The Indians are Quiet

White Supremacy in the First Photographs of Native Peoples in Oregon

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BETWEEN THE AUTUMN OF 1857 and the early spring of 1861, Lt. Lorenzo Lorain, a young U.S. Army officer stationed at Fort Umpqua on the Oregon coast, captured what are likely the earliest extant photographs of Native peoples in Oregon. Working with what may have been a homemade camera, Lorain photographed members of coastal tribes who had been forcefully removed, with the Army’s complicity, to the nearby Coast Reservation in 1856. These photographs are held today in the collections of the Oregon Historical Society’s (OHS) research library. Lorain identified none of the subjects by name and few by tribal affiliation, and his letters home to family in Pennsylvania, also held by OHS, tell very little about the circumstances in which the photographs were made.

Lorain’s collection at OHS is one of the most complete records of daily life at Fort Umpqua, a “lonely outpost” on the southern Oregon coast. His letters date from his service at the fort, September 1857 to March 1861, and both the photographs and the letters document expeditions he made off the fort’s property. His archive complements and fills in gaps in other extant primary sources documenting the fort, such as the correspondence, official muster rolls, reports, and post returns that Lorain and his fellow officers submitted to the War Department in Washington, D.C., now held by the National Archives, as well as a journal kept by Lorain’s commanding officer, 1st Lt. Alexander Piper. Lorain’s archive arrived at OHS in 1946. Ten years later, Howard McKinley Corning became the first to publicly note the importance of Lorain’s photographic work, writing in the Dictionary of Oregon History that the lieutenant had made “some of the earliest pictures” of locations in Oregon, including Fort Umpqua. Since then, photo historians have credited the lieutenant as an early photographic pioneer, notable for his use of outdoor photography and, as Terry Toedtemeier, scholar of Oregon photography, wrote, his “all
but unheard of” employment of 9-by-13-inch large-format negatives. The entirety of the lieutenant’s photographic work in Oregon has never been published, however, and when selected photos by Lorain have appeared in print, they have rarely included any or all of the photographs he made of individuals from Indigenous nations in Oregon.

Yet, the photographs that Lorain made of Native people in southern Oregon are arguably the most crucial pieces of his archive. His images are not only the first known photographs taken of tribal members in the region, but because of the time and circumstances under which they were made, they are also the first known photographs to document the U.S. government’s forced removal of those peoples from their homelands. Lorain was not simply a photographer but also an Army officer, charged with enacting and enforcing this removal, and his responsibility to do so necessarily shades the making of these images. As art historian John Tagg has written: “Like the state, the camera is never neutral.” It is therefore crucial to understand, when viewing these photographs, that Lorain, an agent of the state, was neither a benign nor neutral photographer.

We must, then, decode Lorain’s photographs in the same way that David G. Lewis and Thomas J. Connolly recently examined the lieutenant’s personal letters from Fort Umpqua. Lewis and Connolly rightly identify that Lorain and other members of the U.S. military stationed in Oregon, working alongside settlers, Indian agents, and civilian militias, committed “white American violence” against Native peoples during the taking of their lands; as they write, these actions “rested on the denial that tribal people were humans, deserving of human rights, and that violent actions were wrong when perpetrated on ‘savage’ Indians.” This violence, they conclude, “persisted in the written word” of Lorain’s letters, in addition to direct physical violence that he supported or enacted. That violence equally persists in Lorain’s printed images. Beautiful and significant as they are, we must remember that Lorain created them while employed by the government to enact and enforce harm on tribal communities and on individual people. Lorain’s photographs are therefore evidence, equal to his written documents, of systemic White supremacy on the Oregon frontier that ultimately resulted in attempted physical and cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples. As photographer Michael Katakis has written in his exploration of how viewers must excavate the hidden contexts of photographs taken by White photographers of Native Americans: “We must always ask who controls the recording of particular histories.” Lorenzo Lorain, the photographer and recorder, cannot be separated from Lorenzo Lorain, the U.S. Army officer.

When he arrived at Fort Umpqua in September 1857, Lorain was a recent graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, and a newly minted second lieutenant in Company L of the Army’s 3rd Artillery. His first military posting was to Fort Walla Walla in the Washington Territory in November 1856, where he was expected to serve in the Yakima War. The previous December, the Oregon Volunteers, an organized civilian militia not affiliated with the U.S. Army, had battled against the Walla Walla Tribe and killed leader Piupi-unaksmaks (or Peo-peo-mox-mox), and tensions between settlers and tribes were running high. Lorain was likely stationed there as a member of a military detachment assigned with trying to keep the peace. But his time at Fort Walla Walla was short-lived; in July 1857, nine months after his arrival, Company L received orders to transfer to Fort Umpqua on the Oregon coast and to protect that isolated military outpost from a rumored retaliatory attack by Native people whom the United States had recently removed from their homelands to reservations on the Oregon coast.

Lorain left Fort Walla Walla on August 15, 1857, and arrived at Fort Umpqua on September 18, along with commanding officer Piper and a detachment of enlisted men from Company L. By the fall of 1857, the outpost was the only remaining military presence on Oregon’s southern coast. The 5 officers and 124 enlisted men stationed there, including Lorain, were the only military agents left in the region to both enforce Indian removal and keep White settlers from attacking and attempting to exterminate Indians. Despite the small numbers it assigned there, the War Department considered the outpost crucial to maintaining federal policies aimed at containing the “Indian problem.” Violent behavior perpetrated by Whites toward Native people had steadily escalated in the region since 1851, prompting the military to enforce separation between the two groups. These attacks were intended not only to drive the tribes from their homelands so that Whites could claim the land for themselves, but also to drive them to extinction. Among the most brutal of these incidents were two massacres in southern Oregon in January and February 1854, in which White settlers killed
LORAIN PHOTOGRAPHED the block house at Fort Umpqua between 1857 and 1860. The outpost was one of the military’s last installations on the southern Oregon coast, designed to keep Native peoples on the Umpqua Reserve safe from White violence. At the same time, Lorain and the other military officers stationed there also perpetuated White violence by enforcing Indian removal and preventing Native people from returning to their homelands, thereby enacting cultural genocide.

Palmer negotiated the Coast Treaty in 1855 with some of the tribes and bands residing west of Oregon’s Coast Range, ostensibly to secure their “protection” from White violence. Under the terms of the treaty, these tribes would remove themselves voluntarily to land that Palmer set aside specifically for their permanent residence: the Coast Reservation (also known as the Siletz Agency, or Siletz Reservation), consisting of at least 100 miles of coastline and over 1.1 million acres from Cape Lookout to the Siltcoos River, and its smaller southern neighbor, the Umpqua Reserve (unaffiliated with the Coast Reservation), stretching from the Siltcoos south to the Umpqua River. In return, the tribes would cede their claims to all other land. Congress never ratified the treaty, and in an unusual move in November 1855, President Franklin Pierce nevertheless approved the creation of the reservation through an executive order that provided no additional compensation for the tribes. Pierce’s move was, as scholars such as Lewis, Connolly, and Wilkinson have noted, potentially illegal and definitively unjust. Palmer began directing the forced removal of Native peoples from southern Oregon to the Coast Reservation in February 1856, delayed after the president’s order by snow in the region.

