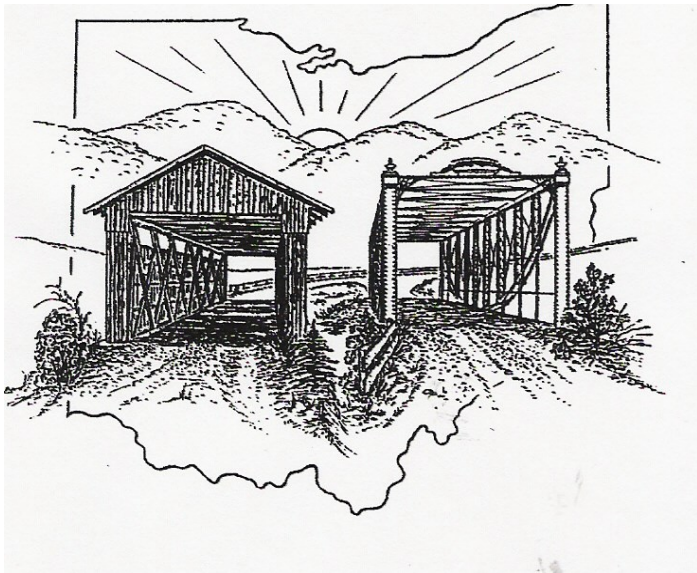


Latest Ohio Historic Bridge News



*Bridges
and
Byways*

Journal of the

Ohio Historic Bridge Association
Volume XXXVI
Fall 2022
Number 3

Meeting Notes:

November 20, 2022 1:30 pm

Annual Business Meeting:

First Speaker: Ron Hill, President of the
Clermont County Historical Society

Topic: Clermont County Covered Bridges
including Stonelick Covered Bridge

Second Speaker: David Simmons

Topic: The Guardians

Place: Ohio History Connection 800 E. 17th
Avenue, Columbus, OH (Exit 111 off I-71)
Meeting is in the Cardinal Room on the third floor.

March 19, 2023 1:30 pm

Speaker: David Geckle, ODOT District 3 Bridge
Engineer

Topic: Anthony Wayne Bridge Rehabilitation and
Dehumidification Project

Place: Ohio History Connection 800 E. 17th
Avenue, Columbus, OH (Exit 111 off I-71)
Meeting is in the Cardinal Room on the third floor.

May 20, 2023

Spring Bridge Tour TBA

July 16, 2023 noon

Summer Picnic

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**Renewal subscriptions are due by Janu-
ary 15, 2023. See page 7 for details.**

Your mailing label has your subscription
date above your name.

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 Reve-
nue Code.

The OHBA mailing address is

**Ohio Historic Bridge Association
PO Box 153
Galena, OH 43021-0153**

The President's Span.....Doug Miller

On the afternoon of Sunday, August 7, 2022, a disappointing email arrived from Bill Caswell, president of the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges. Preble County's Brubaker Covered Bridge was severely damaged the previous Friday. The picture from the Preble County Engineer's Facebook page was gut wrenching. Later that day, my wife and I visited the site, and the in-person



view was even worse! Most of the upper eastern portal was destroyed, as were nearly half of the overhead cross members, leading to the roof's partial collapse. ODOT had closed SR122 nearby and Brubaker Road was a more convenient short cut than following the signed detour. Member Jeff Shroyer also visited the site and spoke to some of the neighbors. He learned that one of them had stopped the same truck on Thursday and convinced the reluctant driver to turn around to follow the detour. The next day, the same truck again tried to come down the road and was again stopped by the neighbor. This time the warning was ignored. Fortunately, the bridge is still standing and can be repaired.

This got me to thinking; most of us use GPS devices in one way or another. The software is embedded in our mobile phones, cars, and Garmin (if they are still in use). They show where traffic is slow and locates road closures. Entering a destination brings up suggested directions with alternate routes and estimated travel times. Why can't we have the same information be displayed for bridges that have posted size opening or weight restrictions? It could consider the locations and identify a different route, similar to a detour, so the bridge would not be impacted. Or in the case of signed detours, Follow them! This seems like such a simple solution! A database could be provided to the software companies, uploaded, new algorithms written, and there it is. Problem solved!



Well not so fast. While attending the recent celebration of Steve Stolte, former Union County engineer and commissioner, David Simmons and I spoke to current Union County Engineer Jeff Stauch. We were discussing Spain Creek Covered Bridge that got damaged by an oversize vehicle, and he informed us that the County Engineer's Association of Ohio (CEAO) has explored this very same idea and basically was told the GPS companies were not interested. CEAO is planning to meet with ODOT to draft some legislation and approach the state legislators for relief. Presumably if the companies can't make a buck on it, or if it is not mandated by law, they are not interested.

