

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

Title: Fort Ross Interpretive Association / Fort Ross Conservancy Newsletter

Author(s): Fort Ross Interpretive Association / Fort Ross Conservancy

Published by: Fort Ross Conservancy Library

URL: www.fortross.org

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."

Fort Ross Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) and California State Park cooperating association, connects people to the history and beauty of Fort Ross and Salt Point State Parks. © Fort Ross Conservancy, 19005 Coast Highway One, Jenner, CA 95450, [707-847-3437](tel:7078473437) www.fortross.org



FORT ROSS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

March - April 1995 Newsletter

BOARD NOTES

by John Sperry, Recording Secretary

The treasurer's report indicated that although bookstore sales for November and January were down from last year, the December sales were up 24%! FRIA will go into deficit spending - even with surpluses over our annual sales projections. A budget meeting is set for March 4.

A letter from the League of California State Park Non-profit Organizations was reviewed. All cooperative associations are informed of a resolution adopted in January, 1995, by the Board of Directors of the League which urges all associations to "reject and repudiate the new contract offered them by the California Department of Parks and Recreation." Stringent state-mandated contractual agreements between the state and cooperating volunteer organizations brought out a general sympathy for affected organizations. Supervising Ranger Michael Stephenson's position on the matter as it affects FRIA's contract with State Parks was heard with relief.

The construction of cages for the Kuskov House displays has been bid by two contractors.

Last Newsletter's Environmental Living Program article reported that ELP operated without benefit of State or FRIA moneys. Not quite true! State gave \$1000 and FRIA gave \$500. Support from both entities is embarrassingly low!

The fort itself had its north wall excavated and surveyed archaeologically. The entire fort is to be fumigated April 13-18.

Call House foundation work continues; the old washroom has been removed. Forming should soon begin. Proper recordation of and care of furniture and living materials within the house has begun. Invitations to bid on reroofing the house have been sent to six contractors. To date no responses have been received. A limited open account has been established with Berry's Mill for foundation materials. Special fund-raising activities are reported elsewhere in this newsletter.

The association voted \$500 in support of Richa Wilson's proposed recordation of the Rotchev House. This is roughly half the estimated cost of the project. It is hoped that state parks can

provide the remaining half. It is acknowledged that this is a true "bargain". Typical figures for comparable work are \$16,000 to \$20,000.

During the staff report a request was made, and approved by the board, to purchase a bibliographic software program to catalogue the library. With this program staff will begin working toward title/author/subject cross reference system which will make Fort Ross library research much easier!

The Russian committee, with board approval, will pursue several potential sources of funds for the construction of and interpretation of a historic windmill at Fort Ross.

The publications committee was given board approval to upgrade two booklets on Fort Ross history (which were interim to publication of the combined "Indians, Russians, and Americans"): "Outpost of An Empire", and "The Caretakers". Development of a "slick", pictorial magazine-format booklet will be considered as a sequel to the small, detailed booklets.

Curatorial committee members and other FRIA directors will travel to the state archives in Sacramento to view materials of Fort Ross origin on February 27, 1995.

Abolishment of the three "period" committees failed to come to a vote. The proposal and its defeat caused the board to review pertinent board history, and to appreciate a renewed commitment to those committees. Setting goals will be an agenda item at the next meeting. Board members are encouraged to bring a list of goals and objectives to the meeting.

The meeting lasted some five hours. Discussion of proposals to meet monthly (to shorten meetings) generated at least one important notion. That notion was to establish general goals and policies and to give committees more autonomy, having the effect of putting detailed discussions into those groups rather than to the entire board. Committees would then submit succinct proposals for board approval. A motion to change to monthly meetings was defeated.



