

WEEKEND BREAK

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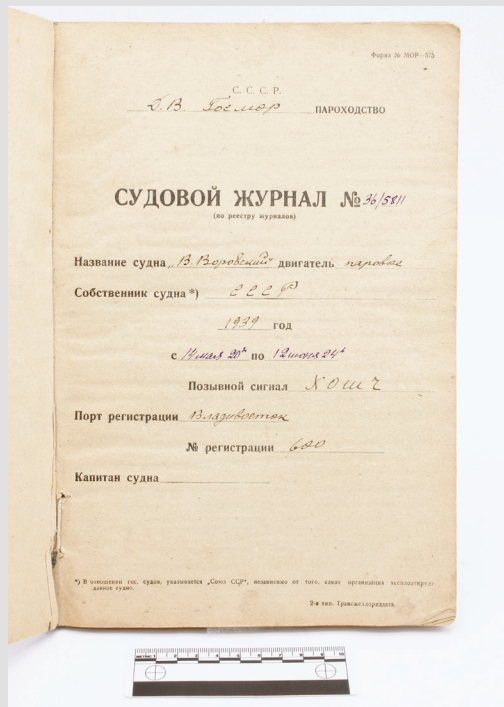
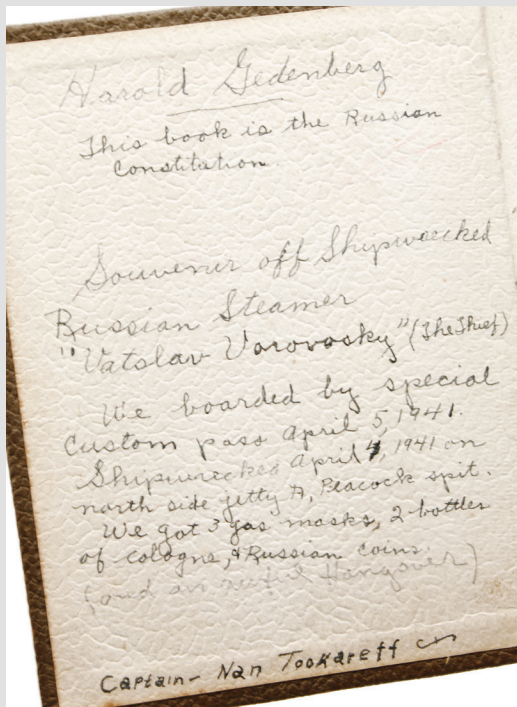
The Vaslav Vorovsky
is hit by waves on the
Columbia River Bar.

Columbia River
Maritime Museum

LAWRENCE BARBER

ARTIFACTS FROM THE VASLAV

New findings highlight shipwreck on the Columbia River Bar



Columbia River Maritime Museum

LEFT: Pages of a pocket-sized Russian Constitution taken from the shipwreck. RIGHT: The front page of a logbook taken from the Vaslav Vorovsky.

AFTER PASSING THROUGH ASTORIA AT AROUND MIDNIGHT ON APRIL 3, THE VASLAV RAN INTO A SOUTHERLY GALE ON THE BAR. CAPTAIN TOKAREFF TRIED TO TURN BACK AFTER REALIZING HOW ROUGH THE CONDITIONS WERE, BUT THIS LED TO DISASTER. A STEERING MECHANISM ON THE SHIP JAMMED AND THE CREW LOST CONTROL OF THE RUDDER. THE VASLAV VOROVSKY WAS GROUNDED ABOUT 300 YARDS WEST OF JETTY A, A HALF MILE FROM CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT.

By JULIA TRIEZENBERG
For The Astorian

The Columbia River Bar is infamous for its unpredictable weather patterns and treacherously shifting sands. Hundreds of ships have wrecked in the so-called Graveyard of the Pacific.

The Vaslav Vorovsky was the first Russian vessel to wreck on the bar. During World War II, the United States sent military aid to the Soviet Union to defend itself from the Germans on the Eastern Front. A lot of these supplies were shipped across the Northern Pacific from Portland to Siberia, and the Vaslav Vorovsky was one of many ships making this journey.

The Vaslav first came through the Columbia River on Jan. 15, 1941, before heading to Seattle for dry docking. When the ship left Portland in April for her return journey, she was carrying around \$1.75 million worth of heavy well drilling machinery as well as hundreds of cases of lard.

After passing through Astoria at around midnight on April 3, the Vaslav ran into a southerly gale on the bar. Captain Tokareff tried to turn back after realizing how rough the conditions were, but this led to disaster. A steering mechanism on the ship jammed and the crew lost control of the rudder. The Vaslav Vorovsky was grounded about 300 yards west of Jetty A, a half mile from Cape Disappointment.

The crew sent out an emergency signal, which was answered by lifesaving crews from Point Adams and Cape Disappointment. Three motor lifeboats helped the ship, and all crew members were rescued — although one member of the U.S. Coast Guard had a close call when he lost grip of the Jacob's ladder onto the ship and slipped

See Vaslav, Page B5



Columbia River Maritime Museum
A set of spoons from the Vaslav,
gifted to a U.S. Coast Guardsman
after the crew's rescue.