

THE RUSSIAN

TO SIBERIA AND

AMERICAN

RUSSIAN AMERICA

COLONIES

THREE CENTURIES OF
RUSSIAN EASTWARD EXPANSION

1798-1867

VOLUME THREE
A DOCUMENTARY RECORD

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DECEMBER 20, 1841

INVENTORY AND BILL OF SALE TRANSFERRING POSSESSION OF
RUSSIA'S CALIFORNIA PROPERTIES TO JOHN SUTTER*

Inventory of structures and chattels located at Port Bodega, the Ross settlement, and the Russian American Company ranchos.

STRUCTURES

The structures are in the following locations: "A," at Ross; "B," at the Kostromitinov Rancho; "C," at the Khlebnikov Rancho; "D," at the Chernykh Rancho; and "E," at Bodega.

A. AT THE ROSS SETTLEMENT.

A square fort, surrounded by a row of posts 172 sazhen** long by 2 sazhen high. There are turrets in two of the corners.

Inside the fort are the following structures:

The old house for the commandant, two stories, built of beams, 8 sazhen long by 6 wide, covered with double planking. There are 6 rooms and a kitchen.

The new house for the commandant, built of square beams, 8 sazhen long by 4 wide. There are 6 rooms and a vestibule.

The house for Company employees, which has 10 rooms and 2 vestibules; 10 sazhen long by 3½ wide.

The barracks with 8 rooms and 2 vestibules; 11 sazhen long by 4 wide.

The old warehouse, two stories, built of beams, 8 sazhen

* The original document from which this translation is made is in French. A Spanish version also exists, but to date no Russian version has been found.

** The French term is *toise*, the Spanish, *brazo*. In the absence of a Russian version, Glenn J. Farris, State Archaeologist with the California Department of Parks and Recreation, has applied the archaeological research at Fort Ross to determine that the correct translation is the seven-foot Russian *sazhen*. See his study, "Fathoming Fort Ross," in *Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 17 (1983), No. 2, pp. 93-99.

long by 4 wide. It is surrounded by an open gallery with pillars.

The granary, built of planks, 7 sazhen long by 4 wide.

A kitchen, 4 sazhen long by $3\frac{1}{2}$ wide.

A storehouse for provisions, planked, 6 sazhen long by 4 wide.

An attached jailhouse.

The chapel with a cupola.

A well, $2\frac{1}{3}$ sazhen deep.

Outside the fort there are the following structures:

A forge and blacksmith shop, built of planks, $5\frac{1}{3}$ sazhen long by $3\frac{2}{3}$ *arch*. [arshins?] wide, with 4 partitions.

A tannery, 5 sazhen long by 3 wide.

The public bath, 5 sazhen long by $2\frac{1}{2}$ wide.

A cooperage, 10 sazhen long by 5 wide.

A shed for the baidarkas, on beams, 10 sazhen long by 5 wide.

Around the fort:

A public kitchen 5 sazhen long by 3 wide.

Two byres built of beams, 20 sazhen long by $3\frac{1}{2}$ wide.

A corral, 28 sazhen long by 20 wide.

A shed for ewes.

A shed for swine.

A dairy built of planks, 6 sazhen long by $3\frac{1}{2}$ wide.

A storehouse for cleaning wheat, $7\frac{3}{4}$ sazhen long by $3\frac{1}{2}$ wide.

A wooden threshing floor 8 sazhen in diameter.

A windmill with a grindstone, which can grind up to 20 fanegas per day.

A windmill (old) with one stone.

A horse-powered mill with a grindstone.

A machine for making cordage.

A carpentry shed, 7 sazhen long by 3 wide.

A planked floor for winnowing wheat, $6\frac{3}{4}$ sazhen long by 5 wide.

A well, $1\frac{1}{2}$ sazhen deep.

In addition, there are 24 dwellings around the fort:

4 dwellings, 5 sazhen long by $2\frac{1}{2}$ wide.

5 dwellings, $4\frac{1}{3}$ sazhen long by $2\frac{1}{2}$ wide.

9 dwellings, $3\frac{1}{3}$ sazhen long by 2 wide.

3 dwellings, 2 sazhen long by 2 wide.

At almost every dwelling there is an orchard enclosed by palings, and there are 8 sheds, 8 bathhouses and 10 kitchens.

All these houses are covered with double planking; they have glazed windows and each has a floor and a ceiling.

Located 500 sazhen from the fort there are the following:

A planked threshing floor 10 sazhen in diameter, with an adjoining shed 5 sazhen long by 3 wide.

An orchard 54 sazhen long by 2 wide, enclosed by a hedge.

There are more than 260 fruit trees, including:

207 apple trees

29 peach trees

10 pear trees

10 quince trees

8 cherry trees

In the orchard there is a new four-room house $4\frac{1}{2}$ sazhen long by 4 wide, covered with planking. The house has a kitchen $2\frac{1}{2}$ sazhen square.

A small garden 4 sazhen long by $10\frac{1}{2}$ wide, in which there are some 20 fruit trees. At Ross there is as much as 70 *arpents*

[1 arpent = 1.5 acres] of arable land, most of which is enclosed by fences.

A fruit garden enclosed by a fence, 70 sazhen long by 20 wide, with a small orange grove.

B. THE KOSTROMITINOV RANCH.

A barracks 8 sazhen long by 3 wide, covered with planking, with 3 rooms and a vestibule.

A warehouse 7 sazhen long by 3 wide, covered with planking. There are seed storage compartments inside. Next to this, the land slopes down to the river.

A house 3 sazhen long by 2 wide.

Two wooden threshing floors: one 8 sazhen in diameter, and the other, planked, 10 sazhen.

A wheat-winnowing floor, 12 sazhen square, built on posts.

A shack for Indians, built of planks, 7 sazhen long by 2½ wide.

A kitchen 2 sazhen square, with 2 stoves.

A bathhouse 3 sazhen long by 2 wide.

A boat for crossing the Slavianka [River].

There are more than 100 arpents of arable land here [suitable] for sowing up to 250 fanegas of wheat.

C. THE KHLEBNIKOV RANCH.

A 3-room adobe house, 3½ sazhen long by 2½ wide, covered with planks and surrounded by a hedge. Next to it is a sundial.

A barracks 10 sazhen long by 3½ wide, divided into 3 sections, covered with planks.

A storehouse 7½ sazhen long by 3½ sazhen wide, covered with planks, with compartments for storing seed.

A large wood threshing floor 12 sazhen in diameter.

A kitchen and a forge 6 sazhen long by 3½ wide, covered with planks.



I. G. Voznesenskii made this unfinished sketch of Fort Ross from the sea during his 1840–42 visit to California. We see the high palisade and the octagonal shore bastion; the Russian American Company flag would have flown from both flag-poles. Institute of Ethnography AN SSSR, Leningrad. (OHS neg. 26989)

4 shacks for the Indians and for storing provisions. These are of various dimensions.

A horse-powered mill with one stone, which can grind 4 fanegas per day.

A large corral for the livestock.

The arable land is enclosed by a fence. The fields here produce very good fava beans, maize, tobacco, watermelons and other things.

D. THE CHERNYKH RANCH.

A 6-room barracks 7 sazhens long by 3 wide, covered with planks.

A kitchen 4 sazhens long by 2 wide.

A bathhouse 3 sazhens long by 2 wide.

A storehouse for provisions 7 sazhens long by 3 wide, covered with planks.

A floor for winnowing wheat, 18 sazhens square.

Two shacks for supplies.

A threshing floor 10 sazhens in diameter.

Two hothouses made of planks, each 8 sazhens.

The arable land is enclosed by a fence. There is as much as 20 arpents of land on which 50 fanegas of wheat can be



The Chernykh rancho, as seen by Voznesenskii shortly before the sale of Russia's California possessions to John Sutter. Fenced cattle stockades are in the foreground, cultivated land on the slope beyond. Institute of Ethnography AN SSSR, Leningrad. (OHS neg. 26997)

sown. The fields here produce very good fava beans, maize, onions and other things, and the land is suitable for an orchard.

E. BODEGA.

A storehouse with an open gallery surrounded by columns, 10 sazhens long by 5 wide, covered with planks, well-suited for storing seeds and merchandise.

A house 3 sazhens square, with 3 rooms and a stove.

A bathhouse 4 sazhens long by 2 wide.

A corral.

A boat.

The following should [also] be considered as belonging to Bodega:

A cottage on the grazing ground.

A large corral.

A shack and a corral.

The boats:

A copper-covered smallboat, well suited for navigating all along the coast of California. 25 tons.

Two hide-covered launches; one has 16 oars, the other, 18.

A baidarka.

A longboat.

Machinery and agricultural equipment:

A cast iron *ecopaise* [?] for threshing wheat.

A Fogh Harrow.

27 ox-drawn plows.

24 horse-drawn plows.

26 pairs of plowshares.

21 harrows.

24 harnesses *en lais* [?]

30 horse harnesses.

21 bridles.

29 saddles.

8 bridle bits.

20 shadracks.

16 saddle blankets.

5 4-wheeled carts.

10 2-wheeled carts.

15 pairs of wheels.

Furnishings:

14 laurel wood chairs.

4 armchairs.

1 couch.

1 oval table.

1 square table.

1 armoire.

1 ordinary square table.

2 counting tables.

4 sofa pads.

8 pads.

1 bed mattress.

3 mattress cases.

3 cushion cases.

2 bed sheets.

8 chairs covered with hide.

11 wood chairs.

3 armoires with windows.

4 ditto.

6 spring-roller shades.

Livestock:

1,700 head of horned beasts, namely:

Plow oxen	70	
Medium size oxen	174	
Small oxen	111	355
	<u> </u>	

Large cows	777	
Medium cows	409	
Small cows	159	1,345
	<u> </u>	
		1,700

940 horses and mules, namely:

Large mules	53	
Small mules	2	55
	<u> </u>	

Large stallions	20	
Medium stallions	30	
Small colts	50	100
	<u> </u>	

Large mares	320	
Medium mares	70	
Small mares	90	
Horses	305	785
	<u> </u>	
		940

About 100 of the horses have been broken to the plow and wagon, and some 20 mules to the harrow.

900 ewes and wethers, namely:

Medium wethers	100	
Small wethers	35	
Large ewes	540	
Medium ewes	217	
Small ewes	8	900
	<u> </u>	

TOTAL: 3,540 head of livestock

(Signed) P. Kostromitinov

(Signed) J. A. Sutter

Received from Mr. Sutter in the month of
December, 1841, in Spanish piasters

\$400.00

Due from Mr. Sutter to the Russian American Company as of January 1, 1842	33,468.16
TOTAL	33,868.16

(Signed) P. Kostromitinov

Port San Francisco 19 December 1842 v.s. [old style] Current Account Russian American and Mr. Sutter	San Francisco
According to the stipulated contract, for the sale of the structures and chattels at Ross	\$30,000.00
By another current account for various merchandise, provisions and materials	3,868.16
TOTAL	33,868.16

(Signed) J. A. Sutter

The undersigned, agent of the Russian American Company, Petr Kostromitinov, and the inhabitant of Upper California, the Chargé de justice and Representative of the Government on the frontiers of the Sacramento River, Captain J. A. Sutter following preliminary agreements, have drawn up the following articles:

ARTICLE 1. It is agreed that the Russian American Company, in evacuating Ross, upon the consent of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias [Nicholas I], cedes to Mr. Sutter all its establishments located on the coasts of New Albion at Port Bodega and North of that port to Ross, *with the exception, however, of the land*, according to the inventory signed in order by the two above mentioned persons.

ARTICLE 2. It is agreed that as the price of all these establishments ceded by the Russian American Company, Mr. Sutter is obliged to pay the sum of 30,000 piasters within four years, reckoning from the year 1842.

ARTICLE 3. It is agreed that the payment of the said sum will be made in produce of the land during the first and second years, in the amount of five thousand piasters (\$5,000), and in

the third year in the amount of ten thousand piasters (\$10,000). For the last, which is to say the fourth, year, Mr. Sutter will pay in cash the sum of ten thousand piasters (\$10,000).

ARTICLE 4. It is agreed that Mr. Sutter will prepare produce in the following amounts within the appointed time (Article 2) during the first two years:

1,600 fanegas of wheat @ \$2	\$3,200
100 fanegas of peas @ 2¼	225
25 fanegas of frijole beans @ 3	75
50 quintals of soap @ 14	700
200 arrobas [1 arroba = ¼ quintal] of lard @ 2	400
250 arrobas of tallow @ 1½	375

The third year this quantity must be doubled, that is, to equal the sum of \$10,000. It is understood that all these commodities must be of the best quality, the wheat and peas fresh, the soap dry, the tallow and lard fresh and clean. Five and one-half Spanish arrobas are equal to one fanega.

ARTICLE 5. It is agreed that Mr. Sutter is obliged to have the produce ready by the first of September during the three years, n.s. [New Style; see Editorial Principles], reckoning from 1842, the time established for the arrival of the Company vessels at Port San Francisco.

ARTICLE 6. It is agreed that the Russian American Company will dispatch its ships to the port of San Francisco to take on the goods during the time established by Article 5, and Mr. Sutter, upon the arrival of the vessel, will make the necessary arrangements to load the prepared goods through his own means, so the vessel will not lose time.

ARTICLE 7. It is agreed that if the shipment of goods is not ready upon the arrival of the Company ship at the designated time, and if the vessel must return to Sitka without having loaded its cargo, Mr. Sutter will be personally responsible, without rejoinder, for all expenses incurred by the ship from Sitka to Port San Francisco; that is, the maintenance of the crew and the cost of freight; or, in place of the produce, he must pay cash, reckoning the sum which must be paid this year as per Article 4.

ARTICLE 8. It is agreed that the vessels of the Russian American Company, which will come to take on the commodities mentioned in ARTICLE 4, will enter without paying customs

fees or tonnage dues. If necessary Mr. Sutter will pay fees for tonnage and for anchorage, according to the size of the vessel.

ARTICLE 9. It is agreed that although the Russian American Company is fully confident of the integrity of Mr. Sutter in regard to payment, nevertheless as guarantee of the agreement, and in case of unforeseen circumstances, for repayment of the above mentioned sum, his establishment on the Sacramento River, which is called New Helvetia, founded in accordance with the government of California and in accordance with legal documents, with all the structures and chattel existing there, will serve as guarantee. Likewise, all the establishments at Port Bodega and at the Khlebnikov and Chernykh ranchos, which Mr. Sutter intends to keep intact and in his own possession, will [also] serve as security so that in the event of nonfulfillment of this obligation we will nevertheless be able to enter our claims as the owners of Port Bodega and of Ross. This same stipulation extends to the heirs of Mr. Sutter in the event of his death, if such mischance should occur before the formal fulfillment of the agreement, and if they should refuse the payment as per ARTICLE 4.

ARTICLE 10. It is agreed that if, in the event of war between Russia and any other nation, the Mexican Republic were to join the enemies of the Russian Empire, and thus be unable to dispatch vessels to accept the produce at the time established above, the sanctity of this contract will remain inviolable, and as soon as peace is reestablished, it will resume in full force.

ARTICLE 11. It is agreed that the Russian American Company, desiring to render assistance to Mr. Sutter, is ready to transport to Bodega from Ross, structures which are not too cumbersome, such as window frames, doors, and all other small items which can be transported in our hide small boats and the large launch. The transport will begin from the present time, and continue until the arrival of the vessel from Port New Arkhangel at Bodega or San Francisco. At that time any persons who have remained here should be put on board without delay, and Mr. Sutter will take possession of everything and continue the transport by his own means.

To give this contract full force and weight, we sign below and affix our seals.

(Signed) J. A. Sutter

(Signed) P. Kostromitinov

[In Spanish]

[I am] Francisco Guerrero, Justice of Peace of this place. Don Pedro Kostromitinov and Don Juan Sutter, with whom I am acquainted, have come before me and stated their intention to sign an agreement written in French regarding the structures and chattels of the Ross Establishment, and each of them has affixed a red wax seal beside his signature.

I have signed below, and in ratification they have signed with me, and with the other witnesses, to which I hereby attest.

(Signed) J. J. Vioget

(Signed) Francisco Guerrero
J. A. Sutter
Jacob Leese

[In English:]

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the original received at the Legation from the Foreign Office.

Julian A. Mitchell
Secretary of the Legation

Reference: Bancroft Library, Manuscript Division. J. A. Sutter
Correspondence and Papers, 1846–1870. MS C-B 631. We have made
our own translation.