

Portland Since Time Immemorial



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Portland Since Time Immemorial

Learn about the Native American communities that have always lived on the land that is now Portland, Oregon, and Native American people who moved to Oregon and made it their home.



Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde delegation welcomes canoes on the shores of the Willamette River at the Hawthorne Bridge.

In this reader, you will learn about the cultures and history of the Multnomah Tribe, the Cascades Watlala Tribe, and the Clowwewalla and Clackamas tribes of Chinook Indians as well as the Tualatin Band of Kalapuya. These are the names of the Tribes that have lived on the land that is now called Portland.

You will learn about Native ways of living before Portland was a city. You will learn about Native people today and the amazing contributions they are making to their communities.

You may have heard **stereotypes** about Native people. There have been many stereotypes about Native people that are not true, such as they no longer exist, they all live in teepees, and they all wear feathers and certain types of clothes.

Native people today live in many different types of homes, such as apartments, houses, shop at grocery stores and have many different jobs in our community. Oregon

is home to many different Native tribal groups, some from the tribal nations in Oregon and some from other areas of North and South America. Native people live throughout Oregon today on reservations and off reservations in cities and communities.

stereotype – a stereotype is an idea or image about a group of people.

Did You Know...

Portland has not always been a city!

The city that is now known as Portland was built on the **ancestral homelands** of the Multnomah, the Cascades Watlala , and the Clackamas tribes of Chinook Indians. The homelands of these tribes were also visited by many regional tribes seeking to trade and hunt, like the Kalapuyans of the Willamette Valley, Molallas, Klickitats, Wascos, Skilutes, and many others.

ancestral homelands – the places that our ancestors lived. Ancestors are grandparents, great grandparents, their grandparents, and so on, who were born before us.

Native people have interesting and complex cultures and histories. Native people are engineers who craft basketry, clothing, houses, hunting and fishing tools, and canoes from raw materials from plants gathered and animals hunted or fished into useful tools.

Native peoples' cultures have been deeply impacted for over 200 years by non-Native settlers, who have changed Native lands and **lifeways**.

In this reader, you will see Native people called Indigenous, Indian, or Native American. Native people are the first people to live on any land, including what is now called the United States of America. Native people and their ancestors have lived on this land since **Time Immemorial**.

lifeway – how a group of people live, including their culture, customs, spiritual beliefs, and traditions.

time immemorial – a period of time that is longer than human memory.

The Land

The City of Portland is located in the State of Oregon. Portland was built along the Willamette River. The Willamette River empties into the Columbia River. Fish, such as salmon and steelhead, can be caught from the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. The **climate** of Portland is rainy and wet in the winters and dry in the summers.

climate – the weather of an area over a period of time.



Portland Parks & Recreation's Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge is a 163-acre complex of meadows, woodlands, and wetlands in Portland on the east bank of the Willamette River. This park is inside the City of Portland. (Photo by GeneralRelative, Creative Commons)

Native Tribes

Oregon is home to many different Native tribal groups. Portland is the homeland of the Multnomah Tribe, the Cascades Watlala Tribe, Clowwewalla, and the Clackamas tribes of Chinook Indians.

Many **bands** of the Kalapuyan, Klickitat, and Klamath **tribes** traveled through the land that is now Portland and traded with the tribes who lived on that land.

Native nations have and always have had **sovereignty**. Native nations have the sovereignty to form their own tribal governments, make decisions about how money is spent in the community, what roads and bridges are built on their land. Even though Native nations have sovereignty many people are still fighting for access to their homelands, fishing sites and water rights. Native nations are working on rebuilding trust with the local and Federal governments who have broken promises, taken land and attempted to erase tribal communities through acts of violence.

tribe – a group of people who share the same language, culture, and community.

band – a smaller group of tribal people who are connected to a larger Tribe through trade and government.

sovereignty – the right of a group of people to make their own decisions about the way they govern their community.

Today Portland is home to over 40,000 Native people. Native people live everywhere in Oregon. There are many Native business owners in Portland today. Native people work in all types of professions, such as teachers, writers, artists, radio hosts, professors, doctors, musicians, cooks, and much more. In this section, you will meet Native artists and authors, and you will learn about places in Portland today.

Meet Artist Lillian Pitt

Imagine that you are coming home from school. It is a nice spring day. The weather is warm, and the flowers are blooming on the trees. You walk past a hundred-year-old cedar tree on your way to the Ainsworth MAX station. As you stop at the station you notice an interesting piece of art.

Lillian Pitt was born on the Warm Springs Reservation in 1943. She is an artist, **activist**, and educator. Lillian Pitt moved to Portland in the 1960s and began studying art. Her work is inspired by the art and **petroglyphs** of her ancestors, who have lived along the Columbia River.

The **petroglyph**, Tsagalala, also known as She Who Watches, sits high on a bluff in the Columbia River Gorge, overlooking the village of Wishxam, the village where Lillian Pitt's great-grandmother lived.

activist – a person who works to make a change.

petroglyph – an image carved on rock.



Ainsworth Greenspace, Bear Woman Chief by Lillian Pitt, Pacific Northwest artist Lillian Pitt a descendant of Wasco, Yakama, and Warm Springs people. Photo from TriMet.



Tsagalalal, "She Who Watches Petroglyph." Photo by John Nelson. Creative Commons CC 2.0

This is the story about She Who Watches that an elder told Lillian, and that Lillian shares on her website: <https://lillianpitt.com/she-who-watches/>:

“There was this village on the Washington side of the Columbia Gorge. And this was long ago when people were not yet real people, and that is when we could talk to the animals.

“And so Coyote — the Trickster — came down the river to the village and asked the people if they were living well. And they said: ‘Yes, we are, but you need to talk to our chief, Tsagaglal. She lives up on the hill.’

“So Coyote pranced up the hill and asked Tsagaglal if she was a good chief or one of those evildoers. She said, ‘No, my people live well. We have lots of salmon, venison, berries, roots, and good houses. Why do you ask?’ And Coyote said, ‘Changes are going to happen. How will you watch over your people?’ And so she didn’t know.

“And it was at that time that Coyote changed her into a rock to watch her people forever.”

Meet Elizabeth Woody, Oregon’s Poet Laureate, 2016

Elizabeth Woody is a poet and educator. She is a descendant of Navajo, Wasco, and Yakama peoples. She is an enrolled tribal member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

Elizabeth Woody was the 2016 Poet Laureate of Oregon. A Poet Laureate is an honored position, named by Oregon’s governor.

Elizabeth Woody was the first Native woman to be named Poet Laureate of Oregon.

Elizabeth Woody is now the director of the Warm Springs Museum. The Warm Springs Museum is a place to learn about tribal community, culture, history, and art.



Elizabeth Woody. Courtesy Oregon Cultural Trust

Here is a poem written by Elizabeth Woody:

Flight

Eagle hovers as immobile Cross

In clarity of blue

Critical detachment drops from view.

Afternoon hail, lightning and mist light blue-gray,
color-filled finches, mourning dove, and canyon wrens sing.

