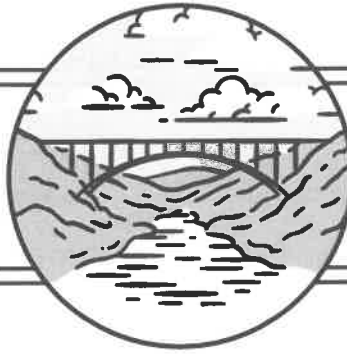


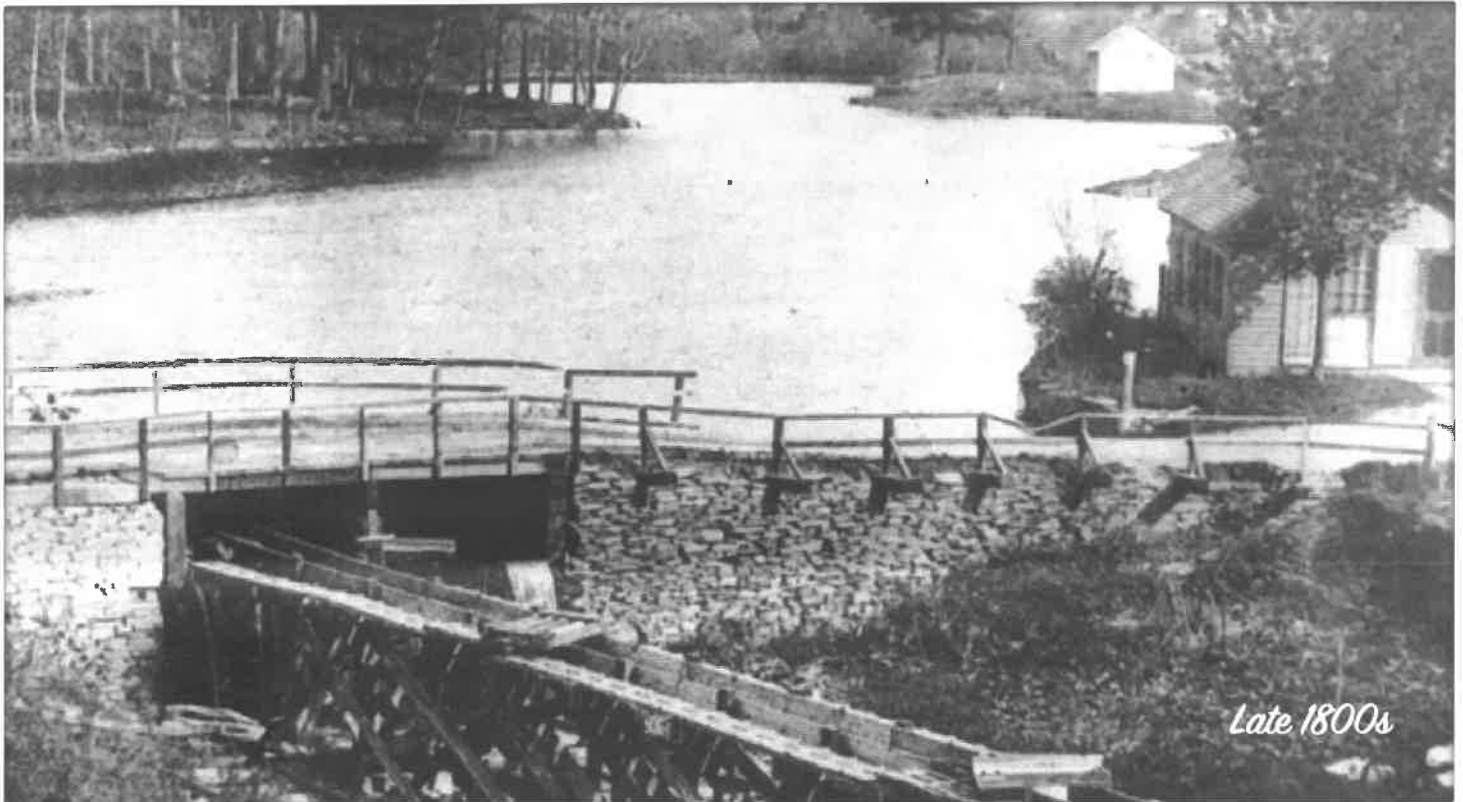
TUSTEN



ROOTS

Published by the Tusten Historical Society
Narrowsburg, New York

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Late 1800s

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Tusten Historical Society

198 Bridge Street
PO Box 18
Narrowsburg, NY 12764
tustenhistor@gmail.com
Hours by Appointment

THE LAKE ERIE BRIDGE

By Art Hawker, Town of Tusten Historian

Since our last issue of *Roots*, progress has come to Narrowsburg in the form of the completion of the Lake Erie bridge, and since we are in the history business, a look at the lifetime of this span in its various iterations is in order.

