



# Six Nation's oldest man soon turning 104

By Jayson Koblun

**SIX NATIONS** - Six Nations' own centenarian Wilfred Jamieson was born less than two months after the Titanic sunk in 1912.

A centenarian is someone who lives to, or beyond the age of 100. At 103 years old, Wilfred, Turtle clan of the Konadaha Seneca nation has seen and done a lot in his life and as the oldest living registered male of Six Nations, he is going to celebrate his 104th birthday on June 21 with his family at the Iroquois Lodge in Ohsweken.

"It's his birthday in a few weeks and chances are we will just all get together in the common room here at the lodge to celebrate," said Sara Jamieson, one of Wilfred's many grandchildren.

Wilfred married his wife Thelma back in the '50s. She passed on in the

'70s, but the time they spent together and life they lived helped create his now large and still growing family tree. In an interview with two of his grandchildren and eldest son, they figured out that in total Wilfred has six immediate children, four step-children, 18 grandchildren, too many great grandchildren to count and one great great grandchild with another great great grandchild on the way.

"My grandpa has a huge immediate family, but it didn't stop there," said Sara. "So many people know my grandpa and he treats everybody like family to him. Even people that aren't actually related to him he would call family."

Wilfred only took schooling up to Grade 8 before leaving to help his adopted parents on their farm. He lived in a house

on 5th line for the rest of his career growing corn, soybean, white corn and several other kinds of crops. Sometime in his life he also worked a short stint at Styres' Saw Mill.

"These days he doesn't do too much in the lodge, a lot of sleeping and taking it easy inside, drinking anything he can find with green tea in it," said Wilfred "Will" Jamieson III, Wilfred's grandson. "When he was younger though he was always out and about being active."

When Wilfred was a child on the territory, he played a lot of baseball with his friends and other neighbourhood kids. There were no nice grassy, neatly kept baseball diamonds to play on at the time, just some fields and dirt roads that they would find space to play on.

"Baseball was definitely his thing. So was old

country music, animals and his water drum," said Will. "He was pretty good with a water drum. He wasn't much of a drinker, he said he tried drinking once, hated the taste of alcohol and never picked it up again."

Will said that his grandpa has taught him how to be resilient and respectful of the earth. In 2009, tragedy struck and his grandpa's home on 5th Line burned down. Will said that he and other members of the family offered him places to stay, but his grandpa wouldn't leave his land.

"He wanted to stay where his home was and didn't want to leave his animals," said Will. "He set up a small camper nearby and lived there for as long as he could — until it got so cold out that he had to move here to the lodge."

Wilfred is a lover of animals, the land, his family

and of his culture. He has seen many things change during his time here on Six Nations territory and he is known by many as a man who always put family first.

"Even when he was already technically 'old' he made sure to spend time with his family," said Sara. "I remember one time I was really young and he was babysitting me with some other kids. We were running around like crazy being nuts and he was right there alongside us keeping up. My grandpa was strong — farmer strong — so even when he was 80 years old he was still keeping up with us."

Sara said that her grandpa loves going to powwows and would travel pretty far to go to as many as he could. Being a farmer, he also loved checking out different "ploughing matches" in the surrounding areas.

"He and I would travel to ploughing matches all over," she said. "That's something he's always been interested in — John Deere tractors. Travelling with him to the shows is one of the best memories I have to share with him."

"My grandpa taught me a lot, but he especially taught me how to share and how to treat people with kindness."

Sara and Will both said that their grandpa was a funny guy — always telling jokes and making people laugh. The two grandchild, adults now, said that their grandpa also taught them the important of forgiveness and that families, friends and communities should be able to put matters aside and love each other simply for being family — as they've already said above, everybody was family to Wilfred.