3712-3713-3714

Form 504
Rev. Dec. 1933

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
U.S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY
R. S. PATTON, DIRECTOR

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT

Topographic } *Sheet No.* T3712
[redacted] } T3713
T3714

State Alabama

LOCALITY

T3712-Mobile Bay, Southern Part

T3713- " " , Northern Part

T3714-Gulf Coast, Perdido Bay to Mobile Point

193 18

CHIEF OF PARTY

T3712-T3713 - F. B. T. Siems
T3714 - H. Lypoldt

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1934

Descriptive Report to accompany topographic sheets 3712, 3713 and 3714.

Date of Instructions, December 3, 1917.

U. S. G. ENGINEER IN CHARGE

General Description.

From Perdido Bay to about 1 mile east of the entrance to Mobile Bay the coast is generally and unbrokenly wooded with pine, as shown on sheet 3714. The only objects of prominence are certain sand dunes which are given in the list of topographic stations.

The shore of Mobile Bay is generally and densely wooded. In general the eastern shore is more densely wooded than the western, and also more deciduous trees are to be found there. An attempt is made to show the relative density of wooded areas on the sheets.

On the western shore the land is quite flat; a low bluff varying from a few feet to about sixteen feet runs parallel with the shore, beginning at Alabama Port and running north till opposite station "Chur" at Mon Louis Island, gradually increasing in height till it reaches the latter point. Thence the bluff falls rapidly to the level of the marshy entrance to Fowl River. A similar bluff which attains a maximum height of about five feet at Belle Fontaine runs from Fowl River Point to the marsh at Deer River. No such escarpment exists between the marsh at Deer River and Dog River Point. From this point the shore again rises steeply from the high water line, gradually growing in height till it reaches a maximum of about twenty feet, two and one eight mile south of Station Mon.

On the whole the eastern shore lies at a higher elevation than the eastern one. The south and west shore of the Bay from Mobile Point eastward to Bon Secours River, thence northwestward to Mullet Point is absolutely flat and low. On this part of the west shore there is a narrow strip of sand only, with plain marsh or wooded marsh immediately adjoining. An attempt is made to show this condition by the proper symbols. Due to the monotony of the aspect of the shore it is very difficult to distinguish the entrance to Weeks Bay when more than three miles off shore. The recession of the shoreline gives an indication.

Station "Hay" which is a shack on the only pier within about seven miles on the shore, and the two houses immediately to the southeast of it are the only land marks.

The channel in Weeks Bay to the entrance of the southern mouth of Fish River is marked by private stakes.

From Mullet Point northward the land is quite low, till the southern limit of the string of houses below Point Clear is reached.

Bluffs similar to those on the western shore are, as shown on the sheet.

The bluffs on the west shore are more irregular in height, but are quite hidden from view by intervening woods. In two places, (to the north of Volanta Bayou) the bluffs are bare. The extent which is bare is indicated by the dotted arrows. Two hundred meters north of the mouth of Volanta Bayou the bluff is about 50 feet high. Station "Apex" is the northern limit of the second bare (red) bluff. These two bare bluffs are extremely prominent landmarks.

North of Village Point it was impracticable to determine and locate the position and extent of the bluffs, note was made, however, that the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey chart No. 188 showed the true conditions in this regard.

The north shore of the Bay is a continuous marsh. It is quite difficult to distinguish the shoreline as seen from a boat. Local knowledge is necessary to navigate the various river entrances. Apalachee and Blakely River mouths are marked by private stakes. All this land to the extent surveyed is covered with water at tides only slightly higher than ordinary high tide. The shoreline shown is to all intents and purposes the limit of the cane brakes which cover this region.

Owing to the height and thickness of these canes, the use of the plane table was rendered very difficult. The four rivers were run out by plane table, however, by zig-zagging from one shore to the other.

In Spanish and Tensaw Rivers a position was obtained at the mouth and the azimuth carried up inside with directions to station "Van" as the only check.

Triangulation station "Hill" afforded a check on the traverses in Blakely and Apalachee River. All other parts of the north shore except these four rivers were located by sextant. Here it was necessary to devise a ladder fifteen (15) feet long, which could be set up at various places to observe angles.