Sage rolled between fingers at the edge of Juniper berries is prayer.

The evergreen crests collect arches of pinion to mingle with ozone.

A burning red draws eye to the circle of copper in rock

Upon palm's hot lifeline.

Our eagle plume stands up in the path.

Breath moves on the brown edge of filmy down as divination of the proper
direction.

Elizabeth Woody

Portland State Native American Community Center

The Native American Community Center at Portland State University was built in 2003. The Native American Community Center holds events that are open to the public, and it provides support for Native people.

Portland State University (PSU) offers classes that focus on **Indigenous Studies**.

indigenous studies –

classes about Native people, culture, community, and history.



Portland State's Native American Student and Community Center
(Creative Commons CC SA 3.0)

Native Plants Garden

Portland's Park and Recreation organization worked with local Native people in the community to create a native plant garden in the Northeast Cully neighborhood. The Native Gathering Garden is a place where you can learn about **native plants** in Portland and Oregon.

native plants – plants that grow in an area naturally and were not brought from another place by people or animals.



Cully Gardens

Native American Youth and Family Center of Portland

The Native American Youth and Family Center, known as NAYA, was founded in 1974. NAYA provides a place for Native people to gather, access services, attend community events, learn skills, and to celebrate community. NAYA has been working with Native people for over 40 years.



Children and community members gather, play, and connect at NAYA.

Tilikum Crossing

In 2015, Portland built a bridge. The new bridge needed a name, so the city asked people to submit their ideas.

The committee looked over the ideas and decided to name the new bridge Tilikum Crossing, which means people, tribe, and relatives in Chinuk Wawa, a language that is still spoken by Native people today.



Tilikum Crossing

Committee Chair and historian Chet Orloff said the Native American name was selected because it holds the “*most promise to connect the people of our region today with the long past of people who have been here for thousands of years, and to connect with future generations.*”

Chinookan artist Greg A. Robinson created three original pieces of art which can be seen at the bridge. Robinson called the collection of artwork *We Have Always Lived Here*.



Greg A. Robinson, Chinook, *We Have Always Lived Here*, artwork at the Tilikum Crossing, Portland, Oregon. The circular piece on the left is made of bronze, and the stone carvings are made of basalt. Reproduced with permission of the author.

Think and Connect:

What do you notice about the Native artists and places featured in this section?

How are they alike? How are they different?

DOK Level Two

Meet Tawna Sanchez

Tawna Sanchez is of a descendant of Shoshone-Bannock, Carrizo, and Ute peoples. She is the second Native American to serve in the Oregon legislature. Representative Sanchez is the first Native person to represent Portland. Sanchez has a master's degree from Portland State University. She has worked at the NAYA center for over 20 years. Sanchez was elected to office in 2016. Sanchez decided to run for office when she realized there were no other Native leaders in the Oregon government.



Representative Tawna Sanchez

“There had only been one Native person to represent Native Americans in the legislature in Oregon. So, as indigenous people here we didn’t really have anybody representing us. We barely had people of color in the legislature.”

Representative Sanchez has helped get important laws passed that help Missing and Murdered Indigenous women. She wants to make the community better for all people and children.

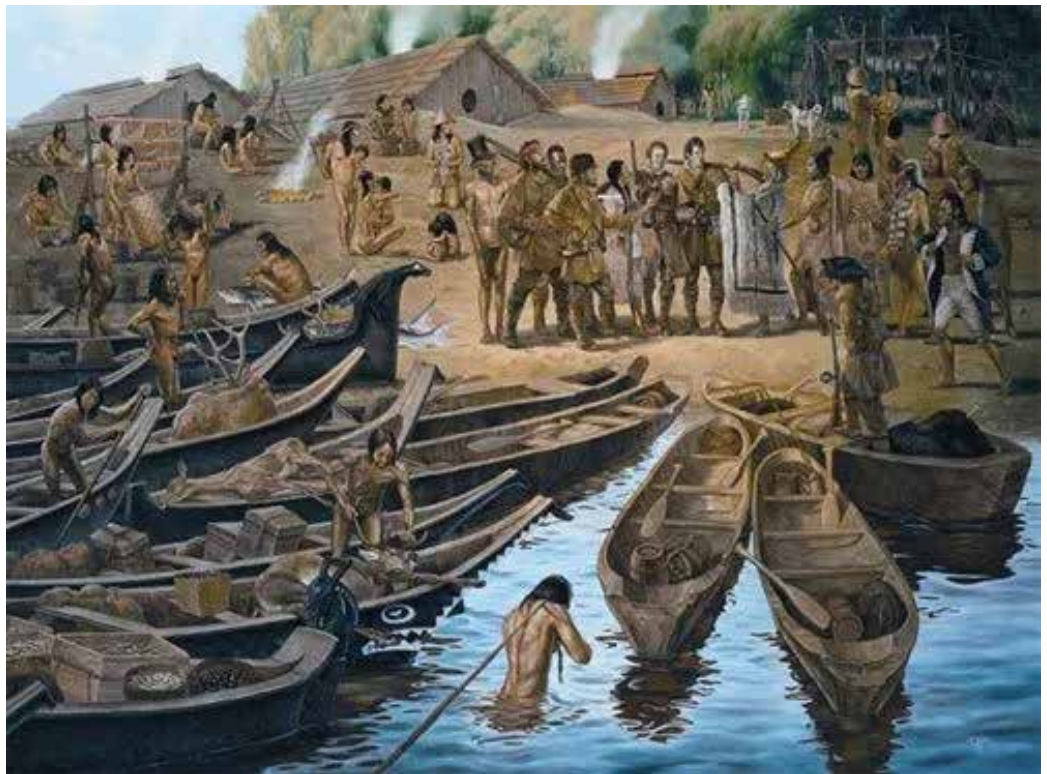
“You can’t just be thinking about yourself. You have to think about the future and your kids and their kids. How do we create a world that is safe for them? How do we deal with some of the issues that we’re struggling with and recognize what will happen to them in the future if we don’t? It’s amazing how hard all this is. But it’s so important.”

The First People Of Portland

Native people were the first people to live in Portland and have lived on this land since Time Immemorial. Time immemorial is a period of time that is thousands of years of human history and is longer than human memory.

Native people today are still connected to the histories, languages and lifeways of their ancestors who have been here since Time Immemorial. Native people today also participate in life the way other communities do. Native people today live in many types of homes, such as houses, apartments, and duplexes. Native people today shop in grocery stores, visit movie theaters, and wear clothes such as jeans, tee shirts, and sneakers.

In this section of the reader, you will learn about the history of the Multnomah Tribe, the Cascades Watlala Tribe, and the Clackamas Chinook Tribes. You will learn about their historic **lifeways**. You will be learning about local Native homes, villages, and foods before Portland became a city.



"Lewis and Clark visited Cathlapotle on the Columbia River in 1806." Oil on canvas. Created by Chris Hopkins in consultation with Burke Museum Director George MacDonald, site archaeologist Ken Ames, and Tony Johnson of the Chinook Tribe, 2004. A copy of this painting hangs in the Chinook Tribal Office in Bay Center, Washington.

