



Tribal members Rose Bremner, Donna Woods and Jeremy Cearley (below) visit in one of the units of the new Gwee-Shut Apartments. Cearley owns Cearley Construction of Milwaukie, Ore., which built the apartments. This project provided jobs for four Tribal members and was completed a month ahead of schedule.

Photos by Natasha Kavanaugh

Tribal Council members Loraine Butler, Delores Pigsley, Sharon Edenfield, Tina Retasket, Lillie Butler and Robert Kentta join staff from the Siletz Tribal Housing Department (Rob Smith, far left, and Valerie Hibdon, far right) to cut the ribbon at the open house for the Gwee-Shut Apartments in Siletz. The 19 units consist of three four-bedroom, two-bathroom units; seven three-bedroom, two-bathroom units; and nine two-bedroom, one-bathroom units.



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Having responded thus, the acting commissioner also stated he was having a special inspector investigate the matter further and report to him. The 1874 Inspection Report of Wm. Vandever, sent to investigate the Siletz agent's complaint, confirmed what the acting commissioner had already stated – that Vandever could find no justification for the Grand Ronde agent's insistence that the north end of the Coast (Siletz) Reservation was under his jurisdiction, the Grand Ronde agent's turf was well-established by the 1857 Executive Order and he needed to desist unless there was an official change to his jurisdiction.

Vandever did pose the question of the convenience of Tribes and individuals in that part of our reservation having more ready access to the Grand Ronde Agency headquarters than the Siletz Agency headquarters. But as fate (and the white man) would have it, the majority of the north end of our reservation was opened to settlement just a few months later, before any action on his recommendation could have been taken – if it would have been at all – because taking part of our reservation and handing it over to Grand Ronde or even simply handing jurisdiction to that area without title also following both would have been legally problematic (would have resulted in a "claims suit" by us).

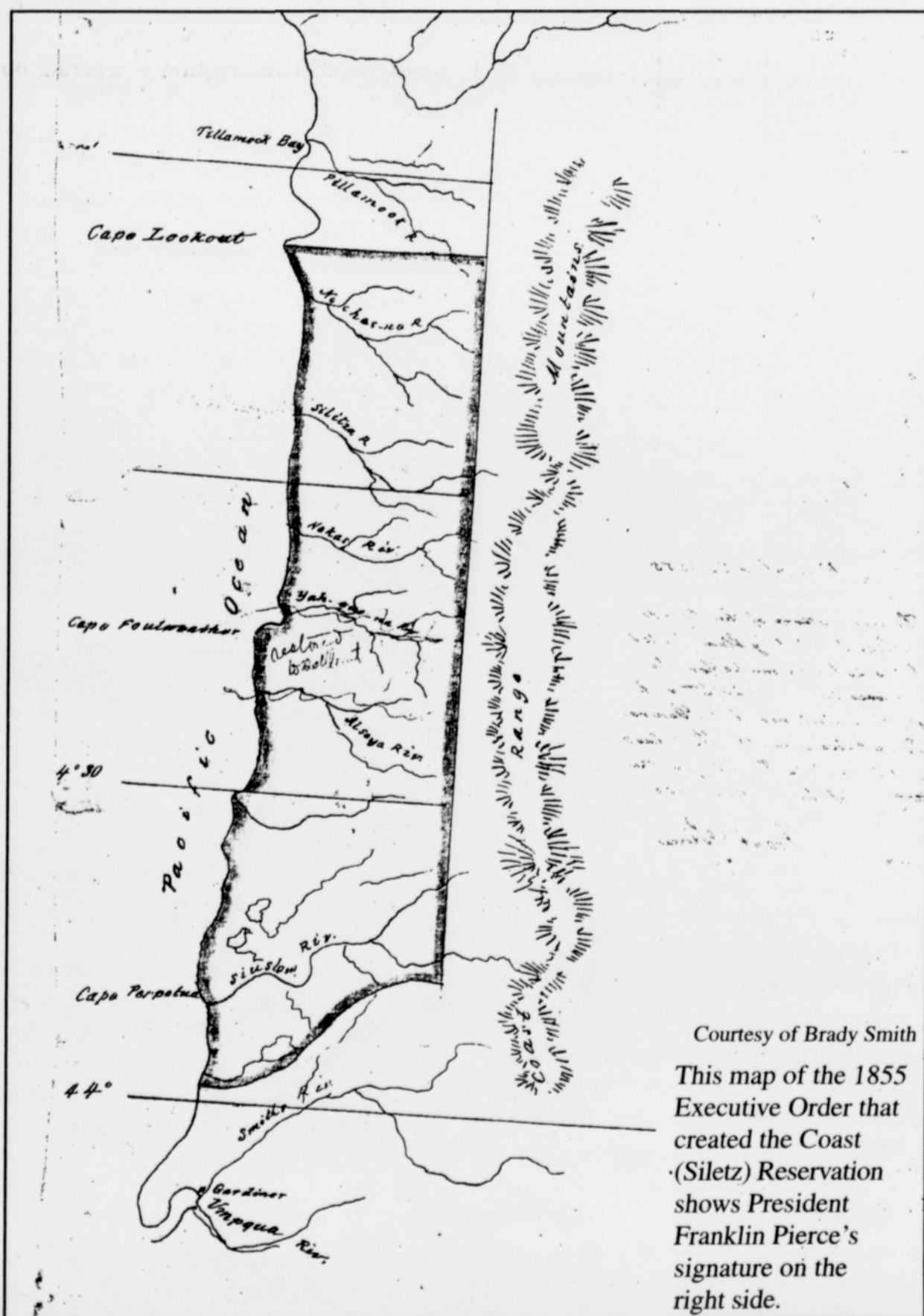
Even after the 1875 reduction of our reservation, the Grand Ronde agent persisted in attempting to claim the north end

of our remaining Siletz Reservation, from the Salmon River south to even claim the mouth of the Siletz River. All this while our former agent – Ben Simpson, who had assisted with the opening of our reservation to settlement under the 1875 act by falsely reporting our "consent" – was in 1878 sitting in his promoted position of surveyor general of Oregon and advocating that the Siletz Valley (our main Tribally settled/farmed and otherwise "improved" areas) be opened to settlement and that only the Salmon River and very mouth of the Siletz remain as Siletz Reservation land.

These two seemingly diametrically opposite positions have the familiar smell of collusion and continued theft, and likely would have been followed by a recommended "cost saving" measure of doing away with our Siletz Agency/Reservation altogether and putting our Tribes under the Grand Ronde agent. Well, that **did not** happen, as much as the Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde would like it to have.

If anything, the Grand Ronde agency was closed and its duties folded under those of the Siletz Agency in the early 1900s. The Siletz agent would travel to Grand Ronde when needed to conduct any business needing attention there.

You likely will hear more updates and details of this (non)argument as this year of nuisance (non)issues and distractions from productive pursuits continues.



Courtesy of Brady Smith  
This map of the 1855 Executive Order that created the Coast (Siletz) Reservation shows President Franklin Pierce's signature on the right side.