



2514

Diag. Cht. No. 901-1 & 902

U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.

O. H. Tittmann, Superintendent.

State: *P.R.*

U. S. C. & G. SURVEY
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MAY 21 1901
Acc. No. 52861

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT

Hydrographic Sheet No. 2514

LOCALITY:

Guanica Harbor

1900-1901

CHIEF OF PARTY:

G. L. Flower

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GUANICA HARBOR.

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This Harbor is on the south side of the Island of Porto Rico about half way between Ponce and Cabo Rojo. The deepest water found is twenty eight feet over a limited area in the centre of the entrance.

The four fathom curve extends well inside and vessels drawing less than twenty four feet can enter the harbor and load or discharge with safety.

There are many shoal spots and lumps off the entrance extending south to a distance of nearly three miles and vessels drawing more than twenty feet should approach very carefully and keep in the indicated channel which carries thirty feet close in to the entrance. This minimum depth occurs on a bar or ridge which extends from a point about three quarters of a mile south of Point Erea, east northeasterly close to the line of reefs that make out to the westward from the Cana Gorda Islands. Vessels drawing more than twenty feet should keep three miles south of the shore to the eastward of Meseta Light and two and one half miles to the south of Point Erea, *coming from the westward* and bring Point Meseta Light bearing N 14 E (true); then run directly for it until the western most house in the Playa bears N 5 W (true) then change course and steer for it. This will run through the deepest water and enter the harbor a little west of the middle point between Point Meseta and Pescadores Point. The water shoals gradually after entrance and anchorage may be in whatever depth desired. If approaching in thick weather or night time care should be taken to get careful soundings; and shoaler water than ten fathoms should not be entered as the bottom is very steep-to in places and many lumps exist close to very deep water. Vessels drawing less than twenty feet of water may approach safely to within a mile and a half of the shore and when Point Meseta Light bears N 5 E (true) steer for it until it is three quarters of a mile distant then run in between the two Points.

a little west of #2

The entrance is free of obstructions having the deepest water ~~in~~ the centre and shoaling gradually to either side. The axis of the deep water is about N 10 W and S 10 E.

Making out to the westward of the Cana Gorda Islands is a dangerous chain of reefs which extend to the westward about one and one half miles, terminating in a shoal called La Laja which has eight and one half feet of water. These reefs break most of the time and are well defined with the exception of the westernmost, La Laja, which seldom breaks and of which there is usually no surface indication. This shoal bears S 17 E from Pt. Meseta Light House distant five-sixths of a mile. This is the most dangerous obstacle in the approach to the harbor and care should be taken with vessels drawing more than twenty feet not to get on a bearing east of N 14 E to the Light, or vessels drawing less than twenty feet not to get on a bearing east of N 5 E to the Light. There is a very deep channel close to the ^{chain of} reefs on the southern side but it is very narrow and crooked and should not be attempted except by those having accurate local knowledge. Small coasting vessels may enter between openings in the reefs in clear weather as the bottom is usually visible in less than four fathoms and all that is necessary is to keep in the dark blue water. This is unsafe for strangers however. Sailing vessels may enter the harbor at almost any time of the day but can only leave during the early morning as the sea breeze draws into the harbor and there is no room to beat out. It is advisable to get underway at daylight and get as far off shore as possible before the sea breeze sets in. If however it falls calm after the land breeze dies out it is better to anchor than to drift about as the sea sets almost continuously on the reefs and on the rocks on the Point Erea side of the approach. The harbor is almost perfectly landlocked and affords protection against any kind of stormy weather. The holding ground is good and no sea can enter to do any harm.

There is a fresh water river entering the western part of the harbor but the mouth is so filled with mangroves that it is not easy to get any of the water and it is probably not fit to drink in any event. A limited amount of provisions may be obtained in the village about one half mile inland from the playa. The town of Yauco is in the interior about five miles and is the centre of a large coffee and sugar district and is also the terminus of the railway from Ponce.

Some sugar and molasses from the immediate neighborhood and from the westward are shipped from Guanica.

Geo. L. Flower
Asst. U. S. C. & G. S.
Chief of Party