

FORT ROSS - SALT POINT NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED BY THE FORT ROSS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

A CALIFORNIA STATE PARK COOPERATING ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2008

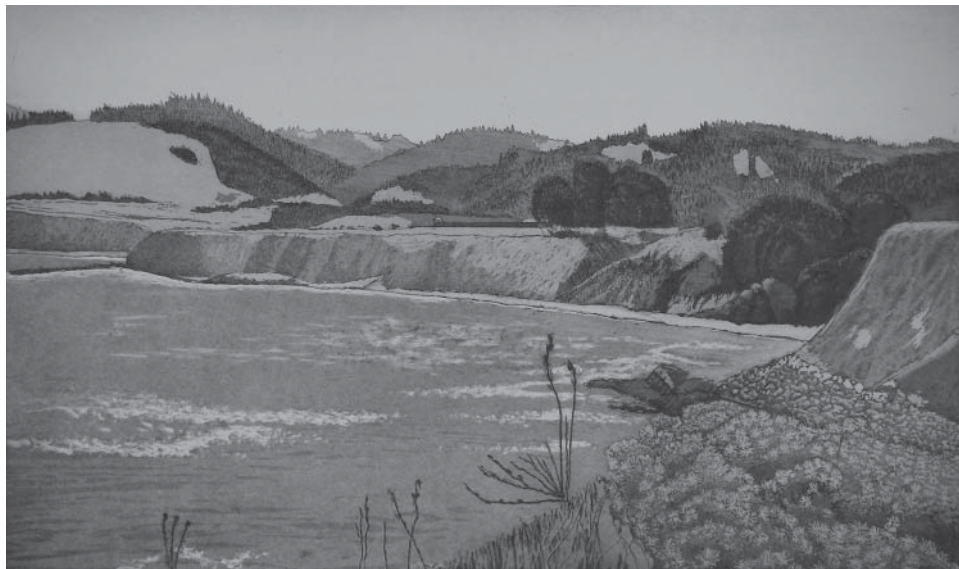
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PLEASE JOIN US FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE DAY THE FORT ROSS CELEBRATION OF RUSSIAN AMERICA 1812-1841



JULY 26, 2008
10:00 AM TO 5:00 PM

From 1812 to 1841 Russian American Company Settlement Ross was home to a unique blend of cultural groups—Russians, Creoles, Native Alaskans, and Kashaya and Coast Miwok Native Californians. On Cultural Heritage Day we celebrate the cultural diversity of these Fort Ross inhabitants.



Etching by Keith Nelson

SALT POINT SHORELINE WALK

SUNDAY JULY 6 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM JULY FOURTH WEEKEND

Join Keith Nelson for enjoyable and educational shoreline walks to explore tidepools, discover wildflowers and learn about the local geology. Meet at Salt Point Visitor Center (at Gerstle Cove). The walk is about 1.5 miles round trip, which takes about 2 hours.

CURRENT RESEARCH IN RUSSIAN ARCHIVES

The Fort Ross Interpretive Association is working with the Russian State Naval Archives to research documents produced during early 19th century voyages to California. The National Endowment for the Humanities has provided funding for this project. Russian American scholars are working closely with the Fort Ross Interpretive Association to research and translate these important records which will enhance the study of early California.

A successful meeting of all project participants took place here May 9 – May 12. FRIA provided lodging and food for the event in two coastal homes that were donated for conference use.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Vladimir Sobolev, Director of the Russian Naval Archives in St. Petersburg, his assistant Ludmila Spiridonova, and project participants Jim Gibson from Ontario, Kathy Arndt from Fairbanks, Alexander Petrov from Moscow, and California participants Glenn Farris, John Middleton, Sarah Sweedler and Lyn Kalani. Discussions focused on the need to assess the documents gathered thus far from Russian archives before continuing research, and the on-going translation of documents which will be included in the project publication. Concurrently we will continue to research and gather relevant graphics. The goal of the project is to produce a richly illustrated book on the Russian contributions to Alta California. We are now over a year and a half into the three-year project.



A special thank you to FRIA members Jean Harris and Kathy Henschel, the owners of the two coastal homes which were used for the conference, and to the Russian Consulate in San Francisco for helping us house and entertain our Russian guests.