SURVEY METHODS

Except for the above mentioned sextent topography, all work was done by plane table. The procedure was to run in both directions from triangulation stations as initial points. In no case was there any appreciable closing error in any of the traverses which were quite short.

One mile north of Gt. Point Clear a mistake was detected. The region affected was re-run. Positions determined by the topography party were partly checked by theodolite cuts.

The work on sheet 3714 was done with absolutely no control. The traverse was begun at station "Red" and carried continuously to station "Ala". The declinatoire was used to avoid actual mistakes but was not used to orient the table. The traverse has no detectable error in azimuth and a closing error in distance of only about 25 meters. This extremely slight discrepancy in a distance of 32 miles was distributed the whole length of the traverse.

The two roads, Cedar Point and Fairhope and Zundell Road, and the road running northward from Fairhope, running concurrently with the shoreline of the Bay on the west and east shores of the Bay respectively, are improved, good automobile roads. Cedar Point road is gravelled and the others are sand-clay roads. All of them are followed by telegraph lines.

A check was obtained on all traverses along roads except the stretch of Cedar Point road south of Dog River. Cedar Point road runs continuously from Mobile to the south as far as shown on sheet 3712, where it turns westward. Two and a quarter miles (about) of this road south of Fowl River were not run out. A tracing of this stretch was however obtained from the authorities in Mobile.

The streets of Fairhope were fitted in from a blueprint which has been obtained from the county surveyed in Fairhope. All extremeties of streets facing the water were determined by plane table; besides this a rectangular traverse was run through the town roughly embracing its limits.

The unimproved road running eastward from the mouth of Volanta Bayou is the only useable road in this immediate vicinity. The system of roads shown on the old chart could not be found.

The various cultivated fields were sketched to a great extent, the chief object in mind being to show the general nature of the country.

The remains of old wharves, or such wharves which are unservicable are shown by dashed lines. The two long wharves, one at Fairhope on which triangulation station "Shack" is located, and the other at Gt. Pt. Clear village on which topographic station "Gray" is located, are provided with light railways for unloading and loading facilities.

Gasoline motor-driven cars are provided for the transportation of passengers from the outer end of the wharf at Fairhope into the town.

The chief industry along the Bay is truck farming and pine tar distillation. Along the southern shore fishing predominates.

The eastern shore down to Gt. Pt. Clear village is largely used for summer houses; the numerous houses close to the beach being an evidence.

CHANGES.

There are no great changes in the shoreline of the Bay on the south, east and west. The sharp bluffs spoken of before, and the fact that all of the old triangulation points of 1847 and 1856 are, where there is now water, give strong evidence that the shore is being eroded. According to statements made by inhabitants close to shore, the high-water line recedes as much as 12 feet during one of the Gulf hurricanes. Evidences of the effectiveness of such hurricanes is furnished by the dilapidated wharves, which are more numerous than the good ones, and the great number of wrecked houses along the shore. The Government houses and wharves at Ft. Morgan can well be included.

Above Village Point on the west shore the change in shoreline is appreciable. There are also many changes in the shoreline on the north.

Fowl River has cut across the neck of land and formed a new mouth as shown. Great difficulty is experienced in trying to enter Fowl River across the bar with a draft of two feet.

On sheet 3714 the only appreciable changes are that Little Lagoon has now an outlet to the Gulf; that the lake to the east has an outlet to the Gulf and that the entrance to Perdido Bay has shifted to the eastward.

NEW PLACE NAMES, well established local.

1. Village Point
2. Yancy Creek
3. Sea Cliff
4. Battles Wharf
5. Gumbo Swamp
6. Mon Louis Island (town).

Volanta Bayou is also known as Fly Creek. The first name seems to be preferable.

It was learned that the two mouths of rivers emptying into Weeks Bay are branches of one (Fish) river.

Fowl River, shown on sheet 3712 runs continuously to another outlet in Fowl River Bay, shown on sheet 3711.

