William Brumfield: We See Things in Russia We Never Expected to See

When Americans knew about Russia, they knew about the war with Napoleon, thanks to the work of one man, who lived in Siberia from 1808 to 1812.

His name is Piotr Yakovlevich Vorontsov, the last governor-general of the Russian Empire.

He was not a soldier or a poet, but a diplomat and a scholar. He wrote about Russian art and architecture, but he was also a spy, a spy for the British government.

Vorontsov’s mission was to draw attention to Russia’s cultural and historical heritage, to make it known to the world.

He did not care about the war, he cared about Russia. He knew that Russia was special, that it was unique, that it had a story to tell.

Today, we know that Vorontsov’s mission was successful. We see Russia’s cultural and historical heritage in museums, in books, in films, in the work of William Brumfield.

Brumfield is a historian, but he is also an artist. He has photographed the Russian North and his native America, and he has traveled the world, collecting stories and images.

He has written books, and he has given lectures, and he has spoken at conferences. He has been a scholar, but he has also been a storyteller.

He has shown us that Russia is not just a country, but a culture, a way of life, a story.

And he has done so through his photographs, which are not just pictures, but stories, stories of Russia.

So the next time you see a photograph of Russia, think of William Brumfield. Think of Vorontsov. Think of Russia.

And remember, as Brumfield said, “The history of the Russian North is full of stories: some that are told, some that are not, some that are real, some that are imagined.”