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The LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bulletin

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DEMISE OF BRIDGE SPARKS NOSTALGIA

The rapid dismantling of the bridge at Nay Aug Park that once led the carriage trade and later that of the automobile to the winding picturesque Elmhurst Boulevard strikes a note of nostalgia for many area residents. Many senior citizens remember traveling over the bridge in Model "T"s and other early automobiles. From it one has a breathtaking view of Roaring Brook Falls and the deep gorge below. At the time of its opening in January 20th, 1895, the *Scranton Republican* described it as

"a most substantial and good appearing structure... two teams of horses crossing at a run do not shake it. The driveway is wide enough for wagons to pass easily and the walks are more than sufficient."

Originally constructed to connect Nay Aug Park to the Elmhurst Boulevard, it became a toll bridge shortly after its opening. One way toll for a single carriage was ten cents; fifteen cents for round trip. For double carriages the fare was fifteen cents; twenty-five cents for round trip. Yearly fares of \$15 for carriages and \$5.00 for bicycles were also available. Sometime later a narrow footbridge was built in the gorge for those wishing to view the falls from a nearer vantage point.

In 1937 the bridge was taken over by the city and in 1939 closed to vehicular and pedestrian traffic. It was opened once more briefly for pedestrians only in 1944 after some \$8,000 worth of repairs had been made. In recent years the bridge and its high cyclone fence have fallen into disrepair and this year the Mayor decided it was no longer safe and did not merit the expense necessary to maintain it. And as workmen tear down the steel beams another era ends.

CALENDAR	
1968-69	
ALL MEETINGS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC	
Oct. 23	"Musical History of Tin Pan Alley"
Wed.	Vocal Soloists 8:15 p.m.
Nov. 18	"Local Water Transportation in the 18th Century"
Mon.	Mr. W. Curtis Montz 8:15 p.m.
Dec. 17	"East of the Moosic Mountain"
Tues.	Rev. William P. Lewis and Mr. Robert Mattes 8:15 p.m.
Feb. 19	FILM (To be Selected)
Wed. 8:15 p.m.
Mar. 13	"Political Vituperation: Local and National"
Thurs.	Prof. Timothy H. Scully 8:15 p.m.
April	To be announced
May 21	Annual Dinner "The Lackawanna Valley in Photographs"
Wed.	Mr. Robert Mattes 6:30 p.m.

BOULEVARD ROAD AND BRIDGE AT NAY AUG THE END OF AN ERA

The opening of the Elmhurst Boulevard road on October 23rd, 1894 was marked by a festive parade of some 200 carriages transporting some of the more distinguished citizens of Scranton. Those planning to make the trip were to meet at the Republican office on Wyoming Avenue at 2 p.m. (A recent fire at the site revealed the stone lintel from the building still intact.)

According to the *Scranton Republican*, despite the fact that the day had dawned cloudy and cool, the expedition had attracted a large number of people, anxious to initiate the new road. All drove up the hill past the Moses Taylor Hospital to Ash Street in Petersburg until they passed Little England Mission where a sign had been nailed to a tree indicating the way to the Boulevard. (A steel bridge over Roaring Brook Falls was planned from Nay Aug Park to Elmhurst Boulevard, but not yet completed as the construction of it was proving an expensive and difficult task.)

"The sign indicated the abandoned track of the old Pennsylvania Gravity Road which had to be followed for a mile before the boulevard was reached... But once upon this broad, finely graded roadway, the discomfort of the members of the party ceased, despite the fact that the only heavy grades that the boulevard contains are all within a mile of Nay Aug Falls. In order to escape from the deep valley the road winds among the rocks and trees for a couple of miles before you reach a magnificent level stretch where the horses quicken their gait and everyone seems merry. From this point on to Elmhurst the road is an ideal one, running along the side of the mountain cutting through gorges and affording glimpses of magnificent scenery, which is so surpassingly beautiful at this season of the year as to most baffle description.

The road was described as being of rock and slate covered over with dirt and broken slate hardened to a smooth roadbed that "is a luxury to both man and beast." The length of the road was 7 1/4 miles and was generally 24 feet wide, but was 30 feet at some points and 80 at others. At points where the embankment reaches over four feet heavy guard rails were placed and a viaduct across the Erie and Wyoming track was constructed

back of Nay Aug Falls to eliminate grade crossings

With the completion of the bridge at Nay Aug Park in January 1895, and the advent of the automobile, the road became a popular and lucrative source of income. And before the Drinker Turnpike was built, it was the main artery to New Jersey and New York from the area. Gradually the free turnpike with its gentle grades and less tortuous route became the more traveled route east and the bridge and boulevard were abandoned to occasional vehicles and hikers.

EDITORIAL COMMENT OF YESTERYEAR

The *Scranton Republican* of Wednesday, October 24, 1894 urges the re-election of Joseph A. Scranton to the 54th Congress as he was an ardent protectionist and the only candidate "Who stands pledged to support protective tariff measures and to oppose all bills that strike at the protective tariff system."

Scranton Republican of July 23, 1895 comments on the experiment of Woman's Suffrage being tried in Colorado which has been attracting widespread attention. The paper comments further that women with the rights of men will want their share of spoils which will mean women lawmakers, judges, governors and even a woman president. (And who knows if the last quarter of the 20th Century may not see a woman president in the White House!)

Teachers today might well ponder the recommendation of the Teacher's Committee in 1895 who stated to the Board of Control that no increase in salary was to be made. The minimum salary was still to be \$30 a month.

Scranton Republican of July 23rd, 1895, editorializes on the Forward March of the Bloomer,

"The Bloomer is marching on to victory. Thousands of pretty girls now boldly don the semi-male attire, wearing it whenever and wherever they please. They declare it is just the thing for comfort, and who is there that does not believe them?"

Perusing the old newspapers makes one more aware than ever of the increase in our standard of living. In those days Woolworth offered brooms for five cents and extra heavy washboards—zinc lined—for twenty cents. Brown's Beehive offered men's white shirts, double back and front with linen bosom for thirty-six cents. Clarke Bros. store offered eggs at 13½ cents per dozen and bacon for 7½ cents.

In another editorial of 1895, the *Scranton Republican* lit into President Cleveland's Democratic government as totally lacking in capacity to deal with finance and industry by tinkering with the tariff allowing more free trade. And when the deficit in the treasury began to grow the Democrats said "never mind that." (Such comments might be heard in the same vein today.)

THE LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILL CLOSE ITS DOORS FOR TWO WEEKS,
FOLLOWING LABOR DAY, TO GIVE THE STAFF
A LONG NEEDED VACATION.

WE WILL REOPEN ON TUESDAY, SEPT. 17th
TO GIVE A WARM WELCOME TO MEMBERS AND
FRIENDS.

NEW MEMBERS

Millicent Anne Knierim
Rev. Alcuin F. Shields, O.F.M.
Mrs. Joseph Popovick
Nancy McDonald
Mr. & Mrs. Henry L. Platt
Joseph F. Cimini
Dr. John L. Earl III
Gilbert Weinberger
Edmund Rinkus

This Bulletin was prepared by Mrs. Roswell Patterson and Mrs. Henry Friedmann, Trustees of the Society.

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