TSCHEKATCH'AKE'MAU III



A photo album of Chief Roy Oshkosh, last hereditary Chief of the Menominee
Chief from 1932 - 1974

Chief Roy Oshkosh, a resident of Door County and Egg Harbor, Wisconsin
From 1939 - 1974

Published by
Egg Harbor Historical Society
2014

TSCHEKATCH 'AKE' MAU III

Chief Roy Oshkosh

I – In the Life of Chief Roy Oshkosh

II – Building a Home and a Trading Post

III – Recognized for Serving Two Cultures and Serving Them Well

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Photos donated by Dixie Jorns, step-granddaughter of
Chief Roy Oshkosh
Edited for the Egg Harbor Historical Society
by Giz Herbst - 2014



Chapter I
In the Life of Chief Roy Oshkosh





A Legend is Born

- Born on July 13, 1898, Roy Oshkosh was one of four children.
- As a teen Roy's father sent him to the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania to study electrical and mechanical engineering.
- Before his death in 1932, Roy's father, Chief Reginald Oshkosh called Roy back to the reservation to be trained in the ways of being Chief.
- Upon Reginald's death in 1932, Roy became Chief of the Menominees. Roy was in his mid-30s.
- Roy came to Door County in 1939 to work in the shipyards during WWII.
- Photo is 1905 circa





CHIEF TSCHEKATCH'AKE'MAU III.

Roy Oshkosh became Chief of the Menominee Indian Tribe when his father Chief Reginald Oshkosh (Chief Oshkosh II) died in 1932. Chief Roy Oshkosh came to Door County in 1939. He came to work in the shipyards as an engineer during World War II, he had graduated from Carlisle College with an engineering degree. Friends encouraged Roy to stay in Door County after the war.

It has been said that he built his trading post in Egg Harbor on an old campsite of his ancestors, along a creek (Maury's Brook) “where a stream appears and does not reappear”. Born July 13, 1898, Roy died April 28, 1974, the last to serve as a hereditary Chief of the Menominee Tribe. He is buried in the Egg Harbor Cemetery.

The first Chief Oshkosh was chief in the mid 1800's and was supportive of the United States in the Black Hawk War of 1832 and his participation in treaty negotiations made him a famous and respected figure in the area. It is said because of such respect the City of Oshkosh was named after him.

Like his grandfather, Roy was well respected, an outstanding man who served two cultures and served them well. In Egg Harbor, Roy was a businessman, a member of the Door County Chamber of Commerce, a leader in the Boy Scouts, and in the winter he made personal appearances throughout the United States. He was a friend of many.



Chief Roy Oshkosh – TSCHEKATCH'AKE'MAU III
last hereditary Chief of the Menominees



Chief Oshkosh trades his feather head dress for a beaver top hat,
a gift to his great grandfather from the governor of Wisconsin





Roy with his wife Ruth at home with relics of the past.

Ruth and Roy at 'Smokey Falls on the Menominee Reservation











Roy and Ruth Oshkosh



Tuesday, April 15, 1969



CHIEF ROY OSHKOSH and his wife Ruth are shown above with some of the Indian dolls at their Trading Post at Egg Harbor. It was an interesting experience for Ruth to become accustomed to the ways of the Menominee Indians. —Hagedorn

Ruth Oshkosh is also Princess Shawon to Menominee tribe

By FRANCES BADTKE

"That article on Door county in the National Geographic magazine has made a difference," said Ruth Oshkosh, wife of Chief Roy Oshkosh, as she "minded the store" in the Trading Post the couple operates at Egg Harbor.

"The past couple weekends have been busier than normal with tourists," she went on, "and most of them mention the article they read in the Geographic." Others refer to other articles they have read in newspapers and everyone must see the Trading Post for himself and meet the Chief personally.

Ruth herself met the Chief when she accompanied a patient to Door county who knew both Roy Oshkosh and his father and was determined to visit them. Ruth was a blonde nurse from Chicago who knew little about Indian Chieftains, but she soon became acquainted with the head of the Menominee tribe.

It was an acquaintance that blossomed into a romance and ended up in marriage, with the white girl becoming the "squaw" of an Indian chief.

Her Indian name became Princess Shawon which means Southern Star, because she came from the "south" to Door county. She has been well accepted by her husband's people and has had a pleasant relationship with them.

Roy is a graduate of Carlisle (Penn.) college, formerly a college for Indian students, but now a military school. He spent six years there during the time when the famed Jim Thorpe also attended and Pop Warner was the coach.

Roy himself specialized in cross country running and his team competed with Yale and Harvard teams, the Indian boys coming out well in front of their white competitors.

It is now considered choice property where the couple make their home at the foot of the Egg Harbor hill in a wooded glen with a natural amphitheater just behind the Trading Post, but it was not always so. Where the skilled Order of the Arrow dancers now perform the ancient Indian rituals, there once stood the town dump. Ruth recalls that there were truckloads of junk, almost without number, that they carried away to make living space.

Their first home was a humble two-room cabin without running water or bath. A nearby creek furnished the water and a "telephone booth" in the back yard provided other necessary facilities.

When it came to cooking, the new bride was well experienced, but only in the preparation of the white man's food and her new husband was more accustomed to the traditional Indian fare. Like most other new brides, the new Princess learned to cook what her husband liked and some of it she learned the hard way.

However, the Indian diet did not agree with her and Ruth became ill. After recovering, her grateful husband learned to like her way of cooking. In appreciation she has learned to make some of the foods he remembers with fondness from his childhood but some of her endeavors ended in a fiasco, such as the time she cooked a woodchuck for several days and then fed the doubtful feast to the family dog.

When Roy talks to young group of school children, Ruth ofte asks him to tell the youngster about some of the foods he re members as a child, such a venison, Nanapon (Indian bread maple syrup, roast woodchuc dried pumpkin and apples.

One recipe that Ruth has mas tered and shares with friends an visitors is that for Indian Squa Bread. We give you the recip here as she gave it to us.

INDIAN SQUAW BREAD

1 T. baking powder
2 cups lukewarm water
1 T. shortening (bacon fa is good)
2½ cups sifted flour

Mix ingredients together adding enouhg flour to con sistency of biscuits. Pat out o floured board and cut int shapes you wish.

Fry in deep fat in iron frying pan (or deep fryer) turning s both sides are browned.

Serve hot with maple syrup

The Indians also liked t have crisp fried salt pork with this bread.

The couple prospered with hard ork and literally by the "sweat f their brow" their home grew its present rambling com- rtableness, one room at a time. he walls are paneled with lum- r they cut in the woods, hauled it, had sawed and then put in ace on the walls, all with their wn hands. The stone floors were larried and set in place by the lady of the house" when Roy was n the hospital and he was sur- rised at how great her labors ad been while he was gone.

Their home is filled with ementoes and relics of Roy's dian heritage, many of them mily heirlooms and passed own to Roy from previous gen- rations, now resting peacefully the Happy Hunting Grounds.

