



# Bridges and Byways

*Journal of the*

Ohio Historic Bridge Association  
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## Meeting Notes:

### **OHBA**

#### **September 18, 2016, 10:30**

Fall Bridge Tour

Mull Covered Bridge, Sandusky County—see details on page 4

#### **November 20, 2016, 1:30 pm**

Annual Business Meeting. Ohio History Connection Auditorium, 800 E. 17th Avenue, Columbus, OH (Exit 111 off Rt. 71)

#### **Other**

#### **Sept. 30 & Oct . 1-2, 2016**

The National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, Fall Weekend in Kentucky & Southern Ohio. Contact Bill Caswell at [wscaswell@yahoo.com](mailto:wscaswell@yahoo.com) for further details.

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**Our website is currently under construction. For updates about meetings and tours call one of our officers.**

OHBA is a not-for-profit organization incorporated in the State of Ohio and is recognized as a non-profit organization under 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

**President's Corner..... David A. Simmons**

It's too bad that the Mull Road Covered Bridge is so isolated from other covered bridges, for it doesn't get the attention it deserves. It is Ohio's best preserved Town lattice truss and well worth a trip.

Henry F. Mull built the hundred-foot Town lattice for the Sandusky County Commissioners in 1851 to allow access over Wolfe Creek to his sawmill. County records stipulated that the project cost no more than \$75, suggesting that the stone for the abutments and trees for the superstructure were already available to Mull. The sawyer likely used a lattice design since he could create the necessary boards for the truss in his own sawmill. The contract for the bridge was executed in December 1850. Nineteenth-century bridge contracts often ran through a winter, since ice-covered streams could be used to help support temporary falsework. But it was also a



**With funding facilitated through the Sandusky County Commissioners and county park district, who owns the bridge, the 2015 Mull Road Covered Bridge project replaced the old siding and roof. (Photo by David Simmons)**



**← A minimum number of diagonals were replaced in Mull Road's lattice truss. (Photo by David Simmons)**

time when the water flow necessary for operating sawmills dropped off, so Henry Mull must have been stockpiling the material for his lattice bridge long in advance. A center pier was added sometime around the turn of the twentieth century. The county bypassed the bridge in 1962, restricting it to foot traffic, while leaving a small parking area.

The advantages of the Town lattice and its nineteenth-century critics are both given excellent coverage in the National Park Service book *Covered Bridges and the Birth of American Engineering*. The framing of a lattice was much simpler than the complicated joinery required for other truss bridges and eliminated the need for heavy timbers and challenging tension connections in the lower chord. Still, because it was “lighter,” it was susceptible to twisting out of alignment due to strong winds and heavy loads.



The designer of the Mull bridge ingeniously incorporated a system of overhead bracing into its roofing system to counter this tendency. Along with the usual overhead and below-deck cross bracing, about every ten feet, 4 3/4 –inch square knee braces were installed from the roof peak to the second upper chord. I don’t know of another bridge in the state that features this type of auxiliary bracing.

So I was naturally quite interested when I learned in the summer of 2014 that the Sandusky County Commissioners, in conjunction with the Sandusky County Park District, were planning a rehabilitation project for the Mull Road Bridge. As president of OHBA, I routinely receive notice of proposed work on historic structures through the environmental office at ODOT. The plans were prepared by Smolen Engineering and called for the replacement of the lower chord and selected truss timbers, installing a new vertical at the pier added long ago to the center of the span, and replacement of the flooring, siding,

**The highly unusual overhead bracing was untouched in the recent Mull Road project.**

(Photo by David Simmons)

and roof. David Shields, the project engineer, confirmed that no work was being done to the overhead bracing and that all connections would be recreated in-kind. R. G. Zachrich Construction of Defiance completed the work in 2015. This is a firm that has built two new covered bridges designed by Smolen Engineering, but this was their first historic project.

After a trip to the Hayes Presidential Library at nearby Fremont, I was able to visit and photograph the bridge. I am happy to report that the bridge still fulfills a high standard of historical authenticity. Joe Conwill, editor of *Covered Bridge Topics*, has repeatedly critiqued the regrettable loss of historic covered bridges through overzealous replacement of historic components during “preservation” projects. The culprit, it seems, rests in part with the “over-romanticizing” of new covered



**A close examination of the treenail joint between old and new diagonals shows that not only were new connections done precisely as the original but that some old treenails were reused.**

(Photo by David Simmons)

bridges. Mull Road is bright and shiny on the exterior and may superficially give the appearance of a new bridge. But on the interior, where the real significance of a covered bridge lies—and where all the old graffiti is still apparent—a true sense of history has been preserved.

