

A
S K E T C H
OF THE
R E C E N T I M P R O V E M E N T S
AT
E A S T - B O S T O N .

JANUARY, 1836.

B O S T O N :
P R I N T E D B Y J . T . B U C K I N G H A M .
1836.

A S K E T C H

OF THE

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS AT EAST-BOSTON.

EAST-BOSTON, called until recently Noddle's Island, makes part of the city of Boston, and is within its chartered limits. It contains, of upland and marsh, about 660 acres independent of the adjoining flats belonging to the Island, which are estimated at about 1250 acres more. These flats, by a special provision of the Colonial Legislature, are exempted from the operation of the law, which gives to the owners of upland the flats to the extent only of 1650 feet from the main shore at high water mark. This extensive tract of land is now held by the East-Boston Company, incorporated by the Legislature of Massachusetts, in March, 1833, excepting such part as has been sold by the Company since its Charter was granted.

Among the improvements which have been made at East-Boston, (since the Charter was granted,) are the following :—

The constructing of a spacious wharf by *the East-Boston Wharf Company*, extending into the Channel 1250 feet and of a breadth of 310 feet, with a dockage on each side of 100 feet. The side walls of this fine wharf are of solid granite, of an average thickness of seven feet, the space between filled up solid, with earth, and comprising a surface of over eight acres. The Capital of this Company, as fixed by their Act of Incorporation, is five hundred thousand dollars. By an agreement between them and the East-Boston Company, a way, seventy feet wide, is to be forever kept open for the accommodation of public travel to the Ferry landing, at the end of the wharf, where the Ferry

House, and accommodation for landing and depositing fuel, is also established.

The Ferry itself is the property of another Company, called *the East-Boston Ferry Company*, with a capital of one hundred thousand dollars. Every effort has been made by them to facilitate the intercourse between these two parts of the city, by means of large and convenient Steam Ferry Boats, two of which, with engines from Dr. Nott's factory, at New-York, are constantly plying, and another of the same size and construction is nearly ready to go on the line. The time required for a passage across in these boats, is about three minutes. The landing on the Boston side, is at the end of Lewis's wharf, at the head of which runs Commercial-street, one of the widest and most commercial parts of the city. The rate of ferriage is at present twenty-five cents for a stage-coach, twelve and a half cents for a horse and gig, eighteen and three quarter cents for carts and wagons with four horses, and four cents for foot passengers. Inhabitants, and others connected with East-Boston, pass over at a lower rate. The distance across the ferry is 600 yards, being 120 yards less than the Fulton Ferry at New-York. Connected with this Ferry is a straight, level, and fine road, thirty feet wide, leading from the Salem Turnpike to the Chelsea free bridge, which crosses Chelsea river to the Island, a distance of 650 feet. From this bridge, which is the property of the Ferry Company, a fine level road has also been constructed by them, to the Ferry landing at the East-Boston Wharf before mentioned. The distance from the Ferry landing to the Salem Turnpike, is $2\frac{9}{10}$ miles; and as it avoids two of the principal hills which must be passed in going the old Turnpike route, over Chelsea Bridge or Winnissimet Ferry, and is beside more than a mile shorter than the Chelsea and Charlestown Bridge road, and cheaper, by nearly half the toll, it is fair to suppose it will continue to be preferred as the shortest and cheapest avenue to the city in this direction.

Some doubt has been entertained by the public, whether the Ferry, in severely cold weather, might not be interrupted by ice; but the experience of the present season has removed these apprehensions, and it has been found that the boats can ply uninterruptedly with the thermometer at fifteen degrees below zero.

An important advantage to the Commerce of Boston, from the establishment of this Ferry, should not be overlooked. It is the clearing of the lower part of the harbor from ice, which being separated by the plying of the boats, all that portion below the Ferry, drifts out to sea with the ebb tide, while the upper part of the harbor, including Chelsea Cove, remains fast locked up.

"In the course of the examination before the Committee of the Legislature, when the application for a Charter for the Company was pending, it was testified, by some of the oldest inhabitants of that section of the city, that the part of the harbor where the Ferry is now established was the last to be obstructed by ice; for which they assigned a reason, the experience of the Company has shown to be well founded;—that the confluence of the Charles and Mystic rivers, at that comparatively narrow spot, produced so rapid a current, as to prevent the ice from making there, even when the harbor, both above and below, was completely frozen. Another fact, important to the interest of the city and the public, has, the Company think, been also established; which is, that there is less interruption and delay to travelers in crossing their Ferry, than takes place at many of the bridges leading to the city, from the frequent lifting of the draws for the passage of vessels,—an obstruction known to be most inconvenient, and which will, of course, be increasing every year, with the increase of population and trade of the city, surrounded as it is, on almost every side, by populous towns and villages, so near as to be reckoned, when the question of her population is considered, as almost part of herself.

At the upper end of the East-Boston Wharf are established buildings of the *Boston Sugar Refinery*, an incorporated company, having a capital of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. These buildings are all of brick, the main one being 136 feet by seventy-five feet, eight stories in height, and having within it a Steam Engine of twenty-five horse power. The fresh water used in the Engine, and in other parts of the process of refining, is taken by pipes from a spacious brick well near the Maverick House, which supplies about thirty gallons per minute, and is of an excellent quality, furnishing an ample supply for all the wants of the Refinery.

Every part of East-Boston abounds, however, with fine water, seldom requiring the shafts of the wells, excepting on the hills, to be sunk to a greater depth than fifteen feet. Even on the summit of Belmont, in Section No. 1, the shaft of the well is only 52 feet in depth.

The Boyden Malleable Cast-Iron and Steel Company, also incorporated by the Legislature, have their establishment in Section No. 3, the plots of ground marked C. and D. on the plan, together with the several lots comprised in the space between Meridian, Lexington, Marion, and White streets. Their buildings consist of two large Brick Factories, one 200 by 50 feet, and the other 80 by 30 feet ; fourteen dwelling-houses for the operatives, together with a solid wharf of granite and earth in front. Their Steam Engine, of forty horse power, is in a separate brick building. The Capital of this Company is three hundred thousand dollars.

In front of Liverpool-street, in Section No. 2, and between that and Maverick and Decatur-streets, is situated the property of *the East-Boston Timber Company*, incorporated with a capital of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Their Timber Dock, 200 feet square, and their Store and Wharf extend from Border-street toward the channel. This Company is extensively employed in supplying white oak plank and timber, for ship building, from the lands at Grand Island, in the State of New-York.

The lands appropriated to the *Merchants Marine Railway*, are likewise in Section No. 2. An Act of Incorporation has been obtained, with a capital of one hundred to two hundred thousand dollars, allowing the company to establish inclined planes for six ships at one time.

At the present session of the Legislature an application will be made for an Act of Incorporation for *the East-Boston Water Power Company*, with a capital of one hundred thousand dollars, for the purpose of inclosing, by a granite dam, from West Wood Island to the extremity of Section No. 1. as seen on the plan, a space of about 180 acres of water, and thus to create a water power for general and manufacturing purposes. Soundings have been taken of the depth of water, and estimates of the expense have been made by a skillful Engineer. As the power thus

to be created is reckoned by the Engineer as equal to forty mill powers, its successful prosecution, it is contemplated, will add greatly to the population, and materially promote the prosperity of East-Boston.

The spacious Hotel called the *Maverick House*, together with all the furniture, equipments, stables, baths, &c. is the property of the East-Boston Company. It is kept by Major Barton, in a style of elegance surpassed perhaps by no other public hotel in the country.

It is now scarcely two years since the only dwelling-house, then existing on this extensive tract of land, was taken down to make room for the contemplated improvements; and, beside the buildings erected by the various incorporated companies already enumerated, there are now more than fifty substantial private dwelling-houses, beside about twenty stores, ware-houses, &c., and about ten substantial wharves, notwithstanding which, the population of the place is so rapidly increasing, that leases are readily taken at rates that will give a yearly rent of at least ten per cent. on the cost of the investment. By the census of the city just taken, the population of East-Boston already exceeds six hundred souls. A large proportion of this population consists of mechanics and artizans, and so long as the price of land there continues at a rate so much lower than in the city opposite, the difference being more than ten to one, it will continue to offer advantages that will induce the rapid settlement of the portion of the island, more particularly adapted to the purposes of that respectable and industrious class of citizens, while at Belmont and the beautiful and commanding eminences in Section No. 3, the most delightful situations are to be found for villas and rural residences.

A most important circumstance, connected with the prosperity of East-Boston, and of the commercial part of the city opposite, would be the establishment of the great Eastern Rail-Road over this Ferry. The stock of this new Company is not only all subscribed, but very extensively distributed, and notice has been published, according to law, of their intention to apply for a Charter at the present session of the Legislature. Arrangements have been made with the gentlemen composing the Committee of Subscribers, to accommodate them with such land as they may

need at East-Boston for the Rail-Road Depot, immediately contiguous to the Ferry landing; and it is a matter of much congratulation, that the Committee have unanimously decided upon that route, and have prepared their surveys, and framed their petition accordingly. The route, as laid down on the Island, will pass immediately over the tract of about fifty acres of fine Brick lands, belonging to the Company, situated on the more remote part of the island, and will contribute to reduce the price of that important building material to the inhabitants.

Of the 660 acres of upland possessed by the Company, they have sold, up to this time, about forty-four acres, and a small portion of the water lots, for an aggregate sum of \$250,000. From the proceeds of these sales, two dividends have been made to the extent of \$92,400. The residue has been expended in the building and furnishing of the Maverick House, with its extensive Stables, Baths, and other appendages; in constructing a solid Wharf, containing 22,000 feet of surface, for the general use of the Company, a commodious School-House, which is also used as a place of public worship; but principally for the laying out and grading of the Streets, Squares and Avenues, the constructing of Sea Walls, &c. &c. The necessity of further expenditures for these objects no longer exists, and until the population shall greatly increase, no further disbursements in this respect will be needed; nor is there any reason to doubt that the further sale of land will soon enable the Directors to make additional dividends.

Boston, January, 1836.