

Revealing Our Past



A History of Nineteenth Century Vancouver Barracks through 25 Objects



Edited by Gregory P. Shine and Marc Carpenter

Designed by Bradley Richardson

A Publication of the National Park Service

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Forward

Robert K. Sutton

Years ago, while I was a graduate student at Portland State University, one Friday morning, one of my professors called me into his office to ask if I was interested in working weekends and holidays at Fort Vancouver National Historical Site. I went to the park that afternoon, was hired on the spot, and started the next day. Things were very different then. Only the north wall and a small portion of the east wall were built. There was an earlier archeological excavation, but the artifacts were kept in the basement of the visitor center and not available to the public. The staff was small, and the interpretive programs were limited. Computers were mysterious machines used by engineers to launch spaceships.

Boy, have things changed! The rest of the wall and a number of buildings were reconstructed; archeological excavations of the fort, the surrounding villages, and Vancouver Barracks are ongoing; the interpretation of the fort and Vancouver Barracks is vibrant; and, the artifacts uncovered in excavations are still kept in storage,

but they are now available to the public through excellent images posted on the park's website. Of course, just exhibiting these beautiful images on the internet does not do much to educate the public unless they are accompanied by interpretation. A fulminated mercury friction primer probably will look like a strange metal contraption to most, but with interpretation explaining how it functioned as the mechanism to fire most late 1800s cannons, it makes sense.

This book, *Revealing Our Past: A History of Nineteenth Century Vancouver Barracks through 25 Objects*, not only shows 25 artifacts from the Fort Vancouver collection, it provides interpretation to explain what they are and how they functioned. Believe it or not, people in the 1800s used toothbrushes. Children played with dolls and marbles. A lovely white pot that looks like maybe a soup tureen, a large flower pot, or who knows what, was a chamber pot. What is a chamber pot? Read this book and find out.

Revealing Our Past is the product of a creative partnership between the National Park Service and Portland State University. Every other year, students come to the fort and spend a quarter developing projects that help the park better tell its stories, and give the students learning opportunities that go way beyond the classroom. In a recent study of history and historical programs in the National Park Service, entitled *Imperiled Promise*, produced by the Organization of American Historians, the authors found that this collaboration, led by Greg Shine, Park Historian, “allows PSU students to glimpse public history in action, while the park harnesses the skills and interests of the rising generation in the development of podcasts and other digital media.”

This book marries technology with scholarship and allows readers from around the world to better understand material culture from the 1800s, how each artifact functioned, and, we hope, give them the desire to visit Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

Dr. Robert K. Sutton

Chief Historian, National Park Service



Introduction

Gregory P. Shine

How can museum objects inform our understanding of our collective past? What role do an understanding of “people” and “place” play in helping objects convey deeper meanings? At the most basic, these are the questions driving this book. I first asked these questions rhetorically to myself and the six graduate students enrolled in my Historic Site Interpretation: Public History Field School course at Portland State University in the Winter Quarter of 2013. This book represents our attempt to collectively answer.

As with innovative projects that expand public access to museum collections through digitization, the National Park Service has pioneered the paradigm shift in resource interpretation, moving away from telling people what they should know about a national park site and its resources to showing them ways to connect to the significance of these on their own, personal terms. Rather than a traditional “Sage on the Stage” entertainer, the twenty-first century park ranger thrives by

Gregory P. Shine speaking at the 2013 Nez Perce/Chief Red Heart Reconciliation Ceremony



NPS photo by Cassie Anderson

being a “Guide on the Side” facilitator, providing information as necessary but asking probing questions and provoking deeper, individual thought. Seminal publications such as David Larsen’s *Meaningful Interpretation: How to Connect Hearts and Minds to Places, Objects, and Other Resources* provide this sea change with a firm

Portland State University Public History Field School at Fort Vancouver, 2013



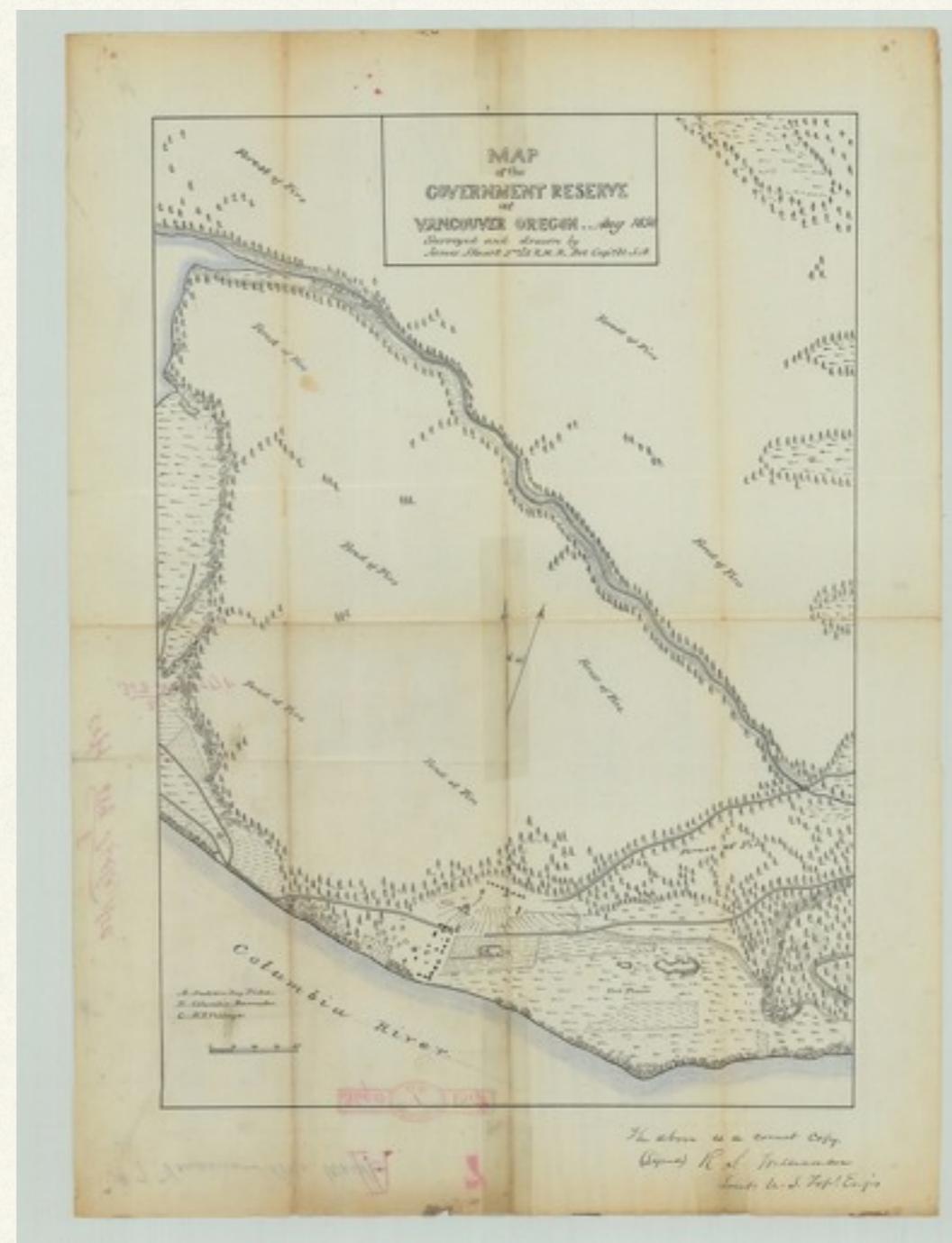
Front row, from left: Marc J. Carpenter, Bradley D. Richardson, Beth Cookler, Museum Technician Meagan Huff
Back row: David-Paul B. Hedberg, Luke Sprunger, Archaeologist Elizabeth A. Horton, Gregory P. Shine, Michael A. Dicianna



philosophical footing and guide, inspiring programs and publications, including this one.

With this book, we hope to illustrate how even the simplest and mundane of objects—like, in our case, an [old rusty fish hook](#), or [a condiment bottle discarded in a privy](#)—possesses individual stories that, in turn, lead to broader stories of people and place that help define our American experience. The place of our focus is Vancouver Barracks—the buildings and grounds of the nineteenth century United States Army post now part of [Fort Vancouver National Historic Site](#) and the Vancouver National Historic Reserve. With no battles ever fought on site and no traditional fortifications ever built, the barracks’ significance differs from many popular nineteenth century Army sites in the West—and certainly from the grand heroic narrative of the West institutionalized through movies and television. Many different people lived and worked in Vancouver Barracks in the nineteenth century, including [immigrant soldiers](#) seeking a new life in a new country, Nez Perce women and children [imprisoned](#) miles from their homes, and wives of Army officers [managing household finances](#): all were connected to this place through one or more of

Map of the Government Reserve for Vancouver Barracks, August 1850



Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle Office. Copy on file at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Archives, Vancouver, WA

our 25 objects.

Our goals for the book are threefold. First, we hope that readers will understand and connect on a personal level to the daily life of soldiers, civilians, and families at the nineteenth century Army post known as Vancouver Barracks. This is a story that has been overshadowed in the past by the reconstructed Hudson's Bay Company stockade and associated programming, but one recognized by Congress as a reason for creating this national park. Secondly, we want readers to understand and connect to the national significance of this place—[Fort Vancouver National Historic Site](#)—one of just over four hundred units of our national park system. Thirdly, we want readers to recognize the value of tangible items in historical archives, museum collections, and archaeology in understanding our collective past.

Methodology

These objects were selected by students enrolled in the 2013 Public History Field School course noted above, with the guidance and review of myself and fellow National Park Service staff members. To help focus

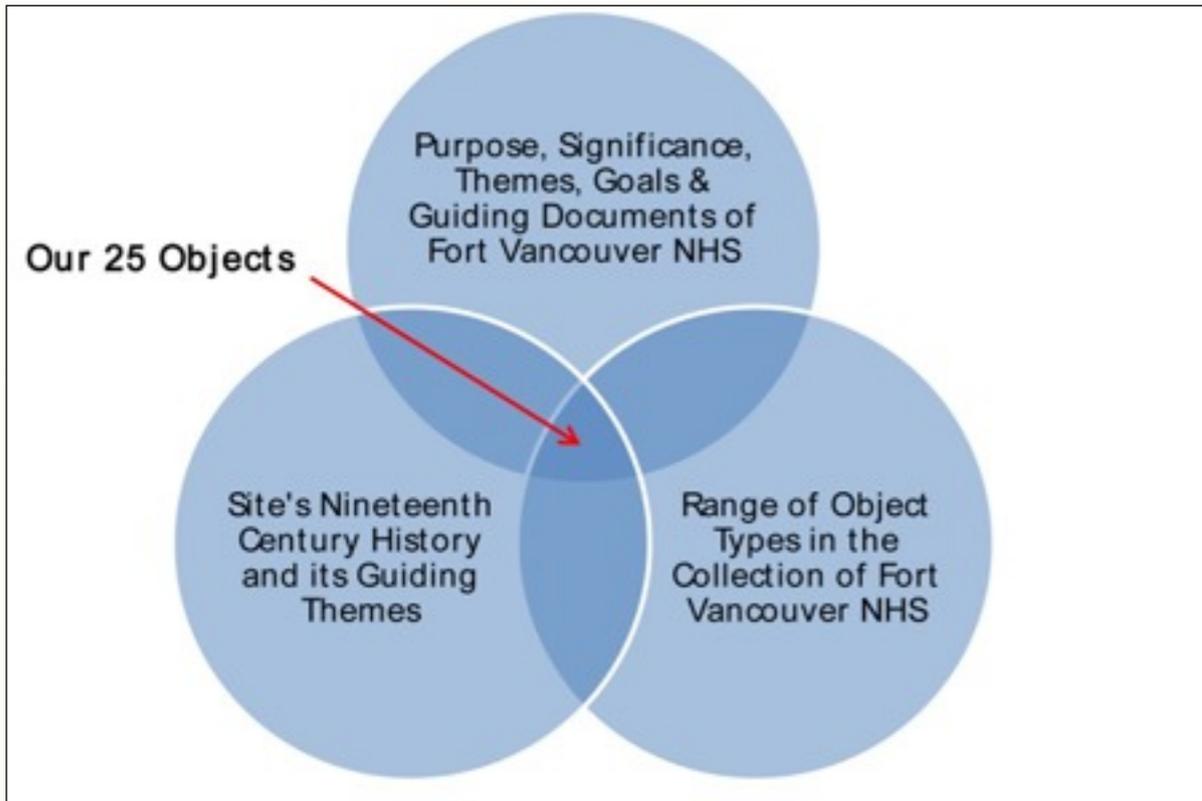
2013 Public History Field School, Fort Vancouver



From left: Bradley D. Richardson, Gregory P. Shine, Beth Cookler, Luke Sprunger, David-Paul B. Hedberg, Michael A. Dicianna, Marc J. Carpenter, NPS photo

our project, I set the number of objects at 25—a number I felt achievable and sufficient to meet our goals—and established a few guiding parameters. First of all, we would seek to fill a gap in the national park's programming and publications and create something that would connect readers to an overarching yet underrepresented theme: life at the site's nineteenth century military fort. Secondly, we would employ 25 of the more than two million items in the park's world-class collection to do this.

The Venn diagram pictured here helped us visualize the project. One of the circles represented the types of



collection items, and I challenged the team to represent each one. They did. Readers will find archaeologically recovered objects that include [ceramics](#), [glass](#), [organics and lithics](#), [metal](#), and even [synthetics](#); historic items such as [photos](#), [textiles](#), [artwork](#), and other [material objects](#); and archival collections, including [paper items](#), [maps](#), [letters and journals](#), [ledgers](#), and [government documents and reports](#).

A second circle encompassed the National Park Service's guiding documents for the site, including the park's enabling legislation and documents formed

through public input: management plans, interpretive plans, cultural resource plans, site significance statements, and interpretive themes. This allowed us to build upon existing and previous efforts and craft something that truly met park goals.

We created the third circle—the themes of military life on the post in the nineteenth century—through directed readings, project work, peer review, and class discussion. These themes are:

- Like the fur trade culture, the people of Vancouver Barracks created a unique culture that was an amalgam of Victorian mores, life in the borderlands, and the experiences of the common soldier.
- The U.S. Army's Vancouver Barracks represents conflict and collaboration over land, resources, labor, and sovereignty.
- Vancouver Barracks exemplifies the explosion of technologies that connected the West to the

broader nation throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.

- Vancouver Barracks functioned as the nerve center of military operations throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Our challenge was to identify and weave together 25 objects at the intersection of these three circles, and this book represents the culmination of our efforts.

Caveat Lector: “Too Many Vancouvers”

As a warning to readers, the name Vancouver, in its various forms and applications, presents one of the biggest challenges to understanding the site’s history. First applied by Lieutenant William Broughton of the British Royal Navy to the geographic feature Point Vancouver in recognition of his commanding officer, Captain George Vancouver, it became ubiquitous by the mid-nineteenth century. The Hudson’s Bay Company named their post Fort Vancouver in 1825, and its neighboring village grew into the a town first called Vancouver, then

Fort Vancouver, Spring of 1874. Tap on the image to see how many “Vancouvers” you can find.



Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle Office. Copy on file at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Archives, Vancouver, WA

Columbia City, and then Vancouver—its present name. Confusion grew during the Army era. “There are too many Vancouvers here now,” noted First Lieutenant William Welcker in 1860, “the American Fort Vancouver; the lately abandoned Hudson’s Bay Company’s Fort

Vancouver, the town of Vancouver and the Fort Vancouver Depot of the Quartermaster's department, in addition to the [Vancouver Depot \[Arsenal\]](#) which I command."

For the sake of simplicity, we refer to the military establishments on the grounds of today's Fort Vancouver NHS as Vancouver Barracks throughout this book. In reality, the military post held several different names throughout the nineteenth century. Initially, the post called Camp at Fort Vancouver, Camp Vancouver, and Fort Vancouver. On August 12, 1850, an Army departmental order officially named the post Columbia Barracks, and this name remained until July 1853, when the Army renamed it Fort Vancouver. In April 1879, the Army renamed the post a final time as Vancouver Barracks, and this name continues onsite today.

It is also important to clarify that Vancouver Barracks was not a lone post; it was part of a larger Military Reserve onsite that included several different independent commands that came and went throughout the century. One of these was the headquarters for the department or district that commanded Vancouver Barracks and other forts throughout the Pacific Northwest. From

1850 to 1866 and then again from 1879 through the end of the century, department and district commanders and staff lived and worked from headquarters at Vancouver Barracks. In addition, the Military Reserve housed a Quartermaster's Depot and the Vancouver Ordnance Depot (later Arsenal) in the mid and late nineteenth century.

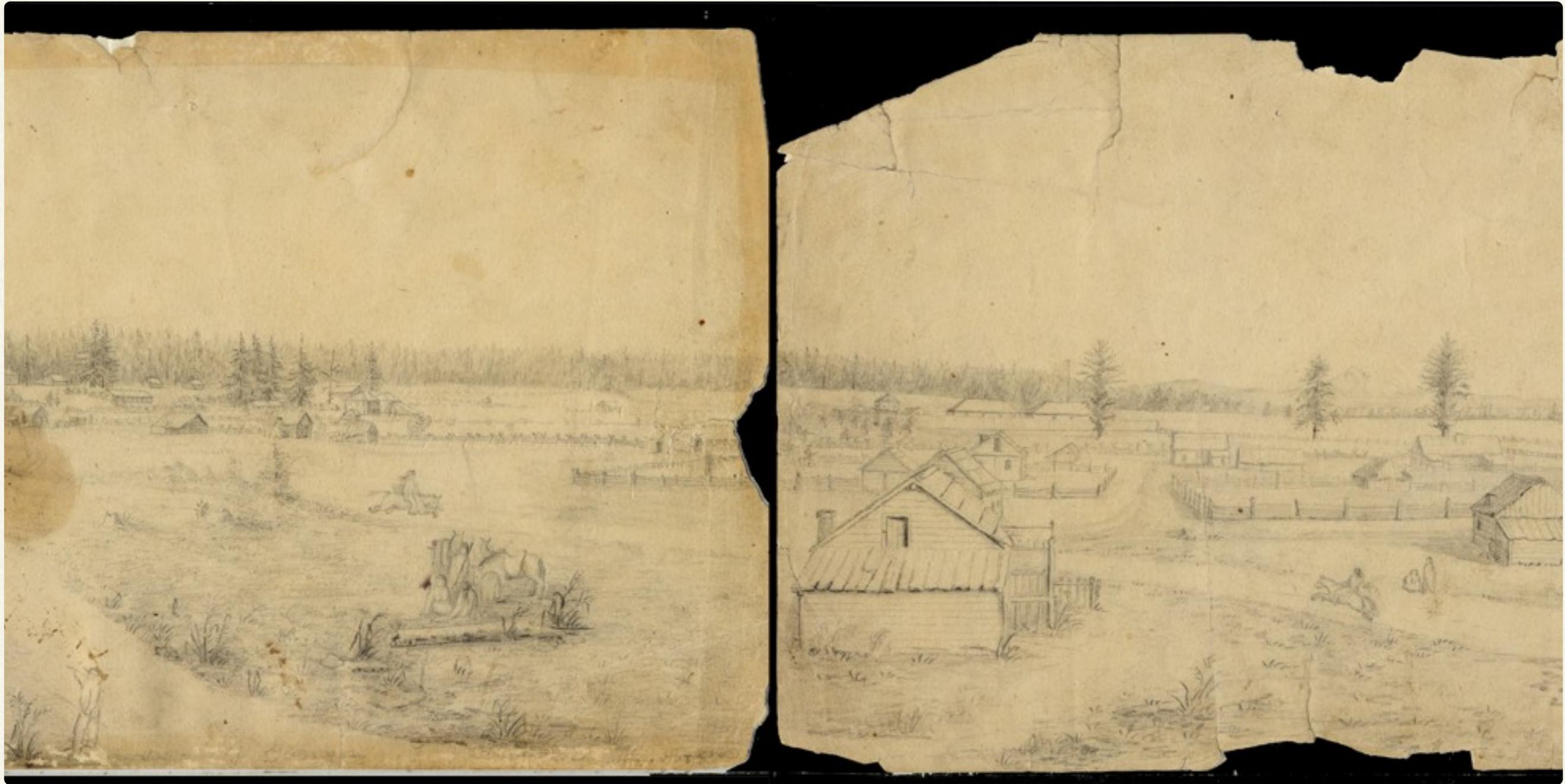
McMENAMINS EDGEFIELD PRESENTS
OREGON ENCYCLOPEDIA HISTORY NIGHT

REVEALING OUR PAST

A HISTORY OF
NINETEENTH-CENTURY VANCOUVER BARRACKS
THROUGH 25 OBJECTS

TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2013
A Presentation of the 2013 Public History Field School at Fort Vancouver, a Partnership Project between the National Park Service and Portland State University.
Presented by **GREG SHINE**
Chief Ranger & Historian at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site
with Marc Carpenter, Bradley Richardson, Beth Cookler, Mike Dicianna, David Hedberg, and Luke Sprunger
Graduate students from the History Department at Portland State University.
Official launch of the National Park's free eBook
McMenamins Edgefield Power Station Theater
6:30 p.m. • Free • All ages welcome
Bring a canned good to donate to SnowCap Community Charities
2126 S.W. Halsey St. • Troutdale • (503) 669-8610 • mcmenamins.com
#McMenaminsHistory

George Gibbs Sketch



From trading to Taps... the Army assumes command

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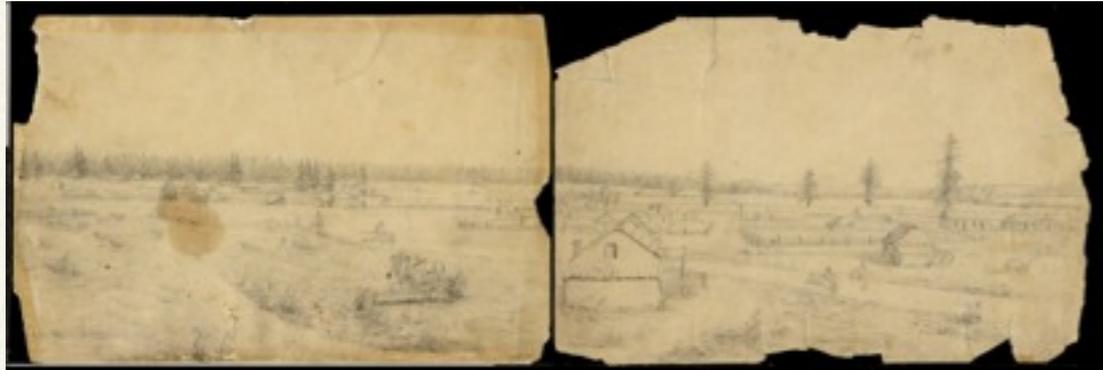
George Gibbs Sketch

Beth Cookler & Gregory P. Shine

George Gibbs Sketch -- Can differing groups peacefully coexist on the same land? On the grounds of present-day Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, this age-old question played out on a global scale in the 1840s. What can this sketch tell us about the developing relationships onsite?

In 1818, Great Britain and the United States agreed to jointly occupy the land known as the Oregon Country, including most of today's Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, as well as British Columbia. Twenty-eight years later, in 1846, land south of the 49th parallel--including the grounds of the [Hudson's Bay Company's](#) (HBC's) Fort Vancouver—became United States territory. With the consent of the HBC, who retained possessory rights, the US Army established the Pacific Northwest's first military post on land near the HBC's stockade in 1849. In 1850, the War Department established a broad, four square mile military reserve surrounding the post, subject only to the HBC's treaty rights—not any land claims of individual settlers.

Along with drawing, while in the Pacific Northwest George Gibbs studied the culture and language of the region's American Indian nations.



