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Department of Commerce and Labor
COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY

O. F. Fissmann
Superintendent.

State: *Alaska*

U. S. C. & G. SURVEY
OCT 19 1907
No.

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Topo Sheet No. *2805*

LOCALITY:

*Parts of Fugidas
& Lisianski Islands*

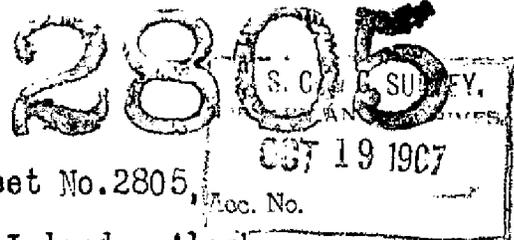
1906

CHIEF OF PARTY:

W. C. Hodgkins

2805

Descriptive Report



to accompany Topographic Sheet No. 2805,

COAST AND Parts of Tugidak and Sitkinak Islands, Alaska.
COSTUME SURVEY

OCT 18 These islands are of very diverse character and appearance, Sitkinak being composed of high hills, though with small areas of low ground at its eastern and western ends, while Tugidak is nowhere very high and, so far as shown on this sheet, is composed chiefly of sand flats subject to tidal overflow. The highest parts of these flats rise into low sand hills covered with coarse grass.

The shore of Sitkinak Island, for several miles westward from Valley Point, lies at the foot of lofty cliffs of earth, which are apparently composed of glacial drift. Embedded in this earth are many boulders, which fall upon the beach as the cliffs are undermined by the sea and remain to form rocky shoals as the shore recedes and make landing difficult except in very quiet weather. The smaller particles appear to be swept along shore by the current, in either direction according to the state of the tide and wind, forming the border of low land which is found at Flat Point and also at the west end of Sitkinak. Some of this material may also be swept out to sea by the ebb current, which runs with great velocity through the contracted passage between Sitkinak and Tugidak, and may perhaps go to form the shoals which appear to bar the southern approach to that opening.

For the general characteristics of Sitkinak Island, reference is made to the descriptive report accompanying Topographic Sheet No.2804, Eastern part of Sitkinak Islands.

The most striking characteristic of the northern part of Tugidak Island, the part shown on this sheet, is the fact that the beach is usually composed of heavy shingle overlaid with sand. As this part of the island is so low and flat, appearing to be little more than the top of a shoal which has built up a little above mean sea level, and is separated from the somewhat higher part of the island to the southward by water passages of some depth, through which swift tidal currents flow, this circumstance seems somewhat peculiar and may perhaps indicate that this part of the island, like the southern portion, was formerly a higher island composed of glacial material and that it has been entirely washed away by the action of the sea.

There are no trees on these islands and only occasional low alder bushes. On Sitkinak there are many streams, descending from the hills. On Tugidak there are few streams, but a good many small ponds, which would no doubt furnish drinking water in case of necessity.

On the low ground at the western end of Sitkinak Island, in which there is a small lagoon, are a few sod huts which are sometimes occupied in the summer time by native fishermen.

On the southern part of Tugidak Island, not shown on this sheet, there is a small gold mining camp. Placer gold occurs in the drift, which towards the southern end of the island forms cliffs from 200 to 400 feet high, and as these are undermined by the sea the fallen detritus is washed out by the miners, who secure in this way enough of the precious metal to induce them to continue their work, though the output is irregular and never very large.

From the southern extremity of the island to the break of the bluff a little north of Red Bluff trigonometric station the whole western shore is formed by a sand and shingle beach in front of nearly vertical earth cliffs.

The eastern side of the island is lower, the surface being gently rolling and sloping gradually to the eastern shore from the summit of the western cliffs.

The shores of this island are difficult to land upon except in very quiet weather as there is generally considerable surf, which is apt to be troublesome on account of a tendency to run diagonally upon the beach, in connection with the tidal current which usually runs swiftly along shore. When working on this beach, it is necessary to keep a careful watch upon the condition of the weather and the sea, as a heavy surf frequently makes with little warning and may make it difficult to get away from the beach.

The shore of West Sitkinak Island is foul to the westward of Valley Point and should not be closely approached and the opening between Sitkinak and Tugidak should moreover be avoided on account of the force of the ebb current setting through to the southward. The northern and western sides of Tugidak may generally be approached to a distance of a mile and sometimes more closely in good weather, by the careful use of the lead. In moderate weather and with the wind off shore, fairly good anchorage may be found at almost any desired point on the sandy flat surrounding this island, avoiding the eastern side as already noted. Care should be exercised when nearing the middle part of the western side of Tugidak, as a bank not yet surveyed lies some distance off shore. It appears to have depths of from three to five fathoms over it, but during thick weather with a heavy sea running the Patterson struck on this shoal and suffered some damage.

Considerable quantities of drift wood are found upon these beaches.

This survey was a compass reconnaissance executed by Mr. W.M. Steirnagle.

W. C. Hodgkins

Chief of Party.