

**Replacing Sound Assumptions: Rediscovered Narratives of
Post War Northern British Columbia**

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Through a close analysis of a regional public radio archive, this dissertation reveals how residents of northern British Columbia defined their identities, expressed discontent, and revealed their aspirations and expectations for Canadian society. No matter what age, gender, or ethnic affiliation, the people of the region, when studied in a historical framework, challenge and alter previously held historical assumptions about a remote, isolated place, about the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as a national cultural institution, and about the wider Canadian society during the three decades after the Second World War.

The dissertation addresses shifting historical methodologies. It moves away from text-based interpretations of the past to listen closely to the recordings created by the CBC radio station in Prince Rupert, British Columbia, in order to gain further precision as to regional narratives and historical time frames. By doing so, new historical narratives are produced that more accurately reflect both the region and Canada as a whole. This dissertation shows that Canadian identity was tied to larger goals of nation building. The CBC mandate may have promoted such nation building practices, but with mixed results on a regional level.

Listening to the recorded voices of northern British Columbia residents encourages us to reconsider historical assumptions about rural regions, national cultural institutions, and the wider Canadian society in the post Second World War era. Indigenous peoples were active listeners, and used the medium of radio to communicate personal messages, political agency and cultural integrity. Women were also active on

the air (even though not hired as staff announcers) and they often reflected the localized, sometimes subversive feminist activities. The region's isolation made events there seem distant or unimportant to Canadians, especially during events such as when the Granduc avalanche highlighted the anti-American sentiments and the physical and financial risks of resource development. Although media studies and cultural critiques can assist our understanding of radio archives, historical studies may best express the significance of such events, resulting in a more complete account of the social and temporal context of this important time period.

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First, to Michael Bruce, in this our 25th year of marriage, I thank you for the support in all ways that really mattered. You didn't have to read the words in order 'to be there' and, to be fair, this project started before I even met you. You were always in competition with this even when you didn't know it! To our children -- Patrick, Eden and Sarah -- I love the young adults you have become as you make your way in the big wide world. I am so proud of you all.

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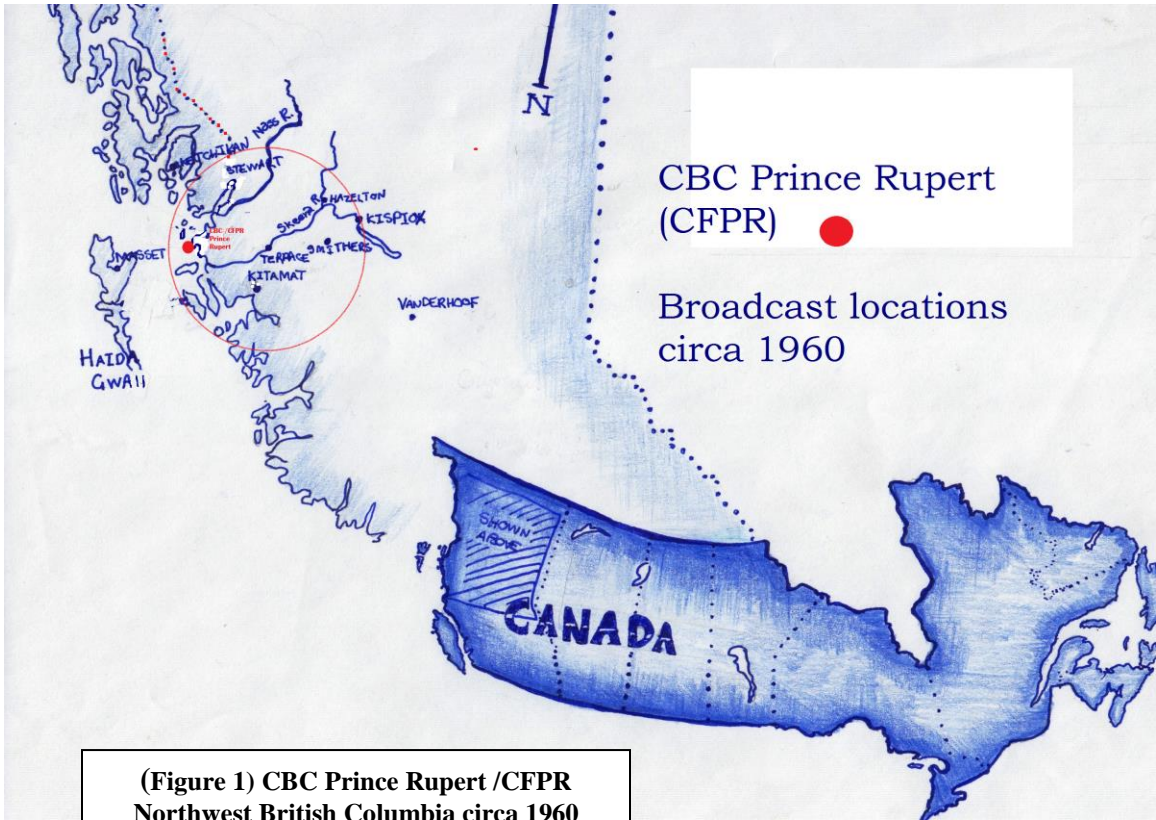
This dissertation is dedicated to my dear friends: Jean Barman with her ever brilliant insights all the while cheerfully saying, 'Go Woman Go,' and to Dina Von Hahn, who walked every bit of this journey with me from CBC in 1988 to the present. Your friendship and insight has meant more to me than you will ever know. And to my eldest sister, Hallie MacDonald, because you have given more than anyone I know to the betterment of our family, community and the world beyond.

Table of Contents

Examination Supervisory Committee	ii
Author's Declaration	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
Preface	xii
List of Figures	ix
Introduction: Re/placing History through the Sounds and Voices of Northern British Columbia	1
Chapter One: A Short History of Electronic Communications in Northwest British Columbia	36
Chapter Two: Deconstructing John Must's "The Foam on the Water" (1960)	80
Chapter Three: Beyond <i>Club Corner</i> : Women's Voices in Northwest British Columbia	109
Chapter Four: Voices of Disruption: BC History and the Granduc Mine Avalanche of 1965	136
Chapter Five: Raising the Voices of Indigenous People in the CBC Prince Rupert Radio Archives	167
Conclusion	203
Bibliography	208

List of Figures

Figure 1	Map of CBC/CFPR broadcast region (1960) (Seven Sisters Network)	x
Figure 2	Advertisement (map) of CFPR program and broadcast region (circa 1980)	xi
Figure 3	Hazelton Telegraph Office (circa 1911)	46
Figure 4	Clarence Insulander and CFPR studio, (circa 1944)	56
Figure 5	Robert Tomlinson Jr. and Pioneer Dinner (1959)	86
Figure 6	Charles Hays statue Prince Rupert City Hall	91
Figure 7	Tape and script of “Foam on the Water”	110
Figure 8	Nora Arnold, Prince Rupert Mayor (1948)	121
Figure 9	Valerie Dudoward (circa 1975)	131
Figure 10	Granduc Avalanche <i>Prince Rupert Daily News</i> , Feb. 19, 1965	151
Figure 11	Replica Totem Pole carved by William Jeffrey	187
Figure 12	“Indian Radio Training” <i>Indian World</i> , 1980	199



**(Figure 1) CBC Prince Rupert /CFPR
Northwest British Columbia circa 1960**

Illustrated by Eden Atkinson-Bruce , 2016

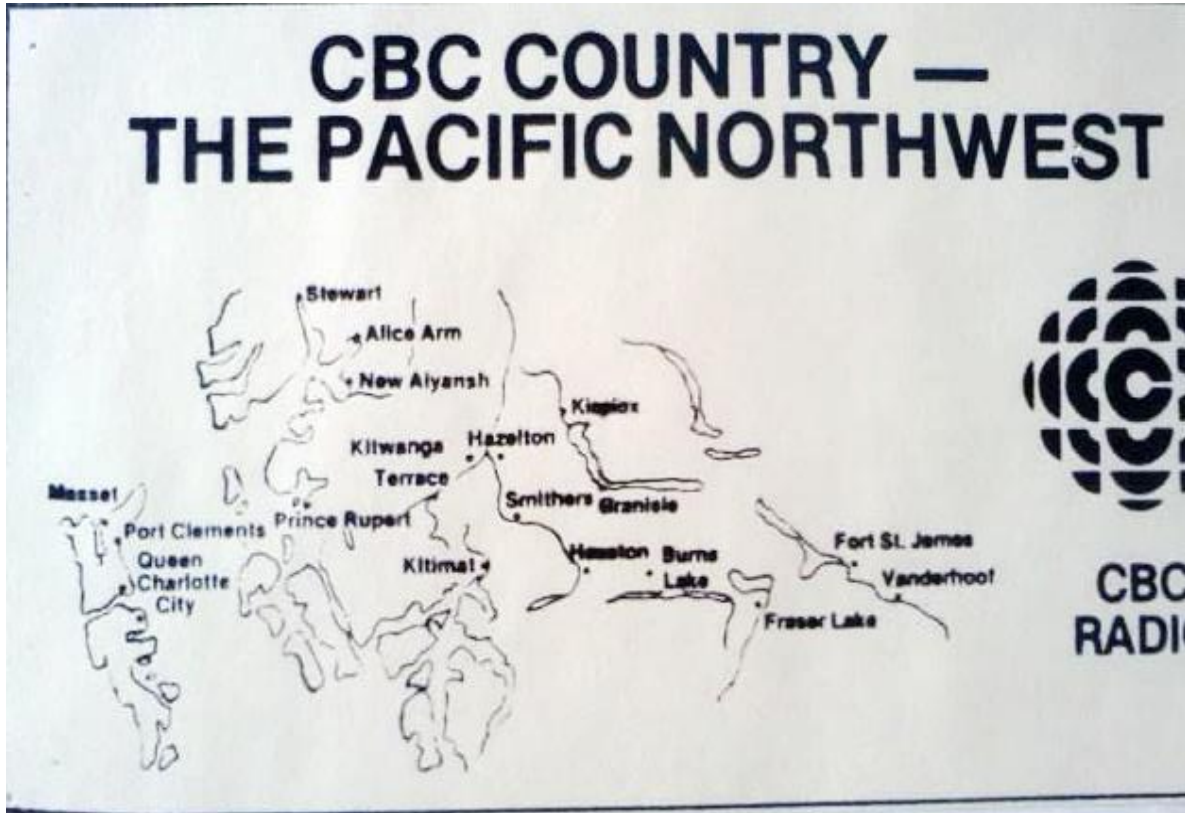


Figure 2) CBC/CFPR regional map from print advertisement (circa 1980)

Courtesy of CFPR radio bureau scrap book
(Photo M. Atkinson 2016)

Preface

This dissertation is about sorting out the voices from the past that have lingered in my head for over twenty-five years. I have had the intimate, yet sometimes unnerving, privilege of listening to these voices, first when I was young broadcast researcher in the late 1980s working at the new Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) radio bureau in Prince Rupert. Later, when the CBC was conducting a national archiving project, I was hired as a short term media archivist to transfer the 290 reel to reel tapes that comprise the CBC/CFPR¹ radio archive, onto compact disks. These reel tapes and, later the digital CD collection, remain in the trust and care of staff at the Prince Rupert City Archives in northwest British Columbia and are accessible to researchers to listen to, and to experience the past in new and interesting ways.

I have long been fascinated by the human voice, not only for details that are revealed through the spoken word, but also more generally how sound as a sense can evoke emotional and physical responses. Sound, laughter, music and, to a lesser degree, speaking clearly were a large part of my daily life as a child growing up in southern British Columbia during the late 1970s. I am the youngest of five girls, so it was a busy household .. But the demands to speak clearly and to be heard were especially difficult since both my father and grandmother suffered from significant hearing loss. Perhaps to be heard and understood through words took on perhaps greater meaning for me in my youth.

The following dissertation fulfills two functions: it finally releases me somewhat from my thoughts and feelings of responsibility to the voices of citizens from the region.

¹ CFPR stands for the local broadcasting station identification known as *call letters*.

It may seem overly sentimental and perhaps signs of an outsized ego, but I have felt protectively responsible for these voices and stories – a response not uncommon to archivists everywhere, I am sure. At the same time, however, I felt there was much these voices could tell an audience; not only about past lived experiences of northerners but also about themselves as Canadians. I firmly believe that you do not have to be an academic, nor a student of history, nor even a loyal CBC listener to find value in listening to voices of the past. We all can learn new insights by listening to those who have gone before. Thus the completion of this research is a turning point in my own life: I get to reclaim my focus somewhat, not away from the past, but perhaps to a more open future.

Introduction: Re/placing History through the Sounds and Voices of Northern British Columbia

As scholars investigate newly available electronic primary resources, in particular audio recordings, they identify opportunities to explore alternative perspectives on social change, in this case, in North West British Columbia after World War II. The audio archive of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) radio station, serving Northwestern BC, provides such an opportunity to better understand this region after the Second World War. It is a collection concentrated in the location where it was created. It was not shipped off to the BC Provincial Archives in Victoria or CBC Vancouver's office and thus remains accessible to regional researchers.

Two major questions direct the following dissertation:

1. How do the personal narratives and experiences of the people of the Northwest, as revealed in the CBC Prince Rupert radio archive, diverge from the standard historical accounts of regional development, and
2. Can radio archives, specifically material from the CBC Prince Rupert station, provide unique or original access to the thoughts, experiences and perspectives of the residents and the societies of Northwest British Columbia?

There are over 290 reel to reel tapes and a few cassettes in boxes housed at the Prince Rupert City and Regional Archives. These tapes range from five to thirty minutes in length, with the majority being fifteen minutes long. The collection includes diverse topics in the collection, from interview outtakes to locally produced dramas to full length special programs that were shared with the national network. The bulk of the 290 tapes

were produced between 1960 and 1973. The collection offers a unique window into the lives of ordinary people of the Northwest. The tapes in the CBC collection can be considered sites of local exchange between individuals in small northern communities. They were generally neither intended for nor seen as relevant to a national audience. On the other hand, some of the audiotapes in the collection include stories of national interest (such as the Granduc Mine avalanche) or accounts of times when prominent Canadians, such as author W.O. Mitchell or BC Premier W.A.C. Bennett, visited the north for public events.

The CBC Prince Rupert audio recordings are then social, political, and cultural intersections that reveal the dynamics of history through the medium of radio. The importance of the repository is underlined not only by its wide diversity of audio selections, but also by the fact that the material relates to a rural, isolated resource-rich region during a time of rapid economic and population growth. Projects such as this study of post-World War II regional culture, relying on newly exploited historical sources, could refine some standard historical accounts and assumptions, such as the notion that Northern British Columbians relied on the expertise of outsiders who possessed the new communication technologies. The written memories of telegraph operators Mattie Boss (Martha Washington O'Neill) and her brother Wiggs O'Neill clearly show that both northern men and women embraced the new employment opportunities. Another and more revealing result of this study was the discovery that Indigenous peoples also embraced radio technology both for practical reasons of faster communication and for the prestige of having their voices and messages disseminated on the air.

Scholars must be cautious, however, against reducing personal biographies and historical accounts to be representative of specific gender, class or ethnic group. Each story is part of the larger whole. As western Canadian historian Gerald Friesen reminded readers, individual voices, especially those from peripheral spaces, can show Canadians that despite our diverse backgrounds, all have a place in the larger Canadian historical experience.²

Personal stories and local histories as regional narratives can articulate an individualized and divergent historical perspective to the generalized Canadian narrative. These local audio sources, much like written autobiographies, also create a stronger connection between listeners, readers and researchers. In the same way, the form, tone, language, accent and pacing of the story-telling increases the level of intimacy between storytellers and listeners and this, in turn, affects the meaning for those who listen. This requires, then, a new approach and awareness in how researchers incorporate the experience of audio recordings and still apply the necessary temporal information for context. Documentary sources, when available, can help the researcher slow down the fast paced nature of audio record: real time processing of the spoken word requires a researcher's focused energy and attention. Because of the scale of the CBC Rupert collection, transcribing all the audio recordings was not feasible. However, by listening carefully to the recordings and then grouping the audio selections by similar content, it was possible to create a useable listing that provided an organizational structure for the material. A research agreement was established with the regional and national CBC archives, and access was made available through the Prince Rupert Archives, and a

² Gerald Friesen, *Citizen and Nation: An Essay on History, Communication and Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 220.

digital recording copy compiled on two hard drives for ease of access. One hard drive remains with the Prince Rupert archives. The other was returned to CBC Vancouver Archives in 2016.

When this research project commenced, there was already a working catalogue of the CBC Prince Rupert collection,³ and all the audio recordings were reviewed when I was hired to digitize the collection in 2000. The audio recordings were then put into different groupings: thematic issues, voices (as in First Nations speakers or female announcers) and by program (such as the “Visit to Miller Bay” or “Talk of the Town.”) By doing so, it became easier to see the similarities and omissions there were between the audio recordings and certain historical sources, both primary and secondary.

To supplement the hundreds of hours’ worth of audio recordings, twelve oral history interviews were conducted over an eighteen month period between February 2014 and December 2015, each with a specific topic in mind, but often including several distinct themes. Interviews were conducted with such notable Canadians as former MP and North Coast broadcaster Iona Campagnolo, and journalist Craig Oliver, who grew up in Prince Rupert and began his career at CFPR, as well as highly regarded British Columbian labour negotiator Vince Ready, a worker at the Granduc mine at the time of the avalanche in 1965 who generously offered his insights. Archaeologist and former director of the Museum of Civilization, Dr. George McDonald, and his wife Joanna McDonald, shared their memories of Prince Rupert harbour digs of the late 1960s. Others interviewed included local broadcasters and long-since retired CFPR staff members such as Jim Taylor, Dave Madison, Murray Hannah, Laurie Mills and freelance

³ Email to author, Neil Gillon, (March 2000). According to former CFPR staff member Neil Gillon, a catalogue written in the summer of 1985 or 1986 by writer/researcher Andrew Wreggit.

announcer Marge Ciccone. Interviews were also conducted with former residents Pamela Dudoward, Blanca Schorcht and Christine DeBoer about family members and their memories of CBC Radio in Prince Rupert. All these oral interviews were carried out after the approval of the project from University of Waterloo ethics review board.

The audio recordings in this study provide detailed insights into events and social processes missed in the standard regional and provincial histories. This is due, in part, to the unique nature of the CBC audio recordings and the constraints historians face when researching and writing regional histories. Some audio recordings provide localized examples of national trends that are sometimes overlooked by researchers. The revitalization of First Nations traditional arts, for example, created important symbolic and political power for Indigenous peoples, but the understanding of these processes is often disconnected from the larger political relationships of the same period.

The history and voices of some of the citizens who lived in Northwest British Columbia before 1970 are reflected in this radio archive housed in the City of Prince Rupert Archives. This audio collection spans roughly thirty years (1955 - 1985), a time of rapid resource and industrial economic development and shifting demographics across the province, but particularly in the north. The specific political and geographic issues revealed in the CBC material are backdrops to the standard historical narratives, yet the intangible elements of the lived experience provide intimate connections to the past. These elements are accessible to a researcher who listens to voices of the past rather than relying entirely on historical texts. To hear the raw emotions -- frustration, boredom, awe, anger and joy -- can be a profound experience for the historian.

Scholars and researchers must find ways to reconsider research questions and methodologies to include audio recordings and the historical attributes of “the audible past,” which tracks the construction of sound reproduction itself.⁴ Just as historians are encouraged to read documents “against the grain,” looking for omissions and gaps in the narratives and primary sources, they should also recognise the audio record as an intimate, constructed primary source that remains underutilised within the discipline.

Important historic events, including community celebrations as well as tragic natural disasters, are marked in the radio archives by both commemorative programs and ‘on the spot’ news specials. Interviews with witnesses or local dignitaries, were carried out by announcers, depending on the nature of the event. These recordings provide a primary source that can enhance and sometimes verify or counter other documentary records. The audio data holds information and implications for historical and inter-disciplinary studies that extend well beyond a defined regional space. These materials can be relevant for a wider reading of a national Canadian experience of the post war era.

Given the breadth and depth of content contained in audio recordings, it is not surprising that historians, even social and political historians whose research focuses on the two decades following the Second World War, are not utilising the content of audio archives to a significant degree. A brief historiographical review can help explain what the audio record, even from a small radio station from northern BC, has to offer and why perhaps it has been overlooked in regional and national historical accounts. Historians and their readers both benefit when they find new ways to explore the interchange

⁴ See Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

between people of a place, and the cultural messages shared across a vast geographic expanse. Several Canadian media historians have tackled the study of communications from the 1950s to the present. The analysis has usually focused on the urban and ‘southern’ media institutions (print and broadcasting) since the databases and archives of media and communications outlets reached the largest audiences. Few, however, have incorporated the perspectives of ‘first person’ regional historical accounts or primary sources of rural regions of post war Canada.

A way to conceptualise northern BC in the middle of the 20th century through the lens of the CBC radio archive, is to see it as a cultural and temporal “contact zone” as described by Mary Louise Pratt, an expert on cultural and comparative literature. Pratt investigated European and colonial travel writing “and the dynamics of meaning on the imperial frontier.”⁵ Pratt’s contact zone is a geographic region where two or more cultures meet, collide and intermingle. It is also a theoretical space that is continually shaped and altered by the social and political events. The CBC radio archive in northern British Columbia fits with both the physical and theoretical contact zone since it is in a remote location, and the material contained within it also conveys the diverse subject matter that represents the economic and social mixture of a region, as well as the daily concerns of the people of Prince Rupert. The radio archive is a repository of historical exchanges, illustrating the growth and diversity of relationships between individuals, but also the social prejudices against Indigenous peoples. At the same time, it shows how

⁵ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992) back cover.

some people, whether CBC staff members or other northerners, tried to adjust paternalistic perceptions and promote new inter-cultural pathways.⁶

Other historical and social concepts can evolve from the periphery, both in a geopolitical sense (as in removed from the centres of power) but also in academic discourse. On the periphery, new ideas are freer from the constraints of conservative institutions and mainstream arts and cultural expressions. The rapid expansion of what Carl Berger called ‘new histories’ of the 1970s and 1980s expanded the historical questions to include the voices of subordinate groups, and fostered an age of social movements critically “questioning institutions and practises.”⁷ Scholar Jack Granatstein expressed deep concern over the demise of the grand historical narrative and clearly blamed social historians in his 1997 work, “Who killed Canadian history?”⁸ But he never questioned the value of the grand narrative in contemporary Canadian society. According to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, however, a pan-Canadian identity is not necessary in the present “post-national” age.⁹ Scholars, however, cannot simply sweep away the knowledge that building a uniquely Canadian identity has for most the 20th century been a central tool of the dominant society and federal and provincial governments through political, social and cultural institutions. This “technological

⁶ See also, Pickles, Katie & Rutherford, Myra (ed.s) *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005.

⁷ Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900 (2nd Ed.)* (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 1986), 265.

⁸ Jack L. Granatstein, *Who killed Canadian History* (Toronto:Harper Collins, 1998)

⁹ Guy Lawson “Trudeau’s Canada. Again.” *New York Times Magazine* . Dec. 8. 2015
<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/magazine/trudeaus-canada-again.html>

nationalism,” as Maurice Charland called it,¹⁰ fostered the concept of a thoroughly modern nation, bound together by steam powered trains and rails, and later through electronic signals in the form of the telegraph lines and radio waves that criss-crossed the Canadian landscape. Charland argued that the “rhetoric of technological nationalism is insidious,” since “Canadian identity” was not “[tied] to its people, but to their mediation through technology.”¹¹ Douglas Francis considered this technological imperative to be a global phenomenon, but Canadian intellectuals such as Harold Innis, George Grant and Marshall McLuhan all grappled with its implications for Canadian society. These thinkers “were moralists who were attempting to retain or salvage a moral order – a moral imperative – that they believed either the technological imperative enhanced or else threatened.”¹²

At times, the cautionary sentiments of these influential Canadians were used by nationalists to re-enforce an anti-American cultural bias. Indeed, much of the promotion and protection of Canadian content regulation was built directly on the fear of American influence. This was certainly the case through the 1920s as Canadian government investigated the best way to licence and regulate the broadcasting industry.

From the inception of modern radio as a viable and commercial entity, urban Canadians were troubled by the influences of American advertising and entertainment on an artificial Canadian character. As historian Len Kuffert observed:

¹⁰ Maurice Charland, “Technological Nationalism,” In *Communication History in Canada*, Daniel Robinson editor Oxford University Press, 2009 originally printed In *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 10 1-2 (1986): 196-220.

¹¹ Charland, Ibid. 203.

¹² R. Douglas Francis, *The Technological imperative In Canada: An Intellectual History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 1.

Despite friendly appearances, in the realm of communications and media, friction, anxiety, and discomfort have frequently accompanied American-Canadian relations, and some of the oldest axes ... continue to be ground decades after they were forged.¹³

Canadian news media and broadcast industries were champions of progress and the established Canadian society, but the audio archive provides an opportunity to hear a variety of program perspectives that contradict or challenge these overarching media messages. For the small Prince Rupert radio in 1930s, American influence was not a concern, at least not until thousands of American troops moved into the city and demanded better recreational activities and entertainment during the Second World War. The heightened tensions within the community and the pressure that was applied by authorities to assert control over radio programming illustrate how international events directly affected local communities even far removed from the centres of power or conflict.

Len Kuffert's recent study on radio in Canada also reveals a surprising consistent and early trend towards "a cultural democracy"¹⁴ through the mixed private and public radio broadcast system. Kuffert's extensive use of archival material builds a solid case for the notion that the early broadcast system was more responsive to the needs and interests of listeners regardless of location or region of Canada. This is a key point when thinking about how present media studies might inform the analysis of a small Canadian radio audio archive and yet still frame it within an historical context, providing a new point of view not only for historians but also for media and communications experts.

¹³ Len Kuffert, *Canada Before Television: Radio, Taste And the struggle for Cultural Democracy* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 48.

¹⁴ See Kuffert, pages 15-17.

In an 2009 essay, media historian Paul Rutherford wrote that when he was a PhD student in the 1960s, he was initially obsessed with collecting and applying analysis to the data from “editorial pages.” However, he was missing a theoretical framework. He utilized social science methodological “research instruments” such as “content analysis” with the hope that eventually a narrative thread would reveal itself. Rutherford described the experience as

both enormously time-consuming and usually sterile because it missed the complexities of meaning. It assumed that a word like “nation” had a fixed meaning, akin to an arithmetic figure, so its frequency in the textual record might be used to determine its significance in the broader world of discourse. Here history had been subsumed in statistics.¹⁵

Without historical context, the significance of story and individual uniqueness of the lives of Canadians is lost. Gerald Friesen has shown that a communications history can provide a framework that combines national and individual approaches.¹⁶ Friesen’s essay combines compassionate scholarship with intellectual connections between Harold Innis’ foundational work of technology and empire while addressing Granatstein’s charge that social history brought the demise of the grand narrative.

Instead, Friesen argued that the lived experience of everyday Canadians, when reviewed through a lens of communications history, alters “the one sided and top-down perspective.”¹⁷ Friesen’s stance fulfills both the requirement of a big picture of Canadian history and a personal and local perspective, and is the most inclusive way to situate the individualised content of an audio archive. This approach best expresses the

¹⁵ Paul Rutherford, “Encounters with Theory” in Gene Allen and Daniel J. Robinson, *Communicating in Canada’s Past: Essays in Media History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 273.

¹⁶ See Gerald Friesen, *Citizen and Nation*.

¹⁷ Gerald Friesen, *Citizen and Nation*, note 9 267.

commonalities of experience and change over time rather than a confrontational or continually combative history. Friesen also makes a significant distinction between the history of media and communications history. This distinction is also extremely relevant to the following study, since there is always interplay between media and content analysis, as mentioned by Paul Rutherford, compared to what were people really experiencing. Communication is not static, and although it is not quantifiable, it can be framed historically, as Friesen has done.

One of the most recognised media and broadcasting historians in Canada is Mary Vipond. Her book, *Listening In*,¹⁸ provides readers with a detailed historical account of communications policy and its political players. While crucial to understanding the foundational context, these types of histories by their nature do not encompass radio listeners on a local level. The broad histories of media and broadcasting in Canada do not allow for the lived experience of either the producer or the audience, which is another reason why the CBC collection in Prince Rupert is important. A general history of the CBC or even broadcasting policy history of the 1980s, such as Mark Raboy's *Missed Opportunities*,¹⁹ does little to bridge the local or even regional ways in which Canadians viewed themselves and articulated their identities over several decades. Histories of Canadian broadcasting policies are more relevant as works of political science rather than investigations into how everyday Canadians did, or did not value the quality of entertainment programming, or the diction and elocution of news readers and on-air personalities.

¹⁸ Mary Vipond, *Listening In: The First Decade of Canadian Broadcasting, 1922-1932*. Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).

¹⁹ Mark Raboy, *Missed Opportunities: the Story of Canada's Broadcasting Policy* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

Mary Vipond's 2009 historiographic essay, "Whence and Whither: The Historiography of Canadian Broadcasting,"²⁰ cites significant studies in the development of telecommunications media history in Canada, but does not follow the same approach as Gerald Friesen. Vipond recognizes the cross disciplinary nature of broadcasting history, including sociology, literature and political science. But as an historian, she feels it is those trained in the historical discipline who will "contextualize the object of study in its unique place and time."²¹ The regional historical study of a media archive can provide both the required breadth by addressing the role of the citizen in the nation,²² but also address the local issues and identities generated by the listeners and radio producers.

This is not to imply that a causal interest or non-academic approach is sufficient when dealing with audio recordings of a regional nature. Indeed, as rural historian Ruth Sandwell has surmised, the history of rural British Columbia is too precarious and complex to be left in the hands of the "amateur local historian."²³ Sandwell states it is the "histories of these communities [that most often] reveal the breadth of rural economic activities such as logging, mining, fishing, and both subsistence and market agriculture." And when professional historians sometimes ignore the local, and portray the rural as insignificant, the result is "amateur works [that] vacillate between sentimental anecdote and loosely held principles of 'progress' or modernization. There is "little analysis...

²⁰ Mary Vipond, "Whence and Whither: The Historiography of Canadian Broadcasting." In Gene Allen and Daniel Robinson, *Communicating in Canada's Past: Essays in Media History* (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 2009).

²¹ Mary Vipond, "Whence and Whither" 234.

²² See Friesen, 2000.

²³ Ruth Sandwell, *Beyond City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 9.

[but plenty of]... cheerful retrospective untroubled by issues of power, conflict or politics.”²⁴

However, the local does not have to be parochial. American rural historian Joseph Amato challenged historians (both academic and non) to treat the micro-historical project with as much vigour and integrity as larger scale narratives. He suggested further that there is no distinction between the professional historian and the amateur. Scholarship and creative, engaging narratives are not mutually exclusive. Amato states “local historians **reject** [emphasis mine] overarching explanations for micro-histories, instead staying true to details, anecdotes, and peculiarities of place.” Local historians should recognize the diverse and multiple roles of community members, “the politician” and the “propagandist,” and the resulting narrative should also represent the best of the academy since the local historian can become an “intellectual bootlegger of a sort.”²⁵

The multiple perspectives that go into Amato’s “home brew” are similar to Friesen’s featured experiences of ordinary Canadians. Both Amato on the local level and Friesen on a national level insist individual narratives are all part of a larger composite. The work of Newfoundland historian Jeff Webb serves to illustrate how broadcasting was viewed in a regional context, promoting a singular voice as a unified cultural perception, even during the turbulent 1940s when Newfoundland as a region wrestled with its political future. The Voice of Newfoundland (VON) was a public radio network, but began as a privately owned station, as did most of the stations that became the foundation of the radio CBC network. However, the Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland

²⁴ Sandwell, 9.

²⁵ Joseph Amato, *Rethinking Home: A Case for Writing Local History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 188.

(BCN, later the Voice of Newfoundland VON), was not preoccupied with the debates over commercialization and American cultural influences that comprised a central argument for the creation of national public broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Jeff Webb argues that mass media such as radio did not replace Newfoundland folk culture, as sometimes argued by “popular commentators.”²⁶ Rather, “local broadcasters, whether state owned or privately owned, drew upon local culture for programming at the same time that they imported cultural forms.”²⁷ On the surface, Newfoundland’s history and society could be considered more uniform than that of northwestern British Columbia. But as Webb added, listeners to the VONF were “geographically disparate, and slightly divided by ethnic origin and different classes.” The geography and need for communication for residents living in isolated communities was central to the creation of the radio station on the Northwest Pacific Coast. This was not much different than the BCN.

The first modern history of the Province of British Columbia was written by Margaret Ormsby, who thematically wrote of challenges of geography and wild spaces in determining the character of a people.²⁸ The political and economic tensions between the elites of the urban centre of Vancouver and those citizens living in the rural hinterlands consistently arise in *British Columbia: A History*. Ormsby contends that British Columbia’s “obstinate topography,” as noted by historian Chad Reimer, had a direct impact on the economic development and political culture as well.²⁹ Ormsby concluded that British Columbians were a people, “formed into strong individualists by their rugged

²⁶ Webb, *Voice of Newfoundland*, 11.

²⁷ Webb, *ibid.*

²⁸ Chad Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History 1784 – 1858* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 9.

²⁹ Margaret Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History* (Toronto: McMillan, 1958) 412.

mountain setting” and “set apart by distance”³⁰ from the rest of the country, but still loyal to the wider Canadian identity.

A direct comparison between CBC radio in northwestern British Columbia and BCN include programs such as *Message Time* on CFPR that ran for decades and a privately sponsored program, *Gerry Doyle’s Bulletin*. Jeff Webb argues that the *Bulletin* was a combination of news stories clipped from local papers, personal messages (sometimes even telegrams) that “simulated a community” of loyal regional listeners.³¹ The intimate and personal information that was passed over the airwaves at the same time as regional news reports established a certain validation that local stories were no less important than world events. In this way, for the listeners of CFPR, the daily and personal experiences of the residents of northern British Columbia were more relevant than lives of people in southern, urban Canada.

For decades, CBC radio was respected by most locals as an established communications service, no matter how they felt about programming or music selections. Listeners often influenced program creation and selection – sometimes through feedback such as complaints and letters, but also by patronizing radio advertisers. As Webb comments, regardless of what the “intent of authors and creators of radio programming, listeners interpret the content in ways that are meaningful to themselves.”³²

The centralizing cultural or nation-building activities of radio station were always secondary to the local needs for connection. Mary Vipond was encouraged by these local media “on the ground” histories, such as Webb’s study, which she suggested “were the

³⁰ Ormsby, 494.

³¹ Webb, 88-90.

³² Webb, 13.

most feasible” as they are “based on local sources, sometimes oral history, that can provide a richer and deeper understanding of the meaning of broadcasting in Canadians’ daily lives and of how that changed over time.”³³

To step back from the media history, it is possible to reflect on other ways that local historical narratives contributed to the historicizing of the northwestern part of British Columbia. Concurrent with Ormsby’s scholarly work, several other local historical projects were underway in the province of British Columbia as part of the effort of the provincial government of Premier W.A.C. Bennett, to mark the province’s first centenary.³⁴ Prince Rupert physician and history enthusiast R. Geddes Large wrote *The Skeena: River of Destiny*.³⁵ By doing so, Large established a reputation as an historical expert. His work also brought a significant cultural prestige to the writing of the history of Northwest British Columbia.

Large’s interpretative and narrative breadth set a standard for a progressive regional history. As Mia Riemers pointed out, a booklet on the form and style of the local histories was composed and then circulated by the provincial centennial committee.³⁶ Large’s *The Skeena: River of Destiny*, began with a short geographical description, then another brief chapter describing the pre-contact Indigenous Peoples of

³³ Mary Vipond, “Whence and Whither,” 244.

³⁴ For a comprehensive scholarly treatment of the centennial celebrations as province building see Mia Reimers “BC at its Most Sparkling, Colourful Best”: Post-War Province Building through Centennial Celebrations. Unpublished PhD diss. (Victoria: University of Victoria, 2007)

³⁵ R. G. Large, *The Skeena: River of Destiny*, K. Campbell (ed.) (Prince Rupert, Museum of Northern BC: 1996) . The first edition proved so popular there were four print runs by Mitchell Press in 1957, twice in 1958 and again 1960. A fifth edition by Gray’s Publishing was issued in 1981. The sixth edition was the first that was printed after the author’s death, when the publishing rights were transferred to the Museum of Northern BC and editor Ken Campbell updated and clarified the text with additional footnotes.

³⁶ See Reimers, 59.

the region, all in relation to the Skeena River, which of course was his major thematic thread. Large observed:

This was the Skeena District before the coming of the white man—a mountainous, heavily wooded land, traversed by a swift flowing treacherous river. Guarded to the westward by numerous islands and sunken reefs against approach by sea, it was vulnerable only to the east of the coast mountains, where the open park land of the central plateau and the numerous mountain lakes and streams awaited the coming of the explorer’s canoe.

The next several chapters follow a chronological progression from the first Hudson’s Bay post on the north coast in the 1830s, to the influences of Protestant missionary William Duncan and the village of Metlakatla, and other missionaries. Chapters 6-11 feature a narrative discussion on the technology and transportation advances leading to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and the City of Prince Rupert and other non-native communities in the region. Large’s final chapters feature industrial development, fishing, mining and forestry in the region. The final chapter, titled “Destiny,” ends with the highly optimistic claim that projects such as Alcan Aluminum’s construction of smelter and town site at Kitimat were signs that the “Dawn of Prosperity has finally broken for the Skeena.”³⁷ The novelty of the benefits of industrial progress in the wilds of northern British Columbia are hinted at in Dr. Large’s work, but the real celebrations of modern progress and the wealth of the province’s natural resources were found in the Martin Robin’s work of the 1970s,

³⁷ Large, 188.

and more recently by historians Christopher Dummit,³⁸ Joy Parr,³⁹ Tina Loo and Meg Stanley.⁴⁰

The CBC Prince Rupert announcers from this period, such as John Must, drew on Dr. Large's historical expertise through interviews or by quoting his written work.⁴¹ They used his material to describe the residents moving to northern BC in this time period. Franca Iacovetta mentioned in her 2006 book *Gatekeepers*⁴² that both the broadcasting industry and print media were front and centre in reporting on the transformation of newcomers from foreigners to successfully integrated Canadians. This may seem logical given the need for newcomers to transition into the established Canadian society, yet Iacovetta highlighted the way in which some individuals and media corporations benefited from disproportionate power dynamics. The print media and, most likely other broadcast media outlets reported and promoted modern western democratic activities in the age of the Cold War, citing certain behaviours and conditions as a sign of progressive, positive and loyal citizenship. The early reportage of grateful refugees and immigrants at their arrival into Canada often emphasized "the youthful families, jovial ways, ethnic foods, and love of drink – beer for Germans, wine for Italians."⁴³

³⁸ Christopher Dummit, *Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008).

