

**CONNECTICUT RIVER BRIDGE
01 – HINSDALE**

NH Bridge ID: Hinsdale 042/044

CARRYING: NH 119
PRESENT NAME: Hinsdale Bridge
DATE BUILT: 1926
LAT/LONG: 42.850894,-72.550857

CROSSING CHRONOLOGY

- c.1786 First regular ferry across channel
- 1804 First bridge, wood trestle type
- 1831 Second bridge, wood trestle
- 1844 Third bridge, covered wood truss
- 1862 Fourth bridge, covered wood truss
- 1926 Fifth bridge, a riveted steel truss span with two plate girder approach spans
- 1988 Bridge rehabilitated by New Hampshire

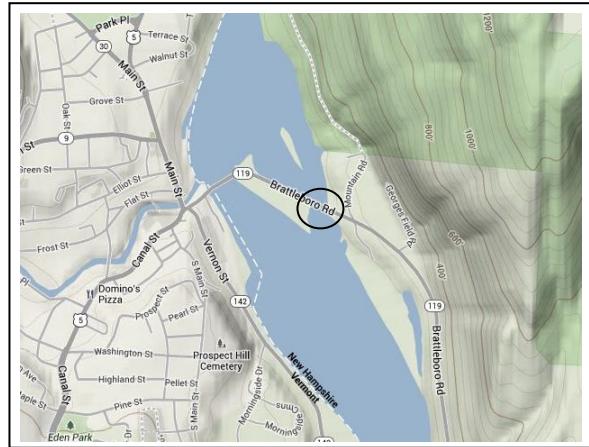


FIGURE 1: Hinsdale Bridge, built 1926. Downstream side from New Hampshire shore (Historic Documentation Co. Inc. 2012).

CROSSING HISTORY

Ferry crossing: A ferry of sorts operated across the river at Brattleboro as early as 1723 when Fort Dummer was first established. Its operation became more regular with the establishment of the Hinsdale fort and Shattuck's fort about 1735. Following the Revolution, James Hubbard petitioned the New Hampshire Legislature for the privilege to operate a ferry at the old Fort Dummer crossing, which was granted in 1786. Another ferry, known as Barretts Ferry, was established about that time, crossing the branch from Hinsdale to the island and the main channel to Brattleboro in roughly the same location as the present bridges.

First bridge: The first bridge was built in 1804 by the Hinsdale Bridge and Sixth New Hampshire Turnpike Corporation, chartered in 1802. Frederick J. Wood, in his *The Turnpikes of New England* (1919), states that this company "appears to have been primarily a toll-bridge corporation, although it had authority to build about ten miles of turnpike through Hinsdale and Winchester to connect with a branch of the Fifth Massachusetts [Turnpike] which was built to the state line prior to 1806." The main bridge crossed the river to the island, with a much smaller bridge crossing the channel on the east side of the island known as "the creek" and later as "little river." The Hinsdale Bridge crosses the east channel, and was for many years known as the Little River Bridge.

Second bridge: In 1831 both bridges were swept away and the Little River Bridge was replaced with another wood trestle.

Third bridge: In 1844 Little River Bridge was replaced with a covered lattice truss. The corporate name of the company owning the bridges was subsequently changed to "The Hinsdale Bridge Corporation," probably reflecting the relinquishment of any turnpike road the corporation had built. A stock certificate in the possession of the Hinsdale Historical Society, issued by the Hinsdale Bridge Corporation for two shares of stock valued at \$100 per share, is dated the 16th of June 1858.

Fourth bridge: The Connecticut River freshet of April 1862, regarded as the highest flood waters up until that date, destroyed the Little River Bridge. It was rebuilt the following summer. The main bridge over the Connecticut River was seriously damaged and repaired. The river inundated the island, sweeping away an entire farm complex and opening a channel down the middle that was eventually filled in when the water level dropped.

Fifth bridge: In 1926 the present steel truss bridge was built by the Town of Hinsdale to replace a covered bridge, thought to be the same bridge built in 1862. The 1926 bridge consists of two 47' long deck plate girder approach spans, one at each end of the bridge, and a single-span riveted Parker truss (a Pratt truss with a polygonal top chord) 200 feet long. It was designed by Storrs and Storrs of Concord, NH and erected by the Boston Bridge Works. The bridge was rehabilitated by NH in 1988.



FIGURE 2: Hinsdale "Little River" Covered Bridge over east channel during high water event sometime between 1903 and 1920. Note truss over main channel, built 1903, in background (Cheshire County Historical Society).



FIGURE 3: Hinsdale Bridge, built 1926. New Hampshire end (Historic Documentation Co. Inc. 2010).



FIGURE 4: Hinsdale Bridge, built 1926, looking toward Hinsdale (NHDOT 1941).

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