

Shimanek Bridge

Shimanek Bridge, of Howe truss design, spans 130 feet over Thomas Creek. It breaks the mold of other, white open sided covered bridges seen on the tour route in several ways.

The current span was built in 1966, but there has been a bridge at this location since at least 1861, with the first documented covered bridge being built in 1891 at a cost of \$1,150.

Since then several spans have been built.

The 1891 structure was rebuilt in 1904, but was washed out by flooding in 1921. the replacement span lasted until 1927 when high water damaged the piers and it had to be replaced.

The great Combus Day storm of 1962 blew trees against the bridge, causing damage that required the County to restrict it to a single lane, and a two ton load limit.

The span was replaced in 1966, making it the newest covered bridge in Linn County. It is also the longest.

The red painted, portal design with louvered windows are features similar to the 1927 bridge, and are found in no other Linn County bridge. Another unique aspect of Shimanek bridge is the fact that rods in the truss are grouped in a series of four, rather than the three usual at each compression joint.

Shimanek bridge was damaged in the floods of 1996, resulting in replacement of the horizontal housing material on the south end.

A final interesting tidbit about this bridge. Rumor has it that the 1891 span had a two hole toilet built into the foundation - a luxury sadly lacking from the current incarnation!