

Log Cabin bridge

Brooke County



The Log Cabin Bridge was built in 1912 by the Luten Bridge Company to carry Three Arches Road over Harmon Creek in Brooke County. Its construction was likely following a devastating flood on September 1, 1912, that swept away many of the smaller bridges over this section of Harmon Creek.

Reinforced concrete arch bridges became prominent in the United States in the early 20th century. Early marketing by concrete bridge companies touted that they would never need maintenance or replacement, and were impervious to floods, unlike their wooden or metal truss counterparts. While the limitations of the material were not yet known given the short period of use at the time, reinforced concrete bridges were indeed a significant progression in engineering technology, that met the demands of an increasingly automobile dependent country and its quickly developing road network.

Daniel B. Luten was a civil engineer from Indiana who pioneered the use of concrete for short-span arch bridges. He established the American Bridge Company in Indianapolis in 1901, which eventually had field offices throughout the Midwest and Southeast. Luten designed and patented many designs for concrete arch bridges, which were marketed as cost-effective, quick to build, and indestructible. The company both built bridges and licensed their patented designs to other construction firms. In 1909, a bridge salesman, Alex Whittaker, incorporated the Luten Bridge Company of York, Pennsylvania, to sell and construct Luten patented designs. The Luten Bridge Company maintained West Virginia offices in Huntington and Clarksburg.

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This bridge is documented on WVDOT's
historic bridge website,

www.highwaysthroughhistory.com



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