



Old Fort Steilacoom cemetery where John Nugen and William Slaughter were originally buried.

March 21, 1890, with the rank of Major General, a hero of the Civil War and famous for his successes against the Sioux, Cheyenne, Crow, Shoshone and Apache Indians. He was sixty. August V. Kautz died September 4, 1895, a Brigadier General. He had been a hero in the Civil War and a member of

Lt. John Nugen (from page 3)

We do not know if ever Mary received the letter forwarded to her by Kautz from John Nugen. In his book about the life of Lieutenant Slaughter by Joseph Koch he states that Mary died “of a broken heart” at the age of 30 on January 3, 1862, and is buried in a family plot at Woodlawn Cemetery in Port Huron.

And what of the other Ohio classmates who moved up rapidly in the Civil War that closed down Fort Steilacoom only four years after Nugen’s death? Philip Sheridan died on August 5, 1888, with the rank of General, only one of four in U.S. history at that time (Washington, Grant, Sherman and Sheridan). He was fifty-seven. George Crook died

the military commission who judged those accused in the assassination plot of President Lincoln and was the journal keeper who recorded the everyday life at Fort Steilacoom, including the last sad days of his friend John Nugen. He was sixty-five.

Lieutenant John Nugen was buried at Fort Steilacoom, but his body, along with others, including that of Captain William Alloway Slaughter, was moved to the Presidio in San Francisco and re-interred on February 1, 1896, a day before what would have been his sixty-sixth birthday (Section Os Row 60 Site 7). Captain Slaughter is two spaces away (Section Os Row 60 Site 5).

References and comments:

Joseph Koch, *William Alloway Slaughter, Lt., US Army 1827-1855, Frontier Soldier*, Privately printed, White River Valley Historical Society, 1991.

Gary Fuller Reese, Editor, *The Northwest Journals of August V. Kautz*, Unpublished, Tacoma Public Library, August 1978.

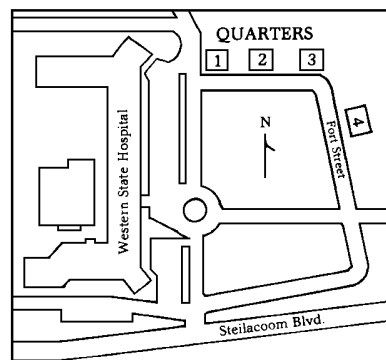
Brevet: A commission giving a military officer higher nominal rank than that for which he receives pay. *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*.

“Liberty on the Border”

Visitors can see “Liberty at the Border” at the Washington State Historical Museum in Tacoma from now until September 10, 2006. This exhibit offers a fresh approach to Civil War history by exploring the concepts of liberty, race, and borders—geographical, cultural, and ideological. Visitors will see the coming of war, its battlefields, its home fronts, and its legacy through the era of Martin Luther King, Jr., and beyond. Featuring artifacts, archival documents, broadsides, ephemera, lithographs, videos, and photographs, the exhibit invites viewers to connect history with their own lives. A special section shows how the issues of liberty, race and borders played out in the formative years of our own state of Washington.

Historic Fort Steilacoom

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Lt. John Nugen 1830-1857

by Anne Timmons Marshall



Lt. G. W. Crook, Cadet P. H. Sheridan, Lt. John Nugen

The author, Anne Timmons Marshall of La Jolla, California, is the great-great granddaughter of Robert Hunter Nugen (1809-1872), the uncle of John Nugen, Superintendent of the Ohio Canal at Newcomerstown and U.S. Representative in the 37th Congress (March 4, 1861 to March 3, 1863.)

He was twenty-seven years old when he died of consumption and among his belongings was a proposal of marriage to Mary Wells Slaughter, widow of the fallen commander of Fort Steila-

coom, Washington Territory, Captain William Alloway Slaughter.

John Nugen was born in Columbiana County, Ohio, on February 2, 1830. When quite young he moved with his parents, James and Sarah Nugen, to Newcomerstown, Tuscarawas County, Ohio. He was the oldest of eight children by the time he was nominated for an appointment to West Point in May 1847 by Congressman John D. Cummins, Democrat, of Ohio 16th District (1845-49).

