



Silver Bridge Disaster of 1967, The (Images of America)

Stephan G. Bullard, Bridget J. Gromek, Martha Fout, Ruth Fout

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Point Pleasant's Silver Bridge, the first eyebar suspension bridge in the United States, was an engineering marvel when it was constructed in 1927 and 1928. Located on US Highway 35, the bridge spanned the Ohio River and linked Point Pleasant, West Virginia, with the towns of Kanauga and Gallipolis, Ohio. For almost 40 years, the structure provided dependable service for travelers in the region. On December 15, 1967, this service came to a dramatic and disastrous end. At 4:58 p.m., during the height of rush hour, the bridge suddenly collapsed. Rescue and recovery operations started immediately but were hampered by poor weather conditions and freezing rain. The cause of the collapse was linked to the bridge's innovative design. Undetected corrosion stress cracks caused an eyebar on the Ohio side to fracture; because the eyebars were linked together in a chain, the failure of one led to the catastrophic collapse of the entire bridge. In total, 46 lives were lost in the disaster.

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