

**Rich in Images, Memories and Lives: A Case Study in Family,
Photographs and the Life Histories of Louise and Harry Yee**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of M.A. Thesis

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**RICH IN IMAGES, MEMORIES AND LIVES:
A CASE STUDY IN FAMILY, PHOTOGRAPHS AND
THE LIFE HISTORIES OF LOUISE AND HARRY YEE**

BY

Hani S. Khalidi

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree**

of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Abstract

Life histories have long been an anthropological staple and have become a method and product of interest throughout the social sciences. Some anthropologists have suggested that in addition to standard ethnographic research techniques, photographs and photograph albums could be useful in doing the life histories of elderly people who are not sensory-deprived. This coincides with the growing use of photo-elicitation techniques in visual anthropology and visual sociology.

The case study proposed here will focus on the collection, analysis, interpretation and comparison of the life histories, in both words and pictures, of Louise and Harry Yee an elderly couple living in Mayerthorpe, Alberta.

The objectives of the proposed research include, compiling and interpreting the photographs and photograph albums of Louise and Harry Yee; conducting photo-elicitation interviews; producing a video documentary account of the Yee's lives; combining the video account with an ethnographic reprisal to present a holistic and comparative view of the life histories of Louise and Harry Yee.

The data collection techniques employed included participant observation, field notes, mapping, informal interviewing, genealogy, photo-elicitation interviewing, audio recording and video recording. The primary techniques of data analysis and interpretation included content and narrative analysis using The Ethnograph micro-computer program. The final form of the thesis is presented in complementary written and visual formats.

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Acknowledgements

Ever since Jim Warren, whom I knew through a mutual friend, introduced me to Louise and Harry my life has not been the same. Each of us goes through events that define our lives and the life course you will take. The ups and downs delivered to any individual most certainly create distinctive personalities that function within the larger environment that is culture. As I became acquainted with the lives of Louise, Harry and their families, I became a part of it. As a result, their deaths have also become an event that has affected my life and the project that I undertook in our meetings.

Both Louise and Harry passed away in 1997, and I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge their respective families and friends. In particular, I would like to thank Paulette Carter for her capable facilitation in this project. I was humbled to be allowed into their lives. It seems as a whole each family responded to their deaths with respect. There was a realization that not only was there a loss within the family, but also a generational role model. Jim Warren spoke frankly to me of the loss he felt when his grandmother Louise passed away, describing it with as much difficulty as he did when his own father and mother passed away.

There are a thousand thank you's and unending gratefulness to Jim Warren for placing his trust in me. Emotions like those described by Jim run deep within the two families. As such, each family was most certainly susceptible to the variable effects of strong emotions mixing when a matriarch and patriarch die from two large kinship trees.

The acknowledgement that either family had for Louise and Harry was reflected in their funeral rites. Each funeral drew a majority of family members to attend and be represented at the ceremonies. The interconnection of the two families continues, and therefore so does the memory and legacy of two individuals that undeniably had a large and unique affect on just about everyone they touched.

I did not get to witness the range of responses within each family, however my own response to their deaths was one of reticence. I was not able to go to their funerals, as I felt rationally or not that my presence would be unwanted. It was the support I received from my mentor Rod Burchard as well my family and friends that helped me see the importance of finishing what we had started. By being able to share knowledge of Louise and Harry's lives with each family, and especially sharing the experiences with Jim, I found that this thesis would be my respect to Louise, Harry and their families.

Chapter 1

Introduction

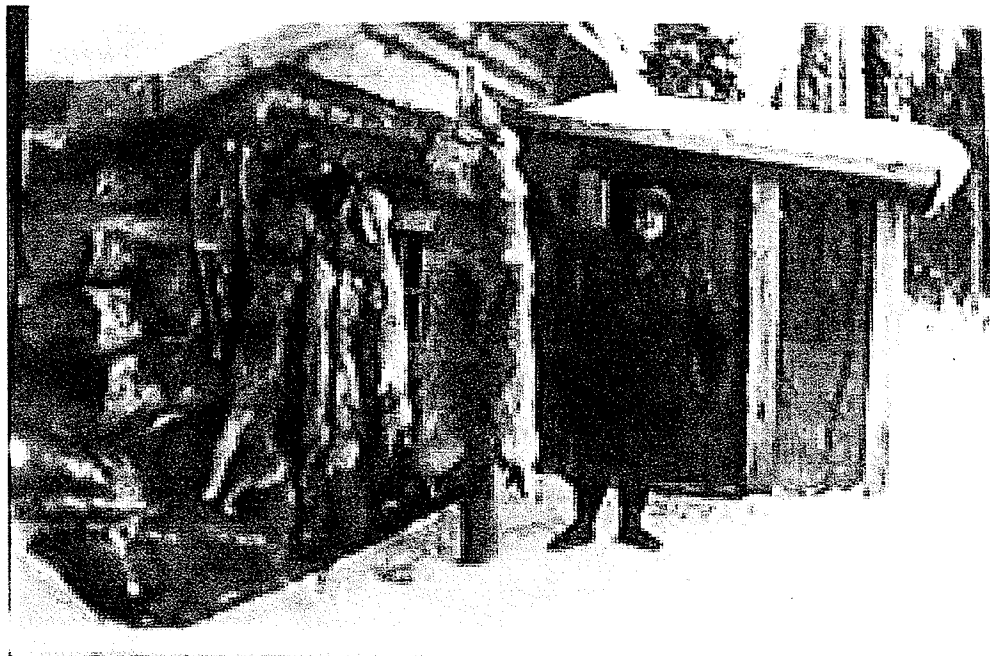
It was a serendipitous meeting with Jim Warren who first introduced me to the possibility of doing my thesis around the research topic outlined below. I mentioned to Jim over a cup of coffee that I was interested in doing my MA thesis on a topic in visual anthropology. With specific reference to the cultural value of photography I discussed my fledgling interests in videography. Jim pointed out that his 92-year-old grandmother, Louise Yee, began taking photographs in 1921 when she was just 16 years old and has continued throughout her entire life. She has many dozens of photograph albums documenting her life in the Canadian North as a fur trapper, gold miner and many other generally male-associated activities making up her "pioneer" life. He went on to note her accomplishment as an award winning poet who has written her autobiography, despite a deficient grade school education, as a memorial gift for her many children and grandchildren. He also discussed her many culturally diverse relationships including her current husband Harry Yee's own fascinating life journey from China to Canada. Jim told me, "You should do your thesis on her story!"

We took the idea to my thesis advisor Dr. Rod Burchard. He was skeptical and wanted to know more about Louise. Her health status and her capacity to participate in what could be a long series of interviews and other research tasks was important. Jim Warren had made arrangements for a trip to visit and videotape Louise, her husband Harry Yee and their environment in the small agricultural town of Mayerthorpe, Alberta. This coincided with Jim's half-sister and future brother-in-law's visit from their home in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. After an extremely fruitful visit in which I met Louise, Harry, several other family members and friends we took the video footage back to Dr. Burchard to review. Dr. Burchard strongly suggested, and I agreed, that Louise

and Harry, together with their extraordinary photographic collection, were simply too interesting as an elderly couple to focus on one and not the other.

Photography as an element of the social sciences is relatively new and it's vast. When the opportunity to put into practice what I had become so interested in presented itself, I jumped. At first my focus seemed to only be on photographic interpretations, but Jim Warren was actually in the process of scouting for someone to document his grandmother's life story. After hearing this, the concept of using Louise's photographic collection and autobiography, and Harry's oral recollections to elicit their life histories in detail and record it on videotape became clear.

In addition to being long lived (Louise, 93 and Harry, 87), the Yees have lived very interesting lives, largely in the Canadian North. Between them, they have 22 children, 78 grandchildren, 61 great grandchildren, and 7 great-great grandchildren. Their memories are good, and they have an extraordinary collection of family photographs documenting the people, places, things and events that have played important roles in their rich and varied lives.



Picture 1



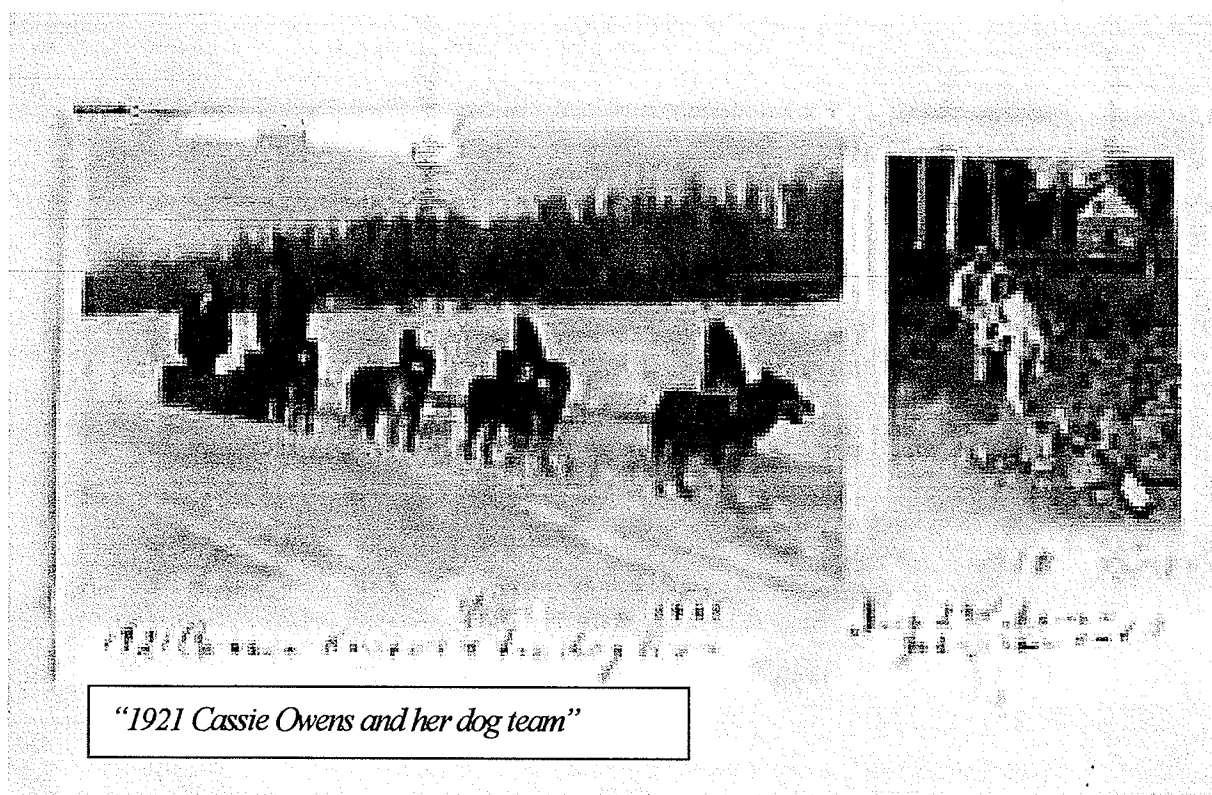
Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



"1921 Cassie Owens and her dog team"

Picture 5

Louise and Harry Yee: A Brief Introduction to the Principal Research Participants and Their Photograph Collection

When I met Louise and Harry Yee they were an elderly couple (93 and 87 years old respectively) living in Sunnydale Manor, a 12 unit residence for independent seniors, in the small rural community of Mayerthorpe, Alberta, about 135 Km. northwest of Edmonton. They are an extremely friendly couple who dislike formalities and prefer to be referred to simply as "Louise" and "Harry". They did most of their own cooking and liked to get outside their small but they say adequate apartment as often as they could either to have a meal at a local restaurant (see videotape)



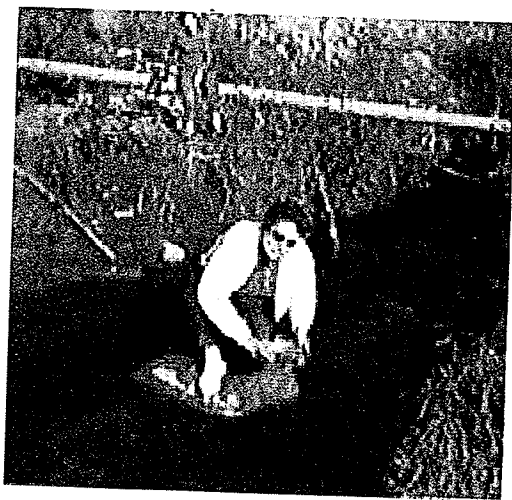
Picture 6

or visit with their many friends and several of their family members living nearby. They had lived in Mayerthorpe for some 10 years, first in a large trailer home on the farm of one of Harry's daughters and for the past three years in Sunnydale Manor. They were well known in the community.

They described their health as "good" for their age, although Louise spoke of diminished vision and usually walked with a walker. Harry got around quite well, although a little slowly. Louise was the more active talker, while Harry "liked to listen". However, he can become quite animated when the conversation was more one-on-one (see the clip on the videotape where he is telling me the story about an offer to go north to Thompson to open a gold mine). He is also known for his ghost stories.

Louise was born in Joplin, Missouri on November 7, 1904, but had never known who her biological parents were. She was "mysteriously" adopted, or she says, perhaps "kidnapped", and brought to Canada at the age of four by her adoptive mother, Lynna Brown. There is some circumstantial evidence that she may be the illegitimate daughter of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. Louise herself would like to know her real "roots", but says said she is now "too old now to really care". However, the question of her unknown roots runs throughout her poetry, autobiography, and interviews (see appendix #1).

Louise spent much of her early life in communities in southern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta. In 1921, having married and divorced at age 16 and pregnant with her first child, she went to live in the "boom" town of Fort McMurray in northern Alberta. She claimed to have been the fourth non-native woman to live in this remote northern community. Aside from Fort McMurray, Louise lived for extended periods of time in Yellowknife, Little Rapids, Fort Simpson and other places in the NWT. Many of her children were delivered with the help of Cree midwives and she learned to speak some Cree. Her second husband Joe Shott (common-law) was a Cree boat maker. Some of her children married into Native or Metis families. So have some of her grandchildren, including Jim Warren.



Picture 7

During the many years she lived in the Canadian North, she was married three more times and had 12 more children. Most of her marriages proved to be abusive, as was the relationship with her adoptive mother. During this time, she worked as a trapper, fur trader and designed and made parkas, jackets, gauntlets and moccasins for sale,

many of which were sold to the U.S. army. She worked as a gold panner, a mine-staker, a matron for the Northwest Mounted Police, a cook and a seamstress and saleswomen for TipTop Tailors. She became an expert markswomen (see videotape), an expert dog sled driver and an expert house builder, several of which she and her children built with wood they had cut down. In 1975, at age 71, divorced, her children gone and living alone in an apartment in Edmonton, she decided to seek a male companion by putting an ad in the local paper. As she describes it, some sixty men answered the ad. She "narrowed the field" down to five candidates and then quickly choose Harry Yee, age 65. She writes:

Two months later we were married. It's been 18 years today, January 8, 1975, since we met, and the most wonderful years of my life. I love him more dearly each day that goes by. The fact that he is of different origin only endears him to me . . . He is Chinese. (Louise Yee, personal document).

Harry Frank Yee was born Yee Fok Hoy in 1911 in a small village in southern Canton Province, China. His father was a farmer and an apprentice in the village pharmacy. I know little more of his family in China. When he was 13 years old, he emigrated to Canada to join his uncle, a fish merchant and owner of one of the first Chinese restaurants in Winnipeg located on the corner of Portage and Main. His uncle paid for his passage, as well as the \$500 head tax required of all Chinese immigrants into Canada. Two sisters followed him much later. Both of who married into prominent Chinese Canadian families and today live in Calgary.

Most of Harry's early years in Canada involved working for his uncle, first buying fish from native fishermen in Gimli on Lake Winnipeg, packing them in ice and shipping them to the USA. He did this for about 10 years. He says he was the only person of Chinese origins doing this work. He then started working in his uncle's cafe on the corner of Portage and Main and then went on to work in and eventually to own other cafes or restaurants in northern Manitoba communities such as

Flin Flon, Cranberry Portage, and Thompson. He can still describe downtown Winnipeg by street-names with great clarity.

Harry married a Scottish Canadian woman named Susan Danielson in 1948 and they had 9 children: seven girls and two boys. They eventually moved from northern Manitoba to northern Alberta and then to Fort Simpson, NWT, where he opened yet another restaurant and a hotel. His first wife died in 1971, leaving him with three young girls to raise. When he married Louise in 1975, she moved to Fort Simpson to help him run his business and raise the three children. All of his children still live in northern Alberta or the NWT. Two of his married daughters and their children live in Mayerthorpe; one works as a cook at the Sunnydale Lodge, a second unit in the seniors residence, while the other works as a clerk at the local True Value Hardware store. Their husbands are small farmers and may also work elsewhere.

The Yees have an extremely large collection of photographs. Louise learned to take and develop her own photographs at age 16 (see video) and over the course of decades has documented photographically most of the important people, places, events and things in her long and extraordinary life and that of her family. She, of course, has also collected a large number of photographs taken by other people. Harry's photographic history prior to his marriage to Louise is meager. Some of his earliest family photographs were destroyed in a tornado, but he and Louise have dozens of photograph albums and a number of boxes full of pictures taken or accumulated since their marriage in 1975. Many of these photographs document important family events and other special occasions in their lives. They also document the many trips that Louise and Harry made in the various Recreational Vehicles they have owned since their marriage. In addition to many locations in Canada, they have vacationed in the USA, including Hawaii and in Mexico. In 1986, Harry returned for a short visit to his natal village in China.

The Yees photograph collection is more than the typical family photograph album; it is in fact a very large series of albums, perhaps as many as 75 or more and hundreds of photos not in albums. This is an extraordinary collection of photographs, covering nearly a century of human experience in the Canadian North of a woman whose roots may connect her to one of the most illustrious families in U.S. history and a man whose roots connect him to a peasant family in China. It is overwhelming in its visual anthropological potential (see video).

Objective

In summary, I have presented only thumbnail sketches of Louise and Harry Yee. The objective of this thesis is to document their life histories in words and images. Using basic ethnographic techniques, their exceptional photograph collection, photo-elicitation techniques and video recordings, their life histories are placed within historical, social, and cultural context in which they had been living both prior to and after their marriage. I found them to be fascinating people, with interesting life stories that were told, imaged and shared. Moreover, their eagerness to participate in the research could be measured by the countless number of letters and phone calls I received asking me when I was coming back to visit and talk.

Understanding Their Involvement

One of the major goals in Louise's life was her need to understand who she was since she had been abandoned as a child and apparently adopted. Her childhood and youth was tumultuous, and riddled with abuse both physically (sexually) and mentally, and affected many of the future relationships she would have with her husbands, mates and her children. As a result, Louise wanted and searched to know whom she truly was and why her life was destined to be on an arduous path. An interesting development in the search for her biological parents led her and her

grandson Jim Warren towards the belief that she was the illegitimate child of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Initially, Jim and Louise were building a genealogy (see appendix #2) together by tracing the ancestry of Louise' first husband Newton Llewelyn Warren who was deported back to the United States on criminal charges and just disappeared without a trace soon after their matrimony. With the family's history in the forefront of their thoughts the notion of a direct blood relation to Eleanor Roosevelt was



Picture 8



Picture 9



Picture 10

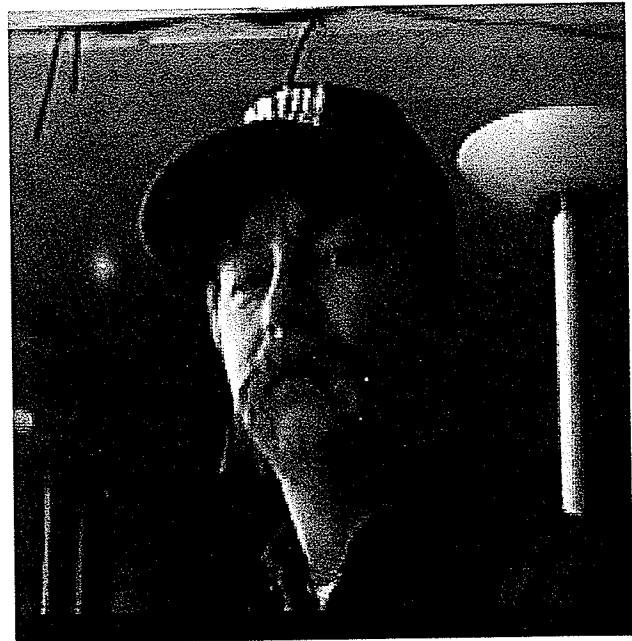
accidental. It began when an article in a local

tabloid published a photograph of Eleanor in her later years and was noticed by Jim and his

wife Linda. This photograph seemed to be the spitting image of Louise and upon further comparison they found the likeness to be nearly identical.



Picture 11



Picture 12

At first the concept of Louise' relationship to Eleanor was outlandish and grandiose. After discussing the notion with Louise, she recalled that her "adoptive mother" had mentioned receiving money for taking Louise away to Canada. After investigating the life history of both Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt the notion became more plausible.

