

# AN EARLY ACCOUNT OF THE RUSSIAN DISCOVERIES IN THE NORTH PACIFIC

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY  
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INTRODUCTION

Although the remnants of Bering's second expedition returned to Kamchatka during the summer of 1742, it was not until 1758 that the first connected narrative of this and other Russian discoveries in the northern Pacific was made available to readers in western Europe. In that year, George Frederich Muller, Professor of History in the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences and member of Bering's expedition in Siberia, published an account based on records in the government files at Irkutsk and Jakutsk, together with documents collected after his return to Russia. This work, written in German and translated into English (Muller, 1761) and French, is the standard narrative of what Masterson and Brower (1948, pp. 3-4) have referred to as the first chapter in the history of Alaska which ended with the return of Bering's expedition.<sup>1</sup>

In 1774, Jacob Stählin von Storcksburg, also of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, published an account of the post-Bering discoveries that was translated into English the same year (Stählin, 1774). This work contains vague and confused references to the expedition of Lieutenant "Syndo" and a very inaccurate description of Kodiak Island and certain islands in the Aleutian chain. There is nothing in the text to suggest that any of the islands were discovered before 1765. This work is accompanied by a map which is equally confused and inaccurate.

The numerous deficiencies in Stählin were at least partly responsible for the publication, in 1776, of *Neue Nachrichten von denen neuentdeckten Inseln in der See zwischen Asien und Amerika, aus mitgetheilten Urkunden und Auszügen verfasst von J.L.S.* The anonymous<sup>2</sup> author of this volume discusses twenty-four voyages of Russian hunters and merchants to Bering and Copper Islands, the Aleutian Islands, and Kodiak between the years 1745 and 1770, as well as the identity of these islands, their natural history and their indigenous population. Although the work of J.L.S. is much more scholarly and accurate than that of Stählin, it failed, for some inexplicable reason, to attract the attention of contemporary geographers (Masterson and Brower, 1948, p. 6). An almost complete English translation is to be found in Coxe (1780, pp. 17-174).

About this time, summaries of the Russian discoveries, based largely on Muller (1761), appeared in the work of other European geographers.<sup>3</sup> Among them was the French geographer Jean Benoit Scherer whose summary appears in his *Recherches historiques et géographiques sur le Nouveau-Monde* published in Paris in 1777. Scherer lived in St. Petersburg for approximately ten years prior to 1774 and during that time obtained access to at least some of the manuscripts

of Georg Wilhelm Steller, the naturalist who sailed to America with Bering. While on his way back to Russia, Steller had been placed under arrest in eastern Siberia, and at that time had turned over many of his manuscripts to Professor J. E. Fischer, one of the academicians who took part in Bering's expedition in Siberia, for safe keeping and transportation back to St. Petersburg. Steller later was cleared of the charges against him but died without returning to Russia (Stejneger, 136, pp. 472-74). In 1774, Scherer published Steller's *Beschreibung von dem Lande Kamtschatka*, presumably having obtained the original manuscript from Fischer (Stejneger, 1936, p. 504; Golder, 1922-25, II pp. viii-ix). This work, preceded by a "highly confused and erroneous" biographical sketch (Stejneger, 1936, p. 493), was carelessly edited. The German naturalist Peter Simon Pallas was critical of Scherer for having published Steller's notes in virtually an unedited condition (Pallas, 1781-96, II pp. 255-56) and although this criticism is fully justified, it should be remembered, as Golder has pointed out (1922-25, II footnote 1, p. 190), that the work was thus prevented from being lost, a fate which befell many of Steller's manuscripts.

The summary of the Russian discoveries in Scherer's *Recherches*, although not notable for its accuracy or its detailed descriptions, is nevertheless an important minor document dealing with this subject. Although apparently unacquainted with the work of J.L.S., the author was familiar with Muller and Stählin. Since Scherer obtained the original manuscript of Steller's description of Kamchatka from Fischer, it has been considered likely that he also had the original of the journal that Steller kept during the voyage from Kamchatka to America and return (Golder, 1922-25, II p. ix). This appears to be practically definite since Scherer makes numerous detailed references to the journal, some of which correspond more closely to a copy of the manuscript discovered by Golder in the archives of the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg than to the one used by Pallas in preparing the original published version which appeared in 1793 (Golder, 1922-25, II p. vii; Pallas, 1781-96, V, VI). Regardless of the manuscript from which he worked, Scherer was very close to the original sources and in a position to have made important historical contributions. Even though he failed to do this, his summary of the Russian discoveries is of interest as a contemporary document relating to a subject that was, even as late as 1777, little appreciated and understood in western Europe.

One of the things that would have been of particular interest to western European readers of Scherer's time was Steller's views concerning the inhabitants of northwest America. It is true that this material had been presented by Muller (1761, pp. 85-89), but his treatment was brief and, of course, the journal itself was not available until published by Pallas in 1793. Scherer devotes considerable space to this subject, and thus gives the western European reader his first detailed account of Steller's ethnological contributions.

In order to appreciate fully the conclusions drawn by Steller concerning the aboriginal inhabitants of the newly discovered lands,

it is necessary to understand the conditions under which his observations were made. Bering's ship, the *St. Peter*, on which Steller sailed as surgeon and naturalist, left Avatcha Bay on June 4, 1741 (old style), parted company with the *St. Paul* on June 20th, and sighted the American coast on July 17th in latitude fifty-eight degrees. Two boats were sent ashore on the 20th, one to obtain fresh water and the other, in charge of Fleet Master Khitrov, to make explorations. Steller requested permission to accompany Khitrov but was only permitted to go in the small boat with one man to assist him. Since Bering had decided to begin the return journey as soon as the water casks were filled, Steller, much to his annoyance and disappointment, was forced to be satisfied with a single day of exploration. The landing was made on Kayak Island and Steller, aware of the disadvantages under which he was laboring and of the short time at his disposal, began to look for indications of human habitation as soon as he set foot on shore. Although no people were seen, there was abundant evidence that the island was occupied and Khitrov's party, which explored nearby Wingham Island, also brought back objects of human manufacture. Presumably as a result of the artifacts found on Kayak and Wingham Islands, Steller formed a theory that these aboriginal peoples were related to those of Siberia, a conclusion which modern research has not changed. From this theory, he further reasoned correctly that America was much closer to Asia than was indicated by the present position of the expedition. It would appear that Steller was ashore on Kayak Island for approximately twelve hours. In addition to his ethnological observations, he also gathered much geological, zoological and botanical data, a truly remarkable accomplishment for such a short period of time (Golder, 1914, pp. 191, 194, 196; Stejneger, 1936, pp. 266-71, 289; Golder, 1922-25, II, pp. 46, 99).

