

Recipes from the 1800s

The following recipes are from several cook books loaned by Joan Curtis and Lou Dunkin.

Venison Hamburger Cochise

Chief Cochise developed a way to make venison hamburger really delicious. This method gives the hamburger a clean, fresh taste, free of the musk odor of venison.

Take three parts of venison free from all fat and sinews. One part of beef suet. Grind them together well. Now mix in one-half level teaspoon of ground nutmeg and 1/8 level teaspoon of ground cloves per pound into the meat.

Buckwheat Cakes

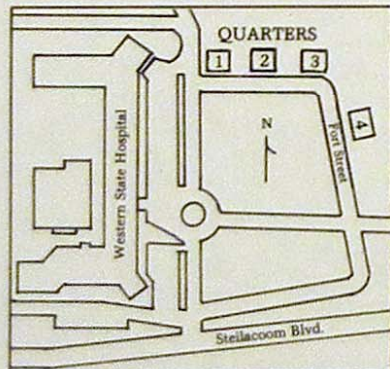
Make a thin batter with warm water, half a cup of yeast, and a quart of buckwheat, with a little salt. Let it stand to rise over night; in the morning, stir in half a teaspoonful of saleratus. Pour on the griddle and bake both sides.

Custard Puddings

Custard puddings for common use can be made with five eggs to a quart of milk, sweetened with brown sugar and spiced with cinnamon or nutmeg and very little salt. It is well to boil your milk and set it away till it gets cold. A little cinnamon or lemon peel or peach leaves boiled in the milk, give a pleasant flavor. Bake fifteen or twenty minutes.

Historic Fort Steilacoom

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Little Chapel (continued from p. 2) church was rededicated and blessed by Bishop Blanchet.

One hundred and thirty-two years later, Immaculate Conception church is still in use. At seven thirty each Sunday morning, a priest—usually from the nearby parish of St. John Bosco—celebrates mass for a standing-room-only congregation of from 80 to 90 souls. It appears that over the years considerable effort has been expended to retain the chapel close to its original condition; although the bell tower, which originally was a little over thirty-three feet high, is now eleven feet shorter. And recently a new porch and steps, com-

plete with extra sturdy handrails extending out to the side walks, were added at the instigation of its congregation. A congregation which appears to consist mostly of long-retired military. So, this chapel, which began with donations from a number of soldiers and a handful of civilians, appears to have come full circle.

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The Little Chapel That Wasn't There

By Raymond Egan

Well, actually it *was* there. Just to the west of Fort Steilacoom's officers' row; less than a hundred yards from the home of the fort's Presbyterian commander, LTC Silas Casey.

But not according to official army reports. There's not even a hint of its existence. It is never mentioned in any reports submitted by the fort's quartermaster, Lt. August Kautz. It doesn't appear on the maps which accompanied Colonel Joseph Mansfield's report of his general inspection of the fort in December, 1858. And it wasn't there according to an unofficial sketch of the fort's layout drawn by Colonel Casey.

But it was most certainly there. In an 1861 photograph of the fort taken from a nearby hill, its bell tower can be seen looming over the buildings next to it. And it was certainly there in December, 1857, when Father Luigi Rossi arrived to take up his post as missionary to Puget's Sound. In his memoirs he tells us that "The soldiers guarding (the fort) are almost all Catholic, and mostly Irish. With the help of civilians they had built a little chapel for the celebration of the holy mysteries whenever a priest would come to visit them." Because of the chapel, and its congregation of almost sixty faithful, Father Rossi decided to live at the fort and to make it the foundation for his missionary activity on Puget's Sound. (Rossi, 130)

When was it built? Which civilians? Who paid for it? Fortunately, the answers may be conveniently found in the Master's degree thesis of Sister



Immaculate Conception Church sometime after it was reconstructed next to the Sisters of Providence convent school in the town of Steilacoom.

Carol Ann Gimple S.H.N., entitled *Immaculate Conception Mission, Steilacoom, Washington*. She wrote it in 1951 while pursuing a graduate degree in history at Seattle University.

We can infer that the chapel was completed sometime in late 1856 from two letters written by Ordnance Sergeant William H. Archbold. This officious native of Kilkenny, Ireland, was, from all evidence, very likely a self-appointed promoter of the chapel's construction. (Rossi, 140)

The letters were written to Bishop A.M.A. Blanchet, whose "Nesqually" diocese included all Catholics between the Cascade Mountains and the Pacific Ocean from the Columbia River to the "English" border.

In his first letter written on January 8, 1857, Archbold complains about the failure of most of the local civilian Catholics to contribute to the chapel building fund.

