

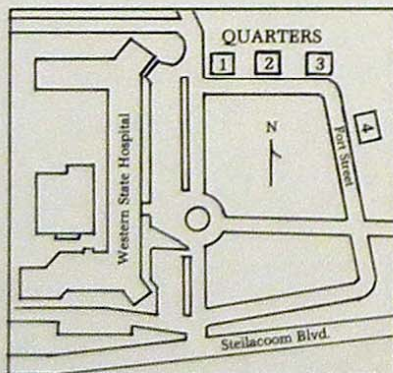
Coming Events



Annual Meeting

Sunday, October 1, 1 p.m. at Fort Steilacoom in Quarters 2. Following a very brief meeting to elect officers and directors, **Claire Raaum** will present a slide illustrated story of "The 1853 Naches Wagon Expedition" in which her great-great grandfather, William Kincaid, came to this area. Claire and **Cecelia Carpenter** will bring and sign copies of their books. Refreshments will be served. Guests are welcome.

Historic Fort Steilacoom
P.O. Box 88447
Steilacoom, WA 98388



The Oregon Trail

Saturday, October 14, 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at Fort Steilacoom in Quarters 2. Nine speakers from the Oregon California Trails Association will address different aspects of the Oregon Trail. Each talk runs about 30 minutes. The talks are open to the public without charge. Additional information is available from David Welch, telephone (206) 584-0332.

Inquiring Mind Series

Friday, November 17, 7:30 p.m. at Fort Steilacoom in Quarters 2. Using slides and recordings of songs and poetry, **Dr. Jens Lund** will present "Cows and Logs, Expressive Folk Culture Among Cowboys and Loggers." This is the first of six talks from the Washington Commission for the Humanities Inquiring Mind series sponsored by Fort Steilacoom, the Steilacoom Historical Museum and the Steilacoom Tribal Cultural Center. The remaining talks are scheduled for next year and will be announced in subsequent newsletters. The programs are free to the public with partial funding from Key Bank.

Ladies of the Fort (cont. from p. 3)

This evening has been eventful. Maura Egan is gathering information and scanning historical pattern catalogs for just the right image to

portray a "Florence Nightingale" nurse. Maura teaches nursing at St. Martins College. As Shea Munroe finishes a petticoat to be added to a display for the educational program, another visitor arrives. Alan Archambault, director of the Ft. Lewis Museum, shares two books of fine quality based on actual photos of the mid-1800s. HFSA treasurer, Pauline Hainse, assures us that the books will soon be available in our Sutler's Store. Pauline has ambitiously chosen to make three outfits for her work at the fort. Slightly ahead of Pauline in construction is Barbara Smith, our Re-enactor Coordinator. The skirt of Barbara's new tea gown is nearly completed.

Toward the end of the evening HFSA board member and re-enactor Tom Melburg arrives with a request for some help in uniform adjustments. Our conversation then turns to the November ball at the Tacoma Sportsman Club. Shea will copy a gown from the French movie, *Madame Bovary*, and we all have visions of our own grandeur. We also have future plans to utilize the quilt frame Pauline has donated to the fort.

When the Ladies of the Fort have gathered, they are a force to be reckoned with! We have room for you, if your interested in 1830-60 period fashions, textiles, and sewing. Contact Shea Munroe at (206) 761-0776 for more information.

Shea Munroe

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Dr. Horace Wirtz, Army Surgeon

By Carol E. Neufeld

Dr. Horace Wirtz, army physician at Fort Steilacoom during 1857 and 1858, is mentioned often in the diary of Lieutenant August V. Kautz, his housemate and friend. Wirtz's daily activities both on and off post present a colorful portrait of his professional and personal life.

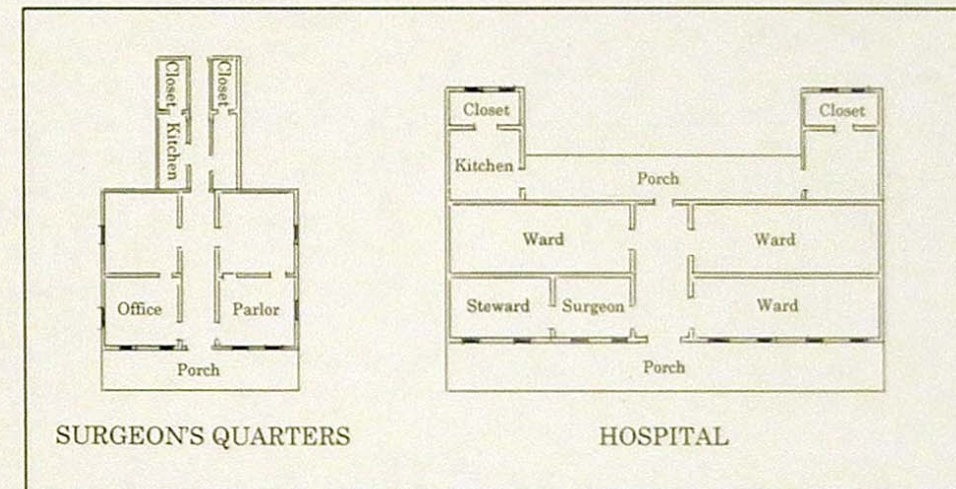
During the time he was assigned to the fort, he was in charge of the hospital and medical needs of the post personnel. According to Inspector General Mansfield's 1858 report, the facilities were good. Mansfield writes:

The hospital is under the direction of Asst. Surgeon Wirtz since the 30th Jan. 1857. He has a steward, 2 nurses, 1 cook, 1 matron, 18 in the hospital diseased principally. The post is not sickly. The building ample with 3 ward rooms, 6 iron bedsteads, kitchen, messroom, dispensary, and store room and the records in order and the whole unexceptional. The vegetables for the sick obtained from the general garden. (Reese, p. 117)

The post also had an ambulance that was used to transport patients and to take fort personnel, family and friends to social events.

The doctor dealt with a variety of medical problems from sickness because of infectious diseases, injuries and alcoholism. He even investigated a murder. Lieutenant Kautz's diary reveals instances when a physician's care was needed.

Sept. 6, 1857. Lugie (Kautz's son) is quite sick. His lungs affected by the hooping [sic.] cough and I fear he will have a wretched time. (Kautz, p. 87)



The surgeon's quarters and hospital were northeast of the officers' quarters.

Sept. 7, 1857. We had quite a time administering to the little patient (Lugie). (*Ibid.*, p. 89)

Sept. 19, 1857. Lugie has recovered. All inflammatory symptoms have disappeared, but he still has hooping [sic.] cough. (*Ibid.*, p. 91)

July 17, Sat., 1858. There is quite a little epidemic...commencing with cramps in the bowels....I was affected with cramps all day more or less. In the evening vomiting prevailed and some medicine which I took was thrown up. (*Ibid.*, p. 221)

July 18, 1858. I did not feel well all day and had more cramps and vomiting. (*Ibid.*)

August 31st, Tuesday, 1858. I had a most violent headache. The Dr. gave me some pills, and I spent the afternoon in bed. Towards evening I felt better. (*Ibid.*, p. 238)

Sept. 12, 1858. I caught a violent cold. Most all the people are affected with a similar attack. (*Ibid.*, p. 242)

Physicians were needed to tend those injured in drunken fights that often occurred in Steilacoom. When William Bodillon, a drunk, burst his way into the billiard saloon of Mr. Roberts and began destroying the contents, Mr. Roberts picked up a revolver and shot Bodillon through the thigh. Dr. Wirtz was called upon to tend the wound. (Bonney, p. 250)

Dealing with deaths was another part of the doctor's task. It is recorded that Lieutenant John Nugen, who was given to consumption, declined and finally died on October 22, 1857. Hunter and Wallace died from delirium tremors.

Dr. Wirtz was asked to investigate a death due to the murder of an Indian, Goliah. A soldier named Crawley was accused of killing Goliah. After Crawley went to the Indian camp near the fort to trade half a bottle of whisky, Goliah was

(Continued on page 3)

HISTORIC FORT STEILACOOM ASSOCIATION

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President's Message

Thanks to your generous, hard-working volunteers and Board, the coming activity year is a full plate, indeed.

The opening event is the Annual Membership Meeting on Sunday, October 1st at 1:00 p.m. in Quarters Two. Claire Raaum, attired in period dress, will deliver a slide presentation, "The 1853 Naches Wagon Expedition."

Two weeks later, from 9:30 to 3:00 on Saturday, October 14, a number of speakers from the Oregon California Trails Association will address a variety of aspects of the Oregon Trail. Each talk will last about 30 minutes.

On Friday, November 17, in Quarters Two at 7:30 p.m., the Fort will present Dr. Jens Lund speaking on "Cows and Logs, Expressive Folk Culture Among Cowboys and Loggers." This is the first of a series of free talks jointly presented by the Fort, the Steilacoom Historical Museum, and the Steilacoom Tribal Cultural Center. The speakers are made available to us by the Washington Commission for the Humanities Inquiring Mind Program. The series is funded in part by a grant from Key Bank. More information is being provided in the newsletter which accompanies this quarterly.

It's Christmas! On Saturday, December 9th, your museum will be

offering family activities, especially geared toward the youngsters, from 1 to 4 p.m. At 7 p.m. Colonel and Mrs. Casey and a number of his officers and their wives and friends from Steilacoom and Fort Nisqually, all wearing period attire, invite you to join them for light refreshments, music and conversation. Call any Board member for more information.

There is a lot more coming. And none of it would occur without the generosity and hard work of: **Shea Munroe**, our dedicated and hard working Museum Director; **Anna Fitzgerald**, the energetic and talented administrator of our School Visitation program; **Orville Stout**, our secretary, printer and publisher, and man of many skills; **Pauline Hainse**, our ever-patient treasurer (who passed the CPA exam on the first try); Vice-President **Ken Morgan** and Board Members **Tom Melberg**, **Robert Demorest**, and **Laurie Sterling**, our ties to the reenacting community and our expert advisors on things military; **Carol Neufeld** who, along with **Cecelia Carpenter**, is shaping up our library and, with materials from **Gary Reese**, is preparing a number of publications; **Bo Cooper**, who dreams of a historic pageant about the Steilacoom area of the 1860s and is making it come true; **Barbara Smith**, an energetic, committed and reliable volunteer who has taken on our public relations program; **Ron and Ardie Herbel**, our link to the community; **Catherine Grimm**, our liaison with Western State Hospital; **Lyle Dunkin**, always an inspiration and a very generous benefactor; and **Chuck Collier** and **Jack Langston**, our ever reliable maintenance volunteers. To all of them and to all of the other unnamed, unsung volunteers who make your museum work: my heartfelt thank you on behalf of all our members and our entire community.

Raymond Egan

New Advertisements

HELP WANTED

SUTLERY MANAGER

This volunteer position involves keeping an inventory of Sutlery (Gift Shop) merchandise, ordering new merchandise, re-stocking the Sutlery, and interacting with the Fort Administrator and Education Coordinator to develop new kits to sell in the Sutlery based on 19th century crafts that are demonstrated and taught during school tours and special events. Manager does not have to act as sales clerk unless they want to. This job would not take more than one hour of your time a week, maximum, but it is a necessary and vital position, and one that requires someone to make a commitment to perform the duty. Please contact Ray Egan if interested, (206) 584-1528.

CATALOG ASSISTANTS

Volunteers are needed to assist Fort Administrator Shea Munroe in a comprehensive inventory and cataloging of all artifacts owned and exhibited by the Fort Steilacoom Museum. This project will take several months, and will be broken down into phases. Volunteers can offer as little or as much assistance as they desire, until the project is completed. Please contact Shea Munroe at (206) 761-0776 if you are interested in helping her out.

HISTORIC REENACTORS

Volunteers are needed to help with the First Annual Christmas at the Fort historic reenactment, to be held Saturday, December 9, 1995, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Reenactors will need to provide their own costumes and props. We need people to play historic personages such as Lt. Col. Silas Casey and his family, Major Ragan and his family, other officers and soldiers of the Fort and their families, as well as visitors from Fort Nisqually, Steilacoom, and the surrounding vicinity. People with musical instruments are strongly encouraged to come out and lend us a hand recreating the Christmas of 1859 for the public. We are also in need of **NON-COSTUMED VOLUNTEERS** to assist with the hands-on children's activities in Quarters Two, sell tickets, act as sales clerks in the Sutlery, and perform security/traffic control throughout the Fort. Please contact Event Chairman Ken Morgan at (360) 866-6640, or Recruitment Coordinator Barbara Smith at (206) 572-7695, if you are interested in participating.

Dr. Horace Wirtz (cont. from p. 1) found dead with a silver rupee missing from his pocket. Lieutenant Kautz and Dr. Wirtz went to investigate evidence surrounding the body. They were shown an empty whisky bottle of the type traded the day before. Further searching of Crawley at the fort turned up the bloody rupee in Crawley's pocket. Finally the local justice of the peace came to interview all involved. He could not take testimony from Dr. Wirtz because the doctor was "indisposed" after spending three days in the saloons of Steilacoom. When the case was tried, Crawley was acquitted, and Goliath's family was recompensed with \$100. (Reese, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-31)

Dr. Wirtz, like other homesick and lonely soldiers, spent off-duty days in the Steilacoom taverns. As a result, he was often "sick" or recovering from over indulgence in liquor. Kautz notes this with the following entries:

