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.”
VISIT FORT ROSS STATE HISTORIC PARK THIS FALL!

Visit Fort Ross State Historic Park this fall when the coastal climate is at its best! The park will remain open and easily accessible despite the construction work which will close Highway One for several months north of Jenner between Meyer's Grade and Fort Ross. The Highway One detour along the ridge above the coast has been repaved in anticipation of the detour, and it is a beautiful drive! Follow the detour via Meyer's Grade, Seaview and Timber Cove Roads. Turn left (south) when you reach Highway One at the base of Timber Cove Road. Fort Ross is only two miles from the end of the detour. Highway One will be open to the Reef Campground south of Fort Ross.

The park includes over 3,000 acres of the most beautiful land along the California coast. It is the site of a bit of unique California history. In 1812 the Russian-American Company, a commercial hunting and trading company chartered by the tsarist government, established Fort Ross as the most southern settlement in Russian America. They inhabited the colony until 1841 conducting business and ranching the land to grow food for company's Alaskan colonies. The history of Fort Ross is a unique blend of diverse cultural groups. These groups include the Kashaya Pomo Indians, Russians and the Aleutian and Kodiak islanders who accompanied them as hunters and laborers. You can visit the stockade, blockhouses and several buildings that have been reconstructed after destruction by fire or earthquake. One original building remains from the Russian era. You can learn about life in the isolated Russian colony. There are exhibits in many of the buildings as well as in the Visitor Center which includes a museum and museum bookstore. Presentations about the history of Fort Ross and Russian America are given at 12:00 and 2:00 in the stockade.

We encourage visitors to visit the museum bookstore in the Fort Ross Visitor Center. There is an excellent extensive collection of books on the cultural and natural history of California and the natural, Indian, Russian and American history of Fort Ross, along with educational books on these subjects for teachers and students. Gift items which reflect the Russian and diverse cultural influences at Fort Ross are also featured in the store. This bookstore is supported by the Fort Ross Interpretive Association, a nonprofit California State Park Cooperating Association. You can help support your state parks—the proceeds from sales in the store help support activities at Fort Ross.

For more information call Fort Ross at 707-847-3286 and 707 847-3437.
**BOARD NOTES**

by John Sperry

The August meeting of FRIA's Board of Directors was the first meeting built upon an experimental Executive Committee meeting process. The Executive Committee met on July 22, and in four hours sorted out a tight agenda for the full board meeting of August 12th. An important component of these Executive Committee meetings is attention to new considerations for FRIA—brainstorming. The experiment will continue.

Bookstore revenues were down slightly for both May and June, but expenses were trimmed correspondingly and our budget looks good. The theme of shrinking revenues produced discussion aplenty. Supervising Ranger Stephenson spoke to 1996 budget cuts in the State Parks program. These include a cut of nearly 30 per cent of normal funding, a massive cutback in personnel, and possible closure of some parks. Visitations, and therefore revenues, to state parks, county and state fairs and similar endeavors the length of California have dropped significantly in the past few years.

FRIA's address to this is multiple: for one, directors and FRIA members are urged to write legislators, assembly persons etc., regarding any threat of park closures; next, with the advent of Highway One closure for repair and the Meyer's Grade/Seaview detour, several efforts to keep Fort Ross maximally visible will be made. Signs at the foot of Meyers Grade and Timber Cove Road will direct the public to Fort Ross. Successive press releases noticing the fort, its accessibility and its openness will be sent to newspapers in the Coastal, Santa Rosa, Bay Area, and Sacramento regions. Lastly, through FRIA, Fort Ross will be described in a regional business brochure.

Living History Day was, from all accounts, a success—new scenario and all. The replica topsail schooner *Hawaiian Chieftain* visited the Cove disguised as the 1822 Yankee trader *Mentor*. About a dozen "Aleuts" in replica baidarkas (kayaks) hung out on the beach and offshore throughout the day. Somewhere between 75 and 100 volunteer "interpreters" did their thing within or near the stockade walls. All are thanked! Attendance was approximately 2500 souls.

What else? Trails: A well-led Trails Committee has put before the state questions of possibilities. The Ranch Committee has accreted the active Garden Committee to its membership. The new whole will meet at 10:00 a.m. on September 16, the same day as the barbecue celebration for Call House restoration work. All interested persons are urged to attend both the meeting and the barbecue. The latter is a pot-luck affair hosted by the Garden Committee which will provide beverages and deserts. One or more masters of barbecue will be on hand to cook your goose. Finally, the directors whizzed through three new complex bylaw articles, accepting all with a few legalistic alterations. The fine draft recorrdation of the Rotchev house by Richa Wilson was rewarded with payment. The gavel crashed down at 1:32 p.m.

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**DO YOU HAVE TIME TO VOLUNTEER?**

**SUPPORT YOUR STATE PARKS BY DONATING WORK!**

The Fort Ross Bookstore staff needs at least one more dependable volunteer to work one day a week—or one day every other week. It is a fun job! You will have time to study the cultural and natural history of Fort Ross, California and Russian America as you become familiar with the extensive collection of books on these subjects which we have in the bookstore. You will have a chance to talk to people from all over the world and research their questions about the history of Fort Ross.

Another very important place we need assistance is in the Fort Ross Library. Much work has been done in the library in recent years to increase the collection of books and research materials and to organize and catalogue the collection. There are still several shelves of uncatalogued materials to be worked on and we could use help! In addition, we are in the beginning stages of entering the entire library collection into Procite, a library data base cataloging system. If you like computer work and jobs which require close attention to detail, we need your help!

Need variety? It is also possible to combine the bookstore job with the library cataloging job!

If either of these jobs interest you, call Lyn at (707) 847-3437.
The fort compound as it appeared after the 1906 earthquake. The chapel has collapsed, but the Official's Barracks, the Rotchev House, and the Fur Barn remain standing.

FORT ROSS STATE HISTORIC PARK BUILDING RECONSTRUCTIONS

1906 to the present

The following article, accompanied by many historic as well as contemporary photographs of Fort Ross, appears in the appendices of the new edition of The Caretakers of Fort Ross After the Russian-American Company. Chapters included in the section “The Ranch Era at Fort Ross” appeared in this newsletter last year, and the chapter “Partners in Preservation in the Development of Fort Ross State Historic Park” was included in the July-August newsletter. The new edition of The Caretakers is available in the bookstore at Fort Ross for $6.50.

THE CHAPEL

Twenty-seven days after Fort Ross officially became a historic site of the State of California, the massive earthquake of April 18, 1906 struck; all of the historic buildings at Fort Ross suffered structural damage. Of the Russian buildings, the blockhouses and the chapel, which had successfully withstood the ravages of wind and rain for nearly a century, were now in a state of collapse. In the spring of 1916 the State Legislature appropriated $3,000 toward restoration of the chapel. Carlos Call, a staunch advocate of the proposal, was appointed supervisor of the plan.

The reconstruction of the chapel mainly involved providing the building with new foundations and walls and bringing the original roofing into position. However, the need to increase the buildings' structural strength posed practical problems that were solved with the means at hand, but in the end changed the chapel's original appearance. The old walls had completely caved in and the floors and foundation had been reduced to rubble. However the roofing and the turrets of the chapel had come to rest over the foundation virtually intact.

For wood to replace the broken timbers that had supported the building, the officials' quarters and part of an old warehouse were dismantled to provide original Russian-cut timbers and planks. However, the upright wall boards from the officials' quarters were over a foot too short for the chapel walls, so the floor was raised to make the chapel roof the correct height. It was then necessary to add a small porch and step to the front of the chapel to make it easier to enter. From historic measurements and observations of similar chapels in Russia, such an addition was reasonable, and in fact there once may have been an extended shed-roofed porch or kryliso. Due to the damage sustained by the ceiling joists and roof beams, an extra side-wall stud was added for stronger support. This increased the number of panels on the south wall from three to four, and thus four windows replaced the original three windows on that side of the building. Also, in this 1916-18 reconstruction, the north and east walls of the chapel failed to be aligned with the adjacent stockade wall—the northeast rear corner was about 16 inches out of line with the original north stockade wall and about 6 inches east of the line of the east wall.

Further inaccuracies occurred when the roof of the cupola was restored in a different style from the original, and a Roman, rather than Russian Orthodox, cross was erected on the bell tower. In 1939, a Russian Orthodox cross replaced the Roman cross; however, it was put on the bell tower upside-down due to a carpenter's misinterpretation of a pattern given to him by a visiting Russian Orthodox bishop. A letter to the governor of California signed by several hundred people noting the
mistake was forwarded to the carpenter, and in 1941 the Russian Orthodox cross was put up correctly.

Although Park personnel were aware of the changes in design and advocated their correction, the alterations remained for nearly forty years. Only as public interest in Fort Ross grew and the study of its building construction became more intensive was the state persuaded to appropriate new funds for bringing the building into closer conformity with the original. In 1955, therefore, a second restoration was funded. The walls of the chapel were rebuilt with three windows and the building was correctly aligned with the adjoining stockade as indicated by archaeological excavation, but the elevation of the floor was still high. In 1960, the cupola was replaced with a more authentic Russian roof style, and a small cross was added. This cross was later replaced by a tall Russian Orthodox cross.

On October 5, 1970, the chapel was destroyed in a fire that swept through the building leaving nothing but a few charred timbers. Once again, resolute supporters of Fort Ross quickly organized to promote the third rebuilding of the chapel. The response was gratifying. New funds were obtained from a variety of sources. Local residents, Russian-American groups, and government agencies all contributed. The Department of Parks and Recreation conducted a comprehensive study of the building site based on new archaeological techniques, and developed updated historical data and additional detail on floor alignment, configuration, and use of building materials. The chapel that emerged in 1973 is what is seen today in the compound, and is considered to be accurate.

THE ROTCHEV HOUSE

Along with the chapel, the structure of most historical interest at Fort Ross is the Rotchev house, an older building renovated in 1836 for Alexander Rotchev, the last manager of Colony Ross. It is one of only two surviving buildings that contains building materials and construction techniques dating back to the Russian era.

About two years after the Russians departed, William Benitz took up residence in the building. Shortly afterward, the building was enlarged to accommodate his growing family, and they lived there until they left in 1867. It was also used as a dwelling after Benitz, possibly by James Dixon for a short time after his purchase of the Fort in 1867, and certainly by Ada Fairfax, her mother, and her niece after her husband’s death in 1869 until she sold the property and moved in 1873. When George W. Call purchased the property, it remained a family dwelling from 1873 until early 1878, and in late 1878, it became a hotel that operated into the early 1900s. In the late nineteenth century, the building began to fall into neglect. But, beginning in 1925, steps were taken to restore its original appearance. It received a new foundation and a new gabled roof covered with shingles. A kitchen and the two-storied addition were removed in 1926. Other repairs and modifications were carried out after World War II.

The long front porch was removed in 1945, a Russian-style hipped roof of long boards replaced the gabled roof in 1948, and new windows and concrete piers were added. In 1971, the Rotchev house was damaged by an arson fire. The roof burned and many artifacts were damaged or lost. A comprehensive plan was drawn to guide its restoration. A new hipped roof was constructed, but the original wall timbers, floor timbers, and ceiling were retained along with the original window and door frames. In 1974, the Rotchev House was reopened to the public.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE OFFICIALS' QUARTERS AND THE KUSKOV HOUSE

Reconstruction of the officials’ quarters was completed in 1981. In addition to living and dining rooms, the building contains a storeroom, a wood shop, a metal shop, living quarters, a stove, a dining area, and a jail room, all furnished as they might have been when the Russian-American Company occupied the fort. The reconstruction of the Kuskov house was completed in 1983. This building, which was built to house the first manager of Fort Ross, Ivan Kuskov, has a furnished armory and storerooms on the ground floor and a trade room and living quarters upstairs. Both buildings have been reconstructed in their original locations, using old joinery techniques.

BLOCKHOUSES AND THE STOCKADE WALLS

Other structures that have been restored over the years are the northwest (seven-sided) and southeast (eight-sided) blockhouses, which were used by the Russians as fortifications and sentry stations. The southeast blockhouse was renovated in 1930. Original floor boards from the officials quarters were set in the eight-sided blockhouse floor and they are still in place. In 1948, ruins of the northwest blockhouse were removed, and it was restored in 1950-51 also using joinery techniques favored by the Russian settlers. In 1956-57, the southeast blockhouse was again repaired and brought into conformity with the northwest blockhouse.

The stockade walls were restored on a piecemeal basis. In 1929, the east, south, and part of the west walls were rebuilt. Archaeological excavations were undertaken in 1953, and a year later the west and north walls were completed. In 1972, Highway One, which at the time ran through the center of the compound, was rerouted to bypass the fort, and, in 1974, the stockade was completely enclosed as it had been during the Russian occupation. Later, in 1984, during a new reconstruction of the west stockade wall, the sally port gate was moved about ten feet to the north based on additional archival and archaeological evidence of its original location. In 1989, a portion of the southeast stockade wall was reconstructed after archaeological investigations found that the spacing of stockade posts needed to be corrected to comply with the Russian gauge.
FORT ROSS BOOKSTORE PRICE LIST
A shortened list including books commonly requested by students and teachers

BASIC REFERENCE MATERIALS

FORT ROSS BROCHURE
  1.25

* CARETAKERS OF ROSS AFTER THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY
  6.50
  The history of Fort Ross after the Russians left to the present.

* OUTPOST OF AN EMPIRE, Watrous
  4.50
  Basic history of Fort Ross during the Russian era.

* WALKING TOUR OF FORT ROSS, available in English or Russian language
  .25

SELECTED HISTORY BOOKS

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOHISTORY OF FORT ROSS, Lightfoot
  18.00
  Excellent compilation of cultural and natural history of Ross along with contemporary archaeology.

CALIFORNIA: A LAND OF NEW BEGINNINGS, Lavendar
  15.95

CALIFORNIA: AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY, Bean
  34.50

CROSSROADS OF CONTINENTS, Fitzhugh/Crowell
  34.95
  Excellent reference on the native people of the North Pacific Rim.

COLONIAL RUSSIAN AMERICA, Khlebnikov
  21.95
  Journal entries written in 1818 by Russian-American Company official. Includes accounts of Fort Ross.

FORT ROSS: CALIFORNIA OUTPOST OF RUSSIAN AMERICA, Essig et al.
  12.50
  A compilation of articles about various aspects of life in the Russian colony.

HANDBOOK OF NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS, Smithsonian Institution Press
  VOL. 5 ARCTIC, VOL. 6 SUBARCTIC, VOL. 8 CALIFORNIA
  35.00

VOL. 7 NORTHWEST
  45.00

HANDBOOK OF THE INDIANS OF CALIFORNIA, Kroeber
  16.95

HISTORICAL ATLAS OF CALIFORNIA, Beck
  22.95

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  3.50

KHLEBNIKOV ARCHIVE, Khlebnikov
  17.50
  Journal entries by Russian-American Company official detail life at Ross 1820 - 1822.

LORD OF ALASKA, Chevigny
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  Readable account of Alexander Baranov, first governor of Russian America.

MY LIFE AT FORT ROSS, Carr
  3.50
  A glimpse of ranch era life after the Russians left written by Laura Call Carr (1877-1907) born and raised at Fort Ross.

NATURAL WORLD OF THE CALIFORNIA INDIANS, Elsasser/Heizer
  14.00

ODYSSEY OF A RUSSIAN SCIENTIST, Voznesenski
  22.00
  Journals of a Russian Scientist who visited Fort Ross in 1840, the last year of Russian occupation.

OXFORD HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN WEST, Milner et. al.
  39.95

POMO INDIANS OF CALIFORNIA, Brown/Andrews
  8.95

RUSSIAN AMERICA, Chevigny
  9.95
  Easy to read history of Russian America.

RUSSIAN AMERICA: A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY, Pierce
  45.00

RUSSIAN AMERICAN COLONIES, Dmytryshyn/Vaughn
  40.00
  Research with many details about the colonies, including Fort Ross.

RUSSIAN AMERICA, STATISTICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, Wrangell
  18.00
  Includes ethnographic accounts on the Fort Ross area written by a governor of Russian America.

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Fort Ross Interpretive Association
19005 Coast Highway One
Jenner, CA 95450

TO: __________________________________________

____________________________________________

____________________________________________
July 29, 1995 marked the occasion of Fort Ross State Historic Park's Living History Day celebration. At several previous events the state sponsored topsail schooner Californian has participated. The Californian is actually a replica of the C. W. Lawrence, a mid-1800s revenue cutter which the state legislature has designated as the official state tallship and ambassador of California. She is operated and was built by the Nautical Heritage Society of Dana Point. On her voyages north to Fort Ross, she has masqueraded as a visiting Russian ship. This year the Nautical Heritage Society arranged for the Hawaiian Chieftain to make the passage.

Accordingly, early Saturday morning a contingent of FRIA members, in the guise of Russian officials, escorted a number of passengers aboard the Chieftain in Bodega Bay, and shortly afterwards departed northwards. For her role, the Chieftain portrayed the visiting American ship Mentor. Unfortunately, no suitable American flag of that period could be found, so she flew the Russian-American Company flag and the flag of St. Andrew in honor of her visit to the Russian colony. Aboard ship, as we got underway, the paying passengers were treated to a variety of interpretive presentations by the ship's crew and by the Russian officials of FRIA composed of John Allen, John Middleton and myself, Nicholas Lee.

The one hundred foot long Hawaiian Chieftain is a replica of a circa 1790s square-rigged, top-sail trading ketch. She is typical of the rig of small European trading ships of that time. With a countiful suit of sail and four small four pounder cannons, she makes for a pretty sight at sea. The steel built vessel was built in Hawaii about ten years ago. Despite modern naval architecture and twin Volvo Penta diesel engines, above decks she is a traditional and efficient sailing vessel.

Departing Bodega Bay at about 0930 hours, the Chieftain passed down channel and past the site of the old Russian port facilities and watering station at what was then called Rumiantsev (after a patron of the Russian-American Company), located on present Bodega Head and at nearby Doran Beach sand spit. Progressing into the outer bay the ghostly images of long gone ships eerily glimmered through morning mists.

For here it was, over the centuries, that many a famous navigator, from many a different country had paused to rest and refit, to replenish fresh water tanks, and perhaps to visit the local Miwok, and later to enjoy the facilities and hospitality of this Russian freeport, as such it was. Famous visitors probably included Francis Drake in the Golden Hind in 1579, Cermeno in San Augustin in 1595, but shortly to be wrecked off Point Reyes, Viscaino in San Diego in 1602 and Bodega Y Quadra in La Senora and Virgen de los Angeles in 1775, after whom Bodega Bay is named. Later on came James Cook in Discovery and Resolution in 1778, and Belcher in H. M. S. Sulphur in 1787 and 1839.
Calendar of Events

September
16 (Saturday) Ranch Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m.
16 (Saturday) Celebration Barbecue in Honor of
Work Done on the Call House, 12:00
(potluck—bring side dish, salad or bread—beverages
& desserts provided!)
24 (Sunday) FRIA Executive Committee Meets, 8:30 a.m.

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

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?

Fort Ross Interpretive Association

Board of Directors: Violet Chappell, Gloria Frost, Laurie Horn, David
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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.

Please check your newsletter label to determine membership expiration!