

Introduction

The collection of material from the Russian Bishops House (RBH) spans over a century and covers several different subjects. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) staffed the RBH, the school located inside the building, and the school attached to it. The collection contains more liturgical texts than any other type of text.

What is significant about the number of liturgical texts is that there is less specific focus on the Orthodox clergy in Alaska, especially following the sale of Alaska in 1867. The one exception to this is Barbara Smith's *Russian Orthodoxy in Alaska* published in 1980. As more archives in Russia are available since 1980, this work may be in need of updating. Historians have written very little about the ROC in Alaska in the early twentieth century, though this might be due to the events of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution.

A brief history will focus on the Archbishops and Bishops that contributed works to the RBH collection, with some background on their activities in Alaska and Russia. There will be some gaps in the information as there are few records or little research conducted on some of the clergymen. Information gaps often occur when there is no bishop or archbishop in residence, which happens several times from 1850s onward.

Bishop Innocent

Father John Veniaminov departed for Alaska in 1823, taking up a position on the island of Unalaska, though he only arrived in 1824 after a length journey. Father John spent several years among the Aleuts, conducting services, and he created a written version of the Aleutic

language based on the Cyrillic alphabet.¹ In 1834, Father John took up his new position in Sitka, and once again began seeing to the needs of his flock, and to the Tlingit people. Father John studied the Tlingit language and succeeded in producing several works, such as *Notes about the Tlingit and Kodiak Languages* and *Instructions on the Path to the Kingdom of Heaven*.

Unfortunately, Father Innocent's wife died in 1838 while he was in St. Petersburg asking for assistance in his clerical duties. After a time of contemplation, Father John took monastic vows in 1840, and the name of Innocent, after Bishop Innocent of Irkutsk.² With the support from both Metropolitan Filaret and from Tsar Nicholas I for Archimandrite Innocent, both men saw to it that he became Bishop of North America and Kamchatka.³ With Bishop Innocent's see located in Sitka in 1841, the RBH became much more important as an administrative building for the Bishop and his staff.

Bishop Innocent was a prolific reader, and records note he borrowed several books from the RAC library.⁴ Unfortunately, it appears that while Bishop Innocent had a large book collection in the RBH, these books slowly disappeared from his collection.⁵ Given the condition of some of the books in the collection, books missing from Bishop Innocent's time are probably lost.

In 1850, Bishop Innocent was elevated to the rank of Archbishop, and three years later, he took up a new position in Yakutsk, along the Lena River in Russia. Archbishop Innocent took to this new position like his previous appointments, and worked translating liturgical texts into

¹ Paul D. Garrett, *St. Innocent Apostle to America* (New York, New York: Athens Printing Company, 1979), 73-75.

² Garrett, *St. Innocent*, 135-136.

³ Garrett, *St. Innocent*, 137.

⁴ Katherine B. Menz, *Historic Furnishings Report. Russian Bishop's House. Sitka National Historical Park. Sitka, Alaska* (WV, Harpers Ferry Center, Department of the Interior, 1986), 178.

⁵ Menz, *Furnishings*, 175-177.

the local language. The Tsar selected Archbishop Innocent to replace Metropolitan Filaret, who died in 1868.⁶

Selected Bishops from 1888 to 1914

Several of the bishops and archbishops that resided in North America after 1853 also had notable impact on the RBH collection. Bishop Vladimir oversaw Sitka from 1888 to 1891. Bishop Vladimir worked with the Uniate emigrants in the United States in the 1890s to bring them back under the authority of the Orthodox Church. Several items in the RBH collection discuss the Uniates, what their differences were from the ROC and how best to reintegrate them into the Church.

Bishop Nicholas, Bishop from 1891-1898, was responsible for the creation of the *Russian Orthodox American Messenger*, a newspaper published in English and Russian. From 1896 to the 1970s, the *Messenger* circulated through the growing Orthodox community in North America. The *Messenger* demonstrates the growing significance of the ROC in North America as well as the increasing importance of English in liturgical texts.

Archbishop Evdokim oversaw the Orthodox Church in North America from 1914 to 1918. The publication *Христианъ (Christian)*, established in 1906, was Archbishop Evdokim's attempt to create a link between secular and religious life, most likely in a response to the 1905 Russian Revolution. The publication covers Christian philosophy of the late nineteenth century, how literature fits in with Orthodox theology, how a Christian should live their life in modern Russia, and other subjects. Archbishop Evdokim also attempted to inform the Orthodox

⁶ Garrett, *St. Innocent*, 283.

hierarchy on how American society differs from Russian society. American law forbade a state religious whereas the ROC was also part of the Russian state, possibly confusing Russians back in St. Petersburg.⁷

The era of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution both saw a massive destabilization of ROC. The Bolsheviks incarcerated most of the clergy in Russia and seized virtually all the funds available to the ROC. The ROC in Russia largely abandoned Orthodox Churches outside of Russia the country, as the Bolsheviks seized church buildings and assets. In the United States, several Church meetings (*собор – sobor*) throughout the early twentieth century ensured that the Orthodox Church in America would continue to function on its own.

