

**BOARD**  
OF  
**ASSISTANT ALDERMEN,**

JUNE 3d, 1831.

*Report of the Ferry Committee made in compliance of a  
Resolution offered by Mr. Whiting, ordered to be printed  
for the use of the Members of the Board.*

B. CRANE, Clerk.

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The Committee on Ferries, to whom it was referred, by the annexed Resolution, to ascertain and report to the Board of Assistants, the several rates of Ferriage as now established, and which the lessees of the several Ferries are authorized by law to charge on the same,

**RESPECTFULLY REPORT,**

That by the 45th section of the Act, entitled "an Act to reduce several laws relating particularly to the City of New-York into one Act," passed April 9th, 1813, the rates or prices for carrying men, women, horses, cattle, grain, and all other goods, merchandize, and things whatsoever in the Ferry Boats, between the City of New-York and the Island of Nassau were specified and established. The various articles with their respective rates are enumerated in the said Act, which will be found either in the second volume of the Laws of New-York, as revised in 1813,

page 355, or in the volume of Laws relative to the City of New-York, compiled in 1827, page 204. The rate fixed by the said Act for a single passenger, was *two cents*. The Committee have been informed and believe that at the time of the passage of this law, Steam Boats had not as yet been used for Ferry Boats on any Ferry between this City and Long Island; and boats of that description do not appear to have been contemplated by the said law. Barges and Horse Boats are expressly mentioned in it.

The Ferries established between this City and Long Island are as follows :

1. From the foot of Fulton-street to Brooklyn.
2. From Catharine Slip to Brooklyn.
3. From Walnut-street to the Navy Yard.
4. From the Foot of Grand-street to Williamsburgh.

There is also a Ferry established from Horne's Hook to Long Island, commonly called the Hurlgate Ferry.

The lease to the Fulton Ferry Company for the first of these Ferries, was given 24th January, 1814; and it appears that it was upon this Ferry, that the use of Steam Ferry Boats was first projected and carried into effect. This lease contains a covenant on the part of the Corporation to apply to the Legislature and endeavour to procure a law to authorize *four cents* to be received for passengers instead of two cents, in *Steam Ferry Boats*, and in case the Legislature should refuse thus to raise the rate of ferriage that the lessees should still be permitted (so far as the Corporation had power to permit them) to receive four cents in Steam Boats. It was also stipulated, that the fare in Horse Boats and Barges should continue the same as established by law.

It appears that such application was promptly complied with by the Legislature; for an Act was passed on the 4th

of March, 1814, entitled "an Act for the encouragement of Steam Ferry Boats, between the Southernmost Ferry of the City of New-York, and the old Ferry at Brooklyn, on the Island of Nassau," by which Act, the rates for carrying in a Steam Boat on that Ferry were raised. It will be found in the 3d volume of the Laws of New-York, b. page 30, or in the volume of laws relative to the City, page 213. This law specifies the rates for passengers, waggons, carts and sleighs in *Steam Ferry Boats*. The rate for single passengers is stated at four cents. It also provided, that the Sail Boat and common Barge establishment, should be conducted and continued agreeably to the directions of the Act of April 9th, 1813, and that every article carried across the said Ferry, in Steam Ferry Boats, which should not be carried in waggons, carts or sleighs, should, if not otherwise exempted, be charged such rates and prices as were specified in the said Act last mentioned.

This Law, (passed 4th of March, 1814,) applied in terms to one Ferry only, viz: the Fulton Ferry; but it recites that "the encouragement of Steam Ferry Boats is highly important to the community, and merits the patronage of the Legislature:" and it may be said that every other Ferry where Steam Boats were used, was, according to the spirit of the Act, entitled, with equal propriety, to charge the increased rates for ferriage in such boats.

Such appears to have been the construction given to it, for the Committee are informed that at the other Ferries between this city and Long-Island where steamboats are used, the same rates of Ferriage as established at the Fulton Ferry, have been charged ever since the use of such boats commenced.

The Committee have caused all the leases for Ferries from this city to Long Island to be examined. The lease for the Ferry to Williamsburgh, dated 8th October, 1827, contains a covenant on the part of the lessees, that the rate

of ferriage for foot passengers shall not exceed four cents each, and contains also stipulations as to the rates at which persons should be entitled to commute.

The lease for the ferry at the foot of Catharine-street, dated 12th June, 1820, grants to the lessees "all and singular the usual accustomed ferriage fees, perquisites, rents, issues, benefits, profits and advantages whatsoever, to the said ferry belonging or therewith used or thereout arising."

The lease for the Walnut-street Ferry grants generally "all the ferriage fees, perquisites, profits, &c. to arise or accrue from the said ferry."

The lease for the Hurlgate Ferry grants all and singular the accustomed ferriage fees, perquisites, &c. &c. to the said ferry belonging or therewith used, &c.

With respect to the last mentioned ferry, the Committee are informed that the charge for foot passengers was one shilling each, during the period when it was conducted by Mr. Sammis, the former lessee; and that when the Messrs. Blackwell's, the present lessees, took it, they agreed to reduce such rate to six cents, and that they have received such reduced rate ever since. Although this ferry is, strictly speaking, a ferry from the city of New-York to Long-Island, inasmuch as by law the city extends to and beyond the point from which the ferry starts on this side of the East River, yet it is well known that this ferry is in truth a county ferry, having none of the advantages arising from a dense city population; and the Committee are well convinced that, at its present rates, it is less advantageous to its proprietors, than convenient for those persons who have occasion to use it.

The Committee can find no law regulating the rates of Ferriage between this City and any part of New Jersey.

The lease to C. D. Colden and others, for the ferry from the foot of Courtland-street to Jersey City, dated 26th Sep-

tember, 1825, has annexed to it a schedule of rates or tolls, and contains a stipulation that the lessees shall not receive any higher rates than what are specified in such schedule.

The rate as therein contained for

Each single passenger is	-	-	-	-	12 1-2 cts.
For each loaded wagon, with 2 horses & driver,	50				
“ “ “	1 horse	do.			37 1-2
“ “ “	4 horses	do.			\$1 00

Many other articles, with their respective rates, are enumerated in the said schedule.

The leases to J. C. & R. L. Stevens for the ferries to Hoboken provide, that the lessees shall not ask, demand, or receive any higher or greater toll or fare for passengers, carriages, horses, or effects, than the lessees of the ferry from Courtland-street to Pawlus-Hook are allowed to receive for like services.

The rates of ferriage on the said ferries crossing the North River are not therefore established by any law of this state, but appear to be regulated solely by the leases or contracts between the Corporation and the respective lessees.

The Committee have had before them the lessees of every ferry hereinbefore mentioned, and have examined them respectively as to the rates of ferriage actually charged and received at their ferries. On the North River ferries, it appears from their statements that, during a portion of the year, a less rate than that specified in their leases is charged, viz. 6 cents instead of 12 1-2 for foot passengers; and on the East River ferries (except that from Hurl Gate) the rates appear to be regulated (for steamboats) by those charged at the Fulton Ferry, under the law of March 4th, 1814. The parties have uniformly stated that no higher rates have been charged, and the Committee have no reason to doubt the truth of such statements.

Having thus endeavored to lay before this Board all the information they have been able to obtain on the subject referred to them, the Committee beg leave to offer the following Resolution :

*Resolved*, That the Committee on Ferries be discharged from the further consideration of the matters referred to them by the Resolution hereunto annexed.

M. M. QUACKENBOS, Chairman.  
SAMUEL DUNSHEE,  
JOHN J. LABAGH.