



19005 Coast Highway One, Jenner, CA 95450 ■ 707.847.3437 ■ info@fortross.org ■ www.fortross.org

Title: **Russian American Company Papers**

Author(s): **Ferdinand Von Wrangell**

Published by: author

Source: Fort Ross Conservancy Library

URL: www.fortross.org

Fort Ross Conservancy (FRC) asks that you acknowledge FRC as the source of the content; if you use material from FRC online, we request that you link directly to the URL provided. If you use the content offline, we ask that you credit the source as follows: “Courtesy of Fort Ross Conservancy, www.fortross.org.”

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

Baron Ferdinand von Wrangell's Report of April 10, 1834. Russian-American Company Papers, National Archives, (vol. 11, roll no. 36, pp. 59-78).

After dispatching ships from New Archangel and handing over port facilities, personnel, and affairs to my assistant, Lt. Capt. Etolin, I left Sitka Bay in the sloop Baikal, commanded by Lt. Illyashevich, on June 13 of last year. We set sail for Fort Ross, where, on July 7, I disembarked and arrived on shore. According to the information of Mr. Kostromitinov, the manager of the office, all was well. An epidemic had raged here during the spring, which afflicted almost all the personnel. However, no one died, and now, thank God, everyone has recovered. However, it overcame some of the Indians living in the area.

I was kept busy inspecting the buildings, warehouses, and economic enterprises, and soon got to know in all respects the advantages and disadvantages pertaining to agricultural and industrial production at Fort Ross. I consider it necessary to provide the Main Administration with a general account of many of the observations I made relating to these subjects.

Structures. Set upon a hill with a sharp descent to the sea, and upon a smooth, clayish terrain, the wooden stockade is shaped in a rather large square, which forms four right angles. In two corners, diagonally opposed to each other and connected to the stockade walls, two watch-towers have been erected with guns that protect all sides of this so-called fort. Nevertheless, it appears quite strong, and perhaps even unconquerable, in the eyes of the Indians and the Spanish here. Inside the stockade enclosure stand the Company buildings: the manager's house, offices, barracks, storehouses, a barn, and a chapel, all of which are neatly and orderly maintained and look comfortable, even handsome. However, almost all the buildings, as well as the stockade wall and watch-towers, are so old and dilapidated that either they need repairing or else they should be replaced by new structures.

On this same hill, outside the fort, fronting and parallel to its sides, are two of the Company's stockyards, large in size, fenced, clean, and well kept up; a small house for storing milk and making butter; a shed for the Indians; a threshing floor; and two rows of small private and Company houses, with gardens grown by Company employees. Further on stands a windmill. At the foot of the bluff, near the landing area for baidarkas, a large warehouse, a cooperage, a forge and tannery, and bathhouses have been built. All of this has been nicely laid out, in conformity with the goals of the settlement and its local requirements. As mentioned above, however, the majority of the structures have fallen into decay. Last year the brick works was transferred to Bodega Bay, where a large warehouse has been built

for storing bricks and other supplies which must be loaded as cargo onto ships sent here each year from Sitka with various provisions for the Ross Division.

Agriculture. In the areas surrounding the settlement the land is mountainous, broken and intersected with deep gulches, and covered with forests. The soil, for the most part, is clay, but there is some black loam (chernozem) too. Tall grasses grow which are pleasantly fragrant and nourishing for cattle, and in a few places, sheltered from sea breezes and ~~mist~~^{fog}, a farmer's labor is rewarded with wheat harvests of a 10 to 27-fold increase over what was sown.

Unfortunately, however, such places as are ~~exposed~~^{here} not exposed to the pernicious influence of sea fogs are very few and in small patches on the slopes of high, steep hills accessible only on foot or on horseback. Once the extensive work of ploughing these steep, hilly fields is over, there then remains the extremely difficult and slow work after the harvest of ~~carrying~~^{carrying} the sheaves on one's shoulders down to the threshing floor or to places where horses can convey them.