There are tom toms, pictures f ancestors, a beaver top hat ver a century old that Gov. Cass resented to Roy's great grand- ather, pottery, Indian hunting ols, arrow heads, tomahawks nd peace pipes. Powder horns Sie for space with feathered head- resses and the wood carvings, ainstakingly made by the Chief imself in his leisure hours, fill he walls.

Among the most valuable of the eirlooms is the six by eight foot buffalo hide inherited by Roy from a great aunt, who received it from the original owner, the famed Indian guide Sacajawea herself.

Everyone past the fourth grade will remember that Sacajawea was the Indian maiden who guided Lewis and Clark on their great expedition across the northwest part of the United States, over the Rockies and on to the west coast.

The story has been handed down through generations of Indian story tellers (and verified in the history books) of how this dauntless maiden led the white explorers through the woods, across the plains, forded rivers and over the Rocky mountains to their destination.

It is said that in the evenings, by the light of the glowing campfire she painstakingly sketched the figures of Indians, buffalo, horses and teepees on the cured buffalo hide, using a sharpened feather quill for a pen, and using a mixture of charcoal and water for her ink.

When it came to filling in the outlines of the braves racing across the plains, the buffalo in a hurry to get out of reach of their spears, and the Indians sending smoke signals from the campfires, she used her own kinds of paints, making use of the native materials available along the trail.

For reds she crushed hundreds of tiny red spiders; the green trees and grass were the juice of weeds; blueberries, sumac and elderberries gave her rich blues and purples and for browns she resorted to the shells of walnuts and butternuts, simmered in water.

Artists know that the natural colors are the long lasting dyes, and 164 years after Sacajawea finished her artistic triumph, the buffalo and the Indian, the campfires and the horses, all retain their original tones and freshness.

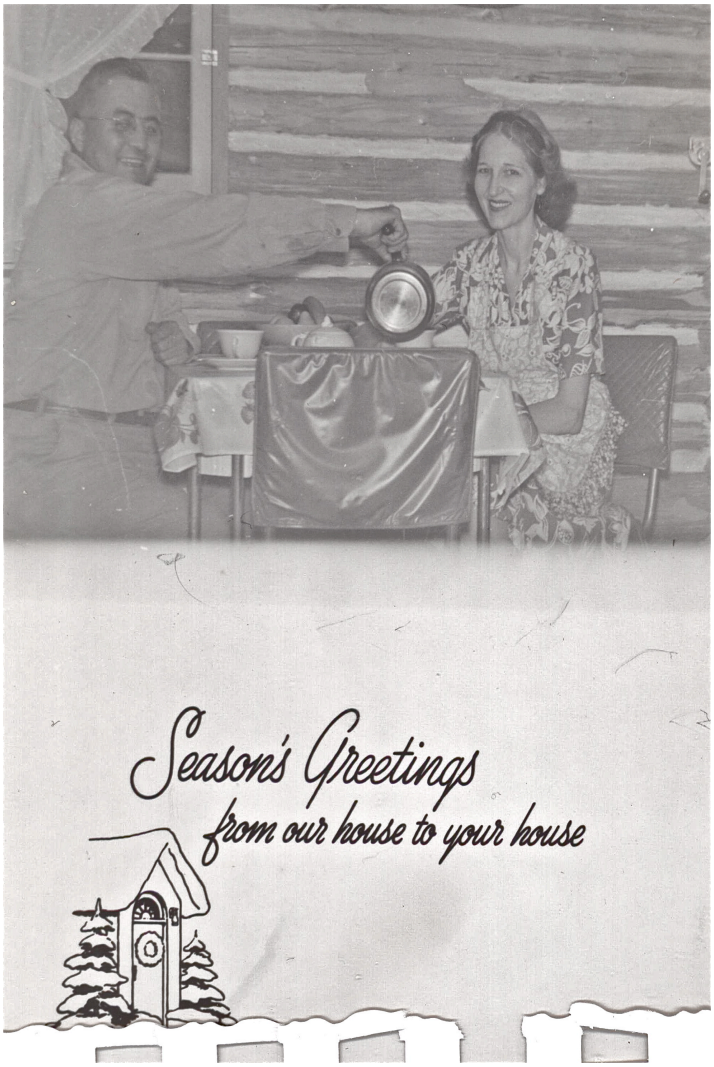
The buffalo hide has been appraised by experts in Indian lore and is insured for a considerable sum. Because of its value, and partly because of the limited space in her living quarters that she has to display it, Ruth has asked that visitors not request to see it as she must regretfully say no.

Both she and the Chief greet visitors with a smile, answer their many questions and carry on the work involved in the Trading Post, as well as assisting and training the Indian dancers for their performances during the summer in the natural amphitheater in the woods behind the Trading Post.

Boy Scouts have learned many skills from Chief Oshkosh and his Princess Shawon and some of their more apt pupils have gone on to greater achievement. Lloyd LeRoy was one of the dancers for nine years and he has received an appointment to the Air Force Academy in Colorado from Congressman John W. Brynes, and has an honor record at school.

While they have had no children of their own, their "sons" among the Scouts and dancers are legion and will long remember the skilled Chieftain and his Southern Star.







