

The timber trade alone at the port of Tonawanda will not average less than from three to five hundred thousand dollars per year, and with the navigation of the river unobstructed, there can be no doubt of its steady increase. I am well and personally acquainted with Captain Orson Shepard,—have frequently employed him to tow rafts for me from Lake Erie to Tonawanda. I believe him to be one of the very best, as he has been one of most successful sailors on the Western Lakes, and I have the utmost confidence in his judgment with reference to all matters pertaining to lake and river navigation.

In the year 1852 I was on the steamer Great Western bound up the river from Tonawanda. At the head of the rapids the rudder chain parted and the boat drifted down the current. We cast anchor as soon as we deemed it safe so to do on account of the rapidity of the current. The anchor dragged upon the rock bottom for about one hundred rods when one of the flukes caught in a crevice, and such was the pressure of the current, that the anchor cable was immediately parted, leaving the boat at the mercy of the stream. Had there been a bridge with abutments below the boat, I am sure no earthly power could have saved the boat from utter destruction. I think it practically impossible to anchor a vessel with safety in the Niagara river, at or near the Black Rock rapids.

H. P. SMITH.

Sworn and subscribed before me, }
this 6th day of April, 1857, }

S. WAKEMAN, *Chairman of the Com. of Com. and Navigation.*

John Simson being duly sworn deposes and says: I am a resident of Tonawanda; have lived there for more than forty years; am well acquainted with the Niagara river from Tonawanda to Lake Erie. Have been up and down the same many times. I have known vessels to sail down from Lake Erie to Tonawanda, and back from Tonawanda to the lake frequently. Have seen as many as twenty-five to thirty vessels, steamers, and propellers, discharging and loading at one time at Tonawanda. Have known as many as twenty vessels to arrive at Tonawanda in one day. I believe there is no better harbor on the lake than the harbor of Tonawanda; and that a bridge constructed across the river at any point above Tonawanda would have the effect to entirely cut off the commerce at this point and below. I believe the business of the river is on the increase. I am well acquainted with Captain Orson Shepard, have known him since 1849; believe him to be a