Chinookan Villages and Homes of the Past

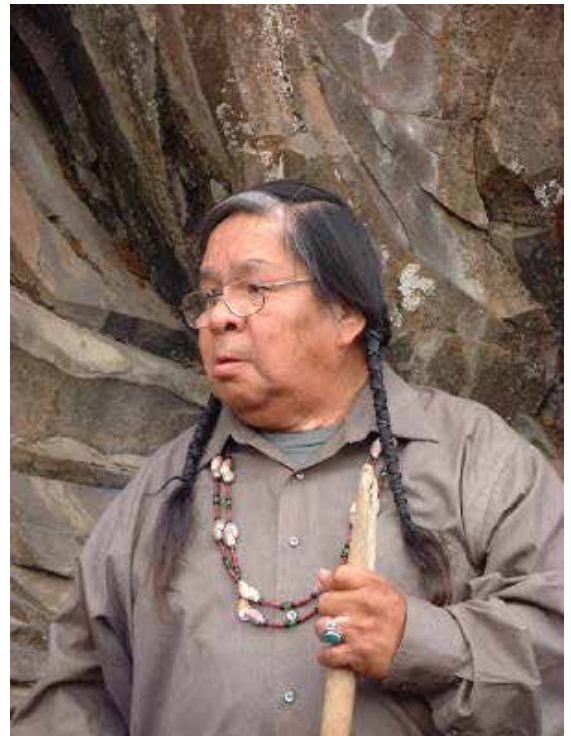
Chinookan villages were built along the Columbia and Willamette rivers, on the land that is now the City of Portland.

Villages were different sizes, depending on how many people lived there at the time. People built many villages along the Columbia and Willamette rivers.

The village was the center of life for people. In the village, people gathered, cooked, and shared stories. Telling stories is a way for Native people to share culture, ideas, and knowledge. Stories were passed down through generations, with some told only at certain times of year. Tribal stories are called **oral traditions**, and many are only told in winter months.

oral traditions – stories that are remembered and shared with spoken words.

Native people today still meet to tell stories and share foods at places like Portland's Native Center, the NAYA Center, or in friends' homes. Portland is home to Ed Edmo, a Shoshone-Bannock poet, playwright, performer, traditional storyteller, tour guide, and lecturer on Northwest tribal culture, who shares his work with the community.



Master Storyteller Ed Edmo



Cathlapotle, modern plankhouse. Courtesy U.S. Department of Fish & Wildlife. This plankhouse was created in partnership with Tribal leaders Tony Johnson and Greg Robinson from the Chinook Indian Nation.

In Chinookan villages, there were three basic types of houses:

1. the post-and-beam plankhouse, which is called the winter or **permanent** house
2. the temporary house, which the people moved as they traveled to different places that were made of planks and/or brush.
3. the pit house or earth lodge.

permanent – when something stays in a place for a long time without being moved.

Some villages had only one or two houses, while larger villages could have many more houses.

Think and connect:

**Take a look at the Cathlapotle plankhouse.
What do you notice?**

Let's take a closer look at the Chinookan plankhouse

The Chinookan plankhouse was a winter or **permanent** home.

Plankhouses were built mainly from the western red cedar trees.

Plankhouses can be small. Some are only 25 feet long, which is about the size of a classroom. Plankhouses can also be huge, as much as 400 feet, which is longer than a football field! Most plankhouses are medium-sized. More than one family often lived together in a plankhouse. The floor of the plankhouse was earth. The floors were often covered with mats. Inside the plankhouse were **hearths**. There could be more than one **hearth** inside a plankhouse.

hearth – a place to make a fire.

Did You Know...

One plank house could need 63 or more trees to build and was lived in by generations of families. The lumber from the trees could weigh over 100 tons! People wove rope from cedar bark and used it to lift the poles and planks.

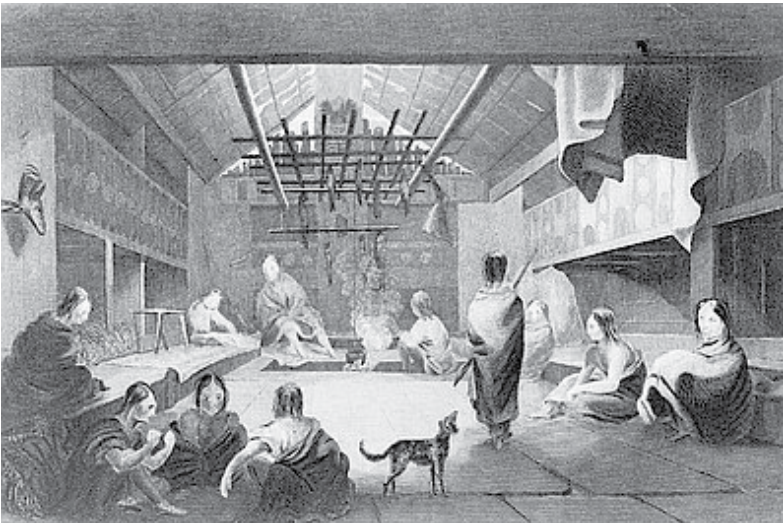


Inside the Cathlapotle, a modern plankhouse. Courtesy U.S. Department of Fish & Wildlife

Inside the plankhouse, people built platforms for sleeping and storing items. They built ladders to reach the top platforms that were built above another platform.

The door of the plankhouse is covered by a wooden plank, a woven mat, or a hide, which is the skin of an animal.

Native housing is brilliant. These homes are made from all local materials and are created collaboratively addressing the many needs of the community.



Artist Richard W. Dodson based this engraving on a sketch Alfred T. Agate made of the inside of a Chinookan winter lodge. Both artworks were created during the 1840s. (OHS Research Library, OrHi 4465a)

Food was **processed** outside of the plankhouse. Cooking, boiling, and roasting foods took place outside the plankhouse, over outdoor fires. Native people today still gather with friends in their homes to cook food, do activities, and share stories. Families and friends gathered inside the plankhouse, where they made tools and art, played games, and shared stories.



Plankhouses like Cathlapotle in Ridgefield, Washington, are still used for gatherings for Native community members.

processing food – when people wash, cut, clean, grind, pound, and cook foods to prepare for eating or storing.

Think and Connect:

What facts would you select to support the idea that Native people are the first engineers and designers?

DOK level 3

Multnomah Village on Sauvie Island

If you take a quick drive out of Portland, following the Willamette River northwest and crossing a bridge, you will arrive on Sauvie Island. It is one of the larger river islands in the United States.

Sauvie Island was home to the Multnomah, a tribe of Chinookan people living along the river. The village was named “Multnomah,” which in Chinookan language means “those towards water.” There were 15 villages that were built on the Island. When Lewis and Clark visited, they called it Wapato Island, because of the abundance of wapato, a native plant and food source.



Sauvie Island



Wapato bulbs are a food source that grows near water. The bulbs can be harvested and eaten. Native people still harvest and eat wapato.

