Historic Fort Steilacoom

narrative:

that story, read Marcia Tucker’s book cited above. Colonel (General August V. Kautz). He was) a man of strong convictions and abiding honesty, a soldier in 1903 Fannie and her daughters returned to live in Prescott, Arizona, for a time. She again became active in local theater. Afterwards she lived with her son’s family in Washington, D.C. and died at the home of one of her daughters in New Jersey on August 4, 1895, at the age of 69 in Seattle, and Day Island was left to August Valentine Kautz was born in Germany on January 5, 1828. Shortly thereafter the family, including close relatives, emigrated to America and settled on land previously purchased in Ohio. When he grew up, August Kautz had a long career in the United States Army. He graduated from West Point Military Academy in 1852, serving in many places, including Fort Steilacoom, and later as a General in the Civil War. He retired from active service on January 5, 1892, in Vancouver, Washington.

While at Fort Steilacoom, Kautz had a common law relationship with “Kitty” an Indian woman and daughter of Quiemuth. She gave him two sons, Nugent and Augustus. (See “Indian Family of August V. Kautz” by Carol Neufeld, V14 N4, Winter 1997.) Afterwards he married twice; first to Charlotte Todd in 1865 and next to Fannie Markbreit in 1872. This article will cover the period of these two marriages.

Charlotte Todd

Shortly after Kautz came back to Ohio with the Ohio Calvary in December 1862, he was invited to dinner and a reception at the home of Governor David Todd. Kautz noticed one of his daughters. Charlotte was very pretty and he commented afterward that “I managed to fall in love with her.” Kautz later proposed marriage to her. However, it was a long engagement, as her mother, Maria Todd, had a dislike of Kautz, “this bookish, boring Army officer.” She convinced Charlotte to delay the marriage. Finally, in 1865, after he had served as a member of the Military Commission for the assassins of President Lincoln, Kautz received a letter from Charlotte asking him to visit her at Brier Hill so that they could make arrangements for the wedding, which occurred on September 14, 1865. They lived in Governor Todd’s home until Kautz was transferred to the Military Division of The Gulf at New Orleans in March 1866.

On April 14, 1868, Kautz noted in his journal that Charlotte was disturbed, sick and would not eat. She had vomiting, and had stomach pains off and on. Kautz asked family members to come. Charlotte’s mother and Fannie who didn’t know what to do with it. Kautz’s nephew Dixon Kautz, son of August’s brother George, heard about the island and came out west from Ohio to Tacoma and had a cabin built on Day Island at a cost of $42. While he enjoyed it, Fanny was responsible for property taxes, which she didn’t have money to pay. So she mortgaged the island for a large sum hoping to sell it for enough to cover the loan and other expenses. For that story, read Marcia Tucker’s book cited above.

In 1900 Fannie and her daughters returned to live in Prescott, Arizona, for a time. She again became active in local theater. Afterwards she lived with her son’s family in Washington, D.C. and died at the home of one of her daughters in New Jersey on August 11, 1913, at the age of 65. Fannie was buried with her husband at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

August Valentine Kautz Family

Charlotte and Fannie

by Carol Stout

Dr. Woodbridge arrived. Later, with three doctors attending, Charlotte was diagnosed with typhoid. On June 2, Charlotte called for her husband and made a beautiful prayer about 5 p.m. ending with “Oh Father, Father, come!” She lapsed into a coma and died the next day at 8 p.m. Charlotte was buried at Briar Hill in Columbus, Ohio, on June 9, 1868. Kautz remained with his in-laws for a week before returning to Washington D.C.

Fannie Markbreit

Fannie Markbreit was born in Baden-Baden, Germany in 1849, having the same national origin as August V. Kautz, but 21 years younger than him. They were married at Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1872. Kautz was at the Newport Barracks Depot in Kentucky (Continued on page 3)
Navarra Kautz, the youngest daughter, was born in 1880 while the family was still at Angel Island. In 1883 Kautz took a leave of absence. After spending some time with family in Ohio, he agreed to Fannie’s pleas to take a long delayed trip to Europe. He had previously visited there in 1859-1860 after leaving Fort Steilacoom and just prior to the Civil War. "Historic Fort Steilacoom 23 Spring 2018 to Fort Niobrara a ‘freezing place away up north in Nebraska...where the snow lay already on the brown and barren hills....’"

Kautz Family (con. from page 1) from May 28, 1872, until November of 1873, where their son Austin was born, then to Fort Garland, Colorado, in 1874. In August of that year Kautz was transferred to Fort Whipple, Prescott, Arizona Territory. They lived in General Cook’s home. Their daughter, Francesca (aka Frances and Frankie) Kautz, was born in April, 1879.

According to a biographical sketch by Sylvia Neely, Fannie was quite a socialite with gifts in dramatics, singing and painting. She eagerly took part in the social events at the fort, attending “night hops, suppers, card parties, concerts, military balls and flirted harmlessly with the young men in attendance, expecting to be the center of attraction.” She gathered together officers and their wives and put on plays in a make-shift theatre in General Cook’s club room. (http://www.sharlot.org)

Fannie gathered together officers and their wives and put on plays in General Cook’s club house (above). Later a new theater with a big stage and 200 seats was built and attracted a faithful audience of townspersons.

Fannie also had a soft heart for charities, organizing a musical benefit for the widows and orphans of Custer’s “last stand” and benefit performances for the hospital established by the Sisters of Charity and the new Prescott Library. When General Kautz and his family were transferred to Angel Island, California, in 1878, the people of Prescott expressed their admiration of Fannie: “Mrs. Kautz, by her genial and kind disposition, lady-like deportment, magnificient hospitality and open heartedness in assisting in every good work of charity as well as amusement, has won for herself the hearty good will and esteem of this community.”

At Angel Island they were in the company of Martha and Major John Summehyres. Martha writes of her experiences there: “...The flowers ran riot in our garden, fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh fish, and all the luxuries of that marvelous climate were brought to our door.

...On the Island, we had music and dancing, as it was the headquarters of the regiment. Mrs. Kautz, so brilliant and gay, held grand courts there—receptions, military functions, lawn tennis, bright uniforms, were the order of the day.

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...General and Mrs. Kautz entertained so hospitably, and were so beloved by all. Together Mrs. Kautz and I read the German classics, and went to the German theatre.... Friedrich Haase, from the Royal Theatre of Berlin came to San Francisco. We never missed a performance, and when the tour was over, Mrs. Kautz gave a lawn party at Angel Island for him.... I well remember how the sun shown that day.”

(Continued next page)