

# OYSTER ROCKS IN JAMES RIVER BARREN

Distressing Condition Brought Great  
Fleet of Accomac Boats' to  
Hampton Roads.

FOITY-FOUR SHIPS GOT 17 BUSHELS

Men Who Have Tonged the Bivalves  
From the State Bed During the  
Past Twenty-five Years Say There  
Are No Oysters to be Found This  
Season.

According to reports brought to  
Hampton yesterday the state oyster  
rocks in James river are entirely  
barren and the season, so far as the  
men who make their living off the  
state rocks are concerned, will prove  
a dismal failure.

The reports of the distressing con-  
dition were brought here by oyster-  
men from Saxis' Island, Accomac  
county, who have oystered in James  
river during the past twenty-five  
years, and who declare that condi-  
tions were never so unfavorable. The  
returning oystermen composed a fleet  
of 44 boats and more than 125 men.  
The men are en route back to their  
homes on Saxis' Island, where they  
will have to engage in other voca-  
tions.

The oystermen declare that they  
spent all day Tuesday and until 10  
o'clock yesterday dredging the state  
rocks in the James river, but the en-  
tire fleet of 44 boats succeeded in  
picking up only seventeen bushels  
of the bivalves from the rocks. This  
is considered a very small showing  
for one boat. Realizing that the oy-  
sters are not to be had the Accomac  
tongers determined to return to their  
homes. One of the returning men  
said yesterday that he has been tong-  
ing oysters from the state rocks for  
the past twenty-five years and this is  
the first season that has proven a  
complete failure.

It was said that the barrenness of  
the rocks is due to the fact that pi-  
rates operated in the river during  
the summer season. The Accomac  
men declare that they were informed  
by men living along the James that  
as many as twenty-five gasoline boats  
have been seen dredging the beds  
at night during the past summer and  
that the pirates have been exceed-  
ingly active throughout the entire closed  
season. This is said to explain the  
absolute barrenness of the rocks.

It was also said that most of the  
tongers from York and Elizabeth City  
counties, who went to the James riv-  
er Monday night, will return within  
a day or two as they were convinced  
that the scarcity of the bivalves will  
be the means of great loss to them  
if they continue the unprofitable  
search of the rocks.

The news from James river will  
cause great sorrow throughout this  
section of Virginia, as hundreds of  
men make a good living by oysiering  
the state beds during the first of  
the season.