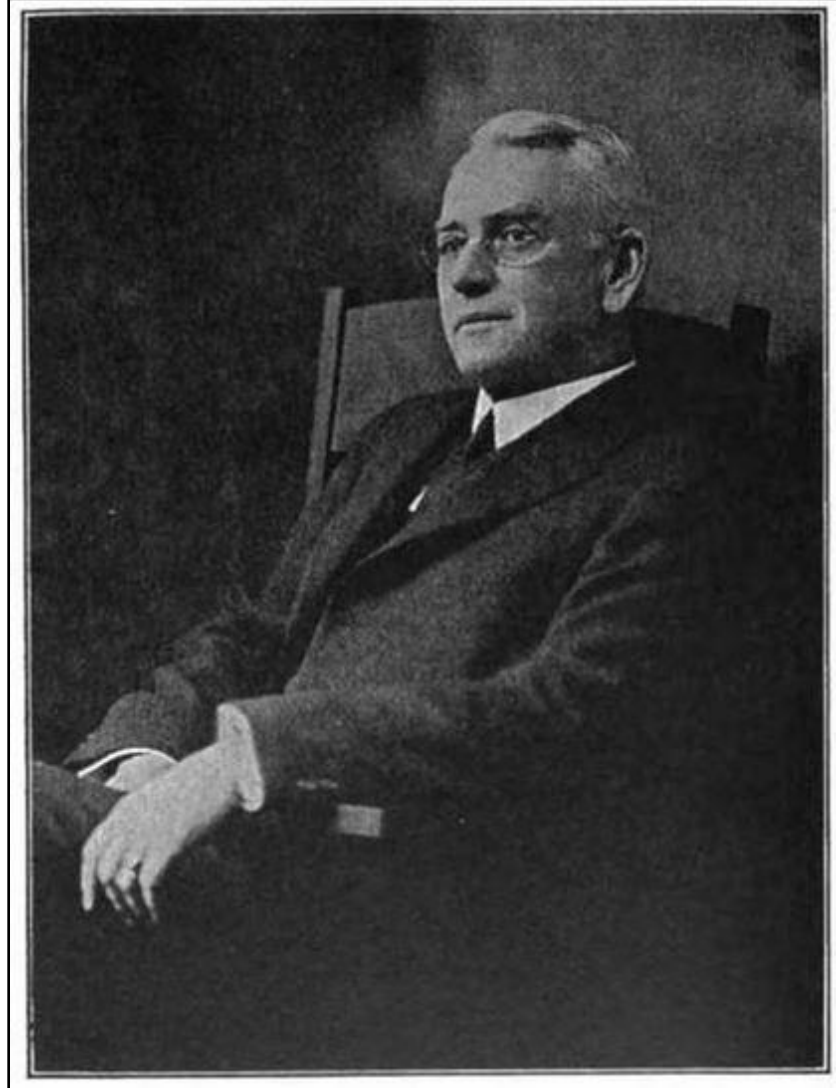


# John William Storrs

Engineer & Public Servant  
Concord, New Hampshire



John W. Storrs, 1918, Chairman of New Hampshire Public Service Commission

*Prepared for*

McFarland-Johnson, Inc.  
Concord, New Hampshire

City of Concord, New Hampshire  
Engineering Services Division

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# John William Storrs

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

John W. Storrs (1858-1942) was a leading citizen of Concord and of New Hampshire at large; an eminent figure in his chosen profession of bridge engineering; a progressive steward of the public interest in times of burgeoning development and expanding infrastructure, in times of economic hardship and stagnation, and in times of world conflict; and a person who merited the high and friendly regard of his fellow man in private and public life. Storrs triumphed over crippling physical and emotional adversities in childhood to lead a long and remarkably productive life.

This biography has been prepared to fulfill a historic property mitigation requirement of the Sewall's Falls Bridge Replacement Project completed by the City of Concord in 2017. John Storrs designed the Sewall's Falls Bridge in 1915. This report was researched, written and compiled by Richard M. Casella, Engineering Historian, Historic Documentation Company, Inc.

A companion document, *John William Storrs Bridge Design Portfolio*, contains additional figures of his bridge designs, several of which are referred to in the text of Chapter 4 as "Portfolio Figure 1," etc.



Mayor John W. Storrs in 1938 (Concord Public Library special collections).

## 2. BIRTH, EDUCATION AND TRAINING – 1858 to 1890

John Williams Storrs was born in Montpelier, Vermont November 24, 1858, the son of William W. and Elizabeth A. (Roberts) Storrs. William, the son of a proprietor of a general store in Montpelier, moved his family to Concord, New Hampshire where he assumed the position of Cashier for the First National Bank of Concord in 1864. In 1867 the companion First National Savings Bank of Concord was chartered and opened, with William as Treasurer. Tragedy befell the family in 1868, when scarlet fever killed John's little sister and left him, ten years old, largely deaf. The following year Jennie Storrs was born into the family and would remain John's only sibling.

William was a respected banker in the city, an active member of the South Congregational Church, and by all accounts "never lived beyond his means." The only apparent excess was the private tutoring that enabled John to complete his education in spite of his handicap.

On September 18, 1873 a financial panic was triggered by the bankruptcy of Jay Cooke & Company, "a major component of the United States banking establishment" and a large holder of overvalued railroad securities.<sup>1</sup> A run on banks known to carry a large percentage of railroad assets began in Washington and spread nationwide. Scrutiny fell upon the First National Savings Bank of Concord due to its large bond holdings of the Concord Railroad and other lines, amounting to nearly a third of its assets. Depositors called for an independent audit of the books, which as it turned out had been left entirely in the trust of William Storrs without adequate oversight. A deficit of \$67,000 was discovered and attributed to a defalcation by Storrs – information that was quickly leaked to the public a week before Christmas. A run on the bank ensued until the Trustee's closed the doors and suspended further payments until January 7, 1874 when a report by the state bank commissioners on the defalcation and health of the bank would be issued. Meanwhile, Storrs admitted the misappropriation but claimed the deficit represented cash loans he had benevolently made to desperate people to whom the bank's loan officer had refused. This stayed the hand of the people through the holidays, but when the Commissioner's report showed Storrs' excuse to be patently false the public's scorn was immediate and harsh.<sup>2</sup> The laymen of the Congregational Church summoned Storrs to appear and answer to charges of conduct unbecoming a Christian.

At their meeting of February 16, the First National's board of trustees, on the basis of the evidence showing that Storrs "is a defaulter in a large sum of money, which was wrongfully embezzled and converted to his own use," entertained a motion to institute criminal proceedings against him, "forthwith."<sup>3</sup> Another motion postponed the vote until the following week. Although it was agreed that the proceedings of the meeting would be kept secret, word of the board's intent reached Storrs and later that evening he fled town. He told his family he was going to visit his mother in Claremont and would be back in a few days but never returned. Failing to appear before the trustees, he was expelled from his church. In March it was reported that Storrs was in Northfield, Minnesota seeking

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<sup>1</sup> Known as the Panic of 1873, the crisis triggered an economic depression that lasted two decades and was known as the Great Depression until surpassed by depression of the 1930s which now holds the title.

<sup>2</sup> Newspaper headlines (cited in the bibliography) included The Storrs Steal; Villainy at Concord; Stop Thief. The official report of the legislature stated: "Judging from what we have been able to learn, Storrs was a villain of the first class. He was not simply a thief but he was also a liar and a hypocrite. We are aware of no mitigating circumstances in his case which may not be found in the case of almost every criminal."

<sup>3</sup> *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette* (Concord, N.H.), "Report of the Special Legislative Committee to Investigate its Affairs," August 19, 1874, p. 1.

work, while "his wife in Concord, who is universally esteemed, is prostrated with sickness and heartbroken."<sup>4</sup> Storrs was subsequently indicted by the Grand Jury for embezzlement. The Storrs' house was sold for \$6,000 and applied to the bank's loss. An investigation made by the state legislature concluded that beginning in 1868 and continuing until 1873 Storrs had systematically stolen roughly \$10,000 each year for his personal enrichment. The misdeed was widely reported in headlines across the state and remained a focus of the news in Concord for over a year. National Savings Bank of Concord never regained the confidence of the people and collapsed in 1875. William Storrs eventually returned east to Montpelier Vermont where he died in 1883. Whether he had any contact with his family after abandoning them is unknown.

When this epic of anguish, humiliation and disappointment befell John, he was but fourteen and its devastating impact undoubtedly forged the character of the man John would become.

If and when John graduated from Concord High School and whether he continued to be tutored in the years after his father disappeared was not determined. City directories indicate that John lived with his mother and sister in a house at 12 South Spring Street until about 1878 when he moved to a boarding house. He worked odd jobs and as a clerk for a number of grocery firms in succession including Woodworth Dodge & Co. located in the Phoenix Block. He became an Eagle Scout and proudly wore the scout pin on his lapel in his later years.

Sometime in the late 1870s John obtained an apprenticeship in the office of Charles C. Lund, a prominent civil engineer in Concord responsible for the design of the city's first sewer and water supply systems, the 1873 Federal Bridge and many other city projects.<sup>5</sup> This was apparently a part-time position that he balanced with his day job as a store clerk. Charles Lund was also an experienced railroad engineer and served as assistant and then chief engineer of the Boston, Concord and Montreal Railroad, a position he held until his death in 1880.<sup>6</sup> In the late 1870s Lund designed very difficult extensions of BC&MRR's lines in the White Mountains, and one can imagine that it was in this exciting and challenging work environment John Storrs found his calling as a railroad and bridge engineer. Also working in Lund's office alongside Storrs was Will Bernard Howe (1859-1922) who started in 1878 as a rodman (surveyor's assistant).<sup>7</sup> Howe would become

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<sup>4</sup> *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics* (Portsmouth, N.H.), "William W. Storrs; Recently; Minnesota," March 28, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Lund was both a lawyer and civil engineer and by 1868 was regularly employed by the city for the surveying of roads and lots. He left the city in early 1870 for Olympia, Oregon to lead a crew of forty surveyors in the layout of the Northern Pacific Railroad to Portland. Upon his return in the fall of that year Lund opened an engineering office in Concord and rapidly gained clients. He was appointed engineer in charge of the design of the City's first sewer system in 1870. In 1873 Lund designed the new Federal Bridge for the City of the patented Phoenix-column type which represented the state of the art in highway bridge design for its day. Its relatively large cost, roughly \$27,000, reflected both the importance of the bridge to the community and their confidence in Lund's abilities. In 1874 he was serving as both an Officer and Consulting Engineer for the City Board of Water Commissioners and in that capacity was responsible for the design of the city's water supply system. In the ensuing decades he provided the city with engineering services of all manner and form. Information on Lund was obtained from Concord Annual Reports and his obituary, cited in the bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> In 1878 Lund designed and oversaw construction of the narrow-gauge Profile & Franconia Notch RR and the extension of the BC&M road from the "Wing-road station to Fabyans and from Fabyans to the base of Mt. Washington, the latter being one of the most difficult pieces of engineering work ever accomplished in this country." *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette* (Concord, N.H.). Obituary. "Death of Charles C. Lund." December 9, 1880, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Will B. Howe graduated from Concord High School and began his engineering career in 1878 working as a rodman for Charles C. Lund, a civil engineer with offices in Concord. Howe continued with Foss & Merrill, Engineers, successor to C.C. Lund, working on projects for Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroad and the Concord Railroad as

Concord's first City Engineer in 1893 and two decades later would employ Storrs as a consulting engineer to the city on many important bridge projects including the monumental five-bridge program of 1915 of which Sewall's Falls Bridge was a part.<sup>8</sup>

When Lund died in 1880, his engineering practice, then operating as Lund and Foss, was assumed by his partner Charles Orrin Foss. Foss partnered with Frank A. Merrill and renamed the firm Foss & Merrill, Engineers, with offices located at 66 Main Street. Both Storrs and Howe were retained at the new firm which continued working on projects for the BC&MRR and the Concord Railroad as well as land surveying for the city of Concord.

At age 26, John Storrs wed Carrie E. Dow, a native of Concord and the daughter of Edward and Lavinia Dow, on April 29, 1885. Edward Dow had been active as a prominent architect since arriving in Concord at age 25 in 1845, designing many buildings in town and at the University of New Hampshire campus in Durham. Carrie had grown up in a house at 112 Pleasant Street, designed by her father, and this manse continued as the home place for John and Carrie Storrs for the remainder of John's life. The couple at first shared the house with Carrie's parents until Edward's death in 1894, then with the widowed Lavinia, and finally presided over the place themselves for more than three decades. On February 20, 1886, their only child Edward Dow Storrs was born.<sup>9</sup> Edward would also become an engineer, following his father's course through employment with the Boston and Maine Railroad and eventually joining him as a junior in his father's firm.

### **3. BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD ASSISTANT ENGINEER – 1890 to 1903**

In 1890 John Storrs gained employment with the Concord & Montreal Railroad as an assistant engineer, beginning a twenty year working relationship with C&M and its successor, the Boston and Maine Railroad. Storrs served as resident engineer on the construction of the Concord & Montreal's branch line from Whitefield through Jefferson to Gorham from 1891-1893. When the Boston & Maine took over the C&M in 1895, Storrs was placed in charge of all track work. Frank A. Merrill, was appointed assistant chief engineer in charge of the Concord office. The B&M also took control of the Northern Railroad shops north of the station, and the following year began construction of all new brick shops on the twenty-four acre site. Storrs was one of the supervisors and inspectors of the works.

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well as the Sewall's Falls dam and power development. Between 1883 and 1888 Howe served as Assistant and then Chief Engineer of the Central Railway in Nova Scotia. He returned to Concord in 1888 to assume management of Foss & Merrill until 1893 when he became Concord's first City Engineer, serving until his death April 1, 1922. See *Journal of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers*, v. 9, 1922, p. 309.

<sup>8</sup> See NH Historic Property Documentation No. 727, "Sewall's Falls Bridge." On file at NH Division of Historical Resources, Concord.

<sup>9</sup> *Genealogical and Family History*, 1055; *One Thousand New Hampshire Notables*, ed. Henry Harrison Metcalf (Concord: The Rumford Printing Company, 1919), 293; US Bureau of the Census, Population Census 1880-1940, accessed via Ancestry.com; Concord city directories 1919-1940, accessed via Ancestry.com (US City Directories 1822-1995).

It is mentioned in many sources that Storrs studied engineering by correspondence at night and in his application for membership to the Boston Society of Civil Engineers he stated that he studied bridge engineering through a school in Scranton, Pennsylvania. He was evidently referring to the International Correspondence School of Scranton, which offered technical courses by correspondence including bridge engineering (Figure 1). The I.C.S., as it was commonly known, became extremely popular from the 1890s well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Perhaps while working as an assistant engineer for the railroads and away from home for stretches of time, Storrs was studying bridge engineering at night.

Storrs would variously refer to his title at the B&M as assistant engineer and bridge inspector or simply engineer. Among his duties was the inspection of accidents on the B&M lines. On August 27, 1896 a derailment of a White Mountain Branch train at the Ferry Street switch in Concord resulted in the death of passenger Rueben E. Craig. Storrs took measurements at the scene of the wreck site and testified at the coroner's inquest on behalf of the B&M. The jury ultimately ruled the death an accident "due to a misplaced switch left in the position by person or persons unknown."<sup>10</sup>

Supervision of construction and repairs constituted a large portion of Storrs work. During the first week of April 1901, heavy rains in the Merrimack Valley lifted the river and its tributaries to flood stage. The Piscataquog River broke its previous flood record and washed out several bridges and sections of track on the B&MRR's New Boston Branch. Storrs was assigned to supervise the repair and reconstruction of the line.

During 1903-1904 Storrs worked closely with Johnathan Parker Snow, Bridge Engineer of the B&MRR, on the design and construction of the monumental double-deck railroad and highway bridge over the Connecticut River at Woodsville, New Hampshire (Figure 2). Located in B&M's home office in Boston, Snow was already regarded as one of the leading railroad bridge engineers in the country.<sup>11</sup> The Woodsville bridge was destroyed by ice in 1922 due to faulty foundations and a lengthy lawsuit followed.<sup>12</sup>

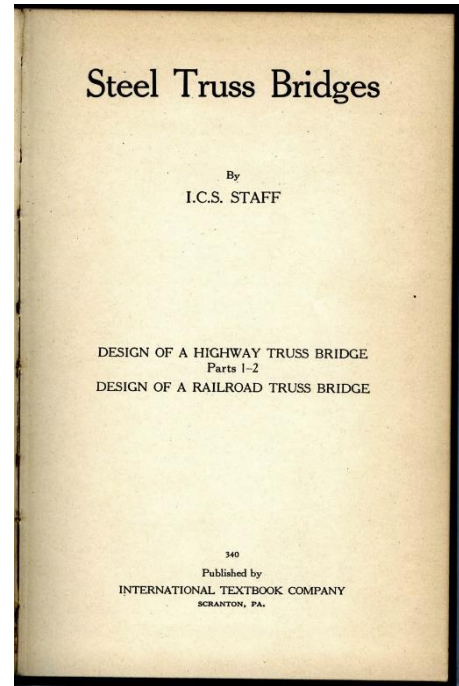


FIGURE 1: Bridge design textbook published by International Correspondence School of Scranton in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>10</sup> *Boston Herald*, "Still in the Dark," September 11, 1896, p. 8; "Misplaced Switch," September 19, 1886, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> J.P. Snow (1848-1936) graduated from the Thayer School of Civil Engineering at Dartmouth College in 1875 and later taught engineering there, 1877-1878. He was with the B&MRR as Bridge Engineer from 1888-1909, then Chief Engineer 1909-1911. He was a consulting engineer from 1911 until his death. Storrs regularly corresponded with Snow on technical engineering matters from 1905 into the 1920s.

