OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Title: Larry Cloud-Morgan prison papers.
Abstract: Papers of a Minnesota Native American peace and justice activist, artist and poet, and Roman Catholic/Anishinabe (Ojibwe) spiritual counselor and leader documenting his incarceration for participating in the Silo Pruning Hooks Plowshares disarmament action of November 12, 1984.
Quantity: 2.5 cu. ft. (3 boxes and 1 oversize folder).
Location: See Detailed Description section for box locations.

BIOGRAPHY OF LARRY CLOUD-MORGAN AND HISTORY OF THE SILO PRUNING HOOKS PLOWSHARES ACTION

Larry Cloud-Morgan, an enrolled member of the White Earth Band of Chippewa (Ojibwe), was born Lawrence Jacob Morgan on February 1, 1938 in Cass Lake (Cass County), Minnesota on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. His Ojibwe parents, Nora Rock Morgan and John Morgan, named him Lawrence Jacob Morgan, and he was baptized with this name in the Roman Catholic faith. His paternal family’s surname had been Cloud, but a doctor named Morgan had assisted in the difficult delivery of either John Morgan or his father, and the family honored the doctor by taking his name. At some point, Cloud-Morgan added “Cloud” to his legal surname. He also used the name Whitefeather, the English translation of Wabash-Ti-Mi-Gwan, his Ojibwa name, especially as an artist and writer.

Nora Morgan died shortly after Larry’s birth. He grew up in Minneapolis, where he lived with an adoptive family and attended parochial schools, and on the Leech Lake Reservation, where he spent summers with his Ojibwa-speaking grandparents and his father. He became fluent in the Ojibwa language and was strongly affected by the pietistic Catholicism of his father and the traditional Ojibwe spiritual beliefs and practices of his grandfather. These childhood experiences and influences led him as an adult to consider himself a resident of both the reservation and the Twin Cities Native American communities, to develop a deeply personal religious faith and spirituality that incorporated
not only both Catholic and Ojibwe teachings but also those of other religious and spiritual traditions, and to express these influences in his art and writings.

While a college student at Marquette University (Milwaukee), Cloud-Morgan was encouraged to become a priest and was, for a time, a seminarian at St. John’s University (Collegeville, Minnesota). He ultimately rejected the priesthood, however, and chose, instead, to pursue his artistic interests. He moved to Chicago in the 1960s to study at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He remained in Chicago for many years developing his artistic and literary talents; working as a luggage buyer for Marshall Field & Company and at the Native American Outpost, a mental health clinic; and becoming active in the Native American community and the anti-Vietnam War peace movement. He also lived in Mexico City for a time and became fluent in Spanish.

Cloud-Morgan returned to Minnesota in the early 1980s and settled in Minneapolis. He earned a living as a Native American artist, playwright, and writer/poet and devoted much of his time and energy to community involvement, social justice causes, spiritual mentoring, and peace and disarmament activism. He served as vice president of the Indian Neighborhood Club. He volunteered regularly at St. Joseph’s House Community, a Minneapolis shelter for battered women and children established in 1976 by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and operated in the tradition of the Catholic Worker movement. He was a member of Minnesota Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC), a peace and disarmament organization, and participated in and was arrested at Honeywell Project protests against the manufacture of munitions and munitions systems by Minneapolis-based Honeywell Inc.

Cloud-Morgan’s peace activism culminated in his participation in a Plowshares movement nuclear disarmament action. On November 12 (Armistice Day) four Roman Catholic peace activists calling themselves the Silo Pruning Hooks – Larry Cloud-Morgan

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1 The origins of the Plowshares international peace and nuclear disarmament movement can be traced to the faith-based segment of the Vietnam War era peace movement in the United States, when antiwar Roman Catholic priests and nuns, many of whom were active in the Catholic Worker movement, came into contact with radical secular political movements. During the 1980s, the escalation of the Cold War nuclear arms race became the focus of the American and international peace movements’ resistance, and on September 9, 1980 eight people, including Catholic peace and justice activists Daniel and Philip Berrigan and Oblate priest and missionary Carl Kabat, carried out the first of what became known as Plowshares actions. The protesters entered a Pennsylvania General Electric plant where the nose cones for nuclear warheads were manufactured; symbolically enacted the biblical prophecies of Isaiah (2:4) and Micah (4:3) by hammering on two nose cones, poured blood on documents, and offered prayers for peace. The “Plowshares Eight” were arrested; tried and convicted (in February 1981) of burglary, conspiracy, and criminal mischief; and sentenced to prison terms of from five to ten years. In April 1990, following many years of appeals, they were paroled in consideration of time already served in prison.

