

# THE BRIDGER



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter – Issue #84

## Events

### Annual Spring Meeting

- by Joe Nelson

The Board of Directors will determine at their current annual meeting whether the Annual Spring Meeting will be held in person this spring, whether the meeting should be delayed, or whether the meeting should be conducted virtually via Zoom. The details of their decision will be announced in the summer issue of *The Bridger*, which will be published in June.

### 2021 Annual Board of Directors Meeting

The 2021 Annual Board of Directors Meeting is currently being held with four proposals on the agenda.

The first item on the agenda is a budget for the current year. The amounts proposed are based on the past spending of each of the standing committees. It is expected that each committee chairperson will agree to, or will alter, the proposed budget amounts.

The directors will also consider whether donations and sales received in 2020 should be put into the Save-a-Bridge Fund or left in the general fund. The total amount is \$760.

The next agenda item will determine scheduling of our Annual Spring Meeting. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the directors will consider whether the meeting should be held during the usual April to June time frame, or if it should be delayed to a later, safer date, or whether it should be conducted virtually via Zoom.

The final item for consideration will be about the continued distribution of brochures at welcome centers. At a Special Board of Directors Meeting held in December 2017, a proposal was approved to attract members to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society by reaching out to the public through the Vermont Visitors' Centers with brochures informing tourists about our covered bridges and about the VCBS. The brochures were distributed to the four most visited of the 19 Vermont Welcome Centers. It was calculated that the VCBS distribute brochures to those centers for \$554.00 annually. The brochures were distributed and 1,250 were picked up by visitors, but only a handful of the visitors responded.

Membership Committee Chair Dan Monger reported that he pulled all of the brochures from the welcome centers in April 2019, leaving the committee with 750 brochures on hand. The directors will consider whether we should continue brochure distribution projects.

The Board of Directors is composed of the Society's officers, the chairs of the standing committees, and the chairs of the bridge watch areas. All of these folks are invited to contribute proposals to be discussed at the Board of Directors meetings, as are Society members in good standing. If you have an idea you would like to put before the Board, contact me at [jcarlnelson@yahoo.com](mailto:jcarlnelson@yahoo.com) or mail me at 2 Sugar Hill, Underhill, VT 05489.

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

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# 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
- 44 Individual Yearly
- 28 Family Yearly
- 46 Single Lifetime
- 28 Couple Lifetime
- 3 Business, Organization, or Municipality

Of our membership, 71 (47.3%) are residents of Vermont, 22 (14.7%) are residents of other New England states, 56 (37.3%) are residents of states outside of New England, and 1 (.7%) is international.

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

## March

- 02 Gordon O'Reilly
- 04 Sarah Ann Gallagher
- 08 Neil Daniels
- 08 Merylyn Towne
- 16 Bruce Laumeister
- 16 Bob Orr
- 21 Thomas and Lisette Keating
- 23 Greg Komeschok
- 23 Steve Miyamoto

## April

- 02 Nancy Hoch
- 11 Jane Porter Gresham
- 13 Gary Krick
- 22 Anthony Daniels
- 22 Dell and Nancy Hoch
- 25 John Dunn

## May

- 03 William Carroll
- 03 Thomas Keating

- 09 Erwin Eckson
- 10 Charles Lovastik
- 12 James Crouse
- 15 Andy Behrens
- 17 Ron Bechard
- 22 Irene Barna
- 22 Lisette Keating
- 25 Cathleen Teel
- 27 Dolores Gendron
- 28 Bill McKone

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

## Help Wanted

The Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center is looking for an individual(s) who would like to volunteer to transcribe/type old letters or difficult to read newspaper clippings or documents. You do not need to live in New York, as material can be sent to you via email or U.S. Mail. If you would like more information or would like to volunteer to assist the center in this way, please contact Trish Kane, Collections Curator, at [bobtrish68@twc.com](mailto:bobtrish68@twc.com) or feel free to call her at (607) 674-9656.

## Editor's Note

**Correction** – In the Winter 2020 issue of *The Bridger*, in the article, entitled New Manosh Romantic Shelter, the owner's name is Howard Manosh.

# One Too Many

- By Edwin Loveland

Whenever we lose one of our beautiful bridges, we have lost one too many. Sadly, we lost the Schoolhouse/River Road Bridge on the morning of February 6<sup>th</sup>. A group of snowmobilers was crossing the bridge, when one of the vehicles caught fire, and apparently the flames got out of hand in a hurry. The riders were unable to extinguish the fire or move the sled off the bridge before the Troy side was fully engulfed in flames. Fire departments from the towns of both Troy and Jay responded and fought hard on either side of the bridge to put out the fire, but not before the Troy side weakened and collapsed into the Missisquoi River. The collapse was seen in a dramatic video shot by Mark Rappold. Troy Fire Chief Bobby Jacobs called it a “freak accident and that may be, though I am personally not a fan of snowmobiles on covered bridges. I saw this past summer the damage they have done to the Sanborn Bridge in Lyndon.



*Photo by Edwin Loveland, October 2020*

As I thought about what to write here, one thing that I heard in all the coverage of the fire and its aftermath kept coming back to me. The wreckage of the bridge was removed on Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. They were able to salvage a partial forty-foot section. One of the workers, between using a chainsaw to cut the burnt timbers said,

“I’ve lived here all of my life, and this bridge has always been part of that.” That made me think, not for the first time, of the uniqueness of each bridge. Every bridge is unique in its life, its character, its history, and its general appeal. Even in towns with multiple bridges, each one stands alone. The life beginning with wood almost always harvested locally. The character coming from those who had the vision to design it and the hands that built it. The history that continues as long as the bridge stands. How many trips by hay wagons or loads of grain, then later cars and trucks? How many meetings between two lovers? How many stories, both remembered and forgotten, over the decades? The appeal of a bridge, I think, is different for each person. For me, it is the whole experience: the first glimpse as I come to a bridge, the sound as I drive over one on a quiet afternoon, trying to take a picture that will in some way convey what I am seeing, the geographic setting, and of course the river. For the people who are fortunate enough to live nearby, the bridge is part of their lives, like the man working in Troy to remove debris.

The Schoolhouse Bridge was unique in more than a few ways. It was unique in its construction, accented by the six flying-buttress supports. It was the only bridge in Troy. And, what I find fascinating, the builder is unknown. I keep picturing a box in some forgotten attic or barn – a box with a folder at the bottom with information on the bridge.

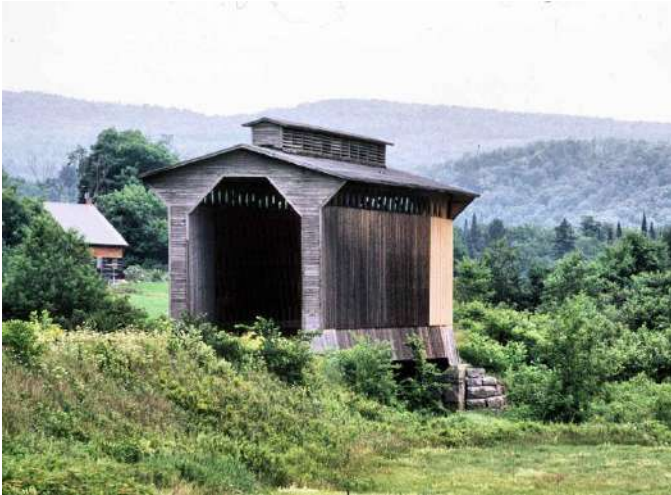
I saw the pandemic as a perfect time for bridging, so this past summer and fall, I visited all 101 bridges. Schoolhouse/River Road Bridge will always hold a special place for me. I visited it on Halloween. It was my 101<sup>st</sup> bridge, and I went there on the day that would have been my mother’s 101<sup>st</sup> birthday. I’m glad I didn’t put off that trip until spring.

## Wolcott’s Fisher Covered Bridge

Vermont Agency of Transportation’s Historic Covered Bridge Committee meeting was held on November 18, 2020, via MS Teams due to the COVID-19 virus. The

meeting was attended by the VTrans Structures Section, VTrans Asset Management, VTrans Environmental Section, the Vermont Covered Bridge Society (John

Weaver), and the State Historic Preservation Office. This report is taken from the published minutes of that meeting.



*Fisher Covered Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997*

The Wolcott Covered Railroad Bridge has been programmed for a project as part of the conversion of the Lamoille Valley RR into the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.

The Wolcott, or Fisher, Covered Bridge was originally constructed in 1908 by the Boston and Maine Railroad with a 103.5-foot long double-lattice truss to carry train traffic until the 1960's. The bridge was in poor condition in the mid-1960's and facing replacement with a new, steel truss bridge.

In 1968, the state of Vermont assisted in funding a project to replace the existing floor system with four steel girders and new ties to carry the live load of the trains. A timber pier pile group was constructed in the Lamoille River, creating two simple spans (42-51 feet). The covered bridge trusses, siding, and roof were left in place to carry their own weight, along with snow and wind loading.

The state of Vermont purchased the entire rail line in 1973. The bridge carried rail traffic into the 1990's under lease to several different railroad operators. Severe flooding in 1995 and 1997 damaged much of the line, such that it was not profitable to repair for rail traffic.

In 2002, the state of Vermont let a contract to remove the ties and track to prepare for the line to be converted to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. Currently, several segments to develop this trail are under design, including this section from Hardwick to Morrisville, which includes the Fisher Covered Bridge.

The state of Vermont, Division for Historic Preservation, as owner of this structure since 1968, would like to stress the architectural and engineering

significance of this bridge and is committed to being an active partner with VTrans in support of the new use of this bridge on the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.

The following is a summary of proposed work for this covered bridge to be opened to the public as part of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail:

Existing Trusses and Roof System – The existing trusses and roof system are in good condition to support their own weight and anticipated loads. A more in-depth inspection is pending on the roof framing and roof condition. No work is currently planned on the trusses or roof. It was suggested that fire retardant and insecticide be applied to all of the trusses.

Existing Railroad Rails and Ties – There are still railroad rails (main rails and guard rails) present in the bridge and for a distance off each end. There is a strong desire to keep the rails on the bridge with the installation of new ties and deck system constructed above the rails to support the bike path and snowmobiles, including a groomer (H10 loading). The current proposal is to construct the new riding surface above the rails, which will be re-installed on new ties.

Bridge Railing – A timber plank railing is being proposed for use inside the bridge. There was discussion about using untreated hemlock or other appropriate untreated lumber for this railing.

Trail Approaches to the Bridge – Several alternatives were discussed relative to the trail approach to the bridge. Proposals ranged from splitter islands, to round-a-bouts, to a rail end-of-line bumper.

East Abutment – The east abutment was originally constructed of laid-up stones. A new concrete bridge seat cap and back wall was constructed when the bridge was modified in 1968. The project proposes to reconstruct the concrete bridge seat cap and back wall, as the bearing cap appears to be delaminating. The remainder of the laid-up stone abutment appears to be in good condition.

West Abutment – The west abutment was also originally constructed with laid-up stone; however, at some point in the past, most of the exposed stem was faced with concrete, including a knee wall at the base. It appears ASR and freeze/thaw issues have been the reason for the current poor condition of this facing. There is no definitive understanding as to why this abutment was faced with concrete other than potential damage to the laid-up stone abutment from stream flow, as this abutment is located on the outside curve of the stream

and most probably takes the brunt of stream flow, ice, and debris damage.

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There are steps just off the west end of the bridge that connect to the parking area. These steps are in need of repair, replacement, or relocation as part of this project. VDHP is not concerned with the disposition of these steps, as they are not original. VHB, in conjunction with the MAB, will propose a solution for these steps.

Schedule – This project is funded with 80% federal and 20% state funds. Construction for this segment is scheduled to begin in 2021.

The Historic Preservation Office and VTrans need to explore an ongoing maintenance plan for this bridge, rather than leaving it up to a third party (VTrans Structures Section or a local group). The Historic Preservation Office will develop and present further details at a future meeting.

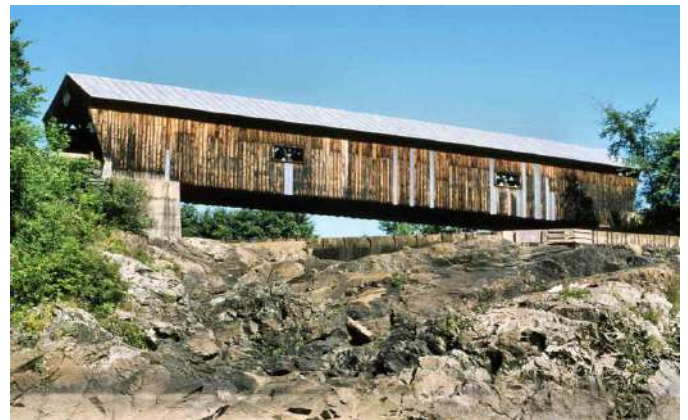
## Touring Woodstock's Covered Bridges

by Joe Nelson

*(This tour is being continued from the previous issue of The Bridger.)*

### North Hartland

Hartland, then called Herford, was chartered by Benning Wentworth in July 1761. Oliver Willard was the first settler in town, arriving as early as 1762. In 1872, 110 years later, Oliver Brothers purchased the land at the falls from P.K. Willard to build the Ottauquechee Woolen Mill. The mill was served by a causeway with two bridges. The two bridges survived the 1927 flood, but the mill building was wrecked. One of the bridges, a queenpost span, was lost in the hurricane of 1938. The surviving bridge, the Willard, is named for the original land-owning family.



*Willard Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997*

### Willard Bridge – c.1870

[WGN 45-14-02]

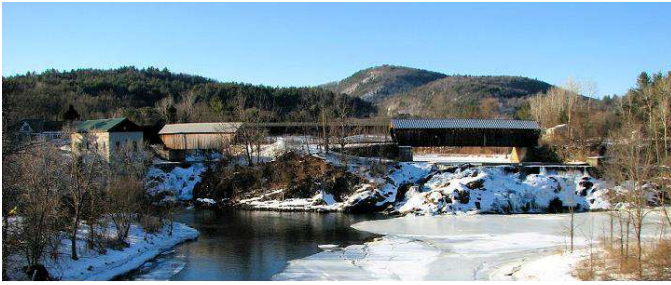
The Willard Bridge crosses the Ottauquechee River by North Hartland above a dam built on the crest of a natural waterfall. The Ottauquechee Hydroelectric Project, established in 1961, continues to use the waterpower there. The millpond above the dam, once used to run the woolen mill, is now a reflecting pool beneath the bridge. The stone foundations of the mill can be seen below the road at the east end of the bridge. In its day, the woolen mill had 1,680 spindles, 60 looms, and 75 employees. A dirt road, also at the east end, leads to a park and easy access to the river below the dam.

The 123-foot, plank-lattice span is in very good condition. The siding features board and batten, part of a renovation done in 1953. The bridge received a new roof, fire retardant, insecticide, stone abutment repointing, and new traffic control railings in May 2009 at a cost of approximately \$142,000.

### Twin Bridge

[WGN 45-14-64]

The as-yet unnamed new covered bridge was officially opened to traffic after a ceremony on October 13, 2001. Nearly 100 spectators, mostly townspeople, attended.



*Twin Bridge (left) & Willard Bridge, photo by Bill Caswell, Dec. 2001*

The new bridge joins the Willard Bridge in spanning the Ottauquechee River Dam causeway, mainland to island, and island to mainland, replacing the covered bridge lost to the 1938 hurricane. The lost covered bridge was replaced by a concrete and steel span.

The Twin Bridge is the only new covered bridge to replace a bridge of another type. In 1994, the VAOT and the town signed an agreement to repair the old concrete and steel bridge, crumbling from bad weather and winter's salt. In 1995, the town suggested replacing the bridge with a covered bridge, and the VAOT agreed. The town contacted Jan Lewandoski's Restoration and Traditional Building Company to construct the bridge, and the state contracted for the abutments and the temporary bypassing bridge.

The new 118-foot bridge uses the Town truss and is similar in construction to the Willard Bridge. Jan Lewandoski remarked that the trusses in his bridge, like in the Willard, are 16 feet high from bottom to top, compared to the state's average of 14 feet. He also noted that 16 of the 18 ship's knees used to brace the trusses were cut from the stumps of tamarack trees; two were cut from spruce. The bridge features a camber of seven inches. The truss members are 3" x 11" spruce timbers secured with 700 trenails, and the deck is constructed of oak and hickory.

The quickest way to North Hartland and the Willard Bridge from Union Village is to retrace Route 113 back to I-91, Exit 14. Drive south to Exit 11 and Route 5. Alternately, drive through the Union Village Bridge to Route 132 and then east to Pompanoosuc. From there, take Route 5 south through White River Junction. Look for Park Street, east off Route 5, about four miles south of I-91, Exit 11, just below the I-91 overpass in North Hartland. The bridge is located one-half mile east on Park Street.

### Woodstock

In 1761, Benning Wentworth, royal governor of New Hampshire, granted the township of Woodstock to David

Page and others. Settlement of Woodstock and many other towns in the area was delayed, however, because of the confusion caused by the king's order in council of July 1764, that made the western shore of the Connecticut River the eastern boundary of New York. The wording of the edict was such that those with New Hampshire titles deemed them still good, while others saw the territory open for land grants by New York.

Wentworth named Oliver Willard, a lawyer from Ashburnham, Massachusetts, to act as moderator for Woodstock's first town meeting. By 1768, Willard had accumulated vast tracts of land in the town by buying out nervous claimants for low prices. He presented a petition for a royal charter to New York's Governor Tryon and received a grant in February 1772. Willard became a partisan of New York and eventually settled in the neighboring town of Hartland. It was his family that gave the Willard Bridge in Hartland its name.

The Woodstock bridges – the Taftsville Bridge, the Middle Bridge, and the Lincoln Bridge – are all accessed from Route 4. Route 4 is entered by way of I-91, Exit 11, or from Route 5. The Smith Bridge stands north of Woodstock in the town of Pomfret.

### Taftsville

Taftsville's first settler, Stephen Taft of Mendon, Massachusetts, arrived in the early 1790's. He built a shop on the south side of the Ottauquechee River, where he made axes, scythes, and other edged tools. In 1794, he built a dam and a saw mill.

**The Turkey Bridge** – The first bridge in Taftsville was built in 1793 at the foot of Main Street, upstream of the present bridge. It was a shaky affair, and the townspeople feared it would crash down under them. The bridge had a peculiar truss, featuring posts set in pairs, joined at the top with a cross beam over the roadway. The cross beams were put to use as a roosting place for market-bound turkeys, but it is not known what other purpose they might have served.

### Taftsville Bridge – 1836

[WGN 45-14-12]

Painted barn red, the Taftsville Bridge stands over the Ottauquechee River, below the powerhouse in the village of Taftsville. The approach from the north side of Route 4 is steep and narrow.



*Taftsville Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997*

The 189-foot structure rests on a center pier set in the gorge below the powerhouse dam. Auto, bicycle, and foot traffic on the single-lane span are heavy. North of the far portal there is a wide spot in the road where artists often work. Taftsville's covered bridge is probably one of the most painted in New England.

The bridge was built by Solomon Emmons, III, and his son in 1836 for \$1,800, and the Emmonses maintained the bridge afterward. The son, Edwin, did major repair work after the flood of 1869. In the bridge's early years, the funds for its maintenance came from the neighboring towns of Pomfret, Hartland, Woodstock, and Hartford. After 1851, when part of Hartland was ceded to Woodstock, Woodstock assumed ownership and maintenance of the bridge.

The truss is variously described as nondescript or mongrel, the kinder words for the trusses. Jan Lewandoski, who inspected the bridge for the Agency of Transportation Covered Bridge Report in 1995, found it to be "a very complicated truss, designed, I think, not by a regular bridge builder, but by a very sophisticated framer who built an almost uncategorizable truss. It doesn't share any features with any other bridge. In general, it has queenpost elements and multiple kingpost elements, and it has arches. The posts are chestnut. It has gigantic bottom chords – 70' 18" x 16" timbers spliced in the middle. The splice is 20 feet long."

The four laminated arches were added to the bridge in the early 1900's. The Taftsville is one of the few arch bridges in Vermont where the arch extends below the bottom chords to the abutments, and according to Lewandoski, the arch system is actually working.

Because the two clear spans differ in length, the two sets of arches are not uniformly configured. The south

span measures 89 feet from abutment to pier; the other span to the north abutment is 100 feet long. The long pair of arches consists of 12 laminated planks; the short pair, 10.

The span was renovated in 1953. The bridge was raised on its abutments and pier to prevent water from flooding onto the bridge deck from the approach roads, and the steel gussets in the overhead replaced the knee braces overhead. Except for the distribution beams installed under the deck system in the late 1980's and the steel gussets, the bridge remains as the Emmonses left it.

Then in August 2011 came Tropical Storm Irene! Taftsville Bridge's abutment foundations were seriously damaged by floodwaters and moving debris. There were measureable wall fractures, movements, settlements, and the protective concrete skirts were fractured and dislocated in several places. The bridge had to be closed.

In November, the Woodstock selectmen were informed that the bridge had suffered more damage than originally thought. The abutment on the Route 4 end of the bridge was found to be unstable, requiring that that half of the bridge, from the center pier to the abutment, needed to be dismantled to allow the rebuilding of the abutment.

The September 19 reassessment found debris at center pier, debris impact on the center stone pier, a washout at the southwest abutment, the wing wall compromised, and a partial collapse of the west stone abutment and the southeast stone wing wall, with a bank slide at the northwest corner.

The northeasterly span of the Taftsville Bridge was dismantled and stored for the winter in the Woodstock Town Garage, leaving only the southwesterly span, from the abutment to the pier, standing in midstream.

The low bid for the reconstruction work was \$226,758. FEMA funded 75% of the cost, with the state and town providing 15% and 10%, respectively. The work was finished on September 7, 2013.

### **Middle Bridge – 1969**

[WGN 45-14-15]

The Middle, or Union Street, Bridge stands in the heart of Woodstock village, almost lost in the clutter of historic facades. The 125-foot span over the Ottauquechee was built in 1969, replacing an 1877 iron bridge that had been condemned in 1966. According to the Woodstock Historical Society, it is the first authentic Town-lattice

truss highway covered bridge built in Vermont since 1895.



*Middle Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997*

Milton Graton and Sons of Ashland, New Hampshire, built the bridge. The lattice planks are Oregon Douglas fir. The trenails pinning them together are New Hampshire white oak. The state of Vermont paid 50% of the cost, with the balance raised by private subscription.

The new bridge was set afire on May 11, 1974, the night of the fireman's ball. The bridge had been well soaked with gasoline and ignited by local juvenile arsonists. The structure was saved by the efforts of the volunteer fire department and the fireproofing system installed by Graton. "In spite of the timing and the intense heat, the firemen are credited with extinguishing the fire in little more than 20 minutes. This was a remarkable showing since they had to fight the fire primarily from the river below. The arsonists received suspended sentences." – from *The Last of the Covered Bridge Builders*, by M.S. Graton, pp79, 105. Graton completed restoration of the bridge in 1976, replacing the roof and siding.

Said Milton Graton: "I enjoyed this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create something out of the past; something that is looked forward to but seldom happens. However, it was a long, tiring process and when I finished, it reminded me of the Maine potato farmer. He had worked hard all summer, harvested his crop, and now had taken his last load of potatoes to Bucksport. Feeling relieved, he said to his friend, 'Now I am going to Bangoa and get drunk, and how I dread it!'"

This history of the Middle Bridge was written by the Woodstock Historical Society and posted on the covered bridge: "Several covered bridges spanned the Ottauquechee River at this point. The 1877 iron bridge which succeeded them was condemned in 1966. Estimates for a modern concrete and steel span started

at \$73,000, whereas this comparable wooden bridge was constructed for approximately \$65,000. The state of Vermont paid 50% of the cost, and the balance was raised by private subscription. Full state specifications for 15-ton capacity have been more than fulfilled. The roadway is 14'5" with a 5' sidewalk. In addition to being treated with fireproofing materials, a sprinkler system was installed for further safety.

"Grafton Associates of Ashland, New Hampshire, the designers and builders, have had extensive experience in repairing and moving covered spans. This was their first complete building project, and it employed the Town Truss construction, named for the noted 19<sup>th</sup> century bridge designer, Ithiel Town. The span is the first truly authentic highway covered bridge to be built in either New Hampshire or Vermont since 1895.

"There is no functional metal in the trusses, the lattice members being held in place with some 1,400 trunnels turned from 23 white oak trees from New Hampshire. The necessary 80,000 board feet of lumber is mostly Douglas fir from Oregon. The estimated weight of one side member is 19 tons. The total weight of the bridge is approximately 100 tons, and the length of the bridge is 150 feet. It was assembled on Union Street and ox-drawn across the river on crib-work in June of 1969." – Union Street Bridge.

*NOTE: The name of the street has since been changed to Mountain Road.*

## Lincoln Bridge – 1865

[WGN 45-14-13]

The Lincoln Bridge, named for a family who owned land nearby, crosses the Ottauquechee, west of the village of Woodstock. The portals stand within a few feet of the south median of Route 4, serving Fletcher Hill Road.

The 136-foot span employs a truss implemented in wood nowhere else in the U.S. According to town records, R.W. and B.H. Pinney built the bridge in 1865.<sup>1</sup> The truss used is similar to that patented by Thomas and Caleb Pratt in 1844. The patent describes parallel chords used in conjunction with a boxed truss, featuring wood vertical members with iron rod cross-braces supporting the lower chords. In the Lincoln Bridge, the upper chords are shallow arches. The boxed truss was never popular

<sup>1</sup> Richard Sanders Allen offers a build date of 1877 in his *Rare Old Bridges of Windsor County*.

in the wood and iron implementation, but when iron and steel began to be widely used, it became the basic truss for bridge building. Look for it with its boxed x's in modern construction.



*Lincoln Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997*

The bridge was renovated in 1947, and the Wright Construction Company renovated it again in 1989. Except for the high strength steel rods added below the bottom chords to add tensile capacity and distribution beams installed under the floor, the span remains true to the original builder's intent.

Thomas was the same Pratt who improved the Town-lattice truss for railroad bridges. The Fisher Bridge in Wolcott uses the Town-Pratt truss.

### **Smith Bridge "at Pomfret" – 1973**

[WGN 45-14-18]

Devotees of historic bridges planning to explore the Smith Bridge might find themselves unwelcome. In South Pomfret, the Smith Bridge off Stage Road near the Suicide Six resort has been clearly marked "PRIVATE DRIVE," and the property posted.

The Smith Bridge, now privately owned, stands on a portion of what was the Lawrence Rockefeller holdings in Pomfret. It can be seen just north of the village of South Pomfret, where it crosses Barnard Brook in an open field.

The 40-foot span was assembled there in 1973 by the Cummings Construction Company from plank-lattice trusses salvaged from the 100-foot Garfield Bridge. The Garfield Bridge, built in the 1870's, crossed the Green River in Garfield village in the town of Hyde Park. When work began in 1946 on the Green River Reservoir project upstream, the old bridge was strengthened to handle construction traffic. It was abandoned in 1965, when the town bypassed it with a culvert. J.P. Rich, president of a

local surveying firm, purchased it in 1971 to ensure it would be preserved.



*Smith Bridge at Pomfret, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997*

Thurston Twigg-Smith, Jr., of ASA Properties Vermont, Inc., a real estate development company, bought the Garfield Bridge to provide access to two of the corporation's properties, one in Pomfret and the other in West Windsor. The trusses were taken down, cut in half, and trucked to the building sites. The two bridges were never formally named, but the developer referred to them as the Pomfret Bridge and the Ascutney Bridge.

Lacking bedrock, the abutments of the Pomfret Bridge were built on six wooden pilings driven 32 feet into the stream bank. Construction was completed on the 40-foot bridge in 1973. It is handsome, with extended gable ends and with sides left open to display the lattice truss. The roof is finished with shingles imported from Australia. ASA Properties, Inc. did not complete its development project in Pomfret. Strict zoning codes and a petition against the building of the bridge challenged the subdivision. The opposition was not to the bridge itself, but to the housing tract it would provide access to. The land was then purchased by the Suicide Six Ski Resort's parent company.

The Smith Bridge in Pomfret is easily reached from Woodstock by taking Route 12 where it leaves Route 4 north from the center of the village. Just follow the signs to Suicide Six Ski Resort. Drive approximately one mile to Copper Flats Road, where it forks to the right, then 1.7 miles to the village of South Pomfret. Turn left onto Stage Road toward the ski resort and watch to the left for the bridge.

*"The Hyde Park Bridge was a little span perched over a rocky glen at the crossroads hamlet called Garfield. Garfield is apparently a tall tale center.*

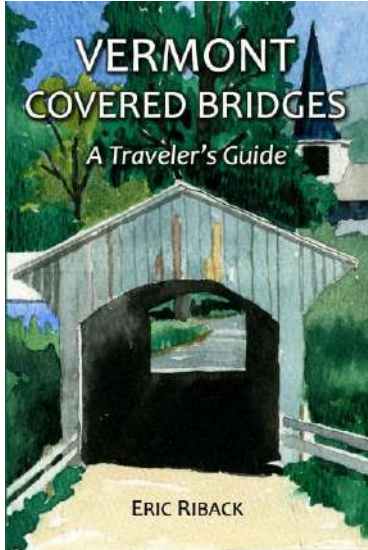
*"Willard K. Sanders, a Morrisville historian, has more than once heard a hair-raising yarn to the effect that*

some 50 years ago the entire community used to snow the bridge and then go out to slide on a winter's evening. They used a bobsled, some 45 feet long and 8 feet wide, which could seat 40 people. Down Davis Hill it would plunge, two men to steer and a third to aim it so as to hit the narrow passage of the bridge with only inches to spare.

*“Mr. Sanders also reports he has been told that the Garfield Bridge is ‘over two hundred years old.’ He says that if he could believe the span was erected back when the country was inhabited only by Indians and mosquitoes, then he could also believe the story of the giant bobsled threading the needle’s eye of the bridge.” – from Covered Bridges of the Northeast, by R.S. Allen*

## About My New Book, Vermont Covered Bridges: A Travelers Guide

My wife, Bella, and I own Bella Terra Publishing. We started the company in 2008 by acquiring a line of lighthouse and covered bridge maps. Over the years, we updated and reprinted the lighthouse maps, which are mostly sold at lighthouse and maritime museum gift shops. The covered bridge maps of Vermont and New Hampshire were out of print and had been produced before the digital age. We live in upstate New York and have traveled to Vermont and sought out covered bridges. While bridge enthusiasts are typically interested in details of history and construction, my sense is that a larger cohort just like the bridges for their beauty, romance and riverside settings. And, their biggest challenge can be locating the bridges.



I felt that rather than make a new sheet map, the best way to address this challenge was in a book. There are a number of excellent books on Vermont’s covered bridges, and some do have location information. I decided to really focus on that aspect and include multiple ways to help the user find bridges. I included a written description of location,

exact latitude/longitude and a close-up map for each bridge. There is also an index of bridges by town, so that wherever you are, you can see which bridges might be nearby. I do include a little history, but there are better sources for those who really want to dig in. We also have some watercolor illustrations that were originally made for the map. They are in monochrome in the book, but we sell them as color prints and notecards on eBay and Etsy.

The book is printed on demand. Thus, it can be updated more easily than a traditionally printed book. I will soon work on the first update that, unfortunately, includes news of the River Road Bridge destruction and addition of new romantic shelters. (I include some of these along with all of the authentic covered bridges.)

I set the price as low as possible, so that it will be an easy purchase decision for those who find it. The book is available directly from us, as well as from Amazon and eBay. It can be found in several Vermont bookstores and can be ordered by any bookstore. As travel and tourism return, I expect to have it carried in more country stores (Weston has it) and gift shops. We have published a similar book for Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and we will have one for New Hampshire by the end of March.

I’m pleased to be a member of the VCBS and look forward to attending meetings when we’re able to meet in person again.

Eric Riback

[eric@bellaterramaps.com](mailto:eric@bellaterramaps.com)

(845) 758-1460

**Editor’s Note:** Purchase information for Eric’s book can be found in the Books Section of the Market Place on the VCBS website at:

[http://www.vermontbridges.org/market\\_place\\_books.shtml](http://www.vermontbridges.org/market_place_books.shtml).

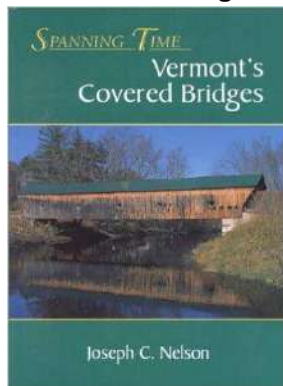
## Our Lending Library

The Society’s library is closed until further notice. Anyone interested in a book, please contact Joe Nelson at [jcarlnelson@yahoo.com](mailto:jcarlnelson@yahoo.com).

# For Sale

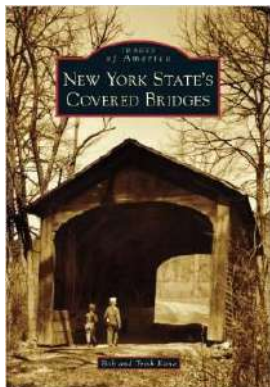
## Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges by

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](http://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](mailto:bob-trish68@frontiernet.net).

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

802.644.8183

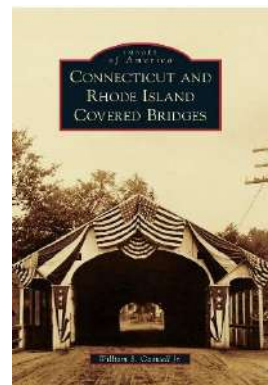
**A special sale** for the benefit of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society featuring the works of Eric Tobin. All proceeds of the unframed prints go to the VCBS. Sale of the framed prints will be shared 50/50. They are all Giclée on acid free paper. The glass is non-glare artist's glass.

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

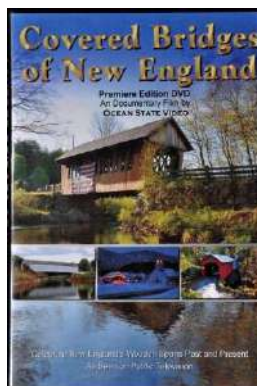


## Connecticut and Rhode Island Covered Bridges –

**Price reduced!** During their heyday in the mid- to late 1800s, more than 150 covered bridges dotted the landscape of Connecticut and Rhode Island. Since that time, floods, fires, and progress have claimed all but two of the historic structures. With over 200 images, this book provides insight into the covered bridge history of an area that has not been well documented in the past. To order your signed copy, send \$20.00 to Bill Caswell, 535 Second NH Turnpike, Hillsboro, NH 03244.



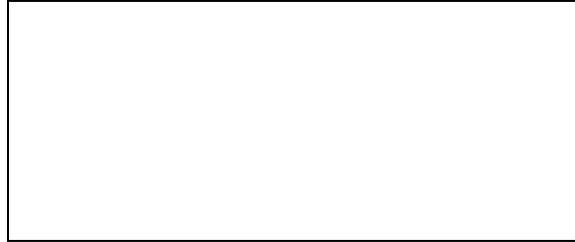
## Covered Bridges of New England —DVD Produced



by Ocean State Video of Rhode Island for Public Television. On Sale. Profits go to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society's Save-A-Bridge Program. For your copy, send \$20.00 plus \$2.75 shipping and \$1.20 Vermont sales tax to VCBS, c/o Joe Nelson, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465-0267.



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### Membership Application

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- Paddleford - \$200       Whipple - \$250

*(Memberships valid to the end of the current calendar year,*

*Dues and Donations will be used to promote preservation of Covered bridges.)*

Please make all checks for dues and donations payable to: The Vermont Covered Bridge Society.

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