I'm looking forward seeing everyone at the November meeting and listening to the Clermont County covered bridges presentation.

(All photos courtesy of the Preble County Engineer's Facebook page, R. Kyle Cross, P.E., P.S)

Steve A. Stolte Celebration..... David A. Simmons



David Simmons, Steve Stolte and Doug Miller.
Photo courtesy David Simmons.

About sixty individuals of all ages gathered on the Pottersburg Covered Bridge in Union County at noon on October 7 to enjoy a meal catered by City Barbeque and to join in a celebration of the historic preservationist career of former Union County Engineer and County Commissioner Steve Stolte. OHBA's Doug Miller and David Simmons were among the specially invited guests. While the attendees enjoyed their meal, they were entertained by the vocals and jokes from The Muleskinners, a bluegrass acoustic string band. The program featured remarks and resolutions of commendation from the county convention & visitors' bureau, State Representative Tracy Richardson, current Union County Engineer Jeff Stauch, and Steve Robinson, president of the county commissioners. All emphasized the important role Stolte had during his nearly 50-year career of helping preserve Union County's covered bridges that brought visitors to the county and helped make it "a destination." Commissioner Robinson pointed out that last year tourists spent over \$203 million in the county. Stauch also read a commendation from Dorothy Pelanda, director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture who was not present, which emphasized the im-

portant historic connection between covered bridges and Ohio's farms.

As a consequence of Stolte's leadership, the county visitor's bureau created two unique digital efforts to promote visitation. The Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway was developed in conjunction with ODOT and features 30 sites that range from historic monuments and architecture to nature preserves and covered bridges. They also produced a Covered Bridge Trail for mobile devices that includes an app free tour of Union County's historic and new covered bridges—along with the 1914 Streng Road metal truss—as well as beverage, food and souvenir opportunities. Users have a year to take the tour and be eligible for dining and gift card prize drawings. Both were highlighted in the commendations.

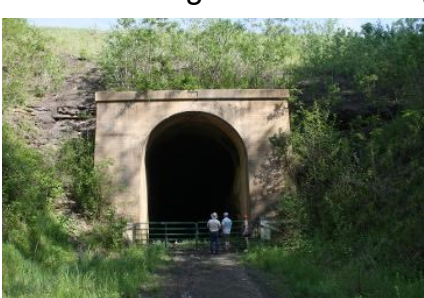
During his remarks, Steve Stolte reflected on how he developed a passion for covered bridges. While in college, he was introduced to the fascinating world of timber structures. His college years coincided with the Silver Bridge collapse, and he used it for a creative writing course where he explored the engineering causes of the disaster. When the federal government began requiring yearly bridge inspections following the Silver Bridge disaster, he and some classmates formed a team to conduct these inspections for Ohio county engineers. Seeing all kinds of old wooden and metal bridges during these efforts helped stir his interest in history. After college, he began designing bridges for a consultant. All was good training for becoming the Union County Engineer in January 1985. Shortly after taking that post, he recalled getting a call from Miriam Wood demanding to know whether he was going to keep the county's historic bridges. He consulted with Scotty Black, his bridge superintendent, and they all agreed that better care was needed for the county's historic bridges. With assistance from Jeff Strauch, then deputy county engineer, in the 1980s new bridges were designed to fit inside the old covered bridges and upgrade their carrying capacity. The successful completion of the upgrades using glulam timbers suggested the possibility of building new covered bridges. After inquiring with state and federal sources, he got approval to proceed but only if it was economically feasible. Because the roofs on a covered bridge effectively extend their life, he was able to get the appropriate administrators to buy into the concept. Union County now has four historic covered bridges and three built for modern traffic in 2006 and 2010.

Steve Stolte has been a major asset to and influence in Ohio. His respect for history and assumption that we can learn from and benefit from its preservation has been a positive force in his county and is an example for the whole state.

Spring Tour of Columbiana County.....David Simmons

The tour was scheduled for Saturday in hopes that more would be able to attend. Given that twenty folks—ranging between the ages of under 10 and over 90—arrived at the Calcutta Tim Horton's before the 9:30 departure time, the experiment seems to have been a good decision.

Our first stop was only a short drive to **Grimm's Bridge**, a well-preserved wrought iron through truss built by Canton's Wrought Iron Bridge Company (WIBC) over Little Beaver Creek in 1884. From the end of the Civil War until 1899 when absorbed into the American Bridge Company, the WIBC was responsible for a remarkable variety of both bridge types and structural innovations. Their influence even extended into Canada. This double-intersection Pratt truss type, sometimes labeled a Whipple truss, was typically used for long-span trusses, in this case totaling 155 feet. It is a particularly well-preserved example, with the only alteration being new floor beams, open-grid steel flooring, and new guardrails. Even with the addition of newer "high-impact" guardrails, the county engineer was careful to preserve the original lattice railings.



