

San Juan Island

National Historical Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

San Juan Island: Civil War Connections

Many of the key American players in the Pig War incident, on and off island, went on serve in the American Civil War in both Confederate and Union ranks. For some, the war brought fame, promotion and long careers. For others, it brought death,



George E. Pickett

destruction, lasting heartache...and legend. Throughout the war, American Camp remained an active U.S. Army installation, manned entirely by regular Army soldiers who rotated between Northwest Washington and the battlefields of the East. The enlisted soldiers probably counted their blessings to be away from the fray, while the officers chafed for glory and the promotions that were

certain to follow. Here are a few of the more prominent participants:

George E. Pickett

Born January 28, 1825. Commander of Camp Pickett from July 27, 1859 to August 10, 1859; April 28, 1860 to July 25, 1861. A native Virginian, West Point graduate and Mexican War veteran, Pickett left San Juan Island with Company D for Fort Steilacoom on July 25. There he relinquished his command and went on extended leave while awaiting his Army resignation to go through. He joined the Confederate Army in September 1861. Promoted to brigadier general in January 1862, he served in the SEVEN DAYS campaign and was seriously wounded at GAINES MILLS. Promoted to major general in October 1862, he achieved lasting fame on July 3, 1863, leading his division in a fatal charge against the federal center at the Battle of GETTYSBURG. He fought admirably at NEW BERN and PETERSBURG, but lost almost his entire command at FIVE FORKS in April 1865, which led directly to the Southern surrender at Appomattox. Some questionable executions of captured enemy soldiers after New Bern forced Pickett to flee the country to avoid indictment for war crimes. The charges were dropped on the intercession of U.S. Grant, an old army comrade. He sold insurance in Richmond until his death in Norfolk on July 30, 1875.

William S. Harney

Born August 27, 1800 in Haysboro,

Tennessee. Department of Oregon commander from September 1858 to April 1860. Commissioned a second lieutenant in 1818, Harney served in several Indian campaigns and the Mexican War before the San Juan incident. His Civil War career was marked by frustration. Assigned as commander of the Department of Missouri, Harney ran afoul of



William S. Harney

Washington when he granted Missouri military authorities power to deal with state affairs. On May 30, 1861, he was removed from his command and sat out the war until his retirement in 1863. Before his ill-fated decision he also had the ignominy to be the first general officer on either side to be captured by the enemy. Being a Southerner he was never really trusted by the North and considered a traitor by the South. He died May 9, 1889.

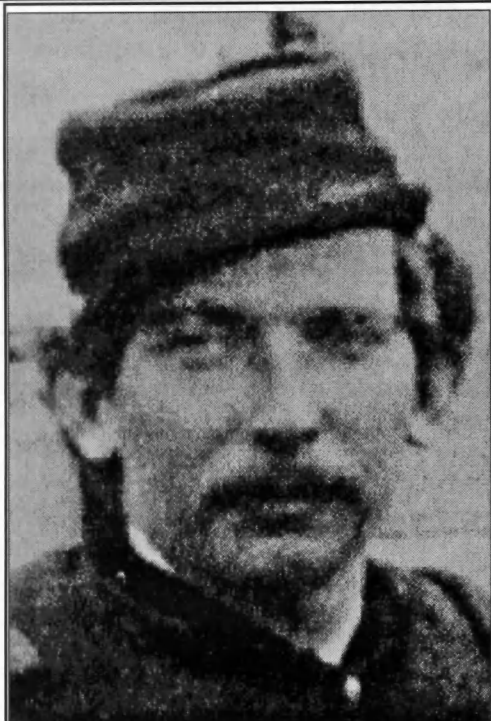
Silas Casey

Born July 12, 1807 in East Greenwich, R.I. Deputy Commander of the 9th Infantry Regiment, based in Steilacoom from January 1856 to August 1861; Camp Pickett commander from August 10 to October 18, 1859. He was promoted to Brigadier General shortly after arriving on the East Coast in 1861. His sole field service during the war was in the PENINSULA campaign, where his division was

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American Camp as it appeared during the Civil War.



James W. Forsyth

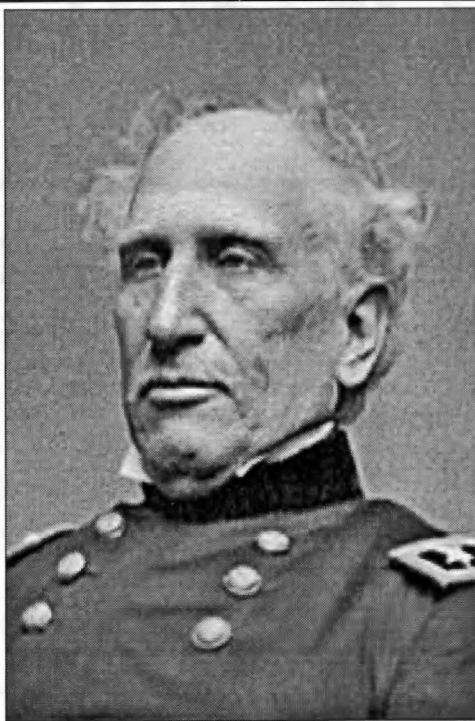
thrashed at SEVEN PINES on May 31, 1862, ironically enough facing George Pickett's brigade. He was still promoted to major general, given a desk and from it wrote his three-volume *System of Infantry Tactics*, used by both sides during the war. After the war, he remained in the army as a colonel. He died in 1882.

