

THE BRIDGER



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter – Issue #78

Events

Vermont Covered Bridge Society Fall Meeting

October 5, 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 Jan Lewandoski, of Restoration and Traditional Building, will present *John Johnson's Wooden Bridges in Vermont and Quebec: 1800-1842*.

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.

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 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 Fox Hollow Road #301, Lenox, MA 01240, email: wcarroll@crocker.com

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

Secretary: Sarah Pierce, 7 Polygraphic Lane, Apt 7n, North Bennington, VT 05257, email: srahpierce@yahoo.com

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

Election Slate Complete

- by Joe Nelson, Acting Nominations Coordinator

With the summer issue of *The Bridger*, we began the process of electing VCBS officers for two-year terms to begin on January 1, 2020. The Vermont Covered Bridge Society membership who asked for candidates to run for the offices of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

As the election slate now stands, Steve Miyamoto will run for Vice President, incumbent Dan Monger will continue as Treasurer, and incumbent Sarah Pierce as Secretary. I will run for President. Challenging candidates have yet to come forward. The Society bylaws governing elections read 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.

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 invited to participate, giving of their time and talent. If you don't wish to run for one of the four offices, you are urged to join a committee or join the Board of Directors by chairing a standing committee or a bridge watch area.

Volunteers please contact Joe Nelson at icarlnelson@yahoo.com, or at P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465.

Publicity Update

- Reported by Steve Miyamoto, Chair

Positively Vermont Interview – Joe Nelson and I were interviewed by host Dennis McMahon as guests on a Burlington cable TV station, where we talked about covered bridges and the VCBS. https://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/programs/vermont-covered-bridge-society?fbclid=IwAR170HS4c5kzLy_qu2BkQ_wzMz5NUqiNisqv1ObYvGa3Tp4PSlw-zyihHM0.

New England Cable Network – Joe Nelson was part of an NECN feature on covered bridges in Vermont. https://www.necn.com/news/new-england/14-Places-to-Visit-on-Next-Trip-to-Vermont-511413501.html?akmobile=o&fbclid=IwAR2kAtiV1_xcy

[MpNUmQr0DHVOj8xbJfw7aHaenzGvB77sssct_QB6vwor nA](https://www.wcax.com/video?vid=547695552&fbclid=IwAR2jUfbfOOXbDGRQSNxDkb9xQxHTCUogH_ASOkYWMaOWoryGqbnP07_GcNA)

WCAX Interview – I was invited to be interviewed live on the local CBS channel, WCAX, on their *News at 5:30* program. Host Galen Ettlin focused on the recent damage to Vermont's covered bridges. We talked about this current trend, VCBS's involvement, and how people can get involved.

https://www.wcax.com/video?vid=547695552&fbclid=IwAR2jUfbfOOXbDGRQSNxDkb9xQxHTCUogH_ASOkYWMaOWoryGqbnP07_GcNA

Social Media – Outreach continues on the Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter platforms. We are now up to 690 followers on the Vermont's Covered Bridges Facebook group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/386732861799546/>

We have purchased a one-year subscription to *The Caledonian Record* and received permission to use their covered bridge articles as news items on our social media and website platforms. *The Caledonian Record* serves northeastern Vermont, where there are a number of covered bridges.

I continue to publish news items on the website and social media as stories happen. There are news items from Vermont and around the country. https://vermontbridges.org/vcbs_news_and_notes.shtml.

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 unfortunately be purged from the membership list.

