

# THE BRIDGER



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter – Issue #76

## Events

### Vermont Covered Bridge Society Spring Meeting

April 6, 2019, 10:00 a.m.

Middlebury Congregational Church Addition  
30 North Pleasant Street (Rt. 7)  
Middlebury, Vermont

### Meeting Agenda

9:00 a.m.

- Set-up time

10:00 a.m.

- Business meeting called to order

11:00 a.m.

- VCBS member John Weaver, PE, a VTrans engineer and co-designer of the rehabilitation of the Scott Covered Bridge (WGN 45-13-13), will discuss the history and revitalization of the Scott Bridge.

12:00 p.m.

- Break – dining arrangements and bridge tours will be discussed

**The meeting is open to all comers.  
There are no fees.**

- Snacks will be provided during the meeting.
- Lunch on your own at restaurants nearby.
- After adjournment, attendees are free to visit the three local covered bridges.
- Call Middlebury Chamber of Commerce at 802-388-7951 for overnight accommodations.

### Spring Meeting Directions:

The meeting will be held in the meeting room adjacent to the Middlebury Congregational Church at 30 North Pleasant Street (Route 7), Middlebury. The church itself stands on the corner of Route 7 and Main Street.

NOTE: We will not be meeting in the church; our meeting will be held in the contemporary addition, which faces North Pleasant Street (Route 7).

### Parking

- The Seymour Street parking lot is open with designated handicap spaces and ramps. There is on-street parking on Seymour Street.
- To enter the building on the east side, please use the door on the north end of the addition.

### Parking and access for individuals with disabilities:

- **To access the meeting room:** There are designated parking spaces on State Route 7, alongside the church building itself and the new addition to the north of the church. Access into the building is via a ramp *from Route 7*. There is also designated parking in the parking lot on Seymour Street.
- **To the VCBS spring meeting room site:** From the designated street (*east side*) parking at 30 North Pleasant Street (Route 7), enter using the ramp on the *north* side of the building.
- There is an **elevator** to access both the lower and upper levels of the building from the Seymour Street parking lot.

President: Bill Carroll, 5 Hutchinson Lane, Lenox, MA 01240, email: [wcarroll@crocker.com](mailto:wcarroll@crocker.com)

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

Secretary: Irene Barna, 7 Forbes Circle, Middlebury, VT 05753-1128, email: [ibarna@middlebury.edu](mailto:ibarna@middlebury.edu)

Membership: Dan Monger, email: [teelmonger@gmavt.net](mailto:teelmonger@gmavt.net)

## The Annual VCBS Board of Directors Meeting - February 19, 2019

- by Joseph C. Nelson, Scorekeeper

William Carroll, VCBS President and Chairman of the VCBS Board of Directors, had notified the members of the board that beginning on February 8 they would be asked to vote on six questions. Nine of the eleven directors voted.

Question 1: The proposed budget for the current year, based on the past spending of the standing committees was presented to the Board, along with the Treasurer's Report for 2018. Each committee chair submitted his or her budget requirements for discussion, followed by a vote for acceptance.

Nine directors voted to accept the budget as presented.

Question 2: Neil Daniels has stepped down as Treasurer due to health issues, and Irene Barna will also step down as Secretary due to health issues. Joe Nelson is currently standing in as Treasurer until the next election of officers in November. The directors were asked to approve Joe Nelson as Treasurer if no one volunteers to take the office. Dan Monger declared for the office of Treasurer. (see question 7)

Question 3: The Siebert's Financial account holding our Save-A-Bridge Fund has been closed, with the funds of \$7,261.53 deposited into our checking account at the Union Bank. Should we:

- a) Leave our SAB fund in the checking account at the Union Bank?
- b) Move our SAB fund to a savings account at the Union Bank?
- c) Move our SAB fund to a CD at the Union Bank?
- d) Maintain Siebert or other financial account with our SAB fund?

Six directors voted to leave the funds in the checking account.

