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Department of Commerce and Labor
COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

W. H. Murray
Superintendent.

State: *Alaska*

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Hyd. Sheet No. *2768*

LOCALITY:

*Wingham Island to
Martin Islands in-
cluding Satella Bay*

1906

CHIEF OF PARTY:

W. C. Hodgkins

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Descriptive Report
Company Hydrographic Sheet No. 2768

MAR 17 3 51 P M Wigham Island to Martin Islands

Controller Bay region

ON ORIGINAL
DOCUMENT

FILE:
REFERRED: Alaska
ASSISTANT IN CHARGE
1905

ASSISTANT IN CHARGE

The work shown on this sheet was done under instructions calling for such a survey as could be completed in two or three days, of the approaches to the Martin Islands and Palm Point and also of the channel between Cave Point and Kanak Island. As a matter of fact, only three good days were available for the hydrography, the weather being very unfavorable during most of the time the Patterson was in this district.

There is little to be said under most of the heads noted in the Instructions for Descriptive Reports, as the country is almost entirely unsettled and there is no harbor, in the ordinary sense of the term. The following notes are based upon my personal observations while in this vicinity, between October 14 and 25, 1905.

Around the outer Martin Island the water is bold, the five-fathom curve closely bordering the island, while the depths a little further from the shore range from six to eight fathoms on the northwest and from nine to eleven fathoms on the southeast side.

A rocky bar connects the two islands and has from four to four and a half fathoms in mid passage, shoaling to two fathoms a little to the southward.

The inner island, called by some Whale Island, lies on the edge of a flat which extends from the main shore near Cape Martin and the water around this island is less bold, the three-fathom curve diverging rapidly from each side and the flat between the island and the main land being nearly or quite dry at low tide.

The stretch of coast between the islands and the head of Katalla (Catella) Bay is foul and should not be approached within a half mile or within the five-fathom curve until east of the meridian of the village, when one can safely run in to an anchorage in four fathoms or less, if desired.

The bottom is generally hard sand, but good holding ground, and when there is not too much swell from the southward an anchorage for temporary purposes may be found almost anywhere in the area surveyed, except where dangers are indicated. The Patterson anchored on each side of the Martin Islands, riding comfortably through a moderate northeaster while at the western anchorage, but when the swell began to set in from the southward the berth became uncomfortable and I ran across to an anchorage under the lee of Kayak Island.

The Patterson also lay for two or three nights in Katalla Bay, a mile or more to the southeastward of the village, and rode easily enough, though she rolled a good deal at times under the joint effect of the swell from seaward and of a current setting along shore. This seemed to be a tidal current, setting to the eastward with the flood and to the westward with the ebb.

With strong winds and heavy seas from the southward, the only good anchorage is in Controller Bay, at the forks of the channel which enters east of Kanak Island. This entrance is perfectly safe and easy when the weather

is clear enough to see the breakers on the dry shoals on either side and to see the range of Point Hey with the inner shore of Kanak Island, which indicates that the upper end of the straight channel has been reached.

With heavy weather, however, this anchorage is by no means comfortable, as the strong tidal currents cause the ship at some stage of the tide to lie across the wind and make her ride heavily. The bottom is mud, on top of sand, and seems to afford good holding ground, as the Patterson rode out some pretty heavy weather here without starting her anchor, though surging on the cable at times.

In the vicinity of Kayak settlement, the water seems to be rather shoal, though this locality has not been surveyed. If the weather had been more propitious, I should have examined it in connection with the work herein described, but under the circumstances it seemed impracticable to do so.

Vessels with passengers or freight for this region usually anchor a mile or two outside, in the bight formed by Kayak and Wingham Islands, where there is some degree of shelter from northerly or easterly winds. In southerly or westerly weather shelter could be found to the eastward of Wingham Island, but few vessels venture in here, on account of the lack of a survey.

Kayak and Wingham Islands are both high and can be seen a long distance in clear weather. The hills between Controller Bay and the Copper River are also prominent as seen from the offing. The northern horizon, in clear weather, is formed by the lofty mountains of the Saint Elias range. The southern extremity of Kayak Island, called Cape Saint Elias, is very conspicuous, both from its position and its castle like shape.

Almost all of the steamers engaged in the coasting trade between Seattle and the ports on Prince William Sound and to the westward touch at Kayak, both on their way north and on their return. Coming from the eastward, they have to make Cape Saint Elias and to avoid the dangerous shoal which extends several miles to the southward from that promontory. I think that this is perhaps the most dangerous point on all this part of the Alaskan coast, on account of the large amount of commerce which passes here, the distance of the danger from shore, and the frequent occurrence of thick and stormy weather in this locality, especially during the winter months.

