

# THE BRIDGER



The Vermont Covered Bridge Society Newsletter – Issue #79

## Events

### Annual Fall Meeting Minutes

The minutes for the fall meeting will be posted at a later date.

- The Communications Committee

## Publicity Update

- Reported by Steve Miyamoto, Chair

Our social media efforts continue to bring Vermont's covered bridges to an ever-widening audience. Our Vermont's Covered Bridges Facebook group now has 825 members. This group is aimed at those people inside and outside of the society. We even have someone from the UK in the group.

VCBS member Peter Cosgrove has designed some recruitment posters to help promote the society and to encourage people to become members. We are in the final design stages and will be posting these soon on the website and on social media. Thanks, Peter!

Another promotional outreach, the 100 Covered Bridge Club Facebook group, was started in early October. The goal of this group is to encourage people to join and document their visits to all of our historical covered bridges. Members can download a checklist of the bridges and record the dates of their visits. They are also encouraged to post pictures of their visits. The group is modeled after the 251 Club, which encourages people to visit all 251 of Vermont's towns. So far, we have 33 members, and a handful of them have already completed the quest!

The VCBS website is undergoing some additions and expansions. We were granted permission by noted Vermont photographer John H. Knox to use his photos on our website. John's work has been featured on the cover of *Vermont Magazine*. Check out the new slideshow on the home page when you get a chance. The Community News and Notes from the original website are being migrated to the new website. So far, the years 2011-2018 have been completed. There is now a date-ordered index for each year. We hope to have this project completed by the time the spring 2020 newsletter is published.

I'm always looking for new ways to publicize the VCBS. Please email your ideas and suggestions to me at [vermontcoveredbridgesociety@gmail.com](mailto:vermontcoveredbridgesociety@gmail.com).

## 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 127 memberships, including:

- 1 Student
- 36 Individual Yearly
- 20 Family Yearly
- 45 Single Lifetime
- 22 Couple Lifetime
- 3 Business, Organization, or Municipality

President: Bill Carroll, 5 Fox Hollow Road #301, Lenox, MA 01240, email: [wcarroll@crocker.com](mailto:wcarroll@crocker.com)

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

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

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

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

#### December

01 Terry and Jane Shaw  
 06 Priscilla O'Reilly  
 20 Lyn Whiston  
 22 Richard Davis  
 23 Ed Barna  
 24 Dave and Marikka Guay  
 25 Ann Ovitt  
 26 Virginia Brackett  
 27 Steve and Susan Miyamoto

27 Dan Brock  
 30 Arnie Schropp  
 30 Gloria Davis  
 31 Jan Bramhall

#### January

12 Jim Patch  
 15 Dan Castellini  
 23 Ray and Adriene Hitchcock

#### February

02 Bill Caswell  
 07 Rick Cyphers  
 12 Joe and Ruth Nelson  
 12 Bob Cassidy  
 14 Richard Howrigan  
 24 John Weaver  
 26 David Guay  
 22 Marikka Guay  
 25 Richard & Gloria Davis

*Please note: If I have neglected to include anyone, please send me an email.*

## Happy 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to the Vermont Covered Bridge Society

This coming year – 2020 – marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society. We will be looking back at some of the significant events that have happened during those years. We will also hear from some of the people who have helped shape the society into what it is today. Watch the VCBS website and social media as we celebrate!

The Vermont Covered Bridge Society was incorporated in February 2000 by a group of six covered bridge enthusiasts. From the beginning, the mission has been clear: “to address the loss of these bridges and to preserve those bridges that remain.”

We extend a hearty THANKS to everyone who has been a part of these first 20 years! We will celebrate the anniversary at the spring meeting.

### Annual Spring Meeting

The Annual Spring Meeting will be hosted by Terry and Jane Shaw in Jeffersonville at the Visions of Vermont Art Gallery in May 2020 to celebrate the Vermont Covered

Bridge Society's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Details of the meeting will be announced in the spring edition of *The Bridger* (news deadline mid-February). Suggestions as to day, speaker, and activities will be gratefully received by Joe Nelson at [jcarlnelson@yahoo.com](mailto:jcarlnelson@yahoo.com). Many thanks to Terry and Jane.

### 2020 Election Slate Approved

The 2020 election slate has been approved by the Board of Directors. Joe Nelson, Steve Miyamoto, Dan Monger, and Sarah Pierce will begin their two-year terms on January 1, 2020, as President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, respectively. The 12 board members voted unanimously for approval.

