

For the first half of the distance inward the north and south shores of the strait are parallel. The latter half branches out into broad and deep passages, bays, and channels.

Throughout, the strait is very deep. In mid-channel it has an average depth of one hundred fathoms, which is carried near shore on both sides. This extraordinary depth of water is maintained in all the channels and branches of the strait. Hood's Canal, for example, which is forty miles long and from one to two miles wide, has a "channel" depth of from fifty to sixty fathoms. Where it does shoal it performs the operation in water from thirty fathoms to five fathoms deep. The southern half of the Canal de Haro has from sixty to one hundred fathoms, while the northerly half, according to Stevens, "shows the more moderate soundings of from thirty to forty fathoms." The depth over the Sandy Hook entrance to the harbor of New York is twenty-one feet in the South channel, and twenty-two feet in the Gedney channel, at low water.

This tree of deep and secure harbors, whose trunk, Admiralty Inlet, is forty-six miles broad and forty miles long, surprised its Spanish, American, and British explorers with suddenly-discovered little harbors, like hidden fruit among thick leaves, pendent from bays and attached to canals—quiet, lovely nooks, embosomed in green woods, and so deep that squadrons of frigates could safely anchor there—so deep that the work at the windlass of lifting a ship's holding-tackle makes all English-speaking sailors swear, and all Spaniards invoke those saints who hold in guardianship imperiled or lazy seamen. So secreted by fanciful nature were these harbors of harbors—or so hidden by the mother-harbors were these baby-ports—so snuggled away were they and tucked up, with overhanging hills of foliage, with coverings of forest timber, and with narrow entrances whose uniformity of height and of leafy covering showed to the ordinary observer continuity of barrier, that Vancouver passed many by without seeing them, and the Spaniards did not find them, nor did the sharp eyes in the Yankee heads, Wilkes was captain over, detect them. But the lumbermen on the sound have found them—they, and the officers of the Coast Survey Service. And they are the loveliest bits of creation. One stands entranced on the deck of a vessel within their circles. Would that I had the wealth to covenant with man never to bring into these paradises of harbors the axe! The ideal sacrilege of chopping through the Garden of Eden to feed a saw-mill is realized daily here by the remorseless Americans who feed the hungry gangs of the Sound mills with the king tree and the queen trees of the world.