November 11, 1982

Dear Ivan,

I'm sorry I missed you yesterday when you came to our department. Thank you very much indeed for leaving a copy of your latest book for me. From the reviews I've read it sounds like a very fine piece of work and I'm really looking forward to reading it now. After reading and enjoying This House of Sky my expectations are high! I appreciate your note and dedication as well as finding my name in the Acknowledgments, although I fear that whatever little information I contributed is in no proportion to such rewards. It seems to me that your book, its subject matter and Swedish protagonists ought to be promoted in connection with the ongoing Scandinavia Today celebrations (the King & Queen of Sweden will visit us on Tuesday) and I will suggest that to the head of the Swedish Information Service who is visiting here right now.

Again, thank you so much for the book and your thoughtfulness!

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Monday, November 22, 1982

Dear Mr. Doig:

Thank you for your book, "The Sea Runners", which I received recently from your publisher.

I was pleasantly impressed by an excellent job of the publishers and printers, who produced the book. Of course, right away I started to read the book, and I must say, read it with great pleasure.

You wrote an excellent book, with a true image of New Archangel at that time. Congratulations! And best wishes to you on your other future endeavors in the field of writing.

I myself have had a new book published this year, called "Cataclysm", which is written in Russian. It is an historical novel based on life of Russians in Manchuria at the time of the First World War, Revolution, and Civil War in Russia.

By the way, I sold my house, which I did not want to keep and occupy since the loss of my wife last year. I am living now in a condominium, which is very comfortable.
There are no house chores any more, like raking the leaves in the yard, taking care of a roof or other household repairs.

My very best regards.

Victor Petrov

My new address:

VICTOR P. PETROV
1016 S. Wayne St.
Apt. 110
Arlington, Virginia
22204

Dear Victor--

I'm thrilled, and more than a little relieved, that my version of New Archangel sounds all right to you. I was in Sitka recently and everyone seemed to like the book. Nobody had even caught on to the few places where I had to make up details of New Archangel life! I hope your own book does well, and that your new abode is a comfortable one.

Merry Christmas and happy '83.
Dear Mr. Doig:

Many thanks for the copy of THE SEA RUNNERS, which arrived a couple of days ago. I have already read it, and enjoyed it very much. It is well done, one of the few good works in an area which has curiously little worthwhile fiction. There are a few little points about the Russians which might have been stated a bit differently, and I think your four Swedes were actually Swedish-speaking Finlanders. Since that was then part of Russia, there were lots of Finlanders in Russian service, but I have never heard of them sending any citizens of Sweden proper to Alaska. But no matter; where history is too scanty, the writer of fiction can step in and complete the picture. Most of the book is concerned with the journey, and you make it seem as if this is the way it would have been. I hope this one does well, and I wish you success on future works.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Pierce
Dear Richard Pierce—

I'm gratified that The Sea Runners reads decently. You're likely too easy on me about points of Russian American life. It's intentional, of course, that my Swedes don't always understand the niceties of the Russian American system, and never give a Russian the benefit of the doubt—but beyond that deliberately blinkered viewpoint, if there are details I'm askew on I'd be glad to know of them for possible correction when the paperback edition comes out.

Similarly, if you ever come across something definite on whether Swedes were or weren't in the New Archangel workforce, I'd appreciate having it passed along. My sole source on the actual men, the newspaper report of their rescue, says "they are Swedes, and belong to Stockholm," and the Swedish professor I consulted with couldn't see why their names would be Swedish—Gronland, Lyndfast, Wasterholm—if they were Finns. So I saw nothing to do but have my characters Swedes, and can get by with it in fiction; but curiosity continues.

I hope your own work is going well. I'll soon be seeing one of your colleagues in the field of Russian American research, Elizabeth Crownhart-Vaughan, at a meeting of the Oregon Historical Society. Again, my thanks for helping me on the specific points you did.

best regards

[Signature]
Dear Dr. Pierce—

Many thanks indeed for your copious response on the points of New Archangel history I queried you about. I've amended my novel where needed, and it'll be the better for it. You might like to know, incidentally, that Elizabeth Vaughan at the Oregon Historical Society provided me an indication that the likeliest watch call was "slushai."

As to my source for the story of the escaping Swedes, I'm greatly glad I chose to do the project as fiction; as you'll see, the enclosed clipping—which seems to be a reprint of a reprint, by freehanded frontier editors—has similarities with the Overland Monthly piece at a few major places (being chased by the Indians, a man's death, ending up in Shoalwater Bay) and almost none anywhere else. Particularly baffling is the newspaper reiteration that the craft was a canoe; from what I've been able to read of NW coastal canoes they could be tacked, in fact couldn't be sailed except downwind, because of lack of keel, yet the Overland Monthly crew seemed to sail blithely whatever the wind. Most mysterious. As I say, thank heaven for fiction.

Again, my appreciation. My book should be out this fall, and I'll pass one along then.

sincerely
Dear Mr. Doig:

Re your letter of 23 Nov., in writing a novel about pre-sale Alaska you have embarked on a major task, but it ought to be a very interesting one.

The voyage you mention is written up in a short article in the OVERLAND MONTHLY, San Francisco, 1875, December, pp. 554-557, based on the journal kept by one of the four fugitives. The article has them starting on 20 April 1853. You evidently have another source, or perhaps the original journal. Just for bibliography I would appreciate the citation sometime.

Japonski Island is mentioned in Orth: DICTIONARY OF ALASKA PLACE NAMES as a name given in 1809 by one of the Russian navigators. It is also said to have been given "because there were some shipwrecked Japanese sailors living there at the time" (which I doubt). and V. M. Golovnin, another writer of the time claims it was from Rezanov's plan to settle Japanese prisoners there. Rezanov was in Sitka in 1806, upon leaving he set in motion a punitive expedition against Japan, which was confined to a couple of minor coastal actions. I have never seen substantiation to the idea that he planned to have prisoners taken all the way across the North Pacific to Sitka, but that was the story. Where history fails the novelist can take over.

Your character wouldn't have warned his comrades that if the Russians caught them they'd hang. Capital punishment did not exist in Russia in the 19th century except in rare instances of serious crimes against the state, i.e., revolutionary acts. Instead they sent people to reside in remote places in Siberia, which also built up that region. Hence there was no capital punishment in Russian America. In fact, crimes were rare, but there were a few instances of murders, or robbery, in which case the culprit(s) and witnesses would be sent to Okhotsk for investigation and trial. Your character could have told the others that they might be sent to Siberia.

The Indian market at Sitka was a peculiar thing, a kind of small enclosure into which the native sellers were allowed and then the door was barred until the transactions were finished, when they were released. I am not sure of the layout, however, and it would take quite a bit of research to get the exact set-up.

Regarding what the sentries shouted, a Russian here whom I have consulted finds nothing wrong with "Vnimanie" as a call, but thinks that at that "time" they might have had something else, like "slushai!" (listen!) or "stoozhi!" (guard!). I don't know, and it would take a bit of reading about 19th century Russian army life in novels, memoirs, etc., to get the needed detail.

Good luck, and I'll look forward to seeing the finished product in a year or so.

Sincerely,
Dear Dr. Pierce—

I believe Phyllis DeMuth of the Alaska Historical Library has mentioned to you that I'm at work on a novel which begins at New Archangel in 1852. It'll be my fictional version of an incident that occurred that year: four of the Swedes indentured to the Russian-American Company stole a canoe, set out south, and three of them survived the thousand-mile voyage to Willapa Bay, north of the mouth of the Columbia River. Your research and articles, particularly on the Russian governors, have been of great help. As I've gone along in the work on this book, however, I've accumulated some stray questions about New Archangel life, and I wonder if you'd have off-hand answers, out of your knowledge of the settlement:

---Was Japonski Island a joke, or pun, by the Russians—dubbing the first piece of land west of New Archangel "Japan"?

---One of my characters threatens to turn in the others to the Russians, warning them that they'll hang. Am I right in that, that the capital punishment faced by plotters or escapees would have been hanging?

---One source indicates that the Indians were allowed to hold a daily market within the gate of New Archangel, another indicates the market was just outside the gate. Do you recall anything which would indicate whether the market was in or out?

---Finally, I've come across a reference that the New Archangel sentries shouted "Attention!" to one another each hour. The Russian word for this would seem to be "Vnimanie!" which strikes me as a rather awkward watch-call. I'll check with a Russian-language scholar at the University of Washington, but I wondered if you've come across anything about the specific behavior and language of New Archangel sentries.

I'm sorry to take your time with questions, but I do want to be as accurate as possible about the details of New Archangel life. I'll see to it that when my book is published in a year or so that you get a copy. Meanwhile, I hope your own endeavors are going well.

best regards

[Signature]

Juan [Signature]
December 8, 1981

Dear Mr. Doig:

Many thanks for your book, THIS HOUSE OF SKY, which I have already started to read, and find it very interesting right from the beginning.

I was glad to hear from you that the limited information which I supplied to you was found to be satisfactory and helpful to you.

I am mailing to you one of my books on Russian America, which is, however, in Russian, the language which is still quite foreign to you. Even if you cannot read it, the book can be added to your library. It describes a rather interesting period in the history of Russian America, when the colony was visited by a high official of the Russian-American Company, High Chamberlain of the Imperial Court, Rezanov. It is a historical novel, describing a trip around the world, a visit to Alaska, and a romantic episode in California, where Rezanov fell in love with a 15-year old Spanish girl, Conchita, a daughter of the Spanish commandant of Russian Presidio (San Francisco). Of course, this story is well known to you.

By the way, let me know, if you will find the watch-call of the Russian sentries in Russian America.

Thank you again for your book.

With my best wishes

Victor P. Petrov
Dear Mr. Petrov—

My deep appreciation for your letter of help on the matter of New Archangel holiday observances. It's a small enough token of thanks, but I would like you to have the enclosed copy of my first book.

Through your advice and information, I have worked out what I hope is a plausible sequence of holiday events for my novel—Christmas Eve a solemn day, Christmas Day with religious observance in the morning and the Russian men making their visits to one another in the afternoon (when you mentioned that, I recalled that I have a diary entry of a Russian who stayed on after 1867, describing this), and then on the night after Christmas a celebration at the Governor's house.

The sentries' call, or lack of one, still is something of a puzzle. I think because of the tensions at the time at New Archangel—the Sitka Tlingits recently had killed a band of visiting Stikines, and Governor Rosenberg mentioned apprehension about the Indians—there likely was heightened security, with some sort of watch-call. The newspaper article which is the source for my novel mentions that the escaping Swedes answered the calls of the other sentries; and the specific reference to "Attention!" is from the manuscript of James C. Ward, an American merchant who spent three weeks at New Archangel in July, 1853. Ward was so meticulous observer of all else—he counted the cannons of the garrison, notes the price of lumber, etc.—that I give some credence to his observation that "at every hour...the sentries cried 'attention!'" But I certainly agree with you that "Vнимание!" is an awkward watch-call, and will consult a Russian-language scholar at the University of Washington to see whether there was some more likely word.

In any event, I'm thankful for the help you've extended.

very best regards
Dear Mr. Doig,

Thank you for your letter of 30 October. I also received a communication from Antoinette Shalkop, informing me of your interest in some of the old Russian customs. I was very much interested in your project of writing a novel on Alaska or rather Russian America, since that region has been an object of my study and research for over forty years.

You are quite right, you should have a good knowledge and accurate picture of New Archangel during the days, which you want to describe.

Coming to your questions: there was and still is a certain traditional observances among the Russians on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Christmas Eve, which fell on January 6 in the last century, was, as A. Shalkop said a solemn day, a devout day. It was a day of strict fasting. No food was to be partaken until the first star in the sky in the evening, which was about 6 o'clock in the evening. But first the worshipperes were summoned at six o'clock by the sounds of a church bell to go to the church for the church service. After the service the people hastened to their homes to eat a traditional food for this day. When they came home, they usually found the table prepared for their feast. It was covered by a layer of straw or hay, over which a sparkling white tablecloth was spread. Hay or straw was to remind of a manger of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. The food was eaten of a kind which is usually eaten during the Lent, i.e. mostly fish and vegetables. No meat, fowl, or dairy products could be eaten.

Usually, the Christmas tree was decorated during Christmas Eve. No celebration of any kind. Quite often children would go out with a large lighted star on a post in their hands. They walk the streets in the snow, singing Christmas carols. This ends the day.

Actually the holiday begins on the Christmas Day, first by going to church for the liturgy service, and then people go home to really celebrate their holiday, eating wonderful holiday food, specially prepared for this day: goose, duck, ham, and an endless variety of hors d'oeuvres, and wines of course. No special church bells ringing during the holiday, except to summon people to the service.

Please note, that no dinner parties, banquets, dancing or other festivities were planned for this first day of Christmas. There was a tradition, however, for male population to go
visiting the friends' houses, and it was a "must" to see that every friend's house was visited on this first day of Christmas. The visitors were supposed to extend their holiday greetings to the hostess of the house, and to eat all the wonderful food on the holiday table. A small glass of vodka was drunk first, and then some wine. Visitors, usually were cautious not to eat or drink too much in each house, so as to able to visit every house and not to collapse on the way. Not to visit any of the homes would have been an insult.

It was customary to have a children's "byolka", a Christmas tree party in the evening of this first day of festivities. As to the elegant dinners or banquets, they were arranged, usually, during the following few days before the New Year's day. Thus, if there was any celebration in the governor's house, it was probably on the second day of holidays.

I forgot to mention to you in the beginning, that on Christmas Eve, when people came home from the church, and before they started eating their dinner of fish and vegetables, they were offered a special Christmas Eve dish, which is eaten only once a year. It is called "kutia", which is a boiled wheat, something like a wheat porridge, which is spiced with honey and nuts. After eating this first food, people start eating their dinner.

I am sorry I cannot answer your question about the word the sentries used to call to one another, but it is definitely not "attention". "Attention" means "unimante" in Russian, and it has never been used by sentries, first of all it is very awkward word for this purpose. I will try to find out what were the words used by the sentries, although I personally doubt that they used any words to call each other. Nevertheless I will look into this matter.

Well, I hope this information will be useful to you, in your work. My own endeavors in this field were mostly in Russian language for the benefit of the Russian speaking people in this country and in other countries, where people of Russian origin reside. So far I published three historical novels on Russian America.

Let me know, if you will need any additional assistance.

Cordially,

Victor P. Petrov
Dear Mr. Petrov—

Antoinette Shalkop has referred me to you, as the best source of information about life at Sitka/New Archangel in the time of the Russian-American Company. For the past year and a half I've been at work on a novel which begins at New Archangel in the winter of 1852-1853. That winter, there occurred the historical incident on which I'm basing my story: four Swedes, indentured to the Russian-American Company, stole a Tlingit canoe and set off southward in an attempt to reach Astoria.

For the purpose of my plot, I thought I would have my characters make their escape from New Archangel during the celebration of Christmas—specifically, during whatever festivity would have been held at the governor's quarters. As I understand it from Antoinette, Christmas Day itself, January 6, would have been a solemn day, a devout day. Would there, then, have been a secular celebration—a banquet, music, dancing—the next night, the 7th, at the governor's, do you think? Or if not, how soon after January 6 might there plausibly have been such a celebration?

Also, I've seen reference to the frequency with which church bells were rung at New Archangel. Do you know whether the bells would have been rung in the night during the Christmas season, say to mark midnight or any other hour?

One other point, this one aside from Christmas. I've read a visitor's account that each hour, New Archangel sentries called to one another, "Attention!" My knowledge of Russian is of the dictionary sort; would the Russian word have been BUMAT, and is "Vnimat!" the English rendition?

I'm sorry to bother you on such details, but I do want to be accurate about New Archangel life. If you have any sources to recommend on the above questions, or for that matter any other aspect of New Archangel circa-1850, I'd be glad to hear of them. I will send along to you a copy of my novel when it's published, and I hope your own endeavors are going well.

cordially
Dear Mr. Hanson—

For the past year and a half I've been at work on a novel which begins at New Archangel in the winter of 1852-53—the story of four Swedes, indentured to the Russians, who stole a canoe and pointed themselves south toward Astoria, out of servitude. Mine is a fictional version of the actual incident; three of the four did survive, and were found by oystermen just north of the mouth of the Columbia River.

Your Quarterly has been of considerable help to me on the details of the North American fur trade. There are a couple of points in my manuscript, however, that I wonder if you might have offhand advice about, from your knowledge of how furs were handled:

—There was a small trade in beaver at New Archangel as the other fur sources began to play out, and I've set a scene of two of my characters handling the pelts in the warehouse, preparatory to baling for shipment. Is it accurate to say the pelts would have been folded in half, fur side in, and then put into the screw press to be squeezed into a bale?

—The other point is about the screw press itself. I've assumed the Russian-American Company would have used a press something like Carl F. Russell describes in Firearms, Traps and Tools of the Mountain Men—a big cast-iron version, screwed down by pulls on a lever. Do you know any reason why the Russians might have used something other than this?

I'll of course see to it that you receive a copy of my book when it's published, about a year from now. I'm sorry to bother you about details such as these, but I do want to be accurate as possible.

best regards
Ivan Doig  
17021 - 10th Avenue, N.W.  
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

Your novel sounds like an interesting project and we are glad the Quarterly has been of some assistance.

As to the first question, I don't know if it was customary to fold beaver pelts in half. Ruxton said American trappers folded them "into a square sheet, the fur turned inwards." This seems logical. Since beaver pelts are circular, when folded they would be roughly semicircular and awkward to pack. Ruxton's reference is from ADVENTURES IN MEXICO AND THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS (1847), reprinted by Rio Grande Press 1973.

We have no knowledge of the type of press used at Sitka but know of no reason why they would not use the type with a large steel screw turned by a bar. They did maintain a special building for fur processing and it must have been completely equipped for the job.

Hope this has been useful. We will look forward to receiving a copy of your book.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Hanson, Jr.  
Director
The Museum's exhibits and collections are unique. It is in no sense another museum of the Wild West. Only material intimately concerned with the commerce of the fur trade and the daily lives of traders, trappers and Indians is presented. It is a specialized museum of international importance which offers its visitors a distinctive in-depth treatment of the fur trade.

The Museum maintains a continuous research program on the materials of the fur trade. Its representatives have studied these materials in the United States, Canada, Mexico, England and Continental Europe. Research facilities include an extensive library and microfilm unit.

In 1964 the Museum received a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History "for the development of a broad museum program which combines an outstanding collection and competent scholarship to interpret the story of the fur trade in Western America."

TRADE GOODS: A priceless type collection of trade goods from Colonial times to the twentieth century. . . beads, kettles, knives, vermilion, silverworks, medals, tomahawks, trade cloth, hand-forged traps, Russian and Spanish trade goods, Eskimo trade goods, fine old Rio Grande and Indian blankets and countless other items used as trade items or Indian treaty payments.

WEAPONS: The collection of Northwest guns made for the Indian trade from 1750 to 1900 is the largest and most complete in the world. Other displays include Hawken rifles, Indian trade rifles, bowie knives, and frontier weapons of all types.

FURS: All types of American furs including buffalo robes, beaver, wolf, mink, badger, and the rare sea-otter.

OTHER EXHIBITS: One gallery tells the chronological story of the fur trade from early Colonial days to the present century. Another portrays the lives of the British traders, Spaniards on the Plains in 1800, voyageurs, Mountain Men, the professional buffalo hunters, and typical Plains, Woodland and Desert Indians.

These displays include examples of early costumes, saddles, horse gear and complete outfits of personal equipment.

THE BORDEAUX TRADING POST: The Museum grounds include the site of the trading house and warehouse built on the bank of Bordeaux Creek about 1841. It was an American Fur Company post until 1849 and was then operated as an independent trading post for the Sioux Indians by James Bordeaux until 1872. It was finally occupied by Francis Boucher until August 1876, when a squad of cavalry confiscated illegal ammunition being sold to hostile Indians and Boucher abandoned the post.

The site was excavated in 1955 and the buildings were completely reconstructed on their original foundations after painstaking research among traders' descendants on the Sioux reservation. Here the visitor can see a typical trading house completely outfitted—willow bed, kettles on the hearth, and the store shelves stocked with trade goods.

In 1972 the Bordeaux Trading Post was entered in the National Register of Historic Places.

INDIAN GARDEN: In its customary place near the trading house will be found a growing garden of nearly-extinct Indian crops. This botanical exhibit includes the tiny primitive "Mandan tobacco," an ancient variety of midget corn, and early types of beans, pumpkins and squash obtained years ago from the older Sioux, Mandan, Hidatsa and Omaha Indians.

IDENTIFICATION SERVICE: The staff will make every effort to identify and authenticate objects brought to the Museum, but they are not permitted to make valuations. An appointment should be made if possible.
CONSULTATION: Brief inquiries about the material aspects of the fur trade are welcomed. However, written requests must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Research assistance and consultation services for museums, publishers, artists and others can be made available on a reimbursable basis. Prior arrangements must be made in each specific case with the Museum director.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: The Museum of the Fur Trade is a field project of the Museum Association of the American Frontier, an educational non-profit institution chartered by the State of Nebraska in 1949, and operating under section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. It is supported by gifts, memberships, incidental tourist revenue and assistance through various training and research programs. Gifts to the Association are charitable donations for income tax purposes.

Support is particularly solicited for the Museum’s research program which makes accurate data on fur trade materials available to the public.

The Board of Directors has created the following honorary positions for persons contributing various amounts to the permanent or general funds of the Association:

- Donors contribute $100
- Patrons contribute $500
- Benefactors contribute $1000
- Bequests to the Association offer opportunity for permanent and useful memorials.

The following form may be used:

“I hereby give and bequeath to the Museum Association of the American Frontier, a non-profit corporation in the State of Nebraska,

MEMBERSHIP: Everyone has an opportunity to participate in the Museum’s activities on a membership basis. Dues are $4.00 per calendar year. Members enjoy free visiting privileges and receive THE MUSEUM OF THE FUR TRADE QUARTERLY, a well-illustrated and scholarly publication devoted to the material aspects of the North American Fur Trade.

HOURS: The Museum is regularly open 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. every day from June 1 through Labor Day.

The superintendent lives on the grounds and will open the Museum’s exhibit halls upon request during the closed season. In this way visitors from distant points need not be disappointed in attempting to see the museum at any time of year. However, it is suggested that appointments be made either by writing or by calling 308-432-3843.

ADMISSION (Tax included): Free at all times to members and their spouses and dependent children (does not include guests).

Other adults over 17 - 75 cents; children free with parents, otherwise 15 cents

Organized travel groups of 20 or more, half-price

SCHOOL GROUPS: Free if adequately supervised and appointment is made for visit. Students, teachers and one adult sponsor per each five students admitted free.
Mr. Ivan Doig  
17021 10th Ave. N. W.  
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

Your letter came this morning and with the help of Mr. Harmening of the Forest Service, I will try to answer your questions about Redoubt Lake, as it is called now. He checked out the mileage from Sitka and says it is about 12 miles from here. It is almost directly south from Sitka, as you will see from the map I am enclosing.

As for Russian-American ships going there, he said that they went there to pick up fish, lumber, etc., and that any kind of a boat could go into that bay provided they were careful of the rocks there. When the Russian historians were here in August of 1979, they were taken down there on the Sheldon Jackson boat, which is about 60 feet long, which probably as long as some of the Russian boats.

We had a little snow last week, too, which left us with some ice, but with temperatures up in the high 30's and 40's with rain, we are getting back to normal Sitka weather.

Good luck with the last details on your novel.

Very sincerely yours,

Isabel Miller
1244 Monroe St.
Port Townsend, Wash.
Dec. 2, 1981

Dear Ivan,

Thank you for the opportunity to read a few pages of your new book manuscript. This is somethin new for us and found it extremely interesting. It looks as though the book should be quite exciting and we are looking forward to seeing it.

I took the time to type comments on the pages you sent and address the subjects you mentioned specifically. I also took the liberty of addressing subjects you did not ask about, and added a lot of observations about our own canoe trip from Ketchikan to Port Townsend in the summer of 1979.

Unfortunately, Dee did not have time to sit down and type her comments, but did write a few notes which she handed to me. I immediately mislaid them, so they are not reflected in my typed comments. I have them at hand now.

In the crossing of Dixon Entrance Dee wanted to emphasize the changes in elevation riding the big swells. I agree. Both in Dixon and crossing Queen Charlotte Sound we encountered the big rollers. Of course we could only gauge our relative elevation against the other boat in Dixon, and occasionally they would be on the far side of a crest so it looked as though only their heads were sticking out of the water, then they would disappear completely. Once they disappeared it felt as if we were in a valley. Going through Queen Charlotte Sound we had good visibility and could watch the trees, only a few hundred yards away, disappear and reappear, as though we were riding some amusement park contraption. Dee said she could not reach the water with her paddle when we were going over the crest of a swell, and when there was chop it seemed as though the waves were coming from everywhere at once. It got so noisy going through Dixon that we had to shout to hear each other. She is especially anxious in the Dixon Crossing part that you show how dangerous and how near death these men are.

My own comments follow. If any of them seem unclear, please give me a call and I'll try to explain. Also, thanks for the $50. Dee did not want to accept it, but I am assuming you feel you will get better cooperation by offering payment and will not get the stigma of the "would you look at my manuscript" gang that published authors so often mention. I accept. Any other help we can offer, we offer gratis.

sincerely,

Korte
A few general thoughts:

Canoes have gotten a lot of bad press in the past 50 years from the American Red Cross and many people presume now that a canoe is a toy boat unsafe in any water or weather. They look upon it as part bucking bronco and part sea monster, capable of anything without Warning. A canoe loaded with several hundred pounds of gear in the bottom becomes unbelievably seaworthy because the load becomes ballast that keeps the vessel steady and balanced in almost any water. The only time we have had any trouble with a canoe is when it is empty. They can be treacherous then. When loaded you can almost stand in them (but I don't recommend it).

PP 63-65: As above, the boat will not rock too wildly and won't buck at all if it is loaded, except when loads are being shifted, as in getting in and out. I don't recall that all of the pain went high into my shoulder blades, but it may have, I just don't remember that. I do remember that my legs would get stiff because there were only so many places to put them. You don't say if these men are paddling from seats, thwarts or just their knees. However they were paddling, I can guarantee you their knees and legs ached miserably from being in the same position so long. The darkness sounds fine to me, I really don't know, but there is no mention of the sounds. Novice paddlers will splash a lot, sometimes throw water pm tje back stroke when they accidently catch the tip in the water, and tossing that cold water on your partner's back is guaranteed to bring a complaint, if now an outright howl. The water will make a little ripple sound at the bow, the waves will lap against the sides and the paddles will thunk hollowly against the canoe sides as they paddle, at least occasionally.

P 79: From the water one becomes accustomed to looking for breaks in the trees because it means there is a stream there. The forests are dense, what they were like in the 1850s is beyond me. Logs stick out of the forest, hanging over banks, and many times when they protrude into the tidal area they are clustered over with blue-black mussels.

PP 87 88: Our only encounter with a sealion was at the mouth of the Coie River. The salmon were running and flashing constantly as they leapt out of the water headed for the river. Every 30 to 45 seconds the lion would break the water snorting and crunching the loudly on the bones of a salmon. Seagulls clustered around him in the air, waiting for the leavings I suppose. Dee was charmed, but my thought was that he was big and strong and if he took a notion to see us a threat he could overturn us and we would lose all of our provisions. I would be real nervous if a whole gang of them came alongside to swim with us because I don't know if they are clumsy, near sighted or mean.
Probably the most unique thing about days of paddling was their sameness. With four paddlers I am sure your boys would make better time than we did. We averaged two knots, and going that pace 10 hours per day, you can spot a hillside far ahead and it takes hours for it to get nearer and finally be passed. The paddling takes up a rhythm and you go with that, marking the time in strokes. Although it is wildly beautiful country, at our slow pace all the waterfalls, snags, beautiful vistas took on a sameness that made us wonder how boring it would be to be on a sailboat at sea for days and weeks seeing nothing. How much more boring would it be to have nothing on the horizon when we got tired of the world's most breathtaking scenery? Spotting animals, be they dolphins, sea lions, seals or killer whales was always a high spot because it was out of the ordinary. Watching birds was great, many, many bald eagles live around these waterways, more than you can believe exist. In shallow ways between islands we saw blue herons, sometimes stalking fish from beaches where we were camped. Oyster catchers and puffins were often seen on rocks, isolated from shore with no vegetation but full of birds that flew up in clouds when we approached. Dee landed on one of these rocks to collect feathers and found nestlings huddled terrified in crevices. The whole place smelled to heaven with guano. Sometimes a break would be needed to relieve yourself and we often would beach to do this up in the tree line. Sometimes if I just had to whiz and we didn't need a break we could find a low rock near shore in deep enough water that I could step out and take care of business without beaching the boat. We became acutely aware of the weather, watching the sky for any sign of what would happen, always testing or otherwise aware of the wind direction, always watching the kelp for the direction of the current. Sometimes if no beach beckoned, or we wanted a short break without beaching, we would tie the canoe to the kelp, the big bull kelp, and it would always hold us without drifting away. Paddling inside beds of the kelp, between it and the shore, would provide a breakwater for us if the water was a little lumpy. Sometimes the head winds got so strong that the headway we made was not worth the energy spent, and then we would either tie to kelp and hope the wind would die down or beach it and wait. Eating was the high point of each day. We always knew what we would have to eat, fortunately not the same thing each day, but the same thing every other day, and we looked forward to it as a break from paddling, a chance to sit or stand or walk around and talk without paddling, or worrying about which way to point the nose, or whether the kelp would hold. We also looked forward to it just as a chance to eat, because we were burning up calories at an almost unbelievable rate. At the end of some of the 10 hour days I would hit the beach and be so clumsy that Dee would not trust me to do any chores. We discovered, after a while, that I needed more frequent eating periods. We would cook more than we
needed at lunch and breakfast then snack on the rest while in the boats. Cold greasy pancakes would probably gag me now, but they were wonderful snacks then, especially when we made them with wild blueberries.

PP 84-85: This is pretty much the same no matter if you are taking a Winnegago to the Grand Canyon or a kayak across the Pacific, the chores end up being done by the person who is best at them, and the odds and ends get assigned to the ones who seem to be shirking or have no particular talents. We tended to take turns cooking. We had two couples and each couple would cook alternate days. Within ok our couple one would cook and the other would clean up. I would normally not cook the dinner because I was always exhausted in the evening until after I ate something. I had the back of the canoe, and it would enrage me when Dee would stop paddling to look at something because I had no such option. Usually we were paddling into the wind or the tide and if I stopped paddling we would go backwards. Even if we were not afraid of going backwards, if I stopped paddleling, or at least steering, the nose would go any which way. Dee made up in other ways though, such as in the evening when I was dead. Besides evening chores, there are chores involved in getting the boat loaded and trim for the day's journey. The boats cannot be dragged out of the water loaded because they are so heavy, and if you could pick them up you would take a chance on breaking their backs. This may not be true of a hollowed out canoe, I don't know. You also could not drag it loaded on the beach because all those rocks, and every beach has lots and lots of rocks up there, has hundreds of little (sometimes medium or large) barnacles that are sharp and guaranteed to shred the bottom of a fiberglass or wood canoe. You can only drag over those barnacles so many times before you have done real damage to your boat. These little mothers will cut up your ankles and feet if you fall, and if you throw out your hands to catch yourself they will give you nasty cuts. The rocks that do not have barnacles tend to be slippery with moss, so you do try to walk on the barnacles because it gives traction. Camping is about the same anywhere you do it, but there are some extra problems with camping in tidal zones. Finding a flat space to sleep is easy when the tides are in the low end of their cycle, but when they start coming up to the high end you have some problems because you are caught between the water and the underbrush. You always look on the beach, whether it is sand, small or large rocks to see where the kelp line was left from the last tide. You set up camp above that line or you get washed out at high tide, which happens twice a day so one is always while you are trying to sleep. Without a tide book to tell you what time and how high, it will be rough. One night we could not find a kelp line but we could see grass growing and figured it was ok. It wasn't. It was saltwater grass and the tide was slapping at our toes when we woke
in the middle of the night. Surf noise is something you learn to
listen to, and when it starts getting close it is impossible to sleep.
We would sometimes get up, put a stick into the sand and wait until
we could see clearly that it had turned before going back to sleep.
Sometimes a storm will drive the tide much higher than it would
normally be. That is a real nuisance, and you have to be ready to
break camp for high ground at any time. We always set our canoes
upside down in high spots, clearly much higher than the tide would
ever go, and tie them to a tree or log for good measure. If you lose
your gear you are in trouble. If you lose your boat you are out
of business.

PP 104-111: Crossing Dixon Entrance in a canoe is something no one
would even try to do if they were paying attention to the world
around them. We didn't. We skirted around the edge of it, figuring
it made more sense to stay near land where you could find a beach
for a handheld even if not for a boat. We went from Pogy Bay to
Fox Island in six hours through fog so thick that we could not see
the shore. We stayed close enough to hear the surf pounding the
rocks that make up the shore, but when we actually paddled in close
enough to see the waves not just breaking, but literally shattering
on the rocks, we had to head back out for fear we would be swept
against them ourselves. This for six hours in the fog was no treat.
Add to that the fact that we hit a tide rip off Tree Point (or was it ...
in fact it was Humby Point) that really tried to get us. The
water was confused as hell. We had to keep the nose of the canoe
into or quartered to the chop, but it was coming from all ways at
once, it seemed, and we had to tack and tack again to keep meeting
the legions of chop that were on us. It was worse than terrible.
Waves would curl along the side of the canoe trying to climb in and
snuggle up against my legs. One or two did get in, but usually I
managed to turn the canoe so they wouldn't. I had to watch the
gunwhales while Dee watched ahead and we both paddled like mad. All
of this on top of eight foot to 12 foot swells mind you. That
rip lasted maybe 20 minutes and it was totally exhausting, but we
couldn't stop then because we had to keep going or be carried
by the swells against the rocks. Fortunately we ran into only one
or two small rips after that, but stayed in the big swells and the
fog until we reached Fox Island. Miraculously that is where the
fog bank ended and we came onto a fine, white sand beach with bright
grey rocks. No place ever looked so good to us. Dee said she thought
it looked like Bermuda. We did not have any wind. I don't know
about snow, but you don't normally have wind when you have fog.
Something else that occurs to me. When Dee and I actually started practising our canoeing for the Alaska trip she was quite afraid of the water and whenever we would get into some wind or a rip she would panic. I had to split my energies between paddling and trying to calm her. By the second week of our trip she was feeling quite comfortable with the water and at the end of the trip she was regarding the water as an old, and occasionally treacherous, friend.

Most of our paddling was done close to shore, probably between five and 50 feet. We found that we could catch eddies and currents close in that ran counter to the wind or tide when we needed them and could also relieve our boredom considerably by inspecting the intertidal life on the rocks and in the shallows. Out in deeper water you are too far from the land to see anything other than trees and rocks and you miss the star fish, anemones, eel grass and snails. We were constantly watching the beach and judging it for suitability for camping. Flat clear areas with a sloping beach are at a premium and you don't always find one nearby when you want to stop for the night. Sometimes if we found a particularly good beach with easy access, small rocks and a stream we would stop even if it was only mid-afternoon. Tide fetches up Ketchikan way run to about 26 feet, and if you come in at high tide and leave at low tide it leaves you with a lot of real estate to cross on your way back into the water. We thought there would be no portages on a sea trip like this because you never leave the water, but that is not true. Sometimes if you camp on a particularly long-sloping beach you may have to cross 100 yards of beach or more to get back in the water. Fortunately, on long sloping beaches like that the tide comes in fairly fast. You can get good enough to estimate tides so you set the canoe on the beach, pack the gear, sit in it long enough to smoke a cigarette, and you are water-borne without getting your feet wet. Some beaches drop off steeply, and more than once we have been amazed to see what we thought was a perfect beach drop off into boulders and ankle-wrenching cobbles. Sometimes you have no beach at all and you have to haul everything up a steep bank, and then down a steep bank hoping you won't slip and fall on the moss and hurt yourself. Major hurts, of course, are something you have to carefully guard against when you are three to five days from the nearest doctor. Even minor hurts are a problem and you have to guard against them becoming major.

Back to chores, the leader of our group, Bob Burton, had many outdoor talents, and made Mark Trail look like a sissy in our eyes. Perhaps the most remarkable one was fire building. I swear he could make a blazing fire from wet cardboard and can probably build fires underwater. It was an amazement to all of us throughout the trip. I learned a lot from him, and we learned a lot of things together. One thing we learned is that if there is any kind of long depression across a beach don't pitch your tent there because when it rains it will
turn into a rivulet or a creek.

Kingfishers live in pairs along the water and when you paddle by they will fly by chattering and screaming. Sometimes you will surprise a seal or an otter on the shore and he will flop loudly into the water before you have noticed him. That will surprise you. Flat rocks in tidal areas sometimes lie at exact keel depth. When you try to paddle over one of these you the canoe will stop suddenly rather like hitting a telephone pole at slow speed in a car. Sometimes it will happen more slowly like trying to drive through sand. Either way you have to either rock the boat off or get out and shove it off. I invariably chastised Dee for not doing her job as lookout, but usually the glare off the water made it impossible for her to see such things. She always was able to warn me that we were too close to shore and the water was getting shallow.

You didn't say whether these guys are coming inside Vancouver Island or outside. If outside, it is more ocean than we ever tried to take on. If inside, you can't believe what a hassle it is trying to paddle through Seymour Narrows, even at "slack tide." The damn thing does not act like the rest of the water because almost all of the water behind Vancouver Island tries to rush through there. At that time, in fact any time before 1950, Ripple Rock was at the south end of the narrows and made things worse. Once we got through there we tied up to kelp to smoke cigarettes. We didn't get to finish them because a whirlpool was sucking our kelp bed to the bottom.
Dear Korte—

A first-rate job of help on the Alaska canoeing. It'll aid me immensely, landlubber that I am.

It'll likely be a week yet before I dovetail some of your scenery and lore into the manuscript, and if I have questions, I'll call you then for clarification. Also, I hope to be through Port Townsend maybe about mid-January at the latest, and if I make it will try be in touch then.

Meantime, please assure Dee that the $50, and inclusion in the acknowledgments, is all too little wage for this sort of help. If I was Michener it'd be $500, but I ain't him, in a lot of ways. I think any professional worker with words ought never do a chore of this sort except for money—-I certainly never do—because any writing occupation, if done honestly, almost always is going to be underpaying anyway.

Again, thanks to you both.

p.s. My Swedes did come outside of Vancouver Island; that is, I'm having them do so, as the actual men of 1853 evidently did. How that was possible in winter I don't know, but I'm finessing past those 300 miles or so with a kind of prose-poem section which omits day-by-day details. As you know from your trip, it's a long damn coast, Alaska to here, and I'm having to watch out for telling too much of it.
October 24, 1981

Dear Ivan -

This time your story really came to life for me; the re-writing you did accomplished wonders. I liked the suspense in the first part (before the escape). I kept feeling that any little thing could happen and they would not be able to bring it off. I can feel their frustration when Wennberg caught on to their plans and deplored the necessity for including him. Like Pat, I became charmed after the escape itself, charmed with the natural beauty that you describe so poetically and which I love most about your writing. Your metaphors and similes always delight me; they are fresh and somehow just right ("trusting him a whisker's width," "blandness like a cloud against a cliff-face," etc.).

I think you should know that your book is not one I would pick up and read, and I wonder how many women readers it would appeal to. This isn't a criticism of the subject matter, for of course a writer expresses what he knows and feels and wants to write about, but I would not be attracted to the book were it not written by Ivan Doig. Having said that, I am surprised that I like the book as much as I genuinely do - and without characters I can empathize with. After all, I wouldn't want to know any of the four characters, but I do want to know what happens to each one of them. I am terribly distressed over the way this half ends; haven't you killed off your best character?

A few things bother me a bit, so I'll try to explain what they are. I know you have a good reason for what seems to be a shifting point of view, but I am bothered when I find a switch to the second person (you) and (to a lesser degree) to the use of the historical present, though I must admit that it does make for immediacy.

The story as a whole does indeed hold my attention all the way and makes me want to read the rest of it - even without Melander.

Thank you for giving me the privilege of this sample of your next successful book!

Sincerely,

Margaret (Svec)
San Francisco, December 10, 1981.

encls.

Mr. Ivan Doig
17021 Tenth Avenue N.W.
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

Thank you for your letter of November 24.

Unfortunately we do not have any information in English on Slite. An Entry in the Swedish encyclopaedia "Svensk Uppslagsbok" mentions the following: Slite is a community of a little more than 2000 inhabitants on the east coast of Gotland at the Slite Bay. It has an excellent harbour and was early one of Gotland's most important ones. Since 1917 Slite has a cement factory which employs ca. 300 employees. The harbour has a 300 yard long pier, there is a customs station and an ocean beach. Othem's Church is gothic from the thirteenth century. Lake Bogeviken south west of Slite is separated from the ocean by only a seawall, through which 7 canals are dug, called "Sju Strömmar" (Seven Streams), which used to be the site of extensive fishing. Nothing is said of what species of fish was harvested.

For your background information about Gotland I am pleased to enclose an article by Michael Salzer: Gotland and Öland, Island Paradises in the Baltic, a map, and a travel folder. If you need more information I suggest that you write to the Tourist bureau on Gotland:

Gotlands Turistförening
Box 81
621 01 Visby (Sweden).

Sincerely yours,

Ulla Wikander Reilly
4 January 1981

Ulla Wikander Reilly
Swedish Information Service

Thank you for your prompt and helpful response to my inquiry about Gotland and Slite. As you suggested, I've written to the tourist office at Visby for further information.

cordially

Ulla Wikander Reilly

---

collected footer information: Finland
Recently I wrote to the Swedish Information Service in San Francisco for information about the community of Slite, and that office suggested I write to you for further information. I'd especially appreciate any brochures or other material which include pictures of Slite and its harbor, and anything about the history of Slite.

One particular interest to me is the fishing site at Slite, as mentioned in this information sent me by the Swedish Information Service: "Lake Bogeviken south west of Slite is separated from the ocean by only a seawall, through which 7 canals are dug, called 'Sju Strommar' (Seven Streams), which used to be the site of extensive fishing." Can you tell me how far back into history the "Sju Strommar" date, and what the principal species of fish harvested there were? Again, any photos of the site would be especially welcome.

Many thanks.

[Signature]
October 23, 1981

Dear Ivan,

You ask if the story "holds your attention all the way". After page 50—Yes, I loved it and was sorry to have it end with 127. Your skill with Northwest scenery is superb. For instance, my favorite on pages 112-14 I don't think could be surpassed. I could go on and on with compliments. The dialogue is lively, often amusing, pushes the plot on and reveals character as well. The action is very skillfully done.

But the first 50 pages, though now vastly improved, still give me much frustration. You had caught my attention effectively at the very start with the escape at sea. But I wanted then to feel for the men (at least as a group) and feel real urgency for the escape. I would have welcomed at some point some direct anecdotes of Russian oppression exposing the men's characters and their strong personal motives to get out. I stayed closely with these 50 pages because, of course, they have interest and fine writing but I did miss knowing just what was so awful at New Archangel that a man would risk his very life to leave it.

I wanted to see a map very much all the way through. But this is more of a compliment than a critical comment.

And now lastly one comment for the Pick-Pick Department. Why do you call The Governor Rosenberg? It is a German surname and Place name since @1200. A few Swedes have it. Lots of Jews have it for they adopted it @1800 when they were forced by census law to take surnames. But the name does not seem at all Russian to me and I kept wondering about it in a distracted, irritated, puzzlement.

Thank you for showing me the ms. I hope I can see more when it is available because I really like it. I can smell another success for you.

Love to Carol too,

Pat (Armstrong)
Ivan

You have a good story here and for what they are worth I will make a few comments. I had some trouble finding the tone in the first few pages but after getting used to the style it does become easier. And I was confused by the beginning in medias res, but that also from being uncomfortable with the beginning style.

Your research on Alaska, its flora, fauna, geography, weather is excellent. There are no pines big enough though, to serve as ship masts, they are all scrubby bull pine, and there is so little fir it's not worth mentioning, what there is is at the extreme southern tip. The forests are a mixture of spruce, cedar, both yellow and red, and hemlock. The variety of trees growing in very close proximity makes for an interesting color combination, especially along shores where they are mixed with alder and crab apple, the only deciduous trees, also especially colorful during hours of sunrise and sunset. The cedar are a yellowish green compared to the hemlock and the spruce are the deep forest green. Except in winter when they can appear silver in certain light. I also made note of the "deer cabbage" which is called skunk cabbage because of its smell in the spring. And it only grows in boggy places, not on the mountain slopes. What turns yellow and brown up there are grasses. Watching the mountain slopes was always a kind of calendar for me. About Halloween the first snow usually appears on them, in spring they almost magically green over night, and in the fall I can tell frost at sea level is not far off when the slopes turn golden.

Dog fish, or mud sharks as we often call them, are not caught in the winter. An equally, even more unattractive fish would be the rock cod, closely related to the red snapper, but living in
shallower water, easier to catch, and a mottled yellow-brown in color. Very spiny and dangerous looking, excellent eating.

The ducks, as I mentioned are not out of season as there are several varieties that remain the year around to feast on small herring that congregate in bays, coves and inlets, especially toward the southern extreme where the danger of these places freezing over is minimal. Grebes, loons and mergansers are the most common and they don't mind spending the winter together as a society.

It might be mentioned that the Indian canoes are always constructed of red cedar, rather than yellow, and that the difficulty in locating just the right tree could often encompass several years of searching. Therefore, the rock through the hull of the native canoe destroyed something not easily replaceable.

I will question the name of the Sitkan governor, because it sounds so German Jewish, but I don't know, I assume you also researched that.

Also mentioned were the totems happened upon by the voyagers, but they had to have become familiar with totems long before in Sitka.

Also made some note of the color of the beaches, the only white beaches I have ever seen in Alaska are around Kodiak, and they are a result of volcanic explosions, the rest are black, also sand itself is uncommon, mostly gravel and boulder. Nor would I have the men sleeping on the beach, the tides reach right up under the trees, I'd put them a little beyond the shore. Fires are built on the beach, then left for the night when it's time to turn in. Also, the extreme range of the tides would sometimes make it difficult for them to even land the canoe, and they would have to pull it into the trees at night.

When they left Sitka in Jan. it was getting dark around four
in the afternoon and not getting light enough to see again until
at least nine in the morning. For them to paddle twenty five miles
in a twenty foot cedar canoe, two of the men with no experience,
against a head wind would be a feat to be sure. I have paddled
ten in four hours in a light 16-foot aluminum with another woman,
both of us experienced, against a ten mile an hour breeze, and it
is a job.

The journey moves quickly and very smoothly, important for
the length of it. Are you sure though that it is only a thousand
miles, it's almost seven hundred from Ketchikan to Seattle. You
have made the trip so far without either too much hardship not too
little. It could be harder, but not necessarily. It is not uncommon
for the weather to get cold enough to freeze bays and inlets, but
doesn't happen every year. And on the outside coast, I have seen
it blow 100 miles an hour in the winter, usually once or twice
a year.

Once I caught the style, I liked it. And I like your descriptions
of the land, a difficult land to describe without becoming either
sugary or high-toned.

I am eager to see the finished product - and what a place to
leave me hanging! I am thoroughly caught up in the characters and
their growing relationships and interactions - curious, to say the
least, as to how they fare together the rest of the journey.

I read it through twice, though, and compliment you on your
research and knowledge of S.E. The feel is good.

Diane

A further note: it wouldn't be at all unusual for them to
see numbers of black-tail deer on the beaches in winter -
easy hunting for hungry men.
Ivan:

As you requested, verbs (and auxiliaries) are underlined in red. It, it's, and its are circled in blue. I read the ms twice, and the second time took the liberty of putting a few pencil marks in the left margins at the site of comment to avoid having to write page X, line X, and so on here. I hope you don't mind.

Of the whole ms: I like it very much. The first reading (I should tell you that I was underlining/circling as I put one eye to the story, hoping I'd catch omissions & mistakes the second time) struck me as deliberate—almost slow—but the pacing led evenly from one step to another, rising as it went. People who demand a lot of action right now may not like your approach, but I do. Once I learned how to read the ms, I let it do the work: I had continual trouble, however, with the shifts of verb tense (I rather dislike the present, which feels day-glo or unnecessarily emphatic). I tried to find a pattern which made sense. I guess I wanted to drop the whole thing into the simple past as the level from which imperfect, perfect, and pluperfect would unfold; I wanted to drop any "you" or "we" or "our" which pulls the narrative line apart. I don't think the casual "you" works as well in fiction as in non-fiction, at least not usually, although two or three times your use of it was elegant (the constellation of fires down the coast, for one). But, back to verbs: I couldn't seem to sift apart the flashbacks, narrative, and aside into consistent usage—perhaps I just never picked up the right clue, but I did become tired trying. You prefer many more passive constructions than I do, many more sentences beginning with the dependent clauses, and also verb forms with auxiliary "had" or "was," which I always tend to want to simplify (avoiding the repetition of had/was, the sing-song of participles). One thing I liked a good deal was the variety of your verbs, which I noticed in the other two books: a real joy for the push and pull of sound—on that note, maybe a little more onomatopoeia? Keesey's Great Notion taught me how alive the prose is when the writer lets me hear. In one place, where a bullet "blooped," the sound was feeble or I wasn't sure it was really a verb (that may not matter), so I questioned it. Again about verbs: your historical/geographical information provided in the present tense (e.g., 105) only emphasized (to me) the fact that you are passing on information, but not getting the story forward. There is so much assurance in your research and narrative, that I wanted to see such information woven in as thoughts or dialogue or Melander musing/worrying a map, &c, rather than the more history-book approach of setting aside a page/block of information that broke up the flow (the shift of tenses intensifies my feeling, as noted). The front end has a lot of narrative... I wanted scenes more quickly: you hooked me right in, hard, when Braaf gets caught. I very much like the banter and humor here, which rings of another age. On the first reading, I felt a lack of tension; on the second reading, I didn't: I read with much more care the second time, and would trust that feeling more. You give a good visual sense of 1851/2, but I guess I would like you to pull me across the time distance more, to make my senses aroused—more smell, smoke, cold, wetness, mud, ice, fog, the slight warmth of winter sun—things definitely tickling my nose and skin, fingers and ears.
Picky things: I guess I would prefer that the book started with an honest-to-God whole sentence. Page 4: Melander and the Emperor Nicholas I: I was surprised Melander admired a steamship, did not understand quite why. Although you gave me more on that later, it did not seem quite a reason—lousy captain aside—to stay. Disliked making colors into adverbs (i.e., whately, grayly). Adverbs: maybe a little overdone, esp with dialogue which is clear and strong without the clues. Braaf is a wonderful character. Melander, too. Wennerberg is genuinely dislikeable. Karlsson, like his bland character, fades into the background. I like the fluctuation of humor and temper among the men.

The opening: good blend of fact into storytelling. Totem pole scene: conveys original surprise of such a find well. Your authority with details comes through quietly and with force, which I like. E.g., 115, experience of the wilderness, dancing with drops from the trees. I was shocked at Melander's death (I forgot you told me som eone would die early on): that seems to be a problem with "first-page information": it's forgotten. Also saddened, so you made him matter. You've planted a whole of a narrative hook, because now I wonder what on earth those other three will do from there—when do I find out?

As to your note-card questions: Yes, the story holds me. Once the men escape, I thought technically (not seeing quite how the whole will fit) that going into the Kolosh chief's thoughts, back to the Russian governor with his hangover, took me away from where I wanted to be. I liked the four men wondering whether a ship was coming after them, didn't so much care (or perhaps could imagine) the scene in New Archangel. On a purely what-if level, it seems to me that there would be more suspense and tension if we had not gone back to NA, if we wondered and feared the coming of a ship or canoes... Melander always listened fore, port, and starboard for ships, aft for Russians and Indians.

Any unbelievable points: no. I'm a pretty willing reader. You establish Braaf as a prime stickyfinger and I'll believe he can lift all those things; you give Melander a good headful of sense, so I trust him. I get no picture of the Russians or miserable aspect of New Archangel (freedom being an elusive vision): I'm told they're this way and that, but lacking a scene/s at the mill or smelting or fish-salting factory, some direct crumbly, some direct picture of crummy food or cold barracks or more that makes life there Deathly dull, I have to take the narrator/men's word for it. From the 20th c. vantage, knowing 19th c. men were hyped, it is still a bit hard to believe men would end up out there: I guess I'd like a bit more about such stories of going off and making a fortune, escaping the law, tales told and pamphletful of promises.

That there kind of takes care of "what more": less: as noted, less historifying perhaps unless it's converted to thought or dialogue, the telling of the tale in some way other than clumps.

Prose: delicate and lively and well controlled: yours. Not many writers write your kind of prose. I like it very much. Once or twice I made a notation on the ms—something like "ark" being too heavy—but 99% reads well. The voice is distant; I like to be drawn in a bit more, but you are consistent now. I think it's fine.

Thank you for the opportunity to read this half of the book. I look forward to the whole thing, between hardcovers.
Diane Zirk
- Cedar - silver
- canoe - how far can travel in a night?
- Diane: 15-20 mi 1 mo day: for, wind in peace,
- 10 D in oxen entrance too
- canoe paddles, salt spray make hands raw,
- blisters (between thumb & index finger)
- M. toughen hands beforehand?
- muscles tear in, do get sore again
- effect in shoulder blade; switch paddle most to side to rest one shoulder
- stern canoeist, steerer
- Katchikan: Nathan Jackson (Diane has nodded)
- winter canoeist; not fine o canoeing
- won't be working hardest at first
- paddle has to turn in hand to steer, each stroke; strongest paddler shot steer; B&W as cookies might be in middle.
- felt. rock cool; cd weigh 7-8#
- grave tombs not all that tall
- 3 times winter, 80 mph, hi winds often a tide change; rising tide, rising wind.
- SE winds - W or NW winds in real cold weather
- cd get well up for a ride or so
- weather aloes as they come south
- seasick earlier on
- hypothermia & exhaustion instead of starvation
Dear Ivan,

A loft in the smithy or in the joiners shop would be a good place also. I like the idea of the loft as a place to hide the provisions.

Depending on the year, there were storage hulks beached around the base of "the hill" and in the area of the park in front of the P.O. The edge of one of these hulks would be an alternative possibility. A key would be necessary for access. The "open door" policy of our west did not extend to Novo Arkangel. Well has dumped a lot of dollars on the Bishop's house. It will finish the project, but I fear for the minute particulars.

Looking forward to your novel, have engaged Winton Brothers.

Best wishes,

Jane

May be leaving the Park Service, note home address. If I can be of any further help let me know.
Dear Gene--

Thanks immensely for the prompt response. And I'm glad my loft idea sounds reasonable to you. You did me the added favor, in suggesting the bilge of one of the hulks, of confirming another of my pilot turns. I have my Swedes originally using one of the hulks for their cache, being discovered by someone who threatens to turn them in, then having to switch everything to another hidey-hole, i.e. the smithy loft. But I hadn't thought of the need for a key to get into the hulk, so will have to try do something about that, now.

I'm glad to hear the bishop's house is coming along, less glad to hear you may be going from the Park Service. It's really a blighted time for anyone trying to do public service; my wife is a community college prof down here, and this state seems truly on the financial skids.

However it turns out for you, my best wishes. I'll pass along a copy of The Sea Runners when it's published next fall.
January 21, 1982

Dear Mr. Doig,

Further to our little conversation yesterday I wanted to call you with a further suggestion of a "haunting" dessert. Although the "sötgröt" with plenty of cinnamon and sugar and even a dab of melting butter in a hollow on the top would certainly qualify as the object of hallucinations, our Swede from Nordmark parish (in the province of Värmland) might also dream about "myltgröt," a kind of compote made from cloudberries and sugar and a traditional dessert in the more northern regions of Sweden. This would probably make more sense if the onesided diet of salted fish has resulted in a vitamin deficiency and a craving for these berries which are very rich in vitamin C. The very name of the dish has a somewhat oldfashioned, homey and provincial ring to it.

The reason I am writing this is that I seem to have lost your phone number (maybe I wrote it down on the piece of paper I then gave to you). Thanks to the only Doig listing in the phone book I managed to get your address. I also wanted to mention that a graduate student of mine from the department of Comparative Literature was in my office today. He became very enthusiastic when he saw your Montana book which you so kindly gave me and extolled it "to the sky." This Thomas Mengert from Tacoma is a very fine and extremely intelligent student. I promised to find out whether you would permit him to contact you. If you have no objections, would you please let me have your phone number again to pass on to him? Personally, I'm very much looking forward to reading your book.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Note: Handwritten note: For else, here’s his number: (1) 584-0994]
20 January, 1982

Dear Mr. Doig:

The plants are still pretty dormant early in March. Salmonberry and blueberry buds are beginning to swell. Last year was very unusual and the blueberries were blooming in February. Someone mentioned that the skunk cabbage might begin to poke its nose (rolled leaves) up early in March, but I haven't taken notice of this.

Blueberries, huckleberries and salmonberries all are blooming in April. Hope this information helps.

Sincerely,

Mary Muller

Hello Don -

Guess we can't help much on this one.

Dan
Dear Gene--

This is partly an overdue thanks, for pitching in with the Mullers to help me be accurate about New Archangel lumber and the wood used by the shipwrights. Also for the Blake quote; I've found in the last year and a half that New Archangel's history is indeed an infinity of particulars to be minutely organized.

One of those particulars is my other reason for writing. I'm doing the checking on the manuscript, trying to verify the details of New Archangel and its life which make up the first third of my novel. One perplexity of my plot has been where my four characters could hide all the provisions for their escape. What came to mind was something I remembered from the blacksmith shops and machine sheds of the Montana ranches I grew up on, boards placed across the rafters to make an impromptu loft; anything that went up there generally was forgotten for years. So I guessed that there might have been something of that order in the New Archangel blacksmith shop. I'd much appreciate it if you'd tell me whether this descriptive paragraph is too far-fetched, and if it is, whether there's some other detail of New Archangel buildings which might provide a plausible hiding place for a cancelload of provisions:

"The sill loft was a narrow platform, like a span of board ceiling, laid across the center of the rafters of the smithing shop. Wood to make windowsills and doorframes was stowed there winter-long in the heat rising from the forges, to forestall warp or shrinkage; until the summer building season came, no one paid the loft any mind."

I hope things are going well with you. I watch with apprehension the trend in government funding, these days—away from bishop's houses to missiles.

best regards
Dear Miss Miller—

Going over my novel for a final time before shipping it to the publisher at the end of this month, I've tripped over what I hope is the last nit-picking question of detail. I have in my manuscript an offhand reference to the R-A Company steamship paying a visit to the Ozherokoi redoubt "eighteen miles" from New Archangel, but can't find in my files the source for that. First of all, am I right that the steamship could have gone to Ozherokoi? (I don't have access here at home to maps with enough detail to show me.) Second, if it could, is that distance right? I find on p. 156 of Tikhmenyev's history a reference to Ozherokoi being "thirty versts" from Sitka—which would be twenty miles—and then on p. 122 "fifteen versts", which would be ten miles. Finally, would be redoubt be best described as southeast from New Archangel, or south?

We've had a couple of inches of snow here this week, and Seattle gets paralyzed when that happens. I've huddled in at home and kept at work.

best regards
Dear Don and Mary—

A quick progress report on the novel, and one more—I hope the last—question of detail.

I met with Tom Stewart, the Atheneum editor-in-chief, just before Christmas, and he said he'd like to bring out the book (did I ever tell you it'll be called The Sea Runners?) as early as possible in the fall, so it can gather reviews. My hope is that it'll translate to early September. Coincidentally, HBJ will bring out the Harvest paperback of Winter Brothers at about the same time. Stewart since has read my manuscript and proclaims to like it immensely; I'm now doing my final touching-up of it, which should be finished by Feb. 1. If I possibly can, I'll get a bound galley to you so you can see what this thing has turned out to be.

Mary, I have a paragraph late in the book saying my Swedes have come down from the northern winter into not-winter, and talk a bit there about signs of spring along the coast. The time by then is early March. Is there a Sitka sign of spring, that early, that I could include in this overview—salmonberry starting to bud, certain geese or ducks back from the south (I'd love to use hummingbirds, but I guess they're not till later?), anything that comes to mind to Sitkans as a first hint of spring? If there's nothing that early, that's okay too—I just don't want to miss a bet if there is some notable harbinger.

We've had about two inches of snow here this week, and Seattle has been either stopped dead in its tracks or badly lurching. I've sat home quietly writing.

all best
Dear Korte and Dee--

Thanks for agreeing to look this over for me. I'm no canoeist myself, so anything you can offer will be a bonus to me. I've had these pieces of manuscript read by a couple of other people who've canoed in Alaskan waters, but nobody who has made a voyage of the distance you did.

My book is a fictional version of an actual incident in the winter of 1852-3: four Swedes ran away from their indenturement to the Russians at Sitka, by stealing a canoe and heading south. About six weeks later, the three who survived were found, in rough shape, at Willapa Bay by James Swan's oystering buddies.

So: if you'd look over these me chunks and see if I have anything inaccurate or inadequate, that'd help. Then if you've any impressions to add, from your own trip, I'd be glad to hear them: what the campsites were like, wide beach or not, or any beach at all, for instance; what was hardest about the trip, what was best, that sort of thing.

A bit of a guide to what's going on in the ms pieces, and my particular concern in each:

pp. 63-65—They're escaping from Sitka the night after Christmas, 1853 (Russian calendar, that is; January 7). Is the description of the canoe's motion plausible, and the feel of the darkness and peril of water believable?

p. 79—does this convey the relentless forest along the shore? I came down the route, but aboard the U. of Alaska oceanography ship, not a canoe, and so could use any water-level observations you might have.

pp. 81-5—Here I'm trying to show some of the problems of sorting out chores. Anything out of your own experience recommend itself here?

pp. 87-8—Here I'm trying for some sensation of the paddling days. Again, the details are from my shipboard passage, and I'd be glad to have any others.

pp. 104-111—This is their crossing of Dixon Entrance (Kaigani Strait on the Russian map they had). It's meant to be dramatic, even somewhat melodramatic; let me know if it sounds reasonable to you, hmm?

Sorry I haven't been able to get over and talk to you about this; have been tied to the typewriter. If you could manage to get your comments to me by Dec. 7, that'd help a lot.

again, thanks.
November 21, 1981

Swedish Information Service
1960 Jackson
San Francisco, California

I'm at work on a novel about four men from Sweden who were indentured to the Russian-American Company in Alaska in the early 1850's, and I wonder if you could provide me whatever travel and/or historical information you have about Gotland, as an aid to me as background for one of my characters. I'd particularly appreciate anything about the community of Slite. One specific question: has Slite historically been a fishing community, and if so, what species of fish has been the most important commercial harvest?

Cordially,

[Signature]
Dear Mrs. Shalkop—

My deep thanks, both for your own helpful letter and for referring me to Mr. Petrov, who has been of great aid to me on my questions about New Archangel Christmas. It's a small enough token, but I would like you to have the enclosed copy of my first book.

With Mr. Petrov's help, I think now I can fashion a reasonable version of the New Archangel holiday season in 1853—Christmas Eve a solemn day, Christmas Day with religious observance in the morning and the Russian men making their visits to one another in the afternoon, then on the next night a celebration at the Governor's house (from the accounts of visitors to New Archangel in this era, it seems there would likely have been a holiday gathering of some sort).

The one other church matter I'll be mentioning in my novel will be a brief reference by one of my characters who'll wonder aloud if the story is true that the finger of a martyr was buried beneath St. Michael's. Another man answers that he doubts it, how would the finger have found its way to New Archangel? (Since my characters are indentured Swedes, they are not greatly respectful of the Russians and St. Michael's.) If you can suggest anything I ought to add to or subtract from that tale, which I came across somewhere in my research, I'd be glad to hear of it. But as I say, it will be a passing reference, and the help of you and Mr. Petrov on the holiday observances has been the major aid.

best regards

[Signature]
Mr. Ivan Doig  
17021 ---10th Avenue N. W.  
Seattle, Washington  
98177  

Dear Mr. Doig:

I have your letter of October 18.

It is very kind of Isabel Miller and Phyllis DeMuth to give me credit for a knowledge of Russian Orthodox customs. I will tell you what I can, but the documents I work with do not give details on the behaviour of people that was customary.

First of all let me give you the facts I know. On the subject of "pure Tuesday" there are two possibilities:

"Velikii Vtornik" Great Tuesday, which the Tuesday before Easter and "Svetlyi"Vtornik" which is the first Tuesday after Easter. "Svetlyi" means sacred (literally 'light') and I suspect that "Pure Tuesday" is this Tuesday.

Yes, according to new style, it would have been January 6. To the Russians, of course, it would have been December 25 and the Christmas celebrations would have been held the next day on the 26th. As a rule, religious services and celebrations always came before any other occupations and feasts. The Governor and the officers would have behaved in the most solemn manner so as to set an example to the lower ranks.

For more details and accuracy I would like to refer you to a well known Russian writer, Victor P. Petrov, who has written many short stories, novels and historical studies in Russian language on the subject of Russian America. Mr. Petrov also is very well acquainted with Russian religious customs and would be able to tell precisely how Christmas would have been celebrated in Sitka during the Russian days. I suggest to you that you write to him; you will find him helpful and his advice would be most valuable because it will be authentic and accurate. I, personally, would have to borrow information in various sources and could give you an unsatisfactory description. And I think that it is important that you give a truthful picture in your novel.

I am also writing to Mr. Petrov, myself, and telling him about your inquiries; thus, if you write to him, he will not be surprised.

I hope that you will be able to find the information you need; and, I will be happy to help you with anything I know now.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Antoinette

October 20, 1981  
Antoinette Shalkop  
4980 Castle Court  
Anchorage, Alaska 99504  
(907) 337-2648

Mr. Petrov's address:

Mr. Victor P. Petrov  
8919 Battery Road  
Alexandria, Virginia  
22308  
(703) 780-2071
Dear Mrs. Shalkop——

For the past year and half I've been at work on a novel which begins at New Archangel in the winter of 1852-53, and am now at the point where I can take the advice of Isabel Miller at the Sitka Historical Society and Phyllis DeMuth at the Alaska Historical Library, to see whether you can clarify a few historical details about St. Michael's Cathedral.

—One scene I've written is to occur on the night of Russian Christmas. Am I correct that the date of that in 1853 would have been Jan. 6? Also, would the church bells have resounded at specific times that night—that is, at any certain hours in accordance with a schedule of worship?

—Would there have been a celebration—a banquet, music, dancing—that night at the governor's house, "Baranov's Castle," or would the Russian officials have spent the late-evening hours in church?

I'm sorry to have to bother you on such details, but Isabel and Phyllis tell me that from your research you're the most likely person to have answers, and I do want to be accurate. I might explain that my novel involves Swedes who were indentured to the Russian-American Company, so the Russian Orthodox life of New Archangel hasn't made itself as evident in my research as I might wish. I hope your own endeavors have been going well.

many regards

p.s. While I'm writing; I've come across a reference to "Fure Tuesday"; at what point in the Russian Orthodox holy season does that occur?
18 Oct. '81

Dear Bill—

I've hit a point in my Sitka manuscript where I have to begin asking people who really know about things how much I've mucked up my version of those matters. So, if you'd be game to look over these few pages for me...

They're from the part of the book where my Swedes have got out of New Archangel and are about to begin their long stint of paddling toward Astoria, and I'm trying to show—particularly to non-Western readers who think Alaska and Seattle are next-door to each other—the magnitude of water and weather they face. So it's to be a rather rhetorical section, but I also want not to make dumb mistakes that I'll leap out at anyone who knows, say, the oceanography or meteorology. Please tell me any problems you spot in this, hmm? I guess I'm particularly concerned about the Japanese Current stuff I have in there. The notion of Kuroshio coming all those miles is seductive to a writer, but can I get by with saying Kuroshio curls north and collides with Gulf of Alaska colder water, or ought I to call that the Alaska Current? I wanted not to introduce one more oceanographic phenomenon if I can get away with it, but the more important thing is to be accurate.

One more bit of help out of your expertise, if you will. Later in the book—it'll be roughly late-February or early March by calendar time—I'll have a section about the canoe men having passed from winter into beginnings of spring, as they've come south. One of those spring beginnings I'd like to have would be the first breakings, crackings, whatever, of the Alaskan and BC rivers starting toward break-up, some months ahead. Again, am I accurate in that—can get by with saying something like, "within the white (gray?) rivers, currents have just begun to pry at their winter roofs of ice"? If so, can you suggest a half-dozen or so rivers I might name, in a kind of tone-poem—Yukon and Stikine and something and something, that sort of thing?

Well, that's the business part. The pleasure part is, will the Reeburgs be coming to town, pre-Christmas or any other time? We thought we'd pass the word that our house will be available Dec. 20-26—we're going to NY and NJ, for the sake of both this book and holidaying with Carol's folks—if you'd be happening through here any time then. If you're coming earlier, please consider this place home for a couple of days; it ain't the U Tower, but we do have beds. I should be out of the real work on this manuscript by early December—even if I'm not, I'm usually just glazed from about 7 till 5, more or less human by suppertime and evening—and Carol is done with exams by Dec. 10. So, come if you can. Carol and I have had a couple of Sunday lunches at Ivan's recently, practicing up for you.

all best
26 October 1981

Dear Ivan,

I received your letter last week and am sorry to have taken this long to reply. I'm glad to hear your Sitka manuscript is moving along.

I've gone over the few pages you sent and took the liberty of bouncing them off of Tom Royer, who made a few comments about currents and weather and suggested enclosing the map. The main thing is that the wind and current were against your Swedes, which makes their feat all the more remarkable.

You had some questions about rivers. "Prying at their roofs of ice" is accurate—rivers don't often freeze solid and there is some water moving under the ice during the dead of winter. The distinctive thing about glacially-fed rivers is how opaque they are—milky brown usually. They usually clear up in the winter when the glaciers slow down. Breakup isn't as spectacular in Southeast as it is in the interior of Alaska. Rivers and lakes are usually about the last thing to melt here— the river ice is sort of lifted up and floated away. In Southeast my impression is that breakup is the point where precipitation changes from solid to liquid.

There are relatively few large rivers in Southeast Alaska, The Taku, the Stikine, its tributary the Tanzilla, the Unuk, the Skeena and the Fraser. If you want to get out of your story area, there is the Alsek, the Copper, the Susitna, and in Bristol Bay, the Kvichak, the Nushagak, the Kuskokwim, and on around to the Yukon and its tributaries. Many of the interior Canadian rivers seem to be named after people who probably post-date your Swedes.

Williwaws, which are katabatic winds or density flows from cold snowfields that roar (sometimes in excess of 100 mph) down valleys, often have local names. I recall hearing them called Taku or Taku winds around Juneau.

Carelyn, Nancy, Peter and I were on the East coast this summer and we bought a Dasher wagon and drove it back in August. I was at sea in the Aleutians for most of September. Scott completed his pilot's license last spring and worked in the Brooks Range again last summer. I'm trying hard to stay at home, so it doesn't look like I'll be through Seattle until February or April. I'm timing the ski races in the Arctic Winter Games and have been involved in all kinds of USSA stuff this Fall. Peter joined Cubs, so Carelyn and I are back into that.

We're starting to go through college catalogs now. Scott is interested in engineering and it seems like he's interested in Colorado or Colorado State. As a result of the trip this summer, Nancy has decided it's either Northwestern or Wisconsin. Pete is still fired up about astronomy, but we haven't had a good clear night in an age and haven't used the telescope much.

Best regards,

Bill
Dear Bill—

Thanks for the prompt look-over of the ms pages. I'll tidy it in the directions you and Tom indicated.

When Carol and I went to vote last night, Ie and behold one of the election judges was Carolyn Cannon (?)—do I have that name quite right, wife of oceangrapher Glen? Talked for a few minutes, she volunteered the info that she much enjoyed showing Barbara's kids around Seattle.

Hope we'll see you soon after the New Year, if you make it through town.

All best,

4 Nov. '61
The Alaska Current brings relatively warm water northward. It apparently is a very broad and fairly slow moving flow. It does supply enormous amounts of heat to the overlying atmosphere, which creates intense storm systems over the Gulf of Alaska. These storms which feed on the warm water are contained within the borders of the Gulf of Alaska by very high coastal mountains. Thus, storms which move across the North Pacific stagnate in the Gulf of Alaska. They either die there after intensifying or occasionally move southward along the S.E. Alaska coast to the Pacific Northwest. Regardless of their movement, they will be manifested by northward (southerly) winds in S.E. Alaska.
smell of yellow cedar near shipyds - aromatic

(white)

-suggested by Feme Currie

Don Muller's wife
they became three.

In the galaxy of frontier enclaves sparked into creation by imperialism, New Archangel was a mapdot unlike any other. Simultaneously a far-north backwater port and capital of a territory greater than France and Spain and England and Ireland together, the settlement ran on Russian capacities for hard labor and doggedness, and was kept from running any better than it did by Russian penchant for muddle and infighting. New Archangel here fifty years after its founding still stood forth in the image of its progenitor, the stumpy and tenacious Aleksandr Andreevich Baranov, first governor of Russian America and contriver of the Russian-American Company's system of fur-gathering. Historians exclaim of Baranov, like Napoleon, that he was a little great man, for Baranov it was who in 1791 began to stretch Russian strength from the Aleutian chain of atolls down the great arc of Alaska's coast, bending or breaking the native cultures along the route one after another: Aleuts chastened into becoming the Russians' seasonal hunters of seals and sea otters, people of the Kenai cajoled into allegiance by Baranov's mating with the daughter of the foremost chief, stubbornly combative Tlingits—whom the Russians dubbed Kolosh—at last in 1804 dislodged from Sitka Sound by the cannonades of one of the Tsar's gunships.

Baranov had true need of Sitka. The most sizable and best-sheltered harbor indenting the archipelagic shoreline of southeastern Alaska, Sitka Sound represented the maritime ringhold into which Russian influence could be firmly knotted. Along virtually all of that stupendous Alaskan
coast the mountains drop sheer to the Pacific, spruce slopes like green avalanches into the seawater. But at Sitka the deep notch of bay is sided by a handy shelf of shore. And a further grudging bequest of topography, at the shore's southmost hook a knoll of rock some forty feet in elevation and four times as broad pokes up like a helmet. Amid the coastline of shoulder to shoulder mountains, this single odd granite callus is the strategic bayside point: the Kolosh employed the mound as their stronghold and Baranov seized the commanding perch for his own thicklogged bastion.

In this summer of 1852, the estimable Aleksandr Andreevich three decades dead, a double-storied governor's house still called Baranov's Castle squats there in the air at the mound-end of New Archangel's single street. At the opposite extent rises the onion dome and carrot spire of the comely little Russian Orthodox cathedral. Betwixt and around, the habitations of New Archangel amount to two hundred or so squared-log buildings, many painted a pale yellow as though they were seaside cottages. Their rooflines are hipped, slanting down in all four directions from the ridgepole; where gables have been fashioned in, they are windowed with small spoked semicircles of glass, like half-suns which never manage either to set or to rise. A burly-looking low-slung town, New Archangel is, beneath the lording styles of cathedral and Castle.

One aspect further, and this one the startling oddity. This port of Russian America has a larger fleet of ships permanently afloat than are usually to be found in its harbor. When they can no longer be safely
sailed, hulks are winched onto shore and then improvised upon as needed. ("The Tsar's notion of an unsinkable squadron," Melander of course has gibed.) Of the first two, beached into usefulness in Baranov's time, one hulk had been used as a church and the other as a gun battery—a pairing of enterprises, canon and cannon, which may have caused the Kolosh to ponder a bit about their new landlords. Its habit of collecting hull-corpses lends New Archangel, as one visitor summed it, "an original, foreign, and fossilized kind of appearance."

The morning after Braaf joined the escape plan, Karlsson emerges from around a corner of the cathedral, on his way from the Scandinavian workmen's barracks a short span to its north, and walks the brief dirt street between God's domain and the Governor's. So deft with an ax that he often is lent to help with the shaping of a mainmast, Karlsson has been delegated to work this day with the shipbuilding crew. But before reaching the shipyard just beyond Baranov's Castle, he veers west toward the stockade gate and the Kolosh village beyond, steps outside and along the wall toward the beach, hunkers and begins to scour the blade of his ax in the pale sand. Polishing away rust, this conscientious timberwright. And second work too, for as he squats, Karlsson from the corner of his eye studies the Kolosh canoes, prows rising in extension like the necks of fantastic horses, in their graceful rank along the beach.

All of New Archangel, stockade and cathedral and Castle and hulks and enterprises and dwellings, sits dwarfed this day by the Alaskan mountains, Verstovia and its throng of minions. Virtually atop the
town in the manner that the spire and dome crown the cathedral, the peaks are precisely those a child would draw. Sharp tall pyramids of forest, occasionally a lesser summit round as a cannonball for comparison's sake. Topknots of snow show here and there, but the color everywhere else on these stretching peaks is the black-green which only a northern coastal fir forest enmixes.

As Karlsson begins hewing pine at the shipyard, Braaf materializes at the southwestern extent of the settlement, beside the eldermost of two schooner-hulks beached there. When Braaf arrived to New Archangel and it became evident that he was not, as listed on one manifest, a shipwright, nor, as supposed on another item of record, a shoemaker, and Braaf with shy innocence denied knowing how such misunderstandings possibly could have come about, a perplexed Russian-American Company clerk assigned him to the readiest unskilled job, as a cook's helper. Daily Braaf manages to use this livelihood to manufacture free time for himself, much of it spent hiding out somewhere within this maritime carcass. The hulk neighboring it yet is in service as a cannon battery aimed into the Kolosh village, but dry rot has made a casualty of this vessel of Braaf's. He slips through a gangway carpentered into the ship's hull when it became a storehouse, creeps to the forecastle, and within a particular one of the several stave-sprung barrels there makes a deposit, a walrus-ivory snuffbox which hitherto was the possession of a Russian quarter-master. Then, per Melander's instructions, Braaf begins to measure by
handwidths the depth and breadth—which is to say, the cache capacity--of other of these abandoned and forgotten receptacles.

Perpetually at combat with the massed mountains around Sitka Sound is the weather, changing even now, for New Archangel lives two days of three in rain and much oftener than that in cloud. One minute the vapor flows along the bottoms of the mountains to float all the peaks like dark icebergs. The next the cloud layer will rise and lop every crag, leaving a broad, broad plateau of forest beneath. Or imprint of stranger sort, clumps of wan light, warmths fallen through chinks in the overcast, now pinto the forest flanks. Between times a silken rain probably has sifted into the New Archangel air, a dew standing in drop-lets on your clothing before you quite become aware of it, and it can be four days before you cast your next shadow. Yet the diminutive port within all this swirl is a place of queer clarity as well, its rinsed air somehow holding a tint of blue light which causes everything to stand forth: smallest swags of spruce limbs on mountains a mile off, rock skirts of the timbered islands throughout the harbor. Voices and the barking of dogs carry extraordinarily.

At mid-morning, Braaf reluctantly emerging from the direction of the hulk toward chores for the noon meal, Melander on work-break presents himself from within the saltery being constructed on the point of shoreline southeast of the cathedral. Sitka Sound shares amply in the twenty-foot tides of this region of Alaska, and on the broad exposed tideflat a pig is rooting up clams. His finds,
one after another, are seized from him by ravens. Melander watches for a moment, then laughs. Other workmen inquire to him over their mugs of tea. Melander points to the raucous gulping birds: "The Castle Russians at one of their banquets."

Fully equal in complication and unlikelihood to its architecture and geography and weather is New Archangel's tenantry. The settlement is ruled by the Russian navy, administered by a covey of Russian-American Company clerks and other functionaries, provisioned chiefly by British ships of the rival Hudson's Bay Company, seasonally abounds with Aleut fur hunters, relies for most of its muscle work upon creoles--those born of Russian fathers and Kolosh mothers; of New Archangel's sum of about a thousand persons, this adds up to far the most sizable group--or upon Russian vagabonds given the push out of Okhotsk, and for its craftwork, such as carpentry and smithing, it imports the seven-year men from Scandinavia. Colony within a colony, the hundred and fifty or so Scandinavians mostly are Finns; Swedes such as Melander and Braaf and Karlsson make an even further minority.

Yet not even this social pyramid, sharp-tipped and broad-bottomed as the triangle peaks above the little port, takes in the most numerous populace on Sitka Sound. The Kolosh, the Sitka Tlingits. Their low-roofed longhouses straggle for nearly a mile along the beach west of New Archangel's huddle of buildings, and the stockade wall of defense
these Siberian vagabonds had not been encouraged onward to Russian America for habits such as nudging ducks into paddles. Thugs, thieves, hopeless sots, no few murderers, the flotsam of any vast frontier, jostled among them. ("Where," a governor of New Archangel once wrote home to a grandee of the Russian-American Company, "do you get such men?") But so did debtors, escaped serfs, those whose only instinct was to drift. Melander, by now no admirer of anything Russian, saved his contempt for the New Archangel officialdom. These others, the Okhotskans, simply had made humankind's usual blunder, forgot to get themselves hightborn.

Abruptly Melander stood up, a process like staves suddenly framing themselves together into a very large scarecrow. Amid a card game several bunks away, a shipwright from Karlskrona flicked a nervous glance his way. Melander grinned at so easy a giveaway, awarded a mocking nod to his derider, and in galumphing strides went from the barracks.

Outside held another sort of confinement, but at least airier than in. Melander as ever glanced up, as if checking a topsail, at the peak which thrust over all their lives at New Archangel, dark Verstovia. Its summit a triangle of rough rock atop a vaster triangle of firred slope, Verstovia sat up there plump and becrowned, the first presence in your life each morning, the last at every dusk. On both sides Verstovia was attended by other, snowier crags. A threefold Jericho, this place New Archangel, walled first by the
stockade, next by these tremendous mountains, and last, the distances to anywhere else of the world.

Melander moved off toward the central street of the settlement and here encountered one of the Company clerks, no doubt on his way to stroll in the Governor's hill garden. Many of the Castle Russians took such a constitutional at evening. Melander considered that more than beds of pansies and fuschias were required to sweeten the soul of any Russian. Nonetheless, "drastia," the lanky Swede said with a civil nod, and was greeted in turn. Since Melander could not rise at New Archangel, he was taking some care to stay level.

This was one of the first lengthening evenings of summer of 1852, the moment of year when New Archangel's dusk began to dawdle on until close onto midnight. The long light copied Swedish summer, so while this slow vesper of the day was the time Melander liked best, it also cast the remindful shadows of all that he had become absented from. His birthland. The sea. And his chosen livelihood. Triple tines of exile. Much to be prodded by.

Only because it afforded the most distance for his restless boots, Melander roved on west through the narrow shoreline crescent of settlement. Past log building after log building; if bulk of timbering were the standard of civilization, New Archangel would have preened grand as Stockholm. Sea-drifter he was, Melander had never got used to this hefty clamped-into-the-wilderness feel of the port-town.
"Log barns and sawdust heads," he called the style of Russian America.

In about four hundred paces from his barracks departure Melander's traipse necessarily ended, the high timbered gate of the stockade here stoppering New Archangel until morning.

Melander still needed motion. He changed course to the north. Rapidly passed the gate watchman yawning within his hut. Climbed the short knoll where the first of the stockade's blockhouses overlooked the gate. In long pulls clambered up the ladder to the catwalk beside the blockhouse. Here met the quizzing glance of the Russian sentry and muttered: "The Finns are singing in the barracks again. They sound like death arguing with the devil."

The sentry nodded in pitying savvy and returned to his watching-slot within the timbered tower. Melander was left solitary against the dusky sky, scanning out beyond Sitka Sound and its dark-treed islands schooled like furry whales, to the threadline of horizon that is the Pacific.

A time of studying seaward. Then as if reassured that the water portion of the world still hung in place, Melander dropped his gaze until he was
THE BRIG

The origin of this type of rig has been variously assigned by students of the evolution of sailing craft. Some would trace its ancestry to a late 16th Century two-masted vessel similar in rig to the buss, or to the buss itself. Others claim that the early brigantine with a fore and aft mainsail was the progenitor of the brig and that the word “brig” is merely a shortening of that longer appellation. Others prefer to think that the brig is an adaptation of a three-masted ship, the mizzenmast being omitted. Whatever may have been their origin, the three terms, snow, brigantine, and brig seem at various periods to have been much confused and applied rather indiscriminately to three kinds of vessels between which we to-day would not hesitate to differentiate.

If the brig be compared with a ship deprived of its mizzenmast, we shall note some differences.

In a ship the main braces lead aft to the extreme limit of the quarter. This method is obviously more or less inapplicable to a brig, as such a lead tends to pull down upon the main yard when it is sharply braced. Although perhaps this was not always the method of leading them, the braces of the main yard as well as the main topsail yard and main topgallant sail yard lead forward. These forward main-yard braces correspond to the preventer main braces often employed in ships for hauling the weather side of the main
THE BOOK OF OLD SHIPS

yard forward, instead of placing the major part of the strain upon the leeward main brace.

Other peculiarities might formerly have been noted in that brigs during the later years of the 18th Century rarely carried square main courses, their mainsails being of the fore-and-aft character, usually with a boom, the forward side or luff of the sail being attached to the after side of the mainmast by means of hoops sliding upon the mainmast. Such a brig carried a cross jack yard instead of a main yard. These characteristics differentiated the brig from the snow (q. v.) which carried a square mainsail in addition to its fore and aft mainsail, the latter normally rigged upon a try-sail mast. Man-of-war brigs sometimes were fitted with a "horse," that is, a vertical rope to which the luff of the fore and aft mizzen was fastened by hanks in the same manner as a stay-sail or jib. Brigs to-day are often fitted with a square mainsail in addition to their fore and aft mainsail, just as ships now usually carry square mizzen courses on their cross-jack yards. Brigs are very handy and many of them sail fast. They were a favourite medium of privateering, and it was a short step from that occupation to piracy. And the brig was what might have been termed the pirate's own vessel.

About a hundred years ago brigs were much employed in sea-going commerce. From the many delightful pictures made by Mediterranean artists, the brothers Roux, Corneille, Pellegrini and others, it would seem as if one of the main events of the career of such a vessel, if not absolutely the most important, was to have its portrait painted at Marseilles or Genoa by one of these delightful and competent artists.
THE BOOK OF OLD SHIPS

Owing to this custom, we have to-day many intimate and spirited representations of these vessels, with their names and those of their masters, information which gives the key to the history of much of the shipping of the period.

Besides their regular cargoes, our vessels often brought back mementoes and treasures for the dear ones at home, carved coral, mandarin coats, laces, fine Chinese and European porcelains, the latter commodity then practically at the height of its artistic excellence.

To judge by the fine examples of many of these works of art still in the possession of the descendants of America’s early seamen, the old-time ship masters must have had almost as good a weather eye for the colour and decoration of a fine Derby or Spode tea-set or the delicate modulation and paste of a Kwang He vase, as for the indications of a coming favourable breeze or for bad weather.

One has only to visit the Essex Institute and the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, to see many examples of these treasures and the delightful old-time portraits of the vessels which brought them to this country.
THE OXFORD COMPANION TO SHIPS & THE SEA

Edited by Peter Kemp
BRIDPORT, a small seaport on the coast of Dorset, England, where one of the best-known naval ropewalks of the 17th and 18th centuries was situated. The finest hemp was grown in the neighbourhood and by instructions from the Navy Board in London, all anchor cables for British warships had to be made at Bridport from the local hemp. This rule lasted until the great expansion of the navy during the Revolutionary (1793-1801) and Napoleonic (1803-15) wars against France, when the demand completely swamped the local supply. So excellent was this Bridport rope that all cables used for anchor work were known in the British Navy as Bridports. Rope is manufactured at Bridport to this day.

Originally the town appears to have been known as Buryport and it is under this name that it appears in the Armada map of the English Channel engraved by A. Ryther in 1590.

BRIDPORT, Lord, see HOOD, Alexander.

BRIERLY, Sir OSWALD WALTER (1817-94). British marine artist, was appointed marine painter to Queen Victoria and was an artist with very close connections with the Royal Navy. Born at Chester, he attended art school in London and studied naval architecture at Plymouth, and in 1839 he exhibited some drawings of ships at the Royal Academy. Later he travelled extensively, spending ten years in New Zealand. At the invitation of Captain Owen Stanley, R.N., he accompanied him on board the *Rattlesnake* during a survey of the north and north-east coasts of Australia together with the adjacent islands. T. H. Huxley being assistant surgeon of the ship. He next made a voyage in the *Meander* at the invitation of Captain (later Admiral Sir) Henry Keppel round New Zealand and to the Friendly Isles, an account of which he illustrated. For this, and the notes and sketches made on the previous voyage, he was made a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. He was again Keppel's guest on board the *St. Jean d'Acre* with the allied fleet in the Baltic and subsequently in the Black Sea during the Crimean War (1854-56). His sketches were published in the *Illustrated London News*. After that war he was commanded by the Queen to make sketches from the Royal Yacht of the naval review at Spithead in 1856. He was under the constant patronage of the Royal Family and on the death of J. C. *Scrutiny* in 1874 was appointed marine painter to the Queen.

