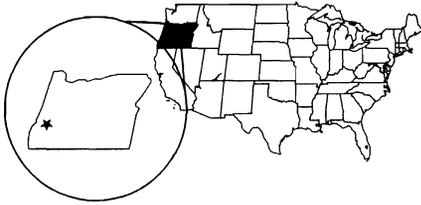


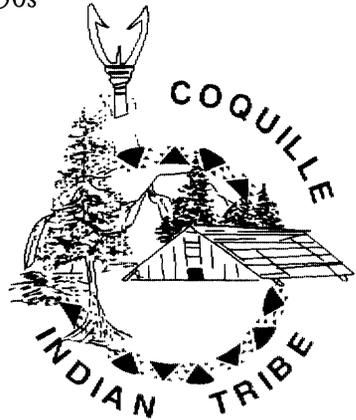
## COQUILLE



A white flag with the tribal seal in maroon or wine red flies over the Mill Casino and over the headquarters of the 650-strong Coquille Indian Nation of Coos Bay, in southwest Oregon. (Don Macnaughtan, *Lost and Found Heritage: Recovering American Indian Tradition at the Coquille*

*Tribal Library*, Bandon, Oregon, New Zealand Libraries, Vol. 48, #1, 11-14; March 1995.)

The Coquille have lived in the same general vicinity for more than 6,000 years. In the 19th century they were ravaged by malaria, smallpox, and an invasion of gold miners in the 1850s that reduced their population from 8,000 to a few hundred scattered survivors. Although declared extinct in 1954, the Coquille were granted federal recognition in 1989. Since then, they have re-emerged as a vital and thriving community and an economic asset to the Coos Bay region of Oregon, becoming a major employer in an area devastated by a decline in the timber industry.



The flag of this now-thriving nation dates from the early 1980s, according to the Dene-Miluk Cultural Center Library. *Dene* is the traditional name employed by the Athapaskan people; the Navajo, for example, continue to call themselves *Dene* or “the people”; *Miluk* is the traditional name for the Coos Bay Indians, the immediate ancestors of the Coquille; and both the Coos Bay and Coquille still employ *Dene* for themselves.

The maroon seal, on a white background, celebrates the history and culture of the Coquille people. In the center is an Oregon Coast “plank house”, the traditional style of native housing in southwestern Oregon.

Behind the house is *UmnatL QwLai*, “Grandmother Rock”, a sacred tribal site at the mouth of the Bandon River. While the rock itself was destroyed by the federal government in the 19th century, the site remains sacred and the rock remains on the seal. A conifer tree to the left of the rock and others behind the house recall the forest and the timber industry which have long been elements in Coquille life. Behind the seal, protruding from the top is a Coquille fishing spear. Fishing has been vital to the Coquille’s existence for millennia.

Surrounding the seal are two distinct elements. The first is “COQUILLE INDIAN TRIBE”. The second, a distinctive arrangement of large and small triangles, represents the tattoo markings which the people of the southwestern coast of Oregon used to measure the strings of dentalium—the local shell money of the ancient native population. ☹

[Thanks to Don Macnaughtan, former tribal librarian at the Dene-Miluk Cultural Center Library, for the information contained in this section.]