After extensive inquiry it was learned at Daphne, that Pt. Zeb which is shown on the old chart, is absolutely unknown to the local inhabitants. Names are as shown on sheet 3713 in this region. Village Point is quite prominent.

The dashed line on sheet 3713, by Deer River is simply a sketch showing the approximate and general course of the northern one of the two branches. Note is to be made of the dashed shoreline in Dog River.

The road running eastward from Ft. Morgan, shown on the old chart has fallen into disuse. Sheet 3712 shows the serviceable portion of the old road.

NOTE:
List of topography station and list of landmarks to be attached.

Respectfully submitted,

E. H. Bernstein

Aid, C. & G. Survey.

On Oct., 4, 1918 the list of topographic stations was still aboard the Str. "Hydrographic" E.H.B.

List of prominent objects for topographic sheets 3712, 3713.

Mobile Bay.

1. Sand Island Lighthouse, See Coast Pilot.

2. Water tank at Ft. Morgan, See Coast Pilot.

3. Objects near Mobile (city) to be given with topographic sheet 1:10,000 upper Mobile Bay, 1918.

4. Channel Beacons 4-42, See Coast Pilot. Beacons 40 and 42 are topographic stations. All others are triangulation stations.

5. Hotel. Large two-story building, painted white 640 m. W x S of entrance to Shell Bank Bayou.

Lat.	Dm. Lat.	:	Long	Dm. Long
30° 15' ?	1772 m.	:	87° 50'	210 m.

6. Great Point Clear Beacon. Triangulation station 1918. Square based pyramidical structure; lighted W. (Similar shape to Mobile Channel Beacons.) Refer to #4.)

7. Red. Red spire on white house. Spire of Hotel at Battles Wharf. 2866m NE x E of Sta. Clear. (See list of topo. stations.)

8. Water tank at Fairhope. Cut in by hydrographic party; cylindrical metal structure; painted black. Shows up well only in sector to west and north of its position; can be carried to mouth of Mobile River.

9. Church (station Chur) at Mon Louis Island. Position is spire of Catholic church in village; painted white.

10. My. Red roofed white spire of largest house (painted white) in Belle Fontaine.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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TOPOGRAPHIC TITLE SHEET

The finished Topographic Sheet is to be accompanied by the following title sheet, filled in as completely as possible, when the sheet is forwarded to the Office.

U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

Register No. 3713

State . . Alabama . . . . . .

General locality . . Mobile Bay . . . . . .

Locality . . Northern half of Mobile Bay

Chief of party . . F. B. T. Siems . . . . . .

Surveyed by . . E. H. Bernstein . . . . . .

Date of survey . . 1918 . . . . . .

Scale . . . . 1:40,000 . . . . . .

Heights in feet above . . . . . .

Contour interval . . . . feet.

Inked by . E.H.B. . . Lettered by . E.H.B. (in pencil) . . . .

Records accompanying sheet (check those forwarded): Photographs,

* Descriptive report, Horizontal angle books, Field computations,

Data from other sources affecting sheet Tracing of . . road (Cedar Pt. Road) between Deer & Fowl Rivers. To be forwarded.

Remarks:

Descriptive report to be written. 9/9/18.

Form 537a
11—5813

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TOPOGRAPHIC TITLE SHEET

The finished Topographic Sheet is to be accompanied by the following title sheet, filled in as completely as possible, when the sheet is forwarded to the Office.

U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

Register No. 3714

State . . . . Alabama . . . . . .

General locality . . Gulf Coast . . . . . .

Locality . Mobile Pt. to Perdido Bay

Chief of party . . Harry Leyfoldt . . . . .

Surveyed by . . E. H. Blumstein . . . . . .

Date of survey . . . 1918. . . . . .

Scale . . . . . 1:40,000. . . . . .

Heights in feet above . . . . . .

Contour interval . . . . feet.

Inked by . E.H.B. . . Lettered by . E.H.B. . . . . .

Records accompanying sheet (check those forwarded): Photographs, Descriptive report, Horizontal angle books, Field computations, Data from other sources affecting sheet . . . . . .

Remarks: