

Alderman Henderson

Chairman Com on Roads & Bridges
Cambridge

Cambridge May 11th 85

To The Committee on Roads & Bridges
Gents

I regret exceedingly that circumstances prevented your meeting on the day appointed, on the Kings Highway at the Ferry Landing, near Oliver's wharf, by Samuels Hill, but what cannot be helped must be endured - Your fellow citizen knowing that you have numerous calls of the same kind, with exhausted patience, & no compensation, and are obliged to sit between two fires, so as to be burned by neither, provided a little entertainment of refreshments for your committee, which in all ages of the world has been considered a token of friendship, and may serve to show that the streams of humanity are not yet all dried up, but as you could not share his hospitalities, you will be obliged to take the will for the deed, The Ferry Landing matter so called, has been aroused from a slumber of more than two hundred years by a very few interested

persons, Without entering into the report of the
Honorable Mayor which may be considered a one
sided lawyers document, & which, holding the
position he now does, as mayor of the City, he
should not ^{have} allowed himself to repeat, but simply
to have referred your committee to that report, your
correspondent, will briefly state the tenure by which
he holds the property in dispute. About the time
Boston was settled, a few men designated this lo-
cality for their country seats, and several of them
built houses, some of which remain to day,
They also used for their convenience a way to
the river which bore one very romantic name
the Kings Highway or the extension of the same
leading to Watertown. This undertaking was soon
abandoned, as the distance from Boston which
was through Roxbury being the only way ^{was} more
than eight miles, consequently, the way fell
into disuse, and was only mentioned for the
next hundred years as a boundary to certain
estates that changed hands, Your committee
will readily see, that this way leading to the river
was never defined by any bounds, or fences that

can be relied on, as many of those fences have been moved from time to time. The writer remembers very distinctly of carrying the chain for a survey or (when a boy) to ascertain the numbers of acres in the Thompson lot, now owned by the hospital trustees, of hearing Mr Thompson say that the lot overrun by more than two acres the old survey, which would seem to indicate an error in the survey, or an increase of land, then again some of the deeds bounding on this way, read, "or however otherwise bounded, or reputed to be bounded" which implies that in addition to the several deeds there must be a living witness to define the bounds. The Mayor in his report intimates that the present fences, may be suitable bounds, to base a claim upon, but the writer remembers very well an old dilapidated barn, that with cowyard & pigsty, stood directly in the way. That is now claimed as a townway, and had remained there, more than one generation, and which he tore down after having purchased the premises. The writer bases his claim as Gen. Walcott stated in your presence by adverse possession, and also by the payment of taxes on the marsh lot since 1743 and by

possession & the payment of taxes on the
common land or watering place since 1826
which deed gives him a title to the westerly fence
near the marble shop, reserving of course the right
of way ^{to the} houses & marsh whoever may be the owners.
This briefly is a very rough outline of ^a complicated case
and as your City solicitor has stated that it can only
be settled by the courts, as it is a question of law & facts
your correspondent makes the following suggestion
That your committee recommend, or lay out an
avenue 35 or 40 feet wide straight or direct from
Mt Auburn St to the river, through his land, and through
the hospital land, and fence the same within a
specified time, also make the street when most conven-
ient within one year and he will give a deed of the
same as far as his limits extend, and if the hospital
trustees will not do the same, then take enough
of his ~~lands~~ adjoining theirs to compensate them
for every foot you take from them. If this meets
your approbation would be pleased to meet your
committee or City engineer on the ground any
time you may suggest. My son will answer any question
you may desire. Yours in haste Joseph E Coolidge

To the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of
Cambridge.

The undersigned respectfully request that
the public highway leading from Mount Auburn
Street to Gerry's Landing in Ward One may be
opened to the public, and that the obstructions
now existing therein be removed, and refer in
support thereof to the Report of the Committee on
Gerry's Landing and the action of former
City Governments in regard thereto.

~~Committee~~ 2, 4, 6, 8

Elizabeth N. Thayer

Morrill Wyman.

~~Lawrence Smith~~

John Brewster

Edwin D. Hale

John L. Hayes

William A. Healey 2'

Horatio G. Parker

Charles F. Walcott

Geo. S. Searge

~~John Brewster~~

Archibald M. Howe

Edward S. Dodge

~~Wm. L. Brewster~~

In Board of Aldermen. April 21, 1885 -
Referred to the Committee on Roads and
Bridges - with instructions to give the petitioners
a hearing.

Sub - closed for concurrence.

~~Attest - Justin C. Jacobs, Clerk.~~

In Common Council. April 22, 1885 -
Concurred -

Attest -
John W. Duffie

Clerk pro tem

May 2, 1885

Approved

Wm. Russell Mayor

#6
1886

12//1887

#309 246

Petition in regard to
public highway leading
to Gerry's Landing.

April 21, 1885.

From file 3
Dec 31, 1889

Tabed

next City Council.

no action in 1887.