

ON THE FIRST PERMANENT RUSSIAN SETTLEMENT IN NORTH AMERICA _____ Kodiak Island

Two documents: 1786, 1794 _____

1786. INSTRUCTIONS from Grigorii Shelikhov, founder of the settlement on Kodiak Island, to Konstantin Samoilov, his chief manager, for managing the colony during Shelikhov's voyage to Okhotsk, Russia, on business of the Russian-American Company. May 4, 1786. [Excerpts]

. . . With the exception of twelve persons who are going to the Port of Okhotsk, there are 113 Russians on the island of Kytkak [Kodiak]. . . . When the *Tri Sviatitelia* [Three Saints] arrives from Okhotsk, the crews should be sent to Kinai and to Shugach. Add as many of the local pacified natives as possible to strengthen the Russians. In this manner we can move faster along the shore of the American mainland to the south toward California. . . .

With the strengthening of the Russian companies in this land, try by giving them all possible favors to bring into subjection to the Russian Imperial Throne the Kykhtat, Aliaksa, Kinai and Shugach people. Always take an accurate count of the population, both men and women, according to clans. . . .

When the above mentioned natives are subjugated, every one of them must be told that people who are loyal and reliable will prosper under the rule of our Empress, but that all rebels will be totally exterminated by Her strong hand. The purpose of our institutions, whose aim is to bring good to all people, should be made known to them. They must be told to stop wars and robbery among themselves, murderous plotting against the Russians, and all their inconstancy and disobedience. People who want to deprive us of our lives or who go back on their promises should be dealt with after a thorough investigation according to instructions from the Okhotsk Office. . . .

During tours of inspection you must, with the help of reliable interpreters, make impartial investigation of all cases of corruption, graft and insubordination, and see to the integrity in relations between the officials of the company and their subordinates. You should eradicate corruption in all cases. You must see that the inhabitants who become subjugated do not lack food and clothing, as is apt to happen due to their laziness and negligence. Before we came they were living in poor conditions due to their profligacy and laziness. After they know what good housekeeping and order are they will acquire a taste for a better life and will become ambitious and quit their licentious and willful ways. When they



Map of the Russian Far East and Russian America, 1844
[Karta Ledovitago moria i Vostochnago okeana]



detail, Kodiak Island

Excerpted and images added by the National Humanities Center, 2006, www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/pds/pds.htm. (1) 1786 instructions in *A History of the Russian American Company*, vol. 2, eds. Richard A. Pierce and Alton S. Donnelly, trans. Dmitri Krenov (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1979), pp. 6-14. (2) 1794 instructions in Grigorii I. Shelikov, *A Voyage to America: 1783-1786*, ed. Richard A. Pierce, tr. Marina Ramsay (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1981), 132-134. Permissions pending. Complete image credits at www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/pds/amerbegin/imagecredits.htm.

know a better way of living, they will understand and will take part in the work that enlightened people are doing. . . .

The school founded by me must be enlarged. For this purpose I will send required books from Okhotsk on the ship *Tri Sviatitelia*. Education is useful and necessary. Only literate people can be good



and accurate interpreters, so needed in this country. This point was overlooked by the hunters of the company, and was not made known to the Government. . . .

For this purpose I am taking with me about forty Americans, male and female, both children and adults, some of their own free will and some as war prisoners. After they see Russia, our buildings and customs, I will reward one third of them and send them back. The other third I will attempt to present to the Imperial Court and the

remaining third, the children, we are going to educate in Okhotsk or Irkutsk, and after their education is completed, if they wish it, we will return them here. From them their relatives and countrymen will learn about the law, order, and prosperity in Russia and will want to improve conditions here. . . .

When possible, build the company's buildings according to my plans. They must be made out of logs or in the form of dugouts where there is not enough timber. No more than two or three natives at one time can be let in the barracks or in the fortress. They should never be allowed to spend the night in Russian quarters. . . . Do not let the Russians go to the native villages except on business. When our men are sent to the woods for firewood or for any other purpose, never send them alone. They must carry loaded guns, and be very cautious at all times. During my sojourn here, notwithstanding their good treatment, the natives due to their instability tried many times to take our lives. If you discover them plotting, keep them away and take care. . . .

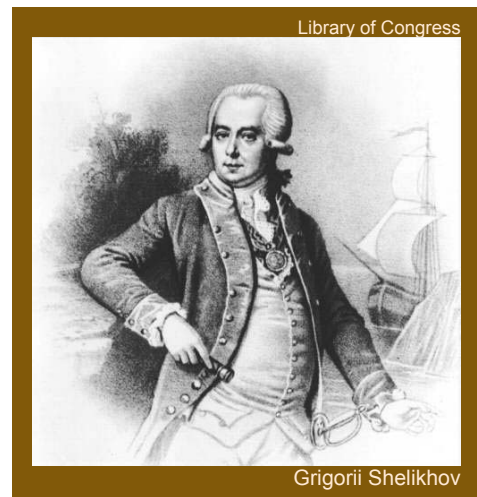
As during my sojourn here, furs should be bartered voluntarily. No goods should be given the natives on credit. I tried to give them credit myself, but after they got the goods they did not even think of paying it back. . . .

Build the harbors and forts I planned on Afognak Island and at Kenai, strong and substantial. Build sheds for baidaras and bairarkas and back of the fortification warm and comfortable barracks for Aleuts, with partitions, and a bathhouse for native employees and for the hostages. . . . Prepare vegetable gardens with fences around them. I left you different seeds for this purpose and you will receive more from Okhotsk. . . .

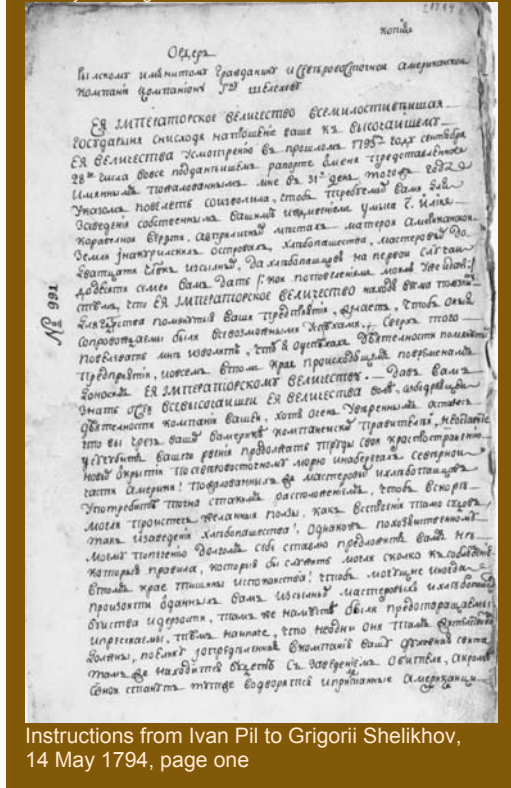
I hear that Maksimov failed to start with his party beyond the Strait between the 7th and the 20th of April. If you find that is so, and that he really stayed till this date, he cannot be trusted as the leader of an artel. . . . If we find that he is slack and detrimental to the company, we will dismiss him like a useless drone.

In conclusion, I confirm to you, Samoilov, that in case of emergencies or if you think it necessary, use your own judgment, because for neglect and carelessness nobody else will be held responsible but you.

The partner of the company of navigators of the Northern Ocean,



Grigorii Shelikhov



Instructions from Ivan Pil to Grigoriy Shelikhov, 14 May 1794, page one

1794. INSTRUCTIONS from Ivan Pil, governor general of Siberia, to Grigoriy Shelikhov, concerning the settlements in the Alaskan islands and coast with Russian families exiled in Siberia. 12 May 1794.

[Excerpts. Text in quotation marks from the orders of Pil to Shelikhov. Source of text not set off by quotation marks in the Pierce & Ramsay edition unclear.]

“Her Imperial Majesty, all-merciful Empress . . . deigned to order that you be given twenty workers from the exiles and ten families of farmers (these men have already been transferred [to you] in accordance with my ordinance), whom you requested for the construction of a wharf near Cape St. Elias and for the introduction of agriculture at proper places on the American mainland and on the Kuril Islands, at your own expense; because Her Imperial Majesty considered your said undertakings very useful for the state and wishes to see them progressing successfully. . . .”

1. Upon his [Shelikhov] arrival to the colonies the Administrator-General must immediately build a fortress as a defense against the natives and for protection of the Company’s property.
2. To build a small town. “The houses with all additional buildings must be comfortable and attractive, properly removed from each other for fire safety. The streets must be straight, wide and divided into blocks with vacant plazas left in convenient places for future public buildings. In a word, knowing the local conditions, order this first settlement in America to be built as a standard city. Any disfiguring of it with crooked, narrow, impassable lanes and bypaths must not be permitted, so that in the future this first settlement may become the beautiful abode of a multitude of people, and the glory and renown of Russian art and taste may not be impa[i]red.” . . .
3. To develop agriculture, to raise grains and vegetables for your own consumption and for export to Okhotsk and Kamchatka. To build a reserve store for grain and vegetables for emergencies. To encourage agriculture by payment to the settlers for products sold to the Company and to encourage the use of local foodstuffs; such as fish, game and roots. To raise cattle and poultry.
4. To encourage industry; “to use all means for finding out about the mineral resources of the country . . . [ellipsis in Pierce & Ramsay ed.] no doubt there should be ore, especially iron”; to instruct the settlers in tanning, soap making and other crafts; to make the settlement self-supporting, independent of Russia for supplies. To raise hemp and flax and to work them into canvas, sailcloth and rope. “If the iron ore is found and worked into iron, which must be the property of the settlers, then you will have no need to import anchors, bolts and all kinds of ship’s nails that are produced here. The discovery of other ores will enrich your settlement there even more. In a word, you must order that everything acquired by the settlers through their labor must be their property, except the [products of the] fur trade with the Americans, which does not pertain to their position as it may distract them from agriculture and other profitable occupations, and which must belong exclusively to your Company.” For better order and safety, to divide the settlers into large groups according to family relationship, to encourage the natives to live with the settlers, treating them with kindness and teaching them the Russian way of living and various arts and crafts “so that in time these Americans may become not

