

Plaques commemorate Niagara Gorge Scenic Railway at Artpark State Park

Artpark's history was center stage as members of the Niagara Frontier Chapter - National Railway Historical Society Inc. and Railroad Museum Of The Niagara Frontier, in collaboration the Historical Association of Lewiston and Artpark State Park, unveiled two new historical plaques outside of the performing and visual arts venue on Saturday.

Niagara Frontier Chapter project coordinator Anton Schwarzmuller researched the site's history and successfully applied for a William G. Pomeroy Foundation grant to purchase the markers.

A press release noted the first plaque commemorates the Niagara Gorge Scenic Railway, which operated from 1895 to 1935 through what is today's Artpark on its scenic route along both sides of the Niagara River, from Niagara Falls to Queenston and Lewiston. The trolley trip was a highlight for countless visitors to the "falls" - including President William McKinley, who rode the line Sept. 6, 1901. Unfortunately, a series of rockslides and other factors lead to the end of the attraction in 1935. A portion of the line's route has since become a riverside trail on the American side.

The second plaque is located



near the remains of the abutments of the historic bridge, which spanned the Niagara River between Lewiston and Queenston, Ontario, and over which the Niagara Gorge Scenic Railway operated. The bridge was constructed in 1899 and was replaced by the current structure in 1962.

Those on hand to celebrate the unveiling included Schwarzmuller, Niagara Frontier Chapter President James Ball and Comptroller Bruce Becker, as well as HAL Curator Tom Collister.

Ball said, "The NRHS mission

statement has three recurring words in it: preservation, restoration and interpretation. Of these, the one that provides the greatest educational value to the most people is interpretation. It takes many forms; the historic marker is only one of these, but a very important one. Once placed, it informs casual tourists and serious historians alike. It invites further exploration and research, and will be here for generations to come."



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