Day Tripping - October 2023

Fall is upon us and the leaves are changing to the beautiful colors so the day trip this month will travel to the covered bridges in Berks County, PA. I think covered bridges are fascinating and cool to photograph and even more so when they are surrounded by the fall colors. Several of the Berks county bridges have looks that are rare so they are worth while seeing.

The first bridge to visit is the **Dreibelbis Covered Bridge**, located roughly 2 miles off of Interstate 78. From GOV travel the Turnpike South to Exit 56 and merge onto US 22W. Take Exit 35 for PA-143 toward Lenhartsville. Keep right at the fork and merge onto PA-143 S and follow to Covered Bridge Road. The Dreibelbis Bridge was built in 1872 and spans 172 feet over Maiden Creek. If you are interested in the history of the bridge you can go to the Berks History site at https://www.berkshistory.org/multimedia/articles/the-dreibelbis-covered-bridge/ The bridge is located at a T-shaped intersection, in a residential area which may make parking difficult but there is a bit of a pull off the highway along Dreibelbes Road.

The next bridge is the **Kutz's Mill Covered Bridge** located near Kutztown and Crystal Cave. Travel east on Covered Bridge Road toward Dreibelbis Station Rd. Turn right onto Dreibelbis Station Road, then left onto Dunkels Church Road, and then left onto Dietrich Valley Rd. In about 2 miles turn right onto Ebling Rd, then right onto Dutch Mill Rd, left onto Kutz Rd, and then right onto Kutz Mill Road. You will come to the bridge. The Kutz's Mill Covered Bridge crosses Sacony Creek and was built in 1854. It is 93 feet long, making it the shortest of the Berks bridges. It was named for the Kutz's Mill which is still located on the northwestern side of the bridge. The mill is on private property, so parking at the bridge is tricky. There may be a bit of room to pull off to the side of the road.

Continuing on the trip to **Pleasantville Covered Bridge,** head southeast on Kutz Mill Rd toward Saucony Road and turn left on Saucony, which becomes College Blvd through town and then turns onto Normal Ave. Then you will turn right onto Nobel Street for 2 miles and it will become N Main Street. Turn right onto West State Ave and then left onto S. Kemp Street/ Lyons Road. Continue right onto Forgedale Road, which after about 4 miles becomes Hoch Road. Then in about 2 miles turn onto Covered Bridge Road. You will arrive at Pleasantville Covered Bridge, built in 1852 and in1856. The bridge was built in 2 periods because of a shortage of lumber. and as a result this bridge utilizes a unique truss system. The bridge spans Little Manatawny and is 126 feet in length. Again parking is tricky but there is a small area to pull off on the southwestern side of the bridge.

Less than 2 miles away is the **Greisemer's Covered Bridge.** Head southwest on Covered Bridge Road towards Rhoads Road, turn left onto Church Road and then left onto Spangsville Road. This bridge is 124 feet long and crosses the Manatawny Creek. Greisemer's Mill is near the bridge. There is a discrepancy about when the bridge was built. Some say in 1832, which would make it one of the oldest in PA, but others say 1868. There is a nice pull off on the southeastern side of the bridge to park.

Completing the bridge tour is the **Wertz's Covered Bridge**, which has the longest single-span at 204 feet of PA bridges. It has also been called the Red Covered Bridge. You will head northwest on Spangsville Road toward Church Road and turn right onto Church Rd. In a short distance you will turn left onto Covered Bridge Road, then a right onto Oley Turnpike Road. In the town of Jacksonwald, you will make a slight left onto Shelbourne Rd, then a right onto Gibraltar Road and then a right onto Demoss Rd, right after the Wells Fargo Bank keep left to continue onto US422 W, follow the signs for I-176/Reading. Continue onto US-222N. Take the Broadcasting Rd exit and turn right onto Broadcasting Rd. Turn left onto Tulpehocken Rd where you will come to the bridge. It is located on the grounds of the Berks County Heritage Center. The Heritage Center is open between April 29 and October 29. It has a 200-year history of a working farm. More information can be found about the center here: https://www.visitpaamericana.com/outdoors/parks-recreation-areas/berks-county-heritage-center/

Red covered bridge surrounded by fall foliage

As you leave the final covered bridge, you can travel home by heading northwest on Red Bridge Rd toward PA-183N. Use the right lane to merge onto US-222N via the ramp to Allentown. Continue on US-222 to I-78E, and then onto I-476N to home.