Termination (1954)

Grand Ronde Tribal History
August 13th, 1954 Public Law 588, Western Oregon Termination Act was signed into law by President Eisenhower.
The beginning of termination

- In 1944, the federal government began its effort to liquidate or terminate federal responsibilities under treaty agreements for all tribes in the United States.

- The Bureau of Indian Affairs conducted inventory of the Grand Ronde reservation and reported positive social conditions and that most of the members were employed.

- In 1974, Congress concluded that the people on the Grand Ronde reservation were assimilated and no longer needed support from the government.
True or False: Western Oregon Tribes agreed to termination

- False!

- Common histories state that Western Oregon Tribes agreed to termination, when they in fact, did not agree!
Termination without consent

- Oral accounts from Grand Ronde Elders stated that the Tribe did not give consent for termination.

- In 1952, the tribe agreed to the first draft termination bill, which called for an early termination of western Oregon Indians.

- The first bill allowed for the tribe to keep the land they had been allotted and to manage their own timberlands.
In 1953 a second termination bill was submitted to the tribes.

This bill stated that along with termination, tribal members had to purchase their land.

The tribe refused to approve the bill.

Tribal Elders stated that they had no knowledge of hearings regarding Termination in Washington, D.C.
In March of 1954, Indian Superintendent E. Morgan Pryse submitted the second bill to Congress, stating that the tribes had agreed, which in fact was not true.

Congress approved the bill.

Later, Indian Superintendent E. Morgan Pryse admitted there were voices in opposition and no vote about the termination draft ever occurred.
What did termination mean for the Tribes of Grand Ronde?

- Terminated the Tribes’ federal recognition.
- The tribe lost all its treaty rights and land.
- Removed all obligations that had been negotiated through treaties between the United States Government and the Tribes of Grand Ronde.
- More tribes were terminated in Oregon than in any other region in the United States.
- A total of 63 tribes were terminated.
Termination

- Many tribal members had to move because they could not afford to buy their land.
- Some tribal members were able to buy their land and stay in the Grand Ronde area.
- Many cultural traditions were lost.
- The Tribe had the cemetery that remained community property. They had administrative rights over that property.
- Tribal members retained fishing and hunting rights during termination, because neither the treaties nor termination expressly addressed fishing and hunting rights.
Termination

“It changed our lives. Things weren’t the same after that.”

“At the stroke of a pen they wiped us away.”

- Margaret Provost,
  Grand Ronde Tribal Elder
Post termination

The Grand Ronde reservation was officially closed in 1956.

The Grand Ronde Tribes were left without any services in health care, education or welfare.

Terminated Indians were highly comparable to new immigrants to American, with no resources, no savings, and little help from the government.
Video on Termination

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyvKAjKBLOk