

86 Rogers' Rangers Bridge

Connecting Lancaster, New Hampshire and Guildhall, Vermont

The Rogers' Rangers Bridge can be found spanning the Connecticut River between the towns of Lancaster, New Hampshire and Guildhall, Vermont. Construction of the steel truss, two span bridge began in 1950. It measures 398 feet long and has a roadway width of 28 feet, enabling it to accommodate two lanes of traffic. There is also a cantilevered sidewalk on one side of the bridge, which was added in 1996. During the winter months, snowmobilers use the sidewalk to cross the Connecticut River as part of the local trail system.

The Rogers' Rangers Bridge is a Parker truss type bridge. A Parker truss is a variation of a Pratt truss, which is a truss-style that includes vertical members and diagonal members that slope down towards the center. Prevalent from the 1840s through the early twentieth century, the Pratt truss inspired a number of variations and subtypes, including the Parker truss. The only difference between a Pratt and a Parker truss is the Parker truss possesses a polygonal top chord, which is more curved or circular in appearance than the "flat top" of a Pratt truss. Parker trusses are also generally used for spans that are 100 feet or more in length. Metal truss bridges are disappearing faster from our landscape than any other structure type, making the Rogers' Rangers Bridge a "drying breed."



While the Rogers' Rangers Bridge is relatively young for a bridge, having been built in 1950, the area that it is located in is steeped in early American history. The Bridge received its name to commemorate the militia group formed by the now-infamous, southern New Hampshireman, Robert Rogers. Between the years of 1754 to 1763, a conflict over trade and land existed between Europe, the Americas and France. This conflict came to be referred to as the French and Indian War according to North Americans, or the Seven Years' War according to Europeans. In an attempt to gain an advantage over their French and Indian enemies, the British sought assistance from colonists who knew the local terrain and formed ranger companies.

Born during a time of deadly Indian raids, Robert Rogers became a ranger for the British and served in a ranger company focused on the Hudson Valley campaign. Equipped with knowledge of the terrain, tenacity and combat savviness, Rogers soon became the commander of his own

(and very successful) ranger company, which became known as Rogers' Rangers. Rogers' Rangers wore distinctive green outfits and practiced tactics, considered unorthodox by the British, which they called "Rogers' Rules of Ranging." Individuals were selected for inclusion in Rogers' Rangers solely based on merit, which probably further contributed to the successfulness of Rogers' company. Perhaps the most shocking to his contemporaries, was Rogers' use of Native Americans and freed slaves in his "ranging" pursuits.

Rogers' Rangers passed through the Guildhall, Vermont and Lancaster, New Hampshire area in 1759, no doubt on a "ranging" assignment.

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