We now have 125 memberships, including:

- 0 Student
- 35 Individual Yearly
- 19 Family Yearly
- 43 Single Lifetime
- 25 Couple Lifetime
- 3 Business, Organization, or Municipality

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

September

04 Richard St. Peter
 05 Robert Salvi
 09 Tom Walczak
 10 Gordon & Priscilla O'Reilly
 11 Dan Monger & Cathleen Teel
 15 Henry Rowse
 17 Doris Taylor
 23 Susan Komeshok
 25 Bonnie Shultz

October

09 Erwin & Virginia Eckson
 11 Trish Kane
 12 Joyce Orr (1940)
 20 Phil Pierce
 21 Arnie & Melanie Schropp
 22 Ellen Everitz
 28 Joyce Soroka

November

04 James Crouse & Jane Porter
 Gresham
 13 Bruce Wagner
 16 Dan Monger
 18 Cheryl Cullick
 18 Euclid Farnham
 18 Bob & Mary Ann Waller
 22 Marikka Guay
 25 Richard & Gloria Davis

How Can You Help Preserve Your Town's Covered Bridge?

- by Peter Cosgrove

Last summer I decided to begin taking photos of all the covered bridges in Vermont. After reading a number of books on Vermont covered bridges and often visiting the VCBS website, I decided to join. I mentioned that I have time to do volunteer work with the Society and after several discussions, I was mailed the *Bridge Watchers Manual*, along with a note about the Adopt-a-Bridge program. In both cases, you need to know about covered bridges in your town. Not knowing whether I wanted to adopt a bridge or watch a bridge, it became apparent that I had to get to know a bridge.

The manual suggested going to the Town Clerk's office to research information, including the state Agency of Transportation's (AOT) biennial report on the condition of the bridges in each town.

I decided to see if the AOT website might contain the reports and was pleased to learn that they are available online. The report on the bridge I wanted to study was both informative and, to the novice eye, quite disturbing. I met with our Town Manager, who had not read the report. Like me, he was unsure of the report's meaning, particularly the summary. He said he would contact the Road Foreman and AOT to get a sense of things. Depending on what he learned there, the next step might be to hire an engineering firm to study the

bridge and write a report for the town. I'm not sure what the end results may be, but it seems the ball is rolling.

Below are the steps to download the bridge reports from the AOT website. The first line of text in bold is the command structure followed by a narrative explanation.

Searching the AOT bridge database:

1. [www.vtrans.vermont.gov > homepage]
 type: www.vtrans.vermont.gov, which will take you to AOT's homepage.
2. [homepage > A-Z Browse > B > Bridge Inspection Reports]
 homepage: On the left-hand column, click on A-Z Browse, which will take you to an alphabetic listing. Under B, click on Bridge Inspection Reports, which will take you to:
3. [Bridge Inspection Reports > Web Map Interface]
 Below the title, Bridge Inspection Reports, click on the underlined text, web map interface.
4. [web map interface > Vermont Bridge Inspection Map]
 Opening in a new window: 1. In the upper left corner, type your town's name. 2. Click on the + symbol to enlarge until you can read the street names in your town.

5. [Vermont Bridge Inspection Map > map dot > Zoom to] Click on one of the dots indicating a bridge that you believe is the one you're searching for, which will open a small window with the information about that bridge. At the lower left of this new window, click on "Zoom to," which will provide a close-up and information about this particular bridge, including bridge type, which will tell you whether or not it is a covered bridge. Toward the bottom of this window, you will see "Inspection Report" followed by "View." Click on view to see the information. If it is not the bridge you are searching for, click on another likely dot and repeat the process.

If you choose to select photos, you will be taken to another window, entitled Browse, which will list individual photos (IMG_0000), which will open another window. NOTE: If you click on one of the image icons, it will open another window and not likely bring up a photo. Instead, provided you have Adobe Acrobat Reader, click on "Plot Set PDF: town name 00000.pdf" in

the text in the upper left corner, which will upload all of the photos that were filed with the report.

So, now you will have the information. The next question: Is there someone in your community who should know about this information?