Thank you also to all the FRIA Board members, volunteers, and Fort Ross staff who helped to make the event a success: Ludmila Ershow and Peter Schwalbenberg for hospitality to the Russians in San Francisco; Sarjan Holt who recorded the conference; Konstantin and Gelia Kudryavtsev for help with translating; Sarah Sweedler and Nat who cooked and cooked, Marion MacDonald for arranging ample bread for the event; Jim Allan for a generous donation to help cover expenses; John Middleton and John Sperry for decorating the Fort Ross auditorium with flags and providing a much appreciated welcome for the guests; Linda Rudy and Suzanne LaFetra the donation for conference housing; and Carolyn Coryelle for the donation of a generous amount of wine. The friendly hospitality of Kent Lightfoot, Marion MacDonald, John Sperry, Linda Rath, and Heidi Horvitz at one of the dinners was very much appreciated. Thank you to all the park staff who were on hand to give a much-appreciated greeting and cannon firing the first day at Fort Ross, especially to Hank Birnbaum for help with translating

Left back row: Participants Glenn Farris, James R. Gibson, Vladimir Sobolev, Lyn Kalani, Ludmila Spiridonova, Katherine Arndt and John Middleton. Front row State Park Interpreter Hank Birnbaum and participant and FRIA Board President Sarah Sweedler. Alexander Petrov arrived shortly after this picture was taken.

Below: Round table discussion overlooking the ocean.



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 new Fort Ross Interpretive Association publication will be available in July

The following is excerpted from the Historical Overview

A substantial percentage of the Russian economy during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was based upon the hunting and trapping of furs. This “soft gold” was in high demand in European nations with cold climates where fur-bearing mammals had been extensively over-hunted. Excessive trapping also brought a decline in resources to the west of the Urals. Due to the great wealth that could be amassed in the fur trade, Russian *promyshlenniki*, rugged self-employed or contract entrepreneur frontiersmen, hunted and trapped eastward into Siberia, just as their French and English contemporaries moved westward across North America to the same end. Upon reaching the Pacific coast in 1639, formal exploration and colonization followed, bringing major expansion of the Muscovite Empire, with the attraction of wealth from furs eventually bringing Russian hegemony into the Aleutian Islands and Alaska.

To define the geographic extensions of his empire, Tsar Peter the Great ordered a Danish navigator, Vitus Bering, accompanied by Aleksey Chirikov, to explore the Pacific coast in 1728. During the expedition the Kamchatka Peninsula was explored, as was the open ocean between Asia and America in the same strait that in honor of Bering would later be given his name. During a second voyage, accomplished in 1741, Bering discovered the Aleutian Islands and Alaskan coast and, although shipwrecked, the survivors returned to Petropavlosk on Kamchatka Peninsula where they reported an abundance of fur seals and sea otters on the newly discovered coast. There the climate was more temperate than in Siberia, and there was a large population of Aleuts, the native inhabitants skilled in hunting with their *baidarkas* [kayaks]. Beginning in 1745, dozens of expeditions were financed to hunt fur seal and sea otter pelts from Kamchatka to the Aleutians. Temporary camps were established to enable the extension of hunting on the coast of Alaska.

To the south along the American littoral, on May 3, 1535, Fernando Cortés had taken formal possession in the name of King Carlos V of the lands and the coast that would be given the name of the Californias. This act of possession was followed by those of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in the Santa Bárbara Channel during his voyage along the Pacific littoral to some 37° North Latitude (present day Monterey Bay), and by Sebastián Vizcaíno at several sites during his definitive demarcation of the coast in 1602-1603. Nevertheless, Spanish primacy through simple acts of possession was insufficient for the retention of territories in the eighteenth century, and given the Russian advances and expansion of the English in the Pacific through the voyages of Woodes Rogers, Edward Cooke, George Shelvocke, and George Anson during the first half of the century, Spain initiated the effective occupation of Alta California. With the founding of missions San Diego de Alcalá on July 16, 1769 and San Carlos de Borromeo on June 3, 1770, by Father Fray Junípero Serra, the process of evangelization and acculturation was begun, along with the defense of San Diego and Monterey by Captain Gaspar de Portolá, thus indicating the presence of both civil and military authority.

Alta California allowed the re-provisioning of ships out of the recently established naval department of San Blas on the coast of Nayarit and the extension of their voyages further to the north. In June and July of 1774 Juan Pérez and Fray Juan Crespí explored the Queen Charlotte Archipelago, and the following year in September, Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra along with Antonio Mourelle reached the coast of Alaska in 58° North Latitude, where they took possession in the name of King Carlos III. Later, in March of 1778, English Captain James Cook explored the coast north of 49° (present day Vancouver), and although he was subsequently killed on the island of Hawaii, the survivors returned to England with reports of abundance of sea otter in the region. The following year an expedition from San Blas, under the command of Ignacio de Arteaga and Bodega, reached the coasts of Alaska where it charted the littoral and established toponyms.

Although these Spanish voyages were brief and temporary, the Russians sought greater permanency, and in 1783 Grigory Shelikhov, a Siberian merchant, established a permanent settlement on the island of Kodiak for sea otter, fur seal, and fox hunting, and initiated a proposal for Russian expansion to Baffin Island and California. These ambitions, just as those of England and the recently formed United States of America, were recognized by Spain in 1787. The year following, an expedition under the command of Esteban José Martínez and Gonzalo Gabriel López de Haro was sent by Viceroy Conde de Revilla-Gigedo from San Blas to explore the coasts adjacent to Nootka Sound and determine if a Russian settlement existed in the area. Although the report was negative, nevertheless the opportunity was available to effect the occupation of the port of Nootka on the island of Vancouver, and Martínez and López de Haro were again sent from San Blas with the *Princesa* and *San Carlos*. In May of 1789 they took possession and constructed a fortification with ten cannon. This rapid advance produced a series of conflicts with England over trading rights on the coasts of Vancouver Island, terminating in an agreement signed in October 1790 wherein Spain, under the threat of increased English naval power and the loss of alliance through the French Revolution, agreed to open trade in the region and began the abandonment of the fort at Nootka.

During the same period Russia continued expansion to the south. In 1791 Alexander Andriyevich Baranov was named director of the Shelikhov enterprise in Alaska, and by the latter's death in 1795, the company had formed the nucleus of the Russian-American Company which was conceded a monopoly over all the American territories north of 55° Latitude in 1799 by Tsar Paul I. During the following years Russia advanced southward and established a new base in Novoarkhangelsk (Sitka) in 1804; however, with these advances, the settlements were short of provisions due to the harsh climate and the long supply road across Siberia.

The winter of 1805-1806 was exceptionally hard and the company director and imperial chamberlain, Nikolay Petrovich Rezanov, who had arrived at Sitka on board Juno in 1805, continued his voyage to San Francisco to seek provisions from the Spaniards and to negotiate a trade agreement. The Russian director was well received in May 1806 by Commandant Luis Argüello, and during several weeks he was able to trade fabrics and Russian tools for a cargo of grain and other provisions, as well as eleven sea otter pelts. Argüello explained that he did not have any authorization to negotiate a contract with a foreign nation, but in June of 1806 he agreed to propose the Russian interest in trade to Viceroy José de Iturrigaray.

Returning to Sitka, Rezanov recommended to Baranov the occupation of an unpopulated section of California as a base for agriculture and the provisioning of Russian colonies, and the latter contracted the United States trader, Jonathan Winship, to take his lieutenant Slovodchikov to explore the coast. Charts showing the bays of Trinidad and Bodega, Isla Cedros, and the Hawaiian Islands were drawn prior to returning to Sitka, and despite the sudden death of Rezanov during his passage through Siberia in 1807, Baranov continued his plans by sending his assistant, Ivan Alexandrovich Kuskov, to explore the coast north of San Francisco.

Russian settlement in California corresponded with the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1808, and the succeeding concentration of Spanish efforts for the liberation of their country. In that year the Russian-American Company petitioned the tsar for permission to initiate a formal trade with California, and was informed of negotiations that were in process at the court in Madrid. One year later, the company re-petitioned, and on December 13 the court replied that, even though it was not willing to establish a colony in New Albion (Northern California according to English maps) at the expense of the imperial treasury, it supported the initiative of the company to accomplish the project.

