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PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF THE HARBOR OF  
GREENPORT, N. Y.

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LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING,

*With letter of the Chief of Engineers, report of a preliminary examination of harbor of Greenport, N. Y.*

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DECEMBER 6, 1894.—Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors and ordered to be printed.

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WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington, December 4, 1894.*

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith a letter from the Chief of Engineers dated December 1, 1894, together with a copy of a report from Lieut. Col. H. M. Robert, Corps of Engineers, dated October 26, 1894, of a preliminary examination made by him in compliance with the provisions of the river and harbor act of August 17, 1894, of harbor of Greenport, N. Y.

Very respectfully,

DANIEL S. LAMONT,  
*Secretary of War.*

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,  
UNITED STATES ARMY,  
*Washington, D. C., December 1, 1894.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit the accompanying copy of report, dated October 26, 1894, by Lieut. Col. H. M. Robert, Corps of Engineers, giving results of preliminary examination of harbor of Greenport, N. Y., ordered by river and harbor act of August 17, 1894.

A project for the improvement of the harbor by the General Government was completed in 1893, but in the opinion of Colonel Robert this locality is worthy of further improvement by the United States, with the object in view of deepening the anchorage ground in Sterling Basin and widening and deepening its approaches; and in this opinion I concur.

No survey is necessary for the purpose of preparing plans and estimates of cost of the desired improvement, the surveys already made affording all essential information.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOS. LINCOLN CASEY,  
*Brig. Gen., Chief of Engineers.*

Hon. DANIEL S. LAMONT,  
*Secretary of War.*

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PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF HARBOR OF GREENPORT, NEW YORK.

ENGINEER OFFICE, UNITED STATES ARMY,  
*New York, N. Y., October 26, 1894.*

**GENERAL:** I have the honor to submit the following report upon the preliminary examination of the harbor of Greenport, N. Y., made in pursuance of the river and harbor act of August 17, 1894:

Greenport Harbor is a small anchorage ground on the southeast side of the north fork of Long Island, near its eastern end. It is a part of Shelter Island Sound, a crooked and rather deep channel, which, with Shelter Island, separates the two forks of Long Island. Greenport Harbor consists of a small bay, originally exposed to northeast storms, but now sheltered by a breakwater, and of a land-locked shallow anchorage with narrow entrance, known as Sterling Basin. The mean rise of tide at Greenport Harbor is 2.4 feet.

A survey of Greenport Harbor was ordered by Congress in 1881, and in the report upon this, dated January 20, 1882, and printed in the Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1882, part 1, page 635, a project was submitted for a breakwater to shelter the anchorage ground and to check further erosion of Joshuas Point. This project, adopted in 1882, contemplated a breakwater about 1,700 feet long, the top to be 5 feet wide and 3 feet above mean high-water level, at an estimated cost of \$46,000. In 1890, when the breakwater had been made 1,570 feet long, the project was modified to provide for increasing its height to 5 feet above mean high water, to omit the further extension, and to apply the remainder of the estimate, for completion, to dredging in order to increase the area of sheltered anchorage. The project was completed in 1893, the available area of sheltered anchorage having been enlarged by about 2 acres, and the entrance to Sterling Basin having been widened and deepened.

Harbor lines for Greenport Harbor were established by the Secretary of War January 5, 1894.

This preliminary examination was asked in order to bring to the attention of Congress the importance of deepening the anchorage area in Sterling Basin, within the established harbor lines.

The freight annually received at Greenport by water has been estimated at different times since 1882 at from 20,000 to 43,500 tons; these have been admittedly incomplete, but as no records of commerce are kept they were accepted as the best attainable. A much more careful and detailed statement was prepared for the calendar year 1893, showing the total of receipts and shipments to have been 158,310 tons, which is believed to be quite accurate. A copy of it is attached to this report.

The improvement now desired would benefit, only in a general way, that commerce which consists in receiving and forwarding freight. It is desired primarily in order to provide a place where yachts, fishing

steamers, and small sailing vessels can lie up during winter in safety and be ready and convenient for overhauling, repairing, and fitting out in spring. It would also be used as a harbor of refuge.

The business of fitting out and repairing pleasure boats and small steamers has already reached considerable proportions in Greenport, 325 vessels having been repaired on the marine railways during 1893, and it is said to be increasing, notwithstanding the inadequacy of the basin for winter quarters. The bottom is soft and vessels that can get into the basin at high tide can lie aground there without injury.

No records have been kept of the extent to which this basin has been used for winter quarters for vessels. It is estimated that about 50 were quartered there last winter. It is reported that, by actual count, 45 boats were in the basin October 14, 1894, as follows:

Vessels.	Number.	Draft.
		<i>Feet.</i>
Steamers.....	2	3½ to 5½
Schooners.....	6	5 to 6½
Sloops.....	25	3 to 6½
Smaller sailboats.....	12	2 to 3½
Total.....	45	.....

There is no doubt that it would be used to much greater extent if the depths were sufficient.

The fact that successive Congresses have made appropriations for improving this harbor shows that it has been regarded as worthy of improvement heretofore. In my opinion Greenport Harbor is worthy of further improvement by the United States, with the object stated; that is, deepening the anchorage ground in Sterling Basin and widening and deepening its approaches. For the purpose of preparing plans and estimates of cost of the desired improvement no survey is necessary, the surveys made during the progress of the improvements completed in 1893 affording all essential information.

