

# Names in Brief

## THE STORY BEHIND THE NAME OF THE WORLD'S LONGEST BRIDGE

Bridgeophiles have been puzzled at the unusual name of the world's longest bridge (between Staten Island and Long Island). The even tenor of such names as Triborough Bridge, Manhattan Bridge, or Brooklyn Bridge has been disturbed by the introduction of VERRAZZANO.

The application of this name constitutes belated recognition of the fact that the narrows spanned by the bridge was first traversed by an Italian explorer 85 years before Henry Hudson's time. Giovanni da Verrazzano and his crew of fifty men sailed the caravel *Dauphine* into then nameless New York Bay on the 17th of April in the year 1524 in the course of a scientific expedition sent out by King Francis I of France. Verrazzano named the harbor "Bay of St. Marguerite" and gave the name "Francesca" to the "United States." Subsequently his brother Hyeronimus named the land "Verrazzana" on a map drawn in 1528.

Normally the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority names bridges and tunnels according to geographical locations, but by a special act (Chapter 182, Section 1) the New York legislature announced in March, 1960: "In recognition of the bold explorations of Giovanni da Verrazzano and his discovery of New York Harbor in 1524, the bridge to be constructed between Staten Island and Long Island, sometimes referred to as the Narrows bridge or the Brooklyn-Richmond project, shall upon construction be designated and known as "The Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge." The name was further approved by both Governors Harriman and Rockefeller..

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