



# • TAMÁSTLIKT •

CULTURAL INSTITUTE

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## NEWS RELEASE

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The book, *Peoples of the Plateau*, includes many of the photos to be displayed at Tamástlikt Cultural Institute Sept. 1- Jan. 14 in a new exhibit of the powerful photography of late 19th century photographer Maj. Lee Moorhouse. The cover features Ku-massag, a Cayuse Tribal member also known as Agnes Davis. The book is available in the Tamástlikt Museum Store.

Pendleton, Oregon—Businessman, postmaster, rancher, pioneer—Maj. Lee Moorhouse held all of these positions and more, but one activity, one that he may have thought of as simply a hobby, has kept his memory vivid for over a century. He liked to take pictures.

And boy did he take a lot. The University of Oregon archives holds over 6,000 of his glass

negatives from photos he took in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The Smithsonian Institution also holds many in its collection. In all Moorhouse is estimated to have shot over 9,000 photos, all on the difficult to handle glass negatives. And now, in an exhibit, *Peoples of the Plateau*, opening Sept. 1, 2006-Jan. 14, 2007, the Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute will present the public with a large number of those exquisite photographs, striking in their quality and in the intimate way in which Moorhouse captured his subjects.

The photos are also the subject of a book, *Peoples of the Plateau*, published in 2005 by the University of Oklahoma Press. Steven L. Grafe, editor of the book, will present a lecture on Maj. Moorhouse at Tamástslíkt Sept. 8 at 2 p.m. The lecture is free and open to the public. The book, available at Tamástslíkt's Museum Store, includes a history of Moorhouse written by Grafe and nearly 100 of Moorhouse's Tribal photos with detailed descriptions.

Also in conjunction with the exhibit, on Sat., Oct. 28, Tamástslíkt invites anyone to bring figured woolen blankets to the museum for a free appraisal by expert Barry Friedman, author of *Chasing Rainbows*. Friedman, the authoritative source for trade blanket aficionados, will provide this service during the museum's open hours, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at no cost.

One of Moorhouse's many jobs put him in close proximity to the 19th century Tribal residents of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Thanks to his Republican Party connections Moorhouse was able to persuade newly elected president Benjamin Harrison in 1889 to appoint him agent of the Reservation. In the ensuing years Moorhouse captured Tribal life on his glass negatives thousands of times.

One aspect of his photography was unusual. While many photographers of Indians in the 19th century, such as the famous Edward Curtis, saw their subjects as emblematic of a type and seldom put a name to the photo, Moorhouse knew and appreciated his subjects—nearly every one of his photos has the names of the individual subjects attached. This has been a boon to today's Tribal members seeking portraits of ancestors. For many, Moorhouse's photos represent the only images of a beloved family elder from the late 19th century.

Sadly, Moorhouse supervised one of the many treaty-breakings inflicted on Tribal members here and elsewhere. Thanks to one of his previous, short-term jobs as a surveyor he undertook to survey the reservation so that "surplus" reservation lands could be separated from the Tribes people who jointly owned the lands. Under the Slater Act in 1886, written by congress specifically for the Umatilla Reservation, plots of 160 acres were to be allocated to Tribal heads of household. The true purpose of the act, engineered by the Tribes' neighbors, was to create large blocks of surplus reservation land so that the locals could obtain them. The following year, the Dawes Act of 1887 applied this practice across the nation.

Moorhouse documented the pristine landscapes of the Umatilla tribal homelands as austere portraits.

Unfortunately, in 1891 Moorhouse was asked to resign as Umatilla Indian agent after being accused of drunkenness, a charge that he denied, as did many Pendleton citizens and the Tribal chiefs who wrote in his support. Despite the lack of any evidence for the charge, he submitted his resignation. Nonetheless, he remained a respected Pendleton businessman until his death in 1926.

His photography obsession began in the 1890s, when he was in his 40s, and continued to his death. Not only did he shoot many photos of Umatilla Tribal members, he also traveled to other reservations and captured Colvilles, Warm Springs, Blackfeet and other Tribes people, including the famous Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce. He also shot many photos of the early Pendleton Round-Ups. In fact, his son, Mark, was one of the Round-Up founders.

Many of his photographs have appeared in magazines and history books. The Smithsonian

Museum has used them in its exhibits. In his lifetime he published booklets of the photos and sold an estimated 150,000 prints, as well as cards and postcards.

In a 1913 interview Moorhouse said, "I have certainly taken great pleasure and some profit out of my photography and I believe the work of preserving in photographic form the historic sites and the well known Indians will be valuable to future generations." How right he was.

Tamástslikt Cultural Institute is located at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, 10 minutes east of Pendleton. From Interstate 84 take exit 216 and follow the signs five minutes to Wildhorse Resort and the Institute. Coming from the north, take the Mission exit from Highway 11 just northeast of Pendleton and follow the signs for about ten minutes to the Wildhorse Resort and the Institute. Tamástslikt is open 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. In addition to exhibits telling the story of the three Tribes' history and culture, there is also a Museum Store and the Kinship Café.

For more information: 541-966-9748 or [www.tamastlikt.org](http://www.tamastlikt.org). Direct dial the museum store at tollfree 1-866-282-2022. Tamástslikt is owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

**Note: If you would like not to receive emailed news releases on Tamástslikt's events and activities please reply to this email and put UNSUBSCRIBE in the Subject area.**