FORT MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

by Doug Warren, Maintenance Supervisor

The Department of Parks and Recreation hopes to accomplish the following list of maintenance projects at Fort Ross in 1995 - 1996:

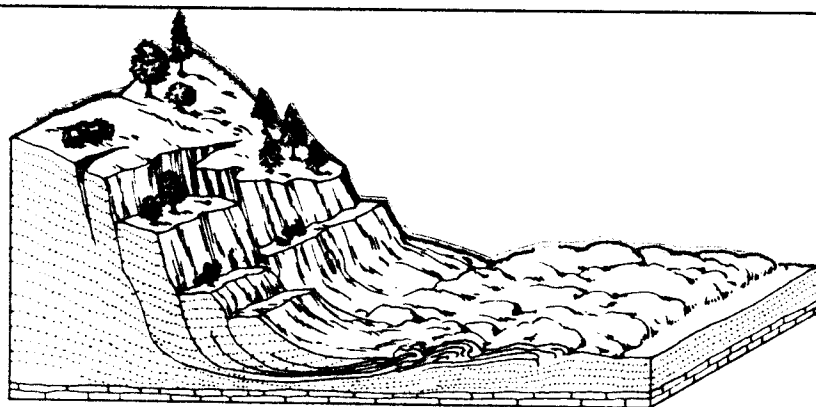
1. Fumigate fort stockade walls, Kuskov House, Officer's Quarters, Chapel, Commandant's (Rotchev) House, and the north and south blockhouses between April 13 and April 18, 1995.
 2. Replace the first floor floor in the Kuskov House in March, 1995 because of dry rot and termite infestation. (This will be a temporary replacement until the log substructure is replaced in 1996, and at that time a new historically accurate floor will be built.)
 3. Finish repairing 60 foot section of the north wall in March and April, 1995.
 4. Remove, study, and replace remaining north wall in the summer of 1995.
 5. Remove old pit toilet at Sandy Cove and replace it with Shasta type toilet in the summer of 1995.
 6. Install new gun powder locker (for rangers) behind the Call House complex in the summer of 1995.
 7. Rebuild old back door steps on Commandant's (Rotchev) House in 1996.
 8. Contract for the removal of the ranger house beyond the north wall. Jack up the foundations of the Kuskov House, Chapel, and Officer's Quarters in order to replace old substructures and rebuild them, and to remedy dry rot and termite problems. Scheduled for 1996.
- * Doug Warren made a video tape of Fort Ross Living History, 1994. This tape has disappeared, and he would like it back! If anyone finds it, please return to the Visitor Center. A copy will be made for the library.

RANGER REPORTS

by Bill Walton, Fort Ross Ranger

January rainfall at Fort Ross was 18.93 inches. There was no major storm damage. It is worth noting that only a few miles inland in the ridges and valleys behind Fort Ross the rainfall was dramatically higher, reaching a total of 49 inches! As the clouds increase their elevation in the mountainous terrain, the moisture condenses. Fort Ross Creek was bone dry before the January storms, but by mid January it was as wide as I have seen it. The footbridge across the creek which leads to the cemetery is gone. One supporting beam was found in the North Cove, and another on Sandy Beach! Power was out for six consecutive days in mid January, and the Fort Ross Visitor Center was closed for a week. Highway One was closed several times throughout January. There are several trouble spots between Jenner and the fort, and the highway is still one lane in places. One notable spot is an enormous landslide on the downhill side of Highway One south of Timber Gulch. It is roughly 200 feet wide and extends 400 feet down from the highway to the ocean in a near vertical break that slopes down to a big muddy pond. The beach is covered by sediment and it now extends further into the ocean. Caltrans was concerned enough about this spot to fly out in a fixed wing plane on a stormy day to look at it, and on several other days they flew out in a helicopter.

Archaeologists from U.C. Berkeley worked at Fort Ross in January. The entire northeast section of the stockade is scheduled to be replaced in 1995, and the archaeologists were here to do preliminary investigations on the 60 foot section between the Kuskov House and the Chapel. Their task was to do periodic trenching to confirm information provided by the Targanza excavation in that area in 1956. It was determined that the previous excavation had not missed anything, and no Russian artifacts were found. High winds in the second week in January blew down the plastic trench shelter covering the site. The hut had been imported from Alaska, and was expected to be storm proof! Archaeologists will return later in the year to complete preliminary archaeology work on the remainder of the northeast wall. Two other archaeological sites in the Fort Ross vicinity, the site at Sandy Cove and one at the Reef Campground, suffered some erosion in January.

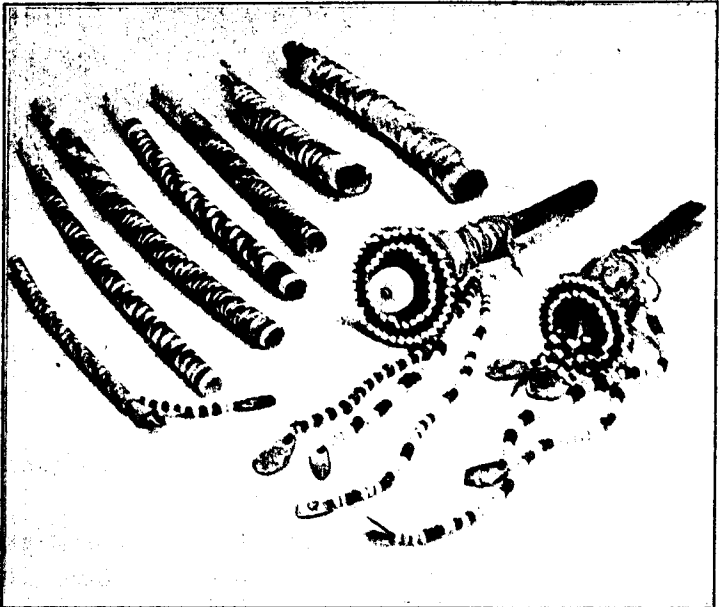


Textbook diagram illustrates landslide south of Timber Gulch. Earth flow features a stepped slope where material has slumped downhill, and a bulging downslope "toe" where it accumulates. Earth flow can occur in hours on saturated slopes.

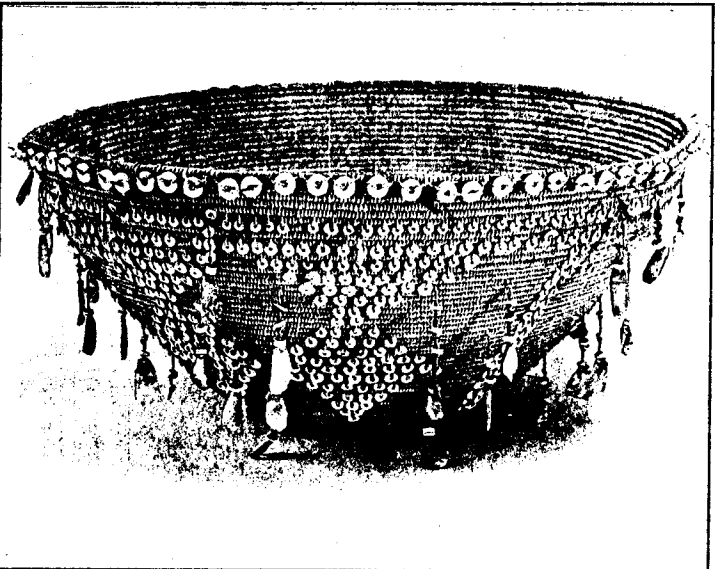
NO LONGER JUST AN "OUTPOST OF AN EMPIRE"?

RUSSIAN AMERICA - From The Personal Impressions Of Missionaries, World Travelers, Sailors, Researchers And Other Eyewitnesses

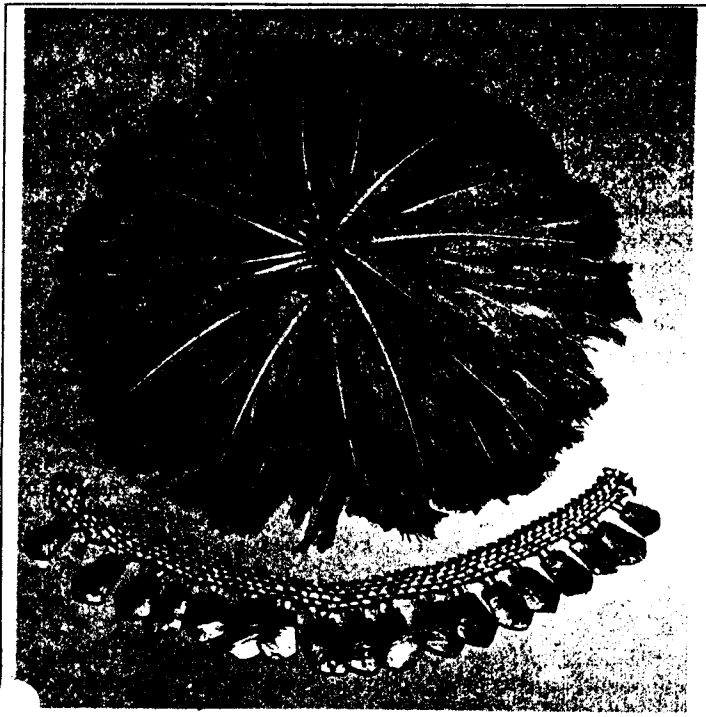
A very important new work on Russian America has been published in Russia. Over half of this book is on Russian California, and it contains much new information which may be unfamiliar or unknown to American scholars. This book, *Russian America - From the Personal Impressions of Missionaries, World Travelers, Sailors, Researchers and Other Eyewitnesses*, was undertaken by the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (MAE), Russian Academy of Science, Kunstkamera, St. Petersburg, Russia. Contributors include the late R. G. Liapunova, past head of the American Sector, MAE, E. A. Okladnikova, Deputy Director, MAE, G. I. Dzenishevich, Senior Research Fellow, MAE and B. P. Polevoi, Senior Research Fellow, MAE. The general editors are A. D. Dridzo and R. V. Kinzhalov, and the publisher, Moisl Publications, Moscow, 1994. The book is richly illustrated, and, particularly important to students of California and Russian California history, it contains many excellent photographs of the MAE's Voznesenskii collection of Native Californian artifacts collected in 1841. We are currently working on obtaining copies of the book for the Fort Ross library and bookstore.



Earrings made of wood and mammal bones - MAE Collection



Vessels woven from grass and decorated with feathers, fluted beads and mother of pearl - MAE Collection



Necklace and headdress of swan's feathers - MAE Collection

Several tantalizing quotes, translated for the readers of this newsletter, are included on the following page. In addition, Dr. Alexei Istomin, Research Fellow of the Institute of Anthropology and Ethnology, Russian Academy of Science, Moscow, has agreed to work on translating sections of the book. These will appear in future newsletters. Dr. Istomin is currently working and residing in Berkeley for three months as the recipient of an IREX grant.(ed)

A quote from the chapter *Ethnographic Observations of Russian Seamen, Travelers, Diplomats and Scholars in California From the Beginning to the Middle of the 19th Century* by E. A. Okladnikova has been translated by Elena Tyspkin, a translator for the United States State Department. The translated information in Okladnikova's chapter is based on a report to Interior Minister [of Russia] O. P. Kozodavlev by the Board of Directors of the Russian-American Company dated April 29, 1819 from the *Archives of Count Mordvinov*, published 1902.

"The board informs that the Company acts in the spirit of kindness and moderation acquiring for the fatherland islands and lands of which they have knowledge that among them are settled areas comprised of fortresses, redoubts, settlements and ship's wharves, on which are built seagoing vessels. . . The first chief center of the Russian American Company became New Archangel on the Island of Sitka. That was the northern capital of Russian America. The southern capital became the 15th settlement which was founded near the banks of New Albion near the small Bay of Rumiantsev, i.e. the celebrated Fortress Ross."



Another chapter by B. P. Polevoi, *The Impressions of a Sailor, Vasilii Zavoiko*, tells about Russian America 1835-1838. Zavoiko traveled aboard the Russian-American Company vessel *Nikolai*. The excerpt below is an edited transcription from a reading by Michael Mendelson, MD., Ph.D.:

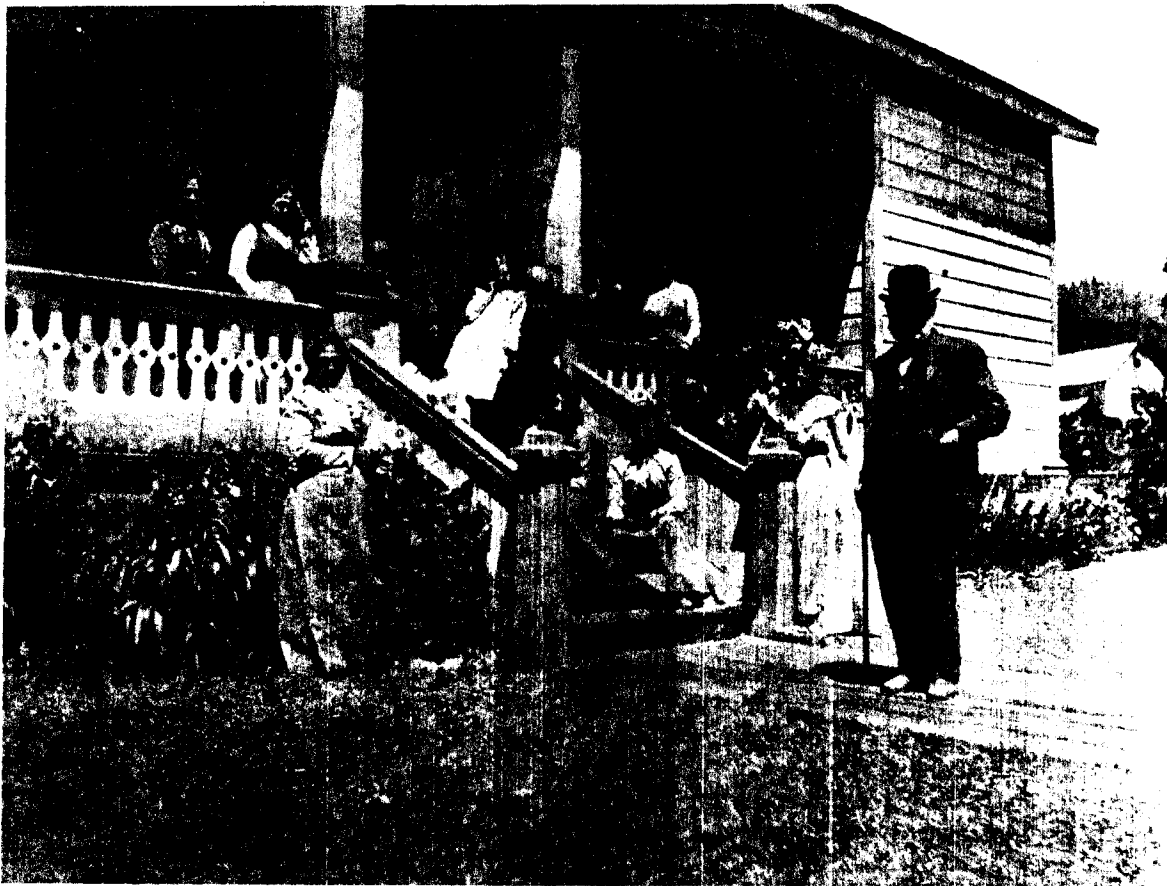
"On the 31st of July the vessel *Nikolai* came to the California Bay of Bodega, and here Zavoiko came to California for the first time. He was commissioned to acquire provisions, and for this reason he went by horse to the River Slavyanka where the company had cultivated fields. He crossed the river at a point which was 30 sazhen wide. When he arrived at Rancho Kostromitinovka he met with an old inhabitant of Fort Ross, the old man Munin, who told him many interesting stories about how, for a quarter of a century, the Russians lived in California. Peter Kostromitinov himself was appointed agent of the Russian-American Company only in 1833 and Zavoiko wrote: *The celebrated village of Kostromitinovka has*

only one house where I sat entertained by my old Munin. It has three forest huts in which live three Russians. According to Zavoiko the settlement's plow lands employed 250 Indians which were compensated for their work with precious little. Zavoiko wrote that *they feed employees with boiled flour and water, and only on Sunday one pound of meat per person. When work was finished they received one shirt, a scarf, some beads. . . and for these things the Indians were satisfied. . .*

Zavoiko traveled to Settlement Ross and wrote about it: *Within the fortress are the house of the administrator, office, and the house of the chinovniki [administrative assistants], selskii khozaev [villagers], kontorschikov [office workers] and prikazchika [clerks]. The fortress, inside and outside, is kept clean and orderly. They built it from planks of chaga [redwood]. I don't remember how many canons they have because these I did not count. Outside of the fortresses is found the settlement where the inhabitants are married contract laborers. Their houses are built from chaga. These have large yards with all necessary equipment, plus there is a windmill.* According to Zavoiko at that time there lived in Ross 120 Russian contract employees with children and wives, 30 Aleuts which came during Baranov's time, in other words before 1819. Indians were few, only 8 men and 31 women.

He spent two days in Fort Ross, but his story about it is very interesting for historians, and one needs to remember that three years after Zavoiko's time they made the decision for the liquidation of Fort Ross. On the 12th of August after California provisions were brought aboard the *Nikolai*, the vessel left Bodega Bay. On his return trip to Novo Arkhangl'sk he wrote about the coast. November 8, 1838 the vessel *Nikolai*, with large numbers of bales of *pushninoi*, departed for Kronshtadt. Zavoiko left Russian America forever; however, in the beginning of the 1850's, the administrators of the Russian-American Company offered him the position of chief administrator of Russian America, but he preferred to be governor of Kamchatka."





The Call House and family, 1900

HISTORIC RESTORATION OF THE CALL RANCH HOUSE

by Mary Lynn Gauthier

All the people who are volunteering on this project are eager to get on to the gratifying work of repairing and restoring windows and doors, trim and paint work, period furniture and the wonderful garden, but we had to start down in the dirt, with the foundations.

The State Parks Department and the Fort Ross Interpretive Association, or FRIA, both aim to have a "flow of history" represented at Fort Ross. The Call house is slated to become a house museum interpreting the life and times of George Washington Call and his family, as they lived in the 1890's. Call purchased the land including the house site and the old Russian stockade in 1873, and completed his new house in 1878. The ranch had a hotel, a school and a weather station; it became an important social, agricultural and horticultural center of a wider-than-you-think universe.

Viewed from the old highway, the house appears to be a cute cottage set in a wonderful garden with a white picket fence. In fact the house is fifty feet wide and contains a dozen rooms on two levels; there is a long wing in the rear with a kitchen and two dining rooms; it was a commodious home for a large family and frequent guests.

You have to crawl to see them, but the floor of the main house is built on two mighty 10 x 12 inch girders, fifty feet long and clearly recycled from some previous structure.

As you read this, the foundation repairs to the rear kitchen and dining wing are under way. This part of the house sits low to the ground with a porch all along the sheltered east side facing the lush yard. There is some debate whether this wing was salvaged from an earlier building, built with the main house or added a little later. We couldn't do it all at once; some preliminary leveling and foundation work had been done on the front of the house; the rear wing had severe settling and rot, so we began there.

The original builders laid a redwood 6x6 on piers and in places right on the ground - or perhaps the ground was allowed to build up later. The floor and walls were built on that frame. We wouldn't do it that way now, but it served adequately for most of a hundred years, until recently. Now we are replacing it from below with concrete stem walls.

Volunteer architect Michael Hallett worked with Parks staff and contractors David French and John Hubiak to develop a design

that would meet current standards, change the character of house and garden as little as possible, and be practical to build.

Raising the whole wing for the foundation work was ruled out as too expensive and intrusive, so the volunteers have had to crawl and dig in confined spaces. Since the interior floor was easy to replace with currently available materials, much of it was removed to ease the access. After much debate, the laundry room, built onto the side of the house in this century, was removed. In addition to preserving the house and the old chimney with minimal disturbance, we have to dig cautiously, always on the alert for archaeologically significant findings. None so far.

The adopted scheme will provide improved earthquake safety, ease of maintenance and a pleasant entrance route that will accommodate wheelchairs.

Intrepid volunteer construction foremen Paul Chappell and John Sperry have removed old root beer bottles and small mountains of dirt; they have been aided mightily by the Sonoma County Probation Industries work crew, supervised by Frank Pearson.

The next phase will be re-roofing with authentic redwood shingles. The Parks Department has provided materials and FRIA will hire a contractor to do the installation.

In the meantime, there is always work to be done in the garden: it's a location favored by nature and rich with plants collected and nurtured by Mercedes Call a hundred years ago.

All this activity is possible due to years of committed volunteer efforts of many people: Jeanette Rosson chairs the FRIA Ranch Committee and has secured major funding for two years running from the Sonoma County Landmarks Commission. Gloria Frost has labored in the garden; the late Kaye Tomlin did tireless research; there are many others working on the restoration work, furnishings and the garden.

The committee has the benefit of first hand advice from Barbara Black and Laurie Horn who are Call family members and were frequent visitors to the house while the family still occupied it.

The money on hand will not cover all that needs to be done and other sources are needed. Recently, the committee held a successful antique quilt raffle, and just after Easter there will be a tour of local houses, called HOME SWEET HOME.

Volunteers are always welcome; call Jeanette Rosson at 847-3250 and she'll find a job that fits your skills and preferences.

If gardening is your first love, call Mary Lynn Gauthier at 847-3468. If you want to help with the house tour call Mary Lynn or Doni Tunheim at 847 3761.

HOME SWEET HOME

*A tour of homes of diverse historic architectural, artistic and lifestyle significance.
Includes homes and gardens at Ocean Cove, Timber Cove, Plantation and Seaview Ridge
and the Call Ranch House!*

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 11:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.
\$15.00 per person, including refreshments and live music

To benefit restoration of the Call Ranch House at Fort Ross as a house museum of life in 1878.
Sponsored by the Fort Ross Interpretive Association

Tickets available April 1 at
Fort Ross Bookstore Fort Ross School Stewart's Point Store The Dolphin in Gualala
or by mail

for information call
Doni Tunheim at 847-3761 or Mary Lynn Gauthier at 847-3468

Docents and cookie donations requested!

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

APPLE TREES NOW AVAILABLE



THESE TREES ARE DESCENDED FROM TREES IN THE OLD RUSSIAN ORCHARD !

They have been propagated for Fort Ross by Winkler's Nursery in Sebastopol. This is the perfect season for planting these trees bare root. Although they will be available year round (as long as the supply lasts), they will be more expensive after they have been planted in pots!

VARIETIES INCLUDE GRAVENSTEIN, PIPPIN,
BLACK GILLIFLOWER & BALDWIN
\$10.00 each (bare root, semi dwarf rootstock)

MULTI VARIETY TREES
WITH ALL FOUR APPLES ON ONE TREE
\$20.00 each (bare root, standard rootstock)

You may purchase your tree from the
Fort Ross Bookstore (707) 847-3437

THE CALIFORNIANS

The Californians magazine is offering members of FRIA a \$4.00 discount for a new subscription, or \$2.00 discount for a renewal subscription, with this coupon. The Californians is an excellent bi-monthly, well-illustrated magazine of California history. To get the discount, clip or copy the coupon and send it in when you make your payment.

\$4/\$2

This certificate is worth \$4 off a new subscription
or \$2 off a subscription renewal to

The Californians magazine

The magazine of California history
when presented with payment
for the balance of the regular \$18.95 price.

No-obligation, cancelable trial sub: (800) 982-1609
Limit: one coupon per year.

\$4/\$2

\$4/\$2

You Can Help Save **ARMSTRONG GROVE!**

become a "Friend of Armstrong Grove"

For over one hundred years, millions of people from all over the world have been thrilled, inspired and uplifted by the beauty of Armstrong Grove. Saving the Grove from the lumberman's ax was the result of the great efforts and generosity of Col. James B. Armstrong, Lizzie Armstrong Jones, the Le Baron family and other early "Friends of Armstrong Grove". Their work culminated in the preservation of this ancient redwood forest as a public treasure and unit of the California State Park System.

