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A COMPLAINT

TO THE

HON. ALBERT G. BROWN,

(OF MISSISSIPPI.)

CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE'S COMMITTEE ON THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

UPON THE SUBJECT OF THE

POTOMAC BRIDGE,

AS AN

OBSTRUCTION TO THE COMMERCE

OF

GEORGETOWN, D. C.

BY

HENRY ADDISON, ✓

MAYOR OF GEORGETOWN, D. C.

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WASHINGTON:  
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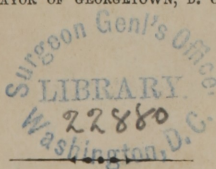
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TO HON. ALBERT G. BROWN,  
*Chairman of the Senate's Committee  
on the District of Columbia.*

SIR :—According to my promise, I now proceed to state in this form, our objections to the continuance of the “Long Bridge” in our river. I may very well take for my text the following resolutions of the Corporation of Washington City :

*“Joint Resolution in Relation to the Long Bridge.*

WHEREAS, it is manifest, from the proceedings of the United States Congress, that certain members of that body have been led into error in ascribing to the construction of the Potomac bridge on its present site the existence of the “flats” in the Potomac river, and the consequent interruption of navigation and production of disease ; and whereas certain interested parties have designedly led those gentlemen into the above error from selfish and sinister motives, there being abundance of evidence to prove that the “flats” existed before the construction of the bridge, and that the present structure has not increased the evil ;

And, further, that Congress, by a series of legislation, commencing in 1808, and extending upwards of forty-four years, evidenced clearly the design to make the present route of the bridge perpetual, it being the most convenient, direct mail route north and south.

And, further, that the destruction of the bridge would be the most serious injury to the interest of our community, to the extensive and increasing population of the adjoining States, and to the public generally. Therefore,

*Be it Resolved, &c.,* That the joint committee appointed to represent the interests of the Corporation before Congress be instructed to lay before that body the facts in relation to the above, and at the same time appeal to the justice of Congress and the claims of the people of this metropolis to have the bridge retained and maintained on its present site.”

It may be profitable now to see what has been the legislation of Congress upon the subject of that bridge, and how far it was intended to make it “perpetual.”

The following is a statement of the acts of Congress upon the subject of the “Potomac Bridge,” from the time of its original construction until now.

1st. "An act authorizing the erection of a bridge over the Potomac river, within the District of Columbia," approved February 5, 1808. This act chartered "The Washington Bridge Company" with a capital of \$200,000, to build and sustain a toll bridge on their account.

2d. "An act to alter the bridge and draws across the potomac, from Washington City to Alexandria," approved May 14, 1830. This act was intended to render the bridge less injurious to the commerce of Georgetown than it had been, and appropriated \$6,000; "the work to be done under the superintendence of the Corporation of Georgetown."

3d. "An act providing for the purchase, by the United States, of the rights of the Washington Bridge Company, in the District of Columbia, and for the erection of a public bridge on the site thereof;" approved July 14, 1832, "and appropriates \$20,000 to purchase said bridge and all "the lands, piers, abutments, roads, and ways, and all the materials owned at the site of the said bridge, &c.;" and \$60,000 to commence a new bridge on the same site.

4th. "An act in relation to the Potomac bridge;" approved March 2, 1833, which appropriates \$200,000 for a bridge at the same site on a plan to be approved by the President of the United States.

5th. "An act authorizing the construction of a bridge across the Potomac, and repealing all acts already passed in relation thereto;" approved June 30, 1834, which, as the title indicates, abandoned the extravagant plans before adopted, appropriated \$20,000 for damages incurred on their account, and provided for the erection of another structure, on the old plan of 1808, only that 1,660 feet of its length was to be so constructed as to entirely prevent the passage of the water. *A drawing of this bridge will be put in your possession.*

6th. "An act to amend an act entitled 'an act authorising the construction of a bridge across the Potomac, and repealing all acts in relation thereto;'" approved March 3, 1835, which authorizes some further changes in that structure, provided the "entire cost" did not exceed the sum of \$300,000.

7th. "A resolution authorizing the repair of the bridge across the Potomac river, at Washington;" approved June 7, 1846—repairs which had become necessary in consequence of injuries which it had sustained by a flood.

8th. "An act to provide for the repairing of the Potomac bridge;" approved September 11, 1841, which appropriated \$15,806 for that purpose.



9th. In the the civil and diplomatic bill, of August 12, 1848, the sum of \$1,700 was appropriated for the repair of the bridge.

10th. In a similar bill, of August 12, 1848, \$1,700 was appropriated for repairs of the bridge.

11th. In a similar bill, of August 31, 1852, \$900 was again appropriated for the same bridge, and it was then "surrendered to the authorities of this District of Columbia."

12th. In a similar bill, of March 3d, 1853, another appropriation of \$20,000 was made for its repair.

13th. Another appropriation was made in the civil and diplomatic bill of March 3d, 1855, for its repair.

We were opposed to the building of the bridge in 1808—we made that opposition known to Congress by humble and earnest petitions, and by personal appeals to the members of both Houses. Our memorials and remonstrances are now on the files of Congress, and have, on a late occasion, been shown to one of the District Committees. We opposed the building of that bridge, because we apprehended serious injuries from it. The question may now be asked, were our fears well founded—have they been justified by subsequent events and actual experience? It would have been well for us if only our apprehensions had been realized—if its effects had not been far more disastrous than were then foreseen. And it will now be my object, with candor and brevity, to state how, in what respects, and to what extent we have been injured.

You are aware of the fact, that Georgetown has always relied upon commerce for its support and prosperity—that we were located in the immediate vicinity of Alexandria, a highly respectable seaport, whose population, wealth, and enterprise were, in all respects, equal to our own. She was our natural and unavoidable competing market for the great staples produced in the contiguous counties of Maryland and Virginia. In making choice between the two markets, interest and convenience were paramount considerations with the farmer, the planter, and the distant merchant. Commercial facilities, safe and certain transportation, and unobstructed navigation, are indispensable requisites of a commercial port. Equality, in

these respects with our neighboring rival, was essentially necessary to a fair and successful competition; and just such a competition was notoriously maintained by us until the erection of the Potomac bridge. And how did the bridge retard and cripple our commerce? Proper answers to that question will cover the whole subject.

FIRST. It injures us by presenting such a barrier to the passage of vessels, that their owners and masters, residing abroad, will not come to our harbor for produce if it can be had at Alexandria, even at an additional price. That barrier presents both delays and injuries. During certain winds, tides, and currents, the contracted drawer of that bridge cannot be approached or passed at all with safety. Hundreds of vessels have been more or less injured while passing through the drawer, when every precaution had been taken to ensure their safety. For these injuries no remuneration has ever been made, and for which no man, association or body politic seems to be responsible. I am now referring, of course, to casualties and disasters that occur during daylight. None but a madman would attempt to approach that drawer during a disturbance of the elements at night. (See Appendix A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J.)

SECONDLY. As already stated, we have always had to contend with our neighboring rival for a fair participation in a trade which was essential to our commercial existence. To do that, it was important that we should be left in full possession of all our inherent rights and natural advantages. But it often happens that at a most important season of the year we are entirely deprived of the use of our river. *At the termination of our winters*, after the whole river had been closed by ice for weeks, and sometimes for months, it was exceedingly important to our merchants that the produce which had been accumulating on their hands, should be shipped to distant markets at the earliest practicable period. Just as important was it to them that they should then receive their arrivals from abroad. But it has happened, time and again, that just at that critical time, when the ice had been entirely carried off from Washing-



ton City to the mouth of the river, the bridge intercepted its passage from our harbor, and our navigation has remained suspended for weeks, while Alexandria remained in the free and uninterrupted enjoyment of all the facilities that the river could at any time afford. This is no fiction, nor is it an evil of rare occurrence. During this very season a vessel from the West Indies, belonging to merchants of Georgetown, not being able to get higher up the river than the bridge, was obliged to remain at Alexandria for a considerable time, with serious loss and expense to her owners. It is worse even than that. In the event of a recurrence of severe weather, just at such junctures, it has happened that the ice became hardened and strengthened to such a degree, that our harbor remained closed for weeks, while Alexandria was entirely free from the annoyance. But, sir, that is not all the injury which is inflicted upon us by the bridge as an obstruction to the passage of the ice. It is only when the ice becomes suddenly broken up by a rushing flood, occasioned by melted snows and heavy rains, that we are made to feel the most frightful of the evils resulting from the obstruction presented by the bridge. On these occasions immense masses of ice lodge against the piers of the bridge and become packed in a solid body from the bed of the river to the surface of the water. The great volume of water becomes thus obstructed and thrown back upon our wharfs and all the houses and other valuable property contiguous to the river. In these seasons, all business is suspended, and our people have plenty of time humbly to behold the progress of a desolation instituted for them by an act of the Congress of the United States.

THIRDLY. The bridge, as you are aware, was originally constructed upon wooden piers braced by heavy timbers, and placed from each other about thirty feet. Soon after its completion, it was found to produce accumulations of mud from its site to a considerable distance towards our harbor, which gradually reduced the general depth of water, and occasioned frequent and vexatious variations in the direction of our main channel, to the great detriment of its navigation. To such an

extent, and so rapidly were these deposits made in the bed of the river, that in a few years about one-half of the stream, for some distance above the bridge, became a mere shoal of mud, and hopelessly unnavigable. Then the wooden piers on that part of the ruined river were removed and substituted by a solid causeway with stone walls on either side for its protection. In one respect, especially, this change in the construction of the bridge greatly aggravated its evil, and rendered it more than ever an intolerable nuisance. These great walls of stone not only intercepted the passage of the mud, and rapidly increased it in our channel, but it presented a barrier to the current of the river during heavy floods, and increased the inundations already noticed.

