

THE BRIDGER



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter – Issue #85

Events

2021 Annual Board of Directors Meeting

The Annual Board of Directors meeting convened on March 5 and closed on March 26. There were four questions on the agenda. The directors were invited to offer amendments to the questions or add questions. With 14 directors, the quorum is 8.

Question 1: The proposed budget for the current year was presented, based on the several standing committees. It was expected that each committee chair would agree to or alter the budget amounts proposed.

Answer: Yes 9, not voting 5

The budget voted for the year of 2021 is \$3,094. The 2020 budget was \$3,310 plus the \$5,000 spent on the Morgan Bridge grant.

Question 2: Shall the amount received from donations and sales in the year 2020 be put into the Save-A-Bridge Fund? Member donations of \$735.00 plus \$25.00 in sales totals \$760.00.

Answer: Yes 10, not voting 4

The fund stands at \$12,201.51.

Question 3: Our Annual Spring Meeting is due to be held in the April to June 2021 timeframe, but we must consider the Covid-19 pandemic. Shall we hold the meeting this coming spring, at a later time, or via Zoom?

Answer: The meeting will not be held in person, with 6 voting to defer, 3 voting to use Zoom, and 5 not voting.

Question 4: The Special Board of Directors Meeting held in December 2017 approved a question to attract members to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society by reaching out to the public through brochures at Vermont Visitor Centers. The brochures were distributed to the four most heavily visited of the 19 Vermont Welcome Centers. It was calculated that VCBS could have our brochures distributed to these centers for \$554.00 per year. The brochures were distributed, and the project attracted three new memberships as of this date.

Membership Committee Chair Dan Monger reports that he pulled all of the brochures from the four centers in April 2019. Visitors picked up 1,250 brochures. The Membership Committee has 750 brochures on hand. Should we continue the brochure distribution project?

Answer: With 8 voting no, 1 voting yes, and 5 not voting, the project is discontinued.

Two questions were added to the meeting agenda:

Question 5: We have made a grant of \$5,000. Should this amount be taken from the Society's cash flow instead of from the Save-A-Bridge Fund?

Argument For: We have been growing the Save-A-Bridge Fund with donations from the membership, from the sales table at our annual meeting, and from investments in the hope of growing it to an effectual size. We have always made grants in the past using the cash flow instead of the SABF.

Answer: Yes 7, no 1, 6 not voting. Question 5 has been adopted.

President: Joe Nelson, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465 email: jcarlnelson@yahoo.com

Vice President: Steve Miyamoto, 8 Ridge Rd., Essex Junction, VT 05452, email: spmiyamoto@comcast.net

Secretary: Sarah Pierce, 49 East Cottage Ave., Millersville, PA 17551, email: srahpierce@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Dan Monger, 26 Lake Street, Tunkhannock, PA 18657 email: teelmonger@ptd.net

Question 6: Shall we make a token grant of \$2,500 to the town of Pittsford toward the cost of engineering studies of their three covered bridges?

Answer: Yes 7, no 1, 6 not voting. Question 6 has been adopted.

On April 11, 2021, I called a Special Board of Directors Meeting to ask for a revote on Question 6. With the amount of \$2,500, and with as many as six directors not voting, I believed the question deserved a revote. I inserted an argument against the question and asked the directors to please vote yes or no or to abstain.

Argument Against: The proposed grant to the Pittsford authorities does not state that the recipients are in need, but it does state that the grant is a token amount. The Pittsford authorities did not ask for the grant, and further the grant is described by its author as potentially an “excellent public relations exercise.”

The best VCBS public relations opportunities come with the making of wise, thoughtful grants, worthy of the people who fund them and in whose names the grants are made. The Society has recently received donations to our Save-A-Bridge Fund in the name of the late Mark Sargent, a VTrans engineer who has given life to our covered bridges. Let our decisions be worthy of him. There is no need to make a token grant as proposed.

With 9 of 13 directors voting, the vote is yes 1, no 5, and 3 abstentions. Question 6 is not approved by the Board of Directors.

A personal note: I voted yes on Question 6 at the Annual Board of Directors Meeting, because Pittsford owns three of my favorite bridges. That, however, is not a good reason for my vote. The town of Belvidere received our assistance after it underwent an investigation of its ability to fund the repairs to the Morgan Bridge, the cost of the repairs being known. Question 6, as it is worded, awards Pittsford \$2,500 without a formal investigation into the town’s need for our assistance.

I changed my vote when North Troy lost the School House Covered Bridge to fire. Meanwhile, Johnson’s Scribner Covered Bridge had been found to be in need of repairs, as well as Pittsford’s three. I believe we should leave our Save-A-Bridge Fund intact and let our board of

directors review requests for grants and base their approval upon the needs provided in the requests.

Our society is dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Vermont’s remaining covered bridges. Since our founding, we have committed ourselves to generating public awareness and government consciousness of the importance of the preservation of our covered bridges. Because our society consists of fewer than 200 members scattered throughout the U.S., actually funding the needs that covered bridge owners have is a challenge – we don’t have the resources. Our Save-A-Bridge Fund was conceived in 2002 and has grown to its present size through donations and investments. Once the fund has been spent, it may take many years to recover it.

Yours in bridging,
Joe Nelson, Chairman
VCBS Board of Directors

Membership Update

- Reported by Dan Monger, Chair

For those VCBS members who are receiving this newsletter with the mailing label marked in red, this indicates that you are behind in your membership dues. Membership fees are due in January. Annual members who are more than one year behind in their dues need pay only for the current year to return to good standing. Members who do not respond will unfortunately be purged from the membership list.

We now have 150 members, including:

- 1 Student
- 48 Individual Yearly
- 25 Family Yearly
- 45 Single Lifetime
- 28 Couple Lifetime
- 3 Business, Organization, or Municipality

Of our membership, 70 (46.7%) are residents of Vermont, 22 (14.6%) are residents of other New England states, 57 (38%) are residents of states outside of New England, and 1 (.7%) is international.

The VCBS wishes a very happy birthday and happy anniversary to:

June

04 Charlie Elflein
 10 Ron & Marie Bechard
 20 Mark & Jan Bramhall
 27 Glen Hall
 27 Terry Shaw
 28 Bob Kane
 30 Lionel & Debra Whiston

July

04 Neil & Suzanne Daniels
 11 Marie Bechard
 11 Charles & Evelyn Lovastik
 16 Melanie Schropp
 20 Bob & Trish Kane
 28 Jan Lewandoski
 28 Sandra Weaver

August

01 Irene Mele
 08 Virginia Eckson
 08 Evelyn Lovastik
 10 Thomas Carpenter
 13 David Charkes
 18 Ed & Irene Barna
 28 Mark Bramhall
 29 Ray & Delores Gendron
 30 Ada Jeffrey
 30 Robert McPherson

Please note: If I have neglected to include anyone, please send me an email at teelmonger@ptd.net.

In Memory of Mark Sargent

Fairlee, Vermont – Mark D. Sargent, 60, of Fairlee, Vermont, passed away peacefully at his home on the evening of Saturday, February 27, 2021. Mark was born on March 24, 1960, in Hanover, New Hampshire, to Paul A. Sargent and Barbara Davis Sargent. Mark was a 1978 graduate of Oxbow High School, Bradford, Vermont; a graduate of Vermont Technical College, with an Associate's Degree in Civil Engineering; and a graduate of the University of Arizona's Civil Engineering program, where he earned a BS with a concentration on geotechnical engineering.

Mark always had an incredible work ethic. Upon graduation from the University of Arizona, he began his career at Trapper Brown Corporation, Plymouth, New Hampshire, as a project manager. From 1990 to 1996, Mark was employed by Brent Rauhut Engineering, Austin, Texas. He worked primarily on behalf of the National Academy of Sciences and the Federal Highway Administration, conducting research under the Long Term Pavement Performance Program and Strategic Highway Research Program.

Mark relocated his family to Vermont in 2000. He was hired as a civil engineer for the state of Vermont Agency of Transportation in the Structures Division. Later, he became a project manager for the Structures Division, with a concentration on the restoration of Vermont's covered bridges, working with his mentor, John Weaver. His most recent project was the restoration of the Taftsville Covered Bridge, which had been damaged by

Hurricane Irene. Mark enjoyed his work and projects immensely. His career with the state of Vermont lasted 17 years, until Mark made the difficult decision to retire due to a medical condition.

Mark is survived by his wife, Marcy (Perry) Sargent; his son, John Paul R. Sargent, of San Antonio, Texas, who was a constant source of his pride; Marcy's son, Perry A. Hall, of Salt Lake City, Utah; his parents, Paul Sargent and Joan, of Fairlee; his mother, Barbara D. Sargent, of Gulfport, Florida; his brother, Scott Sargent (Robyn) and daughter, Megan; his brother, Matthew Sargent, of Fairlee; Chuck Clifford (Sherry) and family of Orford, New Hampshire; and Kate Grant (Charlie) and family of Bradford, Vermont; and Cynthia Escobar Nash and husband, Michael. Mark was predeceased by an infant son, Samuel Davis Sargent.

Mark will be remembered by all for his strength, kindness, integrity, and compassion. A celebration of Mark's life will be held for family and friends in the summer of 2021.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society's Save-A-Bridge Fund, P.O. Box 97, Jeffersonville, VT 05464-0097. Arrangements are being handled by the Hale Funeral Home in Bradford, Vermont.

NOTE: The friends of Mark Sargent have donated \$1,455 in his name to the VCBS Save-A-Bridge Fund. We, in turn, pledge to use these funds wisely in his name. – The Vermont Covered Bridge Society.

Meeting of the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges

Bill Caswell, president of the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, has announced his organization's July meeting. With the recent changes to Vermont's travel restrictions, the Society plans to hold its meeting on July 25, 2021, at 1:00 p.m., at the Scott Bridge in Townshend, Vermont.

The NSPCB members are looking forward to gathering again, and they have invited members of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society to join them. If you would like to meet other covered bridge enthusiasts from across the country, be sure to mark your calendar.

Bridge Patch Project

- By Edwin Loveland

A little more than a year ago, my friend Eileen suggested that I join the 100 Covered Bridge Club. I liked the challenge of visiting all of the bridges, so I joined. I also joined the 251 Club of Vermont at the same time. The two complement each other nicely. I love Vermont, I love history (and of course the bridges), and I love to drive. What better way to spend some well-deserved time off during the pandemic than chasing bridges.

Early in my quest, I noticed that some bridges had VCBS welcome patches and some didn't. Being curious, I asked Steve Miyamoto about it, and he explained the Patch Program to me. For those who may not know, the Patch Program was started in 2014. If you have been to many of the bridges, you've probably seen one of the laminated patches with a QR code. The QR code can be scanned by any smartphone, and it provides a wealth of information about the bridges in that particular county. The project was shelved at some point, with about 35 bridges being tagged. When I talked to Steve, I volunteered to bring the program back to life. Over the past 10 months, I have contacted select boards, town clerks, and private owners to seek permission to attach our patches to their bridges. It has been challenging, partly because of the pandemic, but I have enjoyed it and learned quite a bit along the way.

I was able to get approval from Sunderland, which is where the Chiselville Bridge is – the first Vermont covered bridge I ever saw. We have also been approved by Turnbridge and Northfield. I have added my own personal touch in the way the patches are attached. Initially, they were attached with a staple gun, and that's what I used when I started. Then my friend Mike gave me a box of antique brass cut nails, which apparently came from a ship builder's supply box. The brass won't rust, and they attach the patches more firmly. It also seems about right to use nails that are, in some cases, as old as the bridge.

A couple of the select boards have been hard to reach, specifically Bennington and Randolph. If you have a point of contact in those or any other town that hasn't been approved yet, please contact me. ncassady5@gmail.com

When you visit the bridges, I encourage you to scan the QR codes, if for no other reason than to make sure they are working. Steve recently spent a fair amount of time tweaking the type face and fine tuning the QR codes.

The mission of VCBS simply stated is preserving and saving the covered bridges of Vermont. One key way to do that in this modern day and age is through

social media. I am pleased to see that the Vermont's Covered Bridges Facebook page now has over 1,400 members. We are working on ways to make it grow even more and to get the FB members to join the VCBS. So, don't be afraid to share posts, create your own, and invite friends to join.

The more we can do to create awareness, the more good we can do for our bridges.

NOTE: Just before publication of this issue, we learned that the town of Hartland has approved putting our patches in their three bridges.

A Tour from Rockingham to Grafton

by Joe Nelson

All of the streams flowing from the east slope of Vermont's mountain ranges empty into the Connecticut River. In the southeastern part of the state, the major streams are the Williams River at Rockingham, Saxton's River at Bellows Falls, and the West River at Brattleboro. In the early days of the development of the region, these waterways provided access to a roadless interior and power to mill wheels. Pioneers came, industry grew, roads were built, and bridges were thrown over the streams that nurtured it all.

These historic spans are easily reached by I-91 or by U.S. Route 5. For the more adventurous, the "scenic route" travels from bridge to bridge with no long-distance retracing of paths and provides an opportunity to see more of rural Vermont.

The Scenic Route

For travelers from the north, the scenic route begins in Chester on Route 103. Drive south to find the Bartonsville Bridge, then the Worrall Bridge, and then the Victorian Village Bridge. Continue east to U.S. Route 5 and drive south to Bellows Falls. There take Route 121 west to find the Hall Bridge. Continue west to Grafton and the Kidder Hill Bridge. Also in Grafton, on Townshend Road, find the Cheddar Bridge – an attractive reproduction – next to the Grafton Cheese Factory.

The bridge seeker can retrace Route 121 back to Bellows Falls or turn right in Cambridgeport onto Route 35 south to Townshend to begin the tour of Vermont's old southeast towns.

Rockingham

Massachusetts granted land to the first English settlers in the town of Rockingham. The village, first called Fallstown, then Great Falls, became Bellows Falls when the first proprietor, Benjamin Bellows, settled there.

The town was granted in 1752 to Samuel Johnson and 68 associates. The settlement of Rockingham began in 1753, around the now historic Old Rockingham Meeting House. The first houses were built on high ground to guard against surprise by Indians.

Benning Wentworth became interested in the early settlement of Rockingham when he heard reports of the timber growing along the River of Pines. He went in person to see that the huge pines were reserved for the use of the Royal Navy. Wentworth caused the first sawmills to be established, and one of them was located on the Williams River at a place that came to be called Brockway's Mills. Wentworth named Rockingham in honor of his cousin, Charles Watson Wentworth, Marquis of Rockingham.

According to historian Victor Morse in his *Windham County's Famous Bridges*, there were once 17 covered highway and railroad bridges in Rockingham. Today, the town has four highway covered bridges. Master builder Sanford Granger constructed three of them, all plank lattice: Worrall Bridge, Bartonsville Bridge, and Hall Bridge. The fourth, Victorian Village Bridge, was a queenspost structure rebuilt as a kingpost bridge.

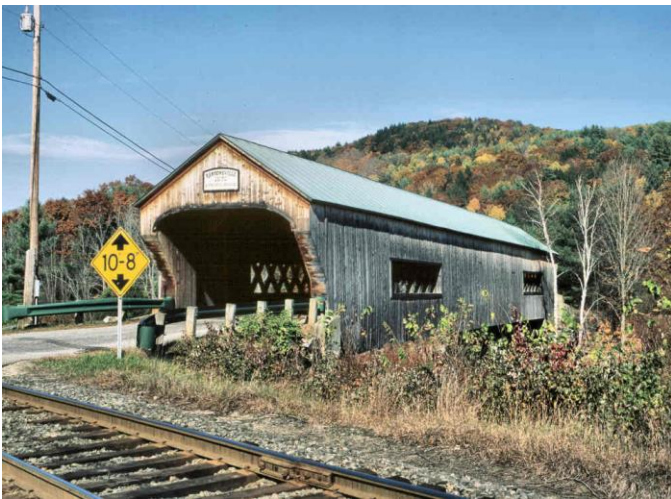
The Williams River

The Williams River was named in honor of the Reverend John Williams, who preached the first sermon in Rockingham. After the French and Indians raided Deerfield, Massachusetts, in February 1704, they took their captives on a 300-mile trek to Canada, and they camped overnight at a place where a tributary flowed into the Connecticut River. The Reverend Williams was permitted to hold services for his fellow captives on Sunday, March 5. The sermon was based on Lamentations 1:18¹.

Bartonsville Bridge – 2013

[WGN 45-13-11#2]

The Bartonsville Covered Bridge, built in 1871 by Sanford Granger at a cost of \$4,241, to replace the span lost in the flood of 1869, was itself lost to Tropical Storm Irene on August 28, 2011, when the Williams River washed away an abutment and set the bridge adrift on the raging river. The entire nation watched the scene on television from a video taken by a local resident.



Bartonsville Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

The town selectmen discussed putting in either a covered bridge similar to the original design or a concrete bridge. The concrete bridge would be sturdy enough to support emergency vehicles and

other modern traffic; however, the townsfolk wanted their old covered bridge back. The select board made the decision, when it found that the cost of rebuilding the covered bridge was nearly the same as the contemplated concrete and steel alternative – but it would need to be a longer, stronger covered bridge!

The bridge needed to be longer because an analysis of the disaster found that the north abutment projected too far into the stream, exposing it to scour, i.e., the footings of the abutment were washed away, leading to its collapse. The new abutments were set farther into the riverbanks and built on pilings against scour 10 feet farther apart than the originals. The new bridge needed to be 10 feet longer – a total of 161 feet, versus Sanford Granger’s 151-foot span. Mr. Granger’s bridge was cited as the longest single-span wooden bridge in the nation using the Town Truss. To support modern traffic, the lumber used needed to be of larger dimensions than the original, and modern glulam timbers were used.

To fund the work, the town’s people held yard sales, sold baked goods, and accepted donations. In total, nearly \$5,600 in checks and \$300 from PayPal were raised for the bridge repair. Fortunately, the historic span was insured for \$1,000,000. The town’s insurance company, Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and the Property and Casualty Inter-municipal Fund (PACIF), paid the \$1 million policy on the loss of the bridge.

Work began on the abutments in October 2012 and on the bridge structure in November. A gala bridge ribbon cutting was held on January 26, 2013, in 13°F temperatures, with the governor and over 200 others in attendance.

The bridge is found north off Route 103 on well-marked Lower Bartonsville Road.

¹ *“The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: Hear, I pray you, all people, and*

behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.”

Worrall Bridge – 1868

[WGN 45-13-10]

Worrall Bridge crosses Williams River on clearly-marked Williams Road, where it leaves Route 103 to the north. After crossing the bridge, continue on the road to Brockway's Mills Gorge. There, the Williams River flows between sheer 100-foot cliffs after dropping down a series of cascades. Sanford Granger completed the 83-foot bridge in 1868, just before the flood of 1869. The gorge must have been an awesome sight, with the floodwaters passing through it. The new bridge was very nearly lost.



Worrall Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

Over the years, the Worrall Bridge, a Town Lattice structure, has been modified, perhaps because it was built without the usual strengthening secondary chords. The lattice was reinforced with six pairs of 7" x 6" vertical posts and further steadied by iron rods and steel cables. As with many other wooden bridges, distribution beams were tie-bolted under the deck system, and the stone abutments were encased in concrete. There is a 20-foot timber ramp on steel beams at the northeast end, an unusual feature among Vermont's covered bridges.

An inspection done after the bridge suffered damage by an oversized truck found the bridge in want of repairs and revisions. The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) hired the engineering firm McFarland-Johnson, Inc. to do an in-depth survey of the bridge's needs. The Historic Covered

Bridge Committee met on October 24, 2007, to review the findings:

- The Williams River is prone to scour, aggradation, and lateral migration, requiring shoreline riprap and realignment of the north approach span and abutment.
- The superstructure requires the correction of racking, replacement of the nail laminated deck and bolster beams, replacement of the primary, secondary lower chords, and upper chord as required, the removal of the distribution beams, and the application of preservative and fire retardant.
- The currently posted 8-ton load carrying capacity would stay the same.

The project began in early August 2009 and was completed on August 5, 2010. The winning bid was \$505,604, made by Daniels Construction of Ascutney, Vermont. Interestingly, the McFarland-Johnson engineering estimate of cost was \$863,215. The refreshed bridge now stands on its own, without the iron rods and steel cables.

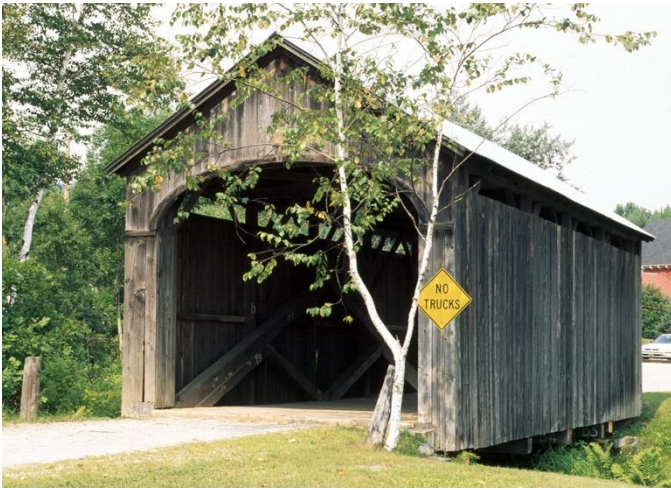
Victorian Village Bridge – 1967

[WGN 45-13-23]

The Victorian Village Bridge stands next to Orton's Vermont Country Store on the south side of Route 103 near the village of Rockingham.

Harrison Chamberlain originally built the bridge in Townshend as the Townshend Depot Bridge in 1872, using a queenpost truss. The bridge was taken down in 1959 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to make way for the Townshend flood control project. The disassembled bridge was stored until 1967, then taken to the grounds of the new Orton Country Store, shortened to just 44 feet, and reassembled by Aubrey Stratton as a kingpost truss. The bridge now represents a class of small bridge that has largely disappeared over the years, many replaced by culverts. There are just four kingpost bridges still

standing, in addition to the two spans that are part of the Scott Bridge.



Victorian Village Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

Notice that iron rods serve in place of timber kingposts. Many of the later kingpost trusses were built this way, and some of the older bridges were repaired using augmenting iron rods, the rods being superior to wood in bearing tensile stress.

Hall Bridge – 1982

[WGN 45-13-07#2]

The Hall Bridge stands at the north side of Route 121, just 3.2 miles from U.S. Route 5. Sanford Granger, the premier builder in the area, built the bridge in 1867, using the plank lattice truss. Unfortunately, Granger's bridge collapsed in October 1980, under a dump truck and its load – a combination of 30 tons. The 120-foot structure that now spans Saxton's River was erected in 1982 by Milton Graton and Sons as an authentic replacement, using traditional methods and materials.

A bridge historian commented that the span was originally constructed with what he described as "flying buttresses." These devices, no longer in evidence, were extended floor beams with a diagonal brace to the top of the truss, used to supplement the lateral braces under the roof rafters. The purpose of the bracing is to keep the trusses

standing upright and aligned against later forces from wind and water. Examples of buttresses in use can be viewed at the School House Bridge in North Troy.



Hall Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

All of the bridges known to have been designed by Granger feature extended gables, except this one. Here, only the gable end roof overhang extends over the portals, and the gables are sheathed with clapboard rather than the usual vertical planking. The rounded portals are finished with "keystone" and pilaster moldings.

The Hall Bridge has two unusual features. First, its portals are 12 feet wide – true to the dimensions of the original – the narrowest portals of all of Vermont's covered bridges. Second, the planks used in the lattice and in the chords are four inches thick instead of the usual three inches. These planks are probably heavier than the original. Cables have since been added to the exterior structure to provide additional lateral support.

The original bridge was on the National Register of Historic Places. The replica has been designated a scenic resource by the town. It once served Barber Park, the town's celebrated amusement park and picnic grove. Today, it serves unpaved Paradise Hill Road, leading to Bellows Falls' village forest. The bridge has also been known as the Barber Park Bridge and the Osgood Bridge.

The First Bridge Across the Connecticut

The first bridge across the Connecticut River was built at Bellows Falls by Colonel Enoch Hale. Isaiah Thomas wrote in the *Massachusetts Spy*, February 10, 1785, "This bridge is thought to exceed any ever built in America in strength, beauty, and public utility." Hale's bridge was 365 feet long, supported in the middle by a pier built on a rocky island. The bridge was the first built in New England with a clear span longer than one timber. Hale's bridge was replaced in 1840 by the famous Tucker Toll Bridge. The wooden Tucker Bridge was replaced by a concrete bridge in 1931.

Grafton

Grafton was chartered in 1754, but because of problems with the French and Indians, possession was not taken until 1763, and the first permanent settlement wasn't established until 1780. The township was originally named for John Thomlinson, a Londoner representing Benning Wentworth's businesses. In 1791, after the Revolution, the townspeople decided the town shouldn't bear the name of an Englishman. They voted to auction the privilege of renaming the town, and Joseph Axtell of Grafton, Massachusetts, won with a bid of five dollars and a jug of rum. Accordingly, the name of the town was changed from Tomlinson (the "h" was dropped in 1788) to Grafton.

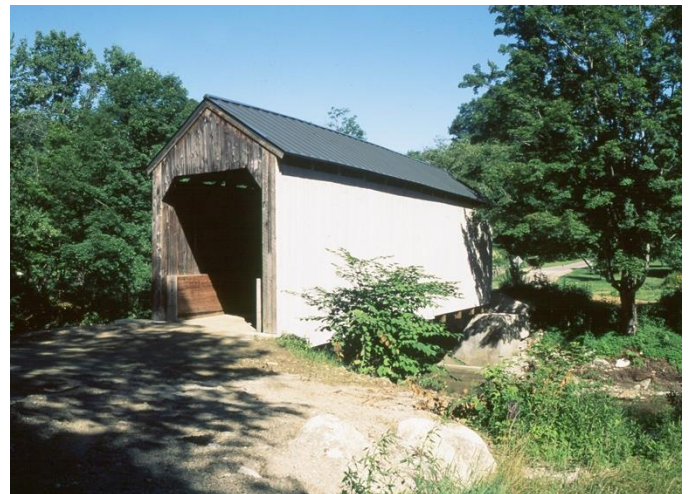
An extensive soapstone bed was found along the southern border of the town. The settlers used to chop slabs out of it for use as hearthstones. By 1824, the waterpower from six dams supported four sawmills, three gristmills, two fulling mills, two carding machines, and two tanneries. Commercial quarrying of the soapstone bed began in 1825.

Kidder Hill Bridge – 1870

[WGN 45-13-03]

The 68-foot Kidder Hill Bridge is the longest of Vermont's four surviving kingpost bridges. It dates from 1870, when it was built to replace a span lost in the flood of 1869. In 1938, the bridge survived what was termed a "500-year flood." It was left isolated but still standing, with the road washed out at both approaches. Kidder Hill Road and the bridge once served a soapstone quarry, which is now closed. The road continues in use to access the Bear Hills hiking and ski-tour area.

The bridge in its prime was considered strong enough to support wagonloads of stone, even though 68 feet is quite long for a kingpost span – the three other surviving kingpost bridges average only 43 feet in length. The kingpost braces measure 8" square, and the kingposts are iron rods 1¾" in diameter. The truss is augmented with a single buttress on each side, a unique feature for a non-plank lattice bridge in Vermont.



Kidder Hill Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

Considering the bridge to be unsafe after some 120 years of service, the Agency of Transportation reconstructed it in 1994-95 and made the roadway self-supporting. The method used is new to Vermont – a 1' x 5' x 67' laminated wood beam was installed on each side of the roadway inside of the covered bridge, the ends resting on the abutments. Wood floor beams measuring 12" x 15" pass under the

wooden deck, each beam end-bolted through the laminated beams above.

Grafton village lies about 12 miles west of U.S. Route 5 on Vermont Route 121. The Kidder Hill Bridge crosses the south branch of Saxton's River on Kidder Hill Road. The well-marked road leaves the south side of Route 121 at the west end of a concrete highway bridge.

Cheddar Bridge – 1967

[WGN 45-13-E]

The Cheddar Bridge crosses the south branch of Saxton's River a few feet west of Townshend Road, next to the Grafton Village Cheese Company.

A sign on the bridge proclaims, "Footpath to Windham Ponds." The very attractive 60-foot bridge is actually a stringer bridge with the addition of a kingpost truss of convincing appearance. The Cheddar is a good reproduction, but its truss serves no function. Iron rods are used as the tension member in the faux truss, rather than timber, imitating the nearby Kidder Hill Bridge and other authentic kingpost trusses. Notice that many of the timbers used in the interior here have mortises in them that serve no purpose, evidence that they were salvaged from a post and beam building.



Cheddar Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

Notice that the World Guide Number (WGN) ends with a letter. Letters are assigned to bridges designated *Romantic Shelters* – bridges with no historical context built by covered bridge lovers.

The Cheddar Bridge stands alongside Townshend Road, about ½ mile south of Route 12.

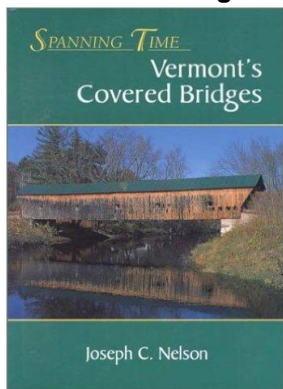
Our Lending Library

The Society's library is closed until further notice. Anyone interested in a book should contact Joe Nelson at jcarlnelson@yahoo.com.

For Sale

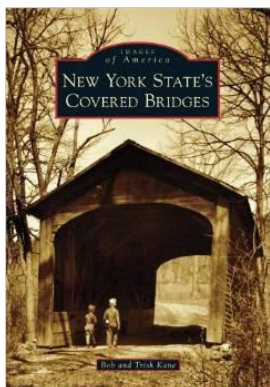
Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges by

Joseph C. Nelson 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 stand.



An appendix provides: A Summary of Vermont's Covered Bridges; A Covered Bridge Glossary; A Bridge Truss section, explaining how trusses work; Thumbnail biographies of people who designed and built the bridges; A Covered Bridge Reading List, for bridge and history buffs; 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 directly from the author for \$25.00, free shipping. For reviews of the book, go to www.vermontbridges.com/bookreviews.htm. Send your check or money order to: VCBS, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05489.

New York State's Covered Bridges - When one typically



thinks of covered bridges, New York is not the first state to come to mind, but New York once had over 300 covered bridges. Floods, fires and progress have claimed all but 32. Readers will enjoy seeing NY's current bridges, including the oldest existing covered bridge in the U.S., the Hyde Hall Covered Bridge, located in Glimmerglass State Park, and the world's longest single-span covered

bridge in the world, the Blenheim Covered Bridge, washed away by Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. This book also highlights the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center in Oxford, NY, the first ever center of its kind specifically designed for covered bridge researchers. For a copy of the tour, contact Bob and Trish Kane, 167 Williams Rd., Sherburne, NY 13460, 607-674-9656, bob-trish68@frontiernet.net.

Visions of Vermont art gallery, Jeffersonville, Vermont at: <https://www.visionsofvermont.com/>

802.644.8183

A special sale for the benefit of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society featuring the works of Eric Tobin. All proceeds of the unframed prints go to the VCBS. Sale of the framed prints will be shared 50/50. They are all Giclée on acid free paper. The glass is non-glare artist's glass.

10x12

\$125 unframed

16x20

\$175 unframed

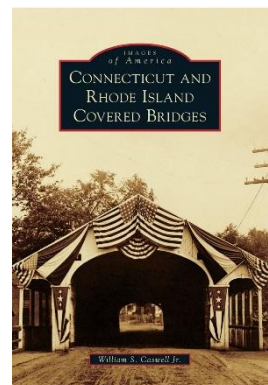
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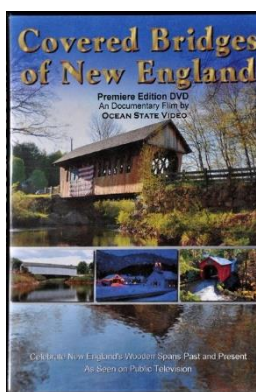


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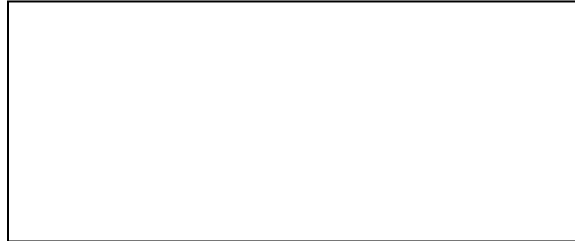
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