There are about 16 citizens (Catholics) in this vicinity and I only got a small sum of money from five of them; it can not be expected, then that they would contribute to the support of a Pastor, whereas they will not give any money for the building of a church.

On another, but related topic, he goes on to say:

There is no house built that a priest might live in, and the two rooms attached to the church behind the altar are not fit for a Gentr. as they

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President's Message

Happy New Year!

We hope that you survived the recent snow and ice at least as well as your museum did. although the hospital grounds are badly littered with storm debris, your museum buildings escaped virtually unscathed.

Given the amount of news and articles, my letter will be short and to the point: Thank you volunteers. Thank you Lyle Dunkin, Chuck Collier and Jack Langston for the 31 lanterns that lit our Christmas at Fort Steilacoom so brightly. And thank you for all the painting and other maintenance.

Thank you Board members for your commitment, dedication and hard work. For each year we are offering Lakewood and Pierce County more and better programs, events and insights into our local history.

Thank you Morrie Pedersen and the Pierce College Chamber Choir and Jim Kelsey and the Pioneer Middle School Choir for charming us all at Colonel Casey's Christmas party.

And thank you Dr. Jerry Dennis, Superintendent, for your great encouragement, interest and support.

Raymond J. Egan

Little Chapel (continued from page 1)

are too small and uncomfortable to live in. (Gimpl, 24)

Interestingly, Fr. Rossi never referred to what was probably a lean-to, but tells us that "With the generous help of my doctor and some of the officers in the fort, we gathered about a hundred francs (\$20) to build a hut behind the chapel for my use. In three days my new abode—measuring twenty feet by ten—was ready. It was divided into two rooms; an entry, used as sitting room, study, dining-room, etc., and another smaller room for my bed. (Rossi, 143)

Archbold's second letter, July 12th, 1857, is to Bishop A.M.A. Blanchet.

The Right Revd Dr. Blandchett (sic)
 Bishop of Nisqually (sic)
 Vancouver W.T.

Most Rev'd Sir,

Enclosed I have the honor to transmit an account of Funds received and expended by me for the Church at this Post.

I intend having a picket fence, four and a half feet high, made around the church, to prevent hogs from getting under it; I am also having the windows, doors and belfry painted green, as the building is whitewashed, this being done I shall have nothing more to say or do with it.

Respectfully Sir
 Your most humble servant
 Wm. H. Archbold
 Ord Sergt U.S.A.

An examination of the "account of funds" reveals that the first collection was made in 1855, so perhaps the chapel was begun the same year. The contributors, all listed by name, were mostly Irish soldiers. Of the \$542.00 raised, \$78.50 was contributed by eight civilians (not five as reported by Archbold) and \$100 was received from Bishop Blanchet.

Among the payments listed was one for \$142 to "Bird" for lumber and another to Byrd for lumber. Probably in both cases the lumber was bought at Byrd's sawmill; Archbold's spelling tended to be creative.

Cost overruns are evidently not just a 20th century phenomenon.

At the bottom of the report, Archbold notes:

Total amount received by subscription from Soldiers and Citizens	\$542.00
Total amount Expended on the Building	<u>554.36</u>
Balance due Sergt Archbold	<u>\$ 12.36</u>

One can be certain that Archbold was reimbursed for the balance due. As his correspondence with the Bishop reveals, he was clearly not a silent sufferer. Moreover, this is also the same sergeant to whom his soldiers—who were paid only once every four months—often came for a loan to tide them over. As Fr. Rossi tells us, Archbold did lend them the money, but "Before loosening his purse strings, he went to the trouble of giving them a pious exhortation, after which he gave them what they wanted...for a consideration which illustrated his selfishness, a consideration of never less than a fifty or sixty percent interest rate." (Rossi, 131)

The next major milestone in the history of the chapel occurred in December, 1863. A month earlier, the Sisters of Providence of Charity had established a convent school in Steilacoom. As the sisters state in their chronicles:

The modest chapel which harbored the King of kings was in the center of the garrison one and one half miles from their (the sisters') house. Nevertheless at the solicitation of the Sisters, a Canadian sergeant and his confreres interested themselves in the situation and decided in favor of the Sisters, that the said chapel should be immediately divided into five or six parts and transported to the land next to the residence of the Sisters. Some reasons, which it would be useless to report here, hindered the reconstruction for nearly six long months. (Gimpl, 75)

On April 23, 1864, the Puget Sound Herald noted that: "The work on the new Catholic church is steadily progressing. It will probably be finished in two months from this date." On June 26, 1864, the reconstructed

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one day's climb, Kautz was already disgusted with the diet. He rejoiced when "the Indian guide, Wahpowety, killed a deer."⁴

The garrison garden provided vegetables for the troops. Colonel Joseph Mansfield explains in his 1858 report:

