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**FOUNDER OF FORT ROSS:**

**IVAN KUSKOV -**

**AS MAN AND MANAGER**

**(1765-1823)**

**ORDER OF MATERIALS INCLUDED**

**A Biographical Timeline**

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(1765-1823)

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## A MODERN SCHOLAR'S VIEW OF KUSKOV: SVETLANA FYODOROVA (1979)

### INTRODUCTION

Of the 58 years that Ivan Alexandrovich Kuskov was alive (1765-1823), 31 of them were dedicated to service in the Russian possessions in America. He spent 21 of them in Alaska, and ten in California, where he founded the southernmost permanent Russian settlement on the North American continent - the fort and settlement of Ross. Three months before his death he returned from America to his native town of Totma, a district center in Vologda province.\* Thus separated by thousands of miles, Totma and Fort Ross, on the Pacific coast of California, were forever linked in the history of a single lifetime: Kuskov was born and raised in his early years in Totma, and here he returned, to die in his home town; his creation was Fort Ross.

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\*Totma was a county (district) seat in the larger province (*guberniia*) of Vologda, situated about 400 miles northeast of Moscow.

\* \* \* \* \*

### KUSKOV'S CHARACTER

. . . Kuskov's Alaska years, preceding his service at Fort Ross, were distinguished by traits characteristic of him even in his youthful days: audacity, resourcefulness, the aspiration to know the world, and at the same time an imperiousness and toughness, . . .

Wrote Kichin [Kuskov's first biographer in 1848]: . . . "He was born in 1765, was of an entertaining disposition, and was affable in relating to people and faithful in carrying out his tasks."

. . . "[General Manager Alexander]Baranov lacked men to assist him diligently," wrote [K. T.] Khlebnikov. "Only his assistant, Kuskov, had intelligence and dedication far above the average." Remarkable organizational talent and tenacity were demanded [of Baranov and Kuskov] to keep the free-booting spirit of Russian *promyshlenniki* in line, to supply them with provisions and necessities, to organize large boating parties of Aleuts to hunt sea animals, to construct Russian forts and reconnoitre suitable places for new ones, to defend against

unfriendly Indians and Tlingits, to build and launch sailing ships, and to establish trade relations with American sea captains who visited the Russian settlements.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### A DESCRIPTION OF THE KUSKOV PORTRAITS

Ivan Kuskov's portrait is half-length, the body is turned about three-quarters to the right from the viewer. Youthful features set in a frame of graying hair, an elongated oval face, an intense gaze of gray eyes, wing-like eyebrows, a straight nose and a rather large mouth; the single-breasted coat of a Commerce Councillor, almost black (such a shade was formerly called "dark-green cloth"), with a stand-up collar; small shoulder-pieces (trimmed with gold lace, with a black cap and gilded buttons on each), a clasp on a row of large gilded button, a golden sword-knot at his waist; on his left arm is a sword; on his chest, hanging on a short St. Vladimir's ribbon (red with black stripes along the edges) is a gold medal (it is impossible to examine the image on the medal, but considering the time which the medal was awarded, 1805, it should be a likeness of Alexander I). Judging by the formal attire, the portrait could have been drawn no earlier than September 1807.\*

A black-and-white reproduction cannot transmit the charm of the second portrait - of Yekaterina Kuskova: a young, ruddy face with prominent cheek bones, hazel eyes and thick, black eye-brows, coral lips, and dark-red hair, parted in the middle, revealing the left ear; a cream-colored, slightly low-necked dress in the Empire style, edged with lace, and a blue belt, which encloses her waistline (in early 19th-century fashion). On her shoulders is wrapped a cream-colored shawl with a broad border (a large floral decoration on a dark-red background); three strings of pearls hang on her smooth neck, and pearl earrings are on her ears. Her right hand rests, as it were, on the frame of the portrait, and the dark, warm background of the portrait blends in with the outlines of her hair, without allowing us to examine the young woman's hair style.

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\* News reached Kuskov (in New Archangel) of his having been conferred the rank of Commerce Councillor in mid-September 1807.

Source: S. G. Fedorova, "Russkaia Amerika i Tot'ma v sud'be Ivana Kuskova" [Russian America and Totma in the Life of Ivan Kuskov], in *Problemy istorii i etnografii Ameriki* (Problems in the History and Ethnography of America), Moscow: Nauka, 1979. Excerpts from pages 229, 230, 231, 233-34, and 243.

## KUSKOV'S SERVICE CONTRACT WITH BARANOV (1790)

Contract Concluded between Alexander A. Baranov and Ivan A. Kuskov in Irkutsk on May 20, 1790:

The general stipulation between us is that Baranov is to take me, Kuskov, on, after the date written above, and that I, Kuskov, shall be attached to Mr. Baranov in a commercial position and shall follow him from hence to Yakutsk and to Okhotsk, and shall go with Mr. Baranov on a voyage to the American coast to the trading company there that belongs to Messrs. Golikov and Shelikhov. Whenever you, Mr. Baranov, should return from thence to Okhotsk, then I too shall not stay there [overseas], but shall proceed back to Irkutsk. Supplies and other proper expenses for my maintenance in food and on journeys will be yours, Mr. Baranov, and beyond all this I claim nothing more. . . . I, Kuskov, am responsible for my clothing and footwear, as my own property.

.....

Comments by Svetlana Fyodorova:

No special insight is needed to see that, according to the conditions of the contract . . . , Kuskov placed himself in complete long-term dependency on Baranov. . . .

Baranov took upon himself the responsibility to pay Kuskov out of his own earnings in the colonies from the moment of his departure from Irkutsk until his return from America back to Irkutsk "one share of animal and other produce, and beyond this a salary in cash of up to 100 rubles per year." . . .

Only utter helplessness could have forced Kuskov to accept such heavy conditions of semi-bondage for a period which lasted over 22 years. Thus, the Irkutsk Supreme Aulic Court, certifying by stamp the signatures of A. A. Baranov, I. A. Kuskov, and the third interested party [Kuskov's creditor], the Totma merchant, A. P. Neratov, stipulated that this contract was signed by citizen Kuskov "with his voluntary consent."

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Sources: Documentary - Manuscript section, Lenin State Library, collection No. 204, Documents, carton 32, file 1, sheets 1-2.

Secondary - Svetlana G. Fedorova, "Russkaia Amerika i Tot'ma v sud'be Ivana Kuskova" (Russian America and Totma in the Life of Ivan Kuskov), in *Problemy istorii i etnografii Ameriki* (Problems in the History and Ethnography of America), Moscow: Nauka, 1979, pp. 232-33.

Ivan A. Kuskov, "Report to Alexander Baranov" ["Raport I. A. Kuskova A. A. Baranovu"], in Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, ed., Rossija i SShA: Stanovlenie otnoshenii. 1765-1815 [Russia and the USA: The Establishment of Relations, 1765-1815], Doc. no. 304, Moscow, 1980. Pages 375-77.

#### KUSKOV'S FIRST VOYAGE TO BODEGA BAY, 1808-09

New Archangel, October 5/17, 1809

With reference to Your Honor's instructions of October 14 last year, 1808, regarding our departure from the port of New Archangel, I was ordered and assigned a first rendezvous with the ship Nikolai (sent out earlier from New Archangel and piloted by the navigator Mr. Buligin) at the port of Gray's Harbor, 47° North Latitude and 263° 3' West Longitude (from Greenwich). Following this route, we encountered obstacles occasioned by continuously contrary and strong winds when we approached the above-mentioned destination. We sailed about for a while and finally were forced to leave. We headed toward Trinidad Bay, where I hoped to join the above-mentioned ship Nikolai, and arrived there on the 28th of November.

.....

After leaving the Trinidad roadstead on December 7, we reached Bodega on December 15 in good shape. After selecting a place to stay, we found the best harbor to be Tuliatelivy Bay, named after the natives that lived there, where the American, Captain [Oliver] Kimball, had earlier visited [on the brig Peacock, in 1806-07 - translator's note, SW]. Since we were ready to hunt, we made attempts to do so in various places nearby. But at the very beginning we had little success, due to the small number of sea otter, and then stormy weather hampered us.

But circumstances required that we stay. First, the rigging and sails needed to be changed, and other ship repairs were necessary. After these repairs were made, we needed to communicate with the commandant of San Francisco, the Spanish fort, and, if permitted, proceed to this port for trade and to request permission to hunt in San Francisco Bay. In case, however, permission should be denied, and the Nikolai not arrive, we would proceed southward where a

group under our agent Slobodchikov had earlier been.

Secondly, we had to wait for some time, of course, for the ship Nikolai. But since the repair and the equipping of our ship went quite slowly, we were delayed until May of this year, 1809. In the meantime, four sailors deserted - first in late December, and then from time to time others threatened to do as well. Since we could not rely on many of them, we were therefore forced to give up both our [anticipated] negotiations with the commandant at the Spanish presidio of San Francisco and our voyage southward. I could not confidently leave the ship, for they [the deserters] might possibly fall into the hands of enemies cruising in these waters (as explained later on).

We accepted the plan of going to Trinidad Bay and leaving a hunting party of Kodiak and Fox Islanders there on shore, under the direction of Slobodchikov and his assistants. Although we could not expect much success from hunting, at least this group would remain trustworthy in the future. But when we were all set, two baidarkas of these Kodiak hunters followed the deserters' example.

I feared that we might meet similar misfortunes on our voyage through unknown places and harbors and that many of the crew might seek to desert and leave the rest of us in bad straits, thus delaying the voyage. So I sent out a group under Slobodchikov's command to hunt northward along the coast. We learned [from the local people that lived] at Tuliatelivy Bay that there was, as it were, a large bay to the north with sea otter.

Buoyed by hopes of reaching it, our hunting party near Cape Mendocino proceeded at great risk along this shoreline, with its rocks, cliffs, and heavy surf, but there was nothing to hunt. Nor was there much success in acquiring furs through trade.

The entire party twice attempted to search for our deserters: at Bodega Bay, around Trinidad Bay, and inside the northern arm of San Francisco Bay, where one might roam all over, and where we undertook most of our fur-hunting activities. In all, we took in 1,866 adult and

yearling sea-otter pelts, 476 young-pup pelts, and 423 fur seals. Meanwhile, the time we spent on the shores of New Albion was prolonged until the middle of last August.

Concerning all that occurred throughout this period, I have the honor of presenting you the following herewith: a daily log-book and records of the crew (both male and female), who came along on board the Myrtle-Kodiak, and of various instances of death or desertion.

Humbly yours, Commerce Councillor [Ivan A. Kuskov]

Source: "Historical Notes on the Organization of the Russian-American Company's Settlement Subsequently Called Ross" (unpublished), quoted in S. G. Federova, "Russkaia Amerika i Tot'ma v sud'be Ivana Kuskova," *Problemy istorii i etnografii Ameriki*, Moscow: Nauka, 1979, pp. 237-38. (Extracted from a chapter entitled "An Expedition Sent Out to Found a Settlement".) Archival Source: Archives of the Geographical Society, category 99, inv. 1, file 120, sheets 2-4.

#### FORT ROSS IN ITS FIRST YEAR UNDER KUSKOV: AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN NO EARLIER THAN THE YEAR 1831

On the basis of His Majesty's acquiescence, Mr. Baranov appointed Commerce Councillor Kuskov as head of this settlement and selected for him from among his best people 40 Russians and 80 Aleuts, providing them with goods, supplies, materials and everything necessary for getting started. To convey men and materials, one of the best ships then in the colonies, the schooner *Chirikov*, was sent off under the command of Mr. Bensemman, an expert navigator. It left Sitka in February of 1812, and on March 15 it safely reached Bodega Bay, where it dropped anchor.

Immediately upon arrival Mr. Kuskov began to reconnoitre areas for settlement. He sent out his foreman [Sysoi] Slobodchikov and his navigation apprentice Kondakov with ten Aleuts on foot to explore between Bodega Bay and the Russian River.\* Upon examination, a suitable place for settlement was not to be found, and so Mr. Kuskov decided to establish the colony next to a small cove, ten miles [15 versts] above the Russian river. Having chosen this site for settlement, Mr. Kuskov moved his ship and all his men from Bodega Bay to this little inlet. They unloaded goods and other items from the ship, and the ship itself they dragged on shore. They pitched a few tents to live in, and took all precaution possible against savages by setting up guards and sentries at night.

The men immediately set to work preparing timber for the construction of the fort and for housing. Despite the fact that timber was very close by, it was quite difficult for the men to haul it in, since they had no beasts of burden. Russians and some of the Aleuts kept busy cutting

and building, while the rest of them dragged wood from the forest, so that by the end of August they had already succeeded in enclosing the fort area with a smooth, standing framework, within which they set up the first residence. The 30th of August, 1812,\*\* was designated as the day to raise the flag at the fort, and for this a full-length mast was made and placed in the center of the fort. After the customary prayers were read, the flag was hoisted, followed by the sound of cannons and gunfire.