<sup>12</sup> Presumably the legal records of the case would provide information on Storrs' role in the project as construction inspector, but they were not gathered for this report.

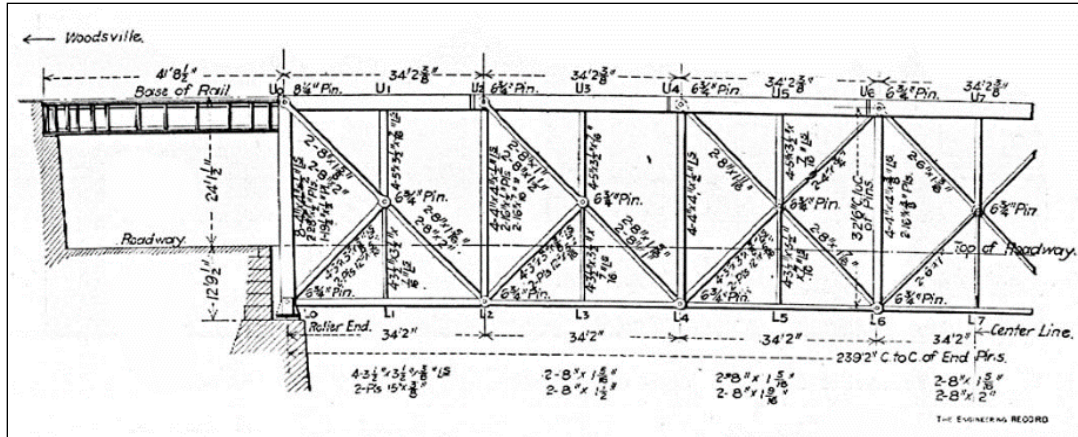


FIGURE 2: Boston & Maine Railroad Woodsville-Wells River Bridge (Haverhill-Newbury) over Connecticut River. This double-deck three-span steel truss, railroad-over-highway bridge was designed by renown B&M bridge engineer J. P. Snow and built in 1904. John Storrs, assistant engineer, was in charge of construction and inspection. Although touted as “equal to almost any loads that could possibly be brought upon it,” an ice jam toppled the piers out from under it in 1922. The towns sued the builder, United Construction Company and finally prevailed in 1927, proving that instead of resting on bedrock as required, the piers were set 30 feet above it. Storrs' role as construction inspector would have been central to the case but his trial testimony, if any exists, was not gathered for this study (*Engineering Record*, 1904).

### 3. NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE HIGHWAY ENGINEER – 1903 to 1905

In 1903, after thirteen years in the employ of the railroad, Storrs jumped at the opportunity to be involved in New Hampshire's first efforts to develop a statewide road building program.

One of the earliest proponents of a state funded highway system was Frank West Rollins, a New Hampshire state senator and governor from 1899 to 1901. Rollins was a proponent of advancing the state's tourism through better roads, and in 1897 advocated for the construction of "a state-built boulevard extending from the Massachusetts border through Franconia Notch, possibly with branches returning south through the Connecticut River valley or easterly through Crawford Notch and along the Saco River into Maine."<sup>13</sup> That same year marked the first tangible effort by the state directed at new highway construction when the Joint Legislature approved the expenditure of \$600 for purposes of surveying, laying out and preparing plans and specifications for a section of highway to be built along the coastline from the state line at Salisbury Massachusetts to Fort Point in New Castle NH.<sup>14</sup> The initial engineering and planning work was done by Arthur W. Dudley, a well-known civil engineer from Brentwood, NH; the final engineering and construction oversight, completed in 1902 was done by William A. Grover.<sup>15</sup> This first state planned and built highway was the first section (now NH 1B) of what became Ocean Boulevard, completed by the state in 1907.

<sup>13</sup> James Garvin, "The Trunk Line Road System." *New Hampshire Highways*, January-February, 2004, pp. 25-29. Available online at: <http://www.nhgoodroads.org/UploadedFiles/Files/TrunkLineRoad.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Laws of New Hampshire Passed January Session, 1897. Chapter 105, approved March 24, 1897.

<sup>15</sup> Twenty years later (1921) Grover served as the state's representative engineer for the construction of the Interstate Memorial Bridge at Portsmouth.

The state's efforts to develop state owned and maintained highways continued to gain support and in March 1903 the Legislature approved a law (Chapter 54) designating Coos, Carrol and Grafton counties as a highway district, later known as the White Mountain District. The law authorized the Governor and Council to appoint "a competent civil engineer" to prepare specifications for road and highway construction in the district to be funded by the state, to supervise and inspect the work, and to report to the Governor on the quality and completeness of the work as required by contract.<sup>16</sup> The next month the Legislature approved another law, *An Act for a State System of Highway Construction and Improvement, and for the Appointment of Highway Engineers* that called for a comprehensive report detailing the needs of the state's roads and highways to be prepared by competent engineers.<sup>17</sup>

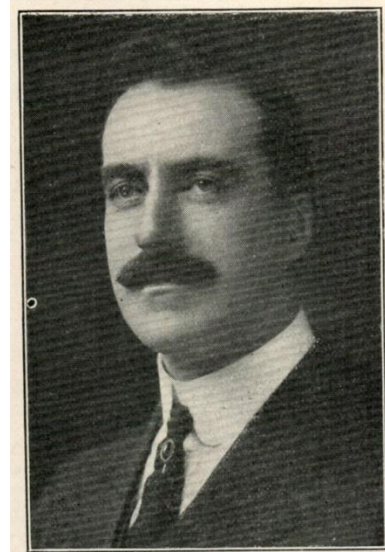


FIGURE 3: Arthur W. Dean, first state highway engineer of the New Hampshire Highway Department, formed in 1905 (*New Hampshire Highways*, 1928).

In 1903, Governor Nahum J. Bachelder appointed John W. Storrs, Arthur W. Dean and William A. Grover to the posts of highway engineer. Storrs was given the first assignment as engineer of the White Mountain District where monies had been appropriated for the construction of "permanent" roads. Dean was appointed engineer of highways and assigned the task of preparing the report on the state's highway needs along with a map of the existing road system within the state (Figure 3). Grover was made engineer of the Rockingham district.

Storrs' appointment was announced in the *Boston Herald* under the headline "New Hampshire to Have Better Roads:"<sup>18</sup>

This engineer is expected to see that upon each section of road under his care some bit of permanent improvement results from the amount of annual expenditure, and that the total improvement shall be upon lines that will render the work as nearly permanent as possible in this region of heavy downpours, landslides, and untamed mountain torrents. John W. Storrs of Concord, N.H., for years on the engineering staff of the Boston & Maine Railroad, and at grade with the best, was appointed to the White mountain district, and his work will be a lasting object lesson to those who would build roads among the mountains.

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<sup>16</sup> New Hampshire. "An Act to provide for a more economical and practical expenditure of money appropriated by the state for the construction and repair of highways." Laws of New Hampshire Passed January Session, 1903. Chapter 54, approved March 5, 1903. See Section 2, Section 8.

<sup>17</sup> New Hampshire. "An Act for a State System of Highway Construction and Improvement, and for the Appointment of Highway Engineers." Laws of New Hampshire Passed January Session, 1903. Chapter 133, approved April 2, 1903.

<sup>18</sup> *Boston Herald*, "New Hampshire to Have Better Roads," July 7, 1904, p. 9



Among the roads built were the Lafayette road from Twin Mountain to the Profile House at Franconia Notch and the road from Twin Mountain to Fabyans. In July 1904 the *Boston Herald* reported a section of the road completed:<sup>19</sup>

The trail from the Franconia notch to the Twin Mountain house has been completed and State Engineer Storrs and John Anderson of the state highway commission demonstrated Wednesday that the path is in condition for carriage travel by passing over it with a pair of horses and a two-seated buckboard. The distance is 8½ miles. An appropriation of \$5000 was made by the state at the last session of the Legislature for the construction of this route.

Storrs was a staunch supporter of Governor Rollins' concept for a north-south highway system leading to the White Mountains that would stimulate tourism. In 1905 he made a presentation to the White Mountain Board of Trade in Whitefield where he called for three roads to be built following the Connecticut, Merrimack and Saco river valleys – a plan, he said, that he "urged in 1903 and as a result, got myself very much disliked" (Figure 4).<sup>20</sup>

Arthur Dean submitted his report and map of the state's existing road conditions and as a result the state highway department was created along with legislation providing state-aid to towns to make permanent improvements to their highways. Dean was appointed to head the new department and became the first state highway engineer in 1905. Whether there was any competition between Dean, Storrs and Grover for the position to lead the new highway department was not determined. Grover returned to his private engineering practice in Dover, New Hampshire; in 1909 he accepted the appointment of city engineer for Portsmouth. John Storrs reestablished a working relationship with his old employer the Boston & Maine Railroad and set up a private consulting practice in an office in his home at 112 Pleasant Street in Concord.

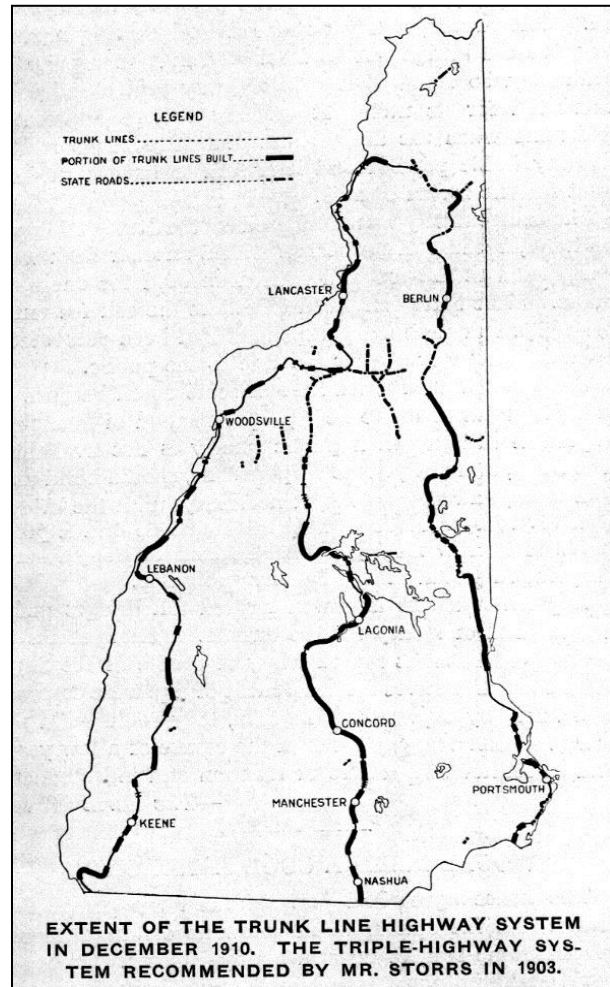


FIGURE 4: Storrs was credited with planning the route of New Hampshire's north-south trunkline system (Laraba, 1928).

<sup>19</sup> *Boston Herald*, "Flume House," July 24, 1904, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Rae S. Laraba. "Backbone of New Hampshire's Trunk Line System Originally Planned by John W. Storrs, Present Chairman of the Public Service Commission." *New Hampshire Highways*, November, 1928.

#### 4. CONSULTING ENGINEERING PRACTICE – 1905 to 1925

Following his stint as a state highway engineer, Storrs resumed work with the Boston & Maine Railroad and established a private engineering consulting practice out of his home in Concord.<sup>21</sup> His old boss at the B&M, Frank Merrill, was still running the Concord office as assistant chief engineer, a position he would hold until his death in 1925. Storrs' first consulting project was a job passed to him by Merrill in March 1905, to assist the Woodstock Railroad of Woodstock, Vermont with strengthening their bridge over the Queechee River to carry heavier B&M trains. Storrs corresponded with the Woodstock Railroad on Merrill's official B&M stationary.<sup>22</sup> Storrs apparently had two additional consulting projects over the course of the next year but those files have been lost.

In the spring of 1906 Storrs launched a marketing campaign to drum-up consulting work. He had letterhead printed that read *Office of John W. Storrs, Bridge and Consulting Engineer*, with a notation to the side, *With the B. & M. R. R. Fifteen Years as Assistant Engineer and Bridge Inspector*.<sup>23</sup> He created a form letter that he addressed "To the Honorable Board of Selectmen" and mailed to towns across New Hampshire and perhaps towns in Vermont and Maine as well (Figure 5). Storrs offered his services to inspect and report on the town's "old wood bridges," and make recommendations regarding repair or replacement, a service that "towns will find to their advantage to accept... as the small additional cost will more than pay in knowing they have satisfactory work and that they are getting what they are paying for."

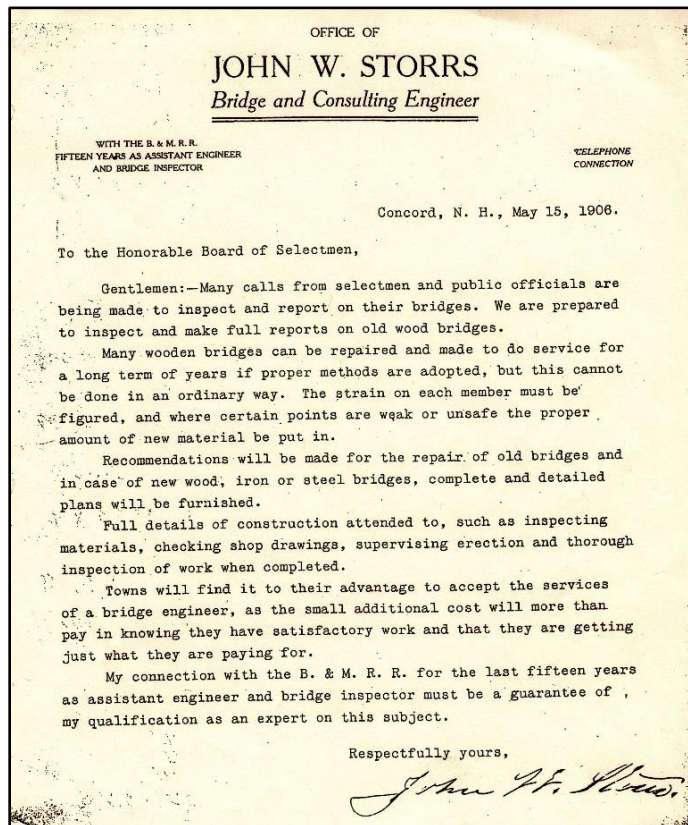


FIGURE 5: Storrs marketing letter dated May 15, 1906 mailed to town Selectmen offering engineering services to inspect and report on old wooden bridges (Storrs Files, NHDOT).

<sup>21</sup> The city directories from 1906 through 1908 list John Storrs as "civil engineer, B&M RR." Sources state that he was "employed by the Boston & Maine Railroad as an engineer from 1890 to 1911. (*New Hampshire Highways*, December 1928; Metcalf, Henry Harrison, Ed. *One Thousand New Hampshire Notables*. Concord, N. H.: Rumford Printing Company, 1919). It was typical for consulting engineers to be on a retainer by railroads to provide engineering services on-call and it was probably in this sense that he considered himself to be "employed" by the B&M up to 1911.

<sup>22</sup> The Woodstock Railroad project is file No. 1 in Storrs consulting project files, located in the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, Bureau of Environment records room, Concord.

<sup>23</sup> Direct marketing letter of introduction mailed by Storrs to "Honorable Board of Selectmen" offering engineering services to "inspect and make full reports on old wooden bridges." Letter dated May 15, 1906. Located in Storrs Files, NHDOT.

Storrs' marketing efforts met with success and by July 1906 he was working for the City of Claremont on his first highway bridge design project. He inspected and reported on the condition of an existing 1870s wrought-iron truss bridge over the Sugar River in West Claremont between the Jarvis and Coy paper mills. Finding the bridge incapable of carrying modern loads, he recommended a riveted steel bridge to replace it. He was given the job of preparing the necessary plans and specifications. Upon completion Storrs inspected the structure to insure it complied with the specifications and approved the contractor's final payment. His preliminary design sketch with load calculations and with the type and size of steel members required is shown in **Figure 6**. Sketches like this appear throughout Storrs project files and from them engineering plans were drafted, initially by Storrs himself and later by his his son Edward who joined the firm in 1909.

The Claremont bridge was completed in the fall of 1906 by United Construction Company of Albany, New York (**Figure 7; Portfolio Figures 1, 2**). Storrs forged a close working relationship with United Construction and the firm built many dozens of Storrs' bridge commissions over the course of the next twenty years (**Portfolio Figure 3**). United Construction and other bridge companies including Canton Bridge Co., Groton Bridge Co., Berlin Construction Co. and others, that built bridges in New Hampshire both before and after John Storrs hung out his shingle, designed their bridges in-house and marketed their services directly to towns with flyers and pamphlets.

