

## **Michael Krauss: The 1960s and the Beginning of the ANLC**

Interview with Andreas Droulias - 02/20/04.

AD: I am Andreas Droulias, today it's the 20<sup>th</sup> of February of 2004 and I'm here with Michael Krauss to speak about the 1960s when you first came here.

MK: Yeah, the 1960s and the foundation of the Alaska Native Language Center. We the last time went over the, I think, my arrival here in 1960 and what I was hired here for and what the basic mentality of all of that was and I'll try to get more into my teaching of introductory linguistics or not even so much that, but the result of that especially in that, that first course that I taught, included two students Erene Reed, who I introduced and Martha Teeluk, who I also introduced and the two of them were central in the student body of that linguistics course, they lived together or they were next door neighbors in apartment building, I mentioned, and the two of them, you might say, conspired to urge me to start up what was then, still now I think, called Special Topics Course in Eskimo and that course begun in the very fall, the very second semester of that first year, spring of 1961 with six students, some of whose pictures you will see in the famous photograph that was published in 1962, University of Alaska, Fairbanks Catalogue, showing myself standing at the blackboard, transcribing along a Yupik word from Martha, you can see facing the camera and Erene next to Martha at the table next there with the other students and this was the very beginning of the teaching a modern program at the University of Alaska, there having being, as I also mentioned last time, two very minor but very interesting bits before in the 1950s, that I mentioned, I don't know what, if anything was done with Gordon Marsh(?) but then Albert Heinrich(?) we had that little film bit of his one, at least, one session of that kind but there had been precious little linguistic work done as such at the University of Alaska, virtually none, during the previous years of the University's existence, the Anthro Department being closest to it and having being very prominent on campus as the major most promising, until Geophysics took over, you might say, research thing making, putting the University of Alaska in anything like the big leagues you might say for Arctic Anthropology but that never included linguistics in any meaningful way. However, when it did begun, it begun in a different department, which to this day has never united with Anthropology to do this kind of work but ever since then, in another sense, you could say that the Anthropology Department could easily say why should we bother with linguistics when in fact we have a whole Alaska Native

Language Center that is illustrious for doing just exactly that. And so our Anthropology can remain without linguistics, even though that there are currently two linguistics in the Anthropology Department but whose work has little or nothing to do with Alaska Native Languages at least for the department. And there is a certain irony in that and the whole issue of the relationship between the Alaska Native language work and the Anthro is a major question and challenge for the University.

AD: Ok.

MK: Ok, for a living I continued to teach linguistics as such and French but begun more and more this program with Central Alaskan Yupik, in fact in 1962, sixty...sorry, fall of 1961 and spring 1961-61, we started a more or less permanent Yupik program with Erene and Martha taking more and more over the teaching of that and that became kind of a program on its own, there was a lapse while Erene was in Seattle doing some more graduate work but that did not turn out to be a really good idea because it couldn't be really relevant to what was needed most in Alaska, so the Yupik program did continue with a lapse in the mid 60s and resumed in the late 60s with Erene back and with linguistics being partly taken over by people who could teach Japanese, in this case, most importantly by far Oshahito(?), who is still very actively working with this, with Central Yupik and is a major leader of linguistics in Japan, including now too, the addressing the whole issue of global language endangerment, which is another subject that M(?) and I also share but with M(?) and Erene back and other students in particular Pascal(?), Joe(?) and still Martha, the Yupik program gathered good steam and we developed towards the later 60s, '67, '68, '69, a good practical writing system for Yupik, which is basically what has been used ever since, with some major or significant final improvements made in 1972 or thereabout by Jeff Leer but the Yup'ik program was the beginning of what we would call the ANLP, the Alaska Native Language Program, which is the teaching of Alaska native languages first of all Central Yup'ik throughout the '60s, Yup'ik, Central Yup'ik alone and that develops, and I'll get back to that, along with other languages into the Alaska Native Language Program. All of this was, however, at this time still courses in the Department of Linguistics and Foreign Languages. Then, in 1961 also, '60-61 I wrote a proposal to establish a research program in Alaska Native Languages, this was never supported, of course, by the University itself, as such, although it was encouraged by the University, to get money from National Science Foundation, most especially,

to do research on Alaska native languages. Already, I wrote, see, with Dr. Wood, kind of a proposal, which is still in the files, for kind of thing, which later did indeed materialize in the form of the Alaska Native Language Center but more specifically I got money, the first one on a grant to survey Alaska native languages from the National Science Foundation, remember that was 38,000\$ back in the '60s, that was not a trivial amount for a young fellow to get for the University here and with that I got a number of people working on a number of Alaska native languages projects. Two more or less duds(?) working on Ahtna(?) and Tanaina(?) Athabascan from the University of Washington grad students, Robert Austerlitz(?), who was the major linguist at Columbia for many years and helped(?) the Department at the time, who started working with Eyak, Erene Reed, working with (?) Alutiaq, first year in Prince William Sound, Chugach and later in Kodiak, the second year, Martha Teeluk, working with her own Central Yupik and recording some superb story tellers and transcribing their stories from those tapes and myself starting working with Athabascan in Minto and becoming very much primarily involved in Athabascan, though especially at Minto, and comparative Athabascan, historical Athabascan, revising immediately the proto Athabascan reconstructed consonant system to include another series, evidence for which was in Minto, the *T-R* series (?)ing from the *T-S* series in Minto and in Upper Kuskuokwim and Gwich'in and in Han(?) and in Galic(?) or (?), swats of languages all the way through(?) Alaska, which correspond to the *P-F* series, as opposed to the *T-S*, in (?) extinct language from the Po Canal(?), which Franz Boas had heroically documented in 1894 and also in Eyak where the *T-R*, *P-F* corresponded to English, to Eyak *K* while the other *T-Ss* corresponded, as expected, to Eyak *CHA*(?), I didn't mean (?) going into this kind of conflict but it did require a major revision of what had been expected for a long time as a reconstruction pro - Athabascan and I would say that my own scientific publication and academic credibility or prestige for working in North American languages derived from that initial work with Athabascan and the year 1961 at Minto and '62, continuation of the NSF survey, in which I spent a lot of time documenting the basic developments of virtually, all Alaska Athabascan, a lot of it being done by fieldwork, including some plane trips or long trips to place like Telaida(?) or Upper Kuskuokwim but also a lot of it done in the old, now old, Alaska Native Health Service hospital, on Gamble(?) street in Anchorage, back in the bad old days, when there was still widespread tuberculosis epidemic and all kinds of elders speaking virtually every language in Alaska, where stuck in the Gamble(?) street hospital with nothing but time on their hands and