People and the River

“That river’s powerful. And you affect it and it affects you. You bring good things to it, it gives you good things. So it’s just not a mass of water flowing downstream. It has a life. The earth is alive. Everything is alive. You’re alive. It has its own spirit, it’s own power. You have to bring to it good things, good spirit.”

— Columbia River, Chief William Yallup, Jr., The Power of the River (via <https://www.confluenceproject.org/library-post/bill-yallup-jr-the-power-of-the-river/>)

Have you ever been to a river? Have you ever been on a boat?



Salmon jumping out of the river near Willamette Falls.

The Columbia and Willamette Rivers allowed people to travel. Native people traveled the river in canoes to trade and move their habitations to seasonal gathering sites. The rivers were known as the “Indian Highway.” The river provided food, such as salmon and eel. Today, Native people fish the rivers and teach their children about the importance of rivers as Indian highways.

Think and Connect: How are the rivers related to the Native people of this place?

DOK level 3



Native fishers offer fresh-caught fish for sale on the Columbia River.

The Fight for Willamette Falls

Willamette Falls is the second most powerful waterfall in Oregon. It is a short drive from Portland in Oregon City. Since Time Immemorial Chinookan tribes including the Clowewalla people lived in villages near and around Willamette Falls. The falls was an important fishing and trading place for tribes. When settlers took the land they forced Native people out of their villages. They burned many of the villages. A paper mill was built along Willamette Falls causing pollution to the water and land. The land around the falls has been closed to the public for 150 years. Native people have not been allowed to visit their ancestral homeland.



Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy at Willamette Falls (Courtesy: The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde)

Today Tribal members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde have worked hard to raise money to purchase the land around the falls. In 2019 the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde were able to purchase 23 acres of land around the falls! This is a homecoming and the Tribe is planning development that will allow greater access.

“We are excited to begin the healing process for this land as well as take the first steps towards real progress in bringing our vision for this site to life.”

Cheryle A. Kennedy, Chairwoman of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

Did You Know...

Canoes were made from one cedar tree. To make a canoe, people carefully built small fires inside the tree and poured water to create steam, which helped the builders shape the wood.

Adzes, which are hand tools used to carve, were used to carve the canoe.

It took several weeks to finish building a Chinookan canoe. That is a lot of work!

Chinookan Canoe Culture

Have you ever seen a canoe? Have you ever been in a canoe?

Native people who lived near water built canoes for travel, for trade, and to gather food. Chinookan people built canoes by hand. They used the western red cedar tree. The bark is easy to carve, water resistant, and lightweight. Canoes were ten to sixty feet long. Several members of the Tribe worked on building one canoe.

Today, many Native people participate in canoe culture. The Portland All Nations Canoe Family makes journeys along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers.



There are many Native nations who celebrate canoe culture. This photo features a Chinookan canoe.

Pause and Think

“For our tribes here along the Columbia River the canoe is pretty much the primary way of travel, you know. So there were always canoes along the river here. . . . Today there’s the boundary between Oregon and Washington, [but] to us it was crossing the street to your relative’s place. But the canoes were very important along here.”

— Greg Archuleta is Cp. 23lackamas Chinook, Santiam Kalapuya, and Shasta, and is a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. (via <https://www.confluenceproject.org/library-post/greg-archuleta-crossing-the-river-like-crossing-the-street-to-your-relatives-place/>)

What conclusions can you draw from this quote about the connection between the river and travel?

DOK Level 3

The Chinook Indian Nation

Many of the people who are citizens of the Chinook Indian Nation have lived and continue to live on their homelands — including land that is now Portland — since Time Immemorial. Tribal members have been and continue to be craftspeople, musicians, herbalists, doctors, and tradespeople. Artist Greg Robinson is a member of the Chinook Indian Nation. People from the Chinook Indian Nation continue to participate in canoe culture, storytelling, plant harvesting, and other traditional lifeways.

The United States government has refused to recognize the Chinook Indian Nation since 1851. When the federal government refuses to recognize a Native nation, it also refuses to provide funding to that tribe or to allow its citizens access to their tribal lands. Refusing to recognize the tribal nation means refusing to have a government-to-government relationship with it. This sends a painful message that the government does not recognize a tribal nation's sovereign rights.

In 2001, the federal government granted recognition to the Chinook Indian Nation. But, 18 months later former President George Bush reversed the decision, taking away that federal recognition. The Chinook Indian Nation continues to fight for federal recognition today.

The homelands of Chinookan-speaking people are large, including much of the land across the lower Columbia River. Today, many citizens of the Chinook Indian Nation are also citizens of other Native nations, in Washington and Oregon, that are recognized by the federal government.



Brothers Gary Johnson (left) and Leroy Johnson steam the traditionally constructed canoe built by Tony Johnson for Fort Clatsop. They are following the steps their ancestors took to make canoes. In 2022, Gary and Tony were members of the Chinook Indian Nation Council.

