

THE SEVEN WONDERS OF LANARK COUNTY

Pakenham Five Span Bridge

The Pakenham Five Span bridge was built in 1903 by Scottish Stone Masons; O'Toole & Keating of Ottawa. It was constructed over the Mississippi river and rapids at Pakenham, Ontario (Township of Mississippi Mills, Lanark County) with stone from a local quarry.

This breathtaking five-arch stone bridge is the only one of its kind in North America. It is located off Hwy.29 at the north end of Pakenham village, across the bridge the road winds up a steep hill on Antrim side road.

The Pakenham five arched stone bridge is believed to be the only one of its kind in the world outside Russia. This beautiful, unique bridge was built in 1901 to accommodate horses and carriages crossing the Mississippi River at the location of the mills in the village of Pakenham. The bridge was built by O'Toole & Keating of Ottawa at a cost of \$14,500 and has an overall length of 268 feet, is 22 feet high and is only 25 feet wide. The largest stone used in the construction weighs 5 tonnes.



Henry Ford had not yet marketed his earliest automobile when the bridge was built however the increasing auto and truck traffic over the subsequent years threatened the stability of the bridge. Public pressure to preserve the bridge, rather than replacing it with a modern bridge, led to the restoration of it in 1984. The stones were carefully removed and identified so each of them could be reinstated in their original position over the reinforced concrete under structure that was installed to strengthen the bridge for modern day use.

The ever changing moods of the Pakenham bridge and surrounding park are a constant source of beauty and joy---it is truly a spectacular wonder of Lanark County.