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The Muckleshoot Review: Elder Edition
Volume 4

Welcome

Our culture is our people, and it is important to keep their stories alive. When we share stories, we honor those who have passed, while also keeping teachings and learning vibrant. In Fall 2013, I started teaching for Northwest Indian College in the evenings. My first class was on cultural sovereignty and the book Lummi Elders Speak was on the syllabus. I had discovered this book earlier when a friend gifted it to me when I was working on my dissertation on Native educational leaders. This is a very special book, mainly out of print, as it contains a wealth of information about some of our elders in the Salish Sea area. I thought, wouldn't it be a good idea to have our Muckleshoot community make a book like this with our elders sharing their stories? So, every quarter that I taught for one year, my students interviewed Muckleshoot and community elders. This is a compilation of many of the interviews the students collected. I'd like to extend a heartfelt thanks to all the students and elders for participating in this project. Also, thank you to Alicia Woods, and the Muckleshoot Tribal College for your support of this project.

Respectfully,

Denise Bill, Ed.D

Cover Humming Bird by
Willy Foulkes

Additional Cover Art: Alicia Woods



Sophia Jane Spencer

By Beverly Courville

Where were you born and where, when and how old are you now and who raised you?

Sophia: I was born between White Swan and Browns Town in Yakima, Washington on March 13, 1927, to Richard Spencer and Ida Henry. I am 87 years old now. My mother passed away when I was three years old. My grandmother passed away soon after. So, my father took care of me, till his friends tried to have sex with me. I didn't like that, I got away from them. My aunt Alice Satanas and George Satanas raised me.

How were you raised?

Sophia: Auntie (Causla, Yakima Indian Name for aunt) she would tell me how to do things and what she needed them to be done. Such as pick berries, make berry baskets, clean, cook, feed the animals (we had horses, cows; heifers and little bulls, pigs, cats and dogs), chop wood (never got hurt), I didn't have to be told what to do.

Are you religious? Can you tell me about when you started, how and when?

Sophia: Yes, our religion is from the Muckleshoot Shaker Church. Our family is very religious. I started at a young age. Several people would come over for help and I would work on them.

What are some of the Indian foods you remember eating and making?

Huckleberries, blackberries, wild strawberries, thimble berries, blackcaps, salal berries, bitterroots, carrots, potatoes, punco (round vegetable), orange tiger lily (boil the roots), quench (black moss), fish, deer, elk, fried bread, indian biscuits, smoked salmon, dried salmon, canned salmon, clams, oysters, chicken, grouse, pork, luckamain, and clam chowder.

What are some of the things that you were taught?

Listen to your elders- always let them go first, never pass them. If you have to, say excuse me. If they are feeling bad, you will get sick. Always close the blinds before it gets dark. Don't look out the window when it is dark. Something will look back at you. Close all the windows and doors. Never let your children run around in the dark. Never eat in the dark, because dead people wish for it. Don't eat in the cemetery. If you have to share, give them some by dumping some coffee on the ground.

Virginia Cross

By Denise Bill, Ed.D

I had the privilege of interviewing two Muckleshoot Tribal members for my dissertation at the University of Washington. Virginia Cross was one of the tribal members I interviewed. I would like to share two of Virginia's answers from my interview in 2005.

[Are there memorable childhood experiences that taught you what it is to be a strong Indian educational leader?](#)

Cross: The memories I have from when I was a child are memories with my grandmother Mary Charles, and then my Aunt Eva Jerry. Mary Charles was a member of the Shaker Church and she was an elderly lady who passed away, I think in about 1958 or 1960. She was very determined to carry on the culture. She wove and knitted her own socks and did her own spinning of the wool and all those types of things. I remember one of the things that she taught us was to share things. She was a member of the Shaker Church and whenever there was a funeral or a dinner or something she wanted to contribute to, she'd pack up a case of peaches or pears or something and carry that to the church to share what little she had.

With my Aunt Eva Jerry, she was very involved in teaching the language all the years I was with the Auburn School District. She was very committed to teaching language and felt very strongly that the language should continue for the Tribe.

So, I remember those two people from my childhood. Another person that had an impact upon what I became was my Father. He was very strong in teaching us good habits and wanted us to be sure we continued in school and (he) paid our bills on time. He used to get up every morning on the first of the month, I remember, and pay his bills on time. That was very important for him. He kept food on the table for us and kept the family together.

Virginia Cross





Willard E. Bill, Sr., Ph.D

By Denise Bill, Ed.D

I had the privilege of interviewing two Muckleshoot Tribal members for my dissertation at the University of Washington. Willard Bill, Sr., Ph.D, my father, was one of the tribal members I interviewed.

I would like to share two of my father's answers from my interview with him in 2005.

Question: Are there memorable childhood experiences that taught you what it is to be a strong Indian educational leader?

Dr. Bill: I turned to my Grandmothers, Clara Siddle and Annie Jack Daniels. These are the two inspirational people who motivated me to do a lot of things. Grandma Annie lived here on the reservation her whole life and was a very traditional Indian woman. She was a Shaker, healer herbalist, and really lived the life of a traditional Indian doing cooking, hunting, gathering berries, and was very active in the Shaker Church. She was a very important person.

My other Grandmother, Clara Siddle, was raised at Muckleshoot also and was eventually literate and very active in her own personal education through the years. So, the interaction with both grandmothers was really instrumental for me and showed me what you can do in two different settings. Whereas my one Grandmother never spoke English, well, she did speak English, but she didn't read or pay much attention to money. The other Grandmother was more assimilated in a way, but was very committed to her culture. They were both very spiritual oriented people and both prayed before every meal and were very proud of their particular faiths. They were two women who inspired me.

What advice do you have for the new generation of Native American educational leaders who are coming up in Indian Education?

Dr. Bill, Sr.: They need to work together. It is very easy to get isolated and to work on your own and do your own thing. We have learned that you should get out there and cooperate wherever you can. Secondly, I worked with Bill Demmert this week. He has been the Director of Education for BIA, has his doctorate from Harvard, and is an Alaskan Native. I learned from him that he always works with people from the top. Often we work with people at our own level or below, but, he starts at the top talking with senators, congressman, and people in big corporations.



Our children can learn from this and not hesitate to work with leaders such as the governor who is open to working with our people. There are others around that we should encourage our children to work with, get to know, and make networks. When the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe has a dinner for legislators, they have a very good turnout. From this, the Tribe has learned to reach out to the speaker of the house, senate delegation, congressional delegations, and legislators and interact with them.

I was always tied to systems, basically, in the K-12 system. I belonged to three unions in the educational system: Auburn Education Association, Washington Education Association, and the National Indian Education Association. Some people don't want to become that formal or belong to all of these organizations, but they do give you benefits and provide networks that are worth looking at.

Secondly, I think they should also look at community college teaching and work. Often times, people in K-12 and the universities forget the community college. Community college to me is one of the most exciting places to work. There is really nothing you can't do at the community college. You can always find a way to get things done and I always felt that you could accomplish anything in the community college. You may not be able to do this in another school, for instance, at the university you have to spend one third of your time in the community, a third of your time doing research, and a third of your time writing or teaching, but often times, the community service really suffers.

Also, people should form networks with other countries. We often think of Indian education as United States, when in reality, borders are artificial and we need to think about the entire western hemisphere and realize that the people in Canada and Mexico are all related to us.

Wilma Cabanas

By Jeramie Smith

What inspired you to work in education in the Native community?

My degree and career focus was actually not education in the beginning. I had my goals more set on business but my focus changed many times over the years. When the reception job opened up at the Tribal College, and I applied, I never dreamed that I would end up where I am today. At the same time, Antioch was just starting the First Peoples Program and needed more students to make it work. So I started Antioch University working on a Master in Education, everything else prior was business related. Education has always been a big deal to me; I knew that I did not want to be a teacher though. I think Education is important, no matter how old you are it's never too late to do anything -especially learn.

My education has been sporadic. I hated gym as a child, my teacher would embarrass me every day, because I felt uncomfortable changing around other people. One day she slapped me and I slapped her back, she sent me to the principal's office and I walked out the front door and never went back.

I dropped out of school in the 8th grade and went back to get my GED after I had 3 kids. I was a work study student when I attended GRCC immediately after that. Like I said, my educational path has been very sporadic over the past 40+ years and once I received my Masters in 2005 I swore I wouldn't go back to school, but I have. I recently started attending some continuing education classes at Bastyr University which I believe is going to lead me in completely different direction.

How have you seen education change throughout your life?

The difference is night and day. I attended the Auburn School District, and it was hard, it was extremely prejudiced when I attended school. I was ridiculed at home and at school; I did not feel that I was welcome or that I belonged, as though I was invisible to everyone around me, unless they were bullying me. Things are different now, there has been a change. Native children now are involved in sports, cheerleading, etc... things have changed, and they are not nearly as bad. Not perfect but a lot better.

I believe that having our own school now makes a big difference in the lives of the youth and their education. Things could always be better, nothing is perfect, but kids are actually attending school, completion rates have improved. It was a big deal back in the day to see two or three Native students graduate. Now we have so many; the growth we have seen has been unbelievable.

What changes, if any, would you make, if you had the authority to do so, without any restrictions?

That is easy. Build a new college, work on accreditation, and expand partnerships with UW, NWIC and others. If we had a bigger building even MOST would EXPLODE!!! We would fill up, no doubt about it. Just like when they built the Tribal School who would have thought it would fill up so quickly? I'm sure we could do the same thing. One last thing I would like to see the Seamless Pathway bridges from birth to three to higher education become even more seamless. What we have is good, but like I said, nothing is perfect and we still have a lot of room to grow.

If you could change anything in your life what would you change?

I don't think I would change anything, no matter how difficult the road has been it has made me who and what I am today. And I think I'm doing pretty darn good...Don't you?



Renee Lozier-Rojas

By Claudia Griffin

I had the pleasure of interviewing Renee Lozier-Rojas, a Muckleshoot tribal member who was born and raised here on the reservation. Renee was born on December 2, 1950 and has spent her whole life here. Renee works at the Muckleshoot Tribal College and is a very well respected woman. She takes the time to speak to students and is a very kind-hearted person. I knew that when I met her, she was someone special. Upon the advice of a co-worker who works at the college, I was informed that Renee would be an ideal person to speak to in regards to the topic that I wanted to discuss.

I took Renee out to lunch one day and had a number of questions to ask in regards to the loss of traditions within the Native culture. After we spent a little time getting to know each other a little better and ordered our lunch, she was eager to share her wisdom and knowledge with me. Renee shared some very personal stories, struggles, and tragedies with me regarding my topic. I was amazed at how open she was. I could tell that she had a message to get across and that it was important to her to share to help educate me and anyone else who could learn from her wisdom.

I first asked her about what traditions that she seen being lost in our community today. Without hesitation or thought, she was very passionate when she said “family values and respect”. Renee told me how important these were, and that she personally was dealing with family issues that she had to a great deal to do with the declination of family values and respect. With this great deal of loss of respect, in addition to weakened family core values in her family; it was troubling to her heart and to her siblings who hold the same values as highly revered as she did. Renee voiced to me the way she was brought up with such traditions and values being the core of her family. How she had to work all day as a 13 year old child by fetching buckets of water from far away to wash clothes that took tedious amounts of time, but did it without hesitation to help her family survive and strengthen the family unit. She was taught that respect was the very core of a successful family. She had eight siblings and they had lost one at a young age but the family had worked past the grief and heartache. The respect that she was taught was instilled by her parents never fighting or allowing the children to fight.

My next question was whether she had felt if the younger generation held these values to the same standards. She once again answered very quickly, without even a second thought, when she told me that the younger generation did not hold these values as high as her and the rest of the elders of the community. Renee compared her generation to the younger generation of today's and explained that nowadays children and younger people do not have to work for anything anymore; that they are just given material objects with no sense of what it is like to have to work for such things. That this has led to poor work ethics, a sense of entitlement, and that this has had a trickle-down effect that again causes a lack of respect for others and their families that spoil these children.

My final question to Renee was what her thoughts were on how we can bring back these ever so important traditions back to our culture to turn it around. Renee spoke of teaching our children to love themselves through us loving them. That in doing so, this will teach them to love their family. We need to show them how to show thanks and appreciation for everything. We need to honor our elders by leading the young ones in showing them how to do so. That in doing these things it will strengthen family values and respect. Starting off with children when they are young by being stricter with them and not spoiling them and letting them run around to late hours and doing whatever they please with no consequences for their actions. That if parents would return to the older ways that she grew up with what they were taught, things would be different. That if something did not change fast that these values will be lost. She was sad when she said what she sees today looks like a downward spiral, and if things do not change, that it looks as if there is no hope for return and that it was a very frightening thought for her.

Renee taught me a great deal in the short amount of time that I got to spend with her. I feel like she is an elder who is willing to teach the old ways to bring back the backbone of our culture, whether it is talking about family values, respect, work ethics, etc. Renee is active in sweats and is the process of putting together an all women sweat lodge group. I have seen Renee take the time to go around the school and smudge classrooms to cleanse and bless them. I watched her on one occasion take time to put flowers together to place in every classroom to rid negative energy that she felt was flowing through the school, all of which she did on her own time to better the students, teachers, and fellow Native brothers and sisters. Renee Lozier Rojas is truly an exceptional elder, woman, mentor, and Native woman. I was blessed to be able to spend the time that I did with her and have her share not only very personal stories, but part of her, to teach me and guide me.

Renee Lozier-Rojas

By Austin Andy

What is your favorite childhood memory?

When we were kids, my brothers and older sisters used to get water by the spring, and while we gathered water, we would have fun turning it into a game. As we would go into the water, we would try not to touch the ground.

Who inspires you?

Charles (son). My son introduced me to sweat lodge, sweat ceremony, Sundance, and goes out into the woods to gather food and medicine. Grandmother and son, introduced the lodge ceremony, and Charles has phenomenal stories and teachings.

Do you have a favorite plant?

There are many plants and many foods that are my favorite. One in particular is the trailing blackberry leaves. It saved my brother's life. Sixty-five years ago, no medicine worked. We gathered wild trailing blackberry leaves, made a tea with honey and my brother thrived on it. He got healthy because the trailing blackberry has a lot of nutrients and vitamins, and had it not been for the plant, my brother would have died.

What is your religion?

Shaker church for ten years, sweat lodge- which has been tradition for thousands of years with Native Americans. From great great grandpas and fathers and sons. Now we have five generations to take part in sweat lodge today. They all taught me to lead women sweat lodge and prayer hasn't changed in years. Sweat lodge has been here many years before the whites arrived. This is part of who we are. Sweat lodge is all about prayer and people. Pray for all children. The strongest medicine for anybody is prayer!!!



Lorraine Joyce Cross

By Suzanne Sailto

Lorraine was born on May 1, 1937, and she resides here on the Muckleshoot Reservation. She was a twin, but Leukemia struck her sibling at 16 years old. She grew up looking to her parents as role models and learning everyday activities, such as picking all sorts of berries and she did basket weaving to make shawls and regalia. She also tried beading a necklace, but did not have interest in it. She eventually grew to really enjoy the basket weaving, and she has been doing it for forty years as of now. Her occupation was working for the HUD Housing, Social Security, and the Bingo Hall. She eventually retired from the Gaming Commission as a supervisor. After she retired, she decided to finish her studies and ultimately received her Master's degree in education at the age of 67. There are many changes she has witnessed from the past, which include members not wanting to go fishing, hunting, and berry picking, which was a way of survival. She also mentioned today, that there is lack of respect for everything, such as the environment, animals, cedar, and waters. She believes that we are to give "Thanks" for our environmental resources for our supply and the nourishment given to our bodies. Her mother and father told her that the rocks, birds, trees, and clouds, all speak the same language. In the past, when a relationship didn't work out, you were to still speak highly of one another. Cooking and preparing the food has also dramatically changed. When she was young, she cooked on woodstoves. There was a specific time where she remembers that she had some beets and it was cooked on the ground, and those were the best beets she had ever tasted. Lorraine is still involved in the Muckleshoot community as part of the Elder's Committee, she also attends the Basket Weaving Conferences, and Canoe Journeys as a strong participant. She is a wealth and beneficiary of knowledge, and it was an honor to interview her.

Elvina Moses

By Janet Emery

Elvina was the mother of some of my very close friends growing up. I used to spend a lot of time at the Moses' home, and I always remember her big smile and abundant laughter.

Elvina was a mother to many. She always drove great-sized rigs, carry-alls, or vans to have everyone around. She would take us to swap meets, ball tournaments, and my all time favorite- she would drive us to Seattle on Thursday evenings to watch professional wrestling. Those were always good times.

She raised her kids with lots of love and laughter, and it certainly shows. Today, her adult children follow in her footsteps and spread laughter wherever they go...

Sandy Heddricks

By Caylen Jansen

I had the privilege of interviewing Sandy Heddricks—a Muckleshoot Elder.

Can you tell me how you feel about sovereignty?

When our elders were alive, our grandparents and great grandparents and the ones that were before us, they probably did recognize sovereignty. But, the farther we go today, the more they are not respecting the word sovereignty as far as I'm concerned. When it comes to the belief that they're following the sovereignty that we're supposed to have.

Do you have any thoughts about the cultural aspects of sovereignty as it applies to yourself personally and the people of your Tribe?

Well, I really don't appreciate the fact that we have to go back in our legal papers to prove what our ancestors had given us years ago, in which I'm talking about our land. We shouldn't have to go back and look for a gift deed, a paper to prove that something belongs to us, when we know that it was given to us and that they should believe our word. Our words should be good enough without having to sit there and feel like you're put on trial for something that legally belongs to you. Years ago, you know, your word was good. Now it's like you have to have it in.... I don't know how to word it. You have to have it in letter form signed, sealed and all this other stuff in order for you to prove yourself. We trusted people of other nationalities to come in and work with the tribal people. And now instead of working for us it seems like we're working for them in a lot of sense.

Do you consider your language an important aspect of the education system of the Muckleshoot tribe?

The children, you know, we can teach them from kindergarten all the way to graduation and by then they should be able to speak it fluently and be able to pray or do a speech or introduce themselves properly in front of a big crowd of people. I think that's important. And also understand the words that are being spoken from elders, because there are several tribes that speak the same. Their language is somewhat the same.

How do you see the sovereignty of the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe affecting your childhood in the area of education? Was it prominent or not so? Whose sovereignty was being exercised in your life as a child? Muckleshoot Indian Tribe or a different culture?

Well, I believe that, during my childhood, a lot of my people were on Tribal Council, my mother and my grandfather before her Louis Starr and Florence Starr. I believe that they tried to bring back a lot of our cultural and traditional beliefs and educational beliefs and things of such that belong to our Tribe. And I don't feel that I was pushed back in any way except for there weren't very many people at that time that were willing to step forward and teach the language. And I have a great aunt Alvina Williams they call her Auntie Beena and Bertha McJoe and Alice Hedrick and some other Angus Moses and different ones and Eva Jerry that taught the language. When they met down at White River they all kind of were speaking the language to each other and correcting each other, so that it could be put into a curriculum that could be used to move forward and teach the young as well as the older people.

Do you believe that in the tribal school, that we should actually have perhaps some type of curriculum that helps our children and our youth understand sovereignty?

Yes, I do, and I believe we're working towards that and we've been working very hard on the school board to get the proper education for our native language teachers as well as our cultural teachers...to work with the seasons so that our curriculum could be taught to children as they go through the school year...to learn what the people did throughout the winter months to keep themselves busy as well as make sure that their young people were learning while they were in the home at the dinner table. This is where our grandfather used to tell us stories about fishing and hunting. Stories about the war that took place on this reservation years ago. If you don't write that down somewhere or sit down and listen and try to put it somewhere where you can remember, then it's something that can be lost in the future.

Sandy Heddricks



Gilbert King George

By Amber Sterud Hayward

Muckleshoot tribal elder, Gilbert King George has some pressing issues on his mind about his people. The thoughts keep him up at night. With respect to the spirits, to the people who have come before him, and the people present, Gilbert has a message to share regarding the past and where the future is going.

Gilbert, or “Hoagie” as many people call him, has been rooted in the Muckleshoot community his entire life. He earned his living and supported his family as a fisherman on the Muckleshoot reservation. He was an integral part of the Fishing Wars of the 1970’s and fought for his people’s treaty rights. In the years following, Hoagie was appointed for a term as the Chairman of the Muckleshoot Fish Commission, where he continued to ensure the Tribe’s fishing rights were upheld. Hoagie also served time on the Tribal Council, having a hand in the economic development of Bingo, and later the Muckleshoot Casino.

As he sits back and reflects on his life, Hoagie speaks of the Fishing Wars on the reservation and where those battles have brought the Tribe today. He vividly recalls when he and his fellow tribal members were on the riverbanks getting their nets seized, getting beaten and even shots fired at them while they were exercising their treaty rights. He smiles and remembers the time when the American Indian Movement (AIM) came to their camp and set up soldiers around their perimeter, waiting for the State agents to arrive. “Just then war drums started and AIM started singing war chants. State agents heard that and turned right back around and went back to their trucks,” Hoagie recalls, laughing. “Today we honor AIM. They said they would die for our rights and all they wanted was for us to give them some salmon. We honor those boys. These were some proud moments that I’ve experienced from the salmon wars.” Hoagie acknowledges these were incredibly important times and has the utmost respect for all the people who were involved. “It’s a dishonor if I don’t speak up; those people who fought are not here to defend themselves. We should be honoring these people. We should have a tribal dinner and recognize those people and their families. Rather than waste our time for something we didn’t do, let’s honor those who committed themselves to fight for our treaty rights. Having said that, it is our responsibility to speak the truth.”

Gilbert King George

Continued

Having spoken about the past, Hoagie wants to move forward and look toward the future of the Muckleshoot people in an honest and sincere manner. The benefits the Tribe receives today are a direct result of the past struggles. Respect toward the past will result in appreciation for what the people have today. Today, the Tribe has opportunities that were unavailable to its members years ago, and not all members are utilizing them.

As Hoagie reflects on days of the past, it's hard for him to look out the window and see how some of the members are living today. Looking at his community, families and especially youth, Hoagie is heartbroken as he observes some of his people's struggles, "I'm worried about these children who are given this lump sum of wealth and see them squander it away and ruin their lives. People become vegetables because of the drugs and alcohol. They turn into walking zombies. I've seen parents become addicted, the parenthood is gone and kids are on their own. We end up with people with no manners. They're growing up without knowing how to take care of themselves and others."

Hoagie is not, however, without hope for the future of his people. He sees the wonderful opportunities the Muckleshoot Tribe has offered its members and the endeavors they've embarked upon to sustain future opportunities. Education and employment are what Hoagie wants to remind people to take advantage of and cherish today. The Tribe is creating job positions faster than tribal members can fill them. He wants the youth to focus on school to fill these jobs in the future. "With right parenting and guidance, our children can grow to be legendary people with wealth and live a good life. They have a right to a good life. We need to think of others before we think of ourselves. Our future is in our past, look at the old teachings, out of that will come discipline."



Amil Starr, Sr.

By Rosie Ulrich

I'm doing my interview on my father Amil Starr Sr. He's a great man, great friend, father, son, brother, uncle, grandpa. His parents are Benjamin Starr Sr. (Muckleshoot) and Violet Starr (Chehalis). His grandparents are Phillip Starr (Muckleshoot), Andrew and Lucy Sanders (Chehalis). He was born June 10, 1943 in Oakville, WA at home his grandma Lucy helped his mom Violet give birth to him and he is the oldest of 8 children. As far back as I can remember, my dad has always been my hero; whenever times were hard he was right there to help me get past the darkness in life. My dad helped his mom in any way he can to put food on the table or give money to buy food. He's one to give and not take. The reason I chose to write about my father is because he's an amazing father.

But in every darkness of life there's a light that gets you out and keeps you motivated to go on with life no matter how bad things get. My dad has always encouraged me to go to college and continue my education. I was the first of his 8 kids to graduate from high school back in 2004, and last June I was the first to graduate with my A.A from Northwest Indian College with honors (Phi Theta Kappa and Who's Who Among Students in American Universities & Colleges) and I'll be the first to graduate with my BA. He's always given us the best of everything no matter how hard things were, he made sure we got what we needed.

Like any parent he put his kids first before his own needs. I remember being a kid and going to the river with him back in Quinault on the Humptulips River. Those were good days fishing on the river or clam digging down the road on the beach. We'd also go Huckleberry picking every fall with my Grandma Violet. He even still has the home video tapes of our birthdays, old pictures that are put away. He was a fisherman/hunter gatherer and always had the freezer stocked full of fish, deer meat, elk meat, berries, clams, and crab. Very rarely did we have fast food. When I was 10 my dad taught me how to make fry bread, by age 11 I could make some things. By age 12 I knew what household chores were. Many things I've learned at a young age but I remember every single lesson that's been taught to me.

These are some of the questions I'd like to ask my father:

What made you want to be a fisherman? Who taught you how to fish?

My dad used to take me to the river when I was about 6 years old. Back in 1949 I used to go to the river after school and wait on the bank, it was dark scary and cold. We got 10 cents a fish and a long pack with 3 fish. 54 years as fishermen started as a kid, my dad had a canoe back then.

How old were you when you started fishing on your own, did you have your own boat?

I had my own boat, (a beat up boat); later got a motor used my dad's boat for a very little time.

Were times hard as a teenager living in Oakville, Washington?

Not really. I was a church goer until I turned 16, my dad was the minister for the 1910 Oakville Indian Shaker Church. It was ok; money was hard back in them days. We used to get gas for 18 cents a gallon so 2 dollars went a long ways we got 8 gallons then. As I grew I had my own car ole beater 50 dollar car. First car my brother Lee and I got was a 1930 Model A we purchased it together.

Do you think times have changed since you were my age which is 27, what were times like when you were 27?

Fishing was great; we had a good time made a lot of money. We fished every day back then. I was out fishing with my dad, I fished for my mom when my dad couldn't do it no more. Yes times have changed since my time but I learned a lot in my life.

Are you proud to be a Muckleshoot Tribal elder?

Yes I am happy I moved from Quinault to Muckleshoot. I relinquished because Muckleshoot had more benefits I could have gone to Chehalis but all my kids were Muckleshoot. I am glad I chose Muckleshoot.

In conclusion, I'd like my father to know that I love him and it's because of him I'm in college and doing the things I am doing to change my life. When I graduated from college last year, it was a good feeling having my father say "I'm proud of you Rose". Thank you for always being here when I needed you dad. You may not have known it all the time but I'm glad you're my dad and thank you for all the support.

Amil Starr, Sr.

Continued



Arlene Ventura

By Kanium T. Ventura

Grandma, can you introduce yourself to the readers out there?

My name is Arlene Ventura. I am Indian, both parents are Indian. I grew up in a Christian home. I was taught how to preserve like canning, spin wool, smoke salmon, but I don't recall very much on the salmon. I even helped my dad skin mink & muskrat. I like to sew, self taught. I require a pattern, but my mom never did. I attend a church in Renton; my parents said it was important to be a part of a church somewhere. I've tried to instill that in my kids and being military kids they attended Sunday school throughout the US. I enjoyed the military life, but I missed my mom & dad very much.

My interview's topic is family, so I have just a few questions for you. First one, What does the word "Family" mean to you?

Unity, Love

Do you have any advice for anyone who doesn't feel like they belong?

It's a case by case basis, there isn't a simple answer.

What do you think keeps a family together?

What keeps a family together? Mutual respect, Love, & Prayer.

Being part of a huge family, you deal with many family issues. At times, it gets hard. How do you handle it?

Again it's a case by case situation. Sometimes I even seek advice.

Finally, Is it ever ok to let a member of family go. Like to cut off, or banish?

No.

Thank you very much for your time.

Lola Elkins

By MyNeah Jansen

I asked Lola Elkins if she would be willing to talk to me about her experience making baby boards. This is our conversation:

What kind of materials do you need to make a baby board?

Board, stick, two yards of fabric and some beads.
Some are made with buck skin it takes two hides.

How old were you when you made your first baby board?

I was 13 years old when I made a baby board for one of my friends in Idaho. I made it out of a raisin brand cereal box, I cut it out and put fabric on it and beads. I used a coat hanger for the stick and put fabric and beads on it! I sold it for five dollars back then.

Could you make baby boards for a living?

When my children were young I made baby boards and sold them to take care of my family.

About how many do you think you made?

I have made over 200 baby boards, I made baby boards for my children and I have made baby boards for babies out of Washington that live in other states.

Being able to go and listen to the stories about her baby board experience at her home was a blessing for my daughter (Ralisea) and myself, We are grateful.



Family Photos

Submitted by Joseph Simmons



Marie Angeline Daniels (Mother)



Bill Simmons (Father)- child in middle



Ramona & Gloria (Sisters)

John McCoy

By Sulkanum Washington

Where did you grow up? What was life like growing up there?

My dad was in the Navy, and I was born here in Tulalip, but he spent 30 years in the Navy, so I was raised on the west coast. But we'd come just about every summer back here. He would use his thirty day leave to come back here to Tulalip. I spent most of my time in San Diego, California. In my K-12 life, I'd been in about 14 different schools. And I graduated from El-Capiton High School in Lakeside California. Which is just do east from San Diego.

So what got you to move back here?

My wife was born and raised on Tulalip. And when I finished my Air Force career, she wanted to move right back, but the Tribe didn't have an Economic base, they didn't have a job for me. I tried to work for Boeing. But everyone wanted me to stay in Washington D.C.. I wound up going to work with Spare Univac, in '85 it merged with Burls to become Unisys. So I was a senior implementation Manager. After I was in the Air Force from 1961 through 81. In 1965 the Air Force put me into computers. Programming Computers, and when I got out, which is now Unisys, I stayed in Washington D.C., I was a senior Implementation Manager, so I got to work on a number of great projects. One of them was working in the White house. And what we did was Automate the White House, the White House was pretty much Manual Operation, and we automated it. So after the white house, that was from '82 to '85. Then I was put into pure management right after that. So I had a number of accounts across the United States, anywhere from three to six hundred people working for me, depending on contracts. And though I designed and implemented computer systems for various agencies. 1990 Chairman Stan Jones of Tulalip started recruiting me to come home. And I said "No, theres nothing back there for me."

I tried to get employment, but there's nothing back there for me. And he said, "Well, we need you to come back here and create an economy." At that time, the .Com Industry was going bust from '90 to '93. Everything was going to hell, There were a lot of companies going under. We were doing a lot of layoffs. That really... got to me, having to lay people off. And so when the tied time came up, the third round of layoffs. I accepts a job offer at Tulalip, and laid myself off. So I came home and I started building an economic base. And so that's when started going to work close to the village.

What did you imagine doing as a career when you were younger?

I didn't have a clue. I. Did. Not. Have. A clue. When I graduated from high school, I came up here, and I fished. For about five months. And I decided that was not the life for me, so I joined the air force. You take an aptitude test when you first join the military to find out what your skills are to help. And so the air force put me into communications. So I started out in teletype cryptography. Then in '65 when I went to the Philippines, they decided I should go into computers. And so computers I went.

What got you involved in politics?

Well, while working for the tribe, and doing the economic development. I was finding several state and federal laws that were a hindrance, so I worked to get laws changed to make it easier for Tulalip. It wasn't a whole lot, but it was quite meaningful. Like retrocession, getting criminal jurisdiction back from the state. That was the biggest deal. So we had full autonomy, full sovereignty, and self determination. So that was the biggest bill we had to get through the senate.

Would you influence the world if you had the choice?

I'm already doing that. See, when I'm not in the legislature or up here, I'm teaching at Evergreen state college. In the MPA, in tribal concentration. And there I talk about governance, and economic development. So I educate these young natives students who're pursuing a master's degree. How to do what I did.

What do you consider one of your greatest achievements?

Well, you know it wasn't me working closer to the village, it was a whole team. But I was managing the team. And so I can look back and pick out periods of time in my life and say "that was a milestone, and that was, and that was." But I think my greatest achievement was help managing and creating closer to the village. And having said that, I was on the team that October 29th 1969 that kicked off Arpanet. Today you call that the internet. I was on that team. You may be too young to know about Telstar, maybe you read about it. But that was the United States' first communications satellite. And I was on the test team that tested that satellites capabilities. So you know I got periods in life that something significant happened. If I had to pick though, I'd have to say working with tribal council.

Barbara Karen Sohappy

By Edna Wyena

What was your childhood like, can you explain to me what you remember?

I lived with my great great grandma and my grandma when I was about two or three years old. They wore wing dresses and moccasins. They had a wood floor and a wood stove. They would make me sleep by the stove during the winter because it was warmer. My great-great grandma didn't have any eyesight. She would cook for me and build fire. She burned her hands while putting wood in the fire. I would speak Indian to my grandma. I lost most my Indian language around six years old. I remember running around in the long house and then listening to the old ladies speak in Indian, then I would stop and talk to them. Than they would say, oh she can speak Indian. Now, I don't know how to speak like I did when I was younger. I remember making tully mats at age three. I had learn by my elders and they spoke in Indian to me. I made my own tully mat at age 4. I was really small. They taught me how to sew on a peddle. The first thing that I learned to make was a purse, a square purse with one button. I used to like the house that I lived in. My grandma taught me how to wash my face everyday. They taught me how to make soap out of flowers. I had to rub them together and make soap. They made me wash my face every morning and night. I lived by creek back than. My brother taught me how to go fishing with a stick and rope. My brother put me on a horse at age three. They all got all mad. Than I led that horse into the field, I made the horse trot back to the house. My grandma and grandpa got mad, than my brothers said she was doing good. Here that horse was racing horse. That horse can run fast but it didn't run with me because I was little.

Did you go to boarding school or do you know anyone who went to the Indian boarding school?

All my friends had to go boarding school. My mom and dad would not allow me to go boarding school. My mom had to go boarding school, she talked how they dressed. If they spoke Indian, than they would put her in different clothes and than the kids would make fun of her. She didn't want me to go to any kind of boarding school. My dad didn't want me to go either, he wanted me to stay home. Just my brother Steve Sohappy went to boarding school.

Steve, the eldest brother went to boarding school. Is that why he is so different and isolated from the family. Going to boarding school must've had a negative effect on him?

Yes it did. But when he went he got beat up with crow bars and lost his memory for eight years. I just kept praying for him.

Can you tell me about your religion: The Seven Drums?

