

= Darlington 's Bridge at Delaware Station =

The Darlington 's Bridge at Delaware Station was a highway bridge over the Delaware River in the community of Delaware , New Jersey (known locally as Delaware Station) . Formerly a railroad bridge constructed by the Delaware , Lackawanna and Western Railroad in 1871 to replace an earlier 1855 timber span , the bridge was sold off when the new one upstream was constructed . Henry V. Darlington , an Episcopal minister in Delaware and nearby Belvidere offered to buy the second @-@ hand bridge for \$ 5 @,@ 000 (1914 USD , equal to \$ 118 @,@ 123 today) . Darlington converted it into a highway bridge , using two fired members of the nearby Meyer 's Ferry to be toll collectors . The bridge prospered , becoming a part of State Highway Route 6 in 1927 and U.S. Route 46 in 1936 . In 1932 , during the massive state takeover of bridges by the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission , Darlington refused offers , bargaining his way up to \$ 275 @,@ 000 (1932 USD , equal to \$ 4 @,@ 769 @,@ 573 today) before accepting the sale . This amount was a far cry from the nearby Belvidere @-@ Riverton and Portland @-@ Columbia Covered Bridge , which were accepted for \$ 60 @,@ 000 (equal to \$ 1 @,@ 040 @,@ 634 today) and \$ 50 @,@ 000 (equal to \$ 867 @,@ 195 today) respectively . On that moment , tolls along the bridge and Route 6 were eliminated . The bridge prospered toll @-@ free for another 21 years , until the construction of the Portland @-@ Columbia Toll Bridge upstream at Columbia . Although Reverend Darlington was still alive to see all this transpire , the Commission ceased operations on the Darlington Bridge on April 3 , 1954 , and the bridge was immediately demolished .

= = History = =

= = = Railroad bridge = = =

As expansion of the Delaware , Lackawanna and Western Railroad (DL & W) continued westward from Hoboken , the railroad company saw the need to build a new bridge over the Delaware River . Reaching the community of Delaware (named after the river nearby) , DL & W built a train station previously in the community , denoted as Delaware Station . The new wood bridge was constructed on the railroad mainline during 1855 . The structure lasted a short time , until DL & W replaced the wooden crossing for a new 740 feet (230 m) long iron bridge . The new bridge had two tracks to cross the river , serving the local area with coal cars and boxcars crossing . The new bridge survived the floods in 1903 that destroyed many bridges (including the nearby Riverton @-@ Belvidere Bridge) along the Delaware and continued to prosper .

However , as trains , cars and locomotives began to get heavier and larger , the DL & W needed to build a new bridge across the river to support the heavier weights . In 1914 , they built the new bridge just upstream for the reason that it would not have to move much track for better service . As soon as the new bridge was finished , DL & W put the former one up for sale . Demand for second @-@ hand bridges were not high at the time , and when Henry V.B. Darlington , a local Episcopal minister , put up an offer of \$ 5 @,@ 000 (1914 USD) for the bridge , DL & W immediately took the money . The railroad did not check on the background of Reverend Darlington or asked what he wanted to do with the iron structure . His money was " as good as anybody 's " , according to DL & W.

= = = Henry Darlington 's ownership = = =

After Darlington bought the railroad bridge from the Delaware , Lackawanna and Western Railroad , he made his intentions with the five decade @-@ old bridge clear . He took out the tracks , replacing them with a paved roadway . Darlington knew the automobile was becoming a big entity in the 1910s and 1920s , turning the bridge into a vehicular bridge was an important decision to make the most out of the crossing . He also figured that the bridge would make a good approach for drivers coming to visit the local natural attractions , such as the Delaware Water Gap and the Pocono

Mountains . Darlington created new roadway approaches (Lackawanna Road and Ferry Lane) to the bridge and even two buildings on the New Jersey side of the span . One building was for toll collecting while the other was for living quarters . These quarters were soon occupied by Edward McCracken and his wife . McCracken and his wife had come from the Meyer 's Ferry , a local ferry service running at that point on the Delaware since the early 18th century . McCracken had been the local ferry operator , but when a large accident occurred during a dinner break killed four passengers , the owner put the ferry under his control and later fired McCracken . Klein later sold the ferry , which Darlington bought and shut down . He immediately hired the McCrackens to work as the toll collectors .

In the meantime , the only other bridge across the Delaware River easily accessible for vehicular use was the covered bridge in Columbia , New Jersey and Portland , Pennsylvania . Drivers heading along the local roads (later designated as State Highway Route 5) , often came to Darlington 's Bridge first . The McCrackens collected tolls in large bushel baskets , which were often filled to the brim of quarters and half @-@ dollars . Locals said that the McCrackens were sometimes spotted dropping these coins off the bridge and into the river below , although swimmers were never able to find anything of value to support the myth . Even though the bridge made a large sum of a money and the tollhouse was often filled with money , the place was never robbed for the money . This was because the McCrackens kept two Airedales in the tollhouse , named Duke and Totsey . They kept the place clear from thieves and to add insult to injury , kept people away from visiting the McCrackens at all . Duke and Totsey often kept people from getting money they may have dropped on the ground for people exiting their cars .

In the time of the bridge prospering , Reverend Darlington was wed to Dorothy Stone Smith at the Trinity Chapel in Newark . The wedding , which occurred in November 1920 , made the local news and the ceremony was performed by Darlington 's father , a big @-@ name bishop . Two years later , Darlington made the news again , this time with the birth of he and his wife 's first child (a son) in Orange , New Jersey at Orange Memorial Hospital .

= = = Buyout and dismantling = = =

The bridge continued to prosper through the 1920s and 1930s with a toll of one quarter to cross the bridge , with drivers of State Highway Route 6 coming along the bridge from the junction with State Highway Route 8 coming across the bridge since 1927 . During the 1920s and 1930s , the states of New Jersey and Pennsylvania began to buy out bridges along the Delaware River under the Joint Commission for the Elimination of Toll Bridges . The reconstructed bridge at Belvidere was bought by the commission for \$ 60 @,@ 000 (1920s USD) and the covered bridge at Columbia for only \$ 50 @,@ 000 . Although the commission tried to buy the second @-@ hand railroad bridge for a lower , unspecified amount , Darlington used his strong bargaining skills to raise the amount to \$ 275 @,@ 000 , a far cry from the other local bridges . Residents of Knowlton Township , New Jersey rejoiced at the fact of when the bridge was bought , tolls were eliminated from the crossing . The new generation of people prospered at the thought that the crossing the Delaware would be forever free .

Although the bridge remained in service for another 21 years as a free crossing , the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission constructed a brand new bridge at the Portland @-@ Columbia . The new toll bridge was constructed in 1953 for \$ 4 million (1953 USD , equal to \$ 35 @,@ 378 @,@ 109 today) , but the toll was only one quarter (equal to \$ 2 @.@ 21 today) , like the former price of the Darlington 's Bridge . Darlington , who had retired from his job in Orange in 1950 , was alive and was in disbelief . The next April , the Toll Bridge Commission went ahead and dismantled the bridge made useful by Darlington , which was fought by several legal actions . The bridge ceased operations on April 3 , 1954 , being demolished soon after . The covered bridge at Columbia was destroyed during Hurricane Diane the next August . Just before the demolishing of the Darlington 's Bridge , the approach on the New Jersey side had been renumbered to State Highway Route 163 , which remains in condition from when the bridge was in use .