

Verrazano Bridge Opened to Traffic



The liner United States, returning from drydock in Virginia, passing under the bridge with other craft yesterday



Associated Press

From left, in front: Governor Rockefeller; Ambassador Sergio Fenoaltea of Italy; Robert Moses, chairman of Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority; Borough President

Abe Stark of Brooklyn; Mayor Wagner; Borough President Albert V. Maniscalco of Richmond and Cardinal Spellman. The ribbon-cutting was held at Brooklyn end.

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

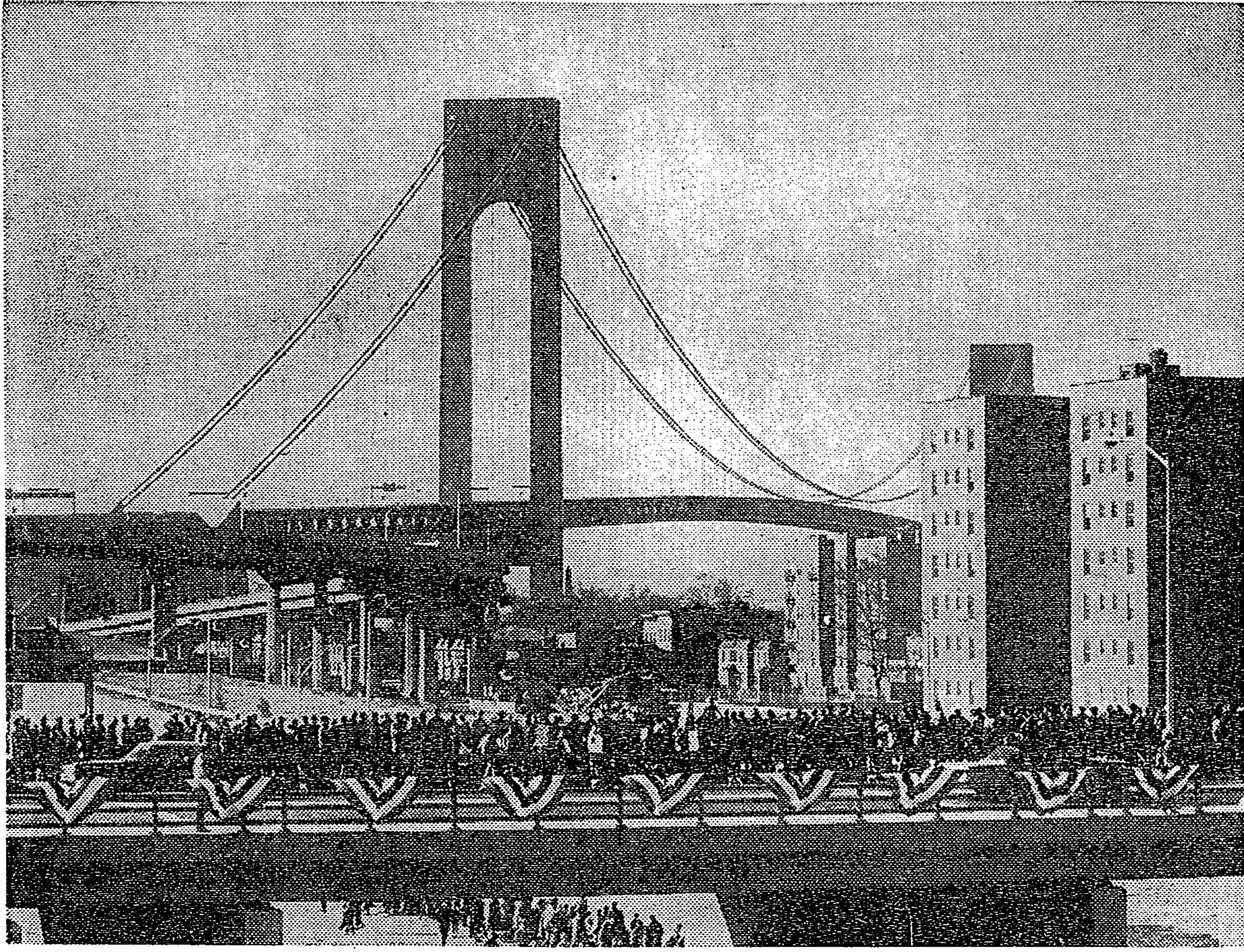
not only as the biggest, but as the most beautiful of all, the most princely, and the most stately."

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.