There are no lights, buoys, or other aids to navigation nor any life saving station or hospital. There are postoffices at Kayak, on Wingham Island, and at Catella, as the place is called by the inhabitants, or Catalla, according to the Postal Guide. The mails to the latter place are carried by launch from Kayak and supplies are obtained in the same way.

Small quantities of provisions and of kerosene oil are obtainable, but no large stocks are carried. Fresh water could probably be obtained by boating it from the streams which enter the head of Katalla Bay.

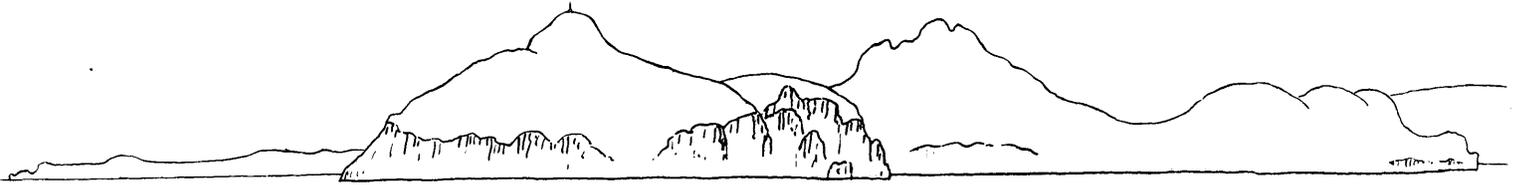
This region is said to contain considerable deposits of coal and oil and it has been proposed by parties interested to establish a port and shipping point at the Martin Islands. This seems of somewhat doubtful expediency, in view of the difficulty and expense of the harbor works which would probably be needed.

Some views of certain portions of this coast are appended.

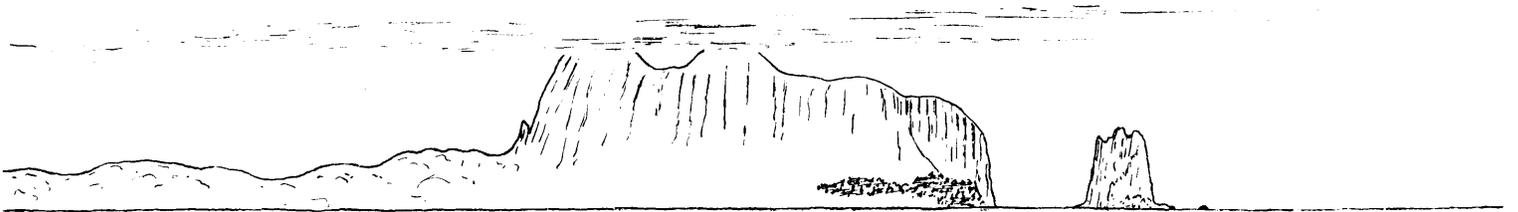
W. C. Hodgkins

March 16, 1906.

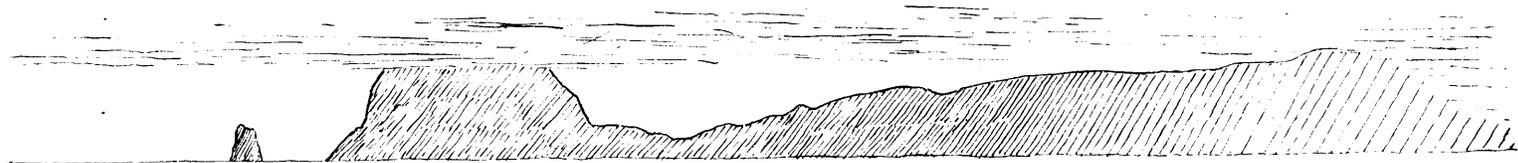
Sketches of Wingham and Kayak Islands



Wingham Island, Station "Green" on summit bearing S.E.(true) and 2 1/2 miles distant



Cape Saint Elias, bearing E.N.E.(magnetic) and about 5 miles distant



Cape Saint Elias, bearing N.W.(magnetic) and about 23 miles distant

Department of Commerce and Labor

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The ground is not well covered.
The plotting was well done, and
the records kept in a satisfactory manner.

H. L. Simpson

June 29 1906.