APPENDIX.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF FORT ALEXANDER,
HANALEI, KAUAI

by

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Fort Alexander at Hanalei is important historically. Scene of action for one man's dream of Russian expansion, it also was the site which saw his exodus from Kauai. "The history of Russian America is rich with striking events, courageous voyages, grandiose projects, and rather modest practical results. One of the oddest and most exotic episodes in the history of the Russian-American Company (RAC) was the Hawaiian adventure of Dr. Schäffer." (Solkhovitinov, 1972:121-137).

**Historical Background**

During the War of 1812 several American vessels in the northwest fur trade were sold to Alexander Andreevich Baranov, chief manager of the Russian-American Company at Sitka. One of these was the ship Atahualpa, renamed Bering.

After visiting the Pribylov Islands to take on a cargo of seal skins, part of the payment for the vessel, the Bering eventually sailed to the Sandwich Islands for food supplies. On January 29, 1815, Capt. Bennett, a former part-owner, sent a man on shore at Waimea to negotiate for supplies. Several days passed and on January 31 a gale with heavy seas forced the ship upon the beach, wined broad side to and heeled on shore. Her rudder was broken and the rudder case stove in. Bennett requested the king's assistance in saving the cargo. Kaumualii, king of Kauai, agreed provided the captain give him the ship as she lay. As Bennett believed the vessel could not be got off, the agreement was concluded and the natives put cargo and possessions of officers and crew in Kaumualii's house - the king claimed them as his own. The men of the Bering were forced to remain on Kauai until rescued on April 11 by Captain Smith of the ship Albatross. Kaumualii had provided
accommodations for the men, but they suffered from lack of food and theft of their remaining possessions. (Log of the Atahualpa, Jan. 29, 1815 - April 11, 1815; Bennett’s Journal, January 29 - February 3, 1815).

When Bennett arrived at Sitka, he advised Baranov to send out an armed expedition to recover the cargo. Instead Baranov chose diplomacy, sending the well-educated Georg Anton Schäffer, left at Sitka by the sailing of the Russian vessel Suworov, to negotiate for the return of the cargo or its equivalent in sandalwood. Schäffer sailed to Hawaii in an American vessel - he was to appear as a naturalist until he had won Kamehameha’s confidence after which he was to request his assistance in securing the property of the Russian-American Company which Kaumualii held.

Georg Anton Schäffer on Kauai

For accounts of Schäffer’s activities on Kauai, we must rely on Richard A. Pierce’s work “Russia’s Hawaiian Adventure, 1815-1817” based on manuscript material in Bancroft Library. These documents were copied from Russian sources by Alphonse Pinart in 1874. (Pierce, 1965: vi-vii).

Schäffer arrived on Kauai May 16 (Julian Calendar), 1816 and met Kaumualii at Waimea. In the days following he negotiated for payment of the Bering cargo, for a monopoly of the sandalwood trade, established a factory and selected land for headquarters and gardens. Schäffer promised Kaumualii Russian protection and an armed ship. (Pierce, 10-11).

Filip Osipov, a promyshlennik (hunter, trapper) with the Russian-American Company reported that when Schäffer gave Kaumualii the ship Lydia the king gave Schäffer the province of Hanalei where Schäffer started to build “two fortresses there, one on the right
side of the river Hanalei at the mouth of the harbor and another on the same side of the river but much higher, at the harbor itself. Both fortresses were built of earth; however, both remained unfinished. The work being done by the promyshlenniks with the aid of the inhabitants of the province, without any aid from the king. As soon as they perceived the significance of such fortresses, they started to beg Schäffer to construct similar fortresses also at the harbor of Haimea." (Pierce, 1965:128-129). This would indicate that the Hanalei fortifications were started before the Haimea fort— if Osipov is correct.

Schäffer purchased the Lydia in August 1816 at Oahu. He then went to Hanalei with Captain Whittemore on the Avon where he decided to transfer the Lydia to the king in exchange for the province of Hanalei. At the same time he made preliminary arrangements for the purchase of the Avon, sending Whittemore to Baranov at Sitka for payment. Schäffer returned to Haimea and started work on the Haimea fort on September 12. (ibid. 13 & 183).

He received the deed to Hanalei September 21, 1816 and on the 30th returned to Hanalei where he named it Schäffer Valley (Schafferthal) and gave Russian names to some of the natives living there. He was occupied from October 2 to 5 establishing the boundaries of the province and preparing for the erection of a fortress "placed on three hillocks". A formal transfer with Russian flag flying, twenty-one gun salute, toasts, took place on October 6. The main fort was named Fort Alexander, the other Fort Barclay. Petr Kicherev was named manager. Schäffer returned to Haimea. (ibid. 14-15, 184).

On October 19th he again arrived at Hanalei. Kaumuali'i ordered the Hawaiian chief Platov to aid Schäffer and his people, the chief even assisted in the planting. Work on Forts Alexander
and Barclay continued, and Platov continued supplying the Russian ships with food. (Pierce, 1965:185-186).

Schäffer wrote Baranov on November 25 that he had "two fortifications of earth, with palisades" nearly ready. (Ibid. 82).

On the basis of information in the letter of December 20, 1815 from George Young and companions at Hanalei to Schäffer, we know that trouble was brewing at that settlement. The natives had left their houses and approached the Russian buildings including a winery near the lake, they carried calabashes and took two butts of wine and a large quantity of roots used in making alcohol. The Russian group decided to set a watch over the property. Young was on the beach when a shot was heard. He and his associates ran along the shore where they met a returning messenger bearing the news that the watchman had been killed and though they could see no natives their building began to burn on all sides. The Russian group put out the fire carrying water in calabashes from the lake. The body of the watchman was brought to the Russian house and Chief Hanalei and Ovana Platov summoned for an investigation. Platov told the Russians and Aleuts to carry guns and offered his armed men to help in capturing the natives of Hanalei. If resistance was offered, the natives would be shot. Platov asked to be allowed to subdue the men of Hanalei by force of arms but Young did not want to start armed conflict without Schäffer's command. The Russian group requested Schäffer's protection. (Ibid. 83-84).

At the present time there is no lake in the area of the Russian breastworks at Hanalei. An 1839 map of the area shows water (pond or lake) in the valley between the ridge on which the breastworks stand and the ridge on which Hanalei Plantation
Hotel is built. Young's letter would seem to indicate that there were Russian buildings, i.e., the winery and the building saved by carrying water from the lake, in that valley.

In February 1817 Schäffer learned that Capt. Kotzebue from whom he expected assistance, had arrived in Hawaii and had left without contacting him.

He went to Hanalei in March where he found the fortifications Forts Alexander and Barclay both nearly finished. The Kadiak was in port. He returned to Wai'anae in April but conditions here had deteriorated - king and natives were unfriendly. He and his forces were evicted and sailed for Hanalei in the Il'mena and Kadiak. (ibid. 198-202).

Early in June Schäffer and his associates signed a declaration to fight on, hold on at Hanalei until reinforcements arrive from Sitka. (ibid. 93-94). They arrived at Hanalei on June 8 to pick up the cannon and other things. Osipov reported "to remove from the shore cannon which were to have been placed in the fortresses." (ibid. 130). This leads us to question whether the cannon ever were raised to the bluff in position on the fortification.

Schäffer made claim to the whole island of Kauai, ordered the Russian flag raised over Fort Alexander, to a three-gun salute. The local natives were hostile, and when Schäffer sent men to gather their farm animals in the Russian farmyard, it was found the natives had taken the stock. An Aleut was wounded when the natives opened fire. Schäffer ordered a retreat; but when the natives attacked on all sides, he ordered a volley from the six pounders. The Russians retired. The Il'mena departed for Sitka carrying as passengers the Hawaiian Chief "Hanalei" (Kallavatti), his wife
and their servants. Schäffer, commanding the leaking Kadijak, sailed for Honolulu. (Pierce, 202-203). "With this brief encounter ended the Russian Tsar Alexander's sovereignty over the Island of Kauai, in a fort named after him, in a place called Hanalei, that he had not yet heard of." (Silverman, KHS ms.).

As yet we have not located any contemporary description of the Hanalei breastworks from non-Russian sources.

**Post-Russian Period**

The accounts of a number of visitors to the site over the years have not given us a definitive description of the fortification or fortifications.

Hiram Bingham in the Hanalei area in 1821 made no mention of the fort in his "Residence..." However, his "Journal" records the following:

Henerae [Hanalei] has a small fort, built of clay, on a verdant hill, eligibly situated, but of little value; a considerable harbor...several thousand acres of valuable land, little cultivated...together with a small population..." (The Missionary Herald, 1822:247).

If there was a fort with palisades as Schäffer reported, Bingham does not mention them in 1821.

Kaumualii died in 1824 and left his possessions to Kalanimoku and Kaahumanu in trust for Liholiho. Shortly after his death Kalanimoku set out for Kauai to settle affairs, arriving at Hanalei to investigate the condition of the wrecked Cleopatra's Darge. Passing around the island, he arrived at Waihe'e on the first of August. Dissatisfied Kauai chiefs lead an insurrection against the government forces; and if there was any activity at the Hanalei fort during this time, we have no definite information. However, Probate F240, 1868, Est. of Kapaehaa, shows that he had been a soldier at the Hanalei fort during the rebellion and all
took off to the woods. (AH).

