

**GETTING STARTED IN ORAL TRADITIONS RESEARCH:
A CASE STUDY IN APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

MASTER OF ARTS

Elisa J. Hart

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BY

ELISA HART

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Abstract

This thesis presents a manual called, *Getting Started in Oral Traditions Research*, which I wrote for Aboriginal people in the NWT who want to get started in oral traditions research but do not know how to begin or what is involved. The manual was written for a grade 8 level of literacy to accommodate use by those with English as a second language and for high school students. The manual is written in a 'how to' format. It provides an overview of terminology associated with this research and outlines planning, preparing and doing interviews as well as processing information and follow-up tasks. The manual is presented in the context of applied anthropology. I describe how, as an employee of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Government of the Northwest Territories, I put my anthropological knowledge to use in trying to address a need that I perceived of Aboriginal peoples in the Northwest Territories.

Note:

Permission to include the manual, *Getting Started in Oral Traditions Research*, was granted by Dr. Charles D. Arnold, Director, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). GNWT holds the copyright of the manual.

Acknowledgements

There are many people I would like to thank. First is my Committee, Drs. Skip Koolage, Jill Oakes and Rick Riewe. They provided me with the opportunity to incorporate the manual into a thesis in applied anthropology. I would like to thank Dr. Charles D. Arnold, Director of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife who provided me with the opportunity and subsequent support to conduct oral traditions research. Thanks goes to Wally Wolfe, Curator of Exhibits, who drew the diagrams. Wally's work brought some life to the manual. I would like to thank my friends and colleagues of Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik with whom I learned many valuable lessons about doing such research as well as learning about the importance of their heritage to them. I would like to thank everyone who provided feedback on the manual. There were too many to mention individually. Thanks to my colleagues at the Heritage Centre for their feedback and support. Thanks also to Carolynn Kobelka who edited the first draft. I would like to thank Carla Bullinger of the NWT Literacy Council who provided advice on how to present the material with literacy concerns in mind and also for providing feedback on the first draft.

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**GETTING STARTED IN ORAL TRADITIONS RESEARCH:
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Wulf and Fiske (1987) editors of, *Anthropological Praxis: Translating Knowledge into Action*, present case studies illustrating how applied anthropologists put their anthropological knowledge into action through addressing a particular problem or need of contemporary peoples. This thesis presents a similar case. I identified and addressed the need for culturally appropriate training material to help Aboriginal people in the NWT get started in oral traditions research. The result is a manual called, *Getting Started in Oral Traditions Research* (Hart 1995). I also hoped that this manual could be used by anyone who wants to begin this research and would serve as a common frame of reference between principal investigators and trainees. I wrote the manual as an employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) while working at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC) in Yellowknife, NWT.

The format of the thesis is loosely based on Wulf and Fiske (1987:2) in which the themes of the articles focus on identifying a problem or need, determining who the client is, describing the process or action taken in solving it, presenting the results of their work, an assessment of the results and end with a discussion of how their anthropological knowledge contributed to their task. In addition to these topics I also provide a brief overview of applied anthropology.

2.0 CONTEXT AND NEED FOR THE MANUAL

2.1 The Context

I wrote the manual while working as the Northern Oil and Gas Action Plan Archaeologist at the PWNHC in Yellowknife. The PWNHC is part of the Culture, Heritage and Language Division of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment of GNWT. Funding for my position was provided in part by the PWNHC and the Northern Oil and Gas Action Plan (NOGAP). It was working within the mandate of the Centre and with the objective of NOGAP that the need for the manual was determined and the opportunity to write it was provided. These mandates, goals and other relevant events taking place within GNWT will be described below as they provided the context for determining the need for the manual.

2.2 Objectives of the PWNHC and NOGAP

The objectives or goals of the organizations for which anthropologists work define our duties and how we approach them. A brief discussion of these in relation to the PWNHC and NOGAP and how they led me to determine the need for the manual is described below.

The activities of the PWNHC are guided by the Statement of Purpose for the Culture, Heritage and Language Division of GNWT. Items from the Statement of Purpose that I felt were relevant to my work at the Centre are as follows:

- promotes the preservation and documentation of archaeological, heritage and cultural sites significant to the Northwest Territories;

- provides professional advice and services to not-for-profit societies and organizations which share, in part or in whole, the same objectives as the Culture and Heritage Division;
- promotes the identification, documentation, preservation and formal recognition of traditional names for populated places, and geographical and cultural features within the Northwest Territories;
- works with language communities to document, preserve and promote the official languages of the Northwest Territories (Charles Arnold, personal communication).

NOGAP was established to, "...accelerate scientific data gathering and to increase the capabilities and levels of expertise on the part of those government agencies which, through mandates of various kinds, were already involved in carrying out long-term resource management and advisory or regulatory roles in the areas under consideration. (Cinq-Mars and Pilon 1991:1)."

In carrying out the objective of documenting archaeological and heritage sites while tackling the objectives of NOGAP to increase the government's capability to deal with oil and gas development and accelerate data gathering, the then Senior Archaeologist and current Director of the Centre, Charles Arnold implemented a number of programs. Data gathering consisted of PWNHC staff participating in archaeological surveys of areas within the NOGAP study area. In addition to surveying for archaeological sites I conducted an inventory of named places that may be considered heritage sites through oral traditions research with Inuvialuit elders. Another objective of the project called the Tuktoyaktuk Traditional Knowledge Project (Hart 1994) was

to document information on other aspects of culture associated with those places such as hunting methods or housing styles. This could be used for a number of purposes such as helping with the interpretation of the archaeological record of the area and also could be worked into educational material for schools.

The issue of increasing capabilities and levels of expertise was addressed through the development and testing of various heritage training programs for people from the communities within the area to be affected. In devising these the PWNHC would have a tested training program in place so that if development occurred they could train local people to be directly involved in the research. Archaeological field schools were conducted near Tuktoyaktuk on the Beaufort Sea Coast and at Drum Lake in the Mackenzie Valley for Inuvialuit and Dene (Arnold and Hanks 1991). An example of how the field schools were run comes from Drum Lake. The direct historic approach was used and, “Students learned to build a fishing camp, interview elders on regional land use and make stone tools before they were introduced to actual archaeological survey and excavation” (Hanks and Pokotylo 1985: vi)”.

A key difference between this program and the usual archaeological field school was calling upon elders’ knowledge to provide a context for what the trainees would learn about researching their history through archaeology. At the same time elders’ knowledge served to increase the knowledge of Heritage Centre staff about the heritage resources in the area.

One of my other responsibilities was to develop and test a training program which introduced trainees to a broader range of work in the field of heritage. The program was called the Heritage Resources Training Program (H RTP) (Hart 1994). There were a number of components to the program but the primary task was to learn to conduct interviews through on-the-job training in the Tuktoyaktuk Traditional Knowledge Project. Myself and trainee, Laura E ttagiak Orchard and later Naudia Lennie conducted interviews in Tuktoyaktuk or Inuvik on named places and their history. We also conducted some interviews with elders at places they had told us about in travelling to them by helicopter or boat. The training involved learning some of the cultural history of the area through reading existing literature and through interviews with elders. In addition to conducting interviews, trainees learned to transcribe interview tapes and eventually to conduct interviews on their own. In reality the trainees and I were both learning at the same time because, as an archaeologist, I had little previous experience with interview techniques or oral traditions research.

2.3 The Heritage Training Needs Analysis

There were other events taking place at the PWNHC that supported the idea of the need to write an oral traditions manual. A heritage training needs analysis was conducted by the PWNHC to, “...recommend future directions and financial requirements for planning and implementing a permanent heritage training program” to senior management in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment” (Heath Consultants 1993: iii). The study consisted of a mail-out survey followed by a “Gathering” at which representatives from 21 communities met to discuss training needs.

Participants emphasized that heritage training programs should be developed by communities and not be designed on southern models which are “highly specialized and divided by academic discipline” (Heath 1993: iv- vii). As well the training should address the needs of specific communities which vary and change through time, and should not be run to fulfill “institutional or professional presuppositions”. Participants also, “demanded of government that it be a service to the communities in providing training and that the communities say what that service should be” (Heath 1993:23-24). The primary concerns of participants were language, traditional skills, oral history, and stories.

2.4 Other GNWT Initiatives Related to Oral Traditions Research

The GNWT developed a number of contribution programs to support community based projects or projects undertaken by Aboriginal cultural institutes. Among these were the Language Enhancement, Cultural Enhancement, Oral Traditions and Geographic Names Contribution Programs. The PWNHC administered some of these and assisted with others in reviewing applications. While working at the Centre I sat on a number of review committees which was useful in showing me the interest that people had in documenting aspects of their culture and the significance they placed on it. Reviewing the applications also showed me that people did not always have a realistic expectation of the time, money or process involved in documenting the information.

Participants in the Oral Traditions Contribution Program attended a training workshop in Yellowknife. The workshop which took place over a number of days covered a wide range of

topics related to oral traditions research such as developing interview skills, use of recording equipment, getting an introduction to archives and recording geographic names. Participants also got to meet other researchers and hear about their respective projects. I was fortunate in being asked to sit in on the workshop to evaluate it.

Another initiative was undertaken by GNWT in response to concerns expressed by Aboriginal people that their knowledge was not being incorporated into the way government operates. A Traditional Knowledge Working Group was established to address this among other issues and came up with a series of recommendations for the government (Legat 1991). Within their response was the recognition by GNWT that the most appropriate role for them was not to document traditional knowledge themselves but to encourage and provide support for others to do so (GNWTa no date). A Traditional Knowledge Policy was developed and among the principles it was based on were that, “The primary responsibility for the preservation and promotion of traditional knowledge lies with aboriginal people. [and] The primary focus of aboriginal research should be the aboriginal community (GNWTa no date: Appendix B, page 1)”.

Although the process of implementing this policy will take some time the government began to take stock of how it uses traditional knowledge (Laraque and Fleck 1994) and began a number of initiatives to integrate not only its use but concepts inherent in the language (eg. Arlooktoo and Tilden 1994).

Among other initiatives by government were supporting the development of curricula appropriate for use in teaching Dene and Inuit. A teacher's manual accompanying Dene Kede (GNWT 1993), the Dene curriculum tells of the importance of bringing elders into the classroom and recording their stories for future use, "If possible, video tape or record the elder's presentation...since the elders are the only source of this knowledge, the schools must do what they can to collect the knowledge for future use (GNWT 1993:56)".

2.5 Determining the need for the manual

Determining the need to write a manual on oral traditions research was based on a number of factors arising from the context in which I worked. Through the NOGAP program I became aware of the important role that elders or other knowledgeable people in communities play in impact assessment related to the identification of heritage sites. Through the training program I was trying to develop and through participating in an oral traditions workshop I became aware of the dearth of culturally appropriate training material that could be used to help people document this knowledge. While conducting an oral traditions project in Tuktoyaktuk and in reviewing applications for contribution program funding it was disturbing to realize how few resources were available to people at the community level in terms of learning to write proposals, planning projects, knowing what equipment to buy and so forth.

The results of the Heritage Training Needs Analysis conducted by the PWNHC pointed out that support from government in heritage training was desired but that the need and type of training should be determined by the communities. The conclusion reached in terms of GNWT's response

to the recommendations of the Traditional Knowledge Working Group was similar in that GNWT recognized that it should support research and use the results but it was the responsibility of Aboriginal people to conduct the research themselves. As well other initiatives such as curriculum development all pointed to the importance of community based oral traditions research.

With all of these factors in mind it became clear that to facilitate community based research it would be useful to produce a manual that would outline a process and provide some basic skills needed to conduct research in a systematic way. If this work is done systematically there is a better chance that the information will be useful and available for future use.

Through running an oral traditions project of my own I saw the need to have a manual that could be used as a common frame of reference between the members of research teams. As I live outside the communities I work in, it is important to me to have skilled co-researchers who can carry on with the work themselves and such a manual would help us talk about procedures and issues from a distance. It occurred to me that having a common frame of reference would be of value to other principal investigators who are working outside of their home community. For example it may be useful to a representative of a cultural institute who is coordinating a research project in another community, or a university research project where the investigator is only in the community for a few months or weeks of the year.

From a personal perspective I wanted to write a manual that could be used by anyone wanting to do oral traditions research whether it be documenting family history or researching a craft. I often heard through conversations with people I worked with in communities or through the local media, the concerns of those who felt that much knowledge was being lost as elders died. A manual would assist those interested in taking direct action to document it even if it was in the context of their own family rather than a research project per se.

3.0 ADDRESSING THE NEED

Many factors were considered in trying to write an effective manual. The first step was to review existing manuals, books and other training material. One quickly finds that the variety of terms used whether oral history, oral traditions, or traditional knowledge can be rather confusing - especially for a beginner. People use these terms differently with some using oral history to refer to the information collected while others refer to it as the process of collecting it. I decided to deal with this issue in the manual in describing the use of these terms. In reviewing the material I kept track of what I wanted to include and what needed to change. The factors I took into consideration are listed below.

3.1 Making the manual culturally appropriate

Many of these existing books and manuals have been published or printed by historical societies or archives in southern Canada or the United States. Few of these are appropriate for Aboriginal people living in the NWT. One reason is that many guides recommend approaches that are

contrary to what is considered appropriate behaviour in some Aboriginal cultures. An example is the way they suggest asking direct personal questions as these may be considered rude by some Aboriginal people, especially elders. To make researchers think about this issue I added a section on determining what questions are polite to ask and introduced the concept of being culturally sensitive. Although this may be obvious to some interviewers it may not be to others as there can be differences between generations of the same culture as elders may live by a different standard of appropriate behaviour than younger people.

Another way to make it more appropriate is to provide examples of research on Aboriginal topics. Manuals from other areas often have examples from southern contexts such as interviewing farmers or war veterans. Although Aboriginal people in the NWT may have some experience with these they would be in the minority. I dealt with this by providing examples that show Aboriginal people or topics being discussed so that Aboriginal people could identify with them. The illustrations all show Aboriginal people conducting and participating in projects. The sample forms all have Aboriginal names. The names are fictitious, but are surnames known in various communities throughout the NWT. I also tried to use real Dene words for fictitious place names such as Yazoa Deh (Blackduck River).

3.2 Literacy concerns

According to a survey of the NWT Labour Force, 36% or 15,446 people aged 15 years and over have a grade 9 education or less (NWT Literacy Council no date). The rate of illiteracy (grade 9 or less) amongst Aboriginal people is 60%. I learned first hand about the needs of challenged

readers through work as a volunteer literacy tutor for Arctic College in Yellowknife. I worked with Euro-Canadian, Asian and Aboriginal people and obtained some startling insights into the challenges they face as adults with little or no reading ability in English. Given a 60% illiteracy rate it was clear that for the manual to be effective and widely used I would have to write it in a way that facilitated a low level of literacy. I addressed this through the use of a book called *Plain Language Clear and Simple* (Government of Canada 1991). I also discussed it with Carla Bullinger, coordinator of the adult literacy program at the Aurora Campus of Arctic College in Yellowknife. I addressed literacy issues in the following way:

a) Using plain language:

The manual is written in plain language. Plain language is defined as, "...a technique of organizing information in ways that make sense to the reader. It uses straightforward concrete, familiar words...Using plain language to explain concepts and procedures involves using examples that relate to your reader's experience (Government of Canada 1991:3)."

Although written in plain language the manual cannot be considered non-technical. If people are going to learn a new skill it is important that they become familiar with key concepts and terminology. For example a researcher should know what an archive is, what transcribing means, or what are ethical behaviour and informed consent. However these can be difficult words for a challenged reader. To try and help the reader I provided a brief definition after each potentially difficult word when it first appeared in the text.

b) Number of words on a page:

Literacy specialists have noted that the more words on a page the more intimidating a document will be for a challenged reader. One only has to think back on one of their first thick, small print university texts to be able to relate to this. To keep the appearance of the manual benign I limited the number of words on a page. I did not have a particular number in mind but tried to ensure that there was ample clear space throughout the book so it would not be visually intimidating.

c) Number of words per sentence:

As well as minimizing the number of words per page the number of words in a sentence was considered. A challenged reader may have difficulty reading a lengthy sentence that contains more than one concept. To address this sentences were generally kept short. This was actually difficult to do as most university students and academic writers tend to write complex sentences.

d) The length of the manual:

Determining the length of the manual was also a consideration as one that is too long will appear intimidating and may cause the challenged reader to be reluctant to use it. This again is probably like the feeling of being given a 400 page introductory text book and realizing that you will have to read the whole thing in a few months time. According to literacy specialists it is better to introduce people to subjects in a series of short documents rather than combine them all into a longer one (Carla Bullinger personal communication). This meant that I had to limit the number of topics that I could present. For example I could not add video recording, discuss intellectual property rights, or even a detailed section on analysis of results and writing a report.

e) Font:

The font used can have an impact on the ease with which the text is read. A font with serifs is easier to read as, “they lead the eye from letter to letter (Government of Canada 1990:41). Carla Bullinger also recommended a slightly larger font as this makes reading easier. The published manual is 14 point Bookman. The version shown here is in Times New Roman.

f) Illustrations:

I included different types of illustrations that serve a number of functions. Small drawings of items described in the text such as cassette tapes, head phones, a microphone or camera are inserted into a very dry section of the text to give it some visual interest. Another type of drawing illustrates how to do something such as filling in a receipt, labelling a cassette or marking locations of places on maps.

