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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

X New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

European Exploration and Expansion in the Glacier Bay Region

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

1. European Exploration, Exploitation, and Impact Upon the Fairweather Coast and Glacier Bay, 1741-1841

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Rick S. Kurtz/Historian

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city or town Anchorage state AK zip code 99503

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Lawrence Bower 12/23/96
Signature and title of certifying official Date

National Park Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper Date 1/9/97

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

E. Statement of Historic Contexts (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)

1. European Exploration, Exploitation, and Impact Upon the Fairweather Coast and Glacier Bay, 1741-1841

This context shall provide an overview of European exploration, exploitation and the ensuing impact of these activities upon the Fairweather Coast and Glacier Bay vicinity. The context begins in 1741 with the first European sighting of the Fairweather Coast and concurrent harvesting of sea otter during the voyage. The context goes on to discuss other major European ventures which followed the 1741 discovery. Special emphasis is placed upon the mercantilistic methods, territorial acquisitions, and their impact upon resources and indigenous peoples of the region through 1841.

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The expansion of European nations into the Glacier Bay region was intricately linked to mercantilistic expansion plans and the international competition for dominance taking place in Europe during the 18th century. In 1741 an expedition under the leadership of the Danish explorer, Vitus Bering, embarked on a voyage of discovery on behalf of the Russian government. On July 26, 1741, Bering's second in command Alexei I. Chirikof, skippering *St. Paul*, spied the snowy peaks of the Fairweather Range. Though Chirikof failed to make landfall, his discovery was the first European sighting of the Fairweather Coast.[1] The expedition's return to Russia with valuable sea otter pelts assured the future expansion of commercial interests throughout the region.

It was not until 1778 that another European explorer would venture to the Fairweather Coast. On May 3 England's Captain James Cook, commanding the ships *Resolution* and *Discovery*, passed off the Fairweather Coast. During the previous winter Cook had made the first European landing at the Hawaiian Islands. Cook's primary objective--on this third and final voyage--was to find the long sought after Northwest Passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The voyage was also charged with seeking out potential territorial and economic opportunities for the crown, as well as scientific discovery. While passing some 12 miles offshore beyond Cape Fairweather, an immense peak was spotted towering above the horizon. Calling the peak Mount Fairweather, Cook noted that it was one of a ridge of snow covered peaks running in a northwesterly direction parallel to the coast. Continuing northwest along the coast Cook came upon a bay which he named Berings Bay, known today as Dry Bay, lying at the park's northwest boundary. Cook failed to find the Northwest Passage. However, he did secure a large quantity of sea otter pelts in trade with Alaska Natives. The pelts were sold at a significant profit in China. Word of the sale spread, spurring a rush of British and American fur trading

[1]Ted C. Hinckley, *The Americanization of Alaska, 1867-1897* (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1972), 18

expeditions to the waters of Southeast Alaska. By the early 19th century British, American, and Spanish (who had laid claims to much of Southeast Alaska in the 1770s) interests were competing with the Russians for territory and a share of the lucrative sea otter market.[2]

In August 1785 France became involved in Southeast Alaska with the departure of Rear Admiral Jean-Francois Le Perouse, commanding the ships *Astrolabe* and *La Boussole*, on a voyage of scientific discovery and conquest. This was to be France's only expansionism attempt in Alaska. On July 7, 1786, the expedition spied Lituya Bay while searching for a suitable spot to replenish their supply of water and wood. The bay was a welcome site on the inhospitable Fairweather Coast. With some difficulty La Perouse's ships managed, unscathed, to slip through the tricky entrance to the bay's protected harbor. Upon entering the bay they were amazed to find a large indigenous population of Tlingits. La Perouse noted three villages; one on a shallow cove on the southeast shore just inside the bay's entrance; a second site on a spit of land known today as Anchor Cove; and a third village located on a small bight of land on the bay's north side. Gold miners later constructed a dock at this site, calling it Big Rock Anchorage. Another village was later discovered north of Lituya Bay near the mouth of Eagle River. Together these villages encompassed the largest concentration of Tlingits on the Fairweather Coast.[3]

La Perouse stayed at Lituya Bay for 26 days. During that period the expedition had the opportunity to engage in substantial trade with the Tlingits for pelts, to collect botanical and zoological specimens, and observe the local inhabitants. La Perouse correctly surmised that the Tlingit population of some 300 hundred persons was largely seasonal. Dwellings consisted of shelters 25 feet long by 15 to 20 feet wide, each housing between 15 and 20 people. Bark or planks covered the shelters' windward side. La Perouse also acknowledged the Tlingits' skill as traders, noting that several of the bay's inhabitants possessed brass, iron, and other goods which must have been secured from Europeans or Americans.[4]

Unfortunately, the stay at Lituya Bay was not without tragedy. On July 12, 21 sailors perished while conducting soundings near the bay's entrance. A strong ebb flow caught two boats and dashed them upon the breakers. Despite days of searching, no survivors were found. Two years later, in 1788, a similar disaster occurred when ten Tlingit war canoes stopped to rest at Lituya Bay. Upon exiting the bay several canoes were caught in the tide and crashed against the breakers killing more than 80 men.[5]

A culminating point of the stay, from the French perspective, came when the Tlingits offered to sell La Perouse the large island--known today as Cenotaph Island--lying in the middle of the bay. A deal was quickly struck and gifts exchanged to seal the trade. The French planted a

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[2]R.N. De Armond ed., *Early Visitors to Southeast Alaska: Nine Accounts* (Anchorage: Alaska NW Publishing Co., 1978), 2-5; Caldwell, 93-94.

[3]Francis E. Caldwell, *Land of the Ocean Mists: The Wild Ocean Coast West of Glacier Bay* (Edmonds, Wash.: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1986), 80, 83-86, 89, 101; "How the White Men Came to Lituya and What Happened to Yeahlth-kan Who Visited Them: The Tlingit Tradition of La Perouse' Visit," *Alaska Magazine*, March 1927, 151-152.

[4]Caldwell., 83-85.

[5]Ibid., 89, 106.

cenotaph on the island to remember their fallen comrades, along with a bottle containing a description of the land transaction.[6]

In 1788 the Russians, in a response to the perceived French encroachment, placed a copper possession plate at Lituya Bay. It was said that the Russians destroyed the French designators. This Russian action was part of a much larger effort to seize territory and establish Russian hegemony over Alaska. This effort became much more aggressive in 1791 when Aleksandr Baranov took over as chief manager of the Shelikhov Fur Trading Company--later referred to as the Russian American Company. Baranov, working out of the company's Kodiak base of operations, began implementing a campaign to gain control of the largely unexploited sea otter rich coastal waters of Southcentral and Southeast Alaska.[7] With his Koniag and Aleut hunters in tow, Baranov established key outposts at Yakutat and Sitka. From these outposts he sent out large hunting parties which systematically hunted down and harvested, to the point of extinction, the valuable sea otter.

In 1796 a Russian-led hunting party entered Lituya Bay. Within a few days they took in excess of 1,800 sea otter. Russian-led parties launched additional hunting expeditions to the area through 1799. The continuation of exploitation had two effects. First, it resulted in the near total depletion of area sea otter. Second, it created a great deal of resentment among the Tlingit people at Lituya Bay and throughout Southeast Alaska.

