

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICEPH 0666335
FOR NPS USE ONLYRECEIVED APR 3 1978
DATE ENTERED NOV 24 1978NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Old Covered Bridge

AND/OR COMMON
same**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Covered Bridge Lane

CITY, TOWN Sheffield

VICINITY OF
CODENOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
1st

STATE Massachusetts

025

COUNTY
BerkshireCODE
003**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☒ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☐ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ COMMERCIAL
☐ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☐ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☒ MUSEUM
☐ PARK
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Town of Sheffield, Board of Selectmen

STREET & NUMBER
Town Hall

CITY, TOWN Sheffield

VICINITY OF

STATE Massachusetts 01257

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Sheffield Town RecordsSTREET & NUMBER
Town Hall

CITY, TOWN Sheffield

STATE Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYSTITLE Historic American Engineering Record
Inventory of Historic Assets of the CommonwealthDATE 1973
1976☒ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR Library of Congress
SURVEY RECORDS Massachusetts Historical CommissionCITY, TOWN Washington
BostonSTATE D.C.
Massachusetts

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ GOOD

☐ RUINS

☒ FAIR

☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED

☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Covered Bridge of Sheffield spans the Housatonic River in the Plains region of Sheffield. The surrounding area is predominantly rural; the immediate area is the flood plain of the river. The bridge, in 19th century fashion, is angled and runs southwest to northeast across the river.

It is approached on either side by Covered Bridge Lane which runs approximately east to west. The easterly approach is from Boardman Street and is twenty-six hundred feet long. The six hundred foot long westerly approach begins at Main Street (U.S. 7). The bridge is ninety-three feet long with an outside width of fifteen feet, eleven inches. The interior width is eleven feet, eleven inches.

The bridge has a shallow slope ridge roof with gables facing east and west. The most arresting feature of the bridge is its structure. The bridge employs Town lattice trusses with secondary chords. Top and bottom chords are six inches by fourteen inches with four one and three-quarter inch trunnels to stabilize the lattice ends. Lattice members are three inches by ten inches and the secondary chords are six inches by ten inches. Timbers are principally hemlock; trunnels are oak, and the flooring is oak and elm.

Exterior sheathing is vertical board with board and batten on the gable ends. There are single window openings near the apex of each gable. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Bollard-like posts have been placed at the entrance to discourage vehicular traffic.

The bridge sits on granite piers that have been seriously undermined by periodic flooding.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION	
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE	
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE	
☐ 1600-1699	☐ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☒ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER	
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION	
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		☐ INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1837-38

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Ithiel Town

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Covered Bridge of Sheffield is significant as the oldest extant covered bridge in Massachusetts and as one of the earliest examples of a Town Lattice Truss bridge.

Ithiel Town, New Haven architect, received his first patent for his lattice truss bridge design in 1820. The principal feature of the design was its ability to span great distances with its relatively simple engineering. In 1835 he modified his design with the addition of secondary chords for greater stability. This bridge was built between April 13, 1837 when Sheffield Selectmen advertised for its construction and April 2, 1938 when the bridge was accepted at town meeting.

The bridge has been closed to vehicular traffic since 1970.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Allen; Richard S., Covered Bridges of the Northeast, 1957.
Walker; C. Ernest, Covered Bridge Ramblings in New England, 1959.
Preiss; Lillian, Sheffield, Frontier Town, 1976.
Records of the Town of Sheffield

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY under area 9-19

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 636000 4664640
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Willard C. French, Sheffield Historical Comm.
Arthur C. Chase, Board of Selectmen

Joseph R. Orfant, National Register Editor &

ORGANIZATION
Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE
28 February 1978

STREET & NUMBER
294 Washington Street

TELEPHONE
617-727-8470

CITY OR TOWN
Boston

STATE
Massachusetts

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

Deputy

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Acting Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DATE

Property

Old Covered Bridge

State

Mass.

Working Number

4.3.78.2845

TECHNICAL

Photos

5

Maps

1

Signature?

CONTROL

pl

4.6.78

HISTORIAN

Sheffy

10-18-78

accept

Very brief but adequate - significant
 as oldest covered - & early
 example of I am lattice truss - Nonwater
 area of bonded by bridge itself.

NO ACREAGE; NO V.B.P.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

CALL/ALEPT

H. B. B. 6/1/78

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

structure is the oldest known covered
 bridge in Mass. - It possesses
 statewide significance in terms of
 engineering. accept

HAER

Inventory X

Review 5/29/78

Donald C. Jackson

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Lebowitz

11/20/78

BRANCH CHIEF

see above

KEEPER

Quinn 11/24/78

National Register Write-up

Federal Register Entry

2-6-79

Send-back

Re-submit

Entered

NOV 24 1978

INT:2106-74



Old Covered Bridge
Sheffield, MA.

