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**Title: The Flag of the Russo-American Company**

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Hewes: The Central Pacific Railroad. — Ground broke January 8th, 1863, completed May 8th, 1869.

Stanford: The Pacific Railroad ground broken — Jany. 8th 1863, and completed May 8th 1869. (Note omission of "Central," abbreviation of "January," and addition of "and.")

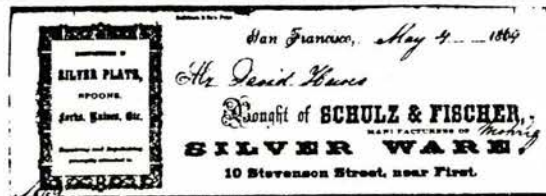
SIDE NO. 4 —

Hewes: (in nine diagonally-rising lines: "Directors" only in quotes): "Directors" — Hon. Leland Stanford — Charles Crocker — Mark Hopkins — E. H. Miller, Jr. — C. P. Huntington — E. B. Crocker — A. P. Stanford — Charles Marsh.

Stanford: (in only eight diagonally-rising lines): Directors of the — C.P.R.R. of Cal. — Hon. Leland Stanford — C. P. Huntington — E. B. Crocker — Mark Hopkins — A. P. Stanford — E. H. Miller, Jr. (Note addition of railroad's initials, etc., and omission of two names — Charles Crocker and Charles Marsh.)

In addition to all these differences, the engraving on the Hewes Golden Spike is much more expertly and neatly done, with uniform lettering throughout. The engraving on the Stanford gold spike is less controlled, with amateurish flourishes and varied styles of letters.

"My father would say, error was error,—no matter where it fell,—whether in a fraction,—or a pound,—'twas alike fatal to truth, and she was kept down at the bottom of her well, as inevitably by a mistake in the dust of a butterfly's wing,—as in the disk of the sun, the moon, and all the stars of heaven put together."—Laurence Sterne, in *Tristram Shandy*, Book II, Chap. 19.



May 4 Finished 2 Gold Spikes 8 60  
 engraved 181 letters 15 25  
 1 block 4 40  
 \$25 25



Received Payment  
 Scholz & Fischer

SILVERSMITH'S RECEIPTED BILL FOR THE LAST SPIKE

(Probably in Mohr's handwriting; for the two other partners names are misspelled below. Note the Civil War revenue stamp, which was still required at the time on any legal or commercial document, including receipts and bank checks)

*attached  
 is  
 Ratchet  
 in  
 Edwards  
 in  
 C.M.F. 11*

PACIFIC HISTORIAN, vol. 14,



*No. 1  
 WINTER  
 1970*

Photo courtesy of State Hermitage Museum, Leningrad

## The Flag Of The Russo-American Company

Written by DR. SVETLANA G. FEDEROVA,  
 Academy of Sciences, U.S.S.R.

Edited by Wayne Colwell,  
 National Historic Sites Service of Canada.

Translated by Dr. Paul Woolf, San Francisco State College, from  
*Ot Aliaski Do Ognennoi*, Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1967.

The very end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries witnessed a new stage in the acquisition by Russia of the islands and shores discovered by her in Northwest America. In July of 1799 Tsar Paul I signed a grant charter forbidding the free hunting of fur-bearing sea animals in Pacific waters, and instead, gave a twenty year monopoly for the exploitation of all the natural wealth of the region to the Russo-American Company. The Company was given the right to occupy, as Russian possessions, all the newly discovered lands along the shores of Northwest America, as well as the Aleutian, Kurile, and other islands not only to the north of the 55th parallel, which were already Russian possessions, but also to the south "providing those were not occupied by any other countries and were not their dependencies." The Company was given permission to use Crown timber for building ships at Okhotsk and to navigate all local waters; to trade with all nearby

Историческая

На подлинности истинности изображеннаго Её  
Императорских Величествъ Имперскаго  
Генералъ-полю

Генералъ-полю



Генералъ-полю  
Генералъ-полю 28 июля  
1806 года.

countries; to exploit, for the Company's use, all useful minerals; to build in suitable places fortifications and settlements, for which purpose the company was furnished gunpowder and lead from Crown Siberian factories. A special clause stipulated the hiring of labor.<sup>1</sup> The Russo-American Company represented quite an unusual enterprise for Russia, in that it comprised several functions: political, industrial, and trade, as well as the administration of the extensive new territory. By giving the company such wide authority the government expected, with the company's help, to extend its possessions on the North American continent and Pacific Islands, and to secure for Russia a dominating position in the strategically important North Pacific, protecting herself primarily from England's competition.

The very fact of granting the Russo-American Company the right to have a special flag, distinct from the Russian national commercial flag, emphasized the desire of the government to single out the company from the other trading concerns, and by stressing the patronage of the Crown to enhance the reputation of the company on the international level. Neither Russian nor foreign publications dealing with Russian-America have any information regarding the history of the Company flag. In specialized publications on flags the picture of the Company flag differs significantly from the officially established design.<sup>2</sup> For this reason the basic source for this investigation was the archive and museum materials in Moscow and Leningrad.

From the time of the establishment of permanent Russian settlements on the islands of Kodiak and Afornak, on the Kenai Peninsula and other points by G. I. Shelikov in 1784-1786, the flag of Russia flew over them. This fact was eyewitnessed by the English seafarer John Vancouver in 1794 when he entered Cook's Bay. His arrival was welcomed by a two gun salute from the high American shore where the Russian flag flew over the settlement.<sup>3</sup> Apparently it was customary to raise the national commercial flag over the settlements, for when Skelikov was planning to build a new town in America, Slavorossia, one that would exceed in size all previous settlements, he wrote to A. A. Baranov, the chief administrator of the Company in America, "Build two or three batteries in good looking towers, and on the towers put up the great national coat-of-arms. Should you also have a shipyard there, then raise over it the national commercial flag of Russia, particularly when foreigners come in."<sup>4</sup> The national commercial banner, used by all the Russian trading companies, was a rectangular cloth

three horizontal stripes of equal width. The lower stripe was red, the middle blue, and upper white. During the first years of its existence this was the flag used by the Russo-American Company. However, seven years after the company's founding Tsar Alexander I signed the edict introducing a special flag for the Company.<sup>5</sup>

The issue of the edict was preceded by the successful completion of the first Russian around-the-world expedition, 1803-1806, under the command of I. F. Krusenstren and U. F. Lisianski, which had been fitted out and financed by the Russo-American Company. This expedition connected, by a giant sea route, Kamchatka and far away Russian-America with St. Petersburg. This expedition greatly enhanced the reputation of the Company. The proposal of establishing the flag was submitted by the Minister of Trade N. P. Rumiantsev, who devoted a good deal of attention to the affairs of the Company, and who later personally financed several scientific expeditions to explore Russian-America including the globe circling voyage of O. E. Kotzebu in 1815-1818.

The text of the edict indicates that after receiving Imperial sanction it was presented to the Senate, and on 19 September 1806 it was forwarded for execution to the head office of the Company (which had been transferred in 1800 from Irkutsk to St. Petersburg) and also to the Admiralty and the Ministry of Trade. Simultaneously the above departments received copies of the approved flag design prepared by the heraldic office, along with the following description: "The flag of the American Company has three stripes, the lower red, the middle blue, and the upper and wider stripe white, with the facsimile on it of the All-Russia state coat-of-arms below which is a ribbon hanging from the talons of the eagle with the inscription thereon 'Russo-American Company's'." The flag design attached to the edict was multi-colored.

In this way, to make the flag of the Company it was necessary to use the national commercial flag with a change of the proportions of the stripes and by adding the state coat-of-arms and the inscribed ribbon. It appears that the introduction of the All-Russia state coat-of-arms was based on the fact that in 1803 Alexander I became a holder of Company shares and thus took the Company under his protection. This action made it obvious to the merchants and nobility that participation in the Company was an important state affair. The banner was authorized to be raised over Russian fortifications in Northwest America, on the Pacific Islands, as well as on the Company's ships. V. M. Golovnin during his sea voyages of 1807-1809 and 1817-1819 had dropped anchor in the harbor of

New Archangel, capital of Russian-America since 1808. Golovnin attached special significance to the Company flag. He stated that according to the naval regulations established by Peter I, the law of exchanging gun salutes "referred to ships, and not a word was said about trading forts since they had not existed then." He complained that the head office of the Company had not gotten around to a petition for amending the naval regulations with regards to the Company flag. Golovnin insisted on that amendment, "taking into account that the Company, although a commercial venture, nevertheless owns extensive territory, enjoys sovereign patronage, and has the imperial Russian coat-of-arms on its commercial flag. A Company flag . . . in many ways deserves preference over the ordinary commercial flag." On this basis Golovnin, contrary to naval regulations, decided to respond to the salute from the New Archangel fort by firing the same number of guns.<sup>6</sup>

The only original sample of the flag of the Russo-American Company exists in the collection of the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad.<sup>7</sup> It is constructed of a fine silk fabric. The coat-of-arms and inscription was done in oil paint. The black double eagle is shown with the wings wide spread horizontally, the feathers being clearly drawn. On the breast of the eagle there is a square, slightly tapered downward, red shield with the Moscow emblem on which St. George in blue vestment is mounted on a white steed looking to the left. The rider is stabbing the dragon with a lance. The Moscow emblem is traditionally surrounded with the chain of St. Andrew. In the talons of the eagle, besides the scepter and the orb, there is a ribbon. On the front side of the flag the ribbon inscription has retained only the ending, ". . . rican Company's." However, the reverse side of the flag, where only a faint outline of the eagle shows, the first half of the inscription on the ribbon has remained and reads, "Russo-Americ . . .". Thus originally the ribbons of both sides of the flag had the same inscription, "Russo-American Company's." Contrary to the design attached to the edict establishing the flag, the eagle on the Hermitage copy is almost in the center of the flag instead of the upper left corner. The wings have lost their elegance, the crowns on the eagle's heads and the crown in the middle are crudely drawn, and contrary to custom they do not differ from each other in size or shape. All in all, the flag was not painted by a professional artist.

While enumerating the trades practised by the population of New Archangel between 1816 and 1831, the manager of the office in New Archangel, K. T. Khlebnikov remarked, "A special man is

occupied in drawing (making) flags because the ships and colonies require from six to ten flags annually."<sup>8</sup> Usually the flags were not made of silk but of a light woolen fabric.

Among the few drawings of New Archangel made by eye witnesses which show the flag flying over the fort, the earliest one is the view of New Archangel by Y. F. Lisianski. The drawing, made with black India ink on blue paper appears in the hand written "Journal of the around-the-World Voyage of the ship *Neva* in 1803-1806." The flag is depicted flying from the mast, supported by rigging, near the house of the general manager. The top white stripe is plainly seen, while the lower part of the flag bears a diagonal cross.<sup>9</sup> In the edition of the Journal published in London in 1814 the Lisianski drawing showed some changes. The diagonal cross had disappeared, and the flag is shown with three stripes although the order of colors does not correspond to that of the national commercial flag.<sup>10</sup>

The flag in the Lisianski drawing has deservedly attracted some close attention for it corresponds to neither the Company or national commercial flags. It is unfortunate that Lisianski, when writing of his voyage on the *Neva*, only had a brief comment about the flag at New Archangel. He mentions, in 1804, that "Mr. Baranov, on coming ashore with a number of armed men, raised the flag on the fairly high mountain in the middle of the abandoned settlement."<sup>11</sup> Another participant of the expedition, Company clerk Nikolai Korobitsin, kept a diary of the voyage, and though he remained aboard the *Neva* he paid particular attention to the flag raising. He wrote,

In the middle of the fort there is a square, about 20 sajen long and about 10 sajen wide, in the center of which there stands a flag pole. On holidays, and also on arrival of ships in the harbor, the Company's flag is raised, which was given especially to the Company by the government. A half width of the flag is a white stripe with the golden Russian coat-of-arms, while the other half consists of blue and red stripes.<sup>12</sup>

It is an unsolved riddle whether Nikolai Korobitsin could have seen at New Archangel the particular flag of the Company many months prior to the official acceptance of the design of the Company flag, or whether it was an error of memory which occurred during the transcription of the diary from the original rough notes. Naturalist K. Langsdorf in 1806,<sup>13</sup> assistant pilot I. F. Vasiliev in 1807,<sup>14</sup> and Chernyshev apparently also in 1807,<sup>15</sup> depict the flag over the fort with the wings raised upwards. It may be assumed

perhaps that the officially confirmed design of the flag of the Russo-American Company had not reached New Archangel by these dates. A published water-color, made and signed by Alexander Olgin 20 July 1837, depicts the flags flying over the general manager's house and the Company ships in the harbor much like the flag in the Hermitage collection.<sup>16</sup>

The flag of the Russo-American Company was raised in Russian America until 1867. In compliance with the decision of the State Council, confirmed by Tsar Alexander II 14 June 1865, the privileges, rights, and obligations of the Russo-American Company were extended until 1 January 1882. A special section stipulated that "the Company reserves the right of flying on the Company ships the special established flag, as well as the right of the ship's crews to wear uniforms, and the right to use the stamp with the State coat-of-arms."<sup>17</sup> On 30 March (new calendar style) 1867 the agreement concerning the sale of Alaska to the United States was signed. The official ceremony was held in New Archangel on 18 October the same year. This ceremony was given much significance, particularly in the American press. American troops arrived in New Archangel to take part in the changing of the flags. 100 Russian and 250 American soldiers and officers in full dress uniform were drawn up on the parade ground near the house of the general manager. The gun salute from the U.S. ship was returned by the guns of the fort and Russian ships. After the reading of the agreement between the U.S. and Russia, the lowering of the Russian flag began. The matter was complicated by the fact that the flag became stuck on the flag pole, and a Russian sailor had to climb the twenty-seven meter high pole in order to remove it. Five minutes later the Stars and Stripes of the United States was raised. Each flag was then given a double gun salute.<sup>18</sup>

According to the report to the commissioner of the Company, Captain 2nd Class Koskul, who had been sent to New Archangel in June to liquidate Company affairs, the rights of the Company were violated both directly and indirectly long before the actual transfer of ownership. He stated that Company ships were sometimes forbidden to sail under the Russian flag, and "we were therefore forced, through pleadings and concessions, to obtain the American flag for them."<sup>19</sup> Thus, ingloriously, the Russian government ended the affairs of its far away transoceanic territory — Russian America.

From the first years of American sovereignty the military strategic importance of Alaska has continuously increased. During the

post war decades Alaska has occupied a special position in the plans of those in power in the U.S. There has been a continuing growth of appropriations for scientific research projects, including history. In 1935 the U.S. passed a special act on historic sites having exceptional interest for immortalizing and illustrating the history of the U.S. In this connection there has been a growing interest in the study of the Russian era in Alaska. These investigations obtained wide scope after Alaska became the 49th state in 1959. The site in Sitka (New Archangel) where the American flag was raised in 1867 was proclaimed a national historic site. On the grounds where the transfer ceremony took place there now stands a tall flag pole with the American flag. Next to it there is a memorial plaque and six or seven old Russian iron cannons.<sup>20</sup>

- 1 P. A. Tikhmenev, *Istoricheskoe Obozrenie Obrazovaniia Rossiisko-Amerikanskoi Kompanii i deistvia ee do nastoiashchego vremeni*, ch. 1, prilozhenie 3. SPb, 1861.
- 2 "Album des pavillons, guidons, plammes de toutes les puissances maritimes avec texte par M. A. LE CRAS . . ." Paris, 1858, tabl. 59.
- 3 H. H. Bancroft, *Works. History of Alaska*, vol. XXXIII. San Francisco, 1886, p. 335.
- 4 Tsentralnyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Voenno Morskogo Flota, f.198. op. 1, d. 79, l. 38.
- 5 Tsentralnyi Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv SSSR, f. 13, op. 1, 1806 g., d. 304. l. 2-5.
- 6 "Puteshestvie Vokrug Sveta, Sovershennoe na Voennom Shliupe 'Kamchatka' v 1817, 1818 i 1819 godakh flota kapitanom Golovininyam," M. 1965. str. 136.
- 7 State Hermitage, Division of Russian Cultural History. The overall size of the flag is 94 x 168 sm.; the width of the lower red stripe is 18.5 sm., the blue stripe 19.5 sm., and the white 56 sm. The flag was received by the State Hermitage in 1848-1849 from the Historic Artillery Museum where, in turn, it had probably come from the old Hermitage collection in the 1820's.
- 8 K. T. Khlebnikov, *Zapiski o koloniakh v Amerike*. Rukopisnaia kopia. Arkhiv Leningradskogo Otdelenia Instituta Istorii AN SSR, f. 115, d. 447, l. 112.
- 9 Tsentralnyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Voenno Morskogo Flota, f. 870, op. 1, d. 2622, l. 112. The drawing has no artist's signature.
- 10 "A Voyage Around the World in the Years 1803, 4, 5, 6 . . . in the Ship 'Neva' by Urey Lisiansky." London, 1814, P. 218-219.
- 11 "Puteshestvie Vokrug Sveta v 1803, 4, 5, i 1806 godakh . . . na korable 'Neva' pod nachalstvom Iurii Lisianskogo," ch. 2. SPb., 1812, str. 18.
- 12 "Zapiski v prodolzenii 9-letnego v Sibir obrascheniia i 3-godichnogo na korable 'Neva' vokrug zemnogo shara voajirovaniia, vedenyi s kratkim i s prakticheskim raznykh mest i narodov zamechaniami s 1795 po 1806 god velikoustuzhskimi kuptzom Nikolaem Korobitsynym." Arkhiv

