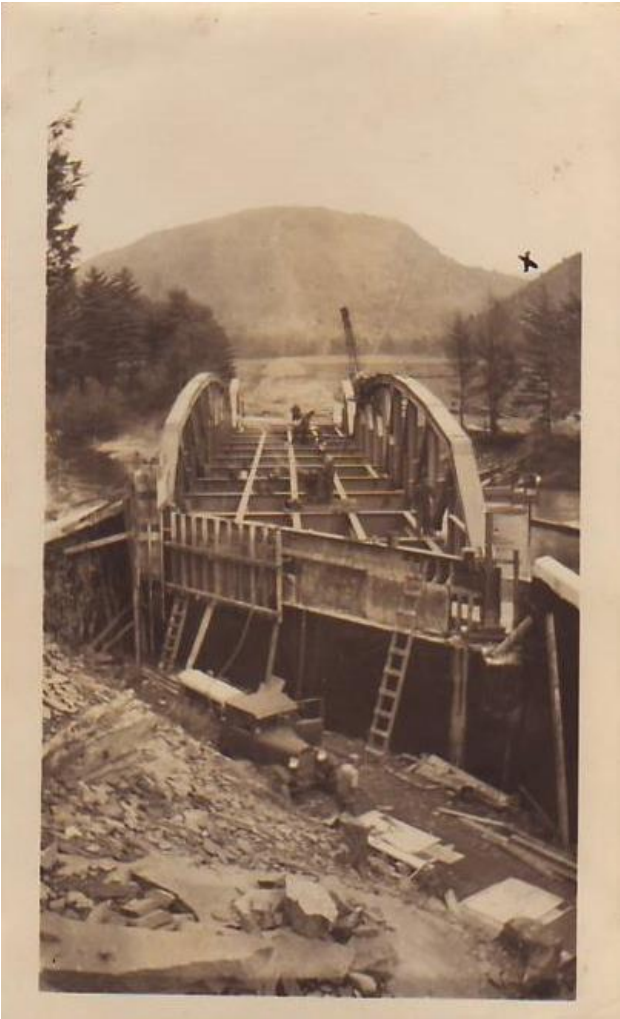


Nov. 5, 2014

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting



A lament found in Harry Greene's book *Souvenir of Hillsgrove, Valley of Dreams & Memories* published in 1934 has a passage entitled "The Old Bridge Speaks". It begins:

"Hello! Good Friends. Hello! And Goodbye! For after seventy years of faithful and quiet service I am declared unsound in my construction, weak in my cords, faulty in my arches and loose in my abutments and therefore a menace to the public whose friend I have been every minute of the time since the last shingle was laid upon my roof tree back in Civil War days. I am a martyr to be crushed beneath the iron heel of Progress, or more truthfully speaking bounced by the rubber tires of speed, and I suppose of the generations I have seen come and go none will mark my passage with a sigh.

"In the language of to-day it seems to be up to me to sing my own swan song, preach my own funeral sermon and write my own obituary, so since to do this means the dropping of the veils of modesty and telling the naked truth I will hew to the line and let the chips fall where they may. For in the glare of noon and in the somber shades of midnight I have been a silent witness to domestic tragedies and infidelities at which I have

blushed. . . Soon a senseless thing of iron and concrete that offers no shelter from sun or storm will take my place. A thing that will not invite to leisurely strolls and sweet confidences, but will shriek to all who approach – speed away – and make room for the next speed demon. Farewell good friends whose lives have been linked with mine for so many years, for I am headed for the limbo of forgotten things. To mingle my decay with bones of the faithful horse whose passing I could not long survive."

On a later page, Mr. Greene states: "One of Hillsgrove's old landmarks, the covered wooden bridge, crossing the Loyalsock creek at the lower end of town was condemned in August 1934. The State is replacing it with a new steel truss bridge with a floor of concrete." The bridge being replaced would have been the third covered bridge at this location and he further states: "Parts of the second bridge were used towards building the Elk creek bridge which was also built in 1876. . . The Elk creek bridge went out during the December flood thirty-five years later." This means that on Elk Creek, another expanse would have been in place from 1911 to 1941 but no records indicate that it was a covered bridge. And for Mr. Greene's writing in 1934, only what is referred to as the Hillsgrove Covered Bridge remained (between the Little League Camp and the Splash Dam Road, going by High Knob Inn). But the photographs featured this week, taken in May of 1941 show the replacement bridge that lies on Rte. 87 where you can make the turn to Elk Creek Road that would take you to Lincoln Falls, or Shunk via the Hoagland Branch Road. This bridge, the two at Forksville and the one south of Hillsgrove are all the same circa of "modern day" bridge building – hence the lamentations of by-gone wooden covered bridges.

Photo: Elk Creek Bridge, 1941