

Scandinavian Immigration to Russian Alaska, 1800-1867

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Before the Great Northern War (1700-1743), fought between Tsar Peter of Russia (1672-1725) and King Charles XII of Sweden (1682-1718), the territories of Sweden covered most land surrounding the east Baltic Basin, *i.e.* the regions of Finland, the Karelian Isthmus, Ingria, Estonia Livonia, part of Poland and Pomerania. In the final peace treaty of 1743 Sweden lost to Russia the south eastern corner of Finland including the Karelian Isthmus (called from that date onwards "Old Finland" and Ingria, Estonia, Livonia, and its territories in Poland. By this time Russia had twice overrun Finland.¹

Prior to 1700 portions of the regions' populations had been in great flux, as service men in the Swedish forces were moved within the empire. Pomeranian Germans, Swedes and Baltic Noblemen served in garrison cities throughout Finland, Sweden, and the Baltic regions. Likewise, Finns served in Sweden, Pomerania, Estonia, Livonia, and Poland. In the Baltics, the Swedish Crown had given huge land-grants to many of Swedish noblemen. Traders moving goods traveled widely.²

Prior to 1700 the various ethnic groups of Sweden looked west towards Stockholm and its center of administration, and south towards the rest of Europe. After 1743, however, this outlook drastically changed within the territories of Old Finland, Ingria, Estonia and Livonia. Their populations, now under Russian rule, were looking towards Russia and its new capital and seat of power, St. Petersburg, a city founded in 1703 in the Neva estuary less than a mile from the ruins of Nyen. In these recently captured regions the population movement continued as Russia manned its military garrisons with over nine hundred Europeans recruited by Peter the Great in 1697.³ Many of these Scandinavian men, such as Cornelius Cyrus, Peter Thordensjöld, Peter Sievers, Daniel Wilster, Peter Bedal, Andreas Hertenberg, Peder Grib, Thure Trane, and Simon Skop would build Peter's Imperial Navy. The Tsar had encountered these men on the docks of the East Indian Company.⁴

In addition to these men were many Baltic German, Finnish, Swedish and Russian officers. This mixture was typical of that found in Wiborg, Old Finland, where German, Swedish, Finnish and Russian were heard spoken everywhere in the streets. And many spoke all four languages fluently. So conversed the population at Nyen, where Finn, Swede and German worshiped under the same roof. Additionally, Narva, Tallinn and Riga, had a sizable population of Scottish merchants.

Some 9000 prisoners captured during the Great Northern War had been paraded through the streets of Moscow, and then sent to Siberia. There they formed a significant population in Irkutsk, Nerchinsk, Tomsk, Omsk, Barnaul, and the Ural mines. A great number of these men

and their officers were Finns and Baltic Germans. Their contributions towards Siberia's enlightenment are considered to be immense. Throughout the area they formed Evangelical Lutheran parishes and built their own churches. The Barnaul, Tomsk and Irkutsk Evangelical Lutheran parishes date from this time.⁵ Later, Baltic criminals and political dissidents banished to Siberia formed other parishes. By the 1750s both Finns and Balts had found their way to populate Siberia. In addition to the capitals of Irkutsk and Omsk, by the mid nineteenth century all major cities in Siberia had large military garrisons housing officers, wives, children, and servants. A substantial number of these families were Evangelical Lutherans from Finland and the Baltic regions.

A portion of Old Finland's Finnish population seeking employment moved to St. Petersburg following the peace of 1743. From St. Petersburg they spread throughout Russia. Among them were Eric Laxman (1737-1796) and Gustaf Orraeus (1738-1811). At Åbo University both men had studied under Peter Kalm, the celebrated student of Professor Carl von Linné. Both Orraeus and Laxman made their unforgettable marks on Imperial Russia. The former as Imperial Russia's first Surgeon General, the latter as a scientist and explorer of Siberia. Laxman is also noted for alerting the Tsarina to the strategic position of the Amur River, and recommended taking possession of its entire length. Fearing retaliation from the Chinese and an end of the lucrative trade at Kiakhtha, the Tzarina instead appointed Laxman to oversee the first Russian expedition to Japan, hoping to secure a trade treaty with the closed nation. By this time Laxman was a respected member of the Imperial Academy of Science and firmly established in Irkutsk. There he shared his passion in mineralogy with a Danish friend, Johan Banner. In 1786 Banner took a position as fur-merchant on Russian dominated Kodiak (Aleutian Islands). At Irkutsk, Laxman also was partner with the Karelian Alexandr Baranoff in a glassworks

Seven years after Laxman's appointment ten monks set out from Lake Ladoga's Valamo/ Vaalam Monastery and traversed Russia and Siberia. Their destination was Kodiak. In their party was an Orthodox Finnish Karelian timber-man by the name of Alexander Kuparinen. The same year (1799), the newly formed Russian-American Company gained its operating charter. Alexandr Baranoff, was appointed its Chief Manager. The company's main purpose was to harvest pelts, among these the prized Sea Otter's, a most lucrative commodity commanding vast sums on the Chinese market. The following year Tsar Paul granted the Russian-American Company monopoly over all endeavors in the Russian Pacific.⁶

Another war erupted again between Sweden and Russia, ending in 1809, forced the Swedish Crown to cede the rest of

Finland to Russia. Tsar Alexandr promised that there would be no conscription of Finnish men into the Imperial Army. So ended 700 years of feeding Finnish men to the cannons of Sweden's enemies. From that day onward Finns were seen tilling their soil and harvesting their crops on their own patches of land in their native land.

