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Form 504	
U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY	
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE	
DESCRIPTIVE REPORT	
Type of Survey	<i>Topographic</i>
Field No.	Office No. <i>2105</i>
LOCALITY	
State	<i>Virginia</i>
General locality	<i>Appomattox</i>
Locality	<i>River</i>
<i>1892</i>	
<i>194</i>	
CHIEF OF PARTY	
<i>Charles H. Boyd</i>	
LIBRARY & ARCHIVES	
DATE	

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U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.

T.C. Mendenhall, Superintendent.

State: VIRGINIA

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Topographical. Sheets No. 2095 & 2105

LOCALITY:

APPOMATTOX RIVER.

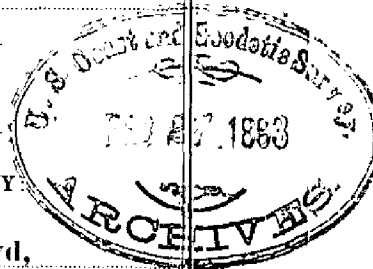
from

Petersburg to City Point.

1892.

CHIEF OF PARTY

Charles H. Boyd,



2105

Write me at: .....

Telegraph me at: .....

My Express Office is: .....

U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey,

Portland, Me.

January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1893.

2-547

Dr: Thomas C. Kendrick  
Superintendent U. S. C. & G. S.  
Sir:

I have the honor to offer, for filing, with the sheet-  
sheets of the Cobscook Bay River, 1892, the following  
descriptive reports.

The immediate banks are, mostly, in soft marsh, while back  
from there, at distances varying from a few metres to a  
few hundred, are bluffs of clay & gravel, in places,  
approximating 100 feet in height. Many of these bluffs  
are crowned with the earthworks, both offensive &  
defensive, constructed in the Campaign before  
Fort Mifflin in 1757. The triangulation points "Larlee",  
"Friend", "Archer", & "Lifton" are located upon parapets  
of these old batteries. "Bourgeois" is upon the site of a  
large convalescent hospital & "Dural" is upon the top of  
a house rebuilt at Gen. Headquarters.

Between the channels of the river are islands, also

of very soft marsh. But one line of ledge-rocks has  
retained, and cropping at the Pt. of Rocks and on the  
south bank nearly opposite at Fusculum farm.

At the Davis place, in the Old Port Hathall Channel,  
also known as the Bermuda Ochu line, are ruins of  
clay highly colored <sup>by</sup> oxide of iron: this is now being  
mined, washed, ground and shipped away in considerable  
quantities for the coloring of paints. The triangulation  
point Cotta of 1853 was lost by the breaking down of  
this bluff over an abandoned ochu ruin. At this point  
the highest buildings not disturbing me visible and here  
a high signal tower was erected in 1864.

Several attempts have been made to reclaim portions  
of the swamps, along the river bank, by the building of  
Levers. e.g. at the mouth of Swift Creek. Mouth of  
Hathall Creek for a distance of  $\approx 1\frac{1}{2}$  miles on  
the north bank of main river just below the Pt. of Rocks.

These Levers are now broken in many places. I should  
judge the scheme failed from the ravages of the  
sunk-rat.

Crossing the land mentioned  
Swamp there may yet be seen the remains of the  
military road of 1864 used by the U.S. Army in crossing  
from the bluffs near Convalescent Hospital, to the

South bank of Broadway, in the advance against the  
rivers of Petersburg. A pontoon bridge has been  
thrown across.

The low-water lines of June & November are indicated  
by the dotted line inside the shore-line (high water).  
There is but slight, if any, evidence of erosion of the banks  
in the limits of these shoals; but much eroded material  
is brought down from above navigation, with the  
freshets, and deposited all along the bed of the River  
from Petersburg to City Point. This, with the wash from  
the City shoals, is the best building material.

The growth upon the Bluffs is Oak, Pine &c. and mostly in  
forest, used for timber and fuel. We have signals in trees  
nearly 80 feet high. There is much undergrowth and quite  
thick. Upon the cultivated farms are orchards of  
Apples, Peaches and Plums. The swamp growth, near  
the shore-line, is of tall reeds and rushes. Upon some of  
the Islands there is a growth of Swamp Gum, Ash &c.  
approximating 40 feet in height.

But a very small proportion of the land, near  
the shore-line, is in cultivation, it is grown up in rushes,  
brush, scrub timber &c. but it is somewhat in use for  
pasture.

The City of Petersburg is at the head of navigation, about 12 miles by the river, southwesterly from the landing of City Point at the junction of the Appomattox with the James River. It is both a manufacturing & a Commercial Town & the distributing point for the Cotton, Tobacco, Lumber, Ornaments & Cereals of the surrounding farm lands. During the Colonial period there was a considerable direct Commerce with the mother Country. It is now said to have a larger export of manufactured Tobacco than any other City in the Country. In 1890 this exportation amounted to nearly 9,000,000 lbs. & for domestic uses about as much more. The lumber shipped that year amounted to 15,000,000 feet.

Facilities exist for moving these freights both by land & water. The Atlantic Coast Line railway system from the South, the Norfolk & Western from East & West with the Strand road to City Point are the land routes. The Steamships of the Old Dominion Line (James River to New York) are reached at deep water at City Point & Norfolk, both by rail & boat lines. Small sailing vessels & barges in two courses directly to the wharves at Petersburg.

The roads of this vicinity are very poor.

scarcely anything more than earth roads are found  
outside the City limits <sup>in</sup> in the hot and frosty  
season they are at these most ~~convenient~~. This  
grades are unnecessarily heavy when crossing hills.

Above the Bridges, at Petersburg, are several factories  
using water power. I saw no feeding places within  
the limits of these streets. The River is subject to  
heavy freshets <sup>in</sup> we hear the water has come  
into the Passenger Station of the railroads  $\pm$  20 feet  
above normal conditions - (June 1891?)

The fencing of the locality is mostly of wooden rail  
and wire wire.

The population of the City is now about 25,000.  
in 1790 it was 2828, including 1800 Slaves: in 1880  
it was 21,650

No changes in the names of localities came to  
my notice. The early settlers were from London  
<sup>and</sup> many local names, today, bear witness to their  
affectionate memories of the old Country home.

There is now no less railroad on these streets than in  
1853 - i.e. to PortWalthall; now entirely abandoned.

The changes in the river since the found survey  
are incident to <sup>it</sup> caused by the extensive systems

of Jetties, Dikes <sup>in</sup> the new Channel cut by the W.A.  
in the City of Petersburg. In the case of the  
Dudalevsk Cut, by the latter. Shown on the same sheet,  
some 4000 metres of the old river is thrown out of  
use by the closure dikes <sup>in</sup> the Cut substituted.

As given in the former survey, the range of tide  
at Petersburg was 1.19 feet, now the range is  $\approx$  2.70 feet.  
As a reason why the range of tide has more than doubled  
since in the past 40 years, I can only suggest, the cause  
may be found in the great interference with the  
former conditions of the River, by the engineering  
experiments before alluded to.

Very respectfully Yours  
C. W. Boyd  
Assistant