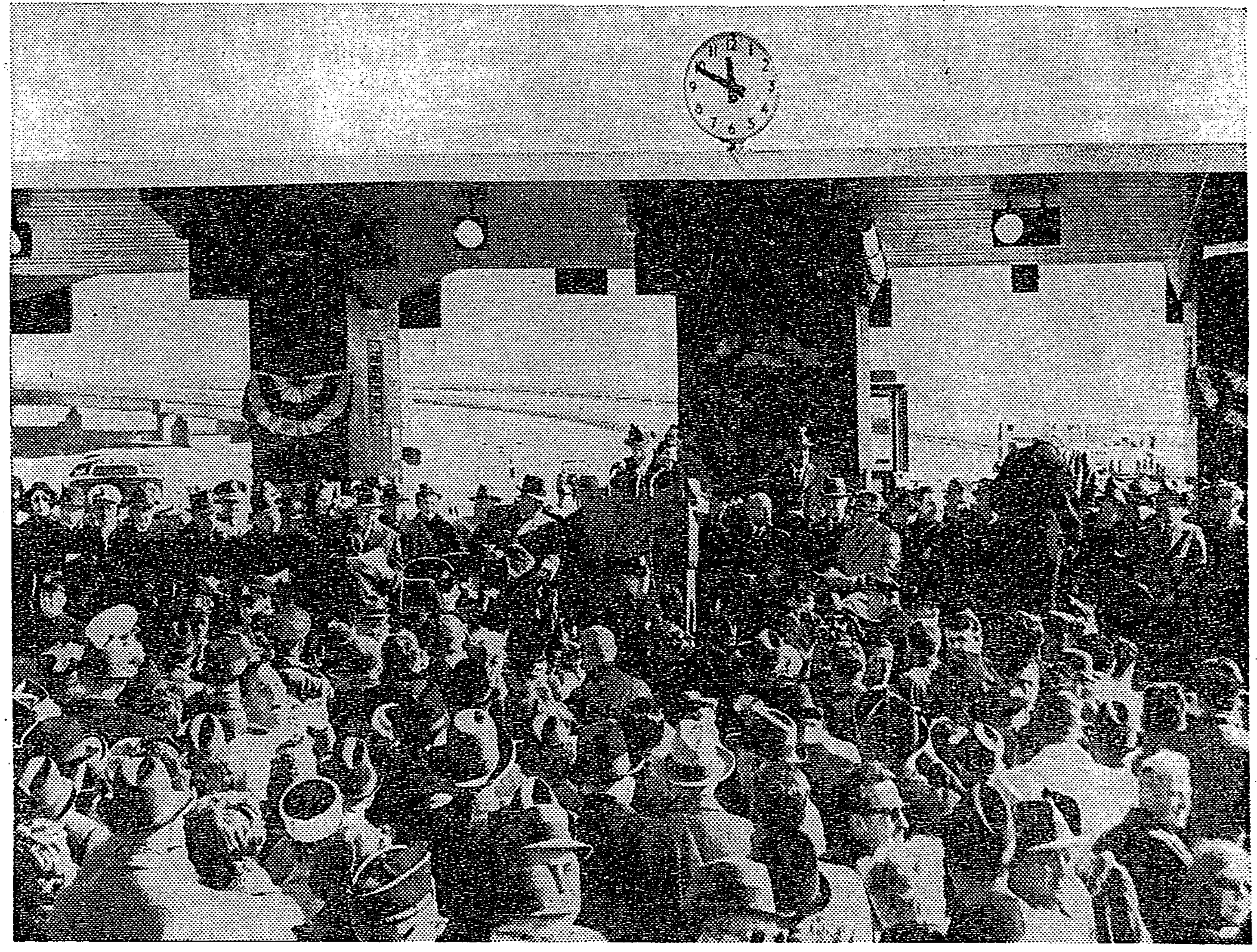
When they crossed the 6,690-foot span, passing through the arches of the two steel towers that are as tall as 70-story skyscrapers, the youths were cheered by the crowds standing

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Verrazano-Narrows Bridge Officially Opened to Traffic After Cutting of Ribbon



BIG DAY IN BROOKLYN: Crowd at 92d Street overpass to view ribbon-cutting for the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge



BIG DAY IN STATEN ISLAND: This was the scene at the toll plaza as Robert Moses spoke at the dedication

A NEW ERA HAILED ON FESTIVE DAY

Stream of Dignitaries and Curious Motorists Causes a Brief Traffic Jam

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on the Brooklyn side of the bridge.

In Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, the neighborhood that had protested the building of the bridge five years ago, had bunting waving from buildings, and flags galore.

