January 5, 1981

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

Dear Mr. Doig,

Bill Reeburgh did talk to me about the possibility of your riding the R/V ALPHA HELIX from Juneau to Seattle in January. There is absolutely no problem with this, and I have already talked with the Institute of Marine Science Marine Superintendent, Dolly Dieter, and she agrees. When you board, we will ask you to sign a waiver of liability, but beyond that there will be no formalities.

We expect to have the ship arrive in Juneau on January 22nd, 1981, and she will be tying up at the NOAA dock downtown. We will be having an open house on January 24th, throughout the day, but it would probably be best if you planned to sleep on board that night. In this way, we will be sure you will be there when she leaves. Dolly Dieter can give you more details. I suggest that it might be a good idea for you to telephone her in the next week or so at the Seward Marine Station, (907) 224-5261.

Yours sincerely,

Vera Alexander
Director, IMS

VA/nw
Dear Dr. Alexander--

Thanks very much for arranging my passage on the Alpha Helix. I've just called Dolly Dieter, as you suggested, and told her that I intend to fly into Juneau from Sitka early on the afternoon of the 23rd, which I hope provides some reasonable leeway before the ship departs on the morning of the 25th. I assured her, and Bill Reebergh when I called him over the weekend as well, that I'll check in at the ship as soon as I arrive in Juneau.

Again, my appreciation.

Very best,

[Signature]

[Address]
2 January 1981

Dr. Vera Alexander  
Director  
Institute of Marine Science  
University of Alaska  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Dear Dr. Alexander:

I believe Bill Reesburgh has already talked to you on my behalf about the possibility of riding the Alpha Helix from Juneau to the Duwamish later this month. Here, as briefly as I can sum up what will become an entire book, is my reasoning behind the request.

I'm the author of two recent books on Western/Northwestern topics: This House of Sky (1978), which was a nominee for a National Book Award, and Winter Brothers (1980). The book I'm at work on now is based on a historical incident in Alaska in the winter of 1852-53: the decision by four indentured workers of the Russian-American Company to flee Sitka by canoe and head south to freedom. Some six weeks later, three of them were found, "nearly starved to death," by settlers at Willapa Bay, just north of the mouth of the Columbia River; the fourth man had been killed by Indians along the way.

The voyage of the Alpha Helix would provide me an exceedingly valuable chance to experience the stretch of water those men canoed through, at a similar time of year. The expertise of the Alpha Helix crew also would be a great asset to me; my background is in history—Ph.D., University of Washington—and writing rather than seamanship.

I hope, for the sake of the most accurate possible telling of this incident of Alaskan history, that space can be found for me aboard.

cordially

[Signature]
22 December 1980
Box 81628
Fairbanks, Alaska 99708

Dear Ivan,

I've checked around here regarding your riding the Alpha Helix from Juneau to Seattle this January. Everything looks real good.

You should write the Director, Dr. Vera Alexander, Institute of Marine Science, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701, requesting permission to go and giving her a thumbnail sketch of why. She'll approve your request and send a bunch of releases required by the University. It may appear as though you are signing your soul away, but they don't mean anything. Outside of getting yourself to Juneau and home from Duwamish, there'll be no expenses. The dates may change because of weather, but they are planning to leave Juneau at midnight on the 23rd or 24th and will arrive in Seattle 3 to 4 days later. I mentioned that we are planning to have a reception for the Legislature on board the ship, and I'm pretty sure that I'll be there.

You ought to get a good look at what that stretch of water is like during the winter. I think you'll find that the Captain and crew are a really good bunch--- they'll probably have all kinds of ideas on the route your trappers took based on winds and currents, so don't hesitate to pick their brains. I told them a bit about your book when I was out in September and October.

I'm enclosing some reprints of my recent methane papers-- the ones I forgot to bring out when we were in Seattle. We really enjoyed seeing you and the Rodens and appreciate your hospitality. We're looking forward to the day when we can reciprocate.

Looks like it's going to be a cold Christmas-- we're above the inversion and it isn't too bad out here, but it's running -30 in town.

Best regards,

Bill
Dear Phyllis—

It was good to see you the other night, if only for a few minutes. The occasion did remind me to pass along to you something I've been intending to. A historian friend sent me—I suppose he meant it sardonically, given the price tag—this notice of a piece of Alaskana for sale. I suppose it's something you already have, although I didn't recognize the item, and I haven't had time to sort through my source cards from when I visited your trove. Anyway, it looked like something more in range of the Alaska state budget than mine, so with my compliments...

all the best. Call the next time you're in town, and win a free lunch from one or both Doig's.
September 29, 1980

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

Dear Ivan:

I am really puzzled about the tombstone epitaph as I did not tell you about one, and it is all new to me. Anyway, I looked through some Russian manuscript materials and then the Enckell material on Gavrilou, but did not find such a translation. I looked at the translations by Dr. Rude and also information sent by Dr. Pierce and Antoinette Shalkop. If something should turn up later, I will let you know.

Pat Wilson, our reference librarian, is away for a month. I don't know whether she might have made some mention of a tombstone. She has not worked with the Enckell material on Gavrilou.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Phyllis DeMuth
Librarian
Alaska Historical Library
Dear Phyllis—

Whoops, that question about the epitaph was my error. One of those odd tricks of memory: I even had the scene in my head of the pair of us standing beside the maps case when you "told" me. Thinking over the possibilities, I believe now it may have been Sheila Nickerson who mentioned the epitaph, and it's not a Sitka epitaph at all; I'll check with Sheila on it. Anyway, my apologies.

Carol and I have had you Juneau and Sitka friends much in mind the past few days, with all the Princedam news.

Here, all is well. I've drafted the first 60 or so pages of my novel, and over the next several weeks see what the agent and the publisher think. Most of my time through that period will be on readings and bookstore appearances for Winter Brothers, which comes out in about three weeks, so I have to shift gears from 1852 New Archangel to the present for a while. Then back at the novel in the new year.

Will be in touch. All the best.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Ms. (Phyllis) Dempsey
Lisa início
Alaska Historical Library
Dear Phyllis—

A quick query, to try retrieve something you told me about during my Juneau stint. As I got it down in my notes, belatedly, you mentioned a tombstone epitaph which you thought was very affecting—"Peace be to your dust." I too thought it affecting, and would like to use it in my novel. But the source of the epitaph, as I noted it down (apparently mistakenly), was the Lt. Gavrilov grave in Sitka—and Isabel Miller tells me no, they don't know of it as the translation of Gavrilov's epitaph, or of it being on any other Sitka tombstone. But she also says the rubbing of Gavrilov's epitaph is in Enchell's pamphlet which you have, so she isn't absolutely sure.

So, then: can you straighten me out? Gavrilov's epitaph, or some other—or did I fantasize all this?

all the best
DC is a major mt. ground cover.

In the late summer & early fall it turns yellow-orange. Then it turns to mush.

It is favorite deer food.
Deer cabbage
Mertens cassiope (one of our heathers)
Ivan Doig

Thanks, for your letter. I received it today. It was nice to hear from America and I will do everything I can to help you get this information you need to write this book.

I have given your letter to Ulf Beijbom, doctor in history, at the House of Emigrants in my hometown Växjö.

He gave me a promise to take this matter first, so you don't have to wait too long for your information. Ulf is in charge for the institute and can have what there is of this three gentlemen from Sweden.

I hope you have contact with Jay again and I hope you will bring him my greetings. It's a real fellow. I wish I have the gots to live like him and his lovely wife.

You will hear from Ulf and me soon. I hope there is a copy of your book left...

You have got a new friend in Sweden.

Best wishes from

[Signature]
Dear Mr. Lath--

I was in Juneau, Alaska, last month to do some research on a book I'm writing, and Jay Cronstad suggested that you might be interested in my topic, and be able to provide me some advice.

My book will be fiction, based on the enclosed newspaper version of an 1853 incident, when three Swedes escaped by canoe from their indenturement to the Russian-American Company at Sitka, Alaska. This one newspaper story seems to be the only version that exists; for my novel, I'm using the few facts it offers and then making the book a work of the imagination, even to the extent of changing the names of the men.

The names of the men who actually made the 1000-mile canoe journey, you'll notice at the bottom of the newspaper story, were Carl Gronland, Carl Wasterholm and Andrea C. Lyndfast, all said to be of Stockholm. I believe, from the research I have done so far, that the men may have sailed to Alaska in 1850 on the Imperator Nikolai I, under a captain named Conrad (rather than "Conrad" as in the newspaper version). Prof. Richard A. Pierce has written that the Imperator Nikolai I, a 596-ton vessel built in New York, sailed from Kronstadt "on July 18, 1850" and arrived at Sitka on April 23, 1851; it's my theory that the vessel would have called at Stockholm and taken aboard the twenty Swedish indentured workers mentioned in the newspaper version.

My question: given only the names of the men and this probable date of their voyage to Alaska, is there any method of finding out more about them in Swedish sources? I'm interested in family backgrounds of the men, their ages, their professions—and particularly in whether they managed to return to Sweden after their canoe escape from Alaska. I'll have to do any research by mail, but can you suggest libraries or archives in Sweden which might yield information on Gronland, Wasterholm and Lyndfast?

I am taking the liberty of enclosing a catalogue page about a book of mine which will be published this fall. The likelihood is that the same publisher, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, will publish my novel of the three men who escaped Sitka.

cordially

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

Dear Mr. Doig:

Thank you for sending us a copy of the Olympia Transcript item. We have all read it with interest, and Joe Ashby made a copy of it.

"Peace be to your dust" from a Bitka grave is not known to any of us, but we will keep looking and I will try to remember to ask Mrs. DeMuth about it when I go to Juneau on the 26th. We copied the inscription on the Gavrilov slab, and Mr. Enckell has reproduced the rubbing of it in his booklet, but that is with Mrs. DeMuth at present, but I am pretty sure that a translation of it will not produce your sentence. I checked the grave, too., of Princess Maksoutoff in the hope that her inscription might be in English, but no luck, and Sergei Kan, our Russian scholar has gone home to Boston!

What I do want to say is that someone was in the Museum lately who said that the government of Sweden takes great pride of having kept a record of everyone of their citizens who left that country. If that is true, maybe the Swedish Consul there in Seattle might give you some leads, but maybe you have already asked his help.

At present, I have been having the pleasure of reading one of the copies of This House of Sky that you left at the Old Harbor Books, and I want to say that if you do as well by three Swedes as you have done by your relatives and neighbors in Montana, it will be a good book.

Very sincerely yours,

(Miss) Isabel Miller
Dear Mrs. Miller—

I've managed to have a photocopy made of the story of the escaping Swedes which I'm basing my novel on. This version is actually a reprint of a reprint; the Olympia newspaper picked it up from the Oregon Bulletin in Portland. I hope to be in Portland sometime this fall, and will try to get a copy of the original article then.

All is going well with my book; the help you and Marilyn Knapp and Joe Ashby provided me has been a tremendous assist.

One loose end I can't find in the research I brought home with me. I believe it was Phyllis DeMuth in Juneau who told me of a headstone—I think she said it was Lt. Gavrilov's—in Sitka which reads: "Peace be to your dust." Am I right that there is such an inscription, and that it's Gavrilov's?

My regards to Marilyn. I hope it'll work out that I'll be in Sitka again sometime this winter.

very best
Växjö 1980-10-31

Ivan Doig
17021 Tenth Av. N.W.
Seattle, Wash. 98177
USA

Dear Mr. Doig,

I've got Your questions from Mr. Läth but I'm afraid we don't have any information available. Most of our register starts around 1860 and the official passenger manifests first in 1869. I've also checked our biography of swedish emigrants before 1860 but without any result.

I think we have information about Grönlund, Wästerholm and Lyndfast in our archive but in microfilmed churchrecords, newspapers and letters. Unfortunately we don't have any alphabetic register to this, so it's rather time wasting to make the research.

Of course You are welcome to our archive but I also understand it's almost impossible.

At last I will suggest You to contact: Sjöfartsmuseet
Karl Joh. Gatan 1-3
414 59 Göteborg

sincerely,

Leif Carlsson
Sitka

Best room at Shee Atika is #530.

Best breakfasts at Sheffield House; okay pizza etc. at pizzeria.
August 7, 1980

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

Dear Ivan:

Thank you for your letter and reports on your trip. The Edward Blasche item on Medical Topography translated by J. B. Saunders is of interest and I wrote Mr. Ervine about it. I sent him a Pierce translation of another article on medical practice at Sitka during the 1840's. You should have seen the latter when viewing the Richard Pierce translations here.

In September I am going to California on business and will include trips to the Huntington Library, Bancroft, etc. Hopefully, I may locate items of interest here and hope they are in a sharing mood. Also we will be receiving a large Russian collection if that is inducement for another trip to Alaska for you and Carol. We've had three days of sunshine and everyone is in a much sunnier mood for it too.

Glad the photographs arrived in good order and let us know if we can be of further help. Also we look forward to seeing your research in print and on our library shelf in due time.

Sincerely,

Phyllis DeMuth
Librarian
Alaska Historical Library

PD/bbc
Dear Phyllis—

The research in Sitka and the Queen Charlottes went so well that Carol and I landed home some days early. Awaiting me were the Tebenkov map copies from F Stop; thanks immensely for such promptness, which is unparalleled in my experience. (I remember waiting longer to get photocopies done at the British Museum.) And thanks too for all your time and help, and the efforts of your staff; I had as pleasing and productive stay as possible.

I spent my time in the Qn Charlottes looking at coastline and so didn't get any idea whether the Masset library has anything you'd be interested in. In Sitka, there was one item, a good one, which I don't remember seeing in your library—although it's entirely possible I just missed it because I was relying so heavily on the Rick's guide and the item isn't in that (at least under "Sitka" or "Russian-American Company"). It's called:

The Medical Topography of the Port of New Archangel, the Capital of the Russian Colonies in North America—by Edward Blaschke. Trans. from the Latin by J.B. Saunders, M.D. (M.D. Dissertation, Imperial Medico-Chirurgical Academy of St. Petersburg, Petropoli, I. Weinhebreri et filii, 1812)

Gene Ervins, the Park Service fellow in charge of the restoration of the Russian bishop's house, showed me this material, which is a census and quite detailed description of life in Sitka in 1838. Gene has it in his masterplan, whatever the Park Service calls such a thing, for the restoration project. If you know about Blaschke, fine, but if you don't, it seems to me highly worthwhile. Will also let you know of anything else of interest I come across.

Best regards. Carol and I had a fine time in Juneau.

Dear Sheila—

Things went so well in Sitka and the Queen Charlottes that we’re home early. I now have Sitka of the early 1850s in my head, and had better work damned hard to get it down on paper, pronto.

The quick Queen Charlottes visit was a double bonus. We flew from Prince Rupert in very dirty weather, so the Grumman Goose skimmed just over the water and I got a thorough look at stormy water. Then the beach point we went to have a look at—Tow Hill—proved to be an astounding place, a sort of mini-Half Dome such as the one at Yosemite, with a black rocky point around it, and a black river flowing beside it. A great setting for one scene of the novel.

Please tell Marlys we had the pleasure of Joe Ashby’s company a couple of times in Sitka.

I don’t know how to adequately thank you for all the hospitality—except to try repay some of it when the Nickersons next come to Seattle. Anyway, you made our Juneau stay a great pleasure. We’ll look forward to renewing the acquaintanceship here at our end, sometime soon.

all best—regards to Nick,

Tom, Sam

p.s. This seems to be our Alaska summer; a friend from Fairbanks will visit us this Saturday.
June 6, 1980

Ivan Doig
17021 Tenth Ave. N.W.
Seattle, WA. 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

Phyllis DeMuth is out of town until June 16th so I will attempt to respond to your letter of May 29th.

I have enclosed a copy of the author entries in our card file under Russian American Company. We have many subject entries under Sitka History and Russian America. If I can give you any more detailed information, please let me know. If you come to Juneau in July we will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

Verda Carey
Photographs Librarian
Alaska Historical Library

VC/pd
enc.

109 2. 28 cm. [Alaska. Division of State Libraries. Translation project. no. 1 Microfiche. 1 sheet 9x12 cm. Contents: (1) The first charter of the Russian-American co., 1799. Ukas 8 July

Russian-American Company. Charters ...

1972. (Card 2)

and


Russian American Company, (Sitka.)

Inventory of furniture in various buildings, 1863-1864. [Sitka, 1863-1864; 1872.]

1 v. 30 cm. Russian ms.

Includes entries for some later dates and a child's scribblings. Has journal entries for individuals also.

1. Sitka — Russian American Co. inventory.
**Russian American Company**


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**Microfilm**


77 rolls of microfilm. (Russian longhand) National Archives Microfilm Publ. 1911

These records were transferred to the U.S. Government in the treaty of cession.

Contents include Company letters, 1802-67; Logs of Company ships, 1850-67; Journals of exploring expeditions, 1842-64.

A printed list of contents in vertical file.

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4 August '80

Dear Dick---

Just a line of appreciation. Phyllis and her staff were wonderfully helpful to me during my days of research; I don't know when I've been in a library archive where the people have such a fine knack for being attentive to a researcher's needs. My thanks to all of them, and to you for having them on hand.

I hope your back is improved; it must be hell going through life wondering what a spare tire is called.

all best
29 June 1980
Box 81628
Fairbanks, Alaska 99708

Dear Ivan,

It was good to hear from you. I'm sorry to be so slow in replying, but I've been swamped ever since I returned from the Bering Sea about two weeks ago. I'm glad to hear that you are going to be in Alaska-- I'm sorry your research won't take you as far north as Fairbanks, though.

I have no plans to be in the Sitka-Juneau vicinity in July. I checked our ship schedule to see if they would be in the vicinity then, but the Alpha Helix will be in Prince William Sound and the Bering Sea then. Did your fleeing canoeists go inside or outside on their trip from Sitka? If they went inside, you might check to see how closely the Alaska State Ferry route corresponds to theirs. You might check with the tugs (Foss Lines, Sea-Land) and see if they take passengers for special purposes. In Juneau, you should check with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game about enforcement vessels going down the coast. We know a fellow in Juneau who used to be in the Journalism Department here in Fairbanks. His name is Jerry Reinwand, and I believe he's an assistant to the Governor. It's been years since we've seen him, but he's a good guy and should be able to put you in touch with all sorts of viable prospects. Don't reject the idea of a series of charter flights-- you can cover a lot of coast in an hour of charter flying.

Regarding insect repellent, I feel like I can be a little more help. The idea is to buy a repellent with the highest concentration of the active ingredient (N,N-diethyl metatoluamide) you can find. We use a couple, Sportmate II (43%) and Repel (53%). Off, 6-12 and cutters typically run 8-16% active ingredient. You shouldn't have trouble finding a good repellent in Seattle with all the outdoor stores.

If it turns out that you have to use the University of Alaska archives, plan on using us as a base of operations. The archivist, Paul McCarthy, is a good guy and should be able to help you on the phone.

This is another one of those years-- I knew I'd be away from home 3 months on the first of January. I'm due to spend six weeks in the Bering Sea in September and October, and have had two meetings in Europe so far. I'll be in Victoria on the 5 and 6 of August and will be passing through Seattle-- I'll call and see if we can get together for a crab and a beer.

It's been quite a summer so far. Scott had an accident a few days after I left on this most recent cruise and almost lost his right eye. He spent 17 days blindfolded and immobilized in the hospital and has been home for about 3 weeks. He has vision and they expect it to improve as the blood clears inside the eye. He's lost some peripheral vision, but every specialist we see marvels over the fact that he can see at all. Nancy goes to Music Camp at the University this summer and enters high school next fall. Peter goes to second grade. We're still busy finishing and maintaining the house-- some of these jobs go so slowly we wonder how we ever built it!

Regard, Bill
7 July '80

Dear All—

Much appreciated your highly helpful letter. We were appalled to hear of Scott's accident, and thankful he's coming out of it as well as he is.

You and my wife have about talked me into some plane charter, likely from Sitka down to Masset. I'm also going to try the Fish and Game Dept. as you suggested, and the Forest Service folks.

I'll have a clearer notion after this Juneau-Sitka jaunt whether I have to try the U. of Alaska archives. I have a hunch I may be back, at least as far as Sitka, in early January, which is the time of year this novel takes place; maybe a trip to Fairbanks will eventuate then. Will keep you posted. The novel, incidentally, is beginning to be fun; since my characters were fleeing from Sitka toward Oregon, I've begun to call it "Coming Out of the Country."

We may coincide with you in Victoria; our master plan, which may get amended all to hell, has us arriving there the afternoon of Aug. 6, either on the 6 p.m. bus from Port Hardy or by plane from there. Try us at the Embassy Court Motel--382-6161. We intend to stay on there until the 9th, researching in the Provincial Archives; but if we don't coincide at Victoria, call our number here in Seattle when you get to town, on the chance we may have got here earlier than scheduled. Hope we can coincide with you one place or the other.

all best
Dear Bill--

A quick line to say that, at last, there's some hope Carol and I may get to Alaska, perhaps late next month. But probably nowhere near as far up as Fairbanks.

Sitka and Juneau are the territory. I've begun a novel, based on a historical incident, of four furtrappers fleeing by canoe from Sitka in 1853; forty days later, the three who survived were found near the mouth of the Columbia River. That downcoast journey is the story, sort of a Deliverance in buckskins, I guess. Anyway, I have to see Sitka as background, and ransack the state library at Juneau for historical stuff. Questions for you:

--Any chance you'll be in the Juneau-Sitka area on any research then, roughly July 22-1st of August?

--Any suggestions for a way we might hitch, beg, borrow, steal, or even hire, a ride from Sitka south to Dixon Entrance? My fleeing canoeists went there, and I should see whatever of the coast I can. I've thought I might try the Coast Guard, and Fish and Wildlife; any other prospects you may know of?

--Are we gonna get carried off by eagle-sized mosquitoes that time of year? What kind of dope do you use against them? We're years out of date on that kind of combat.

My gosh, it's been an eon since we've seen you guys. All is well here, but has been busy. We went to Montana for 3 weeks, got caught in the Mt. St. Helens ash cloud at Bozeman, came home by a great circle route southward. Carol's been on sabbatical, taking courses at the U. of Wash., and rewriting her own courses. I have a book coming out this fall, called Winter Brothers. Other than things of this sort, we don't know where the times goes. And you?

best

Love to Caroline

Juan
Jul 15: phone call from Chief Massey in Juneau: said he would okay my request to the pub affairs officer at Ketchikan, Lt. Jg Nelson (phone 225-5181), so that we could see if a CG patrol—a day or two-day cruise might be possible—is going out when we want; he said a weekend probably isn’t a very good bet, which may mean Monday Aug. 4 would be the best date to shoot for. CG boat would be 95-footer.

27 June 1980

Commander, 17th Coast Guard District (DPA)
PO Box 3-5000
Juneau, Alaska 99802

Dear sir:

In late July, my wife and I will be traveling to Juneau, Sitka and Ketchikan to research a book I’m at work on, and I wonder whether there’s any opportunity for us to hitch a brief ride aboard a Coast Guard vessel out of any of those ports.

The book, based on a historical incident, will tell the story of four men from Sweden who were in the service of the Russian-America Company at Sitka in the early 1850’s, eventually decided to flee, and canoed down the coastline, hoping to reach Astoria, Oregon. In January of 1853, the three who survived indeed were found by settlers near the mouth of the Columbia River. For the purposes of the book, I’d like to see any of the coastal waters between Sitka and Dixon Entrance. If there’s such a thing as a daily Coast Guard patrol into any of that area, that would be ideal; do we have any such prospect?

As to credentials: I’ve written a couple of hundred magazine articles, and my fifth book will be published this fall. My 1978 book, This House of Sky, was nominated for a National Book Award, and seems to be known among the Alaskans I’ve been corresponding with by having been read over National Public Radio stations some months ago. My wife has had several years of magazine and newspaper experience, now is a journalism professor, and accompanies me as my research photographer. Joe Leahy of Juneau, who I believe has done some writing on Coast Guard history, I think will vouch for our work.

cordially
No heat in the place the night we were there in July; one thermostat works entire side of the wing. Ask for room 32 or beyond to get away from bar noise; 32 faces the back, also much preferable.

Food is ok, but high. Much better prices at Armed Forces snack bar.

27 June 1980

Singing Surf Inn
Box 245
Masset

I'd like to reserve a room for my wife and me for the nights of August 2, 3 and 4; a double bed would be fine. Can you quote me the rate? Also, what is the preferred payment method--is a VISA card acceptable?

cordially
Dear Evelyn Bonner--

Recently I wrote to Tracy Allen at the public library to ask about research toward a novel I'm at work on, and she advised me of some holdings of your library, and of the Sitka Historical Society, which sound pertinent to what I'm doing. I intend to come to Sitka, probably the last week in July, and thought I'd better check to be sure I won't be hitting a vacation period when the material might not be available.

I'm interested in details of life at the Russian-American Company's Sitka settlement in the early 1850's, specifically 1852-53. My novel, based on a historical incident, will involve four men from Sweden who were in the service of the R-A Company at the time, and anything which tells of Sitka life then would be useful to me.

I'm very much looking forward to Alaska, and this novel. I've just finished a book set along the Strait of Juan de Fuca in the last century, and my first book—This House of Sky, which was nominated for a National Book Award last year—was set in Montana, so I seem to be steadily working my way north. I'll look forward to meeting you in late July.

cordially
phone call from Joe, offering spare bedroom; I said the nights of 22-23 would be most welcome, he said make it the next night as well if we want. After we arrive and are picked up by Sheila, call Joe at 586-1614; or Betty Hulbert at 586-1224. Betty is with the st. museum, Joe is director of mining museum. Asked me to watch bkstores here for Alaskana: anything on rev. svce, lighthouse svce, friibilo f Is; or mss, esp to do with CG

30 May '80

Dear Joe—

It's beginning to look as if my wife and I can make it to Alaska this summer, perhaps just after mid-July, for some research toward a novel I'm going to do. I've been writing to librarians to ask about pertinent holdings, but it occurred to me to ask some general advice from you as well.

The story, based on a historical incident, is the escape of four Swedes from the Russian-American post at Sitka in 1852, and their subsequent canoe trip down the coast almost to the mouth of the Columbia. I need two things: details of Sitka life at the time, and to see as much as possible of the coastal route they took.

My notion is to start in Juneau—pending word from the state library, but I imagine they have some material on Sitka and the Russian-American Company—and then go to Sitka, and probably take the ferry on down to Prince Rupert. A question: is there a chance of bumming a ride with the Coast Guard (or anyone else) into the waters south of Baranof Island, say down as far as Dixon Entrance? How would I go about inquiring? Also, do you have any advice on lodging for a few nights in Juneau? We intend to travel with a sleeping bag, so if you or anyone you know would want to put up with paid lodgers for a little while, we are candidates.

My James G. Swan book will be published this fall, and the Wolcott cruise material has been cut down to not much more than a mention, so it's clear sailing for you on any use of his journal.

Looking forward to seeing you, if we can get this Alaska trip off the ground.

all the best

[Signature]
Joe--

Eventually, I guess I'd like to have the Wolcott journal back, but there's no rush at all. Who knows, I might make it to Juneau to pick it up from you in person. (There's some chance I'll be making an Alaska trip, maybe later this year.) Incidentally, I've just done a final cut of my Swan ms, and most of my Wolcott journal came out; about all I do now is mention that he went.

Wonderful card you sent. See you sometime.

Ivan...
your promptness shames my own tardy habits.
Thank you for your help... and papers.
Did you intend for me to return...

Thanks again

Joe
Tsultan Gowukan  "PEACEDANCER"

"Tsultan" in the native Tlingit language is the mighty and beautiful Mount Fairweather on the Southern Coast of Alaska, visible from afar on the North Pacific and in the old days a weather forecaster for Tlingit Sea Otter hunters.

"Gowukan" is literally the Sitka deer but in this context is used in the sense of a peaceful creature, a Peacemaker or Peacemaker — A title of respect for a person who has served in a ceremonial hostage exchange during the arbitration of an important tribal dispute.

M. Joseph Leahy (Coast Guard historian)
R 4 Box 4332
Juneau, Alaska 99803
26 Feb. '80

Joe--

Here's the photocopy of Swan's Wolcott journal. I'd like it back eventually, but there's no rush.

I see some of the pages are rather dim; hope it won't be too great a problem to you. You might notice that on Swan's p. 52 is his list of the Wolcott's officers; on p. 66 begins the incident of recovering the body of the army paymaster lost in the wreck of the George Wright (more on pp. 70-1). About all I'm going to be able to use in the Swan book I'm finishing is his reunion with Kt-tairlk at the wedding feast, and his viewing of the young dead woman.

I suppose by default I'm the current expert on Swan's handwriting. If anything totally stumps you, I can try help. Glad to have met you yesterday, and I'm sure our paths will cross again.

regards
Dolly Dieter  
Marine Superintendent  
Institute of Marine Science  
Seward Marine Station  
Seward, Alaska 99664

Dear Dolly--

I don't know when you'll be back in Seward for this to catch up with you, but whenever it does, it can convey my thanks, and vast appreciation, for my voyage on the ALPHA HEILIX. I gained a great amount of coastal detail to use in my book.

The crew couldn't have been more helpful, and when it comes time for Acknowledgments in the book--it should be published in the fall of '82--I'd like to be sure that along with you, Vera and IMS, they're all included. Roy recited the names, but suggested I verify the spellings with you. (He also was bashful about including himself, so please help me with his last name, which I caught only during the hubbub of the dinner at Douglas.) When you get around to it, if you'd check the enclosed list of names for me for spellings, and to see if I've omitted anyone, I'd much appreciate it.

I know it isn't easy to have someone like me dropped into the middle of your work. Thanks again for putting up with me.

all best
Dr. Vera Alexander  
Director, Institute of Marine Science  
University of Alaska  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Dear Vera:

Just a note of thanks, and vast appreciation, for providing me the opportunity of the ALPHA HELIX voyage. I gained a great amount of detail to use toward my book. When it finally emerges to publication—most likely the autumn of '82—I'll see that it acknowledges IMS and the ALPHA HELIX crew.

The crew, incidentally, couldn't have been more helpful. It can't be easy to have an observer perched like an owl in their working hours all that time, but they never flinched.

very best
phone call from Sheila, 
arranged to pick us up at airport, put us up the 1st night. 
Said they have 2d car avbl.
Plans to give suppertime buffet, 5-6, the 23d, for us to meet Juneau writers/poets. We'll know her at airport by brown and black bag she carried, saying something like "Poets and Writers of Alaska"

28 June '80

Dear Sheila Nickerson--

Please excuse a letter from out of the blue, but in Billings a few weeks ago when I did a reading from my book This House of Sky, I met a drama professor who knows you--Vicki whose last name I can't quite recall. Her touting of you and your work came to mind as my wife and I began to put together an Alaska trip. We'll be in Juneau, doing research for a novel involving the Russian-America Company and Sitka, from July 21 to the afternoon of the 25th, when we go on to Sitka. Is there a chance to get together with you during that time?

We've just been visited by yet another Montanan, Jim Welch (Winter in the Blood) and his wife Lois, who'd been to the Midnight Sun Writers' Conference in Fairbanks. They said it made for very, very long parties.

Hope to see you.
Dear Mike--

Please excuse a letter from out of the blue, but as a fellow ASJAer and writing pro, you'll recognize the logistical reason behind it. My wife and I are coming to Juneau July 21-25, to do some research at the State Library toward a novel involving the Russian-America Company and Sitka. Do you know anybody in town who runs the equivalent of a bed-and-breakfast enterprise; or barring that, simply would rent us a room for those days? I'd happily have any name you can supply, and any other lore of surviving in Juneau while traveling on one's own money.

Would very much like to see you if you're going to be around then. I hope things are going well at your typewriter. I'm waiting around for a book to come out this fall, and counting the nickels being earned by the trade paperback of House of Sky.

very best

Ivan Doig

Ivan—Just returned from camping in the Yukon to find your letter. Tried to call you as I transitted SEATAC Monday en route to New York, but you were out. I'm a bit of a loss to suggest a broad-and-busier home. We don't have any I know of (our own home, unfortunately, is totally occupied with Mary, and her plus daughter and grandson. In addition to the more tourist-used hotels (Barrow and Hilton $50+) you might consider the Driftwood Lodge ($35) or the historic Alaska Hotel if you bring your own sleeping bag, would be the AHM hostel in the basement of Northern Light Church ($2.00 per night). Give me a call when you get to town at 586-3067. Sorry not to be more helpful.

Mike
14 July '80

Dear Mike—

Thanks for the accommodations info. (Was startled to receive it in an envelope of the Hotel Tudor, which is where I've fetched up a time or two on visits to the publisher.) Friends of friends have offered us a bedroom, and I think we've got things under control now. I'll indeed give you a call, and hope to buy you lunch, when we get to town the week of the 21st.

all best

—your friend

[Signature]

[Additional text written in pencil, not legible]
7 July '80

Conrad Reinke
Information Officer
Region 10, USFS
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Mr. Reinke—

In late July, my wife and I will be traveling to Juneau (July 22-25) and Sitka (July 28-August 1) to research a book I'm at work on, and I wonder whether there's any opportunity for us to hitch a brief ride with the Forest Service out of either place.

The book is about the Sitka fur trade in the time of the Russian-America Company, and is based on the historical incident of four men from Sweden who fled their service there in the early 1850's and canoed down the coastline in hope of reaching Astoria, Oregon. In January of 1853, the three who survived indeed were found by settlers near the mouth of the Columbia River. For the purposes of the book, I'd like to see any of the coastline between Sitka and Dixon Entrance. "If there's such a thing as a day flight or boat trip by USFS people into any of that area, that would be ideal; do we have any such prospect?

As to credentials: I've written a couple of hundred magazine articles, and also the history of the Pacific Northwest Experiment Station in Portland—working under Louise Parker there. My fifth book will be published this fall; my 1978 book, This House of Sky, was nominated for the National Book Award, and seems to be known among the Alaskans I've been corresponding with by having been read over National Public Radio stations some months ago. My wife, who does research photography for me, has had several years of magazine and newspaper experience and now is a journalism professor.

Cordially,

[Signature]
July 9, 1980

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

Dear Mr. Doig,

Unfortunately, I have not been successful in arranging accommodatons for you and Mrs. Doig in a private residence for the requested dates. Housing will be available at the Sheldon Jackson College campus beginning Sunday, July 27. The rates are: room and board—$28.00 each per day; room only—$15.50 each per day. Velma Stone (Sheldon Jackson College, Box 479, phone—907-747-5262) handles the arrangements.

Two hundred students participating in the annual Fine Arts Camp will be at the campus through the 26th. The campus, museum and libraries are all within a comfortable distance to each other.

Delighted that you have scheduled a meeting with Miss Miller. She certainly is a fountain of knowledge about Sitka.

Cordially,

Tracy S. Allen
Librarian
July 14, '80

Dear Tracy—

Thanks very much for inquiring around about accommodations, and for the information about the college lodging. I think we can fend now. Carol and I look forward to meeting you, and seeing the library, in a couple of weeks.

best regards
28 June 1980

Dear Tracy--

Please excuse yet another letter from me, but it occurred to me you may be the logical person to ask: do you know of anybody in Sitka who'd be interested in renting an accommodation to my wife and me for the week or so we'll be in town? A bed-and-breakfast situation, or a room, or the house of someone who might be out fishing—anything of the sort would be workable for us. If you can think of anyone, I'd happily have their name, or have them write or call me collect. We'll be arriving in Sitka the morning of August 1st, afternoon of July 25, will go on to Ketchikan the morning of August 1.

regards
Dear Tracy Allen--

Thanks immensely for the informative letter about the holdings of Sitka's other libraries. I'll write to Isabel Miller and Evelyn Bonner to be certain of using the material, and I'll certainly come by your library. I'm flattered that you have a copy of Sky.

See you in late July.
June 12, 1980

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

Dear Mr. Doig:

This letter is a response to yours of May 29th concerning material for your new novel.

Although the Kettleson Memorial Library maintains a small Local History Collection, unfortunately, no diaries, travelers' accounts for that period are included. The Sitka Historical Society Museum (Isabel Miller, Chairman; P.O. Box 2414, Sitka) has recently received material in Swedish about life in Sitka in the mid 1840's when Etholen was governor. This information will be translated eventually. The Stratton Library (Evelyn Bonner, Librarian; P.O. Box 479 Sitka) at the Sheldon Jackson College campus maintains quite an extensive Alaskan collection. A map (slide) of Sitka for 1846 is available there. Also, the Alaska Historical Library of the Alaska State Library (Phyllis Demuth, Librarian; Pouch G, Juneau, Alaska 99811) may have some research material.

Mr. Doig, do stop at the public library when you are in Sitka. Perhaps you could be persuaded to autograph the library copy of This House of Sky.

Best regards,

(Mrs) Tracy S. Allen
Librarian
Wickwire

Dear Jim,

I understand Jean Walkinshaw is in both our lives currently, and Jean mentioned during our work on the Winter Brothers script that she'd found out you're familiar with that book. I knew I'd signed a House of Sky to you, but it's a bonus to me that you searched out Winter Brothers as well.

Now I wonder if you could be bribed, gently, to help me with a point on my current manuscript. I'm at work on a novel deriving from an actual adventure which occurred in the winter of 1852-53—a canoe voyage from Sitka to Willapa Bay by three Swedes who were escaping from seven-year indenturement to the Russians. According to what account I have, these three men—they were found and cared for at Willapa by James Swan's fellow oysterman—were terrifically exhausted. That's what I'd like to talk to you about, if you'd be game: the effects, the feel, of extreme expenditures of energy such as you've done in your mountain-climbing. It may not sound like much of a lunch topic, but I'd be enthralled, and of course would buy. Could you manage an hour or so with me anytime in November?

best regards
Highlights in Växjö Sweden:
SMÅLAND’S MUSEUM AND
THE HOUSE OF EMIGRANTS
R/V ALPHA HELIX

Dimensions: 133 feet in length
Range: 30 days
1966: built with a grant from the National Science Foundation.
1966 - 1979: operated by the Scripps Institution until the end of 1979.
1980: transferred to the University of Alaska, Institute of Marine Science.

Equipment: originally designed and equipped to conduct experimental biological and biochemical research in remote regions. The ship is now being converted to a general purpose oceanographic vessel capable of servicing the rigorous needs of high latitude scientists.

Impact on IMS: the ALPHA HELIX will allow the institute to expand inshore and nearshore work. It also has some ice strengthening and will be able to move into deeper water. Up to 15 scientists can be accommodated at sea.

A shipboard minicomputer will assist in data acquisition and real-time data analysis. Previously data had to be analyzed post cruise, much like survey work. Experiments can now be altered at sea.

1981 Cruises: 153 sea days have been scheduled between early May and mid-November. NSF funding will support six projects totaling 148 sea days. Private industry is supporting four days. The State of Alaska is supporting one day as part of a new project which will take students to sea to learn data collection techniques.
CARVED HISTORY

The Totem Poles & House Posts of Sitka National Historical Park
RUSSIAN TRADERS IN ALASKA

By Charles E. Hanson, Jr.

Comparatively speaking we have little published material in English on the every day operations of the Russian fur trade in North America. Alaskan natives and mixed-bloods managed many of the trading activities conducted by the Russian-American Company, and journals or diaries by company men are extremely rare.

Special interest is therefore due the observations of Frederick Whymper, an Englishman who served as an artist in one party of explorers for the Western Union Telegraph Company in 1865-67. The Company embarked on an ambitious scheme to connect Russia and North America by an intercontinental telegraph line. The project was dropped, after construction was already underway, upon the successful completion of the Atlantic cable in 1867.

Before going to the Alaskan interior, Whymper visited Sitka and the Kamchatka Peninsula of Siberia by ship. At that time Sitka, or New Archangel, was dominated by the Governor’s house, often dubbed “Baranof’s Castle” because it was built by Russian Governor Aleksandr Baranov in the early 1800’s. Here was the American headquarters of the Company where the peltries from twenty-one different trading stations passed into the warehouses each year.

Whymper noted many similarities between Sitka and the city of Petropavlovski in Kamchatka. The latter had formerly been a Company station and was a typical Russian colonial settlement. Of Sitka, he wrote, “The colouring of the town is gay and the surroundings picturesque. The houses yellow, with sheet-iron roofs painted red; the bright green spires and dome of the Greek Church, and the old battered hulks, roofed in and used as magazines, lying propped up on the rocks at the water’s edge, with the antiquated buildings of the Russian Fur Company, gave Sitka an original, foreign and fossilized kind of appearance.”

In the fall of 1866 the party reached St. Michael’s, or Michaelovski, the principal post for the Yukon area and the Indian trade of the interior. It was founded by the Company about 1833 and was situated at latitude 63° 28’ N., and longitude 161° 44’ W., on Norton Sound near the mouth of the Yukon.

Basically Michaelovski resembled all the other trading forts from the Mississippi to Slave Lake with its enclosure and blockhouses, a staff of mixed
nationalities and the ever-present Indian village. However it had the deep stamp of Russian, rather than English, culture against the universal primitive New World background. Whymper wrote:

“The station is built on the model of a Hudson’s Bay Co.’s Fort, with enclosure of pickets, and with bastions flanking it. Inside are the store-houses and dwellings of the employees, including the ‘casine’ (caserne), or general barrack, bath and cook-houses. These painted yellow, and surmounted by red roofs, gave it rather a gay appearance.

The inhabitants of the fort — all servants of the company — were a very mixed crowd, including pure Russians and Finlanders, Yakutz from Eastern Siberia, Aleuts, from the islands, and creoles from all parts. They were not a very satisfactory body of men; . . . much given to laziness and drunkenness. Fortunately, their opportunity for this latter indulgence was limited, usually, to one shot per annum, on the arrival of the Russian ship from Sitka with their supplies; whilst the ‘Pravalishik,’ Mr. Stephanoff, the commander of this fort, who had charge of the whole district, stood no nonsense with them, and was ever ready to make them yield assistance. His arguments were of a forcible character. I believe the knout formed no part of his establishment, but he used his fists with great effect! . . . The Russian American Company, however, gave these men salaries proportioned to their deserts: 1½ poods of coarse flour (about 60 pounds) per month, and from 5d. to 10d. per day was the average allowance, and most of them were hopelessly in debt to the Company. Fish and game at this post were not reliable resources; and their pay would barely keep them in tea, tobacco, and clothing. The tea used was a superior and expensive kind (worth 5s to 5s 10d a pound in the Company’s store).

Outside the post, besides other buildings, there was a small chapel, in which on ‘Prasniks,’ or holidays of the Church, and on each Sunday, a service was performed. A priest of the Greek Church, resident at the ‘Mission,’ on the Lower Yukon, comes down occasionally to baptize the natives.

St. Michael’s though threatened by distant Indians, has never been seriously attacked. A small village of Indian houses — underground, or excavated in the hill — exists near the fort . . . .”

The party found a Russian steam bath in regular operation at Michaelovski, and at every other settlement they visited. It appears that everyone became a firm convert to the baths and found them refreshing.

The next Company post reached by the party was Unalachtleet, on Norton Sound at the mouth of the Unalachtleet River. This was a much smaller post, with pickets but no blockhouses. The ‘bidarshik’ or head man lived with his family in a single room. The ‘casine’ was populated by a few engagees and a host of cockroaches. The windows in the buildings here had translucent fur seal gut instead of glass. A large common ‘pitchka’ or bake-oven stood in the yard.

