

# 2554

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1901

U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.  
*D. H. Tittmann*, Superintendent.  
State: *Alaska*  
DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.  
*Hydrographic Sheet No. 2554*  
LOCALITY:  
*Eastern end of Valdez  
Arm from the Narrows  
to Valdez*  
1901.  
CHIEF OF PARTY:  
*H. P. Ritter*

U. S. C. & G. SURVEY.  
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# 2554

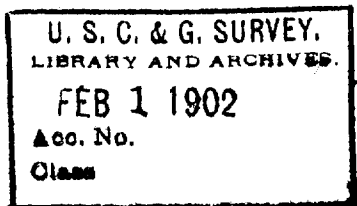
JAN. 31. 1902. 02291

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UNITED STATES COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY,

WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 31-1902.

Descriptive Report to accompany  
Hydrographic Sheet no. 2554.



Title:

Treasury Department  
U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey  
O. H. Tittman, Superintendent.

Hydrography  
Eastern End of Valdez Arm  
from the Narrows to Valdez.  
Prince William Sound  
Alaska.

by Party of Homer O. Ritter, Assistant.

Scale  $\frac{1}{20000}$ .

Observers:- Homer O. Ritter, Assistant.  
William Bowic,  
B. A. Baird, Aid.

Recorder:- J. Sandgren - Coxswain:- Chas. Fick  
F. O. Laine

Boatsman:- Chas. Eklund  
R. E. Carson.

Tide Observers:- F. Hudson, John Nelson, F. O. Laine,  
R. E. Carson.

U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY,

WASHINGTON, D. C.,

....., 18.....

Statistics:-

Date 1901	Letter	Number of				Vessel.
		Vol. No.	Angles	Soundings	Miles Geog.	
Aug. 28	A	1	29	18	5.5	St. Taku
" 29	B	1	71	42	14.5	- do -
" 30	C	1	89	56	12.0	- do -
" 31	D	1	40	28	7.0	- do -
Sept. 2	E	1	42	26	7.0	- do -
" 3	F	1	99	132	14.0	- do -
" 4	G	1	34	33	4.0	- do -
" 17	H	1	48	27	7.0	- do -
" 20	I	1	49	38	7.3	- do -
" 21	K	1	104	76	14.2	- do -
" 23	L	1	76	83	10.5	- do -
" 7	a	2.	67	276	7.6	Whaleboat
" 12	b	2	260	1245	14.7	- do -
" 14	C	2+3	212	871	11.9	- do -
" 25	d	3	255	492	12.4	- do -
" 26	e	3	79	182	5.4	- do -
Total	16.	3	1554	3625	155.0	35 □ Miles

Note: The soundings are expressed in fathoms and show the depth at the plane of reference (Harmonic Tide Plane for this region.)

This plane is 9.0 feet below Mean Sea Level.  
 " " " 3.9 " " " Low Water.  
 " " " 13.9 " " " High "

The plane of reference reads 2.07 feet on "Camp Bobbie" Tide Staff.

Mean rise and fall of tides	9.95 ft.	} Aug + Sept 1901.
Lowest tide observed on tide staff	2.9 "	
Highest " " " " "	18.9 "	

For description of tide staff - B.M.s. -  
 reduction of soundings etc. see  
 Tide and Sounding Records  
 Prince William Sound, Alaska 1901.

The plane of reference for above tidal  
 data was deduced from the field  
 records and furnished by the  
 Tidal Division Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> + 11<sup>th</sup> 1901.

H. P. R.

Local Names:

\* Valdez Arm: The name of the entire arm from Pt. Freemantle to extreme eastern end.

Authority - mariners and local usage - Ritter

\* On the old maps and some of the recent Recon. Sketch Maps of the War Dep. and Geol. Survey the name of "Port Valdez" is given for this stretch.

Port Valdez - Extreme eastern end of the Arm in vicinity of town of Valdez.

Authority: Local usage  
Mariners - Ritter  
and War Dep. Map of vicinity of Valdez.

Valdez (town)

Authority: Articles of Incorporation of town.

Mineral Creek

" Local usage -

Gold "

" " "

Shoup Glacier

" War Dep. Maps.

	authority.
{ Valdez narrows -	Local usage -
{ Stanton "	Mariners - Ritter authority: War Dep. Maps.
Entrance Island	" " " "
Swanport	" Local usage <sup>and</sup> " " " "
Jackson Pt.	" " " " " " " " " " " "
Fort Lisicum	" War Dep. Maps.
Lower River	" " " " " "

The correct spelling of Valdez  
is Valdez not Waldes.

Description of Valdez Arm:-

Valdez Arm is the northeastern one of the numerous long, deep & comparatively narrow waterways entering into Prince William Sound.

From Pt. Freemantle at the western end to the town of Valdez at the extreme eastern end of the arm is about 30 miles.

At the entrance the Arm is about 6 miles wide; from here the Arm extends in a northeasterly (true) direction to the Narrows, 15 miles distant where the width for a short distance is less than a mile but soon widens out again, the Arm taking an easterly direction and having a width of from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 miles to the end.

Both sides of the Arm are flanked by mountains 4000. to 6000. ft high.