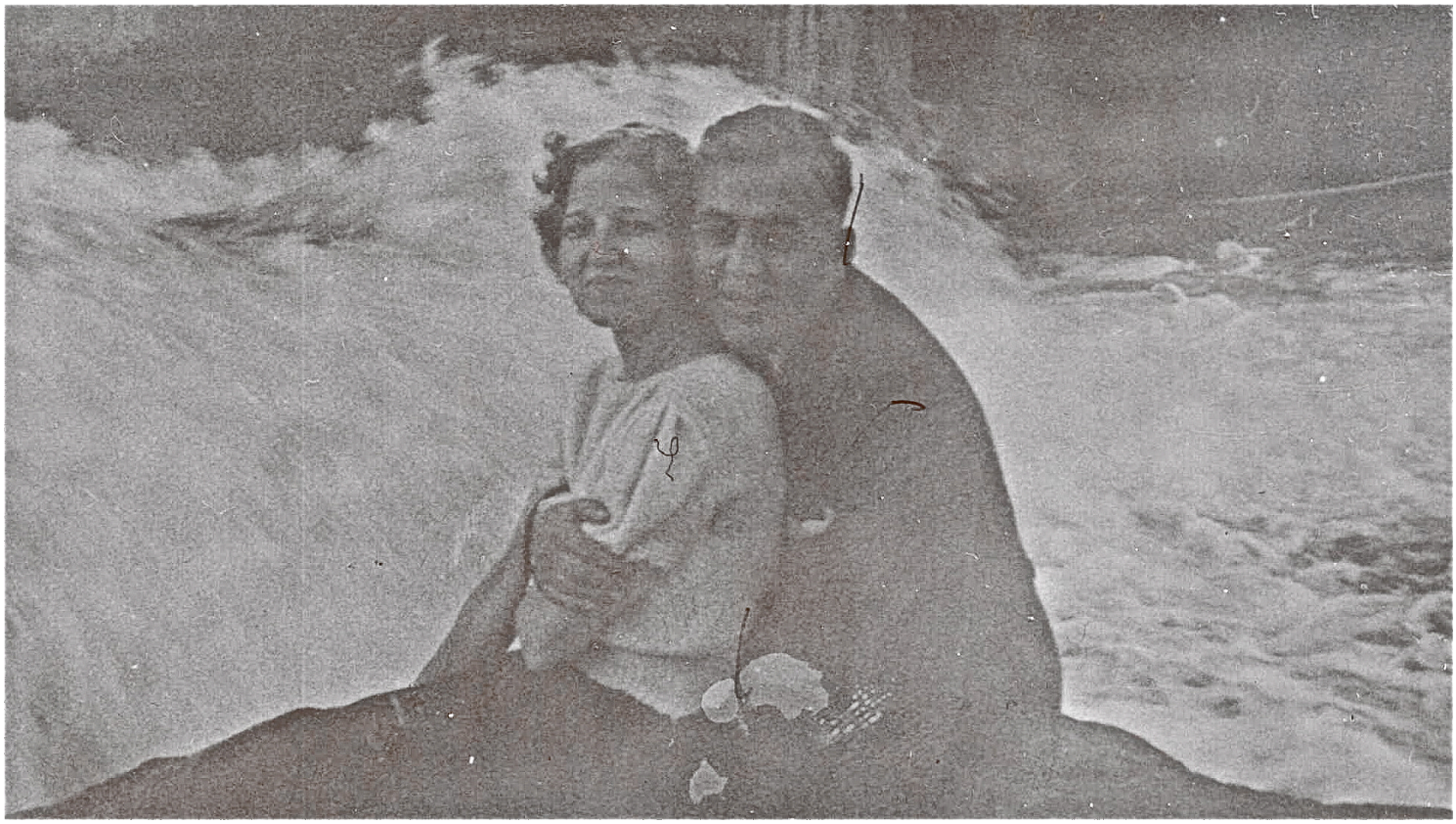
Roy and Ruth Oshkosh at home





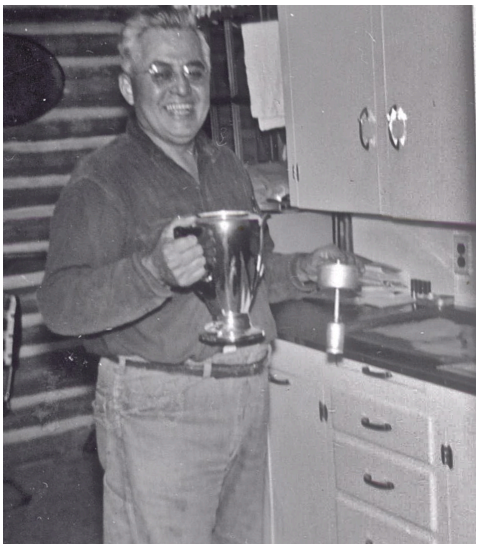


Roy and Ruth Oshkosh at home in Egg Harbor



Chief Roy and Princess Shawon (Ruth) at 'Smokey Falls' on the Wolf River on the Menominee Reservation

Roy doing his thing in Egg Harbor in the 1940s-50s-60s.



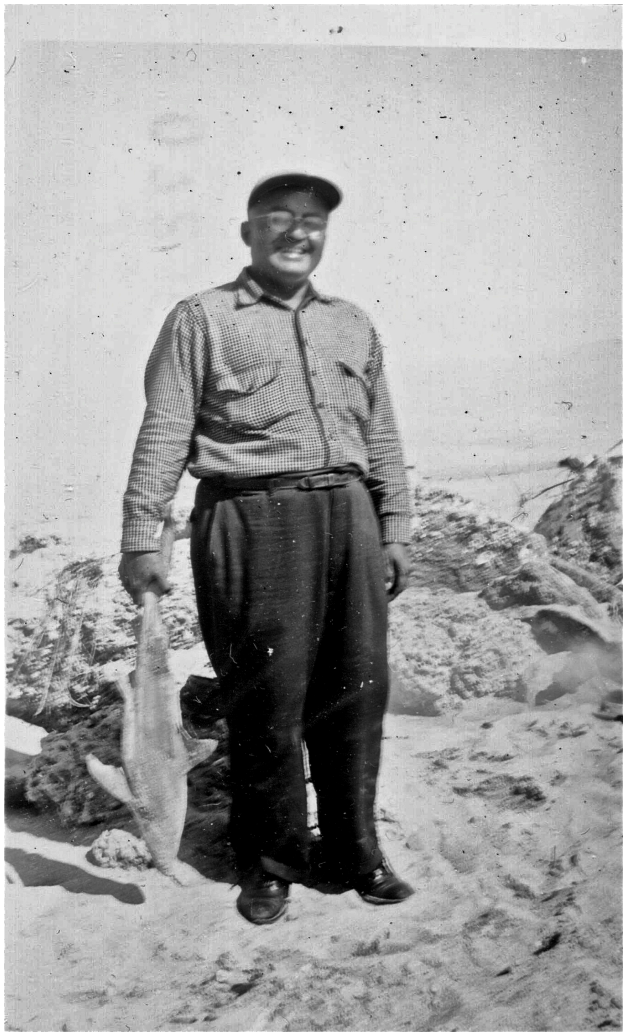
Making a good cup of coffee



Playing his accordion on the beach.....



Riding in a parade



Catching a big one

Window shopping





Chief Oshkosh at ' Smokey Falls' on the Wolf River on the Menominee Reservation and at his home in Egg Harbor





Roy with his new wife, Agnes

Chief Roy Oshkosh's wife, (Princess Shawon) Ruth passed away July 7, 1969. Roy married Agnes Lindal, of Washington Island, on January 3, 1970. Agnes was Roy's third wife.

Roy had been married when he was living on the reservation, little is known of the marriage but that Roy had an only child, Pershing, who died in a car accident in the late 1930's.

Roy met Ruth Morgan from Chicago and married her. She became known to the tribe as Princess Shawon.





Chapter II
Building a home and a trading post



Chief Oshkosh selected the site for his home and trading post along Maury's Brook at the bottom of the Egg Harbor hill along Hwy 42.





The site was located on the corner of Hwy 42 and then undeveloped South Trail





According to the tribe's legends…"where a stream appears and does not reappear"





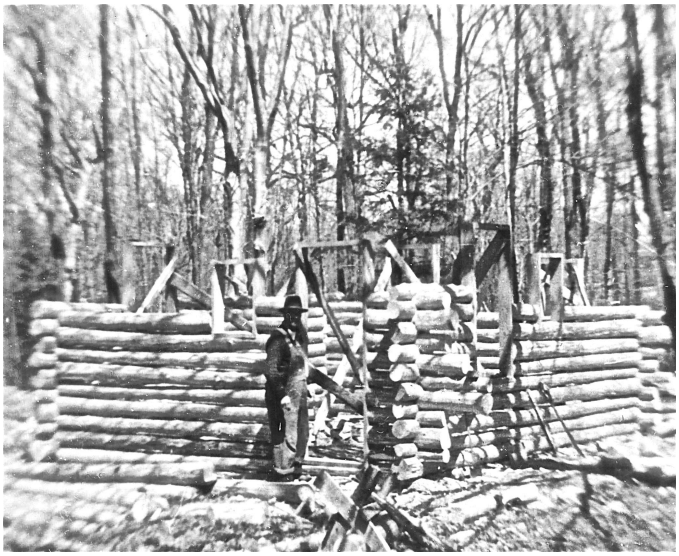
The site was cleared and construction started in 1945





Logs for construction were cut and sorted.







