

The Bridger



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter – Fall 2013

PREZ SEZ

Events

Vermont Covered Bridge Society Annual Fall Meeting

September 28, 2013, 10:00 a.m.

Montgomery Town Hall,
57 Main St., Montgomery Ctr., Vt. 05471

It is gratifying to see that on this Labor Day weekend volunteers, from the National Society, have been working on a temporary fix and stabilization to the Sanborn Bridge in Lyndon. This 19th century Paddleford truss bridge, formerly on Vt. 122 between Lyndonville and Lyndon Center, has been in serious danger of collapse from broken chords. Formerly on a public road, the bridge was acquired by a private party in 1960 rather than be destroyed. Because the bridge is privately owned, it will be difficult or impossible to raise funds for repair/restoration. The VCBS Board of Directors approved spending \$5000 from the Save-a Bridge toward repairing the bridge, with the stipulation that ownership of the bridge be transferred to the Town or a local non-profit organization.

Reminder to our members that the fall meeting of VCBS will be held in Montgomery on the last Saturday in September. I hope to see a good turnout of members.

Bill Carroll, President, VCBS

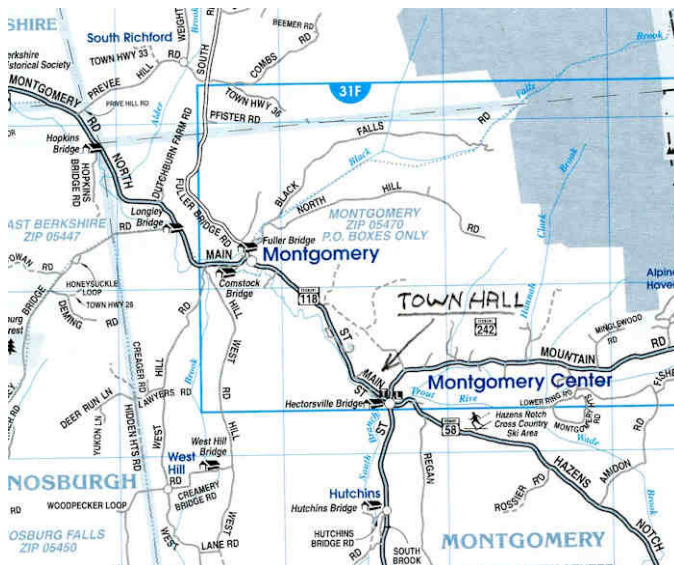
Festivities will begin at 10 a.m. with the usual business meeting to conclude at 11 a.m. at which time our speaker, Scott Perry, will talk to us about Montgomery and Montgomery's seven covered bridges. Mr. Perry is the chair of the Montgomery Historical Society, and a member of the Montgomery Select Board.

9:00 a.m.	Set-up time
10:00 a.m.	Business meeting called to order
10:58 a.m.	Business meeting adjourned
11:00 a.m.	Scott Perry will speak
12:00 p.m.	Break – dining arrangements and bridge tours will be discussed.
	Handouts will be available.

Snack will be provided. The sales table will be open but the usual drawing will not be held.

For those interested, Scott Perry is offering a short tour of The Montgomery Historical Society's Pratt Hall, the former Episcopal Church, a timber framed building built in 1835, after the meeting or lunch. A short history of the building (which is on the National Register of Historic Places). There's more (and color photos) on the web site: www.montgomeryhistoricalsociety.org

The Montgomery Town Hall is at 57 Main Street (Rt. 118) between the Snowshoe Pub, and Lutz's Automotive, across the street from the Coach House, about 0.1 miles from the junction of Routes 58 & 242. Montgomery can be reached from I91 exit 26 and Route 58 west; from I89 exit 21 and Route 105 east, then at East Berkshire, Route 118 south.



