



Bridges and Byways

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Meeting Notes:

OHBA

November 18, 2018: 1:30 pm
Annual Business Meeting . Ohio History Connection Auditorium, 800 E. 17th Avenue, Columbus, OH (Exit 111 off Rt. 71)
Speaker: Rod LeMasters. Topic: The Rehabilitation of the Indian Mill Bridge in Wyandot County.

March 17, 2019: 1:30 pm
Meeting: Ohio History Connection Auditorium, 800 E. 17th Avenue, Columbus, OH (Exit 111 off Rt. 71)

May 19, 2019
Spring Bridge Tour. TBA

July 21, 2019 Summer Picnic. Noon.
Summer Picnic at Salt Creek Covered Bridge. Located east of Zanesville off interstate 70 on Arch Hill Rd. (CR82). Bring a dish to share, your own silverware, plates, drinks, and lawn chair.

Sept. 15, 2019
Fall Bridge Tour. TBA

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Renewal subscriptions are due by January 15, 2019. See page 7 for details. Your mailing label has your subscription date at the top.

The OHBA Web site is now available at www.oldohiobridges.com/new/OHBA

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 Simmons
Documenting Ohio's Only Wernwag

The beginnings of Americans' romantic fascination with covered bridges could likely be documented with the arrival of the automobile. And numerous Americans have taken full advantage of that fact. I have often said that covered bridges provide the perfect drive-through history lesson.

A less positive force has been the reorientation of cargo transit to large trucking operations in America following World War II that has resulted in some of the greatest challenges for covered bridge preservation. How often do we hear of truck drivers who profess ignorance of load or height restrictions?

Fortunately, there were individuals like John Diehl who, beginning in the 1940s, had an in-depth and dedicated interest in covered bridges. Taking time from his Cincinnati-area air conditioning business, he ventured into all parts of Ohio documenting the state's engineering heritage. His collection, now MSS 1615 AV at the Ohio History Connection library, is a prime source for anyone researching Ohio covered bridges. Its value stems in part because it dates back to the 1940s but also because John was trained as an engineer and was a careful photographer. He also filled bound volumes with his field notes on various bridges.



Contracting firm Bandon, Butin & Bowman originally built the Bebb Park Bridge (35-09-02) in 1868 as part of a two-span crossing of the Great Miami River on Middletown's west side. In 1884, when the county decided a new iron bridge was needed there, they sal-

Diehl was especially fascinated with the Fairfield Pike/Bebb Park Bridge (35-09-02). It is Ohio's only remaining example of a Wernwag truss made popular by German immigrant builder Lewis Wernwag. His famous Colossus Bridge, built in 1813-15 and stretching over the Schuylkill River in a single, 340-foot span, was among early America's most exemplary and talked-about construction projects.



Diehl's earliest photograph of the Bebb Park Bridge trusses, taken on September 12, 1940, recorded the structure as rebuilt in 1884. It appears that the relocation contractor had made few alterations from the original design.

Diehl's earliest known photographs of the Bebb Park Bridge date to the late summer of 1940. He returned in 1950 and again in 1962. One of his field journals includes handwritten measurements and notes from that 1962 visit. As an exacting engineer interested in proper documentation, he used his medium format camera and a tripod to record the interior view of the trusswork.



The massive western abutment on the Fairfield Pike location indicates that the county had major concerns about flash flooding at the new location.

Diehl's 1950 photograph shows the boards added to reinforce the connection between the compression diagonals and the radiating tension members of the Wernwag trusses.



Even more informative were his photographs taken of the reassembly of the bridge at Governor Bebb Park. The county engineer had salvaged the components of the wooden bridge and put them in storage when erecting a replacement at the Fairfield Pike site in 1966. The Butler County Park District agreed to rebuild it at Bebb Park, but the effort did not begin until Hamilton philanthropist Peter R. Rentschler offered to finance it. Work was well under way when Diehl showed up to record the work in May 1968. He returned two years later for the dedication.

John Diehl's careful documentation of the Bebb Park Bridge over time gives us a unique window into the unusual history of an important part of Ohio's engineering heritage.



← A contractor was still assembling the relocated trusses at the new location in Bebb Park when Diehl visited in May 1968.

Diehl was present in May 1970 for the dedication of the bridge at its new home in Governor Bebb Park. →



All Bebb Park Bridge photos are from Ohio History Connection, MSS 1615 AV, Box 1.

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

Zoarville Station Fink Through Truss Bridge.....David Simmons



Average Joe’s Affordable Tree Service removed poison ivy and a maple tree at the Fink Through Truss Bridge in Tuscarawas County for OHBA. The left-over mulch was disposed at the Boy Scout Camp with the help of David Tschantz. The bridge was built in Canal Dover over the Tuscarawas River and moved to its present location in 1905. It is the only remaining Fink Through Truss bridge in the US. Albert Fink (an engineer for the Baltimore and Erie Rail Road) designed the bridge to create a stronger all metal bridge allowing for more locomotive traffic than a wooden bridge. It was restored in 2007 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Wedding at Salt Creek Covered Bridge.....Elma Lee Moore

The Salt Creek Bridge was the wedding venue for a couple. The bride-to-be asked if she could use the bridge for a small wedding in the event that their original plans did not work. David Simmons said, “Yes, but send us a picture.” The happy bride and groom complied adding that they were so delighted with the bridge that they scrapped their original plans and held the wedding there. Congratulations Kyle and Alli on their October 14 marriage.