Newcomerstown was a frontier town with about 300 residents. His application to the Academy stated that he was eighteen years old, five feet eight inches high and “in all respects well formed and proportional and is physically and mentally perfectly sound and healthy and vigorous.” The application also stated that he was “a good English school lad, in reading, writing grammar and arithmetic” and this was signed by twenty-one of the townspeople, including his uncle, Robert Hunter Nugen.

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President's Message



Hello to all our fellow friends of Historic Fort Steilacoom. The year is now one quarter gone and it is time for all of us to pack our kits and head out from

our various "winter quarters" and come down to see the Fort. If you have not been here in a while, you will find many things changed and a lot of activity going on. Three rooms of displays have been added since 2004 and much has been re-arranged. We now have a spacious changing room upstairs in Quarters 2. This will make things much more pleasant for our volunteer docents when they go to pick out a historic costume to wear while recreating everyday life at the Fort. A revamping of our acquisitions process is underway with the development of a special area for the documenting and cataloging of donations presented to the museum.

The local Scout troops have been out and the buildings are beginning to really shine as a result of their efforts. Speaking of the buildings, we are calling on all of our members and friends to write their state representatives to call notice to them of the deplorable condition of the Fort Steilacoom roofs. The Board has been busy securing roofing bids and investigating the somewhat stringent construction requirements put forth by the state. We have been



Thirty-one guests and ten reenactors attended Mrs. Casey's tea at Fort Steilacoom on February 5. Steilacoom High School students were servers.

Tea with Mrs. Casey

While football fans were glued to their television sets watching the Super Bowl, some of the women folk were enjoying a social event of the 1850s. Forty-one ladies, including thirty-one guests and ten enactors took tea with Mrs. Silas Casey (Nancy Keller-Scholz) at Fort Steilacoom on February 5, 2006.

They were entertained by Mrs. Casey's two daughters, Bessie (Sarah Comer), who played a violin solo, and Abby (Sarah Pollock), who favored the group with a melodeon piece. Mrs. Batchelder (Karen Haas) sang a song inviting audience participation. Miss Work (Kelli McGowan) of Victoria recited from Jane Austen.

A Fancy Fair silent auction, chaired by Susan Pollock, featured tea items and other things of interest to ladies.

Steilacoom High School students portrayed the serving girls. Nancy Covert, Carol Neufeld Stout, and Nancy Keller-Scholz organized the event.

investigating possible grant sources for this work, but the ultimate responsibility for this construction rests with the state.

Once the roofs are done it will be time to really promote the Fort. It seems that Fort Steilacoom remains "one of the best kept secrets" in the county. We are constantly seeking new media outlets where we can bring notice of this historic asset to the public. Many lectures and events are planned on a monthly basis. Be sure to check out the Fort Steila-

coom web site for details. And finally, remember always that Fort Steilacoom is *your* fort. Come and visit, come and play, but come on down and come often!

C. Gideon Pete

Next Event

April 23: *Silas Casey-An American Warrior*, 2 p.m. in Quarters 2. Ken Morgan will tell about Casey's life as a soldier and military officer.

Lt. John Nugen (from page 1)

He signed his acceptance on March 31, 1848, and began at West Point that July. Among his classmates were other Ohio boys, including George Crook and August V. Kautz, whose journals give us much of what is known about the daily routine of life at Fort Steilacoom. Another Ohio lad, Philip Sheridan, started in the same class but was suspended for a year because of a fistfight and graduated later. The four appear together (Crook, Kautz, Nugen, Sheridan) in the 1850 U.S. census in the town of Cornwall, Orange County, New York.

John Nugen became a Brevet Second Lieutenant in the Second Infantry on July 1, 1852, graduating twenty-eighth in a class of forty-three. Fourteen months later he became a Second Lieutenant in the Fourth Infantry. He was first assigned to Ft. Columbus on Governor Island in New York Harbor.

Before he headed for duty in the West, Lt. Nugen visited Newcomerstown at least once. On July 28, 1853, he attended a wedding there with his friend Philip Sheridan. It was held at a stone house on the edge of town and exists to this day. After the ceremony all the wedding guests, as was the custom, rode behind the newlyweds to their home in nearby Port Washington, six and a half miles further up the Tuscarawas River. According to reports of the family, the two West Point graduates were waving their swords in the air all of the way.

Nugen and Kautz were sent to California, which had been admitted to the United States as a free state September 9, 1850. Nugen was assigned to Benicia, in California's Central Valley east of the Bay Area where the U.S. Army had established an arsenal two years before. He served there with his West Point friend and classmate George Crook. His last assignment before Ft. Steilacoom was at Fort Miller, near present day Fresno. On New Year's Eve 1853 Lieutenant Nugen, who was serving as commander of a

detachment of soldiers sent to observe and control the Yokut Indians, ominously reported that many members of the tribe were ill with malaria and fever. Perhaps this was where he became infected with consumption.

In the autumn of 1852, Captain William Alloway Slaughter, also a West Point graduate, arrived in the Washington Territory to take command of Fort Steilacoom. He and his wife, Mary, sailed from New York, traveling overland through Panama to the Pacific Ocean and to the new assignment on the West Coast with other members of the Fourth Infantry. Lieutenant U. S. Grant wrote letters during the trip to his wife, Julia, that included several references to Captain Slaughter and Mary. He called her "a very nice lady." Upon arrival Captain Slaughter was almost immediately engaged in local problems while Mary Slaughter helped with domestic duties at the fort.

Lieutenant Nugen arrived at Fort Steilacoom in 1854, only a year before Captain Slaughter was killed in action against the Indians at White River on December 4, 1855. He was 28. Mary stayed at the fort until late March when she began the sad journey back to her family in Michigan. From Port Huron, Michigan, she corresponded with Nugen and other friends.

John Nugen's classmate and friend August V. Kautz kept a journal of everyday life at Fort Steilacoom that recorded the activities of the soldiers. There were trips for criminal trials, contacts with friendly Indians and French Missionaries, hunting and fishing, according to Gary Fuller Reese, who edited the journals in the 1970s. Kautz also documented Nugen's last days.

Sunday, August 2, 1857 - Nugen went down the Sound after deserters yesterday.

Tuesday, September 8 - the day was spent in the garrison. Scott and Nugen rode to Olympia and back today.

Tuesday, September 15 - Nugen continues quite sick. He is disposed

to consumption and requires to take great care of himself.

Wednesday, September 16 - Nugen continues sick.

Saturday, September 19 - I was much shocked at the change in Nugen, he is very sick, I thought him a doomed man and I have not been so moved in a long time, as I was to see him today.

Monday, September 28 - Nugen is progressing very slowly.

Thursday, October 1 - We had some more rain today. There is much reason to fear for Nugen, he has relapsed at present and if it continues two or three days he cannot live.

Thursday, October 22 - I took a nap in the afternoon and was awakened up by the intelligence that Nugen was dead. He has been insensible for three days and sinking very rapidly. He died about half past four o'clock. He has sank [sic] so gradually that his death though it falls heavily upon us, it does not shock us. We are all saddened by his death and this is a great gloom upon us. Nugen will be buried tomorrow at 4 o'clock.

Friday, October 23 - The funeral passed off well. Many people attended and some came down from Olympia.

Saturday, October 31 - I wrote to Col. R. H. Nugen, Newcomerstown, Ohio, informing him of his nephew's death.

The next days are peppered with references to John Nugen's belongings and estate. Kautz notes that John Nugen's estate included several hundred dollars and several month's of pay for his heirs.

Monday, December 4 - I arranged Nugen's papers. I found unexpectedly a letter to Mrs. Slaughter dated July 30 which he probably intended to send but did not, perhaps on account of his expected leave of absence and subsequently on account of his sickness. I shall send it to her as it may be valuable to her. He proposes matrimony to her as far as I read the letter.

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