

Michael Krauss on Eyak

Interview with Andreas Droulias, May 6, 2004

AD: It should be on. Ok my name is Andreas Droulias, this is Thursday 6th of May 2004 and I'm here with Michael Krauss to speak about his work on the Eyak language.

MK: (Indistinct)...

AK: Can you say that again?

MK: Have you tested my voice and the microphone and is it working just fine now?

(TEST)

AD: Ok, we are back again, all right.

MK: And I've forgotten, you are not interviewing me now but rather you hope that I will say something about Eyak and my work on Eyak.

AD: I'm listening, yes, I'm not interviewing actually.

MK: Well, ok, but please do interrupt or interview me as questions may arise....

AD: Ok.

MK:as I don't trust either my intelligibility or, given my present circumstances my intelligence either on this. For me Eyak has been a major, central and crucial concern because of the nature of the language linguistically and genetically and because of its position socially as the most endangered language in Alaska, now with one remaining native speaker and as such the closest to extinction. But first an explanation of why I'm particularly concerned about that in connection with what I, in so far as I can remember, with what I've already said about my history and personal nature, which makes us, the centrality of Eyak so inevitable and obvious. For one thing, because of its very state of endangerment, actually there were six people still alive when I first came to Alaska, seven, who knew a lot or at least a bit of Eyak as native speakers but it was already then obviously, also by far, the most endangered and powerless and unrecognized, in a sense, of Alaska's native languages, hence the importance of that to me, given my priorities and instincts of concern for endangered, underdog languages. Not that Eyak had been totally undocumented, actually far from the case, but still it was obviously the most in need of work, both in terms of race against time and the relative importance of the language. Can we interrupt the tape for a second? **(Break, 4:26)**

AD: All right, we're back.

MK: That said, the reason is obvious and I'll make it more obvious now talking about the genealogy of Eyak. Eyak is, oh yeah, even before I had chosen to do Eyak, I should

explain that the first time I had a grant and time, none of this was ever supported from the University, I was, the summer after my first year of teaching French here and Linguistics, was in the summer of 1961 and that was largely devoted to two things, one a general survey of the state of Alaskan languages, the state of Eyak was obvious among those and number two, working with Athabascan, as I hope I did describe in the other tapes, starting with Minto, Nenana(?), Tanana Athabascan in that first summer of my own work...

AD: Well, you haven't actually, you have told that you've done work in Athabascan but you haven't actually gotten into that, what you did....

MK: What I did with Athabascan?

AD: Yeah....

MK Well, I fancy that that summer, that first summer, I actually did two things, I had a grant, I got a grant from NSF, which is the hero in this thing, not the University of Alaska and this was for surveying and general work on Alaska native languages. That first summer Eyak was certainly one of the top priorities and that work went to Robert Austerlitz(?), a major and well established linguist at Columbia University in New York and I, at the trivial stipend of 50\$ a week and expenses, he worked for six weeks with Eyak and confirmed its nature and importance but was not able himself to continue beyond that six weeks of fieldwork in 1961, during which I spent the summer, doing the work in Minto(?) and Nenana(?) Athabascan, which is very fundamental and I think made a major contribution to the understanding of Athabascan languages, in particular the historical phonology and relationship amongst them and of those, in turn, as a single family of thirty some languages to Eyak which is the second branch of the same family. So, Eyak was, it became obvious, was confirmed, was a coordinate branch with its, then six, one might say, speakers to the entire family of Athabascan languages, stretching from Alaska down to Apachean, with thirty some languages, so it was extremely obvious that its genetic position was crucial from a scientific point of view and, aside from the social point of view, which no one really to this day understands the importance of. That's a whole other monstrous subject. But purely scientific, from a point of view of historical linguistics, Eyak was confirmed as being coordinate to all of the Athabascan, with over 100,000 speakers of thirty odd languages. And since Austerlitz(?) was not in the position to continue that the following year, it became obvious that I should. I conferred with

Austerlitz(?) in the summer, as I did with all the other four, I think it was, people that I had working on that grant in the field, in Cordova, that first summer and met two of the Eyak speaker that he did most of his work with and was familiar with the nature and importance of the language and determined during that second year that I was, that my first priority was going to have to be to take over the Eyak project myself.

AD: Who were the other people working with you?

MK: There were two worthless grad students from the University of Washington both working on Athabascan languages, both Southern (?) Tanaina(?) at (?) and Athna at Copper Center(?) for which the results are zero and Erene Reed and Martha Teeluk, then students here, who did heroic work with Central Yup'ik and the Yup'ik or so called Aleut of Chugach, Prince William Sound and they together with Austerlitz(?) and myself constituted the first group of people working on Alaskan languages under my NSF grant.

AD: So, had Austerlitz(?) worked on Eyak before you?

MK: Well, he worked, yes, that first summer but of course had not worked with Eyak before that.

AD: Ok.

MK: There are, the work on Eyak has its own history, which I could go into but the...which deserves to be recounted, but the nature and importance of Eyak and its historical position, is such that we figure that for 3,000, maybe 3,500 years Eyak had an isolated independent development on its own, branching off in a different direction, linguistically, from Athabascan, from its congener(?) or relative proto-Athabascan. That split, as it were, is as though, the difference is such that it is as though Eyak had been isolated from Athabascan in its development, for 3,000 to 3,500 years of separate historical development. And where exactly it was historically or prehistorically rather is extremely difficult to understand, where there was room for it to be so isolated and develop that way for so long but once we know of it historically, it is a, not maritime, but land based shore oriented language, culture instead of chasing marine mammals, specially whales, out of the question, big time delicacy and prize for Eyak hunting was mountain goats, upland from where they are known to have lived on the shores of Alaska from Yakatat area(?) north to, almost, to the Copper River delta, not quite Prince William

