

25th Restoration commemorative issue

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given to us by the Creator. That's really what the undertaking of Restoration was all about. It caused folks to think about, 'We can do this.'



There are a couple different ways to look at Restoration," Tribal Elder and Tribal Council Vice Chairman Reyn Leno, 58, says. "You have the people who weren't Tribal before Restoration, who felt that now I'm going to be recognized as an Indian, and you got people who lived here all their lives, who never quit being an Indian.

"For us, it was basically the government living up to their responsibilities finally. That's what Restoration meant to us. That's what Dad said. There wasn't a big life change. Ask Uncle Russ. They hunted and fished whenever they wanted. No tags. No license."

Tribal Elder Russ Leno, now 81, remembers the Restoration effort taking place with Tribal members who were "more or less trying to survive."

Hunting was one route to survival in the community.

"When you got snow up on the mountains and the loggers were snowed out, there'd be a deer hanging in everybody's garage," Reyn says.

Tribal member Shonn Leno, who was 8 at the time of Restoration, says the idea behind Termination was not true in the world he lived in in the Grand Ronde area.

"It was kind of confusing to us because, like Dad said, we didn't really notice," Shonn says. "Nobody ever told us we weren't Indian is the best way I can put it, so we were trying to figure out, as kids, you're trying to understand what's exactly going on. Why are all these people meeting all of a sudden? You'd see Uncle Russ (Leno), Uncle Merle (Leno) at the meetings. You're trying to understand exactly what's taking place."

Shonn, 33, today is Special Projects coordinator for the Tribe's Natural Resources Department. He remembers meetings to update Tribal members about the Restoration effort at Grand Ronde Grade School, which is now Willamina Middle School @ Grand Ronde.

"One of my memories is going and looking at the map of when we get back the Reservation," Shonn recalls. "We stopped at the grade school and they had it posted."



Chip Tom's youngest daughter, Kathleen Tom, today serving her second term on Tribal Council, was in her early 20s during Restoration. She participated in Phil Sheridan Days as Tribal Royalty.

"I was one of the princesses or queens and thrown in the back of Marvin Kimsey's pickup," she recalls. "We had to show that the Tribe

was here. That was my role."

By 1975, grants, not all of them large, became available to Tribes and made it worthwhile for Grand Ronde members to reconstitute the Tribal Council as a nonprofit organization through which they could take advantage of funding.

Jackie Provost Many Hides remembers a meeting held in the old Grand Ronde Library to select an interim council: 53 people and "nobody said anything."

"Joe Lane would ask a question," Many Hides says, "and all you'd see around the room was eyeballs moving."

Finally, Tribal Elder Gertrude Hudson Mercier (now passed on) spoke up: "It's been a long time since we've been Indians," she said, "but good luck."

Gertrude was Tribal member Shelley Hanson's great-grandmother, Tribal Elder Sharon Hanson's grandmother and mother to Tribal Elders Marion Forster, Dorothy Forster, Norma Lewis, Barbara Thomas (all now passed on) and Nadine McNutt.

The nine-member interim council included Margaret Provost as chair and Marvin Kimsey, Merle Holmes, Patti Tom Martin, Nancy Coleman and Ken Hudson; nine in all.

"Everybody liked the idea (of Restoration)," Many Hides says, "but we didn't know what it entailed."



The Restoration effort required support, starting at the local level, from counties to timber corporations to sportsmen's groups. Obtaining that support meant countless meetings and television news interviews, where the Grand Ronde story could be told.

At one television event for the Tribe, designated Tribal members did not show up.

"My brother (John Allen), who is now deceased, and I drove from Burns to Portland to the TV station," recalls Kennedy, "to support those that were designated to go on and speak on behalf of our Restoration efforts, and they didn't show up. And so we said, 'Oh my gosh. What do we do? Well we've got to go on. If they're making time for us and it's on their schedule, and it's not going to cost us anything,' because we couldn't afford TV, 'we've got to do it.' I was probably 30 years old at the time. So we did that. But that was really a joint effort for all of those that were interested. You did what you had to. You stepped out of your comfort zone."

Tribal Elder Carmen "Candy" Robertson, 62, also was about 30 when she stepped out of her comfort zone. Since 1975, she had played a quiet but vital role in the Restoration effort, writing grants and serving as Tribal secretary before Restoration.

But when Restoration came, and Kathryn Harrison as chairman and Dean Mercier as vice chair asked her to be secretary, she said, "I can't do that."



Nora Kimsey, Jackie (Provost) Many Hides, Margaret Provost

Tribal member Jackie Mercier Colton said, "You can do it. Let's try it." And Robertson reluctantly became an important player in Grand Ronde history.

"There were a lot willing to teach me what I needed to know," Robertson says, and cites Marvin Kimsey, Jackie Mercier Colton Whisler, Dean Mercier, Mark Mercier, Kathryn Harrison, Merle Holmes and Russ Leno.



Tribal Council Secretary Jack Giffen Jr., 57, remembers his grandmother helping the Restoration effort, though the family lived in Brookings.

"My grandmother, (Tribal Elder, now deceased) Arvella Hudson Houck, she used to take us kids to school every day because we didn't like riding the bus," Giffen recalls. "One day, we get ready to go to school, this is during the time of Restoration, and she's all in a panic. 'We've got to get to the post office,' and we're all thinking, 'What's the big panic?'"

"Well, she was sending off some money for Restoration, for the work on Restoration, and apparently she had written two checks. One was going to be sent off later, but she had them both in the same envelope and had dropped them off prior to taking us to school. So, she was in a panic to go and see the postmaster."

"So, before she would take us to school, she went down to the post office to see the postmaster and, luckily, the postmaster was able to pull the envelope out with the two checks in it. It was a great story for us because her heart was in the right place, but she got a little overzealous."



Uncle Russ (Leno) and Uncle Merle (Leno) were kind of the family representatives during Restoration," says Reyn Leno. "I was working in the woods at the time, raising three small kids."

He remembers "getting the paperwork done. Mom was on us a lot. She was the one in the family making sure we got our paperwork done."

Grand Ronde Elders held bake sales to fund the effort, and if nobody bought the cakes, they bought them themselves, Margaret Provost says.

"We didn't have gas money," Margaret says. "We had to pick up pop bottles."

Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison, 84, drove around on bald tires, her daughter, Tribal Elder Patsy Pullin, 65, remembers.

Children helped by picking berries to be canned by Tribal Elders and sold as jam for the cause.

They raised money and sent delegation after delegation across the country to Washington, D.C. They found influential supporters among lawyers, community organizers, congressmen and senators. They had the support of Oregon Gov. Victor Atiyeh.

And they had themselves.



Don Wharton, founding director of Oregon Legal Service's Native American Program, was an early Restoration strategist. He founded and worked at the Native American Program from 1978 to 1983.

With the Menominee and Siletz Tribes recently restored, the Native American Program was instructed by other terminated Oregon Tribes to make Restoration a priority.

"As best that I can recall," Wharton says, "at that meeting were Dean Mercier, Jackie Colton, Marvin Kimsey, Margaret Provost and, I think, Merle Holmes; maybe Eula Petite as well." The core group showed up everywhere.

Wharton brought in community activist Elizabeth Furse to coordinate the effort. She was selected from among four interested candidates.

In law school at the time, Furse got caught up in Wharton's enthusiasm and changed her focus to Native American law. She came on board the Restoration effort in 1979.

Furse prepared Tribal leaders for

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