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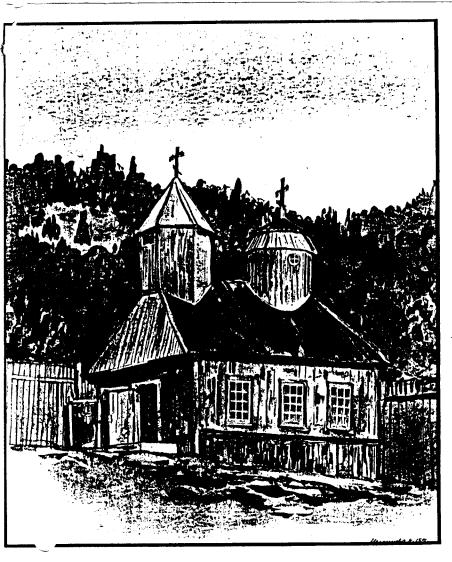
Fort Ross and Salt Point parks have benefited greatly from many dedicated volunteers and staff who have given generously to these parks. Board of directors from FRIA and FRC have fundraised, organized events, overseen volunteers, spearheaded interpretation and restoration projects, and offered substantial 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 Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) and California State Park cooperating association, connects people to the history and beauty of Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks. © Fort Ross Conservancy, 19005 Coast Highway One, Jenner, CA 95450, 707-847-3437 www.fortross.org



FORT ROSS
INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 1992

HAPPY NEW YEAR !



ELECTION RESULTS - 1992 FRIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VIOLET CHAPPELL
GLORIA FROST, MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN
DAVID KENLY
MOLLY LEE
NICHOLAS LEE, RECORDING SECRETARY
KENT LIGHTFOOT
JOHN MIDDLETON, CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
JEANNETTE ROSSON
JOHN SPERRY
FRIEDA TOMLIN, PRESIDENT
DAVID WILLSON
ELIZABETH SIDOROV
NANCY WALTON, VICE PRESIDENT

### President's Message

The first of the New Year always brings a feeling of newness. John Middleton had it last year. He did a marvelous job for FRIA, especially in overseeing the comings and goings of so many Russian visitors, a new experience for Fort Ross. FRIA has been very fortunate to have had a president at that time with so many skills. John not only is an art restorer, which givens him an understanding of the Russian artifacts, he has an interest and understanding of many other aspects, such as the dress of the period depicted at Fort Ross. To top this off, John had a good working knowledge of the Russian language, which has become more proficient with his trips to Russia since perestroika.

Along with being Corresponding Secretary this coming year, John will continue chairing the Russian Committee. With his skills, he will help FRIA work with the many Russian historical professionals with whom we have established relationships in Russia. Thank you, John, for all the work you have done, and will do, with competence, grace, and humor.

Also, a large thank you to Betty MacKenzie who has put in many years as a FRIA Board member and many hours as a volunteer in the Book Store. Welcome to the new Board members Violet happell, David Kenly, and Molly Lee

Frieda Tomlin

### OUR STATE -- FORT ROSS, SONOMA COUNTY AN OLD RUSSIAN SETTLEMENT

HISTORY OF THE OLD FORT - THE DAYS OF 1811 - EARLY EMIGRATION - SOMETHING ABOUT THE PRESENT PROSPECTS, ETC. BY MRS E. BLACKFORD ( PRINTED IN THE DEMOCRAT ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1884)

The subject of this sketch, from its importance in the past as well as its probable future, renders it well worthy of more than a passing notice. Fort Ross, situated on the coast of Sonoma County, about eighty miles northwest of San Francisco and sixteen miles from the terminus of the North Pacific Railroad, is the site of the old Russian settlement, the earliest settlement of white people north of the bay of San Francisco. In the year 1811, the Russians, seeking a country where they could raise grain and other supplies for their trading posts in Alaska, occupied most of the land in Sonoma County lying along the coast from Bodega Bay upl and that they intended their occupancy to be a permanent one and not merely a temporary stay is shown by the character of their improvements. Seeking, therefore, for someplace where they might establish their headquarters, some central point to which they could flee in case of attack by the Indians, or by their natural enemies the Mexicans, whose territory they thus lawlessly occupied on the principal that might makes right, they selected this point as the one best calculated for their purpose. And here on a level tableland about one hundred yards from the ocean, and overlooking a sheltered cove where their vessels might lie in safety, and also commanding all approach except by way of the sea, and a sandy beach where they might build their rude but staunch vessels, they build their fort, which has thus given name to the palce. What they might have called it is not known but it was called by the Mexicans, "Fuerte de Los Rusos" (Fort of the Russians). When Americans began to speak it they shortened it to "Fuerte Rusos" which easily drifted into "Fort Ross" as they became more numerous and less Spanish was

CONSTRUCTION OF FORT ROSS - The prospects of a life in such a country with its virgin forests, the open land covered with a luxuriant growth of wild grasses, and teeming with game and fish together with the mild and equable climage, must have seemed almost like a paradise to the officers who spent years in the wilds of Alaska, and also to the men, most of whom had been sentenced to penal servitude in the mines of Siberia. Here, then, they located their fort, built of hewn redwood logs set endwise in the earth in the form of a parallelogram 280 feet wide by 312 feet long, and upon two corners bastions two stories high pierced for artillery. Inside the wall were erected the quarters for the officers and men; upon one corner they erected a chapel of the Greek church, with a beautiful chime of bells, while in the center of the square they The site chosen was naturally a strong one and their fortification strong enough to resist the attack of any enemy that Here they lived and became would be likely to molest them. powerful and insolent towards their neighbors, the authroities, who on several occasions requested them to leave, but for thirty years they held possession. Upon the beach, under the shelter of the guns of the fort they built their vessels; from their wharf in the little bay they loaded them with the products of They also built a windmill that produced all the flour used in their settlements, a stamping machine for grinding tanbark and a large tannery. The mill was the first one built in the state and did good service for several years after the Americans came into possession of it; but not a vestige is left of it now save the

#### Captain Meeker and the Buried Treasure

In the 1960s at a lunch at Betty Duveneck's place in the Palo Alto/Los Altos area, Dorothy Varian (of Varian electronic fame) told me a story about Fort Ross. Dorothy and her father used to visit Captain Meeker at Camp Meeker when she was a little girl. She was happy to sit and listen to the tales of the men--on winter evenings, this was their entertainment. One night, Captain Meeker told a story. He started by taking a little yellow folded piece of paper from his family box of "treasures".

Captain Meeker said that he had gotten the paper when, as a young man, he had worked as a bouncer in a bar on the San Francisco docks. He said a young foreigner got in a fight and was killed. He was told to carry the dead man to the mortuary, and he did. In the dead man's pocket was found the little yellow folded paper--it looked like a piece of a map. The mortician told Meeker, 'you keep it--you're the last man who saw him alive.'

Life had been good to the Meeker lad, and he became "Captain Meeker" of Camp Meeker, owner of considerable land in the Russian River area. Years after the incident in San Francisco, one day a neighbor who was riding by the River dropped in to see the Captain, asking him who the foreigners were who were digging up the river bank. Meeker got his horse and rode to the spot that must have been near the mouth of the river. Upon getting there, he found he couldn't understand a word the young fellows said. He made them to understand that they should leave.

Some years later, the same neighbor again stopped in to tell the Captain those same foreign fellows were back. Again Meeker rode out and found them, but this time one of them spoke English and there was also an old man with them.

The man who spoke English explained that they were Russians and were searching for a money box that had been buried many years ago by the old man and his buddy after they jumped their ship, the Baranov, at Fort Ross. The two had taken the money box with them, traveling south toward San Francisco. When they got to the Russian River, they couldn't carry the heavy box across the river with them. They couldn't get it opened, and they saw a skiff coming into the river, obviously intent on waylaying them. So they buried the money box and made a map of its location. They each took half the map, in traditional treasure hunt style, and then separated to make their escape, agreeing to meet back at their home village in Russia.

The old Russian man made it back to Russia, but his pal never returned. The villagers knew of the treasure, and all waited for the missing villager to sometime return with the treasure. Finally, the villagers had gone to the Russian River to search for the box, but were unable to find it--Meeker had made them leave. They returned to Russia and then came back to California again, but, on this trip, they brought the old man of the Baranov escape with them.

The Russians showed Captain Meeker the map. He looked at it in amazement, and told them he had the other half of the map. He then told them the story of how he had gotten it. At that point, the old man broke down and wept with happiness at the tale of his comrade's disaster—he had always felt sure his buddy would not have betrayed his village and taken the treasure for himself.

But even with the two halves of the map, the treasure was not found.

Dorothy concluded her story by saying that, as far as is known, the treasure has never been found. One must wonder if the little yellow folded paper is still in the Meeker family "treasure box" somewhere. One must also wonder if the money box is still buried by the river, waiting for someone to chance upon it.

Eve Crittenden November 1991

#### A FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY AT FORT ROSS

Many people who are aware of most of the history of Fort Ross probably don't realize that we have our own specific reason to commemorate people and events at the 50th anniversary of the United State's entry into World War II. Yes, here on this remote part of the north coast of California, activities took place that were part of a large operation to protect our Nation.

On <u>January 12, 1942</u>, just a little over a month after Pearl Harbor, a small contingent of U.S. Coast Guardsmen arrived at Fort Ross to establish a station and lookout that were to be a fixture in the small community until the end of the War.

As a result of corresponding with some of the people (both the Coast Guardsmen <u>and</u> some of their wives) who were at Fort Ross during those times, their most interesting story has slowly been emerging. That story is not quite ready to present, but during the coming year, a series of articles will be made available that should give you all a most interesting picture of what life was like for the Coast Guardsmen and their families at Fort Ross fifty years ago.

As an introduction, we know that five men were assigned duty at Fort Ross at any one time, and we also know most, if not all, of who the people who were:

- Grant (first name unknown); he was the first commanding officer. Grant's whereabouts are currently unknown.
- Richard Brayton and his wife, Margery; Richard, a 2<sup>nd</sup> class petty officer, was the second, and last, commanding officer, and Margery was the "Top Sergeant" of the outfit during her stay. Richard and Margery now live in Dana Point, California.
- Earl Habig; Earl was a seaman 1st class. Earl passed away several years ago, and his wife, June, now lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- LeRoy Joslin; LeRoy was a seaman 1st class. LeRoy died in an auto accident soon after the War. His wife and children, whose whereabouts are unknown, lived at Fort Ross part of the time LeRoy was there.
- John Larson; John was a seaman 1st class. His whereabouts are currently unknown.
- Russell Niemanstsverdriet and his wife, Doris; Russell was a seaman 1st class, and Doris was at Fort Ross during most of Russell's stay, which was the entire time. Russell and Doris now live in Marshalltown, Iowa.
- Raymond L. Newton; Ray was a seaman 1st class. Ray became a career Coast Guardsman, and his current whereabouts are unknown. He was from Omaha, Nebraska.
- Joe Gault Stevenson and his wife, Hope; Joe was a seaman 1st class. Joe and Hope lived in a house near the Dairy Barn. Joe passed away about five years ago, and Hope now lives in San Dimas, California.
- Gerald Tobin and his wife, Polly; Gerald was a 3<sup>rd</sup> class petty officer. Polly lived at Fort Ross during part of the time Gerald was there. Their whereabouts are not currently known. Gerald was from Peoria, Illinois.

One more bit of information before concluding this introduction. In October, the FRIA Board of Directors approved a plan to hold a reunion of Coast Guardsmen and their families. Those contacted have responded favorably, and it looks like the event will be held around mid-September 1992. You will be kept informed of progress.

#### ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

FEBRUARY 1, SATURDAY, 12:30 -3:30 PM

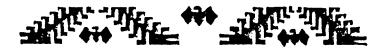
DR. MARGARET PURSER, Assistant Professor in the Anthropology Department, Sonoma State University, will offer this special workshop for North Coast residents and Fort Ross Interpretive Association members interested in preserving the local history. Dr. Purser will be heading the project run out of the Ethnography Laboratory at Sonoma State University which will gather local oral history. The project will involve the volunteer labor of students and local community members. This workshop is intended to introduce the project to the community, to introduce techniques involved in oral history research, and to answer your questions. The goal of the workshop is also to establish connections with the local community, to gather information on what needs to be done, where to direct student labor and how to involve local residents.

The workshop will cover oral history METHODS such as tape recording and designing interview questions. GUIDELINES which help to establish proceedures for dealing with the material generated in oral history interviews, taped interviews and notes, as well as legal release documents, will be discussed. These guidelines have been established by the American Association for State and Local History and by the Oral History Association. TROUBLE SHOOTING POINTERS for issues which may arise such as confidentiality, ethics and public access will also be discussed.

THERE IS NO FEE FOR THIS WORKSHOP. IT WILL BE HELD IN THE FORT ROSS VISITOR CENTER.

TO REGISTER, PLEASE RETURN THE ATTACHED FORM.







#### SEMINAR REGISTRATION FORM

NAME	PHONE
ADDRESS	

PLEASE ENROLL ME IN MARGARET PURSER'S ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1.

FORT ROSS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION 19005 COAST HIGHWAY 1 JENNER, CA 95450

(707) 847-3437

#### CHUNA MCINTYRE

# LECTURE AND PERFORMANCE OF YU'PIC ESKIMO SONGS AND DANCES FEBRUARY 15, SATURDAY, 2:00 PM

CHUNA MCINTYRE, YU'PIC ESKIMO, will describe the culture of his people and perform traditional songs and dances. Chuna is culturally and folklorically related to the Koniag people who inhabited Settlement Ross during the time of Russian occupation.

CLASS FEE: \$15.00



#### SEMINAR REGISTRATION FORM

NAME	PHONE
ADDRESS	

PLEASE ENROLL ME IN CHUNA MCINTYRE'S LECTURE AND PERFORMANCE OF YU'PIC ESKIMO SONGS AND DANCES ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15. ENCLOSED IS \$15.00 CLASS FEE.

FORT ROSS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION 19005 COAST HIGHWAY 1 JENNER, CA 95450

(707) 847-3437

# OUR STATE -- FORT ROSS, SONOMA COUNTY AN OLD RUSSIAN SETTLEMENT CONTINUED, PAGE 2

stone. Who can tell of the jealousy and strife, or of the bright romance and happy hours that were passed at this spot under the dominion of the Czar of Russia. Upon a pleasant hillside under monuments of redwood almost as enduring as stone, sleep many of the first settlers of Fort Ross.

THE SALE TO SUTTER - The cause of their departure can only be surmised. It is supposed that the Ruopean powers had something to do with it. The Mexican authorities did not recognize their title to the land, but the Russians persuaded Captain John Sutter that their title was good and sold all their belongings to him for \$30,000. Early one morning, after the labors of the day had commenced, ships were seen to enter the bay. Orders were brought to the commander, who imediately caused the bells to be rung and a cannon fired, the usual way of calling the people together. left their work hastening to hear the news. Sad and unwelcome were the orders they heard and with only time to gather a few belongings, with hardly time for those whose dead were sleeping in the graveyard, to pay a last sad visit to their graves, they were hurried on board ship and taken to San Francisco, and sent on whaling vessels to Sitka. The most historical article that was included in the Sutter purchase is a four pound brass field piece. This gun was cast in St. Petersburg in 1804. After going through the war with Napoleon, it was finally sent to Alexander Kuskoff, the commander of the California colony as a present from the Czar. This gun, after going through a number of fights and being captured and recaptured was finally presented by Sutter to the Society of Pioneers and can be seen in their rooms in San Francisco. are but few buildings left of the many that were built at that The two bastions still stand, moss covered and bent; the chapel is used as a barn; the buildings used as hotel, saloon, and hall. Few relics have been found. Some benches, a stand that was used in the chapel, the millstone, some redwood monuments around the lonely graves, are all that are left to tell the tale of the time when Fort Ross was home to 250 souls.

FORT ROSS TODAY - The Fort Ross of the present contains one hotel, store, post office, teleghraph office, a few dwellings and the inevitable saloon. During the summer season large amounts of tanbar, wood, posts, etc., are hauled to the landing, to be shipped to SF; from 15 to 26-horse teams being engaged in this business on an average each year. There are also two large dairies whose butter rangs with the best in the state and commands the highest prices in the city markets. The value of the shipments at this place averages \$50,000 a year. The people of the surrounding neighborhood are at present largely interested in the products of the timberlands and raising cattle and sheep. This coast country will in time be the great apple region of the state; the apples being of a very superior quality, equal to the products of the Oregon orchards. Plums and pears are also almost a sure crop and the time will come when thousands of acres of land now used as sheep range will be covered with orchards. Now there seems to be no market for fruit in any amount and the result is that only enough is raised for home consumption. At this place there are two orchards; one containing 12 acres was planted by the Russians and is still bearing. It is supposed to be the first orchard in the

# OUR STATE -- FORT ROSS, SONOMA COUNTY AN OLD RUSSIAN SETTLEMENT CONTINUED, PAGE 3

northern part of the state. It was at that time surrounded by a high stockade, and consists of apples, cherries, pears and prunes. The apples resembe miniature bell-flowers, the cherries are small and sour, the pears are very good, while it is stated that all the old stock of German prunes in California came from seed procurred at this orchard. The other planted 15 or 20 years ago consists of about 30 acres of apple and pear trees. Generally the trees are loaded some of the apples being very large, and all are free from worms and insects. There is very little land for sale in this neighborhood, the pople seem contented and happy, and are improving their homes as if they meant to stay. The climate resembles that of SF and there is very little sickness, and it is many years since there was a death at Fort Ross; and while the number of rainy days is about the same, the amount of rain is nearly twice as much, averaging 50 inches. This does no harm however, as the surplus rain runs into the ocean, while in a dry season it is invaluable. The soil is very rich and while it is too cold for some nearly all kinds of vegetables do well and almost every yard has its wellcultivated garden.

THE DAIRY LANDS - The dairy lands along the coast are only limited in area, and are not for sale unless a very high figure; good timberland is also very high, but the hill lands that are used for sheep and cattle range can be bought for \$5 and \$10 per acre. the summer traveler Fort Ross offers many attractions. easily accessible: the usual route of travel being to Duncans Mills by railroad, from there, 16 miles by stage or team. The road from Duncans follows down the bank of the Russian River for about 5 miles until the ocean shore is reached; from there along the coast road to Fort Ross. This road built largely by private enterprise, winds along the side of the bluff by easy grades, at an elevation of from 100 feet to 500 feet above the ocean. On one side lies the mountain, upon the other the broad ocean. Most people regard the scenery along this road as very beautiful but some are a little timid, as in places a very little deviation from the track would be sure destruction. Along this road runs a daily line of stages carrying the mail and express up the coast. Another route is across the mountains 22 miles by way of Guerneville, the terminus of the Guerneville branch of the SF and North Pacific railroad. Travelers by this route pass over a rough wild mountainous region, but every turn of the road, which is a good one, brings to sight some new and interesting view. About half way between Guerneville and Fort Ross on this route is the popular summering place known as Ingraham's. On this route there is also a daily mail. to Fort Ross can always find plenty of amusement in the way of fishing, bathing and hunting with a social dance now and then. Game such as deer, rabbits and quail are plentiful while most people have notices forbidding hunting, camping, etc., permission can always be had for the asking. The mountain streams are well stocked with trout, while the fishing in the ocean either from the rocks or a boat seldom fails to reward the fisherman with a good catch.

VARIETIES OF CLIMATE - A person here in the summer can choose his own climate, for when it is cool and windy on the coast, by going half a mile towards the hills, one loses the wind and finds a much

### OUR STATE -- FORT ROSS, SONOMA COUNTY AN OLD RUSSIAN SETTLEMENT CONTINUED, PAGE 4

warmer climate and by going up the hill it gets warmer until at a distance of a couple of miles it is almost as warm as in the There is no public school house as yet, but a interior valleys. good private one, the nearest public school being Timber Cove, two miles up the coast. This is a small place consisting of a hotel, several dwellings, a landing and chute for loading vessels with wood, bark, etc. There is a good school house here with an attendance of 20-30 scholars. School is only open during the summer months. Along the coast above Timber Cove are Stillwater Cove, Salt Point, Fisk's Mill, Stewarts Point and Black Point. These are all the shipping points and places of local importance. At Stewart's Point there is a shingle mill and shingles are shipped large quantities to SF and from Fisk's Mill there considerable lumber shipped, while all the rest ship more or less wood, fence posts, tanbark, wool, butter, etc. About 6 miles below Fort Ross on the coast road another road branches off and ascends a ridge about 1600 feet above the sea level and runs parallel with the coast for a distance of 2 miles. Along this road is some beautiful scenery. Most of the road follows the natural course of the ridge, is through timbered country, but through the openings one can see the ocean, that from this distance looks as smooth as a mirror and on clear days Farallone Islands off San Francisco are visible, while to the east are mountains and little valleys. the road almost opposite Fort Ross and a distance of about 3 miles is Sea View post office. Here there is a hotel and store, and as the name would indicate, a fine view of the sea. At this place there is an Odd Fellows Lodge which owns a good and commodious hall carpeted and well furnished. Seven miles further along this road brings us to the Plantation House, a well-kept hotel. proprietor has two large ponds fed by an unfailing spring where he raises fish, principally carp and trout. At thius place there is a lodge of UAOD who owns a fine hall. Near this place there is also a school and, in fact, schools are plentiful and convenient all over this portion of the country. Near Fisk's Mill coal has lately been found of excellent quality but in what quantities is not y et known but the indications point to an extensive deposit. Should this prove true, it will add another source of welath to this portion of the country. To those of limited means seeking homes or in search of health, as well, as to the sportsman or pleasure-seeker, Fort Ross and vicinity certainly offers many attractions.

---from the Democrat newspaper, Feb. 5, 1884, written by Mrs. E. Blackford, submitted by Barbara Black

Santa Rosa, July 31....H.M. Gregson and A. Gotzch arrested for alleged arson in conection with burning of Timber Cove schoolhouse, appeared in court this moring and their examination were set for August 10th. Both were admitted to bail.

Fort Ross items - Large quantities of wood are being deposited on the landings at Fort Ross, Timber Cove and Stillwater Cove. Several schooners are at present being loaded, which makes business look a little more progressive---The coast road being in fine condition seems to attract quite a number of campers who are in pursuit of trout, venison, bear, berries, etc., all of which seem to be quite plentiful this season---a school picnic is to be given the 26th by the Table Mountain, Fisk's Mill and Timber Cove schools, at G. W. Call's grove near Fort Ross. A jolly time is anticipated.

#### APPLE TREES

BARE ROOT APPLE TREES
NOW FOR SALE. THESE
TREES ARE DESCENDED
FROM THOSE IN THE OLD
RUSSIAN ORCHARD GRAVENSTEIN, BALDWIN,
PIPPIN, BLACK GILLIFLOWER! TREES MAY BE
PURCHASED AT THE BOOKSTORE IN THE FORT ROSS
VISITOR CENTER.

\$10.00 EACH



POMO BASKETS

COILED POMO C
BASKETS WOVEN BY
MYRTLE MCKAY CHAVEZ
NOW FOR SALE IN THE
BOOKSTORE.

#### FRIA STAFF

WENDY PLATT, TREASURER (CONSULTANT)
LYN KALANI, BOOKSTORE MANAGER, ADMINISTRATION, NEWSLETTER EDITOR, FIELD SEMINAR COORDINATOR
LAKE PERRY, BOOKSTORE SALES AND MAIL ORDER
DENISE ABBOTT, BOOKSTORE SALES, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR
JACI HALLETT, VOLUNTEER BOOKSTORE ASSISTANCE

#### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 1, SATURDAY, ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP 12:30 - 3:30 PM
FEBRUARY 8, SATURDAY, FRIA BOARD MEETING 10:00 AM
FEBRUARY 15, SATURDAY, LECTURE AND PERFORMANCE OF YUP'IK ESKIMO SONGS AND DANCES 2:00PM



FORT ROSS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION, INC. 19005 Coast Highway 1 • Jenner, California 95450

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