

# Nora was the youngest of 14 children

NORA continued  
from front page

Her parents were Cecille Leno Warren and John M. Warren. John Warren's father was Chief Bogus of the Umpqua Tribe, who was killed by vigilantes on the 1856 Trail of Tears.

Chief Bogus was one of eight Tribal members who died on that march. At the end of the trail, Chief Bogus' sons were adopted by the Warren family and took on the Warren name.

Cecille's father was the senior David Leno.

Cecille and John Warren had 14 children, but only four survived: Nora, former Tribal Elders Philip Warren and Maude (Warren) Hudson and Pauline Johnson. Nora was the youngest of those 14 children.

Pauline Johnson, among other relations, is grandmother to Grand Ronde Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy.

The Warrens raised their family in hard times. In one year alone, Margaret Provost says, "(Cecille) buried two children."

Margaret had been caring for Nora since Loren walked on in 2000. "He really wanted to be 100," Margaret says. "He got pretty far. He made it to 95."

Margaret, perhaps, has the most knowledge of her mother's past.

"When Nora was a young girl, the family picked wild apples and dried them for the winter," says Margaret. "They would go to the coast and gather ocean tea (from a bush that grows widely in the area) by the sackfuls, also for their winter supply. To preserve their food, they didn't can at first; they kept it in a cellar.

"She must have been about 9, during World War I, when soldiers came and took her horse to war, and she felt really bad because they never brought it back."

Every few months, when the family went to Dallas for supplies, their special lunch was on a stopover at Buell, where they got a few slices of cheese out of one of those huge bricks, some "hard tack" (crackers) and something to drink.

Her whole life, Nora always liked traveling.

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From her family, Nora learned generosity. "Whenever families were in need, her dad always helped them out with food from the farm," says Margaret.

During World War II, Nora was a part of the Blue Star Mothers of America, which provided support for mothers who had sons or daughters in the military. She made quilts and things for Tribal members, and put together boxes for soldiers.

"Mark Mercier's house today was their clubhouse," Margaret says.

"Grandmother used to call it, 'The War Mothers' House,'" says Tribal Elder and granddaughter Linda Brandon. "They did all their quilting there."



Tribal Elder Nora Kimsey, right, attended the Canoe Family Winter Gathering in the Grand Ronde Tribal gymnasium in January 2008.

"All the others from the club are gone, though — Tribal Elder Mabel Gaston, the Mercier ladies," says Margaret.

"Grandmother would always talk about former Tribal Elder Mildred Leno, who always brought cottage cheese to the War Mothers' House," says Linda.

Nora and Loren worked at the shipyards during World War II. Nora was a welder and Loren was a pipe fitter. They lived in Orient at the time, outside of Gresham.

After the war, Nora and Loren moved to Grand Ronde to the house on Andy Riggs Road where she lived most of her life.

The family bought its first refrigerator and washing machine, and enjoyed indoor plumbing for the first time. When the washing machine arrived, the Kimseys let other families use it.

Nora worked at Blue Lake Cannery in Salem and sometime before Termination in 1954, she worked at the cannery at the Agency and canned food for the Tribe.

She was among the Elders who baked, canned and dried goods to be sold to raise money for the Restoration effort. The money she helped raise purchased two acres in front of what was the original cemetery that today is part of the cemetery.

She also was on the original Enrollment Committee.

When the Restoration effort started, Nora "talked about it all the time," says Linda Brandon. "(Former Tribal Elder) Clara Riggs was one of her real good friends and the three ladies (all former Tribal Elders), Ila (Dowd), Velma (Mercier) and Martha Mercier, they would do bake sales. They were so dedicated. They did the bake sales so that Marvin and Margaret and Merle Holmes could get letters out, so they had the money for stamps and for gas, to get the word out."

Nora was proud to be a Native and that her children worked hard to make Tribal Restoration happen.

"Whatever happened," says Tribal member and granddaughter Virginia Roof, "she'd say, 'Keep going,

keep going.'"

"She made pies all her life and dozens of quilts," Margaret recalls. "She did a real pretty Apache Trail quilt, a wedding ring design and a log cabin design, and sunflowers. She has embroidered pillows all her life. She was always busy doing something."

Every year, they went to Oregon City to catch lamprey. The family picked berries over at Orient and visited the hop yards in the Salem/Independence area. Finally, each summer they went to the McMinnville area to pick walnuts.