## The Flag of the Russian-American Company - Its History

The flag of the R.A.C. was officially established in 1806 by the order of Tsar Alexander I. The flag has three stripes: large upper--white; middle--blue; and lower--red. It bears the Russian state coat of arms. In the claws of the double eagle is a ribbon with the inscription, in the Russian language, Russian-American Company. All Russian forts in Northwestern America, including Pacific Islands, had the right to fly the Russian-American Company flag. The original flag was collected and deposited at the State Hermitage, Leningrad. It is made of thin silk. Some flags were made of flag cloth. The coat of arms inscription is done in oil. It shows a double-headed, black eagle with wide wings in a horizontal position with well-outlined feathers. The chest of the eagle indicates a shield with the Moscovite coat of arms showing St. George riding on a white horse lancing the dragon. The coat of arms of Moscow is surrounded by the highest medal in Tsarist Russian--the order of St. Andrew (order of Andrei Pervozvannyi).

The overall dimension of the Russian-American flag is 168 x 94 cm. The width of the upper white stripe is 56 cm., the middle blue strip is 19.5 cm., and the lower red stripe is 18 cm. In the eagle's claw is a blue ribbon with the Russian inscription--"Russian: American: Company" (Rossiiskoi Amerik: Kompa).

The Russian-American Company flag flew in Russian-America until 1867. In October of the same year an official ceremony and transfer of Alaska took place in New Arkhangelsk (Sitka). In the presence of 100 Russian and 200 American soldiers and officers, a salute from Russian and American ships was resounded, which was answered from the Russian fort. The lowering of the Russian flag began but the flag got stuck on the way down and a Russian sailor had to climb the flag pole 80 feet in order to lower the flag of the Russian-American Company.

Professor Herbert Bolton, of the University of California at Berkeley, under whom I took Spanish History of the New World, in his lecture said "It is remarkable that Spain was able to control the territory of California for such a long time, ruling it over 200 years, and was able to preserve it from being taken by other powers."

The first visit to the coast of California was made by Cabrillo who discovered San Diego Bay in September, 1542. From then on until Mexico became independent from Spain in 1823, California was under the Spanish crown.

Sir Francis Drake, who came to California on the Golden Hinde in June 1579 claimed New Albion in honor of Queen Elizabeth of England. This pirate had a price put on his head by the Spanish. He stayed only a month in the area which could have been anywhere from Marin County bays to San Quentin.

In 1812 the Russians established their fort and they stayed until 1841. The Russian-American Company flag was white, blue and red with an Imperial double-head eagle. The shield of St. George is surrounded by the order of St. Andrew, The Protector of Russia.

In 1818 Monterey was captured by an Argentinian privateer, Hippolyte Bouchard. He plundered the town, broke into dwellings and store houses "in search of money." Then he fired on the town, raised his flag and withdrew after staying a short time. In Russian records we found he visited Fort Ross and "purchased powder from Kuskov" in order to continue his raid along the coast of California.

When the Mexican Republic declared independence from Spain in 1823, it ceased to be the possession of the King of Spain. California became a Mexican province from 1822 to 1846.

In 1846 a band of American settlers in Sonoma started a revolt against Castro by seizing a herd of horses. Mariano Vallejo was put under house arrest by this group of men. They raised the California Republic Flag with lone star and grizzly bear and proclaimed "California Republic". Today this is California's state flag. When the news of Mexican War reached Sonoma "the Bear Flag Movement" died out.

Below are the important six flags of California one could see in California state parks.

1. Spanish Royal flags from 1542-1823
2. The flag of Queen Elizabeth I of England 1579 -- so-called Cross of St. George. Pirate Drake stayed in California one month.
3. Russian-American Company flag of Imperial Russia 1812-1841. Waved at the Fort Ross and Rumiantsov Bay (Bodega Bay) for 29 years.
4. Argentinian flag of 1818 which flew over Monterey about one month.
5. Mexican Republic flag 1823-1846 (23 years)
6. California Bear flag of 1846

It is noted that the Russian-American Company flag flew 29 years over California, the second longest period after the flag of Royal Spain.

Nicholas Rokitin

Sources: Russia & USA. (1765-1815) N. BOLKHOVITINOV p.328;  
HIST. FLAGS IN CALIFORNIA. PARAMOUNT p.13  
S. FEDOROVA. FLAG of R.A.K. pp 121-129





State Hermitage, Division of Russian Cultural History. The overall size of the flag is 94 x 168 sm.; the width of the lower red stripe is 18.5 sm., the blue stripe 19.5 sm., and the white 56 sm. The flag was received by the State Hermitage in 1848-1849 from the Historic Artillery Museum where, in turn, it had probably come from the old Hermitage collection in the 1820's.

