

Collapse of Monrovia (a Greencastle Rd)
bridge (over White Lick Creek)

Sept. 1956

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MOORESVILLE, INDIANA
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Allen, Mary O.
151 West Main
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to Open Greencastle Bridge Saturday

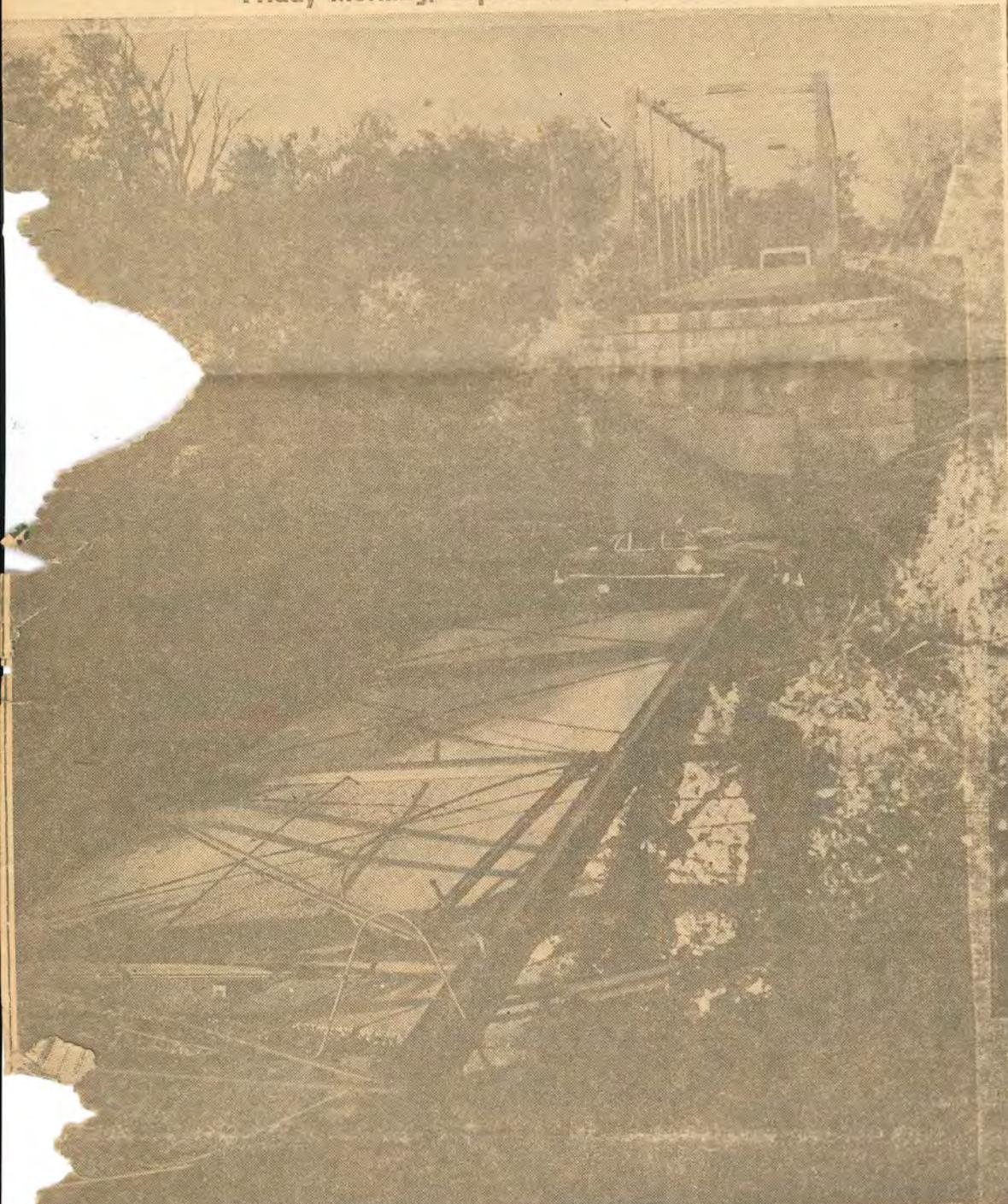
The TIMES

SECTION

FIRST

VOLUME LXX — NUMBER 2 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1958 MOORESVILLE, INDIANA

Friday Morning, September 28, 1956



Mrs. Reedy, last person to cross old bridge to officially open new one; Santa, free gifts, parade planned

Mrs. Marjorie Reedy, last person to cross the collapsed Greencastle road bridge will officially open the new bridge Saturday afternoon when ceremonies begin at 2 p.m. fast time. Civic and governmental officers will be present as Mooreville starts its celebration.

