

Kostrometinoff Letter Transcription

Transcribed on October 15, 2016 by Anna Lee Hirschi

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Seattle, Wash.
114 Doavies St
March 11th 1927

My dear Father Andrew.—

As I feel better to-day, I will proceed with my story.

The American troops landed about 3 o'clock P.M. on the 18th of October 1867; for some reason they didn't land on the wharf, they landed in the warehouse, where Russians kept ship supplies, where Boots cold storage is now. It was built like this:

[DRAWN DIAGRAM]

water water
from here they marched
land
shipyard

(Over.)

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and from there the American soldiers marched to the Castle Hill. I marched along side of them, as far as Castle gate.

Russians had high fence in panels, with heavy double gate, about 8 or 9 feet in height, from the Custom House to Russian barracks, just be-fore you come to Castle steps. I couldn't go no farther than Castle steps—so I went home, and got on the roof, the house was two story high, and it was about 150 or 200 feet from the Castle Hill, and saw the whole business. A company of Russian soldiers were also marched to the Castle Hill. The ceremony began about half past 3 o'clock by lowering the Russian flag. But the ceremony was interrupted by catching of the Russian flag in the ropes attached to the flag pole. A sailor was then sent up to untie the flag—but he went up only about half way, and got tired out, so couldn't go any farther. The flag staff was about 100 feet in height. Then soldier was pulled up on boatswing chair. The orders were to come down with the flag—the soldier must of misunderstood the order, when he untied the flag, he threw it down, and the flag fell on the Russian soldiers bayonets.

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and good many of the Russians ladies cried. Then the United States flag was hoisted up. Then Russian Commander transferred to the United States the Territory of Alaska. And the ceremony was ended. Of course, there was a salute from United States ship, and from the Russian batteries.

During the Russian time the Castle Hill looked much different than at present—there was a large platform on the southeastern side with a flag staff on the middle, and there was a picket fence on the southern side, the pickets were square about 1 ½ inch, and about 5 feet in height, and went through the 2x4. The eastern side was fortified with heavy logs and there were small cannons on the platform and on the northwestern side, there was a pigeon coop and flower garden it looked quite nice.

By the way—the old brass or copper cop which I gave you to the museum has a small story to it—During the Russian time, they had a long pole on the parade ground, on

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the end of the pole they had a bell, and when it was time to go to work they ring it—and when it was time to quit, they ring it again. The working men were allowed a drink before their meals, so at noon time they all marched to the drinking place. The liquor was kept in the storeroom on the northeastern side—near our house. They used to put a stand near the door, and a man would call out: first, second, thirds and so on, and the men stepped up to the stand by four persons and had their drink, out of that kind of a cup, straight with out water. When they had a drink I was there to sell hot peroskey, fish or meat at 5 of *[indecipherable]*. I was a regular Russian boy—dressed just like a Russian—had red shirt with a belt, and the pants in side of the boots. When I think—what a good time we had during Russian time, it makes me feel blue. The time will never come back. I am the only one left who have seen the transfer (I think the United States ought to give me a pension). There might be some Indians who have seen the transfer. If there are, surely they couldn't see very much from such a long distance as they were not allowed in town with out permission althow, there were some Indians on the
(over.)

[PAGE 3 UPSIDE DOWN TEXT]

Castle Hill during the transfer—some Chiefs. I think you must be tired reading my letter, so I must stop.

Sincerely Yours
P.J. Kostrometinoff.