Brierley was a versatile artist, and the sketches and paintings he produced during his two voyages in Australian waters, his visits to the fleet during the Crimean War, and at the 1856 naval review all show a keen observation and a lively attention to maritime detail. He was less happy when he turned his attention to historical painting and battle scenes, his bold treatment of line and colour hardly compensating for his lack of knowledge of ships of past centuries and how they fought.

BRIG, originally an abbreviation of *brigantine*, but later a type of ship in her own right after some modifications in the original rig. The true brig is a two-masted vessel square-rigged on both fore and main masts. A *hermaphrodite brig*, sometimes called a brig-schooner, has the usual brig's square-rigged foremost and a *schooner's mainmast*, with *fore-and-aft mainsail* and square topsails. Brigs were widely used in the days of sail for short and coastal trading voyages, and there are still a few to be found today employed in local trades. They were also used widely in several navies as training ships for boys destined to become naval seamen, and in many navies were retained for this purpose long after sail had disappeared in them for good. In the British Navy the training brigs for boys lasted into the first decade of the 20th century. For illus. see RG.

BRIGANTINE, a two-masted vessel as a *brig*, but square-rigged on the foremost and *fore- and-aft rigged on the mainmast*. The name comes from the fact that these ships were favourite vessels of the sea brigands, particularly in the Mediterranean, although in their case the vessel they used was more of the *galley* type used with oars. But as sea brigandage spread to the more tempestuous waters of the Atlantic and North Sea, the ships used by these new brigands took the Mediterranean name even though the type of ship changed. For illus. see RG.

BRIN, BENEDETTO (1833-98). Italian naval administrator, could probably be justly called the 'father' of the Italian Navy when it was formed after the unification of the country in 1870. A naval engineer, he was appointed under-secretary of state of the Ministry of Marine by the minister, Admiral Saint-Bon. These two men worked very closely together, and where Saint-Bon thought out the type of ships best suited for a navy such as Italy's, Brin drew the plans and superintended their construction. In 1877 he was appointed minister and continued to develop the fleet as an organic whole. The large battleships *Dandolo* and *Italia* were of his design, as were the smaller ships of the Garibaldi class. He also directed his attention to the operation of shipbuilding firms, dockyards, and gun foundries. He held the Ministry of Marine for eleven years in all, and when he was finally promoted to minister for foreign affairs, he left behind him an Italian Navy which was both strong and efficient, and well backed up by manufacturing and shipbuilding capacity.
*poops, the north European nations developing the *galleon from the *high-charged ship by eliminating the high forecastle in order to provide a more weatherly ship for the rougher waters of the north.

The general picture of square rig by the 15th and 16th centuries was a two- or three-masted vessel, carrying three square sails (*course, topsail, topgallant sail) on each mast, with a *spritsail carried below the bowsprit and an additional lateen or spritsail on the mizen-mast.

The introduction of staysails into the square rig came about the mid-17th century, and the jib replaced the spritsail below the bowsprit about fifty years later. What is known as the ship rig (square sails on all masts) remained more or less standard practice until the end of the 18th century. But with the great development of world trade during the 19th century and the consequent large increase in hull size to carry it, new sail plans incorporating some features of fore-and-aft rig were developed, the barque and *barquentine for the larger three-masted ships and the *brig or *brigantine for the two-masted. These were found to be as efficient under sail as the ship-rigged vessels and had an advantage, in terms of trade, of requiring a smaller crew through the replacement of square sails by fore-and-aft sails on the mizen-mast.

A further development during the 19th century was the introduction of the *clipper ship, though this was less a development of square rig...
SECOND EXTRACT;

Containing the Account of an Excursion made by Dr. H. Mertens, to the summit of the Weisstokal at New Archangel, in Norfolk Sound:—from a Letter addressed to a friend at St. Petersburg.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY ADRIAN VON CHAMISSO.

"Norfolk Sound (called Sitka or Sitcha by the Russians), of whose luxuriant vegetation this learned Naturalist here displays to our view a striking portrait, is situated in the 57th degree of north latitude, on the north-west coast of America, to the eastward of that extensive gulf formed by this part of the continent; which, again, under the 60th degree N. lat. stretches in an opposite direction westerly, being changed by a great volcanic mountain, and then prolongs itself further W.S.W. to the Peninsula Alaskika and the chain of Aleutian Islands. At the west of Norfolk Sound, a space of 4000 miles in breadth (calculating 60 to each Equatorial degree) extends between the American and the opposite Asiatic shore: interrupted only by the abovementioned tongue of land of Alaskika. If we compare the lofty forests of Sitcha with the wintry coasts of Kamtschatka, where 4° more southerly, at St. Peter and Paul, the birch only attempts to rise into a kind of tree, we shall here find a confirmation of that law which proves, by comparing the climates of Lisbon and Philadelphia, Paris and Quebec, England and Labrador, Drontheim and Iceland, that countries, situated to the east of the sea, possess a milder temperature than those which are placed on the west of the ocean. This theory fully explains the facts. The sea is the great equalizer of temperature: just as the east winds always blow between the tropics, so do the westerly winds predominate in a higher latitude. These confer on the western shores of the continent to which they arrive, wafted over a warm sea, a milder winter; and, on the contrary, a severer one to those which they reach across a cold and snow-covered continent. The sea-breeze, that conveys warmth in winter to the north of Europe, has first, as a land-wind from Greenland, carried cold to the island of Iceland; and the collating of meteorological observations proves indeed that an opposite state of temperature takes place in Iceland and in the north of Europe; so that our colder winters and colder months answer to milder winters and months in Iceland, and vice versa. But Europe is favoured above all the countries situated under the same degree of latitude. It forms the western border of the continent to which it belongs: the gulf-stream bears into the eastern portion of the Atlantic Ocean a body of waters, warm from tropical latitudes; while the continent of Africa, lying in a position with respect to Europe which in other parts of the world is held by cooling seas, heats the air which thence floats, in the upper regions of the atmosphere, from the Equator towards the Pole. The south winds, those currents of the lower strata of African atmosphere, with their glowing influence, adorn the northern skirts of the Mediterranean with the productions of the Tropics, so that the palms are even seen extending beyond the 43° N. latitude. These are among the most evident, though not perhaps the most decided proofs of the advantages which Europe enjoys as to climate. The sea-winds may not be the sole vehicle for the conveyance of heat with which our northern districts are favoured; for, according to Wahlenberg, the mean temperature of northern Europe is lower than that of the earth. Under the 46° N. lat., an equalization takes place between them; and more northerly the first decreases quicker than the other. In the north of Europe, towards the 71° N. lat., springs and winter-flowing brooks may be seen, the ground does not freeze beneath its covering of snow, and the frost never penetrates into well-protected cellars. To the north of Behring's Straits, on the contrary, the earth never thaws, nor even at the Polar Circle in Kotzebue's Sound; it is found everywhere hard frozen, a few inches below the growth of vegetation; while under that crust, and below a very thin layer of clay, the ice may
be seen in places having nothing in common with the glaciers of our own country. The Esquimaux, being unable to break the ground for the purpose of interring their dead in mother earth, lay the bodies flat on the ground, piling drift-wood above them, and placing blocks of stone on the top, to protect them from beasts of prey. The Tschuktschi, on the coast of Asia, burn their dead.

"If we collect, examine, and compare the accounts of the northern line of coast in Asia and America, the descriptions of these arctic regions will be found to agree, in all essential particulars, with what we have ourselves witnessed at Behring's Straits. The ground is everywhere frozen, and beneath the scanty verdure which sometimes clothes the soil, the ice is frequently as hard as a rock."

In the belief that a description of a spot which is remarkable for its botanical productions will prove more interesting to you than a whole sheaf of promises and assurances of regard, I proceed to conduct you, without further preface, to Norfolk Sound, a place which is rich in every kind of natural beauty; and I beg leave to accompany you in an excursion from the sea-coast to the summit of the Werstovoi. By this means I hope to succeed in giving you a general idea of the vegetation of the environs of New Archangel. As it was quite low tide when we landed, we were obliged to walk for some distance over the stony spots which, at high water, are covered by the sea. A particular state of Fucus recurvus covers the sharp stones with an olive-green, moss-like covering; and by its slipperinessrenderst walking unpleasant: the singular F. succulentus was also seen here and there, while F. ulvoides and F. punctatus appeared in plenty, like red lobes

"* At the mouth of the Lena and Mackenzie Rivers, what may be reckoned as the tertiary formation contains Mammalia of the antediluvian world. In confirmation of this fact, we here only allude to Guellin (Fl. Sib. Prof.), Adams, Wrangel, Mackenzie, Franklin, Georgi (Breviath. des Russ. Reiches 3. I. p. 90.), though more authorities might be quoted.

woven into the green mat. Where the water stood between some of the stones, we were sure of meeting with the beautiful F. floccosus; and in similar situations F. Larix prevailed, covered with a new species, probably belonging to the succulent tribe. F. mammillosus and gigartinus were not rare. On small insulated stones, grows a long intestinal Ulexa; but F. asplenoides particularly attracted our attention by its lovely colours; while F. herbacea lay stretched on this red ground, as if ready for the herbarium, displaying its peculiar, lettuce-like, uniform green hue. Nearer the land, you reach the boundary marked by the occasional overflowings of the sea; it is distinguished by a belt of marine plants, from which I only selected F. Lutheanus (n. sp.), E. costatus, saccharinum, esculentus, and here and there E. edulis. We here leave the district of the sea, and proceed, for a time, along the proper strand. Arenaria peploides, Glaux maritima, some creeping-rooted Carices, and a Juncus which seems to hold the place of our maritima, are perhaps the first Phanerogamic Plants that occur. A few steps inland, the Veronica serpyllifolia, mingled generally with F. Anagallis, is seen growing close to the ground. This is likewise the habitat of Potentilla anserina and ruthenica; under them occurs, here and there, a very pretty small Sisyrinchium, glittering with beautiful blue flowers. Even at a distance, two Plantagines and a Triglochin are distinguishable from the plants already mentioned, by the peculiar hue of their green. Between these, the lovely Dodonathia generally delights to grow, and in some spots a Pedicularis (asplenifolia ?). But the most numerous plants on this strand are certainly an Elymus, that produces a most remarkable spike, and a Bartsia,* with yellow flowers, often growing two feet high. Large individual stones are covered with a particularly beautiful Potentilla; among the crevices of these stones grows a most lovely Campanula, with large blue bells; while a three-leaved umbelliferous plant, and a Sedum, as it appears (here called Petroseta), delights in similar

* Probably our Castilleja pollica S.大陆ensis, Linn. II. p. 581. (Ad. r. Chamisso.)"
situations. But in the shade of masses of stone, particularly inland, towards the forests, are found two species of *Angelica* and *Heracleum*, on which I am unable to decide. Among them the *Sarrhona* *Sarrhona* and *Fritillaria* are frequently seen. *Pisum* *Prunus* *Cochlearia* daica, *Ranunculus acris*, *Galium boreale*, *Gymn intermedium*, *Ranuncul purpuracea* and *Cardamine*, are also not uncommon. But I will detain you no longer from the forest, towards which, if you enter into my feelings, you must already have cast many a glance, and along whose border we proceeded with some difficulty, bending under branches of trees and climbing over colossal trunks, which frequently impeded the path. But farther it was impossible to penetrate; the high tide reaches the gigantic inhabitants of the forest, and we were compelled to proceed along the boared path which the enterprising Governor Baranow formed for his own daily walking, and which is in part kept up by his successors. I dare not take you immediately into the thicket, you will be fatigued by the frequent and vain attempt to penetrate through, and thus lose the strength which is requisite for the farther prosecution of our excursion; and this labour would take away all power of enjoyment. Meantime, let us examine a little the general aspect of the Forest. It principally consists of two kinds of *Fir*: of which the species are not correctly determined. The Russians, who inhabit Sitcha, call one of them the *Pine* (*Vidya* or *Yel*) the other the *Larch* (*Listucho*), though neither bears the least similarity to the trees which are thus named in Russia. Both are referrible to Michaux's genus *Abies*. The *Pine* as it is called, seems to me analogous to the North American *Pine* (*Pinus balsamea*). Both of these trees must be peculiarly eligible for masts, and building-timber, in general, as they attain an immense height; yet the wood of the *Pine* is not much prized. It is said to be of short dura-

---

*Lilium Kantschatchense* L.—The state of this plant that occurs at Umsalovski, and which we suppose to be that of America, differs materially from the Kant- schatchian species, and is probably a peculiar one, *Lilium quadrifoliatum* of Meyer, in *Hedw. Horaeana*, part II. p. 126. (Chamise.)
ful. A Sedge, similar to our Carex Buxbaumii, is here a particular ornament to the woods; while a Streptopus holds the place of our Convallaria multiflora, and both the Trientalis and Linnea are as abundant as in the woods of Germany. I observed a Malaxis, with green and red flowers, and a Cymbidium, whose form recalls that of Cordylorrhiza, with Lathrea Stelligera, were seen in damp spots. A Vaccinium, of which the fruit is daily served up like Bilberries, occurs at almost every step. Suddenly the rushing noise of a river breaks on the ear, and a different scene is opened to view. The copious waters seem to expand before you, as the surges of the wild mountain-current roll through their native forests; the banks grace with a totally dissimilar vegetation from what has hitherto prevailed, though the larger trees appear to be the same. Here alone is seen the solitary species of Salix which the environs of Sticha afford; it resembles acuminata of Hoffm., yet looks as if distinct. But Aquilegia Canadensis, a new Spirea, a Souchus, with flesh-coloured flowers, a Dorumicu, the beautiful Epilobium, a bulbiferous Poa, like P. bulbosa but two or three feet high, an Elymus, that holds the place of our E. arenarius, and a lovely Luzula, are representatives of plants scarcely before noticed. Here are three or four Saxifragas, a Rumex, similar to R. digynus, and a beautiful Aralia, which grows among naked stones in the river. Epilobium montanum, obscurum, or tetragonum, an Aconite, and some Stellaria, increase the number and variety of species. Various Ferns, which are, however, types of those which prevail with us, grow in great luxuriance. The opposite side of the river wears a similar garb, the wood being the same, only even thicker. But the Panax horticorum, which had hitherto been met with only here and there, as a little shrub, soon gives to the country a peculiar character; growing in great luxuriance, and in every respect assuming the form of the tropical Cecropia. It is difficult to wind through the underwood which it sometimes exclusively forms: sometimes it takes the creeping position, at other times it rises like a Palm, and spreads out its broad and umbraculiform leaves. It is fortunate that the prickles, although numerous and sharp, are tender, being only attached to the epidermis of the plant; so that when the hand is covered with a good glove, it is easy to grasp it boldly, particularly the older stems. A Saxifraga, perhaps Penstemonica, grows on fallen trunks of trees in remarkable luxuriance. At last, by degrees, we reach the foot of the mountain, and commence its ascent; this is truly a work of labour, attended by no small difficulties, which I shall endeavour to describe, and thus aid you to surmount. On the little hills at the base grow Epilobium alpinum, and the smaller bushes already noticed. The constantly wet ground (for it rains here almost throughout the year) adds considerably to the unpleasantness of walking: for it yields under the traveller's feet; and if you attempt to climb up by the fallen stems, or to support yourself ever so gently upon one of them, the whole of the mossy bark will frequently strip off from it, and betray you into a fall. Besides, the mountain is, in many places, very steep, and the wood almost impenetrably dense. Happy will you here be if you can detect a gulley, in which a current runs down; though the steepness of its declivities frequently obliges you to return. Though the vegetation is everywhere much alike, yet here the trees become thinner, and the proper region of the Panax commences. We had even descried, when out at sea, these clearer spots in the dark Pine forests, and mistook them for broad-leaved trees. It is true that in such places the lofty stems of an Alder, here called the Red Alder, and destitute of balsamic scent, were seen singly scattered among the surrounding shrubs of Panax. But the wood which now appears again; in increased denseness, before us, consists particularly of a noble Thuja, called, on account of its agreeably scented wood, Duschnik, also Duschonk derewo (scent-wood). It is the timber most valued here. The tree indeed occurs frequently lower down, at the foot of the mountain, and even to the sea; but so scattered that it is necessary to search for it among the more predominant Pine trees which conceal it from view; but here it constitutes almost the entire timber, and the Pine and Larch are seldom seen: the latter, however, not ceasing quite so soon as the
drops into a chasm, which it makes one tremble only to behold. Here and there, a small Carex peeps from the chinks of the rock; a graceful Juncus and a Draba may also be seen. But near as a Cerastium may grow, it is dangerous to attempt to pull it. The Achillea, which forms a rather large patch, may be more easily procured. These difficulties being overcome, you at length reach the summit, perhaps bringing a Pedicularis, a Cerastium, and a new Saxifrage with you; but, once on this elevated spot, where scarcely five individuals can find a footing, the piercing cold forbids you to look round; besides, a dense fog envelops this region, preventing the possibility of a prospect; and with benumbed hands, which scarcely grasp the few specimens that you have collected in the ascent, and trembling feet, you commence a descent, the dangers of which are in reality much greater than those which you encounter in gaining the summit. In returning, we will vary our track, and explore the productions of a swampy moor which lies at the foot of the mountain. Here is a lovely little white-flowered Gentian, and a Carex, which seems identical with C. microglochin, and is the most prevailing plant. This day’s excursion may perhaps produce twenty to twenty-five Reed-Grasses; and a richer collection of larger plants. Among them are Veratrum album, Scirpus multicaulis, Eriophorum Scheuchzeri and gracile, Drosera rotundifolia, Vaccinium Oxyccoccus, and Vitis-idea, and a species near to V. uliginosum, Ledum palustre, Andromeda latifolia, a large Helianthus, a Myrica, Juniperus prostratus, Artemisia Uva-ursi, Polygonum viviparum; on the margin of the lake, which it is necessary to skirt here, are also found Conium palustre, Potentilla natans, Nymphea lutea, Mentha foetida, Mentha trisiliqua, Hippuris vulgaris, Juncus subnervatus, and three different Sanguisorbas, as also some Umbellate. We are now, thanks to Providence, near the establishment again. Isopyrum spinarioideos grows on the stumps of felled trees. At last, between the houses, you have again Chenopodium album, Urtica dioica, Matricaria Chamomilla (its flowers without rays), Sisymbrium Barbarea, Alsino media, and several common weeds.

