

Is It Water Under the Bridge?

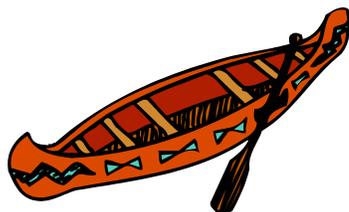


The second Springfield Avenue Bridge, “formerly known as Beadles Bridge.” The young pedestrians are unidentified.

The two letters reproduced below are from the Society’s archives. Although written more than 90 years ago, they seem to have some relevance to Cranford today.

George G. Teller who died in 1935 at the age of 81, is one of the memorable figures of Cranford’s past, a member of nearly every civic or community group in town. From 1913 to 1923, Teller was a member of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, and it was as a Freeholder that he wrote to Plummer. The bridge that he refers to (“formerly known as Beadles bridge”) is the second Springfield Avenue bridge.

Joseph Plummer was born in Brooklyn, but his family moved to Cranford six months later. In 1914, he was 29 years old, a founding member and president of the Cranford Canoe Club. Plummer probably knew as much about the river and its recreational use as anyone.



Teller’s letter is written on Board of Freeholders letterhead and was probably typed by Teller himself. It also appears to have been hastily written, and nothing has been done here to polish it up. Therefore, both letters are reprinted exactly as written, with all of their peculiarities of spelling, syntax, and punctuation.

March 27, 1914

Joseph Plummer, Esq.,
Cranford, N.J.

My dear Joe:-

I am contemplating building a new bridge over the river at Springfield Avenue by Mr. Sandersons house to take place of the old bridge formerly known as Beadles Bridge, which is very much to light for the present traffic. I want if possible to put a cement bridge and one that will be permanent as well as an ornament to the town. There are certain difficulties and I am trying to get around them, by putting in a cement arch, it would be necessary to raise the grade considerably which is not feasible on account of the intersecting streets at both ends of the bridge the question of head room beneath the bridge is a matter of consideration and importance and I write you as one who is familiar with the boating interest as well as the condition of the river.

Will you kindly let me know how much head room in your opinion there should be. I do not think there will be any canopied boats go up there but there will be ladies with there parasols. Will you please let me hear from you as soon as possible.

Yours very truly,

Geo. G. Teller

April sixth
1914

Mr. George G. Teller,
Board of Chosen Freeholders,
Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Dear Mr. Teller:

I have delayed answering your favor of March 27th until I had talked over the matter with several of the fellows. The opinion seems to be that the grade for the new bridge should allow for as much space overhead as there is at present for canoes. However, after looking over the bridge, I can see where this could be sufficient to allow canoes to go under with their occupants without any inconvenience. You are probably aware that at the present time there is hardly sufficient width under the bridge to allow for the passage of the water when it is over two feet above the average in depth. For instance, I have noticed how it backs up and finally goes around the bridge in times of floods.

Will you please have an understanding with the contractor that he must allow sufficient passage so that canoes may pass to and fro without closing the river, as was the case with the Eastman Street bridge. I appreciate fully the difficulty you have in meeting everyone's requests, but, as an active member of the canoe club, I received at the time the Eastman Street bridge was completed at least thirty or thirty-five letters from people complaining of the closing of the river during the canoeing season.

If I can be of any further service to you, kindly call on me at any time.

Yours sincerely,
[Joseph Plummer]