

Part 2

Tribal Hunting & Fishing Rights

The old ways, the old stories.

HUNTING & FISHING continued from front page

give it to Elders because you knew they can't go out and hunt themselves."

And with money scarce — Dean's uncle, Tribal Elder Hubert Mercier, said, "You couldn't find a nickel no place," —



Photo by Peta Tinda

three trips" of eight to 10 miles each. "I guess that's part of the culture," said Kimsey.

"There were no roads up Agency in those days," said Hubert Mercier. "You walked four to five hours in. Now, you drive in in 15 minutes."

"When you'd hunt (for a few days)," he added, "you'd sleep under a log."

Kimsey remembered a simpler time and for him, a happier time. "I always thought I was born 100 years too late," he said.

For many Elders, it was a time that can't be reproduced with cultural events. Kimsey

somebody. It's part of the culture. Something you hand down."

"We didn't have a cultural hunt. We did it automatically," he said.

"We weren't war dancing and all that nonsense," he said. "Dancing was good old fashioned fun."

"We used to hunt for meat. We didn't go for the trophies," he said.

"My grandfather had a sweathouse. He used it to get clean. Not with prayers. He didn't have a bath so they'd sweat in the darn things and they'd get clean."

"They (the younger generation) are assimilated already and they don't realize it," he said.

Outlaw Hunting

Many kids in the community grew up learning that hunting with spotlights at night and hunting with dogs were the way you did it. And when you did it to put food on the table or you went hungry, there wasn't much questioning about it; and not many question the old practice even now, though some would just as soon not talk about it.

Others have no qualms at all about describing the practices that are not among legal hunting techniques in

"When you'd hear the barking," said community member J.R. Robertson, "you knew it was deer coming."

There are stories of piling hay up in the back of the pickup to hide deer kills for the ride home. In those days, you had to haul your garbage to the dump, and Elder Dean Mercier recalled hiding deer under the trash, too.

He tells the story of an old barn by the Agency rock pits where they used to hang out the deer after killing them. One time, he and his "outlaws" had five deer hanging in there. When they went back a few days later, there were eight hanging. The last three came from another outlaw band up there, though Dean had no idea who they were. "We didn't bother their deer and they didn't bother ours. That's the way it was, then."

LaVerne Hosford remembers the time her husband, Tribal member Fremond Bean, now passed on, brought home a deer in the trunk of his car. "He brought it down to Harold Mercier's (Dean's dad) home. When he opened the trunk, the deer was sitting up in the trunk of the car and he had to shoot it again."

"He told me one time, he was hunting out by Little Hebo and he killed this

"I always thought I was born 100 years too late. We used to hunt for meat. We didn't go for the trophies."

~ Tribal Elder Marvin Kimsey

a lot of Indians traded what they made for what they needed.

Kimsey remembers his parents and grandparents both heading to Oregon City with baskets they'd made to "trade for canned fruit and especially school clothes. Just about anything," he said. "Things they could use."

"We used to have a friend who lived on the Siletz River where Coyote Rock is," said Community Elder LaVerne Hosford. Hosford was married to Tribal member Freeman Bean, and has many children, grandchildren and great grandchildren who are Tribal members living in the community. "We'd take venison down and trade him for fish."

And just a few days ago, Kimsey stood in his yard in the autumn sun, wearing a sleeveless shirt and jeans, wielding a big, sharp knife, cutting salmon into steaks for canning. "A friend brought it over," he said.

That's been the Tribal way as far back as anyone can remember, though the common memory recalls how little there often was to share.

Back in the Great Depression, recalled Elder Hubert Mercier, who is 95 years old these days, they were so hungry that when they'd kill a deer, they'd end up eating half of it before they finished hunting and brought the rest back down.

"We took no food with us (when we hunted)," said Kimsey. "There were orchards and stuff but we'd get awfully hungry. I guess we didn't require a whole lot of food then."

Elder Hubert Mercier remembers going fishing "with a few biscuits" in his pocket.

"A friend and I used to walk up to Spirit Mountain," said Kimsey. "We walked every foot of it" during countless two, three day hunts.

If they got a deer, they'd pack it out — "sometimes it would take two or

recalled that Tribal Elder Merle Holmes, who passed on last year, used to say, "If you're going to recreate it, forget it, you can't recreate it."

You can't recreate need or hunger no longer there, is what he and others believe. "It's something you don't teach

Oregon. "I'm too goddam old to become a hypocrite now," said Elder Dean Mercier.

"When I learned to hunt," said Tribal Council member Reyn Leno, "I took care of the dogs. We'd send the dogs in and they'd flush the deer out."



Photo courtesy of Tom Bean

Back In The Day — This photograph of Tribal member Fremond Bean packing a deer out of the woods from back in the day is mounted on wood and hangs in the home of his son, Tribal member Tom Bean. Fremond provided for his family, neighbors and friends, hunting often with his wife, community Elder LaVerne Hosford, and often with friends and fellow Tribal members Vernon "Barney" Reibach and wife, Minnie.

deer out by the road, and he went to cut its throat and the deer jumped up. He got a wild ride out of that one."

Dean recalls bringing a deer home under all the trash, and stopping for gas at Harold and Wally Munson's Chevron Station. Dean got out of the car and "everyone was laughing," he said. "I looked around and the deer is standing up in the back of the truck."

"The Indian eye," is what Dean called the 12-volt spotlight he and many others used to use for hunting at night.

"Sometimes," said Hosford, "in the spotlight, you'd catch a raccoon in the tree. They'd poke out a look at you and then run behind the tree. We never killed them, but it was fun to spotlight them."

"We used to put on the car radio," she added, "so the deer would stand and listen to the music and wouldn't run off."

Elder Hubert Mercier, who hunted and fished, he said, until he was in his eighties, also hunted birds, native pheasants and lots of grouse. "When you heard somebody shoot," he said, "you knew you had something to eat. You'd boil them right in the hills. Pick all the feathers, dress them out and boil them in an old bucket."

A lot of fishing took place at the falls near Otis, on the way to the coast. In the early 1900s, said Robertson, "they used to snag fish. They made gaff hooks out of horns sharpened to a point, like a T on the end of a pole. They'd snag one and back up dragging the fish on the shore."

Before the dams came, many Tribal members fished at Celilo Falls. Hubert Mercier used to dip-net on the lower side of the falls. The dip nets he used were about four feet long and three feet in diameter, he said.

"All you had to do is stick it out there (where the salmon were jumping to make it to the top of the falls)," he said. "When the salmon got tired, they'd fall