

Warm Springs elders share their past

Spilyay Tymoo will feature senior citizens of the Warm Springs community throughout the year. We hope to share stories of the past to give readers an idea of what early reservation life was like for our elders.

Fannie Waheneka is eighty-five-years-old and an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. She was born February 15, 1909 in Log Springs. She grew up on the other end of Simnasho, in the Foreman Point area. She was born to Louie and Lucy (Yahtin) Scott in a small community of approximately 11 homes.

Her mother was Warm Springs, and her father was 1/2 Yakama and 1/2 Wasco. Her parents had eight children, five of which survived. Fannie's oldest sister was Alice, known as Daisy Heath. She was enrolled in Yakama. Her parents then had a baby boy who passed away. Her other sister was Emma Queahpama. Her sister Della passed away as did a baby girl. Her brother Leonard Scott was born followed by herself. Her brother Sam, was the youngest. Fannie was three-years-old when her father passed away, so she doesn't remember him very well.



Fannie Waheneka while attending Chemawa Indian School.

While growing up, her family had to do their shopping in either Tygh Valley or Wapinitia. They followed a trail on horseback to go shopping. Other means of transportation was by walking or traveling by wagons. At that time there was no electricity, and they got their water from natural springs which were adjacent to their home and barn. The family spoke only their native language, Sahaptin.

The family belongs to the traditional Indian religion of Washut. Washut was the first religion around before all others came to be. At that time they didn't pay much attention to doctors, not that there were any around. After her father died, she came down to Warm Springs to attend boarding school because she lived too far from Simnasho. Only those who lived right in Simnasho were able to attend Simnasho school. "It was more like military school than a boarding school. We couldn't even speak our native language." She lived in the dorms and was away from her mother for long periods of time.

In 1924, at the age of 16, she was sent to Chemawa Indian School.

She married Grant Waheneka in 1929. They had two children, one of which they lost. Faye Waheneka is their only surviving daughter. Her husband did a little farming. She now has eight grandchildren; five grandsons, three granddaughters. They include: Kenneth Sidney Miller (Kenman), Sharon K. Miller, Robert Roscoe Smith, Julian Bruce Smith, Eldred Dean Smith, Pamela Faye Cardenas, Kevin Lee Smith, and Robin Tracy Mitchell. From these eight grandchildren, Fannie has twenty-two great grandchildren.

Fannie enjoyed doing beadwork. In 1938 she started beading a bag with metal beads. The picture is of deer in the forest. She said her brother went hunting one time and told her of the deer he saw. He kept the image in his mind and her sister Emma drew a picture of what he remembered. That is where the image on the bag came from. The bag lay unfinished until 1968 when she was told there were beads in White Swan. She then finished the bag.

Fannie worked at the BIA boarding school for about two years as a girls matron beginning in 1941. There she resigned and went berry picking between Sandy and Gresham. Berry farmers would pick them up in Warm Springs to pick berries for the summer. They were provided cabins to stay in. In 1943, as berry picking season was ending, her brother convinced her to work in the Shipyards in Portland (Swan Island). The war was going on at the time and she was 34 years old. At the shipyards she began carrying welding leads for her best friend. One day, at lunch time, her friend showed her how to weld and the boss saw how good she welded and she became an overhead welder. She walked about two miles every day to get to work because they had no car.

They moved from Gresham to Roswell, New Mexico where the Air Force stationed Grant in 1943-44. When he got his overseas orders they moved back home in 1945. To make more money they moved back to the valley again to pick berries. She was then contacted, and told she needed to come back to be a girls' matron, which she was for over twenty years before she retired due to bad health. Her daughter Faye then went to work and Fannie took care of her grandchildren.