The Russian Bishop’s House as a Building

The RAC was responsible for the actual construction of the RBH, and according to Bishop Innocent, constructed a building that was beyond all expectations.⁸ The fact that the RAC constructed the RBH did create the problem of ownership. The RAC was a private company, but the ROC was part of the Russian state, so who owned the RBH? During Bishop Innocent’s time in Alaska, the RBH appeared to remain the property of the RAC, but the clergy living in Sitka were to use the house.⁹ The RBH needed continual maintenance, and the question of ownership hampered these repairs as Bishop Innocent was not always clear on who had to pay for the repairs.¹⁰

⁷ “Archbishop Evdokim,” [http://orthodoxwiki.org/Evdokim_\(Meschersky\)_of_the_Aleutians](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Evdokim_(Meschersky)_of_the_Aleutians)

⁸ Katherine L. Arndt, *Sitka National Historical Park. Historical Context Study. Supplemental Report: The Bishop’s House as Documented in the Alaskan Russian Church Archives and the Published Correspondence of Innokentii (Veniaminov)*, 3, 4

⁹ Arndt, *Historical Context Study*, 11-13.

¹⁰ Arndt, *Historical Context Study*, 13.

Bishop Innocent and his family moved into the RBH in 1844.¹¹ Immediately after moving in, Bishop Innocent made use of the chapel within the RBH as well as creating a day school and seminary for instructions in basic church tenants.¹²

While it is clear there was a school on the first floor of the RBH, it is less clear when the separate school building was constructed. *The Historical Context Survey* discusses the need for a larger school several times, but no specific mention of a separate building is found in the *Survey*. A separate building for staff and servants was built in 1846, and may have been converted at a later date to a school.¹³

The purchase of several buildings around the RBH in the late nineteenth century may have been when the separate school was constructed.¹⁴ It is certain that the separate school existed in the early twentieth century,

Descriptions state that the building contained living quarters for the Bishop and his staff, a chapel, and a schoolroom. The classroom was not very large and probably could not accommodate the large number of students that attended the day school. Four tables, three benches, and seven stools were hardly enough room for maybe 30 students at the most, and that would be decidedly crowded.¹⁵ In 1887 this overcrowding was proved true, when Priest Donskoi wrote a letter stating that 60 or more students were attending the school in the RBH.¹⁶

¹¹ Menz, *Furnishings*, 11.

¹² Menz, *Furnishings*, pg. 11. Arndt, *Historical Context Study*, 16.

¹³ Arndt, *Historical Context Study*, 55.

¹⁴ Arndt, *Historical Context Study*, 44-47.

¹⁵ Menz, *Furnishings*, 25.

¹⁶ Arndt, *Historical Context Study*, 30.

In 1893, an orphanage and boarding school was placed in part of the RBH.¹⁷ Since the number of clerical staff had decreased, some of their rooms were converted into space for the orphanage and boarding school.

Overview of the RBH Collection

Items from the RBH collection have a digital entry, generally containing the cover, title page, and often several pages within the text or of the back-cover of the item. Viewing the cover generally allowed for a quick general assessment of the item, whether it was liturgical, educational, or fell into some other category. Most of the items printed in Russian followed a near identical format of title, compiler, author or collector, printer or publisher, and the location of the printer or publisher. Rarely did the Russian word for author (*автор* - *avtor*) appear, rather the word *составил* – *sostavil*, was often used and does not necessarily indicate an original author. A composer or collector (составитель) rather than an author is also in evidence, and at times makes it difficult to ascertain who the original author was. The composer or collector simply gathered the materials of another author or works about someone and compiled them into a collection. When a collector or compiler appeared in addition to an author, this generally meant the author was either dead or the item was a reprint or republication.

¹⁷ Kan, *Memory Eternal*, 270.

While the majority of the collection is liturgical texts, there are also a large number of educational texts, pieces of literature, and several other categories.

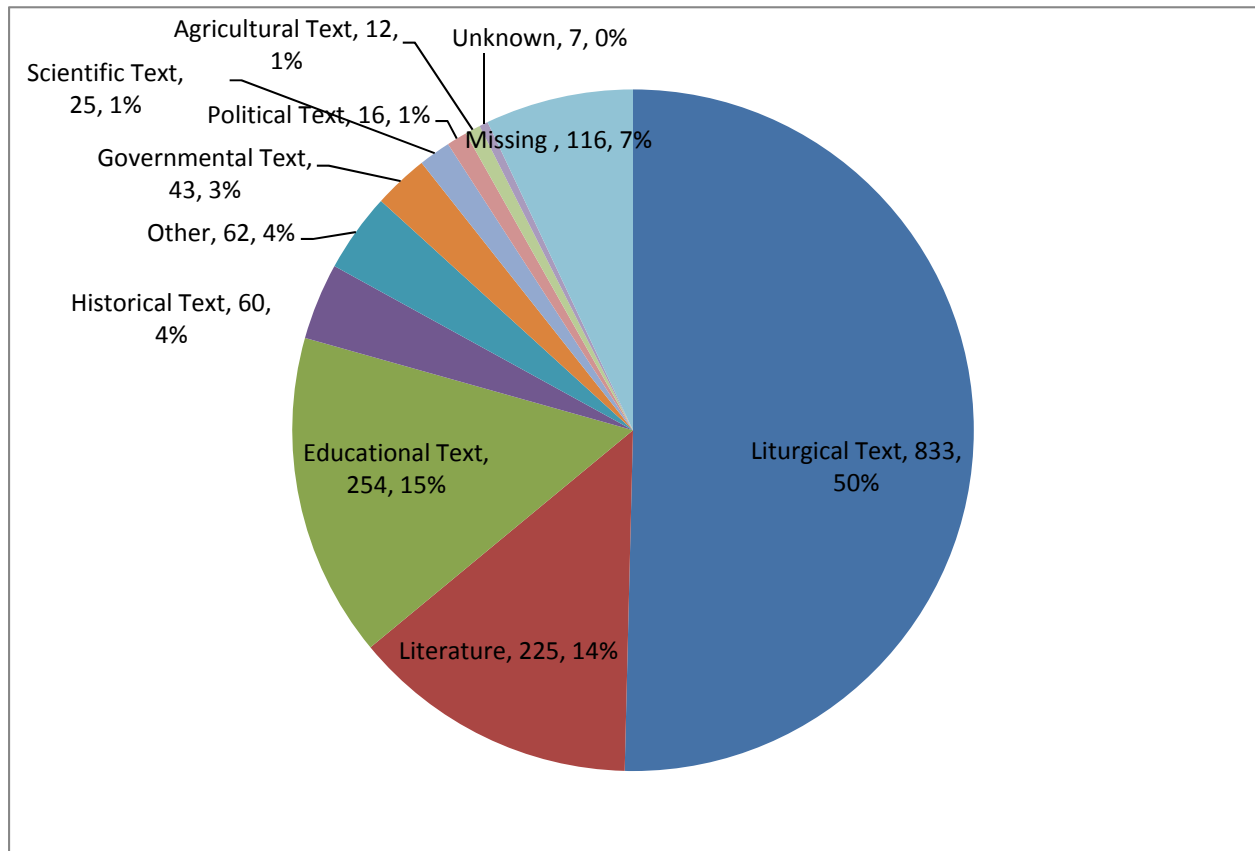


Figure 1.

Within the collection, there is some overlap in categories, such as between educational texts and liturgical texts. Some books are educational texts but with a liturgical aspect, such as instructions in Church Slavonic grammar. The Russian state demanded that Christian morality be an integral part of Russian education, and the religious or moral overtones found in many of the educational texts in the collection reflect this demand.¹⁸ The overlap in categories also exists between many historical texts and liturgical texts that describe Church figures, such as St.

¹⁸ Ben Eklof and Nadezhda Peterson, "'Laska i Poriadok': The Daily Life of the Rural School in Late Imperial Russia," *The Russian Review* 69, no. 1 (Jan., 2010), 10.

Sergius of Radonezh. St. Sergius is figure of immense significance in the ROC, and it is difficult to separate historical and Church accounts of his life.

Liturgical Texts

The sheer number of liturgical books spans several categories, including Bibles, biographies of Orthodox saints, catechisms, and actual liturgies. Educational texts range from introductions to physics, Russian spelling books, books for speech practice, and English reading books. Publication locations also vary, though the bulk of the items were either published, printed, or both, in St. Petersburg, and usually on Nevsky Prospect, the main thoroughfare. Early inventory records of the RBH also corroborate the focus on liturgical education, as the books found in the inventory are all liturgical texts until 1863. Even this change in 1863 only shows the inclusion of legal texts, with more conventional texts such as history books or atlases appearing in 1909.

Several items discuss “God’s Law” (*Закон Божий – Zakon Bozhii*), and were used as basic liturgical primers for the school attached to the RBH as well as in day school within the RBH.¹⁹ Other books covering the basic tenants of the ROC are present discussing the life of Jesus Christ or the Orthodox Catechist. Several Church Slavonic primers were a necessity in instructing both the laity and those that wished to enter the church.

Many biographies and teachings of early church figures and especially figures significant to the ROC are included in the liturgical texts. A large number of entries discuss the

¹⁹ Kan, *Memory Eternal*, 359.

figures of St. Cyril and Methodius the Enlightener of the Slavs, who created the early writing system that would later become the Cyrillic Alphabet.

Several Bibles are present, as are collections of the four Gospels, Old and New Testaments, and Psalter. Church Slavonic was the language for nearly all these biblical texts. There is the problem that the Bible used by the ROC differs from the ones used by many other denominations. The Book of Tobit and other apocrypha are included in the Orthodox Church Bible. Several books such as Psalms have a different numbering scheme when compared to a non-Orthodox Church Bible.

Several items in the collection discuss the Uniates. The ROC considered Uniates as part of the Church, but ROC also considered the Uniates in doctrinal error. The Uniates were largely from regions such as Poland, and often had religious disagreements with the ROC. It is unknown if any Uniates were openly practicing in Russian America, though many Uniates later emigrated to the United States and lived in the Midwest in the late nineteenth century.

There are fewer copies of the *Russian American Orthodox Messenger* than was expected, as the publication ran from 1896 until 1973, and three entries is a rather small number given that length of publication. This dearth of *Messengers* within the RBH collection is difficult to ascertain, but may indicate the constantly changing nature of the diocese in North America.

Literature

The inclusion of a large selection of literature fits with the educational purpose that the Russian Bishop's House served in various capacities throughout its existence. The foremost figure in Russian literature is Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin. Pushkin's popularity explains

why a large number of his works are included in the RBH collection. Also in the collection are other renowned Russian authors such as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Gogol. Tolstoy's unique views on Christianity and his avowed pacifism influenced such figures as Mahatma Gandhi.

Publications such as "On the Falling Away from the Orthodox Church of Count Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy," discussed the Christian beliefs of Tolstoy. These publications allowed the ROC to discredit Tolstoy's beliefs. Tolstoy was never exiled for his works, despite often being at odds with the Russian state.

Exile was often the fate for Russian authors engaged in political and social discussions, including Dostoevsky and Gogol. The Tsar often pardoned these exiled authors after the author's friends begged for leniency. This leniency allowed the Tsar to appear generous as well as demonstrating his personal power and prestige, as he could claim the friendship of a famous author after pardoning him. A collection of literature would serve as a source of national pride, an excellent pastime, and way to maintain a connection to Russian culture for those living in Alaska.

In addition to the Russian literature, the collection contains several foreign authors, often found in literature magazines. One such author is Thomas Mayne Reid. Mayne Reid was a nineteenth century American novelist who frequently wrote adventure novels set in the American West, Mexico, Africa, and other locations. Most of Mayne Reid's works read like adventure novels, making them an excellent source of entertainment. The popularity of foreign literature in Russia was quite high, and translations of all of Mayne Reid's works were widely read in Russia.²⁰

²⁰ Kenneth E. Harper and Bradford A. Booth, "Russian Translations of Nineteenth-Century English Fiction," *Nineteenth Century Fiction* 8, no. 3 (Dec., 1953), 193.

Nineteenth century Russian education focused largely on reading, writing, and arithmetic. Religious schools also added liturgical education, often singing of hymns, recitation of passages from the Bible, and the memorization of things such as the Catechist. Grammar and writing books are also quite prevalent. The students used these texts quite frequently, as the amount of marginalia demonstrates. This reflects general trends in Russian schools throughout the empire in the late nineteenth century, as students retained basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, but did not always excel in these areas.²¹ Sergei Kan and Ben Eklof both note that students tended to drop out frequently, and in the case of Alaska specifically, that students tended to excel only in liturgical singing and recitation.²²

Historical Texts

The category of historical texts includes texts discussing historical events and figures that were relevant to the Russian Empire, Alaskan history, or other regions of the world. There are several items covering the Crimean War (1853-1856), as it was an important event in Russian domestic and foreign policy. The Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878) appears in several historical texts, and was a significant historical event, as Russia attempted to recover from the losses suffered in the Crimean War. The Russo-Turkish War was also significant as the pretext for Russia's belligerence was the treatment of Christians in the Ottoman Empire.

²¹ Kan, *Memory Eternal*, 270-271, 361; Eklof, "Daily life," 8.

²² Kan, *Memory Eternal*, 360-361; Ben Eklof, "The Adequacy of Basic Schooling in Rural Russia: Teachers and Their Craft, 1880-1914," *History of Education Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (Summer, 1986), 216.

Several texts cover different members of the Royal Family both living and deceased, in biographical form. Other historical texts are included because of their name, *Historical Periodical*, or *Historical Publication*, and discussed both historical as well as current events.

Other historical texts are mixture of travel logs and historical discussions. Pierre Loti's *Jerusalem. A Travel Diary of Pierre Loti* not only discusses Loti's travels in Palestine, but also includes a great deal of background history about the region. Loti also analyzes the regional culture and past events of Palestine, and compares them to current events.

Finally, and perhaps most confusing, are the historical texts that discuss the regional history of Poland, such as *From the Trip to Red Ruthenia and Her Surrounding Areas*. Russia and several other nations carved up Poland in 1831. Russia turned the regions it acquired into buffers against Germany and the Austria-Hungarian Empire. The reason these texts are confusing is that they present a very weak argument as to why these regions were important to Russia. The use a Slavic connection and the presence of some Orthodox Christians in Poland was a justification for Russian control of a regions.

Agricultural Texts

The inclusion of agricultural texts in the RBH collection is a practical one. European colonies needed to be as self-sufficient as possible, and Russian America was no exception to this expectation. Despite the inclusion of several agricultural texts discussing crop growing and animal husbandry, crops failed and few animals survived for any length of time in Russian America.

Governmental Texts

The governmental texts cover a broad range of items, but curiously, few of these are in Russian. Most of the items are in English, one in German, one in Church Slavonic, with only three in Russian. The English selections are ethno-histories or ethnographies, and some selections of Congressional records, and all appear to cover different Native American groups indigenous to Alaska. Among the books in English are also several penned by Franz Boas, one of the leading figures in American anthropology.

Other Texts

The category of other is the most difficult one to define as it encompasses all the items that do not fit well anywhere else. There are several bookstore catalogues, catalogues of clerical vestments and accessories, fabric catalogues, and calendars that fall into the category of other. Several items cover Russian land surveys, cataloguing the soil, resources, and people living in different regions of the Russian Empire. City guides are also present, discussing monuments and shrines found in Moscow, Kiev, St. Petersburg, and other Russian cities. Almanacs and calendars are in evidence, and would be an invaluable resource to any nineteenth-century society, especially to a colony that depended on seasonally available natural resources. Finally, there are several temperance texts, ostensibly to combat the abuse of tobacco and alcohol.²³

Political Texts

²³ Kan, *Memory Eternal*, 186-187, 262.

The RBH collection contains divisive and even potentially subversive political texts. Several discuss the zemstvos, the local governmental bodies established following the reforms of the 1860s in Russia. Zemstvos were largely responsible for implementing education reforms at the local level, and they would have been of great interest to the staff of the RBH that operated the school. Both the Tsar and state officials viewed the zemstvos with suspicion, and both worked to curtail the zemstvos' power. While the ROC was an arm of the state, the remoteness of Russian America and the change in ownership in 1867 make zemstvos largely irrelevant to local Alaskan government.

Other political texts discuss the American political system, the English Parliament, and the Russian Duma. The American political system would be of interest given the proximity of the United States prior to 1867, and of extreme importance following the sale of Alaska. The English Parliamentary system would also be of interest as Russia tended to have negative interactions with Great Britain up until World War I, and knowing the internal politics of an international rival in the nineteenth century would be of tremendous importance.

Scientific Texts

The scientific texts include many entries involving medicine and first aid, vital pieces of knowledge in remote Sitka, especially when a doctor had to travel for several days to see to all of his patients. Knowledge about communicable diseases would also be of vital importance, given the living conditions facing those in Sitka, and especially following the smallpox outbreak in the late 1830s. Several books cover astronomy, and usually are translations from French or German,

and discuss the constellations or the movements of various planets and comets. Books about scientific expeditions are also present, though most of these discuss regions either within the Russian Empire, or in close proximity to it.

Finally under the category of scientific text are several items that are pseudo-science. These books of pseudo-science reflect a general attitude of the nineteenth century and a fascination with science. Texts including phrenology and eugenics fall into the category of pseudo-science, and especially in the case of the latter, led to horrific consequences; Imperial Russia experienced multiple pogroms, and those in the late nineteenth century used eugenics as a justification for these acts.

Unknown Texts

The unknown texts category is texts without any way to ascertain what they are. Some had no cover or title page, or their title is all that is present and makes it difficult to ascertain what the book actually discusses.

Dates Relevant to the Collection

With a mind towards actual dates, there is a marked lack of reading material from dates prior to 1855. With the cost of book publication still somewhat high, the cost of shipping items from St. Petersburg, and the relative lack of funds that Father John had on arriving in Sitka, it was quite likely that he would have brought few books. Not until 1855 is there a significant increase in the number of books, likely following the elevation of Veniaminov to Archbishop in

1850. The increase in the number of books also matches the increase in the size and significance of the RBH as a school, as it was expanded to train both indigenous Alaskans and creoles in the ways of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), as well as in more secular lessons.²⁴ The departure of Veniaminov in 1850 saw his tenure in Alaska over, but his emphasis on education and instruction continued. Vicar Bishop Petr took over clerical affairs in Alaska, but maintained the RBH as well as the educational facilities within, in the spirit of Archbishop Veniaminov.²⁵

During the reign of Alexander II, the education reform of 1864 saw an impact in Russian-America that lasted beyond the sale three years later. These reforms emphasized teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. In addition to the regular curriculum, the school attached to the RBH also taught religious instruction and singing.²⁶

Given the distance between St. Petersburg and Sitka, the lack of funds the ROC possessed, and the shrinking Russian population in Sitka, it is understandable that the collection would grow more slowly. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, this slow growth would speed up, as printing became more cost effective.

The sale of Alaska saw a degree of waning of the power and presence of the RAC, as many Russians returned in the years following 1867, though the ROC continued to maintain a presence in Alaska. Veniaminov used his position, both as Archbishop and, in 1868, as the Metropolitan of Moscow, to continue to ensure that Alaska received adequate attention.²⁷

While the Treaty of Alaska saw the end of any official Russian presence in Alaska, this did not entirely disrupt the presence of the Russian Orthodox Church in Alaska. There was a

²⁴ David Nordlander, "Innokentii Veniaminov and the Expansion of Orthodoxy in Russian America," *Pacific Historical Review* 64, no. 1 (Feb., 1995), 31.

²⁵ Nordlander, "Innokentii," 33.

²⁶ Kan, *Memory Eternal*, 267.

²⁷ Nordlander, "Innokentii," 33.

provision within the treaty that stipulated that the retention of ecclesiastical facilities would remain in the hands of the ROC, including the RBH and the school.²⁸

The reestablishment of a seminary within the RBH in 1906 is evident in the increased number of publications available from 1905 on, and the use of the 1905 date assumes a delay in arrival of the publications in Sitka.²⁹ If one views the publication or printing date, there is a sharp spike in 1906 and again in 1908. The stamp, “Sitka Seminary,” appears in some books from the very early twentieth century. Unfortunately, the seminary proved unsatisfactory to members of the Orthodox hierarchy and they closed the seminary in 1910 and the orphanage within the RBH in 1912.³⁰

The change of the Aleutian and Alaskan Diocese to an Archdiocese in 1905 under the leadership of Archbishop Tikhon shows a continued increase in the number of available publications, though there is a marked drop in publications from 1910 to 1914. This drop may be side effect of the lack of focus of Archbishop Platon, who oversaw the North American diocese from 1907 to 1914, and who focused more on the mainland and schismatic difficulties.³¹ Difficulties in Russia arose as civil unrest increased, drawing both clerical and secular focus away from Sitka.

Impressions and Discussion of the Collection

²⁸ U.S. Congress. *Treaty concerning the Cession of the Russian Possessions in North America by his Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias to the United States of America ; Concluded March 30, 1867 ; Ratified by the United States May 28, 1867 ; Exchanged June 20, 1867 ; Proclaimed by the United States June 20, 1867* (March 30, 1867), Accessed 3-10-2016, <https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=015/llsl015.db&recNum=577>.

²⁹ Kan, *Memory Eternal*, 361.

³⁰ Kan, *Memory Eternal*, 361.

³¹ Catherine J. Tarasar, *Orthodox America 1794-1976: Development of the Orthodox Church in America* (Syosset, New York: The Orthodox Church in America, 1975).

The presence of two books in the Ukrainian language is somewhat peculiar. The Ems Ukase from Alexander II in 1876 banned the printing and importing of literature in the Ukrainian language, and reflected a general trend of hostility towards the Ukraine.

The presence of marginalia in several texts would be an extremely interesting study. This would likely require someone who was well versed in deciphering handwriting, especially from multi-lingual sources. English and Russian characters are intermixed in some names, making it difficult to read the name.

On a personal note, a study of the structure of the Orthodox Church in America following 1917 would also be quite interesting. As the ROC was a branch of the Russian state, was it still maintaining links to a now-defunct state, or was a clergy that felt secure in breaking away from the ROC guiding it? As American history tends to gloss over the early twentieth, this lack of information comes as little surprise. Perhaps a study of the Orthodox Church in America would not only shed light on the Church, but on the lives of immigrants from Eastern Europe and on the lives of Orthodox Americans.

Research Difficulties

This presented a challenge as those items that were significantly damaged either were lacking identifying texts or required delicate handling to ascertain what they contain. There also was the difficulty of reading Church Slavonic as well as the Russian of the nineteenth century that differs from modern Russian. Another difficulty was the use of Russian abbreviations and acronyms, though in the case of the abbreviations, most are simply a shortened form of a longer word, such as *об.* as a shortened form of *общество*, the Russian word for society.

Dates also presented a problem, as Russia used the Julian calendar (Old Style), versus the Gregorian calendar (New Style) used by most of the rest of Europe and North America in the nineteenth century. Russia did not adopt the Gregorian calendar until sometime after World War I, and even then, the ROC uses a different calendar for ecclesiastical purposes. The different calendars can and has led to date conflicts on historical events, such as the October Revolution, which actually occurred in November on the Gregorian calendar.

Conclusions

The RBH collection is especially important as it covers several different areas of history. Russian Imperial history, nineteenth century American history, Native American history, church history, and even ecological history all can be found within this collection, and each item can be studied both individually as well in the context of the collection. Many of the items, but not all, are digitized and available on Hathitrust, the Library of Congress, or in Russian digital archives. Some liturgical texts are available online, either through the Orthodox Church of America or on Alaskan and Canadian parish websites. With more time and research, this entire collection could eventually be digitized and assist historians, students, clergy, and many others.

Appendix

Language Notes:

Cyrillic (Post 1917+)

А/а – A/a	Б/б – B/b	В/в – V/v	Г/г – G/g (occasionally H)
Д/д – D/d	Е/е – E/e (often Ye as well)		Ё/ё – Yo/yo
Ж/ж – Zhe/zhe	З/з – Z/z	И/и – I/I	Й/й – I/i
К/к – K/k	Л/л – L/l	М/м – M/m	Н/н – N/n
О/о – O/o	П/п – P/p	Р/р – R/r	С/с – S/s
Т/т – T/t	У/у – U/u	Ф/ф – F/f (sometimes Th)	
Х/х – H/h	Ц/ц – Ts/ts	Ч/ч – Ch/ch	Ш/ш – Sh/sh
Щ/щ – Shc/shc	Ъ/ъ – hard sign	Ы/ы – I/I	Ь/ь – soft sign
Э/э – E/e	Ю/ю – Yu/yu	Я/я – Ya/ya	

In older Russian (pre-1917), *i* was used in place of *и* occasionally, and both *ѣ* and *ѥ* were used in place of *e*. *Ѡ* was replaced by *Ф*, and represented a “th” sound. Words adopted from Greek, especially common in liturgical or historical texts usually contain this letter. In Church Slavonic, *О*, *о*, *Ѡ*, *ѡ*, *Ѣ*, *ѣ*, *Ѥ*, *ѥ*, *Ѧ*, *ѧ*, all have an *o* sound and generally replace *o*, but without in-depth knowledge and analysis of Church Slavonic documents, this is an assertion at best, but appears to be applicable to the documents within the RBH collection. *Ѧ* is replaced by *я*, and *ѧ* is replaced by *у*.

Details of the Bishops Operating in North America from 1824 to 1922:

The Orthodox Church of America (<https://oca.org/holy-synod/past-primates>) contains a great deal of information on many of those that worked in Alaska and the United States. The site generally only highlights those that achieved high rank within the Church and does not discuss many of those bishops and other clergy that worked underneath figures such as Archbishop Innocent, Archbishop Tikhon, or Archbishop Evdokim. The Diocese of Alaska also has no sources available online, and a visit to the either St. Michaels Cathedral or other facility with

records would be recommended. The Canadian Orthodox Church (Orthodoxcanada.ca) site also contains some information about some of the Orthodox Bishops, such as Bishop Innocent (Pustynsky). The following entries about the Bishops in Alaska until 1923 are largely taken from the Orthodox Church of America's website, which took most of its information from *Orthodox America 1794-1976*.

Father John Veniaminov arrived in Unalaska in 1824, beginning his tenure in Alaska. Father John ministered to the Aleuts until he was transferred to Sitka in 1834. Once again, Father John saw to the needs of the native Alaskans he worked with, the Tlingit living in and around Sitka. In 1840, Father John took his monastic vows and took the name Innocent; shortly after this, he was elevated to Bishop of North America and Kamchatka.

Bishop Innocent was transferred to the Yakutsk Diocese, near the Lena River in Russia, in 1853. This transfer left a vacancy in the ROC hierarchy in Alaska that was not filled for many years. The Tsar chose Bishop Innocent to be Metropolitan in 1868.

Bishop Petr (Peter) became rector of the Seminary in Sitka in 1855. Bishop Petr soon after became Bishop of Sitka, rather than Bishop of Kamchatka and the Aleutian Islands. The Diocese that included Alaska became an auxiliary bishopric under the Kamchatka Diocese in 1859. This possibly reflected a decrease in church funds and Russian interest in Alaska. In 1866, Bishop Petr was transferred to the Yakutsk Diocese, which was also under the Kamchatka Diocese.

Bishop Paul was transferred to Sitka in 1866, but was still a vicar-bishop of the Kamchatka Diocese, and he arrived in Sitka in 1867, amidst the sale of Alaska. Bishop Paul was faced with a shrinking Russian population as most Russians returned home. While Bishop Paul remained the Bishop of Sitka, preparations were beginning that would move the see from Alaska

to San Francisco. Bishop Paul was transferred back to Russia to oversee the Diocese of Yeneseysk and Krasnoyarsk in 1870, and in 1873, he was made Bishop of Kamchatka, the Kuril, and Aleutian Islands until 1877.

Bishop John was consecrated Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska in 1870, the first bishop of the new Alaska Diocese. Bishop John also pushed to move the see from Alaska to San Francisco, and received approval for the move in 1872. In 1877, Bishop John was transferred back to Russia as Vicar Bishop of Aksaisk.

Bishop John's replacement, Bishop Nestor, was selected in 1878. Unfortunately, Bishop Nestor perished at sea in 1882, and it took several years for a replacement to be selected.

In 1888, Bishop Vladimir arrived in Alaska as the new Bishop. Bishop Vladimir was faced with the unique problem of a large number of Uniate immigrants in the United States. As Uniates were considered part of the Orthodox Church, Bishop Vladimir was charged with bringing the Uniates back to the ROC. Bishop Vladimir even met with the Uniate leader St. Alexis Toth to try to reconcile the ROC with the Uniates. Bishop Vladimir was recalled in Russia in 1891 to be Bishop of Ostrogozhsk.

Bishop Nicholas (1891-1898) was Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska following Bishop Vladimir. During Bishop Nicholas's time in North America the Uniates returned to the Orthodox Church and Father Alexis Toth became a significant figure in the Church in America. Bishop Nicholas also helped create the *Russian American Orthodox Messenger*, a liturgical newsletter for the growing Orthodox presence in North America.

Bishop Tikhon (1898-1907) was another significant figure in the Orthodox Church in North America. The diocese in North America was restricted under Bishop Tikhon to include the Aleutians and all of North America, not just Alaska. Bishop Tikhon returned to Russia in

1907, and went on to become Patriarch of the ROC, though he was forced to contend with the Bolsheviks following the 1917 revolution.

Bishop Innocent (Pustinsky) was Vicar-Bishop of Alaska from 1904 to 1909, spending part of his tenure under Bishop Tikhon.³² Bishop Innocent was stationed in Sitka for most of his time in North America. Bishop Innocent made several journeys across Alaska and wrote down these travels in a diary and in newspaper accounts.³³

Bishop Platon succeeded Bishop Tikhon as Archbishop of the Aleutians in 1907, but he was transferred back to Russia in 1914. However, Bishop Platon returned to North America in 1921, fleeing the Bolsheviks. Platon was chosen by a North American *Sobor* to be Metropolitan of all America and Canada in 1923. This choice was confirmed by the ROC, but the broken authority of the Church in Russia coupled with a religious power struggle in North America hobbled Metropolitan Platon's authority.

Bishop Evdokim became Archbishop of the Aleutians in 1914-1918. He helped create the publication *Christian* in 1906, which was published for several decades. In 1917, Archbishop Evdokim returned to Russia for a Church Council, and Bishop Alexander governed in his absence. Archbishop Evdokim did not return from Russia and Bishop Alexander continued as the leading bishop in Evdokim's absence.

Bishop Alexander was Vicar Bishop from 1909 to 1916, as Bishop of Sitka. In 1916, Bishop Alexander became Bishop of Canada, and in 1917 he was administer of all of the North American Diocese when Archbishop Evdokim returned to Russia. Bishop Alexander left the

³² [Orthodoxcanada.ca/metropolitan_innocent_\(pustynsky\)](http://Orthodoxcanada.ca/metropolitan_innocent_(pustynsky))

³³ <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=41&dat=19050629&id=5vpQAAAAIBAJ&sjid=h8DAAAAIBAJ&pg=5117,1440358&hl=en> http://www.ortho-rus.ru/cgi-bin/ps_file.cgi?2_176.

United States in 1922 after several years of denominational squabbling, and Metropolitan Platon replaced him.

