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Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde: A Look at where They Were 100 Years Ago and where They Are Today

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Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde

A look at where they were a 100 years ago and where they are today

Ashley Burgess
Y.E.S. Internship
Spring 2012
Pre History
Land Management

• Traditional methods
  • The earth provided all that was needed
  • Fire as only means of “management”
    • Instrumental in hunting, harvesting, and regrowth of vegetation
“Long, long ago it was good country (had better hunting and food gathering). They were all Indians who lived in this countryside. Everything was good. None one labored (at hard labor for wages). Only a man went hunting, he hunted all the time. Women always used to dig camas, and they fathered tarweed seeds. Such things were all we ate. They gathered acorns, they picked hazelnuts, they picked berries, and they dried blackberries”

- Melville Jacobs interview with John B. Hudson, Santiam Kalapuya
Original tribes

- 25 different tribes and bands living in much of Western Oregon, parts of Northern California, and Southern Washington

- Included bands from the Kalapuya, Upper Chinook, Molalla, Chasta, Rogue River, Umpqua, Tillamook, and Clatsop tribes
Language

• Dialects of Molalla, Kalapuya, and Clackamas Chinook
  • Inhabitants of Willamette Valley

• Dialects of Athapascan, Penutian, and Hokan
  • Inhabitants of Rogue Valley

• In all, over 25 different dialects of at least 4 different languages
Around 100 years ago…
Early Contact

• Unlike those from the coastal and lower Columbia tribes, “none of the ancestors of the Grand Ronde people had direct contact in their own territories with these early visitors”—Historic Overview

• Indirect contact
  • As a result of disease, “between five and six thousand Indians died along the banks of the Willamette”—The Kalapuyans, pg. 22
Treaties

• Between 1853-1855 the United States negotiated seven ratified treaties with Indian tribes and bands of the Willamette, Umpqua, and Rogue River Valleys
  • “Separate bands would confederate and remove to land that would be reserved as a permanent home for them” - Historic Overview
  • Extinguished Indian titles to lands
Original Reservation

- Oregon Trail of Tears
  - Beginning in 1856, over 20 Indian bands were removed from their traditional homes and lands and relocated to the Grande Ronde Reservation.

- Total of 58,000-61,440 acres
  - 33,146 acres allotted to 269 Indians
  - Leaving 26,551 acres held in common
    - 440 acres reserved for government purposes
General Allotment Act 1887

- 270 allotments were made to Indians at Grand Ronde

- First 25 years the land was not subject to tax and held in trust for the Indian patentee

- After 25 years a fee patent was issued and lands became taxable
  - Out of Indian ownership very quickly
This reservation contains 61,440 acres, but not to exceed one-sixth of the reserve is suitable for profitable cultivation. A small portion is very good grazing land, while the remainder is broken but very well timbered with pine and fir trees.

Land in severalty is being allotted to these Indians, and the plan pursued by Col. Collins, the alloting agent, giving each Indian a portion of the farming land, and the balance in grazing or timbered land, is the only equitable method that could have been devised.

-Historic Overview
Ceded lands
Termination
Public Law 588

• August 13, 1954—signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower
  • Effectively terminated the Tribes federal recognition and removed all obligations that had been negotiated previously through treaties
  • Promised equality and greater freedom and wealth for the Indians

Edgar Simmons Tribal Chairman
The reality

- “The low average income level, high unemployment rate, the lack of educational/vocational training and health services, and the poor housing reflect the negative impact of termination” - Historic Overview

- Loss of “home” and identity

- [http://www.grandronde.org/culture/#](http://www.grandronde.org/culture/#)
Making “today” possible...
After Termination-1980

• Cemetery Committee
  • Served as a focal point for maintaining identity
  • Carried out all traditional tribal government functions
    • Recorded births, deaths, and tribal membership

• Land base had been reduced to 2.5 acres containing tribal cemetery
  • Tribe purchased additional 7 acres for headquarters
1980- Present

• Public Law 98-165: Grande Ronde Restoration Act
  • “The successful passage of H.R. 1885 will restore the identity to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde as an Indian Tribe. It will correct injustices against the Tribe, from the first land cession to the final injustice of Termination in 1954”
    - Marvin Kennedy, Grande Ronde Tribal member

• Public Law 100-425: Grande Ronde Reservation Act
  • Re-established the reservation (9,811.32 acres) for the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde community
  • [http://www.grandronde.org/culture/](http://www.grandronde.org/culture/)
Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde today…
Current Reservation

- Located in Grand Ronde, OR
  - 10,800 acres
Community

• Approximately 5,100 members
  • Combined from Kalapuya, Upper Chinook, Molalla, Chasta, Rogue River, Umpqua, Tillamook, and Clatsop Tribes

