



Ohio Roadmeet 2018
Lake-Ashtabula Counties
With Special guest Bryan Farr
September 29, 2018

Starting from 8095 Mentor Ave, Mentor, Ohio 44060 (aka James A. Garfield National Historic Site). We will start our adventure 30 minutes after Bryan Farr concludes his talk.

Coming onto Mentor Ave (US 20) turn left and head west to Broadmoor Rd (OH 306), turn left and head south. Going South on Broadmoor Rd we will continue past I-90 and turn left onto Clocktower Dr. Once on Clocktower Dr, take the first left into the parking lot and go to the western extent of the lot.



Original routing for Oh 306 (where the old concrete is) with overlay of current highways NETRonline graphic

STOP 1

We'll take 5 - 10 minutes to admire some 60 year old abandoned concrete that was once used as Oh 306.

Get back onto 306 NB and then turn right onto I-90 Eastbound.

We get to follow I-90 east for 12 miles to exit 205 for Vrooman Rd. At the ramp turn left and head north (in spite of the detour signs)

We will head north 1 ½ miles (or as far as we can take our cars) to Mason Landings Park.



(Old 306, Roadfan photo from March 20, 2001)

STOP 2

Above Mason Landings Park is the (now) crumbling retaining wall that was keeping SB Vrooman Rd from falling into the park below.

Adjacent to the park is a (now) one lane truss bridge with temporary traffic lights above each end.

Work is supposed to start on a new bridge over the ravine for Vrooman Rd. I don't believe they have gotten very far, but we can walk or drive the quarter mile over to Seeley Rd (east of Vrooman) and imagine what the new bridge will look like.

Links:

Bridgehunter - <http://bridgehunter.com/oh/lake/vrooman-road/>

Bridges & Tunnels - <http://bridgestunnels.com/bridges/ohio/vrooman-road-bridge/>

Retaining wall problems - [Painesville News Herald](#)

ODOT Page - [Vrooman Rd Bridge](#)

(Note for Button Copy fans, signs for I-90 along Vrooman Rd [in both directions] are still button copy)

Head back south on Vrooman Rd to I-90 and turn left for I-90 EB.



Vrooman Rd Bridge, Bridges & Tunnels.com (Sherman Cahal) Photo



STOP 3 (sorta)

Along I-90 Eastbound (between OH 44 & OH 528) there should be newly erected signs for 'Variable Speed Limits Ahead' and Speed limit signs with a digital readout for the speed limit. Hopefully there will be nothing going on to cause the limit to go below 70 (but non-drivers have your cameras ready)

We will continue along I-90 EB for another 13 miles till exit 218. At the ramp, turn right. Once on OH 534, bear to your right to follow Harpersfield Rd (old Oh 534) south (you'll see signs directing you for 'Covered Bridge Ahead').

There is parking on three sides of the bridge, and we'll meet up at the NW corner (where the souvenir shop is)

STOP 4

Harpersfield Covered Bridge, built in 1868 spans the Grand River. It is a two span Howe Truss design with a center pier. This part of Ohio wasn't spared in the great flood of 1913, and the northern section of the (original) covered bridge was washed away. This is why there is an 140 ft steel truss bridge design on the northern half of this bridge.

The wooden covered bridge portion underwent a complete rehabilitation job

in 1991-2. The entire structure was placed on the National Register of Historic places, and is now deemed [one of the ten most endangered historic sites in Ohio](#).

Prior to the construction of the Smolen-Gulf covered bridge, Harpersfield CB was the longest Covered bridge in Ohio (at 228 ft, which doesn't include the 140 ft. truss)



South end of Harpersfield Covered Bridge (March 20, 2001 photo - Roadfan.com)

Bridgehunter Page - <http://bridgehunter.com/oh/ashtabula/harpersfield/>
Ashtabula Bridges <http://www.coveredbridgefestival.org/Pages/bridges.html>

After getting all the views of the bridge we want, all cars should be heading SE on State Rd (Turn/bare left immediately once south of the bridge.) and head south to Oh 534, where we should do a (hard) turn left to go back north on 534 to I-90 (for those with cameras, facing the west you might be able to get a photo of the bridge [traffic & weather pending]). Once at I-90, turn right and continue heading east on I-90.

