

## The Bay Bridge Metonymy: How Maryland Newspapers Interpreted the Opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge

By David W. Guth

*Using metonymy as a means of analysis, this paper measures the different editorial approaches Maryland-area newspapers had to the opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in 1952. The bridge opened travel routes to a historically isolated section of the state. Newspapers on both sides of the bay saw the bridge as a metonym for man's supremacy over nature. To a lesser degree, they also viewed it as triumph of capitalism. Western Shore newspapers widely saw the bridge as a metonym for statewide unity. Eastern Shore newspapers viewed it more as a metonym for unwelcome change and the achievement of regional equality. The bridge also became a metonym of redemption for former Governor William Preston Lane, Jr., who had championed the bridge and other road improvements—as well as budget and tax increases to pay for them—at the cost of his political career.*

**O**n the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in 2002, a *Baltimore Sun* editorial said, “In a way its creators never could have anticipated, the 4.3-mile double span has struck a deep emotional chord in most who live in the region.” The *Sun* editors also said, “Sadly, much has also been lost in the process, especially the rustic quality of life that made the Eastern Shore so attractive to urban and suburban refugees.

“The strip malls and condo complexes just over the bridge on Kent Island are enough to make an old-timer weep.”<sup>1</sup>

Ironically, the *Sun* rarely expressed that concern in 1947 when

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the Maryland General Assembly authorized construction of the bridge. Nor was that sentiment often expressed in 1952, when the bridge opened. The bridge had been hailed as a great engineering achievement, one that would strengthen the bonds between the peoples of Maryland's two culturally disparate shores.

On the Eastern Shore, it was a different story. Many viewed the opening of the new span with skepticism. Decades after the fact, those doubts lingered. In a 1992 interview, Frederick C. Malkus Jr., who had represented the region in the legislature, said, "Some people think the bridge was one of the worst things that could have happened to the Eastern Shore."<sup>2</sup>

When one measures the effect of new technology on 21st century communication, it is natural to think of blogs, podcasts and the Internet. However, by their very nature, bridges are catalysts for communication. That was especially true in mid-20th century Maryland, where the opening of the Bay Bridge created a new level of social interaction between the inhabitants of the state's Eastern and Western Shores. Although they had existed under the same charter for three centuries, the communities on each side of the Chesapeake had evolved into distinct cultures. Maryland's newspaper editors and writers understood that the opening of the bridge was a significant moment in the state's history. However, did this technological triumph carry the same meaning on both sides of the bay?

By using metonymy as a means of analysis, the purpose of this article is to examine the different editorial approaches newspapers on both sides of Chesapeake Bay had to the prospects for and opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge on July 30, 1952. The hypothesis driving this study is the belief that Eastern Shore newspapers, reflecting the sentiments of their readers, viewed the event with more caution and concern than their Western Shore counterparts.

## **Historical Review**

The Delmarva Peninsula gets its name from the three states that claim jurisdiction over its 13 counties: Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. (See Figure 1) The three counties of Delaware, the first state to ratify the Constitution in 1787, have existed as a cohesive community since colonial days. The same cannot be said for the rest of Delmarva. The nine Maryland counties and two Virginia counties, most commonly referred to as the Eastern Shore, have been historically isolated from the overwhelming majority of residents in their respective states by a great inland sea, Chesapeake Bay. The Chesa-

peake, which stretches 200 miles from the mouth of the Susquehanna River to the Atlantic Ocean, serves as a great barrier.

For most of its existence, the people of two shores of the Chesapeake have been of different minds. The east versus west rivalry dates to the colony's founding when the Calvert family—the Lords Baltimore—had a 40-year battle with Captain William Claiborne of the Virginia colony. The Calverts had a royal charter to establish the

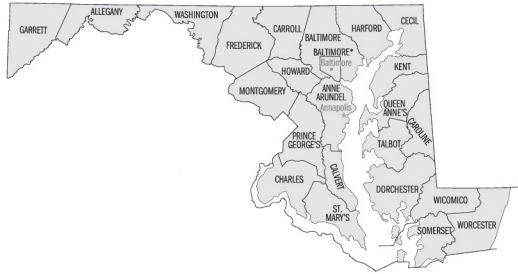


Figure 1—Political Subdivisions of the State of Maryland  
Credit line: Map courtesy U.S. Census Bureau

Maryland palatinate. However, it was Claiborne who established an Eastern Shore trading post on Kent Island in 1631—more than two years before the Calverts landed on the Western Shore near present-day St. Mary's City.<sup>3</sup> At the time of the American Revolution, when most of Maryland was a hotbed of Patriot sentiment, the lower Eastern Shore was home to Loyalists who took up arms in support of Great Britain. The Eastern Shore Loyalists were led by planter James Chalmers, author of *Plain Truth*, a published diatribe designed to counter Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*. Chalmers later led the ill-fated First Battalion of Maryland Loyalists, which suffered through sickness and siege in British West Florida and were later forced into exile.<sup>4</sup> The Eastern Shore was also a center of Southern sympathizers during the American Civil War. Anti-Union sentiment was so strong that U.S. Secretary of State William Seward had an Eastern Shore circuit court judge forcibly removed from his Eastern courtroom and arrested in May 1862.<sup>5</sup>

Through time, the Eastern Shore developed at a more leisurely pace than the rest of Maryland. While much of the state became a part of the Northeast U.S. metropolitan corridor stretching from Washington to New York, urbanization bypassed most of Delmarva. At the mid-20th century, the Eastern Shore remained a region of farming, seafood harvesting and limited tourism. During the first half of the 20th century, Eastern Shore population growth rate lagged behind the rest of the state's population growth rate, 97% to 7%.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to differing rates of economic development, the two Shores evolved into contrasting political orientations. Lord Balti-

more acknowledged the challenges confronting a colony divided by the Chesapeake when he established two independent branches of his government, one for each Shore. For more than a century preceding the Declaration of Independence, the Eastern Shore operated as an largely independent entity. Within four months of the Colonies' break from England, Shoremen sought to split from the rest of Maryland. They launched the first of three passionate, but unsuccessful secession movements. The most serious effort at gaining a divorce occurred in 1833, when a bill to permit Eastern Shore residents to decide in referendum on a union with neighboring Delaware was defeated in the Maryland Senate by a single vote. There is little doubt that such a referendum would have passed.<sup>7</sup>

