

by Julie Mais  
Editor



## Across the covered bridge

*Stepping across the uneven wood planks, you can catch a glimpse of the quiet river below through the holes and gaps. The sides of the structure display the craftsmanship, and the roof overhead offers shade from the sun on a warm fall day.*

It's a walk back in time as I imagined the horses and wagons that once crossed this wooden covered bridge in rural Missouri.

Nothing beats a good road trip. My husband and I took up camping a few years ago as a way to enjoy our beautiful country, and we now get to share this joy with our young daughter. Each place we visit, I'm reminded of stories my grandma shared about the family trips she planned. They always had an educational stop. I'm trying to follow suit with my own family.

During a weekend stay at a state park in eastern Missouri, I saw signs for Union Covered Bridge State Historic Site — home to one of only four remaining covered bridges in the state. We had to stop.

The wooden, white covered bridge spans the North Fork of the Salt River and was built in 1871 of local oak as a solution

to replacing two deteriorating bridges in the area.

According to the Missouri State Parks, the bridge was fastened together mostly with treenails along with a few bolts and nails for added strength. Hand-riven clapboard siding and wooden shingles enclosed the bridge.

I found this structure beautiful, and I immediately wanted to know more. Why did communities cover their bridges, and why aren't they built like this today?

I learned that the roof offered protection from the elements. It kept water out of the joints and freezing in the winter, as well as rotting the wood in the summer. Enclosing the bridge also offered strength to the structure. Because these bridges resembled barns, livestock were also less likely to be nervous crossing the river. Local businesses would later take advantage of the "real estate" and use the sides to advertise their products.

bridges were needed, and weight loads increased. Wooden bridges were replaced with metal ones that didn't require as much maintenance and had the ability to cross greater distances.

We still need bridges today, but these modern bridges offer a design that previous generations were unable to imagine with the technology available at the time.

While your customers still need that foundational Angus bull and female — combination of phenotype and genotype — your customers' needs continue to evolve. How do you keep up?

Ask questions, get feedback and keep the line of communication open. Tools are available to you through the American Angus Association, Angus Media and your regional manager. Reach out and see how we can help you build the bridge to your customers.

As needs and technologies evolve together, new paths can be forded. 



### Changing times, but not changing needs

Covered bridges lost favor as the country changed and developed. The expanding railroad was able to carry iron and steel to where

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie".

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