

FORT ROSS - SALT POINT NEWSLETTER

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A CALIFORNIA STATE PARK COOPERATING ASSOCIATION

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Two long-time FRIA Board members decided to retire this year: Bob Madrone and John Sperry. Our heart-felt "Thank You!" is insufficient for their many contributions and years of hard work. Fortunately, they plan continued involvement with Fort Ross and FRIA, so their expertise will be an ongoing asset! We welcome two new Directors to the FRIA Board: Konstantin Kudryavtsev is from Novokuznetsk in West Siberia. He and his family moved to the USA in 1999, and have become enthusiastic Fort Ross volunteers. Konstantin's profession is software engineering. In addition he is a woodworker, historian, and photographer, and he integrates all of these passions at Fort Ross.

Susan Rudy has dedicated her professional life to caring for public lands. She has been an interpretive ranger and a resource manager with the National Park Service and an Environmental Compliance Specialist with the U.S. Forest Service. The rich natural environment surrounding Fort Ross is of particular interest to Susan, and she hopes to increase the emphasis on educating the public about this wonderful resource.

PLEASE WELCOME RANGER ELIZABETH MOORE

Please welcome Ranger Elizabeth Moore to Fort Ross State Historic Park. Elizabeth transferred to Fort Ross from the Santa Cruz beaches where she has worked for the last 4 1/2 years. She earned her bachelors degree in geology at Humboldt State and has done graduate work in Anthropology at Chico. Her favorite job before joining state parks was working as a hiking guide in Alaska. Elizabeth is a skilled, enthusiastic addition to the Fort Ross staff. She will be working with the Call House volunteers and garden and instructing in the district's emergency medical responder program. We are very fortunate to have her!

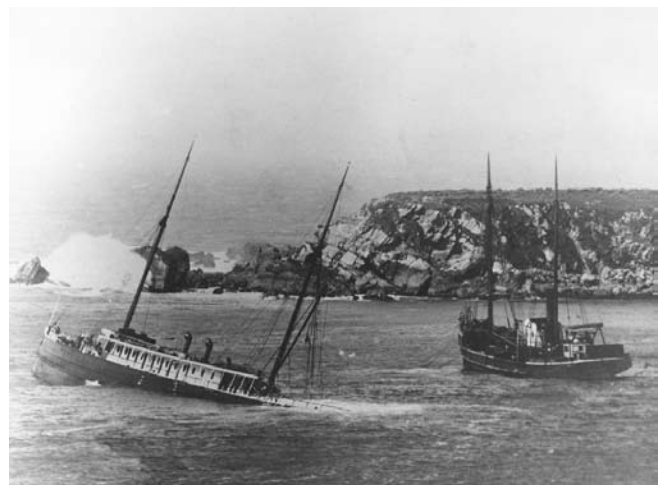
COMMEMORATION OF THE SINKING OF THE S.S. POMONA SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2008 AT 1 PM

On March 17, 1908, at 6 pm the S.S. *Pomona* struck the Monterey Rock south of Fort Ross, was damaged and sank in the cove in front of the Call House which is now a part of Fort Ross State Historic Park. Carlos and George Call assisted in the successful rescue of the passengers and provided shelter while transportation was arranged for the victims. Thanks to the Calls' heroic efforts, no lives were lost. The ship now resides on the ocean floor and is visited by underwater park enthusiasts. In years past, California State Parks and the University of Indiana have mapped the wreck, photographed and conserved removable parts of the ship.

On Saturday, March 15, 2008, Fort Ross State Historic Park will host an event to commemorate the sinking of the *Pomona*. The celebration will include an informative slide show and talk about the history and research of the *Pomona* by Senior State Archaeologist John Foster; Dr. Charles Beeker, University of Indiana professor, will answer questions about the diving research conducted on the *Pomona*; historic photographs and conserved artifacts will be on display; a tour of the Call House and a visit to the site. Researchers and State Park Dive Team members will be on hand to interpret the wreck from the land.