I used to follow grandma and long house. Mommy and Daddy were getting sick, because of a lot of bad feelings come onto them. I would follow my mom to feather meetings. We would travel far just help heal people that were ill. We just prayed so they wouldn't get sick. I would hear songs and want to sing them. My mom told me to sing the song that I hear. Its to pray for the family that needed praying. If I heard any songs and I to sing them in front of a lot of people. My mom said not to be ashamed of the songs.

Can you tell my anything about fishing?

I had heard mom and dad talking about going fishing and asking each other, who should we take? Everyone is going to school. Than I told them I'm not doing anything. I was about 14 years old. So than I went with them, to go fishing through the mountains. We had a old wood boat, it was only like 8 feet with a 35HP motor. Than my dad taught me how to set the net out. Than we had to sit and wait to take the net out. We waited until 4 in the morning to pull the net out. We had some fish in there. Than we had to leave because I had to go home because I had to go school. School started at 7AM. Than my dad would drop me off at school. Than I would say "Well Dad see you after school." They were supposed to dry sheds, and build housing for us but they never did. Maybe some crooked chiefs took the money. I don't know, still today we don't get anything that they promised us. My dad used to read books all the time. He knew all the Indians laws.

Is there anything else you want to add about your parents?

I remember cutting fish with my mom. I always tried to be faster than my mom but she was always three or four fish ahead of me. But I got to help her and cut fish.

Karen Condos

By Frank Burns

Karen Condos lives 2 blocks up the street from me and I've known her 8 years since she was involved in Native Youth programs with the Kent school district when my oldest daughter was in Kent school mid-2000's. Now I'm trying to get LSS language, songs and dances practiced again within our families and neighbors.

How was the Canoe Journey?

Ferry system sucks. They're setup to make a lot of money -1,400 for our two vehicles – ha-haha, I went as ground crew support for Blue Heron Canoe. Aside from the BC Ferries it was a great journey and adventure

Which Native that inspires you?

Vi Hilbert! She was the last fluent LSS speaker when so many Elders had passed away, great Medicine Woman, she told us about regalia, she helped me with the death of a family member, and she never spoke bad about anybody.

Comparison of food today vs as a child?

As a child I ate alot more fish and we grew what they could as well, hardly ever having hamburger, to have steak – that was a real treat or special occasion. My Father fished up in Canada and all the way up into Alaska and we grew a lot of our own vegetables too.

What does Sovereignty mean to you?

To quote Chief Seattle "how can you sell the air" it can have a lot of meanings, why are Natives the only people that have to prove who they are in our own Lands? A lot of Natives couldn't go across the border for Canoe Journey. Where's the Sovereignty or Treaty Rights there?

Franklin Lozier

By Rachel Moses

What kind of upbringing did you have ?

We lived off the land- did a lot of berry picking and fishing and hunting. There were 14 of us so we had enough people to help gather food . I started fishing when I was able to walk with my dad and my grandfather. My mom use to make me a little pack filled with biscuits for when we got hungry. I killed my first deer when I was about twelve. Once while I was fishing a deer came up on me so I took him home too .

Were you or your family part of the fishing rights act ?

You might say I started it. Me and my grandfather were fishing the Puyallup river when the game wardens came and confiscated our fish took us to jail. In the summer it was a buggy jail- it had lice all over it. I had on a pair of tan pants and I looked down and they were dark brown from all the fleas. We called for the guard and asked to be let out of there and we had to stay one night in jail.

Was your family culturally active?

We started going to shaker church when I was a teenager my mom was a cook my dad was a bell ringer I rang bells for a little bit but not very much . there wasn't any powwows back then didn't see them until like thirty years ago we use to go to stick games quite a bit.

Do you believe the tribal council is doing what they can for the community ?

The tribe has gone from one of the poorest in the country to one of the richest, not only financially but culturally and spiritually. We've had a long house built , the shaker church , the Pentecostal church , also the catholic church. All of the original ones are pretty much gone. We have between one hundred to one hundred fifty programs there for the people. Folks think when they hear you're Muckleshoot you're loaded. We knew programs would help our people more than just handing over money. Now there are so many opportunities for the people to be successful. If we had these programs when I was young I would have already- been retired for a few years now .

Canoes

By Joylene Simmons



Basket For Grandma

By Joylene Simmons



Brooke Broussard

By Monica Briceno

I had the opportunity and pleasure of interview an elder in the Muckleshoot community named Brooke Broussard. She works at the Virginia Cross Native Education Center (VCNEC). The VCNEC is located at Browns Corner in my neighborhood and I have always wondered about the people who worked inside and what they looked like. I catch the shuttle bus there every day to go to M.I.T. College. As I walked inside the building, I was in awe as it seemed so peaceful and comforting. As I met with Brooke and her assistant Mrs. Cooper I proceeded with the interview. Brooke informed me that she has been here with the Muckleshoot tribe since 1986. She started working with Virginia Cross in the district on the Diversity Committee. Brooke also stated that she had a memorable child experience and that she liked working with kids that need attention in their lives. Brooke also believes in helping students find their purpose in life, and what the Creator's gift for them is. Brooke has always wanted to be a teacher and to find balance. She also stated that she runs five miles a day, teaching is her life, in her spirit, and she can't imagine doing anything else. To me, Brooke is such an inspiration to our people; she is a very valuable asset to our tribe.



Marcellina Delatorre

By Regina Morrison

Hello Marcellina, I am here to see if you have time to do the interview that we had talked about.

Yes, come on in.

Let's me first ask you where you were born at and if you live on the reservation?

I was born in Toppenish, Washington. It is on the Yakama Reservation where I grew up when I was younger.

Who is your mother and father, do you have any siblings?

Mom and dad are Jeannette and Greshem Morrison. I have seven brothers, and seven sisters.

Do you have any children? Or grandchildren?

One grandson, and two granddaughters.

How long have you been working on baskets?

Have been doing my baskets for 20 years.

What are some of your materials that are used most commonly?

Raffia, bear grass, cedar, tule grass, buckskin, beads, brass bells, Dentallium shells, barrettes, dolls, baby boards, shawls, wing dresses, moccasins, earrings, necklaces, key chains, and purses.

Do you gather some of the material yourself?

I collect cedar, but is still in the process of learning how to treat and clean it. Bear Grass is more durable to use.

What are some of the uses for the types of baskets you have made?

Berry baskets, Medallions, barrettes, earrings with little cedar baskets on the heads of the women earrings, pouches, shawls, baby boards, moccasins, necklaces. That is just some of the stuff I have made.

Do any of your baskets have the ability to hold water?

Yes, they do. Not all of them, like the raffia, they will absorb the water and easily wear out.

Where do you get your patterns from?

Designs come from the things I like, the geometric designs come from my mother.

How do you get color or what do you use to make the designs colorful?

On some baskets, the color is put in with commercial dye or what is called weaphia.

Do you use any of the old patterns?

Yes, I do. I have some pictures of some baskets that I made a long, long time ago.

Now, I have one last question for you, is it easier or harder to get the traditional materials to make your baskets?

I am working with what I can get my hands on, but I do collect books on basketry from all over. It is hard to collect when they sell as fast as I make them.

Thank you very much Marcellina for sharing your story. I will be back when it is in black and white in a book for you. Again thank you. Hoyt.

Oh, you are very welcome. Thank you for listening.

Martin Louie

By Sandra Louie

Martin Louie was my Father. He was born January 21, 1936. He was born and raised on the Colville Tribe. As a child my father worked in bean fields alongside his siblings. During the different seasons he would travel to work in the fields picking different types of fruit and vegetables. In the Summer months they would travel attending pow-wow's and they would spend time in the mountains picking huckleberries and other traditional foods during harvest time he would go out and get camas and bitter roots and different types traditional foods. He said when his family members got sick he would be sent out to find a certain plant and bring that home so his father and mother could cure whatever illness they had. In his household they spoke only in their Native tongue. He told me it was very difficult growing up because there was a lot of racism. He was picked on and teased by the white people when he would venture off the reservation. My Grandfather would take my father hunting to gather food for the winter months for their family. My father was responsible for getting the firewood cut and stacked for winter. They lived in a small wooden built structure deep in the valley. They had no running water or electricity. They were very poor. His mother would make the clothes for him and his siblings. He would have to walk a half a day to just get water. His father was a very strict man. My father said because of this he left home at the age of 11. He said he remembers this day like it was yesterday. He was working in the bean fields that day. He was tired and he wanted to go play with the other children. His father told him he couldn't. He had to work. He was told that if he left before the work was done that he better not come back to the house. He knew his father was serious. But he chooses to leave anyways. When he did try to go back to the house he was turned away at the door by his Father. My dad begged and pleaded but my grandfather stood firm on his decision. My father was taken in by his half brothers family. From that day on that was the family my father stayed with. He said life for him was hard.

My father went through a period of drinking and drugging that ended him in prison for a period of time. He met my mother and had their first child at the age of 28. They named his Thomas Louie. They had their second child a year later. Her name was Stephanie Louie. Then came their third child a year and one day later, Julie Louie. They waited a couple of years and had me, Sandra Louie and just 10 months later had my brother Darren Louie. My father said because of his wild ways him and my mother just couldn't get along. He speaks of a period where my mother moved over to the Colville Reservation to be with him but because of no jobs over there all they had was the land that my grandfather gave them. We were starving. My Grandfather begged my mom to stay. He did not want her taking his Grandchildren away.

He told my mom if she stayed he would take her to the agency and he would give her land. But there was nothing to eat. It was the dead of winter. My father said he set out to find something for us to eat. He had to take the life of a doe that was pregnant for food for us kids. My dad took the unborn deer and prayed for it and then buried it. But that wasn't enough to keep us fed. So my mother packed us kids up and brought us back here to Muckleshoot where she had her family to help her. My father speaks only about that time period briefly about how that tore him apart not being with his children. (My mother tells it differently). He said he got a job logging up in the mountains and then he was taught how to drive an eighteen wheeler.

Once he learned how to drive that he started off on his venture off the reservation and into the life of a truck driver. He said he traveled to every state in the United States. He speaks of how hard it was when he would go back east because of the racism was so bad. Even years later some small towns were still the same. He would tell me stories about when he would pull into small towns to drop a load off he would walk into a restaurant to get a bite to eat to only be told that he had to go to the other side of the street. He said it was because they didn't serve his color. So he said he'd go to the other side of the street to be told the same thing. He said he never understood it. He just didn't fit in either side of the street because of his brown skin color. He told me he would have to drop his load and drive into a bigger city to get a bite to eat.

He said he drove truck for many years and in some small towns it didn't matter that time passed by; when he would drive into those small towns it was just like time had stopped. Nothing had changed. Signs were still up that would say "Whites Only". He said throughout those years of being on the road he would try to get a load that went to Seattle or Tacoma so he could stop in and check on us kids. I told him I never remembered seeing him. He said that was because he would park his truck on Auburn-Enumclaw Rd and just watch us play in the yard. (My mother strongly disagrees with this.)

He said the best part of his life was when my sister and I had contacted him and he came and picked us up to go live with him. I was about 11. My sister Stephanie was a few years older than me. When we first went to live with him he lived in Omak, Wa. He was married and had a daughter, Jodi Louie that was 5 years old. We lived in a single wide trailer that he added onto. Eventually my brother Darren and sister Julie came to stay with us too. He said he was so happy to have all of his children. Our brother Thomas would stop in every so often to say hi. Eventually us kids went back to Muckleshoot with our Mother and my father divorced his wife at that time. She took his Daughter Jodi and she moved to Arizona. He packed up and moved over to another part of the reservation called Inchelium. There he said he bought another trailer. After he got settled along came me and my sister Stephanie again. Things were different then. My father really focused on his culture and traditions. We started to travel to Penticton B.C. for winter dances or ceremonies. In the winter months we stayed busy traveling to winter ceremonies or to Pow-wows. And in the other seasons we spent that time gathering traditional foods and putting them away for winter. He got help from his dad and his brother raising us on his own. and check on us. He said he was lucky he had good girls.

Martin Louie

Continued

My dad's life changed when he lost his first daughter, Stephanie. She was murdered and they didn't find her remains for years to come. And then shortly after that he lost his youngest son to suicide. He just wasn't the same again. He said he turned his life over to the Creator. He stopped driving a truck. He started to work up in the mountains on the Colville Reservation again. He started to stay home more and more. He eventually started to travel he found peace out on that road. He would travel to different reservations and he would share his story with anyone that wanted to listen. He was a speaker at a lot of workshops. He used me and my sister in a lot of his talks he's say. Times were tough for my Father. I was finally old enough to work. I came back to Muckleshoot and told my mom I wanted to work. She marched me down to the Tribal offices and told Walter Pacheco this is my daughter and she wants to work. That was in the Fisheries Department. For twelve years I would work and then drive back and forth from Muckleshoot to Colville. My Father would say "Hey, Old Saok. What are you doing here?" as soon as id get home. That was an inside joke for him and I. But I could see his eyes light up as I'd walk in the door.

My Father was diagnosed with Cancer and a rare blood disease but he fought till the very end. He lost that fight in October 2012. I wrote this as my interview paper from the stories he would tell me. My Father was a great man. I was so privileged to have a father that was so Traditional and Spiritual. He held on to his Traditional values and Culture. Today I can close my eyes and still hear his singing as I picture him sitting around his big Drum with his drum group singing at the Pow-wow's . I can still see him in his full regalia dancing around as he held his head up high as to show everyone how proud he was to be a Native. I picture him teaching the young how to build their own sweat lodge. My Father had lived a hard life. But through it all, he held his head high never giving up the fight to survive.

Bernice White

By T.J. Molina

Bernice White was born by Cooper's Corner, Auburn, WA in 1916. There were eight children in the family. Her father was a farmer, and her mother was a gardener. Her father made some of the decisions, and her mother made the rest of them. Bernice remembers her grandmother's death.

All Bernice had was a broom and a mop to clean with. They had a big garden. They butchered chickens and ducks for their meals. They also went to the store on Saturdays and they purchased rations of sugar and flour.

They also went dances, picnics, and rodeos on Saturday's. Bernice watched babies, and washed clothes. She was a very hard worker. She and her brother chopped their own Christmas trees in the winter time, in freezing weather. On the fourth of July, they shot their guns. They also shot their guns on D-Day.

They played things like kick the can, they had pillow fights, and they also played tag.

Bread was sold for ten cents a loaf, and a bag of candy would cost twenty-five cents. Calvin Coolidge was the president of the United States of America at that time. Lindberg flew over the school in the spirit of St. Louis.

School was hard, and people were prejudice against Indians. In 1926, a social studies teacher was sent to government school in fifth grade. She went to high school for one year. The sports she participated in were football, baseball, and basketball. She also participated in roller-skating and swimming. Her first job was as a Resource Developer. Eventually, she met her husband through a friend. They had seven children, one of them is my mom (Pat). She now has several grandchildren. She went swimming and camping with her children as family activities.

She ended up losing her beloved brother in World War II, and another one of her professions was as Tribal Commodity Worker.

She received high honors from President Kennedy on the Reservation Report.

She traveled all over the United States representing the tribe in her younger days. Today, she goes to Pow-Wow's and her several other family activities. Life is happier for her, and she enjoys the company of her grandchildren.

Some of the changes she made are the roads changing from gravel, to brick, and then finally to pavement.

Dolores Mildred Allen

By Fay Allen

Tribal Affiliation: Skokomish, Nisqually, Yakima and German

Mother: Rosie Pulsifer

Father: William Allen

[What are your memories as a child?](#)

I liked to play in the hills, I also liked to walk on fence posts, and I liked climbing trees and going to the river.

Elementary School: I attended Skokomish Elementary School. There were two grades to a room. Junior High: I attended Chemawa Boarding School.

[Did you like junior high school?](#)

I didn't like wearing boys clothes and shoes that were issued to students.

[What kind of clothes were they?](#)

GI issued

[What would they do if you had lice?](#)

They would check our fingernails, toenails, and heads. If we had lice, they would send us to the hospital on campus and treat us with D.D.T. They were very strict. It was used to get rid of Malaria that is caught from mosquitos.

[Where did you attend high school?](#)

I attended Chemawa, and later transferred to Stadium High School in Tacoma.

Are there any plants that you or your mother would use?

Oak bark, mostly used as a drink to keep us well. Cascara bark, for diarrhea and astringent when needed to fight germs. Thimble berries, for tea and healing our insides after having a baby or a menstruation period.

What do you remember about ceremonies?

Church

What is your take on our trees disappearing?

Response: Sad, when I go down the road, it looks bald. I thought of how the trees we cured, and the beautiful baskets that were made.

Were you able to speak your Native tongue?

Yes, Lu-shoot-seed

Did your Mom speak her Native tongue?

Yes, she spoke Skokomish

Your Dad?

Yes, he also spoke Skokomish

Are there any stories you would like to share?

A story on jealousy- there was a bucket of crabs, they all wanted out. But every time one would get close to the top and almost make it to freedom, another would pull him back in. It would go on and on. All the other crabs were jealous. They did not want to be left behind.

The basket woman- she would walk around and wait for disobedient children to act up. When they would, she would take them with her and would whip them until they learned to mind. If they were good, they could go back home.

Thank you so much for the time you shared with me. Our interview was great. Wish you the best.

Elsie Allen

By Fay Allen

Tribal Affiliation: Skokomish, S'klallam, and Squaxin

Mother: Mini Wilbur

Father: Issac Allen

[What are your memories as a child?](#)

I lived during the depression and we lived off of the land. The Bureau of Indian Affairs sent out people to show us how to do gardening, and out houses were built. It reminded me of Little House on the Prairie. We used lamps for light and candles to help us get around. We also used washboards to wash our clothes. The LeClaire family would share milk with our family because they had a cow of their own. The games we enjoyed playing were basketball, football, pole vault, and swimming. Elementary School: Hood Canal Elementary.

[What did you think about Hood Canal Elementary?](#)

I thought they were strict. Because they would spank our butts and hit our hands. For junior high I went to Chemawa Boarding School. We would go to school for just half of a day.

[What would you do for the second half of your day?](#)

We would have to go to a vocational tech school. We have mess or hall duty, or we may have had to do laundry. They were very strict there.

[Were you able to speak your native tongue?](#)

No.

[Did your mom?](#)

She spoke Twana.

[Did your dad?](#)

Yes, my dad spoke Skokomish.

Were you close to your grandparents on your mom's side?

Yes.

Were you close to your grandparents on your dad's side?

I was close to my grandpa Frank Allen, but his wife hung herself, so I never really met her.

Did you graduate?

No, I quit school in the eleventh grade and received my G.E.D. Later, I went to school for a certificate in retail/ clerk/ cashier manager.

What do you remember about ceremonies?

Just shaker church, I never knew anything about holidays.

What is your take on our trees disappearing?

I don't like it, I feel as if though we are being invaded again.

Are there any stories you would like to share today?

Yes, not stories, but some of my memories.

I can remember how the canal froze over and you could walk on it.

I can also remember Annie's spinning wheel. Your mother (Shirley Allen) helped me as I was growing up.

Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?

Yes, take care of your bodies, your eyes, stay healthy, and stay away from drugs and alcohol.

I would like to thank you Miss Elsie Allen, it has been a joy to hear of your life as a child, but sad to learn of the pain that you also endured. I wish you well my friend.

Ramona Bennett

By Debbie Monahan

Ramona Bennett came and spoke to Denise Bill's Cultural Sovereignty class in July 2014. The class went on a field trip to the Tacoma Art Museum. Ramona gave a lively three hour culturally relevant talk at this event. Ramona shared key historical facts. Here are just a few:

- Forty years ago Natives had a fishing camp set up to protest the lack of recognition for Native harvesting rights.
- Chief Leschi school, in Puyallup, is the heart of the community. Ramona said, "At this school, students can have feelings, they can laugh, they can fight, they can cry." Ramona said that her mom said, "Sometimes people drink so they can have feelings."
- When you say your ancestor's name, it makes the ancestor smile.
- Shared history of the state hospital that used to be where the new tribal buildings are. Ramona said that anytime the state surpluses a building, it should go back to the tribe.
- "Always remember you are somebody."
- As Natives, we have always been modern.
- Ramona's Mom, and, Julia Siddle (Muckleshoot) were friends.
- The government can't give us anything. We owned everything. Sometimes we get it back.

They

By Wilma Cabanas

I wonder do they see us here
Are they up there or somewhere near

Do they see us when we laugh and cry
Scream at God and ask him Why

Do they stand near when troubles grow
Do they somehow help but we don't know

Do they see the pain and hear our sighs
Lighten our loads applaud our highs

I've heard it said they walk at dawn
But leave no footprints on the lawn

They walk in spirit we cannot see
They cannot appear as they used to be

I want to believe that they all know
I love them still and miss them so





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