

Dr. Carpenter had brought with him Charlevoix's maps of the river mouths or "passes," published 112 years ago, and referring to the state of things about 130 years ago. We were surprised to find how accurately this survey represents, for the most part, the number, shape, and form of the mud-banks and bayous, or channels, as they now exist around the Balize. The pilots, to whom we showed the charts, admitted that one might imagine them to have been constructed last year, were it not that bars had been thrown across the mouths of every bayou, because they are no longer scoured out as they used to be when the principal discharge of the Mississippi was at this point. We then went within a mile of the old Spanish building, called the Magazine, correctly laid down in Charlevoix's map, and now 600 yards nearer the sea than formerly, showing that the mud-banks have given way, or that the salt water has encroached in times when a smaller body of fresh water has been bringing down its sediment to this point.

The southwest pass is now the principal entrance of the Mississippi, and till lately there was eighteen feet water in it, but the channel has grown shallower by two feet. When it is considered that a fleet of the largest men-of-war could sail for a thousand miles into the interior, were it not for the bars thrown across the entrance of each of the mouths or passes, one can not wonder that efforts should have been made to deepen the main channel artificially. But no human undertaking seems more hopeless; for, after a great expenditure of money in 1838 and 1839, and the excavation, by means of powerful steam dredges, of a deep passage, the river filled up the entire cavity with mud during a single flood.

One of the chief pilots told us, that since 1839, or in six years, he had seen an advance of the prominent mouths of the river of more than a mile. But Linton, the oldest and most experienced of them, admitted that the three passes called the northeast, southeast, and southwest, had in the last twenty-four years only advanced one mile each. Even this fact would furnish no ground for estimating the general rate at which the delta advances, for on each of these narrow strips of land, or river-banks, the sea