

Illustration by  
Dennis Puleston

Eastern Painted Turtle

# Fire Place

BROOKHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Fall 2013

Organized-1906

Incorporated-1944

## Beaver Dam Bridge Work

Well if you live in the hamlet it is impossible not to know our little bridge on Beaver Dam Road has undergone reconstruction. I am very pleased to note that although the bridge was thoroughly rehabilitated its quaint stone walls and general appearance was untouched.

The bridge needed to be rebuilt because it was deteriorating from below. A special thanks to

Bobby Sterling and Ron Kinsella who brought this to the board's attention. Following is an account by hamlet resident Richard Thomas of the original paving of the bridge and the more recent rebuilding process.

Frank Miller  
President

## The Great Concreting Controversy of 1931

By Richard Thomas

Editor's note: Richard Thomas garnered the information and quotes for this entertaining account of Brookhaven Hamlet's history from articles published in the Patchogue Advance (now the Long Island Advance) throughout the 1930s. For specifics and links to the original articles, go to <http://brookhavensouthhaven.org/hamletpeople/tng/whatsnew.php>.

At the 2013 BVA annual meeting, steps being taken to address the deteriorating bridge across Beaver Dam Creek were discussed. It was not the first time that this area of Beaver Dam Road has been the focus of denizens of the hamlet.

Local residents have probably noticed that a concrete section of Beaver Dam Road extends east from the intersection with South Country Road across the Beaver Dam Creek Bridge to Fireplace Neck Road.

The concrete section dates from 1931, and it was quite controversial, with local year-round residents being in favor of improving that portion of the

road while summer people wished to maintain the picturesque quality of the little rural road and its bumpy bridge.

In January 1930, a letter was published in the *Patchogue Advance* about the "Bumpy Brookhaven Bridge," and on October 24, 1930, the *Advance* reported that the Brookhaven Town Board approved twelve permanent improvement projects. One of

those projects was the concreting of Beaver Dam Road and the widening of the bridge there at a cost of \$10,000. As state aid had been cut, the board voted to increase the highway tax rate by 14 cents to pay for these improvements.

At the Town Board meeting held at the end of February 1931, the Town Clerk was handed a communication signed by sixty Brookhaven Hamlet

residents calling on the Town to carry through with the project as it had been included in the budget the preceding fall. At the same meeting, Supervisor

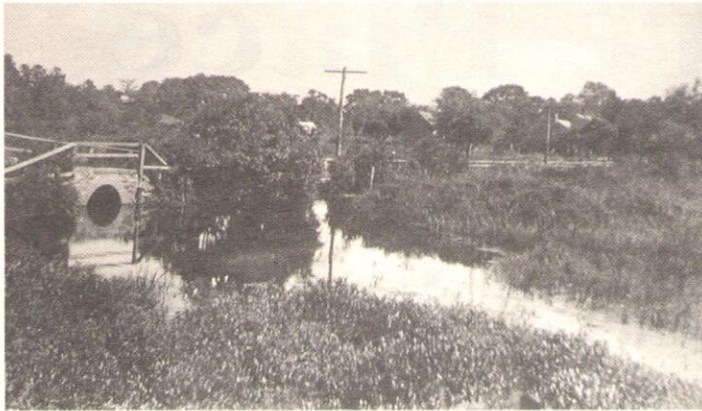


ROADWAY AT BEAVER DAM CREEK, BROOKHAVEN, L.I.

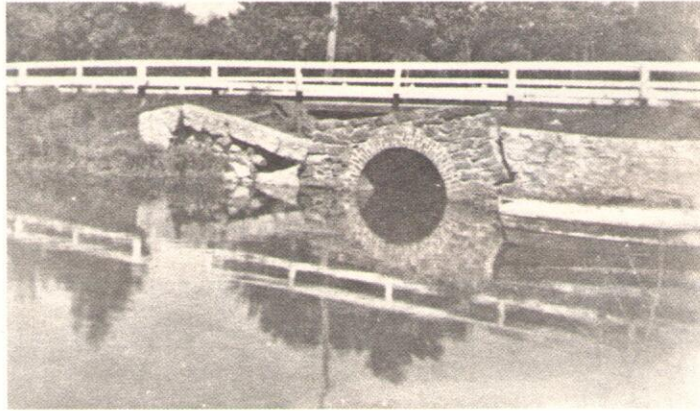
Beaver Dam Road 1905

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Beaver Dam Bridge before July 1931.



Beaver Dam Bridge 1938.

Neville stated that he had received a letter advocating the opposite position, which was backed by some of the summer residents who opposed any change whatever in the road other than the modification of the crown. Their opposition was based on the fact it "would increase taxes, that it was only a local road and would not be of town-wide importance, that it was a winding road and picturesque and any improvement would destroy its beauty." The opposition was further based on the fact it might ultimately lead to concreting the road all the way down to the dock at Carmans river.

miss, but was instead his grandfather, a 1884 graduate of Columbia University, a real estate broker, and later, a banker.) Mr. Nelson told the Town Board that paving that section of Beaver Dam Road would be a "desecration of the handsomest part of the scenery," and declared "it would make a speedway out of the road." He again raised the specter of, eventually, "a concrete pavement all the way to the river."

Justice John Morton and Forrest Reeve spoke in favor of improving the bridge and concreting the road. Reeve (Assistant Postmaster of the hamlet from 1881 until 1933) said "a good road was needed

for people living at the west end to get to church and for children living there to get to school." Mr. Nelson said "they could go the long way round."

The Town pointed out that it was not being proposed that the road be straightened, and the bridge would not be changed much. The work was completed that summer by a large number of men who used a very large houseboat anchored in the Carmans river as living quarters during the construction.

Heavens!

The Brookhaven Town Board had not anticipated any opposition and decided to take no action until after a public hearing. In the interim, the residents held a meeting themselves to discuss the paving of Beaver Dam Road from Bay Road to South Country Road. That meeting was held at the school on the night of Saturday, March 7, 1931. John Morton of Bay Road (a house painter, Brookhaven Fire Department Treasurer, and Justice of the Peace) and others who favored the improvements attended, but those who opposed the changes did not. The opponents waited until the public hearing before the Town Board.

A front-page headline in the March 13, 1931, issue of the *Patchogue Advance* announced the results of the public hearing. Norman Nelson was the spokesman for those who opposed the concreting. (This is not the late Norman Nelson many readers knew and deeply

down concrete from South Country Road to Bay Road but they actually went all the way to the school road, so perhaps the summer residents were justified in thinking that once the Town had concreted to Bay Road, it might just keep right on going. Time has also proven the opponents correct in predicting that even a little bit of concrete at the west end of Beaver Dam

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**Brookhaven to Get  
a Concrete Road,  
Wanted or Not**

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**Board Puzzled at Beaver Dam  
Argument**

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**Lively Dispute at Meeting—Utility  
vs. Beauty and Accessibility vs.  
Privacy Are Involved**

A front-page headline in the March 13, 1931, issue of the *Patchogue Advance*.



# A Message From the President

It is my sad duty to relay the news that Kathleen Lacey has stepped down for personal reasons as President of the BVA, effective September 11th. I believe I speak for the entire Brookhaven community when I say she will be truly missed.

Kathleen has done a great job of leading the BVA and I think she is owed a real debt of gratitude for her efforts as a member of the executive board of the Brookhaven Community Coalition (BCC). In case any of you are not familiar with the BCC, it is a coalition of community groups that joined together to stop the Town of Brookhaven from accepting sludge at the landfill. As many of you can smell, this effort was successful. The group realized that public officials take notice when community groups speak as one. The BCC has successfully opposed the Town's request for increasing the height of the landfill and was instrumental in bringing about the coming positive changes at Long Island

Compost. The BCC is continuing the fight to finally get a firm closing date for the landfill. I know Kathleen, along with the other members, have devoted a lot of their time, including making multiple trips to Albany. Once again I know I speak for the community when I express our gratitude to not only Kathleen but to all the members of the BCC!

As Vice President I have assumed the duties of President until our annual board meeting in June. I will do my best to lead the BVA in its normal activities and will strive to make sure the BVA has a voice in all the issues that affect us as a community.

In closing I would once again like to express our gratitude for Kathleen's service and wish her only the best in all future endeavors.

Frank Miller  
BVA President



The Great Concreting...*(continued from page 2)*

Road might eventually lead to a few treating the road as if it were a speedway.

The Brookhaven Village Association rewarded Forrest Reeve by making him the Chairman of its Highways, Walks, and Docks Committee, where he upheld the policy of having no roads named streets, boulevards, or broadways. The committee preserved the names Fireplace Neck Road and Mott Lane over the proposed Schoolhouse Road and Ocean Boulevard, although it did allow Eelpot Alley to become Newey Lane.

In 1936, storm water sewers were added to Beaver Dam Road at the cost of \$5,000. The *Advance* doesn't record anyone getting very upset over that project. The bridge improvements themselves were short-

lived, as they did not survive the Great Hurricane of September 21, 1938. On September 30, 1938, the *Patchogue Advance* reported that the "bridge over Beaver Dam Creek has been undermined by the water and has rendered this section of Beaver Dam Road impassable."

Just two months later, federal Public Works Administration funds were directed toward reconstruction of the bridge. The "Brookhaven" column in the *Advance* announced that the reconstructed Beaver Dam Bridge was again opened to traffic on March 28, 1939. Michael Kalinowski (who lived on Old Stump Road with his parents, Anton and Josephine, and his younger brothers, Stanley and Walter) was the first to drive across the bridge.