

2017 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Historic Bridges

Statewide



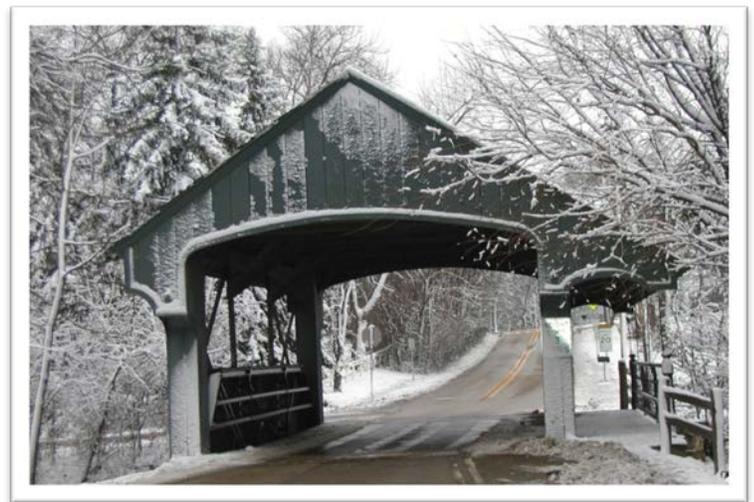
Credit: Long Grove Historical Society

Bridges tell the story of transportation throughout Illinois. They can serve as vital points of entry for communities and provide access to necessary resources. Bridges are part of our state's history, and especially in smaller communities, historic bridges are often tied to local identity. While ongoing investment is needed to maintain these bridges, funding for maintenance and repairs has decreased at every level of government, often resulting in funds being targeted for demolition or replacement. As the current administration discusses federal funding for

rebuilding infrastructure, we urge legislators to advocate for the dollars needed specifically to reinvest in our historic bridges. Repairing and maintaining these iconic structures provides the opportunity to create jobs, retain important transportation and recreational assets and foster pride in community history throughout Illinois. Below, we feature four historic bridges in Illinois that are threatened with replacement or continued deterioration, but numerous efforts continue in other communities such as Carpentersville and Millbrook.

Long Grove Bridge Long Grove, Lake County

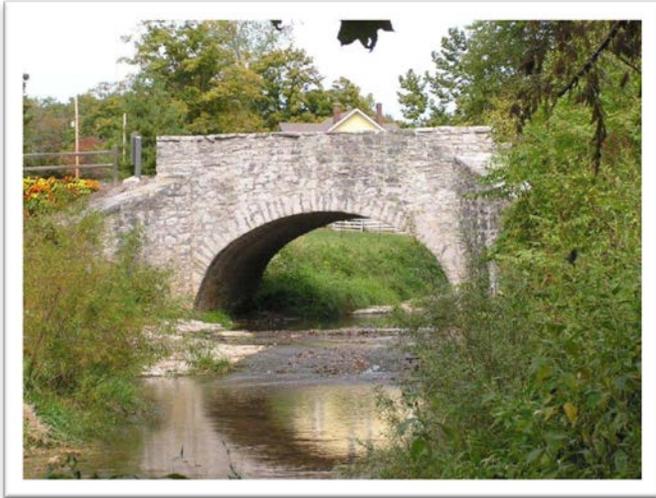
Historically called the Buffalo Creek Bridge, this rare, circa 1906 metal truss bridge that was given a wood covering in 1972 is now fondly referred to by locals as the Covered Bridge of Long Grove. According to Nathan Holth of HistoricBridges.org, despite its covering, it is one of the few pin-connected truss highway bridges remaining in Chicagoland and the only known surviving pin-connected truss bridge in Lake County. The one-lane bridge over Buffalo Creek has



Credit: Long Grove Business Association

been targeted for replacement by the Village of Long Grove to accommodate a two-lane bridge. Local residents and organizations have rallied to save the historic bridge, noting that the village's logo and overall identity is based on its image and contribution to Long Grove's small town charm. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency has determined the bridge as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic Downtown Long Grove Business Association is leading the campaign to save the bridge.



Credit: Village of Maeystown

Stone Arch Bridge Maeystown, Monroe County

The 1881 stone arch bridge entering historic Maeystown passed a recent Monroe County inspection, but the report noted increased damage requiring repairs in the near future. Receiving estimates of \$30,000 to \$40,000 for repairs, the Maeystown Preservation Society is currently fundraising to save the Village-owned bridge. The stone bridge was identified as a significant feature when the entire community of Maeystown was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

Bridge at Thirteenth Street St. Francisville, Lawrence County

The bridge at 13th Street in St. Francisville is a wooden timber bridge built in 1909 by the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway Company to provide safe travel over the railroad track. A steel beam was added in 1950 to stabilize and prolong the life of the bridge. Today, local advocates are worried about calls for demolition of the city-owned bridge, which still carries traffic, because of lack of funding for repairs and maintenance. Locals successfully listed the bridge in the National Register of Historic Places in 2016.



Credit: Bradley Fausnacht

Additional Links:

- **General:**
 - Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Historic Bridge Survey: <http://historic-bridges.isas.illinois.edu/>
 - Historic Bridge Foundation: <http://historicbridgefoundation.com/>
- **Long Grove:**
 - Petition to save the Long Grove bridge: <https://www.change.org/p/village-of-long-grove-save-the-bridge-in-long-grove>
 - “Long Grove officials move toward preserving covered bridge following new developments,” *Lake Zurich Courier*, Feb. 15, 2017: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/lake-zurich/news/ct-bgc-long-grove-covered-bridge-tl-0223-20170215-story.html>
- **Maeystown:**
 - Go Fund Me account for Maeystown bridge: <https://www.gofundme.com/maeystownbridge>
 - “Wally: It’ll take more than a village to help save this bridge,” *Belleville News Democrat*, Nov. 19, 2016: <http://www.bnd.com/news/local/article115938593.html>
 - “Maeystown hoping to preserve old rock bridge,” *Republic-Times*, Oct. 16, 2016 <https://www.republictimes.net/maeystown-hoping-to-preserve-old-rock-bridge/>
- **St. Francisville:**
 - National Register of Historic Places: <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/16000198.htm>
 - National Register of Historic Places Registration Form ([PDF](#))