Question 4: Shall the funds received in 2018 by the VCBS in donations and sales be put into the Save-A-Bridge Fund? (\$395.00 in member donations and \$16.50 in sales, for a total of \$411.50)

Eight directors voted to apply the funds to the Save-A-Bridge Fund.

Question 5: The VCBS has been a guest on Joe Nelson's [www.vermontbridges.com](http://www.vermontbridges.com) since 2000. Since then, Steve Miyamoto has created [www.vermontbridges.org](http://www.vermontbridges.org), using updated resources. This website is also owned by Joe Nelson and is paid for through September 2021. To ensure that [www.vermontbridges.org](http://www.vermontbridges.org) continues as an informational tool for the VCBS, Joe Nelson proposed that ownership of the site be taken over by the VCBS at no cost to the Society. The renewal cost after 2021 would be paid by the Publicity Committee.

Nine directors voted for the VCBS to take over ownership of [www.vermontbridges.org](http://www.vermontbridges.org).

Question 6: Shall the VCBS advertise its existence and its programs in such media as *Vermont Magazine*? The cost of space in the *Vermont Magazine* is estimated to be approximately \$98 per issue, to be paid by the Publicity Committee. The advertisement donated to the Society by *Vermont Magazine* Editor Phil Jordan brought the Society four new members.

Nine directors voted to advertise in *Vermont Magazine*.

Question 7: Dan Monger has volunteered to serve as Treasurer. Does the Board approve?

Nine directors voted to approve. Dan Monger is confirmed as Treasurer.

No one has yet stepped forward to serve as Secretary.

The eleven Directors are: Ed Barna, Director-at-Large; Irene Barna, Secretary; William Carroll, President and Chair of the Historical Committee; William Caswell, Jr., President of the NSPCB, Advisory Director; Neil H. Daniels, Chair of the Weathersfield Chapter; William McKone, Chair of the Cambridge Chapter; Steve Miyamoto, Chair of the Publicity Committee; Daniel Monger, Chair of the Membership Committee; Joseph Nelson, Vice President and Chair of the Communications Committee; Terry Shaw, Chair of the Legislation Watch Committee; and John Weaver, Bridge Watch Coordinator.

## Publicity Committee

- Reported by Steve Miyamoto, Chair

The VCBS will be advertising in the March/April issue of *Vermont Magazine*. A copy of the ad is pictured at the right. We are also exploring a project to post this ad in covered bridges around the state. More information on that will come later in the year.

Work continues on expanding the social media outreach for the VCBS.

- The Vermont's Covered Bridges Facebook group has grown to 535 members.
- The weekly features of Trivia Tuesday, VT Covered Bridge tour, and Throwback Thursday are all posted on the Facebook group, the Instagram feed, and the Twitter feed. Instagram is starting to catch on, but the Twitter feed has few followers.

The VCBS website continues to be upgraded. I'm currently working on updating the covered bridge tour with newer pictures, more descriptions, links to bridge articles, and Google Map directions to the bridges. I am also working on optimizing the website for tablets and phones.

### Join the Vermont Covered Bridge Society



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society was founded in 2000 to address the loss of covered bridges and to preserve those that remain. Membership includes a quarterly newsletter.

To learn more, visit [vermontbridges.org](http://vermontbridges.org) or [@vermontcoveredbridgesociety](https://www.facebook.com/vermontcoveredbridgesociety) on facebook.

Write to: V.C.B.S., Inc.  
P.O. Box 267  
Jericho, VT 05465-0267



## Membership Update

- Reported by Dan Monger, Chair

For those VCBS members who are receiving this newsletter with the mailing label marked in red, this indicates that you are behind in your membership dues. Membership fees are due in January. Annual members who are more than one year behind in their dues need pay only for the current year to return to good standing. Members who do not respond will be purged from the membership list.

We want to again thank Life Couple members Stewart and Dorothy Read for their generous donation last December.