Cartoon-like drawings serve to reinforce lessons in the text. Some of them are meant to do so in a humourous way and show empathy for a difficult task such as transcribing tapes. Although there are a number of different types of illustrations they all serve to break the monotony of the text and in doing so are intended to make reading the manual easier and more enjoyable. My decision to use the number of illustrations of various kinds came from looking at Breen and Sobel (1991), particularly the small drawings of equipment as repeating patterns and also the use of a labelled cassette tape from Reimer (1988).

I was fortunate in that Wally Wolfe, the Curator of Exhibits at the PWNHC was available to draw the illustrations. Outside of his work at the Centre, Wally is a cartoonist who has published his work frequently in northern newspapers and as a book. I supplied the concept for some and examples of items I wanted illustrated and he drew them. A few of the items I drew myself such as the labelled cassette tape which I saw in Reimer (1988) and the sample receipt. The first set of small drawings used alone or as repeating patterns were drawn by Inkit, a graphic arts company in Yellowknife. They were later redrawn by Wally Wolfe.

g) Highlight important points:

When I wanted to emphasize a point I put it in a separate line and highlighted it. I did not do this often so that the highlighted lines would be more noticeable.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE FIRST DRAFT THROUGH REVIEW

The draft manual was distributed for review. I took a number of steps in hope of making the review process effective. First I explained in a cover letter who the manual was meant for and how I addressed literacy concerns so that people could consider this in their review. If I wasn't explicit about the way I addressed the literacy concerns then reviewers may not understand why some pages have so little text and why it wasn't as comprehensive in presenting the details of oral traditions research or interview skills as some other manuals.

I gave people a few months to respond so they wouldn't be rushed. In not being rushed to get it

back I hoped that some might take a second look at it or have the time to mull over their comments. I asked reviewers to write their comments directly into the manual and send it back to me. There were a number of reasons for this. It meant that people could write their immediate thoughts into the text. This made it easy for me to compile responses to each section of the manual. Writing comments in the manual also meant they did not have to take the time to synthesize their ideas into a letter which may have kept some from responding. Having the draft manuals returned allowed me to recover most of them as I did not want them to be in circulation once the revisions were made.

4.1 Distribution

Review copies were sent to approximately 50 people. I sent copies to all Aboriginal social and cultural institutes as I hoped the manual could be of use to them in their oral traditions projects. I also hoped they would let me know if the content was culturally appropriate. I handed out copies to a working group developing an Inuit curriculum for schools as I'd hoped they would note any inadvertent barriers to learning through presentation and language. I sent a copy to Carla Bullinger, the coordinator of an adult literacy program run by Arctic College to ensure that the manual was suitable for a grade 8 reading level.

I sought the opinion of my peers in sending out copies to a number of anthropologists or others with experience conducting and providing training in oral traditions research. I hoped they would provide feedback on the research process and also in terms of their experience working with challenged readers.

The manual was sent to people in various levels of government within the GNWT such as the Assistant Deputy Ministers and the Policy Advisor of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. A copy was sent to GNWT Interdepartmental Committee on Traditional Knowledge to see if it met with their approval. I also sent it to a Special Projects Officer from Renewable Resources who distributed it to some Renewable staff to see if it was suitable for use in their work. Staff within the Community Programs section of our own Culture and Heritage Division reviewed it as they are the ones who actually administer the Oral Traditions Contribution Program and hold the oral traditions workshops. Fortunately they were holding a workshop for recipients of that program at the time the manual was ready for distribution and got a chance to try it out.

I was grateful to Heritage Centre staff who reviewed the manual as they brought their own perspectives to it which was important given their varying backgrounds in the field of heritage research. Archivists at the NWT Archives (housed at the PWNHC) provided comments and approval of the section on archives. A former trainee, Naudia Lennie, who had since become an employee of the museum reviewed the draft. The Curator of Education reviewed it and I appreciated her input as she is in charge of developing educational programming for the museum. I also sent the manual to a number of other people whose opinion I respected such as former professors or people noted for their work in oral traditions research.

4.2 Results

There was a good response to the review in that over 50% replied. The review was valuable in providing a number of types of information for me to consider. Some were straight forward suggestions that were easily incorporated such as providing phone and fax numbers for people in government who could provide assistance, and adding a tape control list. Another useful tip was letting people in the community know that a project was taking place by advertising it on the radio in a time slot when many people are listening.

There were suggestions for additional information that I did not feel I could add as it would make the manual too long or would complicate issues. Examples were to add information on recording genealogies, include a section on intellectual property rights, and discuss video recording. I did follow up on the video recording by referring readers to local communications and broadcasting corporations such as Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) for help and also referring them to the IBC video training manual (Inuit Broadcasting Corporation no date).

The review pointed out some issues that I needed to clarify in the text. One example is how elders are acknowledged for their participation after an interview. The first draft mentioned this issue in the section on planning budgets in relation to determining interview fees. It was interesting to read the strong feelings surrounding the issue of fees to elders and one reviewer emphatically stated that it was wrong to pay them. There is great variation throughout the NWT on this issue. Some elders are acknowledged through a cash payment that represents a set fee or are paid for their time. Some are paid cash as an honorarium whereas others are given a gift or

‘payment-in-kind’ of something useful such as food or fuel. Others are simply thanked. I revised the manual by adding a separate section focussing on this issue and called it, ‘Payment or Honoraria?’. In it I explained the different ways that this is dealt with and recommended that people follow the local protocol or seek the guidance of an advisory committee to determine what is most appropriate.

Another difficult issue was whether or not to include an archival deposit agreement. I had used archival deposit agreements in my own research. As the time neared to give the project material to the Archives I questioned whether they could provide the control over the use of the material that was stipulated in the terms of the deposit agreement. The agreement form distributed by the NWT Archives provides various options for use of the tapes and transcripts including: unrestricted access and use for research or other non-profit purposes; that the collections could not be used for those purposes for stated number of years from the date of the recording; that they could not be used for a stated number of years without the written permission of the interviewee. The Archives then put a 10 year limit on these conditions unless reasons were provided in writing.

Discussion of the issues arising from such an agreement could easily be the subject of another thesis. For example profit is not always a bad thing especially if the gain is to be made by an Aboriginal organization through sales of a local history book. The primary issue for me in using an archival deposit agreement is that I am leading an interviewee to believe that their information will only be used in a particular way - when in fact I can’t guarantee that nor can an archives. If a

book or article written for non-profit purposes is published then anyone can cite it and use it in a commercial enterprise. Some would respond to this in saying that the collection should be restricted. However the way in which restricted material is handled can differ between archives. Some archives will not let you access a restricted collection at all whereas others will let you look at it but not obtain copies. It is possible that if someone can access the material they may use it anyway. The implications of this for the manual was that the Territorial Archivist decided that the deposit agreement should not be included but to advise researchers to contact them so the terms for each collection can be negotiated.

One criticism was that I used the words 'you' and 'your' in the manual when referring to the reader. The reviewer said it made the manual sound as if it was written by an outsider. I am an outsider to Aboriginal culture and did not want to misrepresent that fact and so did not change the wording. As well it is recommended in plain language writing that you address the reader directly as if you are talking to them as this makes it more personal (Government of Canada 1991:12).

An important comment was provided by Joanne Barnaby, Director of the Dene Cultural Institute, with regards to a section on the written tradition. The first draft said, "Until recently, all of the Aboriginal peoples who lived in the area that is now the Northwest Territories, lived by an oral tradition. When non-Aboriginal cultures moved into the area they brought with them their written tradition. Over time Aboriginal culture has changed and most people now have a written tradition as well as an oral one (Hart 1995:3)." Joanne's point was that although many Aboriginal write,

little of their oral tradition has been documented and put into writing to create a written tradition that is meaningful in their own culture. In putting the oral tradition into writing the information can also be preserved and for the future (Joanne Barnaby, personal communication). I re-wrote the section to incorporate her comments.

Another comment was that the manual was missing the passion that many people feel in doing oral traditions research. This comment spurred me on to find a few quotes that expressed the importance of the work to those involved in it. I was allowed to search through applications from the Oral Traditions Contribution Program to look for quotes. When I found suitable quotes I contacted each person or a representative of the project and asked permission to use it. I tried to pick quotes from different groups such as Gwich'in, Chipewyan and Dogrib and one from an Inuk living in Baker Lake. Although there are only four quotes I think they are a useful addition not only in providing some 'passion' but in providing a personal perspective that could motivate trainees to take up this work. They may also motivate those who are slogging through the tiresome process of transcribing or interpreting interview tapes.

I decided to change the title of the manual from, A Manual For Oral Traditions Research, to Getting Started in Oral Traditions Research as the former implied that a much lengthier treatment of the subject would be provided. The manual is really meant as a starting point.

5.0 THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE MANUAL

Presented below is the final draft of the manual. The cover is dark green and as it does not photocopy well I have had to leave out the artwork which consists of two tape recorders and microphones. The GNWT polar bear logo would have appeared above the departmental credit.

GETTING STARTED
IN
ORAL TRADITIONS
RESEARCH

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 4

Northwest Territories
Education, Culture and Employment

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank everyone who provided comments on the first draft of this manual. I hope that our joint efforts have resulted in a useful manual that serves to facilitate oral traditions research in the Northwest Territories.

Elisa Hart

GETTING STARTED IN ORAL TRADITIONS RESEARCH

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Illustrations: Wally Wolfe, Inkit

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1. GETTING STARTED IN ORAL TRADITIONS RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Welcome to oral traditions research! There are many people in the Northwest Territories who want to try to save the knowledge that is part of the oral tradition of their culture. People are realizing that if they do not do this, then much of this information will be lost forever. This manual was written for adults and students in the Northwest Territories who want to do their own research, but need help getting started. There is a lot to learn. This manual provides you with an outline of how it can be done using audio recording equipment. For those who want more detail than is given here, a list of books begins on page 95.

1.2 How the Manual is Organized

This manual is written in eight sections. First we give definitions to the words we use, such as "oral traditions", "traditional knowledge", and "oral history". This gives us a common understanding of what we are talking about.

Next we look at how to plan a project. You have to set your goals, talk with community groups, and write proposals for funding. Then you have to plan your interviews. This means buying or borrowing equipment, deciding what questions to ask, and finding people to interview. Then we talk about how to do the interviews.

Once you finish the interviews, the hard work of translating and transcribing the interview tapes begins. The rest of the manual gives ideas on how to write your report and present the results to others. We hope you find this manual useful and enjoy your experience in helping to preserve this important information.

It has become increasingly important to put on paper the knowledge of those elders still with us today about the Gwich'in way of life, the way they experienced it. There is an urgent need to collect and eventually publish this traditional information so the children of today can identify themselves with their relatives from the past. Children today desperately need to know their cultural background and history so they can be proud of themselves.

*Alestine Andre and Ingrid Kritsch, Tsiigehtchic
Gwichya Gwich'in Oral History Project*

2. THE ORAL TRADITION

2.1 What is an Oral Tradition?

Knowledge can be passed from one generation to another in a number of ways. It is passed by speaking and also through writing. It can also be taught without words by showing people how to do things.

An oral tradition is the passing of knowledge from one generation to the next orally (by speaking). Until recently, all of the Aboriginal peoples who lived in the area that is now the Northwest Territories, lived by knowledge that was passed to them through their oral tradition. The skills for survival such as hunting, building houses, making clothes, tools, medicine and religious practices were taught by telling and showing one another how to do these things. Singing, telling stories, and plays are also ways of passing knowledge through the oral tradition.

Elders are very important in cultures that teach through the oral tradition. The elders are the people with the most knowledge. They have gained it over their lifetime and they are needed to teach the younger generations. They are the educators.

2.2 The Written Tradition

A written tradition is the passing of knowledge through the written word. Examples of this are children learning history from text books, or, adults reading a manual to learn to use a VCR.

With the arrival of non-Aboriginal cultures in the Northwest Territories, many Aboriginal people have learned to write. However, little of the knowledge within their oral tradition has been recorded and used to create a written tradition that is meaningful in their own culture. Over time Aboriginal people have realized the importance of having a written tradition as well as an oral one. This means that many of their traditions can be preserved and passed along to future generations in writing.

2.3. Traditional Knowledge

The term traditional knowledge has come to mean the knowledge that has been passed from one generation to the next through the oral or written traditions. All cultures have traditional knowledge. For example, Aboriginal traditional knowledge refers to aspects of traditional Aboriginal life, such as knowledge of the land and its resources, or traditional spirituality and medicine. However, all cultures change, and as they do new knowledge is added and some knowledge is lost. This means that traditional knowledge changes over time.

2.4 The Crisis of Losing Traditional Knowledge

More and more of Aboriginal children's education comes from books rather than from elders. Children need to go to school because there are new skills to learn for survival. They need to learn skills such as reading, writing and using computers, because these will help them get a job or earn the money they need to do other things.

Over time, less of their knowledge will come from the oral tradition of their own culture. The elders do not have as important a role as they used to in passing along their knowledge to younger people. In some communities the children do not speak the language of their elders, which makes it difficult for elders to teach them. These changes mean that much important traditional knowledge is being lost.

This is a crisis for many reasons. The knowledge that is being lost can provide people with a sense of identity. Knowing who you are can give you pride in your culture. Elders have knowledge that is needed for survival. They know a lot about the land they live in. They know where to find animals to hunt or trap because they know of places where animals will go to find food. They know how to find their way around the land because they know the landmarks. Traditional knowledge has many uses in our world today.

2.5 Helping to Maintain Traditional Knowledge

We need to continue to use traditional knowledge so that it will continue to be part of our lives. One way that you can help is to do a project where you record this information so that it can become part of school programs. There are a number of ways to do this. You can record it with a tape recorder and still camera, or a video camera. This manual is meant for those using a tape recorder, but many of the ideas may be useful for other types of recording equipment as well.

2.6 Oral Traditions and Oral History Research

Some people use the terms "oral traditions research" and "oral history research" to mean the same thing. You will see this if you look at the list of book titles on page 95. These terms are used to refer to a method of doing research that involves interviewing people to learn about their life, their culture or history. Some people also use the term oral history to mean the information they collected through interviews that can be used to learn about a person's or a peoples' history. That type of research can be very important.

When we think of history, we often think of books that are full of names, dates and events. There is a lot of history that is important to us that cannot be found in books. Many people, especially elders, may know a lot of history but have never had it recorded. They can tell you about their life experiences, such as where they grew up and how they made a living. This information can be important to the history of your people. It can show how the culture has changed over the years. For example, think about how cultures changed when people began working for wages rather than making a living only from the land.

In this manual we will only use the term oral traditions research when we talk about recording knowledge or information on traditions or history that is passed on orally.

2.7 Getting Trained in Oral Traditions Research

There is a lot to learn before a person becomes a skilled oral traditions researcher. It is best to learn from someone who already has these skills. There are a number of ways to get this help. You can arrange to have someone train you who would make sure you learn the skills needed to do the various parts of the project. Are there people in town who have done this kind of research and can help you? If you need help using a computer ask the adult educator, teacher, or someone in one of the offices in town if they could assist you. If you need help keeping track of your finances see if there is an accountant or treasurer of an organization who could help.

Projects that are funded by the GNWT's Oral Traditions Contribution Program and the Geographic Names Program (see pages 90 and 91) are given some training along with financial support. If you aren't supported by a funding agency think about getting someone to give you a workshop on oral traditions research at the beginning of your project. To find a trainer call your social or cultural institute or the Heritage Advisor at the Heritage Centre in Yellowknife (page 90).

2.8 Using Video Recorders

Some researchers like to record interviews with a video recorder (camera). In this manual we cannot discuss the many skills a person needs to learn to do a good job with them. Organizations like the Native Communications Society (NCS-TV) in Yellowknife, the Inuvialuit Communications Society (ICS) in Inuvik, and the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) in Iqaluit, are willing to give you advice. They can give you the names of people you can hire to teach workshops on the use of video equipment, or they may be holding workshops themselves. The addresses and phone numbers for these organizations are listed on page 94. The IBC has a community training manual that they are willing to send to people, so give them a call if you want one. There are many good books on using video equipment, so check with your library or book store.

2.9 Ethical Behaviour

Ethical behaviour means behaving in a way that shows you respect the people you will be interviewing, and you have their best interests in mind. An example of ethical behaviour is telling people before you interview them what you are going to do with their information. Will you use it in educational programs for schools? Will you use it to write a book that you hope to sell? It is ethical to let people know how you will use their information so they can decide whether they want to be interviewed or not (see section 4.5 on informed consent).

What if you interviewed someone, and when you finished the interview they said they did not want you to use something they had said? Acting ethically means you would respect their wishes and not use that information.

Various organizations in the country have written ethical guidelines for doing research. In the future, guidelines for community based research in the NWT will likely be written by various cultural organizations. As none are available now, an example of ethical guidelines written by the Association of Universities for Northern Studies is provided on page 82. Although they were written for people in universities who do research in the north, the guidelines apply to anyone doing research.

2.10 Who's Who?

Throughout this manual the person who is doing the interviews will be called the **interviewer**. The person being interviewed is called the **interviewee**.

3. PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

3.1 WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

It is important to know exactly what your project is about and what you hope to accomplish in doing it. Ask yourself these questions:

What is the subject of this project?

What do I want to learn from the people I will interview?

What do I want to have completed when this project is over? A report? A display? A school program?

If you can give specific answers to these questions then you are ready to begin planning your project. Knowing what your goals are helps you decide what questions to ask and who you should talk to.

Examples of how some people may answer these questions are:

I want to learn about the legends that people used to tell. I can write a book about them and that way our people will always know them, even after the elders are gone.

I want to learn about making birchbark canoes so that we can make a report and video that can be used as a project for children at summer camp.

