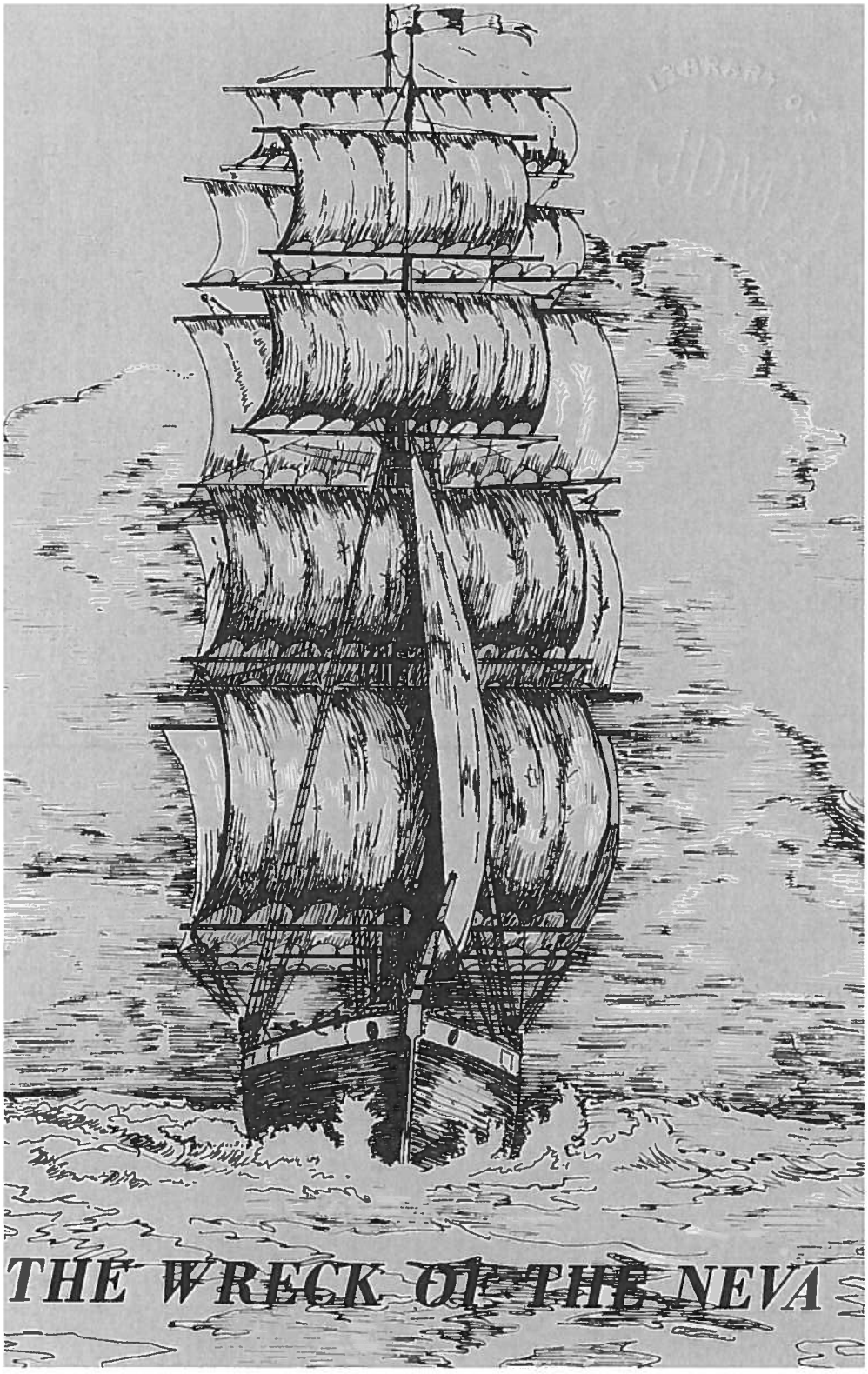

THE WRECK OF THE NEVA

THE WRECK OF THE NEVA

as narrated in the

DESCRIPTION OF THE UNFORTUNATE SHIPWRECK OF THE FRIGATE NEVA OF THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY

by V. N. Berkh

and

THE LOSS OF THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY SHIP NEVA ON THE NORTHWESTERN SHORE OF AMERICA, NEAR CAPE EDGECUMBE, ON THE LATITUDE OF 57°11', ON THE 9th OF JANUARY, 1813

by V. M. Golovnin

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Annotated translation by
Antoinette Shalkop

Introduction by
Antoinette Shalkop
and
Richard A. Pierce

Drawings by J. Davis

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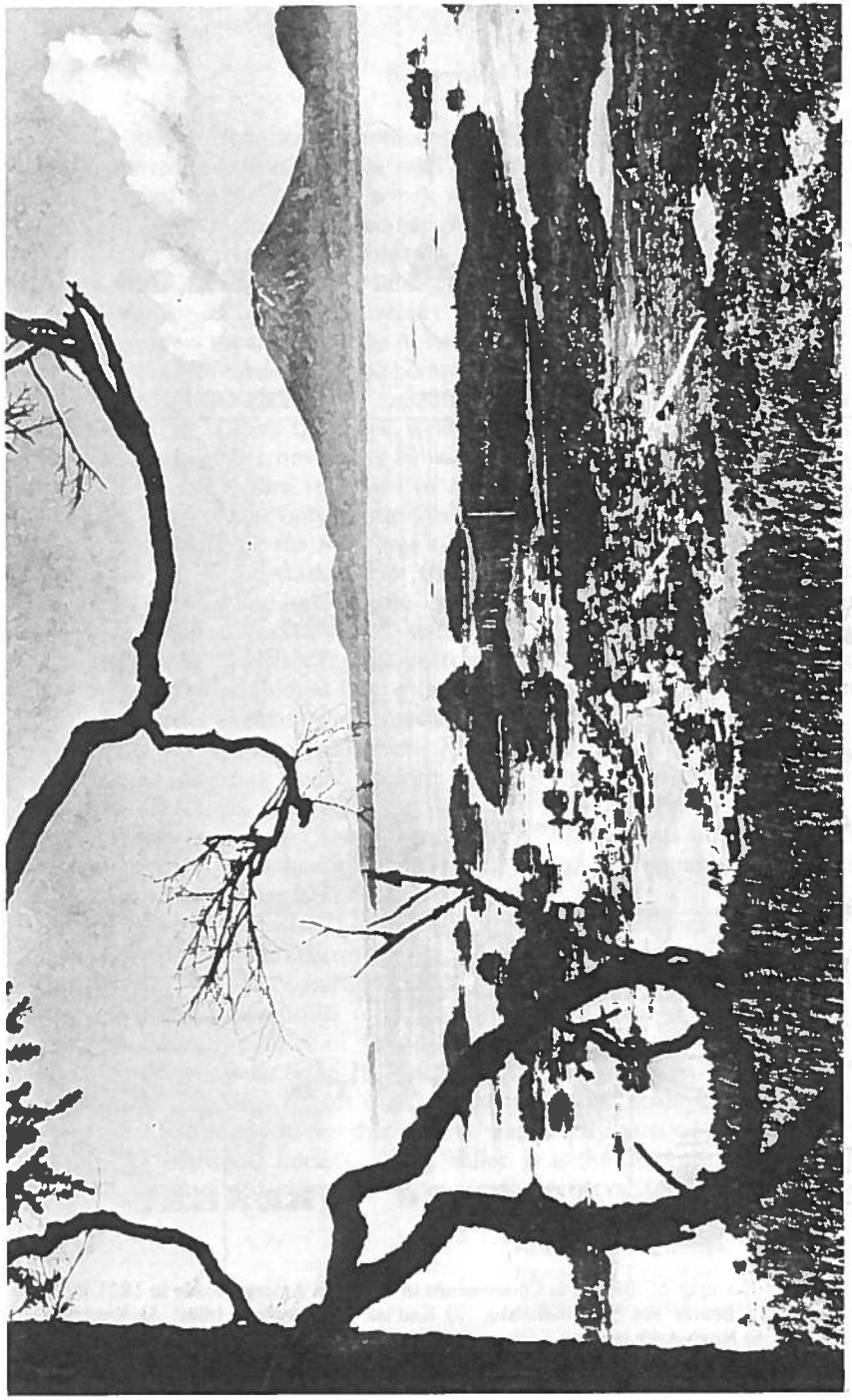


1. View of Sitka Sound with Sitka in the foreground and Kruzof Island in the distance. Courtesy of Cook Inlet Historical Society.

2. Section of a map of the Russian possessions in northern America made in 1821 by M. B. Berkh. 1) Beaver Sea 2) Unalashka 3) Kad'iak 4) Chugach Inlet 5) Resurrection Harbor 6) Novo-Arkhangel'sk Fortress.

Foreword

The Alaska Historical Commission is pleased to be a partner in this publication. Its realization is possible with the translation by Antoinette Shalkop of the Russian accounts of the wreck of the *Neva* off Sitka in 1813; that of V. N. Berkh (1817); the appended report of Fleet Lieutenant Iakov Podushkin; and the later work by V. M. Golovnin (1864). These narratives are listed by Valerian Lada-Mocarski in his **Bibliography of Books on Alaska Published Before 1868** issued by Yale University Press. Translation now makes available to English readers the details of the *Neva's* final voyage.

With the *Nadezhda*, the *Neva* completed the first Russian circumnavigation of the world (1803-1806), the expedition under the command of Lisianskii and Krusenstern. Later, the *Neva* went to Russian America where Lisianskii and his men helped Baranov retake Novo-Arkhangel'sk from the Tlingit warriors. From 1807 on, the *Neva* remained in Alaskan and North Pacific waters until her loss in 1813. After only eleven years of service since she was English-built in 1802, the sinking of the *Neva* was a blow to the colony since fewer Russian vessels were on Pacific station. Her tragic and unnecessary fate off Sitka only made more painful and evident the lateness of Russian beginnings as a naval power. Land-locked for centuries, with few ports of consequence and much or her commerce carried in foreign bottoms, Russia could hardly afford to lose a single ship. The additional loss with the *Neva* of a highly qualified administrator sent to relieve Baranov was another serious loss to the colony.

Paris-born, translator Antoinette Shalkop was educated in Europe and the United States. She has taught Russian at the University of Colorado and the University of Kansas. She came to Alaska in 1972 and became involved in study of the Russian period here. Recently she received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for research on the era of transition following the Russian withdrawal in 1867.

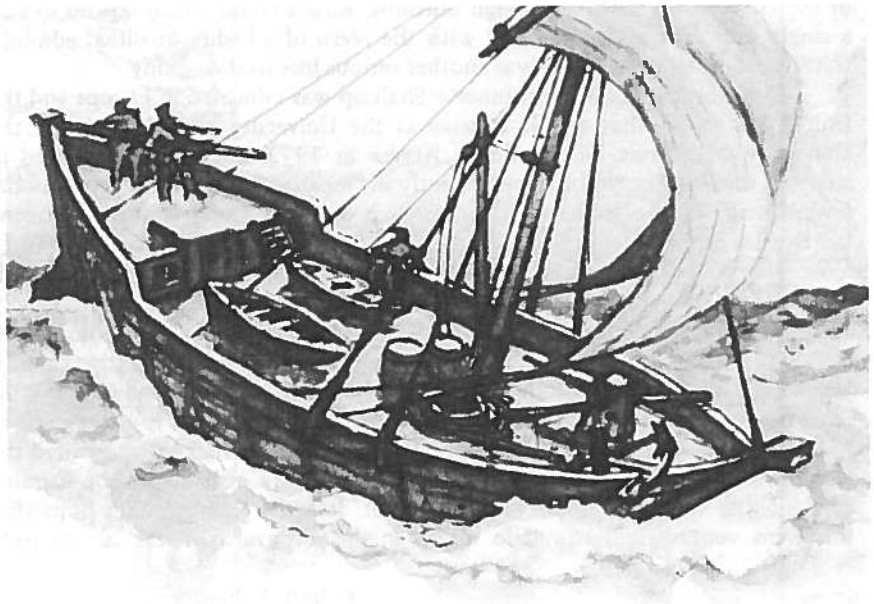
The Alaska Historical Commission offered a challenge grant for this translation. The Alaska Historical Society and the Sitka Historical Society accepted the opportunity and have made possible publication. The Commission wishes to express its gratitude to the membership of these organizations and to Marvin W. Falk, President of the Alaska Historical Society and Marilyn R. Knapp, President of the Sitka Historical Society. Appreciation is also extended to James Davis of Sitka for his drawings and to Robert Shalkop who edited the manuscript. The research for this project was greatly assisted by the Curator of the Sitka Historical Society, Isabel Miller. It is the Commission's hope that this joint venture will stimulate others in the retrieval of Alaska's rich past.

Robert A. Frederick
Executive Director
Alaska Historical Commission

Introduction

When the *Neva* perished in 1813, the Russian navy was barely a hundred years old and was just beginning to be staffed by trained Russian officers. Russia was not a sea-oriented nation like England; at the time when England was exploring the seas for new means of survival, Russia was a landlocked country, recovering from two centuries of Mongolian occupation. The Tartar domination of the southern plains caused the center of Russian culture and political power to shift to the northern forests, and look toward the Baltic rather than the Black Sea. Peter the Great recognized the importance of sea power at the beginning of his reign, when he acquired firsthand knowledge of modern naval design in the shipyards of Holland; but it was not until the early years of the 18th century that he was able to organize the first Russian navy. He noted, "This endeavor is essential to the State; as the proverb says, a sovereign who has a land army alone has only one hand; the one who also has a fleet has both hands."[1]

Like Henry VIII who brought shipwrights to England from Venice and Genoa in the early 16th century, to help England become a first-class seapower, Peter and his successors employed foreign designers and technicians to teach Russians the art of shipbuilding and of sailing. What men like Drake and Hawkins accomplished for Elizabethan England, Russian explorers were doing a century later on the coasts of Siberia, and in the 18th century in the North Pacific.



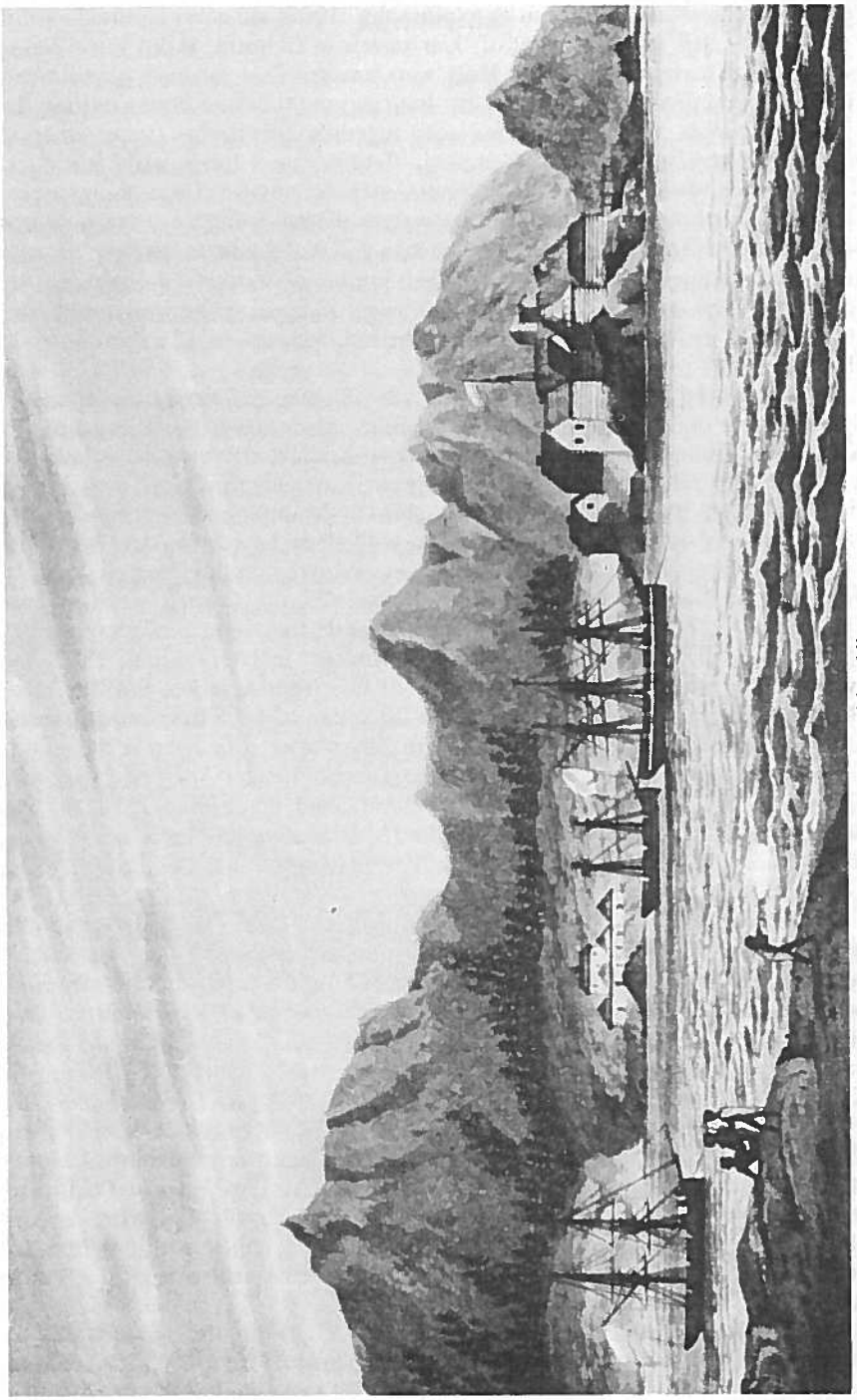
3. Many promyshlenniks crossed the ocean in "kotches," small, single-masted, flat-bottomed boats with one deck. Courtesy of S. G. Fedorova.

When the Russians set out to explore the islands and coast reported east of Siberia, they had to build many of their vessels in Okhotsk, as did Vitus Bering before his discovery of Alaska. Most were smaller than Bering's government-financed packetboats. Some of the fur hunters who followed Bering crossed the ocean in *shitikas,* small plank boats laced together with leather straps; others in *kotches,* somewhat larger single-masted, flat-bottomed boats with one deck. These simple vessels, manned for the most part by untrained but daring crews, sailed some of the most treacherous waters in the world to bring men and supplies to the American colony, and to take colonial products—mainly sea otter furs and sealskins—on the first step of their journey to market. Inevitably Russia lost many ships and men during this early stage of marine expansion until better management, better ships and greater experience began to bring improvement in the 1820's.