Construction for the cabin started with logs cut to length and notched for dovetail corner construction and then laid one atop the other matching the dovetails to lock the corners of the walls together. Mortar was added to fill in between the logs.



The original cabin had two rooms with no running water or indoor plumbing. Water was carried up from the creek and there was an outdoor 'privy' in the woods.















Soon after completing the original cabin, a foundation was poured and log walls set for an addition, and this time a well was drilled.

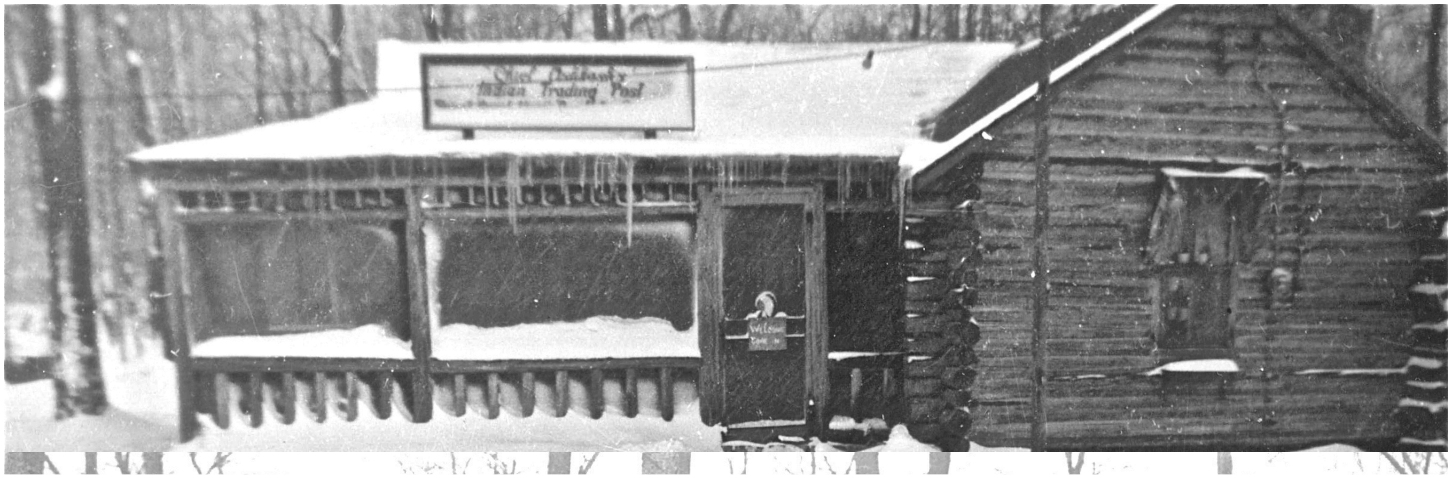


Chief Roy Oshkosh (rt.) with a friend and completion of the early trading post addition.



