

# THE 1855 ATTACK ON ANDREEVSKAIA ODINOCHKA: A REVIEW OF RUSSIAN, AMERICAN, AND YUP'IK ESKIMO ACCOUNTS

Kenneth L. Pratt

Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, 3601 C Street, Suite 1100, Anchorage, AK 99503-5947; kenneth.pratt@bia.gov

## ABSTRACT

The 1855 attack on Andreevskaia odinochka is arguably the most mysterious incident of Native hostilities against the Russians in western Alaska. Published accounts of the attack itself are generally consistent, but descriptions of its aftermath are dramatically divergent. Russian accounts are inconsistent as to whether or not reprisals were taken against the perpetrators of the attack; however, American accounts describe a swift and ruthless Russian response that reputedly served as a turning point in ending Native atrocities against Euro-Americans in the region. After discussing the Russian and American sources, Native oral history accounts are considered. The latter provide the first glimpse of indigenous perspectives of this event and firmly anchor it in the local landscape. Although the oral accounts introduce further inconsistencies, they also reveal previously unknown details about the participants and their post-conflict actions.

**KEYWORDS:** Russian America, lower Yukon River, ethnohistory

## INTRODUCTION

Sustained Russian presence in the lower Yukon River region (Fig. 1) began with the 1835 establishment of Ikogmiut odinochka (Arndt 1996:186; cf. Zagoskin 1967:201), a subordinate post of Mikhailovskii Redoubt (Black 1984a:32).<sup>1</sup> Named after the Yup'ik Eskimo village in which it was situated (i.e., *Iqugmiut*), the odinochka was on the right bank of the Yukon, roughly 125 km upriver from its mouth. Intended to control the Native fur trade along the Yukon-Kuskokwim Portage, Ikogmiut odinochka's functional life was short. It was destroyed by Natives of the Kuskokwim River in the spring of 1839 (Zagoskin 1967:200–201, 275; cf. VanStone 1979:79), apparently in response to the 1838–1839 smallpox epi-

demic (for which the Russians were blamed [Arndt 1985, 1996:45–46; Oswalt 1980:12; cf. Fortuine 1989:234–235; Zagoskin 1967:252]). Rebuilt in 1840, concerns that it was competing for furs with Kolmakovskii Redoubt on the Kuskokwim (cf. VanStone 1979:80; Zagoskin 1967:275) caused the Russian-American Company [or RAC] to abolish Ikogmiut odinochka in 1845 and replace it with Andreevskaia odinochka—located farther downstream on the Yukon (Arndt 1996:62–64; cf. Andrews 1989:124–129).

Andreevskaia stood on the Yukon's right bank about 63 km above the river mouth (Adams 1982:97) and 150 km from Mikhailovskii Redoubt.<sup>2</sup> This location was proximal

1. Bockstoe (2009:372) defines an odinochka as a “small outpost manned by one trader”; but such outposts typically employed additional workers, often local Natives (e.g., Black 1984a:31–33). The trader served as head of the odinochka and held the title of *baidarshchik*.
2. A report that Andreevskaia odinochka was situated “at the mouth of the Nygyklich (now Andreefsky) River” (VanStone 1979:80) is incorrect; it was actually about 8 km west-northwest of the *Negeqliq* (“Nygyklich”) mouth. Due to its relative proximity to Mikhailovskii Redoubt, the odinochka had no fortifications (RAC 1856a; cf. Arndt 1996:103).

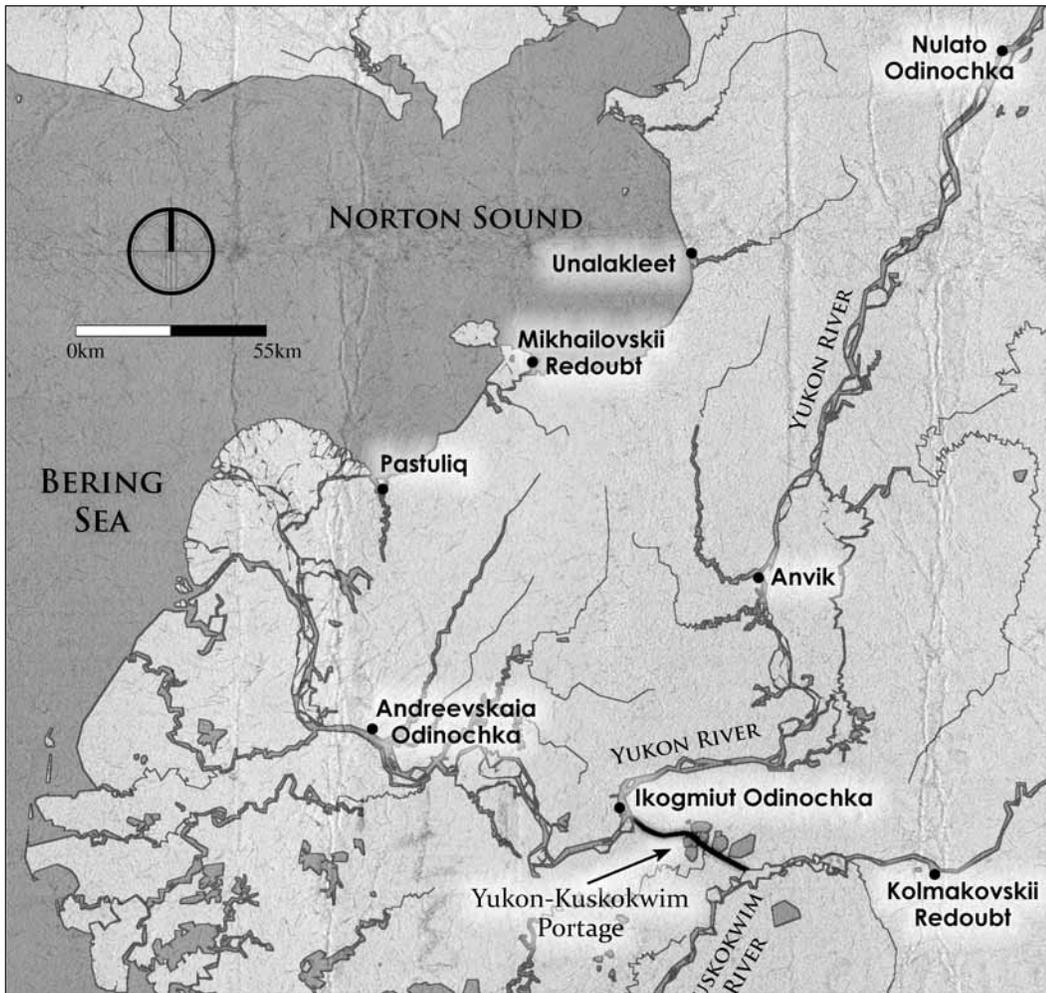


Figure 1: Study region

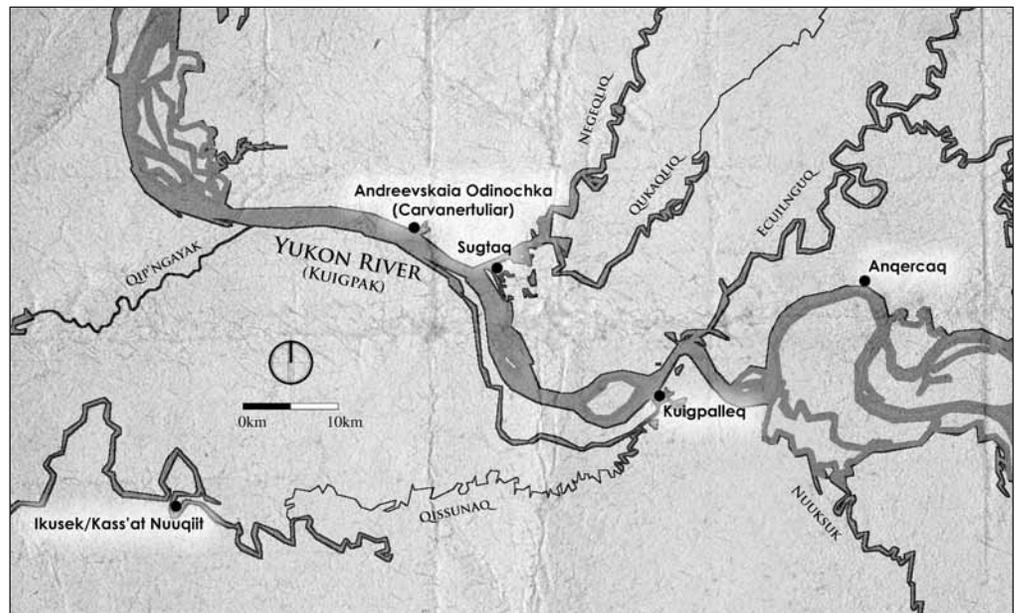


Figure 2: Detail map showing key sites mentioned in text

to the *Qissunaq* and *Qip'ngayak* rivers (Fig. 2; Table 1), key routes of Native travel and trade between the lower Yukon and the Bering Sea coast. These factors contributed to the relative success of *Andreevskaiia odinochka*, which operated from 1845 to at least 1866 (cf. Black 2004:282; Raymond 1871:39; VanStone 1979:81). Its obscurity in the Russian America literature is surprising, especially given an 1855 attack that left two RAC workers dead and subsequently resulted in a number of Native deaths as well. This is the last known incident of Native hostilities against the Russians in what is now western Alaska; to date, it is also the least well documented.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1: Place name correlates**

Native Place Name	Non-Native Place Name Correlate(s)
<i>Taciq</i>	Mikhailovskii Redoubt, St. Michael
<i>Pastuliq</i>	Pastol'skii, Pastolik
<i>Kuigpak</i>	Kvikhpak River, Yukon River
<i>Qip'ngayak</i>	Black River
<i>Carvanertuliar</i>	Andreevskaiia Odinochka, Old Andrefsky
<i>Atiinaaska*</i>	Andreevskaiia Odinochka
<i>Negeqliim Painga</i>	Pitkas Point
<i>Negeqliq</i>	Konnekova River, Andrefsky River
<i>Sugtaq</i> [Also <i>Yugtaq</i> ]	
<i>Qukaqliq</i>	East Fork Andrefsky River
<i>Kuigpalleq</i>	Starry Kwikhpak
<i>Qissunaq</i> [ <i>Kuigpalleq</i> ]	Kashunuk River
<i>Ikusek</i>	
<i>Kass'at Nuuqiit</i>	
<i>Manignalek</i>	Maninglik River
<i>Ecuilnguaq</i>	Chuilmak River, Atchuelinguk River
<i>Nuuksuk</i>	Reindeer River
<i>Anqercaq</i>	Robbers' Village, Razboinicheskoe Zhilo, Ankachagmiut, Razbinsky
<i>Iqugmiut</i>	Ikogmiut Odinochka, Russian Mission

\* Reported by Pilot Station elder Noel Polty (1985a), this name is evidently a Yup'ik rendering of the Russian word *odinochka*.

The limited data available about the attack come from written Russian and American accounts and oral history accounts collected from Yup'ik Eskimo elders of the lower Yukon River. For the sake of clarity, these accounts are discussed in sequence by their cultural groups of origin (i.e., Russian, then American, then Yup'ik Eskimo).

## RUSSIAN ACCOUNTS

The earliest and best source of data on this incident consists of two official letters in the Records of the Russian-American Company (1856a, 1856b).<sup>4</sup> The first letter (titled, "On an attack of the savages upon *Andreevskaiia odinochka*") was written to the RAC Main Office in May 1856 by Colonial Chief Manager Stepan Voevodskii. Following is an extended excerpt from the letter.

The manager of Mikhailovskii redoubt, Andreianov, reports that in November of last year several savages made an attack upon *Andreevskaiia odinochka* [and] killed two company employees, baidarshchik of the *odinochka* Aleksandr Shcherbakov and worker Ida Iakobson, a Finlander, who, as far as could be concluded from the incoherent reports, were in the bathhouse at the time of the attack; the worker Lavrentii Kerianin, a Finlander, who was at the *odinochka*, having saved himself by fleeing, was already exhausted from fatigue, cold, and hunger, but was met by a native in a baidarka heading along the Kvikhpak [Yukon] River for Mikhailovskii redoubt. [The native] took him aboard, warmed him, clothed him, and delivered him to the redoubt.

The stocks at the *odinochka*... were plundered for the most part by those making the attack; what was left by them was carried off by other savages.

Andreianov, having found out from a person arrested for suspicion of participation in this crime that it was committed by six savages of the so-called Robbers' village, learned the place sheltering them and sent against them several workers under the leadership of Ivan Kozhevnikov, appointed baidarshchik at the ravaged *Andreevskaiia odinochka*.

The murderers were found hiding on the tundra in a barabara and were surrounded, but to [the workers'] demand that they surrender and return the stolen company property, they answered with threats

3. This point is underscored by the absence of any mention of the *Andreevskaiia* attack in a recent, authoritative, and highly relevant publication by Bockstoce (2009).

4. These letters were translated from Russian to English by Katherine Arndt.

and one of them fired a gun, but missed, for which reason our employees were provoked to act decisively, the result of which was that five of the murderers were killed and the sixth saved himself by fleeing.

Of our people no one was wounded.

This order of Andreianov had a good influence on the other savages who, however, even without that, were indignant with the criminals... Kozhevnikov found part of the stolen property in the barabara and part buried there in the earth, and in addition he collected much in various settlements from the savages (RAC 1856a).

Later in May 1856, Chief Manager Voevodskii also wrote a letter regarding this incident to Ignatii Andreianov, the Manager of Mikhailovskii Redoubt (RAC 1856b). The letter designated rewards for the RAC employees who went after the Andreevskaiia attackers, as well as for Kerianin's rescuer ("Aleksi," a Native from *Pastuliq*). It also noted that musketoons<sup>5</sup> were being sent to Andreevskaiia odinochka, and urged that it be put "in as safe a defensive position as possible." For the purposes of this discussion, however, the letter's most important component was the following directive to Andreianov:

Gather as much information as possible whether there were any injustices on the part of the late Shcherbakov which could have embittered the savages, and impress upon all the baidarshchiks that their treatment of and also their trade with the savages should be strictly just and gentle, needless to say with the most unremitting caution (RAC 1856b).

This directive was consistent with RAC regulations regarding the treatment of Native peoples (cf. Arndt 1996:108–110). It also clearly expressed the company's interest in determining if the attack on Andreevskaiia could have resulted from misbehavior toward the Natives by its employees: apparently evidence of that sort was not found. Voevodskii's directive is particularly noteworthy in contrast to American accounts of the Andreevskaiia attack. Before those are discussed, however, a comment is in order about the only Russian account of the event that is published in English: the 1978 edition of Petr Tikhmenev's history of the RAC.

Tikhmenev's account clearly was based on the same RAC correspondence just reviewed, but one crucial detail was modified. That is, he reported that the RAC employ-

ees who pursued the attackers found their hiding place, surrounded it, and "*forced them to surrender and return their booty*" (Tikhmenev 1978:351 [emphasis added]). Tikhmenev's decision not to mention that RAC employees ultimately killed most of the Native attackers is puzzling; it suggests a suppression of facts thought to be potentially damaging to the company's reputation. This is unfortunate given existing English-language records about the incident.

## AMERICAN ACCOUNTS

The first American account of the attack was produced by William H. Dall, who visited the lower Yukon region in 1867. Dall's writings are often colored by an obvious lack of respect for his Russian counterparts and predecessors (e.g., Dall 1870:11–13, 432, 1877:26), an attitude that was not uncommon among some American newcomers to Alaska following the 1867 purchase (cf. Black 1988:80). But his comments on the Andreevskaiia incident actually contain a hint of admiration for the reported Russian response.

Andreaffsky [Fig. 3]... was the scene of a mournful tragedy. There was formerly [a Native] village near the fort. Several of the Natives were workmen at the fort. No trouble had ever occurred. Several of the garrison had gone up to Nulato with the annual provision-boat, and only the bidarshik and one Russian, besides the native workmen, were left in the fort. One Friday in August, the natives attacked the Russians as they came naked out of the bath, and killed them with clubs and knives. A Creole boy escaped to the hills, and finally crossed the portage to the vicinity of St. Michael's. When he reached that point the [manager] was away, and his secretary, Ivan [Kozhevnikov], was acting in his stead.

The Russians had long murmured at the conduct of the Company, in leaving unavenged the Nulato massacre. The opportunity of settling accounts with the natives was too tempting to resist. [Kozhevnikov] and Gregory Ivanhoff, with two Creoles, immediately started for the fort. On reaching it they found everything in confusion. The dead bodies lay at the door of the bath-house. The natives, not knowing how to use flour, had merely carried off the sacks. They had also ripped open the beds, and carried away the ticking, while the mass of flour and feathers was left on the floor. After satisfying themselves that there was no liv-

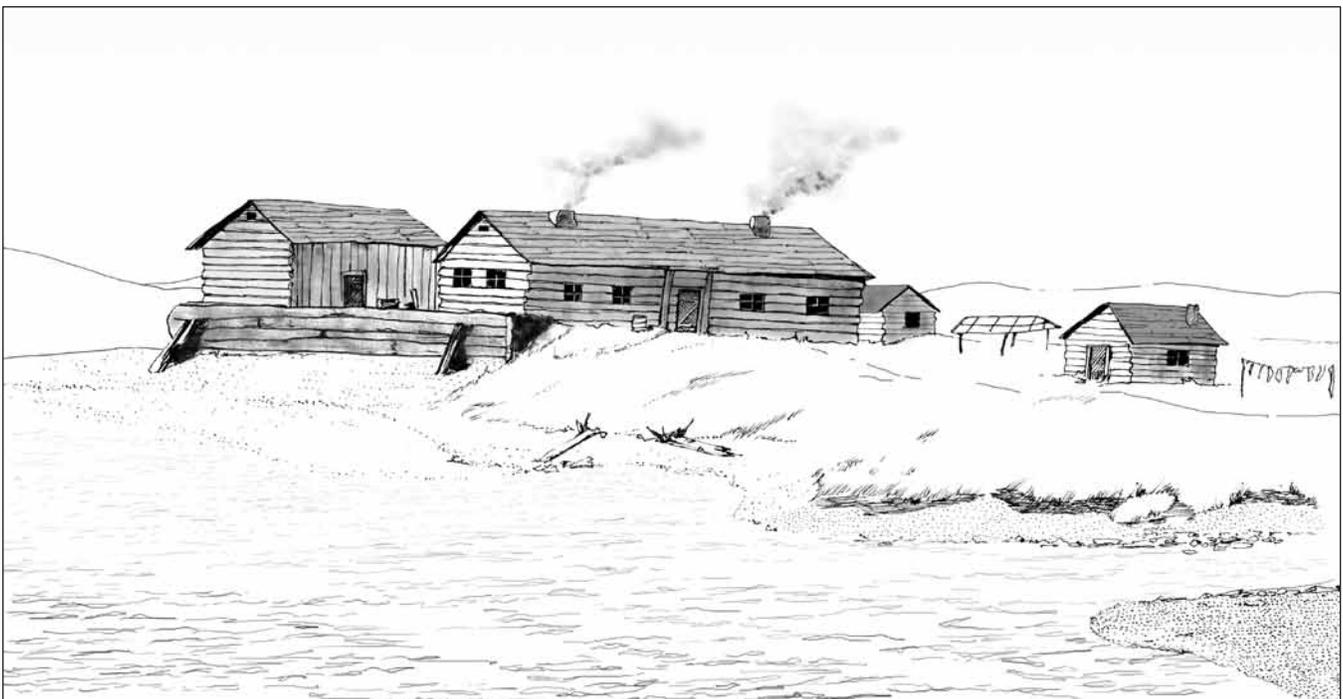
5. Short, large-bore muskets (Bockstoce 2009:372).

ing thing in the fort, the Russians started for the village, which was about a mile off. As they approached, [Kozhevnikov] saw a man standing in the door of one of the houses and pointing a gun at the approaching party. It afterward turned out that the gun had no lock; but not knowing this, the Russians fired, and killed the man. The natives, who were few in number, came rushing out, and were shot down without mercy. The Creoles, who, when aroused, have all the ferocity of the aboriginal savage, attacked the shaman and beat out his brains with clubs. None were spared. The blood [that had been] shed at the fort was not yet dry, and the infuriated Russians resolved that the authors of that cowardly outrage should be exterminated without mercy. When they stayed their hands the work was done. Fathers, mothers, and children had passed their “evil quarter of an hour.” The result was wonderful. From that day to this not a native on the Lower Yukon has lifted his hand against the whites. The bloody lesson was not thrown away. The strong hand, which alone commands the respect of savages, was worth a thousand missionaries. To this day the natives traveling on the river near the fort pass by on the other side. Large quantities of tobacco and other property, stolen

from the fort, were found in the village. Around the necks of most of the dead, crosses were found hanging, indicating that the thieves and murderers were baptized converts of the Yukon Mission (Dall 1870:231–232; cf. Dall 1867a; Nelson 1882:664; US Census Office 1893:123).<sup>6</sup>

Frederick Schwatka penned a similar account in 1883; it may even have been based on the earlier account by Dall, but some details of the attack’s aftermath differ. His report states the boy who escaped the attack:

...reached St. Michael, which was temporarily in charge of the Russian [Kozhevnikov]... He, with one or two others, set out immediately in a small schooner... for the scene of the massacre provided with two howitzers loaded with scraps of iron, nails, etc. He demanded that the murderers be handed over or he would fire on the village. The natives showed no inclination to obey, thinking the guns would not go off, but [they] were soon brought to a realizing sense of their error by the discharge of the guns, which killed a number. The Russians, not satisfied with this, are said to have attacked the remainder with clubs, and to have killed many women and children (Schwatka 1900:356–357).



*Figure 3: Andreevskaiia odinochka as sketched in July 1867 (adapted by Mark Luttrell from Dall 1867b and 1870:230). The odinochka was “deserted... with the windows all nailed up” (Dall 1870:231) when the original sketch was made; hence, the chimney smoke and fish drying on racks reflect artistic license.*

6. Dall (1870:231) provided a description of the odinochka in 1867, shortly before the Alaska Commercial Company assumed its operation (cf. VanStone 1979:81–82, 112–119). Later descriptions of the post were provided by Nelson (1878) in 1878 and Jacobsen (1977:93) in 1882.

To be blunt, characterizations of the Russian response by Dall and Schwatka are not believable. Dall's evident bias against the Russians and "notorious looseness with statements of a historical nature" (Arndt 1996:177; cf. Bancroft 1970:574n9; de Laguna 2000:34) make his account suspect, especially since it portrays the Russians in a negative light. But also:

...in the post-Baranov days the Russians would never have perpetrated retaliatory killings. Not only was it illegal under [Russian-American] company regulations, but there was the danger that such a practice would escalate to open warfare and the Russians were too thinly spread and too dependent on the natives' good will to risk such a thing. Of course, there was always a chance that a native would be killed if he were an immediate threat to the Russians' life and property, but that would occur in the course of self-defense, something far different than retaliatory killing (Arndt 2010; cf. VanStone 1979:79; Zagoskin 1967:236–237).

More compelling yet is the fact that RAC correspondence identified the home of Andreevskaiia's attackers as the "so-called Robbers' village" (RAC 1856a; cf. Arndt 1996:117n57). The settlement in question was *Anqercaq* (e.g., Zagoskin 1967:278), a major Eskimo village about 47 km east of Andreevskaiia odinochka. Zagoskin (1967:306) reported its population as 122 in 1844, and Edward Nelson (1899:247) described it as "the largest existing village of the Yukon Eskimo" in the late 1870s (Fig. 4). The notion that a contingent of *four or less* RAC employees massacred everyone in a settlement of this size is absurd (e.g., Zagoskin 1967:132). An active village throughout the Russian period, *Anqercaq* is also consistently documented in post-1867 accounts of the region (e.g., Dall 1870:229; Jacobsen 1977:95, 230, 242; Nelson 1899:Plates LXXXII and XCI, 365–379; Raymond 1871:30). There is no evidence in historical accounts—or Native oral history—of a massacre at this place. In all probability, the actual place being referenced in American accounts as the site of this reported massacre was *Sugtaq*—a village located on a small drainage just inside the *Negeqliq* mouth, about 8.5 km east-southeast

of Andreevskaiia odinochka. But there is no evidence such an event ever occurred there either.<sup>7</sup>

## YUP'IK ESKIMO ORAL HISTORY ACCOUNTS

The Andreevskaiia attack as related in official RAC records is largely supported by oral history interviews conducted with Yup'ik Eskimo elders 130 years after the fact. They collectively confirmed that: (a) the attack took place in late fall or early winter; (b) one worker escaped to *Taciq*/St. Michael; (c) the Russian group that tracked the criminals was led by Ivan Kozhevnikov; and (d) goods stolen from the odinochka were buried at a remote site, at which the criminals were eventually found and all but one was killed (Evan and Greene 1984; Polty 1985a, 1985b). But these accounts also introduce new discrepancies. The most glaring of these attributes the killings at Andreevskaiia to a party of nine *Russians*—one of whom was married to a Native woman from *Sugtaq* (Polty 1985a, 1985b). The claim that "bad Russians" perpetrated the attack is almost certainly wrong, but it is not inconceivable that at least one such person may have been part of the attacking force.<sup>8</sup> But the most valuable contributions of these oral history accounts are the details they contain about the attackers' actions after leaving the odinochka. These are summarized next.



Figure 4: *Anqercaq* (the so-called "Robbers' Village") in January 1879 (originally published as Plate LXXXII in Nelson 1899 [Reprint courtesy Smithsonian Institution]).

7. However, according to local oral tradition (i.e., U.S. BIA Bethel Notes 1975), the men of *Sugtaq* were once unknowingly trapped inside the village men's house by a party of Yup'ik [*Magemiuut*] warriors from the Askinuk Mountains area. About the time the attackers were poised to burn it to the ground an old man inside the men's house fell and landed head-first in a wooden honey bucket, causing all the *Sugtaq* men to roar with laughter. The attackers heard the laughter and interpreted it as a sign that they had not reached the village undetected, meaning that they themselves were in danger, so they immediately fled and *Sugtaq* was spared. This story likely explains the report by Zagoskin (1967:278) of a large village at this location that was "destroyed by the Magmyut" ca. 1814 (Pratt n.d.). It is plausible that Dall and/or Schwatka heard this story through interpreters, believed that a massacre had taken place at the village, and then compounded the error by ascribing responsibility for the presumed attack to the Russians.

After looting Andreevskaiia odinochka the attackers traveled upstream on the Yukon to *Qissunaq* River, which they then followed to a place at or near the village of *Ikusek* (Evan and Greene 1984; Polty 1985b; see Fig. 2). This is where some of the stolen goods were buried and also where Kozhevnikov's party found the attackers—thanks to the assistance of other Natives. To explain, after departing Mikhailovskii Redoubt the Kozhevnikov party stopped at Native villages along the Yukon seeking information about the attackers. Upon reaching the settlement of *Kuigpalleq* (located at the confluence of the *Qissunaq* and Yukon rivers) the party learned the criminals had gone down the *Qissunaq* to hide at a site referred to as “*Kass'at Nuuqiiit*” (Polty 1985b), which was said to describe a place beyond the reach of white men (Evan and Greene 1984).

The woman from *Sugtaq* was also at *Kass'at Nuuqiiit* when the fight with Kozhevnikov's party began (Polty 1985b).<sup>9</sup> Pregnant and scared, she ran away, following the

*Qissunaq* downstream until reaching *Manignalek* River (Polty 1985b).

Since the woman was pregnant, while she was escaping she started her labor. She was walking along the *Manignalek* River when she came to a bear's den... She delivered her baby there in the bear's den (Polty 1985b).

It was this woman's husband who managed to escape the fighting at *Kass'at Nuuqiiit*. He tracked his wife and found her in the bear's den; after a period of recuperation, he took her back to her family at *Sugtaq*.<sup>10</sup>

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The preceding comments highlighted inconsistencies in Russian, American and Native oral history accounts about the attack on Andreevskaiia odinochka (see Table 2), but they also revealed three major points on which those

