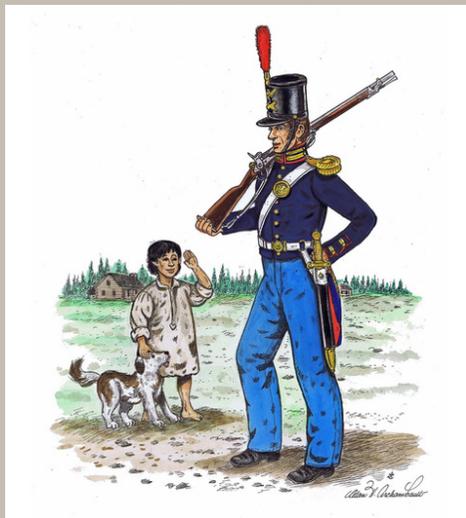


# Fort Steilacoom

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



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*U.S. Army ROTC instructors visited Historic Fort Steilacoom on July 28.*



# YOUR MISSION: TO BRING THE STORY TO ALL

by Walter Neary



With fall comes autumn colors, pumpkins, and the annual election of the officers and directors of the Historic Fort Steilacoom Association. We very much hope you'll join us over the internet on October 17 to help elect (or re-elect) this year's crop.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share just a bit about the lineup presented by our nominating committee of past president Gideon Pete and directors Karin Crelling and Jim Lauderdale. Two members return; Membership VP John McPherson returns to the role of beloved volunteer.

All of these people have extensive backgrounds, of course, so I risk doing them an injustice by my very brief references. I hope you'll have a chance to meet everyone as we share more with members and even (*gasp!*) be able to see each other in person one of these days.

- **Program Vice President: Elizabeth Korsmo.** Elizabeth has a long background in living history at Fort Nisqually and elsewhere and is curator of the Tacoma Historical Society. She also has a degree in museology, which is just a wonderful word and an even better subject to know about for us.
- **Education Vice President: Claire Keller-Scholz.** Claire works for Metro Parks Tacoma; I was listening to her music two nights in a row when I volunteered for the Fort Nisqually Candlelight Tour. Claire, a historian, has been serving on the board of the Heritage League of Pierce County and is well known to all its members. Claire's surname is, of course, familiar to many of you as her mother, Nancy, was on the board for many years.
- **Membership Vice President: Brandon Tautfest.** Brandon was a history classmate of Karin's at the University of Washington and is a cultural historian and researcher now working with the Clark County Historical Society.
- **Treasurer: Tom Melberg.** Now of course you've been seeing Tom's name for decades, but the treasurer role is new for him, and we appreciate him stepping into that position.
- **Director 1: Kurtis Bullchild.** Kurtis is archivist for the Nisqually Tribe. Kurtis was a librarian before that and has been organizing an oral history program for the archives. Kurtis has a certificate in museum studies from the Institute of American Indian Arts.
- **Director 3: Austin Rice.** His name will also be familiar, as this living historian at Fort Nisqually was elected last year to fill an open seat for a year; now he'll be elected to the two-year term.
- **Director 5: Andrew Noll.** Andrew is a longtime living historian and military re-enactor. He is also an electrician; we're very hopeful he'll help us keep the buildings standing and not on fire or anything bad like that.
- **Director 7: Karen Meador.** A historian, Karen has graciously agreed to serve another two-year term.
- **Director 9: Michael McGuire.** Speaking of returning for more, our treasurer for the last many years, Michael McGuire, has agreed to return in a director role.

I can't begin to tell you how excited I am about this lineup. We're filling out strengths in record-keeping, museum operations, and history and interpretation.

I should also acknowledge the debt we have to Fort Nisqually. Many of its employees and "graduates" are bringing a professionalism to our museum that I appreciate. The other reason you see a lot of folks from Fort Nisqually is because of the subject matter of our fort. You may not believe this, but not everyone we approach is crazy for the history of the 1850s. Brace yourselves: Some people find the history of the U.S. Civil War more interesting than Puget Sound history of the 1850s. *I know, right? That's crazy!* But, sadly, it's true.

For our board, we need to reach out to people passionate about the history of the 1850s, hence our growing number of tribal and Fort Nisqually representatives. Like you as a member, we all "get it:" that in the story of Fort Steilacoom, we share insights about the past and the present and the future. It's our job to bring more people along to the meaning and importance of the history we share here locally, not several states away.

I think many of you know we've been working on adapting much of what we do in 2021. It's not easy. You can't just wave a wand to update plans, records, marketing, historical knowledge, and entire buildings. This has been, and will be, hard work for our board. But, of course, we're happy to do it because this is our mission...to bring the story of this land and these buildings to everyone around us.