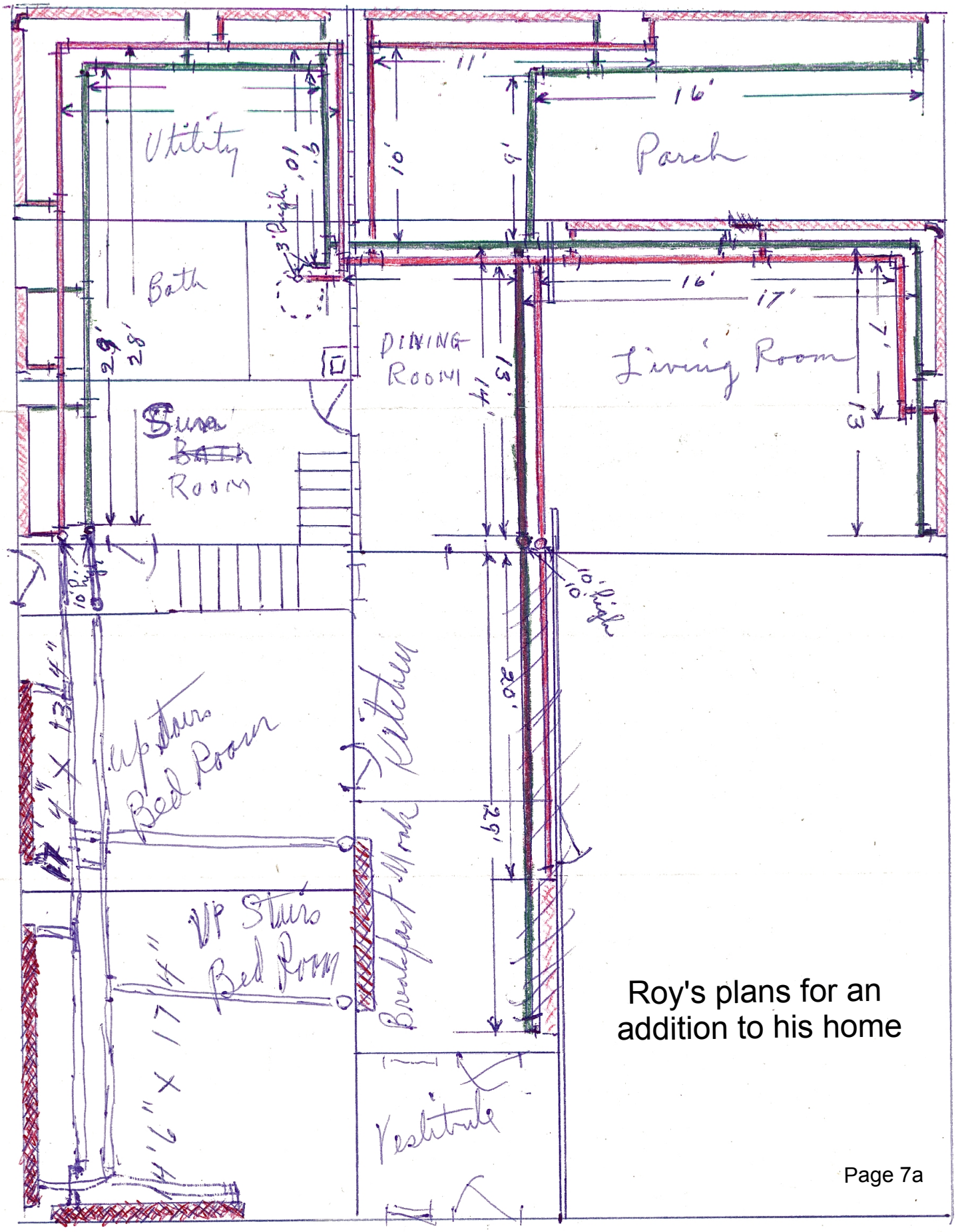




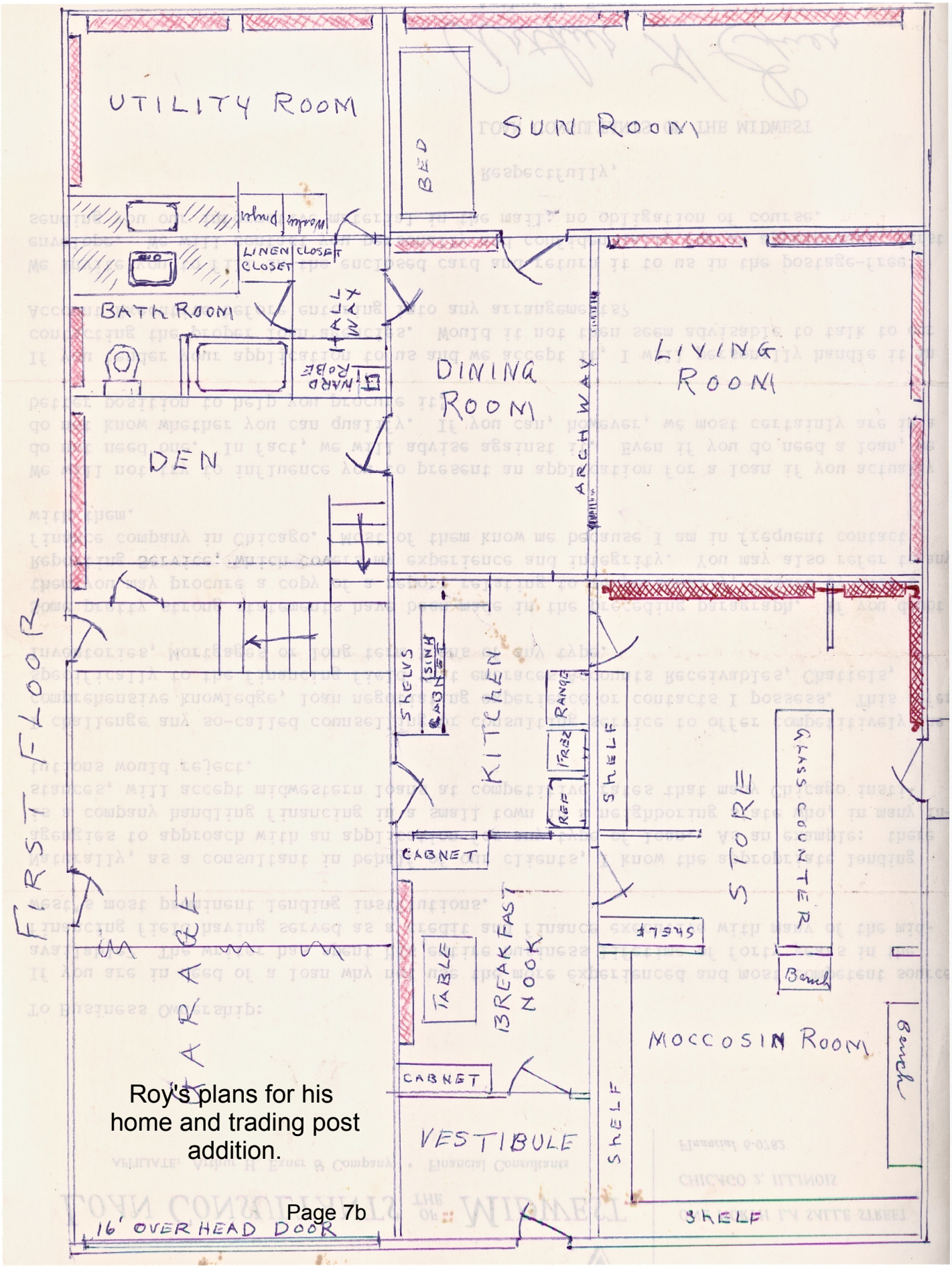


The completed addition, Chief Roy Oshkosh and wife Ruth at their trading post in 1948





Roy's plans for an addition to his home



Roy's plans for his home and trading post addition.



Time for yet another addition - 1957







Logs are stacked and readied for final addition.....winter construction



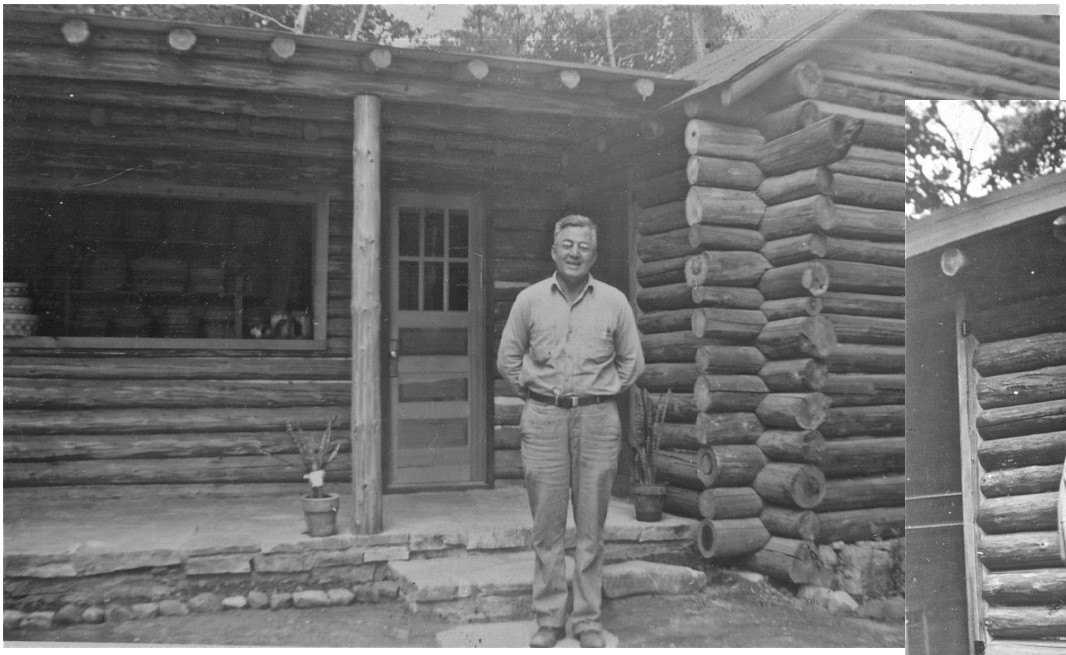


Completed Chief Oshkosh Trading Post



Chief Roy Oshkosh's Trading Post







Roy started his project in 1945 with a two room cabin with no well or indoor facilities. He is shown above in 1947 with pride in front of one of his first of several additions and the start of his trading post. Below is the trading post as it stood in 1959.









Inside the trading post





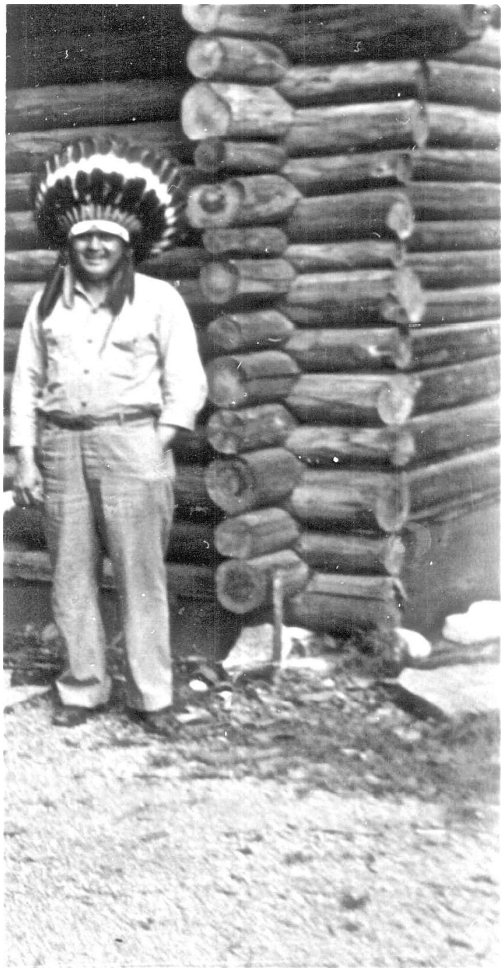






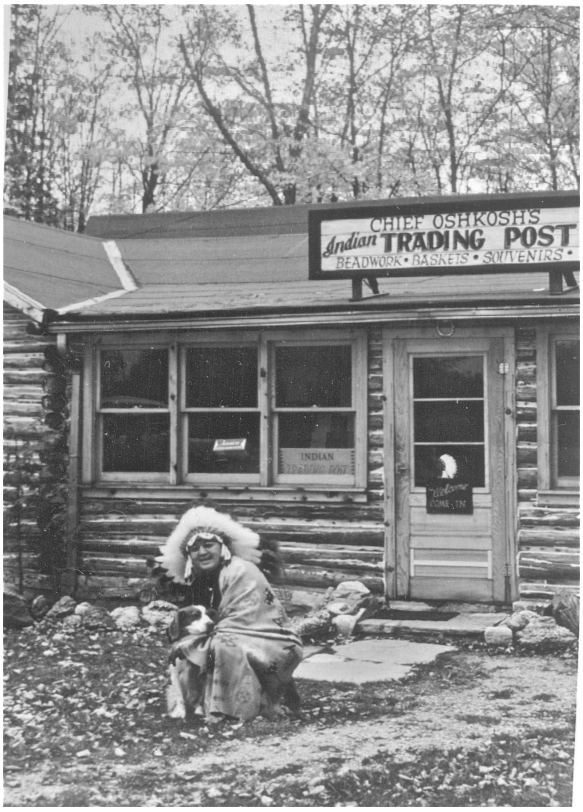
Amenities were added to the Roy's trading post.







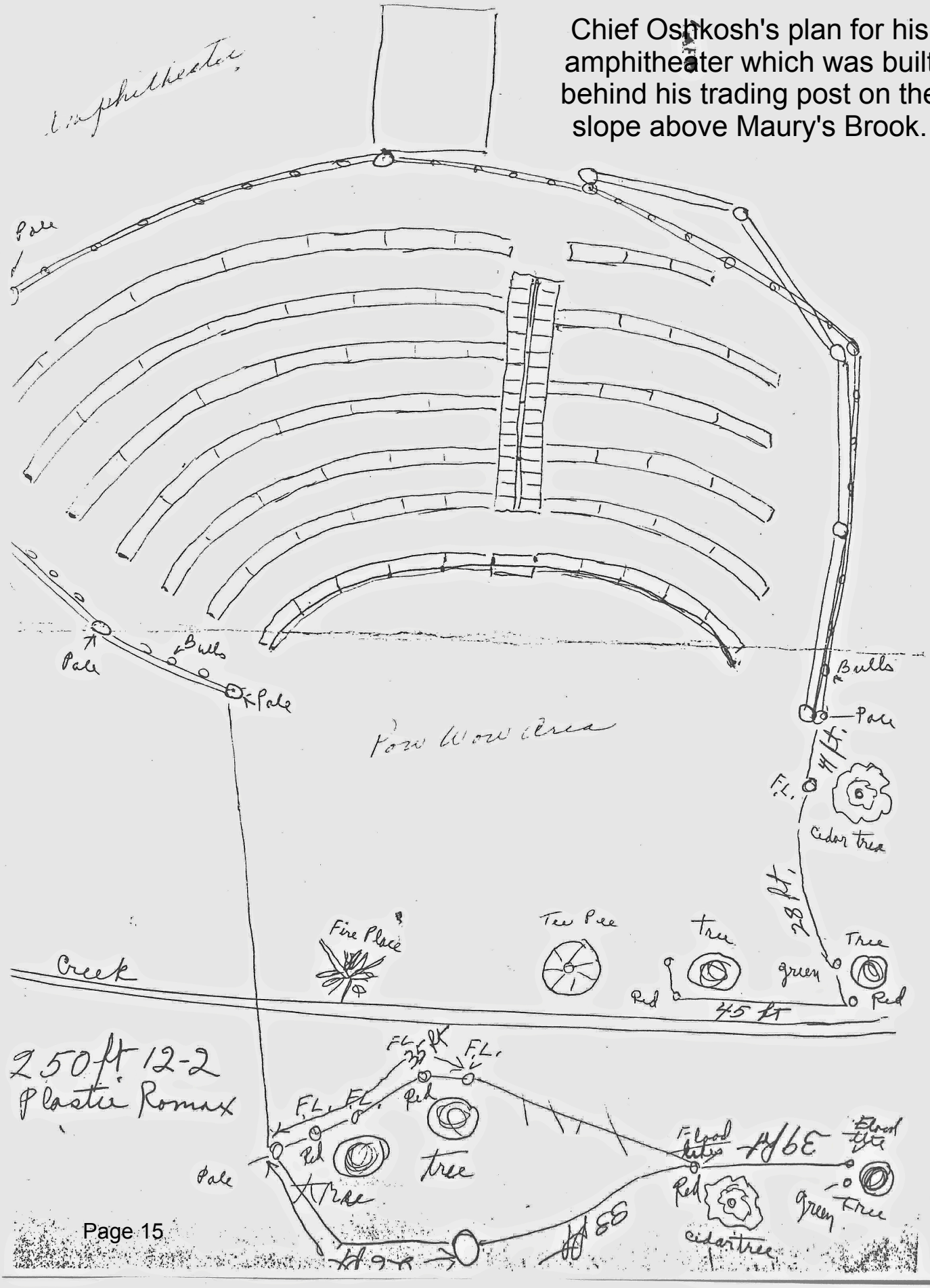




Chief Oshkosh at his trading post



Chief Oshkosh's plan for his amphitheater which was built behind his trading post on the slope above Maury's Brook.







Local boy scouts danced for Chief Oshkosh in the amphitheater



Audience participation was part of the evening's activities.





Shown are remnants of Chief Oshkosh's amphitheater that was built behind his trading post. Native American pageants and dances were presented for the public's education and enjoyment. Present owner, Coleen Bins wishes to restore the amphitheater and bring back Native American pageantry.

Chapter III
Recognized for Serving Two Cultures and Serving Them Well



7/30/58



Model for Carving—This photograph of Chief Roy Oshkosh, titular head of the Menominee Tribe, was used in carving a life-size statue to be dedicated at Egg Harbor. The statue showinng the chief in full tribal costume and painted in authentic colors was carved by Ernest Dombrowe, who was commissioned to do the work by Dr. Robert Cowles, Green Bay physician. (Reynolds Photo)

Egg Harbor To Dedicate Statue of Indian Chief

By IDA MARGARET BAY

EGG HARBOR (PG) — Seldom does a community erect a statue to one of its residents while he is in the prime of life but such is the case in this busy little tourist town, 15 miles north of Sturgeon Bay.

A life-sized figure of an Indian chief will be erected in honor of Chief Roy Oshkosh, titular head of the Menominee Tribe.

Needless to say, the entire community is wholeheartedly behind the project. Permanent citizens and summer residents alike are waiting for dedication day!

Replica in Pine

Dr. Robert Cowles, Green Bay, longtime summer resident of the Horesshoe Bay Farms near Egg Harbor, is responsible for the whole thing. It was he who hired Ernest Dombrowe, the finest woodcarver Door County has ever known, to make a pine replica of Chief Oshkosh in full tribal costume. The completed figure will be painted in authentic colors.

A small triangle in the highway just east of the Frank Murphy Park at Horseshoe Bay has been selected as the site. No more suitable spot could have been chosen. For straight to the west, across the historic waters of Green bay lie the tribal homelands of the Menominees.

Cub Scout's Answer

Why a statue to an unpretentious man of simple means and ordinary ambitions? Anyone can tell you that but a 9-year-old Cub Scout supplied the best answer: "We like him. He's the best Indian we know. He's real! He shows us how to make things. And he's fun, too!"

Erecting statues in memory of the Menominee chieftains seems to be an old Wisconsin custom. The City of Oshkosh placed a statue of old Chief Oshkosh, great-grandfather of the present chief, in Menominee Park because he was "a man of peace, beloved by all."

"Those are great words to live by," said the present Chief Oshkosh. "I hope the people of my community will feel that way about me when I am gone."

The residents of Door County have decided not to wait that long.

Carved Figure of Chief Roy Oshkosh Provided by Friend, Dr. R. L. Cowles

Pine Statue Is Erected In Door-Co.

By IDA M. BAY

EGG HARBOR (PG) — Door County has acquired one more attraction of which it can be proud—the beautifully carved figure of an Indian chief. And it can be even more proud of the two adopted residents who are responsible for it.

Dr. Robert L. Cowles, Green Bay physician, and Chief Roy Oshkosh of the Menominee Indian Tribe have been close friends for many years. Both are civic minded. Both have given unselfishly of their time and money for the public good. Both are idealists with an ability to make their dreams tangible.

Culmination of Dream

Last Saturday afternoon the large crowd assembled at the Frank E. Murphy Park at Egg Harbor saw the culmination of such a dream. Dr. and Mrs. Cowles presented a statue of Chief Roy Oshkosh and the plot of ground it stands on "to the people of Door County with the hope that it will be a source of pride and pleasure."

R. E. Burton, chairman of the Highway Committee, accepted the gift on behalf of the Board of Supervisors of Door County.

An exclamation of admiration passed through the crowd as Robert L. Cowles III, a grandson, unveiled the statue —an outstanding work in woodcarving and a true likeness of the handsome chief in ceremonial costume.

Ernest Dombrowe of Sturgeon Bay, artist and woodcarver, was employed by the Svoboda Church Furniture Co. of Kewaunee to make the statue for Dr. Cowles. It was carved from a 600-pound block of white pine cut at Keshena, birthplace of Chief Oshkosh, on the Menominee Reservation.

Active in Scouting

Chief Oshkosh is well known in Wisconsin for his work with the Boy Scouts. He is an honorary member of the Order of the Arrow, being the only Indian in the United States who has received this honor.

Scoutmaster James Orr of Kewaunee was accompanied by Pat McKinney, Danny Nelson, Terry Ackerman, Paul Rogalske, John Robillard, Tom Charlier and Billy Irving of Troop 126 in entertaining the crowd with a series of colorful dances taught them by Chief Oshkosh.

To the delight of the audience they performed the Friendship Dance, the Feather Dance (in honor of the head of their tribe), and the Pipe Dance. The Feather Dance is competitive, and Danny Nelson was chosen as the one who turned in the best performance. The boys had made their own costumes as part of their study of Indian lore.

Prayers and Hopes

According to Indian legend it is through the medium of the peace pipe that the prayers and hopes of the tribe are wafted upward in the smoke until they reach the Great Manitou.

On this sultry summer afternoon the peace pipe was lighted by Ruth, the Chief's wife, looking as beautiful as any movie star in the ceremonial costume and silver jewelry inherited from her mother-in-law. As the smoke drifted toward the heavens this prayer by Chief Oshkosh was offered to the God of the Menominees:

"O Great Manitou, as Chief of the Tribe of Menominees listen to my prayer:

"Postpone the prophecy of Spirit Rock!" (when Spirit Rock, the Tribe's symbol of strength, crumbles to dust, the Menominees will be no more.)

"Bring my people a new day. Guide them and give them wisdom.

"Look with favor upon my friends. Bring your blessing down upon them and on their children.

"I ask this prayer, O Great Manitou, as the Chief of my people."

The peace pipe used in this ceremony was the same one the first Chief Oshkosh (the present Chief's greatgrandfather) carried to the White House in 1851 when he made his famous plea to President Fillmore and General Winfield Scott.

Tall Pine, Scrub Oak

Addressing the general, he said: "You are like a tall pine tree and myself like a scrub oak, so I stand under your branches to protect my head from harm." And then to the President: "Let my people stay in Wisconsin. Our tribe is small and we want to live in peace for the little time remaining us."

Both men were touched by his naive charm and wilderness wisdom. The Menominees remained in Wisconsin.

After Saturday's impressive dedication ceremony Chief Oshkosh, his wife, and more than 150 invited guests enjoyed one of Door County's famous fish boils at the lovely home of Dr. and Mrs. Cowles. Herman Birnschein of Egg Harbor, a most popular outdoor chef at such events, was in charge. Needless to say the meal he prepared did justice to the occasion.

