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Age no factor in enjoyment of Montana's Big Sky Country

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AGE NO FACTOR
IN ENJOYMENT
OF MONTANA'S
BIG SKY COUNTRY

MISSOULA, Mont.--

Age doesn't seem to be a factor when it comes to enjoying Montana's Big Sky Country.

Two women from New Orleans, La., can vouch for that.

One is Mrs. B. Stanley (Mary) Nelson, 84, and the other is her close friend, Mrs. W.H. (Ruth) Picard, who admits being an "in-betweenner" so far as age is concerned. Both are widows. Mrs. Nelson continues to keep house and Mrs. Picard is retired from the Federal Aviation Agency.

Mrs. Nelson lives at 7319 Panola and Mrs. Picard resides at 5122 Marigny in New Orleans.

Both women came to Montana from New Orleans by bus recently to participate in the University of Montana's seventh Workshop in Family Camping and Outdoor Recreation July 21-27. They visited Montana after learning of the UM summer camping session from an article in the New Orleans Times-Picayune. Both have extensive interest in the outdoors.

"I wanted to learn all I could about camping," Mrs. Picard said. "Mrs. Nelson has a volume of knowledge about the subject and I wanted to learn more about it, too."

Added Mrs. Nelson, "We came to Montana to enjoy the great outdoors. We both are bird lovers and wanted to see as many of Montana's birds as possible during the campout. We are members of the Louisiana Ornithological Society and the Crescent City Bird Club in New Orleans."

Mrs. Picard also enjoys flowers. She has collected orchids from such nations as Guatemala and Mexico. Both are members of the New Orleans Orchid Society.

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The two were among more than 90 adults and youngsters who participated in the six-day camping expedition sponsored by the UM Health and Physical Education Department and the confederated Salish and Kootenai Indian Tribes north of Missoula on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

The scenic trip included campfire cookouts, information sessions about the Flathead Indians, fishing, a visit to Glacier National Park, wilderness hikes and a visit to the Mission at St. Ignatius.

The trip to Missoula was Mrs. Nelson's first bus trip but not her first experience at camping.

"I've been going on camping trips all my life," Mrs. Nelson emphasized. "My father loved the woods and I married a man who loved the woods. I go camping whenever I get the chance."

In addition to Montana, her camping expeditions have encompassed the Smoky Mountains in Tennessee, the Galveston Bay area in Texas and the Canadian Rockies.

Both Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Picard have traveled extensively. Mrs. Picard has camped in Yellowstone National Park and both women have been to Europe. Mrs. Picard has been around the world twice. On their way to Montana they visited such places as Palo Duro Canyon State Park southeast of Amarillo, Texas.

Those participating in the family camping workshop camped out at Little Prairie in the Jocko Valley, northeast of Arlee, a small community north of Missoula.

And how did the two New Orleans women fair during the campout? Quite well, according to Dr. Walter C. Schwank, director of the UM Summer Session and campout coordinator.

"We celebrated Mrs. Nelson's 84th birthday on Wednesday, July 24," Dr. Schwank said. "Others participating in the campout baked her a total of six cakes and we all had a lot of fun singing to her and telling her stories."

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"Mrs. Nelson was the eldest of all the campers, but she and Mrs. Picard enjoyed the hikes and sleeping in sleeping bags and a tent just like the rest of us," he added.

"Youngest of the campers was a 2 1/2-month old baby, Kelley, one of four children of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Enos, Marion, Kans., who went/on the campout." with their parents

By sheer coincidence, Mrs. Nelson had another treat while in Missoula. She visited one of her 16 grandchildren, Miss Martha Nelson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Waldemar S. Nelson, 322 Hillary, New Orleans. Miss Nelson is a student at the University of Montana.

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