

4876

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

## DESCRIPTIVE REPORT

Topographic *Sheet No.* A 4876  
~~Hydrographic~~

State CALIFORNIA

LOCALITY

CALIFORNIA COAST

Partington Point to Pfeiffer Point

1934

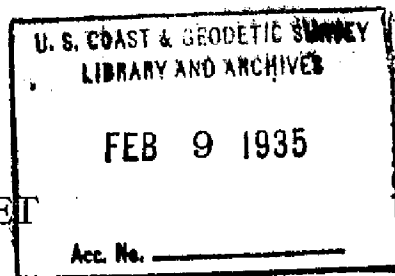
CHIEF OF PARTY

F. H. HARDY

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1934

4876

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY



TOPOGRAPHIC TITLE SHEET

The Topographic Sheet should be accompanied by this form, filled in as completely as possible, when the sheet is forwarded to the Office.

Field No. A

REGISTER NO. **4876**

State CALIFORNIA

General locality CALIFORNIA COAST

Locality Partington Point to Pfeiffer Point  
~~PFEIFFER POINT TO PARTINGTON POINT~~

Scale 1:10,000 Date of survey JUNE - JULY, 1934

Vessel U.S.C. & G.S.S. GUIDE

Chief of Party F. H. HARDY

Surveyed by JOHN C. ELLERBE

Inked by JOHN C. ELLERBE

Heights in feet above MHW to ground ~~to tops of trees~~

Contour, ~~Approximate contour~~, Form line interval 100 feet

Instructions dated MAY 31, 1934

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

1.

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT  
to accompany  
TOPOGRAPHIC SHEET FIELD NO. A  
Coast of California.  
Project No. H.T. 184  
1934.

**AUTHORITY:** Authority for the work was the Director's instructions for Project No. H. T. 184 to the Commanding Officer of the U.S.C. & G.S.S. GUIDE, dated May 31, 1934.

**LIMITS:** The northern limit of the sheet is triangulation station PFEIFFER'S POINT (1890-1922), latitude  $36^{\circ} 14' 07.9''$ , longitude  $121^{\circ} 48' 45.0''$ , altho the actual shoreline was not carried that far north, the station being used to tie in on. The survey included the shoreline, rocks, and the contours as far inshore as could be seen from the coast line. The southern limit of the sheet is triangulation station PARTINGTON POINT (1932), latitude  $36^{\circ} 10' 34.9''$ , longitude  $121^{\circ} 41' 50.4''$ . This sheet joins topographic sheet field No. B at the latter point, and topographic sheet field No. H, Project H. T. 130, season 1933, at the former.

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** This locality is noted for its precipitous bluffs, 400 to 500 feet high at the northern end of the sheet, and gradually diminishing to about 200 feet on the southern end. There are a few short stretches of sand beach at the foot of the cliffs on the northern end. Back of the bluffs, the ground rises fairly quickly to the coast range of mountains. Numerous large gulches open along the shoreline from the mountain valleys. The only outstanding natural feature along the entire length of the sheet is the bold yellow bluff, 400 feet high, at Pfeiffer's Point when seen from the north. From the south, the cliff assumes more of a dirt color, and blends into the background of hills.

From Grimes Point southward, the bluff extends, in places, inshore as far as the coast road, its natural state having been augmented by excess dirt from the road cuts being dumped over toward the beach. Between these spots, the hill-side below the road is covered with sagebrush, small bushes, and poison oak, as is the majority of the steeper slopes above the road. The flatter country is grassy, and is used for grazing lands.

North of Grimes Point, the bluff confines itself to within a hundred or so meters of the beach, and back from the top of the bluff is moderately rising slopes with a few flat spots, used as grazing land. At this point also, the coast road begins to leave the coast line, to cross the Sur River, pass Big Sur Post Office, and return to the coast five miles further north. There are a number of residences along this stretch, but they are in the main invisible from the sea.

The bottoms of the numerous canyons in this vicinity are covered with trees, mostly redwood, and a few of them, particularly Sycamore

and Tores Canyons, have small streams from dry weather springs flowing thru them. All of the canyons are natural drains for the country during the wet season.

The present coast road is completed for the entire length of the sheet. However, it is planned to reline this road at some future date. Grimes Point, is according to the plan, to be either tunneled under or cut thru. If the latter is done, triangulation station GRIMES POINT (1932) will probably be destroyed.

GUIDES TO NAVIGATION: Pfeiffer's Point, when viewed from the north, appears as a vertical yellow bluff 400 feet high. From the south the point blends into the higher background and cannot be easily recognized any distance offshore.

Large white Spanish style house (J. M. Bloom) is 350 feet high on the steep, bluff side of Tores Canyon. It can be seen plainly from the north and west but is obscured by the brow of the bluff on the south side.

Partington Point, a grayish steep bluff rising to a sharp point 390 feet high is not very readily discernable a great distance offshore but can be plainly seen by those vessels that hug the coast fairly closely. Navigators may be assisted in locating this point by the fact that there is a deep gorge (Partington Creek) on the south side of the hill, and just south of that, around a small head, is a narrow inlet formerly used as a landing.

Little Pyramid Rock, a 34 foot rock, grayish in color and situated at the mouth of Castro Canyon, is shown on Chart 5302 at the present time. No mention could be found in any other publication of this landmark, nor was the name used locally as far as could be determined by the topographer. The rock blends into the background and cannot be readily distinguished any distance offshore, even by one familiar with the vicinity. It is therefore recommended that this feature be deleted from the chart.

CONTROL: The control for this survey was furnished by a scheme of triangulation executed by Charles Pierce in 1932. Triangulation station PARTINGTON POINT ROCK AWASH was found by six or seven topographic cuts to be out in its position. It was therefore relocated by triangulation intersections from stations PARTINGTON POINT (1932) and STEEP (1932). The new position determined was about 11 meters northeast of the previous determination.

SURVEY METHODS: Work was started with a three point fix, elevation 564 feet, on the road above triangulation station PETER and a traverse run, via signal BAN, along the beach northward. Another traverse was run from triangulation station PFEIFFER'S POINT up Sycamore Canyon to join a third traverse run along the coast road from the original starting point. To the southward, a main traverse was run from the above mentioned starting point along the road, and a few side traverses of one or two set-ups to facilitate location of the high water line and rocks, all of which were cut in. Elevations of prominent features were determined by intersections of cuts, wherever possible, to check existing form lines.

The character of the country south of triangulation station PETER was such that it was practically impossible to get down to the beach except in one or two places. Thus it was necessary to cut in all of the shore line except a stretch of about 1000 meters on either side of topographic signal PEA, the top of the 60 foot rock at that point being occupied. Difficulty was experienced at several places along the northern beach traverse, the party having to go up over the cliffs to get around the points which dropped off sheer into the water.

CLOSING ERRORS: Extremely small closing errors were obtained practically all the way thruout this survey. The first traverse along the beach from the three point fix on the road approximately 270 meters  $14^{\circ}$  true from PETER was closed on a stake set close by signal MAC on an azimuth from a checked three point fix 100 meters south of SYCAMORE. Resection on PETER, FIELD, SHARP, ROCK OFF PETER; and PFEIFFERS POINT furnished the check in azimuth. This was a flat closure. From this point the traverse was continued closing on PFEIFFERS POINT FLAT TOPPED ROCK, SOUTH with no error in azimuth and 3 meters in distance. *Retain name Pfeiffer on survey H.B.*

From the original three point fix the traverse northward along the road was tied on to that run up Sycamore Canyon at the junction of the two roads with a resultant error of 12 meters. An adjustment was made in the field, then the traverse continued along the highway as far as the Sur River Bridge where it was broken off. It was not thot advisable to run back over this work since the time spent and the expenses incurred in so doing were not warranted. Only the coast road was located on this loose end, and few elevations taken, which reduced it to relative unimportance. It will be noted that a remarkably close check was made on the old location of the Sur River.

The traverse to the southward was begun at the original three point fix on the road above PETER and run along the road, with frequent resections on triangulation stations. When about a half mile south of Grimes Point resection failed to check so the rods were rechecked and found to be from one to one and a half meters off in a hundred. A three point fix was taken on the road about 80 meters  $40^{\circ}$  True from STEEP and a traverse run back as far as five set-ups north of the broken end of the former traverse, where the two checked flat, and resection on OVAL WHITE ROCK and orientation on stations north and south gave a flat closure. The southern traverse was again picked up at the three point fix on the road above STEEP and continued, closing on PARTINGTON POINT with no error in azimuth and three meters in distance.

A side traverse was run along the country road one quarter mile north of Mule Canyon, beginning and closing flat on three point fixes.

All set-ups to the side of the main traverse were checked by resection and orientation on several triangulation stations.

While running the Sycamore Canyon traverse, elevations were carried the entire length of the canyon, checking in on various bench marks (State Highway Department and U. S. Forestry Service) with very close results. This was done at the request of Mr. Paul Oldham, the

owner of part of the canyon, and a sketch of the part passing thru his property (road with elevations) furnished him.

Adjustments were made in accordance with the Topographic Manual.

Following is a table of the main traverse run:

From	To	Distance	Cl. Error
3-pt. fix approx. 270 m. 14° true from PETER	Stake set close by MAC on azimuth line from 3 pt. fix 100 m. S. SYCA- MORE	2 1/4 mi.	0
Stake set by MAC	PFEIFFERS POINT FLAT TOPPED ROCK	1 1/8 mi.	3 m.
PFEIFFERS POINT	Junction of Sycamore Can. road with State highway	1 7/8 mi	12 m. at junct. of these two.
3-pt. fix approx. 270 m. 14° true from PETER	Ditto	2 1/8 mi.	
Ditto	3-pt. fix approx. 80 m. 40° true from STEEP	2 7/8 mi.	0
3-pt fix approx 80 m. 40° true from STEEP	PARTINGTON POINT	3/4 mi.	3 m.

COMPARISONS WITH PREVIOUS SURVEYS: The 1891 survey was checked and found to be fairly accurate in places but decidedly off in others. On the old work, the cliff line appeared to have been used as the high water line. Very few rocks were located, and a large number of those that were seemed to have been spotted in by eye. In the present survey all important rocks were located by intersections of cuts. It is possible that coastal control was poor, thus causing slight errors in the <sup>old</sup> shoreline. That part just south of Grimes Point was found to be decidedly out; however this could be caused by the fact that excess dirt from the large highway cut was dumped over the cliff, thus building up the shoreline. It appears that much more care was taken with the inshore work than with the shoreline and rocks. The old work was transferred to the present survey by means of common points, and all discrepancies were checked thoroughly. It is impossible to enumerate all changes occurring on this sheet, but a tracing of the old work with all major changes noted thereon is attached to this sheet.

With the exception of a few places the old contours checked very well. The stream line in Tores Canyon was relocated about 100 meters east of its original position, and the contours just northeast of Post Trail changed considerably. The construction of the coastal highway necessarily changed a number of the contours along the right of way. Practically all changes of elevation seemed to show the country slightly higher than the old survey indicated. All changes are shown on the sheet in red ink.

#### LIST OF NAMES:

Sycamore Canyon - So named because of the fact that there are a

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number of sycamore trees growing along its length. The name is well established locally and appears on the U. S. Geological Survey Quadrangle map of that vicinity. There is a State Highway Department name board at the entrance to the canyon on the coast highway. This name is recommended for official adoption.

Wreck Beach - This beach was the scene of four steamship wrecks some twenty-odd years ago. The topographer was able to ascertain the names of only two of the ships - Thos. W. Wand and Shin-A-Yak. The name however, is well established locally, and is recommended for official adoption.

Post Trail - This is a well established trail leading from the land of W. B. Post across the first ridge inshore and thence down to the beach. It is used by fishermen to reach the beach, and by the inhabitants for driving stock to and from the pasturage on top of the first ridge. The name is well established locally and is recommended for official adoption.

Mule Canyon - This name evolved from the use of the grazing lands, thru which the canyon runs, for the holding and the pasturage of mules. It is well established locally and is recommended for official adoption.

Grave Canyon - So named because it contains the Castro family burying ground. Three generations of Castros are buried in the small private cemetery. The name is well established locally and is recommended for official adoption.

Castro Canyon - The old Castro dwelling was in this valley. R. J. Castro's grandfather built and lived there for a number of years. The present Mr. Castro lives on the flat land to the northwest of the canyon. The name is in general use locally and is recommended for official adoption.

Vineyard Canyon - There is an old vineyard high up on the south-east ridge above the canyon from which the name is derived. The vineyard is abandoned at the present time but the name is in general use locally and is recommended for adoption.

Grimes Canyon - This name is in general use locally and appears on the U. S. Geological Survey Quadrangle map of the vicinity. It is also used on the California State Highway surveys. It is recommended for official adoption.

Grimes Point - The local name for the point to the southward of Grimes Canyon. The name is well established locally and is recommended for official adoption.

Lafler Canyon - So named because Mr. H. A. Lafler owns and lives in the canyon. It is well established locally and appears on the U. S. Geological Survey Quadrangle maps of the vicinity. The name is recommended for official adoption.

Lafler Rock - A large white, oval-shaped rock, the only large one

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in the vicinity, situated at the mouth of Lafler Canyon, and so named for that reason. The name is in general use locally and is recommended for official adoption.

Tores Canyon - So named because a man named Tore ( pronounced "Torrrey" locally) owned the canyon at one time. The name appears on the U. S. Geological Survey Quadrangle map of that vicinity and is in general use locally. It is recommended for official adoption.

Big Sur Post Office. - On chart 5302 (C & G S) this settlement appears as a small town named Arbolado. The official name at the present time (Post Office Department) is Big Sur, by which it is also known as far away as Monterey, California. The post office is called Big Sur P. O. There is no town at this location, merely a general store, filling station, the entrance to the Santa Barbara National Forest with the Warden's headquarters, and the post office. It is recommended that the name be changed on the chart to conform with present day usage.

ANCHORAGES: A good small boat anchorage in northerly, northwesterly, or northeasterly weather was observed just off Wreck Beach, in the lee of Pfeiffer's Point. It was noted in moderately rough weather that there was a definite line of demarcation between the white caps offshore and the smooth water behind the point, this line following approximately one mile along a line drawn from the tangent of Pfeiffer's Point to the tangent of Partington Point. Larger vessels will find fairly smooth anchorage further offshore, but inside this line.

PICTURES: Photographs of the coast line showing its general appearance are enclosed in this report.

DISTORTION; The sheet was checked at least daily for distortion and never more than three meters to the mile was found.

MAGNETIC DECLINATIONS: Magnetic declinations were taken at triangulation station FIELD with the declinator and compass declinometer. The latter observations are included in a separate report on magnetics.

DATUM: North American, 1927 datum, adjusted, was used on this survey.

STATISTICS:	Shoreline	14.9 statute miles
	Roads	13.9 " "
	Elevations	285

Respectfully submitted,  
*John C. Ellerbe*  
John C. Ellerbe, Aid  
C. & G. Survey.

Approved and forwarded,  
*F. H. Hardy*  
F. H. Hardy,  
Chief of Party,  
C. & G. Survey.



LIST OF PLANE TABLE POSITIONS

STATION	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	ELEVATION	REMARKS
Sharp	36-13- 84	121-45-1062	25 ft.	No mark
Yes	36-11- 1498	121-43- 479	3 ft.	No mark
Mon	36-11- 1015	121-42- 1361	3 ft.	No mark

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
U.S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

## LANDMARKS FOR CHARTS

Oakland, California

January 10, \_\_\_\_\_, 1935

DIRECTOR, U.S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY:

The following determined objects are prominent, can be readily distinguished from seaward from the description given below, and should be charted:

~~F. H. Hardy~~

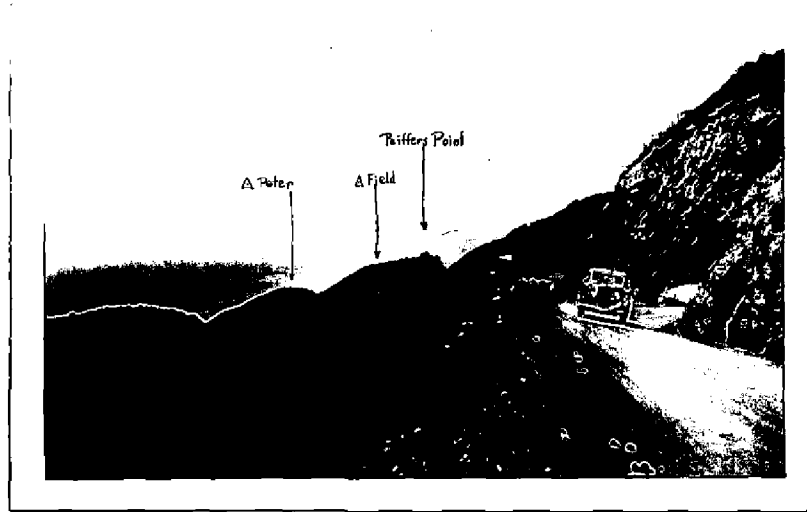
*Chief of Party.*

[illegible]

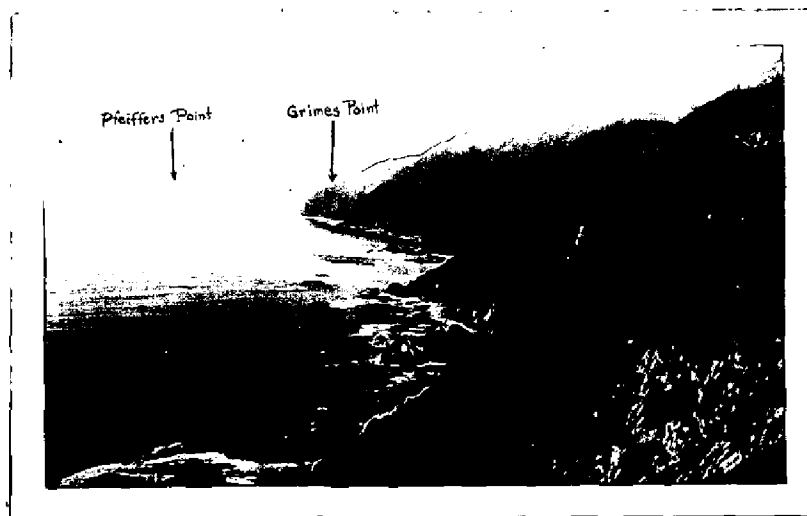
A list of objects carefully selected because of their value as landmarks as determined from seaward, together with individual descriptions, must be furnished in a special report on this form, and a copy of such report must be attached by the Chief of Party to his descriptive report.

The selection, determination, and description of these points are an important factor in the value of the chart. Landmarks selected at appropriate intervals can be clearly charted. However, when none is outstanding, a group of two or three objects may by their interrelationship provide positive identification. A group so selected should be indicated.

The description of each object should be short, but such as will clearly identify it; for example, a standpipe, elevated tank, gas tank, church spire, tall stack, red chimney, radio mast, etc. Assign numerals to landmarks to indicate: (1) Offshore, (2) inshore, (3) harbor, 1, 2, 3 would be a mark useful on all charts. Generally, flagstuffs and like objects are not sufficiently permanent to chart.



Showing A s PETER, FIELD, and PFEIFFERS POINT, also giving the general characteristics of the sloping country north of Grimes Point between the top of the bluff and the Coast Road. Taken from the road just below Grimes Point.



General characteristics of the coast along practically the entire length of Topographic sheet A. Pfeiffers Point is in the distance. Taken from the Coast Road above A STEEP, looking northward.

To: H.M. Strong  
From C.F.M.

