

Restoration of fort (from p. 3)

In building 4, the chaplain's quarters and chapel, after work was completed stabilizing the building and applying a new roof and porch and completing the inside, we then removed some of the non-conforming siding on the south end. It became apparent that the door and window downstairs might not be in their original location. A new door had been cut in and a door location and two window locations had been boarded up. This was apparently done after the army left and the hospital used the buildings, along with three others, to make a hospital ward.

The original openings would have formed a symmetrical appearance matching the two upstairs windows. These openings were not restored to their original location for two reasons: first, the restoration inside was complete and to change it would have required extensive alteration; and secondly, we had no way of knowing for sure that the boarded up openings were the original openings, as no plans or photographs were available.

Restoration completed 1990

Quarters 1: Restoration of the buildings was completed in phases. In January 1986, Quarters 1, a married officer's home, was restored to nearly its original configuration with some additions, including a dry sink and modern heating. Electrical outlets are available, but there is no overhead electric lighting. Jean Gardner, representing Governor Booth Gardner and the Washington State Centennial, dedicated the building on April 29, 1986, presenting the official National Register plaque.² Furnishings were acquired mainly through the efforts of Lyle and Lou Dunkin between 1986-1993.

Quarters 2: Restoration of the Commanding Officer's home was mostly completed by December 1987. The office and troop area were not restored, but were opened to provide a large meeting area. The back wall of this room was left exposed to show structural features, i.e., brick "nogging" and rough cut studs and some split cedar lath.

The front parlor was mostly restored, but the split cedar lath over the fireplace was left exposed. Also, a portion of a stenciled ceiling, uncovered during renovation, was saved and covered with Plexiglas. It is presumed that the stenciling was done during the time the building was occupied by the hospital.

One of the downstairs rooms was converted for use as a research library by adding book shelves and retaining a built-in cabinet used during the era of occupation by hospital staff.

A non-conforming kitchen and bathroom were upgraded for use by the Association. The maple flooring in the upstairs rooms, which was installed during occupation by hospital staff, was retained. The building now has modern electric lighting and is heated by a heat pump.

Quarters 2 is currently used for meetings, events, and the library for historical research. The upstairs is used for storage and has a barracks exhibit constructed by Kenneth Morgan.

Quarters 3: Restoration completed in 1990, this building represents an unmarried officer's quarters. A non-conforming structure at the back was extensively repaired for use by staff. The original building configuration has four rooms; two downstairs and two upstairs. One of the downstairs rooms is furnished as an officer's billet and the other represents a period sutler's store as created by Lawrence Bateman in 2006.

The building was officially dedicated at a ribbon cutting by Shea Munroe on May 29, 1993, though it had already been open for tours earlier.

Quarters 4: Restoration, with modifications to accommodate the Museum Interpretive Center and Gift Shop, were completed in February 1989. The stairway was rebuilt at its original location and a beam installed in the main room to reinforce the upper floors which were to be used for office space, collection processing and storage.

The large north room, the former chapel, was left open for permanent and rotating exhibits. A portion of the east wall was left exposed to show the board-on-board construction of the building. A counter and shelving was installed in the smaller south room for use as a gift shop.

A non-conforming structure attached to the east side of the main building, built for hospital use, was razed and a modern replacement conforming to the exterior of the building was constructed to provide a kitchen, toilets, and an area for audio-visual presentations and flat and photo displays. The building was "electrified" with modern florescent fixtures and electric heating.

The building was dedicated at the Annual Meeting on September 30, 1989, by State Representative Shirley Winsley.

Lyle Dunkin reported that the construction crew put in 34,328 hours and other volunteers donated approximately 1,500 hours of labor. Grants and cash contributions had a value of about \$53,000.³

Grand Opening

Though tours had been going on for some time, the Fort Steilacoom Museum complex celebrated its Grand Opening at the Annual Meeting on September 22, 1990. Donors who contributed to the restoration of the fort were honored, and noted local historian Murray Morgan gave reminiscences of the area's early history. Jean Gardner commended the Association's efforts to preserve an important part of Washington's history, then cut the ribbon for the first official tours of the restored buildings.

³ HFSA, Minutes of March 11, 1992.

² Historic Fort Steilacoom Newsletter, Summer 1986.

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Historic Fort Steilacoom Association History of the Organization

by Orville H. Stout

Part 2: Restoration of Fort

A plan for the restoration of the fort buildings was developed in 1984 by Historic Fort Steilacoom Association and the Pierce County Office of Community Development represented by Caroline Gallacci. A description of the interior of all four buildings was detailed and priorities assigned for their restoration as well as the restoration of the exteriors of quarters 3 and 4. Development of a plan for the use of the buildings was also addressed in the report.

A restoration Committee, headed by Lyle Dunkin, Restoration Director, was established to guide and do the restoration work. Charles Collier was appointed Project Manager and the main carpenters were Lyle Dunkin, "Chuck" Collier, Jack Langston, Bob Weir, Arnold Stern and Jim Lawer. Volunteers included Lou Dunkin, Patricia Collier, Jill Fluker, Vikki Nelson, Sandy Dickenson, Boy Scout troops and Eagle Scout projects, U.S. Navy Reserve-Construction Battalion (Seabees), juvenile offenders under guidance of Pierce County Juvenile Restitution Program, U.S. Army Air Force and Air Force Reserve (McChord), Bates VocTech, Clover Park VocTec, and others.

While a chronological approach to the restoration was established, it was found that deviation was necessary in many instances. Careful consideration was given to restoring the exteriors to their original appearance, but with the exception of



The Restoration Committee was headed by Lyle Dunkin (left). "Chuck" Collier (2nd from right) was appointed Project Director assisted by carpenters Jack Langston, Arnold Stern, Bob Weir and Jim Lawer (not shown).

quarters 1, accuracy of the interiors was not as carefully observed due, for the most part, to the future use of the buildings.

In his "Historic Structure Report" of 1993, Charles Collier gave details of the reconstruction work:¹

In general the first step, when work was started on the buildings, was to remove all nonconforming material. This included exterior additions, carpeting, heat-

ing fixtures, non-code electrical wiring and fixtures, cabinets and wall paper and other wall coverings, and some flooring. This would reveal where walls had been removed or added, doors relocated, and even windows added, and, in building 4, where the original stairway had been torn out and relocated.

It was determined that the original walls and ceilings were painted and that no wall paper was used. Door and window

¹ Charles R. Collier, "Historic Structures Report," 1993, p. 2.

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President’s Message



Another great year at Fort Steilacoom is coming to an end. We have had some excellent events and programs, and accomplished the painting of Quarters 2. A lot of work had to be done to get the painting project going, including sitting in meetings with the State, phone calls to contractors, fundraising, numerous weekends of repair work and the removal of trees.

Tracy Quality Painting was contracted to do the painting of Quarters 2 and also agreed to repaint the Cannon Shed for free. I believe that the many years of being a Supply Sargent paid off, because Bernie Bateman talked with the company that supplied the paint and was able to get them to donate enough additional to do the interior of the building. At this time, He and Mike Harris have used that to paint the meeting room and foyer.

Quarters 2 looks great and stands out from Steilacoom Boulevard as “A pearl among the pebbles.” I thank you all for a job well done. Also, a big thank you to all those who donated money to make this possi-



Photo by Nancy Covert

Ken Morgan provides “supervision” as Tracy Quality Painting transforms the exterior of Quarters 2. It will soon become “a pearl among the pebbles.”

ble. The project and fundraising still continues, because now we need to work on the other buildings.

September was a rather busy time. Some of the reenactors of the fort went back east to participate in the Reenactment of Antietam, a Civil War battle which happened 150 years ago. We also had the 3rd annual historical miniatures game day, “Fix Bayonet,” at Fort Steilacoom. The participants set up terrain tables, and with miniatures, rules that govern tactics, and dice, recreate historical battles. This year donations raised from the event were put toward the painting project. We had two more events during the month: Living History Day and the National Museum Day, the latter sponsored by the Smithsonian in DC which promoted the event by offering “free admission” passes on their website. These two back-to-back weekend events brought around 200 visitors to the fort.

In October the fort had its annual meeting and elections. The members also voted on By-Law changes (members should have received the changes by mail before the meeting).

The newly elected officers and board members are: President, Lawrence Bateman; 1st VP, John Roten; 2nd VP Tom Allen; Secretary, Joe Lewis; elected Board Members are Bernie

Bateman, Tom Melberg, Ken Morgan, Nancy Keller-Scholz, Alan Archambault and Bill Arends are continuing service from last year’s election. Carol Stout continues as Past President.

Christine Colyar, Steve Dunkelberger, Walter Neary, and Gideon Pete are members on the newly formed Honorary Board.

We are currently searching for a treasurer. Please contact us if you know of a person who could qualify for this position (experience in book-keeping or accounting is necessary).



Karen Haas presented “Women Who Wait” at the Annual Meeting.



Photo by Carol Neufeld Stout

You Are There. Joe Lewis interviews three officers who spent some of their time at Fort Steilacoom: Porter Alexander (Alan Archambault), Benjamin Alvord (Tom Melberg), and August Kautz (Lawrence Bateman).

The Annual Meeting was followed with a program presented by Karen Haas. Through several vignettes, Karen represented ladies of the American Civil War, bringing these characters to life through diaries, poems and songs that became popular throughout the war. Personally, I was rather moved by this program.

Our most recent program in November consisted of a panel of officers who served at Fort Steilacoom sometime during their military careers. They were asked questions by a 21st Century moderator (Joe Lewis). The officers interviewed were BG Porter Alexander, CSA (Alan Archambault), MG Benjamin Alvord, USA (Tom Melberg), and MG August Kautz, USA (Lawrence Bateman). Our next event is on December 8th (Saturday), Christmas at Fort Steilacoom, 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. See the advertisement in this newsletter for more details.

I would also like to thank all those who have served, or are currently serving, our country, and the families of those Veterans as well. Thank you for your service!

Have a joyous Holiday Season, and may we have another great year bringing the history of Fort Steilacoom to the public.

Lawrence Bateman
 “Veni Vidi Vici”

friends called her, was active in the D.A.R. and the Fort Lewis Military Museum, as well as other historical organizations where her work was much appreciated.

Restoration of fort (from p. 1)

casings, except upstairs in cottage 1, were not original, and several of the fireplace mantles were not original.

It was found in research that the back rooms in cottages 1, 2, and 3 were added some time after the main structure was built, but definitely during occupancy by the army. This was verified during restoration in that they were of a different type of construction, were at a lower level, and not an integral part of the original building, added on afterward.

With the exception of cottage 2, all of the cottages were on pier blocks. Originally these were charred cedar blocks. Some had been replaced with concrete, but some of the original cedar blocks were still in place and sound.

Most of the plastered walls had to be re-plastered, but in the areas where walls and ceilings were wood—such as the back rooms and upstairs rooms of cottages 1, 2, and 3 and most of 4—an effort was made to repair and patch to keep the original appearance. Where it was not possible to patch and repair, plaster board was applied over the boards to preserve the original fabric.

In building 2 one wall of the west room was left unplastered to show the construction with nogging, and in the front east room, an area over the fireplace was also left unplastered to show the typical hand split lath. This is the only one of the four buildings that had the brick infilled walls and hand split lath, indicating it was the first of the buildings built.

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