

April—May—June, Spring 2008

Newsletter

National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges Incorporated

David W. Wright, President
P. O. Box 171
Westminster, VT 05158
(802) 722-4040

Christine Ellsworth
Corresponding Secretary
44 Cleveland Avenue
Worcester, MA 01603
(508) 756-4516

Send membership dues to:

Pauline Prideaux
Membership Chair
4856 Spencer Oaks Blvd.
Pace, FL 32571
sanibel93@bellsouth.net

Richard Roy, Historian
73 Ash Street, Apt. 2
Manchester, NH 03104
dickroycb1@verizon.net

NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Please send news to our new Newsletter Editor:

Lynn Graton
7 Luneau Court
Northfield, N. H. 03276

email: ljmgraton@verizon.net
Lynn is from New Hampshire's Graton family of covered bridge builders, and NSPCB is fortunate to have found someone so knowledgeable for this job.

SOCIETY MEETINGS

Sunday, April 27 at 1:00 pm at the Plymouth Church, 87 Edgell Road, Framingham, Massachusetts. The program will be a continuation of the Philippe Bonnet slide show from the March meeting. Come see how our covered bridges looked half a century ago.

Sunday, June 22 at 1:00 pm at the Contoocook Railroad Bridge, Contoocook, New Hampshire. Bill Caswell will give a presentation of selected images from the Covered Spans of Yesteryear project. The covered bridge is in the village and is easy to find. Some people will probably want to arrive early so as to eat at the adjacent pizza parlor at 12:00 noon.

Sunday, July 27 at 1:00 pm in Wright's Railroad Bridge, west of Newport, New Hampshire. Bridge wright Tim Andrews will discuss the condition of the bridge, and the problems involved with its possible restoration. From downtown Newport, go west on Routes 11/103 three and a half miles to Kelleyville, then turn left on what we hope is still called Chandler Mill Road. Proceed two miles, passing the Pier Railroad Bridge on your right; and when the road crosses the former railroad line, park and walk in to Wright's Bridge, about 1000 feet. The bridge is no longer visible from the road when the leaves are on the trees. Do not attempt to drive in from the Claremont direction, as this access has been cut off by flood damage.

Sunday, August 24 at 12:15 pm, NSPCB Annual Picnic at the fire house in Westminster, Vermont. The fire house is on Grout Avenue, which runs eastward off Main Street in the middle of the village, and is clearly marked.

NEWSLETTER DATES

The next newsletter is scheduled for July 2008. Therefore, anyone wishing to submit photos, articles, etc. should send them by **June 15, 2008**. Newspaper or magazine articles should include source information and details (such as name of publication, date, etc.) so that proper credit may be given. **THANK YOU!**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Fellow Members, Greetings!

I don't know how it is in other parts of the country, but here where I live, there are a few signs which seem to suggest that winter has at long last about run its course. Not only are the days increasingly longer, and the sun higher in the sky, but the last few storms have been of the wet variety, not the white. Though it is certainly much too soon to begin planting a kitchen garden, those of us who usually do put one in have probably already ordered our seeds. At the very least, even those of us who are much given to procrastination have probably thought about what it is that we shall be purchasing, and perhaps even about how we shall lay out the rows of our garden when it does come time to plant. Of course, with the arrival of spring, it will once again be the start of another Covered-Bridge visiting season, which latter is always good news, this regardless of how agreeably one manages to pass the non-Covered-Bridge-visiting months of the year.

Alas, and as is often the case each quarter, some extremely sad news has recently come to my attention. The news in this instance is that during the first week of January, Mr. Edward J. Thias, A.I.A., passed away of an apparent heart attack. Mr. Thias was a long time and much respected member of the National Society, whose superb drawings frequently graced the pages of *Topics*. Those of us who had the pleasure and privilege of knowing him have suffered a grievous loss indeed, one for which no compensation is even conceivable. The National Society hereby extends its deepest sympathies to all of Mr. Thias's many friends and family.

Though it is true, as has been previously noted, that spring is likely already on the way, for those members of the National Society who rejoin the group on a yearly basis, it will also soon be time to pay one's dues. My fondest hope is that all of you who have been members of the Society over the past year and whose dues are not yet paid shall elect to remain members for the coming year, and why not, for a long string of years stretching far out into the future.

The reasons for the latter aspiration are many and varied.