*These accumulations of mud show themselves so plainly, and have increased so undeniably since the erection of the bridge, that their existence, and the period of their existence, have long ago ceased to be topics of debate. Other things may be denied, and many sound facts have been denied, but, as these mud banks are "fixed facts," constantly lifting their unsightly heads above the water's surface, they determined that their existence shall not be denied, and they have at last silenced all denials. I deeply regret that these banks of mud should annoy others than the people of Georgetown, and particularly, that they should so much have annoyed Mr. Hunter. In his late speech he said the mud banks were there, just where we said they were. But he said that they were occasioned by a causeway which we had ourselves erected between Mason's Island and the Virginia shore. Says Mr. Hunter :*

"I know that objections have been made to the Long Bridge, on the ground that it has inflicted an injury on Georgetown. The general idea prevails that it is owing to that bridge that the mud-flat above it has accumulated, and that a portion of the channel through which vessels go to Georgetown has been filled up. Now, it so happens that this morning I was looking over the old charts of the river, and I find that, according to the chart of 1792, there was no more water in that channel through which vessels now pass under the Long Bridge than there is at present. I find that at that time the mud-flat was in existence, both above and below the bridge."



To this you replied:

"My friend from Virginia has been looking at documents on this subject, but I think he could have obtained more reliable testimony by simply consulting those who see the bridge every day. The opinion of the old inhabitants of Georgetown, and of many in Washington is, that since the construction of that bridge the flat, which is represented on the chart of 1792, has filled up, and that, while then it was a flat under the water, seldom subjected to the rays of a summer's sun, it has now been raised by the action of the water and accumulation of mud, until, with every flowing of the tide, it is exposed. That I understand to be the complaint. It is not denied that there was a flat there before, but it was generally covered with water until after this bridge was built. Therefore the deductions from the chart do not meet the points of complaint."

Again says Mr. Hunter:

"But let us suppose that the citizens of Georgetown are right; and that it is owing to the Long Bridge that the mud-flat has accumulated, then I say it results from that portion of it which is called the "causeway," if it results from anything; and it would not help the citizens of Georgetown to permit the bridge to go down unless we should take away the causeway. If we were to take away the causeway, the bridge might still be maintained in that place on piers."

I regret, on his own account, that Mr. Hunter cannot more satisfactorily dispose of these same "flats." They occur to his mind so often that he was at last obliged to put them all down as an evil resulting from the causeway of the bridge. Mr. Hunter here attributes more sin to that causeway than it ever committed. No one, not even Col. Abert, should say that that causeway *caused* the offensive "flats." We complained of the flats which had been produced, or greatly augmented, by the *piers* of the bridge many years *before* the *causeway* was built, and only complained of the causeway as still further *increasing* the evil. How the *removal* of the causeway and the *replacing* of the piers, which were only a less evil of the two, will remove all our complaints, as Mr. Hunter supposes, I cannot comprehend.

We complain of the bar and flats which block up our river, and which are so ruinous to our navigation. Mr. Hunter meets

us with the chilling rebuke, "*that whatever injury has happened has been caused by the improvement made by Georgetown.*" So that if anybody has been killed, it has not been by an act of murder, or even manslaughter, but by absolute suicide! Innocent dead people are not likely to derive much consolation from such an assurance as that. Mr. Hunter says a great deal about the flats, or mud banks, and still more about "the bar" in our channel. It is truly more of "a bar" than "the bar." The current of the river, particularly during floods, becomes so much disturbed and misdirected by the obstructing bridge, that a new channel is often created, and the former one filled up with mud. We have then to go hunting after the new channel, and can only find it by a careful sounding of the bed of the river. As Col. Abert did not inform Mr. Hunter of these mutations in the direction of our channel, so palpably occasioned by the bridge, he cannot be blamed for saying "*that whatever injury has happened has been caused by the improvement made by Georgetown.*"

Now, as the causeway is placed about a mile west of the bridge, and no water can pass through it to that part of the river which lies below it, I hold it to be impossible that it can create a bank of mud at the site of the bridge and cause it to extend up the river towards Georgetown. That would be but a repetition of the old story of the lamb muddying the wolf's water. The bank begins at the bridge and progresses *up* the river. How it is possible for the causeway to create a bank of mud precisely at the bridge a mile below, is a question as hard to see through as the bank of mud itself.

If it be true, as asserted in the resolutions of the Washington Corporation, that flats were forming in the river before the bridge was built, was not that one of the strongest reasons in the world why no further obstructions should have been thrown in our way. I have been waiting for some years for an opinion from Col. Abert, that the Potomac bridge was the only blessing that had rescued our navigation from irretrievable ruin; that without the bridge, we should, by this time, have no river at all.



Mr. Hunter's speech was substantially the same one which was delivered by the late Mayor Maury before the House District Committee two years ago, and the materials of both were doubtless derived from the same source. As did Mr. Maury, so, also, does that distinguished Senator, argue the whole question under the following nine heads:

1st. "Col. Abert, who had a survey made under the order of the government by one of the officers of his department reports, that *whatever* injury has happened has been caused by an improvement made by Georgetown, itself connecting Anolestan or Mason's Island, with the Virginia shore."

2d. "Especially the opinion of Col. Abert, who declares *that the injury complained of by Georgetown* was not occasioned by the Long Bridge, but by the Georgetown improvement; connecting Mason's Island with the main land."

3d. "We find the opinion expressed by Col. Abert, *that the injury* was occasioned by the causeway from Mason's or Anolestan Island to the Virginia shore, an improvement made by the citizens of Georgetown long ago."

4th. "It is his, Col. Abert's opinion, that it is the bar which was manifestly caused by the improvement at Mason's Island, and not by the Long Bridge."

5th. "The bar which stops the vessels, is the bar formed at the lower end of Mason's Island, which did not exist until that causeway was thrown over by Georgetown."

6th. "But is a bar at the lower end of Mason's Island, occasioned by the causeway erected by the people of Georgetown themselves."

7th. "A causeway was made from Mason's Island to the Virginia shore, which has been the cause of the *injuries* which they suffer."

8th. "There was no bar below Mason's Island until the causeway was made from the island to the Virginia shore."

9th. "That is owing to their own work that this bar was formed."

Mr. Hunter was so determined to preserve the identity of a single idea, in the nine counts of his indictment, that he would not trust it to the possible detriment of even a slight diversity of expression. A small degree of verbal variation would have agreeably relieved it from the harshness of such absolute positiveness and downright monotony. This remarkable peculiari-



ty would not so much have attracted my attention, if Mr. Hunter had not, at the same time, greatly erred in matters of a topographical and statistical character. He said:

“Why do we hear nothing of obstructions to the navigation of the Eastern Branch by the bridges which the Senator from Maryland proposes to repair? Ships went up the Eastern Branch to Bladensburg thirty or forty, or perhaps fifty years ago. Upon that side we hear nothing of obstructions; but here, in regard to a bridge whose utility is sustained by such testimony as I have stated, we are told that, because the people of Georgetown happen to be inimical to it, we must disregard all the other great interests, and put aside the opinions of engineers who have declared that the injury to them was occasioned, not by this bridge, but by their own work—the causeway from Analostan Island to the Virginia shore.”

Georgetown and Bladensburg are not adjacent cities of the same magnitude, or located upon streams of equal capacity, nor have their commercial career been marked by the same fluctuations and vicissitudes, and the same tendency to extinction. Bladensburg is exactly where it always stood. Georgetown was *once* situated upon the shore of a bold navigable river, free from the obstructions of Congressional contrivance. Bladensburg, if not a mere inland village, has been known, for many years, as nothing more than “a commercial emporium” of about five hundred inhabitants, located upon the bank of a creek, not always navigable for scows in quest of sand from its bottom. Mr Hunter says, that “ships went up the Eastern Branch to Bladensburg thirty or forty years ago.” He may be perfectly assured that he has been egregiously misinformed, as to that statement. Thousands of people in this District, and its neighborhood, can satisfy Mr. Hunter that he has been entirely misinformed. As I resided in that seat of commerce just fifty years ago, and for more than forty years since then, in Georgetown, I may be supposed to have some knowledge and information in regard to all matters upon which a comparrison can, at any time with propriety, be instituted between them. We know Mr. Hunter a great deal better than he knows us; and we are perfectly assured that he did not pre-

dicade that comparison for the mere purpose of ridicule or disparagement. Secretary Guthrie can inform Mr. Hunter, that there are not, in the State of Virginia, more than two cities whose commerce equals that of Georgetown. And, if Mr. Hunter will take away the Potomac bridge, give us as much money as Congress has given to Alexandria, and recede us to the State of Maryland, in ten years, we would not agree to change conditions even with Richmond.

After all, I think Georgetown has some just ground for self-gratulation. Last year a Senator told me we were "a one-horse town;" now, Senator Rusk intimates very clearly, that we are a "two-horse town." I don't, in this connection, exactly comprehend the figure of the "*horse*;" but, as I happen to have great admiration for that noble animal, I presume it was intended to convey some sentiment of a very complimentary character. If General Rusk be right—and he is seldom wrong—it is very evident that we have gone up a "horse" within the last year, and must necessarily be on the road of prosperity. I am quite sure it was not intended as a mortifying taunt, or derisive reproach. No city containing 10,000 respectable and unoffending inhabitants, enjoying the blessings of civilization and refinement, devoted industriously to all the creditable occupations of American life, profoundly attached to the institutions of our happy country, can really merit humiliating inuendos from the lips of one of our most distinguished and estimable statesmen.

Col. Abert was so often quoted in that speech, in connection with the causeway, that it will be difficult hereafter to separate the one from the other, or to think of either without thinking of both. It is not the first time in our world that signal discoveries, or brilliant achievements in science or war, have given both men and localities a very prominent association on the same page of history. This has sometimes been done without the loss of a drop of blood, or of a man's being justly suspected of possessing even one valuable attainment in science. In this case, the Colonel has become renowned without, perhaps, paddling his canoe over one of these



flats, or even having placed a foot upon that mischievous causeway. He made his discovery, no doubt, while sitting down very comfortably on his wide arm-chair, and still broader reputation.

Mr. Hunter says nothing about the dangers to which vessels are exposed while passing through the draw of that bridge—he says nothing about the unwillingness of those having the control of vessels, to trade with Georgetown, in consequence of the existence of the bridge—nothing about the annual embargo which it imposes upon us in connection with the ice, and not a word, does he say, about the overwhelming inundations by which we are so often and so disastrously visited in consequence of its obstruction to the passage of the water. I think I could name an engineer, sometimes relied upon by members of Congress, who would either deny the existence of these evils, or ascribe them all, in a batch, “to the causeway erected between Mason’s Island and the Virginia shore.”

Now, sir, what are the facts in regard to that causeway, over which Col. Abert has fairly traveled himself out of breath, if not out of reputation as an engineer. It may be news to tell that distinguished engineer, (whose accomplishments, great learning and practical experience, in his own estimation, have enabled him to make a nearer approach to infallibility, in his profession, than any other man now living,) that from the time of Noah’s flood to the year 1783, neither history nor tradition has ever intimated that there were mud bars in the present Georgetown channel! It may be news to him that, up to the year 1783, there was no stream that could be navigated between Mason’s Island and the Virginia shore. There was nothing there but a mere marsh, and a small stream through which boats and small punys would sometimes pass, but most generally in which they “made fast,” as a place suited to their safety. In the year 1783, a *temporary* river was made there; but in a few years it began to revert back to its pristine condition, and received only water enough to make it an injury to that great channel upon which we relied to accommodate our commerce. See Appendix, K.

The people of Georgetown were wiser in those days than they have been since. It will not do for any modern engineer, deeply interested in the prosperity of Washington, and with as deep and bitter prejudices against the people of Georgetown, to tell us that those who lived here fifty years ago did not know what they were about. The Masons, Stoddards, Corcorans, and Foxalls, of that day, would not have agreed to pay the sum of \$24,000 to make a causeway which was to ruin their river. Mr. Hunter says: "They were told at the time, as I understand, by a person cognizant of the facts, by the very engineer who made the structure, that it would have the effect which has ensued from it—that it would injure instead of improving the navigation."

Mr. Hunter, no doubt, had full confidence in the accuracy and reliability of his informant. But, whoever he was, he was entirely mistaken, and if I had an opportunity to do so, I would like to read to Mr. Hunter the following extract from an original report of the engineer to whom he referred, and which is now in his own chirography before me.

That engineer was a Quaker gentleman, of Maryland, and of great reputation as a man of sound judgment and practical knowledge.

In his report to a committee of the Corporation of Georgetown, dated 4th March, 1810, being several years after he had finished the work upon the Causeway, he made the following statement:

"The direction of the former ship channel from Georgetown to Alexandria, was in exact conformity to what might have been expected from the shape of the shores, Mason's Island, &c., &c., and had it not been for the *fortuitous opening on the western side of the island*, would probably have continued a good channel to the present time. This opening, it is well known, had the effect to partially choke the original channel, and to commence a new one, called the middle channel. By greatly diminishing the current on the Georgetown side of the island, an opportunity was given for the deposition of heavy sediment in the eddy of the island, just below the town, which event accordingly took place to the rapid increase of the bank that was before slowly forming in that place. Had it not have



been for these circumstances, when the western channel was stopped by the causeway, and the whole of river again turned to the Georgetown side, it would have sought its former channel and traveled as before." (See Appendix K.)

It must be observed that our causeway was erected not to obviate any evil that had been occasioned by the Potomac bridge, because the bridge had at that time no existence. The causeway was intended to remedy a defect which had arisen in our channel in consequence of "the fortuitous opening on the western side of the island." And I will now give Mr. Hunter, for whose high character I have the most profound respect, a most concise and graphic description of that "fortuitous event," in the language of a distinguished member of the House of Representatives, from Maryland. When the subject of our causeway was before Congress in 1804, in the course of the debate the Hon. Mr. Lewis made these remarks:

*"Before the year 1784, the channel on the western side was so shallow that only vessels of very ordinary burthen could pass, while on the Maryland side vessels of great draft of water could easily pass up to Georgetown. The uncommon hard winter of 1783-4, was followed in the spring by the greatest torrents ever known in the Potomac. The bodies of ice were of immense magnitude, and many of them lodged upon the island and under the rocks of its bed, prising with a force beyond all credibility. It tore the rocks asunder, and pressed them over into the new channel, occasioning a rise of 30 to 40 feet on the Georgetown shore. On the Virginia side the torrent also forced itself, and deepened that channel, while it left a vast quantity of mud, rocks and sand, in the east channel, which has been constantly accumulating since that period. The situation of the present bar is at the meeting of the two arms of the river, below the island, and does not admit the passage of vessels drawing more than 12 feet."*

The "fortuitous event" to which Mr. Lewis was alluding, happened only twenty years before the time at which he was speaking, when it was fresh in the recollections of most of the people of this neighborhood, and when no efforts had been made to "engineer" them into a profound obfuscation of ideas, and a total misapprehension of palpable facts.

I presume that Col. Abert will not go quite so far as to say that the causeway built in 1804, occasioned the flood of 1784!

It will be seen that Mr. Lewis says that before the year 1784, "Vessels of *great* draft of water could *easily* pass up to Georgetown," while in 1804 "the river did not admit the passage of vessels drawing more than 12 feet." *That* was the growing and alarming evil, to cure which the people of Georgetown erected their causeway, at a cost, out of their own pockets, of \$24,000, and rebuilt it within the last two years, at another cost of about \$10,000 more!

The fact is, from the time of the subsiding of the waters of the flood, which were beheld by none but Noah and his family, down to the year 1784, there were no bars in the Georgetown channel; and the grand idea of Col. Abert that a causeway produced a bar, or mud bank, years before it was built, can be better recognized as an amusing metaphysical intricacy, than as a fact for rational consideration. Yet, so late as January 16th, 1850, this same Col. Abert did not hesitate, with the Long Bridge before his eyes, to say to the Secretary of War, that "All these difficulties are supposed to originate chiefly from an error committed many years since, in obstructing, by a causeway, the channel which then existed between Mason's Island and the Virginia shore!"

He had been called upon to make an examination of our river, to see if something could not be suggested for our relief from the flats which were forming in it, to the ruin of our harbor. In his report he did not hesitate to recommend that our channel should be entirely closed up as an experiment, to ascertain if a good channel could not be secured *for the City of Washington*. It may seem incredible that he would dare to make such a proposition, but we have it from under his own hand, and he cannot deny it. I will give his own language, that there may be no mistake about it:

"In addition to this modification of the bridge, some obstructing work could be thrown from the lower end of Mason's Island, in a direction best adapted to turn the descending tide and freshet waters thrown there from the shore between Rock



creek and Easbey's wharf, back to the Washington shore, *giving to the channel of that shore and to the mouth of the Eastern Branch, the benefit of its scouring force.*"

I say that that was a monstrous proposition, and an outrage upon the feelings of the people of Georgetown.

In that same call of the War Department, Col. Abert was requested to give "an estimate of the cost of constructing a bridge across the Potomac, at the aqueduct of the canal at Georgetown." He refused to give any estimate for a bridge there, at all, and with his accustomed captiousness in reference to all matters submitted to his consideration for the promotion of the interests of Georgetown, he replied thus :

"As the piers of the aqueduct were not constructed with reference to a bridge as well as aqueduct, and do not admit of the erection of a bridge over them without serious inconvenience to the aqueduct, or without great expense, *it is considered inadvisable to entertain any idea of a bridge over those piers.*"\*

Now, what earthly reliance is to be placed upon the opinions of a gentleman who would advance such a preposterous assertion as that? I take it for granted that somebody else will tell Col. Abert that a few more such blunders as this, on his part, will prevent Mr. Hunter from placing the least reliance upon his assurances.

Major Turnbull is now in the city, and honorable members of Congress can refer to him. The aqueduct was built by him. He brought it up from the distance of many feet below the surface of the river's bed, and was daily upon the work until it was finished. It was no arm-chair and fire-side affair with him. It was a Turnbull aqueduct, and should have always been known by his name. He has told us, again and again, that that structure could well accommodate a bridge, and was of that opinion during its construction. He even called the attention of our corporate authorities to that fact.

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\* As to the "*great expense*" which so much alarmed Col. Abert, it is enough to say that a highly respectable engineer is now in the city, who was ready more than a year ago to build the bridge for the sum of \$200,000, and will agree to do it now for that sum.

The engineers and practical workmen we have consulted upon the subject have all agreed that the piers of that work may safely challenge the scrutiny of any man living. They speak for themselves, and discountenance the "idea" of Col. Abert, that they are not suitable for the purpose of "a bridge as well as an aqueduct." Major Turnbull is upon the spot, and can be consulted.

Col. Abert talks so flippantly about "the Washington channel" that Mr. Hunter might well suppose that there really *was* a "Washington channel." If there is any such channel between Easby's point and Tiber creek, it resides exclusively within the ample cranium of Col. Abert; and, in justice to him, it should be called hereafter in congressional debates "Abert's Channel"—one would always know then where it was, and how to find it, without waiting for "the scouring force" of a break-water to be erected by an appropriation from Congress. The magnitude and the merits of that same channel will be properly appreciated after reading the following affidavit:

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

*Washington County, to wit:*

On this 5th day of April, in the year 1856, before me, the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for said county, personally appeared Henry Lewis, and made oath on the Holy Evangelical of Almighty God, that on the 4th day of the present month he made examination of that part of the Potomac river which is usually called the city channel, and which lies between Easby's point and the Tiber creek; it is a mere flat at low tide, and at high tide only a portion of it would be covered with water, and only from one to three feet deep; and he feels certain it has been in that condition for many years.

Sworn before me.

HENRY REAVER,

*Justice of the Peace.*

Mr. Hunter says: "I discover that by the report of an engineer, Col. Hughes, in 1832 it was recommended to build the *causeway which forms part of the structure of the Long Bridge*, for the purpose of forcing the water through a narrow channel, to close up what was called the squash channel, and to keep open that channel now used by vessels going to Georgetown. So far from being an injury, in the opinion of engineers it has been a benefit to the commerce of Georgetown."



I have never seen the report of Col. Hughes, but I have no doubt that Mr. Hunter is perfectly correct in his statement. But only hear what Col. Abert says in regard to that matter. I quote from his report, to the Secretary, of January 16th, 1850:

"By an examination of the chart which accompanies Capt. Graham's report, and a comparison of it with those of former surveys, *the Long Bridge causeway* has aided in the difficulties just stated, by elevating the shoal above and below the bridge, if it has not *increased its dimensions* in length and breadth, as the shoal now lends its aid to force water into the Virginia channel, and to reduce the quantity passing through the Washington channel." Here the Colonel fully sustains the fact upon which I have always insisted; namely, that that huge mass of stone and earth which now forms the middle portion of the structure of the bridge extended the bars which have utterly ruined our channel. But I wish it to be distinctly understood that I never quote Col. Abert except against the views of those who rely upon his authority.

The Colonel further says:

"Allow me to state *that the causeway of the Long Bridge* is not the result of the plan of any U. S. engineer, but was against the advice of all who were consulted on that occasion; but the plan being made a positive direction of law, it had to be pursued in the construction of the bridge." We say that the causeway is an injury to our commerce, inasmuch as it fearfully increases the beds of mud in our channel. Mr. Hunter says that "It is the opinion of *competent* engineers that it would be an injury to the navigation of the river to remove the causeway." Col. Abert says "This last evil (the elevation of the shoal above and below the bridge) is to be remedied by the *removal of the causeway*, and by constructing over its extent, and to the Washington shore, an elevated bridge, upon the plan and the dimensions of the repairs lately put up over the Virginia channel." Perhaps Mr. Hunter will soon begin to think that Col. Abert is not "a competent engineer."

It has been often stated that the bridge occasions a very unhealthy condition of the atmosphere, in certain seasons, in the neighborhoods adjacent to the shores of the river immediately

west of the bridge. That fact has been flatly denied; and as it is a matter which does not very particularly concern the people of Georgetown, I will content myself with giving you the following extracts from speeches of senators of the highest character, viz:

The amendment upon which the debate arose was as follows, viz: "For repairs of the Long Bridge across the Potomac a sum not exceeding \$12,000."

Mr. BADGER. "I hope the amendment will not be adopted. I told my friend from Illinois the other day, when he announced it, that I was decidedly opposed to it. I would much rather vote an appropriation of \$25,000 to remove that wretched and unsightly structure from the Potomac river than vote \$12,000 for the purpose of patching it up and keeping it in a condition in which it will continue to be an obstruction to the flow of that river. I do not agree with my friend that we ought to let this bridge stand until we get another. I think it far better to have none than the present one. I think it far better to have the river open. Why should we inflict upon Georgetown the inconvenience and loss of having the navigation obstructed? Why should we have this structure, a large portion of it a solid causeway, a total obstruction to the flow of the water, filling up the river with shoals that at low water are exposed to the sun, and must ultimately become a source of disease to the whole of that part of the city? It is an unsightly, injurious, and disgraceful nuisance, and I do not want to mend it at all."

Mr. Badger proposed the following amendment: "For the removal of the remains of the bridge \$18,000," and then observed: "I desire to say a word or two on this subject, because I have some reason to believe that the importance of the removal of this structure is not fully appreciated by the members of the Senate. The accumulations that have been making by that bridge, which have been steadily increasing every year, have now got to such a pass that at low-water every day a large surface which is covered at high-water, is exposed to the influence of this August sun. This has been going on for many years. As far back as 1841, when I was residing temporarily in this city, my attention was called to the effect of the bridge by one of the most intelligent men who has ever been here from a foreign country, Baron Mareschal, then the representative of Austria here. He had no small experience on the subject, and he told me that if that thing was allowed to go on, yellow fever at Washington would be the necessary consequence. The health



of the city is first in importance. All the members of Congress are obliged to spend a portion of every year here; and when we regard our own health and comfort, or the health and comfort of the people of this city, it is a matter of high consideration to maintain no establishment here that may even probably result in danger to either. Again, I am opposed to maintaining the bridge, because it has been and is a serious obstruction to the commerce of that venerable city, Georgetown. Its citizens feel it to be so. Senators have lately had laid upon their tables a most earnest and respectful remonstrance of the entire population of that city, begging that the nuisance to them, of the nuisance to us, be put out of the way, may be removed. I sincerely trust that the Senate will concur in this view of the amendment, and that the appropriation will be for the removal of the nuisance instead of perpetuating it forever or for any time."

Mr. CLARKE, of Rhode Island. "My own impression is that this bridge has a deleterious effect on the city of Washington. Its abutments have undoubtedly served to produce the deposits above it, creating, I suppose, a malaria injurious to the health of the city; and I have come to the conclusion that, instead of permanently rebuilding it at great cost, it will be better to have a steam ferry there. It may be known, also, that there was a bridge some three miles above Georgetown which was carried away by the same freshet that injured this bridge. The city of Georgetown has no means to build a bridge. They had a bridge; it has been carried away, and they desire to have another. I have no particular feeling on this subject, for I never was there more than half a dozen times in my life, and never expect to be again; but it seems to me that the city of Georgetown is equally entitled with Washington to the fostering care of this Government. We hold jurisdiction over both equally, and there is no reason in my mind why all legislative appropriations should be made for the one and none for the other. I took some pains, Mr. President, as one of the Committee on the District of Columbia, to look at what I thought would be the best method of connecting the District with the Virginia shore, and came to the conclusion that it would be better to build the bridge across the Potomac at the city of Georgetown, a little above the aqueduct, where there are some rocks in the river, and connect the city of Georgetown with the Virginia shore; and then, in my opinion, it would be better to connect the city of Washington with the Virginia shore by a steam ferry boat than by the present bridge."

Mr. MASON, of Virginia. "What the Senator from North Carolina has in view strikes me as an object that must be attained one of those days by Congress. I presume there can be no question that, from the manner the present bridge has been constructed, it has done serious injury to the town of Georgetown. It is not only by causing the flats in the river, resulting from the deposits above, that it has impaired the health of the opposite part of the city, but it has so obstructed the channel as to do very serious injury to the commercial interests of Georgetown."

Mr. BRIGHT. "I do not believe that the Long Bridge, so called, can ever be made a safe crossing point. But even admitting that I am in this incorrect, which I do not believe, there is one point in this District, one city in this District, one portion of the population of this District which has been seriously injured by the erection and maintenance of this bridge. They have no representative here to speak for them; hence it is proper that those who understand the facts connected with this matter should present them to the Senate; and I was greatly in hopes that the honorable Senator from Virginia, (Mr. MASON,) when he was up, would have gone on and stated the grievances which Georgetown, which lies entirely within the limits of this District, has suffered and is suffering. The people of Georgetown have, from time to time, complained of that structure as an interference with their commerce, and they have asked Congress frequently, and in the most respectful manner, to afford them some relief from these grievances, in short, to remove the nuisance. But Congress has thus far been deaf to their appeals. Latterly, by the act of God, a portion of the Long Bridge has been swept away, and it is to be regretted that the whole of it was not taken."

Gen. SHIELDS. "I prefer that a bridge should be erected at Georgetown, and I hope that we shall be able to determine that one great bridge can be erected there, above navigation, that will answer all the purposes."

Mr. PRATT. "One or two considerations have been advanced, about which I wish to say a word. The first proposition is, that the erection of the bridge has destroyed the trade of Georgetown in consequence of the obstruction it has caused in the river. Now, I believe no one can deny the fact that it is so. Many years ago I went to school in Georgetown, and at that time vessels almost of the largest class were able to ascend the river at that point and load with cargoes for every part of the world. At the present day it is impossible for ves-



sels of that class to get up there. Georgetown has been a place of considerable trade, but from some cause or other that trade has been destroyed, and its inhabitants allege the erection of the bridge, and the consequent obstruction to the navigation, to be the cause. I have no doubt that is the fact."

Gen. SHIELDS, (Chairman of District Committee.) "As far as we have been able to make any inquiries in relation to this matter from many competent engineers, we have ascertained that if there is a new structure it must be placed in a new position. It must be placed in a new locality, near Georgetown; perhaps at Georgetown; perhaps near the aqueduct at Georgetown."

Mr. UNDERWOOD. "I know that for the last fifteen or twenty years that the city of Georgetown has been complaining bitterly of the destruction of the harbor at that place in consequence of the erection of that bridge, and that its citizens have preferred very heavy claims against Congress, and asked for remuneration for the injury done to their commerce by putting up this bridge, which has destroyed their harbor. Now, if you intend to renew this bridge by rebuilding it, or building another, you do the people of that city the injury of which they already complain. I think that before you repair the old bridge or build another, something ought to be done in reference to the feelings of that people. The interests of that people ought to be consulted before you put an obstruction in the river which will destroy their harbor. I therefore wish that the committee who have charge of this subject would inquire into the present condition of our relations with respect to Georgetown, the injury of which the citizens complain, and what further injury they may receive by the repair of the old bridge or the building of a new one."

Mr. GEYER. "The Senator from North Carolina informs me that the difference in the height of the water above and below the bridge last spring was four feet. The result is, that the water thus banked up enters the canal and floods the whole of the little valley on the south side of the avenue. This is a very serious evil, and may be of frequent occurrence. But it was not so much with a view to mention these facts that I arose to address the Senate. My principle object is to call the attention of the Senate to the fact that we are legislating here for a people placed under disabilities by their position; and in that legislation we should take care that we do not injure them further than is necessary to subserve the public interests. We have erected a nuisance which has proved injurious to the health

of both cities, the old and the new. Part of that nuisance has been swept away by a flood; and the question now before the Senate is, not whether that nuisance should be continued permanently—for it is admitted by gentlemen who advocate this appropriation that at no very distant day it must be removed—but whether it shall be continued some time longer? I ask if we have a right to inflict an injury on the present generation? Have we a right to expose those who are our wards, and who have no power themselves to act on this subject, to the evils which that bridge causes? I place this matter on the grounds of justice, and affirm that there is an obligation on the part of the Government of the United States to remove that structure as they have placed it there. I shall support, then, as the utility of the bridge is by no means correspondent to its evils, the proposition of the Senator from North Carolina for the immediate removal of the remains of the bridge, as I am firmly convinced that its retention will prove most injurious to the health of the present generation.”

Mr. SEWARD. “Before the question is taken I wish to say one word for the purpose of justifying any apparent inconsistency in my votes. I do not know whether this question was taken by yeas and nays when a similar proposition was made in the deficiency bill; but if it was, I voted against the proposition which I shall now sustain. In doing so, I must say that I change my vote because I am satisfied, with the arguments which I have heard, that this bridge is a serious injury to the health and prosperity of the city of Georgetown, and unnecessary, in its present condition, to the interests of the people here.”

Mr. BADGER. “One word now in regard to the people who are interested in this bridge. The people on the Virginia shore, below Alexandria, usually come up the river by boats. They do not drive up from Alexandria for the purpose of passing over it; and the people above Georgetown cross there. If I understand the matter correctly, therefore, there are only two or three farms lying between Georgetown and Alexandria who are interested in this matter.”

On another occasion the following remarks were made :

Mr. MASON. “I wish to say a single word in reference to the State of Virginia, which I represent here. My impressions are favorable to the railroads proposed to be benefited. Both propositions are that this road shall be done by private companies, and by those companies alone; and my disposition would be, wherever the public interest would admit it, to give to those



companies the largest liberty to construct ways for the public convenience. But I do not know how far the interest of the State which I represent may be affected by terminating the railroad at the point proposed by the amendment. I shall, therefore, vote against the amendment, with the knowledge, that although the Baltimore and Ohio company has been operating their road for twenty years, this plan did not occur to them until an apparent rival interest started up in Virginia to make a railroad to cross the Potomac at a different point. I shall therefore vote against the amendment."

Mr. TOUCEY. "I am opposed to this amendment *in toto*. I am in favor of the legislation which has already taken place on the part of the Senate. I think it is due to the people of this District, both the inhabitants of Washington and the inhabitants of Georgetown, that the Senate should adhere to the bill as they passed it before. I ask a moment's attention. After we had provided that there should be a railroad from Alexandria by way of Georgetown, without interfering with the navigation of the river, to connect with the Baltimore road at this depot, the Baltimore and Ohio company steps in and proposes to extend a branch to the east of this Capitol, opposite to Alexandria, by which they will have the power of carrying all the freight and all the passengers down to a point upon the Potomac, opposite Alexandria, and thus break up the legislation which was intended by the Senate, and which was intended in Virginia. I hold that it is due to the people of this District, as well as to the people of Virginia, that the railroad from Alexandria, by way of Georgetown to the depot in this city, should be carried out, and that we should not incorporate into the bill an amendment that will defeat it.

Sir, I am in favor of that road for two or three considerations. In the first place, it is the shortest way, and by the route which is proposed by the bill as it passed the Senate, passengers can come from Alexandria to the depot in a shorter time than they can by any other way, because they are not interrupted by the passage of any ferry which requires slow movement. According to the celebrated engineer whose report has been laid on our tables, it is the shortest route in point of time. In the second place, it is due the citizens of Georgetown. They are entitled to the accommodation of this road. Cars passing through to the south by way of Georgetown can take passage there, and can connect with the northern roads by that route in less time than by any other, according to the report of the engineer. I am also in favor of it, because I desire to get rid of

any obstruction in the river below Georgetown. Whether there will be a bridge across that river in any place, either below or here, whether it will ultimately lead to one or not, I do not know. I say I am utterly opposed to it. I think it is due to the citizens of Georgetown that the river should be kept open. I am opposed to closing up these great channels of communication which the God of nature has opened. I say they have a right to have the channel kept upon, and not have it obstructed."

Now, sir, having but hurriedly and very imperfectly stated our objections to that bridge, I will close what I have to say, by stating that there is no kind of necessity for harrassing us any longer with that evil. A bridge below Georgetown is not demanded by any necessity, either local or national. The bridge was originally asked for as a means of communication between Washington City and Alexandria. For that purpose it has been superseded by steam ferry-boats, and members of Congress can now go from the Capitol to Alexandria, in less than an hour, without putting their boots in either mud or dust, for the small sum of 12½ cents, and return in the same time and without exposure to the effects of the weather for the same small sum. The same constant and accommodating facility is offered alike to all.

Will it be pretended that there is a great agricultural region on the other side of the river, which seeks a market over that bridge? Every body knows that that is not so. There are, to be sure, some potato patches, cabbage gardens, berry bushes, and fruit trees, located in the interesting vicinity of the sage of Arlington, whose products are now brought over that bridge to the Washington market. But could not these immense productions be brought here in ferry-boats of even the smallest class. Ferrys answer for the same purpose elsewhere, why not here? If a ferry will answer at Havre de Grace to accomodate the great through-travel, between the North and the South, and if ferrys will answer all the demands of the hundreds of thousands of persons, and all kinds of vehicles which are daily passing between Newark and New York, and New York and Brooklyn, why will not one answer here? (See Appendix N.) And,



sir, to come nearer home, if a ferry is all that Alexandria demands for her intercourse with the people of Maryland, why will not a ferry answer between Washington City and "Cooney." In a word, if ferrys will answer where the demand upon them is unlimited, and, in other places where that demand is uncomparably less, what conceivable necessity, or comprehensible force of circumstances, renders them inadequate to the public or private demands *here*.

The Potomac Bridge was built by a chartered company, with a capital of two hundred thousand dollars. Their tolls were to be a source of excessive revenue to the stock-holders; the travel over it was to be immense, with only one variation, and that was to be found in an annual increase, in a precise ratio, with the augmentation of the population of Washington City. Well, the city went on augmenting from 6,000 in 1808, to 30,000 in 1832, but the travel over that bridge became less and less, during that same period, until the stock-holders found that instead of receiving their promised dividends, it had become a tax upon them too intolerable to be borne. They then sold out their \$200,000 bridge to Congress for the sum of \$20,000, with all "their lands, piers, abutments, roads, and way, and all their materials" thrown into the bargain. Why was all that done—simply because there was no travel to sustain the bridge.

But, sir, if Congress determines that a bridge shall be erected somewhere in the District of Columbia, to secure an uninterrupted connection between the railroads of the North and the South, we think that that can be done without sacrificing the commerce of Georgetown, by ruining its navigation. We think that a bridge for that purpose can be erected above Georgetown at a much less cost than it could at the site of the old Long Bridge, or anywhere else in its vicinity. You can adopt the site of the aqueduct or the one indicated by Mr. Ellet, which I placed in your hands. We know that some wild and reckless assertions have been made as to the greater distance of the Georgetown route, and the consequent loss of time in traveling over it. These ridiculous exaggerations I now proceed

to expose, by producing the testimony of persons who have a proper regard for their veracity, as well as for their professional reputation.

As to the matter of increased distance, I beg leave to refer you to the following letter from the accurate and experienced Surveyor of Washington county:

GEORGETOWN, *April 5th*, 1854.

DEAR SIR: By your request I herewith send you a copy of certain measurements I made some years since, of the distances from Georgetown ferry, by the main road, to King street, in Alexandria. From last mentioned point, by the turnpike to the Long Bridge, and from thence, by the shortest way, to the General Post Office, and from thence to the ferry again, which I found to be as follows:

	MILES.	PERCHES.
Distance from Georgetown ferry to Kings street, Alexandria.....	7	and 13
From Kings street, in Alexandria, by way of the Long Bridge to U. S. General Post Office	7 $\frac{1}{8}$	and 16
From the U. S. General Post Office to Georgetown ferry.....	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	and 12

If a road was laid out from the General Post Office by way of the Three Sisters or Aqueduct, and thence to Alexandria, the difference then in going from the General Post Office to Alexandria by way of the Long Bridge—7 $\frac{1}{8}$  miles and 16 perches—and going by way of the Three Sisters or Aqueduct, which cannot be much, if any, over 10 miles, would seem to be about 3 miles. Not having the measurement of the distance from the Post Office to the Three Sisters in the probable line for a road, I can only approximate to the difference, as I have done, between that and the measured distance to the ferry. The distance to the ferry, as above given, was measured with the centre of the streets and round the squares, so that it is very likely that if the distance to the ferry be considered as an extended cord, and swept round as the radius of a circle, it would not show a difference of more than a quarter of a mile to the Three Sisters, (but I would have this to be understood as a mere supposition.) And from thence to Alexandria, by such a location of a road as would aim for the best ground and shortest line, the distance above given from the ferry to Alexandria would not be increased but very little, if any. So, as above



given or stated, the whole difference in distance of the two lines, would not much exceed  $2\frac{1}{4}$  or 3 miles.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
LEWIS CARBERY.

To HENRY ADDISON, Esq.,  
*Mayor of Georgetown.*

As to the TIME which would be taken to pass from Washington and Alexandria on the two proposed routes, I desire to refer you to the following statement, which you will find in Mr. Ellet's report:

"The site of the bridge has been chosen with a view to avoid any obstruction to the navigation of the Potomac, and to relieve Georgetown of the impediments which it is alleged have been formed in the channel of the river since the construction of the dilapidated Long Bridge and the contraction of the water-way; and, at the same time, to afford a convenient approach for the railroad trains and common travel crossing the river on the great Northern and Southern lines.

"The chief objection that has been urged against this location, is the fact that any railroad which may be projected to unite the road leading from Baltimore to Washington, with those leading from Alexandria to the south and south-west, must be carried out of the direct line in order to cross at this point. The distance is supposed to be about three miles greater than it might be if the new bridge were placed on the site of the obnoxious Long Bridge. I am of opinion, however, judging from the map of Washington and my personal knowledge of the localities, that the actual increase will be less than three miles. Yet, in the absence of precise information, I shall assume three miles as the true measure of its value.

"This increase of distance might appear to be a substantial objection to the site proposed. Yet it is, in my judgment perfectly clear, that if the object were to locate the connecting railroad with a view to the least possible loss of time to the through travel, this is precisely the point at which the engineer would wish to cross the Potomac. A bridge on this site, as already stated, can be conveniently approached by railroad lines from both directions. There is no dense population on the route of the connecting road to retard the trains, or to prevent the highest desirable speed. There is here no Long Bridge to be traversed at a slow rate, nor draws to interfere with the passage of trains, nor streets nor crowds to be provided

for. The through trains may therefore maintain their full headway.

"The line of the road, crossing at the proposed site of the bridge, will pass immediately on the western border of Georgetown; it will then sweep round to the north, skirting the town in that quarter, and affording every convenience that can possibly be derived from a railroad without carrying it actually through the place.

"It will cross over Rock creek near the foot of the new cemetery, and traverse the whole length of Washington, through the northern wards, from Rock creek to the Baltimore railroad, keeping near enough for the accommodation of the city, yet far enough north of the present built up district, to relieve the public of the danger and nuisance of a through railroad within the city.

"The ordinary time on a good railroad cannot now be assumed at less than a mile in two minutes, or 30 miles an hour. Much higher speed than this is made on many English roads, and if less than 30 miles an hour is now suffered on the main lines of this country, it will not be long tolerated, after connections are formed between the finished roads east and those west of the Alleghany mountains, and the great flood of western travel begins to be vented.

"To traverse the three miles assumed to be lost by crossing the Potomac above Georgetown, and passing north of Washington, will involve an apparent loss of *six minutes* in the through time; in the supposition that no corresponding loss will be incurred by crossing at or near the site of the abandoned Long Bridge. But there *will be* material losses on any line; and these losses must be properly noticed in any just comparison.

"If we cross at the site of the Long Bridge we shall meet with the following detentions, which are avoided on the line proposed.

1. "The loss of time required to cross a bridge *one mile longer* than the proposed Georgetown bridge, at a speed of, say eight miles an hour; this loss will be  $5\frac{1}{2}$  minutes.

2. "The loss of time in passing one mile through the built up part of Washington, at 8 miles an hour, which would also be  $5\frac{1}{2}$  minutes.

3. "The loss to be encountered in case the draw should chance to be raised for the passage of a vessel on the approach of a train, which loss would vary with circumstances.

"It is easy to perceive, without going into a minute investi-



gation, that the through trips can be made quicker on a rail road which crosses the Potomac where it is narrow, and above the navigation, and which passes north of Washington, than on any line whatever leading through the heart of the city.

"It is not my purpose, I repeat, to take general ground against local railroads in cities, when properly designed for the accommodation of the cities. Yet, I am clearly of opinion that, at an early day, the *through trade and travel* of this country must be accommodated by lines which pass around the great cities, and avoid the obstruction which a dense population offers.

"In the case before us, it is my opinion that the best speed and the best time can be made on a through road passing west of Georgetown; and, moreover, that the site selected for the proposed bridge is the only place where the Potomac can be crossed by a railroad without injury to the navigation, and affording just ground of complaint, unless the structure be a suspension bridge of very great height and span and cost."

A great deal has been said, too, about the impracticability and the enormousness of the cost of a bridge above Georgetown. Upon that point I must beg leave to refer you again to Mr. Ellet. He says:

*Estimated Cost of the Bridge.*

"We have now all the material needed for determining the cost of this bridge. And in making this estimate, as in arranging the plan of the structure, I have not deemed it at all expedient or proper to practice a close economy. It would seem to be more appropriate in designing a structure to be erected within sight of the Capitol, for the conveyance both of the railroad and common travel across the Potomac, on the great northern and southern thoroughfare, rather to seek to make the edifice a monument of strength and stability worthy of the site and its purposes. I shall therefore submit a liberal estimate and assume that a work of the first order is to be erected.

*Estimate.*

1,520,000 pounds of wire, including the cost of manufacturing, raising and adjusting the cables, at 10 cts.....	\$152,000
40,000 pounds No. 12 wire, in the suspenders, at 12 cts.....	4,800
190,000 pounds bar iron in the anchorage, at 7 cts.	13,300

31,000 pounds bar iron in bolts, for the flooring, parapets, &c., at 7 cts.....	2,170
50,000 pounds cast iron, for saddles, rollers, roller plates, &c., at 4 cts.....	2,000
47,500 cubic feet of timber in the flooring and parapets, including framing and raising at 30 cts.	14,250
600 cubic yards rock excavation in the fastening chambers, at \$7.00.....	4,200
2200 cubic yards masonry in the towers, at \$10.00	22,000
7100 cubic yards masonry in the abutments at \$4.00.....	28,400
7250 cubic yards masonry in the arches, piers, and wing-walls, at \$7.00.....	50,750
500 cubic yards masonry in the fastening chambers, or anchorage, at \$8.00.....	4,000
Total cost.....	<u>\$297,870</u>

"Or, in round numbers, I estimate the entire cost of the bridge at \$300,000.

"If the structure were in all respects the same, excepting only that the railway track were left out, but preparation made for its introduction; and four of the cables, which would then be unnecessary, were temporarily dispensed with, the cost of the bridge would be reduced to \$250,000. No change of plan would be required to build it in this way. It would merely involve the omission of the stone flagging, the upper and lower girders, and four of the cables; all of which might be supplied whenever they would be required for the use of a connecting link of railway. The anchorage would, however, need to be prepared for these additional cables in the progress of the work.

"Still, I think it scarcely probable that the construction of the railroad track can be delayed beyond the completion of the bridge. Indeed, if the erection of this bridge be authorized by Congress, I hesitate not to say that the railway to connect the northern and southern lines would be promptly undertaken as a private enterprise. All that now stands in the way, and prevents this connecting link from offering inducements sufficient to justify parties in undertaking the work, is the want of a charter for the road, and the need of this bridge across the Potomac."

I deem it unnecessary to quote any further from Mr. Ellet's report, as I can furnish it to any member of Congress who may request me in a note to do so.



It is not for me to treat of the Potomac Bridge as a nuisance which threatens every year, more and more, the public health of Washington. It is not for me to account for any evil, real or imaginary, from which President Van Buren and President Fillmore desired to escape, by locating themselves, during certain seasons of the year, on the heights of Georgetown. It is not for me to estimate the injury that would be inflicted upon the best interests of that city, should a prevailing and deadly pestilence, attributable to the bridge, occasion the flight of, even Congress itself, from the Capitol. All that we desire, and all that we have a right to claim, is the free and uninterrupted use of a river, upon which we located ourselves when it was in an unobstructed condition. We have no hostile feelings towards Washington; no desire to war with a city so immeasurably our superior in all the elements of wealth, position, and numerical force; no insane desire to be querulous with those whose power to do mischief is so much greater than our own. On the contrary, we wish to see this only ground of angry contention between us removed, and shall be glad should her prosperity be coeval with the fame of him whose name she bears.

In conclusion, allow me to say that the whole country is demanding the removal of every obstruction to its commerce. We sometimes read the National Intelligencer and the Congressional Globe, and attend occasionally the debates in Congress; we have an eye, too, once in a while, to resolutions of inquiry and appropriation bills. We have seen Congress besieged by clamorous demands for river and harbor improvements, for light-houses and break-waters, and have seen and heard a good deal about coast surveys, and matters of a kindred character. It is sometimes more than a rumor that even the least populous and most distant States are borrowing millions, pledging their resources, and combining public and private means and energies to make roads, dig canals, and remove obstructions from navigable streams. But what do we behold here? A solid structure has been thrown across our river, within our corporate limits, and which has entirely sealed up our navigation forever in the western part of our harbor. That

was done by Congress, for the benefit of Alexandria, out of the Treasury of the United States. Now you are implored to build another solid obstruction below our harbor, and utterly ruin our channel for the *imaginary* benefit of Washington city. All this oppression has been going on for fifty years—an oppression dealt out on a population of 10,000 people, for whom Congress only can legislate, and who abide almost under the dome of the Capitol.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

HENRY ADDISON.

MAYOR'S OFFICE, GEORGETOWN, D. C.,

*April*, 1856.





## APPENDIX.

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### A.

