

Occurrences

The Journal of Northwest History



FORT NISQUALLY
LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM
METRO PARKS TACOMA

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Cover photo:

Sewing to Sowing event in 2012, with volunteers weeding the kitchen garden. The garden looks a little different in 2018, but the tasks remain the same!

Courtesy Fort Nisqually Living History Museum files.



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The Editor welcomes comments and articles submitted from outside sources dealing with early Washington State history. Preference will be given to those articles that deal with the Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Nisqually and other related themes. Authors will be credited; they will be responsible for the content and accuracy of their articles.

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Fort Foundation News

Greetings from the Fort Nisqually Foundation! Spring is here and the living history season is upon us. It's fun to see the new and old volunteers reuniting and doing what they do best – bringing history to life for the visiting public. I think my favorite thing is to see someone trying something “new” like churning butter.

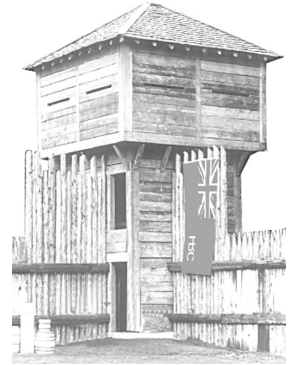
Speaking of new things we have some changes to our foundation board. One of our long time Foundation board volunteers, Gail Cram, is stepping down from the board. She is pursuing new things with her job and is looking forward to having a little more down time.

We on the Fort Nisqually Foundation board want to thank Gail for her years of service to the board and Fort Nisqually. She has been the friendly face greeting members and visitors at the Fast Track table at events, hosting our members-only exhibit openings and annual meeting as well as representing the museum at the Proctor Farmer's Market. Gail has been our membership coordinator for 7 years, as well as serving as President and Secretary in her years with us. She has always gone above and beyond to help make the fort a success. And while she leaves some very big shoes to fill we wish her the very best in her endeavors. She assures us she is not leaving us. She plans to be a happy visiting member wearing her gold Membership visitor sticker.

If you see her at her last event, Sewing to Sowing, be sure to thank her for her countless hours of dedication and service.

Kind regards,

Dana Repp
Fort Nisqually Foundation, President



Editor's Note

Spring has sprung! As usual in the Pacific Northwest, spring is heavy on the April showers, but we're looking forward to the event season ahead.

This issue of *Occurrences* illustrates the discoveries that come out of research. Jim Lauderdale shares the research on U.S. Army soliders at Fort Steilacoom and provides a picture of precisely who was at Fort Nisqually in late 1855 and early 1856. Edward Huggins provides a personal perspective on the tumultous ending era of Fort Nisqually's commercial activity, and the final article provides more insight to some of the artifacts displayed as part of the current exhibit "Firearms of the Fur Trade Era". It reminds us how artifacts on display can provide a tangible connection to a world where hunting for food and fending off villains was more than just a worst-case-scenario.

Enjoy the issue, and as always, please don't hesitate to reach out with comments or questions. Submissions are always welcome, year round.

~ *The editor*

Left: Steve Anderson is not only a passionate historian, but also a talented artist. Here is his depiction of the Strike of the Fisgard (as featured in our last issue). Image courtesy the artist.

Volunteer of the Year

Volunteer of the Year 2017: Synthia Santos

By Allison Campbell ~ Events and Volunteer Coordinator

This year's Volunteer of the Year award was presented at the annual Burns Dinner to Synthia Santos in recognition of her consistent hard work on behalf of Fort Nisqually. Visitors may know her best as "Mrs. Claus" and Father Christmas' right hand woman, but Synthia's contributions to the Fort extend far, far beyond the Christmas event.

Synthia began volunteering at the Fort over ten years ago helping with family camps and youth day camps. She has continued to share her formidable talents with the Sewing Guild, as a Crafts of the Past artist, and at living history events.

Synthia brings a tremendous amount of historical knowledge and museum know how to Fort Nisqually, having recently retired after over 20 years at the Fort Lewis Museum at Joint Base Lewis McCord, and a 36 year career in the history field. Synthia is the driving force behind DuPont's Hudson Bay Days and is always eager to promote Fort Nisqually within the community.

She has always involved her grandchildren as part of her volunteer experience, and her grandson Jaden Coley is currently an Apprentice Interpreter. Fort Nisqually is very fortunate to have Synthia Santos as a volunteer.



*Synthia with her well-deserved award, January 2018.
Courtesy Synthia Santos.*

Right: Synthia regularly demonstrates and helps visitors sew on the 1860s sewing machine at Fort Nisqually's "Sewing to Sowing" event in April.

Far right: Synthia and Don Talmadge provide a picture-perfect Christmas experience for Fort visitors.

Photographs from Fort Nisqually Living History Museum files.



