

The current is mostly downward, although the tide is felt about ten miles above its mouth. The ebb sets off shore some three or four miles, and may be known by the discoloration of the water, which just without the bar is comparatively fresh. The depth at high water on the bar is two and a half fathoms, and the bar is a changing one.

No springs were observed in the vicinity, or any trace of running water, except in the river. The water from the rains collects in the depressions, and forms large ponds, covering acres of ground, but only a few inches in depth.

The time of our visit corresponded in season to our midsummer months, and the mean temperature was found to be 73°. The winters are represented as very mild; snow does fall, but it disappears in a few hours. Ice is seldom seen, though frosts appear to be frequent in the winter. January, February, March, and April, are the least tempestuous months.

The vegetation of the upland bears the marks of long-continued droughts, in an absence of trees, and the roots of plants penetrating vertically. The stunted appearance of the shrubs, branching from their base, their branches dense, rigid, and impenetrable, usually growing into spines; the smallness of the leaves, and their texture which is dry, coriaceous, and hardly deciduous; together with the general brown aspect of the landscape, all denote a vegetation adapted to endure or escape drought.

There was formerly some trade here with Boston and New York, in hides, horns, bones, and tallow, in exchange for cotton and woollen goods of a warm fabric, hardware, crockery, boots and shoes, a few articles of furniture, spirits, and tobacco, all of which are bartered at an enormous profit. Considerable quantities of salt are shipped round to Buenos Ayres. Vessels discharging or taking in a cargo here, pay twelve and a half cents per ton. Vessels stopping without discharging pay half duty; vessels for refreshments are permitted to remain twenty-five days free of duty, after that time they pay half duty. This duty includes pilotage and all other charges; but the governor seems to have the power to exact the full duty whenever he thinks proper.

Sarsaparilla abounds in this section of the country.

As the bar is a shifting one, no permanent directions can be given, nor can any survey be relied on. The annual freshets and gales of wind that take place from May to October, often change the position of the bar. According to the pilots, it had recently undergone a change, and the depth of water was three feet less on it than had been before. Even the direction had been altered from southeast-by-south, to southeast, by compass.