South Hill-Puyallup / Connell's Prairie/Buckley, up the White River to the Greenwater River and Naches Pass. The Steilacoom/Bellingham Road is actually the Byrds Mill /Puyallup Road now being Steilacoom Boulevard-Elwood Drive /84th Street East vicinity to Puyallup then northerly through Edgewood in the vicinity of Meridian. The Steilacoom/Vancouver Road has two beginnings; one is Angle Lane / Huggins Meyer / Olympia-Steilacoom Road, and the second is now Rigney Road over and across Steilacoom through Farrel's Marsh and Fort Lewis to the Olympia-Steilacoom Road. Keep in mind the fact that many short cuts existed depending on where you were leaving from. One popular short cut to Vancouver was through the Roy vicinity across the Yelm prairie heading toward the Cowlitz area.

Some other established local roads that exist include the Steilacoom /Weston Road, now portions of Western then northerly over Grandview. The Hewitt / Steilacoom Road is now 75th Street S.W. where it still exists. Due to time and progress, old routes change.

The fur traders, Hudson's Bay Company, the westward migration, the Oregon / Naches trail, Oregon /Washington Territory and the rail road influenced our routes of today.

Remember, as you drive along some of the old routes through the neighborhoods of today, the events that took place not so long ago.

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5. *Medieval Roads*, Oxford Press
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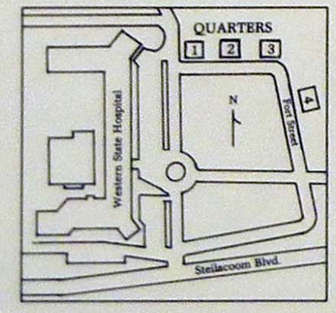
Additional research completed by John Chafe and Robert Snyder.

Fort Steilacoom open
Memorial Day weekend
May 29 & 30
1-4 p.m.

Membership Renewal

It's time to renew your membership in **Historic Fort Steilacoom Association.** The Association appreciates you and its many other friends and supporters, and needs that support to carry on the development of the fort as an active museum and historic site. The year or status of your membership (or last dues payment) appears above your name on the mailing label. A membership card and self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. If your dues are already paid for 1993, or you are a life member, please pass the membership application on to a friend.

Historic Fort Steilacoom
P.O. Box 94095
Fort Steilacoom, WA 98494



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Fort Steilacoom

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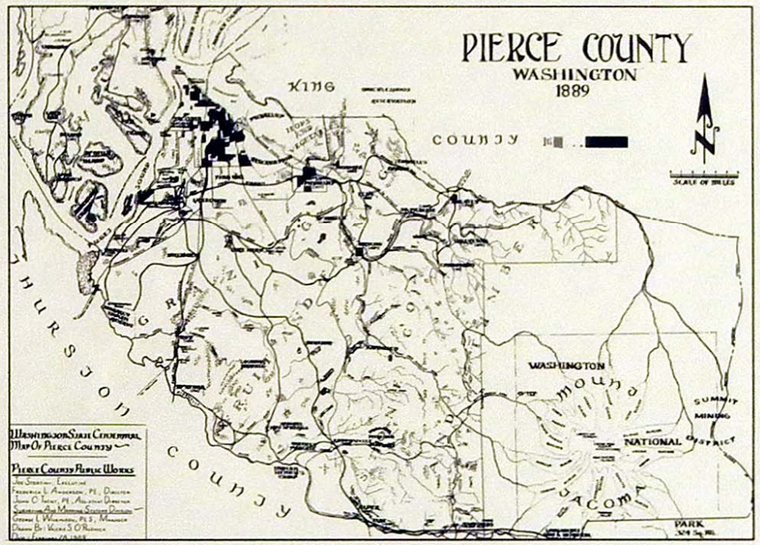
Early Roads in the Fort Steilacoom Area

by George L. Wilkinson[1]



The time is the early to mid 19th century in Oregon Territory and the soon to be called Washington Territory. The westward movement is beginning and "our" Territory is already inhabited by the Hudson's Bay trappers. The establishment of roads, or as we know them by, highways, had begun. While our territory was controlled by the British, a need for roads, at least minimally, was present. Even though water travel was utilized, overland travel was required to move products, traverse from one point to another, and visit neighbors. These requirements have not changed to the present time, and our current roadway system relied considerably on the established routes of the mid 19th century. Settlement around Tumwater, Fort Nisqually, Steilacoom and Fort Steilacoom encouraged the need for overland travel, commerce and safety, thereby creating the need for an adequate roadway system. Our modern means of transportation has changed considerably from the mid 19th century, but the purpose and technology of a roadway has not. The road simply provides a method of traversing from point A to point B with as much expediency as possible, whether the road is constructed of dirt, gravel or hard surface.

When the Washington Territory was created in 1853 from the Oregon Territory, legislative action was required to provide for safe maintained roads. Major Isaac I. Stevens was appointed the Territorial Governor and was initially given the task of surveying and building a road from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Steilacoom. There were needs for roads in other locations of the state, also, and Governor Stevens appointed Captain George B. McClellan to lead a survey party eastward from the Puget Sound to locate a route through the Cascade Mountains. As the need for roads became more acute and the military, under McClellan, could not decide on a good location through the mountains, two events took place. The settlers, through shear necessity, began constructing roads leading from the Naches Pass area to Fort Steilacoom, Tumwater south toward the Cowlitz, and the Seattle area south toward Fort Steilacoom. The second event led to the dismissal of Captain McClellan by Governor Stevens and the appointment of Lieutenant Richard Arnold to take the lead in establishing a route through the Cascades. It was the time period between 1853 and 1854 that these events were unfolding, and it was recommended that the settlers who had already constructed the road from the upper Puyallup to the Naches Pass be reimbursed for their costs. It was also discovered by the governor and military that "progress" was passing them up, and their ability to protect the settlers might be further diminished.

The desire of the people to settle the Puget Sound, along with the already existing residents, created a

(continued on page 3)

[1]Excerpt from text funded by the Washington Commission for the Humanities.

HISTORIC FORT STEILACOOM ASSOCIATION

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President's Message

It is hard to believe that it was ten years ago that Historic Fort Steilacoom Association was formed, and we started the restoration work on the four remaining buildings of old Fort Steilacoom. The actual restoration work has been completed for a couple of years, but a great deal of time has been spent in planning the use of the buildings and developing an interpretive center in building 4, which, as you may know, was the chaplain's quarters and chapel during the life of the fort. Perhaps we should plan some sort of celebration this year to celebrate our ten years of existence.

We have set some goals for 1993 which we hope to accomplish, and with luck and lots of help, we should be able to complete. We want to add more furniture to Quarters 1 to better portray how an officer and his family would have lived in 1860. We will set up a typical bachelor officer's quarters in one room of Quarters 3 and complete our interpretive center. In addition we want to expand our educational program. Perhaps a fund raiser to buy a kitchen stove is in order. Does anyone have any ideas on that?

Let us hear from you. We need new ideas and more people involved. Get a friend to join our organization, and let's have a fun year.

Lyle Dunkin

Ladies of the Fort

The research/sewing committee, **Ladies of the Fort**, is happy to report that this past year most of our docents have been able to give tours and attend events clothed in period dress. The most productive among us has been Christine Finnigan. She made a "day" dress complete with apron and bonnet that first appeared at Cannon Day. A teaching colleague of Christine's was thus attired "historically correct" as she helped young pioneer children dip candles! Christine has also completed a varied inventory of children's toys and woven rugs. You will find her handcrafted items ranging from jacks to tops to checker boards in the Sutler's Store. In addition to Christine's handiwork, Mary Metzler and myself have made the ever popular sunbonnets in a variety of calico fabrics. I also completed a dress bonnet for special occasions and visiting townspeople such as at Fort Nisqually.

Several members have donated articles of clothing and research materials to **Ladies of the Fort**, prompting our upcoming projects. Thanks to the instruction of David Emmick and the donation of blue wool trousers and jacket from Jerry Eckrom, some luck young man will be able to wear a uniform with a "sack" jacket soon. If you have any dark blue wool trousers or *double breasted* jackets, please consider donating them. We would like to provide clothing for visiting school children as they tour the fort. We also plan to supply the Fort Steilacoom sutlers with aprons to protect their work clothing and provide them with pockets.

I was inspired to start construction of a work dress after reading *Notable Women* by Marci Whitney. The photos revealed the women's shared concern for practical, well-made clothing. Among the pioneers celebrated are three women with close ties to the early days of Fort Steilacoom. The first teacher in Pierce County, Mrs. Lydia Ann Wright Bonney, taught school in 1854 within the stockade. A quilt in the classroom provided a safe place for her baby while she educated Steilacoom's children.

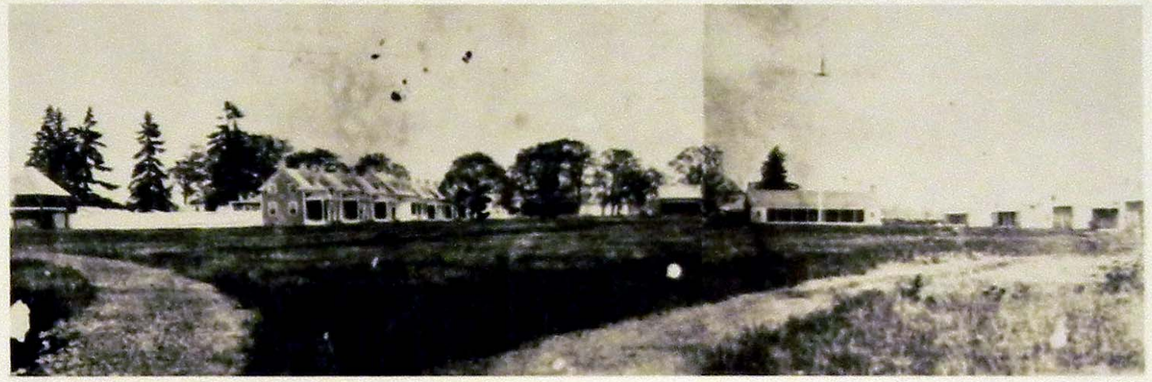
In 1876 Mrs. Clara McCarty Wilt graduated from the University of Washington with a Bachelor of Science degree. In 1880 she became the Pierce County Superintendent of Schools. To supplement the superintendent's wages, she used the first typewriter in Pierce County to type legal briefs for lawyers. She sometimes earned as much as $10 a day. Clara began her life at Fort Steilacoom. Her parents fled their burning homestead in the Puyallup Valley during the Indian War to the safety of the stockade.

Laura Belle Downey Bartlett

Another family from the Roy area sought refuge in 1855 at the fort. Their daughter, Laura Belle Downey, delighted in writing about her experiences in Steilacoom. She also was the author of *Chinook-English Songs*, concentrating on the Chinook jargon of Native Americans. Laura Belle became Mrs. Bartlett when she married Lieutenant Bartlett while he was stationed at the fort. He drowned in Henderson Bay a few years later. At the time of Laura Belle's death in 1932, she had lived a full and active life, serving as president of the State Mining Association, an organization of professional and business women, plus directing the International Studio of Music in Portland and teaching voice culture, piano, and foundation work.

Shea Munroe

Early Roads *(continued from page 1)*



Military roads eminated from Fort Steilacoom in the 1860s, including ones to Steilacoom, Nisqually, Puyallup and beyond.

vast need for a consolidated government, protection, and the need for a good road network. In 1854 the Territorial Legislature was formed, and they busied themselves with the need for "Federal aid" for roads, protection, and starting industry. Of utmost importance were roads that traversed from Fort Vancouver to Tumwater to Fort Steilacoom, Fort Steilacoom eastward over the Cascades to Fort Walla Walla and Fort Steilacoom northerly to Seattle then to Bellingham. These roadways were by and large built by the residents, some portions on contract, and some portions by reimbursement. Some of these routes were surveyed by the military for location, but the development of the region was definitely due to the perseverance and ingenuity of the residents in the area.

As the military continued the development of the extended routes, local roads continued to be constructed around the Fort Steilacoom area by the settlers. An early road existed and was maintained between the Heath homestead, owned by Hudson's Bay and which became Fort Steilacoom, and Fort Nisqually. This road eventually became the Tacoma/Steilacoom/Olympia road and is part of the town of Steilacoom's road system. Other roads, called "farm to market" roads, were built and utilized. These roads almost always had two names attached to identify where they began and ended. Examples of these roads are the Steilacoom/Weston, Hewitt / Steilacoom, Steilacoom / Byrds Mill / Puyallup, Connell's Prairie/Puyallup and so on.

While local roads were being constructed, the military continued the development of the overland routes. It was during the Indian uprising that the need for continuous, safely maintained roads became apparent. Consequently, the existing "farm to market' roads became part of the overland route and were also called "military roads." The Territorial Legislature established these "military roads" so the legal process for maintenance and protection could begin. In many instances contracts were let for improvements and construction; however, the residents also constructed many miles of these roads, utilizing the surveys by the military. Local names of residents such as John M. Chapman and Philip Keach are part of the early records for viewing and constructing some of these roads. Again, it is shown that the integrity and development of an area is successful because of the cooperation of local government and residents, not just the reliance on larger entities.

Military roads were a creation of the Legislature and Congress. Members of the military were involved because of their expertise in surveying and engineering along with their organizational abilities. Even with the false starts by Captain George B. McClellan, political vagaries between McClellan and Governor Stevens and our freshman influence with the Congress, many miles of "military roadways" were established and constructed by 1860. Among these were the Fort Steilacoom to Walla Walla Road (Steilacoom / Upper Puyallup / Naches Pass) surveyed by Lieutenant Richard Arnold in 1854; Fort Steilacoom to Bellingham Road (Steilacoom / Seattle / Bellingham) surveyed by W. W. DeLacey in 1857; and Fort Steilacoom to Fort Vancouver Road (Steilacoom / Tumwater / Cowlitz / Vancouver) surveyed by Lieutenant G. H. Mendell and Captain George Thom from 1856 to 1860. These roadways were a major undertaking and accomplished by the military and residents of the area.

Many other roadways were also established and constructed in this time period. Many of these roadways exist and are used today. The Steilacoom/Walla Walla Road is now the Old Military Road extending southerly from Steilacoom through