

Wilkes-Barre Times

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No. 1332.

OVER THE NEW LINE.

Wilkes-Barre & Eastern Railroad Inaugurates Passenger Traffic To-day.

ROMANTIC ROUTE THROUGH POCONO

The Big Panther Creek Viaduct Described-A Triumph of Mechanical Skill-The First Train Cheered.

It was with no blast of trumpets, no brass band, that the first passenger train over the new Wilkes-Barre & Eastern R. R. was sent out of its elegant new station at 7:05 this morning, the train containing a fair number of passengers, among whom was President Ryman. The train was made up of one passenger coach, one combination-mail and smoker-and a Delaware & Hudson express car, the latter being in charge of Mr. Chase, a representative of the National Express company.

There are two trains and each crew will run thus daily to Stroudsburg and return over this city. The engineers are W. M. Cotter and John Sullivan; firemen, Walter Eike, formerly of the Central Railroad, and Fred Staples. The conductors are H. J. Couch, S. Jones, and one brakeman, T. Azer.

A Glimpse at the Route.

The new railroad crosses the Susquehanna River about one mile above the Market street station. The bridge is very high and is reached from the west side by long trestle extending from near the foot of North street to the river. On the east side the railroad continues nearly level through the Wyoming Plains and then begins its climb up through the Lackawanna Mountains. The grade is comparatively light. The Wilkes-Barre & Eastern is intended as a short line to New York and a portion of it will be required hereafter by the New York & Erie and the Lehigh Valley.

Between the Lackawanna and Lehigh-Carbondale Valleys the mountains are very steep and could only have been crossed by a loop or a long incline. Instead of doing either, the engineers have carried the road around the mountains so as to avoid the steep grade and give a delightful trip through the mountains. The Lackawanna valley can be had, and all along the route the panorama of shifting scenery as the train circles about the mountains are grand.

From what is known as the summit the road appears to wind about the mountain tops with very little grade. The line was built with a view to avoiding tunnels and high bridges. The route is as solid as anything could be, though a railroad is nothing more nor less than a series of rock cuts and fills. The mountains are very rough and been difficult to cross. The cuts have been through solid rock and in many places from deep embankments. Finally as the train emerges from a deep rocky gorge, and the next view is a deep gorge is the Panther Creek valley.

Panther Creek Viaduct.

Under the original survey a circuitous route had been laid out for the new line which would have skirted the Panther Creek ravine as the descent begins.

It was decided after careful judgment that a bridge over the ravine would be better. This plan involved the erection of a bridge 1,004 feet in length and 158 feet in height, making it the longest (1,500 feet) and highest railroad bridge in the country. It is known as the Panther Creek Viaduct. It is the second highest bridge in the world. There are only two or three viaducts in Europe that equal it. It is located near Summit Hill and forms the only break in the otherwise perfect

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route. The total cost of construction, including grading and masonry, is \$583,000 and the work was done in 353 consecutive days. The iron phase began April 11, and was in place August 3, year.

The erection of the viaduct was begun without the use of falsework June 28, and completed without the loss of life on August 3. The difference of the grades on either side of the ravine gives direct force to what the sketch of the line shows. The engineers' marks and their work will be the admiration of the country for years to come. For the erection of the piers 600 tons of iron, ten million bricks and 4,000 barrels of cement were used.

With the finest and most difficult viaducts in the country this one ranks near the top. The cost was estimated at \$130,000.

The limited passenger looks out and down and the train glides easily across the tremendous height. It is with a degree of awe that he cannot refrain from looking over the banks and down. There are but few such scenic sights on any route and it is as much an excursion as a business trip through this section of the Erie Railroad as from here to Texas.

Short Line to the Metropolis.

The Wilkes-Barre & Eastern is very properly known as "The Short Line." By this road Wilkes-Barre is the same distance to New York City as Seashore points of N. J. Every mile is a saving of time and expense and distance. The passenger is on board the train within five minutes after leaving the hotel and is soon far away on the road. A close watch showed that the D. L. & W. and the W. B. & E. run on the same grade through Stroudsburg and Easton. The shortest distance from Wilkes-Barre to Stroudsburg over the new line is sixty miles. By the old way the road is ninety-three miles. From New York, Seashore points and the city itself, the new road is the best.

It connects with the Erie & Wyoming and the New York City and Stroudsburg.

There are nineteen stations between this city and the point of connection with the parent road as follows: Wilkes-Barre, Ashley, Georgetown, Laurel Run, Miners' Protection, Langan Switch, Summit Switch, Viaduct, Ash Gap Switch, Lehigh, Stoddart, Pocono Summit, Half Moon Switch, Bearersville, Kinders, Dreher, Keeler, Battysville Shops, Stroudsburg and Wilkes-Barre and Eastern Junction.

While the apparent route is long, the actual trip to Stroudsburg will be the same as the ordinary short time. A few changes had to stop at but a few sections, so the run to Stroudsburg will be about the same as by other lines which have been running for a century. The schedule which went into effect to-day, being the first, is necessarily experimental, and those who try to follow the time will doubtless be quickened.

A Very Attractive Route.

As the new line pierces the beautiful and romantic Pocono mountains, families familiar with that locality will realize the new line means national scenic enhancement. The trains roll through cuts 25 feet high, bridges and over ravines which look 200 feet down. The ride is a pleasure and the scenery magnificent. The traveler is soon among the clouds and within view of the broad valley of the Pocono mountains. The winding curves give access to beautiful woodland, rock formations, and wide vistas of scenery. Here and there one sees summer cottages nestled among the pine and hemlock trees, but the train glides steadily along. Not one accident has occurred to mar the beauty of the route. The distance from the station to the gorge is short and very beautiful. The route is safer and much shorter.

Dispatches from Stroudsburg and Jersey City say the first trains reached both.