

Gabriel Dumont Institute Oral History Symposium

Tape 1, Side 1: November 19th, 2004

Session 1, 10am – 12pm

Cheryl Troupe – Well, welcome everyone for coming, and thank you for participating. My name is Cheryl Troupe. I'm with the Gabriel Dumont Institute, and on behalf of the Institute and the Native Studies department, we look forward to the discussion that we are going to have over the next couple of days. I'm going to let Brenda Macdougall from the Native Studies department introduce herself as well, and then I want to say a few words about why we wanted to do this symposium and some of the things we are hoping to accomplish. So, Brenda.

Brenda Macdougall – I'm Brenda Macdougall from the Department of Native Studies and I would also like to thank everybody for coming and taking time out of what are surely busy schedules to talk about we think is a really important issue about methodology and oral traditions and oral histories. And so we very gratefully acknowledge your presence and thank you so much.

Cheryl Troupe – When we first came up with the idea for this symposium, we wanted to look at oral tradition and the relationship that people make when they do this kind of work. So, when we were coming up with people who we wanted to participate, we were really looking at a broad range of different disciplines and different ways that people have worked together, and so each of you were chosen because of that relationship. We think that each of you will have a lot to add to the discussion because of the diversity. I think what we will do is we will have everyone introduce themselves and say a little about their work, and then we will go into the presentations. But before we do that, I just want to clarify a few little things that we didn't get to. The purpose of the symposium is we want to have the material available to students, and so we are looking to publish the material in the future. This will be the informal discussion that will guide the publication, and so we are hoping that we will get a more formal paper from each of the participants in the future so that we can publish it, so that it is available to students and other researchers. So, what we will do after the symposium

is that we will provide transcripts to everyone, and they can look at the material and decide what they feel is important, what they want to share in the publication, and go from there. But we also want to make sure that each of you have a copy of the material so that you can take it back to the community that you work with, and that you can share the material with them as a learning tool, and so that you can, because that's what we want to do. We want to be able to develop some ideas as a group and then take it back to the people that we work with, so you will each be provided with that material.

Brenda Macdougall – Today, we will do the formal side of it, which is having your explanations of what you've done and how you've worked. Tomorrow, we'd like to have a much more informal conversation and share ideas, and if you have questions of each other that you will be able to ask those tomorrow. On Sunday morning, we will do a wrap up and talk about future ideas or things that we can suggest for people, as places to turn to for material and resources and that kind of thing.

Cheryl Troupe - All right, if we want to just introduce ourselves.

Brenda Macdougall – Do you want to start at it?

Ida Moore – Good morning. My name is Ida Moore and I am from Opaska Cree Nation. My formal education was here at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina. I did my graduate work here at the University in Educational Psychology, and the focus of my research was on identifying Cree methodologies of counseling and the underlying philosophies that would guide that process. Since I have graduated in 2000, I have been working in northern Manitoba as a therapist and trying to use the research that I got from the old people that I worked with and in how I conduct counsel. That is where I am coming from.

Jackie Walker – My name is Jackie Walker. I am from Nelson House, Manitoba. It is also known as Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation. I work with the Family Community Wellness Center as the Director of the Counseling Program, and I am responsible for five programs. One of the programs that I will be presenting, or talking about, throughout the two days is the Re-

discovery of Families Project, and Ida works closely with me on that project as a therapist. That project is about using the traditional skills and the traditional knowledge of our Aboriginal people, particularly the Cree people, and bringing healing or wellness into practice. I also have a degree in First Nations/Aboriginal Counseling through Brandon University, and I am also looking to pursue my master's in Education Psychology because they don't have a master's program for Counseling, especially for First Nations people or First Nations focused. That's all I have to say. Thank you for having me here. It is an honor and it is a pleasure. Thank you.

John Murdoch – My name is John Murdoch from Waskaganish. That's on the east coast of James Bay in Quebec. Usually I am, I started off in education at one time or another, I've operated an air service, and I'm back to being in education. What I've worked on, especially in the last ten years, is with the Cree Trappers Association. Essentially, having a complete high school and two years of college available in the bush and organizing it in such a way that the people who thousands of years ago, and still very much needed today, would be the teachers, are the teachers. We've accomplished a fully accredited program in terms of terminal objectives, in terms of the program being accepted by the Minister of Education for Quebec, but the problem is the reality of my people's way of operating those services in communities is still very powerful in people's minds. What I've been working on, especially in the last four or five years, is finding a natural way, a way that feels sensible to the elders, that's really the litmus test or the proof that we have got there, but in a normal relationship with children, with young children, and basically to accomplish a parent's dream of having a son or daughter eighteen years old with entrance requirements either to making a living in the bush or entrance requirements into college or university with a positive personality and a confidence that they can always rely on traditional knowledge and skills to support when wage earning employment leaves gaps. That was the promise that was made in the first pages of the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement, but it's a promise that's largely unkept right now. I've been using graduate studies as sort of an antidote to small puddle politics poison. It's been a way for me of maintaining idealism and making sure that my problems are at least interesting while we work through these things because I don't expect things to change over night. So I did a master's in Education at the University of Manitoba on syllabics as a successful educational innovation, and then I did a doctorate in Anthropology with Dick

[Preston] at McMaster University. I had most of my courses from expert witnesses or people that were involved in *Quebec Canada v. Kanawat* court case, where people developed the advantage in negotiating the James Bay Agreement. I finished a doctorate in Education at the University of Manitoba, and now I am working on a master's in Native Studies under Leroy Little Bear in Lethbridge. And they're not counting the silverware anymore there now. I think they understand why I wanted to do that. Basically, what it is, I see Native Studies, for me, as an opportunity to continue in an idealistic or scholarly way to investigate, but without the restraint of what my people think disciplines are, and I have especially enjoyed that. Leroy Little Bear is a Blackfoot with a Doctorate of Laws, and I'm quite startled by some of the things I have discovered. Oral traditions are the new target of the Crown and its strategy to extinguish Aboriginal rights in lower courts. However, what they've done is they've developed a very large body of reversible case law, and that only became apparent to me because I'm a Ph.D. in Anthropology with forty years of intimate experience in the field, doing a master's in Native Studies under a Blackfoot with a Doctorate of Laws. If you had pulled any one of those elements out of the chemistry and what I've discovered would not be discoverable. So I don't see Native Studies as the poor cousin of Anthropology, History or Education. I see it as an opportunity for idealistic and learned Aboriginal people to really explore things of importance without being bound by the boundaries that have been recognized by Euro-Canadians and their disciplines. I am not saying that it is undisciplined. I am saying it's without some of the boundaries that have really gotten in the way of a free and full study, and I should finish that by Christmas. And I'm hoping to go into a interdisciplinary Doctorate in Law and Native Studies and basically put together a cookbook for First Nations wanting to deal with Aboriginal title, fiduciary responsibility. You know, some of the issues that people are having to slog out in the courts and hopefully with the advantage of having something as clear in a lot of the negotiations that have stalled because people lack the confidence, their lacking a clear sense of recipe. The Crown might find it practical to start getting involved in honorable negotiations. But my interest in research and in education is second to a main interest in a lifestyle that has made a very large personal difference for me. I have a grandson who probably will not finish high school the way its defined in the community, and he will probably only have a chance to do what I know he is fully able to do in a high school that is accredited and respects, credits his relationship with his dad, with his mom, with his, with these older relatives. And I really see a lot of the

problems that people end up dealing with, particularly in wellness, are really the symptoms of a fundamental problem of a lack of respect of the very basis of what makes First Nations life really work. I suspected that the theories that were being advanced were rather silly long before I understood the legal principles that were also ignored, and these people being allowed to present basically prejudice in court as somehow expert testimony. And I have discovered that according to standards that are probably 150 years old in common law traditions, these experts are not qualified, and really all it is going to take is a lawyer, or a lawyer's client, who fully appreciates that, and instructs the lawyer as carefully as the lawyers were instructed in the James Bay court case in '73, to have the court respect its own rules. Basically, an expert is a person who has personal knowledge of the facts, which are the foundations of opinion, and that means that an expert who has not lived in a First Nations community is not qualified because he has no personal knowledge of the facts. It also means that oral traditions is not, is admissible hearsay, its really not very important. What's much more important is an elder who's a fully qualified expert witness. An elder is somebody who has acquired his training, and according to a Supreme Court decision that doesn't require that that be at a University, people can be trained in the field. But some of you very clearly have personal knowledge of the foundation of fact which underlie their opinion or their evidence. So, when a high school program teaches Aboriginal children the basis of their rights, which is really the basis of non-Aboriginal kids' history program, then you won't have a problem where you have people graduating from an education without the tools to defend their way of life, to defend their Aboriginal title. My interest in oral tradition, in research and so on, is incidental to, or supportive of, a deeper interest of seeing a way, survive, that has done me personally a lot of good, and is very important to a lot of people, and will continue to be very precious to me. Now I realize that makes me, I'm not objective, but I've never been accused of being objective before anyway, so that's not a serious problem for me. That's a very long introduction. It's your turn Dick.

