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U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.

O. H. Tittmann, Superintendent.

State: P. R.

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Topographic Sheet No. 2542-43

LOCALITY:

Vieques or Crab Island

1901.

CHIEF OF PARTY:

S. Forney

Treasury Department

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O.H. Tittmann Superintendent

Descriptive Report
Original Plane Table Sheets
Nos 2542 and 2543

Vieques or Crab Island
Porto Rico
Scale 1/20.000

Surveyed by
Stetman Forney
Ant. C. & G. Survey

From January 28th to June 12th 1901

Descriptive Report of Original Topographical Sheets Nos. 2542 and 2543, "Vieques" or "Crab" Island Porto Rico, Scale 1/20.000 Surveyed by Stetman Forney Assistant C & G Survey from January 28th to June 12 1901.

The plane Table Survey of the Island was made on a scale of 1/20.000, embracing two Sheets Nos. 2542 and 2543. The shore line - heights and positions of prominent peaks and ridges were accurately determined with the Plane Table. The Contouring of the summits of these peaks and Mount Pirata on the West End of the Island was carefully executed with the plane Table. The heights are expressed in metres and are referred to mean high water. The Contour intervals are shown for every ten metres difference of elevation. The interior ridges and valleys are shown by form contours and represent the work of a Plane Table reconnoissance. The interior roads and trails were delineated by liberal Plane Table sketching, giving a general Idea of these features. The form

Contouring, mapping of roads and trails was executed in accordance with the instructions of Asst. Herbert G. Ogden, Inspector of Hydrography and Topography under date of April 28th 1901, that he issued to me after inspecting my field work and making a personal reconnaissance of the entire Island.

The Spanish names of Points, Head Lands, Bays, Landings, and Boat Harbors as well as the name of the Island, were obtained from Claudomino Flores, a native of Vieques Island, and the man who acted as pilot to Admiral Sampson U.S. Navy, when he was cruising in the waters around Porto Rico, during the Spanish American war. On the C.O. Survey charts and those published by the U.S. Hydrographic Office & the British Admiralty, the island is called "Crab Island." by the natives it is called "La Isla de Vieques" The oldest inhabitants of Porto Rico also know it by this name.

The word Vieques is not found in the Spanish Dictionary, people living on the Island say it is an Indian name, "Cangrajo"

is the Spanish for Crab. The island is covered with an immense number of Land Crabs, owing to this fact the English Sailors may have given it the name of "Crab Island".

The town located at "Puerto de Mulas" is called "Vieques" by the U.S. Post-Office Department and Americans generally. The U.S. War Department and the Natives call the town "Isabel Segunda"

The Island of Vieques is twenty one miles in length - 4 1/8 miles at the widest part - with an average width of 3 miles with sixty nine statute miles of shore line, embracing an area of sixty three square statute miles. The shore line is composed of low bluffs with beautiful hard sand beaches, upon which safe and comfortable landings can be made in small ~~[illegible]~~ during the greater part of the year. From November to June the prevailing winds are from the North East, during this period landings can be made at all of the Lot-Harbors and beaches on the South Coast. The West-end of the Island, "Marguerite Playa" - Puerto de Mulas and "Punta de Serna" on the North Coast of the Island,

Puerto de Mulas" is the principal landing on "Crab Island" for a line of Steamers running from San Juan Porto Rico around the Island of Porto Rico touching at "Puerto de Mulas" twice every two weeks, at "Mosquito Playa" six miles west of "Puerto de Mulas" on the North Shore of the Island, Vessels anchor about one third of a mile off from the beach and boat sugar and wine with lighters, "Puerto Cocinas" at the west end of the Island is a good Embarcadero with the wind from the South East South and South East, "Puerto Real" on the South Coast is a good Anchorage and Smooth landing on a hard beach during the North East Trades but very rough during Easterly and Southerly winds, "Puerto Mosquito" is a land locked boat harbor, very shallow at its entrance "Puerto Farro" is a snug harbor for light draught vessels, the entrance is narrow, some years ago vessels landed here and loaded with sugar and wine for New York and Boston, In December 1900 a large three masted Schooner Stuck coming in through the entrance Sprung a leak and sank

when well into the harbor, the hull and masts are still in sight, since then this port has been abandoned. "Port-Real" is now the shipping point for the Espiranza and Campo Santo mills, Grand Port on the South Coast of the Island is a large Bay with a good depth of water at its entrance but there are numerous Coral reefs inside where the water breakes with the wind and sea from the Southward and Eastward, During the North East trades safe boat landings can be made on the Sand beaches inside of the Bay, These beaches are very rough during Southerly and Easterly winds,

"Salina del Sur" at the South East End of the Island is a good boat landing on a hard sand beach, at all times except with the wind from the South-East and West.

A well defined ridge extends the the entire length of the Island from East to West with isolated peaks and hills ranging in height from 137 metres at the Eastern end to 299 metres at "Mt" Pirata" on the Western end, The hills on the North side of the Island rise abruptly from the

shore to their summits on the main Ridge or back-bone of the Island, then falling off gently to the South Shore, interspersed with rich valleys and table lands, The Eastern end of the Island is covered with mangroves, brush and hard wood timber, some of the ridges and valleys on the central part of the Island are covered with brush and hard wood timber, on the Eastern end of the Island Mount Pirata and some of the foot-hills are covered with brush and hard wood timber, There are three large pinds of Salt-Water on the West end of the Island that abound with wild, waterfowl, All of the uncultivated land on the Island is covered with an abundance of rich nutritious wild grass, that supports about 12,000 head of Cattle and 2000 horses. The beef Cattle are large and well bred very fat and produce excellent tender beef, The draught Cattle are very large, and the horses are larger than those on the Island of Porto Rico,

Approaching Crab Island from the sea, it has the appearance of a long low island with one prominent peak on the

Extreme Eastern end that looks like an island cut-off from the main one. On the Western end two prominent peaks are seen. "Mount Pirata" and "Martino Hill" "Vieques or Crab" Island is practically owned by six individuals. Three Spaniards two French men and one Dane, with two exceptions these parties are exclusively engaged in the growing of Sugar Cane, and the manufacturing of Sugar-Molasses and Rum. The Cane land is very rich and productive. The Cane is replanted once every seven years, and there is one instance, a small tract on the plantation of Mr Mourraille, where they have been cutting Cane from roots thirty years old. The mills are equipped with Crude ancient machinery that loses about 40 per cent of the Sacharine Matter in Crushing the Cane, notwithstanding these methods of Crushing the Cane, the output this year from 2800 acres of Cane, Amounted 29000 Sacks and 350 hogsheads of Sugar 650 Casks of Rum, and 110 gallons of Molasses valued at $350,000, About one half of the Cane land available on the island is now

under Cultivation, Sugar Cane can be grown to the very tops of the hills.

This Island like the South Shore of Porto Rico is subject, at times, to drouths. This could be provided for by the storage of rain water and spring water. The plantations and farm houses have large cisterns for storing rain water. All over the island there are many large watering troughs built of Cement and used for watering the Cattle. they are quite a feature on the island, and are shown thus on the plane Table Sheets. On the old Spanish fort at Isabel Segunda there are two large Cemented water tanks for storing rain water. The town has a cistern with a capacity of 75,000 gallons, which is generally filled with rain water. On the South Slope of the island half way between Isabel Segunda and Playa Grande a large stream of fine water empties in to the ocean called the Rio Ewrans. The damming up of this river would store a large volume of water which could be utilized for power and irrigating purposes. During normal rain conditions the island on the

North and South Shores West from Isabel Segunda is well supplied with Springs and Streams of good water. There are also numerous wells on the island, but the water is not so good for drinking, on the north shore of the Island West of La Bonne's Plantation there are ten streams of fine water. There is a passable wagon road leading from Isabel Segunda across the Island and along the South Shore westward to "Playa Grande" Plantation, thence across the West End of the Island to Maria Plantation on the North West Shore, thence to the Extreme West End at "Punta Arenas". There is also a fair road from Maria Plantation along the north shore to Isabel Segunda. Thence along the coast passed the La Bonne Sugar Mill and through the La Bonne Plantation to within four miles of the Extreme Eastern End of the island. There is also a passable road from "Isabel Segunda" direct to Mr Monvaillier's Plantation. All of the roads on the island are in a very bad condition, most of them only passable for ox carts and on foot back. One can ride around the island and all over it

on hove back, providing they can find the gates through the numerous wire fences.

Pine Apples. Bananas - Plantins - Cocoanuts Oranges - Limes - Grapes. Pomegranits - Sweet and Irish Potatoes. Corn and Cabbage, are grown in sufficient quantities to supply the local market. The wild fruits of the tropics are plentiful, Cocoanut and Royal Palm groves, Bananana Orchards the brilliant foliage and flowers of the tropical growth are found in profusion on this beautiful island. The winter Climate is delightful and healthy, the scenery is charming. According to the Census taken in 1899 and 1900 by the United States the population of the island was nearly six thousand, composed of negroes from the Danish West Indies and persons from the Island of Porto Rico. The rainy season lasts from May until October. The rain fall, as a rule, is not so copious as it is on the Eastern end of Porto Rico. Many rain clouds pass over Crab Island and the rain is not precipitated until the clouds strike the mountains at the Eastern End of Porto Rico.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stehman Forney
Ass't C. G. Surg.