Here the Russian Settlements and Orthodox Churches in California, The United States of America, 19th Century

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Abstract. The article deals with the architecture of the first Russian Orthodox churches in the state of California that were formed with the appearance of Russian settlements on the North American continent at the end of the 18th century. We consider the examples of constructing the churches in California in the 19th century; both volumetric and spatial solutions that are traditional for Russian Orthodox architecture, and peculiarities of forms and elements that reflect the interaction of different cultures, are seen. The work describes the history of the construction and architectural features of the first Russian settlement in California - Fort Ross, the chapel of St. Trinity, which is located on its territory, as well as features of the cathedral of St. Trinity in San Francisco.

1. Introduction
The purpose of the study is to identify the architectural features of the first Orthodox religious buildings in the state of California. Orthodoxy came to California together with Russian migrants who crossed the sea from Alaska and the Aleut Islands. The Russians started settling in California from 1809, this period was mainly connected with the activities of Russian and American Company (RAC). Fort Ross settlement was established in 1812 in the state of California. The residents of the settlements and the fortress constructed the Holy Trinity Chapel from 1812 to 1814 that became the first orthodox church building in North America to the south from Alaska.

The emergence of the American Orthodox Church as one of the twelve Local Orthodox Churches is described in the book of the publishing house of the Sretensky Monastery [1]. The first Russian settlements on the territory of North America were studied by researchers: S. G. Fedorova in his works "Russian America: from the first settlements to the sale of Alaska" [2] and "The Russian population of Alaska and California." [3]; Kochedamov, V I in the book "Russian settlements in North America." [4].

The architecture of Russian migrants is described in the works of the researcher AV Molodin "The Architecture of Russian America" [5], a collection of articles "The Architectural Heritage of the Russian Abroad. The second half of the XIX - the first half of the XX century. "(Edited by Levoshko) [6]. Most studies focus on the architectural features of Orthodox churches built by Russian migrants in...
the United States. M. Baranov and O. Boldyrev conducted an analysis of the architectural features of the Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel (Sitka, Alaska); A. Vyacheslavov, I. K. Yastrebov and A. M. Kolesnikov - Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral in San Francisco; I. A. Simonova - the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in New York [7].

Since the number of migrants, in particular, moving to America, increases, it is relevant to study both the historical aspects of the formation of the environment of Russian migrants and the current trends in its development. Scientific interest is the study of the habitats of the Russian diaspora, the nature of the formation of living space, the architecture of buildings and structures, in particular, Orthodox churches as a reflection not only of religion but also of Russian national traditions.

The study of Orthodox churches on the territory of the United States is relevant not only to the influence of the Russian population on American church architecture, but also to the adoption of certain features of other denominations reflected in American history.

The research method was based on the analysis of American sources, the works of Russian researchers in the field of architecture and history; analysis of volume-planning, compositional and stylistic features of the architecture of Orthodox churches.

2. The Fort Ross’ history and peculiarity

Russian and American Company (RAC) was established in 1799 and united interests and finances of some Russian merchants and employers who had organized some business expeditions to Alaska and islands nearby. The main purpose of a new settlement in California was to provide food and agricultural products to Russian towns in Alaska and islands.

That is the reason why Russian settlements appeared on Alaska, on Kadiak, Unalashka, Pribylov and some other islands, and then in the southern part of the Pacific coast in the Rumyantsev Bay (now the Bodega Bay) 80 km to the north from San Francisco, California. The settlement and fortress were found here in 1812 according to the regulations of military fortification. The fortress was named Ross; thereupon they named the settlement the same [8].

Kuskov, Ivan Aleksandrovich was considered to be the founder of the fortress. On the task of A. A. Baranov, the Governor of Russian settlements in North America he departed Kadiak together with 25 colonists and 90 Aleuts and sailed to find places to widen RAC’s activities.

Such a fortified settlement was required because several other states claimed to that conflict territory. Besides those pretensions colonists had to solve some problems with the aboriginals – an Indian tribe of Kashaia-pomo [9].

On the scheme the fortress Fort Ross presents almost a square 830x732x960x830 m, it is surrounded with the walls made of heavy sequoia logs 20 cm thickness and 3,5 m height [10]. There are two tall bastions - octagonal towers - blockhouses in the south-eastern and north-western corners placed diagonally. Ross Fortress has two entrances: the main one is at the southern wall, and the second one is at the eastern wall. The fortress had its own artillery of 12 small caliber cannons [11] (Fig. 1).

Some big depots and food storehouses, barracks for officers and separately for soldiers, the fortress commandant’s house, an armory, some houses for families and some other buildings with a well and a small ground with a flagstaff in the middle were situated in Ross Fortress. There were two windmills, some wooden homes for RAC’s employees, a bakery, some carpenter’s, metalworker’s and shoemaker’s workshops, stables, cow-sheds and different huts, gardens and kitchen-gardens, wheat and rye fields there. An Aleut village stood out next to the fortress, later some houses for the Indian tribe of Kashaia-pomo appeared near it. About 50 buildings in the settlement, and 9 buildings in the fortress were wooden, and the roofs were tiled with sequoia. An orthodox cemetery was not far from the settlement; a shipyard, a smithy, a cooper’s shop and raw leather shop were situated near the Sand Bay. Having got jobs in RAC, the Indians settled, got married, and a lot of them became orthodox believers. Even now Fort Ross is one of the settlements in America where such a variety of cultures and ethnic communities can co-exist.
Figure 1. The settlement Fort Ross. Plan of the fortress site. 1 - the Holy Trinity Chapel; 2,3 – the storehouses; 4 - the eastern entrance; 5 - the southern bastion; 6 - the southern entrance; 7 – the barracks for officers; 8 – the recent building; 9 - the fortress commandant’s house; 10 - the barracks for soldiers; 11 - the northern bastion. Drawing by D. A. Lava

Despite the fact that Russian-American Company sold the fortress to John A. Satter, a captain and a businessman in 1841, and it got the name of Fort Ross, Russian people settled there on and on. Yet a big group of the settlers, mostly the Aleut, came back to Alaska after the settlement was abolished [12].

Only the one orthodox church of this territory - the Holy Trinity Chapel - was lost. None the less the fortress residents organized and supported an orphanage and an Orthodox school for children and adults for 30 years. Having neither a church nor a priest, the Orthodox settlers of the former Russian village organized a community in 1857 and started to invite priests from Russian ships or from San Francisco to baptize children.

3. The Fort Ross’ Holy Trinity Chapel

The residents of the settlements and the fortress constructed the Holy Trinity Chapel from 1812 to 1814 [13] that became the first Orthodox Church building in North America to the south from Alaska. At first, the chapel was outside the fortress, in the settlement. It was a kind of a rural church that had an apse, one dome on the tall cylinder under the two-slope roof, and a tall stretched bell tower (Fig.2).

After the fire that had destroyed the first chapel, in 1825 they built a new building of the Holy Trinity chapel inside the fortress at the north-east corner of the square, and it became actually another bastion with a watch tower on the bell tower (Fig.1). The chapel was build for the money raised by the fortress residents and also the crews of Russian ships such as Appolon, Ladoga and Creiser. At first, the sailors’ money was collected to construct another chapel, Saint Nikolai’s Chapel in 1824, but the fire made the commander invest the money in the reconstruction of the Holy Trinity Chapel [14] which in its new appearance reflected the sailors’ participation in its recovery.

Parishioners built a new Holy Trinity chapel. It was a wooden structure with some simple details but rather big in size (9.5 x 7.5 m) that was untypical for a chapel because it had to have enough space for the fortress garrison and the settlement’s residents, there were 60 Russians, 80 Aleuts and 80 Indians by 1825 [15].

A pyramid-like roof crowns the Holy Trinity Chapel that imitates the hip-roof of Russian rural church. The building has a cupola of an unusual helmet-like form on a tall cylinder and a pyramid-like roof of a square bell tower. The cylinder has no collars, and the round windows remind ship windows paying tribute to the sailors and builders who invested their money to the construction. The peculiarity of the chapel is its unusual rectangular windows with lots of transoms that divide their opening into many small windows. The chapel has the only entrance with a simple one-fold door. (Fig. 2).
The Holy Trinity Chapel is divided inside into two chambers: a vestibule with a steep stairs that go to the bell tower and a nave. The space of the dome opens above the nave in the center of the chapel. The decoration of the chapel is very modest, there is almost no furniture. As Priest Iohann Veniaminov wrote, in the beginning there were only two icons in silver frames [16], a church-chandelier, and some candle sticks.

The Holy Trinity Chapel overcame several reconstructions during its existence, and a special one was after the earthquake in 1906.

A new foundation and walls were put during the reconstruction of the Holy Trinity Chapel, and they made a more comfortable porch. However, they managed to keep the roof. As a whole the building became more solid and looked more like a rural church without an apse. By mistake they put a Catholic cross instead of an Orthodox one on the top of the bell tower, and they replaced it only in 1939. And again they made a mistake. A carpenter turned the cross incorrectly, and only in 1941 the reconstruction was finished according to all the corrections after the parishioners had written a letter to the Governor of California.