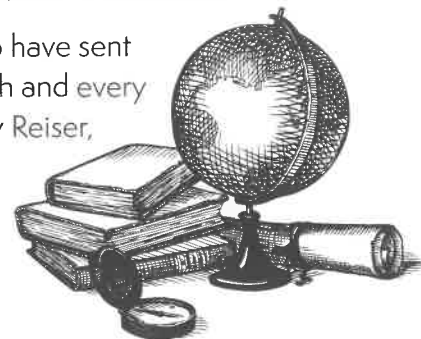
It is pretty well believed that the bridge is the result of the 1848 arrival in Tusten of the New York, Lake Erie & Western Railroad, but at least one source notes that there is a longer history. Edgar S. Bley, in conjunction with James H. Kirk, a 50 year Erie Railroad employee and then station agent, wrote

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A SINCERE *Thank You...*

Thanks so very much to all members who have sent contributions. We greatly appreciate each and every one. Special thanks to Stanley White, Ray Reiser, Lynn Burns and John and Marion Dowd.



This year we welcome Jane Luchsinger as the new President and look forward to another successful year.

Our T.H.S. MEMBERS

Please check the status of your membership. If your membership is ready to be renewed, please do so. As you know we operate on limited revenue and rely on your dues. Also please let us know of any address change.



Join the Tustan Historical Society

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Thank You!

LETTER TO TUSTEN ROOTS

Dear Staff,

I know these items look as if they are 100 years old – and they are. I have been holding on to them for a good many years and just couldn't get rid of them. I was hoping you might find a home for them in your archives. They were in my Mother-in-Law's papers (Tess Zehner). I know they were very meaningful to both Tess and Henry, when they were driving up to Lava/Narrowsburg from Brooklyn.

They loved living in High Hill House and the community – in which they were very active. Henry Zehner served as supervisor for many years and was

active in the Fire department. Tess ran High Hill House as a boarding house in the summer and for hunters in the season. Lots of hard work and she was a wonderful woman. My husband Howard and I used to drive up on weekends and loved the area. I miss those days.

I'm glad you are publishing "Tusten Roots" and keeping its history alive. Good memories.

Blessings,

Dorothy Zehner

Thank you for the Upper Delaware Drummer and the map from 1922!



LOCAL NEWSPAPER • 1934

CLOTHING

We ask you to get our prices on all kinds of Clothing and examine the goods before buying elsewhere. Complete line of Ladies' and Gent's Sweaters from 50c up to \$5.00. Some bargains. Large line of Boys' School Pants, extra values, 50c. Boys' Suits \$2.00 up. Men's Suits and Overcoats.

**Tailor Made Suits, All Wool,
\$12.50 to \$35**

We make a specialty of the above line. Our line of Underwear is now complete for Men, Women, Children and Infants. Have just opened our winter stock of Gloves and Mittens. Bargains in this line. School Supplies and Notions.

**Only complete line of Drugs and Medicines
in town.**

Agents for the Parker-Lucky Curve Fountain Pen, warranted to give satisfaction. Ask for Cash Discount Coupons.

JAMES E. PURCELL,

Notary Public.

Main St. - - Narrowsburg.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER • JUNE 24, 1950

Want COMFORT?
then sit in these new, different chairs

by **Cavalier**



TONG AND CAREY—The Cavalier chair has been designed for carrying. It is easy to move around the house and garden. Chair is a sturdy, sturdy chair with a good solid feel. Comfort—designed for real comfort, built that was graceful in appearance and useful too, fold your glass or other. Designed to resist folding in any direction. Chair fold, steel and steel in individual pieces.

BACK FOLDS DOWN—You've never known comfort like this. A good spring seat with just the right amount of "give." When you move the chair outdoors, the back folds down over the seat, protecting the Cavalier's attractive, useful wide arms and without shaking. Soft smooth backed fabric with rolled edges, no rough sharp corners. **SPRING ROCKER** in this chair is made with a curved rocker base, smooth, 14" long, 10" wide, 10" high. With the back folded, these chairs will show in maximum space.

IN THREE EAT SUMMER COLORS! Bright yellow, turquoise, pink and light aqua for lawn, pool or terrace, and all three go well together. You'll like them too for give them summer color and style and other colors too.



Come in and try these **NEW METAL CHAIRS**

by **Cavalier**

- Contour shaped back and seat for real comfort.
- Prove to yourself that these chairs will not tip sideways, will not judder or fold accidentally.
- The wide arms are made right for your comfort. They are constructed of heavy gauge steel and high carbon steel tubing. High baked enamel finish for long lasting outdoor service.

as seen in **House Beautiful**

RASMUSSEN'S

Phone 78-J-11

Narrowsburg, N. Y.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in a 1940 *Delaware Valley News* article, *Lake Erie of Years Ago*, that the creek which feeds the lake was dammed shortly after the American Revolution to power a sawmill, and the resultant body of water that we call Lake Erie was known in those times as “the Mill Pond”. Another history item states that the Dunn family, some of the earliest settlers, lived at the sawmill at one point after their arrival here. One of

the earliest maps of Narrowsburg, labeled “circa 1853” bears the name Lake Erie and shows a roadway between the lake on the East side and the creek which flows to the Delaware River on the West side. (In the official parlance of the New York State DOT and DEC, what we call the bridge is technically a “culvert”, due to its length. A bridge is greater than 20’ and a culvert is less than 20’. The Lake Erie culvert is 19’ long.).

Although information on the saw mill is close to non-existent at this point, we do know that in its earliest days, the Erie set up a water pump system along the creek next to the Gebhardt Boct and Shoe Store close to where the yellow apartment house now stands. Water was pumped up to the locomotives on the tracks to feed the engines’ boilers that could be as large as 2,000 gallons. Narrowsburg was one of five or six water stops between Port Jervis and Binghamton and steam propulsion used a lot of water. This method was subsequently replaced by the placement of an estimated 50,000 gallon tank on the siding where the Dirlam Lumber Co. offices are now. Locomotives would uncouple from the train, back onto the siding, take on water, re-connect and head Westbound toward Binghamton. Eventually Narrowsburg was dropped as a water stop and the Erie reverted to only using the lake for ice harvesting until 1927, but that is a story for another time.

Not always an organization to spend money on maintenance, the railroad did re-plank the bridge in 1899, probably replacing its original timbers. Photos from that era show us that the dam, as it was then referred to, was constructed of laid-up stone with a wooden fence along both sides of the street.

The Erie divested itself of the lake in 1927 and it became property of the Town of Tusten. In 1931 the Town removed the old dam and drained the lake, creating one large mud puddle. William Kestler, then

Highway Superintendent, oversaw the building of a new dam and installation of a new wooden bridge. This was somewhat temporary, since later that year parts of the bridge were removed and it was made a bit wider. During the summer of 1935, the Tusten road workers put in a new, even wider bridge which was all concrete, able to handle heavier traffic resulting from the Narrowsburg Lumber Company's growing business and more homes on Irish Hill. To avoid any inconvenience to the residents and businesses, the Highway Department worked the overnight hours to minimize any conflicts.



Five years later, in 1940, under the guidance of Highway Superintendent Alvin Holfeld, the road crews installed a flood gate to allow excess water to be discharged when flooding threatened. This became the bridge that most long term residents today grew up fishing from or engaging in other Lake Erie activities...except swimming.

In 2015 the bridge was inspected by Sullivan County Department of Transportation and a determination was made that the culvert was highly deteriorated and rehabilitation or replacement was recommended.

Subsequently, in 2016 a "Bridge NY" grant was awarded to the Town of Tusten for \$198,000 which the

Town believed would cover 100% of the costs to replace the culvert. Before signing the contract to proceed with the construction, it was brought to the attention of Town officials that certain regulatory steps were not followed in the proposal submitted in that the engineer chosen by the Town was not an "approved NY State Department of Transportation (DOT) engineer", and other regulations. Officials were advised that any costs over the \$198,000 would be the responsibility of the Town.

The Town Board then rejected the Bridge NY award for \$198,000 and reapplied following the guidelines of NY State DOT which resulted

in a 2018-19 award of \$921,000 to replace the culvert. For various reasons the project was delayed and construction didn't begin until the spring of 2023 after the Covid-19 period. Unfortunately, the effect of COVID resulted in a sharp rise in the cost of construction materials to over 150% of estimates. Compounding the expenses was the needed complete replacement of the dam which was not accounted for in the original grant application. The completion of the culvert and dam was in December of 2023 at a cost greater than 10 times the original estimate of \$198,000. Costs aside, this structure will hopefully serve us well into the future with minimal maintenance required. ■



WORM BOMBS AND THE RAINMAKER



Back in the day, the Narrowsburg Firemen's July 4th Field Day was close to being the premier social gathering of the summer season, if not the main event. Since its humble beginnings in 1902 as a cold plate picnic on Grove Street behind the Odd Fellows Hall, the day had progressively grown to include all manner of food and drinks, live entertainment, airplane rides, a beauty contest and a variety of games and contests. Commencing in 1946, the Fire Department began hosting the event at the grounds of the Narrowsburg Airport (now Lander's Campground) which they eventually purchased in 1954. Although the firemen hosted Easter and Harvest suppers and clambakes to raise funds, the Field Day was the big one

and planning started soon after the departure of the winter snows. In those days, the fire tax district was limited to the village but the department responded throughout Tusten and on many occasions, into Wayne County, PA as far as Honesdale. Money from fund raising was used to buy fire trucks and associated equipment in addition to maintaining the Community Hall (now Town Hall) which they built with community support in 1926.

