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

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

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

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

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

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

Barbara Black

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

Bill Walton
STUDENTS RELIVE RUSSIA'S COLONY IN CALIFORNIA
By Charles Billinger, Times Staff Writer

Pt. Ross State Park, Calif.—The 29 years that Russia had a colony in California are relived almost every Thursday and Friday this summer through the costumes at this historic fort perchcd on a remote Northern California headland.

Thirty elementary school boys and girls from throughout the state each week spend two days and a night inside the 15-foot high redwood walls turning back the clock to the years 1852 to 1881.

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

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

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

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

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

The schoolchildren were among the estimated 200,000 annual visitor to this outpost. They have included schoolchildren, historians, Russian Orthodox church workers and a good number of Soviet tourists.

While the story of Ft. Ross is little known across the United States, it is widely recounted in the Soviet Union where it is part of the school curriculum.

The California outpost was Imperial Russia's deepest penetration seaward.

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

But the seals and sea otters were depleted by the Aleut hunters brought to Ft. Ross by the Russians, and farming was at best marginal. Additionally, the Russian commission, which was an enterprise, was started in 1841, Czar Nicholas I ordered his colonists here.

Indian Bridges

When they returned, many of the Russian soldiers took back with them Kashaya Pomo Indian tribes who had lived in villages near the fort. Others left Russia in 1854 to settle in California, and to this day Kashaya Pomo Indians in California have Russian words in their language and Russian-Indian bloodlines.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I keep returning to the Soviet Union, for there is still much to learn about the history of the 29 years Russia owned a piece of California," said Rokitskiany, who in 1976 delivered the U.S. bicentennial lectures at Moscow Academy of Sciences on "Ft. Ross and the Russian Settlement in California." This year, Rokitskiany marked the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution by designing a commemorative medal for the California Historical Society at De Anza College. The medal celebrates the constitutional bicentennial on one side with a depiction of the Great Seal of the United States. The other side commemorates the 175th anniversary of Ft. Ross with the Russian Imperial double eagle flag.

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

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

by

Glenn J. Farris
California Department of Parks and Recreation
(Paper presented at California Indian Conference, Santa Barbara, Oct. 16, 1987)

ABSTRACT

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

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

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

Thus, the apparent ambiguity is fairly easily resolved.

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

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE MARCH ISSUE
It is a sad and well known fact that California cultural materials exist in European museums which are not duplicated in American museums. In particular, Russian travelers and collectors obtained 19th century Central California material for the Ethnography Museum, Leningrad, thenceforward a number of tourists, including a number of scientists, who have visited the museum, but have not had much success beyond viewing the few cases of California material on regular display. Photography is forbidden, but quite a few photos have been made of the items on display. None have been seen by the writer. The Museum contains a large number of baskets decorated with California baskets decorated with California redwoods and baskets. Roosters are rare and usually unique. Their place of origin is unknown but they may be Chinese or Cantonese. Although these materials are in glass cases, even knowledgeable observers can't examine them in the non-display collection. Photographs are almost nonexistent in the non-display collection. Materials are only available to Americans. The most successful visitor we know about was the late Trina Hudson of the Santa Barbara Museum, who was permitted to examine California materials in Leningrad, Moscow, Munich, Helsinki and the British Museum. Craig's big encyclopedia of materials and techniques used in Central California art and regalia permitted analysis of many objects from the photos. We look forward to its publication.

Ed Nute of San Rafael recently visited Leningrad with a group of engineers and archaeologists. He went to the libraries and museums and copied the data and photographs of the American Indian collection. We are using these books of anthropological and archaeological materials and techniques and are eager to examine them in the non-display collection. We are not permitted access to the museum's collections. Not so in Leningrad.

First of all, the museum isn't on the usual tourist route. Since Ed speaks Russian, he had little trouble locating the museum, which is in a popular with Russians. A helpful guide was of necessity he visited the California cases. Since there was no printed material for sale, the guide gave Ed some of his own books on the California objects. One pamphlet, in English, presents us of the vast scope of the collection: "The Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography named after Peter the Great is one of the largest ethnographical museums in the world including the collection and the building of the Museum of Russian Art—the first Museum of Natural Sciences in Russia founded by Peter the 1st. The following exhibitions are shown at the Museum: the collection of the first Russian Museum—the Petersburg Chamber of Rareities; Indian art of America; Indian peoples of the South American continent; peoples of Australia and Oceania; people of the Near and Middle East; the culture and way of life of the Japanese people; Korea; Viet-Nam; China; Mongolia; India; peoples of Indonesia; the original peoples of the northern islands of the North Pacific; Khmer; .......The collections of the North American Department occupy one of the first places in the world by their scientific importance. Among others there are Aleutian hunter head-dresses, unique gorgets from South Alaska and California, a valuable collection depicting the Tlingit culture."

