

Bridge was William Doyle's dream

By KRISTINA WELLS

Built in 1883, the Quassaick Creek Bridge stands as a testimony to times gone by and a man with a dream.

The structure originally provided a wooden connection between New Windsor and the City of Newburgh. When the time came to create a more permanent structure in 1880, one man stood at the forefront of the crusade.

That year, highway commissioners informed the Common Council that repairs needed to be made to the wooden bridge. At the time the bridge, known as Chambers Creek bridge, was slowly deteriorating.

Enter, City Alderman William Doyle.

Doyle was the first on the council to suggest the repairs be made, according to archive minutes. He also suggested that the taxpayers be polled on whether to spend the money to initiate the repairs.

Unfortunately, the taxpayers voted it down.

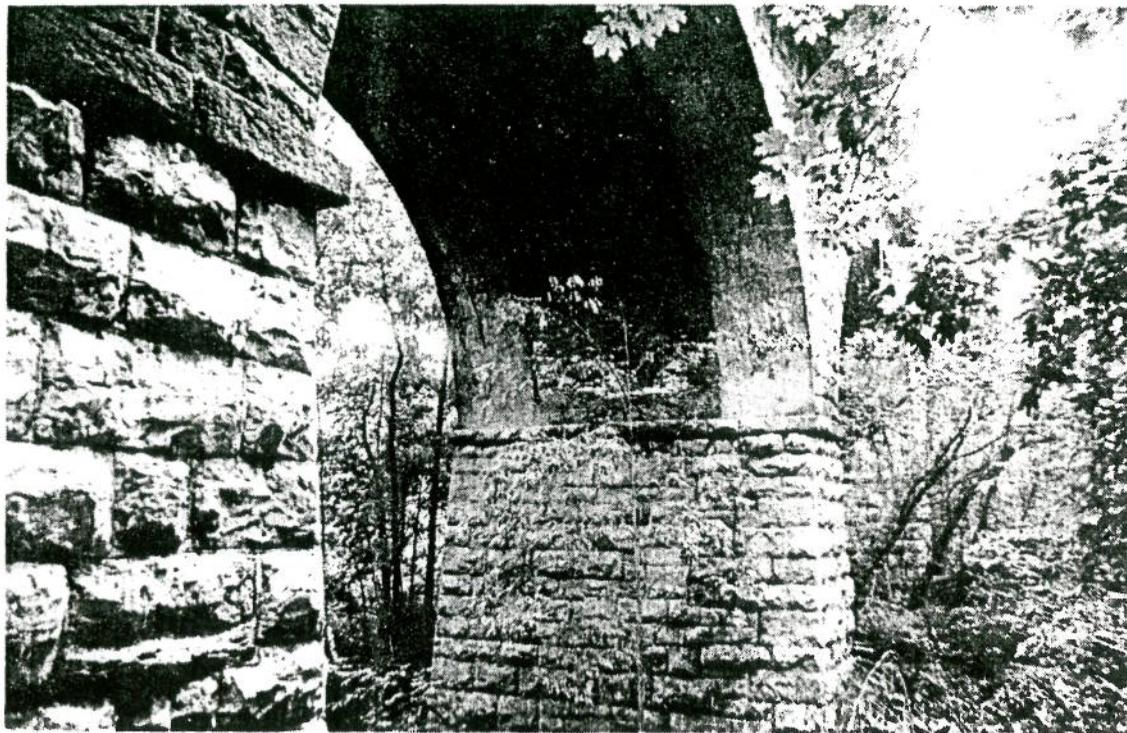
But, as political fate had it, the council decided it wasn't a matter of whether it should be done, but how it should be done. The council moved forward, slightly overlooking voter consensus.

Even then, the bridge debate continued. One group wanted stone, the other wrought iron. Arguments ensued and time passed.

Until, New Windsor, which shared the cost, decided it favored stone. Behind it all, Doyle favored wrought iron, slated to cost \$15,000. The stone would cost \$50,000.

The stone bridge plans moved forward in October of 1880, with Doyle raising funds and overseeing its construction. The following year, contractors informed the council that labor and material costs had risen and insisted that if they were to do it at the original price they would lose money.

As a result, so all parties would win in the situation, the contractors decided to substitute portions of the stone work with limestone. Doyle vehemently opposed it and voted accordingly in the



The Quassaick Creek Bridge, linking Newburgh and New Windsor, was built in 1883.

council minutes.

Instead of agreeing with him, the council appointed Doyle to a committee to work out the problem with the contractors. Almost one year later, a new contract was signed and construction continued.

The bridge was dedicated on August 25, 1883, with Doyle present and the council present. A disagreement followed over what to call it; the Stone Bridge, Chambers Creek Bridge or Quassaick Creek Bridge.

On either end of the historic and breathtaking stone arches, the names of influential people were carved as a testament to the teamwork shown in the

bridge construction.

Doyle's name was left off.

Soothsayers predict that Doyle later, in a fit of anger, went down to the bridge and carved his name in an adjacent stone.

In December 1951, the new steel and concrete bridge opened for public use. Ironically enough, after bickering over wrought iron versus stone; \$15,000 versus \$50,000; the new bridge used neither material and cost \$650,000.

In 1967, a Diamond Candle Co. worker almost had his head smashed in by a falling stone. Thus began the almost four year repair period on the bridge, which opened again in 1970.