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SILETZ

NEWSLETTER

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF SILETZ INDIANS

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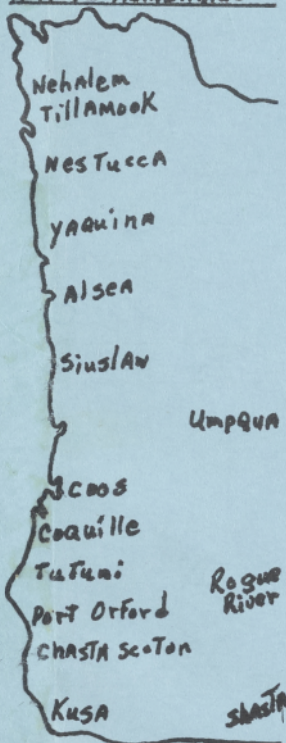
TRIBAL HISTORY

Most Indian reservations are located on the native lands of the tribes, that is the lands on which the tribes had always lived. Some tribes were not so lucky. They were forcibly "removed" to lands more convenient to the United States. Many tribes, for example, were removed from their own lands to what is now the state of Oklahoma. These forced removals were described by later historians by such names as "the trail of tears" and "the long walk." The leading scholar on Indian history referred to removal as a "tragic phase of American history."

The treaty of August 11, 1855, gave the Indian people who were to become the Siletz Tribe one year to move to the reservation. But the bloody "extermination" policy of the Oregon settlers cut that time short. Uneven battles, ambushes, and outright massacres of Indians by settlers forced General Palmer to order the removal of the Indians to the reservation in February, 1856. There was much loss of hope, and the will to live.

A story of the "trail of tears," as taught to a Siletz Tribal member by her grandmother.

NATIVE HOMELANDS



Ki-Ya-Na-Ha remembered how they were told to take only the clothes they had on their backs because when they go to Siletz new clothes and much food would be given to them. She began to cry for she saw her people gathered up like herds of sheep. Some families were even broken up, maybe a mother in one bunch and her children in another. Many fled to the mountains, for they did not want to leave their homes. But they learned very quickly that if they wanted to live that they dared not protest.

Our trail of tears began, Ki-Ya-Na-Ha was not one of the ones that rode on the ship or wagon, for she remembers walking most of the way. She told of women being abused, misused, and even kicked around by the white soldiers, especially if a mother tried to protect her young daughters. If men came to the rescue of their families, they were badly beaten and in some cases shot and left, for they were not allowed to stop and bury anyone that died along the way. She also remembered little children being kicked around if they fell too far behind.



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