

## ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY MOVES ITS TRADING POST TO CANTON, CHINA

English East India Company trade was moved from Taiwan to Canton, China -- 1700  
most foreign traders were confined to Canton where rigid restrictions were imposed  
there a guild of Chinese merchants were licensed to deal with foreign traders  
these merchants were responsible for all business deals  
and the behavior and debts of the foreign traders

Chinese merchants were under the jurisdiction of a local governor and a customs officer  
they were required to pay a large sum every year to the government  
these costs were recovered by levying heavy taxes on foreign ships

English East India Company held a monopoly on East Indies trade [until 1883]  
limited trading ports and the exorbitant fees paid to the customs officer by the merchants  
were the main grievances expressed by the Company traders

## PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIVES BECOME FAMILIAR WITH HORSES<sup>1</sup>

(Spanish explorer Juan de Onate set out from New Spain with a large caravan of soldiers and settlers  
to colonize the upper Rio Grande valley [present-day New Mexico<sup>2</sup>] [1598]  
after founding the province of *Santa Fe* and appointing himself governor,  
de Onate set about to subdue the Pueblo Indians

Spanish colonists brought herds of sheep, cattle and horses to the area  
many Pueblo Indians were recruited to care for the livestock)

(Pueblo natives rose up against the Spanish Conquistador overlords [1680]

most of the Europeans fled back to New Spain leaving their livestock behind  
Pueblos began trading the abandoned Spanish horses with other tribes

it was estimated within thirty years the Shoshone tribes of the upper Snake River had horses)  
Shoshones (also known as Snake Indians) exposed other Plateau natives to the horse -- early 1700s

Cayuse Indians recounted the story of a war party looking for the Snakes: **“What they saw threw them into great consternation: the Snakes appeared to be riding either elk or deer. The spies hurriedly returned to their war chief... who sent other warriors to ascertain the reason for what he thought must surely be an illusion. They, too, saw what appeared to be Snakes riding elk or deer. Dumbfounded, the group inched closer to discover that the hoofprints were not split but solid and round. Thoroughly upset by this discovery, the chief abandoned his war plan for one of peace. After arranging a truce, the war party returned home with a pair of horses, descendants of Spanish ponies. The Cayuses treated their newly gained treasures with great care, and the following year the mare**

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<sup>1</sup> Jack and Claire Nisbet, “European horses arrive on the Columbia plateau,” Essay 9433, HistoryLink.org., May 19, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Locations in parenthesis (present-day New Mexico) were not known by that name at the time.

**foaled. Then the Cayuses decided to send out another party, this time to steal more horses from the Snakes.”<sup>3</sup>**

According to Nez Perce lore their tribe first saw horses among the Cayuse  
they learned had been acquired from the Shoshones  
Nez Perce sent out a trading party that returned with a gentle mare

**“Day after day the curious Nez Percés gathered from all around to watch the mare crop grass near the village. They learned how a horse acted: how it fed, how it exercised, how it rested. In a few weeks the mare dropped a foal, and the crowds increased. Soon other villages sent south for horses of their own, to be treasured as curiosities and pets.”<sup>4</sup>**

horses flourished in the lush grasslands of the Nez Perce homeland  
Acquisition of domesticated horses greatly altered the lifestyle and economy of many Plateau tribes  
people were able to travel greater distances and greatly expanded their hunting and trading areas  
heavier loads of trade goods could be carried and exchanged  
both the volume and variety of goods carried increased  
huge tribal gatherings on an unprecedented scale became common  
horses became a new source of wealth and an important commodity in trade  
Equestrian lifestyle also brought about increased warfare  
horse-raiding expeditions gained prestige -- along with extra mounts  
warriors pursued old hostilities and created new feuds with far-flung tribes  
in attempts to expand their territory

## ENORMOUS EARTHQUAKE HITS THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST<sup>5</sup>

Cascadia fault (Cascadia subduction zone) runs from northern Vancouver Island to northern California  
this very long sloping fault separates the Juan de Fuca Tectonic plate and the North America plate  
geological records reveal that “great earthquakes” (Richter scale magnitude eight or higher)  
occurred along the Cascadia fault about every 500 years on average  
these are often accompanied by tsunamis (large ocean waves)  
there is evidence of at least thirteen previous earthquakes  
estimated to have occurred in 1310 AD, 810 AD, 400 AD, 170 BC and 600 BC  
Japanese sources documented an earthquake (estimated to be magnitude 8.7 to 9.2)  
shook the ground for three to five minutes -- about 9:00 p.m. January 26, 1700  
entire Pacific Northwest ocean coastline dropped three to six feet  
tsunami up to thirty-three feet high was generated  
it inundated 600 miles of the Honshu Island coast with a six- to ten-foot-high wall of water

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Ruby and John A. Brown, *The Cayuse Indians*, P. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Francis Haines, "How the Indian Got the Horse," *American Heritage*, Vol. 15, P. 80.

<sup>5</sup> Greg Lange, "Earthquake shakes Puget Sound." Essay 5104, Historylink.org, January 23, 2003.

that struck five Japanese towns  
Indian legends corroborated the cataclysmic occurrence felt all across Western Washington  
many tales reported plains becoming oceans, mudslides and the like  
Hoh Indians of the Forks area on the Olympic Peninsula tell of an enormous  
“**shaking, jumping and trembling of the earth ...**” (*The Seattle Times*)  
Makah who live on Neah Bay at the northwest tip of the continent have a version  
in which a whale is delivered to the mouth of a river and saved the starving people  
this legend formed the basis for the tribe’s whale hunts  
Other evidence included drowned groves of red cedar and Sitka spruce  
in several different places in the Pacific Northwest  
carbon dating of the tree rings of a seawater-drowned red cedar  
located near the Copalis River in Grays Harbor County show that the tree died  
between [August 1699 and May 1700] -- that is during this earthquake

#### CLATSOP INDIAN LEGEND OF A SPANISH SHIPWRECK OFF THE (OREGON COAST)

Since the earliest days of white settlement along the Oregon Coast,  
native stories were told of a mystery shipwreck exposed on Nehalem Spit  
where the Nehalem River meets the Pacific Ocean  
laden with Chinese porcelain, beeswax blocks and candles  
these stories told of teak wood timbers and delicate Chinese porcelains  
also large blocks of beeswax (some weighing 175 pounds) with strange markings,  
(blocks were stamped with initials of Latin phrases familiar to Catholics I.H.S. and I.H.N.)  
An Indian legend portraying a Spanish shipwreck along the (Oregon) coast  
was reported by two independent sources:<sup>6</sup>

- Celiast, daughter of Chief Kobaiway (from today’s Clatsop, Oregon)
- Charlie Cultee (from today’s Bay Center, Washington)

According to this legend an old woman living near the ancient Indian village of Ne-Ahkstow  
located about two miles south of the mouth of the Columbia River had lost her son  
one day as was her custom she went to the seaside and walked toward (today’s Clatsop)  
she saw something strange she thought was a whale  
she noted that it had two trees standing upright in it  
its outside was covered with something bright (later found to be copper)  
ropes were tied all over the two trees  
while the old woman gazed in wonder, a being that looked like a bear  
but had a human face with long hair all over it came out of the Thing

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<sup>6</sup> William Denison Lyman, *Columbia River*, P. 34-38.

the old woman ran home in haste  
when the people learned of these events they ran with bows and arrows to the spot  
where the Thing lay upon the shore  
but instead of one bear there were two standing on the Thing  
(it was now understood the Thing was a canoe with two trees driven into it)  
these two beings had just started to go down the Thing to the beach with kettles in their hands  
the creatures started a fire and put corn into the kettles  
soon it began to pop and fly up and down in the kettles  
popcorn made a great impression on the natives  
both creatures made signs that they wanted water  
the chief sent men to supply them what was needed  
when the chief saw the creatures' hands were like his own he became satisfied they were men  
one Indian climbed up on the Thing and entered it -- he found it full of boxes  
also many long strings of buttons were discovered  
this Indian went to gather his relatives, but before he returned, the ship was set on fire  
later the Clatsops got possession of the iron, copper and brass  
news spread among the villages -- natives from all over came to see the strange men  
each village was very anxious to care for one or both of the strangers  
which caused great strife among the Indians  
from the beach on the North, the Quinaults, Chehalis and Waillapas  
came to press their claim  
from upriver, the Cowlitz, Cascade and even far off Klickitats came  
according to one account of the shipwreck it was decided  
one stranger should stay with the Clatsop Chief and other go with the Waillapas  
another account has both whites staying with the Clatsops  
from this earliest arrival, natives called the strangers "Tlechonnipts" or those who drift ashore  
one of the men named Konapee was a blacksmith  
he possessed the magical art of taking pieces of iron  
and making knives, hatchets and tools from iron taken from burning the wreckage  
natives kept a close watch on him for many days  
but his gifts placed him at such a high value they allowed him his liberty  
he was allowed to select a site for a house -- that spot became known as Konapee  
both whites were later freed and moved to the foothills of the Cascade Mountains  
where they proceeded to raise families

#### TILAMOOK INDIAN LEGEND OF A SPANISH SHIPWRECK OFF THE (OREGON COAST)

Tillamook Indian legend reports one pleasant afternoon in early summer

SearchableHistory.com

1700-1749

P. 4

a large group of natives gathered on the edge of a precipitous cliff which fronts the sea  
at the base of Neahkahnie Mountain

they saw a great object like a huge bird drawing near from the sea  
as it approached shore a small boat with a number of men and a large black chest  
put out to land

coming to the beach the party of men, including one who was black, carried a chest  
going a little way up the beach the men dug a hole and lowered the chest after filling it with bags  
next the men stood around the chest and drew lots  
they struck down the black man and threw him on top of the chest and filled in the hole  
they returned to their ship

natives did not dig up the box for fear of interfering with the dead

Today on a rock at the foot of Neahkahnie Mountain

a character cut in the rock crudely resemble a cross

others think it looks like the letters *I.H.S.* and *I.H.N.* -- sacred emblem of the Catholic Church  
also there appears to be quite a distinct arrow pointing  
but the treasure has never been found

#### SPANISH SHIP IS WRECKED ALONG (WHAT BECAME THE OREGON) COAST

Spanish sailors were stranded along (today's Oregon) coast at the mouth of the (Nehalem) River  
jealously toward the sailors arose among the native men

because of the sailors' attentions toward the native women

Sailors were killed after defending themselves as long as they could with home-made sling-shots

one of the sailors had red hair which immediately drew the attention of the local Indians

they attempted to kill him but were prevented from doing so by an Indian girl

he returned to his wrecked ship to secure guns and ammunition

he married his "Nehalem Pocahontas" after shooting a jealous rival

red haired Spanish sailor and his wife moved their family into the country of a Clatsop chief  
who had befriended them

Many years later, the red haired sailor who lived with the Clatsop natives

went to care for the Clatsop chief who had become ill -- both men died of the same disease  
(Lewis and Clark found a freckled, red-haired Indian near Clatsop [1806])

Artifacts prove the stories real: beeswax, porcelain and teak timbers have been found

washing up along Manzanita's beaches and the adjacent Nehalem Spit and Nehalem Bay  
for the last two hundred years

throughout the nineteenth century [1800s] local residents of the Nehalem Valley

collected tons of beeswax and used teak timbers from the wreck

to make furniture and souvenirs

Archaeological and historical research indicates that the beeswax shipwreck was a Spanish galleon only the Spanish traded beeswax in large quantities

which was needed to make candles for Catholic churches in their colonies in the Americas based on Spanish records, the decorative styles of the Chinese porcelains found with the beeswax and radiocarbon dates on teak and beeswax wreckage it is now known to be one of two ships Spanish galleon *Santo Cristo de Burgos* which left Manila [1693] or the thousand-ton Spanish vessel *San Francisco Xavier* which sailed -- 1705 both were large ships traveling eastbound loaded with Chinese goods and wax each carried hundreds of passengers and crew

#### KINGDOM OF ENGLAND BECOMES THE KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN

England and Scotland sign the *Act of Union* -- May 1, 1707

this united the Kingdom of England, then composed of England and Wales, with Scotland Ireland remained a separate nation on the British Isles