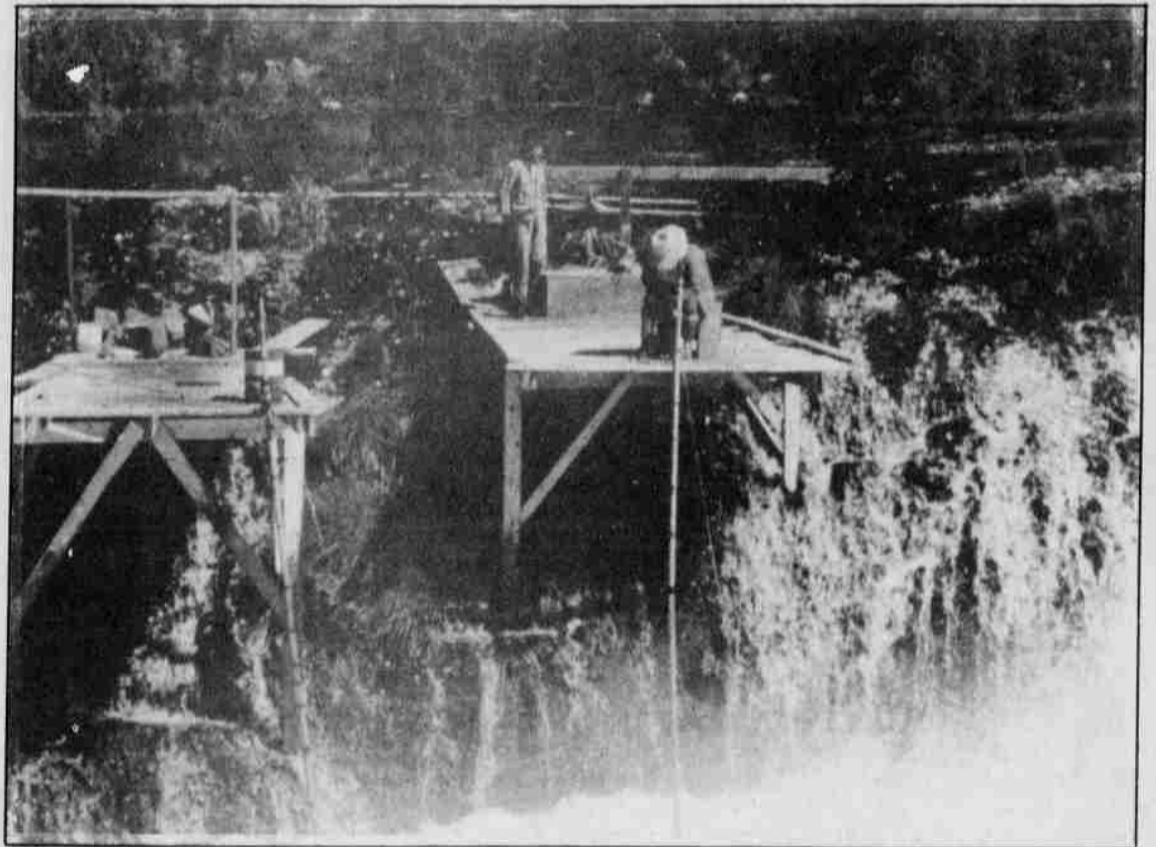
When asked how she felt about the differences between the past and the present, she feels you can't do much about it but live with it.



Fannie displays a beaded bag she made from an image her brother remembered from his hunting trip.



Mabel Eyle is the oldest tribal member in Warm Springs. She now lives at her home in Wolfe Point.



Mabel really enjoyed fishing when she was younger. Above she is pictured on a scaffold at Sherars Bridge.

The oldest enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes, Mabel Eyle is 93. Mabel was born July 3, 1901 to Joe and Fannie Henning in Log Springs. Her blood line is Warm Springs and her ancestry reaches back to the Tygh Band. She had four brothers; George Henning, who passed away in 1918; Clarence, who died in 1909. An unnamed child passed away in 1903, and her brother Henry died in 1911. She had two sisters as well, Mary Henning Sumpter died March 18, 1962, and Sophie Tanewasha, who also died.

Mabel moved with her family to Simnasho where she went to school for three years. Prior to starting school, her family spoke only their native language, Sahaptin. When she spoke of it in school she was yelled at for doing so. Sometimes her family would travel to Warm Springs to visit for a day and go back home. She also recalls going to Willamette Falls to pick berries when she was younger, and picking berries between Sandy and Gresham.

Mabel did a lot of beadwork, she also enjoyed leather work. She made moccasins and gloves from hides she tanned herself. She made numerous items which she traded for groceries in Wapinitia and Tygh Valley. Fishing was another joy. She would often go to Sherars Bridge by herself or with her husband.

Mabel was twenty when she married Johnny Tewee.

February 2, 1920. They had three children together. They divorced ten years later on May 19, 1930. Lena Tewee Santos is their only surviving child. Hesler Tewee died in 1923, and Johnny Tewee, Jr. died in 1927.

In 1924, at age 23, she remembers when she first rode in a car. Her family went to Sherars Bridge to fish. At age 30 she helped clean and do laundry at the Tygh Valley Hotel.

She married Kaleb Adams September 6, 1936. Their marriage ended in divorce, November 10, 1954.

The following year she married William Eyle of Yakama, February 19, 1955. He preceded her in death May 12, 1986.

Mabel made her home in Simnasho until her house burned down in 1967. At that time, Delbert Frank leased her some of his land so her family could build a home in Wolfe Point where she now lives.

She has ten grandchildren: Juanita Denny, Marjorie Danzuka-deceased, Carl Santos-deceased, Irene Santos, Rueben Santos, Rick Santos, Michael Santos-deceased, Susanna Santos, Albert Santos and Theresa Santos. Mabel is the great grandmother of 25, and the great-great grandmother of four. Just recently she became a great-great-great grandmother.

Story compiled and written by Bob Medina and Saphronia Katchia