The record of the quarter century after Shelikhov founded his colony at Three Saints Bay speaks for itself. On September 30, 1790, the galiot *Tri Sviatitelia* (Three Saints), bearing Baranov to Kodiak, was lost at Unalaska. In 1797 the ship *Tri Sviatitelia* (a different vessel) was wrecked at Kamyshak Bay. Early in 1799 the *Phoenix,* the first ship to be built in Russian America, foundered in a storm en route to Kodiak, with all on board, and later that same year the *Severnyi Orel* (Northern Eagle) was destroyed on the Chugach coast. In 1801 the *Mikhail* perished on Unalaska. In 1803 the *Dmitrii* was lost near Umnak, and the *Predpriiatie Sv. Aleksandry* was destroyed on Unalaska. In 1805 the *Zakhariia i Elisaveta* was wrecked at Kodiak. In late autumn, 1807, the two-masted vessel *Sitkha,* bearing a cargo of furs from America, and the *Ioann Bogoslov* both perished on Kamchatka. In the spring of 1808 the company vessel *Mariia Magdalina,* starting from Okhotsk to the colonies, foundered at the mouth of the Okhota River. In the same year the company tender *Avos,* en route from Kodiak to Sitka, was wrecked near Icy Strait, and the schooner *Nikolai* was destroyed on the coast of Washington. In 1811 the *Juno* became a casualty on the Kamchatka coast 40 versts from Petropavlovsk, and the crown vessel *Feodosiia* was lost on the first Kuril island.[2]

Shipwrecks were, then, almost routine occurrences in the possessions in the North Pacific, the effect of which can hardly be overestimated. They sapped the economic strength of the company, eliminated profits, and reduced resources which could have improved conditions of the company and permitted new enterprises to be undertaken. Personnel perished who might, in various ways, have altered the history of the Pacific. Thus, the newly appointed Bishop of Kodiak, Ioasaf, who was lost with the *Phoenix* in 1794, might have hastened the missionary work in the Russian possessions. Had it not been for the wreck of the *Nikolai* in 1808, the Russian-American Company might have established a post at the mouth of the Columbia River as well as at Fort Ross in California, strengthening Russian interests and claims on the west coast. Likewise, the loss of the ship *Neva* on January 9, 1813, on Kruzof Island, almost within sight of its destination, Sitka, deprived the colonies of an able replacement for A. A. Baranov as chief manager.

The *Neva* had been known as a lucky ship. A 370-ton, three-masted ship of 14 guns, built in England as the *Thames* and sold to Russia in 1802, together with the *Nadezhda,* formerly the *Leander,* she had taken part in the first Russian



4. The "Neva" in the harbor of Novo-Arkhangel'sk. Drawing by Capt. Lisianskii.

round-the-world expedition under Lisianskii and Krusenstern in 1803-1806. During the voyage the *Neva* went to Russian America, where Lisianskii and his men helped Baranov retake Novo-Arkhangel'sk (Sitka) from the Kolosh (Tlingit) in a stiff battle. Both vessels returned to Kronshtadt, the port of St. Petersburg, in August 1806.

Baranov had asked the main office for a larger vessel, needed to carry supplies to the company settlements and defend them from hostile acts of natives and of other European countries. The management decided to send the *Neva.* A few months later, under L. A. Hagemeister, she sailed again for America, via New Holland (Australia), arriving at Sitka on September 12, 1807. From that time the vessel remained in colonial waters.

There are not many descriptions of the *Neva,* although she had been honored by a personal visit of Tsar Alexander I in 1803, the object of which, according to Krusenstern, "was to see the two ships [*Neva* and *Nadezhda*] which were to carry the Russian flag for the first time round the world."[3] She is described in some detail in Iurii Lisianskii's account of this famous voyage,[4] where we encounter two rare illustrations of her. Since she spent a considerable amount of time in Russian American waters during Baranov's administration, the *Neva* is frequently mentioned in K. T. Khlebnikov's biography of the doughty chief manager.[5] In later years Tikhmenev and much later Bancroft give brief accounts of her activities and of the shipwreck. In her ten years under the Russian American Company flag she sailed thousands of miles and played an important role in Russian naval history and in the development of the new colony.

At the end of August 1812, after leaving furs from Alaska at Okhotsk, the *Neva* started her return voyage under the command of Lieutenant Ia. A. Podushkin.[6] She had on board 77 people, including several women and children, and Tertii Stepanovich Bornovolokov, slated to replace Baranov as chief manager. Most of them never saw their destination, meeting their death four months later in the raging surf near Cape Edgecumbe on Kruzof Island. At that time there was undoubtedly much correspondence between the head office in St. Petersburg and Baranov concerning the destruction of the vessel, but this is lost now. In 1818 when Baranov left on his return trip to Russia, during which he died, the documents of his period in office were sent with him. At the time of the cession of Russian America to the United States the correspondence of the Novo-Arkhangelsk office for the period from 1818 to 1867 was turned over to the new owner, but earlier papers remained in Russia. Several years after the sale of the American colony, the Russian-American Company was liquidated and the files of the St. Petersburg office were eventually destroyed; with them would have gone the materials on the *Neva.* As a consequence of this, we are left only with unofficial accounts.

Of all the passengers aboard the *Neva,* only 28 made it to shore alive, and some of those soon died of exhaustion. One of the survivors, midshipman Mikhailo Il'ich Terpigorev, gave the naval historian V. N. Berkh[7] a detailed account during a 10-day visit at Berkh's home in Perm the following year. Berkh made Terpigorev's account the basis for his publication on the wreck. He also appends letters from Baranov and *shturman* (navigator) Daniil Vasil'evich Kalinin, commander of the doomed ship in the last stage of its voyage, and a

report by Iakov Podushkin.

Valerian Lada-Mocarski included Berkh's **Description of the tragic shipwreck of the Russian-American Company's frigate "Neva"** in his **Bibliography of Books on Alaska published before 1868** because this short work is unique in several respects. He observed:

> "In his preface, the author states that he has written this booklet in order to render the last homage to the memory of two of his friends who shipped on the *Neva:* T. S. Bornovolokov and D. V. Kalinin. The reason for inclusion of this slight work in the present bibliography is the fact that it is based on the narrative of M. I. Terpigorev, a naval officer who was a member of the *Neva* crew and, of course, witnessed the shipwreck. There are few eyewitness accounts of similar catastrophes befalling ships on their way to or from Alaska in the early days of its colonization. The narrative of circumstances before and after the shipwreck and of incredible sufferings of the participants is very vivid. It shows clearly various dangers to which the Russian pioneers of those days were constantly subjected—the elements and the natives, in particular. It is well worth reading."[8]

Berkh's simple and direct style makes his narrative very effective. He speaks in the first person, confesses his own feelings and solicits the reader's compassion for the unfortunate passengers and crew of the *Neva.* Without using any literary artifice, he unfolds his narration and builds up suspense with remarkable skill. To him the wreck of the *Neva* is not only a fact in the history of Russian America, but a personal tragedy; thus the human appeal of his account is much more memorable than an official governmental report.

Berkh's narrative also carries the flavor of his time, with its knowledge of the world, prejudices, beliefs and attitudes. Scurvy, for example, an ailment resulting from the lack of vitamin C in the diet, was thought to be a contagious illness which infected people in trying circumstances. The violent death of Grigor'ev, a member of the crew, is attributed to bad conscience and remorse; the death of dogs on the beach to "Aqua Tofana," a mysterious poison. The reflected attitude toward the native peoples of the land was commonly held by Europeans and Americans of that time.

Nevertheless, Berkh's story and the letters and other details which he included leave an indelible impression in the reader's heart. The *Neva,* wandering the sea like the Flying Dutchman, knows no rest and her passengers endure seemingly endless tortures before they meet death. We remember Lieutenant Podushkin's laconic words: "cliff and rocks; horror; darkness of the night; no salvation for life; but God willed it so."

Following Berkh's narrative is a much shorter account of the same event by Vasilii Mikhailovich Golovnin.[9] He included the case of the *Neva* in his book on Russian shipwrecks, intended to show mariners how to avoid catastrophe, and how to conduct themselves if one occurred![10] Returning from his celebrated captivity in Japan[11] to Kamchatka in November 1813, Golovnin found in Petropavlovsk Fleet Lieutenant Podushkin and several other survivors of the *Neva* disaster. Golovnin, a first-class seafarer whose experience included two years in the British navy, used Berkh's book, but observes that since Berkh's

main informant, Terpigorev, was only a young midshipman, he could not have had the experience needed to judge events at sea, particularly shipwrecks. Golovnin therefore prefers to base his description on a compilation of the accounts of Podushkin and other survivors, recounted in the presence of one another, as "nearer the truth."

His story, however, was written much later; it does not contain many details, nor any new facts. Golovnin draws a lesson for seafarers and rationalizes the drama which struck the ship and her passengers. He is not as concerned with individual experiences and impressions as with a theoretical evaluation of the situation; in his opinion the *Neva* was doomed because no one on board had the proper authority to control the crew. Aside from this, he offers no real answers to the questions which arise concerning the *Neva* tragedy, and ends his account with a long quotation from Berkh's narrative.

Still another version is to be found in A. Markov's book **Krushenie Korablia Nevy u beregov Novo-Arkhangel'skogo Porta. Razskaz ochevidtsa** (The wreck of the ship *Neva* near the shores of the port of Novo-Arkhangel'sk. An eyewitness account.) St. Petersburg, 1850. Based upon the recollections of an unnamed survivor whom Markov met in Novo-Arkhangel'sk more than 30 years after the wreck, the account adds nothing new to the story and is inaccurate in certain details. Berkh and Golovnin, then, give nearly all that is likely to be available about the wreck of the *Neva.*

Until recently little was known about Bornovolokov, the principal passenger of the *Neva,* except what Berkh relates in his work. In 1964 there appeared an article, written by K. V. Kostrin, which contained additional material![12] Born in 1764 in Arkhangel'sk, Bornovolokov acquired an education, became an official, earned the civil service rank of Collegiate Councillor,[13] and independently developed a keen interest in natural history. He wrote and published articles on northern deposits of oil, coal and shale, discussing their economic significance and possible industrial use. In the journal of the Free Economic Society (Baranov was also a member before going to America in 1790) appear his articles on the geology, geography and botany of Vologda province, as well as discussions of meteors and the making of paint. He was a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, and a member of the Moscow society of naturalists. In later years, he developed a strong interest in the fur trade as an important national resource.

In other times, the versatile Bornovolokov might have risen high in scholarly circles. However, in 1812, with a large family and a modest estate, Bornovolokov eagerly agreed to take over the position of head of the Russian-American colonies, and set out across Siberia for Okhotsk, where his fate merged with that of the *Neva.*

As with many ships lost at sea, legends grew around the *Neva* and many have speculated on the whereabouts of the wreck. Some people believed that she bore a rich cargo. About 1849, the Russian-American Company named a shallow bay about two and a half miles north of Cape Edgecumbe, *Bukhta Neva* or Neva

Bay, in honor of the ship.[14] There is no historical evidence however, that the shipwreck took place in this area. Baranov, who sent rescue boats to bring the survivors and remains of the cargo to Novo-Arkhangel'sk, indicated *Mys Trubitsyna* or Trubitsin Point as the site of the catastrophe. Further confusion arises from a change of name in 1926 when a point of land half a mile east of Cape Edgecumbe was named Trubitsin Point. In the 1790's and later Alexander Baranov had applied this name to Cape Edgecumbe itself.[15]

Uncertain provenance of Russian objects in Sitka and Juneau, and oral accounts of items found or seen in the general area of the shipwreck contribute to the mystery of where it occurred. Since the current is from the south, some objects may have been washed ashore north of the actual shipwreck site; others may have been retrieved by local treasure hunters at some time in the past and abandoned in other locations because of the violent surf. Carrying anything over land would have been nearly impossible because of the deep, volcanically formed ravines.

Whatever was recovered from the wreck has with few exceptions been used up, lost or discarded long ago. The Alaska State Museum, at Juneau, has a piece of wood said to be from the *Neva.* The vessel was built of oak, but this is of a light color and may be Alaska cedar—also called Alaska, Sitka or yellow cypress—which grows in certain areas along the northern Pacific coast.[16] If so, it could have been acquired for repairs during the *Neva's* short stay in a harbor in Prince William Sound, named by the Russians Chugach Sound.[17] In 1793 when they established a wharf in that area, they found this tree to be good and durable for shipbuilding and referred to it as wild cypress or *dushistyi* (aromatic).[18]

Other reminders of the wreck may be found in St. Michael's Cathedral in Sitka. According to P. Tikhmenev, in 1816 the first ordained priest in Russian America, Father Aleksei Sokolov, arrived in Sitka, bringing with him the icon of St. Michael which is still seen in the cathedral. The church services were then conducted in the small chapel which became the first church of St. Michael the Archangel and later was replaced by the cathedral; and "the iconostasis for this chapel was assembled from remnants of a rich collection of icons salvaged from the ship *Neva.*"[19]

Russian small and large cannon are not uncommon in Sitka and some might have been salvaged from the shipwreck site on Kruzof Island. Two small brass cannon or carronades are said to have been brought up about 1919 from that vicinity, but this lacks confirmation and today no one knows what became of them. As recently as World War II, the military explored that general area with hard hat divers, but no findings were brought to light.

Newspaper articles which appeared from time to time embellished the story and added to the confusion. An early example is an article by the well-known Sitkan George (Sergei) Kostrometinoff,[20] published on April 14, 1894, in the ALASKA HERALD.[21] He recorded: "Several days ago some Indians came to town with an air-tight copper tank, oak timbers and utensils supposed to be remnants of the wreck of the Russian vessel *Neva,* and which they found near Mount Edgecumbe." After relating the story of the shipwreck, the author added a legend which had grown up over a period of years about the treasures of the *Neva:*

> "The captain of the Neva told Baranoff he had placed the valuables saved in four barrels, interring them by a creek and near a large spruce tree, which could be identified by a notch cut in the bark. After the wreck they proceeded to build a stockade and huts for shelter, fearing hostilities from Indians, who in those days were warlike and constantly avenging themselves upon the Russians for the persecution they had received at the hands of Baranoff, some time after the massacre at Old Sitka, which is six miles north of the present Sitka.
>
> It may be stated here, that they had nothing to fear from the Indians in that vicinity, as at that time the caves were supposed to be haunted by witches. Many years prior to the wreck a volcanic eruption took place, forming the existing crater between Mt. Edgecumbe and the camel back mountain. The Indians to this day believe the water in the crater of Mt. Edgecumbe to be deadly poison. Tourists and others who climb this mountain generally deposit a sealed bottle containing a note, bearing their name and date of their visit to the crater.
>
> Governor Baranoff made several attempts to discover the remains of the wreck, but never succeeded, for the survivors themselves could not exactly locate the wreck owing to fact that they had no charts. The exact spot was not known until the summer of 1867, when it was discovered by a Russian surveying party, who found a large quantity of oak timber, booms, three cannons and the foundation of the stockade. They immediately came to Sitka and reported to Prince Maksootoff, who was the governor of Alaska. The Prince sent a party out to investigate the matter, but could not find the treasure. The sand being constantly thrown up by the action of the waves has hidden the treasure and costly fixtures, comprising handsome paintings, jewels, elaborately decorated crowns, crosses, and vases of gold and silver.
>
> And such was the destiny of the ill-fated *Neva.* Ah, who knows but what some forlorn and weary prospector in search of that bright yellow metal, in the solitude of the mountains, may accidentally stumble upon this bonanza, which would enable him to live in ease and luxury, for the remainder of his life."

This account must indeed have kept many a dreamer hoping to discover the lost wealth, and many have tried. At other times the story of the *Neva* has lost all semblance of historical truth. The **DAILY ALASKA DISPATCH**[22] published a short article on February 10, 1915, according to which the *Neva* was wrecked somewhere about 1855:

> "**Diver gets Permission to Salvage Lost Gold.**
> Port Townsend, Feb. 1—C. F. Stagger, the marine diver, today received an official permit from the war department to salve the Russian sloop of war *Neva,* wrecked off Cape Edgecumbe near Sitka, Alaska, about sixty years ago.

The *Neva* was en route to Sitka with about $200,000 in gold to pay the crews of the government vessels stationed at Sitka and other government officers. After striking the reef she was abandoned and later slid into deep water. The Russian government tried to secure the gold, but abandoned the effort for lack of a proper wrecking outfit. Mr. Stagger will begin work about May 1."

Reverend Andrew Kashevarov, who was the curator of the Territorial Museum for many years, gave an account of the wreck in 1932 in a story based on Golovnin's text. At the end, Kashevarov wrote:

"Many years after the wreck there were some expeditions undertaken by the Sitka people to locate this treasure, but no one, so far, has been fortunate enough to locate it. During the past summer Mr. W. R. Hanlan visited the scene of the wreck. He is quite confident that he has located a cave above the high water mark which appears to have been used as shelter by the survivors. There is all the evidence that planks were used to cover the entrance, in order to protect the people from the wind and cold. There is, also, evidence of a fire having been made inside.

On the wall of the cave facing the entrance he found marks chiseled in the solid rock. In the center there is a crown about six inches in height. On the left of the crown is a mark that looks like a horseshoe pointing up and on the right are two horseshoes pointing down. From the study of these marks it is not clear just what they represent. Mr. Hanlan also found a portion of a Russian brass candlestick. He said that he did not dare to remain at that place very long as it is a dangerous spot at any time."[23]

Today although the exact site of the disaster is forgotten, it can probably be determined within a half mile. The coast has changed little since 1813; dense forest still descends close to the shore and except for a few weeks a year when the sea around the Cape is calm, a boat cannot sail safely near the cliffs against which the surf beats violently and continually. We know from the account of the survivors that the *Neva* was wrecked near steep cliffs, and one visit to this area convinces one rapidly that any object falling into those waters would soon disintegrate. There is in any case little that might be found; wooden timbers would have rotted away decades ago, leaving only ballast, cannon, and anchors. Such objects may yet be recovered, but boaters and scuba divers should take care not to add to the toll of the unfortunates who perished with the *Neva,* more than one hundred and sixty years ago.

Many generous individuals have helped with our research on this work and we would like to acknowledge our gratitude to the following: Dr. Svetlana Fedorova of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow; Zelma Doig and Barbara Pavitt of the Alaska Historical Library; Laura Bracken of the Alaska State Museum; Alice Postel and Esther Billman, now deceased, of the Sheldon Jackson Museum; Ellen Lang and Gene Ervine of the Sitka National Historical Park; Irene Shuler of Channel Flying, Sitka; and most of all Arnold Johnson of Sitka who piloted his helicopter over the southern shores of Kruzof Island allowing us to examine at close range what we believe to have been the site of the wreck of the *Neva.* Mr. Johnson also helped in identifying landmarks and relating these to the map.

Footnotes accompanying the originals appear in the text; annotations made in the course of translation are numbered and listed at the end of Golovnin's account. Introduced explanatory material appears in brackets and place names in the original texts are given the Russian spelling such as "Kad'iak," "Sitkha," "Unalashka," etc. English equivalents of Russian measurements are given in the glossary.

There are also several period peculiarities which have been retained in translation; social status was of great importance in the early 19th century in Russia and all members of the upper classes were always addressed either by the first name followed by the patronymic or by the last name preceded by the title *"gospodin,"* which literally means "sir." The abbreviated form *"G-n,"* was translated as "Mr." Those who merited special recognition are referred to as *"Kavaler,"* a term of respect equivalent to "Esquire," and translated as "Cavalier."

