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.”
F.R.I.A. has some new projects started and now in place. Louise Revol is offering a class for Docents in local Native Americans. Also, under the guidance of Lyn Kalani, we are scheduling some very interesting classes this fall and next spring. We do hope some of you will attend them and also tell your friends about them.

The Historic Orchard has had the grass mowed and discing done around the trees. This is not only good for the trees, but a much needed fire prevention work for the orchard. Some of the young trees have grown a lot this last year.

At our next meeting in August we will be announcing the nominating committee and confirming the meeting that is the General Membership meeting. This will be the October meeting; thus the 90 days before for the committee and the 60 days before for the nominations are correct. Not only will the nominating committee report in October, but nominations from the floor are then taken.

While I am sure there will be a write up in here on Living History Day, I want to tell you that for Ranch Day we are having that very interesting display of old saws, motors, and wood splitters. And also back will be the Blue Grass music everyone enjoyed.

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FORT ROSS
STATE HISTORIC PARK

PRESENTS
LIVING HISTORY DAY
SATURDAY JULY 30, 1988 10AM-5PM
JOIN US FOR A DAY RECREATING LIFE AT FORT ROSS IN 1836

RUSSIAN BLACK BREAD

7 cups rye flour
7 cups all-purpose flour
5 cups water
4 lbs. brown sugar
2 tsp. salt
4 cups all-bran cereal
4 tbsp. caraway seed, crushed
2 tsp. fennel seed, crushed
6 tsp. instant coffee powder
4 pkg. active dry yeast
10 lbs. dark molasses
12 lbs. dark molasses
212 square unsweetened chocolate
12 lbs. butter

Place 2 cups rye flour, 3 cups all-purpose flour, brown sugar, salt, cereal, caraway seed, fennel seed, coffee powder, and yeast in a large mixing bowl. Stir to blend. Heat water, vinegar, molasses, chocolate, and butter together until liquids are very warm (about 125 degrees). Gradually add to dry ingredients. Beat well 2 minutes. Gradually add enough of the remaining rye and all-purpose flours to make a soft dough. Turn out onto a lightly floured board. Knead until smooth and elastic. Place in a greased bowl. Butter top of dough lightly. Cover with a clean kitchen towel. Let rise in a warm place until double in size, about 1 1/2 hours. Turn out onto a lightly floured board and knead a few times to remove air bubbles. Cut into four and shape into round loaves. Place on a baking sheet covered with corn meal. Cover and let rise until double, about 30 to 40 minutes. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 to 50 minutes, or until loaves sound hollow when thumped.

This is the current recipe that I use to bake bread on Fort Ross Living History Day. There are many tricks to the "Russian oven" in the Officials Barracks and each year I learn a few more. If you are interested in learning this process please contact me and I would love to show you how!
FORT ROSS LIVING HISTORY DAY CLOTHING
(SOME EXCERPTS FROM THE FORT ROSS COSTUME MANUAL)

MATERIALS: All natural fabrics
100% wool, linen, 100% cotton

*Especially appropriate:
"fuzzy woolens"
coarse weave muslins such as "weaver's cloth"
unbleached muslins
"mattress ticking" type striped duck
large simple prints
coarse weave stripes

Avoid modern and modern-looking fabrics. Use only natural fibers: linen, cotton or wool. Modern "calico" is not like the original which had only one or two colors printed in widely spaced patterns.

COLORS: Subdued, since only natural dyes were in use: blues, darker reds, apple green, browns

MEN-
1. Hat of felt or straw, or a cap.
2. Shirt.
3. Belt of rope or cloth.
4. Trousers.
5. Stockings, cotton or wool.
6. Shoes or native-style boots.

WOMEN-
1. Cap or turban.
2. Scarf.
3. Shirt.
4. Sarafan.
5. Belt of rope, cloth or yarn.
6. Stockings, cotton or wool.
7. Shoes.

RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY CLOTHING: BACKGROUND.

Since most of what we know about the clothing worn in Russian America comes from descriptions, as well as inventories of garments and materials, we must look to what was worn in Russia and Siberia during this same era for a clearer idea of what the average promyshlennik and his family looked like. The clothing of settlers in early Siberia resembled Great, (northern) Russian costume, because that was where many of these people came from. The Company employees in America came mostly from Siberia and Northern Russia.

