

2922

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S.H.F.
2922
1907

Department of Commerce and Labor
COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

O. H. Tittmann
Superintendent.

State: *Alas.*

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DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Hydrographic Sheet No. *2922*

LOCALITY:

*Hodiak Island, narrow
Strait and vicinity of
Spruce Island*

1907

CHIEF OF PARTY:

Or. C. Hodgkins

2922

Descriptive Report

to accompany Hydrographic Sheet No 2922

Alaska

Narrow Strait and vicinity of Spruce Island

Scale 1:20000

Surveyed in 1907 by the party on the Steamer Patterson

W. C. Hodgkins, Commanding.

RECEIVED
BY ASSISTANT IN CHARGE
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Of the development around the northern and eastern shores of Spruce Island little need be said, as these shores are totally unfrequented by vessels of any class. The survey shows that they are generally bold and that in case of necessity they may be rather closely approached.

The passage on the south side of Spruce Island, separating it from Kodiak Island, is the regular route for vessels going to or from Kodiak by way of Kupreanof and Shelikof Straits.

In a general way, this passage is converging, or funnel shaped, with the wide end to the eastward. In consequence, a heavy swell sets into the passage with easterly gales, but this generally loses its force to a great extent toward the western end of the strait.

The water is too deep for convenient anchorage throughout the greater part of the strait and some portions are foul. There is a fairly good anchorage, somewhat exposed to the easterly swell, in the cove off the village of Usinka or Ouzinkie at the southwestern point of Spruce Island. A smaller and less

desirable anchorage, though better sheltered from the swell, is in the tapering cove on the south, or Kodiak, side of the strait, directly opposite the former. The main objection to this cove is the lack of swinging room. It is also somewhat exposed to the northwestward.

There are numerous dangers near the shores of this strait, especially near Spruce and Miller Capes on the Kodiak side and near Nelson Island on the Spruce Island side. So far as known, all of these dangers show at low water and many at high tide. The mid channel is believed to be free from dangers, and a course which will keep the narrow western end of the strait just open is thought to be the best.

At the western end of the strait the passage is very much contracted by a small island on the north side and by the southwest point of Spruce Island beyond, both of which closely approach the Kodiak shore. Furthermore, a detached rock, which shows at ordinary high water, lies a little to the westward of the islet and to the southward of the line from it to the southwest point of Spruce Island. Abreast of this rock a gravel spit makes out for a short distance from the Kodiak shore. It is therefore necessary to watch the steering carefully at this point and to hold a mid channel course.

When up with the southwest point of Spruce Island, called Usinka Head, the northern shore should be kept well aboard, especially at low water, to avoid a shelving reef on which kelp

grows freely, making off from the opposite point on the Kodiak shore.

Two and a quarter miles westward of Usinka Head is a rather low dark cape called Shakmanof Point (locally "Chiniak") and about half way to it are an island on the south side of the passage and a reef which bares at half tide on the north. The course leads nearly for Shakmanof Point, keeping it open on the port bow, and passing about midway between the island and the reef, after which one bears a little to the northward of West to give Shakmanof Point a berth of half a mile.

This island is low and narrow and from its northern end a bank makes out across the channel but so far as known there are no dangerously shoal spots except one lump with about 17 feet at low water, which lies pretty well over on the north side of the channel.

The reef on the north side of the passage, called on the Russian charts "Tri Brata" or "Three Brothers", is of some extent. It has several rocks which show at low water, one of these being a little distance to the northward of the others, which form a clump. At about half tide two or three of the rocks in the clump show, but the detached rock is then covered. When the tide is low enough for all the rocks to show, a passage may be safely made to the eastward and northward of the reef, hauling close around Usinka Head and giving the northern detached rock a berth of a quarter of a mile. There is no

special advantage in such a course however unless bound to Afognak Bay or, in case of a very deep vessel passing at extremely low tide, wishing to avoid any chance of touching the 17 foot spot mentioned.

It is at very high water, however, that these dangers are most to be feared as they are then less easily distinguished. The Three Brothers Reef has a heavy growth of kelp which can generally be seen at some distance unless the sea is very rough; and the rock in the narrows usually has a breaker or ripple on it on the rare occasions when it is covered. At such times careful attention to the steering will avoid any danger.

The tidal currents in this region have no great force, except right in the narrows, where at spring tides they are rather powerful though not dangerously so. The eddies formed by the division of the stream by the small island off Usinka village sometimes give a little trouble in steering, especially in entering or leaving Usinka Cove by the western passage.

Respectfully submitted,

W. C. Hodgkins

Assistant Coast and Geodetic Survey,
Commanding.

September 19, 1908.

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MAR 23 1910

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Hyd Sheet No 2922

Apr. 23, 1908.

The ground is well covered outside of the 130 ft curve but the area between the curve and the shore is not sufficiently developed. The limits of reef and shoal should have been more carefully determined.

Positions 31 to 33 $\frac{1}{2}$, 20 to 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ + 40 $\frac{1}{2}$ not plotted on account of weak angles.

H. L. Simmons

June 10, 1908

The plotting and soundings were verified and, found to be all right, by

R. L. Johnston

Complete projection

J. G. W.

Applied to Chart No.

8534 (1935), 1:80000, by James W. McGuire.