If you would like read about the *Pomona*, please go to:
<http://www.indiana.edu/~e472/pomona/pomonahome.html>
http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23572

For more information, please contact Heidi Horvitz at (707) 865-3124



MY ROAD TO ROSS

BY HANK BIRNBAUM

In the fall of 2007, Hank Birnbaum joined the Fort Ross staff as an interpretive specialist. He has been a long-time member of FRIA, and a frequent visitor to Fort Ross. He is our first staff member fluent in Russian language and culture, and is a huge asset to the park in many ways. We asked him to introduce himself.

Why Russia? Considering that I am not of Russian ancestry yet lived most of my adult life in Russia, the question that I'm most often asked is "Why Russia?" While finishing my interdisciplinary undergraduate education, I turned my attention to what seemed to me to be the greatest need of the day: the nuclear arms race and USA-USSR reconciliation. Taking initiative and getting involved with citizen diplomacy and exchange projects, in 1983 I started traveling to the former Soviet Union and Russia by serving as an assistant or group leader of study tours.

Sent to Siberia Though I was born on the San Francisco peninsula, I was raised mostly in the "Wild West" of the Colorado Rockies, and the allure and unknown of Russia's "Wild East" was great. Scouting out Lake Baikal, it's freshwater seal, and the possibility of organizing a natural history expedition there, I first went to Irkutsk and Lake Baikal in 1986.

Move to Russia Finding more than I expected, in 1988 I ended up moving to Irkutsk and "marrying into" the Russian culture, indeed raising my commitment to Russian-American exchange. I worked for many years assisting various cultural and scientific (mostly Baikal environmental) exchange programs, plus teaching American Studies at a local language institute.

A New Beginning at Baikal In 1996 I accepted an offer from a friend to serve as a backcountry fire lookout and then ranger at Prebaikalsky National Park. The life-giving waters of Lake Baikal and the hearty local villagers, living a subsistence lifestyle, indeed gave me a new meaning to life in many ways. My career as an interpretive park ranger began. Together with my Buryat-Mongolian and Russian village neighbors, we created a series of national award-winning interpretive booklets and trails, the first of their kind in the area. Meanwhile I also remarried to a Prebaikalsky National Park colleague, and am now a proud father of three: Alisa- 21, Arseni- 19, and Anya- 8.

Career in Interpretation At last finding my career path, and wanting to improve my nature and culture interpretive skills by learning from other's successes, I then completed an internship with the National Park Service's American Indian Liaison Office in Washington, DC, (surveying interpretation of and by American Indians in the NPS).

After returning to my Baikal village where we formed a local community-based park-partner interpretive association, we focused our efforts on heritage tourism, developing

a successful local home-stay/bed-and-breakfast program. As the road was being paved to, and electricity was being brought into, our Baikal village, we also were involved with various nature and culture conservation and preservation projects, supported by the Global Environmental Facility's Lake Baikal Biodiversity Conservation Program. This work led to the creation of a partner NGO, the Buryat Cultural Center, which focused primarily on preserving and restoring Buryat cultural traditions (particularly nature conservation traditions).

Meanwhile, while continuing my work at Baikal, I also completed my graduate degree, eventually receiving my M.S. in Resource Recreation and Tourism, from the University of Idaho, Moscow.

Back to America... and now Fort Ross Although we love Siberia, and I have dual citizenship, in 2004 we chose to resettle in America, so that my family could have an American experience, as I had had a Siberian experience. Also we wished to be closer to my elderly mother [who lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.] Thus for three years we lived in our family's historic log cabin near the shores of Lake Pend Oreille in northern Idaho, while I was working at a private residential therapeutic school nearby in northwest Montana.

I contacted Fort Ross State Park and inquired if there were any openings on the horizon at the fort. Wow! We need to be careful what we wish for! Though I've been off-schedule since the holidays, I've served Fort Ross as a seasonal State Park Interpreter since October 1st. Working Thursday through Saturday, my hours will increase during the summer. Besides working with Fort Ross' school children visitors as part of our active Environmental Living Program, I'm also serving our adult and Russian visitors as a Park Interpreter, and will coordinate our seasonal festival events as our Fort Ross Volunteer Coordinator. Looking forward to getting better acquainted and working with you all!

'KOLYADKI'

This January 19th 'Kolyadki' was celebrated at Fort Ross at the Cultural Heritage Winter Celebration organized by the fort's interpretive office (707 847-4777). The event celebrates the two weeks between Christmas and Epiphany. Russian Orthodox Christmas is on January 6-7, and the following two weeks are filled with joy, visits, songs, dances and games. "Kolyadki" is the name of songs that children sing when visiting village houses and asking for treats. Adults had another fun activity: in some houses there were dances, in others games or skits. All of this took place at Fort Ross, and mid-afternoon everyone walked down to the Fort Ross Cove. Singing filled the air and all took part in a traditional winter cleansing in the water of Fort Ross Creek. The next Cultural Heritage event is the Spring Festival "Maslenitsa" on Saturday, April 19th.

EXCERPT FROM A JOURNAL OF A VISIT TO ALTA CALIFORNIA BY DMITRY ZAVALISHIN



Dmitry Zavalishin, 1864. This painting is among the works reproduced for the project publication by Lyailin Andrey, Deputy Chief of the Central Naval Museum.

The Fort Ross Interpretive Association is working with Russian archives to research documents and graphics produced on early 19th century voyages to California. Russian American scholars are working closely with FRIA to research and translate these important records which will enhance the study of early California. *Excerpt from a Journal of a Visit to Alta California* is among the documents that will be included in a project publication. The anticipated goal of this project is to produce a book which will feature translations of journals, as well as the beautiful maps and graphics created on these Russian voyages.

FRIA is now in its second year of *The Coast of Colonial California through the Eyes of Russian Mariners: Fresh Perspectives from Russian Naval Archives*, our research grant funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. In November of 2007, Dr. James Gibson, John Middleton, and Sarah Sweedler converged in St Petersburg to meet with Russian colleagues and continue culling the archives at the Russian Naval Archives and beyond. St. Petersburg is a fascinating and beautiful city, more so during off-season when one can comfortably stroll Nevskii Prospekt and enjoy the city's sites, including the canals of the Neva River which were crackling with ice. Research and translation is ongoing, but to pique your interest we include this excerpt, a never-before-published translation provided by Dr. Gibson, retired professor of geography at York University, Canada, and esteemed research director of this grant.

Dmitry Zavalishin.¹ *Excerpt from a Journal of a Visit to Alta California during the Round-the World Voyage of the Frigate Kreiser.*² 1 December 1823-12 January 1824. Translation by James R. Gibson. [To be concluded in the spring issue of this newsletter.]

. . . [Zavalishin's description of New Archangel and of the *Kreiser's* voyage from there to San Francisco is omitted here.]

On 1 December [1823] we dropped anchor in San Francisco Bay not far from the presidio (fortress) of the same name; at the anchorage we found the sloop *Apollon* and two ships of the Russian-American Company, and within several hours the *Ladoga* arrived, too. Thus, a considerable (for that time) Russian naval force assembled in San Francisco Bay, for the Russian-American Company ships had cannon, and the naval forces of neither England nor the United States were represented by a single vessel. In fact, Russia then dominated the northern part of the Great [Pacific] Ocean but the time to reap benefit from this position was already being lost.

As my health had still not fully recovered, and meanwhile it was necessary to occupy myself with the purchase of wheat and the securing of fresh provisions for the frigate, the next day a room was allotted to me in the house of the governor [commandant], who had become the president [governor] of the province and was moving to Monterey.³ Since in these houses there are no glass windows, no wooden floors, and no stoves, our joiners and carpenters made window frames and floors, and in place of a stove a spare copper fireplace from the frigate was installed. The aristocracy of San Francisco liked all of this very much, and my room became a gathering place for the ladies and maidens of the presidio, considerably constraining me and hampering my work.

In my articles "A Recollection of California" [actually, "California in 1824"] and "The Case of the Colony of Ross" printed in the *Russian Messenger*, I have already mentioned many things relating to the political situation and social life of California, and therefore I intend to limit this account mainly to those circumstances that directly concern the frigate *Kreiser*.

To have any business then in California was extremely difficult because everything there was still in a primitive condition, not only with respect to the Indians but also the ruling Spaniards. Notwithstanding the abundance of wheat, it was impossible to get flour, even in an amount sufficient for preparing at least fresh bread for the command; it was good that I had brought a hand millstone from Russia just for the purpose of milling on the frigate:

the Spaniards did not have mills driven by water, wind, or horses or even hand mills, and every grain grower prepared a small amount of flour for himself for unleavened flatcakes, grinding the grain with a stone on a slab, as we grind dyes.

The method of transporting bought grain was also extremely labourious. Although part of it was bought at the nearest mission, the fields belonging to it and the farmstead where the granaries were found lay on the left [northern] side of the bay, and if we had had to transport the grain by land we would have had to make more than a hundred verstas around the entire bay, and with the lack of vehicular roads and carts it would have been necessary to haul it on packhorses. Meanwhile, for water transport, which was much closer and easier, the Spaniards had only clumsy barges of the most primitive construction that barely moved, and in this way for every round trip we had to spend twice or four times as much time as with a good longboat, but our longboat was constantly employed in other tasks for the frigate and we could not use it to transport wheat. And the Indians also had no means of transport whatever, such as could be found, for example, among the Aleuts and Koloshes at Sitka. Nowhere had we ever seen river navigation, let alone ocean navigation, in such a primitive condition, and this was perhaps explained by the fact that San Francisco Bay is closed on all sides and so there is no necessity of struggling with the element of water.

We had seen a variety of savages in different situations, and all of those who had to strain their mental powers and their energies to struggle with the natural elements — all were able to invent various kinds of vessels in accordance with local conditions. The Koloshes have canoes [*baty*] that are able to accommodate a large number of people and that in contests with our rowed vessels are as fast as our best gigs and whaleboats; the Aleuts have excellent skin kayaks and umiaks that are equally capable of traveling the open sea or crossing the shallowest shoals; and the dug-outs [*odnoderevki*] of the inhabitants of the islands of the Great Ocean [the Polynesians] are so skillfully constructed that they cannot be overturned (for this they position a small tree a certain distance from the boat and fasten it firmly crosswise to each end of the boat with lengths of wood, and this [outriggering] does not let the boat overturn because on the one hand it keeps the boat pressed to the water, and on the other hand the lengths of wood act as levers that lend enough weight to the small tree to keep the craft level; to haul loads they join two boats to form a common deck). But the Californian Indians have devised nothing better than two bound bundles of reeds [*tule*] that they fasten to themselves and, parting the bundles in the middle, wriggle into them and float thusly, submerging half of their bodies and employing a thick stick in place of an oar.

The slowness of the delivery of wheat was very inconvenient to us. We had to return to Sitka by March, when the herring fishery there drew several thousand savages and always created not a little danger to the colony; besides, it would not be possible for us to embark until all of the needed amount of wheat had been delivered to the frigate.

Regarding meat, however, there was no difficulty at all; it was always abundant and cheap. For a live bull we paid two Spanish piasters, which were strictly for the labour of catching it and bringing it to a spot where we had built a workshop. The owner kept only the hide for his own use, since hides then constituted California's sole item of export besides wheat. We issued a double ration of fresh meat daily to the command and, in addition, salted not a little meat for use at Sitka so as to conserve for the return voyage to Russia that corned beef that had been brought from Russia and prepared in such a way as to last three years; we also took some corned beef from the sloops *Apollon* and *Ladoga*, which had economized theirs considerably. We did not even buy game but bagged it ourselves. Besides the daily hunts of the officers, every day we sent ashore a very skillful hunter, a sailor who bore the name 'hunter'; he was given two helpers, and every day they brought a whole cargo of the most varied game — geese, ducks, snipe, quail, and rabbits. In order to give an idea of the abundance of game, I can cite the following anecdote. One of the *Apollon's* officers, M. K. Kyukhelbeker, a very good and tolerant man, went hunting with his batman, a great knave who had, of course, to carry everything that his master shot. In a very short time the batman, seeing that he had already to carry a dozen and a half geese, and that his master was continuing to hunt, suddenly fell to the ground and moaned, saying that he must have stumbled and could not walk because of a pain in his leg. The good master took the catch himself to carry and ordered him to walk slowly and lean on a stick that he broke off a bush. Of course, the medical assistant who examined the batman's leg did not find even a trace of an injury, but the master did not want to believe him and confirmed that he really had stepped awkwardly and stretched a tendon.

Fresh butter and milk was likewise abundant and was especially agreeable to those officers who liked to drink tea and coffee with milk and for whom the want of milk was a great hardship. Three times, it is true, we tried to bring cows onto the frigate, and each time during the first prolonged storm and strong rocking we lost them; at Sitka there was no milk because it was impossible for the residents to keep cows for want of pasture, so that it was not until California that the frigate was able to enjoy milk for the first time since Tasmania. Of course, the hunters tried to substitute either condensed or powdered milk for fresh

milk but it was always very expensive and insufficient. In California milk was a commonplace beverage and was of excellent quality, owing to the superior grass; only cream was impossible to get from the inhabitants, who did not use it, and it was necessary to skim it ourselves.

Because of the purchases of wheat, we had to travel throughout the northern part of California, at first on horseback to purchase it and then by water to transport it; thus did I visit all of the places that later became famous with the discovery of gold. I visited the missions of San Rafael and San Francisco Solano [Sonoma], the only ones built on the northern side of San Francisco Bay, the latter with the very aim of impeding the expansion of the Russian colony of Ross, which I visited on this occasion, too. I was also at San Pablo [Bay] and on the banks of the Sacramento River, where I proposed that a new Russian colony be established (it was here that gold was first found). I was at San José and Santa Clara [Missions] repeatedly; I crossed [the Santa Cruz Mountains] to Santa Cruz [Mission] by the most difficult, dangerous, and desolate direct route; and I was at the Mariposa [River] and the canyons of the Calaveras [River]. I examined the abandoned silver mines, and I may say that after the discovery of gold, when much began to be written about California, for a long, long time I did not see the name of a single place where I had not set foot; in one day I made more than 150 verstas on horseback, and on one trip I traveled 600 verstas in four days.* [* The horses in California were excellent and were of Andalusian stock, which, as is well-known, are derived from Arabian horses. For frequent changes while traveling I took three or four more horses than the number of riders.]

In the meantime, while I was spending so much time on travel, my comrades were not deprived of diversions, especially while the ships were still at San Francisco. There was no shortage of opportunities for festivities because all holidays were repeated twice, not only because they were reckoned according to the Old Style [Julian calendar] among the Russians and the New Style [Gregorian calendar] among the Spaniards but also because the Spaniards had come to America from the east and we from the west, with the result that we differed by one day from them, so that when it was still Saturday to them, it was already Sunday to us, and on our Monday it was still only Sunday for the Spaniards.⁴ Before the celebrations the hunters could merry-make two Sundays in a row, the Russian and the Spanish. It must be said, however, that our officers furnished the chief means of merrymaking for the Spaniards ashore; always there was our music, our wine and dessert, our plates and dishes, our servants, our cook. The Spaniards provided only the premises and ordinary victuals, which were nothing there, and they invited the female society. To this it must be added that the officers preferred to have such festivities ashore because it was very troublesome to arrange them on the frigate, given

the necessity of bringing and returning guests, especially females, in our rowboats.

The sloops *Apollon* and *Ladoga*, whose sole purpose in stopping at San Francisco was the necessity of letting their commands rest and recover, were soon, of course, ready to leave, and on 12 January 1824 they set out on their return voyage to Russia. I cannot help recalling the honourable and sensitive behaviour of our frigate's officers on that occasion. Knowing that our former senior lieutenant, K---,⁵ who had been transferred from the frigate, would be coming to delicately bid the frigate's officers farewell, all of them — in sight of the command that had demanded his removal — approached him to say goodbye, although few of them had not been seriously mistreated by him. None was himself personally and directly to blame for the clashes with him, having generally avoided dealings with him, but he had found the means of provoking conflict with us in various devious ways. It is true that he never dared to address me rudely or to interfere directly with my orders, knowing that I reported every day to Lazarev and would not fail to openly recount his disagreeableness; but I often had to take the part of the young officers and his subordinates and therefore not infrequently had also confronted him. [To be concluded in the spring issue of the newsletter.]

(Endnotes)

1 Dmitry Irinarkhovich Zavalishin (1804-92) was one of Russian America's most interesting protagonists. The precocious son of a military governor, he was schooled in St. Petersburg's Naval Academy, where he claimed to have taught his classmates various subjects at the age of 17 (Zavalishin seems to have been as egotistical as he was talented). Upon graduation the teenage prodigy studied a number of foreign languages and attended lectures in the sciences at several institutions. So he had a broad education and diverse interests, including the frontier regions of the Russian Empire, where he had been born (Astrakhan at the mouth of the Volga River). But he was unable to indulge these interests until he was invited to join the round-the-world voyage of the *Cruiser* in 1822-25 as a midshipman under Captain Mikhail Lazarev. Zavalishin accepted eagerly, intending to travel overland via Okhotsk in order to study Siberia firsthand.

During a stopover in England Zavalishin became exercised about the perversion in practice of the ideals of the Holy Alliance, an ineffectual coalition of the monarchs of Russia, Austria, and Prussia intended to apply principles of Christian morality to foreign relations in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars but destined to become a symbol of reactionary legitimacy. He wrote a letter expressing his concern to Alexander I, whose religious fervour and idealism had prompted him to found the alliance in 1815. The tsar, now the "tired reformer," was so impressed that he took the unusual step of recalling Zavalishin to St. Petersburg to explain himself in person, but the order

reached England after the *Cruiser's* departure. Another copy was sent via Okhotsk to New Archangel, where it was delivered at the end of the summer of 1823 right after the arrival of the *Cruiser*. But it was too late in the season to make Okhotsk, so Zavalishin decided to visit Alta California over the winter. He spent six weeks there, and in his capacity of purchaser of the *Cruiser's* provisions he travelled widely and conversed with numerous Californios. So the cocky radical (and chauvinistic imperialist) was able to become acquainted with the precarious situation of both Russian and Mexican California and to conceive some bold plans. He concluded that California, with its political instability and agricultural and mineral potential, should be annexed by Russia in order to enhance its Pacific position. He cultivated the Californio authorities, secular and clerical, advising them to secede from Mexico in the belief that an independent province could be more easily annexed by Russia. Zavalishin envisioned himself as the Grand Master of a knightly "Order of Restoration," modelled upon the Knights of Malta. This amorphous institution, which he had conceived in early 1822 with the aim of spreading the Enlightenment, supporting human rights, and purging Europe of "troubled minds," was now to be based in Alta California and serve as a vehicle for Russian expansion.

His machinations were interrupted by the *Cruiser's* return to New Archangel and his own recall via Okhotsk to St. Petersburg, where the tsar, preoccupied with the flooding of the city by the Neva River, had time for only a hurried audience. So his proposals — which by now included not only the occupation of Alta California but also the seizure of Sakhalin, the Amur River Valley, and even the Hawaiian Islands, all in order to safeguard and develop Russian America and to enhance Russia's naval power — were submitted in writing and examined by a special committee chaired by the notoriously reactionary Count Arakcheyev. It essentially rejected Zavalishin's proposals; he was told that the tsar found his "Order of Restoration" to be a fascinating but impractical concept. Thereupon he secretly founded his order anyway and converted it into a republican and "masonic" (subversive) society but retained its international and semi-mystical flavour.

The Russian-American Company, whose "chief protector," Count Mordvinov, had been a member of the special committee, was much more sympathetic to Zavalishin's scheme. At Mordvinov's urging the company decided to adopt his proposals for reorganizing the colonial administration and rejuvenating agriculture in Russian California through free colonization by Russian peasants. The company asked Zavalishin to facilitate the implementation of these proposals by becoming manager of Ross Counter for two years and then governor of the colonies for five. However, the tsar refused to release him from his naval duties for fear that his actions would provoke a conflict with Great Britain or the United States.

