

TRIBAL PROGRAM NEWS



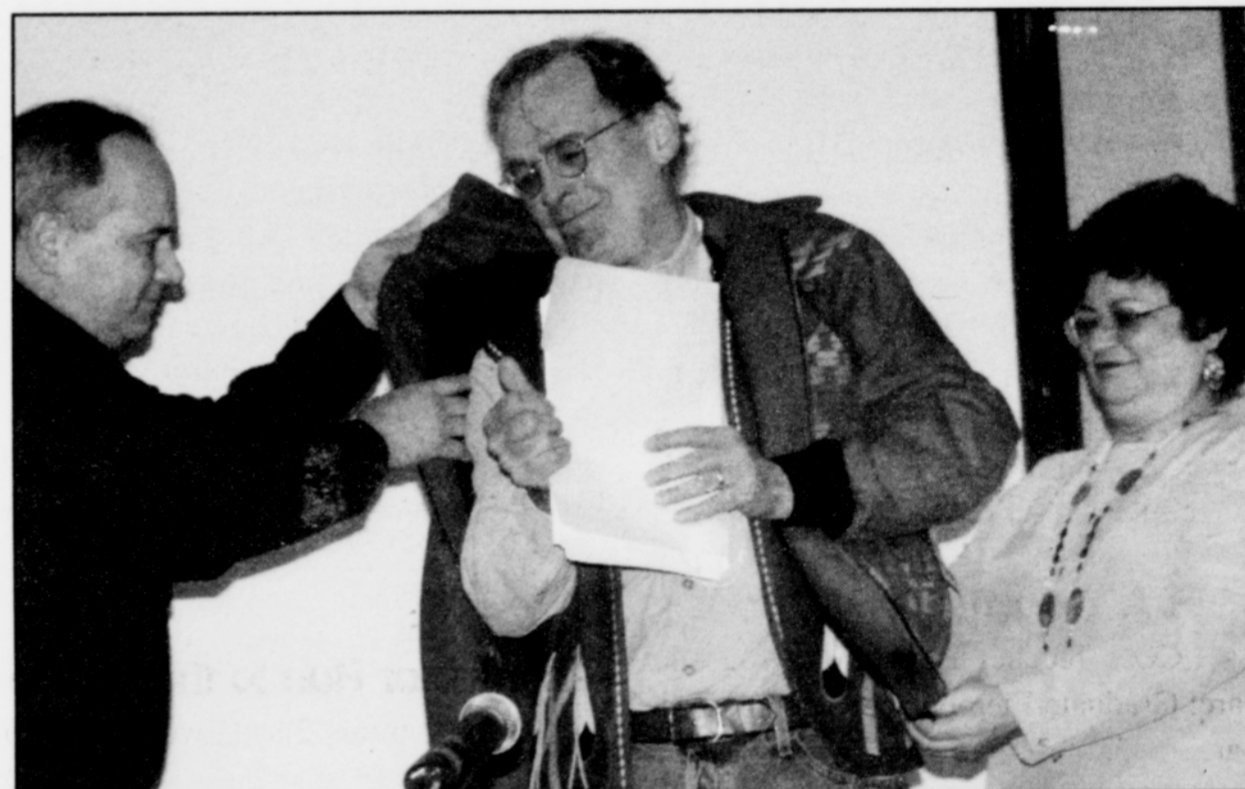
Siletz Tribal Head Start students made their annual appearance to sing songs for the Restoration crowd during the afternoon event. (photo above and both below by Diane Rodriguez)



Quanna Pigsley, Hattie Imbler-Bremner, Jr., Miss Siletz Rose Pigsley, Delores Pigsley, former Gov. Vic Atiyeh and Delores Atiyeh enjoy the Restoration Pow-Wow. (photo by Brent Merrill)



Delores Pigsley presents Mike and Max Clements with a framed photo of their brother, Rudy Clements, which also includes an eagle feather, in appreciation of the family's support of the Siletz Tribe.