NOV 24 1978

1977

Alice C. Hurlburt

Sheffield Historical Society

Sheffield, MA.

Photo #1

Looking east towards the bridge

APR 3 1978

Sheffield Old Covered Bridge #1
and Approaches

FRONT FACAD (WEST)
AND ENVIRONMENT

PLEASE CREDIT
Photograph By
ALICE C. HURLBURT



5
Old Covered Bridge
Sheffield, MA.

1977

Alice C. Hurlburt
Sheffield Historical Society
Sheffield, MA.

APR 3 1978

Photo #2

Detail, interior showing lattice

NOV 24 1978

PLEASE CREDIT
Photograph By
ALICE C. HURLBURT



Sheffield Old Covered Bridge +
Old Covered Bridge

Sheffield, MA.

1977 . . .

Alice C Hurlburt

Sheffield Historical Society

Sheffield, MA.

APR 3 1978

Photo #3

Looking north towards the southern elevation

NOV 24 1978

PLEASE CREDIT
Photograph By
ALICE C. HURLBURT



3
#3
Old Covered Bridge
Sheffield, MA.

1977

Alice C. Hurlburt
Sheffield Historical Society
Sheffield, MA.

APR 3 1978

Photo #4

Looking west towards the east elevation

NOV 24 1978

Photograph B₄
ALICE C. HURLBURT



Sheff
Old Covered Bridge
Sheffield, MA.

1977

Alice C. Hurlburt

Sheffield Historical Society
Sheffield, MA.

APR 3 1978

Photo #5

Looking south towards the north elevation

NOV 24 1978

PLEASE CREDIT
Photograph By
ALICE C. HURLBURT

Old Covered Bridge
Sheffield, MA.

UTM Reference:
18/636000/4664640



Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, Massachusetts Harbor and Land Commission,
Massachusetts Geodetic Survey, and Connecticut Geodetic Survey

Topography in Connecticut by planetable surveys 1944

Topography in Massachusetts by photogrammetric methods and by
planetable surveys 1946. Aerial photographs taken 1942

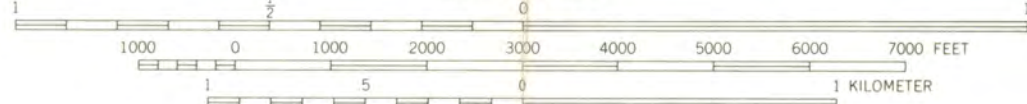
Revised 1958

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum

10,000-foot grids based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone, and Connecticut coordinate system

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines
visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET

DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty Light-duty

Medium-duty Unimproved dirt

U.S. Route State Route

ASHLEY, FALLS, MASS. - CONN.

N 4200-W 7315/7.5

1958

PHOTOREVISED 1969
AMS 6368 III SE-SERIES V814

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with
Connecticut Highway Department from aerial photographs
taken 1969. This information not field checked



NOV 24 1978



TELEPHONE REPORT

OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

PROJECT: *old Covered Bridge*

TO/FROM: *Cordice Jenkins*

DATE: *9-13-78*

ADDRESS:

Reached her *9-19-78*
PHONE:

STAFF MEMBER:

Shay

DIVISION:

REPORT:

*under
1 case*

- will send VBD



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

*Secretary of the
Commonwealth*

*294 Washington Street Boston, Massachusetts 02108
(617) 727-8470*



Mr. Charles Herrington, Chief
Registration Branch
National Register
OAHP, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Herrington:

Enclosed you will find plate 31 of the Sheffield Real Estate Book. The boundaries of the Old Covered Bridge are delineated in red. Please note that the nomination is confined to the bridge itself. I hope that this will satisfy the requirement for a verbal boundary description.

Sincerely,

Candace Jenkins

Candace Jenkins
National Register Coordinator
Massachusetts Historical Commission

CJ/ts
enclosure

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

OCT 17 1978

DATE REC'D

(ATTACHED)

DATE OF REVISION

INITIALS

Berkshire-Franklin

Resource Conservation and Development Area

P. O. Box 408

75 South Main Street

Sunderland, Ma. 01375



November 1, 1978

Mrs. Donna Williams
National Register Planning Board
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mrs. Williams:

The Berkshire-Franklin RC&D Council supports the nomination of the Sheffield Old Covered Bridge as a candidate for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

This nomination was sent to you one year ago on October 16th, 1977. We urge you to make a swift decision as to its status, since the Town would like to save the bridge from possible destruction and their search for funding to reverse the eroding away of the underpinning would be greatly aided by its inclusion on the Register.

The RC&D Council is interested in assisting the Town with this worthwhile preservation attempt. The bridge is unique in its design, utilizing the so-called Town Lattice Truss with Secondary Cords construction, and is the oldest surviving covered bridge in Massachusetts.