Storrs effectively inserted himself in between these companies and their customers. He recognized an opportunity

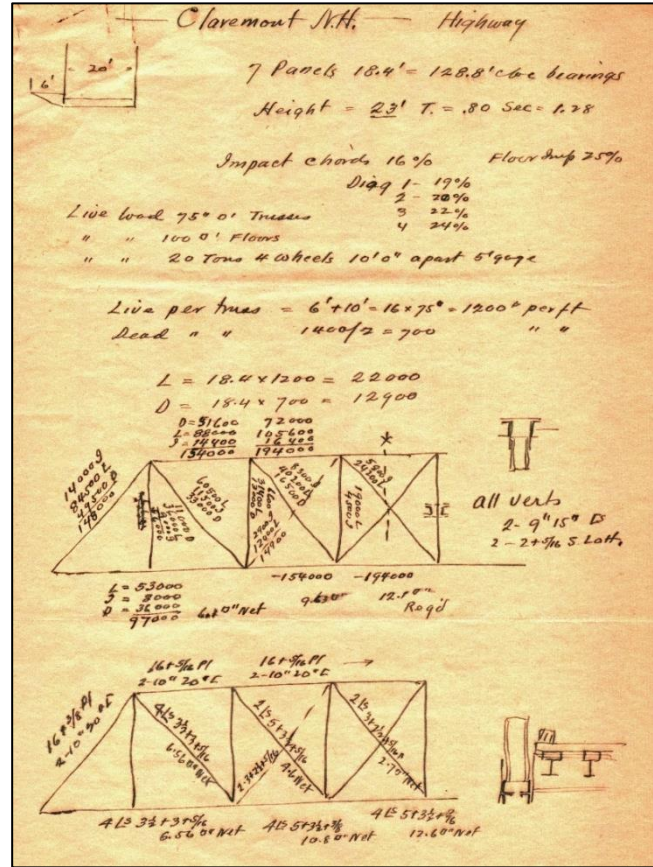


FIGURE 6: Storrs preliminary design sketch for West Claremont Plains Road Bridge over Sugar River, West Claremont, built 1906 (Storrs Files, NHDOT).

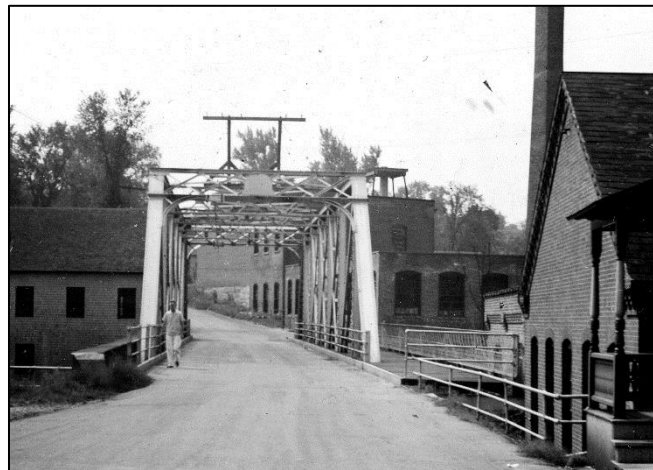


FIGURE 7: Plains Road Bridge over Sugar River in West Claremont, a single 131' span Pratt thru truss built 1906, replaced 1974. This is probably the first highway bridge designed by John Storrs after establishing his consulting business in 1905. Built by United Construction Company, Albany, NY. Photo taken August 26, 1942. Note utility lines carried on wood tower mounted atop the bridge (NHDOT Bridge Inventory Card, Claremont 091/118).

to act on behalf of towns and cities that did not employ an engineer – as was mostly the case at the time – to insure that they were "getting what they are paying for." When Storrs caught wind that a town was discussing the need for a new bridge, or entertaining entreaties from bridge companies for the same, he fired off a form letter to the Selectmen that described his services in detail and the advantages they offered.<sup>24</sup> In response to the letter he sent to the Selectmen of Pompanoosuc, Vermont, he was asked what his fees were, to which he responded "5% of the contract price, with a minimum of \$200." He was given the job and in August 1908 United Construction completed a 100' truss over the Ompompanoosuc River in the village of Pattersonville.

Storrs was undoubtedly an annoyance to these bridge companies because he deprived them of no-bid projects that offered greater profits than jobs for which Storrs prepared the plans and specs, oversaw competitive bidding, and locked them into strict contracts that protected his clients. In the case of United Construction Company, Storrs' records show that a symbiotic relationship soon developed between the two. Storrs relied on United to provide up-to-date cost estimates for the steel fabrication and erection that reflected the volatile steel and labors markets. In return United gained early knowledge of jobs that allowed it to better position itself to be the low bidder, or in many cases, simply get the job through Storrs' recommendation without bidding. In the latter case, for example, Storrs would report to a town after inspecting a bridge, that repairs and strengthening could be effected for certain amount to give the bridge a few more years of service, or a new structure of steel or concrete could be had for a small amount more that would provide decades of service.

It seems that within a few years a relationship of trust and mutual gain developed between the two with Storrs essentially acting much like an agent of United Construction. Storrs would request a bridge of a certain span, write up standard specifications and United would prepare the drawings, often by simply tracing a set from an identical bridge they had previously designed. Theirs was not a unique arrangement, but rather the trend of the bridge building industry, especially steel truss bridges. By about 1910, the design of short span bridges from culvert size up to trusses spanning 150 to 200 feet was largely standardized. Actual engineering and design was limited to site-specific elements including the substructure (piers and abutments), repairs and improvements to existing substructures to be reused, approaches, roadway type, the addition of sidewalks (typically

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<sup>24</sup> Letter to Selectmen, town of Pompanoosuc, Vermont, March 20, 1908 (Storrs' files):

Dear Sir:

I understand that your people have the erection of a bridge under discussion. If you feel that you would like any assistance from an engineer, I would like to be of service to you. The duties of an engineer, besides advising with and giving the selectmen such technical information as they may require, includes making plans and specifications, notices to bridge companies or contractors, proposal blanks, writing contract, &c., providing for certified checks accompanying bids, and satisfactory bonds for faithful performance of the work, &c.

The engineer should attend to the checking and approving of detail shop plans, inspection of workmanship and material in the shop. Also inspection of work during erection, testing rivets, &c and seeing that you get a good job, and just what you contracted for and are paying for.

The plans would be made in accordance with your directions as to style of bridge, capacity, or loads that you wished to have it carry, width of roadway, clear height, style of floor, railings, &c. The plans would be made with the idea of using the least possible amount of material and have the bridge safe for your specified loads and in accordance with the best engineering practice. This would give you the best bridge for the least amount of money.

After the plans were made and approved by your board, notices and approval blanks should be sent, under your direction, to the different bridge companies that you would like to have give you a bid on the work. These bids could be opened on a specified date and your board could award the contract in accordance therewith.

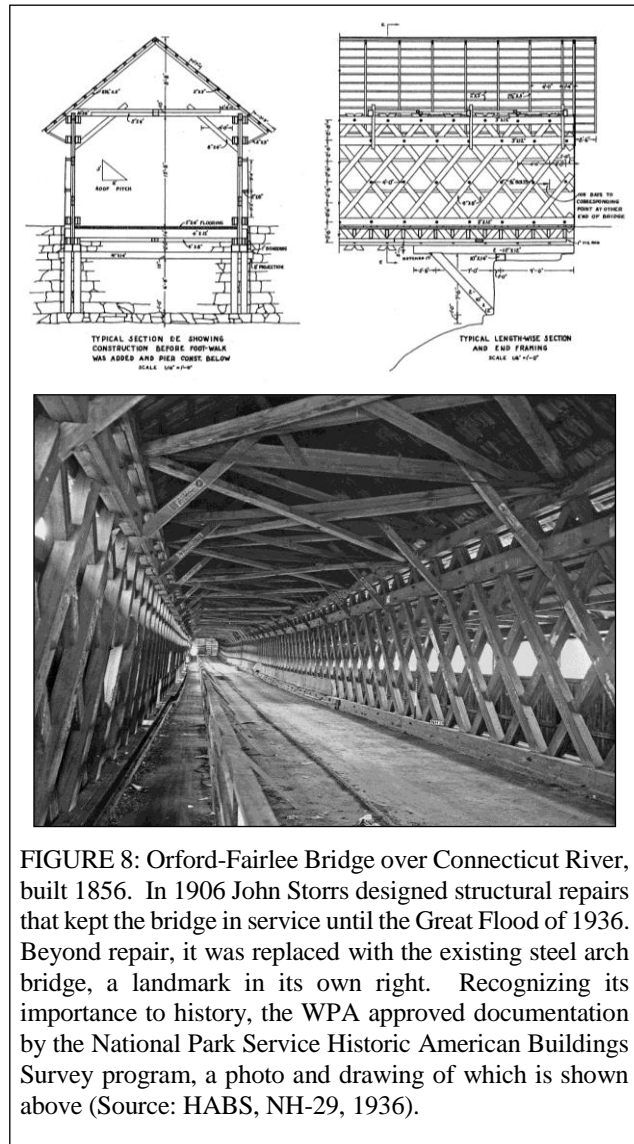
The consulting engineer is just what his title signifies, is employed by the town, and is working for and giving his best efforts and the result of his knowledge and experience to the town, and is protecting and guarding the town's interests in every way. You can readily see the advantage of having someone in your employ who understands this business from beginning to end.

Very truly yours, John W. Storrs

carried outside the trusses on brackets at an additional cost) and special railings. Engineering involving extensive calculations by Storrs was typically limited to situations where existing bridges needed repairs or reinforcing, or a standard highway bridge design required widening or strengthening to carry a street-car line, for example.

A substantial amount of Storrs' early work was inspecting timber truss bridges, both covered highway bridges and covered and uncovered railroad bridges. The highway bridge work appears for the most part, a direct result of his initial marketing campaign. In 1906 Storrs designed repairs to two covered bridges over the Connecticut River, between Orford NH and Fairlee VT (**Figure 8**) and between Haverhill NH and Newbury VT (**Figure 9**). These were closely followed by the Elm Street Bridge over Sugar River in Newport, NH and the Boscawen-Canterbury Bridge over the Merrimack River.

In most cases Storrs stressed to the town selectmen that the repairs were a temporary fix to buy them some time to convince voters to fund a modern steel bridge. In 1907 Storrs was called on to replace the Boscawen-Canterbury Bridge, for which he designed a Parker truss with two 170' spans, his largest project to date (**Portfolio Figures 4-8**).<sup>25</sup> In 1913 the towns of Haverhill and Newbury again called on Storrs to replace the bridge between their towns (**Figure 9**; **Portfolio Figure 32**). Both bridges were fabricated by American Bridge Company and erected by United Construction Company.



<sup>25</sup> For more information see "Boscawen-Canterbury Bridge," NHDHR Historic Property Documentation No. 669, 2010, available online at [www.historicdoc.com/pdf/Boscawen-Canterbury\\_Brg\\_HPD.pdf](http://www.historicdoc.com/pdf/Boscawen-Canterbury_Brg_HPD.pdf).

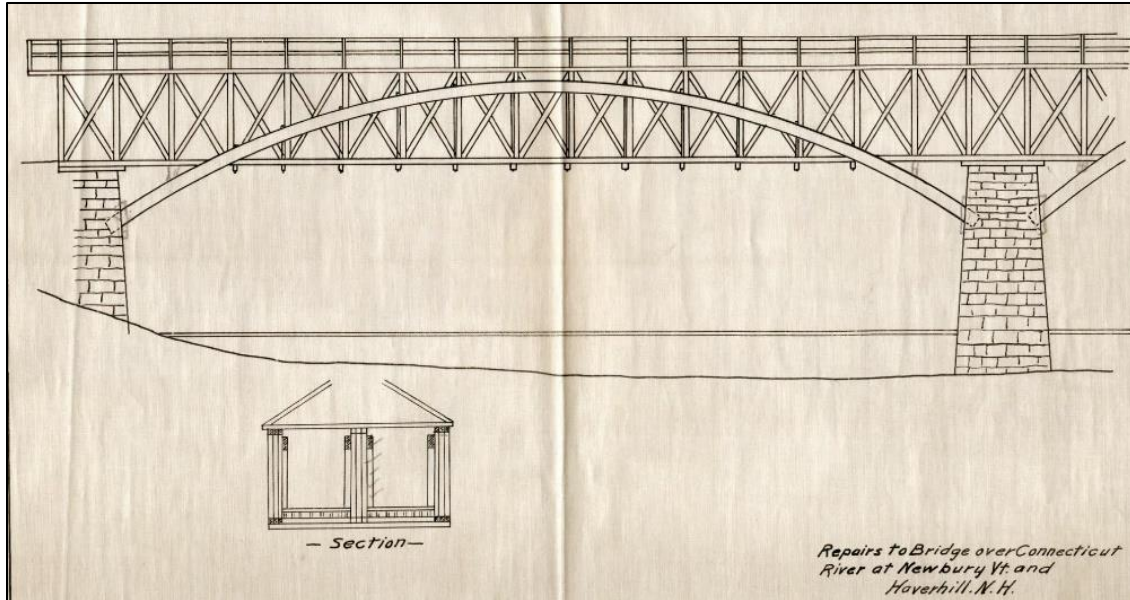


FIGURE 9: Drawing by John Storrs, 1906, of Newbury Road Covered Bridge over Connecticut River between Haverhill NH and Newbury VT, built 1834, showing reinforcing arches added that year. Section drawing shows rare two-lane design with a third truss down the center. Possibly the first Long Truss – as patented by Stephen Long in 1830 – built in New Hampshire. A 1913 flood damaged the bridge and it was replaced with a steel Pratt truss built by United Construction Company, with John W. Storrs acting as consulting engineer; see **Portfolio Figure 30** (Source: Storrs File No. 6).

On complicated structural issues involving wood trusses, Storrs frequently corresponded with Robert Fletcher, Professor of Civil Engineering at Dartmouth College and with J. P. Snow, Bridge Engineer for the Boston & Maine Railroad. Fletcher was regularly employed as a consulting engineer on many of the old covered bridges spanning the Connecticut River. Storrs was acquainted with Snow through his work for the B&M. Storrs sought the opinions of the two men regarding his estimates of safe loading and proposed methods of strengthening or reinforcing wood truss bridges.<sup>26</sup>

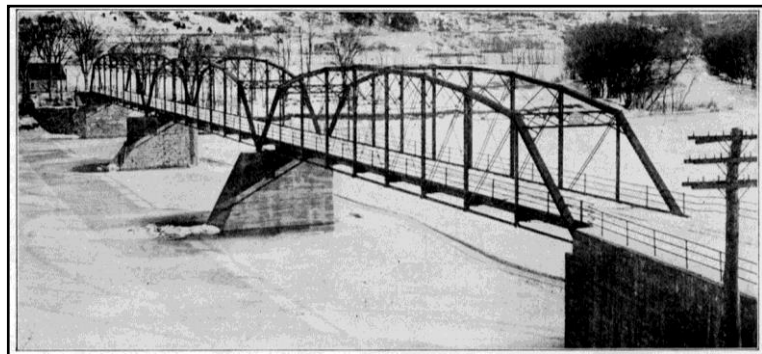


FIGURE 10: "Ascutney Bridge" was a 3-span pin-connected Parker truss over the Connecticut River between Claremont NH and Weathersfield VT. Designed by John Storrs, built by United Construction Company in 1908; replaced in 1969. This bridge replaced the 1837 Claremont Toll Bridge, destroyed by freshet and ice in 1901. Photo from Storrs Bridge Handbook, 1918. See also **Portfolio Figures 11, 12.**

<sup>26</sup> Correspondence between Snow and Storrs in 1908 regarding repairs to the Cornish Windsor Bridge over the Connecticut River, with commentary by covered bridge historian, David Wright, is reproduced in full in the Summer

From 1907 on, demand for Storrs' engineering services grew rapidly. As word spread, town after town across New Hampshire called on Storrs to inspect their bridges large and small and report on their deficiencies and cost to repair or replace. In the vast majority of cases, Storrs' numbers made it readily apparent that replacement of unsafe or obsolete bridges was the most practical choice for the long term benefit of the taxpayers.

For bridge replacements in the range of 50 to 80 feet long, Storrs typically specified a Warren pony truss, the term pony meaning trusses low in height that are not interconnected above the roadway with overhead cross bracing (**Figure 11; Portfolio Figures 9-10, 23, 35-37, 55-59, 69-70**). The shorter, lighter structural members of the pony truss meant much lower cost of materials shipping, handling and erection than the longer-span through trusses. Storrs project files indicate he designed at least nine Warren pony trusses in New Hampshire, but the number may be greater due to missing project files.<sup>27</sup> Storrs' name did not always get associated with bridges built by United Construction and other companies in cases where he simply drew up the bid specifications for a bridge of a certain length and did not actually create drawings for it. Based on NHDOT bridge records, this situation appears to have been a common occurrence.

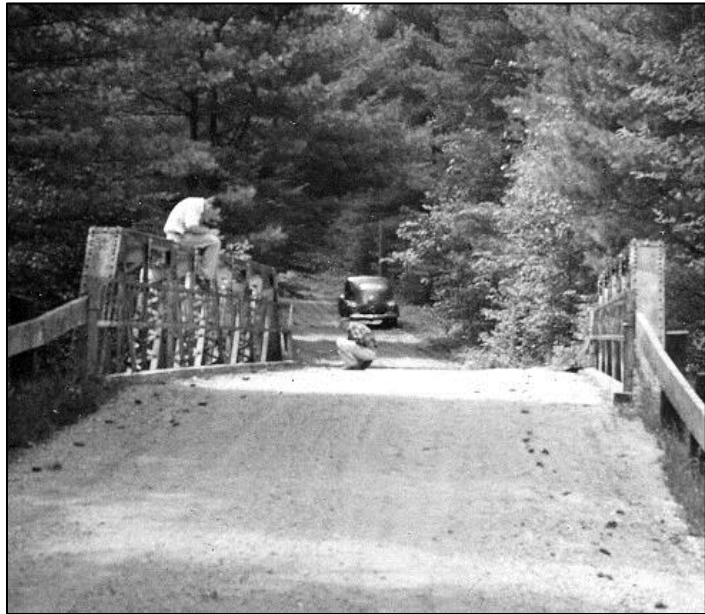


FIGURE 11: Warren pony truss carrying East Penacook Road over Blackwater River in Hopkinton, NH, built 1907, replaced 1967. This 70' bridge was typical of many designed by John Storrs and built by United Construction Company. Note the two NHHD engineers making notes and sketches of the bridge during an inspection on May 27, 1942 (NHHD Bridge Inventory Card, Hopkinton 134/166).

