

## Renovation of Ft. Steilacoom Officers' Quarters

by Chuck Collier

The four remaining officers' quarters were used as housing for some of Western State Hospital staff until the mid 1960s, then sat empty for nearly twenty years. During the time of use many alterations and improvements were made to the houses. Steam heat from the central hospital system was installed along with plumbing and bath rooms. Some partitions were moved and new flooring was installed twice. We removed as many as 13 layers of wallpaper from some rooms.

Lt. Kautz, in his diary, stated that the carpenters were hired from the civilian population throughout the Puget Sound region. Apparently the lead carpenters, following the general plans, built as they knew how, as three types of construction were used in the four buildings. Quarters 1 and 3 were built without plates. The studs are nailed directly to the ceiling joists and rafters. In Quarters 2 the studs are mortised into the support timbers, and the outer walls and both walls of the hallway are filled with brick (nogging), common to New England construction. Quarters 4 has wood on wood construction. The outside walls consist of an inner layer of horizontal planks of

various widths up to 22" and an outer layer of vertical planks.

During restoration, beginning in 1983, we found that the buildings were very well built. All of the outside corners of Quarters 1, 2, and 3 are braced by a 4" X 4" diagonal mortised into the corner post and secured with a wooden peg.

The construction lumber was rough-cut fir. The studs were a full 2" X 4" or 3" X 4" in size, the rafters were 2" X 6", and the ceiling joists 2" X 10".

The second floors of all four quarters have wooden walls and ceilings. The lumber was tongue and groove, planned on one side, but varied in width from board to board. Some pieces even varied in thickness from one end to the other. Kautz complained in his diary about the quality of some of the lumber. The boards are knot free and almost always extend from wall to wall to avoid splices or butt joints. A good example of this can be seen above the stairway in Quarters 2.

The buildings were originally heated by a fireplace in each major room. Quarters 2 had eight fireplaces, and the other quarters have four each. They were built mostly with brick made at the fort. They were of poor quality by today's standards. They were soft and contained some fairly

large pebbles. The fireplaces are shallow, we suspect to make them more efficient, and have no dampers. A one-quarter square mile wood reserve was located just south of the fort. A wood detail must have been a daily activity to supply so many fireplaces.

We attempted to restore Quarters 1 as it was when built. In the other buildings we moved the partitions back to the original locations, and restored the buildings to a useable condition.

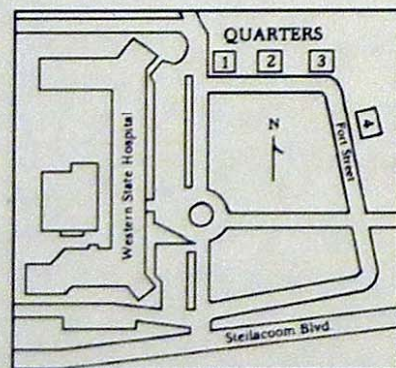
In Quarters 1 we removed two layers of flooring installed by the hospital. Maple flooring, 3/8" X 2", was apparently installed in the early 1930s, as we found a metal state sales tax token under it. A fir flooring, 3/4" X 4", was then removed to get to the original floor. It was put in about 1910, as some Tacoma News Tribune papers of that date were found under it.

The original fir flooring is the 1" X 6" tongue and groove laid on a 2" X 10" and 2" X 12" sub-floor, and in the same direction as the sub-floor. Boards nailed to the same sub-floor plank stay together with only a narrow crack. As the planks shrunk over time, wider cracks appeared as the boards pulled apart. The wider cracks now appear between every two or three flooring boards.

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### Historic Fort Steilacoom

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# Fort Steilacoom

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## Reconstruction of Fort Steilacoom-1857-1858

