

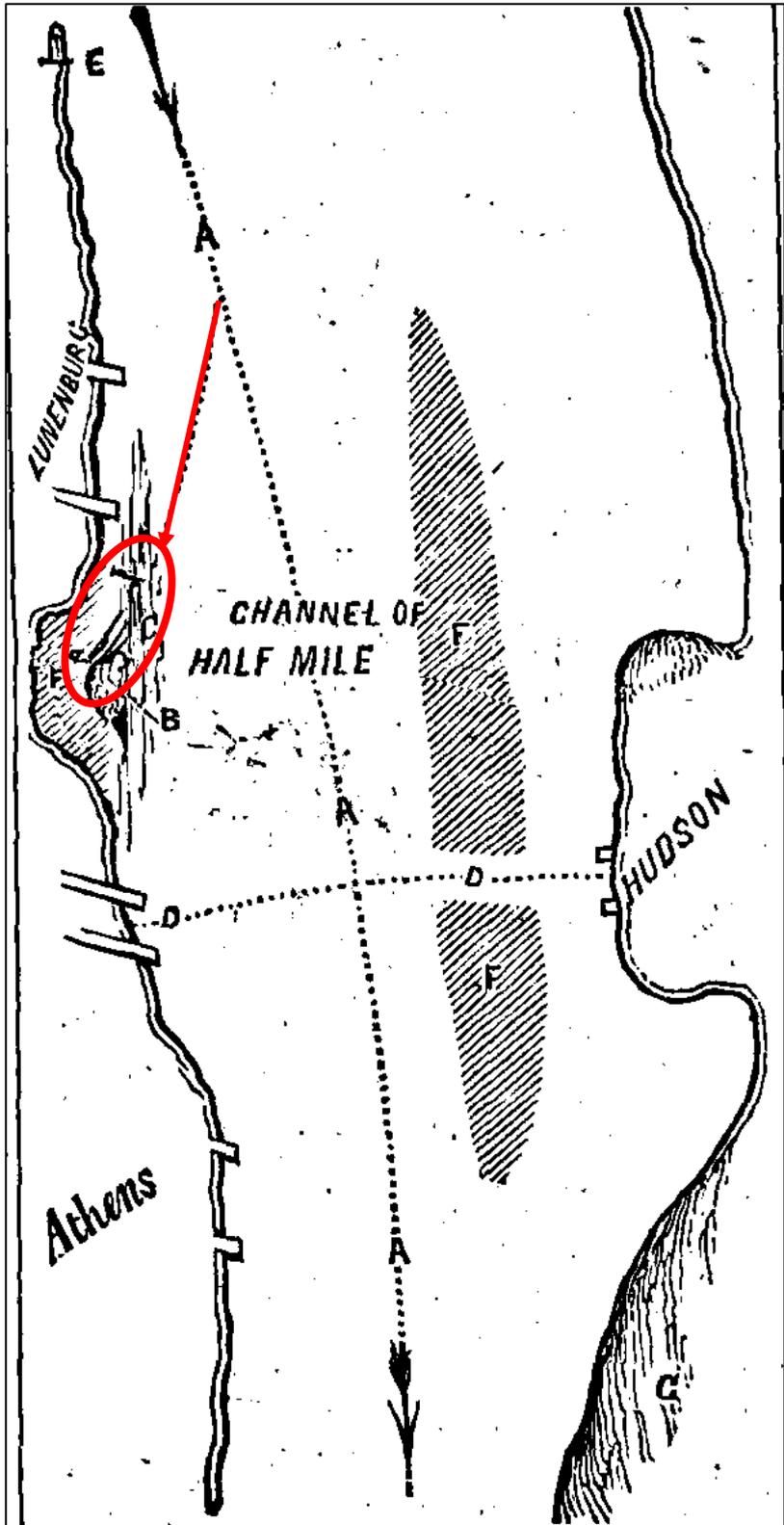


THE SCENE OF THE WRECK

In order to present to our readers some idea of the situation of the wreck of the *Swallow*, we have procured the annexed cut, which although hastily got up, is still sufficiently correct to give a definite idea of the various points in the neighborhood. The river at this point averages in width about a mile and a quarter, from shore to shore. In the centre, or nearly so, is a strip of flat known as the *Middle Ground*, through which a canal has been cut for the passage of the Hudson and Athens ferry boat. The river here forms two channels, one known as the Athens or west channel, and the other as the Hudson or east channel. The Athens channel is broad, more than a half mile in width, & of sufficient depth of water to accommodate a ship of the line—and affording ample room for the beating of any square-rigged vessel. The Hudson, or east channel, though deep, is narrow and more circuitous, and only used by vessels who are either bound to or intending to land at Hudson.

The rock upon which the ill-fated *Swallow* was wrecked, is one of about 75 feet in length, and some 25 or 30 feet in width, sparsely covered by a growth of shrubbery. It is known to watermen on the river, by the name of Payne's Brig, and is just above the lower village of Athens, almost in line with the main shore, from which it is separated by a cove of some one hundred and seventy-five feet in width, in low water sufficiently shallow to be waded. From the outer edge of these rocks the channel is, as before stated, some half a mile in width.

In coming around Four Mile Point in this reach of the river, at its southern extremity rises the high bluff known as Marinus hill, the highest point in that section, and indeed, on the river, the Highlands excepted. The curve of the river just below Athens, gives it, at this point, the appearance somewhat of a lake—the bluff forming the southern shore. On rounding Four Mile Point, coming down the river, it is the rule as we are informed by old and experienced navigators of the river, for vessels which take the Athens channel, to head for this cliff to which we have alluded, until just below the rock, when the cliff is thrown a little to the



- A** Customary track of Steamboats.
- B** The Rock—Payne's brig, as it is called.
- C** Position of the Wrecked Vessel.
- D** Hudson and Athens Ferry.
- E** Intended to show the position of the light at Four Mile Point.
- F** Flats in rear of Rock—and Middle Ground.
- G** Marinus Hill.

eastward. Now by a reference to the cut above, it will be seen that this course would throw a steamboat some quarter of a mile from the rock, when abreast of it.

Of all the navigation, this reach of the river is considered the least difficult. With the bold outline of Maribus Hill in front, the city of Hudson and the village of Athens on either side, and a broad, deep channel, what navigation can be easier? When these landmarks cannot be distinguished, then indeed it is time that a vessel should lie by.

The chart we have given above, rough as it necessarily is, *shows conclusively that the Swallow in running on this rock or island, must necessarily have varied so essentially from her course, that the wreck can be ascribed to nothing but gross and culpable negligence on the part of those having her in charge. We know that it is offered in extenuation that the night was so very dark and thick that it was almost impossible to see. If so, then it is somewhat singular that the same difficulty was not experienced by the two other boats close in her neighborhood—the Rochester and the Express. Besides, if it was so dark as has been represented by those on board the Swallow, why was it attempted to proceed? Why was she not brought to at an anchor until the darkness should have passed away? But we are assured by many who were on board the Express and Rochester, and the Swallow also, that it was not so dark but that all these landmarks to which we have alluded, the bluff and the lights in Hudson and Athens, were plainly visible. And further, it appears by the Hudson Republican, in giving the testimony at the coroner's inquest on some of the bodies, that it was not so dark but that the pilot himself was able to perceive, just before the vessel struck, that she was out of her course.*

We have no wish to blame without reason, but it is certainly due to all concerned, the officers of the boat, as well as to the relatives and friends of the lost, that there should be a full and impartial investigation of the whole affair, and the fault, if any there should be found, severely punished.