very delighted to have someone come by and relieve their boredom by asking knowledgably about the way they said things in their own languages and they themselves could see and compare with each other and so on, it was a wonderful time that I had in that hospital, even though, I always had to wear a surgical mask in front of my mouth as did they in front of theirs, so all of our communication was rather visually impaired and slightly muffled by surgical masks. That was, certainly beat having to, what most of people thought I must have, dog mushed thousands of miles through difficult Alaskan conditions to have gathered so much information and in fact it was tragically simpler than that and the people a lot more available under those tragic circumstances.

AD: One note

AD: That was the last one. So, yeah...

MK: There was one other language that was, I discovered a number of things including the need to distinguish more dialects, or what we now considered languages that the two had been considered to be two different languages in Alaska Athabascan, one of them was Holikachuk, which was still spoken at Holikachuk and the only speaker I could find for Holikachuk was a man named Billy King, who was at that time in, not in the hospital with tuberculosis but in jail and the first documentation of that language took place, eye and eye, through thick glass, over a telephone connection. By that means, I discovered that Holikachuk does not classify, is not a dialect of, definitely not (?), it's very distinct in a more crucial and definitive way from Koyukon and that led to the establishment of another language identity in Alaska, for example but this is 1962 thereabout. I guess, I should also bring in a more personal thing. I was although somewhat obliged to a woman in Iceland that I thought a lot of, I was single bachelor when I came to Alaska, short of, but within one month, after teaching about one month here, there was a gathering outside the (?), I'd been teaching French and Rudy Kreiji(?) announced to me that my parents had just been in an automobile accident and they were nearly dead already and they soon died, I flew out to the funeral and to take care of family matters and the state and at the funeral Jane Lowel(?), an old friend from Cleveland, who had been married and was on divorcing....came over to me and the rest is history and we were married a year later, after her having accompanied me in my inspection tour of my assistants in the fieldwork of that first summer of 1961, (?) Dalton, where the guy from the University of Washington was working on

Tanaina and to Cordova, where Austerlitz(?) was working on Eyak and (?) that photograph which shows Jane, herself now dead, Austerlitz, now dead, Erene, still alive, Lina (?), now dead, famous photograph, which was printed in the book *In Honor of Eyak* and this was the beginning of our, well, that was kind of Jane's introduction to Alaska charmed her enough to decide to marry me and the rest is, I guess you could say, is history. That took place in (?) the first summer, we were actually married the following February, while I was...yeah writing, no, writing the second, writing up the Minto results and writing the second year proposal and that summer I did the definition of Athabascan languages or the survey of Athabascan languages and the others continued their work, Erene in Kodiak, Martha still in Yup'ik and in a way research was, in Alaskan native languages, was beginning to take shape. There was another element here, that it begun with that too, virtually the same time as I came or even a little sooner, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, weekleaf(?) Bible translators, opened a branch in Alaska in 1959, did some field training sessions there in (?) and in 1960 deployed people to St. Lawrence Island, Davids (?) to Fort...to the Gwich'in area, Dick Miller(?) to the Koyukon area, Dave Henry(?), story(?) to the Tlingit area, couple years later Ray Collins(?) to Upper Kuskuokwim and (?) Webster to Barrow and couple of years later Wilfred Ziebel(?) to Katsibue(?) area and I although had, certainly had in no habits frequenting Christian missionaries, I did learn to work, as well as I was fit in those days, with people of that type too so that it was kind of a challenge for someone whose social skills are at best mediocre to learn to deal with a wide variety of my fellow westerners to include missionaries of various types, as well as, academics and, not to mention (?) and of course with the many Alaska native villagers that I considered some of my most meaningful relationships. Teddy Charlie(?) in Minto and Moses Charlie(?) in Minto for example and later Peter John in Minto and others there, and every single speaker of Eyak, Marie Smith(?), who is still with us and Linda (?) and Annie Nelson Harry(?) and Sophie (?) and old Mike Seawalk(?), who was mostly blind and deaf and there with and George Johnson(?) in Yakatan(?) and Annie Nelson Harry, as I mentioned in Yakatat, (?) much more connection with Eyak and many speakers of Athabascan in most of the villages and others in connection with the Yup'ik work, so it was a wonderful rich experience, I was the, still the only academic linguist, full flesh academic linguist in Alaska and it was a period the '60s, I can generalize to say, where I was very much in demand but in the same time not overwhelmed with distractions and too much going on, there was no interest in doing anything with the languages other than this strict

research, even though our goals and ideas had always been going far beyond that, although in the case of Athabascan survey and of course Eyak, the opportunities for community language program development were minimum, as compared with the opposite end of the scale and Central Yup'ik, where you still had a large group of people with the language that many children were still learning and so on and I was keenly aware of this and the sociolinguistics and everything but there was not much one could do to, say, fight with the BIA or get languages policies that were long entrenched and the University itself was a 100% going along with to change anything, make any social changes, sociolinguistics changes. It was enough to persuade people that the languages are worth any attention at all and I presumably unlike the case of the Hebrewese(?) or parts of Ireland, was not a communist spy, neither a communist spy nor crazy to want to do something or learn something about their languages but it was certainly a new idea that was acceptable only in an academic sense and not in a very practical sense, although I was short of testing this all the time and I had, this had come with me, let's say in my mother's milk in all the previous meaningful training that I've had in Ireland and the Faeroes for example or...certainly all of what(?) had happened to those languages, which were in a sense possibly potentially comparable, a language of 5,000 people, hell, Central Yup'ik was 15,000 - 20,000 at the time. Anyway, I...by 1963, by 1962 I had pretty well made the most important contributions to the definition of Athabascan languages in Alaska and changes to comparative Athabascan in the purely academic field, although the results were not published till about 1964 and after that I was always able to continue to get money to do the research but I realized my self that from a research point of view, for me personally, that Eyak was far and away the most important language, for me, to concentrate my efforts on. For one reason because it was already very close to extinction, there were at that time, actually, 5 people who could speak more or less Eyak, Marie, the youngest, Sophie, her sister, who was not easy to work with at the time, severely distracted with alcohol issues and there were a lot people there, of course, Lina (?), Annie Nelson Harry, George Johnson and to some extent Mike Seawalk(?) with some memory of the language, although a distant. And I determined that since Austerlitz was not going to be able to continue this in consistent basis, that I should turn my attention to Eyak and I spent because of that, always supported never by the University of course, any of this research, but by, strictly by NSF grants, which I continue to get through the 1960s to manage to document Eyak, the story of which I will save for a separate tape if I may, as I'm trying to keep a different kind of viewpoint

here but I was then very heavily preoccupied throughout the '60s with the task of documenting as much as I possibly could of the Eyak language. There were two very obvious reasons for that, one that Eyak was already nearly extinct but also that it is very definitively, very obviously not an Athabascan language at all but rather the one and only first cousin to all the Athabascan languages as siblings of a different branch, so you have the thirty some Athabascan languages as one branch and then you have Eyak and Eyak alone as the other branch, that whole, two branch family was in turn attachable to Tlingit, although that was very problematical and still is in certain ways, in a much more distant, much greater distance in a certain sense but at the same time the Eyak and the comparative Athabascan are very, are close enough to be very enlightening to each other, (?) Athabascan languages are the result of maybe 2,000 years of divergence or as (?) it were 2,000 of divergence back from proto-Athabascan, the divergence between proto-Athabascan it self and Eyak is probably another thousand years before that, so that the proto-Athabascan Eyak common ancestor would go back an extra 1,000 years to something more like 3,000 and that is a very enlightening interval or distance and we have only begun, you might say, to benefit from that or profit from that from a purely academic point of view and it may seem like it's purely academic and in fact it is in a sense purely academic, but my belief is that in essence, ultimately, nothing could be more interesting to Athabascan themselves than the study of what is Athabascan and that in essence is the Athabascan languages, the culture is far more diverse to depend on environments, which range from frozen Alaska to parched desert in the southwest, Arizona and even Mexico at times but the languages are all very closely related, mutually enlightening to each other and then all those put together and Eyak are also mutually enlightening in turn, so that, although seemingly academic, is, I believe, ultimately of very intrinsic worth to anybody who is Athabascan and cares what that means.

AD: So that was, this whole preoccupation was all through the '60s?

MK: Through the '60s, I would say, that it was, in a sense, what was foremost in my mind, aside from the things I had to do for my bread and butter and to work with the people working with Yup'ik to keep up the Eskimo side of things in the department and to lay the groundwork for the political advancement of the languages, first and foremost by trying to neutralize the negative effect of the schools by getting them into the schools and by the late '60s all of this fits together rather well, one (?) the late '60s because if you take, say, the '50s and the end of colonialism and

the desegregation rulings and the '60s ensuing political, rather social unrest, especially the civil rights issues rising from all of that and somewhat later in the '60s as liberizations crept in too, the ideas of bilingual education and schools outside, especially Hispanic, and we worked closely with those people too, not just following but working with them to develop arguments for the introduction of bilingual education not just in Spanish of course, but in Alaska in especially Alaskan native languages. And by 1968 we put together, Erene Reed and myself and believe it or not Arthur Hipler(?), who later turned into, who was a maverick, in those days whenever one was wearing a suit and tie, he was the guy with short sleeves rolled up and then later on turned into the opposite, when everyone else went to short sleeves, he put on suits and tie and became practically, became a notorious figure in anthropology. But back in his liberal maverick days, he was part of it and God help us so was Don Webster(?), SIL, missionary from Barrow, this motley crew put together a proposal to Cliff Heartman(?), then the...direct...then the secretary whatever you call it, Commissioner of Education for the state of Alaska to introduce the use of Alaska native languages in schools, most specifically Yupi'ik, already we had a good writing system and hundreds of children whose first language it still was and the answer we got back from Heartman(?) was barely polite, just another University eggheads' scheme for making money and blah blah blah, and especially most of all and here he was right, of course, this would totally undermine the authority of the teachers in the school room because the teachers not knowing the native language having the class going on in the native language would be exactly the unthinkable, impossible situation that they could never face and would indeed cause revolution in the schools about who's in power. The beauty, however, and the constitutionality of it, which I very vociferously pointed out is that this is not, this way only Eskimos could get to teach Eskimo schools and so on, and I pointed out that this is not correct. People of any race, religion, creed(?), color are more than welcome to apply provided that they are fluent speakers of Yup'ik, it is not a racial thing, an intellectual thing, there are plenty of Yupiks who can't speak any Yupi'ik, so it's a matter of having a particular skill and not being of a particular race. True statistically most people who speak Yupi'ik happen to be Yupiks but it is still not a racial thing and totally constitutional, totally moral and right. Up to then, of course, the hypocrisy of that thing also is shown by the fact that if a Yupik did get a teaching degree, he would never be allowed to teach in a Yupik school but he would be sent amongst the Tlingits or whatever instead and vice versa. I think I mentioned that in the case of St. Lawrence Island teacher. But this was finally going to



