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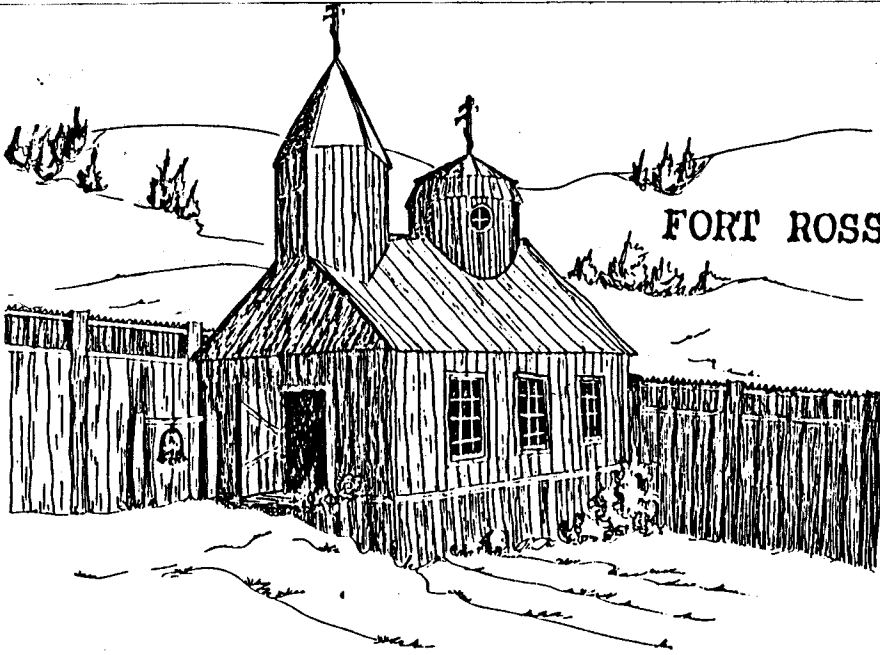
Fort Ross and Salt Point parks have benefited greatly from many dedicated volunteers and staff who have given generously to these parks. Board of directors from FRIA and FRC have fundraised, organized events, overseen volunteers, spearheaded interpretation and restoration projects, and offered substantial support to California State Parks across many decades.

These digitized newsletters capture the activities over the following historic periods:

- Fort Ross Interpretive Association (FRIA): 1976 - 2012
- Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC is the same legal entity as FRIA but the organization changed its name): 2012 - present

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## FORT ROSS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

JANUARY, 1988

### NEWS AND VIEWS FROM BLACK BART TURN

Another year rolls around. We at F.R.I.A. had an **EVENTFUL** year. Our special days turned out well and we can expect to do as well and better in 1988. Interest in the Historic Orchard is gaining and if people knew what a beautiful view of the Fort Ross complex the Orchard area presents, they would hike up there for that alone.

We have a committee working on the Russian Windmill. They are researching the authentic model that was at Fort Ross. Bob Robles has a book at the Duncans Mills District Office showing the different windmills of Russia. So with the background work being done and some help from the State we can get started on this project this year.

We are again trying to get some heating stoves put in the Russian houses in the Complex. This is very important. During the winter and spring dampness seeps in and brings mildew and rust. The Interpretive Association has spent thousands of dollars to furnish these buildings and The Company many hours of work cleaning and drying out the furnishings. We need heating stoves for the buildings and the State will probably put them in when they hear from the Fort Ross Advisory Committee as to the correct models.

Another idea is a 1988 Fort Ross Calendar. We have enough views of Fort Ross to make one. How many of you members would buy one? Drop us a post card at Fort Ross to let us know. With our membership, plus the public, it may prove worthwhile to print a calendar.

Our Budget Committee will have met by the time you receive this newsletter. This year we have taken on two hired persons, a Treasurer and a Sales Counter Manager (who also works on other projects such as this newsletter and volunteer coordination), both worthwhile and should help F.R.I.A. be better than ever. Yours truly is about to have a history of Fort Ross School printed, so all you interested in the 3 R's wait for the next announcement, as I step out from Black Bart Turn, there was such a place.

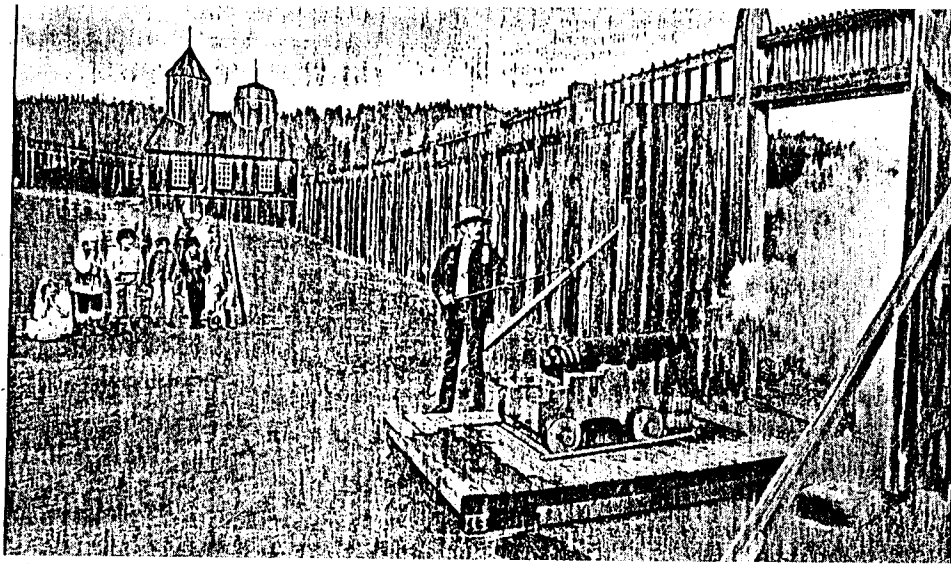
Barbara Black



As you can see by the photo, the new Fort Ross Cannon Project is roaring along. On December 7th the first of four oak field carriages arrived at the Fort. The Howitzer tube was set in place with help from F.R.I.A. and The Company members J. Harris, Bill Pritchard and Glenn Burch. The replica was then emplaced within the Fort Compound. An ELP group from Guerneville was the first to enjoy the sound and feel the shudder as the new gun saluted its young visitors.

Bill Walton





**STUDENTS RELIVE RUSSIA'S COLONY IN CALIFORNIA**  
 By Charles Hillinger, Times Staff Writer

Ft. Ross State Park, Calif.--The 29 years that Russia had a colony in California are relived almost every Thursday and Friday by children dressed in Russian costumes at this historic fort perched on a remote Northern California headland.

Thirty elementary school boys and girls from throughout the state each week spend two days and a night inside the 15-foot high redwood walls turning back the clock to the years 1812 to 1841.

"It's especially exciting for me because I am of Russian descent," said Bohdan Hladky, 11, wearing a fur hat and a 19th-Century Russian militiaman's uniform and carrying a flintlock musket.

The sixth-grader was looking forward to patrolling the fort on midnight watch for 1 1/2 hours "circling the inside of the stockade making sure the gates are closed and changing candles in the lanterns."

**Three Weeks of Study**

Hladky was one of 30 first- to sixth-graders who had been driven from the Bolinas-Stinson School in Bolinas, 65 miles south of here, with 10 parents and teacher Kathie Sweeney, 36.

"They study the history of Ft. Ross for three weeks before coming here." Sweeney explained.

The students slept in the Russian commandant's house in sleeping bags. They cooked Russian meals over an open fire. They made beeswax candles and leather pouches and gathered apples and pears from trees planted 150 to 175 years ago.

The schoolchildren were among the estimated 200,000 annual visitors to this outpost. They include vacationers, historians, Russian Orthodox church worshippers on pilgrimage and a good number of Soviet tourists.

While the story of Ft. Ross is little known across the United States, it is widely recounted in the Soviet Union where it is part of the school curriculum. The California outpost was Imperial Russia's deepest penetration eastward.

The Russians came to California to hunt seals and sea otters, to grow vegetables and fruit and raise livestock to support their outpost in Alaska. Ft. Ross also was the first shipyard of any size in California.

Russian scientists came to Ft. Ross to study the Indians, the plants and animals. Kashaya Pomo bows, arrows, baskets, feathered capes, ornaments and crafts collected by Russian scientists are on display in museums in Moscow, Leningrad and Siberia. Port Rumiantsev, now known as Bodega Bay, 20 miles south of Ft. Ross, was the Russians' principal port in California.

But the seals and sea otters were depleted by the Aleut hunters brought to Ft. Ross by the Russians, and farming was at best marginal. Additionally, the United States, Spain, France and Britain objected to the Russian presence, so in 1841, Czar Nicholas I ordered his colonists home.

**Indian Brides**

When they returned, many of the Russian soldiers took back with them Kashaya Pomo Indian brides who had lived in villages near the fort. Others left Russian-Indian offspring in California, and to this day Kashaya Pomo Indians in California have Russian words in their language and Russian-Indian bloodlines.

Since the turn of the century, members of the Protection of the Holy Virgin Russian Orthodox Congregation of Palo Alto have made a pilgrimage each year on Memorial Day to hold services in the Russian Orthodox Chapel at Ft. Ross. The Orthodox Church of America in San Francisco holds services in the chapel each Fourth of July.

Constructed in 1824, the redwood chapel inside the stockade burned to the ground in 1970 and was rebuilt.

"Ft. Ross chapel has great meaning for us," said Father Vladimir Derugin, 38, pastor of the Palo Alto church. "It is the nexus of the coming together of the East and West spiritually and culturally (and)...mother church in the Lower 48 states."

"Two of our saints worshiped at the church when Ft. Ross was a Russian colony -- St. Innocence the Apostle, who was there in 1836, and St. Peter the Aleut, a hunter and gatherer at the fort in 1816."

Perhaps the leading expert on the history of Ft. Ross is Nicholas Rokitiatsky, 69, a teacher of Russian and history at De Anza College, a two-year school in the San Jose suburb of Cupertino. Rokitiatsky first heard of Ft. Ross as a student in Manchuria in 1929. He came to the United States in the early 1930's and spent eight years as a librarian in the Russian section of the Library of Congress. Then he moved to California and has had an active interest in Ft. Ross ever since.

Rokitiatsky, known as Ft. Ross' "Russian Connection," has made a dozen trips to the Soviet Union visiting historians who are experts on the Russian colonies in Alaska, California and Hawaii, and gathering data about Ft. Ross from Soviet archives.

When Soviet historians, scientists and others come to California, Rokitiatsky often accompanies them on visits to Ft. Ross. In July, he drove a Soviet journalist to Ft. Ross to help him prepare a story for Pravda.

"I keep returning to the Soviet Union, for there is still much to learn about the history of the 29 years Russia owned a piece of California," said Rokitiatsky, who in 1976 delivered the U.S. Bicentennial lectures at Moscow Academy of Sciences on "Ft. Ross and the Russian Settlement in California."

This year, Rokitiatsky marked the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution by designing a commemorative medallion for the California History Center at De Anza College. The medallion celebrates the constitutional bicentennial on one side with a depiction of the Great Seal of the United States. The other side commemorates the 175th anniversary of Ft. Ross with the Russian imperial double eagle flag.

The medallions are doubtless the only ones issued in the United States that commemorate the Constitution in both Russian and English.

# HISTORICAL NOTES

## RECOGNIZING INDIAN FOLK HISTORY AS REAL HISTORY: A FORT ROSS EXAMPLE

by

Glenn J. Farris

California Department of Parks and Recreation

(Paper presented at California Indian Conference, Santa Barbara, Oct. 16, 1987)

### ABSTRACT

Too often do we find Native American folk history patronized as "legend" or some form of "just-so" stories without basis in fact, when in reality they often form valid oral history, simply told from a different viewpoint and background. Two such stories from the Kashaya Pomo living near Fort Ross are compared with Russian and English historical accounts to give us a remarkable picture of a Hudson's Bay expedition in California in 1833.

Thanks to the diligent work of linguist Robert Oswalt in recording the stories of the Kashaya Pomo (1964), we have two fascinating accounts of a mysterious expedition passing by Fort Ross. The first one, entitled "The Ayásh Expedition" (No. 54) was told by Essie Parrish to Oswalt in 1958. She had heard it from her father. The second, "The Big Expedition" (No. 57) was told by Herman James in September 1958. He had learned his stories from his maternal grandmother, Lukaria, who "had lived her entire life in the vicinity of Métini and was about eight years old when Fort Ross was founded there" (Oswalt 1964: 9). A wonderful thing about these writings is that they are presented in dual language, with the Kashaya and English side-by-side.

In his introduction to the stories (which are properly included under "Folk History") Oswalt suggests an element of ambiguity about the timing of the event since Essie Parrish states that it occurred "long, long ago before the white men arrived" (Oswalt 1964: 247), whereas James says that it was at a time when "the undersea people had landed there" (1964: 251). This term, "Undersea People" has been interpreted to mean the Russians, however, I contend that it actually referred to the Aleuts, Creoles, Tana'ina Indians and other native peoples the Russians brought with them who made up 80-90 percent of the Fort Ross settlement (Cf. Fedorova 1975: 12). This is important in understanding the difference between the references to "undersea people" versus "white people" as shown in the story "Tales of Fort Ross" (Oswalt 1964: 277), in which the term "white people" refers to the post-Russian period, American settlers such as William Benitz. Thus, for Essie Parrish to say "before the white men came," really means before the Americans came (i.e., prior to 1842). Thus, the apparent ambiguity is fairly easily resolved.

It is worthwhile to recount each story in full to give the full flavor of the descriptions. The first, by Essie Parrish (Oswalt 1964: 246-249);

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE MARCH ISSUE

It is a sad and well known fact that California cultural materials exist in European museums which are not duplicated in American museums. In particular, Russian travelers and collectors obtained 19th century Central California material for the Ethnography Museum in Leningrad. We know of a number of tourists, including Indians and archeologists, who have visited the museum, but have not had much success beyond viewing the few cases of California material on regular display. Photography is forbidden, but quite a few photos have come back of the figures of a woman with a burden basket, two men wearing head to toe robes of crow and condor feathers, and a man with a flicker feather headband put on inside out. Several spectacular coiled baskets decorated with Olivella disc beads are on display; their place of origin is unclear but they may be Ohlone or Coast Miwok.

Because these materials are in glass cases, even knowledgeable observers can't examine them in detail. Materials in the non-display collection are almost completely unavailable to Americans. The most successful visitor we know about was the late Travis Hudson of the Santa Barbara Museum, who was permitted to examine California materials in Leningrad, Moscow, Munich, Helsinki and the British Museum. He took wonderful photographs which are included in a book, still in manuscript form, which he prepared with Craig Bates. Craig's encyclopedic knowledge of materials and techniques used in Central California art and regalia permitted analysis of many objects from the photos. We look forward to its publication.

Ed Nute of San Rafael recently visited Leningrad with a group of engineers and planners. He went to the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography hoping to obtain publications on the American Indian collection. We are used to seeing bookshops associated with our museums which sell books and reproductions related to the museum's collections. Not so in Leningrad.

First of all, the museum isn't on the usual Intourist route. Since Ed speaks Russian, he had little trouble locating the museum, which is very popular with Russians. A helpful guide saw to it that he viewed the California cases. Since there was no printed material for sale, the guide gave Ed some of his own booklets on the California objects.

One pamphlet, in English, reminds us of the vast scope of the collection: "The Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography named after Peter the Great is one of the largest ethnographical museums in the world being heir to the collections and the building of the Chamber of Rarities--the first Museum of Natural Sciences in Russia founded by Peter I in 1714....The following expositions are shown at the Museum: the collections of the first Russian Museum--the St. Petersburg Chamber of Rarities; Indians of North America; Indians of South America; African peoples of the South of Sahara; the native population of Australia and Oceania; people of the Near and Middle East; the culture and way of life of the Japanese people; Korea; Viet-Nam; China; Mongolia; India; peoples of Indonesia; the origin of man; the main stages of the history of primitive society; the ancient Khoresm....The collections of the North American Department occupy one of the first places in the world by their scientific importance. Among others there are Aleutian hunting head-dresses, unique garbs from South Alaska and California, a valuable collection depicting the Tlingit culture."

Another pamphlet, in Russian and published in 1964, describes the California Indian culture in more detail. It is not very accurate by our standards. The title page is headed "Academy of Sciences USSR, Institute of Ethnography Named for N. N. Milkukho-Maklaya, Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography Named for Peter the Great." Ed Nute's translation of page 20 et seq, follows:

#### "Indians of California

The culture of the Indian tribes inhabiting the state of California (Pomo, Maidu, Yokut and others) is presented in the exhibits collected among the Pomo Indians in 1841 by I. G. Voznesensky in vicinity of the Russian village Ross (established in 1812 by the Russian-American Company) in northern California.

The California tribes populated a region with exceptionally favorable climate (subtropical), fertile soil, and with diverse flora and fauna. This created a distinctive economic system, well-adapted to the specific peculiarities of the natural surroundings. Their social system and religious beliefs characterized a breakup of the family-tribal system.

The basic pursuits of the California Indians were gathering acorns, chestnuts, seeds of the wild oats and others. The women were occupied with gathering and preparing food. For the collection of acorns they used a large cone-like basket (above case 74, 75) which they carried on the back in a netting, held on with the help of a strap around the forehead (case 75).

Wicker ware made up all the domestic utensils. The California Indians attained a high mastery of wicker. Food was cooked in waterproof baskets with the help of hot stones which were thrown in and taken out with wooden tongs (case 74). A basket-winnowing fan, sieve, mortar for crushing acorns and other examples of domestic articles are shown in case 74.

Besides collecting, the hunting of deer, elk, wild goats, and other wild animals and also fish catching had an important significance. The men did the hunting. Their weapons were bow and arrow.

Sometimes the hunters would dress in animal skins in order to sneak up on animals. For fishing they used nets, fishing poles and spears. For moving on water they used reeds to construct light and flat boats resembling rafts (case 75, model).

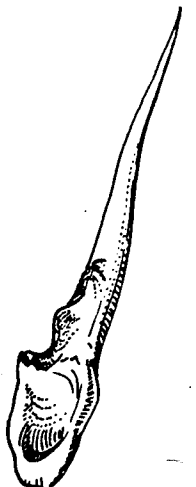
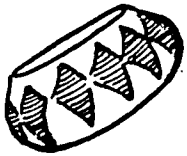
As with other Indians, among the California tribes there were widespread religious ceremonies connected with belief in spirit-protectors. In the collection brought back by I.G. Voznesensky, there are various headdresses, a boa which they swung during dances and others. Unique are two ritual costumes--one from crow feathers, the other from condor wing feathers (case 70, 71).

At the present time, there are extremely few Indians of California. They were subjected to mass annihilation during the period of the gold fever (around 1849). Pitiful remnants of their settlements remain where women, who long ago were famous for wicker, make baskets for sale to tourists."

It is generally believed that there are explorers' accounts of travels in California in Russian archives, as yet untranslated, which will shed new light on California Indian culture in the early 19th century. An article that discusses these possibilities in detail is:

Shur, Leonid A. and James R. Gibson: "Russian Travel Notes and Journals As Sources for the History of California, 1800-1850." In: CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY, vol. LII, Spring 1973, no. 1, pp. 37-63. This is the publication of the California Historical Society: see your friendly local librarian.

Sylvia Thalman, Bulletin Editor, MAPOM NEWS  
Miwok Archaeological Preserve of Marin



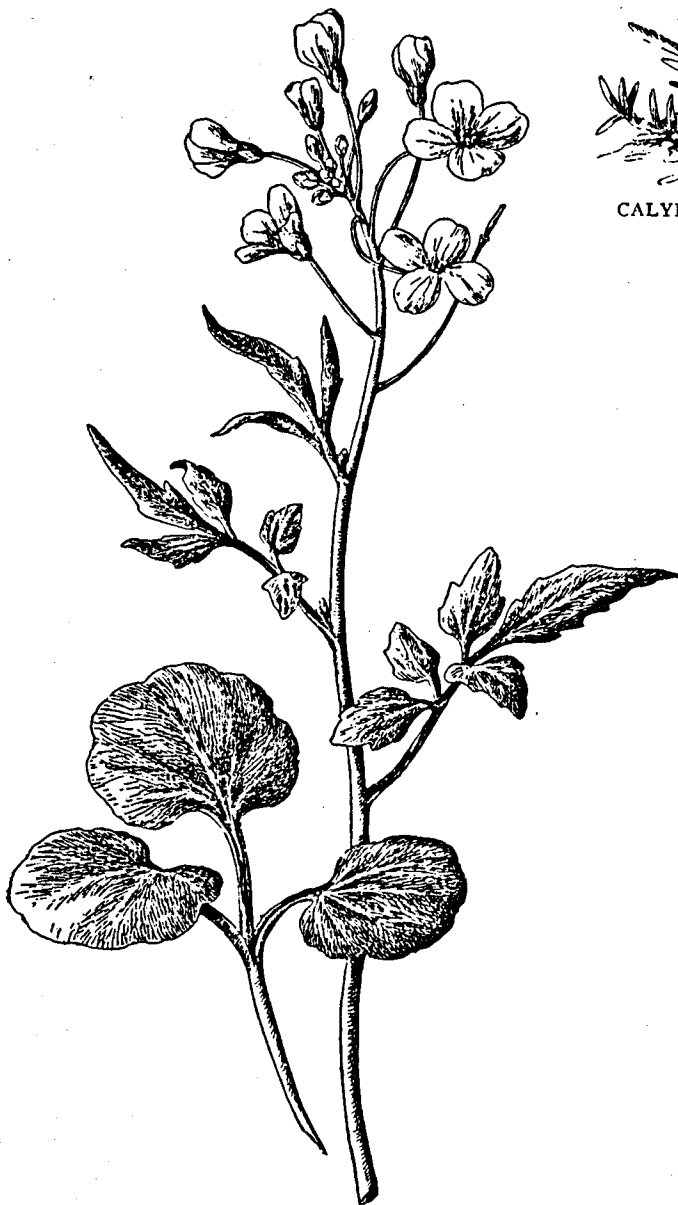
# MOTHER NATURE

## WILDFLOWERS

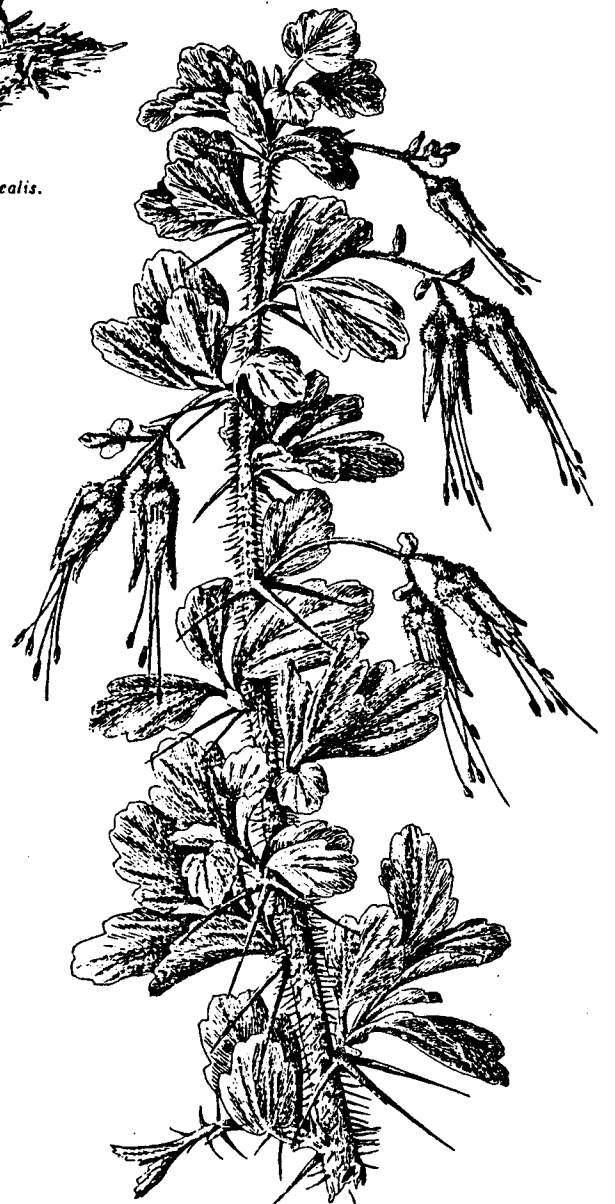
Soon we will be seeing the first spring wildflowers. Among the first to appear are Wild Gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*), Toothwort also known as Spring Blossom and Milk Maids (*Dentaria Californica*), and Calypso (*Calypso borealis*). If you would like to help us add to our collection of pressed wildflowers at Fort Ross, please bring in fresh specimens to the Visitor Center.



CALYPSO—*Calypso borealis*.



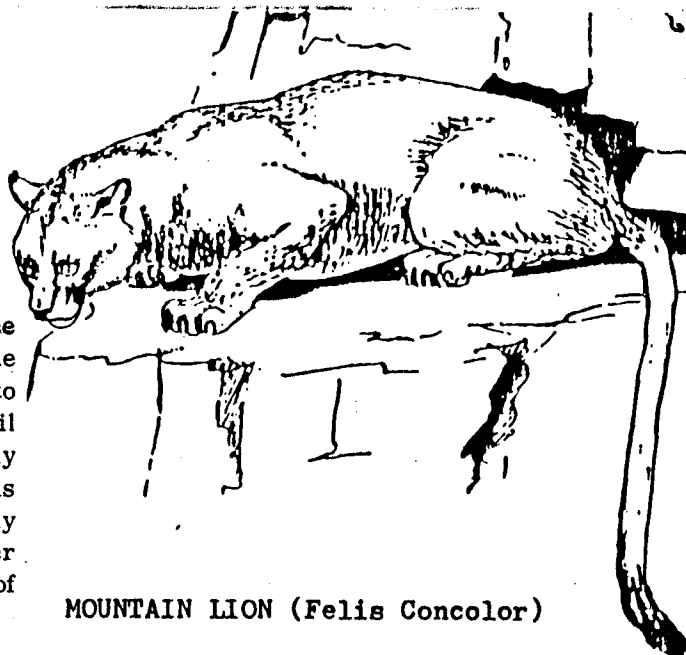
TOOTHWORT—*Dentaria Californica*.



FUCHSIA-FLOWERED GOOSEBERRY—*Ribes speciosum*.

CAT FAM. (Felidae)

**MOUNTAIN LION**  
(*Felis concolor*). Length 3 1/2 to 4 1/2'. Otherwise known as the cougar or puma, this is the largest member of the cat family in our region, and the only one with a long tail. The color ranges from tawny to grayish, with the tip of the tail dark brown. Although widely distributed in the region, it is extremely shy and is rarely seen. It feeds mainly on deer and is a healthful preventer of overpopulation.



MOUNTAIN LION (*Felis Concolor*)

Mountain lions, or cougars, do not stalk about "screaming." If they did, they would scare prey animals away and go hungry. Nor does the cougar roar. It makes many sounds similar to those of house cats, but louder. A set of whistle-like sounds—studied in captive cougars—may be used by wild pairs or in families to call and warn each other.

Also called puma, panther, or catamount (cat of the mountains), the mountain lion is the largest of the North American purring cats. Adult males weigh 148 to 227 pounds (67 to 103 kg) and measure 5.6 to 9 feet (171 to 274 cm) from nose to tail tip.

Mountain lions are strict loners. Adult males and females show social tolerance only during the two-week breeding period, and females and

Nineteen different names have been given this great cat of the Western Hemisphere. A beautiful and majestic animal that roams our area is gradually getting eliminated by the invasion of man. As man moves in and builds, the mountain lion or cougar tries to move on to a more isolated area. These isolated areas are fast disappearing.

Through urban man not truly understanding wildlife and by overprotecting the coyote, he (man) has become an enemy of the cougar. When the time for fawns arrives in the spring, April and May in our area, the coyote leaves the lambing ewe bands that he has been living on since January and moves into the fawning places. I have watched this through a season and saw a coyote stalk and run a baby fawn. As the deer herds diminish the mountain lion's feed becomes scarce and he will then turn to the next best, which will no doubt be livestock.

Deer, or venison, is the main food of the cougar. The much touted phrase of "killing the sick and weak" isn't so. Why should they eat a sick feverish animal when they can just as easily kill a healthy animal. I have seen a few times in wooded areas the kills of the cougar, a deer partially eaten and covered with redwood branches and needles.

Once in awhile an old animal turns into a killer as they lose teeth and ability. Then they become deadly to livestock. Years ago on Kruse Ranch one of these rogues killed ten or twelve sheep in one night and left them strewn around the grass. He then went on to Stewarts Point and started killing calves, and was finally brought down by one of the ranchers.

In the late 1920's some of the neighbors, who were driving from Plantation to the coast down Snake Road, had a cougar with two half grown cubs jump across the narrow road right in front of the car. Another time years before my Uncle Carlos Call had one trail along behind him down Fort Ross Road. My Father Oscar Charles had a similar experience when he was growing up on the South Fork of the Gualala. So you see, these animals have always been here.

I finally saw my first one on the ranch about fifteen years ago. It was sitting on a hill watching something, and even though it's back was to me, when my hunting partner moved the lion bounded away. Near this same spot I found where a feral hog had been killed by a lion.

One summer night I was awakened by the screaming of one. After I woke up it screamed twice more, and that is a real attention getter, believe me. The next morning early my husband went down and, sure enough, in the dust of the logging road were the tracks. In the early sixties my husband and I were looking out of our living room window towards the coast and a large number of deer were running like crazy across the field. We watched and my husband said, "There is a panther going through."

My last sighting was very close. We had traps set out by the government trapper for coyotes because they were killing almost every lamb in a certain pasture. I checked traps about every day and the trapper came by three times a week. So one morning I came upon this set in the woods and here was a mountain lion, caught by the hind foot. He sat there and very quietly hissed at me. He was a beautiful animal, buff colored with the white under the throat and the dark markings around the mouth and eyes. I called the trappers to come and turn him loose, as he was a victim of circumstances and had crossed the trail at the wrong place. Usually they tranquilize the animal, but this time there was no one that knew the correct amount of dosage for the gun. So they took a rifle and shot the jaws of the trap and he was gone like a flash. They said he was a young male about one hundred forty five pounds and, not having any territory of his own, was just wandering through.

I hope one of these days to see a cougar with her two or three cubs, this would be a lifelong wish fulfilled!

Barbara Black

young during the long juvenile dependency period. Breeding is not confined to any one season, but in the northern parts of their range cougars breed mostly in winter and early spring. A pair will remain together for the two weeks, perhaps longer. Then they part, and the male plays no further role in the family.

One to six spotted kittens are born after a 90-day gestation period. The spots will give way to the uniform coat of russet or tan responsible for the species name, *concolor*, "uniform color." Kittens are born in a cave or other sheltered place, as under a rock ledge or windfall. Helpless at first, they grow

rapidly. The mother brings meat to them in addition to providing milk. After about two months they leave the home den and live in temporary dens and caves while the mother hunts for food.

The young lions possess certain inherent abilities as predators.



# CHAPEL NOTES

1824

## Russians at Sonoma Mission

by the Rev. John P. O'Brien

A little known episode in the annals of Russian history in California is their representation at the dedication of the mission at Sonoma. This was an extraordinary event, exceeding even what we know today as "ecumenism". The Russians were Orthodox; the Sonoma mission was Catholic. The event went quite far in inter-church relations.

How the Russians came even to know about the coming dedication is not at all recorded. Whether they had been invited, whether they simply invited themselves, whether it was an event of such importance in the area that everybody's presence was understood, or whether the Russians felt that the Sonoma mission enterprise needed help, we do not know. In any event, a delegation came, and not with "their hands a'hanging". They brought gifts.

Few historians write about the event, even Hubert Howe Bancroft, the famous California historian, only mentions it in passing, first in connection with the Sonoma dedication, "many articles having been presented by the Russians", and in connection with trade between Fort Ross and the Catholic missions, "At the foundation of Solano several ornaments were sent by the Russians".<sup>1</sup>

### FORT ROSS OLDER THAN SONOMA

The Sonoma mission which came to be known as San Francisco de Solano, to distinguish it from San Francisco de Assisi on the other side of the Golden Gate, is the last and most northern of the chain of 21 Catholic missions. It was not begun till

after the revolution by which Mexico declared itself independent of Spain. The mission had been started in 1823 by the building of corrals, implement sheds, a hut for the priest, housing for the soldier-guards, etc. But it was not till nearly Easter of 1824 that the first board church was ready for dedication. Fort Ross had been founded 10 years before. In other words, Fort Ross was already in existence before the chain of "California Missions" was complete.

Apparently it was an official delegation judging by the fact that the inspiration, if not instruction to do so, arose at Fort Ross itself, even though the delegation which brought gifts started from Bodega Bay. Moreover, it does not seem possible that the actual gifts which they had and brought could have been donated without the approval of Fort Ross' commandant.

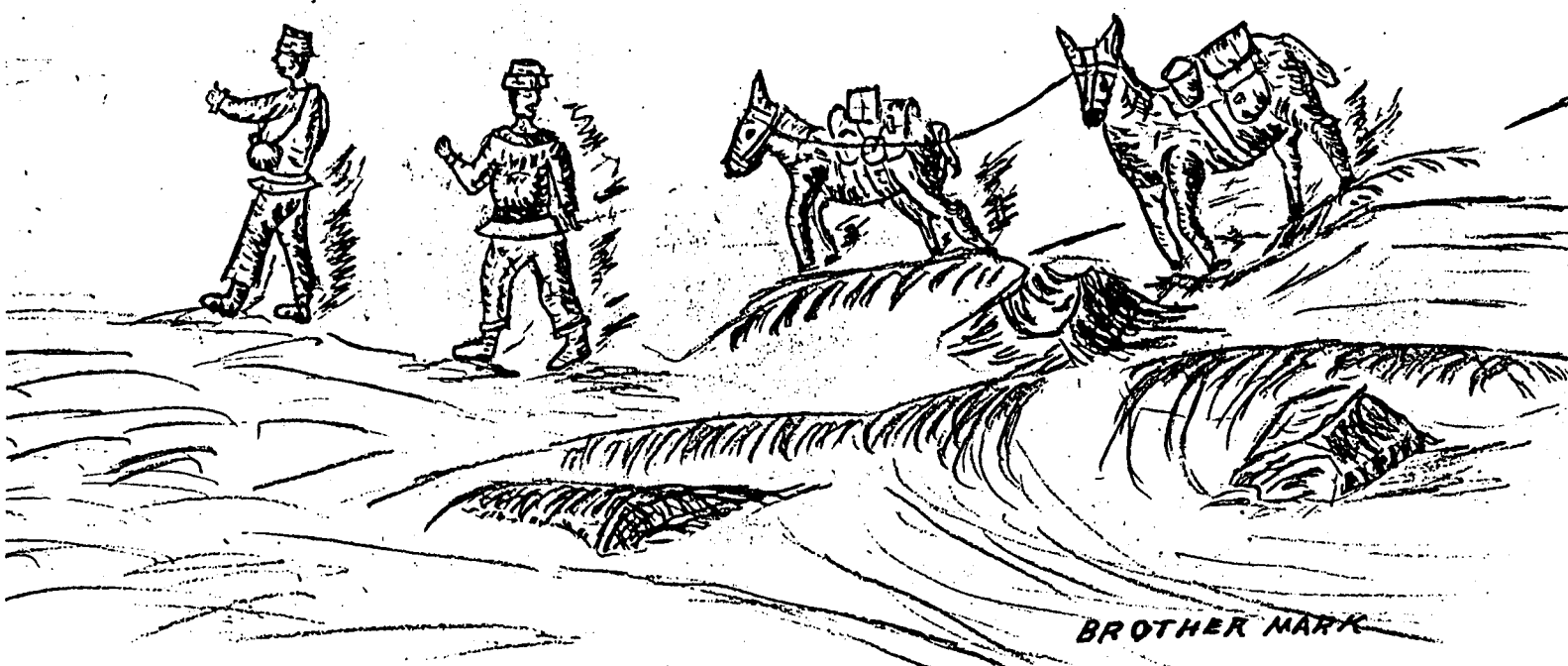
### DON'T KNOW EXACT ROUTE

We are not even sure of the route they used to get to Sonoma. We know they came by pack train and left Bodega (renamed by the Russians "Rumiantzof"). Beasts of burden were regularly kept at Bodega, since it was really more of a port than Fort Ross, and goods were often unloaded there to be packed to Fort Ross. Moreover, there were storehouses there, and the goods they delivered to Sonoma may even have been stored there awaiting need at Fort Ross.

There were several Indian trails they could have taken. They might have taken the same route which Fr. Payeras describes

<sup>1</sup>Bancroft, Hubert Howe, *The Works of, The History Publishing Company, San Francisco, CA, 1886, Vol.*

XIX, also entitled *History of California, Vol. II, 1801-1824, pp. 504 and 646-647.*



BROTHER MARK



so well in his journey to Fort Ross two years before. The Russians were not unfamiliar with routes overland to San Francisco Bay since on hunting trips they had sneaked their bidarkas over the hills to avoid detection from the Praesidio. A very familiar route took them up and over hills to join San Antonio Creek. They would have had no need to go to San Rafael since there is no mention of a transfer from pack train to boat. It was probably a four or five day trip if not longer.

(There is a story, without foundation, but plausible, that on their arrival they found the dedication postponed a few days because everything was not ready, yet the Spaniards were taking a siesta! The story goes on that the Russians pitched in and helped so the dedication could go off as planned.)

#### GIFTS THEY BROUGHT

We can imagine the Spanish excitement as they gathered around to see what the Russians brought. Bancroft only mentions "articles" and "ornaments", but Robert S. Smilie in his book, "The Sonoma Mission" specifies, "altar cloths, vestments, candlesticks, mirrors, holy pictures and other religious articles".<sup>2</sup>

The gifts are interesting themselves. How did the Russians happen to have these on hand to bring? Undoubtedly at least some of them were to have been used in the chapel, not yet built but planned, for Fort Ross itself.

It probably never dawned on the Russians providing the gifts to Sonoma mission, that some of the gifts might not have been entirely appropriate. The Russian (Byzantine) rite is similar in many ways to the Latin, at least to an outsider, because candles and incense are used, and there is much ceremony. Yet there are differences, too. Both wear vestments, but these are somewhat different; altar linens for one rite would hardly fit the altar of the other, etc. Yet it was not so much the gifts that counted as the thought of the giver. Besides, what frontier missionary has not often had to "make do" with what is available?

#### MOTIVES

If only we knew the true motives of the Russians for attending the dedication ceremonies and bringing gifts, we might know a good deal more about the true feelings in the heart of the Russians for the Spanish and vice versa.

Some have cruelly maintained that the Russians were only looking for a "good time". Indeed life was hard for the Russians, and the challenge of survival didn't give them

much time for merry making. Not a few of them "jumped ship" in order to have leisure, wine, song and women that the Californians seemed to enjoy more than they. But such an explanation almost implies that their journey to Sonoma may have been without their superior's approval. In view of the gifts they brought, we have to disregard such an explanation, although we hope they did have a good time.

Possibly the Russians came across the information that the other Catholic missions were expected, as a matter of policy when a new mission was established, to donate necessary items, not only church goods, but cattle, implements, etc. They didn't want to be left out so brought what they thought would be appropriate. God bless them.

It has also been suggested that they had an ulterior motive, namely establishing a better relation for the sake of trade with the Spanish generally, and with Sonoma in particular. While some have maintained that the purpose of Fort Ross was to establish a "foothold" in this territory for Russian imperial expansion, and others that Fort Ross' main purpose was to grow food for Alaska, neither theory is supported by documentation, or by the facts as they turned out. Rather the main intent of the Russians' presence seems to have been to establish trade. An enormous amount of trade was actually carried on, even against the respective governments' prohibitions (especially the Spanish and Mexican), and this even by the Padres. The Russians, especially in Alaska, needed bread, and thousands of fanegas of wheat and arrobas of flow and tallow, mostly grown on mission lands was transported to Alaska.<sup>3</sup>

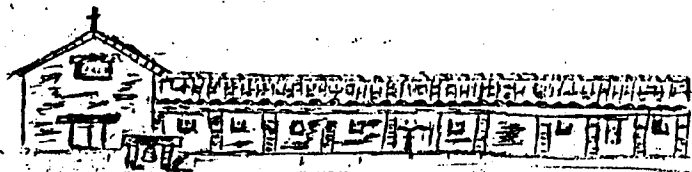
But the Russians at Fort Ross were good mechanics. They made and repaired implements and furnishings for the missions. They even made and sold boats to officers and friars.<sup>4</sup>

