

The Bridger



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter – Summer 2015

Events

PREZ SEZ

Vermont Covered Bridge Society Annual Fall Meeting

The 2015 fall meeting being organized by Liam McKone will be held in the Smugglers' Notch area, probably at the resort of that name five miles south of Jeffersonville (where the VCBS was founded 15 years ago). We hope to coordinate our meeting date with the opening of the local section the rail trail from St. Johnsbury to Swanton, the old "covered bridge road." Guests at the resort, as well as local residents, are to be invited to join us for a full weekend of presentations, tours of the covered bridges, and other activities in the area. No date for an official opening of the rail trail has yet been determined by the contractor.

The weekend of October 2-4 is proposed for the VCBS fall meeting with a second choice of September 9-12. Smugglers' Notch resort has offered us a very attractive group rate if VCBS members would like to make it a full weekend of business, bridging, socializing, and exploring the hills of this scenic area in foliage season. Please contact me at wmckone@stoweaccess.com with your comments about the best date for you, whether you would stay overnight, and any questions or suggestions about this expanded anniversary meeting agenda.

Repairs to Brown Bridge Underway

Construction has begun on the Brown covered bridge (45-12-rehabilitation project in Shrewsbury VT. The scope of work includes roof repairs, new siding and runner planks, truss repairs and foundation stone repairs and re-construction.

Coming up the last of August is the first "Covered Bridge Summit", to be held at the Oxford Memorial Library in Oxford, N.Y. So far covered bridge societies from Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana will be represented, as will the National Society. Some of the topics to be discussed include increasing membership, attracting younger members, publicity, outreach, and more. I will be doing a brief presentation on preservation of photographs and documents, with some comments on digitization of materials we may all have in our collections. It looks like a good opportunity for the various societies to share experience in a variety of areas. At this time I am the only one listed as representing VCBS. I'd like to see a few others also attend. For information email Trish Kane, bobtrish68@frontiernet.net

Bill Carroll, President, VCBS



Brown Bridge (45-11-09)

May 24, 2015.

Courtesy Jim & Gloria Smedley



Permanent Closure of Cambridge Junction Bridge to Motor Vehicles (45-08-02)

On May 18, 2015, the Cambridge Town Select Board took an important step for preservation of the historic Cambridge Junction Bridge by voting to keep the bridge permanently closed to any automobile traffic. This action by the Town of Cambridge as the owner of the bridge reverses the decision made in 2004 after the bridge was restored to original specifications at a cost of close to a million dollars. Two-way traffic was resumed on the bridge that year, limited only by ineffectual signage cautioning height and weight limits, number of vehicles on the bridge at one time, and a speed limit of 10 mph. The select board was informed about repeated violations of each of these restrictions, but the bridge remained open to vehicles until damaged when a small car traveling at high speed broke a timber in the middle of the bridge.

In the course of repairs, problems were discovered with the north end of the truss that are currently being resolved with steel braces to prevent twisting of the arch members. Improvements in the local highway system helped convince the selectmen to re-examine the 2004 decision about traffic. Liam McKone, a co-founder of the VCBS, made yet another submission to the select board, this one showing an analysis of the risks and benefits of opening the bridge to automobiles. Although a few local residents vocally supported the idea of driving over the bridge, the selectmen were willing to consider the points that described the advantages and disadvantages of inappropriate use of the bridge by motor vehicles.

The only plus—a questionable one at best—was a short-cut of 2.1 miles for a low volume of warm-weather traffic, probably with no savings in travel time and unnecessary in view of a new bridge on VT 108 a mile downstream. Arguments against opening the bridge included:

1. Preservation of the bridge as a historic structure since motor vehicle traffic constitutes a major threat of damage or destruction.
2. Liability of the town should traffic on the bridge cause injury or even death.
3. Safety issues of pedestrians and bicyclists sharing the bridge with automobiles. Greatly increased non-vehicular traffic will result from the opening of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail this year. Visibility onto and off the bridge is very restricted by the siding and the recreational trail pass through right at the southern end of the bridge.
4. Potential loss of an economic resource, as this bridge attracts many visitors who dine and stay in the area.

Green River Bridge Repairs Postponed (45-13-04)

On May 27th, the Guilford Selectboard decided to postpone repairs to the Green River Covered Bridge until summer 2016. Wing wall and abutment repairs were done last year. Additional repairs are necessary to bring the bridge back up to its former 8-ton weight limit.