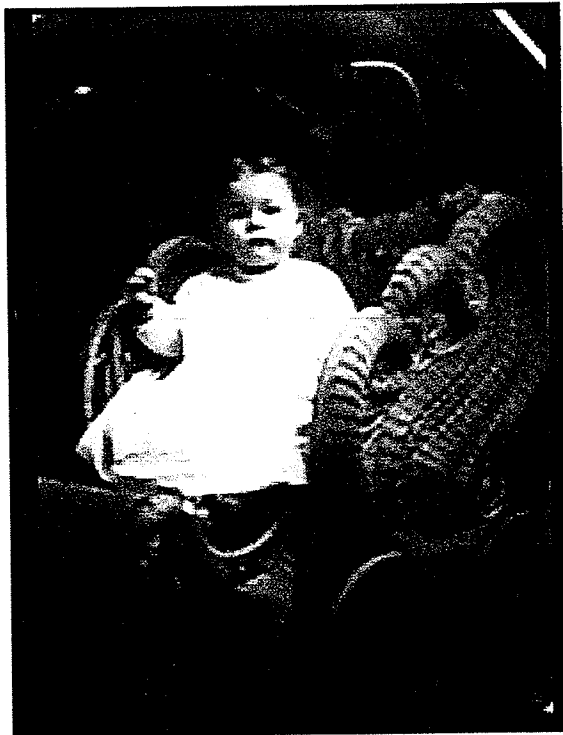


Picture 13

Along with the uncanny resemblance between Eleanor and Louise (the familial features of the Roosevelt's extend to Louise' grandson Jim as well and his resemblance of other male members of the Roosevelt family), other factors also manifested. A missing period of time in the personal documents of Eleanor and Franklin was observed in the Roosevelt family records around the same

time as Louise's birth (1904). It seems Eleanor and Franklin had been courting around this time before their marriage and had been separated for approximately a year before they were married. Franklin was sent to schooling in England and Eleanor was secluded in Kansas City in the American Midwest, close to where Louise was born.

Other circumstantial evidence that directed the notion of relations was a strong similarity in their personality traits. For example, Louise is known for her compassionate acts. An example of this compassion was illustrated by Louise's actions in 1921 when an influenza epidemic struck the fledgling town of Fort McMurray. Louise singly nursed back to health her nearest neighbors the Paquet's, a Metis/Cree family of five, who all survived as a result (Louise Autobiography; 1992). This is also a well-known trait of Eleanor as evidenced in her participation of the drafting of the 1949 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Even a similarity in their handwriting exists



Picture 14

(See pictures 15 and 16).

The last piece of evidence that has circumstantially supported the idea of a maternal relation between Louise, her offspring and the Roosevelt's is the oldest unexplained photograph of Louise as a child. In this photograph, circa 1904, Louise is clothed in expensive linens, and sitting in an ornate baby carriage, one that could have only been afforded by the affluent. Besides what the physical attributes of the artifacts within the photograph, the extravagance of a portrait studio picture itself would

have been very difficult for a working class family to have afforded, suggesting a rich family or individual would have been responsible for the undertaking of a baby portrait.

This is the first anniversary of the acceptance by forty-eight nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We, in the United States, celebrate ^{today} ~~one~~ step forward in the recognition of the rights and freedoms of the individual.

Many people throughout the world hope that the acceptance of the Charter or Bill of Human Rights, ^{will be a first step in building a world of peace} The first part ^{of which} is the Declaration and the second part ^{of which} is the Covenant, still to be put in final form and presented to the General Assembly in the autumn of 1950, - ^{that} ~~the~~ two will form a charter which will be added to as time goes on.

The Declaration has had an effect ^{on} the thinking of men and women in various countries of the world, ~~on this important subject.~~

Forty eight nations voted to accept the Universal Declaration and to try to acquaint their people with its contents and to live up to the standards contained therein as nearly as possible. That means that all over the world people are now becoming acquainted with the document. Naturally since people in different areas have reached different levels of development, it will not be understood in the same way in every area, but the mere fact that we are all of us working in the same direction and that we do ~~take~~ appreciable steps in recognizing the value of the human personality and the dignity of the human being ^{and} ~~and~~ respect his rights and freedoms is of immense importance.

In war time the rights of human beings are quickly abrogated. Therefore it is in peace time that we have to work to ^{keep} ~~keep~~ these rights and freedoms ^{what better} and once established they should help us to retain ^{and} ~~and~~ peaceful world.

Picture 15

May 8 1994

Dear Grandma and Grandfather - Linda & Jim

What a pleasant surprise, when you ~~first~~ phoned last night. I am so happy for you both, and hope we can see you in the near future. I just spent four hours going through all albums looking for pictures for you, so here's some I found. I am also enclosing some of my writings. Hope you will both enjoy. Please do write and let me know what you think of it. I will have a complete book of poems out soon, I hope. I had a wonderful Mother's day, and your call helped to make it so.

Keep in touch more often please.

With love,

Linda

Picture 16

In any case, in Louise' search for her true identity, real or imagined, and the possibility of having found her true identity helped her come to terms with the decisions she had made in her life and their subsequent affects on her family.

In Harry's case, his involvement in my research seemed initially to be simply to "go along" with what Louise was doing. Their relationship was a very complimentary one. What one lacked in their personality and desires the other was compensation for that missing ingredient in their marriage. In the end it provided a peaceful equilibrium between the two. For instance, Louise was a great storyteller and enjoyed captivating her listener with a myriad of stories and experiences in her life. Harry provided the ears and was in essence always her audience when she needed him to be. Something she needed in her life and something he was natural at doing.

Once Harry became more involved in the interview processes and was active in the giving of his life's information, his reticence subsided somewhat. Getting used to someone other than family being interested in the intricacies of his life course was almost completely foreign to him. He slowly became aware of the importance of documenting his life for others to learn from the paths he took.

It seems that once Harry became committed to the project he proceeded as if his life, presented academically, would offer a service to other Chinese descendants within the context of Canadian history. He agreed that it could also act as an example to his own descendants. In my discussions with a few of his family members, I found that their understanding of their family history was sketchy, past their own generations. However their eagerness to learn more about themselves increased over the course of our discussions and their understanding of my research project.

It also became Harry's desire to see the project act as liaison between his own family and Louise's. Throughout his marriage to Louise contact between Harry and Louise's families was limited. There were few pictures of Harry's family with Louise's, outside of direct interaction with Louise herself. It seems Harry's marriage to Louise introduced his new wife into his family's lives but due to the fact that much of Louise's family was already estranged from her, interaction between the two families was limited.

During one of my visits to Mayerthorpe, Alta., I attended Harry's 87th birthday party. It was significant because it was the largest gathering of Harry's family at any given time. However, not only was it a forum for intergenerational interaction, it was interfamily interaction. Louise, her grandson Jim, her daughter Paulette and her husband Doug Carter were very involved with the event. A highlight of their familial interaction was Louise's decision to offer a speech in honor of Harry. In her speech, delivered by Paulette, Louise used the opportunity to mention how important she felt the interaction between their families was and how my ongoing research would facilitate this (see video).

It is clear that Louise and Harry had their own motives for participating in any endeavor that would document their lives. However, I must note that initially the thrust of my research focused on Louise and her family. During the evolution of the project, Harry and his family's significance to my thesis became apparent. Harry's motives only developed once his participation in the interview process was initiated. The sum of my research, through the entire interaction that I had with both Louise and Harry's families, provided introspective themes that ran through each of their lives. Details of their lives and the themes that present themselves will be discussed in greater detail.

Chapter 2

The Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Once the project had taken its basic form, an extensive review of the literature became necessary in order to provide a theoretical and methodological guide to proceed. A sea of information was potentially being presented and it was crucial to be able to gather all the information in an orderly fashion. Certainly an elderly couple as advanced in years as Louise and Harry would prove to be a handful to a novice researcher. Since the ethical issue of rigorous interviews with an elderly couple had been brought to light, the gerontological sphere of the literature also had to be addressed. It was highly unlikely that I would ever get a second chance to perform interviews if my initial attempts were faulty.

The Life Course

Since the 1970s, there has been an attempt to bring together the theoretical and methodological interests of anthropology, sociology, psychology, history and gerontology in the study of aging and of elderly people. This has resulted in the development of a theoretical framework termed the "life-course" approach to aging and the aged. Kertzer and Schiaffino (1986:78) summarize this approach as follows:

In the life-course view, aging is a life long process conditioned by biological, psychological, social, historical and cultural factors. Patterns of aging change over time as the society changes and different patterns of aging are found in the same society at the same time as a result of social differentiation. Of special importance in operationalizing life-course research are 'life events'. These may be defined as noteworthy occurrences in an individual's life, such as marriage, entering the labour force, and/or having children, going to war, and death . . . Life events and their temporal relationships are among the primary objects of examination in life-course study. The study of life events also has a cultural dimension, for each society has norms regarding age-appropriate transitions and behaviour, which provides social sanctions for those who do not follow the proper cultural life script. Closely tied to this, of course, is the behavioural dimension, involving the actual sequence and timing of events in an individual's life.

In his review of the kinds of research done under the life-course banner, Silverman (1987:13) notes that because the usual unit of study is the cohort, it generally entails survey research with samples of relatively large numbers of people and an emphasis on quantitative methods and statistical analysis. This is clearly the case for much of the Canadian research on the life-course and aging (see, for example, Marshal 1987; Gee 1987). However, Silverman (1987:13) writes that there have been increasing calls for research designs that are more holistic and "provide contextually sensitive data of greater importance in gaining insights into a number of life-course issues". For example, he writes that Negation (1985), one of the leaders in life-course research has called for the use of small samples and the use of qualitative ethnographic methods used by anthropologists. Silverman (1987:13-14) continues:

This would allow a closer look at how cultural patterns mould the behaviour of particular individuals. The performance of any social role allows for some options and some violations of norms. Contextually sensitive data provides insights into how individuals manipulate these options to their own best advantage, or how they fail to take advantage of opportunities provided by the options. One such ethnographic approach that allows for detailed retrospective data on a person's life course is the life history technique [my emphasis]. The contextual detail inherent in this technique may lead to the uncovering of important principles of behaviour. How do people react to specific historical events and crisis events, such as death and divorce? How do people actively manipulate their environment as they grow old, and what resources do they have to satisfy their needs?

The ethnographically-informed life history, as both methodology and mode of representation, has long been a part of an anthropological perspective. (For readers wishing to explore this statement in more detail, see for example, Crane and Angrosino 1992; Langness and Frank 1981; Mandelbaum 1973; Langness 1965). But what is meant by the term "ethnographically-informed" life history? On the one hand, it means in part what Langness and Frank (1981:32) have in mind when they state: "Anthropological fieldwork [ethnography] is conducted by the repeated performance of five fundamental tasks: watching, asking, listening,

doing, and recording. The process of life-history taking is essentially the same". But this simple statement, which I shall return to below, hardly captures what is intended in Silverman's above statement. He refers to how traditional "life course" approaches to the study of aging and the aged could be significantly enhanced by the "contextually sensitive" and "detailed retrospective data on a person's life course" afforded by researchers using the "life history technique".

In order to gain a much better appreciation of the idea of an "ethnographically-informed life history", let me turn to one of the real master's of this approach, Oscar Lewis. Moreover, to get a greater appreciation of his skills, I shall take the liberty of quoting him at some considerable length. Thus, in the Introduction to his classic ethnography, Children of Sanchez: Autobiography of a Mexican Family, Lewis (1963:xi) writes:

This book is about a poor family in Mexico City, Jesus Sanchez, the father, age fifty, and his four children: Manuel, age thirty-two; Roberto, twenty-nine; Consuelo, twenty-seven; and Marta, twenty-five. My purpose is to give the reader an inside view of family life and of what it means to grow up in a one-room home in a slum tenement in the heart of a great Latin American city which is undergoing a process of rapid social and economic change.

In my research in Mexico since 1943, I have attempted to develop a number of approaches to family studies. In Five Families, I tried to give the reader some glimpses of daily life in five ordinary Mexican families, on five perfectly ordinary days. In this volume I offer the reader a deeper look in to the lives of one of these families by the use of a new technique whereby each member of the family tells his own life story in his own words. This approach gives us a cumulative, multifaceted, panoramic view of each individual, of the family as a whole, and of many aspects of lower-class Mexican life. The independent versions of the same incidents given by the various family members provide a built-in check upon the reliability and validity of much of the data and thereby partially offset the subjectivity inherent in a single autobiography. At the same time it reveals the discrepancies in the way events are recalled by each member of the family.

Continuing he states (ibid: xii):

The tape recorder, used in taking down the life histories in this book, has made possible the beginning of a new kind of literature of social realism. With the aid of the tape recorder, unskilled, uneducated, and even illiterate persons can talk about themselves and relate their observations and experiences in an uninhibited, spontaneous, and natural manner. The stories of Manuel, Roberto, and Marta have a simplicity, sincerity and

directness which is characteristic of the spoken word, of oral literature in contrast to written literature. Despite their lack of formal training, these young people express themselves remarkably well, particularly Consuelo, who sometimes reaches poetic heights. Still in the midst of their unresolved problems and confusions, they have been able to convey enough of themselves to give us insight into their lives and to make us aware of their potentialities and wasted talents.

And Lewis goes on to write (ibid:xx-xxi):

In obtaining the detailed and intimate data of these life stories, I used no secret techniques, no truth drugs, no psychoanalytic couch. The most effective tools of the anthropologist are sympathy and compassion for the people he studies. What began as a professional interest in their lives turned into warm and lasting friendships. I became deeply involved in their problems and often felt as though I had two families to look after, the Sanchez family and my own, I have spent hundreds of hours with members of the family; I have eaten in their homes, have attended their dances and festive occasions, have accompanied them to their places of work, have met their relatives and friends, have gone with them on pilgrimages, to church, to the movies, and to sports events.

The Sanchez family learned to trust and confide in me. They would call upon me and my wife in times of need or crisis, and we helped them through illness, drunkenness, trouble with the police, unemployment and family quarrels. I did not follow the common anthropological practice of paying them as informants (not informers!), and I was struck by the absence of monetary motivation in their relationship with me. Basically, it was their sense of friendship that led them to tell me their life stories. The reader should not underestimate their courage in bringing forth as they did the many painful memories and experiences of their life. To some extent this served as catharsis and relieved their anxieties. They were moved by my sustained interest in them, and my return to Mexico year after year was a crucial factor in increasing their confidence. Their positive image of the United States as a "superior" country undoubtedly enhanced my status with them and placed me in the role of a benevolent authority figure rather than the punishing one they were so accustomed to in their own father. Their identification with my work and their sense of participation in a scientific research project, however vaguely they conceived of its ultimate objectives, gave them a sense of satisfaction and of importance which carried them beyond the more limited horizons of their daily lives. They have often told me that if their stories would help human beings anywhere, they would feel a sense of accomplishment.

In the course of our interviews I asked hundreds of questions of Manuel, Roberto, Consuelo, Marta and Jesus Sanchez. Naturally, my training as an anthropologist, my years of familiarity with Mexican culture, my own values, and my personality influenced the final outcome of this study. While I used a directive approach in the interviews, I encouraged free association, and I was a good listener. I attempted to cover systematically a wide range of subjects: their earliest memories, their dreams, their hopes, fears, joys and sufferings; their jobs; their relationships with friends, relatives, employers; their sex life; their concepts of justice, religion, and politics; their knowledge of geography and history; in short, their total view of the world. Many of my questions stimulated them to express themselves on

subjects which they might otherwise never have thought of or volunteered information about. However, the answers were their own.

In preparing the interviews for publication, I have eliminated my questions and have selected, arranged, and organized their materials into coherent life stories. If one agrees with Henry James that life is all inclusion and confusion while art is all discrimination and selection, then these life histories have something of both art and life. I believe this in no way reduces the authenticity of the data or their usefulness for science. For those of my colleagues who are interested in the raw materials, I have the taped interviews available.

In my extensive use of Oscar Lewis' observations as being a classic model of what constitutes some of the most important elements of the "power" of an ethnographically-informed life history methodology, I am by no means trying to say that I mastered these elements. But I tried to use his observations as guidelines for my own research with Louise and Harry, among others. Now my task becomes one of linking what has been said so far with the visual anthropology dimension of the thesis. Silverman (1987:14) writes that the "power" of the ethnographically-informed life history method "...lies not in attempts to achieve rigorous quantitative proofs, but rather in the marshalling of rich contextual detail to provide support for the interpretations that will give insight into people's lives".

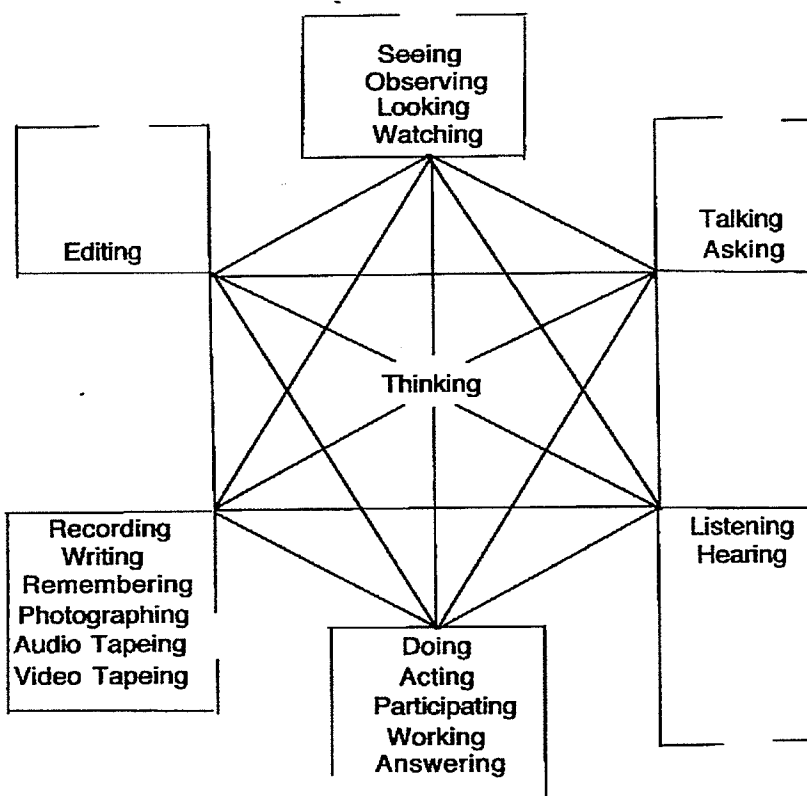
Photographs

In the initial stages of composing a research strategy, what had become an important consideration was how to collect all the information. Ethnographic fieldwork always encompasses some form of data collection, and in this case there was a strong visual component that could not be ignored. Louise had been an avid photographer for the better part of her life and had amassed a considerable library of family photo albums. Before knowing the status of whether Harry had any visual record of his family, the basic concept of photo-eliciting interviews began to take form.

The first hurdle that I encountered was trying to visualize and develop a holistic view of the fundamental tasks that guide ethnographic research as mentioned above. It seemed that some

important components were missing from what had to be ‘done’ to develop and follow a research model. Simply following the traditional tasks seemed to lack the precognitive process that goes through a researcher or informant’s thoughts as new information is constantly being introduced in conversations. It became clear that “*thinking*” as a task is not only integral to any research model, it is central since it is the first thing that anyone does before an action is taken.

In addition to thinking as the root of any endeavor taken in a research project, one cannot ignore the concept of *editing* as another “task”. Editing can be viewed many different ways from the shuffling and rewriting of documents to the more semantic reworking of an individual’s world view. In any case, editing is something everyone does all the time. How people react to one another in any given conversation is contextualized and edited accordingly.



Since it was a holistic perspective that was driving my model building process, it only seemed natural that any task performed would be interconnected to every other task as an ongoing and open system (see model 1). (By an open system I mean that new information is constantly introduced into each task as the research proceeds).

Model 1: Ethnographic Fieldwork as a Interconnecting Set of Tasks

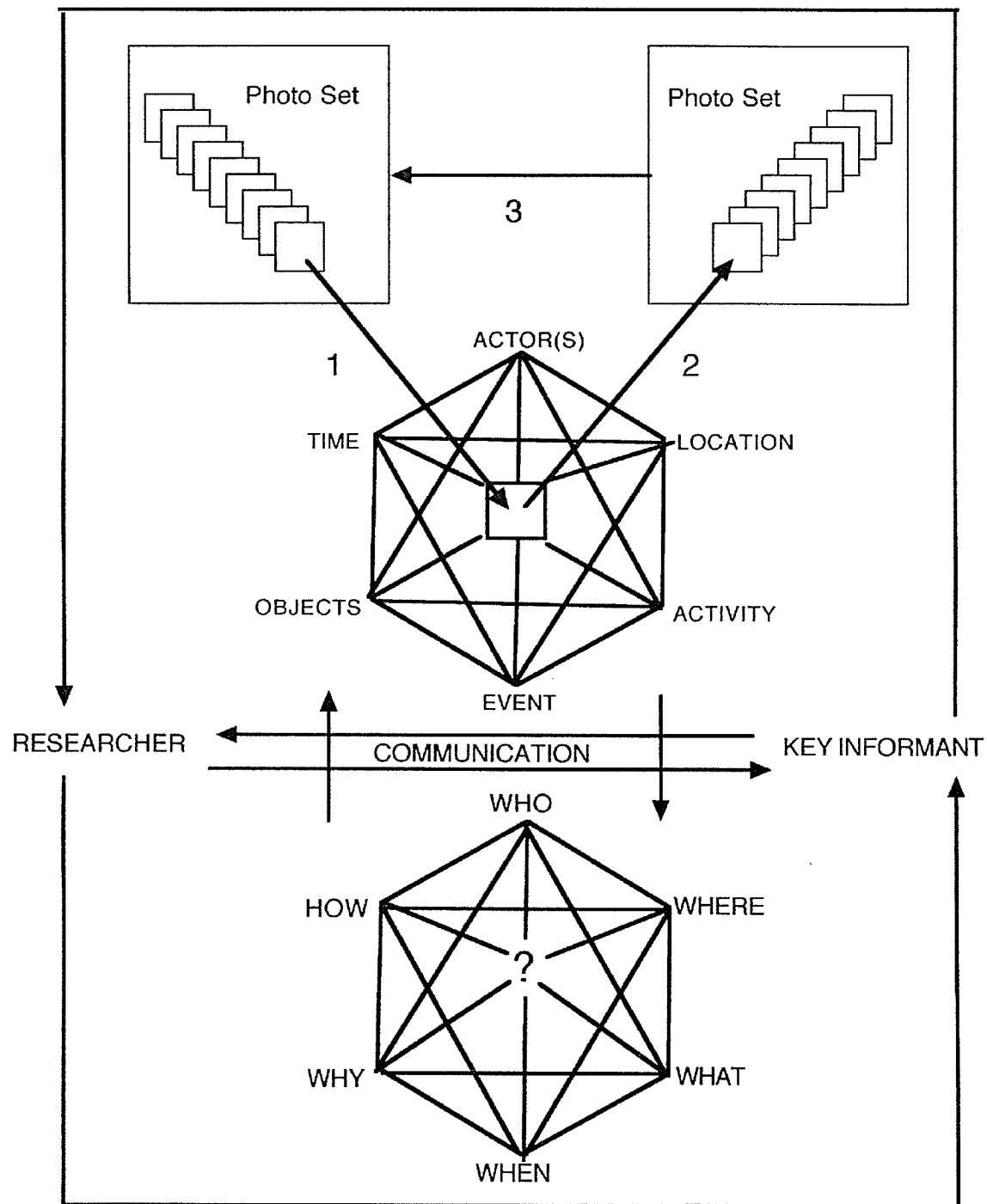
The next step after contextualizing the scope and tasks of the research was to develop an interview protocol. It was at this point that videotaping Louise and Harry's lives seemed inescapable. It would not only provide a valuable research tool, but was developed into a video documentary, which accompanies and enhances the life history that was produced. (See attached CD ROM disc for this supplementary documentary video, and an archive of photographs used in the research). As such photographs became the central focus of another interconnected series of tasks in the photo-elicitation process.

