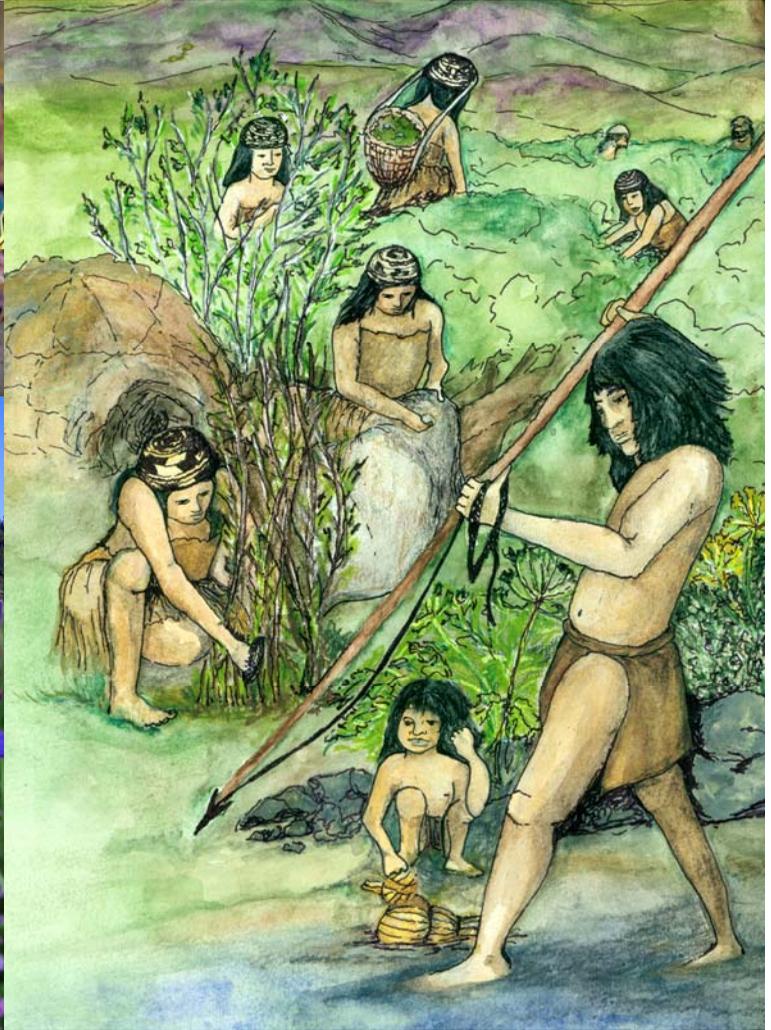


An introduction to the Native Americans of the Rogue Valley

with a Focus on the Ashland Area



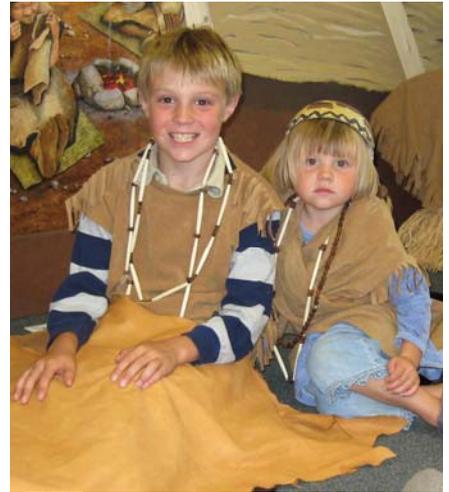
North Mountain Park Nature Center
A division of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department

November 2012

About this Booklet

This booklet is intended as an educational piece for park visitors, classroom teachers and others who are interested in learning about the indigenous inhabitants of this region. Although based on numerous ethnographies, historical accounts, archaeological records, and the input of tribal people today, this booklet is not meant to be a scholarly document, rather, the purpose of this booklet is to form a general picture of what life was like for the Native Americans who lived in and around Ashland prior to, and following contact with, Euro-Americans, including their role as long-term stewards of this region.

The events that occurred during the 19th century and the impact they have had on the land and people of this region are still being felt today. For tribal people, whose ancestors resided in the Rogue Valley for thousands of years, it is about maintaining a relationship with their homeland while moving forward in a new land. For others, it is about trying to learn from the past while looking toward a better, more sustainable and more honorable future for everyone.



Nature Center staff are grateful to all of the people who have contributed to the writing of this booklet and to the efforts of artists Irene Brady and Nancy Wylie.

Top left cover photo by
Michelle Alaimo/Smoke Signals

North Mountain Park Nature Center

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Food and the Seasonal Round.....	6
Shelter	8
Clothing and Decoration	9
Hunting and Fishing	10
Gathering and Processing Plants	11
Tools and Weapons	12
Household Items.....	14
Toys and Games	15
Stories, Myths, and Legends.....	16
Contact with Euro-American Settlers.....	17
Conflict and War	18
The First Treaty and Reservation	20
Forced to Give Up Their Homeland.....	22
Loss of Cultural Ties and Tribal Identity	24
Boarding Schools.....	26
Loss of Reservation Land.....	27
Termination	28
Restoration	29
Tribal Self-Sufficiency	30
Looking Ahead	31
APPENDICES	
A. Tribal Lands of Southwest Oregon.....	32
B. Reservation Lands.....	33
C. Timeline.....	34
D. Resources	35
E. To Learn More	36

Introduction

To the Native American tribes that lived here, the Rogue Valley was not just their home, it was what defined them as a culture and a people. The stories they told, the food they ate, the clothing they wore, and the objects they crafted, were all connected to the surrounding environment.

For at least as long as 10,000 years (13), Native Americans were part of the landscape of the Rogue Valley, travelling from the valley floor to the high mountains in a seasonal round pattern that allowed them access to available resources. They moved throughout the valley hunting deer, gathering willow, burning oak stands, celebrating the return of the salmon, raising families, and mourning the loss of loved ones. Although they did not farm, tribes of the Rogue Valley managed the vegetation they relied upon in a variety of significant ways, including the use of fire, selective harvesting, pruning, transplanting, and, in the case of tobacco, cultivation and fertilization.



Coyote tobacco



Tarweed

The Shasta, or *kahosadi*, people were among the original managers of the land surrounding the Ashland Creek Watershed and what is now the town of Ashland. Anthropologists commonly call this group the Oregon Shasta because of their geographical separation from their kinsmen to the south in present-day California. To fully understand the influences of the Shasta and other tribes on this land (and visa-versa) it is important to acknowledge the elaborate inter-tribal network that existed. This network provided not only for the sharing of resources during times of scarcity, but also for the exchange of critical information related to long-term land management practices. Intertribal exchanges also allowed for cultural sharing and growth. Included in this exchange were tribes from three primary language groups that came to inhabit overlapping parts of Southern Oregon and Northern California: the Hokan groups (including the Shasta and Karok people), the Penutian groups (including the Takelma, Coos, and lower Coquille people), and the

Athabaskan groups (including the Chetco, Tututni, Tolowa, upper Umpqua, Illinois, upper Coquille, Galice Creek and Applegate people). Other tribes along the Klamath River also played a role in this network, including the Klamath, Modoc, Yurok and Hupa.