The court of Saint Petersburg seriously doubted the Spanish claims to the northern region of California, and gave preference to the acts of possession made by English navigator Francis Drake to New Albion in 1579. Furthermore, according to the Russians, the treaty of 1790 between Spain and England which would open the ports of the coast of Vancouver Island to free trade, also applied to the region north of San Francisco Bay.

In September of 1808 Baranov sent two ships, Kadyak and Nikolay, under the command of Kuskov to explore the coast south of Sitka. The Nikolay, captained by V. A. Tarakanov and Nikolay Bulygin, was wrecked near the Olympic peninsula, where the survivors remained captives of the Indians until June 9, 1809. Kuskov, aboard the Kadyak with forty Russians, 130 Aleut hunters, and twenty Indians, accomplished exploration of Bodega Bay and the construction of temporary buildings on the shore. The hunters, with fifty baidarkas, entered San Francisco Bay in February of 1809. Although the arrival of twenty of the baidarkas at San Francisco on March 26 resulted in the death of

four and wounding of two Aleut hunters, following a skirmish with a squad of nine Spanish soldiers, the Aleuts remained inside the bay until the end of April, and upon sailing from Bodega in August the Kadyak carried 2,350 sea otter pelts.

After the return of Kuskov to Bodega in 1809, the Russian-American Company directed the settlement of an agricultural colony and factory on the coast a short distance north of Bodega. On March 5, 1810, Tsar Alexander I declared that the conditions in Spain justified the entrance of Russia on the coast of California, especially in that it would be of mutual benefit for both nations, and instructed Count Nikolay Petrovich Rumiantsev, minister of foreign affairs since 1807 and imperial chancellor since 1809, to inform the directors of the company to this effect. Ten days later, the directors produced a proclamation of friendship directed to the habitants of Alta California, demonstrating their desires of establishing trade favorable to both parties. Among all of the foreign merchants on the coast, the Russians had the greatest need for California products since the cost of provisioning their American colonies from Europe almost canceled the profits obtained from the fur trade.

This plan received personal support from Rumiantsev and, under orders of Baranov, Kuskov sailed with Juno for Bodega in 1810. During the voyage the Russians were attacked by a group of Indians on Queen Charlotte Island and the expedition had to return to Sitka. In February of the following year Kuskov was sent again to California aboard Chirikov to select the most appropriate location for the colony. Kuskov anchored in Bodega on March 4, and a few days later two United States ships, Isabella and Albatross, contracted for service to the Russian-American Company, arrived with Aleut hunters. Kuskov sent his hunters to the south and in May twenty-two baidarkas entered San Francisco Bay where they had great success, although Spanish soldiers guarded the springs making it impossible to take on water. During four months Kuskov's hunters took 1,238 sea otter furs; Albatross took 1,190 and Isabella carried the extraordinary quantity of 2,976 furs.

During this period Kuskov established friendly contact with the Coastal Miwok and initiated the construction of permanent buildings at Campbell Cove on the shore of the Bodega Peninsula, where some temporary constructions had been built in 1809. The name of Port Rumiantsev was given to the settlement. Even though the site was very windy and lacked trees it had a spring of excellent water, and would serve as a base until Kuskov determined a more appropriate location.

From Bodega Kuskov explored northward in search of an ideal site for his colony, and to this end he covered some eighty kilometers in the valley of the river that he named Slavyanka (modern Russian River). He then crossed the river and continued a short distance along the coast until he found a site with excellent vegetation and water, which he determined could be defended, on a cliff some thirty-five meters high above the beach. Thus, Kuskov negotiated an agreement with three chieftains of the

coastal Kashaya Pomo that, through signs, granted permission to occupy an undetermined quantity of land close to the ranchería of Mad-shui-mui for twelve years. In exchange for this grant Kuskov gave the chieftains three pairs of pants, three blankets, two hatchets, three hoes, and some glass beads, and distributed other small gifts among the habitants of the ranchería.