Election Slate Filled – Incumbents Will Continue In Office

by Joe Nelson

For lack of challengers, the incumbent officers will stand again for two-year terms beginning January 1, 2014. The slate includes; William Carroll, President; Joe Nelson, Vice President; Neil Daniels, Treasurer; and Irene Barna, Secretary. William Carroll has stated that this will be the last time he will run for office.

With the Summer newsletter issue of The Bridger, we began the process of electing Society officers. The Vermont Covered Bridge Society membership was asked for candidates to run for the offices of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Non-incumbent candidates were asked to introduce themselves to the membership by letter to tell us why they are seeking a leadership role. The letters were to be published in the Fall Issue of The Bridger together with the ballot.

There were no letters. Fortunately, the incumbents have each agreed to serve another term.

There will be no ballots. The Society bylaws governing elections was changed by the Board of Directors last February. The bylaws now state that if there are no challenging candidates for any of the four offices, election ballots will not be issued and the Board of Directors will confirm the slate.

The cause of this change is the membership voting record. When incumbent officers are not challenged by new candidates, ballot returns have fallen off. In the last election approximately 200 ballots were sent, only 14 were returned.

Every member in good standing is entitled to run for office and to vote. This includes the adult members listed on a Family membership and the contact person on a Business or Organization/Municipality membership.

This is an open organization and all members are asked to participate, giving of their time and talent. If a member doesn't wish to run for one of the four offices, the member can join a committee or join the board of directors by chairing a standing committee or a Bridge-watch area. Please see the "Important Notice" elsewhere in this issue.

A Little Graffiti of Our Own

by Joe Nelson

I mean those watcha-call-ums, those covered bridge tack-ups that covered bridge societies post in covered bridges. The Vermont Covered Bridge Society hasn't been doing this because some towns, the owners of the bridges, object to them.

I bring this up because we discussed the practice at our last Annual Spring meeting. Our bridge visitors find "tack-ups" from other societies on our bridges while the VCBS remains anonymous. People have greeted me many times with "A covered bridge society? I didn't know we have a covered bridge society!" That's what Governor Dean said to me when we met at the dedication of the Warren Covered Bridge a few years ago. And his office had been receiving our newsletter for months.

I suggest, with the approval of the board of Directors, we come out of the closet with "tack-ups" of our own. Let's let Vermonters and tourists know we are here and we are watching our covered bridges. I propose a full color design featuring our official patch with our website address.

The tack-up will measure approximately 3 x 3 inches on pearled paper with an adhesive back. It can be posted without damaging the bridge. The website address will instruct viewers on protecting our covered bridges and the history of the bridge they are viewing.

Should the board of directors approve and if you would like to have some VCBS stickers when they are ready, please contact me at jcnelson@together.net, or PO Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465.

The VCBS Members Handbook Available

The VCBS handbook has been updated to include the changes made by the Vermont Covered Bridge Society Board of Directors annual meeting in February 2012, and is now available in either PDF or printed form.

The handbook describes the VCBS Agenda, or reason for being; VCBS organization, including the objectives of the Standing Committees and the makeup of the Board of Directors. Also described is the membership expense policy and a printable copy of the expense account form.

An appendix includes our constitution and bylaws, our covered bridge preservation policy, and our Save-a-bridge fund.

For your copy, contact Joe Nelson at jcnelson@together.net, or PO Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465.



VCBS Lending Library, a Learning/Research Source

The Vermont Covered Bridge Society has set up a lending library available to all Society members-in-good-standing through media mail. Librarian Warren Tripp has created a detailed booklist complete with a description and critique of each book. Copies of the index are available by mail, or contact Joe Nelson at jcnelson@together.net for an electronic copy.

A borrower can contact Warren Tripp who will send the book by Postal Service Media Mail. Books are returned the same way. Send Warren the complete title of the book(s) you wish to borrow. He will respond with the mailing cost and mail the order when the fee is received. The borrower is then responsible to return the item(s) in a reasonable time, preferably not more than two months.

