

James M. and his wife, Sarah, entertained guests in their home at Fort Steilacoom. Mary, their daughter, recalled that though she was born in the Steilacoom Hotel that was on the waterfront, the family later moved to Fort Steilacoom to a house located at the place where the women's ward at Western Washington State Hospital once stood. Kautz's diary records:

Jan. 1, 1858 - This day commences another year...We had an elegant lunch at Bachelders and afterwards went over to Chambers for an eggnog.

Jan. 2, 1859 - I spent the evening at Capt. Bachelder['s] where we celebrated the anniversary of his wedding until 12 o'clock.

Apr. 21, 1859 - Called over at Capt. Bachelders where the Capt. turned out some champagne and we had quite a pleasant evening."

The business and social life of the Bachelders also included friends at Fort Nisqually. Edward Huggins in a letter to Clarence Bagley of Seattle wrote:

Mrs. Bachelder was a fine looking woman, and was much liked. Was a particular friend of my wives, and frequently made long visits to Fort Nisqually....He was a great drinker. ...He often accompanied me to Olympia, and would generally fill

himself with whisky before going to bed...he died before reaching 50. He was a strong, hearty looking man, and if he'd lived a sober life, no doubt would have reached a good old age.

After Bachelder died on April 8, 1865, at the age of 47 years and 10 months, Sarah and the children moved to Portland and then to California. The attachment of the family to the home of their youth is shown when years later four of the Bachelder children drove from California to Steilacoom to see old haunts of their childhood. The July 21, 1927, *News Tribune* reported of the visit:

Mrs. Mary Patterson, who claims to be the first white girl born on Puget Sound in Steilacoom in 1850, ...has been touring Washington for the past two weeks, and revisited her old birthplace in Steilacoom and her former home at Fort Steilacoom. Accompanying her are her two brothers, Edward M. Bachelder, Horace W. Bachelder, ... and sister, Mrs. E. F. Cathart....The younger brother, Horace, has not visited Steilacoom since he was a child more than 65 years ago. Mr. Bachelder plans to come back to Steilacoom some day and build a home on his land and spend his last days here.

Though Horace owned land in Bills addition, it is not certain that he ever returned to live in Steilacoom.

James M. Bachelder, the man of many occupations, was an influential figure in early Steilacoom. He faithfully served the public in the elected positions that people had entrusted to him. As a storekeeper he provided necessary goods for both the military and the townspeople.

The Army Sutler *(from page 1)*

During this past summer I joined the Board of Directors at Fort Steilacoom. President Gideon Pete and I talked about the store. We both had the same idea. Wouldn't it be interesting if we could have a display that showed a sutler's store of the 1860s period? The idea was brought to the Board. Work soon began, and now the completed display can be seen in Quarters 3. This gives the public a different look at army life on the post as part of our Living History tours. Stop by and check it out!

Coming event:

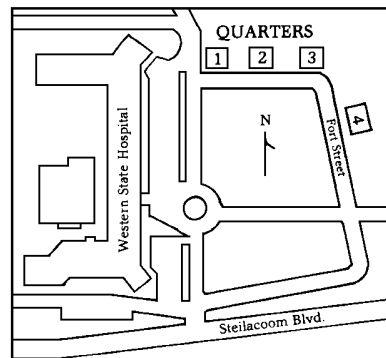
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The Army Sutler

by Lawrence Bateman

From the beginning, where there were armies, there have been camp followers, and one

of these camp followers was the sutler. The army sutler was a merchant who would sell goods to the soldiers. These goods would have been food items or dry goods to help the soldiers in their daily lives. The sutler would be appointed by the commander of the regiment, so when the commander left, the sutler was most often removed and a new one appointed. Many of the sutlers had a tenure of two to three years. Being a camp follower, the sutler did not receive protection for his goods, or his person, from the army. He was also not allowed to set up his store on military grounds and would only be able to practice his sutlery duties in times of wars.

By 1821 the sutler was made part of the army, though he was a civilian contract worker. He was no longer a camp follower, and he was governed by the Council of Administrations. He had to follow strict guidelines that were added to the Army Regulations. He was now under the protection of the army, and the army was supposed to provide him with a building on the post to set up his store. But in many cases the sutler would build his own store. After 1821 the sutler would still apply for appointment to a regiment or post, but now his tenure would be much longer. By the 1850s many of the post traders would have been in business for twenty to thirty years at the same



The Sutler's Store at Fort Steilacoom was created by Lawrence Bateman.

post, he would also sell goods to the local settlers. In many cases his was the only store for miles.

Some of the goods carried by the sutlers included apples, potatoes, butter, rice, honey, coffee, tea, flour, salt, and sugar. He would also carry many dry goods like fabric, needles, shoes, hats, and pocket knives. While going through the records of the Fort Steilacoom sutlers, I found that the store sold many of these items too: nails, screws, files, kitchen stoves, pails, teapots, coffee pots, tin boilers, and tin plates. Charles Prosch even bought a bath tub! I found a ledger entry where the Mason's lodge in Steilacoom bought badges. You could say

the Army sutler's store was the "Fred Meyers" of its time.

James M. Bachelder was a sutler at Fort Steilacoom in the 1850s. Some of his activities are noted in the diary of quartermaster August V. Kautz. Bachelder upheld the innocence of Leschi in the Indian leader's trial for murder after the Indian War of 1855-56. This incurred the anger of townspeople in Steilacoom, and on Saturday, April 3rd, 1858, someone attempted to break into Bachelder's store in the morning and to set it on fire in the evening. However, both attempts failed. George Gallagher followed Bachelder as sutler in the 1860s.

(Continued on page 4)

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President's Message



I would like to begin my last column of 2006 by wishing God's rich blessing, and the best of everything, on each and every one of you for the coming year.

Oftentimes we do not appreciate just how wonderful life is until health, livelihood, or a dear one is taken away from us. Our brief stay on this mortal coil is fragile at best and we should all take the time every now and then to pause, if even for the briefest of moments, and reflect on all the good that has occurred to us this past year and give thanks.

We at Historic Fort Steilacoom can certainly be thankful this fall, for 2006 has certainly been everything it had shown promise to be last spring. At the beginning of the year the Association had decided to take a chance on beginning a new phase in the history of our museum. Several new activities were planned for 2006 with the thought in mind of recruiting new volunteers to help man the fort while also expanding on our relationship with the greater Puget Sound reenacting community. We started out with a very successful Civil War Era Swap Meet and have now just finished up with our first ever "Immersion Event." This new format drew over twenty-five reenactors, some from as far away as British Columbia, who had a simply marvelous time spending two complete days bringing Historic Fort Steilacoom back to life. We had an enlisted men's



Jill Weatherford and Eileen Melberg participate in the "Immersion Event" at Fort Steilacoom.

mess, a separate officer's mess, a gala tea party with Mrs. Casey and visiting dignitaries from the nearby Hudson's Bay trading post at Ft Nisqually. Also present were the more mundane activities of guard mount and the ever present drill and fatigue. I want to thank once again all of the wonderful people who worked so hard to make this October weekend the success that it was. Folks who saw the parade ground full of soldiers and were drawn onto the site from the highway were absolutely astounded with the experience. Some participants claimed it to be simply "the best living history experience on the entire West coast." Needless to say, this event will become a permanent part of the Fort's repertoire and will definitely be repeated in 2007.

This coming year also happens to be the sesquicentennial (150 year anniversary) of the construction of the buildings of "Officer's Row" which was overseen by Lt. August Kautz during the winter of 1857-58.

Lastly, I want to tell you the good news recently received concerning Fort Steilacoom's deteriorating roofs. The existing fort roofs were installed through the efforts of the original restoration

project during the 1980s. Twenty-plus years is a good life expectancy for a wooden roof, and the ravages of time have run their course. The roofs are failing. As of this writing, however, a roofing contractor is even now on the grounds of Western State Hospital plying his trade. Unfortunately for us, he is presently applying it on a roof of one of the hospital's buildings and not on our own. But we are assured that a brand new, heavy grade of cedar shingles will be gracing the tops of Quarters # 1 and 2 before this year is out. When all of you come down on December 9th to see the great celebration "Christmas at the Fort," be sure and take an armful of the old roofing shingles back home with you to light your Yule Logs. Until then, I remain, your loyal servant,

Gideon Pete.

James M. Bachelder Fort Steilacoom Sutler

by Carol Neufeld Stout

James Bachelder, sutler at Fort Steilacoom during the 1850s was a man of many occupations —sailor, storekeeper, public official, organizer, and builder.

Bachelder was born June 17, 1817, in Falmouth Maine, a town on the Atlantic seaboard. After he apprenticed as a seaman achieving his masters' certificate, he sailed on ships along the East Coast as the Captain. Maine was then the principal lumbering state. When the lumber supply dwindled, lumbermen came to Washington Territory to harvest the virgin forests.

He met Captain Lafayette Balch, also a native of Maine and founder of Steilacoom, Washington, who persuaded Bachelder, one of the first Port Townsend settlers, to join him in the lumbering business in Steilacoom. The first arrival and departure records in the Puget Sound Customs book notes that the *George Emory* was built in Sancy, Maine, in 1846, and the master was James M. Bachelder.

The two men arrived in Steilacoom, the seat of the Pierce County government, in 1850 on Balch's schooner, *George Emory*, intending to erect a mill and cut the timber on the present site of Tacoma. Instead, Balch returned to San Francisco and Bachelder remained in Steilacoom with his wife Sarah and children.

Bachelder took an active part in the life of the town of Steilacoom, the seat of Pierce County government. He helped organize the first Masonic lodge and constructed the 1861 lodge at Steilacoom. It was a wooden building on Commercial Street overlooking the water. In addition to serving as notary public and justice of the peace, he was County Auditor from 1862 through 1864. As justice of the peace he married



James M. Bachelder, 1864

many couples who became prominent residents.

He was also U. S. Commissioner. Some of his judicial duties as U. S. Commissioner and Justice of the Peace are mentions in the Fort Nisqually *Journal of Occurrences*:

Thursday, April 1853...Mr. Bachelder, Justice of the Peace for Steilacoom, present at the request of Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, arrived here today, took affidavit from John E. Montgomery and Louis Latour...concerning the Puget Sound [Agricultural] Company's claim. The extent of land claimed by the Company according to the survey of Mr. Chapman is 15 miles square.

Tuesday, 2 December 1856....Dr. William Fraser Tolmie and Mr. Edward Huggins went to Steilacoom. Took with them Bastian and McLeod who signed affidavits, together with Adam Beinston and John E. Montgomery, before...Mr. Bachelder, U. S. Commissioner of the 3 Judicial District of Washington Territory, regarding the Tlithlow Station difficulty. William Greig came in from Tlithlow Station and slept all night. He says that Mr. Dean threatened to shoot the work oxen if they are not prevented from hauling fence rails at Tlithlow Station and if that will not suffice, he will shoot the

driver or any other person who persists on doing operations there....

During his tenure as Commissioner he became involved in the conflict over the execution of Leschi, a Nisqually Indian leader, who had been convicted of murder during the 1855-56 Indian War. On the day fixed for the execution, Bachelder had the sheriff and his deputy arrested on the charge of selling liquor to the Indians. When their hearing was over, the time set for the January 22, 1858, execution had expired. The settlers were for Leschi's execution, but Bachelder and the military at Fort Steilacoom were against it, saying that Leschi was not in the area at the time of the deaths. Bachelder was hung in effigy in Olympia and removed from the office of U. S. Commissioner.

Bachelder received a signed appointment from Jefferson Davis, then the Secretary of War, as sutler at Fort Steilacoom. According to General Mansfield's December 1858 report, the "Inspection of Fort Steilacoom":

A good sutlers store is just outside the enclosure and well supplied and J. M. Bachelder is the sutler.

However, after Bachelder's removal from the Commissioners office his troubles continued. August V. Kautz, Quartermaster and diarist, noted the following:

April 2, 1858 - Bachelder is in great tribulation about his pay due from the men. Quite a number were confined for insolent conduct.

June 1, 1858 - Farrel has gone upon a spree and broke into Bachelder's store where Wheeler, the carpenter, sleeps and took some clothing. I had him confined.

July 12, 1858 - Bachelder thought to redeem his losses in the Leschi affair by running for representative. He, however, has been badly beaten.