cause a very fundamental change in the whole purpose of education in native Alaska. Anyway, we were turned down, as I was saying, in a very nasty letter from Heartman(?), which I, a year later in 1969, in the late summer of '69 before I headed off for my sabbatical at MIT, we were able to brandish this reply to the US Senator Subcommittee and in the education then visiting in the persons of Senators Ded Kennedy(?) and Walter Mandale(?), they came to (?) Auditorium back then and there was a really nice hearing, it went on until wee(?) hours in the morning and I noticed that both Mandale(?) and Kennedy(?) were wide awake and taking all in, all kinds of testimony was pouring in, including ours about how we were turned down by this proposal and they took all due note of that that and it was obvious that now, say between '68 and '69 as you're headed towards 1970, times were changing and society was becoming deeply unsettled both by the human rights, especially civil rights issues in this country and also by the Vietnam war, which for the first time was a war that not anyone agreed was the kind we should be fighting and there were deep divisions and a lot of passions and a lot of radicalization going on finally in the latter part and we were definitely in the thick of that. Then in the year '69-'70, I decided to take a Sabbatical and left the state to spent the year at MIT where I had a Visiting Professionship with Naom Chomsky and Moris Haley(?) and Ken Hale(?), some good, good friend there and promise to be a very nice year, ostensibly to retread my self from a theoretical point of view. Can you stop this for a second? **(FLIP SIDES)**

AD: The '70s, MIT.

MK: Well, yeah, I was going there. I left Alaska for that one academic year in part for a change of scene and in part to work at MIT and in part to absent myself from the situation in Alaska, where I had maybe outlived some of my usefulness as a proponent of bilingual education of Alaskan native languages because of my lack of personal diplomacy and my failure to charm the Bureau of Indian Affairs, BIA or state operated school system administrators with, I think the words that have been used, it was a harsh or strident complaints about what the educational system was doing to Alaska native languages. And in my absence, Erene Reed ever the smoothie and diplomat and Frank Durnell(?), founder of the Center for Northern Educational Research and smoothie and I often described him as a guy, I never saw it happen but I would imagine, that if the rose in the vase on your table was low on water, he would be the first person there to make sure that your rose is well nourished and that things are nicely done and ways to charm and

people into doing things that I would never think of. And between, Erene Reed and Frank Durnell(?), I believe there was a reception or something that they held for the administrators of the state operated schools and the BIA in the, what was still there on the third floor of the Eielson building, still as the home economics lounge where there were stoves for girls to learn to cook and have nice tables and so on and held meetings there and persuaded the BIA, especially, and state operated schools too to experiment with the idea of using Alaska native languages, in the schools were the children knew the language better than English, to learn to read and write for example first in their own language, so they would be learning to read and write the language they knew, their own, number one and number two, much easier intrinsically thing to do than English, which has all kinds of extra baggage from centuries of orthographical chaoses and mixtures of rules from different languages, so *ph*, because of some strange language is pronounced *f*, (laughs)...excuse me, so why do you have to spell *fish*, *p-h-i-s-h*, or (?) or something, Yup'ik doesn't have such problems, unfortunately English does. And the people could hardly understand, why it would be, you know, how it could be so much easier, anyway we were, Erene, not we, Erene and...they were able to persuade these people probably with a few phrases like "Krauss, doesn't have anything to do with it, has he?" or something "...it sounds a lot like", "oh no, he's thousands of miles away at MIT, nothing to do with this". Anyway, they succeeded while I was away to persuaded these agencies to experiment with this notion, in four Yupik schools. Erene is also, a wonderful, a kind of a mother hand type of person and talents scout and with her extensive contact with Yupik people was able to pick superb candidates to come to Fairbanks that following summer to train for this program, this was as I was coming back from MIT, she had there up in the third floor in Eielson, a whole workshop with full of these eight trainees, two for four schools each, who had eight weeks also of training that summer of how to read and write in their own language and to teach in their own language, because don't forget they themselves had never had any opportunity to do that or if they did it was because most probably they would have had some practice with the Moravian writing system for Yup'ik and we tried to go along with that as close as we could but we had to establish at the same time our own pan-Yup'ik orthography using the best traits of the Moravian, well, number one of our understanding of the phonology, number two, better traits of the Moravian and the Russian Orthodox in a lesser extent and especially also Catholic, so for example for the sound (?), which is extremely common in all Eskimo (?) languages, the letter *r*, which is