only citizens of this first town in America, but can be hired to serve on the sea vessels.” After agriculture is firmly established, the settlers may be divided into smaller groups so that each Russian and native can have his own property. “The unmarried settlers should marry ‘American’ girls and train them in the various household duties by the Russian women who were sent with their families. Equally, the ‘American’ men should be encouraged to marry the Russian girls or widows in order to establish mutual relationship.”

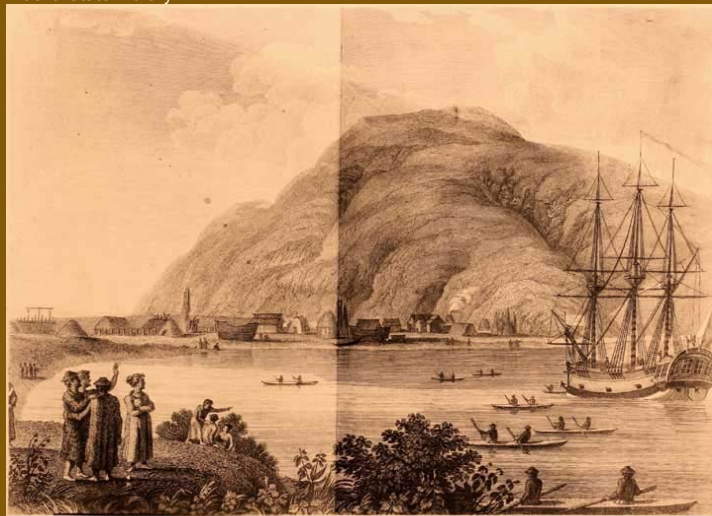
5. To keep order; to promote welfare; to punish the disorderly and the criminals, yet to do it with discretion, seeking the counsel of Archimandrite Ioasaph, who is a learned man of peaceful disposition and high morals, in difficult cases. To respect the clergymen, to assist them in their spiritual and scholarly pursuits, especially in the study of ores and other natural resources. “Your Administrator-General will act wisely if he will strictly supervise the conduct of each of the settlers of this new town and will try to eradicate even the use of obscene language by the settlers.”
6. To civilize and to Christianize the Americans. “Their children learn not only to speak Russian but to read and to write; some of them have even studied mathematics, two of whom were sent by you in 1792 to Japan to practice navigation and seven were used for the same purpose in America. To promote learning it is necessary for your Administrator-General and his subordinates to exert unified effort, watchful earnestness, kind and just treatment and relief in need as means to attract them [natives] to the Russian settlements, where they can live with the Russians, become acquainted with the Russian mode of life and be trained in various arts and crafts, whichever they can learn, as well as agriculture and cattle breeding; the more so that the Americans have naturally keen minds and good memories, and are strong, agile, and consequently, able to profit by such training.” To take as hostages young and gifted people who have better ability for learning. To keep spies among the

Americans to insure the safety of the settlers.

7. To build a dock and small boats for the use of the settlers.

8. To avoid dealings with foreign vessels, except through loyal Americans; not to enter their ships, but to be hospitable; not to show them the fortifications of the property. “Seek the advice of the Archimandrite, who, in these cases, will decide how to receive the visiting foreigners.” To watch especially for English, Swedish, and French vessels, the last-mentioned to be treated as belonging to a Russian enemy, until legitimate authority is re-established in France.

Alaska State Library



Three Saints Bay, Kodiak island, engraving by the artist on an English expedition to the area, 1788-1792

9. To instruct the manager of Urup Island to show all possible courtesy toward the Japanese and to study the conditions of Japan — population, resources, commerce, fortifications, customs, law, opinion about Russians, etc. — through the hairy Kuril Islanders, who are not attached to the Japanese. To be on guard against an unexpected attack by the Kuril Islanders.
10. To report on the condition of the Kuril Islands and navigation there, and to furnish maps, logbooks and descriptions of the country, as well as all sorts of unusual objects — for reporting to Her Imperial Majesty.

Lieutenant-General and Knight, Ivan Pil