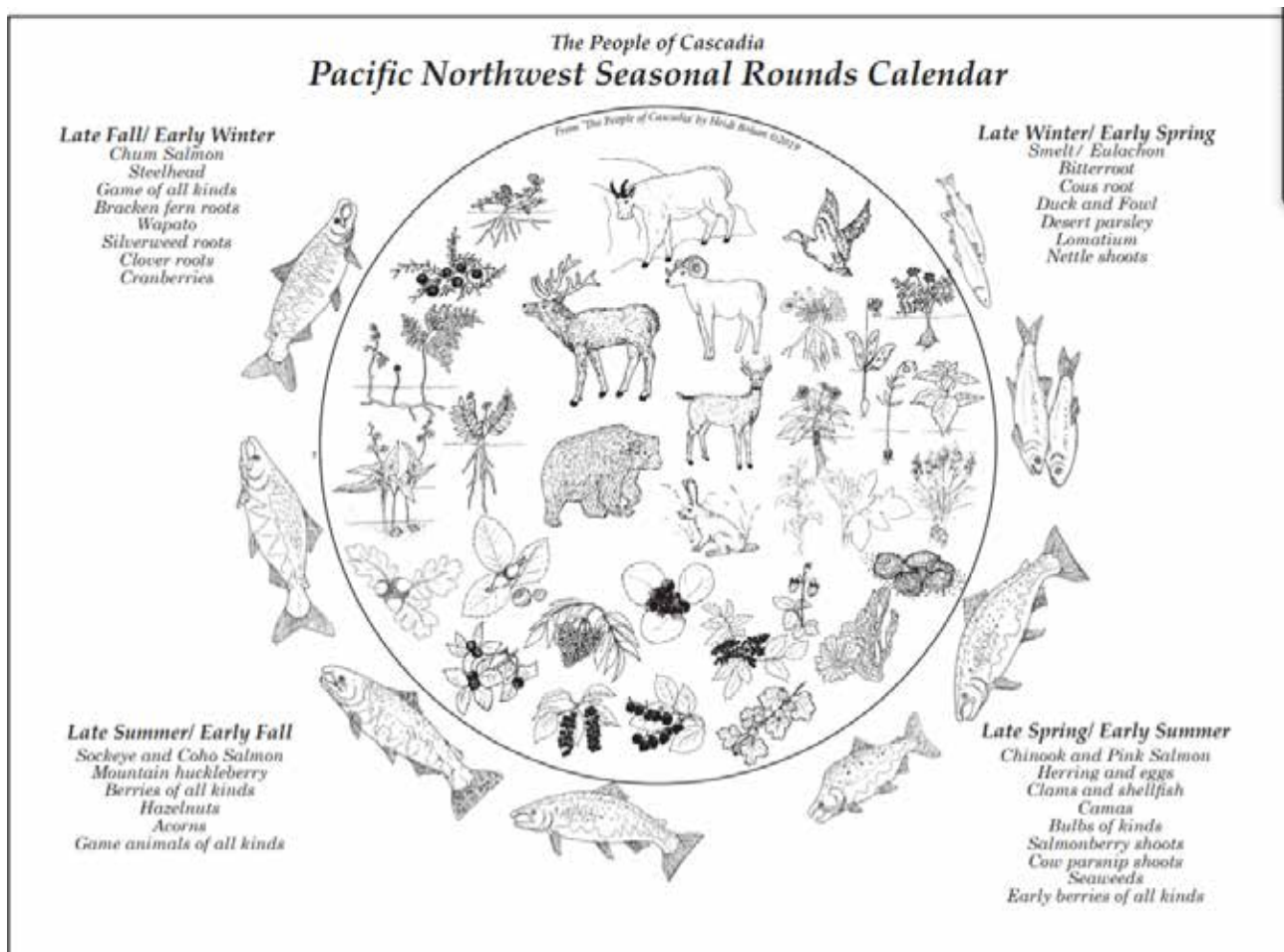
Moving with the Seasons

Think about the four seasons — winter, spring, summer, and fall. Now think about the food that you can eat during each season. We can get many foods all year at the grocery store, but there are some foods that only grow during certain times of the year. During each season in the Pacific Northwest, different plants are ready to be gathered for food.

seasonal round – following the seasons as a way of harvesting and gathering foods.

The Clackamas Chinookan people moved with the seasons to collect, gather, harvest, and hunt food.

Look closely at this seasonal round calendar. What do you notice?



This image of seasonal rounds was created by the State of Washington's Office of Native Education.

As people moved with the seasons, they built and took down seasonal camps and villages. They made fishing camps along the nearby Clackamas River. Once they harvested the foods, they took down the camps and returned to the villages, plankhouses, and permanent homes to share and trade what they had gathered.

Native Plants and Food

What do you know about plants? How could you use plants to help you live?

The Multnomah, Cascades Watlala, Clowwewalla, and Clackamas Chinook Tribes used different **native plants** for food, medicine, clothing, containers, and ceremonies. Native people would tend, harvest, and trade plant products, foods and useful tools, throughout the Columbia River and Willamette Valley. In this section, you will be learning about different plants and how they are used.

Native people today still gather and harvest traditional foods and also shop in grocery stores. Native plants and foods are disappearing as more land is being bought and sold, then cleared for the development of houses or other buildings. Native people today are still fighting for the rights to their Native foods.

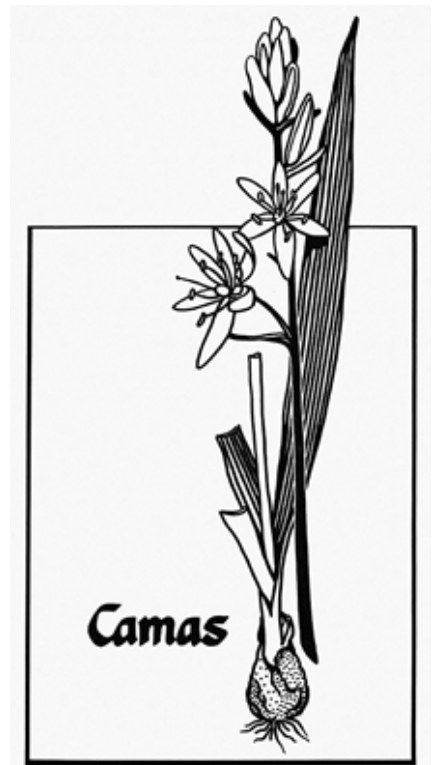
Think and Connect:

Can you identify what foods are in season by looking at the seasonal round calendar?

DOK Level 1

Camas

Camas is a lovely spring flower that looks blue or purple and has bulbs that live below the soil. Camas plants have been tended and harvested by Native people since Time Immemorial. The bulbs are harvested in the spring. The bulbs are dried and stored so that they can be eaten later in the year. Today, Portland Parks and Recreation is working with schools, Native communities, and other local groups to replant and restore camas throughout Portland at parks and natural areas.



Drawing of Camas, by Skip Enge
(OHS Research Library OrHi 82190)

This was my first time harvesting camas. I learned a lot! We brought tools like a shovel and a pitchfork, but I was able to borrow a digging stick and it was so much easier to use. I also learned that the traditional tool causes less damage to the ground around the plant.



David Lewis photographed this Camas meadow at the Oregon State Fairgrounds' overflow parking lot in Salem, Oregon, in 2015.

I learned that there are two types of camas, one of them is called "Death Camas." It's really easy to tell which is Death Camas when they are flowering because the Death Camas is a white flower. Regular camas is purple. The field we were in only had regular camas, but in some other places you can find both. I also learned that the reason why you leave the plant attached to the root

is so that when they go to clean the camas for cooking, they can see what color the flower is. Once you take the flower off, the roots look the same and you can't tell them apart. So, this was a way for people to make extra sure that no Death Camas was accidentally picked. — Mekhai Walker, age 12

Wapato

Wapato is a plant, similar to camas, with bulbs that are eaten. Wapato was traded among Tribes. Wapato loves to grow in wetlands, lakes, and ponds. Sauvie Island was called “Wapato Island” because of the abundance of the plant. Wapato is still harvested by Native people today.



Wapato grows in wet areas and has three white petals on each of its flowers. (via <https://www.flickr.com/photos/12567713@N00/7516991942>, CC BY 2.0)



Wapato bulb. Photo by Nathan Sandel (CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons)

Did You Know...

Wapato can be harvested by loosening the bulb in the water with your toes or a lever and letting the bulb float to the surface. Women would wade out into the water and hold onto a canoe to balance while throwing wapato into the canoe bottom.

Western Red Cedar

Have you ever seen a cedar tree? The inner and outer bark was used for building homes, practicing ceremonies, and making canoes, clothes, containers, medicine, and cordage, which is rope made from plant fibers.

Cedar bark is harvested or “stripped” from the trees and used to create clothing, baskets, and rope. Only a small portion of the bark is stripped to allow the tree to stay healthy. This bundle of Cedar stripping has just been harvested!