I want to learn about the traditional games our people used to play. I can write a report on them, and the games could be used in school so the children learn some traditional activities and the language that goes with them.

Choose a subject that really interests you!

3.2 Community Consultation

You should tell community groups such as the elders council, band, or hamlet administration what your plans are. Be sure to tell your social or cultural institute. Some communities or cultural organizations may keep track of the type of research that is taking place. They may also have guidelines that they would like researchers to follow.

Continue to keep people informed about your project. Think about doing an interview on the radio or writing an article for the local newspaper. The more interest and support you have from the community, the easier it will be for you to do your work. This will also make the results of your project more meaningful to people.

Be sure to tell the teachers and the people on the local educational council about your work. Be sure to tell the divisional board of education in your area. Schools are always looking for information on traditional life and culture that can be used in school programs.

3.3 Getting Advice

See if there are elders, or other people you respect, who are willing to listen to your plans and give you advice. See if anyone else in town has worked on an oral history project or has done interviews. Have any of the teachers done interviews with elders to get information to teach students? Is there anyone at the local radio station who you think does a good job interviewing people?

You may want to set up an advisory council. The council would consist of elders or others who are interested in your project. These are people who want your project to be a success and will help by giving you their advice. They could help you decide what questions to ask and who to interview. They might have ideas on how the information you collect should be used. Think of how good it would be to have a group of people that you can discuss your progress and problems with!

3.4 Rethinking Your Goals

It is possible that some people will not like what you want to do. Maybe they do not like the topic of your research. Maybe they do not think you can finish the work with the money you plan to ask for, or in the time you have planned to get the work done. This kind of criticism can be hard to hear, but can be useful in making you think about whether the plans you have made will work. Do not give up if people criticize you. If they are right you may just have to change your plans.

3.5 What Work Has Already Been Done On Your Topic?

Try to find out if any research has already taken place on your topic. Ask your cultural or social institute and elders council if they know of any oral traditions projects that have already taken place in your area. Phone the NWT Archives to see if they have interview tapes from projects that were done in your area. Phone the Science Institute to see if they have a record of this type of research being done before. By knowing what work has already been done, you will know what information still needs to be recorded. Knowing what research has been done before helps you decide what your research goals should be. When you apply for money from a funding agency they may also look to see if you know what work has been done before.

3.6 Payment or Honoraria?

Interviewees should always be thanked for helping you. As well as saying thank you some projects give an honorarium. An honorarium is a small gift of money. In some communities people will not accept money. They may accept a gift of thanks such as dry meat or getting you to help them with a chore. Some people will not accept anything.

In some communities in the Northwest Territories people are used to being paid for interviews. Some are used to being paid for the time they spend being interviewed. They may expect to be paid a daily wage if they spend days or weeks working with you.

Find out if you will be paying interviewees or giving them an honorarium or some other gift. You need to know this to plan your budget. You should make this decision by talking about it with the elders' council and other community groups. They should also help you decide how much the payments or honoraria will be.

3.7 Developing a Work Plan

A work plan is an outline of the work you will have to do to get your project done. By writing it down, you can plan how long the project will take. Once you start the project you might find that things are taking longer to do than you expected. This means you will have to rethink your work plan to figure out when you will be finished.

You can also use the work plan to figure out how much money you need to get the project done. Making a work plan is really important! It helps you think about all the things you have to do, how long it will take to do them and how much it will cost.

Making a work plan helps you get organized!

A guide to writing a work plan can be found on page 84.

3.8 Planning Your Project Budget

There is a lot to consider in planning how much money you will need to do your project. The work plan will help you think about all the things you need to pay for.

Interpreters, translators and transcribers all charge a different amount. Some interpreters charge per hour, some by the session. Some translators and transcribers charge by the number of words they write. Some charge by the length of the tape they have to work on. How much do you need for honoraria or payment for interviews? What will the equipment cost? Use the list on the next page to help you figure out how much money you need to do your project.

EXPENSES TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING YOUR BUDGET

Wages:

- Will you hire other interviewers?
- Will you be paying elders wages or honoraria?
- Will you hire a trainer in oral traditions research?
- Will you need an interpreter/translator?
- Will you hire someone to type the transcripts?
- Will you need to hire a photographer?
- Who will copy the interview tapes for you?
- Will you need someone to draw pictures or maps for your report?
- Will you need to pay for training on the computer?

Transportation:

- Will you need to rent a boat or snowmobile to go out on the land?
- Will you need to pay a guide?
- Will you need money for gas, oil and spare parts?
- Will you need money to travel to different communities for interviews or to present your results?

Equipment:

- Tape recorder
- External microphones
- External speaker
- Earphones
- Batteries for all equipment
- Battery tester
- Cassette tapes (enough to make copies for interviewees and the archives)
- Tape cleaning kit
- Camera
- Film
- Flash
- Pens, pencils, erasers, notebooks
- Receipt and invoice books
- Notebooks
- Maps
- Photo processing (originals and copies for interviewees)
- Camping gear

Reporting

- Will you need to get someone to type the report for you?
- How much will it cost to get your reports printed?
- Will you have to get colour photocopying?
- How much will it cost to mail your reports?

3.9 Keeping Track of Project Finances

It is very important to keep a record of how you spend every dollar that you get to do your project. The funding agency will want to know how you spent the money they gave you. A government auditor (financial inspector) may also want to see your records.

Keep a ledger (listing) of the money you receive and spend. Everything, such as equipment, elders' fees, and interpreters' wages should be written down. You need to have a receipt to go with each thing. It might be a receipt from the store, a signed receipt from each elder you pay, or records of co-workers' wages. Keep this information in a safe place.

If you do not know how to keep a ledger or an account on a computer then ask for help. You could ask people like the treasurer at the hamlet or band office or an accountant. The funding agency will often help you with this as well.

Be sure to write down everything you spend money on and keep the receipts!

3.10 Writing a Project Proposal

To ask for money to do your project you will usually have to write a proposal. A proposal is a written request for money. In it you must tell the funding agency what you want to do, why it is important, and how much money you need. There may be a lot of other people applying for funding as well, so it is important to write a good proposal.

Ask for help if you need it! There will be other people in town who write proposals and who are willing to help you.

Most funding agencies will send you an application form that lists the information they want from you. Be sure to provide all the information they ask for. If you do not know how to start, find someone in town who can help. Many funding agencies are willing to give you advice on how to write your proposal. You may have to do some background research to show that you know about your topic (see section 4.2 on background research). Ask a few people to read the proposal after you finish writing it. By doing this you will know if other people understand what you are trying to say.

It can take a few months from the time you mail your proposal before you hear whether you will get funded or not. Ask the funding agency how long it will take to find out if you get the money. Also ask how long it takes for the money to actually arrive.

It is discouraging when you apply for funding but do not get it. If this happens to you be sure to ask the funding agency why you were turned down. Maybe your reasons for doing the project, or the way you were going to do it were not written clearly in the proposal. Try to learn from this so that you can give them a better proposal next time. Sometimes good projects are turned down because there is not enough money for everyone who applied.

3.11 Applying for a Science License

The Scientists Act of the Northwest Territories states that people doing scientific research in the Territories must have a scientific research license. At present, doing oral traditions interviews is considered scientific research, so call the Science Institute about applying for a license. Phone them a few months before starting your project because they need at least one month to prepare your license. If you have any problems filling out their application form you can ask them for help.

One goal of the Science Institute is to share information on research done in the Territories. Each year they prepare a report which gives a summary of all the research projects that have been licensed. This report is sent out to many people and organizations in the Territories and in the southern Canada.

The Science Institute has research centres in Inuvik, Fort Smith, Igloolik and Iqaluit, which offer support (help) to licensed researchers. They can help by letting you use some of their equipment for a small fee. The Science Institute staff are trained in doing research in a number of areas so they may be able to help you. They will also give you a place to stay if you are in one of those four communities while working on your project. Give them a call for more information. The addresses and phone numbers of the Science Institute are on page 94.

I started doing research on the Rivers Book Project last July....Believe me it's hard when you've never done something like this before....The reason why I kept working on this project is because of my parents, who had struggled to keep me and my brother and sisters alive during the starvation in the early 1950s and other elders who had camped along the river long ago, and because of the traditional ways they once lived, which most of them can't really be relived. Secondly for the younger generation and my children who are forgetting the life and language dialect of long ago among the Inuit.

*Hattie Mannik, Baker Lake
Rivers Book Project*

4. PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

Once you know you will get your funding, then you can start to prepare for interviewing. This involves a number of steps, from buying your equipment, to finding people to interview.

4.1 Purchasing and Using Equipment

The equipment that you choose depends on your needs and your budget.

a) **Tape recorders**

There are many different types of tape recorders to choose from.



What type should I buy?

Think about where you will be doing the recording. If you are going to be going from house to house then you will need a portable tape recorder that comes with a carrying case. You might want to get a small one if you are going to be interviewing out on the land and do not have much room to pack things.

How much should I pay?

Tape recorders can cost from about \$75.00 to \$1000.00. The one you choose depends on what you want to do with the information on the tape. If you are recording songs or stories to play on the radio then you should spend more money to get a machine that makes excellent recordings. If you are doing oral histories and will use the transcripts rather than the tapes, then you do not need such a good machine. You can probably get a reasonably good one for between \$150.00 to \$300.00.

What features should it have?

- **Recording level indicator** - The tape recorder you choose should have some way to measure the recording levels. **The recording level means how loudly or softly the voices are being recorded on the tape.** If the recording level is too high then the voices will be loud and distorted. This is the same as when you turn your radio up too high and the words become

hard to hear clearly. If the recording level is too low, the voices will sound too soft and be difficult to hear.

Some tape recorders come with a gauge that shows you what level you are recording at. The gauge has numbers on it that indicate the recording level and has a needle that moves to show you the level you are recording at. The best recording level is when the needle is between the numbers 0 and -10. Some tape recorders do not have a gauge but automatically adjust the level for you.

- ▶ **Power jack and battery case** - You should be able to use your tape recorder by having it run on batteries or by having it plugged into a power outlet. When you buy your recorder, be sure it comes with a place to plug in a power cord and a place to put batteries. When you work in someone's home you can usually plug the tape recorder in. If you are going to record outside then you will need to use batteries.
- ▶ **Microphone jack** - If you are using a microphone that is not built into the recorder, you will have to buy a tape recorder that has a "jack" or place to plug in the microphone.
- ▶ **Built-in speaker or speaker jack** - Most tape recorders have an internal (built-in) speaker. On some recorders, such as the "Walkman" style, the speaker is left out to keep the recorder small and light. With this type you need to use earphones to listen to the tapes. Think about whether you will need to play the tape back to more than one person at a time. Will you want to listen to it with an interpreter or transcriber, or play it back to the interviewee? If so, you should probably buy a machine with a built-in speaker, or buy a small speaker that you can plug into the machine.



- ▶ **Remote jack and foot pedal** - "Transcribing" is writing down what has been said on an interview tape. This can take a lot of time because you have to write down every word. While doing this you also have to start, stop and rewind the tape over and over again. Not only is this hard on the forward and reverse buttons of your machine, but it also takes time. You can make this job easier if you buy a foot pedal for your tape recorder. As long as your tape recorder has a remote jack you can buy a foot pedal that is used to move the tape. This leaves your hands free to continue writing, and lets you get the job done faster. Foot pedals start at about \$30.00.
- ▶ **Pause button** - Make sure your machine comes with a pause button. During the interview you might have to stop recording for a few minutes if, for example, the interviewee has to answer the phone. When this happens, stop recording by pushing the pause button rather than the stop button. The stop button makes more noise when it is pushed than the pause button. It is important to try and make a good quality recording without a lot of extra noise on it. Give it a try. Record yourself and stop the machine using the stop button and then the pause button. You will see that the pause button is much quieter.

The best recordings are those that do not have a lot of background noise. This includes noise made by the tape recorder.

- ▶ **Tape counter** - Many tape recorders have a tape counter. The counter has numbers that begin with zero and get higher as the cassette tape moves forward. If you keep notes when you interview, you may want to play back the tape to where something of interest was said. If you write down the number that is on the counter when you make your notes, then you will know where to find that place again. This is also useful when you summarize or transcribe tapes because you can write down where each point occurs on the tape.

One problem with tape counters is that they move at different speeds on different machines. Try to buy a machine that has a "real time" tape counter. That means the number on the counter is in minutes and seconds. If you cannot get this type then use a watch instead to keep track of where you are on the tape.

Read the manual that comes with the recorder. If you have a hard time reading the manual, ask for help.

b) Microphones

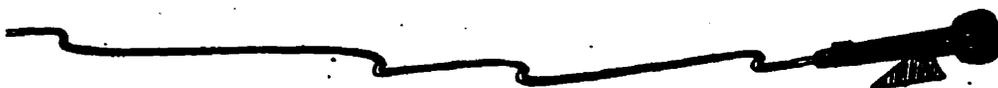
Most tape recorders come with a microphone built into them. These are not the best to use because some of them will record the sound of the cassette tape drivers. Think about using an external (outside the machine) microphone for a couple of reasons. If you ever interview someone in a room where there is a lot of noise, an external microphone can be put closer to the interviewee to pick up more of what they are saying and less of the background noise.

If you are going to interview people outside you will need an external microphone. The cord on it lets you hold the microphone closer to the interviewee. When you are outside, the microphone will also record the sound of the wind. To try and stop that from happening you can buy a wind cover that goes over the microphone.

Some external microphones need batteries. Those kind of microphones usually have an on and off switch that you must remember to turn on for them to work.

c) Earphones

Earphones are very good to use when you are translating or transcribing tapes. You can hear the words more clearly because the earphones help to shut out some of the noise around you. You can also work around other people without disturbing them as the tape recorder does not need to be playing back through the speaker if you use earphones. Be sure to buy earphones that are comfortable on your ears.

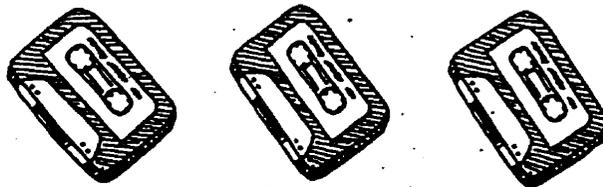


d) **Cassette tapes** - There are a number of different types of cassette tapes that you can choose from. The ones that are best for recording people talking are called **normal bias**. The ones that are best for recording music are called **chromium dioxide**. Chromium dioxide tapes are more expensive and only sound better than normal bias tapes if you are using an expensive machine. If you are not using an expensive machine that makes top quality recordings, you might as well buy normal bias tapes. If your tape recorder has a setting for different types of tape, make sure that yours is set to the type of tape you are using.

Buy cassette tapes with a casing (the plastic cover around the tape) that is screwed together rather than glued. If you crack the casing or something wears out inside of it, you can unscrew it and take the tape out and put it in a new casing. If it is glued together it is very difficult to remove the tape and it may get damaged in the process.

Cassette tapes come in different lengths such as 30, 60 or 120 minutes. The best length of tape is 60 minutes. Tapes shorter than that need to be changed too often. Tapes longer than 60 minutes are very thin and can break.

It is best to store your cassette tapes in a dry place that stays at a constant room temperature (18° C). Do not put them where the sun will shine on them or directly over a heater because they will get too hot. One problem with them getting too hot is that the casing may buckle which makes it difficult to play the tapes. Do not let them freeze or they may get damp when they thaw out. If this happens the recording could be lost.



e) Make an equipment list for interviews

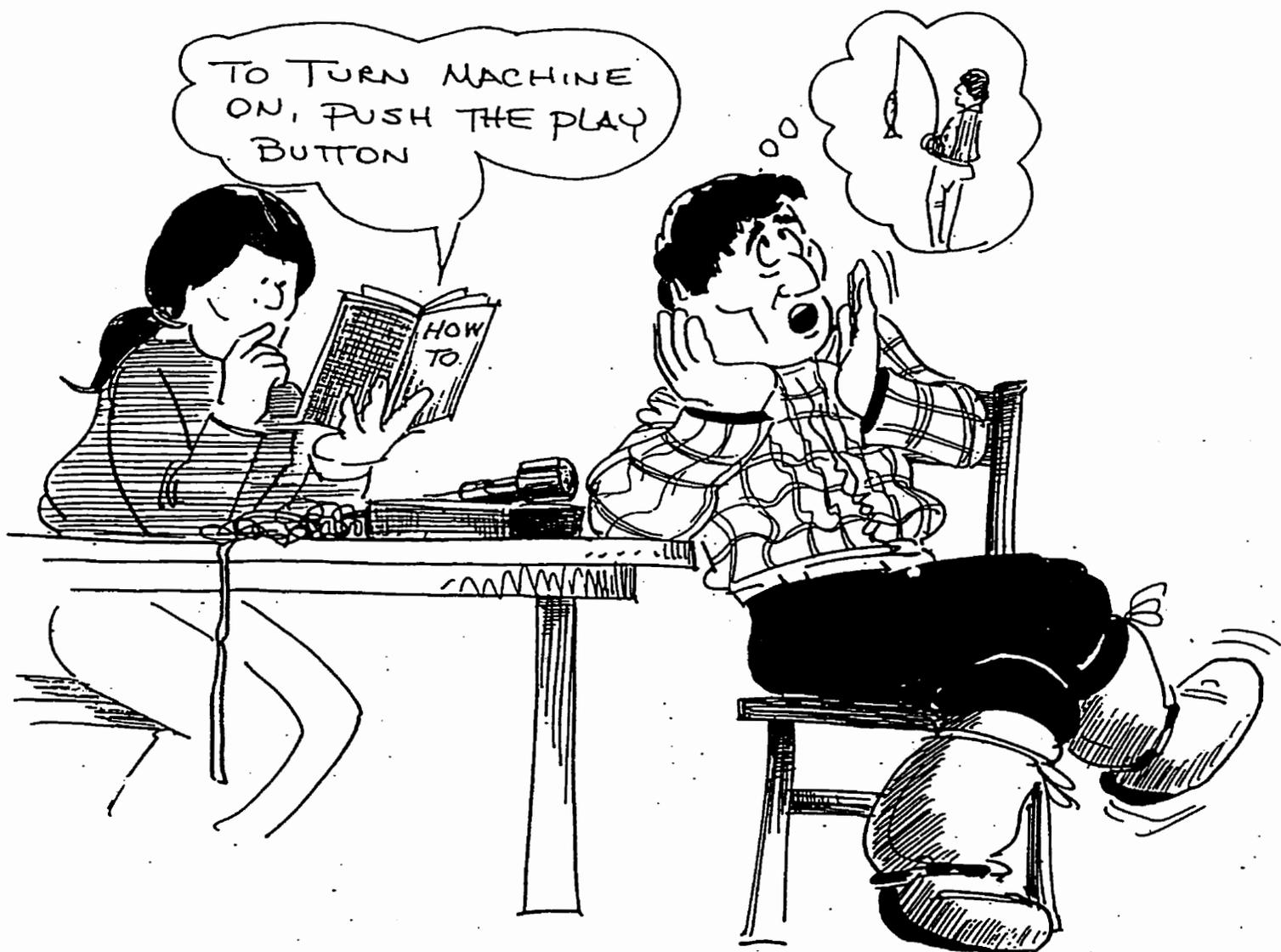
Make a list of the equipment that you will need to have at the interviews. Look at the list before you go to make sure you have packed everything. Practicing an interview with a friend beforehand will help you think about all the things you need to take and should write on your list. Be sure to include spare cassette tapes, batteries and film.

f) Practice will help you learn to make good recordings

Read the tape recorder instruction manual carefully and be sure to practice with your equipment before you start your first interview. Ask a friend or someone in your family to help you. Pretend to interview them and play back the tape to see how it sounds. Is it hard to hear? Is it too loud? If it is, then check where the microphone is placed. If it is too far away from the interviewee the recording will sound too soft. If it is too close the voice will sound loud and distorted.