Inclosed herewith is a statement in relation to the desired improvement, presented by Hon. Henry A. Reeves, of Greenport, and containing details of the commerce of Greenport during the calendar year 1893.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

HENRY M. ROBERT,  
*Lieutenant-Colonel, Corps of Engineers.*

Brig. Gen. THOMAS L. CASEY,  
*Chief of Engineers, U. S. A.*

STATEMENT RELATING TO THE DESIRED IMPROVEMENT, PRESENTED BY HON. HENRY A. REEVES, OF GREENPORT, N. Y.

The principal object for which the proposed further improvement of Greenport Harbor is sought is to establish thereat a safe, accessible, and convenient inner harbor, available especially for the use of yachts and vessels of light draft, within which to anchor during storms or periods of inactivity, and to "lay up" during the winter season.

Practically, the work already done, while of the greatest importance and value, commercially speaking, has served to protect the harbor from encroachments by easterly storms, and to afford an improved waterway on the west side of the breakwater. It is now desired to supplement this improvement by extending the channel, which has been deepened and widened up to and into the mouth of Sterling Basin or

creek, within the basin, and to convert the main space of the basin into a harbor by dredging to a sufficient depth over an area of about 1,200 feet by 600 feet.

The natural conditions for the success of such an undertaking are regarded as favorable in an unusual degree. The basin is entirely landlocked and secure; the bottom is of soft mud, admitting of easy dredging; the distance to deep water, wherein the dredgings can be effectually and completely disposed of without harm to navigation, is not inconveniently great; the space so obtained by simple dredging could be easily and quickly reached from the outer harbor, now that the channel has been straightened and widened, and would accommodate a larger number of boats of the class referred to, for which there is now no adequate or convenient provision.

The harbor of Greenport, in a general sense, as to depth of water, area, security from storms, and freedom from ice, may be said to be one of the important harbors of the Atlantic Seaboard; but its location on the extreme eastern end of an island precludes its obtaining the same measure of general commerce which its actual advantages would otherwise command. It at one time, forty years ago and more, had a very considerable share of the whale fishery; when that ceased to be profitable and was given up, it became the home port of a large number of the superior wooden coasting vessels, mostly two and three masted schooners, which flourished for twenty or twenty-five years, until steam supplanted them; and now its principal business is done in the line of fishing steamers and smacks, and of comparatively small craft, sloops, and schooners, engaged in local commerce, whose development, while steadily progressive, is slow. Within a few years past yachts, both steam and sail, have resorted to this harbor in increasing numbers, and from early spring to late fall they are seen on the adjacent bays, making their headquarters at Greenport. Their owners and sailing masters say that if there were a safe and comfortable place in which to lay up these costly craft at this harbor, they would be glad to do so.

It is to accommodate them and the large class of other light-draft vessels, which are generally idle for three or four months of winter and which need increased room and safer winter quarters than they can always find available, that this improvement of Sterling Basin is especially desired. If effected, its results in the way of promoting the commercial and the material interests of Greenport and its vicinity would be certain and extensive, affecting the whole community, besides lending impetus to the local development of commerce on Peconic and Gardiners bays. In view of the foregoing statement, which is believed to be a moderate one, much below the claims that might be urged, I respectfully submit that the proposed improvement is fully justified by the facts and conditions of the case, and can not fail to yield a lasting return of benefit to general and local commerce far greater than any probable cost.

As showing the present actual importance, in a commercial sense, of the harbor of Greenport, I am supplied with the following statistics for the year 1893, taken from official records or carefully compiled and believed to be entirely reliable:

HARBOR OF GREENPORT, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK, FOR YEAR 1893.

*Arrivals and departures of vessels.*

[Draft, 3 to 18 feet; tonnage, 5 to 1,200 tons.]

Kind of vessels:	
Steamers.....	34
Sailing vessels.....	191
Barges, yachts.....	300
Total.....	525

Number of round trips.	Aggregate tonnage, all trips.
	Tons.
Four steamers, daily trips.....	1,623
Thirty steamers, weekly trips.....	2,951
One trip per week.....	8,319
Two trips per year.....	22,500
Total.....	35,393

*Freight received by water.—Receipts.*

Chief articles.	Tons.	Estimated value.
Coal .....	12,000	\$60,000
Ship timber and lumber .....	2,428	45,480
Stone .....	1,500	2,250
Salt .....	600	3,960
Wood .....	750	1,500
Freight landed by steamers .....	15,000	.....
Fish (in boxes), phosphates, railroad ties, lumber, ice, etc., landed at railroad wharf.....	89,704	.....
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>121,980</b>	<b>.....</b>

*Shipments.*

Chief articles.	Tons.	Value.
Sand.....	3,000	\$4,500
Wood.....	1,500	12,000
Brick.....	20,000	140,000
Shells.....	8,000	32,000
Oysters.....	480	12,000
Clams.....	350	10,000
Fish.....	1,500	120,000
Produce.....	1,500	35,000
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>36,330</b>	<b>.....</b>

Number of vessels entered for refuge in 1893 (estimated)..... 525  
 Number of vessels repaired on marine railways..... 325

	Number.	Tonnage.
Steam vessels enrolled at this port.....	30	2,951.48
Sail vessels enrolled at this port.....	191	8,319.49
Barges enrolled at this port.....	1	781.30
<b>Total number and total tonnage .....</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>12,052.27</b>