Subsequent Plowshares actions in the United States and abroad were similarly characterized by nonviolent but confrontational acts of civil disobedience by antinuclear peace and disarmament activists. They were intended to focus world attention on the threat posed by the growing number of nuclear weapons – notably the Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) – in order to initiate public dialogue that hopefully would result in agreements on disarmament, the development of nonviolent methods for resolving conflicts, and the creation of ways to constructively convert military-related industries into life-affirming production. The actions generally involved small groups entering military bases or weapons facilities, symbolically disarming system components, and explaining their actions; assuming personal responsibility for their resistance by awaiting arrest at the site; and continuing to bear witness by publicly explaining their actions during court proceedings and imprisonment.
Oblate priest Carl Kabat, his brother Paul Kabat, a Minnesota Oblate priest, and Helen Dery Woodson, a Wisconsin peace and justice activist – broke into a Minuteman II nuclear missile site in western Missouri; used a compressor-driven jackhammer and sledgehammers to damage the silo cover; hung a banner proclaiming their peace witness; issued biblical and Native American indictments of the United States government for the “production, deployment, and willingness to use nuclear weapons of indiscriminate mass destruction” and “desecrating the sacred earth with nuclear weapons,” and the institutional Christian Church for “complicity in preparation for mass murder;” and offered a Eucharist.

Following their arrest at the missile site, the Silo Pruning Hooks were declared a threat to the community, held by the authorities on preventive detention, and denied bond. In late November they were indicted on charges of trespass on a government installation, destruction of government property, intent to obstruct (sabotage) the national defense, and conspiracy to commit the preceding offenses. They were tried and found guilty in United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Western Division (February 1985). On March 27 they received the most severe sentences to that date of any Plowshares group (Cloud-Morgan–eight years, Paul Kabat–10 years, Carl Kabat and Woodson–18 years). In addition, they were each ordered to pay approximately $3000 in restitution and special assessments and were given varying lengths of probation. All but Woodson appealed their sentences to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. The convictions were upheld and the appeals denied on July 22, 1986.

Cloud-Morgan was incarcerated at Federal Prison Camp, Terre Haute, Indiana in April 1985. He was transferred there from Wyandotte County Jail, Kansas City, Kansas, where he and the other Silo Pruning Hooks had been confined since November 1984. He was released in March 1987 to return to Minnesota under the terms of a sentence reduction agreement that stipulated a three-year probation. On January 27, 1989 he was convicted of violating the terms of his probation (he had left Minnesota without permission to participate in peace actions at the Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base in Georgia) and was sentenced to prison for one year. For health reasons related to diabetes, he was sent to the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners at Rochester, Minnesota. He was released on November 13, 1989.

Following his release, Cloud-Morgan remained in Minnesota, dividing his time between Minneapolis and a cabin near Ball Club on the Leech Lake Reservation. He resumed his multi-faceted life as a Native American artist, dramatist, and poet; activist on behalf of peace, social justice, American Indian rights, and the environment; Roman Catholic/Anishinabe (Ojibwe) spiritual counselor, mentor, and leader; community organizer and advocate; tribal government reformer; Ojibwe storyteller, lecturer, and teacher; and Ojibwa linguist and translator.

Larry Cloud-Morgan died on June 8, 1999 at Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, Minnesota of complications caused by diabetes. He was buried in Morgan Cemetery, Wilkinson Township, Cass County, Minnesota.
SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

Cloud-Morgan’s prison papers, which date primarily from his incarceration at Federal Prison Camp, Terre Haute, Indiana, demonstrate that he remained committed to and involved in Native American culture and traditions, peace and social justice causes, religion and spirituality, and the arts during his years in prison. The papers include court and legal documents and attorney correspondence relating to the Silo Pruning Hooks’ trial, appeals, and class action suit (involving conditions of confinement in the Wyandotte County Jail); prison and parole documents; materials relating to his prison job, religious activities, educational endeavors, and assistance given to other inmates; drawings and sketches, meditations and chants, poems, and other writings that express artistically his beliefs, interests, and concerns and attest to his creative energy and talent; a small amount of outgoing correspondence, sent mostly to family and friends; a large quantity of incoming correspondence, received not only from family, friends, and acquaintances but also from numerous supporters whom he did not know; ephemeral publications of peace and justice, social service, and religious organizations; clippings; and photographs, including some of Cloud-Morgan and the Silo Pruning Hooks.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

These papers are organized into the following nine sections:

- Court and Legal Documents and Related Papers
- Prison Documents and Papers
- Inmate Law Library Materials
- Religious and Educational Materials
- Drawings and Sketches
- Writings
- Correspondence and Other Papers Sent
- Correspondence and Other Papers Received
- Photographs

RELATED MATERIALS


INDEX TERMS

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Topics:
- American poetry – Minnesota – Indian authors.
Indian art – United States.
Indian mythology in literature.
Indians in art.
Indians in literature.
Nuclear disarmament – United States – Religious aspects – Christianity.
Ojibwa art – Minnesota.
Ojibwa Indians – Minnesota.
Peace in art.
Peace in literature.
Religion in art.
Religion in poetry.
Trials (Political crimes and offenses) – United States.

Persons:
O’Connell, Carl D.
Olsen, Miriam.
Stoever, Henry M.
Strongwind.
Townsend, Norman.
Waxse, David J.
Whitefeather.

Organizations:
Federal Prison Camp (Terre Haute, Ind.).
Silo Pruning Hooks (Group).
United States. District Court (Kansas).
United States. District Court (Missouri : Western Division).
United States Parole Commission.
Wyandotte County Jail (Kansas City, Kan.).

Types of Documentation:
Drawings.
Meditations.
Photographs.
Poems.
Political prisoners’ writings, American.
Sketches.

Occupations:
Indian activists – Minnesota.
Indian artists – Minnesota.
Indian Catholics – Minnesota.
Indian poets – Minnesota.
Ojibwa artists – Minnesota.
Pacifists – Minnesota.
Political prisoners – United States.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation:
[Indicate the cited item and/or series here]. Larry Cloud-Morgan Prison Papers.
Minnesota Historical Society.
See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

Accession Information:
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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and box numbers shown below.

Location  Box  Court and Legal Documents and Related Papers:
143.C.6.6F  1  Arranged by court and case. Materials for each case are arranged chronologically.

Pretrial documents, 1984-1985:
United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Western Division. United States of America, Plaintiff, vs. Larry Cloud-Morgan, Defendant [no case no.]. Motion of the United States for a Pretrial Detention Hearing..., November 1984.


United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Western Division. United States of America, Plaintiff, vs. Lawrence Cloud-Morgan and Paul Kabat, Defendants. Case No. 84-00174-02/03-CR-W-9. Motion to Reduce or Modify Sentence: In addition to Cloud-Morgan’s motion, with exhibits, and his draft of a letter to Judge D. Brook Bartlett, includes letters from attorney Stoever, a court order regarding the decision, and Cloud-Morgan’s Conditions of Probation document (Docket No. 84-00174-01-CR-W-9), November 1986–March 1987.

United States District Court for the District of Kansas. Helen D. Woodson, Carl Kabat, Paul Kabat, Larry Cloud-Morgan, et al, and Leslie A. Cottrill on behalf of all other similarly situated Plaintiffs vs. John Quinn, individually and in his official capacity as sheriff of Wyandotte County, Kansas, et al, and the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Wyandotte, et al, Defendants. Case No. 85-3049. 5 folders: Materials relating to a class action complaint filed against illegal and unconstitutional conditions and practices encountered by the plaintiffs during their confinement in the Wyandotte County Jail, Kansas City, Kansas, March 1985–January 1987. Includes a variety of court and legal documents, notably a draft of the consent judgment and decree, letters from plaintiff attorney David J. Waxse, and photocopies of newspaper articles relating to the jail.

Prison Documents and Papers:
Federal Prison Camp, Terre Haute, Indiana documents, 1985-1986: Documents pertaining specifically to Cloud-Morgan, including an intake personal property record, an incident report involving his work in the inmate law
library, and approved visiting lists; a prison admission and orientation manual; prison memoranda and forms; two issues of “Grapevine Observer,” the prison newsletter; and programs for prison-sponsored holiday activities.

Documents relating to Cloud-Morgan’s 1986 parole application, including a prison progress report, and to his release from prison, i.e., Certificate of Mandatory Release, Notice of Release and Arrival, and Medical Record of Federal Prisoner in Transit.

Cloud-Morgan was assigned to work in the prison library. These materials indicate that he utilized its resources not only to prepare for his own court cases but to help other inmates create documents for their cases as well.
Includes Cloud-Morgan’s daily work schedule; photocopies of legal forms, publications, and documents; and documents and papers relating to other inmates’ legal cases.

Includes materials relating to several Prison Fellowship Discipleship Seminars that Cloud-Morgan attended and other religious activities sponsored by the prison, religious literature, and the State of Indiana High School Equivalency Certificate earned by Cloud-Morgan.

Drawings and Sketches:
Whitefeather (aka Larry Cloud-Morgan), undated and 1984-1986. 5 folders:
Originals and photocopies of pen and ink and pencil drawings and sketches whose content illustrate a number of Whitefeather’s/Cloud-Morgan’s interests, beliefs, and concerns – Native American culture and traditions, peace and nonviolence, nature, and religion and spirituality. The images depicted feature traditional and contemporary Native American men and women; Indian cultural objects, including peace pipes, feathers, and moccasins; landscapes, animals, and plants; Christian religious figures, objects, and symbols; and proponents of nonviolent civil disobedience he admired. Some images are used as stationery letterheads and watermarks and as
illustrations on writing paper and note cards. Some
drawings are colored; some are signed and dated, but
many are not.

