



City of  
**VALDEZ**

**Mission:**

**"To cultivate an environment of opportunity,  
sustained prosperity, and  
well-being for all people of Valdez"**

November 21, 2023

# VALDEZ RISING

*“Suacit”*

*[Soo-Wa-Chit]*

*“The People From The Place That  
Rises Into View”*

[www.valdezrising.com](http://www.valdezrising.com)

# Valdez Rising – *Suacit*

## The Project

To open the new revitalized trails at Meals Hill, Alaska Community Foundation (ACF) is working in partnership with The Port Valdez Company (PVC) and the City of Valdez to develop a public art installation entitled *Valdez Rising – Suacit* [The People From The Place That Rises Into View]. We have worked with the City of Valdez and community leaders, including Anna Bateman and Diane Selanoff, the local tribal administrators, in a competitive selection design process to construct a public art experience that will highlight the history of the Community of Valdez, and the connection between its residents and the future.

## OLD TOWNSITE OR "HAZELETVILLE"

IN 1900 THE ORIGINAL DEBARKATION  
POINT FOR TRAVELLERS AND SUPPLIES ;  
PASSENGERS BEING LANDED BY SHIPS BOAT,  
ANIMALS BY SWIMMING ASHORE.

IN 1903 LAND WAS CLEARED AND BUILDINGS  
ERECTED: LATER THE COPPER RIVER AND NORTH-  
WESTERN RAILROAD PLANNED TO USE THIS SITE  
FOR ITS OCEAN TERMINAL. THESE PLANS  
WERE ABANDONED. IN 1911 MINING ACTIVITY  
UP MINERAL CREEK REMEVED INTEREST IN THE  
OLD TOWNSITE. THIS WAS SHORTLIVED, AND THE  
WELL-SHELTERED AREA OF A COUPLE THOUSAND  
ACRES (MOSTLY PRIVATELY-OWNED) WITH  
ACRES CLEARED THRU HEAVY TIMBER  
BECAME DORMANT. NATURE GRADUALLY  
TOOK OVER AND OBSCURING MAN'S  
WORK.

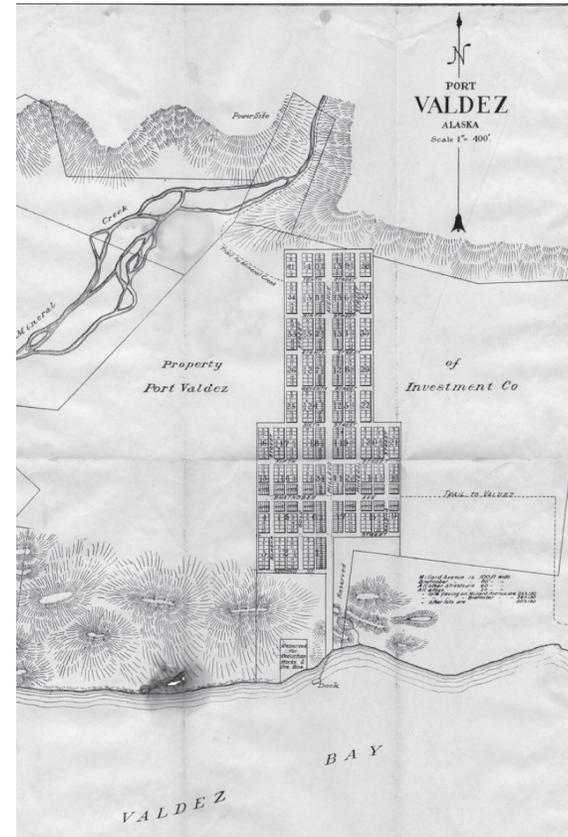
VALDEZ C of G

# 1901

“Juneau is full of talk about Valdez. Townsite is talked, and if any knew I had the papers in my grip which told where the town would be, likewise the railroad, they would be excited sure.”

—George C. Hazelet

The Port Valdez Investment Co.  
a.k.a “Hazelet’s Hay Ranch” or “Hazeletville”  
property sales plat.

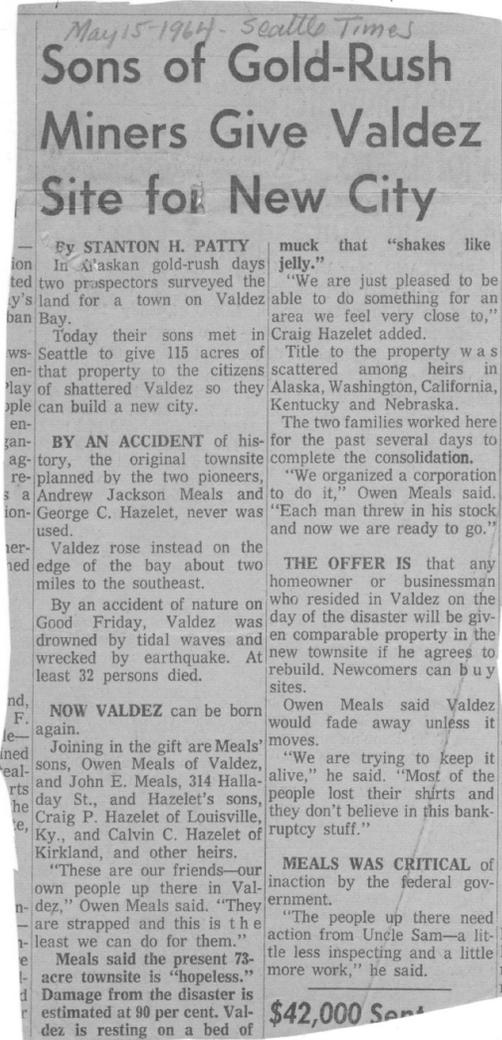


The Port Valdez Investment Co., a.k.a. “Hazelet’s Hay Ranch” or “Hazeletville” property sales plat. Courtesy of Mary Ellen Murphy Collection.

# 1964

*“Certainly, they can have the land. It’s a gift to the citizens of Valdez. I believe Valdez can come back—if we keep politics out of the decisions. The spirit here is good so far, but this town needs help—the kind of help the government hands out all the time to Europe and Asia. If we don’t get it, most of the people here will have to gather up what few assets they have and call it a day.”*

—Owen Meals, April 1964



**MEALS HILL TRAILHEAD**  
**Public Art Installation**  
**at**  
*“Hazelet & Meals Avenues”*

# **MEALS HILL PARKLANDS**

Meals Hill is 184 acres of public land located near the Valdez Ferry Terminal that is permanently protected by a conservation easement, ensuring it will remain open to the public for recreation and that its valuable wildlife habitat will remain undeveloped. It is a recreational destination for the City of Valdez and the many tourists that come to Valdez each year.

# **MEALS HILL PARKLANDS HISTORY**

In October 2019, The Port Valdez Company, Inc. (PVC) transferred 184 acres of land, known as "Meals Hill," to the City of Valdez to become a conservation easement. The land will remain undeveloped and used as a protected wildlife habitat and public recreation area.

The Great Land Trust facilitated the purchase of the property using Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS) Trustee Council funds. The Port Valdez Company worked with Great Land Trust, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program, the State of Alaska, and the City of Valdez to complete the transfer of the land. The City of Valdez manages the new public recreation area.

# The Port Valdez Co. & City of Valdez Sales Agreement

- **Following is the language in the Sales Agreement we must satisfy before any approval is granted found under 3. Terms of Sale para. (c) on page 3 of 29:**
- *In support of the enhancements contemplated herein, the Seller agrees upon the sale of said Property, to set aside in escrow ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$100,000.00) toward a goal of TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$250,000.00) in a matching grant fund to fund a design competition and production of an appropriate memorial that will recognize the family partnership of The Port Valdez Company, Inc., and its founders, George Cheever Hazelet and Andrew Jackson Meals. This partnership was instrumental in the founding of Valdez, Alaska and Cordova, Alaska during the Great Alaska Gold Rush of 1898 and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is the desire of The Port Valdez Company, Inc., not only to recognize its partnership, but the spirit of the many Alaskan partnerships that ushered the Alaska Territory into statehood and these United States of America. A committee of local and statewide leadership (“Design Committee”) shall be formed and chaired by The Port Valdez Company, Inc. If the \$250,000.00 goal is not matched or no matching-fund monies are raised to match the grant offering within three (3) years of the sale of the Property, the \$100,000.00 will revert back to The Port Valdez Company, Inc. An “appropriate memorial” means a memorial that both aesthetically blends with the natural features of the Property, ensures the protection of the Conservation Values as set forth in the Conservation Easement, and in all other ways is consistent with the terms and conditions of the Conservation Easement. At least 6 months prior to any planned construction or installation, the Design Committee shall forward any design concepts to the City and the Bureau of Land Management for review, comment, and finding of consistency. All enhancements to the Property contemplated in this paragraph shall be subject to approval by the applicable planning authority of the City and by the Valdez City Council.*

# Monument to two guys on horses pointing to the gold fields!

Founder A



Founder B



# **The Valdez Story**

Through community leadership meetings the “monument” became a “Public Art Installation” that tells the story of a community that refused to quit. A community story steeped in strength of character, resilience and persistence.

## **“Valdez Rising”**

A community space for conversations, reflection and contemplation of the future.

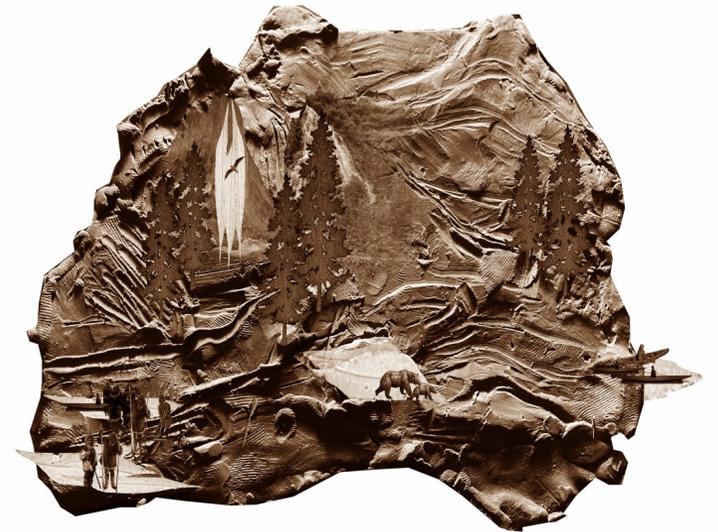
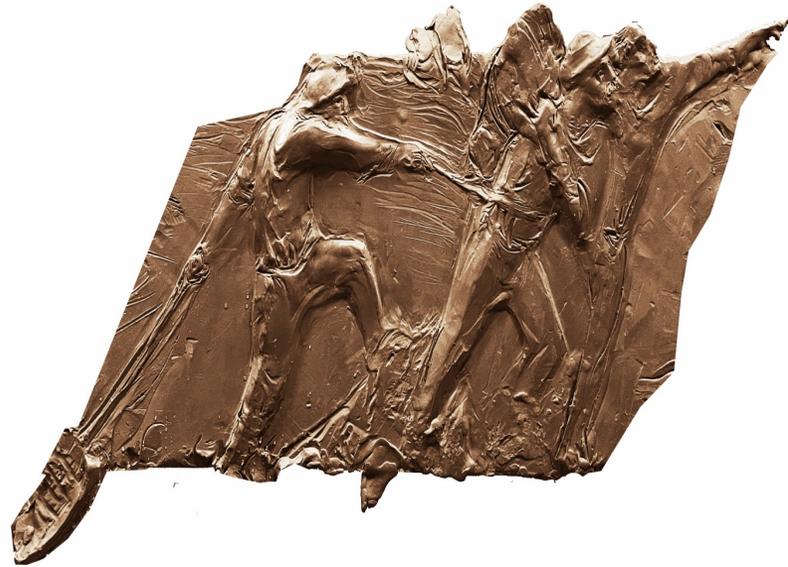
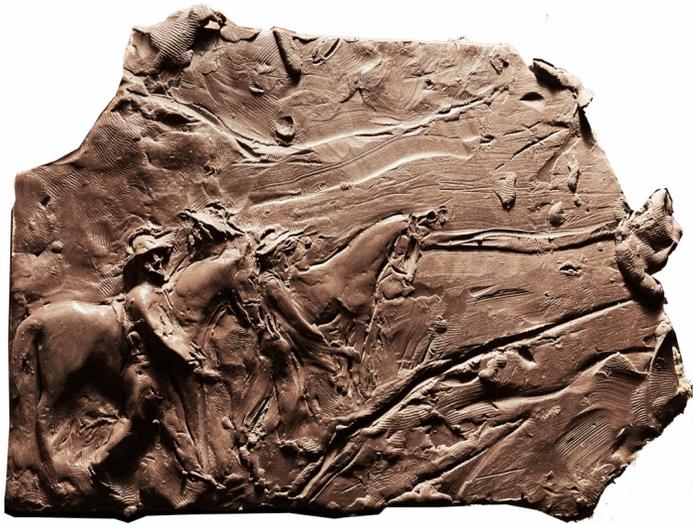




