



2392

U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.

Henry S. Pritchett, Superintendent.

State: *Cal.*

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Topographic Sheet No. *2392*

LOCALITY:

False Bay

1887

CHIEF OF PARTY:

A. L. Rodgers

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FALSE BAY,
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.
(DESCRIPTIVE REPORT)

In order to describe False Bay, it is proper to note its antecedents as suggested by the topographical developement in its vicinity. I have formerly alluded to False Bay as a "wrecked bay", wrecked by the debris of San Diego River.

The topographic features of the vicinity of False Bay give prominence to Point Loma, a rocky promontory with an elevation of over 400 feet, lying westward and seaward from the original mouth or debouchure of the so called San Diego River.

Point Loma was no doubt at one period of the terrane developement an island, flanked on the east by two islets known as Coronado and North Coronado Islands. The present San Diego and False Bays formed together an indentation of the general coast line, extending on the south from the marshes which border the locality shown on Chart 5106 as South San Diego, and northward to the present Bay point of False Bay, leaving a channel nearly one mile in width between the coast line of the main land, or where North San Diego is located, and the eastern shore of Point Loma. These conditions seem plain to me in looking over the topography, natural conditions pointing to progressive stages of developement which the eye can plainly read in nature, but rarely

decipher in topographic delineation, unless special attention is called. San Diego River, so called, is a typical stream of the southern part of the state, the winds of Summer raising billows of sand only over its dry bed, while in Winter it may be a raging torrent for a few days at a time, or in occasional years not running a drop of visible surface water to the ocean.

This river formerly in times of freshet distributed its favors of debris impartially between the Northern and Southern extensions of San Diego and False Bay indentations, gradually forming a bar which gave connection with the eastern foot of Point Loma, and this bar having grown by accretion above the plane of high water, has to the casual observer the appearance of an original formation of indefinite age.

Some thirty, or more, years since, the U. S. Engineers, under authority of Congress, constructed a retaining wall to protect San Diego Bay from the freshet debris of San Diego River, the effect being to throw all the sediment into False Bay, already a hopeless wreck. At the time of the re-survey there was no building of any kind upon the shores of False Bay. The distance between high water mark on Point Medaño to the high water line of Point Loma forming respectively the north and south sides of the entrance to False Bay, leaves an opening to the ocean of about one fourth mile in width. The entrance is marked by a constant line of breakers, and the depth of water is prohibitive to any larger craft than a whale boat, or one of similar draft. In the

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entrance where the current runs with a velocity of a mile and a half or two miles per hour, I noted the ability to toss a pebble accross the current at one's feet into another setting in the opposite direction, the line of separation being as planely defined as if divided by artifice. I have never happened to see so marked a case in any other locality. The high water area of False Bay is approximately five square miles, but at low water, except for the narrow channel of no value because it has no land or ocean connections, it is a barren mud flat. It is but a question of time when these mud flats will develope into salt marsh lands, the present narrow channel diminish to nothingness and the entrance to the ocean be closed by a southern extension of the sand spit appropriately called Point Medaño.

Respectfully submitted,

Wm. F. Rodgers

Assistant Coast Survey.