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INTERPRETATION THROUGH ORAL HISTORY IN THE SUSITNA RIVER BASIN

A

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the University of Alaska
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

Susan Lee Regan, B.S.

Fairbanks, Alaska

May 1982

INTERPRETATION THROUGH ORAL HISTORY IN THE
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ABSTRACT

The objectives of my study were: (1) to apply the oral history technique so that I could investigate its potential in establishing a historical interpretive program, and (2) to document methods I used to obtain and process the oral histories so that others might apply the technique.

I conducted twenty-five oral history interviews from March 1980 through May 1980 with persons familiar with land use in the Upper Susitna River Basin during the 1940's through the 1970's. Field verification of land use information obtained involved aerial surveys during the summer of 1980.

I processed the taped interviews to a typewritten format and displayed the information as a (1) table of interview topics, (2) historical narrative, and (3) three outlined examples of historical interpretive programs.

I evaluated the technique and made suggestions for its improvement. Oral history information can be presented in several ways and is especially adaptable for use in historical interpretive programs.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of Objectives

The two basic objectives of this thesis are: (1) to investigate the potential of the oral history technique in establishing a historical interpretive program, and (2) to document the methods I used to obtain and process the oral histories so that others might apply the technique. I accomplished these objectives in conjunction with a project involving an analysis of land use in the Upper Susitna River Basin. Although the land use project involved objectives different from those of my thesis, both the land use analysis and my thesis shared the same oral history technique.

Definitions and Descriptions

As one branch of historical research, oral history in a formal sense is a systematic research technique for obtaining and preserving knowledge of historical events as recounted by their participants. The technique provides information with a broad scope for use in the present or future by a wide variety of researchers (Baum, 1977). The main subject of my oral history interviews was the historical land use in the Upper Susitna River Basin from the 1940's through the 1970's. This time frame complimented that of a concurrent study involving the prehistoric land use of the same area up to the 1930's.

"Susitna" is a Tanaina Indian name meaning "sandy river". The Susitna River rises from the Susitna Glacier on Mount Hayes of the Alaska Range and flows thorugh the heart of South Central Alaska.

From the railbelt village of Curry, the river continues its 260 mile course flowing south past Talkeetna to the head of Cook Inlet, 25 miles west of Anchorage.

The Susitna River Basin includes an area of 19,400 square miles (United States Department of the Army, Alaska District Army Corps of Engineers, 1978), twice the size of the state of Vermont. The basin is bordered on the west and north by the Alaska Range, on the south by the Talkeetna Mountains, and on the east by the Copper River Plateau. The upper portion of the Susitna Basin constitutes the Susitna drainage basin from the glacial headwaters in the Alaska Range to the Railbelt village of Gold Creek.

The subject of the oral history interviews involved the historical land use of the 80 mile stretch of the Susitna River (Figure 1) within the larger area known as the Upper Susitna Basin. This study area extended from the village of Gold Creek on the railbelt to the confluence of the Tyone River with the Susitna, and corresponded to the area currently under intensive study in connection with a proposal to build a major hydroelectric development.

Few access trails penetrate the rugged periphery of the project area. The major access routes which encircle the project area are shown in Figure 1 and consist of: (1) the Parks Highway, (2) the Denali Highway, (3) the Richardson Highway, and (4) the Glenn Highway.

As I stated previously in this thesis, I examined the usefulness of oral history in its application to the historical interpretive program. The term "interpretive program" refers to the single interpretive activity which is planned and conducted (often in person) by

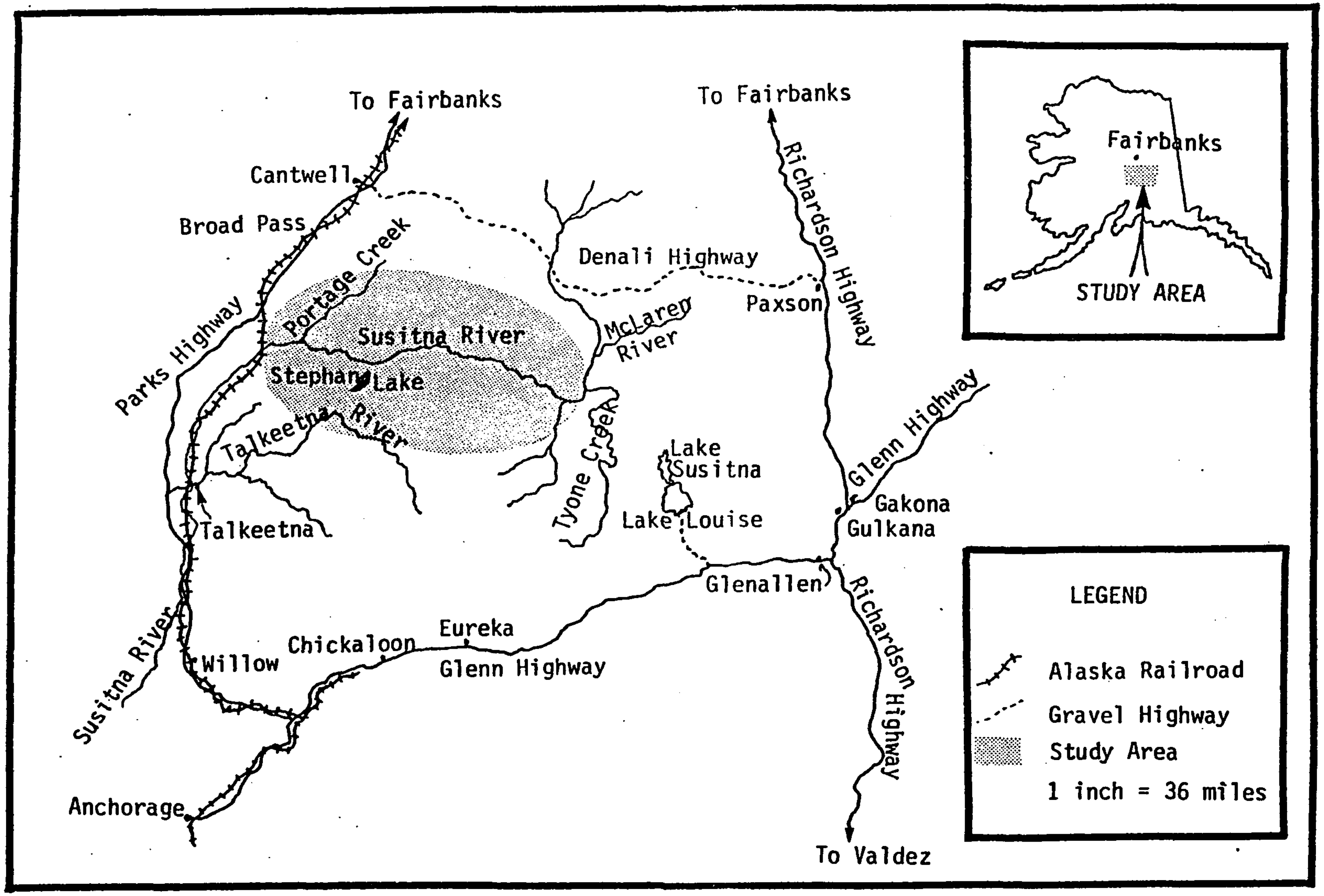

To Fairbanks
Cantwell
Broad Pass
Portage Creek
Parks Highway
Susitna River
Stephan Lake
Talkeetna River
Talkeetna
Denali Highway
To Fairbanks
Richardson Highway
Paxson
McLaren River
Tyone Creek
Lake Susitna
Lake Louise
Glenn Highway
Gakona
Gulkana
Glenallen
Susitna River
Willow
Chickaloon
Eureka
Glenn Highway
Anchorage
Richardson Highway
To Valdez
Fairbanks
STUDY AREA
LEGEND
Alaska Railroad
Gravel Highway
Study Area
1 inch = 36 miles

Figure 1. Location of the Study Area

an interpreter for an audience. The term can be used synonymously with the phrase "interpretive activity."

The working definition of the word "interpretation" I used throughout the thesis is a combination of two great interpreters', Grant Sharpe and Freeman Tilden:

> Interpretation is an educational activity which aims at developing a keener awareness, understanding, and appreciation of a subject through the use of original objects, firsthand experience, and illustrative media (Sharpe, 1976, p. 4; Tilden, 1957, p. 8).

A historical interpretive program, then, is a special type of program. Its main subject area is a historical event or period which occurred prior to the existing interpretive situation. The historical subject is broad and is accompanied by an interpretive theme. The interpretive theme focuses on a specific historical aspect of the interpretive subject.

Importance of the Study to Interpretation in Alaska

As Alaska's people and land face major changes, much of the state's recent history is characterized by a lack of comprehensive physical and written evidence. Many people who were active in Alaska during the last 50 years are alive and constitute a rich source of historical information. Unfortunately, the steps necessary to acquire these oral histories are not described in the literature accessible to most Alaskans. There is a general need to record and document Alaska's recent history and a need to describe the steps taken to obtain reliable accounts of this period. Once the recent history has been documented, there is a need for a vehicle to effectively present the historical information to public audiences.

My thesis is directed toward developing historical information in one area of Alaska that would change substantially if the Susitna hydroelectric project proceeds. My thesis is also intended to fill the more general need for a description of a method to obtain information from the participants in Alaska's recent history. Finally, my thesis provides examples of how oral history information can be used as the basis for a historical interpretive program.

In the second chapter, Methods, I describe the reasons for my choice of the oral history method, and review the national literature on basic oral history procedures. In the next chapter, Application of Methods, I explain how I specifically implemented the procedures described in chapter two. In the fourth chapter, Results, I present the results of my research using three formats: a condensed tabular form of land use types, a narrative of historical land use compiled from oral history manuscripts, and three outlined examples of historical interpretive programs. I summarize my research process in the chapter entitled, Discussion and Conclusions, and evaluate it for its usefulness and potential application. Improvements to the application of the oral history technique in Alaska and insights for its future course of direction in Alaska complete this final chapter.

METHODS

Chapter Purpose

This chapter describes the methods and procedures of oral history. My purpose for this chapter is threefold: (1) to show the factors which led to my choice of the oral history method, (2) to review national literature concerning oral history, basic oral history procedures and methodological concerns, and (3) to delineate the procedures I chose as a combination of the basic procedures and some options.

Choice of Method

Initially, the oral history method was selected as a means of accomplishing part of the land-use analysis objectives. Therefore, the reasons why oral history was chosen for the land-use analysis will precede the reasons why this method fits my thesis objectives.

According to the original land use project proposal, the land use analysis objectives were: (1) to describe and evaluate the human use of the land, and (2) to assess the direct land use affects of the Susitna hydroelectric project. The proposal particularly emphasized locating land uses geographically using a substitute for aerial photographic interpretation. Because many land uses were not likely to show up on aerial photos, and because of the magnitude of the project area (Jubenville, 1979), the land use analysis principal investigator determined that oral history interviews should help to identify a wide range of historic sites and land uses in the area.

The method of oral history was particularly suited for the land use analysis objectives of describing the human use of the land and locating land uses geographically. Because many of the land uses in the project area occurred relatively recently, many of the users are still living and could act as possible information sources. The method of oral history incorporates the availability of the land users and the information they contribute with preexisting information concerning historical land use.

Limited information regarding historical land use after 1940 in the Upper Susitna River Basin could be supplemented by oral history interviews. Another reason the oral history method was particularly applicable to the land use analysis was because of the lack of physical evidence of land uses within the study area. The study area is large, and uses are very dispersed. Some signs of land uses were destroyed by weather, and then obscured by vegetation cover. Existing aerial photographic data did not address the above deficiencies. However, oral history narrators, with the aid of a map, could locate and describe existing structures and their associated uses.

In addition to its applicability to the land use analysis objectives, the oral history technique lends itself particularly well to the development of a historical interpretive program. The oral history technique provides certain qualitative historic data such as what people did, when, and where they did it. However, it is not designed to address the quantitative aspect (how much) of land used. For example, an oral history narrator would describe his livelihood as a trapper in the Susitna basin during the 1930's. He might also explain types of fur bearing animals he trapped, and describe the general area of his trapline. The oral history technique does not aim at locating or counting all the trappers of the area or quantifying amounts of animals trapped or periodicity of use. Yet the technique of oral history fills a substantial part of the historical interpretive program needs. The historical interpretive program requires a historical subject, a historical theme and subthemes, personal historical accounts, and historic memorabilia--all of which an oral history interview provides.

Specific to this particular thesis study, information from oral history interviews provided a history of major land uses including historical themes such as hunting, trapping, fishing and recreation. Subthemes such as the historic trapping lifestyle, the advent of hunting lodges in the Susitna basin, and many historic accounts were also amply covered by the oral history narrations. The technique of oral history captured character, atmosphere and values of the land users; all are distinct types of information not to be gained from a search of the literature.

Oral History Tradition

As a historic medium, oral traditions have long played an important role in world cultures. As early as 450 B.C., Herodotus set down many stories of ancestral wars, catastrophes and triumphs passed from one generation to another by word of mouth through story tellers and epic poets of his time (Starr, 1960). Old timers in the 1800's, including the '49-ers who built the Central Pacific Railroad, were interviewed by California publisher and historian Hubert H. Bancroft. With the help of his assistants, Bancroft obtained information for a multivolume history of Western America (Colman, 1965).

The formal beginnings of oral history as a technique in the United States originated at Columbia University in 1948. There, Allen Nevins launched a program to systematically collect (by way of the oral history interview) information from people who played a significant part in the history of New York City and state. Nevin's important contribution to oral history was the idea that such work should be done continuously and on the broadest possible scale for the benefit of scholars and other researchers (Starr, 1960).

Since its beginnings as a scholarly technique at Columbia University, oral history has developed to include various forms. The most common is a biographical project in which the objective is to gather as much information about a narrator's life as possible (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). Another form of oral history is topic-oriented, where many persons are interviewed about one special topic (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). For example, Tulane University's oral history topic was the history of jazz, and in Texas, the history of the oil industry was researched (Newsweek, 1974). Similar to the topic-oriented approach is the project which focuses on a special event. For example, a project might focus on the home front in his or her community during World War II (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977).

Oral History In Alaska

Oral history is not new to Alaska. As one method available for the larger task of understanding history, oral history has contributed to the rich background of historical information about Alaska since the land's occupancy by native cultures.

Before native contact with white men, oral history served as a medium for education, entertainment, and the preservation of the native heritage in a variety of ways, depending on the native tribe. In an educational sense, the Eskimos told stories in a kariji or men's ceremonial house. This special setting was reserved to educate young Eskimo males and was a place where they learned community traditions and the heritage of their people (Spencer, 1959). In Southeast Alaska, formal stories were told in a clan house for entertainment as well as education (De Laguna, 1960).

The way in which these stories were told was of extreme importance. Spoken Athabascan stories have been recently written as a means of preserving the heritage of Athabascans for future generations, but great care is taken to preserve the oral essence embodied in the accounts transcribed (Jones, Scollon, 1979). In one such translation, it is urged that the stories be read out loud (Jones, Scollon, 1979). Some stories must only be told at night, and others have to be told verbatim and only for a specific purpose. With the Tlingits, only those who belong to a family or a particular clan should tell the family story, while others who may know it defer to the rightful tellers (DeLaguna, 1960). Oral traditions played an important part in the native customs and entertainment, providing a basis for potlatch songs and ceremonial oratory (DeLaguna, 1960) as well as a part in the education and transmission of heritage. To varying degrees, this translational form of communication continues to play an important part in people's lives (Schneider, 1981).

Oral traditions in Alaska native culture continued with the contact of the white man. Native stories, many of which have been subsequently recorded, relate episodes of the first contact with white men. Native perceptions of these initial contacts differed from those of the white man and have been recorded as such, demonstrating that we are conditioned by our past experiences and the experiences of our cultural group. Upon the meeting between the Tlingits and the La Perouse's expedition in 1886, the Tlingit people believed the ships were:

> great black birds with far reaching white wings like their bird creator Yehlh. A nearly blind Tlingit warrior (for the welfare of the tribe) paddled toward one of the ships and climbed aboard. The forms on board, to him, looked like crows. But after much thought, the old warrior was convinced that it was not Yehlh, their bird creator, but that the occupants of the ships were people (Gunther, 1972 quoting Emnons, p. 141, 142).

The significance of these misunderstandings is witnessed by the continued telling and retelling of the story by Angoon people to this present day (U.S.D.A. Forest Service Oral History Tapes).

The early period in Alaska's history has been related through oral history. Accounts from pioneer gold miners, traders, school teachers, commercial whalers and reindeer herders provide colorful first-hand descriptions of experiences in what it was to them a new frontier. These accounts, some of which are either taped, written, or both, may be found in the Alaska Historical Library (see Alaska Historical Library, "A Guide to Tapes") and the Alaska Polar Regions Department, at Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks. These accounts are particularly important because many of the early pioneers are alive today, enabling us to capture their early experiences by means of the oral history interview.

Early political development in Alaska has also been recorded in oral history interviews. Key political figures and special events in Alaska's history such as President Harding's visit (see Alaska Historical Library historical phonotape C-9), like E. L. Bartlett (Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, E.L. Bartlett Tape and Film File, 1952-1968, Box 1, Tapes 1-18), and conversations have been documented in the oral history record. Political hearings on subjects such as the statehood controversy, Native Land Claims, pipeline impact, land use planning and subsistence are documented in oral history collections of the Alaska Historical Library and the Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Recent developments in Alaska history have also been recorded by means of the oral history method. Original source accounts are available on World War II in the Aleutians, the building of the Alaska transportation network (U.S.A.F. tapes, University of Alaska Archives, Fairbanks) and the establishment of the Matanuska Valley Colony (Alaska Women's Oral History Tapes, Brooks, 1980). These inverviews present the values, perceptions and experiences of the actual participants, perspectives rarely gained from a historical overview.

People's responses to natural disasters in Alaska are also related in the oral history record. The 1964 Alaska earthquake and subsequent tidal wave (U.S.D.A. Forest Service Tapes #510, Juneau, Alaska), the eruption of the volcano at Katmai (U.S.D.I. National Park Service, Katmai tapes) and the 1967 Fairbanks flood (Archives, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks) were subjects described by oral history narrators. These tapes, located in the aformentioned libraries, are used as parts of interpretive programs and as subjects for classroom discussions.

Improvement in recording equipment has enabled the last 80 to 90 years of Alaskan history to be more conveniently documented by the oral history method. Native stories and songs which for centuries were verbally transmitted have now been recorded on tape and are currently used in educational and interpretive programs by the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, village councils, and communities statewide.

The last 80 to 90 years in Alaska's history play a critically important role in the history of Alaska and its resources. With mounting pressure for the extraction and use of Alaska's natural resources, historical accounts provide valuable information which influenced the many current laws and regulations regarding natural resources. One example is the set of tapes on Talkeetna made by Robert Durr. Through these tapes, Durr conveys attitudes, opinions, and reasons why and how certain people in the Talkeetna area perceive the land and related regulations, and thus why and how they live in the manner they choose. These attitudes and opinions provide helpful insight for planners and resource managers with regard to solving resource-related problems (Durr Collection, Talkeetna Museum).

The oral tradition has long been used as one method of documenting Alaska's rich past. Though I have not mentioned all the types or uses of oral history in Alaska, these examples should give the reader an idea about the general history of oral tradition in Alaska and the variety of uses the technique addresses and can address.

Review of the Literature on the Oral History Technique

Characterized by its applicability to a diverse spectrum of subjects, the technique of oral history typically comprises an organized series of interviews with selected individuals or groups in order to create new source material or supplement existing source material (Rumics, 1966). Yet there are no cut and dried rules on how to do oral history at any step of the process. Baum (1977) holds that oral history is an art, not an exact science, and therefore it is important that each program work out its own goals and specific procedures. Schneider (1981), curator of oral history at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, views oral history as an art, a science and a responsibility. According to Schneider, it is an art in the way one obtains it, it is a science in how one recognizes what one has and oral history is a responsibility in the way one ethically establishes agreements on use of the narration.

Most oral history projects share the same basic steps, equipment, and needs for personnel. Some of these shared steps include: selection of the subject, selection of staff, selection of equipment, the finding and selection of narrators, the interview(s), processing the tape recorded interviews and curating the source material. Depending upon project objectives, budget, and the number of paid and volunteer staff members, variations occur in basic oral history procedures. Steps within the processing and curating stages may be shortened or excluded, the transcripts may or may not be made into multiple copies, audited, edited or formally outlined in any way. Occasionally, the raw tape recording is the end product (Rumics, 1966). The following discussion describes the spectrum of basic formalized oral history procedures.

Selection of the oral history subject is an important first step in an oral history project. Types of subjects include but are not limited to that of a biography, for example the biography of a grandmother, or a topic, such as Italian-Americans in a community, or a particular historic event, such as the first moon landing (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977).

If there is to be a staff of more than one person, staff selection and careful delegation of responsibilities to suit the talents of the individuals are key factors in determining a successful oral history project. Those chosen for the task of interviewing must be particularly sensitive, perceptive, alert and have considerable social skill in knowing how to draw out the narrator (Baum, 1969). They also must possess knowledge of the subjects to be covered in the interview. Other staff members involved in processing the tapes must be accurate typists, and willing to endure the tedium of transcribing (Baum, 1969; Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977).

To establish the initial list of oral history narrators, friends, neighbors, colleagues, civic and other local groups should be asked (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). One oral history practitioner described finding initial narrators by:

> first stop looking for that wonderfully gnarled old woman sitting in front of her foxfire in a just-right-squeaking-rocking chair...and then begin by simply "asking around" (Ives, 1980, p. 33).

While the list of prospective narrators is being prepared, a card file on each narrator should be kept. The card file should contain information as to name, address, telephone number of prospective oral history narrators, and oral history subjects with which they are familiar (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977).

A letter, a phone call, or both should be made to initially contact the prospective narrators. The letter should explain the subject of the interviews, express the idea that it is thought that the narrator is knowledgeable about the needed information, suggest a time and a place for a meeting that are convenient to the narrator, and ask him/her to respond (Baum, 1969; Ives, 1974).

After the prospective narrator's consent to meet the interviewer, and before the initial contact with the narrator, it is the interviewer's responsibility to become more knowledgeable on the interview subject, the narrator, and the use of recording equipment (Baum, 1969; Ives, 1980). Also, at this point in the series of pre-interview tasks, an interview outline should be prepared.

A legal release form should also be prepared which assigns the literary and property rights of the tape and transcripts to the sponsoring institution (Baum, 1969; Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977; Ives, 1980).

Desired quality of the tape-recorded interview sessions and the project budget dictates variations in equipment choice. A standard equipment recommendation list from the Oral History Office of the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, California is listed in Appendix A.

Once equipment for the project is purchased, staff who will use the equipment should take time to practice and become familiar with it (Baum, 1969). Mock interview sessions and role playing are useful practice techniques (Ives, 1980).

After familiarization with recording equipment, the next step in the oral history process is the preliminary meeting, at which time the narrator and the interviewer get acquainted. The preliminary meeting with the oral history narrator accomplishes several things at once. It provides time to explain more fully the nature of the project, equipment, and answer any related questions, to obtain the narrator's signature on the legal release, and to decide whether or not this particular prospective narrator has and will share the needed information (Ives, 1980).