Today, after long years of public use, Armstrong Grove is in danger of being "loved to death". The restoration of its damaged areas and the prevention of further destruction is the goal of the Armstrong Grove Habitat Protection and Restoration Project. This vital project is funded solely by public donations - the success of the project is entirely dependent upon the generosity of modern day "Friends of Armstrong Grove". You can help make the project a success by making a tax-deductible contribution which will be used exclusively for this project. If you would like to help and become a "Friend of Armstrong Grove", make your donation - in any amount - payable and mail to:

**The Stewards of Slavianska's
Help Save Armstrong Grove Fund**
c/o Armstrong Redwoods State Reserve
17000 Armstrong Woods Road
Guerneville, CA 95446

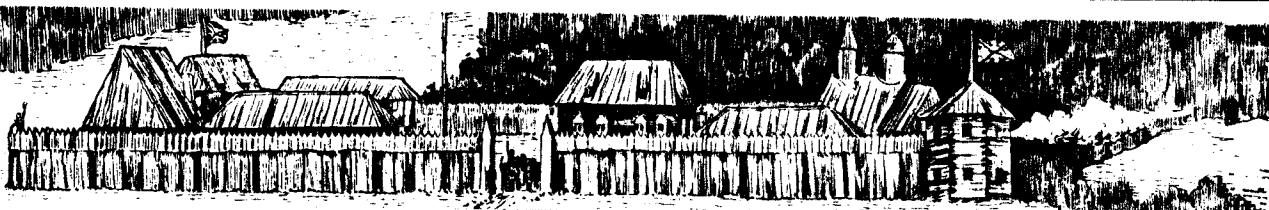


Count me in as a "Friend of Armstrong Grove"!

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Amount enclosed \$ _____

Thanks from the staff and volunteers of Armstrong Grove!

For more information on the Armstrong Grove Habitat Protection and Restoration Project, contact Ranger Chazz Potthast c/o Armstrong Redwoods State Reserve, (707) 869-2015 or the Russian River - Mendocino District Headquarters at (707) 865-2391.



Membership Application

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

_____ \$5.00 senior/student _____ \$7.50 regular _____ \$10.00 family _____ \$25.00 organization \$_____ donation

I/we would like to volunteer at Fort Ross _____ In what capacity? _____

Calendar of Events

March

4 (Saturday) LHD Planning Meeting, Fort Ross V.C. 2:00

April

8 (Saturday) FRIA Board Meeting, 10:30 a.m.

13 - 18 Fumigation of fort buildings and wall

Fort Ross Interpretive Association

Board of Directors: Violet Chappell, Gloria Frost, Laurie Horn, David Kenly, Lenore Kosso, Nicholas Lee, John Middleton, Jeannette Rosson, Maria Sakovich, John Sperry, Frieda Tomlin, Nancy Walton, David Willson

Staff:

Wendy Platt, accounting

Lyn Kalani, bookstore manager & administration, newsletter editor

Lake Perry, bookstore assistant, mail order, membership

Sherry Madrone, substitute bookstore assistant

Bookstore Volunteers:

Jaci Hallett, Moses Hallett, Elizabeth Cresswell

Membership Chair Volunteer:

Jodi Sperry

Mission of the Fort Ross Interpretive Association

The mission of the Fort Ross Interpretive Association, Inc. is to promote for the benefit of the public the interpretive and educational activities of the California Park Service and Fort Ross State Historic Park.

- ◆ To enhance and conserve the interpretive and educational resources of Fort Ross State Historic park, as well as those of the State Park Service.
- ◆ To sponsor, publish, distribute, and sell appropriate items which increase visitor understanding and appreciation of Fort Ross State Historic Park.
- ◆ To acquire materials and equipment for the use in the educational and interpretive programs of Fort Ross State Historic Park.
- ◆ To develop and maintain a library.
- ◆ To preserve historical material associated with Fort Ross State Historic Park, and to provide and maintain adequate and secure storage facilities in an archivally sound environment.
- ◆ To sponsor, support, and assist scientific research and investigations relating to Fort Ross and presentation of these studies to the public. To promote interpretation that reflects current research..
- ◆ To plan, organize, and implement fund raising programs to support the interpretive and educational activities of Fort Ross State Historic Park and of the State Park Service.

Fort Ross Interpretive Association

19005 Coast Highway One

Jenner, CA 95450

(707) 847-3437

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1
Jenner, 95450

Please check your newsletter label to determine membership expiration!