We wish to extend a warm welcome to our new members:

Ms. Carol Robb of New Egypt, NJ

Ms. Joan Whitesell of Alburg, VT

Merle and Ann Miller of Graniteville, VT

We now have 115 memberships, which is down from the last quarterly report, including:

- 56 Lifetime (individuals and couples)
- 50 Yearly (individuals and families)
- 8 Business, Organization, or Municipality
- 1 Student

The VCBS wishes a very happy birthday and happy anniversary to:

#### March

- 02 Gordon O'Reilly
- 04 Sarah Ann Gallagher
- 08 Neil Daniels
- 08 Marilyn Towne
- 16 Bruce Laumeister
- 16 Bob Orr
- 12 Priscilla Farnham
- 21 Thomas & Lisette Keating
- 23 Steve Miyamoto
- 23 Greg Komeshok

#### April

- 11 Jane Porter Gresham
- 13 Gary Krick
- 22 Anthony Daniels
- 25 John Dunn

#### May

- 03 William Carroll
- 03 Thomas Keating
- 06 Debbie Whiston
- 09 Erwin Eckson
- 10 Charles Lovastik
- 11 Steve Wheaton
- 12 James Crouse
- 15 Andy Behrens
- 17 Ron Bechard
- 19 Mary Ann Waller
- 20 Rick & Aida Cyphers
- 22 Irene Barna
- 22 Lisette Keating
- 25 Cathleen Teel
- 27 June Gendron
- 28 Bill (Liam) McKone

## **A Covered Bridge Tour – Route 100 in Central Vermont**

There are seven covered bridges along the fifty miles of Vermont Route 100 and US Route 2, connecting Marshfield, Morristown, Stowe, and Warren. The scenic setting varies from the mountainside villages of Stowe to the farmland of the Winooski and Mad River valleys.

The tour takes us from Route 15 in Morristown, south through Stowe to US2 and I-89. We head east on US2 toward Marshfield in sight of the golden Statehouse dome in Montpelier. After visiting the bridges in East Montpelier and Marshfield, we return to Route 100 and head south to Waitsfield and Warren.

### **Morrisville/Morristown**

Travelers from Route 15 must pass through the urban streets of Morrisville, either on Route 100 or on Route 15A. The streets are marked with state route signs, so it

should be difficult to get lost. Once through Morrisville, follow Route 100 south.

To find the Red Bridge, continue south on Route 100 for 1.9 miles and turn right onto Cochran Road. When Cochran Road ends on Golf Course Road, turn right and go to Stagecoach Road. There, turn left and travel 1.8 miles to Sterling Valley Road. Turn right onto Sterling Valley Road and drive 1.6 miles to the bridge.

### **Red Bridge – 1896** [WGN 45-08-11]

The little barn red covered bridge crossing Sterling Brook in Morristown serves Cole Hill Road above a scenic narrow gorge with walls of exposed bedrock.

Like most of Vermont's old bridges, it has been known by many names. Residents once referred to it as the Chaffee Bridge, for the family who lived nearby. Others



remember it as the Sterling Brook Bridge, Now, it is usually called the Red Bridge.

The Red Bridge was built in 1896, using a kingpost truss with a superimposed queenpost truss system. Sixty-four feet long from abutment to abutment, the little bridge appears to be longer because it has ten additional feet of extended gables. Damaged by a storm in the fall of 1897, the strange truss was made stranger still with the addition of a profusion of iron rods. The resulting truss has been defying classification since.



*Red Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997*

In 1971, the Vermont Department of Highways reconstructed the bridge with an independent reinforced concrete roadway supported by two steel beams. The original stone abutments were replaced with cast concrete. Though the old truss now supports only itself, the structure remains a prime example of 19<sup>th</sup> century bridge tinkering.

Return to Stagecoach Road, turn right and drive 1.7 miles to Route 100. Continue south 3.5 miles through the village of Stowe to Gold Brook Road. Follow Gold Brook Road, bearing left at the first intersection. Continue to Covered Bridge Road and the Gold Brook Bridge.

## Stowe

Stowe has long been one of Vermont's leading tourist towns. As early as the middle 1800's, it was common for strangers with fine apparel, horses, and carriages to stay for three or four months of the year. The "summer people" gave the town the reputation of being the Saratoga of Vermont.

Stowe has three villages. Center Village is located at the geographic middle of the town, where all roads meet. One-half mile to the south lays Lower Village, once known as Mill Village, where the trades, such as mills and blacksmith shops, were located. The third village, Moscow, is two miles south of Center Village. Moscow was known to have one of the best sawmills in the state, as well as a large door, sash, and blind factory.

## Gold Brook Bridge – 1844 [WGN 45-08-12]

This dark little bridge crosses Gold Brook at a busy joining of well-kept country roads. The impression of darkness comes from the walnut-stained gable ends, but there is also a dark side to the bridge's history. For this is Emily's Bridge, haunted by a locally famous ghost.



*Gold Brook Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997*

Many stories exist about why poor Emily does not rest in peace. Perhaps the most popular legend has it that in the middle 1800s, Emily, a farmer's daughter, was deserted by her lover. Despairing and, sadly, in a family way, she hanged herself in the bridge. Her ghost has been seen on moonlit midsummer nights, wandering through the bridge, waiting for her man.

A more menacing story than that of a despairing ghost came from a tourist who drove through the bridge late one summer night and found claw marks on the driver's side of his car the next morning.

According to a long-time resident of the area, Emily's true story was that she was one of a young couple traveling Gold Brook Road by horse and buggy. The rig struck a culvert, and Emily was thrown out and hurt. The couple sued the town, but the matter was settled out of court.

Then there is the story of the Gudgeon Covered Bridge in Pennsylvania. In 1855, a peddler from Kentucky was crossing the bridge on his mule-drawn wagon when a steamboat passed under, blasting the neighborhood with steam calliope music: *My Old Kentucky Home*. The mule bolted and died on the bridge.

The peddler buried his mule by the bridge portal with the mule's name on a marker: Gudgeon. The bridge became known as Gudgeon's Bridge, and the village near the bridge, Gudgeonville. Since then, there have been stories of a mule ghost walking the bridge.

The truth of the tale is that the calliope wasn't playing *My Old Kentucky Home* at all. It was *Camptown Races*!

The first span to cross Gold Brook at this site was constructed in 1803. In 1844, John W. Smith designed and built the Gold Brook Bridge, also called the Stowe Hollow Bridge or Emily's Bridge, using the Howe truss. Finding a Howe truss in a 48-foot highway bridge in the middle of Vermont is something of a surprise. The design was meant for the much more stringent loading requirements of a railroad span. The only other surviving examples of the Howe truss in Vermont are the Connecticut River bridges at Lunenburg and Lemington, and the Rutland Railroad Bridge at Shoreham. The truss has historical significance for its use of iron rods and angle blocks.

Emily's Bridge is in very good condition and is likely to remain so. In 1969, the town made a resolution for perpetual care. A bronze plaque placed in a grassy area near the east portal displays the declaration.

To continue the tour to the Coburn Bridge, return to Route 100 and turn left. Continue south 18 miles to U.S. Route 2 in Waterbury. Take Route 2 east for nine miles, through Duxbury and Montpelier, to East Montpelier and the junction with Route 14. Continue two miles on Route 2 to Coburn Road. Turn left onto Coburn Road and drive .5 mile to the bridge. Coburn Road is narrow and winding, with many blind curves, so use care while driving there.

## Gold in the Brook

Gold Brook does indeed have gold in it. In May 1857, Captain A. H. Slayton, who had experience in the California gold fields, discovered some particles of gold on the banks of the brook on the farm owned by

Nathaniel Russel. Captain Slayton purchased the farm and hired three or four diggers for several days. Slayton didn't find the amount of gold he'd hoped for, but he was able to make a watch chain worth about one hundred 1857 dollars with the gold that was found.

## East Montpelier

The town of Montpelier was settled in 1788. Part of the town was split off in 1848 by the Vermont General Assembly to become the town of East Montpelier. The new town was organized in 1849.