³⁹ Joy Parr, *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953-2003* (UBC Press, 2010).

⁴⁰ Tina Loo and Meg Stanley, "An Environmental History of Progress: Damning the Peace and Columbia Rivers." *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 92, No. 3 (September 2011), 399-427.

⁴¹ Several of the CBC Prince Rupert staff referred to, and recorded Dr. Large for his historical expertise for programs that aired in the early 1960s. See chapter two for further discussion.

⁴² Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2006).

⁴³ Iacovetta, 26.

Even the National Film Board of Canada, a cultural institution established by the federal government in 1939, “proved to be an active gatekeeper of sorts,” and it is most likely that the CBC also fostered and maintained a modern Canadian urban identity. It is questionable whether many newcomers or even established citizens destined to find work in rural and remote regions necessarily accepted it.⁴⁴ Although a small part of the radio archive, the materials show how in Prince Rupert the CBC staff went out of their way to feature a few voices of newcomers to their community. One of the few ‘live on location’ recordings found in the radio archive is the dedication of a municipal fountain donated to the city by the “Italo (sic)-Canadian Club of Prince Rupert.”⁴⁵

Personal histories also became popular during this time period, especially through the work of CBC broadcaster Imbert Orchard and technical engineer Ian Stephens. Orchard and Stephens recorded the voices of over 1000 British Columbians between the late 1950s to the early 1970s. These recordings were sometimes edited and packaged into programs between 15 to 30 minutes in length. The majority of the full-length interviews were later donated to the Provincial Archives in Victoria.⁴⁶

The Imbert Orchard collection was the focus of a master’s thesis for University of Victoria graduate Robert (Lucky) Budd,⁴⁷ who later transcribed and edited several selections for a popular history book. The aptly titled *Voices of British Columbia*,

⁴⁴ See Iacovetta, 11. Although the CBC was not explicitly mentioned in this context, it is reasonable to make this assertion based on Iacovetta’s comments that “Among the enthusiastic gatekeepers were sympathetic reporters and magazine journalists who invited everyone to join them in the grand national experiment in citizenship.”

⁴⁵ CBC/CFPR audio archives “Dedication of Prince Rupert Fountain.” CD 21, Track 1. Tape 51, (Oct. 14 1961) Note the spelling for the Italo-Canadian club comes from the plaque on the fountain itself. Photographed March 2017.

⁴⁶ These recordings were later transferred into a digital format, between 1999-2002.

⁴⁷ Robert (Lucky) Budd, *The Story of the Country: Imbert Orchard’s Quest for the Frontier Folk in BC, 1870-1914*. Unpublished Master’s Thesis (Victoria: University of Victoria, 2005).

published in 2010, was followed by *Echoes of British Columbia* in 2014.⁴⁸ The celebratory nature of these collections aside, for the first time the general public had access to both the audio text and recorded memories of large numbers of British Columbians. Listeners and researchers should note, however that these programs were heavily edited. Yet this collection allows direct access to voices of citizens who have long passed away. Although terms such as “pioneers” are phrases that are themselves constructs of temporal and social nature, it might be better to view them as a number of singular perspectives and individual access points to the past rather than definitive examples of entire social trends. As oral historian Steven High points out, “Life story interviews are an especially rich source for understanding the multiple layers of significance in people’s lives.”⁴⁹

A relevant example of the complexity of oral interviews and life histories is David Mitchell’s biography of Premier W.A.C. Bennett based on a series of audio recorded interviews which coincides with the following dissertation. WAC Bennett and his Social Credit government were in power for a twenty year period, a time span that overlaps with the CBC Prince Rupert recording collection. Mitchell shows that Bennett maintained an enthusiasm for province-building long after his political defeat in 1972. The environmental costs of the “good life” of the Bennett era that brought people, jobs and large infrastructural projects to isolated regions in the north were never seriously questioned until the 1970s, or at least there is limited evidence of questioning in the CBC radio archive collection.

⁴⁸ Budd, *Voices of British Columbia: Stories from our Frontier* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2010). and *Echoes of British Columbia: Voices from the Frontier* (Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 2014)

⁴⁹ Stephen High and David Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland: Landscape and Memory of Deindustrialization* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2007), 14.

British Columbia historian Jean Barman has always respected the voices of British Columbians when they are accessible in the primary sources, and she draws on the Imbert Orchard collection and another such collection by Vancouver archivist Major Matthews. But again the voices are blended in more conventional chronology in her seminal work, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*.⁵⁰ The experiences of northwestern British Columbia are integrated into the larger narrative, something that is appropriate given that Barman's work is a provincial history.

On another regional note, northern historians Ken Coates and William Morrison have argued that the provincial norths have been purposely "ignored" by Canadian scholars (rather than neglected)⁵¹ since the north/south orientation in Canadian history remains predominant. In order for an area such as the provincial norths to be recognized as a region, there first must be a common identity:

Although the region shares a great deal – its climate, geography, racial mixture, economic past, the attitude of federal and provincial governments towards it...-- there is nothing in this country even approaching a shared regional identity ... nor a sense of shared destiny.⁵²

This lack of regional identity remains entrenched long after *The Forgotten North* was published.

Coates and Morrison made a case for the historical similarities in resource extraction dependant regions in which questions about Aboriginal land claims and the lack of engagement with government structures were a source of common concern across

⁵⁰ Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

⁵¹ Ken Coates and William Morrison, *The Forgotten North: A History of Canada's Provincial Norths*, (Toronto: Lorimer and Company, 1992) 6.

⁵² Coates, Morrison, 125.

the provincial North. This regional approach of viewing the provincial norths as a single pan-Canadian unit has not gained traction within southern academic circles, and few, other than Robert Bone, a geographer, have taken up this position.⁵³ Even among northern residents, Coates and Morrison's recognition of a shared common northern identity generated little interest. The north/south provincial alignment remains entrenched in the minds of mid-northern residents themselves, and they do not seem willing to adopt a pan-rural northern Canadian context.

Other scholars, often based in southern institutions, continue to write about cultural and historical images of northern Canada, including cultural institutions such as the CBC. Sherrill Grace observed in her 2007 book that the "North is multiple, shifting elastic: it is a process, not an external fixed goal or condition. It is above all...a construction of southerners."⁵⁴ This creation of a mythic northern identity has been significantly challenged as northerners have embraced communication technologies and expertise to form their own artistic visual, electronic mediums. Unless southern audiences readily choose or select to hear, review and interact with those representations of the North, the 'othering' continues.

Journalism and communications studies offer academic avenues that logically could help hone in on identity of the north and regional communications. Again however, there are few studies that investigate this idea for the provincial northern

⁵³ See Robert Bone, Review of *The Forgotten North: A History of Canada's Provincial Norths* by Ken Coates and William Morrison, *Arctic*, Vol 46 No. 2 (June 1993), 184.

⁵⁴ Sherrill Grace, *Canada and the Idea of the North* (Montreal – Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2007), 16.

regions, with the exception of Lorna Roth⁵⁵ and Valerie Alia,⁵⁶ whose works feature the reportage and fostering of Indigenous media in the north. Their northern focus is not necessarily the provincial north but rather those parts of Canada north of 60 degrees, and in territorial and Arctic regions. These studies offer limited historical content, but the analysis focuses on communications practice, rather than tracing the histories of Canada over time.

Meanwhile cultural scholar Jody Berland's collection of essays, *North of Empire* (2009)⁵⁷ also shows how entrenched the north is in the Canadian identity and indeed in our cultural scholarship. She elaborates on a Harold Innis's "premise that empire is constituted through means of communication," and argues that Marshall McLuhan's views of media "must be understood in relation to changing topographies of space."⁵⁸ Berland framed the continued Canadian northern identity in relation to the powerful nation to the south. Her work is particularly inspiring because she incorporated media technology, music and radio culture into her study, making her work a valuable scholarly hybrid of technological trends, history and cultural and political studies. Place, region and shifting populations and technologies are all in flux, particularly away from the centres of power.

Again, regional spaces can be defined by geographic or political boundaries. But historians have different ways of deciding where one region ends and a local home place

⁵⁵ Lorna Roth, *Something New in the Air: The Story of First Peoples Television Broadcasting in Canada* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

⁵⁶ Valerie Alia, *Un/Covering the North: News, Media, And Aboriginal People* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

⁵⁷ Jody Berland, *North of Empire: Essays on Cultural Technologies of Space* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

⁵⁸ Berland, 5.

begins in terms of historical writing. This, in turn, shapes their definitions of place-based narratives. American rural historian Joseph Amato (2002), calls for a “rethinking” of the concept of home in historical writings by both local amateur writers and professional scholars alike.⁵⁹ Amato wants to combine the enthusiasm and interests of local writers with the broader historical trends reflected in the work of professional historians.

The personal connection to place is the something that local historians have long understood, but not necessarily articulated. Alternatively, it can be misleading to rely solely on memories of a place as the interpretative lens, since local historical writers can be passionate in generating detailed renderings of a particular place and community. But their work often lacks the historical processes that Kerry Abel presented in her 2006 work *Changing Places*, which combines a comprehensive local historical discussion with an academic framework. American historian Joseph Amato calls this process the “dynamics of change” and suggests that this can be obtained by looking at a region’s physical geography, demographics, politics and even cultural mix.⁶⁰ On the other hand, micro histories, as rural historian Ruth Sandwell states, can be “defined by [their] scale and focus, not by specific issues, themes, events or theoretical frameworks.”⁶¹ It is possible to maintain academic standards if they are balanced with an engaging narrative, rendering local stories to a wider audience.

⁵⁹ Joseph Amato, *Rethinking Home: A Case for Writing Local History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

⁶⁰ Joseph Amato, *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Ruth Sandwell, “History as Experiment; Microhistory and Environmental History,” in *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, edited by Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2009) 124-138. See also Ruth Sandwell *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999) 136.

Elizabeth Furniss's 1999 study combines contemporary anthropological theory and what she calls the 'burden of history' as seen in the small town of Williams Lake British Columbia, which is also sometimes considered to be a northern community. Furniss also takes a contemporary analysis rather than an historical one to show the lateral layers of the frontier complex in everyday life.⁶² This approach gives readers a 'snap shot' of a specific place (Williams Lake) but still allows Furniss to explore post-colonial themes such as race and power. Furniss explains that the frontier myth is alive in the relationships between First Nations and newcomers. Her observations are clearly valid considering the "take-for-granted understandings of the past"⁶³ in the western frontier themes of the Williams Lake Stampede, or in the attitudes expressed in contemporary conservative politics of the reform party of the 1990s. Furniss excludes "token" Aboriginal voices from her study since she believes they would deflect or detract from her critique of the dominant culture.⁶⁴ Historian Joy Parr further explores the ideas of place/landscape and personal memory in a more detailed study of the personal physical response to environmental change. Parr's work, *Sensing Changes* (2009), is a fascinating look at how memories of a physical space remain embedded in individuals' sense of self even though the landscape has altered over time.⁶⁵ Six Canadian megaprojects are the case study settings and the catalysts of the "embodied" changes place based identities that are linked to physical senses (taste/touch/sound). Parr has also blended interactive world wide web technology into her study. Developed in partnership with John van der Veen,

⁶² Furniss, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Town* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999) 21-22.

⁶³ Furniss, 13.

⁶⁴ Furniss, 22.

⁶⁵ Joy Parr, *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953-2003* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

the technology gives readers a full sensory experience and insights into the memories of the participants as well as into the research process. Historical geographer Graeme Wynn states that Parr has “thrown down the gauntlet for future scholarship” by incorporating new technologies and reminding historians of the “ways in which people sense and value places.”⁶⁶ However, Parr seems reluctant to address intangibles such as the importance of human spirituality which, perhaps, is now so needed in discussions of the technology of memory and space.

Historians and scholars have been moving away from rigid geographical interpretations of space and place for decades, but the discussion is an intellectual exercise rather than a full exploration of place, space and intangibles. Perhaps it is the use of technologies that have given voice to the marginalized people who often have been located on the periphery beyond the normal documentary sources. It also could be a function of new technologies and personal interactive devices that allow humans to experience spatial dynamics in entirely new, often multisensory ways. Technology such as online forums and social networking now have direct and world changing impacts on human history. Determining how historians deal with place and space in cyberspace poses some fascinating questions for the future.

Steven High recently summed up the importance of technological advancements as new forms of research methods but also as creative avenues of dissemination. High feels these can bring the history of places and spaces alive, but he also cautions against the pitfalls of privileged histories:

⁶⁶ Graeme Wynn, “Foreword” Joy Parr’s *Sensing Changes*, xxii.

There is a danger, however in many of the memoryscapes and audio tours ... in that they suppose a stable and unitary local community – devoid of internal division. We must ask ourselves if there is a place for more controversial or less consensual stories in these immersive spaces. How do we represent the complexity of social relations and the fluidity and multiplicity of communities themselves?⁶⁷

This is not a new question, however, since historians have been grappling with representation and vested interests in their research for decades. The broad historical narratives based on economic or political geographic explanations of the early 20th century have come up for re-examination.

Since the 1950s and 1960s Canadian historians who worked and lived outside of central Canada have begun to reinterpret the importance of place and the transformation of rural spaces with a more local perspective. Regional identities and regional interests and ‘home grown’ historical perspectives, particularly in the Western provinces, instilled a sense of pride in regional histories. But this perspective was still limited to the voice of a few academics and writers in specific communities. In the 1980s and 1990s the shift in historical thinking away from histories of place and space as being strictly geographical with rigid social and political boundaries changed the way that research was conducted, making it more inclusive of specializations of race/class/gender analysis and across disciplinary boundaries.

Other artificial boundaries, such as the rural and urban divide, have created divisions within Canadian historiography. The creation of rural economic definitions (farming or resource economies) does little to assess the similarities of a provincial and regional space. One collection of essays, edited by rural historian Ruth Sandwell,

⁶⁷ Steven High, “Mapping Memories of Displacement: Oral History, Memoryscapes, and Mobile Methodologies,” in *Place, Writing, and Voice in Oral History*, Shelley Trower (ed) (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011) 219.

attempts to redress the historiography of British Columbia from “beyond the city limits,” and to shed the “grand narrative of modernization” ... [that is] “comforting in its simplicity.”⁶⁸ Sandwell explicitly states there is neither definitive rural experience nor rural history in British Columbia. Rather it is the researching of “detailed interactions” and “different levels of experience” that is most significant.⁶⁹ Presently, the inclusion of technology as a social and intellectual force is shedding new light on the perceived limits of the history of space and time. Douglas Francis reminds scholars of Harold Innis’s position that technological elites centred in the heart of empire eventually give way to the “new centre of creativity on the margin of the dominant civilization.”⁷⁰

This study on the CBC radio archives in Prince Rupert builds on Innis’s theme, but takes the broadly interpretative goals set out by Gerald Friesen to heart. The history of Canada can be framed as a collection of individuals where the everyday communications reflects each story. The interactions between people reflect the themes of national interests but these are juxtaposed against the voices of citizens going about their daily lives. It illustrates sometimes the best of the national corporate media agenda, namely service to the social good through communication, but also the less acknowledged bigotry and enforced cultured ideals of a few individuals who had control of what went to air in the region. The central idea of this dissertation is that voices from the marginal spaces can keep challenging the centres of economic and political power. For too long, the histories of rural, local and sometimes forgotten places were dismissed

⁶⁸ Ruth Sandwell ed. *Beyond City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999) 4-5.

⁶⁹ Sandwell, 14.

⁷⁰ R. Douglas Francis, *The Technological Imperative in Canada: An Intellectual History*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009) 174.

as parochial. But perhaps the time has come to marshal creative academic frameworks that cross over into new ideas, reviewing the places of the past and exploring the new social spaces. By placing and re-placing the voices, memories, authority and identity of residents in the geographic region of northern British Columbia and at the same time maintaining the temporal backdrop to ground the stories, the audio recordings and the experience of listening brings the past into the mind's eye (and ears) of the present.

The introductory chapter provides an historical overview of the communications in northwest BC during and after the Second World War. The technological and geographic challenges were significant factors in how radio and television service was established. The work of the CBC was shaped, as well, by the determination of three men and how they interpreted and worked within, and sometimes around, the structures and mandate of the national CBC. The voices of Clarence Insulander, Will Hankinson and documentary sources of private broadcaster J.F. Weber underline how key players can push forward agendas and direct the historical outcomes of a region for good or ill. Generally, social historians try to emphasize social change over time rather than looking at individual influences. In a local history, however, the power and decision-making are centred on a few individuals. The regional audio archive holds key interviews and content that directly expresses these factors. This chapter also describes the origins, nature, impact and regional role of the CBC's radio service in northern British Columbia.

The second chapter features a deconstruction of one audio production from 1960 titled *The Foam on the Water*. This program, created by announcer/producer John Must, promotes a modernist oral history narrative of a typical Canadian town. This radio program sounds like a radio documentary, but it is an hour-long packaged promotion of a

settler, urban-centred view of the past. It provides a wonderful example of how radio was used to promote industrial and war-time developments as indicators of progress in Canadian towns, while maintaining a cautious optimism about the future. This chapter helps illustrate how one producer's choices of sound and technical limitations are also important factors when reviewing audio recordings as historical sources.

The voices heard in this program sometimes express a different perspective on the significant events in the life of the City of Prince Rupert. The labour unrest of 1910, for example, was remembered by senior George Casey, but the story was treated as a quaint bit of folklore through the retelling of this history as a poem and ballad. Reviewing the audio clips and editorial choices of producer John Must identifies not only what he viewed and privileged as history but also how the local CBC station understood its own broadcast identity as the cultural expert in rural Canada. By shifting the focus onto stories and voices (some of which are contained in other interviews in the archive collection) left out by Must, a more balanced and fuller picture emerges of the typical "Canadian town,"⁷¹ during the Post-War resource boom.

The third chapter reviews the growing participation of women in a rural CBC station (CFPR) and, more generally, print and broadcasting beginning in the early 1960s. The subversive wit of Miss Inane Air, an on-air character portrayed by Prince Rupert resident Marge Ciccone, challenges the assumptions that scholars have about rural engagement with international issues, as well as the assumption that women had very limited roles in broadcasting before the 1970s. There is supporting evidence that this

⁷¹ The opening narration explained that the program, was "a salute to Prince Rupert's Jubilee Year, The CBC presents The Foam on the Water." A flashback into the history of a Canadian town and its people. A look at what it is today and a look into its future." CBC/CFPR archives, CD 90 track 1 (1960).

attitude held sway within CFPR management. For example, station manager Will Hankinson stated that it was more important to have women as “listeners,” and that “women will not listen to women announcers.” Interestingly enough, Will Hankinson, who was station manager for more than 20 years, had hired the outspoken announcer-turned executive secretary, Mary Bird, who maintained a key role in office politics, as well as multiple roles in advertising sales and as a writer.

There is a disconnect, then, between what was promoted in the public eye as an accepted female on-air presence versus and the actual practice in a small northern public station, and wider media. Exploring “Miss Inane Air,” the international affairs of the day, and other clips such as “Club Corner,” targeted to female listeners shows how key individuals engaged a significant portion of the population in topics of extra-regional importance. Other female voices presented in the northwestern media show that women were key players on and off the air before and after the Second World War.

Chapter Four examines the Granduc Mine avalanche disaster of February 1965, and how this international event became forgotten in the regional and national historical narratives. The Granduc avalanche was one of the worst industrial and natural disasters in 20th century Canadian history. Local citizens, such as Nisga’a MLA Frank Calder, had warned of an impending disaster because of the record heavy snow pack, but these warnings went unheeded by the government and mining company officials. During the same period, British Columbia attracted thousands of new Canadians, many full of the province-building modernist optimism expressed by Premier W.A.C. Bennett. By contrasting the audio and print media of the day in and interviews with a survivor of the avalanche, Vince Ready and two others who were involved in the rescue and the CBC

reporting of the event, it is evident that both the Canadian and provincial governments, and mine officials, were not anticipating, nor were they equipped to handle, a disaster of this magnitude. This can-do optimism infused essentially every aspect of public life and was expressed in numerous megaprojects, such as the Peace River and Columbia River hydro-electric dams and the rapid construction of provincial roads and rail and ferry links. Few British Columbians, particularly those of the Northwest, know of the Granduc disaster today. By exploring the radio and newspaper reports, it is evident that the modernist and pro- industrial narrative of the 1960s helped perpetuate the social amnesia surrounding this event.

The Prince Rupert CBC archives holds several documentaries, all featuring announcer/producer Norm Newton, which highlight the art and material cultural traditions of northwest BC First Nations. Newton was supportive of Indigenous artistic endeavors, yet he did not recognize the cultural revitalization underway in the northwest. This reveals another important theme. Studies incorporating cultural artifacts such as radio broadcasts reveal much about the past but also illustrate the biases of the times. The final chapter addresses these two seemingly contradictory portrayals of First Nations and uses the audio record to discuss the rise of Indigenous art and material culture within the larger Canadian cultural framework. In audio interviews cultural experts discuss Indigenous arts traditions (including an early interview with Bill Reid) but do not recognize the re-emergence of Northwest Coast artistic traditions as an expression of political activism.

More importantly, this chapter explores the transition of the voices of Native peoples from silent spaces at the margins of northwest broadcasting to broadcast

professionals in their own right. In the 1962 program Talk of the Town, “Visit to Miller Bay,” scholars and listeners *hear* the silent children at Miller Bay Indian Hospital, including many who were not willing to speak into the microphone and read their letters to home, much to the frustration and embarrassment of the non-Indigenous staff.⁷² But with the rise of Indigenous political activism across Canada from the late 1960s to 1980s, a strong media presence by First Nations became an important method of mobilization, education and public awareness. By the late 1970s, CFPR was broadcasting shows produced by members of the Native Media Society and Vancouver Cooperative Radio. Chapter Four also examines these transformations to identify some motivations for change as well as the impact and contributions of individuals, including the Tsimshian⁷³ activist and broadcaster, Val Dudoward, to see if this transition was a unique aspect of northern BC regional broadcasting or part of a larger national trend.

The major social and economic shifts of the 1960s and 1970s changed the political and cultural nature of all regions of Canada, not just the urban centres where power decisions were made. The citizens of these peripheral spaces, the newcomers trying to survive the economic turbulence of the resource economy, and the Indigenous peoples who asserted ownership over vast territories, all had a stake in how the history of these spaces is presented. The availability of audio recordings such as the CBC radio collection in Prince Rupert reinvigorates the past with a sense of intimacy and immediacy. The voices of persons from an earlier time evoke a sense of the past like few other sources. Much can be heard through the voices of the regional past: the “cultured”

⁷² Visit to Miller Bay.” CBC/CFPR Tape 14, CD #6 track 2 (Airdate April 3, 1962).

⁷³ As with many Indigenous groups, there are various spellings for the name of this First Nation. This following dissertation uses the ‘Tsimshian’ since it is the most consistently used in the 1960s to 1980s in the documentation.

arrogance that was inherent in the CBC at that time; the articulation of discontent and protest; the tense energy vocalized in moments of crisis; and the delight of moments of subtle humour. For those listeners and scholars who are willing to remain open to new interpretations, the voices of the regional past, preserved in this archive, can bring the history of Northwest BC alive with a greater sense of clarity.

Chapter One: A Short History of Electronic Communications in Northwest British Columbia

For many long-time residents of northern BC, the CBC radio station in Prince Rupert (CFPR) represents a rallying point in support of, and sometimes conflict with, large Canadian national institutions which are sometimes perceived as outsiders trying to influence and direct the way northerners live. The most visible example of this community ownership came during the late 1980s when the CBC station, with a staff of fourteen, was reduced to four people. The CBC building was sold and broadcasting equipment and staff were distributed across the province. Prince Rupert citizens in particular were adamant that the station was their voice on the Northwest Coast, because it provided the essential services of weather forecasts and communications that could not be duplicated by a rebroadcasting signal originating from Prince George. The local citizens lobbied and won a short-lived victory from a CRTC in the spring of 1988, when the CBC was required to keep a locally produced morning show broadcasting from Prince Rupert. The CBC quickly altered its plans and hired two announcer/operators, a research and production assistant, and a news reporter to file stories from the North Coast. The corporation also hired a staff of the same size for its Prince George bureau, which broadcast a similar format morning show from Smithers to Prince George and also to the Peace River region. Six years later the CBC merged the two morning shows, and scaled its Prince Rupert staff back to two employees.

The story of community zeal and dedication to the vision of CFPR as a local institution is a much longer one, beginning during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Using the voices from CFPR audio archives as well as the documentary record, it is possible to trace the developments of the broadcasting industry in northern BC, not only of the radio station but also the arrival of private interests in the post war period.

Listening to and reviewing the voices, actions and opinions of those individuals who were most directly involved in the industry provides a solid introduction to the history of broadcasting in the area. Studying the careers of people such as Prince Rupert CFPR technical engineer Clarence Insulander, station manager William Hankinson and J. Fred Webber of the CFTK (radio and television) originating in Terrace, makes it possible to produce a narrative of the historical changes in the northern communities.

The voices of these men might reflect a few white privileged males rather than wider, often marginalized population of the post war society in Northwest BC. However, this possibility should not diminish their value to the historian, since they were actively involved in the industry. Personal stories are the foundation of the CFPR/CBC radio collection housed and archived at the Prince Rupert Archive. This audio collection represents a diversity of voices from rural northwestern British Columbia. Some recent historical studies have focused on the voices of women, Indigenous peoples or other immigrant newcomers, many of whom are also included in this study as well. Researchers should be aware that the audio archives provide a variety of perspectives; each is a valuable source for deeper historical understanding.

Communications history can reveal gradual cultural trends as well as more dramatic shifts in social and political attitudes. Studies examining the rapid change in broadcasting technology, for example, particularly in rural spaces, can also highlight economic change and building of infrastructure or transmitting so-called Canadian values.

Broadcasting historian Gene Allen tracked the relationship between advertising and journalistic styles of newspapers after the First World War to the inclusion of radio news broadcasting in Canada by the 1930s.⁷⁴ Allen found it surprising how “many newspaper publishers and editors” became involved in broadcasting to take advantage of the “spatial reach of radio ... from the local, to regional, to national and continental scale.”⁷⁵ Gerald Friesen theorized that the best way to investigate the history of Canada, with its complex social structure, may be through the history of communications. In this way, historians would see how “expressions of identity,” and the “ideas and aspirations... of ordinary citizens” contribute to “shaping this nation.”⁷⁶

The following chapter combines the historical thread of technological change, communications and personal stories to illustrate how northern British Columbia was shaped by regional economic, political and social circumstances from 1860s onwards to the 1960s. More specifically, it provides a basic historical outline of communications, particularly broadcasting in northwestern BC during the post war period, and of some of the personalities involved in the development of radio and later, television.

There is no other audio collection reflecting northern BC like the CFPR radio archive, since it is truly one of a kind, and the only radio archive of the public broadcaster for the region. It provides many audio reflections of a small town/city radio station in Canada’s Pacific province. The CBC radio archive collection corresponds with the social and political change of northwestern BC of the post war period: These are complex stories

⁷⁴ Gene Allen, “Old Media, New Media, and Competition: Canadian Press and the Emergence of Radio News.” *In Communicating in Canada’s Past: Essays in Media History* ed. G. Allen and Daniel Robinson. (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 2009): 47-77.

⁷⁵ Allen, 70.

⁷⁶ Gerald Friesen, *Citizen and Nation: An Essay on History, Communication and Canada* (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 2000), 7.

of Canadians during a time of dynamic social change and rapid population growth, as well as rapid industrial and infrastructure development. The CBC radio archives also contains an extensive record of the development of the radio station and the Seven Sisters Network – the linked seven communities of Prince Rupert, Kitimat, Terrace, Kispiox, Hazelton, Smithers and Vanderhoof, that began broadcasting after 1953.

Communication and broadcast histories in rural regions of North America are complicated and difficult to disentangle in terms of timeframes or technological development. Although technical and corporate decisions were made far away from Northern BC, the perspectives and voices of locals found in written memories, and even in recorded audio sources can help provide a local perspective on much broader development.

In the 1860s, for example, competition between two American telegraph companies, Western Union and Atlantic Telegraph Company,⁷⁷ spurred the construction of a telegraph line to northern British Columbia. The challenge was to construct the first communications link between North America and Europe. Western Union followed American entrepreneur Perry Collins' plan for an overland route through Western Canada and across Alaska and Siberia to connect to Europe. Military historian John Dwyer wrote: "To wire the world was an undertaking that would require careful planning, ... and the support of several governments. For Collins, this meant securing US government backing; his entrepreneurial instincts told him the private sector must also play a role."⁷⁸

⁷⁷ See Rosemary Neering, *Continental Dash, the Russian American Telegraph*, (Victoria: Touchwood Press, 1989) and John Dwyer's *To Wire the World: Perry M. Collins and the North Pacific Telegraph Expedition*, (Westport, C T: Praeger Publishers, 2001)

http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/BROCHURE_5_Collins%20Line_031606.pdf

⁷⁸ Dwyer, 8.

In 1865 and 1866, the survey and construction crews of the Collins Overland Telegraph (COT)⁷⁹ traveled through the central interior of British Columbia towards Quesnelle Forks then through the Lakes District to the confluence of the Bulkley and Skeena Rivers. One of these workers, the self-described “pioneer” Charles Frederic Morison, wrote extensively of his experiences as a newcomer to British Columbia, and described how working for the Collin’s Telegraph brought him to the region he would call home for the rest of his life.⁸⁰

Morison’s memoirs are worth examining for two reasons: first, from a regional historical point of view, his unpublished memoir was circulated amongst many local and provincial historians, including broadcaster Imbert Orchard, and fellow North Coast historian Dr. Large. Secondly, Morison’s document provides a personal retrospective on the first major communications project in northern BC, even though it was a project entirely funded and organized by foreign companies, setting a pattern that could be seen in all subsequent major industrial and communications developments.

Morison described the day to day hardships of bush camping, and physical challenge of crossing the Skeena River at the Hagwilget canyon. He also described in detail his impressions of the Gitksan First Nations and of his COT co-workers, many who became life-long friends. Morison explained that telegraph company expected a high

⁷⁹ See Jean Barman’s *West beyond West* (2007) 89-90; Rosemary Neering’s *Continental Dash* (1989)

⁸⁰ Charles F. Morison, *Reminiscences of British Columbia from 1862 by a Pioneer of the North-west Coast*. Unpublished manuscript, 1919. Morison’s manuscript was actually an accumulation of articles and notes he had written a decade earlier for southern BC newspapers. Some of these articles were also reprinted in the Hazelton paper *Omineca Herald* (1910). Morison’s manuscript was widely circulated and copies given to Imbert Orchard, and Dr. Large, to name a few. A copy was also kept by the family that contained Morison’s original hand written notes kept by Morison’s family. In later years of the early 1960s, John W. Morison, the son of Charles Morison and Odille Quintal Morison, typed provided a slightly revised edition for that was given to the BC Archives. The copy that was in Imbert Orchard possession was later donated to UBC. Morison’s manuscript provided the basis for much of the later northern BC historiography, but has never been published as a complete work.

degree of moral character and that each Collins employee had to sign “very strict articles” that forbade, “trade with the Indians or [to] interfere with them in any way whatever.”⁸¹ Morison also described the camp atmosphere: the monotonous diet of “bacon and beans,” but more significantly his personal relationships with the workers. He provided valuable insight into the Indigenous work crews: “Haidas, Tsimpseans (sic), Bella Bellas, Bella Coolas etc, all northern tribes...the Indians, about twenty in number, went right through from Quesnell (sic) to Skeena River” with William McNeil (son of the HBC factor) as their crew boss.⁸² The crews worked on the Collins Telegraph line in two directions. There was the crew working in northwest of the Skeena River near present Hazelton, and a southern crew that built the line through the Cariboo region.

The Cariboo district had experienced a burst of mining activity along with a sudden influx of many thousands of newcomers searching for wealth in the gold fields surrounding Barkerville. Morison did not speculate on the need for communications, but rather remarked how some Indigenous peoples in the “flourishing village” of Kispiox became “alarmed” by the presence of the work crews and the telegraph line crossing the river and their territory:

Now amongst these people was a very learned Doctor or Medicine man, and he thinking very rightly that the advent of the white men amongst his people would destroy his power over them told them that if the telegraph wire crossed the Skeena no more salmon would ascentascend? that river and that all birds and animals crossing under or over the wire would instantly die.⁸³

After a carefully negotiated “parley,” where the COT manager Burrige explained “that our work would be a source of revenue to them... and after presenting the people

⁸¹ Morison, *Reminiscences* , 19.

⁸² Ibid. 28.

⁸³ Morison, 28.

with gifts of tobacco, ... a general shaking [of] hands ensued.” Morison explained that he had been present at this meeting. After this incident, the telegraph line construction proceeded without further disruption. When the line was completed “to forty miles north of Kispiox,” telegraph operator McCutcheson connected “portable battery to the end of the wire, and lo and behold we had the latest (news) from New York.”⁸⁴

The Collins Telegraph project ended abruptly in 1867 when a competing project successfully laid a cable under the Atlantic Ocean and the overland route was no longer needed. The telegraph line had made it into the interior, but immediately fell into disuse. It was maintained only through the Cariboo. Some thirty years later, during the Klondike Gold Rush, the line was refurbished, and then extended north through to Telegraph Creek, Atlin BC and then into the Yukon. By 1901, a telegraph line was constructed to the North Pacific coastal town of Port Simpson, a former HBC trading post. Another thirty years would pass before a telegraph line would connect the North West coast to the interior. Morison’s memories of the Collins Overland telegraph shows how the initial drive for communication technology was spurred by external competition rather than demands for regional communication or infrastructure. Historian Dwayne Winseck argued that the rise of the telegraph in Canada, United States and Great Britain followed a similar pattern:

Early growth typified by uncertain demand and ‘methodless enthusiasm’, followed by ‘ruinous competition’ and “strategic consolidation”; the close alignment of the telegraph, the press, news agencies, information services, and stock markets; and the transformation of classical legal concepts to accommodate the ephemeral nature of electronic media.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Morison, 29.

⁸⁵ Dwayne Winseck, “Back to the Future: Telecommunications, Online Information Services and Convergence from 1840 to 1910.” In Daniel Robinson, ed., *Communication History in Canada* (Don Mills Ont. Oxford University Press, 2009) 150.

The construction of telegraph lines in northern British Columbia was not aligned with any other major economic development such as a railway, supporting Winseck's contentions of "uncertain demand" in terms of private industry. It was a significant expression of a national permanent and visible link to outside populations and for the first time, people and public institutions could exchange information reasonably quickly. Canadian historian Harold Innis was one of the first to recognize the revolutionary changes the telegraph brought as the first electronic medium, seeing it as "a major turning point in media history."⁸⁶

Unlike more urban areas in southern Canada where the telegraph was often coupled with railway development, the North was different. Local northern BC historian Bill Miller points out that these first Canadian telegraph lines were government projects, and remained largely independent from corporate interests (excluding the Collins Overland telegraph which was a private, American enterprise).⁸⁷ In northern British Columbia, southern businesses that had contracts with the Dominion Telegraph practiced 'grafting' and overcharged for food stuffs and shoddy equipment that was supplied directly to the telegraph workers, cutting out local businesses.⁸⁸ At other times, political organizations, such as the Liberal Association in Port Essington (near Prince Rupert) tried

⁸⁶ Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, Durham & London: Duke University Press), 140.

⁸⁷ Bill Miller, *Wires in the Wilderness: the Story of the Yukon Telegraph*, (Surrey BC: Heritage House Publishing, 2004), See 75-138.

⁸⁸ Wiggs O'Neill, *My Memories: A Lifetime In British Columbia*, (MS) (Smithers, BC: April 1964) 72. Stan Rough Collection NWCC Archives.

O'Neill describes the practice where the wholesaler of the workers for products sent a year's supply of canned food and prepared meat. O'Neill stated that after he took over as operator at the cabin at Telegraph point on the Skeena, he found most of the food supplies of the previous linesman had to be thrown out because they had gone bad. Instead O'Neill sent the grains and other useable dry goods up river to his coworker in Kitselas to feed his chickens. This way, O'Neill was able to get fresh poultry and eggs when he passed through the area.

to influence the hiring of linesman even though the candidate had little previous experience and “was hopelessly unsuitable,” with no skill in handling a boat, a important requirement since that was the sole method of travel on the lower Skeena River.⁸⁹

The Canadian government was keen to assert a physical and official (albeit sporadic) presence in the face of continued American influence in the region after the purchase of Alaska in 1867. The ongoing dispute (1897-1903) between the Canadian government and the United States regarding the boundary between Alaska and northern British Columbia also aggravated the situation and so a land-based link to the Yukon through northern BC established a Canadian communications presence.⁹⁰ The Skeena to Port Simpson telegraph line “was considered part of the Yukon telegraph system” since it branched off the Yukon line at Hazelton.⁹¹

Another consideration is that there was quite a strong market at that time for communications because of the active mineral claims in the entire region from Alaska to Northern BC. The U.S. government had laid a cable underwater from Seattle to Skagway Alaska and then with other lines running through Alaska, their efforts removed the demands for the Canadian land telegraph system.⁹² Resident Wiggs O’Neill wrote that by 1902,

The telegraph office was doing quite a business. There was quite a lot of activity going on up around Stewart and South-eastern Alaska in mining, and the companies involved were making good use of the new Government telegraph line as it was the only one in the north country. I got interested and decided to learn to be a telegraph operator, so got busy learning and practicing the Morse Code. It

⁸⁹ Wiggs O’Neill, 72-77.