The interest to the history of Russia grew, so in 1955 the government of California gave some finances to reconstruct Fort Ross and to make it closer to the original. Thus, the walls and windows were remade, and in 1966 they put back the cupolas and big orthodox crosses to complete the original look.

However the fire in 1970 almost destroyed the Holy Trinity Chapel. In spite of the political disagreement between the USA and the USSR the money to reconstruct the fort and the chapel was risen. More than that, the Park Department of California did some archaeological research to reconstruct the fort according to the historical authenticity. In 1973 the work was finished, and the Holy Trinity Chapel received its original look [17].

### 4. The peculiarity of the Holy Trinity Cathedral in San Francisco

Russian Orthodox Society was established in San Francisco in 1857, first it was at the Russian Consulate General that appeared at 870, Market Street in 1853. It was the society that initiated the building of a meeting-house which was opened at 504, Greenwich Street in 1867, and later was reorganized into a church named Saint Alexander Nevsky the Blessed [18]. Later the church moved to 915, Jackson Str.

1870s became a new stage of appearing orthodox people in California. That period was connected first of all with selling Alaska to the North-American United States in 1867. A significant part of Russians and Creoles who did not want to go back to Russia had to leave Alaska and look for a job. The most attractive city for the migrants was San Francisco. New settlements and neighbourhoods organized parishes and built churches according to the orthodox tradition.

In 1872 the bishop’s chair was moved from Novoarkhangelsk (now Sitka) to San Francisco that created the basis to construct a cathedral. At the beginning, in 1874, it was in the Holy Trinity Chapel
on Greenwich Street. Because of the local migration the cathedral was often moved from one street to another.

The new building of the Holy Trinity Cathedral, that still exists, was built in 1909 at the crossing of Franklin and Green streets (Fig. 3). In 1979 an open bell tower was built next to it, and they were able to put the rescued bells from 1888 on the tower [19]. There is a small museum The Patriarch Ancient Depository and The Patriarch Tikhon Library near by.

![Figure 3. The Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, California.](image)

In contrast to a square chapel in the plan of Fort Ross, the Trinity Cathedral has a more complex volumetric plan decision. Its plan is distinguished by a Greek cross with an altar in the north in the form of a triangle apse.

Like Fort Ross chapel, the Holy Trinity Cathedral has a square bell tower and octahedral drum over the nave. However, the cathedral is notable for four polyhedral small towers that are at the corners of the building. Each tower is crowned with a cupola. Thus, the Cathedral has six cupolas – the first is half-spherical over the nave, and five hip-roof ones over the bell tower and smaller towers.

While the bell tower in Fort Ross chapel was built without any decoration, the bell tower in the Holy Trinity Cathedral was more complicated in volume and was decorated with numerous details. Its square foundation turned through a complex cornices into an octahedral drum with square apertures where they put bells. Some more acute-angled apertures were at the top of the bell tower under the cupola.

The Holy Trinity Cathedral could not be referred to any architectural style. It combines some elements of folk Russian architecture, and its cupolas were made in the form of ‘kokoshnik’. The bell tower adds the cathedral some height that is typical for churches standing in an open space in Russian steppe. The small towers in the corners have traditional arch windows.

However, you can see some influence of multi-national American culture in the architecture of the cathedral. It is shown in rectangle stained-glass windows in nave and altar, rusted surfaces and front stairs with balusters that goes to the main entrance to the first floor.

The interior of the cathedral is traditional. The icons and frescos were made by Gleb Ilin, an artist. There is the second, a lower church, devoted to Saint Innokenty Irkutsky.

5. Conclusion
The building of orthodox churches in San Francisco was rather active starting in the second half of the 19th century. Moreover it united Russian, Greek, Serbian, and other parishes. However, after some bad earthquakes and moving churches to other parts of the city, only the one orthodox church of that period was left in San Francisco, it is the church of the Life Beginning Trinity at the crossing of Franklin Street and Green Street; and one chapel of Holy Trinity in Fort Ross, that is in the city’s outskirts.

In general, the peculiarities of orthodox churches in California, the USA are the combination of different styles in the architecture of a church, and using non-traditional decisions and details in the 19th century. The majority of these features were reflected in the orthodox cathedral in one of the biggest American city – San Francisco. Being in multi-national cultures, the orthodox churches, both big and small ones, have always tried to become bright objects in tightly constructed space of such a big city as San Francisco, and such a settled fortress as Fort Ross.

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