

12 People Tell Their Stories of Culture

How did you learn Siletz Culture? Did you experience Elders speaking a traditional language?

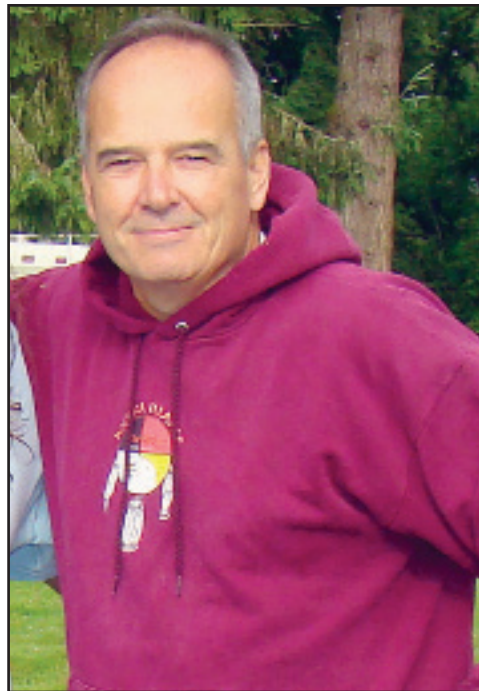


“My parents. My dad told me stories about the Tribe. How we came to our restoration. I’ve always been around the Siletz Tribe. I grew up in Siletz. I always attended classes that were provided and culture classes. A little bit (hearing Elders speak a traditional language) as a youth.” –Allison Simmons (interviewed by Talani Butler).

“Elders. Asking lots of questions. Yes (I experienced Elders speaking a traditional language).” Frank Aspria-Depoe (interviewed by Ayla Ben)

“When I was growing, we had these same things like here at Culture Camp, a Title VII program. We also had Paul Whitehead. When I was growing up, we learned to dance. Ann Goddard taught us beading. Marlene Stuart taught us basketry and beading. I still have my original medallion she taught me. I was also in a Happy Trex program. Its like Head Start, but it was all cultural activities. Yes (I experienced Elders speaking a traditional language). My aunt, Vicki Ben. She would speak when we were at her house doing eels. We would do eels and smoke them at her house. Gladys Muschamp when she would pick blueberries and doing baskets.” –Melissa Butler (interviewed by Talani Butler).

“In the last 25 years. Part of it was due to my sister. I grew up in Portland, Ore. The only time we were really connected with the Tribe was through family funerals and marriages. We would come up to Siletz. The Tribe back then didn’t have many gatherings, pow-wows or office. You didn’t really grow in or with our culture. They opened an office in Portland. My sister started working for the Tribe. She started doing a lot of activities with youth and Elders. I started to get involved then. Later on I started working for the Tribe. Working with the Tribe, I really started learning more about my culture. Feeling comfortable with growing up, I was teased about an urban Indian. Back then people looked down on you as being Indian. I didn’t have other people that were Indian to befriend me. The only real experience with that (speaking a traditional language) was with my grandpa and my mom. It would be words here and there that they would say and then they would laugh.” –Katie Holland (interviewed by Tiffany Stuart)



“Interacting with other Siletz people, my own family, Elders over a lifetime. Yes (I experienced Elders speaking a traditional language), my dad, uncle, Nellie Orton, Harry Fuller, Eddie Collins, Ed Ben, lots of folks, Archie Ben. There were lots of speakers when I was younger.” –Bud Lane (interviewed by Ayla Ben)



“I learned growing up from my grandparents, Archie and Victoria Ben; Vicki Nelson; Gladys Muschamp; Kary Streets; my mom, Maxine Rilatos; my dad, Robert Rilatos; my grandma, Pearl Simmons Rilatos. We danced when we first started walking. We did all the parades in the state of Oregon. We walked the Albany parade, it’s four miles long. We always did Newport Parade-Loyalty Days. Grandpa Ben speaking to us and telling us stories. His brothers, Patrick and Harrison Ben, would tell us about the forced march in California. Now we do the Run to the Rogue. We would go out with my dad. We would go eeling at nighttime. We would put the eels in the gunny sacks. We would learn how to make poles and hooks. We would take it to Grandpa and Grandma Ben’s house. Grandma Ben showed us how to cut the eel and put it on stakes. We were taught how to build a fire in the pit and use the smoke house.” –Marlene Stuart (interviewed by Tyson Rilatos)



“I remember us getting eels, crawdads and salmon. Going out picking blackberries. That was our staples for the winter. We picked a lot of huckleberries and blackberries. My mom canned them and my sisters. Ate a lot of eel, crawdads and fish. We didn’t know we were poor. We were just all together and one big happy family. I didn’t know what poor was until white people said, ‘Hey, you’re poor.’” –Daniel Brown (interviewed by Tiffany Stuart)



“From my family. My father (Archie Ben) spoke four languages in addition to the Chetco language. He spoke one of the languages from the Warm Springs Tribe. They thought it was a lost language. Years ago when people came to Siletz to visit, we didn’t have motels. Everyone stayed in each other’s homes. That one weekend, there were a bunch of Warm Springs people staying at our house. I always stayed in the kitchen with mom. Dad stayed in the living room and visited with all the people that came. There was a lady in there was crying. I thought dad did something to hurt her feelings. So I went and got mom. I said ‘There is something wrong. The lady from Warm Springs is crying.’ Mom went in there. She talked to dad in his language. Because they spoke back and forth like that. He told her ‘no.’ He spoke to that woman in her language. She hadn’t heard it for so many years. It made her really sad. Dad spoke many languages and taught at Oregon State (University).” –Shirley Ben Walker (interviewed by Alya Ben).



“Family. We would go eeling this time of year at Rock Creek. (I heard) my mother, grandmother, aunts and uncles (speak traditional languages).” –Woody Mushchamp (interviewed by Tiffany Stuart)



“From my dad, Archie Ben. He taught us how to Indian dance. I learned how to make baskets from Gladys Muschamp and Kary Streets. Learned double beadwork by Delores Edenfield. Dad taught Indian language.” –Vicki Nelson (interviewed by Tiffany Stuart)

“Grew up learning it as a kid from culture classes. My grandma (Elenor Logan) spoke (Native language), she was a member of the Yurok Tribe. She spoke her Native language.” –Reggie Butler Jr. (interviewed by Paige Lane)



“Through my family. Yes. My grandfather, my dad, my uncles, my grandmother.” –Kay Steel (interviewed by Chantel Lacewell)