

*Directions for
Buzzard's Bay and
New-Bedford*



DIRECTIONS
FOR
BUZZARD'S BAY
AND
NEW-BEDFORD,

COMPILED
AND PUBLISHED BY ABRAHAM SHEARMAN, JUN.
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1821.

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New Bedford, Massachusetts
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gratefully acknowledge the assistance of
the American Antiquarian Society
in permitting the use of its copy of
the 1821 edition of the Directions
for this reprint.*

FROM GAY HEAD TO NEW-BEDFORD, THROUGH
QUICKS' HOLE.

BRING Gay Head Light to bear S. and run N. till you come to the passage through the Islands, called Quicks' Hole. To avoid a spit or flat which makes off from the S. E. point of Nashawina, on the larboard hand, enter as near the middle as possible, but if you do deviate, keep the *starboard* hand best on board, when you will have from 5 to 6 fathoms; then haul square into the Hole, keeping the *larboard* hand best on board, and following somewhat the bend of the shore: You will keep Gay Head Light open about a ship's length by the S. E. point of Nashawina, till you are at least one mile North of the Hole, which will carry you to the eastward of a Ledge and Rock, that lie that distance from it, with only 5 to 12 feet water on them,* while there is 5 fathoms all round them. Then steer N. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. till you strike hard bottom in 5 fathoms water, on the S. E. corner of the North Ledge, [which is on the *western* side of the channel;] then N. E. by N. about three fourths of a mile, till in 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 6 fathoms, sucky bottom, when the Light will bear N. W. by N. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. then steer N. by W. and run into the river.† After passing Clark's Point Light, you will see a small Island, [the outer Egg-Island,] just above water, which you will leave on your *starboard* hand, giving it some birth, as there

* There is also a good channel to westward of these rocks.

† When running from Quick's Hole for the N. Ledge, as soon as you find yourself in 7 fathoms water, you may be sure that you are abreast of the Great Ledge, or have passed it.

[Other directions from Quicks' Hole to New-Bedford, are to make good a North course till you strike hard bottom in 5 fathoms, on the *eastern* side of the channel, and then haul up N. N. W. but the above is by some Pilots considered safest.

are rocks which lie south-westerly from it, say one third of a mile distant, but still keeping nearer to it than to the main land, to avoid *Butler's Flat*, which makes off from the west shore. To steer clear of this flat, keep the Light-House open a ship's length to the westward of the Round Hills. As soon as you open the N. line of the woods with the cleared land, about a mile N. of the Light-House, you are to the northward of the flat, and may steer direct, either for the hollow, or the high part of Palmer's Island, hauling a little to the eastward as you approach it. The passage between this Island and Fort Point, on the starboard hand, is narrow. A flat which extends out S. W. from the Point, makes it necessary to keep nearest the Island; as you draw towards the N. end of the Island, give it a birth of two ship's lengths as a small flat makes off E. from its N. E. point. As soon as you have passed the Island 1 cable's length, the town will appear open on your larboard hand, when you may run for the end of the wharf which projects out farthest into the channel [*Rotch's wharf.*] Or to anchor in the deepest water, bring Clark's Point Light without Palmer's Island.

IN coming into New-Bedford from the westward, the *Eastern channel* is safest for strangers. Give the Sow and Pigs a birth of one mile, and run N. E. by N. till Pune Island bears S. E. then E. N. E. till Gay Head Light bears S. and then N. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. as before directed.

A rock lies off N. W. from the N. end of Pune, (or Penequese, as it is sometimes called,) about 1 mile distant, on which there is only 8 feet at low water. Between this and Wilkes' Ledge, (on which there is a Black Buoy,) is an open Ship channel, free from danger, and courses may be varied as circumstances require.

By those who are acquainted with the Bay, the *Western channel* is most commonly used. Giving the Old Cock and Hen and Chickens a sufficient birth, the only danger to be avoided in approaching Mishom Point, is a rock which lies about 1 mile S. W. by S. from it, on which there is only 6 feet water.* Having passed Mishom Point, you may steer directly for the Dumplin Rocks, off the Round Hills; and which may be passed within two cable's length to the eastward. Hence to Clark's Point Light the course is N. N. E. but to avoid the Middle Ledge, (on which there is a *Red Buoy*,) and which lies very near in a direct course from the outer Dumplin to the Light, it is better to steer N. E. by N. about a mile, and then haul up N. N. E. when you will leave the Ledge on your larboard hand. You may also carry in 4 fathoms to the westward of the Ledge, but the channel between it and the Lone Rock, which lies N. W. from it, is narrow.



