

YOUTH DIVES OFF BROOKLYN BRIDGE

**Youngster Eludes the Police and
Plunges Into the East River,
Escaping Unhurt.**

THEN ANOTHER TRIES IT

**Patrolman Captures Him Just as He
Is Getting Ready for the
Long Drop.**

The police had their hands full yesterday with bridgejumpers. One ferret-faced youth, who said he was 17 years old, did manage to elude their vigilance and plunge off the Brooklyn Bridge, but a middle-aged laborer was stopped just as he was about to climb over the parapet of the new Manhattan Bridge.

When the boy was arrested after being hauled out of the East River he said he was Otto Eppers, a cartoonist of 535 Dean Street, Brooklyn. He said that his only object was to get notoriety, but there were stories about that he had tried to collect for his feat a purse of \$1,000 from the storekeepers of Brooklyn. It was said that a Flatbush clothier had promised to give him \$250 and a suit of clothes.

Word had come to the police in the morning that an attempt to jump from a bridge was to be made, and all along the Manhattan Bridge Acting Capt. Burke had posted patrolmen, among them four bicycle policemen. It was their presence which prevented Eppers from using that structure as a diving point.

Soon after noon Eppers went to the garage of Henry Fisher of 372 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn, and asked for a machine. He had on a bathing suit under his coat and trousers. He told Fisher what he intended to do, and Fisher lent him an auto. With Mason Beck of 9 St. Mark's Avenue Fisher and his chauffeur, Harry McGinty of 87 Lexington Avenue, the youth started off.

He made for the Manhattan Bridge from the Brooklyn side, but saw that there was no chance of his being able to scale the railing unmolested, so the machine was headed for the Brooklyn Bridge.

When he had got 500 feet from the Brooklyn tower Eppers leaped from the auto and began to climb the lattice work along the edge. Patrolman Scheffmeyer made a run for him, but he was too quick, and, placing his hands above his head in regular diving fashion, and bending low down, he let himself go. The drop is reckoned at more than 150 feet, and for the first half of the distance Eppers was able to keep straight through the impetus of the take-off. But then he began to twist and turn, and finally struck the water in a sitting position.

He had arranged that a tug should be ready to receive him, but the enforced alteration in his plans had disturbed this arrangement. When he came up he saw the tug Florence fifty yards off. He struck out for her, and the crew, who had seen the jump, were ready for him. They hauled him in with boathooks and found that he was unhurt. They took him over to the Manhattan side and landed him at the foot of Fulton Street.

There he was arrested on the charge of attempted suicide, and was taken to St. Gregory's Hospital. Dr. Dietrich examined him and found that except for bruises about the back he seemed uninjured. He was placed in a hot bath, and was then told to rest awhile on a couch. Asked why he had performed such a foolhardy feat, Eppers said:

"It hasn't done me any harm. I wanted to become a professional high diver and I want a reputation. I belong to the Carlisle Athletic Club, which has its quarters at Carlton Avenue and Dean Street, and have been a swimmer since I was 9 years old.

"I wasn't a bit nervous except when I saw so many policemen about. My clothes didn't bother me at all, but I seemed to be half an hour in the air, and believe that I went right down to the bottom."

His clothes were so badly torn in fishing him out that the police had to find an old pair of trousers to make his appearance in court fitting. He was taken to the Tombs Police Court about 4 o'clock, and arraigned before Magistrate Appleton on the attempted suicide charge. His mother and sister, who had been sent for, were in court. When the Magistrate heard the charge he smiled and Eppers couldn't restrain a laugh.

"Well, he seems very much alive, doesn't he?" remarked the Magistrate. Acting Capt. Burke admitted it. The Magistrate then admonished Eppers on his foolhardiness and let him go. The men who had accompanied him were charged with aiding and abetting an attempt at suicide, but were discharged. Fisher, however, will have to explain today how it was that he was operating an automobile without a number. He said he had lost it during the morning.

As Eppers walked out of court his family received him with many upbraidings. He escaped from them as well and went off in Fisher's auto.

The other man arrested on the charge of attempted bridge-jumping was James Bicus of Wilmington, Del. He was seen by one of the men looking out for Eppers to be acting queerly on the Brooklyn end of the Manhattan Bridge. He seemed to be mentally unbalanced.