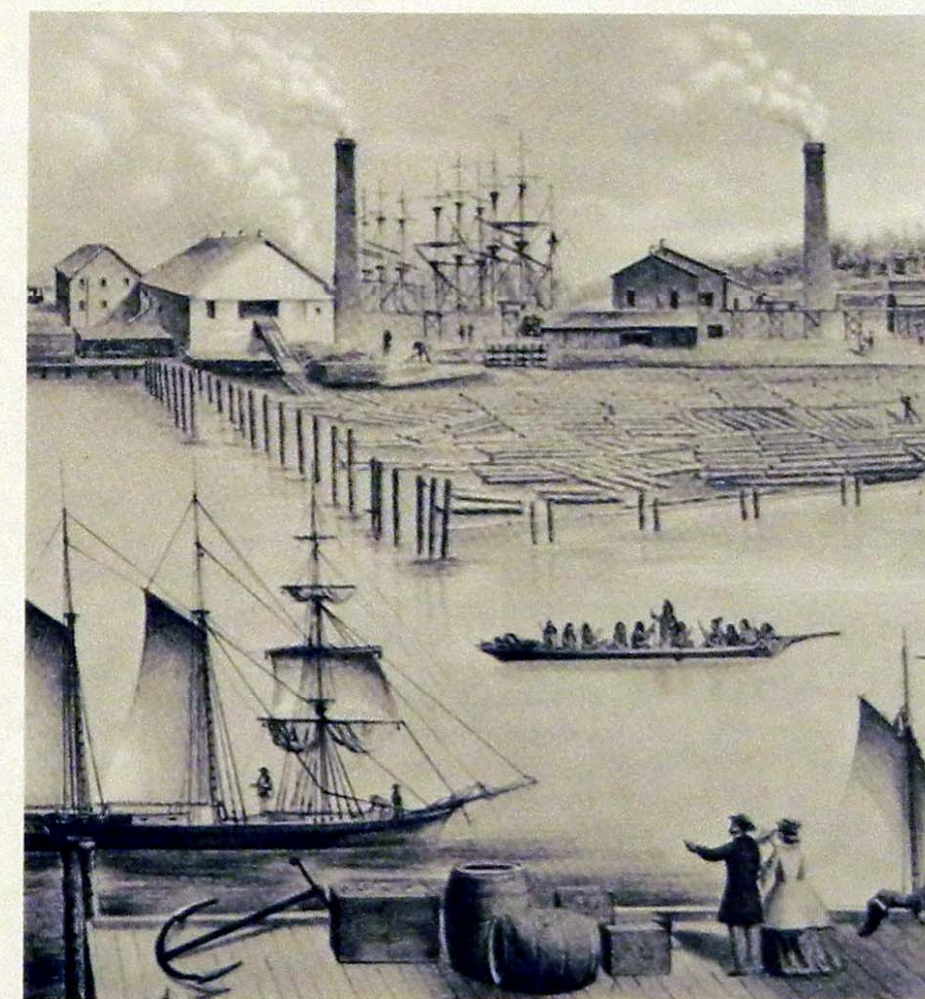
by Carol E. Neufeld

Lt. August V. Kautz, quartermaster in charge of the 1857-58 reconstruction of Fort Steilacoom, completed the task in just over a year in spite of disagreements with his commanding officer, delays of the War Department, bad weather and difficulty obtaining materials and laborers.

After Lieutenant Kautz recovered from his Mt. Rainier climb and returned to quartermaster duties in June 1857, he was ready to construct the new buildings. Though the good summer weather passed without permission from the War Department to begin the project, Lt. Kautz kept busy supervising the installation of a hydraulic water system.

The first problem Lt. Kautz encountered was a difference of opinion with his superior, Major Maurice Maloney. Lt. Kautz maintained that because he was in charge of reconstruction he should issue work orders. Major Maloney, as commanding officer, constantly gave conflicting orders. This continued until the major was replaced by Colonel Casey. Lt. Kautz expresses his views on July 28, 1857.

I was exceedingly put out. I have gone to a great deal of trouble about a water ram, and applied to the Chief Q.M. for pipe and ordered a ram of Mr. Ayers, and now that I have requested Mr. Ayers to come and put it up, the Capt. tells me he will not approve of it and I must get permission from below. He has heard of all my plans about the ram and could have said that he would not approve of it, but tells me at the



Pope and Talbot sawmill in Port Gamble, Washington Territory, which supplied some of the lumber to build permanent structures at Fort Steilacoom.

last moment. He is constantly interfering with my duty directing the men and I never know what they are doing. (p. 71)

By July 31, 1857, Kautz decided:

I have come to the conclusion to manage the Q. Masters Department myself as it is expected of me by

regulations. I suppose there will be a row, but now is as good a time as any, as it has got to come.

August 1<sup>st</sup> 1857, Sa. Soon after breakfast I had a talk with Capt. Maloney about my duties as Q.M. and some warm words passed. I told him that he had been managing

(Continued on page 4)



## HISTORIC FORT STEILACOOM ASSOCIATION

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### From the President

I hope this letter finds you in good health and happiness. With all due respect to January, I prefer to think of spring as the start of the year. You've got to love the longer days—or daylight, if you want to be technical—and the delightful blooms.

And spring gives us something to think about besides natural disasters. As you can imagine and perhaps have seen, our dear buildings took a bit of a tumble during the earthquake. A number of items were shaken, but we sustained no serious damage to goods. A lot of plaster got cracked. And you may have noticed while driving by that the chimneys on the bachelor officers' quarters were badly damaged. You can be assured our landlords at Western State Hospital are aware of what happened with the chimneys and are working with the proper authorities for repairs.

There are two aspects of the chimney damage that I find most interesting. First, as Chuck Collier points out, the chimneys that showed damage were part of the modern reconstruction. The historic chimneys stood tall. That's kind of satisfying. Second, you'll notice that the bricks that were ejected did not fall as you would have expected. You'd think they would pop out, slide down the roof and land in one spot. Instead, they burst forth like water from a sprinkler, going in all directions. They landed in no clear pattern, as

if they'd been hurled from a giant salt shaker. This reminds me of life—predictable in some ways, delightfully and un-nervingly unpredictable in others.

But let us return to the mundane matter of building repairs. Spring is the season when we traditionally ask you to pay your membership dues, which will be most welcome this year. Do please fill out the enclosed card and send in your check. As you can imagine, we'll be spending some of the money on plaster and other materials needed for earthquake repairs.

Of course, there are advantages to you besides the satisfaction of preserving history. Don't forget that a membership entitles you, and a family membership entitles your family, to a free admission to the Memorial Day Civil War Reenactment. Our own Tom Melberg has been leading the planning by the Washington Civil War Association, and this promises to be a very lively year. There are more planned activities this year, both at the fort and in the field.

This gives us high hopes for the event. Last year's attendance was down a bit; no surprise since it had to compare with several previous years with good weather. Last year we either had rain and wind, or the threat of rain and wind, and both affected people's plans for the day. Hopefully, this year we can look forward to hosting the expected 5,000 or so.

Some of you will get a call asking for volunteers to help out. As you know, our staffing of the front gate at the reenactment is our major source of funds for the year. It's what allows us to pay our insurance bills—and when you have responsibility for a bunch of wood buildings that don't have sprinklers, you take your insurance bill very seriously.

We also, of course, staff the fort buildings during the re-enactment. Now, our volunteer list is nothing systematic, and consists of handwritten sheets and Post-Its. If you'd like to help out and did not get a

call, don't be offended. Give me a call at (253) 468-8956. Training is provided, and I can guarantee you will be working with a nice group of people. We all get involved in the fort because we love history—but it is the friendships and camaraderie we build in the present day that are the most satisfying rewards.

Walter Neary

## Membership Month

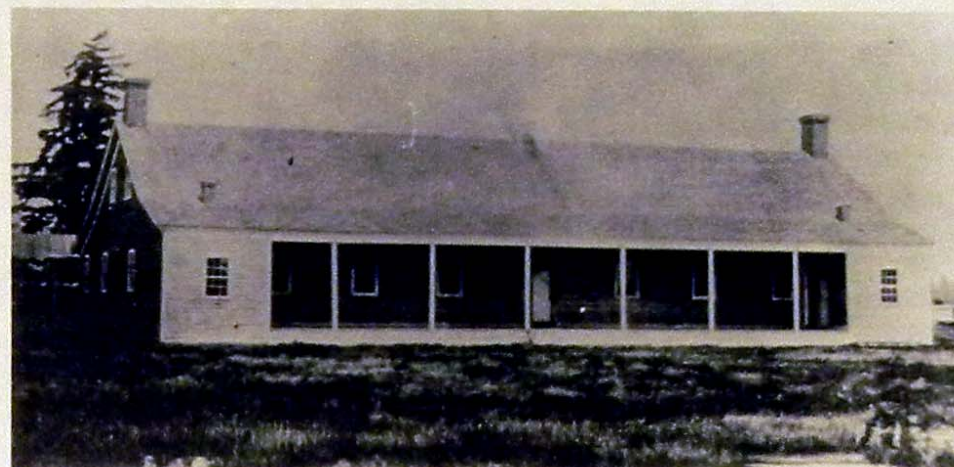
April is our annual membership month, a time to renew your commitment to Fort Steilacoom and help preserve its history. Please fill out the enclosed membership form and mail it with your selected dues payment to Historic Fort Steilacoom Association, P.O. Box 88447, Steilacoom, WA 98388.

In addition to supporting Fort Steilacoom, your membership will give you **free admission** to the 3-day Civil War reenactment at Fort Steilacoom Park during the coming Memorial Day weekend.

The Fort Steilacoom buildings, Sutler's Store and museum will be open during the Memorial Day weekend from noon until 5 p.m. There will be special children's activities beginning at 1 p.m. and, on Sunday at 4 p.m., a talk by Nancy Covert about "Early Pacific Northwest Newspapers."

Throughout the rest of the spring and summer the Fort Steilacoom Museum complex and Interpretive Center will be open from 1-4 p.m. each Sunday until Labor Day.

Your continued support of Fort Steilacoom is much needed and appreciated.



*This barracks was constructed for troops at Fort Steilacoom.*

Throughout the year of reconstruction, Kautz writes repeatedly of problems and delays.

**November 4, 1857. W.** I have difficulty in keeping the men employed, as I have not lumber sufficient to keep them all at work....(p. 111)

**November 17.** I have teams employed hauling lumber from the wharf, but they go along very slowly and the men do not pile it up properly. (p. 116)

**December 16. W.** The carpenters' progress, but slowly, with their work. There is much rain and unpleasant weather. (p. 127)

**December 17. Th.** I had a settlement with Dr. Webber. He was offended because I informed him in reply to his promise of lumber that it was anything but good lumber, as it was very badly sawed. There are few pieces of the same thickness or of one thickness throughout. (p. 131)

In December 1857, Colonel Casey took command of Fort Steilacoom. Though he did not usurp Lt. Kautz's authority in the way Maloney had, Kautz writes:

The Colonel is monopolizing all the workmen to make (his quarters) comfortable. (p. 135)

Work was also slower because

"the sills...were hewn by hand. Many of them were too long to be cut by Byrd's sawmill. They were a foot square. The studding was fas-

tened to them by the now obsolete mortise and tenon method. For the chimneys Stephen Judson (of Steilacoom) made the brick, hauling clay from the hillsides a considerable distance away. His brother, John Paul, served as teamster and hauled lumber to the fort." (Hunt, p. 34)

In spite of slow progress, "C" and "H" companies moved their quarters into a new building on January 4<sup>th</sup> 1858.

**February 8, 1858.** I am at a loss how to get lumber down from Olympia. I have been looking for means of transportation for some time. (p. 150)

**February 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>.** The bad weather has stopped or...very much retarded the work of the carpenters....The snow is 15" deep and still falling....(p. 170)

**March 19<sup>th</sup>.** Some of the carpenters are going to quit work, which will delay the quarters very much. (p. 171)

**April 15<sup>th</sup>.** Many of my men are quitting to go to the (gold) mines. (p. 179)

**May 14<sup>th</sup>.** When I returned to the garrison I found that all the carpenters had struck for higher wages....I immediately decided to go down the Sound and back up with other men. (p. 187)

By May 31, 1858, the quarters were progressing well with 24 carpenters working on them. (p. 198)

**August 12<sup>th</sup>.** Some lumber I sent some men to bring down Chambers Creek to be hauled to the garrison has broken away and been caught by Mr. Riley down the Sound. The men deny it. They say no lumber has broken loose from them. They are evidently misrepresenting. (p. 231)

**August 13<sup>th</sup>.** In the afternoon I rode over to Judge Chambers to find out about the lumber....We could learn nothing...about it. I sent Swan & Riley to have the lumber sent up. (p. 231)

When Lt. Kautz left Fort Steilacoom on October 15, 1858, to report to the army detachment of the Boundary Commission at Semiahmoo, the reconstruction was almost finished.

The water ram supplied water for the garrison; the officers quarters, complete with brick chimneys, were occupied; the soldiers of companies "C" and "H" had moved to their barracks; and meals were served in the new mess hall.

### An Invitation

You are invited to come and tour the four remaining buildings. Beginning on Memorial Day, the fort will be open from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. each Sunday.

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# 8<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL EVENT

## TACOMA / LAKEWOOD

# PRESENTS

# CIVIL WAR

# RE-ENACTMENT

# BATTLES & ENCAMPMENT

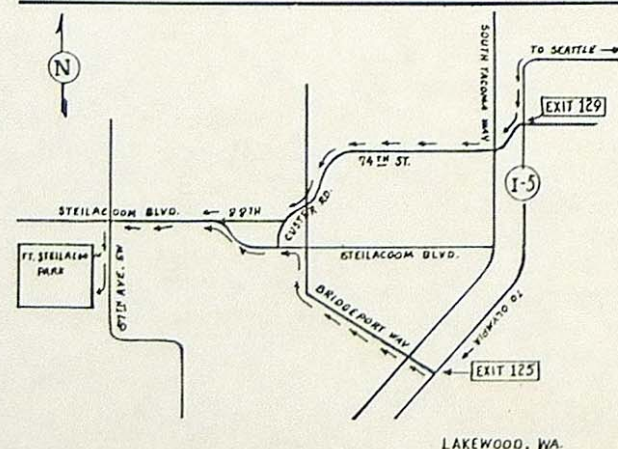
- LIVING HISTORY 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- BATTLES Sat. & Sun. 11 a.m. & 3 p.m., & Mon. 11 a.m.
- CIVILIAN LIFE in the 1860s
- TOURS of FORT STEILACOOM Historic Buildings 12-5 p.m.
- MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE, May 28 after battle

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### Reconstruction, 1857-8 (continued)

the Q. Master's department for some time, and particularly in the last month that I did not like his way of managing it and, as I am the responsible person, I propose to manage it myself hereafter. He protested that he had been exercising no control except that he had a right to exercise, that he had looked after the men because I had neglected to do so, and challenged me to cite an instance where he had interfered. I pointed out several instances where I had put men at one kind of work and he had put them at something else. This he claimed as I protested that he could order me, but that he had no right to order my men. He said I was a fool, that he was commanding officer and could order anybody at the post....He denied that he said I was a fool, he had used the term that it was foolish. He said that the reason he had ordered the men was because I never could be found, and that perhaps the work required to be done immediately. I afterwards told him that...I could be seen three times a day at meals at any rate, and I flattered myself that I was about the garrison at other times.

(I said) if he wished anything done to do it through me, that I wished to have exclusive control of my own men and that when I put them at work I wanted to know that they were doing what I directed, and I did not wish to find that he had put them at something else. He became very angry and said he was commanding officer and that he would not take it (such talk)...(p. 73)

In August the work on the water ram continued, but because of conflict with Captain Maloney, Lt. Kautz asked to be relieved of quartermaster duties.

**August 12th 1857, W.** Mr. Ayers came down today and I put the entire force that I could and commenced to put up the hydraulic ram. I was quite busy attending to the workmen and keeping them employed. Mr. Ayers thinks I shall have no difficulty in supplying the garrison with plenty of water.

**August 13<sup>th</sup>, F.** The ram does not work yet. I shall be obliged to send for Mr. Ayers again. I am inclined to



Quartermaster's residence and office was one of the new structures built at Fort Steilacoom by Kautz in 1858.

think that the position of the pipe is the cause of its not working. We shall probably be compelled to resort to some other convenience. It will perhaps be necessary to elevate a reservoir and require the water to free itself. (p. 77)

**August 13<sup>th</sup>. Th.** Busy all day again with the ram. We got the thing to operate, but it was late when we got it started. There will be considerable work on it tomorrow. It does not furnish quite so much water as I expected. The Capt. is exceedingly jealous of the ram. He is joking about ever other portion of the Q.M. department, but he has not gone near the ram. He would be much pleased if it did not work, I think. I received this morning an order of Capt. Maloney to discharge the brick makers. I protested against their discharge, as it leaves me with 40 thousand unburnt brick on hand and no means to burn them.

I also applied to be relieved from the duties of Quartermaster. He endorsed both with his disapproval. My protest sent forth the necessity of having more brick, the difference of the expense between a small kiln and a larger one, and the part that if I discharged the men that I would have no one to finish the kiln. None of the points at issue, however, are

answered by his endorsement, and I will probably have to apply to the Chief Q.M. to help me out of this trouble. (p. 78)

Finally, on October 12, 1857, Kautz received a letter from Col. Swords authorizing the erection of new buildings.

He writes me an unofficial note saying that if I still desired to be relieved he would urge the Gen. to relieve me, but in that there will soon be a change in commanding officers and that I had better let matters take their own course. He sends me \$7,000 deposited with the Asst. Treasurer in San Francisco. I was quite busy this afternoon, as I want to close up my papers and take a trip down the Sound to order lumber. (p. 97)

Kautz purchased lumber from Chambers' mill at Steilacoom, Mr. Meigs at Port Madison, and Balch and Webber at Sequelitchew. Crosbys at Tumwater provided lumber, shingles, and fences. From Olympia he received window sashes, doors, shingles and cedar lumber. Puget Mill shipped several thousand feet of tongue and grove lumber, lath and pickets.