Sound or Cordova it self, which was still (?), so called Aleut/Chugach Eskimo territory and historically or proto-historically, if that's word for recent prehistory, makes it quite obvious that Eyak was moved or chased northwestward within that Yakatat(?) to Cordova area by assimilation to rather than extermination by Tlingit's culture and it's clear that in the 18th century, say around 1800, there were still Eyak some at Yakatat(?) but it was heavily dominated, invaded and dominated by Tlingit expanding northwestward and the Eyak language probably became extinct in the, toward the middle or maybe earlier of the 18th century in Yakatat(?), 19th century sorry in Yakatat(?) but by, say 1900, the end of the 19th century the were still a few old people at the Yakataga(?), (?) River area that still remembered Eyak and in living memory in the, as late as the '70s, there were still a few old people originally from Yakataga(?), (?), who could remember not any Eyak themselves really but they could remember that the elders in their youth were bilingual and could speak Eyak, as well as Tlingit in the 1890s. Further up, at Controller(?) Bay, there was Eyak still but Tlingit was becoming dominant and by 1912 there's probably no longer regularly spoken but there were, was one man still alive Mike Seawalk(?) that in his 80s, in 1960, who could remember some Eyak. So I heard, with my own ears, Prince....sorry, Controller(?) Bay Eyak, which was then, almost, completely extinct by 1900, by, sorry, by 1960. And the next group, the Copper River delta, Alaganik(?) and Eyak, Alaganik(?) was destroyed or lost by the turn of the century but some of the people, they where essentially the same group as those at Eyak village, on the far side of Eyak lake from Cordova, at the throat of the lake there, the word *Igya'aq*, *Igya'aq*, I-G-Y-A'A-Q or (?) in other Yupik languages, means gullet(?) throat and it's a very common Yup'ik name for villages at the outlet of a lake, such for example as (?) on Iliamna and (?) in the Bristol Bay area, which are the same (?)(), which is typical and pointed evidence that the place names and the inhabitants of that area that Eyak now takes its name from, were in face Alutiaq Yupiks until, probably, certainly 18th or 19th century and that the Eyaks took over a bit of that territory, Copper River delta, Eyak lake area and ironically are known by what originally was an Aleut name, (?), which becomes (?) in Eyak. They, was a bit of a, as they were losing territory to the southeast, they gained that little bit of territory in northwest and are known for their last stand there. In the late 19th century, we have reports that Tlingit was very well known to many of the

people to Alaganiq(?) Eyak area but they continued, this was the only place left now where Eyak was still the dominant language and the last speaker of Eyak for example Lina (?) remembers that her father could speak Tlingit but she and her generation of the 20th century could not, because these last Eyaks in their last stand in what had, there the to, being Aleut territory and the Tlingits and the Aleuts were battling each other with Eyak being a trivial buffer, not even a buffer, in between, non entity in between, Eyak was probably a language which would have died faster, was already doomed to assimilation to and replacement by Tlingit language and the truncation of that process by the establishment of the white American canneries in the 1890s would stop that conflict with the Aleuts and the Tlingits and stopped at the last moment the complete assimilation of Eyak into Tlingit. It's a terrible irony actually that what ended up wiping out the Eyaks, actually, preserved it for an extra generation, would have been lost even sooner. So, that Eyak is an example of Alaska native language, which was going to disappear due to the expansion of other native languages, let's remember that (?) a Tlingit and Eyaks were a few hundred, like maybe in the end there, 1900 or 1880s before the canneries, still maybe 200, 250 people, probably never exceeded 500 in the area that they are known to have inhabited, compared to these huge maritime sea mammal hunting cultures like Tlingit and their huge wooden dug outs and the Alutiq(?) and their huge skin boats, two vastly different cultures converging over what was left of this tiny fragment of Eyak. So, there is a certain lesson there, which probably no whites in Alaska understand but which Annie Nelson Harry, being swift like(?), the Irishman, understood fully and there's even an Eyak expression that "Your turn will come too". So, unless Tlingits get too big for their breeches at Yakatat(?) for example, there's yet another bigger fish swallowing them up. Just as Eyak, at the bottom of the feeding...what do you call that? Sequence? What'd you call that?

AD: Feeding chain? I don't know.

MK: Huh?

AD: Feeding chain? The cycle, feeding cycle?

MK: There's a word for it, at the bottom of the feeding something...chain, short to speak, and Tlingits for a while there thought that they were at the top, little did they understand what's in store for them. Which I'm sure is now obvious, but Annie was the prophet and

the person with the swift like perspective, just as it's impossible to imagine *Gulliver's Travels* written by an Englishman or a Frenchman, the arrogance of which certainly precludes any such insight. The Irish, had to be an Irishman, could not, never had been a Tlingit or Aleut...

AD: At that time.

MK: understanding that, those first two stories in that book, which are the virtual equivalent of *Gulliver in Lilliput* and *Gulliver in Brobdingnag* and have all that same insights that they can't begin to tell you but that's fine because Annie does it so beautifully in that book. Anyway, that's short of a thumbnail sketch of Eyak history in its last stage. What Eyak might have been prehistorically, conceivable Eyak, was a language all the way down to, who knows where, where Tlingit left off before it expanded northwestward but there is no way to know and the contact between Eyak and Tlingit is not probably very ancient, their main relationships are loneward(?) that relatively recent and I don't think that there is much sign that Eyak was in contact with Tlingit for a 1,000 years or something but for a few hundred it certainly was. But whether it was all this time isolated from inland Athabascan is, can be unsaid, not by me, but by, ultimately, who knows. It's one of those mysteries. Anyway, that's short of an (?) that. The, now for the history of the study of Eyak before me and then by me. First Eyak words ever transcribed where, naturally, by the Cook expedition in 1778, in Prince William Sound, the vocabulary taken by the strip surgeon with them, Anderson, includes few phrases that are, although supposedly Alutiaq, are almost certainly Eyak and there are a few more Eyak words in the Strange and Walker vocabularies from Prince William Sound from 1780s, 1786 and a few words, generic place names, supposedly creek names or river names in the T(?) manuscript never published of a Russian, who made a trip on foot from Yakatat(?) to Copper River Delta in the company of Eyak speakers. And 1794, a census including some names that include some of Eyak origin of the people in Kaliak(?) River by the Russians S(?) and Ulikalof(?) and Portof. So, there was already a little bit of, never identified but Eyak, the language...Eyak language documentation, just incidental and accidental in the 18th century, of which we never would have been able of making any sense of. But on S(?)'s 1796 maps, which gives the main groups of Alaska native peoples according, more than anything else, by their language, Eyak, then known as

Uglalamiut(?), which is the Aleut word for them, for the people living to the left as you face the sea, in this case to their east, to the south east, that name in the form of U(?) was clearly shown in its own designated area, which closely corresponds to the area on my map. From 1796, Eyaks were known as one of the native groups, as a separate group. And 1805, accordingly, the extraordinary set of vocabularies taken together by Ritzanof(?), probably all during his stay in Sitka, with representatives of all these different groups...Hold the line, hold it for a second. **(BREAK 33:10)**

AD: We're back on.