Amongst the more significant of these is the sad fact that our Covered Bridges, these national treasures to which all of us are so deeply attached, are not doing all that well at present in many areas of the country, this despite the enormous sums that are currently being spent on them,

As most of you probably already realize, the question of how Covered Wooden Bridges ought to be repaired and revitalized is an immense subject, one which cannot be gone into here for lack of time and space. I have only raised this subject in passing so as to underline the importance of each and every one of you maintaining your membership in the National Society.

As well as certain additional benefits, a large membership gives the National Society significant negotiating strength whenever it comes time to discuss the relative merits of a Covered-Bridge rehabilitation scheme

with the public authorities who are responsible for it, or who must approve or not a rehabilitation scheme designed by others. The National Society, of course, since its inception, has been a ferocious advocate for Covered-Bridge preservation, Covered-Bridge preservation of the correct sort, so it is rather important that the Society's voice should be heard and heard loudly, whenever there is a chance that a particular Covered-Bridge rehabilitation project might turn out better thanks to advice offered by the National Society.

A little National Society history would not be inappropriate in this context.

When the National Society first sought formal recognition of itself back in the 1950's—our *Articles of Organization* were signed by our then Directors on April 30th, 1954—the first item on the list of purposes for which the National Society was establishing itself as a corporation was “to preserve Covered Bridges.” As well, the name chosen for our group at that time was perfectly indicative of the attitude of most of our members towards saving Covered Spans; that is to say, the National Society for the *PRESERVATION* of Covered Bridges. (An earlier moniker, the Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, clearly gave voice to exactly the same attitude, only then, the focus of this attitude was a little less definite.)

Over the years, our Society has sometimes succeeded in its preservation efforts, and on other occasions, it has failed, but never through lack of trying.

A very early effort, one ultimately crowned with success, resulted in the Taft Bridge being moved from its former home in Dummerston, Vermont, to its current location at Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts. The Taft Bridge once carried the traffic of what is now Route 30 over Stickney Brook near where the latter stream empties into the West River. Needless to say, but I shall say it anyhow, the former Taft Bridge, now called the Vermont Bridge, has been appropriately cared for since its arrival at Old Sturbridge Village. Had it remained in Dummerston, it almost certainly would have faced demolition due to the ever increasing traffic along Route 30, and to the much greater weight of the trucks that soon began to pass over this highway.

A much more recent achievement of the Society has been the repair and stabilization of the Contoocook Covered Railroad Bridge in Hopkinton, New Hampshire, a span of national significance. The Contoocook project could not have been realized had not numerous members of the Society contributed generously to the Eastman-Thomas Fund for Covered-Bridge Preservation over a period of many years.

So once again, I ask each and every one of you who are currently members of the Society, if your dues have not already been paid, *to re-up now*. The Society needs you, and the bridges need you.

I would also ask those of you who are financially able to do so, to make as generous a contribution to the Eastman-Thomas Fund for Covered-Bridge Preservation as you possibly can at the same time you renew your membership. With more preservation monies at our disposal, the Society could take on more preservation projects.

I hope to see some of you this summer, if not at a bridge, than at least at the annual picnic in August.

Sincerely your President,

David W. Wright

NEWS OF THE OLD COVERED BRIDGES

OREGON: Restoration is complete at the Ritner Creek Bridge in Polk County, reports Bill Cockrell (37-27-01). The west ends of the bottom chords have new timber spliced in, and the end braces were also replaced there. Otherwise the trusses are mostly original and the work appears to be well done. The bridge was re-housed, and the portal was rebuilt in the arched style. The official dedication is scheduled for May. (See notice later in this Newsletter of Bill's new book on Oregon covered bridges.)

Marion County officials were considering moving the Gallon House Bridge (37-24-01) to a new location in a park somewhere, to save on maintenance costs. But they changed their minds after hearing from local residents who wanted the bridge to stay where it has always been. The county has received a grant for \$125,000 for repairs to the bridge, including a new roof, and the work is to be done in the spring. Trish Kane sent this news, originally published in the *Silverton Appeal*, and she also reports that:

Oregon Woods, Inc. is low bidder and has won the contract for repair work to the damaged Gilkey Bridge in Linn County (37-22-04). The bid was \$141,652, less than had been originally thought, and the work is to be completed by May 30. See the *Winter Newsletter* for details on what happened to this bridge.