Dick Preston – Okay. Hi, I'm Dick Preston. I'd like to thank Cheryl and Brenda for inviting me to be here. I am a retired anthropologist, and my background for this conference is in stories that I started collecting from a man by the name of John Blackned. And also after that collaboration had gone on for some years, I got involved with John Murdoch, and there

is a collaboration there to be reported. So it's been a career-long, or a long career, love of stories, basically, that I bring to this and we'll get into that.

Keith Carlson – My name is Keith Carlson and I'm in the History department at the University of Saskatchewan. I formerly worked in a formal capacity with the Sto:lo nation, the indigenous people of the lower Fraser River and the lower Fraser watershed in British Columbia. I'd like to thank both Cheryl and Brenda for inviting me here today and letting me participate and learn from what's going on here. I'm quite eager to hear what everybody has to say. I don't want to talk myself too long. I guess by way of introduction in terms of what I do and how I do what I do, it would be fair to say that I come out of a classic history training background and have been increasingly trying to have my research with and about and for Aboriginal people move from seeing Aboriginal people in Canadian history to getting to the point where I think I was starting to see Canadian people in Aboriginal history, and now getting to the point where sometimes the Canadian society doesn't matter too much. It's trying to see as much as I can the history going in within the community and where Europeans, colonizers, settlers, come into that history. I let it sort of move in organically as much as I can. I am very indebted, too, and conscious of the elders and community people that I have worked with me in the past. In particular, I should mention, especially if this is going to be shown potentially in the community, Wesley, Sam and Andy Commodore, Nancy Phillips, Jimmy Charlie, Rosalind George, and **Tilly Cateris (Unknown Spelling)**. There's others, but those are the one's that perhaps have had the most profound influence on me, and I thank them and I keep them in mind, even though some of them have passed on, as I do the work to make sure that its respectful to, as best I can, the way they shared it to me. I think that's all I can say by way of introduction.

Albert McHalsie (aka Sonny) – I also would like to thank Cheryl and Brenda for inviting me to participate in this symposium, as well. My name is **Nahahksee (Unknown Spelling)** also known as Albert McHalsie. Everyone calls me Sonny. I always like to share a little about my last name, McHalsie, because a lot of people tend to think that I must come from a Scottish background to have that name. I guess it wouldn't be so bad if I didn't look so Scottish, but the history of that name is that my grandfather as a young boy was known as **Bokupsch (Unknown Spelling)**. As he got older, he was known as **Nahahksee**

(Unknown Spelling). As an elder he was known as **Meschk (Unknown Spelling)**. When he was baptized by the early missionaries, he was given the name Antoine, and then when the Department of Indian Affairs came to the community to register my grandfather, the only name he had was Antoine. He didn't have a surname, so he asked my grandfather what he wanted for a surname. So he said that he wanted his two adult names, **Meschk (Unknown Spelling)** and **Nahahksee (Unknown Spelling)**, so the Indian Agent wrote down McHalsie. So that's where I get that last name. In the formal long house setting, where I am called as a witness, or participate in any of the passing down of the histories, my formal name is **Nahahksee (Unknown Spelling)**. I work in the Aboriginal rights and title department at Sto:lo nation. I've been working there for nineteen years now. I started out as the cultural researcher and became the cultural advisor, and now the Treaty director, there. My department mainly provides technical support to the Treaty negotiating team who are now negotiating a Treaty within the BCTC process back in B.C. Not only are we providing technical support, our department also looks at developing our own capacity as a self-government, basically administering different policies, such as our heritage policy, our environmental policy and different things such like that. Plus, one of our major challenges, as well, is to ensure that there is a lot of cross-cultural awareness that happens because we are dealing with the general public, and we know that at the end, whatever treaty comes about, that they need to understand what our relationship is to the land. So we also, we developed a cross-cultural awareness process that allows us through the publications and through the involvement of historians and anthropologists, such as Keith here, to their involvement with us to produce publications that educate the public through various means. Not only publications, but other ways as well, to inform them what our relationship is to the land, so when it comes time for the finalization of the treaty that people will understand there. Thank you.

Winona Wheeler – My name is Winona Wheeler. My family originates from George Gordon's First Nation and I presently belong to the Fresh River First Nation, close to Tat, Manitoba. My Ph.D. was in Interdisciplinary Comparative Ethnic Studies at the University of California-Berkley, and when I first arrived there my original intention was to do a dissertation on indigenous women and resistance, historical context, until someone told me don't even try and do oral history, it's not worth the fight. At that point, I shifted after two

years of course work, shifted my dissertation topic entirely to oral history as subject. My purpose was to critique the academy and determine, for myself mostly, what the big problem was. Why did they have such difficulty with oral history? And how did they rationalize it in their own minds? So my dissertation was finished in 2000. I am presently working at the First Nations University of Canada in an administrative position, and I haven't actually been able to ply my trade for many years, so it is really fun and exciting for me to be here amongst you all, amongst those who are still actually practicing. It is something I sorely miss and very much look forward to getting back to. I am on a similar wavelength with John Murdoch on my critique of expert witnesses, so in the interlude I have dabbled in some critique in that area, and I have done a little bit of oral history in my administrative job, but not very much. I will go into the stuff I am doing later.

Maria Campbell – I'm Maria Campbell, and I was born and raised in Westside, Saskatchewan. It is known as Park Valley, and our community is no longer there—it was a Road Allowance community. My family background: my parents were trappers, as were the rest of the people in our community, and I grew up in that culture. My first language is Cree, my second language is Michif. I've been working with elders since about 1968. I went to them, first of all, to ask questions, and ended up staying with them, and I guess it was re-learning what I had left when I left home. They sent me off to university to teach in the 1990's, not because I wanted to be there, but that's where they told me that I should be because that's where our young people were. So that was how I ended up at university. After I was there for several years, I was sort of encouraged to become a student and I went into a graduate program without the undergraduate work. So I really went in with old people's stuff and it's been a real struggle, but it has also been a real learning experience for me and I'm still struggling with the dissertation. The young women that I worked with in community stuff is one of the people who sits on my committee, so its been kind of, sometimes she has to get after me, and I'm glad to be here. I think it's really exciting and it's a dream of mine to see scholars and community people coming together and talking about how we can bring those things from our community, those teachings into the classroom. So I really hear you, John, when you talk about that. And it was the dream of my elders and my father. I want to thank Brenda and Cheryl, as well, because they've worked really hard to pull this together,

and I am looking forward for the next two days. I'm sure I'm going to learn all sorts of things and will probably go and begin a new thesis again.

Brenda Macdougall – Okay, so thank you, and I guess we will get started with Maria and Winona as the first formal presenters. About half an hour, forty minutes, something like that. We'll wave.

Winona Wheeler – I guess Maria has asked me to go first. I'm not sure why, but I'll do it. I guess, first of all, I want to expand on my formal greeting. I think it's really fascinating and inspiring for me to be at this table with people whose work I am related to. Maria, because she is a relative, and I have been working with her for many years. I've known Brenda for many years. Ida and I have known each other. I've just met you. We share a common critique interest. I've read your work for years. You're brand new to me, but I worked among your people back in the late 70's and the early 80's, when I first started getting into history as a land claim researchers in the specific claims portfolio with the B.C. Indian chiefs under the late Mary Lou Andrews. She was my first formal teacher of history, and so it's a really eclectic crew, and it feels really good to be here.

I think that's where I wanted to start, in terms of who we are. I'm a displaced Cree. I was born on Vancouver Island, and I had very strong grandparents that wouldn't let go of us in this age of dispersal in the 50's and 60's. Our grandparents had grandchildren from New York City to Vancouver Island, and they made annual rounds. And they would come and stay with us for a couple of weeks, a couple of years, sometimes for a few months, and they never let go of any one of us. So there I was, out in Nuchatlaht's territory on Vancouver Island where we were definitely an outsider according to their hierarchy and their social structure, and my grandparents would come out and they would be invited into the community ceremonies as elders because my grandmother would bring her dress. My grandfather would bring his jacket and they would bring their songs, and so my grandparents were my introduction into Nuchatlaht society, and they created a space for us there.