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

Taftsville Ribbon Cutting

On September 7th, the Taftsville Bridge was re-opened to traffic. The festivities were initiated by Charlie Wilson, President of the Woodstock Historical Society. He was followed by young Allison Leibly who shared her research on the history of bridges at that crossing. The first bridge, a footbridge, was constructed around 1793 when Taftsville was settled. That first bridge washed away in 1807. Two more bridges would come and go before Solomon Emmons III constructed the existing structure in 1836. More speakers followed including Representative Peter Welch. The ribbon was cut by officials of the surrounding towns. After a group photo of the attendees, we were treated to a parade of carriages and antique vehicles through the bridge. A walk through the bridge led to a large barbeque lunch complete with a Dixieland band sponsored by the Woodstock Historical Society and local businesses. The historical society is to be commended for a well-organized event.

*Photos by
Bill and Jenn
Caswell*



- Wanted:** Reporter/correspondents to bring local covered bridge news to The Bridger.
- Wanted:** Someone to share the duties of webmaster of www.vermontbridges.com.
- Wanted:** A volunteer to take charge of Covered Bridge Market Place.
- Wanted:** Volunteer worker-bees by the Events Committee to help set up meetings and assist in hosting them.
- Wanted:** Committee members for the VCBS Standing Committees, i.e. Bridge Watch, Communications, Events, Historical, Legislation Watch, Membership, and Publicity.
- Wanted:** Bridge Watchers. If there is a covered bridge in your locale, please sign up as a bridge watcher and keep your Society informed as to events involving your bridge.
- Wanted:** Vermont Covered Bridge clippings from your local newspaper. Please send them to Joe Nelson, jcnelson@together.net or VCBS, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465. He will share them with the newsletter and with the Historical Committee.

For more information or to sign up for any of these positions, please contact Joe Nelson, jcnelson@together.net, or Bill Carroll, wcarroll@crocker.com.



Membership

Happy Birthday and Anniversary to:

Wendy Payson, of Southamptton Massachusetts, recently joined our Society volunteering to take on the duties of the Events Committee, but when she received her first issue of *The Bridger* and saw that we needed a Membership Committee Coordinator, she signed up for that, too!

With an eye on increasing our membership, she has created a free Mail Chimp account (whatever that is) and entered the VCBS into Facebook and Twitter, all with the objective of attracting young members. In addition to that, she has initiated a new page on our website:

www.vermontbridges.com/vcbs_members_page.htm.

Gloriosky! This had to be too good to be true, and it was. Due to extenuating personal circumstances, Wendy has had to leave us. She will remain a member with hopes that she will eventually be able to return to her duties. She will maintain the Facebook and Twitter accounts she started for us until someone will take them over.

One of the last tasks she undertook for the Society was recovering 14 expired memberships out of a total of 26. Thank you, Wendy.

September

4	Johnny Esau
5	Robert Salvi
9	Tom Walczak
10	Gordon & Priscilla O'Reilly
15	Lou & Mary Zabbia
17	Doris Taylor
21	Bonnie & Leroy Shultz
21	Wilfred Thompson
25	Bonnie Shultz
27	Johnny & Joanne Esau

October

9	Erwin & Virginia Eckson
11	Trish Kane
20	Phil Pierce
21	John & Joanne Billie
22	Ellen Everitz
28	Joyce Soroka

November

13	Bruce Wagner
15	Linda Crouse
18	Euclid Farnham
18	Bob and Mary Ann Waller
22	Marikka Guay
25	Richard & Gloria Davis

Covered Bridge

E. R. L. Barna

No space warp, teleport or time machine, this wooden tunnel into the past remains as ordered, "a load of hay high and wide," though ornaments on the portals show its builder knew his classics: made them to look like ancient pilasters and cornice returns; today, inside, the rows of kingposts are like colonnades improbably remaining after earthquakes. No silence is louder: each of its hardwood pegs tolled for its oak tree as it was malletted in--among the hundreds, not one loose. They worked to make the timbers hewn from the heartwood of the best of the uncut forest grow together again as one--a magnificent wilderness hollow trunk fallen across the stream. On moonlit, windswept nights you can hear the bridge and the trees around like a pack of the wolves that roamed these hills before the settlers' drives doomed them, the higher, louder, throat-voice of the bridge leading the rest.

The spirits of boys, like those chubby angels of Renaissance paintings, are everywhere: some loll on the highest roof beams, or swing from one to another; carve their initials or their names with jack-knives; fish through cracks in the floor; dive through windows into the swimming hole below. One older, more serious, waits with a shovel for winter, to snow the bridge so sleighs can cross. Another, more serious yet, is making a wooden model: the day will come when he stands atop a triple arch so vast the mockers call it his folly--a wooden suspension bridge a generation ahead of its time--and he will walk to the center of the ridgeline and shout, "If she goes, I go with her!" They pull away the scaffolding beneath, it settles--and the bridge, the world's longest single wooden span, remains to this day, hardwood married to softwood. The girls were there, too, initials in hearts on the walls attest.

What other blessed place was sanctified not by deaths of animals or splinters of bones of murdered saints, but with the kisses and wishes of all the secret loves exchanged therein? This temple of democracy, with its arch reaching in one direction back to Greece, leads in the other . . . beyond. Who imagined past the iron horse, the horseless wagons, exceeding the weight of anything those roads had seen? This much of life beyond the grave they proved: do what you do the best you know how and you will do better than you could ever know.

[From *The Bridger*, Fall 2003]

Sanborn Covered Bridge WGN 45-03-02

The VCBS Board of Directors Approve Donation to Sanborn Bridge Rescue

August 19, 2013 - The question to donate \$5000 from the Save a bridge fund for the repair/renovation of Sanborn Bridge, subject to stipulations that the bridge ownership be transferred to the Town of Lyndon or to a local non-profit agency, and that public access to the bridge be continued; and that the Town of Lyndon and/or non-profit organizations establish a fund for renovation of the bridge as well as future maintenance and repair, was approved by the VCBS Board of Directors by a vote of 10 to 2.

Motion to adjourn the special meeting, seconded, and so voted:

William Carroll, Pres., VCBS and B of D Chair.

The question put to the board: The team committed to the rescue of the failing Sanford Covered Bridge, i.e. David Wright, Tim Andrews (bridgewright), et. al. have asked us for a contribution to help support the stabilization of the bridge. The National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges plans to contribute as well. The bridgewright is currently calculating the cost. Meanwhile, Eric Gilbertson of The Preservation Trust of Vermont is seeking funds and permits.

The argument for: The Sanford Covered Bridge is the last example of the Paddleford truss at the pinnacle of the development in Vermont. It is thought to have built by Peter Paddleford's son in 1869, according to research done by Richard Sanders Allen. When it is gone an important part of Vermont's inheritance will go with it.

After the flood of 1927 and probably also due to the "modernization" of our bridges, by 1997 there were only three Paddleford structures left in Vermont. In November of that year, the Irasburg bridge, 45-10-02, was lost to arson. It was replaced with a replica using a non-historic version of the truss. The other Paddleford is the privately owned Lords Creek Bridge, 45-10-01, in the last stages of decay.



The Question: What size donation are you prepared to make? (Our current assets are: \$7,119.25 in the Save-a-bridge fund, and approximately \$3,247.00 in our checking account.)

Collapse Averted

Lyndonville, VT, August 30, 2013 – As reported by David Wright, President of the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, the slow collapse of the Sanborn Covered Bridge was ended by bridgewright Tim Andrews' "stone island" set in the middle of the Passumpsic River under the center of the bridge.

Two 25 Ton hydraulic jacks atop a cribbing built on the "island" exerting 35 to 38 Tons of lift, raised the bridge approximately 25 inches to the horizontal.

With the bridge in position, the broken chords can now be re-enforced with 5" x 12" x 42 foot timbers, completing the stabilization project.

With the bridge stabilized, it needs to be removed from the river and set two to three feet above the ground to await further restoration. The cost of the stabilization is estimated to be \$65,000 and removal activity may cost as much as \$275,000 but perhaps less. The restoration phase has not yet been estimated.

To build the "island," 20 cubic yards of stone were brought to the site. Two thirds to three quarters of this was used, carried to the river by hand in buckets, all of which is required to be removed from the river by December 1, it is assumed, by hand in buckets.

Tim Andrews of Barns and Bridges of New England, was assisted by volunteers John C. Hayden, J.C. Hayden, and Evan Andrews.

Photos by Joe Nelson before cribbing was added.





Taftsville Covered Bridge Repairs Completed WGN 45-14-12

Jim Ligon, Project Superintendent, Alpine Construction, reports that the Taftsville Covered Bridge repairs are nearly complete. The roadway approaches were to be paved and the oak deck complete by the end of August.

The crew was pleased that they were asked to work on this old bridge, and were all in admiration of the photo ops of the painted old structure.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on September 7th at 11:00 to officially re-open the bridge. Details of that are on page 4.



Photo Courtesy Jim Ligon

Windsor-Cornish Bridge Undergoing Repairs WGN 45-14-14 / 29-10-09

The two-lane covered bridge over the Connecticut River between Windsor, VT and Cornish, NH, is going down to a single lane for up to eight weeks starting the week of Sept. 9.

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation said the travel width will be restricted to 10 feet during the repair period. Drivers using the bridge can expect delays.

Quinlan Covered Bridge Repairs WGN 45-04-03

The Quinlan covered bridge in Charlotte has been closed and is undergoing repairs. Deteriorating timber trusses and wear on the joints of the arch-truss system have concerned town officials for several years about the ability of town plow and sand trucks to continue to use the bridge.

The bridge was built in 1849 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. The project was expected to be completed before the end of the summer, but now it is more likely to be finished around October. Wright Construction is the contractor.



Jenn Caswell Photo, September 7, 2013

VCBS Officers

Bill Carroll, President
Joseph Nelson, Vice President
Irene Barna, Secretary

Bridger Newsletter Staff

Bill Caswell, Editor
Joseph Nelson, Staff Writer

802-899-2093 jcnelson@together.net

Covered Bridge Community News Notes

Whites Bridge Lost to Arson WGN 22-34-01

On July 7th, Whites Bridge in southwestern Michigan was lost to arson. The bridge was one of two remaining Brown truss structures. The fire started in the pre-dawn hours of July 7th. By the time emergency crews arrived on the scene, the bridge had already fallen into the river. Now, the only standing example of Josiah Brown's 1857 patented design is the Fallasburg Bridge, in Kent County, Michigan. Eco Demolition of Holland, Michigan, donated labor and equipment towards removal of the bridge remains.

Cabin Creek Bridge Work Ahead of Schedule WGN 17-68-03

Restoration work on Lewis County Kentucky's Cabin Creek Covered Bridge is ahead of schedule. Originally scheduled to be completed next summer, it could be completed as early as January 2014. Arnold Graton indicated that he didn't find any unexpected surprises when he started working on the bridge and the work has gone smoothly.



Bill Caswell Photo, June 3, 2013



Red Bridge, Trish Kane/Richard Donovan Collection

Fallasburg Covered Bridge Damaged WGN 22-41-02

On August 21, a 31-ton concrete truck, more than 10 times the posted limit, was driven over the Fallasburg Covered Bridge in southwestern Michigan. Since the loss of Whites Bridge, Fallasbug is the last standing example of a Brown truss covered bridge. Local residents called police when they saw the truck cross the bridge. The driver was fined and suspended from his position pending an investigation of the incident.

Kent County Road Commission engineers inspected the 142-year-old bridge and stated that there was not any structural damage. The truck caused minor damage to the bridge's interior cross-bracing and it was reopened to traffic on the following day. The engineer indicated that steel tension rods installed on the bridge in the 1930s, and replaced in 1994, likely kept the span from collapsing into the Flat River below.

[Reported by MLive.com, August 23, 2013]

Mull Road Bridge to be Repaired WGN 35-72-01

The Ohio Department of Transportation recently awarded Sandusky County more than \$285,000 in grant money, which will be used to repair the historic Mull Covered Bridge.

"The effort of the partners working to save the historic Mull Covered Bridge is to be lauded. The Ballville Township Trustees, the County Park District, the County Engineer and the County Commissioners have all played a part in this process," said Sandusky County Administrator Warren Brown. "I find it gratifying that these governmental entities decided to push forward collectively and work to see this significant part of Sandusky County's history remain intact for generations to come."

[Reported in Fremont News Messenger, August 25, 2013]

Red Covered Bridge Celebrates 150 Years WGN 13-06-01

During Labor Day weekend more than 100 people gathered in lawn chairs beside the Big Bureau Creek for the sesquicentennial celebration of Princeton's Red Covered Bridge. The event was hosted by the Bureau County Historical Society.

[Bureau County Republican, September 2, 2013]

Your Contribution Makes a Difference

Bridgeport Covered Bridge In Need of Repair WGN 05-29-01



The 150-year-old covered bridge in California's South Yuba River State Park is the longest single-span wooden covered bridge in the world.

The bridge is closed due to safety concerns. An engineering survey discovered structural problems so severe that the covered bridge could collapse and isn't safe for foot traffic. Over the last 150 years, old age and extreme weather conditions have resulted in twisted arches, dry rot of structural supports and misalignment of end supports.

The California Dept. of Parks and Recreation has completed an engineering report, and the total estimate for bridge repairs is approximately \$1.1 million.

The South Yuba River Park Association (SYRPA) is spearheading a Save Our Bridge campaign to raise the needed money. To date, SYRPA has:

- Joined forces with the California State Parks Foundation to provide \$21,000 to secure a federal grant through the CA Dept of Parks and Recreation.
- Met with elected officials to gain their support.
- Begun community fundraising efforts.

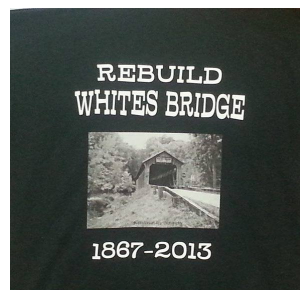
Approximately \$600,000 is still needed to complete the restoration so that park visitors can once again walk across the covered bridge.

- Make a contribution today to the South Yuba River Park Association designated for Bridge Restoration. Mail your check to: SYRPA, P. O. Box 1658, Penn Valley, CA 95946

For more information, visit the South Yuba River Park Association: www.southyubariverstatepark.org

Plans to Rebuild Whites Bridge WGN 22-34-01

A group of dedicated individuals has formed "Friends Rebuilding Whites Bridge" to raise money for construction of a replica covered bridge. While working through the legal paperwork to be classified as a non-profit organization, they are selling t-shirts at local fairs and fundraising events. As I write this, the estimate for rebuilding the structure is \$850,000. Donations can be sent through Paypal to rebuildwhitesbridge@aol.com. Note: until the non-profit process is completed, donations are not tax-deductible.



They have a variety of items for sale to raise money such as t-shirts, hoodies, hats and bumper stickers to name a few. T-shirts can be ordered by mail by sending a check or money order to Friends Rebuilding Whites Bridge, P.O. Box 84, Saint Louis, MI 48880-0084. The t-shirts with the photo of the bridge are \$20 S-XL or \$22 XXL & XXXL the other shirts are \$12 S-XL and \$14 for XXL & XXXL. Sweatshirts are \$30 S-XL & \$35 for XXL & XXXL and kids shirts are \$12. Contact the group for postage rates. A price list of other items can be found on the NSPCB website (www.coveredbridgesociety.org) or email the group at rebuildwhitesbridge@aol.com.

Sanborn Covered Bridge WGN 05-29-01

The total cost of restoring the Sanborn Bridge so that visitors could once again walk and drive across could cost as much as \$1.2 million. If you wish to help, you can:

- Donate to the project using PayPal at www.coveredbridgesociety.org/sanborn.htm.
- Donate by sending a check payable to NSPCB to: Michelle Andrews, NSPCB Treasurer, 9 Damson Lane, Gilford, NH 03249-7857.

Be sure to note that it is for the Sanborn Bridge project.



A Look Back

A Look Back

About Montgomery's Bridges

by Bill Caswell

Editor's Note: Last quarter, Joe Nelson discussed the history of Montgomery, Vermont. After attending the Fall Meeting in that town on September 28th, be sure to visit the town's covered bridges. Much of the material for this article was found in Spanning Time; Vermont's Covered Bridges.

Montgomery, Vermont, named for Revolutionary War hero Richard Montgomery of New York, was chartered in October, 1789. General Montgomery had commanded American forces under Schuyler in the expedition against Canada. The Americans took Montreal but were defeated in front of Quebec City, where Montgomery was killed.

The Town of Montgomery is home to six wooden bridges, all built by the brothers Savanna and Sheldon Jewett over a period of about thirty years. In all, the Jewetts built nine plank lattice bridges in the Montgomery area. They used timber from the family farm on West Hill and dressed the lumber in their own mill.

Longley Bridge

Built in 1863, the Longley Bridge is the oldest surviving example of Sheldon & Savannah Jewett's workmanship. The 85' span was restored by Jan Lewandoski during the fall and winter of 1992. It is currently closed and will be either repaired or replaced in the near future.

Comstock Bridge

Built in 1883, this bridge is nearly 69' long. It was constructed near the mill works of John Comstock, a miller, grain dealer, and manufacturer of carriages and sleighs. The bridge features an opening in the side exposing a portion of the truss and providing a view of oncoming traffic.



Jenn Caswell Photo, March 9, 2013

Creamery Bridge

The 59' Creamery Bridge was built in 1883 on the south slope of West Hill. In addition to the creamery just east of the bridge, there were forty-nine active farms in the area including the Jewett family farm and dimension lumber mill.

Structural problems forced closure of the bridge in the summer of 1994. The bridge was rehabilitated and reopened to traffic. Be cautious about visiting during "mud season" or after heavy rains as the roads leading to the bridge tend to get hazardous.

Hutchins Bridge

Built in 1883, the Hutchins Bridge is 77' long. Although quiet now, this was a busy area when the bridge was constructed in 1883. The moss-covered foundations just south of the west portal include the remains of Joseph Hutchins' five-lathe factory which produced 2,000 butter tubs a day. The bridge saw teams of horses bringing in logs of spruce, hemlock, and basswood, and other teams transporting the completed butter tubs.



Bill Caswell Photo, March 9, 2013

Fuller Bridge

Built in 1890, this bridge is just under 50' long. This bridge was built to replace an open bridge that had collapsed under the weight of a load of bobbins from the J.E. Smith bobbin factory. The bridge was restored in 1981, but it needed attention again soon thereafter. In early winter 1982, the boom from a logging truck hooked the roof braces and tore it off scattering the pieces over a half mile. The bridge served through the winter with the sides braced up with cables and was repaired the next year. It was completely rebuilt in 2000.



A Look Back

A Look Back

Moving the Sanborn Bridge

By Bill Caswell, with excerpts from Milton S. Gräton's
The Last of the Covered Bridge Builders

Editor's Note: With all the attention to the Sanborn Bridge lately, I thought you might be interested in hearing how it got to its present location.

In 1959, the Grättons were called to Lyndonville by a local physician interested in saving the Sanborn Bridge from "progress." The bridge originally stood on Center Street, about a mile downstream of its present location. Improvements to the road included the demolition of the covered bridge and construction of a modern concrete and steel bridge. There was a bitter debate in town between those attempting to preserve the bridge and those wishing to see it replaced.

The physician was told that moving the bridge off of the river and into a nearby field would cost \$4,000. Being unable to raise the money, he gave up on that idea. However, two other businessmen in town offered their own money and support to have the bridge moved..

To prepare for the move, a hole was made in the floor of the bridge 10' feet in from one end. Trucks would back up to the hole and pour gravel through the floor into the riverbed below. Two small bulldozers were in the river spreading the gravel to create a staging area 24' wide about one foot about the water level. A 30' opening was left on the other side for the river to flow through.

Timber cribbing was built on the stone and two tracks set along the top of the cribbing. Soon after the west end of the bridge was transferred onto the track, it started to rain. The following morning, the rain had raised the river to cover the fill. The rain continued to fall and the river continued to rise as the weight of the bridge was being transferred onto the tracks. By the time they were ready to move the bridge, the water was flowing rapidly, a foot above the top of the fill.

By 10pm that evening, the river was 2½' above the fill and threatening to undermine the temporary supports. The workers had to continue into the night for fear that the bridge could be lost if they left it in place. Around 2am, the west end of the bridge reached the east abutment and the bridge was away from the danger of the rushing river.

Once safe, the bridge remained there for two weeks while the Grättons attended to a prior commitment at another bridge.

To move the structure the mile through town, a set of steering dollies, 16 wheels in all, was built for the

rear of the bridge, the west end. This attachment had the ability to be moved a small distance sideways by using a small tractor to pull a cable attached to the wheels. This allowed the bridge to be maneuvered around corners.

The first corner, the turn onto Main Street, took about three hours to negotiate. The truck pulling the bridge would drive forward and backward making a little more progress each time while the cable attached to the rear wheels was manipulated to gradually bridge the bridge into position. The telephone lines were stretched to their limit and a maple limb limited the space they had to work with.

At one point, a small maple tree was obstructing a turn. When asked if the tree could be removed and replaced by a new one later, the owner said no. Not being able to remove the tree, they offered to dig around it, lay it down on his lawn and then replant it after the bridge passed. They dug out one side and laid it down with the remaining half of the attached roots working as a hinge. Afterwards, the tree was lifted back into place and guyed securely. Loam was added, watered and fertilized. The tree survived.

Most of the trip was completed on the first day. By 3pm they stopped at a convenient location where traffic could pass and the utility company could get all its lines back in place.

The following morning, light poles near the final destination were tilted back to make room for the bridge to pass. After reaching the new location, some decayed timbers were replaced and the bridge was placed onto its new abutments without incident.



Richard Sanders Allen Collection, NSPCB Archives

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 \$39.00, free shipping. Go to www.vermontbridges.com/special%20070514.htm. Also see: www.vermontbridges.com/bookreviews.htm.

World Guide to Covered Bridges - 2009 Edition

Published by the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges. On Sale: \$15.00. Profits will go to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society's Save-A-Bridge Program. For your copy send \$15.00 plus \$4.95 shipping to Joe Nelson, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465-0267.

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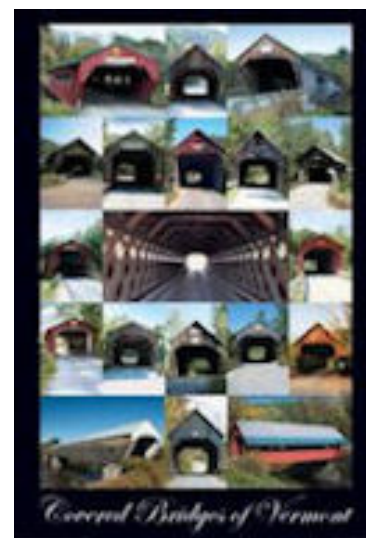


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