From Seaconnet Rocks (giving them a birth of 1 mile) to the entrance of Buzzard's Bay, the course is E. $\frac{1}{2}$ S.—By this course made good, all the dangers off the Hen and Chickens will be avoided. Soundings, generally, from 9 to 7 fathoms, and mostly hard bottom, till it deepens to 16 fathoms sucky bottom, when Cutterhunk Island will be upwards of a mile distant, and Clark's Point Light will bear N. N. E. and you may run directly for the Light till up with the Dumplin Rocks, to which a sufficient birth must be given.—Or, you may stand on this course of N. N. E. till in 7 fathoms sucky bottom, (which will be

* There is also a Ledge directly South of Mishom Point, one mile distant, on which there is not more than 3 fathoms at low water, and at very low tides still less.—(C) When bound to sea, a S. W. by S. course from the Dumplin Rocks will carry you just without this Ledge, and in fair channel way between the Sow and Pigs and Hen and Chickens.

between Mishom Point and the Round Hills,) and come to anchor. Or otherwise, steer N. N. E. till Pune Island bears S. E. and then E. N. E. for the Quicks' Hole channel, as before directed.

It may be well to observe, that if when you have stood in from Seaconnet Point towards Cutterhunk, and the Light on Clark's Point is not to be seen, but you can see Gay Head Light, you may stand on your course E. $\frac{1}{2}$ S. till you shut it in behind the West end of Cutterhunk, but must then immediately change your course to N. N. E.—If neither Light is to be seen, the soundings are the only dependence, and must be very carefully attended to.

Additional Remarks.

To the S. E. of the Dumplin Rocks, one-half to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile distant, is a *Sand Spit*, with only 7 feet of water on it. Between this spit and the Rocks, there are 5 fathoms water.

Lone Rock, N. W. of the Middle Ledge, nearly half a mile distant, is nearly or quite dry at low water, when there are $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms round it. Between this Rock and the Hussey Rock is the entrance to *Aponeganset River*; depth of water, in the channel, $3\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms. There is also a channel between the Hussey Rock and White Rock. Course from Quick's Hole to entrance of Aponeganset River, N. N. W.

The *White Rock* appears considerably high above water, and the two rocks to westward of it, called the *Ragged Rocks*, are always to be seen.

A small Rock to the S. W. of the *North Ledge*, (about one mile distant from the Buoy,) with only 7 feet water on it, and another small Rock to the N. E. of the same Ledge, (about half a mile distant from the Buoy,) with 10 feet water on it, were recently discovered by Capt. MOSHER. On the former he struck with the brig *Commodore-Decatur*, and on the latter with the brig *Elizabeth*.

Packet Rock, a small sunken rock, on which there is 4 feet water, lies half a mile or upwards W. by N. from Black Rock. The passage for coasting vessels bound from New-Bedford up the Bay, is between this and Black Rock.

The Soundings across the western entrance of Buzzard's Bay, between the Sow and Pigs and Hen and Chickens, and some distance within them, are very irregular, varying from 5 to 10 and 15 fathoms, and bottom generally hard.

The number of fathoms and feet given, throughout these Directions, is the depth at low water.

All the courses and bearings given, are by compass.

A S. E. Moon makes high water in the Bay, and the average set of tide is $1\frac{1}{2}$ knots.

Buoys in Buzzard's Bay.

There are five Buoys placed in Buzzard's Bay, viz: A *Yellow Buoy* on the S. E. part of the *North Ledge*, in $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms water. A *Red Buoy*, lying in very shoal water on the centre of the *Middle*, which is a small Ledge. A *White Buoy* on the S. E. part of the *Great Ledge*, in 3 fathoms water. A *Black Buoy* on the S. W. part of *Wilkes' Ledge*, in $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathom's water. All on the western side of the Bay. And a *White Buoy* in 2 fathoms water, on *West's Island Ledge*, on the eastern side.

All these Buoys, except the one on West's Island Ledge, are taken up in the Winter.

Bearings of Ledges, from Clark's Point Light.

North Ledge, S. by E.

Middle Ledge, S. by W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W.

Great Ledge, S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W.

Wilkes' Ledge, S. by W.

West's Island Ledge, (Buoy) S. E. by E.

Other Bearings from the Light.

Old Bart'l'mew Rock,	E. 26 deg. N. one sixth of a
Quicks' Hole,	S. 9 deg. E. [mile distant.
Dumplin Rocks,	S. 21 deg. W. or S. S. W. nearly.
White Rock,	S. 25 deg. W.
Round Hills,	S. 29 deg. W.

From the North Ledge,

The Light House bears	N. by W.
Black Rock,	N. E. by E.
Dumplin Rocks,	S. W.

From Middle Ledge,

Light House,	N. by E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.
Dumplins,	S. W. by S. $\frac{1}{2}$ S.

From Great Ledge,

Light House,	N. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.
Mishom Point,	W. S. W.
North Ledge,	N. N. E. 2 miles distant.
Dumplins,	W. $\frac{1}{2}$ North.

From Wilkes' Ledge,

Light House,	N. by E.
Mishom Point,	W. by N. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. about 2 miles distant.
Dumplins,	N. by W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. about same distance.

From West's Island Ledge,

Light House,	N. W. by W.
Mishom,	W. S. W.
Little Black Rock,	N. by E.
Black Rock,	N. W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W.

(P Any correction of these Directions, or additional remarks on the navigation of Buzzard's Bay, will oblige

A. SHEARMAN, JUN.

NEW-BEDFORD, 4th mo. 10, 1821.

AFTERWORD

IN THE TWELFTH EDITION of *The American Coast Pilot* (1833), Edmund M. Blunt summed up the case for publications such as this: "unless the masters are acquainted with the port, the safety of the vessel depends upon the accuracy of the Sailing Directions. Charts are intended rather to give a general idea of the coast, than a minute and accurate description of particular harbors. It is, therefore, to the printed directions that they must resort, to procure information which at such moments is vitally important."

In earlier editions of *The American Coast Pilot*, Blunt provided a paragraph of instructions for sailing from Gay Head to New Bedford. The directions were rudimentary and useful only to those approaching the harbor from Vineyard Sound by way of Quicks Hole. For a port as busy as New Bedford, better descriptions were needed, especially for the western channels through Buzzards Bay. To provide them, the printer and bookseller, Abraham Shearman, Jr., published this pamphlet in 1821. Copies are rarely found today, most having been worked to destruction or lost in some forgotten tragedy of the sea.

As a practical guide to mariners, Shearman's *Directions* takes its place in a long tradition of "Pilots": the *peripli* of the ancient Greeks, the *portolani* of medieval Europe, the *routiers* of the French and the rutters of the English in the great age of ocean exploration. Whatever the language or age of writing, the style of expression is plain and direct, suited to conveying matters of fact to trustful men.

Abraham Shearman, Jr., the compiler of the *Directions*, was the chief bookseller of New Bedford during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. From his shop on the northeast corner of Union and Water Streets, he published a variety

of books and pamphlets, some on pietistic themes congenial to his fellow Quakers, others more suited to the town's commercial concern for its whaling and merchant fleets.

The chart appended to this edition of the *Directions* is included for the convenience of the reader. It was not a part of Shearman's original pamphlet, and indeed was not published until about 1835 by Edmund Blunt of New York. As stated in the inscription, it was based on the first detailed chart of Buzzards Bay, taken from the great marine atlas of the east coast of North America published during the American Revolution, DesBarres' *Atlantic Neptune*. Buzzards Bay, as redrawn by Blunt, followed closely the outlines of DesBarres' chart but included additional information supplied by William C. Taber, a onetime partner and successor to Abraham Shearman, and by Joseph C. Delano, a well-known New Bedford shipmaster. Not until 1846, seventy years after publication of the *Neptune*, did an entirely new chart of New Bedford harbor appear as part of the Federal Government's Survey of the Coast of the United States.

Readers of the *Directions* will note under "Additional Remarks" the recent discovery by Captain Mosher of two small rocks near North Ledge. "On the former," says Shearman, "he struck with the brig Commodore-Decatur, and on the latter with the brig Elizabeth." The Mosher in question was Captain Philip Mosher, a well-known harbor pilot of his day. According to one contemporary, he and his little sloop, *Malora*, were "often in great demand." Did Shearman single him out to demonstrate that even New Bedford's most experienced pilots needed a copy of his *Directions*?

