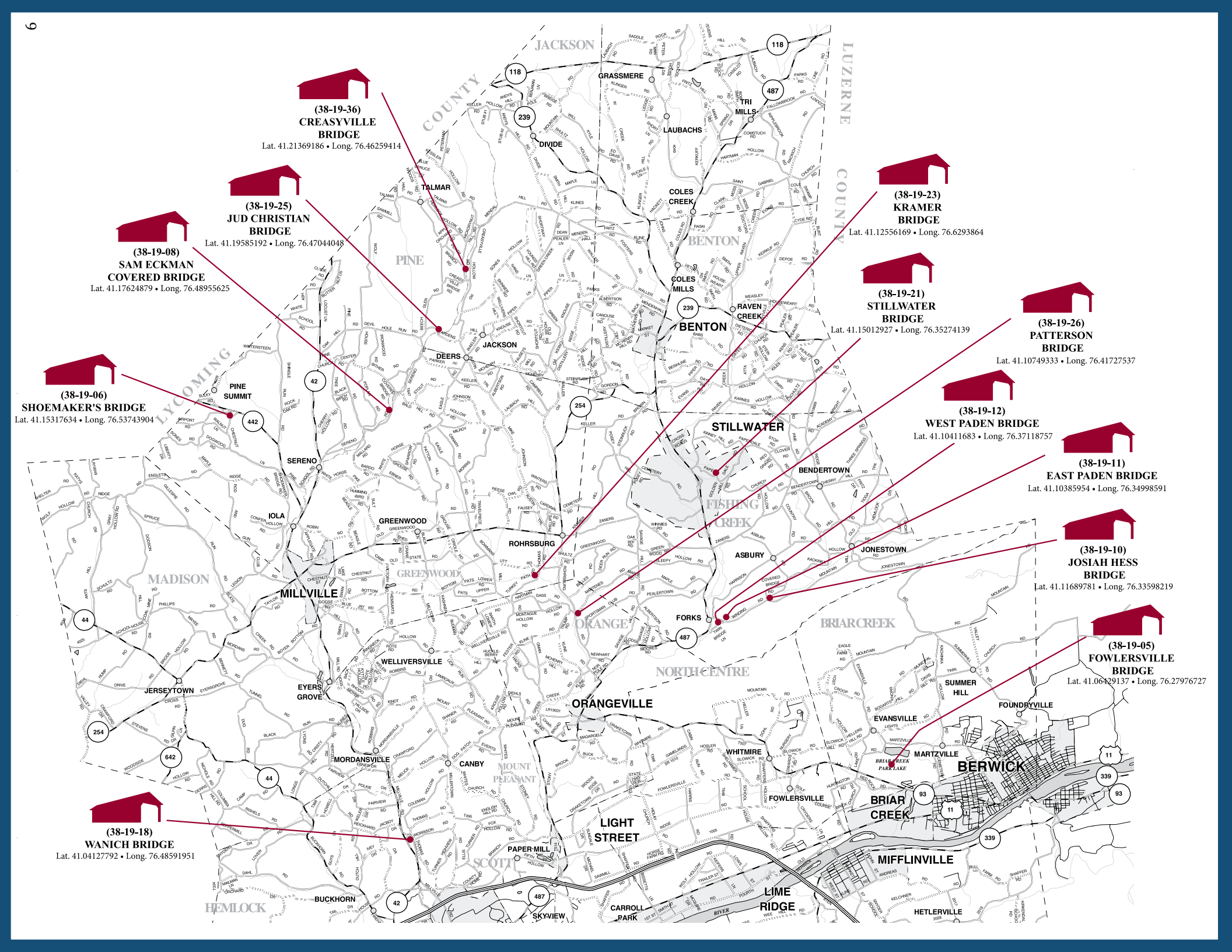
Columbia County Bridges



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(38-19-25)
JUD CHRISTIAN
BRIDGE
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SAM ECKMAN
COVERED BRIDGE
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SHOEMAKER'S BRIDGE
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STILLWATER
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EAST PADEN BRIDGE
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WANICH BRIDGE
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JACKSON
LUZERNE COUNTY
LYCOMING COUNTY
PINE
BENTON
MADISON
GREENWOOD
ORANGE
NORTH CENTRE
BRIAR CREEK
FISHING CREEK
MOUNT PLEASANT
SCOTT
HEMLOCK
GRASSMERE
TRI MILLS
LAUBACHS
DIVIDE
TALMAR
COLES CREEK
COLES MILLS
RAVEN CREEK
JACKSON
DEERS
PINE SUMMIT
SERENO
IOLA
GREENWOOD
ROHRSBURG
STILLWATER
BENDERTOWN
ASBURY
JONESTOWN
FORKS
MILLVILLE
WELLIVERSVILLE
EYERS GROVE
JERSEYTOWN
ORANGEVILLE
SUMMER HILL
FOUNDRYVILLE
EVANSVILLE
MARTZVILLE
BERWICK
WHITMIRE
FOWLERSVILLE
BRIAR CREEK
MIFFLINVILLE
MORDANSVILLE
CANBY
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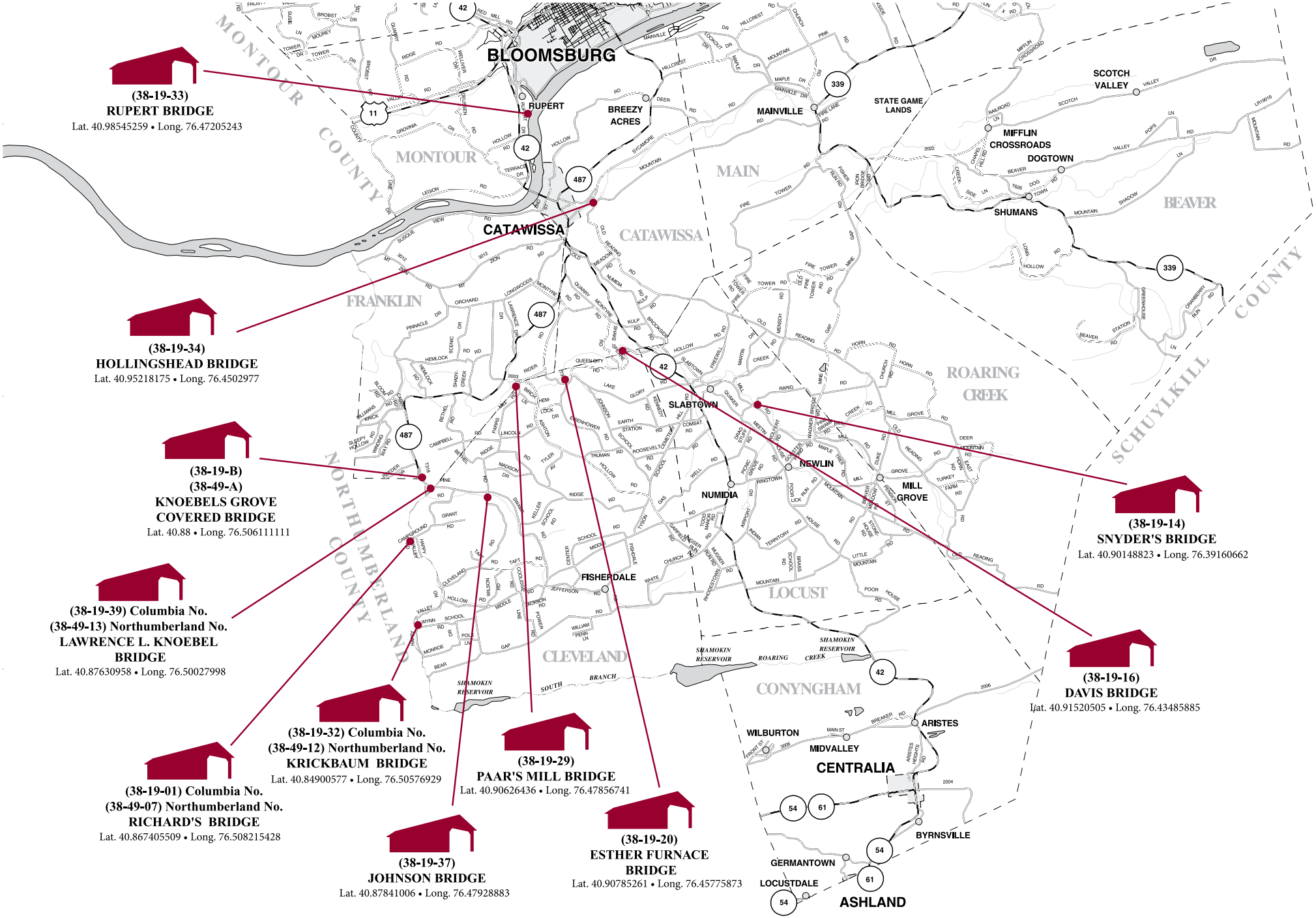

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HOLLINGSHEAD BRIDGE
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(38-19-B)
(38-49-A)
KNOEBELS GROVE COVERED BRIDGE
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(38-49-13) Northumberland No.
LAWRENCE L. KNOEBEL BRIDGE
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(38-19-01) Columbia No.
(38-49-07) Northumberland No.
RICHARD'S BRIDGE
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(38-49-12) Northumberland No.
KRICKBAUM BRIDGE
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JOHNSON BRIDGE
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PAAR'S MILL BRIDGE
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ESTHER FURNACE BRIDGE
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SNYDER'S BRIDGE
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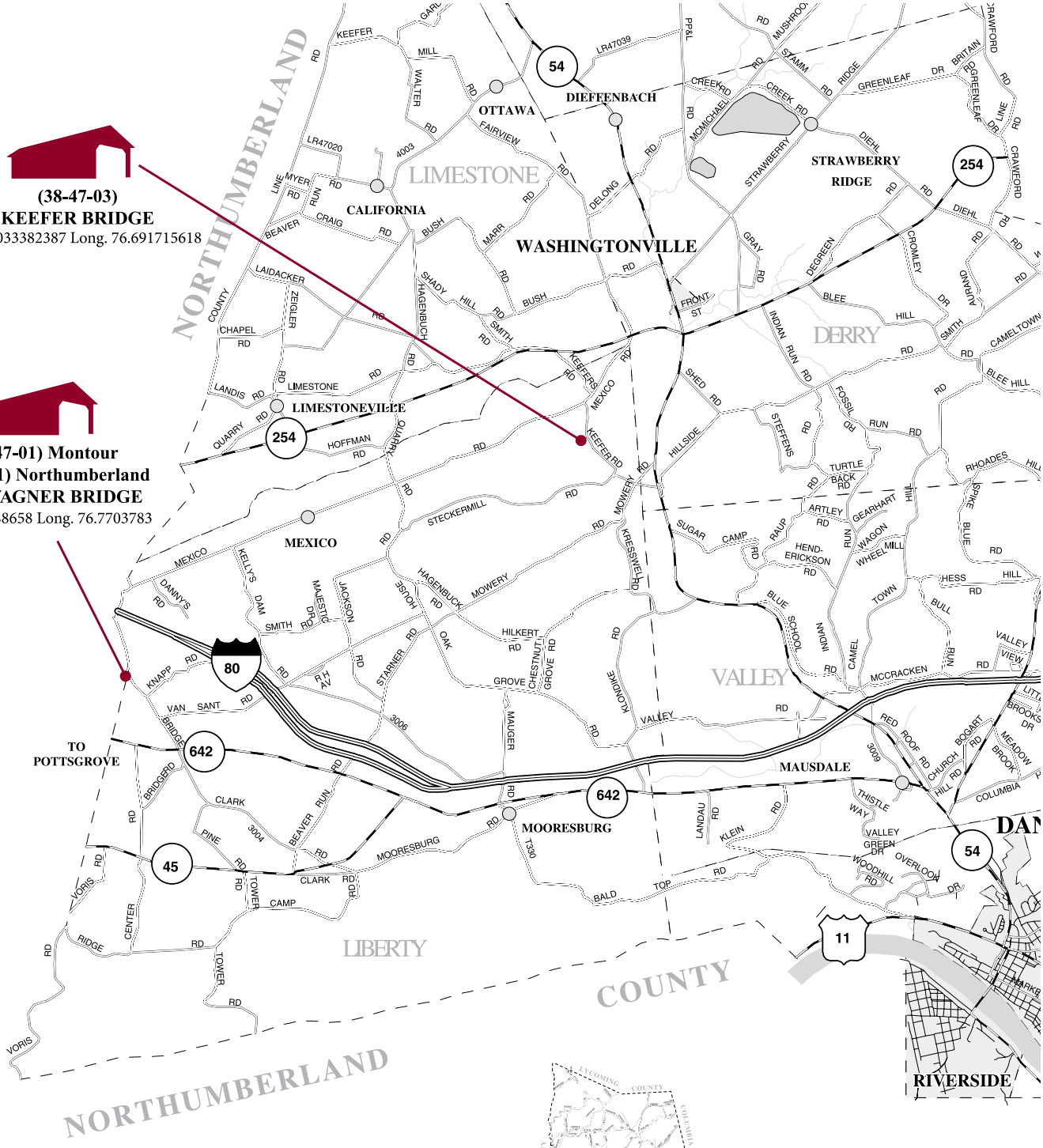
Montour County Bridges