With the arrival of European-American settlers to southern Oregon in the mid-nineteenth century, the local environment underwent a radical change in how it was used and cared for by the human population. The transition from the native hunter-gatherer economy to an imported European-derived agricultural one happened almost overnight and is arguably the most drastic shift in humans' relationship with the environment in over 10,000 years of human occupation of this land.

During this tumultuous period the native tribes fought to keep their land and their livelihood but after years of sporadic fighting and the placement of local tribes onto a temporary reservation near Table Rock, treaty tribes of southern Oregon were removed to two reservations both located near the northern Oregon coast (5).

Since that time, tribal people have suffered innumerable hardship as the government tried first to integrate them into white society and then to exterminate their identity as Indian people all together. Through all of this, the descendents of the Rogue Valley's indigenous tribes have retained a cultural heritage and a spiritual compass that have allowed them to build back their identity as a tribal people while at the same time establishing their rightful place as proud members of American society.



*Woman setting fire to tarweed field.
Charred seeds and grasshoppers being collected.*

Food and the Seasonal Round

One of the most significant differences between the Native Americans of the Rogue Valley and the Euro-Americans who came to “settle” the region had to do with the acquisition of food. The settlers were an agricultural people in contrast to the indigenous tribes whose hunter-gatherer lifestyles were based on moving throughout the region as wild food resources became available and abundant (1). This subsistence pattern, commonly known as the *seasonal round*, required access to a large tract of land, extensive knowledge of the cycles of the native plants and animals that lived and grew there and a belief system that prevented the overuse of these limited resources (9). The seasonal round began in early spring when families or extended families would leave their permanent winter villages and travel to prime root-gathering and fishing sites.

Spring

Plant foods:

Wild celery, wild parsley, wild rhubarb leaves, Miner’s lettuce and other greens.

Animal Foods:

Bear, deer, elk, ducks and geese, salmon, steelhead, trout, eel, grasshoppers, yellow jacket larvae, crickets, crawfish, and mussels.



Gathering camas bulbs



Basket making, storytelling, and sewing

Winter

Plant foods:

Seeds, nuts and berries that had been stored and dried.

Animal Foods:

Meats that had been stored and dried;
Venison that was hunted with the use of snowshoes.

Spring was a time for gathering green shoots, digging bulbs, and fishing for the spring runs of salmon. Summer was a time for moving to the higher elevations of the valley in search of big game, bulbs and a variety of berries. By early fall, families returned to mid elevations where they would be busy catching and drying salmon, burning tarweed fields for easy collection of the seeds, and for gathering the enormously important acorn crop. Late fall was a time for communal deer and elk drives and the processing of the resultant venison. By early winter it was time for families to return to their permanent village locations in the lowlands where they would complete the processing of acorns and other foods that were needed to last throughout the cold, wet winter months. Winter was also a time to work on repairing and crafting weapons, tools, clothes and a variety of household items, and for the telling stories and visiting other villages (11).

Summer

Plant foods:

Manzanita berries, wild native blackberry, service berry, gooseberries, thimbleberries, chokecherries, three-leaf sumac berries, elderberries, tarweed seeds, grass seeds, wild sunflower seeds, camas and ipos bulbs. (6)

Animal Foods:

Mountain lion, bighorn sheep, antelope, bobcat, rabbits, squirrels, beaver, grasshoppers, yellow jacket larvae, crickets, crawfish, and mussels. (6)



Burning tarweed



Gathering firewood, elderberries and acorns

Fall

Plant foods:

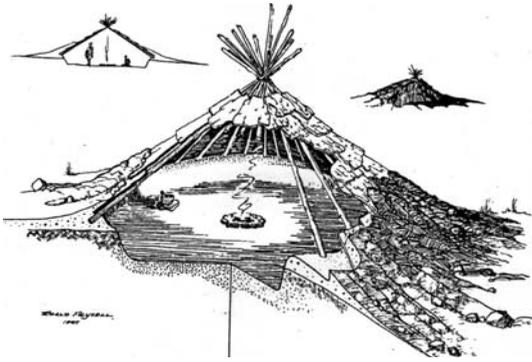
Black and white oak acorns, ponderosa pine nuts and hazelnuts. (2)

Animal Foods:

Salmon, steelhead, trout, eel, ducks, geese, grasshoppers, yellow jacket larvae, crickets, crawfish, and mussels.

Caution: some of the traditional foods listed here, if not prepared and cooked properly, may cause illness or death.

Shelter



A conical, subterranean Umma (13)

typically made up of individual family dwellings, family sweatshouses used for ritual cleansing and general health, a centrally located assembly house for meetings and dances, and, for some tribes, a women's menstrual and childbirth hut (1).

One style of Shasta dwelling, known as an "umma", was conical in shape and framed by a series of tall pine poles with the outside being covered with bark shingles. The inside of the umma would be excavated to a depth of about three feet which helped to insulate it and give it more height. A fire pit would be located in the center of the umma, and it was around this that people slept on tule mats with fur blankets. Possessions would be stored along the outer edges or hung in the rafters formed by the interior ribs. Unlike the teepees of the plains, ummas were not transported but remained in place year-round to be used by the very old or sick during the warmer months. The rest of the family members would leave their winter home in the spring, building temporary willow or brush shelters as they traveled throughout the valley. (6). Another style of winter homes, and one more common to the Takelma, were rectangular plank houses (8).



Takelma-style plank house

Image courtesy of BLM.

Clothing and Decoration

Most Native American tribes of the Rogue Valley had two sets of clothing: “everyday” wear and “dress up” attire for ceremonies, visiting and other special occasions. One style of women’s everyday wear included a double skirt made of buckskin covered by an apron (made of pine nuts, grass or buckskin), a sleeveless poncho-style shirt, and a basket cap. In winter, fur-lined moccasins and shawls or robes made of raccoon, fox or wild cats would be added for warmth.

Women’s formal wear included stylized skirts fringed with pine nut beads, dentalium shells, and grass braidwork as well as belts embedded with porcupine quillwork (1).



Pine nut beads



Men’s winter clothing

For the men, everyday wear in the summer might consist of a simple breechclout. Cooler weather called for the addition of a pair of buckskin leggings, held up with a belt that went through a loop at the top of each legging.

Buckskin shirts, either short or long sleeved, came down to the knees. Like the women, men would utilize fur in the form of robes and lined moccasins for warmth during winter. Men’s formal wear was not as elaborate as the women’s but could include fringed shirts



Men’s summer clothing

or leggings and decorated moccasins. Men also wore ceremonial headbands made of colorful feathers (1).

Children often moved about naked or with a simple breechclout during the warmer months. As the weather cooled, they would utilize a buckskin shirt that hung down to the knees. Moccasins and fur robes were also worn during the cold winter months (11).

For decoration, Takelma women adorned their chins with clay tattoos which were applied with an obsidian blade at puberty. Men often wore tattoos on their arms for the measurement of dentalium, a type of shell currency. Both men and women wore necklaces and bracelets made of shells or pine nuts and pierced-nose ornaments made of shell or feather (1).

Hunting and Fishing

Because the Native Americans of the Rogue Valley did not raise domestic animals for food, their main source of protein came from the game they hunted. Deer, hunted year-round, was their most important game meat, being dried as jerky for long-term storage.