Survey No. T 4876

Date. Feb. 16, 1935

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES  
CALIFORNIA

Chart No. 5302

Diagram No. 5302-2

Approved by the Division of Geographic Names, Department of Interior. \*

Referred to the Division of Geographic Names, Department of Interior. R

Under investigation. Q

*Names underlined in red approved Mar. 26, 1935  
Harlow Bacon*

Status	Name on Survey	Name on Chart	New Names in local use	Names assigned by Field	Location
		<u>Pfeiffer Rock</u>			
		<u>Pfeiffer Point</u>			
	<u>Santa Barbara National Forest</u>	-----			
	<u>Sur River</u>	-----			
	<u>Sycamore Canyon</u>	-----	Same		
	<u>Wreck Beach</u>	-----	"		
	<u>Post Trail</u>	-----	"		
	<u>Mule Canyon</u>	-----	"		
	<u>Grave Canyon</u>	-----	"		
	<u>Castro Canyon</u>	-----	"		
	<u>Vineyard Canyon</u>	-----	"		
	-----	<u>Pyramid Rock</u>	<i>Omit for the present. Doubtful of location. Shown as Little Pyramid on Chart.</i>		
	<u>Grimes Point</u>	-----	Same		
	<u>Grimes Canyon</u>	-----	"		
	<u>Lafler Rock</u>	-----	"		
	<u>Lafler Canyon</u>	-----	"		
	<u>Tores Canyon</u>	-----	"		<i>See D.R. T-4876 36° 11' 12' 1985</i>
	<u>Partington Point</u>	Same			
	<u>Pacific Ocean</u>	"			
X	<u>Big Sur (Post Office)</u> (P.O.)	Arbolado	Big Sur (Post Office) (P.O.) in parenthesis		
	X - This feature is beyond the limits of the survey, information concerning same may be had by consulting the Descriptive Report T-4876. For location see U.S.D.S. Point Sur Quad.				

Section of Field Records

REVIEW OF TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY NO. 4876 (1934) - FIELD LETTER A

Partington Point to Pfeiffer Point, California

Surveyed June - July, 1934

Instructions dated May 31, 1934 (GUIDE)

Plane Table Survey.

Cloth Mounted.

Chief of Party - F. H. Hardy.

Surveyed and Inked by - J. C. Ellerbe.

1. Condition of Records.

The Descriptive Report is clear and very comprehensive and satisfactorily covers all matters of importance.

The records conform to the requirements of the Topographic Manual with the following exceptions:

- a. Scaled one-half meter distances were not laid off along the edge of the sheet for distortion measurement. However, the distortion was frequently checked in the field by projection lines (see D. R., page 6).

2. Compliance with Instructions for the Project.

The survey complies with the instructions.

3. Junction with Contemporary Surveys.

Satisfactory junctions were made with T-4792 (1933) and with T-4877 (1934).

4. Comparison with Prior Surveys.

a. T-2092 (1891).

A comparison of this survey with the present survey shows differences to be as represented in the Descriptive Report. The general trend of shoreline is very much the same and the few differences which were found appear to be due to the fact that bluff line appears to have been used for high water line at the time of the old survey, rather than to changes. The old contours were transferred to the present survey and were found to check exceptionally well. The agreement in offlying rocks and reefs is rather poor due probably to less attention to such features at the time of the old survey (see D. R., page 4). Tracings of the former survey which were used in the field were submitted with the present sheet. This is considered a very good practice because it furnishes evidence that each area which was found to be in error was investigated. The present survey is considered correct and no rocks are carried forward from the older survey.

5. Field Drafting.

The inking by the field party is satisfactory.

6. Additional Field Work Recommended.

No additional field work is required.

7. Superseding Old Surveys.

Insofar as the topography actually covered on the present survey is concerned, it supersedes the following surveys for charting purposes:

T-2092 (1891)

8. Reviewed by - A. F. Jankowski, August 7, 1935.

Examined and approved:

*K. T. Adams*  
K. T. Adams,  
Asst. Chief, Division of Charts.

*L. O. Lobnitz*  
Chief, Division of Charts.

*J. S. Borden*  
Chief, Section of Field Work.

*G. W. Hude*  
Chief, Division of H. & T.

*Applied to drawing of Chart 5302 - Feby. 5, 1936, JFW*  
" " " " 5402 - Feb 25, 1936.  
" " " " 5476 - Aug. 1939. - S.B.M.