Money is available for the project. The town already had \$315,000 in grant money, and state officials recently announced that Guilford had received another \$175,000 for the project. However, the Selectboard didn't feel that they would be able to complete the repairs before the end of summer and did not want the bridge closed when school started.

A New Covered Bridge Being Built in Connecticut

Arnold M. Graton Associates Inc. is building a new 60' Town lattice covered bridge for Richard Perry at his home on Wawecus Hill Road in Norwich, Connecticut. The bridge is being built traditionally starting with drylaid stone abutments.

The trusses were constructed during the winter. After completion, they were moved out of the barn and raised using ginpoles. As I write this (June 8th) the floor and roof are being constructed. The completed bridge will be pulled into place with oxen or horses at a public celebration during the September 12/13 weekend.

If you wish to visit the site, please contact Mr. Perry by email at Richard.Perry@jud.ct.gov or home phone [860-889-9850](tel:860-889-9850). Or, contact Arnold Graton & Meg Dansereau at AMGraton@gmail.com.

**Vermont Covered Bridge Society
Sixteenth Annual Spring Meeting
Pittsford, Vermont
Saturday, May 2, 2015**

The Sixteenth Annual Spring meeting of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society was held in the Fellowship Hall of the Pittsford Congregational Church in Pittsford, Vermont on Saturday, May 2, 2015.

Twenty seven people, including several interested Pittsford area residents, were in attendance when President Bill Carroll called the meeting to order at 10:08 am.

Minutes of the Annual Fall meeting held in Middlebury on October 4, 2014 in the Ilsley Public Library were not read as they are published in the Winter 2014-2015 issue of *The Bridger* newsletter.

Treasurer's Report: May 2, 2015

Neil Daniels reports the following for the period 01.01.14 thru 12.31.14

Income:

Donations	\$562.00
Dues	800.00
Events.....	157.00
Sales.....	2,069.00
Total income	\$3,588.00

Expenses:

Communications.....	\$841.00
Events.....	115.00
Legislation	0.00
Membership.....	0.00
Office	92.00
Sales.....	0.00
Total expense	\$1,048.00

GAIN \$2,540.00

BALANCE SHEET

Union Bank Checking

12.31.14.....	\$5,891.00
01.01.14.....	\$3,351.00
GAIN	\$ 2,540.00

Save-A-Bridge Fund

Value 01.01.14	\$7,192.00
12.31.14.....	\$7,192.00

Balance is cash at Siebert

Funds transfer	\$2,784.00
New Value May 2015	\$9,976.00

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership Joe Nelson

Suzanne Daniels has resigned as chair of the Membership and Events Committee because of

health reasons. Many thanks to her for her service.

A welcome aboard to new member Luke Comeau of Lyndonville, Vermont.

Membership now stands at 139, approximately half are Vermont residents. We have members spread from Canada, New England, Arizona, California, and New Jersey.

Events Committee Joe Nelson

Plans for our fall meeting have not been made. He suggests that the meeting site be discussed during New Business. A volunteer will be much appreciated to make the meeting arrangements.

Communications Joe Nelson

We are still looking for an editor for our newsletter, *The Bridger*. Bill Caswell has been doing excellent work; but since the passing of David Wright, as Vice President of the National Society, Bill has had to assume David's office. Bill is willing to train his successor to make an easy transition.

Steve Miyamoto has been doing a first rate job as our website guru. Go see the Facebook page he has put together. Go to www.vermontbridges.com. The Facebook entry is next to the top-left on the index page; Track through the web pages while you are there. Joe says, "You'll be amazed at the amount of, and the quality of the covered bridge material you'll find there."

Publicity

Johnny Esau has stepped down as Publicity Chair and Bill McKone has taken up the reins and getting the work done.

The VCBS Board has recently approved the position of Public Affairs Officer and Bill McKone assumes that position.

The Board had voted \$250.00 expenses toward travel to a 2-day Travel Industry Conference attended by Bill McKone where Bill "advertised covered bridges". He said that only one person at the conference knew about the Vermont Covered Bridge Society. A copy of Joe's book *Spanning Time* was silent-auctioned. Ultimately, a good reaction resulted in knowing that the VCBS does exist. All in attendance knew of the importance of covered bridges as a tourist attraction. All in attendance had a connection to Vermont tourism and voiced that most visitors do inquire about covered bridges.