⁹⁰ Kitimat Stikine regional district heritage branch describes the connection between the Yukon telegraph construction and the importance of the telegraph trail as access to remote region.

<http://www.rdks.bc.ca/content/yukon-telegraph-trail>

⁹¹ Bill Miller, *Wires in the Wilderness* (Heritage House, 2004), 114.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 197.

came quite easily to me I found, and with the help of my famous elder sister Mattie, it was not long before I was a pretty good performer on the key, and after eleven o'clock at night would do a bit of wa-wa visiting with the other operators on the line.⁹³

The use of the line for after-hours 'wa-wa' ('to talk' in Chinook jargon) is indicative of how a few locals used the communication system for their recreation after hours. O'Neill also often communicated with his sisters Mattie (and then later Katy) to let them know how he was doing and to receive news of family and friends.⁹⁴ Between 1897 and the 1940s, the telegraph lines and trail were maintained by workers stationed in remote cabins (or stations) spaced some twenty to thirty miles (30-50 kilometres) along the telegraph trail. Often workers constructed smaller cabins that served as temporary overnight shelters when they were out checking the line. As described in the local history written by R.G Large, two men were assigned to each station; one as a technical telegraph operator and 'linesman' who maintained the telegraph connections by "patrol[ing] the line for ten miles [fifteen kilometres] on either side on the cabin until he met up with some of his opposite number of the next adjoining station."⁹⁵

These workers did much more than simply repair broken lines. For many newcomers and locals alike, the telegraph men were welcoming hosts and very happy to have visitors who traveled through the region. Vicki (Morison Aldous) Sims, who was born and raised on the North Coast, recalled the telegraph workers' assistance one trip up the Skeena River in the late autumn of 1906. Sims explained that her father was working in Hazelton when winter had set in and his wife and teenage children had missed the last

⁹³ Wiggs O'Neill, *My Memories*, 71-72.

⁹⁴ O'Neill, 71.

⁹⁵ R. G. Large, *The Skeena: River of Destiny (second edition)* (with Ken Campbell), Museum of Northern BC, 1996. 57.

steamer, and so had to travel by freight canoe: “It really was a dreadful trip; anchor ice, storms and sleet and rain.”⁹⁶ They stopped on the north side of the Skeena River estuary at Aberdeen, the site of an old cannery and telegraph office. Sim’s mother Odille Morison sent a telegram up to Hazelton to let her husband know they were coming by canoe. Vicki Sims continued:

The telegraph people were so nice, you know, they had things ready for us you know, they were spaced twenty five miles between cabins..., they would have cakes and pies all sorts of things ready for us you know and we come in for a good meal. Oh they were just wonderful.⁹⁷

By the time they arrived safely in Hazelton word had preceded them through each telegraph relay: “Flags were flying and they made such a fuss, they were so happy to see us.”⁹⁸

In the late 1890s, sixteen year old Mattie (O’Neill) Boss was hired to check and record the weather readings at Port Simpson. Her pay of \$100 per year was considered a good sum for when she began, but after five years, the pay was insufficient and she had tired of the daily weather readings. Mattie Boss sent her resignation to the head meteorologist in Toronto and then made plans to be a become governess and helper with family friends in the Stikine region. Instead of accepting her resignation, the head meteorologist convinced her to stay by granting her a pay increase to \$500 per annum and the promise that she would be trained in telegraphy, technical weather monitoring, and that new improved equipment would be provided. Mattie Boss wrote:

The authorities (government officials) then were anxious for a branch line into the local telegraphs as soon as the wire was through to the coast. [Her] work was

⁹⁶ Vicky(Morison Aldous) Sims, Interview with Imbert Orchard Fonds, BC Archives, T0311:0001, track 1. (1966?)

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

increased, more instruments [including] a new electrical wind gauge ... and wet batteries. The time of the readings was changed to 5am, noon and 5pm and later coded and wired daily to Victoria and Toronto for the daily newspapers.⁹⁹

Boss traveled to Victoria and learned telegraphy from a nun at St. Anne's academy and she contracted a CPR telegraph operator to assist her studies. After she returned to Port Simpson in 1902, O'Neill replaced the operator, who was reassigned to Kitselas station. She worked for the next eight years in Port Simpson, but when the telegraph office was transferred to new port city of Prince Rupert, her job went to a male coworker.



Figure 3) Hazelton Telegraph Office (circa 1911)

Photo courtesy of Prince Rupert City and Regional Archives & Museum of Northern BC: *Wrathall Collection; JRW135*

Her comments that there was interest in weather forecasts from the newspapers in Toronto and Vancouver suggest a speculative interest in the region, beyond casual climatic observations. Local fishermen and those who traveled by water clearly had a vested interest in their own safety, but so did freight companies that shipped goods along the

⁹⁹ Boss, *A Tale of Northern BC: from Cariboo to Cassiar*, (unpublished typescript) Northwest Community College Archives, (1947) 123.

coastal water ways. The recording of weather and climate conditions had been long been a practice of the Hudson Bay Company employees situated in remote regions. As historian Ted Binnema explained, for scientists, this “systematic keeping, collecting and studying of meteorological journals from many places offered the best hope of enabling them to predict weather.”¹⁰⁰ When the telegraph was invented in the mid nineteenth century, the technology made the transference of scientific information all the more rapid. Information flowed from the Western and more isolated, northerly regions of the United States, and later Canada, to larger centres back East. Weather reporting in remote regions between Canadian and continental US counter-parts started as early as 1871, shortly after the American Civil War, which certainly proved pivotal for the establishment of telegraphic expertise within the military.¹⁰¹ Canadian cultural scholar Jody Berland has argued that the telegraph “was a crucial invention in the history of modern weather,” transmitting beyond the localized “knowledge networks” to reach vast distances connecting remote area with networks of industry.¹⁰² The added feature of the telegraph as an audible electronic signal enhanced the experience as well.

Mass communications systems then, even at this early stage, went hand in hand with promotion of the region’s potential to the outside world, but they also improved the quality of life of those already living in northern BC. Generally, the role of the Canadian government in the development of the telegraph fluctuated between “the poles of benign

¹⁰⁰ Ted Binnema, *Enlightened Zeal: The Hudson’s Bay Company and Scientific Networks, 1670-1870*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 34.

¹⁰¹ With respect to the American army signal corps, see Rebecca Robbins Raines, *Getting the Message Through: A Branch History of the U.S. Army Signal Corps*. (Washington, DC: Centre for Military History, 1996), 53

¹⁰² Jody Berland, *North of Empire: Essays on the Cultural Technologies of Space* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 221

neglect and moderate doses of state intervention.”¹⁰³ In northern British Columbia there was minimal concern by locals of how the changing technology might influence the Canadian public. Changing information technologies improved the quality of life as more newcomers arrived to take advantage of economic opportunities afforded by the railway and burgeoning fishing industries, even if they offered only seasonal occupation. Nevertheless, the telegraph, railways, and newspapers afforded a link and feeling of connectedness into the wider world.

Historian Mary Vipond explained that the rise of the popularity of daily newspapers in Canadian urban centres during the latter half of the 19th century moved away from the influence of governments in power to a more critical questioning, claiming to be “watchdogs against corruption,” to appeal to the middle and working classes.¹⁰⁴ Vipond also suggested that daily newspapers, driven by the need for advertising and circulation revenues, added evening editions to reach a wider audience that had more leisure time to read. This shift also changed writing styles and editorial content, placing greater emphasis on feature stories, with human interest that had an entertaining appeal. “Above all, these newspapers featured diversity in their content, to appeal to as much of the heterogeneous population of the modern Canadian city as possible.”¹⁰⁵

In terms of technological change it was a short step from the telegraph, which was an electronically audible signal sent along a wire, to wireless transmission, particularly over stretches of water or in regions of difficult terrain and weather. On the West Coast of British Columbia, according to Bill Miller, shipping communications fostered the earliest

¹⁰³ Winseck, “Back to the Future,” 82

¹⁰⁴ Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 4th edition (Toronto: James Lorimer and company) 22

¹⁰⁵ Vipond, 24

uses of wireless technology. In the inland region of northern BC however, wireless was first proposed in 1906 by “Marconi Company and the DeForrest Company [who] submitted bids to install a wireless system over the 1200 miles between Quesnel and Whitehorse.”¹⁰⁶ Wireless technology was heavily promoted in the early 1920s as the answer to the troubled Yukon line where the costs of workers’ salaries and line maintenance far outweighed limited revenues in the post-Klondike Gold Rush era. After the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific railway began in 1909, the Dominion Telegraph line (or at least the Skeena branch line) was taken over by the short-lived Grand Trunk Pacific, which soon went bankrupt with a drop in revenues at the onset of WW1.¹⁰⁷

In Alaska, the underwater cable that originated in Seattle (officially known as the Washington - Alaska Military Cable) was maintained by the US Army. According to military historian Rebecca Robbins Raines, “radio technology was beginning to link the entire world together, including remote and inaccessible regions such as Alaska.” She added that “Radio had a considerable impact upon the Washington-Alaska Military cable and telegraph system, which continued to serve as an important component of the Signal Corps’ chain of communications. However, by 1923 over forty percent of the Alaskan stations employed radio.”¹⁰⁸

The telegraph provided a personal form of communication but new technologies and inventions such as gramophones also brought new experiences of sound to the region. Certainly live music and dramatic readings remained popular events, but to the cabin-bound telegraph workers, phonographs afforded considerable amusement. Wiggs O’Neill

¹⁰⁶ Bill Miller, *Wires in the Wilderness*, 197

¹⁰⁷ For more on the Grand Trunk Railway, see Frank Lenoard’s, *A Thousand Blunders*

¹⁰⁸ Robbins Raines, 53

described the Edison “radio phonograph”¹⁰⁹ with a horn shaped like a lily, that he and his friend Walter Flewin bought to pass the time on long summer days in their telegraph cabin. He wrote that they would cross the Skeena River estuary to Port Essington with their phonograph, entertain friends with the music and then row back across the river in the early morning hours to be back at the telegraph station to sign on to the telegraph system.

The recorded music helped pass the time, but it was the company of friends and family that O’Neill missed the most. The phonograph was both a device for personal amusement, but also a focal point for people to gather and visit. The social and personal aspect of audio technology improved the quality of life on the Northwest Coast as did the relatively instantaneous communication of the telegraph which passed information between individuals, without competing with the printed newspapers for topical international news stories and local information.¹¹⁰ The telegraph (both connected through wires or through the air) was a form of direct communication, even though special skills in operation and interpretation were needed to transmit the messages. The telephone was an audio device that was both personal (direct communication) but also required some technical expertise by the operators who connected the lines between a switch-board. Telephones were first introduced to the North Coast in 1910 with the establishment of the City of Prince Rupert as the terminus for the Grand Trunk Pacific.¹¹¹ The telegraph and later the telephone were single points or locations by which the information was passed –

¹⁰⁹ Wiggs O’Neill, 77.

¹¹⁰ The two newspapers in Hazelton in 1910 for example, the *Omineca Miner*, and the *Omineca Herald* both printed stories generated locally, about local businesses as well as who were visiting the community. But sometimes they also reprinted stories from outside the region. It is assumed that they were making use of telegraph news services for some of the print content, rather than reprinting stories from select southern publications.

¹¹¹ Large, *The Skeena: River of Destiny*, 156.

point to point. It was only once this information was passed to newspapers that it was circulated and disseminated to a larger audience. Radio, according to historian Daniel Robinson, began as a bidirectional medium, but following the First World War, radio “became unidirectional medium, in which centrally transmitted messages were received by passive listeners.”¹¹²

The advantage of telecommunications, particularly the use of wireless signals, became part of the lives of Canadians, in surprising ways, even on the Northwest Coast. For example, the elderly Anglican Archbishop Frederick H. DuVernet, who came to the region in 1904, speculated on the spiritual healing qualities of telepathy which he imagined were like radio waves. Religious scholar Pamela Klassen theorizes that DuVernet’s esoteric writings on the “radio mind“ were a result of his theological experiences on the “frontier” of the Northwest Coast of British Columbia and his observations of the spiritual practices of Aboriginal peoples.¹¹³ In the early 1920s the Archbishop wrote several articles for local and national publications on the “radio mind.”¹¹⁴ DuVernet gave a public presentation in Prince Rupert to a group of twenty young people who were so interested in the topic, that after the talk, “the young people gathered around His Grace and questioned him more closely in regard to point that had not been quite clear and also as to the possible relationship between thought transference and spiritualism.”¹¹⁵

¹¹² Daniel Robinson, *Communications History in Canada* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2009) 191.

¹¹³ Pamela Klassen’s “Radio Mind: Protestant Experimentalists on the Frontiers of Healing,” *Journal of American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 75, issue 3, 651-683.

¹¹⁴ See Pamela Klassen’s forthcoming book on DuVernet, *The Story of Radio Mind: A Missionary’s Journey on Indian Land*. (In press)

¹¹⁵ “Demonstration of Radio Mind: Group of Young People Keen to See Experiments and Hear Talk,” *Prince Rupert Daily News*, February 18, 1924.

Radio broadcasting for commercial purposes took greater hold in the early 1920s in urban centres such as Montreal and Toronto. Radio systems were also a novel feature of the Canadian National Railway system (and telegraph system) and provided unique listening experiences for passengers. The CNR broadcasting service was the first radio network in North America that reached from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast.¹¹⁶

Media historian Len Kuffert recently noted that CNR management promoted the radio's unique impact on Canadians as a personal, immediate and "intimate" experience that changed travellers who were also listeners.¹¹⁷ Vice President V.W. Robb "supposed that as soon as radio – particularly the CNR's programs – reached Canadians, especially those in the west, listeners' surroundings would be figuratively transformed."¹¹⁸ Radio then, was beginning to be recognized as a powerful medium that could alter lives and perspectives of Canadians in fundamental ways.

Jody Berland has inferred that the nation building attributes of the national railway system dovetailed with the earliest development of telecommunications in Canada. "The national railway system and the public broadcasting system traveled together across Canada in search of nationhood."¹¹⁹ The Canadian National Railway established the first radio network in 1925, and by 1928 the federal government was considering how to regulate both the listeners' access to airwaves as well as broadcasting stations and commercial content. A royal commission, led by businessman John Aird, was established to provide guidance to the federal government regarding licensing of broadcasters and

¹¹⁶ Robinson, 191.

¹¹⁷ Len Kuffert, *Canada Before Television: Radio, Taste, And the Struggle for Cultural Democracy* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 25-47.

¹¹⁸ Kuffert, *Canada Before Television*, 32.

¹¹⁹ Berland, 191.

issuing radio frequencies. “The Aird commission recommended that Canada adopt the model of the British Broadcasting Corporation, nationalize private radio stations in order to create a national public broadcasting system.”¹²⁰ However by 1936, the CBC (as it was now known by then) relied heavily on “private radio affiliates” as well as their own stations, but other private stations were allowed to continue operation.¹²¹ Radio had entered the wider public imagination, regardless of government control, commercial advertising, or amusement, Canadians were aware of its influence and more than a few officials were cautious of radio as an intimate form of communication.

By the mid-1930s, radio broadcasters in Canada, particularly at the newly formed Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, were acutely aware of the intimate nature of radio, and its perceived power to sway entire populations. Leonard Kuffert explains that some “fretted about the competition” and the commercial content presented by American stations.¹²² Along the Canadian-United States border, radio waves could transfer through the air, and Canadian programmers were concerned the audience tastes and advertising revenue would travel to the south.

Radio enthusiasts in remote regions of Canada felt a sense of duty to use the medium to disseminate information but also the notion that some sort of moral regulation of radio content was needed. Northern British Columbians understood or at least placed different cultural significance on telecommunications: radio was particularly viewed as the most important and most expedient way to transmit information – even of a personal

¹²⁰ Daniel Robinson (ed.) *Communication History in Canada 2nd ed.* (Don Mills On: Oxford University Press, 2009) 191

¹²¹ Robinson, 191

¹²² Len Kuffert, ““What do you expect from a Friend”” *Media History*, 15 : 3. 309

nature. This theme of public radio messages as a regional service became a mainstay for the CBC as a public broadcaster, but also private radio in later years.

After World War I, wireless communication of telegraph, and then radios, became essential for Pacific Ocean maritime traffic, and later with the forest service, for the reporting of forest fires. Indeed one young Irishman, William Lowry, who had returned to BC after being injured in France, was reportedly, “one of the first amateur wireless operators in the province, also introduced the idea of fast communication by the use of carrier pigeons in reporting forest fires in the Fort George district.”¹²³ It may seem a bit ironic that a wireless operator would promote the idea of carrier pigeons, but the technology of radio broadcasting was cumbersome, battery power and the signal unpredictable, factors that made pigeons seem as the more reliable option in the early 1920s.

A few northerners tinkered with the technology, ordering up parts through specialty catalogues, but more often making radio receiver components with whatever they could find. One Prince Rupert newspaper reported on the distances that local ham radio operators were being heard.¹²⁴ For example in 1924, “Pete Black had the satisfaction of having his new radio set being heard in Vancouver” and Gordon Bulger, “with a simple five watt set was heard in Vancouver.” The article also commented on the method of reply communication from the location where the message was received: “Cards reporting reception of the call were received from reliable stations in Fort Worth Texas, De Noya, Okla., and other stations from most of the Pacific coastal states.” This type of

¹²³ “Forestry man Dies at Pouce Coupe” *Prince George Citizen*, January 25, 1940.

¹²⁴ “Local Radio Heard at Great Distance,” *Prince Rupert Daily News*, February 11, 1924. Thanks to Pamela Klassen for making this research available.

communication, where an individual would broadcast out and then receive confirmation by letter or card, was common practice with the amateur or ‘ham’ radio operators,¹²⁵ before radio transmissions were licensed and regulated by government authorities.

There was a keen group of young men, of about four or five ham radio enthusiasts in Prince Rupert in the years following the First World War.¹²⁶ One young man was Clarence Insulander, whose early interest in radio technology led to a lifelong career in broadcast technology. Insulander was one of the original five Prince Rupert partners who applied for a radio station license, which was granted in 1936.¹²⁷ Born in Chicago, he moved to Prince Rupert with his mother when he was ten, where he received a “great education” and then returned to the US to attend university, completing a degree in electrical engineering.¹²⁸ Insulander was also the first station manager at CFPR, the Prince Rupert radio station. In a 1982 retrospective oral history interview with Dick Gordon, Clarence Insulander recalled the earliest [unofficial] broadcast of music on the Northwest Coast in about 1923.¹²⁹

Insulander said that his friend Felix Batt had figured out how to get a radio signal to oscillate, “squeal” and “get a signal on the air.” By using a carbon button microphone and a 4.5 volt battery that was “coupled to the lead [wire] that went to the antenna,” these friends were able to set up “an electrical field” and could broadcast a signal that reached

¹²⁵ For clarification on origins of the term ‘ham radio’ comes from see Susan Douglas, *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 2004) 328-346.

¹²⁶ There was likely more but this number was based on the estimate of Clarence Insulander.

¹²⁷ Other partners were not identified by name. The documentation held in the Prince Rupert archives is also unclear as to who all of the original partners were, but Insulander did mention a Mr. Anderson, and another individual who had the original license in his name. Apparently Clarence Insulander did not have official Canadian citizenship since he had been born in the United States.

¹²⁸ Dick Gordon “Clarence Insulander” CBC/CFPR radio Archives, tape # 216, CD 94 Track 1 & 2 (Recorded in April 1982).

¹²⁹ Dick Gordon, “Clarence Insulander” CBC/CFPR radio archives, tape 2—CD #94 track 1, recorded April of 1982.

out from several miles from the Port City of Prince Rupert. One evening they got a call from a ‘fellow’ in Port Simpson who asked “how about giving us a little music tonight.” So Clarence Insulander and Felix Batt rigged up a system where “we’d run this microphone down the living room, upstairs to an old [hand cranked] phonograph. “And we shoved the microphone into the horn to pick it up that way.” Insulander added that sometimes he played the banjo/mandolin and sometimes “we would get two or three of us around” playing music together and “it went fine.” Clearly then, to these innovative young men radio was a communications tool that started out as a hobby, but as radio components and receivers became more efficient and less expensive, broadcasting as career became a plausible, even in remote regions of the northwest coast of British Columbia.

Insulander and his group of friends applied in 1932 to the federal government for broadcast radio license, but it took four years and a lot of help from MP Olaf Hansen for the license to come through.



Figure 4) Clarence Insulander and CFPR studio, circa 1944

Prince Rupert City & Regional Archives & Museum of Northern B.C.; Wrathall collection; JRW1809E

CFPR’s first broadcast went on the air in November of 1935 to cover local two election debates since the “three parties” had all bought air-time. The \$200 profit the

CFPR partners earned from the debate program was an important investment, and Insulander stated they order new broadcasting equipment, improving the audio quality and distance of CFPR signal reached.

CFPR began in 1936 as a small 50 watt transmitter strung between two poles from a barnlike structure, to the 250 watt system designed to meet the demands of audiences during and following the Second World War. In winter of 1965, the signal was increased to 10,000 watts and could be heard on the West Coast of Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands), and along the coastal mainland south to Klemtu and north to Wrangell, Alaska.¹³⁰ By 1968, the CFPR signal originated in a state of the art broadcast building that overlooked the Prince Rupert harbour and included a technical shop, administration offices and broadcast studios.¹³¹

Yet the existence of CBC radio in northern British Columbia only came about due to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December, 1941. Canada was actively engaged as part of the Allied forces in Europe, but the attack by Japan in the Pacific increased the level of participation and presence of American troops in the western provinces and Canada's northern territories. Sizeable numbers of conscripted Canadian soldiers were also sent to the region. Up until 1940, the regional transportation options were limited: a CN rail line (formerly the Grand Trunk Pacific) connected villages and towns from Jasper in Alberta through Prince George, BC and westward to Smithers, Hazelton, Terrace and Prince Rupert. Although many people had automobiles, most community roads were not connected into any highway system and were used for local transportation only. Local

¹³⁰ "Special marking the new 10K transmitter" CBC/CFPR archives, tape 85, CD 33 track 1, (Airdate January 28, 1965)

¹³¹ "Opening of Stiles Place" CBC/CFPR archives tape 93 ,CD 36 track 1. (Airdate Sept 15.1967)

resident and historian Phyllis Bowman wrote that both the federal and provincial governments had tossed around the idea of building a more substantial road, but this “political football” only became a reality after “another World War and financial assistance of the United States government to finally finish the road in September of 1944.”¹³²

With the threat of a possible Japanese invasion, the American government spent millions building airfields, barracks, hospitals and ammunition storage facilities. Prince Rupert’s Dr. R.G. Large wrote: “The port and railroad, which in peace had been steadfastly ignored as a medium of trade and commerce, was suddenly thrust upon the national consciousness as a potential line of invasion for a determined enemy.”¹³³

Prince Rupert, as the most northern Canadian port city with a rail on the west coast, became a major staging area for the construction and movement of people. Much of the historical research to date has focused on the construction of the highway to Alaska through northeast British Columbia and Yukon in 1942 and 1943. Historical geographer Graeme Wynn contends the “the pace of construction was breathtaking” and the “social and environmental effects of highway construction were enormous,” even though the population did not last nor did it lead to further development of infrastructure.¹³⁴

Conversely, the northwest coast of BC also experienced the rapid population growth, but also saw a corresponding expansion of services such as hospitals and military buildings. In Prince Rupert in particular, the population tripled from about 5,500 to 20,000 people

¹³² Phyllis Bowman, *Road, Rail and River* (Prince Rupert: December 1981), 3.

¹³³ R.G. Large, *The Skeena River of Destiny 6th ed.* (Prince Rupert: Museum of Northern BC/Heritage House, 1996), 180.

¹³⁴ Graeme Wynn, *Canada and Arctic North America: An Environmental History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2007), 281-3.

virtually overnight.¹³⁵ The American troops and civilians demanded better radio and communications services.

In a 1982 conversation with CBC broadcaster Dick Gordon, Clarence Insulander explained that the Americans grumbled about the radio services and the lack of national programming at CFPR, then a small 50 watt, privately owned station.¹³⁶ American troops complained to US officials in Washington, and in turn to the Canadian government in Ottawa. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation then entered a leasing agreement with the partners at the station. Insulander said he and the co-owners refused to sell the CFPR station outright, but eventually entered a ten-year lease arrangement.

During the war years, Insulander remained on staff as the technical engineer and station manager. He said the CBC would send up packaged radio programs produced by the four main American networks to be played on CFPR for the troops stationed on the Northwest Coast. These programs were “denatured” (meaning commercials were taken out) so that local sponsors could be aired. Insulander indicated that one of the most popular programs was the Saturday night hockey broadcasts, sponsored by Imperial Oil.¹³⁷ He added that local sporting events, such as boxing matches, were also covered by the CFPR staff during the war. Arts and live cultural events were often played on CFPR again often as a service to the troops stationed on the Northwest Coast. Insulander reported that Armed Forces variety shows (both Canadian and American) were hosted in Prince Rupert,

¹³⁵ City of Prince Rupert actually estimated a population of 21,000. *City of Prince Rupert homepage*, Website access December 12, 2015. De<http://www.princerupert.ca/community/about>.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid. These games might have been pre-recorded and then shipped for local broadcast. It is doubtful that the early games were ‘live to air’ because broadcasting to the various locations might have proven difficult across several time zones, with local commercial breaks. However Clarence Insulander commented that he had interrupted a game broadcast when he heard there was an emergency at the Nass River. A boat was sinking and the crew needed immediate assistance, so he got on the air and broadcast an emergency message, and the crew were saved.

and on a few occasions these performances of skits and music were recorded onto acetate discs by the CFPR engineer and staff. Insulander remembered that one group was so impressed with the sound quality of their show, “they sat there until 3 o’clock in the morning playing these darn things, they wore them out.”¹³⁸ The grooves on the disc wore through, since as he explained, the recording discs “were only good for about 15 plays.”¹³⁹

In terms of national Canadian programming, CFPR connected to the regular network for live newscasts and special bulletins. Insulander recalled that CFPR provided a local electronic link for north coast residents not only as a war time service, (such as the broadcasting the “all clear” codes to the light houses) but also provided a much needed reassurance and connection to the wider Canadian war efforts. He stated there was some “panic on the coast here – people didn’t know what was going on, and they were scared.” CFPR staff and operations were part of the Pacific Coast defense, “an arrangement with the Navy” that required the use of passwords before messages were broadcast.¹⁴⁰ Clearly then, the period of the war was a busy, yet stressful time for the residents along the Pacific coast.¹⁴¹

The war may have been a catalyst for the leasing of CFPR by the CBC, but key initiatives started by Insulander and others to reach and service the remote coastal communities as a private station remained in place. One such service - the broadcasting of urgent personal messages - was initiated at CFPR and then later became standard

¹³⁸ Gordon, “Insulander, 1982

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Works by Phyllis Bowman, a local, self-published Prince Rupert historical researcher, aid the perception that the WW11 was a time of ‘excitement.’ The Insulander clip shows an alternate side to the emotions of the war years in Prince Rupert.

practice for CBC and other private stations broadcasting in remote regions. Clarence

Insulander explained how message-time become a national service:

It was a need when we first opened up in 1936. [The] primary needs of the district w[ere] communications to the outlying points from people stuck in town (Prince Rupert) on account of the weather. Didn't have powerful boats and the stuff we have today. So we applied [to] the board of railway of railway commissions, of all people, for a license [for] private commercial broadcast... We were allowed to transmit messages to isolated points in the district not served by any other means of electronic communication.¹⁴²

When interviewer Dick Gordon asked why it was called a private commercial license, Insulander responded that it was because CFPR was allowed to charge a fee. Each message was fifty cents minimum and the first ten words were at no additional cost. Every word after that was an additional five cents. "It was just another way to make a dollar, you see? But it was a service – more of a service than making a dollar. To hold the abuse down we put in this charge." In 1936, this rate was a significant sum but message time was popular. The "abuse" Insulander referred to was local citizens submitting messages simply to get their name on the air. Nevertheless, the service was so successful that it filled a 15-minute time slot between 11:30 a.m. and noon on weekday mornings.¹⁴³ Insulander claimed that "Most of the native people took advantage of it," because it was ... "prestigious" to "get their names on the air and at the same time let the people at home know what was going on."¹⁴⁴ He then proudly added that this special message license was the first of its kind in Canada, setting a trend for rural CBC national

¹⁴² Gordon, Ibid.

¹⁴³ "Opening of Stiles Place" CBC/CFPR archives tape 93 ,CD 36 track 1. (Airdate Sept 15.1967)

¹⁴⁴ Gordon, Ibid.

radio. The second license was issued in Atlantic Canada for a similar service to the Arctic.¹⁴⁵

Message time, consistently the most popular segment of CBC radio until the 1990s,¹⁴⁶ was perceived as an essential public service, drawing on a much longer regional practice of telegraph, wireless and then radio as an important form of immediate communication. Insulander's claim that CFPR was the first station in Canada to offer this service might have been in relation to a private station, which CFPR was in 1936, but there is evidence that message time was broadcast in the Eastern Arctic a few years before. Len Kuffert explained that the CRBC (Canadian Radio Board Commission) were broadcasting messages to the Eastern Arctic in 1932, and an American radio network, looking for entertaining program content, requested the rights to broadcast the Arctic messages for southern urban American audiences. "In 1934, NBC wanted to broadcast the CRBC's unscripted, loosely timed Northern Messenger program as a one-off because it could 'prove a highly entertaining fifteen minutes or half hour.'" The CRBC turned down the request on the grounds that the program consisted of "personal messages to residents of the Arctic region."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ This comment might be verifiable but it is unclear as to which archive department the documents for the railway board might be.

¹⁴⁶ It is not clear when the fee for messages ended, but most likely it was dropped before advertising was discontinued on CBC radio in the early 1970s. Private stations that began servicing northern communities in the 1960s (CFBV and CHTK) also aired messages. Some were charged (as items for sale) while personal messages were not. Funeral services and memorial notices were announced but were considered a form of advertising and thus paid for by the funeral home. "Services for the late Mr. Jones entrusted to MacKay's Funeral Services Terrace."

(http://www.broadcasinghistory.ca/index3.html?url=http%3A//www.broadcasing-history.ca/networks/networks_CBC_Radio.html)

¹⁴⁷ Len Kuffert, *Canada Before Television: Radio Taste, And the Struggle for Cultural Democracy* (Montreal Kingston: McGill Queens Press, 2016) 66

After the CFPR transmitter was increased to 250 watts in 1947 (several years after the request was made and after the war ended) there was a definite increase in the number of people accessing the message service, particularly from the communities near the mouth of the Nass River. Two recordings of special events—the celebrations of the installation of new transmitter in 1965,¹⁴⁸ and the opening of the new CBC/CFPR studios in 1967—show present day researchers details of the technical expansions of service, but also how CBC celebrated its own communications goals and achievements.¹⁴⁹ Barry Willis, host of the 1967 program Barry Willis, stated

CBC Prince Rupert is more than the Seven Sisters Network, or even the Pacific Network. It is part of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the cohesive voice of Canada from sea to sea. And, through the facilities of the international service the voice of Canada—heard at the four corners of the earth.

These special events were also an opportunity for CBC brass to visit and voice their commitment to continued improvements to broadcasting options for northwestern BC. Kenneth Caple, the radio manager for the Pacific region, commented on the ongoing budget constraints but he “hoped” that by 1969 live television broadcasts would be available from Terrace.¹⁵⁰

The transmitter site was then moved across the harbour to the former Department of Transportation location on Digby Island. The existing buildings and cleared property were seen as ideal for the new 10,000 watt transmitter. This location, however, required the purchase of a seventeen-foot speed boat to move staff to and from the island. Clarence

¹⁴⁸ “Special marking the new 10K transmitter” CBC/CFPR archives, tape 85, CD 33 track 1, (Airdate January 28, 1965).

¹⁴⁹ “Opening of CBC building (Stiles Place)” CBC/CFPR archives, tape 93, CD 36 track 1 (recorded September 15, 1967).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Insulander described both the outbuildings and the hundred-foot dock in a 1965 program announcing the new transmitter. He said local CFPR staff “had quite a fight to get the boat.” CBC management had to be convinced that such a purchase was necessary, but they soon found “the boat paid for itself.”¹⁵¹ There was an onsite caretaker (certainly in later years) yet the technicians still had to make frequent trips across the harbour for maintenance and remote network testing and operations.¹⁵²

It was not clear why the CBC actually purchased the station outright in 1953. They could have continued to lease the station as they did between 1942 and 1952 or let the lease lapse entirely. A generous explanation might be that CBC recognized the economic potential during for the post war period that was being demonstrated by large scale industrial and natural resource projects such as the Alcan (Aluminum Company of Canada) aluminum smelter at Kitimat. In fact, northern BC experienced the largest per capita population increase in all of Canada, with accelerated growth in the decade spanning 1951 – 1961.¹⁵³ The North American demand for consumer goods and raw resource materials (metals and wood) drove the large-scale expansion of new pulp and paper and mining opportunities. Economic investment for private projects was encouraged by the business-friendly Social Credit provincial government in Victoria, under the leadership of W.A.C. Bennett, first elected as a minority government in 1952. When private enterprise was reluctant to invest, large scale public projects such as the building of hydroelectric dams on the Columbia and Peace Rivers or the upgrading of

¹⁵¹ See CFPR/CBC audio archives: tape 85, CD #33 track 1 and tape 93, CD 36 track 1.

¹⁵² It is not clear from the 1960s recordings when the caretaker was added, but arguably the onsite accommodation was present from the same period. It is well known by former CFPR staff from the 1970s that there was a caretaker living onsite.

¹⁵³ Marvin McInnis, Warren Kalback Donald Kerr, “Population Changes,” in *Historical Atlas of Canada: Addressing the Twentieth Century*, Vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) , plate 59.

highways and public utilities were central to the vision of British Columbia prosperity projected by Premier Bennett.¹⁵⁴

These were good jobs, although they were vulnerable. Immigrants, some from southern Europe, decided to take advantage of these new communities and economic opportunities in northern British Columbia. The population of the region almost doubled from 20,000 to 38,000 between 1951 and 1961,¹⁵⁵ and many of those newcomers chose to settle in places such as Kitimat with its modern town-site and steady wages. Alcan's project for the region included the construction of the hydro-electric dam on the Nechako River watershed, a small community at the Kemano site, the Kitimat smelter and a town site, required for 6,000 workers between 1951 and 1956.¹⁵⁶

Another reason why the national broadcaster chose to purchase CFPR may have come from the recommendations of the report of the Royal Commission on the National Development of Arts Letters and Sciences, led by Vincent Massey between 1949 and 1951 (hereafter the Massey commission). The commission saw that Canadian radio was central to the propagation of newly formed nationalism and, to a lesser degree, a more homogenized cultural identity.¹⁵⁷ The Massey report was published at the same time as a massive influx of Europeans came to Canada following the war. It illustrated the expectation that radio broadcasting, like the other "esteemed cultural institution, the National film Board" were to be "active gatekeepers" in the reshaping of ethnic

¹⁵⁴ Jean Barman, *The West Beyond West: A History of British Columbia 3rd Ed.* (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 2007), 437.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ "Making it Happen" *The Kitimat Alcan History Project*, Kitimat Museum and Archives, web article published 2010, Accessed January 11, 2016. <http://www.kitimatmuseum.ca/node/37>

¹⁵⁷ The *Canadian Encyclopedia* provides a good outline of the commission, and of its historical significance on the cultural life of Canada and nationalism. See: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/massey-commission-emc/>

identities.¹⁵⁸

Although the Massey report was far-reaching in its discussion of various cultural institutions, the section on broadcasting, particularly radio, provides some interesting perspectives. It answers some broader questions as to how radio was perceived by many Canadians in 1950, (or at least those who presented to the commission) and thus shines light on the underlying motivation for the CBC's purchase of the Prince Rupert radio station CFPR. The commission's report stated

Canada was in real danger of cultural annexation to the United States. Action taken on radio broadcasting by governments representing all parties made it possible for her to maintain her cultural identity. Through Canadian radio, however, much more than this has been done. Radio has opened the way to a mutual knowledge and understanding which would have seemed impossible a few years before. Canadians as a people have listened to news of their own country and of the world, have heard public topics discussed by national authorities, have listened to and have participated in discussions of Canadian problems, and have, through radio, been present at great national events. All these things are so obvious today that it is easy to forget what they have meant especially to the many Canadians who live in relative isolation, lacking a daily newspaper and enjoying little contact with the outside world.

Canadian sectionalism is not yet a thing of the past, but it is certain that the energetic efforts of the CBC in providing special regional programmes and informative talks, and in introducing a great variety of Canadians to their fellow-citizens, have done much to bring us nearer together. From Vancouver Island to Newfoundland and from the Mackenzie River to the border, Canadians have been given a new consciousness of their unity and of their diversity.¹⁵⁹

It is a minor point that the commission did not include mainland northern British Columbia (CFPR's broadcast region) in its geographic list of areas served by the national radio broadcaster. Yet it does illustrate the commission's keen awareness that a unified

¹⁵⁸ Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: The Reshaping of Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2006), 11.

¹⁵⁹ "Report" 1951, Online copy Library and Archives Canada, *Chapter 18 Radio Broadcasting* (page 276) accessed January 20, 2016, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/massey/h5-440-e.html>

identity was needed and that radio was to play an important role in its creation and maintenance. The commissioners also recognized the significant role that radio played in breaking down the isolation felt by rural citizens in the most extreme geographical environments. Len Kuffert noted that some cultural critics hoped the commission would provide concrete strategies to cope with leisure activities “that did little to promote self improvement or recreation.” Radio, and particularly the CBC, was to be a vanguard protecting Canadians from the encroaching American popular culture. At the same time, radio was to meet certain educational needs – particularly for rural Canadians – to higher forms of national expression and values (some would argue elitist) in the confusing post war modern age. As Kuffert argued, “Critics believed that they could empower the public by helping its members – often over the radio, yet individually – to recognize their place within a troubling new order.”¹⁶⁰ The Massey commission portrayed American broadcasting as self-indulgent and based on entertainment values that drove consumerism and advertising rather than service to a wider public good. The commission, followed by the Fowler commission on broadcasting (1955-57),¹⁶¹ influenced the direction and aforementioned attitudes of soft nationalism and community service that brought the CBC to Prince Rupert after 1953.