Santa Claus will arrive on the first truck over the new bridge and head a parade including the Mooreville school band and Barlow Twirlettes. On North Indiana street free coffee and doughnuts will be furnished all, and the Mooreville Community band will entertain.

H. D. Coleman, head of the celebration committee, has arranged for Waldo Riss formerly of Mooreville and now an Indianapolis Power and Light company executive, to be master of ceremonies.

Santa Claus will have five gifts which he will give to children on N. Indiana street.

Free \$1 gift certificates

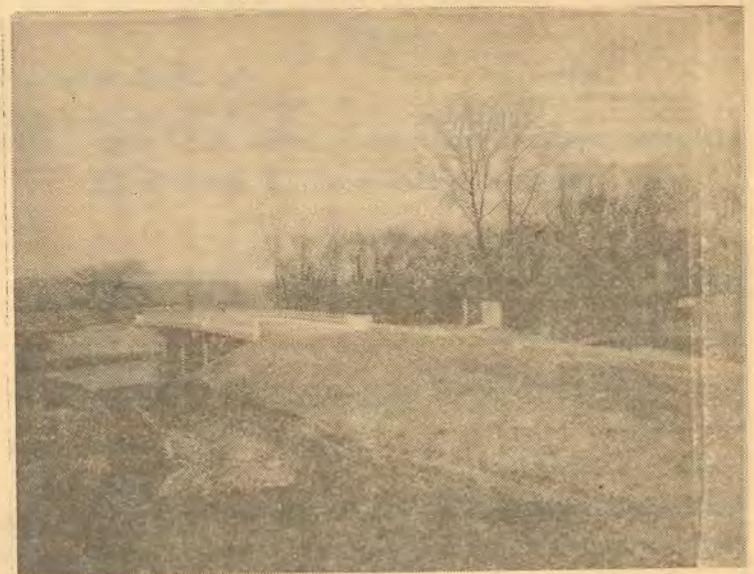
The first 100 people to cross the new bridge will receive \$1 gift certificates good in trade at any Mooreville store. Everyone crossing

Saturday will be given drawing tickets until 5 p.m., and at 7 p.m. on N. Indiana street a drawing will be made for many gifts including 20 turkeys, \$1 gift certificates good on Christmas tree purchases, \$1 auto certificate, a slenderizing course, and other valuable articles. These gifts are being made to show the business community's appreciation of patronage extended during the past two years in spite of the inconvenience caused by the bridge being out.

The JayCees worked over last week and to get the Christmas lights up in time for this event, giving Mooreville the appropriate festive appearance.

Merchants are offering a special celebration sale, marking down prices on hundreds of special items of all kinds. Leon Adler, head of the Chamber of Commerce retail committee for the celebration, welcomes everyone to the Mooreville shopping center to enjoy the entertainment, coffee and doughnuts, and take advantage of the timely sale bargains.

To open Saturday afternoon



Greencastle road's new \$152,237 bridge will carry traffic to and from Mooreville Saturday. Contractor R. L. Schutt was awarded the contract May 31 of this year

and completed the work almost two months ahead of his contract terms, not counting extensions which bad weather would have permitted.

