Charles Dangeau De Labelye Encyclopedia Article

Charles Dangeau De Labelye

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Charles Dangeau De Labelye

1705-1782

Swiss engineer who invented a pile-driving machine to help construct the Westminster Bridge in 1738. Labelye's machine, powered by three horses, repeatedly raised a weight and dropped it onto a piling, driving it into the soil to form a solid foundation for the bridge structure. The machine used a 1,698 lb (770 kg) weight that was raised 9.8 feet (3 m) and dropped 150 times an hour. Labelye's basic design remains in use today, although powered by engines instead of horses.