

Native American Influence

The Kalapuya Native Americans were the first to reside in what is now Salem. An estimated 80,000 Kalapuya resided in the Willamette Valley and would travel from the Willamette River to gather wild foods such as camas, wapato, and tarweed, and would hunt for deer. In the nineteenth century, diseases from non-Native American explorers caused the decline of the Kalapuya; with their numbers dropping fewer than 1,000 when they moved to the Grand Ronde Reservation in the 1850s. Today the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde of Oregon comprise several Native American groups from northern California and western Oregon. Among them are the Kalapuya, Chinookan Clackamas, Mollallas, Rogue River, Shasta, Umpqua and affiliated bands. Representative languages are Chinuk and Wawa.



MICHELLE ALAIMO/SMOKE SIGNALS

Grand Ronde Veterans' Powwow.

The Grand Ronde Reservation was established by treaty in 1854 and 1855, followed by an Executive Order of President James Buchanan on June 30, 1857. The reservation, located at the headwaters of the South Yamhill River on the eastern side of the coastal range, comprised 69,000 acres. Commencing in 1856, U.S. government soldiers forcibly extracted at least 20 Indian bands from their ancestral territories, then moved them onto the reservation. The move was another Trail of Tears in Native American history.

In 1983 the Grand Ronde Restoration Act, through the efforts of Grand Ronde representatives, in effect restored the federal relationship with the Grand Ronde community. From then on, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde would be a tribal unit to formalize government recognition and establish eligibility for federal benefits. In addition, the act provided for tribal self government, tribal enrollment – and the establishment of a reservation.

In 1989 the confederation came into possession a 10,300-acre reservation, consisting largely of timber land, west of Salem in Polk County near the city of Grand Ronde.

In 1994, construction began on the multi-million dollar Spirit Mountain Casino, owned and operated by Spirit Mountain Development Corporation, an entity of the Grand Ronde Tribe. Today Spirit Mountain Casino is one of Oregon's most visited destinations.

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Photos below, l to r: Native American Crafts; Grand Ronde Veterans' Memorial; Spirit Mountain Casino.

