

# Tribal history portrayed in *When the River Ran Wild*

By Tina Aguilar  
Spilyay Tymoo

*The Way It Was Long Ago, When the River Ran Wild.*

The indigenous people of this book were inhabitants of the Columbia River and were of the Columbia River Sahaptin and Eastern Kiksht Chinookan Stock.

Many people wrote about our people from the view of looking into our way of life. In this case, this is a Native American, George Aguilar Sr., who is looking outside from the inside, and telling it the way it was: *When the River Ran Wild*.

The peoples who dwelled on the Columbia River from The Dalles to the mouth of the Columbia River spoke the Chinookan language, intermingled and intermarried from as far as the mid-Western states and to the Northwest coast, and they still do so to this day.

Some of the religions, customs, dance and stories that are in this writing are no longer practiced. You will soon discover that some of these activities are recorded only in the ethnological and anthropological reports.

An example would be seen in the Christian mission works of the 1830-1850s. The shamanistic practices were a thorn in the flesh, polygamy, slavery, bride purchasing etc.

The early reservation course of action of the Euro-Ameri-



George W. Aguilar, Sr.

can was extermination of the Treaty Indians way of life. They succeeded in obliterating some of the languages, particularly the lower Chinookan. Oral history was lost when the Indians took the names of the Americans. An attempt to get back some of the oral history is made in the genealogical section of *When the River Ran Wild*.

### Eight years in the writing

George Washington Aguilar Sr. spent the last eight years writing this book. He did bits and pieces as he researched and visited the museums in Warm Springs and The Dalles. He also went to Portland to visit the Oregon Historical Society and retrieved research there.

As his grandchildren were attending school, some were curious about the family history, wanting to know about receiving Indian names and stories

passed down through the years. This gave Aguilar the idea to write about the family history intended for his grandchildren and relatives, which includes in-laws and anyone linked to the heritage.

He said that the primary function was to bring together his relatives, to make his people, the Eastern Kiksht Chinookan, aware of their past. The survival struggles and the unique way of keeping track of genealogical information of the past, the oral (word of mouth) history passed down throughout the generations.

Aguilar said, "As years went by, I noticed the younger people were receiving the ancestral names, so out of curiosity I made an inquire about where the name had come from, what is the relevant information regarding that given name? The response all seemed to be the

same: 'They gave me an Indian name, had a giveaway and had a dinner at the long house.' That was it, with answers like these it encouraged me to write the history of my family unit and their people."

Aguilar was born on George Washington's birthday February 22 in The Dalles in a small apartment above the old JC Penny Department Store to parents Evelyn (Polk) and Estanislau or Easton Aguilar. His father Easton was born in 1891 in Manila Philippines. He came to the United States in the early 1900's. An early photo indicates he served in World War I.

He first married Adeline Brunoe, which produced four children, Aridonna, Theda, Raymond and Margie Aguilar. Theda is the only living child today. George is the only child of his second marriage.

During the Great Depression, Easton found employment with a bank in The Dalles. In the late spring of 1931, he drowned at the Cascade Rapids while helping his father-in-law James Polk Jr. fishing. His body was never recovered from the river. His wife Evelyn passed on not long after he drowned. Hattie Polk, the grandmother, had to come to The Dalles to get guardianship of Aguilar.

Aguilar was raised in the Wilford Canyon area on the Warm Springs Reservation,

where he was raised in the traditional ways. Hattie had a hard time getting Aguilar enrolled when the tribes were reorganized. The only piece of documentation was a baby record book that was in the government records for over a half century. This baby record book is stored in the Wasco Museum at The Dalles.

Aguilar was enrolled in the Warm Springs Boarding School in 1937. At that time he spoke fluent Klickitat Sahaptin with various words of English and few words of Wasco. He states he spoke and understood enough English to get by, sometimes helping other children who found it difficult to speak English.

After going to Warm Springs Boarding School he went to Chemawa Indian School in Salem. He lasted seven months. During this period he enrolled in the Agriculture Department where he spent most of his time digging potatoes, picking apples and shoveling manure at the dairy and hog pens.

During the early fall of 1949, he volunteered for the U.S. Army. He served boot camp at Fort Ord, Calif., then was sent overseas in the Ryukius Command (Okinawa) in the Far East Asia Theater. He was honorably discharged in December of 1952 after serving three and half years. He met his wife Ella Kurip, a full blood Ute from Fort

Duchesne, Utah, at the Tacoma Indian Hospital after he contacted a service-connected disability. They married on Christmas Day 1955 at the Indian Presbyterian Mission at Tacoma, Washington. They had four sons and one daughter. Today they live on the Warm Springs Reservation with the remaining living children and their families.

During Aguilar's early years he has had occupations of transient field worker, deep-sea fisherman, and Indian traditional fisherman. In his latter years his occupations were timber faller, general construction trades, union affiliated carpenter, service station retailer, auto mechanic, owner and dealer of black jack, construction manager for the tribes, general building contractor and reforestation contractor. At his age of 72 years he can still keep up with the younger generation in the construction and reforestation projects where he is employed with the Shekinah Enterprises. After this book is finalized and published his desire is to enter the ministry of the Gospel.

He has been working very close with Gerald Ramsey searching for a publisher. He said Ramsey is doing all the footwork to make this a reality. They both believe the book will be published in early winter, ideal timing because the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial will be celebrated.

## "Healing Circle" veteran shares story of Vietnam

By Allen Gadberry,  
Vietnam Veteran

*(This is one of the testimonies heard at the "Healing Circle" held at Hebe Longhouse in April 2002; Gadberry is the brother-in-law to Lucy Smith Gadberry)*

It was a cool gray morning, the sunrise soon to be. Trip flares are set off throughout the night. Then it happens. You hear some sporadic gunfire at another side of the perimeter that you can't see. Then it starts to intensify with the unmistakable crack of the enemy's gunfire.

Your heart rate goes up, you wake up your buddy in the foxhole with you, and you wait and hope and pray that they don't attack your side. Fear is starting to set in. Everyone is alert now. The smell of fear permeating over

the ground from one foxhole to another. Then it starts again, it's still dark so that it just intensifies the fear. The screaming of the incoming artillery is more than you can bear. Knowing the one you don't hear will be the one to get you.

As the shells land, there is a terrific explosion and the sound of the shrapnel whistling through the air trying to stick into your flesh. Sometimes it just slices you, other times it gashes you, like someone pushing a jagged piece of glass in your body. The pain is not sudden because the blunt blow to your body has numbed you. Soon though the pain starts like someone screwing a corkscrew into your belly. The pain is different when a bullet punctures you. It's more

of a searing pain, like someone putting a hot steel rod into your guts.

The fear, the stench of fresh blood being spilled out of a human body onto the ground. They are coming up off to my right and now my left. It's getting lighter now, dawn is starting to come about. Now you see the buggers coming up the hill. We lay our line of gunfire on the ones across the hill, so that we can stop their reinforcements from coming to help them.

There is the feeling of killing someone. It doesn't affect you until you are forced to do it in hand to hand at close quarters. Then and only then do you really know the fear of all fears. Actually fighting for your life, not by shooting, but by actually

touching them and they you. The smell of your enemy, the feel of his clothes and his skin as you try your darndest to kill him and he tries to kill you. The sweat because of the fear, the heart pounding, the eyes-those little brown eyes, scared as hell, just as you are, knowing only one of us is going to survive this. The Grim Reaper has come to watch, to see whom he takes next. The smell, the feel of the flesh hot blood spilling out of his belly and punctured organs. The color is deep red, hot and sticky, with a smell that you never forget. Some of the fear is relieved that it wasn't me. Before the killing was far away and impersonal, just shooting somebody at a distance. Now it is a living soul, a human being.

## Birthday wishes...

I would like to holla at my cellie Mack, Happy Birthday on Sept. 14.  
Happy birthday PO (MJ) 9-2.  
From the Dream Team - L.R., D.J. and C.J.

Happy birthday CRJ, 9-4. LER 9-5. PO 9-2.

Happy birthday to my big lil' sister, Deanna Lynn 9-1. Lots of love, your big sister Gran and the rest of the Robinsons.