Is the tape blank when you thought you were recording? If it is, then check to make sure you have the machine plugged in. If you are using batteries, make sure they still have power by checking them with a battery tester. Maybe you did not turn on the external microphone. Maybe you pushed the play button instead of record. It is best to learn to solve these problems before the interview starts.

Learning to use your equipment before you start interviewing will save you a lot of time and disappointment!



KNOW HOW TO USE YOUR EQUIPMENT BEFORE THE INTERVIEW!

g) Cleaning your tape recorder

Your tape recorder needs to be cleaned regularly. If you look at the place where you put the cassette tape you will see the "heads." The heads are the small metal bars that the tape runs across. As the tape goes over them bits of coating on the tape fall off and collect there. When you put in a new tape for your interview, all the bits of tape coating can cause the tape to slow down and you will end up with a poor recording. Buy a tape recorder cleaning kit and use it often to keep the tape heads clean. If you do not want to buy a cleaning kit you can wipe the heads clean with a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol.

Good quality recordings are important!

Good quality tape recordings are important because it makes the interviews easy to hear. If the interviews are easy to hear then they will be used. Think about the different people who may want or need to listen to the tapes:

- ▶ The transcriber needs to hear every word on the tape so they can write them down.
- ▶ School children may want to listen to the tapes to learn about history and traditional life.
- ▶ If the tapes go to an archives and are preserved for generations, then years from now the relatives of the interviewee may go to the archives to listen to them speak.

4.2 Do Background Research Before You Start Interviewing

Doing background research means finding out as much about your topic as you can before you start to interview people. If you do this, you can think up good questions and make the best use of the time you have for interviewing.

**Background research helps you learn what is already known about your topic.
Now you can ask questions on what is not known.**

There are many ways to do background research. You can try to find books on the subject at a library, the school, the church, or maybe someone in town has some you could borrow.

Archives keep things like letters, diaries, photographs, tape recordings and government papers. They may have some with information on your subject so give them a call. A list of archives begins on page 92.

Archives contain a wealth of useful knowledge!

If your project involves recording who peoples' relatives are (called genealogy) you should consult church records. The churches kept records of when people in their congregations were born, died or married. Ask the church if they have the records you need. If they do not, they can tell you where to phone or write to get the information.

Be sure to take notes on what you are learning so you can use this information to write questions for the interview.

4.3 What Questions are You Going to Ask?

Now you need to write the questions you will use for the interview. The questions are really important because they determine what answers you will get. Those answers are important because they are what you will use to write your report.

The way you ask questions is important. Ask them in a way that will get the interviewee talking and describing things. Good questions for starting interviews are called **open-ended** because they give the interviewee a chance to give a long answer. **Closed questions** are ones that the interviewee only has to answer with a yes or no. Closed questions can be important too, but for getting started open-ended ones are best. Look at the example below:

Closed question

Mary: Did you grow up around Ft. Hudson?

Lazarus: Yes.

Open-ended question

Mary: What can you tell me about the place where you grew up?

Lazarus: I grew up at Nuvuk, about 20 miles from Ft. Hudson. It was a good place with lots of fish and caribou would come there to have their young...

Try asking questions that include the words, what, why, when and how. Start out with easy questions. You can ask for more detail or talk about difficult issues when you get relaxed.

Having a list of questions does not mean that they are the only ones you can ask. If you think of questions while you are interviewing, then ask them. Try not to read your questions from the list during the interview. It can be distracting for the interviewee to see you reading them word for word. Just use the list as a guide.

4.4 Find Out What Questions are Polite to Ask

Without knowing it, we can make an interviewee feel uncomfortable by asking questions that they think are rude. For example, in many Dene cultures, it is rude to ask direct personal questions. Asking someone how old they are or what their parents names are, can make them feel uncomfortable with you. Even if your questions are not rude, the way you ask them might be. You may be asking them in a way that sounds demanding or critical to the interviewee. Think carefully about the questions you will ask and how you ask them. It is important to try and make the interview a good experience for everyone.

Sometimes it is important to record information that some elders will think is rude to ask about. An example would be doing a genealogy project (list of relatives) where you ask a lot of personal questions. Ask for advice from someone you respect such as an elder or the elders council. They can help you think of a way to explain to interviewees why it is important to ask these questions. The elders can also help you think of a way to ask the questions so that they do not seem rude.

The types of questions that people find rude can vary from one culture to another. If you are working with people from another culture then be sure to have advisors from that culture who can help you with your questions. This is called being **culturally sensitive** because you are being sensitive (considerate) to what is acceptable behaviour in your own or other peoples' cultures. Even in your own culture, the way that elders grew up may be different from the way younger people have grown up. Subjects that are all right to talk about amongst the younger generation may not be all right to talk about with elders.

Being culturally sensitive is being considerate and respectful of the people who are sharing their knowledge with you.

4.5 Copyright and Informed Consent

In Canadian law the people who make tape recordings have copyright of the tapes. **Copyright means that the people who are responsible for making the recordings own the tapes and the information on them.** For example, if a tribal council decided to do an oral history project, then they would own all the interview tapes that are recorded. If one person, such as a teacher decided to do an oral history project, then that person owns the tapes. The owners of the oral history tapes can do anything they want with the information.

It is important that the people you interview know exactly what you are going to do with their information. Are you using it as educational material for schools? Are you going to play their tape on the radio or use it to write a book? It is important that they agree to let you use their information in whatever way you said it would be used. **This is known as "informed consent" because you have informed (told) the person what you plan to do with their information and they have consented (agreed) to let you.**

Having informed consent shows that you respect the interviewee's right to know what you will be doing with the information they give you.

a) Consent forms

One way to get consent is by using a consent form. On the form you write what you plan to do with the information. The interviewee signs it if they agree. If the interviewee does not like what you want to do with their information, then they have the right to refuse the interview. Here is an example of a consent form. A blank form can be found on page 87.

CONSENT FORM

Name of Interviewee LAZARUS AQPIK

Name of Interviewer MARY UGYUK

Project Title NUVUK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Date MARCH 21, 1995 Place FORT HUDSON, NWT

This interview recordings, whether they are audio, video or photographic, and the resulting translations, and/or transcriptions and/or images will be used for the following purposes:

1. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS

2. TAPE TO BE PLAYED ON THE RADIO SHOW

'OUR ELDERS'

The interviewer will not use the interview recordings, whether they are audio, video, or photographic, and the resulting translations, and/or transcriptions, and/or images for any other purposes without the permission of the interviewee.

I agree to the use of the information I have provided according to the conditions stated above.

Lazarus Aspiik
Signature of Interviewee

I agree to use the information according to the terms outlined above.

Mary Ugyuk
Signature of Interviewer

Date MARCH 21, 1995

b) Verbal consent

Verbal consent means recording the interviewer explaining to the interviewee what they are going to do with the information, and the interviewee agreeing to that use. Here is an example of verbal consent:

Interviewer: My name is Mary Ugyuk and the date is June 5, 1995. I am speaking to Joe Aqpiq of Ft. Hudson. Joe, I would like to interview you about the traditional place names in this area. I will use this information to write a report that can be used to make educational material for schools on local geography and history. I will also use it to write an article for a magazine on the history of this area. Do I have your permission to do so?

Interviewee: Yes, you have my permission.

If you use verbal consent, be sure to record the date, your name, the project name, the interviewee's name, what you plan to use their information for, and the interviewee agreeing with those uses.

4.6 Archives

An **archives** collects things that have not been published, such as letters, diaries, photographs, films, and tape recordings. These things are called **archival records**. Archival records are kept in a building called an archives. The room that the archival records are stored in is kept at a temperature and level of humidity (moisture in the air) that will help preserve them. By being kept in these special conditions the archival records will last many years longer than if they were kept in our homes.

There are a number of archives in the Northwest Territories (see page 92). The main one is the Northwest Territories Archives in Yellowknife. This archives is located in the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. It has many archival records including oral history tapes, and photographs. The photographs are of people and places in the Northwest Territories, and some of them are over 100 years old. People have donated all of these things to the Archives so they will last a long time, and so other people can use them.

An archives is like a library. People can come in and look at, or listen to, the archival records. You cannot borrow them, but copies can be made of most things. If you were looking for old photographs to use in your project, you could phone or write the archives and ask to order some.

When you do an oral traditions project, think about sending the tapes and other information you collect to the archives. They will keep them in good condition and other people can come in and use them. Many elders like the idea of having their interview tapes in the archives. It means that years from now their families and other interested people can listen to the tapes and continue to use the elders' knowledge.

a) Donating your project material to an archives

If you want to send your project materials to an archives, make sure you ask each interviewee if this is all right with them. If they agree, then include this on your consent form. It is important for them to know what it means to have their information at the archives. An archives is open to the public, which means anyone can come in and use the material. This includes future generations of their family, teachers and other researchers and writers.

It is important to call the archives before you start your interviews to talk about donating your material. They can tell you if there are any conditions that can be put on the use of the material. Perhaps you or the interviewee do not want the information used for a few years, or only want it used for non-profit purposes. The archives may also want to see some proof that you told the interviewee that you were donating their tape. If so, they may want copies of your consent form or will ask you to get the interviewee to fill out an archival deposit agreement. Call the archives for more information.

If you receive funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories', Oral Traditions Contribution Program, you are required to offer copies of your tapes and transcripts to the NWT Archives. They will give you a copy of an archival deposit agreement that you must have signed by each interviewee.

4.7 Interpreters and Translators

Interpretation is repeating what a person has said in one language into another language. For example, an interpreter tells you in English what an elder has said in Dogrib. Interpretation is about the spoken word. Translation is writing in one language what a person has written in another.

Interpreters work with the spoken word. Translators work with the written word.

You might want the help of an interpreter during your interviews. You might need the help of a translator when you are writing out what people said during the interview. One person may be able to do both of these jobs.

a) Do you need an interpreter?

In many parts of the Northwest Territories the younger generation does not speak their Aboriginal language. If you do not speak the language, then you need an interpreter.

Some Aboriginal languages have changed over the years. The elders often know more words to describe things than younger people. If you do not understand everything that elders say then hire an interpreter. Some interviewees may know how to speak English, but find it easier to speak in their Aboriginal language. If this is the case then you should use an interpreter.

The Aboriginal language has many words for things or ideas that are not found in English. By doing your interviews in the Aboriginal language, you are recording these important words and are helping to preserve the language.

Doing interviews in the Aboriginal languages helps to preserve them.

b) What skills does an interpreter/translator need?

Interpreter/translators need to speak and write both of the languages you will be using. Writing the Aboriginal language correctly means spelling the words according to the GNWT standardized orthographies or syllabics. An interpreter/translator must have a grade 10 reading and writing level in English, with some experience in interpreting and translating. They should also have graduated from the Interpreter/Translator Training Program at Arctic College (East/West).

Sometimes trained interpreter/translators are very busy and will not be able to work with you. Ask the interpreters to tell you who else in town knows the language well enough to help you. The elders will also be able to tell you who knows how to speak the language well.

Just because someone knows the Aboriginal language does not mean they will be a good interpreter. Some people will be uncomfortable having to repeat everything the interviewee says. Other people may not interpret enough to you to let you know what the interviewee is saying. Some will keep answering your questions themselves rather than asking the interviewee. If you are going to work with an interpreter that you have not worked with before, try them out first to see how they do. Try to find someone who is friendly and not pushy. The elders council or local cultural organization should be able to tell you who would be good interpreter.

You might find that a person can speak more than one language, but does not know how to write all of them. In this case, you might work with more than one person. It is a good idea to have more than one interpreter anyway. If one interpreter is busy with something and cannot work with you, then you will have another person you can call.

When you are looking for a translator, you will want to know if they spell according to the GNWT standard. Ask them to write a few lines for you. Show this to your local government interpreter or a trained interpreter to see if it is correct.

c) What does the interpreter need to know?

You need to help the interpreter prepare for the job. The more information they have about your project and your goals, the more they can do for you. You should go over the questions you would like them to ask. Do you want them to ask only the questions that you have given them? Do you want them to ask questions that they think of on their own?

You should decide when you would like them to interpret the information to you during the interview. Do you want them to interpret after the interviewee finishes a sentence? Maybe you just want them to provide a summary every now and then? Decide all of this with the interpreter before you start interviewing.

4.8 Who Will You Interview?

Who do you think will know a lot about your topic? If you are not sure you can ask for help. If you think you will interview mostly elders, then you could ask your local elders council or your advisory group to help you make a list of people who know a lot about your topic.

People do not share knowledge equally.

It is very interesting to see how people from the same family can have such different experiences. Sometimes this is because they are interested in different things or because they had different responsibilities. For example:

A woman may remember what plants were used for medicine because when she was young she helped her grandmother collect them. It may have been her sister's job to look after the rest of the children, so the sister did not learn how to pick medicinal plants.

A man may have learned all about trapping by going out on the trapline with his father. His brother may have gone to residential school and not learned much about life on the trapline.

You cannot assume that if you interview one person from a family, that all other family members will say the same thing.

People younger than elders can know a lot about traditional life. Some may have spent most of their childhood on the land. Some may have grown up in town, but spent a lot of time with grandparents or parents who told them about traditional ways.

4.9 Meet Before the Interview

Before you begin interviewing anyone it is best to meet with them first. You can find out if the person knows a lot about the subject you are interested in. Tell them about your project. Tell them what you hope to learn and what you will do with the information. They may tell you right away that they do not know much about it. If they are knowledgeable then ask for their permission to come back for an interview and set up a time to meet.

Do not be pushy! You will not have good interviews with people who feel forced to talk!

Tell them what to expect during the interview. Tell them that they will be recorded and describe the type of equipment you will use. Sometimes people are a little scared or nervous of microphones so it is best if they know ahead of time what equipment you will be using.

Let people know if they are going to be paid or given an honoraria. If so, tell them how much and for what. Are you paying by the hour or is there a set rate per interview regardless of how long it is? Tell them that you will need to get a receipt signed for the money you give them.