On this 5th day of April, 1856, before the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for the county of Washington, District of Columbia, personally appeared Thomas A. Lazenby, late Deputy Collector and Inspector of the Port of Georgetown, who being first sworn on the Holy Evangely of Almighty God, deposed as follows: That he was employed in the Custom House from the year 1835 to 1845, and from 1849 to 1853; that it was his duty, during that period, to board almost every vessel that arrived at said Port, and have more or less intercourse with their masters; that in the discharge of his duties he had abundant opportunities of hearing the views of said masters in regard to the evils occasioned by the Potomac bridge; that, to the best of his recollection, they had but one opinion of the bridge, as to its being a most dangerous and inconvenient obstruction to the navigation of the river, many of them having been delayed above or below the bridge, and sometimes had their vessels more or less injured by coming in collision with it; that the complaints of the Georgetown merchants have been unceasing in regard to the same evil; that he has often heard masters declare that they would never again visit the Port of Georgetown; that the Port of Georgetown was in bad repute, owing to the existence of the Long Bridge, and that masters preferred obtaining freight at the Port of Alexandria, rather than incur the detentions and danger to which they were exposed by said bridge.

Sworn to before me.

HENRY REAVER,  
*Justice of the Peace.*

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### B.

On this 4th day of April, 1856, before me, the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for the county of Washington, in the District of Columbia, personally came Capt. John Hammond, and made oath on the Holy Evangely of Almighty God, that he has been navigating the river Potomac for the last fifteen years, in carrying wood, grain, &c., to market; he



would rather sell his wood at Alexandria for 25 cents less on the cord, than bring it to Georgetown on account of the detention and danger of getting through the draw of the Long Bridge. I have frequently known vessels to be injured by trying to get through the draw.

his  
JOHN X HAMMOND.  
mark

Witness,

H. REAVER,  
C. B. RICE.

Subscribed and sworn to before me the day and year above written.

HENRY REAVER,

*Justice of the Peace.*

C.

On this 5th day of April, 1856, before me, the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for the county of Washington, in the District of Columbia, personally appeared Elijah Phillips, who being first sworn on the Holy Evangely, deposed as follows: that he is captain of the schooner Mary Elizabeth, of *twenty tons* burthen; that on yesterday, the 4th of April, 1856, he made five ineffectual attempts to get through the draw of the Long Bridge with his vessel, using, each time, all the skill and precaution in his power; that on the sixth attempt he got through by kedging; that after getting through, he lost his headway, causing him to fall back against the bridge; that his sails were very much damaged, and his vessel just barely escaped capsizing; that he has been frequently detained by said bridge in attempting to reach Georgetown, and that, particularly, on one occasion, he was compelled to lay near the draw three days, waiting for an opportunity to get through, when, if the bridge had not been there, there would have been no difficulty.

Sworn to before me the day and year above written.

HENRY REAVER,  
*Justice of the Peace.*

D.

On this 5th day of April, 1856, before me, the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for the county of Washington, in the District of Columbia, personally came Henry Reaver, and made oath on the Holy Evangely of Almighty God, that he

has been engaged in navigating the Potomac river, from the year 1821 until the year 1840; that during that time he has met with great obstructions in getting through the draw of the long bridge; that in three instance he has been within a few moments of loosing his life and vessel—it being with the utmost exertions that he could save either his life or vessel—it being almost impossible to get through the draw when the wind is down the river; that while the vessel is in the draw she loses all her headway, and, frequently before she can get headway, she is either blown ashore or against the bridge; that he has known two vessels to be drifted sideways against the bridge, one of which was loaded with shad for the Georgetown market; she lay there during the fishing season, causing a loss of the fish and expense of getting her up, and repairs; that during the years above mentioned he was engaged in fishing; that he has many times lost in the price of his fish, on account of his vessel being unable to get to Georgetown on account of the bridge; he has many times known, that when the farmers have come to Georgetown for a supply of fish, that they have had to go to Alexandria to buy them—there being no vessel able to get to Georgetown on account of the bridge—when they would willingly have paid one dollar more per hundred for shad, could they have obtained them in Georgetown, thereby causing a serious loss to the men employed in fishing; whereas, if there was no such obstructions as the bridge causes, there would hardly ever be a time that vessels could not get to Georgetown. He further declares, on account of the difficulty caused by the bridge, that supply of fish, in the spring, coming to Georgetown market, has been reduced more than one half, thereby causing a considerable loss to the town, and also putting the farmers to great inconvenience.

HENRY REAVER.

Subscribed and sworn to before me the day and year above written.

JOSEPH W. FEARSON,

*Justice of the Peace.*

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E.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

*Washington County, to wit:*

On this 5th day of April, in the year 1856, before me, the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for said county, personally appeared Joseph N. Fearson, who, after having been sworn on the Holy Evangelry of Almighty God, deposed as follows: that sometime during the year 1825, he was on board of the schooner Adventure on her way from Alexandria to George-



town, when the wind was blowing very hard, and it being almost then dark, when arriving at the Potomac Bridge, the schooner, which was owned by himself, while he was attempting to go through the draw of the bridge, struck violently against a pier of the bridge, and at the same time the concussion threw his brother, William Fearson, overboard, and was immediately crushed to death between the vessel and the pier. He also deposes, that a vessel, owned by another of his brothers, had her mast carried away while attempting to pass through the same draw, and greatly injured her deck; and that he has known of instances in which vessels have been brought in collision with the bridge at the same place, and have been sunk thereby.

Sworn before me.

HENRY REAVER.

*Justice of the Peace.*

F.

On this 4th day of April, 1856, before me, the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for the county of Washington, in the District of Columbia, personally appeared John Ellis, a resident of Georgetown, in said District, and made oath on the Holy Evangely of Almighty God, that he has been employed in sailing vessels to and from Georgetown for the last fifteen or twenty years; that, in several instances, he has been prevented from getting to Georgetown on account of it being impossible to get through the draw of the Long Bridge; he has had his vessels frequently injured by trying to get through the draw; he has had his sails torn to pieces while going through the draw. And in the spring of the year, while employed in carrying fish from the fishing landings, he has had to anchor and lay below the bridge all night, thereby being unable to get up to market in time; and often he has had to run back to Alexandria with his fish. At one time, on account of the wind being ahead, he had to anchor below the bridge, and had his vessel cut through with the ice that accumulated in the night, his vessel sunk, and cargo lost. Had it not been for the bridge, he could have got to Georgetown without damage.

Witness,

H. REAVER,

C. B. RIED.

JOHN X ELLIS.

his  
mark.

Subscribed and sworn to before me the day and year above written.

HENRY REAVER,

*Justice of the Peace.*

## G.

On this 4th day of April, 1856, before the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for the county of Washington, in the District of Columbia, personally appeared Henry Lewis, who being first sworn on the Holy Evangely of Almighty God, deposed as follows: that he has been trading to Georgetown, D. C., as a captain of vessels from 160 to 300 tons, for fifteen years last past; that, even with a fair wind, there is difficulty and danger in attempting to get through the draw in the Long Bridge; that when the wind is not fair, a vessel is obliged to obtain the aid of a steamboat, or come to anchor and warp through by kedging, which latter proceeding frequently causes very considerable delay; that he has known at least a dozen instances in which considerable damage has happened to vessels in attempting to sail through said draw, although every possible precaution and care was taken; that his own vessel, on three several occasions, ran foul of the said bridge in attempting to get through said draw, he using every precaution and care to avoid doing so; that the current of the channel does not run straight and true through said draw, but at a very considerable angle; that in consequence of the difficulties created by said bridge alone, he, as captain and owner of a vessel, would charge less freight from New York to Alexandria than from New York to Georgetown; and, for the same reason, would give higher prices for produce at Alexandria, for shipment, than at Georgetown; and that it is a common objection amongst captains and shippers against coming to Georgetown, that the aforesaid difficulties of navigation exist, and that additional expense is incurred by the frequent necessity of employing steamboats for towing.

HENRY LEWIS.

Subscribed and sworn to before me the day and year above written.

HENRY REAVER,

*Justice of the Peace.*

## H.

On this 4th day of April, 1856, before me, the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for the county of Washington, in the District of Columbia, personally appeared James F. Gross, who, being first sworn on the Holy Evangely of Almighty God, deposed as follows: that he has been generally employed during the last twenty years in navigating vessels to and from the port of Georgetown, D. C.; that in that time he has heard of many accidents which had happened at the Potomac Bridge to vessels



and their cargoes while attempting to pass through its draw. On one occasion, about three years ago, a schooner which was owned by himself attempted to approach said draw, but was prevented from doing so by a high wind which was prevailing at the time; that said vessel was detained below the bridge during the night, and on the succeeding morning was so severely cut by the ice, which had formed the preceding twelve hours, as to occasion her to sink; the loss which he sustained by the casualty amounted to about the sum of six hundred dollars; about a week after that, he had a smaller vessel sunk in nearly the same place and under like circumstances, by which he lost about fifty dollars. He also states that he knows of many other instances in which vessels, owned by other persons, have been injured in trying to sail their vessels through the draw of that bridge. He says, further, that at ebb-tides, and while the wind is blowing hard from the north-west, vessels cannot pass the bridge on their way to Georgetown without kedging, or the aid of a steamer, and even then not without danger.

JAMES F. GROSS.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 4th day of April, 1856.

HENRY REAVER,

*Justice of the Peace.*

### I.

On this 4th day of April, 1856, before the subscriber, a justice of the peace, in and for the county of Washington, in the District of Columbia, personally appeared James A. Magruder, who being sworn on the Holy Evangelical of Almighty God, deposed as follows: That on the 11th day of June, 1855, the schooner William Henry, consigned to him at Georgetown, with a load of salt, in attempting to get through the draw of the Long Bridge, had a hole knocked in her bow, which caused her to sink about a hundred yards above the bridge, thereby causing an almost total loss of the cargo; that the captain was reputed to be very careful and skillful, and was himself a part owner of said vessel, on which there was no insurance.

J. A. MAGRUDER.

Subscribed and sworn to before me the day and year above written.

HENRY REAVER,

*Justice of the Peace.*

### J.

GEORGETOWN, April 2, 1846.

H. ADDISON, ESQ.

DEAR SIR: In answer to your inquiry as to whether or not

there has been any cases in which vessels coming to or leaving the port of Georgetown has been delayed, or other loss or inconvenience arising from the Long Bridge, I have to say, that on repeated occasions I have had vessels with grain to beat up to the bridge and there detained until the wind changed, or until I sent a steamboat after them, which I did on various occasions, subjecting me to considerable expense and detention in consequence of the bridge. In the winter of 1849-'50, I shipped, in the schooner Hamilton, 600 barrels of flour. She left here in the afternoon, (when the weather had turned very cold,) and in consequence of some difficulty with the *draw*, she had to anchor close to the bridge, and the ice making very hard that night or next day, which caused her to lay there about a month in great danger. If she had not been detained at the bridge I should have been able to have realized \$600 to \$800 on the flour more than I did; consequently I estimated that as my loss at the time as chargeable to the bridge. There is no doubt with me, that the bridge is a great injury to the commerce and channel of Georgetown, and would be still more so by a railroad crossing there, while there was any commerce left to Georgetown, to pass through it. As an example of it, I saw yesterday a small fish vessel beating up to the bridge, which was one hour and a quarter getting through, the draw being open all the time. I was on my way to Alexandria at the time, and was in a position to see, and noted it at the time. On my return this morning, I learned that the same vessel was injured in her sails in passing through.

Respectfully yours,  
CHARLES WILSON.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

*Washington County, to wit:*

On the 8th day of April, 1856, before me, the subscriber, one of the justices of the peace in and for the said county, personally came Charles Wilson and made oath on the Holy Evangelical of Almighty God, that the foregoing statement is true as therein stated.

Subscribed and sworn to before me.

HENRY REAVER,  
*Justice of the Peace.*

K.

This is to state that I have been employed as clerk and Treasurer of the corporation of Georgetown—the former office



from 1791, and the latter office from about ten years afterwards, both to the present time. During the most of that long period, I also served as Secretary of the Board of Aldermen of said corporation. In these positions I became necessarily cognizant of all the measures of the corporation; and in regard to the most prominent or important of these measures, I think I can generally rely upon the accuracy of my memory, particularly when aided by records and vouchers, which have always been in my possession. I have a distinct recollection of the extraordinary flood in 1784. Before that event it was not usual for large merchant vessels to approach the town through that arm of the river between Mason's Island and the Virginia shore—for what reason I do not know—but such vessels came to the town through the eastern arm of that river.

In the winter of 1783 and '84, the weather was intensely cold, and the ice became unusually thick and hard. Early in the spring of the latter year, say in March, there came down the river the heaviest flood that perhaps was ever witnessed here; the torrent was so large and rapid that the ice in the Potomac, for miles above Georgetown, became broken, and descended the river in immense masses. From some cause or other, the ice became obstructed in its passage down the river immediately opposite this town, and there accumulated to the height of say 30 or 40 feet; there being then an immense volume of water in the river, it turned from what was known as the eastern channel into the arm of the river between Mason's Island and the Virginia shore, and reduced its bed to a considerable depth. For some years after this occurrence large merchant vessels arrived at and departed from Georgetown through that channel. At a still later period it was discovered that the channel leading to the town below Mason's Island was becoming somewhat shallow, and the attention of our city councils and citizens generally became a good deal directed to that fact—perhaps different plans to remove the evil were considered—and eventually, about the year 1804 and '05, a Quaker gentleman of some eminence as a practical engineer, then living in Maryland, was called upon by the corporation of the town to examine the condition of our river, and to submit a plan for its improvement and the prevention of bars in the channel below the island. I am very certain Mr. Moore recommended the building of a causeway between the island and the Virginia shore as the best plan to cure the evil, and have never since heard that fact doubted until now. Mr. Thomas Moore, the engineer, not only recommended the building of the causeway, but built it

himself under a contract with the corporation of Georgetown for \$24,000, and which was paid him by the corporation. I add, also, that the rebuilding of the causeway being so clamorously called for by a large portion of the citizens of the town, it was recently rebuilt by the corporation at an expense of \$8,741.34.

JOHN MOUNTZ.

Sworn to by John Mountz to the best of his knowledge and belief April 8th, 1856.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

*Washington County, to wit:*

I hereby certify that the above instrument of writing was subscribed and sworn to by John Mountz before me this 8th day of April, 1856.

Witness my hand.

HENRY REAVER,  
*Justice of the Peace.*

L.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

*Washington County, to wit:*

On this 7th day of April, 1856, before me, the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for said county, personally appeared William E. Bell, who, after being sworn upon the Holy Evangely of Almighty God, deposed as follows: that he has been engaged during the last ten years in sailing vessels to and from the port of Georgetown, D. C.; seven years of that time he was employed as mate and captain of the steamer Salem, and that he has had constant opportunities of witnessing the passage of vessels through the draw of the Long Bridge. On one occasion, about five years since, while the steamer Joseph Johnson was towing the schooner Industry from Alexandria to Georgetown, when the wind was blowing so hard that she could not otherwise have passed through the draw; that said schooner, on passing, struck upon the side of the draw of the bridge, and was so much injured by the collision that she sunk within an hour afterwards—but cannot state to what amount that vessel and her cargo was injured. About a year after that accident, he says that the schooner Susan was on her way from Georgetown to Alexandria, when there was considerable current in the river, and a light wind blowing, she struck against the draw of the Potomac Bridge, lost her jib-boom and top-mast, and had her rigging much injured, and understood at the time that her injuries amounted to the sum of five hundred dollars. On another occasion, within the last twelve months, he was em-



ployed in towing down the river, by his own steamer, the schooner Arctic, when said schooner struck the side of the draw and was much injured, but cannot say what amount of money it required to repair her damages. He saw the steamer Maryland, half an hour after she had struck the bridge, and would judge that her injuries amounted to two hundred dollars. He says, further, that his own steamer has often been injured while attempting to pass through the draw, but the damages were not at any one time very heavy. He further deposes, that he has known of many occasions when vessels have laid below the bridge three or four days because they could not pass through the draw with any hope of safety. That he has known it has often happened that the river was entirely navigable below the bridge when navigation had been suspended between the bridge and Georgetown by ice for weeks. The ice could not escape in consequence of the obstruction presented by the bridge.

WILLIAM E. BEALL.

Signed and sworn to this 7th day of April, 1856.

LEWIS CARBERY,

*Justice of the Peace.*

M.

OFFICE SWANTON COAL AND IRON CO.,

57 Exchange Place, Baltimore, April 5, 1856.

*The Hon. Mayor and Councils of the City of Georgetown.*

GENTLEMEN: The Swanton Coal and Iron Company respectfully represent that they have established a depot, and erected wharfs and fixtures at great expense, for the shipment of coal at Georgetown. These expenditures were made on the faith of the assurance that the ordinances of the council provided appropriations for deepening the channel of the river below Georgetown, sufficiently to allow ordinary coal vessels to pass freely. The depth of the water required, should not be less than 15 feet. The time for commencement of coal shipment is rapidly approaching, and it is the opinion of this company that no time should be lost in deepening the channel, and they respectfully request the council to take such action as will insure the desired result. If coal vessels experience difficulty in getting to Georgetown, the trade must pass on to Alexandria, to be lost to your city, and our expenditures will be valueless.

All of which is respectfully submitted on the part of the company.

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS JOHNS, *Secretary.*

N.

OFFICE OF THE UNION FERRY CO. OF BROOKLYN,  
*April 4, 1856.*

Hon. FERNANDO WOOD:

SIR—The estimated number of passengers passing the seven ferries of the Union Ferry Co., per day, (exclusive of persons in vehicles,) is 83,000. Number of vehicles 4,167.

Very respectfully,

Your ob't serv't,

J. A. PERRY,  
*Treasurer.*

O.

On this 12th day of April, 1856, before me, the subscriber, one of the justices of the peace in and for the county of Washington, D. C., personally came Joseph Ratcliff, and made oath on the Holy Evangely of God, that about 15 or 20 years ago he had three vessels engaged in carrying fire-wood to the Georgetown market, he had one of his vessels seriously injured in going through the draw of the Potomac Bridge, it being almost impossible to go through the draw of the bridge when the wind is ahead; that on account of the injury to his vessel, he incurred a heavy expense in repairs to his vessel, beside the loss of time in the use of his vessel while being repaired.

Sworn to before me the day and year above written.

HENRY REAVER,  
*Justice of the Peace.*

P.

On this 15th day of April, 1856, before me, the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for Washington county, District of Columbia, personally appeared Jon. D. Cathell, who, after being sworn on the Holy Evangely of Almighty God, deposed as follows: That some five or six winters since, he was in command of the schooner Statesman; that early in December, when there had been a slight freeze and a subsequent thaw, he proceeded with his vessel, towed by a steamboat, from Georgetown; that the ice was broken in the harbor of Georgetown, but had been driven by a north-west wind against the bridge; that the steamboat, when within a quarter of a mile of said bridge, was obstructed somewhat by the ice on the surface; that when



within fifty feet of the draw, the steamboat became entirely obstructed in its passage, and after several ineffectual attempts to push her way through, he went with his vessel's boat below the bridge, where the river was free from ice, and proceeded to examine the draw; that he found the ice packed to the depth of more than ten feet from the upper part of the draw to where the steamboat stopped, presenting a barrier through which no boat could force its way; that it was ebb tide, and the pieces of ice packed in and above the draw being not more than two inches thick, by means of his boat and oars, he removed them piece by piece, and in this labor was detained several hours.

J. D. CATHELL.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 15th day of April, 1856.

HENRY REAVER,  
*Justice of the Peace.*