Under Article 5 of the VCBS Constitution and Bylaws, if there are no opposing candidates for the offices of President, Vice President, Treasurer, or Secretary, balloting of the membership will be dropped and the Board of Directors will move to approve or disapprove the slate.

## Bridge Watch

### Lincoln Gap Bridge in Warren

- by John Weaver

The Vermont Agency of Transportation hired a design consultant to develop a rehabilitation plan. The plan,

which includes flooring and stringer replacement, as well as abutment facing work, has been submitted and reviewed.

## A Challenge for our “Local Roots”

- by Peter Cosgrove

*“Covered bridge will need major rehab in order to stay...”*

This alarming quote from a VTrans bridge inspection report could be about your local covered bridge. This article will challenge you to take a few simple steps to help make sure your bridge “stays.”

Twenty years ago this spring, the Vermont Covered Bridge Society was formed “to address concerns about the loss of Vermont’s historically significant spans.” William McKone, for whom “the society owes its existence,” stated in the first issue of *The Bridger* that “VCBS, with its statewide perspective and local roots...can serve a useful purpose in initiating actions, serving as a gathering place for information and a conduit for distributing it, and working with local governments.” We are now asking you, the - local roots - to take action.

We were recently informed that maintenance funding for covered bridges, which had been a separate line item in the VTrans budget, was folded into their overall bridge maintenance budget. That presents concerns for every town-owned covered bridge in Vermont. It is important that town officials are informed if their covered bridge is in peril.

This very brief and simple task which we ask of you can help keep the officials informed. We would like you to obtain the inspection report for your bridge, visually check the bridge and grade it’s overall condition, and submit your findings to be added to our database. What a great opportunity to include your kids or grandkids and involve them in learning about covered bridges and Vermont history.

The bridge you choose to evaluate can be in your town or in a nearby town in your county. If you read in our last newsletter how easy it was to download Vermont Agency of Transportation’s (VAOT) covered bridge reports, you will find that it is now even easier, thanks to our webmaster, Steve Miyamoto, who included the reports on the VCBS home page.

There are 101 covered bridges listed in Vermont’s 14 counties, with only Grand Isle County not hosting a single bridge. We need you to help us grade as many covered bridges as possible, so we may help towns respond as needed. It will also help us build our own database. While VAOT is responsible for mailing out to each town a copy of the bridge inspection reports, those reports do not necessarily get to the appropriate person. This is where you can help.

You can begin by picking at least one covered bridge in your town or county and reviewing VAOT’s bridge report for that bridge. These are the steps for retrieving the report:

- Go to the VCBS home page at [www.vermontbridges.org](http://www.vermontbridges.org).
- Within the navigation bar at the top of the page, click on *CB Collections*, which will drop down a panel.
- Click on *CB Technical Data*, which will open a window with all the counties and graphic icons (push pins) representing each bridge.
- Click anywhere in the county you’re interested in, and another window will open with *Technical Data for the Bridges of (the named) County*, showing each of the county’s covered bridges.
- Click on the bridge that you’re interested in viewing. (NOTE: We are only interested in bridges owned by individual towns.)
- A new window will open with a photograph of the bridge and a data form. Under the column “Item” toward the bottom, the line will read, “VTrans Inspection Report with Past Notes.” To the immediate right, click on *Structure Inspection, Inventory, and Appraisal Sheet*. The report will open in the next window.

### THE REPORT

You may want to print the two-page bridge report. Also note at the bottom of the page is the underlined sentence “Click to View the Glossary.” This information will be helpful in understanding some of the verbiage and numbers on the first page of the report, so you might want to print it also.

At the top of the report is information such as the town name and the bridge name and number. Below that are six categories that include the condition of the bridge, age and service, etc., that the inspector completed. It is here that the Glossary is helpful. The second page, or backside of the report, provides the inspector's narrative, summarizing the overall condition of the bridge. This is where the inspector may state how serious or troubling the overall condition of the bridge is.

