

Slaughter (from page 3)

social life who that enjoyed his friendship can ever forget him? Lieutenant Slaughter was a likable character—those who knew him best loved and respected him most. His wife was a leader in this class....

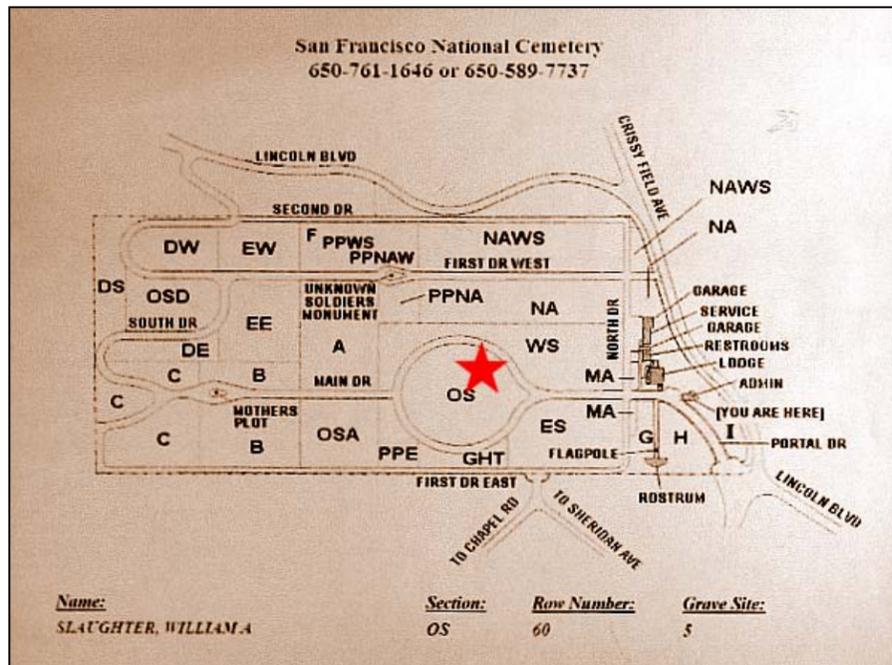
Mary Slaughter remained in Steilacoom until March when acting Governor Mason escorted her and her servant to his parent's home in Providence, Rhode Island, where her brother Fred met them. Mary returned to Port Huron, Michigan, where she remained with her parents. She never regained her cheerful composure after her husband's death. She died of a broken heart on January 3, 1862, and was buried in the family plot at Woodlawn Cemetery. Next to her marker is a stone commemorating William, whose body does not reside there.

In the 1890s William's body was moved from Fort Steilacoom to the Presidio, the national military cemetery in San Francisco, California.



Photo by Kenneth A. Morgan

William A. Slaughter's memorial marker in the Presidio, San Francisco National Cemetery where he was reburied in the 1890s.



Name: SLAUGHTER, WILLIAM A.
Section: OS Row Number: 60 Grave Site: 5

Contributed by Kenneth A. Morgan

Location of William Alloway Slaughter's grave at the Presidio.



Washington State Historical Society

Ezra Meeker (center left) stands next to a monument dedicated to the memory of Lt. William Slaughter in 1919.

Reference Sources:

J. Koch, *Lieut. W. A. Slaughter, Frontier Soldier* (Orting, WA: Heritage Quest, undated).

Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, Vol. 1 (New York: C. L. Webster,

1885-86; also from Tacoma Public Library internet retrieval).

William P. Bonney, *History of Pierce County*, Vol. 1, (Tacoma Public Library, Internet retrieval).

Fort Steilacoom

1st Lt. William Alloway Slaughter Casualty of the Indian War

by Carol Neufeld Stout

William, the family's eldest child, was born on the frontier of Kentucky in December 1827 to Alban B. and Lucinda Alloway Slaughter. The family moved to Tippecanoe County near Lafayette, Indiana, where Alban worked on his eighty acre farm. William spent his growing years helping on the farm, running errands to town and attending school.

When he was 16 1/2 years old, on July 1, 1844, he entered the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. The subjects studied were mathematics, French, chemistry, physics, engineering, military history and tactics, military arts of artillery, infantry cavalry tactics, and military construction.

After William graduated on June 3, 1848, he was promoted to Brevet 2nd Lt. In the 2nd Infantry. On July 1, 1848, he was ordered to frontier duty in San Diego, California, "H" Company 2nd Infantry. In May 1850 he was posted to Fort Gratiot in Port Huron, Michigan, where Company "C" 4th Infantry was located. Here he met and married Mary Wells of Port Huron on May 24, 1852. In April of that year the whole regiment was ordered to the Pacific Coast. Mary accompanied her husband.

While on the ship to the West by way of the Isthmus of Panama, Lt. Slaughter suffered severe sea sickness. In his memoirs, Ulysses Grant, who was then the regimental quartermaster, wrote: (Grant)



Photo by Kenneth A. Morgan

Lt. Slaughter was first buried at the settler's cemetery at Fort Steilacoom then later enshrined at the National Cemetery in San Francisco, California.

One morning an amusing circumstance occurred while we were lying at anchor in Panama Bay. In the regiment there was a Lieutenant Slaughter, who was very liable to sea-sickness. It almost made him sick to see the wave of a tablecloth when the servants were spreading it. Soon after his graduation, Slaughter was ordered to California and took passage by sailing vessel around Cape Horn. The vessel was seven months making the voyage, and Slaughter was sick every moment of the time, never more so than while lying at anchor after reaching his place of destination.

On landing in California he found orders...notifying him of a mistake in his assignment; he should have been ordered to the northern Lakes. He started back by the Isthmus route and was sick all the way. But when he arrived in the East, he was again ordered to California...making his third trip. He was as sick as ever. I remember him well, his chin between his hands, and looking the picture of despair. At last he broke out, "I wish I had taken my father's advice; he wanted me to go into the navy; if I had done so, I would not have to go to sea so much." (Grant p. 198)

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President's Message



Thank you to all who have kept the Fort operating during the 2008-9 year when I have had the privilege to serve as president of

Historic Fort Steilacoom. Having the guidance of the Board, help from members, friends from Fort Nisqually, the U.S. Fourth Infantry, the 20th Maine, Fort Steilacoom Living History Detachment reenactors, and others has made this time full of interesting events and programs. We are grateful for the continuing support from the City of Lakewood, Western State Hospital and DSHS. All of these groups have allowed us to continue our mission: To restore and preserve Historic Fort Steilacoom; to perpetuate the significance of the site for the benefit of the public by operating a museum complex, and a strong educational program stressing the role of the fort in Northwest history.

The main highlight of the year was the Fort's 160th year celebration with a Civil War reenactment held in May at Fort Steilacoom Park. In addition to the almost 2,000 who viewed the troop skirmishes and visited the camps and booths,

approximately 500 adults and children enjoyed visiting the fort buildings, seeing the Civil War Magic Lantern show and making their own slides to be viewed.

Other educational and enjoyable programs included Tea with Mrs. Casey, School of the Regulars Training, Puget Sound Indian War lecture, Military Swap Meet and Display, Puget Sound Indian Wars Board Gaming, Bennett Hill the first fort commander, and the Fort Training Day.

Write these coming events on your calendar: "Living History Day," October 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Annual Meeting, October 18 beginning at 2 p.m. at which Kathleen Benoun will speak about the "History of Western State Hospital"; "Fort Steilacoom Historic Site" November 15 at 2 p.m. when Michael Sullivan will show a Power Point presentation featuring physical changes of the fort over the years; and "Christmas at Fort Steilacoom" on December 12 from 4 to 7:30 p.m.

Also, the doors are open the first Sunday of the month during the winter and early spring months from 1 to 4 p.m. and for group tours by special arrangement. Call (253) 582-5838 for scheduling these tours.

Francis Bacon, an English essayist, claimed, "Histories make men wise." Samuel Coleridge writes, "If men could learn from history, what lessons it might teach us."

Come and bring your family and friends to Fort Steilacoom to experience the history of the first American military presence on Puget Sound.

Carol Neufeld Stout

Coming Events

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

October 18: Annual Meeting and election, Quarters 2 at 2 p.m. Candidates presented by the Nominating Committee include:

President, Lawrence Bateman; 1st Vice President, Thomas Melberg; 2nd Vice President, Robert Demorest; Secretary, Joseph Lewis; Treasurer, Kenneth Morgan; Directors 2009-12, Bernard Bateman, Christine Finnigan, John McPherson.

The program, "History of Western State Hospital," will be presented by Kathleen Benoun.

November 15: "Fort Steilacoom Historic Site," a Power Point presentation by Michael Sullivan of Artifacts Consulting will include historic maps and photographs. Quarters 2 at 2 p.m.

December 12: "Christmas at Fort Steilacoom,": 4-7:30 p.m. Reenactors will present a period candle-light Christmas. There will also be children's craft activities and the gift shop will be open for Christmas shopping. Adults \$5, children \$3, or family \$10.



Trunk Donated

Tom and Eileen Melberg have donated a dome top travel trunk to the Fort Gift Shop. The trunk has a stamped metal design on the dome and front. It is estimated to be of the late 1800s or early 1900s. This treasure may be viewed in the gift shop in Quarters 4. Proceeds from the sale of the trunk will benefit the fort. Thank you, Tom and Eileen!

Docents needed!

Fort Museum guides are needed. Training will be provided. Call (253) 582-5838.

Slaughter (from page 1)

After the Slaughters arrived at Fort Steilacoom, they took an active role in the town. William platted land in Balch's part, finally owning 32 lots. They built a rooming house messing officers of the fort and providing rooms for those who needed quarters. They built a house to live in where Mary operated a store. She had gained experience in her father's store in Port Huron. They purchased supplies for the rooming house and store from the Hudson Bay Company and its subsidiary the Puget Sound Agricultural Company as well as from ships arriving from San Francisco. Slaughter also had an interest in a saw mill at North Bay and owned three lots in Olympia. (Koch, pp. 45-46)

Mary and William were popular with military and citizens of the town and had an active social life. William was master of the Masonic lodge. (Koch p. 46)

Lt. Slaughter led combined volunteers and regular troops in active campaigns during the Indian insurgency in the fall of 1855. His last was on December 4, 1855, when he was camped at an abandoned log hut on Brannan's Prairie near the White and Green rivers. Slaughter sent word for Hewitt to meet him there. During the evening they were attacked by Indians. Lt. Slaughter and Corporals Barry and Clarendon were killed and five additional soldiers wounded, one dying later.

Capt. E. D. Keyes, 3rd Artillery Commander, sent word from Fort Steilacoom to acting Governor Mason the evening of December 7: (Bonney)

Dear Sir: I have just received information that on Tuesday night last while Lieut. Slaughter was sitting in a small house at his Camp about 2 ½ miles above the forks of White River and Green River, conversing with Captain Hewitt, Lieut. Harrison and Dr. Taylor, the Indians fired on them and killed Lieut. Slaughter at the first discharge. Two soldiers were also killed on the spot and five others wounded of whom one is since dead. Lieut. Slaughter's body has arrived here.



Lt. William Slaughter and Mary Wells were married in 1852. Lt. Slaughter was killed during the Indian War in 1855 and Mary returned to the East where she died of a broken heart in 1862.

It is reported on all hands that it is impossible to operate against the Indians with any effect in the country on White, Green and Puyallup rivers, at this season of the year and I know it to be so from personal observation. To continue such a course will break down all our men and effect no harm to the Indians. Our pack animals are broken down, and we must establish our forces on our own ground in places where they will not suffer at night and where they can best protect the settlers. As you may be far better acquainted with such points, I would request that if convenient, you will come and see me tomorrow....

Mrs. Slaughter is at Olympia. Please keep the dreadful news of her husband secret until Lieut. Nugen can break it to her cautiously....

The *Puget Sound Courier* of December 14, 1855, describes Slaughter's funeral:

The body of Lt. Slaughter was interred in the burial ground near Ft. Steilacoom on Sunday last with Masonic and Military honors. The hour appointed for the services was 11:00 o'clock but long before that time groups of two and threes were seen wending their way regardless of the pelting storm through the woods to Fort Steilacoom....All were anxious to pay their last tribute of respect to the remains of their common friend

who had sacrificed his life in their defense. Among the prominent persons...we noticed acting Governor Mason, Dr. Tolmie, Mr. Huggins, Capt. Lafayette Balch and others. The beautiful, impressive services for the dead were performed at the Episcopal Church led by Captain E. D. Keys, 3rd Artillery.

The mortal remains of William Slaughter were consigned to the tomb there to remain at rest regardless of all commands until the last Taps shall sound, summoning him to the grand review in which we shall all participate.

Elwood Evans wrote about Slaughter: (Bonney)

...As an officer he was brave to a fault. As an Indian campaigner, he was remarkably successful: no man had more endeared himself to his command, none had a more happy faculty of inspiring men with enthusiasm; small in frame and delicate in person, his powers of endurance were wonderful. He had led almost all of the expeditions to check the Indians during the stay in the country, and had been actively in the field from the commencement of hostilities until he met his untimely death. Brilliant he was...and as a citizen he had rendered himself equally soldier, dear to the people of the Territory in which he had been assigned to duty. In the walks of