Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Miss Indian America, Williamette Belle Youpee, spent four days in Washington this week, climaxing a cross-country personal appearance to Highlighting her stopover were meetings with government officials and a tour of the student exhibit of Indian and Eskimo art currently on display in the Department of the Interior's art gallery.

A Sisseton-Yankton Sioux from Poplar, Montana, she is the eldest of 12 children of William Youpee, chairman of the Ft. Peck Assiniboine-Sioux Tribal Council.

Miss Youpee - "Willi" for short - has already established herself as a leader in Indian youth activities. While attending Montana State College in Bozeman, Montana, where she is now a senior majoring in commerce, she was instrumental in organizing and was the first president of the Council of American Indian Students. In 1962 she was a member of her college's delegation to the National Indian Youth Conference at Brigham Young University, in Provo, Utah. She is a Board Member of the newly-formed Foundation of North American Indian Culture, in Bismarck, North Dakota, with special responsibility for youth work. Among her hobbies is writing children's stories in Indian lore.

The tenth Indian girl to be named Miss Indian America, Willi was crowned last August at the annual All American Indian Day festival in Sheridan, Wyoming.

Miss Pearl “Nugget” Johnson, 18 year old Eskimo girl from Nome, Alaska, came to town on May 3 for a whirlwind schedule of events capped by a visit with Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall and Commissioner of Indian Affairs Philleo Nash. In the friendly Eskimo tradition, she brought the Interior Department officials gifts of small gold pans reminiscent of Alaska’s prospectors in the early gold rush days.

Pearl is on her way to the New York world’s Fair, where she will represent her State as Miss Alaska Savings bonds in 1964. She was selected for the honor by the Savings bonds Division of the U.S. Treasury on the basis of character, intelligence, personality, appearance, and ability to meet the public.

In addition to winning her title, Miss Johnson also required a new nickname. World’s Fair Official Jack Anderson and Mrs. Helen M. Fischer, Alaska Director of the savings Bonds Division, have dubbed her “Nugget Machutnik” the latter an Eskimo word meaning ‘little darling’. This petite and charming “Machutnik” is a gold nugget as priceless as savings bonds are to the Nation and to the individuals who buy them, according to the Savings Bonds Division. Those who have met her are in complete agreement with this opinion.

“Nugget’s” job for the duration of the Fair will be to sell savings bonds at the Alaska Exhibit. Her transportation and subsistence expense from Anchorage to New York are being paid by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a part of the Bureau’s vocational training and job placement program.

Miss Johnson recently completed a business course at the Anchorage Business College under the adult vocational training program of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The program provides occupational

program of Bureau of Indian Affairs. The program provides occupational training opportunities for Indians and Alaskan natives, primarily between the ages of 18 and 35.

Commissioner Mash expressed enthusiasm for “Nugget’s” accomplishments under the program.

“I consider the Bureau’s adult vocational training program one of the best activities we have under way to help young people,” the Commissioner said. “Miss Johnson did fine work in her business courses. She has a good future ahead of her. We are extremely proud of this young lady.”

Miss Johnson will be on salary as a teller in the Savings Bonds booth in the Alaska Exhibit at the world’s Fair, and when the Fair closes for the winter she will return to Anchorage at her own expense to employment as a bank bonds tellers.

Another highlight in the final day of “Nugget’s” visit to Washington included luncheon with members of the Alaskan Congressional delegation.