

# COMMUNITY NEWS

## What's cookin' with Leroy Gibson?

By Don Decker,  
YAN News

The Senior Program of YAN under the direction of Evelyn Turner has a comprehensive noon luncheon program which also delivers meals to homes. Don't forget their monthly extravaganza the second Friday at the Mountain Springs Restaurant at the Nation's casino which serves a smorgasbord of food for all eligible seniors age 55 or over. It's a robust meal with everything from apple crust pies, shrimp, salmon, salads to rump roast that is very tender served with a small dish of chowder for starters.

Enter Leroy Gibson, a Laguna-Pueblo-Apache who is the new cook for the senior program along with head cook Charles Green. Both Gibson and Green reside on the Clarkdale YAN community.

Gibson is a perfect match for the senior program since he brings lots of cooking experiences (and humor). He was with the Mountain Springs Restaurant at

the casino for a year and three months as a line cook before he arrived at the senior program this past June 25.

His mother was the late Amy Mendoza of Clarkdale. Other relatives include aunt Jenny Gibson of Middle Verde, uncles Roger Gibson, the late Sammy Gibson. Gibson also has son Daniel and a granddaughter.

"I find it very gratifying working in the senior program, helping them out, get a chance to talk with them. I've met a lot of elders- ones I've never met," says Gibson. Gibson rattles off names such as "Sam", "Nell" and the "Quails" just to name a few elders in the community.

During lunch hour at the Middle Verde Senior Center you can see Gibson in action serving up the various dishes some of which was prepared right in Middle Verde with the main dishes coming from senior cook Charles Green's kitchen in Clarkdale.

Gibson is a good listener and often, he'll

interject on an on-going conversation with one of the elders at one of the tables. And his boisterous laugh is contagious and makes for good company for the elders.

"I use to do a lot of fishin' on the Verde River. I know all the fishin' holes in the river. I've been up and down, all the way to Childs (16 miles east of Camp Verde) and to Sycamore Canyon (16 miles west of Middle Verde)," said Gibson. Gibson rattles of the types of fish found in the Verde River such as the bass, catfish and even the Rainbow Trout which often make their home in the cold water springs that line the Verde River. These are Gibson's secret fishing holes.

Gibson's favorite dish is the ribeye steak "barbecued outside" served with a baked potato with asparagus and finished off with ice cream.

When Gibson is not rolling up tortillas and making chicken burritos and fixing plates for the seniors and serving them healthy drinks, he tinkers on cars. He even



Leroy Gibson

offered up a diagnosis on a defective air conditioner for this writer. "Check the valve stem," he said with self-assuredness as he recommended using a black light UV light against an air compressor filled with a special dye sensitive to UN light that would show air leaks, if any. "I like working on cars, like the hot rods. I do all of that. I got all the tools," he added.

His interest are varied. "I like old time rock-n-roll. The Rolling Stones are cool," he said as he dialed in a 1959 song by The Shadows guitar riff titled "Apache" which evokes the very sound that matches the word 'sleepy'.

Gibson attended Camp Verde High School briefly then went to Mingus Union High School then off to

Phoenix Indian High School where he graduated from in 1978. This was the last graduating class of that school according to Gibson. He also spent 2 years living in Morenci in eastern Arizona north of Safford during the 80's living with his guardian sister Loretta Bates, niece to Jennie Gibson of Middle Verde and uncle Clancy Gibson of Globe, Arizona.

## Wassaja-The first medical Yavapai medical doctor

BY DR. MONTE ANDERSON, retired physician-Mayo Clinic  
Part 1 of 3

Our stage is set with the frontispiece of Gina Capaldi's book. He would have two names—Wassaja and Carlos Montezuma. Along with his two sisters, this little boy was kidnapped at age 5 or 6 by Pima Indian raiders near Four Peaks. He would never see his sisters again and his mother was killed when she left the reservation to search for her children. Later in his life, Wassaja remembered his fear of the camera, thinking it was a military weapon, and thought Carlo Gentile, the photographer and the first white man he had ever seen, "did not have pretty skin."

Gentile was born in Naples, Italy. He inherited \$25,000 at the death of his father, 1856, Set off to So. America, Australia, then to Victoria, British Columbia where he advertised "Photographic fixings wanted." He became a serious photographer, interested in photographing mining operations and indigenous people. The next year, he left for San Francisco. While there, he was advised that natives could be seen in their natural state in AZ. He quickly left for Tucson and visited Prescott.

Florence and Adamsville, Arizona—Now a Ghost town near Florence, Adamsville was mostly a trading place between Indians, settlers and miners. The plaque reads, "A flour mill and a few stores formed the hub of life in Adamsville where shootings and knifings were commonplace

