

The New York Times / Vic DeLucia

Festival-goers filled the Avenue of the Americas yesterday for the thoroughfare's first event

For City, It Was a Festive, Sunny Day

By ARI L. GOLDMAN

People, food and music mingled and flowed along the Avenue of the Americas yesterday at the first annual festival on the street — an event that might have been billed "the festival where no one could stand still."

From 34th to 50th Street there was a continuous wave of browsers and artisans, music makers and foot-stomper, street chefs and munchers. All the avenue was a moving stage. People were moving on foot and on roller skates, on bicycles and in baby carriages along the automobile-free streets. And those who paused along the way kept swaying to the ever-present music as they went from booth to booth.

But the Avenue of the Americas wasn't the only place where the action was yesterday. Throughout the city, New Yorkers took to the streets.

In Harlem, contestants joined in the Eighth Annual Harlem Bicycle Championship at Marcus Garvey Park. The event was sponsored by the 32d Precinct Community Council and the Consolidated Edison Company.

And in Queens, traffic along Main Street gave way to the third annual Flushing Fantastic. The event had two themes: children, who were delighted with carnival rides and cotton candy, and ethnic diversity, which in Queens spans the globe.

North and South of Border

The Avenue of the Americas festival, however, stuck with two continents — North and South America. With the sun beating down under clear skies — the temperature hit 85 degrees at 1:10 P.M. — the avenue often felt as if it had been transported south of the border.

"I don't care if it's almost 90 degrees," said Edna Kronberg of Manhattan. "How often do you find a fur coat for \$45?" Miss Kronberg was hugging her new muskrat purchase after buying it off a rack set up near 45th Street.

Along the Avenue of the Americas, piña colodas were competing with egg creams as thirst quenchers, but beer — in cans, bottles and on tap — was the most popular drink.

The crafts and foods defied generalizations. Here is a sampling from just one block, between 40th and 41st Streets: watermelon, Peruvian jewelry, silver cups, musical greeting cards, invisible dogs, baskets, mirrors, nuts, handbags, Stevenson for President buttons, Charlie McCarthy dolls, egg rolls, funnel cakes, used china, antique and not-so-antique books, scarves and hurricane lamps.

Among the vendors was Thomas Backer, who was selling onyx chess boards and 7-foot-tall knights in armor. "Everything from Mexico," said Mr. Backer, "except me." He lives in Queens.

On the steps of Bryant Park, at the corner of 41st Street, the Marco Rizo Latin American Ensemble got things under way at noon, playing to passers-by and an audience that sat on the steps.

Even a Turtle Race

But there was no one sitting two blocks to the north where Mortie Butler and the People's Heritage, played reggae tunes. Everyone was on their feet, and one small boy got up on stage and danced with the group's lead female singer, Mary Isaacs, as the band played "By the Waters of Babylon."

The audience that surrounded Mitch Cohen and his racing turtles also seemed disinclined to stand still. Youngsters who picked their favorites (no money down) jumped and squealed

as the reptiles plodded along the race course to Mr. Cohen's urgings. Other street entertainers drew crowds with juggling, magic and fire-eating feats.

At the northern end of festival, on a stage set up near 50th Street, the music was strictly North American. As Dorian Stuart belted out jazz and show tunes, June Dobson, the stage director, said, "Now, that's American."

At the Flushing festival, an estimated 200,000 people wandered up and down Main Street between Sanford Avenue and Northern Boulevard, going from booth to booth to buy sausages, curried rice and pizza, among other foods.

