

THE BRIDGER



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter – Issue #72

Events

Vermont Covered Bridge Society Spring Meeting

April 14, 2018, 11:00 a.m.
Quechee Public Library
1957 Quechee Main Street
Quechee, Vermont 05059

The spring meeting will be a joint meeting with the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges (NSPCB). Our presenter will be Devin Coleman, Vermont State Architectural Historian, who will be speaking on bridge builder Nichols Powers.

Nichols Powers is renowned for the covered bridges he designed and built, but how much do we know about him as a person? Recently discovered materials documenting Powers' career shed light on his daily activities, his design process, and the life of a bridgewright in the late 19th century.

Each society will hold a brief business meeting. Our meeting will consist of approval of the fall meeting minutes as presented in the fall Bridger, a brief treasurer's report, and old and new business. The usual committee reports will not be made, but they will be published in the summer Bridger.

Directions to the Quechee Library:

From the east – Follow Route 4 westbound to Waterman Hill Road, which is .8 mile past the Quechee Gorge Bridge. Turn right onto Waterman Hill Road. Pass through the Quechee covered bridge. At the end of Waterman Hill Road, turn left onto Quechee Main Street. The library will be .2 mile ahead on the right, just past the Quechee Community Church at the intersection of Willard Road.

From the west – Follow Route 4 eastbound for 3.3 miles

after passing the Taftsville covered bridge. Turn left onto Waterman Hill Road and follow the directions above through the Quechee covered bridge to the library. Dining spots can be discussed at the meeting.

Needed – A New Life

An annual picnic, a cookout, a safari, a fair, a competition. I read about these types of events regularly. You see, I subscribe to most of the other covered bridge societies' newsletters. Those societies all seem to be alive, well, and thriving because their members want the action and are willing to make these activities happen.

The Vermont Covered Bridge Society was once as lively as the other societies. It was fun then when our membership all shared the vision of our twin purposes: to promote the preservation of our covered bridges and to provide fellowship for covered bridge enthusiasts with dinners, fairs, picnics, and other outings held in communities all over Vermont.

The problem seems to be that the lot of us leaves it up to the few of us to make things happen. And it's always the same few of us. We have recently had a shot in the arm with new Membership and Publicity Committee chairs, but this is not enough to pump the old life back into our society.

We need a volunteer to assume the duties of Events Committee Chair to plan our annual meetings, bridge excursions, picnics, dinners, and other activities. But we need much more than a chairperson; we need members for the various committees. The chairs can't do all that needs doing without the help of worker bees. The duties of each of these committees are described at <http://www.vermontbridges.com/whatis.vcbs.htm#item5>. For more information or to sign up for any of these positions, please contact Joe Nelson at jcarlnelson@yahoo.com or Bill Carroll at wcarroll@crocker.com.

President: Bill Carroll, 5 Hutchinson Lane, Lenox, MA 01240, email: wcarroll@crocker.com

Vice President & Communications Committee: Joe Nelson, PO Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465, jcarlnelson@yahoo.com

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Membership: Dan Monger, email: teelmonger@gmavt.net

Annual Board of Directors Meeting

The 2018 annual Board of Directors meeting was held on February 8, convening in accordance with VCBS Constitution and Bylaws, Article 3, Part 2. In accordance with Article 3, Part 2, the meeting was also conducted by email, fax, telephone, and surface mail, as appropriate.

There were four proposals on the agenda:

- The proposed budget for the current year,
- Funding the Save-a-Bridge Fund,
- Shall the Society return to replying with membership cards when dues are paid,
- and Shall the Society return to holding our annual membership renewal drawing.

The proposed budget for the current year was \$2,273.00. Last year's expenditures totaled \$849.79. (Last year's spending was so little because the committee chairs did not ask for refunds, or their committee was moribund.) The directors were asked to approve the itemized budget or respond with their own numbers for further discussion.

Dan Monger, Chair of the Membership Committee, challenged the budget proposal. "My proposed changes to the Membership Committee budget are: "

- Postage for existing members - \$70.00,
- Postage for library mailings (outreach together with VCBS brochure) - \$150.00,
- Printing VCBS brochures – (libraries plus 250 x 4 = 1,000 for VT Welcome Centers) – 1,500 x \$.65 = \$975.00,
- Printing forms, faxing services, miscellaneous at UPS store - \$60.00,
- Vermont Welcome Center (top 4/19 high traffic centers) - \$554.00,
- Total of \$1,809.00. This is in excess of \$384.00 over the proposed budget.