Having observed many evidences of human occupation on Kayak Island, Steller was very anxious to see the people themselves and verify his theory concerning their relationship to the northeast Siberians. An opportunity to do this presented itself when, on September 5th, two skin boats were sighted near Bird Island in the Shumagin group. These boats, each containing a man, approached close enough to Bering's vessel so that their occupants could be easily observed and presents exchanged. Later Bering sent a boat with twelve men, including Steller, toward the spot from which the islanders had come, but because of heavy surf and wind, it was not possible to land. The expedition's Koryak interpreter and two Russians waded ashore and were warmly greeted by a large number of men and women. Meanwhile, one of the islanders paddled out to the ship's boat and was given some brandy and tobacco, neither of which he appreciated. The rough weather made it necessary for the boat containing Steller and the others to return to the ship after only a brief stay and since the islanders seemed unwilling to part with their three visitors, especially the Koryak interpreter, it was necessary to fire muskets over their heads. Taking advantage of the confusion caused by this action, the

three men hastily waded to the boat and all returned to the ship (Golder, 1914, p. 201; 1922-25, II pp. 90-95). The following day, in the same general location, nine skin boats were seen paddling in single file toward the ship, but only two approached close enough for the exchange of presents (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 102-03).

Steller gives a careful and accurate description of these people, their boats, clothing and personal appearance; it is the first account by anyone of the Aleuts. His gifts of observation can be more fully appreciated when it is realized that he probably had no more than fifteen minutes in which to watch them at close range (Golder, 1922-25, II, pp. 95-98; Stejneger, 1936, pp. 298-99).

The detailed presentation of Steller's observations concerning the inhabitants of the newly discovered lands and their relationships to the peoples of northeast Asia is the most valuable contribution made by Scherer in his summary of the Russian discoveries, a translation of which appears below. In spite of inaccuracies and failure to check sources with regard to other aspects of Russian expansion on the north Pacific, his first hand acquaintance with Steller's manuscripts enabled him to present valuable data of this great naturalist to western European readers for the first time.

## HISTORICAL RESEARCHES CONCERNING THE NEW WORLD

By

J. B. SCHERER

Paris, 1777

Chapter VII

### DISCOVERIES MADE BY THE RUSSIANS IN GOING FROM KAMCHATKA TO AMERICA<sup>4</sup>

Distinguished scholars have maintained at various times that America was originally joined to some part of the Old World: of this number are Adrien Reland, in his *Dissertation on the Language of the Americans*, and M. de Maupertuis in his Works (published in Berlin, 1752),<sup>5</sup> who thought that America had been united with the three other parts of the world, or at any rate, had only been separated by a strait.

In spite of the strong presumptions that tended to support the conjectures that the scholars had formed, it was not possible to establish, by the experience of travelers, the place where America approaches nearest the Old World.

When Czar Peter I, being in Holland, proposed to the Dutch to furnish him some experienced navigators to discover at his expense a passage to the Indies through the Arctic Ocean, which they had searched for fruitlessly for a long time, and that the Chinese claimed to be aware of, he promised at the same time, to divide with them the profits of commerce with these regions; but the Dutch rejected



these proposals in fear that when this passage had been discovered, that prince would appropriate all the profit.

When Peter I came to Paris some years later, the Academy of Sciences proposed to that prince, who honored it with his presence, to carry out the following investigations:

I. How distant America was from the furthest northeast borders of Kamchatka.

II. Whether the northern part of Kamchatka toward the Chukchi promontory, formerly called Cape Tabin, was not the country which was closest to America, or was not itself contiguous with it, according to the conjectures of many persons.

Peter I did not neglect the propositions which seemed to him to merit the greatest attention on his part; on returning to his country, he spoke to those whom he believed to be able to fulfil this objective. He thereupon took the wisest precautions and, desiring first of all to assemble the explanations on Kamchatka essential to his consideration, the Court of Justice established at Moscow under the name of *Sibirski Prikaz*,<sup>6</sup> supplied him with what it had preserved for a long time in its archives on the area, particularly the accounts that Volodomir Atlasov, captain of the fiftieth cossacks, had deposited there on his return from a voyage which he had undertaken in 1701 from Jakutsk as far as the Arctic Ocean, and then all along the northern coast of Siberia as far as Kamchatka.<sup>7</sup>

Kamchatka is a peninsula joined to Siberia. Although it had been discovered in the year 1643 by the Dutch and by the Russians, who had more than once explored that country toward the end of the last century, and who had finished their investigation in this one, foreigners have not as yet a detailed knowledge of it.<sup>8</sup> With regard to the explanations which were given by Atlasov, they revolved in large part on matters already known, and on the profits which commerce would reap from the voyages that could be made to Kamchatka, a country rich in martins, sables and beavers, each pelt of which could be sold in China for up to sixty roubles.

Prince Gagarin, Governor of Siberia, whose extortions have unfortunately made him notorious, acquainted with the considerable value of these species of furs, took it upon himself in 1712 to order a Swedish corporal to embark from Kamchatka to cross over to America; the latter constructed a small ship to make the voyage but he returned after six days.<sup>9</sup>

In 1713, Prince Gagarin dispatched again, to the same destination, a Swedish lieutenant, named Malyn, who actually arrived in America but who stayed there a very short time, and who made a report to the governor which remains unknown.<sup>10</sup>

These expeditions, then, gave none of the enlightenment that the government desired, because M. Gagarin was less curious to inform

himself on the position of the country, than about the profits that could be reaped, either by commerce, or by the discovery of the produce and riches that these new regions might contain.

Peter I, little satisfied with the accounts which had been made to him up to then concerning Kamchatka, dispatched in 1714, an order to the commander at Nertchinsk telling him to send two men to the frontiers of Russia to undertake to embark from there to see if it were not possible to discover some unknown lands in those parts. The order was executed and although these two men had not the slightest knowledge of the art of navigation, they had nevertheless, after going several leagues, the good fortune to touch land; but as they were on their return, about to reach Kamchatka, a storm destroyed them.<sup>11</sup>

This enterprise having miscarried, Peter I, shortly before his death, ordered, either to discharge the promises he made to the Academy of Sciences at Paris, or to satisfy his own curiosity, that a second voyage be made toward the north from the Eastern Ocean; he directed at the same time that it coast along the borders of Siberia in order to ascertain if the coast to the north is surrounded by the waters of the sea, or if it is attached to America by strips of land.