MICHIGAN: The Langley Bridge in St. Joseph County is scheduled for \$850,000 worth of repairs this year (22-75-01). A new roof and siding, cleaning, and painting are involved. About 80% of the funding is coming from grants through the Michigan Department of Transportation, with the balance funded locally. This is the famous covered bridge which, from a distance, appears to be floating on the waters of Sturgis Lake. The lake was created by a dam in 1910, at which time the bridge was raised; does anyone have a photo of it before? Trish Kane sent this news from the *Sturgis Journal*, and also the following item:

MISSOURI: The Show-Me State's four covered bridges were featured in a recent *News Leader* article which suggested getting "couch potatoes" off the couch with the challenge, "I bet you can't get to all of Missouri's covered bridges in one day." (Has anyone tried this? My guess is that it is impossible, unless perhaps you started on a long summer day before sunrise.)

INDIANA: Readers will recall that the nation's last Post truss covered bridge, the Bell's Ford Bridge in Jackson County, collapsed several years ago (14-36-03). This was a two-span bridge, and the spans went down at different times. Parts were rescued and placed in storage for a possible future restoration, but we were curious whether *both* spans were salvaged. Member and timber framer Tim Andrews, who worked on this project, assures us that most of the pieces for both spans were indeed saved. The *World Guide to Covered Bridges* continues to list covered bridges in storage, clearly marked as such, in the thought that they are less likely to be forgotten that way. Rock & roll star John Mellencamp is from nearby Seymour, and has sung songs on the theme of rural decline; is he aware of this bridge in need? (At least two other Post trusses still exist, but they are all-iron bridges.)

ALABAMA: Kymulga Grist Mill and the adjacent covered bridge in Talladega County are the recipients of a \$100,000 federal preservation grant (01-61-01). The area was taken over by the government in 1941 as part of the Alabama Ordnance Works project, and everyone living there was relocated. The bridge was therefore not replaced as the area modernized, but it sat abandoned for decades. Now it is part of a park run by the Heritage Committee of Childersburg. Thanks to Trish Kane for this news from *Daily Home Online*, and she also sends in the following three items:

PENNSYLVANIA: Keller's Mill Bridge (38-36-13) near Akron in Lancaster County has been removed and replaced with a modern two-lane concrete bridge on a relocated alignment. However, the covered bridge is to be rebuilt about two miles downstream to be used on Middle Creek Road. We have a number of covered bridges that have been swallowed up in the suburbs, and this is one of the most extreme examples. When your editor first saw Keller's Mill Bridge in 1967, it was entirely in open agricultural country. About fifteen years later, a large housing subdivision went in on the near side, right up to the bridge site. But there was still little traffic through the bridge itself, and the picturesque old stone mill still stood at the turn in the road on the far side. About a decade later, another mammoth subdivision went in on the far side, and it was obvious the covered bridge was doomed. A recent visitor tells me even the historic mill is gone. We have not yet heard the schedule for rebuilding the bridge at the new site, and we wonder if the old-style shingled portals will be put back after the move.

Kidd's Mill Bridge, in Mercer County (38-43-01) has been closed to traffic for many years, but recently a speeding motorist re-opened it for his own use. The driver was being pursued by police and had been clocked going over 90 MPH. Upon reaching the bridge, he crashed right through the barricades and crossed. Apparently there was no damage to the bridge. The driver soon afterwards abandoned the car and escaped, but was wanted by the police, according to the *Sharon Herald*.

VERMONT: Worrall Bridge in Rockingham needs a \$1 million restoration, reports an article in the *Brattleboro Reformer* (45-13-10). Funding is not yet certain, but there is hope for a grant from the National Covered Bridge Preservation Program ("Jeffords Bill"). Worrall Bridge was built in 1868 by Sanford Granger. Meanwhile, restoration will be completed this spring on the Upper Falls Bridge of Weathersfield (45-14-08) and most of the \$1.2 million cost was covered by the Jeffords Bill. Wright Construction of Mount Holly did the work, which included new chords. The bridge has survived mishaps over the years, including a Corps of Engineers proposal to burn it down in the 1950s. This news comes from the *Rutland Herald*.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Campton is considering work to the Blair Bridge, which crosses the Pemigewasset River linking the two halves of town (29-05-09). The bridge was beautifully restored in 1977, but the carrying capacity was not increased at the time, and the town finds that fire trucks cannot use it. There are other ways around, but in some cases, response time is longer. Though the site seems isolated, Blair Bridge Road has an interchange with Interstate Route 93 about a quarter-mile to the west; can anyone think of another covered bridge whose road has a freeway interchange? Thanks to Dick and June Roy for the news, and they also report that:

Whittier Bridge in Ossipee has deteriorated so badly that it has been closed even to foot traffic (29-02-08). James Garvin, New Hampshire's official architectural historian, says that this is the state's covered bridge most urgently in need of repair. The town has contacted Sean T. James, P. E., of Hoyle, Tanner & Associates, to see about moving the bridge temporarily onto land to safeguard it, while funding is found for a complete restoration. The goal is to retain as much original material as possible, but the job is a special challenge because much material was lost in repair work early in the twentieth century. Those interested in making a donation to the bridge restoration fund should contact Martha Eldridge, Ossipee's town administrator, at (603) 539-4181.

Work is progressing on Bath-Haverhill Bridge at Woodsville, the oldest existing Town lattice truss (1829; 29-05-04). James Garvin, State Architectural Historian, is reviewing the job periodically due to the very large amount of original 1829 timber left in the bridge, which should not be sacrificed unless truly necessary

The original floor beams are even intact, showing very fine growth rings from the virgin-growth timber that was used. Some decayed lattice members had to be replaced, and some 1973 work to the lower chords has to be redone. On the whole the bridge is in surprisingly good condition considering that it sits directly over a waterfall and is always subject to spray mist. We plan to publish the history of this bridge in the Winter 2009 *Covered Bridge Topics*.

QUEBEC: Renovation work will begin soon at the pont du Collège, of Saint-Onésime, in the Kamouraska region (61-32-02). It has been bypassed for a long time, and we are glad it is getting attention.

The Painchaud Bridge north of Saint-Méthode in the Lac Saint-Jean region is in poor condition (61-60-16). The siding is mostly gone, and the abutments are unstable. Although there is local interest in its preservation, it will probably be moved if any work is done. The bridge's history is however closely tied to its historic location. Authentic, but always privately owned, it was built for a local farmer in 1913 when the level of Lac Saint-Jean was raised by construction of a power dam for the Aluminum Company of Canada. The high waters backed up the river Ticouapé, cutting the farm in two. The bridge is a two-thirds height Town lattice truss with unusual flared sides reminiscent of Oregon, and may have been a pony truss originally. It is not visible from a public road and was unknown outside the locality until the heritage research of Henri-Paul Thibault of the Québec Ministry of Cultural Affairs in the late 1970s. We hope this interesting bridge can be preserved in place. Thanks to Gérald Arbour for this news, and he also reports:

In the 1990s, as a cost-cutting move, Québec's Transports Ministry enacted a policy of transferring ownership of covered bridges to the municipalities, most of which do not have a sufficient tax base to do any large restoration projects. Recently however, the Transports Ministry has decided to re-assume responsibility for them, which is good news from the funding point of view.

BRIDGE TIMBER PREPARATION: A recent timber framer's workshop in Augusta, Maine addressed various questions including the preparation of timber. James Derby, a noted framer from Waldoboro, pointed out although the public perception has large timber prepared with an adze, Maine barns usually have the timber prepared with an axe. The stop-marks where the tool finishes its swing are curved, and diagonally oriented; whereas adze marks would be straight, and perpendicular to the length of the timber. This got me thinking about our bridge timber. Surely the majority is sawn; indeed some builders owned sawmills. Bridges can have both sawn and hewn timber—posts and braces sawn, chords hewn because they were too long for the sawmill carriage. But when it is hewn, it is sometimes finished with an adze so cleanly that there are no stop-marks from the tool, which merely shaved off shallow cuplike depressions. Probably a broadaxe was used first, with the adze for finishing. When straight, perpendicular stop marks are found, perhaps slabs were notched deeply first with an axe and then removed with an adze? Has anyone made a study of this? I cannot recall seeing many curved stop-marks from an axe in covered bridges, but why would bridge timber have been finished differently from barn timber? As a rule, bridge timber is rather cleanly finished. Is this because the engineering required greater precision, or simply because the timber is exposed to public view, whereas the inside of a barn is private? In the remoter parts of the country, timber is sometimes more roughly finished. Those of us who are interested in bridge structure have not paid much attention to preparation of timber. Truss design, joint types (whether in tension or compression)—these have been the big questions. But there is always something new to discover, even with structures so old as covered bridges.

OREGON, THE WIMER BRIDGE REBUILD: Bill Cockrell sends news from the Portland *Oregonian* newspaper on the all-new covered bridge at Wimer, Jackson County (37-15-05#2). The old bridge collapsed on July 6, 2003. Timber Mountain Construction raised the trusses for the new one in January and most of the construction was expected to be done by the end of that month. The fabricator of the trusses was Western Wood Structures Inc. of Tualatin. The load limit is ten tons. Expected cost is \$1.6 million, of which about one-fourth is being raised locally, the remainder being paid by federal and county grants. The new bridge is quite different from the old. It is a multiple kingpost truss, but the joints are made with steel gusset plates, as has been done with various non-housed timber trusses in recent years.

COLORADO: David Guise sends a photo of a new, non-housed arch-truss combination bridge built in Colorado in 2006. It looks somewhat like a Burr truss but with the diagonals running the other way, in tension, and appears to be made entirely of self-weathering steel. But it is of interest in demonstrating the rehabilitation of the arch-truss combination in the minds of modern engineers. Many engineers in the early twentieth century disliked the Burr truss for its redundancy; that is, two different systems carry the load, and it was then impossible to analyze how much of the load was carried by each. The members could not be sized precisely by mathematics, and in that era which prided itself on efficiency, that was unacceptable. Computers now allow a better modeling of the stress distribution, and having two different systems is now seen as a safety feature. We are interested to see this old concept not just tolerated, but actually used in new construction with no apparent appeal to sentiment. As Mr. Guise comments, “re-inventing the wheel.”

OHIO: America’s Newest, Biggest, Longest, and Highest Above Water: Donald Wiech sends interesting photos of trusses under construction for the new covered bridge at Ashtabula Gulf, in Ashtabula County. This is a Pratt truss similar in design to the two new covered bridges recently built in Union County. Mr. Wiech notes:

The press release dated December 28, 1999 announced a 500-foot-long covered bridge over the Ashtabula Gulf. Now the bridge will be a 600-foot-long modified Pratt truss. The press release noted that the piers would tower ninety feet above the Ashtabula River. Now they are supposed to be seventy-five feet above the river, but from my observation, they appear to be taller than seventy-five feet.

The 600-foot bridge will consist of four spans. The timber was treated and glue-laminated somewhere off site because when I went to the site it was already there and ready for construction. The species used for the trusses will be either Douglas Fir or Southern Yellow Pine. The wood for the siding will be either Hemlock or Yellow Pine because they age better. Two of the spans are being built on each end of the roadway. After they are assembled, a crane will be brought in to lift these spans and put them into place. Also there will be a walkway on each side for people to view the valley. The builder of the bridge is Union Industrial Contractors, Inc. of Ashtabula.

I took my tape measure and made some measurements. The roadway width is 32’, the overall width is 38’, and the total width of the bridge including the sidewalks is 50’. The trusses are three feet thick. The bridge is two lanes wide, but not a double-barrel, and it is strong enough for trucks.

PENNSYLVANIA: The all-new Mood’s Bridge in Bucks County is now open for traffic (38-09-07#2). This is a copy of the 1874 bridge destroyed by arson in 2004. Some years ago, the old bridge had its floor removed, and the load was carried on hidden steel beams. The new bridge keeps this modern feature, but it

closely resembles the original in appearance. The cost was \$850,000, of which the six convicted arsonists are expected to pay \$66,666 each as partial restitution. Thanks to Barbara McCauley for this news, which she sent from the Allentown *Morning Call*.

BULGARIA: The city of Lovech, in Bulgaria, has a covered bridge similar to the Ponte Vecchio in Italy, lined with shops on either side. But whereas Italy's famed example has the roadway open to the air, Bulgaria's appears to be roofed over entirely. The wooden original was repeatedly damaged by high water, and after washing out in 1872 it was replaced by a stone covered bridge. The superstructure however was timber, and apparently treenailed. It was lost to fire in 1925 but has been rebuilt twice since in varying styles. This is not a covered bridge in our sense, but as the Ponte Vecchio has received wide publicity, it seems fair to tell of Bulgaria's Lovech Bridge here too. Thanks to Kenneth Mauer for this information, which came from a tract the Jehovah's Witnesses left in his door.