The proposed budget was revised to \$3,273.00.

The second proposal asked, "Shall the amount received in 2017 by the VCBS in donations and sales be put into the Save-a-Bridge Fund?" Member donations = \$462.00 and Sales = \$8.24, for a total of \$470.24.

A director asked if there were other options for where the 2017 donations and sales money could go. There could be other options for the use of the funds, but we have been building the Save-a-Bridge Fund from which we may draw money to aid in the repair or replacement of a troubled covered bridge. Treasurer Neil Daniels manages the fund with stocks and bonds, as we set aside

membership donations and annual profits from our sales table for the Save-a-Bridge Fund. A yes vote opts to add to the fund; a no vote opts to move the money into the Society's checkbook.

The third proposal asked, "Shall the Society return to replying with membership cards when dues are paid?" We stopped replying to dues payers with membership cards because of the mailing expense. It is proposed that we reply with a postcard message to the member and a membership card. Postcard postage is currently \$.35, which would be paid out of the Membership Committee budget. Two directors challenged sending membership cards as a redundant expense. Another answered that it is a uniform practice among organizations to support membership cards.

The fourth proposal asked, "Should the Society return to holding our annual membership renewal drawing?" Annual members are encouraged to pay their dues on time for a chance to win a prize. Life members may enter the drawing with a donation. The Membership Committee is budgeted to support the program. A director asked if the program had been productive enough to be continued.

The annual Board of Directors meeting votes on the four propositions:

- Proposition 1 (revised proposed budget) 9 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 2 not voting. Passed.
- Proposition 2 (fund Save-a-Bridge) 6 yes, 3 no, 0 abstain, 2 not voting. Passed.
- Proposition 3 (membership cards) 6 yes, 3 no, 0 abstain, 2 not voting. Passed.
- Proposition 4 (membership drawing) 6 yes, 3 no, 0 abstain, 2 not voting. Passed.

Nine of the eleven directors voted; only six are needed for a quorum.

Bridge Watch

Moxley Bridge

WGN 45-09-01

Chelsea, Vermont

Details for repairs to the Moxley Covered Bridge in Chelsea are being developed. In particular, the bottom chord of the north truss requires partial replacement, as well as the east sill timber replacement and complete new floor planking.

A Visit to the Covered Bridge Museum

By Steve Miyamoto

This past September my wife, Sue, and I took a trip to Bennington, Vermont. Among the things we saw was the Covered Bridge Museum, which is part of the Bennington Center for the Arts. The museum has been open since 2003, but I had never visited it. So, it was time.



Photo by Joe Nelson

The museum was designed by founder Bruce Laumeister's son. Bruce told us that the museum was built to the exact dimensions of the nearby Henry covered bridge. Once inside, we saw a number of different displays from the technical aspects to the nostalgic appeal of covered bridges.

One large display filling almost half of the room showed the *Anatomy of a Covered Bridge*. This presentation included information on different truss types, bridge building tools, covered bridge portal designs, and short profiles of the bridge builders themselves. There was even a model of an actual Town Lattice truss.



Photo by Steve Miyamoto

There was a display called *The Artful Covered Bridge*, showing artists renditions of covered bridges through different mediums. The *Postcards, Posters & Signs of the Times* display even included circus posters. Covered bridges were quite the advertising tool at the time. One more display was called *The Cultured Covered Bridge*.

The *Iron Horse and Wooden Snakes* display shows the covered bridge being used by the railroad. They have a very nice model railroad presentation. Continuing with the transportation theme, *Crossing Over* shows how the

covered bridge has endured change from horses and carriages to modern automobiles and everything in between.

The *Edifice Wrecks* display shows the effect that weather, natural disasters, and fire have on covered bridges. We have certainly had our share of destruction to covered bridges due to flooding, fire, and oversized trucks.

The *Covered Bridge Natural Habitat* display explores the covered bridge and its natural environment. Vegetation and animal interactions are explored.

There are many scale model covered bridges of different sizes throughout the museum. There is a fitting tribute to the *Bennington Covered Bridges*, which features a multimedia presentation. If you want to sit for a time, you can watch a movie in the museum theatre.



Photo by Steve Miyamoto



Photo by Steve Miyamoto

Bruce told us that the hand drill used to bore treenail or trunnel holes was a recent addition to the tool collection. He obtained it from a person in New Hampshire for a very reasonable price.

For people who would like to conduct research on covered bridges, the museum houses the *Richard Sanders Allen Covered Bridge Resource Center*. The center contains binders of covered bridge information from many states, Quebec, and Europe. Mr. Sanders was a covered bridge authority and the author of many books on covered bridges.

Wood Preservation of Vermont Covered Bridges

By Dan Monger

I want to give a very brief chemical perspective on biodeterioration and preservation of our covered bridges. The majority of biodeterioration is caused by fungus, and to a lesser extent, by insects – culprits representing two of the five kingdoms of living organisms. Fire retardants and rust inhibitors will be discussed in the future.

Unlike the South, we do not have termite infestations in Vermont because of our low winter temperatures. Yet we all know the wisdom of keeping our stacked wood piles far from our home's perimeter. Why? Because of the black carpenter ant (*Camponotus pennsylvanicus*), which is clearly associated with human habitation. This genus includes well over 1,000 species and will wreak havoc on our wooden homes and timber bridges if they can find moist, decaying structural members. Another such pest is the larvae of the powderpost beetle (genuses *Lyctini* and *Trogoxylini*).

Treatment for the pests is usually borate, with brand names such as Timbor or Boracare. It can be used in the form of rods, drilled and placed for slow release of the agent into the rot site. The mechanism of action is a physical, not a chemical, phenomena. It kills by granules cracking junction points of the adult insect's exoskeleton; borate does not affect the insect's larval developmental stage. The exoskeleton is comprised of chitin, a long-chain polymer of N-acetylglucosamine; the latter being a derivative of glucose. This polymer is chemically similar to another more familiar polysaccharide – cellulose. The adult insect dehydrates and dies. However, it is the decay fungi, and not the insects, which cause the vast majority of bridge member decay. Coal-tar creosote came onto the scene approximately 150 years ago. It is formed by the destructive distillation of coal-tar after high temperature pyrolysis of coal. It was available in the treatment of railroad ties, but a little late for having been available during the construction of our covered bridges. It is readily available today to repair rot in the spot treatment at abutment areas which collect water. Aesthetically, it is obtrusive and is not recommended for use in highly visible areas.

Fungal decay is best treated with Cuprinol, a forest green oil-based liquid, which is easy to apply to the

rotten area. It contains copper naphthenate, a compound which has been available for approximately 100 years. It is registered with the EPA, which today still agrees that it is safe to use. It is found in our bodies, incorporated into various copper-dependent enzymes. One such enzyme is cupric ATPase, an enzyme used in the hydrolysis of the energy molecule ATP (adenosine tri-phosphate) and in establishing the homeostasis or equilibrium of cupric ion intra versus extracellular. The use of copper as a fungicide is because of its ability to inhibit fungal spore germination and hence halt reproduction.

Of Lattice Truss Design

Montgomery Has Six Covered Bridges Still in Service; First One Built in 1820

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following history of covered bridges in Montgomery was compiled by Mrs. Clayton Fuller in conjunction with the Champlain Festival celebration to be held there Saturday and Sunday.

MONTGOMERY – August 6, 1959 – Perhaps it is not known that there are more covered bridges in Montgomery than in any other town in the state. At one time there were eight. Six are still in active service.

These bridges are all of the type called "Lattice Truss." In 1820, Ithiel Town, a well-known architect of New Haven, Connecticut, invented and patented the "Town Lattice Truss" – the familiar plank lattice fastened together with wooden pins. Because of the ease and simplicity of construction, this became a very popular type and was used for most of the covered bridges in Vermont.

Five of the bridges in Montgomery cross Trout River. These are the Harnois Bridge, the Clapp Bridge, the Comstock, the one at the site of Hutchins Mill, and the Hectorville, across the south branch of Trout River. Two cross the West Hill Brook, one at the foot of the hill and the other near Four Corners. Still another bridge crosses Black Falls Brook.

The Clapp Bridge was the first to be built. A man named Ferguson was in charge of construction, and it was he who taught the construction of the lattice plank bridge. All of the other seven bridges were built by Sheldon and Savannard Jewett.

The Harnois, or Head Bridge as it was once called, was probably the next one built in about 1863. The Comstock Bridge bears the date of 1883.

The Fuller Bridge in Montgomery Village was built in 1890 to replace an open bridge which collapsed under the strain of a four-horse load of bobbins from the Black Falls Bobbin Mill. The late Clayton Fuller, renowned photographer of covered bridges, and his father were the first persons to cross this bridge.

The West Hill Bridge was the last to be built. The exact dates of the other bridges are unknown.

During the past few years, a special interest has been taken in these old structures. There is something about their old weather-beaten appearance that appeals to tourists. They seem to regard the covered bridges as one of the most characteristic examples of rural Vermont.

A covered bridge is not very beautiful in itself, but it is the setting in which so many are found – a winding road, a clear stream with a green mountain in the background – that make them most interesting from a picturesque viewpoint.

Many of us remember the warning that was once posted on covered bridges: “Horses at a Walk.” No one

ever heeded this warning. The story is told of a man who owned very spirited horses. Whenever he went to town, he drove as fast as possible through the bridges. Finally, there were so many complaints against him that he was arrested and taken to court. The fine was five dollars. He handed the judge ten dollars and said, “Keep the change. I’m going right back home in about 15 minutes.”

Bridges were favorite places for displaying advertisements, and many old ones still remain: Kendall’s Spavin Cure, Battle-Ax Plug Tobacco, Hood’s Sarsaparilla, and Kickapoo’s Indian Sageva.

Even though the people of Montgomery knew that covered bridges were too narrow and low for modern traffic, they watched with regret as two were torn down when a new highway went through town.

Since our remaining six bridges are all on town roads, it is our greatest wish that we may keep them for many years to come.

(From The St. Albans Messenger, found and donated by VCBS member Rae Laitres)

A Covered Bridge Tour – Middlebury to Brandon

Otter Creek flows north about 70 miles, from the town of Dorset in the Green Mountains to Lake Champlain in Ferrisburgh. Ten covered bridges still stand, scattered along a 50-mile stretch of Otter Creek, which is the longest river within Vermont’s borders. All of the bridges are accessible from scenic Route 7 and the paralleling Route 30. Adventurous travelers can take side trips along some of the Otter’s many tributaries.

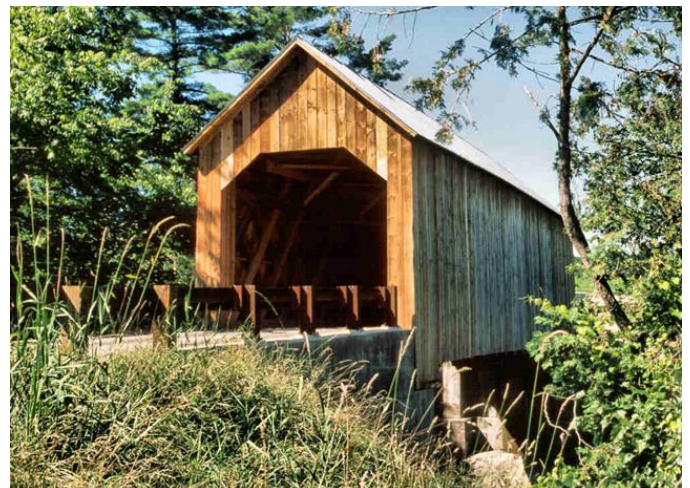
The Middlebury Area

John Everts contracted to survey three towns in the 1760’s. He named the one to the south Salisbury and the one to the north New Haven. He named the third town Middlebury for its position between the other two. Incorporated in 1816 as Middlebury Borough, the town’s name was changed in 1852 to the village of Middlebury.

In the covered bridge world, Middlebury is known for its Pulp Mill Bridge, one of the last two-lane arch bridges in Vermont. There is another bridge close by that is well worth visiting - the Halpin Bridge, which sits astride the

Middlebury-New Haven town line. To the south, the Station Bridge connected Salisbury to Cornwall. However, it burned on September 10, 2016. The cause of the fire has not been determined.

Halpin Bridge – 1840 (WGN 45-01-03)



Halpin Bridge by Joe Nelson

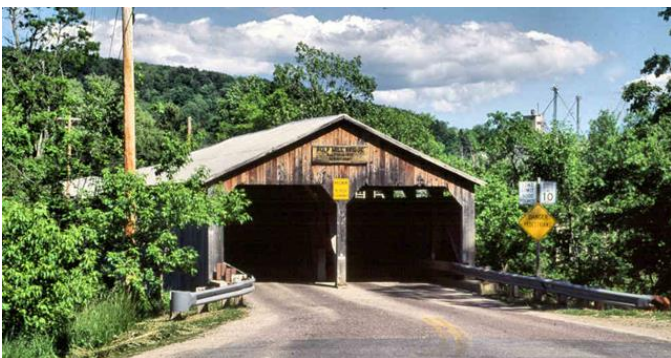
The 66-foot Halpin Bridge, built in 1840 by unknown craftsmen, crosses 46 feet above the New Haven River's Muddy Branch, the highest any Vermont covered bridge stands above a streambed. An 1824 construction date is often cited, but it is unlikely according to the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges website (www.lostbridges.org).