otherwise not needed, was very natural to Europeans, French, German, so on, as many of these Moravians and Catholics were, it was very natural as it had already been the case in Greenlandic and Canada, in a way, to use the letter *r* for (?) so that it went along with the Moravian and Catholic systems any how and so the idea was that we would set a standard, not that it would deprecate any of the already extant writing systems, which churches were more than welcome to continue doing, but for the schools we needed one single writing system for the entire Central Yupik area and based this practical system on what we had done at the University scientifically plus fitting it with the, politically, with the Moravian and Catholic writing systems as much possible, so that's a whole other kind of subject but fundamental to the progress of the central Yupik programs and the first programs, experimental albeit, in bilingual education in Alaska in those four Central Yupik schools. So that was the beginning of the bilingual education. Another ingredient to that, incidentally, was some of the University courses that we had developed in the late '60s, one called the Eskimo Language Workshop, which was something like an advanced composition course for advanced writers in Yup'ik, in which many of the group of the Yup'ik, advanced Yup'ik students in the field begun writing little story books, school books, literally or imaginatively for their younger siblings still in school and experimenting producing little readers and primers and school books, the name again of the course was Eskimo Language Workshop but that basically functioned as a kind of a shell, subversive applying for the development and demonstration of good, sound writing system for the, and sound reading materials for the children to learn to read with, provided the schools, with a view toward getting into the schools or showing how that it could be done (?) learn to read and write in their own languages, using what we had developed, the orthography and these little reading materials produced by the students of this so called Eskimo Language Workshop course so what was later became institution of its own, Eskimo Language Workshop started out as a course called as that for advanced composition(?) in the language at the University probably the year '68 or '69. That first students started passing through that and developing the first prototypes of readers in the modern writing system. So, we doing the basic groundwork especially Central Yup'ik for the political battle of getting the languages accepted into the schools and so that was '68-'69, '70s to describe(?), then comes the year '70 - '71, the experimental program of Central Yup'ik expands, the student James (?), no that was '71 - '72 or '70 - '71, from Barrow comes to the University and he and I together, or no he was a student, I taught a course in his Inupiaq using him as the

chief source of information and teaching the students how to elicit that information about how the grammar of the language works so then it becomes a discovery procedure on the part of the students themselves, back then still half of the students in that course were fluent speakers of Central Yup'ik...of Inupiaq from the (?) or Barrow and it became a very interesting interaction between James, who knew the language very well and the students, who also still knew the language well and many students white and native, who didn't too, to discover how the language works through this intellectual process of rigorous examination of the grammar as directed by me but done basically or as provided, information provided by James, who was learning the process too. And this became kind of a prototype also of this learning process, which doesn't go on for ever, in the sense that the courses eventually take shape and develop their own texts and dictionaries and so on but back then we were starting relatively empty handedly. But that, of course, I consider that a great triumph and it was a wonderful year with my self and James running that course with some outstanding students. This was the beginning also of my second language in the Alaska Native Language program. And the time comes, things were becoming more and more polarized and militant about Vietnam and civil rights and so on that (?) be little late in the game although not that late and through other contacts of the state operated school system, for example an (?) very important figure in this Garry Holthaus H-o-l-t-h-a-u-s, and one time I think he'd been a Minister, a big surprise to find that out but at that time was the bilingual officer for state operated school system or not bilingual officer but in the curriculum there anyway and he and Jo Jofenson(?) drew up a bill for the state legislature, '71, for '71 for the '72 legislature, which did two things, I wasn't on the actual writing of it cause it would be different probably if I had but I was just glad to see this finally taking place and through the sponsorship of Jo Jofenson(?) and the diplomacy and commitment of Garry Holthaus to what is right, introduced a pair of bills into the state legislature, one mandating the use of the children's first language, where Alaska natives, for example, come to school speaking native instead of English but they but they shall have teachers in that language and a curriculum in that language that including reading materials in that language and for any school where there are fifteen or more such peoples, yeah, which took in a large number of Central Yupik schools although not too many others and the second bill, the twin, a pair to that, was that there shall be established at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, an Alaska Native Language Center, whose job it shall be to one, and I am paraphrasing this now, this is not quite the way(?), one "study" all Alaska native

languages and number two support the bilingual programs, give the basic academic support, it doesn't pay for, of course, or train everybody or do everything, that's assured for but provide academic basis for the development of these programs through out state schools, throughout the schools in the state. And BIA went along with this, even though they were not technically legally bound to it but they, and at the same time during the '70s, they were running fewer and fewer of the schools in Alaska. So, we worked like hell through that whole year of, first half of 1972 to get these bills passed because of the strength of the bilingual experiments that had been made with Central Yupik it was possible to introduce this legislature and to lobbied it through because we had very successful and very favorable results from the few schools, Yupik schools were the children were allowed to use their language and there's a lot of that, normally I teach about it, and of course I'm not going to go into that here so much but the children were afraid still to speak the language and they came to school because they knew, as their older siblings were always forbidden from doing that and were punished or there's always that threat, it was a scary thing to do and it took the kids a couple of weeks to realize that "no, it's okay to do it now" suddenly and that finally dawned on them and my God they were different kids, finally after all these years. So this was a liberation too little too late, I admit, but still, obviously glad we did it and, even as little and as late as it was, I actually even confess that I was a bit surprised that it was possible to get to the state legislature this bills that soon.

AD: So, that was a state law or a federal law?

MK: State law, yeah, I would like to say that the federal law permitting bilingual education was passed in 1968 and it became legal to do that by federal law in 1968 but the state law even mandated the use of the languages, not that that it even been always followed through but it certainly went beyond the federal law in its commitment to the use of native languages.

AD: So, the focus was on minority languages then generally, or only native?

MK: No, it was on languages other than English and it is possible that there have been schools where fifteen or more students whose first languages were(?) Japanese, Korean, conceivably Spanish or, God only knows, maybe even Albanian once or twice or something, there's a lot of Kosovars(?), in certain, like Bethel at one time or so, but the main focus for us of course was

native, it didn't specifically state native no, and I'm not going to try to go into, I think, the development of bilingual education throughout the state or anything like this, other than that it spread to certain extent in appropriate ways, failed to spread in some appropriate ways and it spread in certain inappropriate ways, where it doesn't work but I'm staying out of that subject, it's a whole different subject as it was in certain ways too little too late by the time (?) no longer speak that language as dominant language, it's very different problem all together, but meanwhile the Alaska Native Language Center was established, at the same time, not only to support those bilingual programs but also to co-study the Alaska native languages and by that I've always taken to mean, that meant to document, (not) to study them in a sense that as subjects of experiment or to validate or invalidate directions in linguistic theory, quite the opposite, just as subjects in their own right, as languages in their own right, they needed to be documented and nobody invented a better way yet since Boas so, let's say call it, dictionary, grammar and texts and in its place, of course, much phono-video recording as possible too, but documenting the language is, (?) mean by that and getting the dictionaries, all the words in the language so far as possible and (?) about the grammar and everything, has brought in very day a corpus recording of the language in use in various ways and that's a classic definition of documentation as a main go all for what that part of the Center's mandate is and that's our kind of University research. There's something else I must say about that...The Center was established as part of the Center for Northern Educational Research under Frank Durnell(?), who happened to be away that year on sabbatical in England and only came back to find that he was a part of this thing, which he, I trust, was happy to see but I don't think he was too happy to see that he had me as an underling, I caused him maybe, I think, some discomfort, I should have realized that and reassured him that I wasn't going to cause him trouble but I guess, I was the only other person in there that might have vied with him for power or anything so he had to more or less make sure that I didn't get to uppity(?) at the Center, get to uppity(?) with the result that as part of that Center, we were more crowded until the, well the rest of the thing luxuriated in nice space for having tea and so on, Frank's experiences in England, until fire marshal. We were so crowded together in a little slam of our own that it was too hazardous on (?), we had to be accorded more space and so on. That was our second year, our first year was, where I still was, oh yeah, here is the part that I meant to go into, I still was, we still were a part of the Department of Linguistic and Foreign Languages. At the same period, there was a departmental meeting. I think I said earlier in about 1963 or 4, I

am getting very tired of administrating this rapidly growing Department of Linguistics and Foreign Languages and hired Bruce Gordon(?) of the Emery(?) University, (?) Spanish there, partly also to take over as department head, which I promptly installed him as, I hired him and set him up as department head and just expect him to leave me alone and one of those, because my interest was strictly, from say '64 on, was practically all just native language and I expected to treat us fairly and I've even given up trying to teach the linguistics and in my absence, while I was at MIT, he hired a Korean by the name John Koo(?), who did not turn out to be very good, certainly as a linguist, the less said about him the better here, although I've said a lot about him elsewhere but Gordon short of championed him, so that sets stage for our department in 1971 or 2, where I proposed the point that the name of the Department Linguistics and Foreign Languages is not really very appropriate, because it doesn't mention native languages and native languages, although foreign to English, are certainly not foreign Alaska, they are the exact opposite and that is totally inappropriate to allow the department to continue under that name since we also native languages, by then teaching both Yupik and Inupiaq and in that meeting, "we've got to change name, how's about Linguistics and Foreign and Native Languages?", "No, that's not very, that's unwieldy or something", "ok, what about then, Linguistics and Languages", "no, cause that doesn't include English" and then "ok, what about Linguistics and Native Languages?", "what?", "well, ok every ten years we change it, so it was Linguistics and Foreign Languages, it's been that way now for 10 years, let's call it Linguistics and Native Languages for another 10 years", "no, we couldn't possibly do that", "well, what should we do?", "well, why not split in two departments?" and in fact it was John Koo(?), who actually said that, himself hoping that he would go on with us and actually he brought that up and by the end of that meeting decided to split into two departments but I stupidly, this is another example of how I know John (?), instead of saying "John, you and linguistics are welcome to be with us", I let that go as a kind of, to (?) Gordon "ok, you can be Linguistics and Foreign Languages and we just be Native Languages and linguistics can stay with you", partly because I didn't want to have anything to do with John Koo(?), I should have kept him and then axed him instead of allowed Gordon then to champion him and tenure him, set linguistics back a whole decade here at the University but, be that as it may, by far the most important thing was to get a separate department of Native Languages and that was the beginning of the Alaska Native Language Program and it turned out that very same spring, the Alaska Native Language Center, which

came from a new addition of state money defined at 200,000 to establish the Alaska Native Language Center. To be honest I don't know, how it was that I officially became director of it, it was just short of an assumption, there was no, there was hardly anybody else to begin with or anyway it was, I guess, taken for granted that I was the director and appointed as that and then I, that's how I was established. That takes us in the establishment of the Alaska Native Language Center. **(BREAK: 32.00)**

AD: Ok, we are back on.

MK: All right, in 1972, when this bill was passed the president of the University was still William R. Wood, who I had known since the very first day that I came here and the very first day he came here, we came here virtually the same day, I met his mother, then well into her 90s or over a 100 or something at that time, told me how she raised Bill and, she was a grand lady, saw him inaugurated and all and conferred with him about the bill and the lobbying for it and he was supportive but we did the work, but he was, you know fully up with it or knew what was going on and always supported that but then retired from the presidency the year just after we were founded, so he saw all developing that but no further. The status of the Center, the finances were that this was an add on to the University's budget as it was an add on to the University's responsibilities, now the University as given 200,000 of state money to study and support bilingual programs of Alaska native languages and technically this was legislative intent, which is, say technically, valid or obliges for one year only, and after that the University can take the money and run any direction it wants and often does that kind of thing because the University is not in fact legally obliged to do what it said it's going to do with the money for more than one year. Whether that's ethical or so on is another story but it's a matter of trust and the University is gaining or losing trust of the legislature and we all short of know where that stands for various reasons but and here is perhaps the place to make that point, after Wood left, I think, not since Wood left has there been an administration that has, I think, honestly done anything but abuse and exploit that money that the basic pattern has always been to chisel away at it, never to, no matter what we say, never to increase it. The result is that now after, 32 years since 1974 the budget of the Center is 435,000\$, were(?) barely to keep up with inflation since 1972, that 200,000\$ should be close to 900,000\$, it is now 400,000\$, and the reason that it is even 400,000\$ is that on two occasions, after a 40% cut in 1986, the Center, I was invited by then (?)



to make an enrun(?) on the University budget to the legislature and ask for more money for Alaska Native Language Center, which I did and succeeded in getting two years in a row, for about 200,000\$ more by that time getting us with those two years in a row, virtually up to where we should be without, given inflation, otherwise if I hadn't done that our budget would now be more like 200,000\$, rather than 400,000\$. In other words, in a way, of that original 200,000\$ they've taken out, half or three quarters and that is along with the money that I went back and got to replenish the Center from the predation of the University administration. And it's never been anything but that, with the somewhat minor exception, you might say, of the good will of Ann (?), when she was Dean and we came to her after '86 all bleeding from the chop, she gave us every bandage she had, but it was still only bandages, I mean, what the hell can a Dean level do. The University level, especially UAF administration has never been kind to the Center but only abusive and exploitative. Many people are shocked to hear this but the facts are the facts. Maybe people may think, "Oh the Center has such a prestige, it can take care of itself", yeah sure, no it can't. And not especially, when there is ill will and there is plenty of ill will. And a lot of it is not on the surface, a lot of it is behind closed doors because what we're talking about, are racial and ideological issues that people do not discuss openly in front of me for example. It's probably unhealthy, quite literally, for me to go extensively into this but there are those, who have said to me that "what do you expect of the University?", or, you know, the famous story about that and all of the, snake, I don't know, got a ride on a turtle or something and then, get the turtle, I don't know, you Greeks surely have...

AD: The scorpion and something else....

MK: Well and then at the end...

AD: The turtle and the scorpion.

MK: ...he bites him and, I guess, so you he will sink and die and then the scorpion will drown too or whatever but the scorpion says "I can't help it, I'm a scorpion". And "what do you expect, I'm a scorpion", or "what do you expect, I'm a snake" and so what can, why should...I'm sorry, I was short of...here I am a fugitive from my own background having taken refuge, I thought, in the one human endeavor that is not strictly mercenary, only to find that it's just as mercenary or worse and more hypocritical than most, also there is all kinds of racism working in both directions, including the reverse. So, you know, the Native Language Center, although it's true that we hire far more natives per department than any other, that's for damn sure, nevertheless

there are whites there, and does a white have any right to do this kind of work, maybe only people who should be doing this, makes the University looks bad, if people do this don't have brown skins and, specially, since it purports to be of a nature that is not merely academic but is supposed to be, I don't know, here we are if we'd state academic, they would have let us alone but no, here we are trying to work with the communities and there's all kinds of personal relations and weakness in the administration, I will not name the obvious names but how broad this particular roadblock to our progress is, the president's(?) term was roadblock, it was obviously a roadblock (?), whether he knew about it before or only found out about it after the fact, I don't know, it has been, I'm sorry, in a sense, to have lived long enough to see it take such (?) shape and, it's partly my fault for been such a baby in the woods, or so stupidly naïve to trust people that, you know, because they are "University administration".

AD: Right.

MK: So, I'm not trying to play sorry for my self, I'm just trying to make this point about the fact that this was, the use(?) of the gift, you can call it that, of the legislature to the University for this purpose but yes we have managed to survive but that's only because of whatever mediocre ability I've had to fight the administration not to because of the administration's kindness, although, God only knows, they could have gotten riden us entirely if they wanted too, but, I think, they've tolerated us as a source of income and as a source of something they can, once in a while, whenever it suits their purpose, claim to have done themselves for the natives, which in fact is a certain kind of hypocrisy but its better if I don't turn this or lower this into something that is vile as it, as this aspect of this is....

AD: So, does this conclude this chapter of...

MK: Well, no, I was just talking about the budget. With the money, with the 200,000\$, we had there, I was able to hire top talent, although precious little of it, in that it had the typical academic certifications, in part because, I think, arrogantly believed that my own tip top certifications like Harvard, Ph.D., blah blah blah, gave it the respectability and credibility that it needed and with that I could hire whoever I want to do the job the best. Jeff Leer, who is definitely oddball character, who at the time didn't even had a BA but had superb talent, I think I talked about that or I should at some point, phenomenal talent working with Alaska native languages, he now is a

Ph.D., but that was because I had him do it and others, well Dick (?) and his wife Nora, Dick is himself a Ph.D., but Nora is a Tlingit scholar of the first rank and we had them on that first year, other's like...

AD: Ok, sorry to interrupt you, I have to change tape. **(Change Tape)**.