After you have reviewed the VAOT bridge report, visit your bridge and visually examine it, noting its overall condition. Assign the bridge a letter grade, representing its condition. (A for excellent, C for good, F for failing, or a letter in between, as appropriate.) Email your results to me at [jpetercos@gmail.com](mailto:jpetercos@gmail.com) in the following format:

- The town name and the bridge name and number (from the top of the bridge report)
- The letter grade (A-F) that you assigned to the bridge's condition
- A one or two sentence summary (which you may copy directly from the inspector's summary), as well as the date the summary was written
- Your name and email address

I will compile the results in a database. Information on bridges with a failing or very low grade will be passed on to either John Weaver, Chairman of the Bridge Watchers Committee, or to the entire Board at their annual winter meeting.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at [jpeterscos@gmail.com](mailto:jpeterscos@gmail.com) or call me at 802-483-6070.

#### BACKGROUND

I am asking you to accept this challenge as a result of my own experience with the covered bridges in my town. Nine months ago, I joined VCBS because I was interested in photographing covered bridges. I had also read Joe Nelson's book, *Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges*, and Ed Barna's book, *Covered Bridges of Vermont*. Since there are four covered bridges here in Pittsford, I initially used them to test various camera settings. And, in finding those settings, I found myself wanting to learn more about my subjects.

Six months ago, out of simple curiosity, I looked to see if VAOT's bridge reports were online. They are, and while reading about each bridge, I realized I was reading a piece of Vermont's history. The Depot Bridge, which I pass over every Saturday on my way to the town dump, had become for me like a comfortable shoe. I like the bridge. As I read the report on the Depot Bridge, I wondered who, if anyone, in town governance had seen this report. The next day, with a copy of the report in hand, I stopped by the Town Office to visit the Town Manager, John Haverstock. He had not seen the report, so I gave him a copy. After each of our meetings, which became monthly, I wrote a brief summary to Joe Nelson and John Weaver, and they responded with their insight and encouragement.

VAOT has worked with Mr. Haverstock to help him gain a better understanding of the situation and obtain a grant, which will help the town employ a contractor to improve the condition of our bridge.

The report summary on the Depot Bridge read, "10/29/2018 Covered bridge will need major rehab in order to stay due to significant sagging, twisting, and misalignment of members with multiple members having moderate to heavy deterioration with cracking and splitting members..." I kept looking at the phrase "in order to stay" and imagined the bridge getting up and leaving because it didn't have to be there if it wasn't being treated well. But "staying" in the context of this report could mean only one thing. It wouldn't be around much longer.

## A Covered Bridge Tour – Explore Vermont's Deep South

- by Joe Nelson

There are five covered bridges in the old towns of Vermont's southeast corner. All of them use Ithiel Town's plank lattice truss, but each bridge is unique in

character. The two longest covered bridges in Vermont cross the West River in Townshend and in Dummerston – one of them is really three bridges, and

the other is just two. The Williamsville Bridge in Newfane has a unique-to-Vermont gable end treatment. The Green River Bridge in Guilford has few rivals in the beauty of its setting. The bypassed Creamery Bridge in Brattleboro is a garden spot.

## The Tour

For travelers from the Grafton area, the tour leaves Cambridgeport on Route 35 for Townshend, 10 miles distant. At the junction with Route 30, turn right, west, to the Scott Bridge. After exploring the Scott, return to Townshend Village and continue on Route 30 east to Grimes Hill Road or to Williamsville Road to the Williamsville Bridge. Return to Route 30 and drive east about two miles to the West Dummerston Bridge. Continue from West Dummerston on Route 30 to the junction of U.S. Route 5 in Brattleboro. On Route 5, drive south to the junction of Route 9. Go west on Route 9 about seven miles to the Creamery Bridge.

Drive over the Creamery Bridge bypass south on Guilford Street, then onto Guilford Street Extension. Turn right on Guilford Center Road and continue west to Stage Road and, finally, find the Green River Bridge. Travelers from the south can run this route backwards, starting in the Village of Guilford on U.S. Route 5.

Travelers from U.S. Route 5, take East West Road east to the West Dummerston Bridge. There, on Route 30, a left turn will take you to the Williamsville and Scott bridges. A turn to the right will take you back to U.S. Route 5. Continue south on Route 5 to Route 9, then go east to the Creamery Bridge.

## Townshend

Townshend was chartered in June 1753, but the town wasn't actually settled until the end of the French and Indian War in 1761, when the area became more secure. Colonel John Hazeltine of Bradford, Massachusetts, was Townshend's original grantee, and he, his wife, and his three daughters and their husbands came to occupy their lands in 1769. Hazeltine had fought in the French and Indian War, and he was a partner with Ethan Allen in an iron foundry business in Salisbury, Connecticut. Perhaps Hazeltine's connection to Ethan Allen explains why Townshend was the first town east of the Green Mountains to support independence at the Dorset Convention for the region that was to become Vermont.

The proceedings of a convention at Dorset in 1776: "At a convention of the several delegates from the towns on the west side of the range of the Green Mountains on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of July last consisting of 51 members,

representing 35 towns, and holden this day by adjournment [sic], by the representatives on the west and east side of the range of the Green Mountains; the following members being present viz 26 towns from west, 8 from east, 2 represented by letters voted to take suitable measures, as soon as may be, to declare the New Hampshire Grants a free and separate district, passed without dissenting voice."

Townshend village stands at the junction of Route 30 and Route 35. The bridges on the West River and Saxton's River are easily accessed from here. The Scott Bridge is approximately 1.5 miles north on Route 30. Eight miles south on Route 30, find Grimes Hill Road or Williamsville Road, and the Williamsville Bridge. West Dummerston Bridge lies just two more miles further south on Route 30.

## Scott Bridge – 1870 [WGN 45-13-13]

The Vermont Agency of Transportation closed the Scott Bridge to pedestrians on February 7, 2012, because of structural deficiencies. Serious problems were found with the top and bottom chords of the lattice span. The bridge had previously been closed to vehicles.



*Scott Bridge, Photo by Joe Nelson, 1997*

In July 2017, Renaud Brothers of Vernon, Vermont, completed a rehabilitation project at a cost of \$2,350,000 – 81% from a federal grant, and the rest from the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. At the official opening of the bridge on July 23, Park Chamberlin, a descendant of Harrison Chamberlin, cut the ribbon, opening the bridge again to pedestrian and cycle traffic only.

Harrison Chamberlin (1840-1924) was born in Townshend and served in the Civil War, including the Battle of Gettysburg. When he returned, he became the owner of a lumber mill on West Hill. He was known as a builder and furniture maker. His most important



structures were the four covered bridges in Townshend: Scott Bridge, being the first, in 1870, followed by Depot Bridge in 1872, Holland Bridge in 1875, and Harmonyville Bridge in 1879.



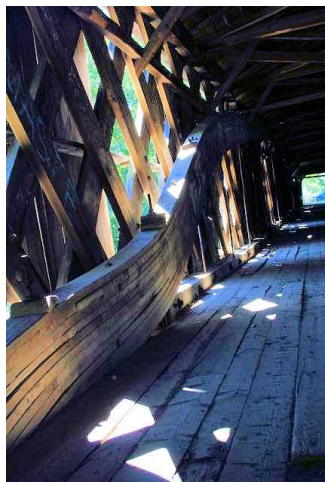
*Scott Bridge Celebration, Photo by Joe Nelson, 2017*

The Scott Bridge, named for the Henry Scott place, is actually three bridges constructed after the flood of 1869. The “over-the-river” section is a 166-foot plank lattice span, the longest single span in the state. A 111-foot section, incorporating two kingpost spans supported by a pier, crosses a gully on the west bank, making the whole affair 277 feet long. The kingpost truss uses iron rods rather than timber posts. The cost of the project was about \$5,200, using 51,514 board feet of lumber.

The Scott is one of the two longest wooden bridges within the state, rivaled only by the West Dummerston Bridge. The Cornish-Windsor span is longer, but it is in two states, crossing the Connecticut River to New Hampshire.

Probably because the plank lattice truss was built without the customary upper secondary chords and because of the great length of the span, the builder used four sets of buttresses to supplement the interior lateral braces. The kingpost section wasn't covered until 1873, when the plank lattice section required roof work. At that time, the town fathers had the entire bridge roofed.

Arches, laminated from 12 layers of three-inch plank, were added sometime later to the lattice section to strengthen the bridge. The ends of the arches were bedded below the lower chords at the east abutment and at the pier supporting the kingpost section. Iron rods



were suspended from the arch and bolted to the bottom chords. Over-adjustment of the iron rods bent the arch. *Photo by Heidi Clawson, 2011*

Repairs had to be made to the bridge twice in the 1950's because it had been heavily overloaded by truck loads of logs. The latticework, floor, and arches were strengthened, and the bridge posted for cars only, but to no avail. Its structure was again found to be severely weakened. The bridge was closed to all but pedestrian traffic and sold to the Vermont Historic Sites Commission in 1955 for \$1.00.

A sign was posted at the east portal that reads, “Longest wooden span in Vermont. This 277-foot bridge built in 1870 by Harrison Chamberlin consists of two Kingpost trusses and a 166-foot Town lattice truss. The latter was the longest wooden span in Vermont: in 1981 a concrete pier was constructed to provide support. An earlier attempt to strengthen the bridge with the addition of a laminated bow arch was not successful.”

One big change made to the Scott Bridge in the 2017 rehabilitation was the removal of the famous laminated arches once added to strengthen the structure. The old arches were pronounced “dead weight, and were no longer serving a useful function.”

While much work has been done to the abutments and piers over the years, some of the original masonry can still be seen – the east bank abutment remains an example of tight and true mortarless stone construction.

## Newfane

Newfane was originally chartered as *Fane* by Benning Wentworth in 1753, then again in 1761. Apparently, the area was not properly settled under these two charters, so New York issued a charter to a different group in 1772, this time adding “New” to the existing “Fane.” Where did the name Fane originate? From the Latin *fanum* for temple or sanctuary.

The bridge at Williamsville is reached by either Grimes Hill Road or by Williamsville Road, both plainly marked where they leave Route 30 to the west. Both roads converge at a Rock River crossing. The covered bridge stands less than a mile further west.

## Williamsville Bridge – 2010

[WGN 45-13-05#2]

Don't look for the *old* Williamsville Bridge, built no one knows when by no one knows who. It's gone! Find instead its replica, a single span, 118 feet long, capable of carrying a 40-ton live load using the Town truss, completed in August 2010 at a cost of \$1,020,000.



*Williamsville Bridge, Photo by Ray Hitchcock, August 2010*

According to DeLorme's *The Vermont Atlas and Gazetteer*, the Williamsville Bridge crosses the Rock River on Williamsville Road. Bridge historians offer a variety of different names for the stream crossed, including Stoney Brook, Marlboro Brook, and South Branch. Also, according to the Vermont Division of Historic Sites, the name of the Williamsville Bridge's builder and precise build date are unknown, but it has been accepted to have been built circa 1870, the date posted at the original bridge's gable end.

Why aren't the origins of the Williamsville Bridge known? Robert McCullough, of the UVM Department of History and member of the VTrans Historic Bridge Committee, having recently dug into town records, reported that written accounts of town meetings up to 1859 do not mention the Williamsville Bridge by that name. In addition, no printed copies of the First Annual Report (1860) have been found. However, the Second Annual Report (1861) reveals that L. Halladay received \$5.93 for painting the Williamsville Bridge. Five years later, sometime during 1865 or early 1866, E.P. Wheeler received \$5.00 for unspecified labor on a bridge by that same name. In 1877, the town spent \$113.03 to repair the Williamsville Bridge and apply new shingles. Twenty years later, in 1897 or early 1898, the town paid L.O. Morse \$106.00 to install metal roofing, again using the name Williamsville Bridge. Unfortunately, whether these activities refer to the Williamsville Covered Bridge or to the covered bridge on the village's easterly end cannot be verified. Identification of the builder is also not possible, but timber framers erected a number of bridges in Williamsville and nearby Pondville (South Newfane) during these years of road building, and the names Daniel O. Stratton, E.P. Wheeler, Dana D.

Dickinson, B.E. Morse, and C.W. Morse appear frequently in town records.

## West Dummerston Bridge – 1998

[WGN 45-13-02#2]

The West Dummerston Bridge, one of the two longest wooden spans within the state, stands next to busy Route 30 and a commuter parking lot. There is a little beach under the west abutment, where people come in the heat of summer to enjoy the water and the cool breezes that pass under the bridge.

Four bridges were built over the years on this stretch of river. The Dummerston Historical Society recalls that the first bridge was lost to a spring freshet in 1826. The second bridge, built on the same abutments, was lost in 1839. The town then rebuilt downstream and lost that span in the flood of 1869. Caleb Lamson built the fourth and present bridge eighty rods further downstream in 1871-72. The new bridge was constructed with the plank lattice truss and supported in midstream on a pier.



*West Dummerston Bridge, Photo by Joe Nelson, July 1995*

The construction of the new bridge would have started soon after the flood, but the local citizens were not able to agree on the site. After this unpropitious start, the bridge collapsed during construction. A worker was killed by falling timbers, and Lamson was injured when he attempted to jump to safety. Since its completion, however, the West Dummerston span has served the town well for nearly 150 years.

