

White River Bridge



(Published in the August 18 issue of the Calico Rock Progress newspaper, founded in 1903)

Undaunted by light showers of rain that lasted throughout the day, some 2000 Ozark mountaineers stood shoulder to shoulder as Governor Faubus dedicated the White River Bridge spanning from Izard County to Stone County at the south end of Main Street at Calico Rock. The 813-foot structure of steel and concrete was filled from end to end with people, with standing room only. Also, the main street and side streets were filled in like manner.

The date was set about one month ago and special invitations were sent to the Governor and also the members of the Highway commission. Aug 12, 1966 became a red-letter day for local people who had cooperated many years to get a bridge across the White River here.

The Arkansas Power & Light Company fried 400 chickens bought from J.K. Southerland by local businessmen with J.K.

making a liberal contribution toward the occasion. The Lunch Room cooks prepared the boxes and Ideal Baking Company contributed 100 loaves of bread.

Free chicken was served at 11:00 until the 1600 boxes were all gone.

A special luncheon honoring Governor Faubus and the Highway officials was held at the Cottage Grill at 11:30 a.m. The dedication started at 1:00 p.m. E.C. Rodman, master of ceremonies, was reminiscent of those who had worked long and hard, but have passed away before the bridge became a reality. Also, he recalled that the ferry at an earlier time was propelled by hand using oars and poles, and later the improvement made when a cable was installed and the current powered the ferry.

He expressed appreciation for outstanding civic leaders who have kept up the work begun by our forefathers. Also, his personal happiness and gratitude for the reality of the bridge.

Congratulatory messages from the Mountain Home chamber of commerce and the Mercantile Trust Company of St. Louis were read to the appreciative crowd enjoying the ceremonies.

J. Orville Cheney, Chairman of the Arkansas Public Service Commission, addressed the meeting and introduced Governor Faubus. Kay Matthews, Chancellor, Little Rock spoke and introduced Mr. Cheney. Both Cheney and Matthews are native Calico Rock residents.

The Calico Rock Lions Club was in charge of the occasion and



Governor Faubus addressed a crowd of about 2,000 at the bridge dedication in Calico Rock. The 813 foot bridge across the White River connects Stone and Izard Counties. The new bridge recently completed will be a gate way to the Ozark National Forest for many and for others it means that they will no longer be isolated by the natural boundaries that did exist.

the committee immediately in charge of plans for the occasion was under the chairmanship of A.B. Whitfield. The food, other than the chicken, was prepared at the Calico Rock School Lunch room and delivered to the east end of the new bridge where it was served in the street. The Speaker's stand was erected in the middle of the bridge by the contractors, Forsgren Bros, Construction Co.

The bridge was gaily decorated with flags and bunting. Rev. John Pyle of the First Baptist Church gave the invocation.

A delegation from Bakersfield, Mo. which included a troupe of young ladies dressed in hoop skirts and clothing fashionable a half century ago, presented Governor Faubus with a walking cane fashioned from Ozark Mountain cedar, decorated and with a message painted on it. They also presented "Whoopin' and Hollerin'" hats to Governor Faubus, Mr. Hampton and the Master of Ceremonies. Miss Barbara Mayhan was spokesman for the group.

In his address to the crowd Faubus said, "The bridge is symbolic of the progress made" during his administration. His only regret was that more such projects could not have been built before he leaves office.

Faubus, who could boast of never having been rained on at a dedication during his 12 years in office, has had a turn of luck recently. It rained at the dedication of the Interstate Route 40 link at Forrest City earlier this week and companions here on Friday had to bail out the water caught in the clear heavy plastic sheet that was protection from the rain.

The Governor noted this saying, "It has never rained on Faubus during a dedication - but you sure had to have this up today, didn't you?" He said that he was glad to be, "going back home to the mountains," then added, "but now of course I may be back." Pointing to the low Ozark Mountain foothills he said, "these are the hills of home." He said he had been asked if he wanted to be buried on the Capitol grounds in Little