The Tlingit response to these intrusions was predictable. In 1802 the Tlingits destroyed the Russian outpost at Sitka. This was followed in 1805 with the destruction of the Russian outpost at Yakutat.[8] The Russians answered these Tlingit aggressions with reprisals resulting in the retaking of Sitka and a solidification of their hold on the Southeast Alaska coast. Once again parties were sent to the Lituya Bay region, hunting along the Fairweather Coast as far north as Yakutat. The catches taken during these excursions were much smaller, to the degree that 1827 was the final year of large scale hunts in the area. Small parties visited Lituya Bay in 1832 and again in 1840-41 with minimal success. Thereafter, until the sale of Russian-America to the United States in 1867, the Russians relied upon trade with the local Tlingits as the principal means of securing pelts. Frequent ports of call during these waning years included the south shores of Icy Strait and Cross Sound.[9]

The final European voyage of discovery to the Glacier Bay region began in 1791 when Captain George Vancouver set sail to explore and survey the Northwest Coast of North America. Commanding the ships *Discovery* and *Chatham*, Vancouver embarked upon his two-fold mission. His first task was to follow Cook's attempt to find the Northwest Passage. This would involve extensive surveying and charting of the coast as well as scientific data gathering. Vancouver's second mission was to secure for England undisputed claim to territory along the Northwest Coast, some of which had recently been transferred to England from Spain. Vancouver spent the winter of 1793-94 wintering in the Hawaiian Islands. In the spring he set sail for Alaskan coastal waters to complete his mission. By June the ships had worked their way southeast arriving at Yakutat Bay on the 28th. Here they met Egor Purtov, one of Baranov's foremen, who with a fleet of canoes carrying some 900 Aleut hunters was in search of sea otters. During their visit Purtov provided Vancouver with information on the coast to the

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[6]Ibid., 104.

[7]Ibid., 95-98; Hector Chevigny, *Lord of Alaska: Baranov and the Russian Adventure* (New York: Viking Press, 1942), 34-39.

[8]Caldwell, 99; Chevigny 193-195.

[9]Chevigny, 217-220; Katherine Arndt and others, *A Cultural Resource Overview of the Tongass National Forest, Alaska* Part 1 (Juneau: U.S. Forest Service, 1987), 189.

southeast. Of particular interest was Purtov's description of a "ledianaia"-- a wall of ice extending into the water beyond the entrance to Cross Sound.[10]

On July 3 Vancouver set out from Yakutat Bay skirting the shoreline on a southeast heading. Cape Fairweather and Lituya Bay were passed on July 7 with the two ships reaching Cross Sound on the 8th and 9th of July. A party of Tlingits (most likely Hoonah) paddled out from Cape Spencer (named in honor of Lord Earl John Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty) to trade with *Chatham*.[11]

Vancouver decided to weigh anchor at nearby Port Althorp. He then assembled a crew under the command of Joseph Whidbey to survey the adjacent waterways beginning with Cape Spencer. Among the crew was Archibald Menzies, the ship's surgeon and a botanist, who was assigned to gather scientific specimens. Much of what we know about this first European encounter with Glacier Bay and the surrounding area comes from Menzies' journal. On July 10 the survey party set sail to Taylor Bay, traveling to within viewing distance of Brady Glacier. In his journal Menzies noted their discovery of the remains of an obviously old and abandoned Native village, roughly five miles upbay. The party was unable to travel any farther beyond the village because of the abundance of floating glacier ice.

Upon exiting Taylor Bay the party passed north of the Inian Islands where "huge icebergs rushed by, carried by the outgoing tide."[12] Whidbey and his crew anchored near a point of land which Vancouver named for Henry Dundas, Treasurer of the Navy, and then proceeded up Dundas Bay to its head. On July 12 Whidbey sailed east into the water immediately adjacent to Glacier Bay. Along the way the party encountered a scattering of Native dwellings located on the mainland. It was surmised that the Natives with whom Whidbey's party had traded for sea otter in Dundas Bay lived here. Upon nearing Glacier Bay, Menzies noted the presence of enormous pinnacles of grounded ice. Icy Strait was described as being filled with ice and "the face of the glacier was right at the mouth (of Glacier Bay) and passed a pleasant island." In his account Vancouver gave the following description, "The bay is terminated by compact and solid mountains of ice, rising perpendicular from the waters edge..."[13] The vast quantity of ice near Glacier Bay's entrance coupled with the high velocity of the flowing tide threatened to crush the party's small boats causing them to flee beyond the pack ice. Thus ended the first European reconnaissance of Glacier Bay.

F. Associated Property Types (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

1. European Exploration, Exploitation, and Impact Upon the Fairweather Coast and Glacier Bay, 1741-1841

Name of Property Type: Physical Manifestations of European Expansionism

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[10]Wallace M. Olson, *With Vancouver in Alaska, 1793-1794* (Auke Bay, Alaska: Heritage Research, 1993), 1, 4; Ibid., 9; Archibald Menzies, *The Alaska Travel Journal of Archibald Menzies, 1793-1794* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1993), 148-151.

[11]Menzies, 157; George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Around the World* (London, 1801), 3.

[12]Ibid., 159-160; Olson, 17.

[13]Olson, 17; Menzies, 163; Vancouver, 15.

Description: The placement of markers, brass plates, seals, and other devices at easily identifiable physical locales was a primary step in laying claim to territory in North America during the period of European exploration and expansion. The mapping, surveying, identification, and naming of significant geographic features likewise lent credence to the legitimacy of such claims. If successfully exploited, such claims resulted in the occupation and development of territory to the benefit of entrepreneurs and the mother country. The pursuit of these territorial prizes became manifest in the Glacier Bay region during the 18th and 19th centuries. Cook, La Perouse, Baranov, and Vancouver, as well as local Tlingit inhabitants, struggled in a contest to gain and maintain control of territory and the lucrative Fairweather Coast sea otter trade. This competition became manifest in the number of expeditions to the region over a short period. It became blatantly apparent at Lituya Bay with the Russian destruction of the French placed cenotaph, land transaction record at Cenotaph Island, and the subsequent placement of a Russian copper possession plate.

Significance: The exploration and subsequent economic pursuits characteristic of European mercantilism and the struggle for dominance in the Glacier Bay region from the mid-18th to the mid-19th century are significant under Criterion A--exploration/settlement, economics, politics/government. The nominated resources are locally significant.

The primary impetus for the exploration of the Fairweather Coast and Glacier Bay vicinity was mercantilistic competition among European powers coupled with aspirations of regional political dominance. This competition, beginning with Vitus Bering's 1741 expedition, had a significant and arguably detrimental impact upon the natural resources. Rampant exploitation reduced sea otter populations to the brink of extinction. Russian records of diminishing returns in sea otter pelts at Lituya Bay during the years 1796 to 1841 readily illustrate this impact. The competition had a similarly negative impact upon the indigenous Tlingit population resulting in the loss of traditionally held territory and resources, and in subsequent armed conflict. The culmination of this competition within the boundaries of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve was most evident at Lituya Bay. It was here that France's La Perouse purchased Cenotaph Island from the local Tlingits in 1786. The transaction was sealed with the exchange of gifts, the placement of a cenotaph, along with a bottle containing a description of the land transaction. It was this perceived encroachment which spurred the Russians, in 1788, to destroy the French designators at Cenotaph Island and place a copper possession plate on the island to help establish Russian hegemony in the region. As such, this action could be viewed in retrospect as a watershed event contributing to Russian expansionism into Southeast Alaska which culminated in the establishment of a permanent settlement at Sitka in 1804.

Registration Requirements: Physical manifestations of European expansionism are historically significant. As historically significant properties, these sites may have sustained some alteration because of storms, other natural degradation, and human activity. This, however, should not lessen their significance given that the area encompassing Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve was almost wholly wilderness at the time of European expansion into the region and remains predominantly so today.

Location and setting are of paramount importance in determining the integrity of sites representative of physical manifestations of European expansionism. The sites should retain the general physical characteristics apparent during the period when the events occurred. This is necessary to recapture the sense of historic perspective. To be deemed significant the physical environment needs to extend beyond the site location and consider the surrounding setting in which the events took place. The natural environment must maintain integrity of the basic topographic features and physical conditions which manifested themselves during the period. Likewise, the site needs to maintain sufficient integrity in order to convey a feeling and association reminiscent of the period. This is largely conveyed through the maintenance of the general wilderness setting which existed when the events occurred and retention of any cultural features or evidence which remain at the site.

Historic Properties: These sites should be considered in the future for nomination under Context One.

Cenotaph Island - French and Russian Possession Marker Sites
La Perouse Expedition Disaster Site

G. Geographical Data

This multiple property nomination encompasses the area which lies within the current boundaries of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation
Methods (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

The multiple property listing of European exploration and expansion in the Glacier Bay region is based upon a 1994 National Park Service field investigation of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve consisting of the following team members: Rick S. Kurtz, Historian; Timothy Cochrane and Dottie Theodoratus, Cultural Anthropologists; Mary Beth Moss, Resources Manager; Hank Lentfer, Biological Technician; and Jennifer Sepez, Intern. The investigation required the team to utilize both air and water transport to gain access to various survey sites. Sites were marked on USGS topographical maps for future reference. Properties were recorded through the use of field notes, drawings, and extensive photographs. Research in support of the field investigation included the investigation of park service records; oral histories; and local, regional, and national archives and libraries.

A subsequent result of these investigations is the development of a historic resources study. The study addresses significant historic themes and developments within the park unit from the time of European contact through the Second World War. The historic context for this multiple properties nomination is based upon one of the various themes resulting from the historic resources study. The 1994 field investigation also contributed to the development of an ethnographic history of the region which will result in multiple property nominations for Native American sites. The significant property types identified in this nomination were derived from the historic context related to European expansion and exploration during the historic period ranging from 1741 to 1841 (the latter being the final year that Russian hunting parties pursued sea otter on the Fairweather Coast). The requirements for integrity of properties under this nomination were based upon predictions derived from historic trends in the region, analysis of previous field examinations focusing on the Fairweather Coast, and development of the historic resources study.

I. Major Bibliographical References (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

Dept. of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service. *A Cultural Resource Overview of the Tongass National Forest Alaska* Part 1:0, by Katherine L. Arndt and others. Fairbanks: GDM, Inc., 1987.

Ackerman, Robert E. *Archeological Survey Glacier Bay National Monument, Southeastern Alaska Part I*. Pullman, WA: Washington State University Laboratory of Anthropology Report of Investigations No. 28, 1964.

Black, Bruce W. *A History of Glacier Bay National Monument Alaska*. Gustavus: Privately printed, 1957.

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De Armond, R.N. ed. *Early Visitors to Southeast Alaska: Nine Accounts*. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Co., 1978.

Emmons, George T. *The Tlingit Indians*. Edited by Frederica de Laguana. New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1991.

Kurtz, Rick S. and others, "Field Investigation of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, conducted in 1994." Files located at National Park Service, Alaska Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resources.

La Perouse, J.F.G. *A Voyage Round the World: Performed in the Years 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788, By the Boussole and Astrolabe, Under the Command of J.F.G. De La Perouse*. London: G.G. and J. Robinson, Patermaster-Row; J. Edwards, Pall-Mall; and T. Payne, Mews-Gate, Castle-Street, 1799.

Menzies, Archibald. *The Alaska Travel Journal of Archibald Menzies, 1793-1794*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1993.

Olson, Wallace M. *With Vancouver in Alaska, 1793-1794*. Auke Bay, Alaska: Heritage Research, 1993.

Vancouver, George. *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Around the World* London, 1801.

Wenrich, Wright. "How the White Men Came to Lituya and What Happened to Yeahlth-kan Who Visited Them: The Tlingit Tradition of La Perouse' Visit." *Alaska Magazine*, March 1927, 151-153.

Primary locations where additional documentation is stored:

University of Alaska Anchorage Consortium Library

University of Alaska Fairbanks Elmer Rasmusson Library

Alaska Resources Library, Anchorage Federal Building

Z.J. Loussac Municipal Library, Anchorage

National Park Service, Alaska Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resources Records

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve Library

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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