## TRIVIA FROM THE FORT STEILACOOM ARCHIVES

J. M. Bachelder, the sutler at Fort Steilacoom (a civilian merchant who sold provisions to an army), was a man who stood opposed to some 300 of his fellow Steilacoom residents, insisting upon Leshi's innocence before the Nisqually headman was eventually hanged.

Prior to the Treaty Wars, Bachelder befriended an Indian boy named Charly of about 10 or 12 who was known to "readily and cheerfully perform many little chores" for him with "an amiable disposition."

To which Northwest tribe did Charly belong?  
Answer on Page 5!



# A CAIRN, A BOULDER, AND A ROCK: A TALE FROM THE TREATY WARS, PART TWO

by Gideon Pete

The winter had passed without any action of hostility whatsoever on the part of the Indians. At the suggestion of Leschi, a white child—one of their prisoners—was sent into the settlements as an overture of peace. The gesture, however, failed to convince and the war resumed in force on March 1, 1856, at the White River, with the Indians being repelled. Another conflict occurred once again at Tenalquot (tədałkʷəlt in the Lushootseed language) on the 10th. After a full day of skirmishing, with the principal loss of life once again against them, the Indians finally withdrew over the Cascades to the relative safety of Klickitat territory. This effectively ended the Treaty War in the Puget Sound region.

There were minor incidents that still occurred in the rounding up of stragglers by separate parties of the Volunteers and the Army, with the former acting on a policy of extermination, killing all they could.

Leschi and his people were among the hostile tribes who eventually concluded terms with US Army Colonel George Wright, but Stevens refused to accept the truce. He instead offered a reward of five hundred dollars for Leschi's capture and succeeded by treachery to bring Leschi in for the murder of Moses at Connell's Prairie. Leschi was turned over to civil authority and arraigned on that indictment in November of 1856. The court resulted in a hung jury and failed to convict him. Leschi remained in custody until March of 1857, when he was tried once again—this time in Olympia, Stevens' headquarters, where Leschi was more easily convicted. However, a higher court issued a writ of error which prevented the governor from seeing Leschi hanged. Stevens was forced instead to go back east to answer that writ before the US Supreme Court. The court refused the writ in December, and Leschi's execution was rescheduled for January 22, 1858.

In the meantime, Stevens had been succeeded as governor of Washington Territory by Lafayette "Fayette" McMullen, who took office September 10, 1857. The new date for Leschi's hanging came and went, and the war between the citizens of Washington Territory and the US Army renewed with increased vigor. Governor McMullen charged that it was the military who held sole responsibility for thwarting the execution. The person who held authority for carrying out all executions in Pierce County was Sheriff George Williams who, coincidentally, had himself been recently arrested and therefore was totally unable carry out his task. On the morning that the hanging was to have taken place, an unnamed Indian swore an affidavit before US Commissioner for the 2nd District James Bachelder, which stated that Williams had sold a quantity of whiskey to another Indian. Bachelder was obliged by his position to issue a warrant for Williams' arrest, and Lieutenant August Kautz of Fort Steilacoom was appointed an acting US Marshal to carry out the warrant.

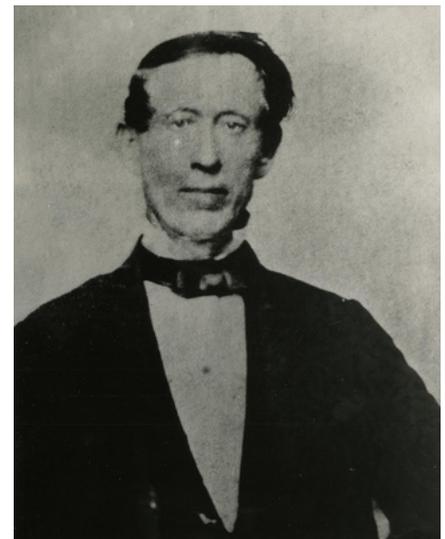
At a meeting held in Olympia on the evening of January 22nd, McMullen announced to the assembled crowd that if the officers of Fort Steilacoom had been present there, he would have hanged each of them in the place of Leschi! As it was, the assembled mob ended up hanging an effigy of Colonel Silas Casey, the commanding officer of Fort Steilacoom. The following morning, McMullen opposed having the effigy cut down, even though it was supposed by all concerned that "Casey" was now quite dead.

(continued on Page 6)

## HISTORIC FORT STEILACOOM ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Lafayette McMullen, Governor of the territory of Washington from 1857-1858.



A rock monument in Lakewood denoting the death of Nisqually Chief Leschi.