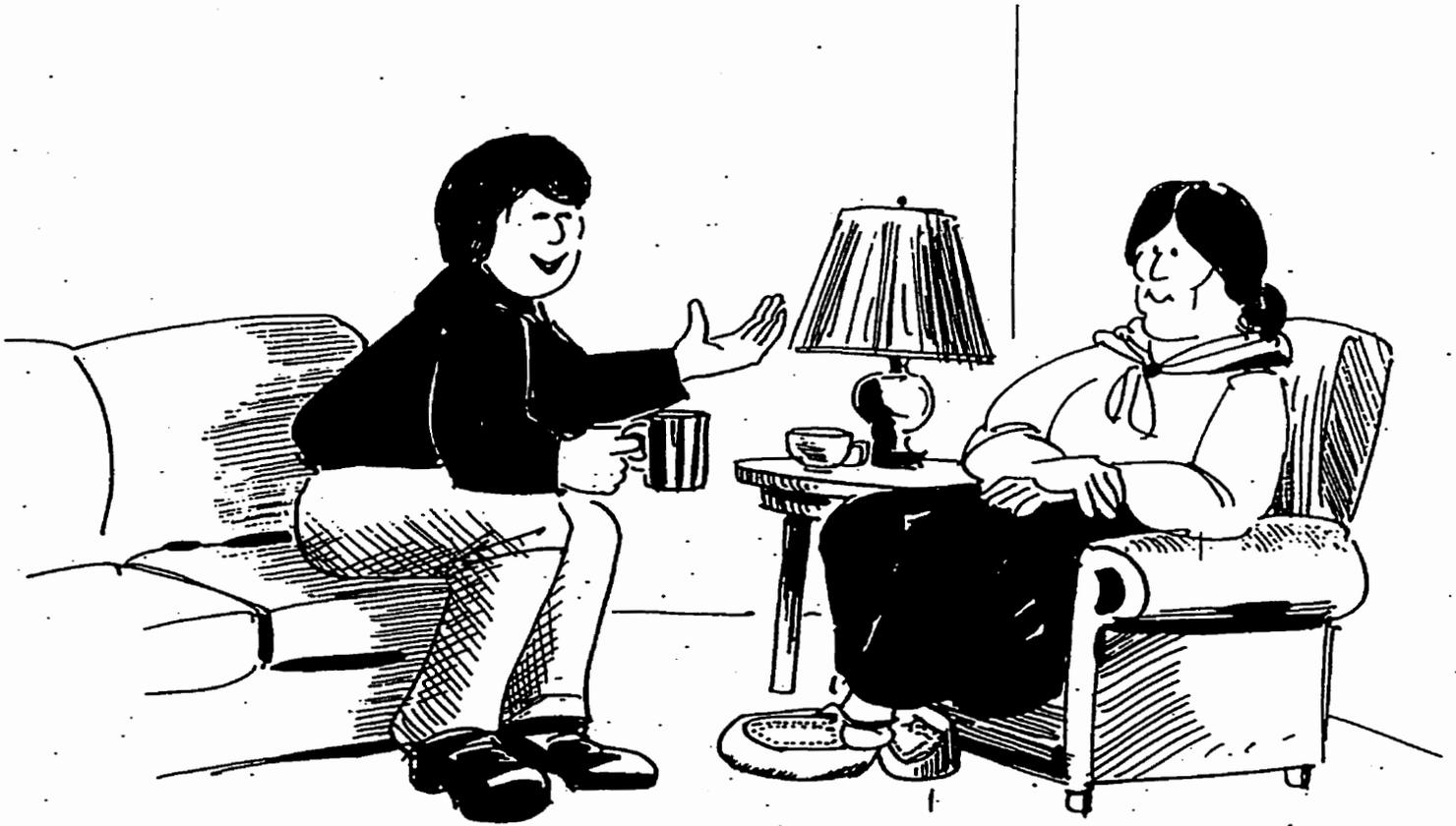
Are there any other forms they will have to sign? If you are using consent forms or archival deposit agreements, explain what they are before the interview. The ideas presented on these forms can be a little confusing for some elders. This gives them time to think about whether they want to sign them.

Find out if the interviewee would like to have someone else with them during the interview. Maybe they will be more comfortable if they have a family member or friend with them. Sometimes friends and family can help each other remember events from the past. Make sure that the other people present understand that they are not the focus of the interview.

Find out if the interviewee would like a copy of his or her interview tapes. This gives people a record of their own knowledge and history. Some elders and their families really enjoy listening to these.

You can see that meeting before the interview is a good idea. It helps you learn if people have the knowledge you are looking for, and whether they are willing to be interviewed. It also lets them know what to expect during the interview. Now they have time to think about the subject before you come back.

Go prepared to do an interview in case someone prefers to do it that day. Sometimes people get excited when they start thinking about the subject and want to talk about it right away rather than wait for another time.



MEET BEFORE THE INTERVIEW TO LET PEOPLE KNOW WHAT YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM THEM AND WHAT THEY CAN EXPECT THE INTERVIEW TO BE LIKE.

4.10 Where to Interview?

The place you choose to do the interview is important. It should be a place where the interviewee will be comfortable and relaxed. People are more willing to talk if they are relaxed and not bothered by things going on around them.

There are many places to choose from, such as their house, at the hamlet or band office, at a favourite place outside, or somewhere out on the land.

A trip to the place you are talking about can help the interviewee remember more about what happened there. For example:

Learning about life on the trapline may be best done while travelling part of it with an elder.

Information on a spiritual place will probably be more complete if you go there.

If you want to learn about a traditional fishing place, the interviewee will remember more if you do the interview there.

A good quality tape recording is important so it is easy to hear what has been said. If you are going to be outside, the wind may be recorded and make it hard to hear the tape. Be sure you have a wind cover for the microphone.



GOING TO PLACES WHERE PEOPLE USED TO LIVE OR TRAVEL WILL HELP THEM REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED THERE.

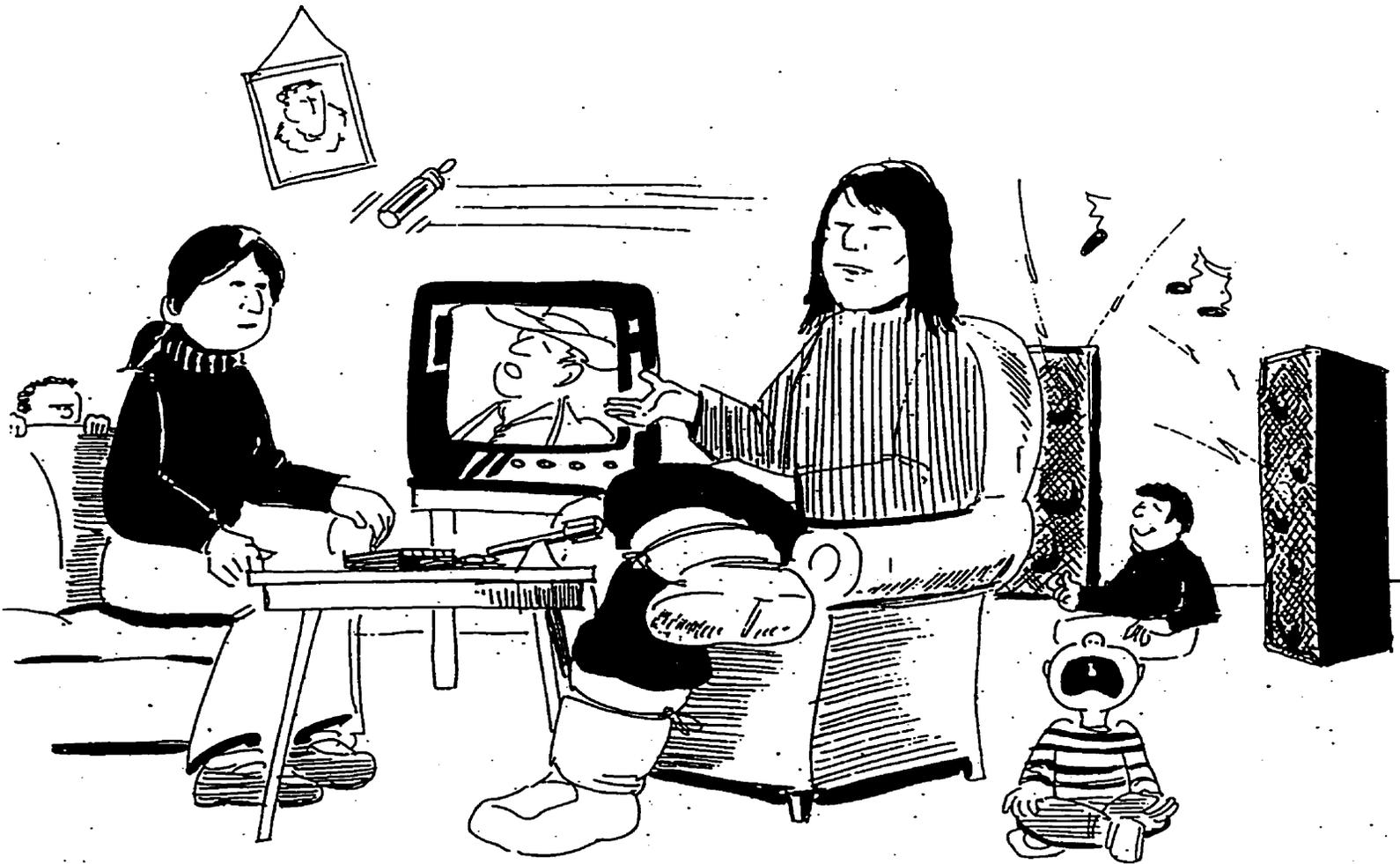
4.11 Keeping a Journal

Many researchers find it useful to write down what they did each day in a journal or diary. You could write down who you interviewed and what subjects you talked about. Did you think of any new questions? Did you learn a better way to ask questions on a certain topic? Keeping track of information on what you learned about doing this kind of work will help you write your evaluation.

You can also use the journal to keep track of the business of doing the project. Write down things like how many hours you worked each day, what phone calls you made, what letters you wrote, or what meetings you went to.

4.12 Use the Radio to Let People Know You are Coming

If you are going to be doing a project that involves a lot of people in town, or you will be interviewing in a few communities, then let people know that you are coming. A good way to reach a lot of people is to put a message on the radio. Ask for the message to be given before or during a radio show that most people listen to.



TRY TO FIND A QUIET PLACE FOR THE INTERVIEW!

5. DOING THE INTERVIEWS

Now you are ready to start the interviews! Here are a few tips.

5.1 Get Relaxed Before You Start the Interview

Interviewing may seem like an easy thing to do until you start to do it. Some people feel very nervous. When you arrive for your interview it is important to visit for a while first to get relaxed. Have a cup of tea. Some elders may be offended if you set up your equipment while they are talking because you are not paying attention to what they are saying. After you have visited for a while say that you need a few minutes to set up.

5.2 Test Your Equipment

Be sure to test your recording equipment before you start. It is really disturbing to the interviewee if you have to stop in the middle of the conversation to fix it. Test it by recording a few words like "testing, testing, testing" and playing it back. Listen to see if it is a good quality recording. Can you hear every word?

5.3 Identify Who is Being Recorded

After you have tested your equipment, record the interviewee's name on the tape along with the date and place of the interview. Make sure you get all of their names. Some people have middle names or other names they are known by. For example, an Inuvialuk may have an English name and also an Inuvialuktun name such as Amagana.

Record the names of their parents, any brothers or sisters and children and when they were born. By having this information on the tape, people will always know who the recording is of, where they are from, and who they are related to. This will be really helpful if the label ever falls off the tape, or in the future when people are trying to figure out who this person was related to.

5.4 Using Prompts

Prompts are things that encourage people to talk about a subject. Sometimes the first few minutes of an interview can be uncomfortable as you and the interviewee try to start talking about your topic. One way to get things going is to show pictures or other things that are related to your topic.

Not only are prompts a good way to get people talking, they can also help people remember more about your topic. For example:

If your topic is traditional whaling, then look for old photographs of whaling, or even photos of whales or harpoons.

If your topic is traditional ways of preparing hides, then bring along a bit of hide, or a scraper, or a photograph of someone working a hide.

If your topic is legends then check the library to see if they have books on legends with drawings in them. It will serve as a place to start talking about legends that are not written down.

If you are talking about family history you could ask the interviewee if they have any photographs that you could both look at. Asking questions about who is in the photos and what they are doing will help you get started.

If you are talking about traditional hunting places, a map of the area can be useful to look at.

If you do not have any old photographs yourself, you could ask to borrow some from people in town, or find some in books. You could also phone an archives and see if they have some you could order.



USING PHOTOGRAPHS OR OTHER TYPES OF PROMPTS MAKES IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO START TALKING AND ALSO TO STAY ON THE TOPIC.

5.5 Using Maps to Locate Traditionally Used Places

Maps are very useful to have at interviews if you are going to talk about the places that people have lived and travelled. It is also interesting for people reading your report to see where the places are that you are writing about.

There may be other people who are interested in using the information that you collect on traditionally used places. Teachers may want to use it in schools for lessons on local geography, history and language.

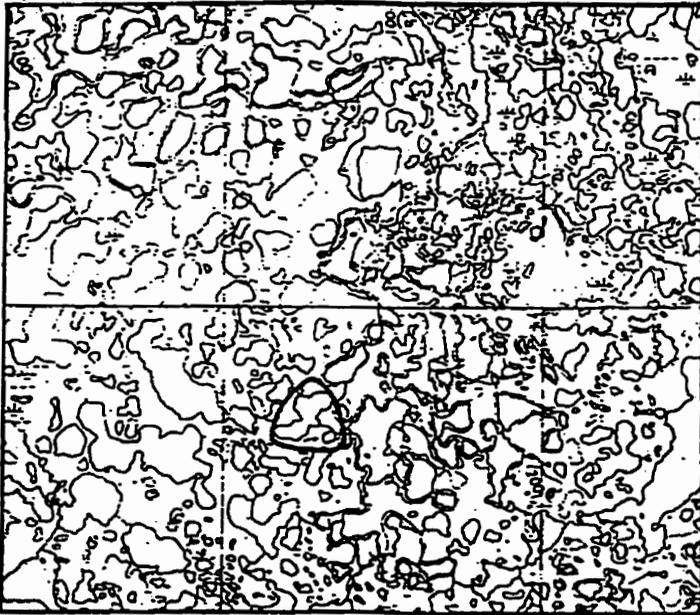
Land administrators may also want to use the information. They protect important places from developments like mining or road construction. Your information may be used to identify an area as a heritage site. These are places that are important to the heritage (history) of the people. Some of these might be traditional hunting and fishing places, places with legends, and traditional landmarks. They can also be archaeological sites, which are places that were used by people who lived long ago.

It would be great to see the traditional place names that you have gathered appear on future maps. To find out how this can be done, and for information on funding for place names research, call the Geographic Names Program at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (see page 90).

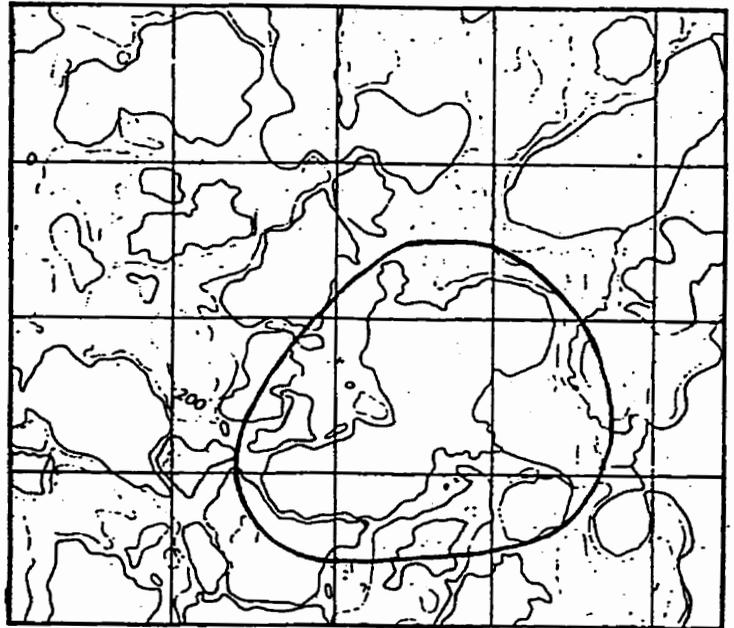
a) What scale map to use

The maps that will be most useful to you are 1:250,000 and 1:50,000 scale. The first scale means that one inch (or centimetre) of the map represents 250,000 inches (or centimetres) of land. A 1:250,000 scale map shows a large area in a small space. They are good to use when you want to see a large area of land at once.

Sometimes you will need to see more detail of an area. If you are going to record the location of traditionally used places, then you need a 1:50,000 scale map. This scale means that one inch (or centimetre) of map represents 50,000 inches or centimetres of land.



← You see a greater area of land on a 1:250,000 scale map.

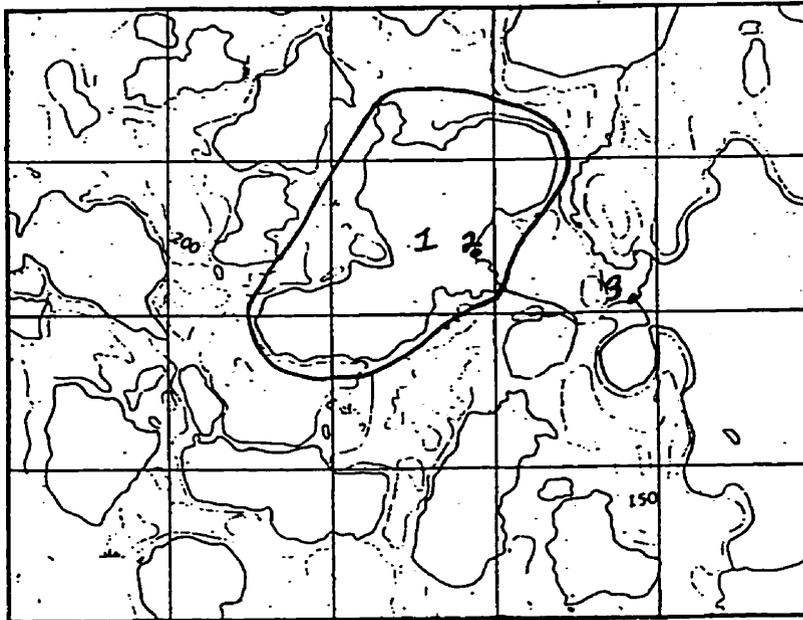


You see less area of land, but more detail on a 1:50,000 scale map. →
See how the lakes circled on the 1:250,000 appear larger on the 1:50,000.

b) Marking locations on maps

You may want to mark the location of a place that you have been talking about on a map. One way to do this is to put a number for the place on the map. Then write the number, the name of the place, and any other information about that place in a notebook. That leaves room on the map to mark down more places. When you use the map at your next interview, begin with the next number. For example, if you used numbers 1-10 to mark locations on the map during your first interview, begin with number 11 next time. Use a pencil so you can erase mistakes.