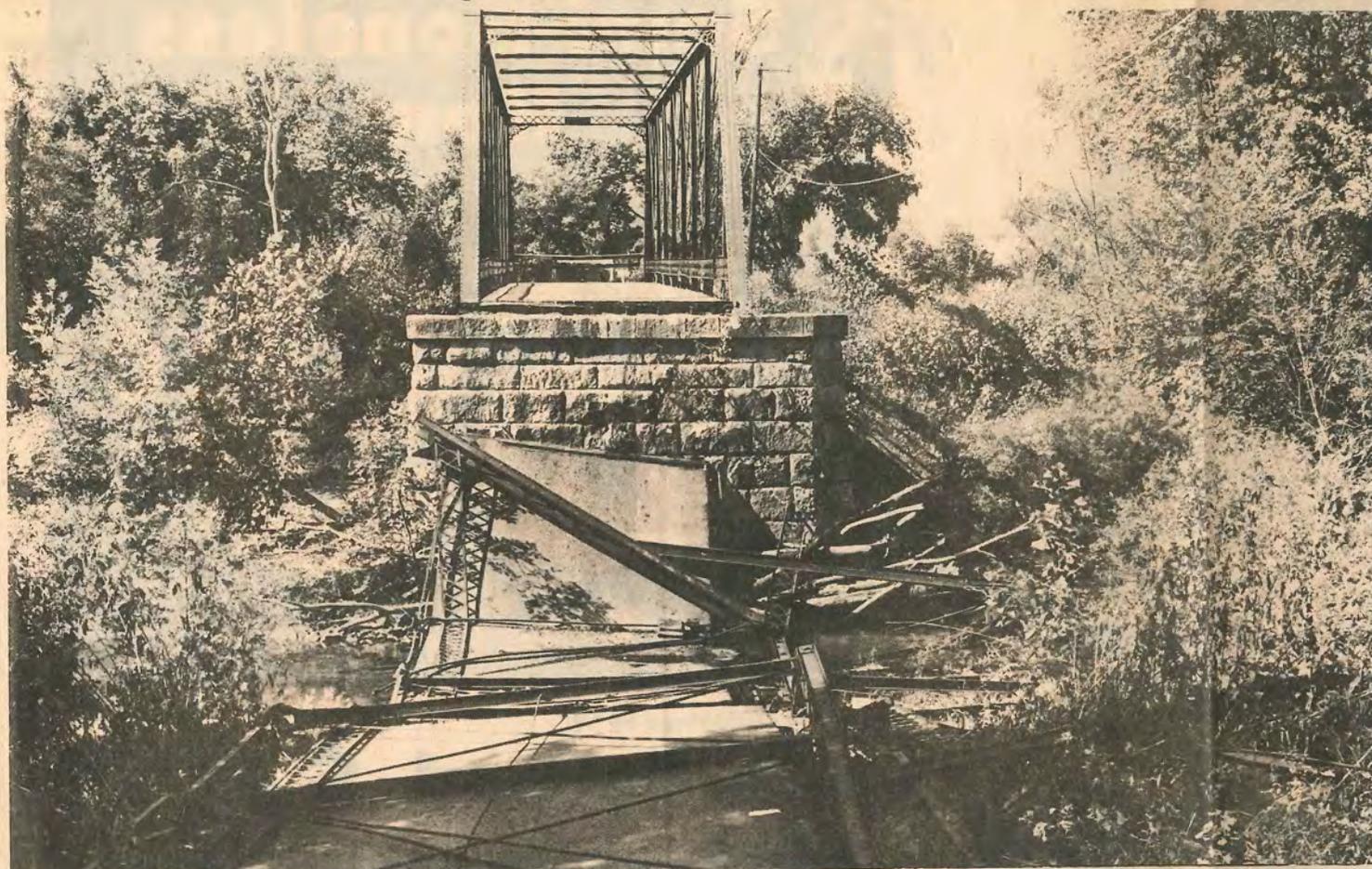
This is the way Greencastle road bridge looked on the morning of Friday, September 28. The car of Mrs. J. L. Reedy is shown after it had been righted below the abutment. She had driven from the

west returning home and her car plunged down at the end of the west span. She suffered a broken ankle and other injuries, but walked across the downed bridge to the west side where she was met by her brother-in-law, Roy Rushing

who had heard the crash at his home nearby.

At the fallen span Mr. Rushing found Mrs. Reedy and also Mr. and Mrs. Hobart Goodman, Kokomo, whose car had gone down from the east side.

If you lived in Mooresville in 1956 do you remember... The day the bridge collapsed



With super-highways and scores of bridges surrounding Mooresville in 1971 its difficult to imagine the spectacular created by the town 15 years ago this month when the old iron bridge over White Lick creek at Greencastle road fell in and even more difficult to imagine the gaudy ceremonies at the opening of the new bridge.

Mrs. J. L. Reedy, 230 E. Har-

risson st., was the last person to go through the old bridge on a dark Sunday evening in September, 1956 to take a group of children home from a church meeting. Returning to town about five minutes later, she found out too late that another auto, driven by a Kokomo man, had struck the opposite end of the bridge making half of the structure collapse into the creek bed. Mrs. Reedy says she didn't know what was happening when her car fell off the end of the west half of the bridge and into the remains of the east-side structure.

Mrs. Reedy was thrown into the back seat of the auto and she crawled out the back door and sat on a beam until she was found by Roy Rushing, her brother-in-law.

The town reacted to the news much like Chicago must have reacted to their fire. Investigations showed that the bridge, built in 1884, had been resurfaced with asphalt and old wood planking removed only two

months before and the bridge had been given a 9-ton rating. Bridges then standing over Rd. 267 towards Monrovia and on County Line road (still in use today) had only 3-ton ratings and parents of school children demanded detours for their safety.

The east end of the bridge had fallen in 1950 spilling a large truck loaded with frozen fish into the creek.

Committees were formed by the Chamber of Commerce and other groups to see the bridge was replaced but speed apparently was not a great factor in the little town of Mooresville (about 2,800 people) in 1956 and it took 800 days (as Bob Adams accurately reported in The Times) to open a new structure and almost that long to let the \$1,520,237 contract.

Preparations began several weeks before the bridge opening for the ribbon-cutting ceremony and old copies of The Times show complaints of businessmen and citizens about the inconveni-



The bridge on opening day.



The Reedy's crossing the new bridge.

ence and the loss of business with persons shopping in Plainfield and Martinsville instead of downtown Mooresville. (There were no shopping centers in Mooresville in 1956, the town ended near Maple Lane with the site of the present high school still planted in corn and soda pop was advertised in The Times at 6 bottles for 19¢).

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Advertisements in The Times began playing-up the gala event six weeks prior with H. D. Coleman as head of the celebration committee and grocery stores advertising "ribbon-cutting" prices. Mrs. Reedy was advertised as the last person to go through (literally) the bridge and was to be the first person through the new structure after cutting the ribbon.

(Mrs. Reedy says she was made quite a celebrity by the accident with television and radio interviews and newspaper clippings from all over the U.S. and a 3-week stay in the hospital with a broken ankle).

The Chamber of Commerce looked upon the opening of the bridge as a resurrection of the town and ran the following promotion in a 1-page ad in The Times: "We had hoped to have Bridgette Bardot as mistress of ceremonies (for the ribbon cutting) but since it might be too frigid for Bridgette, Mr. Waldo Ross, formerly of our town and now with the Indianapolis Power and Light company, has graciously offered his services."

Frigid turned out to be the proper word on November 28, 1958 when the bridge was opened with a 3-inch snowfall and temperatures around 20 degrees.

Merchants joined in the celebration giving away \$1.00 gift certificates to the first 100 persons to cross the bridge along with 20 turkeys, discounts on auto repairs and (of all things) a free slenderizing course.

The ceremony started at 2 p.m. and ended at 7 p.m. with almost everyone with stamina enough to stay being awarded a prize, Mrs. Reedy and Ross cut the ribbon opening the bridge accompanied by Delvin Myrick and his Ramblers and the Mooresville Community band while Coleman and Harlan Hadley tried to keep the microphone from freezing.

The opening was followed by a parade led by Santa Claus on a fire truck with the community band, the high school band, and a twirling group strutting across the structure followed by scores of cars wanting to cross the creek for the first time in over two years.

Gaudy? Maybe, but hasn't Mooresville changed in 15 years?



Mrs. Reedy and Waldo Ross at the microphone on opening day.



The Reedy auto after the accident.