The names of Len and Charlie Roos don't exactly come trippingly off the tongues of Canadian film archivists or those of us passionately devoted to the early days of movies. Indeed, Barbara Boyden, the director/producer of the documentary The Invaders, was unaware that she had stepped into family footsteps in her choice of profession. But, having learned that her uncle was a intrepid newscine cameraman and between the two brothers the Roos boys trail for five years to come up with a delightful personal glimpse of a rough-and-tumble life in the infancy of film.

Oh my, they were a right pair, those Roos. In the small town of Kleinberg, Ontario, Len took a lot of portraits — Buffalo Bill, Chief Sitting Bull, and those cute ones where you put your face over a cut-out body. Len was a real go-getter — taking the movies and moving picture news, hoboing with the young Prince of Wales, going to Australia — and forever telling everyone how smart he was.

Charlie Roos made at least 16 one-reel comedies for his own company, Atlas (formed in 1915), with titles such as Parsons Slips A Cog and Booming Flop. He roped in his small son as an actor, and Bobby Roos (the filmmaker's Mum) talks about the difference between the two brothers. The Charlie was very kind and home-loving while Len wanted to impress and take all the credit.

Len and Charlie Roos made self defence, "the war's first feature," according to the record of the largest barn in Ontario in 1929 and, somewhere in the early 1920s, was manufacturing tyres and treads! Bud joined his father Charlie in making talking pictures and, among other things, filmed contests to find stars, while still turning out industrials. There's some fascinating footage of a documentary on Lockwood's Shoes and Dr. Mahon Locke who proved the Roos boys a smooth manipulation, turning his Williamsburg, Ontario, hometown into the Canadian Lourdes.

Len Roos went to Australia in 1924 and is remembered Down Under for his snappy clothes, especially trekkings into the Outback in his plus-fours! He was invited back to that country in 1926 and with an American director, Norman Dawn, took over the silent film. He was director of the Natural Life, with Len as director of photography. Clips from this film include some tinted shots, and snip...
**Films Reviews**

**THOSE ROOS BOYS AND FRIENDS**

*Will premiere at Toronto’s Festival of Festivals.


Mark Irving USC, mus. Heather Conkie Narrated by Donalda Brown; Len Roos (Barbara Boyden), voice of Len Roos (Don Franks), Charlie Roos (Ralph De Jong), Margaret Roos (Debby Boyden), Bob Roos as child (Gavin Tong), Dorothy Roos (Megan Tong), Frank O’Byrne (Charles Butler), Mother-in-Law (Vida Bruce). Made with the assistance of National Film Board of Canada. The Canada Council. The Ontario Arts Council running time 40 mins. Cost: $7.95. Availability: Film Arts, Toronto (416) 962-0181

**Pat Thompson**

**THOSE ROOS BOYS AND FRIENDS**

This charming documentary incorporates various devices to link together the archival footage and stills. Little vignettes from the lives of the Roos boys are acted out in the style of silent movies, complete with intertitles and evocative piano music. "Len Roos, cameraman in love" refers to his first marriage to Margaret (her mother came too, full of finger-wagging disapproval), and when the marriage is shaky, "Perhaps Len loves his camera more than her," with filmmaker Barbara Boyden playing her Uncle Len.

Len Roos was the one with itchy feet and he went from Canada to the U.S. to Australia, to writing yarns for *American Cinematographer* magazine from Algeria, Europe and Malaya. He opened Malayan Films in the Far East and made travelogues — we get to see an excerpt from *Alluring Bali*. At the time of Pearl Harbour, Len and his third wife were living in a house overlooking it, and he was working for Pathe. When the first bombs were dropped, both Len and his wife picked up cameras and started shooting. The stills were used in *Life* magazine, and Len was famous.

The organization of the material is admirable, given the scope of the research and Boyden’s lengthy odyssey through the background of her family. The absorbing film is a jampacked with wonderful archival footage and personal stories, all whipped into an affectionate and witty tribute to a Canadian cinematic clan.

**Carol Geddes**

**Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief**


**DOCTOR, LAWYER, INDIAN CHIEF**

*Carol Geddes, her film, the women she speaks to, and the women who remain unheard, need this recognition. And those of us who are not immediately intertwined with the personal histories of Native persecution nevertheless need to acknowledge it.

**Leila Marshy-Said**

**Drivers’ Rights**

*Jamieson, Canada’s first Native woman by health and social worker Corinne Hunt and chef Brian Jamieson. She started work on Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief and premiered it May 5 at the Women’s Shelter in Montreal.

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