In addition to these inconveniences there are other ones too: by necessity all the places suitable for cultivation are sown without crop rotation, whereby many arable areas are now already deprived of strength; crops do not come up and must be abandoned, and moreover, cannot be substituted by crops in other places. In some fields wild oats grow in such profusion that they choke out the wheat, and the only way of getting rid of them is to let cattle graze there for two or three years, which ~~will mean~~ again would mean eliminating a portion of arable land. Besides all this, field mice and gophers invade and eat the grain at the roots.

After this, no one will expect good results from agriculture at Fort Ross and cannot be surprised by the fact that from 1826 through 1833 (inclusively), that is, over ^{an} eight-years period, ~~that~~⁹⁸ about ~~275~~^{twelve} metric tons of wheat and barley were sent to Sitka, which averages about ~~275~~^{twelve} metric tons per annum*: a very insignificant amount! The year 1832 was ~~the best~~ among the best by way of a harvest: at that time about 8.8 metric tons of wheat and 3.1 metric tons of barley were sown all in all in Company and private fields.** About 30,000 sheaves were reaped, resulting in 100 metric tons of wheat and 15.5 metric tons of barley.+ That year the grain for Company use from the above-mentioned harvest was worth 37,328 rubles, and ^{that} for use by private individuals was worth 5,748 rubles, figuring one pood of wheat at five rubles.++ After local outlays and the seed grain

* Wrangel gives the figures 6,000 poods of wheat and barley (one pood = 36.1 lb.), and 750 poods per annum.

** 542 poods, 117 lbs. of wheat, and 191 poods, 26 lbs. of barley.

+ 6,104 poods, 32 lbs. of wheat; and 942 poods, 30 lbs. of barley.

++ One pood equals 36.11 lbs.; one ruble was then worth about \$.50. (i.e. 7¢ / lb.)

left behind, there remained about eight metric tons of wheat, which was sent to Sitka.* These are the maximum profits that one can expect from agriculture at Fort Ross in its present condition.

Over the past year, 1833, the following ~~maximum~~ seed grains were planted: 6.2 metric tons of wheat, and 3.4 metric tons of barley. Sixty-two metric tons of wheat and eighteen metric tons of barley were harvested.** As an experiment six and a half pounds of hemp were sown, and from this about 97 lbs. of seed were harvested, which should have been used for seed grain this present year. In the future it would be useful to attempt to plant millet, buckwheat, flax, oats and rye, and for this reason I humbly request the Main Administration to order at the first opportunity a certain quantity of the above-mentioned grains to be sent in fresh condition to the colonies.

agronomists
The agriculturalists here have scarcely any conception of how to cultivate fields. Like promyshlenniks in general who have come to America, they are made up of all kinds of riff-raff. Even the office managers who administer agricultural affairs here have had no experience whatsoever in these matters. Consequently, it is truly amazing that in the face of such local difficulties, and without the aid of practical experience, agriculture has even reached the middling conditions in which it presently finds itself.

Perhaps with the introduction of crop rotation and other auxiliary methods the fields would not get so quickly exhausted, and with the improvement of threshing and winnowing not nearly so much would be lost as is now. Only wheat and barley are sown here. The fields cannot be manured down and are not left fallow, since they cannot be replaced by other ones. The grain is threshed by horses, of which as many as 30 or more are let into a circle covered with sheaves, and by trotting around they beat the grain with their hoofs. By this method 40 horses, with eight drivers, thresh 900 sheaves in a day. Due to a shortage of manpower, chains cannot be utilized. Should mobile threshing machines become practicable, then the Main Administration might provide a very substantial benefit by sending such a machine. I think it would be best of all to refer to the Imperial Society of Agriculture in Moscow, so as to make no mistake in the choice of purchasing a threshing machine. No matter how they praise the Chaplygin and Makhov machines in the periodical press, especially for their inexpensiveness, it is still better to ask ~~at~~ the Moscow Society for expert advice, so that expenses *do not*

* I.e. about 500 poods.

