

# The Bridger



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter — Spring 2010

**PREZ SEZ**

This has been an outstanding winter season for covered bridge rehabilitation work in the southern part of VT - Williamsville, Worrall and Bartonville bridges have undergone or are undergoing considerable work. Ray Hitchcock has done an outstanding job of documenting the work at all bridge sites through many site visits and photos. Many thanks to Ray for this consistent watchdog/reporter work.

Otherwise I look forward to our April meeting in Jeffersonville. Hope to see you all there. Last year we had more than an average turnout in Waterville for our spring meeting.

Yours in bridging,

John Weaver, President, VCBS

## VCBS Officers

*John Weaver, President*

*Joseph Nelson, Vice President*

*Irene Barna, Secretary*

## Bridger Newsletter Staff

*Ray Hitchcock, Editor*

*Joseph Nelson, Staff Writer*

802-899-2093 [jcnelson@together.net](mailto:jcnelson@together.net)

## VCBS 11th Annual Spring Meeting

Visions of Vermont Art Gallery,  
100 Main Street, Jeffersonville, Vermont

Saturday, April 24, 2010

### Agenda

10:00 a.m. – Welcome. There will be coffee, tea and snacks during our meeting.

Business Meeting

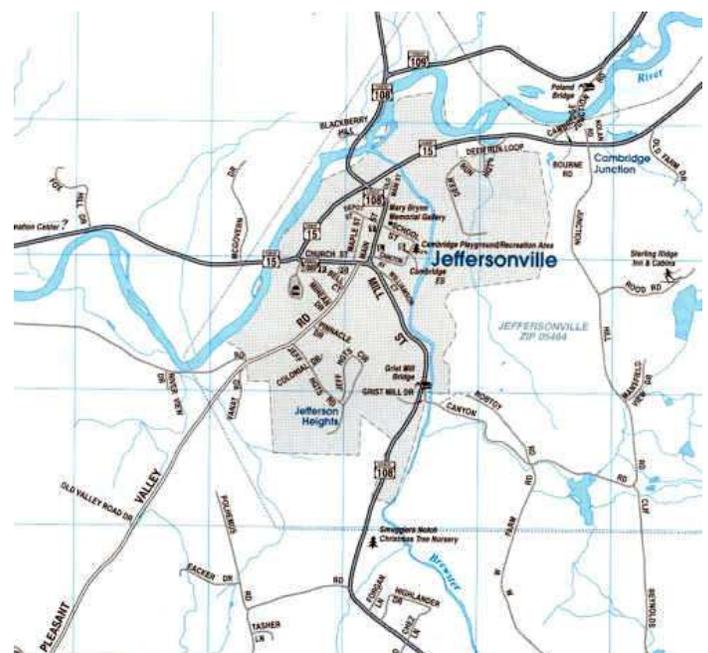
- Reading of minutes of last meeting
- Committee reports
- New Business
- Old Business

Adjourn business meeting

11:15 a.m. - Presentation: The Cambridge Junction Covered Bridge Restoration, by Jim Ligon of, Alpine Construction, Inc.

12:00 p.m. – Drawing for prizes, Memorabilia Table.  
Lunch at 158 Main Restaurant 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, open menu, or bring own lunch to eat at gallery.

1:00-3:00 p.m. - Tour Area Covered Bridges



**Directions:** (see map—previous page)

**From Burlington:** Take Vt. Route 15 east to Jeffersonville, turn right after crossing bridge, passing Exxon/Mobil Station to the left. Turn left onto Main Street before the traffic dummy at the junction of Route 108. Visions of Vermont Art Gallery is on right.

**From I89:** Leave I89 at Exit 12. Go North on Vt, Rt 2A to Essex Junction Five Corners. Take Vt. Route 15 east to Jeffersonville, turn right after crossing bridge, passing Exxon/Mobil Station to the left. Turn left onto Main Street before the traffic dummy at the junction of Route 108. Visions of Vermont Art Gallery is on right.

**Parking:** in street.

**Lodging:**

Deer run Motor Inn, Route 15, Jeffersonville, Vt , 800-354-2728

Sinclair Inn Bed & Breakfast, 389 VT Route 15, Jericho, Vt, 802-899-2234 <http://sinclairinnbb.com>

Homeplace Bed & Breakfast, Old Pump Road, Jericho, Vt, 802-899-4694

Smuggler's Notch Inn, 55 Church Rock Path, Cambridge, Vt, 802-644-6607

Holiday Inn, 1068 Williston Road, S. Burlington, Vt, 800799- 6363 [www.hiburlington.com](http://www.hiburlington.com)

Comfort Inn & Suites, 5 Dorset Street, S. Burlington, Vt, 802-863-5541 [www.innvermont.com](http://www.innvermont.com)

## **A Tribute to Ann Sottery and The Importance of Bequests**

By Neil Daniels, Treasurer

I write this as a tribute to the memory of Ann Sottery, of Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, VCBS Life member, who died in November, 2008. She had made bequests in her will to, among others: Vermont Covered Bridge Society – 5%, National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges – 5%, New York State Covered Bridge Society - 5%, and The Bridge Covered (Pennsylvania) – 5%.

