

under a warrant issued by U.S. Commissioner J. M. Bachelder for selling alcohol to Indians. Leschi was spared for a time.

The citizenry became incensed. Meetings were held, proclamations were issued. Leschi supporters Clark, Bachelder, and Col. Casey were hung in effigy in front of Governor Steven's office in Olympia. When they were cut down, Stevens is rumored to have remarked that wiser heads should prevail before their effigies were removed.

Col. Casey and other Fort Steilacoom officers, most notably Lieutenant Kautz, opposed the execution. They were opposed because, among other reasons, it would violate the rules of war. Prisoners of war were not tried in civil courts. Kautz investigated the circumstances around Moses' death and proved that Leschi was not in the area at the time. Nonetheless, Leschi was taken from Fort Steilacoom, because Casey would not let the execution occur at the fort, and hung on February 19, 1858.

While most of the Leschi affair was occurring, Col. Casey was absent from Fort Steilacoom. He was on leave from mid January until mid December 1857. Captain Maloney was the senior officer present. Changes were being made in the appearance of the fort. A major reconstruction was taking place under the supervision of Lieutenant Kautz.

When Casey returned, his family accompanied him. Kautz was pleased, even though the Caseys would evict him from his house. The household was a busy one, consisting of Mrs. Abby Perry Pearce Casey, daughters Abby Pearce Casey (19), Elizabeth Goodale Casey (13), and son Edward Wanton Casey (7). Two of the Casey children were not at Fort Steilacoom. Thomas Lincoln Casey, a graduate of West Point like his father, was an Assistant Professor of Engineering there. Silas Casey III was attending the U.S. Naval Academy.

The Caseys had an active social life. Dinner parties were frequent and included as guests post officers, gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company, and Steilacoom citizenry. Newly arrived officers were often houseguests of the Caseys. Both of the Casey girls brought a special brightness to the post. Dances were frequent, although Col. Casey, a strongly religious man, worried about the appropriateness of them for his young daughters. Abby particularly enjoyed the company of the post officers, but had eyes for only one, Captain Lewis Cass Hunt. They were married at the fort on November 28, 1860.

The Hudson's Bay Company operated a farm in the San Juan Islands, and several Americans had settled there. While the diplomats worked

to reach a decision as to who owned the Islands, an incident occurred that brought the whole thing to a head. An American, Lyman Cutler, shot a British pig. British authorities threatened to arrest him.

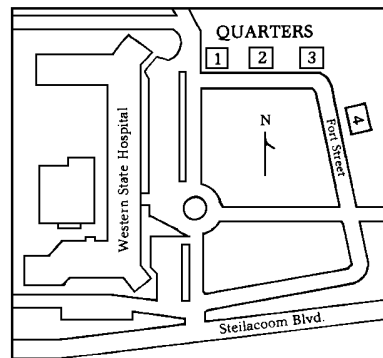
In August 1859 Col. Casey was ordered to bring the soldiers from Fort Steilacoom to the San Juan Islands aboard the steamer *Julia*, and upon arrival remove the steamer *Massachusetts*' guns to reinforce Pickett's camp. Although Casey fully appreciated the possible consequences of this action, and personally disagreed with it, he could not disobey his orders.

The governments in London and Washington were becoming alarmed over the situation. Neither wanted war. President Buchanan dispatched Lieutenant General Winfield Scott to meet with Rear Admiral R. Lambert Baynes, the British Pacific Station commander. After considerable consultation, they agreed to a joint occupation of the Islands. Things cooled off. Both the Royal Marines and American soldiers settled in to the occupation and cordiality prevailed.

Casey returned to his post at Fort Steilacoom to good news. His son Thomas was being posted to the fort. Thomas was bringing his wife Emma and son Thomas Jr.

### Historic Fort Steilacoom

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# Fort Steilacoom

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## Casey in Washington Territory

by Kenneth A. Morgan

*This article is a continuation of "On the New Frontier: Casey's Pacific Coast Service" from Ken Morgan's biography of Silas Casey. Part I, "California and Oregon," appeared in the Fort Steilacoom newsletter, Vol. 21, No. 4, Winter, 2004.*

In March 1855 Congress authorized the activation of four Army regiments: the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry, and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry. These regiments were to serve on the western frontier. Casey's brevet of Lieutenant Colonel was made permanent in the new 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Colonel George Wright was commander with Casey second in command. The 9<sup>th</sup> was activated at Fortress Monroe and made preparations for western service.

The Regiment left Fortress Monroe by steam ship, the *St. Lewis*, for Aspinwall on December 15, 1855, arriving there a few days later. They crossed the Isthmus of Panama by rail and boarded ships for California. Casey and four companies were aboard the *Golden Age*, while the remainder sailed on the *Oregon*. They arrived at San Francisco in January 1856 and soon departed for Washington Territory. After a stop at Fort Vancouver, Casey and two companies, D and H, arrived at Steilacoom. Casey took command of the fort and the District of Puget Sound.