A recurring theme in the CFPR radio archive tapes is that culture is often described in reference to one’s intellectual abilities and education level; so that a cultured individual was well read and well informed. This idea may have been modeled on a British (or BBC) understanding, rather than social science definition of what constituted Canadian cultural

¹⁶⁰ L.B. Kuffert, *A Great Duty: Canadian Responses to Modern Life and Mass Culture in Canada, 1939-67* (Montreal Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 10.

¹⁶¹ Fowler Commission, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/robert-maclaren-fowler/>

identity. What is important however, is that this notion of culture influenced the management style, technical arrangements, advertising, and local program content at the Prince Rupert station.

The CBC corporate model significantly altered the small town atmosphere of CFPR, first during the war with the leasing of the station, but more definitely when the CBC bought the station outright in 1953. Staff member Mel Thompson described the influx of new employees and the quick transformation from a small town radio station, with a “close knit group... of four men and one young lady in the office,” to a radio station of “professionals.” Thompson explained, “It seemed that overnight we had the studio crowded with all sorts of people; producers, station managers, engineers.”¹⁶² Part of the professionalization came from the adoption of standardized radio production methods and the cultured forms of speech and presentation of the national broadcaster.

This was the experience of William Hankinson, who was brought in as the station manager in 1953. Many speculated that Hankinson, with a Master of Arts degree and an abrasive nature, was dismissed from CBC in Montreal to, literally, the end of the line. A few announcers however, commented that they learned much from Hankinson in terms of speaking and announcing techniques.¹⁶³ For many young announcers, CBC Prince Rupert was seen as an excellent training ground to launch a national broadcasting career. The opposite proved true for Hankinson, since he never was able to revive his professional standing within the corporation. However, he took the demotion in stride and fashioned CBC Prince Rupert to meet his own interests. Hankinson’s strength was speech arts, and

¹⁶² Mel Thompson, “First broadcast to Houston” CBC/ CFPR archives tape 84, CD33, track 2 (Airdate August 1961)

¹⁶³ Jim Taylor, personal telephone interview September 8, 2014; Craig Oliver, personal interview February 2015.

over the years he made full use of CBC studios and staff to bolster his own business venture in the form of a private broadcast school.¹⁶⁴

Although CFPR fell under the jurisdiction of provincial CBC headquarters in Vancouver, management left Will Hankinson to run the station as he saw fit. Clarence Insulander, former founding partner in the radio station, was relegated to the job of technical engineer. It seems, however, that he accepted this role willingly, since technical expertise was also his strength. There were severe restrictions on what types of programs, music or productions announcers could broadcast at CFPR, in part because of national cultural standards as defined by the professionals, but also dictated locally by station manager Hankinson, who vetted most scripts himself. Hankinson did not permit telephone interviews to air, even after the recording technology was available.¹⁶⁵ All interviews were recorded live (in person) and then aired at a later date, sometimes months later. It is interesting that time or immediacy was not considered a critical factor in the airing of these interviews. However, if a meeting or fundraising activity was coming up, public service announcements could be sent to the station by post for the announcers to read on air. Like message time, local and regional public service announcements remained an important community service.

Other corporate restrictions that made CFPR less flexible were the strict job categories, with clear separation between the technical, announcing and managerial staff; these sometimes made the workings of the station difficult. For example, in a larger

¹⁶⁴ Hankinson developed a fleet of courses on presentation, public speaking and further radio announcing for as 'night school' credit and eventually a full time, 6 month program. It appears that the CBC management in Vancouver or Toronto were not concerned about a potential conflict of interest where a station manager ran a private business venture using CBC facilities.

¹⁶⁵ Jim Taylor, 2014.

broadcast centre, there was a studio director, show producer, sound engineer, and the on-air talent. The professional designations sometimes hindered the performance and professionalism at the small station, particularly when the announcer's union became aware of William Hankinson's autocratic management style. Job duties, as defined by the CBC contract, were followed to the letter as a form of protest. In a small station where flexibility, staff courtesy and professional respect could go a long way in successful operations, Hankinson's managerial methods created an inflexible and sometimes toxic work environment. One staff announcer, Laurie Mills, who worked at CFPR for several years in the late 1960s said that he took on extra work as a bus driver as a way of coping with the office politics and negativity. Mills recalled he did his best to "keep his head down," to stay out of the office politics. He drove a bus part time because he needed an outlet away from the day to day negativity "and still maintain [his] job" at CFPR.¹⁶⁶ While this may seem extreme, it is an example of the lengths that some staff members went to survive long enough at the Prince Rupert station and eventually advance their careers elsewhere.

After upgrading to 250 watt transmitter in 1947, the CBC at some point after 1953 acquired new technology to expand its services outside of Prince Rupert to include other northern BC interior communities in the Skeena River watershed, through the Bulkley Valley and as far east as Vanderhoof, some 620 km from Prince Rupert. The mid-northern communities were strung like beads following the CN rail line and telegraph lines. The telegraph, and later the telephone lines, were used to transmit an electric signal that in turn, could be broadcast in the various towns and villages. The low power relay

¹⁶⁶ Laurie Mills, personal telephone interview, July 2015.

transmitters (LPRT) were used to boost the reception of a radio station's signal, in this case CFPR, and perhaps generate advertising revenues from community businesses. The LPRTs rebroadcast the signal that originated in CFPR studios Prince Rupert, so they clearly were a technical asset and low cost alternative for communities without any previous radio service. Clarence Insulander explained that the low power relay transmitters, "have proved to be an economical means of bringing radio to areas otherwise without reliable daily radio service," and that they were "radio broadcast station... minus [the community based] the announcers."¹⁶⁷ Essentially the voices of CFPR staff from Prince Rupert were brought direct into the households of many communities in Northwestern BC. Each repeater had its own call letters, and the CBC was applied to for a license for each of them like any other AM radio station in Canada. According to a website dedicated to Canadian broadcasting history, (<http://www.broadcasting-history.ca/>), CBC Vancouver extended its reach well beyond the confines of the BC lower mainland through the use of small LPRTs or 40 watt repeaters to communities throughout southern and central British Columbia.¹⁶⁸ One 1958 promotion for CBC Vancouver radio advertising sales stated "*In British Columbia CBC radio alone matches your advertising to your distribution with stations CBU Vancouver, CFPR Prince Rupert plus 31 repeater stations serving 150,000* extra listeners at no extra cost. (*Elliott-Haynes).*" This system meant that, over time, the CBC media control of Vancouver was deeply entrenched

¹⁶⁷ "Welcome Houston" *Rupert Calling*, CBC/CFPR archives, tape 84, CD 33 track 2 (airdate August 1961).

¹⁶⁸ Website of organization of History of Canadian Broadcasting (private industry) http://www.broadcatinghistory.ca/index3.html?url=http%3A//www.broadcatinghistory.ca/listings_and_histories/radio/histories.php%3Fid%3D56%26historyID%3D21

throughout much of the province, with the exception of CFPR, which remained under the strict management of Will Hankinson.

It is not clear when exactly the CBC set up the full network of repeaters in northern British Columbia, but it must have been in place by 1960. One program in the Prince Rupert CBC radio archives celebrated the 1961 inaugural broadcast of CFPR to the village of Houston, in the central interior of the province.¹⁶⁹ This special audio archive recording is only about ten minutes in length, yet it reveals some fascinating details of how the CFPR staff were committed to expanding the network of communities that their broadcasting signal reached, not as a commercial endeavour but as civic duty. It also illustrates the significant effort, diligence and to some degree, ingenuity (like the LPRT) of local CFPR technical and program staff when dealing with budgetary restraints imposed by the larger corporation. The development of a small regional network of LPRTs promoted a localized identity with programs, such as *Rupert Calling*, that contained a strict local focus but tried to give northern listeners a voice, despite the technical limitations. At the same time, CFPR provided the local audiences with access to wider public affairs, national news, entertainment and educational shows, such as the school broadcasts¹⁷⁰ or farm broadcasts¹⁷¹ produced within BC and across the country. The special program announcing the launch of the Houston service began with Will Hankinson extending a bit of an apology for some technical delays on getting CBUR

¹⁶⁹ “Welcome Houston” Ibid. (airdate August 1961)

¹⁷⁰ For more on school broadcasts in British Columbia see, Laurie Ion, “Over the airwaves: school radio broadcasts in British Columbia 1960-1982” unpublished Master’s thesis, UBC, 1992. Digital Collections: <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/831/items/1.0064539>

¹⁷¹ See Ruth Sandwell, “‘Read, Listen, Discuss, Act’: Adult Education, Rural Citizenship and the National Farm Radio Forum in Canada, 1941-1965” Special Issue, *Historical Studies in Education*, Vol. 24, no 1, (Spring, 2012): 170-194.

(CBC AM signal Houston) to air. More significantly however are Hankinson's comments regarding the role of a radio station:

A radio station should support the good works and the public service efforts of its community. And since there is no microphone in Houston, we offer you our microphone, each morning Monday through Friday on this program, *Rupert Calling*, so that you may announce your meetings and promote the worthwhile things in Houston or any other nearby communities which listen to CBUR.

Founding owner and then technical director Clarence Insulander added that it was always a hope of the original CFPR owners that the station in Prince Rupert could serve a wider northern audience:

Since 1936 the birthday of CFPR, I have looked forward to a time when Prince Rupert radio would serve a good portion of this northern country. And although we cannot do it by direct means [as a station with locally based announcers] we are now in a position and have a part in serving it through the low power relay transmitter and the network out of Prince Rupert.

He concluded his remarks with a request for understanding and patience from Houston listeners when technical problems arose. He asked citizens to remember how challenging the Northwest BC terrain was and indicated that the workers would have to deal with technical problems. Insulander explained

This whole country is very rugged and there will be times when your village will be without radio for short periods, perhaps longer periods because of interruptions to the lines caused by storms, winds and many other natural and un-natural causes. When this happens I would please ask you to remember that some lineman will have to go out in all types of weather to repair that line so as to restore that service to your station.

His appeal touched on more than just the notion of the communications worker struggling through a storm to get to a work site. His direct reference to the telegraph lineman certainly resonated with the older generation who grew up in the era of the telegraph, and

the nostalgic memories of that period. As historian Christopher Dummitt has argued, a feature of the post-war “modern manliness,” was the assumption that at a time of “affluence, scientific development and the emerging welfare state ... Canadians could manipulate the environment for the ever greater social good.”¹⁷²

One such individual who represents Dummitt’s characterization was J. Fred Weber, who established the only private local television and radio network serving Northwest BC, sometimes reaching southeast Alaska. Weber was considered a technical visionary as well as an astute entrepreneur who was passionate about bringing modern communications to remote regions. As reported in the *Vancouver Province*, in 1964 Weber was told, “it couldn’t be done and that made him mad enough to do it.”¹⁷³ Weber was a well known supporter of the Social Credit government in later years, and he epitomized the entrepreneurial notions of the WAC Bennett era coupled with commitment for technology as a public service.

As a private broadcaster Fred Weber started a radio station in Quesnel in central BC in the late 1950s and in Kamloops (with Ian Clark) he established the first “low powered” TV station in North America.¹⁷⁴ By 1961, Weber moved to the Northwest BC community of Terrace and established Skeena Broadcasters, in an era when national CBC television network had only been on the air for five years. Skeena Broadcasters became a CBC television affiliate, but also broadcast radio to the same region. However, this did

¹⁷² Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) 3.

¹⁷³ Pat Carney, “A Tribute Well Deserved: Terrace Station a Triumph for T.V.” *The Northern Sentinel*, (Kitimat) March 19, 1964. (page 4) (reprinted with permission) from *Vancouver Province*, March 14, 1964.

¹⁷⁴ “Weber, John Frederick ‘Fred’ (1922-2002)” listing as Pioneer member of the CAB Hall of Fame, written by J. Lyman Potts (Dec. 1996) Canadian Communications Foundation,

not mean the CBC was responsible for live programming. Indeed, the first CFTK studios were based in a small brick structure in downtown Terrace, where announcers read the news or conducted short local interviews. The live program feed was broadcast from Copper Mountain near Terrace to microwave towers throughout the region to Smithers, Kitimat and, eventually, Prince Rupert.

As the CBC TV affiliate, CFTK aired popular CBC shows, but often two to three weeks following the broadcasts on the national network. This was in large measure due to the very real limitations of transmission methods of the day. Before the arrival of video tape,¹⁷⁵ TV programs were filmed, edited and then mailed to the various broadcast points across the country. This made an affiliated station possible, without the corporation having to lease or own outright the broadcast facilities. As CFTK television became a very important distributor of national media, local program content was produced literally “in-house” in Northwest BC.

Local control of national programming was an extremely important function of the local TV station. For example, for the coverage of the assassination of American President John F. Kennedy, Fred Weber decided to run a full-day memorial broadcast following the event. CFTK had a live host with special commentary and the footage from the CBC news that arrived in the mail two weeks later.¹⁷⁶ Weber knew the CFTK television signal reached Americans living in southeast Alaska, and felt the story warranted special attention. It is not known how many Alaskans or Canadian tuned in for

¹⁷⁵ A Telecine machine would be used to convert the film to a signal that was broadcast out from a microwave tower on a mountain top nearly three kilometres from Terrace. The Copper Mountain site remains the broadcast and telecommunications hub of the northwest.

¹⁷⁶ Weber, John Frederick “Fred” (1922-2002) www.broadcasting-history.ca

the special regional broadcast, but it does underline how a local station interpreted the perceived needs of local audiences and how much flexibility they had to respond to those needs over national broadcast networks. While locals complained in letters to the editor of the local newspaper about getting the national television news weeks late, there was never any suggestion that CFTK was slouching in that respect. The fault always lay with the national CBC. In fact, Weber and the company were continually praised for novel approaches and their local citizenship. Webber even became mayor for a short time and he was an active member of the Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce.

According to Pat Carney, CFTK was the second largest employer “next to sawmilling” with a “monthly payroll of about \$14,000” and capital investment of “\$300,000.” In 1964 terms, these were significant investments, even in comparison to what the national CBC radio spent to maintain and expand the Seven Sisters network. Locals and advertisers turned to Weber’s radio and television stations. CFTK (both radio and television) had not only local advertisers’ support, but also the sponsorship of large scale regional employers such as Alcan. Alcan would fund films in the summer that were broadcast,¹⁷⁷ as well as TV specials, such as the 1965 Christmas program that featured the Harmonettes, the famous Catholic girls’ choir from Smithers.¹⁷⁸ This “experimental” program was the first videotaped production by CFTK-TV and was “re-telecast” on Christmas Eve 1965.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ The Alcan corporate newspaper the *Ingot* (July 8th 1968) reported eight feature length movies would be shown due to “one year contract with CFTK-TV which Alcan would sponsor “Walt Disney’s Wonderful world of Colour” for another year.

¹⁷⁸ “Harmonettes to Re-Telecast Xmas Eve,” *The Ingot* (Wed. Dec 22, 1965).

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Weekly radio and TV schedules ran in local newspapers, which also sometimes included an insert for a local store that sold radio and television sets. These advertisements incorporated another novel idea accredited to Weber -- a way to generate advertising revenue and viewership at the same time. Weber came up with the unique idea to raise some of the capital necessary for the venture by providing \$25 TV certificates. An arrangement was made with local advertisers whereby the general public would buy a certificate for \$25 and this would be applied against the purchase of a TV set. The sponsor would receive dollar for dollar advertising when the certificate was redeemed at the CFTK office. This provided considerable funding for the station. Most of the communities that benefited from the TV station could not provide advertising dollars, but Weber felt morally responsible to provide TV service at no cost to the communities.¹⁸⁰

Although the options were limited for CFTK viewers, it is clear that Fred Weber and his team were committed to meeting the needs of Northwest BC citizens. Like Clarence Insulander and his radio colleagues who applied for the radio license a generation before, these people recognized the potential of broadcast medium as a way of bridging isolated communities where the waterways and geographic topography made travel difficult. While these goals had widespread support, there remained financial, technological or regulatory obstacles (often generated by external agencies) that limited access to the airways. During World War II, several different people, including Canadian and American army personnel, tried to control one small radio station. After the war, the

¹⁸⁰ “Weber, John Frederick “Fred” (1922 -2002) Canadian Communications Foundation.
www.broadcasting-history.ca.

desire to meet the broadcast needs shifted to a national corporation whose main focus, at least on a national level, was to define and promote Canadian cultural identity through standard content and yet still appeal to local audiences. This same corporation did not see local talent or managerial competence as sufficient to meet the corporate image it had created. Instead they brought in an outsider, Will Hankinson, and then simply left him to manage the CBC Prince Rupert as he saw fit. This sporadic outside corporate (CBC) involvement arises in varying degrees in the following chapters, but serves as a reminder of the variable but consistent tug-of-war between local program control versus regional interests and how Northern British Columbians responded to and were represented on air during the phase of rapid social and industrial change. The next chapter examines one radio documentary and its producer who relied heavily on imagined histories of pioneers and early railway development as a tale of cautious optimism about what he hoped would become the future development of northern BC.

Chapter Two: Deconstructing John Must's "The Foam on the Water" (1960)

John Must's one hour long narrative, *The Foam on the Water*, was compiled in October and November 1959 at the CBC radio station in Prince Rupert. The program was "a salute to Prince Rupert's jubilee year," and a "flash back into the history of a Canadian town and its people."¹⁸¹ This program was a celebration of fifty years of the unique history of Prince Rupert, but its deeper purpose was to imbed in the minds of listeners distinct notions of Canadian-ness through its history. Its message, reiterated over and over again, was that Prince Rupert was a city on the periphery of Canada, but it was integrated and physically tied to the national history through the construction of the railroad (1909-1914) and later, the Second World War.

Producer John Must, a former Australian broadcaster, wanted listening audience members from afar to get a glimpse into the life and times of Prince Rupert, a place where he had lived for a few years. Perhaps Must was intrigued with the region's historical past and wanted to share his new knowledge of Prince Rupert and put it on the map for Canadian listeners.¹⁸² His goal in producing the program conceivably was not to promote enthusiastic boosterism, but to present an entertaining yet cautionary tale of the ups and downs that many rural communities faced and to remind southern Canadians that every community in Canada was unique. It is not clear how far the program was broadcast, but it can be assumed to have aired beyond the northwestern BC and the CFPR broadcast region of the Seven Sisters Network. The care and labour-intensive gathering

¹⁸¹ Must, Ibid. 1960.

¹⁸² This assertion is based on several programs in the CBC Prince Rupert archive that John Must was involved in, and most of the content has a human interest and historical theme.

of source documents for this local history, as well as assembling source tapes would have had cost John Must time, and had an impact on the local CFPR budget. The following discussion shows that John Must's historical narrative presents an opportunity to deconstruct an audio history into its program elements and to investigate one broadcaster's skills as an audio producer and story teller. Although Must relied on the research and interviews of other local historians and CBC colleagues when he compiled this program featuring Prince Rupert's short but turbulent history, his selection and choices reveal certain historical complexities of North Coast life in the early 1960s; such undercurrents in local politics, continued economic challenges and how radio and community were integrated. More importantly these reveal how Must as a broadcaster interpreted (and adapted) these facets into his program and likely his own identity as a newcomer to Prince Rupert.

Literary scholar Sherrill Grace notes that by the mid-1960s, intellectuals like Carl Berger had begun to question in a "balanced yet unflinching and unequivocal manner," the connections between Canadian nationalism and Canadian northern identity.¹⁸³ Such critiques were not part of mainstream CBC programming however, yet one might consider the role CBC radio stations in remote regions had in perpetuating or countering these notions. The Northwest coast of British Columbia does not fit neatly into any northern category, with the exception of the shared experiences of rural isolation. The staff at CBC radio in Prince Rupert found themselves in a bit of a geopolitical wasteland: mid-north and rural to be sure, close to Alaska, but with a fairly mild climate. This

¹⁸³ Sherrill Grace, *Canada and the Idea of the North*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) 71.

conundrum of northern identity lies at the heart of CBC staff producer John Must's documentary.

In the mid-twentieth-century, CBC radio was the central medium by which both rural and urban Canadians engaged and connected, providing a way for local stories to mold into the larger narrative. These historical narratives responded to a common image Canadians could understand. Writers, producers and program staff often tried to reach listeners intellectually and emotionally through dramas, audio narratives and sometimes “documentaries”¹⁸⁴ that coincided with the idea of Canada as a northern nation with histories distinct in content to those of our American neighbours.

An initial historical assessment might categorize *The Foam on the Water* as a form of populist, nostalgic history that focused on the wistful and sometimes whimsical voices of regional pioneers. While these types of voices are present in the documentary, it is the decisions of production (editing choices, narration and script design, for example) that compel regional historians to listen more closely. For example, the production title, *The Foam on the Water*, is a reference to the Tsimshian place name for the island upon which Prince Rupert is located. While not ever directly explained by John Must, this reference to Indigenous territory is an indication of localized understanding, and perhaps a measure of respect, that Must had for his local audience with a diverse population.

Must also featured the voices of Prince Rupert citizens, including immigrant newcomers, something that does not occur in any other recording produced in the early 1960s at CBC Prince Rupert. Certainly Must intended to trace “pioneer” history and celebrate the

¹⁸⁴ The term documentary is used loosely in this context since the programming was for radio ‘Talks’ programming rather than more critical journalistic practice. Most of the programs, including interviews produced at CFPR in the 1960s are ‘features’ providing information only.

resiliency of citizens of the north coast city after the continuing economic ups and downs. But he also wanted to share his cautionary lessons to be learned from this history.

Finally, Must's most significant motivation was his attempt to create an audio documentary specifically to represent the north coast BC listening audience to the country at large. This program was a feature documentary that aired for a provincial audience, as its show script and tape label indicate, but the content and the voices have a familiar local quality that would have resonated with Northwest residents. Although assumptions might be made about the listening audience members were based on our current understandings of CBC listeners, this would prove misleading in the context of CFPR in 1960 – the only radio station serving the north coast of British Columbia at the time. Not only were local business and community leaders interested in hearing the content of the CBC programs, but most Northern British Columbians were tuned in and actively “listening in,”¹⁸⁵ with more than casual interest to radio programming. First Nations, fishermen, and canneries workers, business owners and housewives – everyone listened to weather reports, music and national news, and also local content that represented the interests and character, to some degree, of their town on those rare occasions when the national network aired content produced in Prince Rupert. *The Foam on the Water* program clearly took those varied audience interests into account.

Another useful historical document connected with this program is the original script that was found in the tape box. Using this primary source, researchers can compare John

¹⁸⁵ Susan Douglas, *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination*, U of Minnesota Press, 2004) and Mary Vipond, *Listening In: The First Decade of Canadian Broadcasting 1922 -1932*(Kingston-Montreal: Queen's McGill Press). The phrase ‘listening in’ emphasizes the action of listening rather than simply hearing; the audience members are purposely listening particularly close to radio broadcasts. There is level of concentrated purposeful attentiveness in the action. To ‘listen in’ also has negative connotations – as when someone ‘listens in’ on a private conversation.

Must's initial script choices with the final program that went to air. For example, the opening narration was scripted to be a single voice, but for some reason Must crossed this out and went with a montage of predominantly male voices stating their impressions of Prince Rupert. Despite the damp, cold weather and isolation, (two hallmarks of North Coast living), the overall opinion was that the people make Prince Rupert a "friendly" and "a swell place" to live. Ironically, this *streetter* (to use the broadcast term for voice montage) was supposedly to give the impression the aforementioned voices were random comments from everyday citizens on the streets of Prince Rupert. Instead, these are comments were all made in studio by Must's CBC coworkers at CFPR. Clearly then, a local and informed listener, who knows the voices of former staff members will respond differently than outsiders or those not familiar with the local CBC staff. CBC broadcasters and producers have often reused audio material for specific purposes. Sometimes it is to fill a demand for broadcast airtime driven by the need for commercials, as CFPR was in the 1950s, or by the real issues of high production costs of on-air talent and/or equipment. Magnetic recordings (reel to reel or cassette) could be used several times over by simply bulk erasing the contents with an electronic magnet. Another broadcaster would simply reuse the tape for his (or later, her) productions, a fact that makes the existence of a full audio production of the history of a northern community even more significant.

Even though John Must was not born or raised on the North Coast he presented himself as a local citizen, taking on a Prince Rupert identity as exemplified in the following

excerpt from another variety program titled *Talk of the Town*,¹⁸⁶ which was produced about the same time as *Foam on the Water*. Must explained this in his narration:

So far during *The Talk of the Town* we have been concentrating on the places, the events and personalities of Prince Rupert. And I think that we may have overlooked the general personality or perhaps we could call it the 'culture' of the City. And by culture we mean our education, our thinking, our development and our refinement. Well there are many ways we can look at ourselves and our City culture. We can be told by outsiders for one thing. And we can sum it up for ourselves through a little bit of self-analysis. In other words let's try to see ourselves as we are rather than what we would like to be. We have a guest with us tonight on our program who takes a look at the city in which she lives and does some self-analysis at the same time. Her subject is books and the people who do, and do not read them. And for this post script, here's Miss Inane Air.

There were also other factors that would have influenced the audio choices that John Must made. The direction of the station manager William Hankinson cannot be underestimated. Several former staff members have said that Hankinson ruled the station with a forceful hand and actually made most, if not all, the editorial decisions regarding what was broadcast locally.¹⁸⁷ The best researchers can hope for then, is to explore the sound assumptions of John Must and to recognize the multiple layers of social, political and even professional influences at play.

¹⁸⁶ John Must, "Talk of the Town, CD #36 track 5 (1960)

¹⁸⁷ Personal interviews with Jim Taylor, and emails from Laurie Mills, and Murray Hannah.



Figure 5) Robert Tomlinson and Prince Rupert pioneer dinner (circa 1959)

Notice the microphone front and centre. This event was recorded by the CBC staff.

Photo Courtesy of: Robert & Roxy Tomlinson Historical Family Collection
- Owner: Susan Tomlinson Durbin

After the opening sequence of *The Foam on the Water*, John Must described the geographic and historic location of Prince Rupert, but omitted any reference to the presence of original First Nations inhabitants. Instead, he geographically positioned the site of the City of Prince Rupert at the centre of the triangle of three white communities of Fort Simpson, Port Essington and Metlakatla. Fort Simpson was a North Coast fur trade centre of the Hudson's Bay Company established in early 1830s, and Port Essington was a community started in 1870 by Irish missionary turned businessman Robert Cunningham. Interestingly, Must defined these communities as creations of white fur traders and missionaries, despite the fact that significant Indigenous initiative and cooperation contributed to the placement of these communities at least 50 to 70 years prior. At the turn of the 20th century there was a significant newcomer population in all

three communities. Metlakatla, was an Anglican Christian mission community situated on an ancient winter village site of the Coast Tsimshian. The two other communities were also strategically placed for economic and trade reasons, but had many Indigenous residents.

The CFPR radio archives contain many selections that celebrate the history of British heritage, newcomer settlement and industrial development of Northwestern BC, including a royal visit to Terrace in 1959, the first passenger train to Alcan and Kitimat in 1955, and visits with old timers along the Skeena watershed. John Must used a variety of sources to create his one hour program, not only written historical works, but also some productions that were recorded as stand-alone interviews and programs created by CBC announcers based in Prince Rupert. The first program that Must used was a series of three one hour programs produced in the early 1950s by freelance announcer, and long time Prince Rupert resident Robert (Bob) Harlow. Harlow served as a pilot in the Second World War and then completed an English BA at the University of British Columbia. He returned to Northwest BC in the early 1951 and in 1952, under a short contract with CBC, he produced six half-hour programs that were to introduce southerners to three communities of northern BC: Williams Lake, Prince George and Prince Rupert. This series, held in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, is one of the earliest radio features of northern communities.¹⁸⁸ Harlow's full program for Prince Rupert is included in the CBC/CFPR archives, and John Must drew on audio 'clips' for his program seven

¹⁸⁸ Bob Harlow, "Introducing Prince Rupert," one of six half hour shows on three northern towns. Only the second half hour is part of the CFPR archives, CD 28 cut 2# (shipping date 1959) Tape 72. These programs were actually produced in 1952, but John Must most likely ordered a copy up from Vancouver since the archives found a shipping slip in the tape box dated November 1959.

years later. There is documentary evidence to support the assertion that Must requested an audio dub (or copy) of Harlow's 1952 program be made at CBC Vancouver and then sent to him in Prince Rupert in the 1959. This would explain how Harlow's program found its way into CBC Prince Rupert archives, with a label dated 1959.

John Must also made use of other audio histories produced by CBC staff from Vancouver, including the oral history interviews by Imbert Orchard and Ian Stephens from 1958 to the mid 1960s and beyond.¹⁸⁹ The collection produced by Orchard is perhaps one of the largest oral history records in North America with almost 1,000 separate interviews with "pioneers and Aboriginal Peoples of British Columbia" as noted by researcher and writer Robert (Lucky) Budd.¹⁹⁰ Budd and a few others were hired in 2000 to work through the CBC collection held by the British Columbia Archives in Victoria and to dub and catalogue the entire Orchard collection. The nearly 1,000 interviews vary in length from less than an hour to one that runs seven hours in total. Historian Lucky Budd's assessment of Imbert Orchard as an educated radio broadcaster working for the CBC is that he had a certain cachet and "enormous cultural weight." Orchard, according to Budd, went to great lengths to "reassure" his interviewees, and to develop a "rapport," even though many of his subjects were fearful "about being recorded."¹⁹¹ Orchard's goal was to record and interview as many pioneer and old-timer British Columbians as possible. The breadth of diverse voices—men and women, fur traders, miners, fishers, Native peoples, missionaries—and the size of Orchard's

¹⁸⁹ See Imbert Orchard's biography on the BC Archives website <http://search-bcarchives.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/orchard-imberty-1992>

¹⁹⁰ R. Lucky Budd, *"The Story of the Country": Imbert Orchard's Quest for the Frontier Folk in BC, 1870-1914*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, (University of Victoria: 2005) Budd later composed a popular history after negotiating with the CBC for a book that feature several key Orchard audio recordings. See: R. Budd. *Voices of British Columbia* (Douglas and MacIntyre, 2008)

¹⁹¹ Budd, *The Story*, 45-48.

collection make it unique. On the other hand, Orchard's intent and gleaning of voices of an elder generation is consistent with the practice of oral history of the 1950s and 60s, when the gathering of traditions, folklore and memories became a common exercise by interested journalists and concerned community members.

Canadian historian Ian McKay, writing in the mid-1990s, described the rise of the celebration of folkways as a manifestation of protest against modernism and industrialization that began in the late nineteenth century. The simple, authentic and uncomplicated life of the east coast fisherman or a small rural villager was promoted and often commodified by "cultural producers," who sometimes "invented outright new forms and traditions to suit the tourist market and their own ideological projects."¹⁹²

Anthropologist Elizabeth Furniss's "frontier complex" argument is similar in outline to Ian McKay's creation of the folk, and strives to explain how western themes found in Williams Lake, BC were actually connected to a much wider Canadian narrative of exploration, colonization and subjugation of both the land and Indigenous peoples. Furniss states that the frontier complex "is framed by a particular historical epistemology that celebrates the 'discovery' of a rich and 'empty' land by non-Aboriginal explorers and settlers." Aboriginal peoples and "wilderness" are subdued and "a process of benevolent conquest" and colonization becomes "a neutral and desired process." Finally these "vignettes of encounter, conflict, and conquest... become the epitomizing events in the Canadian national histories and are a continual source of symbols in the creation and recreation of Canadian national identity."¹⁹³

¹⁹² Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Anti-modernism and Cultural Selection in the Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 1994) 39.

¹⁹³ Elizabeth Furniss, *The Burden of History*, Vancouver: UBC Press: 187

While Furniss's frontier complex might explain Williams Lake in the 1990s, it cannot be applied in the same manner to John Must's work of 1960. The first reason it does not neatly fit is that the Northwest Coast was not considered suitable for large scale agricultural settlement. Secondly, the role of the early north coast missionaries, particularly William Duncan from the Church Missionary Society, was integrated into the local historical lore, and continued to inform Prince Rupert's identity in the 1960s. William Duncan has been characterized as an industrious missionary and friend of the Tsimshian, and also as a despotic autocrat who was more interested in personal success and considered an outsider to the established and respectable Anglican community. In the Prince Rupert radio collection these two representations are heard in at least two different productions: One is a two-part-hour long radio drama written by George Woodcock for CBC Vancouver (with actor Robert Clothier playing William Duncan).¹⁹⁴ Interestingly this program was produced by John Must who had moved to CBC Vancouver by 1966.

Dr. R. G. Large, author of *Skeena: A River Destiny* (1958), explained in another 1959 audio documentary how the missionaries as white newcomers altered the local history. Large observed that

The opening up of the small corner of Canada near present day Prince Rupert was in sharp contrast to the history of development of the rest of the country. The usual sequence of the entrance of the explorers, followed by the exploiters, then settlers and finally the church was in the main, reversed. Except for a few isolated instances, the first white settlers in the Skeena River area were emissaries of the church.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ "Men of the Harvest," show Tuesday night drama, (second reel only) Airdate Sept 6 1966, CBC Vancouver, CBC/CFPR Archives, tape 176, CD 69 track 1.

¹⁹⁵ The Story of Metlakatla, CFPR fonds, City of Prince Rupert Archives, CD #65, track 3 (original tape #170) airdate 1959.

Large's use of the term *exploiter* is interesting, since without the established Hudson's Bay Company Fort of Port Simpson in the early 1830s, there surely would not have been the missionary presence on the north coast to the same degree. Clearly Dr. Large, and later John Must who ultimately selected the production pieces, viewed Prince Rupert history in a specific and localized way.

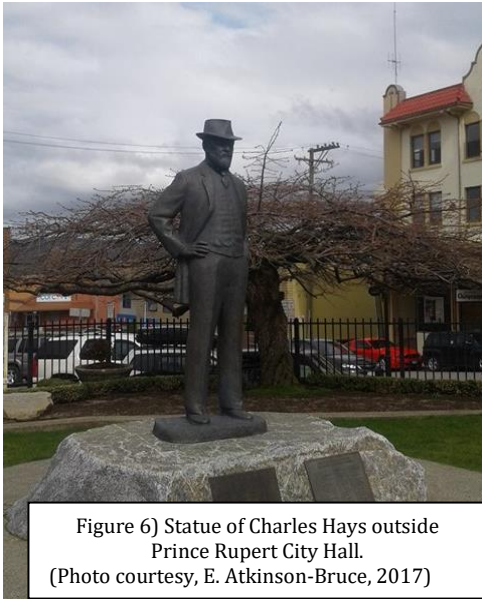


Figure 6) Statue of Charles Hays outside Prince Rupert City Hall. (Photo courtesy, E. Atkinson-Bruce, 2017)

John Must's production choices for *The Foam on the Water* reflect certain tropes and stylistic markers of local historical narratives. He mentions, for example, some of the founding heroes of Prince Rupert's past, particularly the tragic death of railroad magnet Charles M. Hays aboard the ill-fated *Titanic*. In 1912 Hays had gone to England to raise funds and improve the profile of the Grand Trunk Railway. The drama of the high profile sinking of the *Titanic* adds to the historical narrative impact and the drama of Must's retelling of the history of Prince Rupert.

American historian Richard White explained that railway tycoons "have usually been portrayed as bigger than life," and their "failures often mattered as much as their success." They "initiated sweeping changes, and saw these changes often take on purposes they did not intend."¹⁹⁶ Charles Hays was part of a much larger trend. Foreign investment in Canada tripled in this period, two thirds of which came from Great

¹⁹⁶ Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2011), xxxii .

Britain.¹⁹⁷ In present day Prince Rupert, Charles Hays is immortalized in the local history of Prince Rupert, with a mountain and secondary school named in his honour and a statute outside City Hall (see figure 6). Even the city archives promotes this continued association by having an enlarged copy of *The Daily News* story of the sinking of the *Titanic* on its front door and in smaller handouts for archive patrons.¹⁹⁸ Grand Trunk Pacific (GTP) historian Frank Leonard wrote that it was standard fare in earlier historical accounts to attribute the eventual failure of the railway directly to Hay's death, rather than "GTP's president's actual decisions."¹⁹⁹ It is clear that John Must's emphasis on Charles Hays is both relevant and traditional in the local history of Prince Rupert.

In terms of other audio sources used for the 1960 production, John Must drew heavily from at least three different recordings and pre-recorded interviews conducted by himself and other CBC personalities. This is significant for two reasons: if a researcher locates and cross references the original recorded interview (in the CFPR collection or BC archives) it is possible to surmise what Must deemed most significant to a northern BC audience. Second, researchers can hear more of the originating context of the sound or interview. Conversely, some the voices in *The Foam on the Water* can provide a social historical context for Prince Rupert. For example, later in the broadcast, Must featured a recorded clip from an annual *Rupert Night* event in Vancouver. This evening was an annual get together of former Prince Rupert residents who had moved to Vancouver. The event was recorded by CBC Vancouver staff and then edited and sent to CFPR for

¹⁹⁷ See Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 2007, 195.

¹⁹⁸ See the "Titanic Extra," *Prince Rupert Daily News*, Friday April 19th, 1912.

¹⁹⁹ Frank Leonard, *A Thousand Blunders: The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and Northern British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996) 6

broadcast.²⁰⁰ Only a few full recordings of *Rupert Night* exist in the CFPR collection and these are the only surviving recordings. They reveal a certain community pride that both CBC staff and former residents felt about their Prince Rupert community.²⁰¹

Time constraints, both in putting the program together and for on-air broadcasts, must also be mentioned when considering John Must's production choices for *The Foam on the Water*. Must had to include pieces that would make interesting sound tidbits that skimmed the surface of history rather than digging deeper with probing questions, as is often associated with the CBC. This superficial rendering is a feature often found in the early CFPR broadcast content held in the Prince Rupert archives, but it is also consistent with the development of broadcast journalism in Canada, from the 1950s to the late 1970s.²⁰² The CBC was transitioning away from the arts, culture, and entertainment focus with a mandate to manufacture a nationalistic cultural identity as encouraged by the Canadian federal government and the findings of the 1951 Massey commission.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ There are at least three recordings of annual *Rupert Night* Celebrations (1960-63) in the CBC/CFPR archive collection, (tape 86 CD 33 track 2, tape 106 CD40 track 4 & tape 181 CD 70 track 5) .

²⁰¹ *Rupert Night* is still takes place every year in Vancouver.

²⁰² There is does not appear to be a comprehensive study on this aspect of Canadian broadcast journalism. More research needs to be done, but the topic did come up superficially in several oral interviews. One individual Christine DeBoer mentioned that when her husband Ray was asked to assume the station manager's position at CFPR, it was in part based on his freelance, and international journalist experience, as he had worked as a CBC reporter in London for a few years.

²⁰³ See chapter one, page 19-20.

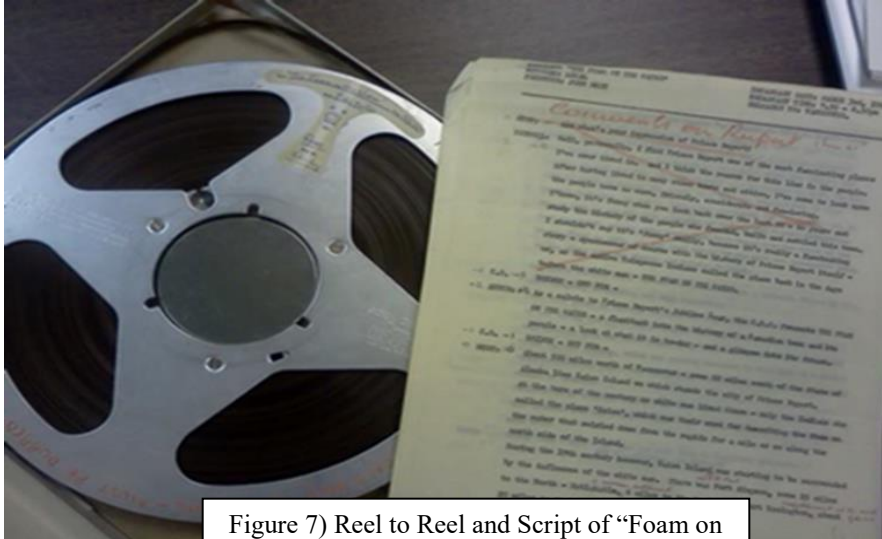


Figure 7) Reel to Reel and Script of “Foam on the Water.”
 Photo: The Author (June 2016)

The creation of local current affairs programming however, coincides with technological and personal changes at CFPR, after station manager Will Hankinson was forced into retirement in the late 1960s.²⁰⁴ They are a significant feature in the content of the CFPR collection. The changes in program length and content, artistic and announcer styles and interview questions all can serve as a temporal bookmarks and indicators of changes in radio even on a local level. Given this pattern of the fragmentation of content or the recycling of media in the radio industry at this time, the preservation of *The Foam on the Water* program is especially remarkable. This 15-inch reel of heavy magnetic tape is an important artifact since represents a complete and intact program of an hour in length (See figure 7). Someone felt it important enough to keep John Must’s version of

²⁰⁴ According to Christine DeBoer, Will Hankinson was forced into retirement by the CBC brass who finally recognized the concerns raised by union and staff reps. Letters were sent by CBC management to staff in Rupert asking them to document their complaints, and Ray DeBoer was hired, and immigrated direct from CBC London, all without Hankinson knowledge. Christine DeBoer stated that she and her husband arrived in Prince Rupert to take over the station, but Hankinson didn’t even know then why Ray DeBoer was in town. She said they couldn’t even visit a realtor to find a place to live, without word getting to Hankinson before the formal and final notice was given. In short the removal of Will Hankinson was almost a clandestine affair. (personal telephone interview, Feb. 2015)

the Prince Rupert local history. The technical limitations of preserving and playback of reel to reel tape must also be mentioned when trying to figure out John Must's audio selections and background historical sources. Essentially, audiotape is a magnetic surface applied to a thin layer of plastic. Over time the magnetic surface of audiotape, whether reel-to-reel or cassette, can peel and flake off the surface. At other times, depending on storage, the tape can re-magnetize, tainting the audio quality. As one former CFPR staff producer Jim Taylor said to me, "I hope that you can make the point in all of this somewhere that the, um, keeping of archives is a task that we need to do ... I do not remember how we decided the things we would save in archives and what things we wouldn't save. Of course we never saved the daily programs ... We did save a lot of [the show] *Rupert Calling* and we did save a bit when we did special programming. Norm [Newton] I think did save seven hour-long programs of a muskeg conference. ... (Laughter) Well, I mean it was interesting there was a whole new type of muskeg in Prince Rupert that they didn't have anywhere else."²⁰⁵ Taylor's comments underline how the preservation of archive material was most often selective and subjective, the result of local interest and personal taste. Clearly this is a wider problem with most archival collections, but there are unique technical wrinkles concerning the shelf life of audio recording materials.

So whose voices did John Must feature most prominently in his program the *Foam on the Water*? There is one Indigenous speaker—a Tsimshian elder, Peter Ryan of Metlakatla—who does appear early on in the program and is actually featured quite prominently. Peter Ryan, who was a resident of the Mission village, was about 90 years

²⁰⁵ Jim Taylor , personal interview Sept 8, 2014

old when interviewed by John Must for a 1959 documentary on Metlakatla.²⁰⁶ The excerpt used in *The Foam on the Water* is significant because Peter Ryan takes credit for the placement of the railway terminus at Tuck Inlet, and the eventual location of Prince Rupert. Ryan explained that two surveyors came to him while he was working as a carpenter in Vancouver and they asked him, as a North Coast resident, what he thought of the harbor at Port Simpson. He replied that a deep water and sheltered site was on the eastern side of the Tsimshian peninsula, and there were even two lakes for fresh water nearby. According to Ryan, “They took to it right away” and eventually paid the Metlakatla people for the use of the site.²⁰⁷ Since Peter Ryan died in January of 1960, it is likely that John Must only interviewed him once – and included his comments in two different programs. Must does not challenge Ryan’s contentions, other than to ask why the rail company paid the people of Metlakatla, to which Ryan replied, “for the townsite.”²⁰⁸

Even though First Nations voices are not often included in Must’s program, he did include an excerpt from a 1959 interview with the North Coast Indian Agent, R. H. Sampson who commented on First Nation contributions to Prince Rupert economy during the fishing season and their ‘traditional’ arts and crafts. Sampson spoke sympathetically about some of the contemporary issues faced by Indigenous people at the time, but again Indigenous voices are largely missing from *The Foam on the Water*.

²⁰⁶ *The Story of Metlakatla*, CBC/CFPR Archives tape 170, CD, 65 cut 3 (Airdate 1959).

²⁰⁷ “*The Foam on the Water*.” Ibid. (1960) Historian Frank Lenoard looks at this transaction extensively in *Thousand Blunders* (UBC Press, 1996): 38-46. However he states that “about the negotiations with the band itself, little has survived.” (41)

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

Historian Kerry Abel suggests that “cultural history” has “not been given due consideration in the task of trying to explain regional or national development.”²⁰⁹ It is not logical then to disassociate John Must’s *The Foam on the Water* from the temporal and political dynamics of northern British Columbia. Rapid growth was underway including both public and private ventures such as new railways and highways, dams and other forestry and mining activities. Most BC historians tend to focus solely on the resource and infrastructure developments of the W.A.C. Bennett era. Scholar Mia Riemers’ 2007 dissertation examined the BC centennial celebrations of 1958, 1961 and 1971 and describes the cultural trends—many unique to BC in this period—that emerged in this time of “province building.”²¹⁰ As Riemers’ research illustrated, there was a corresponding upswing in municipal cultural infrastructure as the BC “government served as cultural producer; in order to inculcate development-oriented values, it drew upon a limited (and sometimes fictional) representations of the past.”²¹¹

This large scale investment instilled a cohesive provincial identity and also greater local and regional pride in British Columbians that was not so visible before. Libraries, parks and museums were created and renovated and, with this cultural infrastructure, came a transformation towards celebrating a more locally constructed cultural identity. John Must’s documentary fit perfectly into the provincial celebrations that had become commonplace throughout the province, as well as the popular centennial celebrations rolled out across the country, culminating in the national commemorations in

²⁰⁹ Kerry Abel, *Changing Places: History, Community and Identity in Northeastern Ontario*. Montreal – Kingston, McGill Queens University Press, 2006.

²¹⁰ See Mia Riemers, “*BC at its most Sparkling, Colourful Best*”: *Post War Province Building through Centennial Celebrations*, (PhD Dissertation: U of Victoria, 2007).

²¹¹ Riemers, 258-59.

1967. As previously mentioned, John Must also drew heavily from the 1952 program, *Introducing Prince Rupert*, created by former Rupert resident, Robert Harlow. CBC Vancouver most likely commissioned this six-part series, and the work was possibly assigned to Harlow since he was from the region. In terms of style and experience, Harlow wrote and produced features for radio arts and dramas rather than the news-announcing department. This stemmed from his BA in English, and talent for creative writing. He later became the first chair of the creative writing program at University of British Columbia. As was John Must and Norman Newton, Harlow was also interested in the previous pioneering generation of British Columbians.

In his 1952 production, Harlow introduced former alderman and labour organizer George Casey with a personal anecdote of his first meeting with Casey eleven years earlier, when they both worked on the construction of a sea-plane base. Harlow reminisced: “He [Casey] was just over 60 then. “A hale and hearty Irishman with an Irish smile and a sharp tongue when injustice was done,”²¹² Harlow used his local connections to provide an intimate and insider’s view of the north coast city. There was a distinct home town feel that Harlow was actively promoting. In the 1952 recording Casey described his arrival in Prince Rupert in 1910 as a matter of survival, since he was desperate to find work as a carpenter. He had been “black listed” because of his “union affairs... in the Kootenays” and “had to procure employment and move out into the wilds.” Casey then described the difficulties of trade labourers in Prince Rupert, and one

²¹² “*Introducing Prince Rupert*,” CBC/CFPR, Tape 49 CD #20 cut 2, (originally produced by Robert Harlow producer) 1952, but rebroadcast or added to the CFPR audio collection in 1959. There is much discrepancy of the actual date of since the BC Archives has most of the six broadcasts and the date given in 1952. According to the information inside the CFPR tape box there is a requisition form sent to John Must from CBC Vancouver dated November 1959.

incident, which became known as the *Battle of Kelly's Cut*. Casey wrote a poem or ballad and recited a portion of it for Bob Harlow. Eight years later, John Must simply dubbed a copy of the Harlow's program and inserted Casey's recitation into his 1960 *The Foam on the Water*. Must thus reduced a significant event in North Coast labour history to a quaint ballad, as he did not include any of Casey's background information.

Since the creation of Prince Rupert in 1910, the city had experienced many economic hardships, especially after the demise of the Grand Trunk Pacific railway (GTP) in 1915. Both the timing of the First World War and more directly, the construction of the rival Canadian Northern Railway contributed to the failure of the railway, not just the death of Charles M. Hays as has been popularly portrayed. Although CBC producer John Must identified the railway magnate as the driving visionary behind the GTP and the success of Prince Rupert, he recognized the promotion by real estate speculators and 'boosters' (of which the GTP was one) of a "metropolis rivaling and even surpassing Vancouver further south along the coast."²¹³

In *The Foam on the Water*, John Must included old-timer Wiggs O'Neill, who contributed three separate anecdotes. In the first, O'Neill explains how the young women from Port Simpson were invited to attend a dance with railway workers. The second is his memory of the frenzied auction in Vancouver for Prince Rupert real estate and the rapid inflation of the cost of a small patch of rock or muskeg. O'Neill's final description focuses on the rivalry between the railway, levels of government and local newspapers, particularly the editor of the *Evening Empire* newspaper, John Houston. Houston's contentious character preceded him. When he shipped his printing press north in 1907,

²¹³ Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 3rd ed.(Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 2007) 193.

the GTP impounded it as a way to try to keep Houston quiet. The GTP refused to sell or lease Houston any property within the municipal boundary. Houston, not to be outdone, staked a mineral claim just outside of the city and surveyed lands to get around the manipulation of the GTP. He and a group of men then broke into the shipping storage to retrieve his press and he immediately published his scathing criticisms of the government and railway corruption.²¹⁴ These anecdotes were selected by John Must to add a rough and tumble pioneer nostalgia to his overall production, but still supported the thematic message of cautious optimism in Prince Rupert's economic future and its civic-minded population.

The thematic story that John Must pieced together underlines a narration of the hardships Prince Rupert citizens faced stemming from the broken promises of the railway expansion. John Must also celebrated the determination and ingenuity of people who streamed into Rupert following the "pioneer's dream." Must's narration and treatment of one major labour dispute during the construction of the city and railway was rather dismissive. He stated: "But as so often happens during boom era, there was dissatisfaction within the ranks of the labour force. This dissatisfaction eventually led to the infamous *Battle of Kelly's Cut*." Must's narrative style did not have room for a portrayal of the daily struggles experienced by the contract construction workers, many of whom did not readily speak English, to "make both ends meet," as recorded in the interview with George Casey.

The event that became known as *The Battle for Kelly's Cut* is covered in a sentimental overview with an excerpt and poem recitation by labour activist, and later

²¹⁴ "Foam on the Water" Ibid. (1960)

alderman, George Casey. It is important to remember, however, that John Must selected these sections from a much longer interview between Casey and Robert Harlow for his 1952 series, and the specific program, *Introducing Prince Rupert*. George Casey, who was a carpentry labourer at the time of city's early construction, provides listeners with an eye-witness explanation for why wages of 37.5 cents per hour were insufficient. This pay might have been sufficient if workers could work full time throughout the year, but actual construction time was limited due to rainy north coast weather. The cost of living in Prince Rupert was also extremely high. Many workers were in dire straits. According to Casey, the municipal council of 1911 supported an increase in minimum wage, but the individual contractors opposed it. Even though there was a labour shortage, the cost of living in Prince Rupert was so high that it was difficult to stretch the pay for sporadic work in order to provide a decent living.²¹⁵

Historian Frank Leonard discusses the wage dispute and labour unrest extensively, based on diverse primary sources including government documents, newspapers and private correspondence from the GTP officials, but George Casey's emotional memories are heard only through the audio recording, making the past a very personal one. Conversely, in *The Foam on the Water* this event, a major labour incident, is given three minutes of audio time, and contained the memory and poem of a single senior citizen. John Must's choice of sound and voice was meant to enhance his historical narrative which was not solely focused on regional labour history. As John Must explained in his opening narration, this was to be an audio program of a 'typical'

²¹⁵ Ibid. 1960. In the audio recording Casey described how the labour leaders were rounded up in Prince Rupert and after a short trial, several were sentenced to three years in jail. Casey claimed that he organized support for the workers and at BC Federation of labour gathering in Victoria where the group lobbied for their release.

Canadian town but it still had to be a story that people would listen to. This once again illustrates the power of the audio producer in constructing and rendering a version of Canadian history that leans towards an interesting story rather than factual events. To be a successful production, the needs of the larger southern audience also had to be considered, and Must had to find a way to construct a quintessential Canadian identity out of the limited supply of pre-recorded options.

The Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railways were nationalized shortly after the First World War and there remained little economic activity in Prince Rupert beyond a fishing industry, a fact noted by resident and former CBC station manager, Clarence Insulander.²¹⁶ Even though the prices for grain were soaring and wheat exports were high in the mid-1920s, Prince Rupert, as John Must surmised, was relegated “into the backwash of Government thinking. The only crumb thrown to the town was a grain elevator built in the [late] 1920s.”²¹⁷ It opened just before the crash of the stock market of 1929. Resident Bob Mackay stated that the grain elevator became another “white elephant” for Prince Rupert, a city that continued to struggle financially.

John Must featured two female voices in *The Foam on the Water* to describe Prince Rupert of the 1940s. They were Lorna Arnold, Canadian Woman of the Year and the first female mayor of Prince Rupert, and Jocelyn Bolton, who commented on the social frenzy and more glamorous effects of the Second World War on Prince Rupert. In contrast, during most of the Great Depression, the City of Prince Rupert was in “receivership.” As Arnold described, “from 1932 to 1942...we were ruled with a pretty rigid hand. We needed it and it got us out of the hole. But ah, by 1942 we began to get

²¹⁶ “Clarence Insulander” Dick Gordon, Interview recorded April 1982.

²¹⁷ “Foam on the Water,” CBC/CFPR archives tape 210, CD 90 (Airdate Feb. 1960)

pretty restive about it. We were fighting wars against dictators and we figured we had one right here in Prince Rupert.” Arnold was first elected in 1943 as an alderman when the municipal council was reinstated; she was later elected mayor after 1946.²¹⁸

As he continued his narration, John Must described the “death-like calm [that] had settled over the city” in the 1930s, which evaporated with “another Boom era” of the Second World War. The addition of American and Canadian armed forces tripled the population in a matter of weeks. Here, at last was the shot in the arm that contributed materially to the city’s recovery – although Jocelyn Bolton referred to Prince Rupert at the time as a “mad house” with the influx of over 10,000 servicemen, some with their families. She described the rapid growth and business of the military work force:

You couldn’t get into a shop or a meal, it really was a mad house on the streets the whole time... Socially it was very gay indeed. ...The Americans have a marvelous club here... the most attractive and smart club on this continent. And you needed two or three evening dresses, believe me, in those days.²¹⁹

A listener to this portion of *The Foam on the Water*, might see Bolton’s comments as shallow or flippant in the face of life during a time of war. John Must, however, continued to underline the benefits of local infrastructure brought about by the Second World War, rather than viewing the war through the lens of the lives lost or sacrifices made by the locals who went overseas. He also did not comment on the social or environmental impacts of these projects on the Northwest Coast. He referred to the construction of regional airfields throughout the North, a road between Terrace and the coast, and buildings in Prince Rupert and Port Edward that were converted into hospitals and apartments. Must declared “the greatest peace-time conversion however, was the

²¹⁸ See Chapter Three for detailed discussion on Nora Arnold as political figure and female role model.

²¹⁹ “Foam on the Water,” Ibid. (1960)

purchase of the Watson Island military establishments by the Columbia Cellulose Company.”²²⁰ This occurred shortly after the war, and the pulp mill officially opened in 1951. The industrial development of the provincial north (at least pulp and paper) was portrayed as a savior of the Northwest from the whims of railway speculation, and Must asked his audience to “imagine what this industry alone has done to stabilize the economy of Prince Rupert.”²²¹ Must then concluded the historical section with the following segue: “No longer is the foam on the waters of the harbour created by ships of war – but ships of peace – the gillnetters and seiners that fish and bring back their cargo for marketing to Prince Rupert- the world’s Halibut Capital.”

Although the fishing industry was the largest single employer for many years, the city came into existence mostly through speculation as the terminus for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. John Must consistently returned to this theme of cautious economic optimism several times in *The Foam on the Water*, most pointedly in his concluding remarks of the historical portion of this documentary: “Prince Rupert’s history” teaches us “it is safer to contemplate than to speculate.” And, by 1960, the city was one of “quiet, unexcited stability...Relatively isolated, still a pioneer’s city – and pioneer’s dream.”²²²

In the last 20 minutes of *The Foam on the Water*, John Must continued his salute to Prince Rupert’s Jubilee (1960) with a look at contemporary city life. He began with a short interview on recreational and cultural activities such as the Alaska Music Trail, a source of civic pride. John Must also included a short stretcher of the voices of European newcomers, who were all men. According to both the audio recording and the show script

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ John Must, *Foam on the Water* (Show script) See original CBC/CFPR archives tape box 170 (1960), page 9.

²²² *Foam on the Water* (original show script) from tape box 170, John Must, CBC radio archives

found in the box containing the recording, Must then stated “Yes, the accents are many and varied – but the least foreign is the accents of the Tsimpsean [sic] Indian. ... The Natives, as a matter of fact make up five per cent of the Prince Rupert population.”²²³ There is a short excerpt from the *Rupert Night* program in which former Prince Rupert residents, such as two sisters who sent their “hellos” to their parents, and former Boy Scout volunteer Gordie Dogindorph who sends his greetings to “all the little cubs and their leaders.” John Must stated that *Rupert Night* was an “annual occasion” held in Vancouver for all those former Rupertites to “meet together ‘down south’ to recall their happy associations [from] ‘up north’ as they say.” He included *Rupert Night* in his program *The Foam on the Water* to illustrate the ‘comradeship’ found in the northern community. This localized northern identity was implicitly bound up with friendship and stalwart anticipation of waiting for better times in the future. In his concluding excerpt John Must returned his wider theme of Prince Rupert as a northern town within the much larger country of Canada, but adding comments from then Prime Minister.

“We know that Prince Rupert is the coastal outlet and railhead for the North –and in the words of Prime Minister Diefenbaker – the North is the future of Canada.” Diefenbaker’s comments are significant because he addresses the audience as northerners – and how this is the time for a northern vision to inspire Canadians with a new “pride in their country.” It is not clear if Diefenbaker gave this speech in Prince Rupert, but it is consistent with the Progressive Conservative 1958 federal election campaign message of the northern vision that roused and moved Canadians in great measure.²²⁴ Diefenbaker’s

²²³ *Foam on the water* script, document found in tape box, page 9

²²⁴ Denis Smith, “DIEFENBAKER, JOHN GEORGE,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 20, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed August 2, 2016,

astounding success in the first two years (1957-59) fit a newer post-war model of Canadian nationalism: a new mantra for northern construction. Diefenbaker himself commented that this “northern vision” was an exercise in building a new direction for Canadian ideals in conjunction with an economic one. In his memoir he wrote

In emphasizing the question of northern development and northern visions, I advocated a twentieth-century equivalent to Sir John A Macdonald’s national policy, a uniquely Canadian dream ... Certainly if any political leader in our history was ever amenable to a coherent and comprehensive proposal for northern development, it was I.²²⁵

Historical geographer Graeme Wynn made it clear that the Conservatives’ plans were not easily achieved: “Delivering on these grand designs proved more difficult than formulating them.”²²⁶ The difficulties in executing these impressive policies had not yet come to pass in 1960 when John Must compiled and produced his narrative history *The Foam on the Water*. Even so, the perceived national obstacles standing in the way of northern development were not felt in the BC provincial north because BC Premier, W.A.C. Bennett and his cabinet ministers had their own visions for the rural northern regions. The Social Credit government encouraged industrial development of the north through private enterprise, particularly in forest and mining sectors. Capital investment in these industries from United States business were not factored in Diefenbaker’s Canadian northern vision and although the expansion of highways in the north was clearly a public works goal that he shared with Diefenbaker, Bennett made sure he got

See http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/diefenbaker_john_george_20E.html. See also, Smith *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1997).

See also Arthur Slade, *Appointment with Destiny: John Diefenbaker* (Lantzville, BC: XYZ Publishing 2001).

²²⁵ John G. Diefenbaker, *One Canada: Memoires of the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker. The Years of Achievement 1957-62*, (Toronto: McMillan, 1976), 11-13.

²²⁶ Graeme Wynn, *Canada and the Arctic North America: An Environmental History*, Nature and Human Societies series, (Santa Barbara Cal.: ABC- Clio, 2007) 315.

credit for public projects. As noted by Jean Barman, Social Credit's "relations with the federal government were never cordial."²²⁷

W.A.C. Bennett, and interestingly enough, Frank Howard, who was the elected Member of Parliament for the Skeena riding for almost 20 years and a member of the CCF/NDP, were not included in *The Foam on the Water*. Logically this could be because John Must's program set out to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the City of Prince Rupert, to foster a local civic pride and cautious optimism, but also to frame the northern city's history within the context of a wider Canadian narrative, rather than strictly a British Columbian perspective. In this way, John Must's personal choices in interviews and incorporating of past audio productions provide an opportunity to see inner workings of the construction of a national storyline that meshed with a local historical narrative.

Framing Prince Rupert as warm community or as "mover and shaker" of postwar Canada, Must's *Foam on the Water* has historical significance in another sense. Editorial and production choices put producers and announcers in an important position of control, especially in small facilities such as the CBC station in Prince Rupert. The local historical knowledge by experts such as Dr. Large were used and later reused by radio producers, and as such, reinforced Large's standing as the sole authority of later historical narratives. While John Must's narrative provides a glimpse into the story he wants to tell, researchers are unable to discern how his own background and personal narrative also contributed to the story he was creating. This is one of the problematic issues with relying on audio records alone to understand the historical content. Researchers must examine the personal back stories of the producers and creators of these audio narratives.

²²⁷ Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia 3rd ed.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 298.

Indeed, that these recorded narratives survived in the first place is noteworthy. It is obvious that John Must promoted Prince Rupert's regional history with an eye towards its successful future. The voices he chose to represent the locals were selective, but at least he attempted to incorporate numerous voices. By trying to represent Prince Rupert as a typical Canadian city for a national CBC audience, John Must actually achieved the opposite: he showed that Prince Rupert was unique in its location, history and composition, a perspective the locals would have most heartily endorsed. In the next chapter the voices of women will be featured to illustrate how they, too, were present and active on air, often in contrast to messages and standards of the national CBC.

Chapter Three: Beyond *Club Corner*: Women's Voices in Northern British Columbia

The CBC radio archive collection housed at the City of Prince Rupert and regional archives can bring the past alive with a sense of intimacy and clarity. However, when researchers examine the collection in its entirety, it is easy to make the assumption that men were the only staff members or on-air personalities working in broadcasting in northern BC. The voices of women, although limited in the collection, still provide challenging insights for historians to rethink long held assumptions about the role of women as mothers, media professionals, bread winners, and even politicians in Prince Rupert and Northwest BC more generally. The major social and economic shifts of the 1960s and 1970s changed the political and cultural nature of all regions of Canada. All have a stake in how the histories of these regions are presented. This chapter features the voices of women from the CBC/CFPR to help Canadians rethink the lives of women in Northwest British Columbia.

These women, in their own words, articulate views and issues relevant to the North, but also show how the medium of radio was a powerful force in their lives during a time of rapid change. Women were not only listeners and consumers of radio, but they were producers, writers and performers, bringing varied and often creative radio content to the airwaves. Women wanted to entertain, inform and sometimes just to reach out to other women across the country, often in the face of misogynist opposition from CBC management both nationally and locally. Although societal norms of this era insisted that women were relegated to the private sphere: as listeners in the home – not behind the microphone and definitely not as voice of authority in the public arena.

During a round table interview in December of 1966, Will Hankinson described the expansion of his private announcer school, the Canadian Institute of Speech (CIS), in Prince Rupert. In the recording of the interview, Hankinson was asked several questions by CFPR employees about the quality of instruction, pre-requisites, course content and costs. Hankinson's responses reflect a personal arrogance that many former staff members complained about, and that eventually cost Hankinson his job a few years later.²²⁸ At one point, longtime secretary and ad sales representative Mary Bird, asked Hankinson, "what about the young ladies?" Were they allowed to enroll in the courses? To which Hankinson went so far as to assert that it was "better to have women listeners and women [would] not listen to women announcers."²²⁹

Hankinson added that women could certainly take a course or two, but he did not want women to get their hopes up that they would be hired as staff announcers.²³⁰ There are many assumptions that one might make about the cultural and historical contexts that generated Hankinson's statement, but in remote areas during the post war period women were, integral to the broadcast industry, particularly in remotes areas in the post war period. Some programs were produced by women were created for women as the primary listening audience. Hankinson's contentious remarks might come off as explicitly sexist, but he was reflecting the predominant corporate view, and the national standard of the

²²⁸ Personal interviews with former announcers Craig Oliver, Murray Hannah, Jim Taylor all confirmed that William Hankinson had a dictatorial style as well. They also expressed how the staff was treated and were expected to take courses at Hankinson's Canadian Institute of Speech if they wanted to advance from the night shift to day shifts on air at CFPR. Christine deBoer said that even after her husband Ray deBoer was brought in to replace Hankinson in 1968, Will Hankinson continued to try and exert influence on CFPR programming and promote the CIS as his personal project. Christine deBoer, personal telephone interview (February, 2015).

²²⁹ "Announcer school interview" CBC/CFPR Archives, tape 141 track 2, CD 53, track 3 (recorded December 1966).

²³⁰ Ibid.

CBC at the time. Despite the limited local programming that was produced at CFPR during the 1960s there is evidence that a few women were both behind the microphone and in front of it as guests for interviews, performers in locally produced radio dramas, sales and marketing promotions, and especially for programs targeted for female listeners such as *Club Corner*.

The well recognized Canadian political journalist Craig Oliver grew up in Prince Rupert and started his broadcasting career at CFPR. According to Oliver, Will Hankinson's statement was not just consistent with national CBC policy, but also reflected his personal distrust of women. "Hank was a real son-of-a-bitch, he really was... [but] at the time, officially the CBC didn't have women announcers and no 'newsmen...' If you don't mind me saying that word."²³¹ Clearly then, the limitations of female voices on air were externally mandated, but they were variably enforced on a local level. In other professions as well, there appears to have been more opportunity for northern women (at least those with a high school education) to find professional, service-based employment, often without even looking for it. Long-time resident Marge Ciccone stated that she was sometimes stopped on the street by acquaintances and business people who were in need of employees.²³² Marge Ciccone was a CFPR contemporary of Craig Oliver, the hostess of *Club Corner*, and the voice of comedic character 'Miss Inane Air,' whose witty monologues were featured in the variety program *Talk of the Town*. Ciccone agreed that the lack of women announcers was a corporate policy, and stated that Hankinson was "a misogynist if ever there was one."²³³

²³¹ Craig Oliver, personal telephone interview, (Feb. 15, 2015).

²³² Marge Ciccone, personal telephone interview, (April 1, 2015)

²³³ Ciccone, Ibid.

The following discussion reviews some of the female voices of the 1960s and shows how most of the content actually illustrates a contemporary, female-centric and a more cosmopolitan view than what may be expected of a rural radio station on the Pacific North Coast by CBC management in the larger centres. The few female voices of the CBC/CFPR radio archive, when assessed chronologically, underline a growing liberal feminism and social changes of the 1960s in the content of the airwaves and in how some of the local listeners responded. By the mid-1970s gender equity issues were brought to the fore on a national level in the corporation, but women had worked around these barriers for years, creatively voicing their concerns on a local level.

Even though women were not hired as staff announcers, (a corporate policy until the mid 1970s) scholars should not dismiss these female voices as filler or fluff of the airwaves. In some of the earlier gender critiques, these studies focused on the employment statistics for males and females to illustrate the inequities and media gender biases. Scholar Margaret Gallagher reflected that in late 1970s and early 1980s “there was a good deal of counting going on.” Gallagher also noted “when we look back we can see that this field [of feminist media scholarship] has always combined a critical edge with a creative disposition and a political motivation.”²³⁴

Later cultural analysis shifted to include content of reporting and biases of individual stories and representations of women’s issues. This was certainly a reflection of the rise of more direct action of women in the public sphere, but second wave feminist scholarship did little to lift up the importance of radio ‘women’s programming’ as having

²³⁴ Margaret Gallagher, “The Push and Pull of Action and Research in Feminist Media Studies.” *Feminist Media Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2001 (11). This was the feature and retrospective article in the new journal.

a valuable role in the establishment of women in the broadcast profession, or early consciousness raising of topical gender equity issues.

The limited nature of archival sources of women's voices also defines the kind of research that can be conducted. The CFPR audio archive, with an estimated ten per cent of content including women's voices, illustrates this point.²³⁵ However, to focus on a strictly quantitative approach, where the number of female voices becomes the sole academic focus, diminishes the personal and unique qualities of each female voice. As broadcaster/historian Barbara Freeman's 2011 biographical study of an early female journalist and producer, Elizabeth Long reveals, "Historical sources on Elizabeth Long are relatively rare and scattered amongst various collections, but it has been possible to reconstruct her efforts using recorded interviews and archived documents, including her own brief memoir."²³⁶ Again, this highlights a method by which oral histories or interviews with female broadcasters can provide details and emotions and personal contexts not found in the radio archives.

Jean Bruce's 1981 oral history project was one of the first to record the memories of twelve female CBC staff members working in "talks" (later current affairs) programs from the Second World War until 1971. Bruce was commissioned by the federal ministry of the Status of Women, and the National Archives Sound division to document "key figures in the Talks Department in the 1940's and 1950's were women... the purpose was to trace their contribution to Talks and Public Affairs radio programmed from 1938 to

²³⁵ This is an estimation based on the number of tapes (290) and roughly the percentage where women's voices are featured as guests, hosts or other air talent.

²³⁶ Barbara Freeman, "We were ONLY WOMEN: Elizabeth Long, Equality Feminism and CBC Radio, 1938-1956." *In Beyond Bylines* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2011), 94.

1971, when major changes were made in the radio programmed schedule.”²³⁷ Most of the women featured in Bruce’s study had been hired as temporary workers, filling in for male staff members on assignment during World War Two. Many stayed on – sometimes as freelancers or temporary employees, particularly the married women- for several years. The interviews conducted by Bruce remain accessible to researchers through the sound division of the Library and Archives Canada, a substantial audio archive that appears to be underutilized, because historians still prefer written documentation over audio recordings.²³⁸

Historian Mary Vipond has been instrumental in Canadian media historical studies, but her early work ²³⁹ focused on the 1920s and the political climate that led to the formation of the CRB, then later the CBC. The role of women as either listeners or broadcasters is not a theme that Vipond addresses directly in her research. Instead her earlier work focused on the CBC’s roots as a distinct public broadcaster that bucked the trend of larger North American corporate print and broadcasting media in which free enterprise and advertising drove and became concentrated into a few national networks.²⁴⁰

Feminist scholarship by sociologists or communications studies scholars has focused predominantly on issues of gender in the portrayal of women in the media through sexualized images in advertising, as well as on stereotypical depictions of

²³⁷ Jean Bruce, “Women in CBC Radio Talks and Current Affairs.” Canadian Oral History Association, *Journal* 5, 1 (1981-2) 7-18.

²³⁸ For example *Canadian Women: A History 3rd ed.* by Gail Cuthbert Grant et al. (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2011) only mentions radio once and strictly as a broadcasting medium that reached female listeners in the home. (283) There is no discussion of women in the CBC at all.

²³⁹ Mary Vipond, *Listening In: The First Decade of Canadian Broadcasting 1922-32* (Kingston Montreal: Queens-McGill University Press, 1992)

²⁴⁰ See Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada 2nd ed.* (Lormier, 1992), 43.

women that emphasize a domestic role as wife and mother rather than a worker or breadwinner. When women were behind the microphone, even in a regional station like CFPR, they were able to promote their personal interests on air, and for a few commence careers in broadcasting and public office. For these few, becoming an on-air personality or working in the ads sales or administrative roles contributed economically to the household but also gave these women local prestige and a certain amount of power.. When historians, cultural critics, or even present day veteran broadcasters frame the female voices of the 1960s within the context of a gendered binary, the potency and value that women placed on these programs is lost.

These factors provide a foundational background to the featured voices and the content of female representations in the CFPR audio archives. When the scholarly work investigated gender issues on air, the comparison between Canada and the United States remains predominant. As noted by former broadcaster and academic Barbara Freeman, there are few studies have that focused on female voices and experiences solely within a Canadian context because, as Freeman writes: “The Canadian experience was very different from an American one on which so many media studies of this period are based.”²⁴¹

Valerie Korinek’s work on *Chatelaine* magazine provides a careful parallel that Freeman utilizes. Korinek analyzes editions of this iconic Canadian women’s magazine, and looks at not only editorials and feature writing and advertising but also drew on reader comments and letters looking for “resistance to corporate and commercial

²⁴¹ Barbara Freeman, *The Satellite Sex; The Media and Women’s Issues in English Canada, 1966-1971*, Waterloo: WLU Press, 2001.

intent.”²⁴² Korinek successfully illustrates how *Chatelaine* “created a community of readers, writers and editors who explored the changing nature of women’s lives.”²⁴³ This community and women’s club atmosphere certainly contributed to the rapid success of *Chatelaine*, at the same time that American publications were folding due to a decline in readership.²⁴⁴

Women developed several strategies to fight isolation in all aspects of their daily lives and not only in suburbia. For female listeners, particularly women working in the home, the regional isolation of northern BC magnified the need for a sense of community, as British newcomer Christine DeBoer found out in 1968. DeBoer was a surgical nurse in London before she met and married Ray DeBoer. She arrived in the early winter of 1968, pregnant with their first child. The family arrived in Prince Rupert direct from the UK and to DeBoer, CFPR and CBC more generally, provided a “vital service that without it, they would be, (the people) would have nothing.” She explained that she “got everything I could get from it... I don’t know what I would have done without it personally. Because it was a – something into the world beyond Prince Rupert.” As a young professional woman transitioning to a new country and a new role as a stay at home mom, the CBC service provided much needed connection to the wider world.²⁴⁵

Although Prince Rupert was a remote place at the time, some women there were at the forefront of early post war social change and prompted direct community

²⁴² Valerie Korinek, *Roughing It In the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*, (Toronto: U of T Press, 2000), 19.

²⁴³ Korinek, 366.

²⁴⁴ Korinek, 4.

²⁴⁵ Christine deBoer, personal telephone interview, Feb. 19th 2015.

involvement. Nora Arnold, for example, was a dynamic community leader in the north coast city in the mid 1940s. In a 1952 CBC interview with Bob Harlow, Arnold explained that she was elected to position of alderman in 1943, and then in 1947 a ‘deputation of business men’ asked Arnold to run for mayor. She was given the “tremendous honour” of Canada’s Woman of the Year by the Federation of Business and Professional Women’s clubs. Younger women saw Nora Arnold’s success as a role model for their own political aspirations. Iona Campagnolo, who went on to become a Member of Parliament and a cabinet minister, and later Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, remembered going to the train station with her friends to witness Arnold’s return from Winnipeg after receiving the award. Campagnolo said it was a very powerful experience to see Arnold wearing a hat and a fancy fur coat and all these businessmen calling out “Your Worship.”²⁴⁶ In a 1952 interview, Bob Harlow asked if women should be in politics, to which Nora Arnold responded

I certainly think they should, particularly in city government because a woman is so close to the home and she knows what is needed and what is necessary, and women also, they... are conscientious. Most of them are not jockeying for political power. They’re there to do a job and I have always found that women are impatient and [are in office] to get things done. Things started and finished.²⁴⁷

Nora Arnold’s contention that women were committed workers and impatient to see results provides another clear view of women of the 1950s as self-confident and capable citizens working in the public sphere. Arnold believed that women should have a greater role in public office, because of their experience as homemakers and the knowledge and expertise they brought from the domestic sphere. In other northern media

²⁴⁶ Iona Campagnolo, personal telephone interview, May 5, 2015

²⁴⁷ Robert Harlow, *Introducing Prince Rupert*, CBC/CFPR Archives, tape 72, CD 28 track 2 (Airdate est.1952)

outlets, particularly newspapers, women were also active as publishers and editors. The *Terrace Omineca Herald*, for example, was run by Katherine Fraser in the 1950s and 1960s, and for many years the editor was Ruth Hallock, a fact that shows that women had a direct hand in the editorial content and publishing responsibilities in regional print media.²⁴⁸

Further in the interview with Nora Arnold, interviewer Bob Harlow naively commented that maybe men in local politics would be at a disadvantage by having to be polite to women. Nora Arnold cleared that misconception up right away with a feisty reply: “Not in the least. Don’t you ever think it! Never as long as I was mayor or alderman did any of the men feel they [had] to restrict their language. And sometimes we got into very heated arguments and they never once felt they were at a disadvantage because I was there.”²⁴⁹

The voice of Marge Ciccone, as hostess of the program *Club Corner* and the comedic character identified as Miss Inane Air, shows that an identifiable liberal feminist understanding was certainly present amongst some northern women several years before an organized feminist (second wave) movement. Marge Ciccone stated “Yes I was a feminist then, but I wouldn’t call myself one now.”²⁵⁰ One monologue by Ciccone’s character of Miss Inane Air made some wry comments about advertising targeting women to lose weight:²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ Katherine Fraser was co-publisher with her husband Tom, but took over the paper after he died in October of 1959 after a sudden illness. (BC death registration # 1959-09-012009). Fraser later remarried a man with the last name Spencer. See also Imbert Orchard interview with Fraser-Spencer from 1962. BC archives sound recordings division AAAB1375 (Date circa,1962).

²⁴⁹ Harlow, Ibid. 1952

²⁵⁰ Marge Ciccone, personal telephone interview, April 8 2015.

²⁵¹ Miss Inane Air, “Talk of the Town” CBC/CFPR Archives, CD 101 track 1, (Airdate 1960?)

For example, one would be confronted by a full page, brilliant coloured picture of a gaunt young blonde in a Dior creation, who has just won the annual jiggle off award for changing herself from that, ... that picture on the lower left That she claims is not her grandmother at all – but she herself before jiggle off. Under the [picture] gaunt blonde are written encouraging slogans such as, “Your husband won’t know you.” This is encouraging? “There are some many wonderful things to do when you’re slim.” Like how’s starving for a start?!

It all sounds very simple and fast. However we find upon investigation that before our friend is transformed into willowy glamour there will be a slight interlude of small sacrifices. AFTER is supposed to be worth it. And, the ad assures you, “It can be fun.”

There will be just a few simple athletic endeavours, nothing that wouldn’t cripple Ingemar Johansson, and a new and thrilling experience in eating like say, living a year on a succulent diet of limp lettuce bolstered by the addition of 4 teaspoons of lightly salted curd.

I agree with the ads – this is bound to do something to you – if only to help you decide that Sophie Tucker and Kate Smith made out all right.

And well who’s to say that what is good enough for them, couldn’t be good enough for you!

In the 1950s Ciccone was a young married woman living in Prince Rupert. She remarked that the standard Canadian expectation was that women were to leave the work force after they got married. In Prince Rupert, however, there was much more opportunity for women to be active in the work force. She said that in comparison to other northern communities of Terrace or Smithers, Prince Rupert citizens came from diverse ethnic backgrounds, “a multicultural, totally egalitarian community.” Marg Ciccone’s comments reflect more a wishful thinking and selective representation, since although Prince Rupert prided itself on its diverse population there were significant class and social boundaries.

On the point of equality amongst the citizens of Prince Rupert, newcomer Christine DeBoer had the opposite opinion: there was definitely a small group of the

upper class professionals—lawyers, city councilors and small businesses who considered themselves to be the “establishment” of Prince Rupert, and who treated the First Nations citizens very poorly.²⁵² DeBoer was appalled by the blatant racism and hypocrisy she saw in the community, particularly with legal issues. If a newcomer to the community wanted fair legal representation s/he would have to get a lawyer from out of town. The cultural diversity of Prince Rupert, however, would prove to be life-changing for Christine DeBoer, since after her family left the north coast, she returned to university for a degree in anthropology.²⁵³



²⁵² Christine deBoer, Ibid. February 2015.

²⁵³ deBoer, Ibid.

From Marge Ciccone's point of view as a long-time resident of northern BC, Prince Rupert was more progressive than Terrace or other northern BC towns. Ciccone commented that, like Nora Arnold, women were more active politically in Prince Rupert, and that the first federal female Cabinet Minister Ellen Fairclough, who was appointed during the era of John Diefenbaker, also made an impression on her during her freelance days at CFPR and later in Australia, providing points of national comparison.²⁵⁴

John Must was a family friend and Marg Ciccone's contact at the radio station; he later became her producer. Between 1959 to 1961, Must produced several half-hour episodes of a program called *Talk of the Town* that featured local stories, interviews with visiting dignitaries and old timers. The show should not be considered newsy or current affairs (although it might cover contemporary topics), but was meant to be light-hearted entertainment. Of the six editions of *Talk of the Town* programs in the CBC/CFPR collection, four shows concluded with a humorous monologue featuring a female character known only as Miss Inane Air, a northern BC version of the silly yet endearing female voice perhaps modeled on American comedienne Gracie Allen. In the late 1930s and 1940s Allen, in partnership with her husband George Burns, became leading radio personalities. Leah Lowe suggests that Allen's talent and "comic persona" required precision and skill since radio performance (unlike cinema) "radio performance depends on sound and language as the means of representation and is devoid visual context ... On the radio, Gracie is a voice in monologue, dialogue, or song, rather than a physical body."²⁵⁵ Although she does not remember portraying that character, Marge Ciccone

²⁵⁴ Ciccone, Ibid. (April, 2015)

Leah Lowe, " 'If the Country is Going Gracie, So Can You': Gender Representation In Gracie Allen's Radio Comedy," in Susan M Squier (ed) *Communities of the Air: Radio Century, Radio Culture*. (Durham:

listened to one monologue and commented that the voice and writing was “actually very good.”²⁵⁶ Miss Inane Air always appeared near the end of the episode perhaps as a little “night cap,” and conclude the show on a lighthearted note.²⁵⁷

The four existing Miss Inane Air selections touch on diverse topics, but subjects that would have been part of daily conversation in Prince Rupert. The topics included Cold War relations between Canada and USSR, advertising that targeted women’s self image, books, and popular films and contemporary self-help phrases. For the latter program Miss Inane quipped

And of course there was that mean little one syllable word; *odd*.
Now for this unkind reference we have been able to supplant, with the help of the clinical vocabulary something not half so nasty.
As a matter of fact even a little bit glamorous.
Eccentric.
People, who in former times would have fought a duel with anyone who had referred to them as (pause) *odd*, don’t half mind being called eccentric.
It sort of puts them in the same league as Oscar Levant.
We do still use the word *odd*.
But only when it is accompanied by the word, *ball*.
Which gives us the less harsh, two syllable word *odd-ball*.
However I think that in polite conversation *eccentric* is still the favourite.
Yes, I think we do owe psychologists a hearty vote of thanks for all the pleasant terminology they have put at our disposal.
So if you would be completely modern in your conversation, always remember to catch yourself when you are about to use a bygone term.
And think of these newer, gentler ones: Your little boy is bad? No. He’s just repressed.
You’re afraid of the dark and snakes and water and dogs? You’re not a coward.
You’re just neurotic.
You find yourself crying over everything?
Don’t let anyone tell you, you are unhappy. You are just *frustrated*.
And if after employing all these pleasant new words:

Duke University Press, 2003): 239. A more detailed discussion of female radio comics in Canada is needed.

²⁵⁶ Further research is required regarding oral history methods, and the reactions of interview subjects have in listening to their own voices 50 years later. Craig Oliver, Jim Taylor and Marge Ciccone all seemed pleasantly surprised with the quality of production and of how good they actually were as announcers.

²⁵⁷ John Must producer, *Talk of the Town*, CD 101 track 1, Tape 257(?)

It still seems to you an unhappy coward with a very bad child, take heart, this is only 1960.

It took us a number of years to learn the words.

I sure we will soon learn what they mean.²⁵⁸

While these hardly seem topics for witty commentary, most listeners to *Talk of the Town* would have found them very humorous. Indeed, even present day listeners are surprised by how funny Miss Inane Air actually is,²⁵⁹ and ironically, not so inane (silly or stupid) at all. In this instance, then, studying the CFPR audio recordings reveals a playfulness and rebellious side to topical issues, and how at least one woman used humour around the corporate restrictions of women announcers (as mentioned by Will Hankinson) gently prodding public consciousness along the way.

As hostess of *Club Corner*, Ciccone's job was to find interesting people to interview and provide fun and entertaining bits of local information for predominantly local female listeners."²⁶⁰ On one occasion she spoke with Mrs. Valcemedes (sic) the "much traveled wife" of a ship's captain based in Greece. Ciccone first asked where she had traveled and then, following a lengthy reply, Ciccone asked her guest: "Did you wish that your husband had a nine to five job, and that you could have spent a normal married life in a home?" To which Valcemedes replied: "For saying the truth no because I am satisfied with my husband (sic) job, because, I enjoy being with him, and many time I was with him onboard you know." Ciccone's final question was if Mrs. Valcemedes was able to cook any meals on board ship since there was a hired cook, and a "standard menu." Mrs. Valcemedes confirmed that she could go down to the kitchen and the cook

²⁵⁸ "Talk of the Town," CBC/CFPR Archives tape 55, CD 59 track 3. (1960)

²⁵⁹ Some of these selections have been played in public and academic venues in northern BC over the past decade.

²⁶⁰ Assorted clips from "Club Corner" CBC/CFPR archives, Tape 271, CD #107 track 3, (Feb. 27 1961)

was a good person. Ciccone added a gendered ironic twist when she added, “He lets you go down into his kitchen does he?” “Yes, yes!” her guest replied. In her conclusion, Ciccone summed up by saying: “Well that was a conversation that makes the life of us stationary housewives seem rather dull.”²⁶¹

Marge Ciccone worked with the CBC as a freelance writer/broadcaster and not as a salaried staff member. This was a most likely a more positive experience for her since she was not under Will Hankinson’s direct authority. She had more freedom to produce topical items and to interview “interesting people” of her choosing. Ciccone said that she worked mostly with John Must at the Prince Rupert station as her program producer, so the few times Hankinson had anything to say, he would go through Must.

Besides working for programs in Prince Rupert, Marge Ciccone also wrote short stories for CBC national actor and producer John Drainie and was featured on the “women’s program,” as she called the radio show *TransCanada Matinee*. Ciccone was an on-air personality, and went on to write and produce freelance pieces for CBC while living in Australia in the early 1960s. She also produced commentaries for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) during the two years she lived there. Her work for the ABC was often about cultural differences between the two countries: Canadian attitudes and lifestyles in comparison to those of Australia.²⁶² Ciccone also said that she used a pseudonym in her writing to avoid attracting attention to her family when writing more topical or political content, although she could not recall what the name was.

The program *Club Corner* had other hostesses as well, and provides another important example of the role of local women in local business and radio advertising that

²⁶¹ “Club Corner” Ibid. (Feb. 27 1961)

²⁶² Marge Ciccone, (April 8, 2015)

have not been found any other CBC archive collection.²⁶³ What are most interesting in these short segments are the advertisements for a Prince Rupert clothing store. This identifies another gap in the historical studies of national radio -- the role of local advertising in subsidizing the interests and wages of regional staff. It is not known what the ad rates were at the time; nor is there any source material to explain what commission women or men might have earned or if there was a difference. This was one of the financial perks for Mary Bird, hired by Will Hankinson at CFPR as a temporary announcer/broadcaster in 1953, the same year he arrived to take over management of the Prince Rupert CBC station.

Mary Bird was interviewed in 1982 by CBC Prince Rupert announcer Jackie Czernin. Bird said the syndicated programs such as *Amos and Andy* would come in on large pre-recorded discs that took up a half hour of programming. "We would sell the whole half hour... We were sponsoring in those days." Bird continued:

That non-commercial business didn't start up until sometime after we were in the new building. [1968] It was after CFTK – CHTK came to town. And they were of course grabbing as many commercials as they could, and um, there just wasn't enough commercial business in town for two radio stations. And then the CBC decided to go out of commercial radio, and so we um didn't have any commercial office then. And that cut down a lot on the office work because when we were doing commercials, we were writing them and selling them and doing all the paper work for commercials.

... I had my own little stable of sponsors that I used to look after, everybody in the station did. We didn't have a sales manager or anything like that. Mr. Hankinson acted as sales manager. ... I sort of missed that.²⁶⁴

²⁶³ Fraser and Paine clothing spots were announced by Joan Hicks. It is not clear if Hicks was a CFPR staff member or worked for the clothing shop.

²⁶⁴ Jackie Czernin, "Interview with Mary Bird" CBC/CFPR archives, Tape 232, CD 97 track 1, (Recorded in 1982?)

Mary Bird's comments on her hiring are also instructive as it shows once again that Will Hankinson may have towed the corporate line of no women announcers in public, but privately he played favorites. Mary Bird explained

I started out in radio at Grand Prairie Alberta with CFTP, as an announcer/operator and that was quite a few years prior to that. [her 1953 hiring]. Mr. Hankinson was a little dubious about hiring a woman announcer, cause they didn't do that then." He said I could apply and along with the rest of them I would have to take my chances. Well as it happened I turned out to be the best I guess because they hired me, and I worked as a casual for a while, then I came on as summer relief while the regular announcers went on their holidays. And then after that, as a temporary employee for a short while... All in all...From April to the end of August and by then the job was finished. And ... I was out of a job. So I said I want the first announcer/operator that comes vacant and Mr. Hankinson said OK. So shortly after that there came an announcer/operator job open, and I applied for it, and Vancouver wouldn't confirm me because I was a female.²⁶⁵

Jackie Czernin exclaimed "No!" in surprise to Mary Bird's comment.

Mary Bird continued, "Yes ... So I didn't get back on the air, but Bill [Hankinson] persuaded me to come into the office, so I went into the office of November of '54 and I was there until '79 when I retired." The interview continued,

Czernin: So Mary Bird had her career spoiled mid-way because she was a female.

Bird: Yeah. Male chauvinist pigs! (laughs)

Czernin: What were your feelings?

Bird: Oh I was terribly disappointed at the time. And I wanted desperately to get back on the air, because that is what I was most interested in. But, ah there was no hope of it

²⁶⁵ Judy Maddren for example was hired as a reporter but women as staff announcers were not hired until 1975. "Former CBC Reporter to Give 'Last Lecture' April 06, 2010" in *Campus Bulletin* University of Guelph Website, http://www.uoguelph.ca/news/2010/04/former_cbc_repo.html The point here is in the larger centres the rules were much more enforced, where regional stations sometimes had to be more flexible with staffing requirements. For more on the CBC internal report, see *Women in the CBC: Report of the task force on the Status of Women*, (Katherine McIvor) (Toronto; CBC, 1975) Interestingly enough in at least one recording Katherine McIvor is mentioned at the beginning of the program airdate information by CFPR producer John Must (1960). There were women working in production even in larger centres in Toronto as well.

and so I took the job in the office and then gradually I got so busy in the office that I gave up any thoughts of announcing.

...After we got into the new building – I did few on-air bits on somebody else’s programs but ... they were just little things I did between jobs.²⁶⁶

Indeed, even long after more women were hired in the late 1970s and 1980s as news reporters and potential staff announcer/operators, they were encouraged to speak in the lower ranges of their natural speaking voice.²⁶⁷ Gender, power and voice pitch all came together to undermine a women’s chances of on-air advancement, specifically in news or current affairs. Mary Bird commented that in the short time she was a temporary announcer in 1954, she read the first newscast in Prince Rupert and that “everybody seemed to like [her] on the air, the people around town. They seemed to think that [she] had a good radio voice... .”²⁶⁸ To return to manager Will Hankinson’s initial comments, it is not possible say for certain why he stated that “women will not listen to women announcers,” but one possibility could be that he felt females lacked the deep voice of paternal authority. In Hankinson’s speech school, men were taught pronunciation and encouraged to make their voices deeper to sound more masculine on air. Staff announcer Jim Taylor said that when he started at CFPR he was a tenor and after a few years of taking courses with Hankinson, Taylor spoke more in the range of a baritone.²⁶⁹

As mentioned also by Mary Bird, private radio arrived in Terrace and Prince Rupert in the early 1960s, with CFTK radio and its affiliate in Prince Rupert. The private station was not restricted to who was behind the microphone but most of the time the radio

²⁶⁶ Czernin, Mary Bird, (1982?)

²⁶⁷ Based on my personal employment experience at CFPR as well as that of former CBC colleague and good friend Dina Von Hahn.

²⁶⁸ Czernin, Mary Bird (1982)

²⁶⁹ Jim Taylor personal interview (telephone), September 2014.

announcers were all men. By the late 1960s, the private station's manager J Frank Webber had expanded early television service to the northwest region with a broadcast studio in Terrace. National programs were sent to Terrace from Vancouver on videotape, and were always shown one week later than in southern urban centres.²⁷⁰

Newcomer Christine DeBoer considered the video delay annoying, but as women often did, she found a way to work the limitations to her advantage and became familiar with Canadian political players of the day. She said she would listen to the CBC radio news for daily stories, and then looked forward to the TV report, complete with visuals, a week later.²⁷¹ Another Prince Rupert citizen was Iona Campagnolo, who was an employee with the private station in Rupert and a single parent who would go on to federal politics in the early 1970s.²⁷² She was an avid performer and director in a local drama club and played was the character “Montana Lou” in the locally produced radio play *Fantasy, Flight and Feathers* recorded in July of 1972.²⁷³

Iona Campagnolo stated that she was trained by Will Hankinson in speech arts through the Athostenes Club, and later the Canadian Institute of Speech. However, the atmosphere at the private station was much more sociable and more pleasant place than the “stuffy” CFPR. Campagnolo said that Skeena Broadcasters was just “like WKRP” fictional radio station in Cincinnati Ohio featured in a 1980s television sitcom. .It was a lively and upbeat place to work. In those days she said it was mostly “rip and read,” referring to the practice of simply taking content from the national wire service and

²⁷⁰ Christine de Boer, personal interview, Feb. 19, 2015.

²⁷¹ Ibid. Christine de Boer described the first federal/provincial premiers meeting held in Victoria, with the Trudeau government. The proceedings were carried live on radio, and then broadcast on CBC TV.

Stations like CFTK had to wait a week before receiving and then broadcasting the TV special a week later.

²⁷² UNBC Archives, special collections Iona Campagnolo fonds, biographical information.

²⁷³ CBC/CFPR archives, Tapes 174-75, CD 68 cuts 1-3 (July 29, 1972)

reading it on air. However, Campagnolo developed her own program style and expanded the content of her show from women's issues to more topical and political content, interviewing popular or notable guests. The program, titled "Ladies First," was a ten minute segment that aired five days a week.²⁷⁴ Campagnolo was selected as BC Broadcaster of the Year in 1973 – two years before the CBC formally released a report on the status of women employees and changed its formal position on appointing women as senior announcers.²⁷⁵

Iona Campagnolo attributed her success to her ability to network local contacts from her youth. For example, Campagnolo said when the Nisga'a chiefs were considering taking the federal government to court in early 1970s, she was the reporter who broke the story after she was given the scoop by a Nisga'a schoolmate, Rod Robinson. When she was elected as a member of parliament Iona Campagnolo retained a special keen interest in regional media as a public service but also as a method of communicating a regional identity. In a 1977 letter regarding the mandate of the CBC as a national broadcaster, Campagnolo wrote that her constituents sorely lacked the television and radio service that were taken for granted in larger urban centres. As she explained,

It seems the CBC ... takes it for granted that all Canadians have such access, or at least those who don't, don't matter, and that priorities should therefore be placed on the provision of larger more sophisticated production centres. I feel most strongly about this point ... three years as a Member of Parliament have done little, if anything to reassure me of the CBC's 'good intentions' in this regard.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Iona Campagnolo, email to author, May 7, 2015.

²⁷⁵ Iona Campagnolo, telephone interview, May 5, 2015

²⁷⁶ Letter Iona Campagnolo to Harry Boyle, April 11, 1977. Communications files (box 116-2.1), Iona Campagnolo Fonds, UNBC Archives.

Not only was service poor in rural and mid-north regions, but the CBC generally fell short of its stated mandate to “actively contribut[e] to the flow and exchange of cultural and regional information and entertainment.” Campagnolo complained that the CBC national news and current affairs coverage of stories in rural and northern interests “falls far short of that objective.” Campagnolo used the CBC evening news program as an example:

There is invariably, at least one western item each evening on *The National*. And almost equally invariably, it is an item consisting of soft news. By this I mean so-called human interest stories; fires, floods, grasshoppers plagues, and other natural phenomena; stories which have been in the can for an indeterminate length of time; or stories of an otherwise offbeat nature. It is the type of coverage which has helped perpetuate the image of the west as a raw, elemental frontier, populated with kooks, freaks and other assorted weirdos.²⁷⁷

Using her political and broadcasting connections, Campagnolo advocated for changes to the national media (both public and private) that better reflected the lives of northerners. She also stated that western Canadians thought the “CBC is looked upon as the voice of Ontario.” And there was “little acceptance in the West of our national broadcasting service as being such.” Not only were westerners feeling misrepresented, but they were also were demanding a better deal for all Canadians considering the government funding of the crown corporation.²⁷⁸ After Campagnolo’s electoral defeat in 1978, she remained active in federal politics, becoming Liberal Party president, Chancellor of the University of Northern British Columbia, and then the first female Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia.

The final female voice that features prominently in the CFPR archives is that of

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. p 3

Valerie Dudoward (1953 – 2006), who is thought to be the first Indigenous woman hired by the CBC in British Columbia.²⁷⁹ Dudoward’s contributions and archive recordings are a unique aspect to CFPR collection: the majority of her work was for a program called *Talking Stick* which was produced through a government grant in 1977-78 by the fledging Native Media Society. The cultural and political implications of these six programs will be explored in depth in the final chapter, but her role as a female and Indigenous announcer must be included in the discussion of women and CFPR, since she started her broadcasting career at the Prince Rupert station as a high school student.



Figure 9) Val Dudoward – circa 1975
Photo Courtesy: Valerie-Ruth-Pamela Dudoward Foundation

Valerie Dudoward’s parents were from the North Coast community of Port Simpson and Metlakatla but she was born in Prince Rupert in the 1953, the eldest of three children. Her parents, Jim and Ruth, were from two high ranking Tsimshian families,

²⁷⁹ It is assumed that she was first Indigenous announcer but it is impossible to verify with the corporation or private broadcasters.

and they moved to Prince Rupert for the education and opportunities for their children. The Dudowards were fairly affluent, since her father Jim held a lucrative herring license and was active in the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia.

Valerie Dudoward was a considered a bright student, and according to her younger sister Pamela Dudoward an avid writer, with strong opinions, even at an early age.²⁸⁰ In 1974 she was hired by the local CBC station, under the guidance of David Madison, as a weekend announcer to draw in a larger youth audience.²⁸¹ This outreach was, in part, Madison explained, the result of CBC management making it a priority to generate better community-based relationships. CBC staff reached out to the local high school to fill a part time announcer position with a high school student. Over twenty students applied for the position and were auditioned. Valerie Dudoward was selected for her voice, her writing skills and potential. It was not until after the competition that David Madison became aware of Valerie Dudoward's First Nations heritage.²⁸² Her high school friend, and later academic collaborator, Blanca Schorcht, said she would often go down to the CBC on Saturday evenings with Val was "spinning records," but unfortunately no archive recording of her programs survived.²⁸³

Pamela Dudoward, Valerie's younger sister, said that Valerie was quite vocal and active in her high school. Her interests were not limited to First Nations issues, and she considered herself a feminist. Even though it seemed at odds with her views, Valerie was encouraged to enter the Miss Prince Rupert beauty pageant by CBC coworkers and local

²⁸⁰ Pamela Dudoward, personal telephone interview (June 27,^h 2014).

²⁸¹ David Madison, personal telephone interview (June 7, 2014).

²⁸² Ibid. Madison maintained personal contact with Valerie for many years, and this relationship is likely why the six episodes of *Talking Stick* remained part of the CFPR collection.

²⁸³ Blanca Schorcht, personal interview, (June 1, 2014)

business owners who suggested that the pageant might provide a forum to raise public awareness for the issues that mattered to her.²⁸⁴

In her speeches for the Prince Rupert competition and later at the provincial pageant in Vancouver, she was outspoken for the need for better mental health and medical services in the north. She also advocated for abortion and women's health issues. Dudoward also promoted her First Nations ancestry and raised quite a stir by insisting on wearing a stylized dress and moccasins that was made for her, with her hair in braids. This evidently caused great uproar at the Miss PNE competition because she was not wearing regulation formal attire for the parade. Eventually a compromise was reached. She wore the dress, but did not wear her pageant tiara.

Valerie stayed with CBC only for a few years, but later went on to the short-lived program called *Talking Stick*, produced by the newly formed Native Media Society in Vancouver during the summer of 1978. When the pilot project funding came to an end, Dudoward worked as communications coordinator for the Union of BC Indian Chiefs as well as a contributor to their publications. She wrote several features, including one interview with her grandmother about traditional medicines. Pamela Dudoward commented that her sister Valerie wrote constantly and published a few plays, some poetry and even collaborated on academic writing over the years. She died suddenly in 2006. Unfortunately, not much of her work has survived.²⁸⁵

Yet arguably, it was her Tsimshian ancestry that was the most defining factor in

²⁸⁴ David Madison, personal interview (June 7th, 2014). Madison contends that Valerie Dudoward had female role models in the community and he identifies several including the Iona Campagnolo, Joan McClelland and others.

²⁸⁵ Valerie Dudoward's sudden death led to tensions between family members. Valerie's volumes of writing are not accessible, beyond the few publications and the CBC radio archives, notably for the program *Our Native Land* that were produced by CBC Winnipeg.

Valerie Dudoward's life direction as a communicator. Also, her special interest in women's issues had a direct impact on topics she covered. She was particularly interested in gendered barriers that related to Indigenous topics and events. In one episode of *Talking Stick*, Dudoward reported by telephone from a United Native Nations gathering in Williams Lake BC where the theme was fighting for the rights of women and children within the Indian Act.²⁸⁶

Valerie Dudoward was extremely dedicated to promoting the voice of Indigenous peoples, and advocated for their increased ownership of communications and media companies as well as technological training for them. She wrote

For too long and with the greatest danger for us, we have looked to non-Indian communications specialists to handle delicate and crucial work. As long as we do this, we will never develop our Indian communication specialists, and worse, we will continue speaking through other people with other people's words.²⁸⁷

Valerie Dudoward's words reflected her awareness as an Indigenous person, but also as a strong advocate for women's rights. For women such as Dudoward, Iona Capagnolo and Nora Arnold, the political and social life of northwest British Columbia was deeply connected to the broadcasting media and, particularly, CBC radio. Although women were not officially hired as staff announcers until 1975, many women were active producers, writers, performers as well as on-air talent long before the mandate was changed. Even in a small remote radio station like CFPR, women were organizing and using the medium of radio to raise issues relevant to women sometimes topical and other times subverting token women's programming for their own means.

²⁸⁶ *Talking Stick* (#2), CBC/CFPR Archives, tape 77 ,CD #30 track 1,(July 7, 1978).

²⁸⁷ Editorial, *Indian World*, July 1980 (Vol 3, No. 4), 2.

Northern BC women were not so different in their outlook from their southern sisters, but found a variety of media sources to express their opinions and issues. That is why the few female voices to be found in the CBC/CPFR radio archive are so important. The collection continues to reveal the varied voices of Northern British Columbians after the Second World War. The next chapter looks at one tragic event in northern BC history --the Granduc mine avalanche of 1965-- to show how voices of workers, company officials and political figures can all be present in a media archive presenting and sometimes disrupting the vested interests of the past and the shifting memories of the present.

Chapter Four: Voices of Disruption: BC History and the Granduc Mine Avalanche of 1965

The 1965 Granduc Mine avalanche, where twenty-six workers lost their lives, was one of the most significant natural and industrial disasters in post war Canada. But it remains a little known event in the history of British Columbia. Labourer and arbitrator Vince Ready was a twenty-one-year-old miner who worked at the mining camp at the time. Fifty years after the event, Ready reminisced, “It’s kind of a forgotten thing... I tell people about it every once in a while ... in conversation and all that. But a lot of people don’t even know it happened. I told my kids about it and they looked it up on the Internet.”²⁸⁸

The CBC radio archives in Prince Rupert have four recordings that bring the event’s drama and sense of urgency to life through the voices of news announcers, workers, and those who tried to rescue the more than 140 men trapped at the mine site. This tragedy remains unknown to most British Columbians, as noted by Vince Ready, and the audio record alone is not enough to answer some fundamental questions about the event and lack of emergency response by the either the federal or Canadian governments. With the addition of contemporary print sources through newspapers and Ministry of Mines report, researchers can begin to piece together what happened in February in that remote region in 1965, and perhaps some answer a more fundamental historical question of how such an event went missing from histories of British Columbia.

²⁸⁸ Vince Ready, personal interview, (October 27, 2014).

The Granduc mine project, as described in one CBC news report, was conceivably “the most remote” mining project in Canada.²⁸⁹ Even though the copper outcroppings had been identified by prospectors in the 1930s, it was not considered a viable project until the late 1950s. The demand and price for copper continued to rise, making the expensive project viable. The initial surveying and exploration activities were carried out by the company Grandby Consolidated. Later, Newmont Mines became the major stakeholder and invested an initial sum of \$55 million.

Situated at the foot of the Leduc Glacier, the camp was located 38 km northwest of the coastal community of Stewart, and situated less than 12 km from the border between BC and Alaska. This camp, which was under construction, was only accessible by air or by diesel cat trains in the winter. A 16 km long tunnel was being built under the Leduc glacier to access the rich copper deposits. Two portals or openings to the tunnel were being built as well as the camp where workers would be housed and the temporary centre of operations. Work was well underway by the autumn of 1964, despite the high costs of transportation and servicing the secluded work site.

The winter of 1964-65 began cold but dry, creating thin hard base of ice, since little precipitation had fallen before January. When the snows did come, they fell wet and heavy. In mid-February, it snowed continually for three days, with accumulations of over one metre in a twenty-four hour period. Mineworker Vince Ready actually said that he had “never seen anything like it,” as the snow could be thigh deep during an eight-hour shift. The mining camp was still in its infancy, but the camp amenities were about average for the mid 1960s. There was a coffee shack, tool shed, radio operations, first aid

²⁸⁹ “Granduc Slide” CBC/CFPR Archives, tape 83, CD# 32 tracks 1 & 2. (Recorded Feb. 20th 1965).

station, main cook-house, and several bunk houses. Vince Ready said, “The only luxury you might have is a transistor radio,” and shower facilities were not available.²⁹⁰

On February 18, there were about 150 men on site.²⁹¹ Many of the workers were on construction crews or with camp services such as catering, alongside the underground miners involved in the tunnel construction. There were also radio operators, transportation crew, a first aid attendant and local physician from Stewart who had gone to the mine.²⁹² Just before the mid-morning coffee break a massive avalanche of accumulated snow tumbled down the glacier. Many of the men were buried and most of the camp’s buildings were destroyed. The avalanche missed the entranceway to the tunnel, so the twenty-one workers underground survived. Vince Ready had been in the camp for less than a week, and was working on the afternoon shift, so was not underground when the snow slide hit.²⁹³ Ready had been up late the previous night writing letters so he was still in the bunkhouse. He said that his bunkhouse was sheared off, and the cookhouse and bunk houses were “in the line of fire.” He added that it was a “the rebound” slide, that “did more damage” as the snow went up the other side of the narrow and steep valley, came back down after the initial avalanche, similar to a wave breaking on the beach and then receding. A large mucking machine weighing some fourteen tons was picked up “like a dinky toy” and tossed aside.²⁹⁴

An SOS message was sent out immediately from the mine site, but it took over twenty hours for the first rescue workers to reach the disaster site. A helicopter from

²⁹⁰ Ready (Oct.. 2014).

²⁹¹ “The Granduc Avalanche Disaster” *Ministry of Mines and Petroleum Resources Annual Report*, 1965. (Victoria: Government of British Columbia, 1965), 370.

²⁹² CBC report, Ibid.

²⁹³ Ready. (Oct. 2014)

²⁹⁴ Ready

Ketchikan, Alaska reached the men the following morning. The rescue efforts by the Canadian Army corps engineers and provincial civil defense were hampered by bad weather and poor planning. After a freezing, frightening night for the remaining workers, the first helicopter arrived from Ketchikan where all the men were eventually taken, before being flown to Vancouver. The men who survived had begun immediately to search for others who were buried under the snow and construction wreckage. Several men were found alive even several hours later and one, Einar Myllyla, was miraculously found in the rubble three days after the avalanche by rescuers as they were clearing snow and debris for a heli-pad.²⁹⁵

Canadian rescue and medical personnel and several members of the national and international press flew to Prince Rupert in the evening and then waited for the Alaskan state ferry, the *Taku*. The ferry was en route from Ketchikan to be used as a floating hospital and operation centre. It left at four in the morning, February 19 from the Prince Rupert dock and headed for the port at Stewart, BC where it met the Canadian engineers and medical staff. Also on board were also several journalists who had come from large cities down south to cover the story from the thick of the action. One hotel manager, later the mayor of Stewart, stated that a reporter from Toronto was so desperate for a place to rest, he ended up sleeping in the broom closet. The Alaskan ferry was never used as a hospital, since the driving snow and thick cloud cover stranded of the helicopters and planes from Stewart. All journalists, support and rescue personnel who had arrived in

²⁹⁵ Einar Myllyla, a carpenter from Winnipeg, was found alive but suffering from hypothermia and frost bite. Although Myllyla had some toes amputated, his miraculous survival, 76 hours under snow and debris was in large part due to the camp construction materials mixed with the snow. Many of the men had air pockets enabling them to breathe and survive for hours after the slide. See also the Ministry of Mines *Annual Report of 1965*.

Stewart were also stranded and unable to reach the workers who were still at the mine site. As the hours turned into days, the thwarted attempts by the press to access the mine site, turned the story from the rescue efforts to one of angry indignation, and freedom of the press. The pressure on the media to file a topical story by telephone and to scoop the other news crews surfaced. The southern Canadian journalists turned on the government and, more specifically, the company for its lack of access to the mine site.

This significant human disaster that shaped Vince Ready's experience shows how ill-prepared the company and provincial government were in the face of such a tragic event. This disaster challenged and disrupted the popular notion of the time that the development of northern BC resource industries was without risk during booming economic growth. The following discussion investigates the memory of the Granduc avalanche, in part to explain why this event was forgotten in the minds of Canadians.

The CBC radio archives and the four audio selections featuring the Granduc mine disaster are valuable assets providing audio snapshots into this significant event. However, relying on these four audio selections as the sole primary source would produce a skewed perspective. These media representations of the Granduc event show how the immediate reporting of radio, and the life and death drama emotionally swayed listeners, and sometimes skewed the more reflective historical questions. The audio recordings then are an important starting point for raising wider questions about historical memory and the province of British Columbia at the height of the post war province building era.

The Granduc disaster should have piqued the interest of labour studies and provincial or national historians, yet it remains entirely absent from the provincial

historical accounts or even wider academic writings (with the exception of avalanche experts). As Ken Coates and Bill Morrison have argued in their book about the 1918 sinking of the *Princess Sophia*, the Granduc avalanche can be seen as another “episode in the history of a North American region – its economy, its growth, and its decline, a story of northern society built on a ‘boom and bust’ philosophy.”²⁹⁶ Although the Granduc event took place during a time of economic and industrial growth, this too could be an example of the lack of historical remembrance. Maybe the Granduc disaster metaphorically disrupts the foundations of the post war Canadian progressive narrative to such a degree that it has not been investigated. Perhaps as Canadian studies professor Lawrence Taylor contends, “Most researchers tend to concentrate on successful projects,” when investigating the province building activities during the Social Credit era.²⁹⁷

The international context of this event is also significant given the prominent role of the US Coast Guard and other Alaskan personnel, who were first on the scene and rescued the survivors. The prevailing anti-American attitude advanced by the Canadian media and politics was also called into question by the rescue. An editorial in a small coastal community newspaper summed it up best. The editor of the *Sechelt Peninsula Times* wrote

The US for one reason or another, has been subject to attacks from time to time. Sometimes the Yanks are “too stuffy,” while at other times they’re “too formal.” Some Canadians see them as “stuck up,” and others view them as “too much down-to-earth.” This may all be, yet we still can’t help but admire their actions during the Granduc Mine disastrous slide last week. Who was the first on the scene for the rescue purposes? Our neighborly Yanks. And who said the only reason was they got there first was because the Canucks from Prince

²⁹⁶ Ken Coates, Bill Morrison, *The Sinking of the Princess Sophia: Taking the North Down with Her*. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), xvii.

²⁹⁷ Lawrence D. Taylor, “The Bennett Government’s Pacific Northern Railway Project and the Development of British Columbia’s ‘Hinterland’,” *BC Studies* 175 (2012), 35.