## Coburn Bridge – 1851 [WGN 45-12-02]

The Coburn Bridge is not just a covered bridge; it is representative of the bridge builder's art. The eaves are wide, shedding rain and snow far away from the structure. The gable ends are deep for the same purpose. The sheathing on the sides is three-quarter height, letting in light and moisture-drying air. These are the features that an artisan will employ to ensure a long life for his bridge. But, the pilasters and trim at the portals serve no practical purpose. These finishing touches are the mark of the builder's pride. This is not just a bridge; this is Larned Coburn's bridge.



*Coburn Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997*

Built in 1851, the 50-foot structure spans the Winooski River, perched high on its abutments out of reach of the last freshet and hopefully out of reach of the next. The Coburns, as long-time residents, were familiar with high water in this place. The patriarch, Larned Coburn, settled in East Montpelier in 1830. The Coburn homestead, the land adjacent to the bridge, is celebrated as having remained in the same family for more than one hundred years.

Luther Johnson, in his *Vermont in Flood Time, November 1927*, tells a story of Larned's descendants during the great flood. "F. W. Coburn's eight cows were drowned when the Winooski River surrounded his farm buildings at the Plainsfield, East Montpelier line. A rescue party, which included Mr. Coburn's son, Harry, tried to reach the dwelling on a raft, but it capsized. The party managed to gain a tree from which Mr. Coburn drew them to the house by means of a rope, rescuing the rescuers."

The bridge was reconstructed in 1972 by the Agency of Transportation. A concrete deck on steel beams now supports traffic, and the old truss supports only itself.

Despite the new work done, the basic technology of the original work is still evident. The upper chords were fitted into place mostly "in the round," and the diagonals and cross beams clearly show the marks of the adze and broad axe. The truss was renovated in the winter of 1996-97, so new carpentry is also in evidence.

Return to Route 2 and turn left. Martin Bridge stands in sight of Route 2, three miles past Coburn Road. Watch to the south as you approach a barn and a row of small houses on the right side of the highway.

## Marshfield

The town of Marshfield was granted to the Stockbridge Indian Tribe by the General Assembly of Vermont in 1790. The Indians intended to settle here, but after white settlements were founded around their town, they sold it to Captain Isaac Marsh of Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The Indians moved on to the then-unsettled forests of New York.

William Martin was an early settler of Marshfield. He bought a farm about a mile north of Plainfield Village. His farm was reputed to be one of the finest on the headwaters of the Winooski River. The Ortons bought the old Martin place and gave it their name for a time.

### **Martin Bridge – 1890** [WGN 45-12-06]

The Martin Bridge, or Orton Farm Bridge, crosses the Winooski River in a pasture south of Route 2, three miles east of the Coburn Road intersection.

The 45-foot queenpost truss structure stands high on abutments of cut granite and rubble stone laid dry. A

cattle gate is hinged at one of the queenposts. Herman Townsend and his sons, to provide access to Martin's agricultural lands on the far side of the Winooski River, built the bridge for William Martin in 1890. It is believed to be the last surviving example of the work of Herman F. Townsend, a local bridgewright.



*Martin Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 2009*

The Martin Bridge is the last remaining covered bridge in Marshfield and is the only original covered farm bridge left in Vermont. A farm bridge is a bridge built solely for agricultural use.

The town of Marshfield acquired the Martin Bridge and surrounding land in November 2003. Charles Thorndike of New Hampton, New Hampshire, gave the town of Marshfield the 120-acre property, valued at \$87,200, in exchange for what he owed in school taxes.

The bridge was in need of repairs and in danger of being lost. The citizens of Marshfield voted to sell some parcels of land that had been acquired through tax sales over the years, and volunteers began fundraising. Through these efforts, the bridge was moved to stable footing on land, and the town began applying for grants.

The town received a grant of \$40,000 from the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board and a grant of \$188,000 from the Agency of Transportation. The project also received grants of \$5,000 from the Block Foundation, \$5,000 from the Orton Fund, \$1,000 from Walmart, and \$1,000 from the Vermont Covered Bridge Society.

Additional funds came from an auction, a steak barbecue, and sales of bridge-related merchandise. The proceeds from the grants and fundraising were used beginning in 2008 to restore the bridge and abutments, move it back to its original location, and build a park, parking area, and walking trails.



On April 29, 2009, the Martin Bridge, after standing in a field off U.S. Route 2 adjacent to the Winooski River for nearly five years, was returned to its place over the river on this bright spring morning to the cheers of the watching Marshfield residents. And cheer they should have after a five-year effort to raise the funds to see this final moment. The bridge serves as an entrance for pedestrians and bikers to Marshfield's new town park.

To view the bridges in Waitsfield and Warren, retrace Route 2 to Duxbury. There, take Route 100B south to the junction of Route 100. Continue south 1.6 miles on Route 100. Turn left on Meadow Road and cross an open one-lane bridge. Continue on Meadow Road to North Road. Turn right and drive to the Pine Brook Bridge.

## Waitsfield

Governor Thomas B. Chittenden signed the Waitsfield town charter in 1782, five years after Vermont declared itself to be a free and independent state. Waitsfield was named for its first settler, General Benjamin Wait.

Wait fought the French in the early days of the colonies, then against the British in the Revolutionary War. He began his service in the Continental Army as a captain and rose to the rank of colonel. After the war, he was made a brigadier general of the militia.

He also worked against New York interests in the formative years of the New Hampshire Grants, which were to become Vermont. By the time he was 25 years old, he had participated in 40 battles and never received a wound.

Construction of roads and bridges began soon after the town was chartered. In 1806, however, a flood damaged all of the bridges on the Mad River. Floods again destroyed all of the bridges in 1824, then one more time in 1830. After that, the voters finally realized that they needed sturdier, more permanent structures.

A tax of two pence per acre was voted in 1790, one-half to be used for roads and bridges. The first road crossed the Mad River on the Wilder Farm, not far from where the present covered bridge crosses Pine Brook.

### Pine Brook Bridge – 1872 [WGN 45-12-12]

The Pine Brook, or Wilder, Bridge is representative of classic kingpost truss construction. It is one of Vermont's

four surviving kingpost bridges and one of two that actually feature wooden kingposts. Milton Graton and Sons carefully and authentically restored the little bridge in 1976.

The 49-foot span served North Road, just one mile north of Waitsfield Common. The bridge was in a poor state when Graton inspected it. The chords had rotted, a corner of the bridge had sagged almost a foot, and there were posts standing in the stream supporting the middle of the span.

The bridge was raised a foot and a half to keep the deck system dry. Non-mortared stone abutments were capped, steel beams were installed, chords and siding were replaced, and the roof was repaired.

Graton, in his book *The Last of the Covered Bridge Builders*, relates that the restoration had to conform to the requirements of historic preservation to qualify for federal aid, so setting the bridge on a concrete pad and supporting it with steel beams would not do. So, he set the steel beams under the bridge one-half inch short of contacting the chords as a safety device for heavy loads.

Graton noted that there is a gravel pit near the west end of the bridge after the repairs were made, and 12 cubic yard loads of gravel were being trucked over the little 8-ton bridge.

Drive through the bridge and continue to Tremblay Road. There, turn right to return to Route 100. Continue south on Route 100 to Waitsfield. Turn left onto Bridge Street to cross the Village Bridge, or to get the best view, continue a little farther on Route 100 to find the riverside parking lot off to the left.

### Village Bridge – 1833 [WGN 45-12-14]

The Village, or Great Eddy, Bridge was built in 1833 to replace a span lost in the big freshet of 1830. It is thought to be the oldest Burr-arch type structure in Vermont. It stands in the middle of Waitsfield village and stretches 105 feet over the Mad River, serving Bridge Street and East Warren Road, one end securely resting on a great ledge. After 142 years of service, the old bridge was a wreck, damaged by years of pounding by the elements and heavy use, so in 1973 Milton Graton and Sons of New Hampshire contracted to return the bridge to good health.