MK: Ok, people that we hired in that first year, that were new, Jeff Leer was his own story definitely, there are a lot of these other people, the Dauenhaurs(?), Nora and Dick, Katherine Peter(?), superb speaker of Gwich'in, who was literate in the old (?) writing system and who learned virtually in a day or so, how to read and write in the modern system, became a very productive writer and teacher of the language, Elisa Jones(?), native speaker of Koyukon from Koyakak(?) and superbly talented in her own language, who undertook, from the beginning among other things, the re-edition, or rather the development of the (?) manuscript dictionary into full fledged magnificent dictionary of Koyukon, who I don't know if she ever finished elementary school, maybe not, the point is these people didn't have the credentials, they merely had the superb, unique skills for which, you know, you don't get a Ph.D., they might(?) be fluent in Koyukon and life size interests in writing a dictionary for your own language. That kind of thing you can't get out of any Ph.D. degree mill(?), you can only get out of uniquely Alaskan situations and, God given, good fortune. So Elisa Jones(?), Katherine Peter(?), people like that and then Irene Reed(?) became short of, and always had been anyway, first and major supporter in this whole thing, she had not only the skills and the work and the devotion to Central Yup'ik but to the whole field and to the enterprise as such and she became rapidly, the mother hand, I never was much of a mother hand either, but saw to people needs and provided housing for people and so on, for example, and all kinds of support, so she was our, made ANLC a warm and hospitable and supportive place. All of this by the way, started to take shape in my one office, granted it was about four times the size of my present office but it was more crowded because I had about ten people working there in that first year. It was only the second year that we moved into what became slum(?) that was condemned by the University Fire Department, our physical housing, that was our second home but that first year was very exciting. That first year also we had, it was the year that Walter (?) was on campus as the first Director of native programs, who was a good old friend already that we knew from Tlingit work in the past, late '60s and whose wife Genovive (?), native speaker of Haida was there and that year we also worked on the Haida

orthography, those were exciting times with the Genovive (?) and Jeff Leer was at the time to work(?) with the Tlingit and working, also Sheldon Jackson(?) and Mont Edgecombe(?) at UAA, he became sort of our, for the first couple of years, southern Alaska representative and then joined us and he's been with us ever since in Fairbanks and Irene, the people that she, her whole coterie of people that she supported and worked with her on Central Yup'ik, the most important of which in the long offering to ANLC has been for sure Steve Jacobson, who's married to Anna Jacobson, a Yupik herself from back then and who has proven over the years to be our most productive grammar and dictionary writer and he has made the whole field of Yupik his life career. First, of course, Central Yup'ik, he started with, in the late '60s when Irene discovered him and put him to work for her Yup'ik projects as a lexicographer and branching out thence also to Siberian Yup'ik on ST. Lawrence Island and most recently and heroically for the past several years, selfishly as the editor of the Naookan(?) Yup'ik dictionary, the Yup'ik language, which is in fact a stepping stone, half way between Siberian Yup'ik and Central Alaskan Yup'ik. Those speakers in Alaska, until very recently, they were all in Russia and this was part of the Russian projects that I started on recording with Igor(?) and hadn't gotten really around to but that's sort of in a sense the climax of my Yup'ik or rather, yeah, Yup'ik work, I'm working with minority of the minority. Again I have to....**(BREAK 7:04)**

AD: We are back on track.

MK: Yeah, about a lot of this stuff Steve Jacobson has been around ever since then too and he could give you a supplementary or complementary view of this whole picture, Larry Caplan(?), I should mention, was hired in early '70s or thereabouts to work with Inupiaq and most importantly in 1974 or thereabouts, James., '73, James (?) left to finish his degree in Theology in Iowa and he was replaced by Etna McLein(?), who did a spectacular job and continues to do all kinds of spectacular jobs with her language and her community but for 1973 or thereabouts to about 1987 for about 14 years we had the inestimable privilege of having Elisa Jones(?) working with us, I mean Etna McLein(?) working with us as well, not only teaching the Yup'ik, Inupiaq like she as teaching the Yup'ik but also, and writing a dictionary of Inupiaq, Barrow Inupiaq, and also grammars for first year and second year as well. She was extremely productive, ideal example of what I call native intellects and values working ideally together with academic values enabling them to transcend cultural bounds of been strictly, you know, dead white Europeans,

men but in fact very alive Alaskan Inupiaq woman, who did an ideal job for us too, and it was lost her, sad when we lost Elisa, sad when we lost Irene and sad when we lost Kathy but in some ways a new generation started up, I'm not going to start evaluating that now, but partly as a result of my retirement, enabling, finally cannibalizing that in order to get some fresh people in here but some of them are second generation like Kathryn Peter's(?) daughter, Kathy (?) is a mainstay(?) now of our program that (?) second floor or the, what's called the third floor and Elisa Jones' (?) daughter is at times spent with us too and so that we are in some ways in our second generation, so there are nice things about it in spite of the misfortunes, as I see it, that we suffered in recent years. We've had our good times and I hope that there may still be some more ones, good times. This short of winds up at least with the establishment, although I didn't go very far into the accomplishments, of the Alaska Native Language Center and at the same time I have not yet taken up Eyak, which is, should remain, I think, a separate subject of its own and it's the one Alaskan language that I've become the most intimate with, you might say, and now it's kind of ironic that, although that was the language that was, and still is, I guess, the one that is statistically the most likely to be the first to become extinct, this ironic rate, the last speaker of the language now in her '80s is phoning me, rather frequently, out of concern for my health, so it's a question whether Eyak, not at all surprising that Eyak outlasts me, the way things are going. So this interrupts(?) our conversation and the fact that I'll be away for the next couple of or several weeks, who knows how many trying to stay off the grim reaper but I'm glad to have this chance to go at least this far with it and hope that I'll have the chance to get back and continue with it. There still remains to be done with the subsequent history of ANLC and the Eyak and what else out of...oh finish the Russian side parts with Igor, including the Naookan(?) as well as the Central Siberian Yup'ik, yeah...

AD: Ok...(END)