PERCEIVING THE SACRED: ARKY CAMP IN MYTH, LEGEND, AND REALITY

E. BRECK PARKMAN AND JOHN W. FOSTER

For years, archaeologists have enjoyed a unique experience known as Arky Camp. Created in the 1970s to benefit archaeology at Fort Ross, Arky Camp has played host to countless professional archaeologists, college field classes, and scientists of associated disciplines. The existence of Arky Camp has facilitated extensive research at Fort Ross, resulting in numerous dissertations, theses, and publications. Many archaeologists received their initial training at Fort Ross and often created friendships while there to last a lifetime. For some, it is all but where the world began. Because of this, Arky Camp exists in myth, legend, and reality, and represents a Traditional Cultural Property for archaeologists.

Arky Camp is located less than a mile inland from the Pacific Ocean. It is situated along Fort Ross Creek and on the leeward side of a slight swell that provides protection from the onshore winds (Figure 1). Because of its relative insulation from the wind and cold, the site has been utilized for at least the past 2,000 years.

The San Andreas Fault runs through the middle of the camp. Prior to renovations made to Arky Camp in the early 1990s, it was necessary to cross the fault to get to the outhouses. Although they were only 100 feet or so from the camp kitchen, the outhouses sat on the Pacific Plate, whereas the rest of the camp occupied the North American Plate. There were numerous discussions around the campfire regarding what might occur should there be a major quake. Such an incident has yet to occur. There are reminders of what the fault can do, though. For example, the San Francisco Quake of 1906 pulled apart a fence at Arky Camp, remnants of which can still be seen.

A recorded archaeological site, CA-SON-670, occurs in and around Arky Camp and has been the subject of several archaeological investigations. Dr. David A. Fredrickson was the first to undertake archaeological study of SON-670. In 1971, he brought an archaeological field methods class from Sonoma State College (now SSU) to document and explore the site. Rob Edwards of Cabrillo College stayed at Arky Camp while conducting excavations within the Russian Compound at Fort Ross 1975-1977 (Figure 2). In 1985, Dr. Glenn Farris of California State Parks directed an excavation at Arky Camp to mitigate the adverse effects of a new leach field and other camp upgrades. In 1988, Thomas Origer of Santa Rosa Junior College directed additional archaeological study of SON-670, as did Dr. Kent Lightfoot of the University of California at Berkeley that same year.

SITE CHRONOLOGY

From the various investigations that have been conducted at Arky Camp, we know that SON-670 is a multi-component site dating back at least 2,000 years. To date, three cultural components have been identified:

1. Pre-Contact deposit dating to c. 2,000 CYBP. Constituents include chert and obsidian debitage, stone net-weights, groundstone, FAR. Appears associated with seasonal encampment by Kashia Pomo people harvesting coastal resources.

2. Historic-era deposit dating to c. 1812-1841. Constituents include chert, obsidian, and bottle glass debitage, bottle glass projectile points, glass trade beads. Appears associated with Russian-era encampment of local Kashia Pomo people engaged in trade with or employment by the Russian-American Company.

3. Historic-era deposit dating to post-1860. Constituents include iron and nails. Appears associated with Call-era sawmill.
Figure 1. Looking down on Arky Camp, 1984. (Photo by Breck Parkman) This is the view that visitors have of Arky Camp when they first arrive. Note the two cabins and the original kitchen (at right center).

Figure 2. Archaeology students from Cabrillo College at Arky Camp in 1977. (Photo courtesy of Rob Edwards)
Additionally, we recognize a fourth cultural component, one that we associate with the archaeological crews who have used Arky Camp as a base of operation for almost fifty years.

4. Recent Past-era deposit dating to c. 1971-present. Constituents include bottle caps, broken glass, and ceramic sherds, among other things. This is a contemporary deposit attributed to seasonal occupation by field archaeologists.

**TIMELINE FOR THE PRESENCE OF ARCHAEOLOGISTS AT ARKY CAMP**

Arky Camp has seen the comings and goings of archaeologists for close to fifty years now. During this time, it has also been used by participants in the living history events held at Fort Ross and by teams of California Department of Fish and Wildlife wardens conducting special abalone limit enforcement. Occasionally, the camp has been used as seasonal housing for State employees. During those times, there might be one or two small camping trailers parked at the camp, with the occupants sharing use of the kitchen with the other campers.

The following timeline captures some of the highlights of the camp’s use by archaeologists.

1971: Arky Camp was first used by Dr. David A. Fredrickson and a crew from Sonoma State College. According to Thomas Origer, who was a member of the crew, they camped just above the current location of Arky Camp, near where the water tanks are now located. The purpose of the project was to test the archaeological deposit where the current Arky Camp is located.

1975-77: Professor Rob Edwards and his students from Cabrillo College camped on site at Arky Camp while working on excavations within the Russian Compound at Fort Ross.

1977: The State constructed two cabins and a kitchen at Arky Camp to facilitate future archaeological work at the park. Site development for the structures partially impacted SON-670, as documented in a follow-up inspection by State Archaeologist Larry Felton.

1981: State Archaeologist John Foster directed an underwater archaeological survey of Fort Ross Cove with the U.S. Navy dive team.

1983: State Archaeologist Breck Parkman and a volunteer crew camped at Arky Camp while excavating the pits within the Russian Compound at Fort Ross, over which two Shasta Toilets were later installed.

1984: State Archaeologist Breck Parkman and a volunteer crew from the Santa Cruz Archaeological Society camped at Arky Camp while conducting a test excavation of an historic Native American deposit adjacent to the historic Russian Orchard at Fort Ross.

1984: State Archaeologist Peter Schulz and a State Parks crew camped at Arky Camp while excavating an historic Russian feature in the historic Russian Orchard at Fort Ross.

1984: State Archaeologist Glenn Farris and a State Park and volunteer crew excavated the site at Arky Camp to mitigate the effects of upgrading the kitchen and leach field.

1986: Jack Hunter conducted a photo-mosaic survey of the SS *Pomona* wreck site.

1988: Dr. Kent Lightfoot of the University of California (UC), Berkeley initiated the Fort Ross Archaeological Project. Dr. Lightfoot brought his summer field classes to Fort Ross for the next twenty years. The crews camped at Arky Camp every summer. It was also the scene of the field lab and wet wash operations, as well as a classroom (Figure 3). Over the years, crews from Berkeley worked on a survey of the hinterlands around Fort Ross, conducted excavations at the Native Alaskan Village Site and, under the direction of Kashia elder and tribal scholar, Otis Parrish, at the ancestral site known as Metini. Investigations were also conducted within the Russian Compound and in Fort Ross Cove, where the Russian ship-building operation was located. Most recently, Berkeley archaeologists conducted a geophysical investigation to locate the sites of the Russian windmill and Russian village.
1990: Dr. Lynne Goldstein of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, initiated the Fort Ross Cemetery Restoration Project. Dr. Goldstein brought her summer field classes to Fort Ross in 1990, 1991, and 1992. The crews camped at Arky Camp every summer and spent their days documenting the 130+ historic burials in the cemetery.

1990: Dr. Douglas Owsley, Head of Physical Anthropology at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, brought a forensics anthropology crew to Fort Ross to assist Dr. Goldstein in her excavation of the historic Russian cemetery.

1991: Dr. Alexei Istomin of the Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography in Moscow, a specialist in Russian-Kashia relations, camped at Arky Camp while conducting research at Fort Ross.

1992: Dr. Jay Noller and geologists from William Lettis & Associates and Dr. Kent Lightfoot and archaeologists from UC Berkeley camped at Arky Camp while conducting subsurface investigations of the San Andreas Fault at several locations within Fort Ross State Historic Park. During this project, a backhoe was used to excavate an exceedingly deep trench across the fault right at Arky Camp.

1998-2008: Dr. Charles Beeker of Indiana State University conducted underwater surveys and documentation of the SS Pomona site and other submerged features in Fort Ross Cove. In 1998, a survey made was to assess the site as to its archaeological value and viability for possible establishment of an underwater park. A detailed site report contains background information regarding the ship’s history, updated site plan and description and analysis of sites features such as the Scotch boiler, and the Carnegie fire brick. In 2000, dives placed a spar marker buoy on the site of the Pomona, developed a prototype underwater guide, video-documented the site and its surroundings, and analyzed possible locations of a land-based observation point. In 2001, a survey was made of the Fort Ross lumber chute. In 2008, the steam whistle from the Pomona was conserved.
1999: Russian exchange students participating in the Fort Ross ~ Global Village Project camped at Arky Camp, while assisting Dr. James Allen with an excavation of the Russian ship-building site at Fort Ross.

2002: Dr. Sheli Smith camped at Arky Camp while conducting a survey of doghole port features at Fort Ross and adjacent coastal terraces and assembling the McCardle Codex of underwater parks in California.

2008: Arky Camp hosted the Centennial Observation of the sinking of the SS Pomona – March 17, 1908 and her listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

2016: Dr. James Delgado and a crew from NOAA, Sonoma State University, and California State Parks camped at Arky Camp while conducting a coastal maritime survey of the Sonoma Coast.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARKY CAMP

As early as 1971, California State Parks identified Arky Camp as a location to be developed. As a result, Dr. David A. Fredrickson was invited to conduct an archaeological test excavation to determine the significance of the site, recorded as archaeological site CA-SON-670. The Fredrickson crew excavated numerous units within the boundaries of the archaeological site, which was located within a small grassy meadow with no extant structures. The crew camped immediately off site, just up the hill, atop the nearest knoll.

In 1975, Rob Edwards brought his field class to work on archaeological investigations within the Russian Compound at Fort Ross. Like Fredrickson before him, Edwards encamped his crew at Arky Camp. However, this time around, the crew lived directly at the site, not nearby as had been the case with Fredrickson in 1971. According to Edwards, the Arky Camp had a few small developments when he arrived in 1975. His photos taken that year depict a crude kitchen area and several wooden picnic tables. By the time Edwards departed Arky Camp in 1977, a small camping trailer had been brought in, apparently by the State (see Figure 2).

In 1977, California State Parks created a more substantial camp at Arky Camp. In doing so, part of the area was leveled for the placement of two wooden cabins. The grading activity caused impact to the archaeological deposit. State Archaeologist Larry Felton was brought in from Sacramento to evaluate the nature of the damage. The State had placed two wooden cabins atop the site as well as a crude kitchen structure. The kitchen had a dirt floor and no doors that could be closed. A floor-length curation panel was used in place of a door to “lock” the entrance. Naturally, encroachment by wildlife, especially ravens and raccoons, became an ongoing issue with the kitchen. Each cabin had two separate bedrooms. The bedrooms were each equipped with two metal bunkbeds. Thus, the cabins could accommodate 16 campers. Whether 16 campers ever used the cabins at one time is unknown, but considered doubtful, given space limitations in the rooms and the abundance of nice tent-camping spots just outside the door. Two wooden outhouses were placed a short distance from the camp, just on the other side of the San Andreas Fault.

In 1985, the State initiated a new upgrade of Arky Camp. Dr. Glenn Farris and a large volunteer crew conducted the necessary excavations to minimize the impacts of the upgrade on SON-670. It was found that certain areas of the cultural deposit had survived, although other areas had been graded away. Within a few years, the State constructed a new kitchen structure, complete with combination restroom/shower facilities (Figure 4). The new kitchen had a tiled floor and doors that could be closed and locked. It also came equipped with a new stove and refrigerator. With the new kitchen in place, Arky Camp became more attractive to archaeologists looking to work at Fort Ross.

REMINISCES ABOUT ARKY CAMP

Archaeologists who have camped at Arky Camp tend to remember it fondly. The following are some of the responses we received from a few archaeologists polled on their memories of Arky Camp.
Figure 4. Looking down on Arky Camp in 2017. (Photo by Breck Parkman) Note the new kitchen.

Memories from Cabrillo College (1975-1977)

In 1975, there was only a shower and porta potties. We (my wife Julie for the first two years) cooked on Coleman stoves and used ice coolers for food storage. By 1977 we had brought in a gas stove to hook up and a refrigerator to plug in. There were no cabins there while we were there, but there was a small old camper/trailer (12’) that I used as an office by 1977. I am not sure from where it came.

Student and staff tents were spread around the meadow and by 1977 cars were also parked in the meadow. There were several large heavy long wood picnic tables for eating which on windy days were used for lab work away from the Fort. We held class around those tables and later in the evening talked and sang. We also erected a volleyball net for after dinner games. On one or two balmy days, we even had small student sessions on the area between AC and overlooking the fort.

Rob Edwards
Cabrillo College

Memories from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (1990-1992)

I spent at least a month each summer for three consecutive summers (1990-92) living in the Arky Camp while I directed the excavations of the cemetery at Fort Ross, and my memories of that time are among my favorites. The camp was a great place in terms of convenience; it was easy to walk to the cemetery from there. It also allowed the various archaeology teams to spend time together and fully experience the wonder that is excavating at Fort Ross. The camp was upgraded a bit after my first summer there, but it was never about luxury or amenities, although flush toilets and electricity were appreciated. There was always someone to talk with, there was always someone to discuss archaeology, and there was usually someone who was in charge of cooking dinner. That part of the California coast is beautiful and isolated, but the Arky Camp was a welcoming place with friends, colleagues, and great conversation. The Arky Camp made doing extensive archaeological work at Fort Ross possible, but it also is what made the work collaborative and memorable. I have not found another place quite like it, and I
will always remember it as one of my best and favorite field experiences. How many other places can you put your tent ON the San Andreas Fault?

Dr. Lynne Goldstein
Michigan State University

Memories from the University of California, Berkeley

The Arky Camp is a real gem – a truly exceptional place to camp and undertake archaeological fieldwork in California. Of all the beautiful places I have had the privilege to camp and work in the field of archaeology, it is my favorite. Situated along Fort Ross Creek in a stunning vale among a grove of majestic redwood trees, I have found it to be ideal for running field schools and field programs. The facilities have been tenderly built up over the years. My first experience staying at Arky Camp was in the summer of 1988 when we initiated some fieldwork in the Fort Ross State Park. At that time, the kitchen consisted of a lean-to hut and there was one rather ancient outhouse situated some distance from camp. Now there is a fully enclosed kitchen with all the appliances of home, two bathrooms with flush toilets and showers along with a couple of bunkhouses. What more can you ask for? I spent many enjoyable nights around the campfire at chatting with students, talking archy strategy, playing cards, and listening to some great stories by Breck Parkman and other legendary denizens of Arky Camp. My wife, Roberta Jewett, and I purchased an imposing eight person Eureka tent, which we christened as Camelot, specifically to stay and work at Arky Camp. I think very fondly of my days there and look forward to the next time that I have the great honor to stay and work in such a special place.

Dr. Kent Lightfoot
University of California, Berkeley

My first memories of Fort Ross State Historic Park date back to the 5th grade when I participated in the Environmental Living Program alongside my classmates from James McKee Elementary. I remember small details of that trip: the skirt my mother purchased from Goodwill for my “Russian Farmer” costume, the willow basket I wove on the first day, and my grandmother’s scarf that I wore on my head. These early memories have now been layered with the experiences of working at Fort Ross as a graduate student, postdoctoral scholar, and now professor.

For 13 years the park and Arky Camp have been a home away from home for me, and for even longer, the Berkeley archaeology crew who first began working at the site in 1988. Amongst those who went through training on the Fort Ross Archaeological Project and Kashaya Pomo Interpretive Trail Project, Arky Camp always figures large in the stories we tell when we gather. It’s where rain-soaked students and crew sat one dark night as an unknown taxi came down the drive into camp. The scene where lifelong friendships between tent-mates developed, where impromptu foam sabre and baton wars between park rangers, their children, and our crew broke out, where elaborate plots for ghost and snipe hunts were hatched. Totinos pizza rolls, stargazing, the fire pit covered in raccoon paw pits, meals shared over the picnic table, Kashaya elders’ stories, the laughs of Kent and Roberta. These are the fragments that rush back.

Kent always told us that Love Blossoms at Arky Camp. As I’ve begun to work in another place, this place continues to occupy a core part of my heart and soul. It’s where I became an archaeologist and learned countless lessons about what it means to be of good mind from trusted advisors, elders, students, and friends.

Dr. Sara L. Gonzalez
University of Washington
Dancing in the Dark - One Night at Arky Camp

In the Fall of 1991, music filled the air and tickled our ears, while our eyes delighted at the sight of Bill Stillman (the first recipient of the SCA’s coveted Golden Shovel Award) and a woman (perhaps best unnamed) dancing upon a picnic table at Arky Camp. While they gyrated to the music, several children (after all it was a family outing) held flashlights that they rapidly turned off and on - effecting the sensation of strobe lights. Some say the dancers were naked but others say they were fully clothed - the truth lies somewhere in between. Pickled brains being what they are don't recall the details, and Arky Camp rules demanded . . . "NO CAMERAS AFTER DARK!"