The bridge was in constant use until the mid-1990's. In 1995, it stood forlorn, bypassed by a temporary bridge. The old span was crisscrossed inside and out with cables to keep it stable while it awaited repairs. The repairs were completed in 1998, replacing much of its original fabric. Then, in 2009, the bridge was closed to replace the work deck surface.



Various sources state that the Dummerston Bridge is the longer of the two longest wooden spans in the state, citing a length of 280 feet. Rival Scott Bridge is believed to be 277 feet long. Measurements taken during the preparation of this article verified the truss length of the Scott to be 277 feet, 3 inches, while that of the Dummerston Bridge is 267 feet, 4 inches. The roof ridge lines measured 279 and 273 feet, respectively. On the basis of those measurements, the Scott Bridge is the longest covered bridge under one continuous roof within the state, and the Dummerston Bridge is the second longest. Nevertheless, the Dummerston is still the longest two-span bridge.

The tour continues south on Route 30 to Brattleboro. About two miles south of the Dummerston Bridge, the highway crosses Stickney Brook on a steel and concrete bridge. The Taft Bridge, built circa 1870, served here until it was replaced with the concrete span in 1950. The Vermont Highway Department presented the old bridge to Old Sturbridge village in Massachusetts. Workers from Sturbridge came, dismantled the bridge, and trucked it to its new home, where it is a part of a living museum.

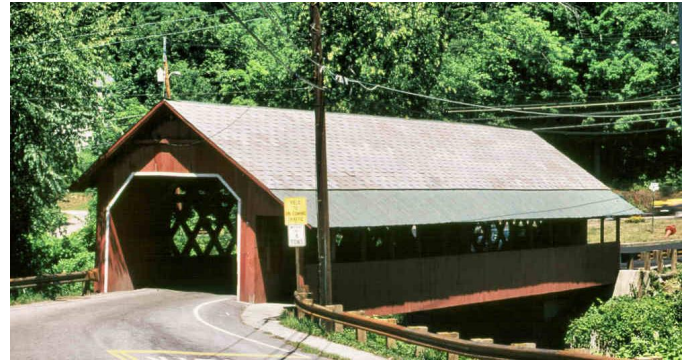
## Brattleboro

When the border between the colonies of Massachusetts and Connecticut was settled, Massachusetts granted four tracts of land in what is now Vermont to Connecticut. The colony of Connecticut ordered the land sold at auction in 1716. The tract that included the present towns of Brattleboro, Dummerston, and Putney went to William Summer, William Brattle, and John White. When Massachusetts and New Hampshire settled their borders in 1741, the tract became part of New Hampshire. Governor Benning Wentworth granted charters to the same proprietors in 1753, and the three towns eventually became part of the new state of Vermont. Because of all of those land swaps, a long-lived early settler in any of the three towns would have lived in three different states or colonies without having moved an inch.

All that remains of William Brattle's grant is his name. When the Revolutionary War broke out, he fled to Nova Scotia, and all of his holdings were confiscated.

### Creamery Bridge – 1879 [WGN 45-13-01]

The Creamery Bridge is located in Brattleboro off old Vermont Route 9, seven miles west of the junction with U.S. Route 5, south of the highway. Handsome in red paint, white trim, and a multi-colored slate roof, the Creamery Bridge stands in an urban setting.



*Creamery Bridge, Photo by Joe Nelson, July 1995*

The 80-foot plank lattice bridge was built in 1879 by A.W. Wright to replace another bridge lost to a freshet. The slate roof and the covered footbridge were added in 1917. The bridge is named for the Brattleboro Creamery, which once stood nearby. Living Memorial Park overlooks the bridge and contributes to the ambience of the site.

The Agency of Transportation covered bridge inspection team found the bridge to be in poor condition. Because of that, and because of the heavy traffic flow over the bridge – some 4,000 vehicles each day – the agency recommended that the bridge be closed, reconditioned, and a bypass be constructed adjacent to it. In March 2009, the town selectmen voted to authorize a \$230,000 bond to provide the town's 10% share of the cost to build the bypass. The contract to recondition the covered bridge was won by Renaud Brothers, Inc., of Vermont, with a bid of \$285,000. Ninety-five percent of the cost of reconstruction was paid by the state using federal funds, with the balance paid by the town. The reconditioning included replacement of the floor system, portions of the truss lattice, and whatever problems were found when the bridge was dismantled. A fire alarm and dry sprinkler system were added.

The bypass was completed by the fall of 2010, and work on the covered bridge was completed and opened to pedestrian and cycle traffic only. It serves as an entry to the Living Memorial Park, maintained by the Brattleboro Garden Club.

## Guilford

Guilford was chartered in 1754 by Massachusetts. On May 19, 1772, a majority of Tories and Yorkers – those who believed the territory belonged to New York State – voted that Guilford was part of Cumberland County of the Province of New York. Renouncing their charter, the townspeople governed themselves as a little republic



until 1776. The town's Yorker contingent remained strong until the end of the Revolutionary War.

### Ethan Allen and the Guilford Yorkers

In 1782, the Yorkers voted to stand against the "pretend state" of Vermont. They believed that when the war ended, Congress would move against Ethan Allen. Until then, they voted to receive direction from New York's Governor Clinton. The Yorkers and Vermonters each carried on with hostile parallel governments.

In August 1782, Ira Allen sent a sheriff to arrest the commander of the Yorker Militia. The Yorkers repulsed him. Governor Thomas Chittenden then ordered Ethan Allen to enforce Vermont's authority. Allen rode at the head of a hundred of his men to Guilford. There he gave a sulfurous speech, in which he promised no quarter to any who opposed him, and unless they accepted his authority, he would "lay Guilford as desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah!" The Yorkers ran away. Twenty of them were captured and taken to a grand jury in Westminster, where all but four of them agreed to join Vermont. The four lost their property and were sent to New York.

### Green River Bridge – 1870 [WGN 45-13-04]

The 105-foot plank lattice Green River Bridge spans the Green River and is surrounded by a village of the same name. The setting includes a white church on a knoll and a picturesque dam upstream.

The red-painted portals are rounded and trimmed with a molding. The gables are finished with horizontal butted planks. A sign warns of a two-dollar fine if a user passes through at a pace faster than a walk. The bridge was built in 1870 by Marcus Worden, replacing an earlier span lost in the 1869 flood.

Covered bridge historian Richard Sanders Allen related to this writer his recollection that when he first saw the bridge in the 1930's, one side of the bridge interior was lined with private mailboxes. Among them; distinctively red, white, and blue; was a U.S. Postal Service mailbox, and up in the roof rafter rested the town's gin pole. Said Allen, "I remember my wife remarking something about those persnickety Vermonters! Green River and green verdure all around, but red paint in the middle of it all, a target so you won't miss the bridge!"

When were the Green River Bridge portals first painted red? Lola Bennet, a writer for Historic America Engineering Record (HAER) of the National Park Service believes that covered bridge portals weren't painted

until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Local historian Addison Minott of Green River says, "This bridge has always been 'barn red' since it was built in 1870 to replace a bridge washed out in the 1869 freshet. I suppose that red was used [because] the ochre coloring was readily available and it was used with a milk base as red barns were." Ochre is a class of natural earths: hydrated oxide of iron mixed with various earthy materials.



*Green River Bridge, Photo by Joe Nelson, September 1995*

Structural problems were discovered in the west abutment of the Green River Bridge during wingwall repairs in 2014. Additional repairs included straightening the structure, new floor deck, replacement of some floor beams, replacing a piece of lower chord, two sister lattice installations, some other minor structural repairs, and a standing seam roof to replace the existing asphalt shingles. The bridge was reopened to traffic in the fall of 2016.

The Green River Bridge lies at the end of Guilford Center Road and Stage Road. Guilford Center Road is reached by crossing the Creamery Bridge bypass on Guilford Street, then onto Guilford Street Extension, which ends on Guilford Center Road. Turn right to continue to the bridge.

Guilford Center Road twists through a maze of other little roads, marked and unmarked. The traveler needs to have faith and count road entries and exits carefully on the map and rejoice when a corroborating road sign is seen. Stage Road is narrow, very hilly, and with barely two-car passage. In summer, it's a green tunnel; in fall, the trees are a riot of color. Casual passage in winter or in mud season is not recommended.

## Letters

Dear Joe and Steve,

[I'm sure] you will enjoy this. If you use it you can credit me but indicate that the actual sources are the excellent covered bridge researchers in Quebec: Gaetan Forest and Gerald Arbour.