Bill expressed the need to promote the VCBS and asked for help with the Publicity Committee to advertise it. Modern technology should make it easier to reach the many interested people.

The Lamoille Valley RR –Saint Johnsbury to Swanton was known as the Covered Bridges Railroad as there had been five covered bridges on that route -- the last remaining is the Fisher Bridge. This rail trail is now a recreational trail and the Cambridge Junction Covered Bridge is adjacent to that trail. Bill asks again for help with publicity.

OLD BUSINESS

Bill Carroll asked about the status of the project of posting covered bridge information upon each bridge. This VCBS posting project is an ongoing effort.

Tom Carpenter then reported that in Rutland County, the Kingsley bridge near the airport in Clarendon and the Rutland Town “shed”, which is the remaining half of the Twin Bridges in Rutland Town that were torn loose and sent downstream in June of 1947 are the remaining two to be posted -- awaiting permission from each town.

Joe Nelson mentions that the Brown’s River Bridge in Westford has now been posted.

Several Selectboards throughout the state have not yet responded giving permission for bridges in their communities to be posted with the VCBS 2” x 3” cards which contain information about the particular bridge. Half of the bridges in the state have been posted to date.

It was then said that the State does not look kindly on the VCBS branding signage as it will assumedly attract other miscellaneous postings. Whoever from the State was quoted was to have said that the Historic Signs Project of the State would be the approach. Joe Nelson then suggested that the requester of State’s Committee must look at the expenses of these particular free-standing signs. (Reference is being made to the embossed metal large dark blue background historic informational signs. These signs are remotely linked to the Interior Department.) Bill M. says that there are only 373 spaces per sign for lettering; that the wording needs to be carefully chosen.

Bill offered to assist; but did go on to say that he has erected four of the state signs in question (one of which is at the Cambridge Junction bridge) and that the state had covered the expenses of those signs. Joe replies that that is not what the state web site says regarding the cost of putting up these historic marker signs.

Bill Carroll asks if a motion needs to be made to pursue this issue. Joe Nelson recommends that a

committee be formed to look into the details of the issue.

Joe suggested that this be a part of the Publicity Committee. Neil Daniels advises, “Don’t quit on the branding project. It is for identifying the bridge; not as an historical marker!”

Irene Barna then held up a photocopy of the 2” x 3” VCBS sign that is posted on or near a permissioned bridge to illustrate how small these stapled-on signs actually are and that they are cell phone-readable providing information about the particular bridge.

Bill McKone offers to organize a committee for signage. Joe Nelson motions to appoint Bill McKone as Publicity Chair. The motion is seconded by Neil Daniels. The motion was approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Irene Barna mentioned that Joe Nelson, Ed Barna, and she had attended the April 16th ASCE (American Society of Civil Engineers) gathering held at the Shelburne Museum. The theme of the meeting was the *Rehabilitation Design and Construction of Covered Bridges*. The speaker was VCBS member Robert Durfee who gave an overview of the inspection, evaluation and rehabilitation design processes used for covered bridge rehabilitations. Irene said it was pleasing to hear a presentation about covered bridges directed to engineers and be able to understand all specifics of the topic.

Also of note was that, photographer Martin Stupich, working for the National Park Service to document the Pulp Mill Bridge for the HAER/Library of Congress Collection visited Middlebury Saturday, April 25 to photograph the Pulp Mill Bridge for the HAER (Historic American Engineering Record) project. He also was scheduled that same weekend to photograph the Cornish-Windsor Covered Bridge.

John Weaver asked about the repairs done to the Pulp Mill Bridge in Middlebury following damage done this past November by a Green Mountain Power truck. Irene Barna presented a requested copy of the documentation sent to her by the Middlebury Town Manager. The copy is of the documentation from the State of Vermont detailing the damage and the repairs.

Joe Nelson then asked for a person to determine details for the fall meeting. Joe is temporary chair of the events committee.

The question was raised whether we should still meet two times each year as attendance is sometimes very light in the context of the distance some folks travel. Joe Nelson explained that, initially the VCBS would have more in attendance;

but so many have passed away. The VCBS has changed – Only one half of the 139 members live in Vermont.