# THE IRISH AT FORT STEILACOOM: PART THREE

by Alan H. Archambault

## THE JOURNEY TO THE OREGON TERRITORY

On November 10, 1848, Companies L and M of the 1st United States Artillery Regiment left Fort Hamilton on Governor's Island, New York, bound for service in the Pacific Northwest. Some of the soldiers onboard had seen service in the recent Mexican-American War, but most were new recruits anxious for adventure. The artillery detachment was commanded by Captain (Brevet Major) John S. Hatheway and consisted of eleven officers and one hundred and fifty-three enlisted men. The Army transport ship, Massachusetts, which carried the artillerymen, was an auxiliary steam packet and was considered one of the most modern ships in the United States fleet.

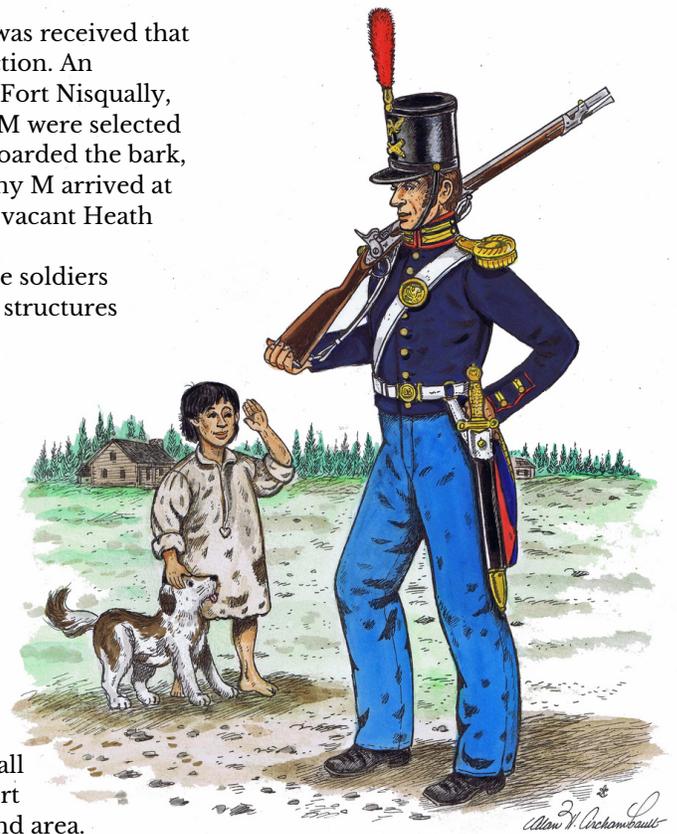
Rather than take the normal route to the Pacific, around Cape Horn, the Massachusetts took the route through the Strait of Magellan which was considered a tricky route to navigate. However, the ship made it through without incident. During the course of the trip, stops were made to take on coal and supplies at Buenos Aires, Argentina, Santiago, Chile, and Honolulu, Hawaii. On May 9, 1849, the Massachusetts reached the mouth of the Columbia. The ship then steamed up the Columbia and on May 13, 1849, dropped anchor at Fort Vancouver, the British Hudson's Bay Company Post. The officers of the two-company detachment selected a site overlooking Fort Vancouver and the soldiers of Companies L and M began to construct a post they named Columbia Barracks.

## THE IRISH HELP ESTABLISH FORT STEILACOOM

Shortly after the troop's arrival in the Oregon Territory, word was received that American settlers in the Puget Sound area were calling for protection. An American settler, Leander Wallace, had been killed by Indians at Fort Nisqually, another Hudson's Bay Company post. The soldiers of Company M were selected to respond but were not able to set out until August, when they boarded the bark, Harpooner, bound for Puget Sound. On August 23, 1849, Company M arrived at Fort Nisqually and soon established their own installation on the vacant Heath Farm, rented from the Hudson's Bay Company.

Captain Bennett Hill commanded Company M, and soon set the soldiers to work building barracks and other structures, since the existing structures on the farm were not adequate for their needs. Soon Fort Steilacoom became an important center of life for American settlers in the Puget Sound area, providing protection and law and order to the region. The new post was to be home for the soldiers of Company M until 1853. The U.S. Census of 1850 included the garrison of Fort Steilacoom. Although some of Company M soldiers may have been away on detached duty, most of the personnel are included. Of the sixty-four members of Company M reported on the census, twenty-nine listed their place of birth as Ireland. In addition, five women who were the wives of enlisted soldiers were born in Ireland. As was the tradition, they probably served as washerwomen to assist the troops stay clean and healthy. The five women were: Elizabeth Doyle (28), Helen Lacky (27), Eliza Rigney (25), Margaret Mahan (28), and Julia Dowling (age is illegible). All of the women had small children born in the Oregon Territory. There is no doubt that Fort Steilacoom brought a touch of the Emerald Isle to the Puget Sound area.