I'm currently writing an article on the Pont Jones that was built in 1826 at St. Jean sur Richelieu, in 33 spans, apparently designed by John Johnson of Burlington. Gaetan and Gerald have been of great help.

Jan Lewandoski

### An elephant inspects a bridge

The Montreal Star says the well-known sagacity of the elephant exemplification, at St. John, in the Province of Quebec, on Saturday morning last, in which the immense Ceylon elephant belonging to Campbell's Menagerie and circus, which was to exhibit in Montreal, was the hero.

We will premise our statement with the fact that, a few weeks since, while travelling from Waterbury to Northfield, in the state of Vermont, this elephant in crossing the bridge, over a creek, crashed the floor with his enormous weight, and fell partly through, his forequarters only remaining on the bridge. By this accident he was lamed for several days, but not sufficiently to prevent him from traveling.

When he was brought to the Long Bridge, over the Richelieu River, at St. Johns, he evidently retained a vivid recollection of this mishap, and neither coaxing, threats, persuasion, nor force, could induce him to budge an inch on the, to him, perilous structure. Nor does it appear that his apprehensions were unfounded – for the proprietors of the bridge notified the Menagerie managers that they were dubious of the capacity of the bridge to bear the weight of the elephant, and if they crossed him they must do so at their own risk.

The morning was rather chilly, and as they did not wish to risk his health by swimming, they concluded to make the venture. The band chariot and an enormous den of performing lions were started ahead of him in order to give him confidence, and when he saw that they were safely over, he was induced to follow which he did very slowly, testing each plank and timber with his fore feet and trunk as he progressed.

Whenever he discovered any of the timber to be defective he would cross over the division to the opposite roadway, and would so progress until he came to another doubtful place, when he would cross back again. He worked along this way until he had come more than half way over, when he became suspicious that neither road was safe, and started rapidly back, driving back the long line of cages that were following and clearing the bridge for a space of ten or more of rods.

At this juncture a flock of sheep came running past him, and he vented his spleen by picking them up one by one with his trunk and throwing them into the river until he had disposed of seven in this way. He was finally induced to go on, and after having been more than two hours in crossing arrived safely over. The scene was witnessed by over two thousand people, and the utmost excitement prevailed.

## 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.

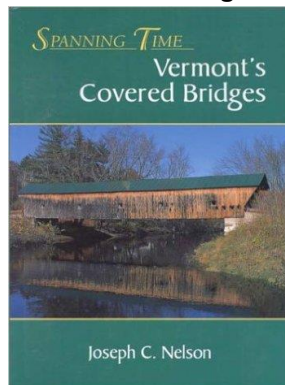
Librarian Warren Tripp has created a detailed book list complete with a description and critique of each book. Copies of the index are available by mail, or you may contact Joe Nelson for an electronic copy at [jcarlnelson@yahoo.com](mailto:jcarlnelson@yahoo.com), or go to <http://www.vermontbridges.com/whatis.vcbs.htm#item7>. A borrower can contact Warren Tripp, who will send the book by Postal Service Media Mail. Books are returned the same way.

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# For Sale

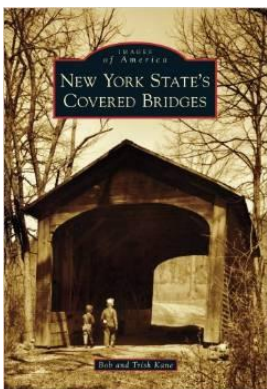
## Spanning Time: Vermont's Covered Bridges by

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](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



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

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**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.

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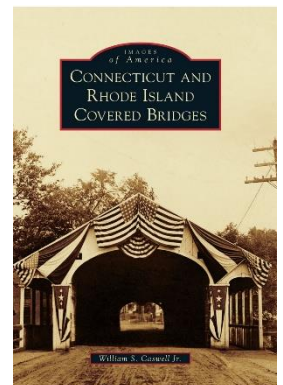
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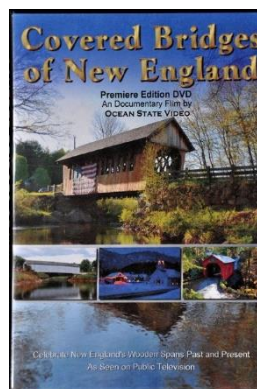


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