

Bridges and Byways

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Ohio Historic Bridge Association
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Meeting Notes:

OHBA

March 17, 2019: 1:30 pm

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

Speaker: Terry Miller, **Topic:** Southwest China's Unknown Covered Bridges.

May 19, 2019: 10:00 am

Spring Bridge Tour: Great Stone Viaduct and National Road Bridges. Meet at McDonald's, 300 28th St. Bellaire, OH 43906

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

November 17, 2019: 1:30 pm

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

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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.

A Happy Coincidence

Occasionally, a previously unknown photograph of a covered bridge long since demolished will come to light. The recently discovered image of the Rushville Covered Bridge in Fairfield County is a prime example.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has been preparing exhibits for a new visitors' center at Hocking Hills State Park, one of the state's premier natural areas. Those preparing exhibits wanted to include a portrait and information on the life's work of paleontologist Jesse E. Hyde. A geology professor at Cleveland's Western Reserve University, Hyde authored numerous publications, including a number on the geology of southern Ohio that encompasses the Hocking Hills.

Jesse Earl Hyde was born in Fairfield County at Rushville in 1884, and it was there that he first got interested in geology. In 1912, he contributed a lengthy chapter on the local geology for a county history. In it he discussed the extensive local use of Cuyahoga sandstone "for massive work such as bridge abutments." The application of geology to civil engineering was among his areas of specialty, and engineers frequently sought his opinion as a technical expert in court proceedings.

So we might have expected him to photograph the Rushville Covered Bridge crossing Little Rush Creek between his hometown and West Rushville. According to his grandson, who found the photo in a family album, Hyde dated the photo as taken in May 1914. The following year, he moved to Cleveland to begin his teaching career at Western Reserve.

A sign painted on the portal of the Rushville Bridge (35-23-70) gave Jonathan Coulson credit for building it in 1842. The fact that the 102-foot-bridge had two lanes was unusual for rural Ohio. Most double-barreled bridges were in cities, where high traffic volumes demanded it. At Rushville, we can account for it because a private toll road, known as the Zanesville and Maysville Turnpike Company, constructed it. The turnpike was established in 1836 on the right-of-way of the legendary Zane's Trace, the first inland highway across Ohio. Zane's Trace ran from Wheeling to the Ohio River opposite Maysville, Kentucky, passing through Zanesville and Lancaster, and had been completed as a twenty-foot wagon road by 1804. The turnpike corporation was formed by forty individuals. Their plan shortened the Zane Trace route to run between Zanesville and Maysville. Unlike public officials, who were typically far more frugal, private road builders could anticipate toll revenue from their highways and felt confident in building a more expensive, two-lane bridge requiring three trusses—in this case Burr trusses—instead of only two. Presumably the traffic on this major east-west route warranted having lanes going in both directions.

Because most of the records of early turnpike and bridge companies' corporate records were seldom archived, we know relatively little about the rationale for such private projects. The documentation of publicly financed bridge projects, most frequently found in county commissioners' journals, are much more extensive, and were the source that Miriam Wood so successfully mined for many years.

While the activities of the Zanesville and Maysville Turnpike are unclear, we do know something about the builder. Jonathan Coulson was born in Pennsylvania in 1797 and was living in Greenfield Township northwest of Lancaster as early as 1830. His farm was rated at a relatively high value in the 1850 agricultural census, but he was clearly also working as a building contractor as well as a farmer, since those living in his household included a blacksmith and two carpenters. Miriam Wood found that he was a regular bidder on county bridge projects from 1838 through 1850.

Even though she was primarily interested in covered bridges, her research notes preserved at the Ohio History Connection indicate that Coulson was especially active erecting open wooden bridges during the 1840s. It is interesting to note that Coulson's father was one of the original turnpike incorporators, which likely helps explain how Jonathan Coulson obtained the contract. Sometime before 1860, Coulson moved to a farm between Lafayette and Indianapolis, Indiana, where he worked as a carpenter. Upon his death in 1863, his remains were brought back to Fairfield County and buried in Baugher Cemetery in Greenfield Township.

So a state official's interest in recognizing and documenting the work of an important Ohio scientist led to the discovery of a fascinating image of a distinctive, early Ohio bridge.

David A. Simmons



Jonathan Coulson, builder of the 1842 Rushville Covered Bridge, reportedly taught Jacob “Blue Jeans” Brandt the bridge-building profession. Brandt is credited with rebuilding the Rushville bridge in 1892. The low iron truss approach span was added to accommodate a railroad line. Both bridges were replaced in 1922.

William Hyde Collection

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

Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center Update-Excerpts.....Trish Kane

The Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center is the first of its kind to exist anywhere. It was designed specifically for individuals seriously interested in covered bridge research and officially opened on July 2, 2011. The Center is dedicated to the memory of Richard Donovan, Covered Bridge Extraordinaire and Charlotte Stafford, former town of Oxford Historian. It is open to the public whenever the Library is open. The first collection received by the Center was the Richard Donovan collection which included approximately 20,000 post-cards and approximately 1,500 photographs, plus numerous slides. Since that time, we have accepted several collections of various sizes. The National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges also supported the Center by donating 21 covered bridge models which are part of the Center's permanent collection and currently on display. We have 288 books in our covered bridge library. Our oldest book is dated 1897 (The Elements of Bridge Engineering: Prepared by Students of the International Correspondence Schools, Scranton, PA) and our newest book is dated 2017 (New Hampshire's Historical Covered Bridges by Conrad Young. The Center has 16 different covered bridge organizations represented via their newsletters. In 2011, Terry Miller, author of many covered bridge books, donated \$5,000 towards the purchase of computer equipment which was a tremendous boost to the Center. We were able to purchase a new computer, software for this computer and two types of scanners. In 2013, the Center hosted a covered bridge summit which was attended by over thirty individuals from the covered bridge community. With the exception of Oregon, the President of every state that has a covered bridge organization was in attendance. We had representatives from Maryland, New York, Ohio, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Maine and Vermont. The Center is appreciative of those who continue to support the Center by volunteering to assist the Center in various ways. We also appreciate those who support us monetarily on an annual basis. We continue to exist because of your support and generosity. If you have any questions or are interested in supporting the Center by volunteering to help, donating a collection of covered bridge resource material, or making a monetary donation, please feel free to contact me.



Bob Kane showing a bridge model

Trish Kane, Collections, Curator, Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center
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Parker Covered Bridge (35-88-03) Award.....Doug Miller



The February 2019 meeting of The Southwest Chapter of the Association for Bridge Construction (ABCD) hosted the "All Ohio" Outstanding Bridge Awards Dinner. During this event, the Parker Covered Bridge was recognized for Outstanding Rehabilitation of a Short Bridge. A brief presentation was made by Mike Killilea, PE of the Righter Company which has rehabilitated numerous covered bridges in Ohio. The Parker CB in Wyandot County is a Howe truss built in 1873 by J.C. Davis. It is on the National Register of Historic Places (1976). Photo: ABCD)

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

Lynchburg Covered Bridge (35-36-06) Suspicious Fire.....Elma Lee Moore



David Wright of The Times-Gazette reported that the Lynchburg Covered Bridge in Highland County was set afire on January 28, 2019. The fire did damage to the interior of the bridge although the extent of damage had not been determined by the county engineers. It is suspected that the fire was the result of arson. There were no reported injuries.

The Long truss spans the east fork of the Little Miami River and connects Highland County and Clinton County. It was built in 1870 at a cost of \$3,138.66 by local bridge builder John C. Gregg of Hillsboro. As do many covered bridges, it occupies the site where

a gristmill and sawmill once operated. In 1969, it was retired from service and Clinton County gave up its rights to the bridge to Highland County. Over the years the bridge has suffered other damage requiring restoration. It is Highland County's last covered bridge. In 1976, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places and was one of only eight Long truss bridges in existence at that time. This bridge is a product of sustained community effort of support for maintenance and upkeep of the bridge. An annual covered bridge festival raises funds for the bridge. Photo: David Wright, The Times-Gazette.

History in Your Own Backyard Videos.....David Simmons and Elma Lee Moore

Many of you had the opportunity to meet Satolli Glassmeyer creator of History in Your Own Backyard.com at last summer's picnic. OHBA has arranged filming for a total of nine videos about Ohio historic bridges this winter and spring as part of its educational outreach. Along with four covered bridges, filming at several iron, suspension, and stone bridges is planned. The first two will focus on The White Bridge in Poland, Mahoning County and the Iron Bowstring Arch Bridge in Lisbon, Columbiana County.