Bud Lane and Delores Pigsley present Charles Wilkinson with a Pendleton jacket following Charles' heartwarming keynote address.

Restoration, con't from page 1

ties signed only a century before. The people of the Siletz Tribes had originally inhabited the entire western portion of the State of Oregon from the Columbia River to the Klamath River in Northern California, from the ocean shores to the eastern foothills of the coastal mountain range.

"Restoration is important to remember because when the Tribe was terminated much was lost," said Chairman Pigsley. "Few Tribal members today remember those years from termination through Restoration. The Restoration Act is as important as our Tribal treaties. It gave us back programs and services and it outlined a plan for obtaining a land base."

What the Tribe lost is hard to measure. Spirituality, personal oral histories and loss of traditional ways of life are hard to measure in acres.

In 1855, a 1.1 million-acre Reservation was created by the federal government for people of the Siletz Tribe on the Oregon Coast. The Tribe's 3,000 people watched as the government took 200,000 acres of Reservation land surrounding Yaquina Bay in 1865. That prime coastal hunting and gathering land was opened up to white settlers.

Just 10 years later, another 700,000 acres was taken by an act of Congress in 1875.

The final blow was dealt when the remaining Reservation land was taken by the federal government through the Allotment Act in 1892. The Allotment Act left 551 Tribal members with 80-acre allotments.

In the early 1970s, the remaining people of the Siletz Tribe began to meet in each other's basements and kitchens to discuss the process of Restoration. Siletz Tribal leaders had heard of the Menominees successful efforts to achieve Restoration for their people in 1972. After years of members meeting after work and holding bake sales to raise money for their cause, then-President Jimmy Carter signed Public Law 95-195 officially restoring the Tribe to federal recognition.

Restoration celebration guest speaker Charles Wilkinson, who played an instrumental role in the Tribe's Restoration efforts and is currently writing a definitive history of the Siletz people, talked to a Tribal member crowd earlier in the day about the changes that have taken place since he first started

traveling to the remote, coastal mountain Reservation.

Wilkinson began traveling the road to Siletz in 1975.

"I love to drive the west and this is one of my favorites, emotional and central to me beyond saying," he said.

Wilkinson spoke about his emotion when driving to Siletz along Highway 20. He had made the route many times before, beginning 32 years ago.

"As I climbed toward the low crest of the Coast Range, the old, heavy mix of the land and the long stretch of time and human experience in western Oregon welled up and took over," he said. "Then as I always do, I pulled over and parked a few miles east of Eddyville. I got out and let the feelings sink in. For it is there, just out of Eddyville, where lies the eastern border of the great 1855 treaty reservation. This eastern border, 24 miles east of Newport, stretched 110 miles from north to south, beginning well south of Eugene and reaching all the way to the suburbs of Portland. The reservation encompassed 1.1 million acres, nearly 2 percent of Oregon, and it took in the magnificent spruce, cedar and Douglas fir forests in the Coast

Range and all the salmon rivers feeding the ocean and, on the edge of the sea, the rocks and beaches and points and capes and heads and harbors and mussels and oysters and seals and sea lions. It all belonged to the Siletz."

Wilkinson went on to say that he felt all the hard work and extraordinary effort by this small core group of tenacious, yet gracious people was worth it in the end.

"If my stop at Eddyville and my immersion in the Oregon Coast's history, so real, so tangible, brought sadness and anger, so too does it bring forth joy and inspiration," he said. "Especially at the end of the trip. For the people of the Siletz in the 1970s had the look of the eagle in their eyes."

Wilkinson said the people surprised him when they were so willing after years of failed government policy toward Indian people had delivered "blow after blow." He admired their "staying power." He watched as the people's first act was to roll up their sleeves and clean the Tribal cemetery on Government Hill.

"No one realized it at first, but it was a sign of what was to come."