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Early Railway Competition?

Tony Bagwell

The whole panorama – 88cm x 17 cm.

My daughter recently bought a large panoramic picture of Luzern from a charity shop. In a heavy black and gold frame it looked quite old and was a bit scruffy, the rear being covered with aged brown paper that had seen better days and there was dirt inside the glass. So I carefully took it apart by removing the rusty nails that held the glass, image and backing in place. But how old was it? Initial examination showed the Bourbaki Panorama building was there so that put it after 1890 and the railway station was the 1896 version before the fire of 1971, but that was a large date range. However, closer examination revealed a building on the lakeside at Tribschenmoos, further round from what is now the Kultur-und-Kongresszentrum to the south east of the current station. That building looked remarkably like an airship hanger with an airship poking out.

Putting "Airship Hanger Luzern" into Google revealed an interesting website for the Aero Association Lucerne: Switzerland (1910-1914).

https://www.worldhistory.biz/contemporary-history/74931-aero-association-lucerne-switzerland-1910-1914.html

This makes interesting reading and tells how an airship made a flight between Luzern and Zürich in September 1910 with plans for regular flights. Many local flights were made around the lake during 1910 to 1912, but several problems were encountered with the balloon envelope and by 1913, more conventional aeroplanes were used. World War 1 in 1914 eventually brought to an end this short, but interesting period. Thus the period depicted in this image is obviously 1910-1912 but we're still not sure of when this particular picture was produced.

TOP: The Bourbaki Panorama building in the bottom left corner of the picture.
ABOVE: This is the station that was rebuilt in 1896 with its large dome and front arch that still exisit outside the current station, after this version burnt down in 1971.
LEFT: Careful examination shows the airship hanger with an airship poking out, a sight only possible between 1910 and 1912.