When you mark down the location of a place, outline the whole area that it covers. You can then put dots and related numbers in specific places for the locations of cabins or other things within that area.



1. Kigalukvik - The name means 'place of muskrats.' Lazarus Aqqik used to go there during the ratting season between 1930-1945.

2. The location of Lazarus' camp at Kigalukvik. He had a log cabin there.

3. Lazarus saw the remains of old sod houses there.

c) Finding the position of a place

Sometimes you may need to give other people information on how to find a place on a map. You may have noticed that there are lines across the map and numbers along the edge. These will help you determine the exact position of a place. There are two ways to do this. One system is called latitude and longitude, and the other is Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM). If you need to write down the position of a place but do not know how, then ask someone in town to help you. Perhaps someone at the lands administration or band or hamlet office can help.

d) Ordering maps

Some communities have stores that sell maps. If there is no place to buy maps in town then you can order them from the Canada Map Sales Office in Ottawa. They have a toll free number (page 94). They will accept credit card payments or you can send them a money order. To know which maps you need, ask them to send you a map index which is a guide to all the maps in Canada.

We do not want to abandon the old ways of our ancestors. That is why we continue to work along their traditional routes. Through the oral tradition, I know of their choice fishing spots, places where they could obtain food, and their campsites. I am past the age of 60 so I remember our history. My elders used to tell me stories. I witnessed their work and now we are travelling and working along their trails. Though our young people of today do not really know the ways of our people, we want to retain our traditional ways so that whomever survives in the future will use them. So we are, in effect, working to help them.

*Harry Simpson, Elder, Rae Lakes
Ida Heritage Survey*

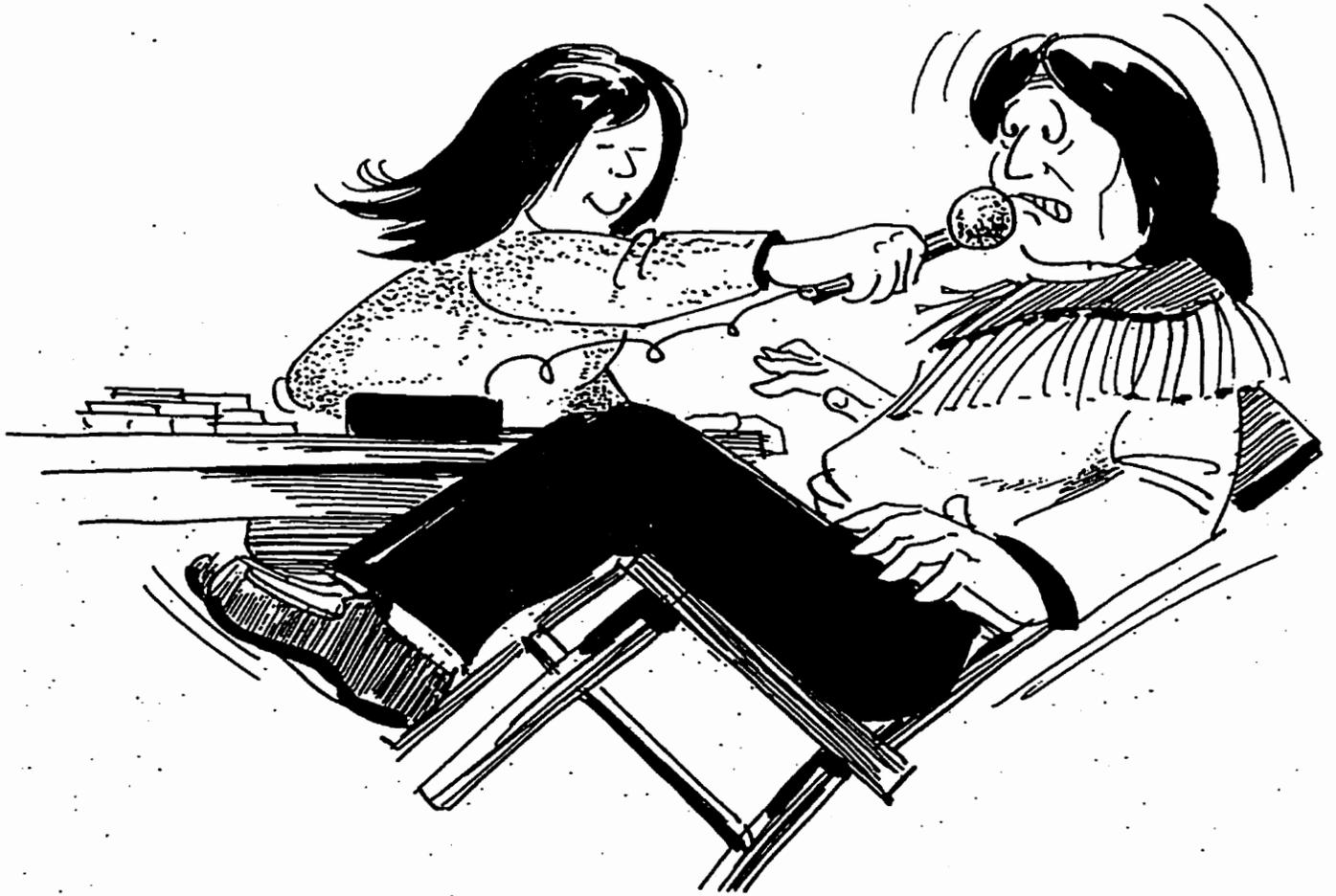
5.6 Taking Notes

While interviewing, you may want to write notes in your journal to remind you of questions you just thought of. You may also want to write down some words that will remind you of the subjects you talked about during the interview. Watch to see how the interviewee reacts to your note taking. Some people seem to get distracted by it.

You can write more notes after the interview. Do this as soon as you leave, while you can still remember what happened. What subjects did you talk about? Did the interviewee react badly to certain questions? Could you have asked the questions in a better way? How did the interviewee react to the equipment? Could the equipment be set up differently next time so it is not distracting? Your notes will be very useful to you when you write your report. They will also be helpful to you in learning how to do things better next time.

5.7 Try Not to Interrupt

People from different cultures can give you information in different ways. Some people will give you a direct answer to your question. Some people may give you an answer in the form of a story. Some people will talk about other things before giving you an answer. In many cultures it is a sign of disrespect to interrupt people, so let them finish what they have to say. If they did not answer your question then try asking it again in a different way. Maybe they did not understand what you wanted the first time.



DO NOT SHOVE A MICROPHONE IN SOMEONE'S FACE!

5.8 A Few More Tips on Interviewing

a) Be sure to say what you are looking at during the interview so that it is recorded on the tape. If you do this the information will show up in the transcript and help you remember what you were talking about. It is a good idea to write notes on these things too.

If you are talking about the traditional names for something such as the parts of a bow, then say what part of the bow you are asking about. For example:

Interviewer: What is the word for that handle?

or

Interviewer: What do you call this string that runs from one end of the bow to the other?

If someone is showing you the size of something with their hands, be sure to say what you see so that it will be recorded.

Interviewee: That pit we dug was about this deep.

Interviewer: Oh, the pit was about two feet deep.

If you are looking at photographs, say something that will let you know from the transcript which photograph you were looking at.

Interviewer: What is the name of that man standing beside the dog team?

If you are using a lot of photographs it is a good idea to number them. When you and the interviewee are looking at them, say the number of the one you are talking about so it will show up in the transcript. If you are trying to identify a photograph with many people in it, then make a photocopy of it and write a number on each person. Make a list of the numbers and write the names beside them as you get the people identified.

b) *Try not to put your feelings into the questions you ask as this can affect how someone answers you.*

If you are trying to find out what the interviewee thinks about something, try not to put your feelings into the question. Some interviewees may give you the answer they think you are looking for because they do not want to disagree with you. Do not ask questions like:

Interviewer: Didn't you think it was awful that Joe moved away?

Try asking the question so the interviewee says what they think. Use words like what, when and how.

Interviewer: What did you think of Joe moving away?

c) *It is all right if there are times when people are silent during the interview.*

Some interviewers feel uncomfortable when there are moments of silence during the interview. These moments can be very important. It gives the interviewee time to think about what they have said or what they would like to say next. So give people time to think.

d) *Before you end the interview, be sure to ask the interviewee if there is anything else they would like to say.*

You have had lots of chances to ask the questions you thought of. You may not have thought to ask about everything that the interviewee thinks is important. Give them a chance to give you this information by asking them if they have anything else they would like to say.

5.9 Watch to See When the Tape Should Be Changed

Try to keep an eye on the tape recorder so you will see when the tape needs to be turned over or changed. Change the tape when there is a quiet moment during the interview. It is better to change it a little ahead of time, than to cut someone off by changing the tape when they are talking. If you did miss some important information, ask the interviewee to repeat it.

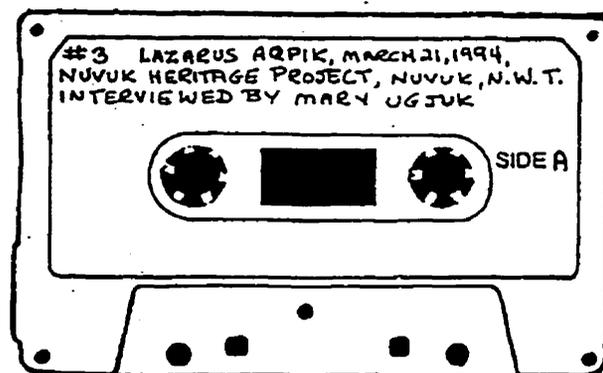
5.10 Label Your Cassette Tapes

It is important to label all of the cassette tapes so they do not get mixed up. It is a good idea to include the following information:

- the tape number (each tape should have a number)
- the interviewee's name
- the date of the interview
- the place where you did the interview
- the interviewer's name
- the project name
- the side of the tape (A or B)

The tape label is usually small, but put as much information as you can on it. Make sure all of the information is also on the cassette box label.

It would be awful to accidentally record over an interview. To prevent this, push in the tabs that are on the top of the cassette tape casing as soon as the interview is finished. When the tabs are pushed in you cannot record onto the tape.



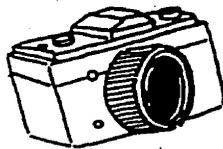
5.11 How Long Should the Interview Be?

You will have to decide how long the interview should be. Most interviews longer than one hour are tiring for the interviewee. Let them decide whether they want to stop for a break or want to stop for the day. If you are finished for the day set a time to meet with them again.

5.12 Taking Photographs

It is nice to take photographs of the people you interview so that you can include them in your report. You should ask the interviewee for their permission to take their photograph. Ask the interviewee where they would like to have their picture taken. Some people stiffen up when they get their photo taken. Try and get them to relax by telling them a joke or having someone else talk to them while you take the picture.

If your project is on an activity such as making a canoe or kayak, or old tools, or sewing, then be sure to take photographs of the activities. It will be helpful to those reading your report if they can see what people are talking about.



5.13 Paying People

Give people their payment or honoraria at the end of the interview. You will need to have them sign a receipt. A receipt is proof that you have paid them, and you need these to show the funding agency what you spent the money on.

Some people do not know how to write their name. Some may sign with an "X", and some may print part of their name. When this happens, ask them to make their mark (an X, or however they usually sign). Print their name underneath their mark and get two witnesses to sign the receipt. You can sign as one of the witnesses.

		<u>June 5.</u>	<u>19 95</u>
Received from Reçu de	<u>MARY UGYUK</u>		
	<u>thirty dollars</u>	<u>00</u>	Dollars
			100
	<u>honoraria for interview</u>		
<u>\$30.00</u>	witness: <u>Mary Ugyuk</u>	<u>X</u>	
	witness: <u>Charlie Agich</u>	<u>JOE AQPIK (HIS MARK)</u>	

5.14 Make the Interview a Good Experience

Try to make the interview a good experience for both you and the interviewee. Be prepared before you go. Know how to use your equipment and know what questions you want to ask. Be considerate. Always watch to see how the interviewee is doing. Are they tired? Do they need to take a break? Do not force people to talk about things they do not want to discuss. Look interested! It is very distracting to an interviewee if the interviewer is looking around and not paying attention to them. Enjoy yourself!

Being considerate will help make your interview an enjoyable experience!



TRY NOT TO TALK SO LONG THAT YOU MAKE THE INTERVIEWEE TIRED!

6. PROCESSING INFORMATION

Now the hard work begins of translating and transcribing the information from the tapes. This is the most time-consuming part of your project.

6.1 Translating and Transcribing Interview Tapes

After you finish your interviews the next step is to translate and/or transcribe the interview tapes. **Translating means to write the information from one language into another.** If the interviews were done in an Aboriginal language you may want to translate them into English or some other language.

Transcribing means to write out the interview in the language in which it was spoken. If the tape is in Inuktitut then you must write it out in Inuktitut. A **transcript** is all of the pages you have written. The transcripts are important because:

- ▶ **Transcripts are easier to get information from than tapes.** Transcripts can be read faster than you can listen to a tape. If you are writing a report or programs for school children, you will find it easier to get the information from the transcripts than from the interview tape.
- ▶ **Transcripts are useful for checking facts with the interviewee.** When you read over the transcript, you may have questions about what was said. There may be sections of the transcript that show that parts of the interview could not be understood. Go over the transcript with the interviewee to make sure that what has been written down is correct.
- ▶ **Transcripts can be used by people in the future.** Another reason to transcribe tapes is to make the information you collected easier for others to use. Having transcripts means that people will not have to listen to the tapes to know what is on them.

a) Transcribing

Transcribing tapes takes a lot of time. It can take an experienced transcriber four or more hours to do a one hour interview tape. Some people take three or four days to finish a tape. Below are some suggestions for how you could do your transcripts.

- ▶ At the top of your paper write: the project name; the tape number; the name of the interviewee; the interviewer; interpreter; the date of the interview; where it was done; the name of the translator or transcriber; the side of the tape you are working on (A or B).
- ▶ Number each page you write.
- ▶ Write the name of each person that is speaking.
- ▶ Write down every word that is spoken. Even if people repeat themselves write it down again.
- ▶ If someone laughs, put that in brackets (laugh). If the person stops talking for a minute, then put the word "pause" in brackets (pause). Writing this information down helps people understand what the interviewee was saying. The interviewee might say something as a joke and laugh when they tell it. If you do not write that down then the reader may not know that what was said was supposed to be funny. Writing down pauses in the conversation helps readers understand why sentences that come one after another might not relate to each other.
- ▶ If you do not understand a word that was said, put round brackets and a question mark where the word is (?).
- ▶ If you want to make a comment on the transcript, put it in square brackets []. Sometimes comments are added to transcripts to help those reading them understand what the interviewee has said.

- If you go over the transcript with the interviewee, write your comments in a different coloured pen so it is easy to tell what is part of the original transcript and what came later. If the transcript is typed, then use a pen to write your comments.

Here is an example of how to write a transcript.

Project Name: Nuvuk Oral History Project
Tape #: 2
Interviewee: Lazarus Aqpik
Interviewer: Mary Ugyuk
Date: March 21, 1995
Location: Ft. Hudson, Northwest Territories
Translation: Sarah Marshall

Side A, Page 1:

Mary: My name is Mary Ugyuk and I am talking with Lazarus Aqpik at Ft. Hudson. The date is March 21, 1995. Lazarus, what can you tell me about the place where you grew up?

Lazarus: I grew up at Nuvuk about 20 miles from Ft. Hudson. It was a good place with lots of fish, and caribou would come there to have their young. There was always lots of driftwood for fires, and there was lots of good logs to make cabins too. We could get 50, maybe 60 fish in our nets some days. (pause) There was a good water creek there too. Nuvuk was a real good place to live.

Mary: Why did you leave Nuvuk?

Lazarus: We had to leave Nuvuk because they closed the trading post there. In 1930 they moved the post to Imnat [Mission Landing]. We used to go there once a month for (?) and to trade, but that [trading post] was closed in 1937. So we had to move here to Ft. Hudson. Hudson was a big place to us then. There were probably 200 people here that time. I was just a boy and to me it was a big city (laugh)! We were sad to leave Nuvuk because my family had lived there for generations. I always hope to get back there some day.



TRANSCRIBING AND TRANSLATING CAN BE VERY FRUSTRATING!

b) Translating

Translating tapes is a little different than transcribing. Rather than translating each word spoken, the translator will write down the entire thought. You can also ask for word-for-word translation. This is best done if you need to know the words for specific things that the elder talks about, such as types of tools, activities, or ideas.

The best way to translate information from tapes is to have it transcribed into the Aboriginal language first. The translator should mark down any words or ideas they have trouble with. They can go over these later with another translator or the interviewee. Use that transcript to translate the interviews into English or whatever language you need.

c) Using computers

Transcripts that are typed on a computer are easy to use for a number of reasons. Printed transcripts are easier to read than hand-written ones. When your transcripts are in a computer file, you can get the computer to search through them to find words for different subjects. For example, if you wanted to find a transcript where you talked about harpoons, then you type in the command that the computer needs to look for it.

If you do not know how to use a computer see if you can find someone who can help you. You may want to include in your project budget the cost of computer training.