Elk and bear meat were also important sources of protein-rich food, however, some tribes had restrictions and taboos related to the eating of bear meat. Other game animals that were hunted in and around the Rogue Valley included rabbit, fox, cougar, bobcat, antelope, and big horn sheep (3). Boys honed their hunting and trapping skills by going after smaller game such as squirrels and rabbits. In addition to the meat they provided, game animals were utilized in the making of numerous tools and household items (1).

The main tool of the hunter was the bow and arrow (13), which replaced the atlatl approximately 2,500 years ago (19). An atlatl was a long spear-like tool that was launched with an additional hand tool. Hunting was done on foot (horses were not part of the pre-contact landscape of the Rogue Valley), often with the aid of trained hunting dogs (4). Hunting was almost always done by the men of the tribe with the exception of the deer drives, where women participated. Because hunting was such a critical component to their subsistence, hunters were very careful in the preparation of their weapons and in the mindset they brought to the hunt. Hunters often spent days in ritual cleansing to prepare for an important hunt. Numerous taboos existed which related to hunting, particularly in the way hunters were expected to share with their village. An overriding respect for all animals, and for their role in maintaining balance, ensured that hunters honored and thanked the animals they were hunting (3).



Yew-wood bow



Spear point

Salmon and steelhead, which provided another important source of protein, were caught with the aid of traps, spears, weirs, nets, hooks and lines and drives. Spring and fall runs provided an abundance of fish which could be eaten fresh or dried for winter (1) (3).

The tribes also had a great respect for the salmon they caught, evidenced in their protection of the spawning grounds and in their salmon ceremonies.

Gathering and Processing Plants

Native Americans of the Rogue Valley had an intimate knowledge of the plants in their region which were as important to their survival as were the animals they hunted. This knowledge was gained over thousand of years as people learned which plants were edible, which had medicinal value, which could be counted on to make the sturdiest bows, and which could be formed into beautiful baskets and caps (18).

The gathering and processing of plant materials was primarily the work of women who could do so while caring for young children (6). Men, however, worked with a number of specific plant materials in the making of bows, arrows, and cordage for fish nets and deer snares, items that women were often not “allowed” (by social custom) to craft.



The timing as to when the needed plant materials were available helped dictate the movement of the tribes throughout the valley. Shoots of willow that grew along the streambed, for example, had to be gathered in early spring, while berries that grew in the higher mountains were not available until later in the summer. During the fall, tribal members came to read the signs that signaled it was time to travel back to the lower elevations to gather the falling acorns and to burn fields of yellow tarweed to collect the roasted seeds (3).

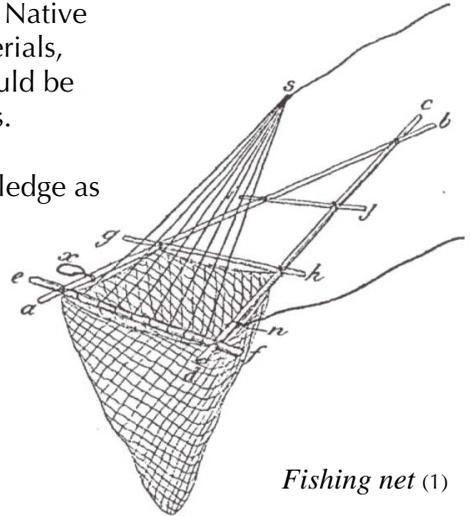
While nearly all people gained a general working knowledge of commonly used plants by the time they were adults, medicine women and men also had extensive knowledge of a variety of plants that could be used for healing and for ceremonial purposes.



Tools and Weapons

The landscape of the Rogue Valley provided Native Americans with a variety of raw natural materials, including plants, animals, and rocks, that could be shaped into all manner of tools and weapons.

To do so, however, required extensive knowledge as to where these resources could be found, the best time of year to access them, and how to fabricate them into useful and lasting items. Children acquired these skills through a combination of careful observation and playful imitation, often over a period of several years.



Fishing net (1)

Fish club



Fish hooks made from bone and antler



Plant stems and fibers were used in the manufacture of numerous items, including digging sticks, fire drills, cordage (rope), spears, fishing nets, fish weirs, fish drying racks, bows, arrows, deer snares, gambling sticks and children's toys (11).

Animal parts, including hides, fur, claws, hooves, teeth, bones and antlers were critical in the manufacture of needles, awls, wedges, fishhooks, digging stick handles, scrapers, bow strings, arrows and quivers, among other items. Deer antlers were also part of the all important flint-knapping kit.

Fire drill



A variety of rocks (such as jasper, agate, and basalt) were readily available and commonly utilized by residents of the Rogue Valley in the making of tools and weapons. Others, including obsidian, had to be obtained through trade or long-distance travel (15).



Pipe

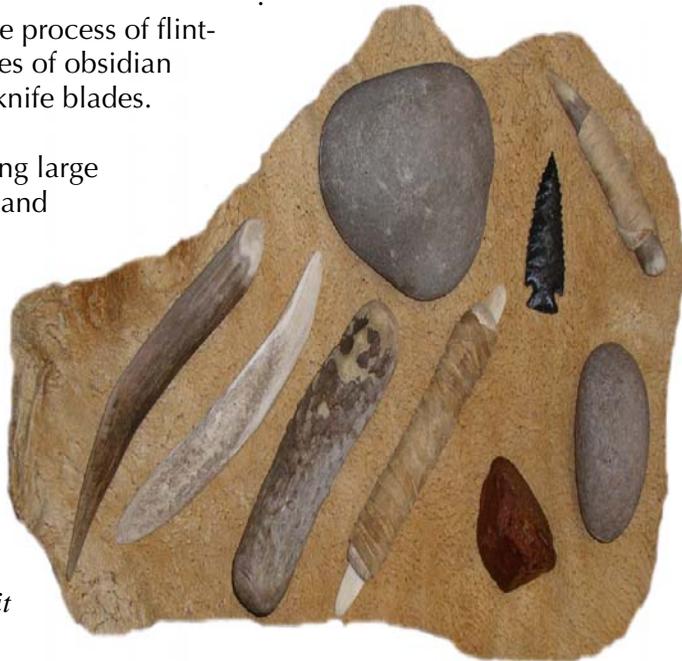


*Obsidian and
Jasper scrapers*

With considerable labor, people could shape basalt and other hard stone into bowls, pipes, grinding slabs, grinding manos and metates, hammer stones, ax heads, and wedges. Soapstone was used to make pipes and other small items (1).

Stones were also used in the process of flint-knapping to turn large pieces of obsidian and jasper into points and knife blades.

This was done by hammering large chunks of rock with stones and antlers until fine pieces were formed.



Flint knapping kit

Household Items

Because the tribes of the Rogue Valley were very mobile, moving from the valley floor into the high mountains and back each year, their inventory of household items was fairly small.

Some items that were critical and in use at all times included baskets, made of willow and other plant materials, sleeping and sitting mats, woven from tule or cattail, metates (grinding stones) and manos (hand tools) used to process seeds and nuts, spoons made of wood or antler, and the all-important cordage which was used to lash together any number of items (5).