The skills in effective oral history interviewing are something that some people possess naturally, others must acquire, and still others seem incapable of learning (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). Baum (1969), a pioneer in the field of oral history, summarized guidelines for the oral history interview (Appendix B).

During the actual oral history interview, notes should be taken to clarify key points, obtain correct spellings of names and places and dates (Baum, 1969). The interview should conclude with a review of the notes for approval and corrections by the narrator (if any), an encouraging comment on the value of the information gathered, consensus on the next interview taping session, and an expression of thanks from the interviewer (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977).

After departing from the interview, several tasks should be immediately accomplished. Spellings of names and places should be rechecked, and tapes should be fully labeled to include the interview date, place, and name of both the narrator and the interviewer (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). Also checked should be tape contents--that which is discussed during the interview and subsequently recorded on the interview content or interview information sheet. Samples of the interview content and interview information sheets are shown in Appendices C and D, respectively (Baum, 1977; Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). These sheets indicate general subjects covered during the interview and the length of tape time in minutes. The interview information sheet combines information from the initial contact cards with information pertaining to the interview such as noise types, interruptions, extra voices and other such matters (Ives, 1980).

Processing the interview involves the sequence of events from the time the interviews have been tape recorded to a typed finished manuscript. Procedures common to the processing phase of the oral history technique consist of transcribing, auditing, editing, and final typing of the original manuscript (Baum, 1974; Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). A copy of the original tape should be used for the transcriptions. Specifications commonly given to the transcriptionist are summarized by Baum (1969) in Appendix E.

Once the tape is transcribed, the proofreading of the rough transcript against the tape, or auditing, should take place. During this step, the obvious spelling and typographical errors should be caught and corrected (Baum, 1977; Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977).

The task of editing involves the conversion of the audited transcript into a finished draft. The edited transcript must clearly convey the speaker's meanings and read smoothly enough so that it can be easily understood by the reader (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). At the same time, the edited manuscript must retain the casual quality of the speaker's individual speech patterns and meanings (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977).

After the basic processing steps of transcribing, auditing, and editing, final steps should include: (1) final manuscript typing, (2) mailing the transcript to the narrator for proofreading, and (3) archival preparation. Since the first two final tasks are self-explanatory, I shall concentrate briefly on archival preparation.

The collection and processing of oral history though extremely important, fulfills only part of the role of oral history with regard to the user of the historical information:

> A cabinet full of tapes and a shelf of transcripts are only a stock of curiosities unless patrons--both actual and potential--know that the collection exists, know what it contains, and how to gain access to the information (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977).

A thorough handling of information involves providing a convenient retrieval system consisting of at least three basic components: (1) the indexing of taped interview contents, (2) indexing of transcripts, and (3) assembling a card catalog for the oral history collection (Baum, 1977; Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). Eventually, a computer-based retrieval system should be achieved for the convenience of all users (Schneider, 1981).

Indexing tapes consists of providing the following information on each tape and on an information card: (1) name of the narrator, (2) name of the interviewer, (3) place of the interview, (4) date of the interview, and (5) reason for the interview (Baum, 1977).

Transcripts are indexed by a table of contents, which may or may not include a short description of the interview subjects, narrators, and their occupations. In addition to the indexing of the transcript as individual memoirs concerning a certain subject, they must also be thought of in a greater context as parts of the collection (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977), and as contributions to the larger task of understanding a particular part of history as of yet poorly known and described (Schneider, 1981).

There is no standard indexing format and no standard subject head terminology or cataloging system shared by libraries or centers for oral history (Hales, 1981; McCarthy, 1980, personal communication). Given such a wide range of subjects with varying degrees of emphasis, the difficult task of developing a system of descriptors which would bring about a continuity to an entire collection will probably be achieved only through the perspective gained by one person working with all of the transcripts (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977).

After the tapes and transcripts have been indexed, oral history tapes should be deposited and preserved. Safety and accessibility are of major concern for tape preservation. Proper storage conditions include a fireproof, temperature controlled storage location (Baum, 1977). A copy of the original tape is usually made if tapes will be loaned out for listening or other uses (Baum, 1977). Tape curation also involves periodic running of the tapes and re-copying the tapes since they do deteriorate (Baum, 1977; Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977).

Concerns of Oral History as a Research Tool

Over the course of the relatively recent formalization of systematic procedures for oral history and rapid development of the technique from its increased use, a number of concerns for the subject have been recognized by practicing oral historians and users of oral history information. Concerns for the technique focus on the areas of: (1) how much weight should be placed on the information gathered, and (2) the rate of growth in the use of the technique.

The problem of how much weight should be placed on the information is related to the value of the information and the following questions: (1) what role does the oral history information play in the overall material gathered on the subject, (2) how reliable is the narrator and the information gathered, and (3) how valid is the interview process and the resulting information. Answers to these questions reflect the assignment given the role of the information in the oral history project, as well as the steps taken during the interview process, and subsequent handling of the tapes to insure quality data.

Some oral historians use the information as a supplement to other existing data, whereas others let the oral history interviews stand as an attempt at a first interpretation of a series of given events (Benison, 1965). An example of a direct, unaltered use of oral history information is the historical interpretive program, especially the living drama. Actors in a living drama many times are the oral history narrators themselves and their text is the oral history narration (McKinney, 1980). Often, when there is a void of information on a certain subject, the technique of oral history provides original data to which other information can be added. A combination of oral history interviews, published documents, archival manuscripts and photographs directed at a particular question provides a more complete historical interpretation than any one source of information alone (Schneider, 1981). The old historical aphorism that "without documents there is no history" holds for oral history as well (Benison, 1965). To discover, create, and use such documents is one of the main functions of oral history.

The second aspect of the concern for how much weight to place on the oral history information stems from the question of narrator reliability and corresponding integrity of information supplied by the narrator. In the context of this discussion, reliability refers to the consistency of measuring techniques and findings (Jacobson, 1976). In an oral history interview, reliability is addressed by questioning strategies which solicit information in ways which confirm the narrator's statements with similar statements made by other narrators, with any existing literature or with other sources of information such as historic or archaeological findings. Returning the processed oral history manuscripts to the narrator for review is another way reliability is addressed in the oral history process. This allows the narrator to make necessary corrections to the manuscript. Reliability of information is also addressed by examining the differences in the narratives and analyzing why they are different.

Validity, or the degree to which researchers measure what they set out to measure, is influenced by certain phenomena during the course of the application of the technique. These phenomena are termed history, maturation, differential selection, differential mortality and testing (Jacobson, 1976).

Applied to an oral history interview, the phenomena of history involves an interview extending over a long period of time. Certain events arise over the course of the extended interview which influence the narrator's perception and recollection of events. The phenomenon of history as it affects validity also occurs when the time between the period of study and the actual interview involves events which affect the narrator's attitudes and perceptions toward the period of study.

The phenomenon of maturation occurs when the feelings, attitudes, and interests of the narrators change over a period of time. It is exemplified by narrator fatigue, or the narrator's increased interest in a short interview or the changing attitudes of a narrator in an extended interview.

Differential selection occurs when oral history narrators are selected in a biased, nonrandom fashion. Differential selection is exemplified by the selection of narrators with relatively permanent attachment to an area instead of transients who singly or collectively contributed to the subject in a significant way.

Differential mortality is another phenomenon influencing the validity of the oral history information. It involves a key informant (oral history narrator) dropping out of the population and being no longer available for interviewing purposes. Applied to land use, differential mortality is seen when a land use which occurred during the period of interest no longer occurs because the land user died and the use type was never replaced.

The last factor that influences validity of oral history information is the phenomenon termed testing. The term "testing" applies to validity when the method of testing or measuring influences those being tested and the resultant data. An oral history example of the testing phenomena would be an insensitive obnoxious interviewer. The interviewer would offend the narrator, affect the narrator's attitude towards the subject and thus the narrator's response (Jacobson, 1976).

During the interview process, the interviewer uses certain counterbalancing strategies to address the previously mentioned phenomena. These strategies improve validity of findings.

The phenomenon of history is addressed by an interviewer being sensitive to and aware of the background data as a possible influence on the narrator's responses. The phenomenon of maturation is addressed in the interviewers' attempt to get concrete or relative measures that have been anchored to a reference. Also, the interviewer can attempt to shorten an excessively long interview to prevent narrator fatigue. The phenomena of differential selection and differential mortality can be addressed to improve validity of findings by asking those selected about groups or individuals who were not already contacted. The phenomenon of testing is addressed in the oral history process by having an independent review of the tape and/or manuscript in addition to the review of the manuscript by the narrator.

History, maturation, differential selection, differential mortality, and testing are five factors which limit the validity of oral history information. The previous discussion addressed ways in which the oral history practitioner deals with these factors in an effort to improve the validity of information obtained.

As one form of historical research, the oral history interview can be made to supply valid and reliable historical information. Yet depending upon how the information is to be used, the value placed on reliability and validity varies. With some oral history practitioners, it is not of primary importance. The use of human memory as a credible source of historic information has been disputed for some time. For example, in an article citing the problems encountered by oral historians, Swain (1965) relates that:

> as a research tool, oral history interviews have definite human limitations in that human beings have an extraordinary facility for forgetting unpleasant things (p. 67).

In another paper Starr (1960) reminded oral historians that memory can be a treacherous source on which to rely for historical information. In this same paper, the author went on to express:

> It is a never ending source of wonder to me that some persons are unable to recall even the broadest essentials with any certitude, while others will recite the minutest details--some of which happened thirty or forty years ago (p. 3).

Yet other oral history practitioners highly value and critically accept the information, and take steps toward making the resulting interviews as reliable and valid as possible. They believe the value of the interviews is in their usefulness in getting "emphasis" and "atmosphere" which provides an understanding to the subjective "feel" of a person or period (Swain, 1965). A practical approach to the question of reliability, validity and the question of weighing oral history information is expressed in the following quotation:

> True, human memory is a fragile historical source; it is subject to lapses, errors, fabrications and distortions. Anyone who uncritically accepts an oral history memoir as historical truth is destined to misunderstanding the past. The thousands of

> transcript pages that constitute this nation's oral history storehouse contain a generous share of trivia, errors, and lies. But to acknowledge this sobering condition is not to deny the value of oral history (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977, p. 5).

Capsulizing the value of oral history information, author and educator Brooke Workman (1972) expressed that:

> oral history vividly illustrates that what a person remembers is their own truth: people, even scholars see life in relation to themselves. This is what it means to be alive (p. 388).

With the growth and development of the oral history methodology, practitioners of the technique have become more conscious of its rate of development and its growing degree of applicability and use by many diverse subject fields. Distinct attitudes about the direction of the development of oral history have been expressed as a consequence.

In the mid sixties, Swain (1965) expressed the need for shifting the focus of oral history from the organization of new projects towards an attention on the problems of oral history. He urged specialists in the field of American History to use existing oral history source materials rather than embark on new projects.

With concern for a growing field, oral historians and its users also focused on its growth in the educational process. Besides actual classroom projects in oral history, oral history workshops sponsored by local historical societies and courses sponsored by colleges and universities became more common in the late sixties and early seventies as a response to the need for trained oral history practitioners (Neuenschwander, 1976).

Variations in Oral History

Since the time of formal recognition by Allen Nevins and staff at Columbia University in 1948, the technique of oral history has diversified to presently include variations in the procedures stated earlier in this chapter. The purpose of this section is to: (1) show how available resources may constrain or eliminate use of some procedures that might be appropriate, (2) show how use of oral history procedures towards my objectives fits within the range of uses, and (3) show how my use of the method required specific applications not always used.

The most common resources which influence oral history projects are time and the operating budget (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). These resources, together with the project objectives determine the degree of variation from the oral history procedures.

Perhaps the most common cause of variations in formal oral history procedures is the intended use of its products. The intended use is directly associated with the oral history project objectives. In my own research, the objectives involved an investigation of the potential of oral history as applied to a historical interpretive program, and a documentation of my procedures. For the land use analysis in which I was involved, objectives included a description of historic land use. Both sets of objectives relied on the method of oral history to produce and supplement information which would serve as data for future researchers and actual historical interpretive programs. Because of these intended uses and my time and operating budget, the following discussion addresses my choices in procedures.

The number of staff chosen to participate in an oral history project is closely associated with the project objectives and resources. Some projects involve a salaried director, associate director, a field interviewing staff, secretarial staff and an archivist (Kielman, 1966). Other oral history projects are totally dependent on interested community volunteers (Baum, 1969). Because my research was limited to one year, and the budget somewhat limited, I served as the only salaried full-time oral history staff person. I assumed responsibility for designing the oral history project, and performed all the interviewing, processing, auditing, and editing. I hired a part-time secretary during a four week period to transcribe the tape-recorded interviews. The limitation of one full-time staff person resulted in other procedural variations. Some oral history practitioners believe it is advantageous to conduct interviews in pairs, with one person taking care of the note-taking, tape-recording, and reminding the interviewer of important questions which may have been overlooked during the course of the conversation (Swain, 1965). Since in my oral history project I was the only staff person, this added assistance was not possible.

Another procedural variation specific to project objectives and resources is that of the number of interview sessions. Depending upon the interview topic, a person can be interviewed many times or only once (Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). A biography, for example, may involve many interviews while a single interview event may consume only one session. In my project, the number of interview sessions was limited to one session per narrator. Travel distance and expense prohibited multiple visits. For this reason, the preliminary meeting with the narrators was forgone. Instead, a phone call, after the initial contact by mail, served as a preliminary "get-acquainted" time.

I planned the length of the interview for one hour, to obtain information that was important and so as not to over-fatique the narrator. I usually interviewed one narrator at a time, for the sake of clarity and ease in transcription. In two cases, however, the narrator's spouse, also closely associated with the subject of the interview informally urged that they be interviewed together. In deference to the narrators, I decided in these cases to interview them together.

From the onset of the project, the land-use project coordinators decided that the interviews would be processed beyond the raw tape stage, to facilitate future use. Some of the steps in the processing were cut short because of limited staff. These steps were: (1) transcribe to rough transcript only, (2) proofread and edit all transcripts, (3) audit only those transcripts in which the transcriptionist had marked difficulty with the tape, (4) make three multiple copies from the original transcript, (5) send one transcript to each narrator, (6) incorporate any narrator's corrections or reviewed comments into the rough transcript (transcripts were not retyped). These procedures were taken because budget resources limited the typist/transcriptionist services to only four weeks.

Addressing the objective of documenting my procedures and making the results of my project available, I accomplished a number of tasks that are frequently omitted in other oral history projects. The project budget allowed time for the transcripts and tapes to be indexed according to the Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks format for listings in their computerized oral history collection index. I also prepared a series description in accordance with the Archives, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks standards. I deposited the tapes in the Archives, Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, for safekeeping, making them available to future researchers.

One procedure used in my application of oral history methods not commonly used was that of aerial verification. Because the land use aspect of the project allowed helicopter time for aerial surveys, I located and mapped old sites reported by the oral history narrators (cabins, lodges, trails). This procedure, rarely afforded by the typical oral history project, enabled certain information from the oral history interviews to be checked for reliability and validity.

Objectives, project budget, and length of time in which to accomplish the objectives caused certain formal procedures to be retained, and others to be forgone. The aforementioned procedural variations were unique to my oral history project and were influenced by project objectives involving time and budget resources.

APPLICATION OF METHODS

Chapter Purpose

In this chapter I describe specific methods and resources I used to accomplish my oral history project. The major divisions of this chapter correspond to the order in which they were accomplished during the project.

Tasks Related to the Oral History Interview

For the purpose of discussion, I divided all interview-related tasks into the following three phases: (1) pre-interview tasks, (2) field interview tasks, and (3) post-interview tasks.

The first task I accomplished during the interview phase was that of finding the prospective narrator. I accomplished this by reviewing background land use literature for the area. Types of literature I reviewed were regional studies for the area, land-owning agency plans, old government reports on studies in the area, hunting magazines, trapping magazines, the Alaska Magazine, old maps, Bureau of Land Management records, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game harvest records for big game and fur bearers. From this literature, I established the following list of general land-user types: hunters, guides, trappers, fishermen, pilots, miners, homesteaders, natives and lodgeowners. I then searched the yellow pages of telephone directories of towns around the periphery of the study area, advertisements in the Alaska Milepost and the Alaska Magazine, recreational brochures on hunting, fishing, lodges, float trips, historical society records and communications with friends and colleagues who knew of people who used the study area. After I gathered the information from the previously mentioned sources, I matched the general user category with actual people. These individuals served as my initial contacts.

Another preparation I made before the interview field sessions was correspondence with the prospective narrators. I composed the letter to the narrators with the help of a colleague. The letter expressed my interest in talking with them about historical land use in the Upper Susitna River Basin (Appendix F). I enclosed a stamped post card addressed to me. The narrators were requested to checkmark statements indicating their level of interest in talking with me, and various times they would be available for an interview.

I obtained the narrator's addresses from local Anchorage, Cantwell, Gakona, Glenallen and Talkeetna telephone directories, and voter registration lists. Two and one-half weeks prior to my first scheduled interview trip I mailed letters to fifteen prospective narrators. Only fifteen letters were initially mailed because I anticipated the names of new contacts from both postcard returns and interview sessions.

I received nine postcard replies from initial contacts--all of which expressed favorable interest in conversing with me about historical land use in the Upper Susitna River Basin. I received five letters unopened marked "return to sender, addressee unknown". One letter was not returned nor was its enclosed post card. I kept contact file cards as a record of information and correspondence with each narrator (Appendix G).

The pre-interview task phase also included preparation of the interview equipment. First I selected and purchased a cassette tape recorder, then sixty and ninety-minute cassette tapes and a set of maps of the

Susitna Basin. My criteria for choosing the tape recorder was small size, medium weight, and a built-in microphone with high quality recording capabilities. These criteria were important because I anticipated air travel and backpacking to interview some narrators and needed a small, rugged, relatively lightweight recording device.

Of the fifteen tapes I purchased, ten were sixty minutes in duration and five were of ninety minute duration. Since I planned the interview for one hour, I used the ninety-minute tapes as back-ups, because I anticipated tht some interviews would last longer than the hour planned. I purchased TDK brand normal bias tapes because of their quality for recording in the voice sound range, rather than the music sound range. Also, the casing on these tapes could be removed for tape repair or splicing purposes if necessary.

I composed the general interview outline and question format before the actual interview sessions, with the assistance of a colleague. The outline is shown in Table 1.

I planned the field interview sessions to correspond with my class and project schedules. I also considered travel time and distance between towns where narrators resided in planning the field interview schedule. I planned the first field interview session for March 28, 1980 through April 6, 1980 with narrators who resided in Talkeetna and Palmer. I planned the second field interview session for a four-day weekend in April in Anchorage. I planned my last and longest field interview session for May 8, 1980 through May 21, 1980. This session involved interviews with narrators in villages and towns located along

TABLE 1

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS - ORAL HISTORY

I. Introduction

    A. Introduction of Interviewer
    B. Explanation of the project
    C. What information is needed by interviewer
    D. What interviewer will do with the information
    E. Does the person think he can help
    F. Ask for permission to record conversation--avoid use of the word "interview"

II. Background of the informant

    A. Relationships to and interests in project area
        1. Length of time involved with project area
        2. Seasons of year
        3. Means of access

III. Knowledge of land uses in the area (use map)

    A. How was project area used?
    B. What resources were utilized, where?
    C. Major changes that have taken place in the project area, when? Why?

IV. Who else might I contact?

    A. Name, address and occupation
    B. Relationship to the area.

the transportation route surrounding the study area: Cantwell, Denali Highway, Paxson, Gakona, Glenallen, Anchorage, Palmer and Talkeetna.

My first field interview session as I previously mentioned, was based in Talkeetna, with a side trip to Palmer and Murder Lake. The Talkeetna Roadhouse, a lodge and common town meeting place served as my field base. I telephoned each narrator before the actual interview, if they had a telephone. The telephone call provided a time for me to tell them that I had arrived, and to ask whether our agreed upon interview time was still convenient. The telephone conversation also gave the narrator a bit of time to prepare for the interview. If the narrator had no phone, I relayed a written message to them or hiked there. Most of the Talkeetna interviews took place at the homes of the narrators. Some took place at the Talkeetna Roadhouse, however.

I conducted the second major field interview session in Anchorage from April 28, 1980 to May 1, 1980. I visited each narrator in her home where they had access to their own maps, pictures and journals which assisted in their descriptions of the study area.

I conducted the third and longest series of interviews from May 8, 1980 to May 21, 1980. As planned, I visited the villages on the road network around the study area. When I arrived in each town or village, I phoned the prospective narrators (when they and I had access to a telephone) to reaffirm our scheduled interview time and place. These interviews took place at hunting lodges, cafes, cabins, and in the homes of narrators. Upon meeting the narrator, I conducted the interview in an informal manner, generally following the interview outline in Table 1. Since I eliminated a preliminary meeting with the narrator for reasons explained in the chapter on methods, this meeting was the first formal meeting I had with the narrator.

During the introductory phase of the interview, I explained to the narrator about myself, and listened to the narrator in order to discern whether their degree of familiarity with the project area warranted further questioning. Basic criteria I used to determine whether I should continue or curtail the interview were length of time and seasons of the year they used the project area, and the geographic location of their reported use. If they had used the study area for ten years or more, and/or used the land within the study area, I continued the interview. If I decided the narrator was not as familiar with the area as I had anticipated, I concluded the interviews in a much shorter period of time. Five interviews concluded in this way.

After receiving recording permission, I set up the map and the small tape recorder, placing emphasis on the map throughout the interview. Depending on how receptive the narrator had been to the oral history process up to this point, I formally introduced the narrator on tape. If the narrator appeared nervous, I discarded the more stringent formalities and focused on conversation which would make the narrators feel comfortable in sharing information about themselves. If the narrator seemed indifferent to or pleased about being recorded, I formally introduced the narrator on tape.

As Spradley (1979) observed, each narrator was at first apprehensive, then curious, cooperative, and finally an active participant in the interview project. During each interview, I used the important principal of restating what was said by the narrator. Restating certain terms or sentences reinforced that which the narrator explained. Restating also clarified points I thought confusing, and omitted the need to ask another question about it (Spradley, 1979).

I took notes throughout all of the oral history interview sessions. The notes consisted of questions I had about certain points (a location, a place name, or pronunciation) made by the narrator during the interview. These notes were used for questions which were posed after the narrator finished the initial description. I also noted dates, names, hard-to-hear phrases, and characteristics about the narrator and other persons present during the interview.

I encouraged the narrator during various stages of the interview to use the plastic-covered map for further description of locations important to the narration. This map-related activity also served, for some, to lessen the anxiety of a one-to-one interview, and provided a clearer explanation of the land uses and respective locations.

All narrators suggested other people who were familiar with land use in the study area to talk with. When a certain individual was repeatedly suggested, and highly recommended, I telephoned them, and arranged a time we could converse at a later date. Because of the anticipated list of newly suggested narrators, my initial list of fifteen narrators grew to a final total of twenty-five oral history narrators.

I concluded each interview by stopping the tape recorder and completing an interview information sheet with the narrator. At this time, we reviewed names, spellings, dates, place names and pronounciations. I also reminded the narrator that I would send them a copy of the interview transcript.

Average time spent with each oral history narrator totalled about one and one-half hours. I returned to my field base (a tent, a cabin, or a room) after closing the interview. There, I transferred land use information from the plastic-covered map to mylar overlays, reviewed the tape-recorded interview to insure its recording and to find more specific areas for further questioning, filled in the index on the interview information sheet, and then fully labeled the tapes and correlated the tape numbers with the numbers on the interview information sheets. Twelve of the twenty-five oral history interviews were extremely informative and provided the bulk of the information for my historical narrative of the study area in chapter four.

Processing

The processing phase of oral history consists of: (1) transcribing the tape-recorded conversation to a typewritten format, (2) auditing, or proofreading the tape against the rough transcript, (3) editing, and (4) finishing touches (Baum, 1977; Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977). For four weeks, a typist-transcriptionist transcribed the bulk of the tape recorded conversations into a typewritten format. With the tape-recorded interviews, I gave the transcriptionist a list of names of places and persons she would audibly encounter in order to facilitate correct spelling and interpretation of the tape-recorded dialog. I typed interview information sheets and retyped corrected manuscript errors, while the secretary transcribed the tapes. After the secretary transcribed the tapes, I audited them, and edited major transcription errors. Both the secretary and I made multiple photocopies of the transcripts and interview information sheets. I mailed a photocopy of the transcribed conversation to each narrator. Enclosed with the photocopied transcript was a letter expressing thanks to the narrator for the interview, encouraging the narrator to review the transcript and correct it, if necessary. I also enclosed a stamped envelope addressed to me, in order to expedite a reply from the narrator. Four narrators responded with corrections and additions to their transcript. I added their corrections, in pen to the transcript. In order to keep track of the many stages of processing 25 oral history interviews, I used a production sheet. The production sheet served to keep track of the status of each interview during the processing stage, and is shown in Appendix H.

As I stated in the introductory chapter of this thesis, both my thesis project and the land use project shared the same oral history methods. Because of this, I had an opportunity rarely encountered by oral history interviewers: aerial field surveys.

During the months of June, July and August of 1980, I aerially surveyed the land described by the oral history narrators. From the information related by the oral history narrators, I was able to reaffirm the reliability of the interview information by aerially locating, photographing, and mapping the reported existing structures and old trails. In most instances I ground-truthed the reported structures, which consisted of a helicopter drop-off, where I then hiked to the structure and photographed it. I located, from the air, all of the cabins and trails reported by the oral history narrators.

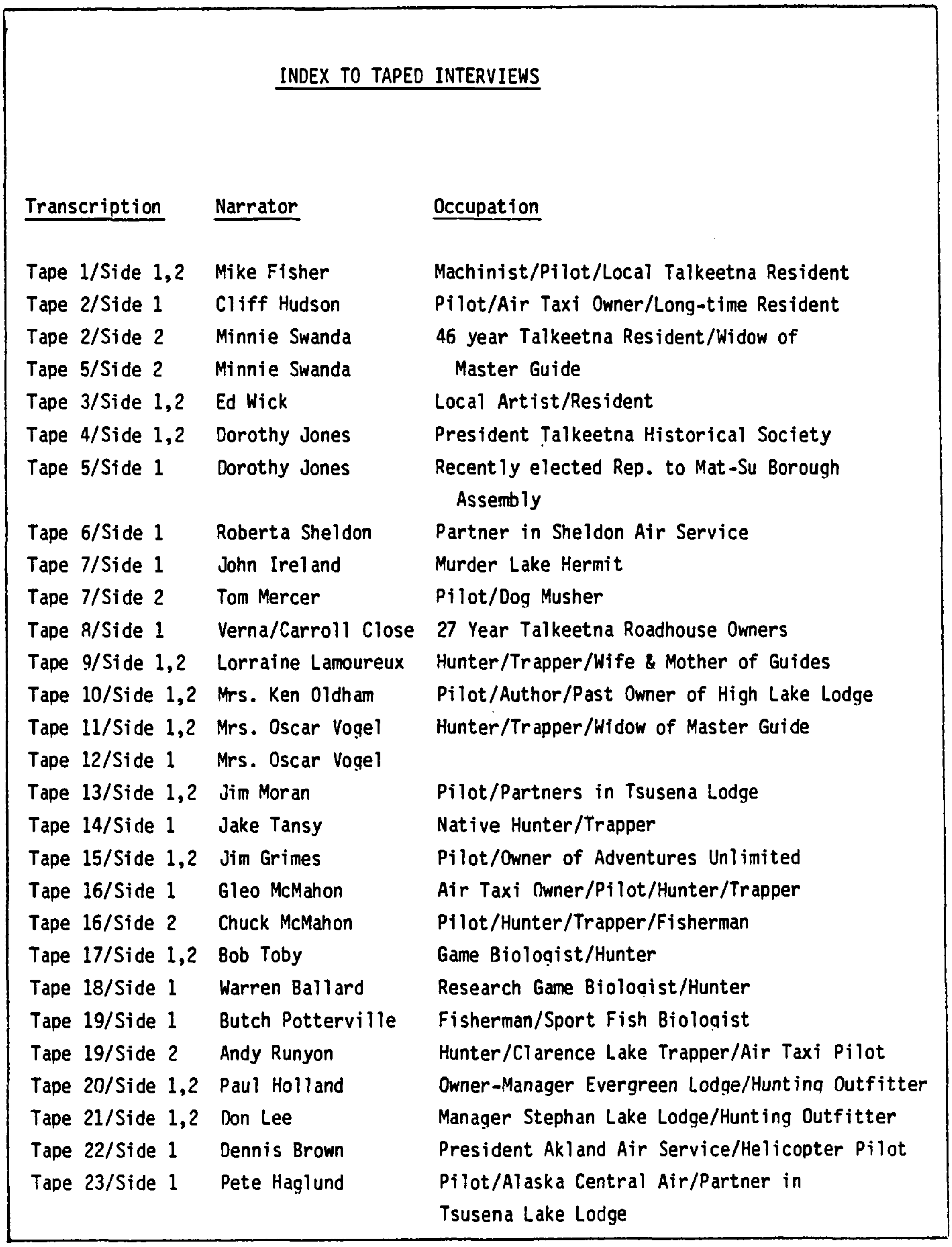
Archival Preparation

Tasks comprising archival preparation involved a series of steps leading to safekeeping and convenient access to the oral history collection. These steps included indexing the set of manuscripts, indexing the collection to correspond to the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, computerized oral history collection index, making copies of the tapes, audibly checking the recorded tape copies, labeling the tapes, composing the series description (Appendix I) and notifying the narrators of archival donation.

Figure 2 illustrates the index page of the manuscript notebook. After the manuscript index page, I placed the set of twenty-five interview information sheets, enabling the user to scan a capsulized version of the interview before turning to the entire interview.

In an effort to conform with the library's computerized oral history index, I completed index forms for each interview. These forms provided key information about the oral history collection and interview. A sample of the oral history computer index format is shown in Appendix J.

Media Services of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks made copies of the oral history tapes. I listened through all of the tapes to insure that each was correctly recorded. The ones that were only partially recorded I returned for re-taping. Upon receiving them a second time, I rechecked them for mistakes. With a full set of copied tapes, I labeled all copies with the following information: Tape #, Side #, Narrator name, Interviewer name, Date.



INDEX TO TAPED INTERVIEWS

Transcription	Narrator	Occupation
Tape 1/Side 1,2	Mike Fisher	Machinist/Pilot/Local Talkeetna Resident
Tape 2/Side 1	Cliff Hudson	Pilot/Air Taxi Owner/Long-time Resident
Tape 2/Side 2	Minnie Swanda	46 year Talkeetna Resident/Widow of Master Guide
Tape 5/Side 2	Minnie Swanda	
Tape 3/Side 1,2	Ed Wick	Local Artist/Resident
Tape 4/Side 1,2	Dorothy Jones	President Talkeetna Historical Society
Tape 5/Side 1	Dorothy Jones	Recently elected Rep. to Mat-Su Borough Assembly
Tape 6/Side 1	Roberta Sheldon	Partner in Sheldon Air Service
Tape 7/Side 1	John Ireland	Murder Lake Hermit
Tape 7/Side 2	Tom Mercer	Pilot/Dog Musher
Tape 8/Side 1	Verna/Carroll Close	27 Year Talkeetna Roadhouse Owners
Tape 9/Side 1,2	Lorraine Lamoureux	Hunter/Trapper/Wife & Mother of Guides
Tape 10/Side 1,2	Mrs. Ken Oldham	Pilot/Author/Past Owner of High Lake Lodge
Tape 11/Side 1,2	Mrs. Oscar Vogel	Hunter/Trapper/Widow of Master Guide
Tape 12/Side 1	Mrs. Oscar Vogel	
Tape 13/Side 1,2	Jim Moran	Pilot/Partners in Tsusena Lodge
Tape 14/Side 1	Jake Tansy	Native Hunter/Trapper
Tape 15/Side 1,2	Jim Grimes	Pilot/Owner of Adventures Unlimited
Tape 16/Side 1	Gleo McMahon	Air Taxi Owner/Pilot/Hunter/Trapper
Tape 16/Side 2	Chuck McMahon	Pilot/Hunter/Trapper/Fisherman
Tape 17/Side 1,2	Bob Toby	Game Biologist/Hunter
Tape 18/Side 1	Warren Ballard	Research Game Biologist/Hunter
Tape 19/Side 1	Butch Potterville	Fisherman/Sport Fish Biologist
Tape 19/Side 2	Andy Runyon	Hunter/Clarence Lake Trapper/Air Taxi Pilot
Tape 20/Side 1,2	Paul Holland	Owner-Manager Evergreen Lodge/Hunting Outfitter
Tape 21/Side 1,2	Don Lee	Manager Stephan Lake Lodge/Hunting Outfitter
Tape 22/Side 1	Dennis Brown	President Akland Air Service/Helicopter Pilot
Tape 23/Side 1	Pete Haglund	Pilot/Alaska Central Air/Partner in Tsusena Lake Lodge

Figure 2. Index Page of Manuscript Notebook

Resources Used

Multiple stages of the oral history process required the use of a variety of resources and the expenditure of time. To give the reader an idea of the types and the extent of resources used, I prepared tables showing the time, and number of staff I used to accomplish each step in my project. This information in tabular form appears in Appendix K.

As the tables clearly indicate, an oral history project, to the extent dictated by resources of time, budget, and objectives, can be a tremendous undertaking. I designed the tabular review of resources used to illustrate the extent I used those resources and to give those who are considering undertaking an oral history project a better understanding of the resources involved.

RESULTS

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the oral history interviews in three basic formats: (1) a grouping of conversation topics, (2) a historical narrative, and (3) historical interpretive program outlines.

I group the topics of conversation to show the number of times each topic is discussed in the collection of 25 interviews. See Table 2 for the list of conversation topics. I chose the narrative format to show a way in which the information gleaned from the oral history interviews can be woven into a cohesive historical representation of that geographical area. I used the historical interpretive program to demonstrate a way to convey the information from the oral history manuscripts to public audiences.

Summary of Oral History Topics

The summary presented in Table 2 lists occurrances of topics discussed in the series of 25 oral history interviews. The figure after each topic represents the number of narrators who discussed, in detail, the respective topic.

I questioned the narrators on all topics during every interview. However, all topics were not described in depth by all the narrators because of their admitted unfamiliarity with some topics. For example, I mentioned the topic of dogmushing during each of the 25 interview sessions. Yet only 7 narrators felt qualified to share information according to their experiences with dogmushing in the Upper Susitna River Basin.

TABLE 2

SUMMARY OF ORAL HISTORY TOPICS

Oral History Topic	Number of Interviews Topic was Discussed	Oral History Topic	Number of Interviews Topic was Discussed
Air Charter Prices	05	Game Populations	14
Air Plane	17	Guiding	08
Air Taxi	10	Guiding Prices	07
Alaska Railroad	03	High Lake	04
Archaeological Sites	04	Horses	03
All-terrain-vehicles	10	Hunting	21
Boating	08	Lake Louise	02
Motorized	03	Lodges	08
Non-motorized	08	Military	05
Cabins	14	Mining	15
Camping	02	Off-Road Vehicles	08
Changes		Photographing	05
Game Populations	10	Pilots	10
Land Uses	02	Prospecting	04
Lifestyles	03	Recreation	07
User Types	03	Sled Roads	06
Clarence Lake	07	Sight Seeing	07
Cross-Country Skiing	03	Skiing	05
Denali Highway	03	Snow Machining	10
Dog Mushing	07	Snowshoeing	04
Flying	10	Susitna Dam	06
Fishing	21	Susitna River	14
Fur-bearing Animals	04	Stephan Lake	13
Game	10	Tourism	04
Black Bear	09	Trapping	21
Brown Bear	09	Tsusena Lake	05
Caribou	12	Vogel, Oscar	04
Moose	13	Wolves	06

Other narrators chose not to discuss the topic, because they had not experienced it.

Topics of hunting, trapping and fishing were most frequently discussed. This is because these activities were the primary occupations of the early pioneers of the Susitna Basin. Most narrators, having had experience with these activities, related their familiarity to them during the oral history interviews.

It is interesting to note from information conveyed by narrators, growth in Susitna Basin land use was facilitated primarily by increase in access to the area. Means of access to and from the basin were most often discussed in relation to a particular land use. For example, the airplane and air taxi services were related during the oral history narrations most often associated with hunting, guiding, and fishing.

The changes perceived over the years by the oral history narrators focused primarily on game populations. Each narrator's ideas varied as to reasons why the game populations were changing. Some believed the profit motive was the cause, others felt that unsportsmanlike gun-happy hunters reduced herd numbers, and others related the ease of access brought about by snowmobile and airplane to the changing game populations.

The Susitna Dam was not a particularly popular topic. Most narrators were primarily interested in relating their personal land use experiences rather than speculating on the questionable Susitna topic. Those narrators who actually discussed the prospects of a dam did so in an opinionated fashion.

In the section that follows this topical breakdown, I integrate the topics in a narrative format.

Narrative: Historical Land Use in the Upper Susitna River Basin

I compiled the following narrative on historical land use with information obtained only from the oral history interviews. In present to show one way in which information from the oral history interviews can be conveyed, and to illustrate the descriptive values of local observations, the sentiments that are expressed, and the narrators' particular explanations for the changes that have occurred. This narrative, in one aspect, can be thought of as a local level window to the study area, demonstrating the narrators' observations of changes and local level activities that took place from the decade of the 1940's through the 1970's.

Throughout this previously mentioned time period, land use trends in the Upper Susitna River Basin have been greatly affected by the increase of motorized access to the area. It is with this theme of "access" that I relate the following narrative.

Non-motorized Access

Prior to World War II, the predominant means of access to areas within the Upper Susitna River Basin were by foot, dogteam, or horse. These non-motorized means of access in most instances were limited by season, and facilitated by the proximity of the railroad to the study area. As mentioned in chapter one, Introduction, the rail route touches the actual study area boundary at the village of Gold Creek, and passes through villages of Sherman and Curry (Figure 1). From these villages near the project area, people would leave the railroad and hike, ride by horse, or mush eastward into the basin. Another foot access route aided by train was from Chickaloon, a village south of the study area. This route, used extensively by trapper, hunter, and master guide Oscar Vogel during the 1930's and 1940's was described in an oral history interview:

> He'd (Oscar) take a bus or train to Chickaloon, pack up Rainbow Pass to the Talkeetna drainage and up Prairie Creek to Stephan Lake...He also has walked to Gold Creek from Stephan Lake (Fisher, 1980).

Foot Access

Types of land uses associated with foot access to and within the Upper Susitna River Basin prior to World War II were trapping, hunting, guiding, fishing, and prospecting. Few people trapped this area prior to World War II. These people had gentlemen's agreements on the extent of trapping territories. Oscar Vogel, a long-time trapper in the basin since the 1930's, trapped the area of Stephan and Fog Lakes, Prairie Creek, and drainages both north and south of the Susitna. His neighbors, 30 miles to the east of Stephan Lake, were Dick Tahowsly and Elmer Simco. They trapped the Clarence and Watona Lake area. Trap lines were sometimes as long as 70 miles, and each trapper was careful to trap only the territories understood to be theirs by gentlemens' agreement.

Another part of the study area trapped by non-motorized means prior to World War II was the area north of the Susitna River between Chulitna and the Swan Lakes. In describing this trapping area, one oral history narrator explained:

> Bodaker had a trapline that ran from his base over here at Chulitna going up the old mine road to Silverdome (Portage Creek)...The trail curved down around in the trees because that was where he set up

> his marten traps. He had to go upstream a little bit to cross (Portage Creek). At that time these lakes were called the Swan Lakes (Oldham, 1980).

Because of the large areas encompassed by trapping territories prior to World War II, neighbors were few and far between. Illustrating the distances traveled by foot in visiting neighbors, an oral history narrator related:

> We had a friend at Watona Lake (30 miles away)...Simco. He and Dick Tahowsly would come over and meet Oscar here at Stephan Lake, and then they would walk out his way (Vogel, 1980).

Prior to and during World War II, trapping territories defined by gentlemen's agreements covered portions of the study area depicted in Figure 3.

Dog Team

Dog teams were another form of access which assisted trappers in their travels within, to and from the study area. One trapper explained:

> The only way we did trapping up here (Clarence Lake) was with snowshoes or dogs...This was in the 50's... The dogs started phasing out with the snowmachines in the 60's (Runyon, 1980).

Trappers using both dogteam and snowshoes accessed the study area during the 1940's, following natural drainages of the Chulitna, Kosina, Oshetna, Portage, Susitna, and Talkeetna Rivers. These trappers lived along the rail belt or in the area of Lake Louise. One oral history narrator explained:

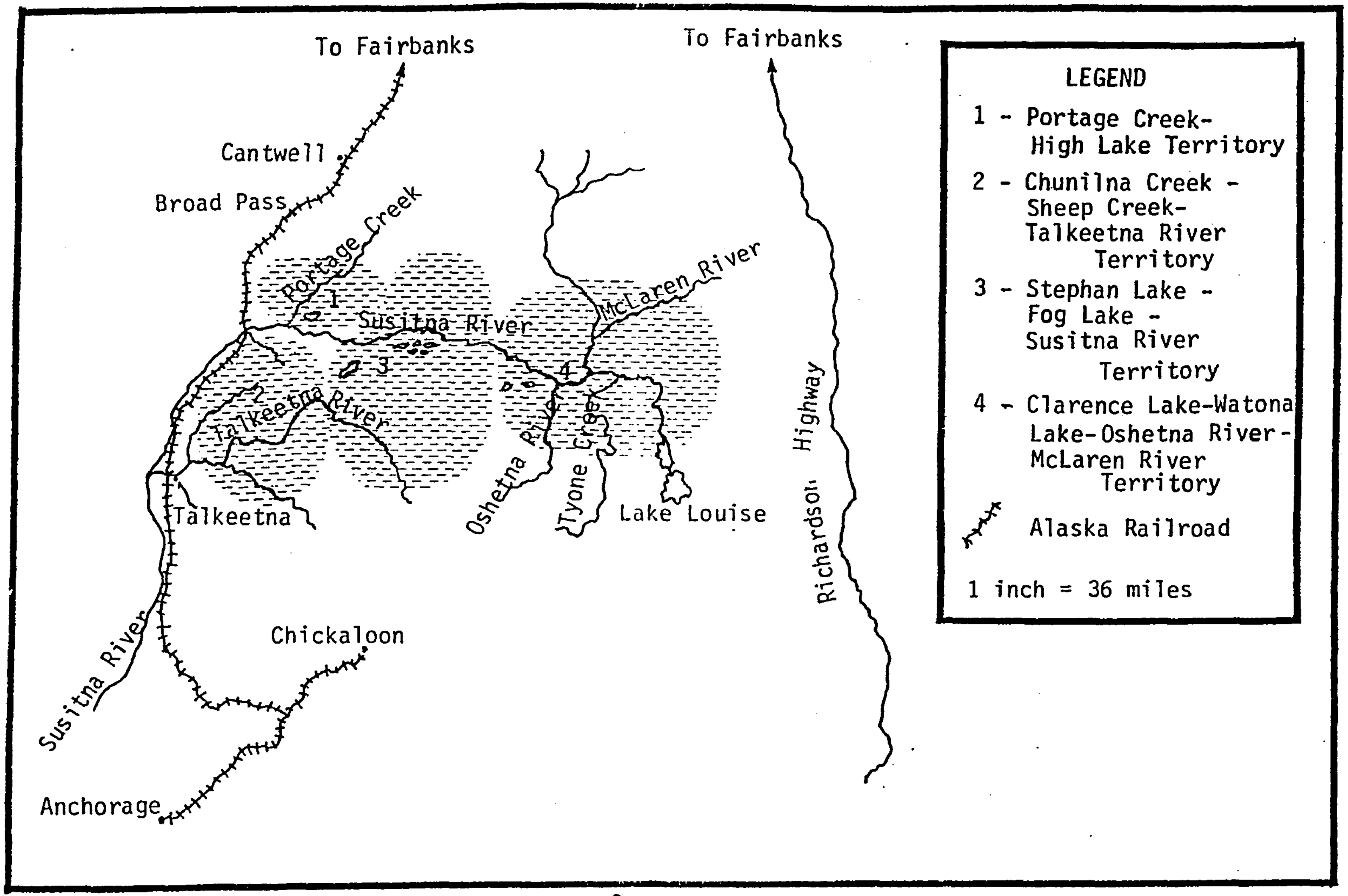

To Fairbanks
To Fairbanks
Cantwell
Broad Pass
Portage Creek
Susitna River
McLaren River
Talkeetna River
Oshetna River
Tyone Creek
Lake Louise
Talkeetna
Richardson Highway
Chickaloon
Susitna River
Anchorage
1
2
3
4
LEGEND
1 - Portage Creek-High Lake Territory
2 - Chunilna Creek - Sheep Creek-Talkeetna River Territory
3 - Stephan Lake - Fog Lake - Susitna River Territory
4 - Clarence Lake-Watona Lake-Oshetna River-McLaren River Territory
Alaska Railroad
1 inch = 36 miles

Figure 3.
Trapping Territories in the Upper Susitna River Basin established by Gentlemen's Agreements Prior to and During World War II.

> They would walk the (trap) line from the Talkeetna up the Chulitna and Talkeetna Rivers for beaver. Others used dogs. In those days there wasn't anybody settled out there. The beaver and the game was right close to the banks (Jones, 1980).

Foot and dogteam travel, as dictated by season, were common to prospectors in the Susitna Basin during the 1940's. An oral history narrator described the travels of miners and prospectors in an oral history interview:

> Most of those guys (miners and prospectors) in their younger days were prodigious in their travels for the purpose of prospecting. Rocky Commings tells incredible stories. He traveled places by dogteam and by foot where only in recent years people have gone via the airplane and thought they were in virgin country. Old Rocky looked at that study (Devil Canyon) forty years ago. They walked all through the Susitna drainage area. They crossed the glaciers and forded the creeks. Some of their feats would make modern-day crosscountry travel look relatively pale by comparison (Fisher, 1980).

