

Bridgeport April 26th 1870

To the Hon. Legislative Committee on the extension of the Bridgeport boundaries West.

Gentlemen,

As I start for California next Monday, to be absent several months, and therefore shall not be able to appear before you, I wish simply to say a few words. I am the largest tax-payer on unproductive land in the town of Fairfield and all of that land lies within the line which it is prepared to add to the City of Bridgeport. As a citizen of Fairfield I am impressed that it has become a most pressing necessity both for the interests of Fairfield and Bridgeport that the line of Bridgeport shall be immediately extended to Ash Creek.

I need not repeat here the unanswerable arguments in favor of this measure which will be presented to you. I only wish to say, as the result of 25 years constant experience in laying out new streets and avenues, I know that every year this extension is delayed, additional thousands of dollars will have to be expended to remove buildings, fences, fruit and shade trees, and to change roads which are now made hap-hazard in this section of Fairfield, without any regard to what will be necessary when this territory comes under City supervision, which in the necessity of the case must soon occur.

At the present moment those who live in and east of Black Rock, many of them depend upon Bridgeport for a part or all of their income. In Bridgeport in the daytime they are merchants, Bank Presidents, and Cashiers, Insurance Officers, Manufacturers,

Lawyers, &tc &tc but at night we step over the line into old Fairfield, and sprint back into Bridgeport as if we had no interests there. By all the rules of justice we belong in Bridgeport, and we ought to willingly share in the responsibilities as we do in the profitable commerce of that thriving and growing City.

A sort of mole-eyed selfishness, induces many who live over the Fairfield line to oppose this measure. They would just as stubbornly oppose it ten years hence when the growth of Bridgeport had driven 5000 to 10000 inhabitants over the Fairfield line to live; but meanwhile this disputed territory would be over-run with lanes and by-ways, crooked as rams-horns, and studded with dwelling houses stores and manufactories, which a subsequent City government could not twist back into regular streets and Avenues without an enormous outlay of money and of trouble.

It cost me ten thousand dollars to straighten and open the few roads in State-Street between Division and Seeley Streets. The short sightedness of the Fairfield property owners had induced them to erect a block of buildings square in the line which State Street would necessarily occupy if extended. I purchased and removed that block of buildings and therein open free the land for this extension of State Street and I begged the town of Fairfield to permit it to be extended to Fairfield Avenue. I offered to present them with land for a public park on the line of said street if they would permit it; but one man on the line said it would hit the rear of his corn yard, hence he opposed the extension, and old Fairfield always afraid of expanding even sufficient to make her highways passable, refused my application. After working fourteen years for that extension of

State Street, Fairfield reluctantly consented - that corn yard is now worth at the rate of \$8000 per acre and probably not one person in Fairfield today denies that the extension of State Street (to which noble avenue I call your attention with pride) is one of the most valuable improvements ever made in the town. And yet an improvement quite as necessary, is the extension of Iranistan Avenue to Sea-Side Park. I have opened it as far on both ends as I own the land, presented the land, worked the land and put up street fences at my own expense, but as I have only begged for six consecutive years that old Fairfield would open the west of that Avenue, it is not done although thousands would be accommodated by that opening to Sea Side Park. These and many other pressingly needed improvements cannot be made until a city government directs it. We sadly need street lights - police - a fire department - sewers, and many other things which would not be permitted by a county town meeting, made up mostly of farmers living miles away from this east edge of Fairfield - men to whom a sixpence necessarily looks as large as a cart-wheel.

Fairfield west of Black Rock is mainly an agricultural town - and the majority of her inhabitants therefore have no affinity with the bustling prosperous manufacturing and mercantile population of Bridgeport - a city more thrifty, and more rapidly increasing in the number and wealth of its citizens than in any other City in this Commonwealth.

I am sure that a glance at the time position of things, will convince your honorable Committee that no interests can be injured, but that the initial interests of the inhabitants on both the sides

of Ash Creek will be vastly promoted by extending Bridgeport line to that point.

Respectfully Yours

P. T. Barnum