An excellent garden is on a reserve about four miles (away as the crow flies). It gives abundant vegetables for both summer and winter. Each company has 500 bushels of potatoes for the winter besides other vegetables. The vegetables for the sick (are also) obtained from the general garden.⁵

According to *Soapsuds to Sunday School*:

Early vegetables in pioneer gardens would include peas, beets, carrots, cucumbers, onions, early potatoes, lettuce, radishes, tomatoes and cabbage. Fall vegetables were squash, pumpkins, green beans, turnips, potatoes, parsnips and squash.⁶

Lieutenant Kautz also "started a small garden...on the border of the little Lake (Waughop) half a mile south of the post."⁷

Though some food was provided by trading, hunting, fishing and gardening, contracts were let to supply beef, pork and other commodities. The quartermaster accepted bids from the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Nisqually, Steilacoom tradesmen, farmers in the surrounding area and others.⁸

The chief factor at Fort Nisqually, Dr. Tolmie, on January 1, 1850, agreed with Sergeant Hall (of Fort Steilacoom) to exchange fresh beef for salt pork. In May of 1853 two entries in the *Fort Nisqually Journal* note other transactions.

Thursday 12th...Dr. Tolmie made a contract today with Lieut. Slaughter, Quartermaster, U.S. Infantry Steilacoom to supply the Company of troops with beef at nineteen cents per pound.

Tuesday 26th We supply the post now with 500 lbs. of beef weekly.

Fort Nisqually also supplied the army with other items. On August

28, 1849, "...Charles Ross who has been employed since Monday, (was) sent to Steilacoom today with some shingles and wine for the officers."⁹

When commissary officer Lieutenant Kautz opened the proposals for beef on June 22, 1857, he received three bids. One from Dr. Tolmie, another from Meeker, and the lowest bid from Mr. Hurd of Olympia. Kautz closed the beef contract with Mr. Hurd for 13 1/2 cents per pound.¹⁰

Food prices paid by the army listed in Colonel Joseph K. F. Mansfield's 17 December 1858 report were:

flour \$13.80 per bushel; beef at 18 cents the pound; sugar 15 cents and crushed sugar 18 1/2 cents.

The flour contract was given in 1857 to Judge Chambers who operated a mill in Steilacoom.

Some supplies came on ships to Steilacoom from California and other parts. Lt. Kautz noted that on August 27, 1857, "The *Constitution* brought all the stores that were not thrown overboard and which were...invoiced." September 8, 1857, Kautz received seventy-five tons of commissary stores from the *Sea Bird*. These supplies usually came from Fort Vancouver, Washington, or Benicia Barracks near San Francisco. He also bought fresh "melons, grapes, etc." from the *Sea Bird's* cargo for a very expensive price.¹²

Fruit was readily available locally from the Nathaniel Orr and Philip Keach orchards in Steilacoom and at Fort Nisqually where a large variety of apples, pears, plums, cherries and grapes were grown.¹³ A plentiful supply of local wild berries provided additional fruit.

The abundance of food obtained for the fort was prepared in the soldiers' and officers' kitchens and served in the mess halls. The enlisted men's kitchen and mess, located at the rear of the two large barracks, was usually managed by a sergeant. A sergeant was also assigned to the garrison bakery.

The officers hired women to cook. Mary, Lieutenant W. A. Slaughter's

wife, cooked for them from 1853 to September of 1855.

Fort Steilacoom officers entertained and fed a host of dignitaries. Hudson's Bay and government officials, army and navy officers, friends, their ladies and others often accepted officers' hospitality. Their tables were filled with the best money could buy, especially during the Christmas and New Year's season.

The *Puget Sound Herald* reports that on Tuesday, December 25, 1868:

Everybody and military seemed to have made preparations in advance for a fitting celebration.

At the garrison the day was observed in the usual social manner; the officers providing tables laden with all the luxuries of the market; and making welcome all whom inclination might lead to visit them.¹⁴

These diaries and reports reflect an army lifestyle that, though difficult in some ways, succeeded because of the helpfulness of the Indians, cooperation and trade with the settlers, and the abundant resources of the land.

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Fort Steilacoom Soldiers and Dependents Lived off the Bounty of the Land

By Carol Neufeld

The beauty and natural resources of the Steilacoom area provided a pleasant place to live for the Indians, settlers, and soldiers. Early army and Hudson's Bay reports indicate that the soldiers, especially the officers, lived a good and satisfying life in spite of the hardships of pioneer times.

Lieutenant Kautz pictures the scene when he first arrived in May, 1853:

Mt. Rainier was in full view. In the vicinity were several beautiful lakes, while we were supplied with water by springs. About a mile distant was the townsite of Steilacoom, where boats landed and ships anchored and a store had been located.