The shore between Pt. Freemantle and the Narrows is rocky, bold and precipitous and is indented by one small bay.

The southern shore in this stretch is ~~is~~ indented by two narrow bays of considerable length,

Where these bays join the Arm the shore



is somewhat broken up with small islands and numerous rocks.

The eastern end of the Arm is almost entirely landlocked, surrounded by mountains 4000. to 6000ft. high.

Area sounded:-

The area sounded comprised the eastern end of Valdez Arm, from a short distance east of the Narrows to the town of Valdez at the head of the arm.

This part of the Arm is about 12 miles long and has a width of from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 miles.

The general character of this part of the Arm is that of a deep trough with a flat bottom and steep sides, both where the sides reach the surface at the rocky shore and at the edge of the extensive mud flats which are found at the eastern end and along the north shore of this part of the Arm.

The depth over the main body of this area varies from 100 fathoms at the eastern to 140 fathoms at the western end.

The south shore of the eastern end of the Arm is rocky with numerous

small islands and rocks close to shore, but the deep water generally extends close up to them.

About half way between the narrows and the eastern end of the arm is a circular sand spit about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile long with a steep front outside of the low water shore line; on the spit a small sawmill plant was in continuous operation during the season when the survey was made.

The logs were cut in some of the bays west of the narrows and towed to the mill and made into building material.

Two miles east of the spit a <sup>small</sup> outlying island (Jackson Pt.) joined <sup>to the mainland</sup> at its eastern end by a sand neck forms a small harbor called Swanport; here the Alaska Commercial Co. have built (1898) a wharf & warehouse.

Just east of Jackson Pt. is the military Post "Fort Liscum". Here the Government has built (1900) a wharf extending from the shore <sup>out</sup> to deep water.

A short distance east of the Government.

wharf the H. W. shore is fronted by a mud flat which extends all along the entire eastern end of the Arm, in front of the town of Valdez and along the north shore 3 miles west of the town where a low rocky bluff begins which extends several miles to the westward.

At the western end of the bluff quite an extensive valley heads into the mountains.

This valley is drained by a large creek (Mineral Creek) at the mouth of which is a mud flat extending <sup>along the shore</sup> several miles to the westward where it again meets the foot of the mountain; From here the deep water close to the rocky shore extends as far as the bay which terminates at the base of Shoup Glacier.

This bay which is just east of the Narrows is about a mile wide and two miles long. Across its mouth stretches a sand barrier which is nearly dry the entire distance at low water.

This bay is often filled with floating ice some of which escapes into the Arm when wind and tide are favorable.

Valdez:-

The town of Valdez is situated on an extensive and comparatively level gravel morain which starts at the shore and has a gradual ascending slope inland to the foot of Valdez Glacier about 4 miles distant.

In front of the town this morain extends from the high water shore to deep water (where it slopes off abruptly) for a distance of from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile.

This part of the morain submerged at high water from a few feet to several fathoms is bare at low water stages and covered with mud.

The town had its beginning in the Spring of 1898. when it was the landing place of many of the thousands of gold hunters going into the Copper River Country. Since that time it has gradually assumed a more permanent status. It now (1901) consists of some 325 dwellings ranging from tent shacks and log cabins to three story frame buildings.

There are a number of establishments carrying quite a stock of goods selected with reference to local needs.

There are hotels, restaurants, saloons two or three churches a Post office, U.S. Custom House, Town Hall etc.

The town is now (1901) incorporated and under municipal rule.

From here starts the Government trail and Telegraph Line into the interior of Alaska. They are now in course of construction by the War Department

The Alaska <sup>overland</sup> Mail route between Valdez and Eagle City on the Yukon River starts from here. Pack horses in summer and dogs + sleds in winter are used.

During the season 1901. three regular lines of steamers making monthly trips, stopped at Valdez both on their westward and eastward runs.

One of the lines operated by the Alaska Commercial Company, ran between Seattle and Kodiak, touching

at way ports.

The second line - operated by the Pacific Steam Whaling Co. (now 1902. The Pacific Packing <sup>and</sup> Navigation Co.) ran between Seattle and Cooks Inlet, ~~touching at~~ touching at way ports.

The third line <sup>also</sup> operated by the latter company ran between Juneau and Unalaska touching at way ports.

All the vessels carried the U.S. mail.

In addition a number of tramp steamers and government transports came to Valdez (or Fort Lisicum) during the season.

At present the cargoes of the ships are lightered ashore or put on shore at low water and carted to town.

The Pacific Steam Whaling Co. had a whariboat moored in front of the town upon which they discharged the freight.

Future importance of Locality

at present the indications are that this locality will be of considerable importance in the near future, and is destined to be the starting point of one of the principal all american routes into the interior of Alaska.

It has the advantage that the largest ocean steamers afloat can come from the ocean through Prince William Sound and up Valdez Arm to its extreme eastern end during every month of the year and at any stage of the tide.

The mineral resources of this section and the country in the interior accessible from here, promises to be of importance

Respectfully  
Homer P. Ritter  
Asst. U.S. Geol. Survey

Applied to Plan 8519 L.S.S. Oct. '46