The only obvious signs of disenchantment along the Brooklyn shore yesterday were the picket lines of teen-agers who protested the bridge's lack of pedestrian walkways. "Are Feet Obsolete?" one sign asked.

It was the belief of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, which financed the building of the \$325 million bridge, that a walkway would not only be expensive and relatively little-used but that it might also prove attractive to suicides, who often are drawn to new and famous places.

Deeper into Brooklyn yesterday, there was another group of mildly disappointed people—the bridge builders. They boycotted the ceremony yesterday, responding to a call by the ironworkers' union leader in Manhattan, Raymond R. Corbett, who last week denounced Robert Moses for his failure to invite the men "who put that bridge together piece by piece, strand by strand."

Mass for Three Victims

Instead, Mr. Corbett and his ironworkers said they would attend a mass in honor of the three workmen killed during the construction of the bridge.

Nevertheless, the men who built the bridge were given credit and applauded in speeches on both sides of the Bridge. Mayor Wagner mentioned them, as did Roger M. Blough, board chairman of United States Steel, and others.

"Indeed, to all the named and unnamed thousands, the eight million citizens of New York City say 'Thank you' for the mightiest bridge in the world," Mayor Wagner said.

The Mayor also read a congratulatory message from President Johnson hailing the bridge as "a structure of breath-taking beauty and super engineering" and "a brilliant example of how several levels of government can work in cooperation for the common good."

All in all, on the bridge at least, it was a harmonious day. At 11 A.M., on the Brooklyn side of the bridge, 1,500 official guests gathered to witness the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

52-Car Motorcade

They arrived in 52 black limousines—a line of cars that moved as slowly as a funeral procession over the smooth white highway that cuts through Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, and circles a few times and finally links with the entrance to the bridge.

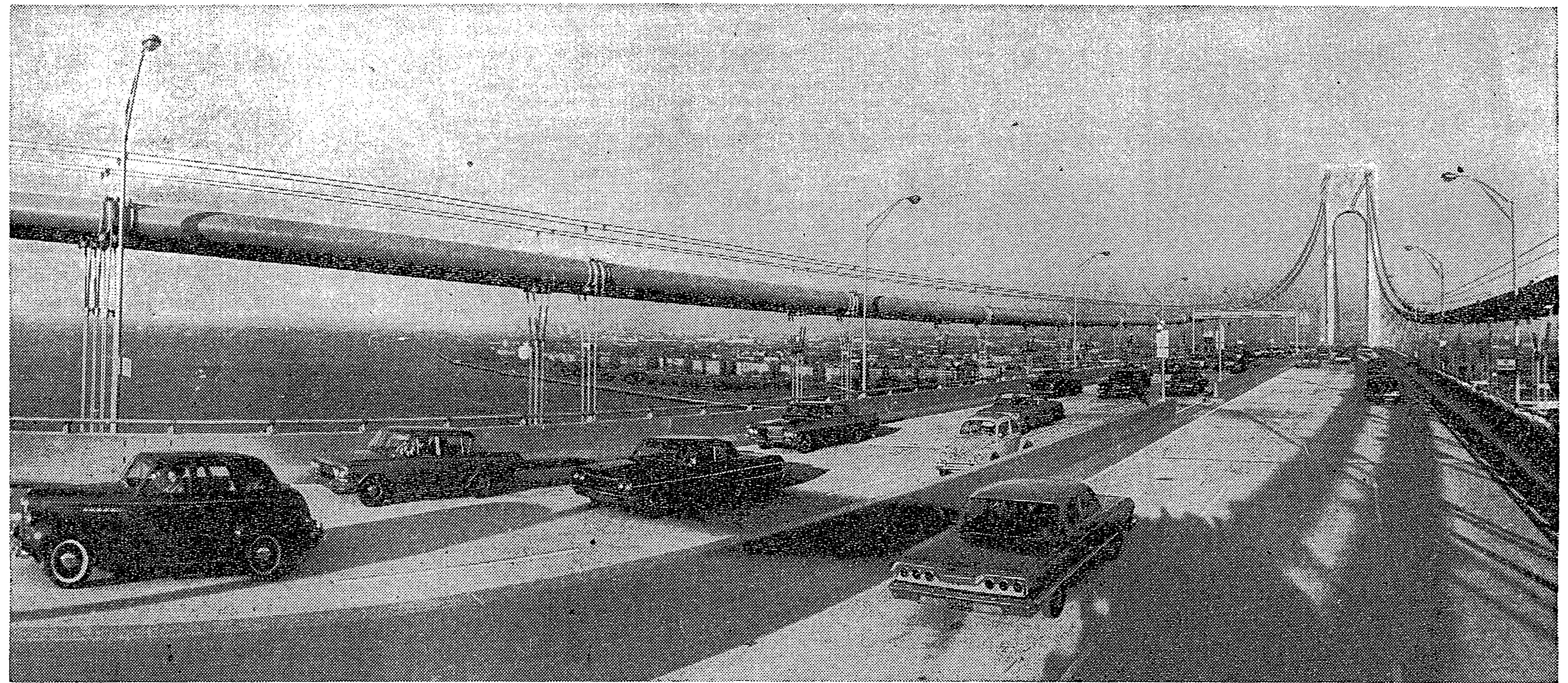
In the first car was Robert Moses, wearing his battered gray fedora. In following cars were Cardinal Spellman, Mayor Wagner and Governor Rockefeller; then Abe Stark, Borough President of Brooklyn and Albert V. Maniscalco, Borough President of Richmond.