Recently harvested Cedar bark. (Photo by K. Walker for Oregon Historical Society)

“It was beautiful to go harvest cedar. We went with Elders and listened to stories. Many of these women have been harvesting since they were children. You could look up the trunk of the tree and see faint notch marks from previous harvests. Only part of the tree is harvested at a time so that the tree stays healthy.” — Kelly Walker, Okanagan, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation



Greg Archuleta, Grand Ronde Nation, Harvesting Cedar



Berries

Have you ever gone berry picking before? Native people gathered huckleberry, western blackberry, elderberry, salmonberry, and wild strawberry. People today still gather berries in forested areas in and around Portland.



Thinleaf huckleberry



Huckleberry picking, woman, August 1933. Indian woman picking huckleberries, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Washington

“Our family has been using these baskets to gather berries and roots for as long as I can remember. When I was little, my cousins and I would grab these from the wood shed during salmonberry and huckleberry season and go fill them up in the hills behind our Tupa’s house. Tupa is what we call our great-grandmother in Salish [language]. When my dad was a kid, he remembers using these same baskets to go berry picking. He also remembers his mom and aunties taking these to go and gather roots. My Tupa told us once that her mother made them. That means these baskets have been used to gather berries for over 150 years!”

— Kelly Walker, Okanagan, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, third generation Portland Urban Indian.



Root and Berry Gathering Baskets, Photos courtesy of K. Walker for OHS.



Indian man picking huckleberries, August 1933, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Washington

Think and Connect

What does the caption “Indian man picking huckleberries” tell us about this man?

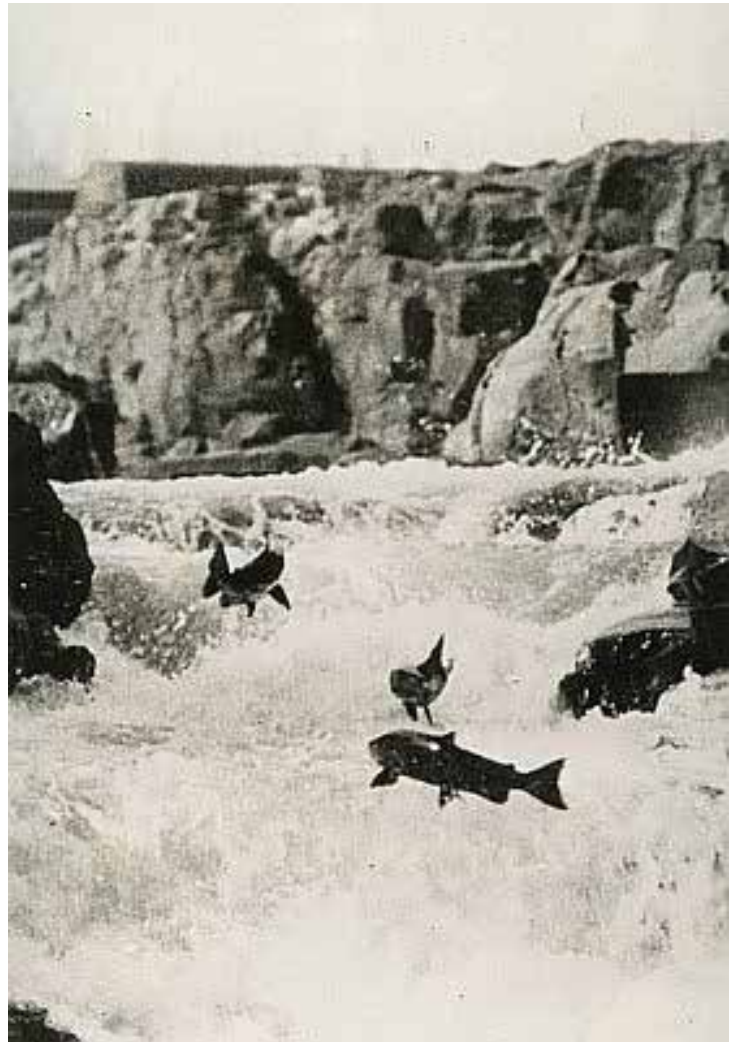
What doesn't the caption tell us about this man?

Salmon and the People

What foods do you like to eat? Have you ever tried salmon?

Salmon has always been an important source of food for Native people living along the Clackamas, Columbia, and Willamette Rivers. In the spring and again in the fall, the rivers were filled with wild salmon swimming from the ocean to the places they were born. The return of salmon is celebrated by all the Tribes.

Native people today still celebrate the salmon. Oxbow Regional Park hosts a homecoming celebration every year to welcome the return of the salmon, honoring ancestral traditions such as storytelling, drumming, and eating and learning about native plants.



Salmon migrating up Willamette Falls. Photo by Ralph Eddy.
(Courtesy OHS Research Library, 53943)

Did You Know...

Spawning is very stressful on the salmon. It is ok to view the salmon as they spawn up river but keep your distance so not to scare them away from their nests also called redds.



Every year in the fall, Salmon Homecoming along the Sandy River is celebrated at Oxbow Regional Park.



Joseph Drayton made this sketch of Willamette Falls and Native fishers using scaffolds and dip nets, in about 1841, while he was on the Wilkes Expedition. (OHS Research Library, 968)

Today, fewer salmon return to the Columbia and Willamette Rivers each year. Dams built along the river, overfishing, warming temperatures caused by man-made climate change, and pollution have all affected salmon. Tribes in Oregon and Washington are working together to help the salmon.

Pause and Think

“I think we understood every kind of water there was in our universe, whether it flowed on the ground or from the sky. We understood the whole horizon of water, if it was sleet we knew what that was going to do to the land. If it was snow we knew what that was going to do and we always had a way to deal with that, as a life process.”

— Tanna Engdahl, Cowlitz, Traditional Knowledge
(via <https://www.confluenceproject.org/library-post/tanna-engdahl-traditional-knowledge/>)

How does this quote show the relationship between people and the water?

Trade

trade – the exchange of items for other items.

Have you ever traded something? What did you **trade**?
What did you receive?

The Chinookan Tribes were active and successful traders. Portland has always been a place for trade and business.

Native people used canoes to travel to villages along the river for trade. Items such as baskets, tools, foods, meat, clothing, beadwork, and furs were all traded.

Dentalium are variously sized ocean mollusks that look like miniature elephant tusks and may grow up to be several inches in length. Dentalium was highly desirable and valuable because it was hard to get. The shells were gathered by Native people around Vancouver Island and are still used today in Native beadwork.

Today artists at the Indigenous Marketplace in Portland sell jewelry using traditional beading designs.



This necklace is strung with dentalia shells and beads. (Dentalia Shell and Bead Necklace OHS Museum 94-1.210)

Think and Connect:

What do you notice about the items that were traded? Why might these items be useful?

DOK Level 2

Language — Chinuk Wawa

What is a language? What language or languages do you speak at home?

The Chinookan people traded with many other tribes and non-Native traders who did not speak the same languages. To make it easier for trade and communication between tribes, the people created the Chinuk Wawa language. Chinuk Wawa is a language that includes elements from many languages. Chinuk Wawa was a way for many non-Native traders and settlers to speak with different Native people.

Think and Connect:

Why is language important?

What do languages help you to do?