**Fall Bridge Tour Details.....Doug Miller and David Simmons**

**Mull Covered Bridge, Sandusky County**

The tour will begin at **10:30** at Wolf Creek Park, 2701 South SR 53, Fremont Ohio. This location has only pit toilets so you may wish to use facilities before starting the tour. We will then continue to the end of the road (CR 9) where the Mull Covered Bridge is located. Jim Moyer, the Sandusky County Engineer, will speak about the bridge. This will give you the opportunity to take photos and explore the bridge. We will then proceed to Spiegel Grove in Fremont for a picnic lunch or find a restaurant to eat. (We will have a list of nearby restaurants at the beginning to the tour.) The Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center opens at noon. (It is located in Spiegel Grove at the Corner of Hayes and Buckland Avenue in Fremont—for GPS location use 1337 Hayes Avenue, Fremont.) The Hayes home and museum are located there. At noon the tour will continue in the museum with a presentation by John Smolen about the renovation of the Mull Covered Bridge. After the presentation, you can continue to tour the museum and view exhibits, tour the Hayes home, or return to the Mull Covered Bridge. The Center closes at 5 p.m. but the last tour of the home begins at 4 p.m.

**Bridge News.....Elma Lee Moore, David Simmons, and Doug Miller**

**County Engineers Association of Ohio Conference.....Doug Miller**

The County Engineers Association of Ohio (CEAO) presented



**Anthony Wayne Suspension Bridge Lucas County**

Statewide Historic Preservation Awards at a conference in August. The awards were made in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and the Ohio Historical Preservation Office. Those awarded were the Anthony Wayne Suspension Bridge in Lucas County, Stone Arch Bridge (CR 40 B—0.74) and Stone Arch Bridge (TR 814-0.21) in Belmont County, Bickham Covered Bridge and McColly Covered Bridge in Logan County, Mull Covered Bridge in Sandusky County, and Stevenson Road Covered Bridge in Greene County.

Doug Miller’s employer was the recipient of the award for the Stevenson Road Covered Bridge. Ron Mattox (now with Woolpert) also made a presentation about the rehabilitation of the Foraker Covered Bridge and the emergency repairs made to the Knowlton Covered Bridge in Monroe County.

See additional photos on the next page.



**Stone Arch CR 40B-0.74, Belmont Co.**



**Stone Arch UNI TR 814-0.21, Belmont County**



**Bickham Covered Bridge, Logan County**



**McColly Covered Bridge, Logan County**



**Stevenson Road Covered Bridge, Greene County**



**Mull Covered Bridge, Sandusky County  
During Construction**

Photos courtesy of County Engineers of Ohio web site and Elma Lee Moore

**Ballard Road Covered Bridge, Greene County (35-29-18) .....Elma Lee Moore**



Restoration has started on the Ballard Road Covered Bridge. The bridge was recently moved to the cul-de-sac behind the bridge while rehabilitation continues. The Howe Truss bridge(1883) gets limited vehicle traffic since it ends in a cul-de-sac abutting U.S. 35. It is in need of a new roof, new sliding and replacement of some members. The

project is bid at \$486,000. R. G. Zachrich Construction is the contractor. This is one of several bridges being rehabilitated under the direction of County Engineer Bob Geyer.



(Photos Courtesy of Elma Lee Moore)

**Summer Picnic at Salt Creek Bridge.....Elma Lee Moore**



**Janis Ford and David Simmons**

We were again rewarded with a beautiful day for the summer picnic, The food was delicious to be followed with homemade ice cream courtesy of the Gnagys. Two presentations followed a short business meeting. Janis Ford and Pat Hoffmannbeck reprised their recent bridge tour to New England. The exhausting tour viewed approximately 62 covered bridges, 30 metal bridges, and 7 stone bridges. Of special interest were the Paddleford Truss Bridges. These bridges were designed by Peter Paddleford (1785-1859). Paddleford modified the Long Truss by stiffening it with a system of interlocking counterbalances. David Simmons provided the drawing of the Paddleford Truss.

Terry Miller made a second presentation about a historic covered bridge recently “discovered” in Quebec, Canada. Phillip Caston is credited with the discovery of this previously un-catalogued bridge in a remote section of Quebec. Details will appear in the World Guide.

(Photos by Elma Lee Moore)



**Eric and Ellen Rupp Prindell**

## OHBA Officers & Membership Information

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**Dues:** Senior (age 55 and over) \$8; Student \$8; Single \$10; Family \$15; Contributing \$25; Supporting \$40; Life \$250.

Annual dues include subscription to Bridges & Byways, quarterly journal of the OHBA. Dues period is the calendar year. Dues paid after October 1<sup>st</sup> cover the succeeding year. Renewal dues to be paid by 1/15

Please fill out the membership application form below and send it with your check made out to the OHBA and send it to Mr. Charles at address above. Be sure to include your 9 digit zip code.

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I wish to join/renew (circle) membership with the OHBA.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

My mailing address is \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code( 9 digit) \_\_\_\_\_

My email address is \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check made out to the OHBA in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ for a \_\_\_\_\_ year membership.



**Summer Picnic at the Salt Creek Covered Bridge July 2016**

Photo by Elma Lee Moore