Update on my contacts:

1. *The Pittsford Town Manager discussed my concerns with the AOT. They agreed and said they will help find funds (likely a grant) to hire an engineering firm to help the town get a more thorough study of the Depot Covered Bridge.*

2. *I had a phone conversation with the Section Chief of the Division of Historic Sites about the condition of the Hammond Covered Bridge. She said the bridge is "more problematic than she had realized."*

Bridge Watch

Pulp Mill Bridge in Middlebury

Irene Barna attended two recent meetings of the town of Middlebury Selectboard, as well as a meeting of the Infrastructure Committee, regarding a proposal of the installation of protective structures to prevent oversized trucks from damaging the Pulp Mill Bridge. Damage could likely occur as construction necessitates the closure of VT 125 and VT 30 through downtown Middlebury during the summer of 2020.

The following appears in the online report of Selectboard Meeting Highlights of Tuesday, August 13, 2019:

"In response to concerns brought to the Selectboard recently by resident Irene Barna over the possibility that oversized trucks detoured from Main Street during next

summer's Bridge & Rail Project street closure might attempt to cross Pulp Mill Bridge and damage it, DPW Planning Director Dan Werner reported that the Infrastructure Committee had endorsed a staff recommendation to investigate with VTrans the installation of electronic signs at both ends of the bridge to warn drivers."

Following the May 28 meeting on her first suggestion of preventative structures, (a separate article regarding the proposal was published in the *Addison Independent*), many residents voiced support in agreement of the suggestion.

It was brought to the attention of the Selectboard that in 2019 alone, there have been five Vermont covered bridges damaged by oversized trucks.

A Covered Bridge Tour – Touring the Town of Montgomery

- by Joe Nelson

Montgomery, named for Revolutionary War hero Richard Montgomery of New York, was chartered by the Vermont General Assembly on March 15, 1780. General

Montgomery commanded American forces under General Schuyler in the expedition against Canada. The

Americans took Montreal but were defeated in front of Quebec City, where Montgomery was killed.

The town of Montgomery holds bragging rights as the Vermont town with the most covered bridges, boasting six inside the town limits and one on the northern border – the most of any town in the state, country, and as some claim, the world. As recently as the 1940s, there were thirteen covered bridges in use there, most of them built by Savannard and Sheldon Jewett, dating from the 1860s to the 1890s. The brothers used timber from their family farm on West Hill and dressed the lumber in their own mill there.

The northern edge of the Green Mountain chain rises around the town of Montgomery on three sides. The valleys among the foothills are blessed with small rivers and streams. Fed in the spring by melting mountain snows and in the summer by the rains that make the Green Mountains green, the streams usually kept millponds filled for much of the year. With a wealth of waterpower and accessible forests, Montgomery became a town of mills, turning spruce, beech, birch, maple, and hemlock into sap buckets, butter tubs, bobbins, and veneer.

Factories sprang up by the streams, sharing the waters. The peak growth years for the mills stretched from the 1860s into the 1890s, the years during which the Jewetts built their bridges. Each new mill created the need to cross the stream that powered it, so the boom years of mill construction led to a flurry of bridge building as well.

Montgomery Center

There are two settlements in the town, about two miles apart – Montgomery Village and Montgomery Center, the Center being the seat of the town government. There the most famous enterprise was the Nelson and Hall Company veneer factory. Nelson and Hall operated the mill that made the veneer for the Victrola Company's cabinets. The mill works stood across the Trout River from the bridge on Route 118 near the junction of Route 242. A scattering of other mills operated there, along the South Branch of the Trout River. Jewett-built covered bridges stand near two of the old mill sites south of town.

Hectorville Bridge – 1883 [WGN 45-06-06X]

Gone! While surveying the Montgomery covered bridges in May 2003, this writer was stunned to see vacant abutments where Montgomery's Hectorville Bridge had stood since 1899.

According to the Town Clerk, the bridge had been taken down sometime in October 2002, its trusses and roof put into storage in the yard of St. Onge Construction. The town had hired an engineer, who advised the town that the bridge was unlikely to survive that winter's heavy snows.



Hectorville Bridge, photo by Scott Perry, August 2003

The stored bridge continues to be the object of curiosity and amusement, as many still stop and take its picture. In the meantime, a group of townspeople has been charged by the Selectboard to recommend where the bridge should be restored and to provide an estimated cost for the project.

While the Hectorville Bridge's Gibou Road site is an exceptionally beautiful one, featuring a pool and a waterfall, it was much too far from the population center to protect it from the tender mercies of vandals.

The bridge was originally built in Montgomery Village in 1883 by Savannard and Sheldon Jewett and was moved over the South Branch of the Trout River in 1899 to serve Gibou Road and a tub factory now long gone.

When the truss began to fall, a jury rig was added to the truss in the form of inverted "V" braces that supported steel cables attached to a log slung under the floor. This led to a new truss type: *Town & King*, in the National Society's *World Guide to Covered Bridges*. The bridge was ultimately retired and bypassed with a concrete and steel span.

The bridge is gone, as is the hamlet of Hectorville. Maybe somewhere in the spirit world, the bridge and the hamlet are together again.

Gibou Road leaves the west side of Route 118, approximately six miles north of the junction of Route 109 at Belvidere Corners, or 1.6 miles south of the junction of Route 242 in downtown Montgomery Center.

Hutchins Bridge – 1883 [WGN 45-06-07]

The Hutchins Bridge stands in a quiet valley, out of view of the busy highway. A narrow unpaved road leads the traveler to the portal of the bridge. It is easy to imagine, in this isolated spot, that one has returned to the nineteenth century.



Hutchins Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 10/20/2009

However peaceful this site appears to be, it would be wrong to think of the Hutchins Bridge's history as idyllic and bucolic. This was a busy spot in 1883, as the moss-covered foundations just south of the west portal reveal. Here, Joseph Hutchins' five-lathe factory produced 2,000 butter tubs a day. The bridge resounded with the arrival of the mill workers at dawn, and again with their departure at dusk. Teams of horses clattered through, bringing logs of spruce, hemlock, and basswood while other teams took the completed butter tubs away. The bustle stopped only when night fell. Over the years, as industry and society changed, the activity waned, until it finally stopped altogether as the factory shut its doors for good.

Maps dating from 1858 and 1871 depict the town of Montgomery as it was in the mid-19th century. While the maps predate the Hutchins Covered Bridge, some other kind of bridge was there. On the west side of the bridge stood the tub factory. On the hill overlooking the

factory, stood the residence of the factory owner of the time: William H. Stiles.

The Agency of Transportation Covered Bridge Study team inspected the bridge in 1994 and found it to be in such poor condition that they recommended prompt attention to restore its capacity to safely support traffic. The agency asked the town to close the bridge until repairs were made. "I" beams were installed atop each side of the bridge deck, and the bridge continued in use by the single residence it served.

A repair project began in November 2008 and was completed in October 2009. The winning bid was \$1,085,869.93 by Alpine Construction of Schuylerville, New York. The bid included a temporary bridge.

Take Hutchins Bridge Road, leaving the west side of Route 118, 1.2 miles south of the junction with Route 242. Turn west here and you will find a crossroad. Drive straight through, downhill and around a curve to the renewed Hutchins Bridge.

Montgomery Village

White painted portals and splash-panels give the three bridges in and near Montgomery Village a clean, cared-for look. The Fuller Bridge, the Comstock Bridge, and the Longley Bridge, are marked with wooden cutout letters placed high on the gable ends – additional evidence of tender, loving care. A fourth span, the Creamery Bridge, is unpainted, but like all of Montgomery's covered bridges, it is marked with a signboard testifying to the Jewetts' craftsmanship and its year of construction.

Fuller Bridge – 1890 [WGN 45-06-05#2]

The Fuller, or Black Falls, Bridge stands in the heart of Montgomery Village and is very much a part of village life. In season, it is decorated with Christmas wreaths and lights.

The Fuller Bridge crosses Black Falls Brook in sight of Route 118. The Black Falls Brook powered J. E. Smith's bobbin factory, and the Jewetts built the 50-foot span in 1890 to replace an open bridge that had collapsed under the weight of a load of bobbins from the factory. The company built a mill town at the end of the present-day Black Falls Road, complete with a 50-room dormitory and 26 mill houses. No trace of the mill town remains.

The bridge was restored in 1981, but it needed attention again soon thereafter. In early winter 1982,

Montgomery's road crew knew there was a problem when a logging truck passed the town garage dragging Christmas lights and pieces of roof rafter. There were bits of roof scattered for one-half mile. The road foreman said, "We had just put the lights up for the season." The trucker was obviously feeling very little pain when he drove through the bridge; he didn't notice when his boom hooked into the tie beams and dragged off the new roof. The bridge served through the winter with the trusses braced with cables. A new roof was installed the following spring.



Fuller Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 7/13/2000

In April 1993, an inspection found the bridge to be in need of rehabilitation, and then the flood of June 15, 1997, applied the coup de grâce by damaging the upstream truss. It was resolved to build a new structure to support modern traffic.

Work began in April 2000. The roof that was replaced in 1982 was lifted off and set aside while the rest of the structure was disassembled and replaced with all new build. The job was completed in August with the reinstallation of the now historic roof. When visiting the bridge, look for the robin's nest in the eaves.

The Fuller Bridge stands next to Route 118, 2.3 miles north of the junction of Route 242 in Montgomery Center. Continue north on Route 118 about one-half mile to find the Comstock Bridge.

Comstock Bridge – 1883 [WGN 45-06-04]

The 69-foot Comstock Bridge crosses the Trout River. It serves a piece of the old road to Berkshire, now called Comstock Bridge Road, that provides access to Route 118 for a few homes. The bridge's surroundings are

park-like, through the efforts of the adjoining property owners.

The Comstock Bridge features a side port unique to the area; it exposes the lattice truss and lends the bridge a trim and jaunty look. Not installed for appearance, the port allows bridge users a glimpse around a sharp bend in the road. The abutments are of irregular stone laid without mortar. The west abutment stands on exposed bedrock. The span was built in 1883 near the mill works of entrepreneur John Comstock, a miller, grain dealer, and manufacturer of carriages and sleighs.



Comstock Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, July 1997

In 2002, Vermont Transportation Agency (VTrans) inspectors found an alarming amount of rot in the trusses and roof. Work began in June 2003 to be completed in September.

As is often the case with covered bridges, there is damage that cannot be determined until siding and roofing are removed. VTrans viewed the Comstock as one of the covered bridges that was in reasonably good condition and expected that a goodly amount of the bridge's original fabric could be retained. However, as the roofing was removed, the floor of the bridge was littered with rotten cedar shingles and broken purlins, many so rotted they crumbled at a touch. The bridge swarmed with carpenter ants evicted from their nests among the shingles. The metal roof had been installed years before without removing the old wooden shingles. Rotted ridgepole, lattice, and chord members were replaced, and a new nail-lam floor was installed. The bridge was opened to traffic in November, ready to serve for another 100 years.

To find the West Hill, or Creamery Bridge, pass through the Comstock Bridge, heading west to Route 118, then go left. There are two roads leaving the south side of Route 118 west of Montgomery Village, one at each end of a cement bridge. One is named West Hill Road, and the other is Hill West Road. Perhaps some Yankee humor is at work here. Because Creamery Bridge Road joins both roads, you may take either.

Creamery Bridge – 1883 [WGN 45-06-09]

The first glimpse of the Creamery Bridge is of the rooftop peeking through a sheltering screen of hemlock and black birch. The little bridge, spanning 59 feet, crosses West Hill Brook high above a cascade of crystal clear water deep in a hollow on the south slope of West Hill.



Creamery Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, March 2006

In 1873, when the bridge was built, West Hill was a busy place. Besides the Jewett family farm and dimension lumber mill, there were 49 active farms. A creamery stood just east of the bridge, and there was a furniture factory in the lower West Hill Brook gorge.

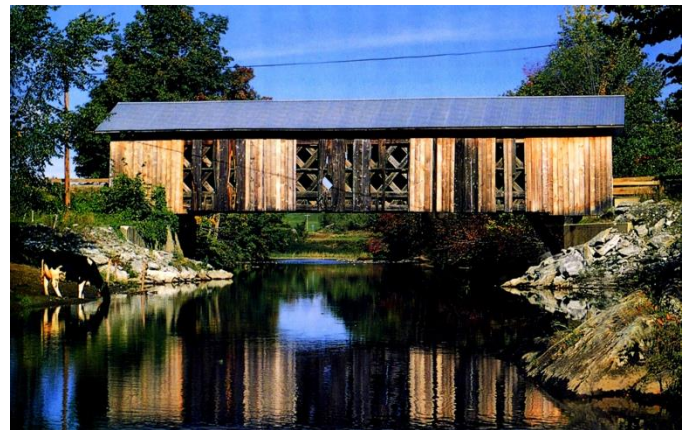
Structural problems forced the closing of the bridge in the summer of 1994. An inspection team recommended interim rehabilitation to avoid collapse under its own weight and snow loading. The bridge was closed with concrete barriers. Over time, water washing down into the bridge from the east end contributed to the rotting of the floor and floor timbers.

Alpine Construction of Schuylerville, New York, began work on Montgomery's Creamery Bridge on West Hill in September 2008. The work was completed in September 2009. The winning bid was \$598,632.30. The work

included repairs to the roof system, trusses, floor, abutments, and both road approaches.

Longley Bridge – 1863 [WGN 45-06-08#2]

The Longley Bridge stood crisp and clean, with new deck, roof, and siding after Jan Lewandoski restored the 85-foot span during the fall and winter of 1992. Also called the Samuel Head Bridge, it crossed the Trout River north of the village, serving Longley Flat Road, giving access to the Enosburg Town Forest and East Enosburg.



Longley Bridge, photo by Joe Nelson, 1997

Soon, however, the old span could no longer be expected to safely carry modern traffic. The bridge had to be strengthened to support emergency service vehicles and a milk tank truck serving a dairy farm.

The town rejected the idea of a modern span to bypass the Longley but opted to replace it with a new covered bridge capable of handling 40,000 pounds, the historic bridge to be taken down and stored for erection elsewhere. Farewell, old friend. You will be missed.

Alpine Construction of Mt. Holley, VT, began construction of the new Longley Bridge on December 30, 2017. Their bid of \$1,035,899.80 included "replacement of the town lattice trusses, installation of a new flooring system, replacement of siding and steel roofing, minor substructure and approach work, and removal of the existing temporary bridge."

Work on the Longley Covered Bridge in Montgomery was completed, and the bridge was opened to traffic on November 6, 2017. The first to drive across were Stanley and Lucinda Longley, whose nearby farm has been in the family for over 150 years.

Enosburgh

The Enosburgh Township was granted to Roger Enos and 59 associates on March 12, 1789, by the Vermont General Assembly and chartered on May 15, 1780. The town was named for Roger Enos, a commander of Vermont Forces in the American Revolution. He was also Ira Allen's father-in-law.

Hopkins Bridge – 1875 [WGN 45-06-01#2]

The Hopkins Bridge, built by the Jewett brothers, stands just over the Enosburgh-Montgomery town line off Route 118, 1.3 miles north of the Longley Bridge. The portal is unpainted and there is no name plate, but it is distinguished by a carefully-lettered formula sign that reads, "Slow Autos to 10 Miles an Hour Horses to a Walk per Order Selectmen."



Hopkins Bridge, by Joe Nelson, June 1, 2000

The road served by the Hopkins Bridge once connected Enosburgh Post Office, now Enosburg Center, and East Enosburg with East Berkshire and Richford. If there was any other reason for the bridge's existence, the evidence is gone. Any dams or foundations that might have been here to indicate industry have been erased from the rich bottom land lying along the twisting and turning course of the Trout River.

Today the bridge serves a dairy farm and several residences. It was closed and bypassed with a temporary bridge when, in 1993, the Agency of Transportation Covered Bridge inspection team found it to be "severely over-stressed." The report recommended general structural rehabilitation.

Then, in 1999, the bridge was reconstructed as part of a study called *The Apparent Reserve Load Carrying Capacity of Covered Bridges*. It had been found that covered bridges can carry more weight than analyses of just the trusses indicate. The additional carrying capacity, it was thought, must come from the curbs, upper chord truss bracing, the roof system, wood flooring, and floor beams acting as a unit. The theory was tested as the Hopkins Bridge was reconstructed. The most obvious clue to the testing activity can be seen in the hardware used to attach the knee braces, unique to this bridge.

The Last One in Use

- by Ed Price

February 20, 1968 – Located in Swanton, and bridging the past century and this one, is the only covered railroad bridge in use in Vermont.

Spanning the Missiquoi River, the structure was built in 1899; it is 381.5 feet long, with double, wooden latticework.

A spokesman for the St. Johnsbury and Lamoille County Railroad told the MESSENGER, this morning, that the covered span is not likely to be razed or entirely abandoned. At least not in the foreseen future.

"It is in fair condition," he said, "but eventually we will use it only for work crews going into Swanton. Freight in and out of Swanton will be shuttled through Fonda

Junction. Our engineers put a top limit of weight it may carry at 200,000 pounds.

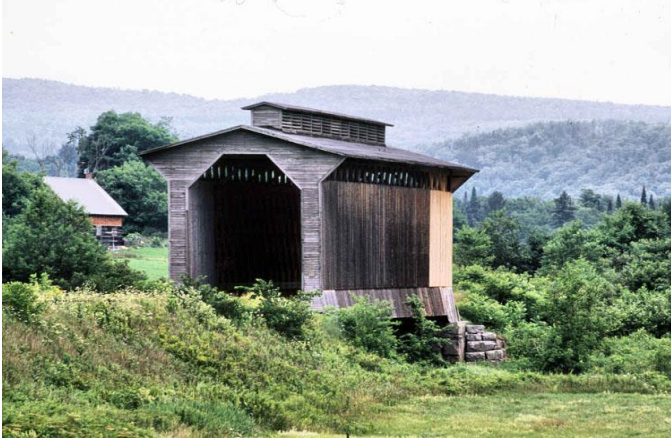
"Bridge 45 in East Wolcott is another matter. We have given up using it although we have gone to considerable expense reinforcing it with steel beams. This one was constructed in 1908 and is 103 feet long."

The Vermont Board of Historic Sites has authorized \$9,000 of its funds to further protect Bridge 45 and a number of historical societies are seeking \$5,000 from the public to complete the project.

While it is understood that the East Wolcott span has been touted as "Vermont's last covered railroad bridge,"

the Vermont Department of Development admits this is not so; the actuality of the Swanton span proves this.

A VDD official said, "The reasoning in back of the fund drive to preserve the East Wolcott Bridge is because of its unique construction – it may be the only wooden bridge existing in the nation with ventilators on its roof."



The term "Vermont's last covered railroad bridge" raised the ire of loyal Swantonion Ben Gravel. He wrote to the MESSENGER, "Don't let anyone tell you that the little bridge near Wolcott is the only covered railroad bridge in the state. I think someone should look around a bit. Come to Swanton; go up Church Street to the cemetery and look across. You can see another covered bridge.

"It spans the Missisquoi River and is more than twice as long as the East Wolcott one. It is in use every day, with Carloads of limestone, etc., going over it.

"If you wish to get closer to it, go up South River Street and the end of the bridge is not over 30 feet from the highway."

[From the St. Albans Weekly Messenger; 2/20/1968, contributed by Rae Laitres]

For Sale, One Covered Bridge

Warner, NH, Sept. 10, 1937, (ap) – Selectmen of this town today posted notices announcing that an old wooden bridge over the Warner River will be sold to the highest bidder. Bids will be opened on Sept. 15, the selectmen said.

Officials agreed that aside from the wood in the span there is little use for the wooden structure.

Note: This is possibly the Bagley Bridge of Warner, Merrimack County, NH. Built in the 1830s and removed 28 Dec 1966.

According to Covered Spans of Yesteryear, the Bagley Bridge was rebuilt in 1866 by H. B. Harriman and Walter Davis replacing an earlier bridge built in 1853 by Davis, Joshua Sanborn, and others. It was abandoned in 1948, sold for one dollar in 1966 and trucked away. The roads in the area were realigned for construction of I-89.

[From the St. Albans Weekly Messenger; 9/16/1937, contributed by 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.

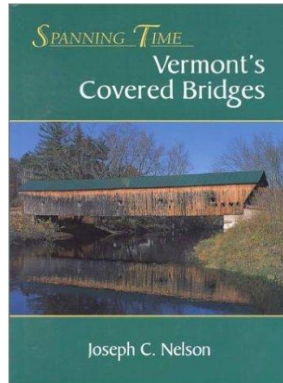
Librarian Warren Tripp has created a detailed book list complete with a description and critique of each book. Copies of the index are available by mail, or you may contact Joe Nelson for an electronic copy at jcarlnelson@yahoo.com, or go to <http://www.vermontbridges.com/whatis.vcbs.htm#item7>. A borrower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

For Sale

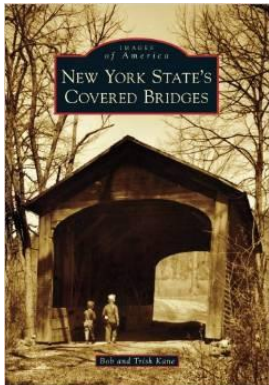
Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges by

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 at P.O. Box 575, Shelburne, VT 05482. *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. 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 covered 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, 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, 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 work of Eric Tobin. All proceeds of the unframed prints go to the VCBS. Sales 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.

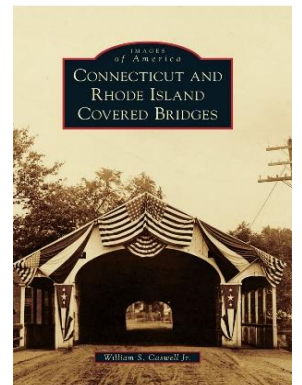
- 10x12
- \$125 unframed
- 16x20
- \$175 unframed
- 16x20 \$550 Matted and framed
- 20x24 \$850 Matted and framed



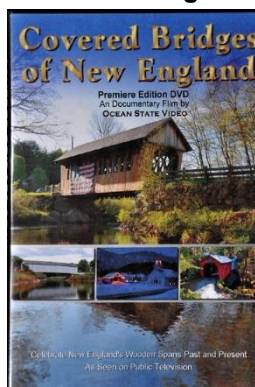
Connecticut and

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. Profits go to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society's Save-A-Bridge Program. For your copy, send \$20.00 plus \$2.75 shipping and \$1.20 Vermont sales tax to VCBS, c/o Joe Nelson, P.O. Box 267, Jericho, VT 05465-0267.



Membership Application

(Business or Society please provide name of contact person)

New Member Renewing Member

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Check type of membership

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

Life Single - \$150 Life Couple - \$200

Business/Organization/Municipality - \$15

Sign me up for PDF version of newsletter

We are a 501c3 non-profit organization.

(Federal tax deductible.)

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

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

Paddleford - \$200 Whipple - \$250

(Memberships valid to the end of the current calendar year.)

Dues and Donations will be used to promote preservation of covered bridges.)

Please make all checks for dues and donations payable to: The Vermont Covered Bridge Society.

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