Rupert had a tougher route to traverse? You're right, the friends from the U.S. And who put that giant Alaskan ferry at our disposal for ambulatory and other purposes: Governor Egan of Alaska, that who. 'Nuff said.²⁹⁸

For these reasons, it is important to integrate additional primary sources, such as newspaper accounts, government reports and present day oral history interviews as points of comparison to the audio selections. The major theme of the primary sources is isolation, in both a spatial and a temporal sense. The devastation and aftermath of the Granduc disaster was in large measure due to the extreme remoteness of the mine. This, in turn, isolated the event in BC historical memory as the stories of the day presented some significant problems for the mining company and all levels of government. Alternatively, the story of the Granduc mine should not be framed solely in a negative light. Instead, it illustrates the very qualities of northerners when neighbours come together in the face of great personal danger. More importantly, it shows the resiliency of these workers and local communities as they looked toward the future.²⁹⁹

In the economic expansion of post war Canada, there was little resistance to the mega projects from the large populations down south. One long time northern resident Andy Burton was a young man living in Stewart at the time of the avalanche. He later became mayor of the small community and then a federal Reform/Alliance Member of Parliament. He explained that during the "boom times" of the 1960s, megaprojects were the "flavor of the week." Most projects proceeded without opposition, and often without regulatory frameworks. "We lived day by day almost. We never thought that far ahead. When something needed to be done, it was, [like] 'Let's just get on with it.'"

²⁹⁸ "Editorial," *The Sechelt Peninsula Times*. March 17th, 1965),6.

²⁹⁹ I want to thank Ken Coates for this significant and positive observation. (via skype, Oct 17, 2014)

During the Granduc mine construction phase, there were several flights a day from Stewart to the camp and mine site. Burton added, “Granduc had its own boat, and Northland Navigation was coming in every week, and there were barges coming with equipment. It was busy, busy times” during the construction phase.³⁰⁰ Workers were driven by the opportunity to make a good wage, even if it meant a certain (and often unrecognized) risk in natural resource development.

In February 1965, the CBC staff aired three radio news specials about the Granduc event. These audio records focus the listener’s perspective and analysis to a single event played out moment by moment. One news clip includes a partial news story about the Vietnam War, reminding listeners of the global geo-political context. Listening to these recordings is like looking at the front page of a newspaper, with a wide variety of stories, rather than just a single story glued in a scrapbook. The emotional connection and feeling of urgency generated by the news reports crosses the temporal boundary through radio archives. Another archive tape provides a fascinating look into the “story behind the story,” of how the Prince Rupert CBC staff worked together during the event. Station manager Will Hankinson, who used the moniker of an “Average Joe,” recalled that he filed approximately thirty news stories to media outlets across North America in a twenty-four-hour period.³⁰¹

The fourth audio archive recording, however, is a short retrospective marking the eighteenth anniversary of the Granduc avalanche that is lighter in tone than the

³⁰⁰ Andy Burton, Personal interview, Terrace BC. (April 18, 2001) permission granted Sept. 23, 2014 via email.

³⁰¹ “Special News Report” CBC/CFPR tape 83, CD 32 track 1 (Recorded Feb/March 1965)

recordings of February 1965.³⁰² The host for *After Four* was Susan Cardinal. She chatted with the mayor of Stewart BC, Ian McLeod, about his memories of the Granduc Mine disaster and the impact that could be felt some eighteen years later. Cardinal commented that on February 19 “flags are traditionally at half-mast in Stewart.” Ian MacLeod described two men who drove a tracker train across the snow cover glacier to try and reach the disaster site. By doing so, MacLeod provided visual reference points for listeners as part of his interview. His descriptions are useful to present day historical researchers who listen to the CBC archive tapes. Susan Cardinal’s questions also provide researchers with insights into what the public wanted to know years after the Granduc slide. She asked MacLeod, “Why didn’t someone anticipate an avalanche would happen given the high altitude and terrain?” He responded that to most people, the location of the camp looked safe, but it was the unusual winter conditions and late snow fall that caused the avalanche.³⁰³ Near the end of the interview, Cardinal commented that the Canadian rescue efforts were limited to “a mop up stage,” when compared to the Alaskan efforts.

Historiographically, the provincial historical narratives continue to follow the interpretation of events in northern BC through a southern or core/periphery lens, often as extensions of southern phenomena. Ken Coates and Judith Powell referred to Canada’s northern territories as “Canada’s colonies” and this perspective certainly could be applied to northern BC.³⁰⁴ The wealth generated by northern resources (wood, hydro, or minerals) certainly flowed into southern urban centres where political decisions were made affecting rural regions. Even though it is noted the Social Credit plan was to

³⁰² “Granduc Retrospective”, *After Four*, CFPR/CBC tape 262, CD 105 track 2. (airdate Feb. 18, 1983)

³⁰³ Cardinal, (1983)

³⁰⁴ Ken Coates and Judith Powell, *Canada’s Colonies: A History of the Yukon and Northwest Territories* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1985)

expand the services and work force in the north, there was little government oversight or much input into how this would be achieved by the private sector.

W.A.C. Bennett's relationship with Swedish millionaire Alex Wenner-Gren provides an example of how the shared entrepreneurial values between Bennett and the corporate world shaped the formulation of these resource projects. According to David Mitchell, Wenner-Gren's initial interest in the Rocky Mountain trench was for an extension of a northern railway line (monorail).³⁰⁵ By 1957, the interest shifted from the railway to the massive hydro-electric potential in the Peace River Valley. An agreement was signed in October that Wenner-Gren would be directly involved in constructing the massive project. Mitchell wrote: "Bennett was gurgling with excitement and enthusiasm; he told incredulous reporters that this day was 'the most important that B.C. has experienced in its whole history.'"³⁰⁶

It is interesting how W.A.C. Bennett maintained this exuberance even at the time of the Granduc avalanche. The *Prince Rupert Daily News* ran a CP wire story of Bennett feted by "friends and foes" alike at a "testimonial dinner" on February 17, 1965 in Vancouver. "More than 1,000 black-tied men crammed into smoke-filled rooms for a \$10-a-plate" dinner to celebrate Bennett's longevity as BC's longest serving premier. "Through it all, the smiling premier looked out over a sea of faces – the elite of British Columbia's business and political world."³⁰⁷

³⁰⁵ David Mitchell, *WAC Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and MacIntyre, 1983), 287-89.

³⁰⁶ Mitchell, *WAC Bennett* 289.

³⁰⁷ "Friend and Foe alike hail Bennett as 'great leader,'" *Prince Rupert Daily News*, (CP) Thursday, February 19, 1965.

Environmental historian Tina Loo contends that Bennett adopted a high modernist ideology where state sponsored mega-projects were designed to provide social benefit “on a broad scale.” This was the idea of an age and spanned the political spectrum from “left to right.”³⁰⁸ Bennett did not view his progressive ideology as being at odds with either with the working class or labour movement since, in his mind, they would both ultimately profit from the projects. David Mitchell wrote that Social Credit’s labour policies became “politically misconstrued” since “policy making during a time of rapid development is generally more concerned with the large picture than with details.”³⁰⁹

This white male group that supported Bennett was not comprised of modern bureaucrats or urban professionals elites, but rather small business owners from outside the lower mainland. Historian Christopher Dummit argues that during the 1950s and the 1960s, “affluence, scientific development and emerging welfare state combined to make it seem as though Canadians could manipulate the environment for the ever greater social good.”³¹⁰ Bennett’s small business background and identity made him wary of faceless corporate entities or government red tape, but he did see government as “a dynamic agent of development.”³¹¹ The Bennett Social Credit government, for example, brought in provincial legislation and made major changes to tree harvest tenures to enhance large scale harvesting in order to meet the demands for lumber and pulp and paper. As noted

³⁰⁸ Tina, Loo. "Towards an Environmental History of Progress." Considering Site C. (Niche Audio) <https://archive.org/details/LooSiteC>

³⁰⁹ Mitchell, 266.

³¹⁰ Christopher Dummit, *The Manly Modern*, (UBC Press, 2007) 3

³¹¹ Markley et al. 103

by scholar Sean Markey, “In fitting with these times, policy makers imagined rural BC as vacant resource bank ready for the ‘productive use.’”³¹²

Given the predominant progressive focus and importance of the natural resource economy, researchers must include Northern BC’s residents’ sense of ‘place’ and geographic realities as they read, listen and formulate opinions based on the primary sources. Joy Parr’s demanded that scholars consider the “embodied knowledge” and supplement “customary historical analysis of transcripts, images and landscapes with analytical device[s] that can register experiential excess.”³¹³ This is a good argument for adding radio archives and other audio formats to the historian’s toolbox.

Historians who *read against the grain* should also start to *listen in situ* when using audio recordings. Listening in situ occurs when researchers put the location and localized circumstance foremost into their interpretation of both events and expressed perspectives. In the field of archeology, an artifact found in a dig, for example, is studied intensely in place. The levels of sediment and of surrounding objects provide vital clues about use, age and cultural significance. If the same principle is applied to audio recordings, a great deal more is revealed beyond the content of the recording, but also the localized social context and issues of the time period. The listening researcher is drawn in, and thus radio can take the black and white of the printed word and apply tone and texture.

To date, no primary historical resources have been found that might show what planning or emergency preparedness was in place by either the government or the companies before the project commenced. There are several documents related to

³¹² Ibid, 106

³¹³ Joy Parr, *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953-2003* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010),190.

industrial relations and labour standards that underline the diverse union affiliations of those working at the mine site in 1965.³¹⁴ But since the Granduc project was a private venture and employed a diverse labour force that was needed during the construction phase, including both contract workers and mine employees, it is difficult to assess the role of organized labour in the aftermath of the accident. Even recent work by BC historian Benjamin Isitt in his book *Militant Minority* and the rise of new left in post war era, does not provide a basis for comparison.³¹⁵ Isitt's methodology focuses on a specific period and the social change in the labour movement during this time period. Conversely, Tom Langford and Chris Frazer chose a comparative case study approach for their research into cross provincial working class politics during the 1940s and 50s. They explain that historians often sacrifice the deep reservoir of local information when "no attention is paid to local circumstance or activists' strategic initiatives."³¹⁶

In short, during the days of rapid industrial growth such a disastrous event really was beyond imagination. The Granduc mine avalanche then served as a temporary antidote and, perhaps, a reality check, to the optimistic mindset of the Social Credit era.

³¹⁴ There are at least five separate possible sources in the BC archives, Labour Standards Branch, Labour relations, and reports regarding Conciliation and arbitration. There is also a file found regarding Labour standards complaint in 1965, but detailed analysis has not been done regarding these sources. filed against the major construction contractor of Sentinel construction. All of these files are available for review and most are on microfilm, with the significant years of 1964-66 features prominently.

³¹⁵ Benjamin Isitt, *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the New Left, 1948-1972*. (U of T Press, 2011) Isitt mentions the Granduc avalanche only in relation to shifting union allegiances in the late 1960s and how "twenty-eight Mine-Mill workers had died in a 1965 avalanche." (163) Isitt's cites *Red Bait!: Struggles of a Mine Mill Local* (1998) A memoir by labour activist Jeff King coauthored with Kate Braid. While the use of personal memoirs is certainly commendable, it seems odd to me that Isitt would not fact check the statistics (number of the dead for example) of the accident. Isitt's study is about rise of the labour movement not the Granduc incident nor union activism related to it. However, it does illustrate a larger problem that historians face when trying to piece together a history without primary sources. Just as the Granduc mine was remote and isolated in the minds of most southern audience members in 1965, it continues to be relegated to remote corners of regional memory, not even a footnote in provincial histories.

³¹⁶ Tom Langford, Chris Frazer, "The Cold War and Working-Class Politics in the Coal Mining Communities of the Crowsnest Pass, 1945-1958." *Labour/Travail*, 49 (Spring 2002), 45.

As Christopher Dummit notes, “These years saw great expansion in the [forestry, mining and fishing] industries but also consolidation of corporate ownership and increased use of technology to manipulate the natural world in order to feed what Bennett and others called the “the good life.”³¹⁷

Comparing causes of other mine disasters, such as the coal mines at Springhill Nova Scotia in 1956 and 1958, and more recently, the Westray mine disaster of 1992 to the Granduc event is challenging, since the circumstances of underground mine accidents and explosion are not similar.³¹⁸ Both Springhill and Westray were coal mines in Atlantic Canada, a region where coal mining had been going on for many decades. The 1956 Springhill disaster was an explosion caused by built up methane gases, and the event of 1958 was a geological incident, known as a bump, with the layers of earth settling rather than an explosion. Thirty-nine men died in the 1956 event and seventy eight died two years later. The Westray event of 1992 was an explosion and in that killed 26 miners. The causes and responses of the events however are not similar to the Granduc avalanche because of the isolated location and the lack of community that housed the families and loved ones of the coal mines. A solid community and the length of time of mine operation appear to be a factor in how and why these events were remembered. The CBC

³¹⁷ See Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Post-war British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 10-11.

³¹⁸ See T. Richards, “The Westray Mine Explosion: An Examination of the Interaction Between the Mine Owner and the Media,” *Canadian Journal of Communications*, 21.3 (Summer 1996) 339-363. Also, E. Tucker “The Westray Mine Disaster and its Aftermath: the Politics of Causation” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, (1995)

has a multimedia article on the Springhill explosion in their online digital archive which is totally accessible to the public.³¹⁹

There are grounds for comparison between the broadcast media response and reporting of the second Springhill disaster of 1958 to the Granduc mine avalanche. These were the early days of CBC television network, and for the first time there was a medium that could bring up-to-date reporting including live images from the scene of the disaster. Author Melissa Fay Greene wrote that a CBC television crew, “discovered they could fire a signal from their mobile unit directly into a land cable a few miles away, enabling them to broadcast live footage from the pithead. European networks were eager to televise the story of the mine disaster, too; the film images were processed as Kinescope in Toronto and carried by freighter planes across the Atlantic. It was the biggest radio and TV network patched together in history.”³²⁰

³¹⁹ See, “Springhill Mine Disaster” [font size]

<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/tag/springhill+mining+disaster/>

³²⁰ Melissa Fay Greene, *Last Man Out: the Story of the Springhill Mine Disaster*, (Orlando FL: Harcourt Books, 2003), 83.



Caption below the photo indicated the Canadian Army Engineers 'take time out' to play cards as they wait to board the Alaskan Ferry, *Taku*.

Figure 10) *Prince Rupert Daily News* front page Friday, Feb. 19, 1965

Based on Jim Taylor's special report of the Granduc disaster, the closest CBC outlet was CFPR in Prince Rupert. The private station based in Terrace, CFTK-TV was closer to the town of Stewart but the regional highway system was still being developed and there was no winter road into the community. Even those journalists who traveled with the medical and emergency crews to Stewart on the Alaskan ferry the *Taku*, were stranded and without access to the mine site and the rescued workers who were flown out from Ketchikan.

Full public inquiries of the first Springhill explosion and Westray disasters³²¹ were deemed important since there was an assumption that fault would be found, be it

³²¹ See, Springhill commission reports (1956) Accessed Aug. 16, 2016. <http://mineaccidents.com.au/uploads/springhill-royal-commission-report-1956.pdf>

mechanical, technical or human error, as the source of the mine cave in or explosion. This was not the case with the Granduc avalanche, since it occurred during an early construction phase of the camp, tunnel and mine infrastructure. Even though there was an inquest, there was never a public demand for a full provincial inquiry into the Granduc incident. The event was simply deemed “an act of God” by the jury at the coroner’s inquest held in Stewart two weeks after the avalanche.³²²

Plausible explanations into the broader question of why the Granduc event is missing from British Columbia narrative, come from two researchers of the 1992 Westray mine explosion. Legal expert Eric Tucker (1995) explores the concept and politics connected to causation that “is crucial to ... attributing moral, legal and political responsibility.”³²³ Within days of the Westray incident Canadians asked “how did this happen and who is responsible?” Tucker explained that even though the mine company, Curragh Resources Inc., tried to “manage the news, information began to trickle out suggesting that systematic failures at many levels caused the disaster.”³²⁴

Sociologist John McMullan (2006) investigated the varying degrees of media truth in the news stories produced before and after the Westray disaster. McMullan contends the media was limited in its “social vocabulary of corporate crime,” and “news production was a contested site of cultural production.”³²⁵ Both articles raise important

and (1958), Accessed August 16, 2016, <http://mininghistory.ns.ca/springhill/sp-index.htm>

Westray proceedings, “Westray Mine Public Inquiry” Accessed Aug. 16, 2016

<http://www.newscotland1398.ca/westray/wrpindex.html>.

³²² “Coroner’s Jury finds no blame in the Granduc avalanche deaths,” *The Prince Rupert Daily News*, March 5th 1964, (1965).

³²³ Eric Tucker, “The Westray Mine Disaster and its Aftermath: the Politics of Causation.” *Canadian Journal of Legal Studies (CJLS/RCDS)* Vol 10 #1 (Spring/printemps 1995), 91.

³²⁴ Tucker, *Ibid.* 92.

³²⁵ John L. McMullan, “News, Truth and the Recognition of Corporate Crime” *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, (October 2006):905, 7.

questions about the media role and the pursuit of culpability as a social need in the Westray event. This then underlines the social transformation in Canadian thinking between the high modernist aims and social benefit of 1960s,³²⁶ the time of the Granduc avalanche, to greater demands for public accountability by 1990s the period of the explosion at the Westray mine.

Perhaps this closer public scrutiny by both the press and various levels of government into the causes for the Westray tragedy is more a social phenomenon reflecting socioeconomic pressures of a depressed region such as Atlantic Canada in the 1990s. In contrast, the mid 1960s were the boom times in all sectors of BC, even in the more remote reaches. With the plethora of other projects underway, the memory of the Granduc disaster got swept away by the need to move on. The infancy of the camp was also an important factor since there was not a cohesive work force, with differing contractors, construction crews, and catering as well as the miners moving through the site. Essentially, there was not a community to preserve a collective memory of event, showing that such memories are shaped more by the social circumstance of the time period and the locality that the event occurred. The mixed workforce and lack of cohesive community base may also account for why the story is absent from BC history. It may be simply because during the construction phase, workers would fly in and fly out from larger centres. Vince Ready stated that he knew his mining co-workers only because they had worked on other mine development projects throughout the North.³²⁷

The Province newspaper identified each worker by name and home town, revealing that many of the workers came from BC's lower mainland, with a few from

³²⁶ See Tina Loo, *Ibid.* (2008)

³²⁷ Vince Ready, *Ibid.* Oct. 27, 2014.

outside the province and Canada. It did not, however, explain how long these men may or may not have been in the country, before coming to work at the Granduc site. Simply put, there was not the continuity of community of workers or families that could keep the story alive in the public sphere.

On February 19, 1965, *The Prince Rupert Daily News* ran a story that featured details of the concerned family members of local Granduc workers. ““All we can do is wait,” Mrs. Mark Ganton, whose husband is a city employee, said of their son Mark, 19, formerly a cook at the Broadway Café, who went to Granduc as a laborer last month.’ Three others are identified in the story, including the brother of a high school teacher, and William Norton a 53 year-old construction contractor working on the Graduc camp bunkhouses. The article concluded, “The Nortons, who have lived on East Eleventh Avenue, have twin girls who will be 16 in July and a son who will be 18 in February.”³²⁸

The survivors experienced great trauma in those twenty plus hours without support or even consistent contact with the outside world. Vince Ready said that the survivors began digging out partially buried survivors. They began searching in areas where buildings were, or supposed to be. “We all had poles (loading sticks) ... and we went around digging and poking the snow ... and some of those people got dug out while we were there.” Of course there was some panic, but Ready recalled, it was worse after dark on Thursday night. No one slept as “we kept hearing more avalanches. All night long we kept hearing them... A lot of unknowns, you know, and nervousness that way.”³²⁹

³²⁸ “Relatives Wait Anxiously: Rupert Men at Granduc,” *Prince Rupert Daily News*, February 19, 1965.

³²⁹ Ready Ibid. (Oct. 2014)

It must have worn deeply on the surviving workers who searched the snow for the missing forty workers. Stories from the returning survivors in the *The Province* newspaper are perhaps the most revealing. Hard rock miner Eddy Crooks wrote down his thoughts, which *The Province* ran as a feature. He reported that right after the avalanche, “Almost all of the buildings were toppled over and nobody knew where to go or really what to do. We just wanted to get people out.” Crooks continued that he and this “other guy” started digging around. “I never knew his name. We didn’t say anything, just dug around very carefully since we didn’t want to hurt anybody below.” They managed to rescue two coworkers, and Crooks “didn’t know who they were, but they sure were happy to see us.”³³⁰

Some men (besides Einar Myllalyla) were buried alive for several hours before being found. Asser Louste of Edmonton, for example, “spent more than five hours buried in the snow.” According to Louste, “I didn’t hear nothing. First thing I knew, I woke up underground with 10 or 12 feet of snow over my head.” He said that he was knocked out for a while:

I had some air but I could hardly move. Everything, my feet and hands, were all numb and the snow was mixed with a lot of water. I just stood there, hollering for somebody to come and I was sure I would get out. I did not give up hope. And I made it.³³¹

The Ministry of Mines reported the causes of death for most was suffocation, but for a few however there were other complicating factors such as “fractures of the skull or neck.” In one case, loss of blood from amputation of a leg was a “contribution to

³³⁰ “Two Guys buried in the snow sure happy to see us,” *The Province Newspaper*, Monday Feb. 22, 1965.

³³¹ “Hard Bitten Miners” *Prince Rupert Daily News*, Monday Feb. 22, 1965.

death.”³³² Mine Mill union representative Al King recalled flying directly up to Stewart to help with his fellow workers, including survivors Vince Ready and Archie MacDonald, and to assist the RCMP with the identification of bodies of those who were not as lucky. King stated that even though he had experienced battle and was “an overseas veteran of the war, this was not an easy job.”³³³

Andy Burton recalled the sobering task of unloading the bodies of the victims, which were frozen solid, from the helicopters and onto the awaiting plane. The weather was so bad that the C46 skidded off the runway and they had to reload the bodies onto another aircraft. Burton stated that many of the victims were labourers and worked for a contractor, Sentinel Construction. However, in the official report all but six of the twenty six dead are listed as Granduc employees.³³⁴ Some of the victims of the avalanche were buried at Stewart, since no one knew how to contact the next of kin.³³⁵

There were questions and safety concerns voiced at the time by the workers. CBC reporter Myron Lacka spoke with brothers Gus and Jack Ritchie when they arrived back in Vancouver.³³⁶ The Ritchies were both working in the tunnel portal when the avalanche hit. Myron Lacka asked the question that many wondered about: “Do you have any idea of what might have caused this ah ... glacier to collapse?”

Gus Ritchie (with French accent): Yes they blast only two or three minutes before that, And that shake the, the mountain there the ground you see? That is why that slide come down right after.

Lacka: You think it was the blast that caused the slide?

³³² See, Ministry of *Ministry Annual Report*, 1965.

³³³ Al King, with Kate Braid, *Red Bait: Struggles of a Mine Mill Local* (Vancouver: Kingbird Publishing, 1998) 140.

³³⁴ Ministry of Mines, Annual Report 1965,370.

³³⁵ Andy Burton, personal interview, (April 2001).

³³⁶ CBC/CFPR Granduc News special.

Gus Ritchie: Oh yeah, that is what everybody, they say too.

Lacka: Have they been blasting there very long?

Gus Ritchie: Oh they blasting there before that... oh yeah and we had that only three days before this one.

Lacka: There was another slide?

Jack Ritchie : Oh yeah three days before this one, only it was not too bad. It come right close from (to) the power house. But not that low.

Lacka: Was it as big as this one?

Jack Ritchie: No ...

The Ritchies reported blasting from the tunnel operations likely triggered the avalanche, and that some of the camp employees were nervous about the amount of snow and their overall safety.

Lacka: Before the big slide happened, did anybody think that it might happen? Any of the officials afraid that it might happen?

Gus Ritchie : Yes you can say that again. Everybody was talking about that. Everybody was (not discernable)... Talking about quitting... and everything, you know? They got these (not discernable) right on the roof some (chaps) ?? There is five-six feet of snow right on the top of the roof. You know they shovel the roof everyday, two or three feet everyday.

Although Myron Lacka's question to the Ritchies was about what concerns the officials may have had, the brothers did not specify what action was taken other than the men shoveling snow off the buildings. Concerns over the amount of snowfall beginning in early January was not limited to the Stewart area. CFPR announcer Jim Taylor recalled that there were mounds of snow four to five feet high (1.5 metres) in the middle of streets

of Prince Rupert that winter. He also commented that there was no avalanche control in BC at the time, even on the highways.³³⁷

Frank Calder, Nisga'a leader and MLA for the region, had raised the issue in the Provincial legislature and "strongly advocated" for emergency rescue crews two weeks before the avalanche. According to a report in the *Prince Rupert Daily News*, "Calder said slides are a recurring disaster in [the] area and heavy snowfalls this winter point to an increase in avalanches and floods this spring, so an emergency system should be organized on a permanent basis."³³⁸

The CBC broadcast a special newscast some thirty-six hours after the event,³³⁹ but the speculation that tunnel blasting may have triggered the avalanche does not appear in any other media source. Instead, the focus shifted to the rescue efforts and the unfolding drama. News media from across Canada and the United States used all methods necessary to try to get to the remote location. This in itself became a main feature of many of the radio and print reports: the remoteness, the isolation and the drama of getting to the site and source of the news story.

It seems natural then that when listening to the material in the CBC radio archives, one becomes fascinated with the tale of the avalanche and the human drama as it evolves in real time. The audio record provides listeners with a sense of urgency and the tensions of the event that are intricate and palpable aspects of the listening experience. It makes sense then to approach a study on the Granduc mine by focusing on

³³⁷ Jim Taylor, personal interview (September 8th 2014). Taylor said the snow was so deep you could not see over the mounds to the other side, so 4 feet is fair estimate.

³³⁸ "Mountain Rescue Service discussions underway, *Prince Rupert Daily News*, Feb. 24, 1965. (Hansard or legislative proceedings, were not recorded before 1970 in the province of British Columbia)

³³⁹ Although there is no exact airdate, based on the content of the report it was likely a special edition to the evening news, on Feb. 19th, 1965.

the primary sources, particularly print and the audio, and feature the voices of those people who experienced this disaster first hand.

Communications and broadcasting researchers provide some of the most informative points about the news coverage as access points for historical comparisons. For example, Jeff Webb, from Memorial University studied the 1936 Moose River mine cave in, where the lives of three miners hung in the balance, and how the dramatic live radio broadcasts by J. Frank Willis stimulated the listening audience's imagination. Willis's style made him a household name and showed that radio had a distinct advantage over newspapers since it could take listeners inside an event and provide up- to- the- minute, immediate information.³⁴⁰ Webb argues that Willis's lack of professional journalism experience was a source of animosity with the newspaper reporters who were competing to cover the mine story.³⁴¹

This is consistent with the Granduc event some thirty years later where CFPR announcers were trained to be on-air voices and personalities rather than investigative or professional reporters. The local newscasts – when they aired – were often gleaned from the local newspapers.³⁴² CFPR producer Jim Taylor confirmed that when the story first broke, station manager Will Hankinson received initial reports and then he was in and out of the office to meet with officials. When other news stations continued to call, particularly from the United States, Taylor's fellow announcers were reluctant to pick up

³⁴⁰ See, Jeff Webb. "Canada's Moose River Mine Disaster 91936): Radio-Newspaper competition in the Business of News" *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol 16 No. 3. (1996), 365-376.

³⁴¹ Webb, "Moose River" (1996)

³⁴² CFPR personality memories found in the archives... including Mary Bird and Clarence Insulander.

the phone. They said they were not “qualified to do that” and that [they] didn’t “know anything about it.” And then they passed the call over Taylor.³⁴³

In the case of the Granduc disaster, the competition was for accurate information, and in this respect the daily coverage in Ketchikan, Alaska and Prince Rupert newspapers worked together to bring locals up to date. Stories, photographs and even an editorial were reprinted between the papers. The editorial is interesting, since it criticized the Granduc Manager R.D. Baker’s handling of the media and lack of “diplomacy.”³⁴⁴ The editorial began “When disaster strikes it is the business of the press to inform the public as best and as quickly as it can.”³⁴⁵ Clearly the print media saw access to information as an issue. The editorial went on to state that the spending of public money in the recovery efforts, not only in Canada but also in the United States, demanded press attention:

“When public dollars money is being spent by both Canadians and US, millions of people standing by deserve a better deal than the cold shoulder given them by an executive who obviously fails to recognize the role of the news media.”³⁴⁶ It is certainly evident by the reports in the CBC audio archives that the media story was front and centre. One special report that aired on CFPR describes how media from all over North America were calling and requesting reports.³⁴⁷ The gendered language used in the news reports is also worth mentioning. In a story that originated from Vancouver and circulated through the Canadian Press wire service, the stereotypical “tough hard-rock miners” and “construction men from the northern wilderness” shed “unashamed tears” when they

³⁴³ Jim Taylor, personal interview, (Sept. 8, 2014)

³⁴⁴ “Anything but Cooperation” *Prince Rupert Daily News*, Monday, Feb. 22, 1965, reprinted in *Ketchikan Daily News*, Thursday Feb. 25th

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ “Special News Report” CBC/CFPR Archives tape 83, CD 32 track 1 (Recorded Feb/March 1965)

greeted “ their families after the Granduc mining camp disaster.”³⁴⁸ The print media represented the masculinity of the “hard bitten miners,” but also applied it to the news reporters themselves who viewed themselves in the same masculine vein.

In the aforementioned editorial, the “newsmen” are ready for anything; they were “used to covering events of this nature and are prepared for the worst.”³⁴⁹ This was a clear indication or challenge to R.D. Baker’s authority, based on the argument that the company and rescue officials did not think the newsmen could handle the dangers at the slide site. The newsmen were not positioning themselves on the same tough and readiness scale as the camp workers, but certainly pushed back against management’s attempts to control access to the slide area by asserting the journalists’ rights and readiness in all danger to cover the story. It is interesting to note that the complaints of the company officials are consistent with the news reports of Westray, as described above, but the management of the press on site by Granduc officials did not comment on the corporate error or blame but rather as interference of freedom of the press.

Alternatively, in the few stories where women were mentioned, they usually were the concerned wife or mother of a Granduc employee. There is one exception in the short feature of “the pretty nurse-turned housewife” Mrs. Marlene Durland. *Toronto Telegram* reporter Sean Browne mentioned of how Durland asked her husband, a forestry manager with the US Forest Service, if she should help out. She left her two small daughters with a neighbour to go to the avalanche site: “Next morning, wearing an old shirt, slacks and boots, she began the hazardous trip to the mine by small plane and helicopter.”

³⁴⁸ “Hard bitten miners shed tears after dramatic Granduc rescue.” Prince Rupert Daily News, Monday Feb. 22, 1965. (Canadian Press, wire service)

³⁴⁹ Special News Report” CBC/CFPR tape 83, CD 32 track 1 (Recorded Feb/March 1965)

Unfortunately for Marlene Durand there was little for her to do, and she reported that she “wasn’t really needed. There were two doctors in already and another came with me. There wasn’t really much for me to do.”³⁵⁰ Clearly the gendered stereotypes of the dutiful feminine middle class housewife/nurse, and ‘masculine miner’ were used against the backdrop of the frozen desolate wilderness.

The reporting by the larger urban daily newspapers also criticized the handling of the emergency response by the Canadian army and rescue personnel. Access to the mine staff and to the disaster site was strictly controlled once the workers were airlifted to safety. In the days that followed, the story of the Granduc disaster shifted, particularly in the national and provincial papers, from the survivors of the avalanche and recovery efforts to all round mismanagement by the company, and to a lesser degree, both levels of government.

One subtle way these criticisms were carried out by the print media was with the use of photographs of the army engineers when they were arriving in Prince Rupert. One picture shows army engineers playing a game of cards while they waited to board the Alaskan ferry (See figure 8). Another image portrayed showed one young man with a wide grin on his face and a guitar slung across his back. The visual representations are more like a recreational camping adventure rather than crews risking their own lives diligently searching for lost workers. The selection of these images, just like the editorial choices that the radio producers and writings use to build and shape the public opinions, lasted longer than the details of the news stories themselves.

³⁵⁰ “Ketchikan Nurse Says She’s No Heroine, But she Aided Injured.” *Ketchikan Daily News*, Tuesday Feb. 23, 1965. (byline *Toronto Telegram*, Sean Browne)

The remote location of the Granduc camp was emphasized time and again in four of the CBC radio accounts. This is in part because the CFPR reports were re-using the same pieces of audio – interviews by Jim Taylor talking with Prince Rupert physician Dr. Fiddis about the flights from Stewart to thirty-five miles north to the mine camp, situated at about 6,000 feet. This meant the plane would have a rapid ascent up and over the mountain peak and then down into the glacier on the other side. Dr. Fiddis explained that the landing strip was short and steeply inclined, and the plane ride was often “a very scary one.”³⁵¹

The isolated location of the mine, situated a few kilometers from the Canadian side of the international border between Alaska and British Columbia, was perhaps the most interesting and disrupting aspects of the whole Granduc disaster. Once the distress call was received in Prince Rupert, action plans were put in place, relying on Canadian government response for Royal Engineers (RE) station in Chilliwack. Fortunately the RE search and rescue team had just returned from training exercise in Williams Lake and so their gear was already packed.³⁵² They and members of the press boarded a flight to Prince Rupert, arriving at the Digby Island airport. They then waited for several hours for the *Taku*, an Alaskan state ferry that was prepared to sail as a floating hospital based at Stewart. Bad weather had hampered earlier efforts of an air rescue by the regional civil defense of Prince Rupert and “kept most planes grounded.”³⁵³

³⁵¹ “News Special” (On reporting CFPR Granduc Mine), CBC/CFPR Archive tape 44, CD 18, cut #4 and CD #32 cut 1 and 2 (airdates Feb. 20th and 22) (? Year unknown here or what’s unknown?)

³⁵² “Survival Gear was Already Packed when Disaster Alert Came.” *Prince Rupert Daily News* (Monday Feb. 22, 1965).

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

By the time the *Taku* with its Canadian medical and search personnel arrived, the first helicopters from Ketchikan were already evacuating wounded survivors. Vince Ready recalled being most impressed with the speed and efficiency of the US rescue operations. “I just recall how efficient they were. They looked like space guys (laughs). They were dressed like spacemen when they got off that helicopter – and they were in and out within minutes full of injured people off to Ketchikan.”³⁵⁴

Nine helicopters carrying medical and rescue personnel airlifted all the camp workers to safety, first to an emergency base at the Chickaman River where they were met by two US coast guard cutters. The worst of the injured were flown directly to Ketchikan, Alaska, where they spent Friday evening, some in the hospital, others at a local hotel. The Granduc company gave each worker fifty dollars and some of the survivors celebrated heavily at a Ketchikan bar.³⁵⁵ Vince Ready said, “these were all hard rock miners so most of them went out and got plastered at the local bar! ... As I recall most of the Ketchikan bars were open most of the night. They put us up in a hotel and CP Air brought [in] a plane the next morning and got us out.”³⁵⁶

Andy Burton had this to say of the rescue efforts: “Actually, I ah, think it was a bit of a boondoggle they kind of held things up waiting for the army to come in. ... They actually brought them in on the Alaska Ferry, the *Taku*, I think. ... There was a quite a delay in getting people up there and some of the guys they dug out had not been dead very long. ... A lot of bad feeling in the community (Stewart) about that, ‘we should be

³⁵⁴ Ready, personal interview (Oct. 27, 2014)

³⁵⁵ Reporter Tom Hazlitt wrote that some of the workers, “couldn’t wait to get to Ketchikan to get roaring, hilariously drunk” in a feature article, “The Granduc Tragedy” by *Province Newspaper* (Saturday Feb. 27, 1965)

³⁵⁶ Ready, Ibid.

up there, now!”³⁵⁷ Avalanche specialist Montgomery Atwater was brought in and stabilized the area during the early days of rescue by dropping explosive charges from the helicopter.³⁵⁸ The company later implemented a “large scale program” of avalanche control “for the protection of the camps and access road.”³⁵⁹

The Province newspaper reporter Tom Hazlitt wrote a feature essay that appeared nine days after the disaster, outlining complaints by reporters, the public agencies, and Granduc company officials. This article is an important primary source since it summarizes the major concerns and questions that the public had over the avalanche itself and the responsibilities of both the government and the rescue. Hazlitt’s concluding remarks clearly illustrate the awareness of provincial economic development in the north:

It could be argued that frictions and misunderstandings are bound to occur in a situation as this, which far exceeds the previous experience of anyone taking part. But the Granduc operation is only one of many in the undeveloped north of the province. Hundreds of men are out each summer prospecting and surveying similar areas. This country is incredibly rich, and men will be found to harvest these riches. It can happen again; if development goes ahead as planned in avalanche country it will happen again.³⁶⁰

Although there is very little in the scholarly literature regarding the Granduc mine disaster, there was significant news coverage beyond CFPR’s three audio recordings. A careful reexamination of the print primary media sources illustrates this brief moment in BC’s history, where the pursuit of the good life was turned on its head and the very survival of over 120 men was at stake. The cooperation between the local northern daily

³⁵⁷ Andy Burton, personal interview (April 18, 2001).

³⁵⁸ CJ Stethem and P.A. Schaerer *Avalanche Accidents in Canada: 1 A Selection of Case History of Accidents 1955 to 1976*. Ottawa: National Research Council of Canada (Feb. 1979) 24. This is the first reported case of helicopter explosives.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Hazlitt, "The Granduc Tragedy"(1965).

newspapers (Ketchikan and Prince Rupert) also provides the up to date coverage that the CBC could not.³⁶¹

The Granduc story is a hidden historical narrative that runs counter to most post war British Columbia histories.³⁶² The Granduc mine avalanche and the miscalculations by Canadian government emergency response temporarily disrupted the heady days of the supreme optimism of the Social Credit era but did not settle into the larger historical consciousness of the province. It provided an important reminder that the efforts of by Alaskan neighbours probably saved several dozen lives. It is a prime example of how important local and regional understanding and courage are during the times of greatest need, and how the local historical sources, in combination with other national sources, can bring these incidents to light.