In 1992, after state bridge inspectors found the abutments to be dangerously cracked, the plank lattice structure was lifted from its crossing place by crane so repairs could be made. It was found to be in good structural condition, so after replacement of some of the bottom chord planks and lattice members, it was moved back over the stream with new siding and roof.

The original abutments, now replaced with cast concrete, were remarkable in that they were not only very tall, but they were built from cut white marble blocks. Similar masonry can still be seen to the north of the bridge in some abandoned foundations. A mill and a general store flanked the bridge in the middle 1800's.

To find the bridge, take River Road where it leaves Route 7 just south of the bridge crossing the New Haven River, about three miles north of the junction of Routes 7 and 30 in Middlebury. Drive east on River Road one mile, then turn right onto Halpin Road. Drive another mile and turn left onto an unmarked dirt road. The town-maintained bridge is in use, but it leads only to a farmyard.

Pulp Mill Bridge – 1854 (WGN 45-01-04 #2)



Pulp Mill Bridge by Joe Nelson

When you visit the Pulp Mill Bridge, take your walking shoes. The old "double-barrel" bridge stands in a tight little urban neighborhood, and parking for bridge viewers is scarce, so visiting the bridge usually involves a bit of a walk.

The Pulp Mill is the only two-lane covered bridge in Vermont that carries regular daily traffic. Joggers and cyclists also compete with the automobiles. Vermont's other two-lane span originally served Cambridge. It now stands next to Route 7 in Shelburne and is used as an entry for staff at the Shelburne Museum. This tally does not count the two-lane bridge in Windsor that crosses the Connecticut River, because 99% of it is in New Hampshire.

The 184-foot Pulp Mill Bridge once crossed the Otter Creek with a single span. According to the Vermont Agency of Transportation covered bridge inspection report, the two concrete piers topped with timber cribs we see today were built in 1979. When the bridge was subdivided into three spans, the direction of half the braces had to be reversed. The stone abutments were capped and faced with concrete and the laminated arches rebuilt. Additional work was done in 1991 by Jan Lewandoski.

The build date of the bridge has been cited as 1812 and 1820. Lewandoski believes the Pulp Mill Bridge was built in the 1850's in imitation of one of John Johnson's bridges. In researching the selectmen's records, Lewandoski discovered that in 1850, a selectman went to Essex to view a bridge – most likely John Johnson's double-barrel multiple-kingpost span in Essex Junction.

Wrote Herbert Congdon in *The Covered Bridge*, "First known as the bridge near the paper mill on the outskirts of Middlebury village, the name of Papermill Bridge followed naturally and lasted until the old mill was reopened to make paper pulp. In the old days [the bridge on this site] was owned and operated by the Waltham Turnpike Company, which was dissolved in 1828. After that, its maintenance was shared by the towns of Middlebury and Weybridge."

When the Pulp Mill Bridge was constructed, the builders overlooked several key details. The posts, which receive heavy braces, don't shoulder within the chords. That is, the notched posts aren't fitted into lower chord members notched to receive them, latching them in place. Instead, the bottoms of the posts are reduced in thickness to fit between the chord members and held there with a single bolt. The tremendous load of the nearly 200-foot span transmitted through the braces set at the bottoms of the posts would break the posts, sliding them between the chord members. The bridge started failing right away, and carpenters have been fixing it ever since.

Early efforts were made to strengthen the truss with Burr-style segmented timber arches – when these arches were added is uncertain. In the 1860's, these were augmented with laminated arches of three-inch planks, using the original timber arch as a form.

Today, there are two large arches between the lanes that rise nearly to the ridgepole. A smaller arch rises to the eaves of each side. The center arches, consisting of a lamination of ten, 3x6 inch planks, are bolted to both sides of a central multiple-kingpost truss. The outer arches are a lamination of nine, 3x6 inch planks, each bolted to the inside of a multiple-king post truss. There is no longer any evidence of the original segmented timber arches.

There is access to the creek at the northwest side of the bridge approach. From there, at low water, the entire length of the bridge with piers and abutments can be viewed from the dam. Note that the ends of the arches are bedded in the abutments below the main stringers. Most of the other Vermont bridges built in the "Burr manner" terminate the ends of the arches at the bottom chords above the abutments.

Besides being on the National Register of Historic Places, the Middlebury town plan identifies the bridge as a "Scenic Roads Resource," giving it additional preservation status. The town of Weybridge was awarded a grant to fund the pedestrian bridge built beside the covered bridge.

To find the bridge from Route 7, take Route 30 south in Middlebury. Drive about .3 mile to Route 23. Turn right onto Route 23 and drive .8 mile to Pulp Mill Bridge Road. Turn right to the bridge at the junction of Horse Farm Road.

Salisbury Station Bridge -1865 (WGN 45-01-01x)



Salisbury Station Bridge by Joe Nelson

A mysterious fire totaled the Salisbury Station Bridge on September 10, 2016. The cause of the fire has yet to be positively determined. A portable bridge has temporarily replaced the span. Whether the covered bridge will be replaced with a replica or with concrete and steel has not been decided.

The 154-foot Salisbury Station Bridge spanned Otter Creek on Swamp Road at the edge of the Great Cedar Swamp. It was known as the Cedar Swamp Bridge, the Salisbury Station Bridge, or simply as the Station Bridge.

Raised in 1865 by unknown builders, the truss was unique in that the web was wider than that of any other plank-lattice truss in Vermont. It measured four feet, ten inches on center – the webs in other bridges using that truss average about three feet. The bridge was renovated in 1969 and a mid-stream pier was added to support the long span. Until then, the Station Bridge was one of the longest single spans in the state.

Today, one may wonder why the bridge was built in a remote spot between a large swamp and acres of fields. In the 1860's, however, it provided the town of Cornwall with a vital economic link to the railway shipping point at Salisbury. The Champlain & Connecticut Railway right-of-way through the town of Salisbury was approved in 1846. The original plan was to build the railway parallel to the road that became Route 7, but a farmer who owned much of the land in Salisbury Flats caused the right-of-way to be moved to West Salisbury. The depot was erected on the east side of the tracks, just south of the Cornwall Swamp Road crossing. The change in plan was regretted afterward; the roads to West Salisbury and Salisbury Station were so bad that the shipping facilities at Leicester and Brandon had to be used for much of the year. Swamp Road, a soggy trace in the 1840's and 50's, wasn't improved until 1862.

The bridge is gone, but the legendary narrative of Ann Story remains. Ann Story's husband, Amos, came to the Salisbury grant from Connecticut with his son, Solomon, in the early 1770's. Amos had taken rights to 100 acres not far south of where Swamp Road crosses the railroad tracks today. There, he and his son, Solomon, built a cabin and cleared a field. A falling tree killed Amos.

Ann was determined that the family was going to live on their land. In 1774, she and Solomon and her four other children came to the cabin Amos had built and planted the field. In 1775, in the beginnings of the Revolutionary War, Tories and Indians were ravaging

unprotected settlements. Other settlers retreated to Rutland, but Ann and her children stayed on to harvest their crops. When she saw the smoke from a neighbor's burning homestead, she gathered her children into a canoe and paddled into the flooded woods. From there, she watched unseen by the Indians who came and burned her cabin. The Storys dug a tunnel into the west bank of the Otter Creek and stayed there at night while they continued to work on the land by day. The tunnel remained undiscovered until a Tory heard a baby crying as he passed nearby. He surprised the Storys when they came out, demanding they leave. Ann sent Solomon to Rutland to warn the people that the Tories were back. As a result, 14 Tories were captured and taken to Fort Ticonderoga. This and her resolve to defy the King's forces gave Ann Story her reputation as a heroine of the Revolution. There is no road to the little clearing by Otter Creek, but the monument is there. The Cornwall Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution placed it over the site of Ann's cave in 1907.

The best way to reach the site of the Station Bridge, or to visit Ann Story's monument in most seasons, is from Route 30. Look for Swamp Road, approximately eight miles south of the junction of routes 7 and 30 in Middlebury. Drive east on Swamp Road for two miles – the bridge crossed the town line at Otter Creek. The site of Ann Story's cave lies about one-third mile north of the Station Bridge site.