Imperial Russia continued to receive a steady stream of Finns, all free men. They rapidly gained the reputation of desirable employees and worked as civil servants, artists, craftsmen, silversmiths, tradesmen, coachmen, and servants. These individuals flocked to the Empire's many urban centers where they formed parishes requiring Evangelical Lutheran pastors. St. Petersburg boasted two large Lutheran parishes, the Finnish language St. Maria and the equally Finnish, Swedish language St. Katarina.⁷ St. Katarina's also served the other Scandinavians in that city. Finns and Ingrians flooded Siberia as banished convicts or political dissidents, forming in their penal colonies Evangelical Lutheran Parishes seeking pastors and schoolteachers. In the latter part of the century one such pastor was the Finn Johannes Granö who served his vast pastorate out of Omsk, West Siberia's capital. He had replaced Pastor Roschier, another Finn who had served as acting military Pastor in Irkutsk. By the end of the century both European Russia and Siberia were literally dotted with numerous Evangelical Lutheran parishes. Other Ingrians migrated to Siberia fleeing poverty, and serfdom.⁸

In 1812 Tsar Alexandr created the Grand Duchy of Finland. Everyone in Finland now turned their heads southeast towards St. Petersburg. A large number of Finland's highly educated, skilled, and experienced military men, initially idle, found welcoming employment in Imperial Russia's infant navy and military establishments. By the end of 1917 more than 300 Finns had risen to the ranks of General and Admiral in Imperial Russia.⁹ With their Baltic German counterparts, many of these men served both as officials and military governors, overseeing vast districts throughout Imperial Russia. Their districts were often many times larger than their own homelands. This was most certainly true for Russian Alaska. Of Alaska's fourteen Chief Managers/Governors between 1799 and 1867 five were non-Russian Evangelical Lutherans. Of the fourteen three were Baltic Germans: Carl Ludwig August von Hagemeister (Jan. 1818-Oct. 1818), who relieved Baranov of his reign of eighteen years, Baron Ferdinand von Wrangell (1830-1835) and Nikolas Jacob von Rosenberg (1850-1853).

Two were Finns: Arvid Adolph Etholen (1840-1845), and Johan Hampus Furubjelm (1859-1864). A third Finn, Johan Joachim von Bartram declined the offer for the five-year period between 1850 and 1855. All were high ranking Imperial naval officers and all but Rosenberg made truly brilliant careers. Most all of them had spent numerous years in Company service or Alaskan and Siberian waters,

Sitka, or New Archangel, capital of Alaska



working their way up the ranks. Thus one third of Russian Alaska's governors were non-Russian, North European Evangelical Lutherans, representing an entirely different culture and outlook on life and religious belief.

Since Russian-Alaska could only be reached by ship, the Russian-American Company was deeply dependent on its merchant vessels. From St. Petersburg's port, Kronstadt, they sailed first to England, then across the Atlantic to Rio De Janeiro, around the tip of South America and up to Valparaiso, and from there to Sitka. In Sitka they unloaded passengers and cargo. From Sitka, they sailed to their outlying stations such as Kodiak, Petropavlovsk, Okhotsk.¹⁰ Then the ships traced their way back to Sitka bringing pelts, other cargo and Company personnel, and from there they traced their way back to Kronstadt with furs and those of its personnel who had completed their five year contracts (seven years for artisans, craftsmen, and laborers).

Russia relied heavily on Finnish seamen. These seamen manned Russian naval ships as well as its deep seagoing vessels. Company records show that in the early 1800s these ships were crewed predominantly by merchant seamen from Finland. From 1840 onwards the Company's around-the-world ships were manned entirely by Finnish merchant skippers and crew. Most Company ships stationed in Sitka and the Northern Pacific were likewise manned by Finnish skippers and Finnish crews. All these men were on the Company payrolls.¹¹ Several of the company ships, such as *Nikolai I* and *Naslednik Alexandr* were built in Finland at Åbo's Old Shipyards. Several other Finnish built ships were ordered for the Imperial Russian Navy. The *Baikal*, built in Helsinki in 1847, and the famous corvette *Varjag*, built in Uleåborg/Oulu are good examples.¹² Some ships were caught in the terrible turmoil of the Crimean War (1853-1856).

Åbo Seaman House records, as well as Finnish passport and church records, show the Company hired a steadily increasing stream of Finnish experts. Apart from seamen and skippers, they hired geologists, medical doctors, and numerous master craftsmen, such as master stone-masons and cutters, timber-men (shipwrights), sailmakers, sailcloth weavers, gold-smiths, tailors, shoemakers, Church sextons, Evangelical Lutheran pastors, school teachers, servants, cabinet-makers, and blacksmiths. By 1839 there were at least 150 Evangelical Lutherans engaged by the Company. This means that by this time one third of the white workforce consisted of non-Russian Western Europeans. In the ensuing years their numbers increased. There is compelling evidence that the Company preferred to hire Finnish men.

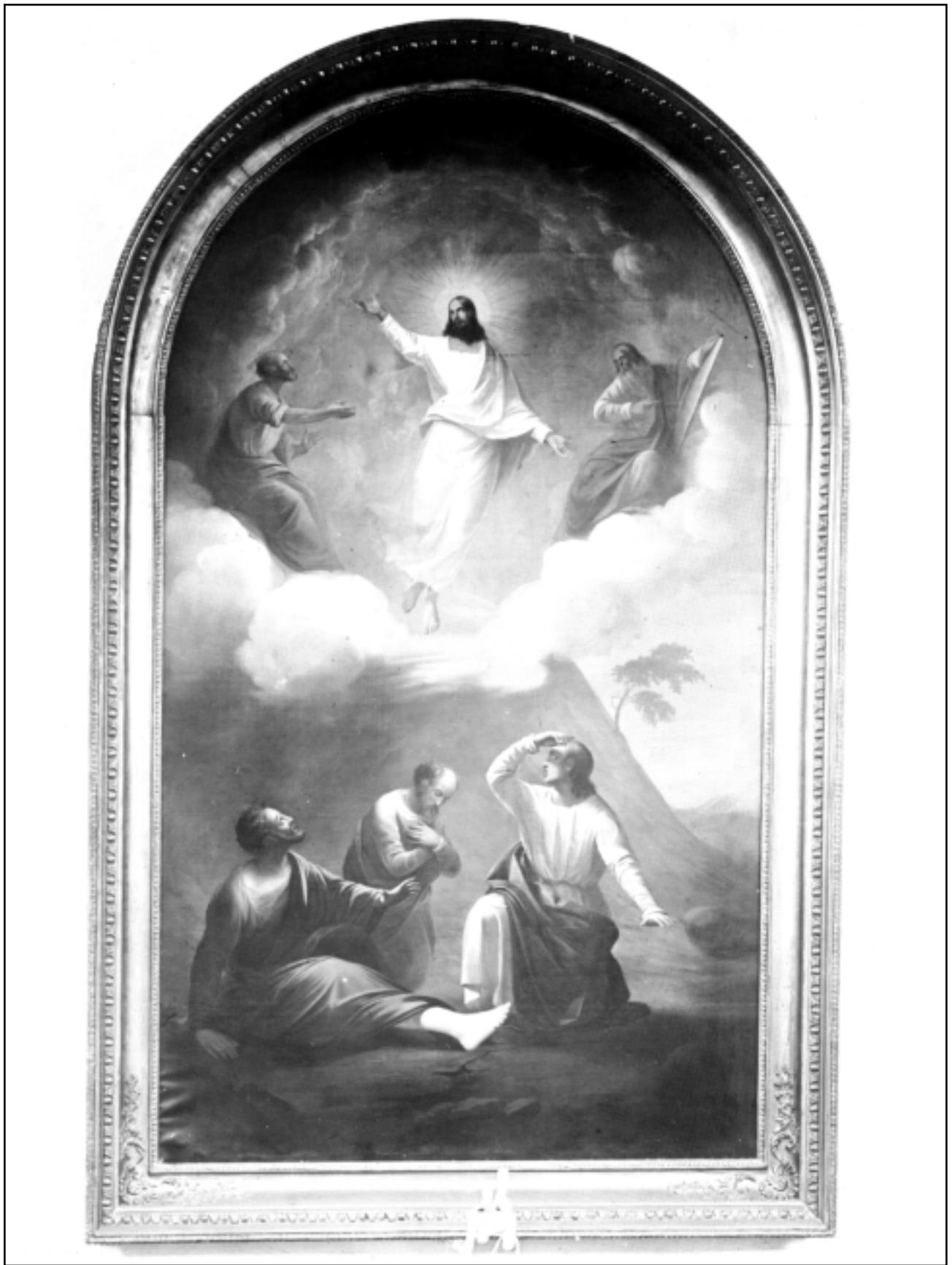
Sitka became the a principle port for the joint Finnish and Russian-American Company-owned venture, the Russian-Finnish Whaling Company, which between 1850 and 1860 operated several whalers in the Pacific, Bering Sea and Okhotsk Sea. Managing partner was the Åbo tycoon Eric Julin. His ships were all manned by Finnish skippers and crews, with an occasional Balt and Swede included.¹³ Due to the Crimean War (1853-1856) this company lost so many ships it went bankrupt in June 1860. During the war

several of its ships were forced to shelter from the enemy in Sitka's harbor. This considerably augmented the Finnish population of Sitka, and many mixed-race, cross-cultural, mixed-faith marriages took place in Sitka's female poor European community. None of these whalers are found on the Russian-American Company's payroll.¹⁴

Another of Finnish Skippers and seamen not found on the Company's payrolls are those that sailed ships owned by Erik Jilin and his E. Jilin & Co. Several of his ships, such as the *Sitka*, *Ata*, and *Freyja*, (and later the *Kamchatka*) were leased to support services Russian-American Company and Russian-Finnish Whaling Company ships. These ships transported cargo and Company employees to Sitka. On their return journeys they picked up passengers, furs, whale oil and bones. These ships shuttled between Bo, Ronstadt, and Helsinki to London. From there they followed the usual route around the tip of South America. Then they stopped in Honolulu to load a cargo of fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat for Sitka. From Sitka they sailed to other Pacific Siberian ports. These ships regularly returned via Hong Kong, where they took on tea before returning to Ronstadt and Bo. Naturally their crews are not found on the Company's Sitka payrolls. Still, their crews came to Sitka twice a year, spending more time there than in their home port. The departures and arrivals of these ships and their crews are recorded into Bo Seaman House ledgers.¹⁵

After the Crimean War at least two Helsingfors/Helsinki owned whalers, the *Sofia Adelaide* and *Grand Duke Constantin*, appeared regularly for lengthy stays in Sitka. Several ships from other Finnish ports hauled government men and cargo to the Amur Region. Some of these came to port in Sitka and transported civilian personnel, laborers and passengers to the region.

