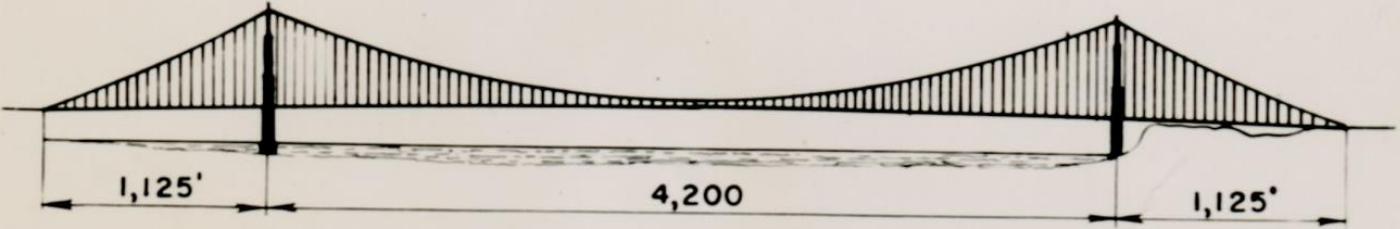
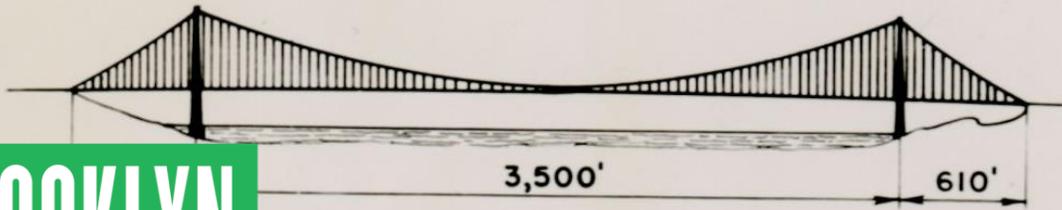


PROPOSED NARROWS BRIDGE
NEW YORK



GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.



GEO. WASHINGTON BRIDGE
NEW YORK

BROOKLYN

CONNECTIONS

VERRAZZANO-NARROWS BRIDGE

PRIMARY SOURCE PACKET

Student Name

INTRODUCTORY READING

Plans to link Brooklyn to Staten Island began in the years following World War I. A projected tunnel from Owl's Head Park was actually commenced in 1921 under Mayor John Hylan. A shaft between Shore Road and the Belt Parkway, at the foot of 68th Street, still exists. The abandoned project was referred to as Hylan's **Folly**.

The idea of a bridge was vetoed in 1936 by the War Department. It was felt that linking the boroughs would present a threat to national security.

In 1949, after public hearings before a joint military board, the Federal Government granted the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority a permit to construct a bridge. Although 82 civic groups fought hard to prevent the eventual displacement of 2,500 families, the **proponents** of the project, led by Robert Moses, claimed victory in Albany. Work began in April 1959, and traffic opened on the upper roadway on November 21, 1964, a year ahead of schedule. Ferry service between Brooklyn and Staten Island was discontinued on November 25.

The Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge was engineered by Othmar Ammann, the world's foremost bridge builder. Ammann, senior partner of Ammann & Whitney, [was] an octogenarian during this project, having come to America from Switzerland in 1904. He had worked on the Golden Gate Bridge, and designed the George Washington, Triborough, Throgs Neck, Bronx-Whitestone, Goethals, and Bayonne Bridge. He also designed the Outerbridge Crossing.

The Verrazzano-Narrows was the world's longest suspension bridge, spanning 4,260 feet between the 690-foot-high towers. The foundation of the Brooklyn tower rests upon the remains of Fort Lafayette. About 143,000 miles of wire suspends the weight of twelve traffic lanes—six on each level. Over 600,000 cubic yards of concrete were used in the course of constructing the 13,700-foot-long engineering marvel. The entire project, including construction, administration and financing, cost three hundred and five million dollars.

Although not initially embraced by local residents, this magnificent bridge, linking the boroughs of Brooklyn and Staten Island, is revered by the communities in both boroughs as a symbol of unity and a monument to local pride.

CITATION: Merlis, Brian, et al. *Spanning the Narrows: Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, 1964-2004*. Israelowitz Pub., 2004.

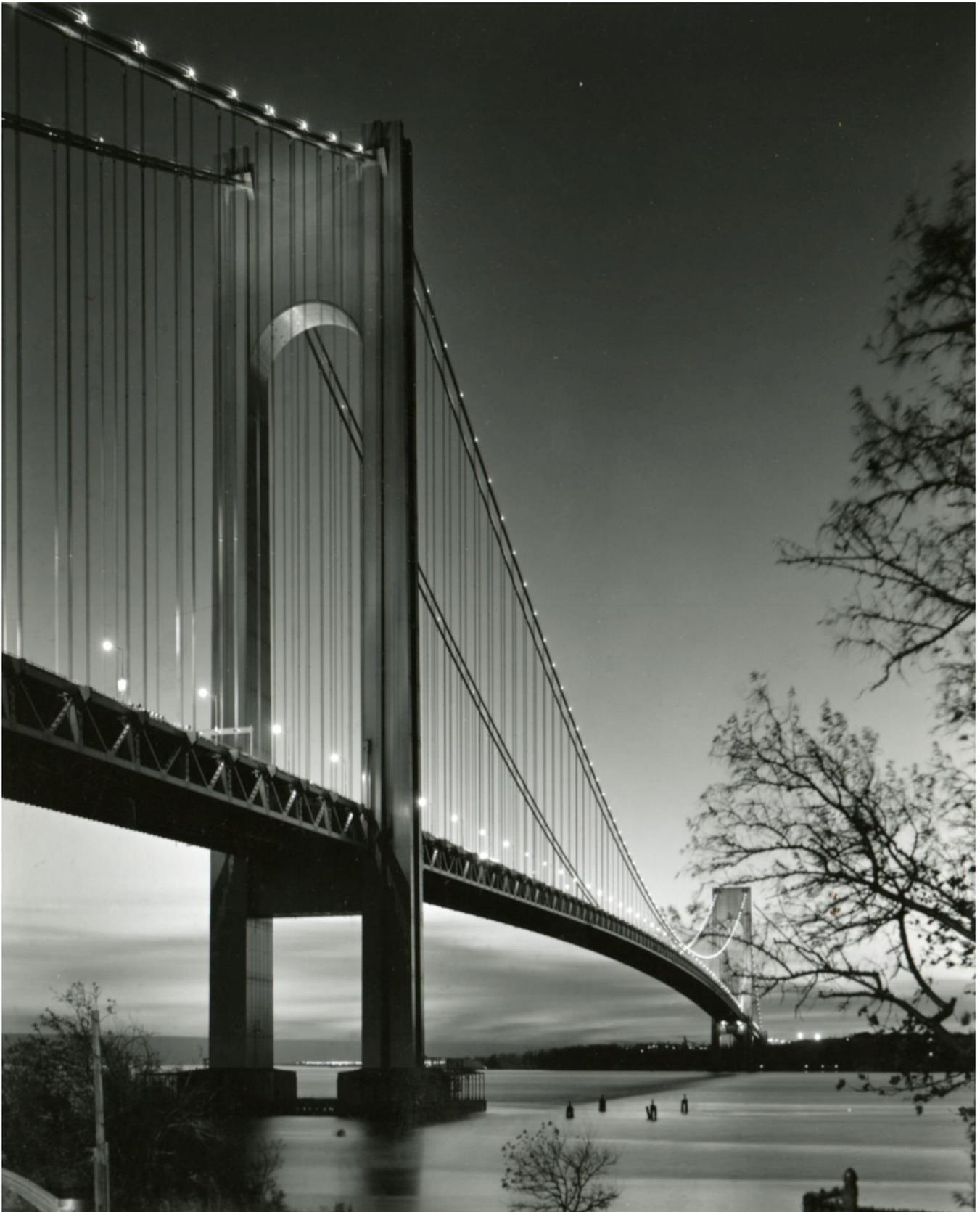
1. According to the **Introductory Reading**, what was “Hylan’s Folly?”

