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Diag. Ct. No. 8502-1

Department of Commerce and Labor
COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

O. H. Tittmann
Superintendent.

State: *Alaska*

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

H Sheet No. *2860*

LOCALITY:

Anchorage Bay
Chignik Bay

1906

CHIEF OF PARTY:

W. C. Hodgkins

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RECEIVED
COAST AND
GEODETIC SURVEY

Descriptive Report
to accompany Hydrographic Sheet No. 2860
Anchorage Bay, Alaska
1906

MAR 26 3 18 PM 1907

FILE REFERRED:
ANCHORAGE IN CHIEF
Anchorage Bay is a relatively small indentation on the southern side of the large sheet of water called Chignik Bay, which enters the southeastern coast of the Alaska Peninsula near the Semidi Islands, these islands and Chirikof, further to seaward, lying due east (magnetic) from the mouth of Chignik Bay.

Chignik post-office is located at Anchorage Bay which derives its importance from its proximity to the valuable salmon fisheries in Chignik Lagoon, a few miles further west, this being the nearest harbor for sea-going vessels.

A large cannery operated by the Northwestern Fisheries Company is situated here, while the cannery of the Alaska Packers Association is on the eastern side of the lagoon. The station ship of the Association, upon which the crew and supplies for the season were brought to Alaska and upon which the force returned in the fall with the packed product, was moored here throughout the season at the point indicated by the anchor marked "Balclutha", the name of the ship.

The anchorage so indicated is considered the best in the bay, that in the cove to the northward where some protection would be afforded by the shingle spit being avoided on account of bad holding ground. The Patterson anchored to the northward of the Balclutha's berth, and directly off the cannery wharf. The depth of water was nearly twenty fathoms and the bottom was of hard sand but the anchor held well and no trouble was experienced while lying there, the strongest wind during the short stay of the Patterson not exceeding force seven of the Beaufort scale and blowing from the neighboring shore.

The anchorage is exposed to the north-northwest and heavy winds from that direction are said to be sometimes dangerous, though infrequent during the summer.

The country is generally mountainous, the peaks a little back from the coast being sharp, rocky pinnacles while the summits near the shore are lower and rounded in outline and are covered with grass, moss and sometimes low bushes.

These lower hills often look as though they were composed of molded drift but that they are really formed of solid rock rather thinly covered with soil is shown by the sections exposed at the coast line, from which they rise in lofty cliffs which are all nearly vertical and which sometimes actually overhang. A series of such cliffs, at the northern ends of as many spurs from the main axis of uplift and separated by low valleys, forms the southern side of Chignik Bay and furnishes a marked characteristic of the landscape.

The rock lies in nearly horizontal strata which are frequently of strongly contrasting colors, some bands being of a very light gray tint while others are composed of a an inky black and very hard rock which, when seen from a distance, much resembles coal.

The shores are generally quite bold and no breakers were observed except upon the beach itself or upon the drying reef which extends from "Eagle Rock", at the western point of the entrance to Anchorage Bay. As a rule, the beach is covered with heavy shingle or with still angular fragments of rock which have fallen from the cliffs too recently to have been rounded by wave action. In some places the beach is a solid table of rock swept clean of all loose material, or nearly so.

It would appear that the coast line recedes slowly through the undermining of the cliffs by the sea and the fall of large and small fragments to the beach to be milled into shingle by the force of the sea. There seems to be a tendency for the shingle to travel along shore to the southwestward, probably as a result of heavy easterly storms which are frequent in this region, resulting in the formation of the shingle spit which forms the eastern point of the entrance to Anchorage Bay, its shore continuing in a direct line with that below the cliffs for about a mile before the entrance to the bay is reached. The outer shore of this spit is the shoalest part of the approaches to the harbor.

There are no forests in this region, but the lower slopes of the hills are sometimes covered with dense brush and scattered clumps or single bushes are to be seen in some places. There is no cultivation of the land in the ordinary sense of the term, but there are some very small vegetable gardens. The only business is the salmon packing and the only means of communication is by water.

There seem to be no special dangers in the approach to the anchorage so long as a reasonable distance from the shore is preserved. As the entrance is nearly a mile wide at its narrowest part, there should be no difficulty in keeping in the fairway, but care should be taken not to approach the shingle spit closely.

Few vessels visit this bay except the ships of the two cannery companies and the mail steamer "Dora", which calls here on her monthly trips from Valdez to Unalaska and return. One or two revenue cutters may call during the packing season and small trading or fishing vessels may sometimes seek harbor here.

When approaching the entrance to Chignik Bay from seaward the prominent headland called Castle or Tuliumnit Point will easily be recognized by its peculiar castellated formation. It is composed chiefly of light colored rock varied by bands of black and has been worn into many curious pinnacles and buttresses. From one point of view, several small pinnacles give the effect of a group of men standing on the summit.

West of Castle Point lies Castle Bay, quite a large sheet of water, which seems to have been unexplored. Westward from Castle Bay, four ridges separated by low valleys extend to the shore, where they terminate in bold cliffs. Still further west is another prominent headland, which forms the eastern point of Chignik Lagoon. As this is approached, another shorter and lower ridge comes into view to the eastward of the former. This ridge, forming the division between Anchorage Bay on the east and Doris or Mud Bay on the west is the fifth of the series of six ridges west of Castle Bay.

Anchorage Bay is not distinctly made out until nearly abreast of it, when the smoke stacks of the cannery and the masts of any large vessels in harbor will be seen across the shingle spit at the entrance. "Eagle Rock" is a conspicuous detached rocky islet over 80 feet in height and standing upon the reef of rocks which extends for a distance of nearly 500 meters from the bluff point at the western side of the entrance. This reef dries at low water of spring tides and partially at every low water and has upon it a second, but smaller, islet about 100 meters from Eagle Rock and nearly midway between it and the outer end of the reef. To the westward of this reef the shore is foul for some distance from the beach and should not be closely approached.

Chignik Bay is generally deep and the soundings taken seem to indicate that the bottom is so irregular that the lead would probably be of comparatively little service in entering in thick weather, at any rate in advance of a regular survey.

W. C. Hodgkins

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Sheet 2860.
Anchorage ~~Bay~~ Chignik Bay Alaska.

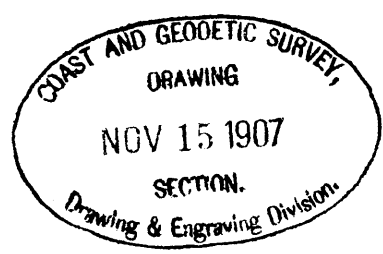
The field work is good, and seems to be all that is necessary to develop the Harbor, which is practically free from shoals.

Oct 16 1907.

J. C. Down

Verified: J. G. Watkins

11-5-07



approved.