Mrs. Ralph Nash, violin artist of Winnetka, Ill., who was vacationing at Alpine Lodge, played several numbers especially for the chief including his favorite, "The Indian Love Call." Lois Ickes also of Alpine Lodge, then sang the same song accompanied by Mrs. Nash.



Hail, Chief!—Dr. Robert L. Cowles extends the hand of friendship to Chief Roy Oshkosh during ceremonies at Egg Harbor unveiling the heroic pine statue in the background. The carving was executed by Ernest Dombrowe, Sturgeon Bay, and presented by Dr. and Mrs. Cowles. (Hagedorn Photo)



6/12/58 THE DOOR COUNTY ADVOCATE. STURGEON BAY. WISCONSIN

WOODCARVER AT WORK — This is Ernest Dombrowe, Cherry road woodcarver, working on a large figure of an Indian chief. He used a picture of Chief Oshkosh for his model. The figure took him nearly a month to complete. —Advocate photo

Dr. Robert L. Cowles of Horseshoe Bay presented the statue of Chief Oshkosh and the plot of ground around it to Door County. The statue was located in front of the entrance to Murphy Park (Horseshoe Bay Park).

Dr. Cowles is shown with Chief Oshkosh in front to the dedicated statue.

Dr. Cowles was a Green Bay physician.



The statue was carved by Ernst Dombrowe, a wood sculptor from Sturgeon Bay. Ernst used white pine from the Menominee Indian Reservation.





Chief Roy Oshkosh and his wife Princess Ruth at the dedication of the statue carved in his honor.

(August 9, 1958)

The statue was prominently displayed at the intersection of Cty. B and G at the entrance to Murphy County Park, just South of Horseshoe Bay Farms.



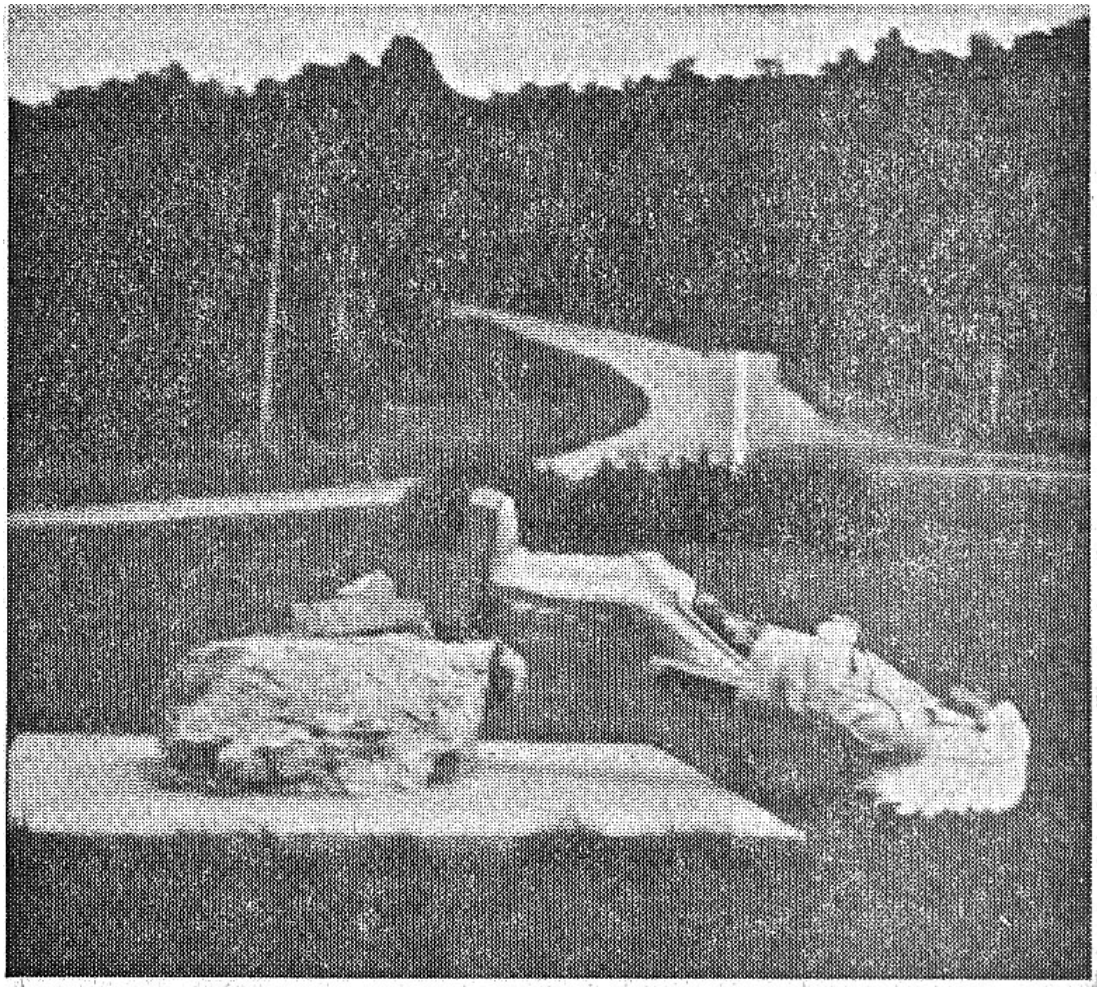




Activities at the dedication ceremony for the carved wood statue honoring Chief Oshkosh August 9, 1958







VANDALS last week shoved over the statue of Chief Oshkosh at Horseshoe bay and broke the base. The sheriff's department is investigating. The statue was taken to Horseshoe Bay Farms for repairs. —Alric Erickson

Dear Editor: 8/21/58

Letters From Our Readers . . .

VANDALISM

Last Saturday afternoon I attended the dedication of the statue of Chief Oshkosh III at Horseshoe Bay. This is indeed a beautiful piece of work and a credit to all concerned: the sculptor Ernest Dombrowe, the donor Dr. Robert Cowles, and the recipient Door county.

Four days later I took some friends to see it, and someone has already carved his initials on the back, marring the beautifully portrayed leather jacket.

Is there anything that can be done about this type of vandalism? Do the people of the county have to put up with it? Perhaps an editorial would help to arouse public opinion against such vandalism and encourage people to appreciate and protect the beauties of Door county.

Tragically the statue was stolen on July 12, 1973 and never found. A new statue was carved and is on display at Chief Oshkosh's Native American Arts in Egg Harbor.



The new statue is now on display at Chief Oshkosh's Native American Arts in Egg harbor

Milwaukee
Sports Show

Lt. - George Resch
Rt. - Bill Bertschinger

Mary Jane VanDyse
Sorgel

Chief Roy Oshkosh



Chief Roy Oshkosh and wife Ruth were ambassadors for Egg Harbor and Door County, often making public appearances. Roy served two cultures and served them well.