2. When did construction of the bridge begin?

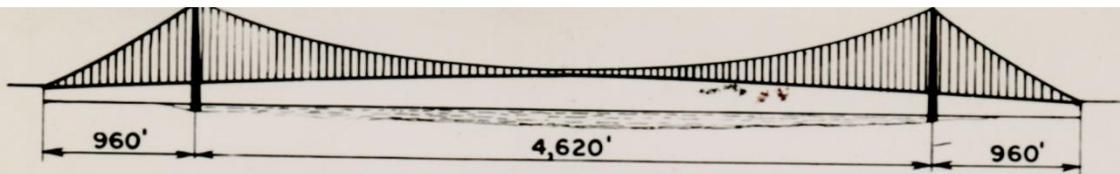
3. How did people cross the Narrows prior to the bridge being built?

4. Who was the engineer for the bridge? What other projects did he work on?

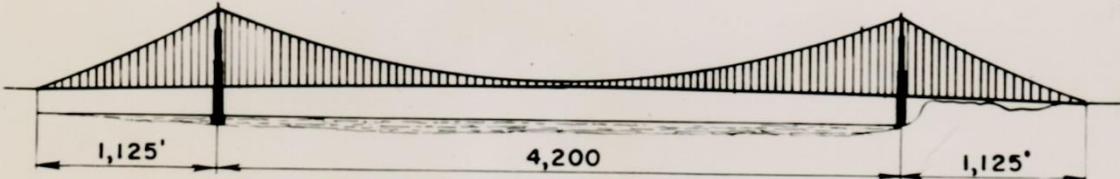
Document 1: Wurtz Brothers. *Verrazano-Narrows Bridge*. 3 Feb 1965. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



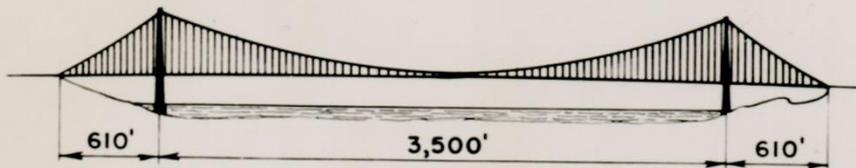
Document 2: *World's Largest Suspension Bridges*. 1948. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



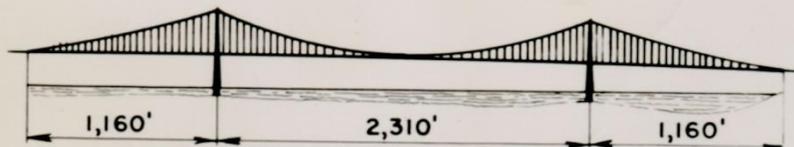
PROPOSED NARROWS BRIDGE
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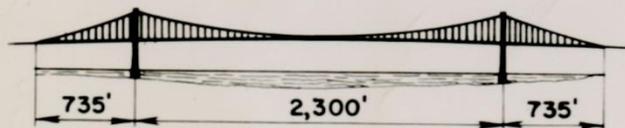
GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE
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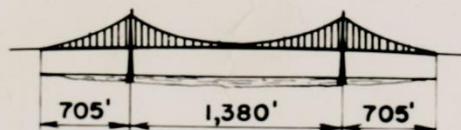
GEO. WASHINGTON BRIDGE
NEW YORK



SAN FRANCISCO-OAKLAND BRIDGE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.



BRONX-WHITESTONE BRIDGE
NEW YORK



TRIBOROUGH BRIDGE
NEW YORK

WORLD'S LARGEST SUSPENSION BRIDGES

1. Examine **Document 2**. How does the “Proposed Narrows Bridge” compare to the other bridges documented?

2. All the bridges in **Document 2** are located in either New York City or San Francisco. Why do you think these two cities have so many bridges?

3. Before the Verrazzano Bridge was built, the Golden Gate Bridge was the longest suspension bridge in the world. How much longer is the Proposed Narrows Bridge than the Golden Gate Bridge?

NARROWS BRIDGE

Staten Island Crossing Proposal Revived

THE proposal by City Construction Coordinator Robert Moses to build the long-talked-of bridge between Brooklyn and Staten Island across the Narrows has special significance for motorists from Long Island who head for New Jersey beaches in the summer and for Southern vacation lands in the winter.

