U.S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.

A. M. Thorne, Superintendent.

State: Louisiana.

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Topographic Sheets No. 1762, 1763, 1764, 1765 and 1766.

Locality:
Coast of Louisiana.

1887.

Chief of Party:
J. Waddy Perkins.
Descripitive Report

to accompany

Plane Table Sheets

1881 1702, 1703, 1704, 1705-9, 1769

from

Raccoon St. Ile Derniere

16

S. W. Base, Grande Ile

Louisiana

1887

Act

Capt. W. H. F. Jenkins

Chief of Party

C. T. Cardella

W. C. Hodgkins

Topographer
Geological formation and general description of Coast.

The geological formation of the coast of Louisiana from the mouth of the Mississippi to Sabine River is a uniform alluvial deposit hundreds of feet in depth, decreasing in width from about fifteen miles at the western boundary of the State to something over seventy in the region under consideration.

The country for many miles back from the Gulf is a flat marsh, subject to overflow, boldly indented by large bayous, lakes, and lagoons, and drained by a network of rivers, bayous, and creeks which interlacing separate it into innumerable islands.

The only relief to the monotony of this flat, grassy surface is a slight rise along the Gulf Coast.
former of broken shell and sand, rarely more than a metre high, than the marsh upon which it rests, and occasional ridges of similar origin, ranging from one to four metres in height, under modern, lying further back and forming the encroachments of the land upon the sea.

The water along the shore is slow, sloping very gradually and regularly for some miles out, with the soft mud bottom affording good holding ground; and as there is partly more than one line of breakers it is generally practicable to ride in a gate at anchor off the shore itself. While in case of a vessel being stranded elsewhere than at the mouth of an inlet, the bottom is so soft and the breakers so inconsiderable as to make but slight danger to the vessel and practically none to the life of passengers or crew.
There being no danger of her going to pieces it would always be practicable to lay by the ship until the weather moderated.

Owing to the slight cohesion of the light particles constituting the earth the shores both of Gulf and inland waters are subject to constant changes, and all bodies of water having slight currents, such as Lakes and Cores, set up very rapidly while many bays, navigable for small craft a few years ago are now barely traceable. Whether there is a corresponding deepening of the remaining water courses is uncertain.

As the main object in view at the present moment was the collection of the material for the immediate preparation of sailing Charts, the Topography was confined to as nearly a simple three-line as the economy of the general or final work would permit. Consequently the area covered was extremely

small in proportion to the coast surveyed.

All important shore line was mapped
by means of the planetable but one
of the latter and small Bayous are
determined by distant angles at short
intervals connected by stiches based
upon frictional compass courses and
estimated distances. The results of the
latter class of work proved extremely
satisfactory both in quality and in
account of the large area, otherwise
inaccessible, covered by an officer and a
single man making from a very light
flat bottomed boat.

The statistics are as follows

No. of days devoted to planetable work 43
Miles of shore line

    of Cures & Bayous 117.1
    March 79.4
    Canals 34.4

    Roads 32
    Ponds 2.0

Square miles 163
As this was a combined party engaged in reconnaissance, triangulation, signal building, and topography on an unexplored tract only about one half the working days during the time that the party was in the field could be made available for topography, but even charging to that branch of the work one half of the season's expenses the cost per acre is only about $3.4 cents. The weather was better than for the same month during first season but as the work extended 56 miles in longitude the same degree of economy was not possible as in a more compact section.
Panetarie Sound

Pop. in 1792

Western part of the Simeon

A long, low, elevated barrier, last and finest for the greater part of what is now a marsh, has been eroded along its western edge with a thin layer of sand. There is not much vegetation, and the marsh is extremely flat. There was formerly a popular fishing resort on this part of the island which was destroyed by the hurricane of 1855, with great loss of life. At present there are only a few small houses occupied by an indolent, mixed population. There is a good harbor of refuge for vessels of light draft under Roman Point.

Caillou Bay has a pretty uniform depth of from 5 to 6 feet. Lake Pelou is a large body of water with deep lakes and an ice covered depth.
depth of 5½ to 6 feet. There is a fishing village of some fifteen or twenty houses on the North Western shore of very recent date, probably not more than one or two years. Storm tides pass over the island in different places forming new inlets of varying depth which soon fill up again. Minor changes of shore line are frequent but the absence of reliable surveys of earlier date, of old inhabitants or intelligent accident observers deprives us of the data necessary to judge if any permanent modifications of their direction.
Incredible Fact

Aug. 10, 1833
Eastern part of the northern section Island.