He then went into detail about the early meetings of the VCBS: Aside from 2 meetings each year: a spring business meeting and a fall, more social meeting -- a sponsored picnic meeting would be held in a town having a covered bridge He fears that having only one meeting a year the Society will have less contact with its members.

The president likes having two meetings a year: the spring business meeting and the fall social meeting. There is a need to have a committee to attract people to attend the meetings.

Bill McKone offers his campground in the Town of Cambridge as the site for the fall meeting. President Carroll asks Bill to suggest a date. Bill notes that accommodations at his campsite fill up during foliage time. Bill will select a date and site and will have it posted in *The Bridger*.

Bill McKone brought several copies of the *Vermont Country Sampler* and suggests that information about covered bridges be placed in that publication -- that one Vermont covered bridge be a focus of each issue. The editor of that publication offered free advertising of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society.

The May meeting of the Society for Industrial Archaeology to take place in Albany, NY to be attended by Bill "Liam" McKone at which he will promote the VCBS as well as Vermont's covered bridges. He also plans a proposal for monies to be made available for the conversion of the former rail line to be preserved as a recreational trail.

Historical Committee Bill Carroll

Archives

Bill mentions that he received from Irene Barna several photographs and news clippings about covered bridges.

Bill also noted the acquisition of a copy of the book Covered Bridges across North America by Joseph Conwill that will be available on loan from the Society library. To answer a question regarding the library and its contents, he replied that information on borrowing appears in *The Bridger*.

The Events sales table brought in a total of \$20.00 to be applied to the Save-a-bridge fund:

Spanning Time Books sold (2 @ 10%): \$8.00

Larkin Bridge Key Chain; \$5.00

Used covered bridge books; \$5.00

VCBS Patch; \$ 2.00

Next meeting date was not determined.

Bill McKone suggested that rather than not have a fall meeting; he would host the VCBS at his campground located in the Town of Cambridge.

The date was not determined as Bill wanted to look at the calendar and attempt to choose a date that would not be deterred by reservations at his campground in the fall leaf-looking season. See above for further discussion within New Business.

No further discussion, a motion to adjourn was made by John Weaver and seconded by Warren Tripp. The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 am.

The program featuring photographs of the covered bridges of the Pittsford area was presented by Peg Armetage who has a wealth of knowledge regarding the Pittsford area and its covered bridges.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene R. Barna, Secretary

Presentation at National Conference of the Society for Industrial Archeology (SIA)

The 2015 national conference of SIA was held in Albany, NY, May 28-30. Taking advantage of this proximity to Vermont, Liam McKone represented VCBS with a poster display showing the history of the St. Johnsbury & Lamoille County Railroad and conversion of the line to a rail trail to be opened for year-round recreation this fall. Known as the "covered bridge road" for its five wooden covered bridges, the line operated from 1870 until 1997 when storm damage to the clearly unprofitable 96 miles of track was not repaired.

The right of way reverted to the state of Vermont, which in 2003 gave VAST (Vermont Association of Snow Travelers) a lease to use the line for snowmobiling. VAST also has acted as manager of the extensive construction process to convert the line to an all-season recreational trail, two sections of which are nearly completed. The display at Albany, proposed by McKone, showed the history of the St.J&LC with its covered bridges, only one of which—the Fisher bridge near Wolcott—still exists. It also provided information on the conversion of the line and its rebirth as a recreational trail for snowmobiles in the winter and non-motorized use in warmer weather.

The Cambridge Junction bridge featured elsewhere in *The Bridger* was built by George W. Holmes in 1887 at the insistence of Judge Luke Pollard of Waterville for direct access to the railroad station on the south side of the Lamoille River.

For more information about the SIA and this year's conference see their web site at www.sia-web.org. The New England Chapters of the SIA also has a site at www.NEC-SIA.org that has information about the Northern branch (ME, NH, VT, and NE NY) and its activities which include visits to covered bridges in the region.



VCBS Lending Library, a Learning/Research Source

The Vermont Covered Bridge Society lending library has added two terrific titles to its collection: *Vermont's Covered Bridge Road* – The story of the St. Johnsbury & Lamoille County Railroad, by Edward A. Lewis. The St. J & LCR 96 mile route travels through five covered bridges. The 131 pages tell all, and features more than 100 very good black and white photos.

The other title is *Covered Bridges Across America*, by Joseph D. Conwill. Joseph Conwill is the editor of *Covered Bridge Topics*, an outstanding quarterly magazine of the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges. The 128 pages feature large full color photos, and a handy index.

The lending library is available to all society members-in-good standing through media mail.

Librarian Warren Tripp has created a detailed book list complete with a description and critique of each book. Copies of the index are available by mail, or you may contact Joe Nelson for an electronic copy at jcnelson@together.net.

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, fftwbt@yahoo.com, Phone (802) 584-3545.



Dear readers, I know you have seen this column again and again. It has been posted here in your *Bridger* because it is important that we fill the listed needs. (See the logo above.) A volunteer-run organization like the Vermont Covered Bridge Society needs worker bees to fulfil its mission, i.e. promoting the preservation of covered bridges. **Please give serious consideration the needs we have listed here:**

- **Wanted: a newsletter editor trainee** to take over the editorship of *The Bridger*, a key element in the Vermont Covered Bridge Society's mission to promote the preservation covered bridges.
- **Wanted:** A volunteer to **chair the Membership Committee**. See the Membership Column for details.
- **Wanted:** A volunteer to **chair the Events Committee**: The member chairing this position will have a seat on the Board of Directors.
- **Wanted:** Volunteer to take charge of **Covered Bridge Market Place**. The market place brings us funds to support our Save-a-bridge program.
- **Wanted: Committee members** for the VCBS Standing Committees, i.e. Bridge Watch, Communications, Events, Historical, Legislation Watch, Membership, & 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, Communication Committee Chair, jcnelson@together.net or Bill Carroll, wcarroll@crocker.com

From the Archives

Franklin County covered bridges.

According to lostbridges.org, there are 8 existing bridges in Franklin County and 41 lost bridges. In the VCBS Archives we have information on the eight extant bridges and some information on only three of the lost bridges. In addition we have an article about the Jewett Brothers and many of the local covered bridges they built. The lost bridges information we have is as follows:

45-06-06 Hectorville Bridge. Not really 'lost', this bridge was dismantled and put in storage when it was replaced by a steel/concrete bridge in 2002. We have three photographs of this bridge in its original location and miscellaneous notes, ca. 1980s. This bridge will probably be reassembled on Town-owned land as part of a recreational trail.

45-06-10x Swanton Railroad Bridge. We have polaroid prints and notes from 1976, and prints and clippings relating to the fire in August 1987 which destroyed the bridge.

Unknown We have three undated prints of a bridge only identified as 'near Berkshire'.

Montgomery's bridge building brothers : ill. article / Kevin M. Walsh, 2006, in *Stowe Guide and Magazine*. Photographs and short articles about Longley, Hopkins, Creamery, Comstock, Hectorville, Fuller, and Hutchins bridges, all built by the Jewett brothers in or near Montgomery.



*Sanderson or Upper Bridge (45-11-02 #2)
May 22, 2015.*

Courtesy Jim & Gloria Smedley

The Election of Officers is Starting NOW!

With this newsletter issue, we begin the process of electing Society officers for two-year terms to begin January 1, 2016.

Starting with this, the Summer Issue of ***The Bridger***, the Board of Directors is asking the Vermont Covered Bridge Society Membership for candidates to run for the offices of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Non-incumbent candidates are asked to introduce themselves to the membership by letter to ***The Bridger*** and tell us why they are seeking a leadership role. The letters will be published in the Fall Issue of ***The Bridger*** together with the ballot. Voters will return the ballots by November 30, the deadline for the Winter Issue in which the winners will be announced. The incumbent officers will serve until midnight, December 31, 2018.

The Society bylaws governing elections was changed by the Board of Directors on February, 2012. 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 for this change is the membership voting record. When incumbent officers are not challenged by new candidates, ballot returns have fallen off. In a past election of approximately 200 ballots, 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 encouraged to participate, giving of their time and talent. If you don't want to run for one of the four offices, volunteer to join the board of directors by chairing a standing committee or a Bridge-watch area. Also, please see the "Important Notice" elsewhere in this issue.

Candidates or volunteers will please contact acting election coordinator, Joe Nelson; jcnelson@together.net or PO Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465.

Historical Committee Report

Received from Irene Barna at the May meeting, a large number of clippings and print-outs that she has collected and saved for the VCBS archives, as follows:

- 45-01-02 (?) Baker's Store and Bridge, No. Ferrisburg. Printout from the Vermont Collection at Middlebury College. This might be Old Hollow (Spade Farm) Bridge in its original location.
- 45-01-03 Halpin Bridge, Middlebury. Two printouts from University of Vermont collections showing the bridge at two different time periods.
- 45-01-04 #2 Pulp Mill Bridge, Middlebury/Weybridge. Printout of 1942 photograph from University of Vermont collections.
- 45-01-04 #2 Pulp Mill Bridge. Clipping relating to Green Mountain Power truck stuck in the Weybridge side of the bridge. Addison Independent, Nov. 6, 2014.
- 45-01-04 #2 "Covered Bridges - Historic yet contemporary" : ill. clipping / Zach Despart, Addison Independent special publication, Fall 2013.
- 45-01-15x Three Mile Bridge, Otter Creek, Middlebury. Printout from University of Vermont collections.
- 45-02-01 West Arlington Bridge and kayaker : ill. clipping / Rutland Daily Herald, Southern Vermont section, May 9, 2013.
- 45-02-05 Chiselville Bridge vandalism : ill. Clipping / Rutland Daily Herald, Southern Vermont section, December 9, 2014.
- 45-03-05 Sanborn Bridge, Lyndon. Newspaper articles relating to the deterioration of the bridge and efforts to save it, four articles from various sources, 2013-2014.
- 45-03-05 Sanborn Bridge, Lyndon. Flood illustration on flyer about emergency alerts, VT-Alert.gov program. July 2014.
- 45-04-03 Quinlan Bridge, Charlotte. Articles relating to reconstruction of the bridge and vandalism at the site. Vermont Eagle, May 25 and June 22, 2013. (3 items)
- 45-08-01 Scott Bridge, Cambridge. Printout from University of Vermont collections. (2 p.)
- 45-08-02 Cambridge Junction Covered Bridge, Cambridge. Printout from University of Vermont collections.
- 45-08-04x Little Bridge, Cambridge (?), original location. Printout from University of Vermont collections.

To be continued in the Fall edition.....

Communications Committee

Chair, Joe Nelson

Bartonville ... The Story Continues

The title above appeared in last spring's *Bridger*. The article told the continuing story of Bartonville's covered bridge, but it didn't tell how the story came to us. It came to us by member participation!

VCBS member Thomas Hildreth, of Chester, Vermont, raised the question in a letter dated 24 December, 2015 to our Jeffersonville address. Unfortunately, that post office box is accessed only monthly and sometimes not at all during bad weather.*

Thomas Hildreth wrote: "Dear Sir, Last night I had a conversation with a resident of Rockingham, Vermont regarding the current disposition of the old Rockingham Covered Bridge. This bridge was lost to tropical storm Irene, an event witnessed by millions on video. The gathered remains of the bridge are lying in a field behind the Town of Rockingham gravel pit. I am under the impression that they are there for the taking.

"We have seen in the past where a destroyed bridge was used to produce another bridge, so there may be potential value to prospective bridge builders in the contents of this field. I feel the availability of these parts should be broadcast throughout the covered community...."

Mr. Hildreth's letter was forwarded to Susan Hammond, who answered it with her article in the Spring number. Many thanks to Thomas, and to Susan Hammond.

* Should a member wish to contact the Vermont Covered Bridge Society by letter, please use: VCBS, PO Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465. The letter will be forwarded to our acting correspondence secretary. E-mail, of course, should go to jnelson@together.net.



Securing the Past for the Future*

by Steve Miyamoto

For those of us who are fascinated by covered bridges, Vermont is a wonderful state to live in. This is the state where picture post cards come to life. As the seasons change, we get to see firsthand what others can only dream of. Some may *never* experience scenes like these in their lifetime.

In the famous poem, The Road Not Taken,¹ Robert Frost describes a traveler who decides to take the less traveled road. And to him, the less traveled road "has made all the difference." Like Robert Frost's character, we need to take the less traveled roads to discover Vermont's covered bridges. Most are tucked away and hidden from the interstates and state highways.