ОПИСАНІЕ

НЕЩАСТНАГО КОРАБЛЕКРУШЕНІЯ

ФРЕГАТА

Россійко-Американской компаніи

НЕВЫ

Послѣдовавшаго близъ береговъ Ново-Архангельскаго Порта.

САНКТПЕТЕРБУРГЪ.

Въ типографіи В. Плавильщикова,

1817.

5. Title page of the 1817 Edition of Berkh's account.

DESCRIPTION

OF THE UNFORTUNATE SHIPWRECK

OF THE FRIGATE

NEVA

OF THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY

which took place near the shores of the port of Novo-Arkhangel'sk

by

V. N. Berkh

SAINT PETERSBURG
The Press of V. Plavil'shchikov
1817

Printing is authorized
with the provision that before release from the press, there be presented to the Censor's Committee: one copy for the Censor's Committee, another for the Department of the Ministry of Public Education, two copies for the IMPERIAL Public Library and one for the IMPERIAL Academy of Sciences, St. P.

The 30th day of May of the year 1817.

Censor, Councillor of State[24] and
Cavalier, Iv [an] Timkovskoi

Preface

Wishing to pay a last debt to the memory of two deserving sons of the fatherland, I have undertaken to describe the disastrous event which was the cause of their premature demise; but before proceeding to this terrible narration, I consider it my duty to acquaint the reader with these two individuals. Collegiate Councillor, Cavalier of the orders of St. Anna and St. Vladimir and correspondent of the Imperial Academy, Tertii Stepanovich Bornovolokov, known for a long and useful service, at an early age entered into a civil service career. For some time he was a member of the laroslavl *gubernia* treasury; after this he served as Chief Provision-master, was ten years Gubernia Procurator in Vologda, and finally before entering the service of the American Company, was with the Minister of Justice, Dmitriev.

Mr. Bornovolokov told me himself that while he was in Kola, where he was sent on important government missions, and where he had frequent conversations with the *promyshlenniks* who were leaving to hunt sea lions and white bears on Novaia Zemlia and Spitsbergen, he conceived the idea of improving the organization of our mercantile companies. Later, being sent on behalf of two Ministers to the town of Arkhangel'sk in order to examine the affairs of the liquidation commission, and study the economics of the fur trade, the deceased occupied himself with even greater attention to the above-mentioned object, and suddenly formed a very strong desire to go to our American colonies.

Upon his return from Arkhangel'sk, after getting acquainted with the Directors of the Russian-American Company, Messrs. Mikhail Matveevich Buldakov and Benedikt Benediktovich Kramer, he ventured to offer his services to the Company and was unanimously designated assistant to the Manager of [the Company colonies in] America, Collegiate Councillor Baranov, with a significant salary, and with the understanding that in case of the death or departure of Mr. Baranov from America, he would take his place.

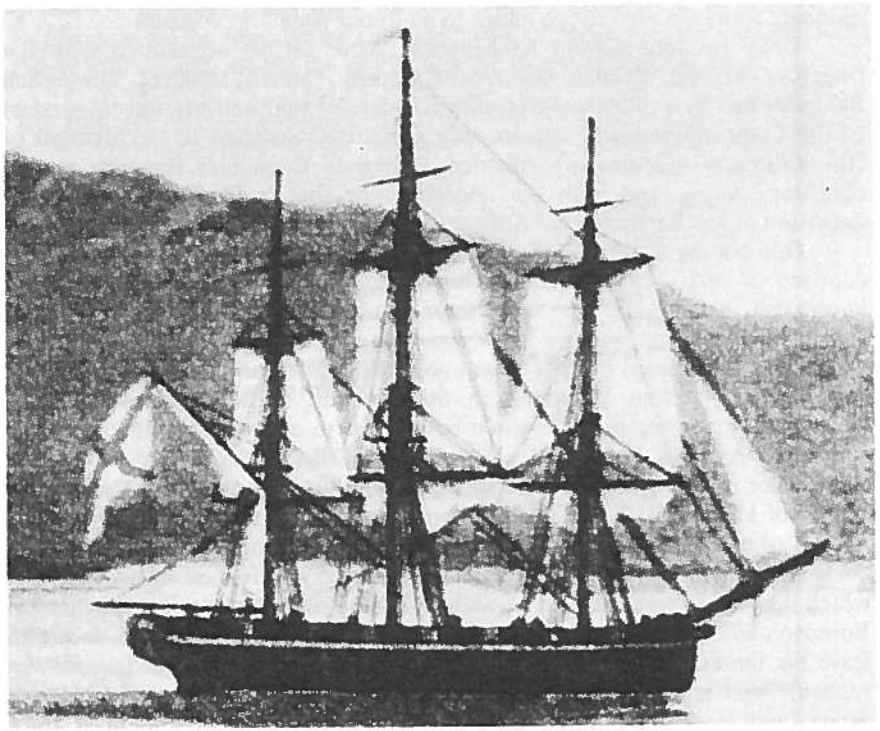
One can say impartially that our colonies have lost a great deal having been deprived of such a rare leader, for his good character as well as his excellent knowledge, which could have been very useful in that land. The deceased was a lover of all the fine arts; he knew the French and German languages almost perfectly; he occupied himself pleasurably with agriculture, chemistry, botany, medicine and various languages; in other words, he was a man of broad knowledge. From the moment when he decided to commit himself to the wild regions of America, he began to collect avidly all knowledge about that land. The author of this description, having spent with him several days in Perm in the month of May in 1812, was astonished that in such a short time he had enriched himself so much with detailed knowledge about our colonies.

Now there remains only for me to mention one feature of his character which does him great honor. The writer of these pages, having learned that Mr. Bornovolokov was leaving for America, was astonished that he could decide to leave his family of a wife, five daughters and four sons. "My dear friend!", he replied, "you are acquainted with my circumstances; you know what a small estate I will leave my children. Love for them, sincere paternal tenderness, force me to sacrifice myself. Ten years of my life in America will provide completely

for their inheritance. If I return then I shall enjoy with them together the wealth honestly acquired; if not, they will know how to value my sacrifice. I, my dear friend, have lived forty years, seen much, experienced often the vicissitudes of human fate, and am going to wild America, not regretting at all that I leave you all with your refined enlightenment."

Here, my dear reader, is a striking example of love for one's children; but all of the creations of our minds are a dream! Providence determined differently, and this worthy man, barely did he see the shores of America, when he became a victim of the fierce waves of that unpredictable Ocean.

The other, over whose demise I shed the most bitter tears of true friendship, is Mister Kalinin. He was a disciple of Neptune. From the earliest years he dedicated himself to the sea, and in the past war with the Swedes (1790) was promoted to the rank of officer for his courage. Until 1803 he served with the Baltic fleet; was constantly at sea, and deservingly enjoyed the name of skilled seafarer. This same year he was invited to join the expedition around the world, and was assigned to the ship *Neva.* During this trip, Mr. Kalinin distinguished himself by his skill and tireless activity, was first to face all dangers, and endured without a murmur all labors. It is to be regretted that his name is seldom, and not as it should be, mentioned by the author of the journal of the ship *Neva.* In 1807, after twenty years of labor, Mr. Kalinin left the naval service and, settling in Petersburg, took his rest.



6. The "Neva" (detail from a drawing by Capt. Lisianskii.)

In the year 1812 he stopped in once to see the Director [of the Russian-American Company], Mr. Buldakov. The latter, telling him that the ship *Neva,* being in Kamchatka, was assigned to leave for America, pursued the conversation with him on this subject until he inflamed his imagination. Mr. Kalinin in that very minute announced his desire to take the *Neva,* and to serve another four years in America. The conditions were concluded, and already in the month of February Mr. Kalinin began to get ready to depart for Okhotsk.

The author of this description, having served a long time with Mr. Kalinin, and having enjoyed for about ten years his most sincere friendship, embraced him for the last time in Perm in March of the year 1812. Honoring the memory of this noble attachment, he ends this introduction with tears, shed from the depth of his heart.

List of the Officers and Crew of the Ship "Neva"

Collegiate Councillor, Cavalier of the orders of St. Anna and St. Vladimir, Tertii Stepanovich Bornovolokov.

Shturman [Navigator] of the 9th class,
Daniil Vasil'evich Kalinin.

Flota Leitenant [Fleet Lieutenant],
Iakov [Anikievich] Podushkin.

Gardemarin [Midshipman],
Mikhailo Il'ich Terpigorev.

Podporuchik [Sub-Lieutenant],
Schilling.

Uchenik moreplavania [Apprentice Seaman],
Mikhailo Travin.

Uchenik korablestroenia [Apprentice Shipbuilder],
Prokofii Mal'tsov.

Botsman [Boatswain],
Grigor'ev.

Prikashchiks [Supercargoes],
Petr Kolobov,
Vasilii Sorokin.

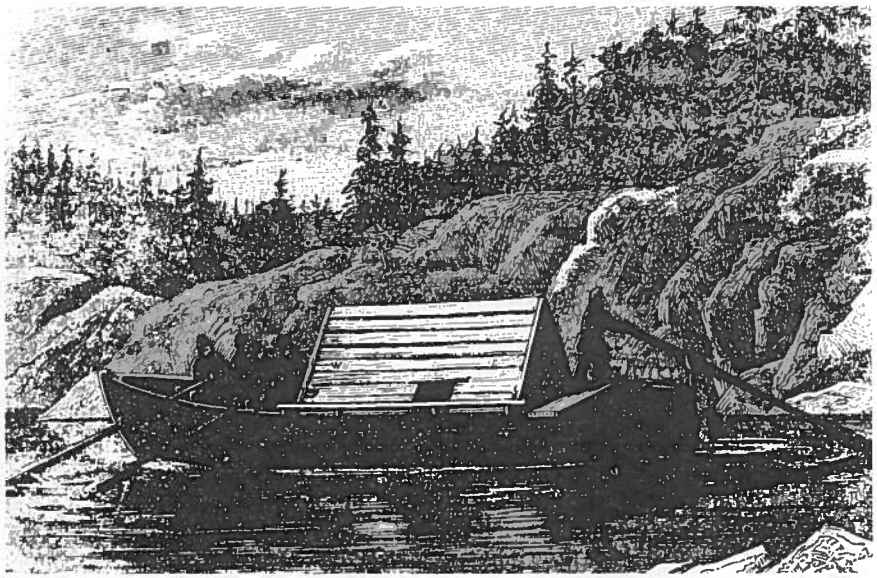
Shturman [Navigator] 14th class,
Nerodov.

His wife Anna and son Anton.
Master saddler Brikman.
Postmaster Vaoulin.
Artillerist Volkov.

Meshchanka [towns-woman] Verigina with daughters Aleksandra and Maria.
Mr. Bornovolokov's servant, Timofeev.
The Moor, Ivan Petrov.

Total of 21.

The apprentice shipbuilder mentioned, Prokofii Mal'tsov, was a native of Baranov Island. In the year of 1806 he was taken to St. Petersburg, and the Director of the Company, Mr. Mikhailo Matveevich Buldakov, having taken him under his special protection, enrolled him in the school of marine architecture. Mal'tsov stuck to this science with special application, and in a short time demonstrated great success. Finally, after finishing the course, he was sent by his benefactor to America, where he could be very useful in the art of shipbuilding; but unfortunately, Mr. Buldakov's noble intention did not have an opportunity to bear fruit; he drowned during the shipwreck.



7. Siberian river boat.

The Journey to Okhotsk

I begin this narration with three letters written to me by Mister Kalinin from Okhotsk.

"Okhotsk, July 8, 1812[25]
My esteemed friend!
V [asili] i N [ikolaev] ich.

In this very long letter I will have the pleasure of describing to you the most interesting and painful part of my journey. On the 23rd of May, I left Irkutsk and after traveling safely 247 versts, *I arrived at Kachuga landing. Here I bought myself a good boat, built a cabin in the center of it, and sailed to Iakutsk on the famous River Lena, about which I think it my duty to give you information which it seems has not yet been printed anywhere.*[26] *I obtained it here accidentally and all of the Lena navigators vouch for it. The name Lena in the Iakut language means "a big river" and this appellation has been given quite justly; from its source to the Icy Ocean, it flows over 4,000* versts, *a terrible distance over which are some 278 different islands. One may sail on it from its source to the Icy Ocean.*

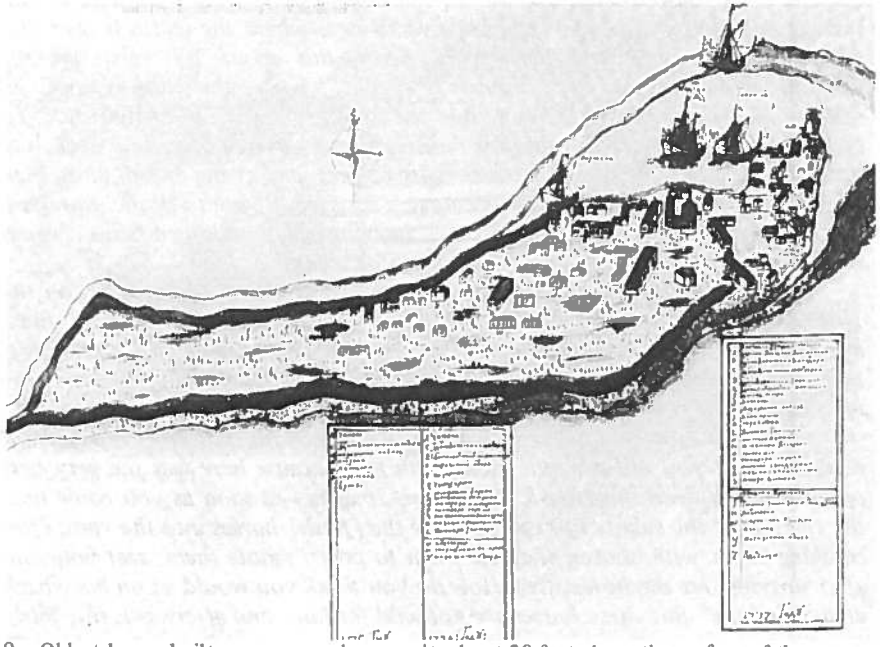
I have seen many vessels as long as 84 feet which while carrying up to 3,000 puds *have a draft of only 26* vershoks. *In the spring these vessels come from the Kachuga landing into Iakutsk in a little more than 20 days, this distance being more than 2,500* versts. *The width of this river is from 30 to 400* sazhens. *At the confluence with the river Kinga, where the width is over 200* sazhens, *it is so fast it is like rapids. Below this about 200* versts *are the well-known narrows [*shcheki*–literally–"cheeks"] where the width is barely 70* sazhens, *and numerous cliffs hang over the river, especially on the right side. To be here with a poor pilot would be a misfortune. I was at all times on deck, and passed these safely. Its depth is from 6 to 12 feet, and at the mouth more than 35 feet. In the entire distance of its course, 323 rivers flow into it; the shores are most picturesque; high cliffs, deep caves, hanging rocks, and open fields covered with liliaceous flowers make the most charming scenes.*

On the 7th of June I arrived at the district town of Iakutsk, and on the 10th after taking five pack horses on relay, left with them to go forward. But I must describe to you the order of my procession: in front rode my Iakut guide, then on another horse myself, on the third and fourth my equipment and the tent, and on the fifth rode the servant.

Having remembered that you paid money to learn how to ride a horse, I regretted that you did not ride along with me, because here was the very best opportunity to learn horseback riding free. Imagine–as soon as you come near the relay post the Iakuts run out to drive the [fresh] horses into the yard; after catching them with nooses, they tie them to posts, saddle them, seat you, and after untying, let the horses free. How do you think you would sit on horseback at such a time? But these horses are not wild for long, and afterwards ride fairly quietly.

It seems to me that the Okhotsk road could easily cure our comrade and

8. Iakutsk on the River Lena. 17th century.



9. Okhotsk was built on a narrow bar or spit, about 30 feet above the surface of the water. 18th century map.

friend P. V.[27] *of hypochondria. While riding on it there is not one free minute to give oneself to contemplation; either one has to go up a mountain, or down the steepest cliff, or ride through such dense and thick woods that one has to watch out constantly so as not to put out one's eyes on branches, or knock one's forehead against a tree. At times you get into a swamp or the most sticky clay where it is absolutely necessary to get off the horse and drag it out with great difficulty. Judge for yourself in what condition the rider is at that time. I am not saying a word to you about the many rivers which one has to cross by fording, getting one's legs wet in water up to the knees.*

On the way we met the Provision Commissioner who carried grain, flour and peas to Okhotsk and Kamchatka on eight thousand horses, (but the parties were divided into groups of 100 horses). You will probably think that they carried large weights and you will be surprised when I tell you that the entire load was only 50 thousand puds;–*on each pack horse they put no more than 5* puds. *Finally, having passed through all the labors and dangers, I arrived at Okhotsk*[28] *on July the 2nd.*

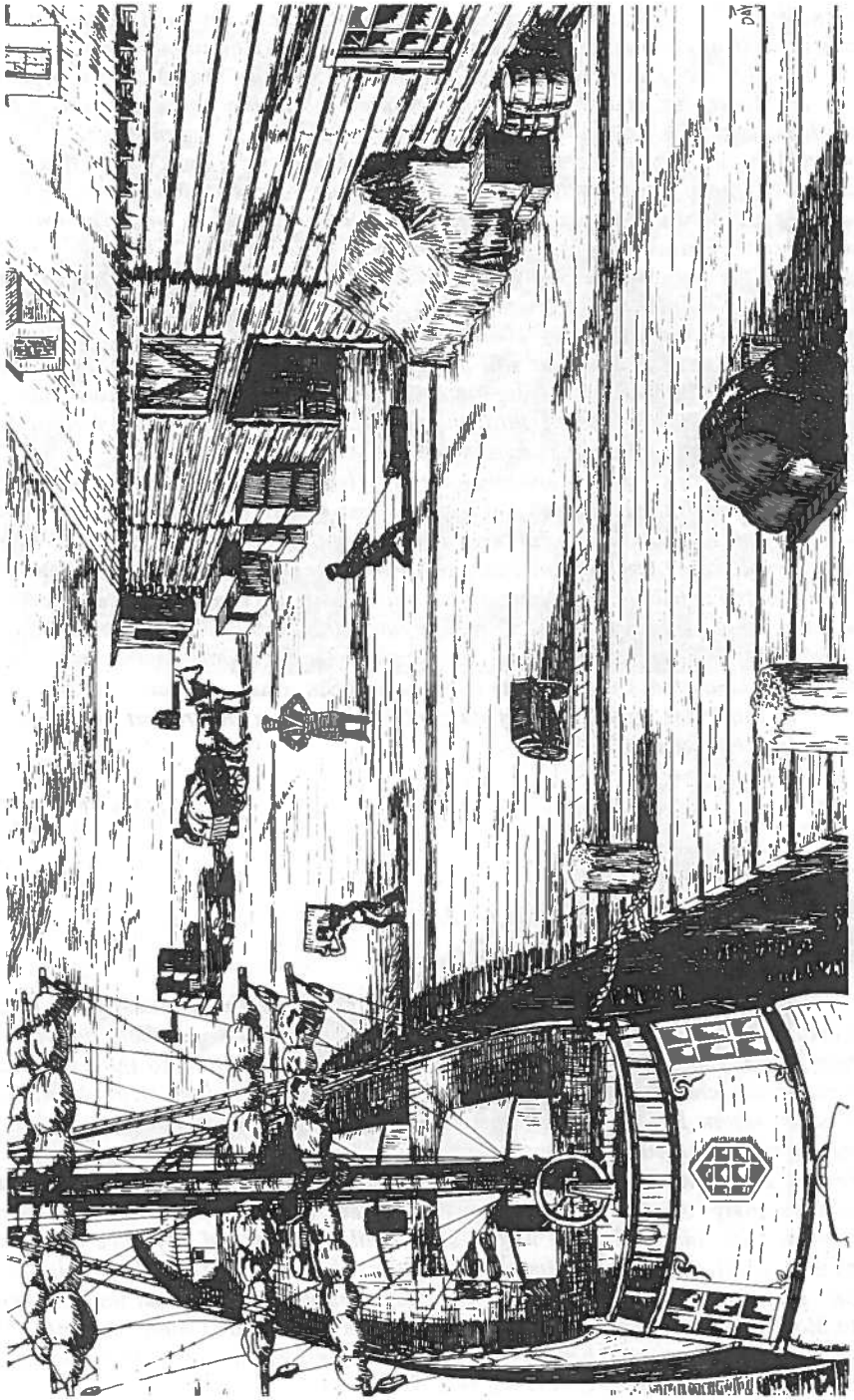
On the next day I appeared before the commandant of the port of Okhotsk. Here in the roadstead stand quite a few vessels; of the government ones there are the sloop **Diana**, *under the command of Captain-Lieutenant Petr Ivanovich Rikord, the brig* **Zotik** *and also two more brigs under the command of Lieutenants Podushkin and Narmanskii, one of whom is assigned to Kamchatka, and the other to Izhiga. Of the Company ones: the* **Neva** *under the command of Lieutenant Podushkin [sic] and the brig* **Finlandia**, *which came from the Aleutian island of Atkha under the command of* Shturman *Vasil'ev.*

In this letter, upon my brief stay in Okhotsk, I can only repeat to you that I remain ever yours, etc . . ."

[D. V. Kalinin]

"Okhotsk, August the 8th, 1812.
My Esteemed Friend!

I have not written to you for an entire month for the reason that the mail leaves Okhotsk every thirty days. Since that time several events have happened here which I will describe to you. Mr. Podushkin was moved to the **Finlandia** *because the crew of that brig did not agree to serve anymore with* Shturman *Vasil'ev whom I assigned to command the* **Neva**. *I and the mate Nerodov, are sailing on it to America as passengers; but an accident left everything as it was before.* Shturman *Vasil'ev, going in a skiff to his new ship a few days ago, was unfortunately overturned and drowned. I feel very sorry for his wife who remained in this wild place with a small child, and would not have had any means to get out of here without the help of the Company which, despite the fact that Vasil'ev owed it about one thousand rubles, ordered that she be taken to Moscow and be supplied during the trip with one hundred rubles a month for subsistence. They gave her on top of this a considerable honorarium for her husband's former services. This is a very commendable act.*



10. "Now our ship is almost completely ready for departure . . ." Drawing by J. Davis.

The sloop **Diana** *and brig* **Zotik** *left already for the Island of Kunashir to demand the release of Vasilii Mikhailovich Golovnin and others who have been held there.*[11]

Mr. Podushkin and I are getting along fairly well; we live together on the **Neva** *and have agreed to manage the work alternately every other day. One needs to say, however, that the* **Neva**, *after standing two years in Kamchatka without any kind of care, has begun to rot perceptibly, and I think will sail much worse than before.*

Now our ship is almost completely ready for departure, which I am anxious to do because the Okhotsk roadstead is open from all sides. God protect us if there should be storm; there will be no mercy, but certain peril. We suffered because of the crew; imagine that out of 70 men, promyshlenniks, *we could not get enough oarsmen. The commandant of the port felt sorry for our situation and not wanting us to go fishing [drown], like Vasil'ev, let us have his launch.*

You probably know how in the old days the ships were sent from Okhotsk, and what kind of provisions they were supplied with. Now I will tell you we can be proud of our ship. All of our provisions are the very best, and the crew is equipped with sufficient clothing, underwear and shoes; but all of this is still hidden. Before going out to sea one cannot give out anything; our dashing fellows leave everything in the taverns. Yesterday eight men were brought to the ship completely naked; however this, as you know, is not a misfortune. These wild folks are quite useful in America; most desperate souls!

I am finishing this letter with the pleasant hope of writing to you soon under sail."

[D. V. Kalinin]

"Ship **Neva**, *Okhotsk roadstead, 28th of August, 1812.*
My Esteemed Friend!

I had the honor of receiving your letter through Tertii Stepanovich, and am deeply grateful for your recommending me to this man, so intelligent and deserving of affection.

On the twelfth a very sad event occurred, during which the present commandant almost lost his life. On this day a deputy inspection of the two government brigs was to take place. Therefore, after inviting several officials and merchants on his launch, he left to carry out the inspection. Barely had he entered [the channel marked by] the buoys, when suddenly the launch was overturned. If we and the brigs had not hurried to offer help to the drowning, all would inevitably have perished. However, despite all the help, the Krigs Kammissar,[29] *the merchant Miasnikov, four* prikazchiks, *the quartermaster and six sailors drowned.*

Our ship is already under sail; the wind blows from the N W and the weather is most congenial. If it lasts this way, then I should be in Sitkha in November.

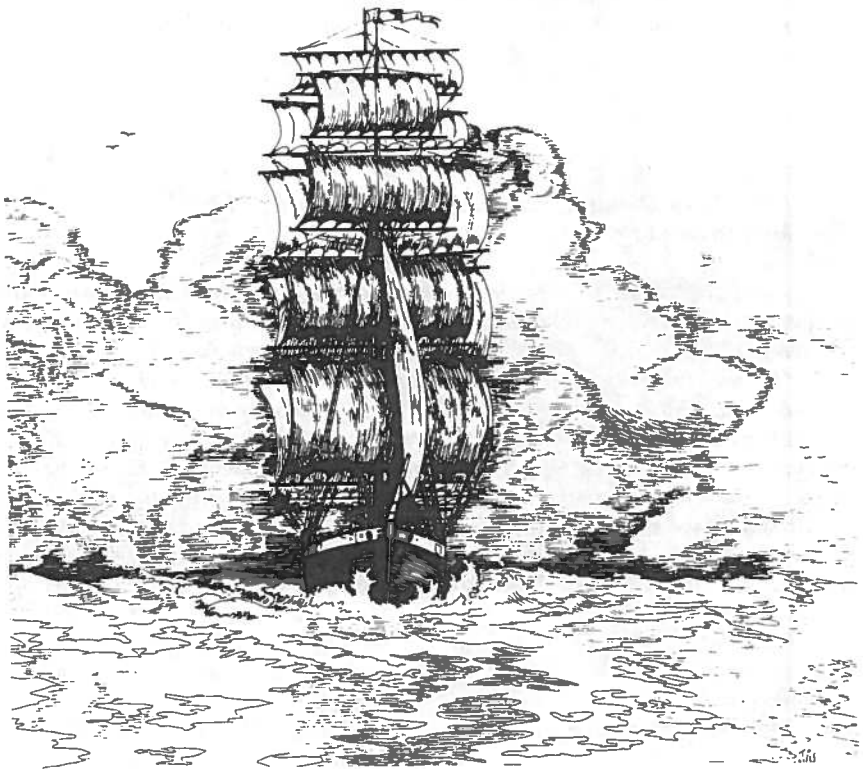
Therefore, farewell my dear and esteemed friend! Those who accompanied us want to leave, and I must seal this letter despite my desire to talk some more

with you.

Stay in good health and be safe. Four years will flow by quickly, and then with cordial warmth your devoted friend Daniil Kalinin will embrace you."

[D. V. Kalinin]

I also received a letter from Mr. Bornovolokov in which he described his departure in the most cheerful manner, adding that his stay in Okhotsk, and the thought that he would soon be in America, helped him forget the road which had nearly cost him his life.



The Description of the Shipwreck

Thus the reader has already seen that on the 24th of August with a favorable wind the *Neva* put out to sea; but this propitious weather did not last long; contrary winds slowed its voyage to the point that on the 25th of September they barely passed the fourth Kurile strait; on the 29th they saw the island of Atkha 20 miles to the N W. Kalinin's intention, after emerging from this strait, was to go down to the 50th latitude and, after sailing for some distance, to go up directly to Sitkha. But Mr. Podushkin, who commanded the *Neva,* did not agree with this, and preferred navigating along the shores of the Aleutian Chain, where at that time usually blow very strong N E. winds. Their adverseness was the reason they could not approach the shores of America until early November. At that time a water shortage occurred. Many times they attempted to stop at Kad'iak and Unalashka; but all of their efforts were in vain; the wind was creating an obstacle at every step.

Finally on November 8th, during a fierce storm, the mainsail and the mizzen topmast were broken. At that time Mr. Podushkin came to Tertii Stepanovich and announced to him that he did not have the strength anymore to manage the ship, and found only one means of salvation, to get the passengers on shore and sacrifice the ship to the waves.

Mr. Bornovolokov was overwhelmed by this report; he knew that the shore near which they found themselves was inhabited by ferocious savages from which one could not expect even the least mercy. Then, turning to Mr. Kalinin, he asked him to take the command, and to lead the ship into a quiet harbor where they could rest, make repairs and take on water. Mr. Kalinin gladly consented and promised to employ all of his efforts to take the ship to Yakutat, near which, according to his observations, they were located. However, as soon as the ship began to approach the entrance of the inlet an opposing wind suddenly struck which bore them down to Kad'iak; but then another change of wind offered the new commander the chance to come near the shores of Chugach Sound, and on the night of the 16th to lead the ship into the so-called Resurrection Harbor.[17] After lowering the anchor he sent Mr. Terpigorev and the apprentice Trovin to find a convenient place to take on water; then raised the anchor again and placed the ship in a quiet little bay, protected from all winds.

All of the pleasures tasted in different situations in life can hardly be compared with the pleasure of the seaman when, having barely escaped certain destruction, he enters a safe harbor. But here even this joy was poisoned by many circumstances. On this wild shore deep winter reigned, dense forest concealed their situation from their eyes and the first night a violent wind tore off the tents in which they hoped to rest. In this harbor they spent eleven days during which they repaired everything that was damaged, provided themselves with a supply of water, and restored the health of the exhausted crew.

Many were of the opinion that they should stay here until March; but Mr. Kalinin did not agree with this. He knew that during such winterings, from lack of occupation and idleness the entire crew becomes ill with scurvy. He promised to wait until there was a new favorable wind, and if it were to continue, to bring the ship to Novo-Arkhangel'sk within three days.

On November 27th they went out to sea again; the wind was favorable and indeed after three days they saw Mount Edgecumbe. They were at that time at a distance of 130 versts from the fort, that is, about ten hours of sailing. But it seems that the infuriated winds armed themselves against the poor *Neva* and out of envy for her previous happy sailings* decided to obstruct her in all of her intentions.

The night of the first of December a fierce N E wind began to blow, forcing Mr. Kalinin to change course and go toward the shores of Kad'iak. But to shorten a dull narrative about the winds, I will say briefly that until the first of January, that is for a period of thirty days, they were their plaything.

According to the account of Mr. Terpigorev, from whose words I am writing these notes, they suffered at that time all of those misfortunes that only seamen can encounter. "One day," he says, "we changed our course five times, going either toward Sitkha, or Kad'iak, or Unalashka or Yakutat. During twenty-four hours the wind blew sometimes the full thirty-two points of the compass and was accompanied now by gloominess and darkness, now by fog, rain and sleet."

To Mr. Kalinin's credit one must say that he was a very skillful observer; this can be noted during their unfortunate voyage. At times they did not see the sun for seven days, and went at that time in seventy directions; but he always knew the true location of the ship.

The passengers of the *Neva* included several people who had never been to sea and who were not used to the difficulties, privations and heavy labor. This long and unsuccessful voyage affected their spirits and their physical condition, and drove them to such exhaustion that in the last days of December there were only ten men capable of performing work. For unknown reasons Messrs. Podushkin and Nerodov also refused their duties.

Thus Mr. Kalinin had to find in himself alone all of that help which he should have expected from his companions. Often it happened that upon coming on deck he would find that the helmsman was steering differently from what he had been ordered!!! But I shall pass this with silence. The lowly deed which might have drawn all into inevitable disaster—or perhaps, was the true cause of it—must, it seems, even without my reproof torture the conscience of the guilty one.

Mr. Kalinin, who had been previously in these places, had heard from mariners of the United States of America, and knew from the voyages of English Captains who had visited these seas that from the middle of November to January sailing in these waters entails many dangers, of which the principal one is the fog that conceals the shores at the very approach to them. But relying upon his skill and the deceptive wind, which tempted him now to approach

* The ship *Neva* was bought in London in 1802 and in 1803 was brought to Kronshtadt, and left that port the same year on a most fortunate voyage around the world. In 1806 she returned again to Kronshtadt and after several months she left for America under the command of Mr. Hagemeister who, having taken the ship around New Holland, sailed very safely for four years, being a large part of this time at sea. The *Neva* was built of the best oak, and had all of the qualities necessary for a ship which is sent on long voyages.

Kad'iak, now Sitkha, he hoped to reach a calm harbor despite the violent elements.

The author, as has been said above, knew Mr. Kalinin very well; he recommended him to Mr. Bornovolokov, and acquainted the latter with all of his qualities, and the way by which he could obtain his loyalty. Mr. Kalinin's faithfulness was the most excellent feature of his character; in friendship he was unshakable. Their first meeting made them friends, according to Mr. Terpigorev. Mr. Kalinin's heroic feat, when he brought the almost shattered *Neva* into Resurrection Harbor through the dark night, and repaired it with the skill of an outstanding seaman, had earned him a special respect on the part of the [now] deceased Tertii Stepanovich. From that time on they were almost inseparable.

Mr. Bornovolokov, having with him the descriptions of all the early and later sea voyages, and having himself spent more than three months at sea, acquired considerable knowledge in this matter. He tried from the beginning of December to persuade Mr. Kalinin to go down to the Sandwich Islands, to which he agreed willingly, but feared that during this voyage, which could last sometimes as much as two months, he might have a shortage of water. This shortage appeared indeed during the last days of December, and at that time Mr. Kalinin took all necessary measures. Hoping to reach without fail some kind of harbor within two weeks, he arranged the distribution of water so that it would last for three.

The 2nd of January was clear, crisp and bright weather. This day Mr. Kalinin took all of the necessary observations and after checking his calculations, which changed [later] for various reasons, found himself on the 56th latitude and the 150th longitude west of Greenwich, in a most secure place and at a considerable distance from the dangerous islands of the Aleutian Chain. Here with a sigh from the heart I must render justice one more time to the talents of the departed. Had he during the last week borne farther north, the cruel S W winds would have wrecked the unfortunate *Neva* against the rocky shores of Kad'iak or the islands near it.

From this time on the weather became a great deal better and clearer; a moderate wind blew from N W. Mr. Kalinin, overjoyed with this, ran to the cabin of Tertii Stepanovich and congratulating him upon the propitious weather, added that within seven days or even less, he hoped to see the ship at anchor in Sitkha.*

The same wind continued until the eighth day, but was so light that the ship did not go faster than four knots. On that day, the unfortunate Daniil Vasil'evich took the last observation and found himself at a distance of 140 versts from the port of Novo-Arkhangel'sk. The entire crew was very much overjoyed with such pleasant news, and many who were lying below and had not seen daylight crawled to the deck to participate in the rejoicing of their companions.

Mr. Terpigorev has told me that from that very morning Mr. Bornovolokov was overcome by strong melancholy; he kept him [Terpigorev] and Mr. Kalinin nearby, complained of his depression and asked that they not leave him. Around

* Sitkha or Baranov Island, is the site of Port Novo-Arkhangel'sk, the main settlement of the American Company.

six o'clock in the evening Mr. Kalinin went on deck and ordered a lookout on the left side for a high shore. The apprentice Trovin, who kept watch at that time came in soon thereafter to the cabin and reported to the gentlemen that the shore was indeed visible. Having been previously in Sitkha with Mr. Hagemeister, he knew the location of Mount Edgecumbe and the entrance to Sitkha Sound; therefore, he affirmed that it was [that mountain] which was visible, as indeed Mr. Kalinin had seen himself. Knowing that the distance from there was about fifty *versts*, and that the speed was no more than three and a half knots, he ordered the vessel kept on the same course; then entering Tertii Stepanovich's cabin, he said jokingly: "Now I shall drink a glass of tea, lie down to rest for a couple of hours, and hope to drop anchor near the very harbor before daylight. Our honorable ruler of America, Aleksandr Andreevich Baranov, gets up before everyone else; I will probably find him at six o'clock having tea and will celebrate for the second time the arrival of the *Neva.*"* And this unfortunate thought could well have been the cause of the destruction of the ship and the crew.

At one o'clock Mr. Kalinin went topside, looked over the situation of the shore, and concluding from the appearance of it that the ship would enter directly into the sound, he again went below, ordering that he should be notified of the least change in weather. Trovin, who himself had come into Sitkha several times and knew these places, was of the same opinion that the course was good. At two o'clock a light rain started and the shores began to be covered with fog; it was then that Daniil Vasil'evich should have changed the course and stood out to sea, keeping away from the shore until daylight; but he relied on himself too much and, wanting to show off his knowledge, gave orders to steer to the same compass point. In revealing Mr. Kalinin's mistakes, I fear to accuse him in the loss of the ship. No! In this misfortune there must have been other participants; something that every one of my readers who knows at least a little about seafaring science will clearly see. It has been said above, that at one o'clock to the left Mr. Kalinin saw Mount Edgecumbe from which the ship could not at that time have been farther than 30 to 40 *versts*. As a man who during his life had entered many harbors, perhaps more than one hundred times, he could have decided whether it was good or not to continue on this course, and indeed ordered [the helmsman] to steer in that direction; consequently one concludes that the *Neva* at that time was in a most secure situation. The wind was then light, as we have seen. How could the mountain mentioned find itself on the right side within three hours if the course had remained the same? The current, it is known, is almost always from the south, and could have pushed them only to the shores of Mount Edgecumbe, not carry her [the *Neva*] away from them.

However, when the ship ran aground Mount Edgecumbe was behind their stern, at a considerable distance. Not wanting to blame anyone with this conclusion, I assume that probably the man at the wheel steered otherwise, and in this case the current was an accomplice to the ship, multiplying the speed of its course. Nevertheless it is unforgivable for the commander, regardless of how exhausted he was from work and vigil, not to have been at that time on deck;

* Mr. Kalinin was in America in 1804 on the same *Neva*.

the wind and water are most treacherous elements.

