

The Gudgeonville Covered Bridge – November 8, 2008:

Early this morning, the radio crackled to life with an unusual dispatch:

“West County Fire Control to all Platea and Girard Monitors: Bridge Fire, Gudgeonville Road between Beckman and Brooks Road.”

That type of broadcast tends to get your attention. Even when you’re a burned-out paramedic who is off-duty, dead tired, and not much inclined to chase fire engines anymore.

I knew the bridge, of course. It was the wooden covered bridge – one of only three left in Erie County. It was also the oldest; most authorities dated the structure to 1868. Others say the original construction took place during the “canal boom” in the 1830’s. Whatever the exact date, the bridge was at least 140 years old when it burned.

Well, the ladies and gentlemen from the Platea, Girard, Cranesville, and Fairview Volunteer Fire Departments did a good job. They responded in an expeditious fashion, extinguished the fire, and secured the scene. Unfortunately, the damage was severe and the bridge will likely collapse during the first heavy snowfall. That is, unless the township demolishes its remains before then.



Looking north from the rim of Elk Creek Gorge, Winter 2005



The "Southern" Approach to the bridge, Late October 2005



The "Northern" Approach – July 4, 2008.



Bridge Interior, with Graffiti July 4, 2008



Yet another photo showing the extent of vandalism -- July 2008