

The Bridger



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter—Fall 2009

PREZ SEZ

Vermont Covered Bridge Society Annual Fall Meeting

Old Toll House,
45 Bridge Street, Windsor, Vermont
Saturday, September 26, 2009

I look forward to seeing all members at our upcoming (fall) VCBS meeting. Windsor and the surrounding area offer several neat opportunities for touring and bridge peaking.

To date, no new candidates for VCBS offices have declared themselves and no resumes have been submitted. It would help validate our Societies election process if we received completed ballots from our membership. There is a postcard ballot inserted into your Bridger. Please do vote, even though there is no contested office. You may verify your email address, share your birthday and anniversary, and sign up for the PDF version of the newsletter.

Neil Daniels, Irene Barna, myself and Joseph Nelson have consented to run for 2010 treasurer, secretary, president and vice president, respectively.

Lots of interesting covered bridge projects are going on: West Hill and Hutchins bridges in Montgomery and Kingsbury bridge in Randolph should be finished this fall. Worrall bridge rehabilitation has just been started. Daniels Construction will work on it through the winter. E. Fairfield covered bridge rehabilitation was finished in July.

John Weaver, President, VCBS

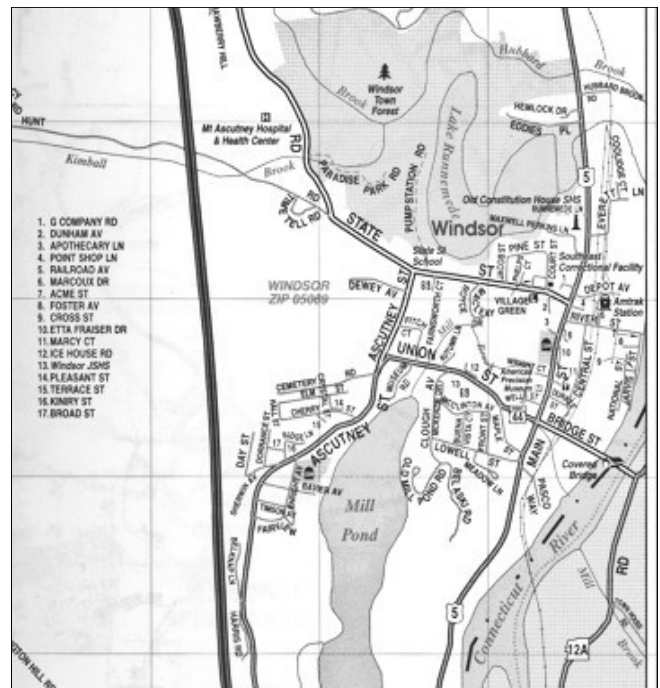


VCBS Officers

- John Weaver, President
- Joseph Nelson, Vice President
- Neil Daniels, Treasurer

Bridger Newsletter Staff

- Ray Hitchcock, Editor
- Joseph Nelson, Staff Writer
802-899-2093 jcnelson@together.net



Agenda

- 9:00a.m. - Doors open – setup, fellowship. Sale of tickets for drawing.
- 10:00 a.m. - Welcome
 - Business Meeting
 - Reading of minutes of last meeting (Assembly to vote to hear)
 - Committee reports
 - Old Business
 - New Business
- 11:15 a.m. - Presentation: Jan Lewandoski will speak about the Cornish-Windsor Bridge and the Old Toll House.
- 12:15 p.m. – Drawing, break for lunch on own: Restaurant listing available at meeting.
- 1:15-3:00 p.m. - Tour Windsor Bridge and Area Covered Bridges

The Toll House of the Cornish N.H.-Windsor Vt.

Covered Bridge

by Suzanne Daniels



Old Toll House and Cornish Windsor Bridge, Photo by Joe Nelson, May, 2003

The original toll house for the Cornish-Windsor Covered bridge is located on the bank of the Connecticut River at 45 Bridge Street in Windsor, Vermont. The cape style house was used by the Proprietors of the Cornish Bridge (NH) as a place to collect tolls, situated as it was at the Vermont entrance-exit to the bridge.

Tax records reveal that the structure was erected by 1806. It is probable that the building was constructed as early as 1793 when Jonathan Chase purchased from Elisha Hawley a ten acre tract of land on the west bank of the Connecticut River in Windsor, Vermont. Chase had successfully operated a ferry between Cornish, NH and the Vermont community since 1784 under a charter granted by the New Hampshire Legislature. It appears that his vision of a toll bridge near the ferry site had materialized by June 1793 when he petitioned the legislature in Concord for "a grant for a bridge." By an act of the NH legislature the Proprietors of Cornish Bridge were incorporated in January of 1795 with exclusive rights to erect a bridge at the ferry site.

When the toll bridge opened on October 18, 1795, a facility suitable to the collecting of tolls had not been erected by the Proprietors. At the corporate meeting the previous day, it was voted to rent the house of Jonathan Chase for this purpose. This arrangement was to have lasted only for six months, however tax records reveal the Proprietors of the Cornish Bridge were not assessed on "improved" property in Windsor until 1806.

Although over time many changes occurred to the structure at 45 Bridge St., many remnants of the original structure remain. There are indications of "modernization" in the succeeding periods, such as Federal, Greek Revival, Victorian, and "depression" in evidence, such as stove pipes inserted into the chimneys, bricking up of one of the three

fireplaces, Victorian windows, doors and radiators installed. However, basic features have survived period changes—such as split-lathe walls under the layers of wall-paper throughout; a beehive oven still intact in the original chimney hearth with a hook upon which to hang a cooking pot; doors that remain insitu—two of which are four-paneled hung on strap hinges. (These doors are somewhat uncommon type that was seen across northern New England from about 1810 to about 1830, usually in less pretentious houses.) And for the most part, the remaining old interior joinery is simple in character and suggests the Greek Revival style of the 1830's .

The Toll House is today an outstanding example of the domestic, architectural history of early New England architecture.

Martin Covered Bridge Dedication

By John Weaver



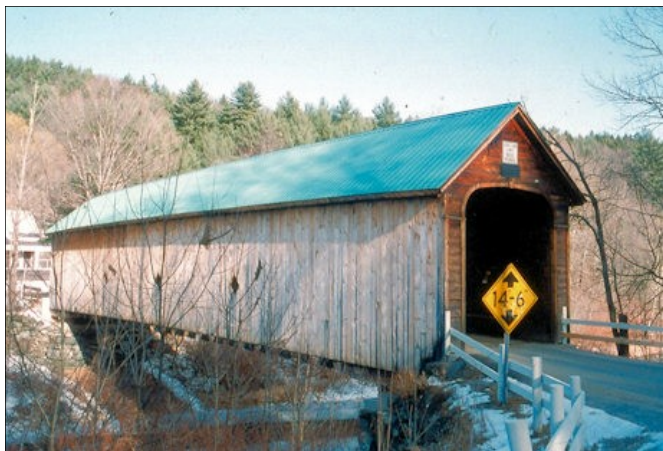
Martin Covered Bridge dedication , Photo by John Weaver July 11, 2009

There were about 75-90 people there to appreciate the dedication of the rehabilitated bridge, new trail, and surrounding park.

All together it appears to have been quite an undertaking, requiring the cooperation and support of many dedicated people. Nathan Phillips and his father were quite instrumental in pulling it all together - grant administration, bridge rehab. design, etc. However the Town of Marshfield and other individuals and parties were quite supportive as well. Several public and private grants were awarded to support the over-all project.

Hall Bridge [WGN 45-13-07 #2]

by Susan Hernandez for *The Shopper*



Hall Bridge WGN 45-13-07 #2, Photo by Joe Nelson, January 1993

Rockingham, Vt., August 12, 2009 - On August 3rd the National Parks' Heritage Documentation Programs Division began a project to digitally scan and document the Hall Bridge located east of Saxtons River on route 121.

A bridge historian named, Lola Bennett, from Stow Massachusetts, first contacted Saxtons River Historical Society President Louise Luring via e-mail.

Bennett said that they would be documenting historical covered bridges throughout New England this summer and the Hall Bridge was one of them. She said that she had already researched the records at the Rockingham town hall and was interested in materials that the SRHS might have in their collection.

"Particularly photographs or written records of the present or previous bridge(s)," wrote Bennett.

The SRHS had a number of photos taken by local photographer Jack Peters who had been hired to document the reconstruction project from start to finish.

"I met with her and she was delighted that we had pictures of the reconstruction." Said Luring. The documentation took four days and the bridge was closed to traffic on Wednesday.

The HDP team sent to Rockingham was comprised of four members: Christopher Marston Project Leader Architect with the Historic Engineering Record in Washington, Anne Kidd the Team Leader, and two interns, one architect from Arizonian and Csaba Bartha from Romania who was here though a foreign exchange program. Bartha had previously been documenting churches in Europe for the government.

The team set up and monitored a digital scanner that recorded the bridge inside and out.

"The scanner takes a photograph and based on the photograph we can tell where the bridge is in relationship to the scanner and we can set up a box and tell it where to send the laser and with what frequency to take points," said Kidd.

"It measures the distance between the scanner and the point, and the angle. The horizontal and the vertical angle, and after that you have basically a 3-d model," explained Bartha.

The Hall Bridge was chosen because it was built by one of the last master bridge craftsmen, who also wrote the book, *The Last of the Covered Bridge Builders*.

"It was only built in the 1980's so it's not historic. It's important because it was built by Milton Graton, he was significant," Kidd said.

Kidd explained that the new bridge is mostly a duplicate but the Gratons did make some changes to better engineer it.

"They changed the" upper court, the lower court and the tree nails; essentially the whole bridge got bigger so it can bear much more load," said Bartha.

The original bridge was destroyed when an overweight Farnsworth gravel truck broke through and ended up in the river along with the bridge.

The new bridge was constructed on the north side of the river in 1982.

"It was reconstructed using the old techniques," Luring said. "It demonstrated the techniques that were used 100 years ago."

When the bridge was completed, Graton and his team set up cribbing in the river and a turnstile on the south side of the river. A team of White Durham oxen owned by Westminster resident, Clayton (Posty) Pierce, was brought in and hooked to the turnstile to pull the bridge across.

"Someone thought the White Durhams would show nice. They weighed 4500 pounds together ... it was quite a process to get them clean enough," Pierce's widow Ruth Grandy said.

Grandy said that Fred Bullock housed the oxen just down the road, and George and Ann Kuusela played hosts for the event because they lived across the street from the bridge.

"Lieutenant governor Madelyn Kunin came down and there was a band on George's porch," said Grandy. "Lots of people came to watch. We were there for five days. It was quite a show."

[Our thanks to *The Shopper*, Bellows Falls, Vt., who gave us permission to reprint this article which first appeared in *The Shopper* August 12, 2009 – Ed.] {Court =cord Ed.}

Covered Bridge Fiction or Fact?

Dear Readers:

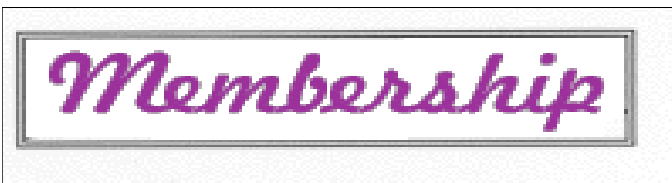
Let us hear from you. What topic do you want our panel of experts to discuss?

Please send your suggestions to "Trivia", Bob and Trish Kane, 167 Williams Road, Sherburne, NY 13460, or bobtrish68@frontier.net - Ed.



VCBS Life Member Mary P. Hyde, 83, of Bozrah, Connecticut, passed away Wednesday morning July 8, 2009, at her home surrounded by her loving family. She was born in Winter Park, FL to Joel and Grace Phillips on October 13, 1925. She was predeceased by her brothers, Joel Jr., Harrop, Alan and her husband Asa. She married Asa Wilcox Hyde of New London, CT on March 28, 1948. Her sons John and Thomas were born in Orlando, FL. Thomas died of heart complications while in the Air Force. She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law Wanda Hyde of Bozrah; grandson and wife John Jr. and Jennifer and granddaughter Sarah Grace of Bozrah; two great-granddaughters Alyssa Avery and Kiana Flowers. She is also survived by her companion and caregiver Mr. Wilfred Thompson of Bozrah.

Mary and Wilfred Joined the Vermont Covered Bridge Society in 2001 as Life Members and have been serving as Bridge Watch for the covered bridges in the southern counties of Vermont since, traveling from Bozrah and from a summer home near Brattleboro. A regular attendee of the VCBS semi-annual meetings, Mary will be missed.



Membership Birthdays and anniversaries

September

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

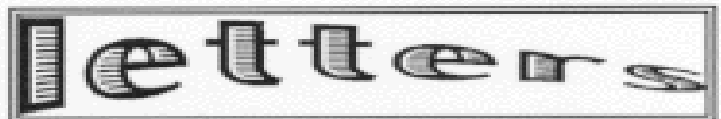
- 25 Bonnie Shultz
- 27 Johnny & Joanne Esau
- 29 June Evans

October

- 9 Erwin & Virginia Eckson
- 11 Trish Kane
- 13 Mary Phillips Hyde
- 18 Leo & Vera Fleury
- 20 Phil Pierce
- 21 John & Joanne Billie
- 22 Ellen Everitz
- 28 Joyce Soroka

November

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



Moscow Covered Bridge Restoration Fund
Rush County Heritage, Inc.
Larry L. Stout, President

6352 W 650 S (Gowdy), Rushville, IN 46173-9224
765-629-2892; gowdy@usa.com

15 June 2009

Dear Friends of Vermont Covered Bridge Society:

This letter is to serve as a thank you as well as a receipt for tax purposes.

We are very appreciative of your generous gift of \$250.00 which was deposited in our Moscow Covered Bridge Restoration Fund saving account on 20 January 2009.

Your donation means a lot to us and to the rebuilding for our 330-foot Moscow Covered Bridge which was lost to a F3 tornado on June 3, 2008.

Check out the website www.moscowbridge.com for the Governor's plan as well as photos of the bridge and a video narrated by outdoor news columnist and Moscow resident Jack Spaulding.

Because of your generosity, we have raised nearly \$100,000; however, we still have another \$360,000 yet to go but we feel confident that contributions will still continue to pour in. Local resident Kenneth Stiers has issued a \$1,000 Challenge to anyone that will match his similar contribution. Like all donations, money is being sent to MainSource Bank, P. O. Box 249, Rushville, IN 46173.

Again, we thank you for your help. And we hope to see you at the reopening of the restored Moscow Covered Bridge to be announced at a later date. We will notify you in advance.



Creamery Bridge Reconstruction Progress

WGN 45-06-07



Photo by Joe Nelson, August 13, 2009

Montgomery, VT, August 13, 2009 - South Portal View. The work on the bridge and abutments is complete. The retaining walls for the road approach are cast and curing. The final step in the renovation will be construction of the approach roads.

Hutchins Bridge Reconstruction Progress - WGN 45-06-07



Photo by Joe Nelson, August 13, 2009

Montgomery, VT, August 13, 2009 - East Portal View. Work on the Hutchins Bridge truss's is mostly complete except for the upper chords, which await a shipment of "trunnels." The abutment facewalls have been cast and cured while the forms and re-bar for the back and wingwalls are being readied at both portals.

The Jewett Brothers signature end-posts are shown here. The post on the left has been replaced due to extensive rot. The original fabric of the post on the right has been kept, the rotted lower half replaced by splicing. The end posts at the west end of the trusses have been repaired in a like manner.

Reading Osgood Bridge

WGN 45-14-F



Photo by Brian T. Fitzgerald, March 31, 2009

Reading, VT, March 31, 2009 - Brian writes, "I don't recall seeing mention of this bridge in The Bridger or on the VCBS website. I first noticed it in 2008 but I didn't stop. I was down that way on a work-related outing on

a work-related outing on March 31, 2009 and I stopped to take a few photographs.

The bridge is located on Mill Brook in Reading. It's on the west side of Vt. 106, a few miles north of the intersection with VT 44. The zoning permit was issued on July 5, 2007....Since it is on private property, I confined my exploration to the highway side of the bridge."

Brian T. Fitzgerald



Jeanette Haight, Rockingham VT Country Store manager, August 6, 2009, Photo by Ray Hitchcock

Victoria or Kissing Bridge. My wife and I did our first set of inspections on our three assigned bridges in Rockingham County. The last of the three was the privately owned bridge at the Hwy 103 Rockingham VT Country Store. Store Manager Jeanette Haight participated in the process of completing the checklist and asked several questions.

In the 45 minutes I was at the bridge location I saw at least 4 couples visit the bridge and two vehicles drive over it. We even assisted one couple with a picture of them kissing inside of the bridge. I guess that happens a lot at this busy store.

Jeanette is pictured with a "Bird Box" which is hidden in the bridge for children to find and get a stamp as evidence that they found it.

We discussed some minor repairs and some cleanup needed to remove some accumulated gravel between bridge members. Approach guard rails, signage, and some brushing were added to the suggestions for the Vermont Country Store to consider.

My wife slipped away during the inspection and met me at the car with a full bag of "necessities" purchased inside the adjacent store.

Please sign me up or renew my membership

In the VCBS:

(Business or Society please provide name of contact person)

New Member Renewing member

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

e-mail _____

Check type of membership:

Individual - \$10 Family - \$15 Student - \$8

Life-single - \$150 Life-couple - \$200

Business/Organization/Municipality - \$15

Sign me up for PDF version of newsletter

Check type of donation:

Palladio - \$2 Palmer - \$5 Hale - \$10

Powers - \$50 Town - \$75 Tasker - \$100

Paddleford - \$200 Whipple - \$250

(Memberships valid to end of 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. Mail to: The V.C.B.S., Inc. Attn: Treasurer P.O. Box 97, Jeffersonville, VT 05464-0097



ALL OF A SUDDEN IT WAS GONE

by Dick Roy

A fragile remnant of Rockingham's (Vt.) past collapsed at about 8:30 Thursday morning, October 2, 1980. An overloaded truck loaded with stone sent the Hall's Bridge crashing 20 feet to the shallow waters of the Saxtons River.



Hall Bridge, Photo by Dick Roy, 1980

The 113-year old covered bridge, which is on the National Register of Historic places is posted for 10 tons. State officials in charge of the investigation said the loaded truck, owned by Roger Farnsworth Construction Co. of Westminster Station, weighed in Thursday morning at 30 tons.

The driver, Albert Lober of Westminster, miraculously escaped injury as he jumped through the window of the cab of the truck and ran up the other side of the bridge a few seconds before the midsection splintered and gave way.

Alan Kusula who lives nearby saw the entire incident. He saw the truck enter the bridge on Vermont Route 121 in Saxtons River. He said he heard a loud ripping noise, then watched the span crash into the river just after Lober jumped to safety. All of a sudden it was gone, Kusula said.

Fall 1980

The town manager, Lawrence McAuliffe, met with state officials and Milton and Arnold Graton, of Ashland, New Hampshire, covered bridge experts, to see if the bridge could be salvaged. A decision will be made to see if it is feasible to fix the bridge or if it should be replaced.

If the bridge is repaired, both ends of the structure will have to be brought out of the river and a clean cut will be made removing the midsection. That will be replaced and a pillar placed in the middle of the bridge. Workers will also have to repair the abutments if feasible.

The truck was removed by its owner over the broken section of the bridge, away from Route 121. It was aided with a cable attached to a piece of heavy equipment and, also under its own power.

The truck was barely visible through all the mangled planks and boards. Small boards and slivers of wood floated downstream moments after the accident.

The state police referred the accident report to the State Attorney John Rocray. They said they had no idea whether any charges would be filed against the driver.

Priscilla Cowan, who lives in the house at the north end of the bridge, noted that her great-grandfather, Jerome Hall, helped with the construction of the structure that was a single span, 117 feet long and 15 feet wide.

It was noteworthy for its lattice work sides and lateral support.

As with Vermont's old houses and barns, the timbers were pegged together in a day when nails were scarce. Some of its uniqueness was due to its diamond shaped windows.

The ironic thing about the bridge's collapse is that it was slated for major repairs soon. An engineering study had been done, and a final decision on a matching grant program for covered bridge repairs was due to be made by the state next Tuesday (Oct. 7, 1980).

Eric Gilbertson, assistant director of Vermont Historic Preservation Office said, "The bridge was built between 1867 and 1871 by Sanford Granger, a prominent northern Windham County bridge builder."

Gilbertson said it was "almost a criminal act" that the Farnsworth truck was on the covered bridge to start with. He said, "There is another, stronger bridge, the recently built Barber Park Bridge, located about a half a mile downstream from the Hall Bridge. It had very nice arched portals. It was a very pretty bridge." The bridge had been on the Historic Register since 1973.

The 1980 edition of "The World Guide to Covered Bridges" list the bridge as 122 feet, a single span Town lattice design over the Saxtons River in Rockingham, Vermont.

It was probably built with graciously curved portals but over the years the portals became squared off (see photo). Another photograph, taken prior to growth along the river and acquired from the Grafton Historical Society shows the curved portal and the lower portion of the portal painted white.

I have a slide, taken December 1967, which shows hardly any remains to the face boards of the portal. Another slide taken in May 1969 shows the portal completely repaired and also showing the newness of the boards.

In some of the earlier pictures can be seen a cast metal sign over the portal, which read: "Speed limit, horses at a walk, motor vehicles ~ 10 miles per hour."

It is a sad sight to see one of our beloved covered bridges in this condition. I have seen many bridges which were damaged by heavy trucks or pieces of heavy equipment, but most of the time the floor gave way in a section. None to compare to the damage which was caused to the Webb Hall Bridge, Rockingham, Windham County, Vermont, World Guide No. 45-13-07.

The above material was derived from The Brattleboro Reformer for October 2nd and 3rd. The Rutland Daily Herald dated October 3rd and the Manchester (N.H.) Union Leader (state edition) dated October 3, 1980.

*[This article is reprinted from the Connecticut River Covered Bridge Society Bulletin, Fall 1980 issue, with permission – Ed.]



Reminder Fall Meeting

On Saturday, September 26th, 2009 we will meet at the Old Toll House at 45 Bridge Street, Windsor, Vermont for our fall VCBS Annual Fall Meeting. Doors open at 9am and meeting starts at 10 a.m. Speaker Jan Lewandoski



Cornish Bridge, photo by Ray Hitchcock, August 9, 2006



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