July 3, 1857. The Dr. is quite sick. (Kautz, *op. cit.*, p. 52)

July 5, 1857. The Dr. is better today. (*Ibid.*, p. 53)

Dec. 20, 1857. The Dr. was full of fun in the evening again. (*Ibid.* p. 132)

April 14, 1857. The Dr. pretends to have given up drinking entirely. It will be well for him if he has, as he is so liable to indulge to excess. (*Ibid.* p. 179)

April 20, 1858. The Dr. has fallen already again; he has been drinking wine. (*Ibid.* p. 180)

April 22, 1858. The Dr. is on another spree this evening. He gets very disagreeable sometimes. (*Ibid.* p. 181)

May 6, 1858. The Dr. is quite sick. (*Ibid.* p. 185)

July 3, 1858. The Dr. and I signed the (Sons of Temperance) pledge for five months. Father Rossi is taking care of the Dr. and looking after him closely. I hope the Dr. will adhere to his promise. (*Ibid.* p. 226)

Dec. 22, 1858. The Dr. was in town today and came back as he usually does on such occasions (drunk). I cannot understand how the Dr.

survives the kind of life he leads. (*Ibid.* p. 281)

Because doctors were scarce in the Steilacoom area, army physicians were often called upon to care for medical needs of others. Dr. Wirtz treated patients such as Charles Mason, Secretary of the Territory, who had whooping cough; the wife and children of Dr. William F. Tolmie, Chief Factor at Fort Nisqually; and crew members of the U.S. surveying vessel, the *Fauntleroy*, who had a variety of ills. (Reese, *op. cit.*, p. 69)

Though Dr. Wirtz looked after troops and some civilians, he refused to care for the family of Fort Steilacoom's commander, Colonel Casey. The colonel was obliged to call upon another physician, Dr. William Tolmie, to attend to the illnesses of his wife and daughters. Inspector General Mansfield mentions this in his 1858 report, "Inspections of Fort Steilacoom":

I will remark here that Asst. Surgeon Wirtz declined by an official note to attend on Col. Casey's family. The Colonel knows of no reason; therefore, I enclosed a copy of the note to Genl. Harney in Command of the Department. (*Ibid.*, p. 117 citing Mansfield)

A note on the cover of Mansfield's report, written by J. B. Floyd, ordered that Wirtz be brought to trial before the General Court Martial.

If action has not already been taken by the commanding officer of the Department of Oregon in the matter reported of Asst. Surgeon Wirtz by Inspector General Mansfield, that officer (Wirtz) will be brought to trial before the General Court Martial appointed in Special Orders No. 35 from the Adjutant General's office on the charge of "conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline," with two specifications, first that he neglected and failed to give medical attendance to the family of Colonel Casey when called on, second that he refused to give such attendance when required. The Judge Advocate will prepare such special instructions for the Judge Advocate of the Court as the case may require. A

copy of the duties of medical officers will be furnished to the Department Commander and to the Judge Advocate of the Court for his guidance. J. B. Floyd, Secretary of War, War Dept., 5 May 1859. (*Ibid.* p. 125)

Apparently, Dr. Wirtz decided to abide by duties of medical officers after he appeared before the Court Martial, because he remained in the army.

Little is known about the doctor after his assignment at Fort Steilacoom, except that he served at Fort Chehalis, was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel after the Civil War, and died in January of 1874.

In spite of Human frailties, Dr. Horace Wirtz met the medical needs of the Fort Steilacoom community. Dr. Wirtz's life is an example of the difficulties of those who served on the frontier during the early years of the territory.

Bibliography:

Bonney, W. P., *History of Pierce County Washington*, Pioneer Historical Publishing Co., 1920.

Kautz, August V., "Nothing Worthy of Note Transpired Today," *The Northwest Journals of August V. Kautz*, edited by Gary Fuller Reese (Unpublished), Tacoma Public Library, 1978.

Reese, Gary, *A Documentary History of Fort Steilacoom, Washington*, 2nd edition (Unpublished), Tacoma Public Library, 1984.

"Ladies of the Fort"

Every Friday night at 11:00 the docent room light mysteriously blinks off. Tonight, the sewing group is finishing their evening's endeavors and making plans to attend a wholesale fabric show in Seattle. Someone casually comments, "It must be time to go home," and we call an end to another session of sewing, sharing research materials and good company. The resurrected "Ladies of the Fort" (and a few good gentlemen!) sewing circle is once again meeting; Friday evenings in Quarters 4 at 6:00 p.m.

(Continued on page 4)