Kuskov headed for Sitka in July, and upon arrival he found that Baranov had already received authorization for the establishment of a colony in California. With the site already determined, they boarded the *Chirikov* in Sitka, and with twenty-five Russians and promyshlenniki, eighty Aleuts and forty baidarkas anchored in Bodega at the beginning of 1812. Kuskov sent his hunters along the coast, prohibiting their entrance to San Francisco Bay to avoid conflict with the Spaniards. However, this policy of remaining outside of the bay was nullified by the entrance of Aleuts contracted by the United States captains of *Albatross* and *Charon*. On March 15, Kuskov sent the majority of the Russians, along with twenty-five experienced workers, to Mad-shui-mui to cut timber and saw boards for construction; he ordered the Aleuts to aid in the construction that began in May. Shortly before finishing on August 25 a detachment of seven soldiers from the presidio of San Francisco under the command of Ensign Gabriel Moraga arrived, their attention attracted by the Aleuts who entered San Francisco Bay in July. The Spaniards were received in a friendly manner and Kuskov informed Moraga of his interest in trading with San Francisco to obtain grains, meat and fodder. After touring the site accompanied by Kuskov, the Spaniards returned to San Francisco and reported the presence of the Russians. The main buildings and the stockade were finished on September 10, using boards of redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) and, though its proximity to San Francisco was not considered ideal by the directors of the company, the site was officially dedicated and named Ross.

Within a short period the Port of San Francisco became the center of active trading, necessary and illegal, between Russians and Spaniards. The Russian-American Company recognized their illegal presence and followed a friendly policy with the Spaniards; the latter, for their part, recognized their isolation and dependency upon foreign products which was aggravated by the decline of trade with the United States resulting from the War of 1812. Under the orders of Commander Luis Argüello, Moraga was ordered to Ross a second time in January of 1813 and discussed trade matters with Kuskov. He gave him some horses and cows, assuring him as well that Governor José Joaquín Arrillaga would come to an agreement for the obtaining of grains and other food products. During that year and the following, Russian ships entered San Francisco Bay to buy provisions, taking advantage of their stay by hunting otters. In 1814, the Ilmena dispatched twenty-five baidarkas with fifty Aleut hunters under the command of Tarakanov into the bay, provoking a conflict with the Spaniards. Receiving news of the presence of illegal Russians in California, Viceroy Félix María Calleja del Rey informed the governor that they were in violation of the treaty of July 20, 1812, between Spain and Russia, and for that reason must order the abandonment of Ross.

At the beginning of 1814 Argüello sent Moraga with a detachment of troops to Ross to inform Kuskov of the viceregal order. Kuskov, feigning any knowledge of Castilian, did not respond immediately to the demand. Finally, on June 20, he answered Arrillaga and Argüello with a demand in which he requested the release of fugitive Aleuts and Russians imprisoned in San Francisco while, at the same time, demonstrating a friendly attitude by sending a campaign tent as a gift to the governor. In spite of the danger from Spaniards, Ilmena continued hunting toward the south where, in San Pedro, Tarakanov and eleven Aleuts were captured and arrested, although the ship returned to Ross with almost four hundred sea otter pelts.

According to Moraga, following his third visit, the fort was comprised of a wooden stockade in the form of a square with a tower in each of the four corners from northeast to southeast. The commander's house and the barracks of the other Russians were located inside the wall, and outside to the north there was a corral and above a small cove, to the west, was a large storehouse and another smaller building. In 1816, according to a Russian deserter, the fort had been expanded to include a factor's house, a kitchen for the commander, a clothes storehouse, an armory, a bath and a forge; outside the palisade there was a shipyard and a windmill. The stockade on the north measured eighty-four meters, on the east eighty meters, on the south seventy-eight meters, and on the west eighty-two meters; its height was some six varas. In the same year, Argüello reported that the towers were of eight sides, each one with two apertures, one the height of one and a half varas and the other of six; both towers had a total of fifteen cannon.