That's where I grew up. I grew up between cultures. I grew up a first generation urban half-breed Treaty Indian in Nuchatlaht territory with Cree, Saulteaux, Assiniboine, Irish, English background. And so I was born and I was raised on multiple boundaries, and my grandparents taught us very early how to negotiate those boundaries and how to get

along with people, and I think one of the most important lessons they taught me, which I hope I do service to their memory with the rest of my life, is how to be a good guest, how to behave yourself when you're in somebody else's territory, somebody else's home. How to go in there with gifts, whether it is a pot of coffee or whether it is your manual labor, and there is where my first training came from, from my grandparents who taught us how to be good guests, how to be respectful, how to clean up somebody's house if they've invited you to stay there. How to look after old people, how to shovel potatoes, how to clean fish and make fish head soup and all sorts of other wonderful things. Hang out with the old ladies and can salmon until the wee hours of the morning for weeks on end sometimes. And so I am ever so grateful to my grandparents for that, and in this modern times of dispersal and people being displaced and estranged from their communities, I was among the very fortunate that had a strong family grounding that wouldn't let go of us, wouldn't throw us away, and didn't let us disappear or assimilate into the mainstream. So I'm very fortunate and gifted that way.

My mother was one of the first Aboriginal people in Canada to go into the media. I'm actually right now doing what's called, what I've called, a pictorial memoir with my mother, who is very ill, she's living with cancer, and interviewing her about her life because she was seventeen and a disc jockey up in Churchill, Manitoba. She was the first Aboriginal DJ that I know of in Western Canada. And I found some old pictures in my father's, my late father's photo album. And because my mother has been a journalist all her life, she is the *crème de la crème* of interviewers. I can't compete. She critiques me, so I decided I'm not asking her any questions. What I do is I get an old photograph and I blow it up. I put it in front of her and I turn on the tape recorder. I don't say a word and I just watch her memory, just watch how it triggers, and it really is a fascinating process because then my Mom gets impatient and she says, "what else now, what else do you want, what do you want to hear?" Then I just look at her, and she goes, "Okay, okay," and she looks really hard again and "poof," something else will come to her mind. So my mother also taught me as a child, how to listen and how to respect, and again I hope I do service to her teachings in my professional work and otherwise.

And then I ended up in British Columbia working for the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, only after I had been fired from a law firm because I refused to do research on the Cowichan Indian band for the town of Duncan. And the law firm I was working for was defending the town of Duncan against a claim made by the Cowichan band. So I got fired,

and then a friend of mine hired me at the Union to do specific claims research, and I didn't even know where to start. I didn't even have a grade twelve education. So my training in history came from Mary Lou Andrews, and the way she trained me was to send me out to the communities. So I would get a band council resolution giving me permission to do research on this particular reserve, by this particular band, and I would have a photocopy of a map on where the reserve was, and off I went. And I had to go and visit people, and I would end up in communities where I didn't know a soul, a young woman in her early 20's, and the community would look after me. I often stayed in a chief's or councilor's house, and on many occasions I had to share beat up old metal beds with little girls because there were only so many beds in a house. You know those old beds that sag in the middle? I had the biggest one in the middle and I had kids on top of me.

I would end up on trap lines. I would end up hiking through the bush, riding the backs of pick-up trucks and being driven around in four wheelers by old men who couldn't see. Scary. The way those old people taught me about the history of that land was through their relationships with that land, and so my first real formal training in history came from those people who wanted me to know their land intimately and their relationship to that land—that was history to me, that's how I understood history. And so we would go out onto the land with these old people, or I would on my own, and they would tell me stories. Tell me stories about this rock, or this old rotten car that's all deteriorating, or the notches on that tree over there, or this abandoned beaver dam over here, and it was fascinating. You were there and the land was there. It touched you, and you became a part of the history.

With that, I then went to the archives and started to do archival research in support of the band's claim, and so that's how I learned to do history. I found myself with a couple of little hippie lawyers in our gumboots, going into federal court with a team of Department of Justice lawyers and Ph.D'd historians. We'd have our little apple box full of papers and they would have their files on rollers, and we usually pulled out pretty good, we did well. But I was always fearful that I would miss something, that I wasn't trained, I didn't have the same skills as those white guys on the other side of the table with their PhD's. And I was scared to let down that community that had so much faith in us, so much faith in our ability to present their claim fairly and with integrity, and so that is what sent me into university. And, of course, university tried to kill it. "That's not how you do history" is how I was taught in university, and it was very hard, very hard to survive in university. It was a big

battle for me because everything I had been taught was thrown out the window, or ridiculed, or ignored, and so I had to find a tremendous amount of support amongst my family and friends and community to keep myself in there. I had a tremendous amount of support actually, and I had to learn how to do it their way because I learned real early that the only way to take apart the enemy was to learn the enemy well. Since I still perceived myself as a land claims researcher, and these historians were usually the one's hired by the other side, I had to learn what made them tick. So it was a long, drawn out process.

I didn't use oral history, at least openly, in my undergraduate or master's level, because I wasn't, at that point in my mind, strong enough to fight them. I was the first Indian in the honours program in history at the University of Manitoba. I did a community history of Fisher River First Nation and it was grounded on oral history. I was out in the community, I was doing research out there. The paper that I did was based on archival documents, but the oral history shaped the direction I took in my research. But I didn't bring it in as evidence. I think maybe one or two. That was about it. My master's was shaped by my grandmother and our family histories, but there wasn't a single oral history source of evidence in my master's either because, again, I was the first Indian at UBC to do a master's in history, and I didn't feel that it was safe and I didn't feel that I was strong enough yet to fight for it. So it's been a long journey.

I met Maria when I was 13 years old, a little urban Indian kid in Winnipeg, and Maria was a good friend of my mother's. I was, again, like I say, fortunate and very honored and very privileged to be surrounded by strong women and a strong family. Women who were door kickers, movers and shakers. They cleared huge paths for us to follow behind, and I don't think I can ever say it enough that I am so grateful to them and to Maria, to my mother, especially, for opening doors for us in our generation, and made life that much easier with all their hard work and sacrifices. Maria wrote a book and my mother gave it to me and said, "Read this." And I read this, and this beautiful lady came over to visit, and my mother whispered, "This is the one who wrote that book." And I was in awe. I was in absolute awe. And then we went and listened to your readings and you stayed at the house, and I was one of the kids that just kind of hung around and peered around the doors and listened to the adults talk because I was always a nosy kid. That was my first meeting with Maria. And over the years we kept in contact on and off, on and off.

I guess our working relationship began when we were both here at this campus and Maria came to teach here, and it was a very exciting time because I think it was the first time the university, the mainstream, actually accepted an instructor who didn't have a university degree. But we fought tooth and nail for Maria to come in and teach indigenous literature, Native literature. And it was a fun fight and the timing was perfect, and Maria came in and taught with us. And we started to visit and we started to travel together, and the traveling together is one of the strongest bonding mechanisms people can have because you are cramped up together in a vehicle for short durations and long durations. Some of our trips that should have only taken us nine hours took a few days because of her propensity for second-hand stores. Every one along the way we knew, along the route, and it was a wonderful experience for me, and it still is to hang out with Maria and to travel with her and to learn with her. We've indulged in many different experiences together and one of the things that I can say about this is that we have done community development work together, we have done teaching work together, we've done ceremonial work together, we have done a whole range of things together, and it is all part of it. It's all part of the teaching and the sharing of experience and knowledge and history.

Maria Campbell – And the really neat thing about doing that is that I didn't have a degree and I couldn't understand half of the things that I was reading. I didn't know what words like pedagogy or epistemology meant, but in traveling together we would have discussions about those words. I would say, "Well, what does this mean?" And so she would talk about it because Winona is a teacher, and try and break it down for me. And then what I would do, in turn, is, "Well, how would we say that in our language? You know, what would that mean?" So she would ask me those questions, and we would try to find the meaning of that word. I started to realize that, for me, this was really, it was something that I had known, but I didn't have a way to prove it when, you know, we talk about not being able to talk oral traditions in and use it as proof. I think what it did for me, it made me, first of all, look at my father in a whole different way because I realized my father has a Ph.D. and beyond that with all of the knowledge that he has and not just in one area. Not just in literature, he also, if we were giving out Ph.Ds, he would have it in his knowledge of the environment and natural resources, and there was a whole lot of things.

So she would do this with me. We would talk about these words and then I would go back to my father and other old people that I was working with, and I would say, "This is what I learned." This is really what they had sent me off to school for or sent me there to teach. I guess they hoped that I would come back with questions for them. One of the things that we're taught today is that elders don't like to be questioned, and I totally disagree with that. I grew up with really traditional old people. My great-grandmother was a non-Christian, she spoke no English and she encouraged us to ask questions. She encouraged us to ask questions and to talk to her. That is what we did in the evenings. My father was the same way and all of the old people in our community. I don't ever remember anybody telling us we had to be quiet. We knew from the time we were really young that there were times that you were quiet, you had to be. But when it came time for us to talk and storytelling was happening, when stories were finished, we could ask questions and that was encouraged. The elders that I worked with in 60's and 70's also encouraged the same thing. I always had lots of questions, but I didn't have another place to take them and when I met Winona I was able to do that.

At the time that she was teaching, my children were going to university, so I had this whole wonderful thing happening. That she is a friend of my daughter's and they would be visiting, and we would end up spending half of the night talking about all of these, you know, things that the old people would talk about. We would try to find words in English to translate those to and how does that apply to the community. It wasn't, we never looked at just traditional knowledge, at least that's, you know, its always been really eclectic. We looked at ceremonies, we looked at songs, we looked at stories. You know, what was happening when this story was translated? There were times I remember picking up a story that had been translated from our area in 1922 and it was published in a historical journal, but I couldn't understand because I knew the old man. I couldn't understand why it was translated this way, but I didn't know a whole lot about history, and this was where, you know, I started to learn to look at things in a context. I look at them in my own context, but not at the context outside, and Winona would say, "This is what is happening at this particular time in this area." So, really, it just broadened the way that I was able to look at information and knowledge that I had received at home. And then, to be able to go back, we have most of these elders have now passed away. There is only a couple left, but one in particular who was my elder for a long time, my Grandfather. He loved having this kind of dialogue, so there

were times when I would take Winona over to visit him and it was like he would take us to other places in Cree.

The other thing that I wanted to say is that I speak Cree. Winona doesn't speak Cree, but she writes syllabics and she also writes Cree. So, when elders would be talking, she would be writing. She could write down what they were saying or else I could say, "Well, this is the story." Then she'd be able to write it down, and then we'd figure it out after what we were going to do with that story. But I've never been able to write Cree. I can do it phonetically, but it just takes forever then to try and decipher what I have written, whereas she spent one summer in my home learning just syllabics, which was something that I never learned either. So lots of good discussions and its been a very reciprocal because I have been able to share. And it's not that I have a whole lot to share, but because I over the years learn to speak Saulteaux as well. I've been able to be a bridge between my father's, my grandfather's, my uncle's generation and her, and I have been able to move information back and forth. I'd be sharing that knowledge with her, but she was also giving it back to me and teaching me, which is, what I believe, is supposed to happen. I think old people need younger people to be able to help them understand the information that they carry. It's certainly worked that way with the old people, and my questioning them and talking to them. The knowledge and information that I have, which isn't a great deal, but what I do have, I'm able to better understand it as a result of my visits with her.

Winona Wheeler – I can't tell you how much my relationship with Maria has meant on a personal level, both in terms of my emotional and spiritual development, but also my professional development. I had to take a sabbatical to finally buckle down to do my dissertation—you know how those things are. I was in the city, it was February, I'm trying to write, I'm going crazy. So I moved out to Maria's in late spring, out at the Crossing, and I took, I don't know, ten boxes of books and my computer, and my flannelette sheets ...

Maria Campbell – She learned how to cook traditional food.

Winona Wheeler – I moved into her place and I set up my office in her spare bedroom, and I had about 150 books and articles that I had to catch up on because there was a big lag between when I finished my course work and when I started writing, and a whole lot

published in the meantime. So I had a wonderful summer reading 150 books and articles with Maria right there. I would find something really interesting or I would find something that made me mad and I'd go race in the house or race out to the field, and I would say, "Look at what this guy said, and look at what this person said," and we'd sit down ...

Maria Campbell – Which is where I met you ...

Unknown – That's right!

Winona Wheeler – So we'd sit down. We'd talk all about this fellow and his methods, and it was really fun for me because when you write a dissertation it is the most lonely experience of your life, and if your writing about a subject that's [an] innately human relationship, it's so bizarre. I mean, what kind of situation, you know, you find yourself in. It's totally alien to you. And so I had the comfort zone of Maria being there to dialogue with me, to keep me alive and human, and speaking and listening and learning and growing along with these dead pieces of paper that tweaked ideas. But then those ideas would then come to fruition here.

Maria Campbell – See, she would read something to me and then we'd spend the afternoon cleaning a moose nose or something, and then I would find out not only would I meet the person that she was reading, but I would also end up finding out how much knowledge was involved in just a moose nose. We don't think about that. But it also made me, helped me, or directed me, I don't know what to call it, to start to look at women's knowledge. Women in our history have been really, very little is written about them. I was looking at something not long ago, and out of ten pages there was three lines that said yes, in 1768 women were also trapping beaver, although they were only able to sell the small ones. That's not very much when you think of what was happening during that time. But working with a historian, cleaning a moose nose, she starts to ask you all kinds of questions.

And you know, I know all this stuff because I grew up with a great grandmother that was a hundred years old, and I remember the stories. So I'd share them with her, and then she was able to say "wow, look at this" and as a result of that I was able to start to understand a whole lot of things about women. And I also started to understand something that I always knew, but I didn't know how to put into words, and that was how our

relationship to the land, that that's where identity comes from. And place names. I found that when I would say, "Well, we used to go here," and that was, you know, "I can remember my grandmother cleaning this moose nose in this place," and when I had to first do it that it was easier to talk about it using Cree, Cree words, even if she didn't speak the language. You could use those words and then, well, "What does that mean?" I ended up calling those things—today I call them word bundles because one word is like a huge bundle. I always think that, you know, we are told that we lost so much, and we did because of colonization, but on the other hand we really didn't. When you start to take words apart, not the way that a linguist would take them apart because I tried that and it didn't work, but when you look at them from a traditional place, and by that I mean from the place that you come from, and you look at a word. You look at this whole sentence and then you take that one word—what does that mean? And you find out all the stories that are in that word, the knowledge, the teachings. You can find out about men's stuff and women's things and things about children in just one word and end up with this. Always reminds me my grandma used to have these blankets. Somebody would give her a blanket and she would put all kinds of stuff in there, and then she stick it under her bed. And then, months later, you'd be helping her to clean, you'd pull these bundles out and it would be just full of stories because she'd forget she had them, and then would tell you stories as she pulled out each thing. That's what these word bundles remind me of. One word can give you so much.

But all of that, again, came from working with a scholar who is very curious, and I remember one elder telling us one day, because she asked the question. We were traveling in the north, and she said, "Well, how come elders always like anthropologists and all these old, you know?" Like you think, why would old people want to spend time with these people who, when you've come through the radical 60's and 70's, you don't think like that? I remember having him say, "Because they ask them questions." You need to ask your elders questions, and I thought it's true because that is what our elders did when we were young, they encouraged us to ask those questions. So, as a teacher in a school, it is one of the things that I constantly tell students, and in particular our own students, is ask questions, ask questions. Because if we don't ask questions we don't have these old people, [they] aren't here for long. If we don't ask them those questions we're not going to, we're going to lose all of that information.

Winona was talking about starting out in British Columbia. My very first time working with oral tradition, I was also hired by the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs. I'm sure all of us have come through that at one time or another. But George, I worked with George in the late 60's, and I did a lot of, I did writers workshops, that's what I would call them. I'd go into the community, I would be invited into a community to do writers workshops, but really they were kind of organizing workshops under the guise of writers workshops. But George asked me if would come into British Columbia to do that, and I was sent into these little northern, these little communities in the northern part and the interior of British Columbia, and then all through the mountains. We'd have these workshops, and we'd bring the elders in and tell stories, and then we'd look at what knowledge was in those stories. I remember meeting some really amazing old people in the North. They had a different history and so looked at things in a different way. But I find that oral tradition, which means all kinds of things, is the most liberating.

I can't think of, I remember in the 60's being a part of the Red Power movement and all those kinds of things, and walking around with Karl Marx and it just didn't liberate me, didn't do it. And I kept moving on to something else, but it was going back to those stories that I found. It was like somebody gave me a key to liberation, and I see that a lot with students with younger people. Listening to those stories. You know, even if you don't speak the language it doesn't matter because we are taught in our traditions that those things are there, they're in our body and all we need to do is find the right word to trigger all of those things to come back, and that can be done in ceremony. Which is one of the difficulties about writing, in doing academic writing, because how do you say you know that? "Well, I got this information from a ceremony." I haven't figured out how to do that, so I don't even try. But being able to talk to Aboriginal students about those kinds of things and tell them, "Don't feel bad because you don't speak your language. It's not your fault you don't speak it, and there is nothing you can do about it right now. So just, you know, instead, just work with what you got and the old people will find a way to open those channels up for you."

Winona Wheeler – I think we're just about out of time, and we haven't got to what have been the results. We haven't published a doggone thing, and one of the reasons we haven't is because we're, well, there is many reasons why we haven't. We do wonderful work together,

we teach together. In fact, we're co-teaching again in January a theory and methods in oral traditions research class at First Nations University, and it's a wonderful class. When you got a classroom full of Aboriginal students who all have some experiential knowledge to contribute, it's just an amazing place to be, and we both learn so much while were teaching. And so you'd think, we've taught a course, we should have enough lecture notes to spit out a book, but it's the bringing together of those sacred, those traditional and those other sources of knowledge that don't fit the prescription of a book. That's where the major barrier is for us.

And Maria is right, you know, when I was doing my thesis, my master's thesis, I mean, I had dreams that helped me answer questions that I was confronted with or helped me explain things. Well, you can't footnote that, and so we haven't had the opportunity. We both have very busy lives anyway is sometimes our big excuse. But we haven't yet been able to pull together how we want it pulled together, and until we're ready and until that happens, it's not going to happen because we can't do it prematurely. It's got to be done carefully and cautiously and respectfully. We can speak about it. We've talked about a lot. We teach about it a lot together, but we haven't quite reached the point where we can write it yet.

Tape 1, Side 2: November 19th, 2004

Session 1, 10am - 12pm

Winona Wheeler – ...you know, number 10 here—Explain your issues, problems, concerns about publishing, recording, sharing, knowledge with the researcher. I guess were both the researchers, it's a collaborative venture in most instances. The majority of the time, it's me, the student. Our methods are unorthodox. They're in pick-up trucks and four-wheel drive trucks heading down highways at two in the morning. Sometimes I was lucky and snapped on a tape recorder between two people talking. Usually it's on the front porch. There is no prescribed methodology that would fit the textbook version. It's a natural, I think, fluid and organic relationship that results in the sharing of understanding and knowledge. And I guess that could be what's called the indigenous research method package. The learning is on going, there is never closure. It happens in all contexts, whether we have to go to a second store with an old lady because when you're going through the bargain bins, memories get triggered left, right and center. It's just great. But is that an orthodox methodology, you

know? A lot of the Jan Van Seena types would be totally appalled that it wasn't a regulated, you know, an almost....

Maria Campbell – One of my teachers was an old lady, **Sienkampashu (Unknown Spelling)**, she was the granddaughter, or the daughter-in-law, of Big Bear, and she was a 103, I think, when she passed away. And that was how I worked with her. I drove her around to visit relatives, to go in shopping. Go into, she loved second-hand stores, so that's where I got addicted to second-hand stores, and it was like every time I would take her into a second-hand store and she would start to look at fabric, you know, cloth, because she would look at it as fabric that she could, dresses she could take apart and make a blanket, I guess. But she would remember stories and I learned more things about Big Bear digging in those bins than I did sitting in her house trying to interview her, except that I never had a tape recorder, so I would be following her around with a note book, and then I couldn't do that because she wanted me to do other work with her. I have two elders that I work with now that are in their eighties, and it's the same thing with them. I'll spend time with Winona, then I spend time with them, so its almost like we're going this way, but it's not. But we're not working on a project, and then the information that I get from them and then gets sifted through her, ends up with other people that I work with. It never seems to be any time, and it's knowledge that belongs in different places. Sometimes it's about place names and genealogies or it's about women. You start to take that apart and say, "Well, here's, look at what we found this time."

Protocols, I think I just wanted to say something about them because that's the other thing that I have lots of, I really struggle with that. All of the old people that I have worked with have always been generous. I have never had to come up with a huge sum of money or anything. Usually its tea, cookies, or this driving around, or whatever it is that they want me to do, split wood, or haul water. Although I have paid, I've given horses away, too, because I've wanted something, but it was me out there looking for it. But what do I do, how do I use that information because they're very, they make it very clear what I can use and what I can't use, although they don't say, "Well, this stuff you can write and this stuff you can't." They don't say it that way. So I have to spend sometimes years trying to sort out what it is that I can use if I'm going to write and what I can't. Sometimes I think maybe I'm not even supposed to be writing some of this stuff down, that I'm supposed to be doing what I'm

doing with it, and that's sharing it either in ceremonies or in classrooms. Because how I understand it this week is not how I understood it a year ago. Somebody can ask a question and it will take me to a whole different place, and I think, *Why didn't I see that then?* But I think of one old man in particular who told me, "Well, don't worry about remembering it because when you need it, it will be there." Now, how do you explain that, because that's usually what happens. Something will happen and I'll know what it is that I am supposed to do, but if I'm trying to remember it I don't, just for the sake of talking. And so what do you do about protocol? I'm not even sure all the time what protocol means. Right now, it just seems like give tobacco and give an offering, but to me protocol is much more than that. It's very hard to explain what that means. I know that there is an incredible responsibility. I feel that all the time.

And sometimes the responsibility isn't necessarily a land claim. I would be terrible as an expert witness or anything because sometimes, you know, an example of that is all of the hunting stuff, hunting rights and things that a lot of the struggle is over. I was raised where everything, nothing was wasted, and you didn't go out and hunt for the sake of hunting. My teachings, the way that I understand them and the way that I was taught about food and animals, is that you, what does hunting rights mean? For somebody to have hunting rights, does that mean that we go out and kill animals, and those are our relatives? How can we say that they are part of our family if we do that? So, what do you do with those kinds of things, because we've lost a lot of the teaching and how we are supposed to hunt. People just go out and turn the light on and shoot an animal. So how could you, how would you work with that if you were an expert witness and you were called to do that. I know that my father refused to do that because he felt that some people shouldn't be hunting, they shouldn't be allowed to hunt. So protocols are not just protocols to old people. Protocols are to the land, protocols are to all of our relatives, and I'm not quite sure what to do with that in the academic world or how to talk about it even, how to articulate it. It's not hard to articulate it if we're doing it in our own language, but how do we do it in English? That's all I can think of right now.

Winona Wheeler – I think we went over our time anyway. Thank you.

Brenda Macdougall – We will pick up with Sonny and Keith. However you want to structure yourselves.

Sonny – Okay. I guess a little more about the introduction of myself. My father was **(Unknown Word)**, my mother was Sto:lo. They both spoke their languages fluently, but they were both different enough that the household language was English. I was able to pick up a little about our culture and tradition when I was younger, but I didn't attend residential school. I attended public school and I did, I was involved in archeology, and that is the reason I was hired as the cultural researcher when I first started this job, [it] was because of my background in archeology. Although that was a very minimal involvement, my first two weeks work with archeology was actually just back-filling the pits, and then there was following the others actually doing some excavating. But based on that I was hired as a cultural researcher. So very little exposure, I guess, to culture and tradition. So as my job as cultural researcher was to go out and interview elders and collect all kinds of information in regards to place names, in regards to fishing sites, the backgrounds of fishing sites, photographing the sites.

My main expertise, I guess, comes from place names, interviewing elders, talking about the history of places, taking them out to these places. Looking at some of the various previous works of other anthropologists and historians, and seeing what sort of things they had gathered on that, and then going out and talking to the elders and gathering further information on that. So that was back in 1985, when I first started this job. I work for the Aboriginal Rights and Title department, and early on we had established that it was important for us to involve certain experts. Like one of our teachings is that we need to respect the beliefs and teachings of others, and so we knew that we needed to involve experts. So we had hired an anthropologist whose basic background was archeology. But at the same time, we are trying to develop our capacity within our department with very limited resources, so that particular person that was working for us also spread himself too thin and was trying to be the historian, trying to be the genealogist, trying to be the environmentalist, trying to be the economic development officer. And so that resulted in not doing a very good job in each of those areas. As time went on, we started trying to look at other experts, and then that's how Keith and I had met.

Keith was invited by the chiefs to do some work in looking at the traditional structure of our leadership because at the same time we were developing our capacity as a self-government. We wanted to look at just how did we want to structure out government and we wanted to incorporate some of the traditional aspects of that, and that's how Keith came into the picture. When Keith came in, we also started other research as well because there are other aspects of our culture that were being researched, and this other archeologist who was doing some research for us had started this one subject. Very shallow research and Keith had come in and using his background as a historian actually took that information and delved into it quite deeper, going to Victoria, going down to the States. I had seen his report on it and I was quite impressed with how much information that he had gathered and the methodology that he incorporated into doing that, and so I really seeing something in Keith and the benefits that we would get from his employment with our department. So that's how we first met.

Our development of our relationship slowly evolved. We have become very good friends. We've reciprocated with each other in various levels of our own personal lives together, our own understandings of spirituality. I think it's an important part of the relationship. I have my own spirituality that I don't try to impose it onto Keith. Keith has his own spirituality that he doesn't try to impose on me. I respect his spirituality, he respects mine. We are both are aware of that and we maintain that as we go. Also, I have a good respect for his background as a historian. Like I mentioned earlier, that one of our teachings is to respect other peoples beliefs and teachings. So I respect that as well, and part of our development of our relationship, too, is based on how his background as a historian. He's able to provide context to certain things that I have an understanding of. Most of my information that I carry is from elders where I've gone out and interviewed elders, talked to elders about certain things. And a lot of times, some of the things that elders raise to me I don't really have a, I'm not sure where it fits or what the importance of it is. Sometimes you can have something in your head for twenty years before finally you go, "Wow, that's why this is important." And so quite often because Keith came in and has a background as a historian and he is able to look at some of the historical aspects of our culture and our history, he's able to look at some of the questions that are being raised that we need to answer in the negotiations of the Treaty, or that we need to answer, you know, because of the curriculum development that we are working on, or whatever. He's able to provide some

sort of context to that, and I was able to see where because he was able to ask questions, that I could say, “Oh.” I’d have an answer for that because someone had told me something and I didn’t really know where to fit it, so we’re able to develop that. I respect his academic background. I don’t have an academic background myself, just the information that I have collected from the elders.

There is a number of projects that we have worked on, and those projects, there is a lot of projects we worked and some of them we have actually seen results from. Like for instance, we have the three books, *Your Asked to Witness, I am Sto:lo*, and then also the historical atlas. There’re some projects that we have started, or things that we have spoken about that are just kind of sitting there and waiting for. There is going to be an opportunity or a time in the future where we will probably pull that information out and make something of it. Just one example I guess is the very first work that I had seen Keith do was on the “Lynching of Louie Sam.” And this was back in 1992, I believe, when he first started working for us and he did that report on that, and it was published in a journal and then it just kind of sat there. And its only recently, right now, there’s actually a documentary that was done on it this year that is going to be released quite soon, you know, so there’s the fruition of that work. Something that started when we very first started working together, and now there is going to be a documentary that will appear on the Nature of Things and APTN and other places as well.

And so when I think about it, there’s are a lot of other opportunities that we have because there’s are a lot of different issues that when Keith was doing his research, where he would find little tidbits of different things and he’d raise it with me as well. For instance, it’s only in the last couple of years where we have been talking with our anthropologist and archeologist in developing a repatriation policy. But a few years back, when Keith had first started working with us he found this evidence, or documents, that talked about how one of our ancestors, a young boy from one of our villages had, was brought down to San Francisco by someone from the Gold Rush, and the boy died down there and was buried in the cemetery down there. And I know, you know, that’s something that we know of that because Keith was able to uncover that for us, but now it leaves me with an obligation. Sometime when we have our repatriation policy in effect and when we start repatriating the remains of our ancestors from different museums, and that we will think about that young boy and we will have to bring that young boy home someday. We know where he is down in

San Francisco and we need to do that. And so there's other things like that where those things, there's opportunities, there's certain things that we have looked at and talked about. Certain files we have established, and sooner or later some of that work is going to continue and that's where we're at right now.

I know when Keith first started working for us originally, our intent was to hire him for two years and he has actually spent 9 years with us. And all the time that he spent there, we knew him and I as friends, talked about the fact that he eventually wanted to become a teacher/professor at a university, and so when that time came and an opportunity was there for him and that opportunity allowed him to continue to work for us, of course we said yes, that's fine. We support Keith in his work here at the University of Saskatchewan, but at the same time we continue to maintain the relationship that we've developed over the years and we still work together doing different projects. Another one was the "Crown's Promise." That was initially Keith's work on that and that we had a huge gathering down at New Westminster this year on the Queen's birthday, and yet research for that is still on-going. Keith has opportunities right now where he continues to do research on that.

Some of the protocols, like I mentioned earlier, it's important to us to understand spirituality. We have another anthropologist who was working for us who didn't have spirituality, and yet he was able, yet he talked to us like as if he totally was in support of it, but meanwhile, he didn't, he didn't have any sort of spirituality of his own. When he talked to us, he made us believe or think that he had some sort of spirituality, but he actually didn't. So it really made it difficult to talk to him or to even support some of the things that he wrote about when he didn't have his own spirituality. Because Keith having his spirituality, myself having my own spirituality, we can also look at some of the downfalls, look at some of the protocols of that. We can talk about how things are bothering us because certain things don't happen anymore, you know. Like, for instance in the past, the **Flint (Unknown Spelling) Dance**, in the past people when they did the winter dance they went around on the floor, they had to be connected to the earth. They had to dance with their bare feet and now, today, you go to the long house, and you see a lot of younger people wearing their shoes. It's only very, very, few times you see an elder dancing in their bare feet, and the elders say that's really important. It's supposed to be bare feet and they said in the past, like one of my elders told me that forty-fifty years ago, if someone went out on the floor with their shoes and tried to dance with their shoes, other elders would go out there and grab

each arm and escort them off the floors. Like, what's the matter with you, you're supposed to be doing this in your bare feet. So there are certain things, elements of our traditions that we need to look at and see well what sort of things have changed. Same thing like Keith's own background with some of his own spirituality is able to see how some things are changing there and then we start talking about why does that bother you, and of course we are able to build on that as well.

Other parts, for instance, we have developed protocols as well with the anthropologist and the archeologists where when they go out to do excavations within certain places where our ancestors have been. They have to wear the red paint on their temples, on their hands, on their chest, and that's because the elders tell us that it is something that we have to do because of the connections that we have, to our, what we call **“Shoowee” (Unknown Spelling)**. **“Showee” (Unknown Spelling)** is like the life force of the spirit and that connects us to everything. It connects us to the trees, it connects us to the water, to the earth. It connects us to the plants and the rocks and the mountains and all those things we are connected to that. And so we have to be wary of that as well. Not only that, but it connects us to our ancestors, so there are certain protocols that don't allow us to talk about people at a certain time during the day. Like at night time, we are not allowed to say the name of an ancestor who is no longer around because it's like, because that ancestor is around us and it's like we are calling them and we're not supposed to call them unless we have something for them because there is certain times of the year where we have ceremonies that allow us to take care of our ancestors. We're allowed to talk about them during certain times of the day, but as soon as late afternoon, evening comes around, we're not supposed to mention ancestral names. Things like that, there are a lot of those things that we are very aware of and we make sure that we follow those protocols. I am sure there are some things I am missing, but I will turn it over to Keith to talk about it, and I am sure that will spark some other comments that I would like to make.

Keith Carlson – I think one of the things that I have really grown to appreciate about Sonny as a mentor for me, working in the communities and as a close friend—he's my best friend—and, you know, I turn to him for advice that aren't necessarily about Aboriginal history and things, right. And I was thinking, too, when Maria was mentioning talking to Winona about what is pedagogy or something like that. Sonny and I have had a lot of

opportunities to be stuck in cars together for long times, driving from one place to another. And we sort, I guess it's a bit of a game almost, where he would say, "I heard that scholar mention the word paradigm. What does he mean by paradigm?" And I'd define it best I could, and then I'd say, "Well, I heard that elder talk about **(Unknown Word)** and I know it's like little people." And we would just define words that were specific to the communities that perhaps we were working in or living in, and try to share them with one another. It would always lead to other discussions about how that would fit with this in a way that I hadn't thought of before. I think for the both of us, and where I feel sorry for a lot of historians who do a lot of interviews, they're often one or two or three time off encounters, and I feel with Sonny and some other people, I just have sustained conversations that get picked up again months, weeks, months, or even years later after the original conversation came up. Someone will say, "I've been thinking a bit about what you and I were talking about last summer at that card game at Charlie's house or something and I want to add to that." And so it never feels finished. It's not an interview. It's difficult to cite it. This time so and so said this and there's a footnote or something.

I think some of these sustained conversations are an important part of my methodology now in terms of how I approach an Aboriginal past and with protocols, I think. Sonny used to have on the back of his business card when he was the cultural advisor that, sort of the mandate for him was to help ensure because he would work with other scholars coming in to do projects on Sto:lo archeology, Sto:lo history, Sto:lo anthropology, Sto:lo sociology, child welfare and a host of things. And he would help sort of steer them to sources. Steer them to community members with expertise and steer them to archeological sites that he had known about, wherever it might be. And on the back, he always said that his job was to help ensure that the interpretation of the past, the Sto:lo past, was respectful and accurate.

And I remember when he would tell that sometimes to a scholar who popped in from some university, you'd see them sort of wince a bit. Because the accurate part they could understand, but does the respectful part compromise the accurate part? And I think that, perhaps, is a bit of what some of the other people earlier today were talking about. It certainly can, from a strictly western scholarly tradition. And it can be seen that way, I should say, not necessarily that it can do that. And so that the goal is to present a history that is accurate, accurate, but to be accurate you have to be respectful. I don't see the two as being

in anyway contradictory. In fact, you can't do one without the other really. Once you start to appreciate the fact that the history affects people and you need to understand. And that doesn't mean not talking about negative things in history, or bad things. Or that all government agents are evil, all Indian chiefs are good, you know, it's not like that. It's a matter of trying to understand why would someone do that and why did someone else react to it this way, and how were they talking past one another and to what extent were they talking with one another?

I've had elders tell me stories about how as little girls they wanted to run away to residential school, instead of away from residential school. How do you start to make sense of that in a way that is accurate and respectful to that elder and those people? That's something, I think, that informs the work that we do profoundly. I think, too, one of the very first projects that I was working on Sonny mentioned, Sto:lo traditional leadership and at the band level, the tribal council level, and then anticipating a treaty settlement that had a self-government component to it. The chiefs wanted to have research done and work with, and towards, a system of governance that wasn't part of the *Indian Act*. That wasn't a municipality imposed upon an Aboriginal settlement, town, village, community, hamlet, tribe, however people define it, and all those words are problematic in various ways. So it was a wonderful project.

It involved me having to go out, and I interviewed thirty-two elders and community members for that project, and it was my first introduction to that community, in addition to the archival research. What I was finding was a lot of elders saying, "Gosh, you know, that's not something that has been a part of the teachings that I have heard from the elders, that I have necessarily held on to really close. I don't know a lot about how we governed ourselves, how our ancestors resolved disputes among families and villages. We know that there was a lot of raiding that went on, and we know there was marriages that were arranged to keep raiding down, so that villages weren't in conflict." But a lot of them would be very open and say, "I just don't know exactly," though it wasn't something that my elders talked to me about. I was so frustrated: "Oh gosh, I'm not doing a very good job, it's not going to work, I'm not getting information from the community. I have various historical references, but that's not going to cut it."

And then I met one elder, Wesley Sam. I was introduced to him by another elder who said, "Well, you should go talk to Wesley. He'll probably know something about that."

So I went to talk with him and he was just a very, very gentle man and we sat down. I didn't use a tape recorder anytime during that project because a lot of the elders felt that they would just prefer that I take notes and it was just more relaxed. Tape recorders make some people seem nervous. They make me nervous when they're sitting there because you're scared for the person who's speaking. And Wesley gave me a cup of coffee, we chatted for a bit, he told me about himself and various things, and then he just sat back with his hands on his. He wasn't a big man, but he had his hands crossed on his stomach and closed his eyes. His head back, neck back, but head down. And he closed his eyes and started talking about traditional leadership. What a **Seeyam (Unknown Spelling)** was, a respected leader, how **Seeyam (Unknown Spelling)** were trained, how **Seeyam (Unknown Spelling)** applies in a gendered sense to women and men and spheres. Where they would operate and spheres that overlapped. It was this wonderful talk, it was so detailed, so coherent, so wonderfully organized. He spoke for about forty-five minutes straight without stopping, pausing, in a very calm fashion. And then he looked up and said, "That's enough for today."

We went back to drinking coffee and he would talk about his grandchildren and things, and he said, "You should come back tomorrow." Coming back tomorrow wasn't always easy because at that time I was living in Victoria, working for the Sto:lo out in the Fraser Valley. So it meant getting on a ferry off Vancouver Island and coming over. And the budget that had been set up with the chiefs involved me coming over once every five weeks, essentially, and I would come over for four-day periods. Because there was another elder after three or four days that said you should have talked to Wesley. It meant that I had to adjust all these schedules that had been set up, and my wife was back there. I was nervous, but I said, "I'll come back tomorrow, I'll do that if you like."

I came back and the same thing happened again. He closed his eyes and put his head down and talked. Wonderful stories, wonderful detail. And it also was corroborating sources that I had read, historical documents, early anthropologists' field notes. And it was just so detailed compared to any of the other elders that I talked to. And I finally said, "Wow, where did you hear all this, how did you learn all this?" And he said from Bob Joe, an elder's name that I recognized from the field notes of previous anthropologists, [a] very well known elder who was referred to as the last Chilliwack historian. Clearly very respected, especially for his historical knowledge. I said, "Oh, that's interesting. Did you know him?" And he goes, "Well, he was my grandfather." Oh well, this is a wonderful example of the oral history

working, he must have sat on his grandfather's knee as a little boy and had all this **(inaudible)**...

And I was feeling, *This was really good*, and he said, "You know, I never knew Bob Joe." And I said, "Oh," and I go back to my notes: "doesn't actually know Bob Joe." And then he didn't really explain it and I didn't want to push. We were starting to become friends. This was maybe our third or fourth or fifth time together, and he talked about other things. He came back and says, "You might want to know how come I didn't know Bob Joe." And he says, "There was some things in my family where I was an illegitimate child and my family, my grandfather, Bob Joe, was a very high status family, and this was a real problem within the community, I guess, for my mother and him."

So, basically, Wesley went to the residential schools as a young boy and stayed there, and in the summer times he didn't come home. He had to stay in the residential school. Then I was thinking, *My gosh, this poor man was disconnected from his family*. I said, "So, you must have reconciled as adults." And he said, "Well, no, not really," he said, never did. "Didn't you tell me that it was Bob Joe?" Maybe I read my notes wrong. And eventually after some time with me being puzzled, and I think him enjoying my puzzlement to a certain extent, he explained that Bob Joe had been telling him these things in dreams, and that he and Bob Joe had reconciled, his grandfather. But it was after Bob Joe had passed away. And he was telling him these stories in dreams. And he said, "That's why I had to stop at a certain point when I was talking to you, because I was remembering what he had told me the night before and I had to wait till the next time. That's why I had to ask you to come back."

And I was sitting there with my notes, thinking, *Footnotes. I need to cite my source and who is my source now? Is it Wesley Sam, the man who has been talking to me, or do I put Bob Joe, because that's who he keeps citing as his source. But do I need to explain to the reader that it's coming in dreams every few nights. And I thought, I can just know what the historian, academic community is going to think of this. They are not going to think very highly of it. And yet, by all the criteria that I had, as historians we always want to triangulate if we can get two sources even if they corroborate or they don't. It's nice to have a third source at least, a third that you can triangulate and get a sense of where this information is coming from. And his information was triangulating wonderfully.*

Before, I had thought that, well, maybe at residential school he had read some of these old reports. Maybe, but he had, but he hadn't, and, in fact, Wesley Sam was a very, very kind, gentle man, but he wasn't very literate. He had been at residential school all that time,

learning how to do manual labor, not learning how to spend a lot of time reading. And it was coming from dreams and it was very accurate as far as any of the triangulation I could deal with. And I thought to myself, as well later on, reflecting on this over months and years later, after Wesley had passed away. The Sto:lo community, people in the community, would get information from Wesley or other elders in that fashion, and they weren't concerned with the fact that it had come from a dream. It was myself, as an outsider, who thought, *Well, oral history is something that is passed down from living person to living person, right, but it comes in other ways.* So, this time, at this time, I was reading some post-modern stuff that was coming up in the early 1990's and I thought. *Oh, it's the other's other, right, and inside of him is another other, he had his other other removed.*

And then Wesley pointed out to me at one point and I said it would be nice to have met Bob Joe, and he says, "Well, in fact, you have because you're talking to me, and Bob Joe is telling me what to say. And I said, "Yeah, and it's great you seem to know what I want to ask about." And he says, "Well, that's because Bob Joe is telling you what to ask me." And I thought all this stuff about power and agency and, you know, who, the researcher has the power, the informant doesn't, and how do I make sure their agencies. And then I thought, *I don't have any agency at all now.* Bob Joe is telling me what to ask his grandson, who he has never really met, so he can tell him what I need to know, so I can go back and make a report to the chiefs. It was, it was all, a bit of an existential problem for me. And it got me thinking at that time about the traditions that I had been raised with by my mother, who, when my grandmother passed away, her mother, when I was a little boy my mom would talk about seeing her in the garden, a ghost. And at first it kind of scared me and things. But I remember seeing her myself one time. I saw her in the bathroom when I was a little boy after she passed on. She was there, physically there. My mom would take praying to saints, right, because she's Catholic and whatnot, and I started to think more and more about what this means—how what relationship I might have with ancestors and how being respectful goes beyond remembering them, but trying to understand why they did things the way they did things and whatnot. And I think that might be a little bit of what Sonny was talking about, respecting one another's spirituality and growing in spirituality, I think, for the two of us, in ways that are meant to change the other in any way. But to benefit from the insights that the other has for another, not the ethnographic other, but one another in a friendship sort of way.

If I might just touch one other thing. Sonny mentioned at night you don't mention ancestors' names, deceased peoples' names, except in certain contexts. And even talking about the past is something that, it's different depending on what time of day it is. If I'm thinking about how oral history functions, you know, you go to the court as an expert witness, and I have testified a couple times as expert witness in this horrible litigative sort of context, and they make you put your hand on the Bible and swear, or swear an oath. And then I started to talk about, well, I had heard this from various elders who have said these things. These are the oral histories that I have been made aware of and that the Crown prosecutor—or Crown counsel on the other side I should say, not prosecutor—Crown counsel would say, “Well, how do you know that elder is telling the truth?” It's a good question, you know, maybe he was trying to trick me. There are stories in the community, certainly, about elders. The young scholar would come in from the university and the elder would string him along, so maybe I was being strung along. And this is something, I wouldn't blame them one bit if they had done this.

And so one of the things that Sonny and I have been working on now in terms of research is understanding how oral history is assessed by Sto:lo people for legitimacy. One thing Sto:lo people don't do is lie at nighttime about elders. It's a dangerous thing. If you're going to talk about the past and what people who have passed on, have done, and it's at night when the spirits are active, people are very, very cautious to make sure that that story isn't altered, or else you would offend the spirits. And so people don't lie at night. That's not to say that “Oh, Indians lie in the daytime,” but I think it makes a difference when interviews take place. And when do most people fly into the reserve to do their interviews? Well, it's at three in the afternoon, between lunch, and they can commute back home or to the hotel. And it's at night, when Sto:lo people speak differently about their past. It's not to say that they don't tell the same stories, or the same accurate stories in the daytime, but there is a difference, and Sto:lo people pay attention to when elders tell stories, and at night they especially listen. It strikes me, in the daytime, they listen as well, but at night they know that that elder has an audience around them that is very active. That isn't simply the living people in their presence, that there's more going on, and so they are more cautious.

Among one Coast Salish elder, in an anthropologist's field notes, we found references to the concern that the elders had to keeping stories straight, keeping them right, a concern that Sonny brings to our research all the time. And these elders explained to the

anthropologist, the reason that they need to keep the story straight is that if you are telling a **(Unknown Word)**, a legendary story, an origin story, one of the stories about how the world came into being. And if you truncate that story, speed it up so that the audience, if they look a little bored you speed up the story, that's very dangerous because the people in the audience may have truncated lives, you may shorten their lives. And so people in the audience who have heard that story from another elder, or that same elder on another occasion, will be quite concerned if someone were to shorten that story. It's dangerous to them, to change a story, the Crown counsel.

How do we know the elders aren't changing the story because they know its going to support their land claims today? Well, one of the things with Coast Salish elders, a belief that we found at least amongst some elders—we haven't gone out and asked if everyone feels the same way—but the idea if that you were to change a Transformer story, a story about origins, it's dangerous to nubile women because they may have a baby that is born transformed. Maybe born a hermaphrodite is one of the references we have heard, or born deformed. And so families don't want their young women to be around someone who is telling stories that are not proper and kept right. So there are all kinds of pressures in the community that are far more profound than the ones that academics work in, where we submit it for peer review and if we get it wrong they tell us that we won't get published. Here, someone, people feel that their lives are threatened if stories are transformed and oral histories aren't kept proper and scared. Certain types of stories. I think that's something that certainly shapes the way that I approach oral history.

I still haven't figured out how to cite Wesley Sam. If anyone has some advice for me I would appreciate that.

Unknown – We should have a little seminar about that.

Keith Carlson – Yeah.

John Murdock – What you do is respect the privacy of the people in dreams and you use a pseudonym.

Keith Carlson – One time removed again, yes.

John Murdock – There are good reasons for not exposing this person to thoughtless criticism.

Keith Carlson – Oh, in the courts. Exactly, it's the kind of thing that you have to be very careful of. Thinking about it again, when do you get it written down, how do you do that?

Sonny – Well, I think of, well, the connection that I mentioned earlier, it's called our **Showlee (Unknown Spelling, Tape Time: 43.1)**. And I first come across it, I don't know, right about the time Keith started working for us because that's the same time that our elders were telling us that the **Showlee (Unknown Spelling)** of the three men that were transformed into the rock there at **Haitum (Unknown Spelling)**. That if the **Showlee (Unknown Spelling)** of those three men are still inside that rock. So I was trying to understand, well, what do they mean by the **Showlee (Unknown Spelling)**? Because I came across it when I first started the job in '85, and the dictionary said that it meant the life force, or the spirit, but I didn't quite understand it. So I went to see the late Rosalind George **Oreamalot (Unknown Spelling)**, and this is how she explained it to me. She said, "**Showlee (Unknown Spelling)** is inside you here. It's in your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents, your great-great grandparents. It's in the rocks, it's in the grass, it's in the ground, it's also in the mountains." And so she explained it to me like that. And then, well, everyone has a **Showlee (Unknown Spelling)**. There is a connection that we have to them, so when I am called as a witness and I have my grandfather's name, which is **Nahahtsee (Unknown Spelling)**, which is also my father's name, I feel like there is a connection that I have to them and an obligation that I have to maintain whatever integrity there is to that name. When we are given a name, we are always constantly reminded of that, don't drag that name in the mud. That name represents, you know, what your ancestor, who was respected for these reasons, and that sort of thing, so you have to maintain that.

So, when I'm speaking as **Nahahtsee (Unknown Spelling)**, that part of it, I'm speaking, I have to look after the integrity of my father and my grandfather. But also, the other thing, too, is that when we talk about what elders have shared with us, and this is something that Keith was able to help us with as well, is, as an academic you have to include your footnotes, who told you. Then within our history, though, it's, we need to keep like

who, we need to do it orally. Like, each time when I'm sharing something with someone, I'm obligated to tell the name of who told me. And as soon as you do that, then right away you've pulled in the integrity of that person that told you, and so then you have to make sure that you're going to tell it the way that the person told you, as well. And because the people that are around you are never going to be able to know whether or not whoever you're telling. Somebody could be a family member, and is familiar with that ancestor that I'm talking about and is going to know right away whether I'm telling it like that ancestor or that elder would have told it. So I have to, so right away I'm going to have to let them know that I'm trying to maintain the integrity of that person that told me. And at the same time, not only am I doing that, but I'm also letting the audience know this isn't something that I just made up, this is something that was told to me. So that's what we do now. We oral footnote, and so if you look at the work that we have done, like *You're Asked to Witness*, and you look at the bibliography at the end, and you can see all the different books, different journals and those things that are in there. But at the same time, we footnote all the different elders and we present their words, we italicize their words, so that it really sticks out, so it's, so we know that it's coming from an oral history, that these words that they said are important.

Cheryl Troupe – Thank you, and we'll take a break now for lunch.

Brenda Macdougall – And we'll give you an opportunity to say anything else that you wanted to say after lunch, so that we don't cut you short. But you have, however...**(inaudible)**

Cheryl Troupe – We're running out of tape, so we'll have lunch now and continue on afterwards.

Brenda Macdougall – We've got about an hour, and we'll meet back here. Well, lunch is being served in the coffee room that we were in this morning, and then we will come back here and we'll start with Keith.....