



Nicholson Heritage Association

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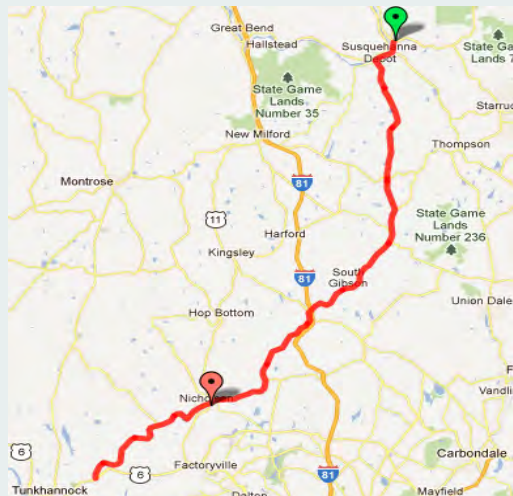
<http://www.nicholsonheritage.org>



<http://www.facebook.com/nicholsonheritage>



<http://twitter.com/nicholsonheritage>



Nicholson (in red marker) is located at the intersection of Routes 11 and 92. The red route is the Viaduct Valley Way Scenic Byway.



Funded in part by the Wyoming County Room Tax Fund and the Endless Mountains Visitors Bureau.

<http://www.endlessmountains.org>



**Nicholson, Pennsylvania,  
the Tunkhannock Viaduct,  
and the Viaduct Valley Way  
Scenic Byway**



**Nicholson  
Heritage  
Association**

*Dedicated to the historical  
preservation of Nicholson,  
Pennsylvania; a small rural town  
nestled in Wyoming County and  
Northeastern Pennsylvania's  
Endless Mountains.*



*During the initial stages of construction - Circa 1913*



*Years after completion - 1934*



### TUNKHANNOCK VIADUCT, ALSO KNOWN AS THE NICHOLSON BRIDGE

The Tunkhannock Viaduct was built by the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad (DL&W) beginning from 1912 and ready for service on November 6, 1915. The viaduct received its proper name from the Tunkhannock Creek that it traverses, but is also known as the Nicholson Bridge because of its location.

This engineering marvel was designed by Abraham Burton Cohen with George G. Ray as the chief engineer. Concrete was first poured in January 1913, with the entire project using 185,000 barrels, or 1,093 carloads, of cement producing 167,000 cubic yards of concrete. In addition, about 1,140 tons of steel were used to reinforce the concrete. The bridge was built to endure 6,000 pounds per square foot, considering some engines at that time weighed 233 tons. At completion, the viaduct cost \$1,735,000 to build.

Five hundred men of which only half or less were skilled laborers worked 24 hours a day with very little equipment. All they had were steam shovels, dynamite for excavation and a cement mixer that was built on-site. At piers 5 and 6, the workers encountered quicksand making it necessary to use pneumatic chambers and many extra hours of manpower. Since the DL&W would not allow dynamite to be transported on its rails, it was shipped by the Lehigh Valley Railroad into Springville and transported to Nicholson by horse and wagon.

The Nicholson Bridge is 2,375 feet long and 34 feet wide. It is 240 feet above stream level and 300 feet above bedrock. There are twelve arches with ten being 180 feet across and two being 100 foot arches, one at each end of the bridge that are totally buried in the land fill. In Theodore Dreiser's 1916 travel biography, he called the bridge: "A thing colossal and impressive. Those arches! How really beautiful they were. How symmetrically planned!" Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and former President Theodore Roosevelt were among the many people that came to view this one of a kind bridge.

This remarkable construction and engineering feat of its time was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (#77001203) on April 11, 1977 due to its national architectural, engineering and transportation significance. Earlier in 1975, the American Society of Civil Engineers designated the bridge as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark due to its significant contribution to the development of the United States and to the profession of civil engineering.





*View of Nicholson from the South Hill - Circa 1920's - Photo Courtesy of Mr. Bill Falls*



*Main Street - Looking North from State Street  
About 1910*



*Nicholson School - Harding & Oak Streets  
Built 1918*

## BRIEF EARLY HISTORY OF NICHOLSON, PA

**Nicholson is a borough in Pennsylvania's rural** Wyoming County named after John Nicholson, former comptroller general of the Commonwealth of PA from 1782 to 1794, who greatly influenced our early nation.

This town of about 700 residents is located where three streams become one: Tunkhannock Creek, Marten Creek, and Horton Brook. Nicholson was also once the crossroads of two Indian trails.

In 1795, Nicholson Township was incorporated out of Tioga and Wyalusing townships.

**In 1811, the area's first Post Office, called** Thornbottom, Luzerne County, Nicholson Township, was established about a mile south of the town in a store run by Postmaster Caleb Roberts.

Nicholson was incorporated by a charter on August 23, 1875.

On February 29, 1904, the volunteer Nicholson Fire **Company #1 was chartered, one of the area's first.**

## NICHOLSON HERITAGE ASSOCIATION BACKGROUND

The Nicholson Heritage Association was established in 1989 as a non-profit organization in anticipation of the 75th anniversary of the completion of the Tunkhannock Viaduct, also known as the Nicholson Bridge, in 1990.

The Association continues to play an active role in our community through many initiatives, including purchasing U.S. flags for local businesses and coordinating the special First Day Cancellation celebrating the Nicholson Post **Office's 200th anniversary in September 2011.**

Additionally, we are currently working to rehabilitate the former Delaware, Lackawanna **and Western Railroad's (DL&W) station located** off Route 11 in Nicholson into a community/visitors center and a gateway to the Viaduct Valley Way Scenic Byway. More details on the station in the column to the right.

We continue to sell Bridge photos and souvenirs at local Nicholson merchants. Additionally, we directly ship certain items, please visit our Website for more information.

## VIADUCT VALLEY WAY SCENIC BYWAY

The Viaduct Valley Way Scenic Byway has designated portions of Route 92 in Wyoming and Susquehanna Counties and runs through the heart of Nicholson. From the breathtaking views of Fall Foliage to the imposing grandeur of the Tunkhannock Viaduct in Nicholson and the Starrucca Viaduct in Lanesboro, there is plenty to see and do along this byway. More information at: <http://bit.ly/viaductbyway>.

## DL&W STATION

The DL&W station in Nicholson was originally **built by one of the DL&W's predecessors, the Liggett's Gap Railroad. In 1849, that railroad** began surveying for a rail line from Scranton to Great Bend, PA. At that time, construction on the first, and largest, railroad station on the line began in Nicholson. Initially, the station was used to board transient workers before being used to handle freight and passengers.

In 1855, the local Post Office moved from the edge of the settlement to the station, at which time the name was changed from Baconville to Nicholson.

In May 1878, the first telephone service in Northeastern Pennsylvania was installed when service was opened between the Nicholson and Scranton Stations, about 21 miles south.

The station only handled freight service after 1915 and continued to handle freight after the DL&W merger with the Erie Railroad in 1960. Due to financial hardship, the merged railroad, the Erie Lackawanna Railroad, closed the station in 1971. The station was sold in 1983 to a local business and in private use since. Donations needed as the Association works to rehabilitate the historic building. PayPal accepted, additional details at: <http://bit.ly/railstation>.



*Station -  
Turn of the  
20th  
Century*



*Station  
- 2011*