

E
78
.06
S522
JUNE
1981

SILETZ NEWSLETTER

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF SILETZ INDIANS

BOX 549, SILETZ, OR 97380

TRIBAL HISTORY

The Alsea men and women wore their hair long. The women usually tied theirs into two braids, while the men either braided or knotted their hair to keep it out of the way when they were working. Along the northern part of the coast the men very carefully plucked out their beards using shell pincers. On the southern coast many of the men wore a mustache or left a small set of chin whiskers.

Both men and women adorned themselves with dentalia shells, shell beads, pine seed beads, and pendants for their ears and noses. The Tillamook, Chinook, and Alsea also flattened the heads of their children in infancy by binding them in cradle boards or a cedar dugout cradle. Some of the coastal Indians painted their faces with red designs. The men often made marks between their wrist and shoulder by which they measured dentalia shells. Many of the women along the coast had three tattoo lines on their chins. They placed these by cutting small lines in the chins of young girls and rubbing in willow bark charcoal.

Nearly all of the women wore basketry hats. Such a hat was a necessity for a modest woman and it also kept off the rain. The women usually carried as well a cone-shaped burden basket on their backs in which were loaded mussels, roots, or fish.

Excerpted from "The Indians of Western Oregon".....By: Stephen Dow Beckham



l. to r. Art Bensell, Bob Tom, Mary Alice Muncney, Bev Brown, Stephen Dow Beckham and associates.