MK: R(?) made, probably by working simultaneously with speakers of the six languages, over a thousand words in each of these languages in six columns, manuscript, which, thank God, we have, or manage to extract from the Soviet Union is, B(?) managed in 1964 to extract from the Soviet Union first, not extract but to get a copy of on microfilm, contained a thousand and some words of, among the other languages, Alutian from both Kodiak and Prince William Sound, Tanaina, Tlingit and Aleutian Aleut and Eyak, recognizing it as it had been since at least 1796 as one of the major Alaskan language divisions, rather cleverly done considering the limitations of the Russian alphabet strictly, very important document, probably from the Yakutat(?) end, showing that Eyak is pretty much same old dialect even to not have any deep dialectical differences, at least then left by 1805, so it confirms a lot and only been able to, with great deal of effort, re-elicit or identify 97% or so or 95% of the material in that and gives us a good historical background on Eyak from virtually the time these languages are first contacted and subsequent to that, more recently discovered by a 1990 trip that I made to Soviet archives in Leningrad, three, there the to, unknown but lesser vocabularies of Eyak, one from Yakutat(?) showing greatly increased Tlingit influence and two more that were published, although not properly identified, during Russian times or from Russian times so that there're deliberate, one, two R(?)'s, the three recently discovered, one is for V(?) circled(?) 1835, probably 1839 in Russian and six or five and six one published by Gibbs(?) from (?)'s, from a missionary, orthodox missionary working with (?), under (?) in the 1860s. So there were half a dozen, oh not counting R(?), which makes it seven, six others, besides R(?), vocabularies done in the Russian period and which were recognized or recognizable as Eyak or U(?) in the Russian literature. But, when the American took

over, all of this information was lost, basically unpublished, and even to Boas clearly, the identity of the Eyak language is very a clearly had discussed by (?) and his book about the Tlingits, which he published in German in 1885 that Boas somehow or other must have been asleep, when he inevitably saw it, and because Boas, who was a champion of rescuing documentation of languages, who were about to disappear, never said anything about Eyak or seem to be the list bit aware of it, otherwise he would have, no doubt, seen to it that somebody did something. So, it was left to, essentially, to Frederica De Laguna and her Danish American expedition, first one, in 1930, where they were in Cordova, outfitting for a archaeological fieldtrip to these, Prince William Sound, incidentally heard from a local game warden there, that these local Indians had their own lingo and it was different from Tlingit and it was different from Athna and was different from Aleut or so called Aleut and she made a note of that but it was not until 1933, the next expedition follow up, with herself and Danish anthropologist (?) and Norman Renolds(?), a graduate student then at the University of Washington, that did any work with Eyak language or culture, language and culture and published the famous, deservedly famous book, *Eyak Indians of Copper River Delta*, which came out in Copenhagen in 1938 in English, which at the end has an 800 or so word vocabulary, still, in less primitive phonetics than before and from which there is no mistaking as to what the nature of the Eyak language is genetically with regards to Athabaskan, which they themselves recognized, no they didn't but they certainly did its importance and its importance enough to spend, what nobody otherwise understands either, cause it's a, looks like a substantial book (?), the paper is kind of thing, print is kind of big, the margin is kind of big but it looks like a substantial book, be all and end all of Eyak ethnography, if not linguistics and not being that basically, because by the time they got there, there were only 38 Eyaks left in Cordova and, (?) any much elsewhere but that was the basis, that book was done heroically on the basis of no more than seventeen days of contact, with most definitely, centrally (?) Nelson, a man already quite ill, who had been sent out to, from Alaganiq(?), to Chimaua(?) Indian Boarding School in Oregon and therefore deculturated and so on, for 10 – 15 years, I forgot, it gives that information in the introduction there. Was an exceptional guy, he made it back unlike many others who were taken away to boarding school outside from Eyak area, he actually made it back but found people in such a

distressed situation, given his health and the contacts there, he committed suicide, tried to commit suicide there as a, we even have a newspaper blurb from somewhere, I forgot, which jeeringly points out that Indians aren't even capable of succeeding in killing themselves. So, there is a certain amount of terrible tragedy, that he, I think, contracted the last Eyak to Eyak marriage with Annie Nelson, then more or less an orphan, who was at the time twelve, I think, in 1918 and that was the very end of Eyak culture but (?) was very exceptional in taking a kind of academic, historical interest, giving his love to his people and loyalty to them and the presence of his young wife, who was also a very extraordinary woman, as you can see from the much later telling of the stories in both 1933 in English and then again in 1960s in Eyak to me. She was the main supplier of the stories or the interpreters of, she was the main supplier in (?), her husband was nothing than the interpreter, but that book was the major, was back then until recently, the major source of information on Eyak. Much later Freddy de Laguna in the '80s and the volume of the handbook of American Indian, North American Indian, HNAI for the northwest, writes much updated version, which includes a lot of what she learned from her work in Yakatat(?) subsequently about which she wrote a huge three volume masterpiece at the Smithsonian and the Smithsonian handbook contains her updated chapter on Eyak, which is extremely valuable both for (?), as a basic introduction to Eyak and as a updating, especially of the perspective of Eyak as having earlier been present as far as south as Yakatat(?) at least and the irony of ending been called Eyaks, after the Chucagh name of the last village, which they were discovered and hence got their name, is part of the typical irony.... **(BREAK)**

AD: Ok.

MK: Ok, yes, part of the typical irony in the tragic history of native North America.

Eyak, been incidentally one of the very last tribes "to be discovered" by which time they were already verging on extinction. So, the de Laguna documentation of Eyak, with some contribution by Norman Reynolds(?) as well, is the first meaningful American documentation of the language, as well as the, practically, the only ethnographic work ever done for the people. De Laguna dully sent copies of the vocabulary and typescript to Edward Sapir, top American linguist of his time, who had worked very extensively with Athabascan and he recognized the position and importance of Eyak and was involved in

efforts to get a follow up expedition to work on the language, including for example Mary Haas(?), a top American student of Sapir's but it was the Depressions and Mary was told that Cordova is not a fit place for a single woman, paternalistically enough, but also Cordova is not a fit place for much else either and ends up having the responsibility for the final extermination of Eyak really, with the canneries and the terrible conditions, economic destruction of Eyak food supply and social destruction of the people, exploitation with the Chinese workers, who were supplied with opium in the canneries, and the American workers, who were supplied with whiskey, provided everything destructive but no work for the Eyaks, took away their food and their social well being and, suppose it never occurred to them to wonder why each season when they came back there were fewer and fewer Eyaks but in living memory, let's say by 1905 or thereabouts, when Annie was born, people could remember maybe there were 50 Eyaks, by 1938, 1933 there were 30 some and by 1960 there were, in terms of speakers, seven and I should name them all. Mini Stevens (?), wife now widow of Scars (?) Stevens, mother of the last two speakers of the language, Sophie (?) and Mary Smith Jones(?), the latter of whom is still alive and now the only Eyak speaker. She died in March of 1961 before anybody got there, but I left out two very important subsequent people working on Eyak since 1933. 1940, John (?) Harrington(?), a very difficult and notorious character and no doubt transcriber of the last gasps of more languages in North America from the Smithsonian institution, was in Yakatat(?) and got bilingual responses from George Johnson(?), then of Yakatat, originally of Alaganig Katala(?) area, in Yakatat in both Eyak and Tlingit. To the tune of about 400 words, I would guess, in his voluminous notes, which are pitifully little value in certain ways, he was a good phonetician but the brain attached to the ear is, one may wonder and there is not a major contribution to the documentation of Eyak in some ways but everything counts and I certainly took great pains to get copies of all this material, of course, in so far as I was able. And then in 1952, Lee Van (?), a superb linguist was send by the Linguistic Society people to work with Eyak and he worked with Scar Stevens(?) and Minnie Stevens(?), in particular, in 1951 and in Yakatat(?) with George Johnson(?), especially, and got several notebooks full of rather valuable documentation, relatively well transcribed, the first, well Harrington's as well was transcribed too, but the first really voluminous or significant

corpus but still not enough to do (?) grammar or vocabulary, I mean an extensive vocabulary of the language. We would surely know quite well how much we had missed, from had we stopped at 1952 and Lee Van (?) was most generous with me in allowing zeroxes of his field notes as well, as was then Austerlitz(?) in 1961, so I had extensive discussions and copies of all of their field notes. So that's quite an American dynasty then too, Frederica de Laguna, John (?) Harrington(?), Lee Van (?) and Robert Austerlitz(?) having worked with the language before me but none of them, really protractedly or extensively but each with one field trip of a few weeks. And the last two being especially, important, Austerlitz(?) got, of course not anymore with the oldest generation, which died out with Minnie Stevens(?) in 1961, spring before the summer after he's got there, but three major modern speakers or actually four. He worked a bit with George Johnson(?), got a text from him and worked, not that extensively, with Annie Nelson Harry(?) but most of all with Marry Smith Jones(?) and with Lina Naktan Sasqa(?) in Cordova that summer, for, again, for about six weeks. Lina Naktan Sasqa(?) or Lina Sasqa Naktan(?) was divorced from the Aleut Ponty Naktan(?) and hadn't spoke Eyak too much during her marriage but after her divorce from him and moving back to Cordova, she spent a lot of time with Minnie talking Eyak and "brushed up" or very much revived her Eyak so that, in some ways, she became both dramatically and lexically the most important single source. Marie and her sister Sophie were then the youngest speakers. Sophie was in no condition at the time, in the 60s, to work with, Marie not much better either but she is survived the longest and outsurvived even, she would proudly and very justifiably say survived her alcoholism too and there is a lot to be thankful for there now. But at the time Lina Naktan(?), in one way, and Annie Nelson Harry(?), in another way, were the crucial contributors to the documentation of their own language. Incidental, on the side or less important were Mike Seawalk(?), then 80 something, mostly blind and mostly deaf, living in Cordova hospital from Katala(?), the Bering River region, gee, did I forget that? Yeah, I left that out, Bering River in Controller Bay was between Kaliak(?) and, oh I think I did mention it, and the Alaganiq(?) Eyak Copper River Delta area, was such that at the turn of the century although Eyak was dominant, Tlingit was dominant, still Mike Seawalk(?) in 1960, I did mention, could remember some words of Eyak. Including one, pathetically, when I would

ask him something, he said something, he said this phrase “(?)” and I never heard that last words, was “(?)” and I took it to Lina and she said “Oh yeah, I remember that word. It means my tongue is stuck!”. In other words, in protesting to me that he was tongue tied for Eyak, he came up with a word that I, otherwise, never would have gotten, for which there is an interesting Athabascan cognate. Such are the ironies of these things, so Seawalk(?) had some conservative, Tlingit induced conservatisms in his Eyak pronunciation and so, what we have from him is important, if only a few hundred words and George Johnson(?), again a few hundred words from him at Yakatat(?) and also from Sophie (?) Murrie’s older sister, who died in the early ‘80s, with whom I did work in the early ‘80s and latter ‘70s, somewhat more extensively, who knew aspects of Eyak that others didn’t, and who had, by that time also, had survived her alcoholism and was a fine person to work with by then. So, I did work with everyone left, had any memory of Eyak language in my time and those are six people again and in terms of their importance, Lina Naktan, Lina Sasqa Naktan(?), Annie Nelson Harry(?), Marrie Smith Jones(?), George Johnson(?), Sophie B(?) and Mike Seawalk(?), in something like reverse chronological age. By this six different people, plus six Russian sources for late 18th century, very incidental sources, seven Russian 19th century vocabularies and Frederica de Laguna and Norman Renolds(?), John (?) Harington(?), Lee Van (?), in American it’s Van (?) Lee and Robert Austerlitz(?) before myself, which is quite a history, I stopped counting but that’s a significant number of sources.

AD: But, you did say that there were seven native speakers?

MK: Yes, the seventh died months before Austerlitz(?) got to Cordova in 1961. But I would say that in a certain sense, for practical purposes, shall we say, the last person, the last Eyak, spontaneous Eyak, normal, regular conversations took place between Minnie Stevens(?) and Lina Naktan(?) and Minnie Stevens(?) and her two daughters, especially Marrie(?). Sophie was older grown and married away. But there had been no regular conversations held in Eyak until she, passed 1961, everything else was memory. And I didn’t not get, given those circumstances and the fact that I could only get away for short periods of time in the summers and a few other things, as my University duties never included any support, even tolerance, for Eyak, unless I had my own money and was not being paid by the University.

AD: How come then the National Science Foundation gave this grant?

MK: National Science Foundation, thank you for asking that question, is a hero in my book not just because it supported me but because it never lost track, even during the days the Chomsky thrills and the sentence to almost exclusive, almost exclusive, priority and prestige within linguistics to theoretical concerns, (?) Chomsky, that the fact that Native American languages were dying, left and right, and that documentation of such languages was not even considered worthy of linguistics, to be called linguistics, but merely maybe some kind of drudgery or indescribably humble worthless activity, NSF never lost track of the importance of this and always supported the documentation of Native American languages or of any languages but especially Native American languages, so it was relatively easy, shall we say, for me to get support from them. The University, that's a whole different story, but with regard to NSF I have to say this. That I remember, probably, in 1963, writing a proposal to them, including the statement that there are very few speakers left, only five or something and the youngest of whom, referring to Marrie, is already quite elderly. And I wrote this, when I was still in my twenties and Marrie, already quite elderly, was in her forties. But she looked that way to me, it was sincere, and she had terrible hacking cough from constant smoking all the time, had no idea whether she would be alive for the next summer or not and she was distinctly the youngest. But she held and I say this with some amusement, and it goes, it's even worse than that with my latest health problems, life threatening illness and hospitalization, Marrie still there, is the one calling me, concerned about my health and survival. There she is, already quite elderly and I was worried about her survival, forty some years ago. Now she's worried about mine. She is still there and worried about mine. God, bless her.

AD: So, because I'm interested, going back to National Science Foundation, where there any, you said they didn't lose track, but where there any, like, particular individuals that were interested...?

MK: No, there was a general linguistics program policy to take sensible priority for what was going on. In the '80s, I was on their panel for evaluation of linguistic proposals and that time there were six member at their panel and my (?) specialty, other were in neuro linguistics, social linguistic, blah, blah, theoretical linguistics and so on, I was the only

one on the panel with responsibility for descriptive, documentary and historical linguistics...one out of six. But, I was heeded even during those days, or, at least, they saw fit to include me in their top evaluation panel, was hell of a lot of work, but they had never lost track of what had become so unfashionable in linguistics, as this mere documentation of endangered languages. So they must be given due credit for their heroic and exceptional stand in this regard and that's what kept things going, especially during the 1960s before the state of Alaska stepped in and entrusted the University with funds to do this work instead. But during the '60s it came exclusively from the National Science Foundation and somewhat from the National (?) for Humanities as well but never from the University and the University has always (?) off with the state, gave it, excuse my repeated emphasis on this very negative matter. Again, short of privately, there was an article, the subject is becoming very fashionable now, in part also because of some of the things that I called attention too in the early '90s and there was an article, this often happens nowadays, on endangered languages, specifically about (?) or it used to be Alakaluf(?), one of the Patagonian languages about to become extinct in Chile. And there's a group of Chileans, who are working to do what they can for (?). And it's mainly about that and it's called, the activity is called "Language Reclamation", and it does add incidentally that in North America there are only three Universities in North America that do this kind of work; MIT, University of Arizona and University of Alaska. Well, that's, in spite of the University of Alaska, at MIT it was because of Ken Hale(?) exclusively and he's dead now so you can guess how much MIT is doing and on top of that I am assured by someone at the University of Arizona that this activity is completely ceased there too, so there's a comforting finale or consistency to who gets credit for this kind of work, it's typical of the media, news media...

AD: They don't recognize individuals...

MK: ...and the facts or accuracy of things. So, given my feelings about that, I keep returning to this sad issue. Anyway, so then...given pretty much the history of Eyak with myself in perspective, in a sense, but I worked all I could and as much as I could within the limited freedom that I had to do this with the foundation of the Alaska Native Language Center. Then a huge part of my work was not only remain teaching on campus but also running the center, especially fighting the administration to keep the center alive,

they never made it easy, only made it hard, so that ate up huge amounts of my time and effort, which could, otherwise, had been used more productively on something like Eyak and also the diminishing returns that during the '60s while supported by NSF, I had managed to document the, I would say relatively thoroughly, relatively thoroughly, this language. Can we stop for a second?

AD: Ok, we are back.

MK: I've always taken great care to do, say, two things. Make sure that everything is verified as much as possible, used of previous work, hence the preoccupation with the history of the study of Eyak on part, cause I never fancied, I was the first person to have worked with the language and, due for posterity wish it to be known that, don't think people should start suspecting if they see something in some previous work that they don't see in mine, in the same form, that means I missed it or didn't pay attention to it, quite the contrary. So, I, in a sense, both mean to have in the archives a complete as possible of all previous documentation of Eyak, on the one hand, and at the same time to say that mine, I wont use the word supersedes all the rest, but takes into as much as possible, full account of all previous work. That's one priority and another is, much more difficult to evaluate, is to, in documentation, to get down in an explanatory way, as much as possible, as much as possible of what is left in living memory of the language in the field. And certainly worked with everyone that could be worked with, I mean, with everyone that there was and they all were very cooperative, every single one. There's not one of those six people, who, given decent physical condition, did not work with me as well as they possible could. And, maybe I could give myself some credit for that, but I certainly mean to give them credit for understanding mistakes and without exception they were all very generous and cooperative and worked as well as they could. The, how much of what is left in their memories, now alone in Marrie(?)'s, is a whole other question but I feel that what has been resurrected from oblivion has to be well into the ninety something percent of the lexicon that they remember and pretty much likewise, least to the rest of my ability or sense, likewise grammar, although there is no end to either one. Surely, some more could be done but I daresay that I think that we have a pretty good, very good documentation of what has been left of Eyak in, both in terms a) of accuracy and transcription, you know observational adequacy (?) and b) in terms of quantity and I hope

or I daresay, sensibility of having investigated all possible or plausible areas of lexicon or of grammar, so I've done insightfully and I've been something of a bug about statistics in this regard too and it would be adventure(?) to say that we're coming pretty close to a record in the size of corpus, not sheer size, but percentage of what has been left in living memory of a language down to its very last speakers and very last historic habitation and so on. Austerlitz(?) helped a great deal with, incidentally, they key part of what he did, was going carefully over, as much as he could, of the biota, the flora and fauna of the Eyak area with the speakers, so a number of plant names and medicinal uses and bird names, he tried especially hard to work with. That was his main central theme in the limited work that he was able to do, which helped a certain amount, (?) helped a lot in those areas, so it's, undoubtedly there is more, there will never be an end to any of it until the last speaker dies, in which case the corpus is closed. But the size of the corpus, depends on the count(?) lexicon but I would say is probably is 7,000 items or something like that. In the present dictionary is, which includes all the texts and so on, is about as much as anybody has probably ever gotten from a language that is reduced to such a small scale. And I feel fairly, I'm sure that I would be cursed not to be for many shortcomings even in the Eyak work but it's the best work I've done and it is the, I could be cursed or curse my self for a lot more had I not done it. And I also have to say this, that the documentation is especially fortunate in, not only having all the older work, which was productive, but also having the two personalities especially of Lina Naktan, Sasqa Nakta(?) and Annie Nelson Harry(?), as the polar opposite and complementary to each other in terms of discipline versus creativity. Annie was extremely creative and imaginative and eloquent and fluent, she was the last person who could probably speak Eyak and enjoy speaking Eyak more than any other language and the only person with whom I ever got so that we conversed at all regularly in Eyak. It was very difficult for me to develop any fluency, given the fact that everyone of those people spoke English or Tlingit better than Eyak or more readily than Eyak, except for Annie and she loved to speak the language just for fun and spoke to me as short of to the ages and those stories, I can talk a lot more about those but her creativity was the exact compliment to Lina's great insistence in particularity about getting things right and accurate and so on and I would often say or she would often say "Well, can you say this in Eyak?", I came to

something that Annie had said or something and she would say “Well, Annie could but I wouldn’t” and Annie was, thank God, the, I know it isn’t(?) quite the complete but would have been, could be called the James Joyce(?) or something of Eyak, I would not say that, certainly, in a text, not to be looked like (?) Wake but she was certainly the creative and imaginative or not imaginative or not imaginative, creative speaker of the language and artist with it and Lina was absolutely inexhaustible patience and insistence on authenticity or correctness and “Don’t you put that down” or “Put a question mark after that, because I’m not absolutely sure” and so on and no such qualms would cross Annie’s mind, besides it was much more difficult to work with her because she was quite deaf by the time I got to work with her and you couldn’t question her about, “did you say this” or “did you say that?” but you could check over with Lina and you would get an answer for sure. She was extremely helpful in deciphering a lot of the texts. I mean I learned to do that from her accuracy, you know, over every syllable be it a stutter or so on, “Oh that’s a stutter” or “That’s a part of a word and she was going to say this but changed her mind and said that” and so on. So, this stuff was done very meticulously with Lina, including making sure that I was getting the right stuff and not any bogus or inaccurate stuff. And she had the patience of job(?), when it came to going through all the verbs and making sure and all the nouns, she would, what noun class they belong to, Eyak is very rich in classification of nouns, so you can get a given word that, let’s say medicine, if it’s liquid medicine has to be treated one way in the grammar, if it’s pill has to be treated in another way and so on, or a dollar bill versus a quarter, because the nouns for 25 cents, given their shape and the floppy dollar bill are very different things when you describe the nouns. Or how things how can be displaced or moved depending whether your egg is fresh or scrambled or hard boiled. So this noun classification for the nouns, which is a singe(?) compared to the verbs, which are exquisitely complex and which Annie, I mean Lina, not Annie, would patiently go over making sure I get everything just right and she was very bright about it too, she would, you know, in her mind kept track of things in a way that she could even tell me “Well you ought to be able to figure that out, because of these two forms”, you know, which we before gotten and so on and I had to protest “Well, maybe this one is irregular or something” but she is wonderful, insightful about the grammar and so on and Annie was the creative one, so working between he two of

them, literally between, going back and forth between Cordova and Yakatat(?) and working between the two of them, it was a perfect privilege to get a perspective on Eyak, nothing, I've never had the like of those two extremes with any other language in my carrier. So, the Eyak corpus is very fortunate, especially because of the contrast between those two personalities. I would say a fairly well rounded picture of Eyak with the probable exception of casual conversation, which was not to be readily had, except under artificial conditions. Including with Annie and me, not only because of my limited ability but also of her limited hearing, you couldn't just chat and so on, so it was not possible to reconstruct, you know, family life or something conversation in Eyak. Although, I did try, you know, for getting baby terms and all kinds of colloquial things, still we have to be aware that we are lucky we got what we did and it's relatively well documented in terms of the dictionary or the materials for the dictionary and in terms of texts, it's pathetically little in a way, almost all of it from Marrie(?), I mean from Annie but, thank God, it's from Annie and it's probably only about 7-8 hours of tape altogether but when it comes to elicitation, probably, 25-30,000 elicitation designed maximally to cover the language. So, anyway, you know, we're, I often like to compare that with, let's say, with the kind of documentation we have of Hebrew and although, the corpus of texts is only about the extent of the book of Genesis or something which is a small part of the classical Hebrew corpus, whether(?) we had half a decent number one, a documentation of Hebrew of the way it was pronounced and the way the phonology worked, a) and b) the grammar and c), I don't know, how many different birds are mentioned in the Bible or how many different plants but probably half of them are not identified at all and we can't even guess what they were, whereas, we may or may not half the word for earlobe or pupil of eye or (?) wrist or something from classical Hebrew, merely by chance, would we, cause there was never any systematic lexicon coverage of classical Hebrew, just what happens to get mentioned in the Bible and with Eyak we've got far better record of the language in that sense.

AD: All right, let me change tape here.

MK: Which was enough by the way to be the basis of the revival of the language. **(TAPE CHANGE)**

AD: Ok, we are back on yes.

MK: Ok, I'm back on, you can tell? Now, let's look at the chronology of things. I guess we have to consider ourselves exceedingly lucky, (?) the tragedy and perhaps in part of the tragedy of what happened in Cordova. The social conditions at the turn of the century, with the canneries, in particular, and the nature of the town, is, I think, is one of the highest alcohol consumption towns even in Alaska, which is saying a lot, that the exploitation or the destruction of the Eyak people and the assimilation to Tlingit, all those two things, timed out and left such as the speakers that I was able to work with, is exceedingly fortunate and I hope that posterity will not judge me too harshly in having missed too much. It would have been helpful if I had been able, especially in the '60s when there was a lot of, relative a lot of resource too, in terms of Eyak speakers and memory, I could have spent more time with it, instead of having to fulfill University priorities but even with all of that, just that I happened to be here and had the time that I did with what was left of Eyak then, were, I feel, very privileged myself to be the one to get to do it and I kind of wish that, you know, others were working on it too and others had made some contributions, like particular Jeff Leer(?), but who continually keeps asking questions about Eyak that no (?) can be answered or wishing that we had back in the '60s the kind of documentation of related languages in Athabascan and most especially, Copper River Athabascan but any other Alaskan Athabascan because I certainly did also do my job in trying to elicit Eyak cognates of Athabascan lists. I did that with what was available in 1960s, with some productivity. Athabascan languages can generally find 60% maybe cognates for what's in any other Athabascan language, in any given Athabascan language, so you take Navajo and Athna Copper(?), for example and you come up with maybe 60% cognates. Still, that's not so bad, naturally, if you take you know, closely related dialects, you get in the 90%.

AD: But, what is "cognates"?

MK: Words from the same source, proto source. So, for example, Greek *πτέρο* and so on, English *feather* or Greek *πάτερ*, what is it?

AD: *Πατέρας*.

MK: *Father*.

AD: *Father*, yeah.

MK: *Πάτερ*, English *father* the same rules and Greek *πέντε*, five, English *five*, those are cognates ok? But in the case of Athabascan languages, we can find maybe about 60%

cognates. So, if you had a Navajo word list and you worked off that to get what words are there in Athna, you might get 2/3 of the Athna vocabulary, that way. But with Eyak it jumps down to 30%, across the board. So, that Eyak is no closer to Athna than it is to Navajo, there're all down in the 30%. So, maybe 1/3 but, if we had the Athna dictionary we have now, back in the 1960s, it's possible that I would have listed a dozen or dozens Eyak words that otherwise would never been jogged out of memory, out of any living memory, but I, still certainly did go over the available stem lists and word lists of, that were available for Athabascan in the '60s, it can't compare with what we've got now, but, and we've gotten, you know, some more, maybe 10% more or something like that but I have a feeling that we are well up in the 90s or into the 90s percents of what had been left in living memory as of the 1960s, when I did the greater part of that work or most of the work. So, I mean that's a, you know, look back, added(?). I've some other statistics, for example, when I made a complete, what's the word, you have it for the Bible, list of all the words in the Bible and all of their occurrence, what do you call that concordance, concordance. I made a complete concordance of the Eyak texts that we have or that we had of as about 1969 and kept track of how many news words appeared per page and, of course, the first page was almost all new words and a hundred page still several, but by the five hundreds page, maybe you'll only run across a new word every ten pages. And I put together for a number of points along those ten pages, how much new per page, produces a curve, which flattens out at the top, and the name of that kind of curve is a what? I forget the name of it. If you had 1/4 to a half, 1/8 to that/ 1/16 to that, 1/32 to that you'll never reach until you've gone an infinite number of times, 1. And that's the hmmm of that curve, I forgot the word. SYM something, whatever.

AD: I don't have a clue of that, not even in Greek.

MK: Well, it's a mathematical term for a kind of curve, which if you carry it out to infinity it will end up to a certain number.

AD: Right.

MK: What the hell is that kind of curve called? Anyway, I then took that to a guy with computers, from the 1960s and he found out that the, that key number from that curve, if I had a million pages of text at the rate they were coming, that I would have found within them, 85 billion pages of text or something, that I would end up with the number 886.2 or

something like that of different stems but in fact I already had 1100 stems because I had been very systematically and deliberately asking what do you call this side of your nose and the bridge of your nose and the thing between your nostrils and the thing under between your nostrils and under your lip and so on and in a very detailed possible way, to get vocabulary and in terms of stems, I already had far more than the end point of that curve because I had not just sat around waiting for somebody to speak the word but asking for it. So, that means, little hints of this kind and that, I feel that Eyak is fairly well documented. There's to be said also for, it's true we don't have much text in the language and it's almost often Annie Nelson Harry(?) and it's almost all her kind of traditional text, albeit unmercifully innovative, in certain very dramatic ways that are directly comparable with what we had(?), albeit, in (?)'s English translation from 1933, in the 1938 book. Often we have the very same stories told so differently because of her maturity and because, may not have gotten much round to this in the introduction to the book, because of the fact that she is not only more mature, instead of her late 20s in 1930s, '33 but in her 60s in 1960s, she not only the maturity of her perspective but from her particular history, having witnessed the demise of her own people and its virtually total disappearance that she was telling me these stories, to me as short of totally out of their normal folkloristic context as well as having gone to this dramatic, historically dramatic life. And all of this control, which keep traditional storytellers to a standard, certain standard of discipline and following the story, she was utterly liberated, released from all those bonds of tradition, being the last one who knew the stories or could tell them in any way, telling them to me representative of a totally different culture of the future, in other words telling them not to her own people, but telling them on behalf of her people to the rest of the world, to the ages and not to potential critics, you know, elders, who would shake their heads with the way she was telling things, which they certainly would be doing as we can directly see in some of the stories, by the way it was told in 1933 and the way it was told in 1965. The difference is extremely dramatic and particularly in the departures she takes from the original. The two stories that I keep coming back to, the very first two on greatness and smallness, or whatever you wanna call it, the relatively of everything and if, you know, the Eyaks think the Tlingits are big or the Tlingits think they're big compared to the Eyaks, imagine what the Anlgo invasion

thought of Tlingit or dealt with it in(?) dispatch, so the Tlingit's turn was coming too. And you could see this, implicit together in two separate events, two separate occasions. One is the story of, that is based on traditional historic accounts of conflict with the so called Aleuts and, that is the Chugach and, wait, what am I, no, excuse me I'm not but one comes from probably that, the Aleuts and it's the story of the hunter, who is out hunting bears and looks down and by this puddle notices very tiny people, probably 6 inches or so tall, just about the same size as Swift's(?) Lilliputians who were very busily hauling ashore mouse hindquarter and there where two mice. One was a black bear for them, the other was a brown bear for them. And she takes delight in using the word (?) or (?), I've forgotten which, but she takes delight in that, it means mouse thigh and she uses it just as a common word or mouse rack, I've forgotten which but here they were wrestling with this mouse thigh and it took four of them or something to pull it ashore and all that, was quite a price and women are there and he bemusedly picks up one of them and the poor little fellow realizes, you know, he's being picked up in the air by this monster man mountain or whatever and bribes him with his strawberry leaf weapons to let him go and he scoots back to his own people and tells them, "Quick we got to get away from this, this monster is after us", but the monster that is the hunter who is too busy hunting bear, paid them no heed and just, you know, left the puddle and went on, cause he was busy doing something of significance like hunting bears and that's story number one. And then story number two is, interestingly enough, the distortion of likewise, because in the Eskimo original in the 1933 version of that first story, a lot of it has to do with the personalities of each of one of these, of the little people and their internal politics and the big enders and the little enders or whatever, and treats them as creatures of consequence, which they certainly were in the folklore, that you have to be nice to these spirits, represented by these lake dwarves, or you'll have but luck hunting and so on. So it was an important art of the culture. But here she treats it just as like Swift treats the Lilliputians. But the very next story, the next story in the book, is about the rat kin, the giant rat, which reputedly had its home in some monster cliff, somewhere between Yakatat(?) and Cordova and there is this family traveling along by canoe between the two places and the wife stupidly and carelessly says "Gee, it would be interesting to see that rat" and the husband says "Shut up! My God, it can come out any