You can travel on Vermont Route 15 through Jeffersonville heading towards Johnson and never realize that you just passed thru Cambridge Junction. Had you known about Cambridge Junction and the little, obscure left hand turn onto Route 23, across from the Corse Oil Company, you would have been able to find the Cambridge Junction Covered Bridge. But it won't tell you that it's there. The "less traveled road," the back roads of Vermont will lead us to Vermont's covered bridges, if we will but take the time.

I remember when I first "discovered" this bridge. Our oldest daughter was a student at Johnson State College from 1996 - 2000. My wife and I would occasionally make the trip from Essex to Johnson taking Vermont Route 15. Around that time I had started reading about covered bridges and found a copy of Joe Nelson's *Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges*² in the local library. I began to notice the covered bridges of Lamoille County and started to try to figure out where they were. One day I remember cruising from Essex thru Jeff an route to Johnson. The road sign ahead said JOHNSON 9 MILES. Just as I was going up the little hill past the Corse Oil Company, out of the corner of my eye, I caught a glimpse of a road sign for Route 23. I remembered something about a covered bridge on Route 23. I stopped the car as soon as I could, turned around and finally came back to the turn. Route 23, though not long, led across an abandoned railroad track and then, there it was: the Cambridge Junction Covered Bridge. As I walked across the bridge that day I was glad to have taken the time to explore and touch the past. I had driven by it so many times before.

I grew up in southern Dutchess County in southeastern New York. My family's roots were in New York City but my parents chose to move to the small town of Hopewell Junction in the later 1950's.

Hopewell Junction would later become the home of IBM East Fishkill in the 1960's but in the 1950's it was a small, rural town with a railroad past. The remains of the tracks are still there today but the town has grown dramatically. There were many small developments sprouting up on former farmland back then. There were lots of open fields and a world full of wonder for a small child. Our development was built on farm land once owned by J.C. Penney himself. There was an old barn with a farmhouse and a small family cemetery right near the manmade lake. We used to skate on in the winter and tried to fish it in the summer. Up the road were larger farms and houses that were turned into apartments in the 1960's, but there were no covered bridges where I grew up. We used to sit on the wooden stringers of what was probably an old plank bridge, used by the farmers, that crossed a small stream, but that was as close as we got. Everything else was concrete and steel.

I have always wondered about the history of the covered bridges in that area. Recently I got an e-mail from Richard Wilson of the New York State Covered Bridge Society concerning bridges in Dutchess County, New York. It turns out that there were at least 3 bridges in the county all crossing the Wappingers Creek at different points. The towns of Pleasant Valley, Manchester, and Red Oaks Mill each had covered bridges. According to Mr. Wilson, the bridge in Pleasant Valley was in service from 1855 to 1911. The Manchester bridge was a two-lane span in service from 1845 – 1923. Manchester is located on Route 55 in the town of Poughkeepsie. The bridge at Red Oaks Mill had no dates associated but is reported as being 80 -- 90 feet long and white. I know that area well and could very easily picture a covered bridge there. Someday I should ask one of my good friends, who is an artist and still lives in the area, to paint the scene. Thanks Mr. Richard Wilson for this information. Maybe someday we'll find some pictures of these bridges or even some more information on these or other covered bridges in that area.

This past summer my wife and I became grandparents as my oldest daughter and son-in-law had their first child. He is 7 months old now and doing well. We are grateful for his health and well being and look forward to watching him grow. Though my daughter has graduated, they all still live in Johnson so when life slows down we can still take the Essex to Johnson trip. We can still stop and see a covered bridge or two along the way.

Sadly my grandson will never see the original Powerhouse Covered Bridge in Johnson. It stood strong for 130 years, but it collapsed last winter under the weight of heavy snow. He should be able to see the newly restored Westford Covered Bridge however. The restoration work there is impressive. The views through the window are very picturesque looking downstream to the rocks. I have to wonder how many people over the years have stood in the same place and seen similar sights. They may have been facing wars, crisis, joys, friendships or any number of other things that we all experience. But I hope he never has to face what I saw last September. I was away on a retreat in the Thetford area and decided to see a few of the area bridges on the way home. Covered bridges have been messengers of all kinds of events in the past but the saddest one I've seen was a poster on the Sayers Covered Bridge in Thetford. The poster was for a man missing in the World Trade Center attacks of September 11, 2001. God help us.

