

ERNEST A. DAVIDSON
Director of Operations



With this 1970 Annual Report the Delaware State Highway Department ceases to exist as an entity of its own. With the ceremonies of August 5, 1970, the former Department has broadened in concept to the Department of Highways and Transportation, but will have relinquished its responsibilities for the State Police, the Motor Vehicle Department, the Mosquito Control Division and responsibilities for the control of public beach lands.

These past years the Highway Department has grown in a magnitude undreamed of in the days of Delaware's first highway. It is expected that the years of the 70's will run true to form and reflect the beginning of a challenging decade for the Department. Traffic volumes have never been greater. Public interest and demands have never been higher. Economic, safe, well engineered and aesthetically pleasing highways are the objectives for the 70's as they have been in years past.

Highways have become fully absorbed into the everyday life of the citizenry. They are such integral components of their regions that social growth has become a highway counterpart.

With all this, only imaginative planning and engineering has carried the Department the distance it has gone. Regional considerations are paramount, with the entire system designed in a balance. Future recommendations will include a continuation of the past quality engineering, as well as:

- Continued improvement and expansion of Department programming and monitoring systems to ensure that planning and construction schedules are met
- Structuring Department components according to function and emphasis on recruitment of professional level personnel
- Expansion of electronic data equipment application, and increased development of computer programming techniques in all phases of planning and design
- Evaluation of managerial, accounting and administrative activities in search of increased efficiency and organization
- Continued efforts in Department organization and personnel to improve our response posture for new and broader challenges
- And, of course, a greater development of concern and answers to the problems of general transportation.



*T. Coleman duPont and Richard Appleby on the
Coleman duPont Highway, circa 1916*

September 20, 1917

To the Hons. John G. Townsend
Josiah Marvel
Walter O. Hoffeecker and
Joseph E. Holland
Members of the State Highway
Department of Delaware

Gentlemen:

With the advent of the automobile, I realized the wonderful development of which our little State is susceptible and that the first essential for this development is a well laid out system of modern highways traversing all the sections of the State. It was obvious from the beginning that the backbone of such a system must be a main North and South Highway.

Familiarity with the great boulevards of Europe and those that have in recent years been constructed in this country was the foundation for the conception of a great longitudinal boulevard as the backbone of a highway system for our State, wide enough to carry a road for vehicular travel and, when the development that is bound to follow demands them, two roads, one for travel in each direction, and also wide enough to carry the public utilities which must come with the development and increase in population.

As you know, following necessary legislation and after many surveys all summer, in the Autumn of 1911, I organized a private corporation, called "Coleman duPont Road, Incorporated", for the purpose of building such a boulevard for the State, at my expense. My original intention, as frequently stated, was that the State should ultimately control and have the benefit of this boulevard when fully developed and as rapidly as each part might be developed, the road for vehicular travel, to be first built upon it, being required to convey to the State upon completion. Unfortunately, some of the people of the State failed to see the practicability or the value to the State of such a great main trunk highway. Other persons imagined that some personal profit might result to me from the project. For these and possibly other reasons opposition to the Boulevard arose in some parts of the State and resulted in litigation, which, in the form of several suits, has been in progress most of the time since the Spring of 1912 and has necessarily delayed the completion of the Boulevard.

The whole of the right of way between the Maryland line and Georgetown, a distance of about twenty miles, has been acquired and the vehicular road has been completed thereon and conveyed to the State in accordance with the provisions of Section 163 of the General Corporation Law of the State. Work is now underway on the section of road between Georgetown and the Appenzellar Farm, which is located a few miles South of Milford, the condemnation of the right of way across which has been delayed by a suit brought by Appenzellar and now pending in the Supreme Court of the United States. All but a small part of the right of way between the Appenzellar Farm and Milford has been acquired, the unacquired part being also in litigation. While the surveys have been made for the entire proposed length of the Boulevard, its location, width and character have not been finally determined North of Milford.

It may be that the public interest aroused by the Boulevard project and the demonstration furnished by the twenty miles of completed vehicular road have done much to awaken the people of our State to some realization of the value of a splendid system of modern highways and of the wonderful benefits that must result therefrom. It may also be that there are many now who are looking far enough into the future to visualize a longitudinal boulevard, such as I originally conceived, in full operation. It is doubtless a fact that the "State Highway Department", of which you are members, is the direct result of the public interest thus aroused.

