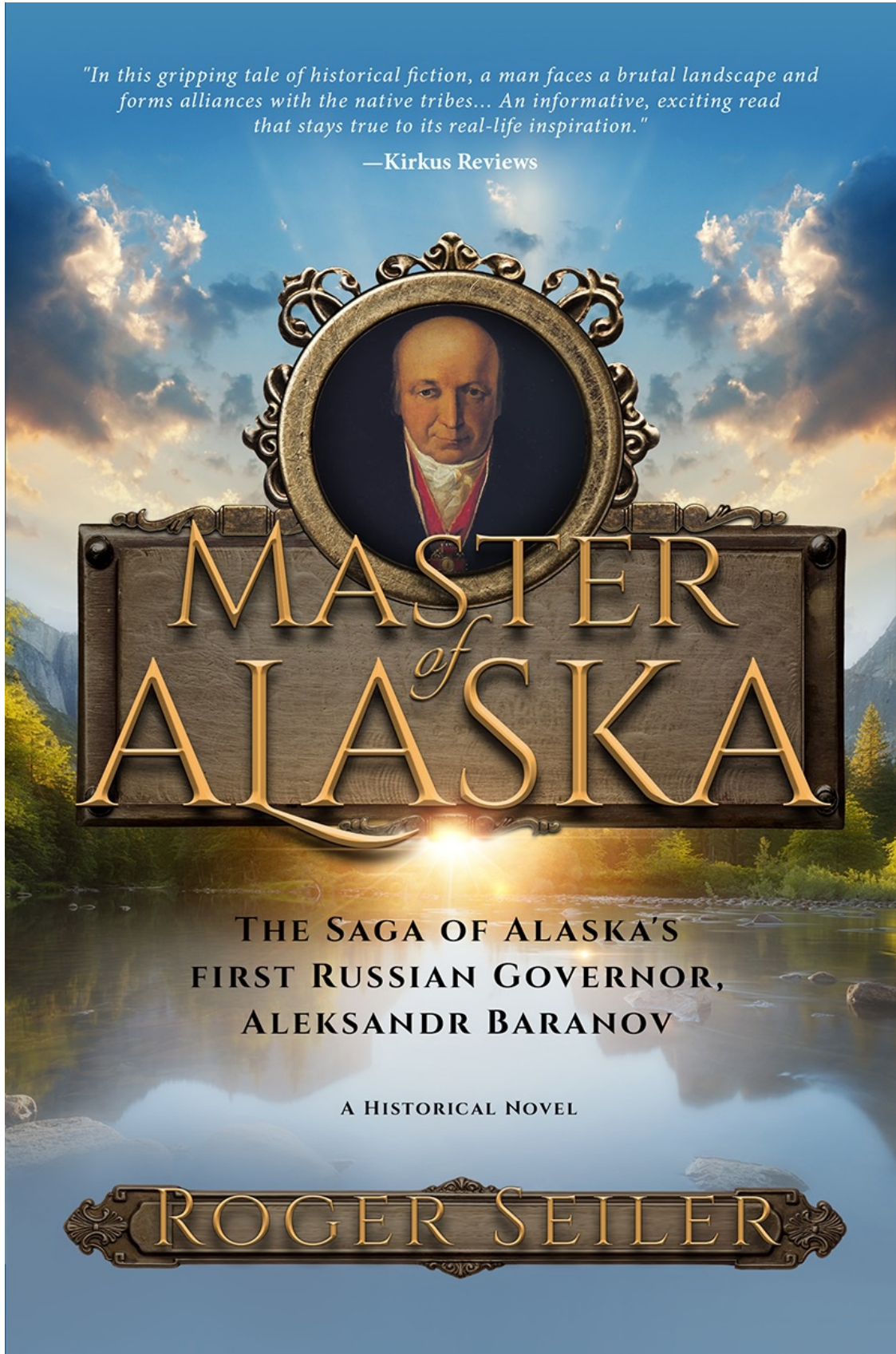


*"In this gripping tale of historical fiction, a man faces a brutal landscape and forms alliances with the native tribes... An informative, exciting read that stays true to its real-life inspiration."*

—Kirkus Reviews



**Inside: excerpts showing the engaging story elements that make this book such a good read.**

(More on back cover...)

# ***Master of Alaska***

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## **Excerpts**

*These excerpts were chosen to give a fair sampling of the variety of story elements in this book. For a better flow, some excerpts are purposely shown here out of their sequence in the actual book. Text in italics indicates either an introduction to an excerpt or dialog in a Native language.*

### **Excerpt 1: Finding Unalaska (p. 1)**

*October 1790. . .*

*George Washington was President of the United States;  
Catherine was Tsarina of Russia; and Aleksandr Andreievich  
Baranov was sailing across the roaring Bering Sea near  
Alaska's Aleutian Islands.*

Baranov had never been at sea before, but that didn't scare him. He was accustomed to controlling fear with calculated reason. At age forty-three, with a short, wiry build, he exuded an impatient energy. Now he was headed across a fierce ocean to what he'd been told was a wild land of volcanoes, glaciers, giant bears, and savages. No matter, he thought. He would do whatever must be done.

### **Excerpt 2: Surviving the Wreck (p. 4)**

*INTRO: On the way from Siberia to Kodiak, Alaska, Aleksandr Baranov's ship crashed into rocks near an Aleutian island. In a lifeboat, he led the rescue of the 53 other men on the ship...*

"Pull to starboard!" Baranov barked at the oarsmen.

But the surf, too strong, hurled the rowboat headlong into the rocks. With a loud crunch its hull was punctured by holes too big to plug with shirts and the men were thrown about in the boat as it spun around. Before they could react, the next wave pulled them off the rocks, and they fought the sea to row through the channel toward shore. But water came in through the holes faster than they could row. The lifeboat sank beneath them, and the icy surf seized them all. They were tossed and dragged toward the beach.

Out of the pounding waves, Baranov pulled himself onto the gravel shore where he heard the hollow clatter of small round stones rolling up and down the beach in cadence with the surf.

### **Excerpt 3: The Aleuts (p. 23)**

*INTRO: With driftwood, Baranov and his battered Russians made a lean-to shelter on the beach, crawled inside and went to sleep. The next morning of this cold late October of 1790, they were awakened by a group of Native seal hunters led by a young Aleut man, Kuponek. The Aleuts fed the Russians dried salmon and then took them in large open boats that they paddled to their village a few miles away. There, Toyon (Chief) Putuguk told his men to show the Russians how to make barabara huts for shelter. That evening the chief called a meeting of the Aleut men to discuss how to deal with their visitors, who must now spend the winter with them. Obviously, the worsening fall weather meant the Russians could not continue to Kodiak until the next spring, six months hence.*

Kuponek stepped into Toyon (Chief) Putuguq's barabara, where the village men had gathered and solemnly sat around the central fire. Kuponek listened to Putuguq and the others speak in Aleut while all stared into the sacred flames. *"Not enough food to feed ourselves and Russians, too. Before long, they will fight us for our food supply."*

Kuponek said, *"We must hunt more seals to feed them."*

Putuguq answered, *"Storms coming fast. In storms, we will not be able to kill enough seals."*

Another man, sitting next to Kuponek, spoke up. *"Then we must kill Russians before they kill us for our food. They have no hostages from us, so we can do it. We must kill them while they sleep."*

"No," objected Kuponek. *"With just a short break in the weather, we can hunt enough seals. Maybe the Russians will help."*

Another man replied, *"They are too weak! If we wait until the Russians regain strength, we will not be able to kill them. We must kill them tonight."*

*"If we kill them, Russians from Kodiak will come and kill us,"* said Kuponek.

*"We will drop their bodies near the wreck, so it will look like they died there."*

Putuguq held his hand up for a moment, then said, *"Go. I will consult the sacred fire for an answer. Then I will tell you what we will do."*

Kuponek and the others got up and left, leaving Putuguq still seated, contemplating the fire.

#### **Excerpt 4: Nanuq** (p. 38)

*INTRO: After being rescued from their shipwreck on Unalaska Island by the Aleuts, Aleksandr Baranov and his Russian crew of 53 men had faced a food supply problem. Baranov solved the problem by learning the Aleut's methods of seal hunting and then killed enough seals to provide food through the arriving winter. This averted a massacre by the Aleuts if the Russians had failed to provide for themselves.*

It seemed to Baranov as if spring would never come, but finally the storms subsided in April 1791. As he and his men prepared to leave for Kodiak up the Alaska Peninsula in large Aleut rowboats, Toyon Putuguq invited Baranov into his big barabara next to a ceremonial fire, along with Kuponek and some other Aleut men. The room was quiet as the men entered and took their places around the central fireplace. Baranov saw this was going to be an important ceremony and paid close attention.

They all stared at the fire for a long moment. Then the chief began singing and chanting, with Kuponek joining in—a ritual song describing a seal hunt. After another long and silent moment, Toyon Putuguq spoke to Baranov in the Aleut language, which Baranov by then knew well: *"Baranov has learned Native ways. Baranov is the only Russian who learned to hunt well with Native ways and speak our language well. And Baranov worked for the village, not just himself.*

*"Now Baranov is part Aleut,"* he continued. *"So now, as toyon, I give Baranov an Aleut name: Nanuq, blessed by the sacred fire spirit. Nanuq is the polar bear; the great white hunter.*

*"With your Native name, I give this skin of Nanuq. I got it from an Eskimo up north. It has great powers."*

The chief unfolded the big white bear skin and solemnly draped it over Baranov, who admired it with a smile. The bear head was awesome with its snarling white teeth. The top of it lay above Baranov's head, with the ferocious gleaming canines thrust forward under the bear's black nose. The lower jaw and teeth projected under his chin. His face was then framed by that of the bear, and the full length of the nanuq's white fur fell over his shoulders and arms, down to his feet.

*"Toyon Putuguq, I accept with pride."*

The chief looked again into the sacred fire and spoke solemnly: *"But now your Native part will fight your white part.*

*"Not a good fight.*

*"Sometimes your white part will win. Sometimes your Native part will win.  
"How these fights will end, I don't know."*

**Excerpt 5: Baranov Meets Anooka** (p. 82)

*INTRO: After Aleksandr Baranov had reached the Russian settlement at Three Saints Bay on Kodiak Island, he took command of the colony. He explored the surrounding area, including the mainland Kenai Peninsula where he visited a Native village. The village chief, named Grigor by the Russians, had learned to speak Russian and invited Baranov into his longhouse to confer. As they sat in front of the central fire, Baranov took from his pocket a bright copper plate engraved with Tsarina Catherine's coat of arms and gave it to Chief Grigor as a gift.*

Chief Grigor's eyes widened in amazement as he examined the copper plate closely. "This is important," he said.

It was exactly the reaction Baranov wanted. He continued, "I look for a long future of friendship between us. We can help each other in many ways. I must explore Montague Island, over here, and need some of your men as guides."

"Great Nanuq, do you have a woman?"

Baranov was taken aback. "I have a wife in Russia."

"In Russia? What good is that? Take my daughter for wife. Then I be your father, and we work together as one. This way we make powerful alliance."

Before Baranov could react, Chief Grigor turned and called out to his daughter in his Native tongue, "*Anooka, come here!*"

From a dim recess of the lodge, a slender seventeen-year-old in deerskins approached with unusual youthful dignity. She had glistening long, black hair flowing over her shoulders, and set in an oval face were the high cheek bones common to many Natives. Her big, warm, brown eyes looked out from under lovely arched eyebrows. Clear, tan skin, a straight, pretty nose, and a mouth with soft lips completed her. To Baranov, Anooka was strikingly beautiful. Though reserved, the self-confidence of her rank allowed her to glance at the strange Russian in front of her, and then she faced her father.

In the Kenaitze dialect of the Alutiiq language, the chief told her, "*Turn around and face the great Russian Nanuq.*" She did so. With no hint of shyness, she looked Baranov right in his eyes. Her intelligent dark eyes held his stare as an equal for a long moment, until she yielded a slight smile, revealing perfect white teeth, and looked down.

Nanuq quickly collected himself and, wanting to get back to the negotiations for guides, replied, "Chief Grigor, your offer is most generous. But as I said, I already have a wife in Russia."

Grigor insisted, "But not here. How long has it been, great Nanuq, since you've had a wife at your side?"

Baranov stared at him in silence. He didn't want to offend the man, but the proposal was absurd. The chief tried once more. Certainly an alliance with this Russian Nanuq would greatly benefit his own stature in the eyes of his people—and especially their southern enemies, the hated Tlingit.

"I see. Well, you need a wife here! And we need a strong alliance."

"A Russian can only have one wife."

"Poor man! Poor man!" said Grigor in mild disappointment. He knew that making such alliances, especially with one as strong as Nanuq, could take time and much negotiation. But just how strong was Nanuq, anyway? Maybe he should be tested. There was more than one way to impress the Tlingit with Kenaitze power. Grigor motioned to Anooka to return to her work.

"Well, then, the least I can do for you is give you the guides you need."

Anooka sat on a blanket in the back of the longhouse, where she had been making a bear claw necklace for her father. Why did Father want to give her to this man? Though short, he looked strong

and intelligent, but strange. Could she ever want him? She knew what she wanted would count for nothing. Her father would decide, and she had to trust him to choose well for her. She would ask one thing: that her father wait until he really knew a man before he made his choice. As his daughter, she deserved at least that, and the chief had only just met this Nanuq.

Baranov looked into the shadows for Anooka, straining for another glimpse of her youthful beauty. Grigor noticed.

### **Excerpt 6: Anooka Becomes Anna** (p. 126)

*INTRO: For two years Baranov avoided Chief Grigor's entreaty that he marry his daughter Anooka. But then a supply ship from Russia was long overdue – had probably sunk in the vicious North Pacific – and his men were about to starve. He had to get food from Grigor, and there was only one way to get it. The deal was made and Baranov fed his men.*

The time had come—no escaping it now. Baranov walked to the beach, where Chief Grigor's clan was gathering for a wedding. Baranov saw and heard ceremonial drummers begin to beat out a tune to accompany chanting dancers in a circle around nineteen-year-old Anooka, exotically beautiful in her pale, deerskin dress. Once he caught sight of her, he couldn't take his eyes off her.

In preparation, her father had spent the last few months teaching her basic Russian to speak with her new husband. Chief Grigor, across the circle from Baranov, looked on and bellowed cheerily to the great Russian Nanuq, "Months of food for your men have bought us a powerful alliance and gotten Anooka a husband! I wish her mother was still alive to see this! She was from Kodiak, you know, near your village."

Baranov nodded, his eyes still enthralled by the girl.

Moving to the rhythm of the drums, Anooka danced to her father, and at his command she obediently knelt. He draped a bear claw necklace around her neck. It would certainly be a great honor to be married to the great Nanuq. And she would serve both husband and tribe by doing for him whatever he wanted. This was what she had been raised to expect.

But there was one thing she wanted. She rose, then danced to Baranov and placed the necklace around his neck, signifying their bond, and the drums beat louder and faster. She looked Baranov straight in the eyes for the second time. What was he like? Would this strong man give her the one thing she wanted, the one thing that would guarantee her undying loyalty forever? ....

*Gentle kindness. Always.*

He was struck by the warmth, intelligence, and innocence in her eyes. As his wedding gift, he gave her jade earrings; she put them on, still looking him in the eyes as she did.

"Now, my dear, I give you your Russian name: Anna Grigoryevna."

She didn't understand, so he pointed to her as he said, "Anna Grigoryevna. . . . Anna."

Then he pointed to himself as he said, "Aleksandr Baranov. . . . Aleksandr."

Smiling, she pointed to herself saying, "Anna." She pointed to him and said, "Al-ek-san-der."

### **Excerpt 7: Anna's Wedding Night** (p. 128)

Early that evening, they reached St. Paul on Kodiak Island, and Baranov led Anna into his house. She looked all around this strange place.

He carried a moose-hide bag with her things and put it in the bedroom. She followed him there. He took a blanket and pillow for himself, smiled at her gently and left the bedroom, closing the door

behind him.

Anna sat impassively on the edge of the bed. She knew her duty. She had been trained from an early age for this moment—a moment she kept trying to delay.

She thought of how her devotion to her father had made her accept her mission, as awful as it was. Her Aunt De'ina had prepared her for it. Her aunt had said, *"When you grow up, you will have a very important purpose. It is to give our tribe the most advantageous alliance through your marriage."*

*"What does that mean?"* she had asked.

*"It means your father will choose someone from another clan to be your husband who will strengthen our tribe among all tribes. And to attract such a husband, you have to be taught how to act, how to dress, how to talk, and what you must not do."*

*"What I must not do?"*

*"You must not give yourself to a man until you are married to the husband your father chooses for you. You will have a special duty on your marriage night. It is very important for the future of our tribe. If not done right, you could be sent back to your father by your husband and the disgrace to our tribe would be so great that you would have to be put to death."*

She remembered how strange and threatening this had sounded, and then her aunt continued, *"On the first night of your marriage, you must remove all your clothes and present yourself to your husband so he can enjoy your body. You should not expect to enjoy this yourself at first, but eventually you probably will."*

This sounded horrible to her then, and even more so now—especially because of what some other girls had told her about Russian men. Her friends had been hostages to the Russians. *"They raped us. The Russians were rough and strange and made us do awful things. And the first time was so painful."*

Now she thought of Baranov. He was not at all the kind of man she had expected to marry—not the handsome young son of a Native chief. Instead, Baranov was white, much older than she, and from a totally foreign culture. And he smelled like stale sweat. But she had no choice but to obey her duty. Completely separated now from her tribe, family, and friends, she knew that for the first time in her life she was totally on her own, and that there was no refuge for her if things went badly.

She had never been undressed in front of a man before. What would he think of her body? What would he want to do with her? What would it feel like? All of this frightened her to her core. And deep inside, despite all she had been taught about this moment, what was happening now to her and her life somehow seemed wrong. But her courage and sense of duty to her people were now pushing her in the one direction she knew she must go.

The time was now. Slowly her eyes moved to the door. Aleksandr had appeared to be kind to her, a man who would not want to hurt her.

She did as she had been taught and undressed herself. Her hand and bare arm reached forward, grasped the bedroom door latch, and opened the door to the parlor. She saw Baranov across the room on the floor, lying on a bear rug under a wool blanket, as she took a step into the room. He stirred and looked with arousing awe at her naked, innocent beauty in the doorway. A tear rolled down Anna's cheek.

"Please, no hurt me," she asked softly.

### **Excerpt 8: Denali** (p. 132)

*INTRO: Soon after Baranov's Native marriage to Anooka, whom he had renamed "Anna," he launched a "marking" expedition from Kodiak to the foot of Mt. Denali. There the Russian claim to Alaska, defying the British, would be established by burying copper plates declaring Russian colonization. Because Anna had travelled there before with her father, she became Baranov's guide along the difficult route up the Susitna River. After the group was several miles up river, they went on*



*land to follow a Native trail.*

Anna, pointed and said, "Denali that way."

Baranov studied where she was pointing and said, "I don't see a trail."

She looked at him indulgently and replied, "Big trail. I lead blind men."

He shrugged and chuckled. She led the way, and he soon learned from her how to recognize the trail. The sky was overcast, so only the low foothills of Denali could be seen as they approached the base of the great mountain...

*After a harrowing encounter with a grizzly that killed a Russian, the expedition arrived in the fog at the foothills of Denali, where they made camp on the crest of one of the hills...*

A strong gust blew the remaining fog away, and the huge majestic grandeur of snow-covered Denali suddenly appeared with glacial fingers in its lap. 20,320 feet high at its summit, it was the highest peak in North America and a magnificent sight...

The Russian artist quickly set up his easel to paint Denali to document not only Russia's reach, but the most awesome sight he had ever seen. The day was spent burying copper plates in locations carefully plotted on a map. Let mad King George try to deal with that!...

After supper, Baranov laid out blankets for a bed and climbed in. He looked at Anna, sitting across the campfire. Denali was lit behind her by a sunset glow. She poked the fire with a stick, well satisfied with her achievement in guiding the expedition. He stared at her for a moment, then said, "You're amazing."

She looked up and, though not sure, sensed a compliment and smiled a bit shyly.

"And you're mine. Come here, Anna."

Her smile disappeared, and she looked back at the fire.

"I not *belong* to you. We *part* of each *other*."

He pondered that for a moment, nodded as she looked up again, and held up the corner of his blanket. She crawled over and slid in. As he put his arm around her, he asked, "And what part of you am I?"

She looked up at him, amused by the question, hesitated a moment, then said, "You are *toyon* of my heart."

"I am the chief of your heart?"

With a big smile, she answered, "Yes."

He kissed her and said, "And you are *toyon* of my heart, too."

### **Excerpt 9: First Blood** (p. 90)

*INTRO: Baranov and about 30 of his men, including several Aleuts and a few Kenaitze, had been exploring Montague Island south of the Kenai Peninsula, looking for good stands of fir trees suitable for shipbuilding. They had pitched camp near the shoreline, where Baranov would soon encounter the Tlingit warrior Katlian from Sitka who would long be his main antagonist...*

In the early dawn of the following morning, everyone was asleep, including the watchman. Kuponek stirred, nudged Baranov, and whispered, "Something not right."

In the nearby woods, the young Tlingit warrior Katlian, part of a Tlingit war party from Yakutat,

his face decorated with fearsome red-and-blue war paint, moved stealthily and eagerly through the dark woods. With a spear in one hand and a knife in the other, his eyes were wide with the anticipation of finally proving himself in battle by killing a man hand-to-hand.

In just a few moments, he knew, he would be plunging his knife into the heart of an enemy and feeling hot, red blood spurting over his hands. It excited him below in a way he had not expected. He could hardly wait, fearless as he was—and in that wild land, Katlian prized fearlessness above all else.

At the yelping signal of the Yakutat Tlingit leader (Katlian was a reinforcement from Sitka), they suddenly attacked with knives, spears, and muskets. Katlian saw that the enemy were Russians and Aleuts. That was a surprise—a good one. The Aleuts, the first he'd ever seen, were small and slight of build compared to the Tlingit. He would have to kill two of them to count as one of his own. But he saw that without the fierce battle skills of the Tlingit, they were instantly terrified. Good, he thought, that will make it easier to kill a lot of them. Like killing rabbits in a nest.

Baranov jumped up, understood the situation in a flash, and grabbed for his musket. A spear thrown by Katlian pinned his shirt to a tree. As he tore loose, Baranov wheeled around and shot an attacker. He saw four Kenaitze guides run to the Tlingit and get captured. He wondered, *Why did they so quickly surrender to the attackers?* Kuskov fired the falconet [small cannon], killing two Tlingit.

*A small Russian ship from the nearby island of Nuchek happened by, and hearing the noise of war, came and joined the battle. This surprise made the Tlingit war chief from Yakutat order a retreat.*

Katlian reluctantly retreated through the forest to their landing place. The battle leader of the Yakutat Tlingit had ordered the retreat, and Katlian had to obey. But he complained to another warrior, *"I killed two Aleuts and one Russian, and now I have no scalps to show for it, not even one!"*

Katlian was frustrated by the retreat. *These Yakutat Tlingit cousins are not bold enough,* he thought. To another warrior from Yakutat he said, *"Your people do not understand Oondikat."*

*"Oondikat?"* asked a companion.

*"Yes. That is the burning inner spirit that ruthlessly protects the right of the Tlingit to live on this land forever. And Oondikat means that, when attacked, you must not retreat but must turn back and fight even harder to kill the enemy—and kill them all. The Russian enemies are filthy rats that can take over the land by contaminating it with their diseases that kill more Tlingit than their guns!"*

The other warrior grunted in agreement.

Katlian glanced at the wounded warriors moaning in the bottom of the canoe. *"This is not the way to fight,"* he muttered as he paddled. *"We should throw these overboard. They are contaminated with the awful spirit of defeat."*

### **Excerpt 10: Blueberries** (p. 209)

One day in midsummer, Baranov heard that Anna had gone blueberry picking by herself. He knew her favorite blueberry patch was on the mossy, hilly meadow just southwest of the village. It was a sunny day under bright blue skies with a few wisps of high, white clouds—and being after mid-July, with a strong breeze, mosquitoes were hardly a nuisance. *A beautiful day indeed,* he thought.

He hiked out of town to seek Anna. There, in a meadow ahead, he saw Anna, her back to him, kneeling and picking berries. On this island, Kodiak bears were also blueberry pickers, so he thought he would give her a playful scare by sneaking up behind her. But he hadn't counted on the acuteness of her Native senses. When he was twenty feet from her, she said without facing him, "Hello, my toyon."

She continued picking without turning around, as if to say, "I know where you are without having to look, so I win this game." He came up right behind her and got on his knees. He noticed how



lovely she looked as the sun made her flowing black hair glisten over her open blue jacket, which covered a pleated white blouse tucked into a long blue skirt. He realized there was another game he knew he could win.

He lifted the hair from her shoulders and leaned over and kissed the nape of her neck. That got her attention. They stood up, and with the berry basket hanging on one arm, Anna turned to face him. Looking steadily and warmly into his eyes, she put a ripe blueberry in his mouth. As he savored it, his playful mood changed into something more serious. He caressed the side of her face, and then put an arm around her.

"What do you want?" she asked softly.

"I want your berries."

He pulled her close and kissed her tenderly on her lips.

"My basket full of berries." She kissed him. "For you." She fed him a couple more berries as a tease, which he quickly swallowed, focusing on her.

"I want them all, my dear Anna." He kissed her.

"Every round. . ." (he kissed her) "ripe. . ." (he kissed her) "delicious. . ." (he kissed her) "berry."

He knew he wanted her right now, right here, in broad daylight, on this bed of moss and berries. His rising passion infected her, and she dropped the basket, spilling the berries. He felt her arms around his neck, and he lowered her onto the soft, green moss. From above, he unbuttoned her blouse as her hands gently held his face...

...Now, as he looked into her eyes, it was as if the sun had come out from behind a cloud and bathed the whole countryside with light. Now for him, this moment was no longer about the ecstasy of sex. It was about the ecstasy of love... For the first time, Baranov knew that he truly loved Anna...

...He spread open her clothing, opened his own, then slowly caressed her and kissed her, again and again, everywhere that could make her feel his love...

...Afterward, they fell asleep, with Baranov partly on top of Anna.

Soon, a Kodiak bear wandered onto the field, saw them, and picked up their scent. The most formidable, most vicious killer of the North American animal world was with them...

(Note: in the book, this scene is twice as long. Cut for this sample.)

### **Excerpt 11: Tragedies At Sea (p. 177)**

*INTRO: The summer's sea otter hunt had begun. In his sloop, Olga, Baranov was leading a squadron of Aleut hunters in their 2-man bidarka kayaks. They were south of the Kenai Peninsula traversing a stretch of open ocean between Nuchek Island and the mainland when a gale suddenly arose and quickly worked the sea into ten-foot waves that mightily challenged the skills of Baranov and his men. Some bidarkas were flipped and broken, spilling their men into the roiling waters where they quickly drowned. Baranov desperately tried to rescue men with his sloop, but found his sailing skills were not up to the challenge.*

The ocean crushed many more bidarkas on both sides of Olga, throwing Russians and Aleuts into the frigid sea to drown just out of reach. The wind pummeled Baranov, and his face was contorted with the grim frustration of helplessness.

Nearing a rocky coast, he headed for the safe haven of a cove, and most of the remaining bidarkas followed. Sailing into the inlet, he was nearly blown onto rocks. The sails were quickly furled and Kuskov set the anchor. "Take me in," Baranov told Kuponek, who untied his bidarka, launched it, and paddled him ashore. Baranov ran up a seaside bluff, and in the howling wind, he waved his arms

overhead to draw others still at sea toward the cove.

As he stood there, leaning hard into the gale, he yelled, "Alaska, hear this, you savage beast! I will not be defeated! Not now, not ever. Never! Never! Never!"

He glared at the angry sea and sky. The raw power of nature was awesome indeed. Even beautiful, though his enemy.

### **Excerpt 12: Baranov Faces the Church** (p. 141)

*INTRO: Baranov loved a good party, and the part of it he loved most was the vodka – lots of it. A group of Russian Orthodox priests had been sent to Alaska, and they quickly were at odds with Chief Manager Baranov. On the day after the uproar of a drunken party much enjoyed by Baranov...*

Later that day, after he had sobered up, he got a message that Father Nektarios wanted to see him. What for? he wondered and headed to the man's cabin.

The priest was sitting behind the desk in his quarters. At fifty-five, bespectacled and with a gray beard, he wore his long, black Orthodox vestments as a statement of power.

Baranov knocked on the door. "Come in," said the priest.

Baranov did and took a seat across from the cleric, sizing him up as the man stared at him sternly. "You must stop holding hostages and levying Aleut hunters," Nektarios said. "Those practices are un-Christian!"

*Just as I expected,* Baranov thought. *The man has his head in the clouds of liturgy.* "Father, you speak of matters outside your authority. You were sent here by the company. Our purpose is to run a profitable business here. As chief manager, I'll decide what practices are necessary to make a profit."

"The business is secondary. It is merely a means to an end. The real purpose here is to bring Natives to Christ and save souls."

"You think that by sprinkling a little holy water on them and reciting a jumble of Russian words that mean nothing to the Natives, you are saving souls? How can you possibly save them without speaking their language? How ridiculous."

Nektarios glared at him. "You're outrageous! Simply *outrageous!*"

"Well, saving souls may be your job, but it's not mine. Your demands are impractical. Also, with our limited resources, all priests must help hunt and gather food. Everyone must do their share to earn their own keep."

". . . Everything I heard about you in Okhotsk is true, Baranov. You have a wife and family in Russia, yet you live with a Native woman here. You abuse the Natives. You are the greatest sinner in Russian America! Whether you can be saved remains to be seen."

"Fortunately, as chief manager, I have the privilege of choosing who gets to save me," Baranov snapped as he got up, turned, and started toward the door.

"Only Christ can save you, if you have repented your sins and deserve saving. But I see no sign of repentance in you, Baranov."

Baranov stopped, thought for a moment, and turned around. "I have a question for you, Father. The Bible is the word of God, right?"

"Of course."

"Then why does the Bible contradict itself?"

"It doesn't."

"The Book of Acts, Chapter 9 Verse 7, contradicts Acts Chapter 22 Verse 9. The first place says the men with Saul on the road to Damascus heard the voice of Jesus, and the second says they didn't. How do you explain that?"

"You have the arrogance to read the Bible yourself?" admonished the cleric. "You have no business reading the Bible. Only clergy can properly read and interpret the Bible. The parts of the Bible

read in church tell you all you need to know."

"So what's the answer to my question?"

"If you keep questioning the Bible, you'll end up going straight to hell. Give me your Bible, so you won't be tempted to play priest."

"So you'll be free to play God?" asked Baranov softly.

"How *dare* you!" sputtered the graybeard.

They glared at each other. Baranov turned again to leave, saying, "Good day, Father." And he was out the door.

### **Excerpt 13: Retake Sitka!** (p. 247)

*INTRO: the British desire to take Alaska away from the Russians and add it to Canada led them to arm the Tlingit people of southeastern Alaska, supporting their aim to push the Russians out. These British moves convinced Baranov to establish a presence in southeastern. Paradoxically the Tlingit had sold Baranov land on Sitka Island where he had built a fort in 1800. Two years later, after Baranov had gone back to tend to business in Kodiak, the Tlingit decided to evict the Russians, attacked the Sitka fort and massacred nearly all the resident Russians and their Aleut otter hunters. It took two more years for Baranov to gather the naval resources needed for a major battle to retake Sitka.*

In the ripening spring of 1804, the time had come to begin solving the Sitka problem. Baranov stood on the end of the wharf, energetically directing hundreds of Aleuts below who were organizing a fleet of bidarkas. His assistant Ivan Banner stood nearby. Also standing by him were Anna and their small children Antipatr and little Irina. Baby Ekaterina was strapped to her mother's back.

Banner asked, "Why not wait for one of the navy frigates to get here before launching this attack?"

"I don't know when they're going to get here," said Baranov. "But I do know that I must take Sitka this season, before the British make a big move along the south coast. I'll never have another chance."

"I see your point."

"Banner, if any of the frigates sent to help us arrive, send them to Sitka."

"Right."

Baranov leaned down to kiss his youngsters Antipatr and Irina. Then he kissed baby Ekaterina and wife Anna. She had parting words that would make a mark on him: "*Toyon* of my heart, my love is with you, and God's love, too. But remember, God loves the Tlingit also."

He was surprised. She had voiced an idea that had never occurred to him. But he was in too much of a hurry to think about it or discuss it. He climbed onto the well worn sloop Olga, tied alongside, and set sail. Anna and his little Alaskan children waved goodbye. The heavily armed fleet embarked on the first leg of its journey to launch the Battle of Sitka, where Anna's words would reemerge.

### **Excerpt 14: The Battle of Sitka** (p. 255)

The big Russian navy frigate Neva was already in Sitka Sound in late September 1804 when Baranov and his men arrived. He climbed aboard and was welcomed by its skipper, Captain Yuri Lisianski. "We're ready to bombard the Tlingit fort with our fourteen cannon, at your command" said the captain. Baranov followed him up to the poop deck, where, to Baranov's surprise, he found Father Nektarios. "What are you doing here?" asked Baranov.

"Ministering to our soldiers. I'll hold a baptism service tonight. All heathens will have one last

chance to save their souls before battle."

Baranov nodded, headed for his cabin, and said to Kuponek on the way, "I'm going to write orders for each battalion. Then you can deliver them."

"I think tonight I will become a Christian," said Kuponek.

It was a comment that didn't immediately register with the preoccupied Baranov—until he went inside. Then it hit him.

"Kuponek a Christian!" he murmured. "Hmm."

At dusk, many Native hunters gathered on deck, facing aft, where Nektarios had ascended to the poop deck. Kuponek was off to one side, about to join the congregation, when Baranov called him. "My orders for battalion leaders," he said. "Deliver them right away."

Kuponek took the sheaf, nodded, climbed over the side, and paddled a kayak to the onshore camps.

Meanwhile, Nektarios proceeded with his ceremony: "Only baptized Christians are forgiven their sins and may enter heaven and have eternal life. Tonight, all who wish to may become baptized Christians."

Kuponek delivered the messages while Nektarios performed baptisms, with Baranov watching. The priest finished with a prayer, and Baranov bowed his head: "O God, be with our men carrying your righteous sword to the savages. Protect our soldiers. Lead them to victory in the glory of your name. Amen."

"Yes," Baranov muttered to himself sarcastically. "Let us deliver Christianity through the barrel of a gun. Amen."

*The Battle of Sitka lasted five days. On the first day, Baranov led Russian and Aleut troops in an assault on Chief Katlian's Tlingit fort. The attack was a failure and Baranov was wounded. But days of bombardment from the frigate Neva's big guns, plus the Tlingit's loss of their gunpowder, forced the Tlingit to abandon their fort and retreat toward an island many miles away. During the battle, Baranov was taken back to Neva to recuperate from his battle wound.*

Lisianski returned to Neva and found Baranov in his cabin just as the Tlingit fort erupted in flames [after being torched by the Russians]. They sat down together. "The retreating Tlingit are weak now," said Lisianski. "We could pursue, attack, and kill their warriors, who now have no gunpowder. It would make their defeat complete. And it's what they deserve for the 1802 massacre."

"No, Yuri," said Baranov. "There's no profit in vengeance. No future in it either. And don't underestimate their bows and arrows in the woods. They might outnumber us, too. We've achieved our objective—they're gone from here, so we can rebuild—and that's what matters. Our power is now absolute, but we must use it with restraint in order to keep it."

Lisianski was surprised. But after a moment's consideration, he said, "Indeed, sir. There has been enough bloodshed."

"The truth is," said Baranov, "in this tough place, I've learned to admire them. But I have a job to do, and that comes first. The trick is to apply only enough power to get the job done. Apply too much, and we'll never have peace with them—and we can't survive here, long-term, without peace with the Tlingit."

Katlian was, at that moment, looking through the branches of a spruce toward Neva in the distance as the line of Tlingit refugees passed behind him. He muttered bitterly to himself, "*I will kill him. I will kill him and all his kind. It must be done!*"

**Excerpt 15: Nanuq Says Goodbye (p. 380)**

*Please get the actual book in your hand and turn to page 380. There you will find the end of this remarkable historical adventure and love story. In this case, knowing where the story is going will not detract from it when you read the entire book. Instead, it will help show you why this story is so worth reading.*

*The book excerpts seen here barely touch the surface of “Master of Alaska,” though they do convey a sense of what it is about, the nature and depth of the key characters, and how the story is told. It is an exciting adventure and love story based on documented history, with an underlying humanitarian theme that offers food for inspiration without being soupy.*

Paperback: 432 pages  
Publisher: True North Publishing  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 1628653299  
ISBN-13: 978-1628653298  
Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.9 x 8.5 inches

*“Master of Alaska,” from True North Publishing, is available in Alaska from Todd Communications Inc. and the bookstores they serve throughout the state. In all other states, it is available from Ingram distribution and the bookstores it serves.*

**MASTER of ALASKA** -the exciting story of Aleksandr Baranov, a charismatic Russian leader, who left his family in 1790 to sail to Alaska as chief manager. Shipwrecked, he survived a harsh wilderness; motivated Aleuts to help him; married a young Native; and endured massacres from the Tlingit, meddling priests, the Battle of Sitka and a running duel with powerful Tlingit Chief Katlian. He built an empire and sought peace with the Tlingit, helped by his wife and teenage daughter. Alaska is part of the U.S. today, thanks largely to Baranov.

"What a great read! ... full of action and adventure. Baranov is a smart, ambitious, and incredibly brave leader..."

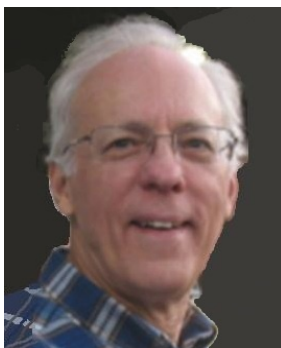
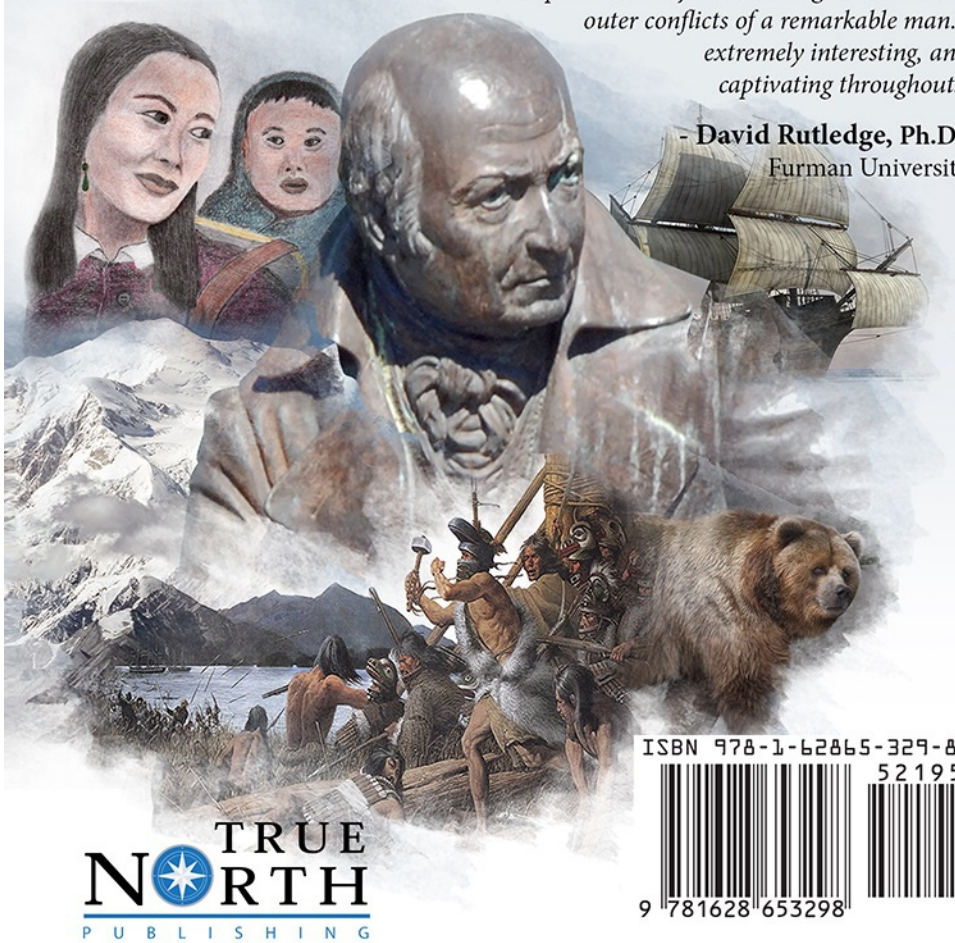
- Sarah Johnstone,  
screenwriter, "Mary McGreevy"

"A rip-roaring tale... cleanly written."

- Barry Sheinkopf,  
author, *Those Barely Silent Dead*

"A personal story dramatizing the inner and outer conflicts of a remarkable man... extremely interesting, and captivating throughout."

- David Rutledge, Ph.D.,  
Furman University



**Roger Seiler** grew up in King Salmon, Alaska as the son of a bush pilot. He is a graduate of the UCLA Film School and an award-winning filmmaker. His first book in the historical novel genre was *Naked Thinkers*, which earned Amazon's top reader rating.