“Now, my dear friend, you have my botanical account of Sitcha: I wish that you may be pleased with it, as I have drawn it up at some cost of time and trouble, in order to prove to you, however inadequately, the gratification that I derive from the remembrance of those happy hours that I was so fortunate as to pass in your company.”

---

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE LATE**

**CAPTAIN DUGAULD CARMICHAEL, F.L.S.**

*By the Rev. Colin Smith, Minister of Inverary.*

[Concluded from p. 313, vol. 2.]

**CAPTAIN CARMICHAEL returned from the Isle of Bourbon to the Cape of Good Hope with his regiment in the year 1811; and the various success with which he pursued his inquiries into the natural history of the Cape and its neighbouring districts, has been already detailed in the preceding pages. In July, 1815, on a requisition being made by the Earl of Moira, then Governor-General of India, for as many troops as could be spared from the Cape of Good Hope, the 72d regiment was selected for that service, and ordered to proceed for the Peninsula. “As the call was extremely urgent,” continues Captain Carmichael, “we were embarked as fast as the vessels could be equipped for us, and each was directed to make the best of her way to Bengal. The Morley transport, carrying the head-quarters of the regiment, and in which I sailed, was the last that cleared Table Bay, and this took place on Sunday the 9th July, 1815.

“On the parallel of 38°, on which we ran down our longitude, we found the weather uniformly disagreeable. A hazy atmosphere, the horizon circumscribed by a muddy bank of clouds; strong westerly winds, increasing frequently to furious gales; and showers of sleet or hail, with a high tumultuous sea that knew no interval of tranquillity. Such...
former. A *Blechnum*, which we never noticed before, was not unfrequent in this district; *Pyrola secunda* appeared, now and then, with a little *Lycopodium*, and higher up we found a beautiful *Convalaria*, allied to *latifolia*, but distinguished by its red flowers. A yellow-flowering *Viola* occupied large patches of the ground in the now much thinner wood, where we entirely lost sight of the *Pineau, Ribes, Ribes*, with the other shrubs. A few straggling *Vaccinia* and *Azalea* alone remain; and although the eye should fail to detect it, yet the scent would infallibly betray the existence of a *Valerian*, which grows only at this high elevation. It is allied to our *officinalis*, or perhaps more properly to *V. Pinetorum*; and yet it may constitute a distinct species. The smell of the root is pungent, and more powerful than that sold in our apothecaries’ shops; the Russians call it *Koloschenski Kornili* (*Koloschen root*), because the aborigines of this country hold it in high repute; employing it in almost every complaint, and ascribing to it wonderful medicinal virtues. On account of the great difficulty which attends the gathering of this plant, it is much prized, and the Koloschans are very unwilling to barter their whole stock of it. Here we first saw the singular *Pyrola* *Fruticosae* of Eschscholtz, which I had begun to despair of finding; but it was only in bud, a few flowers appearing in some sunny situations, while the former year’s fruit might be seen along with the young leaves. The wood is hereabout very thinly scattered: the *Thuja* is of stunted growth, and a *Pinus*, very similar to our *P. Mugo*, appears associated with it. This species, which the people call *Tanne* (*Sosna*), is usually of low growth, and may also be found in the less elevated spots, not among the woods, but growing in turf moors.

"But now again we are come to a difficult place, and we reach the first cross. It is not safe to cling to the plants of *Empetrum*; a better hold is afforded by the *Pyrola*, which strikes root among high stones. At this increased elevation, a new vegetation presents itself. The ground is thickly covered with *Andromeda tetragona*, and another species which I propose to call *empetriofolia*; a *Menziesia*, with green flowers, appears among these, and the stones are clothed with a tufted creeping *Saxifrage*, similar to *S. Strophurgetii*. In the vicinity of the snow, which here covers large tracts, grow a peculiar *Dodecatheon*, and a *Menziesia* with reniform leaves, which I had observed much larger in the half-dried swamps below. A delightful *Aster* reminded me of the *Anchusa* of our country; *Gena montana* (?), *Andromeda polifolia*, *Empetrum nigrum*, and, hidden among these, *Coptis trifolia*, *Azalea procumbens*, some alpine *Grasses*, and *Ranunculus*; these complete the picture of this region: a picture, certainly, which is equally characteristic of the summits of many mountains of similar elevation. But ascending yet higher, and coming to the last cross, we shall find a spacious meadow, adorned with a large *Anemone*, a red-flowered *Bartsia*, an alpine *Ranunculus*, and many of the plants before enumerated. The shrubby *Pine woods* have altogether ceased here; as well as a kind of shrub, which is generally confined to the tops of mountains, and which I omitted to notice in its proper place. This species seems to have altogether escaped the notice of the inhabitants of Siteha; none, to whom I showed it, seemed to be acquainted with it. It is an exceedingly beautiful, thickly growing shrub, not described, at least, in *Sprengel’s Systema*, with small obovate leaves, of the same colour on both sides.

"Thus I have led you, in description, to the place at which all who have hitherto ascended this mountain, pause, and begin to return: but farther on is the naked rocky summit, which I cannot help inviting you to climb with me. To do so, we must certainly descend a considerable way; but among the snow we shall be likely to find some handsome alpine plants. We slide down, therefore, on the snowy fields, and soon reach the foot of the pyramidal point. It is here extremely difficult to proceed among the perfectly naked stones, which, slipping under one’s feet, roll down into the deep abyss below. A single false step, an involuntary trust to the projecting point of a loose stone, and the unwary traveller..."
Juan Doig
17021 Tenth Ave. N.W.
Seattle, WA 98177
Hello,

Received your ms. and letter today. Thanks. I am happy to help.

Don Muller
Dear Don—

It's taken a while, but here are the Sitka descriptions from the novel I have underway. If you'd look them over and tell me whether they seem on the mark or not—feel free to jot comments in the margins—I'd much appreciate it. I'm simultaneously sending the same pages to Isabel Miller.

Also, if you can think of anything about the "feel" of Sitka's site and climate that I ought to include, I'd be glad to hear about it. If there are signs of changing season, for example—behavior of the weather, or bird migrations, or change in the appearance of Verstovia—that you as a year-rounder have come to recognize, I'd try work them into the manuscript. I do want to give as accurate an impression of Sitka's climate as possible.

The manuscript is on schedule, should be done by the end of the year and into print in autumn of '82.

Thanks for agreeing to look this over for me. Best regards.
Dear Don—

A quick query—to your invaluable wife, really—to be sure I savvy a detail from the ms checking you did for me. I'd like to use the description of Verstovia in late summer and fall that you provided, something like the mountain then being in a bodice of yellow-orange, the heather and deer cabbage having changed. Another Alaskan friend who's been reading for me says she understands deer cabbage to be skunk cabbage, and therefore the lowland boggy plant such as we have in the rain forest down here. Thought I'd better check: is deer cabbage right for Verstovia, or would it be deer brush (ceanothus integerrimus) such as I just found in the only trees-and-shrubs book I have around here, or even deer fern?

Also, please, an introduction: I'd like to include both your name and your wife's in the Acknowledgments. I think I told you on the phone, but I should say again, how very useful your comments on the draft ms have been. If nothing else, you brought about a cure (probably momentary) of my longstanding habit that every evergreen forest is a fir forest.

One further question apiece for you. I think Gene Ervins, in showing me around the bishop's house, mentioned that Sitka in the mid-nineteenth century likely would have had a smell of yellow cedar. Think I'd be right to have such a smell emanating from the shipyard? So far, I haven't come across a blessed thing about what wood the Russians used in that shipyard, but I'm assuming it wouldn't have been hemlock, so must have been spruce and cedar, Mrs. Muller? And Don, do you have any professional advice about the optimum time in the autumn for this book to come out? My notion has always been the sooner the better, but I guess there's a theory that closer to Christmas boosts some gift-buying; any notions on that?

Again, thanks for pitching in.

best regards
1. According to my wife (a botanist for the Forest Service), there are no fir or pine forests in Southeast Alaska, only spruce and hemlock. However, in Melander's time, this wasn't exactly true. What is now called Sitka spruce was put in the pine genus in 1832 and called pine until 1855 when it was reclassified as spruce. What is now called Western hemlock was in the fir genus until 1898 when it was reclassified as hemlock. Hence, the early writings (and now the translations) describe the forests as pine and fir. You should probably use spruce and hemlock in your descriptions: some readers today would gleefully jump on your use of pine and fir as proof that you are an outsider. There is the usual, sometimes myopic, local pride here.

2. Another aspect of Verstovia that is interesting: in the late summer and fall, before the snow covers the mountain top, the bare mossy-looking western slope (actually composed of deer cabbage and various heathers—this from my wife) turns a yellow-orange color. The forest remains dark green, the bare rock is gray and black, but the slope changes—as if Verstovia changed its shirt or put on a vest.

3. It sometimes seems to me during the long summer evenings that darkness really isn't approaching, the evenings just change color. The exquisite moment of dusk is stretched and expanded and goes on and on.

4. Atolls are actually coral islands (Isabel pointed this out to me). Maybe use "continental islands" or something similar.

5. Castle Hill is composed of Sitka graywacke, not granite. I always smile when I hear the word graywacke—it is not the word to use. The second definition of granite in the Random House Unabridged is this: "anything compared to this rock in great hardness, firmness, or durability." So it
is certainly appropriate and correct in that sense.

6. I think this paragraph is very good in describing the weather and changes in the weather. Another element that I associate with the weather here, or with the atmosphere, is the *silence*, or stillness, which is implied in the last sentence ("Voices and the barking of dogs carry extra-
ordinarily."). The rain, the clouds, the coolness, the dark forests, the strange lights, all seem to combine to create a silence that is overwhelming, a loud silence, a primeval silence. This is especially true inside the forests and on the water but is also present at times on the beaches and near streams. This silence or stillness must have been frightening to the Russians when they looked into the forests and saw endless wilderness. I seem to associate this silence more with the summer than with the winter.

7. In Sitka there is a maximum difference of only about 16 feet in the tides, which occurs over a spread of several months. An average daily difference is about 8 feet. In other words, the extreme low tide is about -3.8 feet and extreme high tide is about 12 feet—but neither extreme occurs on the same day.

8. This may be nit-picking: I don't think of ravens as "gulping" birds in the situation described. Crows and seagulls would certainly gulp the clams (not the shells--I assume the pig is breaking them open) on the spot; a raven would probably grab two or three in his large beak and fly away, to eat in privacy, to feed his young, or to hide them for some future meal. Ravens are extremely cunning, extremely wary, and, I think, extremely humorous. It is no wonder that they play such a large role in Indian legends. There are ravens, and there are birds. Ravens should be put in their own class. A better word might be "mocking" or "greedy." Or, to maintain the feeling of gluttony, you might use gulls or crows as the birds involved, gulls if in early summer or crows later. Gulls and crows rather have "penchants for muddle and infighting" as you describe the Russians on page 21. As I say, this may be nit-picking. Most people seem to look at
ravens as if they were large clever crows.

There, that's it. Overall, in the pages read, I think the Sitka descriptions are on the mark. Expressions such as "hefty clamped-into-the-wilderness feel," "thicklogged bastion," and "a burly-looking low-slung town" are very good.
9/1/81

Dear Juan:
I hope these comments are what you’re looking for. I am very anxious to read the finished book.

Thanks very much for asking me to help.

Sincerely,

Don

I have also enclosed two papers that my wife, Mary, thinks you will be interested in. They were written by botanists in 1829 and 1831 and give more information on the forests, Mt. Verstorren, etc.
these Siberian vagabonds had not been encouraged onward to Russian America for habits such as nudging ducks into paddles. Thugs, thieves, hopeless sots, no few murderers, the flotsam of any vast frontier, jostled among them. ("Where," a governor of New Archangel once wrote home to a grandee of the Russian-American Company, "do you get such men?") But so did debtors, escaped serfs, those whose only instinct was to drift. Melander, by now no admirer of anything Russian, saved his contempt for the New Archangel officialdom. These others, the Okhotskans, simply had made humankind's usual blunder, forgot to get themselves highborn.

Abruptly Melander stood up, a process like staves suddenly framing themselves together into a very large scarecrow. Amid a card game several bunks away, a shipwright from Karlskrona flicked a nervous glance his way. Melander grinned at so easy a giveaway, awarded a mocking nod to his derider, and in galumphing strides went from the barracks.

Outside held another sort of confinement, but at least airier than in. Melander as ever glanced up, as if checking a topsail, at the peak which thrust over all their lives at New Archangel, dark Verstovia. Its summit a triangle of rough rock atop a vaster triangle of firred slope, Verstovia sat up there plump and becrowned, the first presence in your life each morning, the last at every dusk. On both sides Verstovia was attended by other, snowier crags. A threefold Jericho, this place New Archangel, walled first by the
stockade, next by these tremendous mountains, and last, the distances to anywhere else of the world.

Melander moved off toward the central street of the settlement and here encountered one of the Company clerks, no doubt on his way to stroll in the Governor's hill garden. Many of the Castle Russians took such a constitutional at evening. Melander considered that more than beds of pansies and fuschias were required to sweeten the soul of any Russian. Nevertheless, "drastia," the lanky Swede said with a civil nod, and was greeted in turn. Since Melander could not rise at New Archangel, he was taking some care to stay level.

This was one of the first lengthening evenings of summer of 1852, the moment of year when New Archangel's dusk began to dawdle on until close onto midnight. The long light copied Swedish summer, so while this slow vesper of the day was the time Melander liked best, it also cast the mindful shadows of all that he had become absented from. His birthland. The sea. And his chosen livelihood. Triple times of exile. Much to be prodded by.

Only because it afforded the most distance for his restless boots, Melander roved on west through the narrow shoreline crescent of settlement. Past log building after log building; if bulk of timbering were the standard of civilization, New Archangel would have preened grand as Stockholm. Sea-drifter he was, Melander had never got used to this hefty clamped-into-the-wilderness feel of the port-town.
"Log barns and sawdust heads," he called the style of Russian America.

In about four hundred paces from his barracks departure Melander's traipe necessarily ended, the high timbered gate of the stockade here stoppering New Archangel until morning.

Melander still needed motion. He changed course to the north. Rapidly passed the gate watchman yawning within his hut. Climbed the short knoll where the first of the stockade's blockhouses overlooked the gate. In long pulls clambered up the ladder to the catwalk beside the blockhouse. Here met the quizzing glance of the Russian sentry and muttered: "The Finns are singing in the barracks again. They sound like death arguing with the devil."

The sentry nodded in pitying savvy and returned to his watching-slit within the timbered tower. Melander was left solitary against the dusky sky, scanning out beyond Sitka Sound and its dark-treed islands schooled like furry whales, to the threadline of horizon that is the Pacific. <end here>

A time of studying seaward. Then as if reassured that the water portion of the world still hung in place, Melander dropped his gaze until he was
they became three.

In the galaxy of frontier enclaves sparked into creation by imperialism, New Archangel was a mapdot unlike any other. Simultaneously a far-north backwater port and capital of a territory greater than France and Spain and England and Ireland together, the settlement ran on Russian capacities for hard labor and doggedness, and was kept from running any better than it did by Russian penchants for muddle and infighting. New Archangel here fifty years after its founding still stood forth in the image of its progenitor, the stumpy and tenacious Aleksandr Andreevich Baranov, first governor of Russian America and contriver of the Russian-American Company's system of fur-gathering. Historians exclaim of Baranov, like Napoleon, that he was a little great man, for Baranov it was who in 1791 began to stretch Russian strength from the Aleutian chain of atolls down the great arc of Alaska's coast, bending or breaking the native cultures along the route one after another: Aleuts chastened into becoming the Russians' seasonal hunters of seals and sea otters, people of the Kenai cajoled into allegiance by Baranov's mating with the daughter of the foremost chief, stubbornly combative Tlingits—whom the Russians dubbed Kolosh—at last in 1804 dislodged from Sitka Sound by the cannonades of one of the Tsar's gunships.

Baranov had true need of Sitka. The most sizable and best-sheltered harbor indenting the archipelagic shoreline of southeastern Alaska, Sitka Sound represented the maritime ringhold into which Russian influence could be firmly knotted. Along virtually all of that stupendous Alaskan
coast the mountains drop sheer to the Pacific, spruce slopes like green avalanches into the seawater. But at Sitka the deep notch of bay is sided by a handy shelf of shore. And a further grudging bequest of topography, at the shore's southmost hook a knoll of rock some forty feet in elevation and four times as broad pokes up like a helmet. Amid the coastline of shoulder to shoulder mountains, this single odd granite callus is the strategic bayside point: the Kolosh employed the mound as their stronghold and Baranov seized the commanding perch for his own thicklogged bastion.

In this summer of 1852, the estimable Aleksandr Andreevich three decades dead, a double-storied governor's house still called Baranov's Castle squats there in the air at the mound-end of New Archangel's single street. At the opposite extent rises the onion dome and carrot spire of the comely little Russian Orthodox cathedral. Betwixt and around, the habitations of New Archangel amount to two hundred or so squared-log buildings, many painted a pale yellow as though they were seaside cottages. Their rooflines are hipped, slanting down in all four directions from the ridgepole; where gables have been fashioned in, they are windowed with small spoked semicircles of glass, like half-suns which never manage either to set or to rise. A burly-looking low-slung town, New Archangel is, beneath the lording styles of cathedral and Castle.

One aspect further, and this one the startling oddity. This port of Russian America has a larger fleet of ships permanently aland than are usually to be found in its harbor. When they can no longer be safely
sailed, hulks are winched onto shore and then improvised upon as needed. ("The Tsar's notion of an unsinkable squadron," Melander of course has gibed.) Of the first two, beached into usefulness in Baranov's time, one hulk had been used as a church and the other as a gun battery—a pairing of enterprises, canon and cannon, which may have caused the Kolosh to ponder a bit about their new landlords. Its habit of collecting hull-corpse lends New Archangel, as one visitor summed it, "an original, foreign, and fossilized kind of appearance."

The morning after Braaf joined the escape plan, Karlsson emerges from around a corner of the cathedral, on his way from the Scandinavian workmen's barracks a short span to its north, and walks the brief dirt street between God's domain and the Governor's. So deft with an ax that he often is lent to help with the shaping of a mainmast, Karlsson has been delegated to work this day with the shipbuilding crew. But before reaching the shipyard just beyond Baranov's Castle, he veers west toward the stockade gate and the Kolosh village beyond, steps outside and along the wall toward the beach, hunkers and begins to scour the blade of his ax in the pale sand. Polishing away rust, this conscientious timberwright. And second work too, for as he squats, Karlsson from the corner of his eye studies the Kolosh canoes, prows rising in extension like the necks of fantastic horses, in their graceful rank along the beach.

All of New Archangel, stockade and cathedral and Castle and hulks and enterprises and dwellings, sits dwarfed this day by the Alaskan mountains, Verstovia and its throng of minions. Virtually atop the
town in the manner that the spire and dome crown the cathedral, the peaks are precisely those a child would draw. Sharp tall pyramids of forest, occasionally a lesser summit round as a cannonball for comparison's sake. Topknots of snow show here and there, but the color everywhere else on these stretching peaks is the black-green which only a northern coastal fir forest enmixes.

As Karlsson begins hewing pine at the shipyard, Braaf materializes at the southwestern extent of the settlement, beside the eldermost of two schooner-hulks beached there. When Braaf arrived to New Archangel and it became evident that he was not, as listed on one manifest, a shipwright, nor, as supposed on another item of record, a shoemaker, and Braaf with shy innocence denied knowing how such misunderstandings possibly could have come about, a perplexed Russian-American Company clerk assigned him to the readiest unskilled job, as a cook's helper. Daily Braaf manages to use this livelihood to manufacture free time for himself, much of it spent hiding out somewhere within this maritime carcass. The hulk neighboring it yet is in service as a cannon battery aimed into the Kolosh village, but dry rot has made a casualty of this vessel of Braaf's. He slips through a gangway carpentered into the ship's hull when it became a storehouse, creeps to the forecastle, and within a particular one of the several stave-sprung barrels there makes a deposit, a walrus-ivory snuffbox which hitherto was the possession of a Russian quarter-master. Then, per Melander's instructions, Braaf begins to measure by
handwidths the depth and breadth—which is to say, the cache capacity—
of other of these abandoned and forgotten receptacles.

Perpetually at combat with the massed mountains around Sitka
Sound is the weather, changing even now, for New Archangel lives two
days of three in rain and much oftener than that in cloud. One minute
the vapor flows along the bottoms of the mountains to float all the
peaks like dark icebergs. The next the cloud layer will rise and lop every
crag, leaving a broad, broad plateau of forest beneath. Or imprint of
stranger sort, clumps of wan light, warmths fallen through chinks in
the overcast, now into the forest flanks. Between times a silken rain
probably has sifted into the New Archangel air, a dew standing in drop-
lets on your clothing before you quite become aware of it, and it can be
four days before you cast your next shadow. Yet the diminutive port
within all this swirl is a place of queer clarity as well, its rinsed
air somehow holding a tint of blue light which causes everything to
stand forth: smallest swags of spruce limbs on mountains a mile off,
rock skirts of the timbered islands throughout the harbor. Voices and
the barking of dogs carry extraordinarily.

At mid-morning, Braaf reluctantly emerging from the direction
of the hulk toward chores for the noon meal, Melander on work-
break presents himself from within the saltery being constructed
on the point of shoreline southeast of the cathedral. Sitka Sound
shares amply in the twenty-foot tides of this region of Alaska, and
on the broad exposed tideflat a pig is rooting up clams. His finds,
one after another, are seized from him by ravens. Melander watches for a moment, then laughs. Other workmen inquire to him over their mugs of tea. Melander points to the raucous gulping birds: "The Castle Russians at one of their banquets."

Fully equal in complication and unlikelihood to its architecture and geography and weather is New Archangel's tenantry. The settlement is ruled by the Russian navy, administered by a covey of Russian-American Company clerks and other functionaries, provisioned chiefly by British ships of the rival Hudson's Bay Company, seasonally abounds with Aleut fur hunters, relies for most of its muscle work upon creoles—those born of Russian fathers and Kolosh mothers; of New Archangel's sum of about a thousand persons, this adds up to far the most sizable group—or upon Russian vagabonds given the push out of Okhotsk, and for its craftwork, such as carpentry and smithing, it imports the seven-year men from Scandinavia. Colony within a colony, the hundred and fifty or so Scandinavians mostly are Finns; Swedes such as Melander and Braaf and Karlsson make an even further minority.

Yet not even this social pyramid, sharp-tipped and broad-bottomed as the triangle peaks above the little port, takes in the most numerous populace on Sitka Sound. The Kolosh, the Sitka Tlingits. Their low-roofed longhouses straggle for nearly a mile along the beach west of New Archangel's huddle of buildings, and the stockade wall of defense
COMMENTS
ON THE
FLORA OF SITCHA ISLAND
BY
MR. BONGARD

(Read on May 4, 1831)

Among the plants which the late Dr. Mertens brought back from his trip around the world, those he collected on Sitcha Island appeared to me as being of particular interest, because the area they come from is part of the Russian possessions, and little is known yet about its flora.

The thesis which I am honored to present today to the Academy contains the comments which these plants prompted. The Graminaceae were examined by Dr. Trinius, who kindly agreed to the task, and Mr. Prescott took the trouble of looking after the Cyperaceae.

But before enumerating here the plants collected on this island, it will not be superfluous to sketchily describe its geographical location, its climate, and the nature of its soil.*

Sitcha Island is located near the Western coast of America, at a latitude of 57°N., in a gulf which the English call Norfolk Sound. A narrow channel separates it from the continent. The entrance of the gulf is marked by an extinct volcano named Edgecumbe, which forms the cape of the same name. By clear weather this mountain can be seen from as far as 10 Italian miles.

Sitcha, which is, so to speak, made of three islands, separated only by narrow channels, stretches over three and a half degrees of latitude; its coastline is lined with a chain of tall

---

*I owe these notions to the courtesy Mr. Postels, Associate Professor of Mineralogy at the University of St. Petersburg; he traveled around the world along with Dr. Mertens.
mountains, most of them cone-shaped, continuing as far as the eye can see.

The Russian-American Company has its main trading post, named Novo Archangelsk, located on this island. There the coastline is infinitely sinuous and dotted with small rocky islands, all covered with thick forests. Among the mountains closest to the Russian trading post, the one called Werstowoi is the most prominent by its elevation, which is about 3000 feet (Parisian measure). It is covered all the way to its top with thick forests, where pines and firs, which prevail exclusively, sometimes reach the stupendous height of 160 feet, with a diameter of 7 to 10 feet. Only one trunk of one of these trees is sufficient for the Natives to carve a canoe large enough for 30 men and all their gear.

All the mountains around the trading post are made of schistous slate, of shale, and of a conglomerate of quartz, lidian stone and syenite, cemented by a quartzy mass. The first of these rocks prevails. Mr. Langsdorff was thus mistaken when he identified them as granite. Volcanic products are found only on Mt. Edgecumbe, consisting in porous basaltic porphyry, compacted basalt with olivine and different kinds of lava.

The climate of Sitcha is infinitely milder than that of European locales at the same latitude. During the Winter the cold is moderate and never lasts long. But the atmosphere is continually loaded with vapor which, by condensing, causes almost unceasing rains. In the whole month of July there were at most 3 or 4 days where the Sun appeared on the horizon, and then for a brief moment only. The constant humidity reigning there influences the flora tremendously, and all the plants, very vigorous, grow at an astonishing speed. However, there are no clear areas and the soil is ill-suited for agriculture. Indeed there are no plains, but everywhere mountains and deep, humid gorges, covered with a thick forest.

The botanical trips took place in June and during the first half of July; but most of them were limited to the vicinity of the trading post, and a few took place along the coast. There was a visit to Werstovoi. The hostile behavior of the Natives, and an extremely wild natural setting, made the collection of specimens dangerous and very difficult. Imagine tall and inaccessible mountains, steep rocks, narrow gorges, swamps, thick and impenetrable forests, the ground covered and congested with big trees which, half rotten and decayed, but covered with a fragile and deceptive carpet of moss, often mask chasms into which one might fall, and you will have an idea of the kind of difficulties which would restrain even the most enterprising naturalist.
In the space of six weeks, however, the number of plants collected reached 222 species, 35 of them new. Of this number, two form new genera; furthermore, this collection contains many plants which are both very rare and hardly known to botanists.

I only regret that I found no notes about these plants in Dr. Mertens's papers; my work would then have been more perfect and less difficult. On the bright side, Mr. Prescott's herbarium was a considerable resource to me. Rich in plants from North America collected by Messrs. Douglas, Nuttall and Scouler, it allowed me to compare the plants from Sitcha with the original samples from these botanists, so that I could confirm the identification of the different species.

Translated from the French by Claude Ostyn; May 1980.
23 October 1981

Dear Mr. Doig;

Deer cabbage is deer cabbage. The scientific name is either NEPHROPHYLLIDUM CRISTA-GALLI (nephros = kidney & phyllon = leaf, see picture) or FAURIA CRISTA-GALLI, depending upon which authority you follow. It definitely is not skunk cabbage LYSICHITUM AMERICANUM (lys = loosing & chiton = tunic; the big yellow "flower sheath" doesn't last long), or deerbrush CEANOTHUS INTEGRERRIMUS (doesn't occur in Alaska), or deer fern BLECHNUM SPICANT.

The pictures show the leaves and growth form pretty well. Both pictures were taken in the alpine.

Another bit of information. Deer cabbage leaves turn yellow, but heather is evergreen! Because of its robust leaves, the deer cabbage's yellow-orange prevails over the heather's deep green. Several different heathers occur in the alpine. In some places heather forms dark green mats, in other places heather grows with other plants. Anyway, the yellow-orange of the deer cabbage dominates the mountain tops early in the fall.

I just looked over at Verstovia. Shades of gray. At this moment its an indistinct dark-gray triangle, looming over an even darker-gray, dripping-wet town. I shouldn't complain, we have had pretty good weather this fall.

Good luck on all of your detail checking, obviously a tremendous amount of difficult work. I envy your patience and perseverance.

Sincerely,

Mary Muller
It is not really sure what to say about the publication date. It would probably be best for us if it came out in August or September or even July. If we are able to push the book, we can sell it anytime. Nationally, it does appear that Oct/Nov/Dec are the best months.
for Xmas sales, especially when a lot of advertising is done. I don't know. I still don't understand why some books sell and some don't. I guess I would advise you to follow the publisher's advice.

Finally, we are all happy that you are checking out so many details. Here told me to give you William Blake's quote: "...art... cannot exist but in minutely organized particulars."

Thanks,


Sincerely,

Don
Roy L. Robeck, capt. of Alpha Helix

7539 NE Hidden Cove Rd., Bainbridge I. (near Port Madison) 842-3068
Dear Miss Miller--

It has taken a while, but I think now I have the Sitka descriptions in my novel sufficiently roughed out for you to look them over. I'm sending a copy to Don Muller at Old Harbor Books too, Don also having been so kind as to offer to scan my Sitka material. I simply need to know whether my version of the town and the feel of its weather, etc., seem on the mark to you; please feel free to jot comments in the margins of the manuscript pages.

Also, if anything comes to mind about Sitka's "feel" and climate, I'd be glad to hear about that for possible insertion into the manuscript.
Mr. Ivan Doig  
17021 Tenth Avenue N. W.  
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

We have been talking over how best to answer your June 22nd letter. If you had asked us the same questions about the 1840-45 period, we would have a better answer since we have recently received three beautifully hand done booklets (70 pages plus each) from Mr. Jarl Enckell of Finland, written in Swedish, and containing several unpublished letters and journals of the Etoolin period. Mr. Enckell has translated a little of it for us and the State Historical Library has gotten some other parts translated, but most of it is awaiting someone really interested in researching that period. Good maps and pictures in them.

For the 1850's we have the following suggestions:

The End of Russian America, Captain P. N. Golovin's Last Report, 1862,  
Translated by Basil Dmytryshyn and E.A.P. Crownhart Vaughan for the Oregon Historical Society, 1979. 1230 NW Park 222-1741

This gives many details of life in Russian-America, especially from the 1850's on.

A History of the Russian-American Company by P. A. Tikhmenev which I am sure you already have since it was published in 1978 by the U. of Washington Press.

Two issues of the Alaska Journal, Vol. 2, No. 2 and 3 in which Dr. Richard Pierce describes the periods when Etoolin, Tebenkov, Rosenberg, Rudakov, and Voevodskii were Chief Managers of the Russian-American company here in Sitka should be helpful to you if you don't already have them. They are available for two dollars each by writing to Box 4-EEE, Anchorage, AK 99509.

We will look forward to meeting you at the end of July. Mrs. Marilyn Knapp, the president of our Society, will plan to be at the Museum in the Centennial Bldg., along with me, if you let us know which day to expect you.

Very sincerely yours,

Isabel Miller, Museum Chairman
July 7, 1980

Dear Isabel Miller--

Thanks very much for your generous response to my inquiry. How would Monday, July 28, suit you and Mrs. Knapp as a time to meet me at the Museum? I ordinarily try to get underway as promptly as possible; would 9 or 9:30 that morning be all right? My wife and I will likely be arriving in Sitka on Friday the 25th—we don’t yet have our living arrangements set—and perhaps it’s simplest if I call you that weekend to confirm a time for the Museum.

Both of us are very much looking forward to Sitka and this research. I have the Tikhmenev book and Pierce articles you suggested, and am ordering the Golovin report on Russian America. I would like to see the translated portions of your Swedish material from Etholen’s time; I only wish I knew Swedish to handle the rest of it.

Looking forward to meeting you on the 28th; if anything changes my plans, I’ll get in touch with you.

best regards
Dear Bill—

I've just written a letter of appreciation to Vera Alexander, and told her in it that I called Dolly Dieter at Seward as she suggested. If there are any other points of etiquette I'm overlooking, please call me collect and steer me toward them, hmm?

Dolly tells me she's not sure I can be put up aboard the ship the couple of nights in Juneau, given the number of mucky-mucks who are coming to town, but I can wangle some place with Juneau friends, if that's the way it works out. I'll be flying to Sitka on the 21st—will be at the Shee Atika that night and the next, should you need to reach me—and then into Juneau on a flight that arrives at 1:10 the afternoon of the 23d. I'll find my way to the ship promptly, and play it by ear from there.

All is well here. Looking forward to seeing you in Juneau. Our sympathy to your flu-ridden wife.
Hi Ivan,

Was a pleasure to be of help to you & everyone enjoyed having you aboard. We're only sorry for all the last minute confusion that things got a bit out of hand.

We expect to be at Kuwait Yard until 1st May. If you have time please stop by or join us for lunch. Our phone #18-4990 on shipboard.

Holly Dick
Carol,

I stopped out for coffee with Diane Zink and thought I'd poke my head in your door... but you sounded busy with a student.

I have intended to visit many times before, but times & visits never coincided with school hours! I've always intended to thank you for the good teaching I received from you... & to say I'm surviving well in the news room!

Ketchikan is great fun! (The fishing's even better!) I don't know that I'll be there forever, but Alaska feels just fine.

I don't get to Seattle often (one has to leave Ketchikan every once in a while to keep the moss from accumulating & overpowering.) I'll call again, sometime, or sit down & drop you a note. I really do appreciate the experience you shared in the classroom. Hope all is well for you.

Take care,

Heidi Ekstrand

P.S. If you get to Ketchikan, stop & visit. The salmon start running in late spring. We'll catch them off the rocks by late July. Bring rain gear & visit!!
Dear Bill--

The voyage went fine, and I think I gained even more from it than I anticipated. Thanks one more time for having the wit to suggest I make the trip.

We tied up at the Duwamish last night about 10:45, an hour or so ahead of what the captain had been estimating, thanks to a following wind through the Strait of Georgia and a flood tide down Rosario Strait and Puget Sound. Every so often that morning, Roy would look across the bridge at me and say with a proud grin, "We're making 12 knots!" I was much impressed with him, with Mike the mate, with the whole crew, really. I'd asked Roy at Juneau if I could tuck away in a corner of the bridge part of the time, for the sake of seeing things, and he said okay, except when something tricky was coming up, he'd like the bridge clear. But I made it a point to stand the whole morning watch--I'd be in place in my corner a few minutes before Roy came on at 5:45--and then would go up for the last half of Mike's afternoon watch, so they pretty soon saw I was serious, and until I voluntarily left before all the maneuvering into the Duwamish began, I got to see whatever I wanted, whenever.

The real bonus of the trip for all of us proved to be Howard Cutler's wife Enid. She whipped out watercolor portraits of most of the crew--it was worth the price of admission to see her getting the cook, Mary, to pose--and taught me a lot about looking at colors of the land and water. And Howard seemed to enjoy himself, pottering around the ship, gamely bussing his own dishes after meals and the whole bit. I think the Institute scored a lot of points with the two Foundation members, too. (At least that had better be the case with the Anchorage lawyer, Brian Brundin. You've undoubtedly heard from Dolly--perhaps by direct scream rather than telephone--that when she went to the Juneau airport expecting to pick up only the Cutlers, off also got Brundin, his wife, his son, and a couple of friends.) Everyone seemed impressed with the professionalism of the crew.

So, all is well, and I gained a great amount of detail for the book of the Swedes. Now to hunker in and write it. All best to Carelyn--see you whenever you're next through here, we hope.
for Acknowledgments page: The crew of the R/V ALPHA HELIX

Roy Robeck
Mike Demchenko
Mike Miller
Carol Baker
Walter Betz
Jerry King
Ed Mooney
Mary Sirdon
Mike Stirts