

which were escorting the charting party, returned fire. Admiral John Rodgers, the senior US Naval officer present, waited ten days for a formal apology from the Koreans. None was offered.

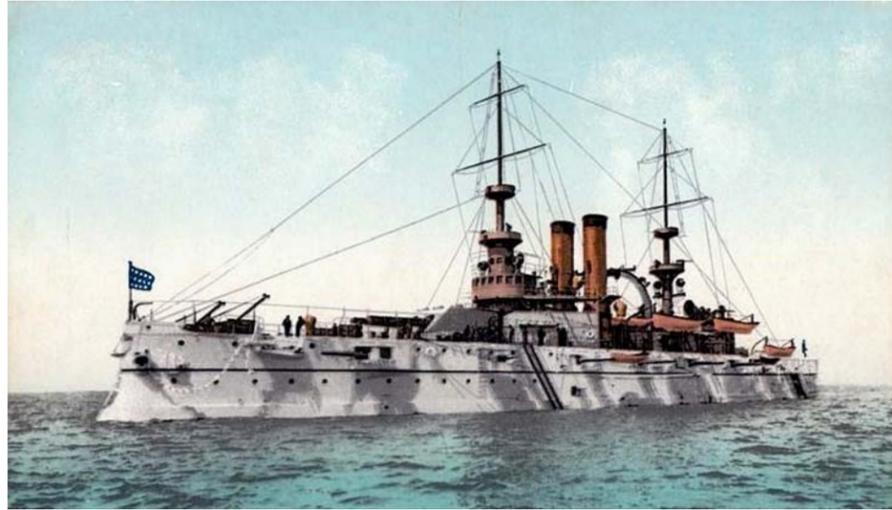
Admiral Rogers chose to launch a punitive attack on the forts. A landing party of nearly 700 sailors and marines, supported by the gunboats, was assembled. The marines were commanded by Captain McLane Tilton, while the sailors were commanded by now Lieutenant Commander, Silas Casey.

The gunboats opened fire, then the Americans advanced. Despite using Civil War model 1861 Springfield muskets, their fire was overwhelming as the Koreans were using long outdated matchlocks. Some Koreans even threw stones at the Americans. The battle was a short one and resulted with many Korean casualties. The forts were leveled and the offending cannon were spiked or destroyed.

Naval officers do not always serve at sea. Typically, after a period of sea duty, they are transferred to shore duty. Such was the case with Casey. He served stints with the US Lighthouse Service and at the Washington Navy Yard.

The US Lighthouse Service was created in August 1789 as part of the Treasury Department. Before that the states constructed and operated their own lighthouses. In the 1890s it was reorganized into Lighthouse Districts, each headed by a District Inspector and a District Engineer who were either Navy or Army officers. Casey was Inspector for both the 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> districts.

The Washington Navy Yard was established in July 1799. It is the oldest Navy shore facility. Originally the yard was designated a shipbuilding and shipfitting center. This soon changed as access to the sea was limited. It became the Navy's location for advances in ordnance and technology and the manufacture of chains, anchors, and steam engines. It was later designated as the manu-



*U.S.S. Wisconsin in Pacific waters off San Francisco, California.*

facturing location for all Naval ordnance. Casey was appointed as equipment officer at the yard.

In the 1880s and 1890s Casey served aboard or commanded several vessels. Among those ships were the *U.S.S. Wyoming*, a screw sloop launched in 1859; the *U.S.S. Portsmouth*, a sloop-of-war launched in 1843; the *U.S.S. Newark (C-1)*, a cruiser launched in 1890; and the *U.S.S. Quinnebaug*, a corvette launched in 1875.

Casey was advanced to Rear Admiral and assigned to the *U.S.S. Wisconsin (BB-9)*. It was his flagship during his command of the Pacific Squadron. She was launched in November 1898 in San Francisco. Casey joined the ship when she was undergoing repairs at the Bremerton Navy Yard in 1901, after which she conducted gunnery practice off Tacoma and Seattle.

At the turn of the century, Civil War was sweeping through Columbia. The *Wisconsin* was dispatched in 1902 to protect United States interests in the railroad which crossed the Isthmus of Panama, which at that time was part of Columbia. Adm. Casey volunteered to act as mediator in the dispute between the Liberal and Conservative parties, inviting the belligerents aboard the ship. An accord was reached, which became

known as "The Peace of Wisconsin." Casey was mentioned in dispatches for his diplomatic services in resolving the dispute. It was his last official duty.

The *Wisconsin* sailed into San Francisco harbor where Casey "transferred his flag" to the cruiser *U.S.S. New York* in September 1903, thus ending his Navy service.

Admiral Casey was married to the former Sophia Gray Heberton in 1865. They had two children, Sophia and Elizabeth. Casey died August 14, 1913. He is interred at Arlington National Cemetery.



*Silas Casey III's headstone at Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia.*

# Fort Steilacoom

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*Past issues of this Fort Steilacoom newsletter have presented stories of the Casey family: General Silas Casey II, his wife, Abby Pearce Casey, daughters Abby Pearce Casey and Elizabeth (Bessie) Goodale Casey, and sons General Thomas Lincoln Casey and Lieutenant Edward Wanton Casey. The Casey's had another son, Admiral Silas Casey III. This is his story.*

**S**ilas Casey III was born in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, September 11, 1841. East Greenwich was founded in 1677 on the west shore of Narragansett Bay and had been the ancestral home of the Caseys since the mid-1700s. At the time of his birth, his father was serving in the Florida Wars against the Seminole Indians.

East Greenwich, being a coastal community, has a long maritime heritage. In June 1772 the Rhode Island assembly passed a resolution creating a navy which consisted of two vessels, the *Katy* and *Washington*. Many consider this establishment of a colonial navy to be the birth of what has become the US Navy.

Not only did East Greenwich have a seagoing tradition, so did the Casey family. The first Silas, as early as 1759, was a successful shipping merchant, importer, and fishing vessel operator. During the Revolution he and his wife's relative, Joseph Coggeshall, outfitted several privateers which operated against the British. Sadly, their ventures were not successful, as several of their vessels were captured by the British, resulting in the diminishing of the family fortune.

Unlike his father and younger brothers, Silas Jr. (as he was known) chose a Naval career. Perhaps he

## Silas Casey III Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy

*by Kenneth A. Morgan*



Library of Congress photo

*Silas Casey III with his papers and dog aboard the U.S.S. Newark.*

was influenced by his ancestors, or he had wanted to be different from his father. In any case, he entered the US Naval Academy on September 25, 1856.

By tradition, young men wishing to become Naval officers served an apprenticeship aboard a Naval vessel. This all changed in 1845 when the US Navy established a land academy at Annapolis, Maryland, on the grounds of a former Army post, Fort Severn. This decision was based partly on the Somers Affair, in which the Secretary of War's son was executed at sea as a result of a mutiny.

The Naval Academy evolved from the Philadelphia Naval School which operated from 1834 to 1845. When

midshipmen were ready for promotion, they were sent to this school for eight months and then returned to service.

At first a course of study at the new Academy was five years. The first and last years were spent in Annapolis and the middle three years were spent at sea. In 1850 the program was changed to seven years, the first and last two at the Academy, the middle three remaining at sea. This was again changed in 1851 with four years of study at the Academy interspersed with practice cruises.

The Civil War brought another set of changes to the Academy. Since it was located in Maryland, sympathy

*(Continued on page 3)*

## HISTORIC FORT STEILACOOM ASSOCIATION

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### President's Message



The Fort Steilacoom board continues to focus on the preservation of the fort and interpreting the importance and history of the four buildings. Board members are working on projects dealing with the preservation grant from the state legislature obtained by the late Senator Mike Carrell. The architects are planning a major foundation restoration for Quarters 3, and a contract for the work is pending.

New shelves have been built in the fort library to accommodate the "Official records of the Union and Confederate Armies." The books were donated by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Additional books have also been given by several other donors.

Visitors from military units, college and public school groups, community members, and out of state guests are given guided tours of the historic buildings throughout the year. For group tour arrangements call (253) 582-5838.

Special programs are also featured during most of the months. The February Tea was well attended as



Lou Dunkin, between Carol Stout and Becky Huber, was a very special guest at the May 30 program featuring a video of the restoration of Fort Steilacoom between 1983 and 1989. Lyle and Lou Dunkin narrated the video, produced in 1997. "It was nice to have a visit with Lyle," said Lou.

were the "Fort Steilacoom to Fort Bellingham Military Road" program presented by Karen Meador in March and the "Fort Steilacoom Ties to Spanaway" program by Jean Sensel in April.

After supervising a group of Boy Scouts in a photo inventory project of Quarters 1, Keegan Clark was awarded Eagle Scout rank in a ceremony held at Fort Steilacoom in May.

Reenactors from Fort Steilacoom supported Armed Forces Day at JBLM. And on Memorial Day the fort opened for summer season Sunday tours from 1 to 4 p.m. This will continue until Labor Day in September.

A special video program narrated by Lyle and Lou Dunkin showing the restoration of the fort buildings between 1983 and 1989 was shown at the request of the Lakewood Historical Society on May 30.

You are invited to another special program on June 14 telling the history and customs related to the

United States flag. Bring old, tattered American flags you want to be properly disposed of at 1 p.m. After the respectful disposal ceremony, a Power Point program will be given by the Sons of Veterans Reserve.

On Independence Day, July 4, the Fort will have a booth at the Steilacoom Street Fair. There will be many items to buy and soldier reenactors will pose with visitors for photograph taking. During the July 11 Lakewood Summer Fest at Fort Steilacoom Park, the Fort Steilacoom Museum will be open from 10 to 4 p.m. for visitors.

In participation with the nationwide Smithsonian Day on September 26, Fort Steilacoom will feature "Museum Day Live" from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Reenactors in period dress will show the historic buildings.

"Thank you" to all of the volunteers who keep the Fort Steilacoom Museum going!

Visit our website for additional information:

[www.historicfortsteilacoom.org](http://www.historicfortsteilacoom.org).

### Silas Casey III (From page 1)

for the southern cause ran deep. Riots broke out around the state, but it did not secede from the Union. This instability prompted the US government to move the school. The upper three classes were sent to sea while the Academy itself was moved to Newport, Rhode Island. The Maryland campus became an Army Hospital.

Silas, Jr., graduated from the Naval Academy in 1860. His first assignment was aboard the *U.S.S. Niagara*. *Niagara* was a steam frigate, powered by both sail and steam engine. She was launched in 1855 in New York and assigned as a Trans-Atlantic cable layer. When Casey joined the ship, she was engaged in transporting the Japanese diplomatic mission back to Japan.

By the time *Niagara* returned, the Civil War had commenced. The Federal Government adopted a plan, first developed by General Winfield Scott, to blockade southern ports. It was called the Anaconda Plan. This plan was implemented by President Lincoln by proclamation because Congress wasn't in session.

Unfortunately, the Navy was ill prepared. There were less than fifty ships available with 180 southern ports to close. *Niagara*, with her twelve eleven inch guns, was one of those ships. Assigned to the East Gulf Blockading Squadron, she engaged defenses at Fort McCree, Pensacola, and Florida in October 1861.

As the Navy expanded, so did the opportunities for young officers. Casey served in several vessels and participated in many engagements. He was aboard the *U.S.S. Wissahicken* as part of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron in 1862-1863; in an engagement against Fort McAllister, Savannah, Georgia, in 1862; on the *U.S.S. Quaker City* of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron 1863-1865; during the first attack on Charleston under Admiral DuPont; in the attack on Fort Fisher in 1864 (Casey's younger brother Thomas also participated in the battle); and



Silas Casey III (front center) and officers of the *U.S.S. Newark*.

on the *U.S.S. Winooski*, Atlantic Blockading Squadron, 1865-1867. Casey was promoted to Lieutenant in February 1863.

With the close of the Civil War, the Naval Academy returned to Annapolis. Casey was assigned to the Academy as instructor of seamanship. He held the position for three years. Upon completion of his tour at the Naval Academy, Casey was assigned as executive officer of the *U.S.S. Colorado*.

*Colorado* was a steam frigate. Launched in 1856 at the Norfolk Navy yard, she had been part of the Gulf Blockading Squadron during

the war. When Casey joined her, she was the flagship of the Asiatic Squadron.

In the spring of 1871 several ships, including *Colorado*, were sailing along the west coast of Korea near what is today the city of Inchon. Aboard the *Colorado* was Fredrick Low, the US minister to China. His task was to open diplomatic relations with the Korean Kingdom. Additionally, the Navy wanted to chart the Han River which leads to the capital city of Seoul. As the charting party was entering the river, it was fired upon from forts along the shore. The gun boats *Monocracy* and *Palos*,