The Eastern portion of the Island is
a ten-miles' sheet of marsh, with a
thin layer of land on its southern edge.
The Island, which commences about
this mile to the Eastward, is about three
miles long and of similar formation.
There is a good place at the Eastern end
of the Island, but with only six or
seven feet inside.

The Eastern part of this Belle is
rather narrow, but also by long narrow
islands running nearly North and
South and North are well-defined
channels, but a pretty general depth
of about five feet.

Sisterbne Bay is a very large
sheet of water with very regular
bottom, varying from 17 to 32 feet, and
said to have many islands in it.
Northern part— but it quite open as far as observed.
Caillon Island is a narrow strip of sand at the Eastern end of Storehouse Bay, with the usual low of sand on its southern side. It is said to be washing away very fast. There is a belt of hard land in its south east extremity where a clump of trees about the single house makes a prominent land mark.

West Rentallie Island has a rather broader deposit of sand near its Western extremity from which a wide sand shelf extends for some miles completely cutting off the approach to Caillon Island from the Eastward and Eastward. The Island is said to be growing rapidly to the Westward. Back of this broad sand beach there are for hard ridges.
covered partially by a growth of small trees. The inner ridge being along the bank of a lagoon is inhabited by a few families who live by fishing and on the increase of a few cattle. The Northern and Eastern portion of the Island is faced by innumerable little marsh islets.

Between East and West Cunniltice Islands is the main pass into Cunniltice Bay, five and a half or seven feet may be carried over the entire bar, part made of brick, and outside of the former of the Islands there is a four foot deep hole, soft bottom, with moderate ebbing, some seven and a half feet can be carried up to the E. No. There is good water at Saint-eugene Arm. At far as known only about five feet can be carried over the shallow section just North of the Light House, east of which the water deepens.
East Tambeller Island is a long, narrow bar of marsh, largely covered by sand, subject to overflow in many places, and separated from the mainland by shallow marshes subject to constant change. Originally it is the Eastward- is the Pointe- mouth of Bayou La Fourche barely passable for small boats. About two miles and a half South East is Cape Foreborn the main entrance to the Bayou with a very narrow bar at present. Causing about five feet - The Bayou La Fourche has good water as far as Stilbon where there is a head continues by the breaching of the levees. It does not readily receive any water except from the Mississippi River. But canals have been cut connecting...
it with Tumbeli & Paratame Bays near its mouth, and Lake Wailer and Bayou Black further North. Its shores are practically uninhabited for the first twenty miles from its mouth. After for many miles they are thickly settled by market gardeners and small farmers succeeded higher up by some of the richest sugar plantations in the State.

A mile or two above the head of the fields commences a strip of wooded land following the general course of the Bayou and continuing with few breaks throughout its whole length. In places the trees grow close to the edge of the water but at a little distance a margin of sod open land varying from one to several hundred feet. Formerly the Bayou Delta was ground wide but the closing of Pass Manou for military purposes during the War of 1870
1812 proved a permanent obstruction to the flow of the waters in that direction and that section has now an independent drainage system based upon the triangulated monument.
The system of wooded ridges lying parallel to and about six or three miles back from the coast known as La Peyrise is a marked feature on sounding along this coast. It consists of a series of very narrow bands of hard sand separated by very soft sand and is partly an extension of the Chênière Caminada, Chênière only in name as the trees have wholly disappeared and a fishing village of some sixteen hundred inhabitants has within the past forty years grown up upon the one ridge of which it consists. The trees opposite this place had a bar carrying about 3 1/2 feet of water with a 12 foot anchorage inside flat sand sifting form. It is gradually moving to the Eastward and at the same time cutting off the western end of Pointe du Bois.
and the front of the Caminada.

The survey was carried north as far as the mouth of the Canal leading into Bayou La Fourche but the Bay extends twelve or fifteen miles further north and there are large bodies of water lying to the northward of the present

These of the mouth.

There is a weekly sail from

Granville during the winter months,
a small canoe being employed
in the service. During the summer
season there is a considerable mail
and a small passenger canoe is
sent on the route for the accommodation
of the people of the said.

The principal travel route
points forth which connection vessels
made here well marked and easily
recovered.