If the bridge proposal should be approved it probably will be some years before motorists can hope to use the short cut. Officials of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, which would build and operate the crossing, say that in its present stage there are no estimates available as to the cost, the amount of preliminary work required, and how long actual construction of the bridge would take.

The bridge, which would be built from the Fort Hamilton area in Brooklyn to Fort Wadsworth in Richmond, would provide the missing link in a direct highway connection between Long Island and the mainland to the South and the West. It would reduce the distance between those areas by nine to thirteen miles and enable motorists to avoid many congested city sectors.

The new bridge would also prove a benefit to Manhattan drivers. Motorists returning from New Jersey shore points at the end of summer week-ends are often delayed by traffic jams on the Pulaski Skyway or the approaches to the Lincoln and Holland tunnels. These delays could be avoided by making use of the new bridge which would be reached by continuing along New Jersey highways to the Outerbridge Crossing and traversing Staten Island along the new highways now in the planning stage. Once across the Narrows Bridge motorists would continue along the Belt Parkway, go through the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, which is now under construction, and then take either the East Side or West Side express highways to points in mid-town Manhattan.

Travelers coming from the South and West also would benefit from the new system. They could by-pass congested metropolitan sections en route to Long Island or even to New England points.

PROPOSED STATEN ISLAND BRIDGE

Transcription

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1. Why might residents of Long Island like to see a bridge built between Brooklyn and Staten Island?

2. How would travelers going to Manhattan benefit from the Verrazzano Bridge?

3. Based on the image in **Document 3**, why do you think the area where the bridge was built is called “the narrows?”

4. If built, where would the bridge ease traffic?

VERRAZANO BACKERS PROTEST A PROTEST

The Italian Historical Society of America yesterday vigorously countered a protest against giving the name Verrazano to the bridge to be built across The Narrows.

The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce, in a letter to Governor Rockefeller, has urged that the span be called simply the Staten Island Bridge.

In its protest, the chamber said it was time "to let Staten Island get into the limelight for a change."

John LaCorte, executive director of the Italian society, said in a statement that several historical organizations had testified that the Florentine navigator Verrazano was the first white man to explore the area.

"What's more," Mr. LaCorte said, "both Mayor Wagner and former Governor Harriman have honored the navigator by proclaiming Verrazano days." The Mayor did this on April 17, 1954, and the Governor followed on April 16, 1956."

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1. According to **Document 4**, what group wanted the bridge to be named “The Staten Island Bridge?”

2. What did the Italian Historical Society of America hope to call the bridge?

3. Why do you think it was resolved to call the bridge, the “Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge?” Who does the bridge honor and recognize and why?

4. What would you have named the bridge? The Staten Island Bridge? The Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge? Something else? Explain your reasoning.

BAY RIDGE SEETHES OVER BRIDGE PLAN

Housewife and Dentist Chafe
Over Approval by City
of Staten Island Span

7,500 TO BE UPROOTED

Most in Way of 7th Avenue
Approach Uncertain on
Where They Will Go

By GAY TALESE

Many merchants, housewives and even a mortician were seething in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, yesterday because the \$320,000,000 Narrows Bridge has become more than a specter on Seventh Avenue.

On Tuesday, the Board of Estimate approved the bridge, which will mean demolition of about 800 homes and the displacement of about 7,500 residents.

From the barber shops to Bohack's, conversations bristled with contempt. A man in a cigar store asked, "That bridge—who needs it?" A dentist wondered about new patients. A used-car dealer worried about a new lot. Mrs. Olga Kaidy, a housewife of Fort Hamilton Parkway, asked, "Where are we all going to live?"

Their problem, of course, is not the bridge to Staten Island itself; it is rather the approach along Seventh Avenue that will necessitate the destruction of all buildings in its path.

Bay Ridge residents long ago formed a "Save Bay Ridge" committee; but Tuesday's development made the committee-men embittered, irate and talkative.

"We don't need the bridge," said J. Gerald Shea, the chairman, "it's ridiculous. The construction of the approach to the bridge will henceforth be known as 'Wagner's Seventh Avenue Folly,' and the bridge will be known as 'Abe Stark's Cross-Brooklyn Ditchway.'"

All to Be Affected

Nearly everyone in Bay Ridge will be affected in one way or another by the Narrows Bridge. Msgr. Edward J. Sweeney of St. Ephrem's Roman Catholic Church will lose about 2,000 members of his parish. Dr. Henry Amen will lose a dental office he recently remodeled at a cost of \$15,000. Joseph V. Sessa, an undertaker, said he would lose about 2,500 families "from which to draw."

Almost all of those owning homes slated for demolition seemed undecided where they would live next. A housewife complained that she did not wish to leave her older, more comfortable home for a newer house "made of cardboard."

Louis Juliano, a builder and contractor, is fed up with moving. About four years ago, when a school was planned on his home's site on Shore Road, he was forced to move; and now he again is forced to move.

Only Mr. and Mrs. John G. Herbert, of 6704 Seventh Avenue, do not seem concerned over their next abode. Which is odd. They have seventeen children, and all but two daughters live with them and a dog and cat in an eight-room house.

"I'm going to wait until the last minute before I move," Mr. Herbert said. "I'm going to wait until they come with the city truck. I'm letting them worry about the details."

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1. According to **Document 5**, how many homes needed to be destroyed to make room for the bridge's construction? How many people does the article estimate will lose their homes?

2. Why were Bay Ridge residents upset about the bridge and the approach to the bridge?

3. The article notes that most of the residents in Bay Ridge would be affected by the bridge. How about merchants?

4. Imagine you had to move because of construction. How would this impact you?

Z'S SPELL TROUBLE FOR BRIDGE NAME

Officials Go to Staten Island on Verrazzano Boat for a One-Z Affair

The game of one-z, two-z over the name Verrazano-Narrows Bridge broke out again yesterday during a groundbreaking ceremony in Staten Island.

The fanfare became slightly deranged when a ferryboat carrying dignitaries to the ceremonies was discovered to be named "Verrazzano" with two z's.

As nearly everyone knows by now, the Italian Historical Society of America is campaigning to name the bridge, which will connect Staten Island with the rest of New York, after Giovanni da Verrazano (one z in the *Columbia Encyclopedia*), the Florentine who is credited with discovering New York Harbor, in 1524 A. D.

April 16, 1958, Gov. Averell Harriman, a Democrat, who is once again using W. in front of his name, told a crowd in Battery Park that the bridge would be called the Verrazzano Bridge, with two z's. And Mayor Wagner, also a Democrat, proclaimed Verrazzano Day. The two z's had been suggested by the Italian Ambassador, Dr. Manlio Brosio, who said Italians preferred it that way.

1. According to **Document 6**, what was a disagreement surrounding naming the bridge?

2. What was the name of the ferry? How did the ferry's name add controversy to the naming of the bridge?

3. What was the end result of the debate? One Z or two Z's? Why do you think this was chosen?

New Landmark Greeted With Fanfare in Harbor

By GAY TALESE

The sun shone, the sky was cloudless; bands played, cannons echoed up and down the harbor, flags waved, and thousands of motorists yesterday became part of the first—and perhaps only—blissful traffic jam on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

The bridge, which took more than five years to build and which reaches like a rainbow over the Narrows between Brooklyn and Staten Island, was officially opened to traffic at 3 P.M.

"This latest addition to our city's great wealth of bridges represents a new summit of achievement," Mayor Wagner told the crowd assembled near the world's longest suspended span. "Surely we must see it

not only as the biggest, but as the most beautiful of all, the most princely, and the most stately."

A young man in a rented tuxedo, driving a pale blue Cadillac convertible with flags flapping from the fenders, was the first man to cross the bridge and pay the 50-cent toll. He, together with his young companions (also in rented tuxedos), had parked all week behind the Staten Island toll gate to assure their official position as the first to cross.

When they crossed the 6,690-foot span, passing through the arches of the two steel towers that are as tall as 70-story skyscrapers, the youths were cheered by the crowds standing

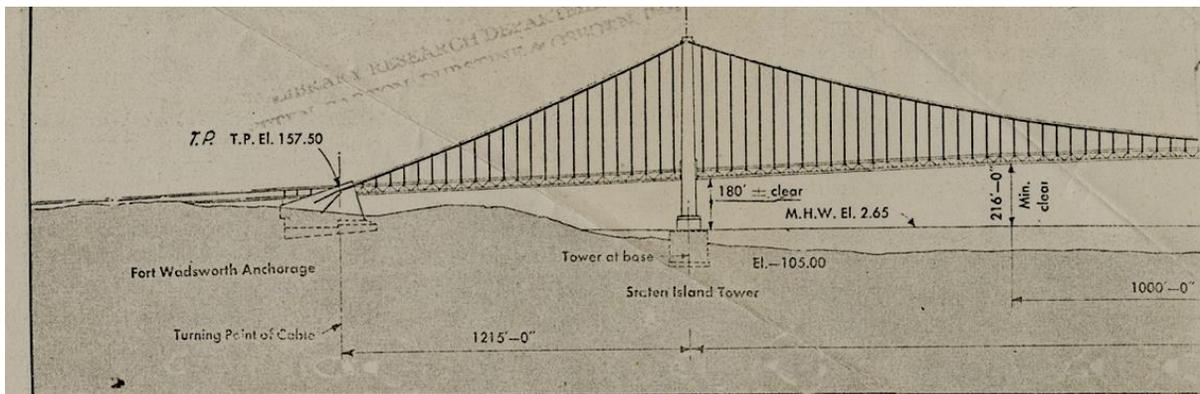
Continued on Page 80, Column 1

1. When did the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge open to the public? Include the date and time.

2. How did Mayor Wagner describe the Bridge?

3. The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge costs \$17 to cross today. How much did it cost when it first opened? What is the difference in price between when it opened and today?

4. How long and tall is the Bridge?



Everything About the Narrows

When New York City's Narrows Bridge is opened in 1965 it will be a truly remarkable structure. Among other things, it will contain the longest suspended span ever built. In the four main cables that will support its two decks will be enough wire to go five times around the world at the equator—with a piece left over long enough to reach from New York to Tokyo.

Its height, measured from the base of its eastern tower foundation to the tower top is just under that of the Eiffel Tower.

And it will be one of the most expensive single structures ever built by man: it will cost \$325 million—almost

ten times more than the present long span record holder, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the cost of new highways being built to it will exceed by many millions the combined initial cost of the Golden Gate Bridge and the George Washington Bridge (which currently has the third longest suspension span in the world).

At the present stage of construction the Narrows Bridge appears to the casual observer to be little more than widely scattered series of holes. But even the holes are remarkable—the excavation for the west anchorage is about a city block square, 145 ft deep, and on its completion will have re-

quired the movement of almost half a million cu yd of earth. Into it will go almost a quarter of a million cu yd of concrete.

The structure and its immediate approaches will be more than 2½ miles long. From anchorage to anchorage the distance will be 6,690 ft. The center span will be 4,260 ft—60 ft longer than that of the Golden Gate Bridge. (Present runner-up, Mackinac Bridge in Michigan, has a 3,800 ft span, third place George Washington Bridge has one of 3,500 ft.) Each of its side spans will be 1,215 ft long. Each of the four 35½-in.-dia cables will be 7,205 ft in length and will contain 26,108 wires.

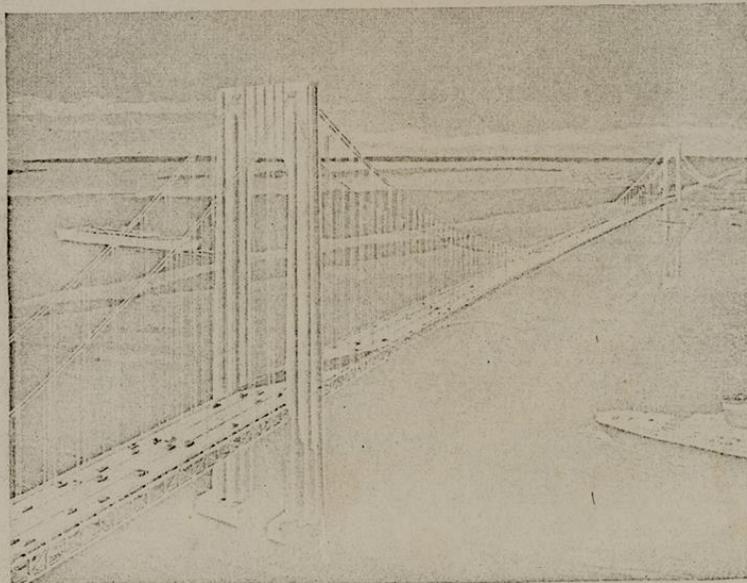
The total length of wire in the cables will be 142,500 miles.

