Location: Spanning Lake Champlain at NY Route 185 and VT Route 17, Town of Crown Point, Essex County, New York, and Town of Addison, Addison County, Vermont.

The Lake Champlain Bridge is located at latitude 44.0149, longitude -73.2524. The coordinate represents the center of the bridge at the New York/Vermont boundary. The coordinate was obtained on 4 May 2010 by plotting its location on the 1:25,000 Port Henry, NY USGS Topographic Quadrangle Map. The accuracy of the coordinate is +/- 12 meters. The coordinate’s datum is North American Datum 1983. The Lake Champlain Bridge location has no restriction on its release to the public.

Structural Type: Steel continuous through and deck truss span

Date of Construction: 1928-29

Designer: Fay, Spofford and Thorndike, Engineers

Builders: Substructure - Merritt-Chapman and Scott Corporation, Boston
Superstructure - American Bridge Company, New York
Deck and Approach Paving - Scott Brothers Construction Company, Rome, New York
Electrical Equipment - Alvin E. Bennett, Crown Point, New York
Toll House – Charles Malone, Port Henry, New York

Present Owner: New York State Department of Transportation and Vermont Agency of Transportation

Present Use: Vehicular bridge, closed October 16, 2009, removed December 28, 2009

Significance: The bridge was a nationally significant engineering landmark and one of the country’s most technologically inventive and aesthetically sophisticated designs for highway bridges of its period. Opened to traffic in 1929, the bridge symbolized a convergence of four separate but related trends in transportation engineering, the origins of which can be traced to the closing decades of the nineteenth century: (1) continuous truss technology; (2) a debate within the engineering community regarding the
aesthetics of bridge design, and especially the aesthetics of truss bridges; (3) the use of cantilevers in truss design to extend span length, reduce construction costs, and address aesthetic concerns; and (4) evolving engineering responses to rapidly increasing travel by automobiles. Those trends intersected at Lake Champlain, and the inventive design that blossomed from that meeting is original in American engineering. Equally important, the crossing served as the country’s prototype for a succession of important bridges built or planned for major waterways during the remainder of the twentieth century.

Historians:  
Mark S. LoRusso, M.A., Cultural Resources Survey Program, New York State Museum, Albany, New York

Robert McCullough, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Historic Preservation, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont

Project Information:  
Recording of the Lake Champlain Bridge was completed in November and December 2009, under the direction of Mark S. LoRusso, Historian, Cultural Resources Survey Program (CRSP), and under the supervision of Dr. Christina Reith, Program Director, CRSP. The photography team consisted of New York State Museum Photographer Thaddeus Beblowski and Mark S. LoRusso. The New York State Department of Transportation provided additional photographs. Measured drawings were prepared from the original plans by CRSP Cartographer Jessie Pellerin. Comprehensive field measurements were not possible due to the emergency closure and removal of the bridge.

The historical report was prepared by Mark S. LoRusso, with assistance from Christopher Marston, HAER Architect, National Park Service. Mark S. LoRusso authored the introductory sections, the site description, the background history, and the descriptive information from 2009-2011. The bridge description, the biography of Fay, Spofford and Thorndike, and the statement of significance are from the draft National Historic Landmark (NHL) Nomination of the Lake Champlain Bridge by Robert McCullough, prepared in October 2009 and revised in 2010. A copy of the NHL Nomination is provided in the field records accompanying this documentation. The documentation was submitted to HAER in 2011.
HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Thaddeus Beblowski

November 2009

Photo 1. New York approach, view northeast. ................................................................. 4
Photo 2. New York approach, view northeast. The former tollhouse is shown at right. ........ 5
Photo 3. Vermont approach, view southwest. The Chimney Point Tavern is shown at left. 6
Photo 4. Vermont approach, view southwest................................................................. 7
Photo 5. View from Fort St Frederic, Crown Point State Historic Site, looking northeast. 8
Photo 6. View from Fort Crown Point, Crown Point State Historic Site, looking northeast. 9
Photo 7. View from Crown Point Public Campground, looking north. ............................ 10
Photo 8. View from Crown Point Public Campground, looking northwest. ....................... 11
Photo 9. View from the Champlain Memorial lighthouse, looking northwest. ................. 12
Photo 10. View from Chimney Point State Park, looking southwest. The Chimney Point Tavern is shown at right................................................................. 13
Photo 11. View from Port Henry, New York, looking southeast across Lake Champlain. The bridge, two miles distant, is just visible above the horizon................................. 14
Photo 12. New York abutment and Span 1, west side, view south. The spans are numbered, 1-14, beginning at the New York (south) end................................................ 15
Photo 13. Spans 1 and 2, west side, view east............................................................... 16
Photo 14. Spans 2 and 3, west side, view northeast....................................................... 17
Photo 15. Spans 4 and 5, west side, view northeast....................................................... 18
Photo 16. Span 4, upper truss detail, west side, view northeast. ...................................... 19
Photo 17. Spans 4, 5, and 6, Pier 5, east side, view southwest toward New York............... 20
Photo 18. Spans 6, 7 and 8 (continuous truss), east side, view from Crown Point Public Campground pier, looking northwest ......................................................... 21
Photo 19. Spans 6, 7 and 8, east side, view from Crown Point Public Campground pier, looking northwest ................................................................. 22
Photo 20. Span 7, Pier 6, east side and underside, view north........................................ 23
Photo 21. Spans 7 and 8, Pier 7, east side and underside, view southwest....................... 24
Photo 22. Spans 7 and 8, Pier 7, east side, view north................................................... 25
Photo 23. Spans 8 and 9, Pier 8, east side and underside.............................................. 26
Photo 24. Spans 8 and 9, Pier 8, east side, view northwest........................................... 27
Photo 25. Spans 9 and 10, Pier 9, east side and underside, view northwest..................... 28
Photo 26. Span 9 and Spans 10-14, east side and underside, view north......................... 29
Photo 27. Original steel light standard with replacement lamp, Span 1, west side, .................. 30
view northeast................................................................................................................ 30
Photo 28. Original concrete light standard and steel support arm, with replacement lamp, New York approach, east side, view south................................. 31
Photo 1. New York approach, view northeast.
Photo 2. New York approach, view northeast. The former tollhouse is shown at right.
Photo 3. Vermont approach, view southwest. The Chimney Point Tavern is shown at left.
Photo 4. Vermont approach, view southwest.
Photo 5. View from Fort St Frederic, Crown Point State Historic Site, looking northeast.
Photo 7. View from Crown Point Public Campground looking north.
Photo 8. View from Crown Point Public Campground, looking northwest.
Photo 9. View from the Champlain Memorial lighthouse looking northwest.
Photo 10. View from Chimney Point State Park looking southwest. The Chimney Point Tavern is shown at right.
Photo 11. View from Port Henry, New York, looking southeast across Lake Champlain. The bridge, two miles distant, is just visible above the horizon.
Photo 12. New York abutment and Span 1, west side, view south. The spans are numbered, 1-14, beginning at the New York (south) end.
Photo 13. Spans 1 and 2, west side, view east.
Photo 14. Spans 2 and 3, west side, view northeast.
Photo 15. Spans 4, and 5, Pier 3, west side, view northeast.
Photo 16. Span 4, upper truss detail, west side, view northeast.
Photo 17. Spans 4, 5, and 6, Pier 5, east side, view southwest toward New York.
Photo 18. Spans 6, 7 and 8 (continuous truss), east side, view from Crown Point Public Campground pier, looking northwest.
Photo 19. Spans 6, 7 and 8, east side, view from Crown Point Public Campground pier, looking northwest.
Photo 20. Span 7, Pier 6, east side and underside, view north.
Photo 21. Spans 7 and 8, Pier 7, east side and underside, view southwest.
Photo 22. Spans 7 and 8, Pier 7, east side, view north.
Photo 23. Spans 8 and 9, Pier 8, east side and underside, view southwest.
Photo 24. Spans 8 and 9, Pier 8, east side, view northwest.
Photo 25. Spans 9 and 10, Pier 9, east side and underside, view northwest
Photo 26. Span 9 and Spans 10-14, east side and underside, view north.
Photo 27. Original steel light standard with replacement lamp, Span 1, west side, view northeast.
Photo 28. Original concrete light standard and steel support arm, with replacement lamp, New York approach, east side, view south.