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7.	DESCRIPTION								
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (II known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Silk Covered Bridge consists of a single span supported by two flanking timber Town lattice trusses. Additional floor beams have been placed in the structure for reinforcement. The north end of the bridge rests on an abutment built of stone slabs overlaid with a concrete cap; the south abutment has been rebuilt in concrete. The bridge is 88 feet long and 19 feet wide, with a 15-foot roadway.

On the exterior, the large planks pegged together diagonally to form the trusses (and side walls) of the bridge are sheathed with flush boards hung vertically. Similar siding protects the ends of trusses immediately inside the portals. The gables are sheathed with flush boards hung horizontally. The exterior siding is painted dark red; the siding inside the portals is painted white to increase visibility.

Beginning nine feet from each end of the bridge, the vertical siding reaches only six feet above the floor, leaving the upper sides of the trusses exposed. The overhang of the roof protects the open trusswork. The roof is covered with wood shingles.



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PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		-
Pre-Columbian	🔲 16th Century	18th Century	20th Century
15th Century	17th Century	X 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicab	le and Known) circ	a 1840	
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Che	eck One or More as Appropri	ate)	
Abor iginal	📋 Education	Political	🔲 Urban Planning
Prehistoric	🔀 Engineering	Religion/Phi-	Other (Specify)
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Conservation	Music	Transportation	

Although its builder and date have not been documented, the Silk Covered Bridge was probably constructed by Benjamin F. Sears, member of a locally prominent family of bridge builders, about 1840.1 It is one of two bridges built by that family among three covered bridges which survive in Bennington township. Together the three bridges, which cross the same river within two miles of one another, constitute an important resource of transport and engineering history in an area which possesses outstanding examples of other types of historic resources.

The covered bridges of Vermont are among its most cherished and symbolic historic resources. About one hundred bridges still stand in the state, the greatest concentration by area of covered bridges in the country.<sup>2</sup> Many of these bridges are integral parts of unique architectural environments whose physical setting and cultural context have been little altered until recently. However, extensive highway construction programs are now drastically changing the historic environment of the state. The Vermont Division of Historic Sites wishes to extend the recognition and protection of the National Register to the majority of the surviving covered bridges, including the Silk bridge.

1. John Spargo, <u>Covered Wooden Bridges of Bennington</u> <u>County</u>, Bennington Historical Museum and Art Gallery, Bennington, Vt., 1953, p. 17.

2. R. S. Allen, <u>Covered Bridges of the Northeast</u>, The Stephen Greene Press, Brattleboro, Vt., 1957, p. 50

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Spargo, John, <u>Covered Wooden Bridges of Bennington County</u>, Bennington Historical Museum and Art Gallery, Bennington, Vt., 1953.

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