*(continued on Page 5)*



## CHRISTMAS AT FORT STEILACOOM RETURNS FOR 2021!

That's right! After a pandemic-related hiatus, our fun and festive event for the whole family of history buffs is returning Sunday, Dec. 11! Keep an eye on Fort Steilacoom's [Facebook page](#) for more details when available!

## THE IRISH AT FORT STEILACOOM: PART THREE

(continued from Page 4)

### IRISH SOLDIERS BECOME SETTLERS ON PUGET SOUND

By 1853, when elements of the 4th United States Infantry Regiment arrived on Fort Steilacoom, most of the enlistments of the soldiers of Company M had expired. The few that had time left on their enlistments were transferred into the ranks of the 4th Infantry while the officers and some noncommissioned officers returned east to re-organize the companies. A number of the Irish soldiers of Company M decided to make the Puget Sound region their home and filed land claims based on their service. In 1853, this region also became part of the newly formed Washington Territory.

One of the most notable Irish born settlers were John Rigney and his wife, Eliza. They and their twins, who were born on Fort Steilacoom in 1850, established a successful farm, north of Steilacoom, along Leach Creek. They eventually acquired more property, had six more children, and became one of the largest land owners in Pierce County. Christopher Mahan and his wife Margaret and their two children established a farm along Clover Creek in Spanaway. They became well known and admired for helping new settlers who traveled along the Naches Pass Trail. Murty Faley, another soldier born in Ireland, took out a Donation Claim along Clover Creek, near the present eastern boundary of Joint Base Lewis-McChord. John Lacky, his wife Helen, and son John, established a claim on the southern shore of American Lake. Michael Connell,

“While most of the Irish soldiers were enlisted men, one man stands out since he had earned a commission: Maurice Maloney.”

after his discharge from Company M, settled near present day Auburn. The area he claimed became known as Connell's Prairie after he was killed by Indians during the Treaty Wars. Finally, another Company M, Irish born soldier, George Barr, took employment with the Hudson's Bay Company at the end of his military service. He worked on building the Chief Factor's House, which still stands at the Fort Nisqually Living History Museum.

### AN IRISH OFFICER AT FORT STEILACOOM

In the years after the arrival of the 4th Infantry at Fort Steilacoom in 1853, tensions continued to grow between the settlers and the original owners of the land, the Indians. This resulted in additional military units being sent to the Washington Territory. As with Company M, the companies of soldiers that passed through Fort Steilacoom contained a number of Irish born soldiers. While most of the Irish soldiers were enlisted men, one man stands out since he had earned a commission: Maurice Maloney. Born between 1812 and 1813, Maloney immigrated to the United States at a young age. He joined the United States Army, as a private, in 1836. He soon saw service against the Seminole and Cherokee Indians in Florida. Maloney admirably rose through the ranks, a difficult thing to do for an Irish-immigrant soldier. By the time the United States went to War with Mexico in 1846, Maloney held the rank of sergeant major.

As the Army prepared for War with Mexico, Maloney was rewarded with a commission to second lieutenant.

(continued on Page 7)

## TRIVIA ANSWER FROM THE FORT STEILACOOM ARCHIVES

According to the Fall 1997 edition of the Historic Fort Steilacoom Association's newsletter, when tensions grew and local Indians were removed from the Fort, Bachelder wrote a letter to the Puget Sound Courier that read:

*“I employed a little ragged Snohomish Indian boy to go out to Fort Steilacoom on an errand. The little fellow... discharged his duty so well and seemed so unaffectedly pleased that an opportunity had occurred for him to do a 'Boston' a kindness, that I was at once prejudiced in his favor.”*

Bachelder wanted to *“assure the public that the boy Charly...was not a friend or a relative of any of the Indians now in arms against the whites, had no sympathy with them, or wish for their success, and no knowledge, whatever, of the causes which fed to the present unhappy war.”*

\$40 AT AMAZON, BUT ONLY \$18.95 AT THE FORT GIFT SHOP!

**REMEMBERED DRUMS**

A History of the Puget Sound Indian War

by J.A. Eckrom

Introduction by Murray Morgan

## A CAIRN, A BOULDER, AND A ROCK: A TALE OF THE TREATY WARS (PART TWO)

*(continued from Page 5)*

A new date was eventually set for Leschi's execution to take place, and at approximately 11 a.m. on February 19th, 1858, Thurston County Sheriff Charles Grainger accomplished the task. Some of those present called it a homicide as opposed to an execution, as the law stated that an execution must be performed only by the sheriff of the county in which it is slated to take place, which also must be the same county where the crime occurred. Therefore, Leschi's hanging was illegal, as his alleged crimes took place in Pierce County. As such, any citizen could have stopped this execution from taking place. If they thought their intervention would have been successful, however, Leschi likely would have been resentenced to hang in March. This still would not have allowed sufficient time for an intervention by President Buchanan, which was the whole point of the original exercise.

