

Buchanan Swinging Bridge

The Buchanan Swinging Bridge is 366 feet long, 57.5 feet tall and the only one of its type to cross the James River.

In 1999 the Buchanan Swinging Bridge was recognized as a contributing structure to the Town of Buchanan National Register Historic District officially making it a State and National Historic Landmark.



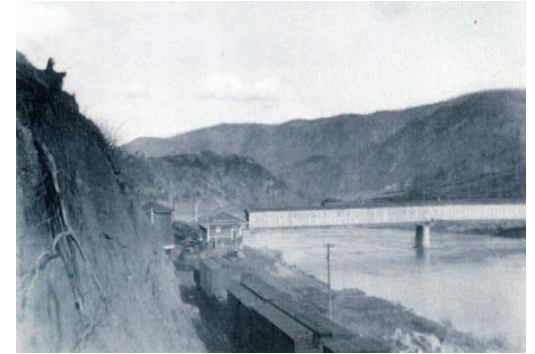
Portions of the bridge date back to 1851 and have witnessed Hunter's Civil War Raid, the rerouting of U.S. Route 11, and numerous floods.

The stone piers rising from the James River are attributed to the 1851 Buchanan Turnpike Company's Wood Covered Toll Bridge.

Toll for every person to pass through this wood covered bridge was five cents with an additional five cents for each horse, mule or oxen and five cents for each wagon.

On June 13, 1864 the covered bridge was burned by Confederate General McCausland in an effort to prevent Federal troops from crossing the James River on their way to Lynchburg.

It was reported following the war the new covered bridge at Buchanan washed away in a flood of 1877.



A late 1800's image of the toll-free covered bridge with the Railroad Depot to the left on the riverbank.

Following the flood the R&A Railroad Company rebuilt a toll-free covered bridge.

In 1897 this wood covered bridge was replaced with a steel bridge that remained in use until 1938.



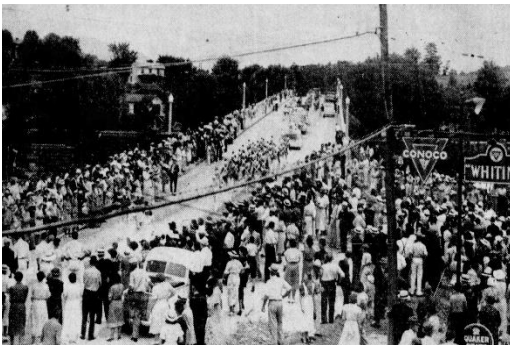
An early 1900's image of the steel bridge with C&O Railroad Depot to the right. This image was taken on the north bank of the James River in the "Pattonsburg" neighborhood looking towards downtown across the river.





A 1937 image showing the construction of the new concrete bridge in the foreground with the old steel bridge in the background. This photo was taken from the intersection of Main Street and Parkway Drive looking towards the Pattonsburg neighborhood.

In July of 1937 construction of the current concrete James River Bridge on Main Street was started with an agreement with the Town under Mayor C. W. Blount to maintain pedestrian access to Pattonsburg via the swinging bridge.



Hundreds gathered for the dedication of the new concrete James River Bridge.



On July 4, 1938, the bridge was dedicated following a presentation by Governor E. Lee Trinkle.

Since 1851, portions of the Buchanan Swinging Bridge have played a critical role in the Town of Buchanan's history while providing a scenic crossing of the James River.



An early view of the Swinging Bridge shortly after construction.



How to Reach Buchanan, Virginia

Whether you are speeding along Interstate 81 as it passes through Botetourt County or enjoying a leisurely excursion along the Blue Ridge Parkway Buchanan's historic downtown is a natural stopping point.

Buchanan's Main Street coincides with U.S. Route 11. The Town is centrally located 24 miles south of Lexington, 24 miles north of Roanoke and 20 miles from Bedford.

Buchanan has convenient access from Interstate 81 at Exit 168 when traveling from the north or Exit 162 from the south. Main Street Buchanan is minutes away from the Blue Ridge Parkway at milepost 90.9 (JCT 43 North, Parkway Drive).

Driving Distances

Blue Ridge Parkway – 4 miles
 Natural Bridge State Park – 15 miles
 Peaks of Otter – 14 miles
 Roanoke, VA – 20 – 30 minutes – 24 miles
 Richmond, VA – 2 hours 45 minutes – 178 miles
 Greensboro, NC – 2 hours 20 minutes – 116 miles
 Bristol, VA – 2 hours 24 minutes – 152 miles
 Charlotte, NC – 3 hours 45 minutes – 230 miles
 Washington, D.C. – 3 hours 45 minutes – 230 miles
 Virginia Beach, VA – 4 hours 23 minutes – 284 miles