NEWS OF MEMBERS: Robert H. Durfee, P. E., was named New Hampshire Engineer of the Year by the professional organization, Structural Engineers of New Hampshire, at the annual Engineers Week Banquet in Manchester on February 21. Mr. Durfee has wide experience with many types of civil engineering work, including covered bridges. The award recognizes not only the extensive variety of his work over his thirty-year career, but also his efforts to improve engineering training and the mentoring of younger engineers, as well as his involvement in various volunteer projects in his home community of Laconia. Congratulations! Mr. Durfee is vice president of the engineering firm DuBois & King Inc., located in Nashua. News of the award appeared in various publications including the New Hampshire *Union Leader*, and was sent in by Dick and June Roy.

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS: Look for the release of Bill Cockrell's new Arcadia "Images of America" photo book on Oregon covered bridges! The release date is May 26, 2008. We are really looking forward to it, and are certain we can give it rave reviews sight unseen. In what appears to be a first, Arcadia is also issuing a set of postcards of fifteen images from the book, which will sell for \$7.99.

This newsletter will contain a flyer with ordering information for Prof. Ron Knapp's new book on the covered bridges of China, from Tuttle Publishing. We recall that Tuttle published Clara Wagemann's *Covered Bridges of New England* back in 1931 (with second edition in 1952) but in recent years this famous old firm has specialized in the Orient. With Prof. Knapp's book they have the opportunity to return to some of their former subject matter. Don't miss it!

Meanwhile, Melissa Jurgensen is working on a new Arcadia "Images of America" photo book on *Central Kentucky's River Towns*. One covered bridge over the Kentucky River is included, Lewis Wernwag's famous bridge at Camp Nelson. Different photos will be used than those found in her book on *Kentucky's Covered Bridges*. Also included will be photos of various ferries (the Valley View Ferry still operates, and is a stern paddlewheel craft). The book should be available the middle of next year. Further information may be found on her web site (www.MelissaJurgensen.com).

EASTERN ILLUSTRATING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY: Most of the negatives from this famous postcard publisher are now in the archives of the Penobscot Maritime Museum in Searsport, Maine, although it appears that not all of the covered bridges are included. More details will be in the summer *Topics*, but readers may like to consult the collection's web site (www.glassplateimages.com).

WORLD GUIDE NUMBERS: Several widely varying proposals have been put forth in the last fifteen years, to modify the system of numbering in the *World Guide to Covered Bridges*. Each proposal was met with strong protest on the grounds that (1) all existing records would need to be changed, a huge task; and (2) any change would render difficult the use of materials published previously, using the old numbers. Thus the society is keeping with the old numbers, despite what appear to be anomalies in alphabetization of counties. Although the new systems vary somewhat from each other, the one feature they all have in common is the universal exasperation with which their proponents view every other system!

Other groups should certainly feel free to use whatever system they deem fit for bridges on their territory, however, even while NSPCB maintains a universal system for purposes of the *World Guide*. There are differences in the conception of geography which may make a special local system more useful for certain purposes. A “town” is not the same thing in New England as elsewhere, for example, and a “county” in Québec is not a stable unit of geography as in the United States. Citations should perhaps be followed by a notation in parentheses telling what system is being used, as is done with biology nomenclature, for example 32-53-03 (NSPCB). Users of any other system will still have the benefit of reference to the one system that will be invariable, when the inevitable questions arise as to which bridge is meant; or when the new systems themselves are thought to require further revision, as we are told will periodically be the case with two of them.

The concept of numbering by county and bridge began in Ohio with John Diehl of the Ohio Covered Bridge Committee. Later, NSPCB extended the system to cover North America. The prototype list is the 1959 *World Guide to Covered Bridges*, although Canada did not receive numbers until 1965. Unfortunately, even the 1959/65 system is not quite invariable. It contains a few mistakes that would need to be corrected. For example, in preparing the current issue of *Topics* it was necessary to find the number for the Palmer Junction railroad bridge near Selleck in King County, Washington. This bridge was unknown in 1959, so the number comes from the 1972 *Guide*. Unfortunately the number existed in 1959 for a different bridge, and was mistakenly re-used after that bridge was gone. A similar problem exists for bridges added later to the ephemeral “Duplessis County” in Québec, which should have been listed in Saguenay County.

