

Finding Aid to the Y-Indian Guides Collection, 1963-1967

Summary Information

Title: Y-Indian Guides collection

Creator: Lyon family (primary)

ID: 117.10427

Date: 1963-1967

Extent: 1.5 linear feet

Language: The material in this collection is in English.

Abstract: The Y-Indian Guides collection is a compilation of council meeting reports, activity reports, camp schedules, newsletters, and other information from the Lyons family, who were involved with the Y-Indian Guides through the Bay View YMCA during the 1960s.

Repository:

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong
One Manhattan Square
Rochester, New York 14607
585.263.2700
library@museumofplay.org

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use: This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, he has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

Custodial History: The Y-Indian Guides collection was donated to The Strong in December 2017 as a gift from the Edward S. Lyon Family. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under 117.10427. The papers were received from Janice Linn, along with various articles of clothing, instruments, awards, a trunk, and photographs documenting the Lyon family's involvement with Y-Indian Guides through the Bay View YMCA (Activity ID 13389).

Preferred citation for publication: Y-Indian Guides collection, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

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Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names

- Lyon, Edward S.
- Lyon, Richard ("Dick")

Corporate Names

- YMCA
- YMCA-- Bay View Branch
- Young Men's Christian Association

Subjects

- Camp Lawrence Cory
- Camping
- Field trips
- Indians of North America--Interpretive programs--United States
- Outdoor life
- Y-Indian Guides
- Y-Indian Guides--Bay View Branch
- YMCA Adventure Guides
- YMCA Indian Guides

Historical Note

The Y-Indian Guides Program (also called YMCA Indian Guides) was founded in 1926 by Harold Keltner, director of the St. Louis chapter of the YMCA. Inspired by Ojibwa tribe member Joe Friday, Keltner sought to develop a program that would foster strong father-son bonds through basic life and outdoor survival skills. According to program literature, the concept was based on “strong qualities of American Indian culture and life—dignity, patience, endurance, spirituality, harmony with nature and concern for the family.” The program grew to include mothers and daughters, fathers and daughters, and mothers and sons. Y-Indian Guides participated in various activities originally intended to honor Native Americans and their traditions.

Task forces and committees formed to examine the program’s themes and apparent cultural appropriation during the 1970s, and national guidelines remained largely unchanged for at least two decades. The program’s name had been modified several times, from YMCA Indian Guides, Princesses, Braves, and Maidens in its early years, to Y-Indian Guides or Y-Guides toward the end of the 20th century. In 2003, the YMCA’s national organization decided to officially change the program’s name to YMCA Adventure Guides and removed all references to “Indians” from guidebooks and activities. (Examples of language revision within the organization included changing parent-child “tribes” to “circles,” and “chiefs” to instead be called “navigators.”) In addition to responding to shifting attitudes about the usage of Native American themes and mascots by non-native peoples, the change in policy also meant to update the program and boost membership. As of 2019, Adventure Guides programs through the YMCA encourage parent-child interaction with group activities and outdoor pursuits to bond through shared experiences.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Y-Indian Guides collection is a compilation of documentation and ephemera from the Lyons family, who participated in the Bay View YMCA and their Y-Indian Guides program during the 1960s. (Father Ed Lyon and son Dick went by the names “Big Hawk” and “Little Hawk,” respectively as members of the Ginisaga council.) Materials include council meeting reports, tally reports, activity reports, camp schedules, contact information, newsletters, and a group charter. Reports discuss meetings but also daily activities and observations about group events and activities. Additional scope and content information can be found in the Contents List section of this finding aid.

The use of the word “Indian” occurs throughout this collection due to the name of the organization at the time.

The Y-Indian Guides collection is arranged into three series, one of which has been further divided into subseries. The materials are housed in two archival document boxes.

Related Materials

Along with this documentation, the Edward S. Lyon family donated several dozen photographs and objects from their involvement with the Y-Indian Guides program from the Bay View YMCA in the Rochester area. (These were accessioned under Activity ID 13389 and are tagged with the museum subject term “Indian Guides.”)

System of Arrangement

Series I: General camp information, 1963-1966 and n.d.

Series II: Newsletters and publicity, 1965-1966

Series III: Reports, 1965-1967 and n.d.

Subseries A: Camp activity reports, 1965-1967 and n.d.

Subseries B: Council reports, 1965-1967 and n.d.

Subseries C: Tally reports, 1965-1966

Contents List

Series I: General camp information, 1963-1966 and n.d.

Scope and Content Note: This series contains informational leaflets on Camp Cory, camp schedules, contact information, and tips for tribe chiefs. (Camp Cory was the location of many of the Ginisaga council overnight trips and activities.)

Box 1

- Folder 1 Y-Indian Guide Camp Cory leaflets, 1965
- Folder 2 Camp Cory schedule and tribe assignments, 1965-1966
- Folder 3 Tips for tribe chief's booklet, 1963
- Folder 4 Camp Cory information: names/addresses/phone numbers, 1965-1966 and n.d.

Series II: Newsletters and publicity, 1965-1966

Scope and Content Note: This series houses newsletters about Y-Indian Guide programs, as well as a photograph feature in a local newspaper.

Box 1

- Folder 5 Tom-Tom Newsletters, 1965
- Folder 6 *Penfield Republican* newspaper: tribe photo, 1966

Box 2

- Folder 2 Bay View Branch YMCA newsletter, 1965

Series III: Reports, 1965-1967

Subseries A: Camp activity reports, 1965-1967 and n.d.

Scope and Content Note: This subseries contains reports, fliers, and programs about camp activities performed by members of the Ginisaga council of the Bay View YMCA during the mid-1960s. These activities include plays, field trips, and contests.

Box 1

- Folder 7 Kite flying contest fliers/reports, 1966-1967
- Folder 8 Camp field trips, 1966
- Folder 9 Play title page and character list, n.d. [c. 1967]
- Folder 10 Handwritten staging notes, 1967
- Folder 11 Camp Cory chapel service program, 1965

Subseries B: Council reports, 1965-1967 and n.d.

Scope and Content Note: This subseries includes meeting reports about council meetings (essentially a chronologically numbered meeting) of the Ginisaga council of the Bay View YMCA Y-Guides, as well as notes about daily life in the camp. Also in this subseries is the charter for the Ginisaga Council. This information is from the mid-to-late-1960s.

Box 1

- Folder 12 Council meeting reports, 1965-1967 and n.d.

- Folder 13 Second council Report, 1967
- Folder 14 Council meeting report June 21st, n.d. [c.1960s]
- Folder 15 Camp Cory weekend report, 1966
- Folder 16 Camp Cory mid-winter pow-wow, 1966
- Folder 17 Ginisaga tribe at Camp Cory, 1965
- Folder 18 Overnight at Bay View Longhouse report, 1965-1966
- Folder 19 Memorial Day parade report, 1966

Box 2

- Folder 1 Charter, 1965

Subseries C: Tally reports, 1965-1966

Scope and Content Note: This subseries contains tally reports that detail meetings and activities of the Ginisaga council of the Bay View YMCA Y-Indian Guides. (“Tally reports” are what the Y-Indian Guides called attendance, progress, and activities recorded by the group’s Tally Keeper.)

Box 1

- Folder 20 Tally reports, 1965-1966