Wooden spoon



*Cordage and
cordage keeper*



Basket

While many of these items were small enough to transport, some of the heavier items, such as the metates, would have been formed wherever they were needed and then buried at that location for later use. Other items, those which saw the most use, might need to be re-made several times over the course of a season.



*Metate (grindstone) with
a mano (hand tool)*

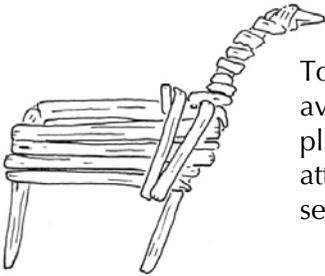
Toys and Games

As with people everywhere, the Native Americans of the Rogue Valley provided their children with a variety of toys, and everyone participated in game playing. Some games, such as the gambling games for adult men and women, were quite serious with teams of gamblers singing power songs to strengthen the gamblers in a complex ceremonial fashion.

Other games, played by children, were used to teach life skills that would be essential in later years. One such game was played using a disk of ponderosa pine. The disk was rolled down a hill as young boys shot at it with their toy bow and arrows. Similar to this was the hoop and pole game, whereby a hoop made of a pliable shoot or bark strip was rolled on the ground as the youngsters attempted to throw a spear through it – imitating spear fishing.



Ball and Pin Game (11)



Cattail toy

Toys could be fashioned out of any number of readily available materials. The ball and pin game, whereby players attempted to catch a series of hoops onto an attached stick, was made out of a wooden pin with a series of salmon vertebrae attached to a cordage string (11).



Indian dice

Other toys, such as dolls and stick animals, could easily be fashioned from common plants including cattail and willow. Even acorns could be made into small tops.

Gambling sticks for Stick Game



Stories, Myths, and Legends



The Native Americans of the Rogue Valley spoke languages that could be traced back thousands of years, but these languages were never developed into a written form. Consequently, all of the tribes' critical historical and cultural information was passed down orally, mainly through myths and stories. For this reason, stories were much more than a form of entertainment – they were serious lessons that explained the origin of the natural world, tribal history, survival techniques and codes of conduct.

Almost without exception, stories and myths were told during the dark winter months. Usually told by elderly members of the tribe, stories and myths would be repeated over and over so that none of the details would be lost.

As a way of keeping children focused,

storytellers would ask their audience to chime in with a word or phrase at frequent intervals. Some storytellers would have their young audience repeat each line of the story as a way of ensuring that it would be remembered.

All tribes have significant mythological characters. A favorite character for many of the tribes of southwest Oregon is coyote who can be lusty, wily, greedy, cowardly, and sometimes foolish but also extremely smart, using his wit to help others (11). The Shasta, for example, might have utilized the coyote character to help teach how losing one's way might lead to the making of new friends while the Takelma might have depicted Coyote in a way that would help teach a healthy respect for places that are unfamiliar (23). The Dragonfly was also a main character in Takelma stories and myths.



Contact with Euro-American Settlers



The exploration of Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery in 1804 brought them as far as the Pacific Ocean along the Oregon Coast. Although the indigenous residents of southern Oregon had no knowledge of this monumental occurrence, in just 50 years, they, along with their ancient cultural traditions, would be forever changed. These changes were due in large

part to the potential that Lewis and Clark saw in opening up the west.

Although they may have heard rumors of a strange new people, it was not until the fur trade brought trappers to southern Oregon via the Canadian Hudson's Bay Company in the 1820s that the Indians of the Rogue Valley encountered white men. While it may have been reassuring that these new people did not intend to stay, it also became clear that by taking as many beaver as they possibly could, these strangers were displaying values and spiritual beliefs that were markedly different from those of the resident population. And these new ways hinted at ominous changes to come.



*Moses Black
Harris of the
Applegate Trail
exploration party,
1846.*

Salem Public Library
Historic Photograph
Collections.



The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 sent an ever-increasing number of ambitious pioneers west along the Oregon Trail. It was the Applegate Trail, though, the later, southern version of the Oregon Trail, that had an even larger impact, as this trail brought settlers directly through the Rogue Valley. These pioneer families not only looked and dressed differently than the resident Native Americans, they also brought with them a variety of strange animals. Pigs and milk cows were as unfamiliar to the native residents as were wheat and whiskey. While many of the pioneers passing through the area did not initially stay in the valley, they had a significant impact on the local plants and wildlife as the domestic animals they brought with them chewed their way through native bunch grasses and camas fields and all variety of game animals were shot to feed their hungry families. Through these and other actions, the seemingly rude and ignorant pioneers began a cycle of mistrust that was to last for a very long time.

Conflict and War



In 1851, the discovery of gold near present-day Jacksonville led to the influx of thousands of people, mostly men, into the Rogue Valley. The miners came on the heels of the California Gold Rush in high hopes of making their fortune. Although many did not intend to stay and make the Rogue Valley their permanent home, they had a significant impact on the environment and caused hardships to the resident population. By the winter of 1852, just two years after the valley was virtually void of non-Indians, the brand new town of Table Rock City (present-day Jacksonville) had grown to a bustling community of over 2,000 fortune-seeking newcomers, complete with saloons, gambling halls, shops and businesses (6).

At the same time, and mainly to support the miners, the nearby town of Ashland was becoming established with the construction of a handful of mills. As other new towns began to take shape, more settlers arrived to stake their claim to the free land under the new Oregon Donation Land Act. Married couples were promised 640 acres of land and single men were allotted 320 acres; the only stipulation being that the land had to be worked for at least four years.



Seeing so many new people coming to the valley with the intent of settling would have been disturbing to any resident group, but the Native Americans of the Rogue Valley feared not only for their own safety but also for the safety of the local environment. Their world was quickly changing as streams, and the salmon residing there, were compromised by thousands of miners chipping away at the gravel bars and by hungry settlers devastating deer, elk, and other game populations. It did not take long for the native residents to decide that they had no choice but to take up arms in an attempt to defend their homeland.

The settlers not only staked claim to the land upon which they built their cabins and barns, they also built numerous fences for pastureland which effectively prohibited native people from having access to many of their important fishing, hunting and plant gathering locations (6).

Small skirmishes erupted, as both sides tried to maintain the upper hand. As the settlers and miners began to lay new claims, the skirmishes evolved into major ambushes and planned executions on both sides.



Indian Agent Joel Palmer
Oregon Historical Society Image #27903

Attempting to protect themselves, their families and their land, the native people soon found that they were severely outnumbered and that their impact was limited due to a territorial law that unfairly prohibited native people from possessing firearms. (13).

Within two years of the discovery of gold near Jacksonville, the problems between the new emigrants and the Indians had become so volatile and impossible to resolve that the US government, under the leadership of the

Superintendent of Indian Affairs Joel Palmer, made plans to remove all of the Indians of the greater Rogue Valley to a temporary reservation on and around Table Rock.



Photo of Grave Creek Covered Bridge. 15 miles north of Grants Pass. Completed in 1921, the bridge is named for a young woman that died at this crossing in one of the pioneer caravans while on the Applegate Trail.

Salem Public Library Historic Photograph Collections

The First Treaty and Reservation

“Right of discovery could not be established ... because the land is not ownerless—the Indians are the true owners of the land—treaty is the proper means by which to secure safe and lucrative passage in the New World.”

- Excerpt from American Indians, American Justice



By 1852, many of the Rogue River Indians realized that the hostile miners and settlers were not going to allow them to move freely around the valley without threat of death, so they

resigned to negotiate a truce. The indigenous residents understood that if they did not sign a treaty, they would have no claim to any of their ancestral homeland and worse, they would remain unprotected from the life-threatening immigrants. Representatives from three language groups, the Applegate River Athabaskans, the Shasta, and the Takelma agreed to sign a treaty. By handing over an estimated two million acres of the Rogue River Valley, the tribes were ostensibly guaranteed peace and security on a reservation. This treaty, referred to as the Rogue River Treaty, was signed by tribal and government representatives on September 10, 1853 (6).

The Table Rock Reservation was the first reservation in the Pacific Northwest and was meant to be a temporary solution to the conflict between Indians and settlers in SW Oregon. It was located in and around the Table Rocks, bordered on the south by the Rogue River from Evans Creek to Little Butte Creek and bordered on the north by the Umpqua/Rogue divide. As part of the treaty, the Indians agreed to give up, or *cede*, claims to all of the surrounding and in exchange they were to receive \$60,000 (\$15,000 of which was required to be used to compensate the settlers for “trepidations” or damages resulting from various skirmishes), housing, food in the form of wheat and beef, horses and oxen. They were also promised schools, a hospital, tools, and training in the ways of farming, ranching, and blacksmithing. Although the treaty was said to be binding under the US constitution, many of its provisions were not to last, or were never implemented at all (6).

Fort Lane was constructed on the south bank of the Rogue River near the mouth of Bear Creek.

It was abandoned September 17, 1856 after most of the Indians had been removed to the coastal reservations. No buildings remain..



In addition to granting them the right “to occupy temporarily the Table Rock Reservation... until a suitable selection could be made for...permanent residency,” the US government agreed to construct a fort across the Rogue River from the reservation. Fort Lane, as the new fort was named, was erected to protect the peace between the Indians of the new reservation and the miners and settlers who surrounded them.

Many individuals and families felt that life on the reservation would be their best chance for survival, though a few small groups decided to live off of the reservation, remaining in traditional villages, knowing they would have to fight to protect their way of life. Tecumtum (“Elk Killer”), also known as Chief John — head of a band of Takelma — refused to sign the treaty with the U.S. government that established the Table Rock Reservation. This treaty ceded their claim to lands in Southern Oregon in exchange for \$60,000. In a speech to government officials, he said:



“This is my country; I was here when the trees were very small...My heart is sick with fighting, but I want to live in my country.

If the white men are willing, I will go back to Deer Creek..., but I will not lay down my arms and go to the Reservation; I will fight.”

Chief John

Oregon Historical Society Image #4355

Forced to give up their Homeland

“Before we came to the reservation, myself and my people were promised cattle, horses, clothing and so on. We were to have coffee, sugar. We were to have each a piece of land to cultivate. What we raised by our own labor was to ours to do what we please with. Now we have not had any of these things...”

Chief Sam of the Rogue River
The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde



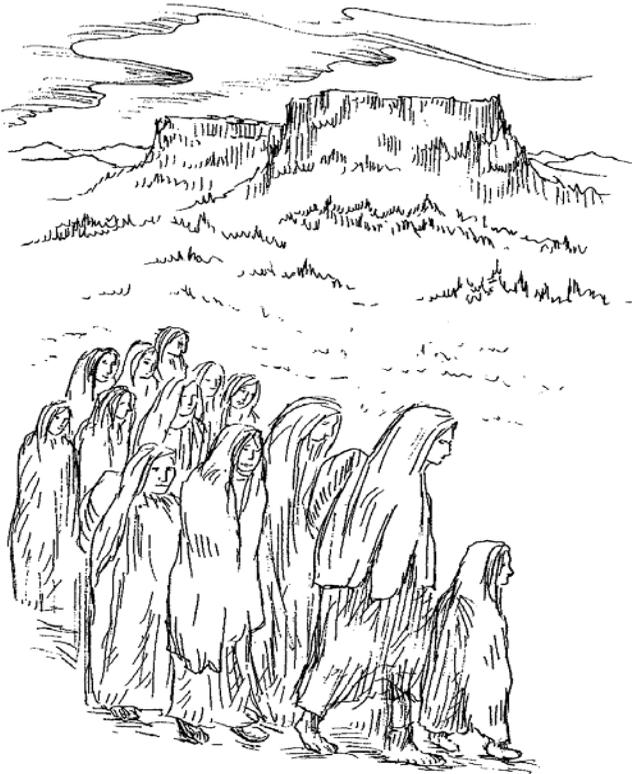
From its inception, the plan to house the tribes of the Rogue Valley on Table Rock Reservation was doomed to fail. One of the first issues to arise was the government’s insistence that the Indians give up their subsistence way of life and immediately transition to farming. To initiate this process, the government had promised a supply of food in the form of beef, wheat flour, sugar and coffee. Because these early rations were delayed due the fact that the treaty took several months to become ratified, the Indians were forced to attempt to secure food in their traditional manner amidst an ever-increasing number of armed newcomers.

In addition to the lack of early rations, the Native Americans of the Rogue Valley, who were not an agricultural people, did not possess the skills and knowledge required to successfully grow wheat and raise beef. While this problem could have been overcome with enough training, the US government failed to supply the vocational tools needed to ensure that the reservation could produce enough food for everyone living there. And so, because there were not nearly enough resources on the small reservation of Table Rock, the Indians were forced to travel outside of the boundaries of their new reservation to obtain food in their traditional manner. This situation led to the inevitable resurgence of violent conflict. Making the situation even worse was the fact that the US government continued to recruit “volunteers” to help fight the “hostile Indians” who were roaming beyond the established boundaries of the new reservation. Many of these recruits were young men who saw the killing of Indians as a satisfactory and lucrative career. Making life even more difficult for the struggling tribes, and adding to the chaotic situation, was the fact that the groups that had been re-located onto the reservation, including members of the Athabaskan, Shasta, and Takelma tribes, did not share the same traditions or cultures, nor did they share a common language.

The conflict reached a bloody peak during the 1855-56 Rogue River Wars. Provoked by the unwarranted attack on a village outside of the reservation in which eight men and fifteen women and children were killed, many of the reservation Indians fled to the hills so they could regroup and retaliate. Others, sensing the desperation of their situation, chose to move onto the grounds of Fort Lane, across the Rogue River, for protection (6).

The US government quickly began to finalize plans to remove all of the indigenous residents to a permanent reservation along the coast (6). Although the boundaries of the coastal reservation had been identified by the time the Indians were to be forced from the Rogue Valley, Superintendent Palmer did not feel the agency at Siletz was ready to host and take care of over 2000 people. Instead, Palmer made the decision to lead the Indians to Grand Ronde, adjacent to the Siletz agency land. In the winter of 1856, Palmer, Indian Agent George Ambrose, and just over 100

additional military “escorts” force-marched 400 Native Americans of the Rogue River Valley over 200 miles north through snowy mountains and across freezing rivers to their new home (5). Thirty-three days later, after the deaths of eight of their members and the birth of eight more, the exhausted and weather-beaten Indians arrived at Grand Ronde. A short time later, many of the “renegade” Indians, those who were trying to maintain a stronghold in their villages surrounding the Rogue River, were rounded up and brought via ship and by foot to the Coast Reservation.