Casey and the 9<sup>th</sup> arrived at Fort Steilacoom in the midst of the "Puget Sound Indian War." The 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry from Fort Steilacoom had already taken to the field, as had



Photo donated by Beth Julian

*This barn, once on the Flett property in Lakewood, Washington, was used as a blockhouse during the 1855-1856 Indian War.*

several militia companies organized under the authority of C. H. Mason, acting territorial governor. A series of blockhouses, to act as places of refuge for the population and bases of operation for the militia and army, had been constructed throughout the Puget Sound region.

The problems started when the Yakima Indians killed some settlers in the fall of 1855. Isaac I. Stevens, the territorial governor, was absent, so acting governor Charles H. Mason oversaw the territory. Mason took it upon himself to call out the militia and requested the assistance of the army at Fort Steilacoom and Vancouver. A force from Fort Vancouver, commanded by Major Granville O. Haller, was dispatched up the east side of the Cascades, while a similar force under Lieutenant William A. Slaughter left Fort Steilacoom on

the west side. The two forces were to join in the fight. Additional support was requested from two vessels stationed in Puget Sound, the sloop *Decatur* and the revenue cutter *Jefferson Davis*. The call for additional militia companies continued.

Slaughter's party was to cross the mountains by way of Naches Pass. The regulars and a company of militia commanded by Captain Hays started for the pass, but having learned of the large band of Indians awaiting them, being short on rations and fearing early winter mountain storms, aborted the trek.

A flood of correspondence amongst the participants accompanied this movement in the field. Letters giving orders, telling of the situation, requesting supplies and other support, and relaying the possible location of the Indians were exchanged among

*(Continued on page 2)*

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### President's Message



I live in two worlds—the present and the past. In the present I go about a daily household routine. Time is also spent reading, re-

searching and writing, viewing educational channels and the occasional mystery program on television. Being with my family, my husband Orville, my sons, their wives and grandchildren is important.

Working with Historic Fort Steilacoom is and has been a priority since 1992. This entails both present and past. Helping keep the current four 1858 fort buildings and programs running is a continuing activity. The Board and others are also deeply involved in this task.

Interpreting Fort Steilacoom's history requires delving into past events and the lives of people who lived and worked here when the fort was operating from 1849 to 1868. Many members of the Board, Association, and friends of the fort also do research. Some assume the persona of past fort people for living history events such as "Christmas at the Fort." When we research we are living in the past.

Why is this important? Knowing and understanding history helps us understand ourselves, our environ-

ment, and guides us in our future. Thomas Carlyle maintains that "history is the essence of innumerable biographies." Francis Bacon claims "history makes men wise."

Come to learn history at Fort Steilacoom! Colonel Casey (aka Ken Morgan) will be here to greet us and tell about his life on November 16 in Quarters 2 at 2 p.m.

Enjoy the sights and sounds of "Christmas at the Fort" on December 13, 2008, from 4 to 7:30 p.m. Colonel Casey and his family will entertain guests; officers and their ladies will dance to the tunes of the fiddlers; carolers will serenade; the sutler will display his wares; and children may craft a Christmas tree ornament.

Though I (as we all do) live in both the present and the past, I wonder what the future holds for Fort Steilacoom. We plan to continue interpreting the fort through living history, tours of the quarters, historical displays and educational programs. In addition, we want to increase our membership and have volunteers who can help us accomplish our goals. Volunteers are needed to work at all these tasks, especially docenting at the museum for events and during our Sunday open hours. During the fall and winter months the fort is open on the first Sunday of the month from 1 to 4 p.m. We need additional people to keep the fort open. Call 582-5838 if you are available.

Thank you to all of our members and friends for your support. If you haven't already renewed your membership, take time to do it now. The rates are: Seniors and students \$15, Individuals \$20, Family \$35, Lifetime \$300. Our mailing address is: Historic Fort Steilacoom, P.O. Box 88447, Steilacoom, WA 98388.

We look forward to seeing you on November 16 and December 13 for the last programs of 2008. Be prepared to celebrate Fort Steilacoom's 160<sup>th</sup> year during 2009.

Carol Neufeld Stout



Ken Morgan portrays Col. Silas Casey during Christmas at the Fort.

### Coming Events

**November 16:** "Silas Casey, American Warrior," by Kenneth Morgan, 2 p.m., Quarters 2.

**December 13:** "Christmas at the Fort," 4 to 7:30 p.m. Tickets at the door.

### Casey (continued from page 1)

acting governor Mason, Major Raines at Fort Vancouver, Captain Maloney at Fort Steilacoom, the captains of two vessels, and the army and militia officers in the field.

Lt. Slaughter established his camp on the White River and was reinforced by more soldiers from Fort Steilacoom and its commander, Captain Maurice Maloney. There had not yet been any killings on the west side of the mountains, but soon there would be.

In mid October several families were killed in King County, militiamen who were attempting to visit Chief Leschi were killed on Connell's Prairie, as were another militia party carrying dispatches to Fort Steilacoom. Because of these killings the inhabitants of the Puyallup River Valley

fled to the protection of Fort Steilacoom, which was being defended by a small number of soldiers commanded by Lieutenant John Nugen.

