
Volume 12
Number 4
Oregon's Tribal Libraries (Winter 2006)

July 2014

All Aspects of Southwest Oregon History: Covered by Coquille Indian Tribe Library

Chris Tanner
Coquille Indian Tribe Library

Recommended Citation

Tanner, C. (2014). All Aspects of Southwest Oregon History: Covered by Coquille Indian Tribe Library. *OLA Quarterly*, 12(4), 4-5. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/1093-7374.1131>

© 2014 by the author(s).

OLA Quarterly is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association | ISSN 1093-7374

All Aspects of Southwest Oregon History

Covered by Coquille Indian Tribe Library

by **Chris Tanner**
Tribal Librarian,
Coquille Indian Tribe Library

It should not be a surprise to anyone that the Coquille Indian Tribe's (CIT) Library contains a great deal of information on the Coquille (pronounced Ko-Kwel), but few are aware of the diversity of the library's collection. Our collection covers the region of southwest Oregon as a whole rather than just resources related to the Tribe. One cannot talk about the Coquille Indian Tribe without mentioning all of Coos County, from the natural history of the area to the logging and fishing industries, where many tribal members found work.

Located at the Tribe's Administration Office in North Bend, the CIT Library is a small but concentrated source of information on the culture and history of the Coquille, neighboring tribes, and southwestern Oregon as a whole. Many other subjects can also be researched through our collection.

The diversity of the library's resources mirrors the diversity within the Tribe. For example, the elected officials who make up the Tribe's governing body include a heavy equipment operator, a high school teacher and basketball coach, the owner of a construction business, a high school Indian Education Program coordinator, a mental health specialist/therapist, a nurse practitioner, and a homemaker, who in her spare time helped convince the United States Congress that the Coquille deserved to be recognized as a sovereign nation.

The library's patrons also reflect this diversity. In addition to tribal members, library users include local community members, students from the local community college, foreign visitors, and an Elder-hostel group, which brings visitors from all over the country. The Coos County Library System also directs community members wishing to learn more about the Tribe to our resources. Many of our visitors come to learn more about the Tribe's culture.

There is no better place to find information on the Coquille Indian Tribe's culture than the Tribe's own library. The collection includes the biographies of tribal members, such as Annie Miner Peterson and Coquelle Thompson, which give considerable insight into local traditions, languages, and the results of the mix of cultures that occurred when indigenous people worked and lived with pioneers and settlers. During the 1930s, both of these individuals spent considerable time recording their knowledge of traditions, stories, and the local languages of Hanis and Miluk to linguist Melville Jacobs.

Our resources illustrate the connection that the Tribe has with the rest of the local community. The collection reflects the fact that Coquille history and the history of Coos County are often one and the same. We carry a solid and growing collection of regional natural history resources. For example, we have resources related to forestry, from books describing the impact of the logging industry on the local community to the traditional uses of cedar by tribes in the Pacific Northwest.

The collection contains roughly 2,800 books, 200 videos and DVDs, and an extensive archival collection numbering over 30,000 pages. While the collection focuses on tribal and regional history, there is also a diverse range of subjects of interest to Coquille tribal members. Library users can find fiction paperbacks, cookbooks, language



A school visit to the library.



tapes, and guides to fishing or nature trails. The library also has 35 periodical subscriptions. Like most libraries, we carry the local and regional newspapers. The library also subscribes to several periodicals that focus on national news from the perspective of "Indian Country," including *Indian Country Today*, *News from Indian Country*, and *American Indian Report*.

For more in-depth research, our archival collections provide details on many aspects of our history. There are two collections in our archives: The Melville Jacobs collection and the collected works from the Southwestern Oregon Research Project (SWORP).

The Melville Jacobs collection is the accumulated work of the linguist and several associates. The collection is used widely by scholars, including tribal members, studying southwestern Oregon tribes. Jacobs' research resulted in the creation of a Miluk dictionary and a word search program allowing users to match English words with Miluk and Hanis translations.

Despite the importance of the Jacobs collection, SWORP might be having an even greater impact on the preservation of the Tribe's heritage. SWORP is an ongoing project between the Coquille Indian Tribe and the University of Oregon. Several members of various Oregon tribes, who are also students at U of O, participated in research trips to the National Archives and Smithsonian in Washington D.C. The project resulted in the discovery and dissemination of thousands of pages of 19th century documents regarding Northwest tribes. The documents include interviews, ethnographies, and letters from people living on Oregon reservation lands in the 19th century.

Both collections have been used by scholars for a variety of historical essays. Three students, including two tribal members, have completed thesis papers that focus on our Tribe's history. These works

are nearly as valuable as the archival collections themselves because they succeed in consolidating the expansive collections into a concise resource, which is more accessible to our library users. The CIT Library keeps numerous copies of these important works.

Tribal members have used the CIT Library to increase their knowledge of many subjects, including their heritage. Indeed, this is the quintessential reason for the library's existence. It is the smallest budgeted program that the Tribe has, yet it has the greatest potential to educate the entire community, as well as provide a variety of resources to tribal members interested in improving themselves.

You can support our library by visiting and using the collection. For more information, please contact Chris Tanner at ctanner@coquilletribe.org. 

Is managing your e-journal collection
more difficult than you expected?

We can help.

EBSCO's services include e-journal audits to confirm that your library is billed only for the titles ordered, itemized invoices to facilitate budget allocation, and customized serials management reports to assist with collection development.

We assist with non-access problems, IP address changes and more. And our e-resource access and management tools minimize administrative tasks while maximizing patron experience.

To learn more, contact your EBSCO sales representative today.

www.ebsco.com

CUSTOMERFOCUSEDCONTENTDRIVEN