time” and sure enough this monster rat comes out from its hole, just like an opening(?) at the top, on the top of the cliff and an opening at the bottom of the water and naturally upsets the canoe and, I think the wife is lost, drowned and the guy manages to save himself by clinging to the fur of this monster rat, its hair was as long as the hair of a black bear skin. And he goes with it to its cave or hangs on to it actually, he goes back to its cave and sort of keeps him there as a pet and cooks food for him by sitting on the food and this and that but his plotting ways of getting out of there and he discovers a root hanging from the ceiling and manages somehow to climb up, climb up through that hole and escape back to his own people. And they all want to get his rat and they go over to the top of the hole, hole at the top and dump some ravens down the hole, which agitates the rat, so it sticks, it flails its tail around and sticks, its tail goes up through the hole, and they manage heroically to chop off the end of the tail and the poor giant rat evidently must bleed to death. There was no way that they could possibly have hauled it ashore except that a big tide came and washed it ashore, like with a whale, and with that they managed to butcher this rat and take its skin. And inside the rat’s stomach are the bones of so many important chiefs and men that made meals for it and stayed(?) but they heroically managed to slaughter the rat and to get its skin and the skin of this rat, although it’s true that the hair was falling off in places and so on, was a great price, so much so that the reputation of this reached far and wide in foreign tribes from as far away as this, “it’s just like people in Juneau, they like us but they are different, you know, but they are, just like people in Juneau, they came to make war on people just to get this rat skin, what the hell good is the rat skin, well they made war about it”. And the end of the story, instead of the traditional is, I think she deliberately played with Eyak grammar, which is not rich in differentiating one third person from another, so “they”, the people who rested the rat skin from them or from whom the rat skin had been rested or something, killed them, they slaughtered them, killed them all off and there where none left, but you can’t tell from the grammar, which side slaughtered which side and I think she’s been quite deliberate about this because it obviously doesn’t matter just like whether the Russians got us first with the bombs or with got them with a buzzer beam, nobody left anyhow, and I mean that’s the kind of thing that was surely on her mind, you know, people going to war over a rat skin, for, what the Hell, for what reason? So, they slaughter them all and

there were none left, of whom it doesn't matter, and she tells this thing with a kind of smirk or laugh at the end and she has every right to laugh at that, because of the, you know, philosophical triumph she has actually accomplished in the way that she has completely, not even say distorted but completely revised the meaning of these stories to a much even deeper philosophical perspective and truth than, it was the level of Swift because she is an Eyak and so that's just the first two and there are many others that are, couple several paired like that, I'm think I'm going to let....**(BREAK)**

AD: So, what you are saying now, so she is using the story....

MK: Yeah she is just using these stories and not telling them but she is using them as raw material for a still higher art that transcends anything traditional because nothing traditional is left. So, she is soaring into the ages and no bond, terrestrial bonds left.

AD: Exactly what you like in people, I think.

MK: Yeah, so, she is the spirit of a people that is, thank God, is not lost in every respect and I feel very lucky to have gotten the privilege to know someone like that and play the role that I can still play.

AD: Right. So, you think this concludes our discussion of Eyak?

MK: Well, there is all kinds of linguistics I could go into and so on. It's fascinating how Eyak explains, so much of the particular nature of Athabascan in a sense that it's as though, going back to the beginning of this little discussion that there was a language known as proto-Athabascan – Eyak, which is ancestral to both Athabascan and Eyak and Eyak branched off, now represented by one person all together, and Athabascan branched off, now represented by 30 languages and over 100,000 speakers of them, mostly Navajo, but it's as though you had something happened in a room with two windows on opposite sides of the room and you had a hundred people looking in one window and telling you together a story that you can reconstruct from the one hundred people looking in that one window, you can reconstruct some kind of truth from that and then you got one person, looking in the window at the opposite side and telling you what happened, and that one person's testimony, I mean if you were a jury as to what happened in that room, should you not give as much attention to that one person, as you do to the hundred looking in the other window. As to, you know, who is holding a knife, in which direction and which way the moves(?), the place and so on that Eyak tells you as much, in its own way, as all the Athabascan languages put together. In certain other ways it tells you even more because Eyak is extremely conservative in the way it allows you to put sounds including

sequences of consonants, consonant cluster together. So let's say, the Navajo verb(?) *tickle* is (?) and Eyak is (?) or rather (?) but it can be (?) or (?), depending whether you tickle in one place or tickle repeatedly, in one place or tickle around here and there and so on and other things can be (?), sorry (?), if you do it customarily and so on. Whereas in Navajo it's either (?) maybe (?) alternating with (?) in various unpredictable and difficult ways but the Eyak explains because it allows....(FLIP SIDE)

AD: Ok, we are back.

MK: Because Eyak allows sequences of consonants, consonant clusters without restriction, which in Athabascan is streamlined, pronunciation wise, into complex patterns that don't have any obvious explanation, unless you take Eyak into account. So, the Eyak explains a lot of the earlier stages of Athabascan in some respects, just to take, you know, that one little example, there is many other ways in which Eyak is much more conservative, sound wise that way, it allows for thorny sequences of consonants, whereas Athabascan requires things to be relatively streamlined, or extremely streamlined in some cases, like losing all the final consonants altogether, so *tickle* might come out as (?) or something with nothing at the end and Eyak allows for three or four or five consonants strung together. So, it may seem like Eyak is harder to pronounce, but it explains then the streamline Athabascan, if that's intelligible and provides a whole different look at the origin of Athabascan from a different angle, quite literally, as explained from the window analogy. So, it's historically important that way and I would say that, although it might appeal only to a linguist or a weirdo specialist like my self, I beg to disagree that in fact I've seldom met any thoughtful Alaskan natives, who don't readily understand why Eyak is important, even for that and important to every Athabascan, as their only cousin, when they have got brothers and sisters (?) that they can see the importance of it and they can see also the social importance because, ok there is a parade of languages that are going to disappear, maybe all Alaskan languages and Eyak is merely number one and who's next, I mean, who's the next volunteer and that issue of who is going to be next, who wants to be next, does anyone wanna be next, is important to all native Alaskans and, I daresay, important to Alaskans too because it's, I mean, (?), you know Mc Donalds or Tio Taco are not very different from the ones in Arizona but languages are. And the, what is uniquely Alaskan is, there's been tragically, not neglected so much as actually

suppressed, continuingly in the school, no child left behind, everyone ends up same place, no time for Eyak, no time for diversity, no time for still knowing how to live in St. Lawrence Island, not when you got to learn the right basketball cheers in English and all heading in the same place. So, Eyak will be the first of the children not left behind and all the rest to follow and in what order and what does Alaska care. So, there's a certain lesson in Eyak, what we losing, and I'll give you an example, not only the nature of the Eyak language but also the Eyak's take on the human condition, different per force from anybody else's, we're just losing another voice and I like to hope at least that what I've done maybe in some ways can palliate to compensate for that. And hope that all the rest soon to follow, can be maybe exempted from the parade in some way or other, if Alaska Native Language Center is allowed to survive, there is nobody else doing it, that's for damn sure.

AD: Right.

MK: Which can bring me to the subject of the relationship if any between Alaska Native Language Center and the Anthropology Department. **(CONTINUED 6:55)**