Loss of Cultural Ties and Tribal Identity

In June of 1857, an Executive Order was signed by President James Buchanan establishing the Grand Ronde Reservation separate from the Coast Reservation. As a result, extended families, cousins, and even immediate family members were split up, some remaining on the Grand Ronde Reservation and others being placed at the nearby Coast Reservation.

The first shipment of supplies sent to the new reservations included a year's supply of flour and other staples, however, it wrecked on Siletz Bay losing the entire cargo. Because the government had no funding with which to purchase more supplies, reservation Indians were left amidst starving conditions. In essence, the reservation tribes were expected to subsist mainly on what they were forced to grow at the agency farms. Due to the wet climate of the coast however, wheat was a marginal crop at best, and so the Indian people found themselves scrambling at the end of each meager harvest to provide enough game meat and fish to get them through the winter.

As a result of the hopeless conditions on the reservations, many people decided to return to their old homes where they knew they could find acorns, bulbs, and venison. They were usually doomed to make the long walk again back to the reservation, sometimes several times, as the vigilant soldiers made periodic sweeps through southwest Oregon looking for these "runaways". One group was forced by starvation out of the hills down-river from Grants Pass in 1857. The settlers, fearing them still "hostile", went out and shot all the men (about 10) and penned up the surviving women and children until the Agent could send soldiers down to march them back up to Siletz.

The reports coming back of the fate of those who tried to leave the reservation were terribly discouraging to the Indians as they began to realize that they would never be allowed to return to live on their homeland back in the Rogue Valley.



Grand Ronde Indian Agency.
Salem Public Library Historic Photograph Collections.

Sipe & Elk Rivers
13 Aug. 1875

Sir,

As settlers here, we have to request that you will remove the Indians belonging to the Reservation under your charge from this locality. —

Last year some old men & squaws were quite enough, but now Younger Men have come & altogether they are too numerous & found to be a nuisance. —

Women & children who oftentimes are necessarily left unprotected have a feeling of insecurity. —

Yours respectfully

Rev. Wm. Fairchild
Indian Agent
Siletz Reservation

Chas. Crew
Ed. Wilson
Wm. MacVick

A hostile letter from settlers to Siletz Agent Fairchild, 1875.
Oregon Historical Society Mss 442

As a result, they did whatever they could to survive in their new home. They reluctantly adopted farming and ranching and a new diet of wheat flour, beef, sugar and coffee.

One exception was Umpqua Joe, who in 1855 warned white settlers in the Grants Pass area of a pending massacre. Thanks to Joe's warning, the settlers were able to thwart the Indians' attacks. Joe was allowed to stay on the land and operated a ferry for local miners. When Joe died in 1886, his oldest daughter named Mary Peters, known as Indian Mary by the locals, stayed on the property and continued to operate the ferry. In 1894, Mary applied for squatters' rights for land on which her father Umpqua Joe had built a cabin on the hill overlooking Hellgate Canyon. She received a 25-year deed. Josephine County eventually converted the land into a beautiful park now called "Indian Mary".

Along with forcing them to adopt a western diet, another way that the US government attempted to strip the tribes of their identity was to enact a policy whereby they were not allowed to speak their native languages. With no written language, and a ban on speaking their native tongue, it became very difficult to pass on cultural information. The resulting loss of traditional knowledge during this period is incalculable.

Because so many different tribes were being forced to live together on the new reservations, when not being forced to speak English, the tribes communicated mostly using Chinook jargon, or Chinuk Wawa. This indigenous language, which was known to most of the tribes of the Pacific Northwest, originated near the mouth of the Columbia River. Indian Agents, teachers, and priests also learned this language as a way to communicate with the tribes.

Boarding Schools

In the harshest method enacted to assimilate Indians into “white” society, the federal government authorized the first off-reservation boarding schools in 1879. Children were taken from their reservations, including Grand Ronde, Siletz and others across the United States, and placed in these schools. The boarding schools were designed to keep children isolated from their parents as they were trained military-style for integration into American society. This was a very effective, and at the same time, cruel way to strip away a child’s culture, family ties and basic identity.

Captain Richard H. Pratt, founder of the first off-reservation boarding school, the Carlisle Industrial Indian School on the east coast, had a philosophy that could be summarized as “Kill the Indian, and Save the Man”. This motto was followed at numerous boarding schools across the United States.



Most boarding schools were set up along military lines so as to remove the incoming “recruits” of their identity while forcing a new one upon them. This was accomplished by removing all signs of their “Indianess”. New students were forced to cut their hair, dress only in western clothing, and to speak only English. Boys were trained in the ways of farming and welding while girls were taught domestic tasks such as baking, cleaning, and sewing. The overall effect of the boarding schools was that they were so foreign, abusive and demoralizing to the children in their care that many died simply of a broken spirit.

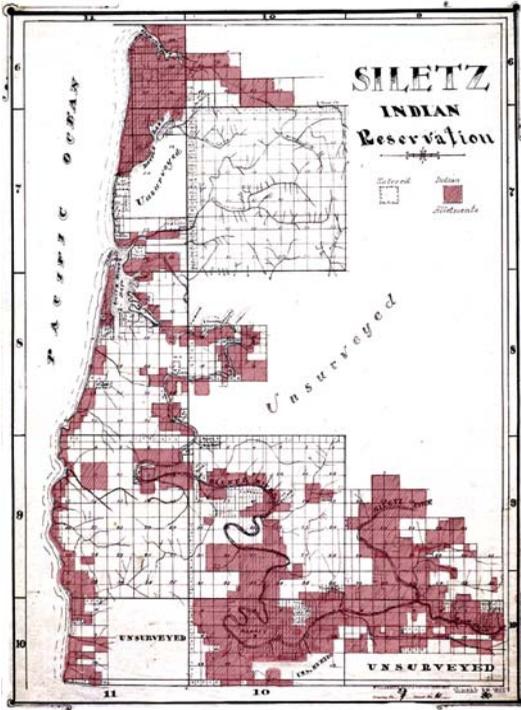


In the 1880s, the federal government increased their operations of boarding schools and over the next three decades the number of mission and boarding schools in the United States rose from 160 to 383. These boarding schools remained in existence well into the 20th century.

Top: *New recruits to the Forest Grove Indian Boarding School, 1881.*
Oregon Historical Society Image #226558

Bottom: *A group of students seven months into their education in 1882 at the Forest Grove Indian School.* Oregon Historical Society Image #37245.

Loss of Reservation Land



Map of Siletz Indian Reservation, 1900. The colored sections represent Indian allotments, while the light-colored sections represent land sold to non-Indians.

Oregon Historical Society Map 259

Another threat to the identity of the Native Americans living at Grand Ronde and Siletz, among other reservations, came from the government's policy of allotment whereby the reservation land was broken into individual parcels and given, or *allotted*, to individuals of the reservation. This policy was related to the Dawes Act of 1887. At best, the policy of allotment was meant to encourage assimilation by giving Indian people the same advantages as land-owning whites. At worst, the policy was used to further reduce the land base of the Indian people as a way to eliminate their communal and spiritual identity.

