

The Many Bridges of Linden Avenue at Irondequoit Creek

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

With two dozen nearby mills along Irondequoit Creek, the succession of early bridges spanning Linden Avenue over the years endured a lot of wear and tear. Andrew Lincoln and Samuel Rich partnered in a milling business on Irondequoit Creek. A bridge across the creek was essential for access to both Penfield and Perinton, and for the transport of their products to Fullamtown, the early canal settlement that pre-dated the village of Fairport. While limited documentation exists, it is likely that the first bridge, a crude wooden structure, was built in 1821. Records indicate that since the first bridge was built in 1821, at least ten bridges have spanned Irondequoit Creek at Linden Avenue.



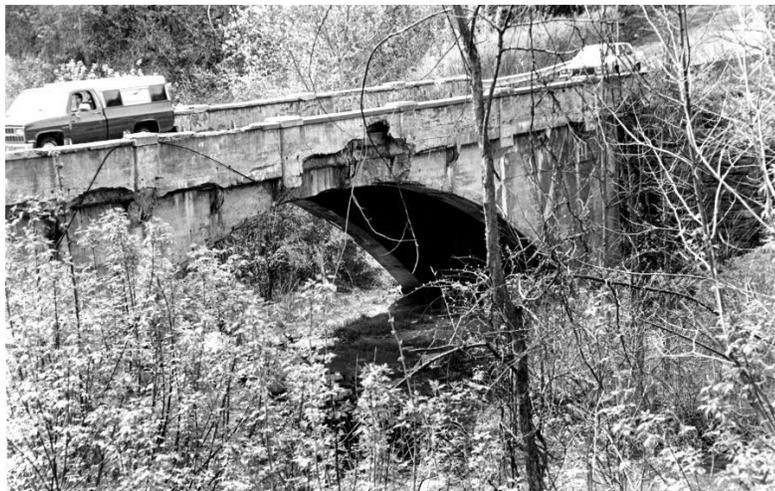
Lincoln's Mill at left, and the 1870 bridge built of iron with wood planking. This is estimated to be the seventh bridge at the site, and the first of which we have photographs.

Perinton records include numerous reports of repairs to the bridge, by what became known as Lincoln's Mill, as early as 1827. After nine years of hard use, the original 1821 bridge was replaced with another, which lasted a bit longer - twelve years. The early bridges were made of wood, and the heavy loads from the mills on Irondequoit Creek must have been a great burden. Town records indicate the bridge by Lincoln's Mill was in a constant state of repair or replacement. In a flood of high water in 1863, the west abutment of Lincoln's bridge was washed out. Again, a new bridge was needed.

A view looking north at the bridge at Lincoln's Mill, built in 1897, estimated to be the eighth bridge at the site.



An iron bridge with wood planking was installed in about 1870. It had a much longer life than previous bridges, but by August of 1897, an engineer's inspection condemned the bridge. The report stated, "the bridge vibrates badly under moving loads, and is so badly braced that these vibrations are liable to cause a collapse of the structure. Speed over it should be limited to a walk, and live loads to not over two tons, including the wagon, until such time as the town sees fit to replace the structure."



This concrete bridge was built in 1922 and replaced in 1990, making it by far the longest serving of all the bridges at the site.

A month later, the Owego Bridge Company was under contract, and for the price of \$2,692, a new bridge of "extra heavy steel" was soon assembled on the site. It did not last as long as the previous bridge, and was replaced in 1922 by a concrete bridge, the construction of which was hampered by the existence of quicksand, discovered while putting the abutments in place.

As work was being completed on a replacement bridge in July of 1990, the supports of the old concrete bridge to the north of the new span collapsed. Two construction workers and the equipment they were operating fell to the creek below. Fire and ambulance crews rescued the workers.



The concrete bridge, many may recall, was for at least two decades a crumbling exercise in self-demolition. It was planned for replacement as early as 1975, but was delayed until 1990. The current bridge was built just south of the old concrete span, which collapsed while being dismantled, causing two construction workers and a backhoe to fall 25 feet to the creek below.

Published in June, 2019