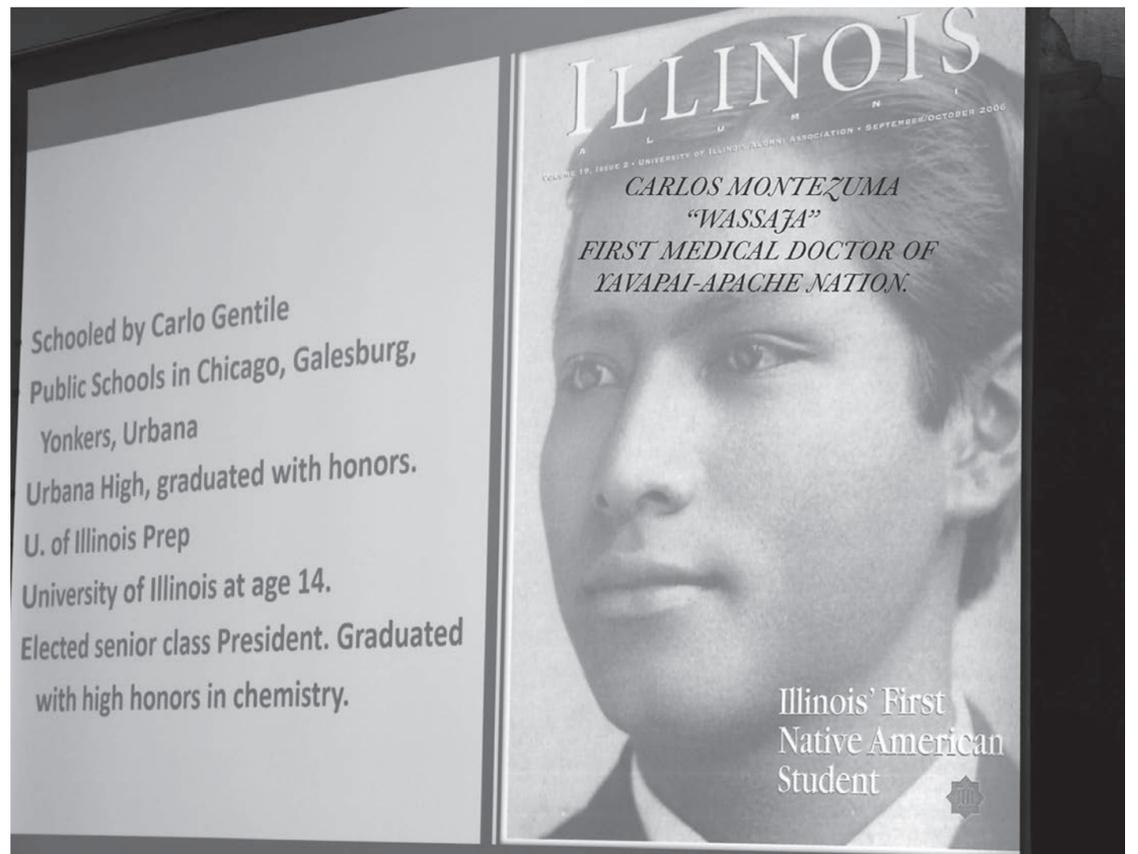
and life was one of the cheapest commodities." He went to photograph adobe buildings—certainly having no idea that three Pima Indians would offer to sell him a captive Yavapai child. But that happened... and he left with Wassaja, having him baptized "Carlos Montezuma" in nearby Florence. 1871

Gentile and the boy saw a lot of America during their first years together; Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Denver, Washington D.C., Detroit, Grand Rapids, and on to Chicago where they settled, at least for a while.

In Chicago Carlo pursued his photography, including this lovely image of Carlos at age 6. Soon, he and the boy turned up in the production of a Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, Red Devilry AS It Is. Carlos appeared on stage as "the young Apache captive" Azteka, the son of Cochise." He was the only real Indian in the show. Carlos never forgot the year he traveled with Buffalo Bill and wrote a tribute to him when the showman died in Denver in 1917.

Gentile contributed significantly to his charge's education. Carlos started primary school in Chicago where he was interviewed by a curious Chicago Tribune reporter who found him to be "rather superior in aptness and intelligence to boys of his age, and is, apparently, thoroughly civilized." From the time he began his schooling, he was called "Monte."

Then "I got sickly and was put on a farm in Galesburg, Illinois." He stayed with the Ferris family. As a Native American child, he likely lacked the natural immunity of the other



Carlos Montezuma

kids and it was a long recovery. "Three doctors gave me up, but they did not know how tough an 'Injun' is, and I pulled through under the tender care of Mrs. Ferris."

Two years later, he re-joined Gentile. The two then moved to Brooklyn 1877 where Gentile opened a photography studio. Soon after, a fire in his studio reduced his cameras, files and notes to ashes. Despondent, he gave up his young charge to a Baptist foundation that moved him back to Urbana, IL, leaving him in the care of a Baptist preacher, William Stedman, who had five children of his own. Stedman viewed his role not so much as a father to Carlos but as a traditional overseer who would insure that the boy "traveled the proper

path." Their relationship would be meaningful and enduring. In 1880, as an Illinois scholar was an achiever at Urbana High School.

He began his studies at the University of Illinois when he was 14 years old. One of his professors noted: "Monte displayed in his college writing a sophistication and vocabulary that reflected an impressive volume of reading during his teenage years." His fellow students elected him senior class President. Sr. class. He is on far right in picture.

His membership in the Adelpic Debating Society helped him to overcome his shyness and win acclaim for his oratorical prowess. In May 1883, he made a speech titled In 1885 he was accepted to study medicine at Chicago

Medical College. The sessions were six months a year. He had to work to earn money. "I called on every drugstore I saw and I

did find a pharmacist quite close to the medical school, as it happened, who listened to me patiently.

What can you do? He asked.

I can do anything. Wash windows?

Yes.

Sweep the floors?

Yes, I said. I am willing to do anything. What I want is just a chance where I can work for my meals and a bed and a little money and can have a few hours a week to attend school.

Well, he said at last, I'll give you a trial on that basis.

I made good and stayed with him for five years until I completed my course in medical

school."

These medical students found themselves at a turning point in medicine. Microscopes were available, surgical instruments were being sterilized and rubber surgical gloves had been recently introduced.

In 1886 while Monte was attending medical school, he drew the attention of Civil War veteran General Richard Henry Pratt who was fascinated with Monte's story. Pratt was chosen to oversee Indian war prisoners at Fort Marion, St. Augustine, FL.

To be continued