

TO GREAT FALLS, VIRGINIA ON THE WASHINGTON AND OLD DOMINION TROLLEY LINE

By
Ruth C. DeBevoise

From the Georgetown Depot at 36th and M Streets, N.W., one could see many families carrying baskets of food and drink and leaving on the train to spend the day at Great Falls Park, with their children and friends. Sometimes, upon arrival at the park, the music of the carousel could be heard. This was exciting, especially for the children. There were many benches and tables available, in addition to a large outdoor two-story pavilion. Picnic lunches were eaten at the tables, and the pavilion was nice for relaxation and for watching the great beauty of the falls rushing over the rocks and down the river. It was a fascinating and awesome scene! The constant roar of the falls accompanied the other activities of the park. Sometimes on weekends, the pavilion accommodated an orchestra and dancing. Also, an outdoor and an indoor restaurant provided home cooked fried chicken dinners.

On one particular day a Sunday school teacher with about twenty-five children appeared at the Georgetown Depot, all bound for Great Falls on a picnic and outing. The Chief Engineer of the railroad called to her to wait, that he would get a special car to take them to the falls. The car soon arrived from the car barn in Rosslyn, just across the Aqueduct Bridge. The children were jubilant and quickly filled the car. Having a car all their own was great fun and an unexpected pleasure. The teacher had known the engineer as a boy and in later years she loved to tell the story about their trip to Great Falls in the special car. The teacher and the class were from the old Presbyterian church at Glebe Road and Wilson Boulevard, now a place of business (Bob Peck's Chevrolet).

It was amazing to see so many young people climbing and poking around the rocks. Some were near the water, which was very dangerous. Each season several lives are lost when people underestimate the danger and are swept away by the swift unseen currents.

P.S. The Chief Engineer in the above story was my brother who for many years was an employee of the railroad.