DESTINATION LODI

A HISTORICAL JOURNEY

The Black River Arch

Thanks to Joe Warner and his love for Lodi history, we have documentation of Lodi history but I always need more. One of Joe’s passion was our railroads and the stone arches.

I had a wonderful visit with Jan Van Dornan who with Joe wrote an article for Timeline, a publication of the Ohio Historical Society 25th Anniversary, October\*December 2009. Jan and her hubby moved to Lodi and soon became interested in our extraordinary history.

The article, “Building Century Bridges” in detail explained how Lodi, at the beginning of a century became a community known for its role in major transportation and commercial enterprise: the massive, soaring masonry arch built by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&0) west of town.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the B&O engineers faced the challenge of the crossing the Black River Valley near Lodi. This feat completed with using steam power and human muscle, building the arches that still stands today.

The article explains the issue of the unstable ground known locally as the Black Swamp. This included the muck soil that grew the onion and celery crops and could swallow locomotives! By 1901, under new control, a 20-year improvement program launched. This program improving grades and curves, replacing bridges, and expanding to double track.

B&O Chief engineer D.D. Carothers was the designer for the Black River stone bridge, with the local contractor being George Tresher. Locals called the project “Tresher’s bridge”. Estimates for the bridge was from $250, 000 to $500,000. The project also cost the lives of five workers and three murders occurred at the camp. Approximately a thousand Italian, Romanian and Austrian laborers were housed in two work camps of tarpaper sheds, and the railroad provided food and supplies. Local men employed as teamsters and carpenters.

I was talking with Ron Stewart at church and he said he had a picture of his Grandfather Gus Kaylor who with other local farmers opposed the moving of public highways. In Oct 1906, his Grandfather Kaylor (circled in the picture) with 100 other farmers stood guard on a pushed over locomotive. More to the story includes large horse teams, dynamite and shotguns. That will be another article.

I just completed a community grant through CSX line. I am asking for money and permission to clean up around all three arches with adding plaques of distinction. The bridges are historical landmarks. This is my second attempt; let us hope for the best.

SOS…..We are making plans for this year’s Christmas event. We are in need of either a horse drawn carriage or wagon. Everyone I have called are already booked! Please contact me if anyone knows anyone who could help us out.

If you have historical home, please call me.

Dinner and Music with Frank. March 25th. Few tickets left. $20 please call me. 330-635-7294