A Reminiscences of Fellow Bridger..... Sue Whitacre with Elma Lee Moore

Recently Sue Whitacre, a long time OHBA member, inquired about lists of bridges. She included a short story of how she and a friend became interested in covered bridges. With her permission, her story is included: I used to live in Toledo, Ohio. My close friend Carol’s husband was severely injured in an industrial accident in 1983 and she became his caregiver. Initially as a “way to get out of Dodge” for a while, Carol and I would flit all over Ohio taking pictures of covered bridges. We do not know how we got started with “bridges” but possibly it was because my husband’s family resided near Fremont and the Mull Covered Bridge. We had numerous CRAZY



experiences over the years prior to the era of GPS and cellular phones. While trying to get the perfect shot at just the right angle from a field near a bridge, we were chased by a raging bull. Another time, we waded through a stream attempting to photo the side of a bridge not covered by graffiti. While searching for the location of the Manchester Covered Bridge in Noble County, we were snagged as we crawled under barbed wire (and no doubt trespassing). Our scariest time was getting lost in the middle of “good ole boy” hunting grounds near Zanesville where Confederate flags flew everywhere.

Carol’s husband died in 1993 and I moved to Illinois in 2016 but we continue our journeys to Ohio. We went to Ashtabula, Greene and Union Counties taking photos to add to our collections. I am 73 and Carol is 78. The recent photo is of Carol at a covered bridge in Long Grove, Illinois near my home.

Fall 2018 Bridge Tour – Southwest Ohio Bridges..... Elma Lee Moore



← We were guided at the first bridge on the tour - the Black Covered Bridge (35-09-03) built in 1868 - by member Bill Bowser who has researched the bridge. Bill showed us things to look for at the bridge. He pointed out the sagging at the end of the bridge, caused by the abutment underneath.

The Beeb Park or State Line Covered Bridge was featured in President's Corner above. It looks much like the final photo there. →



We ate lunch at park of the Crosby Township Senior Center where the



← Oxford Road Bowstring Bridge (1870s) was relocated in 2006.

We then continued to the Willey Road Concrete Bowstring Bridge (1911). This unique bridge is an example of the way concrete was used to protect structural steel from the effects of locomotive steam. →



← Next was the Jediah Hill Covered Bridge (35-31-01) one of the few Queenpost truss bridges in Ohio. It was completed in 1850 and rebuilt in 1981.

The most spectacular → bridge viewed was the John Roebling Suspension Bridge (1867) which crosses the Ohio River at Cincinnati. It was difficult to get a great picture of the bridge, but the towers are quite impressive.



The final two bridges were in Clermont ← County. The Stonelick Covered Bridge (35-13-02) was built in 1878 and rehabbed in 2013.

And nearby was the → St Philomena Church Bridge which was moved to this location in 1950 and closed to traffic in 2002. This bridge is named for the St. Philomena Church nearby. The bridge was so covered by vegetation that one missed it in the first pass-by.



OHBA Officers & Membership Information

President: David Simmons, Ohio History Connection, Timeline Office, 800 E. 17th Ave., Columbus, OH 43211-2494, 614-297-2365 (work) dsimmons@ohiohistory.org
740-965-4023 (home)

1st VP: Edmund Chapdelaine, 217 E. Main St., West Lafayette, OH 43845,
740-545-6696 schapdelaine@sbcglobal.net

2nd VP: Douglas D. Miller, 7228 Pineview Dr., Englewood, OH 45322-2600 937-832-0817
(home) dmiller94@woh.rr.com

3rd VP: Elma Lee Moore, 4489 Choctaw Trail, Jamestown, OH 45335 937-675-9115 (home)
elmphd@aol.com

Treasurer: Joseph W. Charles, Jr., 726 Newark-Granville Rd., Granville, OH 43023-1451, 740-587-2266, jdcharles@windstream.net

Corres. Sec'y: Miriam Wood, c/o Howard Wood, 5995 Springburn Dr., Dublin OH 43017

Rec. Sec'y: Ellen Rupp, 612 Glenridge Pl., Columbus, OH 43214, 614-847-9634 mailellen-too@yahoo.com

Trustees: Ken & Linda Cash, 1657 Spruce St., Zanesville, OH 43701, 740-453-3840

Editor of Bridges & Byways: Elma Lee Moore, 4489 Choctaw Trail, Jamestown, OH 45335
937-675-9115 elmphd@aol.com

Web Master: Pat Hoffmannbeck, 2457 Willis Rd., Dublin, Oh 43016,
614-579-3823 phoffmannb@gmail.com

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 1st 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 to **Mr. Joseph Charles at 726 Newark-Granville Rd., Granville, OH 43023-1451.**
Be sure to include your 9 digit zip code.

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 _____

My phone number is _____

Enclosed is my check made out to the OHBA in the amount of _____ for a _____ year senior/single/family/contributing/supporting/life/student (circle) membership.



Fall 2018 Bridge Tour, Southwest Ohio Sept. 16, 2018

L to R : Mrs. Dan Bennett, Dan Bennett, Mike Hagan, William Bowser, Eric Prindle, Janis Ford, Pat Hoffmannbeck, Judy Haas, Dennis Parker, Ellen Rupp, Elma Lee Moore. Photo from Janis Ford