

The wood from Risser's Mill Bridge

On the morning of July 8, 2002, the remains of our local covered bridge, that was torched the night before, still stood. The bridge was known so well as I drove through it so many times and took hay rides through it so often. Our farm home is just 1/2 mile from the sight and I've lived here for 91 years. It was painful to see only the main structural logs remaining. Everyone in our neighborhood grieved its loss, and we were so sorry to see it destroyed.

It seemed to me, however, that the burned logs were still usable lumber, and it was historical lumber since the bridge was built in 1872. There is evidence in the logs that the trees were over 100 years old when harvested. That means the trees were growing during the Revolutionary War. So, fortunately I was able to purchase the lumber from the contractor who took the bridge down on July 30, 2002. It took over 350 hours to sort through the logs, take out the spikes and pressure wash the black soot from the logs. Then, a portable saw was called in four different times to cut the logs into usable boards.

Now, seventeen years later, that burnt lumber has produced over 800 frames; 330 small bridges; 1000 candle holders, many shelves, tables, and many other items, some of them custom made. I've built two 18ft. walk through bridges as well. The first of those bridges is on our farm pond, where all the lumber came from those burned logs salvaged from the fire.

A theme for all this is the vision of Isaiah who saw God making beauty out of the ashes. The reference is found in the Bible...Isaiah 61:3. When working with this wood, one is reminded of how God wants to take the ashes of our burned out lives and make something beautiful within. He takes the ugliness... the wasted time, the meaningless ambitions and re-creates us into something useful and productive.. .and beautiful

Enjoy this item you have purchased. All of it came from the Risser's Mill Covered Bridge which was the last of six covered bridges that once spanned the Little Chiques Creek. If you want more information or want to see other things made from the bridge, please call 717-653-5675. or email wplongenecker@gmail.com My address is 1267 Risser Mill Rd., Mount Joy, Pa. 17552.