Bowing to pressure from white citizens, reservation parcels were often sold to white settlers, many of whom felt the size of the Coastal Reservation, of which Siletz was only one part, was absurdly large. Ironically, at the same time the

government was utilizing the allotment policy to allow non-Indians — including those affiliated with timber companies — access to many of the natural resources on the reservation, it was making it exceedingly difficult for native people to hunt and fish on and around these same lands.

The overall effect of the allotment era was not only to greatly reduce the amount of land to which Indian people had access, it also took away much of the sense of community and communal practices that were so much a part of Indian life. By the time the allotment policy was reversed, the land that remained in ownership of the residents of Siletz and Grand Ronde was a mere trace of their original reservation land.

Termination

Allotment, which was intended to fully integrate the Native American population into white society, failed to satisfy the US government. And so, the men heading up the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or BIA, resolved that to truly solve the “Indian Problem” an act of “termination” would be the best approach. The policy of termination was enacted in 1954 with the passage of the Western Oregon Indian Termination Act (Public Law 588) and the Klamath Terminations Act (Public Law 587). The intent of these acts was meant to “...end and forever eliminate the federal government’s trust responsibility and all other government-to-government relations between western Oregon tribes and the federal government.” Although these acts were specific to Oregon, other termination acts were simultaneously being carried out throughout the nation.

By the end of 1956, the BIA had ended the US government’s formal recognition of both the Confederated Tribes of Siletz and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. In doing so, the government took all reservation treaty rights away from the Indian people, except for hunting and fishing, in an effort to force them to look, act, and in every way be mainstream (i.e. white) Americans.

The policy of termination was intended to help Indians become self-sufficient, but it also made them very poor and they suffered from a loss of culture. Practically overnight, tribes were left to finance education, health care, and other critical services without any assistance from the government.



*Grand Ronde Family
— Lena Riggs with
her grandchildren,
circa 1947.*

The Confederated Tribes of
Grand Ronde



*This image of a native woman in the
1960’s indicates the desire of Native
people to retain their traditional life-
ways.* Salem Public Library Historic
Photograph Collections.

The half-hearted effort on the part of the US government to give the Indians a “better way of life” by isolating them on reservations lead to immense suffering and the irrevocable loss of cultural knowledge. Despite everything they had endured, however, the descendents of the Indians of the Rogue River Valley who had been forcibly removed to the reservations of Grand Ronde and Siletz continued to survive and to eventually persevere.

Through Indian activism, which fought to change government policy and perception, the Indian Self-Determination act was signed on January 4, 1975. This law shifted the focus of Indian policy away from termination and toward self-governance.

A policy of self-determination committed the federal government to encourage "maximum Indian participation in the government and education of the Indian people."

With the door now open, members of both Siletz and Grand Ronde worked diligently to re-establish federal recognition. On November 18, 1977, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz became the second tribe in the United States to have its federal status restored, and returned to being a sovereign government.

In 1983, after years of strategizing and petitioning the government to revoke their termination status, Congress enacted Public Law 98-165 which restored the federal relationship with the Grand Ronde community. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde was now able to provide for tribal self-government, tribal enrollment, and to re-establish their reservation land.



Top: *Grand Ronde restoration hearing, 1983.*
Left: *First Grand Ronde Royalty, 1980—81*

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

Tribal Self-Sufficiency

Today there are nine recognized tribes in Oregon:

- Confederated Tribes of Coos Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians
- Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians
- Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde
- Coquille Indians
- Klamath Tribes
- Coquille Indian Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of the Siletz
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs



While it has been immeasurably important to regain recognition and to qualify for government aid and securities, it has been even more important for these tribes to move toward economic self-sufficiency. Toward this end, the tribes have established successful business operations through sustainable resource extraction, recreation and tourism. The casinos of Grand Ronde and Siletz (Spirit



Mountain and Chinook Winds), help to financially support tribal government operations while also helping to build up much

needed social services, including health care facilities, day care centers, after school programs and senior housing among others. The casinos have also allowed the tribes the opportunity to give back to surrounding communities.



Looking Ahead

Along with furthering their own economic development, tribal members throughout Oregon are investing in the teaching of ancient cultural practices and in the re-learning of traditional languages. Through pow-wows, activity-based camps and classes, traditional festivals and through the use of technology, tribal members are re-kindling cultural traditions. While not intending to return to a pre-contact way of life, many tribal members feel that by practicing traditional skills, crafts, stories, and languages, and passing these down to their young people, they can once again feel secure in their identity as a first people. And in looking ahead to a new era of revitalized self-identity, many of the members of the indigenous tribes whose ancestors resided in the Rogue Valley are opening up new dialogues. In doing so, they are finding new ways to come together with Indians and non-Indians alike in an attempt to heal old wounds, find common ground, and work toward a better, more sustainable future for everyone.

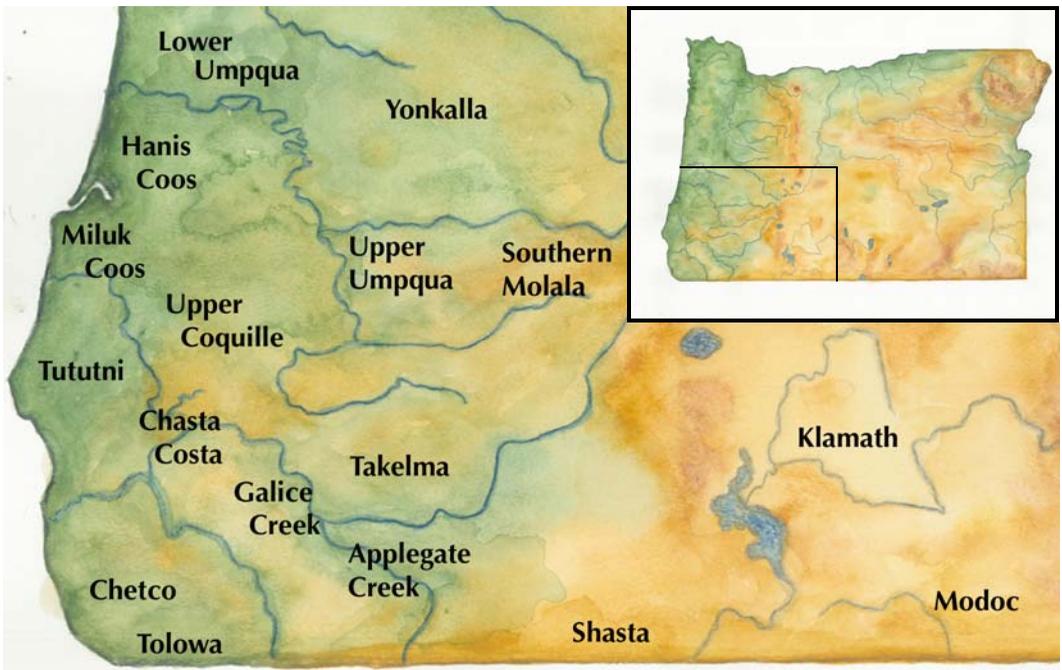


Appendix A: Tribal Lands of Southwest Oregon

Three main groups of Native Americans lived in or near the Rogue Valley at the time of contact with white settlers in the mid-1800s:

- **Hokan groups** (including the Shasta and Karok people),
- **Penutian groups** (including the Takelma, Coos, and Lower Coquille people),
- **Athabaskan groups** (including the Chetco, Tututni, Tolowa, Upper Umpqua, Illinois, Upper Coquille, Galice Creek and Applegate people).

