The Bridger



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter — Spring 2011



I'm looking forward to seeing a good turnout for our spring meeting in Middlebury on April 9, 2011 at the Ilsley Library. It will be good to share in the progress since our fall meeting.

Ron Bechard has been investigating some serious damage to bracing members of the Poland Covered Bridge. Evidently the damage occurred late last October. He has submitted documentary photos and a copy of an article from a local paper.

The pre-construction meeting for rehabilitation of the Gifford Covered Bridge (in Randolph) will be held on 2/16. This project will start this Spring.

I urge folks to watch covered bridges for potential heavy snow loads this season. Please report any serious situations.

Yours in bridging, John Weaver, President



Our Annual Spring Meeting will be held 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., on April 9, 2011 at the Ilsley Library Meeting Room.

The speaker will be **Ray Hitchcock**. "The topic will be a Vermont covered bridge tour by motor cycle.

Ray is the editor of the VCBS newsletter, *The Bridger* and is the Bridge-watch for the Rockingham Area.

Meeting Agenda

10:00 a.m. Welcome

10:05 a.m. Business Meeting

11:15 a.m. Break and Drawing

11:30 a.m. The speaker

12:00 p.m. Adjourn

- -The meeting is open to all.
- Snack will be provided during the meeting.
- Attendees are asked to bring items for the drawing. The receipts will go to the Save-A-Bridge Program
- Lunch on own at restaurants nearby.
- After adjournment, attendees are free to visit the three local covered bridges
- For overnight accommodations, call the Middlebury Chamber of Commerce for a list of area lodgings. The phone number is 1-802-388-7951

Spring Meeting Directions

The meeting is in the public room of the Ilsley Library (go to rear, take ramp to downstairs room).

Because there is a new bridge connecting downtown Middlebury with Route 7, there is a new way to r each the parking area that serves the library. The road to the parking area comes off the south side of the west end (downtown end) of the bridge and goes under the bridge to the parking spaces. Since the upper level spaces have a two-hour limit, it would be best to use the lower level spaces.

Coming from the north on Route 7, go through downtown, get on the roundabout at 6 o'clock, leave it at about 9 o'clock but do not enter the bridge, instead take the road to the right which leads under the bridge to the municipal parking lot, which is the "lower lot" behind the library

Coming from the south on Route 7, proceed across the bridge and immediately at the end of the bridge and on the right is the entrance to the upper level parking lot behind the library.

Rockingham balks at covered bridge fire fee*

By Howard Weiss-Tisman / Brattleboro Reformer Staff



Rockingham officials are concerned about the costs surrounding a new fire sensor installed at the Worrall Bridge – photo RHitchcock fall 2010

Rockingham, December 30, 2010 - When the state offered to modernize the historic Worrall Covered Bridge, it might have been a little too modern for the town of Rockingham.

The Rockingham Select board is questioning a \$100 monthly charge that the Vermont Agency of Transportation says the town owes for a new fire security system that was installed when the bridge was rehabilitated this year.

Interim Municipal Manager Francis "Dutch" Walsh told the Select board at its last meeting that he received a call from transportation agency project manager Mark Sargent about the monthly fee, which Sargent explained will be paid to a security company that will run the fire protection service.

"When I first got the call, it came as a total surprise to me," Walsh told the *Reformer* on Tuesday. "We knew the work was done but I have not been able to find a record of it anywhere. I have not seen anything that said there would be a fee for the electrical fire protection system."

The 87-foot Worrall Covered Bridge was built in 1868 and spans the Williams River, just off of Route 103 in Bartonsville.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation announced in 2008 that the bridge would receive almost \$1 million in repairs, and between the spring of 2009 and the summer of 2010 the bridge was completely renovated. The bridge received a new roof *and new bottom chords and many parts of the siding and lattice work were replaced.

In the end, the state spent about \$800,000 on the bridge, and Agency of Transportation Spokesman John Zicconi said the town has to keep up its end of the bar-

gain by paying for the fire protection system. "VTrans believes this kind of alarm is prudent to help protect this historic resource and investment," Zicconi said in an email. "The town, during the project's development, agreed, and we installed one. But being a town-owned bridge it is the town's responsibility to maintain and pay for the system once the project is complete." He said it is a relatively new stipulation to have towns take on the monthly fees, and said every covered bridge is unique and requires its own safety and protection considerations.

Zicconi said that even though the state paid for 100 percent of the renovations with state and federal money, the town owns the bridge and the state is trying to complete the paperwork to close the project. As part of that process the town of Rockingham has to provide contact information and agree to take on the \$1,200 in annual fees to keep the fire protection system active.

"As part of the agreement regarding the Worrall Covered Bridge, the town of Rockingham agreed to properly maintain and protect the bridge, which includes a fire alarm system" said Zicconi. "While VTrans is not in the business of policing day-to-day how well towns live up to their agreement, we do assume that the town will take its agreement with us seriously and do what it can to properly maintain and protect the considerable investment that is made when we rehabilitate a covered bridge."

The bridge contract was signed by former Municipal Manager Jim Mullen, but Walsh said he has not found any documents that say the town would be on the hook for the fire protection system.

At the Select board meeting last week, board member Ann DiBernardo said it might make sense to invest in some kind of protection for the historic structure. "These are irreplaceable structures," she said. "We should do something to protect them.

But the other board members seemed less willing to invest the taxpayers' money in the system.

Select board Chairman Tom MacPhee wondered what

even the best alarm system could do if the wooden structure caught fire. "What are the odds of this alarm saving it anyway," said MacPhee. "It doesn't make sense to spend \$1,200 on a system that may or may not be effective."

*[NOTICE: This article is copyrighted and appears here with the permission of writer Howard Weiss-Tisman. Our thanks to him, the Brattleboro Reformer and to Tony and Neil Daniels for forwarding this story - Ed.]

* {editors note—The bridge received a new roof on an earlier project. It was old enough to have a few leaks which were noticed and reported by the local Bridge Watcher.}





Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges

by Joseph C. Nelson

Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges 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 are found.

An appendix provides: A Summary of Vermont's Covered Bridges, listing vital information on each bridge; A Covered Bridge Glossary, naming and describing the details of a covered bridge; A Bridge Truss section, explaining how trusses work with drawings of the several trusses used in Vermont; The Bridge Builders, providing thumbnail biographies of the people who designed and built the bridges; A Covered Bridge Reading List, for bridge and history buffs who want to read more; 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, <u>free shipping</u> - http://www.vermontbridges.com/special%20070514.htm Also see: http://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 \$2.77 Media Mail shipping to Joe Nelson, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465-0267.

Covered Bridges of New England —DVD

Produced by Ocean State Video of Rhode Island for Public Television/

On Sale: \$20.00. Profits will go to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society's Save-A-Bridge Program. For your copy send \$20.00 plus \$1.73 shipping to Joe Nelson, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465-0267.

To place your ad in the Bridger, contact Joe Nelson, jcnelson@together.net. The ad must be about covered bridges and you must be a member of a covered bridge society.

Covered Bridge Community News Notes

Keep Village Bridge Sidewalk, Say Citizens WGN 45-12-14

Waitsfield, Vt., September 23, 2010 - The Waitsfield Select Board held a hearing to discuss repairs to the bridge, its current condition, and how to best use a \$270,000 state grant to improve the bridge. The state grant is a matching grant towards which the town contributed 20 percent, or \$54,000.

It was disclosed that there are several problems with the bridge that impact its stability. The sidewalk is cantilevered off the north side of the bridge and that is causing the bridge to twist/list to the north.

The sidewalk may be moved, supported differently, counterbalanced, or removed. Among several other issues, it was the issue of removing the sidewalk that generated the most comments from those present and via email.

[Our thanks to Irene Barna for sending this article to us - Ed.]

Charlotte Studies Options to Repair Bridge WGN 45-04-03

Charlotte, Vt. January 12, 2011 - Vermont Agency of Transportation officials presented ideas at Monday's Charlotte Select board meeting that they hope will help resolve the dilemma presented by the deteriorating Quinlan covered bridge.

Repair of the 87-foot-long bridge spanning Lewis Creek must conform to Federal Highway Administration guidelines and the Vermont Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Plan administered by Vermont's Agency of Transportation.

Mark Colgan of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. of North Ferrisburgh is a consulting engineer working with the state. He described the three possibilities considered by the state Historic Bridge Preservation Committee: Option 0ne would retain the steel girders installed in 1985, reinforce deteriorating, bracing and connections and replace the bridge's top chord. Option two would remove the steel girders to return the bridge to its original configuration and add reinforcements to many parts, and option three would isolate the load borne by the trusses from that supported by the floor beams. All three would include rehabilitative work on timbers.

The 86-foot Quinlan Bridge was built in 1849 to cross Lewis Creek using a multiple king post truss with Burr arch.

[Our thanks to Tom Keating and Richard Hiscock for forwarding this article - Ed.]

A Special Invitation to all Covered Bridge Enthusiasts...



Oxford Memorial Library—Fort Hill Park Street , Oxford N.Y.

For everyone who has been so supportive of the newly established Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center, you will be very pleased to hear that the Center is ready to officially open and there is *much excitement* in the air!

In honor of this event, the Board of Directors of the Oxford Memorial Library will be hosting a grand opening of the Center in conjunction with a 200th anniversary celebration of the house that Burr built. Although plans for the event are still being finalized, here are a few highlights of the day's activities: Reception and tour of the Center and Library, covered bridge sales tables by various covered bridge societies, covered bridge presentation on NY's Covered Bridges, chicken BBQ, and an exciting program with guest speakers and special presentations. One particular highlight of the day will be one very special guest whose identity will not be released until the day of the event. As plans begin to finalize, we will keep you posted on more details of the event. But meanwhile, be sure to mark Saturday, July 2nd on your calendars and plan on joining us for the opening of the new Center. It is an event you won't want to miss!

(ed note—more information will be in the Summer Issue of the Bridger)



Covered bridge stitchery – 12/8/2010

Hi Joe, I live in western Canada. Last night I saw a documentary on repairing covered bridges. In 2006 and 2009 we visited your beautiful state and enjoyed touring some of your bridges. I would like to stitch (preferably cross) a bridge or two but am having a difficult time finding a pattern book, kit, or even one pattern. Perhaps someone in your society would know where I can get a lead on a catalogue of stitchery patterns. If so, I would appreciate it. Thank you. – Cheryle, Regina, SK, Canada

Hi All; Can anyone help Cheryle? – Joe

Cross stitch pattern – 12/31/2010

Season's Greetings, Joe! Several weeks ago, I set out on a quest for a covered bridge cross stitch pattern. On impulse I decided to contact you as I hoped there might be one person who would be able to give me an idea of where to turn. I must admit, I wasn't very positive as I had tried to contact some local commercial places with no response. How pleasantly surprised I was that I received so many hints from your call. I hope I replied to each of them to thank them for taking the time to give me their suggestions.

I did follow one of the leads and now have what for me is perfect - an autumn covered bridge cross stitch kit! I'm looking forward to getting busy on it in the New Year.

Again, thanks, Joe, for taking my request seriously, and to all who replied with ideas. All the best to you and the members of your society in 2011. Cheryle Regina, SK Canada

Irene Mele - Thanks Joe for relaying Cheryle's thank you message. There is just something about a community spirit where everyone cares about everyone else! You have that. May God bless you this New Year!

From Joe to all: The Vermont Covered Bridge Society membership has the community spirit. You all certainly proved it. Many thanks.



Reminder; Don't Let A Learning/Research Source Go To Waste

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 you may contact Warren Tripp at fftwbt@yahoo.com, or Joe Nelson at jcnelson@together.net for a PDF copy.

To borrow a book 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, Phone (802) 584-3545



By William Carroll

Pulp Mill Bridge, Middlebury, 45-01-04

Pulp Mill Bridge, also known as Paper Mill Bridge, crosses Otter Creek between Middlebury and Weybridge, above a dam and in the midst of an area of former industrial activity, now primarily an area of moderate residential and commercial development.

The road from Middlebury center through the bridge and on northerly is the route of the former Waltham Turnpike, and it has sometimes been erroneously stated that the turnpike company built the bridge.

Waltham Turnpike Company was chartered in 1805 to build a turnpike road from the Court House in Middlebury to the Court House in Vergennes. The turnpike was completed by 1808, except for a bridge in Middlebury. The company sought and received permission to use public roads and an existing town bridge in Middlebury, with the provision that the company would build their own bridge within 12 years and return to its original location.

Alterations to the route were made in 1816, and it might be assumed that the company had built a bridge at that time. In 1821 all the roads in Middlebury except half a bridge and a mile of road in Weybridge was surrendered to the public, and in 1828 the entire turnpike was made a free road, under the jurisdiction of the various Towns.

Since all of the early turnpike companies were only marginally financed, it can be assumed that the turnpike bridge was built as quickly and cheaply as possible. According to the Internet site www.lostbridges.org an early covered bridge at this site was built in the 1820s (probably the second bridge) and replaced with the present bridge in 1853. This is likely correct, as a notice in the Middlebury Register of December 29. 1852 by the Selectmen of Middlebury and Weybridge request bids for a new covered bridge at Paper Mill Village.

The present bridge is a double-barreled structure with three multiple kingpost trusses, center and two sides, and extends almost 200 feet across Otter Creek. The bridge, originally a single span Burr truss, was built with some serious design flaws in the attachment of the kingpost elements of the truss to the lower chords, and since its construction has been subject to almost constant repairs. However the bridge may have been built as a multiple kingpost truss with segmented Burr arches added after construction.

The first major alterations to the bridge were done soon after it was built, with the removal of the Burr segmented arches and replacement with the four present laminated arches. the side arches reaching to the eaves and the center reaching nearly to the ridge of the roof.

Around a century later two equidistant piers were built, which essentially changed the bridge to three spans. This also required changing the direction of half of the compression members of the truss in the two end spans. However neither of these steps addressed the original error in the seating of the truss members in the lower chord. Subsequent repairs have been almost ongoing, including some major work done in the 1980s which exacerbated the bridge's problems and had to be undone. The bridge was closed in 2002 while some of the remaining 1980 "fixes" were undone and repairs made to lower chords.

At this time plans are in the works for a major repair to the bridge which will involve closing it for a year and correcting many of the deficiencies from the original construction and subsequent repairs. This may be carried out in 2011.

The road is heavily traveled, and is one of only two bridges across Otter Creek near Middlebury center. The bridge has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1974. Otter Creek drops about 40 feet in elevation as it passes through Middlebury, and mill sites along the river date back to the late 1700s. Beside the usual sawmill and grist mill of the early settlement, numerous other businesses have at various times built or operated mills along the creek; an ashery (for potash), woolen mills, an iron furnace and associated operations. marble sawing, and more. The Green Mountain Pulp Company built a pulp mill by the bridge in 1883, on the site of a former paper mill, from these the name of the bridge derives.

Sources:

Vermont Street & Road Atlas. American Maps, 2006. Covered spans of yesteryear. http://www.lostbridges.org Nelson, Joseph C. Spanning time, 1997.

Barna, Ed, Covered bridges of Vermont, 2000.

Evans, Benjamin D. and June R. Evans, New England's covered bridges, 2004.

Historic USGS Maps of New England - http://docs.unh.edu/nhtopos/ nhtopos.htm

History of the Town of Middlebury, Vermont

http://vermontgenealogy.wordpress.com/category/vermont-towns/ middlebury/

Wood, Frederic J., The turnpikes of New England, 1919; abridged and reprinted 1997

by Ronald Dale Karr.

The Bridger, VCBS quarterly.

Three Mile Bridge, Middlebury, 45-01-15x

Three Mile Bridge, so named because it was about 3 miles from Middlebury Center, was a lattice truss bridge which crossed Otter Creek below the entrance of the Middlebury River. The road was originally laid out and a bridge built around 1800. Because there was little use of the road and bridge, the Selectmen in 1815 voted to discontinue both.

In 1822 some of the residents of the area petitioned for a new bridge and to repair the road to Cornwall. This was not done until so ordered by the Courts at the end of 1824. The covered bridge, known as Three Mile Bridge, was built in 1836. By 1859 the bridge was sagging, and in the summer of 1859 or the following year laminated arches were added to the trusses.

Again by the 1950s the bridge was sagging seriously, and was closed and condemned by the Selectmen. In August 1954 the bridge burned, a result of arson. Since around 2004 there have been efforts made to raise funds to build a new bridge at the same location. The terrain around the site of Three Mile Bridge is flood plain, flat and swampy. There is some agricultural use of the land in the area, but few buildings. The roads in the area are subject to flooding during spring runoff and periods of heavy rainfall. Replacement of a bridge in this location is not a high priority at this time.

Sources:

Vermont Street & Road Atlas. American Maps, 2006. Covered spans of yesteryear. http://www.lostbridges.org Historic USGS Maps of New England - http://docs.unh.edu/nhtopos/nhtopos.htm

Three Mile Bridge, in - http://vermontgenealogy.wordpress.com/category/vermont-towns/middlebury/

New acquisition to the archives: We have received an extensive collection of Kodacolor prints of covered bridges throughout New England, New York, and Pennsylvania, taken between the late 1980s and mid-1990s. Most photographs were taken by Marjorie Bettis, some by Jean Garren. The collection was given by Ms Garren in memory of Ms Bettis. There are an estimated 1500 photographs. More on this collection in the summer Bridger. We have been going through the pictures to identify each one during the past several weeks. All will be re-housed in archival quality enclosures.

Bridge News: The Gilbertville Covered Bridge between Hardwick, Worcester County and Ware, Hampshire County was reopened in October after being closed for more than eight years. The bridge is a lattice truss, about 150 feet long, and was built in 1887 and is listed on the National Register.

Richard Sanders Allen's classic Covered bridges of the Northeast was reprinted in soft cover in 2004 by Dover Publications. I first saw it in a local bookstore only a few weeks ago. It sells locally for \$8.95.

Cambridge Jct. Bridge Damaged WGN 45-08-02

Ron Bechard, Adopt-a-bridge person for the Cambridge Junction Bridge, upon hearing that the bridge had been damaged, surveyed the scene then forwarded a newspaper article and a battery of photos to Bridge-watch Coordinator, John Weaver.

The base of the brace in the fifth panel from the Route 15 end on the downstream side was found broken off. There is also severe damage to the timber curbing.

Local authorities believe the damage was done sometime in October just before the bridge was closed for the season when a vehicle jumped the curb.

The Cambridge Select Board is reported to be studying the problem. According to the *News & Citizen* of Morrisville, Vt., the board has received bids from Blow and Cote Inc. and CCS Constructors, LLC.

In addition to the repair of the brace, the timber curb may be replaced with higher curbs. The curbs were found damaged in the same manner at the bridge portals last winter.

It was also reported that a Vermont State Police Investigation into who damaged the bridge resulted in no leads or suspects.

The 153-foot Cambridge Junction Bridge, also known as the Poland Bridge, was built in 1887 by George Washington Holmes to cross the Lamoille River in a single span using a multiple king post truss with Burr arch. The bridge was restored in 2004.



Cambridge Junction Bridge - Damaged Brace

Mt. Orne Bridge Repaired NH/29-04-08 - VT/45-05-03

by R. Durfee, VCBS Member

February 23, 2011 - Repairs have been completed to the Mt. Orne Bridge in Lancaster, NH. The bridge was damaged as a result of truck collision damage when an oversized tractor trailer drove through the bridge on May 26, 2010. Damage was caused to the upper lateral bracing, truss chords and portal siding.



Mt. Orne Bridge closed for repairs – photo courtesy R. Durfee, Feb. 23, 2011

The bridge was closed by the Town of Lancaster, the bridge owner, on the recommendation of the NHDOT. Through their insurance carrier, the New Hampshire Property-Liability Trust, the Town hired the consulting engineering firm of Dubois & King, Inc. to evaluate the damage and outline steps to initiate repairs to the bridge. Barnes & Bridges of New England was selected by the Town as the contractor to make the repairs.

"The upper later bracing and some truss chords took some very big truck hits" says Robert H. Durfee, P.E., Vice President for Dubois & King. "Repairs were initiated that preserved as much of the original bridge fabric as possible"

"We tested the existing timber used on the bridge, and found it to be Southern Pine. We installed all replacement members and truss repairs using Southern Pine Dense Select Structural Grade", say Tim Andrews, President of Barns & Bridges.

The bridge remains closed and barricade to vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Field observations by the NHDOT and Dubois & King discovered decay (rot) in the truss connections (compression members) and up to 4" of sag in the trusses on the Vermont side. It was determined that these problems were not caused by the truck collision. The Town will keep the bridge closed until repairs to the trusses can be made. The Town is currently seeking grant monies to perform a complete rehabilitation of the Mt. Orne Bridge.

The Mt. Orne Bridge was constructed in 1911 using Howe type trusses. It is a two span structure, with an overall length of 266 feet. It spans the Connecticut River and connects Lancaster, New Hampshire with Lunenburg, Vermont.



Membership Committee Chairman, Sue Richardson. Please join me in welcoming new members to our group: Stewart and Dorothy Read of Bellows Falls, VT, a warm welcome to you!

And now, our Early Renewal Contest. Many thanks to each of you who mailed your membership dues on time. As in years past, the drawing was done by Ruth Nelson's first grade reading group at the Jericho Elementary school. (The little rascals have fun doing it.)

Here are the prizes for this year's contest: A two year free membership to the VCBS or a signed copy of Spanning Time, Vermont's Covered Bridges by Joe Nelson, or the cost of the book to the VCBS (\$30).

The winners are: James Crouse of Fort Wayne, IN, and John Murphy of Medford, MA. Congratulations to you both, and thank you for your membership.

Membership Birthdays and Anniversaries

March

- 2 John Billie
- 2 Gordon O'Reilly
- 4 Sarah Ann Gallagher
- 8 Neil Daniels
- 16 Bruce Laumeister
- 12 Priscilla Farnham
- 21 Thomas & Lisette Keating
- 23 Steve Miyamoto
- 24 Adrienne Hitchcock

April

- 13 Gary Krick
- 22 Anthony Daniels

May

- 3 William Carroll
- 3 Thomas Keating
- 6 Debbie Whiston
- 9 Erwin Eckson
- 10 Charles Lovastik
- 12 James Crouse
- 15 Andy Behrens
- 17 Ron Bechard
- 19 Mary Ann Waller
- 22 Irene Barna
- 22 Lisette Keating
- 27 June Gendron
- 28 Bill McKone

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☐ Life-single - \$150 ☐ Life-couple - \$200
☐ Business/Organization/Municipality -\$15
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- □ Powers \$50 □ Town \$75 ☐ Tasker – \$100
- \square Paddleford \$200 \square 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