We feel that speed is extremely important, if the bridge is to be saved -- erosion becomes increasingly serious with each winter and spring's heavy water flow. Once on the Register, it will be possible to provide protection for this unique structure. Once this is guaranteed, it will be easier to enlist the support of other groups to permanently stabilize the area around the piers as well as to riprap the riverbank upstream from the bridge to avoid washouts in future years.

Your prompt action would be much appreciated. Another year's delay in a decision could make the matter moot. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Shay
RC&D Council Chairman

MRS: dta

SPONSORED BY:

Berkshire Conservation District
Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission

Franklin Conservation District
Franklin County Commissioners

413 ~~442-1521~~

TELEPHONE REPORT

OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

PROJECT: OLD COVERED BRIDGE

TO/FROM: Michael R. Shay
~~Mrs. Donna Williams~~ / Lou Cipro

DATE: 11/8/78

ADDRESS: Sunderland Mass

PHONE: 413 - 743-4135

STAFF MEMBER: L. Cipro

DIVISION: NRC

REPORT:

Spoke to Mrs. Sue Shay (his wife) & told her I was replying to his letter of Nov. 1, '78 & that the Old Covered Bridge would be listed quite soon as it is virtually through the process.

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered NOV 24 1978

Name

Old Covered Bridge

Location

Sheffield
Berkshire County

Also Notified

Honorable Edward W. Brooke

Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Honorable Silvio O. Conte

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Patricia L. Weslowski
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

1 NAME as it appears on federal register: Old Covered Bridge			2 OTHER NAMES:			3 date of entry: NOV 24 1978		4 county code: 03	
5 LOCATION street & number Covered Bridge Lane		city / town Sheffield		vicinity of		state MA		county Berkshire	
6 NPS REGION: NA									
7 OWNER ☐ PRIVATE ☐ STATE ☒ MUNICIPAL ☐ COUNTY ☐ MULTIPLE ☐ FEDERAL (agency name)						8 ADMINISTRATOR:			
9 EXISTING SURVEYS ☐ HABS ☐ HAER ☐ NHL ☐ FUNDED? ☐ YES ☐ NO						10 CONGRESS. DISTRICT 1st			
11 SOURCE of NOMINATION ☒ STATE ☐ FEDERAL						if state who prepared form? SHPO staff			
12 WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? ☐ YES, NAME ☐ NO		13 WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? ☐ YES, NAME ☐ NO		14 ACRES					
15 CONDITION ☐ excellent ☐ good ☐ fair		☐ deteriorated ☐ ruins ☐ unexposed ☐ unexcavated		☐ altered ☐ unaltered ☐ reconstructed ☐ excavated		16 original site ☐ moved ☐ unknown		17 features: INTERIOR: ☐ SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-1 ☐ NOT INTACT-0 ☐ UNKNOWN-4 ☐ NOT APPLICABLE-7 EXTERIOR: ☐ SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-2 ☐ NOT INTACT-0 ☐ UNKNOWN-5 ☐ NOT APPLICABLE-8 ENVIRONS: ☐ SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3 ☐ NOT INTACT-0 ☐ UNKNOWN-6 ☐ NOT APPLICABLE-9	
18 ACCESS ☐ YES-Restricted ☐ YES-Unrestricted ☐ No Access ☐ Unknown		19 ADAPTIVE USE ☐ YES ☐ NO		20 SAVED? ☐ YES		21 IS PROPERTY A HISTORIC DISTRICT? ☐ yes ☐ no			
22 AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: ☐ ARCHEOLOGY-prehistoric-2 ☐ ARCHEOLOGY-historic-1 ☐ AGRICULTURE-3 ☐ ARCHITECTURE-4 ☐ ART-5		☐ ENGINEERING-11 ☐ ENTERTAINMENT-26 ☐ EXPLORATION-12 ☐ HEALTH-27 ☐ CONSERVATION-8 ☐ ECONOMICS-9 ☐ EDUCATION-10		☐ LANDSCAPE ARCH.-15 ☐ LAW-16 ☐ LITERATURE-17 ☐ MILITARY-18 ☐ MUSIC-19 ☐ PHILOSOPHY-20		☐ POLITICS / GOVT.-21 ☐ RELIGION-22 ☐ SCIENCE-23 ☐ SOCIAL / HUMANITARIAN-24 ☐ SOCIAL / CULTURAL-30 ☐ TRANSPORTATION-25		23 CLAIMS: explain 'first' ☐ 'oldest' ☐ 'only' ☐	
24 functions WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT: CURRENTLY:		25 dates of initial construction: major alterations: historic events:		26 ETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION					
27 architectural style(s):		28 architect:		29 master builder:		30 engineer:			
31 landscape architect / garden designer:		32 interior decorator:		33 artist:		34 artisan:		35 builder/contractor:	
36 NAMES give role & date PERSONAL: EVENTS: INSTITUTIONAL:									
37 NATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP									