

# Russians chose high bluffs for their first fort

The Russians chose their first trading in the Bristol Bay (Alexandrovski Redoubt), because of its location to its high bluffs which were a noticeable feature in the Nushagak Bay area.

The first chapel was built in 1832. The Eskimo name for the Nushagak site, and river is *Tahlekuk* or *Tathlekok*, which means like an elbow. The Nushagak River has a shape like an elbow.

For many years, (1800-1828) when the Eskimo people on the shores of the Bering Sea in the Nushagak area began to welcome Orthodoxy there was very little missionary activity.

After 1821, several priests were sent from Siberia to Alaska. The missionary activities in Russian America (Alaska) were divided among four priests whose headquarters were at Sitka, Kodiak Islnd, Unalaska and Atka.

In the spring of 1829 Father Veniaminov arrived at Alexandrovski Redoubt to visit the few Christians, Russians and mixed blood people living there.

He met 14 Eskimos living there who were traders and could travel, so he attempted to convert them so they could spread the Orthodox Christianity. He knew he would not be able to travel as much as they.

He succeeded in baptizing 13 people. They helped spread Orthodox Christianity. The priests presented each person who was baptized a copper cross. During this time many people heard they were baptizing people, so they went to be baptized. Since this time people began being baptized and learning the meaning of their Orthodox religion.

After 1840, one of the main efforts of Bishop Innocent in Alaska was to create three new mission districts in the heart of Alaska. The Nushagak Mission, the Kenai Mission and Kwikpak Mission.

The Orthodox religion is still around the Bristol Bay area today.