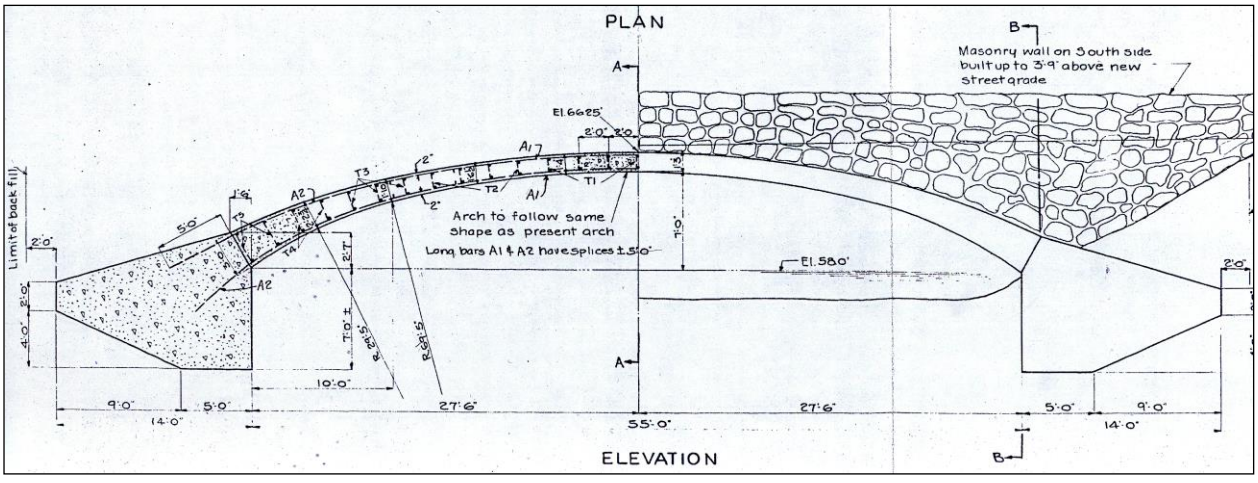
STATE-LEVEL DOCUMENTATION
PORTER AVENUE BRIDGE OVER LONG MEADOW BROOK
NAUGATUCK, CONNECTICUT

As part of the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Local Bridge Program, AHS Senior Historian Bruce Clouette, Ph.D., prepared state-level documentation of the 1909 Porter Avenue Bridge over Long Meadow Brook, known historically as the "Golf Links Bridge." The Town of Naugatuck requested funds to replace or rehabilitate the bridge, a concrete arch with the exterior finished with cobblestone masonry. The state-level documentation consisted of an inventory form giving a complete description of the bridge, including changes from its original appearance, a statement of the bridge's historic context and its historical significance, archival research to locate original drawings, present-day photographs of the bridge, and interviews with the municipal historian, Dana Blackwell, and other informants. The documentation package was made part of the Connecticut Historic Preservation Collection, housed at the Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Storrs.

This rustic bridge's historical significance derives from its association with John H. Whittemore (1837-1910), a local industrialist whose philanthropy greatly affected the built environment of Naugatuck. Whittemore was a supporter of the Naugatuck Golf Club, privately owned but publicly accessible, and he donated the funds for this bridge to the Borough of Naugatuck so that the course could be reached from North Church Street. Other Whittemore projects included the Naugatuck Soldiers Monument, the railroad depot, the Naugatuck High School, a new bridge over the Naugatuck River, and the public library building. Although the designer of the Porter Avenue bridge is not known, Whittemore chose major architects for many of his projects, including Henry Bacon and McKim, Mead and White.



Drawing of Porter Avenue Bridge, 1909 (original from Naugatuck Engineering Department).