



FORT ROSS - SALT POINT NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED BY THE FORT ROSS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION
A CALIFORNIA STATE PARK COOPERATING ASSOCIATION

FALL 2008

WWW.FORTROSSINTERPRETIVE.ORG

ANNUAL MEETING & HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2008

Potluck Lunch 1:00 PM

Please Join our Winter Celebration!

Bring a dish to share - salad, hot dish or dessert - drinks will be provided

Regular Board Meeting

10:30 to 12:30

The ballots for the 2008 election will be counted at 12:00 PM

NIKOLAI NIKOLAIEVIVCH BOLKHOVITINOV

The Center of North American Studies, Institute of World History of The Russian Academy of Sciences informs us that Academician Nikolai N. N. Bolkhovitinov died on October 1st, 2008. The civil funeral will take place on October 4th, 2008 at the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences. [Announcement from Dr. Alexander Petrov of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow]

Dr. Bolkhovitinov was Russia's pre-eminent scholar on Russian-America, and Fort Ross was honored to have him lecture here in the 1990s. He was the author of numerous books on the history of Russian America, including the three-volume *Istoriya Russkoy Ameriki 1732-1867* [A History of Russian America, 1732-1867], a unique work in world historiography. It is based on documents found in the archives of Russia and many other countries, and on extensive literature written in all major European languages. Dr. Bolkhovitinov was the head of the Center for Research on Russian America and Russian American Relations, Department of General History, at the Russian Academy of Science. In honor of Dr. Bolkhovitinov, the Russian-American Company flew at half-mast at Fort Ross and in Alaska at Russian American sites on the day of the funeral service.

WELCOMING A NEW FORT ROSS - SALT POINT SUPERVISING RANGER

We look forward to working with Jeremy Stintson who will be the supervising ranger for Fort Ross and Salt Point beginning this November. He wrote the following to share with newsletter readers: "I grew up in Marin County and started with state parks in 1993 as a park aid at Mt. Tamalpais. I graduated from the University of Oregon with a BA in journalism in 1995. After college, I worked a few more seasons as a park aid and one summer on an NPS fire crew before being hired as a ranger in October 1998. My first assignment was Brannan Island State Recreation Area in the Sacramento Delta. I worked there until April 2001, when I transferred to Sonoma Coast. In August 2005, I promoted to Supervising Ranger at Sonoma Coast. While working in the Russian River District, I had the great fortune to have been mentored by Michael Stephenson and Heidi Horvitz – so it only made sense for me to eventually transfer to Fort Ross / Salt Point. When I'm not working I'm spending time with my fiancé, Tiffany, who is just starting her career as a warden with Fish and Game, or sailing my Ranger 26 sailboat on San Francisco Bay." Welcome Jeremy!

Heidi Horvitz, former Fort Ross Supervising Ranger (2000 - 2008) and District Public Safety Superintendent moved to the Cascade area this summer. She is now a Sector Superintendent and manages Shasta State Historic Park, Weaverville Joss House, Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park, McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial Park, and Castle Crags State Park. At Fort Ross we have not been able to stop missing her!

Excerpts from recent mail from Heidi: "We are now in the Cascade area of the very northern/central part of California famous for hiking, fishing, kayaking, boating, and bicycling. From our state house in Shasta you can go north, west and east to incredible open space with huge holdings run by National Parks, US Forest Service, BLM Land, and State Parks.

"The move got off to a rocky start with the lightning storm that started thousands of fires in California. Our area got hit particularly hard and we were under 'voluntary evacuation' at both our home and Shasta State Historic Park. Not fun. We did end up evacuating the huge art and artifact collection at Shasta and moved it to 'safer' locations in downtown Redding, Oroville and West Sacramento. Visualize moving trucks and frantic state employees moving irreplaceable artifacts, paintings, a library, and normal office stuff out while being serenaded by bombers and helicopters and a wall of smoke coming towards town. The Courthouse Museum is now back together and awaits your visit.

"The closest big town is Redding which is known throughout California as being 'hot'. It is hot, but we have altered our lifestyle: put away the down comforters, jeans and sweatshirts and learned that cooking rice heats up the house for hours (or days). The people are very friendly, the schools are very good (and only 5 and 10 minutes away). There are Farmer's Markets almost daily. . . . All is good. Please visit!"

But, she misses Fort Ross and Salt Point and will return to her home upon retirement in 2013.

A NOTE FROM DIRECTOR EMERITUS JOHN SPERRY

Usually what is printed in FRIA's Newsletter is written or compiled by the FRIA Staff. Not so this! This note is an accolade, (definition: ". . . a tap on the left shoulder by the flat of a sword in conferring knighthood . . .") This is to be praise of staff.

The past three years at FRIA have seen a research grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, several state and federal grants for the preservation and furnishing of the Rotchev House, the publishing of wonderful French and Spanish documents relating to Fort Ross, and many more accomplishments. There have been a dozen remarkable newsletters, published and mailed to the membership. There has been the co-joining of Salt Point Park and Fort Ross State Park, and a truly unique articulation of State Park's and FRIA's purposes! Although there's much more to be listed, let this suffice for now. In the front lines of these accomplishments, three persons deserve enormous praise: our departing State Park Sector Superintendent, Heidi Horvitz; Lyn Kalani, FRIA's Executive Director; and Sarah Sweedler, FRIA's president – named in no particular order. Behind the front ranks there is the hardworking enthusiastic FRIA staff: Susanna Barlow, Lake Perry, and Sarjan Holt. There are many valuable volunteers behind all the FRIA projects. In this artificial delineation of "front lines", we need to see Lynn Rudy for her ongoing research and leadership in the Call House museum, as well as Gelia and Konstantin Kudryavtsev, Hank Birnbaum, Peter Schawalbenberg, and Ludmila Ershow all, as gracious hosts and translators during recent Russo-FRIA research meetings. Unconstrained to any "front line" in most of this, John Middleton, ranks as an invaluable resource and FRIA ally.

This is written in tribute to what is, in contemporary times, a remarkable, vital, volunteer, organization. This is FRIA.

ROTCHEV HOUSE MUSEUM

Current preservation on the Russian-built Rotchev House at Fort Ross has been completed, and this fall work will begin on the planned furnishing and exhibits. In November Igor Medvedev will travel from Moscow to Fort Ross to meet with fellow project advisors and to begin architectural working drawings for the exhibits. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has awarded funding to prepare these architectural plans. This grant will also fund a bilingual Russian - English exhibit catalog and web tour.



FRIA is also pleased to announce that the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is providing generous funding to construct exhibit furnishings and incorporate recent research into exhibit design and interpretation. From the NEH grant application:

“Research from numerous sources, in particular new research from archives in the Russian Federation, has enlightened us about the unrecognized Russian contributions to colonial California history. Fifteen years ago, following enormous changes in the former Soviet Union, western scholars were allowed access to archives and museum vaults that had previously been closed, and cultural exchanges flourished which have allowed historians and anthropologists to reinterpret Fort Ross’s vital role in international trade and nineteenth century politics with fresh eyes. In 2006 FRIA was honored to receive a collaborative research grant from NEH to continue this research in Russian archives.

Through the new exhibits visitors will experience an expanded interpretation of the Russian role in early California. In the 1760s Empress Catherine the Great, who brought the ideals of the European enlightenment to Russia, issued orders for the scientific exploration of the North Pacific which were followed for the next 100 years. Detailed journals reveal how seriously these explorers worked to achieve her order to bring knowledge of the North Pacific “to perfection”. Initially uncontrolled eighteenth century entrepreneurs brought social dislocation, disease, and cultural losses to the regions of America colonized by Russia, but by the nineteenth century Russian policy makers were encouraging the use and preservation of native languages and traditional customs, and public health programs and schools had been established. Beginning in 1818 with L. A. Hagemeister, and especially with Baron F. P. Wrangell in the 1830s, the governors of Russian America introduced innovations in political, educational and religious doctrine. Standards of fair and equitable treatment of the native populations were established, and the working conditions of company

employees were improved. They led by example, and their influence reverberated throughout Russian America. The Russian-American Company on California’s North Coast was administered by individuals with liberal and intellectual ideas reflective of the European Enlightenment. Administrators, like Alexander Rotchev of Fort Ross, and the visitors they brought to California, were among the first to scientifically record the natural and cultural environment; introduce important technical developments and innovations;

and pursue a harmonious relationship with California Natives and their Hispanic neighbors. These innovations have not been properly credited in a history that traditionally focuses upon on Spanish and American achievements. The proposed displays will offer a needed counterpoint.

