Work in the Air Chamber.

By the end of November sufficient weight had been placed on the caisson to prevent its rising for a short time at low tide when inflated.

A gang of laborers worked for several hours every day, taking up the floor of the air chamber and removing the principal obstructions in the shape of dock logs and stones under the edges and frames.

In proportion to the weight above, the length of time spent below was increased, until two regular gangs were at work, four hours on and four hours off, the caisson being now permanently grounded.

Each gang consisted of about seventy laborers and seven foremen. In a short time an extra night gang was also established. Two weeks were consumed in removing and taking out the floor.

This floor proved a valuable adjunct in giving the caisson a level bed on which to rest, and in preventing it from tipping up on either end before sufficient weight had been placed on it.

The character of the work at this particular time was more disagreeable than at any subsequent period. This location had for many years been the site of the principal dumping-ground for city garbage. The mud abounded in decaying animal and vegetable remains. Although the odor of these was checked while imbedded in the salt water mud, it came forth in its original strength when brought in contact with the caisson air. More men were overcome by foul air than by compressed air.

By keeping the material constantly covered with water, so as to cover the odor, it was gradually disposed of through the water shafts.

This black dock mud is really a clay, and is the silt brought down by the North River, merely lacking time and pressure to make it as hard and tenacious as ordinary clays. It derives its black color from sewer discharges, but is by no means their product.

The coarse river sand and beach gravel beneath the mud