

Happy Canyon marks a century of family tradition

By SUZANNE KENNEDY

Happy Canyon is celebrating its 100th birthday this year during the Pendleton Round-Up. One of my favorite things about the show is how it appeals to all different ages. I love watching the children perform and seeing entire families give of their time and talents for the enjoyment of others. These families are the thread that keeps the show going, year after year.

The Duff/Hodgen family is one such thread. See if you can keep up. As Macy and Michael Rosselle perform their roles, they carry the Happy Canyon generations on both sides of their family. Macy and Michael's dad, Bob Rosselle, is a fourth-generation Happy Canyon actor. His stepfather, Jim Duff, is a third-generation actor and volunteer, later becoming a Happy Canyon director and president. All of Jim's children (Wendy, John, Kyle, Rocky and Davey) also performed in the show.

Jim's father, Jack Duff, also a Happy Canyon volunteer and director, was himself a president. Bob Roselle, who began as a swim kid, says, "It is part of my family tradition, a tremendous show to be part of it. There is really nothing like it around."

The Duff family's involvement



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Chief Gary Burke makes the most of his current role as a raider. He is the fourth generation of his family to perform in the Happy Canyon show.

began with Frank Duff, Jack's father, who offered his services as a mule-skinner at the Old Canyon. Bob Roselle, Jim Duff and Jack Duff all share a beautiful commonality: that of president of Happy Canyon.

Macy and Michael's mother, Teri Hodgen Rosselle, is a third-generation performer and volunteer. Her father, Tom Hodgen, acted in various roles in the show. Tom's father, Tuk Hodgen, initiated the family's participation by volunteering and later serving as a Happy Canyon director.

Another strong thread is the

descendant line of Poker Jim. Poker Jim's sons, Clarence, Richard and Robert, have all played key parts throughout the show. In fact, the 1923 script lists Poker Jim and his wife as having key horse parts. Clarence Burke continued his father's legacy as Round-Up chief and Happy Canyon Show participant for nearly 60 years. Thus began a tradition for the Burke family, who now can claim several sixth-generation actors in family parts and scenes a century old.

Poker Jim's grandchildren, Raymond "Popcorn" Burke, William Burke, Ernestine Crawford, Videll Bronson, Ellen Cowapoo and Richard Jr. "Summer" Burke, also have performed in various parts in Happy Canyon. After the silhouette was added at the Old Canyon venue, Chief Clarence became the official opening act, by greeting the audience and welcoming them to the show both in his native tongue of Cayuse and in English, and was known as the most photographed Indian in America. He was followed

in the silhouette by Chief Raymond "Popcorn" Burke (Chief Wish lau Tu la' tin) when the part was handed down to him by his Uncle Clarence.

Popcorn began in 1935 by dancing in the Happy Canyon pageant around the age of 13 and helped translate for the elderly cast members who did not speak English. He also performed as a raider and rode horseback when the cavalry arrived.

Currently, Chief Raymond's son, Chief Gary Burke (Tuk Low Key – Glancing Shot), is a fourth-generation show participant and now officially welcomes the audience in Cayuse. Chief Gary acted as the lone chief in the trail horse part and currently is a raider. Gary and his sisters' involvement began at around five years of age. Chief Gary's grandmother, Ada Jones Patrick, trained him, Alvina Burke Huesties and Judy Burke Farrow to be in the show. Both Farrow and Huesties are grooming their grandchildren for parts in the show. Alvina and Judy served as Happy Canyon princesses as well.

Want to learn more about the families involved in Happy Canyon? Be sure to purchase a copy of Becky Waggoner's book, "Happy Canyon: A History of the World's Most Unique Indian Pageant & Wild West Show," available for pre-order at Amazon and Barnes & Noble, or buy it in person at the Round-Up and Happy Canyon's gift store, Tamastslikt and Umatilla County Historical Society for \$34.99.

On with the show!

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