The Exhibits

It is imperative that the Russian contributions to early California be understood through exhibits which reflect current scholarly research. Exhibits in the re-created structures at Fort Ross are based on research and interpretation dating from the 1970s and 1980s, much of which has since been proven incorrect by the first-hand accounts recently unearthed in Russian archives. Over time, the interpretive emphasis has evolved from describing the colony as a rough and primitive Russian settlement, based solely on fur seal and sea otter hunting, to a multi-cultural, agricultural, and industrial endeavor, integrating enlightened European values, international trade, and scientific discovery. The Rotchev House Museum exhibit will be the first major exhibit in the fort which takes advantage of the recent research focusing on nineteenth century materials archived in Russian institutions. As a result there will be a deeper understanding of colonial California. The furnished Rotchev home will be a visual experience grounded in current historical thinking. Many of the myths about the primitive nature of the colony will be dispelled as visitors walk through the sophisticated home of the last Russian-American Company administrator and his family brought alive with objects unknown elsewhere in colonial California—a piano forte, silver tea service, sophisticated goods manufactured in the colony or brought here on company ships for trade with their Spanish neighbors. The exhibit displays replicating original furnishings, and the objects they house, will enhance understanding of how the earliest European refinements introduced by the Russian settlement had a profound influence on life in colonial California.

Fort Ross was the site of California's first windmills and shipbuilding, and the colony provided imported and manufactured goods much sought after by their neighbors. The glass windows and wooden floors eagerly sought by Spanish and Mexican colonists will be highlighted. The exhibits will also reflect this family's intellectual and aristocratic background. Alexander Rotchev was well-traveled and a published poet. His wife, Princess Elena, was a descendant of titled nobility. Both were conversant in several languages. Accounts indicate that the Rotchev home was a refined and well-furnished residence. The library, French wines, and piano, as well as the hospitality of the Rotchevs, were highly regarded. Small details such as the top hat, gloves, and a score of Mozart, will be seen in the parlor. The trade goods, cosmopolitan library, and sketches of local flora and fauna by visiting scientists in the administrator's study will be a window to the company administrator's daily life. The Rotchev household included three young children, and the exhibits planned will show that Fort Ross was a thriving settlement, inhabited by women and children, as well as workers and administrators. Presently none of the exhibits in the fort give voice to the numerous families who lived in the colony. For the many school children who visit Fort Ross, the child's cradle, desks, and toys will illustrate that children grew up here.

The accompanying walking tour will provide accurate detail and develop the story line so that visitors can understand the important influence of the company administrators within the multicultural Russian settlement, with the local Native population, and with the Hispanic residents of colonial California. It will include details about the objects on display, point out unique historic structural elements, and illuminate the story of the Rotchev family. The tour, interpretive panels, and the historic accounts, illustrations, and video on the website will enlighten visitors about how the company administrators created a harmonious multicultural society comprised of Russians, creoles, Native Alaskans, and Native Californians, and how the Russian settlers influenced the life of their Hispanic neighbors.

Project History

California State Parks restored and has maintained the Russian-built Rotchev House since 1925. However, due to frequent budget cuts, the building had again fallen into disrepair by 2000. Original structural elements had decayed, and the interior remained empty, unfinished, and un-interpreted. In 2002 California State Parks requested the assistance of the Fort Ross Interpretive Association to seek funding and begin the task of restoration and interpretation.

The initial budget of \$250,000 funded a conference in February of 2003 which drew on Californian, Alaskan, and Russian resources. These advisors are experts on the restoration of wooden buildings, Russian American history, and early nineteenth century Russian-American exhibits.