No one was present at Leschi's execution outside of a few Indians and a small sheriff's posse made up of fourteen non-Indians. Leschi was given an opportunity to speak. In substance, he stated that now—since he was going to die—he wished to be at peace with all, that he felt no ill will toward the whites, and that he was not guilty of the offense for which he was now about to hang. Leschi drew a parallel between his own ignominious death, and that of Jesus Christ's, and stated that he forgave all who were concerned in his death. He said that he no longer wished to live, having been confined a long time and arraigned six times. He was tired of life and now simply wished to die and go to Heaven. He told his people in their own tongue not to think hard of the whites on account of his death and to always remain in peace with them. He then made a short prayer and, being asked if he was ready, nodded his assent. His hands and feet were then tied, the rope adjusted, a cap drawn over his face, and (with some difficulty) a plank was knocked away. He fell several feet, and after ten or fifteen minutes ceased to struggle. He hung about an hour, then his body was cut down and taken away to the reservation by the Indians. Leschi was approximately forty-two years of age.

From a legal point of view, his case has to be one of the most remarkable on record. Leschi was arraigned by civil courts for an act of war, of which in truth he was not guilty. He was convicted after two attempts in court, by a jury which had prejudged him, and in the end, executed contrary to law.

To their credit, the officers of Fort Steilacoom did all in their power to see justice done for Leschi. Although officially denying any culpability in the arrest of the Pierce County sheriff, it did happen on their watch, by one of their own officers, and the sheriff was imprisoned in their own stockade. They also published both a broadside and a newspaper, each called the "Truth Teller" and each edited by Ann Onymous. In the broadside, which was Ann Onymous' first publication, the

Fort Steilacoom officers, along with Commissioner Bachelder and the Pierce County sheriff, all denied any impropriety regarding their part in the handling of the Leschi affair. Also included was a map of Connell's Prairie detailing the location of the various participants on that fateful October day. The second issue of the Truth Teller outlined a complete and detailed explanation of the entire Leschi scenario, much of which has been paraphrased here. In the end, when all attempts by the officers of Fort Steilacoom at acquitting Leschi or postponing his execution had failed, there was only one last favor they could perform. Col. Silas Casey refused to have Leschi's execution performed on Fort Steilacoom's military reservation as would have been required by law. Leschi's hanging would have to be done away from the Post instead.

Today, all that remains to tell this tale is a cairn, a boulder, and a rock. At Tenalquot, located right on the shoulder of the old Buckley-Sumner Highway, is a cairn marking the site of the 1855 Battle of Connell's Prairie. It is not difficult to locate, but for the adventurous is definitely on the order of a "destination." Closer to civilization, hidden away in the Oakbrook Shopping Center at 8107 Steilacoom Boulevard SW, is the "Chief Leschi Memorial," a boulder engraved with several lines alluding to the actual location of his execution which is hidden in a neighborhood 300 yards away. Finally, on the grounds of historic Fort Steilacoom, our museum at 9601 Steilacoom Boulevard SW in Lakewood, is one last obscure monument—an engraved plaque upon a stone marking the location of the fort's guard house, the place where Leschi was imprisoned for an awfully long year and a half. It would be well worth anyone's time to plan a road trip to rediscover this hidden trail of Washington state history.



## THE IRISH AT FORT STEILACOOM: PART THREE

*(continued from Page 5)*

Such a promotion was rather unusual and exhibits the high regard in which Maloney was held by the officers of the 4th Infantry. He eventually served as adjutant of the regiment and fought with distinction at the battles of Molina del Rey and Chapultepec. By the end of the Mexican War, in 1848, Maloney had been promoted to first lieutenant with a brevet (honorary) rank of captain.

In 1853, the 4th Infantry Regiment, with Maloney as a company officer, was sent to the Pacific Coast. In 1854, Maloney was officially promoted to captain and assigned to Fort Steilacoom where, as ranking officer, he commanded the post. His tenure at Fort Steilacoom was an eventful one. In 1855, tensions between the territorial government and the Indians reached a boiling point resulting in the "Treaty Wars." Captain Maloney acted with decisiveness and directed the deployment of regular Army troops to assist in suppressing the Indian uprising. By late 1855, with the arrival of Lieutenant Colonel Silas Casey, Maloney returned to his duties as captain of Company A, 4th U.S. Infantry. When the Civil War began in 1861, Maloney was serving with his company at Fort Chehalis, Washington Territory. He returned to the east coast with the 4th Infantry to help save the Federal Union. During the course of the war, Maloney also served as a major with the 1st U.S. Infantry and later as colonel, commanding the 13th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry.