"That was our last place to make money for the year," says Margaret.

Margaret remembers that her mother used to salt food, dry it and, later on, can it, whether it was fruit, lamprey or game.

Later, when the children were all grown, she and Loren worked summers as campground caretakers in Pacific City.

Margaret also remembers that Nora and former Tribal Elder Ila Dowd were good friends and made



Tribal Elder Linda Brandon, left, shows her grandmother, Tribal Elder Nora Kimsey, photos during a 102nd birthday celebration for Kimsey at the Elders' Activity Center on Dec. 2, 2010.

a Chinuk Wawa jargon video together.

"Her and Tribal Elder Cordelia Kneeland speak jargon yet," Margaret said before Nora's passing.

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Linda Brandon lived a few years with the Kimseys when she was young.

"Grandma was always going," she says. "She'd get up at 5 or 6 o'clock and make pancakes every morning, because grandpa loved his pancakes and grandma liked her oatmeal. Lots of sugar, no milk. Grandpa liked to have his pancakes with gravy and butter, and he was a big eater."

"Before they tore the old grade school down, I used to walk from the grade school to grandma's for lunch every day, and every day grandma would have French fries for me."

"When she got done with washing, she'd take the clothes outside and hold them up on the line. I was little. Her arms finally got tired, and she put the clothes down. She went to the clothes pins and picked one up and said, 'These are the clothes pins.' I learned what clothes pins were then."

"I have so much in here for her," Linda says with her hand over her heart. "I remember how I always used to make grandma laugh when I'd dress up for Halloween."

"She was a darn good cook, too," Virginia says. "She cooked everything. When they went elk hunting, she went with dad and grandpa all the time and was pretty much the cornerstone of the camp. She pretty much stayed in camp and did the cooking and making it nice for when the guys came back."

"We always had homemade bread for our school lunches and at home we had custard pies."

Nora helped her mother cook for the thrashing crews, when others worked in the grain fields.

"Maybe that was what made her

such a good cook," says Margaret.

"She liked that role," says Virginia. "She always had an apron on. Her and Auntie Pauline both. And they would tee-hee around a lot."

"They always spoke jargon together," says grand-niece Cheryl A. Kennedy. "When (Nora) passed, I thought, 'Wow, what a reunion they're having!'"

"She was a quiet, gentle person," Kennedy adds, "who always came with something to offer. I remember her coming to a Tribal Council meeting, oh, six weeks before she passed, and sitting by the side of the room. When I came in, she looked at me and just waved. For me, from my Elder, that was great encouragement. She recognized and greeted me."

"She was a very cultural person. She knew how to do all the things we are reviving now. She was an accomplished basket weaver and knew all the steps required. She knew how to dye cloth with the natural elements."

"And she was very industrious, preserving foods. She took care of her family in these ways whether they had little money or a lot."

"Never a cross word ever to any of us," says Virginia. "Family means everything to her. Families are supposed to be close. Grandma and her made baskets and they traveled clear to Gladstone to trade them for school clothes. Grandma didn't like to go, but she needed the school clothes so she went every year."

Myrna Brandon also remembered her early years and how Nora would also make school clothes on a pedal sewing machine.

Nora made their clothes out of other, worn-out clothes, says Margaret.

"We lived where the old food bank was," Myrna says. "There is a creek there. I was by the water with my lunch pail. It was a lard bucket, and I was careless, and the bucket floated away. I felt bad." She adds, "I don't remember what Mom said, but she wouldn't have been angry. She just would have found me something else."

Even Margaret remembers the incident, because even though it was only a lard bucket and Nora would never have made a fuss about it, even a lard bucket was a big thing in those days.

"We were poor, but we didn't know it," Margaret says.

Nora travelled on horseback. "She loved to ride horses bareback, her and auntie (Pauline)," says Virginia.

Linda recalls one of the stories Nora told her.

"Her and Pauline wanted to ride their horse, Fly, and Fly was being stubborn," Linda recalls. "He just stood there and wouldn't let them saddle up, so grandma took him by the bridle and walked him inside the house to look at the mirror so he could see how stubborn he was."

After the war, "Grandma and Aunt Pauline, they used to travel to

a lot of the Indian Reservations in the U.S. and Canada," says Linda. "Auntie would preach the Word and they would travel together to attend revivals and prayer meetings, and do missionary work."

