

25th Restoration commemorative issue

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the complicated, time-consuming process that would bring success at local, state and federal levels. She also accompanied them on visits to the nation's Capitol.

Furse "always ate at vegetarian places," recalls Margaret Provost. "Some places, I didn't really know what I was eating."

"We'd do anything for the help," says Jackie Provost Many Hides.

Among the Restoration efforts, Tribal members found a surprise friend at the state Capitol. Tribal member Sequoia Bobb Raya, 54 today, was raised among the Yakamas. In 1981, he worked at the Oregon State Capitol for then-Speaker of the House Hardy Myers.

One day, a group of Grand Ronde Tribal members showed up at the Capitol pursuing Restoration. There was a chance encounter. "They knew what Grand Ronde would be facing in the Legislature and were looking for support," Raya says.

Jackie Mercier Colton Whisler wrote a major grant for the Tribe in 1979. The \$90,000 federal Administration for Native Americans funding was enough to employ five people. Smaller grants also came from Church Women United and the Catholic Church, and the Tribe was on its way.



Meanwhile, in 1978, two years before the official Enrollment Committee was established, those who would be members began wrestling with enrollment issues, according to Tribal member Margo Mercier, now 53, but then a member of the first Enrollment Committee. The committee also included Tribal Elders Nora Kimsey, Velma Mercier, Martha Mercier, Ila Dowd and Tribal member Lois Butler.



Margo Mercier

In 1985, Margo gave up committee membership to become Tribal Enrollment manager, a position she holds today.

At the time, the committee considered blood quantum and residency issues.

"There was a consensus for about two years that blood quantum should be set at one-quarter Grand Ronde blood," Margo says, and it was decided not to penalize Tribal members for leaving "a dead reservation." No residency requirement made it into the Tribal enrollment rules. Many, in fact, did leave and married outside the Tribe, so it also was decided to lower the blood quantum to 1/16th Tribal blood, where it remains today.

"When we contacted AuCoin



Debby Larsen, Candy Robertson, Angie Blackwell, Mychal Leno

(early in the 1980s)," Margaret Provost says, "he told us about all the work we still had to do. 'How many people are we talking about?' he asked. So, we knew we needed a census."

"He told us to get our act together," Margaret says, and referred to both the census and gaining support at the local level, "and then come back and see him."

"The hardest people to convince was our own people," Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison says.

"The Steelheaders were the biggest opposition," Jackie Provost Many Hides remembers, "and we had to give up our hunting and fishing rights. You have to take and give in the real world." Then the Steelheaders signed on.

Local timber executive John Hampton, who owned Spirit Mountain (he passed on last year, but the estate has since declined to sell the sacred property back to the Grand Ronde Tribe), was another tough opponent for the Tribe.

Principally, Hampton worried that if the Tribe got timber land, it would compete with his mills and sell logs overseas, outsourcing jobs from the area.

Not without some hard bargaining, the Tribe signed away the right to build a mill, compete with existing local mills or sell logs overseas for 20 years. They won Hampton's support. (Those 20 years ended on Sept. 9, 2008, but with timber prices too low for new sales throughout most of 2008, the Tribe has not yet made any changes to the initial policy, says Tribal member Mike Wilson, manager of the Natural Resources Department.)

Dean Mercier said Hampton also worried that children from the neighborhood would start a fire in the woods.

"So many times we went places and people would insult us," Margaret Provost says, "but we kept on going. And the unity of the Tribe was really something."

Sometimes insults would be direct; sometimes subtle.

"A couple times people weren't so nice," recalls Jackie Provost Many Hides, but Margaret would say, "Put your thick skin on and come on. It was a lot of fun, but a lot of heartache, too."

"We kept on going and kept on putting our case before all the groups that would listen," says Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison, who joined the effort in 1980 and served on Tribal Council for 22 years.



Some of the next generation, caught up in the excitement, picked up a different perspective in the local community.

"When we were in the midst of getting restored," says Tribal member Mike Colton, 38, "the community supported it completely. We'd do bottle collections for Little League, and at the store, Ed Johnson would take time out of his day counting them. A lot of the nonTribal members gave their full support."

The Colton boys, Mike and Doug, 39, are Jackie Mercier Colton Whisler's sons, and grandchildren to Tribal Elder Dean Mercier.

There was a time, as Mike Colton remembers it, before Restoration when unrecognized Tribal members "recognized ourselves" with little things, such as the name of the Grand Ronde baseball team — it was the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde team.

"We had summer school through the (federal) Title IV program," says Doug Colton. "Mom did craft classes for the community. (Tribal Elder, also passed on) Eula Petite taught (the Chinuk Wawa) language."

"Before Restoration," says Angie Blackwell, 41, daughter of Candy Robertson, "maybe we didn't know a lot, but Mom had traditional values that she passed on to us. We didn't know that they were even Tribal. We always had respect for our Elders, but we were just raised that way."

"They were very respectful," Candy says. "They were willing to jump in and help. I was so proud of them."

"Mom is very humble," said Candy's youngest daughter, Mychal Leno, 38. "She taught us everything."

When local and state parties got on board with the Tribe, Tribal leaders turned their attention to Oregon's federal representatives.

Tribal member Jim Holmes, now 43, son to Tribal Elder Merle

Holmes (who passed on in 2004), remembers that "Dad was a log truck driver, so he worked 12-hour days and he was gone a lot anyway, and when they started working on this, he was gone even more, and I know that he missed the time away from family, but it was important to him. It was a legacy that they were creating to leave behind, that we're going to take care of generations of Tribal members."

"I remember a couple of trips to Washington, D.C., that he was going to take. I knew he wasn't crazy about air travel. Both he and (Tribal Elder) Marvin Kimsey were going. One quote he kept saying to Marvin, 'Don't worry about the flight. It's kind of like our bill. It's going to fly or it's not.'"

"It was hard at that time for me to understand the big picture. I asked him what is this whole thing about and he explained that we were trying to gain federal recognition for the Tribe so we could provide educational and health benefits for Tribal members, and be recognized as an Indian tribe."

"He explained that we weren't raised in traditional Indian culture because it had been taken away. It took seeing and being a part of and watching the whole thing unfold, and seeing this Tribe and the geographic area change over the years."

"We knew Dad was busy working on something but weren't privy to many details about it. But now, we know a little more of the back story, we know what huge sacrifices were made by everyone involved. It means that much more to us."

Today, Jim Holmes works for the Tribe as Risk and Insurance Administrator. In 2004, his father held the Tribe's first naming ceremony for Jim.

"I remember Dad always talking about having meetings with (then Congressman, now Senator) Ron Wyden and (then Congressman) Les AuCoin and (then) Governor Atiyeh at the time, and that always struck me as being kind of cool. You heard about these political figures in the news and on TV and now my Dad and this group were meeting with them, and I thought it was a neat deal."

"If there's one overriding theme, they sacrificed a lot, took from their own families; a lot of what they did was on their own dime. What they did is something we need to be really proud of. I know Dad was, what this Tribe developed into."



Tribal member Colleen Branson, 45, daughter of Tribal Elder Marvin Kimsey, says, "I remember Dad and Jackie (Mercier) Colton doing some work out of a small modular or trailer they had parked just outside of Russ Leno's driveway for a short time."

"For the next five or six years, dad

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