The inhabitants of Ross were, on an average, fifty Europeans, plus fifty to one hundred Aleuts (including Siberian, Kamchatkan, Aleutian Islands, and coastal Alaskan natives). Inhabitants were of all socioeconomic classes from gentry to criminal; many were of mixed Russian-Aleutian parentage. The primary task of the Aleuts was to hunt sea otters and fur seals, although at times they were employed as agriculturists, shepherds, carpenters, and builders; for sea otter hunting they built and repaired their own baidarkas. The majority of the experienced workers were Russians who also served as stewards; in general they were rustic and violent people, and thus officials maintained a high level of discipline. The officials and employees of a high rank were generally educated gentlemen, and the sole residents inside the fort. Wives of colonists were not allowed until 1818, and they were never numerous. The Indian population estimated in the vicinity of Fort Ross and Bodega was calculated at approximately 2,000, a number reduced by epidemics in 1815 and 1822. Indians of Miwok, Juki, and Pomo groups were seasonally employed as construction workers, carpenters, peasants, farmers, and shepherds, and were paid with food, clothing, and other merchandise.

In January 1813, with the second visit of Moraga to Ross, cattle breeding was introduced. He brought twenty head of cattle and three horses as gifts for Kuskov, and agreed verbally to trade with the Russians. Later, more animals were obtained from the

Spaniards, and by 1817 the fort had 80 cows, 200 sheep, 10 horses, and over 50 hogs, as well as a good quantity of chickens and domestic geese.

On the departure of Kuskov in 1821, the fort maintained 186 cows, 736 sheep, 124 hogs, and 30 horses. There was production of meat, fat, lard, butter, and hides adequate to maintain the colony, and it was sufficient to allow shipping of hides to Sitka during some years. The increase of breeding cattle also suffered losses due to Indian hunting or attacks by bear and cougar that inhabited the area.

Kuskov promoted horticulture through the cultivation of the gardens, since the rocky and undulating land did not lend itself to extensive agriculture. Beets, beans, stringbeans, peas, cabbage, turnips, radishes, lettuce, and other vegetables, as well as pumpkins, cantaloupe, and watermelon were planted. The growing of potatoes was less successful than expected due to diseases and damage caused by numerous moles and gophers. As in the case of the cattle, fruit trees were obtained from the Spaniards, and in 1814 the first peach tree brought from Mission San Francisco de Asís was planted. Three years later Lieutenant Leonty Andreyanovich Hagemester brought grapevines from Lima and peaches from Monterey. In 1820, about one hundred apple, peach, pear, and cherry trees were sent from Sitka aboard Buldakov. Other products from the Ross colony included rosins extracted from pines, bricks made from local clay, and barrels made from redwood.

The failure of cultivation of wheat and other grains as a consequence of fungus, mold, and other diseases produced by the humid climate and heavy fog, forced trade with the Spaniards for these provisions. For this coastal trade the ships *Chirikov*, launched in 1809 and seized in 1824; *Kutuzov* built in France; *Ilmena*, *Baikal*, *Golovnin* and *Okhotsk* built in the United States; and *Rurik* built in Finland were employed. To these were added the ships constructed at Ross, *Rumiantsev* launched in 1818, *Buldakov* launched in 1820, and the *Volga* begun in 1821 and launched the following year. Due to the inferior quality of the lumber and lack of curing due to the humid climate, these ships rapidly deteriorated and useful life was five to six years. In spite of the establishment of this shipyard in Ross, *Rumiantsev* (*Bodega*) remained the primary Russian port in California. Even though it was some thirty kilometers distant, products from Ross destined to Sitka were transported from the fort by mule trains or longboats for embarkation. Distant from the presidio of San Francisco, *Rumiantsev* also was frequently visited by United States ships that participated in the fur trade. It was recognized as having an excellent freshwater spring.

