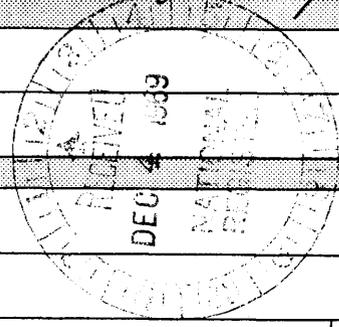


PH0004119

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine	
COUNTY: Somerset	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-1-18-0001	DATE 1/21/70



1. NAME

COMMON:
New Portland Wire Bridge

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Col. Morses' Fool Bridge

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Wire Bridge Road

CITY OR TOWN:
New Portland vicinity

STATE: Maine CODE: 18 COUNTY: Somerset CODE: 025

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied/used <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of Maine

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta STATE: Maine CODE: 18

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Somerset County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Skowhegan STATE: Maine CODE: 18

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maine
COUNTY: Somerset
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good
<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
(Check One)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered
(Check One)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The New Portland Wire Bridge spans the Carrabasset River. It is 188' long and 12' wide. Because of its narrow width only one car can pass over the bridge in one direction at a time.

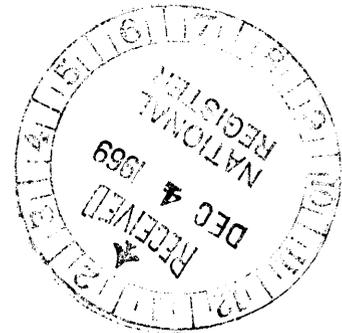
The bridge towers are 25' high and are constructed of rugged 12' x 12's covered with shingles for protection. There are 204 steel girders holding the bridge to the two massive (about 4" diameter) Sheffield steel main support girders.

Originally built in 1841-42, it was extensively repaired in 1960-61 by the Maine State Highway Commission.

There is a 30' drop from the bridge to the water during the summer. The water and/or the level is considerably higher in the spring. At one time ice actually pushed the middle of the bridge a few inches upward.

The abutments have been recently repaired. Thirty ton blocks of granite and concrete anchor the main support girders.

As many as 100 cars per day pass over the bridge on occasion. The load limit is four tons. The narrow entrances to the bridge serve to discourage heavy wood pulp trucks from attempting to cross.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

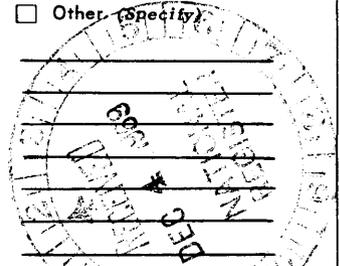
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The history of this bridge dates back to 1838 when at the annual town meeting there was discussion relative to a bridge over the Seven Mile Brook, as the Carrabasset River was known by name at that time.

The reason this bridge was thought of was so that the settlers on the North side of the river could get to New Portland village. As the current was swift there, it was considered doubtful if a wooden bridge would stand the freshets or even high water.

Col. F. B. Morse who lived on the south road, came forward with the idea of a suspension or wire bridge. At the town meeting in 1840 citizens voted to build it and the sum of \$2,000.00 was appropriated for a wire bridge. This bridge was to be built under the direction of Morse who had been a colonel in the Army and had had engineering experience. He drew the design of the bridge and ordered two cables to be made in Sheffield, England. That summer under his direction Elder Ezra Winslow and William Witham with a crew built the two abutments. There was much criticism about the project and it was called Colonel Morses' "Fool Bridge".

Sometime in the winter of 1841 the cables came to Bath and that spring were loaded on a schooner for Hallowell. On arrival at Hallowell Colonel Morse ordered 16 pair of oxen in two teams to make the trip to haul the cables and fittings to New Portland.

On the seventh day they returned to New Portland, with them Moses Mitchell, Sr., and Daniel Parker were the boss teamsters. It was on June 29, 1841 that the cables arrived but owing to high water it was some time in July before the foundations were ready.

In August of that year the cables were strung and before cold weather the bridge was nearly completed. Work was suspended during the winter, but early in the spring it was resumed and on June 20, 1842, it was completed and ready for traffic. It's total cost was around \$2,200.00.

There have been reports that the bridge was actually not built in 1842, but in 1866 by a Capt. Charles Clark. Claims have been that bridge agent David Elder was paid \$3,624.93 for building the bridge.

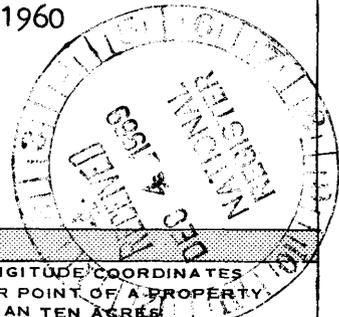
Due to the lack of reliable records, it is impossible to be certain of the bridge's early history.

The Maine State Highway Commission has assumed responsibility for the bridge.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Article in the Maine Trail Magazine, July, 1962, pp. 7-9
 Article in the Maine Highway News Magazine, June, 1962
 Packard, Harry; article in the New York Times, April 24, 1960



10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		44° 53' 23"	70° 5' 36"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1/4 of an acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
John W. Briggs, Historian

ORGANIZATION: **State Park & Recreation Commission** DATE: **Nov. 26, 1969**

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House

CITY OR TOWN: **Augusta,** STATE: **Maine** CODE: **18**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name *Lawrence Stuart*
Lawrence Stuart
 Title **Director**

Date **12-1-69**

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

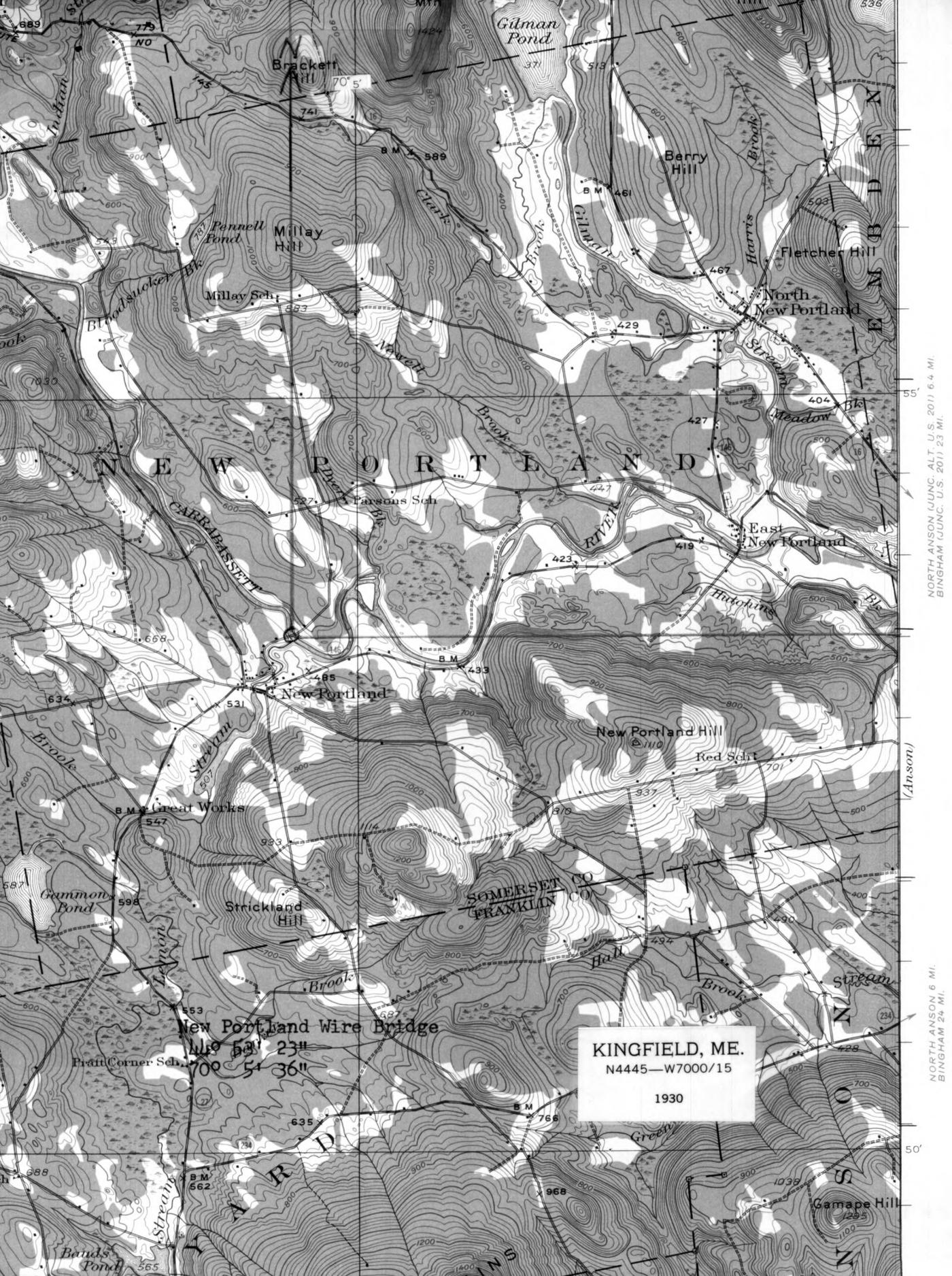
Ernest Allen Crowley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date **JAN 12 1970**

ATTEST:
William J. Bourke
 Keeper of The National Register

Date **DEC 31 1969**

19/412660/4971175-
 1-26-76
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS



KINGFIELD, ME.
N4445—W7000/15
1930

NORTH ANSON (UNCL. ALT. U.S. 2011) 6.4 MI.
BINGHAM (UNCL. U.S. 2011) 23 MI.

(Arson)

NORTH ANSON 6 MI.
BINGHAM 24 MI.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Maine	
COUNTY Somerset	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-1-18-0007	DATE 1/21/70

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: New Portland Wire Bridge
AND/OR HISTORIC: Col. Morse's "Fool Bridge"

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Wire Bridge Road

CITY OR TOWN:
New Portland

STATE: Maine	CODE 18	COUNTY: Somerset	CODE 025
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3. MAP REFERENCE

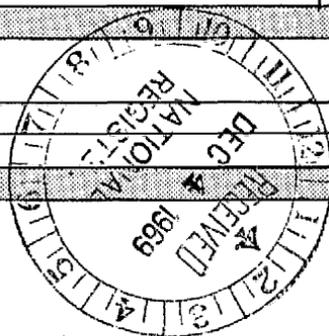
SOURCE: U. S. G. S. Kingfield quadrangle

SCALE: 1:62,500

DATE: 1930

4. REQUIREMENTS

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. Property boundaries where required.
 2. North arrow.
 3. Latitude and longitude reference.



PH0004910