



NHL Significance:

- Constructed in 1862-1863, Knight's Ferry Bridge is an exceptionally fine example of nineteenth-century covered bridge construction.
- It is an outstanding example of the Howe truss, one of the most successful and widely-used American timber bridge truss types. Patented by William Howe (1803-1852) in 1840, the Howe truss was a ground-breaking design that used adjustable wrought iron rods to overcome the inherent difficulty of creating tension connections in wood structures, and allowed for easier and more efficient pre-stressing of the members.
- At 379-feet long, the four-span bridge is one of the longest, most visually impressive and structurally intact of over 100 historic Howe truss-covered bridges surviving in the United States. It exhibits the distinctive features of this truss type: diagonal wood compression members, vertical iron-tension rods grouped at each panel point, and cast iron angle blocks at the joints.

Integrity:

- Knight's Ferry Bridge is one of the best surviving examples of a timber Howe through truss (a truss that extends both above and below the bridge deck). All the essential load-bearing components of the structure are still intact.
- The historic area's setting possesses a high level of historic integrity of a Gold Rush-era settlement, with the original bridge and Stockton to Sonora Road, all extant. Although closed to vehicular traffic, the original transportation corridor is still used by pedestrians and equestrians, and the bridge is maintained as a historic landmark and tourist attraction by the Army Corps of Engineers.
- The bridge was restored in 1988-1991 by renowned covered bridge specialist Milton S. Graton who used traditional materials and construction techniques to repair the trusses and piers, remove non-historic elements, and restore the exterior of the bridge to its nineteenth-century appearance.

Owner of Property: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Acreage of Property: Less than an acre

Origins of Nomination: The Covered Bridge Context Study, as well as the nominations for the Knight's Ferry Bridge and the Humpback Bridge, originated with funding from the National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program. The Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documented 75 historic covered bridges from 2002 to 2004 from a list suggested by a national committee of covered bridge experts, including Joseph Conwill, editor of *Covered Bridge Topics*. These two nominations are the first to be nominated under this program.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Designation would recognize the importance of covered bridges to the development of transportation and engineering.
- Covered bridges are an unrepresented resource type among NHL transportation resources.



Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 4/18/2012):

Dario Gasparini, Professor of Engineering, Case Western Reserve University

Joseph Conwill, Editor, Covered Bridge Topics

Amy Crain, California SHPO

Advisory Board Recommendation: