

THE BRIDGER



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter – Issue #82

Events

Well, the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly taken its toll around the globe. We are all very aware of the tragedy and loss of life that have happened over the past six months, and it continues to happen. We all know of the seemingly endless cancellations of events intended to help us “slow the spread.” And at this point, there is no end in sight.

Unfortunately, the Vermont Covered Bridge Society is facing the same decisions as everyone else. At this time, the majority of our Board of Directors have voted to cancel the Annual Fall Meeting, which had been scheduled for October 17 in Jeffersonville.

In place of the “in-person” meeting, we are considering holding a “virtual” meeting on Zoom. I will be sending out a survey to the membership in the near future to see if there is interest in attending a virtual meeting. In the meantime, stay safe and watch out for your loved ones.

- Steve Miyamoto

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 143 members, including:

- 1 Student
- 43 Individual Yearly
- 27 Family Yearly
- 45 Single Lifetime
- 24 Couple Lifetime
- 3 Business, Organization, or Municipality

**It takes two kinds of people to make the world – poets to write
of the glories of autumn
and the rest of us to rake them.**

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: spmiamoto@comcast.net

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Treasurer: Dan Monger, 148 Otter Creek Hwy., New Haven, VT 05472, email: teelmonger@ptd.net

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

September

04 Richard St. Peter
 09 Tom Walczak
 10 Gordon & Priscilla O'Reilly
 11 Dan Monger & Cathleen Teel
 17 Doris Taylor
 23 Susan Komeshok
 25 Bonnie Shultz

October

09 Erwin & Virginia Eckson
 11 Trish Kane
 20 Phil Pierce
 21 Arnie & Melanie Schropp
 22 Ellen Everitz
 28 Joyce Soroka

November

04 James Crouse & Jane Porter
 Gresham
 13 Bruce Wagner
 16 Dan Monger
 18 Cheryl Cullick
 18 Euclid Farnham
 22 Marikka Guay
 25 Richard & Gloria Davis

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

Publicity Update

- Reported by Steve Miyamoto, Chair

Well, the word seems to be getting out a bit more about the Vermont Covered Bridge Society! Despite the pandemic, we are seeing some growth. Dan will have more details, but we have gained some new members from the membership section of our website. Social media continues to grow, also. We are approaching 1,100 members on the Vermont's Covered Bridges Facebook Group. The 100 Covered Bridges Facebook Group is also growing.

The Covered Bridge News section of our website is expanding. We get news from around Vermont and across the country from a handful of reliable sources and connections. Stop by the news section when you get a chance. Better yet, sign up for notifications to be delivered to your email. There is an RSS option on the website in the social media section.

VCBS Patch Program

The Vermont Covered Bridge Society "patch" program is getting a breath of life. New member Edwin Loveland has volunteered to identify the Vermont bridges currently displaying the patch and those without. Edwin

will be replacing any missing patches, as well as contacting the towns that have bridges without patches.



I will be giving a presentation via Zoom regarding the Covered Bridges in the Bennington Museum Collection in September. I will send out an email with the time for those who might be interested. Between now and the end of the year, our membership application will be going "live." I will set up an option to apply for membership online, and I will send out an email when it is completed.

Speaking of email, we have begun to use Mailchimp to send information to our members who have given their

email addresses. There have been a few sent out already. Please let me know if this is helpful for you.

Independent Film Features Covered Bridge

A recent social media conversation has turned into a connection! We were recently contacted by Harry Goldhagen from East Fairfield, regarding the East Fairfield Bridge on the Vermont Covered Bridge Society Facebook page. It turns out that Harry is a local independent film maker. One of the recurring backdrops in his first film, *Bridges*, happens to be the East Fairfield Covered Bridge in East Fairfield!

Here is a synopsis of the movie from the *Bridges* Web page. "A distraught, disillusioned physician...a little girl

with a life-threatening illness, desperate for care...a small town with a large vision: a vision of health care for all. *Bridges* tells the story of one doctor's journey from bitterness and alienation to compassion and joy."

The movie features many local actors, musicians, and crew, as well as some great Vermont scenery. You can stream the entire production by Harry Llama Video for free on Vimeo: Bridges.

For more information, go to the Harry Llama Media website at www.harryllama.com.

Let's Explore the Covered Bridges of Northfield Falls

by Joe Nelson

According to the Northfield Bicentennial Committee's pamphlet, *Northfield in the Bicentennial Year 1976*, the town was often referred to as "Northfield-on-the-Dog." The Dog River was named when, according to legend, a hunter's dog, pursuing a moose over the river's ice, fell through and drowned.

Northfield, chartered by the state in 1781, with the first settlers arriving in 1785, began as a small industrial center, using the waterpower supplied by the Dog River and its tributaries. Elijah Paine founded the first millworks on Robinson Brook at Mill Hill, near the village of South Northfield.

Other enterprises that established themselves along the tributaries of the Dog River prospered for a time and then petered out. On Sunny Brook, there was a shingle mill, a carriage shop, a blacksmith shop, a knife factory, a manufacturer of doors and sashes, a chair factory, a gristmill, a wool carding mill, and a manufacturer of coffins and caskets.

Mills also operated on Cox Brook, Union Brook, and Stoney Brook. The East Branch of the Dog River, now Bull Run, supported a gristmill, a carriage shop, a machine shop, and a manufacturer of pumps, chairs, and handles for hayforks and brooms.

Today, the mills are gone. Norwich University, the oldest private military college in the United States, is the town's primary employer. The town is chiefly a forest area with some crop and pasture land.

Northfield Falls, called Gouldsville in its mill days, is located where Cox Brook joins the Dog River. Five covered bridges tie the area together, as they did in the mill town years.

The Station Bridge is the centerpiece of the village, easily seen to the west from Route 12. The bridge's west portal stands only a few feet from the New England Central Railroad tracks. The Newell Bridge on Cox Brook Road can be seen through the Station Bridge. Northfield Falls is one of just two places in Vermont where you can view one covered bridge from another. The other place is North Hartland and its Twin Bridges. The Upper Cox Brook Bridge is one-tenth mile further up Cox Brook Road, beyond the Newell, past a dam, and on the summit of a low hill.

Slaughter House Bridge serves Slaughterhouse Road, an unpaved dead-end lane about one-quarter mile south of the Station Bridge, east off Route 12. The Moseley Bridge is 4.8 miles south on Stony Brook Road off Route 12A.

The Station, Newell, and Upper Cox Brook bridges were reconstructed in the 1960's to handle modern traffic. The original floor systems were replaced with independent timber roadways on steel beams. The Slaughter House Bridge floor system remains as its builder left it. All of Northfield's covered bridges were painted red in 1978, when the town spruced them up while repairing and replacing the siding.

Station Bridge – 1872

[WGN 45-12-08]

Station Bridge, also known as the Northfield Falls Bridge, is named for a railroad depot that once stood nearby. It serves Cox Brook Road and Northfield Falls village with its single lane. A sign over the portal proclaims, “Town Lattice 1872.” The fluorescent lamps lighting the interior are a concession to modern times. Four ports on each side expose the truss and afford the traveler an opportunity to watch for trains while crossing the bridge to the tracks. New England Central trains pass here regularly.



Station Bridge, Photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

When the 137-foot plank lattice structure was strengthened and the original deck system replaced in 1963, a concrete pier was constructed under the center of the span. The original un-mortared stone abutments remain, but with cast concrete caps. Tie rods extend between the top chords for lateral bracing. Steel cables give additional reinforcement.

Newell Bridge – 1872

[WGN 45-12-10]

The Newell Bridge, also known as the Lower Cox Brook Bridge, crosses Cox Brook a short distance from where the stream passes under the railway to flow into the Dog River. The original stone abutments supporting the 56-foot span were faced with concrete when the roadway was strengthened in the 1960’s.

A sign over the board and batten portal proclaims, “1872 Queenpost.” A rare cast iron sign spells out, “Speed limit horses at a walk motor vehicles 10 miles per hour.” Another sign forbids loitering. A small port on the south side was created by pushing part of the vertical siding out a few inches.



Newell Bridge, Photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

Upper Cox Brook Bridge – c. 1872

[WGN 45-12-11]

The Upper Cox Brook Bridge stands a few hundred yards up Cox Brook Road from the Newell Bridge and above a waterfall and an abandoned dam. The place is seldom lonely in summer. The pool above the falls is a popular swimming hole with lots of places to sit on the bedrock in the shadow of the span.



Upper Cox Brook Bridge, Photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

The Vermont Division of Historic Sites, in applying to put the bridge on the National Register of Historic Places, stated that the date of build is unknown. The Agency of Transportation, in its bridge inspection report, estimates the date to be about 1872.

The Upper Cox Bridge is vented on both sides for most of its 51-foot length, as the siding is a couple of feet short of reaching the eaves. In addition to the vents at the eaves, there are ports on each side, both created by pushing the siding away from the truss like an awning.

The siding below the ports is also pushed away, directing rainwater away from the lower chords.

The upper chord of the queenpost truss is only half the height of the sides. This would ordinarily suggest that the span was once open and the roof was added later, except that the queenposts themselves are full height. Because the bridge does not cross the stream squarely, the whole structure is skewed.

Slaughter House Bridge – c. 1872

[WGN 45-12-09]

The Slaughter House Bridge, probably built in the late 1860's or early 1870's, once served the now-abandoned site of a slaughterhouse. The 60-foot queenpost structure crosses the Dog River on abutments of unmortared stone blocks and slabs above a mill pond and waterfall. Painted barn red like the others, it is unique in Northfield in that it alone has rounded portals. Hidden by a turn in the road, an open grassy field offers easy access to the riverside.



Slaughter House Bridge, Photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

While the town's records do not offer a build date, the Agency of Transportation covered bridge inspection reports suggest 1872. Stoney Brook Road leaves Route 12A to the west, 1.4 miles south of the junction of Route 12 in Northfield Center. Drive .8 mile to the Moseley Covered Bridge.

Moseley Bridge – 1899

[WGN 45-12-07]

Stoney Brook runs over bare bedrock under the bridge built by John Moseley in 1899. The 37-foot kingpost

truss structure is remarkable in that it actually has a wooden kingpost. Those in most of Vermont's other kingpost bridges have been replaced with, constructed with, or augmented by iron rods called kingrods. The abutments, once known for their large granite blocks, were faced with concrete in 1990. Five steel beams were installed under the deck in 1971.



Moseley Bridge, Photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

From 1785 through the 1820's, mostly Yankees from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and the older Vermont towns settled Northfield. Next to arrive were the Irish, attracted in the 1840's by jobs on the railroad. The Welsh arrived after the Irish to work in the slate quarries in the 1850's and 1860's. Stonework also brought the next wave. Beginning around 1890, Italians, Spaniards, and Scots joined the workforce in the granite sheds. From the 1880's onward, Canadians of French descent came seeking opportunity, many buying up hill farms abandoned in the decades after the Civil War.

The years from 1785 to 1825 saw the development of Northfield's four villages. The first settlement was on East Hill (now Mill Hill), close by Elijah Paine's grist and sawmills. As the population grew, boundaries crept up the hill and northward along Route 12. Clusters of houses became villages, each with its own personality and name: South Village, Center Village, Factory Village, and the Falls. - *The Northfield Town Committee (1974). Green Mountain Heritage: The Chronicle of Northfield, Vermont.*

Pulp Mill Bridge

by Melanie Schropp

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and the town of Middlebury have been working on a bridge and rail construction project in downtown Middlebury. Two nearly 100-year-old rail bridges in the center of town are being removed and replaced with a tunnel.

On July 13, 2020, Main Street and Merchants Row were closed to traffic for approximately ten weeks. The anticipated closing of these major thoroughfares raised a concern for the safety of the Pulp Mill Bridge, which will likely see more traffic during construction. Some of that traffic could include vehicles too large to cross the span without causing damage to the wooden structure.

VCBS member and former secretary Irene Barna attended several Middlebury Select board meetings in 2019 to address this concern. To illustrate the seriousness of the risk, Irene recounted the significant damage sustained by the Miller's Run Bridge, the Taftsville Bridge, and the Lincoln Bridge within just one month, all caused by oversized vehicles.

Irene urged the Select board to consider installing physical structures, commonly known as "headache bars," at the entrances to both ends of the bridge. The Infrastructure Committee did not support Irene's request, but explained that they wanted to work with VTrans on the use of electronic message board signs at both ends of the bridge.

Despite Irene's persistence and repeated attendance at the Select board meetings, ultimately, regular road signs were erected.



Photos by Dan Monger, 2020

Covered Bridges Possessed

- compiled by Joe Nelson

The dark little Gold Brook Bridge crosses Gold Brook at a busy joining of well-kept country roads. The walnut stained gable ends of the Gold Brook Bridge in Stowe give the impression of darkness, but the bridge does actually have a dark side, for this is Emily's bridge, haunted by her ghost.

Poor Emily does not rest in peace. The most popular legend has it that in the middle 1800's, Emily, a farmer's daughter, was deserted by her lover. Despairing and, sadly, in a family way, she hanged herself in the bridge. Her ghost is sometimes seen wandering through the bridge on moonlit midsummer nights, waiting for her man.

I've occasionally heard about people who have had eerie experiences at the bridge. Visitors have reported strange noises and screams – some have even reported seeing Emily's ghost! Most occurrences are said to happen around 2:00 a.m.

A local resident who drove through the bridge one summer night said he felt a presence, but knowing the Emily legend, he shrugged it off, attributing the feeling to the suggestion of the night's moon glow. But when he arrived home, he found the length of his car was scratched on the driver's side by a single hand.

I received a letter from a Canadian tourist in January 2002: "Dear Mr. Nelson: I've been meaning to try and contact someone about this information for a year now, since my husband and I visited Stowe, Vermont, last January 2001.

"While visiting Stowe, we went on a *Lantern Walk* one evening, and the gentleman guiding the walk was a teacher at the local high school. He told us some 'spooky stories' while on the walk, and the last one was told in the local graveyard while our lanterns were surrounding Emily's grave site. He told us the story of Emily and the Gold Brook Bridge and of many unusual circumstances surrounding the bridge. One of which was the fact that many visitors who had taken pictures of the bridge found that the pictures came back blank or black after developing.

"Well, of course my husband and I had to visit the bridge and take pictures. It was rather spooky when the pictures came back from the developer with all of the

bridge pictures having distortions of colour in them, particularly since the bridge pictures were in the middle of the roll. The ones before and after them were perfect.

"But, this is not the end of our information and, in fact, the best is yet to come. I showed these pictures to many people, and of course all were intrigued with our story. But one weekend, a university friend of mine asked if we wouldn't mind having a visit from an autistic young gentleman she was tutoring.

"During the visit, I was showing my friend these pictures, and the autistic young man was listening intently but became quite agitated when I told the story of Emily. He did not generally speak much but tended at times to blurt out words pertaining to what you were talking about. He was very quiet after the Emily story. We were all sitting around the fire awhile later that evening, when out of nowhere he blurted out 'woman.' We all stared at him, and my friend said to him, 'What woman?' He became quite agitated again and she asked again, 'What woman?' He said, 'Story.' My friend said, 'You mean Emily?' He became very agitated and said, 'Yes – yes – yes – pregnant.' My friend looked at him incredulously, and said, 'Emily was pregnant?' He said, 'Yes.'

"Our guide hadn't mentioned the pregnancy." –
Dianne and Alex C., Ontario, Canada

And then there is the Hammond Bridge in Pittsford, standing in the shade of ancient trees, with vines climbing its weather-stained sides. The Hammond is a picture book bridge. The setting inspires one's imagination – the echo of tramping hooves and rolling iron-tired wheels can still be heard if you listen hard enough.

A couple from Connecticut visited the bridge. The wife stayed in the car while the husband walked through the bridge. Suddenly, the car door locks clicked shut, then open, then shut and open again. Her first thought was that her husband was pressing the keyless remote, but the keys and remote were hanging from the ignition switch. Just then, the husband returned to the car. "I heard such strange noises on that bridge, like people talking and working, but I walked all the way to the end

of the bridge, and no one was there.” (As reported by *Country Magazine: October/November 2008*)

Other states besides Vermont have their haunted bridges, too, Pennsylvania’s Gudgeon Covered Bridge [PA-25-03x], for instance. In 1855, a peddler from Kentucky was crossing the bridge on his mule-drawn wagon, when a steamboat passed by the neighborhood with calliope music, playing *My Old Kentucky Home*. The mule bolted and died on the bridge.

The peddler buried his mule by the bridge portal with its name on a marker: Gudgeon. The bridge became known as Gudgeon’s Bridge, and the town near the bridge as Gudgeonville. Since then, there have been stories of a ghost mule walking the bridge.

The truth of the story is that the calliope wasn’t playing *My Old Kentucky Home* at all. It was *Camptown Races*.

Woolwine, Virginia, has a covered bridge with mysterious lights. Steve Pierce, of the Covered Bridge Society of Virginia, reports, “Joe, we just got our copy of *The Bridger* this morning. I read with interest your article on the haunted bridges. One of our ex-members took

the attached picture at the Bob White Covered Bridge in Woolwine, Virginia. I had the picture analyzed by a photo expert, and he said he thought it was sprocket marks.

“The member, Don Overman, thought they were ghost pictures. When Mom and I were talking to the people of Stuart, Virginia, I showed them these pictures as kind of a joke. They became very serious and said it was a HALO. They said they had seen this several times when people were baptized in the creek next to the bridge.”



[VA-68-01] Photo forwarded by Steven Pierce

Students Lead Bridge Preservation Project

April 18, 1975, St. Albans, VT – A group of ecology-minded students at Missisquoi Valley Union High School have not only formed an active club, “Students for a Better America,” but are taking an interest in the history of their town.

Realizing the significance of the old, but rapidly falling into dilapidation, covered railroad bridge which has spanned the Missisquoi River since 1898, they decided to try to save their town’s landmark.

Their first step was to approach the Swanton Chamber of Commerce to find out what they could do to be of the most use. That was in February. The chamber was sympathetic, but they told the teenagers that nothing could be done until ownership was definitely established. The chamber gave the students a month to clear up this mystery that had stumped even the attorney, Ronald Kilburn. “They went to the town clerk and looked up old deeds. There they found that when the St. Johnsbury and Lamoille County Railroad sold the business to the state, some of the landmark property was not included in the deed. They seem to have come

to the same dead-end that had stopped previous investigations.” Then Kilburn advised the youthful investigators to contact the Office of Historic Sites in Montpelier.

The group spoke with William Pinney there and were told it had been determined that the historic bridge was included in the sale, and it did indeed belong to the state of Vermont. He also told them that recently the Public Service Board for the state had sold the bridge to Historic Sites for eventual restoration.

The students were further advised that the bridge is on the National Register of Historic Sites, and therefore, any construction or restoration would have to be approved by that office.

The next step for the group was to find the details of construction. They felt that this was bound to be interesting, since the bridge is one of the longest and the oldest of its kind still standing in the United States. A telephone call to Robert Vincelette, general manager of

the S J & L C RR, explaining the problem, brought a letter in return, telling those needed facts.

Since the students wanted to provide a parklike area for picnics, as well as restore the structure, they also had to find out how much land went with the bridge and how large the right-of-way next to it was. They went to the public service board for the answer and found out the railroad still owns this piece of property and uses it for access. However, they were advised that a strip 33 feet wide on one side and 33 ½ feet on the other side of the bridge could be used.

The last step before reporting back to the Chamber of Commerce was to get an estimate of the cost of repairs. They were able to enlist the services of the industrial arts teacher at MVU, Darwin Queary. He accompanied the prospective restorers to the bridge, made a survey, and came up with the figure of \$3,000 for materials.

On time for the March meeting, the Students for a Better America made their report to the Chamber of Commerce, who according to a spokesman for the group, seemed impressed that “the kids could find out in three weeks what they couldn’t do in three years.”

As an immediate result of their research and presentation, the chamber voted \$500 to start the project and appointed two of the students to the town Bicentennial Committee, which was formed at that meeting.

One of the students said they had learned that the Shakespeare Club also planned to take an interest in restoration of the landmark, and has given \$25 for the restoration. Another group interested is the Future

Farmers of America, who have volunteered people power.

Students for a Better America is a twelve-member group, whose advisor is Anthony Brainard, MVU science teacher. President of the group is David Hakey, Vice President is Jim Kelly, and Debbie Pike is the secretary/treasurer. The other members are Steve Baker, Mike Patnode, Danny Richard, Kathy Lasnier, Rina Choiniere, Leon Berthiaume, Mary Fosgate, Diane Hakey, and Debbie Hazard.

The bridge, technically described as three spans in the Towne Pratt design, and at 369 feet, the longest in the East, was placed on the National Register only by an odd coincidence. It just happened that coming home from Montreal on the train, Swanton lawyer George Spear met the architect, Chester Liebs, who happens to work for the Division of Historic Sites, Agency of Development and Community Affairs. They got to talking, and the Swanton man just happened to mention the old covered railroad bridge, starting an animated conversation.

Curious, the man from the preservation office came up from Montpelier soon after the eventful Amtrak ride. The survey was made and the nomination filed in March 1973. Official recognition from Washington came in June 1973.

[Our thanks to VCBS member Rae Laitres, who found and shared this article with us.]

The Windsor Bridge: A Long Span of History

by Richard Andrews

WINDSOR, March 2, 1987 – A lot of history will be on the agenda at a hearing Thursday on the Windsor-Cornish Covered Bridge. At the hearing, New Hampshire and Vermont officials will present their ideas on how to preserve the bridge.

The New Hampshire Department of Highways and Public Works, which owns the sagging bridge, has proposed to raise it an average of four feet to escape damage from spring ice jams. The Department also has preliminary plans to strengthen it with hidden steel, an idea which some preservationists have challenged. Raising the bridge also requires raising Bridge Street and

several houses in Windsor, itself an expensive and controversial proposal.

The hearing will take place at 7:00 p.m., at the Windsor High School band room. So far, the bridge has survived remarkably well. Traffic between Windsor and Cornish, New Hampshire has been crossing the bridge since the fall of 1866, when James F. Tasker of Cornish and Bela J. Fletcher of Claremont, New Hampshire, finished construction.

But, ancient as the bride is, it was the fourth one on the site. According to Hugh H. Henry, an architectural

historian from Chester, earlier bridges were built in 1796, 1824, and 1849. All were lost to floods.

In his nomination of the Windsor-Cornish Bridge to the National Register of Historic Places, Henry wrote that it had “survived several major floods to become the longest covered wood bridge remaining in the United States.

“The bridge has an overall length at floor level of 450.5 feet. The longer of its two spans has a clear span of 204.6 feet, only 5.4 feet shorter than the longest wood clear span in the world – the 210-foot span of the Old Blenheim Covered Bridge at North Blenheim, New York.”

Even at that, the bridge is “considerably shorter than the old original bridge,” according to Richard T. Dana. Dana published “The Bridge at Windsor, VT., and its Economic Implications” in 1926.

Dana wrote that the current bridge, though shorter than its predecessors, is higher above the river bed. That probably accounted for its longer life.

Although the first two bridges were not covered, the 1849 bridge included the innovation of a roof to keep weather from rotting its timbers. But that didn’t preserve it from a major flood in March 1866.

Tasker and Fletcher signed their contract just a month later, on April 3rd. “Tasker,” noted Henry, “was an intuitive engineer able neither to read nor to write.” Nevertheless, he finished the bridge promptly, opening it to traffic in late October or early November of the same year.

Tasker used a variant of the Town lattice truss, a popular design in the mid-1800’s. In an 1839 book explaining the advantages of his patented design, inventor Ithiel Town contended the immense lengths his design made possible weren’t just a matter of engineering vanity.

Town said that long spans prevented a dam of ice or driftwood, “which is hardly possible in spans of 180 to 250 feet. Further,” he said, “such long spans put immense weight on each pier and abutment, greatly increasing their ability to resist floods, ice jams, and floating debris.”

Tasker’s client was a private toll company. The company kept the bridge until 1935, when New Hampshire bought it. The state collected tolls until 1943,

when the bridge became free. It was the last covered toll bridge connecting Vermont and New Hampshire. According to Henry, three other covered bridges connect the two states, and two of them still carry traffic.

Though the bridge is often subjected to weights far over the legal six tons, its sag is nothing new. When he inspected it in 1912, Dana discovered the west span sagged 9 7/8 inches, and the east span dipped 7 1/4 inches.

However, Dana said that the timbers were sound then, with 18 borings “showing practically no signs of deterioration in the wood, which was clear spruce.”

Some stresses actually were more severe at the turn of the century than they are now. According to Dana’s 1926 book, “In 1912, there was a very much larger horse traffic on the bridge than at present. That horse traffic occasioned a considerable amount of vibration, especially when the horses made 120 steps per minute, one-half second being the approximate period of vibration of the whole structure.”

In other words, the pace of a horse was actually more likely to cause the bridge to resonate, or suffer ever-increasing vibrations and tear itself apart, than automobiles.

“Today, the traffic is mostly automobile, which produces much less vibration on the bridge than the former horse traffic, the floor is cleaner (manure promoted decay), and appears to be entirely adequate for the present traffic up to the allowed limit of “four tons on four wheels,” Dana concluded in 1926.

In all probability, four tons on four wheels would be no strain for the bridge even today, 118 years after its construction. But, few truckers stop at that, and nobody wants to see the bridge in the river. How best to keep it for another 118 years is still an open question.

[From *The Rutland Daily Herald*. Our thanks to Mrs. William Reid of Chelmsford, MA, who donated to the VCBS her late husband’s trove of covered bridge clippings.]

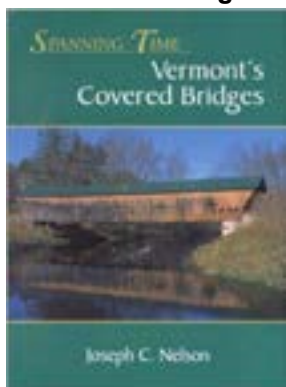
Our Lending Library

The Society’s library is closed until further notice. Anyone interested in a book, please contact Joe Nelson at jcarnelson@yahoo.com.

For Sale

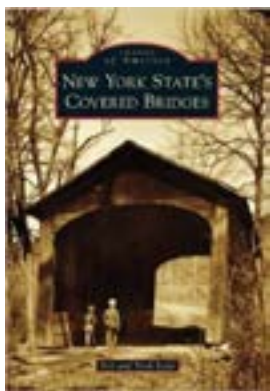
Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges by

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

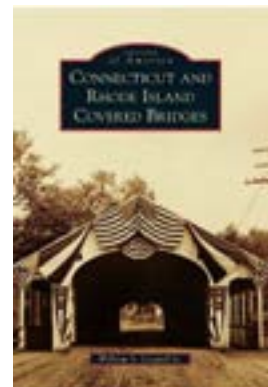
A special sale for the benefit of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society featuring the works of Eric Tobin. All proceeds of the unframed prints go to the VCBS. Sale of the framed prints will be shared 50/50. They are all Giclée on acid free paper. The glass is non-glare artists glass.

- 10x12 \$125 unframed
- 16x20 \$175 unframed
- 16x20 \$550 Matted and framed
- 20x24 \$850 Matted and framed



Connecticut and Rhode Island Covered Bridges .

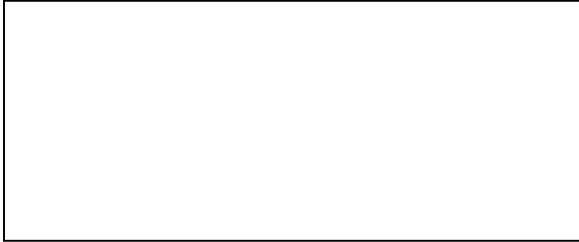
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