One of the key elements for a successful field day, was, of course, the weather, and over the decades Narrowsburg's Field Day was occasionally rained on but seldom rained out. Unfortunately, the 1948 Field Day was canceled due to the tragic death of Tusten Supervisor

Malcolm Dexter on July 2nd and a calamitous thunderstorm struck on the Fourth in 1949 when the skies opened up and reduced the event's attendance from a hoped for 10,000 attendees to maybe 1,000 who, undaunted, removed their footwear and slogged about the grounds. These two setbacks were a financial disaster for the firemen. In a news interview after the 1949 deluge, NFD President Art Van Schoick stated "we'd be mighty thankful if a drought sets in again next year; if you're praying for rain, put in the proviso...except for July 4th".

So it was, in 1950, when the planning began to make the Fourth "bigger and better" than ever, with the failure of '49 fresh in everyone's mind. As the Spring gave way to Summer, nerves for the Fourth were somewhat calmed by the fact that the region was undergoing a drought. In fact, so little rain had fallen that in May, the New York City Water Commissioner had hired a consultant meteorologist, Dr. Wallace E Howell, of Lexington, Mass., to seed clouds over the upstate city reservoirs with silver iodide crystals in an effort to boost their capacity. The resulting effectiveness of Dr. Howell's rainmaking attempts were debatable (he was being paid \$100 per day) but it did cause a level of concern for the firemen who wanted a clear, cloudless July 4th. For a bit of fun, they authored a letter to the local newspaper entitled "Firemen to Rainmaker: Take July Fourth Off". The letter stated in substance that if the rain making efforts of

Dr. Howell continued, the firemen would have to retaliate by dropping thousands of live earthworms on New York City.

In short order, the humorous missive was picked up by the wire services and word was received that it had appeared in newspapers such as the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* and the *London Daily Times*. Not all was humor though, whether the resultant weather was God's rain or Howell's rain, the summer was damp and Howell took the blame. Both the Sullivan and Orange County legislatures passed resolutions against him with Sullivan calling for his indictment and prosecution as a "Public Nuisance". In September, Dr. Howell took a month off to write a report and his detractors were gleeful to report that's when the heaviest rains occurred. In November (1950), newly elected State Assemblyman Hyman Mintz said he would introduce a bill to control professional rainmakers to protect the businesses of farmers and hotel operators whose businesses were being adversely effected by the rains.

The end of the story? Well, when Dr. Howell's \$100 a day contract with New York City expired in February, 1951 it was not renewed and later that year the \$11,000 worth of rainmaking equipment that he had accrued at the city's expense was given to Hunter College. Oh, and by the way, the 1950 July 4th was just overcast and no rain fell. Everyone had a great time! ■



LOCAL NEWSPAPER • 1929

Come to the
HALLOWEEN
MASQUERADE BALL
BENEFIT OF LAVA ATHLETIC CLUB
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1929
—AT—
HOP INN, LAVA, N. Y.
GOLD PIECES AWARDED FOR BEST COSTUMES

LOCAL NEWSPAPER • 1934

NEW
HANDY • TRAY
ON THE 1934
MASTER SERIES
Westinghouse
Refrigerator

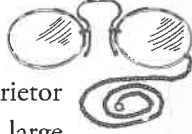


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Also—New Operating Economy • New Faster Freezing • New Dulux Finish
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ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING SUPPLIES
Narrowsburg, New York
Near Delaware Bridge

AN OLD BIBLE



Robert Huebner, proprietor of The Homestead, a large summer resort on the Ten Mile River near Narrowsburg, has a bible published in Germany which bears the date 1732. The cover of goat skin is well preserved as is also the print. The bible which is 180 yrs old, is highly prized by the owner.

**Sullivan County Record,
Jeffersonville, NY - 2 May 1912**

Mr. Huebner is the grandfather of THS member Ralph Huebner.



TUSTEN ROOTS

- Newsletter Staff -

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- Marje Janowski
- Jane Luchsinger
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- Tina Spangler
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