Cow: Boys and Girls

The grass being greener on the other side of the fence compelled several Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) students of anthropology/archaeology to jump the fence. On the neighboring land, to the southeast of Arky Camp, they encountered a newly born calf, abandoned by the cow who jogged away at their approach. Believing that it was permanently abandoned, they attempted to rescue the calf and bring it back to Arky Camp. About that time, their efforts were rewarded by the landowner, the landowner was irate at the trespassing “city kids.” Phone calls were made by the landowner to State Parks and Recreation (SP&R) staff. Calls were made between SP&R and Tom Origer, SRJC instructor. And a call was made by Tom to the landowner. Apologies were made, and an offer was extended to purchase the calf in the event that the cow would not bond with it. This story ended happily. The cow and calf were successfully reunited, tempers were soothed, Tom did not end up owning the calf, and the landowner moved away shortly after the ersatz calf rustling incident.

Jack Be Nimble

One evening as the group camp fire at Arky Camp was providing light and warmth and apparently, some form of inspiration, an individual decided to leap from one picnic table to another. With the blazing fire pit between the two tables and weighted down by beverages containing alcohol and affected by gravity, the fire was not cleared and a direct hit was made into the glowing flames. A rescue was made by another camper (and now professional archaeologist who experienced the effects of fire at a young age by being burned over a large portion of his body) who declared about the jumper’s condition... “he’s not burned bad.” I guess it’s all relative.

Thomas Origer
Santa Rosa Junior College

An Impression from “Arky Dave”

The first time I saw Arky Camp, I thought, “I’m home.”

Dave Makar, 2017

A Few Memories from Breck Parkman

I first camped at Arky Camp in 1983. The last time I was there was just a few years ago. The memories I have of the camp are legion. And a few of them are approaching legend!

Arky Camp was a place where you could sit around the campfire at night, listening to beloved Kashia elders, Otis and Warren Parrish, reciting Kashia stories or watch as Dr. J. Desmond Clark demonstrated stone tool manufacture from ancient Africa. It was a place where you could attend a lecture by Dr. Alison Wylie regarding the philosophy of archaeology one day and observe a demonstration of the proper way to prepare abalone by Ranger Ashford Wood the next day. It was a place where the camp cooks were often celebrities, such as the beloved Kashia sisters, Violet Chappell and Vivian Wilder, who,
for several years, served as camp cooks for the Berkeley field classes. The connection between the students of Arky Camp with Otis, Warren, Violet, and Vivian, all children of the great Kashia dreamer, Essie Parrish, was a highlight of our time there. So were the many distinguished guest anthropologists and scientists who were brought to Arky Camp by Kent Lightfoot, Lynne Goldstein, and others.

The first time I camped at Arky Camp, I pitched my tent just after sunset, choosing an area that seemed flat and flanked by heavy brush. In the middle of the night, I discovered that I was in the middle of a narrow cattle trail. I lay in my sleeping bag perfectly still, as several dozen cows, startled by my tent’s presence, brushed up against it as they tried to get by. I kept praying, “please do not stumble!” We had lots of wildlife encounters while camped there. Before we replaced the old kitchen structure, some of us fought epic battles with gangs of outlaw raccoons in the middle of the night and hungry ravens during the course of the day. The mice were unrelenting, too.

Once, in the mid-1980s, a few of us were camped at Arky Camp. It was dark and we were sitting around the campfire talking. We looked up to see what looked to be a missile passing slowly overhead, headed inland from the coast. Everyone agreed that it looked to be a missile and that, of course, led to some pretty serious discussions about the fate of the world we had left behind a few days before. We wondered if a war had begun. What a relief it was to discover that the world was still there, when we managed to get some news on one of the car radios. There was no mention of a missile attack. A few days later, I saw in the newspaper that the U.S. Navy was conducting naval exercises off the coast of northern California that week. As I continued to read, I found myself wondering if we might have witnessed an unarmed Polaris missile being tested. After all, it was late at night in one of California’s least inhabited coastal areas, seemingly a perfect place for such a test. I never learned if what we saw was in fact a missile. Perhaps it was just your run-of-the-mill U.F.O.!

Late one Friday night in 1989, I was sitting around the campfire with Kent and Roberta Lightfoot, and a few of Kent’s Berkeley students, when, around 11:30pm, we spotted what appeared to be a police car slowly heading down the road into camp. I remember writing there thinking, “this isn’t good.” I suspect we all thought the same thing, that an officer was bringing bad news to one of us. As the car approached our campfire, we could see that it was a taxi cab. At the time, there were no taxis in this part of the world. I do not believe there are any there on the coast today, either. Kent got up and walked over to the driver’s side of the cab and then came back and told one of the students that he needed to talk to the driver. The student had a girlfriend back in Berkeley and she was new to the U.S. When the student left for Fort Ross, he had told his girlfriend to come and visit one weekend. Without letting him know she was coming, she had hailed a cab in Berkeley and asked the driver to take her to Arky Camp. While the student was covering the cab fare for his soon-to-be ex-girlfriend, the rest of us began a pool to see who could guess how much the fare would prove to be. I seem to recall it being just over $300.

One Sunday evening in 1990, I was sitting around the campfire with Kent and Roberta Lightfoot and some of Kent’s teaching assistants. That afternoon, the students had returned to camp from their weekend break and we had just completed dinner and the after-dinner chores were done. Now it was time for relaxing. As I looked around, I realized that we were all but alone. It was a little after 8pm and about twenty of Kent’s students had vanished. I immediately thought, “alien abduction!” My curiosity piqued, I decided to take a walk to see if I could find the abductees. With flashlight in hand, I made my way up the narrow dirt road connecting Arky Camp with Highway 1. As I reached the top of the ridge separating the camp from the coast, I heard noises coming from not too far away. I walked along the grassy ridge and eventually found the students, a huddled mass sitting on the ground, staring at a small, battery-operated TV set, tuned in to The Simpsons. It was the end of the first season of the show and the students were big fans. Relieved that we had not experienced our first alien abduction, I returned to Arky Camp and reported my findings to the others. The students would continue to disappear the same time every Sunday night for the remainder of the field class. The Simpsons provided them a connection with the outside world.

When people ask what was the neatest thing I ever found, I tell them this story. I arrived at Arky Camp just after dark on Kent’s first night there with his 1991 field class. There were around 25 students and a half dozen teaching assistants, as well as Kent and Roberta. The camp was a buzz of activity and I
was listening to all these new voices punctuating the darkness. I heard this one voice talking to others just out of sight and I remember having this strange sensation come over me, as if I was hearing the voice of a long-lost friend. When people ask me what was the neatest thing I ever found, I tell them that it was my wife, the mother of my son, who I found at Arky Camp that night so long ago.

A Memory from Russia

November 9, 2016

Dear Breck,

I have a lot of impressions of Archaeological Camp at Fort Ross. For me it is a special place. It was the first place in the USA I was living. I remember every interesting moment there, a lot of things that were surprise for me. I met the America there first time. I met the nature of the North American continent there first time. The Sequoya forest made the greatest impression on me. I finished there the first half of my life and began the second and last one. I remember in details you, Kent, Glenn, Sannie Osborn, Lynn Goldstein, and a lot of other persons, sometimes without memory what was their name.

The stay in Arky Camp was in fact a great event in my life, as well as my work in the library of the Fort Ross Visitors Center. And three weeks after my departure from the Camp the August 1991 events in Moscow finally broke my life in two halves.

Warm regards from cold Moscow,

Alexei Istomin

[Note: Three weeks after Dr. Istomin returned home to Moscow, the world watched as the August Coup unfolded, causing the already fragile Soviet Union to experience three intense days of chaos. Fearing Mikhail Gorbachev’s reform policies, hard-liners in the Communist Party had moved to seize power. President Boris Yeltsin rallied the citizens of Moscow against the coup by climbing atop a tank in front of the White House. With the world watching, Yeltsin denounced the coup leaders. The hard-liners’ reactionary anti-constitutional gamble failed and by year’s end, the Soviet Union had been dissolved. Dr. Istomin’s life changed dramatically as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union. He lived one life prior to his time at Arky Camp and a different one afterwards. Breck Parkman]

CONCLUSIONS

Beginning with Dave Fredrickson and his Sonoma State College field class in 1971, approximately a thousand archaeologists and students of archaeology have camped at Arky Camp. The campers have come from all over the U.S. and some from foreign lands as well. Thomas Origer calculates that he alone brought over 300 students and archaeologists to Arky Camp, during the years that his Santa Rosa Junior College field classes worked at Fort Ross and nearby Salt Point State Park (Table 1).

The archaeologists who camped at Arky Camp participated in unique and varied investigations at Fort Ross State Historic Park, including the restoration of the historic Russian Cemetery, exploration of the Native Alaskan Village Site, the ancestral Kashia Pomo site known as Metini, investigations of the Russian Orchard, and the 1870s-era Call House. Additionally, post-fire surveys of nearby Salt Point State Park were conducted as was an investigation of a late nineteenth century Chinese-operated saw mill located there. Surveys and excavations were also conducted at Salt Point to evaluate coastal erosion and its impact on cultural resources. As a result of all this work, substantial contributions have been made to our understanding of California history.

Arky Camp is where so many archaeologists learned their craft, including how to conduct surveys, to dig, analyze artifacts, and record archaeological sites. It is where many of them learned how to work with indigenous peoples, both Native Alaskan and Kashia. In learning to respect the archaeological record, they learned to respect the indigenous communities associated with the sites. Archaeologists such as Kent Lightfoot, Lynne Goldstein, Otis Parrish, Thomas Origer, and Kathy Dowdall instilled this attitude of respect for indigenous peoples among their students and co-workers.
Table 1. SRJC field classes with camping at Arky Camp.

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<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Salt Point Site Testing</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Aleut Site at Fort Ross Cove</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Arky Camp Historical Cabin Search and Test</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>2002</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total*</td>
<td></td>
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*Not all students camped at Arky Camp. Number of campers on Spring and Fall projects averaged approximately 10 per night. All summer students stayed at Arky Camp. Estimated total of “Arky Campers” is 300 for SRJC projects between Spring 1989 through Fall 2002.

Archaeology at Fort Ross is not restricted to dry land, though. Arky Camp is where some of us learned underwater archaeology working on the SS Pomona. That shipwreck has been studied, mapped, and measured more than any other in California. In April 1981, we selected Fort Ross Cove to conduct the first systematic underwater archaeological survey in the State Park System. We conducted a widespread magnetometer survey and sent teams divers to identify charted anomalies. While it was
technologically primitive, the survey was a huge effort and resulted in pinpointing the remains of the Pomona, the “Pride of the Coaster Fleet,” and the first passenger vessel on the Pacific coast to be powered by a triple-expansion steam engine.

It is a great site with an interesting history, but what also sets it apart is its proximity to Fort Ross and Arky Camp. Capt. Swanson happened to wreck the steamer on St. Patrick’s Day, 1908, where it could eventually serve as a laboratory for learning underwater archaeology. Working from Arky Camp over the years, we mapped and measured the Pomona’s bones as time and weather would allow. Often the visibility was less than 10 feet, so it was painfully slow. In a mere 27 years, we had completed a detailed site map, thoroughly documented its history, and successfully had the SS Pomona listed in the NRHP in time to celebrate (at Arky Camp) the Centennial anniversary of her loss – Mar. 17, 2008 (Figure 5).

Arky Camp should be considered a Traditional Cultural Property to those who learned there. It may not exactly fit any traditional heritage category, but we’d argue TCP would be appropriate for a place:

1. Where teaching and learning archaeology was carried out for multiple generations instilling the techniques, norms, values, and responsibilities of this discipline,
2. Conducive to expanding cultural horizons by studying the interactions of different historical groups on a dynamic Pacific frontier,
3. Where interactions beyond one’s own geographic setting were the norm,
4. Where simple living, without extensive material comforts, generated an awareness of natural beauty and park values,
5. Where strong cultural bonds have been forged among participants.

Archaeologists need to remember to tell our own stories, and how our information about the past pushes back against the unknown. So many times, the public is told about the human history of a place, but not told how that heritage information was collected and preserved. It might come from ancient or traditional knowledge; it might be from archaeological study; it might be from both and ancillary sciences that shed light on the past. Places like Arky Camp are important because in support of these studies, they themselves become part of the heritage landscape and touchstones of cultural tradition – our own!
Figure 5. Underwater Archaeologists gathered at Arky Camp to commemorate the listing of the SS Pomona in the NRHP and the Centennial Anniversary of her loss on March 17, 2008. (Photo Courtesy of John Foster) Dr. Charles Beeker (in red sweatshirt) of Indiana State University and John Foster (to Dr. Beeker’s left) of California State Parks are seen sitting by the fire (center), surrounded by other divers.