Smith retires after 35 years

by Donna Behrend

Not many of us can say we've held the same job for the past 35 years. But Claude Smith Sr., who recently retired from the BIA Roads maintenance department, can. Smith's last day with the Roads department was July 16. Retirement for Smith has been busy, he says. "I do more work at home than I did at work."

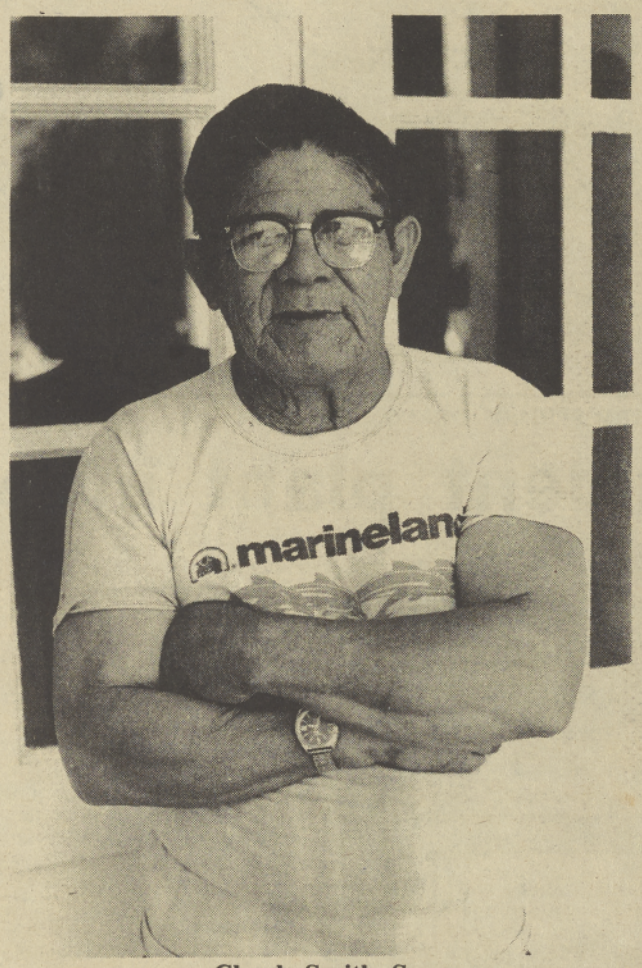
Smith started work with the Bureau in 1946 after spending 4½ years in the Army during World War II. Smith speaks proudly of his years in the service where he guarded a 36 field hospital and served as a combat medic with the 306th Infantry. The hospital was close to the combat zone, says Smith. "I was overseas 42 months and was on 11 different islands. I received 11 different battle stars."

Since 1946, with beginning pay of $.87 per hour, Smith has worked under seven different engineers. The best crew, he says, was while Lee Travis was here. "There were no paved roads when he came, and after he left, the roads were paved." The highlight of his career was when Travis recommended the Roads crew for commendation. Smith and seven other Roads employees received outstanding achievement awards for work of excellence. "Travis thought we were the best crew in the whole United States."

The 60-year-old retiree sees no difference in the maintenance equipment of present and that of past years. "Today's equipment has more power." The roads are easier to maintain, says Smith, because they're paved, but some gravel roads are difficult to repair.

Smith has six children, the youngest of whom is 21 years old. Smith gives credit to his wife, Victoria for helping him make it to work regularly and on time. "She stuck with me during hell or high water."

Smith is unsure of his plans for the future but, he says, "I would like to work for my tribal people...I miss my work, I can say that. But enough's enough."



Claude Smith, Sr.

Talbot speaks on Indian sovereignty

Noted author, lecturer and professor Steve Talbot was the speaker in the second event sponsored in the Warm Springs Speaker Series which has been co-sponsored by the Central Oregon Community College and the Lewis Pitt, Sr. Memorial Fund on August 2 at the Agency Longhouse.

Talbot's topic for the presentation was "The Fight for Indian Sovereignty: 200-plus Years of Struggle and Resistence." He gave a history of the settling of the colonies and their effect upon the Native Americans. He explained the effects which were started over 200 years ago are still producing results.

The whole idea of settling this country for capital gains is an idea which still persists. As the East coast was the starting point of settlement the push of natives was to the West. It is this push to remove Indians which led to the idea of reservations.

The resistence of the native people led to the Indian Wars. It has been a struggle throughout the years to keep what little land has been given to the Indian and Talbot predicts it will continue to be a struggle as long as the Indians hold title to any land which has natural resources. He warns Indian people to be aware that any laws passed by the government to change the status of their land, resources and the Indian people themsleves can be an attempt by the government to take from the Indians. He cited the Dawes-Allotment Act as just one such of these acts. The act was an attempt to make farmers of the Indians by giving allotments of land to each Indian. Any land that was left after each individual Indian had been given land would be opened for settlement to non-Indians. This act reduced the size of Indian lands.

Talbot stated that the relocation program and the termination program were additional acts which were destructive to Indians.

He emphasized that the programs are a product of a capitalistic system which strives to increase its profits. An example he used to illustrate his point was the Kennicott Mining Company which entered into a deal to do strip mining on Indian land. The royalties for Kennicott were approximately 55% with percentages for Indians being between 12-15 percent. He stated that at present negotiations are improving for a new contract in which the Indians would get a higher percentage.

Talbot added water rights and energy rights as other areas of natural resources which large corporations show an interest. He expressed that the large corporations show an interest. He expressed that the large corporations have the power and resources to control the U.S. government and as long as Indian nations have resources the Indians will have dealings with these giant corporations. The one redeeming factor in the entire affair is that today non-Indians are banding together with the Indian to fight exploitation from corporations.

Accompanying Talbot's talk was a showing of a video tape entitled "Facing the Wind, A Song for Yellow Thunder." The tape was a brief story about the spiritual camp started in the Black Hills by the Lakota people and the struggles the have faced. The Lakota people are attempting to gain back the Black Hills as Indian Country. The showing at Warm Springs was one of the first public showing of the video tape.

Superintendents past and present

Among the dignitaries who attended the Hydro Project dedication ceremonies on July 16, 1982, were some of the past and the present Superintendent of Warm Springs.

Allen W. Gailbraith who took office here on June 30, 1957, and served here until May 15, 1965, left Warm Springs to accept the position as the Portland Area Director. At the present time he is retired.

Doyce "Speck" Waldrip replaced Galbraith, coming here on May 23, 1965 and served until June 25, 1971. Waldrip also left Warm Springs to take the position as the Assistant Area Director in Portland. He has held several other high level positions since and is now retired.

James Cornett came to Warm Springs August 22, 1971, replacing Waldrip. Cornett served as the Superintendent until his retirement on January 16, 1981, and presently resides in Albany, Oregon.

Merritt Youngdeer took office here on June 19, 1981 and is the present Superintendent. Youngdeer who was born in McAllister, Oklahoma, came here from the Albuquerque, Area Office where his position was as the Administrative Officer.

During the Hydro Project dedication ceremonies some of the past and the present Superintendents took time out to pose with Ken Smith after a hardy meal. Pictured from left to right are; Allen W. Galbraith, Ken Smith, Doyce "Speck" Waldrip, James Cornett and Merritt Youngdeer.

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