Near this post stood a large village of Malemute and Kaveak Indians. A large proportion of the Indians had flint-lock or percussion-lock guns, generally obtained through inter-tribal barter with Hudson’s Bay Company posts far to the eastward. They lived generally on caribou, fish, and berries and were energetic fur gatherers. Most of them used both pipe tobacco and snuff made from Russian leaf tobacco. Strangely enough, tea and sugar do not appear to have been regular articles for Indian trade but were generally reserved for the traders themselves.

On November 15, Whymper’s party reached the post at Nulato, on the Yukon River, making a grand entry with gunfire. “All hands helped the sledges up the incline leading up to the station, and a few minutes later we
were lunching at the ‘bidarshik’s’ table on raw salt-fish and bread. It need not be said that the ‘samovar’ had been prepared as soon as they sighted us in the distance. The poorest Russian never neglects the sacred rite of hospitality, and we pledged each other in massive cups of strong tea. Later in the day we had something stronger.

We found the quarters appropriated to our use — a low building forming one of the boundaries of the courtyard — to be large and reasonably comfortable. The place had been cleaned out, a large fire lighted in the ‘pitchka,’ or oven, straw laid on the floor, and, in short, everything done that was possible with the limited means at command. Later in the day we took a delicious steam-bath, and soon came to the conclusion that, after all, life in Russian America was perfectly endurable.”

Nalato was a picketed fort with two watch-towers and a gate that was always shut at night. The log apartments formed part of the fort enclosure. The water supply was kept in the ubiquitous water barrel filled from the river a quarter-mile away. The only special problem there was keeping a water hole open. Ice formed to a thickness of nine feet on the Yukon. At one time in December the temperature fell to —58° Fahrenheit.

Like the buffalo hump and beaver tail of other places, there was a special delicacy for the Russians at Nulato. It was the rich, oily liver of a large black fish called the Natimo.

Life at the post included many small social events that sound like those at some Missouri River fort subject, however, to the omnipresent Russian overtones: “This day we gave a dinner-party to ‘Ivan,’ the bidarshik, and his clerk ‘Iggor.’ Ivan, a half-breed, had been prooted to his present position from the fact that he was a good trader; in other respects he was an ignorant man, able neither to read nor write. We found him a pretty good fellow. Our banquet of baked ptarmigan and fried ham, pancakes (known, reader, by the poeti-

Fort St. Michael's, or Michaelovski, Alaska
cal name of ‘flap-jacks’ molasses (known by us as ‘long-tailed sugar’), and coffee, pleased our Russian friends well, but our tea was not to their standard. They universally use a superior kind. In Petropaulovski, a merchant told me that he had once imported a quantity of second-rate tea, and had to re-export it, for the poorest Kamchatdale would neither buy it nor take it as a gift.”

In June, 1867, Whymper and Mr. Dall of the Smithsonian traveled 600 miles upriver to visit the Hudson’s Bay Company’s Fort Yukon. Upon his arrival there he was moved to draw a comparison. “After our experience of the rather dirty Russian forts it was quite a relief to find newly plastered walls, glazed windows, capital floors, open fire-places, and a general appearance of cleanliness.” He did observe, however, that the tariff at Ft Yukon was “rather higher” than that at the Russian forts. In fact, he considered some of the prices to be very high. The goods traded by the two companies seemed to be similar and Whymper particularly noted the amounts of dentailia traded by both. One exception was the fact that the Russians did not trade guns or ammunition on the Yukon.

Familiar as he was with trading operations in Canada and the United States, Whymper predicted that light steamboats could go up the Yukon and open up a trading empire. The Russian had apparently made no move toward such a venture.

Whymper’s day by day narrative of the Yukon trip is replete with observations that have a familiar ring to any student of the fur trade. In addition there are many things that hark to the days of the old French trade when a few whites struggled to carry on commerce in a vast area with limited capital. There is the same feeling of a far-distant and unconcerned royal court which chose to be represented by a few soldiers and a black-robed priest or two.

NOTES:

1. Whymper’s experiences were published as “Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska;” by Frederick Whymper, John Murray, London, 1868. A similar narrative by a member of the Siberian telegraph party was published as “Tent Life in Siberia” by George Kennan, G.P. Putnam Sons, New York, 1867.


6. Ibid. p. 175.
7. Ibid. p. 221.
8. Ibid. p. 189. Denticialia were small tusk-shaped shells.
Overland Monthly, Dec. 1875, pp. 554-7

- byline in vol. contents p. - Charles S. Scammon
yet there are strange coincidences in the case. I was not thinking of this being the anniversary, until my ears were arrested by a singular moan.

"I heard it," said I, "but thought it was the sudden swelling of the wind.

"And so did I!" exclaimed my son and daughter.

"If it was the wind," said Cousin William, "it is the only blast we have had to-night." "What became of his wife?" I asked.

"She returned to her family," "And the fair woman of the mountains?"

"I afterward ascertained that she died in the arms of Sir Hugh. It was her summons that called him away on that memorable day. Grief for his desertion killed her. Her last words were, 'Meet me soon!'—words that it seems were but too faithfully obeyed.

**A RUSSIAN BOAT-Voyage.**

IRVING, in his *Astarta*, speaks of the hard-drinking and iron-ruling government of Russian America, which, according to its early history, maintained an existence for many years under the fostering care of the renowned Baronoff. The chief metropolis of the territory was situated on an island bearing his name, and known as Sitka, or New Archangel. The employed importuned of the old country were of a class inured to hard labor and frugal living, aside from their inordinate indulgence in strong drink.

Militant rule was exercised over the colony, and at the capital the discipline was punctiliously strict; moreover, a watchful eye was ever kept upon the different departments to prevent desertions. Notwithstanding this vigilance, it appears from the record that at one time several restless spirits concocted a plan of absconding, which was carried into effect successfully, but at great hazard.

As usual in such cases, the tale is prefaced with complaints of ill-usage in justification of appropriating the Russian company's property to private uses.

The journal kept by one of their party begins as follows: "This perilous voyage—launching out on the broad Pacific Ocean to seek harbors for fresh supplies of water and provisions, among wild Indians, on a rough coast not known by any of us to contain any settlements of civilized people before reaching the Columbia River, a distance of nearly six hundred miles—was undertaken to liberate ourselves from one of the most tyrannical governments on the face of the earth, under which a laboring man, and even the best mechanics, receive but a trifle as wages."

One of the confederates, named West—a sail-maker—while ostensibly employed repairing and making sails for the company's vessels, contrived to complete the sails for their own boat, but with a hairbreadth escape from detection. A scanty supply of other indispensable articles of outfit being at last collected, at two o'clock on the morning of the 20th of April, 1853, they silently embarked in a canoe or boat previously selected, and began their flight. A dead calm prevailed, and a gloomy darkness. Once they thought they heard the splash of oars, and again the voice of the sentinel as he reported the hour. With anxious hearts they plied their oars, and prayed fervently for a favoring breeze to widen the distance from the fort before daylight.

At five A.M. the wished-for breeze sprung up from the northward, when all sail was set, and they cut through the ruffled waters, winding their way through whirling narrow passages between rocks and islets, or running along the open coast, as their southerly course led them. At daylight they saw three canoes at some distance containing Indians. "Not knowing their disposition toward us," reads the journal—"whether they were friends or enemies—we fired a shot over their heads, which they understood and turned their canoes back toward the shore.

On the morning of the 21st they passed the island of Baidarka, and at noon were up with Embeline; toward evening the island sunk in the distance as they dashed along with a freshening wind from the south-west. Every preparation was now made for rough weather. "A new mainsail was bent, some new rigging was made, and one of the party (a carpenter) repaired the mainsail; a new cleat for the main-halyards was made, and a tight canvas bag to keep tobacco in." From this one might infer that they placed great value on the weed.

On the 22d they were under all sail, running rapidly along the coast. About eight A.M., they saw two islands. At three P.M., Bilir Island was seen, and at midnight the wind came out of north-west, clearing the haze, when the Queen Charlotte Islands were seen in the distance.

Early on the morning of the 23d they attempted to land on an island, finally succeeding after barely escaping total wreck; the boat struck heavily in the surf, which started leaks, and all articles aboard were wet by a roller breaking over them. Luckily, however, all was saved, and the boat hauled high up the beach. Then Ridderston and West, two of their number, being boat-builders, improved every moment to make the necessary repairs, while the others got the life-boat ready for use, and in the afternoon went in search of fresh-water, which, to their great relief, was found in abundance, and a supply brought to the boat. "To celebrate our success," says the journalist, "in being free from Russian bondage, we prepared a bowl of warm toddy, and drank a toast to a brighter future." Toward evening the whole party went for an additional supply of water. While on their way one of their number discovered a quantity of gunpowder, some of which was afterward used in paying the seamen of the boat.

The 24th was ushered in with a dismal rain-storm, that lasted through the day; nevertheless, all hands were busily engaged in repairing the boat. At night, being fatigued and drenched with the incessant rain, "made another bowl of toddy," and toasts were given, "hoping that the number of our friends might exceed the number of our enemies."

The weather proved pleasant from April 25th to the 28th, permitting the completion of the repairs on their crazy craft. On the evening of the 28th they launched it. Unfortunately during the operation they lost an anchor, and the boat sprung a new leak; however, with great risk and difficulty all was last embarked, and they made the best of their way along the shores of the island until a smooth bay was discovered, which they entered and there landed without difficulty.

The 29th, a pleasant day, was improved in again repairing the boat. In this bay they "shot two sea-birds."

April 30th, at midnight, they left the harbor, using their oars. At eight A.M. they were out at sea; the wind came fair and fresh, soon increasing to a gale, but they made good way with a reefed mainsail—a mere speck of sail.

May 1st brought a change of weather; the wind lulled and the sea went down. At meridian two canoes with Indians were seen making toward them. They
immediately tacked their vessel and stood out to sea. Soon after the canoes changed their course, and were last seen making for the land. The fugitive vessel again resumed her southern course. Night set in with thick weather and rain, obscuring the land from view, and they groped their way as best they could by a pocket-compas, which was now and then consulted by the faint flicker of a transient light of pitch-wood. At dawn on the following morning an island was seen to leeward; their prow was immediately turned for it; in a few hours they landed, and “killed six sea-birds and made a good meal of them.” At this place they remained until the 8th, high winds and rainy weather prevailing, and during the time they succeeded in killing ninety “sea-fowl,” which afforded them a supply of food. At this date the diarist remarks: “We were also fortunate enough to find some mussels and small lobsters, and fish also; consequently we enjoyed ourselves, and had a good time and felt happy.”

May 8th, in the evening, they left “Happy Harbor,” using their oars until the offing was gained, when, with light winds springing up, they set sail to it, but made little way. On the 9th, the wind came from the north, which carried them along at their utmost speed.

At daylight a heavy squall struck them, carrying away the mainmast, with all attached. Luckily the squall passed quickly over, when, mastering all their strength and resolution, they succeeded in picking up the broken spar and saving the sail. The mast was soon temporarily repaired and sail again set, but the wind settled into a hard gale, which obliged them to heave-to. In a few hours the wind abated. On the morning of the 10th it came from the south, compelling them either to head seaward or close in with the land. They chose the latter alternative. The wind soon became a gale again, to which they shortened sail, but held their course and steered for Vancouver Island. On gaining the southern side of it, they were enabled to land. Here they found mussels as well as other kinds of shell-fish in abundance, on which they feasted until the cravings of hunger were satisfied. A good supply was then taken on board for a sea stock. Stormy weather prevented their departure until the 13th, when at an early hour they sailed on their course with a favoring breeze.

May 17th they passed a point of land, and soon after found themselves among shoals and breakers. The vessel struck on a sunken rock. “It seems,” mentions the chronicler, “almost a miracle that we got through this dangerous place and into deep water again.” The same day they attempted to land again, but the natives fired at them; so they continued along the shore and landed at another part of the island, but passed an anxious night, fearing another attack. At an early hour on the 16th they were again under sail, with a light wind.

The 17th was a still calm day, without a breath of air to ripple the undulating swell as it swept along the coast. As the day dawned nothing was heard but the distant sound of the surf dashed against the rock-bound shore, and the shrieking of sea-fowl, as if boding a coming storm. The sun rose out of a thick haze, betokening wind, but none came. The supply of half-putrid provisions, consisting entirely of shell-fish, was nearly exhausted, and with heavy hearts the famishing party gazed almost hopelessly in all directions as their frail vessel rose and fell with the waves. At length one of their number thought some black-looking objects could be seen toward the shore. Anxiously every eye was turned in that direction. Soon twenty canoes came dashing along with their savage crews, who proved nevertheless to be friendly. They had come out for the purpose of fishing, and all were at once busily engaged in the sport.

As the glaring sun went down a light air sprang up, waiting them slowly southward. Before parting with the fleet of canoes they were given a supply of fish, which proved a timely addition to their scanty fare. The following three days they coasted along with light fair breezes, but dared not land, as the Indians seen daily in their canoes appeared to be hostile.

On the 21st they passed two canoes, when the Indians fired at them; fortunately no one was injured.

On the 22d they landed at a place called “Dearmost,” where one of their party, named Ridderston, was shot dead by an Indian. The starving fugitives re-embarked and fled for their lives, setting all sail to a strong fair wind.

“May 23d.” reads the journal, “we got into shallow water, the sea high and breaking. We were very near being wrecked, but the Almighty saved us from the calamity.”

This place proved to be Shoalwater Bay bar, and we most sincerely agree with the narrator that their escape from being overwhelmed by the breakers was quite providential.

After passing the bar they were unable to land, on account of the rough shallow water, so they lay at anchor from the 24th to the 27th, anxiously waiting a favorable time to get on shore.

May 28th they saw a boat with white men in it, but they could not communicate with them, as a broad flat intervened. The following day they ate the last morsel of their provisions. On the 30th, the weather becoming more moderate, they left their anchorage, sailed up the bay a few miles, and landed. Immediately two of their number set out in quest of game, or anything to appease their craving starving hunger; nothing was found but some wild fruit, which they voraciously devoured. Soon after they heard the report of fire-arms. On going in the direction whence the report came, to their great joy and relief they found, to use their own expression, “civilized Americans.”

Quickly did those distressed men manifest their wants, and as quickly were they relieved by our countrymen, who gave them meat and drink from their haversacks, and conducted them to their dwellings on the banks of the Flats.

Here ended this voyage of hazard and suffering, and when assured (in answer to their overanxious inquiries) that they were in a free country and would not be molested, the voyagers' past adventures seemed nothing in comparison to their inexpressible joy at realizing their fullest anticipations.

It may be well to add that the brief journal closed as follows: “The names of those four gentlemen who so kindly received us after our long and perilous passage, and who we all with sincerest gratitude shall remember so long as we live, were Captain Pilg, Charles Dunlap, August Fairfield, and Edward Banks.”