In an effort to solidify the large Northern European Lutheran community stationed in Sitka, the Company established an Evangelical Lutheran pastorate in Sitka.¹⁶ In the fall of 1839, St. Katarina pastor Gustaf van Zandt, shipped to Sitka numerous bibles and new testaments in Finnish, Swedish, German, Estonian, and Latvian. He also shipped two large silver-plated candlesticks and a large bible to adorn the altar, and the specially commissioned altarpiece painting by the Finnish nobleman, lawyer, and artist, Berndt Abraham Godenhjelm.¹⁷ Over time this painting grew into a tangible symbol for the multiethnic community in Russian Alaska and its Pacific communities. Finnish pastors regularly held services in Finnish, Swedish and German. The Sitka congregation reflected the distinct ethnic composition of its sister parishes in Nyen of the past, Wiborg, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Omsk, Barnaul, and Irkutsk. On 6 December 1849 Sitka's Evangelical Lutheran pastor sanctified a new cemetery. By August 1843 a building was erected to hold the parsonage. As found in all of Europe's "east-west" borderline regions, Sitka's Lutheran and Orthodox churches stood side by side. The proximity was deliberate and symbolic of their separate but equal status. Together these churches form a historic landmark unique in United States.



Altarpiece painting of Berndt Abraham Godenhjelm, now being restored in Finland

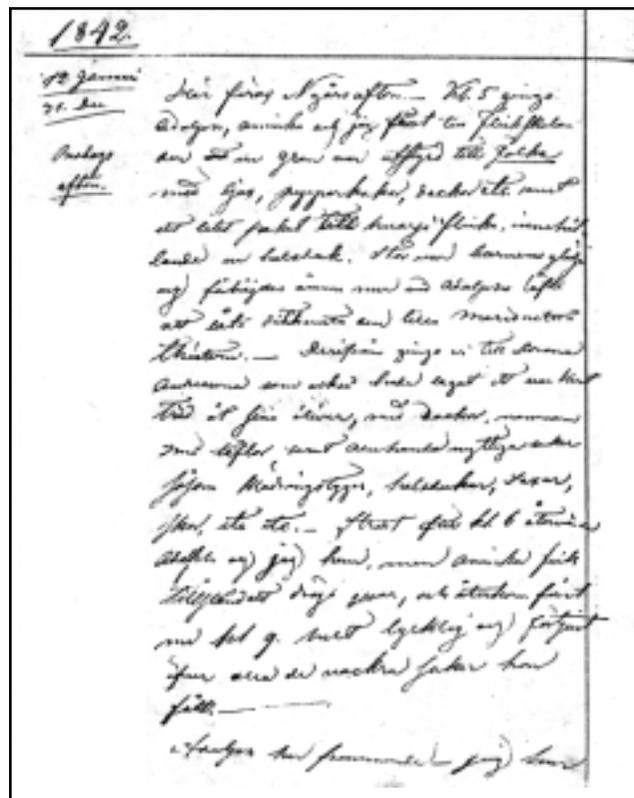
It has been said that Sitka's Russian Era Evangelical Lutheran and community was an anomaly. I hope that the evidence mentioned above puts this misconception to rest. Granö's demonstrates Sitka's was far from being an exception. On the contrary, it demonstrated the rule. Sitka's pastorate filled the needs of exactly the same category of people as found throughout European Russia and Siberia.

Between 1840 and 1865 three successive Finnish pastors served this pastorate: Uno Cygnaeus (1840-1845), Gabriel Plathán (1845-1852), Georg Gustaf Winter 1852-1865. The Balt Andreas Haepfner, and the Finns Aaron Sjöstrom, and Otto Reinhold Rehn, served as parish organists/sextons.¹⁸ The three latter ones married out of their faith, but as so many of their compatriots, they themselves stayed within its folds, although by Russian their children became Orthodox.