# Panels in Bas Relief

- Proposed materials for Meals Hill sculpture:
  - Three 4 feet X 6 feet Bronze (natural color and patina)
  - Lighting
  - Stone Monoliths
  - Embedment epoxy material & wall anchors

# December 21, 2021 City of Valdez Council Meeting



# May 5, 2023 Valdez Community Meeting



NOVEMBER  
21, 2023  
City of Valdez  
Council  
Meeting



### **Always Looking Forward**

In the early 1900s, city leaders George Cheever Hazelet and Andrew Jackson Meals dreamed of moving the original site of Valdez to higher, more stable ground. Long after they were gone, their vision was finally realized.

The 1964 earthquake was the defining moment. What is now known as "Old Town" was devastated. The descendants of both men responded by revitalizing the old partnership of 1898. They formed The Port Valdez Company to donate 115 acres of land, where the failed "Hazeletville" development once stood, so the City of Valdez could rebuild and thrive again.

### **Valdez Rising – Suacit "The People From the Place That Rises Into View"**

These sculptures at the gateway to the Meals Hill parklands and trails celebrate the history and culture of the City of Valdez and the collaborative spirit of those who built it. That spirit was inspired by the longtime leadership of George Cheever Hazelet and Andrew Jackson Meals, and the Native Alaskans they relied on. The lives of these two prospectors and uncommon entrepreneurs tell the story of the "many" who journeyed over the Valdez Glacier into the Alaskan Gold Fields in 1898. It was strength and character like theirs that built Valdez and led the Alaska Territory into statehood in 1959.

[A. Plaque ]

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[B. Plaque]

# VALDEZ RISING

## *“Suacit”*

*[Soo-Wa-Chit]*

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The lives of these two prospectors and uncommon entrepreneurs tell the story of the “many” who journeyed over the Valdez Glacier into the Alaskan Gold Fields in 1898. It was strength of character like theirs, persistence and resilience of common goals that built Valdez and led the Alaska Territory into statehood in 1959.

[C. Signature Plaque]

# VALDEZ RISING

## *“Suacit”*

“The People From the Place that Rises into View”

1898

George Cheever Hazelet, Andrew Jackson Meals, and Tl’adets (a.k.a. “Indian Charlie”) ascend the Valdez Glacier to find Gold and Copper but more importantly define the early “soul” of what would become

The Community of Valdez, Alaska

Founded 1901

Sculpture 2024, by Ion Onutan, Gegham Abrahamyan, Tsonivar Muradyan, Grigoriy Reva, Gar LaSalle – Classic Foundry, Seattle, Washington U.S.A.

Donated by: The Port of Valdez Company, Harris Sand & Gravel Company

and the Citizens of Valdez

[www.valdezrising.com](http://www.valdezrising.com)



# Information added to existing website: [www.valdezalaska.org](http://www.valdezalaska.org)

Page 1:

Title: VALDEZ RISING “SUACIT” – The People From The Place That Rises Into View  
(with photos of the art installation)

Page 2:

Meals Park Map (with “you are here”)

- Links to the three Panel narratives
- Links to:
  - History of Hazelet and Meals, Native Alaskans and Valdez History
    - Book links:
      - *Hazelet’s Journal* - Hazelet
      - *Ice Bound Empire* – Tower
      - *The Native People of Alaska* - Langdon
      - *Alaskan History* – in Brief - Barnett
      - *Valdez Rises* - Gregory
  - Other Valdez resources ([www.visitvaldez.com](http://www.visitvaldez.com))

# CENTER PANEL



# Center Panel Narrative

In 1898 George Cheever Hazelet and Andrew Jackson Meals made their way from their homes in Nebraska and joined the thousands of pioneers who ventured into Alaska's vast, frozen north to prospect for the rich natural resources buried within.

Their story, a life-long adventure chronicled in books like *Hazelet's Journals* and *Icebound Empire*, is one of persistence, courage and endurance - two determined souls leaning relentlessly forward and upward against overwhelming odds of success.

Guided by resourceful native Alaskan's like Tl'adet, Hazelet and Meals carved the first trails into the Alaskan Copper River interior. Hazelet, a modest but extremely resourceful visionary, recognizing the importance of an accessible coastal terminal, founded the townships of Valdez and Cordova. The citizenry of Cordova elected the highly respected Hazelet as its first mayor and the Republican party nominated him as their gubernatorial candidate for the Alaskan territory. Meals settled in Valdez and with his family, developed important transportation and construction enterprises.

Undaunted by personal tragedies, the inevitable vicissitudes of a harsh, unforgiving wilderness, and the political tribulations that accompany new enterprise, they never gave up.

# Center Panel Sculpture Imagery

- George Cheever Hazelet and Andrew Jackson Meals, their efforts aided by Tl'adets (a.k.a.) "Indian Charlie", climb up a steep glacier pass - all of them attempting to move a sled loaded with supplies to a cache for their long prospecting journey.
- Tl'adets guides them, pointing to something up ahead
- George Hazelet struggles to pull the sled while he peers forward to where Tl'adet is pointing
- Jack Meals strains to pull the sled from the middle

# LEFT PANEL



# Left Panel Narrative

The Native Alaskan presence in the Valdez area had never been recorded before the arrival of enterprising non-native pioneers in 1792. However, it is likely that Tl'adet, known by many prospectors as “Indian Charlie”, was from one of the three migratory main cultural descendants of aboriginal Native Alaskan tribal peoples. For thousands of years these tribes consistently used the Prince William Sound and the Copper River Basin for hunting and fishing:

The *Ahtna* are an Athabascan tribe, also known as “Copper River Natives.” Their homeland is located in the Copper River area of southern Alaska.

The *Sugpiaq* or *Chugach*, now known as “Alutiiq.” These were the maritime people who live around Prince William Sound and the Alaska Peninsula and share some cultural traits with both the Aleut and Yup'ik peoples, and

The *Eyak* people who live in the Copper River Delta, and whose territory has changed over time, moving southward from the Alaskan interior. They have often been associated with Northwest Coast tribes such as the Tlingit, and Haida, but they retain their own distinct language and culture.

Hazelet and Meals repeatedly acknowledged their reliance on Tl'adet to help them successfully explore the region. It is certain that the survival and enterprising efforts of many other prospectors would have been impossible, had they not relied on the early guidance of Native Alaskans, whose inherent knowledge of the area was profound.

# Left Panel Sculpture Imagery

- Native Alaskans in kyaks harpoon whales
- Thatch Huts on shore
- Native Alaskans fish, hunt
- Bears, birds, Natural beauty
- Volcanic eruptions
- Glaciers
- Seals, Bears, rivers teeming with Salmon

# RIGHT PANEL



# Right Panel Narrative

Valdez, a thriving community nestled on the shore of a bountiful region abounding with natural resources and beauty, provides great opportunity for the families that live here. The history of the Valdez community rich with stories that relate these common themes:

*Perseverance and Durability* in the face of overwhelming adversity and dramatic climate challenges,  
*Hope for the future with Community Cooperation*,  
*Love and Responsible Stewardship* of the environment and its awe-inspiring beauty and bounty,  
*Respect for the Past*, the Native Alaskan predecessors and those pioneers who founded the Valdez home that so many people love.

