

The Bridge Builders: Alpheus Wheelock

(Information was extracted from George Gould's Indiana Covered Bridges Thru the Years for the following)

Alpheus Wheelock was associated with the Smith Bridge Company and was agent for the Company in northeastern Indiana and perhaps in other areas as well. The 1880 U.S. Census listed Wheelock as a resident of Auburn: he was born in New York in 1829. In 1870, he obtained a patent for the construction of abutments made of cast iron plates. At least four bridges, both wood and iron, in Carroll County had the patented iron abutments. No other records are known showing the use of this abutment.

Wheelock had a number of partners or associates. In 1863, he along with John A. McKay and William Valleau built the DeKalb County courthouse. In 1869, Wheelock and McKay built the Dill's Covered Bridge in DeKalb County and these two, along with a Mr. Underhill, built a bridge at Buena Vista. Wheelock, McKay and Goshorn worked together on several structures, including the 1870 Covered Bridge in Wells County. Apparently at some time, each man on his own built a bridge or bridges, but the source of the timbers and other supplies was the Smith Bridge Company.

The Wheelock Bridge Company was credited with six bridges from 1870 to 1872 and in 1877, Wheelock with C.S. Olds established the Western Bridge Company at Fort Wayne to build iron bridges. However, the company did build the 1878 Dolan covered bridge in Monroe County.

Only the Adams Mill and Lancaster bridges in Carroll County are still standing of from the list of structures believed to have been built by and/or with associates by A. Wheelock.