On the significance of the photograph Marita Sturken (1996:1) writes:

Since its invention, the camera has figured centrally in the desire to remember, to recall the past, to make the absent present. Photographic, cinematic, and video images are the raw materials used to construct personal histories: events remembered because they were photographed, moments forgotten because no images were preserved, and unphotographed memories that work in tension with camera memories. The memories constructed from camera images are not only personal, but collective. History is represented by the black-and-white photographic or cinematic image, and increasingly by a faded color film image or low-resolution television image. The camera image produces memories, yet in offering itself as a material fragment of the past it can also produce a kind of forgetting...Projected and transmitted on screens, these images can be seen as 'screen memories'. According to Freud, a 'screen memory' functions to hide painful memories that are too difficult for a subject to confront, the screen memory offers itself as a substitute, while 'screening out' the 'real' memory. The camera image can often screen out other often unphotographed memories and offer itself as the 'real' memory, 'becoming' our memory.

Therefore the photo-elicitation interviews that were conducted in the course of the research were centered using "*Photo Sets*". Photo Sets were a series of pictures chosen by Louise or Harry, depicting an event or a time frame that was used to elicit their memories as they described the actor(s), time, objects, events, activities and locations in the set they had defined. Any given set of photographs could overlap with a set previously used or a set yet to be seen. As such the photo set was continually being created and edited as links and gaps in memory were elicited (see model 2).

Model 2: Photo-Elicitation Interview Cycle



As the photo sets developed during the interview process an open-ended series of questions was posed to Louise and Harry. (These questions and the system of inquiry are described in greater detail below). They can again be conceived as an interconnected group of questions generically referred to by Who, What, Where, When, Why and How used to generate a detailed story or picture of their memory(ies). It is key to point out as mentioned previously that there is a constant interplay between the researcher and informant. Communication becomes the buffer between the system of inquiry, the photo sets, the researcher and the key informant. The whole process develops into cyclical pattern once the initial photo set is introduced (see model 2 above).

Videotape

In discussing his own work, Joseph Schaeffer presents four reasons that using videotape technology is advantageous in anthropological endeavours. These were adapted to my own research.

Firstly, video supplements written accounts of observed activities, as well as complementing high definition coverage of short sequences of activity (Schaeffer, 1995:255). What Louise and Harry did in their daily life could be documented in their own natural environment over relatively extended periods of time. It also added a context for activities observed on photographs or even audiotapes. In certain instances when activities included large groups or gatherings, videotape was combined with still photography and audio recordings. The video could be reviewed to provide a context for the separate audio and photography produced.

Secondly, as Schaeffer (1995:255) notes videotaped records of events allowed for an easy retrieval and scrutiny of information at later times. In this instance, any narrative information that was taped was transcribed for even further study. In addition, analyses of sampled sequences of activity on videotape increase the quality and reliability of general statements. Schaeffer suggests

that "analytical operations applied to videotape records can be assessed for inter-subjective reliability (1995:255). It was my hope that any transcribed information could be entered into a database and cross-referenced to verify dates, facts and statements. My supervisor, Dr. Burchard supplied me with The Ethnograph program in order to assist my efforts. The program is:

...a set of interactive, menu driven computer programs designed to assist the ethnographic/qualitative researcher in some of the mechanical aspects of data analysis. These programs present an efficient alternative to the often cumbersome tasks of managing field notes, transcripts, documents and other types of text data collected and analysed in ethnographic/qualitative research (Seidel, et al, 1988:1-1;1-2).

Schaeffer's third suggested use of videotape technology includes the review of recorded data by social researchers and informant-participants in the field to "...stimulate response and to increase the scope of interpretation of both general and specific sociocultural phenomena" (1995:255). As I engaged in the ethnographic tasks outlined in the parameters of the proposed research, most of my emphasis was placed on the use of an interview technique termed "photo-elicitation" (Collier and Collier 1986: 99-116). Basically, photo-elicitation involves showing informants photographs and asking them to comment on or construct a narrative around what they see. The kinds of photographs used as the basis of these interviews can be classified into four types:

- (1) those produced by the researcher specifically for the research at hand.
- (2) those which the informants already possess.
- (3) those secured by the researcher from other sources, such as archives, mass media (newspapers, books, magazines) or private collections, and
- (4) those produced by the informants at the researcher's request.

Although I employed a mix of the four above noted types of photograph sources in my research, my main emphasis was focused on developing a genealogy and life history using the large

collection of photographs held by the Yees. Photographs have become an important way to learn about all kinds of events and relationships having to do with life history research. For example, in their discussion of life history research with elderly people, Frank and Vanderburgh (1983:193) write:

Family photograph albums can be useful in understanding the social dimensions of a life, and in filling gaps in a genealogy. They also serve as mnemonic devices, even for elders with excellent memories. Too, the cultural dimension can be illuminated through photographs, as when a collection of very old snapshots at Cape Crocker served as the basis for discussions of logging and milling of boards, maple syrup making, and funerals.

Schaeffer's fourth and final perspective on videotape usage in research compilation is that it can be employed to establish links and connections with the abstractions and inferences being made of the observed phenomena (1995:255-6). This is useful in the interpretation of the information that was experienced. If the video is used as a constant reference point, it permits well-considered and grounded conclusions and observations.

Interviews

The Yees were asked to make a selection of those photographs from their collection that they believed were the most important to the various phases of their individual and joint life histories. Using a digital camera the photographs were digitised, and saved onto computer disks and VCR tapes so they could be seen on the large screen TV that the Yees have in their apartment.

Due to the potential duration of interviews and their failing eye site, enlarging the images and observing them facilitated the Yee's by providing a relaxed environment for them. Lengthy discussion about what they saw on the TV screen and how it related to their life histories was elicited. Both Louise and Harry were videotaped as they did these photo-elicitation interviews, individually and together. The photographs selected and talked about by the Yee's were then edited into the final videotaped versions of their life histories.

In designing an interview protocol it was very difficult to design similar interview questions for both Harry and Louise. The social dimensions of gender and family background were variables that had to be addressed in coming up with significant queries. Frank and Vanderburgh surmise that an approach that works for one informant may not work for another and therefore the development of a protocol is thus an ongoing process during the collection of life history data (1983:194). This was evident in my research, since the emphasis was originally focused on Louise, their personality differences played a large role. Harry's reticence proved difficult to overcome in some instances and interviews therefore became limiting in their scope.

That the photo-elicitation interview method was successfully used with the Yee's is indicated in that part of the accompanying video documentary where Louise and Harry are shown making detailed comments on videotaped photographs being shown on the Yee's large screen TV.

The informal moments that I spent talking with Louise and Harry were non-directional conversations, however a list of question provided by Plummer (1983:30, citing Akeret (1973)) was instrumental in providing a guideline for questioning. What can be asked of photographs in an interview is open-ended so most of my formal interview protocols were adapted variations of Plummer's suggested questions:

- What is your immediate impression of the photograph?
- Who and what do you see?
- What is happening in the photo?
- Is the background against which the photo was taken of any significance, either real or symbolic?
- What feelings does it invoke in you?
- What do you notice about physical intimacy or distance?
- How do the peoples in the photos feel about their bodies?
- Are they using their bodies to show them off, hide behind?
- How do peoples in the photo relate?
- Are they tense or relaxed?
- Who has the power, the grace?
- What is obvious and what is subtle?
- What memories and experiences does the photo stir in you?

How do you identify with the peoples in the photo?
How are you alike, how different from those peoples you see in the photo?
What moves you most about the photo?
What do you find distasteful about the photo, if anything?
What is the cultural background of the peoples in the photo?
What is the ethnicity of the people in the photo?
How have you changed since this photo was taken?
How has she, he, they changed since this photo was taken?

Another useful tool used in the methods of eliciting life course information from Harry and Louise was *The Grandparent's Interview Kit*. The kit is published by The Starmark Family Group and was purchased through an ad in a popular video production magazine. The Starmark Group is a family owned and operated company dedicated to the production and distribution of products aimed at strengthening the family.

The interview kit is a complete package of guidelines to follow in videotaping and interviewing grandparents for future family viewing. It provides a brief lesson in using a video camera and manipulating light and angles for the benefit of the viewer. It also provides a rigid protocol of questions that remain constant in interviewing a grandparent. As such, tips are given to the interviewer on how to speak to the informants and how to direct the flow of conversation to the camera.

Generally the kit proved to be valuable in eliciting information.. However the production of the kit requires a crew of several individuals to successfully follow the steps in managing an interview session. Since I was usually alone with either Harry or Louise when the interviews took place, adaptive strategies in interviewing them were necessary. An example was simply to use a remote for the camera in controlling its functions, freeing the ability to comfortably interview the couple.

Another useful process and tool that would enhance the elicitation of memories is the use of *auto-photography*. Allowing informants to use a camera to represent themselves and their world view adds significance and understanding to the major themes and events defined in their lives. Since the quality of the pictures produced is not as important as the content, disposable cameras prove to be an economical and easy way of achieving this. Unfortunately due to time limitations, I was not able to introduce this into my research. (For a more detailed review of representation and auto-photography refer to Blinn and Harrist's 1997 article Combining Native Instant Photography and Photo-Elicitation ; and Berger's 1977 book Way's of Seeing).

In considering interview protocols and photo elicitation endeavors with Louise and Harry, consideration of an emic perspective was also necessary. The issue was raised of what role did eliciting memories play in how they perceived and translated their own lives. Barbara Myerhoff suggests that memory is a continuum of vague to bright and vivid original experiences and offers the opportunity to relive the past (1984:319). Myerhoff more importantly notes that "integration through memory with earlier states of being surely provides the sense of continuity and completeness that may be counted on as an essential task of old age" (1984:319).

Life courses, according to Christine Fry, regardless of how integrated or fragmented they are, are all structured by social time (1990:139). Fry defines the determination of social time, as the roles people occupy and the attributes they entail. These roles are markers punctuating the life course and rendering a social clock (1990:139). Myerhoff (1984:320-1) views these roles more as ritual, which allows the elderly to present claims regarding their past as proof of their continued existence. As such, cultural and context specific roles that Louise and Harry occupy are manifest through ritualized reminiscence and storytelling.

Old Age and Anthropology

At the ages of 93 and 87, Louise and Harry were reaching the end of their life-course and became distinguished by their longevity. The task of collecting their life stories and all the issues that encompassed them seemed simply to observe their daily lives from a gerontological perspective and record all that was deemed relevant at that stage in their life. Their lives seemed unique simply because they were the oldest of the old. However, as Corrine Nydegger points out, gerontology was developed in order to focus interest on issues specific to old age (1981:298). This approach was clearly not the direction my research followed. The topic of old age and the relevancy of the years "before" old age had to be integrated.

Nydegger critiques the use of gerontology in anthropological studies suggesting there has been a tendency to partition the life span into separate specialties. Dividing the life course into discrete age slices and proceeding as if they were unrelated creates a fragmentation of knowledge, and ultimately makes age-relevant theory building in anthropology much more difficult (1981:298). Instead, Nydegger suggests that anthropological studies should take a life course perspective, as it represents a holistic outlook and is interested in the processes of change and maturation-in-social-context (1981:298).

Keith and Kertzer suggest that although life history has long been an anthropological technique it seldom has been used to interpret the life-course processes themselves (1984:24). They illustrate this in discussing the theme of status and treatment of the elderly in anthropological work. They note; it is "because in this research old people are usually seen via secondary analyses of data not collected with issues of aging in mind, old age is isolated from the dynamics of both cultural and life-course context" (1984:24-5).

Age related research in anthropology, especially within the areas of marriage and family studies are significant in using a life-course framework. However Keith and Kertzer point out that most analytical attention has focused on the family as a unit of study and underplays any major focus on the individual life course (1984:42). The life history research done with Harry and Louise accounts for kinship ties, especially genealogically, but is driven to look more specifically at their life events and ultimately their marriage to one another.

Keith and Kertzer suggest that changing norms of age appropriate behaviour for children have ramifications on characteristic age linked patterns of economic activity for women (1984:43). They also feel that in an economic explanation of age relationships in the family, it is the man's role in the productive process, at least in Western societies, and his related need to acquire capital before marriage (1984:44). Since their union was a re-marriage, the second for Harry and fourth for Louise, their age differential of 11 years had a diminished role on the impact of age relations in their family lives.

They both had established significant family groups and both were still able to work and therefore remain economically viable. For Louise her work history had been effected greatly in her previous marriages, as she had 13 children and lived in northern regions of Canada, but it did not seem to be a factor in her marriage to Harry. Instead, their marriage was derivative of a need for companionship and personal support, rather than economically based. Of the nine children Harry had with his first wife Susan Danielson, three were still living with him when he met and married Louise. Harry was also the owner of a hotel and restaurant in Fort Simpson.

Synopsis

The narrative study of lives in this case study becomes an important research approach in gaining a perspective on an understanding of Louise and Harry's lives as a whole or for significant events within their lives. In his discussion of the life story interview, Atkinson suggests that life stories naturally tend to arrange events and stories in order to provide coherent order. Meaning making, identifying life influences and interpreting life experience by a subjective narrative "...helps the researcher understand a life from the insider's point of view"(Atkinson,1998;13).

Visual anthropology thusly becomes a method to achieving life history, and is not merely a way of "showing" the lives of Louise and Harry Yee to interested audiences. Research-oriented visual anthropology advocated by John and Malcolm Collier (Collier and Collier 1986) provides research tools which enhance the ethnographers capacity for data collection by participant observation, mapping and the interviewing of informants within a given sociocultural context.

Chapter 3

Louise

Louise Yee's life is thick with an elaborate story that spans her 94 years and presents a tremendous endeavor in surveying her genealogy (see Appendix #2). The foundation of the information gathered to recount the major events in her life were obtained simply by reading her autobiography called Louise. The opportunity to interview her as well as speak to many of the people that knew her, including many family members, helped to enrich an understanding of the difficult choices that she had faced in much of her life.

Much of her earliest years were recounted from memory, as the circumstances of her origins were vague at best. In fact, it was the difficult task of discovering her roots that led her to write her autobiography, despite a deficient education. Instead, much of her early memories are captured in her poetry, which seemed to be the outlet she needed in displaying her emotions to her family, and all those who cared to take interest in her. Louise recounts some of these early memories:

I was born November 7, 1904 I was told. I did have a baptism certificate, but it was lost in the fire. It stated that I was baptized in Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, and I was four years old as Louise Jeanette Brown, daughter of Frank and Lynna Brown of Joplin, Missouri. So I presumed I was their daughter though I never knew my so-called father. The woman who raised me, I only knew as my mother until she was dying. That's when she told me she was not my birth mother, that I had been abandoned at birth and left on her doorstep. She also told me, when I was 10 years old, that my father was dead. She was angry with me before and before that she told me she wished that she had taken \$500 offered by someone who [wanted me] when I was a baby. Big Question: was I really abandoned, or kidnapped? Was this ransom money?

Her earliest years were spent with her adoptive mother and she remembers that life was very hard as a child with very few age mates and as few adults to interact with. Her inquisitiveness and imagination generated the sources of entertainment for her as a young child. Her recollections

develop a story of constant moving from one town to another in Saskatchewan and Alberta. This was mainly due to the fact that her adoptive mother cultivated a very transient set of relationships with men. On the farms that Louise would end up, she would be forced to perform hard labour and was mostly abused sexually and mentally by many of her mother's mates.

Her education at that early age suffered, and had never seemed to be an option. While she was living in Cantour, Saskatchewan, Louise managed to attend a public school for a short while achieving a low grade reading and writing level that carried her through the rest of her life. It was not until she first married and had learned to take photographs that documentation of her life was supplemented and a clearer picture of her history emerged.



Her first marriage was to Newton Llewelyn Warren, who she met while she was living with her mother in Edmonton circa 1919.

Although only 15 at the time, Newton asked her mother for her hand in marriage, and her mother willingly accepted. It seems that Louise represented a burden to her financially and in her own abilities to obtain a husband.

Picture 17

After convincing a Salvation Army Officer of her legal age of 16, they were married. It proved to be a short and brutal marriage. Newton consummated the marriage by raping Louise for the first two days of matrimony, after which he was deported back to the United States for reasons unknown to Louise. After this incident, Louise left home unwilling to remain with her mother, who



Picture 18

reciprocated her feelings, and boarded the Muskeg Express to Fort McMurray with her new child Frank Warren.

Once in the fledgling town of Fort McMurray she lived in what she described as an old one-room shack. It had one window, one

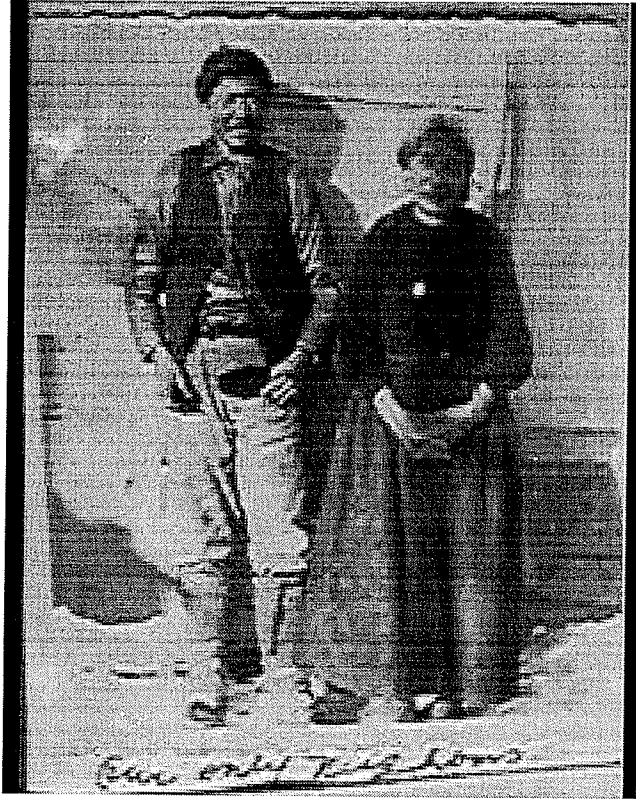
sagging old bed, a small cast-



Picture 19

iron cooking stove with a barrel fastened to the stovepipe called a 'drum oven', some boxes for cupboards, and an old homemade table with sawed-off blocks of wood to be used as stools. It was at the Ryan Brothers Restaurant where she was to start work

earning \$50 a month for washing dishes and looking after the tables used by only a few men. At that time she was paying \$30 a month for rent which left her with very little money at the age of sixteen in a frontier town with a child to support.



Picture 20

It was during the summer of 1921 that Walter Hill, an associate druggist, had offered to teach her the art of developing film and making prints. It was also at this time that an Influenza epidemic hit Fort McMurray. The Paquet's, her nearest neighbor's at the time were a Cree family hit hard by the outbreak. She took it upon herself to nurse them back to health. It was at this time she recalls that she met a tall handsome French-Canadian named Joe Shott, labeled by many a 'half-breed'.

He was building a boat to transport a trading outfit to the mouth of the Peace River far to the north, and began living with him as a common law wife.