The death of Arrillaga at Mission Nuestra Señora de la Soledad in July 1814 marks the deterioration of friendly relations between Spaniards and Russians in California. The provisional governor, José Darío Argüello, who governed until August 18, 1815, followed by Pablo Vicente de Solá, whose administration lasted until November 22, 1822, strictly interpreted the instructions of their superiors in Madrid and Mexico City. They con-

formed to demands presented to the court of Saint Petersburg by Minister of Foreign Relations Francisco Zea Bermúdez on May 5, 1816, for absolute removal of the Russians from Ross. The beginning of these changes was manifested in June 1815 when *Ilmena*, under the command of Boris Tarasov, obtained provisions in San Francisco and continued her voyage southward arriving at San Pedro in August. There, the commissioner, Sergeant Guillermo Cota, ordered them to weigh anchor, but on September 17 Tarasov returned to the port. The following day the Spaniards attacked and captured Tarasov and twenty-four Aleuts. Following the detention of Tarasov in San Pedro, the supercargo of *Ilmena*, John Eliot de Castro, attempted landing at El Refugio near Santa Bárbara on September 21, but was repulsed by Sergeant Juan Ortega. The next day the commander of the presidio, José de la Guerra y Noriega, dispatched a squad of fourteen soldiers that captured Eliot, four Russians, a United States citizen, and one Aleut when they landed at El Refugio on the morning of the 24th.

Due to the failure of arriving at an agreement with Spain, and to avoid further conflicts in California, Baranov sent doctor Georg Anton Schäffer to Kauai in the Hawaiian Islands, explored in 1809 by Hagemester, who recommended occupation of Molo-kai as a base of supply for the Russian colonies. Even though the mission was ostensibly to negotiate the return of the cargo of *Bering*, wrecked in the bay of Waimea on January 31, 1815, new possibilities for occupation were opened, and upon arrival at Kona in November of that year, Schäffer visited King Kamehameha I and obtained permission to establish a factory on the island of Oahu. The arrival of *Otkrytie* on May 3, 1816, *Ilmena* on the 11th of the same month, and *Kadyak* at the end of June gave Schäffer enough force to recapture the cargo in the possession of the king of Kauai, Kaumualii. The latter, desirous of recouping the power he held in 1810 when he was forced to accept control of Kamehameha over his island, on July 1 not only agreed to the return of the cargo, but also to fealty to the tsar, Russian monopoly for trade in rare woods, and occupation of lands on the island. In exchange he would get Russian protection and supply of arms, ammunition, and an armed ship to re-conquer the islands that he would place under the protection of the tsar, ceding half of Oahu to the Russian-American Company. While attempting to establish a fort at Honolulu, the Russians were expelled by Kamehameha in September, and they reunited with Schäffer in Waimea where on September 12 they began construction of a fort, named Elizabeth in honor of the wife of Tsar Alexander I.

The arrival in October 1816 of the scientific expedition under command of Lieutenant Otto von Kotzebue of the Imperial Navy aboard *Rurik* was cordially received by Argüello at San Francisco, and Solá traveled from Monterey to converse with Kotzebue regarding the problem of Russian occupation. Even though he did not have authority over the Russian-American Company, Kotzebue ordered Kuskov to attend the negotiations that would take place on October 25 and 28 with the scientist Adelbert von Chamisso, serving as interpreter. A document was

composed and signed by Kotzebue, Kuskov, and witnesses Luis Argüello and José María Estudillo, expressing Spanish objections to the presence of Russia south of the Strait of Juan de Fuca as well as the determined retention of Ross by Kuskov until he received orders to the contrary from his superior, Baranov. Kotzebue, under direct command of Rumiantsov, the imperial chancellor, agreed to deliver the document to the Tsar for consideration. The Russian visit was celebrated with banquets and parties, and on November 1 Kotzebue sailed, taking the four prisoners freed by Solá, including the supercargo of Ilmena, John Eliot de Castro.

From San Francisco, Kotzebue continued his voyage to Hawaii where, between November 24 and December 14, he clarified the activities of the company to King Kamehameha, who ordered the abandonment of Fort Elizabeth under threat of attack in early 1817. Kotzebue's actions caused great displeasure to Baranov in that they were without authority of, or consultation with, the company, and would serve only to call attention to the Russian presence in Spanish territory.

Upon receiving a report of the Russian visit, Viceroy Juan Ruiz de Apodaca issued instructions to Solá prohibiting the entrance of Russian ships to California ports and ordering forced expulsion of the Russian colonists. Solá responded that additional forces would be needed for this, and that a lack of troops was the reason for continued Russian-Spanish trade, although it was outside the law. In early 1817 Baranov sent Lieutenant Yakov Podushkin in the *Chirikov* to deliver a communiqué to Solá requesting the release of imprisoned Russians. Arriving at San Francisco, Argüello denied him permission to continue by land to Monterey, and Podushkin proceeded there by sea. Upon receipt of the letter from Baranov, Solá released fifteen prisoners, including Tarakanov, promising the Russian emissary return of the others as soon they arrived from different locations. Podushkin took advantage of this occasion to propose to Solá an increase of trade relationships and formation of a society between the Spanish and the Russians for sea otter hunting. To this offer Solá responded that such matters must be addressed directly to the viceroy.

After the Podushkin visit, a letter of protest regarding Russian occupation in California was presented by the Spanish ambassador to Minister of Foreign Relations Count Nesselrode in Saint Petersburg. In spite of these setbacks, in 1817 the company made a profit of 250 percent that, in the following year dropped to 150, and in 1820 fell to 110 percent. In part this decline was because, prior to 1818, Russians did not pay taxes on purchasing and selling enterprises, but in that year taxes were fixed at 7.5 percent on imports and 12.5 percent on exports, the former increasing to 12.5 percent in 1820. The primary Russian products sold in the California trade, principally in the ports of San Francisco and Monterey, were cotton, wool, and linen fabrics, iron and steel, lead, copper, tools, glass, porcelain, rope, hats, candles, tobacco, coffee, tea and sugar. The purchases were wheat, barley, dried beef and pork, lard, butter, peas, beans, salt,

soap, and hides, as well as sea otter pelts. The sale of these furs to foreigners was prohibited by a decree issued by the company in January 1818.

Despite the apparently friendly or passive relations between Russians and Spaniards in California, the latter followed a policy designed to halt expansion and ultimately force the removal of the Russians. Between May 13 and 26 of 1817, Luis Argüello explored the Sacramento River in search of sites for new settlements, and to the north of San Francisco, the Mission of San Rafael was established on December 14, 1817. In May of 1818, Argüello, and the president of the California missions, Fray Mariano Payeras, made a visit to the new mission, and Payeras recommended new foundations in Petaluma and Suisún, as well as the establishment of a presidio near Bodega. In consequence of the renewal of Spanish activities, in 1817 Baranov sent Hagemeister to Ross with a document of cession of territory, which was signed by some Pomo chieftains and the Russian emissary as a supposed formalization of occupation by the company.

The illegality of the active trade notwithstanding, Kuskov confronted grave health problems in the settlers due to the type of food consumed in Ross and Bodega. The Aleuts did not eat vegetables or red meat and therefore suffered from scurvy. In order to resolve this problem, in 1818 Kuskov ordered the establishment of a camp on the Farallon Islands for hunting seals to supply the Aleuts with their favorite meat. The isolation and climate of the islands made life difficult there, and water and wood had to be brought from Bodega. After nine months the original colonists were replaced by others, who also brought their wives. The six to ten hunters were under the command of a Russian administrator, and the inhabitants took full advantage of all the fauna of the islands. In addition to several tons of seal meat and salted meat, the feathers and eggs of the thousands of marine birds that were found on the islands were sent to Ross. Almost all of the eggs consumed in the Russian colonies in California and Alaska came from these gatherings.

Although Fort Ross was established as an agricultural base to supply the Alaskan colonies, the company also pursued the hunting of sea otters along the California coast. This enterprise produced relatively little profit. Between 1812 and 1817 it was calculated that the number of furs taken was 1,000, and between 1817 and 1821 the number only reached 323. Decimated from intensive hunting by England and the United States, who took more than an estimated 100,000 furs prior to the arrival of the Russians in 1812, the sea otter population continued to decline considerably until in 1817 it was considered completely exterminated at Trinidad Bay and San Antonio Cove. Nevertheless, in 1818 the Okhotsk brought fifty Aleuts with their baidarkas to California, and in the same year seventy-eight Aleuts were dispatched to hunt near Cape Mendocino, while four Aleuts in two baidarkas aboard the *Kutuzov* took seventy-two otters in two weeks on the coast off Santa Cruz.

(Part two of the historical overview will appear in the fall 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 meeting is Saturday August 9 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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