

## Foundations of Schuykill Prominent Bridge

"The masonry is executed on a plan suggested to the Masons (Mr Thomas Wickers) masonmaster of New York. The walls of the abutments and wings are perpendicular without buttresses and supported by interior offsets. These are found completely competent to support the pressure of the filling (which consists in perpendicular lines) without buttressing or centering. The abutments are 18 feet thick. The wing walls nine feet at the foundation achieve by offsets till at the junctions they are only 18 inches. The eastern abutment & wing walls are founded on a rock. Those on the west side are built on piles. Although the western pier has attracted most attention, that on the eastern side of the river was first erected; and was attended with difficulties appearing often irreparable, although in from 21 to 24 feet deep, below tide, to the rock on which the lower course is laid and bolted.

Depth of water at the western Pier to the rock is 41 feet.

The foundations were laid in coffers under great difficulties & expense owing to the lack of experience in that kind of work at that day. Mr William Weston of England furnished the plan of the coffers but "declared that he should hesitate to risk his professional reputation on the work." Though he was convinced the success of the enterprise depended upon & required the attempt.

Afterwards in a congratulatory letter dated Southborough N.Y. 4<sup>th</sup> May 1803 "I wish sincerely rejoiced at the final success that has crowned your persevering efforts in the erection of the western pier; it will afford you matters of well founded triumph when I tell you that you have accomplished an undertaking unrivaled by any thing of the kind that Europe can boast of" "I have never in the course