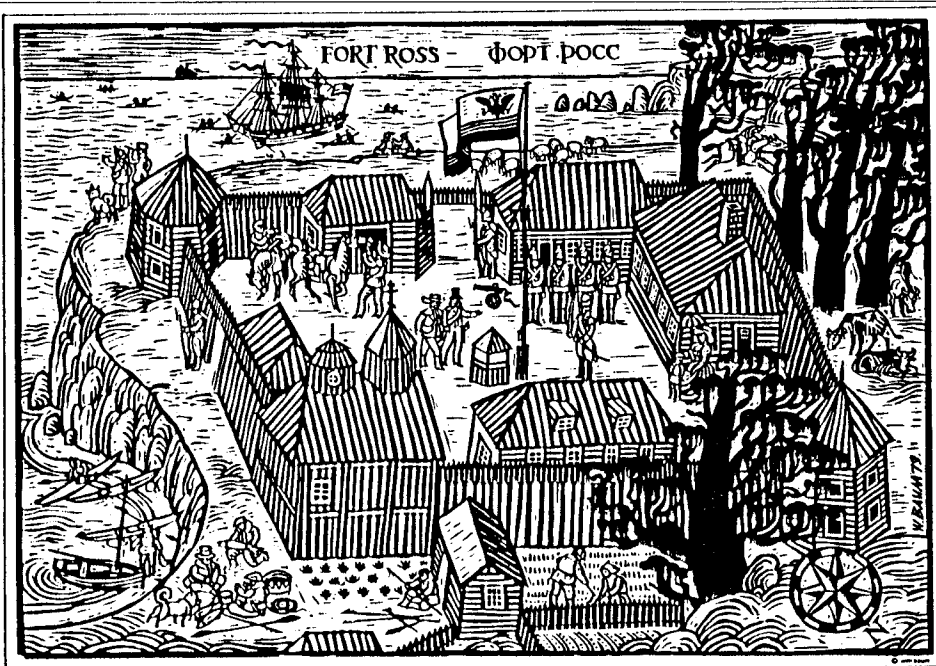
If to stimulate peaceful trade was a motive for their gracious participation in the dedication of the Sonoma mission, they had a good and noble purpose. A lesson for us, though, is that we should be much more friendly to one another, and to people of different religions.

<sup>2</sup>Smilie, Robert S., *The Sonoma Mission, San Francisco Solana de Sonoma*, Valley Publishers, Fresno, CA, 1975, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Bancroft, *op.cit.*, p. 643, footnote.

<sup>4</sup>Bancroft, *ibid.*, p. 639 7 643.





FROM THE BOOK AND GIFT SHOP AND INFORMATION COUNTER

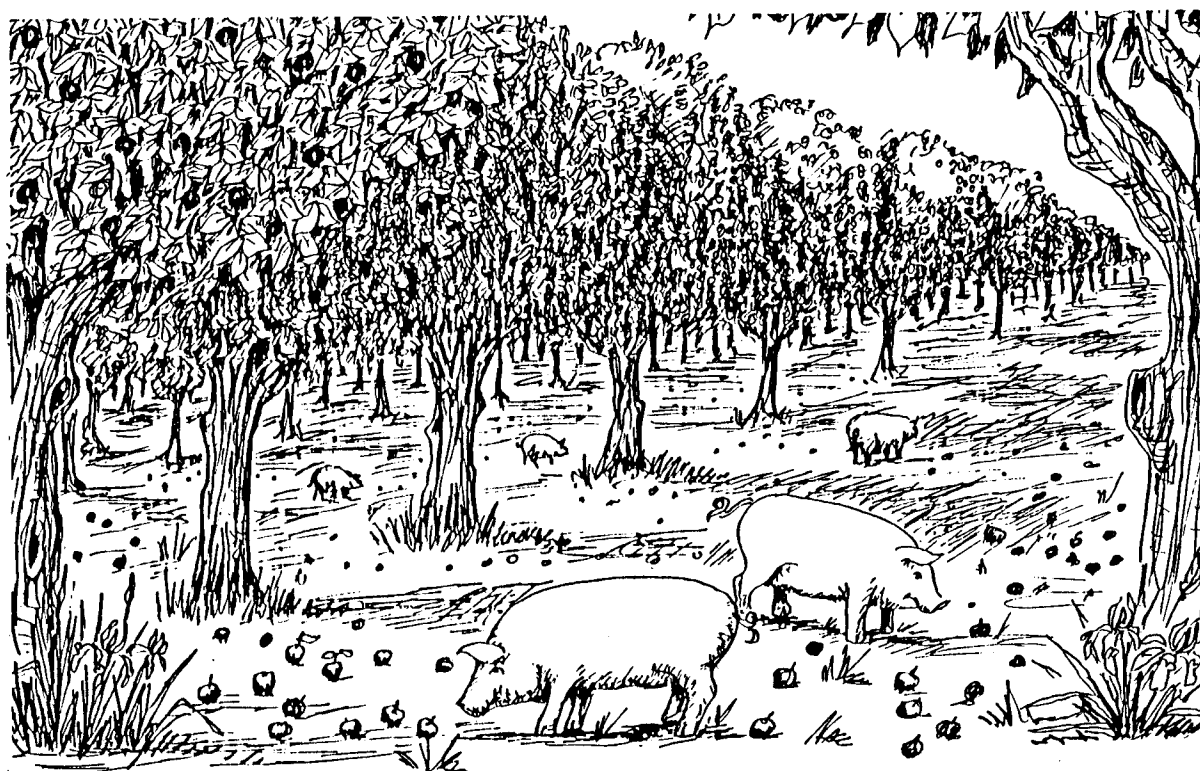
First, thank you Jaci and Moses Hallett, Ella Salgado, Fred Cresswell, and Betty MacKenzie for volunteering in the Book and Gift Shop in November, December, and January. And thank you Pete Nelson for spending a whole week organizing the library.

Betty MacKenzie has had the By-word script translated into French and it is now available to visitors in the Visitor Center. It would be wonderful to have it in other languages also--especially Russian, German and Japanese. Is there anyone out there who would like to volunteer to translate the script?

Priscilla Pastor of Hemet, California has donated a video tape to FRIA. It is titled "Spreading Our Wings of Understanding" and is a current Soviet documentary. At present it may be borrowed from the Visitor Center for viewing on home video. If there is enough interest we will arrange to have a showing this spring.

APPLE TREES FOR SALE

Apple trees descended from trees in the Fort Ross Historic Orchard will be sold at the Book and Gift Shop beginning January 15. The cost per tree will be between \$10.00 and \$12.00. Tree types are Gravenstein, Late Gravenstein, and Black Gilliflower.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FRIA MEETING--February 13, 1988

NEXT NEWSLETTER--Mid March--Remember, FRIA members, this is your newsletter. Please submit articles and comments by March 6, 1988, to Lyn Kalani, Fort Ross Interpretive Association, 19005 Coast Highway 1, Jenner, Calif. 95450. (707 847-3437)

WHALE WATCH--Bodega Head--Weekends 1-4PM  
 Now through Feb. 7, Feb. 27 through April 3  
 Salt Point---Weekends 11 AM  
 Now through March 27

