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September 12, 1932.

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed September 3, 1932

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

AN ALASKAN TIDAL WAVE

The erratic invasions of low shores that are generally known as "tidal waves," though they have no connection with true tides, are not common in high latitudes; hence some interest attaches to a case that occurred on the Bering Sea coast of Alaska, near the mouths of Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers, during the night of December 7-8, 1931, the details of which have only recently been reported. The sudden rise of the water along the shore, in some places to a height of 12 feet above ordinary high tide, was probably due to the waves produced by a storm that traveled north from the Aleutian Islands to Bering Strait.

According to reports collected by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, many houses were wrecked by the waves, kayaks, boats, fuel and lumber were widely scattered, and such objects, as well as blocks of sea ice, were carried far inland. At Apokak ice was piled 15 feet high on the tundra, which ordinary high tide never reaches. In the region near the north mouth of the Yukon the flood extended 7 miles inland and here ten dogs of a mail team were drowned. No loss of human lives has been reported.

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