At the request of the War Department, the U.S. Army provided aid to Palmer during removal. Military detachments accompanied steamships carrying over 1,400 Native people to the reservation. Other soldiers and officers escorted overland marches, led by civilians and Indian agents who had rounded up groups of tribal members in southern and western Oregon. These marches sometimes lasted as long as a month and covered as many as 250 miles, over rough and unforgiving terrain and in harsh winter conditions, such as the January 1856 removal of Cow Creek Umpqua, Upper Umpqua, Yoncalla Kalapuya, and Southern Molalla people, during which five of them died due to being forced to travel without adequate protection from the elements. Soldiers also watched over removed peoples at Port Orford and other way-stations, acting both as captors and protectors against violence from White settlers, who were eager to see the tribes exterminated. At the same time, the Army was still engaged in the last major battle of the Rogue River War, the May 1856 Battle of Big Bend; its aim, which was ultimately successful, was to force the “peaceful” surrender of hundreds of Native families so that they could be marched north to the reservation. All told, U.S. Army officers played multiple crucial roles in ensuring the “safety” and land claims of White settlers in southern and coastal Oregon — while, at the same time, they collectively, brutally, and unequally punished the region’s Indigenous peoples by supporting removal proceedings.

Fort Umpqua served as the final outpost in southern Oregon to enforce the Army’s dual role in both enacting the violence of removal and dispos-
session of Indians and stopping rogue militias from extra-legal violence. The U.S. Army built Fort Umpqua in August 1856, three months after the federal government established the Umpqua Reserve in May 1856 of that year, locating the fort on the abandoned townsites of Umpqua City, on a windswept peninsula northeast of Winchester Bay. With the bay to the south, Umpqua River to the east, Pacific Ocean to the west, and its property deeply embedded in sand dunes and pine forests, Fort Umpqua was accessible only from the north, where it shared a boundary with the reservation. The nearest White settlements were distant; Scottsburg was twenty-five miles upriver near the Lower Umpqua village of Te’aliila, and Port Orford was eighty-five miles southwards down the coast. As he wrote in letters home to his sisters, Mary Jane Ashman and Martha Eliza Lorain (nicknamed “Merty”), Lorain found the fort an “isolated position” — this was intentional. Although the reservation itself was managed by E.P. Drew, Indian sub-agent of the Umpqua District, and not the Army, the outpost was, per orders, intended to serve as a “buffer zone” to prevent the people removed to at the Coast Reservation from escaping southwards across the Umpqua River to their homelands. Any Native person trying to do so, as Lorain wrote to his sister Mary in July 1859, would either have to pass through the fort or take “the route through the settlement in the valley above” — both of which could attract the attention of either Fort Umpqua’s soldiers or White settlers and result in re-capture or death. The locations of both the fort and the reservation therefore were intended to permanently separate Indians from Whites, and as Lewis has noted, the closeness of both locations meant that the White soldiers and Indian agents “worked together to manage the tribes on a daily basis.” They were effective. As Coos tribal member James Buchanan remembered in 1931, “we became prisoners.” Indeed, just seven days before Lorain’s arrival there, the U.S. Army’s Headquarters of the Department of the Pacific delivered specific directives to Fort Umpqua: the enlisted men and officers stationed there must, at all costs, prevent Native people from leaving the reservation.

By the time Lorain arrived at the fort, the Army had forced the removal of a reported 690 Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw men, women, and children to the adjacent Umpqua Reserve. Conditions were harsh. Although there are no accounts written by Native people that document life at the Umpqua Reserve, Agent E.P. Drew’s written records confirm that the agency could not adequately provide food for the people it housed there. In March 8, 1858, he wrote that he was making arrangements to collect Indians in the region and bring them to the reserve, but that he would be forced to only “subsist them on potatoes — Flour cannot be purchased on the credit of the

LORENZO LORAIN’S LETTERS provide details about his life at Fort Umpqua as well as the fort’s purpose as a buffer between Native people removed to the Coast Reservation and the Umpqua River to the south. In this July 2, 1859, letter, Lorain wrote to his sister Mary that Native people trying to escape would have to travel through the fort or the White settlements to the north.
Indian department here until the back liabilities are paid up.” Tribal oral traditions and historical demographic and health data from the reserve’s northern neighbor, the Coast Reservation, also reveal severe conditions there that likely were similar to those at Umpqua. In his historical anthropology of the Coos and Coquille, Mark Axel Tveskov recounts, through multiple first-person testimonies, how the tribes regularly went without clothing or food, “penned up the same as a pen of hogs.” Similarly, historian Robert Boyd has noted that diseases such as tuberculosis, syphilis, and scrofula killed hundreds of tribal members on Oregon’s reservations; oral accounts from tribal people indicate that smallpox killed others. Additionally, some tribal leaders reported that Native women were mistreated—beaten, likely raped, or worse—by Indian agents on the reservation. As Lewis has written, the Umpqua Reserve and other reservations in Oregon during this period essentially functioned as “horrible prison camps for many tribes. … Today, these would be called Human rights abuses and Crimes against humanity.”

During negotiations for the 1855 Coast Treaty, Palmer had promised tribal leaders a horse for each tribal member, cooking utensils, food staples, mills, lumber for housing construction, and a reservation doctor—all in “payment” for tribal lands. Congress never ratified the treaty, however, and the U.S. government never delivered on those promises. The people of the Coast Reservation and Umpqua Reserve suffered deep emotional wounds as well. During the years following removal, tribal members routinely expressed, through oral accounts and records kept by Indian agents, the pain they felt at being torn from their homelands and traditional lifeways. All told, an estimated 50 percent of all Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw peoples died during their years on the Coast Reservation.

In stark contrast, life for the White officers and enlisted men at Fort Umpqua was uneventful, even comfortable. Lorain’s letters confirm that they faced none of the reserve’s food shortages or serious illnesses. Instead, they had fresh water, salmon and shellfish in the river and ocean, and plenty of game to forage. The worst obstacle for the Army at the fort was, as Lorain wrote home in March 1859, that life there was “unconscionably dull.” To fill the time, the men of Fort Umpqua engaged themselves in other pursuits. Lorain and others took up hunting for elk, deer, or ducks; as the lieutenant wrote home on April 3, 1860, “it is fine sport and without it I don’t know what I would do to break the monotony of this place.” Others took up serious natural history pursuits; for instance, the fort’s surgeon, Edward Perry Vollum, sent “nests, eggs, and skins of birds, and other animals” to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., ostensibly for its natural history collections.

Lorain also took photographs to pass the time. He appears to have made his first photos of Native people at Fort Umpqua sometime between his arrival on September 18, 1857, and early November 1858. On November 8, 1858, he responded by letter to an apparent request from sister Merty Lorain for “authentic” photos of Indians. “I can’t send you photographs of Indians in any other dress than what you term civilized,” Lorain wrote, “as they now where [sic] no other” — although his 1859 portrait of a man with bow and arrows may have been an attempt to fulfill her request. The lieutenant went on to say that he would “continue the scenes if the weather is suitable but I am afraid it is rather late in the season to do much in the photographic line,” indicating that he had made such photographs prior to this date. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine which photographs he was referring to in this letter, as the only extant image by Lorain that bears a date is one held by the American Antiquarian Society (AAS); none of the images held in OHS’s research library collections are dated.

