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U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.
Henry S. Pritchett Superintendent.

State: *La*

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Hydrographic Sheets Nos { *2380*
 { *2381*

LOCALITY:

Lake Maurepas

1899.

CHIEF OF PARTY:

O. B. French

2381

Diag. Cht. No. 1269.

Department of Commerce and Labor
COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

H. S. Prichett
Superintendent.

State: *La*

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Hyd C Sheet No. *2381*

LOCALITY:

See

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CHIEF OF PARTY:

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U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey,
Washington, D. C.,

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Dr. Henry S. Pritchett,
Superintendent C. & G. Survey,
Washington, D. C.

ACKNOWLEDGED

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Sir:-

The following is a descriptive report to accompany
Hydrographic sheets numbers 2380 & 2381 covering Lake
Maurepas and neighboring tributaries, Louisiana.

Lake Maurepas is a small body of water, ten miles in diameter
on the average, situated about 40 miles from New Orleans toward
the northwest. It is connected with Lake Pontchartrain by Pass
Manchac, a narrow body of water resembling a river. North Pass
is also a connecting stream between the two lakes, or rather
between Lake Maurepas and Pass Manchac, as it empties into the
latter about a mile before it enters Lake Pontchartrain.

There are three fair sized rivers emptying into Lake Maurepas
and several smaller ones. The Tickfaw, Amite, and Blind Rivers
are narrow tortuous channels through the cypress swamp, and are n
navigable far beyond the limits of this work for vessels drawing
much more water than can be obtained on the bars at the mouths
to these rivers.

Each river has a bar, or shoal, off its mouth in Lake Maure-
pas upon which there is only about six feet of water on an average.
It is not safe to enter any river, or Pass Manchac, either, with
a ship drawing more than six feet unless the tide is abnormally

high. After crossing these bars however the water in the rivers is quite deep, usually being from three to six fathoms in depth and rarely less than two fathoms even close to the banks.

The Lake and rivers are entirely surrounded by a cypress swamp several miles in width. The edge of this swamp was found in only one place, and that was near the Amite River. At this point the swamp is only about a mile in width. Along the southwestern side of the lake is a low very narrow strip of fairly solid ground extending along the shore for about three miles, but solid dry ground is found nowhere else around the lake, excepting where it has been artificially built up.

The bottom of the lake is a soft blue mud with a few scattering shells mixed in it. This mud is soft for at least ten or twelve feet as no trouble was experienced in pushing the water signals into the bottom to that depth, the weight of three or four men being all that was needed.

Bordering the shores of the lake are numerous logs, stumps, trees and snags, so it is not safe to put a ship within about a quarter of a mile of shore even where the depth of the water will permit. All over the lake are partially sunken logs, one end being afloat and the other imbedded in the mud on the bottom. Owing to the presence of these snags it is not very safe to navigate these waters at night although very few ships stop on that account,

The greater part of the traffic through this lake is carried by small schooners. Several steamers run between New Orleans and points up the rivers, more or less regularly. One small steamer (about the size of a small tug boat) makes regular trips between Manchac and points up the Amite River and carries the U. S. mail

for the settlements and post-offices in that region.

Lumber, wood, staves, cotton, and the ordinary farm products form the greater part of the produce transported through these waters.

All the channels into the rivers and Pas Manchac from Lake Maurepas are near the north shore. The best channel into Pass Manchac is just along the edge of the visible snags (really among them) but it is probably not safe to get too close although nothing was found outside of those visible. As no dragging for snags or other obstruction was made I would not like to say positively that there are no obstructions in that region, other than those visible, but none were found with the lead nor with the ship which drew five feet, although the ground was pretty well covered during the season while passing out and into the pass besides the soundings shown on the sheet. Along the south side of Pass Manchac is fairly deep water also but it is much nearer shore and is very narrow and full of snags and logs. By clearing out these snags on either side of the entrance to Pass Manchac the channel would be very much improved. As the water is deep enough now however to float any ship that can enter the Pass from Lake Pontchartrain it is not necessary to deepen the Maurepas entrance unless the Pontchartrain entrance is also cleaned out.

There is a current flowing through the lake and Pass Manchac which varies in strength and direction depending principally upon the direction of the wind. For an average or normal condition of the weather the current flows toward Lake Pontchartrain at perhaps a half mile per hour. When the wind is northerly or westerly the current is stronger and is occasionally about two miles per hour.

With a strong south or southeast wind the current is in the opposite direction, but rarely with so much strength as when flowing toward Lake Pontchartrain. The actual tidal effect is very small and is usually lost in the wind effects.

This region may be reached either by boat or by railroad. There are no regular steamers excepting the small one, previously mentioned, as running between Manchac and points up the Amite River, but there are schooners, and occasionally a steamer, leaving New Orleans every few days and most of them will take passengers. The Illinois Central R.R. crosses Pass Manchac near Lake Maurepas and passengers can reach the railroad station "Manchac" twice each day, at least, from either direction.

This railroad crosses Pass Manchac on a wooden trestle with an iron truss draw near the north end. The station Manchac is on the north side of the Pass at the north end of the trestle. There is a short wharf at this place with a R. R. sidetrack upon it, and coal or other produce can be loaded onto boats or unloaded. The water alongside the wharf is as deep as that on the bars.

Manchac is a telegraph, express, and freight station, and also a postoffice. The name of the last is "Akers" and not Manchac however as there is another postoffice in the state with the latter name.

At the mouth of the Amite River a light house has been built about 100 metres off shore and just south of the entrance to the river. It is visible from Manchac on clear days. This light and the light at the Pontchartrain end of Pass Manchac are the only aids to navigation established in this region, excepting the lights

required on the railroad draw and its approaches.

North Pass is navigable for nearly all the vessels that ply these waters as far as the depth of water is concerned, but the Maurepas entrance is shallow and the channel after getting in is narrow and tortuous. The railroad trestle has no draw at this Pass either hence no vessels can pass through it .

Respectfully submitted,

Wm B. Fruch

Assistant C. & G. Survey.