At first glance, the VCBS stood to receive maybe \$8,000. Unfortunately, as the estate was probated, the bequests evaporated.

However, this experience does point out how good it would be for our society to receive bequests from our members. We are a small, struggling preservation group that raises and spends about \$1,200 each year and has a \$4,000 bank account. Meanwhile we are slowly building our Save-a-Bridge account from donations and covered bridge memento sales. Our ability to help with preservation grants is limited.

Please, when you are making your arrangements, remember your covered bridge society and its work.

## **The 2010 Annual Board of Directors Meeting**

The 2010 Annual Board of Directors meeting was held beginning February 12 with a targeted adjournment date of February 23, convening in accordance with VCBS Constitution and Bylaws Article 3, Part 2. Also in accordance with Article 3, Part 2, the meeting was conducted by email, fax, telephone and surface mail as appropriate.

The proposed 2010 budget and two other proposals were on the agenda.

**Item 1: The Annual Budget – 2010** Standing Committee Chairs were asked to review the proposed funding amounts for their committees, agree to them or adjust them as needed

The proposed 2010 budget totals \$4,380, of which \$2,000 is earmarked for Save-a-bridge actions. The budget for 2009 was \$5,029, of which only \$2,375.57 was spent.

The vote was 13 yes, 0 no, and 2 votes not cast. The proposed budget was approved.

**Item 2: Should the VCBS** initiate a program to use society funds to post rewards for the arrest and conviction of those who have defaced or destroyed a Vermont covered bridge?

The vote was 7 yes, 6 no, and 2 votes not cast. The initiation of a rewards program was approved.

**Comments received:** “I vote no. This situation leads to difficulties about justification for individual awards. Also, our funds are not that plentiful and have other commitments.”

“No, what if those that have damaged or defaced a Vermont Covered Bridge are younger than 18 or what if they are just 10 years old! I think we have to leave it up to local police & constables to take care of the problem. We shouldn't get involved. We are in the preservation business not law enforcement.”

“No, unless funding can be found.”

Item 3. Because the Vermont Covered Bridge Society was chartered for the purpose of promoting the preservation of covered bridges, it is necessary to be able to state a complete and consistent preservation policy.

The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Statement of Covered Bridge Preservation Policy presented in the VCBS Member's handbook is incomplete. It is a proposal statement presented as a starting point for the Vermont Covered Bridge Society Preservation Committee Conference held January 20, 2001 in Brandon, Vermont. The conference was called for the purpose of developing the Society's official preservation policy to be voted upon by the VCBS Board of Directors.

The conference, while highly educational, concluded with such widely differing views it was found to be necessary to call a second conference to complete the work. The second conference has not been scheduled.

Question 1: Should the second conference be scheduled to complete the work?

The vote was 0 yes, 13 no, and 2 votes not cast. The second conference will be dropped.

Question 2. Rather than call a second conference to complete the work begun, should the VCBS adopt the Burlington Charter for the Preservation of Historic Covered Bridges, approved June 6, 2003, at the First National Best Practices Conference for Covered Bridges held at the University of Vermont?

The vote was 13 yes, 0 no, and 2 votes not cast. The Burlington Charter is adopted by the VCBS as our preservation policy.

Comments received: "Article #4 [of the Burlington Charter] should be added as written to the responsibilities of the Historical Committee."

The motion to adjourn was made by Bill McKone, Seconded by Irene Barna. The "ayes" had it.

(Signed), Joseph C. Nelson, Chairman of the Board of Directors.

A copy of the Burlington Charter is included in the next column in this issue of the *Bridger*. The Brandon Conference transcription is available on <http://www.vermontbridges.com/vcbs.cbpres.policy.htm>. The proposal statement is at <http://www.vermontbridges.com/whatis.vcbs.htm#item6>. Any VCBS member in good standing can view the materials used by the directors meeting. Request copies from Joe Nelson at [jnelson@together.net](mailto:jnelson@together.net)

**Burlington Charter for the Preservation of Historic Covered Bridges**  
**Approved June 6, 2003**  
**First National Best Practices Conference for Covered Bridges, Burlington, Vermont**

Covered bridges are vitally important cultural, economic, educational, aesthetic, and historic resources. Although public support for preserving them is strong, many are vulnerable to the effects of deterioration due to neglect, limited funding, and limited knowledge of appropriate treatments. Consequently, their structural, material, and functional integrity is often at risk. This charter establishes the following goals for insuring the long term safeguarding of historic covered bridges.

1. To preserve the historic structural and material integrity of covered bridges to the maximum extent possible, consistent with public safety.
2. To identify, document, and preserve examples of covered bridge design, ingenuity in timber and masonry construction, and unique practices or solutions to specific problems, and to encourage future generations to summon similar ingenuity.
3. To retain covered bridges for active use for transportation, with the least possible compromise to their structural and material integrity.
4. To identify, document, and preserve all surrounding features that define the historic character of covered bridges and their settings, including approach roads, historic cultural landscapes, and views.
5. To interpret and publicize individual covered bridges and the overall importance of the covered bridge to the history of transportation, engineering, and community life.
6. To establish partnerships among bridge owners; local, state, and federal governments; non-profit organizations; design and construction professionals; craftspeople; and others in order to provide the best opportunities for cooperative stewardship of covered bridges.
7. To undertake research to develop tools essential to the preservation of historic covered bridges, including studies of appropriate treatments of historic materials; methods of structural analysis; techniques for repair and strengthening; and the economic benefits of preserving historic covered bridges.
8. To develop management practices that ensure timely identification of needs and prioritization of treatments.
9. To encourage government agencies and other public

and private entities to provide adequate and effective funding to implement the above goals.

Resolved: Participants of the First National Best Practices Conference for Covered Bridges hereby adopt this Burlington Charter for the Preservation of Historic Covered Bridges. Be it further resolved that we respectfully ask the U.S. National Park Service to develop guidelines that apply and adapt the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction to historic covered bridges in a manner consistent with these goals and objectives, and to present these guidelines at the Second National Best Practices Conference for Historic Covered Bridges, time and place to be announced.



## Williamsville Bridge Replacement WGN 45-13-05#2

**Williamsville, Vt., February 28, 2010** - Two folks are reporting the ongoing activities at the build site of the Williamsville covered bridge replica; Ray Hitchcock, VCBS Bridge-watch for Rockingham, and Jim Ligon, Alpine Construction Company Foreman.

The build area is located within sight of the original covered bridge, which remains in use until July when it is demolished and replaced with the replica.

**December 4, 2009** - "I am curious as to why the glulam for the bottom chord," writes Ray Hitchcock. "Does it have superior strength properties? It has also been a while since I did any work with structural strength of wood in various configurations, so I asked Tom Lacky, the designer of the replica. Tom replies:"

"The bottom chord gets the greatest axial stress of all the chords. It's like a bottom flange of a girder. A glulam chord has greater axial strength than a timber chord.

"A glulam chord is also continuous, unlike the timber chords. Since the chord timbers are only 24 ft long, the original builders used pairs of timbers on each side of the lattice, so they would always have at least 3 members at a splice. This makes the structural width of a timber chord effectively only 3/4s as wide as the glulam chord.

"I would have liked to use timber for the bottom chord for

authenticity, but the glulam chord will help the bridge resist modern truckloads."

**December 17, 2009** - "We picked the first truss to vertical today and installed the floor beams," writes Jim Ligon. "The process went without a hitch. There was no dead load deflection from the flat built to vertical, in fact we shimmed our mid-point blocking a quarter inch or so for a tight seat. We'll pull the shim tomorrow and let it relax.

"Next step is install trunnels from the outside in, which we couldn't do when the truss was flat. At the same time we'll install lower diagonal bracing, add a temporary working deck, cover ourselves up for the winter and build the 2nd truss on the flat on top of the temp deck



**January 19, 2010** - We stood up the second truss today and installed tie rods underneath and tie beams overhead - Photo by Jim Ligon

"A big thank you to Mother Nature for only barking at us twice in the last month, but the first one had a little bite to it too.

"I'm very proud of our work, so is the very select nitpicky crew I have working for me. They bite each other at night after work on just who did the best job today. And tomorrow's another day. Gotta tell ya, it was a nice feeling to see all the guys at the end of the day stand back in awe and look at what they had accomplished in the last month! "

**February 8, 2010** - Writes Ray Hitchcock; "They have the decking done and have made a lot of progress these past few weeks. I am impressed with the work site in that it is picked up and looks quite safe.

"I note more deck boards from the old bridge that are pulled up and stacked with nails and lag bolts showing. I would guess that the first layer of decking on the old bridge is 50% gone. Tom Lacky says they are removing loose running boards and screws in the old bridge and not replacing them. They are sacrificial members that protect the laminated deck, which we won't need much longer."

## Worrall Bridge Renovation WGN 45-13-10



Worrall Bridge Renovation, Dec 3, 2009, Photo by Ray Hitchcock

**Rockingham, Vt., January 13, 2010** - Wood has been delivered and the rotten/damaged pieces have been removed. The crew is ready to begin putting the bridge back together.