Separatists were never able to mount another serious threat. However, Shoremen continued to feel estranged from the rest of Maryland—a feeling some might argue continues to the present day. An example of this tension was played out in 1931, when the *Baltimore Sun* reported on the lynching of a black man on the grounds of the county courthouse in the Eastern Shore's largest town, Salisbury. Angered by the failure of local officials to stop the lynching, *Sun* columnist H.L. Mencken lashed out against the Eastern Shore's "boozing-day politicians" and called Salisbury "the Alsatia of morons." A backlash followed. Two circulation trucks were hijacked, the newspapers were thrown away and the drivers were beaten. Eastern Shore businesses boycotted the newspaper. *Sun* editors received telegrams threatening harm to any reporter who crossed the Bay.<sup>8</sup>

The newspapers of the Eastern Shore often displayed their antagonism in the form of editorial barbs. When the *Baltimore Sun* published an article about Ocean City politicians allegedly embroiled in a gambling scandal, the Ocean City-based *Eastern Shore Times* fired back with a front-page "open letter" to *Sun*:

"Now we want to ask you what prompted this gaudy display of solicitude for the welfare of the people on the Peninsula? Are things so dull in Baltimore these days? Has the town suddenly been white-washed with all the bookie-joints and gambling under suspension? No vice, graft or corruption of any kind? No Garmatz dirty work? No O'Connor investigation? Well, bless your lily-white brows!"<sup>9</sup>

A June 1952 *New York Times* article described the isolation and mindset of the people of the Eastern Shore. The article had a Baltimore dateline, but no author byline and not a single direct attribution

to a source. The anonymous writer attempted to capture the essence of what it meant to be a Shoreman:

“Shoremen are a homogenous lot, with a geographic pride akin to that of Texans or the Shoreman’s next door neighbors, the Virginians, and they tended to relish their aloofness from the polyglot peoples and the hustle of Baltimore and Washington, to say nothing of the industry and coal of Western Maryland. In short, the average Shoreman considered himself superior.”<sup>10</sup>

The article went on to note that the Eastern Shore “has been compared in isolation and mental climate to some of the deepest parts of the farther South.”

A more contemporary observer, John R. Wennersten, professor emeritus of history at the University Maryland-Eastern Shore, described the region in 1992 as having the kind of climate “that encourages loafing, hunting, fishing and general revelry.” He added, “the region does little to encourage moral or philosophical speculation.”<sup>11</sup>

With coming of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, the anonymous *Times* writer said 1952 that a typical Shoreman “now considers the new bridge with resignation tinged with skepticism.”<sup>12</sup> Forty years later, Wennersten wrote, “a favorite fantasy of many Eastern Shoremen is that of blowing up the Bay Bridge in order to preserve and protect what is left of the region.”<sup>13</sup>

## **The Chesapeake Bay Bridge**

The dream of spanning the Chesapeake with a bridge may date back to its discovery by the region’s first human inhabitants. However, the first serious discussions of building a Chesapeake Bay Bridge have been traced to the period right after the Civil War, when Baltimore merchants proposed a bay-spanning railroad bridge to counter the expansion of Philadelphia-based railroads into Delmarva.<sup>14</sup> The first serious proposal for construction of a bridge came in 1907, when Baltimore businessman and politician Peter C. Campbell schemed to lure Eastern Shore trade away from Wilmington and Philadelphia. However, a study one year later by the Merchants and Manufacturers Association determined that the project was not economically feasible. The demand for access to the Eastern Shore led to the first regularly scheduled ferry service in 1919.<sup>15</sup> A variety

of bridge-building schemes continued over the next three decades, but were foiled first by the Great Depression and later by the Second World War.

The dream of a bridge across the mighty Chesapeake fascinated many people. But not everyone was in love with the idea. As *The Baltimore Sun* noted in a article commemorating the 50th anniversary of the bridge:

“Convinced there was no need for civilized people to visit the Eastern Shore, H.L. Mencken had dismissed the bridge proposal as “ridiculous.” Ocean City investors loved the idea, but most of the Eastern Shore worried that the bridge would ruin their peaceful, rural lives. Private ferryboat companies opposed it. Shipping companies saw it as a navigational hazard.”<sup>16</sup>

Another observer noted that “if they wait another forty years...people will have flymobiles and won’t need bridges to cross the bay.”<sup>17</sup>

It wasn’t until 1938 that the first legislative proposal for bridge construction at Sandy Point near Annapolis to Kent Island in Queen Anne’s County first surfaced. It was out of that legislation that Maryland moved to the pooled toll-financing concept placing the revenues from toll-generating highways and bridges into a common fund. That decision would eventually make it possible for bridge construction at the Sandy Point site. The General Assembly approved construction of a two-lane toll bridge in 1947, with construction beginning two years later.

On July 30, 1952, a 4.3-mile two-lane bridge spanning the Chesapeake from Sandy Point near to Kent Island opened the door to the Eastern Shore. That bridge was designed by J.E. Greiner Company of Baltimore and cost \$44 million to build. A trip to the beaches of Ocean City from Baltimore, which once took at least six hours, depending on traffic, was cut in half. A southern bridge, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel, linked the Hampton Roads area to Cape Charles, Virginia, in 1965. A three-lane span—referred to as a “modernized look-alike” parallel to the first bridge also designed by Greiner opened in 1973 at a cost of \$117 million.<sup>18</sup> During 2004, approximately 25.8 million vehicles crossed the Bay Bridge. It averaged more than 70,000 vehicle crossings a day.<sup>19</sup>

“So many people in Salisbury who grew up there tell me that the defining event in the history of the Eastern Shore was the creation of that Bay Bridge,” said Michael Lewis, director of the environ-

mental issues program at Salisbury University. “That is absolutely at the core of people’s sense of their history. I have to honor that and respect that is what these people see as true.”<sup>20</sup>

