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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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#### SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1	NAME	

HISTORIC

East Putney Brook Stone Arch Bridge

AND/OR COMMON

# **2** LOCATION

	STREET & NUMBER	1. January			1-1-1	to River Road	(Town-Highway #7
	Former-town-highway	across East	Putney	Brook	ad-jacent-	NOT FOR PUBLICAT	• •
	CITY, TOWN					CONGRESSIONAL	DISTRICT
F	Putney			TY OF		Vermont	
	STATE		CODE			COUNTY	CODE
	Vermont		50			Windham	025
		N 7					

#### **3** CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
DISTRICT	X_PUBLIC	OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
BUILDING(S)	PRIVATE	X_UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
_XSTRUCTURE	ВОТН	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	X_YES: UNRESTRICTED	INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATION
		NO	MILITARY	XOTHER: Disused

### **4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Town of Putney STREET & NUMBER

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CITY, TOWN Putney

\_\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

# **5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the Town Clerk

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STREET & NUMBER

CIT	Υ, T	ow	Ñ

Putney

STATE

STATE

Vermont

Vermont

### **6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

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	Vermont	Historic	Sites	and S	Structures	Survey				
DATE										
	1974					FEDERAL	XSTATE	COUNTY	LOCAL	
DEPO	SITORY FOR									
SURV	YEY RECORDS	Vermont	Divisio	n foi	r Historic	Preserva	tion			
CITY,	TOWN							STA	ATE	
	,	Montpeli	.er					Ve	rmont	



CONDITION CHECK O	NE CHECK ONE
EXCELLENTDETERIORATED X_UNALTER	D CORIGINAL SITE
-XGOODRUINSALTERED	MOVED DATE
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The East Putney Brook Stone Arch Bridge carries a former town highway (River Road) across East Putney Brook, 3.9 miles northeast of Putney village. Beyond the partly wooded margins of the brook, the site of the bridge is generally surrounded by large open fields used for agriculture. A mason and intuitive engineer from nearby Townshend, Vermont named James Otis Follett constructed the bridge in 1902 at a cost of \$1,500. One of eleven extant stone bridges built by Follett, the East Putney Brook bridge remains unaltered and structurally sound. However, owing to its one-lane width and location on a curve, the bridge was bypassed in circa 1965 by the reconstruction of the road on a less curved alignment immediately to the east.

The East Putney Brook Stone Arch Bridge consists of a single span supported by a stone segmental arch. At its base, the arch extends about 30 feet; it rises about 11 feet above the surface of the brook. The overall width of the arch between faces is 16.5 feet, giving the roadway only one travel lane for modern vehicles. At its corners, the arch is abutted by wing walls which flare outward from both faces.

The arch itself is built of large, mostly rectangular blocks and slabs of granite, which are roughly pitched and mortared into somewhat irregular courses. The keystone on each face of the arch projects slightly beyond its vertical plane. The spandrels of the arch are infilled with irregularly shaped granite blocks and rubble mortared into irregular courses. The single deck course, which rests directly atop the arch, is laid with rectangular granite slabs, over which is laid the gravel road surface. The wing walls are built in the manner of the spandrels.

A unique juxtaposition of arched structures exists in proximity to the East Putney Brook Stone Arch Bridge. The reconstructed River Road crosses the brook immediately to the east on a corrugated metal culvert whose form follows closely that of the stone arch bridge. Immediately again to the east of the River Road culvert, the Boston and Maine Railroad crosses the same brook on a mortared stone arch culvert which shares the form of the adjacent structures. The railroad culvert, which probably dates from the late nineteenth century, displays quoined corner courses on random ashlar; more recently it has been reinforced with massive concrete buttresses applied to its faces.

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# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	·* AF	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	ECK 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	X_ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	-PHILOSOPHY	X_TRANSPORTATION
X_1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)
		INVENTION		
SPECIFIC DAT	ES 1902	BUILDER/ARCH	ITECT James Otis Fol	lett

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The East Putney Brook Stone Arch Bridge holds primary significance for being the work of an intuitive engineer, a farmer and mason from nearby Townshend, Vermont named James Otis Follett. The masonry arch applied by Follett in 1902 to carry a town highway across East Putney Brook represents a highly unusual structure among rural secondary road bridges in Vermont, especially for having been built after the turn of the twentieth century when iron and steel had almost completely displaced wood and stone in bridge construction. The East Putney Brook bridge together with nine other extant stone bridges and culverts built by Follett in Putney and Townshend constitute probably the largest group of such related structures in the state. (An eleventh bridge built by Follett---and the only one with two arch spans--survives in Walpole, New Hampshire.)

Born in East Jamaica, Vermont in 1843, James Otis Follett lived and worked most of his life on a farm in Townshend. Among other public activities, he served that town for several years as road commissioner, being responsible for the maintenance and improvement of its public highways. During the 1890's, Follett seems to have shifted his vocational emphasis from farming to masonry. The first known entry of payment to Follett for the construction of a "stonebridge" appears in the Townshend town records in 1894. Thereafter, Follett built one or two bridges almost every year until his death in 1911, creating substantial yet inexpensive structures to meet the needs of at least three small rural towns. Additionally, he constructed foundations for buildings and abutments for wood covered bridges, including in 1900 a center pier for the famous Holland Bridge (demolished in 1952) across the West River in Townshend.

The total number of bridges built by James Otis Follett is not known definitely. A grandson, Robert Follett of Ascutney, Vermont, estimates that he may have built about forty bridges. Entries in the Putney and Townshend records list payments to Follett for a total of about twenty bridges and culverts built on public highways in those two towns. The Putney records list payments for seven structures between 1902 and 1908; three arch bridges, including the East Putney Brook bridge (which is also the earliest of the seven structures), and one culvert are known to survive.

Although Follett lacked formal training in engineering, apparently he did consult a popular engineering text of the period, A Treatise on Masonry Construction by Ira Osborn Baker. A copy of the ninth edition, published in 1899 and apparently used by Follett, remains in the possession of the Follett family. The book describes methods of constructing stone arch bridges; however it is not known to what extent Follett actually depended on the book in his work, for he built at least four bridges in Townshend prior to the publication of his copy of the Baker text.

Cont'd. -Sheet 8-1

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Derry, Anne. James Otis Follette (sic), Bridgebuilder. Unpublished manuscript prepared for Graduate Program in Restoration and Preservation of Historic Architecture, Columbia University, New York, New York, 1975.

DeWolfe, Edith, Lura H. Frost, Edith I. Gassett, et al., eds. The <u>History of</u> <u>Putney Vermont 1753-1953</u>. Putney, Vermont: The Fortnightly Club, 1953. (Cont'd. 9-1)

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As the designated S	State Historic Preservatio	on Officer for the	National Historic Pres	servation Act of 1966 (Pu	Iblic Law 89-665), I
	nis property for inclusion			that it has been evaluate	ed according to the
criteria and procedu	ures set forth by the Natio	onal Park Service			
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Direct	or/State Histori	ic Preservat	tion Officer		. 20, 1976
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Notes from interview of Robert Follett, Ascutney, Vermont by Michele Frome on 9 July 1976.