



WILLETT HOFMANN
& ASSOCIATES INC
ENGINEERING ARCHITECTURE LAND SURVEYING

TINKER SWISS COTTAGE BRIDGE

Location: Rockford, Illinois

Client: Rockford Park District

The Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum, a Rockford Park District Facility listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was originally built by Robert Tinker in 1865. In 1870, he added a swinging pedestrian suspension bridge across Kent Creek—a bridge that, twenty years later, would be swept away along with every other bridge in Rockford in the flood of 1890. Tinker rebuilt his swinging bridge in 1891, and it stood as a Rockford Landmark until 1976, when deterioration necessitated its removal.

Twenty-five years later the Rockford Park District envisioned replacing the foot bridge to its original architectural design. The Willett, Hofmann & Associates, Inc. Structural and Architecture staff successfully designed a new bridge replicating Tinker's original, based on artifacts, historic photographs and

careful study of the remaining pier and cables to determine the dimensions of the original bridge. The design was then modified to allow for modern safety requirements. Approximately 25 feet above the creek, the original bridge did not offer a safety rail. The new bridge uses small diameter tension cables as a railing which is sturdy enough to provide safety, but thin enough to be inconspicuous from a distance while still maintaining the look of the original bridge.

The result is a two span (103'-8": 64'-7") suspension bridge on reinforced concrete abutments and pier with stone veneer to replicate the original look. WHA's new structure beautifully bridges the gap between current design requirements and Mr. Tinker's original historical aesthetics.