LCA Testimonies indicate that Kalanimoku gave Hanalei to Kaainahuna at the close of the War of 1824. (AH). He may have been one of the foreigners who acquired Kauai lands after the 1824 Rebellion when Kauai chiefs were dispossessed. Kamakau wrote: "The lands were again divided...and the loafers and hangers-on (palaualelo) of Oahu and Maui obtained the rich lands of Kauai." (Kamakau, 1961: 269).

On August 27, 1831 Richard Charlton, British Consul in the Sandwich Islands and Kaikioewa, Governor of Kauai, agreed that he "may feed his cattle, sheep, fowls and other animals...at Hanalei on Kauai, and he shall be allowed to feed them there for twenty years from date, he shall not be oppressed or taxed or pay rent for such feeding (pasturage) his animals...shall give to Kaikioewa boards 560 for the house of Kauikeaouli." No land boundaries were specified in this lease. Charlton's cattle ranged over the site. (AH, FO & EX August 27, 1831).

H. M. S. Sulphur visited Hanalei Bay in July 1837. The purpose was to secure bullocks from Charlton's heard, but while there a survey of the bay was made. It is from this survey we are able to establish the location of a body of water in the valley between the two ridges. This area is now silted in. Richard Brinsley Hinds in 1837 noted: "When some Russians attempted some piece of folly or other in the group, it was on a headland near us they placed their cannons". (Belcher, 1843; Hinds, 1968).

In 1845 Gorham Gilman observed the ruin of an old embankment thrown up by the Russians on a commanding situation overlooking the bay of Hanalei. Its form nearer round than any other shape measured 350 feet long, 250 feet wide. Its walls were made of
earth and a few guns mounted, but the walls have fallen and a slight ridge remains. (Gilman, 1845).

Several years later Chester Lyman visited the "Russian Fort":

The remains of the fort are simply a breastwork of earth, now not more than 3 or 4 ft. high, of an irregular oval of oblong form, & enclosing perhaps an acre & a half. Some loose stones near the center marked the place of the magazine. It is on a point or bluff some 200 feet above the water and commands the entrance of the harbor which is about 2 miles in width.

This fort is the work of the ambitious Dr. Schoof [Schöffer] familiarly known as the Russian Doctor. (Lyman, 1924: 172)

Charlton sold his lease and animals to Mary Taylor, who sold to Mrs. Ann Dudoit. The Dudoit family was in Hanalei in 1845 - their cattle was marketed in Honolulu and salted beef was sold to whalers. (Wilcox, KHS Papers, v. 1, 275).

A boy of 16 left us his description of a visit to the site in 1849:

This is a breastwork about four feet high, of an irregular form, containing about 1/2 an acre." (William DeWitt Alexander, 1849)


During 1860-1861, Mr. Wylie bought lands on the hill above Princeville as far as Kalihiwai and added them to his estate. The estate was sold in 1866. (King, KHS Papers, v. 1, 251)

1865 saw another visitor to the fort site:

It is merely an earthwork said to have been thrown up for exercise by the men of a Russian ship of war refitting in the harbor (Brigham, KHS Papers, v. 1, 260)

The upper lands between Hanalei and Kalihiwai were planted to imported grasses and turned into a cattle ranch around 1895, and in 1916 Mr. A. S. Wilcox sold the Princeville lands to
Lihue Plantation Company. (Wilcox, KHS Papers v. 1, 258).

R. S. Kuykendall, Executive Secretary of the Historical Commission, Territory of Hawaii inspected the site in January of 1923:

This 'fort' is really only a dirt redoubt, now completely overgrown with buffalo grass, with some patches of guava and lantana. The redoubt is irregularly oblong about 65 yards wide and about 100 yards long. The walls are doubtless much lower now than they were a hundred years ago, but it is still easily possible to trace the complete circuit of the fort. There are some small circular depressions which may have been a part of the original plan and near the middle is what appears to be a sort of quadrangular rough stone platform which I surmised might have been the location for a flag staff."

(KHS letter files 1923)

Mehnert reported in 1939:

The fort near Hanalei is a low oval enclosure, today entirely overgrown with grass and bushes and apparently never finished, although strategically well located, protected to the north and west by a cliff falling abruptly to the ocean, to the south by a ravine, and thus accessible only from the east...

(Mehnert, 1939: 29)

The site has been surveyed and will be submitted to the Hawaii Historic Places Review Board for its evaluation.
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1891


1894


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