Among the fifty-four unique photographs in OHS’s collections that Lorain took or collected, at least thirteen depict Native people. Only one of these appears to have been made with the 9-by-13-inch large-format negatives for which Lorain was later celebrated; the rest are much smaller images, cut into oval shapes and made either within a makeshift studio or outdoors. All are salt prints, an early photographic format in which images were made on cotton writing paper that people coated in a salt and silver nitrate solution, placed beneath a negative, and exposed to sunlight. Most of these prints are pasted into a composition notebook with a marbled paper cover, possibly assembled by Lorain himself. On the upper right-hand corner of the first page is an obscure pencil notation, which reads, in Lorain’s handwriting, “VoM/u.,” possibly physics shorthand for “velocity of mass/energy”; this could indicate that Lorain may have put the album together in 1871, while he was briefly a professor of physics at Lehigh University. Or, it could just as easily have been put together by one of Lorain’s sisters, to whom the lieutenant frequently sent his photos, as indicated by his letters. Myriad notations are scrawled across the album’s pages, some written in pen in an unknown hand, others in pencil by decades of OHS archivists attempting to identify the images. Notably, these notations only identify White men and women. The album opens with an albumen carte de visite portrait of the lieutenant himself, pasted on the inside cover. Immediately afterwards, on the next page, are three oval salt-print portraits of unidentified Native men. Two of these images are relatively clear, the men staring directly at Lorain’s camera (see page 144). The third photograph in the OHS album is now faded and obscured by heavy scratch marks, but the AAS holds a clearer version, showing that it originally depicted a man holding a bow and arrows. The AAS image is also notated with the inscription, “Umpqua Reserve, 1859.” None of the three are identified by name or tribal affiliation. Two additional pairs of images

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of Native people appear later in the album, after pages of other photographs Lorain took of White officers and outdoor scenes of Fort Umpqua’s buildings and landscapes. The first of these pairs depicts an unidentified man and a young woman or girl, both posed on the same white chair that is just visible behind them in each image (see image on page 135). The second pair are similar to the first grouping: men, again, also unidentified (see images on page 149).

Who do these photographs depict? Why did Lorain photograph these people? And how did he come to know them and persuade them to sit for his camera? The lieutenant’s personal letters hold few clues, and his official Army records contain no mention of photography. Based on the inscription on the AAS photograph, it is likely that they depict either Coos, Lower Umpqua, or Siuslaw people who were held at the Umpqua Reserve near Fort Umpqua, as those would have been the tribal groups with whom Lorain most often engaged during his work at the post. Without additional corroborating sources, however, we should be careful not to assume that the place and date in the identification of that photo are correct or that they apply broadly to all the portraits in the Lorain album at OHS. It is equally possible that some of the portraits depict Klamath or Modoc individuals, taken by Lorain when he and his company visited the Klamath River to meet with tribal leaders in southern Oregon during the summer of 1860. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the photographs of these people could ever be positively linked with their names or even their tribal identities. As Jesse Beers, cultural stewardship manager for the Confederated Tribes of Coos Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI) pointed out to me, in
Photography was introduced in the United States in 1840, well after the first documented encounters between Euro-Americans and Indians in Oregon during the late eighteenth century, and did not arrive in the Oregon Territory until almost a decade later. The first known photographer to set up shop in Oregon was daguerreotypist William H. Jennings, who started a short-lived studio in Oregon City in January 1851 — notably, at the same time as the Cayuse Indian Wars. Perhaps not incidentally, Jennings appears to have closed his business only a few months later, because he instead went west, as recorded in a diary attributed to him, “to visit the Cayuse nation of Indians, for the purpose of making Daguerreotypes.” The photographer’s camera was stolen at Fort Vancouver a few weeks later. “In consequence of the loss,” the diary concluded, “I was obliged to abandon the idea of Taking Pictures of the Indians.”

It does not appear that any other early commercial photographer in Oregon during the 1850s was successful in photographing Native people. Peter Palmquist’s research files for his seminal compendium of early frontier photographers, Pioneer Photographers of the Far West, contain information about twenty-four people (all White and all male) who set up photography studios throughout Oregon between 1851 and 1857, when Lorain arrived at the Oregon coast. These include photographers who became well-known and today have substantial collections of work held by archives in Oregon, such as Peter Britt of Jacksonville and Joseph Buchtel of Portland. Not a single image within these men’s extant work documents Native peoples in Oregon before 1858, when Lorain apparently made his first images. Lorain’s photographs therefore appear to be, within the surviving photographic record, the first visual documentation of Native people in Oregon using photographic processes.

Equally significant is that Lorain was likely an amateur photographer, albeit a very good one. His interest in photography was not a prescribed duty of his military service; instead, his letters indicate that it was just a source of personal “amusement.” Practiced in his off hours at the fort, photography allowed him to share his life on the distant, unfamiliar Oregon coast with his sisters back home in Clearfield, Pennsylvania, a wealthy mining town north-west of Pittsburgh. In letters to his sister Mary between 1859 and 1860, Lorain described himself as “not much of a letter writer” and “down on poetry.”

Through photography, however, he gave his family a literal picture of his life in the region, writing in July 1860 that the images allowed them to “obtain a better idea of the country than which I can give you by writing.” His letters indicate that, throughout his time stationed in Oregon, he sent photos to both sisters whenever he could.

The fact that Lorain apparently took photographs for no purpose other than his own pleasure has led scholars such as Palmquist to postulate that he was perhaps “one of the earliest amateur photographers in the Pacific Northwest.” Others have elaborated on this by speculating, without evidence, that the lieutenant did not even have the same photographic supplies that a professional photographer would have had; for instance, Palmquist repeated an unsubstantiated claim that Lorain “fashioned a homemade camera” during his time at Fort Walla Walla, before leaving Washington Territory for Oregon.

Despite these assertions, I have found no sources to identify exactly how Lorain came by his camera or where he received his photographic training. Almost certainly, however, it was not during his education at West Point. According to a U.S. Military Academy publication documenting the school’s 1902 centennial, the first course in photographic instruction did not occur there until June 18, 1863. Indeed, when Lorain arrived at Fort Umpqua in 1857, photography was not yet considered by the military to be an integral tool of expansion in the American West. Painters and illustrators had been traveling with frontier expeditions for years, providing images that their government employers then used, according to historian Martha A. Sandweiss, “as records of fact, as a means of communicating scientific and topographic discoveries, and as a tool of propaganda” for securing financial support for further expansion into the West.

But in 1857, photography’s capability to do the same was mostly unproven. Only four years before, Col. John C. Frémont had been the first to successfully use photography on a military expedition, hiring daguerreotypist Solomon Nunes Carvalho to accompany him on his explorations of land that would become Kansas, Colorado, and Utah. That same year, painter and photographer John Mix Stanley accompanied Isaac I. Stevens’s Pacific Railroad Survey across the Rocky Mountains to Washington Territory. Carvalho’s photographs were published not as photographs but as photogravures (line etching illustrations based on the images) in Frémont’s popular books about his expedition, however, and Stanley’s daguerreotypes disappeared after the Stevens expedition and have never been found. It was not until the 1860s that professional photographers such as William Henry Jackson and Timothy O’Sullivan were regularly employed.
by the federal government to “record the truth” of military expeditions in the American West.\textsuperscript{75}

The British government, however, was far ahead of the Americans in employing photography on the frontier. At the same time as Lorain was making his photographs in Oregon, photographers with the British Royal Corps of Engineers were traveling in Washington Territory, where from 1858 to 1862, they worked as part of the British Northwest Boundary Commission’s survey of the 49th parallel.\textsuperscript{76} They helped deliver the corps’ mission, established in 1851, to employ photographers to document public works, military installations, and other matters of historical, anthropological, or archaeological interest. Sometime between April or May 1860 and October 1861, an unidentified photographer on the commission’s survey captured images of members of the Middle Spokane and Kalispel tribes at Fort Colville in Washington Territory, as well as of Native encampments nearby on both sides of the Columbia River, including at The Dalles, Oregon.\textsuperscript{77} If, however, we are to use the date of Lorain’s November 1858 letter, his first mention of photographing Native people at Fort Umpqua, the commission’s images post-date Lorain’s.\textsuperscript{78} Therefore, in addition to the lack of commercial photographers documenting Indigenous communities in Oregon before Lorain did so in 1858, there likewise appear to be no military or government photographers doing so either.