Suddenly at the end of the fifth hour they shouted: "The shore is under the bow!"

Mr. Kalinin ordered the anchor to be thrown out; but what happened? The cable was not checked and wound only once around the windlass; because of this it began to spin with terrible speed. Mr. Terpigorev reported to me that both of them were standing by the windlass and stuck their coats under it but nothing helped.

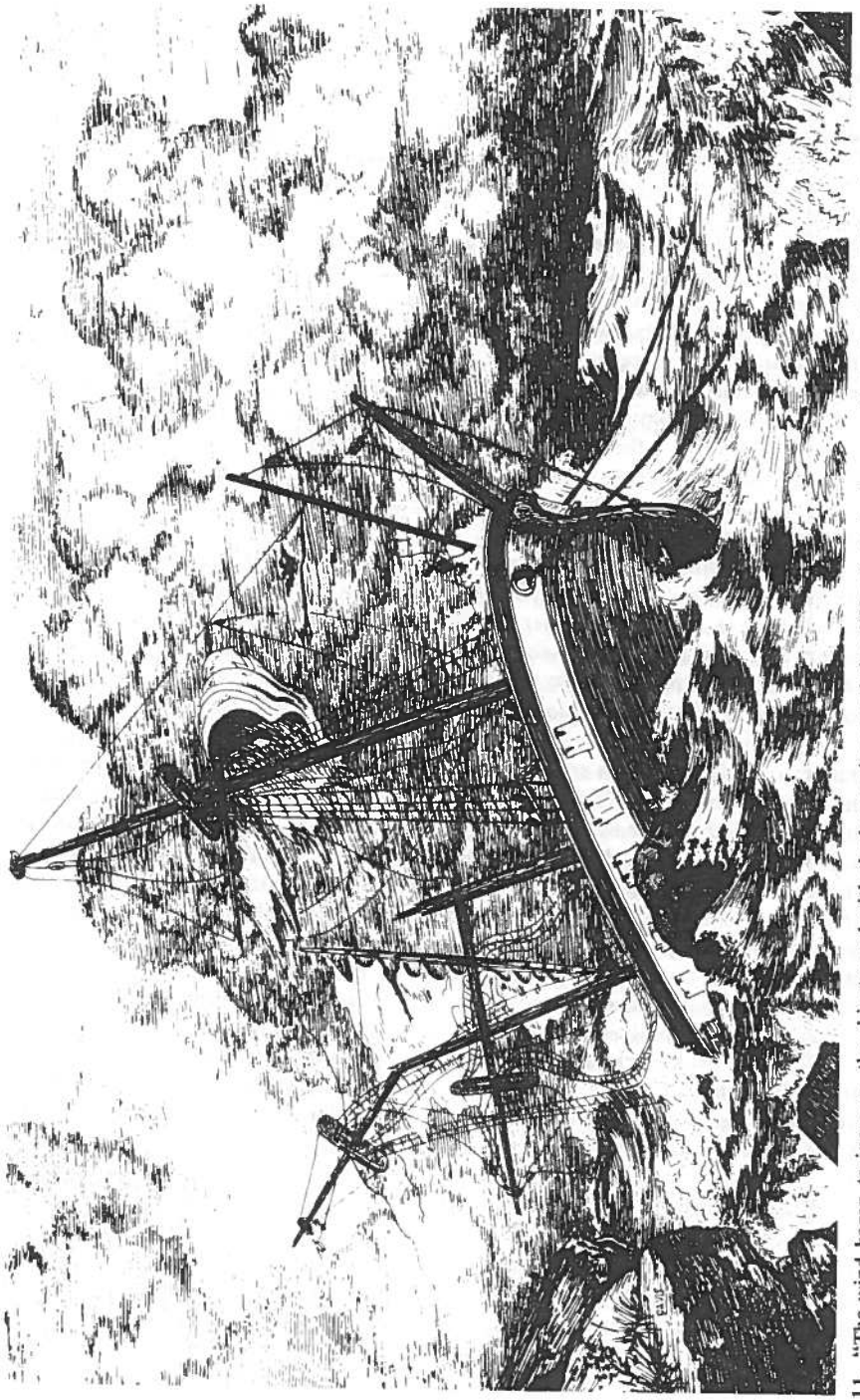
At that time it was still raining, and the wind was so moderate that had the anchor held, then without doubt one could have saved not only the crew but the ship itself. On the *Neva* there was a boatswain, Grigor'ev, a man who had served with distinction in the fleet, and was of good behavior; but from the time of the discord that took place on the ship, he joined the opposing party and began to neglect his duty, and perhaps with intention left the cable in this condition. Probably Mr. Kalinin was deceived; probably he was told that the anchor was completely ready; otherwise it is difficult to understand that a good seaman while getting ready to enter the harbor did not remember that it was necessary to prepare the anchor. The reader will see in what followed the terrible end of this boatswain.

There remained only one means for the salvation of the *Neva.* Seeing that the anchor was without action, Mr. Kalinin began to turn about, but the stern of the ship hit a rock, the rudder was knocked out, and the waves sat it on the underwater rocks, on one of which it seemed to have leaned. If they had delayed turning by one minute then all inevitably would have perished, because the collision would have taken place near a very high and inaccessible cliff.

Having collected from Mr. Terpigorev all, even the least little circumstances of this disastrous event, I can describe it with impartial accuracy. When the *Neva* sat on the reefs then it was already getting light; but the wind began to increase, the ship turned with the bowsprit toward the cliff and at that moment it broke in two. Mr. Kalinin ordered the masts to be cut down; these went down immediately, but this did not help the *Neva;* therefore it was necessary to think only about saving the passengers. It was recognized that the most expedient measure was to tie together the topmasts, crosstrees and other [parts] to make a raft. Preparing one quickly, they lowered it into the water; but the infuriated wind tore it apart and scattered it over the entire area and later many who were trying to save themselves were killed by fragments of it.

On the deck of the *Neva* a long boat was tied that easily accommodated 60 men. Mr. Kalinin ordered the ropes to be lowered, and the women and the most weakened men to be seated in it with the intention of lowering it lightly on the water from the inclined side of the ship, to give these helpless people the easiest means for salvation; but barely had the long boat touched the water, when a cruel wave turned it over and those who sat in it became the first victims of the wild ocean under the eyes of their comrades, who expected no better fate.

At nine o'clock the entire stern of the ship was broken off, she split in half, and those people who remained on her moved over on the bow; holding onto the shattered remains they saw how the mixed fragments of the *Neva* were strewn all over the area, and how some of their companions were now approaching the shore on them, now were thrown back by terrible breakers. At



11. "The wind began to increase, the ship turned with the bowsprit toward the cliff and at that moment it broke in two." Drawing by J. Davis.

noon the shipwreck was complete; the remains of the ship were swallowed by the waves. Messrs. Bornovolokov and Terpigorev sat themselves on a piece of the mast, on which they were carried toward the shore.

The latter told me that twice he raised Tertii Stepanovich, begging him to hold on tighter; but suddenly he [Bornovolokov] turned blue and slid again into the water. From that moment on Mr. Terpigorev does not remember anything until he regained consciousness on the shore. He saw Mr. Kalinin for the last time a few minutes before becoming unconscious when he [Kalinin] was floating towards the shore on a plank.

Now, before starting the final episode of this unfortunate event, I want to examine the reasons for the shipwreck. Several days before his departure from Perm, Mr. Kalinin and I had a most detailed conversation concerning his voyage to America—and we concluded that he would leave the Sea of Okhotsk through the fourth Kurile strait, go to the 150th western longitude from Greenwich, between the 46th and 50th degrees of latitude, and from this place start north toward Novo-Arkhangel'sk. By taking this route there was first of all the advantage that the strong N W winds which blow all September within this area of the Ocean would have shortened their voyage considerably. The route from this location would also have given the advantage that they would have entered Sitkha Sound unobstructed from the south side. From the north side, the winds are subject to frequent changes because of the great height of the mountains; for the most part they blow toward these [mountains] from the N E. Mr. Jones, a citizen of the American States who was in the service of the Company, went in the month of December from Yakutat to Sitkha, and was three times beaten off by the N E winds from Mount Edgecumbe, because he had to enter the sound from the north side. Everybody who happens to read or notice what influence the mountains exert on the atmosphere, will agree that if what I am saying is only a theory, it is a theory very near the truth.

Our well-known seafarer, Fleet Captain-Lieutenant and Cavalier Leontii Andreanovich Hagemeister, to whom I read these notes, agreed with me that the location of Mount Edgecumbe, and mountains adjoining it, always impede the entrance from the north, which in his opinion is all the more inconvenient, since the current, as he had experienced it several times, is almost always from the south. Mr. Bornovolokov, about whose knowledge on this topic I spoke earlier, was in agreement with me as well, and I do not know how he suddenly decided to change his ideas, upon the advice of an inexperienced officer. The famous Captain of our Fleet, Vasilii Mikhailovich Golovnin also went from Kamchatka to Sitkha; however not at all by the route which was sailed before, but across the open sea, and completed it very quickly and successfully. The company has lost in recent years quite a few ships, and because of what? Because its so-called seafarers were ignoramuses.*

Concerning the voyage of the *Neva* from the day of its departure from Resurrection Harbor, I can only say that very seldom does such a large number of obstacles ever conjoin as this ship met at every step.

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* Now through the special care of Directors Messrs. Buldakov, Kramer and Severin, measures have been taken against this, and the company's ships accomplish long voyages with excellent success and skill.

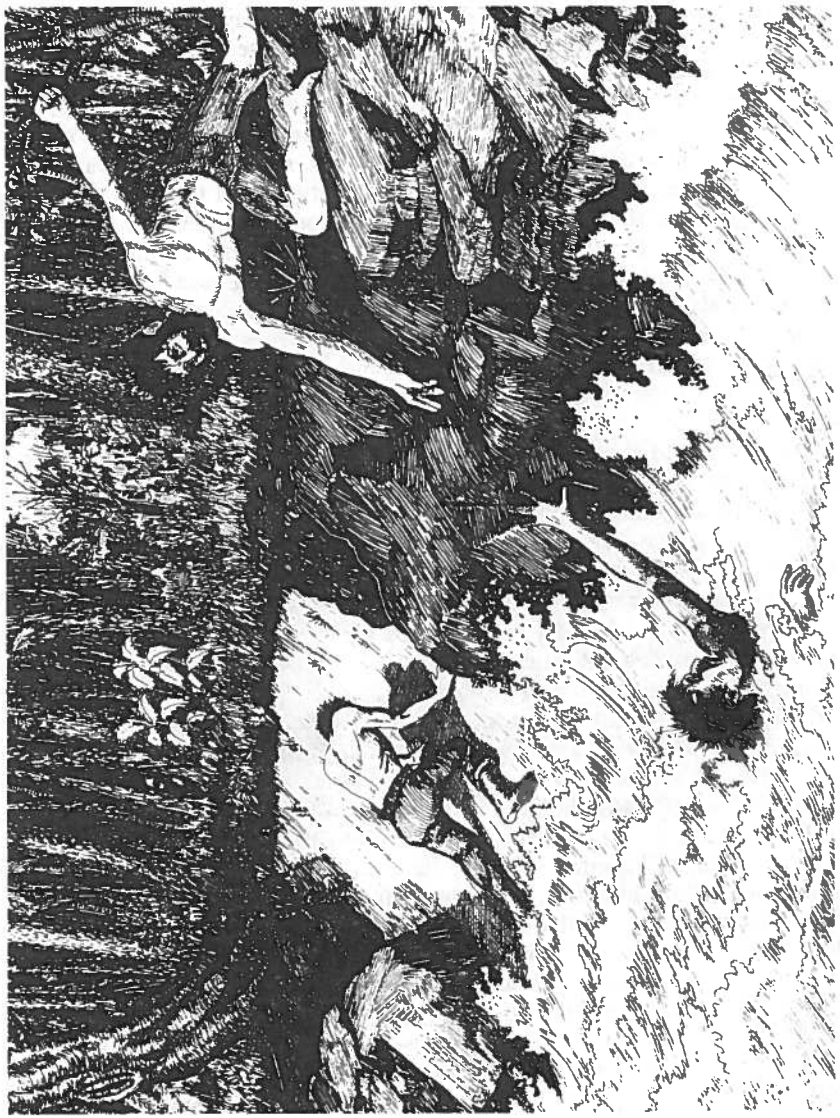
Mr. Terpigorev related that upon regaining consciousness, he found himself on the shore about a hundred steps from the edge of the water. However, he was so weak that he could hardly get on his feet. Not being able to walk, he crawled to the forest where on the side of a path he noticed several comrades in misfortune, some of whom were in such a weakened condition that they were not able to come to life until dark. The reader will probably not forget that it was winter, and that in a place at 57 degrees north latitude the January nights are not very pleasant.

Around five o'clock in the evening there gathered twenty-five of these men, most of them still in a state of complete exhaustion physically and morally. In addition to this two more circumstances also influenced their feelings a great deal. The boatswain Grigor'ev, whom I have mentioned, about 35 years old, suddenly went berserk, started throwing himself around and biting those who sat next to him. It was only natural that the exhausted men, who had not had the time to gather their strength, were very much stunned by this unfortunate happening, and could barely defend themselves against the raving Grigor'ev; but fortunately for them his insanity did not last long. He was in this condition only a half hour; afterwards he fell on the ground, began to scream frightfully and then gave up the ghost. If the reader will now look back, and remember my conclusion about the anchor cable, then will he not receive the same thought I had that Providence inevitably punishes the guilty? As soon as Grigor'ev's spirit departed, the unfortunate ones were struck by a new blow. One of the officers, whose name I do not want to mention, suddenly fell into a similar condition, which however did not last long and did not deprive him of life; but it also gives grounds for further conclusions.

Around midnight all those who escaped the shipwreck gathered together; their number was 29 [28], but two of them because of complete exhaustion lived no more than an hour on the beach. Here I want to account for the fate of the unfortunate passengers of the ship *Neva* who, as the reader saw, numbered 73 men.[30] Thirteen died during the voyage; 32 drowned during the shipwreck; 28 escaped; and thus from the 73 men who left from Okhotsk on their own free will, less than half arrived in America. In this case the remark, best known to those who have been in heavy combat, and to seafarers, that "the best people are always the first to go" is justified.

Mr. Terpigorev assured me that the largest number of people who escaped were those who for several weeks had not even stepped out on deck because of illness. It is known how well the Moors swim, but here even this did not help; young and of robust build, the Moor drowned, but a decrepit and enfeebled man of fifty escaped unhurt.

This same evening one of the *promyshlenniks,* who had a [flintlock] pistol with him, made a fire and near him the sufferers recovered the first night. The next morning, they found a great number of items cast up on the beach; but had to nourish themselves the first two days with whatever happened to be available. Luckily again, a barrel of butter, some meat and some hardtack were washed up. Having strengthened themselves with this food, they built a hut out of various fragments and began to think about ways to inform Mr. Baranov that they were here. Many of them knew that the fortress of Novo-Arkhangel'sk was not far away, but being on an island, they did not know how to reach it.



12. "The breakers by the shore were so great that many unfortunate ones, after swimming safely to the shore, were beaten by the waves against the cliff and rocks . . ." Drawing by J. Davis.

After resting several days, they began to bury the bodies of those who perished. Mr. Terpigorev told me that as soon as he recovered, he went searching for the lifeless corpses of Messrs. Bornovolokov and Kalinin. He found the first one not far away, completely whole, and after embracing him, he delivered him to the earth; he barely found the latter or better say, gathered; because in one place lay the torso, in another the head, and farther away the legs. One must think that a wave hit him and threw him against some kind of sharp rock, because his head was so smoothly separated that the best Damascan sword could not have severed it more cleanly. Of all the bodies which were washed ashore, only two were found completely whole; others were so broken that it was impossible to make a conclusion as to their number. Along the entire water line hands and feet were lying mixed. Another strange thing was that all those who escaped were on the shore without clothes, which one supposes were torn from them by the waves. Mr. Terpigorev relates that he also found himself on the shore with only one boot, although he remembered having both boots on when he was seating Mr. Bornovolokov for the last time on the piece of the mast.

Having completed the sad task of burial, they began to think again about the best ways to get to the fort. The most reliable means would have been to seek a boat and to send someone in it with the news of their situation; but although many went, it was in vain. In the meantime the many different trails that they found, and the large number of dogs which came running, made them conclude that there was some kind of settlement not far from that place.

Here I must make a digression and mention one incident which only naturalists can resolve. From the large number of dogs which ran to the site of the shipwreck, a large part of them expired after eating the scattered remains of the passengers who had perished. From what did this occur? Could the bodies have turned poisonous? Is the reason for this the exhaustion and weakening of the nerves? Could their life juices have turned into *Aqua Tofana*?[31] But these questions, as I said, are not for me to solve.

Through January 24 their time was spent reflecting how best to inform Mr. Baranov of their presence. On this very date two *promyshlenniks* volunteered; one of whom was sent along the trail to the right, and the other along the opposite one; but to bring the unfortunate ones more quickly to a safe refuge, I will report that the first envoy encountered, through unusual luck, a boy riding in a boat whom he assured through signs that he was from the fort and persuaded him to take him to it, promising him a shirt for his trouble.

Aleksandr Andreevich Baranov, the Chief Manager [of the Russian colonies] of America, venerable through age and service, wept as he listened to the narration of the *promyshlennik* and immediately sent several boats after the unfortunate ones, who were brought into the fort on February 2.

The savage inhabitants of the place where the *Neva* was shattered tore their hair out of vexation that they had not known about this event. They openly said: "We would have cut up all the people, and would have taken possession of the cargo or things which were thrown out in such a way that Baranov would not have known about it for a lifetime."

Mr. Baranov immediately sent to the scene of the wreck an armed party to collect goods which were cast on shore. This was a very judicious and useful order, because for the next six months they continued to find things on the

13. Alexandr Andreevich Baranov.

shore. The waves were once so strong they even cast up two carronades.[32]

There was on the *Neva* a lot of sailcloth and Flemish cloth which was also washed ashore; but one must suppose that the waves beat it against the rocks because not one piece was whole; it was all as if cut up with knives.

Mr. Terpigorev, while telling me for eight days the story of their shipwreck, and knowing that I intended to publish it to the world, asked me with tears not to remain silent about the good deeds rendered to him by Mr. Baranov. He said that from the first day the venerable Aleksandr Andreevich took him into his house and kept him for three months like his own son.

Although the object for which I took up my pen is now completed, I cannot put it down without talking about the honorable Mr. Baranov. The well-known Grigorii Ivanovich Shelekhov* was the first of all the Russian Argonauts who, upon conquering the island of Kad'iak, founded upon it a regular colony, and after settling more than two hundred Russians there, took to America the Religious Mission, built a church and started to convert the savages to the Christian faith.[33] He is the true hero or father of the Russian settlements, recognized even more because he knew how to select the most gifted man to manage them. In the year 1790 he invited Mr. Baranov to Kad'iak, to rule it as well as other settlements established by him. From this time on Mr. Baranov remained in those parts and managed them with such commendable energy that he was rapidly promoted from merchant to the rank of Collegiate Councillor (in the year 1803), and in 1806 was awarded the order of Saint Anna second class. During the period of his living there he enlarged our possessions by 1200 *versts* with no army or artillery. But if these deeds and astute accomplishments deserve great rewards, what then are worth those traits of character of him who, while having the opportunity to attribute all of these deeds to his own credit, offers them to the Government in their true light, and is satisfied himself with the most modest rewards? In this worthy man the reader will recognize the first and foremost Director of the Russian-American Company.[34]

For several years now Mr. Baranov had been preparing to return to the bosom of his fatherland; but not wanting to leave America without a chief, he asked many times the Main Office of the Company to send him relief, by appointing to his place the Collegiate Assessor[35] and Cavalier, Mr. Koch, who at the time of his [impending] departure for America, was the Commandant at Okhotsk. The Company, complying with his wish, sent Mr. Koch; but what happened? He reached only Kamchatka, and died. Mr. Terpigorev told me that once, sitting at the table the honorable Aleksandr Andreevich suddenly burst into tears, exclaiming: "Obviously fate is placing all sorts of impediments in the way of my seeing my motherland. Koch died in Kamchatka, Boronovolokov drowned almost in Sitkha. Therefore, it is the wish of Providence that I do not depart from here."

Here the better to acquaint our reader with the deeds of Mr. Baranov I shall place a letter, which I received in October of the year 1814:

* The reader should know that for these exploits Mr. Shelekhov was raised to the dignity of a nobleman and wore the insignia of the favors of the Most Wise Empress Catherine of Blessed Memory.

"From the American shores, out of the Port of Novo-Arkhangel'sk.
The year 1814, April 15th
Gracious Sir!

V [asili] i N [ikolaev] ich:

I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of March 18, 1812, from the Province of Perm which you sent to me with great hopes through Daniil Vasil'evich Kalinin, who ended his life with my intended successor and many good and useful people near Cape Trubitsyn.[15]

However it was cast up along with the monthly reports, after I had already sent to Okhotsk in the year of 1813 a transport of local build, the* **Otkrytie**. *Therefore I failed to thank you on that occasion, and ask you to receive the gratitude which I am expressing now from the sincere disposition of my heart and soul for remembering a man you know in a remote land separated by a great distance; moreover*[36] . . . . . .

. . . . . .

About myself and about the land here I must explain the following:

Up to this time I am still alive; but I am becoming decrepit from old age. I was on Kad'iak after you [departed], having left Sitkha in the fall of 1806 with the shipmaster O'Cain;[37] *and in August 1808 I returned there again on the* **Neva** *with Leontii Andreanovich Hagemeister and since that time live and manage the affairs you are acquainted with, without leave, safely as in the past. Ivan Aleksandrovich [Kuskov],*[38] *Commercial Councillor,*[39] *assistant to Mr. Baranov [sic] who had been before, in the years of 1808 and 1809, on the shores of New Albion with parties of* promyshlenniks, *has left again for the third time in February 1812 and is establishing a new settlement on the shores of California north of Port Bodego, near the Spanish fort of San Francisco. He left from here on a schooner, also locally built, which I named* **Chirikov**. *According to the last report, I learned that he, with all the people who are settling there, lives well, has a lot of cattle and garden vegetables, is building his new settlement successfully, and lives in accord with the savage inhabitants and the Spaniards.*

In December of last year, 1813, I sent him a brig, recently purchased by me, called **Sikurs**, *some men to help and various goods for trade with the Spaniards.*

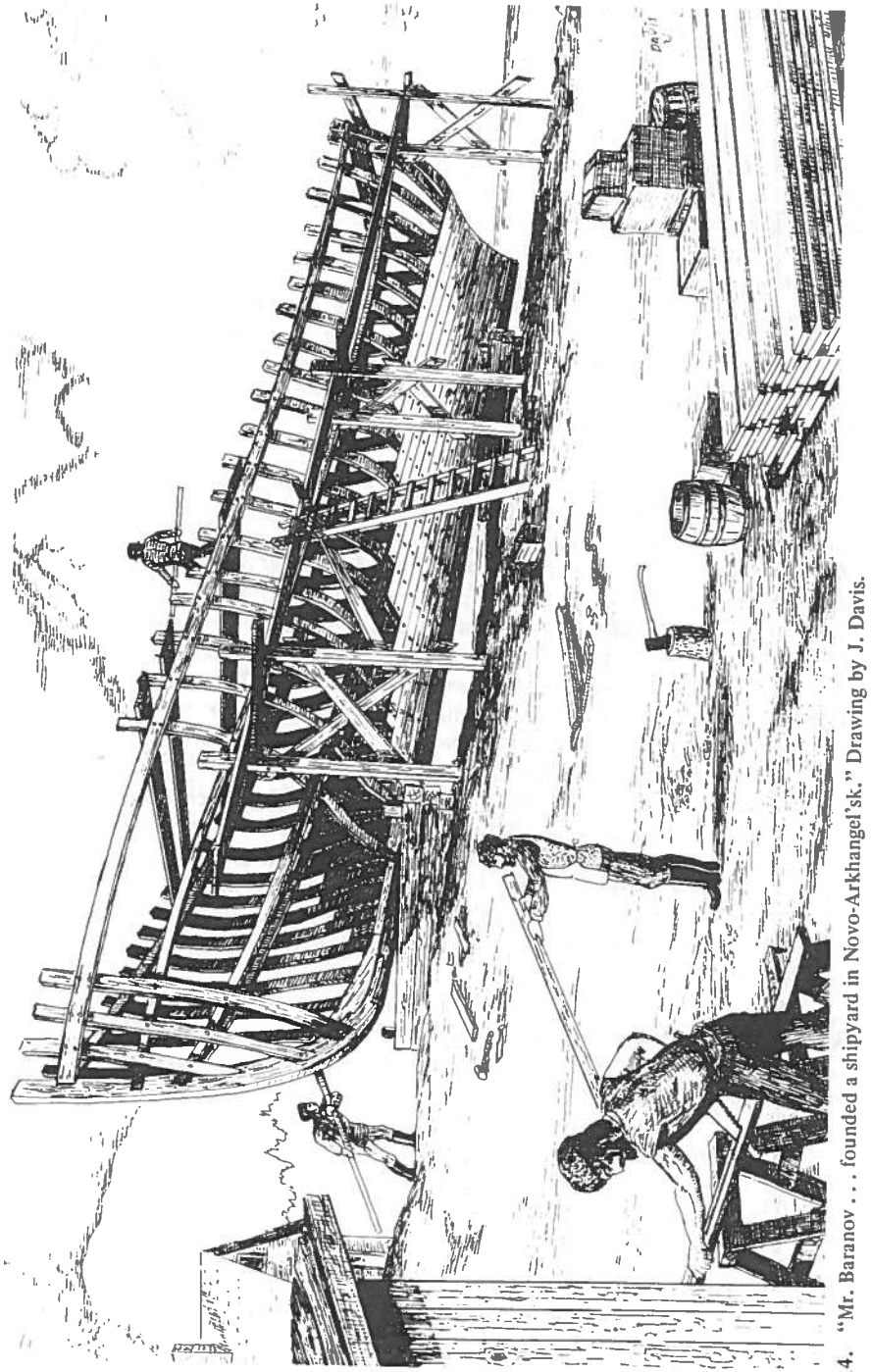
In Kad'iak, where you also lived before, everything is well. Ivan Ivanovich Banner[40] *is managing with the bookkeeper; but the former, like me, is getting decrepit.** Despite this the pops [priests] persuaded him to marry a young woman,* who already had two children.

My son Antipatr, whom you know, is already 17 years old, knows English quite well, and occasionally goes to sea with the foreigners. My daughter, who is 10 years old, is being taught reading and writing.

The citizens of the American States visit this port every year, and bring so much of a variety of goods that not only do we live in abundance, but supply

* This case was carried in the sea for six months and later was cast out on that place where the shipwreck of the *Neva* had taken place.

** Mr. Banner passed away in 1814 [1816].



14. "Mr. Baranov . . . founded a shipyard in Novo-Arkhangel'sk." Drawing by J. Davis.

the surplus to all the American islands, Okhotsk and Kamchatka.

This letter is going to Okhotsk along with a rich cargo, and also on a three-masted ship, recently purchased by me, which I have named the **Bering** *in honor of the [first] seafarer in these waters.*

*We are not without troubles even now with the wild peoples who inhabit this place. Hardly a year passes that when [our men] get together to catch herring without screens [*shermitsy, *nets stretched to shield the crew from arrows], [something happens], and this year two of our riflemen were killed.*

And thus having described to you all of the occurrences in these regions, although only briefly, I remain[36] *. . . which I also forward to your spouse and children, if you have them.*

Aleksandr Baranov.

P.S. I would have liked to send you a present of local goods, but do not know through whom, and whether or not you will stay in Perm; please let me know!"

From this letter the reader can perceive the activity and intelligent adroitness of Mr. Baranov. During his rule of America he founded a shipyard in Novo-Arkhangel'sk. He builds very good ships and with his enterprise raises our colonies to a high level of accomplishment.

By settling New Albion, the Company carried out the plan of the Most Wise Catherine. The Great Empress intentionally sent Captain Krenitsyn in the year 1768, in order to make a detailed map of the California Peninsula after looking over the N W shores of America; but this weak seafarer was not capable of carrying into action the Great Sovereign's grand intention.

Having been carried away by my own discourse from the object of my real concern, I must again turn to it, and tell the reader, that in June Mr. Terpigorev sailed away from America on the transport *Otkrytie*, the captain of which, following the ordinary custom of the Company's seafarers and ferrymen of former times, could not sail in one summer the whole distance, a little over four thousand *versts,** but put in to Kamchatka to winter and arrived in Okhotsk only in the following year, 1814.

At the end of the year 1814, Mr. Terpigorev lived at my house for ten days and helped me compose this description. Soon after his departure he wrote to me that he had entered the military service and was in the Keksgol'm regiment.

* See Appendix.

Report of Lieutenant Iakov Podushkin

I am appending here the report of Mr. Podushkin about the shipwreck of the *Neva.* The reader may see from it more clearly the circumstances which were to blame for this disastrous event. I did not change a single word from the original, and have copied it with complete accuracy.

To His Highness, Chief Manager of the Russian-American territory and Cavalier, Aleksandr Andreevich Baranov.

Summary Report

From Fleet Lieutenant Iakov Podushkin.

According to the instructions given to me by the Okhotsk Office, in which the following was described:

The passengers of the frigate *Neva* comprised 77 persons.

The passengers were: Collegiate Councillor, Tertii Stepanovich Bornovolokov, from whom I was directed to seek advice in the event of danger; the discharged cadet Mikhailo Terpigorev; the wife and son of navigator Nerodov; widow Verigina, an Aleut, with two daughters; a serf of Bornovolokov; the commander of the frigate *Neva,* Lieutenant Podushkin; navigator of the 9th class, Kalinin; navigator of the 14th class, Nerodov; crown boatswain, Grigor'ev; navigation apprentice, Travin; with the cargo the *prikashchiks,* Petr Kolobov and Vasilii Sorokin; and 64 men, *promyshlenniks.* With this group I was bound for the port of Novo-Arkhangel'sk.

On August 25, 1812, I left the Okhotsk roadstead with a N W wind, took a course to the 4th Kurile strait, through which we passed on September 8. On the 22nd of this month we came back to Kamchatka, on the south side of that island from where I wanted to go out on the north side of the Aleutian Chain, but the N winds did not let us through. On October 8, we came in sight of Atkha; on the 25th, we passed Ukamok or Chirikov Island, from where I held a course to Paul's Three Saints Harbor[41] on Kad'iak, taking advantage of light wind, between S and W. In the first hour a strong N W wind forced us to reef our sails; at daylight I suggested to Tertii Stepanovich–if it were agreeable to him–that we go down to Sitkha, because there was still enough water for 10 days, with which he was in agreement. And thus I went down on E N E. On the 29th we were 120 miles from Edgecumbe, but we were becalmed. From time to time, up to November the 4th, we took advantage of the light wind from S E and E. From this time on a strong easterly wind struck, and the shortage of water forced us to go down to the nearest port, Sitkha. Contrary winds; Kad'iak far away; Yakutat 80 miles; and so we went down to the latter; at night the topsail was torn down by an E S E wind; that is why I lay to the South, so as not to get on the sand beach of the Rokof-Panplona;[42] because toward the evening

at sunset the heights of Port San Francisco were seen to the East, according to reckoning.*

Toward the morning [there was] a moderate wind from E N E; we went north; on the sixth with daylight the coast of North America revealed itself; according to the noon observation, we found ourselves to the west of Yakutat; with the E wind we sailed along the shore. On the 7th in the morning we were between Kad'iak and Cape St. Elias; beginning with noon, the wind increased; at 4 o'clock in the afternoon a strong wind with squalls, but had to carry topsails all the way up the topmast in order to get around the south tip of Kad'iak. At 6 o'clock in the evening bore off; fixed the fore topsail, the crosstree; took two reefs out of the main topsail and went down to Nuchek. At two o'clock in the night the main topmast broke; the crow's nest and the foresail were torn away; in such condition, having cleaned up everything, I waited for daylight, lying toward the south. At 8 o'clock in the morning I took the W N W course; at noon the wind changed to N E. The strait between Nuchek and Sukli [Montague Island] opened to N W no more than 10 miles; and so I had to sail along Sukli to the South, seeking salvation either in Resurrection Harbor[17] or a good anchorage at the southern extremity of Sukli.

It was my intention more than once to enter some kind of convenient port; we were 130 miles from Unalashka with north winds on the 50th latitude; 60 from Kad'iak; 120 from Edgecumbe; 30 from Yakutat; and 20 miles from Nuchek. But evil misfortune kept us from entering. I decided finally, being exhausted, to propose to Kalinin that he take the frigate to Kad'iak, since he had been there at the time of the survey of the coasts; consequently he would know all of the convenient landings there. Tertii Stepanovich accepted this and Danilo Vasil'evich agreed; and so on the 9th at one o'clock at night we came to a bay unknown to us[43] which according to its observed latitude, lies on 59°56' east of Greenwich, calculated at 148°37',** where we stocked up with fresh water and firewood; and on December 1st we went down again, with God's help, toward the Port of Novo-Arkhangel'sk. On the 9th we came within sight of the coast on the latitude 57°56'; but the storm which arose in the night from the east continued for three days; it carried us about two hundred miles away from the land. The violent scorbutic disease [scurvy] infected nearly all the crew, and almost every day it reduced the number of people by two.

With a calm S E wind we began to hold the course to Yakutat; we were one mile away from the shore of Yakutat at a depth of 18 *sazhen*, according to the sounding lead. Light wind from N and N E lasted all day; at night a high E N E wind blew and in danger we were lying to, so as not to get on the Russian sandbar.[44] Providence saved us from it, and the noise of the surf was heard to N W; what a relief that we bypassed the danger! But the winds kept on [blowing] from E and S; the crew despondent; the frigate in a bad condition.

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* How Mr. Podushkin could see the heights of Port San Francisco is not at all understandable. This Spanish settlement was at that time no less that 5000 versts from the ship. If, as I noted above, this report were not orginal, one could not believe such strangeness.

** A small error in the longitude of 211°23'; should be stated western instead of eastern. [Berkh translated 148°37' east to 211°23' west].

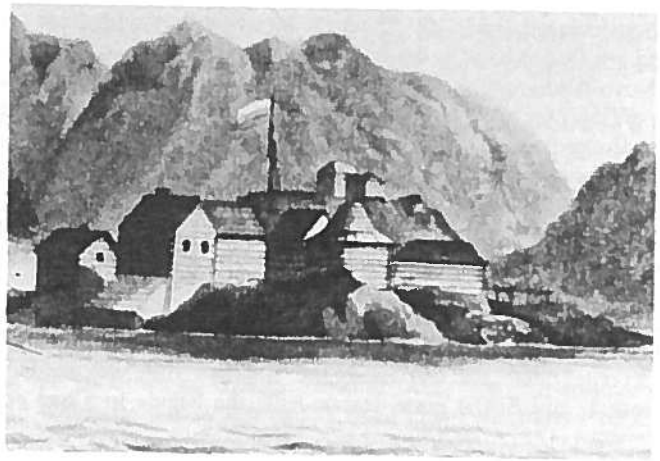
Greedy Death kept on receiving exhausted people into the kingdom of eternity.

We were in this condition up to the 9th of January. On that date at four o'clock at night we sighted Edgecumbe;[45] the wind changed from W to S W and had to take a reef in the topsail. At half past six the shore was so close that the only hope left was the anchor; it was thrown; the entire cable spun out. Cliff and rocks; horror; darkness of the night; no salvation for life; but God willed it so. We put on the foresail and missed the rocks! A ray of hope flashed for salvation: two ways to get up on land; the ship, filled with water, stands at about one hundred *sazhens* from it. From seven o'clock in the morning to one o'clock we held on to the ship; from that hour began evil times; the entire ship was demolished and everyone [fell] into the water; 25 [28] saved themselves; 39 drowned.

Of those who remained alive, I have the honor to report to your Highness.

Fleet Lieutenant of the 38th Ship Depot and Cavalier,

Iakov Podushkin.



THE LOSS OF THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY SHIP NEVA ON THE NORTHWESTERN SHORE OF AMERICA, NEAR CAPE EDGECUMBE, ON THE LATITUDE OF 57°11', ON THE 9th OF JANUARY 1813.

from

Works and Translations of Vasilii Mikhailovich Golovnin

ST. PETERSBURG

Naval Printing Office

1864

15. Vasilii Mikhailovich Golovnin. Courtesy S. G. Fedorova.

In November 1813, upon returning from Japan to Kamchatka, I found in Petropavlovsk Harbor, Fleet Lieutenant Podushkin and several other employees in the service of the Russian American Company who were on the ship *Neva** when she was wrecked. From them I obtained information concerning this unfortunate event, and as I usually do, wrote it down in my journal with all the details. I took the following narrative from my notes, and while composing it I also used the remarks of Vasilii Nikolaevich Berkh,** who once served in the fleet and who made a voyage around the world. However, I did not describe all of the deviations which took place during the voyage of the *Neva* from Okhotsk to America and the shipwreck itself, as these have been recorded by this honorable man; he wrote from the testimony, as he states, of Mr. Terpigorev,

* This ship is famous in the chronicles of Russian seafaring; on it under the command of Captain Lisianski, and Fleet Commander I. F. Krusenstern, the Russians accomplished their first voyage around the world. [The *Neva*] was also used in collaboration with the Company's force under the leadership of Collegiate Councillor A. A. Baranov, in the conquest of the Koliuzh [Tlingit] fort on the island of Sitkha.

** Mr. Berkh's name is well known to the public through his interesting and widely useful works. The description of this shipwreck was published by him in a special book under the title **Description of the unfortunate shipwreck of the Russian American Company's frigate, Neva.**

who was then a discharged cadet from the naval school, and who was going to America with his uncle, Collegiate Councillor Bornovolokov. Neither through his rank, nor his age, could he have acquired that experience needed to judge happenings on the sea without making errors, and especially during shipwrecks. There have been cases where even men of mature age have taken the bow of the ship for the stern, and therefore I think that my description, composed from the words of not one person, but several, who talked in each other's presence, will be nearer the truth.

The chief manager of the Company's colonies, Collegiate Councillor Baranov, having spent in America twenty years without interruption, wished in his old age to return to his fatherland, so as to spend his remaining life in the circle of his relatives and friends; for this reason he asked for the appointment of a successor. First the Company's choice fell on Collegiate Assessor I. G. Koch,[46] an older man, intelligent and informed in business affairs; he could have been especially useful to them because his long service in Siberia, and more in Okhotsk, gave him the opportunity to learn everything about the fur trade and how to rule men of that sort; but fate did not destine him to be in America: on the way over there he remained to winter in Kamchatka, and in January 1811 he suddenly died. Then Collegiate Councillor Terentii [Tertii] Stepanovich Bornovolokov, whom I did not know personally, but who in the opinion of others was a man of great merit, offered his services to the Company. He arrived in Okhotsk in the summer of 1812, so as to leave from there for America.

For transporting Mr. Bornovolokov to America, the directors assigned the ship *Neva,* the command of which was entrusted to Fleet Lieutenant Podushkin. This officer served with good conduct in the Mediterranean Sea, in the fleet under the overall command of Vice Admiral D. N. Seniavin. He obtained the approval of his superiors and the reputation of a good sea officer. His good references attracted attention and the trust of the Company. His assistant was a navigator of the 9th class, Kalinin, who on the ship had made a voyage around the world; he was a highly skilled seaman and was most diligent in his duties, and a tireless officer; while he was a junior navigator, he had the honor of serving on the ship of the commander of the fleet, which was then in England by agreement of the allies.* I heard from all of the officers of the ship *Neva,* concerning Mr. Kalinin, the same that Berkh published in his description of the shipwreck of the *Neva:* "It is to be regretted that his name [Kalinin's] is seldom, and not as it should be, mentioned by the author of the journal of the ship *Neva.* In addition to the above-mentioned employees, there were included on the ship *Neva* in the service of the Company fourteen men, *raznochintsy* [commoners],** not belonging to the Table of Ranks and fifty-six men, *promyshlenniks,* and four women: the wives and daughters of the Company employees.

In the last days of August 1812, the ship *Neva* left on her voyage from the

* In 1798, 1799 and 1800 on the ship *Elisaveta*; I knew Mr. Kalinin when I served as flag officer under the flag of Vice Admiral Makarov.

** Sub-Lieutenant Shilling, Navigator 14th class Nerodov, Cadet Terpigorev, Apprentices Travin and Mal'tsov, *prikashchiks* Kolobov and Sorokin, fleet boatswain Grigor'ev, artillerist Volkov; and five hired employees of various ranks.

Okhotsk roadstead, accompanied by a following northwest wind which however did not favor them for long. Soon contrary winds sprang up; with little change they blew from all points of the compass and hindered the forward progress of the unfortunate ship, and in the end were the main reason for her wreck and the destruction of many of her passengers. Lieutenant Podushkin sailed close to the Aleutian islands, on their south side, but so unsuccessfully that it was not until the 6th of November that he saw the American coast in the vicinity of Yakutat Bay.* However, although their voyage from Okhotsk was unusually long, judging by the time of the year when western winds usually prevail in high latitudes, at least no misfortune befell them. But upon sighting the American shores, first of all there occurred a shortage of drinking water, and then on the night of November 8, a fierce wind from the east broke their main topmast and tore the foresail, mainsail and main topsail. Until then they had tried to enter some harbor of the islands of Kad'iak or Unalashka; but now they decided to head south to the first possible port, regardless of where it was, and only where the wind would permit them to enter. Lieutenant Podushkin, who had never before served in the northwestern ocean and was totally unacquainted with the American coast, gave the navigator Kalinin full freedom, as a seaman who knew the local area well from his former travels and experiences, to take the ship to where he deemed it necessary for their common safety. Mr. Kalinin assumed command of the *Neva* and, taking advantage of the winds, brought the ship into a small safe harbor of the Chugach Sound.** To the misfortune of the passengers, the dissensions and disagreements which had sprung up between the senior officers on their way to this place became even stronger here. We would not be talking much about quarrels and factions, which should be buried in oblivion, if this were not a lesson to still inexperienced young officers, as to how destructive the consequences of disagreements between leaders can be in dangerous, critical situations. It suffices to say that Mr. Podushkin suggested that they spend the winter in that port, pointing to the inevitable danger attached to sailing in winter time on stormy seas in an old ship in poor condition with damaged rigging, an incomplete set of sails and an inexperienced crew, among whom began to appear various illnesses. But Mr. Kalinin was of the opposite opinion: he thought that spending a winter in such a fierce climate, without comfortable dwellings, sufficient food and occupation for the employees, would plunge them into disastrous idleness and spread scurvy among them, which might kill off the larger part of the passengers; but in any case, probably take the life of so many that it would become impossible for the ship to reach any port inhabited by Russians. For these reasons Kalinin thought that they should by all means go out to sea and try to reach the Novo-Arkhangel'sk fort on the island of Sitkha; the north and northwest winds prevailing at that time of the year on

* At the latitude of 59¼ degrees on the English maps of Captain Vancouver, it stands under the name of Bering Bay; La Perouse called it Baye de Monti, and Dixon, Port Mulgrave; the large bay in which it is located, Admiralty Bay.

** Known on the English maps as Snug-corner-cove and Port Etches; but to our *promyshlenniks* as Nuchek Bay and Voskresenskaia Bay; at latitude 60°, longitude 147°48' west. [See notes 17 and 43; this does not coincide with Iakov Podushkin's report.]

those shores promised success. Both of them were partly right; each of them had on his side strong and convincing arguments; but regardless of how good were their assumptions, of the two one always had to be better than the other. Having the rank of future chief manager of the colonies and head of their naval and land forces, Mr. Bornovolokov had to resolve the argument between the two seafarers; the fear of starting out to sea in winter strongly disposed the manager in favor of Mr. Podushkin's plan, but the proven experience of Mr. Kalinin persuaded him to accept the opinion of the latter. He hesitated for a long time, and finally decided to follow Kalinin's advice. Consequences did not justify his choice; but his choice, in my opinion, was good; if I were in Mr. Bornovolokov's place, I would have done the same. Mr. Kalinin, of course, knew of the case of the English seafarer, Meares,* who spent a winter in that same bay where the *Neva* was located, and this example was sufficient to keep any seafarer from following it.

With the endorsement of Mr. Kalinin's plan, he was entrusted with the command of the ship, because Lieutenant Produshkin refused to command it. After repairing the ship, as much as possibilities and conditions permitted, Mr. Kalinin went out to sea about the first of December and directed his route toward Cape Edgecumbe** which lies at the very entrance of Sitkha Sound, where the fort of Novo-Arkhangel'sk is located. In three or four days they arrived in sight of the high mountain on this cape; it seemed that the end of their misfortunes was nearing, and they were already congratulating one another upon their imminent arrival in the safe, long-sought harbor; but Providence moves along its own path from which no mortal can divert it. In the first days of December fierce contrary winds began to blow, which soon drove the ship from the shores and later, shifting often, carried her on the waves of the sea for about a month. During all of this time the unfortunate passengers suffered not so much from cold, foul weather, fierce storms and lack of food, as from disagreements of the men who led them; because dissensions and disorder on the ship between the officers filled the lower ranks with distrust of their chiefs, the enlisted men had good reason to assume that the officers were not sure in their skill and did not know themselves what they were doing. I do not think that Terpigorev was correct when he assured Mr. Berkh that in "one day they would change their course five times, going at one time toward Sitkha, at another toward Kad'iak, Unalashka or Yakutat." It is doubtful that one would find these days in our navy an officer so faint-hearted that with each change of wind, he would switch the port of his destination just to sail with a following wind! But I know that total disorder was reigning on the ship *Neva* at that time; Mr. Bornovolokov did not know the science of seafaring; with all of his intelligence he could not order

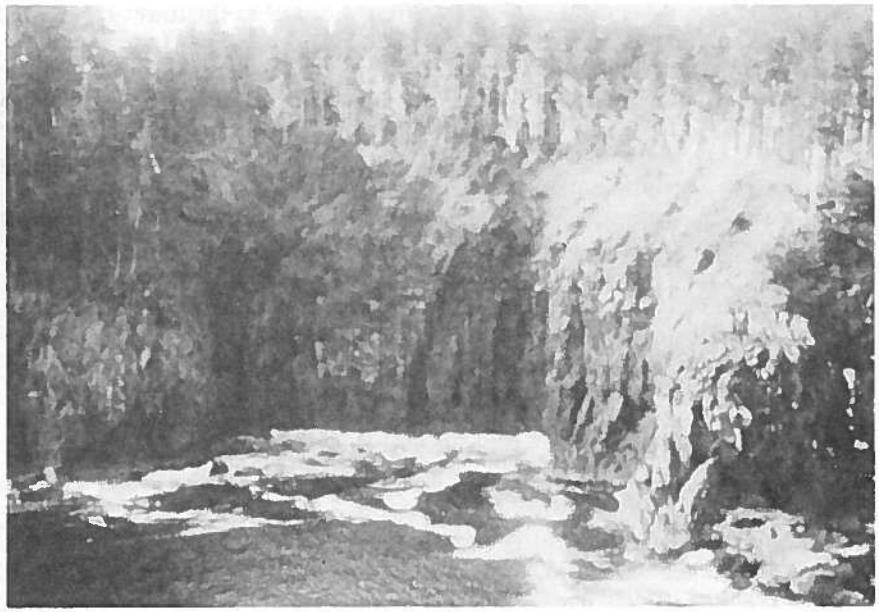
* [Captain John] Meares, while commanding a merchant vessel, remained for the winter in Nuchek Harbor of Chugach Sound, because of commercial advantages. During the winter he lost almost all of his men who died of scurvy, and was driven by this to such extremes that he could not leave the fatal place. Fortunately in spring an English merchant ship arrived in the Sound, the captain of which lent him several sailors and then returned to Canton.

** Cape Edgecumbe; this cape is so called by the English and is so indicated on the maps; but the Russians who live in America gave it the name of Trubitsyn, in memory of the boatswain who served with Chirikov and died near these shores (see note 14).

firmly what was to be done, and out of necessity acted on the suggestion of others; and for this reason his orders often changed. Once he ordered them to sail to the Sandwich Islands, about which he had read in one of the travel accounts and was attracted to them; his thought was well grounded but the naval officers informed him that for the trip over there they had neither provisions nor drinking water, something he did not think to inquire about earlier, not being a seaman. The crew and the passengers, observing their superiors, also split into factions which were at war among themselves. The men ill-disposed toward the former commander, of whom every chief has more or less among his subordinates, tried to spread rumors that, supposedly to spite Kalinin, he taught the men at the wheel how to go off course in an unnoticeable manner so as to confuse his [Kalinin's] calculations of the route. But I, from my point of view, cannot in any way believe this; not speaking even of such a deed in relationship to its extreme baseness, one's own safety would have prevented anyone from committing it. And of course the men at the wheel knowing that the preservation of the ship and their own lives depended upon the correctness of calculations would never have agreed to carry out such a fatal order. One should say that a ship at sea resembles in certain ways a small kingdom, independent of outside influence. If, because of the weakness and imprudence of her rulers, obedience to one of them ceases, immediately then characters appear whom we see on the large stage of the world in similar circumstances. The affairs on the ship were in this sad state until fate put an end to them by means of the most dreadful shipwreck!

On the 8th of January 1813, soon after sunset, they saw to the left a high shore, which by Mr. Kalinin's calculations based on astronomical observations taken at noon of that date, had to be Cape Edgecumbe. The shore revealed itself exactly in the manner and the time that Mr. Kalinin expected, and therefore, with full confidence that his observations were correct, he did not want to miss the quiet following wind and decided to use it and sail through the night into Sitkha Sound so as to be ready immediately at daybreak to enter into the port of Novo-Arkhangel'sk. The outer appearance of the shore, known to Mr. Kalinin from his former voyages here, convinced him even more of the correctness of his calculations; he did not doubt at all that he saw Mount Edgecumbe, on the position of which he determined his course and remained calm. The wind blew moderately and the ship was moving at three to four miles per hour. The night was rather dark, but allowed one to see the shore at such a distance that one could turn away without any danger because in that area it was open and rather deep.

At midnight they saw the shore and continued to move on the same course; finally when clouds came, followed by rain, and concealed the shores, even then Kalinin gave orders to continue on the same course. It is hard to determine the reason which guided Mr. Kalinin at that time. He acted against all the rules of seamanship, especially in the Sitkhan Sound, where there are so many rocks on the level of the water and underneath, and a fairly strong tide which surges irregularly. Consequently, only experienced local pilots, of whom there were none, can calculate the movements of the currents. All of these circumstances were, of course, known to Mr. Kalinin and therefore, I believe, the very bad condition of the ship forced him to dare such a dangerous, and even

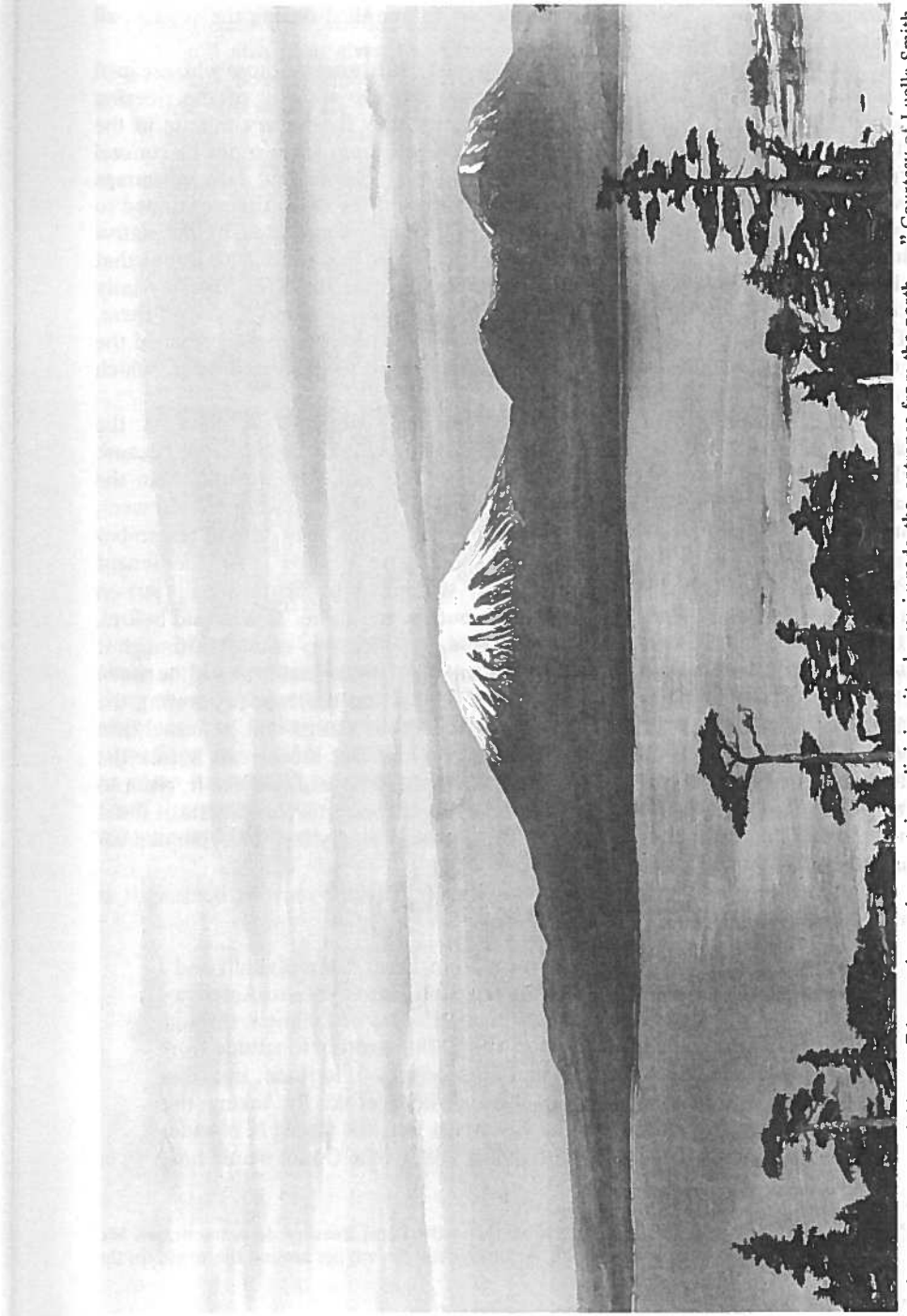


16. and 17. **Cliffs at Cape Edgecumbe.**

under better circumstances unreasonable action. He was afraid that if a strong wind should again carry them away from the shore, they would have to perish at sea; and therefore he decided at all cost not to lose a fair wind which would allow him to make the desired port. Concerning the declaration of Cadet Terpigorev that—supposedly when it became cloudy and the ship was getting close to the shore—Kalinin was below, one cannot at all expect such neglect from an experienced officer known for application to his duties, especially in such a case when he had no helpers on whom he could rely with confidence. However: "without trial, let no one be punished!" Kalinin paid with his life for his action and cannot answer anymore; but if this seafarer remained alive, then he probably would have justified his measures, not by the rules of seafaring art, to which they were all contrary, but by the state of his crew!

A couple of hours before daylight (on the 9th of January) a desperate voice from the foredeck: "the land is right under the bow!" first created fear, and then confusion all over the ship. Everybody was distraught, screaming, running; everyone wanted to command, advise! In brief, the greatest disorder reigned, as often happens among groups in dangerous circumstances, when there is no single leadership or obedience. First they wanted to turn away, but did not know in which direction, and then decided to throw the anchor, the cable of which all spun out in a few minutes because, being afraid and in a hurry, they forgot to check the stopper knot properly as they should have. After this misfortune the ship was carried to the shore. The crew tried to turn it so as to maneuver it away from danger, but without success; it stood on the rocks near a huge forbidding cliff. When it happened the wind was blowing from the west very moderately, but thereafter, at the very break of day, changing to southwest, it began to blow harder, and in a very short time became extremely fierce.

In the meantime on the ship the officers, as well as the lower ranks who were braver and more energetic than the others, were showing off and wanted to command, each according to his own ideas and in his own way. They cut down the mast; this was necessary and done according to naval rules. They sat people in the launch and wanted to lower it on the water. Sometimes this also works out, when it is done properly, without confusion and with moderate waves; but now, to the misfortune of the crew of the ship *Neva* the launch was flooded and several people in it drowned, among them the women and children. They made rafts from the remaining masts, crosstrees and other wooden parts, and sought salvation on them; but these rafts were demolished and scattered by the waves. The crew did not attempt anything else until about noon when the waves started to break the ship into pieces and soon smashed her completely and swallowed her. Then every one grabbed whatever he could and tried to save himself on the fragments of the ship. But the surf or the breakers by the shore were so great that many unfortunate ones, after swimming safely to the shore, were beaten by the waves against the cliff and rocks, or were struck by pieces of the ship and thrown out unconscious on the shore, and some from hard blows and wounds were deprived of life. Among these last were Messrs. Bornovolokov and Kalinin. But the former commander of the ship, Lieutenant Podushkin saved himself; he was thrown on the shore unconscious and was revived through the care of his comrades. Some, who escaped the shipwreck, died afterward on the shore. Out of the [original] number of employees and passengers on the ship *Neva* there



18. "The location of Mount Edgecumbe and mountains adjoining it, always impede the entrance from the north . . ." Courtesy of Luella Smith.

remained alive only twenty-five men; about fifteen died during the voyage, all the rest in the shipwreck.

But with the demolition of the ship the misfortunes of those who escaped did not end; they had to experience hunger and the severity of the freezing winter's damp and cold climate. On top of this they lived every minute in the danger that the savages would see, attack and kill them all in order to conceal from the Russians the loss of the ship near their shores, and take advantage without interference, of the remains of the ship and the cargo that continued to be cast upon the shore. By the nature and barbaric disposition of the native inhabitants of the northwest coast of America, there is not the least doubt that they would not have left a single one of these unfortunates alive, had they only caught them; but the righteous and merciful God punished and pardoned them. They got hold of a small boat in which two of the *promyshlenniks* reached the fort of Novo-Arkhangel'sk; then Mr. Baranov sent them armed help, which rescued and brought them to the fort.

The delivered men told of many miracles which took place at the shipwreck, which however do not deserve much credibility, first of all because these events are not normal and secondly because not all have told them the same way. For example, those who at the wreck of the ship were dressed were, supposedly, thrown on the shore completely naked, and they did not remember how they lost their clothing. At the same time I know that Lieutenant Podushkin, when he had to save himself by swimming, for lighter weight put on a cotton jacket and pants; he was thrown out on the shore, as was said before, unconscious, but his clothing was whole. However, strangely enough, although it was not torn anywhere, there was a large amount of fine sand packed between the outer cloth and the lining. Also they related that the copper covering the ship was so beaten and mixed with sand and other things that it turned into some kind of ore, and they showed samples of it. But three years before the destruction of the ship *Neva,* I had in my possession a piece just like it, given to me by Mr. Baranov; this piece, among many, was found on the American shore near Cape Saint Elias, and was nothing other than ordinary iron ore, rounded off and smoothed by the waves.

I will conclude this description with Mr. Berkh's remark, because it is instructive to seafarers.

> "Several days before his departure from Perm,* Mr. Kalinin and I had a most detailed conversation concerning his voyage to America— and we concluded that he would leave the Sea of Okhotsk through the fourth Kurile strait, ** go to the 150th western longitude from Greenwich, between the 46th and 50th degrees of latitude, and from this place start north toward Novo-Arkhangel'sk. By taking this route there was first of all the advantage that the strong N W winds which blow all September within this area of the Ocean would have shortened their voyage considerably. The route from this location would also have given the advantage that they would have entered Sitkha Sound unobstructed from the south side. From the north side, the winds are subject to frequent changes because of the great height of the mountains; for the most part they blow toward these [mountains] from the N E. Mr. Jones, a citizen of the American States who was in the service of the Company, went in the month of December from Yakutat to Sitkha, and was three times beaten off by the N E winds from Mount Edgecumbe, because he had to enter the sound from the north side. Everybody who happens to read or notice what influence the mountains exert on the atmosphere, will agree that if what I am saying is only a theory, it is a theory very near the truth. Our well-known seafarer, Fleet Captain-Lieutenant and Cavalier Leontii Andreanovich Hagemeister, to whom I read these notes, agreed with me that the location of Mount Edgecumbe, and mountains adjoining it, always impede the entrance from the north, which in his opinion is all the more inconvenient, since the current, as he had experienced it several times, is almost always from the south. Mr. Bornovolokov, about whose knowledge on this topic I talked earlier, was in agreement with me as well, and I do not know how he suddenly decided to change his ideas, upon the advice of an inexperienced officer."

This remark is very just; in general one should take it as a rule that when there are no special reasons to stay close to the shores, one should sail far away from them in the open sea. Being free, even with opposite winds one can choose advantageous tacks and always use the one closest to the proper course; something one cannot always do approaching the shores where, on the contrary, as often happens, it is necessary to move with that tack which takes one away from the proper route, because the proximity of the shore does not permit the use of a favorable one.

–END–

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* Mr. Berkh, serving at that time as councillor in the Perm treasury department, saw Mr. Kalinin who was on his way to Okhotsk. Both made the voyage around the world on the ship *Neva* in 1803-6.

** Between the islands of Onekotan and Kharimkotan.

Notes

1. Veselago, p. 1.
2. For more information on these vessels see Tikhmenev and Bancroft.
3. Bancroft, p. 423.
4. Lisianski, London, edition 1814.
5. Khlebnikov, **Baranov.**
6. Iakov Anikievich Podushkin was a Russian naval officer; he survived the shipwreck of the *Neva* and between 1813 and 1818 commanded Russian-American Company ships in the North Pacific. For more details see R. A. Pierce, **Russia's Hawaiian Adventure, 1815-1817.**
7. Vasilii Nikolaevich Berkh (1781-1834) was born and educated in Russia; he served most of his life in the Russian Navy and wrote many works on Russian maritime history and other subjects. His account of the discovery of the Aleutian Islands is a classic of Alaska history. For more information on Berkh's life see introduction to his **A Chronological History of the Discovery of the Aleutian Islands.**
8. Lada-Mocarski, p. 272.
9. Vasilii Mikhailovich Golovnin (1776-1831), Russian naval officer, round-the-world voyager and author; he began his adventurous career in 1790 as a midshipman in battles against the Swedes. In 1809, commanding the sloop *Diana,* he escaped internment by the English in South Africa. He sailed from Kamchatka to Baranov Island in Russian America in 1810. While surveying in the Kuriles in the following year, he was captured by the Japanese and interned on Hokkaido for more than two years, finally to be freed by the crew of the *Diana.* Golovnin returned to St. Petersburg across Siberia. In 1817-1819 he commanded the sloop *Kamchatka* on a round-the-world voyage to Russian America. In 1830 he was made Vice Admiral. He died of cholera in St. Petersburg only a year later.
10. **Sochineniia i pervody** (Works and Translations . . .). This work includes a translation of Duncan's **Famous Shipwrecks** and his own volume on Russian shipwrecks, including accounts of the wrecks of the *Nikolai* and the *Neva,* vol. V, pp. 444-453.
11. Described in **Zapiski . . .** (Notes written in captivity in Japan . . .), published in 1821.
12. Kostrin, K. V., **Zabytyi russkii uchenyi Tertii Bornovolokov** (A forgotten Russian Savant, Tertii Bornovolokov) in **Letopis Severa** (Chronicle of the North), Moscow, 1964.
13. Collegiate Councillor **(Kollezhskii Sovetnik)** was the sixth civil service rank in the Table of Ranks as issued by Peter the Great on January 24, 1722, which drew a clear line of demarcation between the civilian and the army service. The ranks were arranged in hierarchical order in fourteen classes, (Pushkarev, p. 156).
14. Orth, p. 683.
15. Orth, p. 301 and p. 986.
16. Viereck, p. 66.
17. Chugach Sound (**Guba Chugatskaia** or **Chugatskii Zaliv,** Orth, p. 778) is given by Golovnin; Berkh quotes Terpigorev and writes *Voskresenskaia Gavan* or Resurrection Harbor—not the same as the one near Seward on the Kenai Peninsula but, as Golovnin indicates, near Nuchek, known as Snug Corner Cove or Port Etches.
18. Pierce, ed., p. 43.
19. Tikhmenev, v. I. p. 228.
20. George (Sergei) Kostrometinoff (1854-1914) was the son of Ioann Kostrometinoff, a Russian in the employ of the Russian-American Company, and a Creole woman, Anna A. Melovidoff. He received his education in San Francisco and a few years after the sale of Alaska became the official interpreter for the American authorities in Alaska. He and his brother Peter lived in Sitka and became prosperous; they were among the few native-born people who retained their social position and leadership after the land changed hands. In later years, George Kostrometinoff became a priest and returned to the use of his Russian name, Sergei. He left a sizeable "Scrap-book," now in the Alaska Historical Library, which contains a wealth of information on Sitka during his lifetime.
21. **ALASKA HERALD,** published in Sitka, June 27, 1892 to June 9, 1895.
22. **DAILY ALASKA DISPATCH,** established in Juneau in 1897; after 1919 changed to **THE ALASKA WEEKLY.**
23. **THE STROLLER'S WEEKLY,** January 15, 1932, Juneau, Alaska (published July 1921-March 1933).
24. Councillor of State *(Statskii Sovetnik)* was the fifth grade in the civil service Table of Ranks; see note 13.
25. The original text reads 1813, evidently a typographical error.
26. Kalinin is probably correct in his assertion that the information he relates had not been published before 1812. G. A. Sarychev drew a map of the road from Iakutsk to Okhotsk along the rivers Maia and Iudoma in 1788 (Yefimov, map 168). This route was soon given up for an easier one. The description of a trip across Siberia in 1802 by G. I. Davydov came out some time after his death in 1809. Among the more entertaining and witty narrations is the one by Baron F. P. Wrangel who in 1830 followed the same route described by Kalinin, when he travelled to Russian America with his wife and four-week-old child to assume the post of Governor. Both Iakuts and horses play an important role in this journey. In his opinion the road to Okhotsk was the most fatiguing and dangerous in all Siberia, (Wrangel, p. 172). In 1840 Lieutenant Zagoskin added more information in his well-known account of the same trip to Okhotsk. Among contemporary authors, James Gibson describes this road in his book, **Imperial Russia in Frontier America.**
27. Reference is made to a mutual friend, whose name we do not know. Full names often are not given, as a matter of etiquette. This individual is not connected with the succeeding narrative.
28. Lieutenant Zagoskin gives an interesting and detailed description of Okhotsk. As he arrives and sees the town for the first time, he notes, "Okhotsk stretches miserably along a low bar," and later, "the town is actually on a narrow bar or spit which rises some 4 sazhen above the surface of the water, and is washed from the northeast, east, south, and southwest by the Okhotsk Sea, and from the other points of the compass, or from the side towards the land, by the Kukhtuy River." (Zagoskin pp. 58-59). The town was established in 1731, and served as a port until 1851 when it was transferred to Ayan (Zagoskin p. 75). Also see description by Davydov pp. 82-86.
29. Krigs Kammissar, a civilian post in the army.
30. Berkh does not include here the four women who were on board the *Neva.*
31. *Aqua Tofana,* a notorious poison invented in the middle of the 17th century by Julia Tofana of Palermo and Naples **(Grand Dictionnaire Universel du XIX siecle,** v. I, p. 535 and **Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrade,** v. 2, p. 416). However, in the context of Berkh's account this poison is thought to be produced by the bodies of those who died. It seems clear that the normal process of putrefaction would have began by this time. Another possible association may lie in George Kostrometinoff's account of an Indian legend of poisoned waters on Mount Edgecumbe.
32. Carronades: short iron cannons.
33. Grigorii Ivanovich Shelikhov (1747-1795), merchant from Rylsk, organizer of the Russian trade in Alaska, called the "Russian Columbus" for his activity and accomplishments in America. See his work, **Rossiiskogo Kuptsa . . . . amerikanskim beregam. (Voyage by the eminent Russian merchant . . . to the shores of America),** also see Richard A. Pierce, editor, **Documents on the History of the Russian-American Company,** pp. 18-20.
34. Aleksandr Andreevich Baranov (1746-1819), the first Commander-in-Chief of the Russian-American Company's possessions, 1790-1818. A native of Kargopol in Olonets province, he traded for a number of years in Moscow, Petersburg and Irkutsk. As Manager of the Russian-American Company, he established Russia's position in the New World. He founded Novo-Arkhangel'sk (Sitka) and other settlements, and it was during his period that shipbuilding was started (see Khlebnikov's **Baranov).**
35. Collegiate Assessor **(Kollezhskii Assessor)** was the eighth grade in the civil service Table of Ranks; see note 13.
36. Passages were frequently deleted from letters in Russian literature, either upon the censor's request or to omit routine expressions of courtesy.
37. Joseph O'Cain, Boston shipmaster, was active in the Pacific at the beginning of the 19th century and drowned in a shipwreck on Sanak Island in 1809. (Richard A. Pierce, **Russia's Hawaiian Adventure, 1815-1817,** p. 240 and passim).

38. Ivan Aleksandrovich Kuskov, a merchant from Tot'ma, went to America with Baranov and became his assistant. In 1812 he founded Fort Ross, a Russian trading post in northern California. He left the Company's service in 1821, returned to Russia and died in Tot'ma in 1823. (Khlebnikov, pp. 121-122 and passim).
39. Commercial Councillor *(Kommertsii Sovetnik)*, an honorary title established by the government in 1800 for outstanding merchants. (Pushkarev, p. 143).
40. Ivan Ivanovich Banner (died 1816), an employee of the Russian-American Company, headed the Company's office at Kodiak for several years. In 1803, he wrote a short description of the Koliuzh [Tlingit] people. See Richard A. Pierce, editor, **Documents on the History of the Russian-American Company**, pp. 156-160.
41. Should read Paul's or Three Saints Harbor.
42. Roca Pamplona or Pamplona Rocks off St. Elias (Orth p. 737).
43. Podushkin's statement does not agree with Golovnin's 60° latitude and 147°48' longitude.
44. Possibly in the vicinity of Rurik Harbor (Orth p. 820).
45. Berkh recorded that Kalinin saw Mount Edgecumbe at one o'clock.
46. Khlebnikov, p. 125, note 56.

Glossary

Creole–offspring of mixed Russian and native parentage.
Gubernia–province.
Prikashchik or prikazchik–in Siberia an administrator of a village or rural district. In Alaska, an agent of the Chief Manager, or a supercargo.
Promyshlennik–Russian fur trapper, hunter, trader.

Measurements:

arshin–2.37 feet or 28 inches or 16 vershoks.
vershok–1.75 inches.
sazhen-7 feet or 1.16 fathom.
verst–0.6629 mile.
pud–36.11 English pounds.

Note: measurements also occur occasionally in English feet.

Appendix

* In order to show the reader how rapidly the longest voyages are sometimes accomplished, I will cite as an example the above-mentioned mariner O'Cain, with whom I lived a month on Kad'iak. In the year of 1803 in September he left Boston, and in February 1804 arrived, without stopping anywhere, in Kad'iak; that is, he was at sea about one hundred and fifty days. Now I shall calculate the distance he sailed. The town of Boston is in the 24th latitude north, and Kad'iak is in the 57th, but on the other side of the American continent. And thus to get there, he had to go down to the sixtieth southern latitude in order to go around Cape Horn, and then go up again. Consequently there were 225 degrees of meridian or 23,623 *versts* of straight line sailing; but I shall probably not tell a lie, if I say that he sailed 30 thousand *versts* in five months. If now someone wants to know how much he sailed in one day, and finds that this would be around two hundred *versts*, he will probably be astonished that I call it fast, for it is known that a ship can sometimes sail four hundred fifty *versts* in twenty-four hours. But in this case one should take into consideration that he passed the equator twice and that the winds do not always blow with the same strength, or in the same direction. The *Neva* during its voyage around the world, in February of the year 1804, going to Cape Horn, sailed in twenty-four hours 66 and a half German miles, or four hundred sixty-two *versts;* but such cases are rather rare. If someone going from Novo-Arkhangel'sk to Okhotsk, sailed in every twenty-four hours only about one hundred fifty *versts*, he would reach it in thirty days, and going from Kad'iak in twenty.

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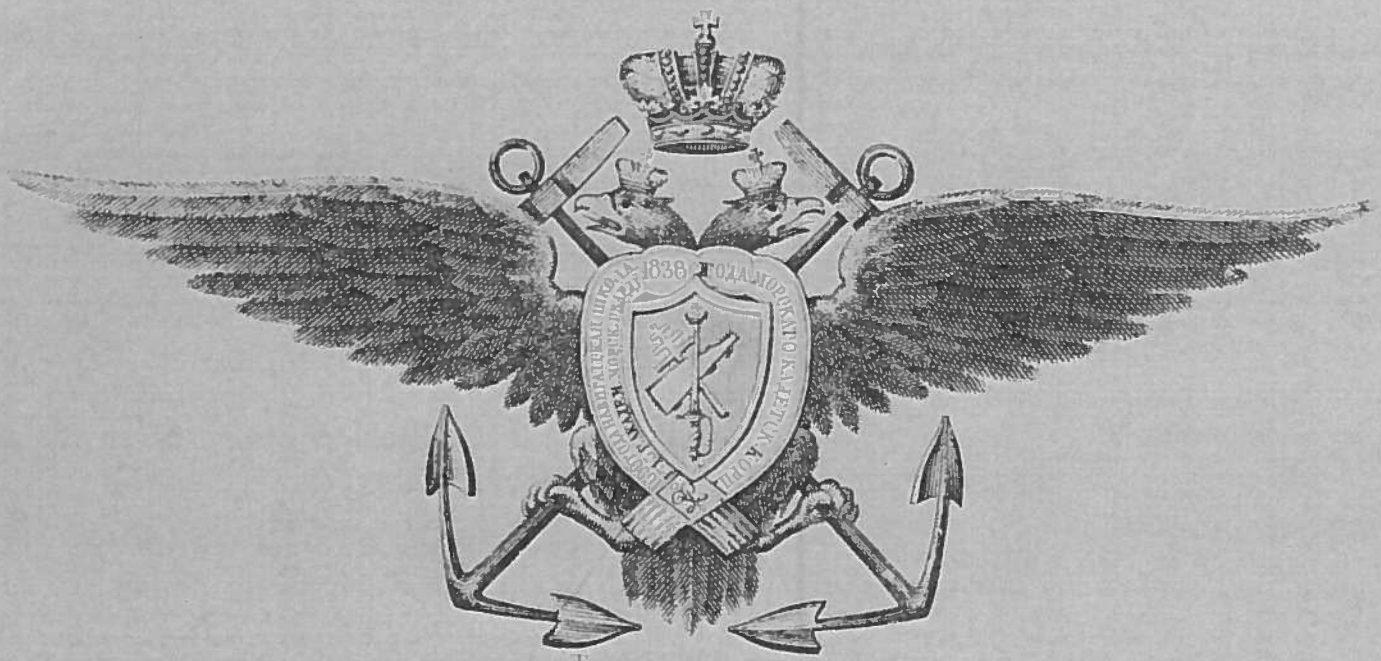

Герб корпуса.