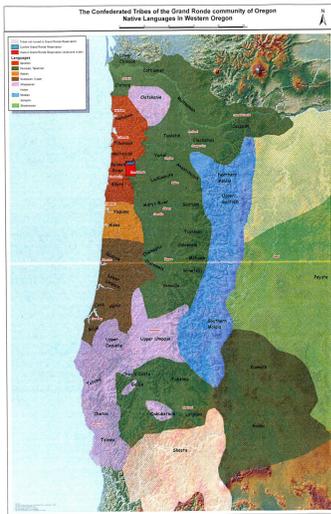


History of Chinuk Wawa



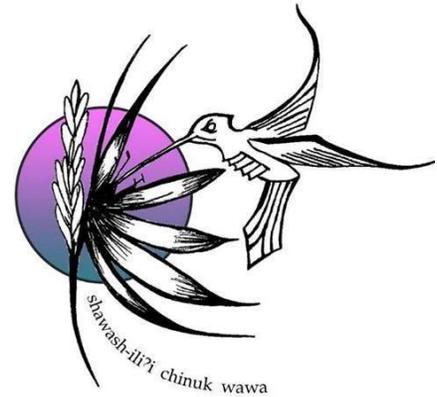
There were over 27 bands and tribes of people who were brought to the Grand Ronde Reservation. Each band and tribe spoke their own language (*shawash-lalang*). The first common language of the reservation was not English but instead was the Native language of Chinuk Wawa. Chinuk Wawa was earlier developed by Native peoples along the Columbia River to communicate with traders (*mukuk-man●r*), explorers, and travelers. It became the first language for the people on the Grand Ronde Reservation and they used it to communicate with each other. Communication was necessary to perform everyday tasks, as well as to build and foster relationships with peoples from other tribes and bands. For example, when individuals from different tribes/bands would marry they would often not speak the same language and would use Chinuk Wawa to talk together (*wawa k^hanumakwst*). It quickly became the language most commonly spoken in homes and the first language that many children would hear and learn.

When The United States Government removed the Native peoples from their homes and gathered them to live on reservations, they forced the Native peoples to change their ways and live more like the European people. The United States government began forcing Native people to send their children to boarding schools where their children would live practicing European traditions and customs. The children were seldomly allowed to return home and were forbidden from practicing their Native culture. Native children were made to wear modern-day European clothing and eat European-style food that was often unfamiliar to them. The children were only allowed to speak in English and were punished (*t'lap-p^hey●r*) if they were found to be practicing any Native American customs or speaking their Native language. This was the United States Government's effort to eradicate, or put an end to, the Chinuk Wawa language. Even though the children in these boarding schools were forbidden from speaking their Native language, the older people in the Grand Ronde continued to use the Chinuk Wawa language and with that, the Chinuk Wawa language was able to survive through the eradication efforts.

During termination, many Grand Ronde tribal members moved away to find work and support their families.

During this time, the number of Chinuk Wawa speakers continued to decline.

The individuals who moved away from the Reservation felt pressure to assimilate, or blend into, the traditional Euro-American society. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a few of the Grand Ronde elders conducted community Chinuk Wawa classes in efforts to keep the language alive. Around that same time, a scholar came to the Grand Ronde Reservation and recorded elders speaking the Chinuk Wawa language. He also learned to speak it himself. In 1997, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde hired a language specialist who organized a program to revive Chinuk Wawa. He began teaching community classes and teaching more people to speak the language. He worked with the scholar who had previously recorded the language, to create curriculum and lessons for these community classes. In 2000, they helped start a preschool immersion class at Grand Ronde where students could learn preschool content in Chinuk Wawa. An immersion class for Kindergarten began in 2004 and a 1st Grade Immersion Class was added in 2012. Now, there is even a High School Chinuk Wawa Language course at the local high school where students can earn college credit for learning Chinuk Wawa.



The revitalization of the Chinuk Wawa language has been a long, but successful process.

Today, tribal members and non-tribal members can learn this language through the use of YouTube videos/classes, a published Chinuk Wawa dictionary, an app, and community classes. Keeping this language alive helps to keep the Native American culture alive.