

ice against the vessels, and the vessels were driven upon the reefs at the mouth of the river. One large brig called the "Chieftain" was carried by the force of the ice and current down the river, carrying away both the cables and forcing her upon Squaw Island, opposite Black Rock dam, her crew having no control over her. Under such circumstances, I believe it would have been utterly impossible to have guided the vessel to a draw in a bridge, and that her escape from total destruction had there been a bridge across the river, below this point, would have been the merest matter of chance.

H. P. SMITH.

Sworn before me this 7th }
day of April, 1857, }

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

Henry P. Smith, being duly sworn, deposes and says: I reside in the village of Tonawanda, and County of Niagara. Am a lumber merchant, and have been engaged in the business of towing rafts from Canada West, on Lake Erie and Lake Huron, to Tonawanda, for the last thirteen years, during which time I have owned three steamboats and one propeller, all of which were used for towing rafts from Lake Erie to Tonawanda. Have generally had the superintendence of towing said rafts, composed of logs, masts, and timber, and am thoroughly acquainted with the navigation of the Niagara river. I believe it to be one of the best and safest harbors on the lakes, it being easy of access, and perfectly safe to enter in the severest gale. There has been, for the past ten years, a large number of sail vessels and steamboats engaged in the lumber and timber and stave trade between the upper lakes and Tonawanda, and I am firmly of the opinion that a bridge, constructed across the river at any point between Tonawanda and Buffalo, would seriously injure, if not entirely cut off that branch of trade from the Niagara river. I am also well aware of the fact that there has been for the past several years, a large commercial business carried on at Tonawanda, which is now on the increase, and for the accommodation of which an extensive elevator was erected some eight years since and docks and warehouses built for the conveniences of transshipment from the river to the Erie canal. An elevator has also been erected during the past year in connection with one of the most extensive distilleries in the country, which is capable of using 1500 bushels of grain daily. I believe that a bridge across the river as contemplated would have the direct effect to destroy this rapidly accumulating business, and prove highly detrimental to all parties interested in the navigation of Niagara river.