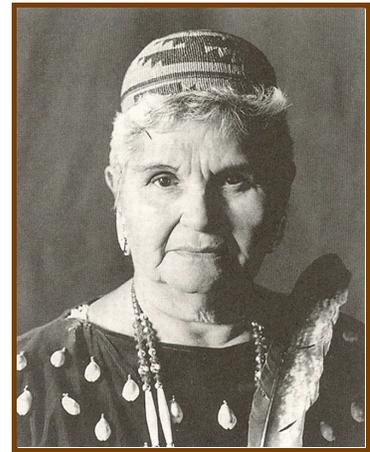


The Fight for Restoration

Martin Luther King Jr is well-known for his leadership during the African American Civil Rights Movement. He was born in 1929 and later became famous for his “I have a dream” speech in 1963, when he helped organize the March on Washington. He played a vital role in ending segregation in the South, which brought about the construction of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Among prominent civil right leaders are many others that have gone unnoticed around the world, one of which is Kathryn Harrison, a tribal member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.



Kathryn was born in 1924, the same year that the Indian Citizenship Act became law. Although she led a tough life, she persevered and later became known for her resiliency and fight for restoration for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. In 1954 President Eisenhower signed the Western Oregon Termination Act, which deprived Western Oregon tribes of recognition and terminated them. Termination meant that the tribes lost all of their treaty rights and land, as well as the small amount of services they were receiving from the government. The next thirty years were hard for the people of Grand Ronde. Many moved away because they could not afford to buy their land from the

government and many could not find work in the area to support themselves and their families. Many relationships and family bonds were broken when families had to disperse to find work.

Efforts for restoration began in the 1970's by other tribal members, such as Margaret Provost, Marvin Kimsey, and Merle Holmes. Kathryn Harrison joined in on the journey in 1982 to fight for federal recognition. Government officials such as Oregon Senator Mark O. Hatfield, Representative Les AuCoin, and Governor Victor Atiyeh helped support Grand Ronde in its efforts towards restoration. Tribal members gathered in a small building on the only piece of land that was left after termination, the cemetery. They were left to write letters by hand, because they had no money to purchase typewriters.

Their challenges were threefold. First, the Grand Rondes had to overcome opposition by the neighboring communities, who were threatened by rumors of impending tribal land acquisition. Second, they had to garner the support of other tribes, who were fearful that the federal government might reduce their own meager benefits if another tribal entity lobbied for its share. Third, they had to convince Congress that this bill was not a Pandora's box, opening the way for a myriad of illegitimate claims. (Olson, 2005, p. 109).



With no money, the tribe had to do everything they could to raise money to fund their efforts towards restoration. This included selling baked goods, raffles, bazaars, movie showings, applying for grants and reaching out to various communities in the surrounding area for support. Kathryn states, “How many of each other’s cakes and cookies we bought, [when they could have knocked on any door and been invited in to share a treat for free” (Olson, 2005, p.112).



After several trips to Washington D.C. the Grand Ronde Restoration Bill was presented on September 14, 1983. A month later Kathryn Harrison stood before the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee and presented her speech in hopes of convincing them to pass the Restoration Bill. In November, Kathryn returned to Washington D.C. for the floor votes. On November 11, 1983 “the

Grand Ronde Restoration Act passed the Senate without amendment by the voice vote” (Olson, 2005, p.121). The next day the act was presented to President Reagan, where he signed it eight days later making the act Public Law 98-165 on November 22, 1983. “That very day, health-care benefits were extended to the nearly three thousand enrolled Grand Ronde members...other benefits quickly followed” (Olson, 2005, p.121).

Today, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde hold a special celebration on November 22nd every year in remembrance of the day the tribe once again became federally recognized and restored.