Make a list to show your thinking.

DOK Level 1

Settlers, who claimed Native people's land, made it illegal for Native people to speak anything but English. This forced many Tribes, such as the Multnomah Tribe, the Cascades Watlala Tribe, and the Clackamas Bands of Chinook, to lose their connection to language.

Chinuk Wawa has survived because of the hard work of teachers, students, and community members from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and other tribes. You could take a class today at the local community college to learn how to speak Chinuk Wawa. The Chinuk Wawa app is free and available to anyone interested in learning how to speak words in Chinuk Wawa.

Caring for Land

Since Time Immemorial Chinookan people managed the land through digging, tending plants, making fire, and harvesting just enough so plants and animals would return each year. Controlled fires allowed the people to tend certain areas of the land, which helped plants like camas, hard nuts such as acorns, and certain berries grow better.

Today, Native people are leaders in fire management. The Forest Service is learning from Native communities about the brilliant ways Native people use fire to care for the land.

MEET COLBY DRAKE, CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT MANAGER



Colby Drake, left, leads fire crews from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Metro staff and contractors in preparation for the prescribed burn about to start at Quamash Prairie Natural Area.

Colby Drake, a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, has fought fires for over 22 years. Colby knows how to control fires. He also helps the land with fires. Colby and his crew worked with the City of Portland to make a fire at Quamash Prairie Natural Area. They used Native knowledge to plan and control the fire. Burning the land allows native plants to regrow. Native people care for the land. Tribes fight to stop changes that destroy their homelands.

Think and Connect:

What conclusions can you draw from this section that Native people teach people how to care for the land?

DOK Level 3

Oregon's First Engineers

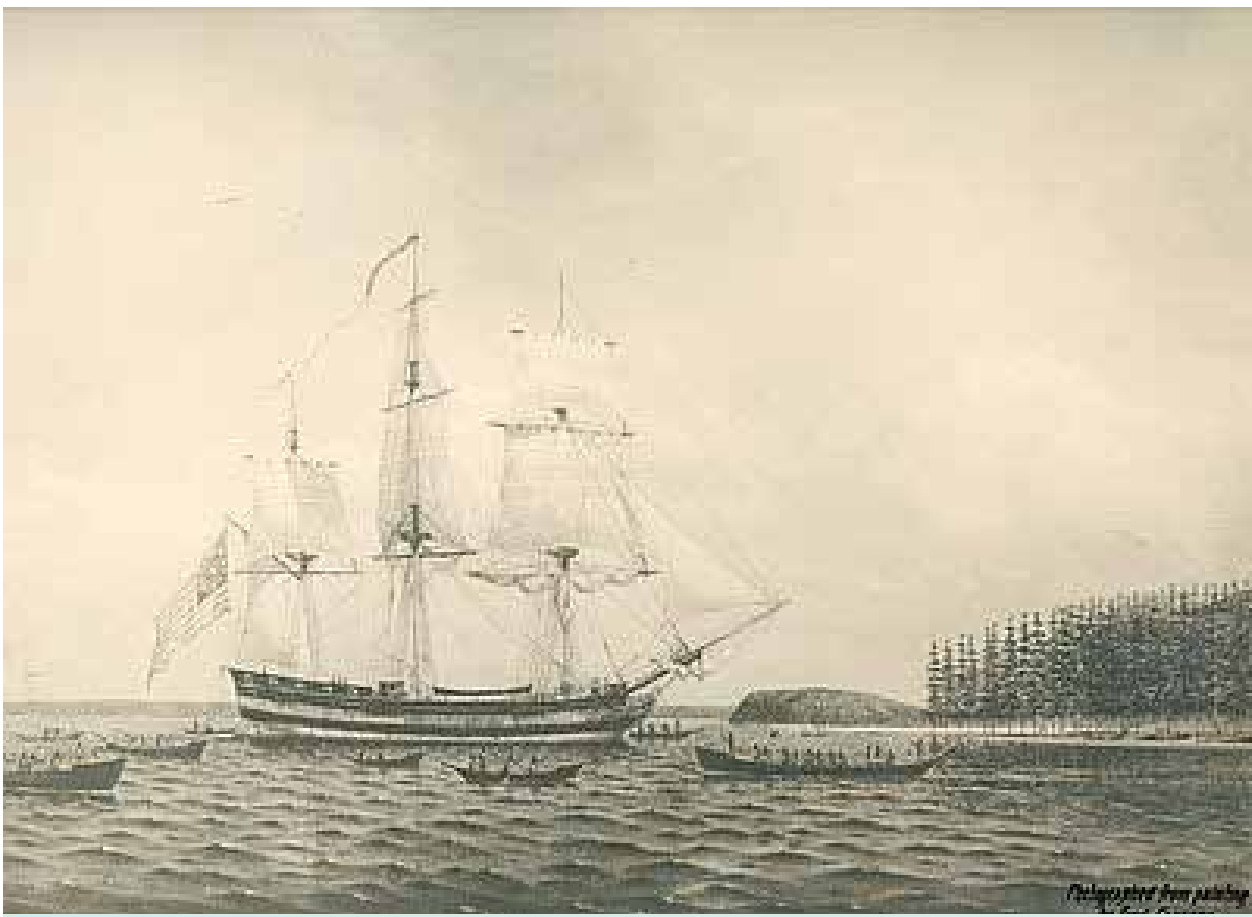
Native people are **engineers**. Native people have been designing tools, homes, clothes, baskets, fishing nets, and canoes for thousands of years. They have used only what the lands offered to invent new ways to live on the land. Native people are the first inventors and engineers of Oregon.

Today many non-Native scientists, designers, doctors, and teachers are having conversations with Native people to learn more about how to care for plants, manage land, and design useful things.

engineer – someone who plans, designs, and builds things that can make life better for a group of people.

In this section of the reader, you will learn about how life changed for the Native people of the Multnomah, Cascades Watlala, Clowwewalla and Clackamas Bands of Chinook Tribes as contact was made with non-Native traders and explorers.

You will learn about events in the 1800s that forced Native people out of their home villages along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. You will read about diseases that affected communities, such as the Multnomah Village on Sauvie Island, and about how Europeans and Americans changed the land as they began living here. You also will read about treaties and reservations.



The ship, the *Columbia Rediviva* is met by many Indian canoes in 1792. (OHS Research Library, 126)

Fur Trading

The Clackamas Bands of Chinook Tribes traded animal furs with non-Native people beginning in the 1600s. Fur traders sailed boats from Europe to the land that is now the United States and Canada. Fur traders built relationships

with local Tribes. Some fur traders married Native women and had children. Fur traders brought new items to Native people, such as guns, iron, and cloth. These items were useful and new to the Tribes. Some Chinookan Tribes maintained relationships with traders.

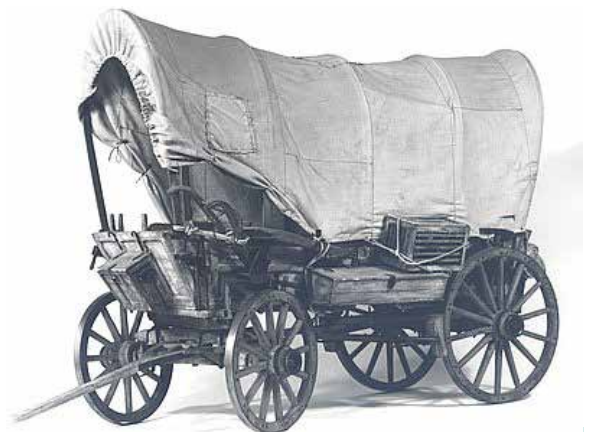
Disease

As contact between non-Natives and Native people increased, so did the spread of **diseases**. Non-Native settlers brought diseases and viruses, such as smallpox and measles, that were new to Indigenous people. In some villages, almost all of the people died because of sickness. Native people who did not die moved to other villages. Multnomah people abandoned their villages on Sauvie Island because of death and disease. Overall, about nine of every ten Indigenous people in the region died from the illnesses brought by trade with new people.

disease – something that causes illness.

Oregon Trail

Have you ever heard of the Oregon Trail? People followed the Oregon Trail from Missouri to Oregon City. Traders, mountain men, and missionaries shared stories about Oregon's land, fish, and trees. American people who wanted land traveled 2,000 miles from Missouri to Oregon Country. They walked and rode horses and wagons. People moved across the land with the intention of settling. They did not want to share the land with the Native people.



A replica of a trail wagon on display at the Oregon Historical Society. (OHS. Research Library, OrHi88643)

The journey took about six months, with wagons traveling between ten and twenty miles each day. A lot of people came to Oregon on the Oregon Trail . Non-Native people arrived in the homelands of the Native bands along the Willamette River. Settlers wanted to build homes and farms where Native people lived. They did not want to live together or share the land. White settlers wanted the land to farm and live on, so they looked for ways to move Native people off the land. Native people wanted to keep their homelands, so they looked for ways to stay.

Think and Connect:

What evidence can you find that shows how the arrival of settlers affected the life of Native people?

DOK Level 3

The United States government called this conflict, “The Indian Problem,” and Congress passed laws, signed treaties, and used the military to take the land away from Indians and give it away for free to Americans under the Donation Land Claims Act. Settlers moved here and were able to claim land before treaties were signed or negotiated.

Treaties

The United States made **treaties** with many Native nations. Treaties were tools that the United States used to take Native homelands. Treaties that were written by the United States government were not fair. They forced the Tribes to agree to give up their land through violence and threats. Native nations continue to fight for their treaty rights to urge the United States government to honor the treaties.

treaty – is an agreement between nations.

The Willamette Valley treaty was created and ratified in 1855. This treaty forced the Tribes living on the land that is now Portland to remove from their homelands to what would become the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation in 1857.

Reservations

Reservations were created by white settlers as a place Native people were forced to move to. The reservations were placed on lands that were not good farm lands, did not have good water, and white settlers did not want. Reservations were not always on Native homelands. In some cases, historically warring Tribes were placed together on **reservations**.

reservation – a piece of land held in ownership by the United States Government for the benefit of a federally recognized Tribe.

Settlers wanted the homelands of the Chinookan people. Settlers wanted to build their own homes along the Willamette and Columbia rivers, where the Tribes' villages were built. Settlers wanted the salmon in rivers where the Tribes fished. Settlers wanted to harvest the large Western cedar trees in the forest where the Native people have gone for generations. They wanted the resources that the land offered. They wanted to build a city. They did not want to share the land or resources with the Native people. Settlers took the land from the local Tribes by violence. They forced them to move to **reservations**.

Grand Ronde Reservation

Today, the Grand Ronde reservation is located about an hour and half southwest of Portland by car. The Grand Ronde Reservation is home to more than 30 different Tribes that were moved from their homelands in Oregon, SW Washington, and Northern California. Many of those Tribes are from the place that is now Portland.

The Grand Ronde Nation has its own sovereign Tribal government. The Tribal government makes decisions for the community. The Tribal government provides services, builds roads, bridges, and manages their lands.

The Grand Ronde Reservation has a school, police department, museum and cultural center, as well as a wellness center. The Grand Ronde community holds events that are open to the public to attend. The Grand Ronde community opened the Spirit Mountain Casino in 1995 which employs over 1,000 people. The Grand Ronde community continues to grow, learn, and honor Native lifeways.

Conclusion

Native people continue to live and work throughout Oregon. Portland is home to many diverse Native communities and organizations. Native people have been leaders in designing tools, clothing, canoes, and homes since time immemorial. The Forest Service is learning fire management skills from Native community members. Native people today still gather today to teach their children lifeways that were taught by their ancestors.

Native people still fight for their rights to land, water, food and to maintain their cultures. They continue to fight against stereotypes. Native people continue to fight for their lifeways. Tribes continue to lobby within the State and Federal government to protect and maintain Treaty Rights and uphold trust responsibility. Native groups in Portland have organized marches and protests to bring awareness to their ongoing fight for their rights.

People from the Multnomah, Cascades Watlala, Clowwewalla, and Clackamas Bands of Chinook Tribes continue to live and contribute to the community that is now Portland.

Glossary

Activist: An activist is a person who works to make a change

Ancestral: Ancestral is the place that our ancestors are from.

Band: A Band is a group of people organized around family ties and connections who live close to each other and speak the same language. A Tribe can be made up of many bands who trade and share resources.

Climate: Climate describes the weather of an area over a period of time.

Disease: A disease is something that causes illness.

Hearth: A hearth is a place to make a fire.

Indigenous, Native American, Native: Any of the words Indigenous, Native American, Native is a broad term used to describe people who have lived in a place, such as the United States before settlers arrived. There are Indigenous people all over the world.

Indigenous studies: Indigenous studies are classes about Native people, culture, community, and history.

Lifeways: A lifeway is how a group of people live, including their culture, customs, spiritual beliefs, and traditions.

Native plants: Native plants are plants that grow in an area naturally and were not brought from another place by people.

Oral tradition: An oral tradition is when people tell stories that are passed down through generations without being written down

Permanent: Permanent is when something stays in a place for a long time without being moved.

Petroglyph: A petroglyph is an image carved on rock.

Processing: Processing food is when people wash, cut, clean, grind, pound, and cook foods to prepare for eating or storing.

Reservations: A reservation is an area of land held and governed by a federally recognized Native American tribal nation whose government is accountable to the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs and not to the state government in which it is located. Many reservations were created in partial fulfillment of treaties signed between Tribes and the United States government that removed Tribes from their homelands.

Sovereignty (sov·er·eign·ty): Sovereignty is the right of a group of people to form their own government and to make their own laws and decisions about the people who live on their land.

Stereotype: A stereotype is an idea or image about a group of people that may not be true.

Time Immemorial: Time Immemorial is a period of time that is longer than human memory.

Trade: Trade is the exchange of items for other items.

Treaty: A treaty is a contract or agreement between nations.

Tribe: Tribes are sovereign nations and have a government to government relationship with the United States.