



The Brooklyn Bridge New York City



S T E E L - W I R E S U S P E N S I O N B R I D G E



S P E C I F I C A T I O N S

Span: 1,595 feet 6 inches (486.3 m)

Length: 5,989 feet (1825 m)

Completion: 1883

Opening date: May 24, 1883

Construction materials:

limestone, granite, and Rosendale cement, steel, and steel wire

Traffic Type: motor vehicles (cars only), elevated trains (until 1944), streetcars (until 1950), pedestrians, and bicycles

Toll: free both ways

Engineers: John, Washington, & Emily Roebling

Landmark Spanned: East River

H I S T O R I C A L D A T A

The Brooklyn Bridge was designed by John Robeling, who died from a tetanus infection due to a toe injury before construction began. His son, Washington Robeling, assumed the title of chief engineer and completed the bridge, along with the help of his wife, Emily. Construction began on January 3, 1870. Caissons were used to dig foundations underwater, however, many workers, including Washington Robeling, became ill with caissons disease or decompression sickness, which is now commonly known as “the bends”. Emily Robeling supervised and coordinated construction of the bridge with her husband and the engineers on site for eleven years after Washington became paralyzed from caissons disease.

The Brooklyn Bridge, which connects Manhattan and Brooklyn, opened for use on May 24, 1883. On that first day a total of 1,800 vehicles and 150,300 people crossed. One week after the opening, on May 30, 1883, a rumor that the Bridge was going to collapse caused a stampede, which crushed and killed at least twelve people. On May 17, 1884, P. T. Barnum helped to squelch doubts about the bridge’s stability. The first jumper was Robert E. Odium on May 19, 1885 who died shortly from internal injuries. In 1950, the streetcars stopped running and the bridge was rebuilt to carry six lanes of automobile traffic.