## FLAGS AT ROSS

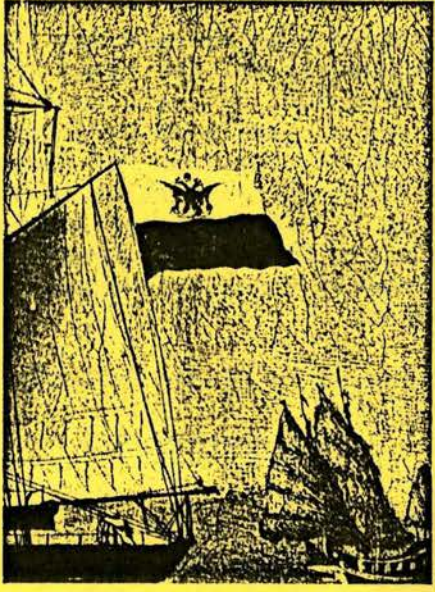
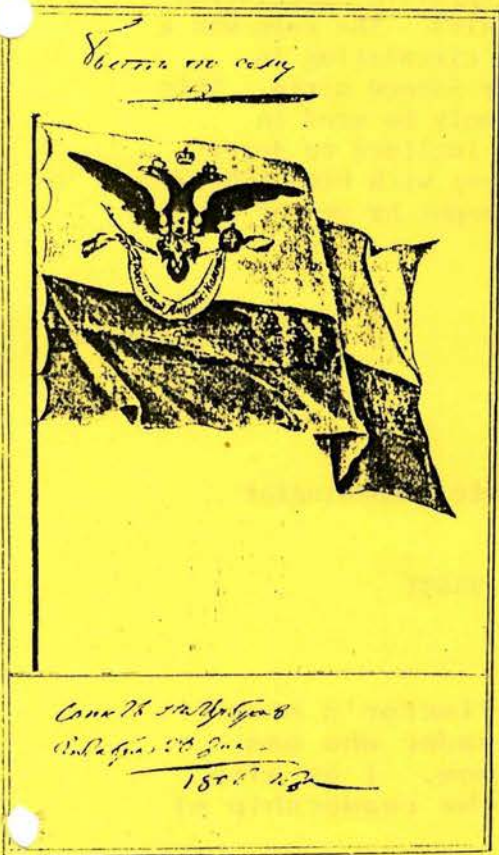
Established by a maritime trading company and supplied by both commercial and naval means, Fort Ross, along with the other coastal colonies in Russian America, based their use of national symbols on contemporary maritime customs and usage. Flag use developed from the necessary identification requirements needed to discern friend from foe, and act accordingly. The founder of the Russian American Company, G. I. Shelikov, writing to the first Chief Administrator, A. A. Baranov, about the shipyard in Slavo Rossiya, directed him to "Paise over it the national commercial flag of Russia, particularly when foreigners come in."<sup>(1)</sup> The inference of this directive is, I believe, to show the flag only upon the occasions necessitating it. Contemporary naval practice was to fly the flag at sea only when encountering another vessel, or in port to show the ship's nationality. This custom was followed on shore by the Russian American Company, who flew the Company flag "on holidays, and also on arrival of ships in the harbor."<sup>(2)</sup> This practice was no doubt an economic necessity, as flags then, as now, were expensive, and to leave them up only quickened their wearing out. As the primary intent was to identify the ship or colony, the flag was only flown when there was someone who needed to see it.

Shelikov's instructions to Baranov predate the 1806 edict<sup>(3)</sup> establishing a special flag for Company use. This flag, referred to as "the flag granted by his majesty" in Company correspondence, is the Russian commercial flag with the "all Russian state coat of arms" granted by Aleksandr I. The Imperial eagle thus gave official sanction to the activities of the Company. This produced some concern among Russian naval officers who, ever conscious of naval etiquette, were confused as to how to treat this flag. Anchored in New Archangel in 1808, V. M. Golovnin reasoned that "Taking into account that the Company, although a commercial venture, nevertheless owns extensive territory, enjoys sovereign patronage, and has the Imperial Russian coat of arms on its commercial flag. A Company flag ... in many ways deserves preference over the ordinary commercial flag."<sup>(4)</sup> Golovnin returned the cannon salute of the Sitka fort with an equal number, an honor usually reserved for state vessels, and not covered by the naval regulations of Peter I. A precedent had been set to regard the Company's flag with the same respect due to the naval ensign. At times they almost

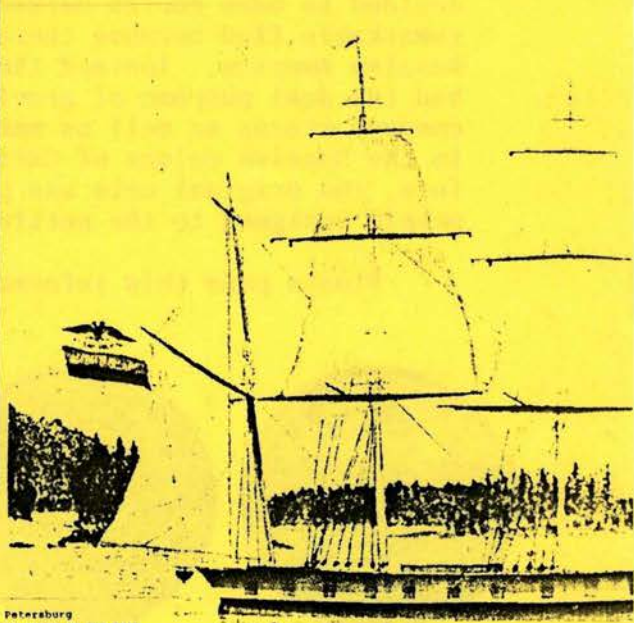
There continues to be much discussion concerning the design of the Company flag, mostly centered around the design and placement of the eagle. Between 1806 and 1867 the all Russian state coat of arms changed officially at least four times in Russia, and judging from paintings by eyewitnesses in Russian America, as many times here. These changes were mostly to the position and shape of the wings. One monarch preferred the wings up, another sloped, another up and fanned. The one existing example in the Hermitage Museum shows the wings half up, but still showing the sloped look of Nikolai I's reign. Early depictions of the flag in America show the wings up in 1805-6 and 1808 and the eagle in the upper quarter of the flag, as in the original edict. In 1827 the eagle has moved to the middle of the white stripe and the wings are sloped. Johann Bartram also shows the wings sloped in 1840, and the eagle in the middle of the flag. By 1842 the all Russian state coat of arms changed to the wings up position and shields of the provinces were added to the wings. This change is reflected in a drawing of the Company's flag on a certificate in 1845. In 1857 the Russian eagle changed again by royal edict. This time to a "wings up and fanned" design, again with provincial shields. This design was probably incorporated into the Company flag, though no representation is known. This would have been the flag lowered at Sitka in 1867.