His death having prevented the carrying out of so interesting a project, his widow, the Empress Catherine, entrusted Captain Bering with this commission in the month of February, 1725. His instructions were to the effect that he should make the most exact explorations on the frontiers of Siberia toward the northeast, in order to determine if on that side Siberia is joined to America, or if a free passage by sea exists between this country and America.

Bering, following his instructions, proceeded northeast and reached as far as sixty-seven degrees eighteen minutes of north latitude, and discovered by his observations that the distance from the mouth of the Kamchatka River to sixty-seven degrees eighteen minutes was eleven degrees ten minutes of latitude and thirty degrees of longitude to the east, and that if the ice did not hinder the passage in certain seasons, it would be possible to come by sea to Kamchatka,<sup>12</sup> a discovery confirmed by the reports in the archives at Jakutsk which said that at the end of the past century the inhabitants of the mouth of the Lena, who are neither sailors nor acquainted with sea-faring, but simple peasants, had previously undertaken voyages by sea from the Lena to the Kolyma.<sup>13</sup> The same reports told of a peasant from Jakutsk who in 1648, having undertaken the voyage from the Lena to the Kolyma, had rounded Cape Chukchi as far as the Anadyr River. This peasant, questioned on his return in order to know how and in what way he had gone about undertaking such a long voyage, laughed and replied simply: "All my countrymen are capable of undertaking the same trip that I have made; nothing will stop them either. They only have to keep on going, as I have done, along the coast, and they find at the end a canal in which the largest boat can sail, after

which, in a good season, the ice will be as little a burden to them as it has been to myself.<sup>14</sup>

Captain Bering returned from his voyage to Kamchatka in the year 1730, under the Empress Anne, as much disposed to the prosperity of her people as Catherine I had been; she showed the greatest desire to continue these expeditions and wished to know exactly how far America was from Asia. In consequence, although Engineer Gvozdev had made in that interval the voyage from Asia to America,<sup>15</sup> she nevertheless ordered Captain Bering to make a second voyage, which he undertook in 1741, on two vessels, one of which was commanded by himself, and the other by Captain Chirikov. On Bering's vessel was M. Steller, Adjunct of the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, and the vessel of Chirikov carried Louis Delisle de la Croyere, Professor of Astronomy in the same Academy.

These two vessels, which were to accompany each other during the entire course of the voyage, nevertheless did not follow each other long; for they lost sight of each other, according to the calculations of M. Bering, at the fifty-first degree, where the American continent was discovered and Chirikov's ship landed. Several persons on Bering's ship also asserted that they had seen the continent, but nobody wanted either to believe them or to approach nearer. Meanwhile, he discovered between the fiftieth and fifty-sixth degree of north latitude, a large number of islands; the one to which he gave his name, those of Mednoi, St. Theodore, St. Abraham, St. Macaire and several others. On the 18th of July, 1741, he again glimpsed on the sixtieth degree, the continent or the mainland of America, through a number of islands, but they believed it no more than they did the first time and passed without landing.<sup>16</sup>

The voyage from Kamchatka to America has been undertaken since that time by several private persons, principally by a company of cossack merchants and others, whose purpose was to enrich themselves in trading for furs with the people of America. They took ship in 1766, under the direction of Lieutenant Sinda. They found, from the fifty-sixth to sixty-seventh degrees of north latitude, a number of islands, of which the most noteworthy are Kanaga, Tschepchina, Tagalok, Achta, Amlia, Kad-Jak, Umnak, etc.

From these islands they proceeded to land on the mainland of America.<sup>17</sup> Their voyage was not unfruitful. It is they who brought the beautiful blue fox which the court of Russia presented to Prince Henry of Prussia, and which, on account of its beauty, is considered priceless.

The government, to encourage the company of traders charged with doing business in its American establishments, presented to them a gold medal on which was a portrait of her majesty, and they attached it with a blue ribbon to the third buttonhole.

Finally, the government ordered a last expedition which has confirmed not only all that was known of the voyage from Kamchatka to America, but served at the same time to verify the route that Bering had taken in departing from Jakutsk. Here is the detail of this expedition.

In 1764, five officers of the Russian fleet were chosen, namely Captains Chichagov, Panov, Babayev, Krenitzin and Levashev, to whom were not given, as formerly, simple instructions, but they were given maps on which were traced the route which they were to follow. Rewards were promised to those who distinguished themselves the most; to the one who reached such and such a degree, the title of captain of the first rank; if he went a degree further, he was to be named a rear admiral immediately; and if he doubled Cape Chukchi, he was to have the rank of vice-admiral.

The captains set out from St. Petersburg in 1764. Three among themselves constructed at Archangel for this voyage three skunards, a sort of small ship. It was agreed that Captains Chichagov and Levashev would come and meet them, setting out from one of the ports of Kamchatka. They carried out their voyage so secretly that even at St. Petersburg not many people suspected their true intention. It was almost generally believed that they had only gone to make explorations relative to the White Sea, and to survey it. They all returned except Krenitzin, who at the time of the return to Archangel, diverting himself with a fishing party, had the ill fortune to capsize his boat and to drown himself. Chichagov on his return was made immediately a vice-admiral of the Port of Reval; Levashev, Panov, and Babayev preferred pensions and retired on their lands to tranquilly pass there the rest of their days.<sup>18</sup>

This expedition is the last that has been undertaken by order of the government; the results have disclosed the profit that could be extracted from the fur trade. The government engaged 14,000 cossacks from the Ukraine to establish themselves in Kamchatka and vicinity. An ordinance of December 26, 1775, established a school of navigation at Jakutsk where the young people who are educated there will learn, in addition to the art of navigation and several European languages, everything relative to the commerce with Japan and with the people who inhabit the north of Asia, at the same time as languages that are in common use there. The object of this establishment is to train young people not only for exploration and discovery, but also to activate the commerce which can be made from the vast regions of Kamchatka to the environs of America and Japan.

After this brief account of expeditions made from Kamchatka to America, it remains to examine whether the natives who inhabit the coast of Asia opposite to North America have not peopled a part of that continent, and how far apart the coast of the two continents are. I will make use of for this purpose the journal that M. Steller made in going from Kamchatka to America.<sup>19</sup>

The author, whose just and intelligent mind would tolerate nothing but the absolute truth as the basis of his accounts reports:

I. That he has seen, a little after having left the port of Avacha, below the sixtieth degree of latitude, the mainland of America, and perhaps the same coast where Engineer Gvozdev landed in 1732.

