

Reviews

RUSSIAN AMERICA

RUSSKAYA AMERIKA V 'ZAPISKAKH' KIRILA KHLEBNIKOVA. NOVO-ARKHANGEL'SK [Russian America in the 'Notes' of Kiril Khlebnikov. Novo-Arkhangel'sk]. Fedorova, S. G. (editor). 1985. Moscow, Nauka. 302 p, illustrated, maps. Hard cover. R2.40.

K. T. Khlebnikov was an official of the Russian-American Company, who served first in Kamchatka and other parts of the Russian Pacific seaboard, and then from 1817 to 1832 in Russian America, based at Novo-Arkhangel'sk (modern Sitka). He was an observant and scholarly person who was reputed to know Russian America better than any other man then living, and he recorded his impressions very fully in the form of 'notes'. They were entitled by him 'Notes on the colonies in America', and they were divided into six sections: I Sitka (I give the modern names); II Kodiak; III Unalaska, the Fox Islands, and part of the Alaska Peninsula; IV Atka, the Andreanof, Rat, Near, and Commander Islands; V the Pribilof Islands, St Matthew Island and part of the mainland; VI Fort Ross; there was also a supplement entitled 'Notes on California'. These Notes have been used as source material in certain publications of Khlebnikov's own, and notably, unacknowledged, in the official history of the Russian-American Company by P. A. Tikhmenev (1861–63). But the only section which appeared in full in Khlebnikov's lifetime was the supplement on California, published in 1829. Sections I and VI were published in 1861 as part of a work called 'Materials for the history of the Russian settlements on the shores of the Eastern Ocean', which appeared as appendices to the journal *Morskoy Sbornik* [Marine Handbook]. Sections II–V were published in full only in 1979, in an edition edited by R. G. Lyapunova and S. G. Fedorova entitled *Russkaya Amerika v neopublikovannykh zapiskakh K. T. Khlebnikova*.

The present book is parallel to that volume, being a new edition of Section I, and it was prepared by S. G. Fedorova. She establishes her text on the basis of three surviving MS copies as well as the 1861 edition, and has been able to bring into print a significant amount of new material. It is the most detailed and fact-filled account available of the social and economic life of the colony's administrative centre, as seen by the manager of the Company's office there. It is, in other words, an essential source for Alaskan history, and a short review need state no more than that.

Fedorova has done a fine job of editing. She has found a number of interesting contemporary sketches of Russian America, and reproduces these together with the illustrations accompanying the original *Zapiski*. Full descriptive notes to each are given in a separate appendix (although for some reason the same level of detail is not given for the fourteen colour paintings by M. T. Tikhonov). A curious trophy she has unearthed is the words of a song composed in Russian America by A. A. Baranov, the first governor of the Company. In addition to informative annotation to the main text, she has added a chronology of Khlebnikov, a most useful glossary of specialist, local, and obsolete terms, and separate indexes of place-names, family names and ethnic names. In these excellent aids to research she follows the pattern of the 1979 edition, of which she was co-editor.

We are given to understand that Section VI on Fort Ross is being worked on now. Besides rounding off the present series, it will make an interesting companion volume

to *Russian California*, a collection of documents now being prepared by Fedorova and J. R. Gibson of Canada for the Hakluyt Society. (Terence Armstrong, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

ARCTIC JOURNAL OF JOHN RICHARDSON

ARCTICORDEAL. Houston, C. Stuart (editor). 1984. Kingston and Montreal, Canada, McGill–Queen’s University Press, and Gloucester, Alan Sutton. 349 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0–7735–0418–4. £16.50.

When Lieutenant (later Sir) John Franklin’s first expedition of 1819–22 explored the northern coast of Canada, among the party was the surgeon and naturalist John Richardson. It is his journal that forms the basis of *Arctic Ordeal*. The expedition was ultimately beset by tragedy. Only a small amount of coast was surveyed, and on the return journey over half the party perished; starvation, murder and execution are recorded with rumours of cannibalism. Stuart Houston has already edited the journal of Robert Hood, another member of the expedition. Published in 1974, this covered an earlier part of the journey to 15 September 1820. Richardson’s journal begins on 21 August 1820 and continues to 19 December 1821. Thus together the two works cover the period the expedition spent north of Fort Resolution and supplement the official account written by Franklin. (Hood was murdered on 20 October 1821; Richardson executed the death sentence on the culprit.)

The journal includes many details of biology, geology and meteorology of the region; some of this is summarized in the appendices which give details of the birds, mammals, fish, lichens and other plants, and geology recorded. There is also an excellent commentary by the editor which assesses and interprets Richardson’s contribution to exploration of the Canadian north. The narrative account becomes progressively more interesting as Richardson records details of the expedition’s increasing difficulties. The editorial comments are very helpful, including extracts from Franklin’s account of the expedition and other sources. The book is illustrated with many attractive engravings by H. A. Hochbaum, who recently followed the expedition’s course. The maps, although adequate to show the route, have not reproduced well. A bibliography of the expedition and a good index complete an excellent contribution to knowledge of Franklin’s first expedition. (R. K. Headland, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

A GUIDE FOR MARITIME HISTORIANS

A GUIDE TO THE LLOYD’S MARINE COLLECTION AT GUILDHALL LIBRARY. Hall, C. A. 1985. London, Guildhall Library. 55 p, soft cover. £3.00 plus postage.

In the 18th and 19th centuries there were a thousand whaling voyages for every naval polar voyage. Except for the Scoresbys, father and son, they are nearly all forgotten. When the whalers came back, they wrote no double-decker quarto volumes about their experiences and failures. They were only too glad to get home for a few weeks if they had a good catch, or make a winter voyage to earn some money if it had been a bad season. They were the Silent Service. Little has been published about them, save for the contributions of Tom and Cordelia Stamp.

However, in *Lloyd’s List* there are some 15,000 shipping movements in the Greenland and Davis Straits trade, but they have to be dug out of the millions of entries. Without