



Photo taken September 25, 1988

Some of the early board members of Historic Fort Steilacoom Association have their picture taken in Quarters 2 where restoration work had already progressed by 1988. From left to right: Charlotte Naccarato, Lyle Dunkin, Raymond Egan, Robert (Bob) Weir, Charles (Chuck) Collier Patricia Collier, Vikki Nelson (partially hidden), Jack Langston, Marion Ball, Hilda Skott, and Jill Fluker.



Tonkin/Gressinger did an extensive study of the buildings in 1979. Non-historical additions, such as the bay window on quarters 2, were removed.

HFSA History (from page 3)

In order to complete the restoration, both outside and inside of all four of the historic buildings, the non-profit Historic Fort Steilacoom Association was formed in 1983. Cyrus Happy, as president, led the first Board of Directors and Caroline Gallacci, Pierce County Preservation Planner, assisted with the details in general administration of the restoration project. The Department of

Social and Health Services, which governs Western State Hospital, agreed to lease the four buildings to the Association for the purpose of restoring the structures.

In addition to Cy Happy and Caroline Gallacci, members of the first Board of Directors in 1983 included Gen. Ensley M. Llewellyn (Vice President), Bette Bradley (Secretary), Helen Pool (Treasurer), Lyle Dunkin (Restoration), Aurora Toth (Leasing), Susan Grohoski (Funding), Charles Collier (Maintenance and Operation), Patricia Laughlin (Publicity), Charlotte Naccarato (Museum), Sandy Dickenson and Lou Dunkin (Members at Large), Gary Reese (Historian), and Mark Selging (WSH Liason).

The first tasks of the directors were to enter into a lease agreement with DSHS, set up an organizational structure, and draft bylaws. The bylaws describe the legal aspects of the organization which include its name, purpose, members, officers and their responsibilities, meetings

and parliamentary authority for them, standing committees, amendments to the bylaws, and dissolution of the association.

Patricia Collier, Jill Fluker, and Raymond Egan replaced members of the Board in 1984 in the respective positions of secretary, treasurer, and funding. They also served in additional positions over the years. Those who joined the Board in the early years of the 1980s included Jack Langston, Robert Weir, Orville Stout, Marion Ball, Wanda Nadal, Craig Gunter, Hilda Skott, Arnold Stern, Frederick Zeigler, and Marjorie Larsen. Many others have also served as officers and directors during the past thirty years. A complete list will appear in a later article.

A very important task was getting funding and grants to accomplish the restoration. Funding for restoration was secured through the efforts of Caroline Gallacci, Susan Grohoski, Nancy Montgomery, and Raymond Egan. Ray also secured donations of materials for the restoration. Major grantors are named on a plaque displayed in the museum. Non-profit status was required for some grants and the organization received re-confirmation of that from the Internal Revenue Service in 1989. The State of Washington granted the association tax exempt status for personal and real estate property in 1991.

Informing the public about the fort was also important. The first newsletters, from 1984 through the spring of 1988, were primarily reports written by the president and secretary. The quarterly newsletter began to be published by Orville Stout in September 1988 and he has continued as editor up to the present time. The most prolific contributors of articles have been Raymond Egan (1989-1997), Carol E. Neufeld/Stout (since 1994), and Kenneth A. Morgan (since 1999). The Washington Museum Association presented its "Award of Publication Excellence" to Historic Fort Steilacoom for its quarterly newsletter in 1995.

(To be continued in next issue.)

Fort Steilacoom

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Historic Fort Steilacoom Association History of the Organization

by Orville H. Stout

Part 1: Legacy of Fort Steilacoom

Fort Steilacoom had operated as a United States military outpost, supply depot and refuge from its establishment on August 24, 1849, by Capt. Bennett Hill and the First Artillery on the abandoned Hudson Bay tenant farm of Joseph Heath until the outbreak of the Civil War. When the soldiers and officers were called back East to fight in 1861, Washington Territorial militia volunteers occupied the fort until it was closed in 1868. The fort's 37 star, tattered flag is now displayed on the wall of the Historic Fort Steilacoom Interpretive Center.

The fort lived on, not as a military outpost and safe haven for settlers in times of unrest, but as an "asylum" for those with mental afflictions—a dramatic change in its mission. The Washington Territorial legislature bought the garrison buildings on January 15, 1870. They cost the federal government \$200,000 to build; the Territory paid \$850. This did not include the 373.75 acres of land which the U. S. Congress finally turned over on April 15, 1874, with the provision that it be used for "an asylum for the insane and for no other purpose."¹

The mental hospital at Fort Steilacoom opened on August 19, 1871,

¹ Hilda Skott, *From Camas Lillies to Prilly Blossom, Fort Steilacoom becomes Western State Hospital* (Tacoma, WA: Media Production Associates, 1999, p. 8).



The Commanding Officer's quarters was used as a home for the superintendent of the hospital after the fort was turned over to Washington.

when twenty-one patients were transferred from Monticello (near present day Longview, Washington) to the former military barracks made into wards.² Some of the officers' quarters were used as residences by the doctors and hospital staff. The hospital superintendent lived in the commanding officer's house, which we now call Quarters 2. Most of the fort buildings would eventually be torn down as the brick structures of Western State Hospital took their place—until only four of the survived four quarters. Those original 30 or so buildings remained in use through the mid 1960s when they began to fall into disrepair, and

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

consideration was given to tearing them down.

In efforts to save the remaining historic buildings, a survey completed in 1974 registered the site with the Washington State Inventory of Historic Places. The records were archived by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission in Olympia, Washington. However, that was not enough to protect the buildings from demolition—only placement on the National Register could do that.

An application for recognition as a national historic site was prepared by Cyrus and Rita Happy, representing the Heritage Council of Pierce County, and submitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer, Arthur Skolink, for certification on September 17, 1975.

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Jack Langston

Jack Langston, a long-time supporter, director and officer of Historic Fort Steilacoom Association, passed away on July 25, 2012. Jack was a member of the carpenter crew who restored the fort buildings.

Through his initial efforts the fort obtained the two Civil War era Napoleon cannons for display and sponsored a "Cannon Day" event for several years. He also pushed for the Civil War reenactment at Fort Steilacoom Park and started a 4th Infantry reenactor group originally attached to the fort museum.

Jack was born in Louisiana in 1921 and served in the army from 1940 to 1954 during both World War 2 and the Korean conflict. He married Carren in 1947. During their 60 years together, they raised a family of seven children.

trees was to prepare for the painting project, and to open the view of the buildings to those passing by on Steilacoom Blvd.

The Board wants you! We are looking for association members who would be interested in being members of the HSFA Board of Directors. One of the positions that will be opening up is Treasurer. Ken Morgan, after many years of great service, has elected to step down. Thank you, Ken, for all the work you have put



Quarters 2 before and after removal of laurel.

into HFSA. Ken will work with the new treasurer to assure a smooth transition. We are also looking for general board members. The fort can not run or proceed with its projects that keep this site open to the public without participating board members.

Our painting project is still on track! Donations are still coming in from multiple sources. At our last board meeting we picked a contractor and work will start soon. The plan is to get Quarters 2 painted first, to be followed by Quarters 1.

September will bring you all the annual Living History Day, 22 Sept. Also on 29 Sept. the fort will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. as part of the Museum day. This event is part of the National Museum Day, hosted by the Smithsonian Museum. The Smithsonian advertised for all the museums that would participate in this event.

Thank you to all our volunteers who have helped in all the projects we are working on at this time. I would also like to thank all those who donated to the painting project.

Lawrence Bateman

President's Message



I have a few things that I want to share with you all. I will start out with our past events. In July, John Roten did a first person presentation of a soldier on San Juan Island during the "Pig War." After he was finished, he returned to the present and continued with a slide show, shared more information about the Pig War, and ended with Q & A's.

August brought us a rather hot spell. This hot weather cooled off enough by the Sunday of the annual Founder's Day Picnic. This year's picnic was attended by over 20 association members.

July and August also brought some changes to the fort. As reported in past newsletters, I talked of new displays in the museum. This time the changes were not indoors, but outdoors. In July and August we removed the three laurel bushes in front of Quarters 1 and 2. Because of decades of neglect, these bushes turned into 16 foot trees. In the case of Quarters 1, it covered the front of the building and hid it from view. The reasons for the removal of these



Chairs donated

Thank you to Col. Isabelle Schwartz for the donation of two 1850-60 era chairs. These types of chairs had no arms and were used by ladies with hoop skirts. They are a welcome addition to the furnishings of Quarters 1.

Coming Events

Sept. 22: Living History Day

Fort Steilacoom will come alive as reenactors live and work as soldiers, officers, their wives, children and friends. Open to public 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Donations accepted.

Oct. 14: Annual Meeting/ Program

HSFA will host its annual meeting and election at 2 p.m. in Qtrs. 2. Karen Haas, using letters, diaries and songs, will portray the struggles of women waiting for the return of their loved ones from the Civil War. Donations accepted.

Nov. 18: You are There

A moderator from the present will interview historical persons of Fort Steilacoom's past, including Col. Silas Casey, Lt. August Kautz, Lt. E. Porter Alexander, and Maj. Alvord. The program will begin at 2 p.m. in Qtrs. 2. Donations accepted.

Dec. 8: Christmas at Ft. Steilacoom

From 4 to 7:30 p.m. reenactors will present a period candle-light Christmas in the four remaining officers' quarters. There will also be children's craft activities, and the gift shop will be open for Christmas shopping. Tickets will be available at the door of the Interpretive Center in Qtrs. 4. Adults \$5, children \$3, family \$10.



John Roten presented a first-person dialogue of a soldier stationed in the San Juan Islands during the "Pig War" territorial dispute with the British.

HFSA History (from page 1)

He signed it on December 19, 1975, and transmitted it to the United States Department of the Interior—National Park Service,³ where it was approved and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.⁴

The application broadly describes the historic district within a one mile square military reservation established in 1861 and includes the fort buildings, the Western State Hospital buildings, grounds and farm, the golf course and what was then a baseball diamond on Fort Steilacoom Park. It also describes the area topography and history associated with the Hudson Bay Company-Puget Sound Agricultural Company tenant farmer Joseph Heath, whose farm became the site of Fort Steilacoom. There is detailed information about the establishment of the fort, the Indian War of 1855-56, some notable Army personnel

³ National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination form.

⁴ Charles R. Collier, "Restoring Historic Fort Steilacoom," *Fort Steilacoom Newsletter*, Spring 2007.

and their contribution to the development of the Pacific Northwest, including the military roads. The application also includes a review of hospital history and various treatments for the mentally ill there up through the resignation of Dr. Keller in 1949.

As a result of being placed on the National Register, the State of Washington was obligated to preserve the remaining fort buildings. The State Department of Social and Health Services hired the architectural firm Tonkin/Gressinger in 1979 to study the buildings and prepare an historical report and drawings for guidance in restoring the buildings to their original configuration. While no specific drawings of this particular fort could be found, their research enabled them to prepare drawings and develop information which proved to be fairly accurate.⁵ Based on this information, the state restored the exteriors of buildings 1 and 2 in 1980. That was a far cry from what needed to be done.

⁵ Charles R. Collier, "Historic Structures Report," 1993, p. 2.