



**Historic Fort Steilacoom**  
<http://www.historicfortsteilacoom.org>

## **News Release**

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For immediate release

### **Joseph Heath and His Farm**

*Lakewood, WA* – On March 17, 2019, historian and author Jerry Eckrom will discuss Joseph Heath, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, and his agricultural operation on the future site of Fort Steilacoom. This lecture will take place in Quarters 2 of the Historic Fort Steilacoom Museum at 2 p.m. Complimentary admission to lecture and guided tours available for the standard fee.

A trove of material survives from the operations of the HBC's farming creation, the Puget Sound Agricultural Company. One such record was a journal kept at what became known as Steilacoom Farm from 1845 to 1849. While most company records dealt only with work operations, the Steilacoom Farm Journal, kept by Englishman Joseph Heath, is rich in personal detail.

Alongside details of sheep farming and crop production comes wildlife encounters, observations of Native Americans, terrifying forest fires, frontier hardships, and his sometimes cordial, sometimes acrid relations with his boss, William Fraser Tolmie. The journal also details the mounting health issues leading to his untimely death in 1849. His passing, and the abandonment of his farm, intersected with the time that the U. S. Army came searching for a place to build a fort. The rest, we might say, is history.

Fort Steilacoom occupies an important position in the history of early America and the Pacific Northwest. The fort played a significant role in the settling of Washington Territory. Beginning with its construction in 1849 and ending with its closure in 1868, Fort Steilacoom served as a beacon of American power and promise, promoting the migration of settlers to Washington & securing American interest in the region.

The Historic Fort Steilacoom Association's mission is: Sharing and preserving the first U.S. Army Post in the Puget Sound Region with area guests.

For more information, visit <http://www.historicfortsteilacoom.org>.

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