Lorain also differed sharply from photographers such as Stanley and those on the survey commission. The latter were paid by government employers to visually document the frontier Pacific Northwest, including making images of Native people, with the express purpose of understanding the land so that it could be settled by Whites. Lorain appears to have come to his Indian photography without directive from the Army. That said, amateur curiosity does not entirely absolve his photography of cultural imperialism. Like many White newcomers on the American West, Lorain used photography to make sense and order of his new environment (in which Native peoples were central) for his family back home in Pennsylvania. As art historians Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson have written, this kind of “Western visualization of native people and their environments as primitive or exotic was . . . an attempt to make the unfamiliar or strange seem desirable in a traditionally legible way.”\textsuperscript{79}

Lorain primitivized and exoticized the Native people in his photographs when he chose not to identify them for his family, thereby creating a generic, identity-less visual picture of the “types” of Indians who existed in Oregon Territory. As Katakis has written, referring to the vast numbers of photographs of Native people that White photographers took during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: “We do not glean from these early photographs
The Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw have identified the low building in this photograph as a cedar plank house, a traditional dwelling of the tribes, situated near Fort Umpqua. In the image, an unidentified group of people, including Native men and women, pose against the structure.

THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw have identified the low building in this photograph as a cedar plank house, a traditional dwelling of the tribes, situated near Fort Umpqua. In the image, an unidentified group of people, including Native men and women, pose against the structure.

a sense of Native Americans as individuals with dreams, hopes, sorrows, even flaws. Instead, they serve as props for the viewer’s imagination. Without their own names and stories attached to the images, the individuals in Lorain’s photographs are indeed props or illustrations — and to the photographer himself, disappointing ones, at that. He wrote to his sister Merty in November 1858, “at best they are miserable creatures when compared with the Indians of romance.” That line is by far the harshest indicator of Lorain’s attitude toward the Native people he photographed and interacted with at Fort Umpqua: pitying, dismissive, and above all, superior.

Native scholar Gerald Vizenor calls these types of images of Indigenous people, made by photographers such as Lorain, “fugitive poses.” As he writes, when White nineteenth-century photographers created visual depictions of Native Americans without connecting them with their individual identities, they intentionally separated tribal communities from their traditional lands and cultures, turning “the real into the unreal with no obvious presence in time or nature.” Lorain’s photos do the same: they capture his Indian subjects in the midst of assimilation, torn between removal and White-imposed lifeways, divided by the photographer from their pasts and identities. This separation extended to Lorain’s actions and his words. In his role at Fort Umpqua, he enforced the physical separation of Indigenous people from their lifeways, to devastating effect, and in his letters, he referred generically to tribal people as “Indians.”

Such intentional separation may have been a tactic that Lorain used, in both his letters and photos, to diffuse his family’s concerns about his personal safety on the Oregon coast. Many of his letters to his sisters make it seem as though “Indians” were distant problems, not immediate ones just a few hundred feet away on the Umpqua Reserve. When he wrote with news of Native-White conflicts, it was almost always in reference to an event taking place in some far-off location, such as when he reported on Col. George Wright’s campaign against the Yakama, Palouse, Spokane, and Coeur d’Alene in Washington Territory, noting with satisfaction that the colonel had “defeated the Indians with the loss of none (0) killed and 1 wounded.” In contrast, he reported regularly to his sisters that there were no such conflicts at Fort Umpqua. “As regards being killed by Indians,” he wrote home in July 1859, “I believe we are almost as safe from it here as you are in Pennsylvania; at any rate I have none of your fears about it.” In another letter, he warns against their putting stock in any inflammatory reports they might read in the press about the Indian wars of the Northwest: “Newspapers generally are humbug[,] Oregon papers especially[,] in some states papers are not far behind when they undertake to speak a military affairs.” At the same time, Lorain seemed proud of the nobleness of his purpose as an Army officer and ready, if called on, to engage in conflicts with tribal members. “It is our profession to face danger when required,” he wrote to sister Mary Ashman, “and our luck if we escape unharmed.”

By making generalized, static, and unthreatening visual and written images of Native people, Lorain could make his new life in Oregon “traditionally legible” to his family back East. He was, his letters appear to say, not so far gone from “civilization” or from the Pennsylvania-bred brother they once knew that he would intimately consort with such “miserable creatures” as the Indians in his charge. Yet, at the same time as Lorain was sending such reassurances, he was intentionally leaving out any mention of his actual actions against Native peoples. In the fall of 1858, Lorain wrote

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IN THE SUMMER OF 1860, Lorain photographed Camp Day, Company L’s encampment in the Klamath River valley. The detachment intended to meet there with White settlers and Klamath and Modoc leaders, on orders to perform reconnaissance on relations between the two communities.

to sister Merty that “the Indians are as usual quiet” on the Umpqua Reserve — but did not acknowledge that he was directly responsible for enforcing that “quiet.”88 In the post returns from Fort Umpqua, commanding officers noted that officers and enlisted men were making regular expeditions in 1857 and 1858 to prevent Native people from leaving the reserve.89 Lorain may have participated in one such expedition on October 14, less than a month after his transfer to the fort, when commanding officer Piper took members of Company L from the fort north to the reserve’s boundary on the Siuslaw River. Their purpose, according to that month’s post return, was to destroy “some canoes belonging to some Coquille Indians who had left their proper district on the Reservation and had established a ferry at that point for Indians leaving the Reservation.”90

In addition to enforcing the imprisonment of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw tribal members who were already housed at the Umpqua Reserve, Lorain also actively participated in removing Native peoples from their homelands. On January 3, 1858, he left Fort Umpqua with a detachment, enroute to the Chetco River. According to commanding officer Maj. John B. Scott, who completed the fort’s post return for that month, his orders were to “assist the Indian Agent in removing a party of [Chetco] Indians to their reservation North of the Umpqua River.”91 The agent in question, Capt. William Tichenor, was, as Loraine likely knew, a former civilian guide for the Army during the Rogue River War and a known “Indian killer.” In 1851, Tichenor and the crew of his ship had violently attacked the Kwatami tunne band of the Tutuni peoples, in order to secure land for the settlement of Port Orford, Oregon, and his actions resulted in the deaths of at least 20 Native people.92 (The captain was never charged for any crime associated with that massacre.) Together, Lorain and Tichenor succeeded in removing approximately 150 Chetco people to the reserve, and the lieutenant returned to his usual post at Fort Umpqua on February 15.93

Although the post returns contain only dispassionate mentions of such removal efforts, these forced marches of Native peoples to reservation land were, as noted previously, brutalizing. Wilkinson has noted, in particular, that White accounts of removals recorded starvation, illness, and death of tribal members, while Native accounts described far more inhumane treatment: beatings, rapes, and murders at the hands of the White men charged with bringing them to the reservations.94 Although Lorain’s letters and Army records apparently do not document the events of his march with Tichenor in the winter of 1858, he was almost certainly a firsthand witness to Tichenor’s violent behavior toward Native people later that spring. On June 16, 1858, Tichenor arrived again at Fort Umpqua with fifty-three women and children from the Chetco tribe.95 Earlier that month, he had rounded up another group of about seventy members of that tribe, with the intention of delivering them to reservation land. Their march to the coast was far from peaceful; on the way, Tichenor, acting on the pretense that some of the Native men were trying to escape, ordered his men to shoot and kill fourteen tribal members, wounding two others.96 The captain later claimed in his defense, without basis, that the men were criminals, “the most desperate and murderous of all the Indians on the coast.”97

Lorain would have been among the officers who received the group on June 16 at Fort Umpqua, in the aftermath of this horrific crime. The remaining tribal members were starving and ill-clothed; in the fort’s June post return, Scott noted that they “were destitute of Provisions, and I felt obliged to supply them.”98 As the fort’s quartermaster and commissary, in charge of rations, clothing, and other supplies, Lorain would have been the one to act on Scott’s orders to care for the Chetco group before they were delivered north to the Siletz Reservation. Two months later, Tichenor arrived a third time with sixteen more women and children from Pistol River. Scott noted in the July 1858 post...
return that this group was, again, as “entirely destitute of provisions” as the previous group had been, indicating Tichenor’s continued ill-treatment of the Indigenous people whom he was bent on forcing out of southern Oregon.99

At the same time as he actively participated in and enforced the removal of tribes to the Umpqua Reserve, Lorain’s letters reveal his uncertainty about the Army’s role in supporting policies that protected, instead of punished, White violence toward those tribes. In a letter home from Fort Walla Walla in December 1857, almost a year before his transfer to Oregon, he wrote about the behavior of “volunteers” in southern Oregon, the armed civilian militias whose members had tasked themselves with removing Native peoples from the region, and recounted the wanton, unprovoked murder of a band of Rogue River Indians at the hands of such men. Although he stopped short of expressing outright disgust, the episode was clearly an object lesson for Lorain about what his role would be in the Northwest Indian wars; such “treatment . . . by the volunteers will illustrate pretty well,” he wrote, “their [the volunteers’] general conduct towards the indians and account of the treatment . . . by the volunteers will illustrate pretty well,” he wrote, “their [the volunteers’] general conduct towards the indians and account of the behavior of “volunteers” in southern Oregon, the armed civilian militias whose members had tasked themselves with removing Native peoples from the region, and recounted the wanton, unprovoked murder of a band of Rogue River Indians at the hands of such men. Although he stopped short of expressing outright disgust, the episode was clearly an object lesson for Lorain about what his role would be in the Northwest Indian wars; such “treatment . . . by the volunteers will illustrate pretty well,” he wrote, “their [the volunteers’] general conduct towards the indians and account of the behavior of “volunteers” in southern Oregon, the armed civilian militias whose members had tasked themselves with removing Native peoples from the region, and recounted the wanton, unprovoked murder of a band of Rogue River Indians at the hands of such men. Although he stopped short of expressing outright disgust, the episode was clearly an object lesson for Lorain about what his role would be in the Northwest Indian wars; such “treatment . . . by the volunteers will illustrate pretty well,” he wrote, “their [the volunteers’] general conduct towards the indians and account of the treatment . . . by the volunteers will illustrate pretty well,” he wrote, “their [the volunteers’] general conduct towards the indians and account of the

Lorain’s dual unease with and support of his role in Oregon’s Indian removal efforts mirrors what historian Nathan Douthit has identified as the uncertain “middle-ground” that characterized relationships between the U.S. Army and tribes in Oregon during the late 1850s and early 1860s. Douthit identifies how the actions of the Indians and the Army were in opposition to one another, yet at the same time, involved steps toward mutual “accommodation and adaptation.”100 Lorain is a perfect example of that duality. He did not condone unprovoked White violence from settlers against Indians, nor did he believe reports from those settlers that Native peoples were an immediate threat to himself or other Whites in the region. Yet, he actively engaged in the Army’s (sometimes physically violent) efforts to remove and enforce removal of tribal members from the region, and he appears to have believed that those actions would ultimately protect Native peoples from complete loss of life. Similarly, Lorain engaged in the intimate act of photographing Native people, yet he did not bother to record their identities in the otherwise detailed letters that he sent home with them. Was photography a private way for the lieutenant to bridge the conflicting nature of his position? Or, in the same way as his colleague Vollum collected animal skins to send to the Smithsonian, was Lorain “collecting” the people he photographed, as objects of the Oregon landscape? His letters do not answer this question, so we must return to the question of how the images were made and what that can tell us about how he perceived the subjects of his photography.

It is possible that some of the Native men and women in Lorain’s portraits were employed at the outpost. It was not uncommon for tribal people to work within the walls of a post at other military installations in the Pacific Northwest, especially as direct hires by the Army to support military efforts against Indian peoples in the region. For instance, the post return for Fort Walla Walla in November 1856 (shortly after Lorain’s arrival there) listed three Native men employed as “interpreters,” “expressman,” and “herder.”101 At Fort Umpqua, a May 1859 inspection report written by Cor. Joseph K.F. Mansfield indicates that the outpost had a laundress and a baker — both of whom may have been Native, as Mansfield took pains elsewhere in this report to identify when civilians or “extra duty men” (enlistees on additional work details) were performing other work at the outpost.102 Detailed government records documenting the activities and censuses of tribal members at the Umpqua Reserve between 1857 and 1861 are scant.103 It is difficult to locate records, if they exist, that directly confirm whether Native men or women were working at Fort Umpqua — and thus, none that confirm whether the people in Lorain’s photos worked for or with him.

Regardless, it seems likely that some of the photographs of the Native men and woman in were made at the fort and not another location — the portraits on page 135, the lower left portrait on page 144, and the lower portrait on page 149. They share a similar staging and dark background to portraits that Lorain made there between 1857 and 1860 of Vollum, Scott, and Scott’s wife and daughter; the background in all of these images appears to indicate that the photographs were made indoors, in whatever studio Lorain had built for himself at the outpost.104 Less certain, however, are upper and lower right portraits on page 144. The background in these is lighter, possibly but not definitively indicating that they may have been made in the field, perhaps in a makeshift tent studio. Could they have been made on one of Lorain’s expeditions off the fort’s land? Again, Lorain’s letters contain no answers, but if so, it is possible the men in these latter
PREVIOUS SCHOLARS heralded Lorain as an early master of outdoor photography in Oregon. By including but not identifying Native men, women, and children in his landscape photos, such as this one taken at Fort Umpqua, Lorain created a vision of Native people as props, rather than individuals.

images are not Chetco, Coos, Lower Umpqua, or Siuslaw tribal members but were affiliated with other tribes and bands that had not yet been removed to reservations.

Aside from the portraits, Lorain made three other images of Native communities, this time outdoors at and near Fort Umpqua. In one, a group of men, women, and children sit on a sand dune, likely at the river’s edge, with Lorain’s camera positioned below and the photographer looking up through his lens at them (image above). This was likely taken near the fort, as Mansfield’s 1859 report indicates that there was “nothing but an ocean of sand” to the west of the fort and that “high sand bluffs” also encircled the post. In the second image, another group poses alongside a low building that has been identified by the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw as a cedar plank house, a traditional dwelling of the tribes. The third photograph looks northward along the edge of the peninsula toward the southern border of the Umpqua Reserve, with the Umpqua River and mainland Oregon also in the image. A group stands along the shore of the river, near other low structures that are likely plank houses or windbreaks (image below); this may be confirmed again by Mansfield, who wrote: “The Indians about here live in lodges on the margins of the river. . . . Their lodges are made with planks & boards, with a hole just large enough to crawl in & out.” Judging from extant maps of the fort’s buildings and the height of the camera placement, Lorain likely made this image from the blockhouse.

