

Ector became so. His affliction made her very excited and unreasonable and hard to do anything with.... Mrs. Ragan also had a miserable pet poodle dog named Annette which she cared for as much as for her adopted boys, Frank and Wyley. And the poor Major had to make that trip from Fort Steilacoom to Georgia with that menagerie, Mrs. Ragan, Ector, the major's brother, Frank, Wyley and Annette....

After getting to New York he took Ector to an asylum in Philadelphia where he was cured within a year and came down to Georgia. And in 1874 he visited us in Opelika, Alabama, and scared Miss Teen awfully, for she had no confidence in his recovery and when I, maneuvering to bring a long, tedious and trying visit to a termination, said I must go down to my office for a while, Miss Teen nearly fainted at the idea of being left alone with him. She believes to this day that I put her in great danger in making the suggestion. But fortunately, it worked and Ector went off with me and did not come back.

For social amusements we had a very occasional hop at some sort of a semi-public room or hall, I can't now recall exactly what, and once some wretched travelling minstrels gave a show to which Miss Teen and I took Bessie Casey. I remember Joseph Bowers sang to the grinding of a coffee mill used in imitation of a hand organ. Once or twice we had attempts at sleigh rides with dry goods boxes on makeshift runners when we had a few inches of snow, but it usually melted in a day and we had to come back through the mud.

Once the little pond we used to walk to froze over so hard that Colonel Casey thought he might cut some ice and he walked out there with Miss Teen, Bessie Casey and an orderly. The orderly thought the ice was strong enough and walked far out where the water was very deep when he broke through and would have drowned had not Miss Teen

taken an oar and walked out near enough to give it to him while Bessie Casey ran back to the barracks nearly a half a mile and brought help. The oar enabled the soldier to hold up until ropes were brought and he was hauled out.

Sometimes we had riding or walking excursions or picnics with some of the ladies and sometimes pistol practice for them and Miss Teen generally beat them all.

As the spring approached she and I used to take long walks just to pick the beautiful yellow violets of which the woods were full. Bless the memories of old Fort Steilacoom! Though possibly they are seeming peculiarly dear today as I write them, June 9, 1897, way down in Greytown, Nicaragua, where lonesomeness has its own abode and homesickness its everlasting habitation.

Edward Porter Alexander, "Memoirs of E. P. Alexander," typescript at the University of North Carolina, written June 9, 1897.

Biographical Sketch

E. P. Alexander

Edward Porter Alexander (May 26, 1835 – April 28, 1910) was a military engineer, railroad executive, planter, and author. He served first as an officer in the United States Army and later, during the Civil War, in the Confederate Army, rising to the rank of brigadier general.

He was born in Washington, Georgia, into a wealthy and distinguished family of planters of the Old South. He was the sixth of ten children of Adam Leopold Alexander and Sarah Gilbert Alexander.

He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1857, third in his class of 38 cadets, and was brevetted a second lieutenant of engineers. He briefly taught engineering and fencing at the academy before he was ordered

to report to Brig. Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston for the Utah War expedition.

Returning to West Point, he took part in weapon experiments and Signal Corps flag code.

Alexander married Bettie Mason of Virginia on April 3, 1860. They had six children, one of whom died in infancy.

Lt. Alexander's final assignments for the U.S. Army were at Fort Steilacoom, and at Alcatraz Island, near San Francisco, California.

After learning of the secession of his home state of Georgia, Alexander resigned his U.S. Army commission on May 1, 1861, to join the Confederate Army as a captain of engineers. While organizing and training new recruits to form a Confederate signal service, he was ordered to report to Brig. Gen. Beauregard at Manassas Junction, Virginia. He became the chief engineer and signal officer of the Confederate Army of the Potomac.

Alexander was promoted to major on July 1, 1861 and lieutenant colonel on December 31, 1861. During much of this period he was chief of ordnance, under Johnston's command, managing supplies and ammunition in what later became the Army of Northern Virginia. He was also active in signal work and intelligence gathering, dealing extensively with spies operating around Washington, D.C.

Porter Alexander is also known as an artilleryman who played a prominent role in many of the important battles of the war. He was promoted to colonel then brigadier general.

After the surrender, Alexander taught mathematics, was a railroad executive and became a respected author.

Shortly after returning from a presidential assignment in Nicaragua in 1899, his wife Bette died. He married her niece, Mary Mason, in 1901. He died in 1910 at Savannah, Georgia, and is buried in Magnolia Cemetery in Augusta.

Summary source: Wikipedia

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Remembrances of Fort Steilacoom

by Edward Porter Alexander

The sappers with whom I came to serve were under command of 1st Lieut. Thomas Lincoln Casey of the engineers. I had known him slightly at West Point before I went to Utah. His wife, Emma, was a daughter of dear old Professor Robert Weir, professor of drawing at West Point.

Perhaps this is as good a place as any to say that among all the many friendships which Miss Teen and I have made, in our varied journeyings, our friendship with the Caseys was one of the very dearest and it has proved the very longest of all in its duration. It continues today with poor Mrs. Casey, Tom having died last year after being retired as Brig. General and Chief of Engineers, though still charged with and having nearly completed one of the great works of his life, the Congressional Library in Washington City....

Tom and Emma met us on the dock at Steilacoom City and drove up in the post ambulance to the fort, where we became the guests of his father, Lt. Colonel Silas Casey of the 9th Infantry, who was in command of the post. I am tempted to linger a little over our six months stay at Fort Steilacoom. As I look back at it, now it seems to have been the last of my youth.

Our garrison consisted, besides the sappers, of two companies of the 9th Infantry. The other officers, besides the Casey mentioned, were Captain Thomas English; Lieut. David McKibben, both married; Lieut. Arthur Shaaf; Quartermaster Major "Nosey" Myers; Chaplain Rev.



Edward Porter Alexander

Mr. Kendig (married); Paymaster Major A.B. Ragan, with Mrs. Ragan and two adopted children (Frank and Wyley B.) and her brother, John Ector; the surgeon Dr. Brown and family soon succeeded, however, by young Dr. Vansant and he later by Dr. Heger. In Colonel Casey's household, beside Mrs. Casey, were also his two sweet daughters, Abbie who while we were there married Captain Hunt of the 4th Infantry and beautiful Bessie with her lovely eyes, who afterwards became Mrs. Robert N. Scott.

Besides these families there was the family of the sutler, a Mr. Bachelor, who were visited by the ladies, and there were also Capt. Fauntleroy in command of the armed steamer *Massachusetts* with his wife.

The *Massachusetts* did not belong to the Navy, but was kept by the army to protect the settlers and Puget Sound Indians from a very warlike Alaska Tribe, the Stikines, who sometimes made incursions in immense war canoes carrying 60 warriors each. Captain Fauntleroy was a Virginian, son of a former army officer, celebrated as a great rifle shot and he had with him a Midshipman, Barron, son of Commodore Barron who I think fought a duel with Commodore Decatur.

We stayed with Colonel Casey as his guests for about two weeks. His quarters were a double cottage, ½ stories facing the center of the parade ground; 4 rooms and 2 shed rooms on the lower floor and four rooms in the ½ story above. On each side of it were three other cottages with two full rooms and two shed rooms below and two rooms in the ½ story above.

After looking around we found our only chance for quarters was to divide the cottage next on the right to Colonel Casey's with Lieut. Shaaf who being unmarried only needed half of the downstairs. He took the rooms on ones' left entering.

The right front room, on entering, was our parlor and dining room. The rear or shed room was the kitchen. Upstairs, the upstairs rooms had no fireplaces. Our bedroom was over our parlor, which was the side next to Colonel Casey's, and Anne, our cook and house girl, whom we had brought from West Point, had the room over Shaaf's parlor for her bedroom.

(Continued on page 3)

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President's Message



Greetings Everyone!

Time is going by so very quickly. We are told that this is what happens when one gets busy, and has your HFSA Board of Directors ever been busy this season! There are a lot of changes coming in the next few months to Historic Fort Steilacoom.

When you visit during the holidays for our annual "Christmas at the Fort" celebration, be sure and drop by the Gift Shop. For the first time in decades, the Directorial Staff have been employing a professional design firm to rework the HFSA's merchandising image.

We are expecting boxes of new merchandise containing images of the Fort, and our logo, to arrive just in time for Christmas. To say that everyone is excited would be a great understatement. To help facilitate all that excitement, Fort Steilacoom will at long last be embracing the 21st century by enabling purchases at the Gift Shop through your favorite cards!



Archive photo 2017

Laurence Bateman and Dennis Eller presented their program "A Necessary Evil, the Army Sutler" at the October 20 Annual Meeting.

Speaking of shopping, please be sure and remember our Amazon Smiles and Fred Meyer Community Rewards programs when you do your everyday shopping. You are going to buy some items anyway, everything from groceries to bicycles, so why not allow your favorite charity (yes, we're begging here, lol!) to enjoy some of the profit. Every year, both Fred Meyer and Amazon donate millions and millions to organizations through these programs. It is all so very simple. You can sign up for either, or why not BOTH, of these programs right online. It only takes a minute. After that, it is all automatic because you can easily link both rewards cards to Historic Fort Steilacoom! For Amazon Smile, simply go to (Amazon Sign In – Amazon Smile) and for Fred Meyer Community Rewards go to: (<https://www.fredmeyer.com/topic/community-rewards-4>). There are only a few steps. After that one time sign up, you will help to keep this great old army post alive every time you shop! What could be easier, what could be simpler!

Our Annual Meeting and election of officers was held on October 20. All current officers were reinstated.

See you at the Fort! *Gideon*

The Army Sutler



J. M. Bachelder

Sutlers were merchants who often followed armies or were allowed to establish stores at military forts. They needed to have the permission of the commanding officer and were subject to Army regulations. They were suppliers of non-military goods to the soldiers, who often bought on credit, reimbursed when the Army paymaster arrived at the fort.

J. M. Bachelder was a sutler at Fort Steilacoom before the Civil War. He and his family are mentioned in Alexander's story.

Remembrances (from p. 1)

It took us some little time to find all the furniture, bedding etc. we needed to go to housekeeping, but we finally got fixed sending thirty miles to Olympia, the capital, for some things, getting some in Steilacoom and some at Nisqually, a fort or station of the Hudson Bay Company on the prairie about six miles to the south.

Mount Rainier, in the southeast across the parade ground, towered high above the Cascade Range which bounds the horizon there, apparently some forty to fifty miles away. The country is one of interspersed prairie and forests of fir, with many little lakes scattered about, a dozen or more within an hour's walk.

Since the war (Civil War) the fort has been given to the territory for an insane asylum and Miss Teen and I revisited it in 1892. Colonel Casey's quarters and our house on the right and Tom Casey's on its left were the only buildings left of the officers' quarters existing in our day, but some of the old soldiers barracks and the old trees about the vicinity still stood. We walked out to the little lake nearby where we used to walk in the old days of our honeymoon and cut our initials on a tree with the dates '61 and '92.

One of our favorite walks, too, was to a little mill pond, about a mile north on a stream flowing into the Sound, a deep ravine. Here Miss Teen would sit on the bank and read while I, out on a log, could always catch a fine string of brook trout in a little while. Indeed, we nearly lived on game and fish.

I bought a nice pony which Colonel Casey kept in his stable, for the privilege of joint use by his daughters. Once a week I would ride down to the mouth of the Puyallup River, where the City of Tacoma is now situated, and leaving Charley, the pony, at the house of a Swede named DeLinn, who had a little shingle mill on a little brook emptying into the Sound, I would walk up a mile or two to the Indian village on the

Puyallup River and get an Indian to take me in his Kynim to paddle around the flats and creeks at the mouth of the river for a cultus mimeloose Kulla-Kulla, or for amusement kill ducks. I could usually get fifteen or twenty by the time he would land me at Delinns. And if I cared to get any pheasants, I could always get them in an adjacent crab apple thicket with Mrs. Delinns little dog.

About five miles southeast from the fort was a large lake, about one mile wide by four long, which was a great resort for wild geese to roost in. At least twice every week I would get up long before day and saddle Charley and by dawn would be on the far side of the lake to get a shot at the geese as they flew for their feeding grounds, and I usually brought one or two. One afternoon I walked out and back and brought in seven.

Occasionally, too, I would go deer hunting on the islands in the sound with Capt. Fauntleroy, but only once did we get a deer. Then I killed it, running in the woods, one hundred yards off by a wonderful chance shot, with the old small bore rifle of Capt. Fauntleroy's father, the bullet hitting it in the neck and cutting the jugular vein.

Once I was sent by Colonel Casey on a three days trip over to some settlements on the White River, where it was reported that there were hostile demonstrations by Indians, but the alarm proved unfounded.

Once every five or six days, I was on duty as officer of the day. Our guard had charge of a few very hard cases, deserters, etc. serving long terms. One day one of these fellows mutinied and getting an iron bar cleared the upstairs room in which they were confined and threatened to kill anyone who came up. The sergeant of the guard ran over to my house for me and I went over and advanced on the fellow with my sword. Then he retreated into his cell where he gave up and submitted to hand cuffs.

But the excitement of the winter was caused by the going crazy of my intimate associate, John Ector, who lived with the Ragans in the cottage adjoining us on the right. Ector and I used to be together a great deal, especially to play chess a great deal. Some time early in February, 1861, his conduct began to be a little peculiar at times. He got excited upon religious subjects and began to show that exaggerated self appreciation which is so often a sign of incipient insanity. At last it became necessary to have him watched constantly. One night they sent for me about 4:00 a.m. to come over, for he had a violent fit and had driven two soldiers, who were nursing him, and Major Ragan out of the house with a poker, breaking the bones of one man's hand.

I went over hurriedly in dressing gown and slippers and got him in his room and disarmed him, but had to stay with him 'till breakfast time, at 8:30 a.m. when he insisted on going over to my house to get my guns and pistol to kill all the people on the post whom he thought were plotting against him.

I got him out on the porch and there a half dozen soldiers brought up behind a fence made a dash on him and after a hard fight tied him. After that he had to be kept in an out house in a straight jacket and his feet fastened to a staple in the floor.

When we all came home in April and May, Ector was brought along, always with his arms in a straight jacket and his feet tied together and fastened to the floor of a cabin on the steamers or a room in hotels and transferred by main force when necessary, generally making his vicinity known by howling and yelling, crying fire or murder or both, and vituperating every person he saw with a most extensive vocabulary of billingsgate and profanity.

Poor Major Ragan! Mrs. Ragan, Ector's half sister, was not very far from being crazy herself, even before

(Continued on page 4)