6.2 Tape Summaries

Write a tape summary for each interview tape. You can take the information from the transcripts. The tape summaries are useful to have because they will show you or others very quickly what information is on each interview tape.

Tape summaries are important if you are going to send the tapes to an archives. This gives archives staff and future users of the tapes an idea of what is on them. A blank tape summary is on page 88.

Here is an example of a tape summary. You can photocopy the form on page 88 or make up one of your own.

TAPE SUMMARY

Tape Number: 15
Project Title: BLACKDUCK RIVER HERITAGE SURVEY
Name of Interviewee: MINNIE LAFFERTY
Date of Birth of Interviewee: SEPTEMBER 5, 1912
Name of Interviewer: SALLY LAFFERTY
Date of Interview: MAY 5, 1995 Place: YAZO₂A DEH

Summary of Tape

Side 1: - MINNIE TALKS ABOUT LIFE AT YAZO₂A DEH
- MINNIE TALKS ABOUT HOW PEOPLE USED
TO FISH

Side 2: - STORIES ABOUT YAMOZ₂AH

Continue on another page if necessary. Be sure to staple the pages together.

6.3 Fact Checking

When you are working on translation and transcription you will find that you have questions about what was said. Maybe you did not hear someone clearly. Go back to the interviewee with the transcripts or translations and ask any questions you have.

It is a good idea to go over the main ideas that were made during the interview with the interviewee. This is really important because you do not want to write your report with the wrong information.

6.4 Keeping Track of Your Work

a) Tape lists

An easy way to keep track of the interview tapes is to keep a tape list. This is a form that you can make up yourself with the information that you think is important. It should have columns for the tape number, the interviewees name and date of the interview. It can also have columns that let you see that the tape has been copied, that you have a consent form signed, and that the tape has been translated or transcribed, and verified.

b) Interviewee files

One way to keep your project papers organized is to make a file for each person you interview. In the file you can keep their consent form, archival deposit agreement, tape summary, transcript, letters or notes that relate to that person.

7. REPORTING YOUR RESULTS

7.1 Writing a Report

Writing a report on your project is important so that you can show people what you learned. Even if your project was making a video it would be useful to write a short report that other people can learn from.

The way you write your report depends on who it was written for. A funding agency may tell you how they want it written. Most reports are written in the same way. Here is an example of how you could write yours.

a) Title page

The title page shows the name of your report. Below the title you can write who the project was done by, and the date it was finished.

b) Acknowledgements

To acknowledge means to thank people or agencies that have helped you. You should thank the elders for sharing their knowledge. Thank people who gave you advice or worked with you. You could thank the person or agency that gave you the money to do your project. The acknowledgements are from one paragraph to one page long.

c) Introduction

The introduction is where you tell people why you wanted to do the project, how you did it, and how you intend to use the results. This is written in a very general way as you will give more detail later on in the report. The introduction should be one or two pages long.

d) Method

This is where you say how you did your project and why. What background research did you do? How did you do your consultation? Did you have an advisory council? How was it decided who would be on it? How did you get informed consent? What equipment did you use? Did you use interpreters and translators? What questions did you ask? Did you pay people a fee or honorarium? Did you verify the transcripts?

e) Results

The results of the project are all the things that you learned from the interviewees. It is important to think carefully about how you will organize all this information so that it is easy for others to understand. The easiest way to present your results is to write about each subject you discussed. If your project was on the traditional use of plants for medicine, then you might want to organize it so that you list each plant along with all the information you learned about it. For example, you would give the following information:

- the names of the plant (the plant may be known by more than one name) and a photograph or drawing of it
- what illnesses it cures
- where to find the plants (in dry sandy places, in wet places, growing in the shade of trees)
- how you prepare the plant to make the medicine and how it is applied (boil it and drink the juice, put the plant on your skin)
- you might have a section on what you have to say or do to give thanks for the plant when you collect it or use it

If your project was about building kayaks or birchbark canoes, you would write out all the steps. Photographs and/or drawings will help people see what you are talking about. If you are writing someone's life history, you would probably write about it in the order that events took place.

Be sure to include a list of all the people you interviewed, the date you interviewed them, and what their tape numbers are. If you sent tapes and transcripts to an archives be sure to say which archives they went to.

f) Conclusion

You make final remarks in the conclusion. This is where you would repeat, very simply, what your findings were. Did you reach your goals? What are you going to do with the information? What is there about the topic that people should work on next? Did you learn anything about doing this kind of work that might be helpful to others? Give any comments on how you would do the project differently next time.

Writing a report is not always an easy thing to do. It sure feels good when it is finished! It feels great when you have something to give to people to show them what you have done. If you have trouble writing your report, then ask for help. Ask someone like an adult educator or teacher to read it over for you.

7.2 Who Should Get Copies of Your Report?

Think about who should get copies of your report. The people you interviewed should get a copy because it is their information you are presenting. Even if some of them cannot read they could get someone to read it to them. The public and school library, the education board, the social or cultural institute, and the band or hamlet council, are all places that should get copies. Once people find out about your report you will probably get lots of requests for copies.

8. FOLLOW-UP

8.1 Presenting Your Results

When you have finished writing your report you should consider giving some presentations of your work. There will be many people who may not, or cannot, read your report. Think about setting up a time and place where you could give a slide show or talk on your project. See if you could talk about it on the radio. Maybe the local television station would like to do a story on it. Think about making a display that you could put up in different places, like the school, the adult education centre, and the band or hamlet office.

8.2 Evaluation

An important part of doing these projects is learning how to do it better the next time. Take time to think and write about what you would do differently. Think about what you did that worked well and what you could do differently next time.

8.3 Archives

If you planned to give copies of your project tapes and transcripts to an archives, now is the time to do so. Make sure that the tapes are clearly labelled. Give them a copy of your tape list and tape summaries.

When the project was initiated, there were 38 elders in the community over the age of 65. Since the beginning of the project, six of these elders have died; and a large number more have been in and out of hospital due to chronic health problems. It was painfully clear a year and a half ago, and still is, that the process of recording and documenting life histories, legends, and Dene wisdom must proceed quickly, before too much has been lost forever.

*Gail Beaulieu, Fort Resolution
Fort Resolution Oral History Project*

EXTRA INFORMATION

- I. Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North**
- II. Preparing a Work Plan**
- III. Blank Forms**
- IV. Useful Names and Addresses to Know**
- V. Books on Oral History**

I. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH IN THE NORTH

Written by the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies in 1983. Comments in square brackets have been added to help clarify the meaning of certain words.

1. The research must respect the privacy and dignity of the people.
2. The research should take into account the knowledge and experience of the people.
3. The research should respect the language, traditions and standards of the community.
4. The person in charge of the research is accountable for all decisions on the project, including the decisions of subordinates [people that work for you].
5. No research should begin before being fully explained to those who might be affected.
6. No research should begin without the consent of those who might be affected.
7. In seeking informed consent, researchers should clearly identify sponsors, purposes of the research, sources of financial support, and investigators [researchers] responsible for the research.
8. In seeking informed consent, researchers should explain the potential effects of the research on the community and the environment.
9. Informed consent should be obtained from each participant in research, as well as from the community at large.
10. Participants should be fully informed of any data gathering techniques to be used (tape and video recordings, photos, physiological measures, etc.), and the use to which they will be put.
11. No undue pressure should be applied to get consent for participation in a research project.

12. Research subjects should remain anonymous [their names not given] unless they have agreed to be identified; if anonymity cannot be guaranteed, the subject must be informed of the possible consequences of this before becoming involved in the research. [people should have the choice of not having their names used]

13. If, during the research, the community decides that the research may be unacceptable to the community, the researcher and the sponsor should suspend the study.

14. On-going explanations of research objectives, methods, findings and their interpretation should be made available to the community, with the opportunity for the people to comment before publication; summaries should also be made available in the local language.

15. Subject to requirements for anonymity, descriptions of the data should be left on file in the communities from which it was gathered, along with descriptions of the methods used and the place of data storage.

16. All research reports should be sent to the communities involved.

17. All research publications should refer to informed consent and community participation.

18. Subject to requirements for anonymity, publications should give appropriate credit to everyone who contributes to the research.

II. PREPARING A WORK PLAN

Your work plan can be written in the order of the different stages of your project. One way to do it is like this:

- A. Planning your project.**
- B. Preparing to do the research.**
- C. Doing the interviews.**
- D. Processing the information.**
- E. Reporting your results.**
- F. Follow-up.**

An outline of a work plan has been provided for you. You can use it along with the related sections of the manual to help you think about the different tasks involved in doing an oral traditions project. You can also use it to help you think about how long it would take you and your co-workers to finish each task.

A. PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

1. Decide what your goals are:

Why do you want to do this project? What do you want to show for it when you are finished?

2. Consultation:

Meet with different community groups to tell them what you want to do.

3. Making a work plan:

Write down all the steps it takes to do your project. Find out how much time you need to get it done.

4. Planning your budget:

Use your work plan to help figure out how much money you need. Make a list of all the expenses.

5. Writing proposals for funding:

In order to get money to do your project, you need to write a proposal. A proposal is a written request for money in which you say what you want to do and why it is important.

Preparing a Work Plan continued:

6. Buying equipment:

Once you get your funding you can begin to purchase your equipment.

B. DOING YOUR PROJECT

1. Doing background research:

Try to learn as much as you can about your subject. See if there are any books on it in the library. You may want to go to an archives to do research and to find photographs to use in your interviews.

2. Making up your questions:

You need to make a list of the questions you will ask. Go over these with other people to make sure they are good questions.

3. Finding and working with interpreter/translators:

You have to find someone who has the skills you need and that you can get along with. You will have to take time to give them the information they need to do the job.

4. Deciding who to interview:

Consult with others to find out who to interview.

5. Meeting before the interview:

Meet with people you are interested in interviewing to tell them about the project and see if they are willing to take part in it.

6. Doing the interviews:

How long do you think each interview will be? How much time do you need to prepare for the interview and to write notes afterward? Do you need to plan time to travel places to do the interviews?

C. PROCESSING INFORMATION

1. Interviewee files and tape lists:

Keeping a file on each interviewee, and a keeping track of what you have done by having a tape list, helps keep you organized.

2. Tape summaries:

Take the time to summarize the information on each tape, so you know what information is on it at a glance.

3. Transcribing and translating interview tapes:

This takes more time than any other part of your project. Think about whether you need to have tapes translated into another language or just transcribed into the language they were recorded in.

4. Fact checking:

This may include reading over transcripts with the interviewee to make sure you understood what they had said.

D. REPORTING YOUR RESULTS

1. Organizing your information:

You need to take the information out of the transcripts and organize it in a way that you can use to write your results. You may want to put all similar types of information together.

2. Writing the report:

Everyone will take a different amount of time to write their report.

E. FOLLOW-UP

1. Community presentations:

Once you are finished your work, or even while the work is on-going, you should present your results to the community. This may mean a number of presentations to different groups. Your presentation may be a slide show, a display, or being interviewed on the radio or television.

2. Sending out copies of your project report:

Be sure to send copies of your report to people who can make good use of it.

3. Sending project materials to an archives:

Send your duplicate tapes, archival deposit agreements, tape summaries and a copy of your report to the archives.

III. BLANK FORMS

CONSENT FORM

Name of Interviewee _____

Name of Interviewer _____

Project Title _____

Place _____ Date _____

This interview recordings, whether they are audio, video or photographic, and the resulting translations, and/or transcriptions and/or images will be used for the following purposes:

The interviewer will not use the interview recordings, whether they are audio, video, or photographic, and the resulting translations, and/or transcriptions, and/or images for any other purposes without the permission of the interviewee.

I agree to the use of the information I have provided according to the conditions stated above.

I agree to use the information according to the terms outlined above.

Signature of Interviewee

Signature of Interviewer

Date _____

TAPE SUMMARY

Tape Number: _____

Project Title: _____

Name of Interviewee: _____

Date of Birth of Interviewee: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Date of Interview: _____ Place: _____

Summary of Tape

Side 1:

Side 2:

Continue on another page if necessary. Be sure to staple the pages together.

IV. USEFUL NAMES AND ADDRESSES TO KNOW

1. CULTURE AND HERITAGE DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT, GNWT

Within the Culture and Heritage Division is the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, and the Cultural Affairs Program. Read through the descriptions of each of these because some programs provide support to culture and heritage projects in the form of advice or funding.

A. The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre:

Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre

Education, Culture and Employment

Government of the Northwest Territories

Box 1320

Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9 phone (403) 873-7551 fax (403) 873-0205

The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre consists of the following sections:

i. Culture and Heritage Advisory - the Heritage Advisor gives advice on who you can apply to for funding culture and heritage projects. You can also get information on training programs in culture and heritage work, and funding for museums, archives and cultural resource centres.

ii. Northwest Territories Archives - preserves the records of northern history through photographs, maps, and other archival material and makes them available to researchers and the public. This is a good place to do background research and to get photographs to use in interviews.

iii. Geographic Names Program - is responsible for researching and changing geographic names in the Northwest Territories. They also have a **Geographic Names Contribution Program** that provides funding for people who want to document traditional place names in the Northwest Territories.

iv. Archaeology - the staff help protect archaeological resources by watching out for activities that could harm sites or artifacts. They also do research project. Some of these involve working with elders to learn about the past through traditional knowledge and identifying sites through survey and excavation. Their research adds to the knowledge of northern cultures.

v. Education Extension - creates school programs and travelling exhibits on the natural and cultural heritage of the Northwest Territories. They can provide you with ideas on how information from your project can be put into school programs.

vi. Exhibition Department - is responsible for making exhibits for the Heritage Centre. The staff can give you advice on making an exhibit on the results of your project.

vii. Collections and Conservation - the staff work with art and artifacts to record and preserve the natural and cultural history of the Northwest Territories.

B. The Cultural Affairs Program:

This program provides funding to individuals or organizations for various culture and heritage projects. Their contribution programs are listed below:

Contribution Programs:

Oral Traditions Contribution Program:

Provides funding for projects that involve oral traditions research.

Cultural Enhancement Grants and Contribution Programs:

Provides funding for projects that will help to preserve and promote the various cultures of the NWT.

Aboriginal Language Development Grants and Contributions:

Provides funding for projects that serve to preserve and promote Aboriginal languages.

The Cultural Affairs Program also provides funding for arts projects. For more information on any of their contribution programs write or phone:

Cultural Affairs Program
Department of Education, Culture and Employment
GNWT
Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9
phone (403) 920-6963 fax (403) 873-0487

2. Funding Directories:

The organizations listed below sell directories that have information on places you can apply to for funding. They do not just list organizations that give funding for oral traditions research. They also deal with tourism, employment, housing and more. Write or phone for more information before ordering a directory. Check your local library to see if they have a copy you could borrow.

The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy

1329 Bay Street
2nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 2C4
416) 515-0764 fax (416) 515-0773
\$238.00 plus GST

Canada Grants Service

360 Vaughan Road
Toronto, Ontario
M6C 2N7
(416) 760-0030
(416) 760-0220
\$99.00 plus GST

3. ARCHIVES

Northwest Territories Archives

Preserves information on northern history through photographs, maps, and other archival material. They keep some documents of the Government of the Northwest Territories. These are available for people to come and look at. This is a good place to do background research and to get photographs to use in interviews.

NWT Archives

Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre
Government of the Northwest Territories
Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9
phone (403) 873-7698 fax (403) 873-0205

Roman Catholic Diocese Archives

This archives has a library and some archival records from Catholic churches in the Northwest Territories. You must call ahead to make an appointment.

Roman Catholic Diocese Archives

5117-52 Street
Yellowknife, NT X1A 1T7
phone (403) 920-2129 fax (403) 873-9021

Anglican Church of Canada General Synod Archives

Contains records of Anglican churches in the Northwest Territories.

Anglican Church of Canada General Synod Archives
600 Jarvis Street
Toronto, Ontario
M4Y 2J6
(416) 924-9192 ask for extension 278

National Archives of Canada

The National Archives is responsible for conserving Canada's archival heritage and making it available for researchers. They have a large collection of documents, photographs, maps, tapes, video recordings and more. Among their collection are historical documents, photographs and government records relating to the Northwest Territories. You can write to them for a brochure that describes their departments and services:

General Information
National Archives of Canada
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N3
(613) 995-5138

Hudson's Bay Company Archives

This archives contains information on Hudson's Bay and North West Company posts.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives
200 Vaughan Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 1T5
(204) 945-4949

The Canadian Council of Archives

The Canadian Council of Archives has a directory of all the archives in Canada. You can write and ask them for a copy. It costs about \$10.00.

Canadian Council of Archives
West Memorial Building Room 5078
344 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N3

4. MAPS

Canada Map Sales Office

If you need maps for your project you can order them from:

Canada Map Sales Office - Ottawa

phone 1-800-465-6277 fax 1-800-661-6277

5. RESEARCH LICENSES

Science Institute of the Northwest Territories

Research projects in the Northwest Territories require a Scientific Research License. Call the Science Institute in your region for more information.

If your research takes place in the Western Arctic contact:

Science Institute of the Northwest Territories - West

P.O. Box 1450

Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0

Phone (403) 979-4029 Fax (403) 979-4264

If your research takes place in Nunavut contact:

Science Institute of the Northwest Territories - East

P.O. Box 160

Iqaluit, NT X0A 0H0

Phone (819) 979-4108 Fax (819) 979-4119

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND BROADCASTING CORPORATIONS

Inuit Broadcasting Corporation

P.O. Box 700

Iqaluit, NT X0A 0H0

Phone (819) 979-6231 Fax (819) 979-5853

Inuvialuit Communications Society

P.O. Box 1704

Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0

Phone (403) 979-2320 Fax (403) 979-2744

Native Communications Society

P.O. Box 1919

Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P4

Phone (403) 920-7610 Fax (403) 920-4205

V. BOOKS ON ORAL HISTORY

Here is a list of books and manuals on doing oral history. Some can be ordered through a book store and the others can be ordered directly from the addresses provided. Check your local library to see if they already have copies of these or any other books on the subject.

1. Baum, Willa. **Oral History for the Local Historical Society**. 3rd revised edition. American Association for State and Local History, Nashville, 1993.

(This is an in-depth technical manual.)

2. Finnegan, Ruth. **Oral Traditions and Verbal Arts. A Guide to Research Practices**. Routledge, New York, 1992.

(This is an in-depth look at the nature of the oral tradition and the methods that anthropologists use to record it.)

3. Inuit Broadcasting Corporation. **Inuit Broadcasting Corporation Community Training Manual**. Unpublished training manual, Iqaluit.

(This manual was written by IBC to teach skills in the use of video equipment and for learning to record interviews on video. It is easy to read.)

IBC will make a photocopy of the manual for you. Contact: Training Director, Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, Box 700, Iqaluit, NT, X0A 0H0, phone (819) 979-6231, fax (819) 979-5853.

4. Lanman, Barry A. and George L. Mehaffy. **Oral History in the Secondary School Classroom**. Oral History Association; no. 2. Los Angeles, 1988.

(This 39 page pamphlet gives examples of oral history projects done by students and gives teachers some guidelines for organizing them.)

To order, write to the: Executive Secretary, Oral History Association, 1093 Broxton Avenue #720, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., 90024.

5. Larmour, Judy. **How to Do Oral History.** Heritage Notes, Number 11, Government of Alberta, 1994.

(This is a short, easy to read guide on doing oral history and has good examples of how to ask questions.)

To order, write to: Publications Co-ordinator, Old St. Stephen's College
8820-112 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2P8.

6. Reimer, Derek ed. **Voices. A Guide to Oral History.** Victoria: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Reprint, 1988.

(Derek Reimer's manual has detailed information on doing oral history.)

To order, write to: Sound and Moving Image Division, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C., V8V 2R5.

7. Schorzman, Terri A. **A Practical Introduction to Videohistory: The Smithsonian Institution and Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Experiment.** Krieger Publishing Company, 1993.

(There are a lot of skills to learn to be able to do a good job of recording oral history on video. This book is very useful for people who are comfortable reading technical language.)

To order, contact: Krieger Publishing Company, Box 9542, Melbourne, Florida, U.S.A., 32902-9542. Telephone order line (407) 727-7270.

6.0 APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY: PUTTING ANTHROPOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE TO USE

Eddy and Partridge (1987a: 5-7) describe applied anthropology as the application or use of anthropological knowledge in addressing the problems or needs of contemporary peoples. The problems tackled are generally those of the people we work with and the means for solving the problems can be multi-disciplinary. This contrasts with purely academic anthropology that focuses on theoretical issues of concern identified within that milieu. Applied anthropologists often work outside of academic institutions on a contract basis or are employed in organizations such as governments.

In Canada much applied anthropology has been conducted in relation to Aboriginal issues (Dyck and Waldrum 1993, Hedican 1995). Not all of this is done by applied anthropologists per se. Some are ethnographers or, like myself, archaeologists, who through their work have learned about problems or needs faced by the people we work with and apply our anthropological knowledge in trying to assist them.

To me, one of the most influential 'applied' anthropologists is Julie Cruikshank. Through her work with Aboriginal people in the Yukon she has contributed to a change in the way that many archaeologists view the oral tradition and its use in our research (Cruikshank 1981, 1988, 1990). She has also described the disillusionment of Aboriginal people with researchers who come from outside the community and culture. The concerns expressed relate to the lack of input into the topics researched, the way the research is conducted and how they are portrayed in the results.

Cruikshank also describes the increasing desire among Aboriginal people to do their own research. Cruikshank states, “The striking change during the last decade has been the growing interest of both elders and younger people in documenting their own culture in their own voices....Elders’ faith in oral tradition has to do both with their own experience of its effectiveness and with the direct relationship of teacher and listener. But they understand that in contemporary educational institutions power rests with the written word, and they want to devise ways to translate their knowledge into other forms of presentation (1993:138).

For me, Cruikshank’s immediate influence has been to demonstrate the value of documenting the oral tradition, not only for the way it enhances our research but for the value it has to the Aboriginal people we work with. Her observations of the disillusionment of Aboriginal people with outside researchers mirrors what I have heard myself in the context of working at the PWNHC. Cruikshank has successfully applied her anthropological knowledge in identifying issues of concern to Aboriginal people and inspires others to do so as well.

6.1 How I Put My Anthropological Knowledge to Use

It seems appropriate to briefly discuss the ways in which my anthropological knowledge was put to use in addressing the need for the manual.

a) Emic perspective:

In order to adequately serve those we work with it is essential to try to understand their culture and how it shapes the way they perceive the world. This is the emic perspective, and in the

context of this study, trying to grasp the emic perspective is key to providing effective training materials. Although no outsider can expect to completely understand the inside of another's culture we have to do the best we can. Many anthropologists must reach a point where they realize that the more they know - the less they know. Meaning that once you begin to obtain some insights into the differences between your own and another's culture you begin to realize that as an outsider you can never completely understand the emic perspective and will always bring some of the etic or 'outsider's' view point to your interpretation. I must acknowledge that although the manual was written for Aboriginal people the content reflects what I determined was important to present based on my perception of need.

b) Field work:

Field work is another characteristic of anthropology, although it may be time to find another term that is more acceptable to the people we work with. The time spent in the community is central to developing an understanding of the people we are working with, identifying their needs and determining what action can be taken to solve or ameliorate them. It is through field work that I learned first hand about peoples' sense of pride in their history and cultural traditions and the desire to see them documented. A researcher can hear such statements on the radio or television, but engaging in discussions with people on these issues creates a clearer understanding of what they want. It also enables the researcher to assess what resources are available to people in the community to use in tackling the issue and to determine to help.

b) Participant Observation:

Although not a stated method of my field work I learned a lot through participant observation.

In trying to conduct both a training and oral traditions program I was a participant in the activities engaged in by trainees. I tried to observe how they were coping in order to assist or make modifications necessary to developing a training program. I got to see what it was like for someone from the community to begin doing research. What do you do if an elder can't write their name on the receipt? How do I let people know that this project is happening? How do I get people to start talking? Where should I place the microphone so it is less obtrusive? How come I can't get this tape recorder to work? As mentioned earlier I could relate to the trainees as I was in training myself. In working on these projects I could see first hand some of the trainees needs in starting their research and could address them through the manual. I also learned that as a researcher based in another city that it would have been useful to have a research guide that trainees could refer to to feel confident that they were proceeding in the correct way.

It was important to hear trainees and interviewees personal perspectives on how little information they received in school that related directly to them and their experience as Aboriginal peoples. I would repeatedly hear how they never heard about their own history in school and felt that their history wasn't interesting or important. From these comments I decided that I would write a manual that was specifically for Aboriginal people in the hope that they could picture themselves doing research. I do not mean to sound patronizing in saying that. As I wrote the manual I had specific individuals in mind that I wrote it for. They were friends who knew the importance of the oral tradition but could not picture themselves doing research.

Another way in which participant observation contributed to my cultural understanding was through my experience as a literacy tutor. This was invaluable to me in my task of writing a manual as it sensitised me to the challenges that many challenged readers face and helped me to design and write a manual that would facilitate their needs. I am able to gauge the difference that this experience has meant to me. When I first started at the PWNHC I was asked to write an archaeological field training manual and completed a first draft. I had no experience with literacy tutoring at that time and it is easy to see in the draft manual as it is very different in style and readability than the oral traditions manual. Even though I wasn't tutoring in the capacity of an anthropologist my training in participant observation has made me analytical in that I can observe and store what I am learning in one context and apply it to another. In some ways this reflects the holistic nature of anthropology in that we are encouraged to look for solutions to problems outside our immediate area of study.

d) Emphasis on culture:

Another benefit of anthropological training with its emphasis on culture is learning to be culturally sensitive and aware of culturally appropriate behaviour. Most books on interviewing, particularly in oral history do not address the issue of accommodating cultural differences within ones own culture or between cultures. Another issue that is not only key to current anthropological practice but to many other social sciences is the concern for ethical behaviour. As an anthropologist I felt it necessary to convey the importance of ethical behaviour to those starting out in oral traditions research.

7.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL DRAFT

7.1 Distribution

Five hundred copies of the manual, *Getting Started in Oral Traditions Research*, were distributed to various organizations and individuals, most of which were free of charge. These included all school and public libraries in the NWT, teaching and learning centres, divisional boards of education, various branches of Arctic College and all cultural organizations and research institutes. Some manuals were kept by the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre to distribute to recipients of funding from the Oral Traditions Contribution Program. Copies were sent to various people or organizations in the south including literacy organizations, the Canadian Oral History Association, an assortment of cultural programs at universities and to a few university professors. Requests for copies began to come in from university students and professors and a number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural organizations. The manual was also made available on the Internet through the home page of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (GNWTb, no date, <http://pwnhc.learnnet.nt.ca/>).

The Heritage Centre printed additional copies but decided to charge for them. It is difficult to know who is using the manual and for what type of projects. Orders have come in for the manual from university libraries and bookstores and students. Orders were also placed by a number of Aboriginal organizations and various educational organizations in the NWT.

7.2 Assessment Through Feedback and Use

Feedback on the manual is not easy to obtain now as I am no longer working at the PWNHC nor

living in the NWT. It is difficult to track the use of the manual once it has been distributed as order forms do not state applications and not all copies used are ordered as some people photocopy them. Tracking its use via the Internet is also difficult. While browsing the Internet I happened across a one line review by Terri Lamb, manager for a genealogical webpage of an Internet guide service called Mining Co.. Her comment on the manual which she found on the PWNHC website was, “one of the most comprehensive "how-to" sites I've seen on dealing with the various aspects of this type of research (Mining Co. no date, <http://genealogy.miningco.com/msub20.htm>).”

I was pleased to see the manual included in a researchers guide to working in the Western Northwest Territories in an appendix entitled, “Useful publications for conducting research in the north” (Aurora Research Institute 1996: 39).

One of the most satisfying sources of feedback that I read was in the practicum of Shannon Ward, a graduate from the Natural Resources Institute. It was satisfying in that rather than just reviewing it she actually put the manual to use in training people in Cape Dorset, NWT to conduct interviews. Shannon states, “In finding this invaluable resource guide, I knew it would be a vital tool in helping the trainees get comfortable with the research process. I could not predict at the time, however, just how much I would come to depend upon it. It became extremely relevant during this stage in our research with regards to covering the issues of interview and questionnaire design (Ward 1996:97-98). Among other known uses are its incorporation into language enhancement projects supported by the NWT Literacy Council (Carla Bullinger personal

communication).

I am satisfied from the feedback that I have obtained that the manual has successfully filled a need in providing training material that will allow Aboriginal people in the NWT to get started in oral traditions research and serve as a common frame of reference between for researchers and trainees. Also satisfying is its use by non-Aboriginal cultural organizations and in literacy programs as it seems to be serving a need outside the one it was intended for.

8. 0 CONCLUSION

The manual, *Getting Started in Oral Traditions Research*, can be viewed as an application of applied anthropology as I put my anthropological knowledge to use in addressing a need of contemporary people. The need is that Aboriginal people want to document the oral tradition themselves for their own use. The action I took was to write a culturally appropriate oral traditions manual that would help them get started. The manual is meant as a first step. Ideally there should be a series of manuals that deal with the wider spectrum of topics related to oral traditions research. One is needed on synthesising the results of interviews and writing reports. A separate manual is needed for learning effective techniques for conducting interviews on traditional ecological knowledge. Another manual is needed on video recording. A manual could also be produced for those who want to learn more about ways of organizing research projects like the Participatory Action Research method.

It is difficult to know how successful the manual has been in addressing the need as there are no means for tracking its use. I am satisfied with the results that I know of in that it is available in many locations throughout the north in schools, public libraries, adult education centres, and at research and cultural institutes. It is also used in the south by some students in Northern Studies and Native Studies programs and is available on the Internet. The fact that it has been ordered by Aboriginal organizations and is also used to train recipients of the Oral Traditions Contribution Program means that it is being used as intended. It is also used by a wider audience such as literacy programs and by some non-Aboriginal cultural organizations. The manual is timely in that with decentralization of government programs and the implementation of land claims the control over research and the related funding lies increasingly with regional governments or land claimant groups. The manual provides a means for Aboriginal people accessing those funds to document the oral tradition themselves and use it in whatever way they feel is most important to them.

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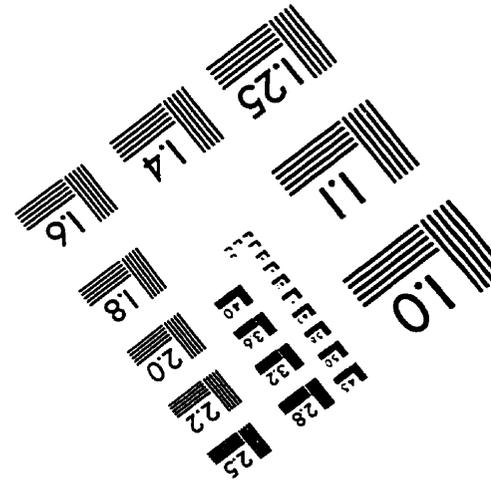
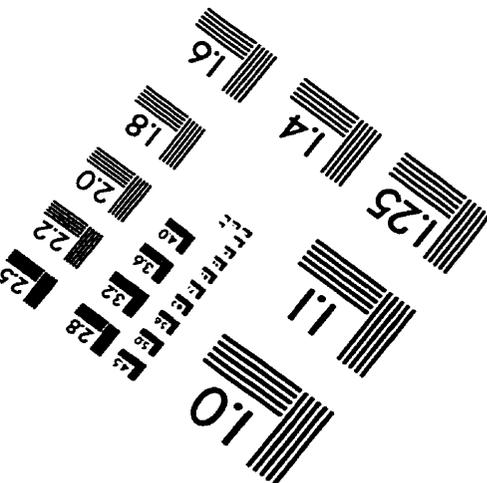
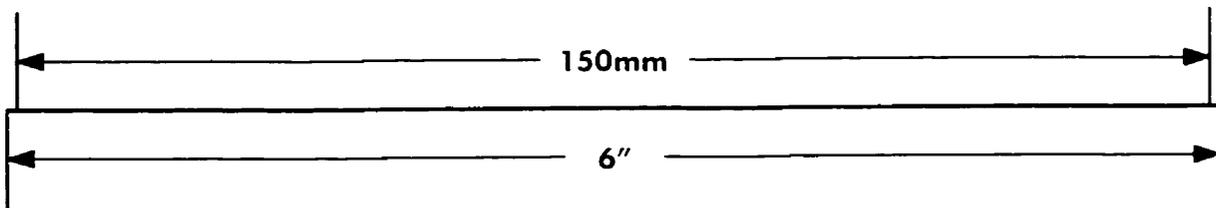
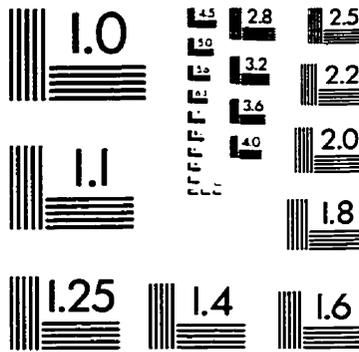
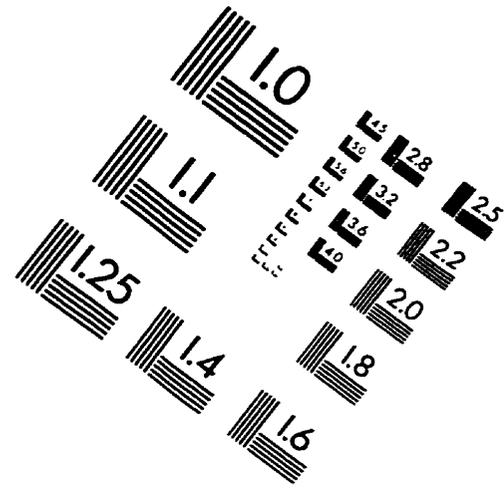
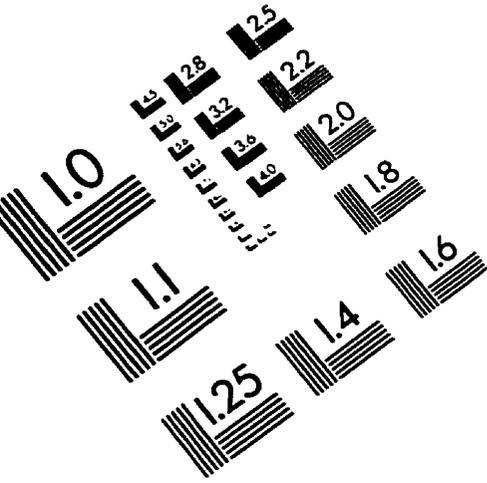
Personal Communication

Arnold, Charles D. Director, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NWT.

Barnaby, Joanne Director, Dene Cultural Institute, Hay River, NWT.

Bullinger, Carla NWT Literacy Council, Yellowknife, NWT.

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