II. That today America is no longer joined to Asia anywhere.

III. But that, according to all appearances and indications which remain, America has been formerly united there, because the distance from Cape Chukchi or *Chukotski Nos* across to America is today only seven or eight leagues at the most; but if one does not wish to admit this point, it is necessary at least to agree that the connection was only broken off for an extremely short distance. This is demonstrated further by the archipelago that the Russians lately discovered, which shows clearly in different places that it is only a broken continent: because several of the islands which formed the archipelago broke and were further diminished daily before the eyes of the travelers.

— With regard to the question whether America was formerly joined to Asia, M. Steller proves the affirmative by the chain of precipitous mountains in all directions along the coasts of the continent, from which rocks are precipitated constantly into the sea. As a result, when one perceives the coasts of America from a distance, they appear to rise up from the waters like immovable ramparts; but as one approaches them, one finds them so broken and full of pitfalls, that it is no longer possible to doubt their continual diminution and one cannot but perceive the ravages that have been caused by sea water for a certain number of years. M. Steller, not content to have examined the effect of these collapses, reveals at the same time the cause. He observed that earthquakes are more frequent in these regions than in all other parts of the world and so destructive that nearly every time they occur, he saw, in casting his eyes on the American shoreline, great masses of rock detached and hurled suddenly into the sea with a tremendous amount of trees and debris dragged along by the fall, with the result that a part of what formerly formed a long chain of rocks and mountains has made way for open sea, and the strait which separates Asia from America is enlarged each day.<sup>20</sup>

It is wrong, however, that some persons in considering the frequent earthquakes to which North America is subject, have regarded it as a sterile and useless land. M. Steller observes judiciously that these mountain collapses are not due to deterioration of the pole, and that these earthquakes only trace their origin to mines locked up and hidden in the bowels of the earth which, not being exploited, erupt these enormous masses of rock.<sup>21</sup> Those who believe, he adds, that it is too cold in these regions for the existence of mines are in error. One can cite Siberia; however cold it may be in this country, they discover in the mountains and in digging in the ground, mines of all types even now. In addition to ordinary metals, the most precious minerals are

found there; the copper contains so many veins of gold that nobody even takes the trouble to separate them. They make money out of it, although it is only used in the country because export is forbidden. It was several years ago in Siberia that a volcano was seen to burn and consume a copper mine without exploding the mountain because the vein and seams of that metal were too slight and too small. All that happened was that this vein, which was formerly of very good copper, became very black and not suitable today for any purpose.

It is otherwise when the mines are filled with sulphur and other inflammable materials; and this makes understandable what havoc can be caused by the mines which are found in large numbers on the coasts of America. Let us then agree with M. Steller's conclusion that even the greatest cold is not at all destructive to the mines. One can even confirm this point of view by the account of several other travelers who have penetrated into the north. M. Ellis in his description of Hudson Bay speaks, not by hearsay but by having been personally on the spot, of a large region which was about seven leagues distance from their fort as nearly covered with stones, among which were found a number of perfectly round pyrites, nearly the size of a six pounder. The English who stayed there imagined that this form had been given them on purpose by the French, in order to use them in their cannons when they attacked the fort; however, we have rather to regard these pyrites as remarkable phenomena of natural history, and as certain proof that the country is filled with metals, even the most precious. Pyrites always contain a little gold; they are often rich in silver, but it is rare that one finds lead or tin. M. Ellis has said elsewhere: "With regard to minerals, it is certain that they are found here in huge quantities of various types. I have myself found iron ore and they assure me that one can see lead ore on the surface of the ground everywhere at Churchill, not to speak of an extremely rich copper mine from which the northern Indians often brought pieces like the one which I myself keep in my cabinet."

It is also necessary not to forget that in Kamchatka, which is likewise a cold country, one finds ores of native copper in such a large quantity that the fragments are scattered on the roads like grains of sand. M. Steller tells us that of all the axes that he saw in America, he found very few of stone, but nearly all of copper, and of a color as red as scarlet.<sup>22</sup>

The volcanos, whose eruptions are frequent in North America, not only cause, by the collapse of the mountains which line the coast, the widening of the branch of the sea which separates Asia from America, but these earthquakes explain at the same time why certain parts of the Arctic Ocean are filled up by the falling in of earth, while, by the changing of their bed, these waters pour into other places. It is evident that if chains of mountains subside and fall into the sea, it forms in the waters a mass considerable enough in volume to turn aside their course and to dry up a part of their old bed. Such is

the nature of the terrain that is found beyond the dwelling place of the Yukaghir, a people who live between the Lena and Kolyma Rivers. The archives at Jakutsk inform us that this region was formerly an island in the Arctic Ocean, instead of being joined to the continent as it is today; but there are two important things to be noted: first, that the ground soil is composed of layers of mud and clay, resembling that which is found at the bottoms of rivers and the sea; second, that in this district, which may be 200 versts in length,<sup>23</sup> one finds the coasts strewn with tree trunks, although the soil absolutely does not produce them: the sea carries them from neighboring lands and in such a large quantity, that one finds in several places whole wood piles where the timber has piled up like mountains. This wood is of larch, cedar, pine and fir.

It is in this manner that the same writer observes in his *History of Kamchatka*, chapter VIII, that among the trees of Kamchatka, one notes not only the larch and the fir which are growing on the mountains and which are so thick, so high and so compact, that it is possible to employ them for the construction of ships as well as for houses, but even white fir and many pines and cedars are found there that do not grow in the country but are thrown up on the shore by the waters of the sea which caused the presumption that a large country near Kamchatka had to exist, as was happily proved by experience.

It is in this manner that one finds on the coasts of several other cold countries, such as Greenland and Iceland, trees of all sizes—driftwood conveyed by the waters of neighboring lands that are wooded. A long dispute has arisen in this connection among scholars, as to where this wood could come from. They supposed that it came from America, but the difficulty was to explain how. It is no longer possible to doubt that the wood comes from America, from these same rocks that are precipitated daily into the sea, and on which M. Steller reports that he has found not only the same type of wood, but forests so thick that it was difficult to catch a glimpse of the rays of the sun. In addition to what he said of this in his *History of Kamchatka*, he speaks of it again in a more detailed manner in his manuscripts.

It is, as we have said, the earthquakes which are the cause of all this damage. They not only take place on the coasts of North America but also in the flat country and on the islands which are found in the newly discovered archipelago, between the fiftieth and sixty-seventh degrees of north latitude. Steller cites, for example, what happened to him on Bering Island, which is in the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude, where he was obliged to pass the winter in order to repair his boat. "We experienced," he said, "several shocks from earthquakes, which each time detached entire sections of rocks and left such traces of their shock, that there were quagmires which crossed the island from one side to the other." It is on this same island that Captain-Commander Bering died.<sup>24</sup>



These discoveries and observations of M. Steller, considered in themselves, prove with much clearness that America was formerly joined to Asia. It is even possible to rely in this respect on a map of the world found in the monastery of Moines de Kiovie, and now deposited in the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg. It fixes the distance from Kamchatka to America at approximately less than half a league; but in going back several centuries earlier than the time this map was made, nothing would have been more natural than to believe that America had been joined to Asia. But to satisfy the more difficult persons, who, in spite of all these reasons, obstinately maintain that the sea at all times formed a separation between America and Asia, let us suppose that this distance was half a league; that still will not alter the fact that America could have been peopled from the north of Asia, but M. Steller, wishing to add certainty to the probabilities, compares the Eskimos and the Hurons, peoples of North America, with the Kamchadal, Greenlanders, Koryak, Chukchi and finally, the Japanese. He finds that they have between them considerable resemblance, as much by their clothing and outward manners as by their morals, their customs and their way of life. Here is a summary of his principal observations:<sup>25</sup>

I. All these people were divided into tribes or families that were governed by the oldest one or by the father of the family. When the New World was discovered, it was found that these people were divided into different families who all depended on a family chief, called *Cacique*.<sup>26</sup>

I. Their canoes, said M. Steller, are of a construction very suitable to their needs, easy to carry on land and move in the water. They are made of wood or of extremely thin whale ribs covered with seal skin, with the exception of an opening in the middle which has a rim of whale ribs or of wood to prevent the water from entering. This hole is made in such a way that only one man is able to get in and seat himself in the canoe, stretching his legs in front of him. There are some where a piece of skin comes up all around from the rim that the man seated in the canoe ties around his body, protecting him completely from the water. They place on the seams a kind of tar or paste composed, it is claimed, of seal oil. They transport in these canoes all that they need and equipment for fishing for whales, sea horses, narwals, seals, etc. These small canoes are only for the men; they are pointed at both ends and are approximately twenty feet long by eighteen inches or two feet wide. The man who is within has only one paddle, but it is flattened at both ends and is used for paddling alternately, first on one side and then on the other. Besides these small canoes, they have others which are much larger and more unprotected, and in these the women are obliged to paddle. These canoes are constructed with the same materials as the others and are large enough to carry more than twenty persons at a time.<sup>27</sup>

III. The Asiatic peoples referred to above also have an instrument similar to that of the Americans for lighting a fire. They take two

small boards of dry wood, and having flattened them, they make a small hole in each one through which they pass a peg of wood, around which they wind a cord. Then they turn the cord with such rapidity that the wood catches fire by friction; then they place the lighted wood against a kind of dried moss which is used as tinder.<sup>28</sup>

IV. These are not the only utensils common to these people. M. Steller remarks that among the savages of America he found a large wooden vessel made with the bark of the lime tree, as in Russia. He also saw several arrows which are bigger than those of Kamchatka, and which approach, as regards form, those of the Tungus and the Tartars, being blackened the same way and having the same polish.<sup>29</sup>

V. M. Steller has remarked that among the North Americans, for it is the northern part that we are talking about here, he saw a grindstone on which could be seen traces of copper, as among the Kalmaks and the Asiatic Tartars. He also saw there many hatchets made of copper. It is not that iron is not as abundant there as copper, but it requires more care and more intelligence to cast it.<sup>30</sup>

VI. The same comparison can be made between the peoples of northern Asia and the Americans with regard to their type of nourishment. They make use of the same type of fish, called *Yukola*, which has the taste of salmon and trout, and which, when they pickle it, becomes entirely transparent and forms a delicious dish.<sup>31</sup>

VII. They have the same drink composed of *sladkaya trava*, of which they make different uses, as one can see in the work of M. Steller. The *sladkaya trava* is the herb that we call acanthus; they employ it principally to make brandy.<sup>32</sup>

VIII. Among his observations on botany, M. Steller remarks that he has found, among the savages of North America, some rolls of thongs made from a sea plant which appeared to him, after tests that he made with them himself, to be of astonishing strength and firmness. He also adds that there fell into his hands some inner bark of larch and pine which were tied in rolls and dried. They were eaten in that country in the same way as in Kamchatka, in all Siberia, and even in Russia, as far as Khlynov, Vyatka, etc., in times of scarcity.<sup>33</sup>

IX. Of all plants, nettles are perhaps the ones most used by the North Americans. M. Steller has seen them picked and carded like flax, in order to send them afterwards in packs to their destination, in the same manner as the Kamchadal do it.<sup>34</sup>

X. The Chukchis make shirts with the guts of whales, like the Americans, and they also employ them, like the Koryak, as leather bottles.<sup>35</sup>

XI. The Americans, as well as the people of northern Asia, employ all types of remedies to prevent pregnancy. They allow their women or rather they often oblige them to miscarry, by making use of a

certain plant. The reason for this custom is to relieve in some manner the heavy burden which oppresses a poor family that is unable to feed its children. This custom is observed today among the Mongols where, by the same principle of a barbaric economy, they permit those who are not in a position to feed their children, to kill them at birth.<sup>36</sup>

XII. The fashion of adorning the face with stones, bones and the teeth of sea horses is customary among the North Americans, as among the peoples of the frontiers of Asia. They regard this as fine adornment.<sup>37</sup>

XIII. They also make use of dogs to pull sleds, in the same manner as the Kamchadal. The dogs of the North Americans never bark and only growl when they are provoked. These dogs are the only beasts of burden of which they make use. They pull much heavier loads, and drag them, when it is necessary, much greater distances than men. They are easily trained in everything taught them, and since they are very docile, they are always very useful. However, the Americans greatly neglect these animals which are almost compelled to search for their food themselves.<sup>38</sup>

XIV. The North Americans wear in summer a type of hat composed of the stems of feathers, and made in the form of a screen. The Kamchadal, Greenlanders, Koryak, Chukchi and the Japanese wear hats of the same type.<sup>39</sup>

XV. The North Americans understand not only the language of the Chukchi and Koryak, but also that of the Kamchadal.<sup>40</sup>

XVI. Those of Japan know the North Americans perfectly and all the people of which we have just spoken, by means of commerce which they have kept up for a long time with them, not under the name of Japanese but of Suhsamans.<sup>41</sup>

I have chosen, among the comparisons that M. Steller has made, those which serve to make known the particular affinity which is found between the border peoples of Asia and the North Americans. Their manners are so extremely similar and their customs conform so perfectly, that it would be difficult to doubt the conclusions which I have drawn. I know that several authors, as for example, Laet and Hornius,<sup>42</sup> have surmised before me that America could have been peopled by the Tartars, but without the truths which supported their opinion they remained conjectures. However, they would have been able to supply decisive proofs if they had consulted the *History of the Tartars*,<sup>43</sup> and the *History of the Mongols*. In these two histories we learn which people migrated last from Asia to America and from where they came. We recall what was said at the beginning of this work on the Greenlanders and Eskimos; that these people called themselves even today *Karalit* or *Karlit*: Their name can lead to a knowledge of their origin. In consulting the *History of the Mongols* by P. Gaubil,<sup>44</sup> we see that in 1203 a prince named Toli or Taugrul, lord of the horde

of *Keraits*, or prince of Korea, after having acted a long time in harmony with Genghis Khan, abandoned his cause at the suggestion of another prince called Tschamouha, the same that Abulgasi-Bayadur-Chan named Zamuczazen; that Genghis Khan, irritated by this defection, swore his doom, and having defeated his army, massacred it. After the defeat of that prince, the name as well as the tribe of *Keraits*, being lost, no longer figures in the *History of the Mongols*. It speaks only of some further efforts of his son Ilho to resurrect his cause, but they were unavailing. The rest of the horde, plundered of their habitations and pursued by Ghengis Kahn, looked for a place of refuge from him. They found it in that section of America opposite to Korea, which thus became their country along with Greenland. Europeans had at first given to these people the name of Greenlanders and Eskimos, but when the inhabitants were questioned on their origin, they gave themselves that of *Karalit* or *Karait*. The Europeans to which they spoke, understanding only imperfectly the history of Asia, thought that these people had to be one of the Tartar tribes that had disappeared from this continent, but were not able to give decisive proof. The *History* comes to the support of conjectures on this occasion, and proves in effect the identity of these people and of those who fled the sword of Genghis Khan. This colony of *Karaites* who went from Korea to America is entirely different from those that the Chinese had sent there a long time before. They had no kind of science, religion or culture. What one sees among them today is perfectly in accord with the *History*; their Lord Toli, being of the race of Ghengis Khan, had, the same as he, no idea of religion. They do not understand and never have known tillage. Abulgasi-Bayadur-Chan said in his own words: "they lived in the country of the Mongols and were not used to cultivating the ground." One seeks uselessly some difference in their name. The Eskimos call themselves *Karalit* or *Karlik*, and Abulgasi-Bayadur-Chan furnished me with evidence that already in his time they availed themselves indiscriminately of the name of *Karait* and of *Karlik*.

This last emmigration of peoples from Asia to America being therefore well verified, I believe to be justified in alleging it as an authority against those who deny that the population of America was brought about by the movement of peoples who inhabited the coasts of Asia; for if a people ignorant and inferior in all ways to the Chinese have been able to execute this migration, one must be inclined to believe with all the more reason that an intelligent people have been able to send colonies to America, in a time when interest in commerce invited attempts, which in diminishing a too numerous population, were expected at the same time to open new outlets.<sup>45</sup>

It results from all these facts that it is not possible to doubt that America had been populated from the old world. However, to safeguard our principles against any possible objection, we will show how it happened that the Americans, who trace their origin from the Chinese, the *Karaites* and the Africans, nevertheless differ from these peoples in

color and facial traits; and what has been the origin of the different species of animals that one finds in America, of which there are several not to be encountered in any other part of the world.

# Notes

<sup>1</sup>See Masterson and Brower (1948, pp. 1-11) for a detailed discussion of eighteenth century bibliography concerning the Russian discoveries.

<sup>2</sup>For discussions of the identity of J.L.S., see Masterson and Brower (1958, footnote 25, p. 7) and Stejneger (1934).

<sup>3</sup>These included Engel (1777, vol. 2), Bellin (1766), Adelung (1768) and Leclerc (1778).

<sup>4</sup>The translator wishes to express his appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. J. Gaudier who read and corrected the translation. With regard to the spelling of Russian names, places and other words, the usage established in Golder (1922-25) has been followed.

<sup>5</sup>Adrien Reland (1678-1718), a Dutch orientalist, and Pierre Louis de Maupertuis (1698-1759) a French mathematician, were also interested in problems of geographical speculation.

<sup>6</sup>The *Sibirski Prikaz* was the bureau in charge of the administration of Siberian affairs. From its offices in Moscow, orders were issued, officers appointed and to it reports and tribute were sent (Golder, 1914, p. 19).

<sup>7</sup>Although neither the discoverer nor the conqueror of Kamchatka, Atlasov can be called the first explorer of the country, and his description of the peninsula and its inhabitants is better than that of any Siberian of his time. He and his party left the Anadyr River in 1679, and although they did not penetrate quite as far south as Lopatka Cape, they nevertheless were near enough to be able to obtain information from the local inhabitants concerning the Kurile Islands. Atlasov returned to the Anadyr in February of 1700 and then proceeded to Jakutsk and Moscow. Petitions from him to the Czar are dated in the latter city in early February, 1701. A detailed discussion of Atlasov's travels can be found in Golder (1914, pp. 98-101) and Muller (1761, pp. 31-33).

<sup>8</sup>There were Russian posts along the Penjinsk River in Kamchatka at least as early as 1652 (Golder, 1914, p. 97), but the Dutch were not concerned in the exploration of the peninsula. In 1643 a Dutch expedition attempting to determine the extent of the elusive Terra de Jeso discovered two of the Kurile Islands and reached as far north as the southeast part of Sakhalin Island (Golder, 1914, pp. 121-22).

<sup>9</sup>This appears to be a confused account of what is considered to be the first passage by sea from Okhotsk to Kamchatka. According to Strahlenberg (1738, p. 17), one of the sailors on this voyage was a Swedish corporal named Henry Busch. Muller met Busch at Irkutsk in 1736 and gives an account of the voyage which took place in 1716-17 (Muller, 1761, pp. 42-43). Nordenskjold also discusses this expedition and draws attention to the errors in Strahlenberg's account (Nordenskjold, 1881, II pp. 175-76). Since the latter states that the voyage took place in 1713 with the return trip occupying six days, Scherer may have obtained his information from this source. However, there is no indication that Busch and his party ever attempted the crossing to America.

<sup>10</sup>According to Golder, a Swedish naval lieutenant, Ambjorn Malyk, was with a group that was sent by the Russian government to find a water route from Okhotsk to Kamchatka. Malyk and his party arrived at Okhotsk in the summer of 1717 and crossed over to Kamchatka in the fall of that year. Golder mentions that from this time the water passage across the Lana Sea (Sea of Okhotsk) became the official route to Kamchatka (Golder, 1914, pp. 108-09). This may have been the event referred to by Scherer, although, again, there is no indication that this expedition involved an attempt to reach the American coast.

<sup>11</sup>Although the date and most of the details are wrong, this is doubtless a reference to Peter the Great's first attempt to determine the relation of Asia to America. He ordered two of his officers, Fedor Luzhin and Ivan Evreinov, to proceed to Asia and make certain investigations for him and also to determine whether Asia and America were united. They left Russia in 1719, reached Kamchatka in 1720, cruised and explored the Kurile Islands in 1720 or 1721 and returned to St. Petersburg in 1722 or 1723. They made a verbal report to the Czar, the results of which are not known (Golder, 1914, pp. 113-14; 1922-25, I p. 6; Bancroft, 1886, pp. 22-23; Muller, 1761, p. 44).

<sup>12</sup>A detailed discussion of Bering's first expedition is to be found in Golder (1914, ch. VI).

<sup>13</sup>The Russians had reached the Kolyma River at least as early as 1644 (Golder, 1914, p. 72).

<sup>14</sup>This appears to be a reference to Simon Deshnev's supposed voyage by water from the Kolyma to the Anadyr in 1648. Muller discovered original manuscripts in Siberia concerning this expedition and was the first to publish an account of it (Muller, 1761, pp. 4-8). Golder (1914) devotes his entire fifth chapter to an examination of the evidence for this voyage and concludes that it never took place. Other authorities have disagreed with Golder (Jochelson, 1928, footnote p. 6) and accepted the correctness of Deshnev's account.

<sup>15</sup>The expedition led by Gvozdev during the summer of 1732 landed on both the Diomed Islands and anchored near the mainland but did not go ashore. Neither Gvozdev nor those with him were aware that they had seen the American continent but thought it to be another island. An official report of the voyage was not made until ten years later (Golder, 1914, pp. 162-63).

<sup>16</sup>It is difficult to understand why this account of Bering's voyage is so sketchy and inaccurate, particularly since Scherer presumably had access to Steller's journal kept during the voyage of the St. Peter. Full accounts of the Second Kamchatkan Expedition are to be found in Golder (1914, 1922-25) and Waxell (1952); it will be sufficient simply to point out the errors in Scherer's account. The St. Peter and St. Paul separated between the forty-eighth and forty-ninth parallels and the latter sighted the American coast in latitude fifty-six degrees. Bering's ship sighted land on July 16th (old style) in latitude fifty-eight degrees and a landing was made on Kayak Island. Then, after deciding to return to Kamchatka, made a landing in the Shumagin group and sighted other islands in the Aleutian chain. With the exception of Bering and Copper (Mednoi) Islands, the other islands mentioned here are imaginary and appear to have been taken from Stahlin's map (1774, see the next footnote.)

<sup>17</sup>Ivan Synd (variously spelled Sind, Sinda, Syndo, etc.) was a midshipman on Bering's ship, the St. Peter. After the return of the expedition to Okhotsk in 1743, Synd remained there. Later he was promoted to lieutenant and in 1764-68 he was sent by the commander of Okhotsk

to the northeast in the vicinity of the Chukchi Peninsula. Synd placed a number of imaginary islands on his chart and reported the existence of a mountainous coast opposite the peninsula. However, he made no attempt to survey this coast, and there is no proof that he actually sighted the American mainland. Synd's voyage is described in some detail by Coxe (1780, pp. 300-02) and Bancroft (1886, pp. 157-58). It was government sponsored and not a private expedition as Scherer suggests. Stahlin's map (1774), which Bancroft has referred to as "perhaps the most preposterous piece of imaginary geography in existence" (Bancroft, 1886, p. 158), shows a number of imaginary islands southeast of the Kamchatka coast together with the islands of Ajak, Kanaha, Tschepchina, Tahalan, Atcha, Amlai, Kodjak, and Umanak. These can presumably be identified respectively as Adak, Kanaga, Sitkin, Tagalak, Atka, Amlia, of the Andreanof group, and Kodiak and Umnak. The similarity between this group of islands and those mentioned by Scherer as having been discovered by Lieutenant Synd will be noted, as will the fact that Scherer has confused the voyage of Synd with the unrelated and, of course, much earlier discovery of islands in the Aleutian chain by the Bering expedition. Masterson and Brower (1948, footnote 19, p. 5) have suggested that Stahlin was Scherer's source of information and that the vagueness of the former's account of the Synd expedition is responsible for Scherer's confusion.

<sup>18</sup>This is one of the earliest references to the expedition of Krenitzin and Levashev, but Scherer apparently did not have access to the official documents concerning the voyage. The earliest full account is given by Coxe who abstracts journals of the two naval officers which were not previously known even to Russian readers (Coxe, 1780, pp. 251-66). According to Bancroft, who also gives an account based on the journals, the expedition was organized because it was thought desirable to have the discoveries being made by the *promyshlenniki* confirmed by naval officers. Krenitzin spent the winter of 1768 on Umnak Island and Levashev wintered on Unalaska. Both parties suffered greatly from scurvy and the unfriendliness of the Aleuts, and returned to Kamchatka in the summer of 1769 having accomplished little in the way of exploration (Bancroft, 1886, pp. 159-67). The Krenitzin and Levashev expedition was expected to join with Lieutenants Chichagov, Panov and Babayev who had been instructed to sail from Archangel in the White Sea and coast eastward along Siberia to pass through Bering Strait (Bancroft, 1886, p. 194; Tompkins, 1955, p. 19). Although the two expeditions never met, the secrecy surrounding their activities resulted in confusion typical of that found in Scherer's account. Krenitzin was drowned at the mouth of the Kamchatka River and not at Archangel.

<sup>19</sup>Steller's journal was edited and published at St. Petersburg in 1793 by the German naturalist Peter Simon Pallas, both serially in volumes five and six of his *Neue nordische Beträge* and separately in booklet form. An abridged English translation appears in Coxe (1804, pp. 30-93), and a complete annotated translation is to be found in Golder (1922-25, II).

<sup>20</sup>In his journal, Steller reports that he questioned traders, travelers and cossacks in Kamchatka concerning the area where Asia and America most closely approach each other (Golder, 1922-25, II p. 99). Although the name of the place is not given, it is clear from Krashenninnikov that the Chukchi Peninsula is the location he had in mind. Scherer appears to have taken most of his information concerning Steller's views on the separation of Asia and America from Krashenninnikov who maintains that Steller, while believing that the two continents most closely approach opposite the Chukchi Peninsula, also thought that they remained close to each other throughout the whole area from latitude



fifty-two degrees to sixty degrees north. According to Golder (1922-25, II pp. 99-100), this view is reflected in the great southwest projecting land mass that is shown in the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences map of 1758. Krasheninnikov maintains that it was the nearness of the two continents that led Steller to believe that they had at one time been connected. The latter also noted that the outline of the two coasts appeared to indicate violent separation as did the numerous capes which project into the sea. The number and situation of the islands between Kamchatka and America suggested to Steller that they had once been part of a continuous mainland (Krasheninnikov, 1764, pp. 44-45).

<sup>21</sup>These and other obsolete geological opinions are only suggested in Steller's journal (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 54-55). Similar views with regard to the earthquakes of Kamchatka are attributed to Steller by Krasheninnikov (1764, p. 77).

<sup>22</sup>Actually, Steller merely states that the aboriginal Americans probably "possessed cutting tools of copper" (Golder, 1922-25, p. 53). In another place he cites evidence for the use of bone or stone axes similar to those used by the inhabitants of Kamchatka (Golder, 1922-25, II p. 46).

<sup>23</sup>One verst is roughly equal to two-thirds of a mile.

<sup>24</sup>For Steller's description of the topography and geology of Bering's Island, see Pallas (1781-96, II pp. 255-301, translated in Golder, 1922-25, II, pp. 193-202). The quotation attributed to Steller does not occur in this paper, but there are references to earthquakes that occurred while Bering's party was on the island (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 198, 205, 207).

<sup>25</sup>Nearly all of this material concerning the inhabitants of the area visited by the Bering expedition is taken from Steller's journal (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 44-49, 90-105).

<sup>26</sup>This vague generalization concerning social structure is not found in Steller's journal.

<sup>27</sup>Steller correctly notes the resemblance between these boats, which he observed off Bird Island, and those used by the Eskimos of Greenland (Golder, 1922-25, II p. 96).

<sup>28</sup>Steller discovered a fire drill along with other evidence of human occupation near the landing place on Kayak Island (Golder, 1922-25, II p. 45).

<sup>29</sup>This is a reference to the wooden vessel brought back to the ship by Khitrov who had gone ashore on Wingham Island for the purpose of exploration. The arrows were found by Steller in the semi-subterranean habitation on Kayak Island (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 52, 48-49).

<sup>30</sup>This whetstone was one of the objects brought back to the ship by Khitrov and may have been used on some copper implement (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 52-53). Steller says nothing of having seen hatchets made of copper, but he did see iron knives which he presumes, quite correctly, were obtained in trade with the peoples of northeast Asia (Golder, 1922-25, II, pp. 97-98). The inhabitants of this area did not, of course, trade directly for these implements, but rather maintained contacts with people farther north who in turn had direct trade relations with the peoples of the Asiatic mainland. The smelting of iron ore was not known by any American aborigines. Compare Scherer's reference to the whetstone with that in the manuscript copy of Steller's journal discovered by Golder in the archives of the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg in 1917 (Golder, 1922-25, II footnote 100, p. 53).

31This appears to be a reference to the dried fish which Steller found on Kayak Island (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 44).

32Steller gives a detailed description of *sladkaya trava* in his *Beschreibung von dem Lande Kamtschatka* (1774, pp. 84-87). Stejneger pictures and describes it from Bering Island (Stejneger, 1896, p. 25, pl. 15a). This so-called sweet grass is the cow parsnip, *Heracleum lanatum*, and was found by Steller on Kayak Island (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 44-45, 48).

33These items were found by Steller in the semi-subterranean habitation on Kayak Island. According to Golder (1922-25, II footnote 90, p. 48), Khlynov and Vyatka were two neighboring villages in Steller's time. In 1781 they were combined with two others to form the present city of Vyatka on the river of that name, approximately in latitude fifty-eight degrees north.

34Steller believed, probably correctly, that these so-called nettles, found in the house on Kayak Island, were used in the manufacture of fish nets (Golder, 1922-25, II p. 48). It should be pointed out that most of the items found by Steller and Khitrov on Kayak and Wingham Islands could be of either Eskimo or Eyak origin. The wooden bucket brought back from Wingham Island by Khitrov's party is, however, typically Eskimo and Birket-Smith (1953, pp. 8-9, 28) has shown that Kayak Island and the adjacent region belonged to the hunting ground of the Chugach Eskimo. Although there were no permanent villages on the island, the Chugach maintained hunting camps similar to the one encountered by Steller (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 48-49).

35The Aleuts observed by Steller on Bird Island in the Shumagin group were dressed in these waterproof garments which were probably made of seal rather than whale intestine (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 96-97).

36Steller's brief contacts with the Aleuts would not have permitted him to make observations concerning such aspects of social culture as pregnancy and birth. This information appears to have been added by Scherer and was perhaps taken from contemporary accounts of the aboriginal inhabitants of northern Asia.

37Steller noted the use of labrets as well as other forms of facial adornment by the Aleuts he observed off the coast of Bird Island (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 92, 103).

38There are no references to the use of dog transportation in the journal but Steller must have been familiar with it during his travels in Kamchatka and northern Siberia.

39In his journal, Steller describes the typical Aleut hat at the time of his second encounter with these people off Bird Island (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 102-03).

40Although Steller has little to say in his journal concerning the language of the Aleuts, it is clear that these people would not be able to understand the Koryak interpreter who was with the expedition, since the languages are unrelated (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 93-94). The Chukchi, Koryak and Kamchadal languages are usually grouped into a single closely related linguistic stock that has been thought to exhibit structural similarities with the Indian languages of the northwest coast of America (Jochelson, 1930, p. 454; Jakobson, 1944, p. 603; Chard, 1953, p. 19).

41Steller, of course, had no knowledge of contacts between the Aleuts and the Japanese, and this is obviously an addition of Scherer's possibly based on information concerning Japanese shipwrecks on the coast of Kamchatka.

<sup>42</sup>A reference to the writings of Joannes de Laet (1593-1649), and Georg Horn (1620-1670).

<sup>43</sup>This work, written by the historian Abulgasi-Bayadur-Chan, was published in 1726.

<sup>44</sup>Published in Paris in 1739.

<sup>45</sup>These naive and obsolete opinions concerning the origin of the people with whom the Bering expedition came in contact are in marked contrast to Steller's reasoned comments concerning resemblance between the artifacts that he found and those of the Kamchadal and other peoples of northeast Asia and his careful attempts to document instances of trade between the Chukchi and the peoples of northwest Alaska (Golder, 1922-25, II pp. 46, 97-99).

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