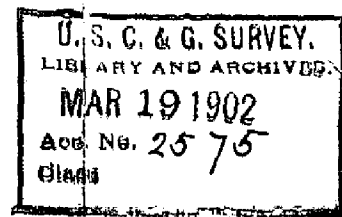


2575



U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.

O. H. Tittmann, Superintendent.

State: *Md.*

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Topographic Sheet No. *2575*

LOCALITY:

Tangier Sound
Manokin River to Fishing
Bay

1901.

CHIEF OF PARTY:

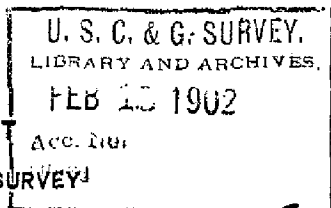
W. L. Vinal

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TREASURY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

Washington, February 14, 1902.

Mr. C. F. Pittman,

Superintendent U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to submit herewith a descriptive report of the territory embraced within my survey at the head of Tangier Sound, Md., in the fall of 1901.

The ground covered by triangulation, and partly so by topography, includes Fishing and Moccasin Bays, the Nanticoke, Wicomico and Manokin Rivers.

Large oyster beds cover that portion of the Sound and its tributaries where there is a depth of water of from one to three fathoms. In many sheltered localities oysters are planted and left to grow to large sizes. Towing and dredging for oysters is the principal

pal industry of the inhabitants from October to April of each year, while during the warmer months they are engaged in catching and packing soft crabs and fish.

The land is everywhere quite low and flat, being to a large extent marshy, presenting few prominent landmarks, either natural or artificial.

Clay Island Point, at the southwest end of Clay Island, formerly the site of a Light House, is the most conspicuous feature near the shoreline. The Light House was discontinued in 1892 and Sharkfin Shoal Light House, erected in the water near the east end of the shoal of that name, takes its place.

The average rise and fall of tides in the Sound is about 1.5 feet, and in its tributaries about 2.0 feet, varying considerably with the force and direction of prevailing winds.

Large vessels are seldom seen in the Sound; carrying is done almost entirely by puffers, barges and skiffs, drawing not exceeding 9 feet of water. Schooners drawing 12 and 13 feet are sometimes towed to White Haven on the Wisconsin River and to Vienna on the Antietam River.

Steamboats belonging to the Baltimore, Chesapeake and Atlantic Railroad Company touch at various

points. On account of shallow water some of the wharves are from one-quarter to one-third of a mile long.

Many changes have taken place in the shore line since previous surveys were made, in some localities being quite extensive. The shore of Seal Island, for some distance south of the steamboat wharf, is protected by piling, "punchions" and stone breakwaters. Within a few years a number of houses on the eastern side of Tangier Sound have been moved back a considerable distance from the shore.

Fishing Bay, at the north end of Tangier Sound, is full of shoals and oyster beds. A narrow channel, not buoyed, having a depth of 14 feet, extends to Fishing Point. On this point is located Elliot's Island, the largest settlement on the Bay. The steamboat from Baltimore touches here on Saturday of each week, but does not stop on the return trip. Small villages and settlements are found on Tedious, Goose and other creeks entering the Bay.

The Hanticoke River flows into the head of the Sound from the northeast. Within the limits of the survey the small villages of Hanticoke, Bivalve and Tyckin are located on the east side of the river. The west side, below Long Point, being marshy is not improved. Steamboats from Baltimore make three trips a week to Seaford, Del.

3 miles above the mouth. In the canning season additional boats are run.

Morie Bay and Wiconico River have a common entrance on the east side of Tangier Sound, near its head. Morie Bay is very shallow and there are no settlements near its shore which is marshy.

The Wiconico River is navigable for a distance of 17 miles, to the town of Salisbury, to which place the channel has been dredged to a depth of 9 feet by the U.S. Army Engineer. Steamboats of the B.C. and A.B.R. run to Salisbury three times a week.

There are several small marine railways at White Haven and near Salisbury which are capable of taking out vessels engaged in local Trade.

The Wanquois River enters the Sound just south of Little Island. It is broad and shallow and a number of large creeks flow into it. It was dredged several years ago, by the U.S. Army Engineer, to a depth of 6 feet and a small steamboat made daily trips between Deal's Island and Princess Anne, 16 miles above the entrance. This dredged channel has shoaled and for a number of years the only means of reaching Princess Anne by water has been by skiffs. The oyster industry, which was formerly quite extensive here, is now comparatively small. There are no villages

or settlements of any importance on the lower part of the river except Fords, at the mouth of Teague's Creek, where there is a small marine railway. The only village of any size on the river, other than Pivers Anne, is Oriole near the head of St. Peter's Creek. Small settlements are found at Crab Island and Fishing Creek. The north side of the Mianokin River is marshy and unimproved. Except at the entrance the river is not buoyed.

Neals Island, on the east side of Tangier Sound and north of the entrance to Mianokin River, is about 3 miles long and 2 miles wide near its southern end. About one-half of the island is salt marsh, the remainder is low ground and nearly flat. The island has a population of about 1700 and, second only to Crisfield, is the largest shipping point in this section for oysters and soft crabs. Boats to and from Baltimore stop here daily, and there is a daily stage to Pivers Anne, the nearest railroad point, 20 miles distant. Some farming is done on the island and several good sized stores are supported by the inhabitants. The village of Mianoka is situated at the south end; it has a post office, sail loft and two or three stores.

South of Neals Island is Little Island. It sur-

face is mostly low marsh. Along its western side there is a narrow strip of slightly elevated land, on which is a single house. Formerly this part of the island was cultivated, but the arable land has been washed away. The shoreline is changing quite rapidly.

Between Little and Deal Islands is a passage called Lower Thoroughfare, which is available only for very light draught boats, such as skiffs, etc., and for which it affords an excellent harbor.

Piney Island, in the entrance of Manokin River, was formerly occupied and cultivated. It is now abandoned, and the house referred to in "List of Beacons, Buoys, etc." no longer exists.

Rock Creek and Dames Quarter are small settlements, the population being largely negro.

Respectfully yours,
W. Irving Olinde,
Assistant U. S. Coast & Survey.