Some unsigned drawings and sketches in these folders
may have been drawn by Strongwind (see below).

Strongwind (aka Carl D. O’Connell) and others, undated and

Strongwind/O’Connell was an inmate who studied
with Whitefeather/Cloud-Morgan at the Terre Haute
prison. The two became close and occasionally
collaborated on artistic projects. Strongwind’s
drawings and sketches also emphasize Native
American subjects; some are similar in style and
content to Whitefeather’s.

Location
+292

Whitefeather and Strongwind, undated and 1985.

Large prints or photocopies of selected drawings by
Whitefeather and a photocopy of a 1986 moon
calendar illustrated by Whitefeather and Strongwind,
with monthly moon meditations by Whitefeather.

Location
143.D.4.4F

Box
2

Writings:

Whitefeather (aka Cloud-Morgan), undated and 1985-1986. 3
folders.

Includes typed and handwritten final versions and/or
drafts of poems, meditations and chants, poetic and
narrative prose, and notes. Also present are print
copies of meditations clipped from The Nuclear
Resister and The Minneapolis Catholic Worker (both
1985); and a chapbook, prison meditations from
whitefeather to his relatives at st. joseph’s house
compiled at christmas time, 1985,… Like his
drawings and sketches, Whitefeather’s writings are
steeped in Native American culture and traditions and
are concerned with peace and nonviolence, spirituality
and religion, nature, and love.

Some of the writings are dated by month, day, and year
in accordance with the Gregorian calendar. A number
of them, however, are dated by month according to a
calendar that references time by the cycles of the moon
and by day. There is a key at the beginning of the
writings that correlates the names of the moon calendar
months with those of the Gregorian calendar.
Strongwind (aka O’Connell) and others, undated and 1984-1986.
   In addition to a meditation by Strongwind, includes copies of secular, religious, and Native American poetry and prose compiled by Whitefeather.

Correspondence and Other Papers Sent:
   1985-1986:
   From Whitefeather to friends and family in gratitude and appreciation in forms reminiscent of his other writings, often on stationery containing his letterhead illustrations, and dated by month according to a moon calendar (for which there is a key) and by day. Some include references to his act of resistance and to his prison experiences.

Miriam (Mim) Olsen (aka Doe Elk), 1984-1986. 2 folders.
   Doe Elk/Olsen, a Minnesota peace activist, and Whitefeather/Cloud-Morgan were close friends (at some point he was Indian affairs editor of Ox Head Press, which was founded by Olsen’s husband Don). Some of this correspondence is similar in style to Whitefeather’s formal writings, but others are written in a more informal and straightforward epistolary manner, and he is more open with Doe Elk about his prison experiences, his feelings, and his health. The majority of these items are dated by month according to a moon calendar (for which there is a key) and by day.

   Includes copies of the following items relating to the Silo Pruning Hooks action, issued and mailed on November 12, 1984: a press release, biographical sketches of the participants, texts of the biblical and Native American indictments of the United States government and the institutional Christian Church left at the site, collective and individual statements by the Silo Pruning Hooks explaining their action, and an information sheet on the Minuteman Missile. Also present is a November 1984 peace and justice newsletter devoted largely to the Silo Pruning Hooks.

Correspondence and Other Papers Received:
   Arranged by year. Within each year organized into two units: personal and organizational. The papers in each unit are not in chronological order, and some enclosures (including drawings, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and photographs) have become separated from their cover letters.
Cloud-Morgan received numerous personal cards (of which a large representative sampling has been retained) and letters – many with enclosures – not only from family, friends, and acquaintances but also from numerous individuals from all over the world whom he did not know. Most expressed support for him and appreciation of his action. Also included in the personal units are newsletters, circular letters, and other “organizational” materials sent to him by individuals and/or annotated with notes from the sender.

Most of the organizational materials are print and near-print items, including newsletters and other ephemeral publications, fund-raising and publicity mailings, and notices from organizations and institutions involved in various peace and justice, social service, and religious activities and causes.

Undated.
1984: Personal and organizational.
1985: Personal. 3 folders.
1985: Organizational. 2 folders.
1986: Personal. 9 folders.

Includes photographs of the Silo Pruning Hooks taken the day of their action; Cloud-Morgan alone and with others; family and friends of Cloud-Morgan; and scenes of northern Minnesota, including land on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation.