

## FORT STEILACOOM'S CENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES

Your Association's Board is planning a series of six presentations between April and October. This series of Centennial talks will be focused on Fort Steilacoom, its era, and its people and will be held in Quarters 2 at 7:30 p.m. Each event will last approximately an hour and a half. Sundown will be late enough during this six month span that you'll be able to stroll or drive home in daylight. The topics are still tentative, and more information will be forthcoming via mail and various media.

1. *The Western Movement*, Tuesday, April 11. The speaker will be William Krieger, PhD. Dr. Krieger is on the State Centennial speaker's list and has been the Centennial project director for Pierce College.

2. *The Indians at Fort Steilacoom: The Puget Sound Salish Then and Now*, Tuesday, May 9.
3. *Women Pioneers*, Tuesday, June 6.
4. *Soldiers at Fort Steilacoom*, Tuesday, August 15.
5. Topic not determined. As of this writing, the Board has not decided if the Centennial talk is to be part of our annual meeting program.
6. *Pioneer Figures*. This talk will be scheduled in conjunction with Western State Hospital's Centennial celebration.

If the local schools have sufficient interest, a special, separate program of all the talks will be developed for them. The possibility of college credit through Pierce College for anyone attending the entire series is also being explored.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 1989

It's time to renew your membership in Historic Fort Steilacoom Association. Annual dues, solicited in January, are:

Student and Senior Citizens	\$ 5.00
Individual	10.00
Family	25.00
Association or Business	30.00

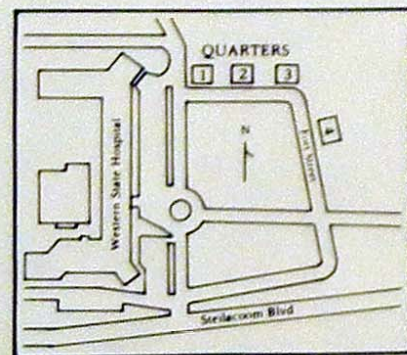
Life memberships are also welcomed. An individual life membership is \$200, and for an association or business, \$250.

Your continued support is much appreciated. Please make your check payable to Historic Fort Steilacoom Association and send to:

Historic Fort Steilacoom Association  
P.O. Box 94095  
Fort Steilacoom, WA 98494



**Historic Fort Steilacoom Association**  
P.O. Box 94095  
Fort Steilacoom, WA 98494



***Renew your membership for 1989!***

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# HISTORIC FORT STEILACOOM NEWSLETTER

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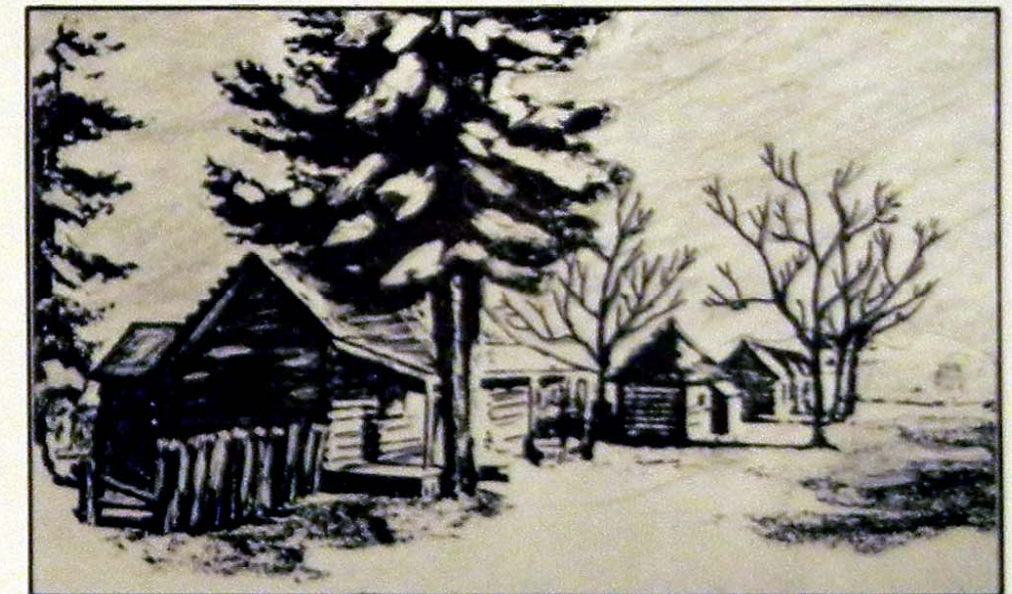
## IN AND AROUND THE FORT: WINTER, THEN AND NOW

This afternoon, January 16th, I made a cookie-run to the crew in Quarters Four. (If you want to see glowing smiles of appreciation, take them cookies, cake or doughnuts. Any sweets, actually.) As I left the Fort, 25 mile an hour winds were driving both rain and the traffic light on Steilacoom Boulevard sideways. The weather report on the TV this evening included descriptions of 65 MPH winds closing the Hood Canal bridge temporarily. So I wondered what the weather was like when the Fort was first being settled. A quick glance through just a few sources convinces me that not much has changed.

Naturally one starts with Joseph Heath's diary, since he was the first to live on Steilacoom Prairie. On Christmas Eve, 1848, he noted that it was "Thawing during the day, but frosty night. Gales. Snow." The next day it was so cold that he was unable to distribute molasses to the Indians who worked on his farm, as it had frozen. On the day after Christmas he wrote, "Thank God a change in the weather towards night."

Christmas, 1855, was also a cold and trying holiday time, according to Mrs. Moore who years later, in the *Tacoma News Tribune*, described her situation as a refugee during the Indian war:

We were housed in the old Hudson's Bay warehouse at Steilacoom, and I could tell you we had nice airy rooms. If you spilled water on the floor, you had to wipe it up quickly or it would freeze. It was a very cold winter. We filled up holes in the walls with anything we



Winter at Heath's farm in 1848 saw frosty nights, gales, and snow. It was so cold that molasses would not pour.

could get our hands on. (Thank you, Gary Reese.)

In January, 1858, Lt. August Kautz, that worthy Quartermaster, noted in his diary that on the 4th it snowed at the Fort. Again on the 10th he wrote that the ground was heavily covered with snow. And on the 12th he wrote that the "Snow continues, but too wet for sledding." the next day was so unpleasant that he decided not to travel to Olympia. Although he described being caught in a snowstorm on Mount Rainier with considerable equanimity.

January, 1859, appeared to be about as gloomy as the previous year and as our 1989 of recent days appears to be. On Friday the 14th Kautz noted that "The wind still blows a gale." On the 28th it snowed very hard in the morning. And

finally, on the 5th of February, he noted that it rained all day, and on Sunday the 6th, "There was snow and much wind today."

So there you have it. Let's see if nature repeats itself and delivers the same sort of weather for 1989's February 5th and 6th. By the way, Kautz's diary indicates that March was not much better, with several stormy days. Perhaps we should hope that nature does not repeat itself.

By Ray Egan





## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON RESTORATION

We are over 75% of the way toward your Association's goal of restoring all four military quarters as part of the state centennial celebration. The biggest challenge, Quarters 4, is expected to be completed by the middle of next month. Construction Superintendent Lyle Dunkin and his also-dedicated colleagues, Chuck Collier, Jack Langston, Bob Weir, Arnold Stern and Jim Lawer, have performed what restoration specialists and preservationists admiringly call a labor of love. Mr. Bob Fitzsimmons, Western State Hospital's administrative officer, referred to it as a "miracle."

You are cordially invited to drop in to tour the former chaplain's quarters any time the fellows are working. (Look for them in Quarters 3 after February 15th or so, and they'll be most pleased to take you over to #4 to view their splendid handiwork.) If you gave the building even a passing glance a couple of years ago, you saw a prime candidate for demolition. It leaned, sagged and was perforated with racoon, bird and squirrel entrances and tunnels. And now, what a testimony to commitment and craftsmanship!

We certainly enjoyed local support, as well. Bates Vocational/Technical School carpentry faculty and students hung the sheetrock which had been donated by Domtar Gypsum Company. Then their painting faculty and students taped, finished and painted the walls. This spring they will paint the exteriors of Quarters 1, 2 and 3 with paint donated by Olympic Paints and Stains. Bunce Rental donated the use of a floor sander, and Rental Marts loaned a sheet rock jack. Bates electrical and sheet metal faculty and students installed the furnaces and ducting, and then the electricians came back and installed the lighting fixtures. And a number of NCOs from McChord Air Force Base's Aerial Port Squadron painted #4's exterior.



Construction Superintendent Lyle Dunkin has spearheaded the effort to save the surviving buildings at Fort Steilacoom and has contributed countless hours to their reconstruction.

All of this support has allowed our restoration crew to concentrate more on the delicate, challenging and time-consuming job of figuring out how things were originally and then painstakingly restoring walls, trim, floors, doors, windows, and fireplaces and then installing cabinets, plumbing and other fixtures in the two new bathrooms and snack/lunch room. And we can't forget the indispensable multi-yard dumpster loaned (and repeatedly emptied) for almost a year now by Lakewood Refuse, a long-time supporter of the project.

Money was the lubricant which allowed all the donations of time, effort, materials and services to be used so effectively. In an earlier newsletter you learned about the anonymously donated challenge grant, which will match all donations to the restoration of Quarters 3 and 4, up to a total of \$30,000. We have already matched \$9,000, and since the last newsletter, we have received donations of another \$2,500 from the Cheney Foundation, another \$1,000 from the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation, and have been advised that we shall receive \$2,000 in Centennial funds from the County. When matched, this will provide a total of \$11,000.

Restoration of Quarters 3 has already begun. As Lyle Dunkin noted in the last newsletter, we had a contractor reshingle its steeply pitched roof. The non-conforming addition has been removed from the back of the house, and the Naval Reserve Seabees have begun removing the old carpets and wallpaper. The Hospital electricians have relocated the electrical service box from the addition to the main structure. As one can tell at a glance, the porch is unsafe and its replacement will be one of the first steps in restoration of #3. While this building will demand considerable time and effort, it is, thankfully, much less of a challenge than #4.

I must congratulate Lyle and his team for yet another splendid accomplishment: squeezing the most restoration from the least amount of money. Materials have been bought at such disparate and inexpensive sources as flea markets and the Boeing surplus store—at a great cost in personal time and effort, but at substantial benefit to our always very limited treasury. We may rest assured that our dues and donations are spent with a thoughtfulness that exceeds the care with which most of us spend our own money.

Ray Egan

### MANY THANKS...

Travis Lauricella of Troop 53 adapted the old Fort Steilacoom Community College sign for our fort as an Eagle Scout project. As you drive on Steilacoom Boulevard alongside the fort, glance to your right (toward Quarters 2). The sign is not just a fine marker for the fort, but a testimony to Mr. Lauricella's public spirit.

Gerald Lyon contributed a refrigerator for Quarters 4.

Gene Pankey Motor Company donated \$50.00 and Lakewood Light and Power Company (Ray Miller, President) gave \$40.00.



A work crew including Jim Lawer, Arnold Stern, Chuck Collier, and Jack Langston do the last of the inside painting in Quarters 4.

### LEND YOUR TALENT

Your Association needs volunteers. People are needed to fill Board positions as they become vacant, to do public relations work, to become docents and help guide groups through the buildings, to write monographs on the soldiers, Indians, archaeology, to write grant requests for funding, to do carpentry and restoration, to work on increasing membership, to make and wear costumes during events at the Fort or while giving talks about the Fort to schools and other groups, to do telephoning, etc. Volunteers are needed for all of the same reasons



Jim Lawer and Jack Langston trudge through piles of peeled wallpaper in the entry hall of Quarters 3.

### OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE

We have office space in Quarters 2 (the commandant's home) and Quarters 4 (the chaplain's home and chapel) which can be leased at a very nominal monthly rent. Eligible tenants would be not-for-profit organizations that are of a historic, restoration, education or public service nature. All rental income received can be applied to museum acquisitions, operations and maintenance expenses or for museum equipment. If you know of any organizations which would enjoy being located in a historic setting and would enjoy having a post office box address at Fort Steilacoom, Washington, please have them contact Marion Ball at 582-0893 or Ray Egan at 584-1528 for particulars.

that other museums need them. Do join us. You'll enjoy it.

### NOTES FROM OTHER MUSEUMS

#### STEILACOOM TRIBAL MUSEUM

The Steilacoom Tribal Museum (1515 Lafayette Street, Steilacoom) is featuring "Changing Tides" through June 11th. The exhibit examines archaeological research as it applies to the Coast Salish of the Fraser River delta and contains 100 prehistoric artifacts from 2000 B.C. to 450 A.D. It was produced by the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Its appearance in Steilacoom represents its inaugural showing in the United States. The museum is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. For more information call 584-6308.

#### FORT LEWIS MUSEUM

The next Friends of Fort Lewis Museum meeting will be at the Fort Lewis Officers' Club at 11:00 a.m., Sunday, January 29th. Mr. Alan Archambault, Director of the Fort Lewis Museum, will do his presentation (in period uniform) on the life and times of soldiers of the Northwest, circa 1860. Alan gave this talk at our annual meeting, and it was a treat, to say the least. We recommend your attendance. This will be a brunch meeting. You can call 967 7206 (the museum) for reservations if you wish to dine.

#### STEILACOOM MUSEUM

The Steilacoom Historical Museum Association has published its first book, *Town on the Sound, Stories of Steilacoom*. This book, edited by Joan Curtis, Alice Watson and Bette Bradley, is a delightful reflection of the past with reminiscences and pictures of Steilacoom—the first incorporated town in Washington Territory. The events and lives of people who brought life to the settlement are recounted—people who influenced the Steilacoom we know today.

A State Centennial project, this book is a *must* for those interested in our history. Copies are available at the Steilacoom Historical Museum, 112 Main Street (telephone 584-4133) and at the Bair Drug and Hardware Store. The cost, including sales tax, is \$11, or \$12 by mail order.