They have jacked the roof up off the lattices and strapped it to the scaffolding to hold it in place, this, to have access to the trunnels. They are working on modifying a jackhammer to drive the trunnels, which should be interesting if it works. They were getting boiled linseed oil today.

Butch Colby is the new on-site engineer, Peter Baker is the Crew Foreman and Alan Davis is the Daniels Construction Company Supervisor. Other crewmembers that have worked on the bridge are working on some short term projects: Ken Vanderberg, Brad Black, & Jim Hoadley. Apparently, Rockingham hired them to make repairs to the Bartonsville bridge.

I was impressed with the work site. It looked very safe and was well picked up. – Ray Hitchcock

**February 8, 2010** - Crew all gone today and no sign of recent activity. They have made good progress on replacing chord and lattice fabric. Again, I am pleased to see a well picked up work site.

This crew is very welcoming and takes the time to bring you up to date on their activities.

- Ray Hitchcock



## Membership

Membership Committee Chairman, Sue Richardson

Please join me in welcoming the following new members to our group: **Angela Wilson** of Austin, Texas, and **Cheryl Cullick** of Bellevue, Kentucky, a warm welcome to each of you!

And now, our **Early Renewal Contest**. Many thanks to each of you who mailed your membership dues on time. As in years past, the drawing was done by Ruth Nelson's first grade reading group at the Jericho Elementary school. (The little rascals have fun doing it.) The winners are: **Brian Fitzgerald**, a copy of *Spanning Time, Vermont's Covered Bridges*, by Joseph C. Nelson; **Richard and Ginger Hiscock**, a copy *Covered Bridges of Vermont*, by Ed Barna; and **G. Robert Salvi**, two years free membership to the VCBS. Congratulations all, and thank you for your membership.

Membership Birthdays and Anniversaries

### March

2 John Billie  
2 Gordon O'Reilly  
4 Sarah Ann Gallagher  
8 Neil Daniels  
16 Bruce Laumeister  
12 Priscilla Farnham  
15 Ed Rhodes  
21 Thomas & Lisette Keating  
23 Steve Miyamoto  
24 Adrienne Hitchcock

### April

13 Gary Krick  
22 Anthony Daniels

### May

3 William Carroll  
3 Tom Davis  
3 Thomas Keating  
4 Sarah Ann Gallagher  
6 Debbie Whiston  
9 Erwin Eckson  
10 Charles Lovastik  
11 Hank & Sally Messing  
11 Steve Wheaton  
12 James Crouse  
15 Andy Behrens  
17 Ron Bechard  
19 Mary Ann Waller  
22 Irene Barna  
22 Lisette Keating  
27 June Gendron  
28 Bill McKone

# Covered Bridge Fiction or Fact?

## Question Number 10

Our mutual friend, Joseph Conwill has posed the next Trivia Question and has asked our experts in the field to respond. He is quite anxious to see what other folks have to say regarding it. He is under the impression there could just very well have been an earlier bridge out there and by compiling information from each of you we can either prove, or disprove this.

Here's the question: The first covered bridge in North America, so far as we know, was the Schuylkill Permanent Bridge at Philadelphia, completed in 1805. Rumors of earlier structures persist, but none have yet been credible. However, what stories have you heard of earlier American covered bridges—whether believable or not.

**Joseph Conwill** - For two hundred years, people thought that the Coalbrookdale Bridge in England (1776/79) was the world's first iron bridge, although Pope, writing in 1811, sounded a little unsure. We now know that it was the second, not the first. To me, the big puzzle about the Schuylkill Permanent Bridge is the 1787 proposal in *Columbian Magazine* for a covered bridge on this spot. Where did the anonymous author get the idea? (See Allen's *Middle Atlantic*, page 2). But the question was thoroughly researched in the 1940-50's by Allen and others, and nothing definite was ever found earlier than 1805.

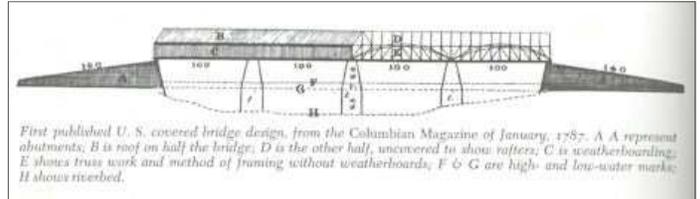
**Sylvain Raymond** - Personally, I never heard of anything before. Both British and French colonists had very little experience with wood bridge building. That was a Germanic thing, still one of the earliest mention in Europe is in Switzerland in 1109.

Prior to that, China... 600BC! Chinese bridges didn't use truss, just beams. Europeans invented the truss, Americans perfected it!

Based on those observations, depending when the good folks immigrated from Germany, it should also be the dates when covered bridges start appearing in the landscape... this is probably the case of the Schuylkill (?)... Prior to that that, we now know of Chinese settlement in the American west and east coasts in the

1400's but it is unlikely that covered bridges got built that early...

[Readers are invited to comment on this subject. Contact Trish Kane, bobtrish68@frontiernet.net or write 167 Williams Road, Sherburne, NY 13460 -Ed]



From *Covered Bridges of the Middle Atlantic States*, by R. S. Allen, page 2

Luckily for researchers, so great and wondrous a project as crossing the Schuylkill with a permanent bridge . . . prompted much comment and many plans. The first appeared in 1787, when the *Columbian Magazine* offered a "suggested design" by which an anonymous draftsman proposed to bridge the river at High (now Market) Street. His idea called for four spans, each a hundred feet long, whose arches would rest on piers and abutments and would carry a flat roadway—and his bridge was to be *covered!* Concerning the unusual addition of a roof to his structure, the author said not a word. The meager descriptive text and illustration form the earliest known published reference to an American covered bridge.

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January 22, 2010

Hello Joe,

I was referred to you and your book "Spanning Time", by Bob McCullough. I was hoping you could help me in finding some information on a certain covered bridge. Bob referred me to the VT Highway Biennial reports, but I thought you may already have some information as you have written a book on this subject.

The Bethel Historical Society recently had a meeting which covered the topic of covered bridges in Vermont. Euclid Farnham, famous for his knowledge in and around VT, is from Tunbridge, VT, was the guest speaker.

Aside from the covered bridge, do you happen to know of any information about the freshet that happened in Bethel, VT at the River Street bridge in January 1906? It was a metal bridge at the time, built around 1898.

Previous to that, there was a covered bridge in its place. I would like to collect any information regarding the covered bridge on River Street, if you have any to share. I heard that the covered bridge was built sometime around 1838.

I thank you in advance for any assistance you can share with me. My quest is to help the Bethel Historical Society in compiling information that pertains to its town history only.

Sincerely, Hildy Jones

January 22, 2010

Hi Hildy,

I'm afraid my research and writing has concentrated on existing wooden covered bridges and their histories, very little of metal bridges.

However, I am very much interested in "disappeared" bridges, especially when I get enquiries such as yours.

I suggest you contact Bill Caswell through his website [www.lostbridges.org](http://www.lostbridges.org). He has listed six or so of Bethel's lost bridges with some photos. Bill's forte is lost bridges.

Also, go to [www.vermontbridges.com/bethel%20bridges.htm](http://www.vermontbridges.com/bethel%20bridges.htm) for an article and photos of Bethel's Church Street Bridge with comments on other bridges there.

I will post your email in our next VCBS newsletter, **The Bridger**. A reader may be able to help. Please stay in touch. Yours, Joe Nelson

January 24, 2010

Hi Joe

The only thing we have about Bethel is a single newspaper article, unknown paper, no date, and this article is primarily about Leo Litwin and his collection of covered bridge greeting cards, with paintings of covered bridges, not photos. There is a photo in the article described as a covered bridge in East Bethel, across 2nd Branch White River, built 1904. I can't identify it from [lostbridges.org](http://lostbridges.org). If you want, I'll mail a copy to you. [Unfortunately the photo quality is too poor for reproduction here – Ed.]

Looks like Bethel would be a good place to poke around in Historical Society, Library, and Town Hall etc.

YIB, Bill Carroll [VCBS Historical Committee Chair]

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## Historical Committee Report

Having recently been volunteered as Chairman of the Historical Committee, I plan to emphasize the 4th item in the Burlington Charter, *To identify, document, and preserve all surrounding features that define the historic character of covered bridges and their settings, including approach roads, historic cultural landscapes, and views.*

To begin I have chosen Green River Bridge in Guilford, one of my bridge watch bridges, and one of the more beautiful in Vermont (in my opinion). Recently in February, I visited Mrs. Addie Minott, Past-President of the Guilford Historical Society, and looked through her personal collection of photographs and prints of the bridge dating back 60 or more years. One point of interest is that the bridge had squared portals during the 1960s and 1970s, and the original arched portals were restored by Mr. Minott in the late 1970s. In addition there is an old photograph of the other bridge in Green River, one-fourth mile north of the village near Gates Mill, said to have been replaced in 1929 by the present concrete bridge.

Green River is an old industrial village, with, at one time, several mills and a blacksmith shop. The foundation stones of some of the buildings are easily seen on the north side of the bridge. The village today is a historic site comprising the bridge, the old church, and several 19th century dwellings. Another point of interest is the timber crib dam just north of the bridge, and the interesting fish ladder.

The Guilford Historical Society, which doesn't open until the end of May, has more information. I plan to do more research into the bridge and village during late spring and summer, and draft something more comprehensive by fall. We know what is in our own archives, but it is important to know what other information is available and where it is.

