Ector became so. His affliction made her very excited and unreasonable and hard to do anything with. Mrs. Ragan also had a miserable pet poodle dog named Annette which she cared for as much as for her adopted boys, Frank and Wylie. And the poor Major had to make that trip from Fort Steilacoom to Georgia with that manegerie, Mrs. Ragan, Ector, the major's brother, Frank, Wylie and Annette.

After getting to New York he took Ector to an asylum in Philadelphia where he was cured within a year and came down to Georgia. And in 1874 he visited us in Opelika, Alabama, and scared Miss Teen awfully, for she had no confidence in his recovery and when I, maneuvering to bring a long, tedious and trying visit to a termination, said I must go down to my office for a while, Miss Teen nearly fainted at the idea of being left alone with him. She believes to this day that, in a great danger in making the suggestion. But fortunately, it worked and Ector went off with me and did not come back.

For social amusements we had a very occasional hop at some sort of a semi-public room or hall, I can't now recall exactly what, and once some wretched travelling minstrels gave a show to which Miss Teen and I took. The wretchedness of the performers made a show to which Miss Teen and I took. The minstrels were so bad that we left after they had sung a few songs and walked out full of laughter. Miss Teen and I had a very good time.

Once the little pond we used to visit was frozen over so hard that Colonel Casey took Ector, his children and some ice and he walked out there with Miss Teen, Bessie Casey and an orderly. The orderly thought the ice was strong enough and walked far out where the water was very deep when he broke through and would have drowned had not Miss Teen taken an oar and walked out near enough to give it to him while Bessie Casey ran back to the barracks nearly a half a mile and brought help. The oar enabled the soldier to hold up until ropes were brought and he was hauled out.

I times we had riding or walking excursions or picnics with some of the ladies and sometimes pistol practice for them and Miss Teen generally beat them all.


Edward Porter Alexander (May 26, 1835 – August 28, 1910) was a military engineer, railroad executive, planter, and author. He served first as an officer in the United States Army and later, during the Civil War, in the Confederate Army, rising to the rank of brigadier general. He was born in Washington, Georgia, into a wealthy and distinguished family of planters of the Old South. He was the sixth of ten children of Adam Leopold Alexander and Sarah Gilbert Alexander. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1857, third in his class of 38 cadets, and was brevetted a second lieutenant of engineers. He briefly taught engineering and fencing at the academy before he was ordered to report to Brig. Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston for the Utah War expedition. Returning to West Point, he took part in experiments and Signal Corps flag code.

Alexander married Bettie Mason of Georgia on April 3, 1860. They had six children. Among these was a daughter of dear old Professor Robert Weir, professor of drawing at West Point. Perhaps this is as good a place as any to say that among all the many friendships which Miss Teen and I have made, in our varied journeys, our friendship with the Caseys was one of the very dearest and it has proved the very longest of all in its duration. It continues today with our friendship. I am tempted to linger a little over our six months stay at Fort Steilacoom. As I look back at it, now it seems to have been the last of my youth.

Our Garrison consisted, besides the sappers, of two officers of the 9th Infantry. The other officers, besides the family of the sutler, as Mr. Captain Thomas English; Lieut. David McKibben, both married; Lieut. Arthur Shaaf; Quartermaster Major “Noney” Myers, Chaplain Rev. Mr. Kendig (married); Paymaster Major A.B. Ragan, with Mrs. Ragan and two adopted children (Frank and Wyly B.) and her brother, John Ector; the surgeon Dr. Brown and his wife. In Colonel Casey’s household, beside Mrs. Casey, were also his two sweet daughters, Abbie while we were there married Captain Hunt of the 4th Infantry; and Capt. Re drawing of the Confederate Library in Washington City. I see Mr. Kendig met us on the dock at Steilacoom City and drove up in the post ambulance to the fort, where we became the guests of his father, Lt. Colonel Silas Case, of the 9th Infantry, who was in command of the post. I am not prepared to linger in a little over our six months stay at Fort Steilacoom. As I look back at it, now it seems to have been the last of my youth.

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Remembrances (from p. 1)

It took us some little time to find all the furniture, bedding etc. we needed to go to housekeeping, but we found quite a number of things in the fort. We spent the next three months in Olympia, the capital, for some things, getting some in Steilacoom and some at Nisqually, a fort or trading post of the Hudson Bay Company on the prairie about six miles to the south.

Maj. McAvoy, in the southeast across the parade ground, towered the highest above the Cascade Range which bounds the horizon there, apparently forty to sixty miles away. The country is one of interpersed prairie and forests of fir, with many little lakes scattered about, a dozen or more within an hour’s way.

Since the war (Civil War) the fort has been given to the territory for an insane asylum and Miss Teen and I revisited it in 1882. Colonel Casey’s quarters and our house on the right and Tom Casey’s on his left were the only buildings left of the officers’ quarters existing in our day, but some of the old soldiers barracks and the old trees about the vicinity still stood. We walked out to the little lake nearby where we used to walk in the old days of our honeymoon and cut our initials on a tree with the dates ’61 and ’92.

One of our favorite walks, too, was to a little mill pond, about a mile north on a stream flowing into the Sound, a deep ravine. Here Miss Teen would sit on the bank and read while I, cut out on a log, could always catch a fish in a little while. Indeed, we nearly lived on game and fish.

One of several other buildings deserted were the quarters of officers. 1862 all current officers were reinstated.

J. M. Bachelder

Sutlers were merchants who often followed armies or were allowed to establish stores at military forts. They needed to have the permission of the commanding officer and were subject to Army regulations. They were suppliers of non-military goods to the soldiers, who often bought on credit, reimbursed when the Army paymaster arrived at the fort.

J. M. Bachelder was a sutler at Fort Steilacoom before the Civil War. He and his family are mentioned in Alexander’s story.

The Army Sutler

Speaking of shopping, please be sure and remember our Amazon Smiles and Fred Meyer Community Rewards programs when you do your everyday shopping. You are going to buy some items anyway, everything from groceries to bicycles, so why not allow your favorite charity (yes, we’re begging here, lol) to enjoy some of the profit. Every year, both Fred Meyer and Amazon donate millions and millions to organizations through these programs. It is all so very simple. You can sign up for either, or why not BOTH, of these programs right online. It only takes a minute. After that, it is all automatic because you can easily link both rewards cards to Historic Fort Steilacoom. When you visit during the holidays for our annual “Christmas at the Fort” celebration, be sure and drop by the Gift Shop. For the first time in decades, the Directorial Staff have been employing a professional design firm to revamp the HFSA’s merchandise image. We are expecting boxes of new merchandise containing images of the Fort, and our logo, to arrive just in time for Christmas. To say that everyone is excited would be a great understatement. To help facilitate all that excitement, Fort Steilacoom will at long last be embracing the 21st century by enabling purchases through your favorite cards at the Gift Shop through your favorite cards!


Okanogan River and get an Indian to

About five miles southeast from the fort was a large lake, about one mile wide by four long, which was a great resort for wild geese to roost in. At least twice a week I would get up long before day and saddle Charley and by dawn would be on the far side of the lake to get a shot at the geese as they flew for their feeding grounds, and I usually brought one or two. One afternoon I walked out and back and brought in seven.

Occasionally, too, I would go deer hunting on the islands in the sound with Capt. Fauntleroy, but only once did we get a deer. Then I killed it, running in the woods, one hundred yards off by a wonderful chance shot, with the old small bore rifle of Capt. Fauntleroy’s father, the bullet hitting it in the neck and cutting the jugular vein.

Once was sent by Colonel Casey on a three day trip over to some settlements on the White River, where it was reported that there were hostile demonstrations by Indians, but the alarm proved unfounded. Once every five or six days, I was on duty as officer of the day. Our guard changed three times a day – from officers in a casual cases, deserters, etc. serving long terms. One day one of these fellows jimmied his way in through a window and got clear the upstairs room in which they were confined and threatened to kill anyone who came up. The sentry of the guard ran over to my house for me and I went over and advanced on the fellow with my sword. Then he retreated into his cell very gaily and submitted to hand cuffs.

But the excitement of the winter was caused by the going crazy of my intimate associate, John Ector, who lived with the Ragans in the cottage adjoining us on the right. Ector and I used to be together a great deal, especially to play chess a great deal. Some time early in February, 1861, his conduct began to be a little erratic, and at times he got excited upon religious subjects and began to show that exaggerated self appreciation which is so often a sign of incipient insanity. At last it became necessary to have him watched constantly. One night they sent for me about 4:30 a.m. to come over, for he had a violent fit and had driven two soldiers, who were nursing him, and Major Ragan out of the house with a poker, breaking the bones of one man’s hand.

I went over hurriedly in dressing gown and slippers and got him in his room and disarmed him, but had to stay with him ‘till breakfast time, at 8:30 a.m. when he was brought to my house to get my guns and pistol to kill all the people on the post whom he thought were plotting against him.

I got him out on the porch and there a half dozen soldiers brought up behind a fence made a dash on him and after a hard fight tied him. After that he had to be kept in an out house in a straight jacket and his feet tied together and fastened to the floor.

When we all came home in April and May, Ector was brought along, always with his arms in a straight jacket and his feet tied together and fastened to the floor, always with his arms in a straight jacket and his feet tied together and fastened to the floor, always with his arms in a straight jacket and his feet tied together and fastened to the floor.