

# 25<sup>th</sup> Restoration commemorative issue

## Remembrances of Restoration

By Ron Karten  
Smoke Signals staff writer

**E**arly in the 1970s, the Road to Restoration began in Grand Ronde.

Tribal Elder Margaret Provost, 78 today, was in her early 40s and working at Teledyne Wah Chang, the Albany rare metals company, in 1972.

Her foreman, Bob Cannon, an Osage Indian from Oklahoma, and Thurman Banks, an Oglala Sioux from South Dakota, were involved in an association of urban Indians, which met in the Lebanon/Albany area. They caught her attention with talk of Tribal Restoration.

"Siletz was being restored," Margaret recalls, "and in conversation, (Bob Cannon) asked why Grand Ronde wasn't doing anything. I thought, 'Why not in Grand Ronde?'"

She joined the group with her daughter, Jackie Provost (now Many Hides), who is now also a Tribal Elder, but was in her 20s then.

Margaret called Tribal Elder Leon "Chip" Tom, her brother Marvin Kimsey and Merle Holmes. Chip called his daughter, Patti Tom Martin. Marvin Kimsey called Dean Mercier. Dean called his daughter, Jackie Mercier Colton, who walked on in 2007.

And so the foundation of Tribal Restoration began one phone call and one Tribal member at a time.

"My Dad got a call from Margaret," says Tribal Elder Patti Tom Martin, 59, "and he said, 'She's got an idea that we could get restored. I don't get home from work in time. I want you to go down there.' I said, 'I don't remember her,' but he said, 'Don't worry, they're your family. You're OK.' So I went down there."

"Margaret Provost and Marvin Kimsey were there and they started talking about Restoration. I thought, 'Oh, my God, can that really happen? Can that really be?' So I leave there absolutely on fire that that could happen. That's what started it for us."

"We talked to different groups," Margaret says. "Then, we talked to Joe Lane (Siletz). He encouraged us to go ahead and do this, and introduced us to different programs they were conducting - Manpower and the CETA (Federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) program. He got us started in some of those programs, and also got us offices in Salem and Albany to work from."

"We got some Tribal members work and into school, and it got us around to other Tribes to make contacts."

Patti Tom Martin recalls one piece of Lane's advice. He told them to meet monthly and establish the record of an ongoing nonprofit.

"People wanted to believe," Patti says, "but I think it was hard to believe that something like that, something that momentous, could possibly happen for us."

But when monthly meetings began in Grand Ronde in 1975, more and more people got involved, Patti says.

"We knew we were on the road to doing something," Margaret remembers.



**A**fter Termination in 1954, the Tribal land base that was originally 69,100 acres was whittled down again, eventually reduced to the 2.5-acre cemetery and a 24-by-24-foot shack.

That little green shack served many purposes for the Tribe when nothing else was available, and still today, though it has long since been replaced, it holds the memories of a Tribe.

**S**ome Tribes, says Tribal Elder Mark Mercier, 56, preferred Termination. He served on Tribal Council for



Mark Mercier

15 years starting in 1984, just after Restoration, and for 12 years of that time as chairman.

Some Tribes were happy to have the government out of their business, he says. But in Grand Ronde, Mark and others just saw Termination as a way for the government to shirk its treaty obligations.

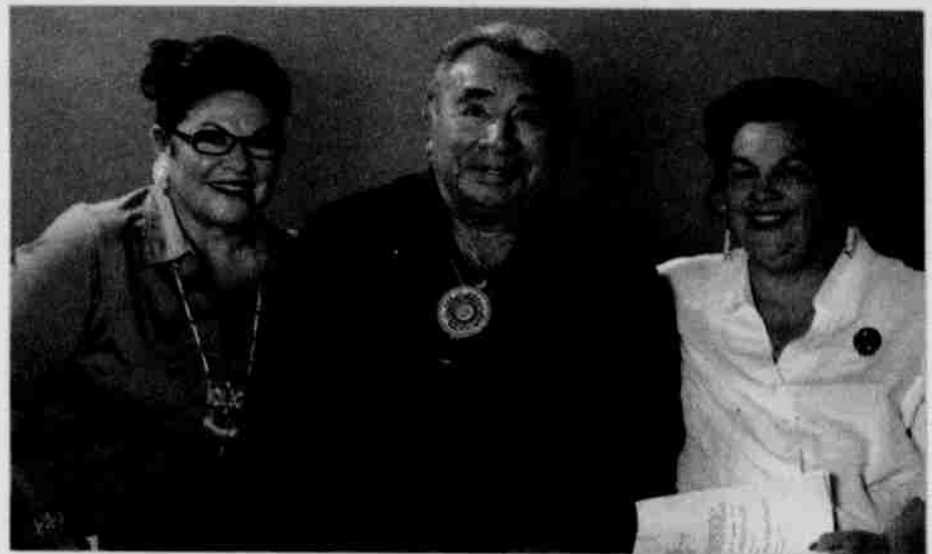
"When we got terminated," says Tribal Elder Chip Tom, "deep down, I never, to me, I wasn't going to be terminated. How can they take your identity away from you?"

Chip Tom's family started in Grand Ronde but joined the federal relocation program for a few years starting in 1955.

"It took our family away from our community of Grand Ronde," says Patti Tom Martin. "Not all families participated in the relocation program. Some of the families around here had land, so they stayed. We went to Colorado with the relocation program and it was a devastating time for our family. I think it actually broke our family apart."

"There was nothing for us there," Patti says. "If it wasn't for our grandparents, we probably would not have got back home. But Indians always get home."

The government's idea with the relocation program, according to Tribal



Kathleen Tom, Leon 'Chip' Tom, Patti Tom Martin

Elder and Tribal Council member Kathleen Tom, 55, was, "If we assimilate them out into the other cultures, pretty soon they'll intermarry and intermarry and pretty soon there won't be an Indian culture, and we won't have any trust responsibility to them."

"Termination for me meant that we were no longer the visible ones," says Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy, 60. "We were invisible as far as the United States (was concerned), but because of that invisibility, we then had to work harder, to do more, to develop the talents, the skills, the abilities that we had."

"And we needed to represent our family and our people; that we were the ones who would remember. We are the ones who would carry out all of the possibilities that were there for us as a people, as well as a family, as well as an individual."

"Those beliefs and strengths and acts of courage, I believe, were the momentum for Restoration."



**I**n 1973, Congress restored federal recognition of the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin. That was the first crack in the dam of Termination.

In 1977, the Confederated Tribes

of Siletz in western Oregon succeeded in its Restoration effort. In 1982, the Cow Creeks in southern Oregon succeeded. The news of Restoration rumbled through Indian Country in the 1970s and early 1980s, and the Grand Ronde members were determined to make it happen.

"It had to come from within ourselves," says Kennedy, who was involved in the 1970s. She credits her grandmother, Pauline Cora Johnson, who was grandparent and parent to her.

"I was raised in a strong cultural family," Kennedy says. "My grandmother made sure that we accepted who we were, that we were valued individuals, and that we had a lot to offer not only our family but the world."

"By the time Termination came, I was a small child, and all those underlying beliefs and all of the nurturing was there to sustain us through Termination."

"Looking at the United States as the most powerful nation in the world who made us invisible, our job was to overcome that adversity and to once again be the strong nation of people that we knew was

See REMEMBRANCES  
continued on page 9



Shonn Leno

Russ Leno

Reyn Leno