"She was a prayer-warrior," says Linda.

Myrna Brandon remembers many of those meetings.

"I remember the days we were at camp meetings," she says, "in Brooks, at Warm Springs and at Fort Hill."

"The church had people on a list that they would call, a prayer circle, if a family needed prayer for something, and she was one of the ones along with many others, who went," says Virginia. "They called on each other because they believed in prayer."

"Nora and Auntie Pauline (loved) to watch people. They'd go to the casino and just sit there."

"I took my grandma to the casino for New Year's one year, and it was about nine o'clock," says Linda. "I was surprised that she wanted to go. We were people watching. And everybody was dressed up, and there was an Elvis impersonator. I went down to High Stakes and asked him, 'Elvis would you do me a favor? Say hello to my grandmother?' He came over and shook my grandma's hand and he said, 'Happy New Year's.' Grandma was tickled over that."

"She loved the ocean," says Virginia. "She (loved) to watch the ocean. Grandpa was a commercial fisherman for years with my dad (Tribal Elder Marvin Kimsey). They would go often off Newport and stay out two or three days at a time. Duke (Kimsey, Marvin's son and a member of the Tribe) would go sometimes, too."

Tribal member Dan Provost, Margaret's son, took Nora to the coast "where grandpa used to launch his dory" a few weeks before she passed. She said she didn't know if she would ever see Pacific City again.

"She liked to ride in the car, and park where she could see people and see what was going on. She rode the sky train at the State Fair when she was 99, and we took her to the Oktoberfest for her 100th birthday, and when she was 102, she went to the fair again. She loved life," says Margaret.

"One time, we went to Walmart," says Dan. "We parked and let mom off, and then a car pulled out closer to the store, and we took that space. When mom came out, she couldn't find us, and Nora laughed at that. So, next time we went, after Margaret got out, grandma nudged me and said, 'There's a car going out over there.'"

"Us cousins all got to take turns spending nights, weekends with grandma," says Linda Brandon. "She showed us how to make pot-holders."

As Nora aged, she held on to her abilities.

"She knows just what she wants



Tribal Elder Nora Kimsey wears regalia that belonged to her sister Pauline Johnson, a Tribal member who walked on in 1997, in a photo taken on Aug. 18. The regalia has been passed down and is currently worn by Tribal member CeCe Kneeland and her daughter, Tribal member Nakoosa Moreland, Kimsey's nieces.

to eat, and her doctor said, 'No matter what it is, if it's doughnuts first thing in the morning (and it often was), let her have them. She knows what she's doing,' " says Margaret Provost.

"And she does," Margaret says. "She knows her accounts, and she knows what they're serving for lunch at the Community Center." She kept up with local events by watching the local cable channel.

Nora watched less television in her later years.

Nora stayed sharp and active until the end, though for many of the last years her friends were mostly gone and the world had changed unbelievably since she was young.

The year she was born, General Motors, Ex-Lax and the first electric typewriter started, Mother's Day was first celebrated and "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" was on the hit parade.

Here in Grand Ronde, the traditional spiritual practice known as "Winter Dance" was still a part of the Tribal culture, according to an interview with former Tribal Elder Wilson Bobb. It passed from use following the 1917 Spanish influenza epidemic that killed many Elders with knowledge of the practice.

The Tribe did not have a Constitution until the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. When Nora was born, the Tribe governed through district representatives based on traditional family lines, says Tribal member and Cultural Protection Coordinator Erik Thorsgard.

At her funeral in the Tribal gymnasium, which was filled to capacity, Tribal member Rex Haller sang, "Where the Roses Never Fade," a song that Nora requested two years ago be sung by Haller at her funeral.

"She took care of things," says Kennedy, "whether animals or people or land. She took care of things. She was in my life all my life."

"When I was about 4, we were at a cold rodeo. It was Easter time. The wind was blowing hard and snowflakes were in the air. I looked at Auntie and told her how cold it was."

Before she passed, Nora remembered that incident. "Oh, Cheryl Ann," she said. "I remember when you told me, 'It's cold, Auntie.'"

"She led by example," Kennedy says. "She left footprints for those around her to follow. She left a clear path for us to live a clean, healthy, happy life." ■