

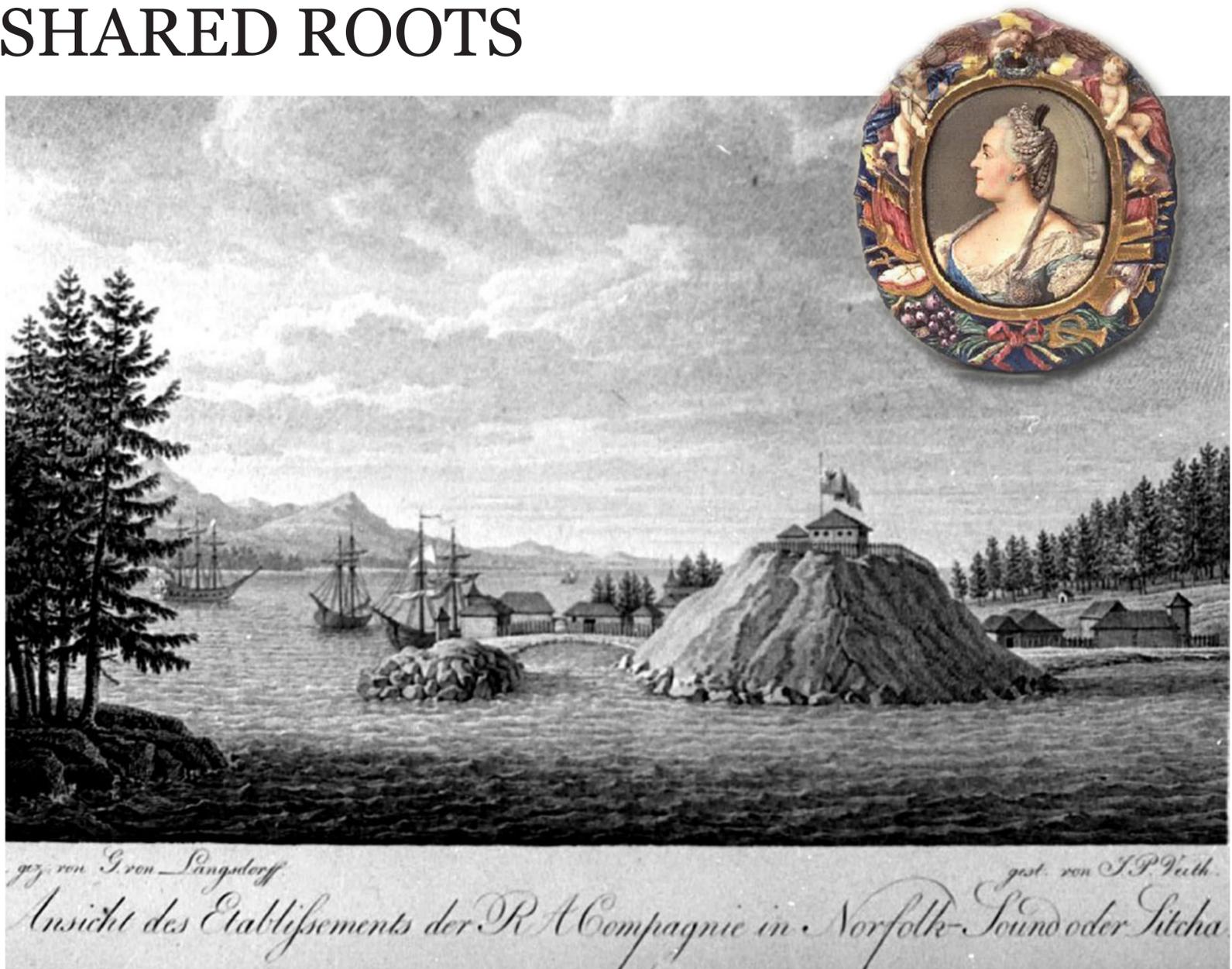


RUSSIAN AMERICA SHARED ROOTS

In 1725, Peter the Great commissioned a Danish explorer, Vitus Bering, to discover where Asia ended and North America began. Three years later, Bering sailed through the narrow continent-separating channel that now bears his name.

Fur traders soon followed and Russian settlements in Alaska were established. Following Catherine the Great's directives, the settlers provided education, as well as Christian instruction, to the indigenous Americans they encountered.

In 1808, Alexandr Baranov, the first governor of "Russian America," developed a thriving capital in the island city of Sitka. Also the chief manager of the powerful Russian-American Company, Baranov encouraged the creation of Russian trading centers along the California coast, eventually reaching as far south as Fort Ross (for Rossiya/Russia), near San Francisco. During World War II, the United States named one of its Liberty ships carrying Lend-Lease supplies to allies the *SS Alexander Baranof* in his honor.



По цѣлѣмъ Россіе презрѣвъ черномый рокъ,
Междо льдами новыи путь отворятъ на Востокъ,
И наша досягнетъ въ Америку держава,
И во всю концы достигнетъ Россовъ слава.

Top right: Catherine the Great. Top: Russian-American Company at Norfolk, Sitka Sound, Alaska. Above left: Fur trader G.I. Shelikhov in Alaska, 1784. Above right: Children of Holy Cross Mission, Yukon River, Alaska, c1910. Below right: Fort Ross State Historic Park, California.

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