Research Revealed

Fort Nisqually – Not a Martial Concern

By Jim Lauderdale ~ Museum Site Supervisor

Fort Nisqually is commonly mistaken for a military post. This is an easy mistake to make; after all we call it a fort. In fact, it was established in 1833 as an outpost of the fur trade by the Hudson's Bay Company. Six years later in 1839, Fort Nisqually became the headquarters for the Puget Sound Agricultural Company; a subsidiary of the HBC. Another reason for the misperception stems from the first forty years of the museum's existence. From the 1930s through the 1970s, most of the interpretation was focused on the American pioneer spirit. This led to re-enactments that have been referred to as scenes from the television show "F Troop" and reminiscent of a Fort Apache playset. By the 1980s however, new direction began to right the misinterpretations of the past. The American flag, which never flew over the historic fort until the HBC had left, was taken down and replaced with a British Hudson's Bay Company flag. This infuriated the local citizenry for a time, but eventually the fur trade interpretation began to take root and historically accurate programming turned into signature events that have lasted for over thirty years. In an honest effort to interpret the true origins of Fort Nisqually, along the way, someone decided to interpret that soldiers were never stationed at Fort Nisqually.

While the historic site was never a military fort, soldiers were stationed there very briefly during the Puget Sound War in 1855 and 1856. This conflict was part of the larger treaty wars that occurred in the Washington Territory following efforts by Governor Isaac Stevens to remove Native Americans from the majority of their lands and force them onto small reservations to allow for American settlement of the territory. The impetus for the conflict was the Treaty of Medicine Creek in 1854. The treaty negotiation was organized by Stevens and included the Native American tribes of the Nisqually, Muckleshoot, Puyallup, and Klickitat, among others. The treaty did preserve hunting and fishing rights for Native people, but dispossessed them of 2.5 million acres. This area stretched from the western crest of the Cascade Mountains to the Puget Sound. The land comprised the Nisqually, Puyallup and White river basins and was made up of forests, prairies and rich bottom lands. For this land, the tribes would be given three separate reservations totaling six square miles of undesirable land and \$3,250 to assist with

their move. Additionally, the tribes were to be paid \$32,500 over a twenty year period. In fact, no money was ever meant to change hands. Instead, the tribes would receive tools, goods or other equipment of equivalent value during that period. Following the Medicine Creek Treaty, Governor Stevens traveled throughout the rest of the territory and successfully negotiated the removal of 20,000 square miles of Native American land from Native control. These terms were unacceptable to many Native Americans, and leaders went amongst the tribes to decide how to resist this effort to remove them from their land.

One of the leaders that had been chosen to represent his people at the negotiations was Leschi, a Nisqually. During the Medicine Creek negotiations, it became clear that Leschi was opposed to his people being removed from their homes and relocated to an area that was unfit to sustain their livelihoods. Leschi, who had been employed by the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, was well known at Fort Nisqually as a man of integrity. An entry in the Fort's daily activity log documents one instance where he and his brother Quaymuth reported local sheep thieves. "In the evening, Edgar came in and reported that two Indians of the Puyallup had made off with a Merino Ram - which was made known to him by Leschi & Quaymuth who saw them eat it, and offered them the skin."¹ As Richard Kluger relates in his recent book, *The Bitter Waters of Medicine Creek*, Leschi traveled east over the Cascades to meet with other affected tribes. The chief of the Yakima tribe that he met with surely supported his concerns and may have encouraged him to make war. Leschi was not a warrior, but his options were limited.

Rumors of a suspected uprising began to circulate among the American settlements already in existence in 1855. The regular army, stationed in the territory since 1849, was undermanned and undersupplied. Stevens called for militia companies to be formed in the event that hostilities broke out. The conflict became violent in October 1855, when Nisqually tribesmen clashed with a local militia company known as Eaton's Rangers. Stevens called for a company to apprehend Leschi and bring him to the territorial seat in Olympia to answer for this violence. More violence led to the death of a well-known American settler and regular

customer of Fort Nisqually, James McAllister.²

By December, several small battles had occurred. These skirmishes led the manager of Fort Nisqually, William Fraser Tolmie, to write to the commander at nearby Fort Steilacoom and request a military guard.³ Fort Steilacoom, also known during this time as Steilacoom Barracks, was the regular army headquarters in the Puget Sound region. The garrison commander responded by dispatching a detachment of twelve soldiers to stand guard over Fort Nisqually and provide some sense of comfort to the customers and employees of this outpost.⁴ As the conflict continued in 1856, the U.S. government began looking to the Hudson's Bay Company to provide assistance against the insurgents, asking for help transporting troops and acquiring supplies.⁵ Tolmie kept his superior at Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island well informed of the events and Company assets' participation.⁶ It is worth noting that Tolmie wrote a lengthy letter in Leschi's defense during the court proceedings surrounding the death of several members of Eaton's Rangers. Both he and his counterpart at Fort Steilacoom, Colonel Casey, strongly disagreed with the Governor's approach towards Leschi's trial and eventual execution.⁷ During the Puget Sound War, Fort Nisqually and Fort Steilacoom relied on each other to help keep the peace, and Tolmie recognized the value of having a few U.S. Army troops at his post.

There is not a lot of information about how the detachment of soldiers occupied their time at Fort Nisqually over the next several months, but occasionally a reference is made about them in the *Journal of Occurrences*. It seems Tolmie had no problem putting the extra hands to work, as the journal notes, "Monday, January 21 Fine in the morning, commenced raining in the evening. Audey and some soldiers picking potatoes in large store."⁸ By March, the soldiers were required elsewhere in the conflict and Tolmie pleaded to keep a portion of the men on hand.⁹ Everyone at Fort Nisqually, including the detachment of soldiers felt that hostilities were still possible in the south Sound. "Wednesday, March 5 Last night the soldiers on watch made an alarm that Indians were about the Fort. Fired guns from the openings in the Bastions at intervals all night. All hands on the qui-vive [alert]. In the morning no traces of any having been about."¹⁰ Tolmie had reason for concern, but the situation was seen by the army as providing private citizens of a foreign government with special treatment.¹¹ After one last Journal entry in April 1856, records indicate that the last of the soldiers were removed from Fort Nisqually. "Tuesday, April 1 Showery. Mr. Huggins, Sam, & Bastian went to near Olympia for beef cattle brought 8. Mr. Kennedy returned. Leclair went to Beach Store & took beef & 5 Soldiers (who have been stationed here for some weeks). Bob & Eneas

cutting firewood - very busy in Stores supplying Gover[nmen]t of W[ashington] T[erritory] order for goods."¹² While the detachment may have left Fort Nisqually, the posting of the soldiers at the Fort was neither the beginning nor end of the two forts' association. Prior to the war, Tolmie frequently socialized with the Casey family, and this continued after the conflict's conclusion. Soldiers from Ft. Steilacoom attended the same local balls and parties as the officers of the HBC and PSAC, and Tolmie attended Ft. Steilacoom ill and wounded just as Dr. Hayden assisted with HBC/PSAC cases. From September 1849 to July 1865, there are at least eighty-eight entries in the Fort's *Journal of Occurrences* that reference United States soldiers. Many of the soldiers, once discharged from service, squatted on Company land. These same men would later help to found many of the communities that still exist today.

Recently, researcher and living historian Don McConnell from Spokane, Washington, shared newly uncovered information with Fort Nisqually Living History Museum on this very topic. He found new details regarding the soldiers that were stationed at Fort Nisqually on detached service during the Puget Sound War while researching in the National Archives. One of the first things he shared was that the contingent was actually a composite unit from Company M, 3rd Artillery; Company C, 4th Infantry, and possibly some from the 9th Infantry. The Regimental Return for the 4th US Infantry for January 1856, listed Privates Bacon, Beck, Dunbar, Emrick, and Pinkerton on



Living historians from Historic Fort Steilacoom visit Fort Nisqually Living History Museum to interpret the 1855-1856 detachment. Photo courtesy of the author.



Living historians at Fort Nisqually. Photo courtesy the author.

detached service at Fort Nisqually since January 6, 1856. This information began to put a face to some of the men that served here. Additionally, the January 1856 Post Return for Steilacoom listed one sergeant and one private from Company M, 3rd Artillery at Fort Nisqually since January 6, 1856. More research will need to be done to see what can be uncovered about the remainder of the soldiers stationed at Fort Nisqually from December 1855 to April 1856.

Mr. McConnell was able to find the five men of the 4th Infantry, named above, in the US Army Enlistment Register of January 1856. The personal details, listed below, will help inform interpreters for future programs about the “old army” at Fort Nisqually.

Edwin F. Bacon, 18, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a farmer, enlisted 12 Apr 1855 at Philadelphia by Lt Flint for 5 years. Assigned to Company C, 4th US Infantry. Gray eyes, sandy hair, fair complexion, 5 feet 4 inches tall. Discharged 12 Apr 1860 by expiration of service at Camp Pickett, WT, a Private.

August Beck, 22, Baden Germany, a printer, enlisted 23 Apr 1855 at Philadelphia by Lt Burns. Assigned to Company C, 4th US Infantry. Blue eyes, light hair, fair complexion 5 feet 4.5 inches tall. Discharged 24 Oct 1857 by sentence of Court Martial, at Fort Steilacoom, WT, a Private.

William Dunbar, 28, Queens County, Ireland, a wool comber, enlisted at Boston by Lt Davis for 5 years.

Assigned to Company C, 4th US Infantry. Gray eyes, brown hair, ruddy complexion, 5 feet 6 inches tall. Deserted 10 Apr 1858. Apprehended 15 Jul 1861. Discharged 12 Jul 1863 by expiration of service at camp near Antietam Creek, Maryland, a Private.

Conrad Emrick, 23, Frankfurt, Germany, a musician, enlisted at Baltimore by Capt McConnell for 5 years. Assigned to Company C, 4th US Infantry. Blue eyes, sandy hair, fair complexion, 5 feet 4 inches tall. Deserted 10 Jul 1857.

Hugh Pinkerton, 25, Donegal, Ireland, a wool sorter, enlisted 28 Apr 1855 at New York by Lt Garnett for 5 years. Assigned to Company C, 4th US Infantry. Blue eyes, brown hair, fair complexion, 5 feet 6.5 inches tall. Died 25 Sep 1856 of hypertrophy of the heart at Fort Steilacoom, WT, a Private.

Despite the name and the stockade, Fort Nisqually was not a martial concern. The brief window of time during the Puget Sound War compared to the span of thirty-seven years of Fort Nisqually’s existence makes the military aspects of the history a unique piece of the larger whole. The fur trade and historic agriculture are the prominent talking points, which will never change. It would be incorrect, however, to state that soldiers were never stationed at Fort Nisqually. The knowledge that these soldiers were here just adds to the colorful past and diversity that the museum’s historians have come to love.

Endnotes

1. George Dickey, et al, *The Journal of Occurrences at Fort Nisqually: Commencing May 30, 1833; ending May 11, 1870*. Fort Nisqually Foundation, Tacoma, WA, 1989, p.155.
2. "Wednesday 31 Gloomy weather. An American named L. [Reihnhard] connected with the Ranger Company at White River called here on his way to Olympia to report that Mr. McAllister and another man by the name of Connell were killed and the remaining party numbering 18 were confined in a log house at White River surrounded by Indians at the present time. He was furnished with a fresh horse at this place." Dickey, *The Journal of Occurrences*, 312.
3. "Steilacoom Barracks, December 4th, 1855
Dugald Mactavish Esquire
Honourable Hudson's Bay Company
Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory

Dear Sir,

I received yesterday your communication of the 29th Ultimo with its accompaniment, and shall as directed forward to the Board at Victoria by first conveyance, copies of the letters from Mr. James Sinclair detailing the recent state of affairs at Walla Walla and its neighborhood.

In order to provide against the worst, I have made applications to Captain Erasmus D. Keyes commanding at this post, for a small guard of soldiers to be stationed at Nisqually for its protection against surprise. The hostile Indians will know how easily in ordinary circumstances the place could be taken in day time, and when becoming short of ammunition would be very apt to make the attempt if aware that our force was no greater than usual.

I wrote you on the 30th Ultimo stating that the Otter had left for Victoria with all the furs &c, on board, and Mr. Hetling as passenger. Major Jared Hurd can have \$1000 or \$1500 here when he comes as Mr. Nugent is ready to make a payment for horses &c recently purchased.

I remain Dear Sir,
Your Very Obedient Servant,
(Signed) William Fraser Tolmie"

Fort Nisqually Letterbook 1855 – 1858. Originals located in the Soliday Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, Huntington Library Call Number: FN 1231. Transcribed from microfilm, 2002.

4. "Thursday, December 6 Gloomy weather. Hands employed as usual. C. Lagace with horse wagon sent to

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**Dr. Jerry V. Ramsey and
Elaine Perdue Ramsey Fund for Fort Nisqually.**

See Foundation website for details

Steilacoom with beef and returned in the evening with soldiers baggage, also accompanied by twelve soldiers who are to be stationed at this post for its protection against any attack from the hostile Indians. Captain Keyes commanding at Steilacoom also called here this day.” Dickey, *The Journal of Occurrences*, 314.

5. “Sunday, January 6 Fine pleasant day. Last night Leichi-uch [Leschi] and others of the hostile Indians went to the Island where the friendly Indians were placed in charge of Dr. Webber, to induce them to join. They took a Mr. Swan prisoner. They received the news at Steilacoom and immediately sent up a word here for the BEAVER, she accordingly went to Steilacoom, received on board Captain Maloney and some soldiers and proceeded for that quarter. On her arrival at the Island found that both the hostile and friendly Indians were prepared to enter into an engagement with them. She accordingly returned to Steilacoom for reinforcements and together with the ACTIVE went back with 100 soldiers but arriving at the Island, found that the hostile Indians with some 40 friendly Indians had made their escape & liberated Mr. Swan. Dr. Tolmie went on the BEAVER on her second trip.” Dickey, *The Journal of Occurrences*. 316.

6. “Nisqually, January 9th, 1856

James Douglas Esquire
Honourable Hudson’s Bay Company
Fort Victoria, Vancouver’s Island

Dear Sir,

An alarm having occurred at Steilacoom on the night of the 5th Instant the Beaver was there applied for by Chief Justice Edward Lander and Captain Lafayette Balch to protect that town and by Captain Erasmus Keyes on Sunday morning to the Indian Reservation nearby where the hostile Indians were endeavoring to persuade the peaceable ones to leave and reunite with them.

The Beaver was employed on government service from Saturday 11 a.m. all through Tuesday afternoon. Please inform me on your next what change is to be made on her account.

With references to your letter of the 21/27 Ultimo, I am glad that you did not engage any men at Victoria for this place on the terms at which they could be had as we have so far obtained a sufficiency without further raising wages. As the shipping away of sheep at this incimate season might have attended with increased loss and would besides have had a discouraging effect on the employees here. I defer it for the present. The Beaver takes a cargo of livestock for private persons having been fitted up for wild horses, but I prefer not to send these with it. Can it be ascertained that they can be profitably shipped if on the Gloria?

I look for a mail on Saturday next.

I remain Dear Sir,

Your Very Obedient Servant,
(Signed) William Fraser Tolmie”

Fort Nisqually Letterbook 1855 – 1858.

7. Tolmie’s letter was published in the newspaper circular “Truth Teller”, published in Steilacoom, February 1858. “Truth Teller” WA State Library digital scan, 4 (Accessed May 30, 2017). <https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/images/newspapers/SL_dir_steilacoomtruttell/pdf/SL_dir_steilacoomtruttell_02251858.pdf>

8. Dickey, *The Journal of Occurrences*, 317.

9. “Nisqually, March 3rd, 1856

James Douglas Esquire
Honourable Hudson’s Bay Company
Fort Victoria, Vancouver Island

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter by the U.S.S. Active with accompanying letters for the Columbia River and England which will be duly passed.

I have received from Mr. Kenneth McKenzie an account of the silver money lately sent to Victoria. It does not belong to the Puget’s Sound but to the Hudson’s Bay Company as payments to the former body are almost invariably made in gold.

The war with the Indians has been resumed, and there are now about 500 soldiers and volunteers in the field. Our guard of soldiers has been reduced to five and I had some difficulty in prevailing on Colonel Silas B. Casey to leave us any.

I mentioned to Captain Erasmus Keyes the charge proposed for the service of the Beaver which he seemed to consider reasonable enough. Next day, however, Lieutenant Nugent called to say that the officers were of opinion that no charge should be made, in consideration of their having, at great inconvenience, furnished a guard for the place, the property of a private company. He added that if we insisted on charging payment would be made, to which I replied that I had never supposed they would object, that I would represent the matter and doubted not, but that it would be as they desired.

The present mail is forwarded by a man named Reuben S. Robinson who will be entitled to a payment of five dollars for its safe delivery.

I am Dear Sir,

Your Very Obedient Servant,
(Signed) William Fraser Tolmie”

Fort Nisqually Letterbook 1855 – 1858.

10. Dickey, *The Journal of Occurrences*, 318.

11. “Nisqually, Washington Territory

March 22nd, 1856



Fort Nisqually Living History Museum's signature event, Candlelight Tour, regularly includes U.S. Army soldiers from Fort Steilacoom, particularly for the 1859 scenarios when the "Pig War" in the San Juan Islands again raised the threat of military conflict in the Pacific Northwest. Photo by Russ Carmack, October 2014, courtesy Fort Nisqually Living History Museum files.

To Colonel Casey, United States Army
Commanding Puget Sound District
Fort Steilacoom, Washington Territory
Sir,

I learnt yesterday evening that on Sunday afternoon, one of the Company's shepherds (Finlayson) saw and was spoken to by eight Indians on foot, at Muck, near the Cold Spring, a well-known locality at the South East corner of the plains whence a trail leads through a lumbered country to swamps and small prairies on the upper Nisqually River.

These Indians are considered to be part of the gang seen at Muck by Smith, and others soon after the murder of White and Northcraft.

They told Finlayson that last week a train of wagons had been attacked on the Puyallup and the drivers killed, and they warned him to keep at a distance from the woods as there were five-hundred Klikatats concealed there.

I do not believe that any but small parties of Klikatats can have crossed the mountains recently, but think it probable that the Indians from White and Green Rivers may be moving towards the head waters of the Nisqually.

I am Sir
Very Respectfully,
Your obedient Servant,
(Signed) William Fraser Tolmie"
Fort Nisqually Letterbook 1855 – 1858.
12. Dickey, *The Journal of Occurrences*, 320.

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Fort Nisqually Letterbook 1855 – 1858. Originals located in the Soliday Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, Huntington Library Call Number: FN 1231. Transcribed from microfilm, 2002.

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Voice of History

Edward Huggins - "Indian War of 1855" Part III

This is the third and final section of an article taken directly from Edward Huggins' personal memoirs of life at Fort Nisqually. For parts I and II, see Occurrences Summer 2017 and Fall/Winter 2017.

Hudson Bay Company Defended

How often have I heard the Hudson Bay Company abused and charged with doing things that would be almost impossible for them to do, as its officers were gentlemen, and it would be out of all reason to think of them guilty of offenses charged against them. Why, during the Indian War of 1855-56 the company at Nisqually was publicly charged with having supplied the hostile Indians with arms and ammunition with which to massacre helpless white families. Instead of that, the company's officers at Fort Nisqually did all they could to prevent the Indians from killing defenseless settlers and I know that in many instances they prevented the Indians from doing many awful things. I have letters in my possession which conclusively prove that the company's officers were anxious, let alone willing, to aid and assist the used up and almost starving emigrants.

The first American settlers came to the Sound in 1845 or 1846. Mike Simmons, who was the first Indian agent appointed by the Government settled at Tumwater; Edmund Sylvester, who took as a donation claim the town site of Olympia; James MacAllister, killed by the Indians in 1855; William Packwood, George Shazer, who died in Olympia about November 1899; Sydney Ford, James Borst, Jene Ferguson, Antoine Rabbeson, Frank Shaw, now Colonel Shaw of Vancouver, L.A. Smith, F.W.P. Tyrell, and George Waunch were a few others.

Most all of these men were farmers and Shaw is the only one now alive, if I am not mistaken. These people, or nearly all of them, were poor and depended on labor for subsistence. The companies alone were in a position to help them. The Hudson Bay Company did, by trading shingles from them for provisions and clothing.

There was hardly any market for the shingles thus obtained and the quantity on hand became very great, and I recollect that when I came here, about fifty years ago, there was a great mountain of them piled in an enclosure at the end of the company's store, at the landing. Dr. Tolmie wrote

to the board detailing the situation, and Governor James Douglas, a kinder hearted man never lived, replied: "What can we do, doctor? We can't see these poor people suffer. If we continue to purchase their shingles and give them a fair price for them, I am sure we shall ultimately be able to dispose of them without suffering much, if any loss."

And sure enough, it turned out so, for in 1848-1849 the California gold mines were discovered and hard times on Puget Sound were a thing of the past. Shingles were in demand at a good price. Ships came to the Sound seeking cargoes of piles for wharf building in San Francisco and pile timber at the ship's side would fetch from thirty to forty cents a running foot. Lumber, what little there was for sale, was worth thirty to forty dollars a thousand.

As late as 1853-1854 the lumber in the house in which I am writing this was thirty to forty dollars a thousand feet while the procuring of piles for sailing ships commanded five dollars a day. Indians had lots of money then, obtained for loading lumber ships with timber. This store at Fort Nisqually was the only place the Indians could trade, and they would come sometimes, Skagits, Clallams, Duwamish and Snoqualmie from twenty to fifty in groups and trade. I have taken in one day from a part of these Indians as much as three hundred dollars in gold coin. This state of things did not last many years and prices fell considerably.

Farmers could always obtain a fair price for their produce, until the railroad was finished between Portland and Tacoma. This gave the farmers east of the mountains in Oregon an opportunity to rush in their live stock and produce all the year round this taking from the farmer residing west of the mountains the benefit he derived from the difficulty of getting livestock, also produce, into the country all the seasons of the year. But then I suppose, this is all the better for the non-producer and consumer.

I find that my explanation of the status of the Hudson Bay and Puget Sound Agricultural Companies and their position and influence in Pierce, Cowlitz, and Clark Counties between 1846 and 1868 has occupied a great deal of space, but I think the existence of these large companies in this section of the country is news to a majority of the people nowadays.

Voice of History • “Indian War of 1855”

The story of my trip across the portage in 1850 must be left for some future time. I think in this my attempt to explain things I have been perhaps tedious and tiresome enough. The decision of the referee in the matter of the companies' claims was made in 1870 and sometime in June of that year the companies made formal surrender of everything it owned or claimed to own under the treaty of 1846.

It was the opinion of almost everyone that people claiming to own land under the donation act would not be allowed to perfect their claims for the act itself plainly forbade the taking of claims upon the lands owned or claimed by the Puget Sound Agricultural Company at the date of the act of 1846. In spite of that there were many settlers upon these lands, some claiming 640 acres, some 320, and still others 160 acres of land.

In anticipation of these claims not being allowed some of the best of them were jumped and grave trouble arose in

consequence which culminated in the death by violence of two men said to be desperadoes in Steilacoom, some time in 1870. Everything came out all right in the aid of the people. Selucius A. Garfield was our delegate to Congress and he was instrumental in getting a special act of Congress passed giving these people their farms.

There were several men claiming under the donation act upon the gravelly Nisqually plains and in 1893 or 1894 I wrote and published a paper in the Tacoma Ledger giving a list of the claimants under the donation act, and the name of the claimants, with the amount of land and the location of claims.

Edward Huggins - 26 August 1900



Deringer single shot pistol, percussion lock, made in Philadelphia, PA, Sutt Collection, part of the Fort Nisqually Permanent Collection.

Exploring Exhibits

Researching “Firearms of the Fur Trade Era”

By Claire Keller-Scholz ~ Curator of Collections

The current special exhibit at Fort Nisqually, “Firearms of the Fur Trade Era” is built around a collection of guns from Glenn Sutt, left to the museum as a bequest after his untimely passing. The exhibit puts the weapons in historical context, exploring their use as everyday tools by the farmers, trappers, and hunters who called the Puget Sound region home in the mid-1800s.

Fort Nisqually was fortunate to receive 24 firearms from the Sutt Estate, of which nearly all are on display in the Great Room, through May 6, 2018. “Firearms of the Fur Trade Era” illustrates the shifting technology that occurred from the late 1700s through the 1800s, even as the fur trade itself was declining. Although not all the guns featured in the exhibit are from the 1833-1869 period Fort Nisqually was in operation, they all reflect the firearms of the era of the fur trade and the many different people who were involved in the trade. Firearms were a part of daily life during this period for everyone, from Native Americans, the Hudson’s Bay Company and Northwest Company, and American fur traders as well the Puget Sound Agricultural Company and settlers moving to Washington Territory.

In my time as curator, this exhibit topic was the one I had least foreknowledge of, and had to spend the most time reading up on. The biggest lesson I learned was just how deep this well goes, and how nuanced the study of historic firearms can be. In order to display as many wonderful artifacts from the Sutt Collection as we could, I made the decision to provide an overview of some of the main styles of firearms and focus on their role at Fort Nisqually specifically, rather than try to describe the technical details of the guns or go in-depth on their construction.

As part of this issue of Occurrences, I’d like to take the opportunity to highlight some of the artifacts on display and share some of the fascinating things I’ve learned about them in the process of putting together this exhibit.

For me, the pieces that inspire the most curiosity are the handheld pistols. The smallest gun from the Sutt Collection measures just 6 inches in total, with a barrel just 2 ½ inches long. This single-shot, percussion-lock pistol was made by Henry Deringer of Philadelphia, between 1852 and 1868.

The first thing I noticed about this pistol, besides it’s small size and engraved silver inlay, was that something seemed odd about the spelling of the manufacturer’s name. Research quickly revealed that “Deringer” was indeed the correct spelling of the gun-makers name, but “derringer” quickly became the term for all such palm-sized pistols beyond the ones manufactured by the namesake company. This was due partially as a result of the non-standardized spelling that was common throughout the 1800s, but some makers intentionally stamped “Derringer” on their models in imitation of the originals. Trademarks, much like standardized spelling, were poorly legislated in the 19th century. Derringers quickly became popular, despite their single-shot limitations, and were usually sold in pairs. After the assassination of President Lincoln in 1865 and the colorful tales of gamblers drawing hidden pocket pistols at card tables in the “Wild West,” the place of the derringer pistol was cemented in the imagination of the public. Sales of the Deringer pistols declined after Henry Deringer’s death in 1868, amid the shift towards revolvers and breech-loading weapons, but the nickname “derringer” for small, single-shot, concealable pistols remained.

Exhibited in the “Firearms of the Fur Trade Era” case alongside the Deringer pistol are several other percussion pistols and a flintlock pistol. Like the derringer, these single-shot weapons were usually sold to distributors in pairs, including the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC). Posts throughout Canada offered a small selection of pistols for trade or sale, primarily to their employees, as well as longarms such as the famous Northwest gun. Deringer also made “dueling pistols” like these in the 1830s, with 7 to 8 inch barrels. The forward-most gun in the exhibit case bears the maker’s mark “Wogdon,” the name of an English manufacturer, and is one of a set of dueling pistols (the only one in the Sutt Collection, however).

Robert Wogdon was an English firearms manufacturer known for making flintlock dueling pistols, though he made a wide range of products. He produced firearms from the 1760s through the early 1800s, first under the name “Wogdon” and then under the name “Wogdon & Barton”

Exploring Exhibits • Firearms of the Fur Trade Era

after 1794. Wogdon's pistols were used in countless duels, including the one between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr in 1804. The name of the gun manufacturer was so synonymous with duels, it is said that in England duels were sometimes simply referred to as "Wogdon affairs".

This particular Wogdon pistol from the Sutt Collection measures 14 ½ inches long in total, with a 9 ¾ inch long barrel, and exhibits wear on the handle and a previously-repaired crack on the exterior of the barrel. The pistol was converted from a flintlock to a percussion lock at some time in its life, illustrating a common procedure of the 1800s. These types of firearms were fairly simple to modify from flintlock to percussion, and older models were frequently still in use for decades after they first debuted.

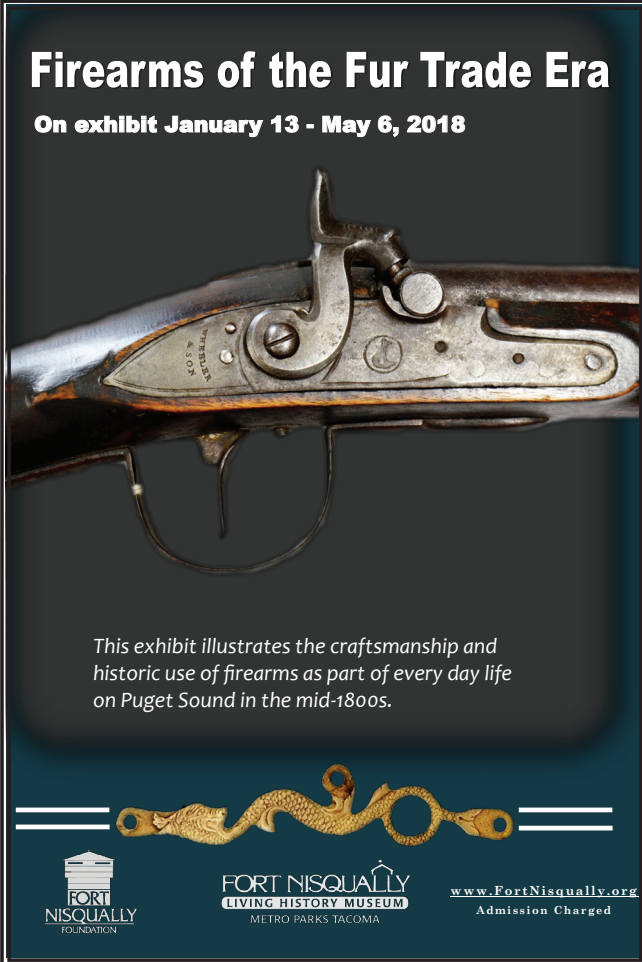
These two pistols represent the mystique and tragedy of firearms, with the beautiful craftsmanship of wood, wrought iron, and engraved silver combined to form a deadly machine, the makers' names forever associated with death. The first line of a poem, printed in 1782 and attributed to "An Irish Volunteer," praises the efficiency of Wogdon's pistols even as it recognizes the grim destiny of the device: "Hail Wogdon, Patron of that leaden death, Which awaits alike the bully and the brave..." Even as Deringer's name became forever associated with a tool of assassination and

intrigue, so Wogdon's name lives on through the duels his work facilitated.