Richard C. Kugler

DIRECTOR

BUZZARDS BAY

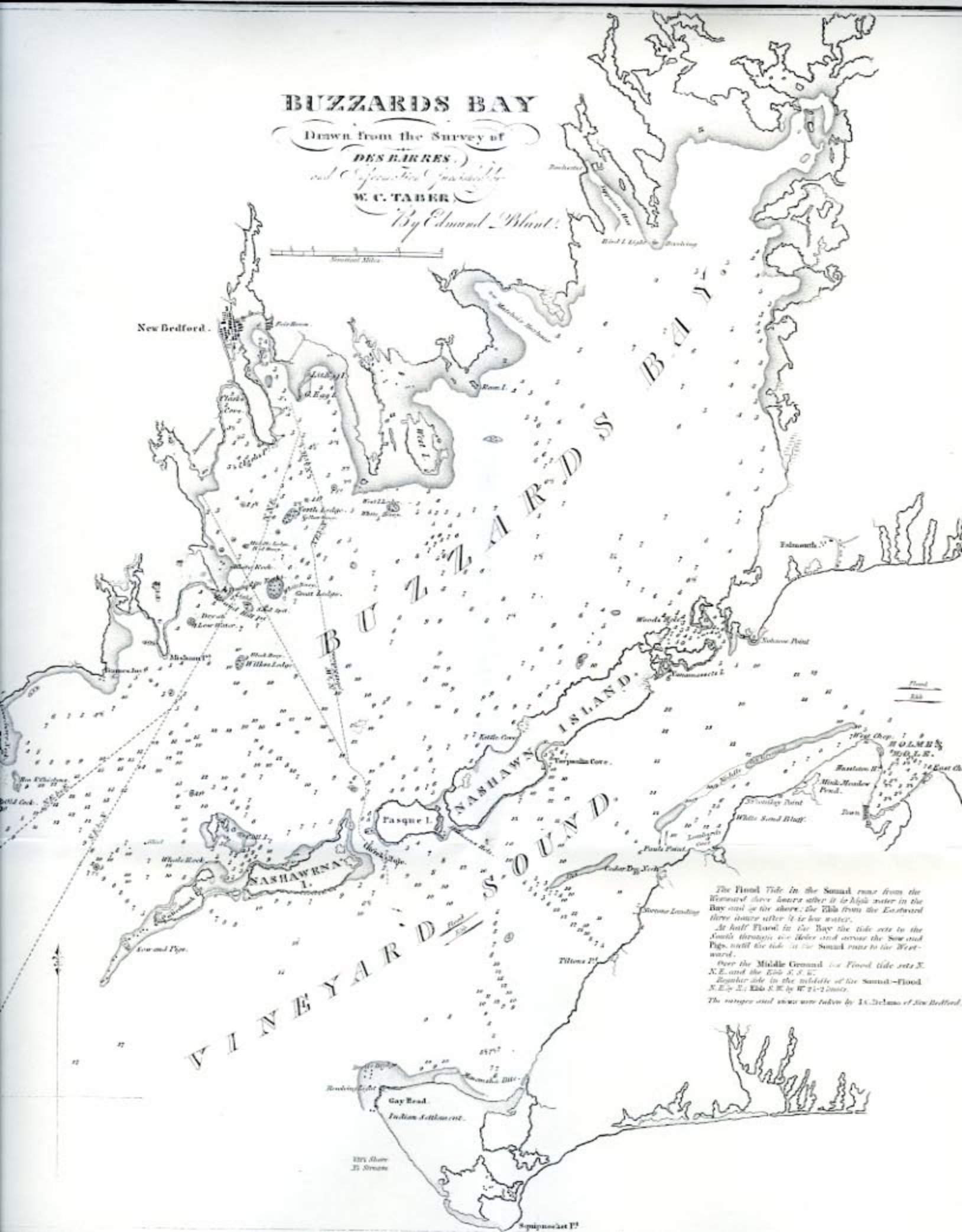
Drawn from the Survey of

DES BARRES,

and *Supplemental* Journals by

W. C. TABER.

By Edward Blount.



New Bedford.

BUZZARDS BAY

NASHAWNA SOUND

VINEYARD SOUND

The Flood Tide in the Sound runs from the Westward above lower other it is high water in the Bay and in the shore; the Ebb from the Eastward three quarters after it is low water.
 At half Flood in the Bay the tide sets to the South through the Hole and across the Sand and Pigs; until the tide in the Sound runs to the Westward.
 Over the Middle Ground in Flood tide sets N. E. and the Ebb S. S. E.
 Regular tide in the middle of the Sound—Flood N. E. by E.; Ebb S. W. by W. 2 1/2 miles.
 The ranges and waves are taken by 13. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

Gay Head
Indian Settlement

Spruce Point