** I.e. 377 poods, 32 lbs. of wheat, and 204 poods, 22 18 lbs. of barley sown; and 3,759 poods, 26 lbs. of wheat, ~~maximum~~ and 1,084 poods of barley harvested.

will not be made in vain, nor will time be lost needlessly.

As for vegetable gardening and horticulture at Fort Ross, I shall not mention why neither one nor the other has benefited the Company. They should remain activities only for private entrepreneurs.

Stockraising comprises another area of the economy at Fort Ross. The hilly location and the forests pose an insuperable obstacle to the propagation of cattle in any significant number in the areas around the settlement. From July through November or December the cattle scatter for a dozen miles in all directions in search of grass, which in summer the sun burns out and the cattle pluck out in areas around the settlement, so that accurate supervision of the cattle is impossible. The cows, driven twice a day from distant places to the stockyard to be milked, get worn out and give so little milk that, to be perfectly accurate, 147 milch cows gave only 4,190 lbs. of Chukhonsk butter in 1832. From this amount, after local consumption, about 3,070 lbs. were sent off to New Archangel. Besides butter, the cattle provide salt-beef for Sitka, a small amount of tallow, and ~~skins~~ leather dressed in the tannery here both for local use and for export to Sitka.

As of September 1, 1833, there were on hand at the settlement:

Horned cattle	719 head
Horses	415 "
Rams and sheep	605 "
Pigs	<u>34 "</u>

Total: 1,173 head

From stockraising altogether, the Company over one year's time earned the following profits from:

Butter, tallow,	
leather, sheep's wool	3,300 rubles
Salt beef	2,472 "
Fresh meat sold to	
employees	1,205 "
Food used by ^{personnel} the crew	<u>1,005 "</u>
Total:	7,982 rubles

All kinds of stock reproduce considerably from year to year, but due to constraints of space they should not reach a number much over 2,000 head altogether. However, there would have to be no fewer than 7,500 head of horned

cattle alone to feed people sufficiently (owing to ~~the~~^a shortage of fish) and to prepare salt beef for New Archangel. By then, the residents could feed themselves without fear of ~~exhausting~~ depleting the herd and could export to Sitka half of its yearly salt-beef requirements, i.e. about $7\frac{1}{2}$ metric tons per annum.

~~Other~~ Various Areas of Productivity, which earn a profit for the Company (besides agriculture and stockraising), include:

1) Sea animal hunting, which in the earliest days of settlement was significant, ~~is~~^{but is} now limited to 200 seals and to occasional, rather infrequent, sea-otter expeditions undertaken by Aleuts along the California coast. The California Government strictly forbids these undertakings, and for this reason we rarely succeed in obtaining temporary permission to hunt. Many people are convinced that these animals will soon be altogether removed from these shores, since they are constantly hunted by seamen from the United States, assisted by Tlingits*, despite the Spanish prohibition.

Over the past seven years Aleuts from Ross settlement have caught the following:

	<u>1826</u>	<u>1827</u>	<u>1828</u>	<u>1829</u>	<u>1830</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1832</u>
Sea Otter	287	9	1	18	19	119	1
Yearlings	13	3		5	4		
Fur Seals	455	290		210	287	205	118

2) Orders placed by the Spanish for various wares, such as cooking utensils, wheels, longboats, and so forth. Formerly, they paid quite a bit for such items, and the Fort Ross Office drew an exchange of sometimes as much as 6,000 rubles per year to the Company's profit. Now, however, such transactions are rare and inconsequential, since the foreigners who dominate the California trade carry all ~~the necessities~~ possible necessities and provide them at such low prices that we cannot compete.

3) Supplying the port of New Archangel with small amounts of fat, tar, ~~bricks~~ bricks - strong and high-quality, ^{and} timber (from bay trees) needed for various uses on ships. These items cannot be obtained from anywhere but Fort Ross, and owing to our considerable need for them, they are naturally important for us. The acquisition of bay wood, however, has now become extremely difficult, for the best trees near the settlement have been cut down, and now they must be sought out in deep canyons.