Historically, firearms were used primarily as a tool for hunting, self-defense, and as a valuable trading commodity. They were a part of life for everyone who stepped through the gates of Fort Nisqually in 1855, and played an integral role in the fur trade and the agricultural trade. Thanks to the historic firearms of the Sutt Collection, Fort Nisqually Living History Museum can further connect modern audiences to the reality of life 160 years ago. To see the guns mentioned in this article in person, and to examine the wide variety of longarms on display, check out "Firearms of the Fur Trade Era," on exhibit through March 6, 2018.

About the collection:

Glenn Sutt was an avid gun collector, as well as a gunsmith and horn-maker, and the extent of his firearm collection was nearly three times the size of what Fort Nisqually acquired from his estate. The remaining firearms were outside the scope of Fort Nisqually's collection policy and didn't contribute to the story of early Pierce County development or the HBC/PSAC saga. As part of the bequest, the guns that the museum passed up were to be sold at auction, with the proceeds going to the Fort Nisqually Foundation. In that way, the collected guns could go to the people and places where they could be best appreciated, while still benefitting Fort Nisqually's mission of education and historic preservation.



Firearms of the Fur Trade Era
On exhibit January 13 - May 6, 2018

This exhibit illustrates the craftsmanship and historic use of firearms as part of every day life on Puget Sound in the mid-1800s.

FORT NISQUALLY
LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM
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www.FortNisqually.org
Admission Charged



Glenn Sutt, Brigade Encampment 2010, courtesy Fort Nisqually Living History Museum files.

TIMELINE OF FUR TRADE ERA FIREARM DEVELOPMENT

1608 – Quebec is founded by French colonists. Champlain begins exploring, trading with indigenous peoples in and around the Great Lakes region.

1621 – Dutch West India Company founded for the Atlantic trade. Its influence included the region around New Amsterdam (New York).

1630 – The flintlock is invented by the French, replacing the matchlock firing mechanism.

1650 – By this time, flintlock guns dominates the Indian Trade. “Fusil” (French word for “firesteel”) became the generic name for a trade gun.

1670 – On May 2, 1670, King Charles II of England signs the charter that creates the Hudson’s Bay Company, granting the company trading rights and control over all lands whose rivers and streams drained into Hudson’s Bay, much of the North American continent.

1753 – First time the term “Northwest” was used for the flintlock trade guns.

1760 – “NW gun” notation appears in HBC records.

1763 – At the conclusion of the French and Indian War (1754-1763), Britain defeated France. As a result, France gave up its claims to nearly all its North American territories including those in what is now Canada.

1779 – The North West Company forms out of Montreal, trading along the St. Lawrence Basin and the Great Lakes Region.

1783 – American colonies defeat the British (Revolutionary War, 1775-1783), declaring independence as the United States of America.

1805 – First written description of the distinctive cast serpent sideplate on a trade gun, a symbol that soon became associated with high quality firearms.

1812 – War of 1812 (1812-1815) sees another conflict between the United States and British forces in North America, even as England faces the Napoleonic Wars in Europe.

1820s – Percussion locks come into use, but are not yet made specifically for Indian Trade.

1821 – North West Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company merge. The North West Company has the better organization on the ground, but HBC has the capital.

1824 – The United States established a new Bureau of Indian Affairs, and began ordering trade guns to meet treaty obligations with Native American tribes moving westward.

1830 – By this time, percussion lock trade guns are appearing in trading posts throughout North America, alongside flintlocks.

1833 – Fort Nisqually established as a Hudson’s Bay Company post midway between Fort Vancouver and Fort Langley.

1846 – Boundary line established at the 49th parallel, the Columbia District south of that longitude would be American territory.

1853 – Washington Territory created

1855 – 1856 - Puget Sound War

1865 – Early breech-loading Springfield rifles are used by U.S. Army during the Civil War.

1869 – Fort Nisqually is officially closed down as an HBC/PSAC post. The following year business is wrapped up, and remaining goods and tools are auctioned off.

1880s – Last flintlock trade gun is ordered by HBC

1905 – Last percussion North West gun ordered by HBC from Birmingham manufacturer.

2018 Calendar of Events

April 14	Sewing to Sowing
May 19	Queen Victoria's Birthday
June 16	Plough to Plate
July 6	Family Fun Night
August 11 & 12	Brigade Encampment

Upcoming exhibit, May 12 - September 16, 2018:
"A Child's Eye View of Fort Nisqually"

2018 Museum Hours

May 1 - September 30

Open Monday - Sunday

11 am - 5 pm

The Museum Store is open when the Fort is open.

The Fort is closed some holidays. Please check the website for more information.

The Research Library is open on Thursday afternoons.

1pm - 4 pm or by appointment.

Admission Charged

Free admission with

Fort Nisqually Foundation membership

** Please check the Fort Nisqually website for hours and current admission fees.*

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