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NEWS RELEASE

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Oregon Historical Society Launches New Digital Collections Site, Providing Broad & Open Access to Archival Materials

Portland, OR – May 22, 2017 – In 2015, the Oregon Historical Society embarked on an ambitious two-year project to build an infrastructure to create, collect, preserve, and provide access to digital materials in its vast historic collections. Today, OHS announces a major milestone in this project with the official launch of OHS Digital Collections (digitalcollections.ohs.org).

This new website allows online public access to a rich variety of materials from the OHS Research Library, including items from our manuscript, photograph, film, and oral history collections. Behind the scenes, these files are safeguarded using a series of digital preservation workflows, systems, and storage processes called the OHS Digital Vault.

While collections will continue to be added to the site on an ongoing basis, featured collections at launch include:

- Photographs from Oregon conservation pioneers William L. Finley, Irene Finley, and Herman Bohlman, part of the [Reuniting Finley and Bohlman](#) project, a current year-long collaboration with Oregon State University Special Collections and Archives Research Center. This project is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Oregon State Library.
- Newspaper photographs from the [Oregon Journal](#) nitrate negative collection, consisting of images from the Portland paper taken during the 1920s and 1930s. This digitization project-in-progress is funded by a grant from the Jackson Foundation.

- [Papers of Joel Palmer](#), 1848-1880, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Oregon Territory and an Oregon State Legislator. Digitization was done in collaboration with the University of Oregon Special Collections.
- Landscape photographs by the renowned San Francisco [photographer Carleton E. Watkins](#) taken during his visits to Oregon and the Columbia River in the 1860s and 1880s.
- Early twentieth century photographs from Portland's [Kiser Photo Co.](#), one of the most successful and widely known commercial studios in the American West.
- Selected oral histories, including interviews from the [Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest \(GLAPN\)](#).
- Over 1100 portraits from the OHS [Cartes de Visite Collection](#), 1861-1893.

“We’re proud to announce the availability of this platform, which we view as a cornerstone of our organizational mission to make Oregon’s history open and accessible to all,” said OHS Digital Archivist Mathieu Deschaine. “We look forward to continued additions that will illustrate the breadth and diversity of our holdings and encourage their use for teaching, learning, and research.”

OHS Digital Collections and the OHS Digital Vault are funded by a generous grant from The Collins Foundation, with additional support from a bequest from the estate of William Bilyeu. Ongoing digitization is supported by private and public funders. Support for the expansion of the OHS Digital Vault to build further capacity to digitize rare and unique items can be made through donations to the Oregon Historical Society’s [FORWARD! capital campaign](#).

Begin exploring OHS Digital Collections at digitalcollections.ohs.org.

About the Oregon Historical Society

For more than a century, the Oregon Historical Society has served as the state’s collective memory, preserving a vast collection of artifacts, photographs, maps, manuscript materials, books, films, and oral histories. Our research library, museum, digital platforms & website (www.ohs.org), educational programming, and historical journal make Oregon’s history open and accessible to all. We exist because history is powerful, and because a history as deep and rich as Oregon’s cannot be contained within a single story or point of view.