As more information is translated and published, no doubt more details on the questions of vexillology will appear. Especially of interest will be the naval officer's journals and correspondence of the main office between 1830 and 1840. This is the period chosen for interpretation by State Parks. Unfortunately, much available information is some twenty years out of date for this period.

The commercial flag, the naval ensign, and possibly the jack, have been restored to the original designs of Peter I by an act of the Russian Parliament earlier this year. 1996 will mark the 300th anniversary of the Russian navy. It seems appropriate their ships have now, and will have in 1996, the same flag flown at the creation of their navy. by John Middleton



4 The flag of the Russian-American Company with the Imperial double eagle. Detail of painting on page 67.



43 Watercolor of Sitka in 1840-1845 by Johan Bartram. At the right is the governor's residence and St. Michael's cathedral. Private collection.

- (1) T.G.A.V.M.F.F. 198 of Id 791.38 Central Navy Archives, St. Petersburg
- (2) Korobitayn, Nikolai, NOTES ON NINE YEARS IN SIBERIA AND THREE YEARS ON THE SHIP NEVA 1795 - 1806
- (3) T.G.I.A. 858R. F. 13, OP 1, 1806 G.D. 304.1.25 (Central State History Archives, Moscow)
- (4) Flacco, Richard A., THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY CORRESPONDENCE OF THE GOVERNORS COMMUNICATIONS SERIES 1818, p. 5, No. 17
- (5) Ibid., p. 60, No. 98
- (6) Greenwich, FLAGS AT SEA, 1986, p. 35
- (7) Halyshov, Viktor, 1991, personal communication
- (8) Elatich, Marko, letter to Wayne A. Colwell 6/11/1961
- (9) Zheleznikov, NOTES ON RUSSIAN AMERICA, Moscow, 1905 (English translation p. 103)

Illustrations (Some not included because of space limitation)  
 Varjola, Pirjo, THE ETHOLEN COLLECTION, National Board of Antiquities of Finland, 1990, p. 12 Russian American Company flag by unknown artist  
 Ibid., p. 60 "Watercolor of Sitka" by Bartram  
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№ 5490

150 Руб. Сер.

# АКЦІЯ

## РОССІЙСКО-АМЕРИКАНСКОЙ КОМПАНИИ.

### НА СТО ПЯТЬДЕСЯТЬ РУБЛЕЙ СЕРЕБРОМЪ.

Выдана Никитинскому/мощанскому/Новоселову/и  
Димитриевскому/Мираеву.

в Петербургѣ, 1 Января 1845 года

Члены Главнаго Управленія Компаніи: Председатель *Ф. Суворовъ*  
*Владимиръ Николаевичъ*  
*Михаилъ Андреевичъ*  
*Андрей Семеновъ*

Бухгалтеръ *А. Бушъ.*



**ВЫПЛАЧЕНО**  
**СТО РУБЛЕЙ**

Выпущена в Петербургѣ 1 Января 1845 года в полномъ соответствии съ постановленіемъ Правленія Компаніи, утвержденнымъ 1 Января 1845 года, и съ означеніемъ чина или званія, имени и фамиліи лица, къ которому принадлежитъ эта акція, и въ томъ, что она принадлежитъ на имя *Никитинскому/мощанскому/Новоселову/и Димитриевскому/Мираеву*.  
§ 40. Каждый акционеръ можетъ распорядиться своею акціею по своему усмотренію, передавая или въ другія руки, продавая или инымъ образомъ. Передача производится только на акціи, съ означеніемъ чина или званія, имени и фамиліи лица, къ которому передается, и подписывается передающимъ лицомъ. Съ тѣмъ вмѣстѣ о такой передачѣ Главное Правленіе или ближайшій Канцлеръ Компаніи извѣщаются объявленіемъ за подписью обоихъ лицъ, которое отъ ипотечныхъ должниковъ должно быть отправлено чрезъ почту по страховой порученію. Когда акція достигнетъ какому либо по завѣщанію, или по наследству, то по предъложенію или по требованію заинтересованныхъ, передаточная надпись дается самимъ Правленіемъ или Канцлеромъ Компаніи. Такимъ же образомъ означаются на акціи и выдача дивиденда.  
§ 41. При предъложеніи акцій въ назначенныя мѣста, акционеръ представляющій акціи, равно какъ и мѣста, сама приписка, уведомляется о томъ Компаніею.  
§ 42. Если акционеръ для получения слѣдующихъ ему прибылей (дивиденда) не явится, то она становится въ пользу Компаніи до личнаго его, или наследника его, употребленія въ теченіе десяти лѣтъ и тогда выдается безъ процентовъ; по истеченіи же десяти лѣтъ присоединяется къ запасному капиталу.

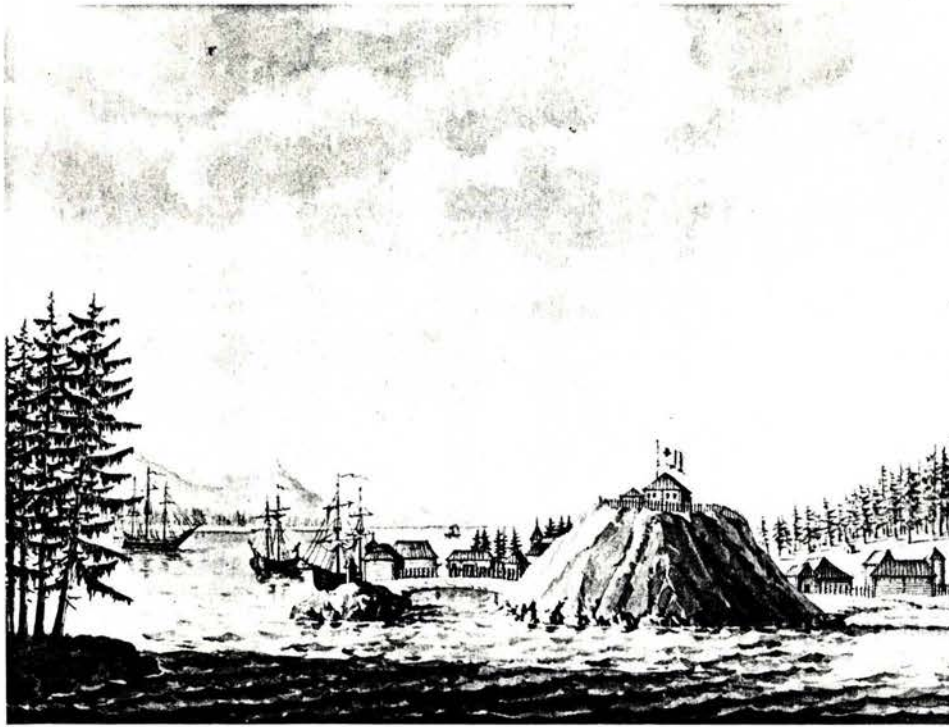
Акція Россійско-Американской компаніи на 150 руб. серебромъ (лицевая и оборотная стороны).  
С.-Петербургъ, 1845-1861 гг.