Another pamphlet, in Russian and published in 1954, describes the California Indians in detail. It is not very accurate by our standards. This page is headed "Academy of Sciences USSR, Institute of Ethnography Named for N. N. Nekrassov-Bohrodey, Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography Named for Peter the Great. Ed Nute's translation of page 20 et seq follows:"

"Indians of California"

The culture of the Indian tribes inhabiting the state of California (Pomo, Modoc, Yokuts, etc.) is presented in the exhibit called "The California Indians". In this display was seen the exhibit of the California Indians gathering acorns, seeds of the wild oats and other. The women were occupied gathering and preparing food. For the collection of acorns they used a large cone-like basket (basket) which they carried on the back in a netting, held on with the help of a strap around the forehead (case 72). The women were made up all the domestic utensils. The California Indians ate a high variety of vegetables. Food was cooked in waterproof bags. The women were using hot stones which were thrown in and taken out with wooden tongs (case 74). A basket-throwing fan, sieve, mixer for crushing acorns and other examples of domestic articles are shown in case 74. Beside collecting, the hunting of deer, elk, wild goats, and other wild animals and also fish catching had an important significance. The men did the hunting. Their weapons were bow and arrow. Sometimes the hunters would dress in animal skins in order to sneak up on animals. For fishing they used nets, fishing poles and spears. For moving on water they used canoes to construct light and flat boats resembling rafts (case 75). With these boats they went on long expeditions, trading with other groups of Indians.

With other Indians, among the California tribes there were widespread religious ceremonies connected with belief in spirit-fish-protectors. In the collection brought back by J.G. Vosnerensky, there are various headdress, a box which they used during dances and others. Unique are two ritual costume—ones from crow feathers, the other from crow wing feathers (case 70, 71). At the present time, there are extremely few Indians of California. They were subjected to mass annihilation during the period of the gold fever (around 1849). Pitiful remains of their settlements remain where women, who long ago were famous for wicker, make baskets for sale to tourists."

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


Sylvia Thalman, Bulletin Editor, MAISON MIKOV
Mikov Archaeological Preserve of Marin
WILD FLOWERS

Soon we will be seeing the first spring wildflowers. Among the first to appear are Wild Gooseberry (Ribes speciosum), Toothwort also known as Spring Blossom and Milk Maids (Dentaria Californica), and Calypso (Calypso borealis). If you would like to help us add to our collection of pressed wildflowers at Fort Ross, please bring in fresh specimens to the Visitor Center.
Mountain lions, or cougars, do not talk about "screaming." If they did, they would scare prey animals away and go hungry. Nor does the cougar roar. It makes many sounds similar to those of house cats, but louder. A set of whistledike sounds—studied in captive cougars—may be used by wild pairs or by families to call and warn each other.

Also called puma, panther, or catamount (cat of the mountains), the mountain lion is the largest of the North American pinnate cats. Adult males weigh 148 to 227 pounds (67 to 103 kg) and measure 5.6 to 9 feet (173 to 274 cm) from nose to tail tip.

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

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CHAPEL NOTES

Russians at Sonoma Mission

by the Rev. John O'Brien

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

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

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

FORT ROSS OLDER THAN SONOMA

The Sonoma mission which came to be known as San Francisco de Solano, to distinguish it from San Francisco de Asís on the other side of the Golden Gate, is the last and most northern of the chain of 21 Catholic missions. It was not begun till after the revolution by which Mexico declared itself independent of Spain. The mission had been started in 1823 by the building of corrals, implement sheds, a hut for the priest, housing for the soldier-guards, etc. But it was not till nearly Easter of 1824 that the first board church was ready for dedication. Fort Ross had been founded 10 years before. In other words, Fort Ross was already in existence before the chain of "California Missions" was complete.

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

DON'T KNOW EXACT ROUTE

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

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

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

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

GIFTS THEY BROUGHT

We can imagine the Spanish excitement as they gathered around to see what the Russians brought. Bancroft only mentions "articles" and "ornaments", but Robert S. Smillie in his book, "The Sonoma Mission" specifies, "altar cloths, vestments, candlesticks, mirrors, holy pictures and other religious articles".3

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

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

MOTIVES

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

Some have cruelly maintained that the Russians were only looking for a "good time". Indeed life was hard for the Russians, and the challenge of survival didn't give them much time for merry making. Not a few of them "jumped ship" in order to have leisure, wine, song and women that the Californians seemed to enjoy more than they. But such an explanation almost implies that their journey to Sonoma may have been without their superior's approval. In view of the gifts they brought, we have to disregard such an explanation, although we hope they did have a good time.

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

It has also been suggested that they had an ulterior motive, namely establishing a better relation for the sake of trade with the Spanish generally, and with Sonoma in particular. While some have maintained that the purpose of Fort Ross was to establish a "foothold" in this territory for Russian imperial expansion, and others that Fort Ross' main purpose was to grow food for Alaska, neither theory is supported by documentation, or by the facts as they turned out. Rather the main intent of the Russians' presence seems to have been to establish trade. An enormous amount of trade was actually carried on, even against the respective governments' prohibitions (especially the Spanish and Mexican), and this even by the Padres. The Russians, especially in Alaska, needed bread, and thousands of fanegas of wheat and arrobas of flour and tallow, mostly grown on mission lands was transported to Alaska.5

But the Russians at Fort Ross were good mechanics. They made and repaired implements and furnishings for the missions. They even made and sold boats of officers and friars.6

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

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4Bancroft, op.cit., p. 643, footnote.
5Bancroft, ibid., p. 639 7 643.
FROM THE BOOK AND GIFT SHOP AND INFORMATION COUNTER

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

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

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

APPLE TREES FOR SALE

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FRIA MEETING—February 13, 1988

NEXT NEWSLETTER—Mid March—Remember, FRIA members, this is your newsletter. Please submit articles and comments by March 6, 1988, to Lyn Kalani, Fort Ross Interpretive Association, 19005 Coast Highway 1, Jenner, Calif. 95450. (707) 847-3457

WHALE WATCH—Bodega Head—Weekends 1-6PM Now through Feb. 7, Feb. 27 through April 3
Salt Point—Weekends 11 AM Now through March 27