In each of these outdoor photographs, the faces of the people in them, both Native and White, are blurred or distant. The blurring may have resulted during Lorain’s exposure, while in his camera, of the wet collodion glass plate negatives from which he later made his prints. Exposure times for such plates could vary from one second to a few minutes, depending on sunlight conditions, and even an exposure of a few seconds would be
Human error could also cause blurring during the printing process, if Lorain had inadvertently moved the photographic paper in its frame. Or perhaps Lorain used a faulty camera lens or warped imperfect glass negative plates. Whatever the cause, the reason for the blurring may be beside the point, as the viewer senses that Lorain’s focus was not on the individuals as people but as parts of the landscape. Unlike his portrait photographs, these scenes illustrate the geographical and ecological world in which he found himself — one in which Native peoples and their material culture were reduced to faceless symbols of the landscape’s foreignness.

Only one outdoor scene made by Lorain clearly depicts Native people. Not incidentally, it is also the only photograph in the collection that documents how the lieutenant’s photographic interests, although not required by the Army, aligned with and were informed by his military responsibilities. During the summer of 1860, Lorain made a striking group portrait of Klamath and Modoc men, women, and children at Camp Day in southern Oregon (image on facing page). This temporary Army camp was located on the confluence of Spencer Creek and the Klamath River, and Lorain, along with Piper and the enlisted men of Company L, had arrived there on July 16, under orders to provide temporary security to the region. The Klamath basin had been the site of increasing unrest between White settlers and tribal members since the Applegate emigrant trail was established there in 1847. By 1859, the unrest had culminated in several violent conflicts, and unconfirmed reports received by the military in 1860 indicated that the Klamath and Modoc might gather for a sustained attack.

Again, in his letters home, Lorain downplayed these alleged dangers — or he was genuinely unconvinced of them. Shortly after arriving at Camp Day, he wrote to his sister Mary that he found the Indians of southern Oregon as “peaceably disposed” as those at the Umpqua Reserve. “Judging from the little we have seen of them,” he wrote, “I think no difficulty need be apprehended with the Klamaths, the nearest Indians.” Piper, in his own correspondence, mirrored that sentiment, writing to Maj. W.W. Mackall on July 17: “The Indians are represented to be very friendly; those I have seen seemed certainly anxious to keep on good terms with us. The Modocs who live above east of this are said to be more independent & quite indifferent as to their relation with the whites.” During the three months that Company L spent at Camp Day, Piper focused primarily on talking with leaders from both tribes, “to ascertain the disposition of the Indians,” as he wrote, “and to endeavor to get such an influence over them & if possible the settlers as will enable me to prevent acts of hostility on either side.”

Piper’s reports indicate that Lorain, as his second in command, accompanied him on reconnaissance missions from Camp Day and also traveled to and from Jacksonville to get supplies. There was plenty of down-time at the camp, too, as Company L waited for tribal leaders to arrive. Just like at Fort Umpqua, Lorain had his photographic equipment to pass the time, writing home on July 28 that “I have my camera and chemicals with me and as soon as I can arrange a dark house shall endeavor to get some views[,] copies of which if successful I will send you.” And indeed he did. Some time between the date of that letter and October 18, when Company L left the Klamath region to return to Fort Umpqua, Lorain made at least three unique photos at or near Camp Day: two shots of the Army encampment and the Klamath and Modoc group portrait. Like with his portraits of Native people at Fort Umpqua, the circumstances in which Lorain made the Camp Day portrait are murky. Although it surely was a significant event for him to photograph so many tribal members at once, the photo, like his others, is undated and unidentified.
In 1968, the editors of the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* (OHQ) attempted to correct Lorain’s oversight, when they published his image as an illustration with their transcription of Piper’s reports from Camp Day. In that article, the editors identified the photograph as “Lorain’s photo of the Indian chiefs, presumably, who talked to Piper.” They also cited Francis S. Landrum, an amateur historian of the Klamath region, as having suggested the identities of several men in the image: the Klamath chief Lalakes (also LaLakes or Lileks) standing in the center of the image and, sitting in the chair beside him, Modoc chief Old Schonchin (left, in chair) and either “Captain George” or Kumtucky (right, in chair). The word “presumably” is key here. No other photographs appear to exist of Lalakes, Schonchin, or Kumtucky (whose name has been variously identified in other records as Kumtuckny, Toon-tuc-te, Comtucknus, and Com-po-twass) that would help confirm the faces of the men in this image. The man identified as “George” could be Klamath chief George, who was hanged by order of Lt. Col. Charles S. Drew in 1863. It also might be possible that George was “Agency George,” a signer of the U.S. government’s 1864 treaty with the Klamath, who also appears in an 1886 photograph held by the Klamath Tribes that depicts several original treaty signers. Given the twenty-six-year difference between the photographs, it is difficult to definitively determine whether the man that Landrum presumed to be “George” in Lorain’s photo is the same as in the 1886 image.

Piper’s reports indicate that Lalakes and Schonchin, as well as other members of the Klamath and Modoc tribes, gathered at the camp in early August 1860. In his entries, the lieutenant specifically noted that Schonchin arrived at Camp Day on August 11 and that the “Klamath Chiefs” had come into camp around August 2. Klamath chief Lalakes, Piper writes, did not visit Camp Day until sometime between August 12 and September 5. If Landrum’s identifications are correct, it may be possible that Lorain made this portrait once Schonchin and Lalakes had both reached the camp, sometime between August 12 and September 5, 1860. Further research needs to be done, in collaboration with or led by the Klamath and Modoc tribes, to positively confirm Landrum’s identifications and to find the identities of the many other unnamed people in this image. Regardless, Lorain’s portrait of the tribes at Camp Day is the most distinct example of how his photography cannot be extricated from his military role in removing the “Indian problem” from southern Oregon; that role informed all of his interactions and relationships with Native people during his time in Oregon.

From Lorain’s writing, photographs, and recorded actions, we can begin to understand the paternalistic, colonialist relationship that he had with the Native people under his charge in southern and coastal Oregon. Yet, it is far more difficult to discern the reverse relationship that tribal members had with the lieutenant. As CTCLUSI cultural stewardship manager Beers noted, there appear to be no extant oral records that document the encounters of these individuals with their photographer. Instead, we turn to a quick glance to speculation. For instance, the OHQ editors, in the same article about Piper’s reports, wrote that the Klamath and Modoc men, women, and children in Lorain’s Camp Day photograph “probably posed obligingly” for the image — but it has to be pointed out that this is just speculation. Again, there is no record, written or oral, to confirm this. We are left, instead, with questions: Did they actually do so “obligingly”? Or were they coerced, in some way, to sit in front of his lens? Did Lorain give them copies of the photographic prints he made? And, if so, did he receive anything from them in return, in addition to their participation as photography subjects?

