

90 Pittsburg-Clarksville Covered Bridge

Bacon Road, Pittsburg, New Hampshire

If a tour of New England covered bridges tops your travel itinerary, the Pittsburg-Clarksville Bridge, also known as the Bacon Road Bridge, holds the honor as most northerly of all remaining covered bridges in New Hampshire.

Spanning the Connecticut River, this bridge connects the towns of Pittsburg and Clarksville, NH, extending south from NH Route 3 in Clarksville to Bacon Road, west of Pittsburg. Though closed to vehicle traffic in 1981, the bridge remains open to pedestrians. While archives cannot place a specific date or builder, records point to 1876 as the year of construction. At the time, Ebenezer Fletcher owned and operated a saw mill near the bridge site, and the townspeople of Pittsburg raised money to build the bridge. According to town records, officials in Pittsburg petitioned the residents of Clarksville for two-thirds of the construction cost, only to be vetoed.



Designed by Peter Paddleford of Littleton, New Hampshire, this truss style bridge spans a gap of 70 feet and sits approximately 16 feet above the water. Its length is 88 feet, 6 inches, with a total width of 19 feet, 3 inches. The roadway spans 15 feet wide with a clearance height of 12 feet, 10 inches.

Although never patented, the Paddleford truss was quite common in New Hampshire and northern Vermont in the mid-1800s. Paddleford was a millwright who modified the Long truss, which was patented in 1830 by Colonel Stephen Long. The Long truss was designed with all

wooden supports, alternating between vertical and diagonal. Paddleford simply added another layer of support by using a notched counterbrace that locked the posts, chords and braces together.

Originally, seven covered bridges were located throughout the area; however, today, the Pittsburg-Clarksville Covered Bridge is one of only three remaining historic bridges. Like most Paddleford bridges, the Pittsburg-Clarksville Bridge required some additional support in the form of laminated arches to help maintain the structure. The Pittsburg-Clarksville Bridge is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sources:

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