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Department of Commerce and Labor  
COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

*G. Pittman*  
Superintendent.

State: *P. I.*

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

*Hyd.* Sheet No. **3695**

LOCALITY:

*Newcomett Bay*

1914

CHIEF OF PARTY:

*M. H. Beck*

11-4645

3695

Descriptive Report,  
Hyd. Sheet. 3695  
Wire Drag Examination  
Newport Harbor, R. I.  
Nov. 1914  
Chief of Party - N. H. Heck, Assistant

## Descriptive Report - Hyd. Sheet- Newport, R. I.

The work on this sheet was a special examination, of the north approaches to Newport Harbor, especially the area surrounding a charted 17 foot shoal to the north of Gull Rocks. The conditions under which this work was done were highly unfavorable—in fact it was undertaken too late in the season. The currents alone are a great handicap to efficient work and continuous gales even in a fairly protected region made constant watchfulness necessary to the safety of the launches.

These facts are mentioned to explain the failure of the drag to cover certain portions of the area. The boat sheet indicated that these had been covered. In each case there was an error in plotting of small ordinary importance but of significance in such an area as this. The plotting referred to was done by one of the Deck Officers, while I directed the course of the launches from the deck, it being necessary to look out for the safety of both launches. In such work the position of the end launch depends entirely on the correctness of the plotting. If plotted too near a dangerous ledge it is called away from it even if the, while the later plotting <sup>now</sup> shows the position in error.

The length of the towline stands out with great prominence in work on a scale of 1/10 000. So long as the launch ESCORT was used a 94 meter towline was necessary to insure the desired depth and 63 meters was used for the launches Katherine and Mildred. Replotting will indicate how close the launches passed to ledges and buoys even where the drag does not indicate this.

The area in the vicinity of the 17 ft. charted shoals was examined with great care, at the expense of some other portions of the area. Careful detailed sounding by three tenders was carried on for several hours in addition to the dragging. I consider such sounding of the greatest value and an essential adjunct to dragging in such areas. The area in the vicinity of Gull Rocks is clear from obstruction to the east and west. In a future survey it may be worth while to develop the extent of the area of great depth. Considering the <sup>currents</sup> tides in this area this channel should not be used by vessels which cannot safely pass over the 17 foot charted shoal.

The channel west of Gull Rocks while of ample depth should not be used

by vessels of considerable draft as its width between Citing Rock and Gull Rock is not great. The depth however is as great as in the eastern channel when passing between the black spar buoys. It is not advisable to pass between Gull Rocks and the black spar to the south, as the currents are will set a vessel directly toward the shoal marked by the buoy or toward the unmarked 1 foot shoal south of Gull Rocks.

With reference to the length of towline it should be remembered that the end launch in every case had a towline as long as that of the guiding launch and that no record of its actual position appears in the records or on the sheet

This is nor a boulder region, in fact the local Engineer Office stated that Newport Harbor improvements did not bring out the existence of boulders. The formation consists of a slate or shalerock and also pudding stone. Some of the latter may have been broken up to form boulders but there are no true glacial boulders so common to the surrounding regions. As a result the formation consists of narrow rocky ridges in a general north-south direction with occasional more or less sharp projections.

The work done was sufficient to indicate that the dragging of Narragansett Bay is urgent, as the other portions of the bay are boulder strewn in addition to having a rocky formation, from which Buzzards Bay is practically free.

VEC  
Mar. 4, 1915  
S. P. S.

HYDROGRAPHIC SHEET 3695.

Newport Harbor, Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island, by

Asst. N. H. Heck in 1914.

TIDES.

	Newport ft.
Mean low water, or plane of reference on staff	1.0
Lowest tide observed " "	-0.9
Highest " " " "	6.9
Mean range of tide	3.5