

**Collection #  
SC 3042**

## **JOSEPH J. DANIELS AND HIS INDIANA COVERED BRIDGES, 1958**

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Processed by

Brittany Deeds

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department  
William Henry Smith Memorial Library  
Indiana Historical Society  
450 West Ohio Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

[www.indianahistory.org](http://www.indianahistory.org)

## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 3 manuscript folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1957–1858

PROVENANCE: Dann Chamberlin, Groton, Massachusetts, 2010

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: *Baker & Daniels* (S.l.: s.n., 1981?), General Collection: KFI3078.B35 1981. Wylie J. Daniels Papers, 1850–1940, (M 0548); Weber, Wayne McClellan. *The Covered Bridges of Parke County, Indiana*. (Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana Covered Bridge Society, 1980), Pamphlet Collection: TG24.I6 W43 1980; and Clipping File: Biography [D].

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2010.0304

NOTES:

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Joseph J. Daniels was a prolific covered bridge builder who erected approximately fifty covered bridges in western Indiana from 1850 to 1904. Many of his covered bridges still stand today as a monument to his skill.

Joseph J. (John) Daniels (1826–1916) was born in Marietta, Ohio. His father, Stephen Daniels, built railroad and highway bridges in southern Ohio for thirty years. Around the age of seventeen, Joseph took up carpentry and bridge-building under his father, and in 1845, at the age of nineteen, he accepted and executed his first bridge contract.

In 1850, Daniels constructed a bridge for the town of Rising Sun, Indiana. He then returned to Ohio and married Clarissa J. Blessing in 1851. In 1853, Daniels built a bridge over the White River for the Evansville and Crawfordsville Railroad in Indiana. His work was so highly regarded that the railroad company offered him the position of superintendent. In 1856, Daniels resigned from the position, but continued to build bridges for the railroad.

In 1860, he built a pair of bridges for the Evansville and Crawfordsville Railroad in southern Parke County, Indiana, and was awarded the contract to construct a highway bridge over Sugar Creek shortly thereafter. In 1861, Daniels moved to Rockville, Parke County, Indiana, where he remained for the rest of his life. Daniels constructed approximately fifty bridges throughout his career.

Covered bridges were an innovation from New England, where bridge makers began constructing bridge coverings to protect the wooden structures from rotting from exposure to the snow and rain and being dried out in the sun. Many years later, these picturesque covered bridges are now responsible for a large portion of Parke County's tourism industry.

As of 2014, Parke County, Indiana, is home to thirty-one covered bridges and bills itself as the "Covered Bridge Capital of the World." Parke County contains many covered bridges for three reasons. One, the county boasts many streams and creeks and the surrounding area provided a large amount of timber suitable for building. Two, Parke County was home to three exceptional covered bridge builders: Henry Wolf, J.J. Daniels and J.A. Britton. Three, Parke County officials and preservationists recognized the covered bridges were part of a unique cultural heritage and moved to protect these structures at a time when other counties were choosing to tear them down to make room for more modern bridges.

Sources:

Materials in the collection.

"Covered Bridges," [http://www.coveredbridges.com/index.php/covered\\_bridges?cfid=52](http://www.coveredbridges.com/index.php/covered_bridges?cfid=52)  
Accessed 16 July 2014.

Parke County Historic Sites and Structures Inventory Interim Report, Historic Landmarks, 2010.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The collection consists of one manuscript and seven letters written about the life of well-known covered bridge builder Joseph J. Daniels.

The first two folders in this collection contain a photocopied manuscript, entitled "Joseph J. Daniels and His Indiana Covered Bridges," and written by donor Dann Chamberlin in 1958. The manuscript appears to be a history seminar paper written while Chamberlin was attending North Central College in Naperville, Illinois.

The third and last folder in this collection contains a total of seven letters written by Joseph J. Daniels' grandson (also named Joseph J. Daniels) to the author of the manuscript. In his letters, Joseph J. Daniels shares his recollections of his grandfather and answers Chamberlin's questions. He also provided a photograph of his grandfather to Chamberlin for inclusion in the manuscript. According to the last letter, Chamberlin's manuscript was considered for publication.

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Manuscript, "Joseph J. Daniels and His Indiana  
Covered Bridges," 1958 (1 of 2)  
[Cover page, Title page, Pages 1–36]

Manuscript, "Joseph J. Daniels and His Indiana  
Covered Bridges," 1958 (2 of 2)  
[Pages 37–73, General Highway Transportation Map  
of Parke County, Indiana]

Letters, 12 Aug. 1957–19 June 1958

### CONTAINER

Folder 1

Folder 2

Folder 3

## CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:  
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 3042).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.