FOVA 10220, NPS Photo by John Edwards

Tap below to hear Dr. Robert Cromwell talk about illustrations of the Village area



NPS Fort Vancouver Mobile Project, 2012

This panoramic pencil sketch illustrates the local scene a few months later, in 1851: the HBC's Fort Vancouver, visible in the middle, and the US Army's Vancouver Barracks, visible in the upper left. What clues can images like this, when compared with the historical record, give us to better understand the relationship between these groups?

The overall pastoral setting of the sketch suggests peaceful coexistence; absent are signs of battling soldiers, bombarding artillery, or any active siege or warfare. Cattle graze serenely. People sit peaceably while horses forage. Fences suggest planned management of stock and agriculture, not strategic defenses. Just weeks before George Gibbs—an ethnologist, geologist, and US Customs agent—purportedly sketched this picture in July 1851, an agreement between the two organizations provided for the removal of fences around a field needed by the Army at the cost of that field's current crop of wheat. The Army's presence ensured a dependable market for the HBC's lumber, grain, produce, mercantile goods, and manpower, and the Army chose the site of its fort in part because these conveniences were so readily at hand.

These fragments of wood are from the Hudson's Bay Company palisade, a replica of which stands at Fort Vancouver NHS today.

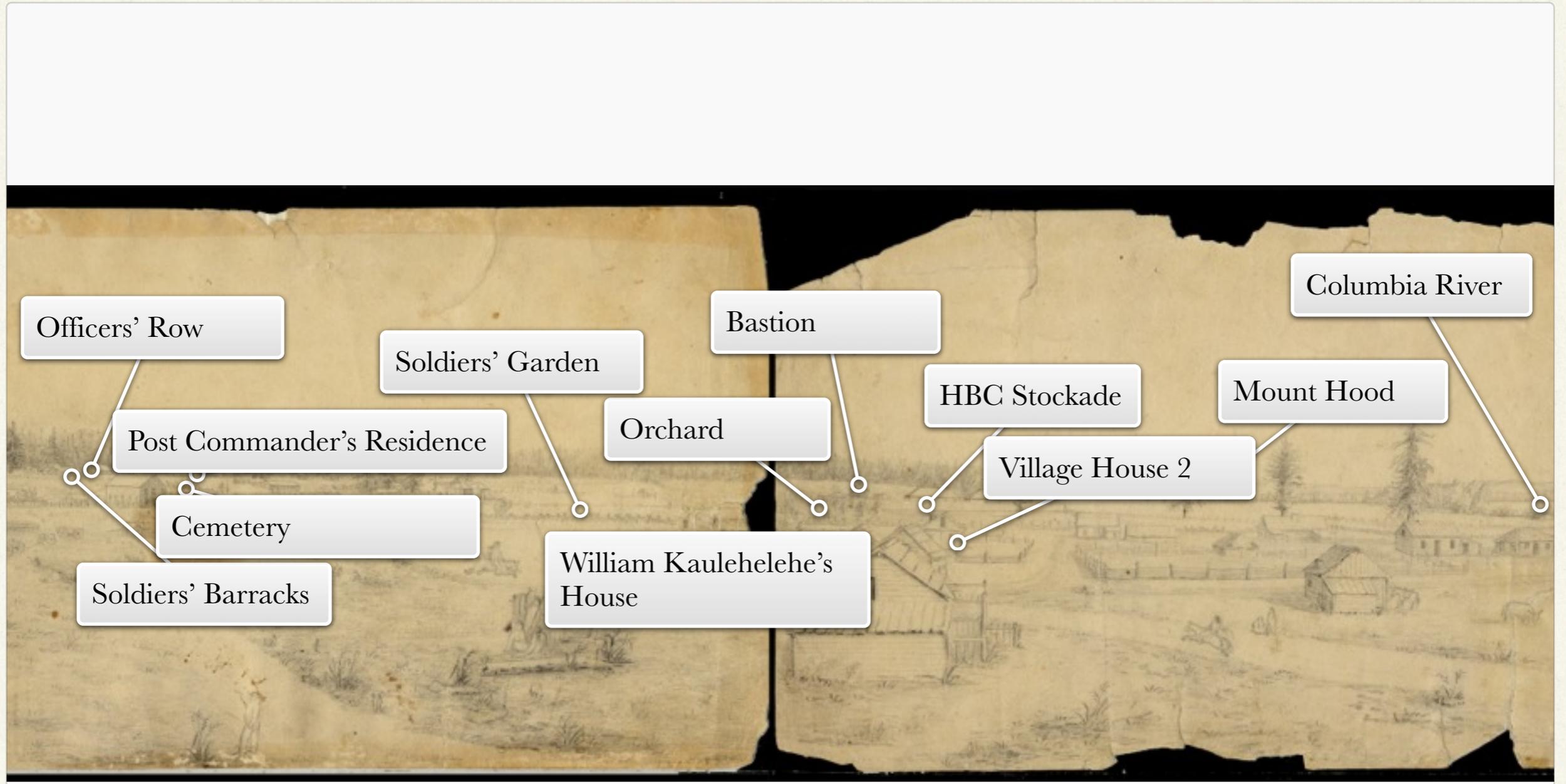


From the park collection, NPS photo by Gregory P. Shine

An orderly line of officers' homes mark the image background on the left to center, along with other Army buildings that follow the sloping terrain down to the center and right of the image, which is highlighted by the HBC stockade and, at the image foreground from right to left, several small cabin-like buildings. Rather than cabins independently owned by American homesteaders, as the popular narrative of the West might suggest, these were homes of the British HBC's working-class employees. The HBC leased several employee village houses to the Army upon its arrival two years earlier, along with other buildings both inside and outside the HBC's stockade. Thus, landscape use in 1851 reflects an

Interactive Revealing Our Past: A History of Nineteenth Century Vancouver Barracks through 25 Objects. 1

Click on the tags below to learn more about the buildings and features in Gibbs' sketch.



amicable shared use agreement between US Army soldiers and HBC employees. Why?

The historical record suggests a pragmatic reason: at the time that Gibbs sketched, the mutual interests of the Army and the HBC outweighed their conflicts. Soldiers and HBC employees shared physical space on site, but both the Army and the HBC prohibited [American settlers](#) from claiming these lands. To the HBC—like most companies primarily concerned with producing profit for shareholders—settlers represented a threat to their treaty rights, which included a guarantee of payment for the full value of their resources and improvements in the newly American territory. By claiming fields already cleared by the HBC, these settlers threatened to reduce the acreage and value of the HBC's interests, thereby potentially reducing the amount of payment due the company.

Map of Government Reserve, August 1850



From Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle Office, copy on file in the park collection

At the same time that Gibbs was drawing, American settlers were effectively lobbying the federal government to reduce the size of the military reserve, and Clark County officials were planning a new city on top of the HBC post. They, too, sought access to the prime acreage developed by the HBC. The US government, however, highly valued the location and improvements as an Army depot and saw greater value in working with only one organization—the HBC—rather than oft-competing individual land claimants, and thus acted to preserve the Army's envisioned public use of the site.

By the time of this sketch, the HBC's Fort Vancouver had shifted its operations northward and its business at the Fort to general merchandising, supplying the Army and the new American settlers and miners. This proved quite profitable, as the California Gold Rush drew hundreds of area residents southward in search of vast wealth.

In the early years of the US Army's presence on the site, the coexistence between Vancouver Barracks and the HBC's Fort Vancouver worked well for both the Army and the HBC. The HBC welcomed the Army, granted them permission to build the new post, leased

them several buildings, sold them supplies to build the new post, and provided the Army with labor, boats and horses in exchange for compensation. The Army protected the site from the onset of individual American settlers, preserved key resources required to ensure the site's success as an Army headquarters and depot, and benefited from the proximity and availability of buildings, goods and services in such a remote area.

For a few years, the Army and HBC maintained a friendly, beneficial relationship, and this 1851 sketch represents this era. But it was not long to last.

German Coffeehouse Pipe



Wisps of smoke and thoughts of home

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German Coffeehouse Pipe

David-Paul B. Hedberg



This porcelain pipe features a German man hoisting a beer. German Coffeehouse Pipe, FOVA 18618, NPS photo by John Edwards.



German Coffeehouse Pipe -- [Tobacco pipes](#), like this German coffeehouse pipe, represent the nineteenth century immigrant demographics of soldiers at the Vancouver Barracks and the larger US Army. They also demonstrate how enlisted immigrants maintained, amended, and reinforced their own cultural identities while serving as soldiers.

Thousands of immigrants left Europe in the mid-nineteenth century and came to the United States seeking new economic opportunities and hoping for greater political and religious freedoms. One way for immigrants to begin new lives in the United States was to enlist as volunteers in the US Army. In fact, throughout the latter half of nineteenth century, a majority of the enlisted men in the US Army were [foreign-born immigrants](#).

In 1850, over half of the 236 enlisted soldiers at the Vancouver Barracks were foreign-born. The 1850 census listed 55 German, 37 Irish, 10 English, 7 French, 4 Scottish, 3 Canadian, 3 Swiss, 1 Swedish, and 1 Welsh enlisted sol-

diers at Vancouver Barracks. All of the commissioned officers, on the other hand, were American-born. Even thirty years later, the 1880 census shows the majority of Company C of the 21st Infantry at the Vancouver Barracks were foreign-born or first-generation Americans, mostly of German or Irish heritage.

Enlistment in the Army afforded new immigrants a steady form of income, modest food and shelter, sometimes monotonous experiences working on and building posts throughout the nation, and occasionally fighting. Yet almost every aspect of an enlisted soldier's daily life was standardized and prohibited the concept of self-expression. Men ate identical rations and took turns [working in the kitchens](#). They slept in barracks, and regulations required that soldiers “wear the [prescribed uniform](#) in camp or garrison,” and that they “not be permitted to keep in their possession any other clothing.”

Imagine yourself in a different country, in a region you have never visited. You have enlisted in the army for the economic opportunities that it affords, and to gain some experience in the culture and society of this new country. As a soldier, you cannot fit many personal possessions in your pack, especially objects that remind you

As this multi-page book attests, regimental rules and regulations grew ever more comprehensive in the late nineteenth century.



Ora T. Palmer's Manual of Guard Duty, 1890, FOVA 972, NPS photo by John Edwards

of your personal heritage before coming to this new place. In this situation, what would you bring that represents your heritage?

For the immigrant population of the Vancouver Barracks, and the US Army in general, a tobacco pipe was an object that could be carried easily and could represent an individual's identity or heritage before coming to the United States. On the other hand, tobacco pipes were not just easy to ship but easy to break, and so made great consumer items. The soldier who owned this pipe might have brought it with him from a foreign homeland, or they might have bought it in the United

States—maybe right here at Vancouver Barracks—as a reminder of home.

This pipe bowl fragment is an example of a Bavarian or German “coffeehouse pipe,” a style of pipe that was popular from the 1870s to the 1900s. The bowl is made of porcelain and features a hand-painted German man resting on a beer keg and holding a glass of beer in one hand. While porcelain is an ideal material for decorating, it is not ideal for smoking. The pipe would become very hot and liquid would condense inside the bowl. To solve this, the pipe bowl was threaded at the base and attached to a reservoir and stem (see illustration) that cooled the smoke before the smoker inhaled it.

Other artifacts archaeologically recovered from US Army deposits, like this baked clay Irish “Home Rule” pipe (far right), further suggest the presence of Irish immigrants who served as enlisted men and as laundresses. This

This variety of pipe cooled the smoke before it was inhaled.

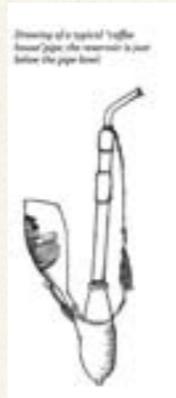


Image from NPS publication *Within the Collection: A Look Inside the Fort Vancouver Museum: Tobacco Pipes*

pipe dates from 1870 to 1900 and represents the political movement to support Irish independence from Great Britain. In response to the Irish potato famine and political and religious strife with Britain, a massive wave of Irish immigrants came to the United States in the mid to late nineteenth century. This pipe was likely owned by one of many Irish immigrants who served at Vancouver Barracks.

Military regulations controlled a soldier’s life to such a degree that small objects, like these tobacco pipes, became important symbols in the maintenance of ethnic identity. At the same time, objects like these helped forge “German-American” and “Irish-American” identities that embraced aspects of the homeland while also being part of the American experience.

It is easy to imagine a few soldiers and/or laundresses sitting together smoking pipes discussing the

This pipe reads “Home Rule,” referring to the movement for Irish independence. Note that the inscription faces in, towards the smoker.

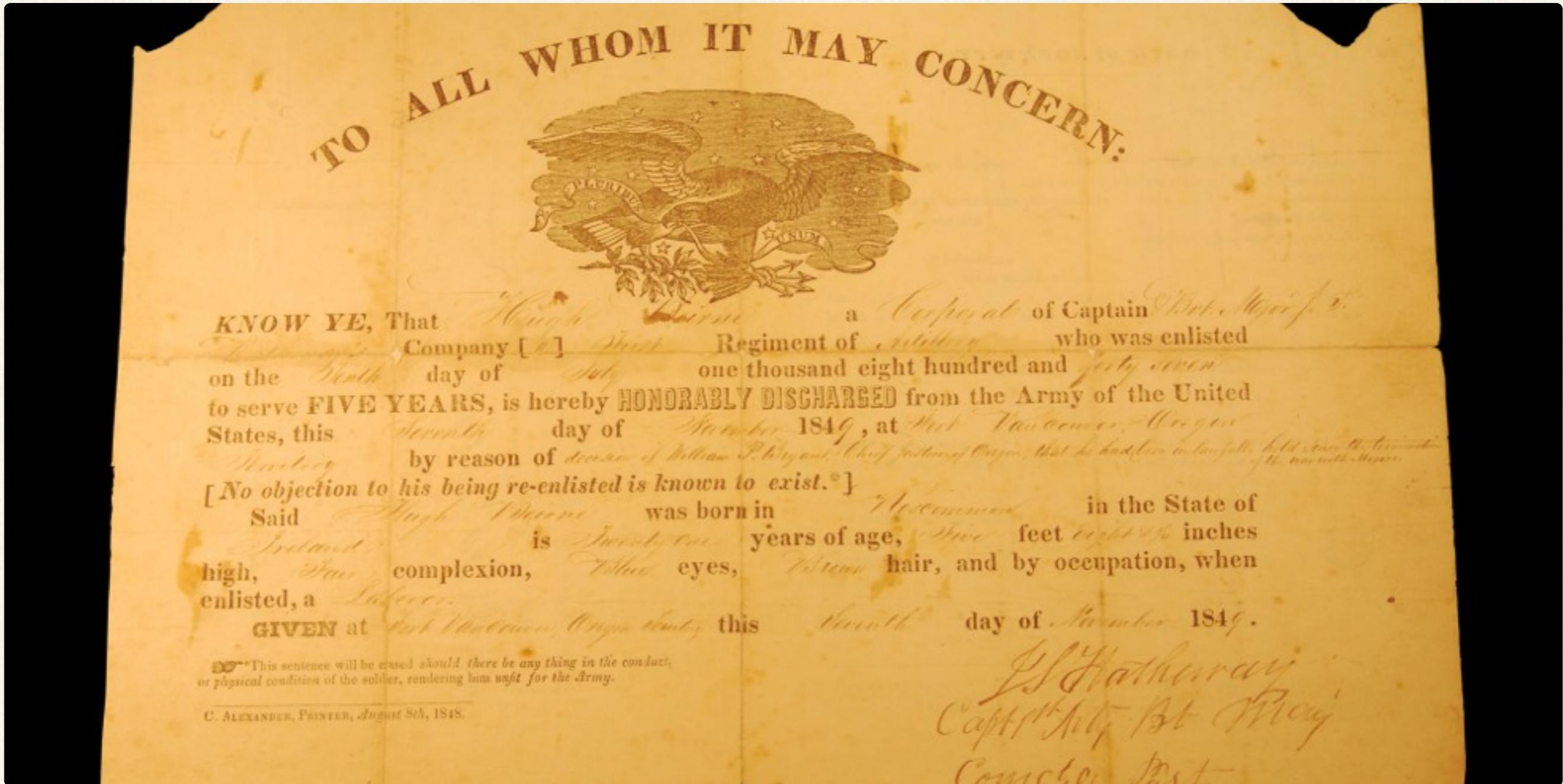


Home Rule Pipe, FOVA 21700, NPS photo by John Edwards

politics of “Home Rule” prompted by this object, or a group debating German Unification because one of them is smoking this pipe. In this imaginary moment, the soldier becomes an individual within the collective; one with a personal background reflected through the simple object, yet also an immigrant American serving in the US Army.

The immigrant soldier was an important part of the nineteenth century Army. For foreign-born residents, personal possessions like tobacco pipes served as important symbols of individuality and cultural heritage in the standardized uniform culture of the US Army.

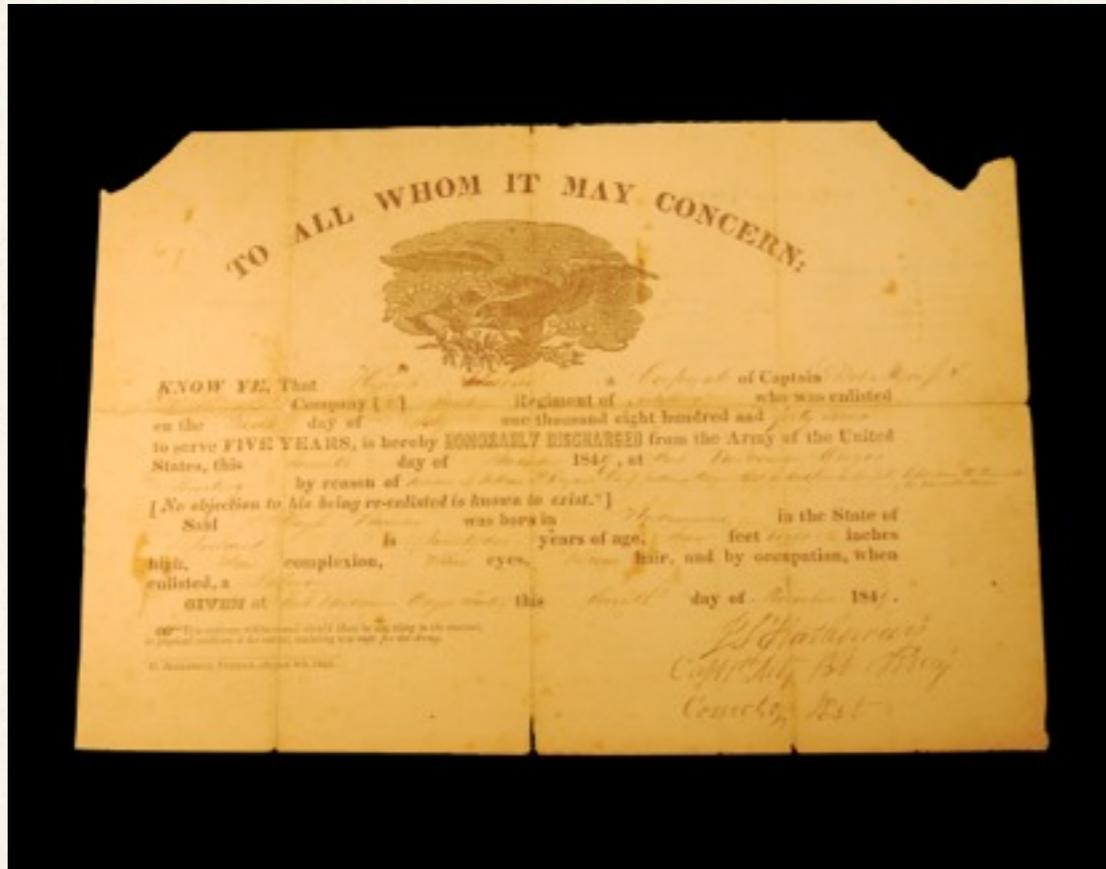
O'Byrne Military Discharge Certificate



An immigrant soldier on the Columbia

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This certificate testifies to the honorable discharge of Hugh O’Byrne, an Irish American immigrant and US-Mexican War veteran.



O’Byrne Discharge, FOVA 120, NPS Photo by John Edwards

O’Byrne Military Discharge

Bradley D. Richardson, Gregory P. Shine,
and Marc J. Carpenter

O’Byrne Military Discharge -- Do you have a certificate that displays an achievement, or marks an important milestone? A a marriage certificate, a college degree, even a birth certificate? This 1849 document declaring the honorable discharge of the soldier Hugh O’Byrne represents a milestone in the life of the Irish American immigrant. Like many other [immigrants of his day](#), O’Byrne’s military service was an important chapter in his pursuit of an American life.

O’Byrne, like many of the seasoned soldiers stationed at Vancouver Barracks in the early years, was a veteran of the US-Mexican War. That war may have presented O’Byrne with an ethical dilemma. Irish immigrants fought on both sides of the conflict, with US forces heavily peopled by Irish soldiers and Mexican forces buttressed by the famous Las Companias de San Patricio (St. Patrick’s Battalion), a group of dissident US soldiers who switched sides to support the Mexican cause, often seeking freedom from

religious or cultural discrimination. Did O’Byrne, like so many other immigrant soldiers, have to take up arms against his former countrymen? Did he weigh his loyalties to his adopted country against his loyalties to his background or his faith? History is silent.

We do know that O’Byrne was a member of Company L of the [1st Artillery](#), which, under the command of Brevet Major John S. Hatheway, [established Vancouver Barracks](#) on May 13, 1849. We also know that O’Byrne was a lifelong Catholic, which may have influenced his decision to stay in the Vancouver area after his discharge from the armed forces. In the 1850s, many soldiers left Vancouver Barracks—with or without an official discharge—and headed south to take part in the gold rushes of California and southern Oregon. O’Byrne met his wife Catherine in California, but chose to make his home in Clark County, Oregon (later Washington) Territory,

Many veterans of the US-Mexican War carried coins like this one along with them to Vancouver Barracks



Mexican Coin, FOVA 131178, NPS photo by John Edwards

These rosary beads are from the Hudson’s Bay Company era, but Catholic faith persisted in and around the post, especially among many of the immigrant soldiers



Rosary Beads, HBC 1829-1860, FOVA 1362, NPS photo by John Edwards

where he acquired significant acreage of land through the donation land claim process—a process that many soldiers from Vancouver Barracks who chose to remain in the area had at their disposal.

Hugh O’Byrne became a foundational member of Vancouver’s bustling Irish immigrant population. Irish Americans had many reasons for settling in the Vancouver area, including the proximity of Vancouver Barracks and the long-standing Catholic roots in the area, which stretched back to the early days of the [Hudson’s Bay](#)

Company (HBC). O'Byrne and his family were active in that community throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. His daughter Sarah Catherine O'Byrne married Thomas W. Padden, a member of a very successful and prominent Irish immigrant family in the area. Another daughter, Maria Frances O'Byrne, was a charter member of the St. James Catholic church in Vancouver, WA. Hugh O'Byrne and his wife Catherine are both buried in the St. James cemetery, with many others who arrived with the military and made a life for themselves in Vancouver.

Ironstone Chamber Pot



Does this go on your table or under your bed?

.....

Ironstone Chamber Pot

Marc J. Carpenter



Several different historical figures may have used this chamber pot, including Rufus Ingalls and perhaps even Ulysses S. Grant.



Ironstone Chamber Pot, FOVA 131159, NPS photos by John Edwards

Ironstone Chamber Pot -- Have you ever snooped through the medicine cabinet in someone's bathroom? If you have, you are not alone. According to psychiatrists, peeking into medicine cabinets is a very common habit. The objects in your bathroom provide a secret window into your private life, a treasure trove of details that you might not share anywhere else.

Privies—toilets seated above deep holes in the ground—are vital to the archaeological work done at Fort Vancouver. They were used as trash receptacles as well as bathrooms, and then filled in—preserving a glimpse of daily life for archaeologists to find. Like a modern medicine cabinet, the privies at Vancouver Barracks give us a window into the secrets of those who lived there, yielding historical details that might not show up in diaries, books, or letters.

The broken pieces of this plain white ironstone chamber pot were pulled from a privy associated with the house of Captain Rufus Ingalls, a [quartermaster](#) tasked with providing housing, food, equipment, and transportation for

the fort's soldiers. The Quartermaster Ranch house was one of the finest in the Oregon Territory in 1850. It was prefabricated in Maine and shipped around Cape Horn in South America to California, with an additional wing built once it had arrived in 1849. By cross-referencing the site of the privy with the house plan for the Quartermaster Ranch house on file in Washington D.C., experts at Fort Vancouver determined that this privy was located inside the house, a rare luxury in the 1850s. Ingalls lived with a clerk, John T. Noble, and with servants, including a Chinese man named Ah-Long and a young woman named Margaret Lenet. Many others came to live in the house over the years, including Ingalls' comrade-in-arms, the famous Ulysses S. Grant. Although the Quartermaster Ranch is no longer standing today, millions of people travel unwittingly over its former site under Interstate 5 each year.

This object was originally thought to be a soup tureen, but further analysis led experts to identify it as a chamber pot, a small portable toilet and common household item into the early twentieth century. Chamber pots were used at night, when it was too cold, too dark, or too tiresome to make one's way to the privy. Grant

This toothbrush bears the mark of the Wisdom Toothbrush Company, arguably the first makers of the modern toothbrush.



Toothbrush, FOVA 17793,
NPS photo by John Edwards

himself may have used this chamber pot; it was in use sometime between 1851 and 1870. It is unlikely that he would have been the one to empty it, however—that was a job for servants.

A chamber pot may look more like dinnerware than a hygiene item to modern Americans, but other toiletries associated with the

house are more recognizable. A toothbrush from the same study is immediately identifiable, even though it is much larger than most modern toothbrushes and even though the holes were once filled with bristles from an animal rather than the synthetic fibers used today. The uses and shapes of other items are more opaque. In a [dig at the Artillery Barracks](#), archaeologists turned up a turquoise glass syringe and the remains of a plunger accompanied by several very small clear glass vials, which were identified as potentially applicators for hemorrhoid medicine. The flaky remains of a rubber tube and aspira-

tor from the same dig were used as a “personal irrigator,” likely for administering enemas.

Intimate objects like these give us a richer, fuller picture of the people who lived at Vancouver Barracks in the nineteenth century. By peering into their privies—a close analog to looking in their medicine cabinets—we get to see private details of the lives of historical figures, details that were often too embarrassing or too seemingly inconsequential to be mentioned in correspondence. But these rich little details breathe life into these historical figures, going beyond their acts and orders to reveal them as flesh-and-blood people, like we are today.

Gustavus Sohon Lithograph



G. Sohon Del.

Sarony Major & Knapp Lith^{rs} 449 Broadway NY

The illusion of tranquility

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This lithograph from 1854 depicts a scene of bucolic plenty and peace. But at the time Gustavus Sohon created this remarkably accurate image, tensions between the Hudson's Bay Company and Vancouver Barracks were coming to a head.



Sohon Lithograph, FOVA 966

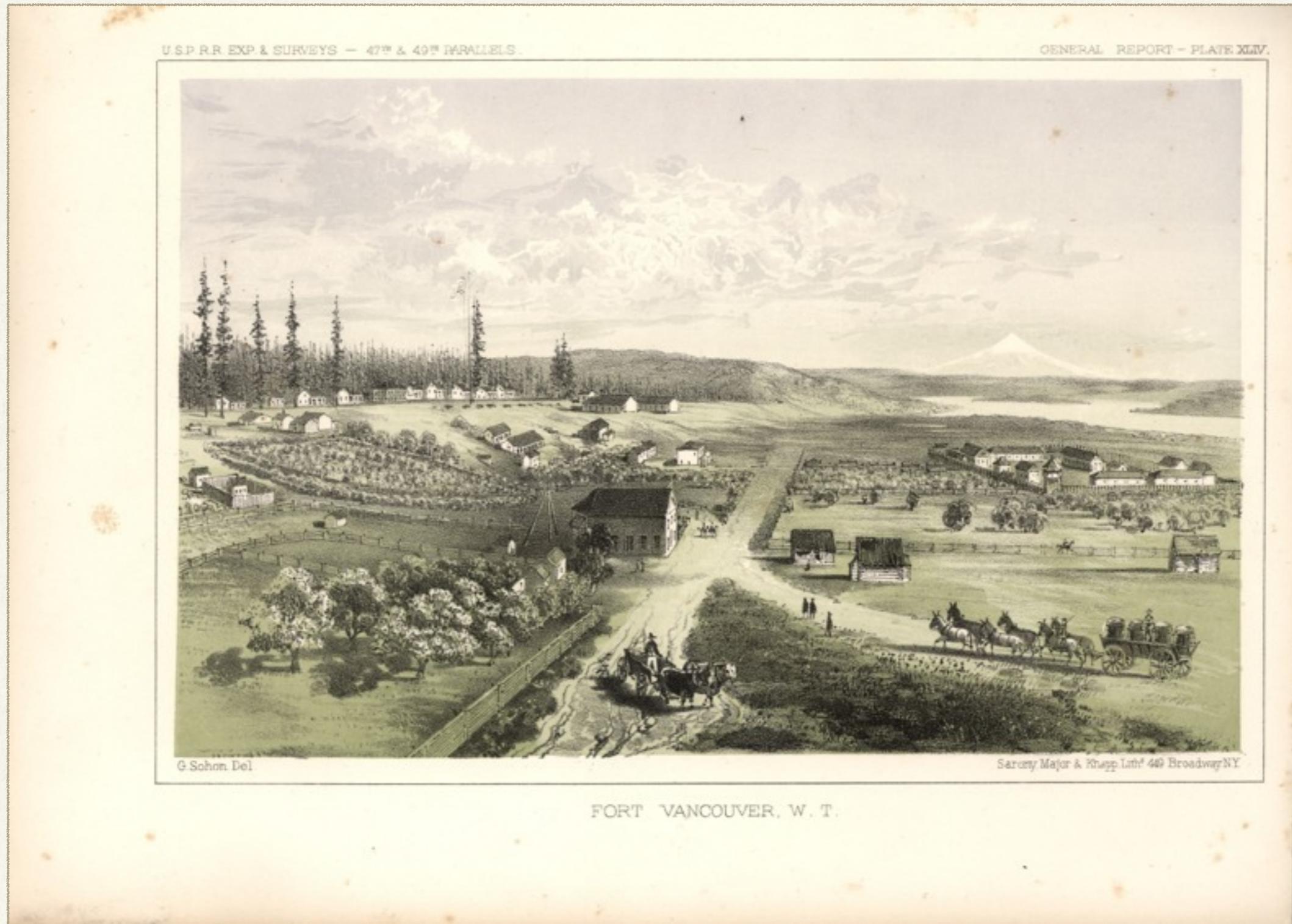
G. Sohon Lithograph

Luke Sprunger & Gregory P. Shine

G. Sohon Lithograph -- When we view a painting or photograph, does it matter who created it? Does knowing the creator's purpose or audience aid our understanding? When creating artwork, how does an artist decide what to include?

This tinted lithograph offers an idealized view of the area around Fort Vancouver in 1854, when dispute over use of much of the land pictured was growing. By this time, the relationship between personnel at the Army's Vancouver Barracks (upper left) and employees of the British [Hudson's Bay Company's](#) (HBC's) Fort Vancouver (walled fort to the right) had soured, along with relations with the Saint James Catholic Mission (structures in the foreground). This lithograph is one of few items from the historical record showing the locations of buildings in the 1850s. It has been widely published and circulated, first appearing in *Volume XII of Reports of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the...Route for a Railroad From the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean*. While probably far from the artist's mind at its inception, today experts at Fort Vancouver compare

This colored lithograph is one of the most recognizable images associated with Vancouver Barracks



Sohn Lithograph, FOVA 966

this lithograph with archaeological evidence, and it helps shape a much more accurate sense of place in the 1850s.

Gustavus Sohon, a German [immigrant](#) from 1842, drew the image upon which this lithograph is based. After joining the army in the early 1850s, Private Sohon relocated to the West and served alternately as an interpreter, an artist, and an explorer. On one expedition he served as a topographer to help plot out the Mullan Road, a wagon road that would connect Fort Walla Walla and Fort Benton. His [survey work](#) and depictions of graphic battle scenes from military campaigns reflected the increasing power of the United States in the West. Sohon's lithograph, accompanied by hundreds of pages of surveys, maps, and other lithographs, functioned to highlight and attract national support for one of four prospective routes for a transcontinental [railway](#), and also to inform an eastern audience of the attractiveness of the West.

Early American settlers, spurred by various images and reports, turned to the US Army for protection and aid in times of crisis, and the [HBC](#) allowed for the establishment of Vancouver Barracks near their fort under

conditions established by treaty in 1846. As mentioned in [another essay](#), the first few years of the Army's presence were characterized by a mutually beneficial coexistence with the HBC. But by about 1856, demands for space in and around the fort pitted the US Army, which was looking to expand its presence and operations, against the HBC, which was seeing its influence and operations wane with the decline of the fur trade and rise of American industry and mercantile.

The land on which HBC facilities were constructed was, by the 1846 treaty, then considered US soil, but the company was permitted to utilize its existing properties and sought reimbursement from the US government for their value. Differing interpretations of the right to possess properties fueled initial conflict. Quartermaster [Rufus Ingalls](#) and army officials continued with capital projects, such as the construction of a public wharf, that in the HBC's opinion violated their treaty rights. Ingalls argued that the company could not continue to lay claim to undeveloped lands and unused and dilapidated buildings, reasoning that their charter to operate only entitled them to areas that they were actively maintaining and utilizing—a line of reasoning that was often used by

US citizens and organizations to expropriate land during this era.

Tensions increased in the years following 1856, with the Army erecting new structures and on at least one occasion tearing down an “unused” company

shed. The HBC issued protests to little effect. The definitive conflict showdown over the land occurred in 1860, when the Army made plans to create a drill ground for a light artillery unit that would necessitate the removal of multiple HBC structures in the employee village, including the home of the HBC’s Hawaiian teacher, William Kaulehelehe. The heated conflict over land rights led the Secretary of War himself, John B. Floyd, to declare the HBC’s charter at Fort Vancouver to be expired and its occupancy there terminated (see re-enactment video, above). Company officials expressed surprise and dismay at the decision, but with no real recourse they relocated HBC personnel and possessions north of the

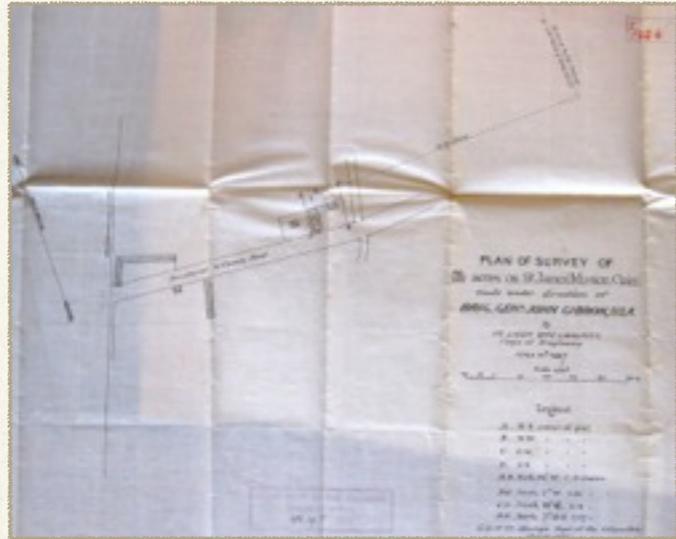


forty-ninth parallel to Victoria, thus ending three and a half decades of presence onsite.

Interestingly, maps and the archaeological record suggest that Sohon omitted many of these smaller, run-down structures that existed in the village area. For those three that he did include, he drew an American log cabin architectural style. While the architecture of buildings in the Village admittedly varied, other artists showed these and nearby buildings in the French Canadian post-on-sill construction style—which is also supported by the archaeological record. Why did artistic representations of the buildings change within only about two years? Were the cabins simply replaced by other structures? Might they have been of such a rustic construction that Sohon did his best to interpret what he saw? Might thoughts of the purpose of his artwork influenced Sohon to interpret them in what he may have thought a more American style? Why or why not?

US expansion to the West also spurred the territorial conflict between Vancouver Barracks and the HBC and the Catholic Mission. The US Army initially considered the Saint James Catholic Mission to be an extension of HBC activities, with an Army assessment from

Many officers at Vancouver Barracks conflated the St. James Mission with the Hudson's Bay Company. While the mission claim was voided, a strong Catholic presence continued in the Vancouver area.



Map of St James Mission, National Archives, Copy in NPS collection

1854 listing the mission's properties as HBC assets. In the early 1850s the Vancouver Barracks commander, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Bonneville, befriended the mission's priest, Father J.B.A. Brouillet. Bonneville was confirmed into the Catholic Church in 1854, and encouraged the mission to expand. Subsequent years saw the arrival of nuns, the establishment of a school for children of both genders, the Holy Angels' College for Boys, and the opening of Saint Joseph's Hospital. The mission continued to operate after the relocation of the HBC, but this removal threatened and undermined the mis-

sion's claim to land and property. Unlike Bonneville, who left Fort Vancouver to assume a new command in 1855, most of the barracks' officials were not sympathetic to Catholicism or the mission. Despite debates over the land claim, the mission continued to expand, eventually establishing more than a dozen structures.

In 1887, the army forcibly evicted all of the inhabitants of the Saint James Catholic Mission—students, nuns, priests, hospital and asylum patients, and orphans—from the grounds, giving them only minutes to evacuate. In the following years, fire destroyed some mission structures; others were intentionally removed. The Army continued to use the Holy Angels' College building as NCO (Non-Commissioned Officer) headquarters for another few decades.

Gustavus Sohon was involved in many of the US Army actions that established national control of the Northwest, and his artwork is informed by his purpose and audience. This lithograph shows Vancouver Barracks at its most idealized, before the Hudson's Bay Company and the Saint James Mission were muscled out but during times of growing tension. While Sohon's lithograph helps experts at Fort Vancouver National His-

toric Site understand a critical point in history, it is also notable for what Sohon chose not to include.

Porcelain Doll



Men parade, children play

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Playing with dolls is as old as civilization itself, but doll play was especially popular after the Civil War. In the Victorian era, dolls that represented children, rather than miniature adults, became increasingly popular.



Toy Doll, FOVA 21668, NPS photo by John Edwards

Porcelain Doll

Bradley D. Richardson & Gregory P. Shine

Porcelain doll -- How can an old, abandoned toy, such as this broken porcelain doll, help us understand or connect to a military fort like Vancouver Barracks? What can we learn from the material culture of play?

Many people normally associate toys with children, homes, and families—not military posts. However, home is exactly what Vancouver Barracks was to many children of Army officers in the nineteenth century, and family life thrived in the background of the official administration, training, and supply activities that dominated life on post. Toys like this doll, discovered through archaeological excavations onsite, remind us that children also lived and played on this post in the nineteenth century.

Documenting the history of children's experiences before the middle of the twentieth century is a challenging and difficult task. Children left very few written records, and what was written about them was most often only mere snippets of information left in passing. However, trace evidence of children onsite does exist, thanks to both

Marbles were typically associated with boys in this era. Many marble games also had gambling components.



Banded marble, FOVA 21660, NPS photo by John Edwards

the historical and archaeological records. Archaeologists have recovered children's toys in excavations at sites of buildings used by the nineteenth century Army, and these material remnants combine with surviving documents to help us better understand the children who lived at the post.

At first, [few officers](#) brought children—or wives—to the remote Pacific Northwest. Records from the United States Census of 1850 suggest that at least five children of the fort's officers lived with their families onsite, including Mary and Margaret Ruff (6 & 8 years old), James Simonson (8), and Katherine and Frederica Jones (14 and 11). Three years later, Colonel Benjamin Bonneville issued orders in response to “the small pox

having made its appearance in [Kanaka Town](#) at this post.” This compelled him to have “the laundresses and other women and children [at the post] vaccinated.” However, children and families became a more common occurrence later in the century as the region developed and the post became an attractive one, adjacent to a growing metropolitan area.

In a place that prepared for war, families went about their daily routines, which often included playtime for children. Doll play represented one way that young girls could develop domestic and maternal skills that reflected the values of the era, and many girls learned sewing skills through crafting clothes for their dolls. Doll fiction, popularized along with china dolls in the years following the Civil War, often provided examples of doll play while reinforcing popular stereotypes—such as the marauding boy. Is that how this doll lost its noticeably-

Most of the pictures we have of children at Vancouver Barracks are from Officer's Row, but a few enlisted men also had wives and children in the community.



Stereoscope, FOVA 197400

Archaeologists found these dolls in the area once occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company's employee village and the Army's Quartermaster's Depot.



Tiny doll, FOVA 21669, NPS photo by John Edwards

absent head? Was it decapitated by a preying brother? Or was it accidentally dropped during a tea party meant to mimic society's expectations of young women of the era? We will never know these answers, but we can imagine how they played out here, on the military post, as well as in other communities throughout the nation.

Doll play was not limited to girls, but gender-specific activities did dominate the era. The nineteenth century publication *The Boys Own Book* described the different types of marbles preferred by young boys: “the Dutch, or variegated clay marbles, were reckoned the worst; those of yellow stone, with beautiful spots or circles of black or brown, were next in estimation; and what were called the real taws, of pink marble, with dark red veins, ‘blood allies,’ were preferred to all others.” With names such as Spans and Snops, Bost-About, Knock-out, The Conqueror, Arch-Board, Ring-Taw, and The Pyramid, games with marbles continued to be popular with boys and reinforced masculine traits highly valued at the time.

Did some boys misplace this marble during rousing game of Knock-out? Might Mary or Margaret Ruff have once played with this doll, cradled it, dressed it, and rocked it to sleep? What memories of the post might these toys bring back to their former owners? In the shadow of the post's dominant military function, daily family activities also moved forward, shaping the lives of many children who knew Vancouver Barracks as home.

Emma Calhoun Ledger



The business of the home
1 of 149

Emma Calhoun Ledger

Beth Cookler

Emma Calhoun's Ledger (available in full on previous page) gives a detailed account of the day to day minutiae of running a household.

Date	Description	Amount
	To Aunt's food first month	1.00
2	By Dunigan for wood-box	25
	" " " "	50
3	Paul to Pittman & Pat	1.00
	" " Brewer's Asphaltum	75
	" " Brush & Lantern	1.25
	" " Watts' Don Mat	2.05
	" " Curtain Pile Eggs	1.70
20	" Candy	1.00
4	" Club bill Fish	60
5	" Potsy Riggs Mules Apples	18
7	" Apples & Butcher	4.25
	" " Vegetables & Shouting	1.05
	" " Mushroom & Cyls	2.70
	" " Wax & Calyx - Black velvet	1.25
	" " Blue jeans - apron pattern	3.90
	" " Linnin's bed & mattress	5.50
	" " Saffire, waffle iron	1.70
	" " Apples & Butcher, dummies	1.50
	" " "	1.50
12	" Hair Cut & Candy	50
	" Making Pants	4.00
	" " Trap - lettuce	1.10
14	" Moppy Milk	79.06
	" Spectacles	3.00
	" Church - postage, flour	60
20	" " Fish - sulphur	30
25	" " Wool - thread	10
	" " Wine Butcher	4.11
26	" Paper - Money 25.00	25.10
31	" W.A.G. Bill	7.50
	" " A.C.S. Bill	7.00
	" " Waffle	2.16
31	" Aunt's food	140.73
		164.33

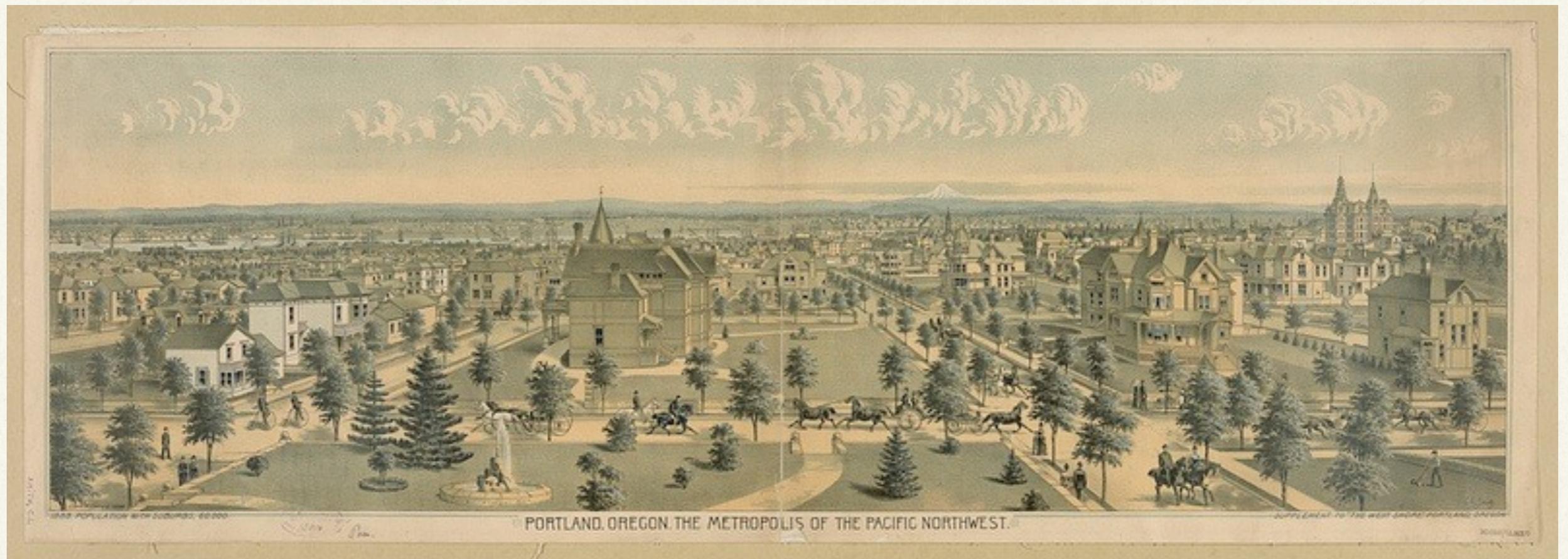
Emma Reed Calhoun's Account Book, 1880 - 1887

Emma Calhoun Ledger -- This ledger kept by Emma Calhoun, wife of [Lt. Frederick Calhoun](#), records the family's finances from 1880 to 1887, including the period beginning in 1885 when the family lived at Vancouver Barracks. This ledger demonstrates the essential role nineteenth century officers' wives often played as managers of the family's household and finances.

Ledger use is infrequent today, but ledgers were necessary for bookkeeping prior to computers. Analysis of this ledger's contents opens a window into the past.

The top of this page is marked "March Ex A/c." This tells us the month of the year—March—and "Ex A/c." tells us that an expense account is listed. The year is not written on this page, but we can tell it is 1885 by looking one page back. The first column tells us the date the transaction takes place, and the next column describes the transaction. For example, on March 12 Emma Cal-

Emma Calhoun did much of her shopping and socializing in Portland, Oregon, which was closely linked by ferry to Vancouver Barracks.



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., Reproduction Number: LC-DIG-pga-003320

houn spent 25 cents on a “Haircut” and 25 cents on “Candy.” The next two blue columns, labeled “Dr” for debit, indicates the amount of money the family took in, while the following two red columns, labeled “Cr” for credit, indicates the amount of money they

spent. Thus, Emma marked 50 cents for her haircut and candy in the red credit column on March 12.

In March 1885, the Calhouns settled in at Vancouver Barracks and Emma began organizing the household. On March 3 Emma spent \$1.00 to take the [ferry](#) to Portland where she purchased supplies

for her new home, including a lantern (\$1.00), mats (\$0.80), a doormat (\$1.25), and curtain fixtures (\$1.50), totaling \$7.75 for the day's trip. Aside from keeping house, Emma also kept her family clothed, and to that end she purchased muslin, calico, black velveteen, blue jeans, and patterns for an apron and pants during the month.

Once settled at Vancouver Barracks, the ledger suggests that Emma managed the household and her family's finances. She promptly recorded her husband's pay of \$140 in the ledger at the end of each month. She also employed the wife of an enlisted soldier—Private Budka—to do housework beginning in March 1886. This practice was common among [women of the officers' class](#). As historian Edward M. Coffman has noted, “middle-class women, [wives of officers] expected to have servants and they usually did, even in the most isolated situations. There were all sorts of chores—cooking, cleaning, laundry, keeping up fires, and looking after the assorted cows and chickens that an officer might keep.”

Emma ran a small chicken business, exchanging eggs for wheat, which she recorded using double entry bookkeeping in the back of her ledger titled “Chicken Account, Vancouver Barracks, W.T.” This small business supplied Emma with some added discretionary funds for the family.

On December 5, 1885, the ledger shows that the Calhouns borrowed \$300 from Stephen D. Potts to purchase 160 acres of land originally utilized by the [Hudson's Bay Company](#). At the time, Christian Powley owned a plot of land that included almost 320 acres, twice the amount that the Calhouns purchased. Emma's responsibility included paying the monthly mortgage, and she spent frugally to ensure the appropriate funds remained available in the family's bank account.

Aside from employing servants, running a small side business, and paying the mortgage, Emma also dispensed funds to her family, including her husband. For example, when her husband Frederick traveled to Seattle with the 14th Infantry in Novem-

ber 1885, she gave him a \$10 stipend for his trip and deducted it from the family's funds. Essentially, Fred could not spend family money without his wife's accounting. She ran a tight ship.

Emma's ledger plainly reveals the central, integral role of an officer's wife on a western military post. While her work may contrast with some of our preconceptions about what activities were considered proper for a Victorian-era woman, the ledger and its contents suggest the important role that Emma Calhoun and many other Victorian-era middle class women played as managers of their family's households.

Goodyear Rubber Button



A button half a world in the making

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Rubber buttons were commonly sewn onto overcoats, parkas, and other foul weather gear.



Rubber Goodyear Button, FOVA 158996, NPS photo by John Edwards

Brass buttons on federal uniforms were sometimes traded or sold, to the dismay of officers.



Button, FOVA 1735, NPS photo by John Edwards

Goodyear Rubber Button

Marc J. Carpenter

Goodyear Rubber Button -- What do you wear that tells the world something about you? A hat, a wedding ring, a brand name, a bandanna? Among the most noteworthy things about the uniforms of the soldiers at Vancouver Barracks were the bright metal buttons; federal troops were nicknamed “brass buttons” by Oregonians in the mid-1850s. Buttons are a boon for archaeologists because they are easy to lose and unlikely to be destroyed; military buttons are among the most common archaeological objects used to identify which [Army unit](#) was stationed where and at what time.

Of course, not all clothing issued by the federal government came adorned with brass buttons—Army undergarments had lead cast buttons, Prosser molded buttons were used for shirts, and rubber buttons like this one were sewed onto parkas issued by the Army during the Civil War. This model, patented by Charles Goodyear in 1849 and made from the vulcanized rubber he had invented in

1839, was a popular design in the second half of the nineteenth century.

It is easy to think of rubber goods as modern phenomena—especially those with the name Goodyear attached—but there were plenty of rubber goods manufactured in the mid-nineteenth century, including rubber blankets for some Civil War soldiers, rubber “Mackintosh” coats, hot-air balloons, rubber boots, and ruffled shirt fronts. Unlike modern rubber goods, which are usually synthesized from petroleum, nineteenth century rubber goods used natural rubber manufactured from milky fluid (latex) tapped from trees, especially the Pará rubber trees (*Hevea brasiliensis*) native to the Amazon rain forest. Starting in the mid-nineteenth century and intensifying in 1879, the Ameri-

Rubber had been in use for hundreds of years, but Charles Goodyear (pictured) made it commercially viable.



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ6-7162

can and European rubber industry spurred the growth of many major South American cities, including Belém and Iquitos, but also had catastrophic effects on many Amazon Indian communities and lifeways.

In an age where many families still made their clothing at home, this rubber button was the product of a [global marketplace](#). Most likely manufactured in a factory hundreds of miles away from Vancouver Barracks and made of chemically treated tree sap imported from another continent, this button travelled halfway around the world so that someone at Vancouver Barracks could button up their coat.

Arsenal Quarters Stereoscope



Home sweet quarters

• •

Arsenal Quarters

Stereoscope

Luke Sprunger & Marc J. Carpenter

This photograph was designed to be viewed with a stereoscope, an optical device that combines two images taken from slightly different vantages to create the illusion of depth--a nineteenth century analogue to modern 3-D glasses. This domestic scene was likely posed, a common practice then and now.



Stereoscope photograph, FOVA 197400

Arsenal Quarters Stereoscope -- When we gather with family and friends, we often take photographs at places that we live or that have special meaning to us. They help capture a specific moment in time; one we and those who follow us can revisit (and, when we see the clothing we wore as kids, occasionally laugh at). This stereoscope is a nineteenth century photograph depicting an officer and his family in front of their quarters at the Vancouver Arsenal. The presence of families serves as a reminder that not only soldiers lived at Vancouver Barracks and the nearby arsenal: [wives](#), [children](#), servants, and often extended families lived on site and contributed to post life. This image also provides us with insight into the era's broader culture, highlighting how class divisions had a large shaping role in influencing marital and family status for men in the Army.

Nineteenth century Victorian ideals, which grew in influence with the increasing presence of upper- and middle-class European American women in the Pacific

Fort Vancouver NHS preserves a number of stereoscopes from the 1880s-1890s Vancouver Barracks era.



An officer poses in front of his house as a child rides by on a bicycle. With magnification, a person—perhaps a servant—can be seen in the background.



Excerpt from stereoscope photo, FOVA 197400

Northwest and at Vancouver Barracks, idolized the family and cast the adult male as the provider. These ideals connected respectability to economic standing. Despite their high ranking in comparison to the poorly-paid enlisted men, many officers struggled to prove themselves as viable suitors or provide for their families—or to simply support themselves. This encouraged many officers to explore a variety of money-making schemes and endeavors for financial stability while stationed at Vancouver Barracks. [Ulysses S. Grant](#), who served as a Brevet Captain in 1852 and 1853, pursued a number of unsuc-

cessful ventures, raising potatoes and shipping livestock and ice to California.

While some officers brought their families with them, Grant and most others were separated from their wives and children while stationed at the post in the early 1850s. Letters written to his wife from Vancouver Barracks expressed how deeply Grant felt about being separated from his wife and two sons, one of whom was born after his departure.

Grant repeatedly asked about his two boys, Fred and the infant Ulysses, in his letters to his wife Julia. He could only speculate on the looks and personality of his younger son. “I would prefer sacrificing my commission and try something to continuing this seperation <sic>,” Grant penned in one letter from December 19, 1852.

“Tell Fred. to be a good boy and recollect his pa and mind evry thing his grand pa & ma tell him. Kiss him and Ulys for me and write a great deel about them,” Grant wrote in his letter from January 4, 1853.

At times, Grant was glad that his family remained behind due to the loss of children brought west with his regiment. In a letter from February 15 he lamented the loss of children from the difficult crossing of the Pana-

manian isthmus and from disease. “I believe there was some twenty or more children of his [Fred’s] age, and younger come across the isthmus with us. Out of that number seventeen died on the Isthmus and all the other contracted disease so that I believe there is not a single one left....You see now why I am glad that you did not come.”

Census records show that a few enlisted men did have family members living with them at Vancouver Barracks. Unlike the officer class, marriage was generally not an option for the enlisted soldier. The US Army intermittently discouraged married men from joining—Congress even briefly banned married men from enlisting in 1847, and throughout the era men in active service needed the permission of their commanding officer before they could get married.

But the biggest impediments to marriage for enlisted men were practical. Victorian values stressed that a man was suitable for marriage only if he possessed the “means of suitably providing” for his would-be wife. Most enlisted men, who struggled to support even themselves on low pay, were not in an ideal or practical position to marry. The economic and vocational pressures

A youth re-enactor demonstrates laundry techniques at a living history event at Fort Vancouver NHS. Few photos of working-class women from the Vancouver Barracks era exist.



NPS photo, 2012

eventually prompted some to leave the service. Corporal Herbert Martin, after his second enlistment ended in 1895, decided against another enlistment: “I was fed up with it, I wanted to get married, and get a good job.” Some did manage to marry, and live with their families on the post. The wives of enlisted men and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) often worked as laundresses, a very labor-

intensive profession in the days before washing machines. Laundresses were official employees of the US Army from 1802 to 1882, and could potentially draw more pay than an enlisted soldier.

This stereoscope shows a picture of domesticity in the Victorian mold. But officer’s wives and children were not the only families at Vancouver Barracks. There are few pictures of nineteenth century laundresses or

working-class families in the collection at Fort Vancouver. But they, too, lived, worked, and played at Vancouver Barracks. Domestic life did not stop at Officer's Row.

Fish Hook



Catch a fish, or hook a chicken?

..

The Columbia river was a famously plentiful fishing ground in the nineteenth century. According to Corporal William Hilleary, Some soldiers used hooks like this one to steal chickens, as well.



Fish Hook, FOVA 10981, NPS photo by John Edwards

Fish Hook

Luke Sprunger

Fish Hook -- Life was often difficult for enlisted soldiers, who received little pay in return for the services they rendered to their country. Food rations were supplied by the Army, but were often meager and sometimes rotten. Such challenges prompted some to turn to a variety of strategies to obtain additional sources of food. With the Columbia River adjacent to the post, soldiers employed fish hooks like this one to catch fish and—chickens?

William Hilleary, a corporal in the [1st Oregon Volunteer Infantry](#) at the tail end of the Civil War who spent nine months posted at Vancouver Barracks, mentioned the practice at the fort in an April 23, 1865 entry in his published diary, *A Webfoot Volunteer: The Diary of William M. Hilleary*:

Some of the boys bait hooks for fish others bait them for chickens, the unsuspecting hen, swallows the bait, when alas the soldier takes her under his arm, walks to quarters. A chicken with a hook on its throat neither squawks

nor flutters. Several “Slow bear” have been taken in lately.

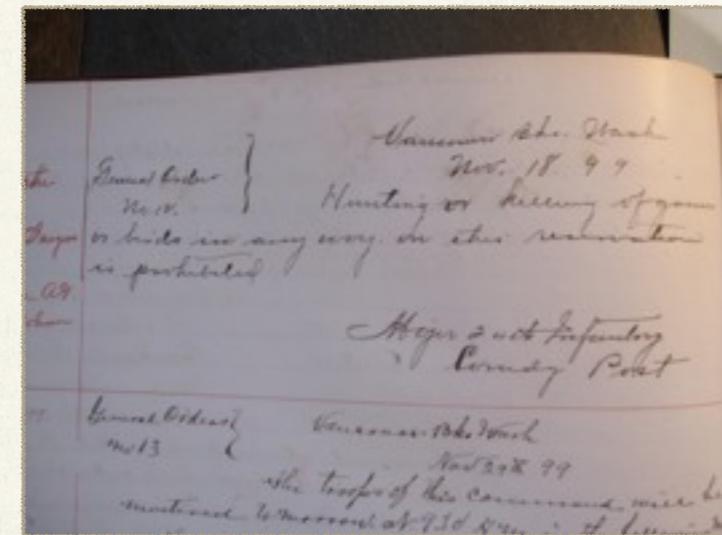
Chicken fishing, then, was a stealthy method of thievery, as was taking “slow bear,” a Civil War-era slang term for stolen hogs. Hilleary’s diary further details the men’s trouble with obtaining enough food. Along with the 1st Oregon Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, his unit was organized to take the place of regular troops who had been moved east (or south to the coastal forts of California) in response to the outbreak of the Civil War. Supply problems plagued forts in the West even more than usual during the Civil War, and there were allegations of mishandled funds at Vancouver Barracks and elsewhere. Enlisted men at outposts throughout the West were sometimes left with little to eat. Hilleary records a rather meagre (if common) dinner from April 22, 1865: “Supper 1 hard tack and coffee.”

The great distances between manufacturing areas and western military installations resulted in higher prices for food and other goods. According to Hilleary, food alone could exhaust a paycheck: “My appetite is hard to satisfy or the fare is scant to-day. Eatables de-

mand high prices. A Soldier can eat up all his wages and not be a glutton either.”

Food rations were often preserved improperly and frequently spoiled—Hilleary made multiple entries about rotten meat he found unpalatable. “The poorest mutton was brought to our kitchen this morning that I ever beheld. Still some would say that you were a copper-head [a Confederate sympathizer] if you did not eat it without grumbling,” Hilleary wrote while on kitchen duty on May 9, 1865.

Echoing trends in the larger Army, Vancouver Barracks revised its policy on soldiers foraging for food over time. This 1899 General Order forbids “the hunting or killing of game or birds in any way” on the post.



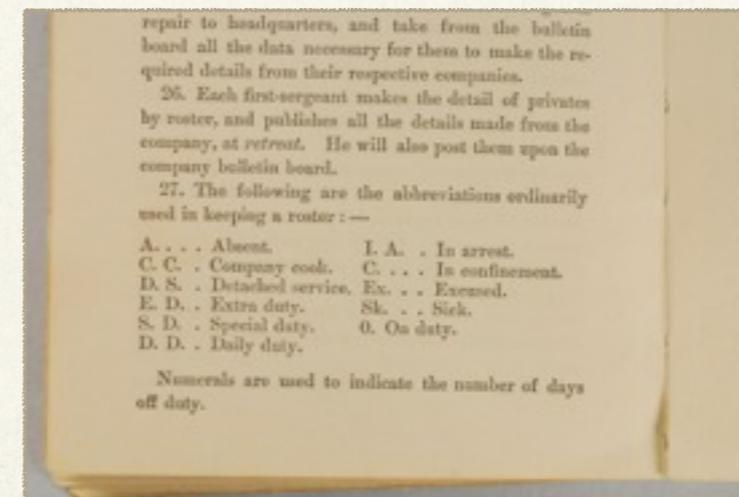
General Orders 12, Nov 18, 1899. National Archives, Record Group 393, Part 5; Vancouver Barracks, Entry 17, General Orders, 1895-1906

Hilleary's brief stint on kitchen duty exemplifies a general lack of trained cooks at the Vancouver Barracks and other western outposts. While officers at the fort had most of their meals cooked by servants, food preparation for the enlisted men was just another work detail, like sentry duty. Lacking many cooking conveniences and appliances of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, cooking in the mid-nineteenth century was more complicated and labor intensive. Mistakes made by untrained cooks commonly resulted in wasted rations and inedible food. Other times, it simply tasted bad.

Hilleary recorded expressions of dissatisfaction: "Some will complain that the food is stolen by cooks; others, that they are too dirty, too sausy [sic]. 'The bread tastes of soap,' 'The coffee is as weak as water'....I will be glad when my ten days [of kitchen duty] are brought to a close."

With rations that were often inedible, rotten, poor-tasting, or insufficient, enlisted men raised vegetable gardens and partook in chicken fishing, "slow bear" hunting, and other methods of foraging or stealing food. Hilleary's diary entry does not note if game was taken on the grounds of the barracks or from nearby civilians, but

In the nineteenth century Army, "Company Cook" was just another detail, like sentry duty.



Ora T. Palmer's Manual of Guard Duty, 1890, FOVA 972, NPS photo by John Edwards

soldiers' attitudes of taking from either source were essentially the same. While enlisted men considered it a serious offense to steal from each other, taking government food and property was widespread and was not perceived by the men as comparable to personal theft. Encouraged to gather their own food by the military, soldiers sometimes helped themselves to livestock or crops from nearby communities.

It is important to consider these actions of enlisted men in light of the circumstances placed upon them. Threatened frequently with death and disability from combat and disease, enlisted men were poorly paid, gen-

erally far away from loved ones and support systems, and were often given little respect or support by settlers from the United States. Under these trying conditions, many enlisted men reevaluated fair or permissible behavior as they made decisions for their own well-being.



Idabelle Kress Dress



Elegance in the not-so-wild West

...

Isabelle Kress wore this to a banquet in 1905. She had a similarly resplendent lifestyle during her time at Vancouver Barracks from 1874 to 1884, shopping for dresses and going to costume balls



Isabelle Sparks Haughey Kress Dress, FOVA 3050, NPS photo by John Edwards

Idabelle Kress Dress

Bradley D. Richardson

Idabelle Kress Dress -- What does our clothing say about us? How did it support or contradict concepts of personal identity at places like Vancouver Barracks? In the 1870s, newspapers from the eastern United States often depicted people “from Texas to Oregon” as “settlers living on the frontier of civilization.” In the minds of late nineteenth century urban New Yorkers, Chicagoans, and Philadelphians, the states and territories of the western United States were just beyond the reach of the “civilized” world. However, the elegant formal dress of Idabelle Sparks (Haughey) Kress pictured here speaks to a reality at Vancouver Barracks that contradicts the opinions of the many Americans and media sources in the eastern United States.

Kress lived at the barracks on [Officers' Row](#) from 1874 to 1884. Her life at Vancouver Barracks was filled with elegant [social engagements](#) and dances, to which she wore beautifully designed Victorian-style clothing and intricate

adornments. Kress' ability to live a chic Victorian lifestyle—similar in many aspects to the one she had lived in New York—is directly attributable to her role as a stepdaughter of First Lieutenant James Haughey, an officer under the command of [General O. O. Howard](#), and her later marriage to the son of Major John A. Kress, commander of [Vancouver Arsenal](#).

In her journal, Kress explained that, for [families](#) of the upper officer's class at Vancouver Barracks, "the social life was very fine—the social activities were many." Her social life consisted of elaborate and fine events, such as a series of masquerade balls thrown by prominent citizens of Vancouver at which often "quite a delegation from the Garrison was in attendance." These events were well-noted in the local newspapers of the time, as similar occasions were by East Coast presses. An article from January 31, 1878, details one such event

Bone was a commonly used material in nineteenth century women's apparel, from corsets to this bone hair ornament.



Bone hair ornament, FOVA 17798, NPS photo by John Edwards

"given by the officers of the garrison, at the government engine house" on a Friday evening. The account mentions "a large number of invited guests came over from Portland on the [steamer] *Vancouver*." The party had a band, in the form of an orchestra, and all were dressed elaborate costumes. It was noted that Mrs. Haughey came garbed as Mary Queen of Scots, Miss Sparks (Idabelle) was costumed as a peasant girl, and Lieutenant Haughey came as one of two orphans with Major

This 1879 photo shows some of the ladies and officers of Vancouver Barracks. Idabelle Kress may be among those pictured.



Officers and ladies of Infantry at Vancouver Barracks, 1879, General Howard and family seated in front, FOVA 978 F, photo files Inv 10058

Spurgin playing the role of the other. The final reports of the event stated that “a large number of spectators were present, and all agreed that the masquerade hop was a decided success.”

Beyond local events, some of the fine garments that Kress possessed were acquired expressly for a trip to Europe. National and even international trips, along with the masquerade balls and other celebrations by the privileged officer classes, linked Army life in the “remote” Pacific Northwest to that in some of the world’s most established urban centers.

Enlisted Infantryman's Hat Insignia



An emblem of service

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Infantrymen wore caps featuring crossed musket insignia like the one pictured below. A letter and number would be added to identify their company and regiment.



Crossed musket insignia, FOVA 381, NPS photo by John Edwards

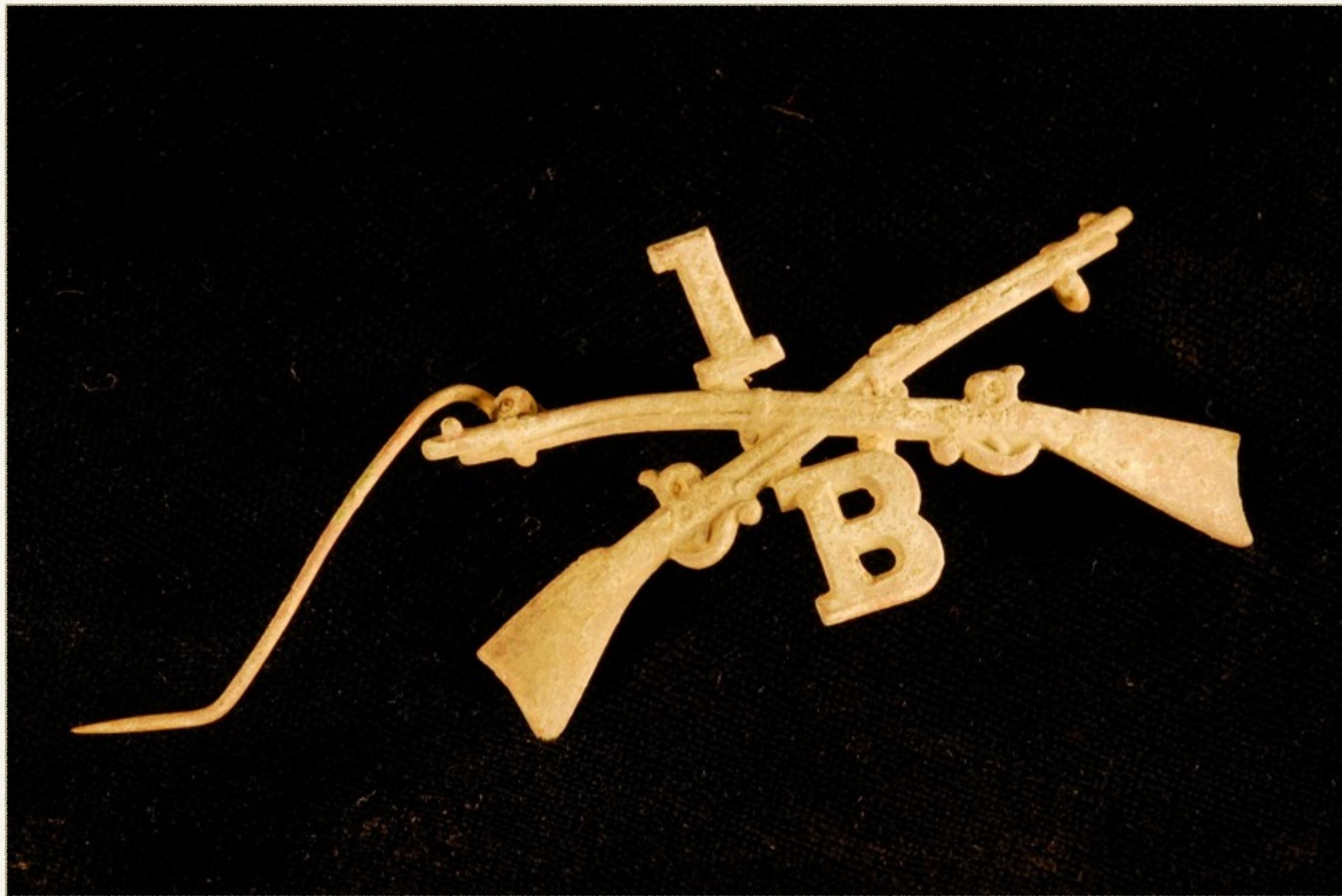
Enlisted Infantryman's Hat Insignia

Gregory P. Shine

Enlisted Infantryman's Hat Insignia -- We see icons everywhere. The octagonal stop sign, the Nike swoosh, the National Park Service arrowhead, and many other representative symbols saturate our real-life and online communities. Whether worn by a barista, [park ranger](#), [baseball player](#), or soldier, [uniforms](#), too, differentiate us from others, and project an identity of unvarying authority or control.

This is not new; even before the Greeks and Romans, humans long used clothing, insignia, and accoutrements to identify or differentiate groups of people—especially in a military context. On a practical level, these allowed for more efficient organization, supply, and control of large numbers of people, while on a psychological level they embodied consistency, power and strength in numbers. Because of this longstanding human practice of uniformity—and records of its changes over time—objects such as this small crossed musket uniform hat insignia can reveal

This later insignia indicates that the wearer was most likely a member of Company B of the 14th Infantry.



Crossed musket insignia, FOVA-205139, NPS photo by John Edwards

Soldiers serving in the artillery wore insignia like this one with crossed cannons to differentiate them from other soldiers.



Crossed cannon insignia, FOVA 205718, NPS photo by John Edwards

much about its possible past wearers and their connection to places like Vancouver Barracks.

While dulled and discolored by decades underground, the crossed musket design of this object recovered by park archaeologists is still visible. Experts can quickly tell us that its owner was an enlisted soldier—not an officer—and, by its size and style, that this insignia once adorned his cap. Had the insignia's crossed weapons been cannon barrels (above) or unsheathed sabers, it would identify the soldier's role as an artillerist or cavalryman. The muskets, however, tell us that he was a soldier serving in the infantry as a tradi-

Infantry soldiers wore the hunting horn insignia until 1875.



Hunting horn insignia, FOVA 3024, lot 743, Spec 1, NPS photo by John Edwards

tional foot soldier. They also provide a clue to the period that the infantryman was present at the barracks.

Had the insignia been made of stamped brass and in the shape of a hunting horn (above) we could associate our infantryman with the Civil War era, up to 1875. That year, the army switched infantry icons and adopted crossed muskets. Had there been regimental numbers or company letters attached above or below the crossed muskets—as in the insignia on the previous page—or remnants of their past existence, we could date the infantryman's presence to later in the nineteenth century, so their absence suggests a use no earlier than 1875 or

shortly thereafter. The army's Post Returns—monthly reports of units associated with army posts—record the presence of the 21st Infantry onsite from 1872 to 1884, and the 14th Infantry from 1884 to 1898. Thus, evidence suggests that an enlisted infantryman from the 21st Infantry or 14th Infantry probably wore this on site, in the mid-to-late 1870s or possibly the early 1880s.

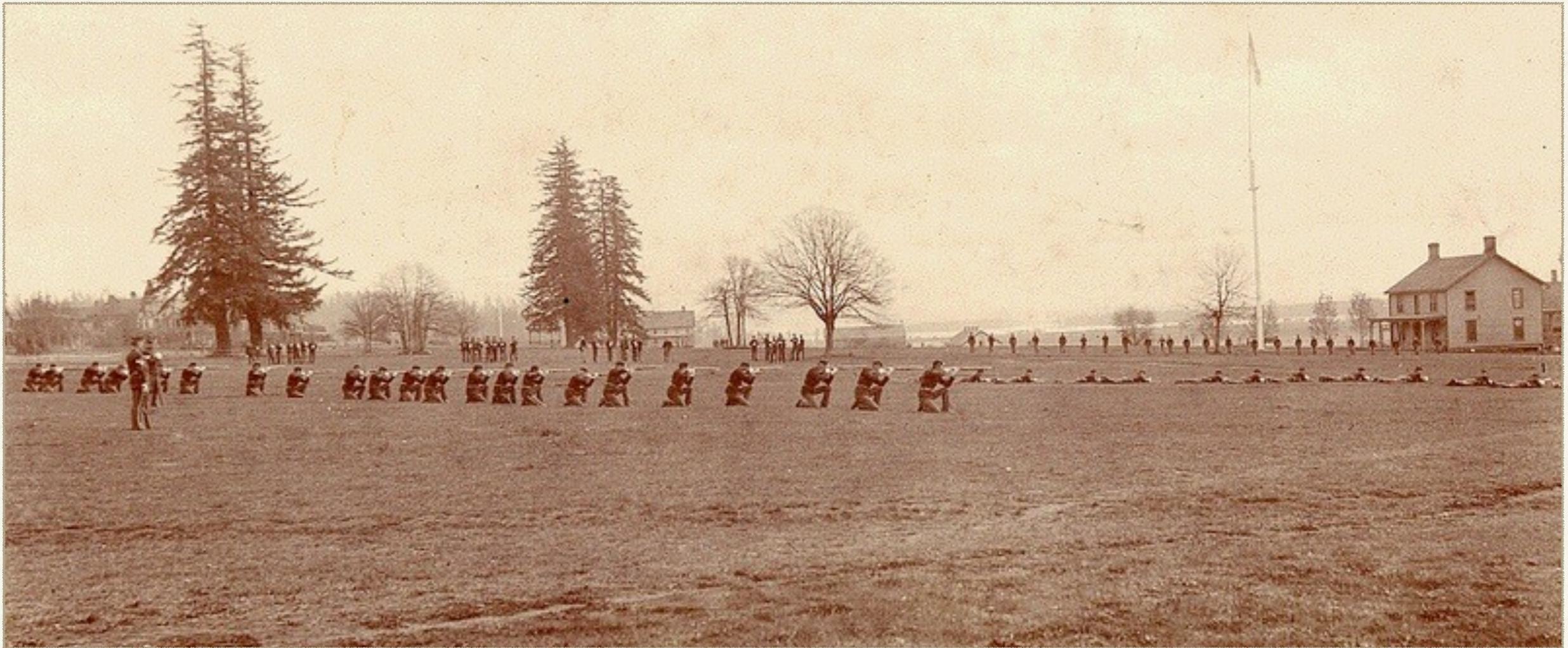
Who was this soldier? Did he lose it where archaeologists later found it, on the south side of the post's parade ground? Did he purposefully discard it? Did it get there by other means? The odds are stacked against us ever knowing the infantryman's identity, and we will probably never know his specific regiment or company. In a way, this information is not necessary. Today, the value of this object is still representational, much like its original function, but differently so. It now has a specific connection to place. For us today, it represents the majority of soldiers serving at Vancouver Barracks, both in the late 1870s and throughout the post's nineteenth century history—the infantrymen.

Books, television shows, and movies portraying the army in the American West have long focused on the cavalry—the army's mounted soldiers. But while cavalry

units comprised the majority of soldiers at several western army posts, from 1849 through 1899 the majority of soldiers present at Vancouver Barracks served in infantry units.

During this period, the garrison at Vancouver Barracks included soldiers from seven regular army infantry regiments and at least seven volunteer infantry units, including units from (in rough chronological order of first arrival) the 4th and 9th U.S. Infantry; the 2nd and 4th California Volunteer Infantry; the 1st Washington Territory Infantry; the [1st Oregon Volunteer Infantry](#), which manned Vancouver Barracks during the Civil War when the regular troops were away fighting in the East and protecting coastal forts in California; the 8th California Volunteer Infantry; the 14th, 23rd, and 21st U.S. Infantry; the 1st Washington Volunteer Infantry; the 1st Oregon Volunteer Infantry (Spanish American War unit); and the [24th U.S. Infantry](#). In addition, the army stationed the regimental command of both the 14th and 21st Infantry at the post, and their officers also served as commanders of Vancouver Barracks throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Drill was a major component of the life of the infantryman at Vancouver Barracks, and the Parade Ground presented a prime location for it.



Post-1886 Infantry Drill, from Park Collection, Negative No. 96155

The army's assignment of infantry units to Vancouver Barracks corresponded with its role as an [administration](#) and [transportation](#) hub geographically distant from the [conflicts](#) of the late 1800s. From Vancouver, infantry soldiers could quickly respond by rail or steamboat to assembly points leading to lands in Idaho, eastern Wash-

ington and Oregon, western Montana, and northern California and Nevada, where conflict between white settlers and American Indian nations continued. No battles ever raged at Vancouver Barracks, but infantry soldiers from the post did fight in [campaigns](#) against Modoc, Nez Perce, Bannock, Paiute, and other nations

that defined our nation's policy of supporting western Euro-American expansion at the cost of American Indian lives, land, and lifeways. Odds are, this insignia may have witnessed one or more of these campaigns, prior to being lost or discarded, covered in dirt, and forgotten.

Despite its simple nature and diminutive size, this brass insignia looms large in the history of Vancouver Barracks. On one level, it represents the infantrymen of the last quarter of the nineteenth century—the most common, workhorse soldiers in the nineteenth century US Army. More specifically, it connects us to the two regiments with the longest association with the site during the era—the 14th Infantry and the 21st Infantry. Most importantly, it also bonds the infantry soldier to a place—Vancouver Barracks—and helps us understand the role of this place during a defining period in the history of the American West.

Gunflints



“a collision of opinions, as fire from flint and steel”

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It is easy to think of gunflints as archaic, something from before the Army era. While they played an important role in the period of the Hudson's Bay Company's prominence, flintlock weaponry was still stocked and in use at Vancouver Barracks through the Civil War.



Gunflints, FOVA 79189, NPS photo by John Edwards

Gunflints

Michael A. Dicianna, Marc J Carpenter,
and Gregory P. Shine

Gunflints -- In excavations throughout the grounds of the national park today, archaeologists commonly find gunflints like these, long lost or discarded by their former users. As a site with a long history of fur trade and military activity, this comes as no surprise. Flintlock muskets and rifles rely on gunflints to ignite their charge of powder and launch their projectiles. Although not often associated with the Army in the American West, gunflints and the weapons they powered accompanied many of the early soldiers and remained available onsite until after the Civil War.

When push came to shove, it was instruments of warfare like these—and the enlisted soldiers themselves—that the nineteenth century Army called upon to enforce the authority of Congress and the President throughout the growing nation. When faced with challenges within the Army, though—especially between fellow officers—an Army officer's weapon of choice was often bureaucratic. We have physical remnants of weaponry, like these gun-

The Vancouver Arsenal stored high-tech and low-tech weaponry, from flintlocks to cannons, which used friction primers like the one shown below.



Cannon primer, FOVA 2013, NPS photo by John Edwards

flints, but we also have some traces of the bureaucratic struggles that sometimes consumed the officers at Vancouver Barracks.

Office politics are not necessarily a modern phenomenon; bickering, backbiting, and rivalries also plagued the commanding class of the nineteenth century US Army. Geography exacerbated this tendency

at Vancouver Barracks because [multiple Army branches](#) and commands shared the same grounds. Within the larger Military Reserve, the post of Vancouver Barracks acted as a logistical organizing point rather than a defensive structure, with troops poised to respond throughout the region. The Quartermaster's Depot distributed supplies like food, clothing, and tools, and organized other necessities including transportation. The department headquarters administered all activities at Vancouver Barracks and nearly a dozen other posts in the re-

Re-enactors fire a Mountain howitzer



NPS photo, 2012

gion. The Vancouver Arsenal, nestled just east of the barracks, was a semi-autonomous supply depot

that distributed arms and manufactured ammunition for US Army units throughout the Northwest.

With multiple officers, an unstable chain of command, significant geographical distance, fragile lines of communication, and occasionally vague or conflicting orders, some workplace friction was perhaps to be expected. Obviously, Army officers dealt with internal foes much differently than external threats. Gunflints like these—stored and issued onsite at the Vancouver Arsenal, later to be replaced by percussion caps and rim-fire cartridges—may have served the fort's early enlisted soldiers well, but officers more frequently wielded the power of the pen when encountering conflict on site.

Most nineteenth century US Army arsenals were imposing brick buildings, heavily fortified and defensible.

Army personnel originally designed Vancouver Arsenal (also known as the Vancouver Ordnance Depot) along the same lines. However, politics, economics, and personal conflicts conspired against more permanent construction.

Instead of a traditional arsenal building, the Vancouver Arsenal was housed in a series of “temporary” structures for more than twenty years. In 1854, when the Arsenal was under the command of Military Storekeeper Theodore John Eckerson, there was no central building in which munitions were stored uniformly; instead it was kept in a [Hudson’s Bay Company](#) school-turned-hospital, a newly-erected log magazine, and possibly other places on the grounds. The Arsenal did not even have room for its commander—Eckerson was “compelled to hire quarters” for himself in the nearby city of Vancouver.

The Arsenal grew in importance in the mid-1850s, as the Army established more forts in the Northwest and more armed conflicts occurred with American Indian nations. Efforts to create safer and more permanent structures were stymied by weather problems and conflicts with subcontractors—the increased volume of arms and

William Harney (who lived in what know today as the Grant House, visible below beside the flagpole) was notoriously difficult to get along with. Sill and Harney were unwilling to speak with one another during their spat, and so sent increasingly angry letters back and forth over the few hundred feet that separated them--preserving their strange bureaucratic tussle for historians.



Gen. Harney House, May 1859, Fort Vancouver, Northwest Boundary Commission image LC-USZC4-11408, Library of Congress

powder were still being stored in “dilapidated,” insecure, and worryingly flammable buildings. Construction delays also exacerbated tensions between officers. In 1858, a conflict over use of building space between Joshua Woodrow Sill, commander of the Arsenal (and for whom Fort Sill is named) and the pugnacious William S. Harney, commander of the Department of Oregon, escalated through back-and-forth letters to the

Eckerson reported in 1864 that the Vancouver Arsenal could put together 27,000 cartridges a week. Thousands upon thousands of munitions were stored at the Vancouver Arsenal, which serviced forts throughout the Pacific Northwest.



Springfield cartridges, FOVA 52388, NPS Photo by John Edwards

point that Harney had Sill placed under arrest for conduct unbecoming an officer.

By 1860, the Vancouver Arsenal had at last erected new buildings (though these buildings, too, were often described as “temporary”) and experimented with the production as well as the maintenance of munitions—though labor shortages still crippled production and security. Still, the construction of these new buildings paid off—when thieves attempted to raid the Arsenal on December 28, 1860, they were only able to make

off with paper and a few bottles of ink. However, letters soon served as the medium for another conflict, this time erupting between a new Arsenal commander, Lieutenant William T. Welcker, and department commander Gen. Harney, with multiple charges filed and Welcker noting “with astonishment the infamous aspersion attempted to be cast upon my character.”

After the outbreak of the Civil War, production efforts at the Arsenal resumed in earnest. In 1864 Eckerson, once again put in charge of the Vancouver Arsenal, estimated that his post could churn out 27,000 cartridges a week. Older technologies still persisted, too—especially in places distanced from the battlefields of the war’s Eastern Theater. Among other accomplishments, Eckerson noted that, in 1863, employees at the arsenal repaired 21 flint lock muskets for ready use, and altered 19 more from flint lock to percussion.

While Vancouver Barracks was far removed from the fighting of the Civil War, the Vancouver Arsenal’s status as the weapons depot for the Northwest made it a flashpoint for Civil War concerns—especially with regular Army soldiers largely stationed elsewhere and volunteers holding the fort. There were fears that the very real

pro-secession elements in Oregon might destroy or even seize the Arsenal, possibly as the first stage of an insurrection or invasion. In May 1866, the *Portland Morning Oregonian* went so far as to claim (in eager capitals similar to those used on modern conspiracy theory websites) that a vast plot to destroy the Arsenal had been heroically prevented in 1864.

Production efforts at the Vancouver Arsenal ramped down after the war, but military units in the Northwest were still armed and outfitted there. Outmoded arms also remained on the Arsenal's inventory, though. Reports from 1866 show that the Arsenal still housed 59 smooth-bore .69 caliber flintlock muskets in 1866, along with 2,533 others that had been altered from flintlock to percussion.

Conflicts between the Arsenal and the rest of Vancouver Barracks also persisted, although they never reached the acrimony of the debacles of the era of Gen. Harney. First Lieutenant [John A. Kress](#), who assumed command of the Arsenal in 1871, echoed his predecessors in noting the difficulties that multiple chains of command imposed. Kress noted that having his direct commanding officer in distant Washington, D.C. while

officers who outranked him lived a few doors down made him feel “as independent as a hog on ice.” Kress was likely pleased when the Army folded command of the Arsenal into the rest of Vancouver Barracks in 1881.

The history of Vancouver Arsenal is about much more than housing arms and producing munitions, even though the persistence of nearly archaic weaponry can be a surprise to the modern eye. The Arsenal also illuminates the financial and bureaucratic difficulties of the nineteenth century US Army. Despite the best efforts of generally competent officers, the Arsenal was perpetually fighting for men, resources, and respect, housed in unsuitable and dangerous “temporary” buildings for much of its existence—and the weapons for these fights were pen and paper, not the traditional weapons the Arsenal itself controlled. Vancouver Barracks was at the center of expressions of US power throughout the Northwest, but it was also a center for power struggles among US military and government interests.

Canteen Report

ITS NECESSITY.

Vancouver Barracks has no post trader, nor has there been one here since about 1877, its proximity to the town of Vancouver, with its numerous stores and saloons, rendering the position one of but slight profit. Indeed, the last post trader's store was little more than a bar-room, where the enlisted men spent but little cash, but exhausted all possible credit.

With the post tax, pay of employés, and his own profit to be made, the post trader could hardly compete with dealers in town, who hold out every inducement to the soldiers, and who can afford to sell their goods at a much smaller profit.

The town contains a large number of drinking saloons, running up to the very edge of the military reservation, which have reaped on every pay day a rich harvest for the vile whisky and other liquors sold to the soldiers.

A CANTEEN STARTED.

About the first of January last, under your instructions, preparations were made for inaugurating a canteen at this post, and the necessary supplies for furnishing lunches, coffee, tobacco, cigars, and beer were obtained.

The question at once arose as to the responsibility for the necessary obli-

A Vancouver innovation spreads across the nation

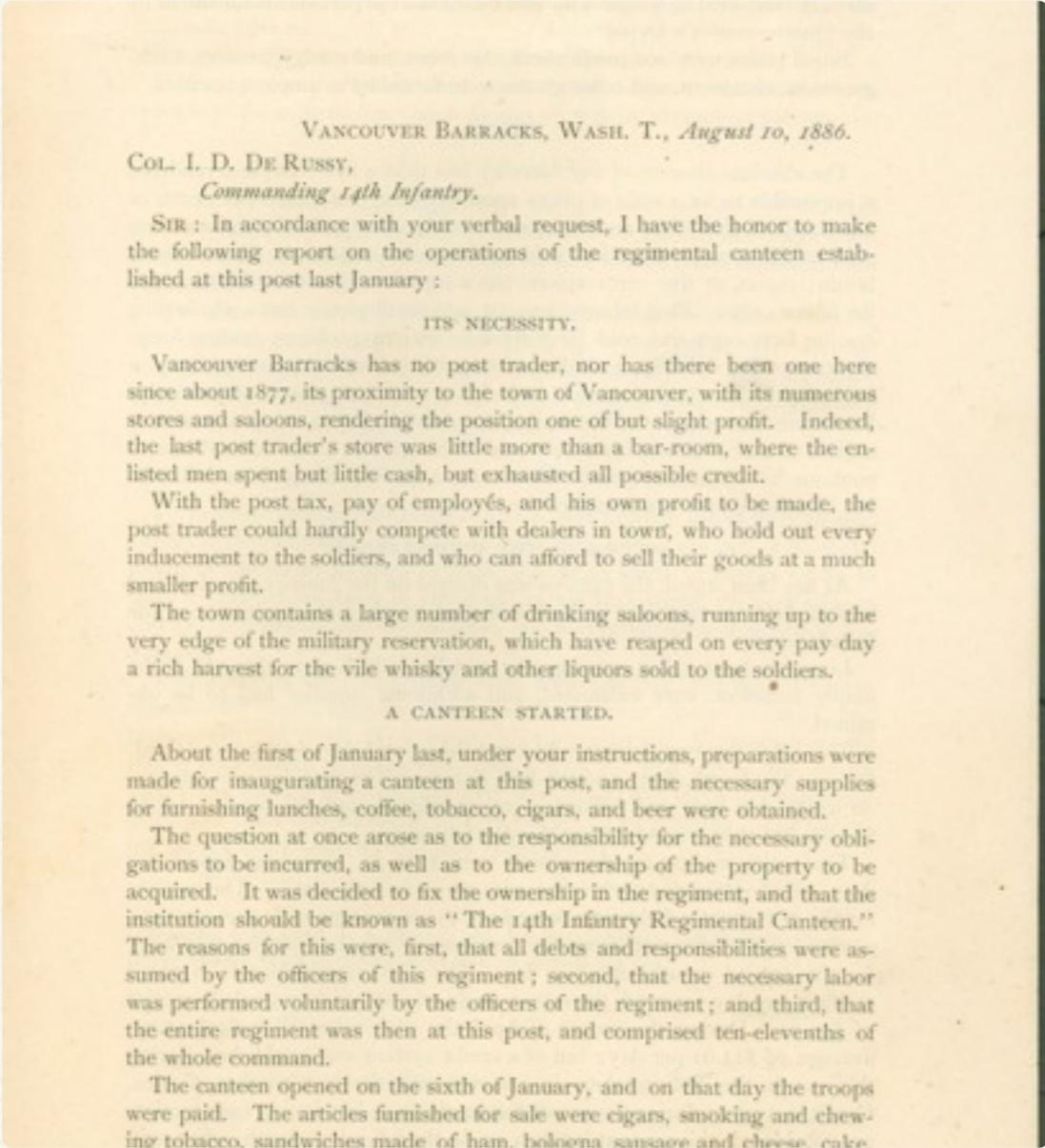
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Canteen Report

Beth Cookler

Canteen Report -- Have you ever come up with an idea for doing something differently and had other people adopt it too? Today we often call these great ideas “best practices,” and share them to help others do something more efficiently, effectively, inexpensively, easily, or responsibly. At Vancouver Barracks, the success of one grassroots idea resulted in a nationwide change that is still reflected on military bases today. This report, discovered tucked into the [Orders Book](#) of 14th Infantry First Lieutenant Frederick Calhoun, details the innovative establishment of the 14th Infantry Regimental Canteen at Vancouver Barracks. Sent from the post to the Adjutant General of the U.S. Army in Washington, D.C., it demonstrates the ability of the Army to meet its needs and those of its soldiers through the formation of the canteen as a place of procurement, leisure, and community.

The Army distributed important communications using paper reports like this one. It is telling that Frederick Calhoun thought that the record of this innovation at his post was worth preserving.



Letter within Frederick Calhoun Orders Book, Park Collection



The canteen at Vancouver Barracks was established because of the officers' desire to keep the enlisted men away from the [bars](#) in neighboring Vancouver and create "proper places of amusement." As Lieutenant Colonel I.D. De Russy of the 14th Infantry noted, "This keeps men in the garrison and prevents much of the drunkenness that always results from their lounging about bar-rooms." Consequently, on payday in January of 1880, the canteen opened to sell lunches, coffee, tobacco, cigars, and beer in the former amusement room, which had been furnished with a lunch counter, small tables and chairs, billiards, and games such as cards and backgammon. A few hours after opening, all the supplies had been sold out.

The canteen became a central place of community, where enlisted men could enjoy a magazine, game of checkers, or conversation over a cup of coffee and a sandwich. As the report emphasized, "[t]he desire is to make it a club for the enlisted men, solely

Lieutenant Frederick Calhoun in 1884, shortly before coming to Vancouver Barracks.



From the park collection

for their direct comfort and benefit, and that they shall be made to feel that they have an ownership in its property and a voice in its management.”

As a tool of inclusion, the canteen used the soldiers’ labor to make improvements and empowered them to suggest inventory items. The steward, a non-commissioned officer, along with the help of a private, managed the canteen and reported to the treasurer, a commissioned officer. The presence of the steward at the canteen had a “wholesome” effect on controlling the soldiers and preventing excessive drinking. Quickly, the canteen became a central community space for enlisted men at Vancouver Barracks. As First Lieutenant J.A. Sladen proclaimed, “The canteen is no longer an experiment.”

The canteen also proved to be quite lucrative. After seven months, the receipts totaled \$5,499.58, a daily average of \$26.08. However, because the soldiers were paid only once every two months, there arose a need to develop a system of checks and

Today, a wayside exhibit stands near the site of the original canteen which inspired the Army’s post exchange system.



NPS photo by Gregory P. Shine

credit. Checks could be purchased at the canteen at the rate of \$1 for \$1.25. In this way, the soldiers could purchase more goods at the canteen with less money, or save checks for use in the second month after payday. Soldiers were also permitted up to \$2.50 in credit that could be granted by their commanding officer for their good behavior. The development of this credit system allowed soldiers to purchase goods without cash, while at the same time allowed Vancouver Barracks to compete with the credit offered by the Vancouver barrooms. “About a year ago, it became known that . . .the want of funds compelled [the soldiers] to go where credit could be obtained even though the price charged was very great.”

After the development of a system of credit at the canteen, not only was the canteen able to profit more, but fewer men used the high-interest credit offered by the barrooms in Vancouver. In this manner, both parties benefited: the men could purchase goods with lower credit rates and the Army could

keep the men on the post while profiting from the endeavor.

The initial experiment of the canteen at Vancouver Barracks proved to be quite successful because it met the needs of both the soldiers and the Army.

The canteen became a central place where the community of soldiers could spend their leisure time and their paychecks. As Lieutenant Colonel De Russy recommended, “it meets with my heartiest commendation, and I only hope that the success it has with heretofore may continue.”

The canteen did continue; it became the model for the modern-day Post Exchange system, managed by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

Eugene Moriarty's Bugle



Sounding the routine of the soldier's daily life

.....

Eugene Moriarty's Bugle

Michael A. Dicianna & Gregory P. Shine

Eugene Moriarty's Bugle -- When one thinks of the tools of the soldier, logically it is often weapons that come to mind first. While all soldiers received training in the use of weaponry, many were also assigned specialized occupations based on previous knowledge or aptitude, including craftsman, wheelwright, cook, or musician. One of the most important tools of the soldier Eugene Moriarty was this bugle. As a bugler, Moriarty's musical skills were essential for communication both on the battlefield and in the soldiers' daily routine at posts like Vancouver Barracks. Moriarty's well-used, weathered bugle represents much more than the sounds that emanated from it—it is part of a larger collection of items that document a soldier's twenty-six year Army career throughout the West.

In the nineteenth century, men joined the army for many different reasons: for adventure, for a steady job with regular pay, or to get an education. Many new soldiers

Part alarm clock, part dinner bell, the Army used bugle calls to coordinate a soldier's life.

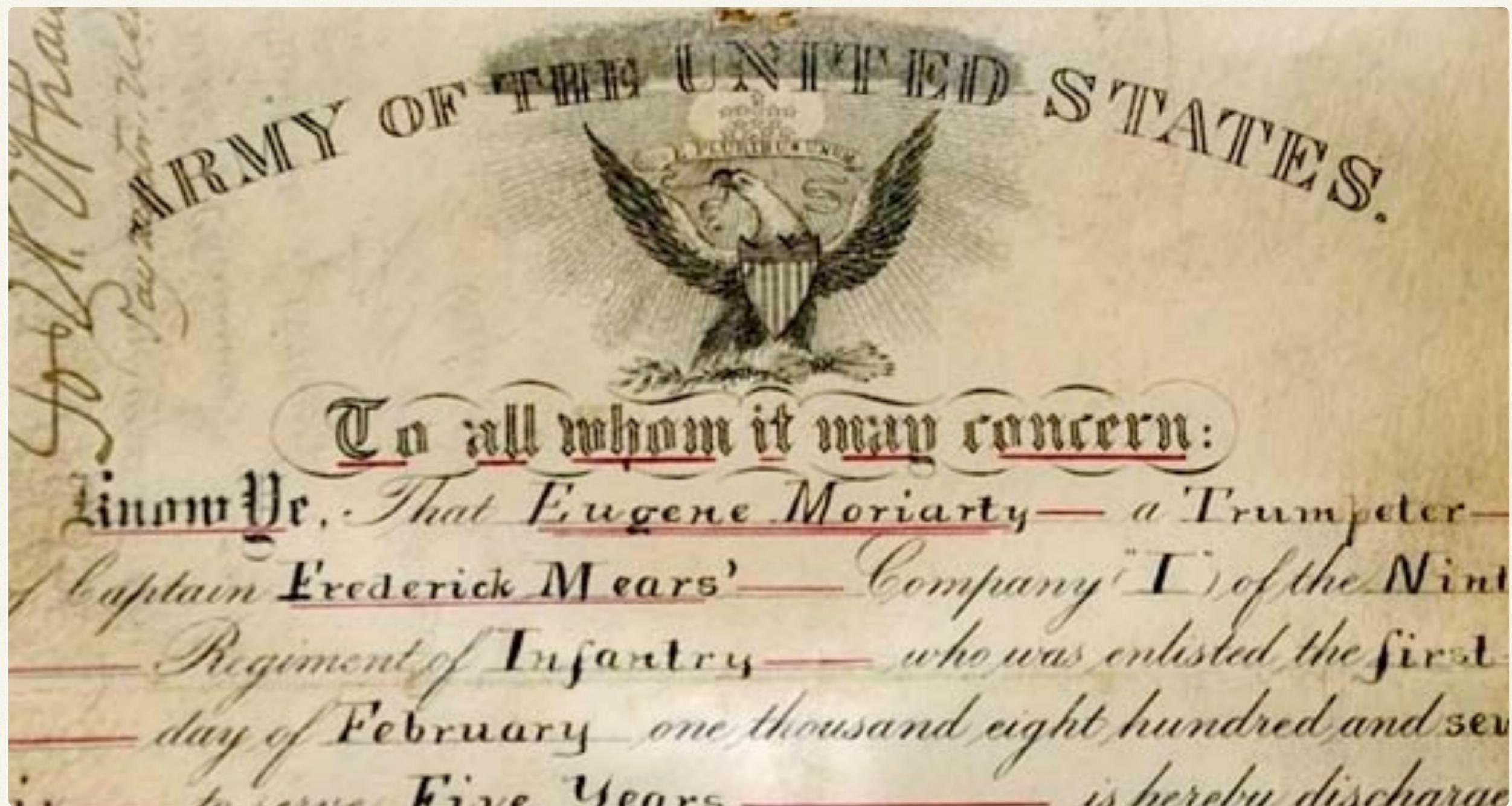


The inscription reads "P.C. Kretschmar, Philad, Germany"



Bugle, FOVA 1534, NPS photo by John Edwards

Eugene Moriarty was a lifelong soldier. He was honorably discharged and re-enlisted several times before gaining United States citizenship in 1894.



Discharge from the Army, 1876



were former slaves or [immigrants](#) to the United States, and service in the Army was one of the few jobs available. Men signed up for five years and could not leave until their enlistment expired. The life of a frontier soldier in the Army during the latter half of the nineteenth century was at times exciting, but was more often monotonous. A frontier soldier had to be prepared to take action at every moment, while he remained busy with the sometimes challenging, often tedious tasks of drilling, patrolling, and building and maintaining military posts in isolated regions. He also had to be ready to relocate to other posts with his unit, depending on the need for military presence or intervention.

These soldiers operated under different circumstances depending on their duty stations, yet they were all subject to the same overarching military rules. For example, a soldier received a yearly clothing allowance, and the 1884 *Soldier's Manual* directed that enlisted men must “wear the prescribed [uniform](#) in camp or garrison, and will not be permitted to keep in their possession any other clothing.” The conditions of the local environment, access to supplies, and the types and num-

ber of nearby communities also affected the everyday lives of soldiers.

Army buglers like Moriarty played an important role in directing the daily life of the nineteenth century soldier. Their bugle calls shaped soldiers' daily schedules, telling them where to be and what to do, both in battle and in time of peace. The post commander had wide authority over the garrison, and the daily schedule of bugle calls was one of his tools in regulating the activities of the soldiers. Although the schedule would vary from season to season, the routine generally did not. The result was a regimented lifestyle that centered on the bugle call as a measure of time.

Through examination of Moriarty's documents, we can trace a career spanning twenty-six years, from 1876 to 1902, and learn a lot about where and when his bugle sounded. Like many immigrants of the time, Moriarty found that military service was a viable option in his new country. He was born in Tipperary County, Ireland in 1846, during the height of the Irish Potato Famine, and immigrated to the United States in 1872. Eugene enlisted in the Army in 1876 and was first assigned to Fort McKinney, Wyoming Territory. His career in the mili-

Bugler Eugene Moriarty (far left, with bugle) poses with fellow enlisted infantrymen.



Park collection, FOVA 1553

tary in the West is documented through notations on the discharge documents. Campaigns that Moriarty participated in and the western forts he was assigned to chronicle many of the major conflicts of the era and illustrate the story of the frontier soldier.

Serving at many posts in the West during his career, Moriarty participated in the campaigns and expeditions of the [Indian Wars](#) and the Spanish American War. A notation on the reverse of an 1881 document states: “Soldier Participated in General Crook’s campaign against the Northern Cheyennes and Sioux during the winter of 1876-7.” Toward the end of his Army career, Moriarty “[e]ngaged in the battle of San Juan Hill, Santiago de Cuba, July 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 10th, 11th 1898.” Moriarty also served at Fort McKinney, Wyoming Territory; Fort D.A. Russell, Wyoming; Whipple Barracks, Arizona; and Madison Barracks, New York. In 1899, he served as the bugler for the Fourth Infantry at Vancouver Barracks. In 1902, Eugene Moriarty ended his twenty-six year military career at Fort Stevens, Oregon, at the mouth of the Columbia River.

Eugene Moriarty became a citizen of the United States on August, 10, 1894, having served in the Army

for eighteen years prior to his citizenship. Perhaps his most striking document, Moriarty’s US citizenship certificate is a telling reminder of the immigrants that helped to populate the country and the Army during the late nineteenth century.

Later in life, toward the end of his military career, Moriarty married. His wife applied for pension benefits in 1904. She and her children, Lillian and Maurice received \$12.00 per month as a pension benefit.

A brass bugle, worn and dented, gives us the opportunity to tell the story of a career soldier during the late nineteenth century. Eugene Moriarty kept treasured documents, both military and personal, that traced his path across the United States as a bugler in the western Army.

Quartermaster's Ledger



The business of conquest

...

Quartermaster's Ledger

Luke Sprunger & Marc J. Carpenter

Quartermaster's Ledger -- Similar to the Hudson's Bay Company's [operation](#) at Fort Vancouver, the Army's Quartermaster Depot at Vancouver Barracks provided supplies, equipment, and staff to numerous secondary posts throughout the Pacific Northwest. Accountability, organization, and good [bookkeeping](#) were necessary to ensure the successful operation of the depot, and for the Army's formative years on site, Departmental Quartermaster Captain Rufus Ingalls labored to ensure that Army's needs were met throughout the region.

This entry from Ingalls' records book, dated September 20, 1851, records the movements of troops from Vancouver Barracks to [Port Orford](#), near the mouth of the Rogue River in Oregon Territory, on the steamer *Sea-Gull*. This transfer of troops was part of an escalating series of conflicts over land rights between US settlers and many of the American Indian bands who lived

Quartermaster Rufus Ingalls kept track of supplies for posts throughout the Pacific Northwest. He supplied many of the soldiers who intervened in conflicts between settlers and American Indians.



Park collection, NPS Photo by John Edwards

Rufus Ingalls (pictured here in 1865) was one of several officers at Vancouver Barracks that went on to Civil War fame.



Library of Congress, LC-DIG-cwpb-01993

along the Rogue River. These conflicts had their roots in the mass migration of settlers into the Oregon Territory in the 1840s. This friction escalated into an open armed conflict in 1855 and 1856, commonly known as the Rogue River Wars, which set

the stage for Army intervention throughout the Pacific Northwest.

As settlers and miners grew more numerous and continued to encroach on American Indian lands, hostilities intensified across the region. Sporadic eruptions of violence between white settlers and American Indians continued to involve the troops at Vancouver Barracks in armed conflict throughout much of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Army often found itself caught between the interests

of American Indian groups and white settlers. These settlers formed volunteer fighting units that did not necessarily answer to the Army. On December 7, 1855, for instance, volunteers under the command of Isaac Stevens, Governor of the newly-formed Washington Territory and Indian Agent, killed American Indian hostages, including Walla Walla chief Peo-Peo-Mox-Mox (Yellow Bird), in retaliation for the razing of Fort Walla Walla by Yakama and Walla Walla American Indian bands. General John E. Wool, commander of the Army's Department of the Pacific, denounced the atrocities committed by these volunteers against Indians, and argued that their vengeful actions delayed peace and prolonged armed conflict.

Some soldiers, like Wool, blamed civilians and volunteers for foolishly inciting warfare through violent acts against Indians. A few recognized that the Bureau of Indian Affairs, individual Indian agents, and other government officials were cheating the tribes, and blamed dishonest and selfish actions for increasing tension and conflict. But most objected on

practical rather than moral grounds. Wool had been willing to threaten violence as well as encourage benevolence when he was in charge of the removal of the Cherokee in 1836 and 1837. His overarching goal, during the Indian Removal of the 1830s and the Indian Wars of the 1850s, was the expedient transfer of American Indian lands to United States control.

Many soldiers held ideas that were tied to widespread racist perceptions of American Indian groups. Some men thought that alcohol inspired hostile behavior in Indians, or that the Indians were inherently barbaric and prone to warfare. In his published account of his campaigns against the Nez Perce and other tribes, *My Life and Experiences Among Our Hostile Indians*, [General Oliver O. Howard](#) characterized the Indians collectively as influenced by “a terrible savagery that strong drink has always awakened in them. . . . Nothing appeared to give him greater satisfaction than acts of barbarous cruelty to men and animals.” With little or no opportunity to interact personally with Indians in the West, and hearing factual

accounts and fabricated tales of battle atrocities, Army soldiers generally feared and failed to understand American Indians, and embraced the same distorted caricature that Howard described in his book, with tragic results. A few days before his death, Chief Peo-Peo-Mox-Mox sued for peace, saying “I see your boys are like mine. They are keen for a fight. But us old men have better sense.” But this plea did overcome the suspicions of the volunteer soldiers to whom he surrendered.

Fear did translate into a form of respect for the fighting abilities of various tribes. After early battles demonstrated the dangers of ambush and battle on unfamiliar and unfavorable terrain, US troops travelled and fought on open ground as much as possible. While most campaigns occurred during the warmer months of the year, several campaigns occurred in the winter (winter clothing and coats became standard Army issue in the late 1870s). The use of winter equipment and mounted infantry in the 1870s exemplify the new tactics developed by the US

The Ingalls House, or Quartermaster's Ranch, housed a number of officers over the years, including Ulysses S. Grant.



"Panorama, Vancouver, Columbia River no. 1" Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-08570

Army over decades of conflict—tactics that contributed to the defeat of American Indian nations.

The Ingalls records book, in addition to recording the emergence of a new era of conflict between US settlers and American Indians, tells other stories about life in the region in the early 1850s. It underscores the prevalence of desertion at Vancouver Barracks, with deserters often bound for the gold fields of southwest Oregon, by listing records of payments

made to officers in pursuit of such men. The records book also includes numerous entries for payments made to Indians for services rendered. In early years of the Army's presence at the barracks, American Indians worked as laborers and mechanics on the grounds, and as transporters and boatmen to move Army goods and personnel through the region. Ingalls' years at Vancouver Barracks, then, marked a turning point in relations between the US Army and American Indians. In the early 1850s, an era of economic cooperation with local American Indian groups was coming to an end, as US demands for land and resources pushed the soldiers at Vancouver Barracks into direct and brutal conflict against American Indian groups throughout the region.

Duff-Gordon Sherry Bottle



But sir... it's medicinal!

.....

Sherry had a wide variety of medical applications in the nineteenth century. It was used as a base for a number of medicines and prescribed as a painkiller. It was also a popular libation.



Duff-Gordon sherry bottle, FOVA 3161, NPS photo
John Edwards

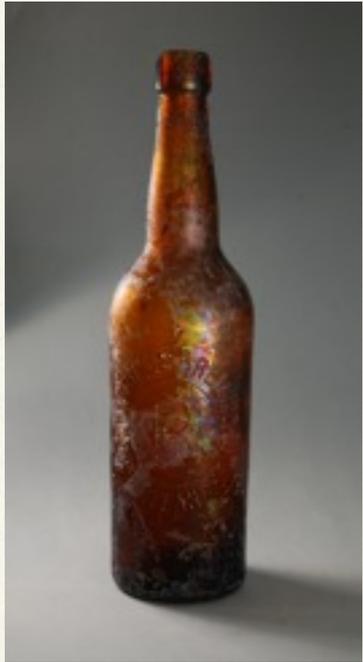
Duff-Gordon Sherry Bottle

David-Paul B. Hedberg

Duff-Gordon Sherry Bottle -- For those who have ever read the label on a bottle of liquid cough or cold medicine, one of the ingredients often found is alcohol. For centuries, humans have noted and encouraged alcohol's medicinal uses as well as its recreational ones. While Army regulations forbade the sale of alcohol to soldiers at Vancouver Barracks, alcohol bottles—like this Duff-Gordon sherry bottle from the 1880s or 1890s—demonstrate nineteenth century uses of alcohol as both an approved form of medicine and, in some cases, an illicit drink.

The laws regarding alcohol consumption were a point of contention for much of the nineteenth century. A post order of 1853 prohibited [sutlers](#) (civilian store owners working under contract with the government) from selling liquor to soldiers, but at other times alcohol was allowed in moderation, or allowed for officers but not soldiers. But orders forbidding alcohol did not necessarily prevent soldiers from consuming it in all circumstances. Archaeolo-

Louis Feurer established the Gambrinus Brewery in Northwest Portland in 1875



Gambrinus beer bottle, FOVA 3161, NPS photo by John Edwards

gists excavated this Duff-Gordon sherry bottle from the privy (or outhouse) of a non-commissioned officer's cottage, along with several Gambrinus Brewing Company beer bottles and the remains of medical supplies. This may lead one to wonder: does the Duff-Gordon sherry bottle represent sanctioned or forbidden consumption of alcohol? Or maybe both?

Despite alcohol's use as an ardent spirit in the nineteenth century, it also had practical medical uses. Army surgeon Joseph K. Barnes staffed the first

hospital at Vancouver Barracks in 1857. He went on to serve in the Civil War, and later became the US Army's Surgeon General in 1868, overseeing the US Medical Department. As Surgeon General, Barnes published a series of books on his medical practices during the Civil War. In one specific case, he treated a patient with ty-

phoid pneumonia, who complained of a sore throat, by prescribing two pints of "sherry wine and beef tea" per night to aid the patient's condition.

Today when we have a cough, many of us take a cough syrup to treat the symptoms. But few of the medicines we take today were available in the mid-nineteenth century. During that time many relied on patent medicines, which contained high amounts of alcohol, and medicinal tinctures [drugs dissolved in alcohol] made by physicians. Sherry was a common ingredient used to make medicated wines or *Vina Medicata*. This particular bottle is interesting because it is embossed with "Medical Department U.S.A." on the body. In the late 1870s, the Alex D. Shaw Co. of New York contracted to import and supply Duff-Gordon Sherry to the US Army Medical Department. James Duff and his cousin William Gordon founded the Duff-Gordon Sherry Bodega

Pharmaceutical recipe for Vinum Carnis or Wine of Beef

ALCOHOLIC LIQUIDS		515
VINUM CARNIS. N. F. Wine of Beef (Vin. Carn. Beef and Wine)		
Extract of Beef.....	20 Gm.	1 ℥. ss.
Water, hot.....	1000 m℥.	1 ℥. ss. q℥. min.
Syrup.....	100 m℥.	1 ℥. ss. ℥. min.
Alcohol.....	50 m℥.	1 ℥. ss. ℥. min.
Compound Spirit of Orange.....	1 m℥.	1 ℥. min.
Sherry Wine, a sufficient quantity.....		1 ℥. min.
To make.....	1000 m℥.	1 pint

Dissolve the extract of beef in the hot water, add the syrup, then the compound spirit of orange and the alcohol, previously mixed, and sufficient sherry wine to make the product measure 1000 m℥. (old form 2 pints). Set the preparation aside for two days, and filter.
Average dose.—2 fluidrachms (8 m℥.).

From Joseph P. Remington, *The Practice of Pharmacy* (1885)

in 1772 in the Andalusia region of Spain. Duff-Gordon sherry was mainly imported to England and the United States, and can still be purchased today. This particular bottle is an interesting example of how the US Army imported and promoted the consumption of sherry in medical circumstances.

While sherry had (at the time) an express medical purpose, beer did not. Many of the bottles found here were from the Gambrinus Brewery, established by Louis Feurer in 1875, in Portland, Oregon. Named after Flemish King Gambrinus, the patron saint of beer, it was one of the larger breweries of the time, distributing beer throughout the region. The bottle features an embossed company seal on the body, but also includes an embossed “THIS BOTTLE NEVER SOLD” marking on the bottle heel. The production of glass bottles was expensive, and many companies, including Gambrinus, essentially rented their bottles to consumers who only bought the beer in them. When the bottles were returned, the customer was given deposit of 30 cents for a dozen pints or 40 cents for a dozen quarts, predating Oregon’s landmark bottle deposit bill by almost one hundred years.

The embossment reads THIS BOTTLE NEVER SOLD. Archaeologists can confirm there were no restrictions on discarding.



Gambrinus beer bottle, FOVA 3161, NPS photo by John Edwards

Because of its alcohol content, beer was often safer to drink than water. In the early days at Vancouver Barracks, the water supply came from cisterns filled with river water, which sometimes became tainted, resulting in sick soldiers. However, by the time these bottles were thrown down the [privy](#) much of the barracks was hooked into a clean (for the time) source of water. Whoever drank this beer probably did so because it was tasty, not because it was more sanitary.

Gambrinus and many other breweries focused advertisements promoting the quality of the water they used and the healthy aspects of beer, calling it “liquid food.” An article in the *Oregonian* analyzed the beer and noted the low alcohol volume compared to hard liquor and the high level carbohydrates that made the beer a “refreshing summer drink.” The article further recommended that “people in delicate health,” “mothers nursing babies,” and “little ones” drink Gambrinus beer to bring “back the bloom of health to their cheeks,” and asserted that the beer “possess none but good qualities.”

Today, most of us would seriously question using sherry “wine of beef” to treat our cough, or that beer “possesses none but good qualities.” But these bottles

Feurer named his brewery after Gambrinus, legendary Flemish king and unofficial saint of beer and brewing.



University of Washington Special Collections, ADV0208

show that alcohol was consumed for prescribed medical situations, or for general health and nutrition, despite intermittent nineteenth century regulations prohibiting alcohol at Vancouver Barracks.

Jehu Switzler Telescope



Making maps, claiming space

.....

Jehu Switzler's Telescope

David-Paul B. Hedberg

Jehu Switzler's Telescope -- Each day, thousands of people cross the Columbia River freely between Oregon and Washington on the Interstate Bridge and travel along well-established roadways that span both states. This wasn't always the case. The creation of this transportation network required many different people playing many different roles and using many types of equipment. US Army units commanded and equipped from Vancouver Barracks contributed greatly to the early mapping and surveying of many of these roadways, and used tools such as this telescope to do so.

Once the property of Jehu Switzler, this telescope holds a deeper story: it symbolizes the important role civilians played in scouting, mapping, and maintaining supply lines to Vancouver Barracks and to the larger network of army posts and settlements throughout the Pacific Northwest.

At the beginning of the Vancouver Barracks era, the post was at the remote edge of the United States. Surveyors like Jehu Switzler charted the roads that connected it to the rest of the nation.



Switzler telescope, FOVA 10132, NPS photo by John Edwards

For millennia, crossing the Columbia River to reach the area later home to Fort Vancouver and Vancouver Barracks was a dangerous and daunting task. After the Army's arrival in 1849, such a venture almost always required the services of John Switzler and his family's ferry. This 1883 map shows the route of Switzler's ferry from the south shore of the Columbia River to Vancouver.

John Switzler was born in Germany in 1776 and immigrated to Virginia in 1788. Switzler operated a mercantile supply in Missouri before he and his family came west on the Oregon Trail in 1845. Once in the Oregon Territory, they obtained donation land claims on the south shore of the Columbia River, across from the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Vancouver. A surveyor's telescope, similar to this one, would have been used in later years to survey and legitimize the Switzlers' land claims.

In the early Oregon Territory, unlike in the rest of the United States, American settlers established land claims before the land was surveyed. An 1860 Government Land Office map shows land claims of John Switzler and his son J.R. Switzler on the south bank of the Columbia.

John Switzler's ferry was a key supply line for Vancouver Barracks for much of the nineteenth century.



Portion of Goethals's "A Map of the Country in the Vicinity of Vancouver Barracks, Washington Territory" (1883), courtesy of Washington State University Archives

John strategically located his ferry between the south shore of the river and Fort Vancouver, and began operations in 1846. Switzler played an important role in regional transportation by contracting his services for both settler and military freight. A January 1, 1850 entry in [Quartermaster](#) Rufus Ingalls's ledger is one of many recording payment to John Switzler for "ferriage, hire of horses, boats &c." With the reduction in Hudson's Bay

Company personnel and operations, Switzler held a virtual monopoly over direct transport from Fort Vancouver to the trails leading to Portland, Oregon City, and the Willamette Valley. Additionally, Switzler raised cattle on his land and periodically supplied [fresh beef](#) to the soldiers of Vancouver Barracks.

However, the Switzler family assisted the military in more ways than providing ferry service and occasional beef. While local American Indians possessed a wealth of detailed knowledge about the region's trails and transportation routes, Americans were just beginning to map and understand the local geography. Many of the roads we use today have important connections to John Switzler's son, Jehu Switzler, a civilian scout who worked for the US Army.

Jehu's telescope was a necessary tool for numerous excursions scouting routes to early army posts throughout the Pacific Northwest. Jehu's familiarity with local geography and American Indian nations provided him with regular employment assisting the commanders of Vancouver Barracks, and he frequently traveled hundreds of miles away from the post on assignments. Jehu first served as the interpreter between Oregon Territo-

rial Governor Joseph Lane and Chief Yellow Hawk following the Whitman killings. In 1856, Jehu traveled from Vancouver to Fort Lane, in Southern Oregon, relaying command correspondences. He also led supply trains of horses to Colonel George Wright through the Columbia Gorge to [Fort Dalles](#), and participated in a skirmish at Fort Cascades.

Soon after the establishment of Vancouver Barracks, the Army began developing a networks of roads to the peripheral Army posts and settlements. They also helped survey a prospective northern route for the transcontinental [railroad](#). In fact, the western portion of the Northern Pacific Railroad expedition was based out of Vancouver Barracks. Commanded by Lieutenant George B. McClellan in 1854, the expedition charted a route from Vancouver heading northeast, through Yacolt Prairie to Simcoe Valley in the Yakima basin. Although the route McClellan surveyed was not selected, it was later used as a road linking Vancouver to Fort Simcoe. Jehu and his brother William Switzler were associates in the survey and construction of the supply road first charted by the military. The 1861 Washington Territorial Legislature passed an act giving the Vancouver

and Simcoe Trail or Road Company rights to lands and construction of the public road that linked Fort Vancouver to Fort Simcoe.

By 1879, Jehu Switzler took up the family business again, this time operating a ferry across the Columbia near Umatilla. He took up ranching and continued as an interpreter and mediator for disputes between local American Indian peoples and American settlers.

The roads and transportation connections of the Pacific Northwest we all enjoy today have important ties to the surveyors and early topographic engineers. Non-military families like the Switzlers were crucial in assisting the US Army in scouting and the movement of supplies, and in connecting Vancouver Barracks with outlying forts and communities. Switzler's telescope ties to the many contributions of the family itself, but in a broader sense, the telescope embodies the larger process of Americans reconceptualizing the geography of the Northwest and the many transportation projects based out of the Vancouver Barracks.

Rebus Plate



Experts on two continents couldn't solve this puzzle

.....

A “rebus” is a puzzle composed of words and pictures. Most of these puzzles referred to current events or political satire. Without context, a cryptic fragment like the one below is nearly impossible to puzzle out.



Rebus plate fragment, FOVA 03024, Lot 877, Spec 4, NPS photo by John Edwards

Rebus Plate

Marc J. Carpenter

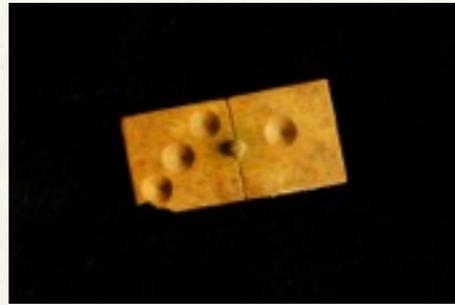
Rebus Plate -- The history of Vancouver Barracks, like the history of the world, is a puzzle with many of the pieces missing. We look at the historical evidence we have and try to figure out the story of the people who lived here. Every new fact that is sifted out of the archives, every donated object, and every archeological artifact pulled from ground enriches that story. This ceramic sherd, then, is both a piece of that puzzle and a literal puzzle piece. In the process of figuring out just what this piece of broken plate was, National Park Service staff at Fort Vancouver contacted Will Shortz (famed “enigmatologist” and editor of the New York Times crossword puzzle), who pointed the way to the Italian scholar Franco Bosio. While these experts were able to identify what the sherd is, there are still many questions about what it meant, and what it was doing at a military outpost in the Pacific Northwest.

This object is a fragment of a French plate printed with a “[rebus](#)” design—a puzzle composed of words and pictures which together form a phrase. Popular both in newspapers and in ceramics, rebuses were a common form

of entertainment for the upper classes, in France and elsewhere. But this sherd was found in a place far from the French upper crust: the privy of the nineteenth century Vancouver Barracks sutler's store.

A “sutler” (literally defined as “one who does the dirty work”) was a civilian contractor who sold food, provisions, and other wares to soldiers. As the etymology of their profession implies, sutlers were often regarded with suspicion. Although they were technically subject to military rules and regulations, these rules were often flouted. For example, a General Order of September 29, 1849 forbade sutlers from “keeping [ardent spirits](#) or other intoxicating drinks,” yet the sutler's store privy that yielded up this ceramic sherd also contained fragments from hundreds of alcohol-related bottles. Sutler's stores were more than simple supply depots; they were sites of recreation, offering food, drink,

The sutler's store provided soldiers with entertainment as well as provisions.



Park collection, NPS photo by John Edwards

Who knows what soldiers thought when they finished their meal and saw this face staring up at them?



Rebus plate fragments, FOVA 03024, NPS photo by John Edwards

games, gambling, and (in some cases) hired female companionship.

The sutler's store at Vancouver Barracks, hidden behind its own palisade, generated rich archaeological finds but few historical records. Many of the written records we have concerning the sutler's store come from [Ulysses S. Grant](#), who was briefly

stationed at the barracks as a quartermaster for the Fourth U.S. Infantry in 1852 and 1853. After writing his wife of grand aspirations of success, Grant complained bitterly about the sutler Elijah Camp, who had supposedly bamboozled him in a business deal involving a San Francisco sutlery after Camp's establishment at Vancouver Barracks mysteriously “blew up” in 1853.

Such antipathy towards the sutlers was common in the Army; many Civil War reminiscences mention suspi-

cion, insults, or even violence directed towards sutlers (and less official civilian suppliers) suspected of cheating or inflating their prices. At Vancouver Barracks in 1880, Col. Henry Morrow pioneered an Army-run [Post Exchange](#) to provide the sorts of goods that sutlers once had. This innovation proved effective enough to be adopted nationally, and a version of the Post Exchange System is still in use today.

While experts at Fort Vancouver have reconstructed fascinating glimpses at the history of the sutler's store, some parts of the story are still shrouded in mystery. What exactly did Grant mean about the sutler store "blowing up"? Was he referring to a catastrophic business failure or a literal explosion? Was the palisade around the store there to keep out trouble, or to keep trouble out of the view of officers?

The riddle of the rebus plate similarly remains unsolved. Nor do we know how the plate came to the sutler's store. Was it a gift, a curiosity, a hand-me-down? Did the soldiers here figure out the riddle as they relaxed over illicit drinks, or did they pay no mind to the complex design underneath their food? Maybe someday

the national park's archaeologists will find more pieces and solve the puzzle.

Guardhouse Stereoscope



“a place of punishment, void of liberty”

••••

A Guard House or jail was standard for a nineteenth century Army installation. In addition to imprisoning recalcitrant soldiers here, the Army also used the Guard House and its surrounding grounds to incarcerate American Indians as prisoners of war.



Guard house stereoscope, FOVA 197400, Park Collection

Guard House Stereoscope

Gregory P. Shine

Guard House Stereoscope -- If you were to guess the function of the building in this photograph, what would it be? Its long, two-story design and chimneys might suggest use as a barracks or living quarters for the post's soldiers. Its cupola, bell, and ornamented second floor railings might signify more than a run-of-the-mill operation inside, such as an office or headquarters. The open center with the roadway passing through might lend itself to a delivery or storage function, like a warehouse. The long, straight roadway, the grassy areas alongside it, and the glimpse of Columbia River to the left suggest that this building is located on a rise, just south of the barracks' parade ground. What was this building? Why was it important to photograph in the 1870s? Why is its story important today?

The east side of the first floor of the building, viewable at the left of the image, provides a clue. While the white clapboard may reflect a painting project in progress, the bars on the three visible first floor windows on the building's east side reveal its purpose: the Guard House. Since

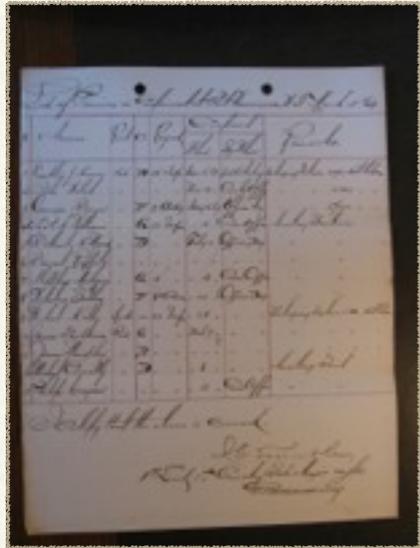
the advent of the post, a guard house or jail facility has been present. Consistent with army policy at the time, original plans for the post's first buildings in 1850 show a small Guard House, along with other essentials including barracks buildings and the iconic structure today known as the Grant House. In 1878, the Army improved and expanded the Guard House. A newspaper noted that it was over one hundred feet long and included "upstairs rooms for chapel and reading room."

It is from the perspective of the Grant House—the post commander's quarters for many years that an early photographer captured this image of this Guard House. In this role, it served as the place of incarceration for those soldiers who failed to abide by army rules and regulations. Directly facing the center of the post, it stood as a symbol of military authority, a constant reminder of the army's power and control. However, a stint in the guard house was not limited to recalcitrant soldiers. For decades in the nineteenth century, this building, its site and nearby grounds served as a place of imprisonment for dozens of American Indians, including those from the Nez Perce, Paiute and Shoshone nations.

Soldiers could be—and were—held in arrest for any number of reasons. In addition to the Articles of War and numerous army regulations, officers expected soldiers to follow orders. "All inferiors are required to obey strictly, and to obey with alacrity and good faith, the lawful orders of the superiors appointed over them," commanded Article I of the 1861 *Army Regulations*. If not, a robust system of garrison and regimental courts-martial existed, complete with trial and sentencing. Possible punishments in the nineteenth century included death, confinement, confinement on a diet of bread and water, solitary confinement, hard labor, wearing of a ball and chain, forfeiture of pay and allowances, discharge from service, reprimand, and reduction in rank. "Uncle Sam ought not to expect all the cardinal virtues for eight dollars a month," one enlisted man explained to a post officer, and at Vancouver Barracks—like many other western forts—[use of alcohol](#) contributed to many incidents requiring court martial, such as insubordination and failure to pass inspection.

Each month, regulations required that each army post submit a report that detailed the "prisoners in confinement" at its guard house (see image next page). Sur-

List of Prisoners in Confinement, March 1869



NARA, RG 393 Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920; Vancouver Barracks, WA; Headquarters Misc. Letters Received, Correspondence and Reports 1852-1919; Box 3.

viving reports from Vancouver Barracks, housed today at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., show that soldiers were not the only people incarcerated at the post's guard house. Several list American Indian prisoners of war. The report of April 30, 1878, under the heading "Nez Perce Indian Prisoners," notes that 23 men, 9 women, and one child "left post April 22, [18]78 en route to the

Lapwai Indian Agency," after being confined at Vancouver Barracks since August 7, 1877—more than eight months and more than 400 miles from where they were found.

While none of the Nez Perce are mentioned by name in this report, Nez Perce oral history remembers each of them today as members of the band of Chief

Red Heart, aligned with the nontreaty Nez Perce whom the Army mobilized to force back to their designated reservation in the summer of 1877. Yellow Wolf, a Nez Perce warrior, recalled how, after the battle of Clearwater, Nez Perce scouts of Gen. Howard approached Red Heart's encampment on Weippe Prairie and encouraged him to return to the reservation. "We will go," answered most of those Indians," Yellow Wolf said. "There were about twenty of them, men, women, and a few children. They had not joined us. Never had been in any of the war. Coming from Montana, they had only met us there. Those Indians not joining with us in the war now bade us all goodbye...."

"These prisoners, as attested by every Nez Perce interviewed, were taken to Kamiah, where their horses

Yellow Wolf was a Nez Perce warrior who fought in the 1877 war. He spent much of his later life recording the history of the Nez Perce war from an Indian perspective.



Yellow Wolf, NEPE-HI-3332

and equipment were confiscated,” wrote L.V. McWhorter, who collected dozens of firsthand accounts from the Nez Perce. “They were forced to march afoot through the blistering July heat, and dust, under guard of mounted Government Nez Perce scouts and soldiers, to Fort Lapwai, to be sent to the Vancouver Barracks as prisoners of war,” McWhorter continued.

[Gen. Howard’s](#) official account differed considerably, stating that Red Heart’s band was captured as hostile combatants, but dispatches from army officers in the field contradicted this, stating that they “came in yesterday and gave themselves up.” What brought them to the post Guard House on August 7, 1877 was a military hegemony aggravated by fear, misunderstanding, politics, religion, and a desire for continued control. Also, it seems like they were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time.

At Vancouver Barracks, a local newspaper reported that Red Heart’s band was “confined in the Guard House until such time as it may be thought best to send them to a reservation.” Shortly thereafter, it described that, adjacent to the Guard House, “[a] stockade has been built at the garrison, in which to keep the Indian

prisoners. It is fifteen feet high and is built strong. In this they are kept during the day, but at night are confined in the guard house.”

During this imprisonment, the building itself underwent change. “The new Guard House is approaching completion, and is a handsome addition to the south side of the parade ground,” a newspaper announced in February 1878. It included a small chapel area, where Christian church services were held. Although detailed information about their day-to-day activities at the Guard House has eluded researchers, on at least one occasion, the post chaplain addressed Red Heart’s band in the building’s chapel room.

Even by military standards of the time, documents suggest that Red Heart’s band lacked sufficient support for their basic health and safety. Two members, including a small son of Little Bear, died while imprisoned at Vancouver Barracks. Just prior to their release in April 1878 and their return to the Nez Perce reservation near Fort Lapwai, Howard telegraphed the post’s commanding officer to “[i]ssue such clothing as may be necessary to make the prisoners of war cleanly and respectable. Any essential purchase for the women prisoners will be

In 1877, the Army forcibly imprisoned the band of Chief Red Heart, pictured here with children in about 1909.



Red Heart, NEPE-HI-1037

approved.”

Context gives additional symbolism to the imprisonment of Red Heart’s band. Gen. Howard mentioned often that he viewed the threat of imprisoning American Indians in the post guard house as significant leverage in his councils with Yakama, Nez Perce, and other native peoples—especially those who followed the non-Christian dreamer prophet religion Howard and the prevailing American culture deemed uncivilized. Just months earlier, Howard used the threat of Vancouver’s guard house to pressure a council of Nez Perce leaders. “I showed them that Skimiah, a ‘Dreamer,’ leader of a small band near [Celilo](#), was already in the guardhouse at Fort Vancouver,” Howard recounted, “and that this would, doubtless, be the fortune of any other ‘Dreamer’ leader for non-compliance with Government instructions.” Days later, he described how he responded to “saucily” answered responses from Smoholla and other Nez Perce leaders. “I then show them plainly that if they persist I will have them arrested, as Skimiah was at Vancouver, and show them that if they continue turbulent and disobedient that they will be sent to the Indian country [Oklahoma Territory].” How might this policy have

Yellow Wolf, pictured below, put the fault for the Nez Perce War in large part on Gen. O. O. Howard, who “showed steel” at a peace meeting—a major insult among the Nez Perce.



Yellow Wolf, NEPE-HI-1370

influenced Howard and his decision to incarcerate Red Heart’s band?

Howard himself may provide a clue. In the preface to his book *My Life and Experiences Among Our Hostile Indians*, Howard uses a later forceful imprisonment to exemplify what he found “most satisfactory” in his experience with American Indians. “To me,” he wrote, “the most satisfactory operation in the Northwest was inaugurated by a very small band of savage Indians near the

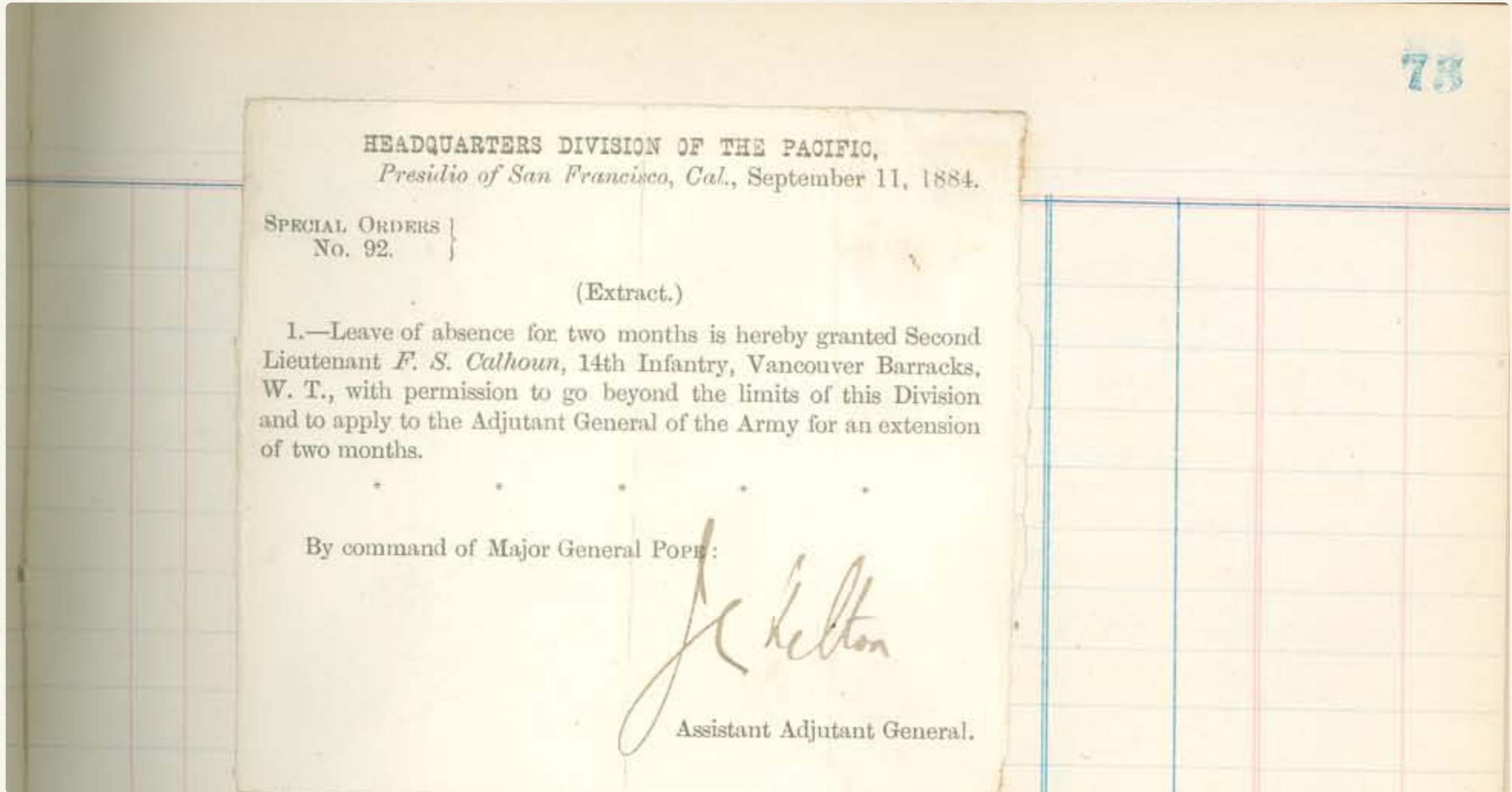
head waters of the Salmon river. In this campaign I did not take the field, but my trusted subordinates subdued the Indians, captured the whole tribe [Paiute and Shoshone], and brought them down the Columbia River to my headquarters, which were then near Vancouver Barracks. Here we had the opportunity of applying the processes of civilization, namely, systematic work and persistent instruction to Indian children and youth.

These Indians were well fitted to abandon their tepees and blankets, dress as white men, and join the civilized Warm Spring Indians who dwelt just beyond the Dalles of the Columbia. In this work of preparation, or I may say of probation, the young Indian princess, Sarah Winnemucca, — of whom I shall have something to say in this volume, — was my interpreter, and bore a prominent and efficient part.”

A major goal of Howard and leading Americans in the late nineteenth century was to have the nation reflect the predominant values, beliefs, and practices of the Victorian era. Whether soldier or American Indian, rules and regulations existed and must be followed, or punishment or forced coercion would result. The newly expanded Guard House— with its barred windows,

cells, and chapel—represented the threat of punishment and reeducation, and meted it out to both soldiers and American Indians. Dominating the south side of the parade ground at Vancouver Barracks, it played an important role in symbolizing the Army’s power and control. No wonder, then, that the photographer chose it as his subject.