For bridges in the range of 30 to 50 feet long and sometimes longer, steel plate girder bridges were generally specified with the roadway carried by deep I-shaped girders made of steel plates and angles, riveted together. Pony trusses and plate girder spans were often used in combination with longer through-truss spans, typically as an "approach span" at one or both ends of the bridge (**Portfolio Figures 38, 53-54**).

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2013 *Newsletter of the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges*, available online at <http://www.coveredbridgesociety.org/newsletters/nspcb-newsletter-summer2013.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> In Storrs Project Files located at NHDOT, there are project file folders numbered up to 292, of which 65 folders are either missing or empty. In some cases a file was created to hold correspondence between Storrs and a potential client which later turned into a job at a later time for which a new project file was created. In other instances, earlier correspondence was consolidated in with the later job documents, or vice versa. A preliminary list of the project files, with the town or client name and a brief description of the file contents, has been compiled and is located in the file boxes.

Bridges of the shortest lengths, less than 30 feet, were of the greatest demand for crossing the multitude of small streams that fed into the multitude of larger streams and rivers for which the uneven landscape of New Hampshire is noted. For spans mostly in the 20 to 30-foot range but up to 40 feet, the rolled I-beam stringer bridge was often the best choice, the steel beams simply replacing the heavy wood-beam stringers of the preceding bridge without requiring much change in the elevation of the approach roadway. Concrete slab and concrete arch bridges from culvert size up to about 25-foot span became increasingly popular from about 1907 on, due to their low cost, ability to be built with local labor and materials, their low maintenance and long life (**Portfolio Figures 24-27, 60-64**).

The design of these small steel or concrete bridges entailed the least work and liability for the engineer and due to their low total cost Storrs typically charged a flat fee of \$200 to design and approve their construction. The repetitive nature of their design meant plans and specs could be copied with few if any changes. This was lucrative work and Storrs was quickly cornering the rapidly growing market for it.

The business grew fast and in 1909 Storrs brought his son Edward on board and reestablished his firm under the name Storrs and Storrs, located in new offices at 59 North Main Street. Edward was born in Concord in 1886 and graduated from Concord High School in 1904 (**Figure 12**). He worked for several years with the Boston & Maine Railroad as a rodman followed by a year or so with Empire Bridge Company of Elmira, New York. Empire was the New York State subsidiary of United States Steel Corporation created in 1901 along with the American Bridge Co. consolidation. Empire fabricated many of the bridges designed by John Storrs and erected by United Construction Co. It was undoubtedly through those connections that Edward found his position with Empire and learned how iron and steel was forged and fabricated on a very large scale (**Figure 13**).

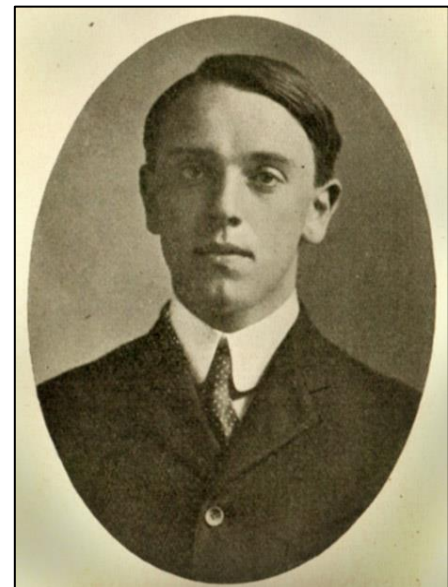
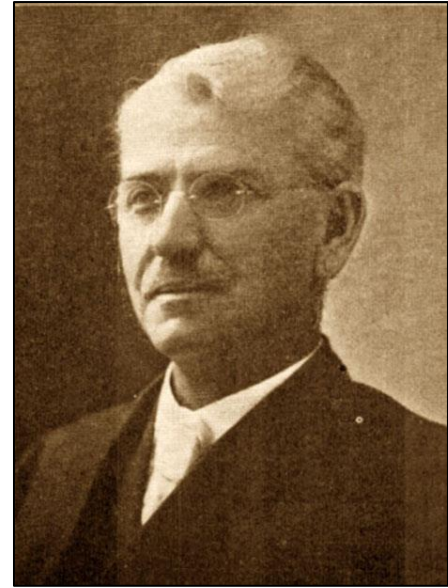


FIGURE 12: John Storrs and son Edward Storrs as they appeared in a 1910 article in *Granite Monthly* magazine (Metcalf, 1910).

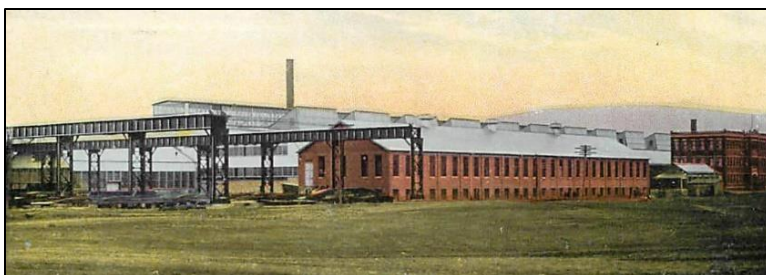


FIGURE 13: Empire Bridge Company plant Elmira, New York, shown in postcard view, c. 1910. Empire Bridge was bought by American Bridge Company in 1900 but operated under its original name for over a decade. Edward Storrs worked at the plant, probably in 1907 or 1908.



Also in 1909, John Storrs purchased the Wm. P. Ford & Co., "iron founders and jobbers, manufacturers of stoves, sinks and agricultural implements," located at 165 North Main Street in Concord.<sup>28</sup> Known simply as the "Ford Foundry", the firm was one of only two iron foundries in the state manufacturing wood and coal burning stoves and ranges (**Figure 14**). Established in 1837, it was a fixture of Concord and remained in the Ford family until the death of John Marston in 1909, son-in-law of William Ford. Storrs formed a partnership under the name "The Ford Foundry Company" naming himself senior partner, Albert I. Foster, manager and treasurer and his son Edward, superintendent. In 1910 the firm employed 20 to 25 men all who had been with the firm many years. Edward's recent employment at Empire Bridge and exposure to the far larger metal forging works there, was likely a factor in John Storrs' decision to launch the venture.

The business was still operating in 1920; in that year the Concord directory listed John Storrs as President of the foundry and Edward Storrs listed "foundry manager" as his primary occupation. No further information about the foundry operation was gathered for this report.

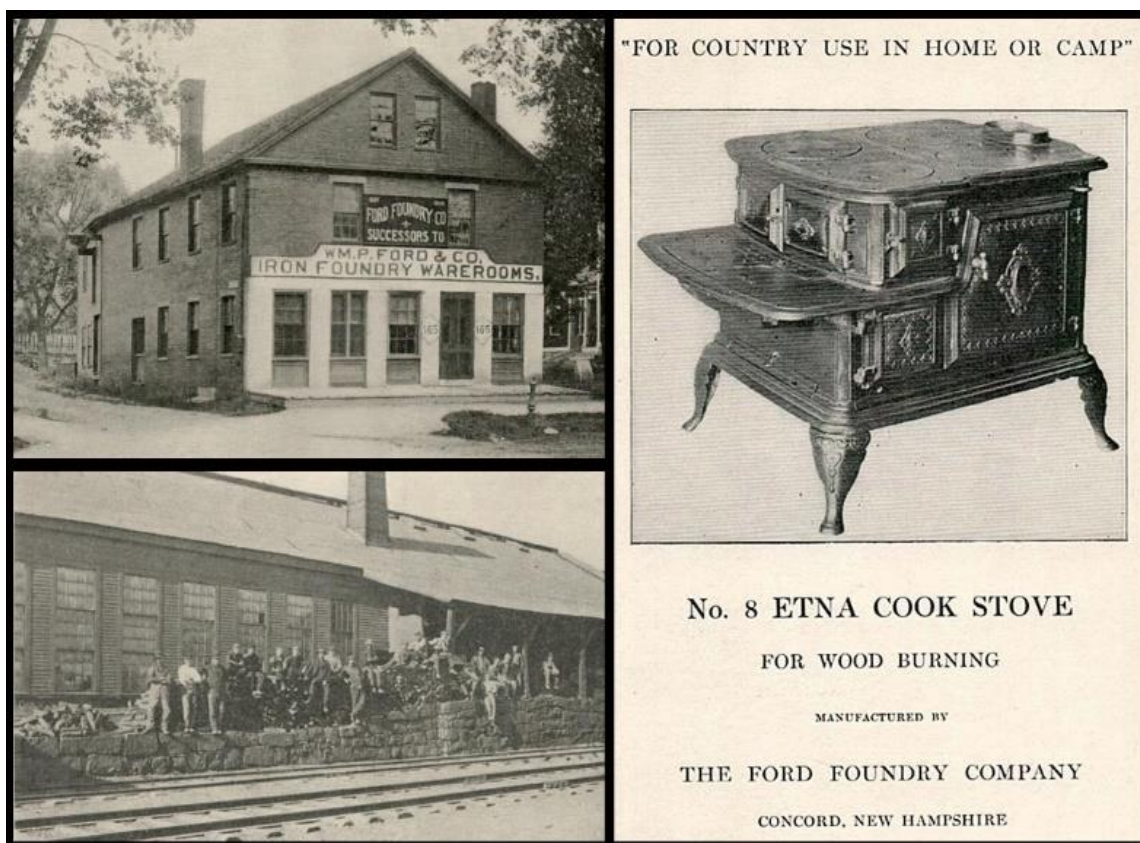


FIGURE 14: Upper left: The Wm. P. Ford & Co. Foundry in Concord, NH purchased by John Storrs in 1909 and shown above in 1910 with a new sign erected above the original sign that reads "Ford Foundry Co., Successors To." The foundry workers are shown assembled for a photo along the railroad siding behind the building (Source: Metcalf, 1910). An advertisement for the Etna Cook Stove printed on 4x6" card stock (right) was found in Storrs' original bridge project files held by NHDOT.

<sup>28</sup> Metcalf, Henry Harrison. "The Ford Foundry Company, An Old Concord Industry in New Hampshire." *Granite Monthly*, August 1910, pp. 243-246.

The consulting engineering firm of Storrs and Storrs prospered through the second decade of the twentieth century with a steady flow of commissions for bridges large and small. The design of a large three span steel truss to replace a covered bridge over the Merrimack River in Hooksett in 1909 was the first important and high-profile assignment for the new partnership (**Portfolio Figures 15-20**).<sup>29</sup> The original drawings for the Hooksett bridge are signed with Edward's initials "E.D.S." and are evidently the first major bridge work for which he drafted the plans. Edward's initials would appear on many drawings thereafter, but records indicate that most of the mathematical calculations for projects requiring them continued to be done by his father.

From 1910 to 1913 a progression of single and multi-span truss bridges were designed by the firm (**Portfolio Figures 21-23; 28-33**). Short-span concrete bridges of both unreinforced concrete – referred to as "plain concrete" at the time – and reinforced concrete utilizing steel bars embedded in the concrete, were also in constant demand. Storrs also promoted pipe culverts encased in plain concrete which could be easily constructed by town or city road crew (**Portfolio Figure 24**). The so called "jack-arch" bridge that utilized steel I-beam stringers encased in a multi-arched concrete slab were simple and economical to construct and became highly popular. The Turkey River Bridge, designed for the city of Concord in 1911, is an early example of the type (**Portfolio Figures 25-27**).

### *A Windfall for Storrs*

In 1913 the New Hampshire Legislature passed "An Act in Amendment of Chapter 76 of the Public Statutes Relating to Damages Happening in the Use of Highways" that shielded towns and other corporations from liability resulting from damages incurred by operators of "carriages" weighing in excess of 6 tons.<sup>30</sup> The law was primarily the result of increasingly heavy motor trucks breaking-through bridge decks and in some cases, collapsing an entire bridge span. The law included a provision to increase the allowable vehicle weight from 6 tons to 10 tons, beginning April 15, 1915. The amended law was enacted on April 21, 1915 (**Figure 15**).

The purpose of the law was to motivate owners to insure that their bridges were capable of at least 6 ton loading and to be prepared to insure they were capable of 10 ton loading within two years. The law sowed considerable confusion and anger among towns and cities as to how they should respond, resulting in widespread calls for

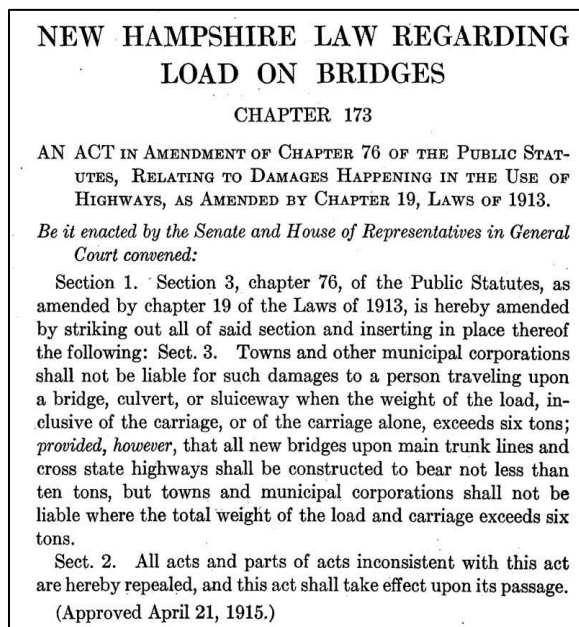


FIGURE 15: Laws of the State of New Hampshire, Chapter 173, Laws of 1915, as it was reproduced in the front of Storrs 1918 handbook for the construction of short span bridges, discussed below.

<sup>29</sup> For more information see "Hooksett Village Bridge," NHDHR Historic Property Documentation No. 737, 2015, available online at [www.historicdoc.com/pdf/HooksettVillageBrgDocumentation\\_NH-737.pdf](http://www.historicdoc.com/pdf/HooksettVillageBrgDocumentation_NH-737.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> New Hampshire. Laws of the State of New Hampshire, Chapter 19, Laws of 1913.

its repeal. Regardless, the immediate reaction to the law was a flurry of work for structural engineers to inspect bridges, to determine their safe carrying capacity, and to provide estimates to strengthen or replace them in order to meet the 6-ton or 10-ton requirement. Many short-span wood beam bridges that could be economically replaced with steel beam or concrete structures, were replaced. Owners of longer span bridges, such as covered wood trusses, began studying their options. Storrs, having postured himself exclusively as a bridge engineering firm – the first and only engineer to do so in New Hampshire and probably in New England during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century – was flooded with commissions in the wake of the state's 1913 bridge-loading law.

Coincidentally, his largest project to date and perhaps his largest single bridge project of his career did not span one of the state's largest rivers and was not a bridge replacement spurred by the 1913 law, but rather a "gateway bridge" over the Piscataquog River at Kelly's Falls commissioned by the city of Manchester to open a new highway corridor into town from the west. With an overall length of 960 feet made up of twenty elevated spans including eleven 60-foot deck trusses, it was the largest bridge in the state at the time (**Figure 16; Portfolio Figure 34**).



FIGURE 16: Kelly's Falls Bridge, Manchester, NH, fabricated by American Bridge Co. and erected by United Construction Company in 1914 (Manchester Historic Association).

### *Concord's Great Bridge Building Program of 1914-1915*

In April 1914 trucks broke through several bridges in Concord and the Board of Public Works ordered all the City's bridges spanning the Merrimack and Contoocook Rivers to be inspected and a report prepared on their serviceability. Storrs & Storrs Engineers had a well-established working relationship with the City and had just completed the design of a new 80-foot pony truss bridge spanning the Soucook River near Richardson Mills (**Portfolio Figures 35, 36**), so it was undoubtedly with little debate that Storrs was awarded the inspection work. The resulting report identified five bridges to be repaired or replaced: Pembroke Bridge, Federal Bridge and Sewall's Falls Bridge, all spanning the Merrimack; Main Street Bridge over the Contoocook and Borough Bridge over the canal branch of the Contoocook, both in the Penacook section. The City decided to replace all five bridges and hired Storrs to prepare the plans and specifications necessary to put the bridges out to

bid. All five bridges were completed by December 1915, at a total cost of \$78,000 (**Portfolio Figures 37-47**). [A history of Concord's five-bridge construction project is given in the Sewall's Falls Bridge Historic Property Documentation available on the Concord City website].

In the spring of 1914 the work load imposed by the Concord project forced Storrs to move operations to a three room office at 59 North Main Street. About the same time another important contract came in for the design of two municipal bridges over the Sugar River in Claremont, one for a 100-foot deck truss to replace the existing Lower Village Bridge on Main Street and the other a 138-foot two-span deck plate girder bridge carry Broad Street over the river in the heart of downtown (**Portfolio Figures 48-52**). With the Concord and Claremont design work in full swing plus several other major projects on board, more room and help was needed and by the end of the year two adjoining rooms were rented and additional secretaries and draftsmen were hired (**Figure 17**).



FIGURE 17: Storrs & Storrs office at 59 North main Street, Concord in 1915. Clockwise from upper left: Reception Room; Main Office; Bridge Design Department; Edward & John Storrs; Drafting Room (*Granite Monthly* 1915).

While the Concord work was under construction the city of Berlin asked for a new truss bridge to carry Bridge Street over the Androscoggin River. The plan called for two 165' high Pratt truss spans and one Warren pony truss span; Storrs was able to use essentially the same plans used for Concord's Sewall's Falls Bridge for the two main spans at Berlin (**Portfolio Figures 53, 54**).

When new piers or abutments could be built and spaced to enable use of a pre-existing set of plans for a span of a certain length, it was naturally done to reduce the engineering work and the potential for calculating or drafting errors. Another example of this reuse is the Mosquito Bridge over Lake Winnisquam between Belmont and Tilton, consisting of five Warren pony truss spans. Designed by Storrs in 1915, the plans for the five 90 foot spans were essentially identical to those drawn for Concord's Borough Bridge just months before (**Portfolio Figures 55-59**).

As the demand to upgrade the state's bridges to carry modern vehicle loads continued to grow, Storrs increasingly reused plans drawn for previous jobs. This was essentially the genesis of "standard plans" that would be prepared for many bridge types and used repeatedly by state transportation departments during the 1910s and 1920s – a practice that continues today. Storrs was one of the first engineers to promote small standard-design bridges that town and city highway crews could design and build themselves. In 1918 he published a handbook to further that cause entitled *Storrs: A Handbook for the Use of Those Interested in the Construction of Short Span Bridges* (**Figure 18**).

The *Storrs Handbook* provided designs for concrete bridges, including conventionally-reinforced slabs and girder spans (T-beam) using steel reinforcing rods, but also included designs for concrete spans reinforced with rolled I-beams. In the latter case, I-beam stringers are encased with a monolithic concrete floor poured over arched or boxed forms suspended around the stringers. Drawings and tables specifying the size and placement of reinforcing rods or stringers needed for various span lengths made designing such bridges a simple exercise. The extent to which bridges were built by laymen following the *Storrs Handbook* is not known, but a very large number of such bridge types were built by towns during the late teens and early twenties that cannot be attributed to an engineer or builder. According to historian James Garvin, the handbook was instrumental in introducing contractors and road agents to concrete as a construction material.<sup>31</sup>

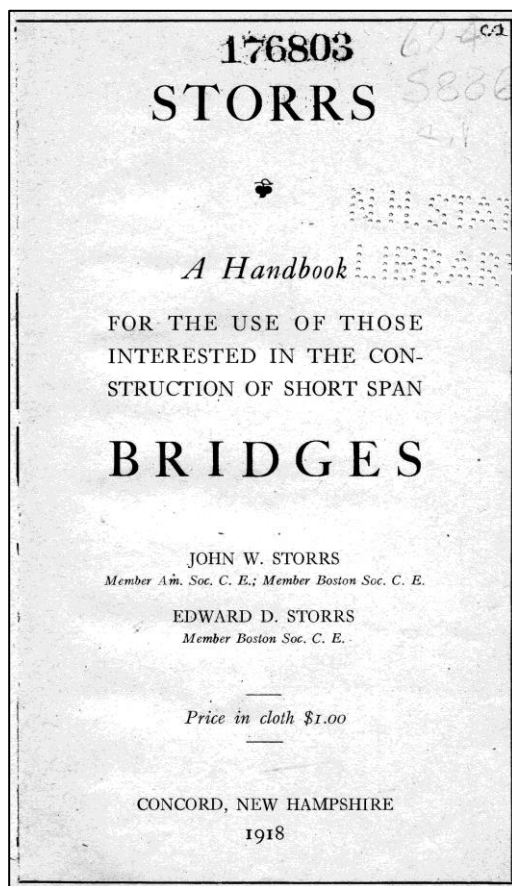


FIGURE 18: The cover of "Storrs", a handbook for bridge design authored and published by John and Edward Storrs in 1918. An original copy is located in the NH State Library, Concord. A digital copy can be found at [www.historicdoc.com/pdf/storrrshandbook.pdf](http://www.historicdoc.com/pdf/storrrshandbook.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> James L. Garvin, "Builders of Bridges in New Hampshire." Draft manuscript dated 1999, on file at NH Division of Historical Resources, Concord.

In the period 1917 to 1920 Storrs and Storrs continued designing bridges but the work load substantially decreased as John Storrs committed more time to his work with the Public Service Commission. In 1918, Governor Henry W. Keyes promoted Storrs from Engineer to a member of the three-person Board of Commissioners, a position of considerable political influence and regulatory power. Storrs was sixty years old when he published *Storrs Handbook* in 1918, and it was perhaps with an eye on winding down the bridge business that he essentially relinquished his work on common short-span bridges to those who might just as well do it themselves. By 1920 Edward Storrs was apparently devoting most of his time to managing Ford Foundry. The reasons that Edward did not assume the helm and continue on with the business remain undetermined. Only a handful of projects were undertaken after 1920 and based on Storrs' bridge design files and on city directories, 1925 was the last year of business. In 1930, when Governor Charles W. Tobey refused to re-appoint the 71-year-old Storrs as Chairman of the Public Service Commission, insisting that he was too old, Storrs hung out his shingle for "Storrs, Engineers" over a new office at 27 North Main Street in Concord. This venture lasted until 1933 when Storrs ran for Mayor of the City and began his first of five consecutive terms. No records pertaining to any consulting work that John Storrs may have undertaken during that three years period were located.

Aside from personal motives that may have led to the gradual discontinuance of Storrs and Storrs, there were several material reasons to suggest that the available work simply dried up. In 1917, the New Hampshire Legislature adopted the provisions of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, the first program to provide states with matching funds for highway building. A portion of the monies were available for use building bridges on the state's trunkline roads. The number of bridges designed in-house by the New Hampshire Highway Department (NHHD) suddenly increased and in 1919 the department hired a young civil engineer named Harold E. Langley who had just graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology two years earlier. Langley quickly found his niche as a bridge designer, ultimately rising to assistant bridge engineer and then chief bridge engineer over the course of his 42 years with the department.<sup>32</sup>

The most significant blow to Storrs' business seems to have come from the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921 that increased funding to the states for both primary and secondary roads. That year the New Hampshire Legislature responded by passing a law providing \$30,000 per year for State Aid to towns for the construction of permanent highway bridges. For municipal bridges up to \$3,000 in cost the state would pay fifty-percent and fund a decreasing share of the cost of bridges over that amount. Harold Langley was promoted to Designer in 1922 and began churning out bridge plans at a prodigious rate. Standard design sheets and tables for concrete slab, jack arch, I-beam stringer and concrete T-beam bridges were generated in 1922 and the following years. Towns could now have their bridges designed for free and half their cost paid by the state. Records indicate that after 1922 Storrs continued to occasionally consult towns needing structural inspections and proposals for large bridges, generating reports, plans and cost estimates, but many were never built (**Figure 19**). For bridges costing between \$20,000 and \$30,000, for example, the state would pay 25% of the cost, plus provide the design work, so any incentive to seek the outside private bridge engineering services that Storrs once monopolized, evaporated. A selection of Storrs' work from 1916 to 1925 is presented in **Portfolio Figures 62-78**.

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<sup>32</sup> A biography of Harold E. Langley is available at: <https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/environment/units/program-management/documents/HELangleyFINALFeb2015.pdf>



FIGURE 19: In the winter of 1921 John Storrs inspected ice damage to the abutments of the Chesterfield-Brattleboro Suspension Bridge along with town officials. The famous bridge was built in 1889 by the Berlin Iron Bridge Company with a clear span of 320 feet. The roadway was carried on a through-truss suspended from fourteen individual cables strung over iron towers. Repairs were made and the bridge continued to serve until November 6, 1935 when the truss was found severely buckled and broken in several places. The damaged had been done by an overweight ten wheel truck and trailer that snuck over the bridge the night before. The bridge was again repaired to carry light traffic but the following March it was inundated and ripped from its anchorages by the Great Flood of 1936. The cables were salvaged to support a temporary pedestrian suspension bridge over the Merrimack River at the site of Manchester's MacGregor Bridge (aka the Notre Dame Bridge), which had also been destroyed by the flood (Storrs Photograph Collection).

## 5. PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION – 1911 to 1930

John Storrs was appointed Engineer of the Public Service Commission of New Hampshire in 1911, made a Commissioner in 1918 and served as Chairman from 1928 to 1930.

The New Hampshire Public Service Commission was established by the New Hampshire Legislature in 1911.<sup>33</sup> It was renamed the Public Utilities Commission in 1951, the title it operates under today. The Commission was made up of three members appointed by the Governor and Council and given broad powers to oversee and regulate railroads and street railways and other non-public corporations and entities in the state that convey telephone or telegraph messages, manufacture or furnish light, heat, power or water for the public, and own or operate toll bridges, ferries, dams and power boats.<sup>34</sup> The Public Service Commission (Commission) replaced the State Board of Railroad Commissioners, which was established in 1844 and was the first such board in the nation to regulate transportation.<sup>35</sup>

The Commission was given an initial budget of \$4000 to employ "stenographers, experts, accountants and others whose assistance it may require in the performance of its duties." One of the first hires was John W. Storrs to "act as its engineer and organize its system of railroad inspection." The Commission reported to the Governor that "Mr. Storrs was for many years in the engineering department of the Boston & Maine Railroad, and is thoroughly qualified as an expert in all matters of station, track and bridge construction."<sup>36</sup>

In 1911, at the time Storrs was offered the position with the Commission, he was employed by the Boston & Maine Railroad as a consulting engineer and operating a private consulting business in Concord with his son Edward under the name Storrs & Storrs Engineers. His new position evidently obliged him to sever all ties with the Boston & Maine Railroad but allowed him to continue his private practice providing his client's work did not conflict with the purposes of the Commission. It seems doubtful that leaving the B&MRR contract work behind was much of a consideration in taking the job with the Commission. His work for the B&M was spotty at best as they employed their own bridge engineering department, and besides, plenty of other design work was pouring into Storrs & Storrs. But probably more importantly, the duties of the position were nothing short of a dream job for an engineer, and as the Commission grew its responsibilities and budget each year, Storrs' role greatly increased in importance.

Storrs was initially given the title of Chief Inspector but was referred to as Engineer in the Commission's reports. While the decision to investigate, call hearings and ultimately sanction a public service company rested with a vote of the Commission members and was seen by some as a politically tainted process, Storrs' work was to simply gather and present the facts and data behind the issues. He was in the vanguard of the citizen's defense against abuses by overly opportunist utility companies. It was a job he grew to love and would ultimately fight a sitting governor to keep.

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<sup>33</sup> New Hampshire, Laws of 1911, Chapter 164.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> From NH Public Utilities Commission website at <http://www.puc.state.nh.us/home/AboutUs/history.htm>.

<sup>36</sup> First Report of the Public Service Commission of New Hampshire for the Period Ending November 30, 1911, p. 15 (hereafter cited as Public Service Commission Report, [date], [page].)



Regulation and oversight of railroads operating within the state was the primary duty of the Public Service Commission, an uneasy task inherited from the dissolved Board of Railroad Commissioners, but one empowered with new and broad legal powers to subpoena witnesses, testimony, records and other information. With the creation of the Commission, the legislature ordered an immediate investigation and assessment of the rates being charged by the railroads to be based on a thorough gathering of data pertaining to all railroad property and operations. To facilitate such an investigation, the law required the railroads to provide the Commission's engineer use of a special train for inspection purposes. So in 1912, with a free ride and probably a large amount of apprehensive respect from his hosts, Storrs traveled over and examined nearly all of the 1000-plus miles of steam and electric railroads in the state including over 100 stations. Locomotives, freight and especially passenger cars were inspected for safety violations as were all aspects of the track including "the condition of road-bed, ties, rails, frogs, switches, etc." All railroad and toll highway bridges were inspected and their owners required to submit complete plans of the bridges to be kept in the Commission's files. When defects or safety hazards were found in the course of the inspection work, reports were made and owners notified by letter; repairs or corrections were typically made promptly. In 1912, for example, a number of bridges were determined unsafe and were "repaired, strengthened or replaced with new bridges."<sup>37</sup>

Storrs examined all railroad crossings in the state and compiled a list that included the detailed characteristics of unprotected crossings, the genesis of what would become a decades-long effort by the State to increase crossing safety and eliminate the most dangerous crossings at grade. The more comprehensive study of crossing warning signs and devices that followed became the national model for industry standards that were eventually adopted into federal law.

Storrs quickly devised and put into operation a system by which all fatal railroad accidents, collisions or derailments were immediately reported to the Commission office by telephone or telegraph, "at whatever hour of the day or night, in order that an investigation may be made at once, if deemed important."<sup>38</sup> As a result, twenty-five fatal railroad accidents were investigated by Storrs in 1912 alone.

The Commissioners concluded their 1912 report with the following description of Storrs' work:

His work has already outgrown our office accommodations, and he has been assigned an office on the first floor of the state house, which is being fitted up with filing cases to contain in readily accessible form the very valuable information now being collected. There is a field for much wider activities in the line of railroad inspection than we have yet undertaken. In the neighboring state of Massachusetts ten inspectors are continuously employed, one of them, for instance, devoting himself entirely to the inspection of locomotives. If we were able to employ two competent men to act as inspectors under Mr. Storrs' direction, we are confident that we could keep them actively and usefully employed. They would have to be competent men. Inspectors inferior in ability and knowledge of their business to the men whose work they are supervising, would be worse than useless. If, however, a sufficient appropriation were made, we believe that we could find the right kind of men.

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<sup>37</sup> Public Service Commission Report, 1912, p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

In 1913 the legislature approved the additional funding requested by the Commission to employ additional inspectors.<sup>39</sup> Storrs was officially named Chief Engineer in charge of the Engineering Department. In July he hired Charles C. Battey, for the position of Assistant Engineer of the Railroad Division and Stuart A. Nims, as Assistant Engineer of the Public Utilities Division.

In July 1913, Battey undertook a detailed inspection of the railroads:

He has travelled on foot over the 1,172.9 miles of track of the Boston & Maine, Maine Central and Grand Trunk railroads in New Hampshire, has examined the condition of the road bed, ties, rails, connections, signals, guards, etc., and has given careful attention to each one of the 697 bridges having ten feet or more clear span, including their abutments. He has inspected each of the 1,255 grade crossings, overhead bridges and underpasses, and each of the 371 depots or stations. He has filed a report in detail of his entire work. Eight bridges were reported as unsafe or requiring attention. All unsatisfactory conditions were at once taken up with officials or employees of the railroad, and all suggestions and recommendations made have been cheerfully complied with, and a spirit of corporation has prevailed throughout. Railroad conditions in New Hampshire are certainly better on account of this detailed inspection.

In 1914, following the inspection of all the state's railroad grade crossings, the Commission drafted a bill to be submitted to the Legislature recommending a law to require "all cities and towns to place railroad crossing signs on highways near every grade crossing within their limits, except in cases in which the Commission, after special investigation, decides it impractical to do so."<sup>40</sup> The bill was signed into law in 1915, becoming the first law governing grade crossing warning signs in the country.<sup>41</sup> In October 1915, Edward C. Niles, Chairman of the Commission, attended the annual convention of the National Association of Railway Commissioners in San Francisco and reported the grade crossing sign law just passed in New Hampshire. The Association, "comprising the chief operating officials of the railroads of the country, took up the matter and appointed a committee to consider the subject."<sup>42</sup> The outcome was a comprehensive set of uniform standards governing grade crossing warning systems including signs, lights and signals that specified factors such as size, color and location. The standard designs we are all familiar with today including crossing gates with black and white stripes and the round white sign with the black border, black cross lines and letters "R R" were a product of the standards.

Another power granted to the Public Service Commission (PSC) by the 1913 legislation was the regulation of the construction of dams over twenty-five feet in height. Initially this requirement did not place undue stress on Storrs and his engineers. In 1913 only one dam was built about 30 feet high in North Weare. Storrs reviewed the plans and employed an engineer to observe all aspects of the work from the "laying of the foundations, mixing of concrete, placing of materials, etc., throughout the whole course of the work."<sup>43</sup> A second dam under Storrs' purview was built in 1915 at the outlet of the First Connecticut Lake in Pittsburg by a lumber company. Being of timber crib construction, Storrs required the owner to have the dam inspected in 1920 and every year thereafter and to furnish the Commission with a copy of the report.

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<sup>39</sup> New Hampshire, Laws of 1913, Chapter 47.

<sup>40</sup> Public Service Commission Report, 1914, p. 62.

<sup>41</sup> New Hampshire, Laws of 1915, Chapter 4.

<sup>42</sup> Public Service Commission Report, 1916, p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 1914, p. 62.

Then in 1917, the Legislature amended the law requiring the builders of all dams of any height to submit specifications and for the PSC to determine it has been safely constructed. During 1917 and 1918, nine new dams were built along with extensive repairs to several others. Storrs reported to the Commissioners that

Whoever was responsible for this law probably little realized the amount of work in its proper execution. [Regardless], they have all been under the supervision of this department, and the plans, water areas, run-offs, etc., have been determined and checked up. The stability of the dams has been calculated, and inspection of construction has been made in accordance with the importance of the undertaking.<sup>44</sup>

The inspection and licensing of commercial power boats, coupled with the added tasks of registering of private power boats and placing and maintaining navigational lights and buoys imposed by the 1915 legislation, was another responsibility that rapidly expanded beyond expectations and tested Storrs' ability to control. In 1916, it was necessary to employ for the season twelve men to maintain the lights and buoys on the state's waters – six on Lake Winnepesaukee alone. Forty one lights were maintained, including 21 oil lanterns, eleven electric lights and nine acetylene gas lights. In 1918, 226 utility boats required inspection and licensing and 1241 private boats were registered. Ten commercial boats were condemned for decayed hulls or unsafe boilers.

In July 1918, Edward C. Niles resigned as Chairman of the Commission. On December 23 Commissioner William T. Gunnison was appointed Chairman and John Storrs appointed to fill the board's vacant third seat.

The war-time and immediate post-war period to about 1922 – aside from its horrific impact on those who served in battle and those who lost dear ones – was also a time of great stress on the economy, especially the railroads. That stress extended to regulatory bodies like the Public Service Commission. The cost of materials used in construction rose so sharply that the Commission postponed requiring utilities to make improvements and extensions "except those necessary for safety of operation and to maintain their pre-war standard of service."<sup>45</sup> The railroads, having been nationalized during the war, were in far more complicated straits. The federal law authorizing the takeover was hurriedly drawn and contradictory regarding which state laws that regulated railroads were superseded. During World War I, which ended November 11, 1918, the Commission exercised restraint: "Recognizing that the work at hand for the whole nation was the winning of the war, this commission has studiously avoided raising the question of jurisdiction." But federal control and operation of the railroads continued well after the war to March 1, 1920, during which time the railroads were limited to a 5.5% rate of return on the value of their property. The eastern railroads, particularly the Boston & Maine which in 1921 operated 1,051 miles of the 1,232 miles of railroad in the state,<sup>46</sup> pleaded they were financially crippled by the wartime takeover and needed to drastically increase rates. Adding to the woes, were the railroad workers who, feeling they were bearing the brunt of the tightening operations, began calling strikes. The B&M turned up the heat on the Public Service Commission to allow increases in their freight and passenger

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<sup>44</sup> Public Service Commission Report, 1918, p. 29.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> The two other railroads operating in New Hampshire in 1921, Canadian National Railroad and Maine Central Railroad, operated 52 miles and 100 miles of track respectively.

rates, first by burying them in reams of financial data that required careful interpretation, and then with political pressure exerted through the governor's office and statehouse.

Storrs' long association with the B&M railroad undoubtedly put him in both interesting and difficult situations during the rate negotiations around which swirled much public controversy and consternation. By December 1922 the problem the railroads and the Commission faced was simple:

It is easy to set out the facts to show that the railroads in New Hampshire are in a critical condition, but it is not so easy to prescribe the remedy. One thing is certain, and that is that the net income of the railroads must be speedily increased if they are to continue to function under private management. This can be done in one of two ways, or in both ways, viz., (1) by raising rates, which are now almost prohibitively high, and (2) by reducing operating expenses. The latter method is more desirable and, in fact, is the only practicable method. We believe it could be done to some extent by running motor cars on those branches where there is little travel.<sup>47</sup>

The public reports of the Commission provide a rich and detailed record of the dilemma faced by the state's railroads through the 1920s and into the 1930s and Storrs played an important role in much of the Commission's work involving them.<sup>48</sup> During 1923 and 1924, for example, the B&M strengthened 72 of their 662 bridges in the state to carry heavier locomotives that could pull longer trains, thereby reducing haulage costs. In his role as a commissioner Storrs continued to "handle all the engineering problems" before the board and would have oversaw the B&M's bridge improvement project, however no effort to locate archival records of the PSC detailing the such projects was made for this report. Also in 1924, the B&M began erecting 600 new railroad crossing signs across the state in response to the "advice of the Commission ...and the efforts of John Storrs."<sup>49</sup>

In his years on the Commission Storrs developed an increasing interest in the large-scale development of the state's water power to generate electricity for domestic use by the public, as opposed to development for private industrial use. In 1922 Storrs broke with the two other commissioners and voted against authorizing a private dam for manufacturing power located on the Androscoggin River in Dummer, finding it "unwisely conceived" and not in the public's interest.<sup>50</sup> The dam was opposed by a variety of interests who hired counsel and kept arguments in front of the Commission for over a year. Storrs' dissent became one more notch in his growing reputation as a man willing to go his own way and follow the interests of the people rather than powerful business and political interests.

In the wake of the Dummer dam controversy, Storrs became a proponent of the rapid development of the state's waterpower resources for electric power generation and the extension of power lines

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<sup>47</sup> Public Service Commission Report, 1922, p. 5. Railroad motorcars, also known as railbuses and "doodlebugs", were single self-propelled cars usually with both passenger and freight compartments. The early models were driven by electric motors powered by a gasoline generators, later versions were diesel electric. The B&M eventually and briefly employed railbuses on routes with dwindling passenger business, but they were quickly made obsolete by highway motor buses. By 1928 there were 54 motor bus routes in the state, 16 operated by Boston & Maine Transportation Company, a subsidiary of the B&M Railroad.

<sup>48</sup> Storrs was forced to retire from the Commission in 1930.

<sup>49</sup> *Portsmouth Herald*, "Putting Up 600 Crossing Signs," July 24, 1924, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> *Boston Herald*, "Authorizes Dam Project," August 16, 1922, p. 6.

to deliver it to all the homes and farms of the state. "It should be borne in mind that electricity, in the past of prime importance only to mills and industries, is now becoming an actual necessity for domestic purposes, not only in the cities, but in the farming communities," Storrs said in 1923 when he came forward with his ideas that were featured in an article on the front page of the *Boston Herald*, entitled "New Hampshire Working Out Super-Power System."<sup>51</sup> Storrs promoted a comprehensive plan for building dams, storage reservoirs and power plants to make use of the state's untapped water power that would generate electricity equivalent to burning 270,000 tons of coal a year. This was not a new idea, but Storrs had actually worked out many of the necessary technical details. Far more remarkable, was that Storrs had mapped out the entire system of electric power lines in the state and discovered that with the building of less than 100 miles of connecting lines, all the state's major steam and water power plants could be "hitched up, [so] when one section is short of power, it may be supplied with power by another utility over connecting lines, thus enabling all sections to have continuous and efficient service."<sup>52</sup>

Familiar to us today as a "the power grid" this too was not an original idea of Storrs. According to the *Boston Herald*, "New Hampshire is now working out a super-power system on a scale based largely on the state's boundaries, but comprising in the essential details all that the national super-power project, so much talked about, comprehends." But Storrs had taken the conceptual idea of a national grid and actually worked it out for New Hampshire, and upon seeing the plan, several of the utility companies began extending lines to make the connections. More study would be needed to determine exactly how it all played out and if New Hampshire was truly in the forefront of the establishment of the national electric grid, but based on the *Herald* article, the state was leading the way in New England.

By the end of 1924 Storrs plan for inter-connecting the state power suppliers was complete and six new dams and hydroelectric plants had been built with three more added by the end of 1926. Domestic electricity demand continued to soar over the next six years of Storrs tenure on the Commission and much of what he had proposed or had predicted was needed, was built or under construction. Once "hitched up," as Storrs put it, the electric utilities began consolidating, going from 70 separate companies in 1924 to 41 in 1930.

In addition to the mileage of the new connecting lines, hundreds of new miles of high-voltage transmission lines and low-voltage service lines were also constructed. Between 1926 and 1930, five new hydro-electric plants were built, including two major projects on the Connecticut River. Not counted here are the many dams and storage reservoirs built without generating facilities, but utilized to store water energy for use by generators downstream, another recommendation of Storrs original plan. The magnitude of the two Connecticut River projects, the Bellows Falls Hydro-Electric Company in Walpole with a capacity of 266 megawatts and the Fifteen Miles Falls Development in Littleton and Monroe at 400 megawatts, is appreciated considering the total electrical output of all electric utilities in the state prior to completion of the two plants was about 275 megawatts.<sup>53</sup> It is safe to say that John Storrs had a major influence on the development of the electric power industry in New Hampshire.

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<sup>51</sup> *Boston Herald*, "New Hampshire Working Out Super-Power System," December 23, 1923, p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> The statistics in this paragraph are gathered from the Public Service Commission Reports, 1924 to 1930.

On February 17, 1928, Governor Huntley N. Spaulding promoted John Storrs to Chairman of the Public Service Commission. Both men were lifelong Republicans, but given Storrs long service, party affiliation likely had little to do with it. The Commission bylaws required one member of the opposite party make up the three-member board, and that was former Governor Fred H. Brown, one of only two Democrats to hold the Governorship since 1858. The third member was Mayland H. Morse, appointed in 1927 by Governor Huntley Spaulding.

On November 24, 1928, John Storrs turned 70:

Quite a little attention was given to Mr. Storrs' birthday, the members of his department transforming his private office into a floral bower and giving other manifestation of their esteem. Shortly thereafter came from a semi-official source word that Gov. Tobey, taking cognizance of the constitutional ban on justices [serving beyond age 70] and realizing that the public service commissioners in a sort of way have to give judicial consideration to some matters before them, felt the conscript fathers would have included public service commissioners among those to retire automatically on their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, had they possessed the prophetic vision to anticipate the development of 20<sup>th</sup> century governmental requirements. He deemed it his duty to follow their implied direction, the story went, hence he would have to replace Storrs by [Styles] Bridges."<sup>54</sup>

A dogged controversy erupted following the leak of Governor Tobey's intentions not to reappoint Storrs when his term expired on June 1, 1929, apparently solely because of his age. The rumored replacement, H. Styles Bridges, was a young politician with no experience in the technical work of the Commission that engineer Storrs excelled at. To many, Bridges' experience as current vice-chairman of the Republican state committee, former business agent for ex-governor Robert P. Bass, and personal friend of Governor Tobey, was evidence the appointment was founded on cronyism over credentials.

The unofficial word from the Storrs camp, was that "the veteran commissioner may engage legal counsel, the firm of Murchie & Murchie of Concord, in the interests of reappointment."<sup>55</sup> Fellow Commissioners Brown and Morse stood by Storrs as competent and capable. "Storrs Highly Popular" reported the *Boston Herald*, noting that "John Storrs is a most likable man and up to now there has never been an intimation of his lack of capacity for the job he holds."<sup>56</sup> In early May 1929, just weeks before Tobey would be announcing his appointments and the Governor's Council would vote to approve them, Fred Brown announced he would be resigning from the Public Service Commission. This fueled speculation that Brown was positioning himself to run for governor against Tobey in 1930, sowing more hand-wringing among Tobey supporters.

Tobey proclaimed to the press that the rumor that Storrs would not be reappointed was "without any official foundation" but inside sources told the paper otherwise – that Tobey had every intent to appoint Bridges and make Mayland Morse chairman. And that is just what Tobey did, confident that he had secured the majority of votes of the Governor's Council. But when the vote came, Bridges' appointment was rejected in an astonishing unanimous thumbs-down vote that left the Governor "momentarily dazed."<sup>57</sup> Storrs was now sitting on the Commission as a "hold-over," his term having expired on June 1 without reappointment and the Governor failing to fill the vacancy.

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<sup>54</sup> *Boston Herald*, "Council Jolts N.H. Governor," May 26, 1929, p. 39.

<sup>55</sup> *Boston Herald*, "Brown Will Quit N.H. Service Com.," May 8, 1929, p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> *Boston Herald*, "Council Jolts N.H. Governor," May 26, 1929, p. 39.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

At the June meeting of the Council, Tobey, having mustered support for the Bridges' appointment from four former governors and "a large delegation of prominent citizens" again put the matter to a vote, but again it was unanimously defeated, again leaving Tobey humiliated. A few days later U.S. Senator George H. Moses of New Hampshire declared that he failed to see the great importance of Styles Bridges that would justify such an eroding of one's political credibility, challenging Governor Tobey to "issue his much-heralded statement setting forth his reasons for consistently insisting upon the appointment of Bridges to succeed John W. Storrs on the commission." <sup>58</sup>

Tobey did not answer Moses' call out and instead set the Storrs controversy aside to cool while he worked on his recalcitrant advisory council members. Meanwhile, Storrs continued to chair the Public Service Commission as a hold-over. Then, at the opening of the February 22, 1930 meeting of the Governor's Council, a greatly anticipated meeting about a taxation plan that included a contentious income tax proposal, Tobey surprised everyone by first putting forward the Bridges appointment. It was voted and passed in a moment that "took away the breath of the assembled statesman and politicians and just plain volunteer upbuilders of the general welfare struggling to harmonize sadly varying theories on the proper distribution of the tax burden."<sup>59</sup> Tobey had finally got his way and replaced Storrs, but in the November election the voters returned the favor, handing the Governorship to John G. Winant.

Most people 72 years of age with Storrs' resume of private and public accomplishment would be content to retire and bask in the shine of all the jobs well-done. Surely Storrs could rest fulfilled that any duty of public service compelled by his quest to restore respect to the Storrs' name tarnished by his father, was done. After all, during the Governor Tobey fiasco, his associates on the Public Service Commission, all the members of the Governor's Council, and the public at large, sided with him and dealt Tobey two embarrassing comeuppances later ratified in the voting booth. But John Storrs was not the type to spend his twilight years with a fishing pole in his hands, so in defiance to the notion he was too old for service, he rented an office at 27 North Main Street in Concord and reopened his engineering consulting business.<sup>60</sup>

It is doubtful that Storrs did much highway bridge design work; by 1930 the New Hampshire Highway Department had a large staff of engineers fully engaged in fulfilling the state's need in that regard. He did some consulting work for the railroads, conducting a survey of Suncook Valley Railroad in the spring of 1930, but the railroads were in trouble financially and it is doubtful he was able to call in many favors for work from them.<sup>61</sup> His vast knowledge of all matters going before the Public Service Commission would have put his services as a lobbyist or applicant's representative in demand, but it is doubtful that he would have undertaken such work – certainly not lobbying. The economic depression was quickly worsening with all types of employment evaporating by the day. By 1933 the Gross National Product had declined by nearly half since the stock market crash of 1929. One might envision Storrs sitting in his Concord office every morning reading about the City's woes in the newspaper and thinking *something must be done*.

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<sup>58</sup> *Boston Herald*, "Moses Scores Bridges Issue," July 2, 1929, p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> *Boston Herald*, "N.H. Tax Session Overshadowed," February 23, 1930, p. 6.

<sup>60</sup> Storrs new consulting was previously discussed on page 22.

<sup>61</sup> *Portsmouth Herald*, "Suncook Valley R.R. in Annual Meeting," May 16, 1930, p. 22.

## 6. MAYORAL YEARS – 1934 to 1942.

Beginning in 1934, Storrs served five consecutive two-year terms as Mayor of the city, being forced to put down the mantle of executive office only through the influence of death on September 19, 1942.

In 1933, with the economy still in a downward trajectory, John William Storrs arrived at his next mission in life, assuming the reigns of Concord's government. By any measure, his campaign for mayor was highly unusual in that he simply did not campaign. He did not give speeches or make appearances at campaign events of any kind, nor did he state his position on any of the issues facing the city. His answer to the oft asked question of what his platform consisted of, was to say only that he stood on his record in public office [with the Public Service Commission] and that he would be a full-time mayor capable of being found in his office at City Hall during the hours of operation by any citizen wishing to talk with him.

The League of Women Voters held a series of meetings around the city during the run up to the election and invited Storrs to speak alongside his opponent, local lawyer John W. Stanley. Storrs declined and instead sent the League a letter stating his qualifications which was read at the meeting held on November 2, 1933. The full text of the letter was published in the *Concord Monitor* the next day:

It is with a deep sense of appreciation that I received the courteous and thoughtful invitation to speak under the auspices of your organization. I assume that candidates for office are expected to extol their own virtues and proclaim their respective policies. It is somewhat embarrassing and probably unnecessary for me to remind you that as consulting and construction engineer I have had charge of building railroads, engine houses, hotels and other buildings, that I have surveyed or built highways, sewers, waterworks, dams, hydraulic stations, etc. I also had charge of building the railroad shops at the south end of the city. I have recently resigned as member in the Boston Society of Civil Engineers and of the American Waterworks Association. I still retain membership in the American Society of Civil Engineers with headquarters in New York City. I was consulting engineer of the New Hampshire Public Services Commission. I then became a member and afterwards chairman of the commission. With this experience and with these qualifications if the people of Concord want for mayor a man who will devote his whole time to the office; and a man with the afore-mentioned background, they have the opportunity to so express themselves on Tuesday November 7.

