

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)**

AD: Do you want speak that since you came here, in which case you would have to speak about Ivar Skarland.

MK: Well, Ivar Skarland is a main culprit in the whole thing. He was a nice man and a clever guy and always nice to me in certain ways, he was respectful but it was always clear that he had no interest or expertise in the field of language and his concept of the Anthro Department did not include language but primarily, from the heritage of the early days, archaeology and physical anthropology. So he looked even at living specimens of Alaska natives as skeletons, even if they were still walking around. And it is said that he could, didn't even need the scalpers(?) or something but just by the look of the cephalic(?), cephalic indexes(?) of somebody's looking, you know, the top of the head or maybe even from the side, could tell whether they came this or that racial stream(?), subracial substream(?) of cephalic types walking around Alaska. And I'm sure he was very remarkable in this but it definitely did not follow the Boasian definition of linguistics that included really even cultural anthropology, along with physical and archaeology, let alone linguistics, which is totally out and social anthropology was nowhere nearly as important or strong as archaeology.

And this goes back to the very beginnings of the discipline, if you want to call that, and the way it was practiced by the guy, who started it all, Otto Geist, who was working for the mining companies and unearthing mammoth tusks and maybe some skulls or arrowheads along with it and became a kind of archaeological junk collector or something but it was obvious that Alaska was a treasure trove of this kind of thing and there as a long period in there, from about 1929 to probably 1949 during which archaeological anthropology and physical anthropology were the University's of Alaska one and only respectable research agenda.

It is made very clear by Wickersham even in his, even though he was no(?) friend to Bunnell, who was a friend to Otto Geist. Bunnell set a certain patterns here of quasi scholarship but not real and I don't know if this place ever recovered, ever grown passed it. The Geist legacy, which is kind of shameful, nevertheless the pride of this place, which otherwise was nothing but a claim that civilization can be brought to this God forsaken wilderness, empty of anything that can be called civilization, until white man came along and builds Greek temples on Chena River, the Masonic lodge and so on, proving that civilization, the only kind there is, will triumph even here. Although, let's emphasize "even here", because we are uncomfortably close to Siberia. That is not Siberia in the positive Russian sense where good thinkers, original thinkers, that is political dissidents were exiled by the Chars and later by the Bolsheviks to the gulag(?) because there was some honor in that, but in the American sense of Siberia meaning, by definition, incompetence and second or third grade anything. And that the University is still here to prove that Western civilization can triumph over, even Tanana Valley and that therefore, although it's a gentlemanly thing to do and short of key to that kind of gentlemanly respectability that we have the time and the money to use for impractical

pursuits, like collecting curios of disappearing cultures around us and bones and stones and making scientific study of that and writing papers about it and so on, which is still key to the Anthro Department's priorities is, so called academic respectability, because for a long time Anthropology was the most respectable academic thing, everything else was a second or a third rate or Siberia rate claim that civilization can triumph even in the Tanana Valley. But a gentlemanly pursuit of collecting bones and stones on the other hand is proof of true civilization. And basic Anthropology Department maybe allowing for some folklore or kinship terms but mainly, ok, the clever way that people started fires or chip stones or treated their uncles or something could be also written about besides bones and stone but when it came to language forget it.

And that's the way it was when I got here. The languages were still being actively suppressed in the school system, the Educational Department in the University trained people to do that or trained people, who did that, never did anything that had anything to do with support of anything in the native language or anything to do with native language in a positive but it was a part of triumphing educational system converting people into good civilized, that is neck tie wearing and Christian civilized people, who did not speak an unintelligible gibberish, which is much more threatening than wearing feathers in your head, anybody can see what're you doing there but if you speak any unintelligible gibberish you can be plotting anything.

AD: So, none of..., Skarland or Geist did not speak any natives languages?

MK: Oh my God, they never paid any attention to them. But they were part of a system University, which was totally in agreement that these languages should disappear, although it would be gentlemanly if someone collected the curios.

AD: Right, ok.

MK: But they didn't bother linguistic curios, even that. And so, along we came and you got that story. And then, if it was ever, it's an unanswerable question, would the Anthropology Department ever had started to include linguistics if we hadn't come along to this day. Possibly not. Maybe, probably not. But since we came along, well that answered the question, ANLC is doing it, Krauss was doing it in the '60s and his grants, not the University, but Krauss and his grants and then by 1972, Krauss and the Native Language Center paid for by the legislature, it is true, but, which, of course, at the same time was its Achilles Heel, because that gave the University an access to the money to deploy for other things, which it has consistently been doing ever since.

AD: But your question if the Department would do that, if you didn't come along seems, can become a little bit general, if anyone would do it, if you didn't come along.

MK: Well, let me put it this way that it's probable that other Universities, elsewhere, would have sent people here. As they did, for example, on rare occasions, it is true, and there were missionaries, that's another story...but like Lee Van (?) 1952, that other entities would have sent people to Alaska, occasionally, to do this and that. But can the University of Alaska even afford to be too Alaskan, I mean we are close enough to Siberia, as it is. I mean both literally and worse figuratively. That to be then waving that around, holding it up and waving it that around, saying "Hey, hey, hey, we are in Siberia!", that was left to me. And, I daresay that what we do is with this emphasis on

Alaskan languages, not Choctaw or something and not general, we don't care about making sure that everybody who works here has a general degree in linguistics and has done, give a course in African languages every seven years, but that it's Alaska. We're here for to serve Alaska and work on Alaskan languages and that's like saying "Hey, we're in Siberia". And I short of most made an art of wallowing, I don't know if you know that verb, a pig wallows in mud, to roll around sensually enjoying the mud and here we were, you know, wallowing around in the snow of Siberia, saying "Hey, we're in Siberia, this is an interesting place" and so on, that there is a certain provincialism complex about this place, you know, if it's too Alaskan, it's Siberia and not academically respectable, except that a lot of the University lip service is paid to it in the, so called, mission statements of the University but with no real support. It's purely hypocritical, well I don't even understand it, because, hell, I came here as a volunteer to Siberia, not because I, you know, had no other prospects and the basic...as such I've never fit in too well here and never been felt all that, well yeah, there's a lot often, nice things are said about what we are doing here at the University, professes some pride but its purely for other purposes because it's never shown any real support. And the Anthro Department is unrelated because does not considers linguistics part of its...except maybe, well, inherited those two ladies, wasn't looking to include linguistics and their position is problematical but they've never had anything to do with documenting Alaskan languages and there is a certain irony to that but the Department can always claim, "Well, we got the Alaska Native Language Center, so why should we duplicate what they're doing?", and I claim that there should be a lot more cooperation or work between the two but I would say, it was just beginning when we were then sequestered, segregated away into Brooks building, very deliberately.

AD: Right, from Eilson.

MK: From Eilson, yeah, It was going to be, I think, going to improve but it can't now.

AD: So, what's that story with the segregation?

MK: Well, they thought that the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, should have a more visible native authority and including a building devoted to native something or other. And we were not consulted in any of this or consulted in our fate at all, in fact we're very deliberately excluded from any information or voice in what we were, what was going to, as to the physical disposition of the Center. I don't want to get into all of this because I am more interested in the way in the Anthro side of it and the history of that too, which had little signs of things happening but they never took place in the strange career of Charlene Craft, for example, which needs to be so much look in to, cause here's a woman from Cordova itself, who never had anything to do with Eyak when something could have been done and in the Anthropology Department, it'll be probably too late to ask anybody still alive but the Department should ask itself, you know, what is its relevance to Alaska natives other than as subjects of study.

AD: Right. So, did you have any discussions with Skarland and others and Craft maybe?

MK: I didn't ever overlap with Craft but with Skarland, no. Sure, I talked to Skarland a lot about but on purely academic basis, not on policy basis as to what Anthropology should be doing, no. That was written on stone and still is.

AD: So, you think, when you left...when the ANLC went to the Brooks building, you weren't advised or anything like that, addressed, but was the Anthropology Department?

MK: No, they managed to stay out of it.

AD: So, you regarded it as a negative move instead of a positive move...

MK: What, to move?

AD: To move.

MK: Of course.

AD: And why is that?

MK: In part because we were not being consulted...

AD: Yeah.

MK:...And in part because the reason for doing so was negative. They wanted to use us as a kind of ballast(?) to justify the use of the building, while knowing they're going to cut our space by a very significant amount but they didn't want us to be involved or we would...and so on and our relationship with the people, any of the other people in the building is negative or, I mean zero or negative. And they never welcomed us either. Always criticized us as being too snooty and removed from native students. Well, now we see non native students and all of our, some of our people we work with most closely refuse to enter the fourth floor. Very uncomfortable situation but that was predictable, I knew it, would have even open (?) circumvented and left entirely, systematically excluded from all the conferences that were going on about us, how to use us, that they knew I would have objected to, hence the exclusion.

AD: What floor were you in, in Eilson?

MK: The floor right below yours, we were right beneath you on the second floor.

AD: And the Museum...what date was that, when you moved?

MK: I blocked that out of my mind, it's like three years ago or two years ago.

AD: Oh ok, so soon. Right.

MK: Two years.