Timeline:

Date	Event
1823	Father John Veniaminov arrives in Sitka prior to taking his clerical post in Unalaska
1824	Father John Veniaminov arrives in Unalaska
1825	Decembrist Revolution in Russia -- Nicholas I becomes Tsar of Russia
1834	Father John transferred from Unalaska to Sitka
1840	Father John Veniaminov consecrated as Bishop Innocent -- A new diocese established that included all of Russia's holdings in North America
1848	Revolutions spread across Europe (France, Poland, Austria-Hungary, etc.)
1850	Bishop Innocent elevated to Archbishop
1853	Archbishop Innocent transferred to Yakutsk Region Diocese -- Crimean War Begins
1855	Alexander II becomes Tsar of Russia
1856	Crimean War Ends
1859	Archimandrite Petr (Peter) consecrated Bishop of Sitka
1861	Emancipation of Russian Serfs by the Tsar-Liberator Alexander II
1867	Alaska sold to the United States -- Bishop Petr transferred to Yakutsk -- Bishop Paul Transferred to Sitka
1868	Archbishop Innocent appointed Metropolitan of Moscow
1870	Bishop Paul transferred to the Diocese of Yeniseysk and Krasnoyarsk -- Alaska made its own Diocese, separating it from the Russian mainland -- Bishop John made Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska
1872	Diocesan see moved from Sitka to San Francisco
1877	Russo-Turkish War begins -- Bishop John transferred to the Holy Synod
1878	Russo-Turkish War ends -- Archimandrite Nestor consecrated Bishop Nestor and transferred to the Diocese of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska
1881	Alexander III becomes Tsar of Russia
1882	Bishop Nestor drowned in an accident on the Bering Sea -- Alaska Diocese overseen from St. Petersburg
1888	Bishop Vladimir arrives in San Francisco, returning oversight of the Alaska Diocese to America
1891	Bishop Vladimir reassigned to the Russian mainland (possibly Voronezh Diocese) -- Bishop Nicholas consecrated Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska
1894	Nicholas II becomes Tsar of Russia
1896	The <i>Russian American Orthodox Messenger</i> first published
1898	Bishop Nicholas elevated to Archbishop and transferred to Tver - Bishop Tikhon elevated to Archbishop and transferred to the Diocese of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska
1903	Bishop Innocent (Pustinsky) ordained as Bishop of Alaska, acting as Vicar-Bishop to Archbishop Tikhon
1904	Russo-Japanese War begins -- Bishop Innocent arrives in Sitka
1905	1905 Revolution, peaceful demonstrators are fired upon at the Winter Palace, several revolts erupt as a result -- Russo-Japanese War ends -- Bishop Tikhon elevated to Archbishop

1907	Archbishop Tikhon transferred to Yaroslavl -- Bishop Platon elevated to Archbishop and transferred to the Diocese of the Aleutian Islands and North America
1909	Bishop Alexander consecrated Bishop of Sitka
1914	World War I begins -- Bishop Platon transferred to the Russian mainland -- Bishop Evdokim elevated to Archbishop and assigned to the Diocese of the Aleutian Islands and North America
1915	Bishop Platon transferred to the Diocese of Georgia as exarch -- Archbishop Evdokim takes up his position in the Diocese of the Aleutian Islands and North America
1917	World War I ends -- February Revolution -- Russian monarchy abolished and the royal family removed from any position of authority -- October Revolution, the Bolsheviks seize power -- Archbishop Evdokim returns to Russia, Bishop Alexander administers in his absence
1919	Bishop Alexander chosen by the Second All American Sobor to be ruling bishop
1920	Bishop Alexander confirmed by Patriarch Tikhon and the Holy Synod as primate of North America, elevating him to Archbishop
1922	Archbishop Platon returns to North America -- Archbishop Alexander returns to Russia

Glossary:

Autocephaly – When a bishop does not have to report to a higher-ranking bishop in a hierarchical style church such as the Russian Orthodox Church. The church can grant autocephaly to dioceses it governs. In the case of the ROC, the Holy Synod can grant autocephaly, but this does not mean that other members of the ROC will recognize another Church’s right to self-govern.

Autonomy – When the ROC appoints a bishop who is answerable to the ROC, but otherwise allows the bishop to govern his diocese as he wishes.

Duma – (*Дума* – *Duma*) A Russian legislative body, first formed in 1906 by Tsar Nicholas II, largely in an attempt to placate groups calling for governmental reforms. The Duma had very little power, and the Tsar dissolved and then recalled the Duma several times from 1906 to 1912.

Holy Synod - The Holy Synod was established in 1721 by Peter the Great, replacing the previous system of a patriarch as the head of the Orthodox Church. He did this in a move to bring the Russian Orthodox Church in line with the state and to remove the patriarch as a political rival. Prior to this, the patriarch held a great deal of authority and independence, and at times worked against the interests of the state. This was a lesson Peter the Great had taken to heart, as he saw the political intrigue between the patriarch and the tsar pull threaten to pull apart Russia.³⁴

Kolosh – (*Колош* - *Kolosh*) Archaic Russian word for the Tlingit, found in certain older 19th century texts.

Uniates - (*Униатов* - *Uniatov*). The Uniates were a sect of the Orthodox Church that had its roots in Poland, dating to around the early seventeenth century, and were considered misguided by the ROC.³⁵ They had both religious as well as political significance, and the ROC made several attempts over the centuries to bring the Uniates back under their authority.

³⁴ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia and the Russians* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011) 199.

³⁵ Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, 136.