

**Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup>**- Finished harvest, thank God, without a drop of rain. All the crops (are) very light, but am in great hopes that I shall have more than enough corn for market to cover my expenses for the ensuing year.... "Things are never so bad but they might be worse." Killed a couple of sheep and, with three kettles of potatoes, gave all of my people a "Harvest Home."

**Friday, 20<sup>th</sup>**- A holiday. Went with three of my people hunting, but could not find a single deer. Out from after sunrise to sunset, most oppressive and fatiguing day. (Was) devoured by mosquitoes....

**Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup>**- Could not leave home, (as I had) no one about the place, having sent my cook to catch trout for dinner, who brought back about two dozen fine ones. Had two of two pounds each roasted, upon which I feasted sumptuously.

**Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup>**- ...An awful fire (is) raging through the forests along the coast, as yet some miles distant from me, but the smoke is so dense that one can see only a few hundred yards and the ashes (are) falling thickly. The roar of the fire can be distinctly heard and the falling trees sound like the booming of artillery at a distance. (Am) praying for rain to check its progress, as, should it continue and come near here, I should have great fear of the whole of my premises. Sent sheep for a change of pasture.

**Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup>**- Traded a large quantity of cockles and salmon. (The) fire (is) raging awfully, so much so that neither Indians nor myself could sleep during the night from its roaring.

**Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup>**- Rode out to see how far the fire had extended. Found the whole country in flames, the forest burning for nearly 30 miles in length and varying from four of five to 10 in breadth, a complete desolation and the wind blowing almost a gale, setting towards my place.

**Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup>**- In the morning the most "solemn Stillness" (was) reigning, not a sound to be heard but the trees falling, reminding one of the firing of "Minute guns" (and) causing a complete depression of spirits. Rode to the Fort to have a chat with the Doctor. (There was a) great noise in the Indian camp in the night; fancied another tribe was coming to attack them.

**Friday, 27<sup>th</sup>**- Thank God, a change in the wind to the southwest, which checks the fire greatly and I am in hopes it will not now reach this (place) altho' within a mile (of it)....

**Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup>**- Heavy fog (is) checking the fire. Saw the sun, the smoke clearing away, for the first time in nearly a week. (A) boy made (a) fire to destroy a wasp's nest and set fire to the woods within 100 yards of my house. Fortunately there was no wind and plenty of water near. Got a number of Indians and extinguished it before spreading any distance.

**Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup>**- ...Lent my gun to William, an Indian, who killed the finest buck I have ever seen in the country—nearly as fat as those in England. Got the head and part of the neck....

**Wednesday, Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>**- ...Could not let the First of September pass over and not take my gun in hand, therefore started off about 4 in the afternoon. (My) first shot killed a Lynx, (the) second severely wounded a fine buck, which after an hours trailing, with the assistance of one of my people, found lying dead a mile or more in the woods. (I) covered him up and left him for the night.... both with a ball.

**Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup>**- Sent for the deer, which I divided amongst the people, keeping the head and kidneys for myself. Skinned the lynx and nailed the skin and head on the house door as a trophy. Ben washing shirts and socks for me, doing it better than the washerwoman used to do, to whom I paid four pounds a year.

At the end of the diary, Heath wrote in February 1849:

**Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup>**- Sent for the Doctor, who remained with me all night, bled, blistered and sweated (me). In great pain all day, cough as though it would rend my chest. Have not felt so ill for many, many years....

**Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup>**- Dick Slocum came and killed the fat hogs. As soon as I can get them salted (am) going to the Fort so as to get constant medical attention. Ill, ill, get no rest from the cough.

Heath died on March 7, 1849, from what is believed to be a heart condition complicated by pneumonia.

After his death and the auction of Heath's effects, an American, Leander K. Wallace, was killed at Fort Nisqually by Snoqualmie Indians. Military forces were requested for protection against the Indian threat. As a result, Major John S. Hathaway, commander of the eleventh military district and Captain Bennett N. Hill of the First Artillery arrived looking for a place for an American fort. Dr. Tolmie showed them Heath's buildings and the U. S. Government rented the farm. The troops moved in on August 24, 1849.

Lt. August Kautz was in charge of the reconstruction of the fort in 1857-8. When Fort Steilacoom was abandoned as an army post in 1868, the territorial legislature obtained the Fort Steilacoom property for the care of the "insane."

Today, guides welcome visitors to the four remaining officers' quarters that display the rich history of the first military fort in the Puget Sound area. You are invited to monthly programs that feature the events and people of the 1849-1868 Fort Steilacoom.

#### Diary source:

Joseph Heath, Edited by Lucille McDonald, *Memoirs of Nisqually* (Fairfield, WA, Ye Galleon Press, 1979).

# Fort Steilacoom

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## From Joseph Heath Farm To Fort Steilacoom Museum

by Carol Neufeld Stout

**J**oseph Thomas Heath, an English gentleman farmer, moved into a crude cabin on December 13, 1844, on what is now Western State Hospital grounds and where the four remaining Fort Steilacoom quarters are located. The cabin had been abandoned by a former settler brought there from the Red River in Canada by the Hudson's Bay Company. Heath's diary provides us with descriptions of the Puget Sound Agricultural farm activity during July, August, and three days in September of 1847.

**Wednesday, July 7<sup>th</sup> (1847)** ...Doctor (Tolmie) sent me some Morning Chronicles, in which I am grieved to see the deplorable state of Ireland.

**Friday, 9<sup>th</sup>**- Took up some of the barn floor and gave the wheat which had fallen through to the Indians. (Received) a report of the arrival of the schooner.

**Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup>**- Rode to the Fort (Nisqually) in expectation of finding the schooner there, but the Indians had brought me a false report.... (There was) great wailing in the camp on my return, an Indian's wife having died during my absence. (Her death was) attributed to the "evil medicine" of an Indian doctor, her sister having died a week since.

**Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup>**- Visit from John Ross early in the morning. Rode with him to (Mathew) Nelson's on his way to Douglas River. Returned home in the



Painting by Steve Anderson

*Joseph Heath was a tenant farmer of land owned by the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, a subsidiary of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Nisqually. This farm later became the site for Fort Steilacoom.*

evening and found Mr. And Mrs. Patterson and their child, Americans, waiting for my return. (They) remained all night...they made up a bed in one corner of the house. (I) gave Mrs. Patterson a bonnet that Ellen had sent me, with which she was much pleased. (Mrs. Patterson was) the first American woman I had seen in the country possessing a fine nasal twang.

**Monday, 12<sup>th</sup>**- (My) visitors left after breakfast, immediately after which the Doctor arrived, who sat chatting

for a couple of hours. (I) lent him 56 bark nails. (He) brought only part of my accounts from Vancouver and those (were) very imperfect.

**Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup>**- (The) schooner fired a couple of guns in passing my place on its way to the Fort.

(Snoqualmie) and (Skykomish) Indians (are) reported to be in the Straits in ambush to waylay and capture any other tribes they can meet with. (They) have long threatened to pay me and my people a visit.

(Continued on page 3)

## HISTORIC FORT STEILACOOM ASSOCIATION

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### President's Message



As we continue to celebrate the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fort Steilacoom I am constantly amazed at the work of our board, members, and friends.

The talented board members donate many hours. In addition to overseeing the operation and the maintenance of the four museum buildings, they develop displays, research and write about Fort history, reenact at the Fort events and elsewhere, publicize and present historical programs, guide visitors through the quarters, operate a gift shop, and do countless other tasks. Our newsletter editor continues to produce a quality, informative publication.

Members and friends from Fort Nisqually, the Lakewood and DuPont museums (to mention a few) also assist. During the 160<sup>th</sup> celebration of Fort Steilacoom, sponsored jointly by Historic Fort Steilacoom Association and the U.S. Fourth Infantry reenactment group, volunteer hours reached 828. This does not include the Civil War reenactors. Thank you to our dedicated volunteers.

In order to continue this momentum, more help is needed. Our goals

for the fort are to increase public awareness and knowledge, the number of visitors to events, membership, and the number of docents. How can you help us reach these objectives? Talk to neighbors and friends about Fort activities, asking them to accompany you to events. Pay the yearly membership or become a lifetime member and encourage others to join the Association. Come to Lawrence Bateman's Fort Steilacoom Training Workshop on September 26, 2009, in Quarters 2 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. And volunteer—volunteer—volunteer!

If you would like information on coming programs, membership, the training workshop, or how you can volunteer, call me at (253) 582-5838.

*Carol Neufeld Stout*

### Ft. Steilacoom Training Day Saturday 26 September 2009 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Are you interested in becoming a Docent Volunteer at Fort Steilacoom, or getting started in Living History? Maybe you are interested in just learning a little more about the historic grounds that were once Fort Steilacoom.

We have taken steps in this direction with lectures and living history events, and now we must look forward to expansion. To do this we must draw on one of our best resources: YOU, the members of Historic Fort Steilacoom Association. We invite you to our HFSA Training Days. If you know anyone who is interested in the fort, but not a member of HFSA, bring them along as well.

We will cover the history of the fort, soldiers, officers, and the buildings, including a tour of each of their displays. Hope to see you there!

*POC Lawrence Bateman*  
[SGT504PIR@comcast.net](mailto:SGT504PIR@comcast.net)  
 (253) 312-8732

### Big Thanks to WSH

A big "THANK YOU" to the Western State Hospital Carpenter Shop, Electric Shop, Ground Crew, Telephone Crew, and Maintenance Office for all of the help you have given to repair the old Fort Steilacoom houses. When the window needed repair you did it with proper pegs. I was impressed!

Thanks also to Parr Lumber for the lumber donated for the replacement of the steps on Quarters 1.

*"Bernie" Bateman*

### Coming Events

**August 16: Founders' Day Picnic**  
 Bring your favorite main dish, salad or dessert and enjoy the fellowship and a tour of the museum. Quarters 4 from 2 to 4 p.m.

**September 13: Founding of Fort**  
 Tom Melberg, in the persona of Capt. Bennett Hill, will tell about the founding of Fort Steilacoom in 1849. Quarters 2 at 2 p.m.

**October 17: Living History Day**  
 Fort Steilacoom will come alive as reenactors live and work as soldiers, officers and their families. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**October 18: Annual Meeting**  
 The Association will hold its Annual Meeting and election at 2 p.m. in Quarters 2. Following the short meeting, Kathleen Benoun will give a history of Western State Hospital.

**November 15: FS Historic Site**  
 Spencer Howard will present a Power Point program showing the chronology of changes at Fort Steilacoom from its earliest times. Quarters 2 at 2 p.m.

**December 12: Christmas at Fort**  
 Reenactors will present a period candle-light Christmas in the officers' quarters from 4 to 7:30 p.m. Tickets will be available in the fort Interpretive Center during this time. The gift shop will also be open for Christmas shopping.

### Heath Farm (from page 1)

**Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup>**- Rode to the Fort (Nisqually) and went on board the *Cadboro*, delighted to see many of my old shipmates. Invited them to come and dine with me on Sunday.

**Friday, 16<sup>th</sup>**- Visit from Captain Scarborough, (who) walked about the farm, much pleased with my place. Gave him a boiled chicken, bacon and new potatoes for dinner, the first he had tasted (this season).

**Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup>**- Visit from Dixon and Murray, two of my old shipmates, who spent the day with me.

**Monday, 19<sup>th</sup>**- Re-laying (the) barn floor with the assistance of Katman, who came for about half the day. Made biscuit. Oppressively hot.

**Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup>**- Unpacked and examined (my) "outfit." Many of the beads for payment to my people (are) worthless, but (I found) a good supply of other things. A Canadian (passed through) in search of his wife, whom he had left two years since. (The heat (is) most oppressive and what with the mosquitoes at night, (it is) impossible to get any rest.

**Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup>**- Heat and mosquitoes driving me half mad.

**Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup>**- Working at the barn. Montgomery came and put a private mark on 11 ox and 11 cow calves. Katman employed part of the day at the barn floor.

**Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup>**- Finished (the) barn floor and cut wheels for (the) wagon.

**Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup>**- ...Paid a visit to Mrs. Ross, was devoured by mosquitoes, returned and dined with the Doctor. On my way home with one of my people found three deer, one of which I killed and he another. (We) slung them on his horse and returned to the camp, not a little proud.

**Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup>**- Rode out in the Plains, returned and dined upon deer's head.



Painting by Steve Anderson

### Joseph Thomas Heath

**Monday, 26<sup>th</sup>**- Making wagon. Nineteen (persons) of all sorts and sizes (are) pulling peas....

**Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup>**- At the wagon, setting my wits to work how to construct it (and) wishing to succeed better than I have hitherto done, and having no model to work by. ...Oppressively hot.

**Friday, 30<sup>th</sup>**- At the wagon. Three and 20 people carrying peas at their backs. Brought home (the product of) 20 acres. (This) does not say much for the crop, but it is astonishing what (the Indians) will do in a day when they "work with a will."

**Sunday, August 1<sup>st</sup>**- Indians brought a quantity of cockles which I purchased, having 30 people working for me and no provisions but wheat and peas. Rode to the fort for a chat with the Doctor. (My) horse broke (its) bridle and got away, taking (the) saddle with him, and could not be caught again. (I) borrowed one to ride home.

**Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup>**- Reaping and carting peas. (Was) disturbed in the night by the arrival of an Indian with the intelligence that the Klickitats, a powerful tribe from the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains (actually from west of the Cascades near the Columbia River) had invaded

the Nisqually (Valley) and commenced taking prisoners (and) were then about 12 miles from my place. (I) have been long expecting them and suppose they will come here to revenge themselves upon an Indian doctor to whose "bad medicine" they attributed to the death of one of their relatives who died here in the winter, the same who left me as his executor. (I) have no apprehension of danger to myself, but fear they may kill some of my people.

**Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup>**- ... (The Klickitats) arrived, to whom I delivered up the property in my possession, with which they were very well satisfied, with the exception of a horse, which had been stolen by Lakalet, an Indian chief at the Fort.

**Friday, 13<sup>th</sup>**- Started for the Fort to demand the stolen horse from Lakalet and had got half way when I met some of the Klickitats returning, who told me that he would give the horse back, Dr. Tolmie having spoken to him. When I returned with them and had not been long at home the thieving scoundrel arrived, backed by a large party, and commenced to bully me, challenging me to fight with guns, when I immediately went in the house and got mine, desiring him to come out into the open plain. This brought him to his senses and he at once gave up the horse and demanded peace and (for me) to make friends with him. This I refused, setting him at defiance....

**Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup>**- Horse dealing (trading), gambling and horse racing amongst the Indians, a great number having arrived from different parts, making quite an animated scene and a fine subject for an artist....

**Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup>**- (Received a) note from the Doctor (Tolmie), requesting me to meet him at Edgar's to see a fresh arrival of sheep from Vancouver, which I did. (Was) much pleased with many of them....

*(Continued on page 4)*