AD: So, I mean of all the Anthropology faculty, which you met, there was no one, who gave any, more than the gentleman interest to you about language. Not even students, if you had any relationship...

MK: Rarely. The students even, who went in the Anthropology Department, were kept studiously there, never allowed to take any of our courses, our courses had been basically boycotted, my courses always completely boycotted by Anthropology. No Anthro major for at least 20 years ever took a course from me, even those who reportedly came here because of me and I'm not exaggerating. All of Anthros required courses are Anthro and they don't require any or even allow for degree courses in any other Department that I know of, maybe they do English or something but certainly not Alaska native language and my courses were always totally boycotted by Anthropology and whether Yupik students are encouraged to take Yupik by Anthropology, I rather doubt but maybe, I don't know enough about that, but Anthros own Departmental requirements are, I think maybe exclusively, certainly Anthro but certainly include no Alaska native anything, so you can get a degree in any kind of Anthropology without a single course in language...a native language. **(TAPE CHANGE)**

AD: Ok, we are back on.

MK: Ok, I can conclude with some positive ideas as they occur to me about how Anthropology and Alaska Native Languages can work better together to mutual benefit. I know that we can learn a great deal from the Anthro Department, not only, of course, in being, you see, culturally, historically...cultural/historical background about things, which is the meat of the Anthropology but also in political procedure on matters like

curriculum and graduate students and students generally and advanced degree programs but above all by better working together, I daresay that Anthropology, which up to now all of its degrees, to my knowledge, require no Alaska native language anything, certainly require and hardly even allow any credit for any Alaska native...maybe the undergraduate or maybe even graduate degrees allow for Alaska native language as one of the two foreign language requirements but certainly you can do it by doing German and French, which are nearly irrelevant, forgetting about Russian and certainly forgetting about Yup'ik or whatever, even if your work is exclusively in Yup'ik you need to know French and German to get a Ph.D., you don't need to know Yup'ik, in fact maybe you can't even know Yup'ik or you don't get credit for taking Yup'ik as, I don't know, because so precious little of any of our co(?) patronage is from anthropology and, so I honestly don't even know whether you can or you're even allow to use Yup'ik, a Yup'ik course for credit for a graduate or undergraduate degree in Anthropology. I know that none of my courses are allowed and in fact they're maybe positively boycotted because the statistics would point to that, so far I've had zero Anthro majors in the last 20 years but the idea of a degree to which, anthropology degrees, just to say maybe, probably all require physical anthropology and (?) of Moore's(?) or something, none of them, even social, require any Alaska native language and probably not even linguistics, for all I know, in other words languages left out altogether of the anthropology degrees and certainly Alaska native languages are, although granted, yes, for getting a Ph.D. you should know Russian, I mean French and German or maybe French and Italian or French and Spanish but you don't need Russian, you don't need Alaska native languages, even if your entire research program is in Yup'ik, so there is a certain irony to that and I daresay that just as we have been somewhat maverick and maybe to our own detriment in being too Alaska native language and not general whatever, that do not purport to be a Linguistics department, then Anthropology in order to give Ph.D.s, maybe even to give a BA requires not only no language but hardly anything, well, maybe it does require Alaskan something but does not include Anthropology and so the Anthros tend to be , when we were in the same building, never come down to the second floor except to use the bathrooms and we didn't know or see any of them unless we were perhaps working in their fields but they never in ours and that was almost a rule. And things were beginning to change a little bit when we were segregated off and removed from any contact with the anthropology. The only contact we now have, as far as I know, is personal relations that mainly I have with people in Anthropology.

AD: Right, yeah.

MK: But there are Anthropologists, who have taken us seriously. I mean look at Igor Krupnik, for example, and he knew how and he's still having more contact with us than anybody in Anthropology, I think, I mean serious professional.

AK: I understand, yeah.

MK: And part of the question also is the relation to and role in the life of Alaska natives. We were conceived of us (?) working both ways with Alaska native peoples, us contributing to them as well as their contributing to us and Anthropology has a much more, much older history here than we do by some, 1930s I would say, by some forty years and well developed academic program but the obligation of that academic program to Alaska natives as opposed to mere use of Alaska natives as subject of study has definitely...very different from the way we were conceived. And true, I think, in the

recent years we are becoming more like Anthropology rather than Anthropology becoming more like us, in that regard, and I'm not so sure that's a good thing. So, out of the, how many Anthro majors there are on campus, how many of them are Alaska natives, for example, is a significant question.

AD: None, at least now. Well, maybe one.

MK: That's an important difference and how that whole issue is addressed.

AD: Well, I think...

MK: Well, I'm happy with just that.

AD: Ok, thank you.