#### SOUTH SEAS COMPANY IS CHARTERED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

British Parliament issued a charter to the South Seas Company which held exclusive access to all of Central America and South America in the South Seas (Pacific Ocean) --December 1711 if private traders were caught without a license their cargo and ship was taken by the British however, these were Spanish colonies and Britain was at war with Spain

even after peace was achieved the Spanish government limited the South Seas Company to one trading ship a year and exactly 500 tons of cargo in Central and South America British fur trade was dominated by dictated by merchants in collusion with royal officials who, in an effort to maintain their monopoly frequently incited the natives to war When another British trading company (the Greenland Company) licensed as a whaling company failed financially the South Seas Company were directed to send ships to hunt whales in the Arctic South Seas Company became licensed to conduct trade all along the Pacific coast

#### HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY REGAINS CONTROL OF YORK FACTORY

York Factory was a trading post located on the southwestern shore of Hudson Bay (in today's northeastern Manitoba, Canada) at the mouth of the Hayes River -- 1713 it changed hands several time in fighting to control the fur trade between England and France

#### FORT MICHILIMACKINAC IS BUILT BY THE FRENCH

Fort Michilimackinac on the upper Mississippi River (Mackinaw City, Michigan) was a strategically located fortified French trading outpost that was established overlooking the Straits of Mackinac connecting Lake Huron and Lake Michigan -- 1715

It was not built primarily as a military facility but rather as a link in the French trade system,  
Fort Michilimackinac served as a supply post for independent French traders  
who operated in the western Great Lakes region  
and as a primary stopping-off point between Montreal and the western country  
which extended from Montreal through the Great Lakes region  
(eventually reaching northwest to Lake Winnipeg and beyond)

Michilimackinac was an island of French influence on the frontier  
from which the French carried out fur trading, sought alliances with native peoples,  
protected their interests against the rival British Hudson's Bay Company  
and the colonial ambitions of other nations

#### HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY CONSTRUCTS ITS SECOND OUTPOST IN THE WILDERNESS

Churchill Factory was a trading post constructed on the western shore of Hudson Bay  
a few miles upstream from the mouth of the Churchill River (in today's Manitoba, Canada) -- 1717  
Churchill Factory was approximately 120 miles south of Hudson's Bay Company's York Factory  
Churchill Factory trading post and river both were named  
after John Churchill, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Marlborough who was governor of the Hudson's Bay Company

#### RUSSIAN FUR TRADERS SWEEP ACROSS SIBERIA

Russian fur traders reached the western shore of the Pacific Ocean  
when they arrived in the northeast corner of Asia they were told of strangers  
who walked across the ice in winter from an unknown land abounding in furs and great forests  
On Kamchatka Peninsula Russians saw a silky dark fur  
from an animal they had never before encountered -- sea otter  
Russians discovered the Kurile Islands while expanding their search for furs -- 1719

#### REIGN OF RUSSIA'S CZAR PETER THE GREAT COMES TO AN END

Czar Peter the Great ruled Russia [1689]-1725  
he had been exposed to European thought as a young man  
and had labored with his own hands on docks of the Dutch East India Company in Amsterdam  
to learn about European trade  
Peter understood the needs and desires of the Russian people  
he began an effort to expand his empire into North America  
he wanted to bring Russia into the modern world, end isolation and win a share of the riches  
Ascending the throne he gathered around himself the best artists, scientists and mechanics of Europe  
he strove mightily to lift himself and his people from the quagmire of medievalism  
Peter the Great developed a plan for exploration of North America

he hired Vitus Bering (a citizen of Denmark) to explore  
Bering was ordered to discover if Siberia and the New World were connected  
thus giving Russians a claim to the New World  
on the day before his death -- February 8, 1725  
Peter lay screaming with pain aggravated by self indulgence  
yet his thoughts were as much of Russia as of himself  
he continued to spur his mind to plan the great scientific expedition  
to expand the boundaries of the Russian Empire

#### VITUS BERING'S FIRST TRIP

Danish captain and explorer Vitus Bering was age forty-four at the onset of his expedition  
he was too considerate to use force in maintaining discipline among his subordinates  
his kindness was repaid by his crew with disrespect, intrigue and insubordination

#### VITUS BERING AND HIS EXPEDITION LEFT PETERSBURG TO CROSS RUSSIA

Russian's annoying faith in her scientific men led to delays for Bering in setting out to cross Russia  
they often gave conflicting advice which was impossible to follow  
Great distances over extremely difficult Siberian terrain had to be covered  
Bering assembled great quantities of supplies and equipment  
he had almost a thousand horses, 2,000 leather sacks of flour and hundreds of auxiliary items  
twenty to thirty river boats had to be built en route  
winter quarters and supply depots needed to be constructed,  
streams had to be bridged and barracks for the expedition completed  
countless other tasks were made necessary by the immense supplies  
departed due to the difficulties of outfitting months drug by before the expedition  
taking this much equipment was only Bering's first major mistake  
Alexei Chirikov, an able Russian, along with hot-headed but efficient Martin Spangberg  
were both named second in command  
Chirikov led the way from St. Petersburg  
followed several weeks later by Bering and the main party  
Vitus Bering and his expedition left Petersburg only days before Peter the Great died -- February 1725  
time after time Bering's trek across Northern Asia was delayed almost to disaster  
most delays were made necessary because of his huge amount of supplies  
which was almost as foolish as attempting to cross Siberia with too few supplies

#### TREK ACROSS RUSSIAN EUROPE

Vitus Bering reached Tobolsk, Russia just across the Ural Mountains -- March 1725

where he met s Chirikov and his men  
Bering and Chirikov did not leave that city until May 1725  
they trudged for three months through the Siberian wilderness  
Bering and Chirikov reached Ilimsk, Russia 1,200 miles from Tobolsk -- September  
where inclement weather forced them to spend the winter of 1725-1726

## SIBERIA TRAVERSED

Vitus Bering sent Lieutenant Peter Chaplin on to Yakutsk, Russia on the Lena River  
to enquire further about supplies

Bering himself traveled to Irkutsk sometime later  
to acquire aid and information from the governor of the province  
entire expedition arrived in Yakutsk -- June 1726

Bering decided to split the expedition into three parties that traveled over separate routes:

- carpenters would go in the vanguard;
- he would follow with two hundred horses;
- rearguard would come after with the stores and gear

Hot-headed Martin Spangberg, also second in command, was instructed  
to build fifteen barges forty-five feet in length

and an additional twelve boats to be used in getting to Yakutsk

he set out along a river route from Yakutsk to Okhotsk with the carpenters -- July 7, 1726

(they became winter bound in route and were reduced to eating dog harnesses and shoe leather)

Bering set out from Yakutsk -- August 16

his expedition reached Okhotsk -- late October 1726

his men immediately built huts for protection during the coming winter

entire expedition spent the winter of 1726-1727

living in huts for protection while they waited for the arrival of lost Spangberg group

Bering sent a rescue party back for Spangberg

(but even then Spangberg's party did not arrive until [January 1727])

Chirikov's rear guard fared nearly as badly as Spangberg's carpenters

## BERING'S EXPEDITION BEGINS CONSTRUCTION ON TWO SHIPS

Bering's Expedition was reunited in Okhotsk

but they still had 585 miles and a mountain range (higher than the Rockies) to cross

before they reached the Pacific Ocean

Rather than cross the mountains work was begun on the new ship *Fortuna*

to carry the party across the Sea of Okhotsk to the Kamchatka peninsula

when finished the expedition embarked across Sea of Okhotsk without incident -- August 22, 1727

Finally, the Kamchatka Peninsula was reached -- where the actual expedition was to begin six-thousand-mile trip from St. Petersburg had taken more than three years of staggering labor and dreadful suffering

#### BERING SETS SAIL IN THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

Newly-constructed sixty-foot vessel named the *Archangel Gabriel*

was launched from Petropavlovsk on the eastern coast of Kamchatka -- July 9, 1728

Explorers headed into the waters of the North Pacific

hugging the shore line, supplies drew short -- crew members subsisted on oil and dried fish

Vitus Bering continued Northward in spite of inadequate food and dense fogs

*Gabriel* sailed close to shore

observations were made as carefully and completely as equipment permitted

almost open hostility surfaced among the crew

Bering reached an area that became the Bering Strait on July 13

(this name was attributed to Captain Cook later)

*Gabriel* continued northward until 67°18' was reached -- July 16

*Gabriel* was in the Bering Strait -- August 13

and reached 67° North -- August 16

Vitus Bering decided to return to Petropavlovsk, Kamchatka -- he believed his mission was completed as the coast was no longer visible to the North and there was no indication of land to the east

he therefore concluded there was no land bridge -- Asia and North America were not connected

Czar Peter's wishes had been fulfilled

#### VITUS BERING'S EXPEDITION INTO THE NORTH PACIFIC RETURNED TO KAMCHATKA

*Archangel Gabriel*, Bering and his crew reached Kamchatka, Russia -- 5 p.m., September 5, 1728

overland trip of three years resulted in two months of exploring

Bering's expedition spent the winter of 1728-1729 refitting the *Gabriel*

#### BERING UNDERTAKES A NEW EFFORT TO REACH NORTH AMERICA

Vitus Bering made an effort to sail directly east toward the American shore -- spring 1729

he was driven back to Petropavlovsk, Kamchatka by a storm

Bering decided to return to St. Petersburg

before discovering any definitive proof regarding a land bridge linking Asia and North America

#### VITUS BERING RETURNS TO ST. PETERSBURG

Bering's return trip across Siberia took one year

which demonstrated the effect the enormous amount of supplies had on his eastward effort

Bering arrived at St. Petersburg with his reports five years after his departure -- March 1, 1730

Bering was met by disappointment

Russian scientists disputed his facts

his conclusions conflicted with predetermined opinions -- geographers in Russia ridiculed him  
academicians pointed out from the comfort of their studies how inconclusive his findings were  
intensely annoyed, Bering never doubted the significance of his expedition

Bering recommended to Czarina Anna (who had succeeded Peter the Great) and the admiralty  
that a second expedition be dispatched at once to check on what he had said

## BERING'S SECOND EXPEDITION WAS AUTHORIZED BY THE RUSSIAN ESTABLISHMENT

Czarina Anna assumed the Russian throne after the death of Czar Peter

Russia was involved in an internal power struggle among its academy, admiralty and Senate  
Czarina Anna authorized a second expedition to explore coast of America -- 1732

as soon as she had given her permission, members of the academy, admiralty and senate  
all started planning for the venture

Czar Peter had given Bering his orders in one scant paragraph

three years were spent while the Russian academy, senate and admiralty  
developed the details of Bering's new orders

No major act could be undertaken until ordered by a junta of officers and scholars  
each task was further subdivided into a myriad of details

Bering had little power, but he was held responsible for success or failure

Final instructions would fill several volumes, but generally fell into six categories:

- he was to make astronomical observations both on land and sea;
- he was to thoroughly prosecute geographical exploration  
and study the natural history of the regions traversed;
- he was to examine the races encountered not only from an historic perspective  
but he also was to compare the various native cultures;
- he was to discover America from the Pacific Ocean;
- he was to chart the Arctic and East Siberian coasts and build lighthouses;
- he was to discover Japan from the North Pacific and Christianize the natives of Siberia

## BERING'S SECOND EXPEDITION -- OVERLAND PHASE

It was three years before Bering set out on his second expedition overland to the Pacific

his expedition would consist of twenty-four officers, twelve doctors, seven priests, five surveyors,  
two landscape artists, additional scientists, pseudo-scientists, scholars, laborers, scouts, bakers,  
carpenters, soldiers, sailors, all of their wives and their children -- in all over 500 people  
half of the officers were foreigners who spoke no Russian

these officers grew more quarrelsome as they learned the Russian language  
Martin Spangberg, Bering's old lieutenant, led the first small contingent from St. Petersburg  
bound for Okhotsk in Eastern Siberia -- February 1733  
Alexei Chirikov followed with the main contingent -- April 18  
original contingent of 500 people swelled to approximately 3000 after laborers were added  
included were 4,000 horses, nine wagon loads of scientific equipment,  
including thirteen-foot and fifteen-foot telescopes  
hundreds of books and seventy reams of paper for notes  
Vitus Bering got underway with his wife, Anna, and two youngest children -- April 29  
their two older sons were left behind with friends  
Bering's second expedition's overland trip took seven years  
their first winter was spent at Tobolsk, Siberia just across the Ural Mountains into Siberia  
such a large party with such great demands put a serious strain on the town  
Bering and a small advance party left Tobolsk -- late February 1734  
they stopped at Irkutsk, Russia to pick up gifts for the native tribes they would later encounter  
Alexei Chirikov led the main force out of Tobolsk -- May 1734  
this expedition carried supplies estimated to last for six years  
however, food ran short in spite of enormous supplies  
horses which should have carried burdens were eaten  
days were oppressively hot -- nights freezing  
three times boats and barges had to be built on the way to the Pacific Ocean  
more than a thousand Siberian exiles walking along the shore  
dragged barges mile after mile against the currents of Asia's rivers  
Chirikov's difficult trek required harsh discipline to be imposed to prevent desertions  
(nonetheless, his expedition arrived in Yakutsk [June 1735])

#### YAKUTSK, RUSSIA IS VISITED BY BERING'S SECOND EXPEDITION

Martin Spangberg continued east to Okhotsk in Eastern Siberia,  
Vitus Bering arrived at Yakutsk on the Lena River in central Siberia -- August 1734  
there two ships were built for exploring the Arctic coast -- a full year's effort  
(over the coming years both were to sail northward  
to test whether the Arctic Ocean was navigable and to chart the Arctic coastline)  
Bering soon found he was quickly bogged down in Yakutsk  
two scouting parties sent east to find a better route to the Okhotsk Sea were both failures  
Bering decided to prepare a similar land route to the one he had used on the first expedition  
he ordered huts to be constructed along the route in advance  
(that task was still unfinished in the [summer of 1737])

## MARTIN SPANBERG IN OKHOTSK FARED ONLY SLIGHTLY BETTER

Okhotsk was poorly suited to serve as a permanent port and construction was slow  
however, two new ships, the *Archangel Michael* and *Nadezhde* had been constructed  
and the *Archangel Gabriel* was refitted for a voyage to Japan -- end of 1737

Russia had never before made contact with that country

Vitus Bering took up residence in Okhotsk, Siberia on the fifth year of the expedition -- 1737  
Bering himself was criticized on an increasingly regular basis  
delays also caused friction between Bering and Chirikov who felt unduly constrained  
and between Bering and Spangberg who felt Bering was too weak  
in dealings with the local people

## BERING'S SECOND EXPEDITION FINALLY BEGINS EXPLORING

Martin Spangberg set off for the Kuril Islands and Japan -- June 29, 1738

with the three ships he had prepared, *Archangel Gabriel*, *Archangel Michael* and *Nadezhde*

On his return to Okhotsk he reported finding some thirty Kuril Islands

he began preparations for a second voyage (which provided Russia its first contact with Japan)

## EARLY FRENCH EXPEDITION IN NEW FRANCE

Louis de la Verendrye, a French soldier, explorer and trader, built forts at Lake of the Woods  
(on the future site of Winnipeg, Canada)

and also at the mouth of the Saskatchewan River

In the course of his expeditions he traveled as far as the Mandan Indian villages on the Missouri  
in his search for the western sea -- 1738

## ENGLAND ATTEMPTS TO INTERFERE WITH SPAIN'S TRADE IN SOUTH AMERICA

Commodore George Anson was sent by the British Admiralty  
to attack Spain in the Pacific Ocean -- 1740-[1744]

especially along coast of South America and the Philippines

While the ambitious scheme failed to meet its orders, Anson did capture a Spanish galleon  
which he took to Macau where she was sold

its cargo, valued at \$1,500,000, made Commodore Anson a very rich man

Anson's voyage was completed by sailing to China and around the Cape of Good Hope to England

## VITUS BERING IN OKHOTSK, RUSSIA ORDERS TWO SHIP BUILT

Bering, now sixty years old, ordered two ships constructed at Okhotsk -- July 2, 1740

*St. Peter* was built for himself

she was manned with a crew of seventy-seven men -- most criminals conscripted for the trip  
*St. Paul*, *St. Peter's* sister ship, was manned by crew of seventy-five  
both ships were two-masters  
eighty feet long with a twenty-two-foot beam -- each could carry 100 tons of cargo  
both carried fourteen two- and three-pound guns

#### VITUS BERING MOVES FROM OKHOTSK TO THE KAMCHATKA PENINSULA

Month of May 1740 had been spent getting officers to agree on a route  
which proved to be the wrong one  
Sails on *St. Peter*, *St. Paul* and *Nadezhda* were hoisted en route to Kamchatka -- September 8, 1740  
*Nadezhda* hit a sand bank before being beaten in a storm that forced her to stay  
at the village of Bolsheretsk on the southwest coast of the Kamchatka Peninsula  
*St. Peter*, *St. Paul* arrived in their destination -- October 6, 1740  
Avacha Bay on the eastern coast of Kamchatka

#### VITUS BERING GOES EXPLORING

*St. Peter* with Bering and Alexei Chirikov on the *St. Paul* set sail from Kamchatka  
in the direction of North America -- June 4, 1741  
Bering began his second exploring expedition -- eight years after setting out from St. Petersburg  
Only 100 casks of water had been loaded on the *St. Peter* -- a small amount for seventy-seven men  
minor officers on the *St. Peter* were a brawling, quarrelsome lot  
Southeast the two vessels sailed  
Vitus Bering and Alexei Chirikov reached 46° North -- June 12, 1741  
*St. Peter* and *St. Paul* become separated in a gale -- June 20  
Bering, searching for the *St. Paul*, was sailing on uncharted seas like Chirikov  
in a continual fog as he searched for the *St. Paul* Bering lost his way  
a great deal of time and valuable supplies were lost -- Bering accomplished nothing in June  
Chirikov set course for Southeast in hope of sighting the *St. Peter*  
not being successful, a council decided further search for the *St. Peter* was useless -- July 13  
Chirikov set his course for Kamchatka and continued as an independent expedition

#### NORTH AMERICA IS SITED

Alexei Chirikov on the *St. Paul* sited North America at 55° 21' North -- July 15  
near the western shore of the Alexander Archipelago which he named  
(about fifty miles north of the present-day southern boundary of Alaska) -- July 15, 1741  
Chirikov deserves credit for reaching the Western shore of North America  
Vitus Bering continued to sail in a dense fog -- but the fog lifted for four days -- July 16-[20]

Bering sighted a wonderland of islands, inlets, forests and gleaming icebergs  
towering above was the unbelievably beautiful snow peak of Mt. St. Elias  
(second highest in North America)  
which he named in honor of the saint of the day -- July 16, 1741  
he also sighted land from his location just south of Mount St. Elias  
he announced to his crew this was the North American coast  
thirty-six hours after Chirikov had first seen North America  
With a storm on the way Alexei Chirikov decided to fill water casks and explore the area  
he sent eleven men ashore to get water but none returned to the ship -- July 18

#### VITUS BERING SENDS A LANDING PARTY SENT ASHORE

Vitus Bering was sixty years old, thick-bodied and flabby-fleshed -- Siberian crossing had fatigued him  
he was suffering from exhaustion and a terrible sense of depression  
that accompanies the early stages of scurvy  
Bering reached Kayak Island and sent a landing party ashore for water and fuel -- July 20, 1741  
he could only watch gloomily as his German naturalist, Georg Wilhelm Steller,  
left for shore leading the party  
a second boat is sent to explore a bay north of where the *St. Peter* was anchored  
Steller was joyously rummaging through an abandoned Aleut fireplace  
while half the water casks remained unfilled  
when suddenly Bering gave orders that the ship weigh anchor  
Unspeakably disgusted, Steller gathered up such artifacts as he had had time to collect  
and returned aboard the *St. Peter*  
but not before seeing a gorgeous dark blue, high-crested bluejay (the Steller jay)  
that he recognized from a picture as being a western North American species  
Steller asked Bering whether ten agonizing years of preparation  
were going to result in less than ten hours of exploration  
Bering ignored Steller as the captain faced a grave situation on Kayak Island  
crew member were sick -- half of the crew had scurvy  
officers bickered constantly with Bering and among themselves  
constant fogs returned -- July 20, 1741

#### CHIRKIOV ATTEMPTS TO RESCUE HIS LOST CREWMEN

Alexei Chirikov sent four more men ashore to assist the eleven sent six days earlier -- July 24, 1741  
this attempt ended in failure and the loss of four more men  
he decided to return to Kamchatka -- July 27  
fifteen men he had sent ashore had been lost and were presumed ambushed

neither landing party ever heard of again  
Storms were almost constant and fogs enmeshed the *St. Paul* -- natives caused further trouble  
after the storm passed Chirikov's supply of fresh water was very low -- supplies gave out  
one-fifth of his crew of seventy-five had been lost along with two small boats  
fate of the first Russians to land in North America was unknown  
they probably perished either to natives or the treacherous currents  
Chirikov abandoned the search for his missing crewmen  
he could spare no more small boats -- he was forced to turn back  
he hoisted sail and set a Northwest heading for Petropavlovsk, Kamchatka  
in the face of yet another an incoming storm  
his men drank distilled sea water and moisture from the wet sails  
Chirikov faced another crisis as this storm was followed by calm  
*St. Paul* sailed and drifted Northwest in spite of dangerous fog and rain

#### VITUS BERING HELD A COUNCIL TO DISCUSS THEIR PLIGHT ON KAYAK ISLAND

Bering faced a grave situation on Kayak Island -- August 10, 1741  
crew of the *St. Peter* was sick and baffled by constant fogs  
charts were worthless -- they were lost on a strange shore  
twenty-five casks of water were left; food supply was down to two months  
it was decided to sail for home

#### VITUS BERING SAILED FOR KAMCHATKA

Members of the crew were very weak  
Bering drew close to land and ordered a landing -- August 30, 1741  
most of the sick had to be carried ashore -- one died in the process  
discipline was so lax the crewmen sent for fresh water filled the casks with brackish water  
although fresh water was available a short distance inland  
Bering ordered his expedition to sail on  
rain turned to sleet  
bad water made the crew even more sick  
rotting rigging on the *St. Peter* began to snap  
dread specter of scurvy stalked the ship unchecked  
nearly every day someone perished in his fouled hammock -- until a dozen men had died  
Bering made his first contact with two native Aleuts Indians -- September 4

#### ALEXEI CHIRIKOV MADE LANDFALL AT ADAK ISLAND

On the return to Kamchatka, Chirikov on the *St. Paul* stopped at Adak Island -- September 8, 1741

his men were ill with scurvy and on half rations of food  
there was at least one death a day from September 26 on

#### VITUS BERING WAS SICK IN BED FOR WEEKS

Bering languished all during the months of September and October  
Second in command, Lieutenant Sven Waxel, took over the work of navigation  
crewmen grumbled, complained and fought  
rigging froze stiff and broke -- gear rotted away  
fogs, snows and sleet made progress impossible  
when the *St. Peter* tried to make headway, many of the men had to be carried to their posts  
they were too weak to move alone

German naturalist George William Steller noted in his journal: **“The general distress and mortality increased so fast that not only the sick died, but those who pretended to be healthy, when relieved from their posts, fainted and fell down dead; of which the scantiness of the water, and the want of biscuits and brandy, cold, wet, nakedness, vermin, and terror were not the least causes.”**<sup>7</sup>

#### CHIRIKOV LEFT ADAK ISLAND

*St. Paul* was allowed to drift as the crew was too weak to sail the ship  
crew recognized the Asian mainland -- October 8, 1741  
Kamchatka Peninsula was sighted  
When Avatcha Bay was entered and Petropavlovsk, Kamchatka was within reach  
a distress signal was sent up asking for aid in entering the harbor  
only the pilot was able to man the helm  
*St. Paul* and what remained of her crew arrived in Petropavlovsk, Kamchatka -- October 12

#### CREW OF THE *ST. PETER* SITED LAND

Bitter weather cleared the skies -- early November 1741  
a cry of **“land”** went up  
to the astonishment of all, a small keg of brandy was taken from some hiding place  
and was dealt out in celebration of the hoped for approach of the coast of Kamchatka  
but it was not the Kamchatka Peninsula that had been sighted  
*St. Peter*'s crew sighted the Commander Islands, a group of treeless islands -- November 6, 1741  
named in honor of Vitus Bering  
Bering Island and Medny Island are the largest of the group  
there are also fifteen smaller islets and rocks

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<sup>7</sup> Gordon Speck, *Northwest Explorations*, P. 68.