Towers will rise 690 ft above the water. Tower foundations will go 105 ft below water on the Staten Island side, 170 ft below water on the Brooklyn side.

Channel clearance of midspan will be 228 ft above mhw.

And even though it's in a field where behemoths develop slowly, the Narrows Bridge is also notable for the length of time that elapsed between the time it was first seriously proposed and the time construction was actually begun.

It is possible that with the exception of the proposed English Channel Tunnel (which was actually started by Napoleon in 1812) no major water crossing in the world has been argued over for so long or with so much heat. It was first officially proposed in 1888 and in the near three quarters of a century that have elapsed since, countless persons in both official and unofficial roles on local, state and national levels have fought violently against, or enthusiastically for, erection of the great structure.



Narrows Bridge will look like this when it is completed in 1965.

1. According to **Document 8**, how many times could the Bridge's main cables circle Earth if stretched out?

2. Which is taller, the Eiffel Tower or the Verrazano Bridge?

3. According to the article, how much will the bridge cost?

4. When was a bridge connecting Brooklyn and Staten Island first proposed?

Document 9: "Verrazano Bridge Casts Long Shadow Over Staten Island." *New York Times*. 28 Jun 1969.

"The new people," they are called on Staten Island. Mainly from Brooklyn, they are the people who have settled on the island since the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge was opened, in 1964, touching off the area's biggest boom since the Dutch moved in on the Leni-Lenape Indians in 1661.

The bridge has pushed this last rural outpost in the city well on the way to suburbia. And many islanders fear "another Queens" is in the making, with high-rise apartments and closely packed homes sprouting out of bulldozed woodland.

Another step in the citification of Staten Island will take place today when a six-lane second level of the largest suspension bridge in the world is opened—11 years ahead of schedule—adding fuel to the arguments over progress and serenity.

The lower level was included in the 13,700-foot bridge when it was built. But as traffic rose far beyond expectations, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority pushed up the opening date of the second level of the \$320-million bridge when volume neared 28 million cars a year.

One industry created by the bridge is the assembly of statistics. They include: Staten Island's population since the bridge opened Nov. 21, 1964, has increased by more than 60,000 to its present estimated total of 310,000, about double the increase between the census figures of 1950 and 1960 . . . About 80 per cent of

the families own homes . . . The non-white population is between 7 and 10 per cent.

Take 17-year-old Mark Meyers, stretched out on a beach chair on the front lawn on a block so new that the street signs were not even installed. Up the street, a few children were riding bicycles.

"It's nice here," he said. "Peaceful. Not like Brooklyn. I never lived in a house before. I like living in one. I can go downstairs in the den and play the drums.

"My only complaint is the bus system. You can wait 20 minutes and sometimes they break down. And there's the mosquitoes. I don't like them.

"But it's swell here. I've had some of my friends over from Brooklyn. I think their parents are thinking of moving out here."

Several feet away, in front of the next house, Mrs. Carol Curcuru gave a bottle to her 5-month-old daughter Kim and chatted contentedly with a neighbor, Mrs. Eileen Sandman. Both had come from Brooklyn, but had not met before they moved here.

"I wanted a home," said Mrs. Curcuru. "And this is much better than suburbia.

1. Who moved to Staten Island after the Verrazano Bridge was built? Why do you think they moved to Staten Island?

2. When did the second level of the Verrazano Bridge open?

3. How long was the construction on the second level supposed to take? Why was the construction sped up?

4. What was the population of Staten Island in 1961? 1969? How many more people lived in Staten Island in 1969 compared to 1961?

5. What were Mark Meyer's feelings toward Staten Island?

The New York Times

How Do You Solve a Problem Like the Verrazano? With an Extra Z

By Vivian Wang

June 7, 2018

Adaptation

ALBANY — The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge: A **colossal** expanse linking Brooklyn and Staten Island, once the longest suspension bridge in the world and a proud symbol of New York City’s history and urban geography.