Ft. Nisqually, the Hudson Bay trading post, was about seven miles to the south. Several farmers had taken up donation claims on...fertile spots within a few miles of the fort.

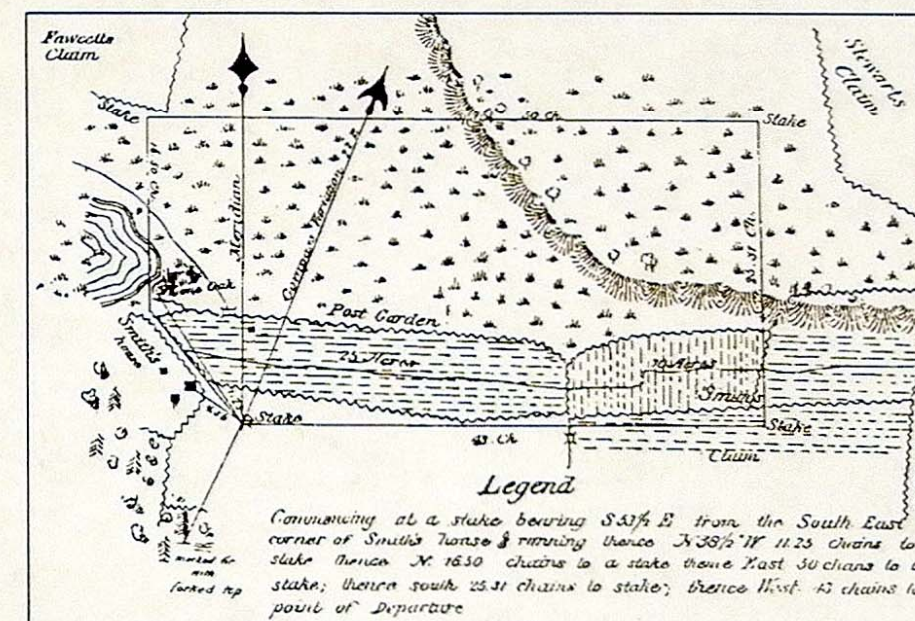
A day or two after my arrival I went...to the mouth of the creek and had my first sight of the Sound....The snow clad Olympics were in...view.

Later as twilight came (we saw) the Indians gliding in their canoes, spearing for fish, of which there was great abundance.¹

Lieutenant E. P. Alexander remembers his stay at the fort in 1860 as "the last of my youth."

The past was a very pleasant one, the woods and waters abounded in game and fish, the climate was mild and open. Indeed we nearly lived on game and fish.

He recounts numerous hunting and fishing stories. Once a week he rode down to where Tacoma is now situated. Then he paddled around the flats and creeks of the Puyallup River with an Indian guide. He would shoot ducks along the way and afterwards hunt for pheasants in the crab apple thicket next to Mrs. DeLin's.



Fort Steilacoom's 126 acre garden reserve was located about four miles from the fort.

For trout he walked to a little stream in a ravine a mile north of the fort where he caught a fine string of brook trout in a short time.

Alexander reminisces:

At least twice a week I would get up long before day...and be on the other side of the lake (five miles southeast of the fort) to get a shot at geese....One afternoon I brought in seven.²

The local Indians gave, traded or sold food items and taught army officers how to find and prepare them. Lieutenant Kautz notes that:

We had a large supply of rejected potatoes from the post garden. They were too small for our use, but the Indians were fond of them and brought us all the clams, fish, and game we wanted in exchange for the little tubers.

While on a trip to the southern sound to discover who was selling liquor to Indians, Lieutenant Kautz records:

May 23, 1853. We purchased fish and clams from the Indians....We con-

cocted a chowder this evening. Potatoes, clams, fish and onions formed the ingredients, and we all had good appetite.

May 25, 1853. A fair wind carried us a mile beyond Point-no-Point. We were unloading the boat...when the doctor (Haden) who had gone to shoot ducks, came running toward us, crying..."Bear" and "Musket." We hurried to the boat and came within forty or fifty yards (of the bear)...I blazed away....When we reached him he was quite dead. We dragged our prize ashore and spent the evening dressing the bear and discussing him.

May 27, 1853... We returned by way of Point Wilson. We failed to see any bear...but we killed a few grouse. Mr. Hasting's...wife had prepared a dinner of native products....There was clam soup, a saddle of bear which I had sent up, fresh bread, butter and buttermilk and current and gooseberry pies.³

When Kautz and other officers from the fort climbed Mt. Rainier in July, 1857, they each took twenty-four crackers and a few pounds of dried meat. On July 11th, after only