Alfred Pleasonton

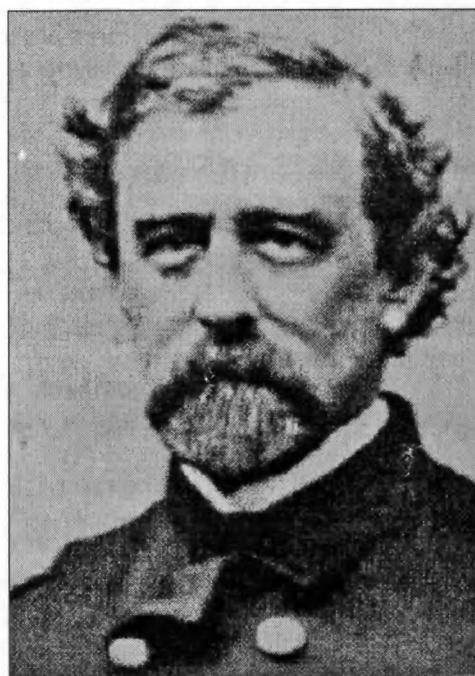
Born July 7, 1824 in the District of Columbia. As Acting Adjutant General for the Department of Oregon, Pleasonton wrote (and signed) almost all orders and correspondence directed to Pickett and Casey throughout the Pig War incident. Shortly after being given command of the newly organized Union cavalry corps, Pleasonton on June 9, 1863 caught the Confederate cavalry by surprise at BRANDY STATION. The two sides fought to a draw in the largest cavalry battle ever fought in North America. Promoted to major general, Pleasonton successfully directed his corps at GETTYSBURG. He was replaced as head of the corps in March 1864 and sent to the western theater of the war. Embittered, he resigned his regular army commission in January 1868. He died Feb. 17, 1897.

James W. Forsyth

Born August 8, 1835 in Maumee, Ohio. Second, then first lieutenant of Company D, 9th Infantry from December 1856 to July 1861. Forsyth was assigned to Company D following graduation from West Point. During the war, Forsyth served on the staffs of George B. McClellan and Philip H. Sheridan. His staff skills and valor in battle spurred



Silas Casey



James M. Alden

his rise through brevet ranks culminating in promotion to brigadier general on May 19, 1865. Forsyth earned a colonel's brevet for his actions at FIVE FORKS on April 1, 1865. In command of the Confederate forces was his past superior officer and close friend, George E. Pickett. Forsyth remained in the army following the war and commanded the troops at the massacre at WOUNDED KNEE on December 29, 1890. He was still promoted to major general before retiring in 1906. He died October 24 that same year.

James M. Alden

Born March 31, 1810, in Portland, Maine. Commander of the U.S. Survey Ship *Active*, which served with the U.S. Boundary Commission (1857-60) and as a messenger ship throughout the Pig War incident.



Alfred Pleasonton

Alden's nephew, James Madison Alden, painted the only known image of San Juan Town while serving aboard his uncle's ship as a junior officer. The senior Alden was one of the U.S. Navy's most stalwart captains during the Civil War, doing blockade service and participating in actions from NEW ORLEANS to FORT FISHER. As commander of the steam cruiser *Brooklyn*, he led Admiral David Farragut's cruisers into MOBILE BAY. When Alden stopped to clear torpedoes that had begun to cling to his bows, Farragut, aboard the *Hartford*, shouted, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead." Alden retired a rear admiral and died in San Francisco Feb. 6, 1877.

Rufus Ingalls

Born August 23, 1818, in Denmark, Maine. Quartermaster General for the Department of Oregon from 1858 to 1861. He was there when Harney briefed Pickett on the Pig incident. He became chief quartermaster of the Army of the Potomac in September 1861. Promoted to brigadier general on July 6, 1864, Ingalls was assigned by General Ulysses S. Grant to build the massive materiel center at CITY POINT, Virginia, during the siege of PETERSBURG. During that time Ingalls, Grant and former Department of Oregon (and San Juan Island) Surgeon George Suckley sent greetings through the lines to Pickett on the birth of his son. After the war Ingalls interceded (with Grant) for Pickett when Pickett was indicted for war crimes. After Grant was elected President, Pickett and Ingalls were frequent White House visitors. Pickett even named his dog "Rufus." Ingalls retired from the army in 1883 and died January 15, 1893.