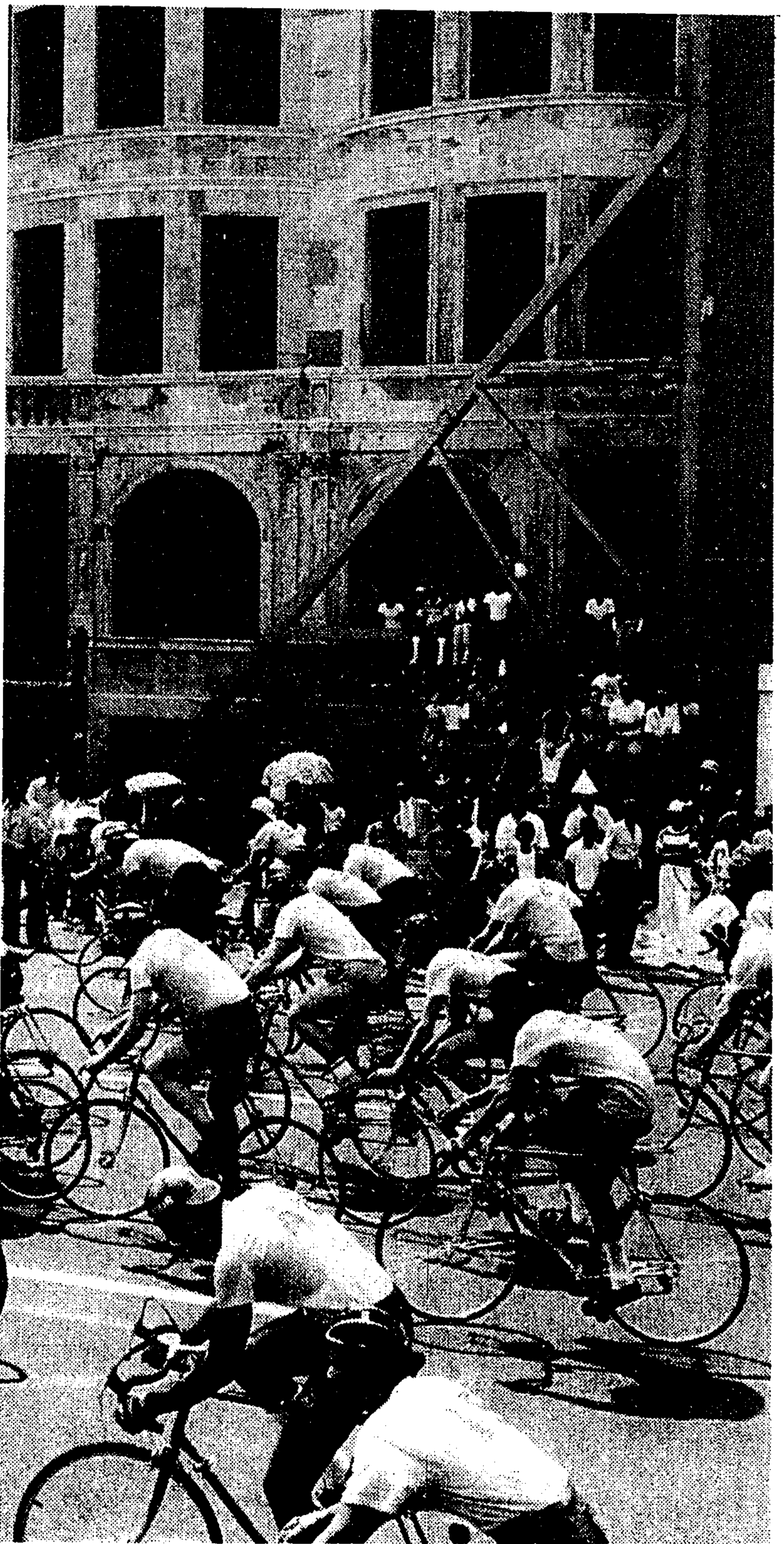
The most popular entertainment for youngsters was "Uncle Ernie's King Kong Ride," a huge see-saw that rocked back and forth. Kelly Mills, a ninth-grade pupil from Intermediate School 237, waited in line with friends.

"This is the best thing at the fair," she said before boarding the breezy ride. "It's too hot to eat food."

"You're scared, right?" a friend asked her.

"No, I'm not scared," she said. "It can't be that scary."

When Miss Mills came off the ride, she said: "I didn't scream, I laughed. Well, I screamed a little bit."



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In Harlem, bicycle riders raced along Fifth Avenue to Marcus Garvey Park

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