

Backstory: Mayview Lake



Mayview Lake's story begins with Charlotte native and Mayview Park and Mayview Manor creator, Walter L. Alexander. Alexander was enamored with Blowing Rock and having settled in the town in 1917, quickly set about to create what he deemed "America's Switzerland." Alexander began with the construction of Mayview Park which was composed of numerous cottages meticulously constructed using chestnut

bark exteriors, each consisted of five to seven rooms, and held marvelous views of Grandfather Mountain. Walter also supervised the construction of roads and footpaths through Mayview, all of which were carefully graded. Residents of Mayview Park had endless amenities available to them such as horseback riding, tennis at Mayview's clay tennis courts, swimming, picnicking, meals at the Mayview Club, and golf at Green Park Norwood Golf Course. (Above image: Five ice skaters on Mayview Lake December 1929.

Handwritten on the back of the photograph reads, "Ice skating. Dec. 1929 Ed R., Ed C., George R., Ben G., Lloyd R." Right image: A man seated on the bank of Mayview Lake. A canoe can be seen on the left side of the photo. Image circa 1910s).

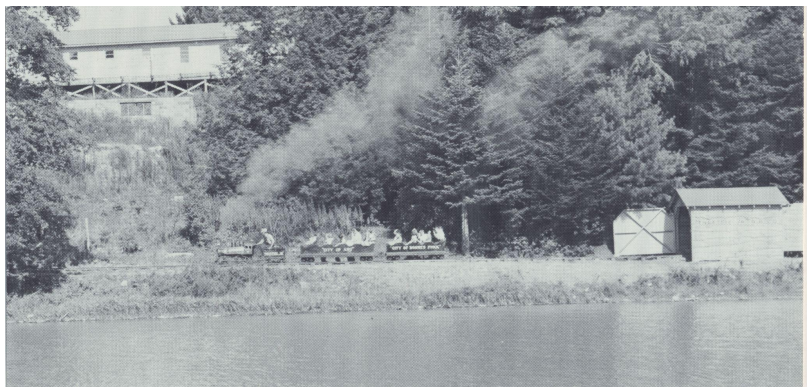
While Mayview Park's construction did not begin until 1917, Mayview Lake was actually installed four years prior to entice future Mayview Park residents with even more amenities. Mayview Lake soon became the go to fishing hole, ice skating spot, as well as a popular area for camping, walking, and community winter bonfires. Over the years many installations and attractions located around Mayview Lake have come and gone. Until the 1930s the lake



was home to Blowing Rock's only electric generation plant and provided electricity to Mayview Park and some sections of Main Street. The last recorded use of Mayview Lake for power was during the worst flood in Blowing Rock's history on August 13, 1940. The village's only source of power came from a small diesel station that was on Mayview Lake at the time.



Another Mayview Lake installation that might be surprising to those unfamiliar with the lake's history is that of the Tweetsie Junior train. In the early 1950s Grover Robbins, Sr. and Frank Coffey installed the Tweetsie Junior train to run around Mayview Lake, carrying adults and children alike.



(Topmost right image: The Tweetsie Junior in action at Mayview Lake on its opening day. Circa 1950s. Middle right image: The Tweetsie Junior making its way around Mayview Lake circa 1950s. Bottom right image: Adults inspecting the Tweetsie Junior at Mayview Lake circa 1950s). The little train was built by the McGarigle Machine Company of Niagara Falls, New York for the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.



Robbins purchased the train in Miami, Florida and knew such an attraction would be a hit for resident and visitor alike in Blowing Rock. The Tweetsie Junior preceded the



Tweetsie Railroad attraction which did not open until 1957 following the purchase of historic Locomotive No. 12 (lovingly nicknamed “Tweetsie” for the sound of its shrill whistle) by Robbins, Jr. The Tweetsie Junior made its loops around the lake for some thirty years before being removed in the 1980s during the town’s beautification efforts.

While the Robbin’s Pool at Broyhill Park can now be found not too far from Mayview Lake, Blowing Rock villagers once had a pool only a stone’s throw away from the gorgeous lake! (A pool by Mayview Lake circa 1950s).

Thanks to generous donations from the Broyhill family, Mayview Lake and its surrounding land became Broyhill Park. Broyhill Park and Mayview Lake offer serene views away from the hustle and bustle of Main Street and the lake has continued to be a popular destination for longtime residents and newcomers even a century since its creation. Weddings are frequently held at and around Mayview Lake and the Broyhill Park Gazebo and the Blowing Rock Trout Derby recently held its 43rd season at the lake this past April. Take in the view and the history on your next stroll around Blowing Rock’s Mayview Lake. (The Broyhill Park Gazebo under some fresh snow circa 1990s).