When the Governor requested me to accept an appointment to membership in the Highway Department, it immediately occurred to me that there might be some conflict between the interests and activities of the Boulevard Corporation, in which I am importantly interested, and the interests and activities of the Highway Department. After reflection and discussion with the other officers of the Boulevard Corporation, a decision was reached which enables me to make to you, on behalf of the Boulevard Corporation and on my own behalf, certain propositions which I feel will eliminate every possibility of conflict between the Boulevard Corporation and the Highway Department, and therefore I felt justified in accepting the appointment.

Consideration of the Governor's request impressed upon me the fact that there is not room for two main trunk longitudinal vehicular roads through the entire State. Therefore, if the Boulevard Corporation,

as a private enterprise, should proceed to complete its vehicular road, the Highway Department would be compelled to accept, as the backbone of the State road system, a highway that might not be in accord with its general scheme or to build its own longitudinal road and thus impose upon the State the economic waste of maintaining two utilities where one would be sufficient to accommodate the traffic for many years. It at once became obvious to me that the Boulevard Corporation should defer to the judgment and wishes of the Highway Department, a Department created by the people of Delaware through their representatives in the Legislature and of later date than the Act authorizing the creation of Boulevard Corporation.

On behalf of the Boulevard Corporation, therefore, and as its President, I am authorized to say that the said Corporation hereby offers to abandon the construction of the Boulevard, or Highway, which it was organized to build, when the same is completed as far North as the Northerly boundary of the said Appenzellar Farm, PROVIDED THAT the Highway Department will agree, as the first highway construction that shall be undertaken and completed by the Department, to continue the said Highway, as far as Milford, by the route heretofore approved by the Commission created by Section 167 of the General Corporation Law and now deposited in the Office of the Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions of Section 173 of the said law, and North of Milford to the City of Wilmington by such route and of such width and character of construction as the said Department shall determine. Inasmuch as the route between the Appenzellar Farm and Milford has heretofore been approved by the then existing legally constituted agency of the State having jurisdiction of the matter, the Boulevard Corporation is of the opinion that the route of the highway as far north as Milford must conform to the one which has been thus approved.

In case the Highway Department shall so agree, as its first work, to continue the said Highway from the Northerly boundary of the said Appenzellar Farm to Wilmington, in the manner hereinabove prescribed, I hereby personally offer to pay the entire cost of all new rights of way that it may be necessary to acquire, but excluding the cost of a new bridge, if one should be found necessary, across the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal. The reason for excluding such bridge, is that, under the Canal Company's charter, the Company itself is bound to build same.

I address this letter to you four gentlemen, Members of the State Highway Department, and hereby authorize you to present it, as a proposition to the Department, at its next formal meeting. I shall not attend such meeting as I deem it would be improper for me to discuss or vote upon the question as to

whether the Department shall accept the offer of the Boulevard Corporation to abandon its Boulevard, upon completion thereof to the Northerly boundary of the Appenzellar Farm, in case the Department will agree, as its first work, to continue said Highway to Wilmington in the manner herein above prescribed, and the further question as to whether the Department shall accept my offer to pay the cost of such continuation of said Highway to Wilmington.

It is to be expressly understood that, in case said offers are accepted, all details of the continuation of the Highway from or near Milford, Delaware, to the City of Wilmington, including route, width, character of construction, etc., are to be determined by the "State Highway Department", in accordance with law creating it.

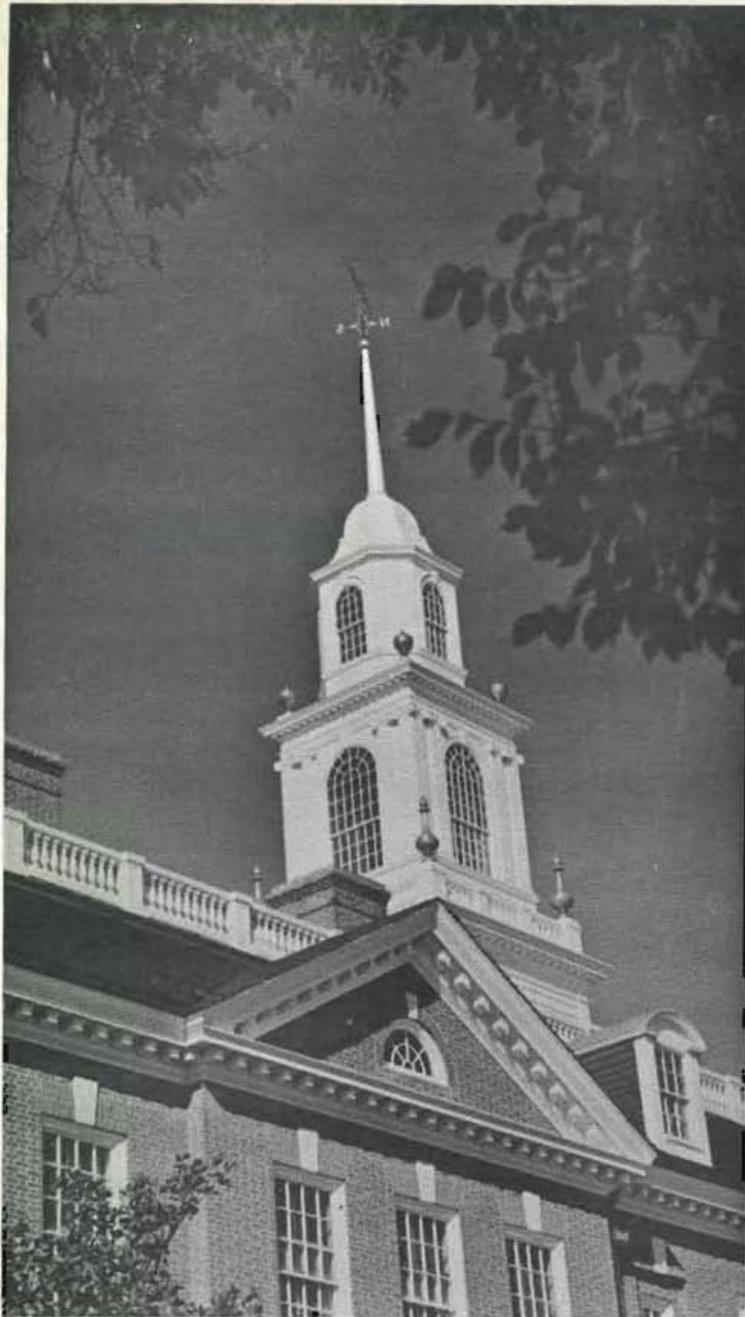
Should the offer be accepted, I will tender my resignation as a member of the State Highway Department so that my presence in this Department shall not embarrass any member in the exercise of his independent judgment.

Please act promptly upon these offers and notify both the Boulevard Corporation and me of your decision.

I beg to remain,

Yours Respectfully,

(Signed) COLEMAN DUPONT



Legislative Hall, Dover

highway legislation . . .

In review of significant legislation, perhaps Senate Bill 547, creating a Department of Highways and Transportation, provides the greatest impact for the coming years. This reorganization will provide the necessary posture to respond to the future demands of public travel in Delaware.

Senate Bills 443, 444, 446, 447, and 449, regarding combining of previous bond authorizations, provides flexibility in construction programs. Capital Improvement funds in the amount of over \$13,000,000 was provided by Senate Bill 445.

The legislative response to Federal guidance in relocation assistance, new home purchases, supplemental rent and mortgage, was achieved by Senate Bill 257 and House Bills 520 and 644. These bills provide increased financial assistance over the Federal standard.

Right of way preservation was achieved by House Bill 668, and Senate Bill 570 removed certain railroad crossing jurisdiction from the Highway Department. Senate Bill 528 places additional responsibility for railroad crossing protection upon the railroads.

Highway aesthetics benefited from Senate Bill 640 which provides for the control of billboards on interstate and primary highways. Senate Bill 547 transferred the control of public beach lands from the State Highway Department to the new Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. House Bill 827 placed Mosquito Control under the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and House Bill 914 relates to removal and storage of abandoned vehicles.

Pedestrian crossing, school sidewalks and a pedestrian bridge were provided by Senate Bills 573, 585, and 593 and House Bills 828 and 831.