

TRIBAL PROGRAM NEWS



Many generations of families, from elders to newborns, attended the treaty commemoration. Sister Francella Griggs (above, second from left) was the oldest person there and Harrison Smith (left photo, baby on right) was the youngest.

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Valley (Takelma, Shasta and Dakubetede or Applegate River Athapascans)," said Robert Kentta, Cultural Resources director.

The commemoration included a welcome from Tribal Chairman Delores Pigsley; an invocation in the Native language by Bud Lane, language/traditional arts instructor; historical information sharing by Kentta; and a presentation by Dave Hubin, executive assistant president at the University of Oregon. A buffet dinner was followed by the Siletz Feather Dancers.

Kentta's presentation included a detailed review of the history of the confederated tribes. Under the Rogue River Treaty, the tribes reluctantly agreed to cede title to the entire Rogue Valley east of the Applegate River watershed. They agreed to confederate and live within the boundaries of the Table Rock Temporary Reservation until the president selected a permanent reservation.

This reservation's boundaries ran from the southern base of Lower Table Rock to the gap in the southern face of Upper Table Rock, and from there

northwesterly to the upper part of Evans Creek. The boundaries then followed Evans Creek and the Rogue River to the place of beginning at Lower Table Rock.

The primary representatives of the U.S. were Joel Palmer (superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon Territory), Gen. Joseph Lane (first governor of Oregon Territory), James Nesmith (who later served as superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon and as a U.S. senator), and Robert Metcalfe (who had an Oregon Donation Land Claim abutting the Table Rock Reservation, had a family with one of Tyee John's daughters, and later served as the first Indian agent of the Siletz Reservation). Twelve headmen, including Tyee John, signed the treaty on behalf of the many tribes. Other headmen later agreed to the terms negotiated, though their names do not appear on the treaty.

In November 1854, the same U.S. representatives negotiated a treaty with the tribes on the Table Rock Reservation to confederate the related mid-Rogue River bands and tribes with them on the Table Rock Temporary

Reservation and the future permanent reservation. The U.S. then negotiated with these bands for title to their country. That treaty was concluded on Nov. 18, 1854. These treaties also were ratified by the U.S. Senate and proclaimed law by the president.

Despite the treaties, aggressive acts continued, culminating in an Oct. 8, 1855, attack on two Indian camps of the headmen "Jake" and "Sambo" by miners and settlers near the mouth of Butte Creek. James Lupton organized these attacks and was one of the few white casualties. Estimates say that 23 to 40 Indian men, women, and children were killed. When word reached the Table Rock Reservation, the Indian people realized that they would not be left in peace by those in the local communities who were loudly calling for "extermination" of all local Indians.

The tribes left the Table Rock Reservation in terror and anger. Some pleaded for protection at Fort Lane, but the majority retreated to the protection of the mid-Rogue River country, attacking some of the less-friendly settlers along the way. All attempts to establish permanent arrangements for the tribes at the Table Rock Reservation ceased.

The war raged on for many months. In November 1855, the Siletz (or Coast) Reservation was established by order of President Franklin Pierce as the permanent home for all the western Oregon tribes. In June 1856, the Rogue River Wars officially ended and nearly all western Oregon Indians were prepared to remove to the new reservation.

A temporary encampment was established on the south fork of the Yamhill River in northwest Oregon for all of the tribes that were removed until the Siletz Agency could be established. In May 1857, nearly all of the Rogue River, Shasta, Applegate, and Cow Creeks Indians removed from the encampment at Grand Ronde to the Siletz Valley, though 58 men and their families remained at Grand Ronde. In June 1857, the Grand Ronde encampment gained official status as a separate reservation, though it was physically attached to the Siletz Reservation and was at times under the same agent.

Many indigenous tribes from all over western Oregon, representing 11 different language groups, came together on the Siletz Reservation to form the Confederated Tribes of Siletz

Indians. They came here after living for thousands of years within homelands totaling 20 million acres.

Despite several ratified treaties that promised a permanent reservation, about 900,000 acres of the original 1.1 million-acre Siletz Reservation was opened to settlement by non-Indians within the first 20 years. This was done without additional treaties or compensation for the losses. Tribal rights to the remaining 225,000 acres also were questioned and the tribe was forced to cede all but about 47,000 acres in 1892.

Loss of tribal lands and resources continued until legislation by Congress in 1954 targeted the western Oregon tribes for "termination." After passage of the Western Oregon Termination Act, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians ceased to exist in the eyes of the U.S. government and the Bureau of Indian Affairs disposed of the last parcels of tribal lands.

In 1977, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians successfully petitioned Congress to repeal the termination of the Siletz Tribes, and in 1980, the Siletz Reservation was re-established at 3,660 acres with scattered BLM-administered parcels around the original Siletz Reservation. Today, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians continues to represent the ancestral tribes from which it is formed, including the tribes who entered into the Rogue River Treaty of 1853.

Hubin discussed several items in the university's Native American Initiative, including the building of the Many Nations Longhouse. "Another programmatic note of encouragement comes from the formal development of the university's Center for Indigenous Cultural Survival.

"I want to highlight a word choice that is significant in the naming of this center. This is the Center **for**, not the center **on**, Indigenous Cultural Survival. Its purpose is not to study and observe, but rather support and promote preservation of traditional cultures that, if lost, will, by that measure, impoverish us all," Hubin said.

"Through this center, as well as the Northwest Indigenous Language Institute and the Southwest Oregon Research Project, we fight to hold on to learning and wisdom that some in the 1850s would have preferred to see vanish."