• Vision
  • “To be a Tribal community known as caring people, dedicated to the principles of honesty and integrity, building community, individual responsibility and self sufficiency through personal empowerment, and responsible stewardship of human and natural resources; a community willing to act with courage in preserving Tribal cultures and traditions for all future generations”
Governing body

- **Tribal Council**
  - Consists of nine members who have been elected by the general membership
  - Offices located in the Tribal Governance Center
  - Primary duties are to adopt Tribal laws and policies, and is also the decision-making authority on Tribal budgets and investments

- **Administration**
  - Provides support services to Tribal staff, Tribal council, committees, and Tribal members
  - Includes executive office, legal, public affairs, finance and administrative services
Tribal Council
Programs
Member Services

• Serves the Tribal population by providing Medicare supplemental benefits to Tribal members 65 years and older, reimbursing Elders who pay for Medicare Part B, supplemental security income, disability program, Elder pension and Elder non-Tribal spouse insurance, and offers a health plan to all Tribal members

• Timber Trust Fund
  • Means for Tribal members to supplement their income by either letting the Tribe invest funds for them or making a withdrawal
  • Gaming Revenue Allocation Plan: distributes 25 percent of the Casino’s net revenues to Tribal members on a yearly basis
Cultural Resources

• Mission statement
  • “To preserve and perpetuate the cultural heritage of the original Tribes of the Grand Ronde community by acquiring, managing and protecting tribally affiliated collections through exhibition, loan, and repatriation”

• Preserves and revitalizes cultural traditions, history and languages and the general public interested in learning about the unique history of the different tribes
Social Services

• Responsible for providing services that promote family unity with an overall goal of attaining individual and family self-sufficiency.

• Services provided:
  • Individual and family counseling
  • Domestic violence education
  • Crisis intervention
  • Indian Child Welfare services
  • Foster care services
  • Vocational rehabilitation
  • Financial assistance
  • Prevention and referral
Education

• Mission statement
  • “To preserve and perpetuate the cultural and linguistic heritage of the original Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community”
• Offers financial assistance to Trial members enrolled in higher education or adult vocational training
• Sponsors a variety of educational programs to youth, assistance in obtaining a G.E.D., counseling services, library and research materials, and short-term training.
• Tribe’s language specialist teaches children and adults Chinook Wawa—common language that existed when Tribes were gathered onto the Grande Ronde Reservation in the 1850’s
• [http://www.grandronde.org/culture/](http://www.grandronde.org/culture/)
Health and Human Services

• Responsible for providing quality health and wellness services to the Tribal membership including medical and dental clinics, mental health, chemical dependency, vocational rehabilitation counseling, billing assistance, as well as Elder and youth activities
Natural Resources

• Responsible for designing, developing and implementing programs and services that fulfill the strategies of self-sufficiency and make efficient use of resources on Tribal lands
  • Include, but are not limited to: timber, fish, wildlife, minerals, air and water

• Fish and Wildlife
  • Issues and maintains hunting and fishing licenses for Tribal members, provides hunter safety courses, and creates recreational areas on the reservation.

• Forestry
  • Responsible for timber harvesting, forest roads, silvicultural activities, fire and disease protection, minor forest products and patrolling the reservation
Natural Resources continued...

• Land Acquisition
  • Objectives include 1) to increase the amount of forest land inside the consolidation area 2) purchase forest land outside the consolidation area for trading and investment purposes 3) protect special management areas and 4) consolidate Tribal ownership

• Environmental
  • Investigate existing or potential environmental problems on Tribal lands that may create health or ecological risks.
Giving Back
Spirit Mountain Community Fund

• “The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde through the Spirit Mountain Community Fund fulfills their Native tradition of potlatch, a ceremony at which good fortune is distributed. The Spirit Mountain Community Fund’s focus is to improve the quality of life in Northwest Oregon through community investments that provide lasting benefits consistent with the Tribe’s culture and values”
• 6% of the profits from Spirit Mountain Casino goes towards worthy organizations and causes in Western Oregon

• Donates about $5 million each year to local programs and services that benefit citizens striving for self-sufficiency

• Since the fund’s inception, $40 million has been donated to nonprofits

• [www.thecommunityfund.com](http://www.thecommunityfund.com)
What This Project has Done for Me...

- Obstacles
  - Communication/Cooperation
  - Affiliation
- Growth
  - Relator
  - Achiever
  - Focus
  - Belief
  - Learner
Special Thank You…

• Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
  • Mr. Merril
  • Mr. Thorsgard
  • Mrs. Brown
• Susan Sokol-Blosser
• Dr. Jeff Peterson
• Rachel Parker
• Kristi Mackay
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