Within the year, with the founding of the fort, the first activities undertaken were solely construction-related. Besides the stockade itself the following were built: inside were a communal barracks, a kitchen, a smithy and metal shop, and a storage place for goods; outside the stockade were a bath-house and a corral. Several vegetable gardens were set up near the settlement, where, on a trial basis, potatoes, turnips, horse-radishes and lettuce were planted, all of which yielded well. Vigorous measures were undertaken to feed the personnel. A Russian and four Aleuts were sent out from Bodega Bay to the Farallon Islands, near San Francisco Bay, to hunt sea lions and birds, which subsequently provided a considerable amount of salted and dried meat. Experienced bowmen were sent out to Tomales Bay\*\*\* and to Drake's Bay in a number of baidarkas. They always brought back a supply of goat meat and venison. Along with such jobs and activities, the hunting of fur-bearing animals was not forgotten: during the first year as many as 700 sea otter were caught at various locations, and 2,600 fur seals were taken on the Farallon Islands.\*\*\*\*

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\* The anonymous writer uses the term "Bodega Bay" (rather than Rummyantsev Bay), as well as the term "Slavianska River," rendered here as Russian River.

\* \* The name day of the Emperor Alexander I.

\* \* \* Tomales Bay was called by the Russians "Greater Bodega Bay."

\* \* \* \* The Russians called the fur seal *morskii kot* (i.e. sea cat).

Source: Commerce Councillor Ivan Kuskov to Governor José Arrillaga, June 20, 1814. Archives of California (Bancroft Library, UC-Berkeley), "Provincial State Papers," vol. XIX (C-A, reel 2), 1805-1815, pp. 365-67. English transcription (original Russian version destroyed in 1906 fire). (Note: minor grammatical and spelling errors or inconsistencies in Ivan Petroff's original translation have been adjusted by the editor - SW)

**KUSKOV'S RESPONSE TO GOV. ARRILLAGA'S LETTER ABOUT THE STATUS OF  
FORT ROSS (1814)**

Your Excellency

Gracious Sir,

Your Excellency's letter from the port of Monterey, forwarded by your officer, Mr.[Lt. Gabriel] Moraga, I had the honor to receive on the 16/27 day of April 1814, but its contents have remained unknown to me for the reason that I neither read nor write Spanish, though your officer, the above-mentioned Mr. Moraga, endeavored to make me understand the object of Your Excellency's communication, his explanations were hardly sufficiently clear, as we had no interpreter, to justify me in taking official action on the premises.

I have been informed by Mr. Moraga that Your Excellency has in your possession a tent which has been left behind through the carelessness of some of our men in the port of San Francisco. I take the liberty of making Your Excellency a present of the same, as I intended to do so before I received your communication and had made arrangements to have it forwarded to you by the Commandante Don Luis Arguello.

With respect to the Kodiak men now at the port of San Francisco, I have more than once asked the Commandante to intercede with Your Excellency for their return to us, and once received an encouraging reply; but later a refusal followed, saying that Your Excellency has resolved not to return them, and now I ask Your Excellency directly, in the name of the Honorable Russian-American Company, under special protection of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, that the above-mentioned inhabitants of Kodiak be returned to us. It appears that they

have done no wrong, but were only compelled to save themselves from the surf in the bay of the port of San Francisco, where they were captured. Of the natives of Kodiak who visited that place during last year, 1813, two men and two women were also detained without the least cause. I was informed by the above-mentioned officer, Mr. Moraga, and by Don Gervasio that Your Excellency had given orders for the Commandante of the port of San Francisco [Luis Arguello] to return these Kodiak men to us, but whether this is true or not, time will show.

With the greatest respect I ask Your Excellency's permission to call myself

Your Excellency's

faithful servant

Commerce Councillor

Ivan Kuskov

June 9/20, 1814

Source: Extract from unspecified Russian-American Company papers sent by Dr. Svetlana Fyodorova to Mike Tucker, Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento; dated Moscow, April 11, 1980.

**EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES SENT TO FORT ROSS, 1812-1815**

"Account of the Capital Goods for the New Settlement of Ross, Copied at the Main Administration [in St. Petersburg] from Information Received from the New Archangel Office [Sitka], December 1815."

The following have been forwarded to Mr. Commerce Councillor Kuskov from the New Archangel Office during the Years 1812 through 1815 (according to six accountings):

	<u>rubles</u>	<u>kopeks</u>
60 barrels of powder	4,746	
42 poods, 19 lbs. [ca. 1,530 lbs] of powder	<u>40</u> 4,786	<u>50</u> 50
guns of various calibers:		
10 bronze cannon	2,674	
15 iron cannon	4,100	
221 rifles		
20 sabers     }	5,219	
22 pistols	<u>130</u> 5,349	
various military materials:		
gunlocks and flints, powder cartridges and horns, grapeshot, wicks, swords, spears, etc.	at 3,702	88.2
scales and various weights	1,071	97
nails of various sizes	at 705	72
various domestic items:		
chimney flues, door accessories, glass and tableware	2,766	56
762 door locks and hanging locks - iron and bronze	2,359	40

162 mirrors of various sizes		769	62
tools: for carpentry, joinery, barrel-making, metalworking and blacksmithing	at	7,727	6.2
mathematical and navigational instruments:			
one telescope		25	
one sextant		100	
one octant		35	
three jacks		450	
two bronze bells (130 lbs.)		188	
71 small bells		117	
137 iron and pewter spoons		588	10
musical instruments: one organ		300	
various agricultural implements:			
spades, shovels, scythes, sickles, ploughshares, etc.		1,909	22.5
clothing and footwear:			
jackets, trousers, vests, overcoats, boots, shoes, etc.		8,012	7.5
three linen tents		7	25
glassware:			
bottles, glasses, wine-glasses, decanters, and half-liters	at	324	93.2
pewterware: teapots, dishes, and plates	at	171	
casks and barrels - oak and fir	at	1,955	70
24 different irons		118	50
36 iron-heaters			
12 pieces of cloth - for flags	at 25 rubles		
	at 48 rubles	453	
one flag		40	
one pennant		15	
20 church icons		49	45
29 dozen silk, worsted, and cotton stockings		1,534	80
161 hats: knitted, downy, and felt		1,195	45

Source: National Archives, Russian-American Company Records, Correspondence of the Governors-General, Communications Received, Reel 2, page 4 (January 15, 1820; Report No. 51).

**THE COMPANY DIRECTORS ARRANGE FOR KUSKOV'S RETIREMENT (1820)**

From the Main Administration of the Russian-American Company, under the Patronage of His Most Supreme Imperial Majesty,

To the General Manager of the Russian-American Colonies, Lt.-Capt. Matvei Ivanovich Muravyov:

Commerce Councillor Kuskov, who administers the settlement of Ross, wishes to return to his homeland after having served the Company for a very long time. For this reason, Mr. [Semyon] Yanovsky [Acting Manager of the Colonies, November 1818 to September 1820] was even informed last year, via the ship Borodino, that Navigator [shturman], Karl Ivanovich Schmidt could be put to good use in replacing Mr. Kuskov.

Upon your arrival in New Archangel, you may agree to appoint him [to the position at Fort Ross]. You are already aware of the [Foreign] Ministry's thoughts in its deliberations concerning this outpost. As a consequence, the position may perhaps be terminated. However, in case the opposite should result, [the outpost] should not be weakened.

[Board of Directors] Mikhail Buldakov

Benedict Kramer

No. 51. January 15, 1820.

Andrei Severin

## IVAN KUSKOV: A SPECTRUM OF VIEWPOINTS

### COUNT NIKOLAI RUMIANTSEV & KUSKOV'S NEW TITLE (1806)

Dear Ivan Alexandrovich:

I have respectfully accepted the opinion of the Main Office of the Russian American Company and of the former captain of the ship *Neva* [Yury Lisiansky] concerning your energetic work in helping manage the settlements of the Russian-American Company. I have considered it quite justifiable in petitioning His Imperial Majesty, on your behalf, for receiving the rank of Commerce Councillor, which His Majesty has conferred upon you.

I will be quite satisfied if you accept my solicitation in the matter of this award and the value which I attach to it, for since the time that I was entrusted with administered the Ministry [as State Chancellor] only five of these awards of distinction have been granted. You now justly receive it as a consequence of your distinguished merit.

I remain, moreover, with all due respects to you, dear Sir, your humble servant.

October 13, 1806

Count Nikolai Rumiantsev

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Source: Quoted in N. A. Chernitsyn, "Issledovatel' Aliaski i severnoi Kalifornii, Ivan Kuskov" (Ivan Kuskov: Explorer in Alaska and Northern California), *Letopis' Severa*, vol. III (Moscow, 1962), 112

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### CHOICE OF THE FORT ROSS SITE: PRO'S AND CON'S IN RETROSPECT

[After Kuskov founded the fort], the Company Administration repeatedly expressed the opinion that the site for the Russian settlement in California was unfortunate and poorly chosen. Its proximity to San Francisco, the seat of Spanish power, its considerable distance from Rumiantsev [Bodega] Bay, with its excellent harbor, as compared to no harbor at all along the strip occupied, and a number of other drawbacks provoked constant criticism from the Company.

However, Tikhmenev [in his history of the Company, 1861] correctly observes that all

these drawbacks became evident only when the Russians were forced to limit themselves to settling only along the strip they had initially occupied. If we proceed from the assumptions of Baranov and Kuskov, who both anticipated that the settlement itself would be only a first step in the possession of all California, then we should realize that this choice [of site] provided a number of advantages both for defense and for further advances.

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Source: S. B. Okun', *Rossiisko-Amerikanskaia Kompaniia*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1939, p. 116

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **CAPT. VASILY GOLOVNIN'S ACCOUNT OF KUSKOV AT FORT ROSS (1818)**

Fort Ross comprises a rectangular palisade of tall, thick beams, with two wooden towers on its sides, and is defended by 13 cannon. The construction inside is very good: the manager's house, the barracks, and the warehouses. To the honor of Commerce Councillor Kuskov, the founder of this establishment, it should be mentioned that there is a draw-well inside the stockade, even though located right next to a stream. This is a rather necessary measure of military preparedness, in case of hostility with the natives or encroachment on the part of the enemy. . . .

Mr. Kuskov has experimented a little with agriculture, but due to the lack of enough workers and necessary tools, and perhaps inexperience too, harvests have not corresponded to expectations, for this very year the wheat crop gave him only four times the seed, and barley five times.

He also raises cattle and is without a doubt successful, for the abundant pastures, watering places, and pasturage year round permit a small number of people to manage large herds. He now has ten horses, 80 head of horned cattle, 200 sheep, and over 50 pigs. These animals are all in fine condition. From the two steers he gave me, the meat alone weighed 1800 pounds. He has a lot of domestic fowl, such as geese and chickens.

As part of his domestic economy, a mill and the tanning of hides for footwear play a role.

He is presently intending to make his own cloth and is teaching Indian girls who have married Aleuts to spin wool. In a word, Mr. Kuskov knows how to make use of the good climate and fertility of the land. He is a man the like of which the Company hardly possesses elsewhere in its service.

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Source: V. M. Golovnin, *Puteshestvie na shliupe "Kamchatka" v 1817, 1818, i 1819 godakh* (Voyage of the Sloop Kamchatka during the Years 1817-1819). Edited by V. A. Divin *et al.* Moscow: Mysl', 1965. Pp. 175, 178-79.

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#### KUSKOV AS HELPFUL MENTOR: ZAKHAR CHICHINOV'S RECOLLECTIONS (1818)

Mr. Kuskoff treated me very kindly, and occasionally, when he had time, he used to teach me a little. Sometimes he gave me papers to copy, and he promised my father to give me some more schooling as soon as he was relieved of his position at Ross.

We stayed there all that summer and winter, but there was a great deal of scurvy among the men, as the Aleuts did not like the beef and they did not know anything about raising vegetables. Mr. Kuskoff then concluded to get some meat that the Aleuts would eat, and he made up a party of Aleuts under my father's command, to go to some small rocky islands a long ways from the coast - to kill sea lions and salt down the meat. I was sent along with the party to keep accounts.

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Source: Zakhar Chichinov. *The Adventures of Zakahar Tchitchinoff, 1818-1828*. Introduction by Arthur Woodward. Los Angeles: Glen Dawson, 1956. Page 4. (Memoir dictated in 1878.)

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#### TESTIMONIAL UPON KUSKOV'S RETIREMENT, FROM MANAGER-IN-CHIEF MATVEI MURAVYOV (1822)

Commerce Councillor Ivan Alexandrovich Kuskov has long continued his service in America, to the honor of his own name and to the benefit of his Fatherland.

During his most recent stay in America he commanded the settlement and outpost of Ross, on the shores of New Albion. Mr. Kuskov himself founded and constructed this outpost. He established a shipyard and had three mercantile ships built there, which were of great use to the colonies of the Russian-American Company.

Amidst savage peoples not far from the outpost, he engaged in stockraising, horticulture, and some agriculture. He reconciled groups of Indians hostile to each other, and for many years he kept these wild people in friendly relations with the residents of the outpost solely by fair and gentle means. After September 15, 1820, he served under my authority, and as a sign of my esteem for him I am pleased to testify to his noble behavior, his high level of honesty, and his steadfast zeal for the common welfare of all.

His experience and knowledge of local circumstances is so valuable that it is difficult to replace him with anyone at all. I warmly wish him every happiness, but bid him farewell with deep regret.

Given at New Archangel with my own signature, and with the seal of the Russian-American Company affixed. Matvei Muravyov, Cavalier and Captain of the Russian Navy, and Manager-in-Chief of the Russian-American Company. Secretary - Nikolai Gribanov.

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Source: From a biography of Ivan Kuskov written shortly after his death by an unknown author; the manuscript belonged to P. A. Kuskova; Copy of 1916 in the archives of the Totma Regional Museum.

Quoted in Chernitsyn, "Issledovatel' Aliaski," pp. 120-21.

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#### **KUSKOV AS COMPANY OFFICIAL: IVAN PETROFF'S RETROSPECTIVE VIEW (1877)**

Baranoff and Kuskoff, though they had official rank bestowed upon them by the Government, belonged to the class of shrewd, but rough and uncultured fur traders, slightly polished by their intercourse with foreigners; but after that the higher positions throughout the Russian possessions in America were held by men of education and ability.

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Source: Ivan Petroff, "The Management and Personnel of the Russian-American Company, From Its Beginning to Its Dissolution," (in manuscript form), San Francisco, 1877, p. 10. Copy located in Bancroft Library (P-K 23), University of California, Berkeley. Note: Petroff was Bancroft's assistant in acquiring and translating literary sources on Russian America.

MANAGERS AT FORT ROSS: 1812-1841

- 1) IVAN ALEXANDROVICH KUSKOV (1812-1821)
- 2) KARL IVANOVICH SCHMIDT (1821-1824)
- 3) PAUL IVANOVICH SHELIKHOV (1825-1829)
- 4) PETER STEPANOVICH KOSTROMITINOV (1830-1838)
- 5) ALEXANDER GAVRILOVICH ROTCHEV (1838-1841)

## A SUMMARY OF THE TREATY BETWEEN RUSSIANS AND INDIANS SIGNED AT FORT ROSS IN 1817

Source: S. B. Okun'. Rossisko-Amerikanskaia Kompaniia (The Russian-American Company).  
Moscow, 1939, p. 122.

The Company moved toward a legal formulation of the Indians' "cession" of the territory of Fort Ross even before the Spanish government's inevitable protest was received. In 1817 [Lt. Captain Leonty] Hagemeister drew up a document signed by the Indian chiefs Chu-gu-an, Amat-tin, Gem-le-le, and others, which confirmed "that they are quite satisfied with the Russians' occupation of this place and they are now living without danger from other Indians who previously attacked them. This security began only after the time of the [Russian] occupation." The document read: "Lt. Captain Hagemeister has conveyed the Russian-American Company's gratitude to them [the chiefs] for having ceded the lands for the Company's forts, structures, and workshops, located on sites that belonged to Chu-gu-an."

Ivan A. Kuskov, "Report to Alexander Baranov" ["Raport I. A. Kuskova A. A. Baranovu], in Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, ed., Rossija i SShA: Stanovlenie otnoshenii. 1765-1815 [Russia and the USA: The Establishment of Relations, 1765-1815], Doc. no. 304 , Moscow, 1980. Pages 375-77.

New Archangel, October 5/17, 1809

With reference to Your Honor's instructions of October 14 last year, 1808, regarding our departure from the port of New Archangel, I was ordered and assigned a first rendezvous with the ship Nikolai (sent out earlier from New Archangel and piloted by the navigator Mr. Bulygin) at the port of Gray's Harbor, 47° North Latitude and 263° 3' West Longitude (from Greenwich). Following this route, we encountered obstacles occasioned by continuous contrary and strong winds when we approached the above-mentioned destination. We sailed about for a while, and finally we were forced to leave. We headed toward Trinidad Bay, where I hoped to join the above-mentioned ship Nikolai and we arrived there on the 28th of November.

. . . . .

After leaving the Trinidad roadstead on December on December 7, we reached Bodega on December 15 in good shape. After selecting a place to stay, we found the best harbor to be Tuliate-livy Bay, named after the natives that lived there, where the American, Captain Kimball, had earlier visited. Since we were ready to hunt, we made attempts to do so in various places nearby. But at the very beginning we had little success, due to the small number of sea otter, and then stormy weather hampered us.

But circumstances required that we stay. First, the rigging and sails needed to be changed, and other ship repairs were necessary. After these repairs were made, we needed to communicate with the commandant of San Francisco, the Spanish fort, and, if permitted, proceed to this port for trade and to request permission to hunt in San Francisco Bay. In case, however, permission should not be granted and the Nikolai not arrive, we would proceed southward where earlier a group had been with our agent Slobodchikov.

Secondly, we had to wait for some time, of course, for the ship Nikolai. But since the repair and equipping of our ship went quite slowly, we were delayed until May of this year, 1809. In the meantime four sailors deserted first in late December, and then from time to time others threatened to do as well. Since we could not rely on many of them, we were therefore forced to give up both our [anticipated] negotiations with the commandant at the Spanish presidio of San Francisco and our voyage southward. I could not confidently leave the ship, for they [deserters] might possibly fall into the hands of enemies cruising in these waters (as explained later on).

We accepted the plan of going to Trinidad Bay and leaving a hunting party of Kodiak and Fox Islanders there on shore, under the direction of Slobodchikov and his assistants. Although we could not expect much success from hunting, at least this group would remain trustworthy in the future. But when we were all set, two baidarkas of these Kodiak hunters followed the deserters' example.

I feared that we might meet similar misfortunes on our voyage through unknown places and harbors and that many of the crew might seek to desert and leave the rest of us in bad straits, thus delaying the voyage. So I sent out a group under Slobodchikov's command to hunt northward along the coast. We learned [from the local people] that lived at Tuliatelivy Bay that there was, as it were, a large bay to the north with sea otter.

Buoyed by hopes of reaching it, our hunting party near Cape Mendocino proceeded at great risk along this shoreline, with its rocks, cliffs, and heavy surf, but there was nothing to hunt. Nor was there much success in acquiring furs through trade.

The entire party attempted twice to search for our deserters: at Bodega Bay, around Trinidad Bay, and inside the northern arm of San Francisco Bay, where one might roam all over, and where we undertook most of our fur-hunting activities. In all, we took in 1,866 adult and yearling sea-otter pelts, 476 young-pup pelts, and 423 fur seals. Meanwhile the time we spent on the shores of New Albion was prolonged until the middle of last August.

Concerning all that occurred throughout this period, I have the honor of presenting you the following herewith: a daily log-book and records of the crew (both sexes), who came along on the Myrtle-Kodiak, and of various instances of death or desertion.

Humbly yours, Commerce Councillor [Kuskov]

Adelbert von Chamisso. "Reise um die Welt" (A Voyage around the World), in Saemtliche Werke, vol. II. "California," in part II "Observations and Viewpoints," pp. 275-283. Munich: Winckler Verlag, n.d. Excerpts from pp. 281-83.

#### CHAMISSO'S OBSERVATIONS OF INDIANS IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (1816)

The disdain which the missionaries harbor toward these peoples to whom they are sent seems to us an unfortunate circumstance, in view of their godly vocation. Not one of them seems to have concerned himself with their history, customs, beliefs and languages. "They are unreasoning savages, and there is nothing more to be said about them. Who bothers with their irrationality, who wastes time on it?"

Indeed, these tribes extend deep among those which inhabit the northern coast and interior of America. On the whole, they appear similar to one another, except for the Cholovones, somewhat, whom we soon learned to differentiate by their distinctive physiognomy (which the padres themselves could not). They are all of very wild appearance and are very dark-colored. Their long, smooth hair - thick and black - shades a broad, flat face, from which large, fierce eyes shine forth. The gradation of color; the languages whose roots are alien to each other; their way of life, crafts, and weapons; the lines of their tattoos, variously on the neck and chin; and the way they paint their bodies for war or for dancing all differentiate the various tribes. They live in variously friendly or hostile relationships among themselves and with the Spanish. Their weapons consist of bows and arrows; with some, these are of extraordinary elegance: the bow is light and strong, and at the outer bend lined with animal sinews. With others, the bow is bulky and made only of wood.

Some possess the skill of weaving handsome, water-tight containers out of colored grass stalks (a woman's occupation). However, at the mission the Indians most forget their craft talents. All of them go around naked and have no horses nor boats of any kind whatsoever. They only know how to fit bundles of reeds together, which carry them over the water, due to their

specific light weight. Those that reside along rivers live, above all, on salmon, for which they set up basket traps. Those in the mountains live on wild fruits and grains. None of them, however, plants or sows, but they burn fields from time to time, so as to increase their productivity.

. . . In America, and especially here in New California, tribal communities from one common stock that live next to one another often speak quite different languages. Each fragment of human history is important. We must leave for our heirs, just as our predecessors left for us, satisfactory accounts of the natives of California and collect their languages. We had set up as a goal a proposed trip to some of the nearest missions. But matters of a different kind kept us in San Francisco, and the day set for our departure arrived without our being able to have the spare time for this trip.

. . . Since the time of [LaPerouse and Vancouver], not very much has changed in California. The Presidio has been newly built of air-dried bricks and is roofed with tiles. The construction of the chapel has not yet begun, such as have been built in the missions, and the Indians' barracks at San Francisco are of the same architectural style. An artillery-man has set up horse-driven mills in the missions, but they are mostly out of order now and cannot be repaired. In San Francisco there is still a millstone which a horse turns on top of another one without mechanical assistance, the only mill in operation. When needed quickly, the grain is ground between two stones by Indian women. A windmill at the Russian-American settlement arouses admiration, yet finds no imitation. When artisans were brought here, at great expense, several years ago to teach the various skills needed, the Indians made use of the instruction than did the gente racional, the expression by which the Spanish designate themselves. They themselves bear witness of this to the Indians.

...

We should finally mention the noble hospitality with which both military and missions

sought to anticipate our needs, as well as the freedom so readily and boundlessly extended, which we enjoyed here on Spanish soil. We dedicate these lines of remembrance and gratitude to our friends in California.

We were given the names of the following tribes among the California Indians, as such, who live in the area around Mission San Francisco.

The Guymen  
The Utschiun  
The Olumpali

The Soclan, and  
The Sonomi

All speak one language; they make up the majority of those at Mission San Francisco.

The Chulpun  
The Umpin  
The Kosmitas  
The Pitemen  
The Lamames

The Bolbones  
The Chalabones  
The Apalamnes, and  
The Cholovones

All of these live on the Rio del Sacramento and speak only one language. They carry the best weapons. The Cholovones, a warlike tribe, are allied with the Spanish against the other Indians.

The Suysum  
The Numpali

The Tamal

They tatoo themselves, speak the same language, and live toward the north, the Tamal toward the northwest.

The Ululato

They live farther north than the Suysum, and only a few of them come to the mission.

Vasilii M. Golovnin. Puteshestvie na shliupe "Kamchatka" v 1817. 1818. i 1819 godakh  
(Voyage of the Sloop Kamchatka during the Years 1817 - 1819), edited by V. A. Divin,  
et al. Moscow: Mysl', 1965. Excerpts from pp. 176-78, 182-83.

#### CAPT. GOLOVNIN DISCUSSES RUSSIA'S RIGHT TO COLONIZE NEW ALBION (1818)

In accordance with all popular usages, the Russians have had full right to settle on these shores, but the Spanish wish to drive them away on grounds of unfounded and completely empty claims. The Russians founded their settlement with the willing consent of the original inhabitants of this country, with the permission of a people who do not recognize the authority of the Spanish and who have been in perpetual enmity with them. This people has ceded the right for a site to be chosen and settled on its shores in exchange for a certain payment, delivered in various wares.

The friendly disposition of this people toward the Russians, which has continued to this day, testifies clearly that the latter have not taken possession of this land by force. Russian hunters go off alone or in pairs to shoot wild goats in the forest, sometimes stay overnight among the Indians, and return unharmed and uninjured. As opposed to this, Spaniards do not dare show themselves in their midst unarmed or in small numbers, or they would all be killed. These Indians willingly give away their daughters in marriage to Russians and Aleuts who have settled in their midst, and now there are many of them at Fort Ross. Not only friendship but family ties are formed this way.

Moreover, the Russians have settled on a coastline which has never been occupied by a single European people, for not only La Perouse and Vancouver, but many others after them here, such as English and American merchant captains, can testify that the Spanish have never had a settlement north of the presidio of San Francisco. On the north side of the vast bay of this name they founded Mission San Rafael three years after our settlement, and they founded it on land that belongs to New Albion and not to California. The Indians burned this establishment of theirs. Such are the rights of the Russians to the occupation of New Albion.

The Spanish base their claims on the right of first discovery and on their contiguity with these shores. Even if the Spanish had seen these shores prior to Drake, this would have been extremely questionable, for even in most recent times navigators have shown that they knew nothing of the western lands of North America.

In an earlier chapter, I mentioned already that the chief of the people living near Port Rumiantssev came to visit me on board ship during my stay there. He brought gifts, which consisted of various headdresses of theirs, arrows, and domestic implements, and he requested that Russia take him under its protection. Our translator was an Aleut, who had lived for over a year among this people. The chief, named Valenila, actually wanted more Russians to settle in their midst, so that they could defend the inhabitants from Spanish oppression. He entreated me to give him our flag so that, as he put it, when Russian ships appeared on their coastline, he could raise it as a sign of friendship and alliance with the Russians.

#### NEW ALBION'S GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES AND RUSSIAN EXPLORATION OF THE AREA

New Albion has only one major disadvantage for the establishment of a colony: the lack of a single convenient and safe shelter along the whole expanse of this region's coastline. Port Rumiantssev, situated at Latitude  $38^{\circ} 18'$ , is shielded from all winds and is completely secure, but with its shoals it is suitable for only the smallest ships. Its roadstead is fully accessible from the south.

Greater Bodega [Tomales Bay] is also shallow at its estuary; Drake's Bay, Trinidad Bay, and a few others can serve as mooring places in summer, when the strong southerly winds are gone.

The rivers that flow into the ocean within the boundaries of New Albion, though large and deep, either are very shallow at their mouths or have banks of alluvial sand and silt which often shift and make an exit or entry not only quite difficult, but even very dangerous. Such, for example is the . . . Columbia River. This is the proper place to say that the Russians who have set-

tled in New Albion have within a short time discovered rivers, bays, and mountains which were totally unknown to the Spanish. It is not necessary to mention all the discoveries made in this country by Russians as evidence, but it will be enough to cite the following examples.

The Spanish did not even know of two large rivers flowing into the north side of San Francisco Bay, and even the boundaries of the bay itself were unknown to them. But Russians were there several times and found that the bay extended northward, parallel to the entrance of Greater Bodega Bay. One of the rivers flowing into this part of the bay runs from the northwest, and the other from the northeast. The first of them, according to the Indians' information, comes from the same large lake that the Slavianka River flows from. Russians have travelled 65 miles up the second river and found a high, flaming, fire-breathing mountain there, the existence of which the Spanish had never heard. The Indians are convinced that still a third great river flows from this same lake to the west, which, judging by their words, is to be found about 12 miles north of Cape Mendocino and emptying into the bay discovered by the Russians just last year [Eureka Bay]. This bay is divided into two arms and is wide enough, but still shallow. Two large rivers and three small ones flow into it, all abounding in fish, among which are sturgeon and salmon; there are many seals in the large rivers.

Enormous forests, mostly of fir and alder, grow along the shores of the bay and the river banks; they are vast in number and are valuable for building [materials]. Between this bay and Trinidad Bay there is another bay larger than the first, into which two big rivers flow; Russians have been up them. Thus, there are four large rivers and three small ones along an expanse of about 45 miles, from Cape Mendocino to Trinidad Bay. Only one of them is designated by name on Spanish maps - Rio de los Tortolas. This clearly shows how unfamiliar this country is among Spaniards. All the while they make claims to it as their lawful possession.

Vasily M. Golovnin. Puteshestvie na shliupe "Kamchatka" v 1817, 1818, i 1819 godakh  
(Voyage of the Sloop Kamchatka during the Years 1817-1819). Edited by V.A. Divin et al  
Moscow: Mysl', 1965. (Extracts from p. 151, 172, 175-76, 178-79)

[September 3, 1818] . . . At one o'clock in the afternoon we saw the coast at a distance of about five or six miles away, and soon afterward we caught sight of Fort Ross, above which the flag of the Russian-American Company was waving. We then raised our own flag, accompanied by cannon shot, and approaching the shoreline, two miles away, we saw three Aleut boats coming toward us. In one of them was Commerce Councillor Kuskov, Manager of the Fort, who reached us at two o'clock in the afternoon. I had the pleasure of learning from him that the Chief Manager of the Company's settlements [in Alaska], First Captain Hagemeister, was in Monterey, and that I would surely find him there. Mr. Kuskov stayed on the sloop with us until nine o'clock in the evening, until he had obtained from shore various fresh, edible provisions, a supply of which he ordered from the fort while on the sloop. . . . After receiving what we needed, we bade farewell to Mr. Kuskov, and at nine o'clock p.m., with a gentle southeast wind, we went our way.

.....

[Sept. 20, en route north from Monterey] . . . A gentle wind from the southeast that night allowed us to pass Point de los Reyes, and before dawn on the 21st we approached Port Rumyantsev, where at six o'clock in the morning we arrived, when it became light. . . . [A]fter approaching shore at 8:00, I dispatched our Aleuts to shore in their baidarkas with a letter for Mr. Kuskov at Ross, and began to beat windward under short sail. When the wind soon abated, we came to an anchorage, where at 10:00, at a depth of 42 feet, we cast anchor at a distance of a mile from the nearest shoreline. . . . That evening, about eight o'clock, Mr. Kuskov came to see us. He had seen our sloop from the promontory off the fort, and, supposing it was the Kutuzov, he had left at 11:00 in the morning. My letter reached him en route, and he sent an order back to

the fort to provide us immediately with fresh foodstuffs, which we needed. The usual transit by baidarka from Fort Ross to Port Rummyantsev takes five hours, but a contrary wind detained Mr. Kuskov for longer than this.

[Sept. 22]. . . . Meanwhile, we were sent from the fort two bulls, ten rams, four pigs, some chickens, and a large amount of vegetables. On this day I spent time with Mr. Kuskov, and he told me all the necessary information regarding the country here. After dinner we went together to the Indian settlement or, better put, to their huts, and we saw how they live, what they eat, how they treat the sick with calumnious statements, and how they play with sticks for gain, all of which will be described later on .

.....

Fort Ross comprises a rectangular palisade of tall, thick beams, with two wooden towers on its sides, and is defended by 13 cannon. The construction inside is very good: the manager's house, the barracks, and the warehouses. To the honor of Commerce Councillor Kuskov, the founder of this establishment, it should be mentioned that there is a draw-well inside the stockade, even though located right next to a stream. This is a rather necessary measure of military preparedness, in case of hostility with the natives or encroachment on the part of an enemy.

Outside the fort are a bath-house and cattle-yards. The garrison consists of 26 Russians and 102 Aleuts, many of whom are often away hunting. During our stay here, 74 Aleuts were at Cape Mendocino hunting otter, which thrive, though not in large numbers, between this cape and Trinidad Bay. With such a force, the manager here, Commerce Councillor Kuskov, is not afraid of the Spanish and disregards all their threats.

The moment this establishment was founded the Governor of Upper California knew about it, as did other Spaniards subordinate to him, and they even helped the Russians, supplying them with their first necessities in horses and cattle, and then maintaining friendly relations and trade with Mr. Kuskov. Missionaries bought various goods from him in cash and for grain;

Spanish officials went to visit him, and he visited them -- in a word, they lived as two friendly neighboring peoples should live. . . . At present, however, . . . the new governor, who has arrived here from Mexico, has demanded that the Russians leave these shores, which belong to the Spanish Crown, and should they not leave, he threatened to drive them away by force.

At first, Mr. Kuskov did not know just how to treat him, being unaccustomed to relations of such a kind, and unacquainted with a single foreign language as well. But since he well knew how weak and contemptible the forces were that the governor had at his disposal, he gave him the short and curt reply that he had founded the settlement on the orders of his superiors, and consequently he could not abandon it, would not, and refused to go contrary to the instructions of the same authorities. This made the governor discontinue his demands and threats, and he was satisfied by the fact alone that he had prohibited any kind of relations with Fort Ross and had forbidden Mr. Kuskov to hunt sea otter in San Francisco Bay.

.....

The soil here produces many plants in abundance. At present, under Mr. Kuskov's direction, the gardens grow cabbage, lettuce, pumpkins, horseradish, carrots, turnips, beets, onions, and potatoes. Even watermelons, canteloupes, and grapes ripen in the open air, although he has not grown these for long. Garden vegetables are very tasty and sometimes reach extreme size; for example, one horseradish weighed about 45 pounds, and they often grow to about 35 lbs. Pumpkins here are sometimes over 50 lbs., and one turnip weighed 13 lbs. Potatoes are especially prolific: at Fort Ross their usual fertility is 100-fold from a single apple, and at Port Count Rumyantsev as many as 180 to 200 sometimes grow from a single apple; moreover, they plant them twice a year. Those sown in early February they harvest in May, and whatever is sown in Juen is ready in October.

Mr. Kuskov has experimented a little with agriculture, but due to the lack of enough workers

and necessary tools, and perhaps inexperience too, harvests have not corresponded to expectations, for this very year the wheat crop gave him only four times the seed, and barley five times.

He also raises cattle and is without a doubt successful, for the abundant pastures, watering places, and pasturage year round permit a small number of people to manage large herds. He now has ten horses, 80 head of horned cattle, 200 sheep, and over 50 pigs. These animals are all in fine condition. From the two steers he gave me, the meat alone weighed 1800 pounds. He has a lot of domestic fowl, such as geese and chickens.

As part of his domestic economy, a mill and the tanning of skins for footyear play a role. He is presently intending to make his own cloth and is teaching Indian girls who have married Aleuts to spin wool. In a word, Mr. Kuskov knows how to make use of the good climate and fertility of the land. He is a man the like of which the Company hardly possesses elsewhere in its service.

Otto von Kotzebue, Neue Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1823. 24. 25 und 26 (A New Voyage around the World, 1823-1826), Weimar: W. Hoffman, 1830, 2 volumes. Excerpts from pp. 65, 67-68, 69.

A DESCRIPTION OF KARL SCHMIDT, MANAGER AT FORT ROSS (1821-25), AND THE FORT WITH ITS SURROUNDING AREA AND RESIDENTS  
(November 1824)

[En route to Fort Ross]. Our route now led us partly over hills and meadows, and partly along the sandy shore of the ocean, where we got so close that the feet of our horses were often sprayed by the surf. Soon, after we passed Bodega Bay, we rode across the shallow bottom of the river the Russians call "Slavianka." It is said to be deeper farther inland, and even navigable. The Russians have gone 70 miles upstream. It comes from the northeast, and furthermore, its banks are said to have the appearance of great fertility, but numerous warlike peoples live there.

The region we now passed through became very romantic, without changing its rugged character. The rich grass-cover again gave evidence of the soil's fertility. Once more we reached the top of a high mountain, and to our great joy, we looked down upon Fort Ross. A rather easier route led down the slope. We spurred our tired horses to a gallop and dashed through the gate, causing no little amazement. The manager of this establishment, Mr. Schmidt, received us most amiably and ordered a few cannon to be fired, in welcoming us to Russian-American soil. Most hospitably, he took us into his comfortable, clean house, built of thick beams in the European style.

.....

The residents of Fort Ross live in the greatest harmony with the natives. Many Indians come to the fort and work for daily wages. At night they usually set up camp outside the stockade walls. They marry their daughters to Russians and Aleuts, and many family ties thereby develop, which strengthen good relations even more. Fort Ross residents go off to hunt deer and other

wild game far into the interior, and they spend night among various Indian tribes without anything harmful ever happening to them. Spaniards would not dare do this. The more striking the contrast is between Spanish treatment of the Indians and that of the local residents, the more a friend of humanity should rejoice when entering Russian territory. . . .

Fort Ross has a mild climate. The mercury on a Reaumur thermometer seldom falls to the freezing point in winter, but the frequent fogs along this coast do not allow garden vegetables to grow very well. On the other hand, just a few miles inland, where fog doesn't penetrate, most southern plants thrive quite well. Garden products reach an enormous size. Some radishes weigh 50 pounds, some pumpkins 65, and other vegetables are proportionately just as large. Potatoes yield 100 to 200-fold and are harvested twice a year. Famine can hardly ever be a problem here.

The stockade is surrounded by fields of wheat and barley, which due to fog are admittedly not as productive as those of Santa Clara. Yet they reward the work of the Fort Ross residents, to whom they belong specifically, with white bread and groats each day. The Aleuts, too, like it here so much that they would rather stay than return to their islands, which otherwise they are so reluctant to leave.

The Spanish should take a lesson in agriculture from Mr. Schmidt at Fort Ross. In these endeavors he has brought everything to a degree of perfection that is quite admirable. Under his supervision, field tools and implements are all manufactured here, and in no way are they inferior to the best that Europe can offer. Our Spanish travel companions were also amazed, but it was seeing a windmill that that astonished them most of all. They had never seen such an elaborate, yet practical machine.

.....

After a two-day visit here, we took our leave from the estimable Mr. Schmidt and left Fort Ross along the same route we had earlier taken. We encountered nothing noteworthy along the

way back. Prof. Eschscholtz stayed behind to conduct some scientific investigations which he still needed, and anticipated joining us by taking the sea route back, on an Aleut baidara. Several of these were soon to leave for San Francisco on a sea-otter hunt.

Otto von Kotzebue. Neue Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1823, 24, 25 und 26 (A New Voyage around the World, in the Years 1823-1826). Weimar: W. Hoffman, 1830. Two volumes in one. From Chapter XI: "California and the Russian Settlement, Fort Ross." Excerpts from pp. 47-48, 61-62, 80.

CAPTAIN KOTZEBUE'S REFLECTIONS ON VIEWING SAN FRANCISCO BAY (September 1824)

. . . [We] sailed in a quite easterly direction past picturesque shores, islands, and promontories toward Mission Santa Clara, which was 30 nautical miles away from our ship, as the crow flies. Wherever our eyes turned, the countryside appeared beautiful and fertile. No bare rocks are to be seen here. The shoreline, covered with the prettiest green, is only of moderate height. The undulating hills rise like amphitheatres toward the interior, with forested, hilly country in the background. Little oak groves stand scattered on the handsome, rounded hills, and separated by pleasant meadows, they form groups even more charming than an artist could portray.

With little effort the richest harvests could be reaped from all of this land. But one looks in vain for people here who have put to good use what nature offers so lavishly. All about these beautiful fields a deathlike silence reigns, broken only by wild animals. As far as the eye can reach, nowhere is there a hut or trace of human beings. Not one boat travels upon this body of water, which could support ships and which forms several fine harbors. Only the large white pelican, his big pouch under his bill, makes use of the realm of the fishes.

. . . How happy and carefree life here could be for thousands of families! How much better Europeans would have done had they settled here, rather than going to Brazil as colonists. There they have to struggle with far more hardships, . . . Here they would have found the climate of southern Germany and a world of nature which would generously advance their slightest endeavors.

.....

The entire San Francisco Bay, in which thousands of ships can ride at anchor, is by itself already a fine harbor. Its little coves, as found on the northwest shore, where ships can come

right next to land, offer great advantages for repairs, especially when the finest construction timber, even for the tallest masts, is nearby, as is the case here. The whole northern part of the bay, to be exact, does not belong to California, but rather it is considered by geographers to be part of New Albion. It still has not been explored by a single navigator, and even to the Span- nish here it is little known. Two large, navigable rivers, which I later investigated, empty into the bay here: one from the north, and the other from the east.

Everywhere the land appears quite fertile, and the moderate climate is perhaps the finest and healthiest in the world. But this region, as with quiet virtue and modest gain, goes unnoticed. Posterity will be more attentive some day in recognizing its value. This desolate waste will glit- ter with towns and cities. These waters, now so seldom visited by even a single boat, will sup- port the flags of all nations. And a prosperous and fortunate people will thankfully accept what nature so extravagantly offers and will export its resources to all parts of the earth.

#### EN ROUTE TO FORT ROSS: A VISIT TO MISSION SAN RAFAEL

When the sun was already close to the blue mountain tops in the west, we reached our landing place by means of a narrow channel in swampy land. Here we were still a good nautical mile away from Mission San Rafael, visible amidst ancient oak trees.

Several of the horses belonging to the mission were grazing in a pretty meadow along the shore, all alone with a herd of small deer, of which there are many around here. Our soldiers, who had no desire to walk all the way to the mission, took their lassos in hand and soon caught more horses than we needed. Since we had brought saddles along, we rode at full gallop across level ground, past solitary oaks, to the mission, where we were amiably received by a single missionary, who serves as its administrator.

The location of this mission, founded in 1816, seems to be even better chosen than that of the famous Mission Santa Clara. A high ridge of hills protects it from harmful north winds. Be-

yond this rampart, however, live the Indianos bravos, as the friar called them, who have already succeeded in burning the mission building in a surprise attack, and against whom he must constantly be on guard. Indeed, San Rafael has the appearance of an outpost for the other missions against the enemy. A garrison of six soldiers is stationed and ready, at the slightest alarm.

During the night, when I had to elude some vermin in my bed, I found two sentinels, fully armed and facing the hills. Each had made himself a fire, and every ten minutes they sounded a bell, hanging between two posts, supposedly to show their vigilance. . . . The boldness of the bravos seems only to consist of their unwillingness to be subjugated, their flight to hiding places, when persecuted, and at most, their sneaking up on the sly to set fires. We saw several of these heroes here, working patiently, their feet in irons, and in no way distinguished from the Indians at San Francisco and Santa Clara.

#### OVERLOOKING THE SANTA ROSA PLAIN FROM THE COASTAL HILLS

. . . To the east, a valley reached far inland, which, as [our guide] Don Estudillo told me, was called "the valley of the white men" by the Indians.

There is an old story among them that once a ship was stranded along this coast, and that white men chose to settle in this valley and lived in harmony with the Indians. No information is available, however, about what ever finally became of them. To the northeast we saw a high mountain range, thickly covered with fir trees, which seemed inaccessible. For that reason, Indians preferably stopped there, as the rising columns of smoke indicated. Our soldiers said that a chief's residence was there; . . . They claimed that this tribe belonged to an altogether different race, distinguished by its courage.

#### UP THE SACRAMENTO RIVER

The majestic Sierra Nevada range was here at its most beautiful. The entire eastern horizon was bordered by its high masses of snow, and in front of them the lowlands stretched out like a green sea. Nowhere is the Sierra Nevada visible from San Francisco Bay; but as soon as you go beyond the junction of the Pescadores [San Joaquin] and the Sacramento, then you can already see a part of this range.

"Duhaut-Cilly's Account of California in the Years 1827-1828," in California Historical Society Quarterly, vol. VIII, no. 4 (December 1929), pp. 306-336. Translated by Charles Franklin Carter. Excerpts from p. 323, 324, 325, 326-27.

#### A DESCRIPTION OF PAUL SHELIKHOV, THIRD MANAGER AT FORT ROSS (1825-29)

The morning of the 3rd [of June 1828] we appeared before the settlement [of Bodega], and as we brought to, some miles away, . . . we saw suddenly three bidarkas approaching, each one bearing three persons. After some instants these boats arrived alongside, and we received the visit of the Russian commandant himself, Paul Shelikof, to whom I imparted the motives bringing me. At the same time I asked from him permission to moor in his port, in order to offer him the goods of the cargo which might suit him. Although he was not much in need, and was somewhat low in goods of exchange, he kindly received my proposal, and giving orders to one of the men he had brought to serve as pilot to me, he said he would accompany me to the port of Bodega, the only anchorage used by the colony. . . .

From the spot where we had brought to, the settlement appeared very different from the presidios of California, pictures of the rudeness of the arts and carelessness in the execution. Well-made roofs, houses of elegant form, fields well sown and surrounded with palisades, lent to this place a wholly European air.

. . .

Toward evening Commandant Shelikof returned to land, whither horses had been brought for him, after making me promise to go to see him the next day.

. . .

We mounted our horses and set out, accompanied by several Russians and by our pilot, . . . Two leagues passed over in this field led us to the bank of a fair-sized river, called by the Indians Sacabaye, by the Russians Slavonka. It is too deep, even in summer, to be forded; and in winter it becomes terrible, and carries swiftly away the immense trunks of fir trees uprooted by the storms . . . .

This passage has been fatal to many travelers, and two years before, an American captain was drowned here. As for us, we passed over safely enough in a bidarka M. Shelikof had purposely sent hither. . . . Horses accustomed to crossing the river, swim over it by themselves as soon as they have been relieved of their harness. Again setting out on the way, we climbed a road so steep that we could hardly understand how our horses were able to hold themselves on it without falling over backwards upon their riders.

The mountain, whose top we reached not without difficulty and even some danger, was covered with enormous firs, mixed with sycamores, bay trees, and various species of oak. . . .

We descended the other side by as cruel an incline as the first, and at each vista, we saw through the trees, or above their tops, and more and more distinctly, the Russian settlement below us, northwest from the mountain. Fearing the same horses, after a course of four leagues, could not travel these two dangerous passages, M. Shelikof had been considerate enough to have fresh ones ready at the highest point.

At eleven in the morning, we arrived at the colony the Russians have called Ross. It is a large square enclosure, surrounded by a palisade of thick planks twenty feet high, . . . On the four sides corresponding to the four cardinal points are four doors, each one defended by a mortar with fixed breeching, showing at a port-hole, as in a ship: inside also were two field pieces of bronze, with their gun-carriages.

A fine house for the commandant or director, pretty lodgings for the subordinate chiefs, large storehouses and workshops take up the square. A chapel newly built serves as a bastion at the southeast corner. . . . The two gorges open out into two little creeks serving as a shelter and landing place to the boats belonging to the colony.

All the buildings of Ross are of wood, but well built and well taken care of. In the apartments of the director are found all the conveniences which Europeans value, and which are still un-

known in California. Outside the square are disposed or scattered the pretty little houses of sixty Russian colonists, the flattened cabins of eighty Kodiaks, and the cone-shaped huts of as many indigenous Indians.

.....

Much order and discipline appear to exist at Ross; and though the director is the only chief who is an officer, everywhere is noticed the effects of a minute care. The colonists, at once, workmen and soldiers, after being busied all day with the labors of their various occupations, mount guard during the night. Holidays they pass in reviews and in gun and rifle practice.

...

All these advantages do not prevent the colony of Ross from arousing in the traveler only sombre and melancholy thoughts; and I attribute the cause of it to the fact that society here is incomplete. The director is a bachelor, and has no woman in his house: all the Russian colonists are in the same situation. There are then only the women of the Kodiaks and of the Indians in the settlement; but whatever be the relations which may be formed between these women and the Russians, the stranger, to whom they are objects of disgust, considers this little population as no less deprived of a sex whose mere presence makes life bearable. . . .

We went with M. Shelikof to see his felling of wood. Independently of the needs of the establishment, he cuts a great quantity of boards, small beams, thick planks, etc., which he sells in California, the Sandwich Islands and elsewhere: he has even entire houses built which may then be transported taken apart. The trees he cuts are almost all firs of various species, and in particular the one called palo colorado (redwood). . . .

We were treated with most distinguished hospitality by M. Shelikof, and we passed a very pleasant night at his house. Unfortunately neither Dr. Botta nor I understood Russian, and the director spoke neither French nor English nor Spanish. This inconvenience made us lose a large part of the charm his company would have afforded us. It was, however, in Spanish we

succeeded the best to make ourselves understood. I did but little business with him: an American ship had preceded me hither, and had gathered almost all the furs this settlement had. I sold him only to the value of some hundreds of sealskins. The next day I arose early, and went to a hill to the east to make a drawing of the citadel, as may be seen in the plate accompanying this volume. After breakfast we mounted our horses to return to the port, whence we set sail the next morning.

Letters from Fort Ross, Monterey, San Pedro, and Santa Barbara by an Intelligent Bostonian.  
Early California Travel Series, XLVIII. Los Angeles: Glen Dawson, 1959. Excerpt from  
pp. 3-6.

#### A BOSTONIAN'S DESCRIPTION OF FORT ROSS UNDER MANAGER KOSTROMITINOV (May 1832)

Shortly after we anchored [at Bodega Bay], the Governor [Kostromitinov] came on board, and I accompanied him on his return. The distance was about 8 leagues, but a circuitous route, and the ride was very pleasant. Arrived at the Presidio, we passed thro' an assemblage of 60 or 70 men and children, who respectfully doffed their caps on our entrance into the square. The Presidio is formed by the houses fronting inwards, making a large square, surrounded by a high fence. The Governor's house stands at the head, and remainder of the square is formed by the chapel, magazine, and dwelling houses. The buildings are from 15 to 20 feet high, built of large timbers, and have a weather-beaten appearance.

#### THE MANAGER'S RESIDENCE

The first room we entered was the armory, containing many muskets, ranged in neat order; thence we passed into the chief room of the house, which is used as a dining room, & in which all business is transacted. It was comfortably, though not elegantly furnished, and the walls were adorned with engravings of Nicholas I, Duke Constantine, &c. There are a number of workshops outside the walls, in which many different trades are pursued; and in a small place near the sea are the huts of the Kodiaks. I should think there were about 300 inhabitants of all descriptions.

#### ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

They cultivate about 400 acres of wheat, and raise many vegetables and some fruits. They drive 200 head of cattle, and many sheep. Eggs, butter, and milk may be purchased in abundance cheaply. They have several cannon, but all their batteries are of wood, and not in a very defensible situation. We merely stopped here for wood and water, and to learn the situation of affairs in California. The settlers were much in want of tea, sugar, &c; but as they had no money, and are not allowed to barter their furs, we only exchanged a few articles for sheep, eggs, &c.

Peter S. Kostromitinov, "Bemerkungen ueber die Indianer In Ober-Kalifornien; von Kostromit-onow" [Kostromitinov's Remarks on the Indians of Upper California], in Statistische und ethnographische Nachrichten ueber die Russischen Besitzungen an der Nordwestkueste von Amerika, collected by F. P. von Wrangell, and edited by K. E. von Baer. Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1839. Pages 80-96. Excerpt from pp. 95-96.

Simplicity and good-naturedness are their chief character traits. Theft and murder almost never occur among them. If you do not provoke or insult them, then you can be quite sure of their support. Yet this comes more from their great timidity. For example, each time a cannon is fired they are terrified, and with some of them their limbs even shake all over. Suicide is totally unknown to them, and if one should make inquiries about it from them, they cannot even conceive how such a thing could be possible.

One thing more could be said about these wild people. Filled with the curious delusion that they must necessarily die if they recount their ways to a stranger, they answer every question that is asked of them with the words: "I don't know." I once inquired if they divided the year into 12 months. The answer was: "I don't know." "Who then should know?" "Oh, there are learned people who know everything." "Where do they live?" "Far off in the plains!" Such were the evasive answers they usually gave to similar questions too.

Their absent-mindedness and unconcern toward everything goes a long way. Our watches, lenses (for burning), and mirrors, and our music, etc., they look at and listen to attentively. But they make no effort at all to learn how and why they are made. Only those objects that can strike terror in them make an impression, but probably more out of fear than of curiosity.

The Indians at the missions in California were once just as simple in their manners and customs. Now, of course, they have a few rough skills and jobs, and at the same time they have also learned all the vices of their teachers. Theft, drunkenness, and murder are now quite usual among them. They observe the practices of Catholicism more out of fear than of attachment to belief. The transition from the most brutal servitude under the previous regime to the complete freedom under the present one will ruin their morals even more.

"Russian Agencies," National Archives, M11, Roll 38 (1836).

Document 91 (p. 57b), April 16 [1836].

To Mr. Rotchev, Commissioner of the Ship Helena

According to the instructions which you have received from the Main Office of the Company [in St. Petersburg], I recommend that you send to the New Archangel Office as soon as possible a concise account of travel expenses incurred from the moneys set aside for this on board the Helena.

[Manager in Chief, Ivan Kupreianov]

Document 92 (p. 57b), April 16 [1836].

. . . I have directed Mr. Rotchev, Commissioner of the ship Helena, to forward to the New Archangel Office without delay a concise account of travel expenses from the sums earmarked for such purposes on the above-mentioned ship.

Document 93 (p. 58a), April 17 [1836].

. . . The Helena has just arrived for service in the colonies. . . . Among the officers and officials who have arrived to serve in the colonies are:

. . .

Gentryman [dyorianin] Rotchev

Townsmen Kostromitinov, from Veliki Ust

Document 381 (p. 260b), June 19 [1836].

Mr. Rotchev and the priest from Sitka, Ioann [Ivan] Veniaminov, have left on the sloop Sitka. Whenever necessary, Mr. Rotchev is to be used in translating foreign languages, and indeed he should be made as familiar as possible with relevant matters concerning California. Fr. Ioann plans to attend to religious needs at Fort Ross while the sloop is at Bodega.

Mr. Rotchev should be sent off with Mr. Kostromitinov, Manager of the [Fort Ross] Office, down the coast to visit the missions, provided he does not meet with obstacles I have not foreseen. Fr. Ioann and Mr. Rotchev are to return here on the Sitka.

[Manager-in-Chief, Ivan Kupreianov]

Document 382 (p. 261b), June 19 [1836].

To Lt. Voyevodsky, Commander of the Sitka.

. . . The priest from Sitka, Ioann Veniaminov, and Mr. Rotchev are being sent on the sloop Sitka entrusted to you. The latter will be needed by Lt. Capt. Mitkov and by Mr. Kostromitinov at Fort Ross, as circumstances dictate. Both of them are to return here on the Sitka.

Sir George Simpson. An Overland Journey Round the World, during the Years 1841 and 1842.  
Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1847. Excerpt from pages 84-85.

A DESCRIPTION OF ALEXANDER AND HELENA ROTCHEV AT SITKA (1842)

On the first of May [1842], the Constantine sailed with supplies for Atcha, in the Aleutian Archipelago, . . . thence to proceed . . . to Ochotsk. She had about sixty persons on board, including passengers, of whom some were bound for Ochotsk, and others for Europe. Among the latter was Mr. Rotscheff, already mentioned, with his family, who was recently in charge of Bodega, in California, with a salary of five thousand roubles a year -- an income on which, besides furnishing his house and entertaining visitors, he had to feed and clothe Mrs. Rotscheff and himself and three children. Mr. Rotscheff is a very good-looking man, in the prime of life, and is the author of several works of the lighter order, both in verse and prose. He had been doing very well in Petersburg, as a translator of foreign pieces for one of the principal theatres, when he was so fortunate, or so unfortunate, as to make a conquest of a daughter of Prince Gagarin, without the approbation of her family.

His wife, who accompanied him to the far east, is intellectual and accomplished, speaking several languages, conversant with many branches of science, and divinely musical. This poor lady, "reared in the halls of princes," and accustomed in early life to all the luxuries of society, meets her present difficulties and privations with a degree of firmness which does her infinite honor. There she sat with all the fortitude and cheerfulness imaginable, cooped up with her husband and seven children, four of them not her own, in a small cabin, with the prospect before her of a dangerous voyage to Ochotsk, and an equally dangerous ride of seven thousand miles to St. Petersburg. I sincerely trust that for all these hardships she may be rewarded by a reconciliation with her friends, who, notwithstanding their high blood and high titles, have no reason to be ashamed of this fallen member of their stock.

Eugene Duflot de Mofras. Duflot de Mofras' Travels on the Pacific Coast. Vol. II. Translated, edited, and annotated by Marguerite Eyer Wilbur. Santa Ana, Calif.: The Fine Arts Press, 1937. Excerpts from vol. II, p. 10, 13.

#### A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ALEXANDER ROTCHEV AT FORT ROSS AND AT RANCHO KHLEBNIKOV

From a personal standpoint, appreciation of the amicable welcome that was invariably accorded our party by the Russian officials during our visits in 1841 cannot be too warmly expressed. The governor of Ross, Alexander de Rotchev, his wife, nee Princess Ga[g]arin, M. Kostromitinov, head of the counting-house at Sitka, Captain [Z]agoskin, commander of the sloop Helene, and M. [Voz]nesenski, scientist of the Academy at St. Petersburg, exerted themselves at all times to make our visit at their settlements agreeable.

In addition to our reception, which was almost European, they materially assisted in the exploration of various parts of the country by placing at our disposal skiffs, canoes, and soldiers, and by assembling for our use numerous relays of excellent horses. . . . Anyone who has led the dreary life of a trapper . . . or has been pursued by the yells of savages can fully appreciate the joy of a choice library, French wines, a piano, and a score of Mozart. It is indeed a privilege to take this opportunity to express publicly gratitude to the Russian officers for their regal hospitality.

.....

#### FESTIVITIES AT RANCHO KHLEBNIKOV

Since most of the Spanish coloniists have intermarried, [festive] excursions occur at frequent intervals, and Californians think nothing of traveling 200 or 300 leagues to dance a few days.

In August, 1841, such a group composed of 30 men and women left Mission San [Francisco] Solano for the Russian settlements to celebrate the birthday of Madame Helene de Rotchev, wife of the governor. Having left in the morning, by dusk they reached Khliebnikov's farm, where they danced all night, and throughout the following day and night. On the third day, at five in the

evening, having stopped under the windows of Madame de Rotchev, who had retired early, and greeted her with a noisy demonstration, the crowd returned home at a gallop without stopping even for a brief rest. When they arrived I happened to be visiting the Russian settlement for the second time.

Alexander G. Rotchev, "A New Eldorado in California" (Novyi El'dorado v Kalifornii),  
Otechestvennyia zapiski (Notes of the Fatherland), vol. 62 (1849), section VIII,  
pp. 216-224. Excerpts from pp. 216, 217-18.

What an enchanting land California is! For eight months of the year the skies stay cloudless and clear. For the rest of the year, from late November on, it rains periodically. It never gets hotter than 25° Reaumur [77° F.] in the shade. In January everything returns to life, and vegetation is fully growing; everything is fragrant; and the friendly hummingbird flutters and glitters on a stalk, or shimmers above a flower like a precious gem.

California's virgin soil gives forth astonishing fruits: I happened to see a wheat harvest there that yielded 150-fold! And even with meager efforts applied. A pointed, twisted branch, whose tip is covered with some kind of share, serves as a plow. After scratching about two inches of soil, a farmer can finish his sowing. A branch of a bay [laurel] tree, tied to an ox, serves as his harrow. If you take a peach off a tree and toss the pit away, and it falls on the ground, and if you come back three years later to the same place, you will see an adult tree, cut fruit off of it, and enjoy it!

A giant evergreen tree - the redwood [chaga] (pinus Californicus) - grows in California. Look at this massive tree: eight or nine centuries have passed over it. Its hollow core, burned out by fires, may serve as a home for entire families! With my own eyes I saw a grain storehouse and a building with an office and two rooms for assistants built out of one tree. It was 180 to 200 feet tall, from top to bottom, and eight to ten feet across. One can imagine the deafening crash which such a colossus makes when felled by human hands! Other trees in the forests of California include the bay tree, <sup>buckeye</sup> chestnut and oak, and, along river banks, wild-grape stock.

Man has looked upon this land with cool indifference for a long time. But now, when gold has been discovered in the bowels of the earth, people have been pouring in: across the Rocky

Mountains, from New Orleans, across Panama, and around the Horn. Mineralogists and natural scientists have even gone there now. Each vein in this land of beauty trembles under the anatomical knife of science. The best years of my life I spent there, and I reverently carry the collection of these days in my soul.

.....

Just one year later, I had to leave this country and had to sell everything possible, whenever a buyer should appear, and abandon everything that could not be stowed in a ship's hold. In connection with these business negotiations I had to meet with Mr. Sutter. So I set out up the Sacramento River in a sloop to visit my old friend. . . .

It was August at the time, in other words, the time of year when the forests and valleys of California are set on fire by the Indians, presenting a picture which a talented Cooper might sketch: the virgin forests of America aflame. In October and November rain begins to fall, off and on, and extinguish these waves of fire which spread across huge expanses. Once when I traveled from California to our colonies [in Alaska] on the open sea, I was able to see thick masses of smoke which shielded the sun - at a distance of several hundred miles from shore. And this condition lasted for several days!

**PART II. COMPANY OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES**

**BARON FERDINAND PETROVICH VON WRANGEL (Manager-in-Chief, 1830-35)**

**KIRILL TIMOFEYEVICH KHLEBNIKOV (California Business Manager, 1818-1830)**

**YEGOR LEONTIEVICH CHERNYKH (Agricultural Assistant at Fort Ross, 1836-1841)**

**ZAKHAR CHICHINOV (Promyshlennik's Son and Employee at Fort Ross, 1818-28)**

**VASILY PERMITIN (Promyshlennik at Fort Ross, 1833)**

Baron Ferdinand Petrovich von Wrangell. "Einige Bemerkungen ueber die Wilden an der Nordwest-Kueste von Amerika" (Some Remarks Concerning the Savages along the Northwest Coast of America), in Statistische und ethnographische Nachrichten ueber die Russische Besitzungen an der Nordwestkueste von Amerika, collected by F. P. von Wrangell, edited by K. E. von Baer. St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1839.

#### BARON VON WRANGEL'S EXPLORATORY EXPEDITION UP THE RUSSIAN RIVER (Sept., 1833)

I came to know the Indian tribes which live near Fort Ross (38° 33' N. Latitude) on an excursion into the region surrounding the settlement. They inhabit the gorges of the mountain range which surrounds Ross on almost all sides, and they also live on the plain that lies beyond, to the east, through which the Slavianka River flows, discharging itself into the sea about seven [Italian] miles south of the colony.

After the wheat and barley harvest had been brought in from the steep mountain slopes, and after other necessary agricultural tasks had been completed at Fort Ross, we set out for the plains. . . . [W]e decided to render [the Indians] their due respects by providing ourselves with an escort and with loaded pistols. Besides three officers, our detachment consisted, accordingly, of 21 horsemen, which consisted of seven Russians, two Yakuts [from Siberia], six Aleuts, four Indian vaqueros, and two interpreters, all of whom carried well-filled quivers on their backs.

On September 10 (1833) [N.S. Sept. 22], we set off uphill en route to Bodega. At this season the horses, worn out from all too frequent use and from a meager diet, are usually quite thin. Around Fort Ross all the grass, which is dried up anyway by the long and persistent summer drought, is used for feeding numerous herds and flocks of all kinds. This circumstance compelled us to take along, besides the horses we rode, an equal number of reserve horses and two mules, which carried provisions for four days.

After we crossed the Slavianka River at its mouth, now silted up, we turned left and went uphill. Turning our backs upon the sea, we passed through hollows, forests, and copses before reaching areas that were flat and more open. Although we rode along foot paths which the Indi-

ans use for going to the seashore from their plains to collect shell-fish, we nevertheless met no one. When we finally reached a small, luxuriantly overgrown meadow, we heard a loud voice singing. Our interpreters hurried ahead to find out whether we had friend or foe to deal with. But the impatience to get to know the inhabitants of this desolate area drove us on to follow hard on the heels of our scouts. So we set off at full gallop and chanced upon an old Indian woman gathering seed grains in a basket woven out of fine root fibers. She went stiff from fear. Not without difficulty did we learn from her that beyond the next copse lived several Indian families, who no doubt had noticed us already and had hidden themselves for fear of falling into the hand of the Spanish, who often go out Indian-hunting, to convert their catch to Christianity. The woman told us further that she was gathering seeds for food and had sung so loud in order to drive off evil spirits; they always submitted to her voice, which resonated its echo from the mountains one hundred times over.

#### THE SANTA ROSA PLAIN AND FIRST ENCAMPMENT

Before evening we reached the largest of the plains. At first it is unforested, completely level, luxuriantly overgrown with fragrant vegetation, and so immense that its distance is no less than 25 miles across. Left and right, mountains rise again, whose familiar outlines we could notice not far from Fort Ross, where they also appear before one's eyes. We were about 18 miles [25 versts] from Ross, as the crow flies, but between us lay insurmountable mountains and ravines, which we traveled at least 50 miles to circumvent. Here the Slavianka River nestles against a westerly range of hills and absorbs a stream which meanders through the middle of the plain. We now turned aside and went along the meadows which lay on both sides of the river.

Nightfall took us unawares in one of the splendid oak groves which shade the plain here and there. The horses almost disappeared in the high, fragrant grass which covered the meadow. The

campfire blazed up amidst the dark foliage of oaks a century old. Deep silence settled upon this land so richly endowed by nature. Scarcely had the night watchman - the coyote - intoned his plaintive howl, than our new friends, the Indians, arrived at the campfires. After we gave them tobacco, biscuits, glass beads, and other trinkets, they sat down with their fellow countrymen, our interpreters and vaqueros, in a circle and began their favorite activity - indeed, it can be said their only one, when circumstances permit - which is playing at odds-and-evens.

#### VISITING AN INDIAN VILLAGE

We found the Indian village on sandy ground, entrenched behind shrubbery and dry ditches. It was inhabited by five or six families related to one another. The women had set up temporary dwellings, made of pliable branches of sand-willow, easily stuck in the ground. They were set up in such extreme good taste that the sight startled me in a most pleasant way. . . .

The women and old men were frightened by our appearance, and it seemed as though they did not want us to disturb their tranquility. However, they behaved in a friendly way and showed us everything that belonged to their meager economy. In a few baskets lay provisions of paste made of ground acorns and of a kind of groats prepared from wild rye and other seed grains. Moreover, there were fish, which they catch in the stream, when they sprinkle a powder upon the water's surface made from a root called soap-root; with this the fish become stunned and float along the surface. Hunting is the men's activity. By contrast, the women must carry all the heavy loads and undertake the difficult jobs in general. This unusual division of labor probably stems from the peculiar fact that the women here are generally of a much stronger physical constitution than are the men, who, although, large and well-proportioned, still seem to be weaker than the women.

Kirill T. Khlebnikov. "Zapiski K. Khlebnikov o Amerikie" (Kirill Khlebnikov's Notes on America), in Materialy dlia istorii russkikh zaselenii. Issue no. 3. Supplement to Morskoi sbornik [Maritime Anthology], no. 3. St. Petersburg, 1861. Excerpts from p. 162, 164.

#### KHLEBNIKOV'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT THE COLONY OF ROSS (ca. 1830)

##### Thoughts on Improving the Settlement

If the settlement at Fort Ross were to remain the perpetual property of Russia, legally confirmed by other powers, then a permanent base would be necessary, and we would need to turn our attention to more important objectives. Provisions in grain for the colony are the first point of concern and consideration on the Company's part. Therefore, we should seek the cheapest and most convenient means. Agriculture can be made more efficient without our undertaking anything that is difficult, far-reaching, or unusual. The ways to do this are as follows:

As mentioned earlier, there is no space for agriculture around Fort Ross, and those places which are already cultivated are unsuitable, due to their proximity to the sea. Therefore we should turn our attention to the valleys that lie inland from Bodega Bay. These places consist of plains with fertile land, good for cultivation and not very far from port. About six miles up the Estero Americano a farm-house should be built, where workers could live and raise some stock. Cultivation of lands would be done, just as it is now, by free Indians who at times show up voluntarily during spring work. This establishment would have a barn for the temporary storage of grain, which, after threshing, would be sent directly to Bodega Bay in ox or mule carts. The distance is not long, and the road is good. A warehouse would be built at Bodega, and grain would be collected there prior to the arrival of the ship, onto which it could then be loaded directly. The grain would be removed to the spit, because of its proximity, and from there be ferried across the mouth of the bay on row boats. Furthermore, there would be no difficulty in building warehouses on the spit.

. . . At the Estero settlement there would be ten or twelve Russians, with nothing kept in ex-

cess; for between here and the fort there would be a regular shipment once a week, or as circumstances required. Travelling round-trip on horseback would take one day. Sentries would be attached to the Bodega warehouse, as well as a sloop or boat for transport across the bay.

...

Manufactured Goods. Assuming that the settlement improves, I shall by no means state percentages, which would attract special expenditures by themselves before we profit from the consumption of products. I only propose that we will be able to make them with no great effort. One man, a master of his trade, will at the same time serve as a teacher for our talented young Creoles. All of the items I refer to will be local products which are presently neglected.

Wool. Cleaning, spinning, and making thick cloth from wool, as well as knitting stockings, are occupations familiar to many villagers in Russia. Blankets and other things needed for the Indians, and made like those in California, would replace the payments rendered for agricultural work. Calendering felts and making hats would likewise be useful and needed. Felts can replace mattresses for bedding; at present we use deer and bear skins, as well as feather-beds, for this. From felt we can also make fittings for harnesses. The hats, besides being used in the colonies, can be sold in California at a profit. We get one piastre apiece for a bark hat made by Tlingits, and a woolen hat could always be sold at a price no less than this. Felts and saddle-cloth for horseback-riding can also be sold at a profit. Up to 3500 pounds of wool can be gotten from a thousand sheep, and as a result this would be enough for all kinds of products.

Yegor Chernykh. "O sostoianii zemledeliia v selenii Ross, v Kalifornii" (The Condition of Agriculture at Fort Ross, in California," in Zemledielcheskii zhurnal (Agricultural Journal), no. 6 (1837), pp. 343-51. Extracts from pp. 343-44, 348-49.

CHERNYKH'S ARRIVAL IN CALIFORNIA AND HIS ESTIMATION OF ITS AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL  
From a Letter to the Director of Affairs of the Moscow Agricultural Society (Nov. 1836)

Finally, I am writing to you from California, from the settlement of Ross. What a tremendous distance away! I left New Archangel [Sitka] in late November of 1835 and reached Ross on January 14, 1846.

Your doubts about the Company's means of establishing a long-term agricultural effort, even for feeding itself, are quite justified. With lands now cultivated only on a small scale, the lack of working hands delays many of our endeavors. Moreover, it is not worth pursuing agriculture in the area around Fort Ross, in view of the high wages presently given to workers, even when harvests are poor, which is quite often. The reasons for this I described partly in an earlier letter.

About 12 miles inland from Fort Ross there are plains which are truly blest: excellent lands, various forests, and lakes and rivers with fish. Fogs could not affect the crops there. And up to now the Californios have not occupied these places. If permission to occupy them were granted, the Company would then, even with its present resources, not only begin to feed itself abundantly in all respects, but could also send some of its field produce to Kamchatka and Okhotsk.

.....

When I recognized how difficult and wasteful it is to thresh grain at Fort Ross, I decided to build a wooden Scottish machine. To my great satisfaction, I finished it quite successfully. I built it according to Mr. Flatt's outline and description (found in the Agricultural Journal), with very minor changes. I built the entire machine of wood, excluding tires and bearings, which are made of iron. The cams on the wheels, and the spindles on the gears, are made of bay

hardwood; the carrier cylinders are also of bay wood. It is set in motion by two horses. A drum rotates around six beaters 180 times a minute, which is not enough, as I learned from experience. In ten hours it can thresh up to 700 heaves of great bulk. But because the workers are obstinate about this innovation and the horses are not used to going around in circles, it threshes between 350 and 550 sheaves a day, with the help of four or five men and four horses (which are replaced every two-and-a-half hours).

I should note that both here and throughout California there are no drying barns, so flour is always made from damp wheat. This is why the machine did not thresh out the wheat as well as I saw the threshing machines do in Moscow. I should attribute this to the slow movement of the drum and to the small number of beaters.

. . . This coming summer (1837) I intend to correct the mistakes evident in my machine, and I will try to build another wooden one. This is now all the more possible in that the sloop Helena, which just arrived from Kronstadt, has brought us the cast-iron parts of a Scottish thresher, which the Butenop brothers purchased in Moscow. This wooden machine recently had occasion to thresh up to 10,000 sheaves of damp wheat and did not suffer any damage at all. . . .

"Russian Agencies," National Archives, M11, Roll 38 (1836), Documents 395 (p. 276b) and 394 (pp. 275b - 276a)

A LETTER OF MANAGER-IN-CHIEF IVAN KUPREIANOV TO YEGOR CHERNYKH (June 19, 1836)

Dear Yegor Leontievich:

I am aware that last autumn you traveled along the coast on the sloop Silka from Monterey to Fort Ross, where you have been designated to go. I expect that you will write me candidly regarding everything you will have observed, especially from your own perspective, during your stay at Fort Ross, and regarding your convictions as to what can be done there by way of improvements in agriculture with the resources available to us. These should shortly become apparent to you.

I should be quite pleased to hear that no problems arise between you and Mr. Kostromitinov, but rather that a complete [and mutual] understanding should exist, which among persons of authority is so necessary for the Company's sake. I have no doubt that you will utilize all your abilities and expertise, as befits an honorable officer and a conscientious man, and that you will never sacrifice them in any way, out of your own personal or momentary dissatisfaction while serving with someone.

Having offered this opinion, I am pleased to remain, with respect and devotion, dear sir, your humble servant, Ivan Kupreianov

To His Honor

Mr. Yegor Leontievich Chernykh

Official of the 14th Class

A LETTER OF MANAGER-IN-CHIEF KUPREIANOV TO PETER KOSTROMITINOV AT FORT ROSS  
(June 19, 1836)

Dear Peter Stepanovich:

I am quite pleased that Chernykh, an official of the 14th class, is now with you as your agricultural assistant. I am firmly convinced that you will be in complete agreement with him and that you will find his information useful and beneficial to the Company.

I hope that he too, on his part, will serve honorably, conscientiously, and assiduously, and will try to justify his having been selected by the Colonial Authorities. May I request that you inform me frankly and in detail of his activities and achievements, about which I will also write to you.

Your brother Innocent has arrived on the ship Helena for service in the colonies. I appointed him to serve as supercargo on the sloop Sitka , so as to give you a chance to see him again after so long a separation.

With my sincere respect and complete devotion, I have the honor of remaining, dear sir,  
your humble servant, Ivan Kupreianov

To His Honor,

Peter Stepanovich Kostromitinov

Manager of the Fort Ross Office

Russian Agencies. Baron Ferdinand von Wrangel's Report of April 10, 1834 [Report to the Main Office, no. 61, April 10]. Russian-American Company Papers, National Archives, (vol. 11, roll no. 36, pp. 59-78).

EXPENSE ACCOUNT OF A RUSSIAN PROMYSHLENNIK AT FORT ROSS: VASILY PERMITIN (1832)

Everyone has confirmed the fact that there are no ways to help [the promyshlenniki] live and feed a family on a single salary, with one ration of flour and one pound of meat (with bones) a day. Consequently, there is indeed no way the Office can reduce debts. On the contrary, they increase year by year. To give some idea of a Russian promyshlennik's expenditures at Fort Ross, I include here the accounts of one of them, Vasily Permitin, who has a wife and five children.

During the year 1832 he received on account:

Wheat	125 lbs.	Felt	2 rolls
Wheat flour	1522 lbs.	Cotton Stockings	1 pair
Rye flour	72 lbs.	Woolen blankets	2 rolls
Dried meat	36 lbs.	Cotton cloth	1 roll
Fresh meat (beef)	71 lbs.	Soles	21 pairs
Lard	24 lbs.	Boot vamps	10 pairs
Butter	11 lbs.	Nankeen cloth	5 pieces
Candles (tallow)	14 lbs.	Medium-sized	
Salt	14 lbs.	sheepskins	2 pieces
Cattle fat	2 lbs.	Flemish linen	48 ft.
Copperware	4.5 lbs.	Calico	73.5 ft.
Millet	10 lbs.	Ticking	39 ft.
Circassian tobacco	22 lbs.	Misc. [cloth]	34.5 ft.
Soap	27 lbs.	Gingham	16 ft.
Tea	10.75 lbs.	Soldier's broadcloth	5.5 ft.
Sugar	43.5 lbs.		
Molasses	10.5 lbs.		

All of this, at current prices, comes to a sum of 738 rubles and 17 kopeks. Moreover, Permitin's annual salary comes to 350 rubles. The above-listed summary of items and supplies purchased by Permitin indicates, for example, that there is nothing superfluous included. Consequently, one cannot but recognize how impossible it is for these people to sustain themselves on a single salary of 350 rubles per year. Taking these circumstances into account, I found it necessary to reduce a few of the debts of the local promyshlenniki, . . .

Richard Henry Dana, Jr. Two Years before the Mast. A Personal Narrative of Life at Sea.  
Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1946. Excerpt from pp. 249-50.

DANA'S DESCRIPTION OF RUSSIAN SAILORS ON A COMPANY SHIP AT YERBA BUENA (Dec. 1835)

Here, at anchor, and the only vessel, was a brig under Russian colors, from Asitka, in Russian America, which had come down to winter, and to take in a supply of tallow and grain, great quantities of which latter article are raised in the missions at the head of the bay. The second day after our arrival, we went on board the brig, it being Sunday, as a matter of curiosity; and there was enough there to gratify it. . . . [S]he had five or six officers, and a crew of between twenty and thirty; and such a stupid and greasy-looking set, I certainly never saw before. Although it was quite comfortable weather, and we had nothing on but straw hats, shirts, and duck trousers, and were barefooted, they had, every man of them, double-soled boots, coming up to the knees, and well greased; thick woollen trousers, frocks, waistcoats, pea-jackets, woollen caps, and everything in true Nova Zembla rig; and in the warmest days they made no change. 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. To a Russian, grease is the greatest luxury.

THE RUSSIAN SHIP DESCRIBED

The vessel was no better than the crew. Everything was in the oldest and most inconvenient fashion possible: running trusses on the yards, and large hawser cables, coiled all over the decks, and served and parcelled in all directions. The top-masts, top-gallant masts and studding-sail booms were nearly black for want of scraping, and the decks would have turned the stomach of a man-of-war's-man. . . . Five minutes in the forecabin was enough for us, and we were glad to get into the open air.

Dmitrii I. Zavalishin. "Dielo o kolonii Ross" (The Fort Ross Question), in Russkii Viestnik, (1866), no. 3, pp. 36-65. Excerpts from p. 5, 14, 34.

#### ZAVALISHIN'S RETROSPECTIVE EVALUATION OF THE ABANDONMENT OF FORT ROSS (1866)

In short, the history of Fort Ross, our colony in New Albion (the usual expression in California), consists of the following: it was established with the government's knowledge and permission on the assumption that with the development of agriculture and industry it would serve as a useful support [base] for our hunting and fur-trapping colonies [in Alaska], and subsequently for Kamchatka and the Okhotsk region. But this objective was not attained, chiefly resulting from the lack of governmental support, promised to the Russian-American Company. And the colony, never having offered the [expected] benefits, and deprived of any hope of improving its unfavorable situation, was vacated by governmental decision. As things were going, this happened not long before it would have come to nothing on its own, posing an even greater handicap for the Company, and possibly considerable difficulties for the government itself.

Our greatest mistake with respect to Fort Ross . . . consisted of the fact that we sought the consent and permission to do that which we had full right to do, without anyone else's consent and permission. On the other hand, other nations constantly acted, while asking no one, even when they had no right to act this way.

.....

Thus, while we did not dare advance, nor even extend ourselves in an area which we already occupied without question - along the Slavianka River, which was christened with a native Russian name, an American sea captain, who asked nobody, openly took possession of a place between the Spanish settlements and the Russian ones, caring nothing of the rights of either. And what is more, this was along the Slavianka River itself, over which we had just intended to negotiate with its imaginary owners.

.....

When finally the disadvantages of our situation and the need to find a way out of it became obvious, instead of seeking a direct agreement with the Spanish in California, whose interests could have been co-ordinated with our own, we let the last favorable time, in 1824, slip past. Subsequently, we turned to Mexico, to whom we could not offer enough advantages to purchase her consent.

Meanwhile, Americans from the United States, without asking anyone, settled places which we did not occupy, and this circumstance rendered fruitless, in all probability, even Mexico's consent, in the event it might have followed. The Americans, of course, would not give up the places they occupied, and this would inevitably have led to those very conflicts with the United States which even earlier we had supposedly decided to avoid through firm action.

In such a situation, nothing further was left but either to meet these conflicts head on, bearing in mind an endless prospect of troubles and losses, or to abandon the colony. The latter was chosen.

#### ZAVALISHIN'S TRAVELS IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (1823-24)

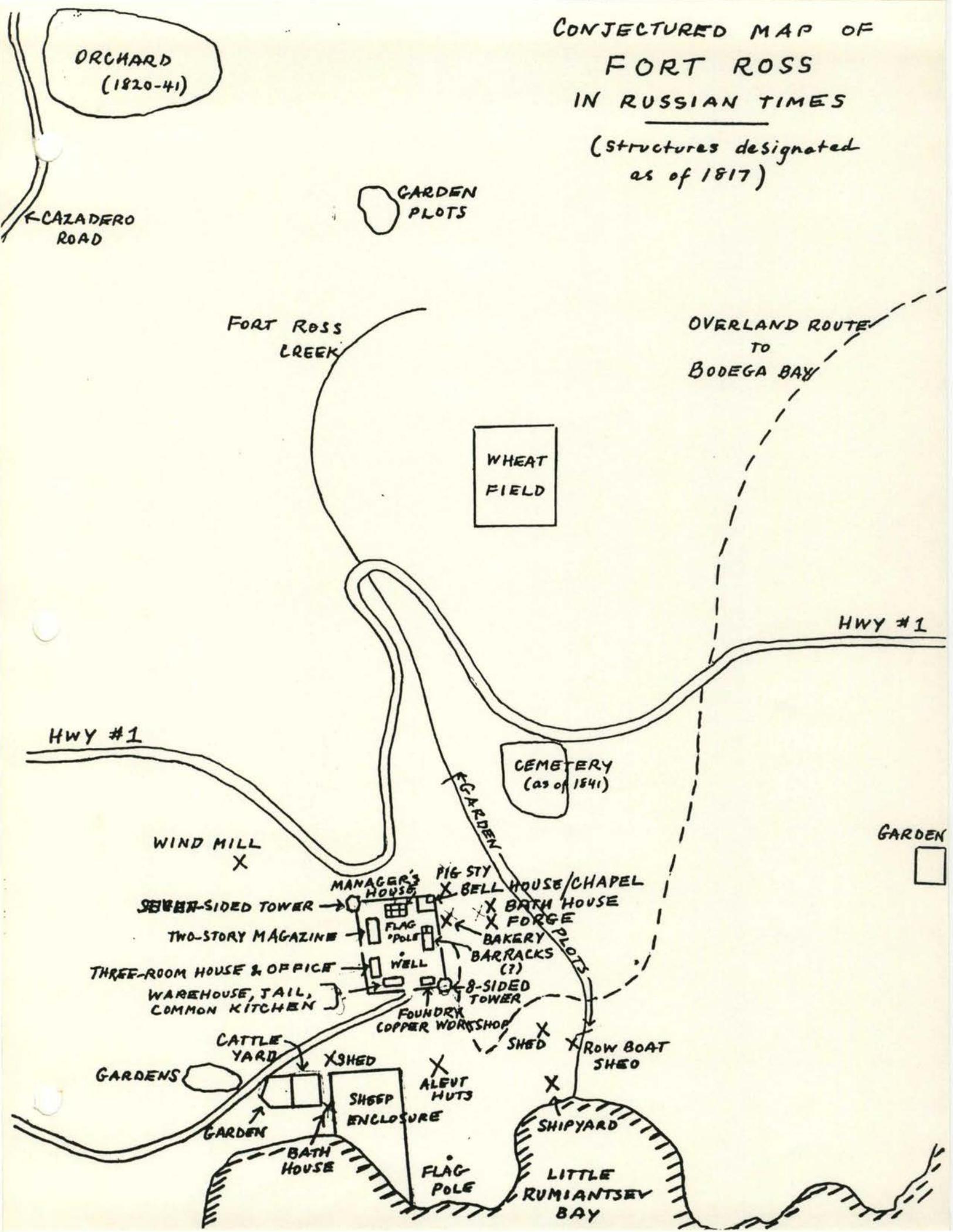
[from "Krugosvietnoe plavanie fregata Kreiser v 1822-1825 gg.," (The Voyage round the World of the Frigate "Kreiser" from 1822 to 1825), in Drevniaia i Staraja Rossiia (1877), bk. 11, pp. 210-17. Excerpt from pp. 213b-214a.

As a result of our wheat purchases, we had to travel all over the northern part of Upper California, at first on horseback - for the purchases, and then by water - transporting them afterward; in such a way I visited all the places later made famous by the discovery of gold. I visited Missions San Rafael and San Francisco Solano, the only ones established on the northern shore of San Francisco Bay, and the latter namely with the aim of restraining the expansion of the Russian colony of Fort Ross, which I also visited on this occasion. I was at San Pablo and on the banks of the Sacramento River, where I proposed that new Russian colonies be established (and here too the first gold was found). Several times I was at San Jose and Santa Clara, and I passed

over an abandoned but direct route to Santa Cruz, which was very difficult and dangerous. And I was in Mariposa and in the ravines of Calaveras. I examined deserted silver mines and can say that after the discovery of gold, when people began to write a lot about California, it was a long time before I came across the name of a place where my feet had not touched. I happened to make over 100 miles in 24 hours on horseback, and on one excursion I rode 400 miles in four days.

CONJECTURED MAP OF  
FORT ROSS  
IN RUSSIAN TIMES

(structures designated  
as of 1817)



POPULATION AT FORT ROSS: 1812-1841

By Ethnic Origin

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Russians</u>	<u>Creoles</u>	<u>Aleuts</u>	<u>Indians</u>	<u>Source</u>
1812	175	95	-	80	-	Khlebnikov
1812	120	40	-	80	-	Anon. (1831)
1818	105	27	0	78 (Kodiaks)	-	Census (Materialy)
1818	128	26	-	102	-	Golovnin
1820	273	23 - Russ 3- Yakuts	10	122 (various)	6+	Kuskov/Fedorova
1828	220	60	-	80 (Kodiaks)	80	Duhaut-Cilly
1832	330	-	-	-	-	"Intelligent Bostonian"
1833	293 *	50	88	83	72	Potekhin
1836	260	120	51	50	39**	Veniaminov
1836	400	60 ***	-	80		Slacum
1839	300			50-60		Belcher
1841	700	(300 Europeans)				Duflot de Mofras
1841	1000	100				Wašeurtz

By Sex and Age Group

	<u>Adult Male</u>	<u>Adult Female</u>	<u>Boys under 16</u>	<u>Girls under 16</u>
1820	148	71	54 altogether	
1833	128	71	54	40
1836	154	106	(included with adults)	

\* Includes non-Indian children

\*\* Baptized only

\*\*\* Includes Finns

Extract sent by Dr. Svetlana G. Fyodorova to Mike Tucker, Dept. of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento, dated Moscow, April 11, 1980

"Account of the Capital Goods for the New Settlement of Ross, Copied at the Main Administration In St. Petersburg from Information Received from the New Archangel Office Sitka, Alaska, December 1815"

The following have been forwarded to Mr. Commerce Councillor Kuskov from the New Archangel Office during the Years 1812 through 1815 (according to six accountings):

	<u>rubles</u>	<u>kopeks</u>
60 barrels of powder	4,746	
42 poods, 19 lbs. (1,530 lbs.) of powder	<u>40</u>	<u>50</u>
	4,786	50
guns of various calibres:		
10 copper cannon	2,674	
15 iron cannon	4,100	
221 rifles } 20 sabers }	5,219	
22 pistols	<u>130</u>	
	5,349	
various military materials		
gunlocks and flints, powder cartridges and horns, grapeshot, wicks, swords, spears, etc. at	3,702	88½
scales and various weights	19071	97
nails of various sizes at	705	72
various domestic items:		
chimneys, flues, door accessories, glass and tableware	2,766	56
762 door locks and hanging locks of iron and copper	2,359	40
162 mirrors of various sizes	769	62
tools:		
for carpentry, joinery, barrel-making, metal- working and blacksmithing at	7,727	6½
mathematical and navigational instruments:		
1 telescope	25	
1 sextant	100	
1 octant	35	
3 jacks	450	
2 copper balls (130 lbs.)	188	32½



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By Ethnic Origin

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