

Final Report on the Lake of the Woods Powwow Club Project

With the funding obtained from the Common Ground Research Forum, Mary Alice Smith was able to digitize the collection of audio and video recordings of powwows and the activities of the Lake of the Woods Powwow Club that had been amassed by her late husband, elder Joseph Morrison. Over a dozen film reels and one hundred audio tapes have been digitized. Included among the film reels is footage from early 1970s powwows at Cecilia Jeffery Indian Residential School in Kenora, as well as events in various communities around the Lake of the Woods region, including gathering wild rice, and summer excursions with the families of the Powwow Club. In addition to the audio and video files, Mary Alice has a substantial collection of photographs of Powwow Club events and activities that have not yet been digitized.

The family of Joseph Morrison and Mary Alice Smith had a get together in late February 2014 in Kenora to view the digitized film clips. Only two of their adult children were able to attend - Danielle Morrison and Jason Williamson, but cousins Donald & Ida Copenace, and Charles Copenace and Anita Cameron were also there. Donald and Charles are sons of the late Sam Copenace who was part of the Powwow Club and is featured numerous times in the footage.

The family did not get to see all of the film that afternoon as it was over 3 hours long and a number of people had to leave. So Danielle took the DVDs back to Winnipeg and she will edit it into a 1-hour collection, which will be copied and given to a representative of each of the families. Mary Alice expects this will get done by September 2014, given Danielle has a new babe.

The following people – all past members or descendants of members of the Lake of the Woods Powwow Club - are among those who will get copies of the 1-hour DVD, as will the Common Ground Research Forum and the LOW Museum:

- Clifford & Jeanette Skead
- Ida Skead
- Kitty Everson
- Eleanor Skead
- Patrick Skead
- Donald Copenace, Charles Copenace
- Robert Greene
- Marie Seymour

In addition, any of the materials could be available to others who request it, for purposes approved by the family. An edited version of the collection will be made available to the Lake of the Woods Museum and to the Common Ground Research Forum, too.

Some of the past members of the Club, as well as regional First Nations organizations such as Seven Generations Education Institute and Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig Health Access Centre are interested in supporting the work of sharing the stories of the Lake of the Woods Powwow Club at such time as the membership of the Club are ready to move this project forward.

In the meantime, Mary Alice plans to use the film clips for a biography of Joseph Morrison. She will apply for Canada Council/Ontario Arts Council funding for this, and will let the CGRF know how this evolves.

Mary Alice has spoken with Delbert Horton (Seven Generations Education Institute) about a future potential collaboration. Seven Generations Education Institute is considering a proposal to have Seven Gens archive Treaty 3 stories, and there is a good possibility that this would provide a means of sharing the story of the Lake of the Woods Powwow Club.