← The White Bridge (actually now painted black) is located in Poland, Ohio. Bridges & Byways ran an article about this bridge in our Spring 2018 newsletter. OHBA donated funds for restoring the paint color for this bridge. Photo: Library of Congress

The Iron Bowstring Arch Bridge in Lisbon, Columbiana County is an excellent example of historic preservation. The bridge was originally built in 1872 by the Massillon Bridge Company over the Middle Fork of the Little Beaver Creek in Lisbon. In 1966 when the road was realigned, the old bridge was left in place. However, the deck began to deteriorate and it became unsafe for children who were playing there. In 1969, the bridge was removed and placed in storage at the Columbiana County Engineer's office.



The Lisbon Bridge in storage

And there the bridge sat until 2015. At that time there was a need for a pedestrian bridge at the Columbiana County Fairgrounds. Funding was secured to restore the bridge. It was disassembled and shipped to Cambridge, Ohio where experts at U.S. Bridge made the necessary repairs to the bridge fabric. It was then returned to Columbiana County and placed on new abutments and piers. It opened July 23, 2017. The



The Lisbon Bridge Restored as entrance to the Columbiana County Fairgrounds

videos will be available soon at [History in your Own Backyard.com](http://HistoryinyourOwnBackyard.com). Copies of the videos will be made available to local historic societies, libraries, and school systems in these two areas. Photos: Lisbon Bridge: Troy Graft, Bridgehunters.com

Mary Ruffner Covered Bridge Donation Request.....Doug Miller and Elma Lee Moore

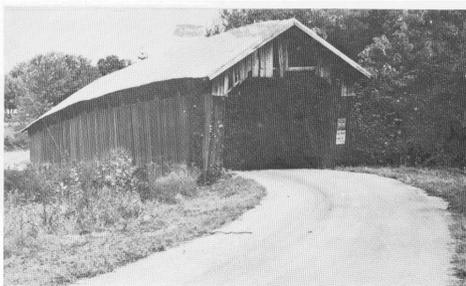
At our November meeting, a request was made for a donation for restoration of the Mary Ruffner Covered Bridge (35-64-84) under private ownership in Perry County which is now being donated back to the Fairfield County Parks System. This brought up a discussion of how OHBA as an organization should make decisions about donations for such projects, keeping in mind the organization’s mission which is “...to promote the study of historic bridges and bring together persons interested in learning about, protecting and promoting the historic bridges of Ohio. We strive to foster an understanding and appreciation of these structures and their connection to our past and to support efforts of bridge preservation and rehabilitation.”



After a lengthy dialogue, it was decided to use the criteria as set forth by HAER (Historic American Engineering Record). These guidelines give explicit detail about documentation of projects. The decision about donating to the project was tabled until a future meeting. Since our meeting, Doug Miller contacted the Fairfield County Parks System and acquired a copy of a feasibility survey that has been prepared regarding the Mary Ruffner CB. Photo: [Lancaster Eagle-Gazette](http://LancasterEagle-Gazette)

A fun story from member Jeff Shroyer.....Elma Lee Moore

Daily, when I open [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) postings by Jeff Shroyer, I am greeted by Brutus who accompanies Jeff on his rounds at work for Mays-Shedd Sales and Service. (And I wait to find out which country song Brutus wants to hear today.) Jeff travels all over Ohio and nearby states and has many opportunities to visit bridges. He tells a fun story of a visit to the Eakin Mill/Arbaugh Covered Bridge (35-82-07) in Vinton County.



Arbaugh Vinton County, Ohio 35-82-07

“About 1982, I had a good trek to the bridge from the recently completed Appalachian Highway-SR 32. As I neared the bridge, I heard laughing and talking. Looking down into Raccoon Creek, I had a surprise as three young ladies were skinny dipping on a hot, very humid afternoon!” The Eakin Mill bridge was abandoned when SR-32 was built and heavy damage was caused by construction traffic. It was replaced by a new covered bridge 35-82-07-#2 in 2003 when it was determined that the original bridge was beyond repair. Photos: Jeff Shroyer and Elma Lee Moore

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 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
c/o David Simmons
800 E. 17th Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43211

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Roberts Covered Bridge (35-68-05) in Preble County

Built in 1829, it is the oldest covered bridge and the only remaining double-barreled bridge in Ohio. Photo: From the Library of Congress Collection, taken in 1961 before being moved to its present location in Eaton and restored in 1991.