Shoreham

Shoreham, known for its apple orchards, is also known among bridge seekers for the covered railway bridge spanning the Lemon Fair River.

Rutland Railroad Covered Bridge – 1897

(WGN 45-01-05)



Rutland Railroad Bridge WGN by Joe Nelson

The Rutland Railroad Bride is easily missed. It crosses the Lemon Fair River behind a state fishing access park and almost out of sight down a tree-lined lane that was once the railroad right-of-way. The bridge, owned by the state Division for Historic Preservation, is on the National Register of Historic Places as an engineering landmark.

Lemon Fair is a curious name for a river in Vermont. The origin of the name has been obscured over the years. Even Abbey Hemenway's wonderful *Vermont Historical Gazetteer* provides little help. One local history expert – a surveyor who reads extensively about local history in his land research – has found a plausible origin of the name. He discovered that Lemon Fair may be a corruption of the words "A Lamentable Affair," a river named in commemoration of an Indian attack during the early settlement years.

Many other theories have been proposed, but perhaps the most likely source of the name is that it is an English corruption of a French phrase describing a sometimes-murky stream. The river flows over beds of limestone and through soils containing concentrations of hydrate of magnesium sulfate, or Epsom salts. There are enough salts in the area to flavor some of the nearby wells.

The bridge is best visited from Route 30 at the village of Whiting. Drive west on Shoreham and Whiting Roads 2.5 miles, turn south on East Shoreham Road and proceed .5 mile. Look to the left for a state fishing access park just north of the steel bow truss bridge crossing Richville Pond. An historic site marker found at the back of the access parking lot reads, "This 108' Howe Truss railroad bridge is one of only two covered railroad bridges left in Vermont. It was built in 1897 on the 15.6 mile Addison Branch connecting the Rutland Railroad at Leicester Junction with the Delaware and Hudson at Ticonderoga, New York, crossing Lake Champlain on a floating bridge at Larrabee's Point. This bridge was last used for railroad traffic in 1951."

Brandon

Brandon began in 1761 as Neshobe, named by the Massachusetts proprietors who got their grant from New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth. The Vermont legislature changed the name in 1784.

The town began as a farming community, but industry soon came. In 1820, an iron smelter was founded,

producing ash as a byproduct. Makers of potash took advantage of the byproduct. Potash was used to make a caustic soap for the woolen industry. In 1833, a literary and scientific institute was founded. In 1834, in an attempt to build a perpetual motion machine, a blacksmith named Thomas Davenport constructed an electric motor capable of thirty revolutions per minute. The Howe Scale Company was in business here in 1857.

Stephen Arnold Douglas, U.S. Senator from Illinois from 1847 to 1861, and Democratic presidential candidate against Abraham Lincoln, was born here in 1813. His grandfather, Benjah Douglas, town selectman and member of the Vermont State Legislature, influenced the boy. Benjah was reputed to be the town's greatest talker – a small man with a big voice who could speak on any subject and take any side in a debate. The grandson, in later years, came to resemble him in both appearance and speaking talent. Stephen was small of stature, but with a large head and broad shoulders, he was called the Little Giant. He left Vermont when he was 20 years old.

Sanderson Bridge – circa 1840

(WGN 45-11-02#2)



Sanderson Bridge by Joe Nelson

The original Sanderson Bridge stood amid cornfields in the fertile bottomlands of the Otter Creek flood plain. It was named for a family who had farmed the adjacent land continuously since 1825. The planking of the

ancient bridge was bleached silver by the comings and goings of the seasons. The interior presented a show of geometric shadows and spears of light when the sun shone through the gaps and cracks in the siding, highlighting the plank lattice truss.

The bridge was remarkable both for its abutments and for its gable ends. The abutments were large white slabs of marble laid dry. The gables were notable for the neo-Grecian treatment of the eaves and gable ends, enclosed cornices, enclosed roof gable end overhang, and partial cornice returns. The portal featured pilaster moldings. Because of the style of finish used, it is believed the bridge was built in the late 1830's or early 1840's. Among all of Vermont's surviving bridges, only Downer's Bridge (WGN 45-14-08) in Weathersfield, built in the same decade, shares these features.

Once known as the Lower Bridge, the Sanderson stood 1.2 miles from Route 7 on Pearl Street on the northern outskirts of Brandon. The Upper, or Dean, Bridge once stood on Carver Street, crossing Otter Creek upstream of the Sanderson Bridge. Built in the same decade as the Sanderson, it is one of Vermont's lost treasures, destroyed by arsonists.

