

2147

Daylight No 78-1

U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.

T.C.Mendenhall , Superintendent.

State: VIRGINIA

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Hydrographical Sheets No. 2126. *2147*

LOCALITY:

APPOMATTOX RIVER.

from

Petersburg to City Point.

1892 .

CHIEF OF PARTY:

Charles H. Boyd,



2147

Write me at: .....

Telegraph me at: .....

My Express Office is: .....

U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey,

February, 1893.

2-547

Dr. Thomas C. Mendenhall,  
Superintendent U. S. & G. Survey  
Sir:

I have the honor to make the following  
descriptive report, to accompany the Hydrographic  
sheet of the Appomattox River, Virginia. Issued December  
1892.

The navigable portion of this river, about 11 miles,  
is between the City of Petersburg and its mouth at  
the James River. There is now a channel of about  
8 feet, at mean low water, between these points, largely  
excavated through mud and gravel banks, but hereinafter  
it may continue to hold this depth, is very uncertain,  
owing to large amount of silt brought by freshets  
from the upper river. For the first 6 miles below  
Petersburg the banks are almost entirely artificial.  
It is quite necessary for a stranger to take a pilot.  
There is little or no raising away of the banks, within limits

of these sheets, <sup>and</sup> I saw no indications of change of axis  
of stream, from natural causes. The U.S. Engineers  
have been dredging during the ead fall, as shown  
upon the sketch supplementary to sheet 2/26 of same land:  
<sup>and</sup> more or less work of this kind seems to have frequently  
been done. It is reported, as the intention of the Engineers  
to make a 11 foot Channel at high water. It is also  
currently reported, that a dam is soon to be built  
above the Bridges at Petersburg, <sup>and</sup> above that a  
canal cut through the flat lands between Pocahontas  
<sup>and</sup> the Roanoke heights, deflecting the river from its  
present Channel in front of the City, for some mile  
or more, <sup>and</sup> then reentering existing Channel.  
The reason assigned; to prevent deposit of silt in  
the Petersburg Harbor. Another experiment of doubtful  
utility. The small sailing vessels & steamboats  
that go up to Petersburg can find anchorage nearly  
anywhere. There is a dangerous rock in the Channel,  
just off the Government wharf, at Petersburg. Shown on  
the same sheet, which I have seen awash at  
extreme low stage of river. It is now bridged. I see  
no reason why it <sup>could</sup> not be very easily removed.  
The most radical change since the Survey of 1852-3

is in the cutting off some 2 miles of the main river,  
by the so called "Closon dikes", the upper one about 2  
miles below Petersburg <sup>and</sup> the lower somewhat more than 4,  
and the substitution of the Prochodovsk and Truglov.  
The average width of this Canal is about 50 m. <sup>and</sup>  
it is intended to have fixed rates at m. l. v.

During the fall there was a small river strambol,  
running, <sup>regularly</sup>, from Anzals. the only regular  
passenger <sup>and</sup> freight boat we saw on the river.

The Schonus we saw was largely loaded with  
Lumber. <sup>and</sup> Coal. There were 8 Buys shown on  
the Dec. sheet <sup>and</sup> 1 on that of Jan. no beacons or lights.  
I think pilots would be taken before entering the  
Appomattox, as the river is so narrow <sup>and</sup> curved.  
Many of the sailing vessels were being towed. There  
was not usually a tug at City Point wharf with steam  
up. The river is so narrow at Petersburg that  
all vessels we saw, were moored at the wharf.

Supply <sup>and</sup> Ship Chandlery stores are <sup>limited</sup> - we could not  
find either a lead or log-line. Fresh water can  
be obtained from the City water pipes. The river water  
below the City should not be used as it is Contamin-  
ated by the City sewage, with chemicals from the

7  
factories above the Bridges &c. Both Anthracite and Bituminous Coals are to be obtained - of good quality and delivered on the wharves by teams or taken directly from the Coal Sheds. I think the nearest Seaside Hospitals are at Richmond and Norfolk. Ferries are not usually retained here. An office of the Practical Engineer is on Sycamore near the corner of Washington St. The Steamers of the Old Dominion Line - James River to New York - pass the mouth of the river and stop at City Point. A railroad from Petersburg to City Point is the connecting; also the small river Steamboat mentioned before.

The Atlantic Coast Line railway from the South and the Norfolk & Western, from East & West, have stations near the Government Wharf. The U.S. Custom House and Post Office are in the Government Building, corner of 7th and Union Streets. The Flagstaff Tower is a transshipment point. The river below Petersburg is seldom frozen to impede navigation; nor are towed boats barred without its being closed by ice, but residents upon its banks told me they had steamed from Petersburg to City Point at rare intervals.

There is no Compulsory Pilotage, no Daily Levies

or limited Harbor regulations. There is, however, a Port revenue.

The following statement of Tonnage of the Port of Detouring for the past year - Jan'y 1<sup>st</sup> 1892 to Jan'y 1<sup>st</sup> 93. is sent to me by the Collector of the Port <sup>is</sup> from the Port traders books. He writes, under date of Feb 20<sup>th</sup> in answer to a letter of the 6<sup>th</sup> inst. that the traders office had then nearly 2 feet of water in it. so he could not reach his books to answer earlier.

Steamers <sup>&amp;</sup> Frigs	581	with tonnage	37,229-
Shunners	82	" "	7,665-
Sloops	14	" "	184-
Boats	11	" "	1,891-

Very respectfully yours.

C. W. Boyd  
Assistant