Happy birthday to Chief Bullneck Heath, 9-26. Love, the Robinsons.

Happy birthday, Chris Suppah, 9-4. Love, Gran.

Happy birthday Berta (Puto) 9-28. Love, your sis Denise. From PO and the Dream Team, M.J., D.J., L.R., C.J.

Happy birthday to half my dream team. Sept. 2, 4 and 5. Love ya, PO.

Happy birthday to little Merlin Ernest Tom lil (Fudd), Aug. 31. Seven

years old. Love you and miss you. You're always in my prayers. Mom.

Happy birthday little Merlin. Love, your brothers Douglas and Sundown.

Happy birthday, Uncle Merlin. Love, your nephew Aidan Allen Jackson.

Happy birthday Merlin Ernest Tom. We all love you. Mom, bro., nephew, grandma and pops. All you aunts and uncles and cousins.

Happy birthday, Merlin. Love you, uncle. Love, your nephew Allen Aidan Jackson.

Happy birthday, baby Merlin. We love you, Grandma Gina and Grandpa Tonto, cousins Pudge and Celestine.

Happy Birthday to our brother Larson Kalama Sr. August 15th and Happy 22nd Anniversary to my husband Easton, God bless you both always! Love your family, Tina & kids

## Advanced quilt classes set

Eraina Palmer, owner of Quilts & More, will be giving two Advanced Star Quilt classes in September. The first classes will be Wednesday, Sept. 11, Thursday Sept. 12, and Friday Sept. 13 at the Plaza from 5 to 8 p.m. The second classes will be Thursday, Sept. 26, and Friday Sept. 27 from 5 to 8 p.m.

and Saturday, Sept. 28 from 10 to 5 p.m. (if needed). Students will need to bring their own sewing machine to class. A supply list will be given at registration. Both classes will cost \$30 per person. Space is limited. Palmer would like to have other classes, such as baby board making and embroidery.

### Howlak Tichum

Virgilena "Nanci" Jay Wesley-Begay

Virgilena "Nanci" Jay Walsey-Begay was born July 26, 2002 to parents Rodger and Cecelia Walsey-Begay, of Celilo, Oregon in The Dalles, Oregon and passed away July 26, 2002. Walsey-Begay was Yakama, Navajo, Warm Springs, Shoshone-Bannock and Paiute tribes. Proceeding in death are her maternal grandparents Anita (Totus) and Richard Walsey Sr., great-grandparents Watson and Tillie Totus, James and Gladys Walsey, Virgil Hunt Sr., Dorothy Lucas; and Maggie Jim, uncles Franklin Lee Walsey and Levi Walsey and aunt Virgilena Walsey.

Survivors include her parents, brothers Dillon and Garrett Begay, paternal grandparents Roger and Lucille Begay of Celilo, Oregon, great-grandparents Howard Jim of Celilo, and Matilda Allen, Roberta Danzuka and Donna Kishwalk all of Yakima Valley; Geri Jim, Caroline Torres, Venus Strong and Delia Walsey of Warm Springs, uncles and aunts Ronnie and Edith Walsey, Reggie and Lourie Walsey, Jenny and Teddy Walsey Sr., Katrina and Jay Richard Walsey, Roxanne and Wilson Begay, Tina Allen, Donna Wesley, Lillian Walsey, Bobby Begay and Lucy Begay. Numerous other relatives also survive her.

### Card of remembrance

Our daughter/sister will be greatly missed. Baby, you will be loved and remembered every day. You will be in our prayers. Thank you to all of our families for their love and support. Thank you for being by our side. **Rod, CeCe and the boys**

WHEN IT'S TIME TO CHANGE YOUR OUTLOOK.

*Work* IS WHAT WE DO ON TIRED MUSCLES.

A good, strong pain reliever all you need to work out the kinks and melt away the stress. So relax. Get a massage in our world-class spa. Emmerse yourself in our soothing, natural mineral baths. Or spend the day exploring all the attractions of this high desert oasis. Whatever you do, work will be the furthest thing from your mind.

**KAH·NEE·TA**  
HIGH DESERT RESORT & CASINO  
1-800-554-4SUN Warm Springs, Oregon