Your editor’s personal preference is to do away with the numbers entirely, and use name and location instead. This is not a new idea, for Mrs. Lincoln shared it, and it was also the policy of the Québec society in referring to existing bridges. But from what we have heard from NSPCB members, the numbers are wanted, and the existing system is preferred. If any changes are made, the *Topics* editor will need to continue printing the old numbers from 1959/65 alongside the new, since if this is not done, articles using the old numbers will be difficult to use in historical research. When information or photographs once get mis-labeled in any way, they get passed around and the error persists for decades. Think of that famous mistake in Maine where photos of the Abbot Twins got identified as Gilman Falls. Some collections still have that mistake, which first occurred nearly fifty years ago. Such problems will be multiplied hundreds of times over, if the original numbering system is not always made readily available alongside any new system that may be developed, especially if the new numbers closely resemble the old.

ARCHIVES: Work has been completed in scanning the negatives from the Gibson and Brainerd collections (except the very late Brainerds, which are of lower quality), and also the Litwin negatives for Québec. About 2,300 negatives are involved, varying in size from 2-1/4x3-1/4” up through 4x5”. If sharp, the negatives are usually scanned at 2400 dpi, and saved with slight compression at JPEG level 10. This gives a file size varying from about 17 to 27 MB depending on the size of negative, and the detail it contains. If not quite sharp, they are scanned at 1200 dpi which results in files roughly 1-1/2 to 5 MB in size

(the less-sharp negatives are often smaller in area too, having been taken with smaller cameras). In the future we hope to be able to transmit images by e-mail, but the file sizes are too large for this at current technology. From what your archivist has seen of images transmitted by e-mail, they are useful only for reference, not for high-quality publication. We do not want to scan and save at a low resolution that would limit the future usefulness of the photographs, and the file size can be reduced before transmitting if needed. In fact, even 2400 dpi involves a small compromise; 4800 dpi is required to resolve film grain clearly. A few highly important images have been scanned at 3200 dpi, and one was done at 4800 but it required fifteen minutes in the scanner.

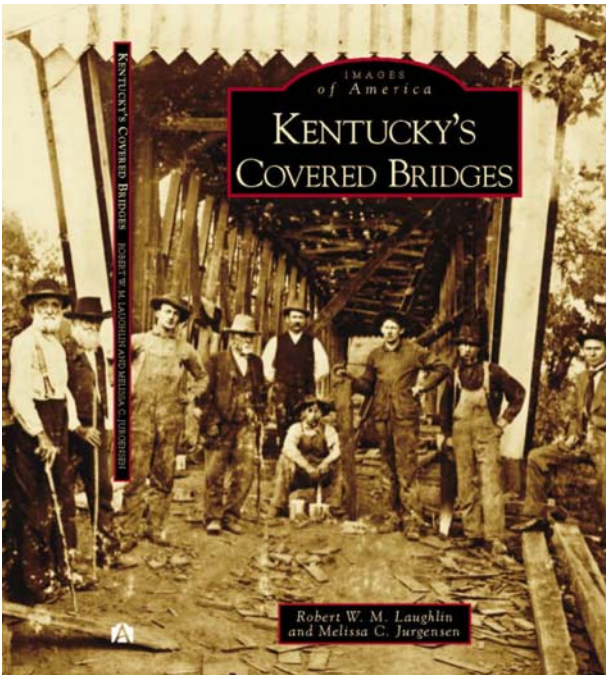
The original scanning proposal also called for making two hard copy 8x10 file prints from each negative, since these would remain accessible even if the electronic storage technology goes obsolete. It turns out that they would be highly expensive to produce, and probably much less long lasting than traditional darkroom prints. Therefore prints will only be made as needed. Future society officers will have to see to it that the electronic storage format is updated as the technology changes.

EVENTS: Postcard collectors, mark your calendars for **Saturday, October 18, 2008**. Wayne Siefert, organizer of the Bucks County (Pennsylvania) Covered Bridge Festival, has extended an invitation for a covered bridge postcard show and sale to be part of the event. Note that the date is different than the one originally announced. Duplicate postcards will be available from two fabulous collections, the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, and the Richard Donovan/Trish Kane Collection. There will be a beautiful indoor location for the show, with plenty of tables. There may be someone offering covered bridge patches as well. If you have duplicate postcards to sell, and would like to reserve a table, please contact Trish Kane as soon as possible (bobtrish68@frontiernet.net) or by mail at 167 Williams Road, Sherburne, NY 13460; telephone (607) 674-9656 after 5:00 pm. There will be a small set up fee of \$15 to help cover expenses.

UNION COUNTY, OHIO is planning a Covered Bridge Festival for Saturday, September 6, 2008. Various events will take place in Marysville, North Lewisburg, Plain City, and several other communities. To help raise funds, 2008 calendars are for sale at \$15 showing the county's covered bridges. There is also a set of seven new postcards selling for \$2 postpaid. Contact Sue Spencer, 15600 Harmon Patrick Road, Richwood, OH 43344, or by email (Robertsrichwood@aol.com). Or call (800) 642-0087, or look on the Web (www.coveredbridgefestival.com).

INDIANA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA is planning a Covered Bridge Festival later in the same month. It is planned for Saturday, September 27 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Blue Spruce Park near Ernest, which is centrally located to the county's four remaining covered bridges. In the heyday of covered bridges, Indiana County had forty-eight of them. Thanks to the sharp-eyed Trish Kane who spotted this news in the *Indiana Gazette Online*.

As I conclude this Newsletter, I would like to thank everyone who sent me news—especially Trish Kane, who sent in nearly half of the news you have read here!



Kentucky's Covered Bridges
Signed by Author Melissa Jurgensen

The book has over 200 photos of 110 of Kentucky's past and present bridges.

\$19.99 + \$2.25 Shipping.

If you would like the book personalized, please specify to whom.

To order send check or money order to:
Melissa Jurgensen
2278 Harrods Pointe Trace
Lexington, KY 40514

On-line ordering:
KyCoveredBridges.org

50th ANNIVERSARY ITEMS AVAILABLE

We are very happy to offer a couple of items in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges.

Tote Bag — Has the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges emblem in dark blue on front pocket measuring 12 1/2" by 15 1/2" with a top snap and 20" handle straps. Available for \$15 including shipping.

Ornament — Also has the Society emblem. It's a 3" round glass maroon ornament with the emblem in gold. Available for \$7 including shipping.

Pens — Pens have "I love Covered Bridges – N.S.P.C.B." written on them. Available for \$1.25 including shipping.

SPECIAL OFFER!!

You may want to have them all. One of each tote, ornament and pen will be available for \$20 including shipping. They are great gifts for family, friends and other bridgers.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS TO N.S.P.C.B. INC. and mail to:

N.S.P.C.B Inc.
Pauline Prideaux
4856 Spencer Oaks Blvd
Pace, FL 32571

The following are items still available through the Society. All of the items below are available from June Roy, 73 Ash Street, Manchester, NH 03104-4906 or E-mail >dickroycb1@verizon.net<

The Book, **Life in the Slow Lane** is still available for \$16.95 + \$3.95 Shipping and Handling. **Society Arm Patch** with N.S.P.C.B. logo 3” arm patch available for \$1.75 + 55 cents P&H.

Books Available by Andrew Howard:

- C/B’s of Madison County IA, A Guide.....\$6.50
- C/B’s of Connecticut, A Guide.....\$5.50
- C/B’s of Virginia, A Guide..... \$6.95
- C/B’s of Bennington County VT, A Guide.....\$6.50
- C/B’s of Massachusetts, A Guide \$7.00

There is a \$2.00 postage and handling charge for each book.

Covered Bridge Polo Shirts with N.S.P.C.B. Logo

For a white Polo Shirt with a blue NSPCB logo, send \$15.00 plus \$3.95 for shipping and handling to June Roy, 73 Ash Street, Manchester NH 03104-4906. Specify, **Medium** or **Extra Large**. This is a fund raiser for the preservation fund. Buy several as gifts for your family and friends. Shirts are 100% pre-shrunk cotton.

Other Available Books from the Society Store

Covered Bridges of Vermont by Ed Barna. This is a book depicting all the covered bridges in Vermont in the year 1996. Postpaid \$17.00 (from June Roy)

Books by Joseph D. Conwill: Images of America, *Vermont Covered Bridges* and *Maine’s Covered Bridges* They sell for \$19.99 each plus \$3.00 shipping and handling.

There is another excellent book on Vermont covered bridges called *Spanning Time: Vermont Covered Bridges*, by Joseph Nelson, who is the President of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society. For information contact the author at 2 Sugar Hill Road, Underhill, VT 05489 or on the Web (www.vermontbridges.com)

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COVERED BRIDGES
ON A SINGLE COMPACT COMPUTER DISC**

World Guide—Romantic Shelters—Index to *Topics*—Bibliography of all known covered bridge books—Chinese Bridges—and much more for only \$5. Send a check made out to Joseph Cohen.
From September to March: 210 Wellington F, West Palm Beach, FL 33417
From April to August: 130 Westfield Drive, Holliston, MA 01746