In early November a large body of Indians attacked Maloney in his camp from across the river. Several of the Indians were killed or wounded, but only one soldier was killed when a tree he was cutting fell on him. Additional skirmishes occurred throughout the month. More soldiers arrived from Ft. Vancouver commanded by Captain Erasmus D. Keyes. Calls for more militia went out. Soldiers were moving throughout the Puyallup Valley, searching for the hostile Indians.

Lt. Slaughter once again took to the field. Fort Steilacoom soldiers met up with volunteers and a detachment from the *Jefferson Davis* and were later joined by other U.S. Regulars. They were attacked by Indians led by Kitsap and Kanasket by members of the Nisqually and Niscope bands. Slaughter lost forty horses but no soldiers in the attack. On December 3<sup>rd</sup> he split his command and proceeded with about sixty men to a camping place on Brannan's Prairie. While conducting a council of war in a small cabin on the evening of December 4<sup>th</sup>, Lt. Slaughter was shot and killed. Activities continued in the field, but some of the enthusiasm was gone after Slaughter's death. Attempts were being made to find and capture Leschi with no success.

In January 1856 the settlement in Seattle was attacked, but the Indians were driven off by militia and the sloop *Decatur* without losses on either side. Also, in mid January Governor Stevens returned to Olympia and Lt. Col. Casey arrived at Fort Steilacoom with two companies of the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Both of these men were now in charge; Stevens commanding the militia and civil government, Casey the U.S. Army.

Governor Stevens approved the actions Mason had implemented with one exception—not enough militia had been called. Stevens called up

more.

Casey went into the field. He marched from Fort Steilacoom on February 26, crossed the Puyallup River and arrived at the camp established by Captain Maloney on Lemmon's Prairie. Captain Keyes was the designated officer of the day and as such was responsible for camp security. He had posted guards around the camp, paying particular attention to the hill and the winding road ascending it. Beyond the hill was hostile territory, believed to be occupied by Kanasket and his band.

Kanasket was perhaps the most militant of the local Indian leaders and was feared because of his reputation as a night fighter. Private Kehl of D Company was standing at his post when a party of Indians approached just before daybreak. Kehl, following Keyes' orders to make every shot count, waited until they were very close before firing at the first in line. It was Kanasket.

In early March, Casey divided his command sending Keyes to the White River where Lieutenant Kautz was entrenched. They were soon attacked by a band of about one hundred hostiles. During the battle Lt. Kautz was hit in the leg. Lieutenant David B. McGibbins, Kautz's subordinate, successfully drove the Indians off, losing only two soldiers.

Later in March the militia, led by Major Hayes, encountered a large Indian force on Connell's Prairie. A fight ensued and the Indians were driven off. This was to be the last battle of the Puget Sound Indian War. The loss of Kanasket and the loss at Connell's Prairie disheartened the Indians. The militia and regulars remained in the field in pursuit of small groups of Indians. Some were captured, others scattered. Despite ongoing hit-and-run raids, on May 19<sup>th</sup> Casey reported the war west of the Cascades over.

The war in the field may have ended, but the war of words was just beginning. Casey suggested, in a letter to Governor Stevens, that with two additional companies of militia mustered into federal service, he

could protect the frontier without the aid of the volunteers presently in service to the Territory. Stevens flatly refused, saying that there were no volunteers available, he would not release the volunteers from active service, and under no circumstances would he allow any of his militia to be "under the command of the regular service."

Stevens, who referred to himself as Commander-in-chief, did not hold General Wool, commander of the Department of the Pacific, in great regard. Stevens and the general disagreed over the use of volunteers from both Washington and Oregon as an adjunct to the regular army. Stevens wanted to control it all. In a letter to Secretary of War Davis, Stevens demanded that Wool be removed as he had "shown an utter incapacity" in executing his duties. Stevens claimed that his authority was superior because he held office by presidential appointment. Stevens and Wool would feud until Steven's death in the Civil War.

The militia was still in the field searching for Chief Leschi. Leschi and his followers had gone east of the Cascades, but returned in the fall of 1856. Leschi intercepted an express party carrying messages from the field to Fort Steilacoom. Militia Colonel A. B. Moses was killed. Stevens declared Leschi to be a murderer and was to stand trial for it. Sluggia, Leschi's nephew, turned him in for a reward of fifty blankets. Leschi was brought to Olympia and a trial was ordered to take place in Steilacoom. The trial resulted in a hung jury. A second trial was held in Olympia in March 1857. Leschi was defended by Frank Clark, who had been the prosecutor for the first trial. The verdict was guilty; hanging was the sentence. The Supreme Court upheld the findings and execution was to occur in January 1858.

Leschi was brought to the guardhouse at Fort Steilacoom to be hung. When Sheriff Williams and Deputy McDaniel arrived at the post to carry out the sentence, they were arrested