There were other influences on Russian American clothing than just the Russian. The native costumes of Siberia and America found its way in whole or part into the wardrobe of the promyshlennik and his family. Aleut women usually wore a smock made of cotton, but cut just like their original fur or birdakin parkas. Siberian and Aleut style headgear, parkas, raincoats, trousers and footgear were worn by both men and women at Company outposts. There was also the European influence seen in the popularity of hats, vests, frockcoats, women's shawls and most of the fabrics used.
MAN’S SHIRT:

This is the style of shirt that would have been worn in America by the Russian, Aleut, and Creole employees of the Company.

These roomy, comfortable shirts were usually worn with the tail outside of the pants, and with a belt wrapped around the waist and knotted over the stomach. Belts were made from a twisted piece of thin cloth, or a length of hemp cord, about 1/4-inch in diameter. Fringed sashes were sometimes worn for festive occasions, and buckled leather belts were used to support hunting or traveling gear.

Shirts of this era and location were seldom ornamented in any way. This includes embroidery or woven braid trim.

WOMEN’S SHIRTS:

These are two common styles of shirts appropriate for the Russian, Aleut and Creole wives of Company employees. They might be worn alone in the privacy of one’s own home, especially when working or sleeping, but never in public. Then a sarafan was worn over the shirt.

WOMAN’S SARAFAN:

Over the shirt, women wore a jumper, known as a sarafan. The sarafan described here was the most common style of this era in Northern Russia and Siberia, and probably in America as well. Though very elaborate sarafans were worn for festive occasions in Russia and Siberia, this plainer version represents what was worn for everyday, and is much more appropriate for the usually poor, mainly non-Russian women of Alaska and California. Aside from the trim down the front, these dresses were not ornamented in any way, including embroidery and metallic or patterned woven braid.

As with all these garments, the sarafan was very loose, and exact fit is not important. Three areas can be adjusted: the hem, the shoulder straps, and the long, narrow side panels. (marked C. on the pattern). These side panels can be made wider or narrower as needed.

An important addition to the sarafan is a belt, which all Orthodox Christian women were expected to wear. This could be a narrow woven sash, a twisted piece of cloth, or even a hemp cord about 1/4-inch in diameter. The belt was wrapped once around the torso, just under the bust, and was usually knotted in front.

In the old days, a Russian Orthodox married woman never appeared in public with her head uncovered.
Berkeley Archaeologist, Kent Lightfoot and Berkeley students have spent the past two weeks at Fort Ross doing various archaeology work, such as excavation in depth, examination of surface, and surveying. These were done in three areas of concern, Indian, Russian, and Aleut. Findings were based on pre-historic and historic information.

There was a find of a type of structure in one of the excavation sites. Kent thought the site could have been used for a sweat lodge, oven, or a bath house. Until an analysis can be done of the material gathered from this particular area he will not know what it could have been used for. I will also be working on the ethnographic data of what it might be. I am the Archaeology Specialist for the Department of Parks and Recreation. I assist Breck Parkman, Archaeologist for the Department of Parks and Recreation, with ethnographic data in the area as needed.

There were various visitors, visiting the Archy camp to keep the students interested and updated on the world outside the little camp area. The students were also treated to a gourmet cook for two weeks—that is more than I had as an undergraduate doing archaeology work.

The group of students working on the particular site that I mentioned before has found projectile points, broken harpoon points, and a chert arrowhead. The projectile and harpoon point is believed to be of the Aleut, the chert arrowhead identified as Pomo. We have to generalize because an analysis needs to be done of the few flakes and artifacts found. There were mammal bones and a seal tooth that was found in this area also.

The Kashia Pomo have had a chance to see the actual archaeology in action and they were there when Kent discovered the structure. They are very excited about what they have seen.

Kent is very excited about the finding and he is looking forward to his return to continue his work.

Vana Lawson

ARCHAEOLOGY NOTES

U. C. Berkeley archaeology students under the direction of Dr. Kent Lightfoot excavated a portion of what was thought to be a Kashaya Pomo kitchen midden site. To their surprise the site revealed the cultural blend of at least three cultures. Dr. Lightfoot was most excited about the discovery of two well preserved Aleut sea otter harpoon points. The discovery of these artifacts have made the physical connection that Aleut hunters were employed to capture sea otters at Ross. Also discovered in the site is what appears to be an otter's molar, a tooth broad and rounded used for grinding and crushing the meats of marine shellfish.

Russian presence was confirmed by the discovery of two musket flints, probably cast aside or inadvertently dropped by a promyshlenniki. A pair of bent and corroded nails arose speculation about the location and extent of the Russian ship building. Chinese export porcelain called angular ware common to the 1830 period also surfaced during the dig.

