

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received NOV 15 1979

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic WEST SWANZEY COVERED BRIDGE

and/or common WEST SWANZEY (THOMPSON) BRIDGE

2. Location

street & number Main Street _____ not for publication

city, town West Swanzey _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district Second

state New Hampshire code 33 county Cheshire code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted ^{Limit: 6 tons}	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Swanzey

street & number Town Offices

city, town Swanzey _____ vicinity of _____ state New Hampshire 03431

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cheshire County Registry of Deeds
Cheshire County Courthouse

street & number 12 Court Street

city, town Keene _____ state New Hampshire 03431

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NH Historic Preservation Plan has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1970 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records State of New Hampshire
Dept. Resources & Economic Development

city, town Concord _____ state New Hampshire 03301

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Spanning the Ashuelot River in West Swanzey village, this double-span bridge with center pier is located on a surfaced town road just east of Winchester Street off NH Route 10. (National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges World Guide to Covered Bridges number 29-03-04; New Hampshire Department of Public Works and Highways number 093/124; New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development number 5.)

Originally built in 1832 under the supervision of Zadoc Taft, master workman, at a cost of \$523.27, this bridge occupies a central village site and, typical of bridges located in towns, was originally equipped with two sidewalks, of which only one remains. It probably retains much of its original appearance. A picturesque example of the popular Ithiel Town Truss construction, it has fine proportions and an especially attractive facade with balancing overhang roadway and pedestrian walkway arches. Partially open sides expose the web of heavy planks crisscrossed in a lattice-like web. The bridge has a length of 155' with stone abutments and central pier. It has been quite carefully maintained; repairs costing \$431.58 were made in 1859 and nearly \$2,000 was spent on it in 1888. Most recently when discovered unsafe, it was closed briefly and a \$17,000 renovation was undertaken in 1973, which included a new floor, roof and supporting beams. The bolts, replacing wooden trunnel pins and other supporting additions, give evidence of continued repair and maintenance of this important structure.

The site of this bridge in proximity of a busy textile mill and near village stores, fire station, and school has put heavy demands upon it and, although limited to 6 tons, school busses and other heavy vehicles crossing the single-lane bridge are an increasing problem to its preservation. Fortunately, plans are being made for another bridge nearby to take heavy traffic from daily use of the older one.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Specific dates 1832 **Builder/Architect** ZADOC TAFT

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Engineering: Among the picturesque covered bridges of New Hampshire, all significant documents in the annals of American engineering history, the West Swanzey Covered Bridge is one of the finest and an excellent illustration of the Town Truss design in one of its best Granite State applications. The crossed planks, forming a lattice-like web fastened together with wooden pins or trunnels, provided an efficient but structurally indeterminate construction design, which is especially important historically in such a well-proportioned example as the West Swanzey Covered Bridge. The bridge has the added value of illustrating a bridge construction within a busy village, a rare type today as all covered bridges face serious preservation challenges of an "endangered species."

Transportation: An important transportation link between two parts of West Swanzey village, this bridge is a vital part of the town's transportation system, serving as a connecting link for the village and greater township as well. Its role is due to be supplemented by another, modern bridge nearby, now being planned. Retention of the West Swanzey Covered Bridge is essential; its transportation role and local historic importance combine to make it one of the few covered bridges still actively in service, an important distinction for any structure and certainly deserving of preservation as part of the community scene.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Allen, Richard Sanders. Covered Bridges of the Northeast. rev. ed. (Brattleboro, VT: Stephen Greene Press, 1974.)
 Avery, Floyd L. Report of Covered Bridges in New Hampshire, rev. October, 1965. (Concord, NH: NH Department Public Works & Highways, 1965).

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property + 1 acre

Quadrangle name Keene, NH

Quadrangle scale 15'

UMT References

A

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7	1	8	2	2	0
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4	7	4	9	8	1	1	0
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Verbal boundary description and justification

A rectangular parcel approximately 132' in length east and west and 25' in width north and south, centered on the bridge and with sides parallel to the axes of the bridge.

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 David R. Proper, Curator

organization Historical Society of Cheshire County date June 20, 1974

street & number 51 South Lincoln Street telephone

city or town Keene state New Hampshire 03431

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Theodore Natto, acting

Commissioner, NH Department Resources & Economic Development
 title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date August 6, 1979

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

Sally G. Alder date 2/29/80
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Bill W. Gouvis date Feb 22, 1980

Chief of Registration

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

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RECEIVED	NOV 18 1979
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CONTINUATION SHEET 1 ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Continued)

Kenyon, Thedia Cox. New Hampshire's Covered Bridges. rev. ed., with appendix.
(n.p., Wake-Brook House, n.d.).

Keyworth, William Gordon. The Covered Bridges of New Hampshire, (n.p., 1972?).

National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges, Inc. World Guide to Covered Bridges, ed. by Oscar F. Lane, rev. April 1, 1972. (n.p., 1972).

NH Division of Economic Development. The Covered Bridges of New Hampshire, (Concord, New Hampshire, 1973).

Read, Benjamin. The History of Swanzey, New Hampshire, From 1734 to 1890. (Salem, Mass., Salem Press Publishing and Printing Co., 1892).

Smith, Marjorie W. "Swanzey's Covered Bridges," Granite State Vacationer, August 17-23, 1973, pp. 27-28.

White, W. Edward. Covered Bridges of New Hampshire. (Plymouth, New Hampshire, n.d.).

Works Progress Administration, New Hampshire. New Hampshire, A Guide to the Granite State. (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1938, pg. 344).