*Table 2: Summary of accounts about the attack on Andreevskaiia Odinochka*

Russian Accounts	American Accounts	Yup'ik Eskimo Accounts
<b>Date of Attack:</b> November 1855 (RAC 1856a)	<b>Date of Attack:</b> August 1855 (Dall 1870:231)	<b>Date of Attack:</b> 1848, “in the fall just before freeze-up” (Polty 1985b)
<b>Attackers:</b> “Six savages from the so-called Robbers' village” (RAC 1856a)	<b>Attackers:</b> (1) Natives from a village “about a mile” from “the fort” (Dall 1870:231–232); (2) a “band of Ingalik [Athabascans]” (US Census Office 1893:123)	<b>Attackers:</b> (1) Yup'ik Eskimos (Evan and Greene 1984); (2) a group of nine “bad Russians” (Polty 1985a, 1985b)
<b>Killed in Attack:</b> Aleksandr Shcherbakov and Ida Iakobson (RAC 1856a)	<b>Killed in Attack:</b> (1) Two Russians (Dall 1870:231); (2) the “few inmates” of the “station” (Schwatka 1900:357)	<b>Killed in Attack:</b> An unknown number of Russian men (Evan and Greene 1984; Polty 1985a, 1985b)
<b>Escaped from Attackers:</b> Lavrentii Kerianin (aided by <i>Pastuliq</i> man named “Aleksi” [RAC 1856a])	<b>Escaped from Attackers:</b> (1) “A Creole boy” (Dall 1870:231); (2) “a boy” (Schwatka 1900:357)	<b>Escaped from Attackers:</b> One Russian man, “the first Kozevnikoff” (Evan and Greene 1984)
<b>RAC Pursuit Party:</b> Ivan Kozhevnikov; Niuman; Ignat'ev; Mikiforov; and two other unnamed men (RAC 1856b)	<b>RAC Pursuit Party:</b> (1) “[Iván] Kogénikoff and Gregory Ivánhoff, with two Creoles (Dall 1870:231); (2) “the Russian kogenikoff... with one or two others” (Schwatka 1900:357)	<b>RAC Pursuit Party:</b> (1) The “man who escaped to <i>Taciq</i> [i.e., ‘the first Kozevnikoff’]” (Evan and Greene 1984); (2) an unknown number of “other Russians” (Polty 1985a, 1985b)
<b>Fate of Attackers:</b> (1) five killed by RAC pursuers; one escaped (RAC 1856a); (2) all surrendered to RAC pursuers (Tikhmenev 1978:351)	<b>Fate of Attackers:</b> killed, along with every other resident of their village, by Russians (Dall 1870:231–232; Schwatka 1900:357)	<b>Fate of Attackers:</b> (1) all killed by Russian pursuers (Evan and Greene 1984); (2) eight killed by other Russians; one escaped—he was married to a Yup'ik woman from <i>Sugtaq</i> (Polty 1985b)

8. Russian priest Iakov Netsvetov (1984:421) reported precisely this type of situation in the region in April of 1861.

9. The attackers presumably picked up the woman en route to their hiding place. By extension, this suggests *Sugtaq* was one of the settlements at which RAC personnel later recovered goods that had been plundered from Andreevskaiia odinochka (RAC 1856a).

10. What little evidence there is suggests the RAC did not attempt to capture this man and bring him to justice at a later date; instead, the company was apparently satisfied that Andreevskaiia's attackers had been duly punished (RAC 1856b).

accounts agree: i.e., one worker at the post survived the attack; Ivan Kozhevnikov had a central role in the pursuit and punishment of the attackers; and multiple Natives were killed by RAC personnel as a direct result of the attack. Another point of agreement not yet mentioned concerns how the attackers dealt with the *odinochka*'s supply of flour. The RAC (1856a) reported the attackers "spilled flour" at the *odinochka* but suggested much of it was salvageable; in other words, the flour was not taken. Dall's (1870:231) account claimed "the Natives, not knowing how to use flour, had merely carried off the sacks." Yup'ik elders effectively concurred with the RAC and Dall accounts by stating that the attackers "took the flour sacks after they spilled the flour out" (Evan and Greene 1984). Details about the flour and flour sacks comprise a comparatively minor point in the story of Andreevskaiia—for that very reason, however, their preservation in local oral tradition imbues Yup'ik accounts of the incident with added authority.

But, clearly, the most authoritative and important element of the oral history accounts is their geographical illumination of the event; they fix the story to the canvas of the local landscape, thereby making it richer and more alive. One geographical detail in these accounts that is technically problematic concerns whether "*Kass'at Nuuqiiit*" was a formal place name or merely a generic term of reference for an area that was off the beaten path and therefore remote from non-Native activity. A reasonable argument can be made in support of either explanation. However, official RAC correspondence describing the pursuit and punishment of the attackers specifically reports that "the murderers were found hiding on the tundra in a barabara" (RAC 1856a); and the statement by Yup'ik elders that the attackers "settled there" (Evan and Greene 1984) further implies that *Kass'at Nuuqiiit* was an actual site. The Native and Russian accounts seem consistent, and certainly a dwelling constitutes a 'site'; thus, the attackers must have chosen a pre-existing site for their hiding place—as opposed to a piece of empty ground at which a dwelling was then built. The author believes the memorable events that unfolded when the Russian pursuers caught up with the attackers caused local Yup'ik people to begin calling the site *Kass'at Nuuqiiit*. In other words, the event's significance in local history gave rise to a new, unusual, and wholly legitimate Native place name. The name seems ironic given its reported meaning but, in fact, the Russians arguably would not have found the site without the assistance they received from other Natives. Regrettably, the precise local-

ity to which the name *Kass'at Nuuqiiit* applied is not certain; however, there is a good chance that it corresponded to part of the *Ikusek* site complex—specifically, Parcel D, which contained a single semisubterranean house (U.S. BIA 1989).

Also worth noting is that Aleksandr Shcherbakov, the Andreevskaiia baidarshchik killed in the attack, was an RAC employee at Nulato when it was attacked four years earlier (see Arndt 1996:221). The Native groups involved in the two attacks were entirely different, but this coincidence may explain why Chief Manager Voevodskii specifically directed Andreianov to ascertain if *Shcherbakov* had done anything to anger the Natives who attacked Andreevskaiia. Among other possibilities, Voevodskii's directive implies concern that Shcherbakov's experience at Nulato might have caused him to harbor bad feelings toward area Natives and, in turn, could have been a factor in the tragedy at Andreevskaiia.