Go east on I-90 for another 10 miles to Oh 11 (exit 228). I-90 uses a C/D ramp for both ramps to Oh 11, so don't wait till the last moment to go right. Take the second right (cloverleaf loop) for Oh 11 North to Ashtabula. Follow OH 11 north to Seven Hills Rd (Exit 95), and then turn right onto Seven Hills. Follow Seven Hills Rd east to State Rd, and turn left, over the RR Tracks, so you're heading north on State Rd.

We'll head north on State Rd, for nearly a mile. When you see the retaining wall on your right side, that will be your note to slow down and turn right (onto old State Rd) into the parking area.

STOP 5



Smolen-Gulf Bridge, July 2009 photo by James Baughn for Bridgehunter.com

There are two spots to see Smolen-Gulf bridge. There is a parking area at the top of the hill where you can look upon the bridge, or you can travel down the hill, and there is a parking area that will allow you to look up at the bridge (and you can hike a thousand feet or so and check out Riverview covered bridge built along the old roadway under Smolen-Gulf).

Figure I'd give everybody 15 minutes at each vantage point (30 mins total) for Smolen-Gulf before moving on.

Smolen-Gulf was completed in 2008 after two years of construction and at 613 ft is the longest covered bridge in the United States.

From Smolen-Gulf's parking area, turn left and follow State Rd over Smolen-Gulf and continue north to the intersection of E. 51st and OH 84. Turn right and follow Oh 84 east to Oh 11. You want to take the second right to get back Oh 11 North.

We'll follow Oh 11 north till it ends at Oh 531. You want to turn left here, and follow OH 531 west towards Ashtabula.

Stay on OH 531 west, for less than a mile, then you'll make a hard left and we'll be upon the Ashtabula lift bridge. Watch for the traffic light at the base of the bridge (in case the bridge is open and we have to stop).

Once you cross the bridge, you can take either of the first two left turns (Marina Dr or Goodwill Ave), or the 2nd right (Norton St) to locate parking.



Ashtabula lift bridge, photo taken by Jack Schmidt in June 2015 for Bridgehunter.com

STOP 6

Ashtabula Bridge is a Pratt through truss "Brown" type bascule bridge. This means that as a drawbridge, it uses a counterweight (in this case above the eastern end) to swing down and "lift" the bridge. Originally built in 1925, its last rehab job was in 1986 (according to Bridgehunter).

Get back onto Bridge St and head west (away from the bridge) towards Lake Ave. Once you reach Lake Ave. Turn left and head south. Continue south on Lake Ave to W. 9th St and turn left (following OH 531 west). Follow Oh 531 west nearly 3 miles to Oh 45 and turn left. Follow OH 45 south another 3 miles to US 20, and turn right and head west towards Cleveland.

Follow US 20 west 6 miles, through Geneva, to West Main Ct. (Old US 20) and bare right onto West Main Ct. (Start looking to get off US 20 when you see University Hospitals - Geneva, on your left)

STOP 7

West Main Ct. is mostly paved by bricks, with a asphalt middle where trolley tracks once stood. There is a small parking lot on the right side of the street (for a veterinary clinic) some of us can use.

You can walk up to the end of the street, where it once crossed the railroad, but locals (there are 4 houses & a veterinary clinic along Main Ct) might be alarmed at strangers fooling around at the tracks.



Old US 20 with its bricks and asphalt center, west of Geneva. March 21, 2001 photo from Roadfan.com

Once you head back to West Main St (US 20), there are several options you take to head back towards Mentor:

- 1) Head east on US 20 back to Oh 534 south to I-90 west to Oh 615 north to US 20 west
- 2) Head west on US 20 to Oh 528 south to I-90 to Oh 615 north to US 20 west
- 3) Head west on US 20 to Oh 2 west to Oh 615 south to US 20.

And thus ends this year's Ohio Roadmeet.

Previous Ohio Roadmeets....

2002 - Toledo

2003 - Cincinnati

2004 - Cleveland

2005 - Columbus

2007 - Toledo 2

2008 - Dayton

2009 - Youngstown

2010 - Canton/Akron

2011 - Columbus 2

2012 - Dayton 2

2013 - Irononton-Chesapeake (& Ashland, Ky - Huntington, W.Va.)

2013 - Cleveland 2

2013 - Cincinnati 2

2014 - Toledo 3 (US 24 corridor)

2017 - Columbus 3