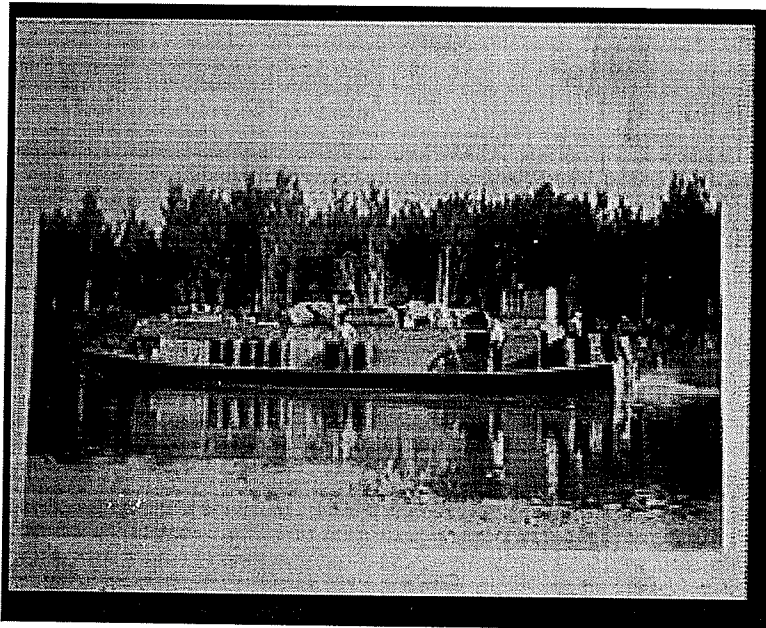
Early in the summer of 1922 Louise became embroiled in a brief relationship when she met a young bank teller who she remembers "...was very sweet to me, and after I became pregnant I was scared to tell Joe. He assured me he would take care of me until the baby was born". He had asked her if she was willing to give up my baby for adoption and continue living with him as his wife. Louise said that "A Cree woman helped me deliver by motioning for me to pull on her arms and bear down. This 'natural childbirth' had, of course, nothing to ease the pain but my strength and

health got me through the procedure very well. I was glad to get it over with at that point. I did not allow my self to get attached to this baby since I knew I would have to give it up soon. We named the baby Clarence Swan and signed the papers for adoption". As fate would have it, Clarence found her years later after he was married and had a family. She still felt remorse because she had given him away, and didn't feel she had any right to be called his mother.



Picture 21

Joe's father, as Louise recounts, was Louis Fonenaue one of the greatest rivermen in the north who



Picture 22

came west from The Pas, Manitoba in the early years. He used to run the scows from Athabasca to Fort McMurray for the Mission and the early fur traders. He was called Shott because of the Grand Rapids he used to shoot going to Ft. McMurray.

He moved his family to Lac La Biche where his wife lived to age 104.



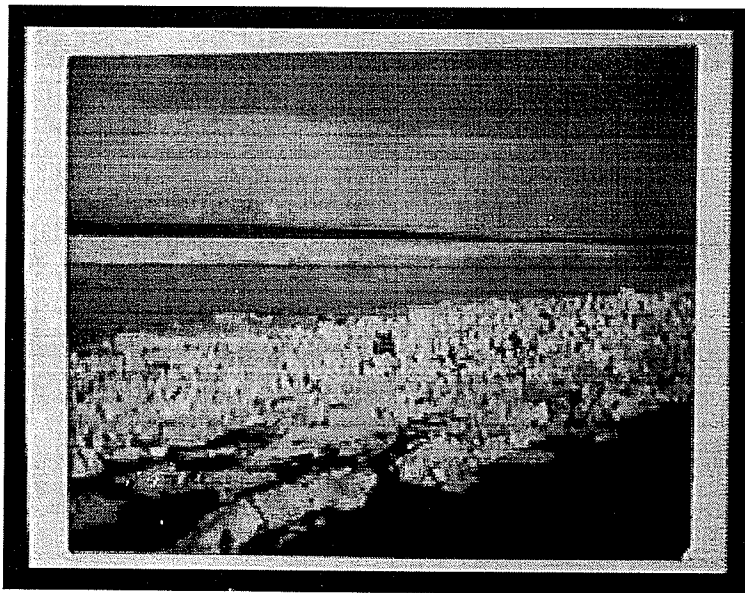
Picture 23

Louise's first home with Joe was an old abandoned building in the Peace River region. According to Louise, Peace River was the 'trading post' where natives brought their furs to trade for groceries, clothing, beads and silk to decorate moccasins, and gauntlet gloves with beautiful designs sewn in. "Needless to

say, when we lived far from civilization and conveniences, we tend to adapt and learn the skills of survival very quickly. Living like we were on the Peace River miles from the nearest town, I had to do a lot of learning fast. The approach of winter made it crucial."

One day a native woman had brought her some moccasins to sell at the trading post. They were constructed of moose hide, tanned and smoked soft as velvet. She remembers loving the smell of the hide and marveled at the beautiful beadwork on the uppers. She had Joe find out if the woman could teach her to do that kind of work. A week later, the woman returned bringing some moose hide, scissors, sinews, and a Glovers needle. She got some beads from a store and she cut a pattern from an old piece of canvas. Using the pattern she instructed Louise in the cutting of the leather with the big scissors. With a straight pen dipped in ink she drew a simple rose design on one piece of hide. She would then put two pieces together facing each other while the ink design on the first piece was still wet and proceeded to pound them together with her fist to transfer the design from the first piece to the second.

In Peace River, during her 'common law' relationship to Joe, she became pregnant again and had a son named John. She learned to live in the wilderness and was soon paddling a canoe and visiting fishnets in the creek, drying and preparing high-protein food for themselves and their dogs. Louise notes "I was not a stranger to a 22 caliber rifle and hunted chickens and rabbits to supplement our meager food supply. Joe showed me how to set traps and I learned to drive the dog team. If the trail was covered with fresh snow I would run ahead on smaller, narrow snowshoes to break trail".



Picture 24

The Rocher River flows out of Lake Athabasca into the Peace River. The ice would break in the spring and right behind the ice came the free traders in their boats. They would sell furs to them or ship them to the fur markets in other region of the province. "We did do some business with the traders, buying fresh eggs, butter, fresh

fruit, and anything else we were running low of, selling only enough of our furs to them to pay for our needs. Many times I prayed the only way I knew how, just asking God for whatever I needed and thanking Him in the end".

Their only neighbors at the time usually carried head or body lice. It would often spread from them to the children, so when they started to scratch, Louise would douse their scalps with the coal oil they burned in their lamps. It was also an old Chipewyan lady who showed her how to make a salve for scrapes and insect bites by picking the sticky buds from the Balm of Gilead trees

in early spring and boiling the buds in moose tallow, then straining it through a cheese cloth. This salve was then put away for future use. Louise commonly emphasized, "I learned many things from the native people. I can now make blueberry jam without water by melting lard in the cast iron frying pan. I could paddle a canoe like a native and bring down my fair share of wild ducks and geese with a shotgun".



Picture 25

In the fall she was pregnant with her eldest daughter Josephine. At the time Louise and Joe had been working with a crew of logging teamsters and as they prepared to go, Vic Ingraham had told her to name it Joseph if it was a boy or Josephine if it was a girl. It was a girl and she used Vic's suggestion. Once Josephine was born, Joe and Louise decided that their son Frank was old enough to be in school. They put him in the convent school at Fort Chipewyan. On arriving at Fort Chipewyan, Josephine was quite sick.

They took her over to the hospital and the doctor diagnosed a kidney infection and gave her some medicine for Josephine, rarely seen by Louise during her youth. Louise recalls "Once again I was pregnant and didn't go out into the bush too much, I spent a lot of time doing beadwork. My baby Lynna, my fourth child, was born and she had a perfect butterfly birthmark on her back.



Picture 26

She was a beautiful baby but was not very well for some time after her birth. I had to laugh at all the native women who came into our store to buy Pampers!"

It was an old Chipewyan Indian couple camping near that taught Louise a lot during the pregnancy with Lynna that season although neither of them spoke a word of English. Once Louise was sick with a cold and as she recalls, "One day the wife, Susan Wichaga, took out her muskeke bag made of dried skin, and produced from it bits of dried roots and herbs. She gave me a piece of root and motioned me to chew it and swallow the juice. A few days later my throat was better and I've yet to catch a sore throat since. I loved to sit in her snow-white canvas tent and watch her do fancy leather and bead work. I also watched her make dried fish and meats".

Soon after the birth of Lynna they decided to move back to Fort McMurray in the spring. They had moved into an old log building, which was formerly a store owned by an entrepreneur named Tom Woodman. With so many mouths to feed at the time they had to live frugally, but in those days nobody else had much either, so their way of life fit right in with any of the communities that surrounded them. "Our brood now included Mary [not Louise's] now a teenager, Frank, Josephine, John, Lynna, and I was again pregnant with a daughter Veronica. Katie Bird, a French and Cree Metis, was my good midwife. After Vera was born, I started making moosehide and white caribou skin slippers which were nicely beaded and fur-trimmed. I was able to sell them. The demand for any northern handiwork was great; Vera was able to teach me to make mukluks and other native work. Maggie Chuckham an Indian woman soon became one of my most beloved friends. She even named her daughter, little Louise".

Soon after arriving back in Ft. McMurray Louise had another boy that they named Joseph, who they referred to as Joey. Eleven months later another daughter Cecilia Anne was born. When Joey was five years old he began having difficulties with his ears. The local doctor, Dr. Ingus,

suggested they should move him to a hospital in Edmonton. They got together enough money for Louise to make the trip with Joey on the old Northern Alberta Railway train. The University Hospital diagnosed Joey as having Mastoiditis and an operation was ordered but her son lived only a few days after surgery.

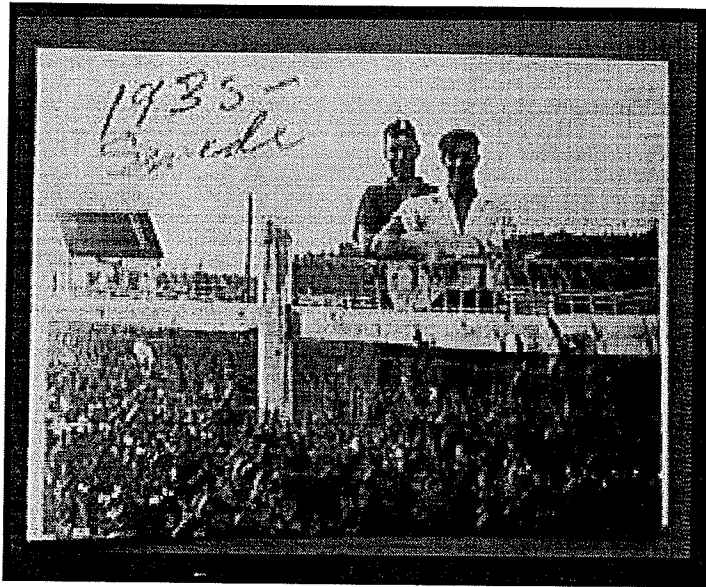
It was also at this time that Cecelia Anne was critically ill with whooping cough and might not live, so after the devastating loss of her son she returned to Ft. McMurray to be with her family.

She recalls:

The next morning I was just going to lie Cecelia in her crib since she seemed to be resting easier, when her little body stiffened and she became blue in colour. I new she was gone and I called Joe in from the kitchen but it was too late. We cried together. I thank God the other children didn't come down with the illness as I don't think I could have stood any more heartache. I loved my children and mourned their loss but I had to keep busy. I had an idea for setting up shop to do Indian craft work with old scraps of wallboard and two-by-fours. I fashioned a display counter and proceeded to ask all the native women to make moccasins and fancywork for me to sell alongside my own creations. I asked Len Williams, a train porter, if he could pick a sewing machine up for me in Edmonton. He returned with an old Singer sewing machine and our first music gramophone. The pair cost Len \$35 and I repaid him with an additional \$5 for his trouble. The sign read: INDIAN SPECIALTY SHOP, MOCCASINS, PARKAS, SLIPPERS AND MUCKLUCKS, made to order (Excerpt from Louise).

At this point Louise recalls that a Major B. Day of B.E.A.R. exploration for Radium, gave her a contract for \$1200 worth of parkas, canvas-top muckluks, mitts, and duffels for outfitting about 100 men heading north. In the meantime she became pregnant again. "I was proud of my achievement and had the most money I had ever seen at one time. The profit came in handy since Joe had a bad leg with varicose ulcers and wasn't able to trap much that year. Most of the money went towards groceries."

After that a young lad that Louise referred to as 'Swede' came and stayed with them. He played the guitar, sang, and yodeled, teaching her some guitar chords. When he left two months later, he gave his guitar to Louise in lieu of rent. Louise learned to sing with the guitar and was



Picture 27

invited to play and sing for various dances and parties. It was also at this time that Louise and Joe Shotts relationship began to deteriorate. Louise laments that "Joe had been very good to me but I didn't love him. I held a lot of respect for him as he was undoubtedly a very honest person, but at that time I wanted excitement.

Looking back, I realize this attitude was formed by the actions of my mother who messed up my life."

She also cites the fact that although she had lots of chances to drink and smoke, but she never did and that was probably one of the few good things she felt that came from her childhood. "I had seen what liquor would do to people and I hated smoking. Mother used to sneak out to the outdoor privy taking her little bag of Bull Durham and brown rice rolling papers to make her cigarette. Watching her smoke made me sick and I promised myself I would never smoke or drink"

In 1938 Louise left Joe. She felt that he was doing less and less to provide for his family and that she had to take over the support. "When my children's stomachs were empty, I had to take my .22 rifle and shoot rabbits to feed them." Louise and her children had moved their living quarters to the old Hudson's Bay Company store next door, but she still kept up her shop. John Perry, a local landowner, had built some cabins for rent and she decided to take one.

Louise notes that "Joe didn't seem to mind when we moved since, as a Catholic, he could then go to confession and be reinstated in his church. Before our separation, I had made separate inquiries into gaining a divorce from Frank's father. I was advised that since he could not be

located (after his deportation back to the United States), I should apply for 'presumption of Death' which could be obtained after not having any knowledge of his whereabouts for seven years. This I did, and was granted my freedom. I would have married Joe for the sake of the children, but I thought better of marrying a man I didn't love."

Soon after Leaving Joe Shott, Louise met a Dane named Victor Hjalmar Jorgensen, who went under the name of Victor Johnson in Canada. He had asked her to marry him and she accepted. She was still in the process of obtaining a divorce from Newton Warren, and when a friend had built a small log home for them in 1943, which they moved into it. She was pregnant again.

At this time in Louise's life, her son Frank volunteered for the army and John had gone to live with his father, Joe Shott, leaving only Josephine, Vera and Georgina still living with her. Louise and Victor had their first child, Nels. She remembers that: "After having our second child, Arthur, I was pregnant again. One year later another daughter, Sharleen, was born. There was only an eleven-month time span between the births of Nels and Arthur."

Louise recounts that one day a letter arrived from Victor's father in Denmark. He was anxious to see his grandchildren and requested they bring the children to visit him in Europe. Victor had told her that she would need a passport, so she needed a birth certificate. She went to see her adoptive mother and it was at this time her mother broke down and told her the story of how she had been found on her doorstep when she was only a few hours old. Louise said "I still celebrate my birthday on Nov 7. I remembered my mother saying when I was small how if she had known how I would turn out she would have accepted the \$500 for me. A childless couple had offered to buy me because I was such a pretty baby. On another occasion she had bitterly told me I had rich aunts and uncles in California and in Joplin, Missouri where I was born."



Picture 28

Once Lynna had left Louise went back to sewing, but this time for the United



Picture 30

During her marriage to Victor, Louise's daughter Lynna became involved with a U.S. Army Officer named Paul Williams who was able to see Lynna quite often and asked her to join him in Fort

Smith, Arkansas to meet his family. They were married in Oklahoma City three months later. They still live there.



Picture 29

States Army who was sending work battalions north on the canal project near Aklavit. She was asked by the head officer to make mosquito bars and head nets for the soldiers. She also took orders for fancy parkas to be ready for the men's return to McMurray

During the time the army was in Ft. McMurray her youngest daughter, Paulette had become seriously ill with an intestinal infection and was in the hospital.

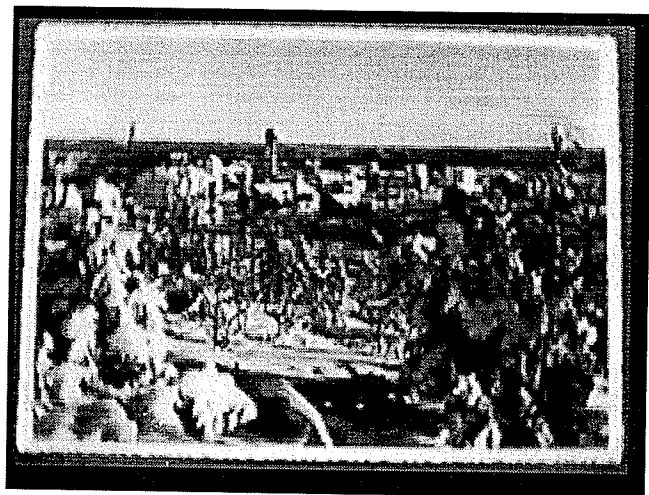
The only way to save her nine-month-old daughter was to persuade a Sgt. Badeau of the US medical corps to administer some sulfa drugs, apparently the first Canadian child to be treated with the 'new' drug.

During the spring of 1948 Victor got a job at Giant Gold Mines in Yellowknife and flew north. They packed up and shipped their belongings north by barge, sold their house and double lot for \$500 and flew to Yellowknife. They still had Vera, Georgina, Nels, Arthur, Sharleen, and Paulette to raise with a baby now four years old. They moved into an old shack near the Peace River Flats.



Picture 31

While working at the old Stope Hotel as a chambermaid Louise knocked on a door to one of the rooms while she was making her my rounds. She remembers:



Picture 32

When no one answered, I used my passkey to open the door. Inside the room I found Victor in bed with a native woman. I hired a lawyer and sued for divorce taking custody of the children. Victor was to pay \$25 for each of his four children, but he paid for only a few months. He left Yellowknife shortly and never sent another penny for child support. I kept working and saving my money until I had accumulated \$500, which I used to purchase an old log cabin down by the lake on Latham Island. I even bought a rebuilt piano, the first in Yellowknife, and had it brought up by boat.



Picture 33

While living in Yellowknife Louise had received from her daughter Vera a beautiful female Samoyed pup which she raised. She had six white puppies, which she was able to sell for \$50 each. With the money she received Louise was able to buy enough oil to heat their cabin that winter.

After getting through her first winter in Yellowknife, Louise recalls that a man was looking for a good cook for his fishing lodge at Taltheilei Narrow, a hundred miles east of Yellowknife, where he had booked a number of oil



Picture 34

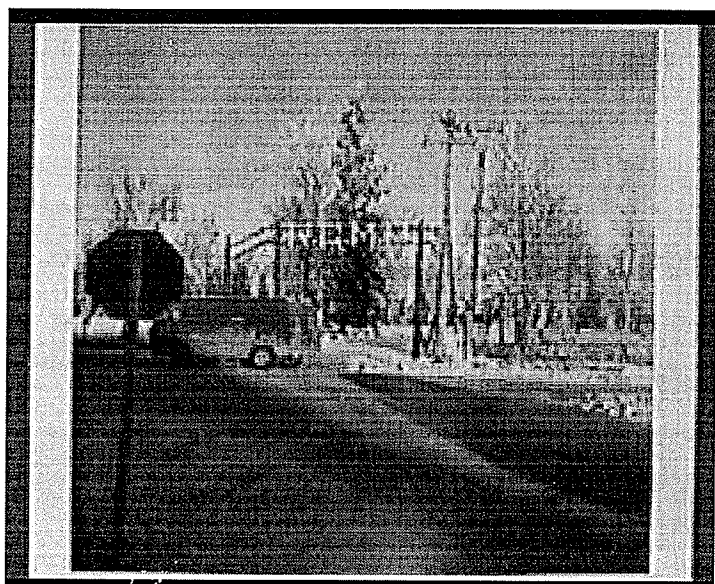
speculators and millionaires to do some fishing. He hired Louise on the spot paying her an advance of \$100. With her wages, a bonus, and tips she received well over \$1,000, a fortune in her eyes.

By this time Josephine, her eldest daughter married to Art Halliday, had moved from Fort McMurray to Yellowknife with their three daughters: Sheila, Elaine, and Carol Anne. Vera was also married and had one daughter, Cherie, living with them in Yellowknife. Louise had come to the conclusion that her remaining children should find out what the outside world was like. She heard of a very good school in Bonnyville, Alberta close to Cold Lake and since she now had the funds, she sent Nels, Arthur, Sharleen, and Paulette there for a term.



Picture 35

By this time Louise had a nice car and worked for numerous agencies as a saleswoman selling their wares. "When the kids left for school I would load my briefcases in the car and go looking for sales. Commissions were good. I was taking orders for Dexter and Concordia Men's and Ladies Shoes, TipTop Tailored suits on which I did all the alterations, Jewelry and Canadian Gift Sales as well as Avon (for which I was the top salesperson in the northern division)". It was at this time that a major event changed the direction Louise would take in her life course. Eddy Langevin (her daughter Georgina's husband) supplied her with a prospecting claim tip that Louise ended up selling for \$30,000 and split down the middle with Eddy. Louise suggested that "Northern prospecting and the northern lights have always had a lot in common. The lights in the sky, Aurora Borealis, symbolized the rarity and beautiful mystery of the minerals and stones in the earth. The light dances across the sky in a lively rainbow of colour incorporated in an undulating curtain of brilliance."



Picture 36

With the money she made, they moved down to Fort Smith, south of the Great Slave Lake and on the southern boundary of the Northwest Territories, 100 miles north of Fort Chipwyman. She built onto an existing structure making a two-bedroom house with a living and kitchen area together. She went to work at the Hudson Bay store, but the wages

were not enough for their needs so she took on the job of night matron at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police barracks.

She recounts that "One day I was approached by some government men who were interested in my lot which was an ideal location for a water tower tank which they were going to construct. I agreed but they would have to give me two adjacent lots cleared, \$7,000 and would also have to pay hotel and café bills while the move was being made. I later built the second shack into a very nice three-bedroom home and rented it out".

