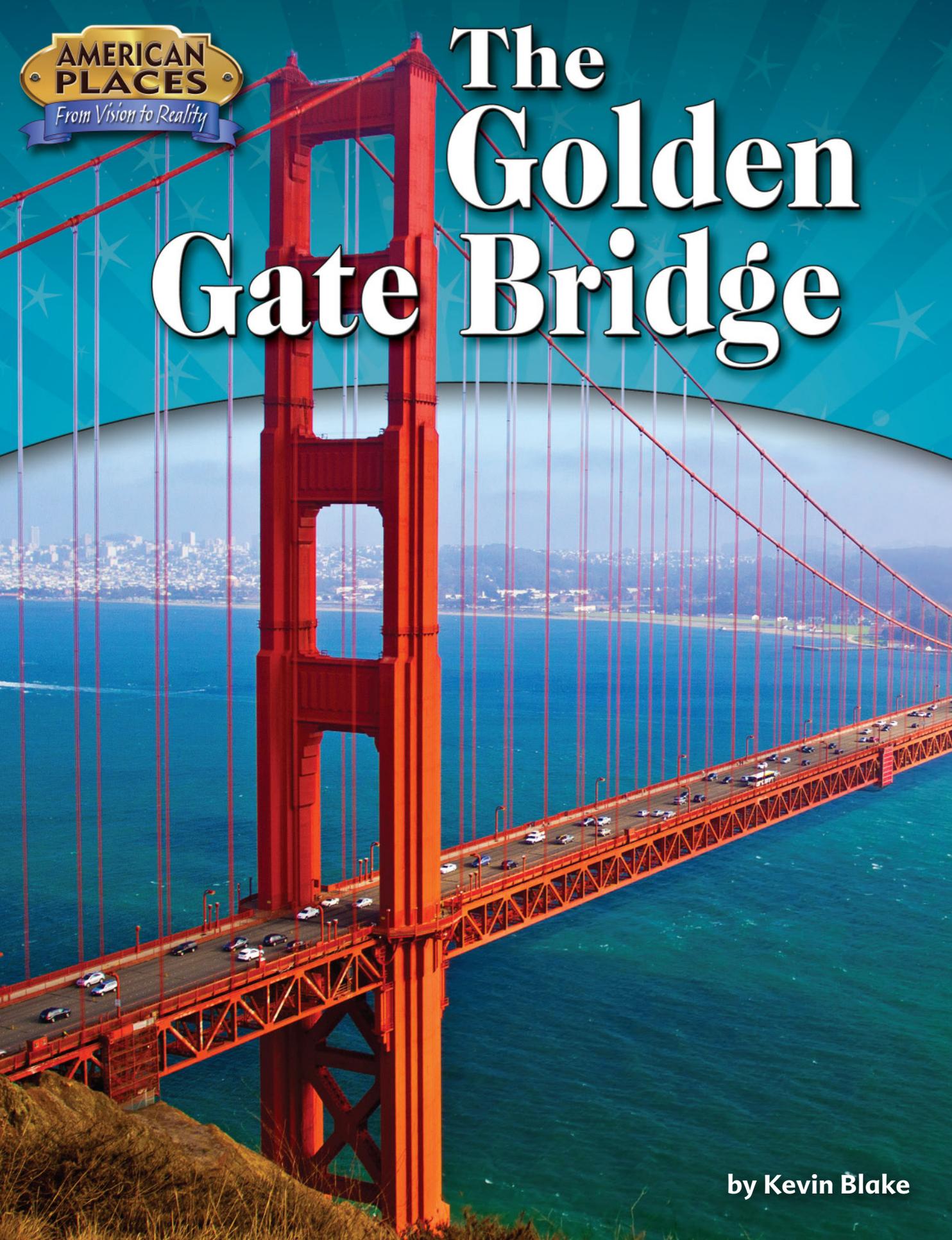




# The Golden Gate Bridge



by Kevin Blake

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# The Golden Gate Bridge



**by Kevin Blake**

**Consultant:**  
**Mary Currie, Retired Public Affairs Director**  
**Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District**  
**San Francisco, California**

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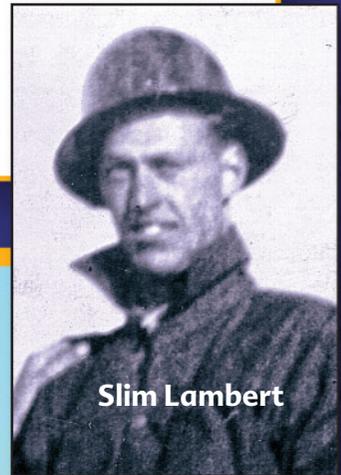
# Contents

Disaster! . . . . .	4
A Great Need . . . . .	6
An Impossible Feat . . . . .	8
The Dreamer . . . . .	10
A Suspension Bridge . . . . .	12
Brave Workers Wanted . . . . .	14
Two Piers . . . . .	16
Huge Towers . . . . .	18
The Main Cables . . . . .	20
A Finished Bridge . . . . .	22
Opening Day . . . . .	24
The Big Test . . . . .	26
The Golden Gate Bridge: By the Numbers . . . . .	28
Glossary . . . . .	30
Bibliography . . . . .	31
Read More . . . . .	31
Learn More Online . . . . .	31
Index . . . . .	32
About the Author . . . . .	32



# Disaster!

It was February 17, 1937, in Northern California. Hundreds of feet above the cold, swirling waters of San Francisco Bay, construction worker Slim Lambert was hard at work helping to build the Golden Gate Bridge. As Slim and his crew balanced on a narrow platform attached to the bridge, disaster struck. The platform broke and ripped through the safety net below. Twelve men, including Slim, **hurtled** 220 feet (67 m) through the air toward the **frigid** water.



In February, the average water temperature of San Francisco Bay is a chilly 50°F (12°C).

As Slim plunged deep into the water, he kicked his legs as hard as he could and managed to swim up to the water's surface. "The only thing that went through my mind was survival," said Slim. Although badly hurt, he was alive. Sadly, ten of the other men who fell died.

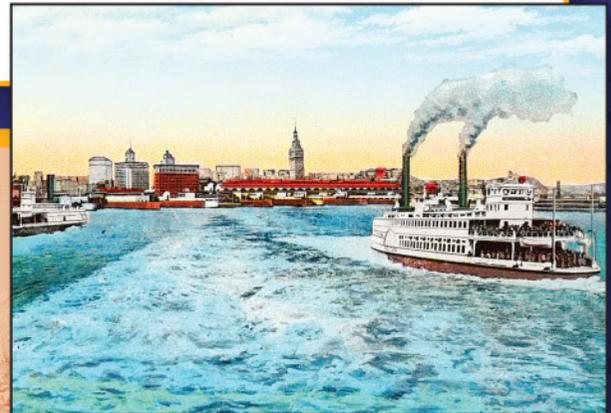
The Golden Gate Bridge was the first construction project that used a safety net. The net was used to catch workers who accidentally fell off the bridge. It prevented 19 workers from falling into the bay over the course of the bridge's construction.



The safety net would have caught Slim and the other workers had it not been torn when the heavy platform fell on it.

# A Great Need

Despite the terrible **tragedy**, work on the Golden Gate Bridge continued at a fast pace. The people of San Francisco desperately needed the bridge. Why? San Francisco sits on a **peninsula** with water on three sides: the Pacific Ocean, San Francisco Bay, and a narrow passage of water called the Golden Gate **strait**. Before the bridge was built, the only way people could cross the strait and travel to and from nearby Marin County was by ferryboat.



The ferryboats used before the Golden Gate Bridge was built traveled very slowly.



The Golden Gate strait connects San Francisco Bay to the Pacific Ocean.



In the 1930s, the **population** of San Francisco was growing at a fast rate. During this time, as new roadways were being built in California and in other parts of America, many people were purchasing cars. A new bridge would mean more people could reach San Francisco by car. It would also be much faster to drive into and out of the city from the north.



**An automobile in the 1930s**