The aim of the conference was to accumulate accurate data based on primary resource materials, including data now accessible for the first time in Russian archives. Advisors worked cooperatively with the Russian Federation and their museums to access pertinent original materials. This team of scholars met at Fort Ross to advise on the history, preservation, interpretation, and exhibits for the Rotchev House Museum. The expertise of the National Park Service in Sitka, Alaska which has restored and furnished the historic Russian Bishop's House was utilized as well. State Park participants outlined the needs of the State. The topics included necessary interior and exterior structural preservation; historical architectural elements; restoration and modifications needed for visitation by the public; function and historical use by the Rotchev family; material culture and furnishing styles; costs, resources and timeline for development of a plan to accomplish the transformation of this building into an exhibit showcasing the life of a Russian-American Company manager and highlighting the contributions of the Russian administrators to the history of colonial California. With this research in hand, a preservation, exhibit, and furnishing plan was compiled based on conference proceedings. Consultation with the advisors continues through all phases of the Rotchev House preservation and exhibit preparation.

Thus far, funds to preserve this unique structure have been raised to arrest deterioration, restore original building elements, and to prepare the structure for exhibits: The Sonoma County Landmarks Commission funded the initial conference of Russian wooden building and furnishing experts, the preparation of a furnishing plan, and the replacement of all of the decayed doors and windows with handcrafted, historically accurate reproductions. California State Parks Cultural Stewardship Grant funds were allocated for analysis of original wooden elements and finishes, conservation of original logs, upgrading the electrical system, and stabilization of the fireplace. The California Cultural and Historical Endowment has ensured the crucial final phase of preservation so that the building may be furnished with exhibits. It also funded the first steps of the exhibition – the installation of security and environmental measures, the construction of historic replica interior doors and security barriers, and the installation of historic painted sailcloth wall coverings in the two showcase rooms. FRIA is currently the recipient of an NEH Collaborative Research Grant to uncover, then translate and publish colonial California documents from the Russian State Naval Archives. Documents, graphics, and translations are stored in the Fort Ross archives and available for exhibit research.

Donated funds are supporting the purchase of exhibit objects and there is a display of those already acquired in the Visitor Center. Additional support for purchasing objects is being actively pursued. A brochure about the progress of the project, and the type of exhibit materials needed, has been prepared and is currently being sent out to appropriate organizations.”

THE RUSSIAN-MEXICAN FRONTIER
 MEXICAN DOCUMENTS REGARDING THE RUSSIAN ESTABLISHMENTS IN CALIFORNIA 1808 – 1842
 TRANSCRIPTION, TRANSLATION, AND ANNOTATION BY W. MICHAEL MATHES WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF GLENN FARRIS

This latest publication put out by the Fort Ross Interpretive Association provides researchers a wonderful compilation of documents that offer valuable insights into the Spanish and Mexican attitudes toward the Russian-Alaskan community that set itself up at Bodega Bay and Fort Ross in the first four decades of the 19th Century. Dr. Michael Mathes, renowned historian of California and Mexican history, first produced a shorter version of this book in Spanish almost two decades ago. However, this volume was difficult to obtain and not an easy read due to the archaic Spanish in the documents and so offered many obstacles to its use. At the joint urging of Dr. James Gibson and myself, Mathes undertook the painstaking task of translating these documents with the help of Valentina Salazar. In addition, a few more document translations were provided by Farris. The English volume of 333 pages was edited by Lyn Kalani and Sarjan Holt with editorial suggestions by Gibson, Farris and John Middleton.

The various documents include official correspondence, reports and letters that shed considerable light on the relations between the Californian, Spanish and Mexican au-

thorities and the Russians at Fort Ross and Sitka, as well as some visiting Russian naval officers and dignitaries. Mathes divided the documents into chronological sequences, for which he provides introductory comments on their historical context that place the writings into perspective.

This book provides an invaluable addition, and sometimes counterpoint, to the sizable body of translations of Russian documents made available by scholars at the Oregon Historical Society and the University of Alaska over the years to which will soon be joined a large body of more translated Russian documents to be published by Gibson through the Hakluyt Society. FRIA will also be coming out with an additional volume of translations of even more documents from both Spanish and Russian writers based on ongoing research undertaken in the Russian naval archives and several other archives in Russia (notably from Perm) and the Baltic republic of Estonia. Thus there will soon be an enormous new body of primary documents available to scholars interested in the history of California in the first half of the 19th century with particular focus on the impacts of the Russians and Alaskan natives.

Review by Glenn Farris



PART TWO of the Historical Overview from the *Mexican-Russian Frontier* follows. (See PART ONE in the Summer issue of this newsletter.) This publication is now available in the Fort Ross Museum Bookstore for \$25.

Detail from Spanish map of California created in 1823 by José Maria Narváez shows *Puerto de la Bodega* in the *Distrito de San Francisco* at the top of Spanish California. In 1830 he updated this map with one which included *Establecimiento Ruso* [Fort Ross]. Courtesy Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

THE RUSSIAN-MEXICAN FRONTIER
MEXICAN DOCUMENTS REGARDING THE RUSSIAN ESTABLISHMENTS IN CALIFORNIA 1808 – 1842

PART TWO of the Historical Overview:

. . . Shortly after the return of Podushkin to Sitka, on November 21, 1817, Hagemeister replaced Baranov as director of the Russian-American Company, and on July 22, 1818, he arrived aboard *Kutuzov* at Ross where he negotiated extension of Russian territory with the chieftans of the Vale-ii-l'e and Chu-chu-oana rancherías. Two weeks later, accompanied by Kuskov, he continued to San Francisco where during four weeks Hagemeister sought the release of Russian prisoners as well as improvement of trade relations with Solá. The latter wished to acquire provisions against letters of credit in Guadalajara, but Hagemeister did not want to accept them, and he made a counter offer that in exchange for merchandise, Solá should allow hunting by Aleuts inside San Francisco Bay with a division of the pelts in equal parts, and then the provisions would be exchanged for the Spanish share of the furs at market prices. Solá refused the offer, repeating that such treaties required authorization of the viceroy but, nevertheless, allowed the purchase of grains by the Russians.

The following year Hagemeister repeated his visit with Solá in Monterey, and Kiril T. Khlebnikov presented him a gift of a watch and a large mirror sent by the governor of Sitka, Semyon Ivanovich Yanovsky, but once again they failed to open trade with the Spaniards. However, they did not give up and in January 1820 the directors of the company sent a memorandum to Count Nesselrode in which they made it known that if an open and constant trading relationship could be established, they would be willing to abandon Ross. In light of the agreements of the Transcontinental (Adams-Onís) Treaty between Spain and the United States signed in February 1819, establishing Spanish jurisdiction in California northward to the 42nd parallel, the Russian claims to "New Albion" were nullified and the Spaniards remained firm in their demands and prohibitions with Khlebnikov who had come to negotiate in 1820 aboard *Buldakov*. Notwithstanding these negative results, in 1818 Vasilii Golovnin commanding *Kamchatka* anchored in Monterey and hunted sea otters in the area without incident. *Otkrytie* and *Blagonamerenny*, from the survey expedition under command of Mikhail Vasilyev, anchored in San Francisco on November 22, 1820, where they were cordially received and remained until January 1821.

During the fall of 1821, an expedition of fifty-five soldiers under the command of Captain Luis Argüello and Ensigns Francisco de Haro and José Antonio Sánchez, with Fray Blas Ordaz as chaplain and John Gilroy as interpreter was mounted in San Francisco. Sailing from Carquinez on October 22, the expedition proceeded up the Sacramento River to the north and returned to San Rafael on November 12, having explored the Trinidad range and Santa Rosa valley from the Russian River to Petaluma.

The news of the outcome of the wars of independence in New Spain renewed Russian hopes of retaining their colony in Ross. The position of Saint Petersburg was that occupation had been peaceful during a decade, Russian possessions were based upon cessions of Indian groups, and that Spanish possession north of San Francisco was nullified, and not a single armed attempt had been made to dislodge the Ross colony. The court of Saint Petersburg believed that possibly Spain would pay some pending debts to Russia through cession of the coast between Ross and San Francisco, or at least acknowledge legitimate Russian possession of Ross. These hopes were tardy however, since the Treaty of Córdoba concluded in August 1821 and the occupation of Mexico City by the Trigarantine Army on September 27 initiated Mexican independence and terminated Spanish jurisdiction on the Pacific littoral of North America.

Almost coincidental with Mexican independence, the Russian Imperial government announced two declarations [ukases] on September 4 and 13, 1821, in which absolute Russian sovereignty over the North American coast from the Pole southward to 51° North Latitude and inland for a distance of 115 miles from the coastline was proclaimed. In the ukases the Russian-American Company was granted a monopoly for trading and hunting within these territories for a period of twenty years.

The danger of Russian expansion was expressed by the Governing Council on December 29, 1821, when they noted that Ross was situated less than one day's sail from Monterey while proposing a treaty of limits establishing Cape Mendocino as the northern border between the two nations. At the same time Solá recommended basing sea otter hunting upon contracts negotiated with the Russian colony.

The peaceful transfer of Alta California from a colony to a province of independent Mexico was achieved through the arrival of the emissary of Emperor Agustín de Iturbide, the canon of Durango Agustín Fernández de San Vicente, at Monterey on September 26, 1822. He administered the oath of independence, lowered the Spanish flag, and raised that of Mexico. On October 8 Fernández de San Vicente met with Solá, Payeras, Argüello, and other officials to discuss formation of a local deputation, and during his stay in California, the canon visited the Russian establishments of Bodega and Ross.

Leaving Monterey on October 12 with Payeras and eight colonists, Fernández arrived at San Francisco four days later and, accompanied by Captain Luis Argüello, crossed the bay to Santa Lucía de Olompali arriving on the 21st at Bodega where the expedition found two redwood houses near the beach and two springs. Continuing north, they crossed the Russian River and arrived at Ross on October 22 at 11 in the morning. The manager, Carl Schmidt, who had replaced Kuskov on October 26, 1821,

received them with a friendly salute of four cannons. Following some conversations and inspections, the Mexican party departed to the south two days later. Fernández and Payeras traveled to Bodega aboard a baidara [umiak, a large open skin boat] loaned by Schmidt rowed by fifteen Aleuts, while Argüello and the others returned by land. From Bodega, the canon continued by land to Monterey where he arrived November 3, supervised the election of Luis Argüello to the position of political chief, and on November 22, accompanied by Solá, he sailed from Monterey for San Blas aboard *San Carlos*.

Mexican independence ended the old mercantilist prohibitions on trade, and on June 12, 1822, Payeras notified the missionaries that Solá had announced the establishment of free trade under a tariff of twenty-five percent on imports and twelve percent on exports. In that year *Volga*, constructed in the shipyard at Ross and launched in 1822, obtained fifteen sea otter pelts, and the following year the presence of sixteen trading ships in the California ports was reported, among them Russian ships *Ladoga*, *Kreiser*, *Volga* (forty-six sea otter pelts), *Buldakov* (forty-one sea otter pelts), *Golovnin*, *Apollon*, *Rurik*, and *Baikal*.

To simplify these relations and to take advantage of the skills of the Aleuts, on December 1, 1823, at Monterey, Argüello signed a contract valid until March 31, 1824, with the Russian-American Company for sea otter hunting wherein the Russians would supply twenty-five baidarkas and the necessary hunters, and the government, for its part, would admit an equal division of furs obtained. To increase trading activities, on December 19 Argüello bought *Rover* that had arrived at San Francisco in June from her captain, John Rogers Cooper, for \$9,000. The contract was beneficial and by January 4, 1824, 455 sea otter pelts had been taken. On January 22 Cooper received one hundred furs from *Rurik*, and six days later he was given 203 more brought from San Rafael. On February 7, 1824, Cooper sailed from Monterey with *Rover* en route to China with a cargo of California products including 303 sea otter and 1,300 fur seal pelts. During the same month hunting continued on San Pablo Bay with eleven baidarkas, and in Monterey Bay where Aleuts obtained 429 pelts; by October 1824 the government of California had received 627 furs under the contract, and the company had acquired 838. On November 9 Argüello contracted Cooper, who had returned to Monterey on September 13, for a second trip with *Rover* to China. During November and December twenty baidarkas from Ross hunted San Francisco Bay, and by the end of the year the take of pelts increased to 1,053.

During his stay in Monterey Fernández de San Vicente approved the move of Mission San Francisco to a more temperate and fertile location. On March 23, 1823, with the support of Argüello, Fray José Altimira proposed to the deputation the establishment of a mission site north of San Rafael. On April 9 the deputation decided in favor of Altimira's proposal, and ordered him, accompanied

by Deputy Francisco Castro and a detachment of nineteen soldiers under the command of Ensign José Sánchez, to depart on June 25 for the north to explore the valleys of Petaluma, Sonoma, Napa, and Suisún for the purpose of determining the most appropriate area for the mission. On July 4 a site in the Sonoma Valley was established, and two days later the expedition returned to the presidio of San Francisco. Altimira returned to the Sonoma Valley on July 25 with an army of thirteen soldiers, a cannon, and a group of neophyte workers to initiate construction of the new mission. Although the missions of San Francisco and San Rafael originally were to be closed, they remained in service, and the new establishment of San Francisco Solano was dedicated by Altimira on April 4, 1824. Schmidt had recognized the importance of these interior valleys with moderate climates for cultivation during the preceding year, but with Mexican expansion to the region, Russian hopes vanished.

During the month of November 1823, the deputation had declared adherence to the Republican Constitutional Congress and accordingly notified Secretary Lucas Alamán. These changes notwithstanding, the Russian government persisted in denying recognition to independent Mexico since such an action would clearly acknowledge Mexican rights of possession in Alta California to 42° North Latitude (present border of Oregon and California).

In spite of the absence of diplomatic relations between the nations, Russian visits to Mexican waters continued. The frigates *Kreiser* and *Ladoga* under command of Mikhail Petrovich Lazarev found Ross in 1824 without munitions, but with increased crop cultivation due to efforts of Schmidt and his successor, Pavel Shelikhov. They had also directed the construction of the *Kyakhta*, the last ship to be built by the company in the Ross shipyard. It was launched in the same year. Lazarev had just sailed when, on October 8, 1824, the frigate *Predpriatie* under command of Otto von Kotzebue, accompanied by scientists E. K. Lenz, J. F. Eschscholtz, J. von Preus, and J. Hoffmann, anchored at San Francisco, remaining until December 6. During his stay, Kotzebue visited Mission Santa Clara, the town of San José, and, accompanied by Lieutenant José María Estudillo, he traveled to San Francisco Solano, Fort Ross, and the Sacramento River. The Russian commander considered the region of great importance for the expansion of the Russian empire and lamented not having occupied it years earlier. In spite of these scientific expeditions reflecting increased Russian imperial power, prohibitions on foreign trade, dictated by ukazes of 1821, produced a decline in provisions at Sitka and other Russian ports. Between 1824 and 1825 agreements were reached with the United States and England allowing trade and establishing the southern limit of the Russian colonies at 54° 40' North Latitude (present border of Alaska and British Columbia).

The Historical Overview will be concluded with PART THREE in the winter issue of this newsletter.

Membership Application

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

_____ \$10.00 Senior/Student _____ \$15.00 Regular _____ \$20.00 Family _____ \$25.00 Organization \$_____ Donation

Fria board meetings are scheduled for the second Saturday of every other month.
The next regularly scheduled meetings are Saturday October 11 and Saturday December 13 at 10:30 AM

FRIA website: www.fortrossinterpretive.org

Fort Ross State Park web site: www.fortrossstatepark.org



Mission Statement

The mission of the Fort Ross Interpretive Association, Incorporated, is to promote for the benefit of the public the interpretive and educational activities of the Russian River Sector of California State Parks at Fort Ross State Historic Park and Salt Point State Park.

To enhance and conserve the cultural and natural historic, interpretive and educational resources of Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks.

To sponsor, publish, distribute, and sell appropriate items which increase visitor understanding and appreciation of this area.

To acquire materials and equipment to assist in the educational and interpretive programs at Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks.

To develop and maintain a library.

To preserve and archive historical material associated with Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks, and to provide and maintain adequate and secure storage facilities.

To sponsor, support, and assist scientific research and investigations relating to Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks, and presentation of these studies to the public.

To promote interpretation that reflects current research.

To plan, organize, and implement fund raising programs to support interpretive and educational activities at Fort Ross and Salt Point.

Board of Directors: President & Corresponding Secretary, Sarah Sweedler; Recording Secretary, Thomas Fujiyoshi; Treasurer, Jim Allan; Directors, Carolyn Coryelle; Ludmila Ershow; Konstantin Kudryavtsev; Kent Lightfoot; Marion MacDonald; Susan Rudy
Staff: Lyn Kalani—Executive Director; Lake Perry & Sarjan Holt—Administrative Assistants; Susanna Barlow—membership secretary.

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