



Ontario Visual Heritage Project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Your Stories, Photographs, and Film Sought for HD Documentary History of Muskoka

SUDBURY, Ontario – August 1, 2006 – The Ontario Trillium Foundation in partnership with the Living History Multimedia Association, the Muskoka Heritage Foundation and 25 community groups and local businesses, would like to announce the Muskoka District's participation in the Ontario Visual Heritage Project. The Ontario Visual Heritage Project strives to create multimedia tool kits that are meant to teach, preserve and promote the history of Ontario to audiences young and old. The central component of the Project is a feature length, professionally produced, High Definition documentary on the history of the community, complete with re-enactments of historical events, interviews, photographs and film. Also included in the tool kit are an interactive website, a course-guide for educators, and an interactive DVD. In the Spring of 2008, a launch event will be held to celebrate the completion of the project, the history of the Muskoka District, and the distribution of the tool kits to every school, library, and museum in the district free of charge.

On August 1st the Ontario Trillium Foundation announced \$140 000 in funding for four projects in the Georgian Bay area. The Muskoka District, in conjunction with the Parry Sound Area, the City of Greater Sudbury, and Manitoulin Island will each be creating Visual Heritage Projects of their own with the help of the Trillium grant. All four documentaries will be available in a box set of DVDs entitled "The Shield," in the Spring of 2008. The Sudbury and Manitoulin projects will be available in both French and English.

Ontario Visual Heritage Project Co-ordinator Zach Melnick explains that he is *"very excited about bringing the Ontario Visual Heritage Project to Northern Ontario. Local history has the power to enable connections between people and the places they live, work and visit. In order for people to care about these places, they must know the ingenuity, hard-work and determination that created their community, their way of life, or their business. Our goal is to empower museums and historians to tell the stories of their communities in ways that would be unaffordable to them otherwise, using methods and technologies that are appealing to audiences of all ages."*

Under Melnick's direction, the Ontario Visual Heritage Project has seen success in seven counties in Southwestern Ontario, including: Haldimand, Norfolk, Brant/Brantford/Six Nations, Elgin, Oxford, Sarnia-Lambton, and Chatham-Kent. You can check out all of these projects in streaming video on the project's website at www.visualheritage.ca. Also available for download on the website are video podcasts of our latest projects.

As the mission of the project is to help people make connections to the places they live work, and visit through narrative storytelling; the Ontario Visual Heritage Project uses a community-

focused production model to empower historians, museums, and citizens to tell their own stories. Pre-production for the Muskoka District project is about to get underway, and we would like to invite the people of the community to share the stories of their past by submitting them to our website. The stories submitted to the site will be used to shape the script for the production. We are also looking for in-kind contributions of historical photographs and film of the Muskoka area from as early as possible to as late as the 1970's. All material will be digitized and returned to the lender as promptly as possible. Citizens also have the opportunity to participate as actors for re-enactments of historical events. If you are interested in contributing in any of the aspects mentioned above, let us know on the project website at www.visualheritage.ca/muskoka.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Culture, receives annually \$100 million of government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative.

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