Language of origin: Italian.
Part of speech: noun.

Spelling: Wrong.



The iconic bridge, with one Z, was christened in 1960 in honor of the 16th-century explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano, with two Zs. After the better part of a century of arguing over the spelling of the name, the state seems poised to finally **rectify** what is possibly the biggest unintentional **slight** in the annals of American public architecture.

Senator Martin J. Golden is a Republican who represents parts of Brooklyn and who is the sponsor of a bill that would add a Z to the bridge’s name. “Verrazzano was a great discoverer, a great explorer,” Mr. Golden said. To have the name misspelled all these years — “It’s shameful,” he said.

The **orthographic** debate the bill seeks to settle is older than the bridge itself. Even before construction on the structure began, city and state leaders were squabbling over the spelling, with Gov. W. Averell Harriman stumping for two Zs, and the aides of his successor, Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller, championing just one. The war pitted zealous One-Zers against Two-Zers, encyclopedists against museum officials, historians against the Italian ambassador. In 1959, at the height of the dispute, officials en route to a groundbreaking ceremony for the planned Verrazano-Narrows Bridge found themselves in a boat called the “Verrazzano.”

The One-Zers carried the day, and the bridge as currently named — two Rs, one Z, one N, and more than a few angry Italian-Americans — was born.

Jon Weinstein, a spokesman for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which operates the bridge, said a spelling fix would cost the agency roughly \$350,000 to replace “96 signs of varying sizes.”



Advocates of the change say it’s the message, not the price, that matters.

“I understand that there’s a cost involved in doing these things, but I think the cost over time is **minuscule** compared to the psychological and emotional effect that it has on people,” Joseph V. Scelsa, the president of the Italian American Museum in Lower Manhattan, said.

The true difficulty may not be so much cost as past practice. Since its opening in 1964, the bridge has become a fixture of the city’s literature, and the paper trail left by that lone, controversial Z is long. One of New York’s most venerated writers, Gay Talese, wrote an entire book about the bridge, one Z. Opinion pieces have denounced its infamous \$17 one-way toll. Local businesses bear its name.

“That’s the name, and that is the norm,” said Tomas Kim, the owner of Verrazano Bicycle Shop in Brooklyn, who said he does not plan to change his store’s name. “It was a mistake from the beginning, but it’s the name of the area.”

“We’re not changing our name,” said John Miraglia, the manager of Verrazano Motorworks on Staten Island, said. “I mean, I’m Italian. A lot of our names got changed when we came here. It’s not really a big deal.”

The bill would sway at least one local establishment: Public School 101 in Brooklyn, also known as The Verrazano; education department spokesman Doug Cohen said the sight of a misspelled proper noun was “enough to make any educator shudder” and that the school would “take the necessary steps to ensure the integrity of all future spelling bees.”

The bill zipped through the Senate on Wednesday, and will now go to the Assembly. If passed there, it would then be put to Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, who has his own history of bridge-naming tussles.

1. According to Senator Golden, who was the Verrazzano Bridge named after?

2. Which New York governor was in favor of spelling the name with one Z?

3. How much does the Metropolitan Transit Authority estimate it will cost to change the spelling of the Verrazzano Bridge?

4. What other impact would changing the spelling of the bridge have on the local community?

5. What's your opinion on the matter – would you keep the spelling with one Z or change it to two? Explain your reasoning.

GLOSSARY

Congested: so crowded with traffic or people as to hinder freedom of movement

Folly: lack of good sense; foolishness

Merchant: a person or company involved in supplying merchandise to a particular trade

Minuscule: extremely small; tiny

Mortician: funeral director

Octogenarian: Someone who is in their eighties (80-89)

Orthographic: a set of conventions for writing a language

Proponent: a person who advocates for a theory, proposal, or project.

Rectify: put (something) right; correct

Sark, Abe: Brooklyn's Borough President at the time

Seething: very mad/angry

Slight: insult (someone) by treating or speaking of them without proper respect or attention

Specter: phantom

Traverse: travel across or through

Wagner's Seventh Avenue Folly: reference to the Mayor at the time, Mayor Wagner, wanting the approach (major roadway) to the bridge on 7th avenue. Residents believed the traffic through the neighborhood would create problems for the area.