A short distance further downstream, we stopped to climb a hill to see the **Youngstown & Southern Railroad Tunnel**, a 1,042-foot concrete-lined tunnel completed in 1933. This rail line carried coal to Smith's Ferry on the Ohio River until 1965, when a landslide caused by strip mining operations closed the east end of the tunnel. The railroad is proposed as part of the Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway, a 110-mile, rails-to-trails bikeway running from Pittsburgh to Ashtabula, Ohio. State funds were used to clear away the landslide, and the area is now administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

ment of Natural Resources.

As we retraced our steps to Calcutta, we passed some **old water-powered mill stone foundations** along the edge of Little Beaver Creek. After reaching Sprucevale Road, we traveled to the site of the Village of Sprucevale, a community inspired in the 1830s by the construction of the Sandy & Beaver Canal. Nearly all traces of the community are gone except for **Hambleton Mill**, a stone gristmill said to date to 1813, built by a family of Quaker brothers. The mill exterior was rehabilitated in 1974 through the efforts of the Vodrey family, but today it stands vacant. A short distance beyond the mill, we passed an Ohio Historical Marker recognizing the **Death of Pretty Boy Floyd**, when on October 22, 1934, the bank robber known as Charles Arthur "Pretty Boy" Floyd was slain by federal agents and members of the East Liverpool Police Department on the former farm of the widow Ellen Conkle.

After crossing the Little Beaver Creek on **Echo Dell Road Bridge**, a 130' steel Pratt through truss built by the Central Concrete & Construction Company of Canton, Ohio, in 1910, we arrived at Beaver Creek State Park, established in 1949.



At the state park, we visited the **Thomas Malone Covered Bridge** (35-15-96), a 42' multiple king-post truss built in 1870. Local historian Tom Malone discovered the bridge had originally spanned Middle Fork but about 1900 was moved to a farm and adapted into a storage shed. Here it stood for 12 years before OH-154 was widened, necessitating a second relocation. The Elkrun Township Trustees moved it to their Pine Hollow Road lot, again for use as a shed.

Malone began a campaign to have the bridge moved to the state park, which led to its disassembly, repair, and reconstruction at the park site in 1970. Since he unfortunately did not live to see the relocation, the bridge was named after him as a memorial.



Nearby was also **Lock No. 36**, a stone masonry lock from the Sandy & Beaver Canal whose wooden lining was restored by the Friends of Beaver Creek Park in 1991. Below the lock is **Gaston's**



Mill Stone Bridge, a small masonry arch road bridge dating around 1875 following the closing of the Sandy & Beaver Canal. A major feature of the tour was our visit to **Gaston's Mill**, a braced-frame gristmill completed in 1837 that received its current name



after being sold to James Gaston in 1849. The Gaston family has owned it longer than anyone, except the State of Ohio, so it continues under that name. Water to power the mill originally came from the canal, but the mill was later converted to steam and then gasoline power. The Friends of Beaver Creek reconstructed the waterwheel and grind grain on the first weekend of the month during the summer. While we did not get to see grain being ground between the buhr stones, the volunteers were gracious enough to run the waterwheel and answer our questions.

As we drove to our next stop, we paralleled the route of the **Sandy and Beaver Canal**, a private canal system developed in the 1830s to connect the Ohio & Erie Canal at Bolivar in Tuscarawas County with the Ohio River at Glasgow, Pennsylvania, almost due east. The goal was to make a more direct connection to Pittsburgh, where the Pennsylvania state canal terminated. The technical challenges of digging two tunnels through the Columbiana County's hilly topography delayed completion of the canal until 1848. By this time, railroads were becoming popular and after a major dam broke, the canal company was forced into insolvency in 1854.

Upon arriving in Elkton, we stopped to see the **Church Hill Covered Bridge** (35-15-08), a single kingpost truss built in 1870. With a clear span of only 19', this is the state's shortest covered bridge and is thought to be the shortest standing anywhere. Originally located over Middle Run on an isolated rural road, it was bypassed in 1963, and a small park was created around it. Concern over steady vandalism here led the Elkton Historical Society to move it to a more public site near Lock 24 Restaurant, where it was placed over the bed of the Sandy and Beaver Canal in 1982.