### VCBS Archives

We have 44 collections of materials on covered bridges. The bulk of the material relates to bridges in Vermont, though there are a large number of items about New Hampshire bridges, and lesser amounts of information on covered bridges throughout the United States and Canada. Priority, of course, goes to the covered bridges in Vermont. All collections have been processed (preserved with a written finding aid, or description of each item in each collection) All the collections have been cataloged at this time, and the catalog records sent to the Library of Congress. As of the end of February, 21 collection records have been entered into the OCLC site on the internet. We expect to have all the collections in the website by the spring meeting.

Bill Carroll

# Events

by Suzanne Daniels, Events Committee Chair

## **Mark your calendars!!!**

The 11th Annual Spring VCBS meeting will be held at the Visions of Vermont Art Gallery in Jeffersonville, Vermont on April 24, 2010.

The gallery is owned and operated by Jane and Terry Shaw, long time members of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society.

Our speaker will be Jim Ligon of Alpine Construction of Schuylerville, New York. Jim will speak about the recent renovation of the Cambridge Junction Covered Bridge, also known as the Poland Bridge. He has presided over the renovations of the Creamery and Hutchins bridges in Montgomery, that work completed this past fall. He is currently working on the Williamsville Bridge replica in Newfane.

In addition to the Cambridge Junction Bridge, Jeffersonville is home to the Grist Mill Bridge off Route 108. Several other covered bridges stand within an hour's drive.

For meeting details see the agenda elsewhere in this issue.

Our Annual Fall Meeting will be held on October 23, 2010 at the Montpelier Library. There will be more information in the Summer and Fall issues of the Bridger.

**ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ATTENTION!**  
**VERMONT HISTORY EXPO 2010** will be held Saturday and Sunday, June 26 & 27, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Tunbridge World's Fair Grounds. The Expo theme this year is "**Back To The Land Again! Vermont Heritage Ways For Today.**"

Set-up day is Friday, June 25, from 8 am. **Volunteers are needed for set-up and to sit with the display Saturday and Sunday. Please contact Neil Daniels;** neildaniels2003@yahoo.com, or (802) 885-5517.



## **VCBS Lending Library, a Learning/Research Source**

The Vermont Covered Bridge Society has set up a lending library available to all Society members-in-good-standing through media mail.

Librarian Warren Tripp has created a detailed booklist complete with a description and critique of each book. Copies of the index are available by mail, or you may contact Joe Nelson for an electronic copy at jnelson@together.net.

A borrower can contact Warren Tripp who will send the book by Postal Service Media Mail. Books are returned the same way.

Send Warren the complete title of the book(s) you wish to borrow. He will respond with the mailing cost and mail the order when the fee is received. The borrower is then responsible to return the item(s) in a reasonable time, preferably not more than two months.

Contact Warren Tripp, P. O. Box 236, Groton, VT 05046, fftwbt@yahoo.com Phone (802) 584-3545.

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## **Update on the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center**

by Trish Kane

It has been a while since we updated you on the progress of the center and we have some exciting news to share with you.

First, we now have floor plans for the center! It is so exciting to finally see just what the center will look like. We recently sent copies of these plans to the Presidents of each Covered Bridge group, but feel free to contact us if you would like your own personal copies and we'll be happy to send them to you.

As part of the plans, there is a special, climate controlled, designated area that will hold the rare collections that need special storage consideration, such as photographs, slides and postcards. Plans also include the placement of numerous bookshelves that will house the vast collection of covered bridge books and newsletters so generously donated by the various Covered Bridge Societies. The main display case, a very important feature of the center, will house the rotating display of vari-

ous covered bridge models donated by the National Society.

The center is part of phase four of the Library's recently initiated rehabilitation. It is hoped that renovations to the actual center itself will begin in the fall of 2010, but additional funding is still very much needed. The estimated cost of the center has been established at \$50,000. Due to the present economic climate, several grant applications applied for were denied. There just isn't enough money for foundations to fill all incoming requests, but we are still applying for those whose qualifications we meet. We continue to look for a group or individual(s) who might be interested in matching donations to the center.

We would also like to share with you that on **Sunday, June 13, 2010**, the New York State Covered Bridge Society will host their June meeting at the Oxford Memorial Library. This will be a special meeting held in the Library's new Community Center Meeting Room which is absolutely gorgeous, and gives us a hint as to what the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center will look like. At that time, Fred Lanfear, President of the Oxford Historical Society, and Bob and I will update the group on the progress of the center and share the floor plans with the group. This will be an exciting meeting and all Covered Bridge Enthusiasts are invited to attend.

If you haven't already done so, we would again encourage you to consider a gift to the center. As previously mentioned, donors gifting \$1,000 or more will have their names prominently listed on a donor's plaque displayed in the center, but no gift is too small. You can also designate your gift for a special area such as funding for a computer, scanner, bookshelves, or other expense, or you might create a memorial or honorary gift in memory of a covered bridge friend or loved one. The possibilities are endless, and each donation will assist in furnishing the room in some important way. **And all donations are tax deductible.**

If you are unable to make a monetary donation, rest assured there are other ways you can help. We welcome donations of covered bridge materials, such as newsletters, photographs, slides, postcards, or models. Whenever possible, these donations will be identified with the donor's name. Those interested in donating such materials may contact us at bobtrish68@frontiernet.net or by phone at 607-674-9656.

Please, seriously consider a monetary gift to the center and assist us in this exciting endeavor. Whatever amount you can afford will be most appreciated and put to good use. To donate, specify that you want your donation used specifically for the **Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center** and mail your gift directly to the **Oxford Memorial Library, PO Box 552, Oxford, NY 13830.**

We will keep you informed as the center progresses. Meanwhile, a special thanks to each of you who have already made a donation to the center. It is very much appreciated.

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***Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges***, by Joseph C. Nelson

*Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges* features 102 color photographs of Vermont's covered bridges in fifteen chapters, each a guided tour. The tours are complete with maps, commentary on the uniqueness of each bridge, and historic highlights about the towns and villages in which the bridges are found.

An appendix provides: **A Summary of Vermont's Covered Bridges**, listing vital information on each bridge; **A Covered Bridge Glossary**, naming and describing the details of a covered bridge; **A Bridge Truss section**, explaining how trusses work with drawings of the several trusses used in Vermont; **The Bridge Builders**, providing thumbnail biographies of the people who designed and built the bridges; **A Covered Bridge Reading List**, for bridge and history buffs who want to read more; A detailed Index.

*Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges*: 7" x 10", 288 pages. Published by New England Press at P.O. Box 575, Shelburne, VT 05482

*Spanning Time* is available through New England Press, Barnes & Noble and other bookstores. Also try the Amazon book search engine at: <http://amazon.com> (search *Spanning Time*) and: Country Book Store: Vermont Vacation Books. Or get a signed copy directly from the author: <http://www.vermontbridges.com/special%20070514.htm> Also see: <http://www.vermontbridges.com/bookreviews.htm>.

## Advertisements

To place your ad in the *Bridger*, contact Joe Nelson, [jcnelson@together.net](mailto:jcnelson@together.net) The ad must be about covered bridges and you must be a member of a covered bridge society.



The Cornish-Windsor Bridge WGN NH-10-09  
by Margaret Foster, Windsor, Vt.\*



Cornish-Windsor Bridge from Toll House Sept 2009

By Ray Hitchcock

The present Cornish-Windsor Bridge is the fourth one on this spot. The first was opened to the public in October 1796, and lasted until spring 1824. A new bridge was promptly built. It too, was lost in a spring freshet, this time in 1849.

The third bridge, the first to be covered, was built the same year. It went as the others had - in a flood. This was in March of 1866. These three bridges were lower than the present one, as can be seen by the central pier. Had the present one been this lower height, it would have gone out in the flood of 1937 when there were several inches of water over the bridge floor.

On April 3, 1866, the contract for the present bridge was signed. James F. Tasker of Cornish and Bela J. Fletcher of Claremont signed as builders. It is usually believed that Tasker, who could neither read nor write, actually built the structure. Allen Wardner, Alfred Hall and Henry Wardner represented the bridge company proprietors.

The bridge was framed in a meadow north of Bridge Street in Windsor. It is a Town Lattice truss and is made of timber. Late in 1866 the bridge was opened to the public—probably the last of October or the first of November.

Repairs have been made at numerous times, the last being 1954-55. At that time it was necessary to drive ten miles to get across the river. Many workmen who lived in New Hampshire left their cars on that side of the river and walked across the bridge to work.

Most of the early spans were toll bridges and this was no exception. It is easy to wonder how a bridge paid off before the days of automobiles. It was produce and livestock headed for the Boston market, plus stage coaches, that made the bridge a paying investment. In 1838, before the railroad was built, 14,084 sheep and 2,208 cattle crossed the bridge on their way to market. At this time four stage coaches were crossing the river each day.

President Wilson had his summer White House in Cornish during 1914 and 1915 and used this bridge. Other Presidents who are reputed to have crossed here are Hayes, Monroe and Theodore Roosevelt. In 1825 Lafayette came into Vermont over this span.

A "holding company" owned the bridge until 1935, when the New Hampshire Legislature gave permission to the State Highway Department to buy it. The plan was to collect tolls for another ten years. However, in the early 1940's gasoline became scarce and travel was at a minimum. Tolls collected did not amount to as much as the cost of hiring a gate keeper. Since the bridge had already paid for itself, it was decided to make it free. This was done June 1, 1943, with much fanfare.

The gate, which was removed when the bridge was freed, was a distinguishing feature. It was controlled by a rope from the toll house porch. A pull of the rope lowered the gate and held up traffic until the proper cash had changed hands. It was customary to lower the gate at 10 p.m., at which time all respectable people were supposed to be at home. If anyone wanted to cross after that hour, he had to wake up the toll collector and settle with him. In later years the gate was not down at night. It was considered better to lose the 15 cents than to disturb the keeper's rest.

At one time Windsor was "dry," but there was a good tavern just across the bridge. The toll collector had quite a bit of leeway as to what he charged. At this time he set the price for pedestrians at two cents for leaving Windsor and three cents for returning - both to be paid as the person left for the tavern.

There are many stories about this span, as there are about all covered bridges. One story says that at one time a woman tried to run the bridge and not pay toll, which she considered exorbitant. James Montieth, the toll collector, took time out from his knitting to pull the rope. The gate came down between the horse and the buggy and the horse kicked it nearly to pieces. The woman had to pay her toll and the damages. Mr. Montieth never dropped a stitch of his knitting!

A prominent citizen of Windsor says he lost his first job because of the bridge. He was driving for a laundry and had one more delivery to make across the river. There was a dance that night that the young man wanted to attend. As soon as the gatekeeper gave him the nod, he larruped up his horse and ran the bridge. The gatekeeper called the laundry and fined them \$2.00. When the young man got back he was fired.

At one time a man who lived in New Hampshire had a good riding horse. He galloped onto the bridge. The keeper dashed out and dropped the gate. This did not deter the horse in the least. When he came to the gate he jumped over it and raced up the street.

A woman refused to pay her toll, claiming there had been no rate set for automobiles when the franchise was granted. There had been a similar case in New York and the motorist won. A case had been tried in Vermont and the decision, based on the New York case, was again for the motorist. But this case was tried in New Hampshire and the woman lost. However, proper steps were taken to legalize fees for cars.

Some people wish the bridge were gone and a new, modern one in its place. Others, more sentimental, would like to see it kept. It could be blocked to traffic and become merely a tourist attraction. Besides being the longest covered span in the United States, it is very photogenic. Let's keep it for another hundred years.

[This article is reprinted from the Connecticut River Covered Bridge Society Bulletin, Fall 1966 issue, with permission – Ed.]

**A Look Back 38 Years\***



Mead Bridge WGN 45-11-08 )

CRVCBS Photo

**Late news just received.** The "Mead Bridge," over Otter Creek just off the Florence-Proctor Road was destroyed by fire of very suspicious origin about 4 a.m. Thursday, July 22, 1971, only about 2.5 miles out of Pittsford, Vt.

From the Elmer Jacksons, of North Andover and the Brainerds of Brandon, Vt. we have the story and pictures that appeared in Rutland Daily Herald, Rutland, Vt. July 23, 1971.

This old span became known far and wide for the date of 1785 on the portal, and it raised many ques-

tions. Mr. Davenport who lived until his death two years ago beside the bridge delighted to talk with people, telling all about the bridge and pointing out interesting things about it. Mr. R.S. Allen gives the date of this bridge as being built in 1840, and that it was built by Abraham Owens, Nicholas Powers and Daniel Powers and was a Town truss. At one time this was on the main road to Pittsford, but in its latter years has only been used by two farmers to get to their fields, who now will have to detour about five miles.

The Elmer Jacksons went to Pittsford, Vt. July 24, 1971 to check for themselves, because of conflicting reports. They checked all the bridges since they were there, going first to Pittsford-Proctor (45-11-04) (as they had heard there was a fire in it also) where they found about 12 feet charred, but no great damage. Fireman and the Jacksons too believe this to have been caused by a carelessly discarded cigarette. Firemen arrived in time to save this one. Next they went to Cooley and that is all right, could stand a little repair. Depot (45-11-06) was next and that is leaning more each year. They felt a really strong north wind could blow it down. They visited Mead (45-11-08) nothing left of it. A very sad sight indeed. Hammond or Florence Station Bridge is just the same except trees grown bigger and more difficult to photograph. (45-11-05)

The photo of the old span we took in 1954 and had a wonderful time with Mr. Davenport, he was so proud of that old bridge.

[\*Reprinted from the Connecticut River Valley Covered Bridge Society *Bulletin*, Summer 1971 with permission – Ed.]

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Bartonsville Bridge—Rockingham County

By Ray Hitchcock

Rockingham Highway Maintenance hired nearby Daniels, Inc to repair the damaged roof support timbers from a box truck. Daniels, Inc is doing major repair on the next bridge downstream—Worrall. (See article in this Bridger page 5.)

This is the second time in a year that the same repairs have been needed. The Town has put height restriction signs at major intersections and at the bridge. Hopefully the box truck driver can read.

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