There were so many other participants—generals, admirals, politicians, women in mink coats, business leaders, pretty girls—that a traffic jam resulted a half-mile beyond the point where the ribbon-cutting ceremony was to be held.

The dignitaries left their cars parked, bumper to bumper, and came rushing up to the spot where the band was playing, and where a man was holding five gold scissors to be used by the five top officials to cut the ribbon that stretched across the approach to the bridge.

Such a crowd that had pushed in from the shoulder of the road that Governor Rockefeller could not get through.

Ten minutes later, he and Mr. Wagner, Mr. Stark, Mr. Maniscalco and Mr. Moses held their scissors out and, on signal,



BIG DAY FOR MOTORISTS IN GENERAL: Traffic moving on the bridge yesterday. It provides a link, by way of Brooklyn and Staten Island, for travel between New Jersey and New England.

snapped down. Governor Rockefeller was first.

Then they all went back to the cars for the motorcade across the bridge to Staten Island. It was a perfect day for crossing a bridge. They could see, as they moved in the motorcade across the 4,260-foot center span—the longest in the world—the whole view of the harbor, the ships below, the fireboats shooting spray into the air, the cannon smoke, the helicopters hovering over the tall bridge towers that stood 693 feet in the air.

The mightiest blast from below came from the liner United States, which passed under the bridge during the dedication ceremonies. The ship was returning to New York from her annual dry-docking in Newport News, Va.

In one limousine in the motorcade—the 18th car behind Mr. Moses' limousine—sat the 85-year-old designer of the bridge, O. H. Ammann.

Designer Silent

A quiet and modest man, he was barely recognized by the politicians and other dignitaries at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. He stood in the crowd without saying a word, although occasionally, as inconspicuously as he could, he sneaked a look at the bridge looming in the distance, sharply outlined in the cloudless sky.

"How do you feel, Mr. Ammann?" somebody asked, almost startling the lean engineer who wore a blue coat and blue muffler around his neck.

"Oh," he said, slowly, a little self-consciously, "as I feel every day."

When the official motorcade arrived in Staten Island, Mr. Ammann got out of the car and slipped quietly up into the grandstand and did not say another word the rest of the day.

Mr. Moses was the master of ceremonies. He introduced Cardinal Spellman, who delivered the invocation, and then introduced George V. McLaughlin and William J. Tracy, officials with the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority. Then he introduced Mr. Ammann.

"I now ask that one of the significant great men of our time—modest, unassuming and too often overlooked on such grandiose occasions—stand and be recognized."

Mr. Ammann, removing his hat, his brown hair blowing back in the breeze, stood and looked at the crowd of about 1,000 guests seated and standing before him.

"It may be that in the midst of so many celebrities, you don't even know who he is," Mr. Moses continued, as the crowd applauded. "My friends, I ask that you now look upon

Central Labor Council, rose and thanked Robert Moses for the work that his projects had provided.

There were short speeches by Peter J. Brennan, president of the Building and Construction Trades Council; Rex M. Whitton, Federal Highway Administrator; the two Borough Presidents and S. Sloan Colt, chairman of the Port of New York Authority.

Realizing it was getting late and chiller the two Governors present—Mr. Rockefeller and Richard J. Hughes of New Jersey—discarded their formal speeches in favor of a few informal words.

After the benediction by Rabbi Benjamin E. Wykansky of Temple Emanu-El in Staten Island, and more music by the Department of Sanitation band clustered near the tollgates, the big motorcade gunned its cool engines and began the ride back to Brooklyn—and to a party in tents under the elevated approaches.

Parties Abound

Throughout Brooklyn and Staten Island yesterday and last night, there were other parties—small informal ones, and some larger ones in public rooms—celebrating the bridge, which is expected to do so much to facilitate traffic, and build up business and population in the hitherto isolated borough of Staten Island.

In the first hour after the bridge opened to traffic, about 5,000 cars crossed the span, more than 70 per cent of them from the Staten Island side. By 4:30 P.M. the stream of curious motorists had dwindled and traffic rolled freely in both directions.

The first 50-cent toll was paid by the 22-year-old man in the Cadillac—George Scarpelli, an employee of the Parks Department. His passengers, all fellow Staten Islanders, were Richard Ramaglia, Ben Goldsmith, Ron Saccof, Ben Caplan, Anthony Lenza and Frank Picone. The coin was pocketed by Larry Chrusano, the collector, who replaced it with his own money.

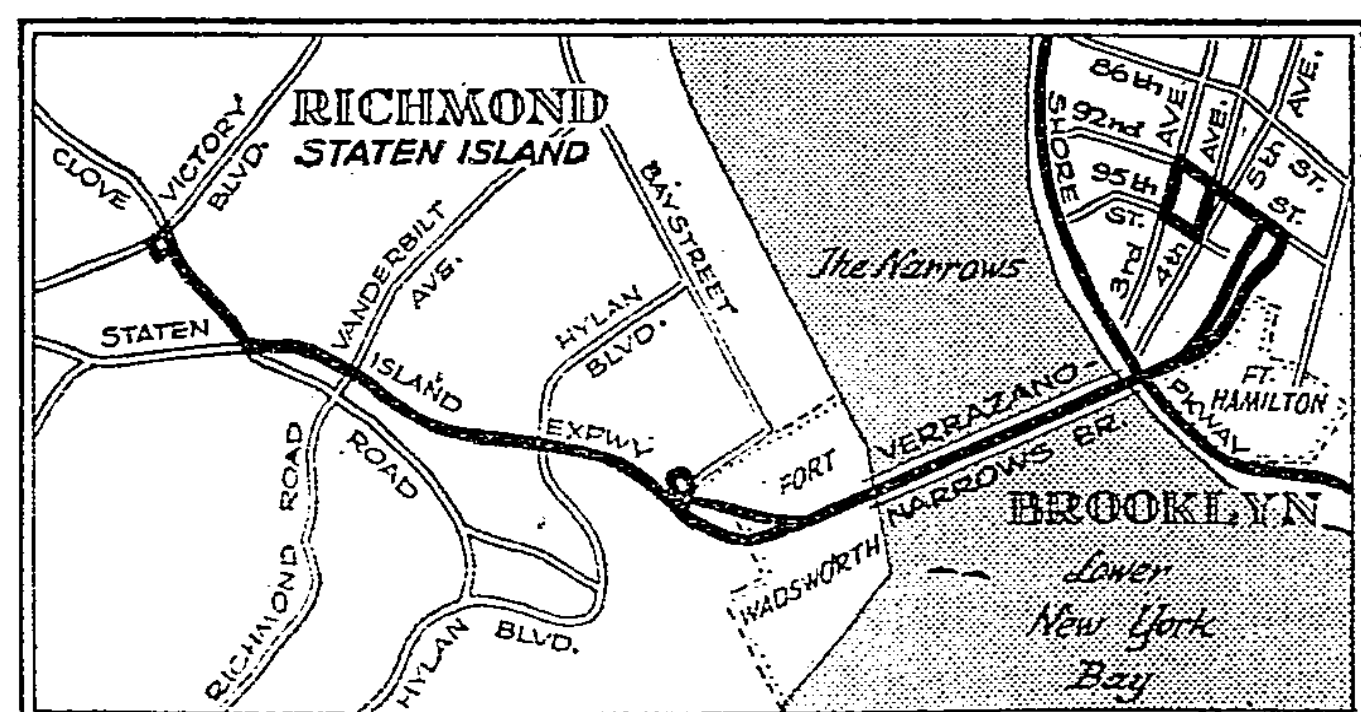
the greatest living bridge engineer, perhaps the greatest of all time.

"A Swiss who has lived and labored magnificently 60 years in this country and is still active, the designer of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, respected throughout the world and regarded here with deep affection."

There was more applause, but Mr. Moses forgot to mention his name. Mr. Ammann sat quietly down, again lost in the second row of the grandstand.

Next there were words by Arthur O. Davidson, president of Wagner College in Staten Island; and then (in Italian) Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Italian Government.

Harry Van Arsdale Jr., president of the New York City



DIRECT APPROACHES: Heavy black line shows main roads leading to both sides of Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.