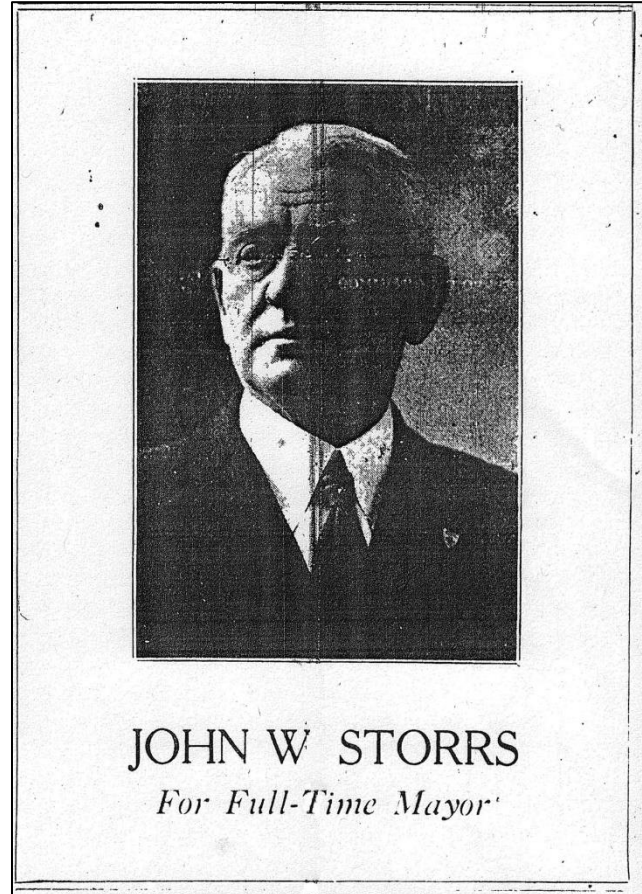


FIGURE 20: Campaign ad run by Storrs in the *Concord Monitor*, November 6, 1933.



On the eve of the election Storrs told the *Concord Monitor* that he still had no comments to offer and would continue his policy of seclusion, and would not be attending the final meeting of the candidates held by the League of Women Voters at City Hall that night even though his opponent John Stanley stated he would attend.<sup>62</sup>

Storrs won the election with 3683 votes to Stanley's 2953, a whopping 730 ballot margin and issued the following statement:

With gracious and gratifying pride I acknowledge the honor conferred by the electorate in choosing me to fill the highest position within the gift of the people of our city. Of my worthy opponent I have the highest opinion. John W. Stanley, Esq., is one of our best citizens and is entitled to the respect of the people of Concord and the highest regard as shown by the the vote he received. As chief executive of our city, I fill the mayor's chair of all the people. It will be my highest endeavor to so conduct myself and try to direct the affairs of our municipality in such a manner as to merit a continuance of your respect and confidence.<sup>63</sup>

On January 22, the day before Storrs was to be sworn into office, the *Concord Monitor* reported that

The pounding of the hammer and the rasp of the saw marred the tranquility of the mayor's office at City Hall today, as carpenters installed a counter. Reason: mayor-elect John W. Storrs takes office tomorrow at 10 o'clock in the morning and intends thereafter to make a full time job of it. Citizens may discuss the affairs of the community with him at any time during the business day and the mayor's office is expected to be as continuously accessible as that of the city clerk or the tax collector.<sup>64</sup>



FIGURE 21: "The Smile of Victory" *Concord Monitor*, November 8, 1933. [Caption reads] "Photo shows Mayor-elect John W. Storrs as he sat in his office this morning receiving congratulations upon his election as chief executive of the city. He is shown sitting in an old oak desk chair once used by President Franklin Pierce who practiced law here. The chair has been in his possession for 20 years, and before it was owned by George Lincoln, local furniture dealer."

<sup>62</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "Two Candidates For City Hall Await Results. Stanley to Speak Tonight; Storrs Continues Silence," November 6, 1933.

<sup>63</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "Storrs Wins By 730 Ballot Margin," November 8, 1933.

<sup>64</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "Storrs Takes Office Tuesday," January 22, 1934.

Storrs assumed office with wishes for success from outgoing mayor Robert W. Brown in a brief ceremony at City Hall on February January 23, 1934. The oath of office was administered to Storrs and the new board of alderman by city clerk Arthur E. Roby.<sup>65</sup> Storrs then delivered his inaugural address which, after a single opening sentence of thanks to the citizens of Concord for his election, was directed to the Board of Aldermen. A few notable excerpts from his address follow:<sup>66</sup>

There are, and will be, necessary expenses for the proper functioning of departments and required progressiveness of the city. That all costs must be carefully given your best attention is essential, and among your duties. Conservation of our resources require your solicitous meditation. Economy is a by-word—everyone believes in economy and everyone talks economy; luxuries of the past are necessities today; the public are willing to, and do, pay for things that are necessary; they want, however, something to show for their expenditures.

Just criticism gives assistance and is helpful, but fault finding is not constructive. No one person or any one action is expected to please all individuals—the American people are not so constituted.

I hope our administration will be free from all political intrigues, all trades, and all "if you will help me I will help you" agreements. Let no one be hypnotized by his own visions, but seek assurance that we are working for the good of all.

You are elected by, and represent, the people of our city, and by your doings and actions will be judged and held responsible—"your faults will find you out." I am but a figurehead, but with your loyal and co-operative support I have the supreme confidence that we will not only be a credit to those who placed us here but that we will set a reliable and beneficial example for future governments to follow.

On January 24, 1933, as Storrs assumed his first day of work as mayor, his office quickly filled with dozens of bouquets of roses and carnations. By noon "he was forced to clear the office of the blossoms" which were all sent to Margaret Pillsbury hospital. One of his first acts as mayor was to reply to an invitation from Governor John G. Winant to meet the next day to discuss the pollution of Contoocook River and its recent condemnation by the State Board of Health as unsafe for swimming. The Contoocook and Ammonoosuc rivers had become so polluted from municipal sewerage and industrial waste "that fish life has practically been eliminated and neither offer safe places for swimming or bathing."<sup>67</sup> The possibility of obtaining federal funding to build waste water treatment plants, estimated to cost \$343,000, was to be discussed.

Storrs, at least initially, was opposed to the federal Public Works Administration (PWA) grants that came not only with requirements for matching funds from the city, which meant issuing bonds that ultimately translated to higher taxes, but that also imposed other burdensome requirements on the already struggling citizens. In the case of the PWA-funded construction of sewer lines in the city, residents within 100 feet of a line were required to hook up to it at their own expense, a minimum of \$60 that Storrs called a hardship for many. The city aldermen eventually passed

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<sup>65</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "Storrs and New Alderman Assume Their Offices," January 23, 1934.

<sup>66</sup> *Concord Annual Report*, 1934, pp. iii-v. Storrs inaugural address is found in the 1934 Concord Annual Report. All the city's reports referred to in this report can be accessed online through the University of NH Library: [http://www.library.unh.edu/search/digital/%2A%3A%2A?f\[0\]=category%3ANH%20Cities%20%26%20Towns/Concord%2A](http://www.library.unh.edu/search/digital/%2A%3A%2A?f[0]=category%3ANH%20Cities%20%26%20Towns/Concord%2A)

<sup>67</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "Clearing Contoocook of Pollution is Urged at Conference," January 24, 1934.

resolutions to issue bonds for sewer construction over Storrs' objections. Storrs "refrained" from vetoing or signing the resolution, but agreed to sign the bond contracts "because it is a duty of his office and does not imply approval of the projects."<sup>68</sup>

Storrs took rebellious positions on PWA projects during the Depression that he considered to contain conditions that deprived the state [hence the city] of its rights and amounted to federal overreach. At the same time he was a progressive who believed in government's role to fulfill the needs of the average citizen. In March, just over two months into his term, Storrs again took on the city alderman.

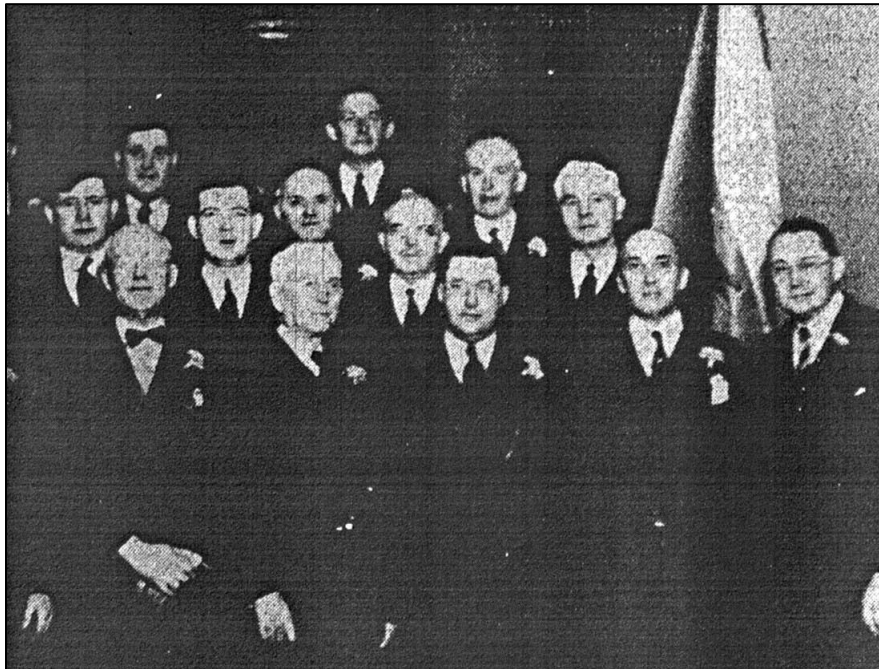


FIGURE 22: Mayor Storrs (front row, second from left) and city aldermen pose for inauguration photograph, January 23, 1934 (*Concord Monitor*, January 23, 1934).

In 1933, the city aldermen had enacted a ten-percent pay cut affecting all city and school employees with the condition it would expire a year later on April 14, 1934. At the March aldermen's meeting a new resolution was introduced for its first reading, to continue the cuts another year. Storrs did some research and calculated that the 10-percent pay cut "probably resulted in a 25-percent loss of efficiency" and that "practically every dollar paid to municipal workers goes to local merchants" and if the salaries were restored, part of the money would find its way back to the city in the form of tax payments.<sup>69</sup> At the April aldermen's meeting a compromise was reached, restoring the full 10-percent cut to those city employees making \$1500 or less annually, and restoring 5-percent to those making over \$1500. Storrs had scored an important victory for city workers and to top it off he managed to get an additional \$1000 budgeted for the playground fund which he had argued was crucial to the well-being of the city's children during such trying times.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "Storrs Frowns on PWA but to Approve Bonds," February 19, 1934.

<sup>69</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "Mayor Asks for Restoration of Pay Cuts for City Employees as Community Economic Aid," March 22, 1934.

<sup>70</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "Alderman Restore Half of Wage Cut for City Workers," March 27, 1934.

During Storrs' first term he developed a two year plan to spend \$22,000 improving South Main Street and several cross streets and endorsed the issuance of city bonds for the building of a new library of which 45% of the cost would be paid by the Public Works Administration. The city waterworks was improved in 1935 and 1936 with the construction of a 250,000 gallon standpipe on Little Pond Road and an elevated water tower, also of 250,000 gallon capacity in Penacook along with a modern automated pumping station.

Mayor Storrs was also instrumental in pushing for revision of the building and plumbing codes in the city to stay abreast of the rapid advancements in residential plumbing equipment and building materials and techniques. A pocket-size booklet that contractors could conveniently carry to work was published by the city.

One of Storrs' most important and lasting contributions to city government was the pioneering creation of a City Planning Board in accordance with enabling legislation first enacted by the state in 1935. New Hampshire was the first state in the country to set up a state planning board "under the terms and vision of the National Industrial Recovery Act" and Concord was one of the first, or perhaps the first, to establish a city planning board.<sup>71</sup> One of the first reports compiled by the Planning Board was a report on the storm damage wrought throughout the city by the 1938 hurricane "for the purpose of assisting governmental and private agencies to whom will fall the work of reconstruction."<sup>72</sup>

The planning board consisted of nine members including the mayor, one alderman, one city administrator and six members appointed by the the mayor. The board was very active under Storrs and produced several major reports including "The Development and Use of Land in Concord (1938; Figure 24) and "The Industrial Advantages of a Concord Location" (1941).

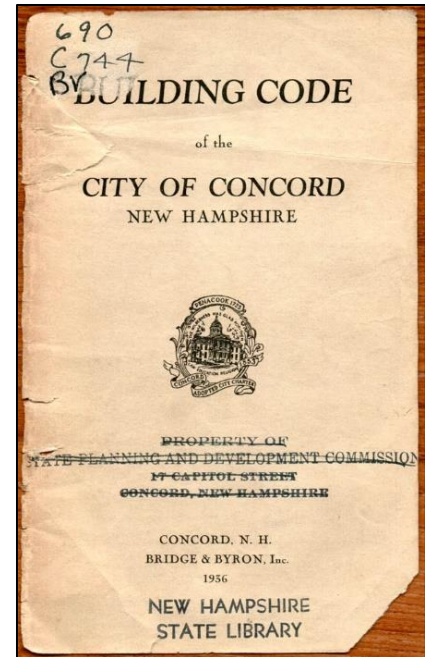


FIGURE 23: Pocket-size building code published by the city in 1936 (Concord Public Library special collections).

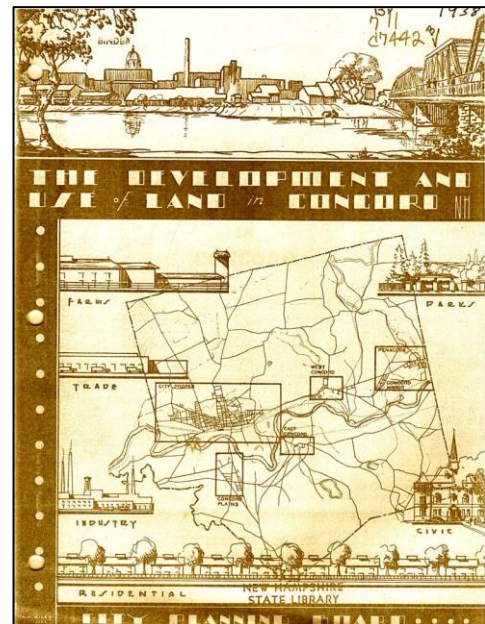


FIGURE 24: City Planning Board report, 1938, illustrated with graphics in the Art Deco style.

<sup>71</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "State Lauded for Pioneer Planning Work." April 2, 1934. See *Concord Annual Report*, 1938, p. 7, for the complete text of the Concord City Planning Board Ordinance. See *Laws of New Hampshire*, 1935, Chapter 55, "An Act to provide for City, Town, Village District and Regional Planning Boards," pp. 81-100.

<sup>72</sup> Concord City Planning Board. "Storm Damage in Concord, Flood and Gale of 1938." Report located in New Hampshire State Library, Concord.

In 1938 Storrs commissioned a study of the "organizational and administrative practices" of city's government by Donald C. Stone, the country's leading expert on the subject and director of the new Public Administration Service, a consulting service offshoot of the American Public Works Association based at the University of Chicago. The lengthy report examined all aspects of city government citing "a number of highly commendable improvements recently made by the administration...notably the establishment of city planning, changes in the accounting system, earlier preparation of the budget, and the inauguration of an annual independent audit."<sup>73</sup> Among the many recommendations of the report was an improvement in the city's public relations program, noting that to this end, "the Mayor [is already] formulating a constructive plan for a greatly improved type of annual report."

"Greatly improved" was an understatement: for the 1939 report Storrs ushered in a total revamp of the City's formerly staid and unillustrated *Annual Report of Receipts and Expenditures*. The cover featured a photo of city hall under the title *A Report to the Citizens of Concord* (Figure 25).

The report was filled with dozens of photos and easy to understand charts, tables and descriptions pertaining to all of the services provided by the city (Figures 26-28). For the first time, the average citizen could sit down with the annual report, enjoy reading it cover to cover and come away with a complete understanding of how their tax dollars were being spent.

FIGURE 26: Illustration from the 1939 *Concord Annual Report*. The report's new format gave the reader a complete education on taxation and the costs of operating the city.

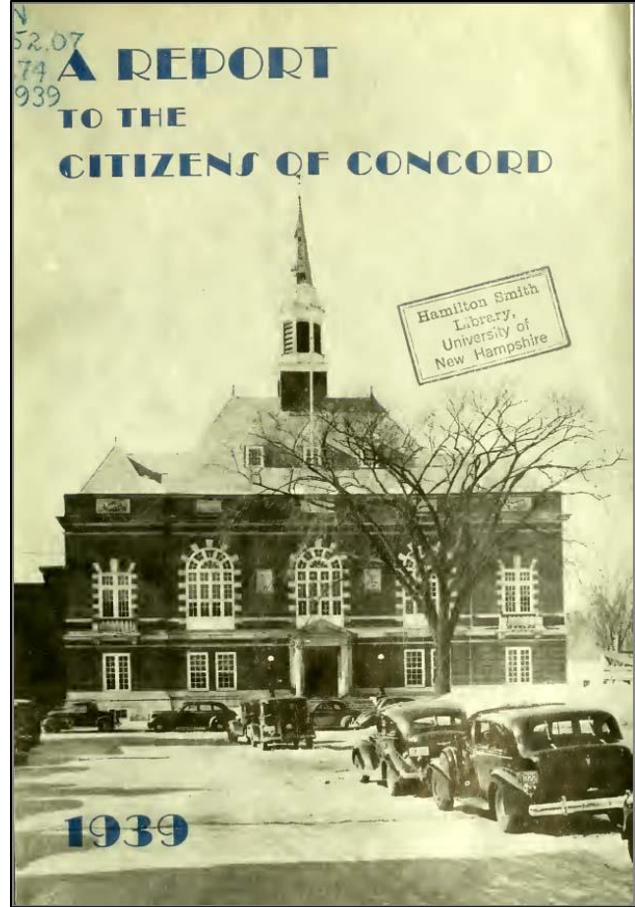
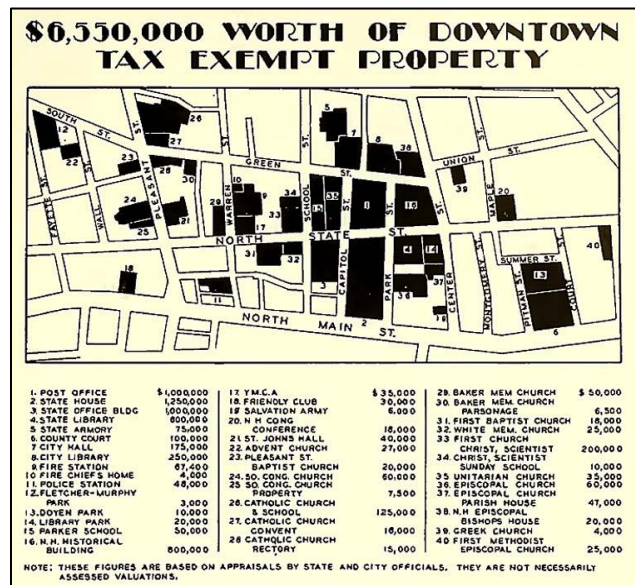


FIGURE 25: Cover of the 1939 *Annual Report* that Storrs gave a radical new look with illustrations and a "user-friendly" format that departed from tradition (UNH Digital Collection).