But for now I have to wonder what the world will be like when our children and grandchildren are our age. When our children and grandchildren become the future leaders, how will they shape the future? How many of today's covered bridges will remain say 50 or even 100 years from now? As towns value their heritage and strive to preserve their past, we stand a greater chance in holding on to these treasures. As organizations like the Vermont Covered Bridge Society are supported and funded we can make people aware of preservation and restoration efforts. Let's all help by preserving the work of the past generations for the generations to come. Let's make sure that the less traveled roads will always help lead us to one of Vermont's treasures: the covered bridge.

¹ *The Road Not Taken* ©1915 Robert Frost.

² *Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges*, © 1997 Joseph C. Nelson, The New England Press

*First published February 21, 2002 on www.vermontbridges.com



Joe Nelson, Stand-in Chair

Please join me in welcoming a new member to our Society: Lucien Comeau of Lyndonville, Vt. A very warm welcome to you!

Member Philip Jordan, a winner of the Early Renewal Drawing has chosen the book *Spanning Time, Vermont's Covered Bridges* as his prize. It's in the mail, Philip. Enjoy. As we go to press, we haven't heard from the other winner.

Sadly, we are in need of a volunteer to take up the duties of Chairperson for the Membership Committee.

It would be nice to have a volunteer to join the committee to support the chairperson.

Duties of the committee are to maintain the Society membership roster, supply the Communications Committee with mailing labels, to distribute membership cards, and to serve as correspondence secretary. There is a seat on the Society Board of Directors for the Chairperson.

A member of the committee needs to have a computer and an email address. The current membership roster is maintained on Microsoft Excel, but that can be changed to the chairperson's preference.

Those interested, please contact me at jcnelson@together.net

Happy Birthday and Anniversary to:

June

04 Charlie Elflein
07 Carolyn Clapper
10 Ron & Marie Bechard
14 Dick & June Roy
20 Joanne Billie
20 Mark & Jan Bramhall
27 Glen Hall
27 Terry Shaw
28 Bob Kane
30 Lionel & Debra Whiston

July

02 Dick & Kathleen Howrigan
04 Neil & Suzanne Daniels
05 Bill & Ada Jeffrey
11 Charles & Evelyn Lovastik
11 Marie Bechard
20 Bob & Trish Kane
22 June Roy, Lou Zabbia
28 Ray Gendron
28 Dick Roy
28 Jan Lewandoski
28 Sandra Weaver

August

01 Irene Mele
03 Joanna Titcomb
05 Joe Nelson
08 Evelyn Lovastik
08 Virginia Eckson
10 Thomas Carpenter
13 N. David Charkes
17 Euclid & Priscilla Farnham
18 Ed & Irene Barna
25 Jim & Linda Crouse
28 Mark Bramhall
29 Ray & Dolores Gendron
30 Ada Jeffrey
30 Robert McPherson

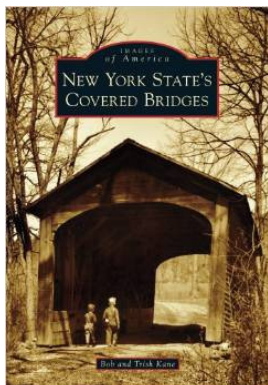
For Sale

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.*

Covered Bridges of New England —DVD Produced by Ocean State Video of Rhode Island for Public Television. On Sale: \$20.00. Profits go to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society's Save-A-Bridge Program. For your copy send \$20.00 plus \$2.50 shipping to Joe Nelson, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465-0267.

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.



Connecticut and Rhode Island Covered Bridges - 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 \$25.00 to Bill Caswell, 535 Second NH Turnpike, Hillsboro, NH 03244.

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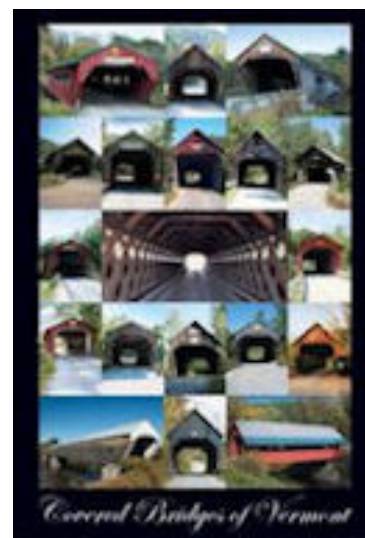
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