Frederick Calhoun Orders Book



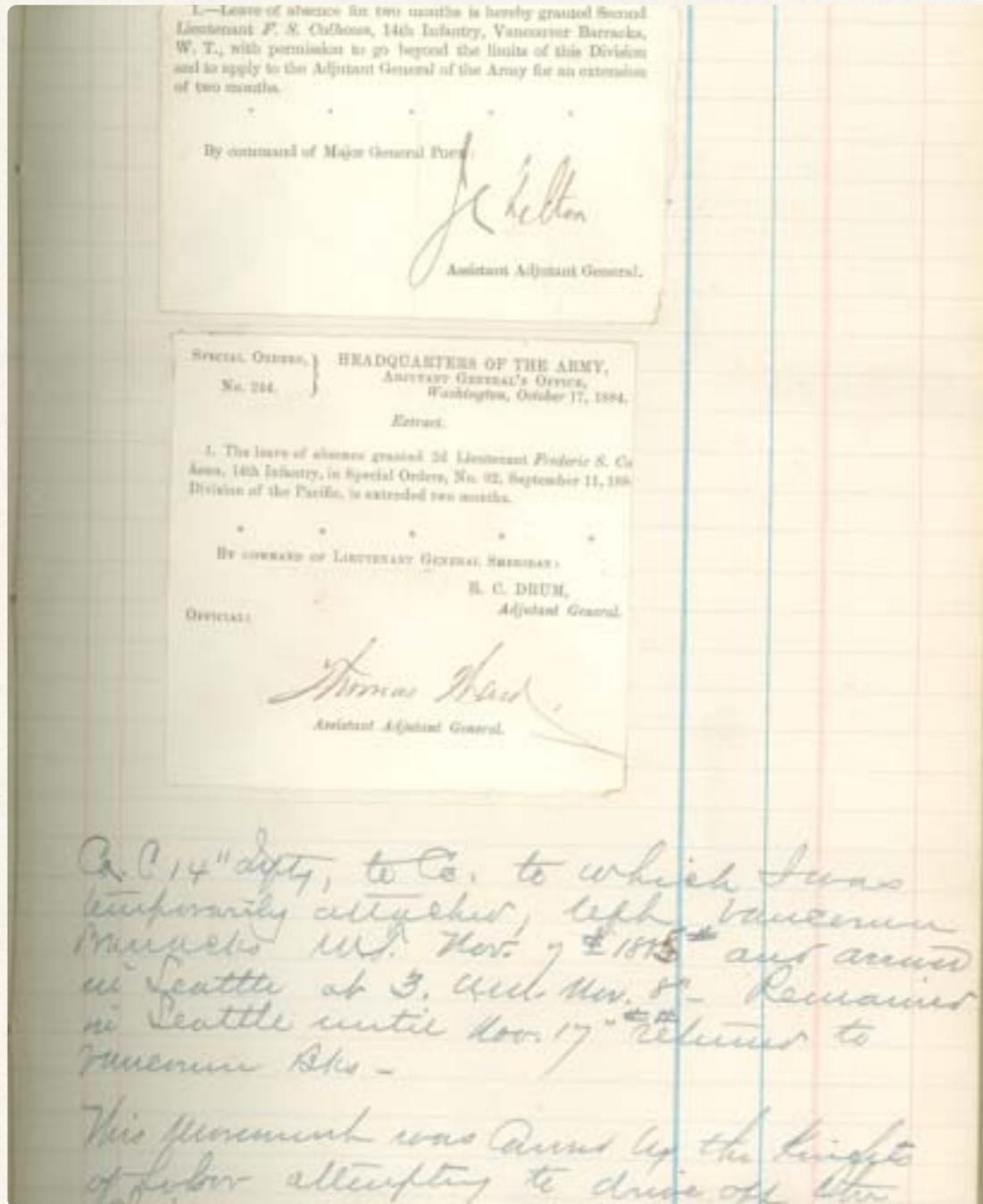
Called to duty, quelling violence in a western... city?!

...

Frederick Calhoun Orders Book

Beth Cookler

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Army dispatched troops from Vancouver Barracks and other western posts to intervene in labor disputes.



Park collection, NPS photo by John Edwards

Frederick Calhoun Orders Book -- How do you stand up for what's right when it's not popular to do so? How do you support something that is unpopular? These two entries from [Lt. Frederick Calhoun](#) demonstrate the role of the troops at Vancouver Barracks as protectors of the American ideal of civil liberties, enforcing federal law regardless of popular sentiment. Dated November 6, 1885 and February 8, 1886 respectively, these entries document that troops were ordered to Seattle, Washington to restore order because of the "Knights of Labor attempting to drive off the Chinese." Though [popular sentiment across the West at the time was vehemently anti-Chinese](#), and many soldiers may have personally agreed with this attitude, in this instance it was the role of these soldiers from Vancouver Barracks to oppose public sentiment—if only halfheartedly.

Similar to incidents in Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory and Squaw Valley, Washington Territory, anti-Chinese

agitation reached a crisis point in Seattle by late 1885. After numerous well-attended anti-Chinese mass meetings and rallies held at Yesler's Hall and Frye's Opera House organized by several different groups (not solely the Knights of Labor, as Calhoun had suggested), much of Seattle's white population agreed that action had to be taken to oust the Chinese from Seattle, regardless of the law. These sinophobes believed that the Chinese worked for lower wages than their white counterparts, sold their products for lower prices, and therefore should be blamed for the unemployment of white workers. Racial prejudice that Chinese were

The Knights of Labor fought for fair working conditions and worker's rights, but also pursued discriminatory policies against African Americans and Chinese.



Illustration by Joseph Keppler, 1882. Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-28487

“alien and non-assimilating” also acted to motivate the anti-Chinese fervor.

Governor Watson C. Squire of Washington Territory requested troops be sent from Vancouver Barracks to Seattle because he feared violence when 2,500 people participated in an anti-Chinese demonstration on October 24 that aimed for a “laudable end of excluding the Mongolian curse from the land.” After the large turnout, leaders of the anti-Chinese groups pressured the “bosses” of the Chinese community to sell their property and leave Seattle. Many Chinese agreed, fearing violence.

By the time troops began to arrive from federal forts on November 8, 1885, 150 Chinese had already left by ship. While the presence of federal troops in Seattle effectively calmed the anti-Chinese activists and prevented mass violence, the troops themselves offered no protection to the Chinese. Instead, troops brutally assaulted numerous Chinese and collected a “special tax” from individuals, amounting to \$150 in total. While the Army sent these men to protect the rights of the Chinese, many of the troops sided with the anti-Chinese popular sentiment or otherwise exploited the situation.

The troops from Vancouver Barracks (along with troops from other federal posts) returned to Seattle when the conflict heated up again in February 1886. After failing in the courts and the legislature to legally expel the Chinese, the anti-Chinese agitators attempted to find an alternative means to force them to leave. On Sunday, February 7, 1886, five- or six-man “committees” invaded the Chinese quarter in Seattle and forced its lawful residents to pack their belongings, leave their homes, and report to the wharf, where they would await their departure to San Francisco. After a Chinese merchant used a writ of habeas corpus to prevent their departure, the Chinese were then ordered to appear in court en masse to testify. Judge Roger S. Greene affirmed their right to stay, but urged them to leave, as the “general sentiment of the community was against them.” Many did depart, making the difficult choice to leave behind their homes rather than risk the violence of the mob. Those Chinese who tried to return home were harried by anti-Chinese agitators.

After a firefight between Seattle lawmen and the rioters that left five dead, Governor Squire once again declared martial law and called for federal troops. Vancou-

ver Barracks and other federal posts responded, but by the time Lt. Frederick Calhoun and Company F of the 14th Infantry arrived in Seattle on February 10 the threat of further violence had dimmed.

Like other federal troops, the soldiers at Vancouver Barracks occasionally found themselves standing up for the law against popular agitation. The Army’s somewhat ineffective intervention to protect the Chinese in Seattle echoed earlier attempts to protect American Indian peoples from the avarice of the white settlers who threatened them. In both cases, many of the troops had more sympathy with the vicious will of the majority than with their own orders. In both cases, Army officers and elected politicians decided that the rule of law should, in some circumstances, trump what was popular. And in both cases, the men in charge were unable or unwilling to do more than damage control.

Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Bottle



A sauce that reached from Kolkata to Vancouver

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Lea & Perrins sauce was one of the first brand-name condiments in the United States. In the early nineteenth century, most sauces were made at home. The Vancouver Barracks era coincided with a rapid rise in commercial foodstuffs.



Lea and Perrins Bottle, FOVA 03161, NPS photo by John Edwards

Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce

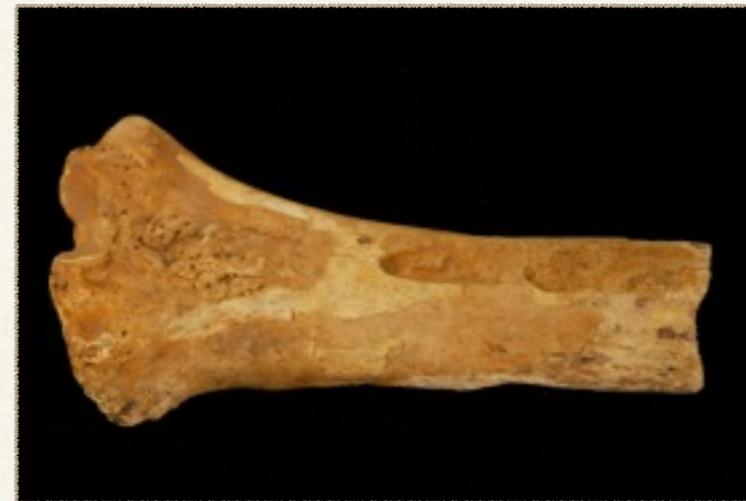
Marc J. Carpenter

Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce -- How do you spice up your food? The soldiers who lived in Vancouver Barracks in the nineteenth century used a wide variety of condiments, from simple salts to strong sauces like this bottle of Lea & Perrins Worcestershire sauce from the 1880s, [found in a privy](#) for the non-commissioned officers' (NCOs) quarters. The men who used this bottle likely ate reasonably well for their time, but food was [scarce](#) and monotonous in the early years of Vancouver Barracks. Private William Hilleary, a volunteer soldier who was stationed at the barracks in 1865, wrote that soldiers complained that “the bread tastes of soap” and “the coffee is as weak as water”; Hilleary would rather skip meals than eat the “rotten” meat that was served much of the time. Complaints about the food were a constant feature in soldier’s reminiscences, even for those served after the Civil War. It is unsurprising, then, that soldiers would prefer strong condiments like Lea & Perrins Worcestershire sauce.

The chemists John Wheeley Lea and William Henry Perrins of Worcester, England created their famous sauce in 1837. Besides placing conventional advertisements in newspapers, they aimed the sauce at the international market from the beginning—they gave kickbacks to stewards on ocean liners to serve their sauce to passengers, and it quickly became popular throughout the English-speaking world and beyond, spreading to New Zealand, Australia, India, and the United States. The concoction was one of the first brand-named condiments in America; in the 1830s, most sauces, mustards, and relishes were made at home.

By the Civil War, Lea & Perrins was a well-known sauce in the United States. A *Harper's Weekly* cartoon from 1861 emphasizing the importance of food to the Union Army showed Lea and Perrins bottles marching to “Victory” alongside pork chops and roasted chickens. The privy that this bottle was found in also contained evidence of homemade mustard, along with sardine tins, raspberry seeds, beef bones, and numerous other food remnants. In the 1880s, the NCOs who used this privy had a diet that was both national and local, using interna-

Experts at Fort Vancouver can deduce a great deal about the diets and lifestyles of the people at Vancouver Barracks by studying the butchery and preparation methods used on recovered bones like this one.



Bos Radius, FOVA 17985, NPS photo by John Edwards

tionally popular sauces to garnish meats that were likely butchered on site.

Food preparation, like many aspects of Army life, became more regulated in the late nineteenth century. There were Army-issued eating utensils, Army-approved recipes, and, by the turn of the century, Army-mandated butchery methods. Worcestershire sauce, popular in the Army since before the Civil War, was the key ingredient of the official Army recipe for “Brown Sauce” included in the US War Department’s *Manual for Army Cooks* (1896).

This is not the only Lea and Perrins bottle that has been found at Fort Vancouver, nor is it the only condiment container. Soldiers didn't just scrounge and scrape for food; they also found ways to make that food a little tastier. Their tastes, like those of the rest of the country, had a decidedly international flavor.

O.O. Howard Pistol



The personal sidearm of the “Christian General”

O.O. Howard was known as the “Christian General.” He viewed his faith as integral to his duties.



Howard pistol, FOVA 219206, NPS photos by John Edwards



O.O. Howard Pistol

David-Paul B. Hedberg & Gregory P. Shine

O.O. Howard Pistol -- At first glance, this item can be clearly identified as a pistol. Someone with knowledge of firearms might also observe that it is a Hopkins & Allen model XL No. 5 .38-caliber rim fire spur trigger pistol with the name of Major General Oliver Otis Howard engraved along its ivory grip. A Western history enthusiast might also add that it was manufactured around 1875 and was reportedly carried by the general as his personal weapon during the West's Indian War era.

The personal sidearm of Major General Oliver Otis Howard, famous Civil War veteran and commander of the Department of the Columbia from 1874 to 1880, is all of these things. It also symbolizes aspects of Howard, his life, and his role at Vancouver Barracks—specifically, his social class and the military power he used to advocate for African Americans and also subjugate American Indians.

Weapons inherently embody power, and this particular weapon represents Howard's status as an elite officer in the US Army. A cartridge revolver, like the one pictured on the next page, would have been a standard-issue service

weapon for Army officers. Howard's more unique, personalized weapon, unlike the standard-issue revolver, publicly displayed his significant power and fame. But like many famous figures, Howard's reputation can be looked upon today as embedded with contradictions.

Howard became nationally known through his service in the Civil War. He commanded Union troops at [Gettysburg](#) and in a number of other Civil War battles. During the [Battle of Fair Oaks](#), in Virginia, a Confederate minié ball struck Howard's right arm, requiring amputation. In 1893, Howard received the Medal of Honor for his bravery during the battle.

Howard is also well known for his outspoken Christian ideals, and he was an ardent supporter of the abolition of slavery. After the Civil War, he led the Freedmen's Bureau, a Reconstruction-era program that over-

Cartridge revolvers, such as this one, allowed for multiple shots to be fired without reloading.



Pistol, FOVA 2421

saw the transition of formerly enslaved African Americans into the sharecropper system. Through his work in the Freedmen's Bureau, Howard played a significant role in the establishment of Howard University, a college dedicated to providing educational access to African Americans.

By the time Howard came to Portland, Oregon as commander of the Department of the Columbia in 1874, he already possessed significant prestige through his Civil War service and his founding of Howard University. However, his treatment of American Indians during this era complicates his reputation as a Christian advocate.

Howard—reflecting the conventional wisdom of his era—viewed the American Indian Dreamer religion of the [Nez Perce](#) and Columbia Plateau peoples, which embraced a prophetic vision of a return to Native practices and a complete removal of whites from the land, as a threat and contradictory to Victorian-era concepts of peace and civilization. He viewed his role as Army department commander, in part, as an “opportunity of applying the processes of civilization, namely, systematic work and persistent instruction to Indian children and

Howard University was founded in 1867, and is still in operation. Below is a photo of the university in 2006.



Library of Congress, LC-DIG-highsm-13349, Photo by Carol Highsmith

youth.” To Howard and others, peaceful assimilation could be achieved if American Indians abandoned their native practices for those of the dominant American culture. “Those who have been the most successful in civilizing Indians,” Howard wrote, “brought about a gradual separation from savage ways of living and introduced various peaceful industries among them.”

The Pacific Northwest’s Dreamer-prophets represented a threat to this vision. “Their model of a man is an Indian,” explained Indian Agent T.B. Odeneal,” they

aspire to be Indians and nothing else. It is thought, by those who know them best, that they cannot be made to go upon their reservations without at least being intimidated by the presence of a military force.” Howard’s pistol represents this military force—in 1877, he responded to the Dreamer movement by [imprisoning](#) Skimiah and others at Vancouver Barracks in an attempt to force several groups back to their designated reservations.

However, non-treaty tribes like [Chief Joseph’s](#) Wallowa Band of Nez Perce refused to move onto a reservation, emphasizing that they had never signed a treaty. The resulting Nez Perce War of 1877 involved Howard’s US Army campaign against Chief Joseph and a 1,700 mile trek toward Canada, with Joseph’s subsequent surrender just 40 miles short of the border. After the [1877 Nez Perce](#) War and the 1878 Bannock War, fifty-one American Indians were still [imprisoned](#) at Vancouver Barracks in 1880, further showing Howard’s use of military force as a tool of compliance.

Following his fame in the Indian Wars, Howard authored several books of his recollections and gained additional prestige as a published author. He also spoke

and wrote frequently of his time in Portland and at Vancouver Barracks.

Interestingly, much of his tenure as commander of the Department of the Columbia was actually spent at his personal home in Portland. It was not until 1879 that Army Regulations changed and required the department commander to live on the post. Howard moved into the department commander's house (pictured) and the house was later named after him, even though he lived in it for less than two years—yet another example of his fame. The Italianate-Revival house was considered “the finest dwelling house north of the Columbia,” and even today, reflects Howard's public image as an elite officer.

Throughout his career, including his tenure at Vancouver Barracks, Howard sought to spread the nation's prevailing vision of civilization to those who did not possess it—including enslaved African Americans and American Indians. In the case of the Freedmen's Bureau and Howard University, he was willing to go against the popular social current and advocate for African American access to education. In the case of American Indians, he supported the reservation system as the best way

to assimilate American Indians to the Victorian era concept of civilization. In both cases, he was willing to initiate military action to do so. Much like his Hopkins & Allen revolver, Howard was unique, well-polished, and elite—but also very able to threaten or direct a punitive blow.

O.O. Howard pictured during the Civil War, before he came to Vancouver Barracks.



Library of Congress, LC-DIG-cwpb-06684

Hofsteater Photograph



The pomp of battle without the bloodshed

...

Military drills served both practical and ceremonial purposes. Sometimes, soldiers would practice the formations and orders they would use in battle. At other events, the drills were more style than substance, performances put on for morale and to impress and entertain the civilian population.



Hofsteater photograph, Image #4 Parade Ground,
FOVA 201592

Hofsteater Photograph

Michael A. Dicianna & Marc J. Carpenter

Hofsteater Photograph -- What images spring to mind when someone mentions a parade? Beyond the fun spectacle they provide, many parades—especially military ones—can play a role in fostering or creating patriotism. At Vancouver Barracks and in surrounding cities in the nineteenth century, dress parades featuring soldiers from the post served an important public relations function.

Even though the relationship between the Barracks and Vancouver's civilian community was tumultuous at times, formal demonstrations of military personnel and equipment were popular gala events. This was not unusual; in the nineteenth century United States, dress parades were less a show of force than a performance for the community. Much less frequently, the Army also offered another type of public display onsite: mock battles or demonstrations of military tactics and [technology](#) that could also create a positive image of the Army in the eyes of local civilians.

Relations between the city of Vancouver and Vancouver Barracks were often tense in the early years. Soldiers

would sometimes [steal local livestock](#) and crops. Especially before the establishment of the [Post Exchange](#) system, soldiers on payday would paint the town red, providing a valuable source of income but also creating disturbances and scandalizing many local residents.

As the state of Washington and the city of Vancouver grew, relations with Vancouver Barracks became more harmonious. The military reorganizations of the late 1870s forced the high-ranking department officers—including the general commanding all of the region’s forces—to live at the post. By the 1890s, Vancouver Barracks was a central fixture of local high society. Community members from Vancouver and Portland attended many military social events and the post commander and the military’s band played important social roles. The 14th Infantry Band performed regularly at theatricals, hops, and parties, entertaining the public and the regiment. The rowdy drunkards and chicken thieves that locals had once complained about were largely forgotten.

Military dress parades were held both on post and in the community for holidays and celebrations. The *Vancouver Independent* newspaper reported on these dis-

These soldiers are in their dress uniforms; they would have worn considerably plainer outfits for day-to-day tasks.



Soldiers on parade ground, FOVA 205139, Image 3

plays on a regular basis. Special events such as the occasional visit by national dignitaries were also met with the military grandeur of dress parades and band concerts. Former President Ulysses S. Grant returned to the post in 1879, and Rutherford B. Hayes, the first sitting US President to tour the West Coast, visited in 1880.

The Vancouver photography studio of O. M. Hofstater captured an image of a military demonstration staged in that same year. In this photograph, a mock engagement of infantry, cavalry, and artillery is seen on the Parade Ground immediately south of [Officer’s Row](#). Lo-

cal townspeople can be seen lined up in the gallery watching the event, and ladies in fine dresses can be made out on the verandas of the officer's homes. What clues does this image give to the public's impression of this event? Military tactics and technology of the day were displayed for the civilians with all the black powder smoke, dust and noise that accompany a real battle scene. Occasionally, the soldiers were decked out in full finery, plumes, sabers, gold braid, and brass buttons.

In 1872, US Army regulations stipulated two uniforms, one for field duty and one for ceremonial occasions. While the armed forces of the United States did not create a formal structure for public relations until 1948, they clearly recognized that impressing their worth upon the civilian population was an important and distinct task, worthy of its own uniform. The US Army could win hearts and minds at home with spit and polish, along with the occasional mock battle.

Railroad Spike



An iron road to the twentieth century

...

Thousands of spikes like this one forged the railroads that tied together the United States. Before the telegraph and the railroad arrived, Vancouver Barracks was still a distant post. By the end of the nineteenth century, the post—and the Pacific Northwest—was integrated into the rest of the nation.



Railroad spike, FOVA 52375, NPS photo by John Edwards

Railroad Spike

Michael A. Dicianna & Marc J. Carpenter

Railroad Spike -- Fighting was just one of the many duties of a soldier in the nineteenth century United States. In addition to drilling and maintaining post buildings and grounds, major tasks of the US Army at Vancouver Barracks and elsewhere in the West was helping to [survey](#), map, and even build roads, railroads, and telegraph lines, largely under the auspices of the specialized officer-only US Topographical Engineer Corps. Engineers and laborers working from Vancouver Barracks actively linked the post to the rest of the Northwest and the Nation. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, Vancouver Barracks helped build the connections that transformed the land from the so-called frontier to a part of the United States.

Vancouver Barracks was, of course, tied into [global](#) concerns from the beginning, like the Hudson's Bay Company's (HBC) Fort Vancouver before it. But the arrival of the railroad and the telegraph miraculously shortened the distance between the Pacific Northwest and the rest of the United States. Early trips to Vancouver Barracks required

months-long journeys over oceans or across mountain passes—trips by railroad required mere weeks, or even days.

The [Quartermaster's Depot](#) at Vancouver Barracks outfitted many of the seminal survey expeditions that mapped the Pacific Northwest we know today. One of these surveyors was Lt. George McClellan, later a famous Civil War general and presidential contender. As a captain in charge of a survey of the Cascade Range for the Northern Pacific Railroad, he displayed the same abundance of caution that he was later criticized for in the Civil War. Unwilling to brave dangerous winter conditions in the Cascade Mountains or venture into the snowpack, McClellan relied on hearsay and recommended the railroad be built through Yakima Pass. Later surveys found three superior routes nearby.

McClellan sketched several images of Mount Rainier, today a national park.



"Crater E of [Mount] Regnier [Rainier]" Field Book of George B. McClellan from 1853, Library of Congress

Roads, telegraph lines, and the railroad were more than just infrastructure: they were ways of claiming and asserting power. Roads allowed the movement of troops as well as trade. Beyond allowing the passage of troops, the roads themselves were a way of claiming land. In a report on his eponymous Mullan Road, a major conduit for settlers that stretched from Fort Benton, Montana to Fort Walla Walla, Washington, Lieutenant John Mullan explained that the road was important because it would enable settlement and, in the case of conflict with American Indians, those Indians would soon hear "a new sound in the tramp of the march of civilization." Curiously, his report also acknowledged the vital help of various American Indian groups in the area, whose rights he later advocated for in the 1880s.

Engineering remained a central part of the US Army mission in the Northwest throughout the Vancouver Barracks era. In addition to building and guarding roads, the US Engineering Corps mounted river surveys in the 1870s that led to blasting of rocks and construction of locks along the [Columbia](#) and other rivers (with the attendant drastic environmental changes), contin-

ued to string telegraph wire, and, in 1879, placed the first telephone lines from Portland to Vancouver.

The rail spike (also known as a cut spike) highlighted here is common design, still found in working rail lines today. Thousands upon thousands of spikes like this one were used to create the great railroads (like the Northern Pacific) that connected the Northwest to the rest of the United States. Thousands more were built to connect Vancouver Barracks to its surroundings in the early twentieth century, as the post and Army took on a leading role in producing spruce lumber for airplanes in World War I.

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