At this point the Decembrist revolt intervened to deprive him of any audience. A year before the insurrection in St. Petersburg he had been persuaded by

Ryleyev, the company's chief clerk at its headquarters, to assist (although not formally join) the "Northern Society," an underground political circle that had been formed in 1822 with the goal of abolishing autocracy and serfdom. Following the abortive *coup d'état*, Zavalishin was arrested in Kazan Province, where he had been sent by the society for research. He was returned to St. Petersburg for trial and initially condemned to death, but his sentence was then reduced to hard labour in Siberia for life (his brother Hippolyte, likewise a Decembrist, was also exiled to Siberia). In 1839 he was freed from hard labour and allowed to settle in Chita in Transbaikalia. There he continued to study and write, becoming an authority on Siberia. In 1856 he declined an amnesty from the new tsar, Alexander II, but seven years later was deported from Siberia for slandering the local administration. He spent the last thirty-five years of his life in Moscow, promoting popular education and scientific societies and writing copiously, including an account of his round-the-world voyage (Dmitry Zavalishin, "Krugosvetnoye plavanie fregata *Kreiser*. V 1822-1825 gg. pod komandoyu Mikhaila Petrovicha Lazareva" ["The Round-the-World Voyage of the Frigate *Cruiser* in 1822-1825 under the Command of Mikhail Petrovich Lazarev"], *Drevnyaya i novaya Rossiya*, II [1877], no. 5, pp. 54-67, no. 6, pp. 115-25, no. 7, pp. 199-214, III [1877], no. 10, pp. 143-58, no. 11, pp. 210-23) and a study of the Russian-American Company (D. I. Zavalishin, *Rossiisko-amerikanskaya kompaniya [The Russian-American Company]* [Moscow, 1865]). When he died in early 1892 at the age of 88, he was known as the "last Decembrist," having outlived all of his fellow conspirators. See Dmitry Zavalishin, *Vospominaniya [Reminiscences]*, 4th ed., "Biografii i memuary" (Moscow, 2003), especially "Fregat 'Kreiser'" ["The Frigate 'Cruiser'"], pp. 66-78, "Daniya-Angliya-Braziliya" ["Denmark-England-Brazil"], pp. 79-93, "V Kalifornii i Sibiri" ["In California and Siberia"], pp. 93-103, and "Navodnenie 1824 goda and budushcheye russkikh kolony" ["The Flood of 1824 and the Future of the Russian Colonies"], pp. 103-114.

2 Dmitry Zavalishin, "Krugosvetnoye plavanie fregata *Kreiser*. V 1822-1825 gg., pod komandoyu Mikhaila Petrovicha Lazareva" ["The Round-the-World Voyage of the Frigate *Cruiser*. In 1822-25 under the Command of Mikhail Petrovich Lazarev"], *Drevnyaya i novaya Rossiya*, Vol. II, No. 11 (1877), Pt. VII, pp. 210-17.

3 Zavalishin is referring to Luis Argüello.

4 The International Date Line had yet to be demarcated.

5 Presumably Ivan A. Kupreyanov, then a lieutenant (since early 1820) on the *Kreiser* and later (1835-40) a governor of Russian America.

THE RUSSIAN ORCHARD AT FORT ROSS

REFLECTIONS ON STEWARDSHIP AND HISTORIC POMOLOGY

BY SUSANNA BARLOW

It is not known if any trees remain from the Russian time period at Fort Ross. There is conjecture about the origins of the older pear trees (identified as a Bartlett type, *Pyrus communis*, var. "Vicar of Wakefield") the deciduous plum or cherry (var. of *Prunus serotina*?) the ancient cherry trees along the sag ponds and a stand of older olive trees (*Olea europaea*). None of the fruit trees remain from a separate Benitz orchard, the owners of Fort Ross after 1849. What is known is that there has been an orchard at this spot since 1814 which has subsequently been tended by Russian, Benitz and Call family hands. There is a second orchard which lies directly south of the Russian orchard, a short, lovely walk along the San Andreas earthquake fault, near the far southern border of Fort Ross State Historic Park. Known as the Call orchard, this orchard consists mainly of plum and nut trees and is rarely visited. It has a special decaying beauty and has significant historic value in its own right.