* The Russian word for Tlingits was Kolosh.

Population and Status of Residents

As of June 1, 1833, the following were counted at the settlement:

	<u>Adults</u>		<u>Children under 16</u>	
	<u>male</u>	<u>female</u>	<u>male</u>	<u>female</u>
Russians	41	4	3	2
Creoles	10	15	30	33
Aleuts	42	15	21	5
Indians	<u>35</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>not counted</u>	
sub-total	128	71	54	40
total	199		94	

grand total 293 souls of both sexes

Toward the season when they ~~gather in~~ ^{bring in the} crops, the Indians ~~assemble~~ gather together from nearby plains to earn ^a regular wage at the settlement, or else out of necessity, when volunteers are few, for then as many Indians as possible are driven in by force, sometimes 150 of them, who are kept busy for a month and a half without rest, doing jobs useful to the Company. Without their help it would be impossible to harvest and carry the wheat from the fields to the threshing floor. Let me point out, for example, that during my stay at Fort Ross jobs were distributed as follows:

Russians and Creoles (Aleuts were to hunt sea otter) were sentries, artisans, carpenters, cooks, etc. 49 people*

Indians were employed for harvesting, hauling sheaves, threshing-floor work, carrying clay for making bricks, and so forth

161

210 at work

From this it strikes one as obvious how necessary the Indians' assistance really is.

Russians, Creoles, and Aleuts are paid either a salary or a daily wage while working. The Indians, however, ~~assemble~~ ^{receive} food and sometimes clothing from the Company. Those who receive a salary are given about 36 pounds of flour a month, and about a pound of meat (including bones) each day, but the others are allowed by way of food only flour for porridge. From this meager fare and strenuous work the Indians end up quite exhausted! However, it was not from these people, but from the salaried promyshlenniki that complaints and petitions came to me.

* This figure appears to include almost all the adult male Russians and Creoles (51 altogether); cf. census above.

Everyone has confirmed the fact that there are no ways to help them /the promyshlenniki/ live and to feed a family on a single salary, with one ration of flour and one pound of ~~meat~~ meat (with bones) a day. Consequently, there is indeed no way the Office can reduce debts; on the contrary, they increase year by year. To give some idea of a Russian promyshlennik's expenditures at Fort Ross, I include here the accounts of one of them, Vasily Permitin, who has a wife and five children.* During the year 1832 he received on account:

Wheat	125 lbs. **
Wheat flour	1522 lbs.
Rye flour	72 lbs.
Dried meat	36 lbs.
Fresh meat (beef)	71 lbs.
Lard	24 lbs.
Butter	11 lbs.
Candles (tallow)	14 lbs.
Salt	14 lbs.
Cattle fat	2 lbs.
Copperware	4½ lbs.
Millet	10 lbs.
Circassian tobacco	22 lbs.
Soap	27 lbs.
Tea	10 ¾ lbs.
Sugar	43½ lbs.
Molasses	10½ lbs.
Felt	2 rolls
Cotton stockings	1 pair
Woolen blankets	2 rolls
Cotton knives cloth	1 roll
Soles	21 pairs
Boot vamps	10 pairs
Pieces of nankeen cloth	5 pieces
Medium-sized sheepskins	2 pieces

* From the figures Wrangell provides (p. 6), one can assume that Permitin's children, if "typical," were included among the 63 Creole children under 16; his wife was most likely non-Russian.

** Wrangell lists the first five items in poods (1 pood = 36.11 lb.) and pounds.

Flemish linen	48 ft. *
Calico	73½ ft.
Ticking	39 ft.
Miscellaneous	34½ ft.
Gingham	16 ft.
Soldier's broadcloth	5½ ft.

All of this, at current prices, ~~amounts~~^{comes} to a sum of 738 rubles and 17 kopeks. Moreover, Permitin's annual salary comes to 350 rubles. For example, the above-listed summary of items and supplies purchased by Permitin indicates that there is nothing superfluous included. Consequently, one cannot but recognize how impossible it is for these people to sustain themselves on a single salary of 350 rubles per year. Taking these circumstances into account, I found it necessary to reduce a few of the local promyshlenniks' obligations, as stated in a proposal to the Fort Ross Office (no. 260), which I am presenting to the Main Administration in an attached protocol for consideration and approval.

In time, a school will have to be built at the settlement here, to provide for the children, who are very numerous. ** Presupposing that the settlement will be transferred to other locations [sic], I did not, however, set about establishing either a school or a hospital. In the above-mentioned proposal which I submitted, the Indians and Aleuts are to have better food than before and the Indians especially are to be paid somewhat more generously for their work. Not only humanity but common sense as well demands that the Indians be treated more kindly: due to poor food and meager pay they have stopped coming to the settlement for work, whereby the Office has had to seek them out forcefully in the back country, to seize them unawares, and to bind their hands and drive them to the settlement like cattle to get them to work. While I was there a party of 75 people - men, women, and children - was brought to the settlement from a distance of 45 miles † from here, where they must stay, without supervision, for a month or two. Is it really understood what the consequences of such actions toward the Indians should become over time? Are we really making friends with them?

I hope that the Fort Ross Office, when it gets my permission to allow Indians adequate food and pay that is not insulting, will soon see a change in their disposition towards us, and that the Main Administration will, of course,

* Linear measurements are given in arshins (one arshin = 2.33 ft.).

* Linear measurements are given in arshins (1 arshin = 2.33 ft.).

** Children under sixteen comprised over 40% of the population at Fort Ross, excluding Indians; Wrangell's figures of 1833 list 94 of them.

† Forty-five miles approximates 65 versts.

acknowledge these increased expenditures - in contrast to previous outlays - as both judicious and useful. I also recognized how necessary it is to increase the daily wages paid to Aleuts per work day, as stated in a proposal to the /Fort Ross/ Office, Report no. 275 (see Protocol), in which I request the approval of the Main Administration.

Capital and Content of the /Fort Ross/ Division. According to the account books of the Office, as of January 1, 1833, capital resources consisted of the following items:

Available cash on hand	4,398 rubles	22 kopeks
Reserves in store	41,465	87
Community supplies	64,445	49
Trading office	5,133	49
Pharmacy	132	24
Chapel	2,474	26
Tannery	466	50
Domestic Real Estate	42,645	43
Company fields	18,009	72
Employee debts	44,797	63
Aleut debts	3,397	11
Debts owed by Californios	3,096	26
Company livestock and equipment	40,230	00

total 270,693 rubles 33 kopeks *

This capital inventory excludes a sum of 14,484 rubles and 49 kopeks, from the estimates I made of materials and things fallen into disrepair, which, as in the Protocol, under no. 266, the Main Administration will think it proper to attend to.

During the year 1832 the following was spent on maintaining the /Fort Ross/ Division:

on wages	25,227 rubles
on other items	<u>30,151</u>
total expenditures	55,378 rubles

At the same time the gains and losses on account came to a profit for the Company of 45,119 rubles,

to which I am adding a likely profit from seals recently acquired of 2,660 rubles,

totaling in profits 47,779 rubles.

Consequently, the net loss to the Company from production at the Fort Ross Office during 1832 came to 7,599 rubles.

* The Russian silver ruble in mid-nineteenth century was worth about \$.50.

It was noted above that the year under consideration 1832 had one of the best grain harvests ever. * Except for 25 seals, there was no fur hunting at all. The fur industry at Fort Ross Division cannot even come into consideration at present, in view of the fluctuating expenditures and revenues of this Office, as mentioned above and clarified in the accompanying graphs of the fur catch over a seven-year period. + Therefore, one can state conclusively that even in the best harvest years the Company will always sustain losses from maintaining the Ross Division as long as the settlement remains in the locations presently occupied, which do not permit significant improvements in agriculture, which - in my opinion - should be the only reasonable purpose for this establishment.