Kashaya Pomo artifacts including chert and obsidian projectile points as well as hundreds of bone and shell fragments including a yet unidentified "tusk" were also found.

Finally, there was the emergence of a fire pit certainly used by Kashaya or Aleut/Russians as a sweat lodge or as a currently known "hot tub".

We certainly want to thank Dr. Lightfoot and his hard working and dusty "archy" crew for disclosing another page in the unfolding story of Fort Ross.

Bill Walton

Barred Harpoon Dart for throwing stick, Unalaska.
FAREWELL TO SPRING AND WELCOME SUMMER

SILVER HAIRGRASS

SILVER HAIRGRASS (*Atra caryophylla*)

This is one of the daintiest grasses I know. It too, like the quaking grass, is a European, but it is by now a thoroughly naturalized part of the landscape. The tiny spikelets (less than an eighth of an inch long) each borne on hairlike stalks, shine in the sun. As the leaf blades are scarcely noticeable the upper third or more of this annual plant is devoted to flowering and with the many shining spikelets is sometimes used as a part of a “dry bouquet.” But remember! You are on national property and the plant should not be picked.

QUAKING GRASS

QUAKING GRASS (*Briza minor*)

The chances are very good indeed of finding quaking grass and silver hairgrass growing with the small annual festucas of open slopes and pathways. You may even find along the pathways and roadsides another species of Briza (*B. maxima*) also a native of Europe, called rattlesnake grass. This species with large spikelets (see detail), is invading the area. The spikelets on quaking grass are erect and the branches of the inflorescence spread. The spikelets of rattlesnake grass are drooping and the spikelets are much larger as the drawing shows. Anyone can see that they are close relatives, in other words, related species of one genus.

COTOTE MINT--*Hornardella villosa*

RABBITFOOT GRASS (*Polypogon monspelennis*)

No roadside ditch in the western states is complete without rabbitfoot grass. It is a European annual and like others, such as wild oats, quaking grass, and velvet grass, has made itself at home and become a useful addition for grazing. The drawing shows you the shape of the flowering head but it cannot show you its yellow-green color and shining furry appearance, silky soft to the touch.
On July 7, 1840, Voznesenskii set out on the three-masted vessel *Elena*, commanded by N.K. Kadaukov, for northern California. For 13 days the ship sailed along the coast which Voznesenskii had already seen once. They passed close by Vancouver Island (Quadrunga and Vancouver), in 1774 discovered by the Spaniard, Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, and in 1792 plotted on a map by the Englishman, George Vancouver. In Bodega Bay, named for the Spanish navigator, the Russians had founded Port Ruminantsev. There, on July 20th, Voznesenskii went ashore. Eighteen miles northward was located the settlement and fort of Ross.

"My sojourn in California," he wrote in another letter, "continues until the first spring ship from Sitka. They say that next year ships will be coming to California several times in connection with the abandonment of the Ross settlement, so I think it is not really necessary to hasten from under the clear skies of California to the cold north, where my work can scarcely be as successful as here." During his travels through northern California, Voznesenskii visited many coastal places from Port Ross and from San Francisco Bay, calling on Spanish settlements and ranchos.

Not long before his departure for San Francisco Voznesenskii made an interesting excursion northward towards Cape Mendocino. The explorer spent several days in the mountains in the midst of dense forests where grew giant conifers — sugar pines and cedars.

"Voznesenskii's sojourn in northern California coincided with a sad event in the life of the Russian-American Company. The explorer witnessed the last days of Port Ross. The Russian government, as has already been said, ordered Voznesenskii's death on April 15, 1839 to liquidate that legendary Russian settlement. In the course of two years everything that could be was removed from Port Ross to Sitka. The remaining real estate and cattle were sold in installments for 20 thousand rubles to a native of Switzerland and a Mexican subject, Johan Sutter.

A.G. Rotchev advised Voznesenskii to visit Sutter's estate, New Helvetia, located in the valley of the Sacramento River. On February 20th Voznesenskii set out for there by boat. Sutter received the explorer cordially and "the entire time [he] lived with him under the humble roof of his cabin. Accompanying Mr. Sutter through the land which had been allotted to him then by the Mexican government, I rode with him to the Three Peaks Mountains, several times we forded across and spent nights in the gold bearing (at the present time) rivers... In these places I found many diverse objects of natural history, and with the assistance of Captain Sutter acquired fairly rare objects of ethnographic nature. At the same time, I think it is not too much to say that the Sacramento River simply teems with species of fish: sturgeon, salmon and others, specimens of which I sent to the Zoological Museum of the Academy. densely growing on the banks were several species of oaks, the laurel tree and others." His collection of snakes and turtles was extended considerably.

During May and June Voznesenskii traveled through the valley of the Slavianska. He traveled along the entire length of the river and hunted for deer in the plain, and on June 16th even climbed "one of the highest mountains [St. Helena], on whose summit no one had then yet been." On June 19th Voznesenskii observed his 25th birthday by working as usual in the valley of the Slavianska River.

In July 1841 the Russian fort of Ross ceased to exist. Its population moved to Port Ruminantsev (Bodega Bay) to await the arrival of a ship from Sitka. Voznesenskii at that time was located in Khlebnikov Valley completing numerous excursions. On September 5th, he and the residents of Ross set out for Sitka on the brig *Elena*.

(The cost of this book is $20.00)
For many years, I have been wanting to learn more about the cast of characters at Fort Rose during the so-called Fairfax/Dixon Ranch Period—and it has always struck me that there must be more information available, and I have wondered why no one ever did much to gather it and write it all down. I finally got a start recently, and I intend to continue digging for some time to come. I thought that it might be interesting to some to learn some of what I've run into so far, so I shall start by providing a brief sketch of what I've found out about Ada Benham Fairfax, wife of Charles Snowdon Fairfax (who is reportedly born the Tenth Lord of Fairfax, Baron of Cameron, but did not take the title to acquire the title). What follows is what I've gotten out of old newspaper articles and other writings; it should not be construed as being either totally accurate or complete—it will take quite awhile to make sure of the validity of the various source materials.

1. Ada Benham Fairfax and Her Family

Ada has been described as the beautiful daughter of Calhoun Benham, and is referred to as having the manners of a princess and being a woman of extraordinary charm and beauty. Her father was reportedly a Supreme Court Justice, her step-sister was John Calhoun Calhoun, the seventh Vice-President of the United States (under John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, 1825-32); her step-brother, also named Calhoun Benham, was a noted San Francisco attorney in the 1860-70s. After her marriage to Charles, most people referred to her as "Fairfax"—although she didn't have a right to the title, many people used this honorary title, and she reportedly enjoyed it.

2. Some Vital Statistics

I haven't yet found out when and where she was born. However, it is known that she married Charles in California (probably San Francisco) on 10 January 1855. She was childless when widowed on 4 April 1899 (Charles died in 1898). She died of tuberculosis in Narragansett, Rhode Island on 24 September 1926.

3. Ada Fairfax and Fort Rose

Charles and Ada, in partnership with James Dixon, purchased the Fort Rose property (the Monroe Ranch) from William Otkar Benham in 1867 (a deed on 1 March 1867 to James Dixon and on 3 April 1867 to Charles Fairfax). While Dixon built a house on the property, the "White House" that was located about one-fourth mile east of the Fort, the Fairfaxes continued to live at their Marin County estates. When Charles died, he left Ada in debt, and she had to sell Bird's Nest Glen. She then moved to Fort Rose with her mother and niece. There is some indication that there was litigation regarding the Fairfaxes' ownership at Fort Rose, and that they had been "unable to possess" the property when Charles was alive; I have found no indication as to what this was all about nor how it was resolved.

At Fort Rose, Ada and her family moved into the quarters where the Benham family had lived—the Rosetti House with the two-story addition that was later the first residence of the Call family at Fort Rose. While she lived at the Fort, Ada was reported to have continued to entertain friends in the splendid fashion that she had become accustomed to when she was at Bird's Nest Glen. It stretched my imagination to picture her in those times—entertaining her guests in the commandant's house or travelling with her entourage to the "Wahilla River," to "Austin Creek," or to the beach for a picnic, sometimes in as many as eight horse-drawn wagons. In a 1950s newspaper article, it was stated that Lady Fairfax's gowns and jewels, and especially her conveyance, were favorite topics of local conversation in the 1870s:

"She made regular trips into Casadero for her mail, howing to the local yokels she stood around bug-eyed. And no wonder! Four pure white horses draw her exquisitely dainty coach adorned with her own crest."

In May 1873, George Washington Call made his initial purchase of land at Fort Rose (a newspaper article of 31 May 1873 only mentioned Dixon as the seller), thus being among the first to initiate the process of "subdividing" the Monroe Ranch that ever continues. By that time that, Lady Fairfax had to have left Fort Rose, never to return.

4. Ada Fairfax's Later Life

On leaving Fort Rose, Ada moved to San Francisco and registered at the Lick House, where her step-brother was also registered. Soon thereafter, still being "in greatly reduced circumstances," she is reported to have accepted a position with the US Government in Washington, D.C. (as a scribe at the Treasury Department). There she lived out her life in grand style, becoming known as the "Belle of Washington." She became known for her entertaining, her guests including presidents (Grover Cleveland), future presidents (William McKinley and Teddy Roosevelt), and visiting royalty.

F. Kaye Tolman
June 1988
FIELD SEMINARS IN AND ABOUT FORT ROSS
SPONSORED BY THE FORT ROSS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

Starting this fall we will be offering field seminars here at Fort Ross. Classes will include history and crafts of the Russian and Ranch Eras, Native American arts and crafts, and the natural history of this area. FRIA members will be offered a 10% discount on class fees.

PORTRAITS OF PROMINENT RUSSIANS IN EARLY CALIFORNIA
SATURDAYS, OCT. 22, OCT. 29, NOV. 5 (10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
A portrait gallery of Ft.Ross managers, Company officials, navigators, scientists, and a princess—their lives, their activities, and their memoirs of California. Stephen Watrous, History Professor, Sonoma State University $60.00

HISTORY OF THE RANCH ERA AT FORT ROSS
SATURDAY, NOV. 12 (10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
Why did the first American settlers come here? What did they do? The class will include detailed coverage of the four Ranch Era periods: Sutter and his managers, Denitz, Fairfax and Dixon, and Call. Time periods, vital statistics, stories, historical records, photography, and the significance of their presence will all be discussed. There will be time out to walk around and see where the sites were. Kaye Tomlin and Barbara Black (both descendents of Ranch Era families) $75.00

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY
SUNDAYS, OCT. 2 and 9
Learn how to capture nature on film. This class will include all phases of outdoor photography. It will be taught in an easy to understand set of classes that will make you a better photographer. Classroom and field sessions, plus individual critiques will be included. The class is geared toward 35 mm color photography (slides) and is designed for the person who has a basic understanding of photography. Don Jackson, photographer $45.00

TIMEFOUL LIFE
SUNDAY, OCT. 23 (12 noon to 5 p.m.)
This is a field oriented seminar exploring the intertidal life along the Fort Ross coastline. Dr. Daniel E. Wickham, Bodega Marine Laboratory $25.00

MUSHROOM IDENTIFICATION AND USES
SUNDAY, NOV. 13 (12 p.m. to 6 p.m.)
The class will start with a three hour hike up into the hills behind Fort Ross. In addition to teaching mushroom identification and uses, Jesse will share his knowledge about the wild edible and medicinal plants that you see along the way. In the later part of the afternoon you will return to the Visitor Center for classroom activities and a slide show. Jesse Longcore, naturalist $25.00

RUSSIAN AND ALEUT COOKING AT FORT ROSS
SUNDAY, OCT. 30 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
A full meal will be prepared. While you work there will be discussion on Aleut and Russian styles of cooking, foods available and grown at Fort Ross, preparation techniques, seasonings, and native plants. Students must bring paring knife, cutting knife, cutting board, bowl, plate, cup, eating utensils, hot pads, dish towel, apron and paper and a pencil. There is a $5.00 fee to purchase food for this class in addition to the class fee. Please pay this fee to the instructor on the day of the class. Lenora M. Alexander, Living History Day Cook, 1986 and 1987 $25.00

RUSSIA TODAY, A SLIDE SHOW
SUNDAY, NOV. 6 (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.)
Slides on the history, geography and people of the U.S.S.R. will be presented, including slides of the Venedezniki Collection in the Ethnographic Museum in Leningrad. Class dialogue will follow the slide presentation. Judy Thomas, seven time traveler to the Soviet Union $5.00

CLASSES IN NATIVE AMERICAN ARTS AND SKILLS TO BE ANNOUNCED IN AUGUST

REGISTRATION FORM

Fort Ross Interpretive Association
19005 Coast Highway 1
Jenner, California 95450

Please enroll me in the following classes:

NAME __________________________ PHONE __________________________

ADDRESS __________________________

I enclose $____ for class fees.

I am a member of the Fort Ross Interpretive Association

I would like to join Fort Ross Interpretive Association ($5.00 regular, $7.50 family)

and I enclose $____ for membership.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LIVING HISTORY DAY—July 30
FRIA BOARD MEETING—August 13
NEXT NEWSLETTER—Mid September—due date for submissions is September 3
TRAINING FOR INTERPRETERS ON THE NATIVE PEOPLES AND THEIR CULTURE led by Louise Revol
Saturdays, September 10, 17, 24, October 1 (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.)