The fruit, nut, citrus (bergamots), grapes and olive trees once planted at Fort Ross are living reminders of an agricultural past. Just as the remaining original historical buildings need preservation and restoration, so the old orchards need careful assessment, and a maintenance program that includes delicate, judicious pruning and thoughtful consideration. Where as modern orchards are pruned annually to increase fruit production and fruit quality, historic orchards are pruned for the health of the tree. A minimalist approach to pruning can add many years of life to antique, heritage fruit trees.

When it was planted in 1814, it was the first orchard in Sonoma County. The Russian orchard is quietly recognized as a living treasure at Fort Ross, but one whose life is ebbing. Winter wind storms, animal damage (over ten years ago an apple loving bear climbed the fruit trees and broke many branches!) and simply time, have added to the downward mortality spiral. On the up side there have been many volunteers who have taken a personal and even visionary interest in the Russian orchard. The "Save the Trees" project and John Smith's prescient efforts in the 1980s established a detailed map of the existing trees, scions were taken and subsequently grafted onto standard root stock, and many daughter trees were planted around some of the older pear and apple trees. The work undertaken today stands on the shoulders of John Smith and the volunteers who worked many hours fencing, watering and pruning these young Russian daughter trees.

Last spring a small group of Fort Ross staff and volunteers had the immense good fortune of being part of a memorable and inspiring educational historic orchard bonanza, a training given by Susan Dolan, Historic Landscape Architect, National Parks Service, Pacific West Region. Susan's impeccable National Park credentials pale before her love

and passion for fruit trees! Supervising Ranger Heidi Horvitz, Lynn and Susan Rudy, and FRIA volunteers attended this workshop in March 2007. The care of the former Sonoma Developmental Center Orchard was the focus. This beautiful old orchard has been recently annexed by Jack London State Historic Park, and the orchard's condition assessment and stabilization became a concern for Marianne Hurley, State Historian II. Thanks to Marianne's interest a special team was assembled to save some of the older trees before they were lost to time. The orchard we visited later that day had all but been abandoned, some of the trees were being suffocated under native brush, dead limbs, and broken, rotting branches. Pruning students appreciated Susan Dolan's rare horticultural sensitivity for the needs of individual trees, and her mantra was "less is more" when pruning frail specimens. Under Susan's delicate tutelage, park staff and volunteers were given instruction on how to prune mature and ailing fruit trees in the field. My, it is so easy to fall in love with an old orchard on a beautiful early spring day.

The parallel needs of the two orchards, the Russian orchard at Fort Ross, and the Jack London State Park orchard are striking. Fortunately, our orchard has received the care of many dedicated volunteers over the last thirty years. Fort Ross State Historic Park would benefit from the development of a Fort Ross Orchard Management Plan based on the National Park Orchard Management research. The entire orchard needs attention from the soil to the tips of the branches to prolong the life and health of the historic trees. A Management Plan could be the basis for grant writing to gather the funds necessary for the stabilization of the orchard.

And the status of the Russian orchard today? It looks sad. The bare trees are calling out to be pruned. All four quadrants of the fence need repairing. Big gaps in the fence and well-marked feral pig trails in the mud are clear testaments to the animals traveling all over the orchard at porcine will. The indiscriminate wild pig rooting this winter is appalling, making a mess of the paths the parks worked so hard to establish with the Orchard Walk. The Russian orchard at Fort Ross is again in urgent need of tender loving care! This season California State Parks faces significant shortfalls in the budget, both for staff and maintenance, and priorities are being reassessed. With the munificence of California State Parks wavering, what is the role of volunteers in maintaining and preserving this living legacy at Fort Ross State Historic Park? What will be the future of the Russian orchard at Fort Ross? This is a question open to all of us to ponder. FRIA members and Fort Ross community input is valued, and suggestions are welcomed. Please contact 707 847-3437 on Sundays.

po-mol-o-gy /n./ The scientific study and cultivation of fruit.

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, February 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
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