Why We ~~Should~~ Must Occupy the Plains along the Russian River. ° Between the settlement of Ross and Bodega Bay a river empties into the sea, the mouth of which dries up in summer, although there is plenty of water upstream. This river's course flows through extensive plains which are alternately forested and unforested, and covered with succulent grasses. It has its origin about 50 miles upstream ** and is separated from Fort Ross by a ridge of mountains quite difficult to cross. From the plains of the nearest California mission, however, it is separated only by two mountain ranges not nearly as steep as the former. + + Indians hostile to each other wander about on these plains, and among them live a lot of refugees from the missions who are ill-disposed toward all Christians, while the others are not.

The California Spaniards, who hunt down the Indians who escape from the missions, have gotten to know these locations and have not been able to conceal their desire to settle there. Private individuals are doing this in no great numbers; but once the California Government considers it necessary to establish ~~xxxx~~ a mission here, then, of course, it will occupy Bodega Bay too. °° It could then build a road there suitable for wheeled vehicles and for transporting produce from the mission to sell to foreigners. In such fashion they could drive us out of there, and we would be deprived of a great deal, i.e. a relatively safe harbor (in summer) *** and extensive fields suitable for establish-

* See page 2, above.

+ See page 5, above.

° In Russian, the Slavianka River.

**In Russian measure, 80 versts. By today's measurements of the river, 50 miles upstream from the mouth would be located in Alexander Valley, below Geyserville.

++The two "ranges" south of the Russian River are probably the line of hills in southwestern Sonoma County and the hills surrounding the Valley of the Moon (~~East-~~ (eastern Sonoma County), assuming that Mission San Francisco Solano in Sonoma is meant as the "nearest mission."

°°Wrangel appears unaware of the Mexican Government's decree of August 1833, secularizing all missions in Lower and Upper California.

***Summer winds at Bodega Bay prevail from the northwest; in winter from the south-

ment of agriculture and stockraising on a scale so vast that not only all parts of the colonies, but even Okhotsk and Kamchatka,² could be provisioned by the Company with grain, salt beef, and butter.

Occupation of these areas [Inland] could secure the colony [Fort Ross] with the most necessary requirements for sustenance. The Company could derive many other benefits as well. For example, the continuously increasing number of older promyshlenniks, who are tied down with families and who ~~have~~ remain a burden to the Company and all the residents of the colony, could best be ~~settled~~ resettled somewhere along the Russian River where their children would grow up healthy, and from here the latter could enter the Company's temporary service. Here too a main school could be established, and along with the improvement of agriculture under an experienced and prudent administration, some useful manufacturing could eventually be revived (namely of thick cloth and blankets, along with a soap works and rope yard). Indeed, a great number of products, useful to the colonies and beneficial in mercantile transactions with our neighbors, could be generated.

Thus, on the one hand, there is the fear that we may lose what we already possess, and on the other, there is the hope of gaining substantially useful acquisitions which will double the desire to occupy the plains of the Russian River for the Company.

There are quite enough resources for this in the colonies, presupposing only that upon occupation of the plains the settlement of Ross ^{would} be liquidated. The only difficulty comes from the apprehensions of the colonial authorities that such an undertaking would also set against us the government of Mexico itself. Or else it would be exposed to the displeasures of our government on grounds of occupying places on our own authority so distant from the established boundaries of the Russian possessions in America.

On the other hand, all these difficulties, in my opinion, could be removed, if our government entered into direct relations and negotiations with the government of Mexico on this subject. There they will well understand that the proximity of a handful of Russian peasants, torn away from their homeland, so to speak, can never be a threat to the integrity of Mexico's possessions.** Indeed, to the contrary, the Russian population in this area can hold back or at least make things ~~more~~ difficult for the endeavors of the English and the Americans, who are

* The Pacific Seaboard of eastern Siberia.

** Compare this characterization of Russian employees with that on page 3, above ("riff-raff" agriculturalists).

far more dangerous for Mexico. Moreover, the Russian-American Company's presumed objective would be attained if it were permitted to make unhindered use of Bodega Bay and the plains lying along the Russian River, with the barrier mountains on both sides as a natural boundary, for fifty years or even less. Upon expiration of ^athe stipulated time-period, these places could revert to their former owner. In a similar agreement, we might possibly succeed, it would seem, under the pretext of a purchase or by other political means, without giving foreigners any reason to bar Russia from actual control of the above-mentioned territory.

Such are my opinions. Having placed them before the Main Administration's consideration, I should still note that it is necessary to hasten the beginning of negotiations with the government of Mexico regarding the above-mentioned subject. To delay could impair success, and could let the English or the Americans not only hamper us but even occupy these very places and deprive the Russian-American Company of one of the finest acquisitions in this territory here.

Singing ~~the~~ praises of the plains along the Russian River, I base my views on having personally inspected them; to this end, accompanied by the Manager of the Fort Ross Office and 20 Russians, Aleuts, and Indians, I undertook a trip there which lasted from September 11 through September 14 1833. On the second day of travel we reached the beginning of the plains, which we surveyed for a distance of about 25 miles, * finding places quite suitable for settlement. Indians catch fish in the Russian River and in other streams that flow into it. Superb groves of deciduous trees ** are inhabited by wild goats in abundance. The land is beautiful and capable of producing all kinds of cereal grains, grapes, and the fruits of southern Europe. There is enough space to build whole cities, to harvest up to 800 metric tons of wheat + and to maintain as many as 40,000 head of cattle.

If a resolution to occupy these areas should ensue, then we would need to send off, in my opinion, in May a detachment there (of fifteen Russians) to build an enclosure with storage and barrack cabins on a sheltered slope of the Russian River near the plain, between this river and another one. Meanwhile, others would try to travel there on wheels from Bodega Bay and to establish enough supplies to maintain a detachment for an entire year, which would, at a suitable time for planting, sow wheat at the first opportunity - but no more

* 40 versts

** In Russian, dubrava, which happens to be the name of a projected housing development in Guerneville, on the Russian River.

+ 50,000 poods.

than necessary for one year's maintenance of the entire settlement.

Then, the following May, we could transfer from Fort Ross both people and property on a special ship to Bodega Bay, and all the livestock could be driven over the mountains to the plains, so that the occupation of the plains and the transfer of Ross settlement would be brought to a conclusion during the second year.* The first provisioning and organizational work would have to be carried out under the direction of a skillful, enterprising, orderly man who is a good manager, well-versed in agricultural matters.

I should note too, as a warning, that the plains along the Avacha River,⁺ which flows into Bodega Bay, have not been found at all suitable for agriculture.⁺⁺ A thick fog from the sea almost always hangs overhead, the land is clayish adobe, and there are no forests. As a consequence, good harvests cannot be anticipated.

In completing this report about Ross settlement, I add with pleasure that the Manager of the Office, P. Kostromitinov, is outstanding in the administration of the division entrusted to him; he is attentive, active, and observant to the interests of the Company. Therefore I have prevailed upon him to remain two more years, although he has requested to leave.^o In regards to this, may I ask the Main Administration to try to find a man capable to occupy this post and to send him here this coming year. I have no one in mind here at all capable of such employment. **

* Wrangel's proposed evacuation of ~~Russ~~ people, property and livestock from Fort Ross was in fact carried out in 1841. People and property, however, left Bodega Bay for Sitka, Alaska, and John Bidwell drove the cattle overland to Sutter's Fort on the Sacramento River.

+ The Estero Americano, presently a boundary line between Sonoma And Marin Counties.

++ Old Mexican maps (circa early 1840's) from the California State Library, Sacramento, indicate "Casas de los Rusos" in this very area.

o Pyotr Kostromitinov served as Manager at Fort Ross from 1830 to 1838; thereafter he served as Company agent in San Francisco (Yerba Buena).

** Kostromitinov's successor was Alexander Gavrilovich Rotchev, who arrived at Fort Ross in 1836, but who did not take over full command until 1838.