Horse

Horses were another means of non-motorized access to the study area. They were used for guided hunts and freighting mining equipment and are still used in some guided hunting operations. Based out of Chickaloon, a village south of the study area, one big game guiding outfit, since the 1940's, used horses as a means of transporting clientele and hunting gear.

> One big game guiding outfit, his dad is a long-timer here, crosses over from Chickaloon and brings horses over the Talkeetna Mountains...A couple of years ago they dropped a horse down a crevasse and couldn't get him out and just had to shoot him down there. There's a

> certain type of client that likes to hunt that way. These aren't fancy hunts (Fisher, 1980).

Horses were also used by miners as a means of access to the study area prior to World War II. Portage Creek, Gold Creek, and Chunilna Creek, all located in the western portion of the study area, have a long history of mining use prior to the introduction of a caterpillar tractor use in the 1930's. Describing the role of horses in a mining operation within the study area, an oral history narrator explained:

> Back in the 20's there were Chinamen that were mining up there (Portage Creek)...Nobody has ever had much luck mining there...At one time Chinese laborers traveled up via the Alaska Railroad and they mined the high-grade ore. Then the ore was transported out by horses, I don't know the exact route, and put on the railroad (Jones, 1980).

Mining and trapping were complimentary seasonal activities as described by the following comment:

> Over the years, practically everyone that's spent much time in the country has trapped. The big deal was mining in the summer and trapping in the winter. There was a livelihood in that (Fisher, 1980).

But World War II had an impact on mining activity in the study area:

> ...before the second World War...that's when the mining activity, all the activity in the country really wound down. The country needed all the able-bodied men for other things, other than placer gold mining, which was the main mining around here. All the placer mines shut down and there wasn't much going on here for quite awhile (Fisher, 1980).

Prior to World War II, there were no year-round residents living in the study area. Access to the area during this time was primarily non-motorized. Foot, dogteam, and horses provided a means of access from villages located on the main transportation links on the outskirts of the study area. These villages served as stepping stones for access to and from the study area. Natural resources in the project area were important to its rural Alaskan users. Wildlife resources such as fish, game, furs, and mineral resources provided the basis for their livelihood which, in most instances they derived from the Susitna Basin. Their livelihood was dependent on access to the basin which varied by season. Winter trappers and hunters gained access to the study area by snowshoeing and dog mushing. Summertime prospectors, miners, guides and hunters accessed the project area by foot or horse. There wasn't much change in land use or access to the basin prior to World War II. The war effort was responsible for recruiting "able-bodied men" from villages around the study area. One narrator related the job climate prior to the war, and the work her husband did during the war:

> Jobs weren't just floating around-not until about 1942. Let's see, in 1942 and '43--he (her husband) was from the states a tilesetter by trade--he did some work for the Army in Fairbanks and at Fort Richardson. It was a very secretive type thing. They took them up there with vans that had no windows in them (Swanda, 1980).

Motorized Access

After the war, however, traditional land uses evolved simultaneously with the evolution of the traditional forms of non-motorized access towards motorized forms. Access to the project area by airplane, snowmachine, off-road vehicle and motorized boat dramatically influenced land use trends from World War II to the present day.

Airplane

The airplane broadened the use spectrum and dispersed uses within the study area by enabling travel to places commonly hard to reach by foot, dogteam or horse. The airplane also facilitated year-round access rather than the seasonal access limited by most non-motorized means. Since the 1940's, bush pilots based out of towns on the basin periphery have flown hunters, guides, fishermen, freight and recreationalists to all parts of the Upper Susitna Basin on a year-round basis. The towns and villages of Anchorage, Talkeetna, Lake Louise, Glenallen, Gakona, and Eureka historically served as stepping-off points for access to places within the basin.

During the 1940's the airplane assisted big game guiding operations. Many of the big game guides were trappers in the winter and were intimately familiar with the land in the Upper Susitna River Basin. These trapper/guides who for years accessed the Susitna basin by foot or dogteam for hunting and guiding purposes, began to incorporate the airplane into their guiding operations.

In addition to local land users living near the basin, trophy hunters from other states and countries used wildlife resources there. Two factors, both facilitated by the airplane, broadened the hunting spectrum within the basin. Trophy hunting was added to subsistence hunting because of the: (1) increase in use of Alaska as a source of trophy game by national and international hunters, and (2) the establishment of locally-based Alaskan guiding operations. Facilitated by air access, a guided trophy hunt for the national and international hunter took place in various phases. From Anchorage or Talkeetna, air taxi services provided transportation for guides and hunters to selected game areas within the basin. Elite hunters would travel to Anchorage and usually be met by the guide or a business partner, who in many instances was the guide's wife. One narrator who shared the responsibility of a guiding operation with her husband describes the stages as follows:

> We didn't fly. We had to have all our flying done. I stayed in Anchorage. We had the house then, and I would meet them (the hunters) at the airport and bring them to the house and they would stay there. They would get all their right kind of stuff, licenses, gear, and then go out. So I'd stay in town and regulate that. At that time he (her husband) was charging $125 a day, and the house was thrown in free. They didn't have to pay their airfare to camp (Stephan Lake) only to Anchorage (Vogel, 1980).

The daughter of a well-known hunting guide from Talkeetna described her father's guiding operation during an oral history interview:

> ...it was during the '40's, just before World War II and for a short time after World War II my father was a guide...They'd start in the spring season, and they would be gone most of the summer. Maybe they'd come in (to Talkeetna) very briefly for more supplies. And then they'd fly back out again and maybe they would change their camp and not be right at Stephan Lake, but somewhere out along the Fog Lakes...But they were always out for several weeks at a time. I would say three to six weeks, depending on what they were after. Sometimes hunters would come in and say they wanted a sheep, a brown bear, and a black bear and they would come up for all of the large game. And so they might move their camp from one point to

> another, depending on accessibility of the game and what they were after. So it didn't always mean that they started in one particular spot (Jones, 1980).

The degree to which the early big game guides used the airplane varied with their respective guiding philosophies. Some big game guides used the airplane to move their hunting camps within the basin, other guides made their hunters walk to spike camps. One partner in a big game guiding operation explained the philosophy behind making the hunters walk after they arrived at the main camp in the Susitna Basin:

> Oscar wasn't a pilot. He didn't believe in pilots. This way you walked, you earned your trophy. Flying around, you kill too many animals (Vogel, 1980).

So once hunters arrived by plane on Stephan Lake, Oscar made them walk. One friend of Oscar Vogel describes Vogel's method of moving his hunters and camps:

> Oscar was one of the original master guides of Alaska and he hunted this country alot. But he hunted it fair and square. He didn't make much use of the airplane. When he had fancy dudes from outside and he needed to move them, he'd say "Well, boys, I'm going to move you in easy stages." Somebody like Don Sheldon would ask him "Well these dudes are fancy dudes, they're out of shape. They can't move like you can, Oscar. How are you going to move them?" "Well, I'm going to move them in easy stages." But to Oscar Vogel, an easy stage was about a 20 mile hike with a heavy pack on your back. But that's the way he moved his dudes (Fisher, 1980).

The airplane served hunters and guides throughout the 50's. But by then, fish and wildlife regulations brought about changes in the area hunting, and guides began to perceive signs of changes in game populations.

> My husband used to be a guide in that area (Upper Susitna River Basin) starting about 1940 for about 12 years. The hunters would come to Talkeetna. There were no roads connecting Talkeetna at the time. They would come up here by train with all their gear and all their stuff and then they would load the big goose here (Talkeetna) and go into Stephan (Lake) for hunting and fishing. There were changes. Not as drastic up to the 50's. It was after the 50's that really--and during the war of course, there were a lot of things they couldn't do. Up to the 50's it was pretty much about the same thing over and over again. The Fish and Wildlife started setting up these areas that you couldn't go hunting in, and all that sort of thing...it was beginning about the 50's...it was harder to come into trophy type things. They were tightening down on the laws (Swanda, 1980).

Big game guides noticed a diminishing game population in the '50's as a result of military occupation in Alaska. One narrator felt the military was directly involved in the diminishing game populations in this way:

> ...Mostly in the hunting...sheep hunting...the Army went in there and they used the sheep as targets. They used to fly those airplanes over...it (sheep) was a high living target. They would shoot the sheep and caribou. When I was in there (Susitna Basin), I forgot how many they had found. They found them all stacked up there...past the Fog Lakes ...Yes that was years ago when the Army first came up...(Vogel, 1980).

Another oral history narrator, who was once the youngest licensed hunting guide in the territory of Alaska described the effect of wolf hunting and changes he saw take place during the 1950's:

> I've done wolf hunting in the 50's when it was legal and enjoyed it. There is a certain amount of risk involved. If you get a wolf running across a lake like this, (pointing to Lake Louise outside the

> window) it's not very difficult. But they don't always do that. It takes pretty good teamwork between the gunner and the pilot. Actually, I consider it a good fair sport as long as it's not overdone. At one time wolf populations decreased and they closed off wolf hunting in Unit 13, which is part of the area you're talking about. They didn't open wolf season again until...somewhere around'70 (Runyon, 1980).

In a style different than the guided hunts of the 1940's where local Alaskan towns served as stepping-off bases the appearance of hunting lodges in the late 1950's added a new aspect to the existing spectrum of hunting types in the Susitna Basin. Airplanes leaving from villages on the basin periphery flew to remote lodges located on lakes which accommodated both float and ski planes. Because of the convenient lodge locations within the basin, hunters and fishermen staying at these lodges had rather close access to the game they sought.

As with trapping, gentlemen's agreements on initial lodge locations typified early territory establishment by lodge owner-guides during the late 1950's. One oral history narrator and original lodge owner in the project area related:

> Both my husband and another gentleman were outfitting over here on Tsusena Lake in the mid-fifties. The other gentleman had actually been there first, but he was being fairminded when he said "We'll toss a coin, and if you win, you get Tsusena Lake, and if I win, you go somewhere else." My husband lost and so he moved over here to High Lake (Oldham, 1980).

The original lodge owners were their own pilots, construction workers and guides. They erected lodge buildings and built their own runways adjacent to them. Since there were no roads into the areas in the basin on which the lodges were located, most equipment was ferried in by plane. An original lodge owner described the establishment of their lodge in the late 1950's being facilitated by the airplane:

> My husband was and still is a successful guide and outfitter and in the '50's he had a very good reputation. We had an air taxi off Merill Field here (Anchorage) and we built the lodge (High Lake Lodge) originally so that we had some place to take our clients from here. And we started building up a national and international reputation. What we tried to do was to build a very modern lodge...My husband moved in here and in about 1960 we set up permanent camp and began building the buildings. There are eleven buildings, here now on concrete. A 2,000 foot runway, too (Oldham, 1980).

Another oral history narrator described the establishment of a different hunting lodge in the Susitna Basin, also facilitated by air access.

> The original owner completed the lodge about '65 or so...We had added cabins and additions ever since. It's a remote hunting and fishing lodge. It's all log construction. He did alot of the work himself... and he ripped all of his boards with a chain saw and made a sawmill...he is really a carpenter. The main lodge is located about centrally on Stephan (Lake). We have seven out-reach cabins that are in the area that we use for fishing and hunting (Lee, 1980).

By the early 1960's three main hunting lodges and territories existed on major lakes within the Upper Susitna River Basin. Tsusena Lake, High Lake, and Stephan Lake. These lodges continue to attract clientele since their beginnings in the early 1960's. In addition to providing access for float planes, the lakes, teeming with salmon, lake trout, and burbot provided a quality fishing experience. Describing the quality fishing and its common association with hunting, one oral history narrator went so far as to say,

> Well, there were rainbow and grayling out there. Beautiful fishing in the Stephan. The hunters would fish there, you know. One day two guys from Texas, they were hunting and they went fishing. One guy, he came in, Harper and Yokum were their names, and says, "Quick, quick, quick, you can't fish like this." He had two barbs on his line, but the point was off the hook. He said he caught two fish on one line. The other guy says "You are crazy." So he said, "Come out and I'll show you." Just when they were ready to give up, the other guy had his movie camera with him. He did it again. He caught two fish (Vogel, 1980).

Each lodge served as an intact field base with many modern conveniences, all of which were transported in by plane. One oral history narrator, and original lodge owner related the difficulty in air transport of lodge facilities to the basin:

> Of course there was no way in there except by air... It's very difficult to get in there...Everything was hauled in. It has hot showers and running water and we had a big electric plant...There are eleven buildings here now on concrete...My little girl was about five years old and really wanted a pony. My husband bought it (Shetland pony) from a man in Portland, Oregon and had flown this little Shetland pony in the back of his 180. He had tied her all up...By the time he got there (to the lodge) she'd gotten loose from the back of that 180 from kicking and (the plane) sounded like a can of sardines that had come alive. That poor little airplane--I really didn't think he was going to land it. Shetland ponies bite, you know, and she had a hold of him and he was trying to land the airplane and she was chewing on his arm and it was terrible...He got her out of that seat and he said "I think I'm going to shoot her! I mean I can't stand it!" But he didn't and we had her for four years and then we sold her to some people in Glenallen. Quite a strongminded Shetland (Oldham, 1980).

Field-based hunting lodges within the Upper Susitna River Basin continued to attract an international and national clientele from the 1950's and through out the 1960's. In describing this hunting clientele, a lodge owner related in an oral history interview:

> We'd go outside to book our hunts...It was no local residents but kings and princes from Europe that came to this lodge. Hubert Humphrey's son hunted there. And lots of famous hunters...scientists and even Roy Rogers and his son Dusty...In fact, Roy Rogers made three or four movies in this country. My husband was in a couple of them (Oldham, 1980).

During the 1960's the big game hunters and fishermen used the lodges on a seasonal basis. In the "off seasons", caretakers would babysit the lodges, as described by one lodge owner:

> We'd go outside to book our hunts, (and) we'd always leave someone there to babysit the lodge. Often a trapper who would work for us there, run our horses and trap wolverine and marten there in the winter (Oldham, 1980).

Air access and sports hunting: Whereas in the 1950's the airplane facilitated the establishment of field-based hunting lodge operations which catered to a national and international clientele, the airplane continued this service in the 1970's and facilitated use in the Upper Susitna River Basin by a different type of hunter, the sports hunter from urban Alaska. The proximity of the wildlife resources in the basin to urban areas of Anchorage, Palmer, Fairbanks, Paxson, and Glenallen, coupled with commercial services available from the air taxi pilot and private pilots alike, drew Alaskan resident sports hunters into the basin. But during the early and mid 1960's the addition of the local

Alaskan sports hunter did not create a dramatic effect on land use. As explained by a partner in an air-taxi operation:

> There was a period in 1969, 1970, 1971, and 1972 where we had a rush of these people who would call up and say "I want a moose." They'd show up (at our air taxi office) and want to be flown out and picked up the next day. They would want to spot it (the game) from the aircraft. My husband finally got to where he'd say, "I'm sorry. I'm not a meat market" (Sheldon, 1980).

Air access had multiple affects on land uses and resources in the Upper Susitna River Basin. In addition to broadening the hunting spectrum and dispersing uses throughout the basin, airplane access affected the game populations. In the late 1960's and early 1970's air taxi operators, pilots, and guides alike felt the growing pressures exerted by the sports hunter and noticed distinct changes in game populations, thus a decrease in quality hunting experiences. A partner in a Talkeetna based air taxi operation related:

> Sure. The hunters have removed the resource...the game. My husband (a pilot) would come home and say, "My God, I just took so-and-so to such-and-such an area today where I used to see 10 moose or 20 moose and I didn't see a one today." So I picked up over the past years that he was going into areas that he had traditionally gone on a conservative basis and finding that the game wasn't there any more (Sheldon, 1980).

Further describing the attitude of the sports hunter this same narrator related:

> They'd want my husband to fly several times around the lake and spot before they landed. He'd say "Now I'll take you into a good game area and land you on

> a lake, and pick you up when you want me to pick you up." And so they'd go over there and then say "We want you to fly us around for a half hour"...And then they'd (sports hunters) say "Our plan is we see a moose, we're going to get it, and we'd like you to come back tomorrow." And he'd say "You can't get it, dress it out properly, haul it to the lake and be out in 24 hours." And this is where the fights would start. Getting back to your questions, the hunters were so stable in numbers that in these years I mentioned that there was a rush of these people who wanted a quick moose just for their freezer. They would argue about price. It was very unpleasant, very unpleasant. And as a result, the moose population in the area went down, too...because the other two pilots in town were getting the same amount of static and everyone needed the money, everyone needed the traffic. But everyone did have basically the same attitude that this was kind of unethical (Sheldon, 1980).

A pilot from Talkeetna related his experiences and observations on the attitude of sports hunters and its affect on the game population during the mid 1960's:

> I'd land them (hunters) usually on frozen lakes. In the wintertime you land on skiis. It's possible to land on any of these larger lakes on skiis in wintertime. It makes the fixed-wing airplane roughly the equivalent of a helicopter as far as harvesting game because there never is any game in the winter that you can't land within a half mile of in a Supercub. So you might as well tell the helicopter boys to go ahead and hunt. I remember one instance in particular flying some survey crews up to Fog Lakes...about 1966 flying a floatplane for Sheldon at that time. I don't know what their purpose was, but it was probably geology...They had a young helper with them that they hired in Anchorage and the kid was gun happy. I made the mistake of taking him out there first, and before anyone could get to him, he'd dropped three caribou. His boss was enraged, of course, because the camp had no need for that meat...The boss made him stay up all night and work on those caribou and prepare the meat and then I hauled the meat in the next day and gave it to poor people who needed it. So the caribou weren't wasted, but if we just let

> that kid run amuck. The only reason I tell that story is because it's not atypical that story happens again and again all over this valley. That's the reason the game is depleted now (Fisher, 1980).

Another air taxi pilot related the wasteful attitude of the sports hunter with regard to the game:

> It's the amount of game that has been killed off. So many guys will go out to an area and shoot. They used to be able to shoot three caribou, but they'd walk up to them and say "Well, these heads aren't big enough." Our GI's are the worst up here for that...They have no reason to bring any meat home. The mess sargent, he doesn't mess with it, and they get into a big herd of caribou...three or four hundred dead...Hell, I've seen them laying dead all over the doggone hills out there, not even walked up to. Between them and the wolves, they're the last ones to go hungry (Hudson, 1980).

In addition to sports hunting by both urban and rural Alaskans during the 1960's and 1970's, the airplane facilitated aerial trapping. One air taxi operator, being familiar with the country, would scout for places that had no set traps. Once he would spot these places from the air, he would land (on skiis), set a few traps and return a few days later to check the traps. He described his method of aerial trapping in an oral history interview:

> I set a few (traps) every place I see no one trapping and it looks like a good place. Why, I set them all along the Susitna River, here, (pointing to the map)...up Gold Creek, just everywhere, all over the country...I just land and set one or two traps for wolverine...Wolverine and wolf is what I mostly trap...The last time I got lynx was about five years ago. Yeah, there was quite a few lynx along the river, but they are at a low cycle and they haven't been there for a long time (McMahon, 1980).

Facilitated by the airplane, pressures exerted by sports hunting on game populations were not only felt by air taxi operators and pilots. Guides and hunting lodge owners in the basin described the increase in sports hunting. During an oral history interview an original lodge owner within the basin described the increase in sport hunting clientele after selling the lodge in the early 1970's:

> We were selling it (the lodge) to a young couple who wanted very much to live there...They did well the first season, but they advertised it locally, which we had never done, because the area could not support a large number of hunters. It was a place where one, two, or three people could hunt, six or seven... But I don't think we ever took more than eight moose in the fall...ever, because we couldn't do that and have moose for next year...So in 1971, he made the mistake of hauling in 30 to 35 people and hauling the moose out. 'Course that, pretty much in one season, wiped out the area for game (Oldham, 1981).

Another narrator and air taxi pilot commented on the affect of airplanes on the game:

> That (Upper Susitna River Basin) is good bear country in here, too. In fact, there are almost too many grizzly. They are wilder than they used to be. It's a lot harder to get them, because there are so many airplanes and helicopters, and it must be that any time anybody sees them, they must dive on them. There are airplanes flying all over this country all the time. You can't hardly land anywhere for an hour or two when you will hear an airplane in the distance or else it flies right over you. It wouldn't affect the game that much if they didn't come down and buzz them or shoot at them from the air (which some guys do I have heard). It scares the heck out of them and they get pretty wild (McMahon, 1980).

Illegal cabin use: As one means of motorized access to the Upper Susitna River Basin, the airplane was largely responsible for: (1)

broadening the spectrum of hunting types, (2) increasing number of users, primarily hunters, and (3) affecting the game and game population. In addition to these influences on the land, air access to the basin had still another affect. The airplane provided access throughout the year to lakes and streams within most isolated parts of the basin. Miles from the peripheral concrete transportation network, cabins appeared, clustered on lakes, or solitary along streams and lakes in increasing numbers during the latter 1960's and throughout the 1970's. These cabins were primarily associated with hunting. The appearance of cabins on isolated lakes and streams throughout the basin brought with it the problem of illegal cabin use and cabin raids which were facilitated by air access. One narrator who is a partner in a guiding operation described the dilemma of illegal cabin use of their privately owned cabins:

> We have hunting cabins in there (in the basin)...They are frequently used by everyone else. The people up in that area fly the air taxi operator...It's not to our liking, but we can't do anything about it if we're not there. We have cabins in three hunting locations and every one of them gets used...The law of averages says that one of these days we are going to prosecute them because we have lost so much equipment (Lamoureaux, 1980).

Other uses associated with the airplane: Although the airplane largely facilitated guiding operations, trophy hunting and sports hunting in the basin, other types of uses also depended on the airplane. Though it is known from mining records that during the 1960's mining operators in the area of Portage Creek used the airplane to transport freight, only one oral history narrator documented this. Recreational uses such as photography, sightseeing, cross-country skiing, boating and fishing, all primarily associated with lodges and facilitated by the airplane grew in popularity throughout the 1970's. In describing the use of a float plane for fishing, a lodge manager and pilot related:

> We have to fly it (Susitna River)...It's kind of a "zip up and float down" trip. It's about 40 miles upstream...(and takes) about six or seven hours (to float down) because we stop and fish at the tributaries. We land here with floats (pointing to the map) and then we walk over to Deadman Creek. It's real good fishing. We just float-plane in and walk to Deadman Creek (Lee, 1980).

Cross country skiing in the basin emerged as a commercial recreational activity associated with the lodges and wilderness outfitters in the late 1970's. The role of cross country skiing in the lodge enterprise as well as the use of the airplane in ridge top skiing were mentioned in one lodge manager's discourse:

> Cross country skiing is excellent up there (Stephan Lake). With cross country skiiers, you are speaking of not necessarily low class people, but people that want to save the expense of going down-hill skiing and to get out in the woods and see it. Your clientele is a very narrow group of people. The people are there and are available. It has tremendous potential and of course the rates go down to absolutely about nothing...I am trying to encourage it. We have an alpine snowmobile up there (Stephan Lake) that makes trails. I am trying to encourage it now with the cub--(Super cub) ridge top skiing. I will drop these guys off cross country skiing about 3,000 feet above the lodge and then it's all down hill... real easy going (Lee, 1980).

Sightseeing flights over the basin and neighboring mountain ranges grew in popularity during the 1960's and throughout the 1970's. Associated with flights to the lodge, a pilot and lodge manager described a typical scenic flight:

> When I fly people around Stephan (Lake), we include a scenic flight. I will fly in the evening...show them bears in the river. I always know where the moose and caribou are, and show them all the animals. They usually get so thrilled to see so far and so much. Occasionally, I will fly the rivers real low (Lee, 1980).

A commercial air taxi pilot described sight seeing flights in the basin not associated with lodge clientele:

> Yeah...I've flown sightseers over the Susitna Drainage ...in the summer you get quite a few sightseers here as people from California and all around would just like to see a bear. Your typical objective is they'd like to see a bear and a moose and a caribou and maybe some spawning salmon in a creek. It used to be in a one hour charter worth about $125...per whole airplane carrying as many as 3 or 4 people depending upon the aircraft. In that hour you could practically guarantee to show people at least one large bull moose, and probably some cows and a bear or two. This was about 10 years ago. About 1970 you could still do it. But now, if people come up with their cameras and expectations in one hour charter, unless you're exceptionally lucky, and just have some concentration of game spotted, you're lucky to be able to show them two things. Two separate things. The game is just not as plentiful, it's been pushed back further as more and more activity comes into the country the game itself moves further back into the hills (Fisher, 1980).

In describing the variety of airplane-dependent recreational uses which emerged during the late 1960's and continued throughout the 1970's, a lodge owner in the Upper Susitna River Basin related:

> Oh, yes, we've always had people who would just come to sightsee or photograph since we began the lodge. They may take their fishing pole along, especially the ones that fly here from Lake Hood (Anchorage) for just the day...some would stay more than a day. There was a lady who used to come up and train her dog up there...he was a field trial champion and she said it was the best place in the world to train her dog...in the water...there weren't any distractions. I think he was second or third in Alaska. Yes, we had lots of people...and always a Fourth of July party. Sometimes we had so many planes (at their lodge) they had to leave them on the runway. They'd come and spend the weekend, because a few of those people drank, and so they couldn't leave because once you start to drink, you're there for eight hours after you stop drinking and we had a lot of beds...It was a great place to have a celebration because you couldn't hurt yourself. Some of those people would even swim in that icy cold water (Oldham, 1980).

Air access summary: The airplane played an important role in affecting land and resource use from the time of the 1940's and throughout the 1970's. Hunting is and was the most popular land use within the basin. From the time of the elite guided trophy hunts of the early 1940's and throughout the evolution of big game trophy hunting to sports hunting in the 1970's, the airplane has effected all aspects of hunting in the Upper Susitna River Basin. Land uses facilitated by the airplane were: trophy hunting (guided and non-guided), sports hunting, guiding, recreation lodge establishment and maintenance, fishing, trapping, boating, photographing, skiing, mining, and sightseeing. Unlike the seasonal uses associated with non-motorized means of access, the airplane facilitated year-round land use. Most of the aforementioned land uses took place at lake locations in the basin, which provided year-round landing strips, except during freeze-up or break-up.

The following changes in land use were facilitated by air access: increases in sports hunting and changes in the attitude of sports hunters during the late 1960's and into the 1970's, the change in the size of game populations, increase in number of cabins and in illegal cabin use in the basin. New land uses which evolved after the era of non-motorized access to the basin have remained. These new land uses, all facilitated by air access, consist of recreational lodge operations, skiing, hiking trips, sightseeing flights, and air-drop sports fishing and hunting. Traditional forms of land use such as trapping and mining, which for years employed non-motorized access continued. However, the non-motorized forms of access for these land uses were replaced by the motorized means, especially the airplane. Presently, these forms of non-motorized access (foot, dogteam, horse) are used primarily for recreational purposes.

Development of the Highway System

Motorized access in the form of the airplane was largely responsible for increases in land use within the basin. However, other factors, simultaneous in occurrence with the increase in air access contributed to the increase in motorized access, and thus land use within the Susitna Basin. The transportation system, which presently encircles the Susitna Basin improved with Road Commission work on highways north and south of the Susitna Basin. Work on the Glenn Highway, approximately 40 miles to the south of the basin during the 1940's, and the construction of the Denali Highway (north of the basin) during the 1960's enabled closer and more convenient stepping-off points to areas within the basin. Whereas in the 1940's stepping-off points for foot, horse, dogteam and air access were from small communities on the railbelt to the west of the basin, or from villages along the Richardson Highway to the east of the basin, work on the Glenn Highway to the south in the 1940's and the Denali Highway to the north in the 1960's brought road access closer to the basin.

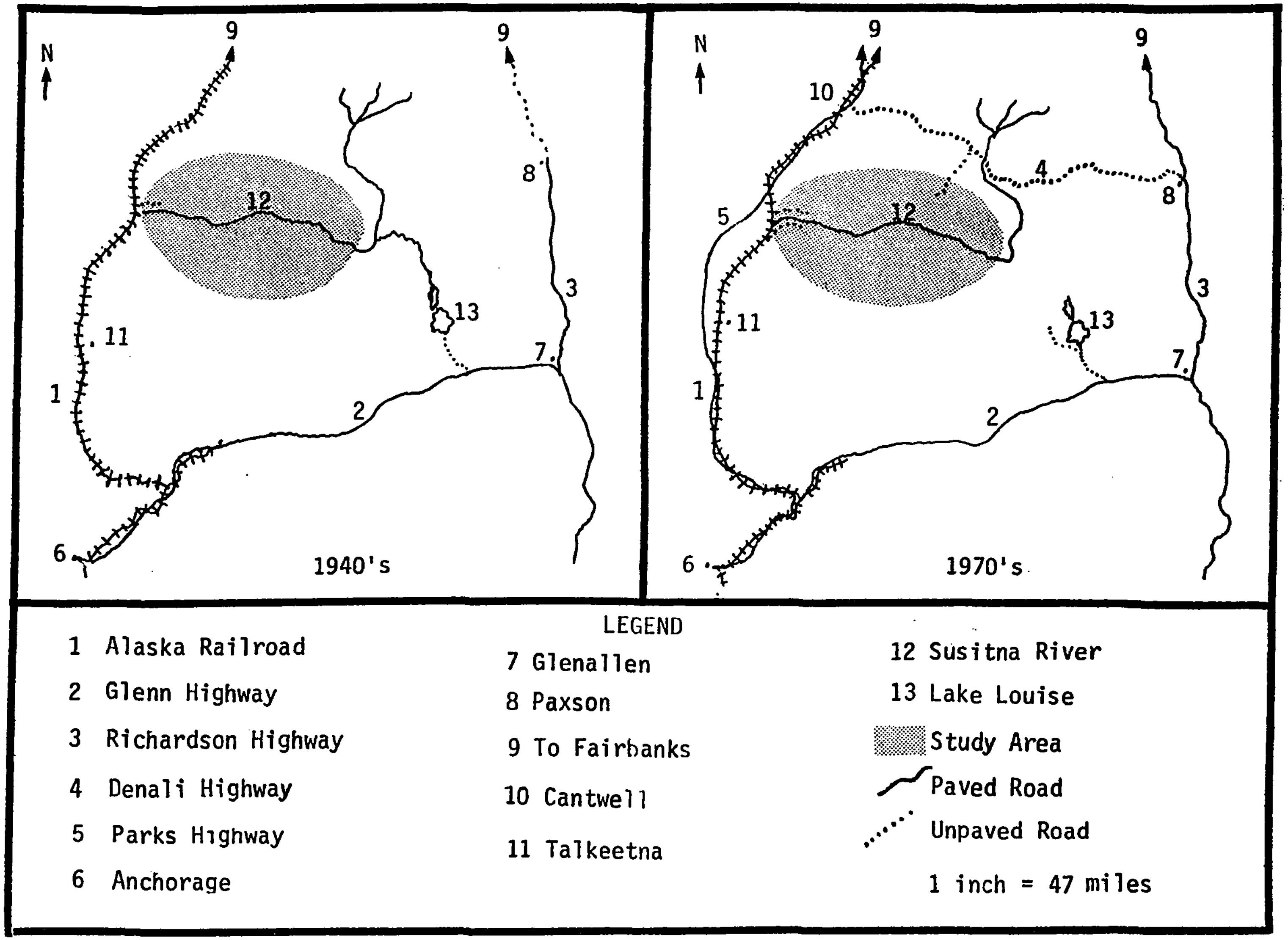
Other road access included the road to Talkeetna, the road to Lake Louise, and the Parks Highway. These encroaching transportation links facilitated air access to the basin and encouraged other types of access such as the snow machine. A diagram of the encroaching transportation system is depicted in Figure 4.

Snowmachines

Snowmachines emerged as a means of motorized access to the Susitna Basin in the 1960's. Used primarily for hunting, trapping and lodge maintenance, snow machines since the early 1960's provided a form of access much easier than traditional means of foot, horse, or dogsled. Snow machines replaced traditional non-mechanized forms of access. Before the advent of snowmachines in the Upper Susitna River Basin, foot, horse, and dogsled were used out of necessity for hunting, trapping, and lodge operations in the 1940's, 1950's and early 1960's. Presently, these forms of access are used only for recreation or emergencies.

An oral history narrator mentioned the displacement of foot and dogsled by snowmachines:

> I first started seeing snowmachines at any great number in the 1960's...when I first started trapping up here, the only way we did trapping was snowshoes or dogs. Dogs started phasing out in the '60's (Runyon, 1980).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1940's
1970's
LEGEND
1 Alaska Railroad
2 Glenn Highway
3 Richardson Highway
4 Denali Highway
5 Parks Highway
6 Anchorage
7 Glenallen
8 Paxson
9 To Fairbanks
10 Cantwell
11 Talkeetna
12 Susitna River
13 Lake Louise
Study Area
Paved Road
Unpaved Road
1 inch = 47 miles

Figure 4. The Encroaching Peripheral Transportation System.

Another narrator and lodge owner described the snowmachine displacing the dogsled for trapping during the 1960's:

> Tom (at Stephan Lake) had a winter dog team, but then he was one of the first in the country to use a snowmachine for his trap line (Vogel, 1980).

Another narrator and pilot described snowmachine access to the basin and its affect on hunting activity during the 1960's:

> During the '60's you could see...a thousand caribou migrating from east to west and they'd follow the Susitna drainage...At one time we had a three caribou limit and if you look at the proximity to the roads as far as the caribou is concerned there's the Denali Highway and people were coming in the Denali Highway when snowmobiles came into vogue. It didn't take people very long to discover in the winter that you could run a caribou down on a snowmobile. Just run them until they'd run ragged and then kill them and people were doing exactly that and filling up their pickups. Three guys at three caribou each was about a pickup load, a heavy-duty pickup load and there were many such loads made like that out of the country. That's what's depleted that and why I've never expected to see caribou like that again in the Fog Lakes (Fisher, 1980).

Another pilot and guide related the impact of snowmachine access on game populations in the 1960's:

> It was a very bad situation and then we had a combination of the snowmachines coming in and bad winters and it cut the (caribou) herd down quite a bit. Most people were worried sickless about it (Runyon, 1980).

Relating air access and snow machine access to cabin raids within the basin a pilot during an oral history interview narrated:

> Snowmobiles have acquired a real poor name, even worse than the pilots because for years anything that was out in the country like that was pretty safe. People just didn't bother it. As soon as the airplane became generally available and everyone and his brother had one, there were alot of riffraff flying around in airplanes that were making depredations on cabins. It made having a cabin back in the country far less desirable than it used to be. To add insult to injury, the snowmobilers found out that they could penetrate into a lot of the same country that the airplanes were and so the way it is now, in 1980 Alaska, people really think twice before they try to build anything decent out in the country because so many of them have had trouble (Fisher, 1980).

Snowmachines are also used to make ski tracks for recreational skiing within the basin. Associated with the lodges, a typical ski tour package might include a flight into the basin, lodge accommodations, and daily ski touring trips.

Snowmachines are usually driven or flown into the basin. A long-time pilot and narrator described transporting snowmachines by air for use in the basin:

> I've flown them (snowmachines) all over...put 'em right inside the airplane...usually they (snowmachine users) trap. I've hauled at least a dozen to Lake Stephan since I've been flying (1950's). The people in the area use them to get wood and the trappers use them...(Hudson, 1980).

Another pilot also described transporting snowmachines into the basin in the 1960's:

> The only snowmachines that I know of that got up there (Susitna Basin) are the ones we hauled up in airplanes. There are a few that we took out that way...When snowmobiles were really in vogue and people realized that you could get around in them was about the late '60's before the snowmobile got good enough. Then

> the snowmobile traffic expanded rapidly, we were flying quite a few of them, people were buying them; and people loved them because you could get out in the country; you didn't have to work very hard at it. It's only been in the last couple of years that that's died off. It's died off because of the high price of snowmobiles and the unavailability of fuel. You'll see less and less (Fisher, 1980).

The Denali Highway (north of the basin) and Glenn Highway to the south, provided access for snowmachines from Eureka and Lake Louise. These highways permitted cheap, easy winter access to the basin.

Local commentators observed and felt hunting pressures from snowmachine use, particularly from the Eureka area. A number of people described what they thought to be adverse affects of these hunters.

> Caribou...we don't know what happened to them. Possibly snowmachining from up in the Eureka area. You know they used to go up there and fire into the herds and they killed twenty and thirty of them and just keep one...(Lamoureaux, 1980).

When not driven overland into the basin, snowmachines were flown in by plane. Besides uses of trapping and hunting, snowmachines served a maintenance function at lodges and cabins within the basin enabling convenient wood gathering or ski trail tracking. Compared to its non-motorized equivalents (dogsled, snowshoe or foot) snowmachine transportation was an economical means of access to and within parts of the basin during the 1960's and early 1970's.

Off-Road Vehicles

Off-road vehicles, commonly known as ORV's, consist of a wide variety of wheeled and tracked vehicles ranging from the popular snowmobile to the D9 Caterpillar tractor (Rhoads, 1980). In this section, I concentrate on off-road vehicles other than the snowmachine. Photographs from the Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Talkeetna Collection, Box 1, Folder 12, depict off-road vehicles such as Caterpillar tractors and Nodwells used in association with mining activity in the Susitna Basin in the 1930's.

Besides mining activities for which there are few oral history descriptions of off-road vehicle use, these vehicles were used to assist lodge operators in construction and maintenance. A narrator and one-time lodge owner described the use of an off-road vehicle in establishing a hunting lodge in the early 1960's:

> We hauled everything in (to our lodge) by air. The only exception to that was that we had a tract vehicle in some of our camps on this side of the river (south of the Susitna River). And one here (High Lake)...a caterpillar. We came in and winched it across Portage Creek in a 20 miles per hour current. It (the caterpillar tractor) came up here on the railroad and there is a sighting right here at Chulitna and so then they off-loaded it and took it up the old mining road (Oldham, 1980).

The caterpillar tractor was also used to make their 2,000 foot landing strip.

> In those days we didn't have a good landing strip, so we just kind of pushed out a little bit of the bushes...My husband was making these 300 foot landings...There is now a 2,000 foot runway...(Oldham, 1980).

Another narrator related off-road vehicle use for mining and hunting in the far southeast corner of the basin:

> You might say since year one, they brought equipment in there to operate their mines and they just kept extending themselves. It looks like an army invasion about the first of September (hunting season)...snow-machines don't really chew up the country like tracked vehicles will and some of these big tire rigs (Runyon, 1980).

Relating off-road vehicle use for hunting and its transportation route, a lodge manager said:

> We have a four-wheel drive at the half-way cabin. They drove it over from Gold Creek up this Cat trail to get on top (of the ridge). Once you are on top, you can drive it in. It's a four-wheel drive and all four wheel just go about anywhere...I would guess that he got it in the late '60's. We have big tires and it just goes. We use it only to carry moose. It's not feasible to just ride it around. So it is in use during the hunting season (Lee, 1980).

Another owner of a lodge located in the central portion of the basin described the use of the off-road vehicle for hunting purposes:

> He (the original owner) had a tract vehicle in here in the early '60's...We still have one in here and he would take hunters all the way up here into Tsusena Creek. (This tracked vehicle is like a bombardier... like you would call a weasel...a small tank without ...like a tractor). He would take it up Tsusena Creek drainage and hunt all along here and all the little outcroppings I'm pretty sure that he would go up Clarke Creek quite a bit and around this way up towards Deadman, too (Moran, 1980).

Another oral history narrator and co-owner of a lodge described the integral part played by off-road vehicles since the lodge establishment in 1958.

> Since 1958 it was used primarily as a hunting lodge. The original owner over the years has taken equipment

> in there. We have a series of (tracked) trails up in Tsusena Creek...which have been there ever since 1958. They used to come over land from the Broad Pass area, up the Jack River, up through Caribou Pass, up by the lakes by Caribou Pass. They would come in this way (pointing to the map)...up the Denali Highway and down to Tsusena. Those two areas were primarily access trails for that area. It's tough going in the summer...They were bringing in equipment--tract rigs--Oliver Sedgegree tractor went in, which is an antique in itself. It went in when they first built the lodge, at least, or before. Of course that was 1958 when the Denali Highway opened...a little more access to that area (Hagland, 1980).

Access to the Susitna Basin for mining purposes using off-road vehicles from points along the Denali Highway is further discussed by an oral history narrator and lodge owner. During the interview, he related a novel experience with cheechako miners, and his response.

> A lot of people come up here and are looking for gold all the time. A guy just came in here from Spain. Him and another guy. They had a tract vehicle and a trailer. They wanted to know where Delusion Creek was...It is down near Watona. They were going into a claim that they had bought-never been up in this country before. He says "Well, we can drive right to it." I told them there is no road back to it. That's 40 miles back in there...they had a little tract vehicle. That's the last I saw of them (Grimes, 1980).

This same narrator described off-road vehicle access to the Susitna Basin for hunting purposes.

> Some of the hunters can get in there all the way with their ATV's. If you go way back in there, there is some real good moose hunting. I got a trail that comes from the (Denali) highway off Canyon Creek (Grimes, 1980).

Since their gradual introduction into the Susitna Basin from the 1930's off-road vehicles have come to play an increasingly important role in the spectrum of land uses which employ a motorized means of access. Used primarily by miners, hunters, and for lodge operations, off-road vehicles have contributed to land use activities in the Susitna Basin by the simple fact that they create their own access route. By cutting new trails into the land, or improving existing trails, off-road vehicles penetrated to points within the basin, providing access to choice game areas and mining areas.

Improvements in the main transportation network around the Susitna Basin periphery have also increased off-road vehicle use. Completion of the Denali Highway in 1957 marked the beginning of access to the basin from the north. Completion of the Talkeetna spur enhanced off-road vehicle access to the Susitna Basin from the west. Road commission work on the Glenn Highway in the 1940's and improvements thereafter as well as improvements to the Lake Louise Road encouraged off-road vehicle access to the basin resources from the south and southeast.

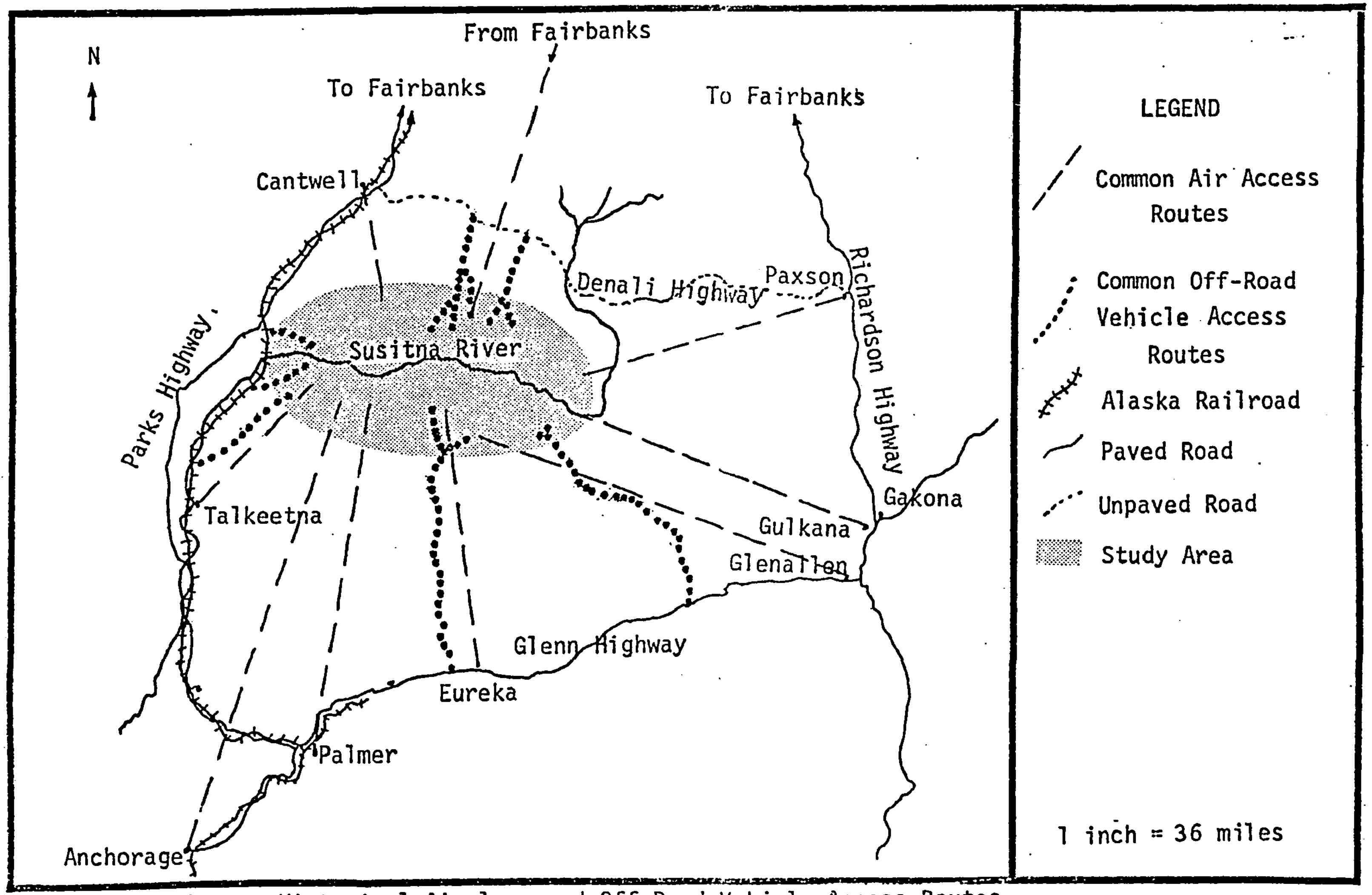
With the increased penetration into the basin by off-road vehicles came increased extraction of its resources. As with the snowmachine, off-road vehicles enabled hunters to easily carry their game from the area. Beyond augmenting the snowmachine's ability to access areas within the basin for hunting, off-road vehicles enabled year-round access rather than access limited to periods of snowfall, as with the snowmachine.

Intrinsic to air access to the Susitna Basin are air strips: take-off and landing points. These "stepping-on-and-off" points for air access were provided by towns on the transportation network surrounding the basin, and by lakes, gravel bars and runways within the basin. Off-road vehicles differed from air access in that the travel route, primarily dictated by terrain, was more important than the beginning and endpoints (airstrips) which are essential to air access. Because off-road vehicles created access as they moved, terrain was an important consideration for establishment of access routes. As a consequence, villages and towns on the basin periphery, which were so important to airplane access and earlier forms of access were less important for off-road vehicle access. The additional ability to create access as they moved enabled off-road vehicles to be more independent of villages and towns than the airplane. Thus, access routes away from villages and towns evolved. Access routes by plane and off-road vehicle, from points on the main transportation network around the basin are shown in Figure 5.

Motorboat Access

Oral history narrators related two main types of motorized boat access to the Susitna Basin since the 1940's--airboats and river boats. Airboats were propelled by an aircraft engine with the rudder above the water, and riverboats were propelled by an outboard motor. Since the early 1960's lodge owners and outfitters, and lakeside cabin owners used motorboats for lake fishing in the Susitna Basin. However, these types of motorized boats were rarely used for access to the basin.

> Oh, yeah, we had airboats...steered by a rudder which is above the water, meaning that the draft was such that they could go in the water and have better control. Whereas on riverboats the outboards they were down and you could shear pins and you'd hit sleepers unless you know the river well. My father ran the Susitna and Talkeetna (rivers) for many years ...I used to go with him (Jones, 1980).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To Fairbanks
To Fairbanks
Cantwell
Denali Highway
Paxson
Richardson Highway
Parks Highway
Susitna River
Talkeetna
Gakona
Gulkana
Glenallen
Glenn Highway
Eureka
Palmer
Anchorage
LEGEND
Common Air Access Routes
Common Off-Road Vehicle Access Routes
Alaska Railroad
Paved Road
Unpaved Road
Study Area
1 inch = 36 miles

Figure 5. Historical Airplane and Off-Road Vehicle Access Routes to the Upper Susitna River Basin

Compared to riverboat use, relatively few people described airboat use during the interviews. A greater number of oral history narrators described their experiences with outboard motor use in accessing the Susitna Basin. Riverboat services using powerful outboard motors evolved as a type of motorized "water" access to the basin during the 1970's. Transporting hunters, fishermen, and sightseers, the riverboat services based out of Talkeetna have increased in numbers and clientele. Present-day services include day-trips upriver to Devil Canyon on the Susitna River, drop camps for hunting, fishing and photography, and canoe hauls to river locations specified by clientele.

In describing one local Talkeetna riverboat service, a narrator and assistant riverboat operator described the owner's riverboat operation:

> He takes people fishing up the Susitna River, the Talkeetna River, and up in the Sheep River area. He uses jet craft. They're about 24 foot, I believe, jet boat. They're powered by industrial engines. He's been working for four or five years. He started out with a small 18 foot Polar Craft...It (the riverboat service) is just mainly taking people fishing, sightseeing, dropping hunters off, taking them upriver and dropping them off anywhere they choose. A lot of hunters would know the area and where they would want to go. Sometimes if he's spotted game, or like if he's seen a lot of black bear in the area, he'll leave the hunters off there...So he takes them from Talkeetna up the Susitna to just about up here (pointing to an area on the map just below Devil Canyon). He comes to Portage Creek. It's about as far up as he will go. He's gone into the canyon (Devil Canyon) as far as he could to see how far his boat would handle it. He said it's too rocky (Wick, 1980).

This same oral history narrator continued to describe the growth of the riverboat service with which he was familiar:

> He'll take the people sightseeing upriver and incorporate fishing. That's his business. It's been expanding quite a bit. By expanding I mean get another boat and stuff. He has three right now and we're working on another one. He has been talking to me about building a larger boat, so he could accommodate more people, taking more people up the river at one time. But also, there's a couple of other riverboat services in town (Wick, 1980).

As river conditions changed, obliterating many of the sand-bar landing strips, air access to recreational points of interest along the rivers was no longer possible. Because of this, people became more dependent on riverboat services. An oral history narrator and partner in an air taxi service established a relationship between riverboat services and air services to fishing streams within the basin.

> Green Construction Company put in the highway from 1965 to 1970 and as the highway became more traveled, all the good fishing stopped along the highway. It is not all that good anymore, so we'd get people flying out because they wanted to get some fish. I can tell you for sure, and I'm sure others will tell you, Clear Creek (Chunilna Creek) is excellent for your salmon run. A good third of our flying was done at Clear Creek. They would fly Super Cubs up and land on the sand bars. Now, the riverboats take them up because the channels change and the sandbars aren't good anymore (Sheldon, 1980).

In addition to motorized boat access from the western portion of the basin, boaters from Lake Louise or the Denali Highway accessed the study area using the Tyone and McLaren Rivers. Motorized boat access into the study area from Lake Louise was described by a lodge owner during an oral history interview.

> I rafted from here (Evergreen Lodge, Lake Louise) to Talkeetna last year...went from Lake Louise up through

> Tyone Lake, down the Tyone River to the Su (Susitna River) then continued on the Susitna until Devil Canyon...where we portaged part of it. I had another guy with me...a client...See that little Avon (raft) down there with a motor on it? That's what we used... I had a 10-horse on it...ended up in Talkeetna. A client paid me to do it...I wanted to run the thing (the river) to see what it looked like. I would do it again for money but not for fun, because there is no fun in it...not a good river to run. There is nothing wrong with it, but there is no fish in it. I am more interested in the fishing. It's just a long boring trip except for Devil Canyon which would be alot of fun to shoot if I had about 50 miles of that kind of water over here (Holland, 1980).

Lodges within the basin provided boating services to their hunting and fishing clientele. River guides associated with the lodges would occasionally lead hunting and fishing trips on the Susitna River. Commercial riverboat services have also used motorized boats for river trips with clients to the Susitna basin--a practice that has been going on since the 1950's. Land uses associated with motorized boat access as described by oral history narrators include fishing, hunting, camping, sightseeing and whitewater boating. The Tyone, Susitna, Chunilna and Talkeetna rivers provide access routes into the Susitna Basin. Depending upon the river route, the use of motorized boats enhanced a concentration of uses along river banks in the basin. For example, riverboat services based in Talkeetna take clientele to various prime locations along the Susitna, Talkeetna, Chunilna and Sheep rivers. There are a limited number of these prime points and a growing number of users. Other routes in the basin, however, disperse uses, because they are longer, more isolated and used less frequently by fewer people. For instance, the 100 mile stretch of rivers from Lake Louise to Talkeetna is comparatively longer and is taken by fewer users.

Since the 1970's, motorized boating has facilitated geographic and seasonal use by hunters, fishermen, photographers, campers and sightseers within the Susitna Basin. Particularly from towns beyond the westernmost portion of the basin, riverboat services over the last decade evolved and grew in popularity and are described in the oral history narratives.

Historical Narrative Summary

In the previous narrative, I described the history of the area through different forms of access and placed the historical events in a geographical context. I learned the dynamics of the chronology from the narrators, who gave "movement" to the actual text. The historical narrative is not something with which the narrators would directly identify. Rather, the narrative emerged from my analysis of what they told me. The oral history narrators provided the opportunity for me to see what they saw, rather than see all the historic events that happened in the basin. The historic themes displayed were from personal narratives and therefore expressions of personal sentiments as opposed to a rigorous historical treatise which would weigh different sources against the oral record. The material is significant because it emphasizes local observations evaluations, and concerns, and provides a form of a guided tour through local historic trends as revealed through local commentary.

Historical Interpretive Program

As previously mentioned in this chapter's purpose, I used the historical interpretive program to show a means to convey oral history information to public audiences. In this section of my results, I first describe a general historical interpretive program, and then focus on three varied examples of such programs.

I adapted my definition of interpretation (with special emphasis on historical interpretation) from the definitions of two great interpreters of the environment, Freeman Tilden and Grant Sharpe.

> Interpretation is...an educational activity which aims at developing a keener awareness, understanding, and appreciation of a historical subject through the use of original objects, firsthand experience, and illustrative media. This activity is planned and conducted (often in person) by an interpreter (teacher, actor) for an audience (Tilden, 1957, p. 8; Sharpe, 1976, p. 4).

General Program Description

A historical interpretive program is a type of interpretive program in which the main subject area and related theme is historic in nature. It differs from other types of interpretive programs in that it focuses on events and time spans which occurred before the present day, and relates the present situation in terms of past events.

The subject of a historical interpretive program is a person, place or event within a time span which occurred prior to the contemporary interpretive situation. This subject is broad in scope and during the program planning process is supported by an interpretive theme. The theme focuses on a specific historical aspect of the subject. Another component of a complete historical interpretive program is the interpretive objectives. The objectives are clear statements which describe that which the interpreter intends the program to accomplish. The objectives incorporate the interpretive theme in the description of the historical subject. In order to convey the historical subject, the program requires interpretive media, consisting of the means, methods, devices or instruments by which the interpretive message is presented to the public (Sharpe, 1976). Some examples of interpretive media are photographs, slide presentations, songs, bulletin board displays, and in my case, first hand historical accounts.

Basic in the development of the historical interpretive program is information of a historic subject nature which facilitates an interpretive re-creation of the past. Historical information is found in the forms of historical literature, current literature on a historic subject, photographs, cemetary records, news articles, journals, oral history tapes and manuscripts, and historic memorabilia. These historical pieces of information support the subject by serving as or providing related historical themes.

My subject was historical land use in the Upper Susitna River Basin from the 1940's through the 1970's. Actual land uses, extrapolated from the people who used the area provided the supporting interpretive themes for the subject. The oral history interviews I conducted related personal accounts of the land uses by long-standing users, and thus supplied "the meat" for the historical themes. I developed the historic themes from the personal narratives, expressions of personal sentiments of the land users. Table 3 shows a comparison of the information needs of a general historical interpretive program with the information types provided by my oral history project.

TABLE 3

Comparison of Historical Interpretive Program Information

Historical Interpretive Program	My Oral History Project
Historical Subject	Subject-Historical Land Use
Historical Theme	Theme(s)-Hunting, Trapping, Historical Access, Recreation
Historical Subtheme(s)	Subtheme(s)-example: the Trapping Lifestyle
Personal Historical Accounts	Oral Histories

Examples of the Historical Interpretive Program

This section is devoted to actual illustrations of historical interpretive programs using my oral history products as the major source of information. For three more specific examples of ways to convey oral history information to public audiences, I chose the themes of historical trapping, recreational floating of the Susitna River and the visitor center display. I will first discuss the historical trapping theme within the context of the historical interpretive program.

Living Drama

Table 4 shows an outline of the Historical Trapping Program. This type of program is called living history or living drama. The participants of a living drama are those persons who actually participated in the historical land uses or those experienced with and familiar with that type of land use activity. The stage could be a school auditorium,

TABLE 4

HISTORICAL INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM PLANNING OUTLINE: LIVING DRAMA

PROGRAM THEME - Historical Trapping in the Upper Susitna River Basin

Program Media Type: Living Drama--a dialog between two neighbors; one a long-standing trapper who trapped the basin in the 40's and 50's, and the other a next door neighbor over for coffee, and not too familiar with trapping in the old days.

Place of Use: School, town theater, visitor center, park, amphitheater, Pioneer's Home

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE - at the conclusion of the program, members of the audience will be able to verbally describe at least two characteristics of trapping styles of the 40's:

1) mode of access to the basin and navigation within
2) animals trapped (mink, fox, wolverine, lynx, beaver, otter)

DATA COLLECTION AND INVENTORY - oral history manuscripts provide the main data source (dialog) with further literature search for any other background thought necessary to supplement oral history dialog.

ANALYSIS/SYNTHESIS of Data - Edit data into script form, including descriptions of lighting, scenery and setting.

PLAN - includes components of program goals, objectives, defined evaluative standards, program implementation descriptions about specific site locations, and evaluation and revision of program as necessary.

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a town theater, a community center, the Pioneer's Home or an outdoor gathering put on by any community associated with the Upper Susitna Basin. The scene could simply be the bare stage, and the two characters would walk out onto the stage and begin a normal conversation about trapping in the "old days". The program director could extract verbatim portions of the narration from my oral history manuscripts or combine the oral history information from more than one interview. Part of the dialog (which I extracted from the oral histories in my study) might read something like this:

Neighbor: "..I just saw an article in the trappers' magazine about that new steel trap."

Trapper: "yeah,..they don't make them like they used to. Why, we used to use them ones hanging out back there...lasted pert' near all our trapping years."

Neighbor: "When did you first begin trapping out in the valley?"

Trapper: "...About 1935...same year as Elmer Simco...yeah, we got everything from wolverine, mink, marten and fox, to otter and beaver. We did most of the trapping around Stephan Lake for the small animals, and had trap lines clear over to the Fog Lakes."

Neighbor: "That's quite a distance..."

Trapper: "Yeah, but we loved to walk. Just put on the snowshoes and hike...check the line as far as we could hike in one day. We built the second cabin eighteen miles from Stephan. A little one-room shelter where we could camp for the night and then go on to the next one the next day. We trapped along Prairie Creek but didn't go over to the Watona area too much."

Neighbor: "Why not?"

Trapper: "That was Elmer's and Dick's country. They trapped the Clarence Lake and Watona Lake area the same time as we trapped the Stephan. Every once in a while Dick would come over and visit us here at Stephan. But for trapping, Dick stayed east of Watona. We didn't go into their territory, and they didn't come into ours...it was a gentlemen's agreement."

Neighbor: "Did you ever use dogs or snow machines to get around?"

Trapper: "Nope, you earned your catch by walking for it. There's people in there now who trap with snowmachines. But things were alot different then..."

Neighbor: "How so?"

Trapper: "Well, when I first came up here in the 30's, pelt prices pretty much took you through a season for supplies and stuff. About 1949, though, pelt prices started dropping, especially fox. Beaver prices were good in '48 but fox pelts, you couldn't get five dollars for them."

Neighbor: "Why was that?"

Trapper: "I don't know...the women just weren't wearing them perhaps. I made an ermine choker for the daughter when she was three. When we'd go to Anchorage, they'd stare at her little choker. She would sleep with muskrat pelts. They were very soft. We never tanned them, but I'd cleaned them real good...She couldn't sleep without her pelt, and one time when we flew to visit relatives in Portland, I could just feel the stares from the folks as we got on the plane in Seattle...Finally one fella had the nerve to ask what that was. I told him muskrat pelt.

Then he asked where I was from...When I said Alaska...they all had a spasm..."

This first example of the living drama could be presented to a number of different age groups in a variety of audience situations. A silent lapse dissolve slide presentation could provide the background illustrating that part of the dialog taking place as it is spoken. In many instances, the original oral history narrators could be the actors.

Historical Float Trip

The second example of a way in which a type of historical interpretive program could be used to convey oral history information to the public is by the self-guided brochure. The particular example I chose is the self-guided float trip brochure for the Susitna River. A general planning outline for this program is delineated in Table 5.

The brochure could include a small map of the floating route, with various historic landmarks cited and interpreted. A portion of the historic information as it could appear in the brochure is pictured in Figure 6.

Historical descriptions at each numbered site would compose the main body of the text. For example, the location of number seven, Devil Canyon on the brochure was descriptively addressed in two of my oral history interviews. Both descriptions could be included in the brochure to convey the danger of the canyon as well as to relate historic uses of the land in that area. One oral history narrator, living near the canyon during the 1940's described it as follows:

TABLE 5

HISTORICAL INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM PLANNING OUTLINE: FLOAT TRIP BROCHURE

PROGRAM THEME: Historical Land Use Along the Susitna River

Program Media Type: Self-guided float trip brochure
Place of Use: The Susitna River

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE: At the conclusion of the float trip, all participants will be familiar with at least three historical sites along the river:

1) Hunting cache location
2) Devil Canyon
3) Trapper cabin remains

DATA COLLECTION AND INVENTORY: Oral History Manuscripts provide the main data source (quotes from oral history narrators describe their historical use of the sites along the river. Optional research would entail fact and figure finding of weather conditions, river stages, and safety precautions.

ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF DATA: Arrange the Historical information to correspond with the sequences of river-boat travel and the graphical representation of the river route.

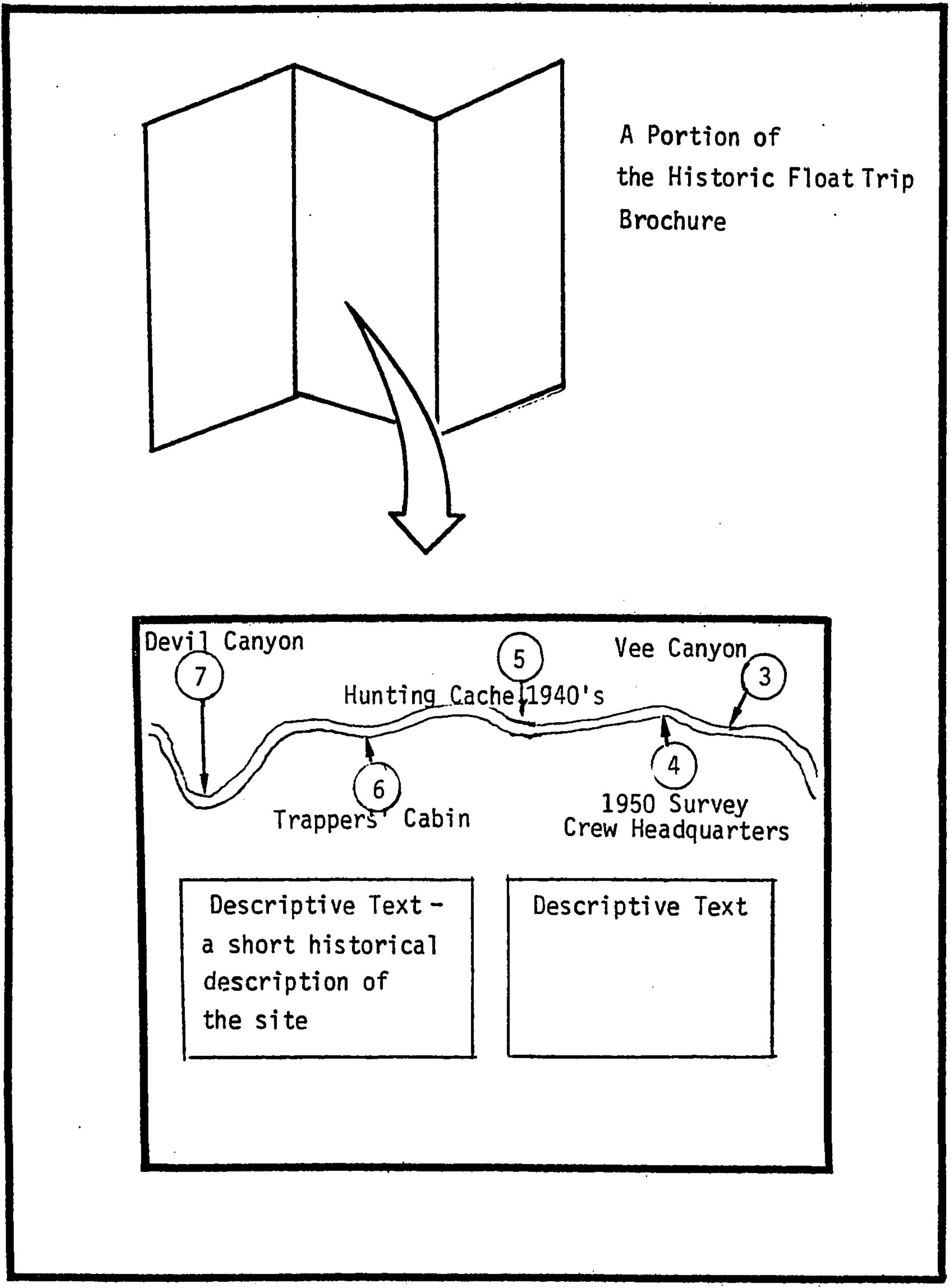
A Portion of
the Historic Float Trip
Brochure
Devil Canyon
7
5
Hunting Cache 1940's
Vee Canyon
3
4
6
Trappers' Cabin
1950 Survey
Crew Headquarters
Descriptive Text - a short historical description of the site
Descriptive Text

Figure 6. Historical Interpretive Program - Sample Brochure

> That canyon is too deep. Too treacherous. It drops down and there is no way you can get a rescue team in there. My husband used to have spasms when people would come around and say they were going to take that trip. he said "They are nuts!", and "There should be a law forbidding them." Even the natives up through there wouldn't travel that part of the river. They worshipped that river where the deep canyon goes down. That was for God and God only (Vogel, 1980).

In another oral history interview the daughter of a well-known local guide from Talkeetna describes a government survey in 1948 in which her father was asked to guide the four government agents from the Department of Interior:

> My father was the first guide that took the government hydrologists to the area of the proposed Devil Canyon dam. There were no accurate maps of the canyon in the late 40's, but Dad trapped back in that way, so by walking the area many times, knew of its dangers. Dad warned them about the dangerous white waters of the canyon, but the hydrologists insisted on taking the boats through. The waters were very speedy and rapid. He didn't want to take them, but they said "According to the map, it's all right." Well, he said "According to my map, which is right here, it's not all right!" Well, they came around some of the bends in their canoes, saw the white water, and a couple of the men got a little panicky. It doesn't take much to lose a canoe, and they lost three canoes for one reason or another. They lost all of their equipment, and had to scavenge food until they were rescued a couple weeks later. Dad was honored by the government that very same year, but it took five years and an act of Congress to restore all Dad's losses (Jones, 1980).

The previous examples of narrations from actual oral history interviews descriptions would provide the historical interpretive text for the brochure.

Visitor Center Display

Another way oral history information could be conveyed to public audiences is by a display in a visitor center. With regard to the information gleaned from my oral history project, a bulletin board in a visitor center or along a highway could display a theme of modes of access and access routes to the Susitna Basin. Table 6 outlines the historical interpretive program using the medium of a visitor center display board. The oral history information could be displayed in the following fashion, as pictured in Figure 7.

Summary

The brochure, the living drama, and the visitor center display board are only three examples of tyoes of historical interpretive programs. Each can be used to convey oral history information to public audiences. The preparation of these programs involves a step beyond the raw oral history data stage. Information pertinent to the program must be extracted from raw tapes and oral history manuscripts. Then, it must be manipulated into a form most suitable for the type of audience receiving it.

In this chapter I presented three alternative means of conveying oral history information to public audiences. These means employed information chiefly from the oral history manuscripts: (1) the tabulated information summary, (2) the historical narrative, and (3) the historical interpretive program. In the following chapter, I summarize the steps in my oral history project and evaluate its usefulness.

TABLE 6

HISTORICAL INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM PLANNING OUTLINE: VISITOR CENTER DISPLAY

PROGRAM THEME - Historical Modes of Access and Access Routes to the Susitna Basin

Program Media Type - Visitor Center Display Board

Place of Use - A visitor center or information center in or around the Susitna Basin

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE - After reading the display board and studying the graphical representation of access modes and access routes, visitors will be able to identify at least five historical modes of access to the basin, and at least three access routes:

1) foot
2) dogteam
3) horse
4) airplane
5) boat

1) Susitna River
2) From railroad using old mining road
3) Chickaloon route

DATA COLLECTION AND INVENTORY - Oral History manuscripts provide the main data source.

DATA ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS - would require a graphic artist to depict modes of access and map access routes

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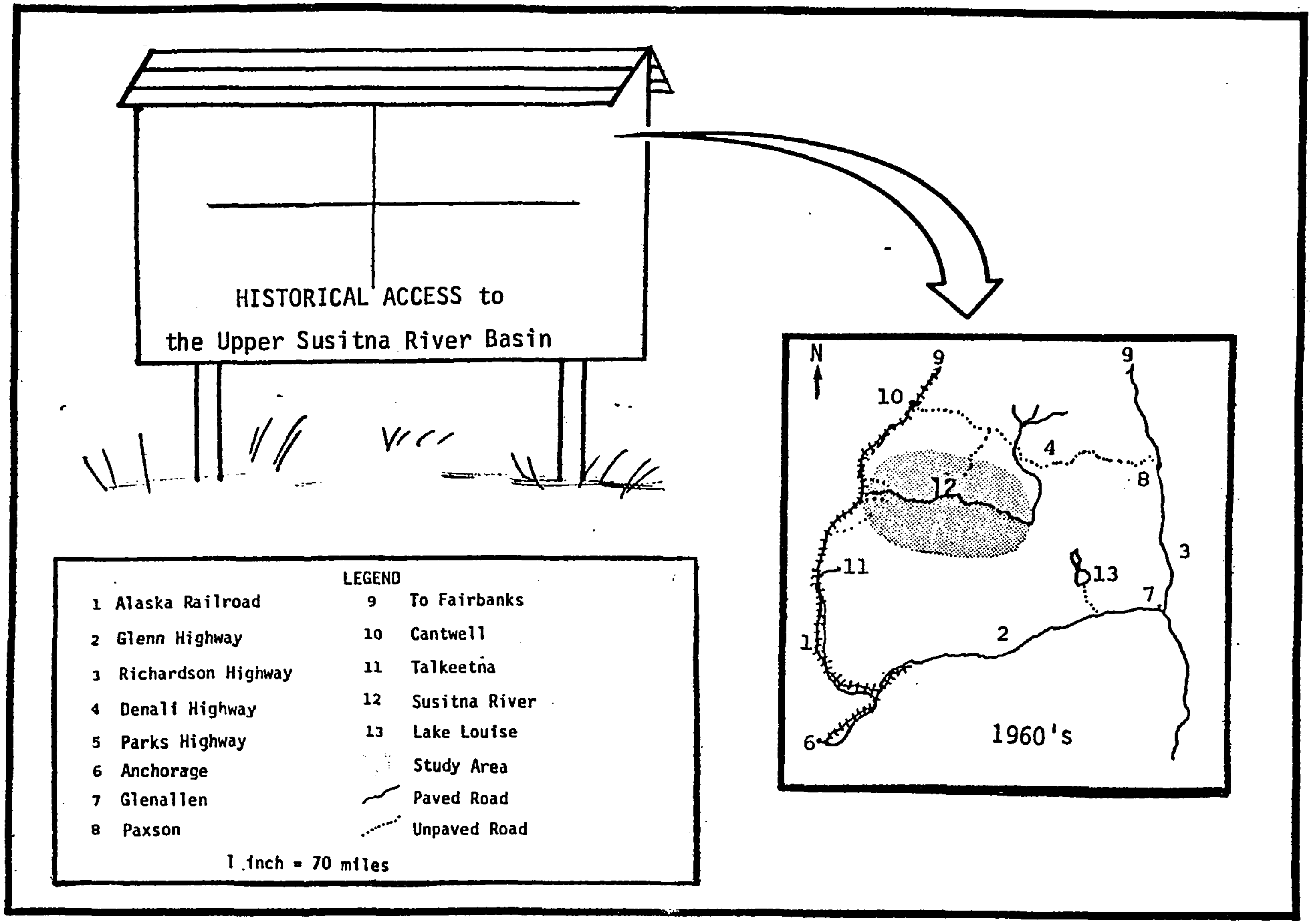
HISTORICAL ACCESS to
the Upper Susitna River Basin
N
9
10
4
8
12
3
11
13
7
1
2
6
1960's
LEGEND
1 Alaska Railroad
2 Glenn Highway
3 Richardson Highway
4 Denali Highway
5 Parks Highway
6 Anchorage
7 Glenallen
8 Paxson
9 To Fairbanks
10 Cantwell
11 Talkeetna
12 Susitna River
13 Lake Louise
Study Area
Paved Road
Unpaved Road
1 inch = 70 miles

Figure 7. Modes of Access to the Upper Susitna River Basin

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, I draw together ideas concerning my application of the oral history technique. I summarize my particular approach, evaluating it in terms of its usefulness and limitations. I also suggest ideas for improvements to the oral history technique. I propose the ideas and the reasons behind them, for the benefit of those who undertake similar Alaskan-oriented projects. Lastly, I present concluding remarks on future applications of oral history in Alaska.

Summary of the Oral History Technique

After I researched my oral history topic on land use, I divided my oral history procedures into three tasks: (1) oral history collection, (2) oral history processing, and (3) application of the oral histories.

Collecting the oral histories first involved background research in two main topic areas: the oral history technique, and land use in the Susitna area. After researching background information in both topic areas, I turned to the interviews. I prepared for the interview by: (1) contacting narrators, (2) composing the interview outline and questions, and (3) preparing equipment for the interviews. During the interviews, I followed the interview format outlined in Table 1. When these were concluded, I listened to the tape-recorded interviews filling out the interview information sheet, reviewing the information on the tape to detect further areas of questioning, and making sure the recording was clear.

The processing phase of my oral history procedures involved three basic stages: (1) complete transcription of the oral history tapes to a typewritten format, (2) auditing, proofreading, and editing the transcripts, and (3) photocopying the transcripts and mailing them to each oral history narrator.

The last of the three major tasks consisted of preparations to disseminate the oral histories, making them available to the public. As with collecting and processing, this large task also involved several smaller phases. I indexed all the tapes and transcripts and used information from them to compose interview information sheets. I placed these sheets at the beginning of the transcript collection. I also labeled the tapes, arranged them, and wrote a series description for the Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks. I presented a topical breakdown of the oral history narrations and a table of contents with the transcript collection. Using the information from the oral history interviews, I compiled a narrative about historical land use in the Upper Susitna River Basin from the 1940's through the 1970's. Also, using information from the oral history interviews, I outlined three different examples of historical interpretive programs and described ways in which each could be presented to the public. By doing so, the oral history information I collected and processed could be used, presented to, and enjoyed by the public.

Usefulness and Limitations

My evaluation focuses on the following three questions: (1) was my application of the oral history technique effective in gathering the type of information I sought? (2) in my choice of the oral history technique, did I choose the best alternative from the spectrum of potential and actual approaches? and (3) did the method or its application, prevent me from obtaining some of the information I sought?

Question 1 relates the "fit" of the research technique to the problem. In my study I focused on a description of land use in the Upper Susitna River Basin. In both the study and my thesis, I sought to represent perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of the land users for that geographic area from the 1940's through the 1970's. In my thesis, I aimed to document the application of the oral history technique to a natural resource topic, and to examine the potential of the oral history technique and the information it yields for providing themes for historical interpretive programs. Chapter 3, Application of Methods, documents my use of the technique, and chapter 4, Results, documents the effectiveness of the technique in collecting such information.

Question 2 is further separated into two other questions: Could I have used other information as a substitute for the oral history information gathered, and, could I have used another technique to gather the same information?

With regard to the alternative of using other available literature as a substitute for oral history information, I remind the reader that I sought to represent perceptions, attitudes and experiences of the land users for that geographic area from the 1940's through the 1970's. One alternative was to tap all available literature sources on the subject. But these available literature sources, as discussed in chapter 2, Methods, lacked much desired information. An example of an endeavor using existing literature sources to generate land use information are the Alaska Regional Profiles published by the Federal and State Land Use Planning Commission in 1974. These profiles, a series of large bound maps and descriptions of Alaska by region, show much of the Susitna Basin land use history as a blank spot on the map. The Southcentral Regional Profile contains a land use map of the Susitna area showing little or no land use for much of the area contained in my oral history project. Thousands of sources of printed material reviewed and used in the profiles failed to supply the significant land use information.

The existing literature also lacked information concerning the land management activities in the Susitna area between 1940 and 1970. In Alaska, from the 1940's land managing agencies did very little managing. For example, the Bureau of Land Management, a land-holding agency, had very little authority and no cohesive mission during the earlier years addressed by my study (Dana, Fairfax, 1980). Thus, Bureau of Land Management and other similar agencies were not apt to collect information that would normally be collected when management plans were called for. Even if the basin had been actively managed, some perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of the land users were not likely to have been documented.

Besides the literature associated with the land managing agencies, other literature sources fell short of the kind of information I needed. Existing archival and oral history literature relating to my subject was scant. Except for the Durr Tapes (Talkeetna Museum) no other oral history information about the Upper Susitna River Basin addressed the time period of my concern. Aerial photogrammetric data and other existing maps inadequately represented both recent and historic land uses (Jubenville, Gasbarro, Regan, 1981). For these reasons, I did not choose the alternative of solely relying on existing literature as a substitute for information from oral history interviews.

The second part of Question 2 applies to the potential availability of other approaches to obtaining historical land use information: Could I have used techniques other than oral history to generate information representing the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of land users in the Upper Susitna River Basin from the 1940's through the 1970's?

The method of survey research is one alternative to the oral history technique. Of interest to the survey researcher is a relatively large number of individuals, so that a nonbiased, random sample population might be attained. The type of information desired by the survey researcher consists of opinions, tastes, preferences, and attitudes of their sample population. Once this type of information is attained, the survey researcher counts the information, thereby quantifying it, and statistically reduces the information by summarizing it, sighting trends, and generalizing the information over a larger population.

Of the other approaches to document land use information, I believe oral history was the best alternative. Survey research might have provided an actual alternative approach to gathering attitudes, and quantitative historical land use data. However, because questions differ according to the respondent in an oral history interview, and because in survey research individual perceptions, reflections, and personal experiences are masked by a generalization into a larger population, survey research was not selected as the research approach. Printed literature, maps, aerial photogrammetric data, and oral history tapes failed to represent the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of the land users or to provide a comprehensive historical land use picture.

I chose oral history, combined with existing literature (printed material, maps) as the best alternative for the research approach. Unlike survey research, the oral history technique drew information from a select few: key "actors and actresses" in the drama of historical land use in the basin. These narrators acted as a local level window through which the historical land use picture was conveyed. Instead of tastes and preferences sought after in survey research, the oral history technique provided accounts of personal experiences, perceptions, attitudes, and the subjective "feel" for the land use history. The oral history technique also enabled me to tap existing historical land use information. In preparation for the interviews, the technique of oral history required a thorough investigation of existing literature sources regarding the historical land use of the area. In addition, information resulting from the interviews complimented all other presently existing sources of information.

The oral history technique proved to be the most suitable of alternative approaches. The technique permitted primary sources, the actual land users, to convey land use information from their perspective. It filled the need for the type of information I sought--a unique, invaluable perspective of the land use history.

Question 3 addresses the limitations of the technique. The limitations I encountered include forgetfulness or confusion of facts by narrators, reluctance to share information, timing of the interview, and conflicting information.

Not all narrators could accurately recall information. For example, one narrator, who used to travel from Talkeetna into the Upper Susitna River Basin along a dogsled route admitted not being sure of the exact route on a map. In situations such as this one, narrators freely and openly admitted confusion or forgetfulness, and suggested other persons who could better describe the routes. During these situations, I merely urged the narrators to do the best they could, and assured them that the information they already shared was extremely valuable.

Some oral history narrators carefully guarded information they felt infringed on or threatened their livelihood. This reluctance to share information was another reason I thought my use of the oral history technique to acquire land use information limited the depth of information I received. For example, certain narrators admitted a very general description of historic use areas because of their continued use of prime fishing and hunting areas.

Timing of the field interviews, in certain instances, was a limiting factor. I timed my first field interviews to correspond with the university's spring break. During this same time period, census takers for the national census encroached on the village populations where I planned my first series of interviews. Suspicion and contempt for the census takers shadowed the local villagers' outlook on my intent until both the narrator and I achieved a level of mutual trust during our interview sessions.

Another example of an effect on interview information with regard to timing of the interviews was the concurrence of the Susitna hydropower feasibility investigations with my oral history interviews. With an increase in time between my oral history interviews and the initial Susitna feasibility field studies came fewer emotional opinions during the interviews. I accomplished all my interviewing during March, April and May of 1980, just prior to the slew of public meetings with those people who were and are involved with the land resources of the basin. The greater part of the Susitna field studies took place in June, July, and August of 1980 and 1981. Though aware of and concerned with the possible results of the feasibility studies, most oral history narrators interviewed genuinely conveyed their perspectives on the way they used the land rather than their emotions about the Susitna issue. With regard to the timing of my masters' field work, I believe that the timing of my interview sessions was as good as could be for receiving minimal opinionated, emotional responses to the Susitna hydropower issue from the narrators.

Another limitation of the oral history technique I encountered was conflicting information. When I encountered information I knew to conflict with another narrators' description, I would further question the narrator and restate the answer to clarify for both the narrator and myself that what he or she said was what he or she intended to convey. If the narrators made no attempt to correct their descriptions at this time, I simply accepted it as their perception of the incident, and processed it as such.

During my particular application of the oral history technique, I found three possible areas which may have limited my accessibility to certain information during the oral history interviews. If I was unable to establish rapport with the narrator, this might have influenced the information gathered. In addition, some narrators may have been reluctant to confide to a stranger. But since I contacted most of the narrators by mail and by phone prior to our interview, I believe most narrators were at ease with the interview situation. I found that for those narrators not contacted by mail prior to our interview, I needed more time to establish rapport. In only one instance did I feel the narrator was reluctant to confide in me, and did not care for my personality.

Lastly, I remind the reader that I did not interview all long-time users of the area. A complete survey of historical land users might have revealed new, different, and/or conflicting historical land use information. I made no attempt to take a random sample of the land user population, because that approach was above and beyond both the objectives of the project, my thesis, and the available time and budget resources. For these reasons, it is possible that in my application of the technique, I overlooked some key oral history informants.

Narrator forgetfulness, confusion, and feelings of propriety of information were basic limiting factors of the oral history technique I encountered. Timing of the interview, reluctance of the narrator to confide to a stranger and inability of the interviewer to establish a rapport with and identify and interview all key historical land users in my interview sessions were reasons my application of the technique may have limited information I sought to gather. Aside from the limiting factors cited above, the strong points of the oral history technique must not be overlooked. Researchers developed the oral history technique to provide a type of data not found in written material. Oral history narrators are selected in a non-random fashion to represent key actors in a historical drama. The selective historical nature of narrators' recollections, reflections, attitudes and experiences conveyed through conversations adds depth, character and value to the historical record.

An understanding of the usefulness and limitations of the oral history technique is helpful in both the selection of a research approach and in the project planning stages. With these considerations, positive aspects of the oral history technique can be capitalized on and used effectively, and plans can be made to minimize the effects of its limitations on information gathered.

Improvements

This section is about improvements that can be made during future applications of the oral history technique in Alaska. I especially address Alaskan oral history projects because of the unique situations faced by Alaskan oral history practitioners. Examples of these situations are extreme travel distances and therefore travel costs, and the seasonally dependent livelihoods of many of the target narrator population. I offer these ideas with hopes that they will be considered and used by those presently involved in Alaska oral history projects, as well as in future applications of the oral history technique in Alaska.

Most of my ideas for improvements are directed towards the collection of oral histories. The first group of suggestions for improvements concerns setting up the interview schedule. One important factor in setting up the interview schedule is the time of year for which the work is planned. Efforts should be made to schedule interview sessions in "off seasons"--periods when narrators are not occupied with important activities. In the "off seasons," narrators are more likely to have the time to think about and prepare for the upcoming interviews. By illustration, I scheduled my interview sessions to coincide with a low period of activity for the narrators--end of the Alaskan winter-early in spring: trapping season was winding down, mining and the tourist season had not yet begun. Narrators welcomed the opportunity to converse because they had more time than during the summer or winter. Most narrators looked forward to and enjoyed the interview, and prepared in advance certain topics they wished to discuss. In Alaska, where many livelihoods and activities are so dependent upon the season, (such as trapping, hunting, guiding, fishing and tourism), information received during the interview is very much influenced by the time of year in which the interview takes place. Planning the interviews to correspond with the personal schedule of the narrators provides ample time to converse, accommodates the narrators, and consequently improves the quality of the information received during the interview.

Another suggestion for amending the interview schedule concerns the time allotted between successive interviews. If a group of narrators are going to be interviewed during a field session within a certain time frame, ample time between the different interviews should be allocated. Time between interviews (excluding travel time between the homes of narrators) would allow a written description about the interview situation. Such descriptions would include factors which might have affected the interview such as the time of year (busy, slow, heavy snowfall, national election), the physical and emotional conditions of the narrator (happy and healthy, irritated with a cold, uncomfortable with a broken arm), and a location description of the interview setting (seacoast estate, log cabin). These descriptions would make for a more complete understanding of something I term the "interview context." "Interview context" is a description of the immediate circumstances and surroundings experienced by both the narrator and the interviewer. This is important because in many instances it facilitates an understanding of reasons the interview went the way it did, giving users of the information something on which to assess the validity of the information.

My next suggestion involves the number of field interview sessions. If I were to replan my interview field sessions, I would schedule three interview field sessions. The "first round" would involve interviews with those I established as initial contacts. "Round two" would take place about two weeks after "round one." These second sessions would involve: (1) a second interview with the initial narrators, and (2) a series of interviews with those people recommended by initial narrators (a new narrator population). "Round three" would consist of re-interviewing the new narrator population. The purpose for re-interviewing each group of narrators is twofold: a second (probably much shorter) interview would help to clear up and refine questionable points raised in the first interview session, and a second interview would permit new points of interest (perhaps missed during the first session) to be incorporated into the main interview.

If I was extremely limited by budget, time, or both, I'd plan the field interview sessions for two rounds. In both rounds I would interview my originally planned set of narrators and use the original conversation topics. The first interview would consist of main topics of conversation, the second session would take place two to four weeks later. The time in between sessions would give both the narrator and the interviewer opportunity to evaluate the interview session, and share information on areas for possible further explanation.

My final suggestion relates to the number of interviewers present during the interview. I suggest an interview team, in which one person would be solely responsible for the communication and interview. The other part of the team, the "auxiliary interviewer", would function to facilitate the mechanics of the interview, operating the tape recorder, noting special occurrences, immediate environmental conditions (interview context) during the interview, and at the conclusion of the interview, reminding the interviewer and the narrator of topics forgotten.

Often in Alaska, an oral history interview involves the topic of a natural resource issue. With a topic such as land use, maps or other reference materials are often used during the interview to further illustrate points in the conversation. The "auxiliary interviewer" would also be responsible for the transcriptions, if called for in the project objectives. The "auxiliary interviewer" would permit the main interviewer to solely concentrate on the shared communication taking place during the interview. If the main interviewer had difficulty establishing or maintaining rapport with the narrator, the "auxiliary interviewer" could take over, leaving the mechanical tasks to the interviewer. Thus, the team would leave the interview with basically the same information sought, if not more and better information. The "auxiliary interviewer" would also be better able to understand the conversation (enunciations) during transcription, and more easily convey them to the typewritten page.

The question might arise as to whether two interviewers would intimidate a narrator. It is extremely possible that narrator intimidation might arise during an interview session with two narrators, but with an awareness of this potential situation on the part of the interviewer(s), an interview team during the planning stages could easily incorporate measures to alleviate feelings of intimidation in narrators. Such measures might include using the time of the initial narrator contact to introduce the idea of two narrators. Introducing the idea at this time would give the narrator a time before the actual interview to acclimate to the idea of two narrators, and perhaps prepare for the interview team. If, during that time, the narrator expressed apprehensiveness or disapproval to the team approach, alternative plans could then be made.

With the assistance of an "auxiliary interviewer", the main interviewer would be free of mechanical worries, and chiefly responsible for conversing with the narrator. The "auxiliary interviewer" (also the project transcriber) would be responsible for note-taking and other mechanical activities such as running and turning the tape, noting place names, locations, descriptions, clarifying geographic descriptions and locations on the map(s), and taking planned photographs. My suggestions for improvements focus on the collection of oral histories and are summarized in Table 7.

These suggestions for improvement ultimately depend on time, budget resources, and narrator cooperation. In multiple interview situations, the suggestions also depend on the establishment of a team approach.

TABLE 7

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE COLLECTION OF ALASKAN ORAL HISTORIES

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1) Schedule oral history interview sessions in "off seasons", so as not to interrupt narrators who are often dependent on a seasonally-based livelihood.

2) Schedule oral history interviews with ample time in between each interview session for purposes of noting descriptions of the interview situation, or "interview context".

3) Plan for three rounds of field interview sessions:

    a) Round one: consists of original narrator population
    b) Round two: consists of a second interview with the same original narrator population, and additional interviews with a new narrator population suggested by original narrators and screened by the interviewer.
    c) Round three: consists of re-interviewing the new narrator population.

- or - if limited by time and budget, #4 -

4) Plan for two rounds of interviews.

    a) Round one: consists of interview sessions with the original target population about the originally planned interview topics.
    b) Round two: consists of further explanations of information shared in round one, if necessary.

5) Auxiliary Interviewer to accompany the main interviewer.

Conclusions

Since I already summarized my oral history project, discussed certain limitations and usefulness in my application of the technique, and suggested improvements to the technique for use in future Alaskan projects, I concentrate on the following subjects in this concluding section of my thesis: (1) the degree to which I achieved my objectives, (2) future research projects using oral history techniques, and (3) future directions of oral history in Alaska.

As stated in my introductory statement of thesis purpose, my objectives were to investigate the potential of oral history in the establishment of a historical interpretive program, and to document the procedures I used in my application of the technique. In chapter 2, Methods, I cited and described previous use of oral history in Alaska. I addressed the importance of my study to interpretation in Alaska. I also cited public interest for much of Alaska's recent history, and the historical interpretive program as a vehicle for presentation of Alaskan history. In chapter 4, Results, I presented information from the oral history interviews in three ways, one of which was the historical interpretive program. In each historical interpretive example, I used a different theme from the information collected during the oral history interviews to show the variety of themes and ways each could be presented to the public. In chapter 3, Application of Methods, I documented those procedures I took in the application of the oral history technique. In accomplishing these tasks, I achieved both of my objectives.

During the conversations shared with the oral history narrators, certain topics surfaced that I believe warrant further investigation using the oral history technique as the main research approach. These topics include the land use of the Upper Susitna River Basin by Native cultures, the big game period in Alaska, when an international clientele used Alaskan resources for trophy hunting, the history of government-sponsored research in the Susitna Basin, and the mining history of the Petersville area. Each topic, which was only briefly mentioned during my oral history interview sessions, is capable of supporting additional research.