Other tribes along the Klamath River down into present-day California included the Klamath, Modoc, Yurok and Hupa.



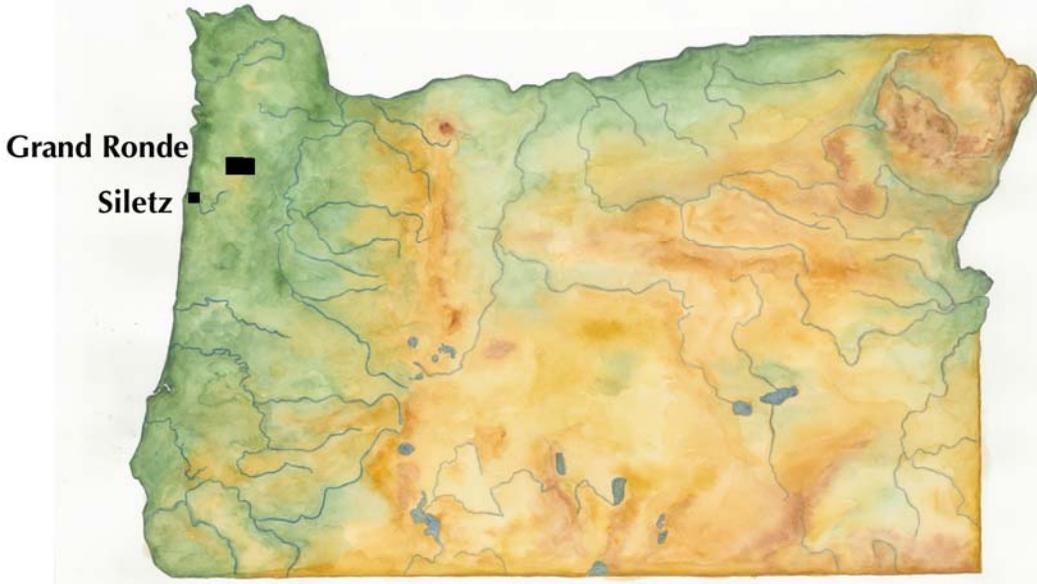
It is believed that Hokan speaking groups had a continuous presence in the Rogue Valley up until the time of contact. Their descendents, the Oregon Shasta, lived along the upper reaches of Bear Creek in southwest Oregon. One of their permanent villages was located along Ashland Creek in present-day Lithia Park (6) (9). There is evidence of another Oregon Shasta village alongside Emigrant Creek under present-day Emigrant Lake (13).

Reservation Lands

Virtually all of the Oregon Athabaskan, Shasta, and Takelma tribal members were relocated to reservations in northwestern Oregon in 1856 following the Rogue Indian Wars.

Today, many of their descendants are members of one of two coastal reservations, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (6).

Reservation Lands West of the Cascades



Appendix B: Timeline of Events, Policies, & Legislation

- 
- 1851 – 1856** Volunteer militias, made up of newly arriving miners and settlers, attack Indian villages throughout Southern Oregon.
- 1853** First Rogue River Treaty, signed by the Takelma, Shasta and Applegate River people, ceded (relinquished to the United States) title to the entire upper Rogue Valley. In exchange, the tribes were given reservation land near Table Rock. This was a temporary solution until a permanent reservation could be established.
- 1854** Second Rogue River Treaty and Chasta Costa Treaty signed. Allows Chasta Costa treaty tribes onto the Table Rock Reservation.
- 1855** Coast Indian Reservation created by Presidential Executive Order as a new permanent home for the tribes of western Oregon.
- 1856** Trail of Tears: Tribes are force-marched to Grand Ronde Agency.
- 1857** Grand Ronde Indian Reservation established by Presidential Executive Order (about 61,000 acres). Two-thirds of the Rogue River Indians relocated to the Coast Reservation (Siletz Agency).
- 1875** The Coast Reservation acreage is reduced by federal acts, then terminated. The Siletz Reservation is created.
- 1887** Dawes Severalty Allotment Act allotted reservation land to tribal members and allowed the selling of remaining lands to non-Indians resulting in the loss of about half of the Grand Ronde Reservation land and much of the Siletz Reservation.
- 1934** Indian Reorganization Act - Self-governance rights secured as tribes adopt a representative democratic government and a constitution.
- 1954** Western Oregon Indian Termination Act, PL 588, terminates the Grand Ronde and Siletz reservations as well as all 60 western Oregon tribes.
- 1973** Restoration efforts begin. Years of intense petitioning and formation of alliances with politicians.
- 1977** After diligent petitioning, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz is restored.
- 1983** The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is restored and once again becomes a sovereign nation.
- 1988** A 9,811-acre reservation is restored at Grand Ronde which fueled economic self-sufficiency for the tribes.

Appendix C: Resources

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Later Ethnographic Synthesis:

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- 3 Pullen, Reginald Overview of the Environment of Native Inhabitants of SW OR ...,1925
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- 7 Gray, Dennis The Takelma and their Athapaskan Neighbors, 1987
- 8 Silver, Shirley Shastan Peoples, 1978
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- 10 Sturtevant, William Handbook of N. Am. Indians Vol. 7 NW Coast Tribes, 1990
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- 14 LaLande, Jeff Rogue River Timeline: A Chronology of the Rogue River Nat'l Forest, 1982
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- 16 Davis, Barbara Plants and the People: the Ethnobotany of the Karuk Tribe
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- 18 Todt, Donn
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- 19 Comments by members of the Confederated Tribe of Grand Ronde, 2011
- 20 Margolin, Malcolm
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- 21 Margolin, Malcolm
 and Montijo, Yolanda Native Ways

Student works and thesis

- 22 Marvin, Maleena Cultural Ecology of the Ashland Creek Watershed Prehistory, 1929
- 23 Gleason, Susan In Search of the Intangible: Geophyte Management...Vol 1 and 2, 2001

Appendix D: To Learn More

Oregon has many wonderful opportunities to learn more about the local Native Americans who lived here in the Rogue Valley and the many Native American communities that make Oregon their home today.

Please take some time to explore the Nature Center, visit one of your local museums or cultural centers, attend a local powwow, or take a Native American Studies class at a local college or university such as Southern Oregon University.

Also, be sure to visit these Oregon Tribes websites to learn more about their history, tribal government, and community events.

Burns Paiute Tribe
www.burnspaiute-nsn.gov

Confederated Tribes of Coos,
Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians
www.ctclusi.org

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians
www.cowcreek.com

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
www.grandronde.org

Klamath Tribes
www.klamathtribes.org

Coquille Indian Tribe
www.coquilletebe.org

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
<http://ctsi.nsn.us/>

Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation
www.umatilla.nsn.us

Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
www.warmsprings.com



Photo by Michelle Alaimo/Smoke Signals