

Eastonians Tell Of Steamers Which Navigated The Delaware

In the course of hearings at Trenton by the State committee having in charge the upholding New Jersey's protest against New York state diverting waters from the Delaware river in order to supply water for consumption in New York City, three Eastonians were called on to give testimony concerning steamboat navigation on the Delaware. They were Former Mayor Charles F. Chidsey, Floyd S. Bixler and Theodore Youells. The purpose of the New Jersey committee in asking these men to give testimony was to establish the fact that the steamboats did at one time navigate the Delaware to Easton from Trenton and Philadelphia. The point to be emphasized was that, under the United States law, water cannot be diverted from a stream upon which steamboat navigation has been maintained, even though now not maintained, and the statements of the Eastonians were to show that steamboats have navigated the Delaware for business purposes.

Mr. Chidsey was first called and in reply to direct questions stated that he had seen the steamboat William Barnet come to Easton, from down the Delaware the first time, on March 12, 1852 and that on that occasion he went aboard the boat. He told of that steamer's record for a time. Asked if he had seen any other steamers he said that he saw the Reindeer come in 1858 and went aboard that boat too. He told of the

building of the Alfred Thomas, intended to navigate the Delaware to Belvidere, and of the disaster that befell that steamer.

Mr. Bixler gave testimony along the same lines concerning the same steamers and their plying on the Delaware. The point which the New Jersey committee wished to establish having been brought out, Mr. Youells, as his testimony would have been along the same lines as that of Mr. Chidsey and Mr. Bixler, was not called upon. The Eastonians were warmly thanked for their compliance with the request of the committee to appear before it. Representatives of New York State were present, asked questions and appeared to be somewhat taken aback by what the Eastonians said. It seems that they would not consent to agree to take from historic records or printed reports of those days back in the middle of the last century, any data concerning steamboats on the Delaware. So Eastonians gave them information they did not enjoy hearing.

Pennsylvania will, it is understood, become active in sustaining the position taken by New Jersey, after having been in sympathy with the New Jersey stand, but not officially recognizing it. It is the opinion that now Pennsylvania will have to, in self interest and protection, take active steps to maintain the present flow of water in the Delaware and see to it that it is not decreased.