Since the Company's head offices were in the Russian capital, the Sitka pastorate was placed under St. Petersburg's Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The day-to-day administration was in the hands of Gustaf van Zandt, St. Katarina's parish pastor, a member of St. Petersburg's Evangelical Lutheran Upper Consistorium.¹⁹

Private letters from Sitka, preserved in Finland, clearly indicate that between 1840 and 1845 Sitka boasted of a "Finnish Party" centered around Sitka's adored second lady, the Jorois born Margareta Charlotta Swartz von Bartram.²⁰ Here the language used was the Swedish of Finland, and the homeland's culture was the focal point, including its awakening wish for independence. Another distinct group met up in the shared quarters of Pastor Uno Cygnaeus and Medical Doctor Alexander Frankenhaeuser. Here German speaking employees, such as von Harder and Lindenberg

Uno Cygnaeus, pastor at Sitka



Personal letter from 12 January, 1842

met up to smoke cigars, drink liquor, and eat a bite while conversing about ships, navigation and other sundry male subjects. Pastor Cygnaeus did not feel at home in these gatherings. The Wiborg natives, Doctor Alexander Frankenhaeuser, and the Governor's Executing Adjunct, Captain of the Second Rank Johan Joachim von Bartram, grew up in German speaking homes. Thus they were at home with both language groups. So were the Baltic Swedish brothers Martin and Christian Klinkowstrom.²¹ Like the others, both spoke fluent Swedish, German and Russian. Other accounts indicate that Finns, Ingrians and Estonians socialized together in their spare time. Some of this time was centered within the folds of the Lutheran Church. However, the white and Creole community in Sitka and its official Company "society" was clearly divided by rank. In Tsarist Russia, civilians holding the same rank as military personnel always ranked slightly below their counterparts.

In 1835, at the end of Governor von Wrangell's tenure, the Tsar granted the Company permission to establish a new category for its employees in the Colonies, the "Colonial Citizen." The purpose was to accommodate the needs of employees who married Creoles, or those who had served the Company for most of their lives and had no reason to their homelands. This allowed those who wished to stay in the Colonies to do so. This program was not acted upon until 1842, when the Finn Arvid Adolph Etholén served as the Company's Chief Manager/Governor. To those who chose to become Colonial Citizens the Company granted the

following: land, housing, cattle, poultry, grain seed, hunting and farming implements and a year's supply of food. In return they had to sell all their surplus products to the Company. James R. Gibson has stated that by 1858 there were 240 men holding this status, the majority living on Kodiak Island. In 1861 they numbered 94. He states Afognak Island, Kenai, and Sitka had ten each, and on Bering Island near Kamchatka, there were nine. As a result of Russia's defeat in the Crimean war, it was well known in the Colonies that Russia intended to sell Alaska as soon as possible. The buyer was to be the U.S. From then on it seemed pointless to apply for Colonial Citizenship. Thus before looking for answers to "who stayed on in Alaska", I wish to point out that most of the white men employed by the Russian-American Company were single upon arrival, and a majority seem to have remained so. Many of these men died in Russian Alaska. Before 1840 they were all buried into the Company's Russian Orthodox cemetery, as well as registered as dead in the Company's Orthodox parish records.

In *Index to Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths in the Archives of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in Alaska, 1816-1866*, I have isolated some 127 Finnish and Baltic men and their descendant who married Creole women. As the names in the *Index* are transcribed from Russian, and since Russian priests recorded each Finnish, Ingrian, Swedish and Baltic name in different ways, I am convinced I have missed many of them. Gibson states that by 1858 there were 240 Colonial citizens, which by 1861 had dropped to a mere 94. One can presume most of the 140 missing had died by that date. By 1867, the children conceived by Finnish, Ingrian and Baltic fathers, were themselves having children or grand-children in Alaska. By November 1867, some of these younger Finnish and Baltic fathers, grand-fathers, and possibly great grand fathers, saw their own multiethnic Alaska-born grandchildren, being born directly into American Citizenship.

Married in Russian Alaska's Russian Orthodox Church were at least the following fifty eight (58) male Finns, Ingrians, Karelians, Balts and Prussians miners:

- 1818 Theodor Laulin
- 1822 Peter Dahlström; Johan Lindstrom (or Lundström)
- 1828 Jakob Heintz
- 1830 Efraim Granskog
- 1831, Kristofer Benzemann, Platon Benzemann, Johan Hansson, Karl Schoultz (or Schoultz)
- 1833 Johan Friman (Fridmann?), Johan Kjellgren
- 1834 Gustaf Lindström
- 1835 Efraim Honka (Hanka?)
- 1836 Karl Edward Nordström
- 1837 Karl Flink, Erik Knuutila
- 1838 Karl Dahlström, Karl Schwab, Peter Silén
- 1839 Jakob Laureus
- 1840 Gustav Gustavsson;
- 1841 Johan Keck, Jakob Lehtonen, Karl Lindberg (or Lundberg), Alexander Pakkanen, Karl Schell

- 1842 Johan Davidson, Johan Ek, Johan Heurlin, Christian Ott, Anders Rönkkö
- 1843 Ander Phil
- 1844 Johan Ekulin (Ekelin?), Jakob Nygren
- 1845 Gabriel Blomqvist, Gustav Lundström
- 1846 Konstantin Kokko, Johann Müller;
- 1847 Joseph Lindkvist
- 1848 Jakob Banker, Henrik Branders, Johan Herman(n), Johan Lönrooth;
- 1850 Karl Herman(n)
- 1851 Samuel Kieras, Anders Pesonen
- 1852 Karl Granberg (Gamberg or Hamberg), Johan(n) Weismann; Johan(n) Westphal; Frederich Wiger
- 1855 Peter Skott
- 1858 Johan Lemberg
- 1859 Leopold Johansson
- 1860 Gustaf Berman (Bergman?), Karl Hellman, Karl Ramsay
- 1861 Johan Helstedt (or Hellstedt)
- 1864: Michael Bonner (or Bonnert)

From above listing it is difficult to identify who was a Finn, Karelian, Ingrian, Balt, or a Prussian. As the Company records are incomplete it is impossible to state who applied for Colonial Citizenship after marriage. What's known is that at least Karl Nordström, Karl Dahlström, Efraim Rönkkö, Jakob Lehtonen, Jakob Knagge, Matti Riippa, Johan Kjellgren, Efraim Honka, and Mathias Mustonen obtained Colonial Citizenship. At least one Finn, Jakob Lehtonen, lived past 1867 and became a naturalized American citizen.²² How many men abandoned their families in Alaska at the time Alaska was sold to the United States is unknown. Certainly some did, although they are difficult to identify. I have not found a trace of any passenger lists of those ships which took Company employees back to Ronstadt, Helsinki, Vladivostok and Petropavlovsk, Pacific Siberia, or to San Francisco. The only data I have managed to locate are records stating that most of the ships departing Sitka between 1861 and 1868 carried up to one hundred passengers.²³ One compelling factor in the choice of destination must have been the terrible hunger years Finland experienced between 1862 and 1870. During that time massive numbers of Finns starved to death in Finland. These sordid conditions were well known in Russian Alaska. In spite of this some individuals and families braved the move back to their homelands. Many opted to move to Vladivostok, a rapidly developing boom town. Others again opted to move to Petropavlovsk, on Kamchatka. A significant number chose to move down to San Francisco.

It is necessary to point out that Russian Alaska's white population was not large. It is believed never to have exceeded one thousand. The above list of non-Russian men is of significance, in that married Creoles in Alaska and had a myriad of children, some truly huge families. Additionally, Alaska's Russian Orthodox Church records testify that these Finns', Ingrian's, Karelian's and Balts' numerous descendants are still living in Alaska today. The route their

progenitors took was significantly different from any later ones. They either crossed European Russia and Siberia to the Pacific ports of Okhotsk and from there by ship to Sitka. This journey was mostly traversed by horseback, and then on river rafts down the Rivers Lena, later Amur. The other route was by ship, sailing out of Bo or Ronstadt to cross the Atlantic, rounding the tip of South America, then up the coast to Sitka.

Significant too is that from the early 1800s the Finnish seamen sailing these ships had journeyed up and down the North and South American coasts. Salt, used by the Company in preserving pelts, was obtained on islands in Baja California. Fort Ross in Bodega Bay, just north of San Francisco, was a stop on that route until 1841 when the fort was sold to the “swindler” Johann Sutter, on whose land the first California Gold was found. Thus, all Finnish seamen plying these waters knew every nook and cranny on these shores. Similarly they knew equally well the coast on the Asiatic side. Returning to Finland on their mandatory around-the-world journeys, they spread the news of the riches they had seen.

So the next wave of immigrating Finns had a good knowledge of both the Asiatic Siberian U.S. West Coasts. Many of them, when crossing America, were intent on reaching the Pacific American regions they had heard described. There is clear evidence that Pacific Siberia also drew hordes of Finns and Balts, as well as some Swedes. Records show that Finns, gold prospecting in Pacific Siberia, crossed the ocean to San Francisco and went to Alaska to prospect; and some Finns in the U.S. departed San Francisco for Vladivostok to there prospect in the rich gold fields of Pacific Siberia.

San Francisco’s harbor records and the Russian Consular records display the names of many Finnish and Baltic Russian Alaska skippers busily plying the waters between San Francisco, Petropavlovsk, Nikolajefsk and Vladivostok. Some of their crew lists have survived, displaying Finns, Swedes and Finnish and Baltic Creoles from Alaska. One such Creole is Navigator Nordström’s son John. His description states he had dark hair and an olive colored complexion. Long before the turn of the century 11% of San Francisco’s seaman community were Finns. The commercial activities these former Finnish Russian-American Company skippers and their men was impressive. At least two are known to have become multi millionaires: Gustaf Nybom (later Niebaum), the founder of Inglenook wineries, and Otto Wilhelm Lindholm of Vladivostok. Their business ventures had interests spread across the northern Pacific. This activity continued until 1922 and the Soviet terror, when Vladivostok’s numerous Finns and Manchurians were rounded up, march to the central square and shot.²⁴

Postscript

In May of 1873 Sitka’s Russian Era Evangelical Lutheran Church’s large Godenhjelm altarpiece painting *The Transfiguration of Christ* “grew wings” and entered St. Michael’s Russian Orthodox Church. There it was placed in

the cupola above the altar to block the sunlight bothering the congregation. In 1888 its former home was torn down. Soon most everyone forgot that this magnificent painting had once adorned the wall above the altar of a very different faith, and the large Western European community it represented. That is, all but one among all of Alaska’s curators and historians. This incredibly brave woman was Isabel Miller, an amateur historian and former school-teacher in Sitka, a member of Sitka Historical Society, and the founder of its Isabel Miller Museum. She spoke up both loudly and clearly on my first visit to Sitka in May of 1988. At that time she delegated me the formidable task of retrieving both this painting, as well as the Russian Era Evangelical Lutheran cemetery from the hold of Alaska’s Russian Orthodox Church. After all, she pointed out, both represented my own Finnish history, and thus it was my job to rescue them. To emphasize the urgency therein she dug her finger deep between my ribs. Just to escape the piercing pain I would do my best. Soon afterwards she died. Never did I think it would take 12 years of research and hard work under increasing public pressure.

On November 22, 1999 the Russian Orthodox Metropolitan handed Alaska’s then acting Evangelical Lutheran Bishop the deed for this old cemetery. It was rededicated on May 14, 2000, in the presence of Alaska’s newly appointed Bishop Ronald Martinson. On June 20, 2000, the Berndt Abraham Godenhjelm altarpiece painting was taken down from its destructive perch and placed in the Evangelical Lutheran church. I would like to publicly thank all those many individuals and societies, who helped in accomplishing this formidable task: Professors Heikki Hanka and Brian Magnusson, Reverend Michael Meier, the Finnish-American Historical Society of the West, the Swedish-Finn Historical Society, and the Board of the Peninsula Nordic Study Circle. The vandalized painting has now been flown to Finland for restoration under the direction of Richard Hördahl, Director, Vanda School of Restoration.

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Notes

¹ The border was drawn just east of the coastal city of Lovisa, leaving the garrison cities of Fredrikshamn/Hamina, Wildmanstrand/Lappeenranta, and Nyslott/Savonlinna on the Russian side. Wiborg, the largest city was now well within this Russian territory. So was Kexhohn/Käkisalmi, Sordavala/Sortavala and Fort Nöteborg in the mouth of the River Neva. Nyen/ Nyen Skans, the Swedish garrison city on the River Neva, was destroyed by Peter in 1703. Finnish historian Professor Max Engman has mentioned that Nyen might have rivaled, or surpassed Wiborg in size, thereby being the second largest city in Finland.

² From this time period my own Finnish family tree is comprised of ancestors from Scotland, France, Sweden, Pomerania, Riga, Narva, Tallinn and Nyen on the Neva.

³ Cf. Lamb, *The City and the Tsar*, p. 123.

⁴ Lauridsen gives the following details while giving a good trashing to many other biographers of Bering: "In August of 1824 Tsar Peter the Great had appointed the Danish native, Vitus Bering (1681-1741) a captain of the first rank, as the leader of his "Kamchatka Expedition" (1725-1730). Bering himself, already by 1703 a naval officer in the Russian service partaking in the Great Northern War, seems to have recruited for his expeditions many of the 9000 experienced Swedish, Finnish, Ingrian, and Baltic prisoners-of-war found in Siberia. Thus these prisoners-of-war formed a large part of the numerous crews building and sailing the ships upon which he explored the waters between Arctic Siberia and America, and later on discovered the American continent. Named among these crews are the following in the First Kamchatka Expedition: Martin Spangberg, Peter Chapin, Richard Engel, the Swede Sven Waxell, Georg Moison, the German medical doctor Niemann, and Illarion, the mandatory Russian Orthodox priest ... Thus among the prisoners-of-war were untold numbers of Finns, Balts and Swedes partaking in Bering's discovery of America." Lauridsen reproduces in his appendix the many objectives stipulated for the Second Expedition. Noteworthy among them is an order to explore the Siberian shores down to the Amur Estuary.

⁵ See Pierce, *Russian-Alaska: a Biographical Dictionary*, p. 19-20.

⁶ This included taking possession of the Amur basin. The Amur is navigable far into the interior of Siberia and became the most important means of transport between Irkutsk and the North Pacific.

⁷ In the 1840s St. Maria's pastor was the noted educator Carl Wilhelm Sirén. Sirén married my great grandfather's sister, Maria Lovisa Margareta Enckell. Serving the smaller by more influential St. Katarina was Gustaf van Zandt.

⁸ Granö gives good descriptions, naming parishes and locations on accompanying maps.

⁹ See Pikoff introduction.

¹⁰ In 1846 Okhotsk was abandoned in favor of Ajan. After 1858, when the Amur River was fully in Russian hands, De Castri Bay and Fort Nikolajefsk became the official sites. They were gradually replaced by Vladivostok from 1865.

¹¹ Company records are incomplete and many names found in various Finnish records are absent in the Company's. This author has managed to identify the following forty-four Finnish skippers and naval officers serving in Russian Alaska's Pacific waters: von Bartram, Johan Joaehim; Blom, Wilhelm; Boucht; Brunström, Alexander; Bäck, Johan Reinhold; Carpelan, Otto Maximilian; Conradi, Johan Jakob; Dingelstedt, Konstantin; Elfenberg; Enberg, Gustav Christian; Engberg; Engström; Engblom, W.; Etholén, Arvid Adolph; Furuhehn, Johan Hampus; Granberg, Johan Christian; Halleen (Hallén), Carl Johan; Hansson, Johan Theodor, and most likely also his brother Henrik Johan; Ingström, Erik August; Juselius, Axel Gustaf; Krogius, Lars Thiodolf; Kählman, Wiktor Robert; Lindgren; Lindholm, Otto Wilhelm; Lindfors, Adolph; Lindroos, Carl Gustav;

Lindström, Johan Herman; Michelson, Herman; Nordgren, Fredrik; Nybom, Gustaf (later Niebaum); Riedell, Adolf Wilhelm; Romberg; Roslund, Iisac; Sandman, Johan Gustaf; von Schantz, Johan Eberhard; Schmidberg; Schmidt, Johan; Solinius, Carl Johan; Söderberg; Söderblom, Wilhelm; Weckman, Johan Wilhelm; Yorjan, B. Öhberg, Abraham.

Known Finnish Navigators stationed in Russian Alaska: Andersson, Berg; Hjelt; Krogius; Lauraeus; Lindberg; Lindfors; Lindholm; Nordström; Nyberg; Mansfeld; Swartz; Thomasson; Vinblad; Öhberg, possibly also Gronberg and Skipper Riedell's oldest son. Some rose to Skippers taking their exams in Finland's Schools of Navigation.

Known Scandinavian, Baltic German, Baltic Swedish, German and possibly Polish skippers:

Benzemann, Kristofer, Martin; De Baer, H. or K.F., or Ber, Klaus; von Harder, Leonard; Hasshagen; Hochloff; Jürgen; Klinkowstrom (Klinkofstrem), Martin and Klinkowström, Christian, both Baltic Swedes; von Koskull, Carl; Lemaschewschy, Paul; Lindenberg, Johann Samuel; (von?) Müllfischer; Ofterdinger, Carl; Sheel; Smith; Vermann, Frederick; Welitzkowski, Valdemar. Note that this list might be very incomplete.

¹² See Pikoff under Lundh, Konstantin for the ship *Varjag*'s history. The *Baikal* was specially designed to support the entire Amur River acquisition process.

¹³ For example, in 1852, onboard the whaler *Turku*, the Swede Johan Ahlgren age 25, served as a Boy. He disembarked in San Francisco. Swedish cooper Carl Johan Jernström age 21, came from Stockholm. He served as assistant cooper. Master cooper Edward T. Michelsson, age 28, was from Tallinn Estonia. In 1857, onboard the whaler *Grefve Berg* the Swede, August Philip Rosenthal, age 16, earned 4 Rubles a month as an apprentice.

¹⁴ At least two other Company ships, the *Nikolai* and the *Kamchatka*, sat out the war in San Francisco. The former was commanded by Martin Klinkowström, the latter by the Finn, Riedell. Both the Company's and Eric Julin's skippers were reluctant to lay anchor in that port or along the coast. Their fear was amply justified. Åbo Seaman House and Company records show that some up to one third of some crews jumped ship during the California Gold Rush. The problem was so serious that already in 1838 Imperial Russia had made the following stipulation in their trade agreements with the U.S.: "The Russian Consuls in America have the right to ask the local authorities for assistance in searching and arresting runaways from Finnish trading vessels, and in such cases the Consuls are to address such authorities, and then in writing, ask for these runaways. When such runaways have been captured, they are to be turned over to such said Consul and then be jailed until they can be returned to their respective ships, or to their homeland on other ships. However, such runaways cannot be held for more than four months."

¹⁵ Finland's Bo Seaman House records give ample evidence to this in crew and seaman records. Pavel Golovin states that in 1861 all but two of the Company's skippers were Finns

and in the workforce were some 130 seamen stationed in Sitka. Most were probably Finns. Between 1860 and 1862 my own great grand-uncle, Carl Constantin Swartz, served the Company in Sitka as navigator. He lived there with his wife and four children. By 1863 he was stationed in Nikolajefsk, Pacific Siberia.

¹⁶ See Enckell *Documenting the Legacy of the Alaska Finns: from the Russian Period*. p. 1-3.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 4-7.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 48.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 4-7.

²⁰ Margareta Swartz von Bartram was my great grand-aunt. She was Carl Constantin's older sister. A younger sister, Wilhelmina, was also in Sitka between 1840-1848. On my mother's side, Naval Captain of the First Rank Alexander Elfsberg served for eight years as Military Commander/Governor in Ajan. His two brothers sailed the routes Ronstadt-Sitka-Petropavlovsk-Ajan and back.

²¹ Letters in fluent Swedish, written in Martin Klinkowstrom's own hand, are found in San Francisco's Imperial Russian Archives. After his long years in Alaska, Martin served for many years as San Francisco's Imperial Russian Consul. These materials are found on microfilm in Utah's Family History Library. Additionally, the Baltic former Russian-American Company Naval Officer, Valdemar Welitzkovsky, as well as Finnish Skipper Gustav Nybom served in that order as Imperial Russian Consuls in San Francisco, (possibly also one of the two Finnish Skipper-brothers Hansson). Former Company employees P.C. Pfluger, L.W. Pfluger, Johann Bollman, and I.F. Haxckfeld served as consuls in Honolulu. In Portland, Oregon the Finn Gustaf Willson served likewise, and the Balt Otto (von?) Kohler served as such in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In the 1867-68 transition year, the Balt, Carl Theodor von Koskull served as such in Sitka.

²² Cf. p. 66 *Amerikan Suomalaisten Historia*. Ilmonen reports while visiting Sitka in 1896 he found some 500 individuals who could demonstrate their own lineage to their Finnish ancestry. See also statement quoted in my *Alaska Finns*, p. 3, no. 4. This disproves some eminent historians' claim, among them Harjunpää and Olin, who doubted Ilmonen's numbers, although neither had studied Alaska's Russian-Orthodox Church's records.

²³ Cf. Sitka Port records covering these years, as published by Pierce.

²⁴ Cf p. 121, 143 of Khishamutdinov's *The Russian Far East: Historical Essays*.