Following the war, Maloney received an appointment as lieutenant colonel of the 16th U.S. Infantry. He retired from the Army in 1870 with thirty-five years of active service. He moved to Green Bay, Wisconsin, the home town of his wife, Mary Jane Dickinson Maloney. He passed away on January 8, 1872.



*The gravestone of Col. Maurice Maloney.*

### THE FEDERAL CENSUS OF 1860



*Henrietta Cox Haller.*

Irish immigrant soldiers continued to serve at Fort Steilacoom after the service of Company M had ended. In the period between 1853 and the closure of the post in 1868, a number of units served on Fort Steilacoom, including companies of the 4th and 9th Infantry Regiments, the 3rd Artillery and Company A, U.S. Engineers. All of the units contained Irish-born soldiers who carried on the tradition of service.

The Federal Census of 1860 provides an interesting view of the composition of the garrison at Fort Steilacoom. As with the 1850 Census, some personnel were no doubt on detached service and were not listed on the day of the census. However, of the two hundred and fifty-three military personnel, a hundred and one listed their birthplace as Ireland. Although not a soldier, among the most notable Irish-born persons on the census is Henrietta Haller, the wife of Major Granville O. Haller. Although Major Haller was a native of York, Pennsylvania, his wife, Henrietta Cox Haller, was a proud native of Ireland. When Granville Haller's military career was sidetracked by controversy during the Civil War, the Haller family returned to Washington, living on Whidbey Island and later, Seattle.

### CONCLUSION

This brief article can only scratch the surface of the story of the Irish soldiers who served at Fort Steilacoom. There are, no doubt, many interesting stories, hidden in the archives, awaiting discovery to further tell their story to future generations.

## THE INSPECTIONS OF GENERAL MANSFIELD

*by John McPherson*

### PART TWO

Mansfield's 1854 report of Fort Steilacoom showed an officer learning his craft. Furthermore, the garrison at that time still reflected its rough-hewn appearance, an appearance that represented its hasty assemblage and possibly short-term lifespan. He noted that the post occupied the "ground and some buildings of the Hudson Bay Company" (Mansfield, 1854). He offered a favorable estimation of the fort's usefulness indicating that "it should be preserved as a depot and rallying point for the inhabitants in case of attack" *Ibid.*, 1854), a suggestion that would become reality a year later. Mansfield also saw Fort Steilacoom as being positioned strategically at the intersection of the Emigrant Trail and key water routes. He went further by suggesting that a military road be constructed connecting Fort Steilacoom to Forts Vancouver and Dalles, another suggestion that would become reality later in the decade. Most interestingly was Mansfield's discussion of the post's "excellent garden" located "about five miles to the Northeast" of the fort. The general focus of the bulk of Mansfield's report was that of available resources and key population centers. Nothing was mentioned of the training of the troops, their preparedness, or the condition of the government stores on site. Other than Mansfield's bird's-eye sketch of the post, little can be gleaned regarding the equipage and combat readiness of the troops on site.

*(continued on Page 9)*

# FALL/WINTER EVENTS FROM THE FORT



## STEILACOOM TRIBE PRESENTATION & ANNUAL HFSA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Join us for the annual membership meeting and presentation on **Sunday, October 17, at 2 p.m. PST**, as Steilacoom Tribal Chair Danny Marshall and his granddaughter, Shianna Deck-Ugelstad, share the history of their people and Puget Sound.

*"We are proud to bring the culture and history of the Steilacoom People into your life,"* said Marshall, a master storyteller and tribal anthropologist since 1976. Shianna Deck-Ugelstad has been performing as a storyteller for eight years and is now a high school senior and a student at Pierce College.

Members of the Historic Fort Steilacoom Association will receive the Zoom link to the presentation prior to the event. Individual memberships are \$15 to \$20. To become a member visit [historicfortsteilacoom.org/membership](https://historicfortsteilacoom.org/membership). Members of the public may sign up on Eventbrite (accessible through the [HFSA Facebook page](#)) to receive a Zoom link.

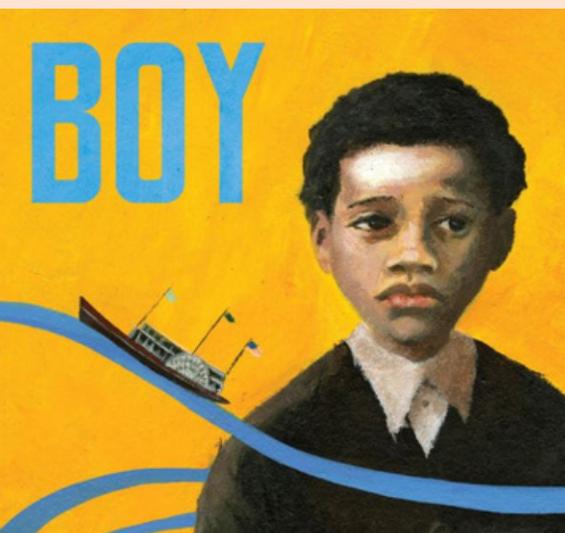


## LIFE OVER LAUNDRY KETTLES: THE LIFE OF A FRONTIER ARMY LAUNDRESS

Join us for a member's speaker series on **Sunday, November 21, at 2 p.m. PST**, as Elizabeth Clark talks about western military laundresses in the 1850s.

What was the price for a clean shirt? The realities of military life can leave little time for the necessities such as laundry that were vital in keeping health and sanitation basics in check. Who handled the mundane, labor-intensive tasks of washing, mending, and keeping a military man's wardrobe in order? What was life like on both sides of the laundry kettle?

Expand your understanding of life in 1850s through primary accounts and images. Clark presents on a wide variety of topics for private, regional and national history conferences and serves as interpretive director for a history park outside Shelley, Idaho. A daughter of the Pacific Northwest, with family ties dating back to 1843 in Oregon settlement, she now lives on the western slopes of the Rockies. Members of the Historic Fort Steilacoom Association will receive the Zoom link to the presentation prior to the event. Individual memberships are \$15 to \$20. To become a member visit [historicfortsteilacoom.org/membership](https://historicfortsteilacoom.org/membership).



## ESCAPE FROM SLAVERY ON THE PUGET SOUND UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Join author Lorraine McConaghy on **Sunday, December 12, at 2 p.m. PST**, for an illustrated overview of the research for her book, *Free Boy: A True Story of Slave and Master*, and for a discussion of the people, events, and ideas raised in the book.

*Free Boy* is the dual biography of Charles Mitchell, the enslaved 13-year-old who fled from Olympia in 1860, and his master, James Tilton, Washington Territory's surveyor general. In his flight from Olympia to Victoria, fugitive slave Mitchell was discovered on board the steamer *Eliza Anderson* at Seattle by a U.S. Army squad from Fort Steilacoom hunting for Army deserters.

McConaghy is a public historian who has devoted her professional life to researching and teaching Pacific Northwest history in a museum setting. She completed her doctorate in United States urban history at the University of Washington in 1993. Members of the Historic Fort Steilacoom Association will receive the Zoom link to the presentation prior to the event. Individual memberships are \$15 to \$20. Visit [historicfortsteilacoom.org/membership](https://historicfortsteilacoom.org/membership) to join.

## THE INSPECTIONS OF GENERAL MANSFIELD

*(continued from Page 7)*

Mansfield's Dec. 14-19, 1858 report was far more exhaustive, and it reflected an officer who had refined his craft. It may also have reflected the desires of a Secretary of War for greater insight into the care and management of military assets throughout the various military departments. The Inspector General's new report delved into the fields of government finance, international relations, forensic accounting, human resource management, post maintenance, and strategic outlook.

Col. Mansfield arrived on post on Tuesday, Dec. 14 accompanied by Lt. August Kautz, both had traveled up the Sound (or, "Whulge") from Semiahmoo. The inspection began the next day on the 15th where Mansfield inspected not only the troops but also the "Barracks, Hospital, Storehouse, &c." (PSH, Dec. 17, 1858). One can easily gather Mansfield's confident tone in his prose and does not hesitate to put forward recommendations throughout the report. He was impressed with Fort Steilacoom's new buildings as of 1858; he commented that Steilacoom was the "best arranged post as a whole in this Department and amply provided" (Mansfield, 1858). Mansfield observed that there were "six buildings right and left [of the Casey residence] for officers of the line" (Ibid, 1858).



*Colorized photo of General August Kautz, circa 1865.*

The inspector was impressed with the efforts of Lt. August Kautz and at several points in the report he took special notice of Kautz's hydraulic ram and Kautz's accounting records concerning expenses incurred during the Treaty War and new construction on post. Perhaps Kautz himself directed the inspecting colonel's attention to these items? Mansfield took time to discuss the efforts of individual officers, identifying them by name and commenting on their commands. He was complimentary to the efforts of Col. Casey pointing out that "This post is extremely well commanded" and that "the discipline is good both among the officers and men" (Ibid, 1858). During Mansfield's visit, Col. Casey conducted battalion drill by dividing the available force into four companies. Despite performing well, Mansfield quietly inserted the critique that the drill "showed, however, that most of the time had been devoted to labor" (Ibid, 1858). At target practice, the three companies (A/4th, H/9th, C/4th) outperformed all posts of similar size in the Department of the Pacific. The inspector tempered this celebration by reminding the reader that the troops of Fort Steilacoom had had additional time to practice owing to their being the last post visited on Mansfield's list. It was Company C/4th Reg't. that had the best outing: they put nine shots out of 40 men into a 6' x 22" target at 200 yards (Ibid,

1858). The 1858 report offers the reader a fascinating review of how a frontier Army post functioned as a self-contained city but also as economic stimulus. The quartermaster's storehouse—well-known as the two-story structure that once existed on the south side of the parade field—was still under construction at the time of Mansfield's visit. In addition to providing for the needs of soldiers, officers, and their families, Fort Steilacoom infused government capital into the region through its hiring of civilian teamsters, skilled carpenters, express riders, and herdsmen. Furthermore, soldiers and their spouses could add to their basic income by pursuing extra duty assignments or laundress contracts. Mansfield also listed the numbers of troops engaged in service in the field at remote outposts such as Muckleshoot Prairie and the Puyallup Blockhouse. The report also indicated that Steilacoom's post guardhouse housed not only military prisoners but civilian prisoners serving prison sentences administered by the territorial court! Clearly, as district headquarters, Fort Steilacoom's reach in terms of influence and investment was extensive.

Those seeking to reconstruct the look, the equipage, and armament of the three infantry companies on post have long consulted Mansfield's 1858 observations. Despite the clarity of his records, some questions remain. Mansfield wrote for an

audience that would have been readily familiar with what was old pattern versus recent issue. This author has participated in several lively discussions among living historians regarding the specific model of head ware, long arm, or knapsack intimated in Mansfield's review! What is clear in the report is that the U.S. Army of 1858 was one undergoing a profound transition. The War Department had begun an active program of replacing smoothbore pieces with that of rifled long arms. This point is clear in the 1858 report: the two companies of the 4th Infantry had just received rifled pieces. Company A had its old smoothbores prepared for return to the government arsenal (most likely Benicia in California). On the other hand, Company H/9th had arrived in the Territory two years prior with its short-barreled Harper's Ferry rifle and was equipped with saber bayonet. Mansfield observed that the rifles of this company were "much worn and many out of order" (Ibid, 1858).



*Fort Steilacoom circa 1860.*



*Reenactors on the grounds of Historic Fort Steilacoom.*

*(continued on Page 10)*

## THE INSPECTIONS OF GENERAL MANSFIELD

(continued from Page 9)

His thorough accounting of the ordnance and ammunition on hand, the serviceability of the uniforms and accoutrements worn, and the quality of construction of the buildings on site provide an invaluable resource for our present-day efforts to interpret the post accurately.



Mrs. Abby Casey.

A curious row between Mrs. Casey and post-Surgeon Horace Wirtz caught the attention of Col. Mansfield in his report. Surgeon Wirtz had refused to attend on Mrs. Casey and her family, a move seemingly intended to stay within a strict constructionist view of the Army Regulations. Mrs. Casey's outrage at Wirtz's refusal was made evident. As an addendum written on the cover of the inspection report, Mansfield recommended that Surgeon Wirtz be brought to trial in a courts martial on the charge of "conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline" (Ibid, 1858). Previous newsletter articles have examined this disagreement between Wirtz and Casey in greater detail.



Dr. Horace Wirtz.

I encourage our membership to investigate those articles further in the newsletter archive online. Mansfield's conclusion was further bolstered by Wirtz's posting of an inflammatory passage a week after Mansfield had left by in the Friday, Dec. 24, 1858 issue of the Puget Sound Herald: "*We are requested by Dr. Wirtz...to state that he most positively declines to practice medicine among civilians, inasmuch as his professional duties & studies occupy his whole time, and as he does not think it proper to interfere with the established citizen practitioner of the county. He, moreover, hopes that the annoyance he experiences from persons who are unwilling...to employ a civil practitioner will cease with this notice.*" The announcement was posted not only in small print but toward the bottom of the page. Did Mrs. Casey see it?

The 1854 and 1858 inspections conducted by Col. Joseph Mansfield help us to fill in the blanks created by the passage of time. While interesting to read individually, they are best read in context with reports filed for other garrisons within the Military Department of the Pacific. Further discussion of the 1858 inspection can also be seen in the journals of August Kautz. I invite our readers to explore that resource as well. By 1860, Mansfield had left the position of Inspector General. With the outbreak of the American Civil War, Col. Mansfield moved quickly in the ranks of the officer corps eventually attaining the rank of Major General of Volunteers. It was at the head of his Twelfth Corps at the Battle of Antietam that General Mansfield was hit in the chest by a bullet. He died the next day on Sept. 18, 1862.



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