**To learn more about the Valdez story, here are links to these sources:**

Books about the Pioneers and Native Alaskans:

*Hazelet's Journal* - by George Cheever Hazelet

*Icebound Empire* - by Elizabeth Tower

*The Native People of Alaska* - by Steve Langdon

*Alaskan History - in Brief* - by James Barnett

*Valdez Rises* - by Tabitha Gregory

[www.valdezalaska.org](http://www.valdezalaska.org)

[www.visitvaldez.com](http://www.visitvaldez.com)

# Right Panel Sculpture Imagery

- First contact, Russian, Spanish, French, English and American interacting with Native Alaskans
- Gold Rush – prospectors panning for gold
- Horsetail & Bridal Falls
- Railroad tunnel in Keystone Canyon
- Earthquake and Exxon Valdez Oil spill
- Valdez Community with Families, Homes, Children playing
- Native Tribal “Starring Ceremony” a symbol of hope and community unity for the future

NOVEMBER  
21, 2023  
City of Valdez  
Council  
Meeting



# Estimated BUDGET\*

- Design and fabrication of completed sculpture and lighting installation: \$182,500  
(cost of materials, labor, contingency\*)
- Web Page design: \$3,000.00
- Equipment rental for installation: \$4000.00
- Transportation of completed work from Seattle to Valdez: \$12,000
- Airfare (6 round trip visits LaSalle and/or Onutan): Delta Air: Seattle - Anchorage: \$4050.00 Airfare (6 round trip visits LaSalle and/or Onutan): Raven Air: Anchorage - Valdez: \$6,000
- Lodging (20 days LaSalle and/or Onutan) spread over 12 months) Hotel: \$4800.00
- Meals: (20 days LaSalle and/or Onutan) spread over 12 months \$2,400
- Quarry, transport and installation of three 3'x4'x12' shale stone columns as backdrop for completed sculpture, plus 3 stone seats & 1 stone table \$30,000

**Total: \$244,700.00**

# Funding

Through the Meals Hill sales agreement The Port Valdez Company has  
Set aside a matching grant of .....\$100,000

In collaboration with the Alaska Community Foundation The Port  
Valdez Company, Inc. secured a Grant from the Rasmuson  
Foundation.....\$ 25,000

Brick Sales **to date** 75 bricks @\$250 each.....\$ 18,750

**Total to date .....\$143,750**



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Glennallen Field Office  
P.O. Box 147  
Glennallen, Alaska 99588  
[www.blm.gov/alaska](http://www.blm.gov/alaska)

In Reply Refer To:  
2160 (AKA02000)  
AA095494

**Sent via Email**

John H. Clark  
The Port Valdez Company, Inc  
520 Old Stone Road  
Louisville, Kentucky 40207

Dear Mr. Clark,

In response to your email, dated March 15, 2023, the BLM has reviewed the information provided.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this proposal. BLM has no objections to this Founders Memorial and find it to be in compliance with the EVOS property plan and easement.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this matter, please contact Rhonda Williams, Realty Specialist, by calling (907) 822-3217, or email [rwilliam@blm.gov](mailto:rwilliam@blm.gov).

Sincerely,

**MARNIE  
GRAHAM** Digitally signed by  
MARNIE GRAHAM  
Date: 2023.11.17  
14:37:18 -09'00'

Marnie Graham  
Field Manager

**APPROVAL TO MOVE FORWARD**  
**with**  
**Valdez Rising – *Suacit***

***“The People From The Place that Rises Into View”***

The Port Valdez Company seeks approval from the City Council of Valdez to move forward with this “Public Art Installation” so the bronze casting production can be scheduled and the site design and preparation can be finalized for Fall 2024 ribbon cutting.

**Many Thanks**  
**to the**  
**City Council of Valdez**  
**for their consideration and approval.**