We then proceeded into Lisbon where we passed through the **Lisbon Historic District**, a nationally recognized preservation district consisting of commercial and residential architecture dating from 1810 to the early 20th century. The majority of buildings date to the Federal period of architecture, although the courthouse itself was erected in 1871. We stopped for lunch at the **McKinley Boy Scout Camp** shelter house.

Following lunch, we stopped within the camp to see the **Gideon Hughes Stone House**, built about 1808 and later occupied by James McKinley, President William McKinley's grandfather, and the **Rebecca Iron Furnace**, also built about 1808.



We proceeded back through Lisbon to the county fairgrounds to see the **Lisbon Bridge**, a lattice-type bowstring built in 1872 by the Massillon Bridge Company. Patented by Massillon inventor Joseph Davenport in the late 1860s, this 72' bridge represents one of the major innovations in iron bowstrings developed by Ohio builders just before and after the Civil War. The main compression member of the arch is composed of bar iron and pipes, materials that were relatively inexpensive and widely available throughout the state.

It proved to be effective in the highly competitive world of bowstring bridge construction in Ohio, successfully competing against hollow, tubular compression members like those manufactured by the other prominent Ohio builders, including King Bridge in Cleveland and Wrought Iron Bridge Company in Canton. Bert Dawson, the county engineer, salvaged the bridge in 1966, and it stood abandoned in the county yard until 2017 when it was adapted as a new “entrance” to the fairgrounds.



After leaving the fairgrounds, we drove north of the city to the **Teegarden, or Centennial, Covered Bridge** (35-15-05), a 66’ multiple kingpost truss spanning the Middle Fork of Little Beaver Creek built in 1876 by Jeremiah Mountz. It was bypassed in 1992 and renovated, including repainting of the historic ads on the portals, in 2001 as part of a bike path. When arsonists attempted to burn it in February 2003, a passing motorist reported it and the fire was extinguished with minimal damage. Fortunately, the renovation had also included fire retardants.

Our next stop was at the **County Home Road Stone Arch**, a 30’ masonry bridge dating to the 1870s composing of three voussoir-type arches. The county engineer has carefully preserved the original stone railing instead of the more common addition of a modern steel impact railing.



Further south on this road we came to the **McClellan Covered Bridge** (35-15-02), a 53’ multiple kingpost originally built by R. H. McCracken in 1879 over the West Fork of the Little Beaver Creek. It stood closed and neglected for many years. Finally, it was extensively rebuilt in 2017, but the work faithfully maintained the original technology even to the point of recreating a historic iron rod “tiedowns” into each corner of the abutments.



Our final stop was at the **Sells Covered Bridge** (35-15-01), a 50’ multiple kingpost truss built in 1878 by the Robinson and McCracken firm. Originally located near Trinity Church Road, by the 1980s it served only a single family and was closed to traffic. In 1989, it was dismantled and stored for rebuilding at a new site. In 1991, timber framer Bruce Egli began a reconstruction project using volunteer labor in Scenic Vista Park. Unhappily, arsonists set the bridge on fire during the summer of 1993, completely destroying it. Egli had the foresight to have prepared measured drawings that allowed a complete reconstruction of the bridge. With the help of insurance and donations, the rebuilding was completed the following year.



All Photos for the tour by Doug Miller

Summer PicnicDavid and Melinda Simmons

Because of inclement weather, the picnic was held inside the bridge. The Cash family provided us with battery powered lights which enabled 20 of us to view our scrumptious food. Neither the speaker Ron Hill nor Doug Miller were able to attend. It was noted that this is the first picnic since the roof has been repaired and coated by J&W Roofing of Logan, Ohio. Leroy Gifford coordinated the project, obtaining six bids before the decision was made to go with the Logan firm. David Simmons reported about Doug Miller’s attendance at the Covered Bridge Summit held in June. Terry Miller talked about the Southern Ohio Covered Bridge Association history. *Photo: David Simmons.*



OHBA Officers & Membership Information

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937-675-9115 elmphd@aol.com

Web Master: Pat Hoffmannbeck, 2457 Willis Rd., Dublin, Oh 43016,
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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 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.

Ohio Historic Bridge Association
PO Box 153
Galena, OH 43021-0153

Return Service Requested



Spring Bridge Tour, Columbiana County, May 21, 2022

L to R: Bill Vermes and Cyler Vermes, Bob and Bernadette Weston, Bill McGuire, Doug Miller, Ed Chapdelaine, Ron Frakes, Karen and Pat McCann, Terry Miller, Steve Buttorf, Sara Miller, Esther Thatcher, Linda and Dario Gasparini, David Simmons, Jim and Sharon Gnagy, Rusty Gnagy *(Photo by David Simmons)*