At this point her daughter Sharleen decided she wanted to be a hairdresser, so she went to Edmonton and took a room at the YWCA which included meals. She did very well and got her diploma. Six months later she started dating Jim Bourque. Within three months they were married and moved to Little Buffalo River where Jim was stationed as a park warden Louise's youngest son Arthur, at this time was sent by a doctor in Yellowknife to a doctor in Edmonton to get treatment for blood clots in his leg. She remembers that "During that time I met a nice appearing man, Gerry, who offered help and comfort in my troubled time. I must have been worried sick and experiencing

financial problems, because it didn't take much persuasion for him to talk me into marrying him. When my son died shortly afterward, I was still alone with my grief. A divorce was granted for non-consummation."

Louise had made many trips back to Yellowknife to visit her son Frank and his family and had a good offer on her Fort Smith home which she took and moved to Edmonton where she lived with a good friend. While living with her, she bought a white, "fully loaded" Mercury Park Lane automobile. From there, she moved to a suite in Windsor Court where she built up a good business making fur coats and jackets along with numerous other articles which were in demand. Louise then took a sales position as unit manager for Celebrity Jewelry, holding evening sales parties in and around Edmonton. All her children were now living on their own and she finally had nobody else to please but herself. She remembers "I enjoyed the freedom, but soon grew tired of living alone. I think the main problem was I missed being needed. So, by taking the bull by the horns and placing a newspaper ad 'Senior lady desires companionship' I ended up meeting the man of my dreams, Harry Yee." Louise wrote an ode to Harry, which she included in a compilation of her poems and odes, entitled Poem and Odes: From the Heart of a Woman. It aptly describes the situation leading up to their marriage:

"An Ode to my Husband"; Harry Yee

I met him there in Edmonton; he had just flown in from Fort Simpson, NWT, on this cold day in December 1976. He told me about his situation with three little mother-less girl's, at home and a business to run. He asked if I could help him find Christmas dresses for his girls. He also told me he was born in China but had been in Canada since he was nine years old.

As we talked, he asked me if I'd like to go home with him and meet his children. Some were married and had children of their own, except for three younger ones - eight, ten and thirteen. So we met and talked for a few days and since I had lived and was familiar with the North, I was eager to go back. I said I would go back with him on the plane. No thought of romance or marriage at that time. When we arrived, I could see the desperate need of a woman like me. Being of good health, I had lot's to give. I could care for home and children and share his life till the end. And so we were married, January 8, 1977.

I was 73 years and Harry was 67. I have found him to be a man of dignity, most generous and kind. My own family all love and respect him, as well as our friends. Our love for each other is

not the passionate kind of the younger folks, but instead, fast and true. He's the quiet type, never criticizes and I've never heard him use bad language to anyone. He can sit alone and keep his thoughts to himself, giving me a chance to sit at my desk and do my own thing. I wrote my life story and so many poems, as thoughts creep into my mind. Oh! Sure we have our little spats as everyone does. But I wouldn't trade for any man. I know he's one of the Best. Come January 1998, we will be married for 21 years.

With lasting love;
Your wife;

Louise Yee

A few years later Harry was ready to retire so they sold their business and home and relocated to Mayerthorpe, Alberta. They bought a big new mobile home, which they used to travel frequently. One by one Harry's girls left to be married and Louise said that "Now there is just Harry and I living with our little dog Funny Face who has become our constant companion. We traveled a lot and in the summer Harry tended our nice yard filled with flowers and raspberries, but his pride and joy was his apple tree. During the years I have often questioned myself. Why did I do some of the things I have done? I hope my children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and great grandchildren will all read my story someday and really know me as I am. After all, I think the thing missing from your life is what you pursue the most."

Once Louise had distributed her autobiography throughout her family, she received a response from one of her grandchildren in the form of a personal letter, with the following excerpts:

Dearest Grandmother;

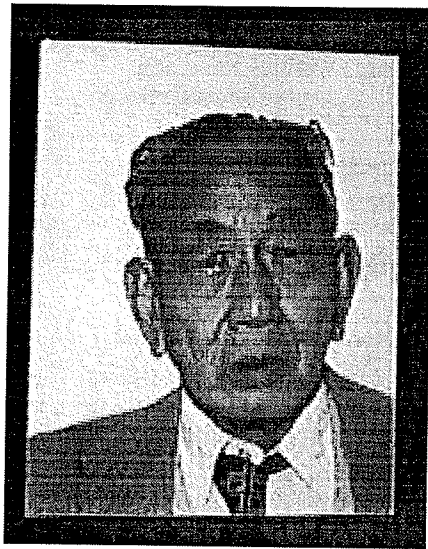
I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for sending me a copy of your book. I have looked forward to reading it with much anticipation for a very long time. I'm happy to be able to tell you that the pleasure I received from reading it far exceeded my greatest expectations. It was only surpassed by the realization that I am descended from one of the strongest, most determined women that the north has ever known.

... You are the foundation of my family. You are my 'roots'. Reading through your book caused my chest to swell with pride. How many women could raise such a fine family under those conditions, and overcome all the pain and hardships that you have?

Thank you for the legacy you have given me and my family. We will cherish it forever.

Chapter 4

Harry

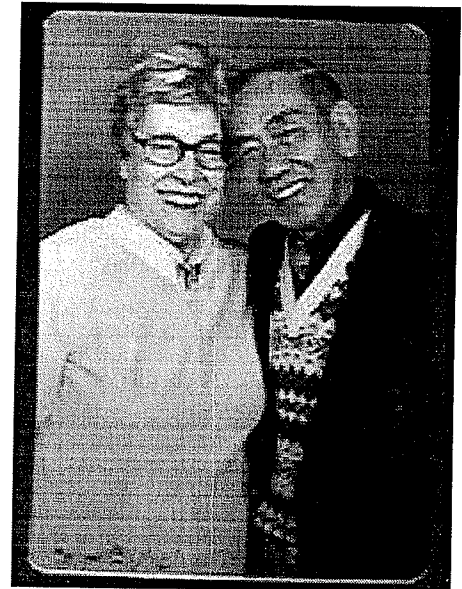


Picture37

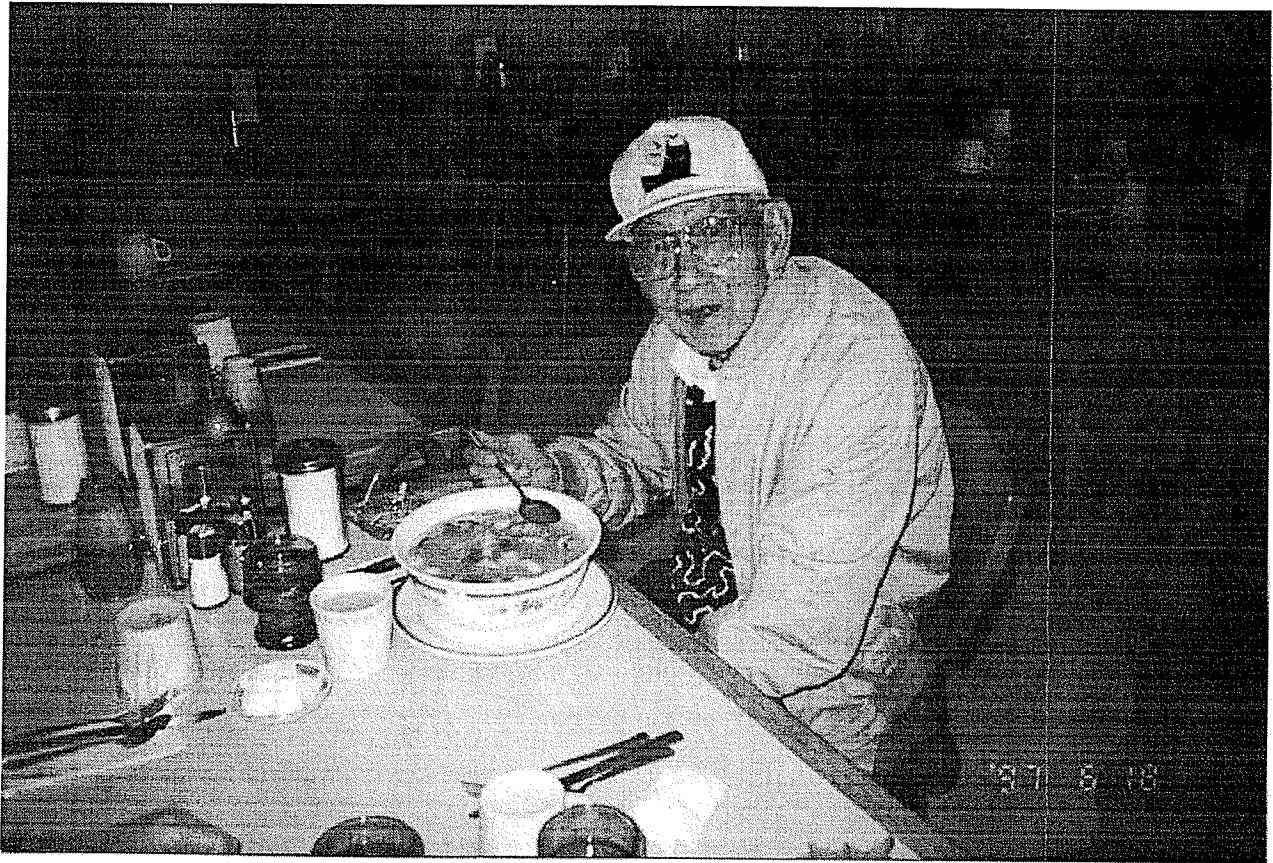
Once the importance of Harry Yee's story was revealed within the context of my research, the task of documenting it seemed daunting. It was immediately clear that talking to a very reticent man might prove less than informative. Harry's photo collection was small as most of it was destroyed, along with many other documents in a twister that struck his home while living in Saskatchewan. What he did have were photographs

that were contained in Louise's larger collection of photo albums. Eliciting Harry's life history before his marriage to Louise was the challenge.

Aside from utilizing a grandparent interview kit, a photo-elicitation method using Harry's diminished photo collection was used. Although the large collection of photo's available to me was also used, I utilized several books that had archival photo's documenting the history of Chinese immigrants to Canada as a catalyst within our conversations. In due course, Harry earmarked the events of his life by sharing most stories from memory. He supplemented his recollections by providing some of the documentation that survived the many years he traveled throughout Canada.



Picture 38



Picture 39

At the time the research was conducted Harry was a father of nine, grandfather of sixteen and a great-grandfather of four. With years of wisdom etched on his face Harry looked the definitive role of patriarch standing 5'6" tall, 135lbs, with lots grey hair and hazel coloured eyes. Harry noted his full name now is Harry Yee, but his Chinese birth name is Yee Fok Hoy. Nonchalantly Harry suggests that there is no special meaning about the Yee name as it was simply passed to him from his mother and father. Yee, however is a very popular Cantonese name and Harry suggests that all the Yee's share the same ancestry. Harry is from Guandon, China and most recently went back to visit his hometown in 1985.

Upon returning to his childhood community, Harry had felt everything had changed. The whole village had changed. Since the war with Japan, everything he had remembered about

growing up in China was destroyed. Harry illustrated his point describing as a child that his house was two stories tall and made of brick with dirt floors. The house, Harry notes is still standing in good condition but the floors had been cemented over, indicative of the modernization and industrialization, which had transformed his community.



Picture 40

One outstanding memory Harry remembers on returning to his community in China was seeing the change in the many regions. According to Harry, these changes were mainly due to the many differing political views. Chinese political views were clearly represented to him, all the way from Communist to Capitalist ideologies. Harry revealed his current political views in Canada as being in favor of a Conservative government. In the last federal

election he voted in, Harry wasn't sure for whom he would vote. He wasn't even sure whom he liked in the election, but Harry voted for Brian Mulroney because he felt it was the only choice at the time. Harry feels that politics is important to him, but he is not always so active.

Harry speaks fondly of his memories in China. Things may have been tough for him there, but he is thankful for all that he has learned and seen over his lifetime. As a young boy he remembers how he wanted to see how things were in different parts of the world. Since then there has been a lot of changes over the years in Harry's village, but he admits that they are all for the better. The way of life for his people is much better now than it was when he was a child.

Harry's family in China was poor. They lived on a small farm or "...wherever we could afford to move. And we would grow up some rice and vegetables to feed ourselves." It was the

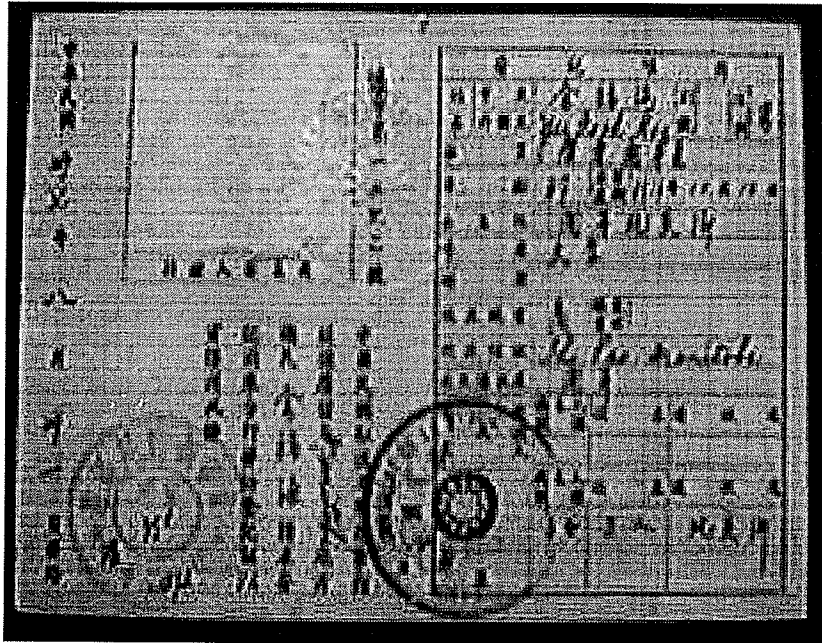
only way they could manage. Harry said growing up like that was tough. However, Harry did grow up as a happy child. When he was young he didn't have anything to worry about. "When you're a kid, you don't know, do you? But we did live through it. The depressing times, the good times and the bad times."

Harry had a very good relationship with his parents growing up. He remembers them from when he was a child, but Harry remembers very little about his grandparents. His grandfather had died in New York City around 1907(?) before he was born, and his grandmother died before that, but he's not sure when. Harry does regret not having any photos of his parents to show anyone, but recalls that his parents were simple people. His mother took care of the house and the children and his father was primarily a farmer. He had one brother, Yee Suk Hoy who died after he came to Canada, and two sisters who eventually followed him. Harry remembers how his father also helped some of the local people fill their prescriptions using traditional Chinese medicine. This type of medicine was always made from pure ingredients. If someone came in with a headache, Harry's father would put all the medicine needed into a mixture to take home. Once the ailing individual got it home, they could then boil the mixture and drink the liquid it produced. According to Harry this pure method of Chinese medicine cured a lot of people.

While admitting that he has seen a lot of adventure, Harry doesn't feel that anything has affected his life decisions too greatly. His main objective was always to just do the best he could to provide for his family. Since Harry's ethnic origin is Chinese, living in Canada at a time when the relations between the two countries was strained at best didn't affect him personally Harry noted candidly. In fact Harry humorously notes that during his first 10 years in Canada, Harry had the good fortune of meeting and shaking hands with former influential Chinese military officials,

which he would have never dreamed of happening even if he was still living in China. Harry recounts:

"General Chang Hi Sak, the principal of a near-by military school had arranged an appointment for me, my cousin and my uncle to meet with him at the school. After the meeting, it was close to lunchtime so the General had invited us to stay for lunch. There was some type of custom that I was too young at the time to understand or take part in, but I do remember going to the school gym and eating lunch" (From personal interview notes).

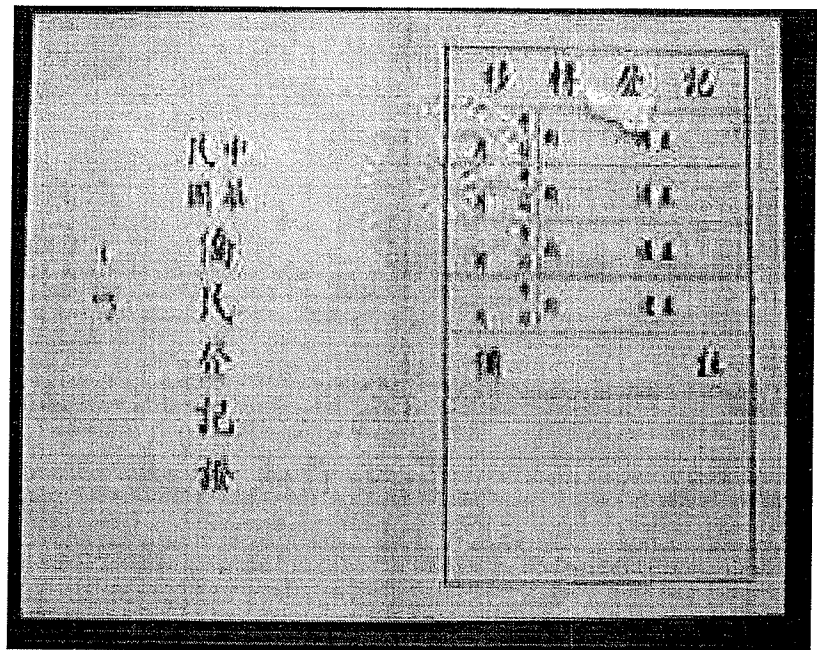


Picture 41

Harry had an uncle already living in Canada who had gone back China to escort Harry and his cousin to Canada. The three of them boarded the Princess of Asia cruise ship bound toward Taiwan and Shanghai. All was smooth sailing until they set off toward

One of the earliest memories that Harry shared with me goes back to his maiden voyage to Canada in 1923. As a thirteen-year-old, an earthquake struck the ship Harry had sailed on.

Picture 42



Japan. While sailing to Japan, they met with the effects of an earthquake {see video for story}. He remembers how the captain had given him a life jacket and a shot of whisky to get through it.



Picture 43

After the turbulence on the high seas, while the ship was preparing to depart from Japan where they had taken refuge, the Japanese Coast Guard insisted they aid in collecting all the individuals still floating in the water. The ship's crew agreed, and all able hands, including Harry had collected about 300 bodies. Fortunately some of them were alive, but sadly most of them were dead recalls Harry. The ship anchored about a mile away from shore and the captain gave the dead a proper burial.

Once they had made it to Canada's shore, in Victoria, British Columbia on Vancouver Island, Harry's uncle went into the city to find some clothes for them to wear. They had lost all of their possessions during the earthquake events and Harry's uncle managed to acquire two different

outfits for them to wear. One was a sailor suit and the other an army suit, this way his cousin and himself could switch around from one day to the next.

Upon arriving in Victoria, Harry was greeted by some women from the Canadian Immigration Office. They gave him breakfast, which consisted of pancakes with syrup, toast and coffee. This was Harry's first cup of coffee ever. Harry remembers that coffee in China was a very expensive commodity so his family didn't have it in the house.

Harry and his cousin were required to pay a \$500 head tax to get into the country. He did hear that the Canadian government intended to pay that back to those Chinese immigrants who paid the head tax, but he never did receive any money back. Harry comments that back in those days, when he had come to Canada, that amount of money could have been about \$10,000 today. Harry's uncle wasn't expected to pay the tax because he had come over much earlier, before the immigration laws had changed.

Harry stayed in Victoria for one week and then came straight to Winnipeg by train. From Winnipeg he went on to Riverton, a town north of the city. This is where another one of his uncles ran the local hotel and cafe. He had one uncle in Winnipeg and two outside of Winnipeg in Riverton and Hudson. Harry also had an uncle who was an interpreter, who lived in Regina.

Harry didn't speak any English when he arrived in Canada and he did not go to school in China for very long. He had spent only two years in school in China. Once he arrived in Vancouver, he was sent to a public school, which placed him in an all native environment. He also went to a public school in Hudson, Manitoba, but had to quit after three years to work. It was in Manitoba where Harry learned English. One of the female teachers, who had taught at Harry's school, took him home every day after school for extra lessons. She was the daughter of the minister of the United Church in town, so she was able to give him a ride with her horse & buggy

during the winter months. Even after he quit school he continued to take private lessons from her for the duration of the winter.

While in school in Manitoba, Harry spent most of his time with Native boys who also attended there. He remembers that there were very few white children in his school. The ratio, as far as Harry recalls, was about half white kids and the other half would have been native. He was the only Chinese boy there and at that time Canada was just a Dominion. Harry was treated well despite what was happening to the Chinese in Canada then.

Even though Harry just had the basic first few years of schooling that he spoke about above, he did have the opportunity to take a five week course in repairing and operating a Kelvinator refrigerator, offered and paid by the company. Once he had completed the course, they wanted to send him to Hong Kong to do more training on the Kelvinator with the other employees there. Harry wasn't very keen on the idea because his English wasn't very good, so the manager of Kelvinator told him to come back to Winnipeg where they would send him to school. He stayed at the YMCA for what he described as a six to eight month period, but that was "...just a place to eat, sleep and clean up, nothing more." Every day after he was done working he would walk to the University up to Old Fort Garry and down William and Portage Avenue where he saw the Canadian Pacific Station for the first time in his life. Harry remembers it had looked like a 'Spider's Web' to him.

Once Harry quit school he worked with his uncle running the hotel and cafe in Riverton. Harry's uncles did many different types of work when they came to Canada. For the most part, his uncles were interpreters. Harry's uncles were taught to speak English in Hong Kong in British based schools. In Canada, they acted as interpreters for other Chinese immigrants who came into the country. They would offer their services to the Chinese people as they arrived in Canada.

These early Chinese immigrants would pay Harry's uncles directly, so they were self-employed and not working for any person or agency.

Things in 1923 were hard for Harry once he moved to Canada. Harry remembers that Mackenzie King as the Prime Minister of Canada was being blamed for the recession. Harry said that at the time while working for a farmer, he would only earn \$5 a month. When he was around sixteen years old his uncle thought he was old enough to go out and get a job of his own, so he did. This was during a wartime period and Harry went from Riverton to Regina to work on a farm to help with relief for the soldiers. Each soldier got 5 lbs of meat, 10 lbs of rice and \$20 to buy more groceries. Once a week Harry would be the one who distributed the rations out to them. He was often asked why he was doing this, he said "Because there are hungry soldiers and there's nothing to eat and everyone is living on the train."

Harry remembers that when the train had arrived in Regina, it was ordered to stop. They were to go no further. Then the soldiers were locked down in the exhibition grounds where there was an armed guard set up in every corner so that anyone who made a wrong move was afraid that the guards would "...mow them all down!"

Once Harry finished working in Regina he made arrangements to move from Winnipeg to Hudson, Manitoba by train. He took the only train that went up to Hudson to bring in passengers and supplies for the town. His uncle had a little restaurant and hotel there where Harry stayed. The day after he arrived, Harry went to church with the pastor's daughter. She had come to his house to pick them up and told them she was going to teach them about Jesus. She would come to their house every day. She would pick them up after they came home from school and take them to her farm to teach them Sunday school. Everything that Harry knows about Christianity was from her.

After three years in Hudson, Harry moved to Plum Coulee and then on to Lac du Bonnet, both towns in Manitoba. In Plum Coulee, Harry met a schoolteacher who helped him learn how to speak and write English properly. She stayed with Harry through the season until summer holidays when she left town. She wrote him a letter shortly after leaving, asking how his English was coming along. She was confident that he was doing very well. Harry exchanged letters with the schoolteacher who told him that she would not return for the next term.

Once in Lac du Bonnet, Harry and his uncle opened up a new hotel and restaurant. One of his uncle's friends chose to quit his job at Canadian National Railway and help build the hotel. Harry was in charge of opening up the dinning room out front. He remembers that this was the first time he ever saw someone get electrocuted. A Hydro worker was ordered to remove all the dead wires from the line and "...this guy went and touched the wrong wire and got burned and fell right down to the ground. His hands were as black as the coal that comes out of a mine."

Harry was living in Regina at the time of the Depression of the 1930's. He remembers that everyone was hungry and no one knew where his or her next meal would be coming from. Harry remembers during the depression, he had served coffee and donuts for a nickel. "Can you imagine, a nickel!" Harry suggests he didn't suffer too badly during this time though. He was never hungry, and he was working serving coffee and donuts every morning. He served enough throughout the day to make a dollar. Sometimes people would come by and help him by clearing up and washing the dishes for him.

In the midst of all of Harry's movements in Saskatchewan, Harry adopted a small dog he called Bailey who was later lost in a flood in one of Harry's homes. "He got into the basement and got into the water and drowned." Harry didn't have another pet until he married Louise and they moved to Ft. Simpson, Alberta.

At 29, Harry tried to join the Canadian Army Reserves for World War II (1939), but his vision was bad and he was rejected so he chose to go to work instead. He was making a little more at this time, \$15 per month. Due to the shortage of men, a farmer had approached Harry with an offer of work. Almost all the men were gone to fight in the war and the farmer had offered Harry three meals a day and \$10 per month. Harry thought it over and decided, "Well, that's better than nothing!" Harry worked for the farmer for the whole summer, but chose not to go back the next year; "...it was too much like work!"

Harry felt there was quite a bit of an impact on his life during the war. Everybody had gone off to fight and "...nobody was around town at all." All the men were fighting in the war and all the women were working out on the farm trying to grow a little bit to eat. Harry remembers these years as the "hard times" in Canada.

When I asked Harry why he came to Canada, he responded:

Because my uncle wanted me to come, but they're going to put a head tax on you. \$500 head tax for each person that enters Canada. So they said they'd get the money so I'd come. I said, don't you know we have to pay a head tax now, in Canada? And they said, yes we know. They knew that way a head of time. That's when they sent for me. He said 'you're young, you can come on over and put in your time and wait for better times to come. That's how I come to be here today. Otherwise I would have stayed at home.

Harry and his cousin had come to Canada to find a better life and to provide money for the needs of their family back in China. There were more opportunities for young men like them in Canada than in China. For Harry, Canada was a new world. "It's like the different pages of a book. [Just] like you turn the pages of a book you turn the page and everything is new to you."

Once Harry moved to Canada, he kept in touch with his parents by mail on a fairly regular basis to provide money he had earned. Harry remembers that they were always trying to save and cut corners to help the family. Harry highlights the extent to which they would go, remembering that his cousin had found some kind of boarding house where they could sleep and eat. His cousin

was very excited about the idea and even suggested to Harry that staying there would help them to save some money to spend or to send home. Harry thought this was a good idea, so he went back to the Army barracks on Osborne Street where they were staying, to pack up his things. Harry laughs as he suggests "Can you imagine finding a cheaper place than the Army!"

One of the reasons Harry came to Canada was because things were hard for him and his family in China. His uncle knew that Harry could do well in Canada, except for the \$500 head tax that Harry would be required to pay. In Canada, Harry's uncle knew the land was better and the people were in a better position to help him along in life. Harry says, "The farther you go, the better you are." Harry's family wanted him to know a better life than the one he would have known in China.

Aside from the places highlighted above Harry has lived in quite a few places while he's been in Canada. He lived in the North West Territories as a businessman for eighteen years. He also lived in Calgary, Alberta for a many years. He worked in the music business for a while in Calgary with a local music company. He sold sheet music during the war, for a total of nine years. Harry was also a cook but doesn't remember doing too well. He knows he wasn't a very good cook. However, he enjoyed the work he did very much.

While living in Camsak, Saskatchewan during the 1940's and 50's, Harry's home was destroyed by a tornado. Everything was gone and all his personal papers were lost. Years later, while living in The Pas, Manitoba, Harry was asked to produce his immigration documentation to his lawyer. Harry admitted to his lawyer, Mr. Whittiger, that all his official papers were lost in a natural disaster in Saskatchewan. Mr. Whittiger told Harry not to worry he would take care of everything. He sent a request to Ottawa to reissue these documents to Harry. Within a week,

Harry had the documents in his hands. Harry was very grateful to his lawyer for his assistance, but when Harry tried to pay Mr. Whittiger for his services, he would not accept any payment from him.

Harry met his first wife, Susan Danielson, in The Pas, MB. The two of them had met at a local community dance where one of Harry's friends had introduced them. Harry found that she was attracted to him and he also liked her very much. Harry recounts that six or eight months later they were married! Harry feels that the most important thing about choosing a wife is that "...she is good to you and honest." Some women, Harry says, get married and then they forget about their home. They leave the house all day, and stay out all night and the husband doesn't know where to find her. When the husband gets home from work, Harry feels his wife should be there to greet him. If, he warns jokingly, she's not there, and he has to start looking for her that's when she's in trouble!

Harry's first child was a little girl. He remembers how he and his wife Susan were happy because she was a girl and a great child. He had figured, "Well, I have something to work for." They were quite happy to be having a child as they felt it takes three to make a home. On the subject of children, Harry's experience has taught him that when you are young yourself and raising kids you must be proud of them. "Send them to school so you know they are in school and when they come back home, you know they are safely back at home." Harry feels it's pretty good to have children. "They are the ones", he says, "who keep you at home and make the house into a home. You may not realise this while they are growing up around the house, but then once you've sent them off to school, they are gone. All a parent can do at that point is to make sure they are learning."

Harry was never frustrated as a parent and he loved being a father and grandfather. He enjoyed being able to watch them grow and hold them in his arms. He has nine children from his

marriage to Susan Danielson. Their names are Myra, Sonny or Douglas, Debbie, Tracey, Nadine, Brenda, Don, Linda and Alannah. Most of Harry's children were born in Calgary, Alberta where he lived with his wife, Susan, for many years. When she died in 1972, he still had three daughters at home left to look after. It was soon after that Harry married Louise in 1976 while living and running a hotel in Ft. Simpson Alberta.

In his work history Harry also worked with one of his uncles in Manitoba for about 10 years shipping fish from the Manitoba Interlake Region to the United States. They would ship about 20 train cars per day. After that Harry worked at another cafe/store in Winnipeg on the corner of Portage Avenue and Main Street. Of all the jobs Harry's had, he liked his job in the store the best. "That's the nicest building a person can get." He says. "The place was clean and I had nothing to worry about. I was able to open the store by myself and I was responsible for everything in the store. I wouldn't change a thing about the jobs I've had."

Harry remembers shortly after his brother died, his mother had come to visit him in Canada since he was her only son now. She stayed with him for six months in Calgary. His mother then began to feel out of place. Harry remembers her always saying, "This is no place for me". Harry and his sister were living together at this time and his mother didn't want to impose. Harry told her not to worry since he had a job and went out to work every day, so she could stay right where she was. Harry's mother, however, was getting older and she was ready to move on to the next stage in her life. She then bid him farewell and wished for him all the best in life. If she were to die before she could get back to Canada, Harry remembers, "God Bless" she told him. This was the last time Harry saw or spoke with his mother.

Harry's Personal Message

During the course of my research with the Yees, Harry changed from being a passive participant into someone who recognized the importance of documenting lives. As a result Harry opened up and shared much of his life in the hopes that not only would his family benefit, but anyone else who may decide to participate in similar research. With that in mind, my conversations with Harry were not always directional. He would share one memory from a photograph, which would trigger several others from completely different times and places. It was his desire to express these in describing the events of his life.

Harry talked a lot about travelling. It was one of the things he had always enjoyed from childhood. He's been from coast to coast in Canada. In the United States he went through Nevada from one end to the other. He's also been to Mexico and Hawaii. Harry says his greatest adventures and the best times he had were in Mexico.

Harry felt his return to his home community in the summer of 1985 had a great impact on him. While out there he made the effort to visit General Chang Hi Sak who was living in Taiwan at the time. The General had moved out there by himself and Harry thought it would be nice to visit. General Chang Hi Sak has since died.

Harry's knows his life has turned out just as he imagined. His greatest accomplishment he notes, has been the education of his children. He wanted them to learn "So that they would be successful in business." Harry knew education would help his children to get to where they wanted to go in their lifetime.

Advice

The opportunity to pass on one's own "wisdom of the ages" is a tempting one for everyone, especially as they begin to live out their twilight years. Harry is no exception. The advice Harry wanted to pass on most when asked is his great grandchildren regarding education. He urges them to become well educated and then they can achieve whatever dreams and goals they choose. The value of pursuing an education in whatever path they choose can only become a reality when they learn whatever they have to learn to realise their dreams. They may find that it takes lots of time, but Harry knows that sticking with something right through to the end can only bring positive results.

As far as determining a career, he feels this is a decision they would have to make on their own. "You can't choose that for them. They might change their mind out there. If you tell them what to do now, they could change their mind in a year. You could ask them where they want to go to school and then after a year, they want to do something else".

Harry continues by suggesting that if they are successful with their education goals, the next step is to use what they've learned to make a living. When it comes to their money, he suggests they take care of themselves and to keep a tight hold on it. They would have to use some self-discipline and make an effort not to spend it too freely because it doesn't come that easy.

Naturally, young children soon become young adults and their hearts turn their heads to love and marriage. Harry tenderly advises his offspring to take their time when they love somebody. They must make sure they are with the right person and the relationship is working for them. Although youth may dictate otherwise, they should take precautions and not jump into things too fast. If they did, they could regret it for the rest of their lives.

Harry revels in the notion that children are blessings to people who love each other. "I want tell my family to behave themselves and be good citizens. Not to do things that they're not supposed to do. Just carry on the way they were taught in school. Not to overdo it, or do it the way they wanted. But just carry on the way it should be." Harry ends by sending a wish to his children and his grandchildren. Wishing them much success and happiness in their lives, he wants them to be about something when they're grown up. "The personal satisfaction you could have in your life is the best thing anyone could have!"

On October 10, 1997, Harry had celebrated his 37th birthday. That year he also celebrated his 21st wedding anniversary with his second wife Louise.

Chapter 5

Content/Narrative Analysis

The primary method of interpreting the data collected was narrative analysis as outlined by Elliot Mishler (1986) in his book *Research Interviewing*. In his chapter on Language, Meaning and Narrative Analysis, Mishler focuses on interviewer responses as narrative accounts or stories as one of the most significant ways individuals construct and express meaning.

Mishler's views on narrative analysis focus on the meanings and functions of different features and modes of speech. His discussions are organised around a framework of linguistic functions borrowed from Halliday's systemic theory of grammar (1970). These functions are the textual, the ideational and the interpersonal forms of grammatical construction (Mishler, 1986:77).

It is the ideational function that was primarily employed in my analyses. The ideational function in life history-narrative research focuses on the organisation of accounts in terms of coherence. According to Mishler, "A narrator's intentions and strategies used to produce a coherent story are central topics of inquiry" (1986:87). The content of a story is expressed through themes, and it is their relationship to each other that is fundamental to analysis and interpretation (Mishler, 1986:87).

Mishler is concerned with a notable lack of discussion of explicit links between themes in life history interviews and anthropological analysis. Citing Agar and Hobbs' work (1982) on the thematic analysis of ethnographic materials we see that coherence is the central idea.

Hobbs suggests that discourse is 'coherent' "... if it exhibits structural relationships between its various segments..." and is used by "... people in conversation to achieve a shared sense of their talk as being tied together" (Mishler, 1986:88 citing Hobbs 1973). Hobbs also argues that coherent

discourse reflects a set of relations between its parts that can be inferred by speakers, listeners and investigators. These are coherence relations which

...provide a taxonomy of coherence relations and include devices such as weak causal and strong temporal relations between events, evaluations of the appropriateness or effectiveness of an utterance in terms of the overall goal of the discourse, linkages between what is known and what is introduced as new information, and various types of expansion and elaboration (Mishler, 1986:89).

In essence participants like Louise and Harry do the work that produces their sense of cohesive discourse. Mishler notes however, that not all discourse is coherent, and one typically finds 'islands' of coherence of varying sizes with attempt to bridge the gaps between them.

Agar and Hobbes (1982) specify three types of coherence:

- (a) global coherence, or how a particular utterance is related to a speaker's overall plan, intent, or goal for the conversation;
- (b) local coherence, which refers more narrowly to relations between utterances and parts of the text and is specified primarily through Hobbes' taxonomy of coherence relations; and
- (c) themal coherence, or how utterances express a speaker's recurrent assumptions, beliefs, and goals, or 'cognitive world'. (Mishler, 1986:89)

Mishler contends that the Agar-Hobbs model preserves some of the complexity and richness found in life history narratives. It also suggests a way of relating form and content (1986:93).

In the final analysis, the Agar-Hobbes' model for narrative interpretation relies on the interpretations of meaning on the intuitive grounds of shared cultural understandings between an interviewer and respondent (Mishler, 1986:95). Mishler suggests that using shared cultural understandings is unavoidable, and that narrative analysis requires the investigator to supplement the text through what he cites as "expansion of meaning"

To accomplish this expansion of meaning the analyst uses her or his 'best understanding', makes explicit ... references to other material [written materials, autobiography and poetry] as well as to presumably shared knowledge between participants, and introduces factual

material from other parts of the interview or from general knowledge of the world (Mishler, 1986:95).

In her discussion of the analysis of data collected from participant observation, Jennie Keith advocates the use of computer software in managing narrative interviews and notes. "How the data will be analysed should have as strong an influence on how they are collected as the theoretical reasons for posing certain questions" (1986:13).

Once collected, all the interviews obtained were entered into The Ethnograph computer program. The Ethnograph program allowed the data to be coded, indexed and repeatedly accessed. The needed portions in the analytical process were quickly identifiable without having to wade through entire transcribed interviews.

Keith recognizes that the most problematic data for analysis are large amounts of field notes, or in this case, narratives (1986:13). Software programs, such as Ethnograph, aid in coding and cross-referencing information so patterns can be discovered. She concludes that if narratives are to be transformed into codes, then coders must read texts looking for important themes, assign them a code, and proceed until there are no more themes requiring indexing (1986:13).

In his book *The Ethnographic Interview*, James Spradley discusses theme analysis as a method of ethnographic analysis which was adapted to the issue of analyzing and coding themes presented in this thesis. Spradley notes that theme analysis is necessary since it "...involves a search for the relationships among domains and how they are linked to the culture as a whole" (1979:94). Likewise, Russell Bernard notes in his discussion of coding field notes that,

...most of what qualitative data analysis really is -- is coding. By the time you have coded your field notes, you've established the themes that need to be indexed and the patterns that need to be located and thought about. Spending a lot of time coding notes is not Mickey-Mouse work. It's analysis (1994:193).

(In the case of this study it is the link between these themes and Louise and Harry that are paramount.) In his discussion of coding methods, Bernard mentions the use of making up your own mnemonics as an alternative to the use of number codes (1994:197). In my analysis, mnemonics were the most applicable due to the specific topics that were dealt with in interviews. He continues by suggesting that coding is a form of data reduction rather than proliferation and that one of the values of using your own coding system is that they develop naturally from your own study (1994:199).

Bernard suggests, as did Jennie Keith, that the use of inexpensive computer programs aids in counting the occurrence of words in the text. Once a list of repeated words are viewed, you receive "hints" about the themes within your interviews. This helps one decide on a list of code words (1994:199).

Themes

Reading through the narratives of Louise and Harry gathered by interviews and other resources, such as personal letters, and informal discourse, themes were coded. The results of the coding process revealed the following themes in Louise' narrative construct: family, health issues, sexual abuse and history. On the other hand, Harry's narrative revealed two major thematic constructs, family and history.

In order to illustrate the coding process that was employed and the themes described excerpts from the transcriptions of interviews as entered into Ethnograph are presented for each theme for both Louise and Harry. For Louise the following excerpts illustrate her themes of family, health issues, sexual abuse and history.

LOUISE: Because I said that back in 19 |
 Yellowknife when the miners were all 20-miners |
 there and there was a lot of native 21-native |
 girls having babies with this one and 22-babies, girls | -Yellowknife
 that one, they didn't know who they 23 |
 were or anything else, because it was 24 |
 so many men there without their wives 25-married men |
 and sex is natural thing. The same 26-sex |
 thing happened in McMurray when McMurray 27 |
 started to grow and the people came in 28 |
 there. They all flocked in there for 29 | -Ft.McMurray,
 the oil fields and the same thing 30 | History
 happened. 31 |

The children used to go to school and 124-children |
 they would come home with head lice or 125 -health |
 body lice and it was terrible, because 126 |
 (Most of the native children) I 127-native |
 guess it's caused from uncleanness 128 |
 too, and they had head lice or body 129 |
 lice. For the head lice we used to 130 | | - disease,
 douse their heads with coal oil. That 131 | | history
 would kill the lice that were living 132 | |
 and then when the nits came and hatched 133 | - medical |
 again, we'd put another douse of coal 134 | care |
 oil on and leave that on for couple 135 | |
 of days and then wash their heads with 136 | |
 whatever kinds of soap we had. For the 137 | |

LOUISE: No that was taken in Ontario...who 13-Ontario
 put that on there. Oh, that one there, 14
 that's Paulette's. That's Paulette 15 |
 when she was about 15? 16 . . . I guess 16 | - Paulette,
 . . . nice looking girl at that time. 17 | Sharlene
 She was another one that liked to show 18 |
 off. And Sharlene, she's just plain 19 |

old Sharlene, she's so different the 20 |
 two girls, you wouldn't think they were 21 |
 full sisters. Different in their 22 | - family
 attitudes towards people and everything 23 | opinion
 . . . very, very different. Paulette 24 |
 takes after me, she thinks very fast 25 |
 and she does everything fast. Too 26 |

fast, she doesn't do it thoroughly. 27 |
 And Sharlene, she's more of a folly- 28 |
 girl. 29 |

LOUISE: I never did date. The first male 50 |
 that ever took an interest in me was 51 |
 the man I was practically forced into 52 |
 marrying at the age of 15. They lied 53 - marriage |
 about my age because 16 was the age 54 |
 limit. He was tall and handsome and 55 | - history
 wore cowboy boots and a big Stetson 56 |
 cowboy hat. He was standing in the 57 |
 lobby of the old Princess Theatre in 58 |
 Edmonton when he smiled and came and 59 - Edmonton |
 sat down beside me, I couldn't believe 60 |
 a man had paid attention to me. 61 |

the wedding ceremony. He then took me 69 |
 to a horse barn on 96th street and 70 |
 107th avenue in Edmonton. In the loft, 71 | - history, sexual abuse
 in the haymill I was . . . there was a 72 |
 cot where he took me brutally. Yes, I 73 |
 know how it feels to be raped. He took 74 - raped |

For Harry the following excerpts illustrate his themes of genealogy and history:

HARRY: That was nice of him to do that. 226 |
 Came back and gave it all back to me, 227 |
 all my papers. And I got that back and 228 |
 my sister was looking for me when the 229 - family |
 war was over. The RCMP was looking for 230 - war, RCMP | - history
 me and my sister was looking for me, 231 |
 everybody was looking for me and they 232 |
 found me in Ft. Simpson. So I flew out 233 - Ft. Simpson |
 and met them in Calgary. 234 - Calgary |

HARRY: Yeah. Everytime you go outside 305 |
 you've got to have your cap on, when 306 |
 you come inside, you take off your cap. 307 |
 If you're walking down the street, 308 |
 you've got to have your cap on, if you 309 | - custom | - history
 don't \$5 fine. It didn't matter what 310 |
 kind of people, who they are or what 311 |

you are, but if you don't put a cap on 312 | |
 walking down the street \$5 fine. 313 | |

HARRY: I don't know. I never really 323 |
 wore them myself. That was long before 324 |
 the Communists ruled China and that's 325 - Communist, | - history
 how they wore it. I never did have any 326 China |
 thing to do with that. 327 |

Each theme described, in both Louise and Harry's narratives, contain sub-themes that encompass a more detailed description of the concepts that comprise the theme. It should also be noted that similar themes, such as genealogy and history are described relative to each Louise and Harry. Their views are widely different and therefore the themes are widely variable. A comparative discussion of Louise and Harry's themes will be presented and provide insight into their lives as elderly individuals and as a couple.

In discovering the truly important themes in Louise' life, it seems that the most important issue in her reflections was genealogy or simply her "family". One of the major goals that Louise had developed in the latter years of her life was to approach and deal with issues within her family that had rarely been dealt with directly. As a result she wrote her autobiography with the aid of a long time friend Marguerite Walter.

In her forward to Louise' book Marguerite writes that Louise is "...a woman with unknown origin and more than her share of inferiority complexes who continually searched for love and compassion".

She continues by adding that Louise, "...while hiding her tender feelings and blaming nobody but herself...suffered great humility within herself as a result of some of her actions" (Forward; Louise Autobiography).

Louise had searched for her own origins and attempted to come to peace with inner issues that she struggled with. It was her contention that everything that she was reflected in her genealogy or life history. She writes in her dedication:

This narrative is the story of my life; all true, and is lovingly dedicated to my sons, daughters, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. I hope that those of my family who have shunned me because they have been embarrassed by me will read this story. Then, I hope they will ask themselves what they could have done in similar circumstances. How would they have acted had they been me? May they forgive me and find at least some measure of good in me.

In all the interviews that were conducted with Louise, the overlying issue always dealt with her family. The stories that defined her life were always dedicated to the survival of her offspring, and to their acceptance of her decisions. Regret never seemed to be an issue to Louise in casual or formal conversations. Louise was proud that she survived all the difficulties presented to her in her life and felt that she had achieved a truly rare task that few other women in her situation did.

In contrast, early in her life it was the theme of sex and abuse that defined her actions. This was a recurrent issue with impact seen throughout her entire life. The historical circumstances that placed her in remote towns throughout Saskatchewan, Alberta and the North West Territories played a role in the contact that she had with "men" in general. This exposure was by her adoptive mother, as Louise lived with her and the mates that she had as male figures. In describing these situations and their importance, Louise spoke of her adoptive mother by saying:

...I didn't know any different because this woman that raised me had brought me up. I was abused and molested as a child. I was called all kinds of names and I was put down and I lived out in the prairie and in those days there was nothing out there. Nobody else, no neighbours nobody to talk to so I had no bringing up. She lived with one man after the other and dragged me with her every time she lived with somebody else I had to change my name to one name to another and that's the way I was brought up. I didn't know anything about morals or anything and it seemed like I was always searching for something whether father love or somebody, anybody that really showed me any affection will. I just fell for it.

Once Louise had left the home environment that her adoptive mother provided to get married, the cycle of abuse continued. After meeting and marrying her first husband, Newton Warren, Louise describes the experience by noting he was the first man to take an interest in her. She could not believe that a man had actually taken interest in her. Unfortunately she ended up being forced to marry him even though she was underage. Her adoptive mother lied about her age, which was 15 at the time, and had a Salvation Army Captain perform the marriage. Once the ceremony was performed Louise said that:

He then took me to a horse barn on 96th Street and 107th Avenue in Edmonton. In the loft, in the haymill I was...there was a cot where he took me brutally. Yes, I know what feels to be raped. He took his pleasure all night long...when he returned that evening he brought me a sandwich and some coffee and abused me some more. Next day after he left, I went crawling back to my mother hurting, scared and ashamed (Excerpt from Louise Interview).

The following day, Louise and her mother reading the local newspaper found out that he had been deported back to the United States. Soon after she found out that she was pregnant and nine months later she had her first child Frank Warren.

These major events in Louise's life were dramatic and defined her approach to many of the future marriages and relationships she had. Her opinions are very strong on this theme in her life, and can be seen reflected in a commentary on prostitution and its linkage to rape and abuse. She contended that a red light district would have helped prevent many of the situations that created abuse for young women at the time. She saw many young girls raped in small towns because of all the married men who did not have their wives with them, and the ease of access to prostitutes in fledgling towns. Louise noted:

...back in Yellowknife when the miners were all there and there was a lot of native girls having babies with this one and that one, they didn't know who they were or anything else, because it was so many men there without their wives and sex is a natural thing. The same thing happened in McMurray, when McMurray started to grow and the people came

in there. They all flocked in there for the oil fields and the same thing happened. I believe that if they had a red light district, where these girls were supervised and under doctor's care and kept clean, I think it would prevent an awful lot of spread of disease and an awful lot of rape and things like that (Excerpt from Louise Interview).

The next major theme in Louise' life was health issues. This theme, like sex and abuse was prevalent early in her life and continued to be an issue into her last years as an elderly individual.

As a young woman, Louise' livelihood was varied but always a struggle. Since she had many relationships and a large family that resulted, surviving in hostile environments was common for her.

In describing the historical events that surrounded her life, Louise commonly referred to the strategies of obtaining nutrition and maintaining sanitary conditions for herself and her children. One such strategy in the nutrition in their lives was cooking with Birch tree sap. "In those days, when the ice broke up in the Peace and Rushing River where we lived the water got pretty dirty and we couldn't use it for cooking or drinking. We had no other water, so we used to tap Birch trees and use the sap. It was good for cooking and we even had to drink it." (Excerpt from Louise interview).

Louise attributes her strength and health to the way she lived in north regions of Canada. Hunting, fishing and eating wild meat was simply the only way to survive in the areas Louise was living. And as far as obtaining vitamins, the only indigenous sources of fruit were blueberries and cranberries, which could be boxed and stored throughout the winters.

There were also many issues of sanitation and medical care that dominated the focus of survival in the North for Louise and her family. Louise understood the importance of cleanliness and its link to disease and its control. She describes the task of bathing her children; "It wasn't easy in those days. They all had to bathe in the same water in the same tub. Sometimes the last one to

bath at the time the water was pretty dirty. And our towels were never clean. We used them one after another until they got so dirty that they'd almost stand up alone."

In many of her discussions on the matters of health and sanitation, Louise described many situations that illustrated the difficulties presented to her. Her children would commonly contract conditions such as scabies and head lice. "For the head lice we used to douse their head with coal oil. That would kill the Lice that were living and then when the nits came and hatched again, we would put another douse of coal oil on and leave it for a few days and then wash their heads with whatever soap we had."

Louise commented often on the noticeable lack of medical attention available in the early years of her life in the north.

It wasn't easy, just imagine when you have no sanitation, you are 200 miles from a doctor and no store or anything at all. It's a little bit difficult; not like it is now a-days where you can just run to the store and get whatever you want. Today, with modern Medicare you don't even have to bear pain or danger of infection, everything is done for you. In those days it sure wasn't like that. Imagine it's hard for you younger folks to believe what it would be like to have a baby with no medical attention.

The final theme prevalently outlined in Louise's life narrative is the issue of history. This was a contextual concept that Louise included in much of her narrative. History in this case described the situations and historical moments that shaped Louise's life. Throughout her entire life, Louise was always in motion. Moving from one region to another struggling to survive and looking for relationships as they presented themselves.

All these diachronic life experiences were tied together by presenting her life through places she lived and what it meant to her at the time. Because there was so little interaction in sparsely populated areas the significance of major events became inextricably linked to the place in which it occurred and to the people that were present.

Louise's career as a trapper and trader illustrates this conceptualisation of history and how it played a role in her life. She describes her contact with traders as she contextualizes the experience.

I just thought of the way it used to be when the ice broke up and the river was running free of ice. The first thing was the traders used to come down the river in a flat-bottomed boat and they brought trading supplies with them; fresh fruit and all kinds of groceries. That's the only time that we got fresh eggs and fresh fruit. They were always welcomed and we traded a few of our furs with these traders in exchange for the groceries that we needed. Otherwise we shipped all of our furs out to Edmonton to a fur buyer. So many things I try and remember.

Louise was truly a pioneer in the frontier towns of much of Saskatchewan, Alberta and the North West Territories. Her exposure to Native populations, and the social changes that were sweeping the country at the time defined her need to reflect on the events in her life and her need to narrate them to her family and future generations.

Harry's narrative construct proved more difficult to determine than Louise's did. This was due to Harry's reticence and its limitations during interviews. No matter how detailed a question was presented to Harry to elicit a response, Harry always responded with few words and in as simple a model as he could construct. This simplicity was very reflective of his views and their importance in describing the experiences that shaped his life.

His experiences in Canada, like Louise's were also varied in their context and regionalism. His experiences as a youth in China did not seem to be a factor in explaining the important themes in his life. However, the concept of being an immigrant and struggling to survive was at the forefront of his descriptions. For Harry the two major themes that developed in his narrative were *genealogy* and *history*.

The theme of *history* is similar to that of Louise's in that the places that events took place in his life were most important as well as when they occurred. So much so that facts overshadowed the events themselves. For Harry it seemed more important that things were achieved in his life

rather than how or why they were goals. We see this concept when Harry described his arrival to Canada and becoming a citizen:

You become a citizen when you pay \$500 for that certificate. So I had no problems at all coming over. I was just a kid too, you know when you are young you don't know what has to happen, do you? You just do what they tell you to do and then you follow it and that's it.

The theme of *genealogy* was different for Harry, since as an elderly individual he was not seeking to explain his life to his family. Rather his family, as did Louise's, and his reflections on how his family developed defined who he was. However in Harry's case, it was the family that he established in Canada that played a greater role in the development of his life experiences. He remembered very little of his family in China, or felt that explaining his experiences as a Chinese boy in traditional China would not help in a narrative to define himself. It was his direct family relatives that he followed to Canada that played a large role early in his youth in Canada. They provided him with an arena to discover a new life that would be far easier in his accounts than living in pre-Revolutionary China.

His cousins, uncles and sisters that lived in Canada laid the foundation that would allow Harry to be very contented in assimilating into the Canadian culture of the time. This was evident by his marriage to a Ukrainian-Canadian woman, at a time when such interracial marriages were few and far between. This of course also helped establish a new family, which would supposedly live a happier and easier life than he could have ever provided them in China.

A Common Theme – Our Story

One of the most integral themes that ran through the life-course events of Louise and Harry's lives was that of a migratory nature. Movement as an event becomes a shared theme that runs deep through the lives of the Yees. Both lives had experienced an abundant amount of displacement in their living environments from an early age. Louise as an adopted child was brought to Canada from the United States where she subsequently was subjected to an environment of movement over a large geographical area as an adaptive strategy to her and her family's survival. Harry similarly experienced an international displacement, arriving in Canada as a teen at a time of exclusion for oriental immigration, and was consequently subjected to an adaptive movement strategy as well.

Both Harry and Louise were fringe participants in Canadian society for much of their lives. As a woman growing up in extreme rural environments and northern regions, Louise found her role and status to be one of hardship and subservience. She shared this role with many of the women that struggled through their lives in the north and were forced to take both the "accepted" woman's role, and the more traditional roles that men had in order to survive. An example of this would be a predominance of promiscuous relationships that Louise was forced to be involved in. Harry, as a Chinese immigrant found himself in such a hostile environment that any type of role he found for himself was fringe and subservient, analogous to Louise's role at the time. This is evidenced by the frequency of new jobs Harry took on during his life in Canada as well as being compartmentalized into a stereotypical, and stigmatic work environment that Chinese Canadians were relegated to. (For in-depth comparative reading on the role of women in the north and Chinese in Canada see Silence of the North by Olive Fredericton; Women of the Klondike by Frances Backhouse; Alone in

Silence by Barbara Kelcey; Gold Mountain by Anthony Chan; and Canadian Steel, Chinese Grit compiled by Julia Ningyu Li).

The migration that Louise and Harry shared as an experience undoubtedly acted as an attraction between the two. After a long life of continual movement that was forced upon them, a relationship between the two offered the most stable relationship either had experienced in their lives. However their mobility did not end once their lives intersected. After both had retired, they found a freedom within their movement. No longer concerned for the daily survival of their families, Louise and Harry bought a recreational vehicle and sought a movement of leisure. They traveled for many years throughout Canada, and the United States including Hawaii until they finally settled in Mayerthorpe, Alberta.

As they gained a greater understanding of their own roles in Canadian society, their lives became contextualized to one another in the their life story's. Essentially their story as a couple became mine as I became intertwined in the events of their lives and their families lives. As the son of first generation immigrants myself, the context in which their lives and their struggles for immigrant freedom in Canada becomes particularly poignant.

Concluding Remarks

Reflecting on the lives of Louise and Harry, the issue of their lives as a couple and how they came to marry and spend the rest of their lives together becomes an important one. Certainly each of them was looking to fulfil needs in their life that had been left open by the passage of time and their own views of growing old. Those needs it seems were overshadowed by the need to finally find equality within a relationship

In describing the parallels between old people in many industrial societies, Keith and Kertzer suggest there may be a life-stage aspect to age set egalitarianism such as the one that existed between Harry and Louise. They cite as an example of how residents in many types of retirement housing create communities whose egalitarian norms are expressed in frequent statements such as 'We're all old people here' (1984:22).

More importantly, it is age equality that is established by those who are excluded from major resources and arenas of decision making. Keith and Kertzer emphasizes that "...those in the age categories that precede and follow social maturity have less access to resources and influence than those in the middle years, although they are physically capable of full social participation. They are consequently most likely to appeal to age equality as a source of leverage for agemate solidarity and as a protective insulation from the consequences of a low rank on the status ladder outside of that age group." (1984:22-3).

In this study of Louise and Harry the importance of this equality and resulting freedom are illustrated by their view of one another. Louise' comments sums this up by suggesting that:

After I married my present husband [Harry Yee] life changed. Harry gave me financial security; we traveled a lot, always had a nice car to drive, nice home. He is a very humble man. Does not criticise, as a matter of fact, we have been married 25 years and I

still don't understand him because he has so little to say about himself. It aggravates me at times, but he is a good person. He needed me and I needed him. He gave me the space to do my thing whatever it was.

Louise was born in Joplin, Missouri on November 7, 1904 and Harry was born in Guandong Province, China in 1910. Both passed away in 1998 first Harry earlier in the year and then Louise, several months later on August 11, 1998. Both left an indelible mark on all those whose lives they touched. It is my sincerest hope that this thesis provides an introspective look into their lives and the issues and moments that helped define who they are and to whom they left their legacy.

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APPENDIX #1

"LOUISE"

I never yearned for riches, gems or gold
 All I ever wanted, was to know who I am
 I had no loving parents to guide me on my way
 No next of kind to turn to, in often times of need.

Call me "Louise", I had no one to love me,
 No folks to call my very own,
 Their names, I've never known
 So call me just, "Louise"

My childhood was a lonely one
 No loving arms to hold me close
 Now I'm that tree, that knows no roots more
 With many a branch, to call my own

Call me "Louise", I had no one to love me
 No one to call my very own
 Their names, I've never known
 So call me just, "Louise"

I nursed my babies, mid strife and tears
 But sang and rocked them, all to sleep
 I'm getting old, my steps are slow and eyes are dim
 The wrong's I've done, May God Forgive

Call me "Louise", I had no one to love me
 No one to call my very own
 Their names I've never known
 So cal me just "Louise"

A TREE OF LIFE

In the year of nineteen hundred and four
A seed was sown in fertile soil
From thus grew a tree of abundant life
In spite of the turbulent winds which blew

It bore the fruit of six strong males
And seven fairer female sex
Still the tree grew on and on
Again young buds, brought forth their fruits
In multiple numbers, God blessed them all

Now the tree of life, that bore that heavy load
Is bending from the heavy load
But much more fruit was yet to come
Each one healthy and loved by all

The tree that began is ninety-two
There's 5 generation's from that lone seed
Most I have held and some not yet
I'm Louise, that planted that seed, of long ago

WHEN I WAS A GIRL OF JUST SIXTEEN

For the want of love and some-one to care,
I made a mistake, causing life-long regrets.
By lying, I tried to hide from my shame;
I had no parents, to show me the way.
When I was a girl of just sixteen.

My baby boy, was born in the cold far north;
Having no way to keep him and nowhere to turn;
I gave him up, what else could I do,
I vowed at that time, I had no right to him.
When I was a girl of just sixteen.

Many years have gone by; now sixty-eight;
How many times have I yearned for his love
Yet felt undeserving, with shame and remorse;
As I look back on the years, that were lost;
When I was a girl of just sixteen.

Then all of a sudden, an urge came to me;
To see and tell him, the truth as it were,
He gladly accepted, with arms open he came;
We're now reunited, I ask why so late?
When I was a girl of just sixteen.

(No date)

"A GENIUS I AM"

Doing with little but make it look nice

A Genuis I am

With the eye of an artist, I know where and how

To place every item to make it look best

I know in my mind where everything goes.

Of old drapes and curtains new creations I make

I knit and I crochet afghans and such beautiful things

Cushions and doilies, with fringe of some yarn

Are made from the samples of upholstery, they're free

I paint murals on walls and frame some of flowers

A bit of paint old furniture looks just like new

Ideas come from here and there, put together by

I never waste; I find a use for all the tiny little things

-Louise

(No date)

IN A LITTLE LOG SHACK

In a little log shack I used to call home
With sod on the roof, bare boards for the floor
One window with glass, and a bunk made of wood

Wooden boxes for cupboards beside the cook stove
Home made table and blocks of wood for the chairs
If we had coal oil we had a good light
Without we had candles, or a rag dipped in oil

We called it a wash stand holding wash bowl and pail
With a long handled dipper, on a vale hung over towel
More like a rag sometimes not too clean
On the logs of the walls stuffed with moss in between

The stone pipes were wired over head and went there a hole in the roof
From the old barrel stove to the stove where we cooked
Sometimes catching fire if they were not cleaned
Very scary it was and oh such a mess of black soot

Outside by the door hung our wash tub, and traps
The wood pile near by, some blocks and some chopped
The sleigh dogs were tied to small trees near by waiting and howling
To be fed harnessed and hitched

To the toboggan near by, with a 'mush' we were gone
Down the narrow trail that led to my traps
With a hu and cha we sped over rivers and lakes
Returning at night full to skin all my catch

A young woman then, I loved the excitement and lore
I was happy and sand, as I lived every day at the time
Sometimes on snow shoes ahead of my dogs
If the trail was good I rode in the sleigh

Looking back on my life of adventure I learned
How just being yourself, and excepting what comes
Its not having the best, or knowing the most
Just being yourself is better than riches untold.

(Respect for all nature/Just being myself)

-Louise

(no date)

"Long Ago"

So many kids used to play in my yard
Slide down the hill on cardboard or sled
All bundled up when weather was cold
Coming in with my own, for cookies still warm.

Swiftly the years have slid by one by one
We have all gone our ways, many names have been changed
Including my own, 'tho I've written my book
Which has spread far and wide, I am now nearing 90

Many have found me as my story "*Louise*" passes around
It makes me feel good, as many phone me or write.
As they read my book they remember me well
I am now nearing ninety, I recall all their names and all their young faces, too

I never had much to give; but from labours of love
Home made treats, and pumpkins I grew for Halloween
My kids wore clothes that I made, with a patch here and there
We didn't have much, what did have we shared

Now the memories I share of long long ago
Make each day seem lighter as birthdays roll by
Mind and body are still pretty good.
Thanks to the good Lord who has guided my way.

-Louise

(No date/title)

Orphaned as a tiny babe
I never knew my parenthood
My national I have ??? of
Growing up was full of bumps
No self esteem, just shame and scorn
From those who should have shown me love
However rough, I grew up strong and of good health

When I was only in my teens
I made mistakes, in search of loving arms
To hold and lead me gently
On my way to womanhood, but sad to say
'Twas not the way and only led to more disgrace,
I fell, and fell again into native hands,

When I was born, I'm sure my mother had no choice
She dropped me by another's door, I forgive the one who
Took me in, she never knew just who I was
Many arms I have now to hold me with love in their hearts

Wayward and lonely I accepted their ways
Having little, I quickly learned fast, too cook and to sew
My teachers were native, little English they spoke
In a very short time I learned most of their skills
To make clothing of skins and even knit socks
In a little log shack on the banks of the Peace

I love the outdoors so I soon learned to trap
Walk on snowshoes or drive my own dogs
Hundreds of miles from doctors, not even Aspirin for pain
We did best we could with the herbs and the roots
The natives preserved

Today I am ninety years old, many children to hold
I live in a city, but my knowledge I owe
To experience I had in the long long ago.

-Louise

(no date)

THE FIRE

It was two AM when the small
children screamed,
The parents awake as the blazing flames
broke through the floor.
Big Jim in his shorts,
grabbed a kid in each arm
as he ran through the blazing door.

His wife Sharleen grabbed a cover and ran
to the next door neighbors
bare foot in the snow.
Jim right behind, two pyjama clad babes crying
his hair was singed and his arms were burned.

All they had left was an old Ford car
inside it a beautiful buffalo robe.
Bystanders pushed it away from the flames.
This took place in Ft. Providence, NWT
on the shore of the mighty MacKenzie, many years ago.

They then moved to Ft. Smith another small village
to live in a little old shack so small
*Jim Bourque and his wife are the greatest people
I know

Someone said, How can you folks be so happy
you've just lost everything? His reply was
*Why should we not be happy we are all alive

April 1st

"I Remember"

I went down north at the early age of seventeen
It was the year of nineteen hundred and twenty one
There was no plumbing in the village of McMurray then
A bucket with a cover or an outhouse used as a toilet.
Most old timers know what an outhouse is, I sure do.
A hole dug in the ground with a portable shed
build over the top made of pieces of scrap
A seat build in and one or two holes cut out

Some even had a door that hooked, for security reasons
The old Eaton catalogue with pages so stiff
Took the place of our tissue, so soft of today
When the weather was cold, our buns nearly froze

Most of my life was spent in the north, in this sort of way
Carrying water from rivers or melting the snow
For cooking, bathing and washing our clothes, until
In nineteen fifty I got plumbing, then my what a treat

I am now ninety years old, but still don't forget
The good years we had when some things were free
To fish or to hunt and pick fruit off the land
No locks on our doors, they were open to all who passed by

I also remember when we had no candles
Or no coal oil for our lamp or lantern
We put some grease in a dish with a piece of rag
In the middle, it was called a bitch, don't ask me why.

-Louise

June 20th 4:00 am

"Saying You're Concerned"

Saying your concerned is not enough. I am 90 years old and my husband is 84. We have both given our All to our large families; Now it would be nice if they would all show us they care, by doing little things for us. We don't need clothes or ornaments, we need attention. If they would take a bit of time out of their busy lives to phone or if coming by, ask if we need some little thing, such as a loaf of bread, milk or a bit of fruit maybe a small some fruit, as I am unable to cook since I fell on June 13th and fractured my shoulder and did more damage to my bad hip which from a bad fall in Ft Simpson many years ago. Since then I have carried on walking doing my shopping etc. In excruciating pain. Now I cannot lift my left arm. Maybe you don't think I feel defeated. We have both been independent all our lives but now it would be appreciated if the families would show their concern.

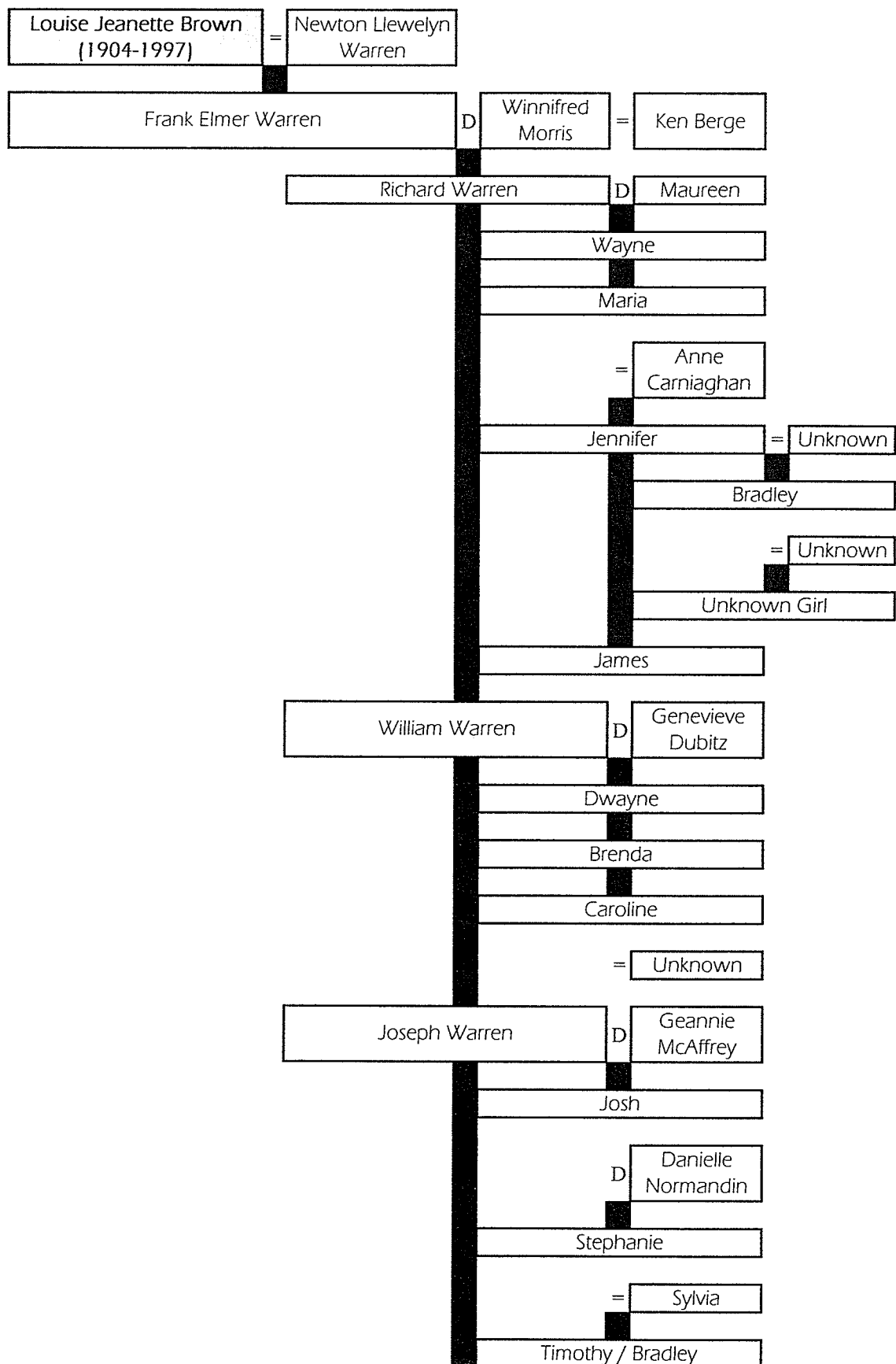
Take time and sit down and talk to us about our needs. We are not asking for a lot of money, but a few dollars for taxi fare to go shopping or to a doctor would help a lot. We live on our seniors pension. Thank God for that.

This is not for the few members who have been very thoughtful, generous and kind, God bless them, we thank them and appreciate every little thoughtful thing done for us.

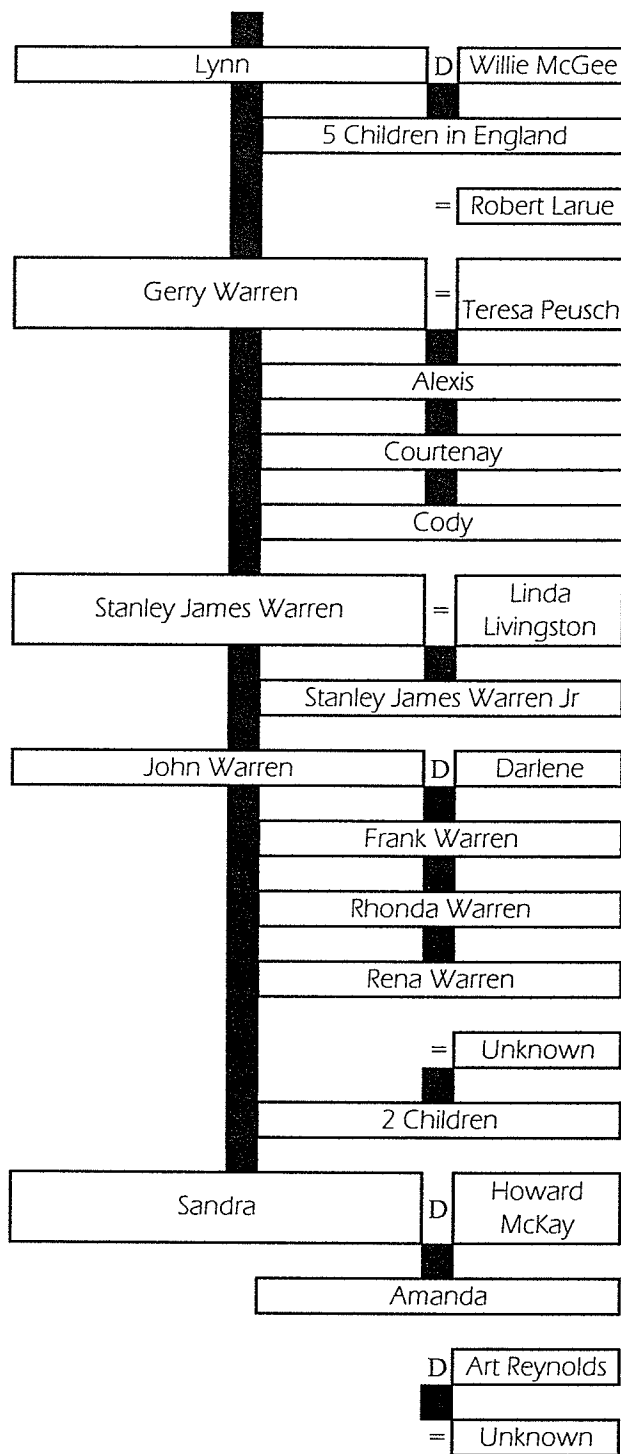
-Louise and Harry Yee

APPENDIX #2

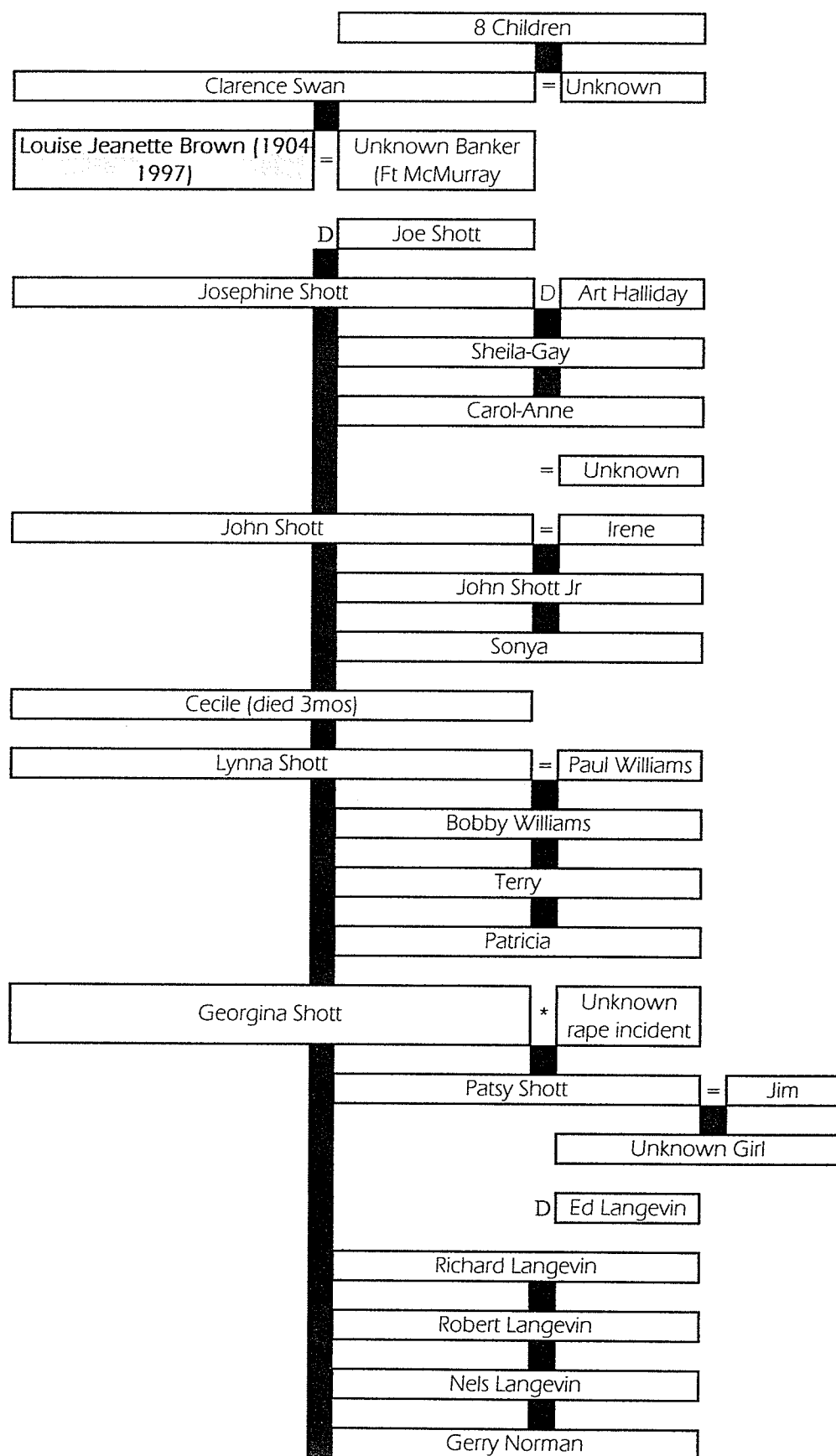
WARREN FAMILY TREE



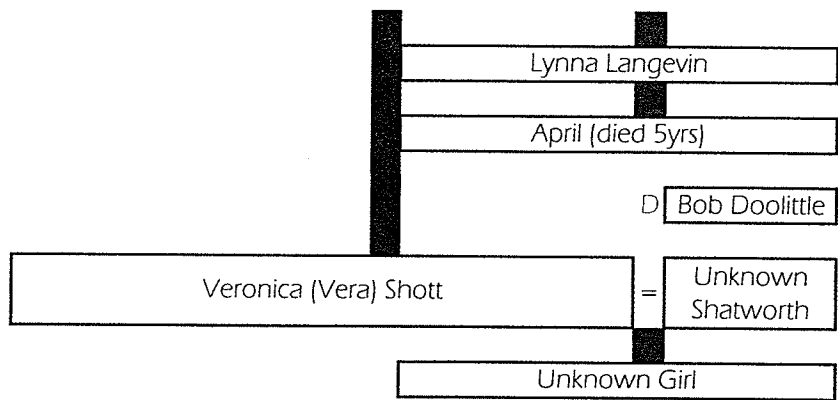
WARREN FAMILY TREE



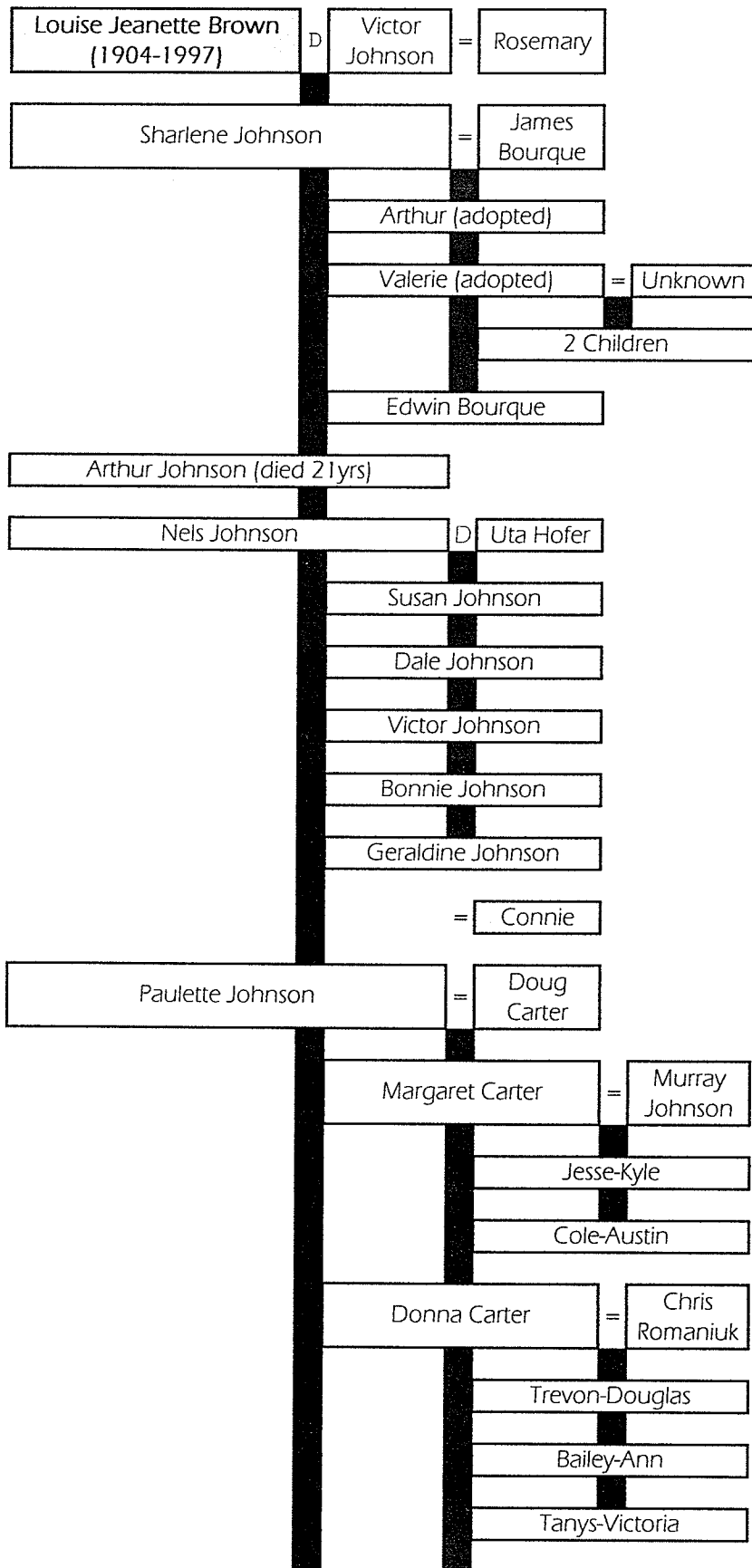
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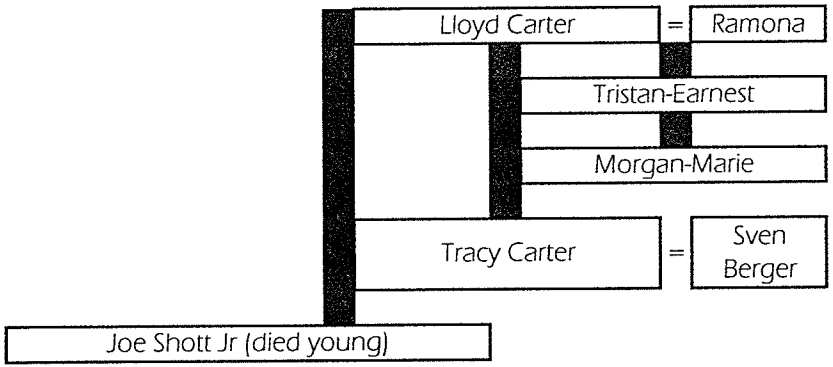
SHOTT FAMILY TREE



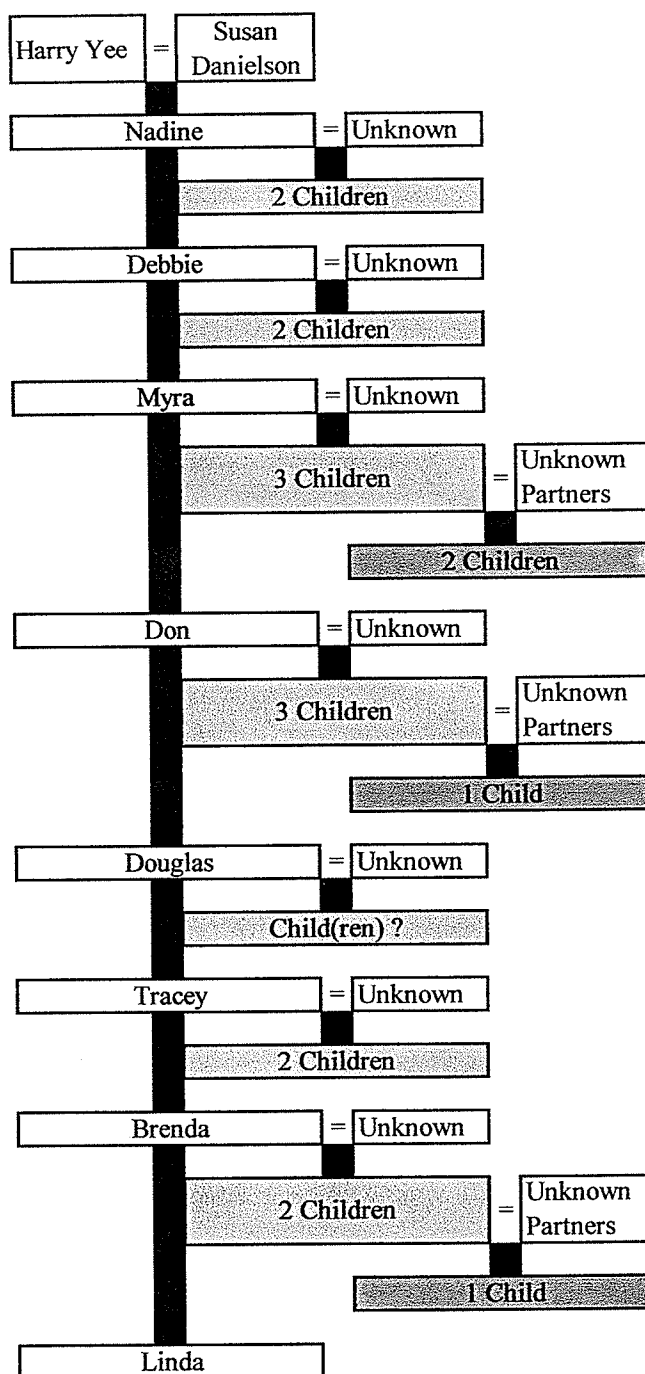
JOHNSON FAMILY TREE



JOHNSON FAMILY TREE



Harry Family Tree



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