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Notes from editor (not for publication):

The National Register application says that it's the only known example of Lamson's work in Windham County, not in Vermont. But that doesn't mean that's not also true.

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 W. Dummerston Covered Bridge has its moment in the
2 sun

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3 Landmark recognized with a historical marker to honor
4 more than 150 years of spanning the West River

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5 TEXT BODY:

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6 In summer, the West River swimming hole under the
7 Dummerston Covered Bridge is so popular that on Sunday,
8 members of the Dummerston Historical Society had to get there
9 at 10 a.m. to protect some parking spaces for their big noon
10 reveal.

11 At noon, with approximately 16 Dummerstonians (and
12 30 bikers) in attendance, the historical society unveiled a new
13 permanent plaque celebrating master carpenter and bridge
14 builder Caleb B. Lamson, who in 1872 built the Dummerston
15 Covered Bridge, the longest covered bridge located entirely
16 within the state of Vermont.

17 The 280-foot bridge, made entirely of wooden boards
18 held together with wooden pegs, or pins, is a masterpiece of
19 19th-century engineering. It is the only example of Lamson's
20 work extant in Vermont.

21 "The West Dummerston Covered Bridge stands as a
22 powerful example of 19th-century ingenuity meeting 21st-
23 century stewardship," wrote retired teacher and historian Bill
24 Holiday of Dummerston, who had the original idea for the
25 plaque. "Its Town lattice truss, heavy timber construction, and
26 central stone pier have allowed it to span both the West River and
27 nearly a century and a half of change."

28 Celebrating the founding of the nation, the bridge was
29 decorated with a modified Betsy Ross flag, the union containing a
30 circle of 13 stars with the number "250" in the center.

31 "The flag was just put up on July 1," said society board
32 member Gail Sorenson, noting it was one of a series sponsored
33 by the Vermont Covered Bridge Society.

34 "They delivered flags to all the towns with covered
35 bridges, so that hopefully there's one on every covered bridge in
36 Vermont," Sorenson said.

37 Society president Muriel Taylor acknowledged Holiday in
38 her opening remarks.

39 "In late 2025, Bill contacted me and said the society
40 might be interested in placing a historical marker at the covered
41 bridge," Taylor said. "We got excited about it. So, Bill, I'm going
42 to thank you several times for doing this."

43 Taylor thanked Holiday for his guidance, patience,
44 extensive research, and "way with words and pictures."

45 The bridge is one of the more — if not the most — iconic
46 covered bridges in the state of Vermont, Holiday told *The*
47 *Commons*.

48 “And it’s in my hometown,” he said. “So I approached
49 the historical society to see if they’d be interested in putting a
50 marker out there to identify Lamson. I did some research, and it’s
51 just a labor of love, that’s all.”

52 There are 23 markers of historic sites in Brattleboro
53 alone, Holiday said.

54 “There’s one on the Common, for example, and at Wells
55 Fountain, at the municipal building, at the Brooks Library, at the
56 old armory, the Gibson-Aiken Center, and on and on it goes,”
57 Holiday said.

58 “There are three at the high school, one identifying it as a
59 Civil War site, one identifying the Valley Fair that used to be
60 there, and one identifying the grandstand that’s just been
61 renovated but started as a [Works Progress Administration]
62 project in the 1930s,” he continued.

63 “So I just thought it’d be a good idea to let people see
64 what the bridge is and learn a little history of it,” Holiday said.

65 A recording of the Holiday’s research, in his own voice,
66 will be available soon via a website link that can be accessed by
67 a QR code on the plaque.

68 After the unveiling, the group toasted Lamson, who was
69 born in Putney, with apple cider.

70 Among the details Holiday discovered was that “the
71 bridge was erected to replace a covered bridge that once stood a
72 quarter mile upriver and was destroyed by a flood in 1869.
73 Lamson’s bridge took three years to build at a cost of \$7,777.06.”

74 Holiday also found out that during the construction, the
75 temporary framework of the bridge collapsed and took Lamson
76 down with it. He received a serious back injury when he landed
77 on a rock in the river.

78 The bridge has had some work done. In 1948, it was
79 given a total floor replacement. It received extensive repairs in

80 the 1970s and 1980s. In 1993, two-way vehicle traffic was
81 suspended when the bridge closed for extensive rehabilitation.

82 Despite these efforts, by 1994, the bridge was in poor
83 condition and was leaning downstream. Temporary cables were
84 placed to keep the bridge from falling into the West River.

85 In 1998, the bridge was rebuilt and reopened, restoring it
86 for heavy continued use. Two-way traffic was never restored.

87 The bridge was submitted for inclusion on the National
88 Register of Historic Places in 1973 by the Vermont Division of
89 Historic Sites, now the state's Division for Historic Preservation.

90 "Vermont's covered bridges are among the state's most
91 cherished and symbolic historic resources," state researcher Hugh
92 Howard Henry wrote in the state's application for the federal
93 program.

94 He described many of the covered bridges as "an integral
95 part of unique architectural environments whose setting and
96 context have been little altered. In view of the extensive highway
97 programs which are drastically changing the visual environment
98 of the state, the Division hopes to extend National Register
99 protection and recognition to the majority of these important
100 structures."

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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