

Exhibit: Battle against erasure is ongoing for North Coast tribes

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And certainly the story of the Indian boarding schools is complicated. Burns was warned by the curator of the Heard Museum that they found people brought very different memories and personal experiences to the exhibit.

The boarding schools of the late 1800s and early 1900s were created to separate children from their families and then they worked to separate the children from their native identities, cutting their hair, taking away traditional garb, often forbidding them to speak their own languages. Conditions at the early boarding schools — there were 25 federally-operated schools by 1902 — were often unhealthy and abusive.

A report in 1928 criticized the schools, finding that they relied on student labor to operate, were overcrowded and did not provide sufficient food or medical services, among other issues.

Reforms began in the 1920s and continued through the 1930s. Native activism and involvement in education in the 1960s and 1970s brought about further changes. Many of the federal schools closed in the 1980s. The four off-reservation schools that remain today are tribally controlled and reflect native values.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Ralph Burgoyne and Mary Burgoyne Simpson are decedents of George Menz, who attended Genoa and Chilocco Indian schools and was a skilled leathermaker.

For every story of abuse and want, there are many former students who can point to vocational skills and opportunities gained or cultural awareness, knowledge and community found in the schools. Some students met future spouses and credit the schools with providing opportunities and direction that were not available elsewhere at the time.

Still, says Tipiziwin Tolman, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux and one of Thurman's relatives, the schools were born out of a terrible truth: the purposeful silencing of identities and a way of life and the separation of families.

She sees how this past destruction continues today. In her maternal line, there are

100 years of Catholic boarding school. Her own family has had to find ways to heal and rebuild connections to each other and their culture.

There is a reason her first language is English and not Lakota, the language of her people, a language she has worked to learn and to pass on to others as an adult.

"When we talk about it in a historical context," she said, "it makes it sound like it's generations ago, or ancient history, and it's not."

Burns eagerly booked the exhibit two years ago when he saw it would be available. He knew it would be a "powerful, relevant story."

But events of the past year have only highlighted social and racial inequities and unresolved wrongs

across American history, and the exhibit has proved to be even more relevant than he thought it would be.

"I would hope that it makes people consider, or reconsider, some of our nation's history and the interactions we have had within our society," he said.

It is easy, he added, to think of history as static information, done with — to think that it doesn't affect things today.

"But it does," he said. "The impact of these schools still affects Native American communities generations later. Events and attitudes that one group has for another makes 'ripples through time' that we are still dealing with."

'It is essential that this past be acknowledged'

There were eight on-reservation boarding schools in Oregon and two off-reservation boarding schools, one in Forest Grove and a second, Chemawa Indian School, in Salem, that is still in operation. There were none in Clatsop County and the North Coast is not addressed explicitly in the "Away From Home" exhibit.

But as much as the museum is hearing from people whose families were directly affected by the schools, "we are also hearing from people who were completely unaware of this his-

tory," said Chelsea Vaughn, curator for the historical society.

"It is essential that this past be acknowledged and understood not just as a national story, but also as a local one," she said.

Certainly, the battle against erasure is ongoing for North Coast tribal people.

The Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes regained historical tribal lands — the first they have had since they began to be displaced 200 years ago — only last year through a transfer from the North Coast Land Conservancy. It is an important foothold for the tribe, but still only a foothold.

The Chinook Nation has fought unsuccessfully for decades for federal recognition. While they are recognized as a tribe by Washington state, this does not bring any rights to land or resources.

Now, though, there is a sign along U.S. Highway 101 ahead of Fort Columbia Historical State Park where tribal members hold a ceremony to welcome the first salmon

each year.

The sign, simple and direct, reads: "Welcome to unceded Chinook territory."

"Away From Home" is a temporary exhibit. It closes on May 25. But when it closes, a statement the museum drafted in preparation for the exhibit will move downstairs to a permanent exhibit about North Coast tribes.

The statement recognizes the Chinook and Clatsop people and the fact that indigenous peoples' "connection to this land has been challenged by violence, disease, treaties, encroaching settlers, relocations and other actions; however, throughout this turbulent history, this land has continued to hold great historical, spiritual and personal significance for the original land stewards of this region."

"We recognize and seek to advocate for the recognition of these, and other, native nations," the statement continues, "and we honor indigenous people, past, present and emerging, and pledge to be more accountable to their needs."

Port: 'We are taking up a lot of water'

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edge of the dock. Moving the seawall and filling in behind would prevent the bowing and eliminate maintenance costs on the dock, he said.

"It will last for an estimated 75 to 100 years," McGrath said. "So we won't have to worry about any of the issues we're worrying about with maintenance right now."

The \$17 million price tag comes with the cost of permitting and mitigating the environmental impact of walling in around 1 acre of shoreline.

"We are taking up a lot of water," McGrath said. "We're going to be required to do a lot of mitigation, and the National Marine Fisheries (Service) may push back because we're taking up too much water habitat."

The Port and KPFF Consulting Engineers, the firm contracted to find a fix for Pier 2, will try to prove to the fisheries service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that the project is the "least environmentally damaging and practicable alternative," McGrath said. If it isn't feasible to push the seawall out the full 60 feet, he said, the Port will see if it can be pushed out 30 feet with a repair of the



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

The Port of Astoria hopes to have a \$17 million rehab of the west side of Pier 2 included in the American Jobs Plan, an infrastructure bill proposed by President Joe Biden.

existing dock.

The Port hopes to get Pier 2 earmarked in Biden's infrastructure bill. Congress banned earmarks a decade ago but revived the concept for states to ask for portions of spending bills. Commissioner Frank Spence has been communicating with U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, an Oregon Democrat, to include Port projects in his ask.

"With the cost of a pier, and the valued operation of Bornstein and Da Yang, I think it's justified and salable" to ask for \$17 million, Spence said.

Shane Jensen, a contracted grant writer for the Port, is also applying for several grants through the U.S. Mar-

itime Administration to fund the Pier 2 work. But the Port needs to finalize its preferred fix, he said.

Jensen and Will Isom, the Port's executive director, have also been lobbying state senators and representatives for a piece of the American Rescue Plan. The stimulus package contained money for states, counties and cities, but not for special districts, such as ports.

"The hope is that once we have some more concrete information, we can really start pursuing these things," Isom said. "But we're already doing the legwork to get us there."

Jensen said the Port has also been pursuing state lot-

tery bonds for Pier 2 and a \$1.8 million project to repair the East Mooring Basin causeway. The causeway runs north from 36th Street over the marina to an Army Corps seawall. But the structure has been closed to both vehicles and pedestrians for years because of rotting wood supports underneath.

The Port had planned to repair 200 feet of the causeway in 2020, but did not start the work because of layoffs during the coronavirus pandemic, McGrath said. The new project would remove the concrete deck that has caused rotting underneath and return the pier to its original wood deck, he said.

The pursuit of the grants comes on the heels of the Port's capital facilities plan being tentatively approved by Business Oregon, Isom said. The state's economic development agency paid for the creation of a capital facilities plan to prioritize Port projects and work in tandem with a strategic business plan already approved. The approved plans bring the Port closer to receiving more state support to fix its numerous infrastructure issues.

"It marks a huge milestone for the Port, and it's a long time coming," Isom said.

Vaughn: 'He was so, so generous ... and I don't think people knew that'

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many of the standards he set we adhere to, to this day," said Seaside boys golf coach Jim Poetsch. "Even though he was no longer coaching, he never left the program. He helped run the Seaside Invitational and district tournaments, and donated shirts, rain gear, balls and lots of money through the years to the Seaside golf program."

Seaside assistant principal Jason Boyd said, "he was my seventh grade social studies teacher and golf coach. Denny genuinely cared about kids. He was very devoted in making sure the youth of our community had the best opportunity to grow."

Tributes poured in throughout the county following Vaughn's passing.

Jeff Ter Har, a local business owner and photographer who graduated from Seaside and is a big supporter of Gulls athletics, said, "What a great person. I was in his first class when he started teaching here, and my daughter was in his last, with a lot of Ter Hars in between. Truly a great teacher, golf coach, and most importantly of course, a

devoted Duck."

"I'm deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Denny," said Dan Foss, a former Astoria boys golf coach. "He was the patriarch of Cowapa League boys golf from the '80s through to the mid-2000s. I will miss his professionalism and genuine friendliness. He cared tremendously about kids. It was an honor to know such a wonderful man."

Scorer's table teammates

She may not have known Vaughn the longest, but Alice Olstedt was one of those who knew him best. You can't sit next to someone at the scorer's table for countless games and not get to know them.

Vaughn operated the clock while Olstedt kept the scoreboard for Seaside basketball, and she spent countless hours sitting to the right of Vaughn at Gulls' home games.

"Like so many of us, everyone knows little bits and pieces about Mr. Vaughn," Olstedt said. "We spent a lot of time talking, but Mr. Vaughn didn't talk about himself. He wasn't that kind of guy."

Vaughn graduated from Central Catholic High School in Portland and later the University of Oregon.

"He was a huge (Ducks) fan," said Olstedt. "He had season tickets for football, but was a huge fan of Oregon women's basketball."

She added, "He was so, so generous ... and I don't think people knew that. He was a Seaside booster donor, and had his name on the sign in the gym and on the sports schedule. But he was the first person to pull out money when kids were selling raffle tickets at basketball games."

"He always gave money to whomever was running the halftime hoop shoot so that kids who might not have money to shoot could shoot."

And Vaughn went a lot further than that, Truax said.

"When Kyle (Vaughn's son) started playing golf, the next thing we know, there's a set of Titleist golf clubs on our porch," he said. "Denny had 47 sets of clubs, so he gave Kyle one. He even gave Kyle an Oregon bag, and Kyle used it, because Mr. Vaughn gave it to him." The Truax family are big Oregon State fans.

"Another kid needed glasses, and Denny was there for him," Truax continued. "That's the stuff that nobody knew about, and he didn't want people to know."

Scorer's table etiquette

"He was very particular about how things should go at the table," Olstedt said. "People thought he sometimes made mistakes with the clock, but I can tell you, it was the clock, not Mr. Vaughn."

"We were kind of superstitious at the table. Things had to be set out a certain way. He knew where he wanted the clock. The home and visitors books always had to sit next to each other so you could communicate."

Olstedt added, "I was hoping so much that Mr. Vaughn would be there for the first home game at the table in the new gym. It will be pretty hard to not have him on my left."

"Every year, towards the end of the season, he would say, 'Well, I think I'm going to retire from doing this.' And I would smile and tell him I needed him there. And every year, he would show up."

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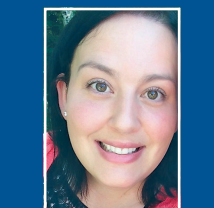
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