In considering these questions, it is dangerous to assume that these silences in the archival record indicate that the subjects had no say in whether they were photographed, or that they did not personally value the act of picture-taking. Sandweiss, critic Lucy Lippard, and cultural anthropologist Sharon Bohn Gmelch have each explored mutual encounters between White photographers and Native people in the mid to late nineteenth century, and Sandweiss notably writes, “to imagine that every photograph of an indigenous person represents an act of cultural imperialism is to deny the ambitions of the sitter, the capacity of the sitter to understand the collaborative process of portrait making.” Historian Carol J. Williams expands on this to frame photographic encounters between Whites and Native Americans as “another variation of the trading encounter”: Indigenous communities, she writes, developed habits of consuming, acquiring, and commissioning photography in the exact same ways that Euro-Americans did during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Based on what we know of photography’s relative newness to Oregon in the late 1850s, the Native individuals who sat for Lorain’s camera, both at Fort Umpqua and at Camp Day, had most likely not encountered photography before. Exchanges may have been made between the sitters and the lieutenant for his acquisition of their likenesses. Additionally, the Native men, women, and children in his images may have equally valued the act of being photographed, in ways that were privately meaningful to them in a non-commodified way. To imagine less is to deny the tribal members in these photographs their personhood — which was, unfortunately, what Lorain ultimately achieved through his picture-making.

Lorain left Fort Umpqua on March 11, 1861, at the outbreak of the Civil War, sent to fight in Virginia, where he was wounded in July 1861, in the battle of
that it no longer served a purpose for "military defense or protection." Lorain, meanwhile, was granted a leave of absence from military duty due to his injury and accepted a series of teaching positions at West Point, Lehigh University, and, later, the Department of Engineering at the U.S. Artillery School in Fort Monroe, Virginia. At that last appointment, Lorain established the school’s first photography department and, in 1879, published an eighteen-page pamphlet entitled Photographic Processes. In this manual, he carefully detailed instructions for making photographs with, among other techniques, wet collodion glass plate negatives and salt paper prints, the same processes by which he made his photographs at Fort Umpqua. While the pamphlet is dry and written solely for serious students of photographic practice, Lorain concluded it with an uncharacteristically revealing sentence about his own approach to photographic endeavors: "In all photographic manipulations," he wrote, "avoid haste; be cool and deliberate."

“Cool and deliberate” as they may seem, Lorain’s photographs of tribal peoples at the Umpqua Reserve and at Camp Day between 1857 and 1861 are anything but. While Lorain may have intended them to be generalized records of the “type” of Native life on the coast, today they are firstly artifacts of an era of brutal, violent, and illegal government policies toward Native communities in Oregon. Secondly, when we decode and excavate the context of their creation, they offer a visual narrative of the complicated relationship between individuals from those tribes and a White military officer charged with simultaneously enacting anti-Indigenous policies and enforcing the illusion of protecting their continued presence in Oregon. Lorain’s photographs are a visual record of how a White agent of Indian removal in Oregon viewed Native peoples: less than, other, and inevitably being pushed into the White man’s world, at the expense of their own.

Despite all this, these photographs endure as a cultural archive. The “fugitive” identities of the tribal ancestors in Lorain’s photographs are still in these images, silent as they may currently be. There is still more scholarship to be done to excavate the true legacies of these photographs from tribal perspectives, especially the identities waiting to be revealed in the faces, clothing, material culture, and ancestral histories in these images. May this article offer energy to the ongoing work, by Native nations in particular, of recovering the hidden histories of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw, Klamath, and Modoc people who are documented in Lorenzo Lorain’s photographs, thereby disempowering the White supremacist structures that allowed for the images’ creation.

NOTES

1. Lorenzo Lorain photographs collection Org. lot 1416, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland, Oregon [hereafter OHS Research Library]. Note that the photograph album within this collection was formerly cataloged as “Album 101.” Scholars have noted past confusion about the authorship of these photographs, citing a photograph album acquired by the George Eastman House in 1948 that is attributed to Edward Perry Vollum, surgeon at Fort Umpqua from 1856 to 1859; there is no evidence to support the claim that Vollum made photographs while stationed there, except for an August 1859 letter written by the surgeon to Spencer F. Baird, Associate Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, about his experiments to measure ozone at the outpost, in which he writes, “I fancy I have noticed the photographic processes retarded on the days of much ozone.” Quote from Edgar Erskine Hume, Omnomists of the United States Army Medical Corps: Thirty-Six Biographies (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1942), 455. Researchers working with both OHS and George Eastman House in the late 1960s concluded that several of the Fort Umpqua and Camp Day photographs in the Vollum album were actually taken by Lorain and that “there seems to be no further evidence of Vollum’s photographic activity,” at Fort Umpqua or elsewhere, aside from photographs he took in May 1861 at Southern conspirators who threatened to blow up the Croton Aqueduct. Quote from “Research Memorandum No. 159 (rev 25 January 1968 from the memorandum dated August 1959),” George Eastman House, reproduced in Mss 417, OHS Research Library.

2. Lorenzo Lorain letters, Mss 417, OHS.


4. Records relating to Fort Umpqua and Lorain’s service there from 1875 to 1886 are found primarily in Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, Record Group 94, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C. [hereafter NAB]. A photocopy of Alexander Piper’s diary is held in Alexander Piper diary; Ms 1590, OHS Research Library; the original is held in the Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Record Group 77, NAB.

5. Six of the photographs in the collection were acquired by the OHS in 1948 from Lorain’s grandson, Sinclair Holt Lorain, as noted in “Accessions,” Oregon Historical Quarterly 47:1 (March 1946): 12. To date, OHS’s research library staff have not located accession information for the remaining photographs and letters in the collection but presume they were donated by S.H. Lorain or other family members between 1946 and the 1960s (Laura Cray, email to author, April 29, 2021).


8. See, for example, Beckham, “Lonely Outpost,” 240, 242, 244, 246, 250, and 252; Aurora Hunt, “The Far West Volunteers: The Army of
169. David G. Lewis has argued that while some scholars have mistakenly assumed that the treaty covered tribes from the entire Oregon coast, the treaty actually excluded tribes in Oregon north of the Nestucca Tillamook peoples, including the Nehalem, Clatop, and Tillamook peoples, who did not attend the treaty meeting. See Lewis, “Beginnings of the Umpqua District, Agency, and Reservation,” 23.
170. Scholars and historical sources have long confused the Umpqua Reserve, Coast Reservation, Siletz Reservation, and Siletz Agency, as well as the Grand Ronde Agency and Grande Ronde Reservation. For two perspectives on this naming of this area, see David G. Lewis and Robert Kentta, “Western Oregon Reservations: Two Perspectives on Place,” Oregon Historical Quarterly 111:4 (Winter 2010): 476–85; Lewis has also done extensive research to untangle the Umpqua Reserve from the Coast Reservation; see Lewis, “Beginnings of the Umpqua District, Agency, and Reservation,” and “The Gateway on the Central Oregon Coast, Fort Umpqua and the Umpqua Sub Indian Agency.” February 14, 2016, Quadus, accessed December 20, 2021. Lewis notes that the Umpqua Reserve was the second reservation in southern Oregon with that name; the first was located in the Umpqua River Valley from 1854–1856, when it was closed by Joel Palmer during removal of the tribes to the coast. I use the term “Umpqua Reserve” in this article to describe the reservation established in May 1856 on Winchester Bay and guarded by the Army at Fort Umpqua.
172. For an overview of the complexities surrounding Congress’s review of the 1855 Coast Treaty and Pierce’s executive order, see Wilkinson, The People Are Dancing Again, 141–46.
174. Wilkinson, The People are Dancing Again, 150. In comments to the author, David G. Lewis contests that the Army was not as heavily involved as Wilkinson and other scholars have written, citing a common use of the term “military” in extant records to stand for both U.S. Army members and civilian militias that were organized without federal sponsorship (Lewis to author, June 25, 2021).
175. Ibid., 155. Lewis notes there were at least five primary tribes located in the Umpqua River Valley (Ncnsal, Kalapuyans, Southern Molalla, Upper Umpqua, Cow Creek Umpqua, and Lower Umpqua or Quuich) and that scholars have erroneously assumed that all five were bands of one tribe (Lewis, “Umpqua Basin Tribal History,” https://indhistresearch.org/tribal-regions/umpqua-basin-tribal-history/, accessed December 3, 2021).
180. Letter dated February 6, 1856, Miss 417, OHS Research Library.
181. Douthit, Uncertain Encounters, 158; and letter dated July 2, 1859, Miss 417, OHS Research Library.
185. J.W. Nesmith to J.W. Denver, September 1, 1857, in Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Accompanying the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1857 (Washington, D.C.: Wm. A. Harris, 1857), 318; Patty Whereat Philips notes that the Coast Reservation’s southern border at the Siletto River was “the traditional boundary line between the Lower Umpqua (Quuich) and Siuslaw (Sha’yush’tl’a) so most of the people at the Fort were Coos Bay and Lower Umpqua people” (Philips, note to author, July 10, 2020) Robert Kentta further notes that many of those people became members of Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, having been later moved to the Siletz Reservation (Kentta, email to author, December 3, 2021).
186. E.P. Drew to J.W. Nesmith, March 8, 1858, “Letters Received January 1 – December 30,” Record 80, Records of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1828–1873 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M2, Reel 16), Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, NAB.
189. Douthit, Uncertain Encounters, 173.
190. Lewis, “The Gateway on the Oregon Central Coast.”
photographs came into vogue in the United States during the mid-1850s and were popular worldwide through the 1870s. See Beaumont Newhall, The History of Photography (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1983), 64–66.


59. See Douthit, Uncertain Encounters, 9–10.


61. “The Journal of Oliver Jennings. Detailing an Overland Trip from Oregon City to Vancouver & Via the Columbia River & Blue Mountains to Fort Boise, Fort Hall, & Great Salt Lake City March 5–May 22 1857,” t. WA MSS 273, Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Pagination is from the original manuscript diary, rather than the typescript copy. Note that authorship of this diary is disputed. Peter Palmquist has posited that William H. Jennings was the diarist and that Yale’s attribution of the diary’s authorship to Oliver Jennings is incorrect (Palmquist, Pioneer Photographers, 324). This is likely based on Harris G. Palmer’s unbound assertion in 1961 that William H. Jennings and Oliver Jennings are one and the same. See Harris G. Palmer, “Art Note: Oliver Jennings, Daguerreotypist,” Oregon Historical Quarterly 52:3 (September 1951): 186–88.


64. See Peter Britt photographs at the Southern Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Medford, Oregon; and Joseph Buchtel photographs housed in various collections at the OHS Research Library.


66. See Douthit, Uncertain Encounters, 9–10.


70. See, for example, letter dated July 2, 1859, MSS 417, OHS Research Library.

71. Ibid. This album also contains images, taken by Commission photographers, of Native peoples and encampments on Vancouver Island and the Kootenay River in British Columbia and on the Pend Oreille River near present-day Spokane, Washington.

72. Martha A. Sandweiss, Print the Legend: Photography and the American West (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press), 94.

73. Sandweiss, Print the Legend, 100–108.

74. Ibid., 110–111.

Indians that have left the Reservation,” in Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800–1916, NAB.
94. Wilkinson, The People are Dancing Again.
96. See Douthit, Uncertain Encounters, 166–67; Lewis and Connolly, “White American Violence,” 374; and Wilkinson, The People are Dancing Again, 168, for overviews of William Tichenor’s role in the May 1858 removal and other removal efforts from 1856–1858. Note that Wilkinson cites the number of Native people shot as nineteen. See also letter from E.P. Drew to J.W. Nesmith, June 30, 1858, in Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Accompanying the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior For the Year 1858, 256–57.
100. Letter dated December 19, 1856, Ms 417, OHS Research Library.
101. As with many accounts of massacres of Native people, primary source accounts of the Wiyot Massacre, or Wiyot Genocide, are conflicting, making it difficult to pinpoint the exact numbers of Wiyot Indians killed. For example, see Ray Raphael and Freeman House, Two Peoples, One Place, Vol. 1 (Arcata, Calif.: Humboldt County Historical Society, 1997), 165, and Michael T. Karp, “The Indian Island Massa-cre, Place, labor, and Environmental Change on California’s Northwest Coast, 1850–1935,” Mas-ter’s thesis (Saint Louis University, 2012), 87–90.
102. Letter dated April 3, 1860, Ms 417, OHS Research Library.
106. See Records of the Oregon Superven-tendency of Indian Affairs, 1848–1873 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M2, Reel 7); Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, NAB; and Records of the Grand Rondé-Siletz Indian Agency, Office Records on the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives, Seattle, Washington. Again, these records are not to be confused with the extant census records from the first Umpqua Reserve in the Umpqua River Valley.
107. The image of Vollum was taken by Lorain sometime between Lorain’s arrival at the fort in 1857 and November 1859, when the surgeon left for his subsequent posting at Fort Crook. The images of Scott and his family were made by Lorain after the major’s arrival at Fort Umpqua on December 9, 1857, and before his death there in November 1860; see John B. Scott to Col. S. Cooper, December 9, 1857, File No. 5716, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General Main Series, 1822–1860 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M567, Roll 571), Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, Record Group 94, NAB, and Beckham, “Lonely Outpost,” 252. Beckham identifies the daughter as Eliza Scott (see Beckham, “Lonely Outpost,” 256), but he has found no other sources to support this identification or that name Major Scott’s wife. Lorain refers to them in his letters only as “Mrs. and Miss Scott” (see letter dated July 2, 1859, Ms 417, OHS Research Library).
108. Mansfield to Thomas, May 16, 1859, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General Main Series, 1822–1860, NAB.
110. Mansfield to Thomas, May 16, 1859, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General Main Series, 1822–1860, NAB.
111. See map reproduced in Beckham, “Lonely Outpost,” 248. Note that the map in this article is incorrectly positioned, with north on the bottom and south on the top.
113. See, for example, reports of discussions about the causes of blurring by the North Lon-don Photographic Association in G. Wharton Simpson, ed., The Photographic News: A Weekly Record of the Progress of Photography: Volume VIII (London: Thomas Piper, 1864), 488–89 and 584–85.
114. Note this photo is reproduced in Berg, ed., The First Oregonians, 152, but is incorrectly identified as having been taken at the 1864 treaty negotiations in Council Grove, Oregon.
121. Letter dated July 2, 1860, Ms 417, OHS Research Library.
122. Folder 1, Org. lot 146, OHS, contains all five photographs of Camp Day, three unique images, and two duplicate prints.
124. See footnote in Piper, 247, for Francis Landrum’s identifications of the variations in spelling for Kumtuckny’s name.
128. Ibid., 252.
129. Ibid., 257.
131. Carol J. Williams, Framing the West: Race, Gender, and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest (New York: Oxford Univer-sity Press, 2003), 139.
135. Lorain Lorain, Photographic Process-es (Fort Monroe, Va.: Department of Engineering, United States Artillery School, 1879), 17.