Graton replaced the deck structure, flooring, and the upper lateral bracing. He also installed new knee braces, hewn from the branches of trees and re-sheathed the roof with standing seam metal sheeting. The footbridge, added to the side of the span in 1940, was restored and reattached.



*Village Bridge, photo by Robert Durfee, 2010*

In 1989 the floor was re-decked, and in 1992 Paul Ide and Jan Lewandoski made structural repairs to the truss. All of the work was done using materials and methods that maintain historic authenticity, leaving the basic original structure intact.

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

It was found that there were several problems with the bridge that threatened its stability. The cantilevered pedestrian walkway added in the 1940's was causing racking and distortion of the trusses, and storms had damaged the abutments and accelerated rot of various structural members.

Improvements included widened abutments, the replacement of the walkway with an independently supported timber-clad pedestrian bridge, replacement of some decking, several floor beams, and roof repairs. The project tied in with a roadway, sidewalk, and streetscape project benefiting the adjacent downtown merchants and visitors. Closed for the work, the bridge was re-opened to traffic in November 2015.

It is interesting to cross the bridge on the walkway and look down at the Mad River. The bedrock outcrop supporting the north abutment juts into the current,

creating the swirl that gives the bridge its other name. The bridge's surroundings are very picturesque and capture the essence of an old fashioned New England village.

To complete the tour, continue south six miles on Route 100 to Warren village.

## Warren

The town of Warren was chartered to John Throop and Associates on November 9, 1780. The Mad River running through its center developed Warren as a mill town. The town hosted a hoe handle factory; a clothes pin factory; a dowel, chair stock, and rolling pin mill; and the Warren Wooden Bowl factory. Walter Bagley, the builder of the Lincoln Gap Bridge, manufactured clapboards in South Hollow for several years.

## Lincoln Gap Bridge – 1880

[WGN 45-12-15]

The Lincoln Gap Bridge crosses the Mad River just east of Route 100 at Warren village, about one mile north of westbound Lincoln Gap Road. The 62-foot structure, ten feet of its gable end overhang, is one of two bridges in Vermont in which the truss interior and exterior are completely enclosed. The other is the School House Bridge in Lyndon.

Walter Bagley built the Lincoln Gap Bridge in 1880. Bagley's claim to fame may be the peculiar construction of the bridge he left us.



*Lincoln Gap Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1995*

The bridge is located within the village Historic Residential District. The village stands in the folds of a jumble of short, steep hillocks, displaying a mix of old New England and Victorian architecture. The old milldam stands a ruin downstream from the bridge.

## 100-Year-Old Wooden Bridge Sags: Some Weigh Sentiment vs. Safety

by William Poole

Dummerston, Vt.

(UPI) – In 1872 Caleb Lamson built the 280-foot long covered bridge that spans the scenic West River.

Its lattice work sides added to the beauty of the winding, boulder-strewn river. And, for more than 100 years, it served as a symbol of Vermont and of a nostalgic longing for the lost art of wooden bridge craftsmanship.

But now the bridge is beginning to show signs of sagging. As a result, Neal Templeton, covered bridge enthusiast and loan officer at a bank in nearby Brattleboro, would like to see something done to preserve the wooden, lattice type structure.

Templeton's hobby is making models of covered bridges. He told Dummerston selectmen about a year ago of a study he made of the Dummerston bridge. That study, according to Templeton, showed several braces were in bad condition and the bridge was sagging in at least one place. He suggested an appraisal be made to find out what work needed to be done to restore the bridge to top condition.

As a result of Templeton's request, the Vermont Highway Department pounded a series of nails into the bridge last October to see how much, if any, the bridge is shifting. Early this November, Templeton viewed the nails and determined the bridge has shifted noticeably since last year. The bridge has bowed enough, he said, to cause water to drip on the slats of its north side. On the south side, he noticed a slight buckle near the center of the two-span bridge.

The most recent major renovation of the bridge was in 1948, when some \$21,000 was spent to put in a new floor. "Since that repair work, there have been numerous accidents on the one lane bridge," says Clifford Emery, the town's road commissioner. "The bridge," he says, "is posted for a limit of 10 tons and has a clearance of 11 feet 3 inches." But he says tall trucks have splintered a number of trusses that the town has been forced to repair, and on occasion overweight trucks have been seen using the bridge.

The state's district highway engineer, John Clifford, said the bridge floor was resurfaced this year with tar, oil, sand, and stone to help prevent moisture from

harming the bed of the bridge. When told of the visible buckling, Clifford said the state highway department was trying to figure out if the shifting was done over an extended period of time or had actually shifted all at once. Clifford said if a check of the bridge shows movement of one-sixteenth of an inch or more, then the department will go back to a bridge expert to correct the situation. He added that visible changes in the sides of the bridge had nothing to do with the structural strength of the bridge. But town road commissioner Emery was skeptical about the chances of the state taking any action on the bridge. "There's a lot of sentiment for the bridge," he said, "but there probably won't be much done about its 'permanent' structure."

[From *The Vermont Sunday News*, 12/5/1976, contributed by Rai 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.

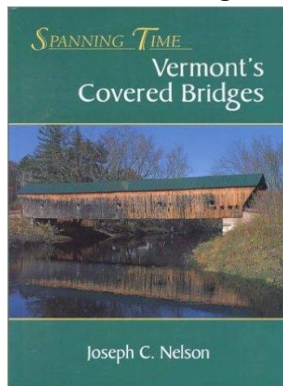
Librarian Warren Tripp has created a detailed book list complete with a description and critique of each book. Copies of the index are available by mail, or you may contact Joe Nelson for an electronic copy at [jcarlnelson@yahoo.com](mailto:jcarlnelson@yahoo.com), or go to <http://www.vermontbridges.com/whatis.vcbs.htm#item7>. 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, [fftwt@yahoo.com](mailto:fftwt@yahoo.com), phone 802-476-8637.

# For Sale

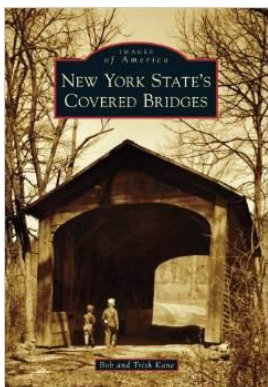
## Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges by

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 of Shelburne, VT. Spanning Time is available directly from the author for \$25.00, free shipping. For reviews of the book, go to: [www.vermontbridges.com/bookreviews.htm](http://www.vermontbridges.com/bookreviews.htm). Send your check or money order to: VCBS, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05489.*

## 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. For a copy of the tour, contact: Bob and Trish Kane, 167 Williams Rd., Sherburne, NY 13460 607-674-9656 Email: [bob-trish68@frontiernet.net](mailto:bob-trish68@frontiernet.net)

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

802.644.8183

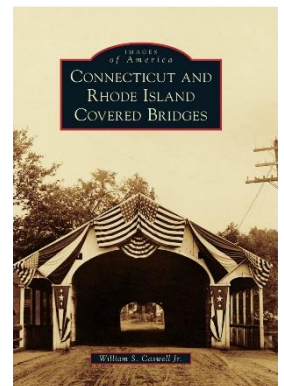
**A special sale** for the benefit of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society featuring the works of Eric Tobin. All proceeds of the unframed prints go to the VCBS. Sale of the framed prints will be shared 50/50. They are all Giclée on acid free paper. The glass is non-glare artists glass.

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

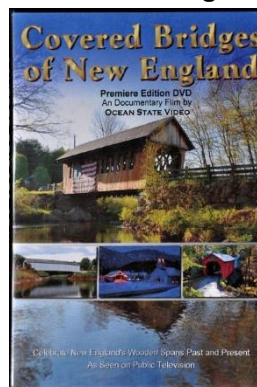


## Connecticut and Rhode Island Covered Bridges .

**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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