As I mentioned earlier in this thesis, oral history in Alaska is not new. It has been used for centuries to convey special cultural characteristics that without verbal transmission might otherwise have been lost. Presently in Alaska, the technique of oral history is being used to unveil a variety of historical topics, from pioneer Alaskan women, to tales of the Klondike gold era. Care must be taken to maximize strong points of the technique in future Alaskan applications. One such strong-point is in the compatibility of oral history information with other written historical records. Efforts should be made to incorporate existing oral histories with the written historical records. Combining the various historical sources would provide a fuller picture of Alaskan history. Also, efforts should be made to facilitate partial, and/or entire transcription of the many existing collections confined only to the magnetic tape. Transcripts, in many instances would facilitate and promote access of oral histories to researchers and individuals who might not have the time to listen to hours of taped dialog.

Another area of the oral history technique where care should be taken is in the prevention of unnecessary repeated interviews by various groups. Examination of all existing oral history projects and written sources should be made, and all pertinent oral history information be used before interviews are scheduled, so as not to exploit key informants who may have already been interviewed numerous times about a similar subject, and to more fully explore issues where the written sources point to critical questions.

Lastly, I see a growing need for a statewide oral history master plan. Such a plan is needed to: (1) eliminate unnecessary duplication of oral history efforts by various state, federal and private oral history factions, (2) combine efforts toward (a) transcriptions of existing tape collections, (b) statewide distribution of multiple transcript copies, and thus (c) statewide access to oral history information, (3) coordinate oral history archival material with other archives in Alaska, and (4) provide a clear direction for growth of oral history in Alaska.

APPENDIX A

EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS*

I. Reel-to-Reel

Reel-to-reel is superior to cassette in fidelity, dependability of getting a recording, and permanence of the recording. Unfortunately, inexpensive reel-to-reel machines have gone off the market. There is only one monophonic, half-track machine available that we know of.

Recorders

Sony TC 105A. About $350. We do not have one, and have no first-hand knowledge about its merits.

Transcribers

1. Tandberg model 1521-F, $631 (including foot pedal & headphones). Can take 7-inch reels, has 3 speeds. A fairly reliable machine, but repairs are frequent and difficult: many dealers won't handle them, due to difficulty of repair. As of 10/79, United States not importing any more Tandbergs; parts are available.
2. Uher 500, about $900 with needed accessories. Takes 5-inch reels only. We do not have any of these machines, but are told they function better than the Tandbergs and are easier to repair.

(*)As recommended by the Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California, 1980.

Tape

Use polyester, 1 1/2 mil or 1 mil. Not necessary to use the highest fidelity tape (for music only).

II. Cassette

Recorders

The market is changing very rapidly on these. Valuable features are automatic volume control (but you can get along without it), end alarm, review button (to go backward a few seconds without passing through the Stop mode--useful for transcribing if you don't have a transcribing machine). Check your machine for machine noise. Quality seems to vary with individual machines. Most cassettes have built-in microphones, but you can get a better recording if you use a remote microphone at some distance from the machine. Do not get the pocket recorders, not adequate fidelity.

1. Panasonic 323 ($130) most highly recommended.
2. Sony TC 787 ($80) or TC 207 ($100).
3. Hitachi, Craig, Superscope not recommended--high repair costs.

Transcribers

Use C-60 cassettes; thinner tape tangles when transcribing. Machines not designed for C-90 tapes.

1. Dictaphone 241, $475. Has automatic adjustable backspace; and you can slow the tape down a bit if necessary for clarity.

2. Sony BM20, $550. We do not have one, but are told it is very good. Has automatic adjustable backspace, and optional "hand pedal" instead of foot pedal.
3. Wollensak 2540AV, $340. No automatic backspace. Heavier than the above. We've had repair problems.

Cassette Tapes

Use C-60, middle price quality. Bolted cases are better than fused--when the tape tangles or breaks you can open the case and try to repair it. End alarm is useful if your tape recorder has it. Scotch, Hitachi, and Maxell have a lower tangling record; Sony tends to tangle.

III. Microphone

Sony ECM-16, $40. Tie clasp-lapel condensor microphone. We highly recommend this small microphone which improves the sound greatly. One is enough for the interviewee. The interviewer can speak up so it will pick up the questions. Well worth the extra cost in reducing transcribing time. Try it with your tape recorder before buying.

IV. Maintenance

Reel-to-reel - every month clean heads with Q-tips and head cleaner (about $1 per bottle). Demagnetize head about every 60-70 hours. A head demagnetizer costs about $5.

Cassette - Run a Cassette Head Cleaner Tape ($2) through every month. Run a Demagnetizer Head Cleaner Tape ($6) through about every 3 months. Run it through forward; do not rewind until much later after the tape has demagnetized itself or you just put the charge back on.

APPENDIX B

GUIDELINES FOR THE ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWER*

1. An interview is not a dialogue. The whole point of the interview is to get the narrator to tell his story. Limit your own remarks to a few pleasantries to break the ice, then brief questions to guide him along. It is not necessary to give him the details of your great-grandmother's trip in a covered wagon in order to get him to tell you about his grandfather's trip to California. Just say, "I understand your grandfather came around the Horn to California. What did he tell you about the trip?"
2. Ask questions that require more of an answer than "yes" or "no." Start with "Why, How, Where, What kind of..." Instead of "Was Henry Miller a good boss?" ask "What did the cowhands think of Henry Miller as a boss?"
3. Ask one question at a time. Sometimes interviewers ask a series of questions all at once. Probably the narrator will answer only the first or last one. You will catch this kind of questioning when you listen through the tape after the session and can avoid it the next time.
4. Ask brief questions. We all know the irrepressible speech maker who, when questions are called for at the end of a lecture, gets up and asks a five-minute question. it is unlikely that the narrator is so dull that it takes more than a sentence or two for him to understand the question.

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*Extracted from Oral History for the Local Historical Society by Willa K. Baum, 1969.

5. Start with non-controversial questions; save the delicate questions, if there are any, until you have become better acquainted. A good place to begin is with the narrator's youth and background.

6. Do not let periods of silence fluster you. Give your narrator a chance to think of what he wants to add before you hustle him along with the next question. Relax, write a few words on your notepad. The sure sign of a beginning interviewer is a tape where every brief pause signals the next question.

7. Do not worry if your questions are not as beautifully phrased as you would like them to be for posterity. A few fumbled questions will help put your narrator at ease as he realizes that you are not perfect and he need not worry if he isn't either. It is unnecessary to practice fumbling a few questions; most of us are nervous enough to do that naturally.

8. Do not interrupt a good story because you have thought of a question, or because your narrator is straying from the planned outline. If the information is pertinent, let him go on, but jot down your question on your notepad so you will remember to ask it later.

9. If your narrator does stray into non-pertinent subjects (the most common problem is to follow some family member's children, or to get into a series of family medical problems), try to pull him back as quickly as possible. "Before we move on, I'd like to find out how the closing of the mine in 1898 affected your family's finances. Do you remember that?"

10. It is often hard for a narrator to describe persons. An easy way to begin is to ask him to describe the person's appearance. From there, the narrator is more likely to move into character description.

11. Interviewing is one time when a negative approach is more effective than a positive one. Ask about the negative aspects of a situation. For example, in asking about a person, do not begin with a glowing description of him. "I know the mayor was a very generous and wise person. Did you find him so?" Few narrators will quarrel with a statement like that even though they may have found the mayor a disagreeable person. You will get a more lively answer if you start out in the negative. "Despite the mayor's reputation for good works, I hear he was a very difficult man for his immediate employees to get along with." If your narrator admired the mayor greatly, he will spring to his defense with an apt illustration of why your statement is wrong. If he did find him hard to get along with, your remark has given him a chance to illustrate some of the mayor's more unpleasant characteristics.

12. Try to establish at every important point in the story where the narrator was or what his role was in this event, in order to indicate how much is eye-witness information and how much based on reports of others. "Where were you at the time of the mine disaster?" "Did you talk to any of the survivors later?" "Did their accounts differ in any way from the newspaper accounts of what happened?" Work around these questions carefully or you can appear to be doubting the accuracy of the narrator's account.

13. Do not challenge accounts you think may be inaccurate. Instead, try to develop as much information as possible that can be used by later researchers in establishing what probably happened. Your narrator may be telling you quite accurately what he saw. As Walter Lord explained when describing his interview with survivors of the Titanic, "Every lady

I interviewed had left the sinking ship in the last lifeboat. As I later found out from studying the placement of the lifeboats, no group of lifeboats was in view of another and each lady probably was in the last lifeboat she could see leaving the ship."

14. Do tactfully point out to your narrator that there is a different account of what he is describing, if there is. Start out "I have heard..." or "I have read..." This is not a challenge to his account, but rather an opportunity for him to bring up further evidence to refute the opposing view, or to explain how that view was established, or to temper what he has already said. If done skillfully, some of your best information can come from this juxtaposition of differing accounts.

15. Try to avoid "off the record" information, the times when your narrator asks you to turn off the recorder while he tells you a good story. Ask him to let you record the whole thing and promise that you will erase that portion if he asks you to after further consideration. You may have to erase it later, or he may not tell you the story at all, but once you start "off the record" stories, he may continue with more and more and you will end up with almost no recorded interview at all. "Off the record" information is only useful if you yourself are researching a subject and this is the only way you can get the information. It has no value if your purpose is to collect information for later use by other researchers.

16. Do not switch the recorder off and on. It is much better to waste a little tape on irrelevant material than to call attention to the tape recorder by a constant on-off operation. For this reason, I do not recommend the stop-start switches available on the microphones. If your

microphone has such a switch, tape it to "on" to avoid an inadvertent missing of material--then forget it. Of course you can turn off the recorder if the telephone rings or someone interrupts your session.

17. Interviews usually work out better if there is no one present except the narrator and the interviewer. Sometimes two or more narrators can be successfully recorded, but usually each one of them would have been better alone.

18. Do end the interview at a reasonable time. An hour and a half probably maximum. First, you must protect your narrator against over-fatigue; second, you will be tired even if he isn't. Some narrators are very frank to tell you if they are tired. Otherwise, you must plead fatigue, another appointment, or no more tape.

19. Do not use the interview to show off your own knowledge, vocabulary, charm, or other abilities. Good interviewers do not shine; only their interviews do.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE INTERVIEW CONTENTS SHEET

INTERVIEW COMMENTS

NARRATOR'S NAME____________________

TAPE NO.____________________

TIME			SUBJECTS
0	to	6	1. personal employment history
6		21	2. patients working in laundry
21	to	25	3. changes in laundry operations
25		30	4. laundry production
30	to	33	5. hiring practices
33		36	6. working schedule
36	to	40	7. depression's effect on Jacksonville State Hospital
40		44	8. fire of 1929
44	to	46	9. new laundry building

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE INTERVIEW INFORMATION SHEET

Tape # _____ Date of Interview ____________

Place of Interview: ____________________ Length of Interview: ______ min.

General Interview Topic: ____

NARRATOR | INTERVIEWER

Name: ______________________ Name: ______________________

Address: ____________________ Address: ____________________

Town: ______________________ ____________________

Phone: ______________________ Source of Narrator's Name: __________

Name/Address of new contact: ________________________________

____

Birth Information: ______________________________________

Other pertinent information: ________________________________

INTERVIEW DATA

Side one — Subject

_______ min. ____

_______ min. ____

_______ min. ____

Side two

_______ min. ____

_______ min. ____

_______ min. ____

(see other side of sheet for interviewers comments)

APPENDIX E

COMMON SPECIFICATIONS FOR TRANSCRIPTIONISTS*

1. Make an original and at least one copy. You may prefer to xerox the number of copies you need.

2. Double-space or triple-space. Leave plenty of margin space on sides and bottom. This is to allow for editing, additions, headings, etc.

3. Include the following information at the top of the page, and of all subsequent interviews with the same person:

> Interview with Bernice H. May, Interview 1
> Date of Interview: 15 June 1974; Berkeley, California
> Interviewer: Gabrielle Morris
> Transcriber: Marilyn White
> Begin Tape 1, Side 1

4. Number the pages consecutively through all the interviews with that narrator; do not begin with page 1 again on the second interview.

5. Use last names of speakers if of reasonable length. If not, use initials or an acceptable abbreviation. Avoid using two sets of initials as then the reader will have to go through some mental gymnastics each time to figure out who is who. Do not use such non-information designations as Question--Answer or Interviewer--Smith. Examples:

> Teiser:
> Kennedy:
>
> Teiser:
> L. Kennedy: [If the interview includes another member of the family.]
> A. Kennedy:

---

*Extracted from Transcribing and Editing Oral History by Willa K. Baum, 1977.

WCL: [Walter Clay Lowdermilk
--too long a name.]
Chall: [Interviewer]
Mrs. L: [Mrs. Lowdermilk--using
her initials would make it
hard to remember who is who.]

6. Note changes in tape as End Side 1, Begin Side 2./End Tape 1./Begin Tape 2, Side 1./End of Interview.

7. Set the digital counter at zero when starting the tape. You will then be able to indicate by counter number the portions that you cannot hear so someone else can try them.

8. If the conversation is carried over to the next page, indicate again at the top of the next page who the speaker is. It should not be necessary on any page to turn back to the previous page to find out who is speaking.

Advice to the Transcriber

1. Listen to about 10 minutes before starting to type in order to catch the manner of speaking, special pronunciations, crutch words, etc. Listen ahead at least a phrase before typing. If the narrator is prone to many false starts, you will have to listen ahead more. If the narrator is fairly deliberate, you can type almost as the words are spoken.

2. Type the words you hear, in the order they are spoken. Listen and type with understanding of what the speaker means, but be careful not to get rolling with the speaker so well that you are inadvertently putting words and phrases into her mouth. Even if the speaker may be awkward, forgetful, or nonverbal, resist the temptation to help out with your own superior vocabulary.

3. Type neatly. While this means typing more slowly and taking the time to make neat corrections, a nice-looking transcript will be more acceptable to the narrator. A narrator is less tempted to revise a neat transcript than one that has many errors xxx'd out.

4. Punctuate according to the sense of the words as spoken. Follow your project's style sheet. Do not be too distressed if your punctuations do not exactly follow the grammar book punctuations rules. They were devised for writing, and the writer had the option of chancing the word order. A transcriber has to do the best he can to indicate how the words were spoken. No changing of word order is allowed.

5. Listen for the end of a sentence; even if it isn't a complete sentence, stop, and start a new sentence. Many narrators go on and on, using an "and" instead of a period. End those run-on sentences at reasonable points, but do not break down a complex clause-speaker into a short sentence John Steinbeck-type speaker.

6. Paragraph when the subject changes. You can often hear a new paragraph in the way a narrator speaks, but even if you can't, watch for subject changes, and start a new paragraph when possible. A long unbroken monologue is very hard to read.

7. Unusual pronunciation and dropped word endings should not be indicated by phonetic spelling. It is almost impossible to convey pronunciation phonetically, and narrators are offended by a sprinkling of "yeahs," "yups," and "goin's," throughout their transcript even if they said it that way. In writing it looks a lot more folksy than it may have really sounded. Save the tape to indicate pronunciation. However, especially

in folklore projects, you may decide to try to transcribe phonetically in order to preserve the dialect.

8. Contractions should be typed as spoken. I'll look that up; I'm not sure what year it was offends no one and is more natural than "I will look that up; I am not sure what year it was."

9. Crutch words. Almost everyone speaks with a plentitude of crutch words and gurgles such as "ah," "well," "and then," "of course," "you know," "understand?" "right?" which serve the purpose of either a pause to think of the next thing to say, or a check as to whether the other person is listening. In speaking, crutch words may slip by almost unnoticed, but written down they will leap out from the page as a proclamation that the narrator could not get her thoughts together instantaneously. It is unlikely a narrator will approve and release a transcript full of crutch words; even if she does they will serve to impede the reader and to make the narrator look inadequate. Leave out most crutch words in transcribing if it is apparent that they are just pauses for thought. Leave in a few to show the narrator uses them, that this is an informal conversation. Leave them in if they have meaning.

10. Interviewer's approval words. Do not transcribe comments of the interviewer which are clearly only to indicate he is listening, such as "my, my," "how interesting," "really?" like crutch words, they only serve to impede the reader and make the interviewer look like a scatterbrain.

11. Do not transcribe false starts or unfinished sentences if the interviewee clearly reconsiders, stops, and then states it otherwise. Do transcribe if it is information she does not repeat in the revised

sentence. In other words, get down all the information, but if she fumbles and then starts again, leave out the fumble.

12. Portions you cannot hear: listen again. Ask someone else in the office to listen. Don't waste too much time trying to hear what you can't. If you still can't make it out, leave a blank about as long as you think the phrase is (don't underscore) and pencil in lightly the counter number. (Remember, you set the digital counter at zero when you began the tape). The interviewer or editor may be able to hear it later.

13. Portions to be left out: the interviewer may indicate on the interview notes that certain portions are not to be typed, perhaps chit-chat, an irrelevant story, or a repetition of an already told tale. If one aims for an informal interview, it is better to leave the tape running during the interview and then not transcribe irrelevant portions than to call attention to the recorder by turning the tape on and off. Omissions may or may not be indicated, according to the interviewer's request. For example, interruption by take-off of an airplane or conversation about the hazards of living near an airport, may be fine, but omit the fourth telling of how she walked ten miles to school and never missed a day.

14. Stage directions, descriptions of what is happening, or how words are spoken. Use these with discretion and put them in parenthesis. Some are necessary to understand the action, such as (reading from newspaper), (goes to bookcase to get scrapbook), (Mrs. Packard brings in cookies and tea), (interruption for telephone call), (pause while fire engines go by).

APPENDIX F

LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE NARRATORS

3/8/80

Mr. Don Lew
P.O. Box 307
Paxson, AK 99676

Dear Mr. Lew:

I am studying for a Masters degree in Natural Resource Management at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Part of the degree requirements consist of writing a thesis. My thesis concerns the history of the land use in the area of the Upper Susitna River Basin.

Currently, there is very little known about the ways the land in the Upper Susitna area was utilized, or about the people who used the area, and I think you might be able to provide me with some important information of this nature.

I plan to be in the Paxson area from 28 March to 6 April and would very much appreciate the opportunity to talk with you.

Enclosed is a post-card for you to fill out and return to me. The returned post-card will give me an idea of your level of interest, and also will let me know whether you've received this letter.

Sincerely,

Susan L. Regan
301 O'Neill Resources Building
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

enclosure

APPENDIX G*

A PREPARED FILE CARD FOR A PROSPECTIVE NARRATOR

Coatney, Bess (Mrs. Ivan)
10644 West Main Road
North East, Pennsylvania 16428
725-3019

Recommended by Susan L. Regan (niece)

Prospect reportedly has a vivid memory and a willingness to discuss her life on the farm in North East, Pennsylvania, plus general recollections.

SLR 2/26/82

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*Format from Oral History: From Tape to Type, Davis, Back, MacLean, 1977.

APPENDIX H

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT PRODUCTION SHEET

Tape #	Information Sheet(1)	Tape Duplicated	Rough Transcripts	Transcript Reviewed	Audit/ Edit	3 Transcript Photocopies	Letter to Narrator	Narrator Packet Stuffed	Date Out
1	W T	5/25/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/20/80
2	W T	5/25/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/20/80
3	W T	5/25/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/21/80
4	W T	5/25/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/21/80
5	W T	5/25/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/22/80
6	W T	5/25/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/23/80
7	W T	5/25/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/24/80
8	W T	5/25/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/25/80
9	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/26/80
10	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/28/80
11	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/28/80
12	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/29/80
13	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/30/80
14	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80
15	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80
16	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80
17	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80
18	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80
19	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80
20	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80
21	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80
22	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80
23	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80
24	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80
25	W T	5/26/80	T	X	XX	III	T	X	7/31/80

(1)W= Written; T = Typed

APPENDIX I

SERIES DESCRIPTION OF THE ORAL HISTORY MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

The "Susitna" collection consists of oral history manuscripts, tape recorded interviews, black and white photographs, and a map of the area studied. This oral history project involved the subject of historical land use in the Upper Susitna River Basin during the time period of the 1940's through the 1970's.

A total of 25 English speaking oral history narrators were interviewed during the months of March, April and May of 1980. These narrators described their use of the land, and its importance and significance in their lives.

The collection also includes an index of all oral history narrators, their occupations, and subject of the interviews.

Black and white photographs of those historical artifacts reported by the narrators depict cabins, trails, mines, and lodges located in the Upper Susitna River Basin. Each taped interview is approximately one hour in length.

Key Words: Oral History, Land Use, Upper Susitna Basin, Susitna River, Hunting, Trapping, Fishing, Guiding, Recreation, Air Taxi, Lodge.

APPENDIX J

COMPUTER INDEX FORMAT SHEET*

Person Interviewed　　　　　　　　　　Interviewer

Key Words

Historic Periods

Reference

Method of Collection　　　　　　　　　Other Locations of Collections

Is there a Transcript　　　Languages

Geographic Area Described　　　　　　Restrictions on Use

Annotation Cited

Date Recording was Made　　　　　　　(form 12-8-80)

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*Standard Format Sheet from the Oral History Project; Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

APPENDIX K

RESOURCES USED

Project Phase	Action Executed	Total Time (hours)	# of Staff
PHASE I	RESEARCH DESIGN		
	Literature Search	150	1
	Interview Design	32	2
	Field Survey Design	36	2
	Total	218	5
PHASE II	INTERVIEW		
	Initial Contact Preparation	40	1
	Travel Arrangements	10	2
	Equipment Selection		
	Tape recorders, Tapes	32	2
	Maps, Film	8	3
	Equipment Preparation		
	Tape recorder, Tapes	16	1
	Supplies	12	1
	Maps, Mylar	24	1
	Interview Sessions	28	1
	Post-Interview Tasks		
	Check tapes	30	1
	Interview Information Sheets (rough draft)	16	1
	Preparations for following interview	8	1
	Travel	90	1
	Total	314	16
PHASE III	PROCESSING SUMMARY		
	Information Sheets	9	2
	Tape Transcribing	150	2
	Audit/Edit Tapes	21	1
	Review/Retype Errors	22	2
	Transcript Photocopies	12	2
	Letters to Narrator	8	2
	Type Envelopes & Send	8	2
	Total	230	13

Project Phase	Action Executed	Total Time (hours)	# of Staff
PHASE IV	FIELD VERIFICATION		
	Field Preparation		
	Bear Protection Course and Shotgun Practice	16	1
	Delineate Zone Survey Areas	16	2
	Equipment Preparation	20	1
	Travel (Plane, Helicopter, Car, Foot)	90	1
	Total	142	5
PHASE V	ARCHIVAL PREPARATION		
	Index Manuscripts Collection	5	1
	Copies of Original Tapes	10	1
	Review Copies	20	1
	Re-copy missed tapes	10	2
	Review second copies	5	1
	Label tapes	12	1
	Computer Indexing	8	2
	Series Description	2	2
	Total	72	11

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