

By the late nineteenth century, the focus for the engineers and builders of tunnels was beginning to shift from Europe to the United States and especially New York, where the rivers encircling Manhattan captured the imagination of tunnelers and challenged their ingenuity.

The first to accept the challenge was a somewhat mysterious Californian named DeWitt Clinton Haskin, who turned up in New York in the 1870's with a proposal to tunnel through the silt under the Hudson River between Manhattan and Jersey City.

Haskin eventually abandoned the risky project.

But a company organized by William McAdoo resumed the attack in 1902, working from both directions.

McAdoo's men were forced to blast when they ran into an unexpected ledge of rock, but with this obstacle surmounted.

the two headings met in 1904 and McAdoo donned oilskins to become the Hudson's first underwater bank - to - bank pedestrian.

World's Work magazine proudly reported in 1906 that New York could now be described as a body of land surrounded by tunnels. Three one - way shafts beneath the Hudson and two under the Harlem River were already holed through; three more Hudson tubes were being built.

Eight separate tunnels were under construction beneath the East River.

