

2264

Diag. Cont. No. 5802

Form 504

U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT

Type of Survey *Hydrographic*
Field No. Office No. *2264*

LOCALITY

State *Oregon*
General locality *Coquille*
Locality *River Entrance*

1896

~~191~~

CHIEF OF PARTY

A. F. Rodgers

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DATE

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U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.

Gen. W. W. Duffield, Superintendent.

State: *Oregon*

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Hydrographic Sheet No. *2264*

LOCALITY:

Coquille River Entrance

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CHIEF OF PARTY:

Asst. A. F. Rodgers.
(H. Westdahl)

NOV. 17. 1896. 014579

Treasury Department,

U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Sub-Office,

San Francisco, Cal., November 9, 1896.

Assistant Aug. F. Rodgers,

U.S.Coast and Geodetic Survey,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to submit herewith a published chart of Coquille River, Oregon, on scale of 1:10,000, with additions in red ink showing the results of observations made by me recently on reported sunken rocks, in obedience to your instructions of October 14, 1896. In addition to the general description of the newly determined dangers contained in the "Note" thereon, I submit the following report.

I took passage on steamship "Arago" on October 17th. and arrived in Marshfield, Coos Bay, on October 19th. On the following evening, October 20th, I reached Bandon at the mouth of Coquille River. The keeper of the U. S. Life Saving Station at this place, to whom I brought a letter from the Superintendent of the Life Saving Service on the Pacific Coast to render me all the assistance I required, had gone to Coos Bay, overland, with his crew this forenoon to render assistance in saving life and property from the steamship "Arago", which was wrecked this morning in attempting to leave the harbor. The heavy southwest swell, unac-

companied by wind, which had prevailed along the coast for the last forty-eight hours, and was the indirect cause of the wreck of the "Arago", furnished the opportunity I had hoped for to aid me in determining the positions of hidden dangers by observing on the breaks from shore stations. I hurried to the summit of Tupper's Rock on my arrival and, although the atmosphere was foggy so that objects beyond one and a half miles could not be distinguished, I saw several breaks not marked on the chart. On the following days, October 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, the swell continuing but gradually abating, I observed on all outlying breaks and heavings of the sea from shore stations at intervals of clear weather and as near low water as practicable.

On Saturday, October 24th, by invitation of the Master, I crossed out on the bar tug near high water for the purpose of ascertaining if the objects I had selected and determined as signals were conspicuous enough for the purpose. We found only $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet at high water on the bar, too little to attempt towing out the detained vessels in the swell still running.

On Sunday, October 25th, the swell had, in the judgment of the keeper of the Life Saving Station, abated sufficiently to try going out in the surf boat. We pulled out at 10 o'clock, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours before high water, and by watching for a favorable opportunity between the heavier swells, succeeded in crossing over the bar shipping only a few buckets of water in doing so. I found two of the sunken rocks readily from ranges previously observed, not the shoalest water on them in my judgment, but sufficiently shoal to indicate their dangerous character. While

searching for the third it began to blow from the southward and as the weather had a threatening look, the Life Saving Keeper advised seeking shelter; but instead of returning into the river he deemed it safer and more convenient to land on a comparatively sheltered beach just to the southward and under the Lookout Station, whence the boat could be launched when it was assuming greater risk to cross out over the bar. Landing was made through the surf about noon without taking aboard a drop of water. Shortly afterwards it began to rain and continued all through the night and next day. There was not much wind inshore and no swell nor breaks showing during Monday, but about two miles off shore could be seen large white-caps, and three south-bound steamers made heavy weather of it in passing.

Tuesday morning opened with clear sky overhead, no wind, and an unusually large swell rolling in from west-south-west. As soon as the fog which rested over the water had cleared away, I saw all the breaks very distinctly and frequently, and observed on them from four shore-stations, obtaining fairly good intersections upon all of them. I believe that I have seen the breaks from all hidden dangers within a radius of three miles from Tappers Rock. After plotting the observations in the afternoon and transferring the positions of the breaks to a copy of the same chart in possession of Mr. Scott, Keeper of the Bandon Life Saving Station, with the same designations A. B. C. D. and F. as on the accompanying chart, I consulted with him as to the probable duration of the present swell. Judging from the length of time of the previous rough spell it might be a week before we could at-

tempt another examination, which would greatly exceed the limit you had set for my return. I therefore concluded to pack up my instruments and return as soon as possible, leaving to Mr. Scott the task of ascertaining the shoalest water over these dangers and approximately the surrounding depths so soon as the weather will permit his launching the boat for the purpose. I have pointed out to him and to members of his crew exact ranges for finding most of them and I hope and believe he will succeed. Mr. Scott, who has members of his crew continually on watch, has informed me that large steamers bound northward in heavy northwest wind and sea frequently pass inside the buoy marking the outermost of these dangers, apparently not aware of the existence of the others.

I left Bandon at 7 A. M. October 28th, and arrived in Marshfield at 1:30 P. M. just too late for the steamer "Homer" which had left for San Francisco several hours before and was just about to leave Empire City. After ascertaining that the "Homer" had crossed out and that no other passenger steamer was expected to leave for San Francisco before her return at least a week hence, and upon receiving your telegram to return without delay, I decided to go overland, shipped my box of instruments to follow by steamer, and returned to Myrtle Point on the Coquille River by logging train at 10 P. M. On the following night at 9 P. M. I reached Roseburg by stage, whence I proceeded by rail to San Francisco, reporting at the Sub-Office at 11 A. M. October 31.

In conclusion I beg leave to call attention to the fact that the present chart of the mouth of Coquille River is an en-

largement from a reconnaissance on scale of 1:40,000 and consequently necessarily defective; that the river is navigable for ocean going vessels for about 24 miles from its mouth to Coquille City and for river craft several miles further to Myrtle Point and beyond; that it manufactures and exports on an average one and one-half millions superficial feet of lumber per month; that several sail and steam vessels have been and are now being built on the river; and that coal mines are being opened and prospects for a much larger output of lumber are fair, owing to the extensive, accessible, and comparatively untouched supply of timber. Bandon, the town at the mouth of the river, has grown from a few houses in 1890 to an estimated population of 1000, has a woolen-mill, cannery, and a ship-building plant. The other towns in succession are Prosper, Parkersburg, Riverton, Coquille City, and Myrtle Point, of which the latter two are larger than Bandon.

Respectfully yours,

Ferdinand W. Wadsworth

Draughtsman U. S. C. & G. Survey.

*Respectfully Obediently
to the Superintendent*

*Wm. J. Rodgers
Assistant*