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.”
* BODEGA BAY SESQUICENTENNIAL
Bodega Bay begins celebrating its 150th anniversary on Saturday and Sunday, July 31 and August 1. An intriguing array of events is scheduled for Saturday, chief of which (from a Fort Ross point of view) is the sailing at 8 a.m. of the tallship "Californian" from Bodega Bay - bound for Fort Ross.

On Sunday, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., there is a succession of great events: pancake breakfast, street fair, oyster barbecue and another sailing of the "Californian" for an offshore cruise. A Bodega Bay Regatta will welcome the return of the "Californian" to the outer bay. Bodega Bay invites Fort Ross to join in the fun - in costume, if possible. For further information call Kathie Morgan at 875-3464.

* ASCENT OF MOUNT SAINT HELENA
Our second annual commemorative climb up Mt. St. Helena was just wonderful. The calm breeze helped to make the heat bearable and the day enjoyable. We all made it to the top. Before we got started we talked of the Russian presence and the possible naming of the mountain. As we went up we enjoyed the flora and the many directions, all with different topography. Picnicking under the gazebo at the south peak we cooled off with many stories shared. John told us he found an "acorn hooded lizard", a new species on the mountain, probably wearing this helmet to protect himself from the blazing sun, or maybe because he couldn't see and didn't want to hurt himself falling off the mountain. After we were all rested we journeyed over to the North Peak. The view from the North Peak at 4,343 feet is awesome. You can truly see forever. In fact someone mentioned the view afforded from the top is the third largest view in the world. Kilimanjaro is the largest view, with Mt. Diablo second. By the end of the day, with the many stories told addressing the subject of naming again and again, we all felt the name came from Father Altaira. In 1823 he explored the valleys north of San Francisco and eventually founded Sonoma Mission. It is possible when Vornesenskii and Chernyk did climb the mountain that in fact they may have been first to do so, as Altaira only speaks of it from the distance. With all the contact between Ross and San Francisco, the Russians had probably heard of this area, knew it had not been explored, and thus had the plaque made knowing they were going to the top. The replica plaque has the names of Vornesenskii and Chernyk on it, with "The Russian-American Company" and the date of June, 1841. The plaque is small, about seven by nine inches, and next to it is the same plaque, but in English.

We got acquainted with new friends from the Napa Valley Natural History Association, who shared stories of Robert Louis Stevenson and his time here. Many sights at the top were pointed out, even Mt. Shasta! Many thanks to David Kenly, John and Jodi Sperry, Nese and Jaci Hallett, Jeannette Rosson, Maria Sakovich, Toni, and to Lucas. It was a lovely day. Until next year - Robin Joy

* FRIA representative, Dr. Alexei Istomin, has informed us of the passing of historian, Dr. A. I. ALEXEEV, on May 31st in Moscow. Dr. Alexeev was the author of a biography on I. G. Vornesenskii. He visited Fort Ross in 1991.
STANISLAV ZAITSEV

Stanislav Zaitsev, Director of the Kuskov House Museum in Tot'ma, Russia, missing since last November in Vancouver, Canada, has been confirmed dead.

A tireless researcher and historic preservationist, Zaitsev dedicated much of his life to the strengthening of ties between Russians and Americans, and especially the ties which bound Ivan Kuskov’s home town with the colony he founded in California.

America had been a dream of Zaitsev’s since childhood. He kept as a souvenir a pair of American Army boots his father had been issued by American soldiers liberating him from a German prisoner of war camp at the end of the war. His father had walked all the way back to Russia in those boots, and never forgot the Americans who had saved his life.

Zaitsev drew upon his art education when he wished to pay his respects to President Kennedy when he was assassinated in his painting "Requiem for John F. Kennedy", published later in "Soviet Life" magazine. His admiration for Americans complemented his interest in his town’s unique historical perspective with the Russian colonies in America, symbolized by the town’s coat of arms, which displays the black fox of North America. Because of his emphasis on this aspect of the town’s history, Zaitsev represented the town of Tot’ma when he presented the key to the city to FRIA representative John Middleton, the first American to visit that area, in 1990. In 1992, as director of the newly opened Kuskov House Museum, he graciously hosted FRIA members Paul Shebalin (a past president of FRIA), Nikolai Rokitiansky and Victor Petrov at the opening ceremonies. His work in preserving the churches, monasteries and historic structures of Tot’ma earned him international respect and the presidency of the UNESCO organization there.

If visiting America had been a dream of Zaitsev’s, then Fort Ross was the focal point. His visit would have been the culmination of a lifetime’s work. We can commemorate this work with our dedication to our shared goals with Stanislav Zaitsev; the preservation and promotion of our joint histories; the conservation of the buildings and artifacts that evidence that history; and perhaps most important, the vision that transcends the bureaucracy and brings closer two nations that share a unique place in the history of California.

A representative from Vancouver Maritime Museum will bring the ashes and personal effects of Stanislav Zaitsev to Fort Ross on July 31. John Middleton will take them back to the Zaitsev family in Tot’ma in August. A wreath will be presented in FRIA’s behalf at the funeral.

HOUSE IN TOT’MA IN WHICH KUSKOV SPENT HIS LAST DAYS

STANISLAV ZAITSEV and his "Requiem for John F. Kennedy"
MABEL MCKAY

World-renowned Pomo basket maker Mabel McKay died of a stroke in Santa Rosa on Monday, May 31, 1993, and her passing signaled the end of a 20,000-year-old Cache Creek Pomo language. McKay, who died at age 86 at the Friends House convalescent facility, was the last person known to speak the Indian dialect.

Her skill at weaving, twining and fashioning all types of baskets made her a leading and respected figure among Pomo Indians. She also was revered as a healer, a gift that came down through her family. "She was always helping the sick and those in need," said Violet Chappell of the Kashaya Pomo Reservation at Stewart's Point, who referred to McKay as her aunt, explaining that her mother, the late Essie Parrish, and McKay were spiritual sisters. "It was hard seeing her in bed. I still don't believe it. She was a great example as a person and role model," Parrish said.

A member of the Cache Creek Pomo and Potter Valley Pomo tribes, McKay was famous for her tiny feathered baskets. Feathers were woven into baskets of sedge root. "She made the smallest basket in the world. It sat on her thumb. She made it with a needle," Chappell said.

"Her basketry and spiritualism were very important to her," said her son Marshall McKay of Benicia. "We certainly will try to pass those skills on through her grandchildren and the next generation to keep her teachings alive."

Gregory Sarris, Chappell's nephew and an English professor at UCLA, said McKay was the last speaker of the Cache Creek Pomo language. The original Cache Creek Pomo tribe of 800 lived in the Lolsei (wild tobacco) Village in Long Valley, east of Clear Lake. When McKay was born in Nice, there were only six survivors due to disease and Mexican slave raiders. McKay was raised by her maternal grandmother, Sarah Taylor, who taught her the native language. As far as passing the language on, Sarris said family members and others were interested in the basketry and healing gift "but nobody took the time to want to learn the language."

Prior to Friends House, Chappell said McKay lived on the Rumsey Rancheria at Brooks near Winters. She made baskets from the time she was 6 until 1989 when she suffered a stroke, according to Chappell. "She was born to make baskets. Making little baskets was part of her doctoring and spiritualism." Chappell said McKay sold baskets only when the spirit approved. No one knows how many baskets she made, family members lost count. Besides sedge root, she used redbud bark for her designs. She was an expert at weaving feathers into her baskets and favored the green feather of the mallard duck.

McKay and Parrish not only were spiritual sisters, but attended basket making demonstrations together. McKay taught other members of the family and led classes throughout area counties and Sacramento. "Aunt Mabel traveled with her baskets," Chappell said. "She visited other museums. She even went to Alaska." Sarris said McKay lectured at numerous universities. Some of her baskets are on display at the Smithsonian Museum and at other museums worldwide. But family members also have many of her baskets. Sarris also has written a book on her life titled, "Mabel McKay: American Genius" due for publication by the University of California Press in the fall of 1994.

MABEL MCKAY
"Collecting the sedge is spiritual, just like weaving the basket is spiritual."
McKay had strict rules for digging roots and gathering materials for her baskets. She also adhered to tribal designs. She was the last of the true weavers," Chappell said. Chappell recalled a unique basket McKay made that resembled a coyote standing on its hind legs and reaching up for something. "I could not believe it. I've never seen one like it before or since."

Besides her son, McKay is survived by two grandchildren...Memorial donations are preferred to Friends House, 684 Benicia Drive, Santa Rosa 95409, or to Sonoma County Indian Health, 791 Lombardi Court, Santa Rosa 95407.

Press Democrat, June 2, 1993

MABEL MCKAY
"The quest for perfection begins among the white willow."

JESSE LONGACRE

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Jesse Longacre. He was loved by all.

Nature Interpreter Extraordinaire - Jesse Longacre. A man of great talent of the outdoors. Jesse shared his knowledge and experiences fully with those who crossed his path. The love he felt about his world was felt by others and remembered. Not only did he talk about the uses and value of plants and the animal world in the academic sense, but talked about it from his heart. Jesse passed away peacefully in his home May 16th. It is with great sadness to us here at Fort Ross and at Salt Point. He worked with us as a consultant with many Environmental Living Programs here at Fort Ross, as well as a part of our Teacher's training. Many of us will miss him and his smile. So many children who had the opportunity to learn from Jesse went away with smiles and a better understanding and love of nature. The times with Jesse were unforgettable, and we had many. Jesse says in his flyer, "My goal is that after your nature experience, you can look around you with more understanding and appreciation of the natural world"... This he offered and more. We will miss him. Robin Joy
Clothing at Fort Ross: A New Look
Part IV Navy and Merchant Shippers

In 1817 the navy, alarmed at reports of abuses among the employees of the Russian-American Company concerning the native population of the colonies, and corruption among the administrators, convinced the Russian government and the directors of the Company in St. Petersburg that the administration of Russian America belonged in the more capable hands of their officers. Many of the concerns expressed by the navy were found later to be groundless. The change had already been effected, however, and all subsequent governors of the colonies were naval officers in Company service.

Naval administration did little to change the appearance of colonial life until the middle of the 19th century. In 1851 a uniform was introduced for officers serving on the Company's ships, and soldiers from Siberian regiments were sent to Alaska to serve as sentries. During the years of the Ross Colony, the only uniform which would have been seen (except for the civil service uniform) would have been that of the officers and sailors of the Imperial Russian Navy.

The naval ships which called in the ports of California in the first half of the 19th century were predominantly those of the Baltic fleet, based in Kronstadt. The Imperial Navy had two fleets, the Baltic, and the Black Sea Fleet, based in Sevastopol. There was also a Pacific squadron, but it was made up of the ships of the Baltic Fleet, and the ships rotated back to Kronstadt or Sveaborg when finished with their station.

The Baltic Fleet used the numerous round-the-world voyages in the first half of the 19th century to train its officers and men in the blue water seamanship it required to become a world class naval power. Many of the junior officers who came to California on ships such as the RURIK, KAMCHATKA, KREISER, and APOLLO later entered Company service and became administrators, and in many cases governors. There were, among these young officers, future naval heroes such as Admiral Makarov and Prince Maksutov, Governors Etholen, von Wrangel and Teben'kov, and others such as Lisiansky, Davydov, Kotzebue, Lazarev, and Zavalishin, famous in Russian Naval history. This ocean training was all the more valuable for the sailors of the Baltic. "The Baltic Fleet spent six months or more of each year in dry dock. The men spent most of their time perfecting the marching skills considered more important than seamanship. By contrast, under the inspired leadership of Admiral Lazarev, and later Admirals Kornilov and Makarov, the Black Sea Fleet spent most of its time perfecting nautical skills." (Thomas 1991: 11)

The Russian sailor during the reign of Nikolai I had much in common with sailors than with sailors of other countries. Uniformed much earlier than other navies, Russian sailors were expected to be seagoing soldiers and perform the duties of both. The navy was organized into units called "ekipazhes" which contained 1,000 sailors, 80 noncommissioned officers, 30 officers and 25 buglers and drummers. The ekipazh was divided into four companies, and these companies supplied the crews required to man the ships of the fleet. "A ship's crew also contained an unspecified number of naval artillery, navigators and engineer officers, and men of the labor ekipazhi who furnished sailmakers, caulkers and carpenters. The addition of these men allowed an ekipazh to be dispersed among several ships." (Thomas 1991: 12)
Sailors often appear in the records of Port Ross. Some were left from ships like the RIURIK to assist with the colony's first shipbuilding efforts. Others, like the sailors from the KREISER, Iakov Statin and Petr Grigor'ev may have found life in California irresistible and jumped ship. They were returned and put to work on the KIACHTA as seamen, and later returned to Sitka aboard the BAIKAL.

There are frequent examples of sailor's uniforms in the works of the artists aboard the Russian round-the-world voyages of 1827 and 1829. A. F. Postels in his drawing "Algarum Vegetatio" shows a sailor assisting a naturalist gathering specimens in what may be the environs of Sitka sound. The sailor is wearing the "walking out dress" for summer: the black "kurka" (sailor's jacket) and the black, piped in white "bezkorirka" (visorless cap introduced in 1811). Bleached linen or cotton trousers were worn in summer, black wool in winter. Pavel Mikhailov shows the same uniform being worn by sailors in the South Pacific "Men of Vostok and Mirnyi in New Zealand", 1820, and another drawing shows the oarsmen of the captain's gig wearing shirts with their black silk ties and duty caps, while the officers, in contrast, wore the dress uniform of coatee and, in the captain's case, black wool trousers (in the tropics!) The crews, occupied in physical labor, have obviously been given permission to remove their jackets and row in comfort.

A sailor was expected to have in his sea chest a parade uniform consisting of a jacket, white or black trousers, a shako, and dress boots; a duty uniform with jacket, white or black trousers, cap, and calf length boots; a work uniform made of sailcloth or blue cloth, cap and work boots; a winter uniform of a greatcoat, and for standing watch in heavy snow, a fur lined leather coat. The latter was issued only by the watch officer, and only a few were kept by each company. "Sailors at a bootmakers" by A. Denisov, 1832, illustrates very nicely both the duty uniform (right) and the working rig of the 1830's sailor. Each sailor had three kurkas. The best was used for parades, second best for everyday duty, and the one in poorest condition was used for working duty aboard ship or in barracks. For hard labor, the "roba", or sailcloth work uniform was employed. When at last the kurka was worn out, it was cut apart and used for patches or to make caps, the cloth being turned inside out to make replacement cuffs, collars, or sleeves.

(Viktor Maliyev, personal communication, 1990)

Rank distinction among the noncommissioned officers was evidenced by a wide strip of metallic braid worn around the collar and cuffs, and a narrower strip of braid worn on the shoulder strap for junior noncommissioned officers, and the wider type for the senior noncommissioned officers. Long service chevrons were worn on the left arm. The Guard's Ekipazh of the Imperial Guard, stationed in St. Petersburg, wore the same uniform as the Fleet, with some distinctions. Their buttons bore the Imperial Eagle with crossed anchors, in contrast to the single anchor of the Fleet. The shoulder straps for the Guards were red rather than the black or white straps of the Fleet, and the leather cross straps for the cartridge pouch and sword, which were black for the Fleet, were white for the Guards. Sailors of the Guard's Ekipazh were distributed among the ships of the Baltic Fleet and in times of war, were comparable to the marines of other countries. One other distinguishing feature of the Guards were their physical appearance; all were blond with blue eyes and over 5'10" in height.
Officers used several different uniforms and, in addition, variations on these. The parade uniform was a black coatee with black or white trousers, epaulets, cocked hat and sword. A naval dagger (kortik) could also be worn, and a visored cap with cockade (after 1835) could substitute for the cocked hat and sword. With the parade uniform medals and orders were always worn. The duty dress for officers was the frock coat, worn with cap and kortik, or an officer’s jacket (here in summer) as illustrated by Karl Brullov in 1836. A white cap cover is worn over the officer’s cap, and black pumps are worn with the white narrow fall trousers. There was, in addition, an officer’s grey cape coat with black collar worn in winter. There were uniform changes in 1835 and 1837 which concerned the navy, but aside from the establishment of a single breasted parade uniform (as illustrated in the Etholen portrait) they concerned mostly details in the epaulet and the establishment of the cockade for officer’s caps. The epaulets for the navy identified the wearer’s rank and to which ekipazh the officer belonged. Epaulets without fringe identified a junior officer below the Kapitan, 3rd rank, and the numeral identified to which ekipazh the wearer belonged. In 1837 the black background color was changed to metallic braid and the numbers discarded. The system of rank stars remained.

The officers of the Russian-American Company prior to 1851 had no uniform. "Officers of the fleet, going into service with the Russian-American Company, were dismissed from military service with the right to wear the uniform, retain the rank and symbols of the navy fleet officer." (Belik; 1992; 2) V. M. Golovnin in 1817 tried to clarify the difference between the Russian-American Company’s commercial vessels and the Imperial Navy’s warships to the Spanish Viceroy in Peru. "I had to explain that there is a great difference between Russian warships and trading vessels, even though the trade ships which had been in port were also under the command of officers of the Imperial Fleet who wore uniforms just like those on our ship." (Golovnin; 1979; 67)

Sailors employed by the Company are mentioned in the previous chapter as wearing clothing very similar to that of the navy, though there is no evidence that any uniform appearance was attempted. Certainly no attempt was made to practice the strict form of military discipline; for, when Richard Henry Dana continued his description of the crew of the Russian brig anchored in Yerba Buena in 1836 he wrote, "The clothing of one of these men would weigh nearly as much as that of half our crew. They had brutish faces, looked like the antipodes of sailors, and apparently dealt in nothing but grease. They lived upon grease; ate it, drank it, slept in the midst of it, and their clothes were covered with it." Dana alludes to the difference between naval and merchant sailors when he describes the ship itself, "The top masts, top gallant masts, and studding booms were nearly black for want of scraping, and the decks would have turned the stomach of a man-of-war's man." (Dana 1946;250) The vessel’s name is unfortunately not known.

Fleet Captain Lieutenant F. Litke, writing in the 1830’s from his notes made on the round-the-world voyage on the Semyavin, addressed the problem of military discipline in the Company. "The severity of military discipline is indispensable here in order to keep not only the Americans in check, but also the promyshleniks themselves, among whom it would be well nigh impossible not to find some unruly and vicious natured men; these however, are carefully surveyed. The carrying out of orders, the receipt of reports, the guards, the patrols, reveille, the retreat - all the duties are carried out in detail here according to regulations and with a certain solemnity. Naval officers are always in uniform" (1887; 53) It would be interesting to know if the Captain of the Russian brig in Yerba Buena was a Company official or a foreign captain contracted to officer a Company ship. John Middleton
Fort Ross State Historic Park was well represented at the recent Society for California Archaeology meetings. An afternoon symposium presented a new combination of theoretical and methodological approaches for studying native responses to European contact and colonialism in western America. The implications of these findings on public interpretive programs at Fort Ross were discussed, as well as a native Californian’s perspective on the archaeological investigations recently conducted at the park.