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"View of the Establishment at Norfolk Sound," 1805-6

Watercolor drawing by G. H. von Langsdorff; courtesy The Bancroft Library, University of California.

*"The settlement of New Archangel [Sitka] . . . was at our arrival quite in its infancy . . . the cape was fortified with large cannon, and some armed vessels of the Russo-American Company were stationed before it, while a regular watch was kept both by day and night. The habitations were for the greater part unfinished, and consisted of small chambers without stoves, with so thin a thatch, that the rains, which we had continually, often came through. The Promüschleniks [Russian hunters or traders] were kept constantly hard at work upon the barracks, warehouses, and other buildings, which were so exceedingly needed"* (Langsdorff, Voyages, 2:87).



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*"The main Russian-American settlement on the island of Kad'iak," 1808*

Drawing by "the navigator assistant of the 14th class," I. E. Vasil'ev, on a map published in Fedorova, *The Russian Population*, fig. 7; courtesy of Svetlana G. Fedorova and Richard A. Pierce.

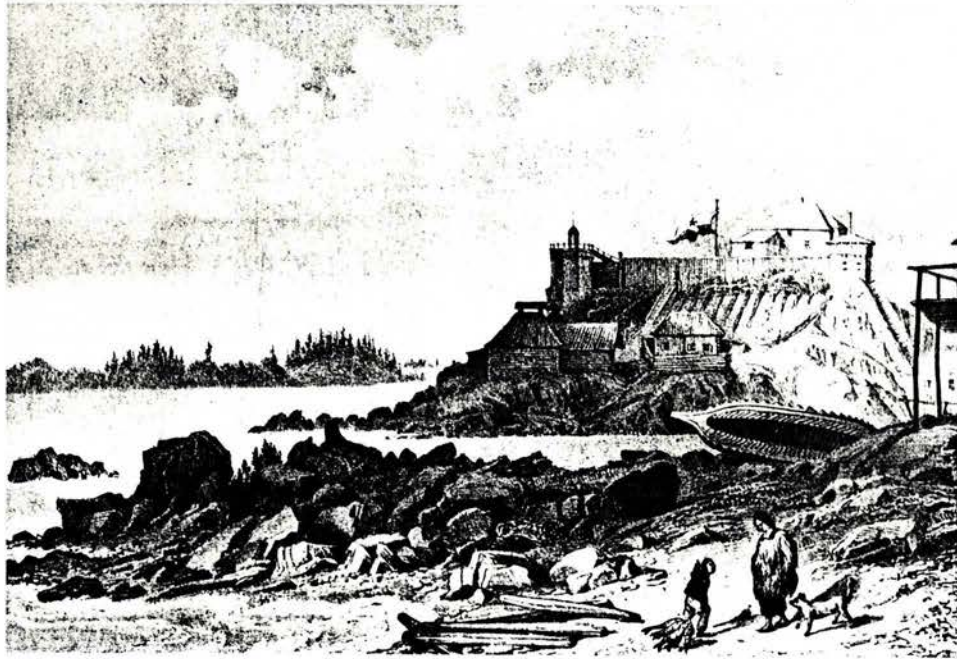
*A cemetery may be indicated by the mysterious small rectangle enclosed by black dots, adjacent to the last building on the left. Close scrutiny discovers two crosses and perhaps a chapel; however, it is some distance from the church seen in the middle of the drawing, surmounted by two crosses.*

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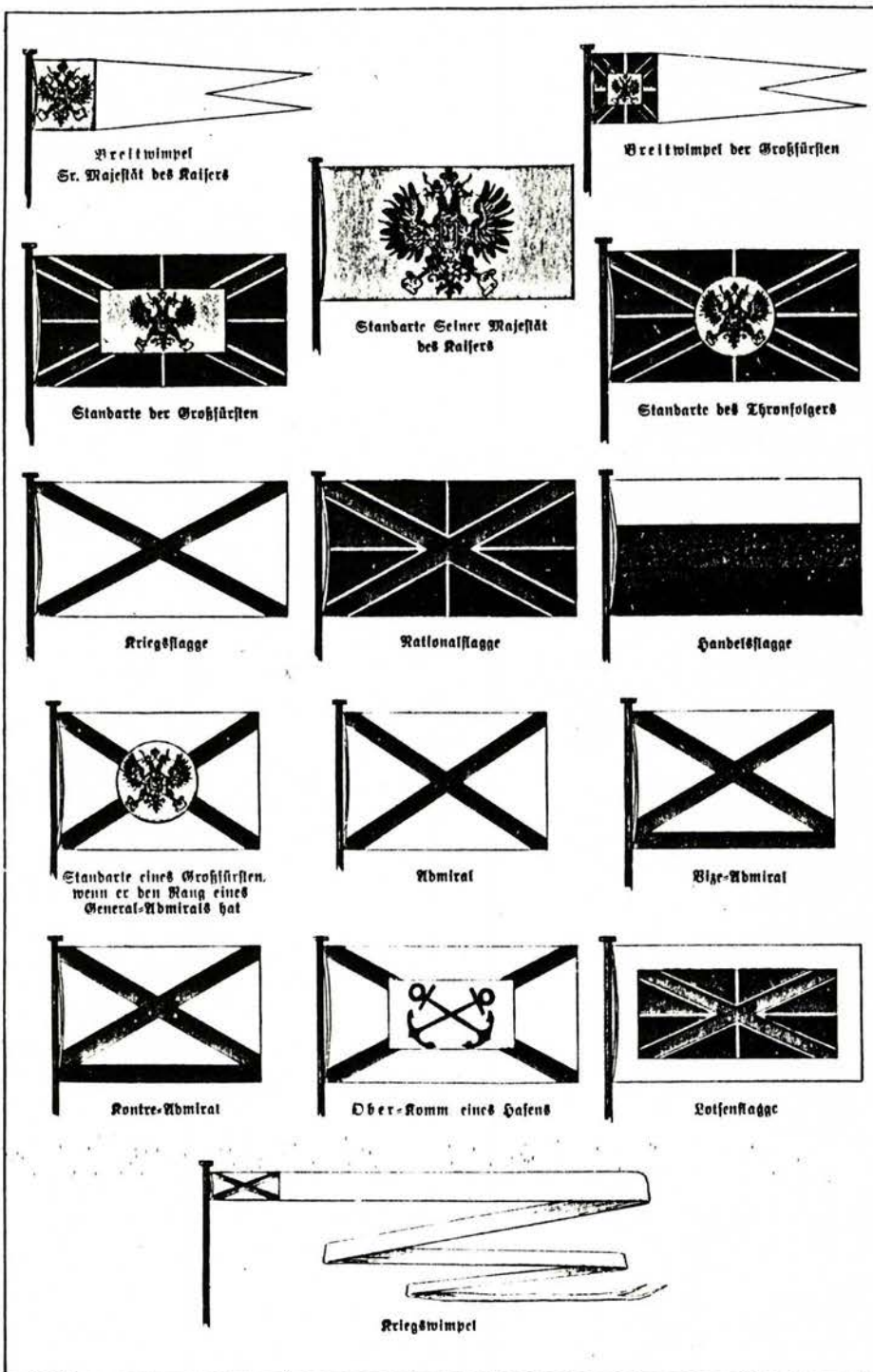


*"The Establishment at New Archangel," Sitka, 1827*

Lithograph of a drawing by F. H. von Kittlitz, in Litke, atlas to *Voyage*, pl. 3 (copy of Tsar Nikolai I); courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University.

*In 1818, nine years before Kittlitz made this drawing, Golovnin, on the voyage of the Kamchatka, described the scene: "The Fort stands atop a high rock elevation right at the harbor, and, considering the chief purpose for building it, is the Company's Gibraltar. Located on high ground, surrounded by a heavy palisade with wooden towers serving as bastions, and supplied with fifty cannon of various types and calibers, as well as a sufficient number of small arms and ammunition, it is indeed awesome and impregnable to the local savages; but against a European power, even against a single frigate, it is hardly a real fort" (Kamchatka Voyage, p. 124).*

# Marine-Flaggen



## RUSSIAN AMERICAN COMPANY FLAG

The Russian American Company flag, authorized in 1806 by Czar Alexander I, symbolizes a time of extraordinary exploration, selfless missionary efforts and significant scientific research. This unique white, blue, red, gold and black double-headed eagle flag, Alaska's first flag, flew over all Russian settlements, forts and trading posts in the Americas. It is an American banner, yet it is a variation of Imperial Russia's own civil and commercial flags.

The top white stripe of the Russian tricolor traditionally stood for nobility and frankness; the middle blue stripe for truthfulness, honor, faultlessness and chastity; the lower red stripe indicates boldness, big-heartedness, love and courage.

The golden-crowned, black double-headed eagle represents the all Russian state coat of arms and denotes imperial patronage and protection. The eagle holds a gold-ringed blue orb and golden scepter. The red heraldic emblem of Moscow features St. George the dragon slayer, mounted on a white charger, and is depicted on the eagle's breast. This ancient crest is surrounded by the collar of the Order of St. Andrew, protector and patron saint of Russia. The inscription on the ribbon between the eagle's talons reads: "Russian American Company" in Cyrillic.

In July, 1799 Czar Paul I granted the Russian American Company the right to occupy and govern as Russian possessions all newly discovered, unclaimed lands in the Americas. Within a few years the Russian American Company's rule stretched from the Aleutian archipelago to Northern California.

The Russian American Company ruled Alaska for the Czar until 1867. It also built and garrisoned Fort Ross, 80 miles north of San Francisco, California from 1812-1841 and erected Fort Elizabeth on the Hawaiian island of Kauai in 1816. Round-the-world sailing expeditions, which often included Russian scientists, maintained regular connections between European Russia and the Alaskan and Californian colonies. The Russians established bilingual Native schools, promoted smallpox vaccination and instituted wildlife conservation in their American possessions. Missionary activity, supported by the company, made Russian Orthodoxy a living faith in North America, especially in the Aleutians.

Russia sold Alaska to the United States in 1867 for \$7.2 million. The formal transfer of territory occurred in Sitka (New Archangel), the Russian colonial capital, on October 18, 1867. The Alaskan ceremony left Princess Maria Maksutova, the distraught wife of the Russian American Company governor, in tears. The wind-whipped Russian flag wrapped itself around its pole. A Russian soldier, hoisted up the 90-foot pole in a bosun's chair, cut it free. Finally the flag floated down onto the bayonets of the Russian honor guard. The Stars and Stripes were run up. Russian and American ships exchanged salutes. The American troops gave three cheers. Russian America was now America.