## VITUS BERING'S EXPEDITION GOES ASHORE

While preparations were being made for a landing, naturalist Georg Steller led out a scouting party

Arctic foxes swarmed everywhere

offshore in the kelp beds grazed monstrous animals (now extinct)

*Rytina stelleri*, or Steller's sea cows, like the jay, named for the scientist

sea cows were twenty-five feet long and up to three tons in weight

not a tree was to be seen along the beach

after two days of reconnoitering, Bering's men discovered the party

had been marooned on an uninhabited island

an absolutely unknown, uncharted stretch of sand and rock

(now known as Bering Island)

fortunately, wildlife was everywhere and food was plentiful if restricted in variety

Over Bering's objections, crewmen of the *St. Peter* landed -- men and supplies were unloaded

Vitus Bering was carried ashore by his men -- November 10, 1841

Georg Steller was the real hero of the island

he searched for water, gathered plants, nursed the sick

while uninhabited, the island was not unpopulated

blue Arctic foxes were so bold that during the first day of work on the huts

Steller and another man killed sixty with their axes

Building materials were nonexistent

returning to the cove, Steller directed the digging of crude pits in the sand

to provide shelter for the sick and disabled

at first the men refused to work together -- Steller's orders were ignored

slowly progress was made

pits were lined and covered with driftwood and sailcloth,

they were chinked with moss and mud

as fast as the shelters were completed, the sick were carried to them

to be placed in these shallow half-graves and covered with all manner of things

nine of the men were so far gone that they did not survive the transfer

Later the men mutually agreed to divide themselves into three groups:

- one group to hunt;
- one group to cook;
- one to drag firewood six or eight miles to their location

## BERING'S EXPEDITION CONTINUES TO SUFFER

Before the huts were completed, an Arctic storm hit -- November 28, 1741

for three weeks it roared so furiously that men could venture forth only on hands and knees  
fine sand sifted endlessly into the huts

Steller tried to keep it brushed away from Bering,

but the commander whispered to let it be, it kept him warm

*St. Peter's* cables snapped and she was driven out to sea -- then reversed herself

she was driven headlong back to land where she was wrecked beyond repair on the beach

Five underground huts housed the men and served as hospitals -- December

men were dying every day

blue Arctic foxes were a maddening nuisance

unafraid, they swarmed over the camp eating the dead and attacking the dying

they scattered provisions and carried off hats and boots

holes in the walls of sand caverns were chinked with the frozen bodies of clubbed foxes  
carcasses and skins were useful for food and clothing,

later on better furs were obtained from sea otters and seals

sea cows and meat from a dead whale cast up on the beach also provided food

#### DEATH SWEEPS THE BERING EXPEDITION

Bering died as he lived: mildly and without violence -- morning of December 8, 1741

his death was reported by Georg Steller who kept a journal account of the voyage

this report noted in Steller's *Pallas' Neue Nordische Beytrage*, (Volume 6, P. 8-9): **“He almost died from hunger, thirst, cold, emaciation, and sorrow; and the dropsical swelling in his feet, which he had had for a long time as a result of having contracted tertian ague, was aggravated by the cold and driven into his abdomen and chest; and finally, gangrene having attacked the lower part of his body, caused his death about two hours before daybreak on December 8.**

**“As painful as his passing necessarily seemed to his friends, just so marvelous was his resignation and preparedness for death, which came upon him while he was in full possession of his reason and speech. He himself was convinced that we had been cast upon an unknown shore; yet he did not wish to discourage the others by making such assertion, but rather cheered them on in every way possible to hope and action.**

**“We buried the body of the departed one that day with Protestant rites near our quarters, where he lies among his adjutants, a commissary, and two grenadiers; and at our departure we marked the grave with a wooden cross, which was to serve at the same time as a token of our possession of the land.”<sup>8</sup>**

Twelve of the original seventy-six crewmen had perished before the landing on Bering Island  
nine died making to trip ashore

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<sup>8</sup> F.A. Golder, *Bering's Voyages* Vol. 2, P. 158.

ten more, excluding Bering, succumbed by the first of the year [1742]

#### EFFORT TO ESCAPE FROM BERING ISLAND

Mysteriously the health of the men began to improve until everyone was up and about -- spring 1742

Problem they faced now was how to escape

*St. Peter* was wrecked beyond repair -- crew's carpenters were dead

but a Cossack was found who had once labored in a shipyard

under his uncertain supervision work began on a new vessel

there were few tools, no wood but wreckage and no rigging but rotting hemp

Nonetheless, the survivors floated a clumsy craft forty feet long, thirteen of beam, six feet deep

its upper part was caulked with tallow from sea cows,

its under part with tar salvaged from the hull of the *St. Peter*

Survivors of the Bering expedition sailed away -- August 16, 1742

their little vessel wallowed in the water and it leaked

eight days later the Kamchatka Peninsula was sighted

it had held together long enough to reach Avatcha Bay on Kamchatka -- August 27, 1742

#### SEA OTTERS BECOME EXTREMELY VALUABLE

Sea otter, a five-foot-long web-toed sea mammal weighing up to 100 pounds,

ranged from the Alaska waters to Northern California

they are the heaviest member of the weasel family -- but the smallest sea mammal

they savored the protected coastline, reefs and kelp beds where they foraged for food

Insulation for the sea otter is provided by an exceptionally thick fur coat rather than layers of fat

fur color of the pelts varied from reddish brown to dark brown to almost ebony in the water

but with enough underlying silver guard hairs

to impart an unmatched sheen when stroked

this under fur is so dense it sheds water and is silky soft

sea otters were hunted by Native Americans for their highly prized pelts

each pelt was five to eleven feet in length and twenty-five to thirty inches wide

pelts weighed about fifty pounds apiece

#### RUSSIAN FUR TRADE IS SLOW TO DEVELOP

Bering had left a legacy of remarkably accurate maps of the Pacific coast from Sitka to Bering Sea

Some members of Bering's crew led by Martin Spangberg had visited the Kuril Islands and Japan

there they had sold their sea otter pelts for high prices

in spite of the value of pelts taken to Asia, Russians gave little notion of the potential wealth

Enthusiasm for Vitus Bering and Alexei Chirikov's efforts waned in St. Petersburg

in an overthrow of the Russian government, Czar Peter the Great's daughter Elizabeth had become the new Empress of Russia  
worse, very few scientists who had made the various voyages remained alive to demand publication of their exploits  
Georg Steller had died crossing Siberia on his return to St. Petersburg  
news of Bering's accomplishments that managed to leak out was unofficial and was disclosed against the wishes of the new Russian government

#### RUSSIAN SEA OTTER FUR TRADE BEGINS

One item of information could not be suppressed in eastern Siberia  
knowledge that the survivors of Bering's crew who had wintered on Bering Island brought back with them 900 sea otter pelts which were sold for high prices  
Some members of Bering expedition organized independent forays  
to search for more animal skins among the islands east of the Kamchatka Peninsula  
they carried no navigation equipment -- seldom even a compass  
they did not organize into commercial ventures but rather acted as independent agents  
results could be fabulous  
first trader to set out after the return of Bering's crew  
garnered just under one million dollars (in today's money)  
(another ship, a decade later, grossed nearly two and half million)

#### RUSSIAN DEMAND FOR SEA OTTERS

News of great profits in the sea otter trade spread like wildfire  
furs were in great demand in Russia because of severe winters  
merchants at the Russian-Chinese border paid 100 gold rubles apiece for the skins  
Trappers and traders stampeded to Bering Island  
their first boats were patterned after river craft  
green timber planks held together by deer hide thongs and willow withes  
caulked with moss and tallow  
one of every three crews who set out never came back  
These men were followed by others  
who joined the haphazard scramble for blue fox and sea otter pelts  
exploitation of the sea animals and natives was brutal  
sea cows were slaughtered and cured for their meat until they became extinct  
After Bering Island was trapped out, Russians moved east along the Aleutian chain  
amiable Aleut natives trapped and hunted for the cheapest Russian trinkets  
when trade failed to get the results demanded by the Russian traders,

hostages were used, abused and killed to accomplish the task  
Almost immediately Spanish secret agents in St. Petersburg  
forwarded information about Russian fur trapping activities to Madrid, Spain  
Russia was soon entrenched in North America  
and, as far as any other country knew, may even have possession of the Northwest Passage

#### FRANCE CLAIMS (TODAY'S SOUTH DAKOTA)

Louis and Chevalier de la Verendrye journeyed west looking for a route to the Pacific Ocean -- 1743  
these brothers traveled down the Missouri River as far west as the Black Hills  
(they were thought to have gone as far as present-day Helena, Montana)  
but they did not make it across the Continental Divide  
(before returning to present-day Pierre, South Dakota)  
(at Pierre), they buried a lead plate on a hill claiming the region for the King of France  
(this plate was covered with rocks and remained hidden for 170 years  
three students from Fort Pierre High School found the plate in [1913])

#### NEW FRANCE IS THE HOME OF FRENCH TRADING POSTS

French trading posts had been established from Montreal  
up the Great Lakes, across to the Lake of the Woods, on to Lake Winnipeg,  
and up the Saskatchewan River as far as the Rocky Mountains  
Another chain of French forts circled southward from the head of Lake Ontario,  
they dominated the Ohio, the Wabash, Wisconsin and Illinois rivers  
they also were on the Arkansas, Red, Osage and Kansas rivers  
French traders were the masters of the Mississippi River  
through their trade at Kaskaskia, New Orleans, Fort Alabama,  
and their itinerant trade with the Indian tribes from Tennessee to the Gulf of Mexico  
These posts produced peltries valued up to £120,000 -- 1743

#### ENGLISH SCHOLAR ARTHUR DOBBS CRITICIZES HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

For decades after Juan de Fuca's death, men continued to dream of a short cut to China  
Arthur Dobbs wrote his critical analysis: *On Hudson Bay* -- 1744  
in this book he complained Hudson's Bay Company violated its Charter  
by not seeking the Northwest Passage  
Company merely allowed selected Indian tribes to travel down river  
to trade at their posts (factories)  
he pointed to the Pacific Ocean as a promising field for British activity  
he proposed naval stations near California and in the South Pacific

to serve as centers for exploration  
he believed thousands of islands and several continents were yet to be found  
newly discovered people could provide a market for British finished products  
Arthur Dobb's attack was sharply felt by the Hudson's Bay Company

#### ENGLISH TAKE UP THE SEARCH OF THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE (STRAIT OF ANIAN)

At the insistence of geography authority Arthur Dobbs -- 1745

Parliament offered a reward of twenty thousand pounds

to the qualified geographer who would **“first discover a communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, in any direction whatever, in the northern hemisphere; and also to such as shall first penetrate beyond the 89th degree of northern latitude.”**<sup>9</sup>

Arthur Dobbs promptly formed a company and sent two ships out to investigate

these were christened *Dobbs* reflecting the ego of the owner

and *California* to disturb the Spanish

Naturally he was unsuccessful in locating the Northwest Passage,

Arthur Dobbs transferred to America to serve as colonial governor of North Carolina

there he encountered Major Robert Rogers who had come down from the north

to quiet the Cherokee Indians

Dobbs passed on to Rogers his belief in a water passage to the Pacific Ocean

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<sup>9</sup> Cecil Dryden, *History of Washington*, 1968, 33.