<sup>73</sup> Donald C. Stone. "Organization and Administration of the City Government of Concord, New Hampshire, January 4, 1939." Chicago: Public Administration Service 1939, p. 7. Located in NH State Library, Concord.



FIGURE 27: Photos from the 1939 *Concord Annual Report* discussing the work of the Health and Sanitation Department.

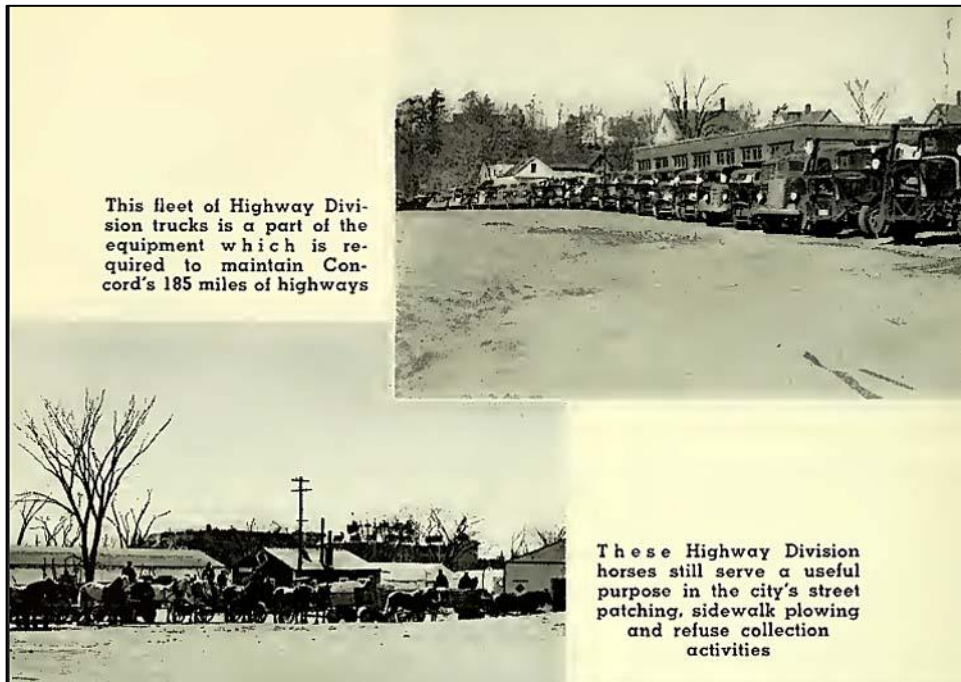


FIGURE 28: Photos from the 1939 *Concord Annual Report* discussing the work of the Highway Division.

The 1940 Annual Report continued in the new format starting with a bulleted list of all that the city accomplished that year. Among the highlights:

- A complete revision of the zoning ordinance.
- A new wading pool installed at Rolfe park
- Lights erected and the first night football game played at Memorial Field
- Average number of persons on City relief was 391 compared to 443 in 1939.
- The registration of bicycles was adopted.
- A total fire loss of \$22,296 was the smallest the city has suffered in a quarter century.

Mayor Storrs talked directly to the people in the Forward to the 1940 report:

The City's business is your business. This fact cannot be over-emphasized. You are a stockholder of the City of Concord and in that capacity you share in the activity of a corporation which does an annual volume of business well in excess of a million dollars. This report is addressed to you. Every effort has been made to present a concise yet comprehensive accounting of the City's 1940 activities. You should scrutinize this report carefully. Give it the same consideration that you give to your everyday business affairs.

The revision of the city's zoning ordinance in 1940, first established in 1930 at a cost of \$2,500 paid to outside consultants, was an important accomplishment. "Especially noteworthy was the establishment of two new types of districts – civic and agricultural, and the extension of single residence zoning to a large section of the fast developing South End. Provision was also made to permit the conversion of large residences into apartment houses accommodating three or four families." Storrs proudly noted that the new zoning code was produced entirely in-house by the Planning Board with no additional cost to the City."<sup>74</sup>

Storrs can also be considered the instigator of city owned parking facilities and meters. With the proliferation of automobile use parking had become a serious problem in the downtown by 1940 and another pet project of the Mayor's. As chair of the Planning Board, Storrs promoted legislation to enable the city to spend public funds for parking areas and had the Board draw up proposed plans (Figure 29).

Far more controversial was the request by Storrs that the alderman approve funding a study of the need and feasibility of installing parking meters along Main Street. The idea met with a backlash from forty Main Street merchants who signed a letter against meters and the study. A Chamber of Commerce poll of merchants found them against "the innovation" four to one. When the aldermen

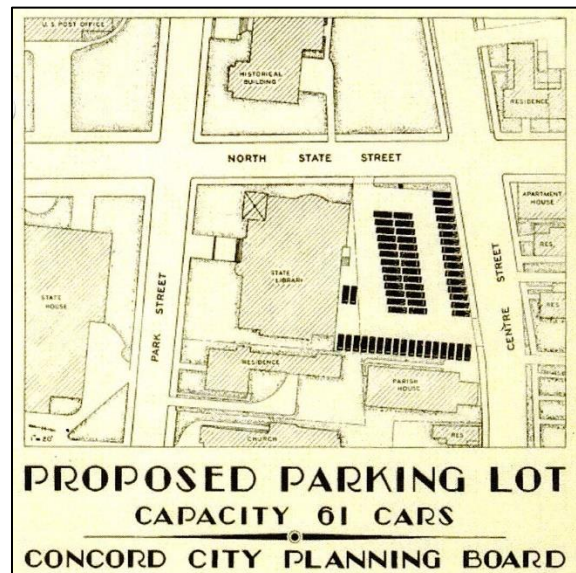


FIGURE 29: Mayor Storrs led the way in the development of city owned parking lots (Concord Annual Report, 1940).

<sup>74</sup> *Concord Annual Report*, 1940, p. 19.

finally addressed the issue and passed a resolution allowing the Mayor to appoint a committee of three aldermen to conduct the study, Storrs rejected the idea on the basis that all of the aldermen have taken a position on the problem and he wanted "the problem approached in a logical manner by unprejudiced minds."<sup>75</sup> In May 1940, Storrs instead appointed three local businessmen to study the meter question but the outcome of that study was not obtained for this report – a month later France surrendered to Germany and all attention turned to defense preparations (Figure 30).

In the course of the Army's massive preparedness program the Army Air Corp inspected the Concord Heights Airport as a potential satellite field to the Army Air Base at Chicopee, Mass. where an Air Corp Tactical Unit would be stationed. Storrs and the City Planning Board supplied the Army with "every type of information" pertaining to the field but in November the Mayor received word from Major General E. S. Adams that use of the field was on hold until further notice.<sup>76</sup> Immediately after Pearl Harbor, spotters, mostly volunteer, were stationed at airports to watch for enemy aircraft, including the Concord Heights airfield (Figure 31).



FIGURE 30: Photo from the 1940 *Concord Annual Report* showing Mayor Storrs giving dictation to his secretary. Storrs had a lifelong hearing loss from a bout with scarlet fever when he was 10 years old. He is seen wearing what appears to be headset of a vacuum tube hearing aid. Note also he is smoking a pipe, which he told a reporter was in his mouth from dawn until bedtime (Concord Public Library special collections).

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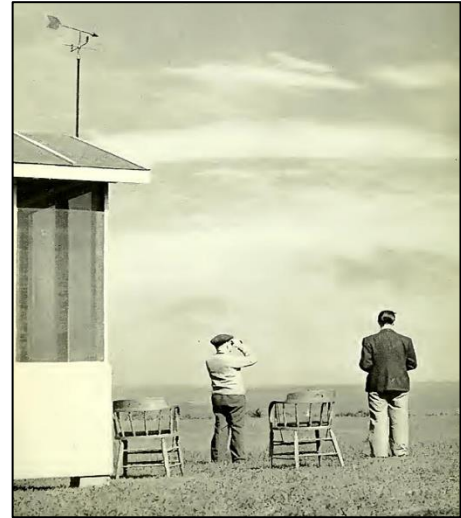
<sup>75</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "Mayor Balks Meter Study by Aldermen," May 18, 1940. See also "City Parking Meter Study Rescheduled," May 21, 1940.

<sup>76</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "No Air Corp Unit for City Mayor is Told," November 1, 1940.



The entire year of 1941 was marked by defense preparations by the city of all sorts, culminating on December 7 with the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese – all the proof needed that the work was justified. In the Annual Report for 1941 Mayor Storrs listed the city's achievements in preparing and spoke directly to the citizens about the difficult times ahead (Figure 32).

FIGURE 31: Photo in the 1941 *Concord Annual Report* showing "spotters" at the Concord Airport watching for enemy aircraft. The caption reads, "Alert – twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week."



## A CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

.....1941.....

**FOR DEFENSE**

- ✓ The Board of Aldermen appropriated funds to assist in setting up the local defense headquarters and made plans to include a \$3,000 appropriation for defense in the 1942 budget.
- ✓ The City Government made its buildings available for meetings related to defense activities.
- ✓ The Fire Department recruited and trained 100 men to form a three-company auxiliary fire force.
- ✓ The Fire Department's alarm system was placed at the disposal of Concord Defense Council for air raid warning purposes.
- ✓ The Police Department organized a 75-man auxiliary police force.
- ✓ The Highway Department delivered dry sand to householders for use in extinguishing incendiary bombs.
- ✓ The Engineering Department distributed detailed property maps to air raid wardens.
- ✓ The Planning Board made its surveys and the services of its staff available to the local defense committee.
- ✓ The Public Library offered a greatly expanded information service on matters relating to national defense.

**FOR VICTORY**

- ✓ The Project Committee in cooperation with the W.P.A. transferred a large number of its workers to out-of-town defense projects. All remaining workers were put to work on secondary road improvement projects as a defense transportation measure.
- ✓ The Public Library participating in the Victory Book Campaign sent over 8,000 books to the armed forces.
- ✓ The Flying Service at the Municipal Airport operated a civilian pilot training course.
- ✓ The Airport Commission made plans for a \$400,000 expansion of the airport.
- ✓ The Board of Education operated a defense training school on a 24-hour-a-day basis at the Morrill School.

**FOR PEACE**


- ✓ The Industrial Committee of the Board of Aldermen in cooperation with the Planning Board surveyed vacant plants and industrial sites for the purpose of inducing new industries to locate in Concord.
- ✓ The Board of Aldermen authorized the Planning Board to make plans for the future development of the City under a six-year program of public works to be prosecuted after the war.

*The Mayor Says:*

For the second time in less than a quarter of a century, our country is participating in a world-wide war. Its ultimate effects on the City of Concord are yet to be determined. But its immediate effects are already very much in evidence.

Because the services of your city government affect your welfare more continuously and more closely than those of your county, state and federal governments, I know that you examine your city's activities critically. I need not impress upon you the fact that for the duration of the war the day of "business as usual" is a thing of the past at all levels of government. Our whole economy must be subordinated to the all-out war effort.

In the days that lie ahead, I ask you to be patient when municipal facilities and services do not appear to be what they should be or what they have been. I ask you to remember that your city government is doing everything in its power — doing it willingly — to the end that victory will be ours.



I want to assure you that all that can be done will be done to provide each and every one of you with the necessary city services. You may be assured that no effort will be spared to adapt existing facilities to meet the changed problems of wartime, and that every city service will be administered efficiently, honestly and effectively.

Whatever the future may hold in store, I am confident that the citizens of Concord, working and acting together, will meet the challenge of post-war readjustment with prudence.

*John W. Storrs.*

FIGURE 32: Opening pages of the 1941 *Concord Annual Report*, published just weeks after America's entry into World War II. A bulleted list of all the defense preparations made by the City, using the V for Victory for the bullet, was placed opposite a plea by Mayor Storrs for patience during the trying times ahead when "business as usual is a thing of the past."

On November 7, 1941, Concord voters elected John Storrs to an unprecedented fifth consecutive term. He defeated Willoughby A. Colby, a former county solicitor 4251 to 3567, despite Colby's endorsement by James Langley, editor and publisher of the *Concord Monitor*. At 82 years old, soon to be 83 on November 24, Storrs was the oldest mayor in the country according to the *Boston Herald*.<sup>77</sup> Storrs agreed to give an interview to Max Grossman of the *Boston Sunday Post* just prior to the election for a full-page feature article to run the following Sunday. The headline on page six blared: "Most Bitterly Hated! Says N.E.'s Oldest Mayor, But Concord, N.H. Really Loves John Storrs."<sup>78</sup> The article was filled with colorful quotes and anecdotes:

His conversation can't be recorded verbatim in this family journal. It's too bad, too, because while Mayor Storrs' cuss words would look explosive in type, they don't carry any sting when he utters them.

Despite what he says ("I haven't a friend in the world and I don't want any"), everyone in town loves him. And that includes his political opponents, who feel, by now, that there is no opportunity for advancement for them while Mayor Storrs is able to be up and about.

Concord residents are almost unanimous in declaring that the city was in bad shape when Mr. Storrs first went into office in 1933. By quickly turning his engineering talents to his administrative problems, the Mayor got things lined up.

Mayor Storrs, they tell you in Concord, is fairly well to do in the New Hampshire sense. His realty and other holdings run into six figures. And they do say he gives his salary away to worthy city and State causes.

He horrifies visitors to his office by placing pictures of Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt cheek by jowl on his desk. The pictures annoy both Democrats and Republicans. Mayor Storrs is a registered Republican.

He has been a teetotaler for 35 years. "Gave up drinking and going to church at the same time," he says.

John Storrs died on September 19, 1943 at Deweyholm convalescent home at 161 North State Street in Concord. He had been seriously ill for about three months, at first laid up in hospital, but was later moved to the home where he continued to monitor and direct city affairs until his death, "realizing his oft-expressed desire 'to die in harness.'" <sup>79</sup>

Storrs was lauded by a number of fellow regional leaders including Governor Robert O. Blood who said "the city of Concord has lost a valuable citizen who not only has given much to the community but also to the state. He has had a rich and full life and a host of friends and associates will miss him." <sup>80</sup>

Charles J. McKee, then Concord's alderman-at-large who automatically succeeded Storrs in the mayoralty, noted that while the ever modest Storrs would have shunned the attention of a eulogy, "we should remember and appreciate the ability, dignity, and graciousness which have, over a long

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<sup>77</sup> *Boston Herald*, "Oldest Mayor Dies, Concord, NH," September 21, 1942, p. 13.

<sup>78</sup> *Boston Sunday Post*, "Most Bitterly Hated! Says N.E.'s Oldest Mayor, But Concord, N.H. Really Loves John Storrs," November 9, 1941, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "Private Rites For Mayor At 2 Tomorrow," September 21, 1942.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

period of years, characterized his associations with the public, the officials of the city government, and the heads of various departments."<sup>81</sup>

City Clerk Arthur E. Roby, who had worked with Storrs throughout his time as Mayor, added that "his absolute fairness and keen sense of humor and spirit of comradeship surely endeared him to all who came in contact with him."<sup>82</sup>

Storrs had long insisted that his funeral be a simple one with no eulogy, no clergyman officiating and no burial, wishing instead to be cremated. He did however want a band to play at the Calkin & Hussey funeral home where he was laid out, and this he arranged in advance with Herbert Rainie and his twenty-piece Nevers Band. In full uniform, the band played six selections chosen by Storrs, plus "The Old Rugged Cross" at the request of his widow. Surrounded by dozens of flower bouquets from friends, city departments and organizations, Carrie Storrs, his wife of 58 years, overruled one of John wishes and asked the Rev. J. Wayne Haskel, pastor of the White Memorial Universalist Church to say a simple benediction, which he accomplished in two sentences.<sup>83</sup>

Cherishing memories that are forever sacred, sustained by a faith stronger than death and comforted by the hope of a life that shall endless be, we return to the elements all that is mortal of this our friend.

And may the peace of God which passeth all understanding, that peace which this world can neither give nor take away, abide in our hearts, this day and forevermore, Amen.

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Concord Monitor*, "Band Concert Played At Mayor's Funeral; No 'Fuss' Mourning," September 22, 1942.

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