The surviving Sanderson, serving the Brandon to Sudbury Road, was no longer capable of carrying modern loads. In 2002, Blow & Cote Construction Company of Morrisville overhauled the 163-year-old, 132-foot structure. A replica of the Sanderson Bridge stands in its place, because the town of Weathersfield voters decided at town meeting to rebuild the bridge rather than pay the high archaeological costs required by state statute to establish a new road to a new crossing, along with the cost of a modern bridge. The Sanderson was taken down, resurrected, and reinforced with glulam beams to let it carry up to 40,000 pounds. The bridge appears today as it would have appeared to its original builders except for its mighty loadbearing bottom chords. (From *Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges* planned 2nd edition, by Joe Nelson)

THE COVERED BRIDGE

by Elisabeth K. Fuller

The covered bridge is standing yet
A relic of the past,
'Twas built in horse and buggy days
When life was not so fast.

It's seldom now that wagon wheels,
The trotting of a horse
Are heard within the covered bridge
The changing times, of course.

I once would boast that I could tell,
What farmer came to town
By just the way his buggy squeaked,
His horse's hooves went down.

But now I see a streak of blue
Sometimes a streak of gray,
An auto has passed through the bridge,
Is speeding on its way.

The bridge was once a haven
On a rainy summer day,
The children in the neighborhood
Wood gather there to play.

Sometimes 'twas 'Kitty earner'
Sometimes 'twas keeping school,
A noisy bunch of youngsters
Bent on breaking every rule.

They went climbing up the latticework
And hiding on the beams,
Calling out to folks who passed
And scaring all the teams.

The boys would carve initials,
Unite what names they pleased
And then look down in laughter

Because the girls were teased.

But what excitement always reigned
When circus bills were posted
Roaring lions! Acrobats!
All things the circus boasted.

*(from St. Albans Messenger, August 7, 1959,
shared by VCBS member Rae Laitres)*

VCBS Lending Library: A Learning/Pleasure Reading/ Research Source

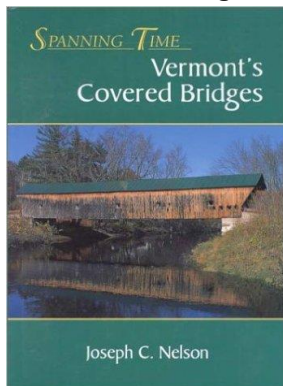
The Vermont Covered Bridge Society has assembled a lending library available through media mail to all society members in good standing.

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 jcarlnelson@yahoo.com, or go to <http://www.vermontbridges.com/whatis.vcbs.htm#item7>. 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 no longer than two months. Contact Warren Tripp, P.O. Box 185, South Barre, VT 05670, fftwbt@yahoo.com, phone 802-584-3545.

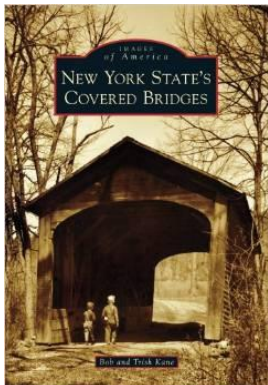
For Sale

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](http://www.vermontbridges.com/special%20070514.htm). Also see: www.vermontbridges.com/bookreviews.htm.*

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.



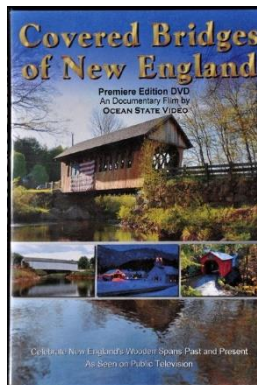
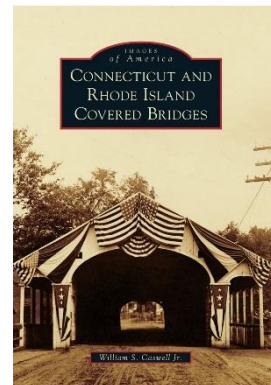
Visions of Vermont art gallery, Jeffersonville, Vermont at: <https://www.visionsofvermont.com/>
802.644.8183

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

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



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



Covered Bridges of New England —DVD Produced by Ocean State Video of Rhode Island for Public Television. On Sale: \$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.



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