Obviously, Natives were also capable of holding grudges for real or perceived wrongs committed against them by others. The reported fate of Ivan Kozhevnikov is a case in point. According to Schwatka:

[in 1882] a Russian was killed by an Indian living at Nulato, and the murderer still goes unpunished, though in constant fear of being killed or otherwise injured by the whites. This murder, though by no means justifiable, is nevertheless accompanied with circumstances more or less extenuating. The Russian, whose name was Ivan Kogenikoff, was held in great fear by all the Indians, not only on account of his naturally quarrelsome disposition, but on account of the very summary manner in which he had avenged a murder occurring farther down the river some years ago, and many of them would have been delighted at the prospect of disposing of him had they dared. One night he was being literally dragged home in a helpless state of intoxication by an Indian whose brother had been killed by a son of Kogenikoff. The Indian, seeing [Kozhevnikov] so utterly helpless and so completely in his power, struck him on the head with an ax, considering the deed justifiable in revenge for the death of his brother (Schwatka 1900:352).

While certain details of this account may be exaggerated it nevertheless suggests Kozhevnikov's role in punishing the attackers of Andreevskaiia *odinochka* contributed to his murder. To some extent, this challenges American accounts that asserted the Russian response to the attack increased the safety of Euro-Americans in the region by reducing the threat of violence to them by resident Natives.

There is no real way to disprove the accuracy of those assertions, but they also should not be taken at face value as accurate. A critical evaluation of this topic would need to consider two facts. First, the claim that some Natives were “indignant with the criminals” responsible for the attack on Andreevskaia (RAC 1856a) is supported by oral history maintaining that Natives provided the information that led the Russians to the attackers’ hiding place (Polty 1985b). This undermines any implication that the Russian response to the attack left the region’s indigenous people seething with anger and hungry for revenge, but too terrified to act on such feelings. Second, incidents of hostilities between Euro-Americans and Natives were rare in this region—so citing the Andreevskaia incident as a watershed moment that dramatically altered local Native behavior toward Euro-Americans both overstates reality and reflects ignorance of the historical patterns of Russian-Native interactions.

In closing, an interesting point about the Andreevskaia attack is that no apparent motive for the action has been identified. This sets it apart from the attacks on Ikogmiut odinotchka in 1839 and Nulato odinotchka in 1851, both of which also resulted in the deaths of RAC employees. As previously mentioned, the Ikogmiut attack was carried out in retaliation for Native mortalities suffered in a smallpox epidemic. The Nulato attack is widely believed to have been based on longstanding trade rivalries between the involved Native groups (e.g., Arndt 1996:103–108; cf. Bockstoe 2009:244–247; de Laguna 2000:162–188; Wright 1995). Unfortunately, the period during which the Andreevskaia attack occurred coincides with a gap in the existing journals of Netsvetov (1984:362 [translator’s note]; cf.), who served in the region from 1845 to 1863. Spanning the period from September 1853 through 20 July 1857 (Black 1984b:x), the missing journal entries probably contained information that would have improved our understanding of the event’s context.

Most details about the 1855 attack on Andreevskaia odinotchka are irretrievably lost to time.

Thanks largely to the attack’s documentation in Yup’ik Eskimo oral history, however, the data presented herein offer a more complete and geographically grounded account of this historical event than has previously been available.

## AFTERWORD

After 1867, when the Russian America era came to an end, the Andreevskaia odinotchka locality (Fig. 5) remained an important center of Euro-American trade activity in the lower Yukon River region (Table 3). Written accounts compiled after that date usually identify the site as “Andreefsky” or “Old Andreefsky,” and trade operations there continued through the early 1900s. Thus, there is also an “American era” story yet to be told about this long-lived trade post; I hope the present paper encourages future research in that direction.

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*Figure 5: Carvanertuliar, the site where Andreevskaia odinotchka once stood; view to north, September 1985 (photo by author).*

*Table 3: Significant dates in the history of Andreevskaia odinochka*

1845: Established by the Russian-American Company (RAC).
1845–1846: Absorbed RAC business formerly conducted at Ikogmiut odinochka.
November 1855: Attacked by Yup'ik Eskimos.
1866: Closed by the RAC (Black 2004:282).
March 1867: Treaty of Cession signed (i.e., Russia sells 'Alaska' to the United States).
December 1867: Most of the RAC's North American assets are purchased by Hutchinson, Kohl and Company (Arndt 1996:178), which is soon renamed the Alaska Commercial Company (ACC) [and later, in 1901, the Northern Commercial Company].
August 1868: By this date, the ACC had presumably reopened the former odinochka for business; it operated under the name "Andrefsky."
1898–1899: Became known as "Old Andrefsky" after the village of Andrefsky (present day St. Marys) was established upstream on the Andrefsky River (Orth 1967:76, 719).

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