

# THE ORPHANAGE NEWS LETTER.

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## A History of Wood Island.

N. W. PAVLOFF.

Continued from last month.

Winter work hours were from 8 to 11 a. m. and from 12 to 4 or 5 p. m. if the weather was clear. At noon each man got his half *chark* (a wine glass full) of rum and a four quart iron pot of fish soup made from salt salmon, potatoes and graham flour, and in the evening another half *chark* of rum and 20 cents as pay for the day's work.

When the men were brought to their new habitation there was meeting among them and they elected a *tiome* (chief) of a highest clan, a practical man in hunting etc., then they elected a *sacushik* (second chief) who was to go with the hunting parties.

The sea otter season formerly was from April to the later part of August and there was always a large party from Kodiak and surrounding stations—sometimes 300 *bidarkies*. They would go as far as Nutchick to the North and to Belkofski to the South. Their catch was generally a thousand or more which they had to deliver to the Russian Fur Co. for \$5 to \$10 a skin no matter if it was ever so good and prime a skin. The company furnished provisions for the trip and ammunition for shooting bear, sea lion or hair seal, but sea otter

were shot with nothing else but arrows. Each party generally had an astomir to foretell the condition of the weather, and a guide, but the shamans had been prohibited to perform their skill any longer by the Russian missionary.

In March, 1867 Alaska Territory was purchased by the United States from the Russian Government for \$7,200,000 by act of Congress. The flags were exchanged in Kodiak in August month, when U. S. military men arrived—company G U. S. artillery, hundred privates, General Titball and his staff, four officers, doctor, hospital stewards, etc. Exchange of flags was performed in a quiet manner, proclamation was read, guns were fired, the Russian flag was pulled down and the stars and stripes went up, waving gently in the summer breeze of sunny August.

They had built soldier's barracks, guard house and all necessary buildings for a military post; and we had military law. At sun rise and sun set one of the brass pieces was fired, which scared the natives and wild animals around surrounding lays. If a man stole or fought he would be placed in a guard house, placed on a ball and chain and given work outside. So all these new rules and regulations made the people behave themselves straight and quiet.

Continued on page four.

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