LIST OF AUTHORS AND SYMPOSIUM PAPER TITLES

1) Kent G. Lightfoot (University of California, Berkeley)
"The Archaeological Study of Culture Change and Continuity in Multi-Ethnic Communities"

2) Ann M. Schiff (University of California, Berkeley)
"Archaeological Investigations of the Native Alaskan Village Site"

3) Lewis Somers (GeoScan, Inc.)
"Preliminary Results of High Resolution Magnetic and Resistance Surveys at Fort Ross"

4) Thomas A. Wake (University of California, Berkeley)
"Social Implications of Faunal Remains From Fort Ross"

5) Peter Mills (University of California, Berkeley)
"Alaskan Hunting Technologies and Cultural Accommodation at Fort Ross, California"

6) Glenn Farris (Calif. Dept. of Parks and Recreation)
"Outside the Stockade: Barns, Bathhouses, and Dwellings in the Neighborhood of Fort Ross"

7) Antoinette Martinez (University of California, Berkeley)
"Native Californian Women as Cultural Mediators"

8) Otis Parrish (Kashaya Pomo Tribal Scholar)
"A Kashaya Pomo’s Perspective on Archaeology"

9) E. Breck Parkman (Calif. Dept. of Parks and Recreation)
"Preserving the Fort Ross Archaeological Record"

10) Daniel Murley (Calif. Dept. of Parks and Recreation)
"Sounds from the Silence: Peopling Ross’s Past"
LIVING HISTORY DAY VOLUNTEERS!
YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS YEAR'S
RUSSIAN-AMERICAN CELEBRATION AND LIVING HISTORY DAY
SATURDAY, JULY 31, 1993

Last year's event was a great success. THANK YOU! Living History Day, 1993, is less than a month away. There is much biographical information on the residents of Colony Ross in the Fort Ross Bookstore and Library. We highly recommend reading or re-reading Outpost of an Empire before the LHD.

COSTUMES may be checked out from the Fort Ross Visitor Center Library. All costumes must be returned no later than one month after the date they are checked out. Some costumes may be purchased through the Bookstore; contact Lyn or Sherry Madrone if you are interested in this possibility. A new book, Clothing at Fort Ross and in Colonial Russian America: A New Look, has been prepared for members of the Fort Ross Interpretive Association. It is available in the Library and in the Bookstore. In it you will find lots of information which will help you put together your own outfit.

ONLY COSTUMED PARTICIPANTS WILL BE SERVED FOOD. If you bring your children and would like them to be served, please make sure they are in costume. There are never enough bowls and cups to go around. If you have a "historically correct" cup and bowl please bring it. Also, each participant is responsible for washing their own dishes and utensils.

REMEMBER TO SIGN YOUR VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT WHEN YOU ARRIVE SATURDAY MORNING. THIS IS IMPORTANT! You may use the area in front of the Fort to unload your gear, but all vehicles must be moved by 9:00 a.m. Saturday. You may park in the main parking lot unless you have made other arrangements.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE COMING, AND HOW MANY OF YOU.

LIVING HISTORY DAY PHONE TREE

If you are interested in interpreting in any of the areas below, please call the appropriate person directly.

KUSKOV HOUSE: Troy Dunham (415) 382-8590
COVE: John Middleton (408) 375-6455 (W)
MILITIA: Bill Walton (707) 847-3286
KITCHEN: Robin Joy (707) 847-3286
WEAVING & SPINNING: Marion Schoenfeld (707) 847-3687
BASKETS: Linden Schatzberg (707) 847-3638
FOLK DANCING: Todd Kellog (707) 847-3465 or 847-3286

Each activity coordinator is responsible for assigning two people from that activity to cleaning up after dinner. The kitchen crew needs your help! Thank you.

FOR GENERAL QUESTIONS, CALL:
Bill, Dan, Caerleon, Robin at the fort (707) 847-3286
Lyn or Lake at the bookstore: (707) 847-3437.
1993 FRIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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JULY 31, SATURDAY,
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