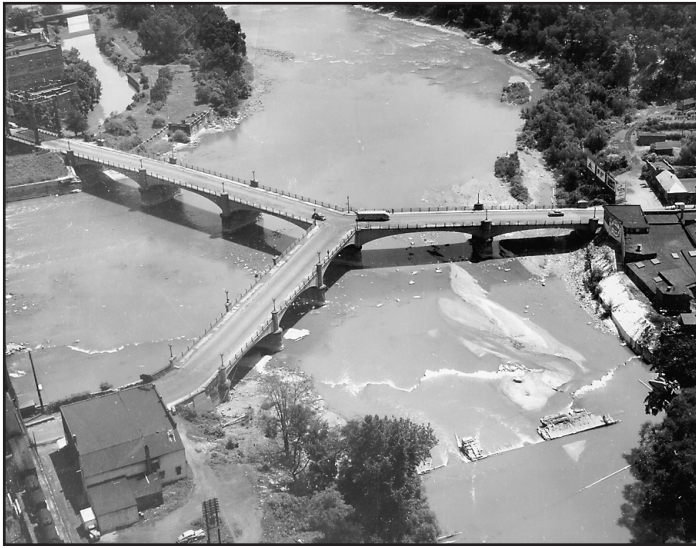


The Famous Zanesville Y Bridge

Did you know that there are more than 42,000 highway bridges in Ohio? The state of Ohio has the second largest number of bridges in the United States. One of the most unique bridges in the state is the Y Bridge located in Zanesville. A Y bridge is shaped like the letter “y.”



This is an aerial photo of the Zanesville Y Bridge circa 1930-1950.

Courtesy of the Ohio Historical Society

The first Y Bridge in Zanesville was built in 1813. It was an open wooden bridge which joined Zanesville on the east side of the Muskingum River with the north and south sides of the Licking River. In its early years, this was a toll bridge. Travelers had to pay anywhere from three cents to seventy-five cents to cross. The bridge fell into the river just a few years after it was constructed.

Both the second and third bridges were covered bridges. Construction on the third Y Bridge began in 1832. The third bridge was built quickly because a flood threatened the area. While it was still under construction, the supports under the eastern span were in danger of collapsing. Support wedges were put in place until the bridge could be completed. Officials involved in the construction of the bridge ordered the removal of the wedges supporting the construction when the bridge was finished. The reason for this was so the flood waters could carry the wedges away without taking the bridge. When the wedges were removed, however, the eastern span of the bridge fell into the river killing two men.

But the bridge was completed and it remained in use for 68 years. The fourth Y Bridge was opened in 1902. Zanesville gained notoriety for its bridge by the time the fourth one was built in 1902. Residents bragged that it was the only one like it in the world. Zanesville became known as “The Y Bridge City.”

In 1979 the bridge was demolished because it was no longer safe. The fifth and current Y Bridge was constructed in 1984. Today it carries travelers of the former National Road over the rivers.