### **William Preston Lane Jr.**

The most important—and controversial—figure in the Chesapeake Bay Bridge saga was William Preston Lane Jr., Maryland governor from 1947 to 1951. Lane, a Democrat newspaper publisher from Hagerstown, and his Republican opponent, Baltimore Mayor Theodore Roosevelt McKeldin, pledged support for the Bay Bridge during the 1946 gubernatorial campaign. Lane defeated McKeldin with 54.7 percent of the vote during the 1946 General Election.<sup>21</sup> In his inaugural address, Governor Lane repeated his pledge. “The State has waited a long time for this much-needed addition to our system of roads and bridges, and now we shall go forward with it,” he said. However, Lane also warned Maryland taxpayers that the state faced serious financial challenges that would create a need to both tighten government spending and increase state revenues.<sup>22</sup>

With limited opposition, the Bay Bridge legislation easily passed the Maryland General Assembly on March 28, 1947.<sup>23</sup> Far more contentious were Lane’s proposals for a two-cent sales tax, an increase in the state income tax and a record \$219 million state biennial budget. “Let us get away once and for all from the philosophy of tax and spend, tax and spend,” cried an *Annapolis Evening Capital* editorial. “We had enough of that under the New Deal.”<sup>24</sup> Opposition to Lane’s proposals was especially strong along the Eastern Shore, where business groups in all of the region’s nine counties were engaged in a vigorous campaign to defeat the tax.<sup>25</sup> A series of sharply worded anti-sales tax advertisements were published in Eastern Shore newspapers. An example of their tone:

“Once upon a time—before real thinking was being done (some say that is even true today)—there was a theory that dogs’ tails could be snipped off a little at a time. That way the dog would feel no pain. Such is the theory on the part of Governor Lane and some of the elected representatives. By taking an average of \$40 a year or more from your family—just a little bit at a time—you won’t feel much, the Governor said. (Just cut the dog’s tail off a little bit at a time, they used to say!)”<sup>26</sup>

Lane's budget proposals ultimately led to his political demise. In a rematch, McKeldin easily defeated Lane in the 1950 gubernatorial election with 57.4 percent of the vote. The Republican's 93,983-vote margin was, at that time, the largest in state history.<sup>27</sup>

## Metonymy

The term *Eastern Shore* is commonly used to describe the nine Maryland counties and two Virginia counties east of Chesapeake Bay. However, that term has significance beyond its obvious geographic reference. From a rhetorical theorist's perspective, it could be known as a figure of speech called a metonym. Corbett and Connors define a figure of speech as "a form of speech artfully varied from common usage."<sup>28</sup> Metonyms are part of a class of figures of speech known as tropes, which are defined as "a deviation from the ordinary and principal signification (meaning) of a word."<sup>29</sup>

Metonymy has been defined in a variety of ways. Barcelona defines it as "a conceptual projection whereby one experiential domain (the target) is partially understood in terms of another experiential domain (the source) *included in the same experiential domain*."<sup>30</sup> In this context, domain is defined as "a schema; a relatively specific store of knowledge about some area of experience."<sup>31</sup> Corbett and Connors define metonymy as the "substitution of some attributes or suggestive word for what is actually meant."<sup>32</sup> For example, when Winston Churchill told the House of Commons on 13 May 1940 that he had nothing to offer the British people but "blood, toil, tears and sweat," he used words with commonly understood meanings to signify the difficult struggle the country would face to defeat the Axis powers during World War II.<sup>33</sup>

Rubba wrote that there are several purposes for the use of metonyms. They are used for clarification, such as when a waiter refers to a customer by what he/she ordered; e.g. "You're the roast beef on rye." They are also used for attribution or mitigation of credit or blame; e.g. "Congress passed the law." Rubba also wrote that metonyms often provide a pragmatic focus by using the part most directly (literally or metaphorically); e.g. calling a car "wheels." They can also be used to abbreviate but using the whole to describe a part; e.g. saying that you love Paris doesn't mean you embrace the city's garbage, murders or traffic problems.<sup>34</sup>

It seems logical to assume that this fourth purpose, the need to abbreviate, would be the most common reason for their use by journalists. Eason wrote that journalism "reflects the dominance of



a metonymical consciousness.”<sup>35</sup> Despite a “doctrine of objectivity,” Eason wrote that the reporting process masks the journalist’s use of metonyms in “the production, maintenance and transformation of social reality.” Simply put, a reporter’s description of newsworthy events often creates metonyms by adding cultural meaning and depth to existing concepts.<sup>36</sup>

A further reason that metonymy is relevant to this discussion is that journalists with varying cultural values can create metonyms that, depending on the audience, are interpreted differently. As Barcelona notes, metonyms are “to a large extent culture-specific, because the domains of experience are not necessarily the same in all cultures.”<sup>37</sup> This notion appears to support the basic hypothesis of this article, that journalists living on opposite sides of Chesapeake Bay could develop different metonymies for similar points of reference—in this case, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

The influence of cultural values on metonyms also explains a significant difference in geographic terminology used by Marylanders: While it is common for the residents of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s counties to refer to their region as *Southern Maryland*, and for the residents living in the four counties comprising the state’s panhandle to say they live in *Western Maryland*, it also is common for Delmarva residents to refer to everything west of Chesapeake Bay as the *Western Shore*. For the purpose of clarity, this article will adopt the latter terminology and limit its discussion to two shores, eastern and western.

At this point of the discussion, it is relevant to note framing theory, a concept that Johansson says “has been widely used in analyses of media discourse, “thus influencing theories on agenda setting, framing and priming in media and communication science.”<sup>38</sup> When Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman first articulated the concept in 1974, he wrote that all of us “actively classify and organize our life experiences to make sense of them.”<sup>39</sup> According to Gitlin, “Media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routine organize discourse, whether verbal or visual.”<sup>40</sup>

In this context, metonymy is closely tied to framing theory. Entman defined framing as communicating an idea in such a way that an audience is influenced, either intentionally or unintentionally, by the way it is expressed.<sup>41</sup> Norris wrote, “Defined more broadly, frames provide interpretative structure which set particular events within their broader context.”<sup>42</sup> Entman wrote that salience, the process of making a message “noticeable, meaningful or memorable,”

is essential in media framing.<sup>43</sup> The use of metonyms as journalistic shorthand serves the same purpose.

### **Community Journalism and Epideictic Discourse**

By creating or perpetuating culturally framed metonyms, reporters unintentionally violate the doctrine of objectivity through the manner in which they frame events. This becomes most evident in an analysis of urban and rural newspaper content. While both kinds of newspapers are deeply rooted in their communities, small town newspapers often take on a community cheerleading role more aggressively than their big-city counterparts. While reporters at urban daily newspapers tend to be insulated from their employer's day-to-day business pressures, rural publishers find themselves on the community's front lines.

"The community newspaper's greatest glory and strength is at the same time a reason for its weakness as a social force and for seeming obscurity among the mass media or communication: it is so personal," wrote former publisher and professor John Cameron Sim. "The readers of a weekly tend to regard it with a proprietary interest ("our hometown paper") and they see its virtues or tolerate its defects just as they do members of the immediate family."<sup>44</sup>

Lauterer wrote that rural weekly newspapers provide "the affirmation of the sense of community, a positive and intimate reflection of the sense of place, a stroke for our 'us-ness,' our extended family-ness and our profound and interlocking connectedness."<sup>45</sup> This is a long-held tenant of community journalism, evidenced by the 1937 textbook *Country Journalism*. Charles Laurel Allen, an instructor at the University of Illinois, wrote that being a community booster is the most important thing a successful country newspaperman should do. "Boost, even when something needs correcting; a positive suggestion showing the way to better the town will accomplish far more than showing how poor the town is," Allen wrote.<sup>46</sup> While this blatant boosterism may sound alien to most journalists 70 years after Allen's proclamation, it is contextually important to note that this philosophy was prevalent in the period leading up to the construction of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

A survey of Midwestern rural weekly newspaper publishers found widespread agreement with the notion that they have to be "married" to their communities by devoting many extra hours to civic duties. Most of the respondents indicated that they felt that

they could handle any conflicts of interest that could arise from this kind of relationship. However, as the principle investigator in that research noted, “The majority of recorded mission statements for these community weekly publishers included some reference to promotion or the role of cheerleader for their towns.”<sup>47</sup> This study dovetails with one published 40 years earlier in *Journalism Quarterly*, which concluded that a majority of small town community leaders believe the proper role of their hometown newspapers is to “work jointly with community leaders to initiate projects.”<sup>48</sup> What makes the Edelstein-Schulz study relevant is that its data was generated within the general period on which this research is focused.

It is probably a fair statement to suggest that most editorial writers and columnists do not think of their craft in terms of classical rhetoric. However, when they express their opinions or those of the newspaper’s editorial board, it is likely that, in a rhetorical sense, they are engaging in one of three kinds of persuasive discourse. The first is *deliberative* oratory, in which the editor seeks to have the reader do something or accept a particular point-of-view. The second is *forensic* oratory, which focuses on the correctness of past actions. The third—and the one most relevant to this discussion—is *epideictic* or ceremonial oratory, which has the purpose of pleasing or inspiring the audience.<sup>49</sup> As will be discussed, it is this third kind of persuasive discourse in which many of Maryland’s editorial writers engaged at the time of the opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

### **The Limitations of Metonymy**

The difficulty in using metonyms as units of analysis lies in distinguishing them from metaphors. The key difference between the two lies in the concept known as *mapping*. Rubba defines mapping as a conceptual (mental) connection between elements in one domain (schema) and elements in another domain.<sup>50</sup> Barcelona defines metaphor as “the cognitive mechanism whereby one experiential domain is partially ‘mapped,’ i.e. projected, onto a different experiential domain, so that the second domain is partially understood in terms of the first one.” He cites the phrase *love is a journey* as an example.<sup>51</sup> At the risk of oversimplification of what rhetoricians acknowledge are difficult concepts to distinguish, metaphors are equations—this *is similar to* that—while metonyms are substitutions—this *stands for* that.

“Similarity is the basis of metaphor, which may therefore be

classed with assertions of dependent relations,” notes Bredin. “Metonymy, on the other hand, exploits simple relations between objects.”<sup>52</sup> Because cognitive domains are based on entrenched knowledge that may vary from person to person, they have no precise boundaries. As Barcelona writes, “How can, then, the neat distinction between two domains be used to distinguish metonymy from metaphor?”<sup>53</sup>

As Feyaerts notes, the study of metonymy is as much art as science—and just as subjective. “Drawing distinct boundaries around a domain always reflects an arbitrary intervention by an external observer,” Feyaerts writes. “Per se, this observation does not pose such a big problem since no linguistic research can ever escape this kind of subjective interference.”<sup>54</sup> According to Bredin, the subjective nature of metonymy may be the reason the modern literary culture has given metaphors dominance over all other figures and tropes, even though metonymy may be more prevalent.<sup>55</sup>

## Methodology

This is a textual analysis for the purpose of capturing the sentiments of Maryland-area newspaper writers at the time of the opening of the Bay Bridge. The units of analysis for this study are newspaper articles, editorials and photo captions in eight Maryland-area newspapers. Three of those newspapers—the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Annapolis Evening Capital* and the *Washington Post*—are situated west of Chesapeake Bay. The combined coverage areas for those three daily newspapers blanketed the most-populated areas of the region this article refers to as the Western Shore. Five Eastern Shore newspapers—the *Queen Anne’s Record-Observer*, the *Easton Star-Democrat*, the *Cambridge Daily Banner*, the *Salisbury Times* and the *Eastern Shore Times* (published in Ocean City)—were also selected. The Salisbury and Cambridge newspapers were (and still are) daily newspapers. The remaining publications were weekly newspapers at the time of the bridge opening. These five newspapers were selected because their combined coverage areas blanketed the Chesapeake Bay to Atlantic Ocean highway corridor—U.S Highway 50—most likely to be influenced by the bridge opening.

Samples were selected from two time frames. The first, January 1, 1947, to mid-April 1947, represents the period in which the newspapers covered the 1947 General Assembly session—the session in which legislation authorizing construction of the bridge was enacted. The second time frame is May 1, 1952, to mid-August 1952, the

period in which the selected newspapers covered events leading up to and including the bridge's dedication.

Articles/editorials/captions selected for the sample were chosen because they directly or inferentially referenced the Bay Bridge. For the purposes of this study, an inferential reference includes articles discussing a subject matter that had been previously linked to the bridge opening in earlier articles on the same subject within the same publication. For example, the *Eastern Shore Times* reported the construction of a new Ocean City parking lot to accommodate the anticipated tourist boom created by the bridge on June 12, 1952. Subsequent articles about tourist parking in Ocean City were included within the sample, even if they did not specifically mention the bridge. This is related, in part, to the aforementioned role of the metonym as a form of shorthand: The bridge remained within the reader's context for understanding the meaning of the article even if it was not specifically mentioned.

Not included in the sample were 45 articles on the 1947 Maryland legislative session that one might argue were inferentially about the Bay Bridge, but primarily focused on the politics surrounding Governor Lane's budget and tax proposals. Again, the question is contextual: an assumption that the reader considers these articles more for their political content. The proposed bridge was not the primary focus in any of these articles.

Using these guidelines, 249 articles/editorials/captions were analyzed from the eight selected newspapers. After a preliminary analysis of the sample, the content of each article/editorial/caption was analyzed for information that suggested that the Bay Bridge was being used as journalist shorthand for a much broader concept. In other words, the effort was to classify the metonyms, if any, within each article/editorial/caption. For coding purposes, seven predominant classes of metonym were identified:

*Conquering nature:* These articles/editorials/captions describe or imply the challenges of building the bridge, including descriptions of construction methods and construction-related statistics. Several examples of this metonym were found when the final piece of the bridge's superstructure was put in place on May 23, 1952. According to the *Baltimore Sun*, "the big event" occurred at 2:11 p.m. "when the blast of a whistle signaled the end of the job. Maryland's 30-year dream of a bay span was finally fulfilled."<sup>56</sup>

*Economic progress:* These articles/editorials/captions describe or imply the economic benefits that will accompany the opening of the bridge. An example is a July 10, 1952, article on how the Bay Bridge will benefit Ocean Downs, Ocean City's harness racing track.<sup>57</sup>

*Unity:* These articles/editorials/captions describe or imply the joining together of Maryland's two Shores and the desire to unify the two Shores of the state physically and psychologically. Such an expression of unity can be seen in a July 27, 1952, *Baltimore Sun* editorial, in which it is stated that the new bridge is a "handclasp across the bay, uniting the two shores in common interests."<sup>58</sup>

*Change:* These articles/editorials/captions describe or infer the social and environmental challenges and benefits that will come with the opening of the bridge. Among the articles placed under this classification were several focusing on the Chesapeake Bay ferries, a Maryland institution that ended with the opening of the Bay Bridge, and on the need for zoning laws to protect the Eastern Shore from a rash of so-called "bridgetowns" and "honky-tonks."

*Equality:* These articles/editorials/captions describe or imply that the opening of the bridge will place the Eastern Shore on an equal basis with the Western Shore in terms of access to markets and cultural development. One expression of the bridge as a metonym for Eastern Shore equality came in an January 23, 1947, editorial in the *Eastern Shore Times*. In it, the editor noted that state officials had ignored the region's transportation needs. "The Eastern Shore is entitled to a direct highway link," the newspaper said.<sup>59</sup>

*Redemption:* These articles/editorials/captions describe or imply that the opening of the bridge has redeemed the reputation of former Governor Lane. A series of articles around the time of the bridge's dedication gave the former governor—who had been routed from public office just two years earlier—praise for his advocacy for construction of the bridge.

*Free enterprise:* These articles/editorials/captions describe

or imply that the bridge's construction and financing was a victory of the Free Enterprise system. Contextually, it is important to remember that the periods of analysis for this study came in the midst of the Cold War. Typical of this classification were articles noting that the debt for the privately financed bridge, would be retired by 1961.

Because each unit of analysis could have more than one focus, some used the Bay Bridge as a metonym for more than one concept. For example, the *Eastern Shore Times* editorial of January 23, 1947, said, "The Eastern Shore long has been deprived of facilities to which it is eminently entitled. No section of any state should be isolated. No section can continue to be a satisfied community of the commonwealth if it is discriminated against." The editorial continued to say, "The bridge will bring contacts, commerce and a feeling of solidified statehood—things much to be desired in this Free State."<sup>60</sup> Using the aforementioned decision rules, this editorial was classified as using the Bay Bridge as a metonym for three concepts: *equality*, *unity* and *economic progress*. Sixty-three articles/editorials/captions in the sample (25.2%) did not meet any of the aforementioned criteria and were classified as containing no metonymic reference. (For purposes of clarity, this absence of metonyms will be referred to as a separate category, *none*.)

While the author is comfortable with the research methods employed within this article, the author freely admits its limitations. The first could be bias—the author was reared on the Eastern Shore. However, since the events described within these pages occurred before the author's birth in Baltimore in November 1952, the author has no personal experience—other than having crossed the Bay Bridge dozens of times. Because the author lives outside of the Maryland region and faced limitations governing the inter-library loan of microfilm reels, these constraints could have led to sampling error. Nor has an attempt been made to select a representative sampling of Maryland newspapers. Significant events in the Bay Bridge saga also may have occurred outside of the two sampling periods.

### **"A Significant Victory"**

Only 42 of the 249 articles in the sample (16.9%) were published during the 1947 sampling period. (For a complete breakdown of the numbers, please see Table I.) The remaining 207 (83.1%)

were published during the 1952 sampling period. This is not a surprising result—it has already been noted that much of the Maryland-area newspaper coverage during the early months of 1947 focused on Governor Lane’s budget and tax proposals. It is also a reasonable assumption that the actual completion and dedication of the Bay Bridge would generate a higher level of news coverage than the bridge did as an intangible dream inside an engineer’s mind.

**Table I—Cross-tabulation of Bay Bridge Metonymy**

Because articles may contain more than one metonym, figures may add up to more than 100 percent.

Newspaper (n)	Metonym	1947 (%)	1952 (%)	Total (%)
<b>Eastern Shore Totals</b> n=159		(n=26)	(n=133)	(n=159)
	<i>Conquering nature</i>	0	37/(27.8)	37/(23.7)
	<i>Economic progress</i>	2/(7.7)	19/(14.3)	21/(13.2)
	<i>Unity</i>	2/(7.7)	15/(11.3)	17/(10.7)
	<i>Change</i>	3/(11.5)	43/(38.1)	46/(28.9)
	<i>Equality</i>	4/(15.4)	12/(9.0)	16/(10.1)
	<i>Redemption</i>	0	4/(3.0)	4/(2.5)
	<i>Free enterprise</i>	0	7/(5.3)	7/(4.4)
	<i>None</i>	17/(65.4)	18/(13.5)	35/(22.0)
<b>Western Shore Totals</b> n=90		(n=16)	(n=74)	(n=90)
	<i>Conquering nature</i>	0	27/(36.5)	27/(30.0)
	<i>Economic progress</i>	1/(6.3)	10/(13.5)	11/(12.2)
	<i>Unity</i>	1/(6.3)	13/(17.6)	14/(15.6)
	<i>Change</i>	0	15/(20.3)	15/(16.7)
	<i>Equality</i>	0	1/(3.4)	1/(1.1)
	<i>Redemption</i>	0	8/(10.8)	8/(8.9)
	<i>Free enterprise</i>	0	5/(6.6)	5/(5.6)
	<i>None</i>	14/(87.5)	14/(18.9)	28/(31.1)
<b>Grand Total</b> n=249		(n=42)	(n=207)	(n=249)
	<i>Conquering nature</i>	0	64/(30.9)	64/(25.7)
	<i>Economic progress</i>	3/(7.1)	29/(14.0)	32/(12.9)
	<i>Unity</i>	3/(7.1)	28/(13.5)	31/(12.4)
	<i>Change</i>	3/(7.1)	58/(28.0)	61/(24.5)
	<i>Equality</i>	4/(9.5)	13/(6.3)	17/(6.8)
	<i>Redemption</i>	0	12/(5.8)	12/(4.8)
	<i>Free enterprise</i>	0	12/(5.8)	12/(4.8)
	<i>None</i>	31/(73.8)	32/(15.5)	63/(25.3)



Most of the 1947 articles (73.8%) contained basic information without content that met the definitions of any of the seven metonyms identified above. This pattern held true for six of the eight newspapers sampled. Breaking that pattern were the *Easton Star-Democrat* (33% *none* and 33% *equality*) and the *Eastern Shore Times* (66.7% *economic progress* and 66.7% *equality*). However, a majority of the articles were classified as *none* when the data were reduced to a comparison of Eastern Shore and Western Shore newspapers during both sampling periods.

Among the articles from the 1952 sampling period, *conquering nature* was the most frequently detected metonym (30.9%). This metonym was very much in evidence on May 23, 1952, when a final, 400-ton cantilever truss span was lifted into place, closing the final gap in the bridge. Although five weeks of roadwork and finishing touches still remained, Maryland newspapers treated the event as an achievement of the human will to overcome great obstacles.

“The 28-foot wide span thus links the Delaware peninsula to the mainland of Maryland for the first time and realizes the age-old dream of connecting the eastern and western shores of the state,” the *Annapolis Evening Capital* trumpeted.<sup>61</sup> Over on the Eastern Shore, the *Queen Anne’s Record Observer*, which published its weekly edition one day before the steelwork was completed, reported, “The Chesapeake Bay Bridge is almost finished! This week it will be possible, for the first time in history, to walk from the Western to the Eastern Shore of Maryland.”<sup>62</sup>

As the July 30 bridge dedication grew closer, the *conquering nature* metonym became more overt and explicit. “Death, Strikes, Storms, Can’t Stop Bridge,” proclaimed an *Annapolis Evening Capital* headline.<sup>63</sup> “Completion of a major bridge betokens a significant victory by man over the destructive forces of nature—treacherous tides, violent winds, freezing temperatures,” the *Cambridge Daily Banner* reported. “The public opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, which takes its place among the great spans of the world, indeed signalizes such a physical achievement.”<sup>64</sup>

### “A Mixed Blessing”

There was a significant difference in how the Eastern Shore and Western Shore treated the metonymy of the Bay Bridge during the 1952 sampling period. *Conquering nature* was the most frequently detected metonym in the Western Shore sample (36.5%), with *change* second-most detected (20.3%). Compare that result with the

Eastern Shore sample, where the frequency of the metonym *change* was almost double (38.1%). *Conquering nature* was the second-most detected metonym (27.8%) in the Eastern Shore sample.

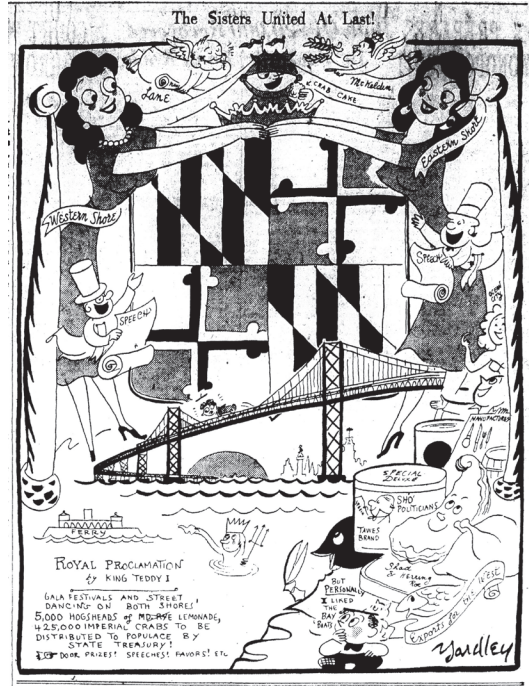
An analysis of the individual Western Shore newspapers shows an important difference in Bay Bridge metonymy. *Conquering nature* was the prominent metonym in two of the three Western Shore newspapers in the 1952 sample. *The Washington Post* was the exception, where *change* was the most-detected metonym (50%) and *conquering nature* was second (37.5%). It is interesting to note that the frequency of *conquering nature* in the *Baltimore Sun* and the *Annapolis Evening Capital* was similar to that in the *Post* (37.9% and 37.2% respectively). However, the frequency of the *change* metonym in the two newspapers was significantly lower (21.3% and 14.0% respectively).

Differences in Bay Bridge metonymy were also present in Eastern Shore newspapers. The prominence of the *change* metonym diminished as the distance from the bridge increased. It was detected in 43.3% of the sample in the *Queen Anne's Record-Observer*, published in the same county as the eastern terminus of the Bay Bridge. That was the highest frequency of any metonym in the *Record-Observer*. The *change* metonym also had the highest frequency of the sample (36.8%) in Talbot County's *Easton Star-Democrat*, located south of Queen Anne's County. In Cambridge, south of Easton, *change* appeared in 40.5% of the *Daily Banner* sample. While this appears to interrupt the pattern, *change* remained the most-detected metonym in that newspaper. Moving further south, the pattern resumed. *Change* was detected in only 17.6% in the *Salisbury Times* sample and 12.0% in the newspaper furthest from the bridge, the *Eastern Shore Times*. The most-detected metonym in those last two newspapers was *conquering nature*, with *economic progress* coming in a close second.

The *change* metonym manifested itself in many different ways. Often it was expressed in terms of uncontrolled growth. The *Queen Anne's Record-Observer* ran several editorials during the 1952 sampling period advocating countywide zoning legislation. "With the Bay Bridge and expressway coming through this county, billboards, road houses and other undesirable structures will spring up overnight," one editorial noted. "The beauties and farm values of the Eastern Shore must be saved."<sup>65</sup> The *Easton Star-Democrat* had this growth in mind when it reported that an entire new town, Bollingbrook Manor, was planned on the Talbot County side of the Choptank River.<sup>66</sup> (As things turned out, the new town never materialized.) The

*Baltimore Sun* reported that the new bridge “threatens the already shaky oyster production of the Eastern Shore” because of increased pollution that comes with growth.<sup>67</sup>

However, the *change* metonym also referred to an often-feared cultural transformation of the Eastern Shore. “Several visiting newspapermen from Washington reported that on the Eastern Shore there exists an inclination to look at the opening of the Bay Bridge to traffic as a mixed blessing,” editorialized the *Cambridge Daily Banner*. “They have been informed that some people are afraid of the impact that bridge will make on the ideas that Eastern Shore people regard as their way of life.”<sup>68</sup> The *Washington Post* said, “With the completion of the great big bridge over the Chesapeake Bay, it is expected that the final assault will be made on the Eastern Shore tranquility and the type of person it has been producing.”<sup>69</sup>



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Figure 2—“The Sisters United At Last!”

### *Unity, Equality and Redemption*

The *unity* metonym appeared only three times (7.1%) during the 1947 sample—one time each in the Annapolis, Easton and Ocean City newspapers. However, it was much more prevalent in the 1952 sample, appearing 28 times (13.5%) and at least once in each of the eight newspapers. However, there were regional differences in its frequency. The *unity* metonym appeared in 15.6% of the entire Western Shore sample compared with 10.7% in the entire Eastern Shore sample.

The strongest expression of the unity metonym came in the form of an editorial cartoon published in the *Baltimore Sun* on the morning of the bridge dedication (see Figure 2). “The Sisters United At Last!” pictured two women representing the two Shores reaching toward each other. Between them is the most prominent feature of the cartoon, a crest created from the Maryland state flag. The detail of the cartoon captures the spirit of the big day: politicians giving speeches on both Shores, the city of Baltimore rising in the background as if it were Emerald City from *The Wizard of Oz*, the Eastern Shore lined with agricultural and food for export to the west, and Neptune tearfully banishing the ferryboats that had ruled Chesapeake Bay for decades. The most whimsical aspect of the editorial cartoon is the depiction of Governor McKeldin and former Governor Lane as cherubs, with McKeldin blowing a kiss to his former rival.<sup>70</sup> In the accompanying editorial, the *Sun* said that the most important byproduct of the new bridge “should be a new sense of unity between the parts of Maryland so long divided that they have developed what some would call a different culture, maybe even a different sense of values.”<sup>71</sup>

Newspapers on both Shores joined in the *unity* chorus. “The third-longest bridge in the world, it marks the end of an era of division for Maryland,” said the lead article on the front page of that day’s *Salisbury Times*.<sup>72</sup> In its dedication day editorial, the *Annapolis Evening Capital* said, “The Western and the Eastern Shores of Maryland have clasped hands across the broad Chesapeake Bay, that has separated them since the Founding Fathers landed on these shores, through the medium of the great steel and concrete bridge.”<sup>73</sup> Symbolic of this spirit of unity was a small ceremony in the middle of bridge on the eve of the dedication. The publishers of the *Cambridge Daily Banner* and the *Annapolis Evening Capital* were photographed exchanging greetings in what was characterized in both newspapers as “the first official bridge dedication ceremony.”<sup>74</sup>

There were stronger regional differences in the frequency of the *equality* metonym. It appeared only once in a Western Shore newspaper, the *Annapolis Evening Capital*, during the two sampling periods combined (1.1%). Compare that with the Eastern Shore, where *equality* appeared four times (15.4%) in 1947 and 12 times (9.0%) in 1952 for a combined total of 16 times (10.1%).

The strongest—some might say most strident—expression of the *equality* metonym came in an August 1, 1952, editorial in the *Easton Star-Democrat*. It noted that a “political bitterness” had ex-

isted between the two Shores since the founding of Maryland colony:

“This bitterness has led the Western Shore into ‘a look-down-the-nose’ attitude toward the “backwoods people” on the Eastern Shore. In the past, we, here on the Eastern Shore, have been considered political slaves of the wishes of Baltimore politicians.

“Not helping this situation in any way has been the past attitude of the Baltimore and Washington papers. They have ignored the news and features of the Eastern Shore and contained their pages to ‘metropolitan’ news.

“This picture has now suddenly changed with the opening of the Bay Bridge. Now, they are fighting tooth and nail for stories about the Shore in an effort to gain the love and circulation of the Eastern Shore. Why? For now they feel that the Bridge will open an easy avenue across the Chesapeake to the stores of Baltimore and Washington. For now the “backwoods people” are going to throw away their wish books of the mail order houses and come to the big city to buy their store clothes.”<sup>75</sup>

The editorial went on to say, “It is hoped that the new span of concrete and steel will cement the East and West together into a team that will strengthen Maryland as a state, free from the false ideas of grandeur on one side and the feeling of oppression on the other.”<sup>76</sup>

There were the other expressions of the *equality* metonym throughout the Eastern Shore press. One was in the “Chesapeake Bay Bridge Edition” of the *Queen Anne’s Record-Observer*, where its banner headline screamed, “Bay Bridge Opens Wide Horizons for the Eastern Shore.”<sup>77</sup> Several newspapers reported that Eastern Shore politicians were successful in their demand that the state conduct a second ribbon-cutting ceremony on the eastern end of the bridge.<sup>78</sup> And when a *Chicago Tribune* columnist criticized the Bay Bridge and the Eastern Shore, the *Cambridge Daily Banner* fired back. “The piece, which professed to find the Eastern Shore a backward area, brings things to mind that escape attention,” the *Banner* said. The paper went on to mention Chicago’s image as a haven of gangsters and Al Capone.<sup>79</sup>

A final area where regional differences in Bay Bridge metony-

my were pronounced focused on the rehabilitation of former Governor Lane's reputation. Because the *redemption* metonym is based on Lane's landslide loss in the 1950 gubernatorial election, sampling for the metonym redemption is restricted to just the 1952 sample.

*Redemption* was detected in 10.8% of the Western Shore sample, compared to only 3.0% in the Eastern Shore sample. While it may be coincidental, this apparent lack of enthusiasm may have stemmed from lingering memories of the Eastern Shore's dogged opposition to the former governor's budget and tax proposals. However, on a positive note, no negative references to Lane were evident in either the Eastern Shore or Western Shore samples.

The *Annapolis Evening Capital* provided the most dramatic examples of the *redemption* metonym. On the day after Lane was sworn-in as governor, the *Evening Capital's* editorial said, "We wish him well, and because of his background and experience we are confident that four years from now the people of Maryland will confer a 'well done' on his efforts."<sup>80</sup> However, less than three months later, the newspaper rhetorically asked, "When William Preston Lane was running for Governor on the Democratic ticket, do you think he would have been elected if he had campaigned on a platform increasing the State income tax, boosting the cost of motor vehicle registration, the gasoline tax, and levying a sales tax?"<sup>81</sup>

Now fast forward to 1952 and the days leading up to the dedication of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. If the bridge was the star of the *Evening Capital's* coverage, Lane was certainly the lead supporting actor. Two weeks before the dedication, the newspaper ran a front-page article and photograph of the former governor's tour of the bridge construction site. "The former governor, who insisted the bridge should be built despite all the opposition thrown against it during his administration, was elated when he got across to the Eastern Shore," the *Evening Capital* reported.<sup>82</sup> However, the clearest sign of *redemption* came in an article the day before the dedication, when an article titled "Much credit is due to Mr. Lane" made a second-reference to the former governor as "the statesman."<sup>83</sup>

Although it appeared in less than five percent of the sample, the presence of the *free enterprise* metonym was one of the surprise findings of the research. It appears to have been sparked by Governor McKeldin's dedication remarks, when he said the bridge was a symbol of America, its industrial progress and "a tribute in our system of free enterprise."<sup>84</sup> Newspapers in Annapolis and Cambridge picked up and used the *free enterprise* metonym in their post-dedication coverage. It also appears in the form of articles about the private financing of the bridge project through government bonds and

how the bridge was expected to retire its debt years before originally projected.

## Analysis

After a thorough reading of these nearly 60-year-old newspapers, one is struck by “the unspoken truths” contained within them. A surface reading of the newspapers on both sides of Chesapeake Bay would suggest that the bridge construction project was uncontroversial and universally supported. However, reporters and editors on both sides of the bay often alluded to the tensions the project created. This was done parenthetically, as if the broader concept was widely understood. In other words, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge was a metonym—one that meant different things to different people.

That the *conquering nature* metonym was most frequently detected in the sample is of little surprise. This is logical, especially when one considers that the focal event of this research was the building of a bridge to span an obstacle created by the forces of nature. When one considers that metonyms, by their very nature, are bridges to understanding, using the building of the Bay Bridge as a metonym for *conquering nature* seems to be a natural outcome.

One is struck by the epideictic manner in which this metonym was expressed. The language of the news stories and editorials strained to achieve gravitas. Nowhere was epideictic rhetoric more evident than in the dedication day editorial of the *Annapolis Evening Capital*, which referenced Rudyard Kipling, Julius Caesar and General George McClellan in a strained, but futile, attempt to bring meaning to the opening of the bridge.<sup>85</sup> However, the presence of such lofty rhetoric is not surprising when one considers the context of the times, an age of post-World War II optimism and technological advancement. The generation that had just defeated the forces of fascism and was holding back the forces of communism had little doubt that it could build a bridge across the mighty Chesapeake.

Nor is the prevalence of the *change* metonym in the Eastern Shore newspapers of particular surprise. The people of the Eastern Shore feared the changes that the Bay Bridge would bring because they could do the math. According to the 1950 Census, the population of the nine Eastern Shore counties was 210,623, just under nine percent of the state total. The Eastern Shore’s eight percent population growth rate appeared paltry when compared to the 31 percent growth rate for the rest of the state.<sup>86</sup> The people of the Eastern Shore had always felt as if they had little say in governing the state. With

the coming of the Bay Bridge, Shoremen feared being overwhelmed by immigrants from the west exercising political muscle to change their way of life.

For much the same reason, it is not surprising that the *change* metonym was detected less frequently in the Baltimore and Annapolis newspapers. To use another trope, in this case a metaphor, political supremacy to the Western Shore was like water to a Chesapeake Bay blue fin crab—it was all around, but the crab didn't really notice it. This explains why the *Washington Post*—observers outside of the Maryland social and political hierarchy—focused much of its coverage on the social, political and economic changes that the Bay Bridge would bring.

The newspapers of the Eastern Shore did not speak with one voice on the matter of change. As has been stated, proximity to the bridge was a factor. The *change* metonym appeared in the Salisbury and Ocean City newspapers—those most distant from the bridge—less frequently than in the other Eastern Shore newspapers. The metonym of *economic progress* was more prevalent in those newspapers. That makes perfect sense when one considers that Salisbury was (and still is) the commercial center of the Eastern Shore and that Ocean City was (and still is) a seaside resort dependent on tourism dollars.

The story of the construction of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge is also the story of William Preston Lane Jr. A Hagerstown newspaper publisher, Lane had a vision for what a bay bridge would mean for the people of Maryland. His stubborn determination led to the construction of the bridge, to improvements of much of Maryland's transportation infrastructure that had been neglected during World War II, and ultimately to his political demise. It was only after the dream of a bridge across the Chesapeake was realized that the people—and the newspapers that had so roundly criticized his policies—came to appreciate that vision. He will forever be linked to the bridge, the signature accomplishment of his administration. Upon his death in 1967, the Maryland legislature renamed the structure the William Preston Lane Jr. Memorial Bridge—an enduring metonym of redemption.



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