The final chapter of this dissertation will refocus attention back to more regional voices: those of Indigenous people in the CBC/CFPR audio record. Like the Granduc Mine avalanche report, it will become evident that there was larger representation and a greater presence of First Nations voices than was previously assumed.

³⁶¹ I have argued in an undergrad essay that both the *Ketchikan Daily News* and the *Prince Rupert Daily News* actually corresponded and interchanged stories and news reports unlike the 'big' dailies (*Vancouver Province or Vancouver Sun*) where there was more direct competition. (major research essay, UNBC, History 408, July 2001, M.E. Kelm professor)

³⁶² See Dummit, *The Manly Modern* (2007) One could argue that Second Narrows bridge collapse of 1958 is perhaps better example of this notion but Dummitt's arguments are limited to how "Vancouverites felt about progress and its risks." (53) The lens needs to be widened to include projects outside of the urban environments.

Chapter Five: Raising the Voices of Indigenous People in the CBC Prince Rupert Radio Archives

Indigenous voices in the Prince Rupert radio archives reflect the political and cultural transitions from perception of Indigenous peoples as passive subjects to active voices engaged in the political action and 1960s social change. Historians hear this transition when the audio record is played chronologically, but this also creates a false sense of the presence of Indigenous people on the airways. The digital audio record, however, is also problematic since selections and archive choices made be based on the preferences and values of each person who listens to them. As scholar Lorna Roth notes, “one of the greatest challenges has been to identify the silences that surround contemporary First Peoples’ issues – silences that have led to First Peoples’ erasure from public and political life and hence from them being considered as equal members of Canadian society.”³⁶³ When researchers listen to the recorded audio voices, and sometimes the strained silences, the daily struggles of Indigenous artists or children at the Miller Bay Indian Hospital, for example, are revealed. As with every other topic covered in this dissertation, secondary research materials provide a frame for understanding these audio intersections where time and culture shift widely.

The experiences and lives of the First Nations people of Northern British Columbia were certainly greater than what is held in the audio archive, but the collection does provide an additional way to exploring their everyday lives. These are, at best, audio

³⁶³ Lorna Roth, *Something New in the Air: the Story of First Peoples Broadcasting In Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill- Queens University press, 2005), 62.

snapshots that reflect the unique local and temporal circumstances of Indigenous people of Northern BC from the mid-1950s to 1980, a period of immense political and social change in First Nations governance, identity and representation. CBC announcers were preoccupied with First Nations cultural enterprises such as totem pole carving as a lost art form or reinforcing the image of Indigenous culture as an exotic element of Canadian identity.

These are topics and audio records that have little to do with actual First Nations voices, since they feature non-Native experts and generally serve to reinforce the widely held perceptions of the day. It was assumed that First Nations clung to past cultural identities or that the problems that Indigenous people faced were self-inflicted rather than the result of state oppression. These policies and bigoted attitudes remain part of the experience of Aboriginal people even as they move “from narratives of loss and grief,” to “feeling, healing and presence in the present moment and toward transformative change,” as noted by scholar Cynthia C. Wesley-Esquimaux.³⁶⁴ The recordings from the early 1960s, even when Indigenous voices are present, in the excerpts from a regional Indian hospital or during the opening of local native centre, Indigenous people are often viewed or portrayed as wards of the state. These recordings also include a few local presentations of service organizations that reflect an older missionary project and the novelty of the All Native Basketball tournament. They also fulfill a wider CBC mandate of radio as public service. Rarely do these recordings feature the voices of Indigenous people themselves but rather some authoritative male speaks on their behalf. Similarly,

³⁶⁴ Cynthia C. Wesley-Esquimaux, “Trauma to Resilience: Notes on Decolonization.” In *Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community and Culture*. Ed.s Gail Guthrie Valaskakis et al. (Winnipeg: U of Manitoba Press, 2009), 23.

the CBC radio materials, as primary sources, do not provide a historical context so scholars must turn to other secondary sources for further details.

The downtown riot in Prince Rupert during the summer of 1958 reportedly started when local police arrested a number of Indigenous people for fighting. Historian Robert Campbell wrote

That action provoked a violent response from bystanders, and eventually some 1,000 people were battling among themselves and (especially) with police. Mayor Peter J. Lester read the Riot Act twice, and "the mob answered with more rocks and bottles." The police replied with "25 teargas bombs," which finally dispersed the crowd after more than two hours of conflict. About eighty people were detained and thirty-nine, twenty-four of whom were Aboriginal, were charged with various crimes.³⁶⁵

In local historical memory and lore, this event became directly tied to the actions of mayor Peter Lester who had read the Riot Act; the event is rarely ever framed within the context of Aboriginal issues. However as Campbell explains, the Centennial riot in "Prince Rupert ...set in motion a series of events that helped achieve legal liquor equality for British Columbia First Nations peoples in 1962."³⁶⁶ These were historical events that certainly affected the topics that were selected for CBC broadcast, but a complete analysis by the CFPR staff of the riot was not forthcoming until October of 1984, when staff announcer Neil Gillon interviewed Peter Lester. Mayor Lester clarified the incident, stating that the greatest contributing factors were the discrimination of both the liquor laws, and the provincial police. In a written report commissioned by Lester he said that "there was no question... the police were at fault...and certainly the people who created

³⁶⁵ Robert Campbell, "A "FANTASTIC RIGMAROLE": Deregulating Aboriginal Drinking in British Columbia, 1945-62," *BC Studies*, no.101 (Spring 2004), 81.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

the disturbance were at fault as well.”³⁶⁷ Without a doubt, the riot of 1958, and the election of Nisga’a MLA Frank Calder in 1949³⁶⁸ drew the public’s attention (for a short while at least) into the realities of life for BC Native peoples.

Regulation and control by non-Native authorities was promoted as the preferred method to improve the circumstances of Indigenous people. However, in the CBC radio archives three distinct types of programs emerge that reveal some fresh insights into the lives of Northwest Coast Indigenous peoples. The first is a short series of half-hour programs from Miller Bay Indian Hospital.³⁶⁹ The second is a collection from the mid-1960s where cultural expertise and traditional arts are promoted as a current way of life, rather than as artifacts of a distant past. The third and final thematic thread is a more overt shift in the coverage of political events and the reclamation of First Nations voices in the 1970s. Although the styles of programs featured vary depending on the type and purpose of each, there remains a consistent theme of Indigenous persons as the voice of the subjected “other,” rather than as active players in the conception, production and execution of the radio program.

According to Native American historian Donald Fixico, representations and histories of Indigenous people are potential points of controversy, fraught with emotion and ethical obligations:

This type of myopic history is a violation of professional ethics
when scholars are supposed to examine all the evidence and postulate

³⁶⁷ In an interview with Neil Gillon of CFPR, Peter Lester did discuss the riot and some of the causes. (CBC radio Prince Rupert archives, CD 70 track 2 Tape 182, October 31, 1984)

³⁶⁸ Nisga’a Frank Calder served as the first Aboriginal MLA in Canada. Calder was first elected in 1949 and then served for the better part of twenty five years. See biography by Jean Harper, *He Moved a Mountain: The Life of Frank Calder and the Nisga’a Land Claims Accord*, (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 2013) for more details.

³⁶⁹ See Mary Ellen Kelm’s *Colonizing Bodies* (1999) or recent scholarship by retired public health nurse, Carol Harrison.

objective analyses. To ignore such narrow interpretations is to further break ethics by choosing not to attempt to balance the historical perspectives.³⁷⁰

The intention of this chapter, however, is to set a baseline that establishes when and where Indigenous voices are found in the Prince Rupert CBC radio archives and to mark possible corresponding social change.³⁷¹

With the exception of one important radio interview that features artist Bill Reid, who was a CBC staff announcer in 1960, and the recorded visits to Miller Bay Indian Hospital, the voices of First Nations people are generally silent in the CBC radio archive.³⁷² This, however, was altered in the mid-1960s with the work of a few CBC announcers such as Norman Newton, who paid special attention to the artistic traditions of First Peoples through his work with CBC in Prince Rupert and later in Vancouver.³⁷³ Newton interviewed local artists Charles Dudoward and William Jeffrey, as well as hereditary chiefs such as Ken Harris (Gitxsan) and Nisga'a Hubert MacMillan, having them recount legends and life ways of the people in pre-contact Northwest Coast societies.³⁷⁴ Newton was interested the Indigenous cultural arts, yet he was not opposed to taking creative license with their creation stories, or applying a quasi-anthropological approach to their language, and points of origin. He wrote plays, poetry, radio documentaries and works of fiction to enhance his own literary prestige.

³⁷⁰ Donald Fixico "Ethics and Responsibility In Writing American Indian history," in *Natives and Academics* Ed. Devon A. Mihesuah (Lincoln, U of Nebraska Press, 1998), 89.

³⁷¹ With the exception on one participant, I was not able to interview any Indigenous people for this chapter. I sent out several invitations and spoke casually with prospective participants, and though many were interested in the project, no one responded to my official interview request.

³⁷² Dan Macafee, *Pacific Exchange*, CFPR/CBC Archives tape 118, CD 45 track 2 (Airdate June 23, 1960).

³⁷³ After Newton left CFPR in 1964, this work was taken up to a lesser degree by Jim Taylor who expanded the programming by taking regular seasonal road trips to conduct interviews.

³⁷⁴ See the following list of CBC/CFPR archives CDs: 34 CD 31, CD 51, CD22.

Newton's fixation with Indigenous traditions of the distant past had little to do with the daily struggles of these people between 1955 and 1970. Ceremonial totem pole raisings, for example, were presented by announcers such as John Must³⁷⁵ as exotic events, not as examples of living and dynamic cultural expressions. Indigenous cultural tools, artifacts and traditions were portrayed as objects of a pre-contact past and were used to reinforce the view that British Columbia was a model modern province and Canada was a pluralistic, progressive nation. The next discernable shift in the radio archive underscores the era of civil rights and the rise of Indigenous land claims and power of self-determination. By the early 1970s, the audio record shifts significantly, representing part of the wider social changes brought about in the era of civil rights, and to a certain degree Indigenous reflection and political activism.

There was renewed interest in the 1950s in the Northwest Coast First Nations traditional arts, particularly the carving of totem poles. In the CBC audio record, Indigenous artistic traditions of the late 1950s to the early 1960s are interpreted in one production as a "primitive" and "grotesque" style of a dead cultural tradition.³⁷⁶ Paradoxically, when reporting on early totem pole raisings or projects for preservation, CBC announcer John Must clearly used Gitksan ceremonial singing and drumming as provocative sound effects to create tension and drama. The First Peoples of northern BC were reduced to primitive tribes for a national CBC radio audience in his productions. In one episode, University of British Columbia (UBC) anthropologist Wilson Duff described the carvings on a pole and then commented on some of its oral history. In all

³⁷⁵ John Must, "Gitksan (sic) Totem Pole", CBC/CFPR archives tape 94, CD 36 track 2 (Airdate June 10, 1960).

³⁷⁶ "BC Holiday," CBC/CFPR archives tape 73, CD 29 track 2 (Airdate Aug. 20, 1959)

fairness, Duff deferred to Gitxsan legends, but it was John Must's decision whether or not to incorporate Gitxsan perspectives. This special program was broadcast across the country, and for listeners, these professional experts added an authoritative air to these recordings as they overlaid Indigenous stories with their knowledge and opinion. The subtle experience then for listeners was to reinforce the voice of authority as coming from White middle class males.

Ronald Hawker's *Tales of Ghosts: First Nations Art in British Columbia, 1922-61*, details the temporal and political factors in relation to First Nations West Coast art of this forty-year period symbolically, from the time of the persecution of a Kwakw'akw'akw' Dan Cramer for hosting a potlatch in 1922 to the time of federal enfranchisement of Indigenous people in 1960. Hawker argues that "during this era, Northwest Coast objects functioned in a complex and multifaceted manner, at once asserting the integrity and meaningfulness of First Nations identities and resisting the intent and effects of assimilation."³⁷⁷ Hawker's assertion of First Nations artistic resistance to "the effects of assimilation" are not expressed in the audio record. This can easily be explained, since the voices of the carvers working at the time are also missing from the audio recordings of the earliest programs on totem poles.³⁷⁸ The one exception is an interview, circa 1960, for the provincial program *Pacific Exchange* between Bill Reid and CBC Prince Rupert announcer Dan MacAfee.³⁷⁹ Canadians know Bill Reid as a great Haida carver, lauded as one of the country's greatest First Nations artists whose

³⁷⁷ Ronald Hawker, *A Tale of Ghosts: First Nations Art in British Columbia, 1922-61*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 5.

³⁷⁸ There are several programs on totem poles in the CBC Prince Rupert collection, produced by John Must in and about 1960 and a few from Hazelton pole preservation from the mid 1960s. A detailed study on the artists, practices and CBC radio staff is another research project underway.

³⁷⁹ Dan MacAfee, *Pacific Exchange*, CFPR/CBC archives tape 118, CD 45 track 2, (June 23, 1960)

monumental sculptures of wood and bronze grace international airports and museums around the world.

What makes this particular interview unique is that this audio document also shows Reid's transition from CBC announcer to his emerging cultural interest in Haida art as a project of reclamation. In this interview, however, Bill Reid discussed his views on the state of "Indian" Arts, and carving in particular. In the audio recording, Reid was introduced by CFPR announcer Dan MacAfee as "a voice that should be familiar" to CBC listeners. In the interview, Reid explained that the carving and construction project was intended to replicate the style of three Haida poles that had been removed from the Haida village of Ninstints and were later erected on the grounds of UBC. The project was also filmed and documented in a 1958 CBC television production.³⁸⁰ What is perhaps most surprising in the interview was Reid's clarification and adamant responses to MacAfee regarding the state of Indigenous art at the time. Reid clearly said that the west coast traditions were, at best, at a standstill. He saw a return to the artwork of past generations as an unrealistic goal or expectation for Aboriginal artists to replicate. He also took issue with MacAfee's use of the term 'restoration' and rather insisted that he and Kwakwaka'wakw carver Doug Cranmer were creating poles entirely in the tradition of Haida artists, to the best of their abilities.³⁸¹

Reid and Cranmer were copying the conventions of traditional Haida carvers, but Reid did not position himself as a master carver. Indeed, in the interview, he agreed with the Canada Council of the Arts' position that the "conditions" of Northwest Coast art

³⁸⁰ *Totem*, CBC television first airdate May 21, 1959. Narrated by Bill Reid. CBC archives online: <http://www.cbc.ca/player/Digital+Archives/Lifestyle/Travel/ID/1659821060/>

³⁸¹ See Aldona Jonaitis, Aaron Glass, *The Totem Pole: An Intercultural History*, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre) 241189-191.

grew out of a particular cultural and social period that could not be replicated.³⁸²

Cranmer's previous work experience helped out immensely, since he had been both a logger and carver working under the guidance of his uncle Mungo Martin, a famed West Coast Indigenous artist.³⁸³ It is not clear if the Canada Council's position and rejection of funding for the first project was due to the inclusion of a carving program, but it would make sense that this is what Reid meant. A carving program would have encouraged the belief that Canada's national arts body supported Indigenous artists in their primitive crafts rather than celebrating the art as of a bygone, classical period.

The position of Reid and Canada Council reflected a typical urban Canadian view that favoured the assimilation of First Peoples into mainstream modern Canadian society. Reid himself later stated in the interview that he did not think that contemporary First Nations artists could make "a modern totem pole." He concluded

The Indian culture is, in itself not a vital or flourishing thing it's uh, Indians are people and they're becoming more and more like everybody else all the time.

I think this is a good thing, I mean we're all citizens of this country and we all have the same impulses and the same way of looking at things and this is the way it should be. And I think out of this we can evolve a better Canadian culture. But as far as Indian culture is concerned, it's rather hopeless to try to maintain it as a separate entity. I think that as the Indians become better educated and uh, become more aware of what's going on in the rest of the world, then they will turn again to their old arts and draw from their inspiration to go on to other things. And those who are artistically inclined will probably draw something from the arts of their ancestors. But there won't be any more totem poles or any more masks or anything like that of the quality of the past. ”³⁸⁴

³⁸² Macafee, "Pacific Exchange" (June 23, 1960).

³⁸³ Jennifer Kramer, *K'ESU' The Art and Life of Doug Cranmer* (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 2012), 32.

³⁸⁴ Macafee, "Pacific Exchange" (1960)

Reid appeared to view the First Nations carving as an art of a distant past, at least at that point in his life. This early audio recording provides surprising detail and content that just does not seem to fit with what a listener today might assume of one of Canada's greatest Indigenous artists. Yet this sentiment it is fairly consistent with Reid's comments made later in life. Aldona Jonaitis and Aaron Glass wrote, "Reid's attitude toward his Haida contemporaries ... fluctuated between condescension for their lack of knowledge and disdain for those who invented new ceremonialism."³⁸⁵ The audio record provides detail and insight to a specific moment over the course of life of an individual. These moments are temporal contact zones where differing cultures, as well as personalities, interact.³⁸⁶

Another set of recordings provides very different incorporation of Indigenous voices into the audio record. The words of Indigenous patients, health care and radio employees are recorded in four audio programs ranging from a special variety talent show in October of 1959 to three half-hour programs titled *Visit to Miller Bay* that aired in the spring of 1962. These programs reflect the challenges of North Coast regional geography and the health care needs and administration of Indigenous people. More importantly, however, these recordings affirm CBC radio's role as a central communications link between regional Indigenous friends and family members back in home villages.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁵ Aldona Jonaitis, Aaron Glass, (2010) 241

³⁸⁶ See Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale, eds *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past* (Vancouver: UBC Press), 2005.

³⁸⁷ *Rupert Calling*, "Visit to Miller Bay" CBC/CFPR archives tape 136, CD 52 track 1. (Airdate, March 6, 1962).

The 1959 variety show was part of the *Talk of the Town* series by producer John Must. The idea for a show exclusively featuring the patients and staff at Miller Bay Indian Hospital most likely derived from the first visit by CBC staff to Miller Bay. This recording gives listeners a different perspective on long-term residence and Indigenous health care, one of active participation and Indigenous people having some fun in an otherwise dire circumstance. Given the racist discrimination that was a root cause of the riot in 1958, it is plausible that CBC staff were making a conscientious effort to reach across social division between Indigenous listeners and the non-Indigenous community.

The variety program was recorded live at the hospital and featured the patients and staff as performers. This recording presents an alternate and more upbeat view of Indigenous patients confined to hospital for long periods. Music included songs performed by Larry Denny,³⁸⁸ Paul Dennis, and brothers Arthur and George Nelson, as well as a rendition of Elvis Presley's "Treat Me Nice" performed by Kelly McMillan, Ken Grandison, and Jimmy Michel. The hospital school choir sang two selections, "Bluebells of Scotland" and "A Bluebird on My Window Sill." The only solo female patient to sing was Madeline West, who performed "Fraulein." The only identified staff member to perform was Marjorie Campbell, who was introduced by the host Gordon MacInnis as the "very attractive nurse." Campbell sang the Kitty Wells tune "God Didn't Make Honky Tonk Angels." Clearly, the musical tastes of both the patients and staff were of a contemporary western genre. This variety concert was the first recorded visit by the CBC staff to the hospital. With the exception of the short interview with Dr. GW Fiddis

³⁸⁸ Recent information from researcher Carol Harrison indicates that a few of these singers were seasonal staff at the hospital and were interviewed by Harrison recently for a forthcoming book.

at the beginning of the concert, the only time Indigenous voices are featured was when they performed.

This changed dramatically, however, in the subsequent three audio archive recordings, where it is clear the Indigenous voices of patients were meant to be the central feature of the program. Although the audio excerpts from patients are short, they are valuable historical records that can be a starting point for genealogical and local research. These recordings can be a powerful and complex way to follow up with local descendants and families using oral histories, linking generations and engaging with the oral traditions of North Coast peoples.³⁸⁹

In spring of 1962, the CBC staff were more focused for the program *Visit to Miller Bay*. In the first recording, dated March 6, 1962, announcer Angus MacKracken introduced the program by stating

We will be visiting Miller Bay Indian Hospital near Prince Rupert to speak with the patients and staff. We hope among other things our visit will serve as sort of a two-way link between the patients and their relatives and friends along the Seven Sisters Network.³⁹⁰

This perception that CBC was a key communications connection point for regional First Nations was also expressed by Dr. G.W. Fiddis who was in charge of the facility. Dr. Fiddis said

Miller Bay as you know ... is the hospital for the Indians for two thirds of British Columbia and the people come from such a distance that [they do not] hear anything of their friends and relatives in long weeks. They don't uh, write to each other very much and this means of communication to their friends back home is very valuable to us. And we appreciate this service very much indeed. And hope that uh people back home will gain some insight into

³⁸⁹ Personal conversation with a cousin of patient Victoria Gray, Nov. 1, 2015

³⁹⁰ ³⁹⁰ *Rupert Calling*, "Visit to Miller Bay" CBC/CFPR archives tape 136, CD 52 track 1. (Airdate, March 6, 1962).

the purpose of the hospital and hear from their friends who are here from time to time.³⁹¹

Interestingly, Dr. Fiddis commented that patients did not receive many letters actually contradicts the patients themselves who were later interviewed by the CBC hosts in the programs that followed. Although the patients for the most part read prepared speeches when they were interviewed, it is clear that many sent and received cards, letters and sometimes even little packages from home. This was clear even in the on-air comments. Mrs. Hester Marks said:

Hello friends at Massett. I feel highly honoured to be given this special privilege to speak to my friends and family. I am glad to say I am doing very well and hope to be with you all again this coming summer (1962). A special word to my son: Daddy told me in his letters you are a good and an excellent housekeeper. Good for you Sonny, keep it up. And to Daddy I say keep the home fire burning bright 'til I come home. And please keep those letters coming. Sonny I hope you like your present – your birthday present I send you. In closing I would like to thank the staff here at Miller Bay Hospital for making my stay a very pleasant one. Thank you very much.³⁹²

Besides the personal need to keep in touch with friends back home, some patients may have used the radio interview opportunity to assert some authority from a distance. The first person interviewed for the March 6 edition was Peter N. Martin from Skidegate, who commented he was at Miller Bay hospital to “restore [his] sight.”³⁹³ Martin began his message home by saying he was “glad to speak to you by radio.” He then mentioned that he was much improved” and hoped “to see you all soon again.” He then added, “I am very much interested in all the work of the village and council. And I can say

³⁹¹ Rupert Calling, *Ibid.* (1962)

³⁹² *Rupert Calling*, *Ibid.* (1962)

³⁹³ Rupert Calling” *Ibid.* (1962)

whenever I arrive home, I can be available again, as in the past, for [the] public service asked of me.” Peter Martin’s message served not only there to reassure family and friends of his improved health, but also affirmed his past contributions and standing in Skidegate village politics.

In his interview, Dr. Fiddis also assumed that some Indigenous patients would be reluctant to speak and when they “come before the microphone for the first time, like with all of us, there is a certain amount of ... fright or stage fright yet after they become familiar with things, they have a story to tell. And many of our patients have very interesting comments to make about their stay in hospital and would appreciate the chance to talk with friends back home.³⁹⁴ Patient Rosarita Mitchell did not sound timid when announcer Angus McCracken spoke with her. He stated that Rosarita must be a “very popular girl” since the CBC station had received many on-air dedications for songs and records from friends and family. Rosarita Mitchell said

First, I want to say hello to my parents and my brothers and sisters and also to my friends. I will go to rehab. It’s from 4:30 to 7:30. I work in ward A, [and] help feed the babies and get them ready for bed. On Monday evenings we have a show in the patients’ rec room. Sometimes we also have a show during the week. My days are full too. Each morning I go to school from 9 to 12. After lunch there is rest period for two hours during which we sleep. In the afternoons I go to O.T. [Occupational therapy] where I have made many things. Among them a ... picture album.³⁹⁵

The value of these detailed messages cannot be understated. It is clear from Rosarita Mitchell’s comments that the patients were active participants in the hospital operations. The older teens, at least those who were able, helped out with the care of

³⁹⁴ *Rupert Calling*, “Visit to Miller Bay” CBC/CFPR Archives tape 136, CD 52 track 1, (Airdate March 6, 1962).

³⁹⁵ *Rupert Calling*, “Visit to Miller Bay.” CBC/CFPR Archives tape 14, CD 6 track 2 (Airdate: April 3, 1962).

the infants and toddlers. Children were in school part of the day, and indeed one patient sixteen-year old Victoria Gray, whose home community was Terrace, stated that her favourite subjects were “Math and French.”³⁹⁶

Interviewers Peter Ford and Angus McCracken recorded the messages from several of the children from across the Northwest. For example, there was Sharon Wilson from Hartley Bay, Audie Hall from Smithers, Terrence Russ from New Aiyansh and Robert Alexcee from Port Simpson. Young adults also gave their greetings: James Dennis from Moricetown, who wanted to say hello to “my brother and sister back in Smithers.” Dennis added that he “expected to be home in time for summer.”³⁹⁷ The oldest hospital resident to be interviewed was 96-year-old Billy Prince from Nak’azdli.³⁹⁸ In a conversation with Norman Newton, he described how his great grandfather got the surname Prince, and he described the arrival of the Catholic missionary Fr. Gabriel Morice to Fort Saint James in Northern BC. Billy Prince’s provided first hand eyewitness testimony to the event, yet his speech is difficult to understand. It is Norman Newton’s innate curiosity and his skill as an interviewer that brings out the details of Billy Prince’s life by asking him more questions or by paraphrasing and repeating what Prince had said.

The length of time that each patient was at the Miller Bay Hospital varied, but most were expected to be for the long term. Dr. G.W. Fiddis described the lengthy process by which patients were sent to Miller Bay Hospital after local health care

³⁹⁶ *Rupert Calling*, “Visit to Miller Bay.” CBC/CFPR Archives tape 36, CD 15 track 2. (Airdate June 5, 1962).

³⁹⁷ *Ibid*

³⁹⁸ *Ibid*.

options were consulted. One interesting note is how pediatrician Dr. Aftahee³⁹⁹ summarized the two main types of illness suffered by the children: respiratory issues, and chronic skin conditions that he attributed to “over-crowding and poor economic circumstances at home.” Dr. Aftahee emphasized that the children did not suffer from tuberculosis, however, he but suggested that heart conditions “were more commonly found in Indian children ... [and] with more heart diseases in the general population” due primarily to congenital heart disease, which may have been from “consanguinity” and viruses in “early pregnancy.”⁴⁰⁰

Miller Bay may have been a somewhat lively place with shows and occupational therapy activities, and school for the younger children; it was also a place where long term care and treatment options were investigative and sometimes speculative, based on the medical research available to the doctors. Another revealing audio clip features outtakes that were appended to one *Visit to Miller Bay* episode. These audio pieces are disturbing. A listener can hear the long silences as one pushy female staff member tries to get the little boy, Terry Russ, to speak into the microphone. The unidentified female voice tried unsuccessfully to first encourage, and then later intimidate, the boy to speak. The whispery voice anxiously said “Come on... the tape is going around and around” and “you still have your spelling to do.”⁴⁰¹ There is also an irritating whine of the tape recorder adding to an already disturbing visual element in the mind’s eye of the listener. This woman was clearly tried to intimidate Terry Russ, but it could be argued that Terry Russ was also exerting his own form of power by remaining silent. It has been argued

³⁹⁹ This is a phonetic guess in the spelling of the name – and at another part of the tape the announcers pronounce his name as Aft-Ta-Han-Nee.

⁴⁰⁰ “Visit to Miller Bay.” CBC/CFPR Archives tape 14, CD#6 track 2 (Airdate April 3, 1962).

⁴⁰¹ CBC/CFPR Archives tape14, CD 6 tracks 3 &4. (Out takes recorded April 3, 1962).

elsewhere that in similar context, at the Anglican mission school in Metlakatla, some of the female students refused to speak in English when commanded by the visiting clergyman.⁴⁰² It seems the pressure or the expectation to perform was not always met with success when trying to force a Tsimshian child to speak.

Silence, according to Metis scholar Fyre Jean Graveline has been a powerful form of resistance to colonial messages and processes: “Many [First Nations people] have resisted silently, inwardly, with their spirit, by refusing to change. ... Silence—the guarding of Ancestral secrets— has long been embraced by our Elders as a successful tool of resistance.”⁴⁰³ Silence does not always have to be about power; sometimes it is simply a respectful act of reflective quiet. Tsimshian cultural teacher and counselor Patricia Vickers described it this way: “Elders to young adults, silence regarding their knowledge and experience and withholding it out of respect for the need for the other to gain inquiry skills.”⁴⁰⁴

From a radio broadcasting point of view, long periods of silence are particularly negative. With radio, anything longer than a normal pause in a conversation could mean that something has gone wrong technically, or worse, the guest has walked away from the interview. In this way, the pre-recorded interviews were always preferable since unwanted silences could be edited out. This too shows the cultural gulf between Indigenous audience and CBC announcers of the day, since the CBC staff did their best to mitigate ‘dead air.’

⁴⁰² See Maureen L. Atkinson *One Sided Conversations: Chapters in the Life of Odille Morison*, Athabasca University, 2008): 32

⁴⁰³ Fyre Jean Graveline, *Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness* (Halifax, Fernwood Publishing, 1996) 44, 185.

⁴⁰⁴ Personal electronic message, Patricia June Vickers to Maureen Atkinson (August 14, 2016)

CBC radio personality and producer Norman Newton was perhaps the most engaged or skilled interviewer of First Nations patients, and he seems to have taken Dr. Fiddis comments to heart about the interesting stories patients had to tell. Newton arrived in Prince Rupert in the spring of 1962, and from the start he was at odds with the dictatorial CFPR station manager, Will Hankinson. Norman Newton considered himself a creative writer first and a radio announcer second. Over the course of his life (he passed away in 2011) Newton wrote several books and had a few published with a small publishing firm in England. He never achieved much recognition for this work. His book, *Big Stuffed Hand of Friendship* (1969), is a dark satire on the life of a small North Coast fictional town of Port Charles, a thinly veiled reference to the City of Prince Rupert.⁴⁰⁵ Interestingly, the climax of Newton's novel is a riot in downtown fictional Port Charles, most likely modeled after the 1958 riot in Prince Rupert. As a curious and eager promoter of Indigenous cultural traditions, Norman Newton produced a series called *The Indian as Artist* that ran on the national CBC network in the mid-1960s. Several of Newton's audio productions, both completely polished documentaries as well as raw, unedited interviews are historically significant and feature Northwest Indigenous men who were practicing artists and/or cultural experts.

Two unedited interviews by Norman Newton, one with William Jeffrey and the other with [Charles] Dudoward, however, underscore the difference between a packaged audio piece that is fully vetted and edited and one with recorded raw data.⁴⁰⁶ The first interview with the Prince Rupert carver William Jeffrey is the only known audio interview with the artist. Most of the replica poles found in the city were carved by

⁴⁰⁵ Norman Newton, *The Big Stuffed Hand of Friendship* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart; 1969)

⁴⁰⁶ Norman Newton Fonds, RBSCARC 1402 box 7, UBC Koerner Library, Vancouver BC

Jeffrey. With his daughter Alice, he copied the style of Haida poles that were brought to Rupert from different North Coast communities from 1930s to the 1950s. These projects were haphazardly organized, most often by the City of Prince Rupert, and thus did not have the same prestige of a project sponsored by a national arts organization, the Canada Council or with the academic interest of the University of British Columbia. This could explain why Jeffery is not recognized in any account of totem pole literature to date, even though he produced several full size poles and a few of his own design. One full size pole was commissioned for the 1963 World's Fair in New York.⁴⁰⁷ He also made several miniature poles working in stone and wood, with one jade miniature, 20 cm high for display at the Expo 67 in Montreal, and valued at thirty thousand dollars.⁴⁰⁸

This recording began with whistling as Norman Newton checked the volume levels and made sure the tape recording device was actually turned on.⁴⁰⁹ Newton then asked Jeffrey to take a few whacks at the log with a carving tool for the purpose of sound effects. Presumably Newton wanted to include this sound in his documentary. Newton has to repeat a few questions at least twice since he and Jeffrey were disrupted by noise from the street. Cars honked and trucks rumbled in the background a few times as Jeffrey and Newton spoke.

Norman Newton asked about painting techniques, described the tools Jeffrey used, and then asked if traditional tools were better, and made the work more “authentic.” His most direct question to Jeffrey was “What is your favorite school of totem pole

⁴⁰⁷ Linda Lafleur, “Reflections on the reproduction of totem poles in Prince Rupert,” *Prince Rupert Daily News*, March 26, 2004.

⁴⁰⁸ “Totem pole for Expo aim of famed carver,” *Prince Rupert Daily News*, Monday April 10, 1967

⁴⁰⁹ Norman Newton, William G. Jeffery interview, CBC/CFPR archives tape 178, 69 cut 4 (n.d. circa mid-1960s)

carving?” Jeffrey’s polite but politically astute response explained there was a commonly held tradition that Haida “were the best carvers” and with the cultural exchanges through marriage, many of the traditions crossed between North Coast First Nations. He continued, saying

In my experience in the walk of life, you can see the most – best carved poles come from the Charlottes. Because it is known they are [from] Charlotte. Ah a carver goes up – up the interior to carve certain poles. That’s the same as Tsimshian... And there was intermarriage too.... They are Charlotte People are the best carvers. You can see it yourself in the Museum and the books they have through Barbeau.

Newton then asked, “What do you think of Barbeau by the way?” perhaps hoping for a more critical or controversial response from Jeffrey. The carver in fact suggested that listeners should buy Barbeau’s books on totem poles “from the King’s Printer” in Ottawa. Marius Barbeau was an early Canadian professional anthropologist and folklorist who investigated and documented lifeways and artistic and cultural traditions of Northwest Coast Indigenous peoples.⁴¹⁰

The main interview concluded with a short discussion on how First Nations art was not dying out but it was difficult to make a living as a carver. Jeffrey complained that he did not earn “enough for what he carves.” And he noted, “Any type of carving for the time you put in, they don’t – sometimes your time is six or seven cents an hour by the time you get through.” Jeffrey’s comments reveals a real problem for First Nations artists

⁴¹⁰ Barbeau catalogued all the known totem poles both in museum collections as well as in northern BC communities. He recorded oral histories, collected songs and material crafts as well over season decades of northern BC field research. Barbeau is also featured in at least one CFPR tape describing the North Coast music traditions. See also, Laurence Nowry’s *Man of Mana: Marius Barbeau a Biography* (Toronto: NC Press, 1998).

in the face of all the promotion of carving as a traditional skill set that carried much prestige.



Figure 11) Replica pole carved by W. Jeffrey (circa 1960)

This pole stands next to Charles Hays statue outside Prince Rupert City Hall and Archives Office

Photo: E. Atkinson-Bruce April, 2017

Without the hereditary First Nation chiefs commissioning the work as in the past, the only market in Prince Rupert was creating miniatures for tourists or copying replica poles from decaying original poles. Newton mentioned that maybe carvers could form a cooperative, but Jeffrey replied that this took financing. Even well-established carvers like Jeffrey worked several different jobs over the years, unlikely to ever fully support themselves by art commissions alone.⁴¹¹ As with many First Nations, getting a loan from a financial institution proved difficult, even in the 1980s. For Indigenous people who

⁴¹¹ For more information on this and further examples of interviews between artists and Norman Newton, see *Fire in the Raven's Nest* (1973) and his conversation with a young Robert Davidson.

lived on reserves it was impossible to get a mortgage to purchase their own homes or a fishing boat since these bank loans required property ownership as collateral.

Even though Norman Newton highlighted the expertise of little recognized carvers such as Charles Dudoward and William Jeffrey, Newton's own attitudes were informed by a liberal arts education of the 1950s and a sympathetic view that First Nations culture existed primarily in the past. There are several different programs produced by Newton housed in the CFPR collection, almost all of them documentary in nature, featuring a localized facet of Indigenous history. There are two programs for the series "Indian As Artist." One features the teachings of the nineteenth century Wetsu'wit'in prophet Bini. Newton interviewed elder Donald Grey of Hagwilget, (near Hazelton) for his interview and Mr. Grey actually sings some of Bini's songs in the Wetsu'wit'in language to Newton.⁴¹² Newton traveled to Haida Gwaii and interviewed Island residents about their daily lives. He interviewed one logger and his wife who lived in remote logging camp, a cannery operator, as well as a geologist.⁴¹³ In another program, Newton featured the art forms of the Nisga'a.⁴¹⁴

Norman Newton consistently cast First Nations artistic and revitalization ventures in a positive light. This was part of the important continued social shift that moved carving and more conventional art forms into the mainstream as markets grew for Northwest Coast styles. Financial support for carving and preservation programs from government agencies of the 1950s in Victoria and at UBC was sporadic. Yet Ronald

⁴¹² "Prophet Bini" *The Indian as Artist*, Norman Newton, CBC/CFPR Archives tape 52, CD 22 track 1 (n.d. mid 1960s)

⁴¹³ "Queen' Charlotte Island documentary" CBC/CFPR Archive tape 126, CD 49 track 1 (recorded Aug. 31, 1963) It is most likely Newton's Interview with Robert Davidson took place after 1967, when he returned to work for CBC Vancouver.

⁴¹⁴ "Nisga'a Art Forms" *Northwest '63* CBC/CFPR Archives tape 124, CD 48 track 3. (Airdate: Sept 14, 1963)

Hawker argues that provincial authorities simultaneously attempted to depoliticize the meaning behind the poles used by First Nations at contemporary political events, and to use the poles as a symbol for British Columbia and its businesses, products, and investment opportunities.⁴¹⁵

In northern British Columbia one project embodied this vision most significantly: the Ksan Village and Museum. It was conceived by a group of local residents, both Indigenous and newcomers, to enhance the economic and social conditions of both communities. In the hour-long special for the CBC documentary program *Between Ourselves* (1971), host and producer Barry Willis provided detailed background of the founding of the project from government and committee officials but more importantly, highlighted many First Nations voices in his presentation. Besides using the “actuality” where the voice or sounds were recorded on site, including Chiefs Ken Harris (Halbewegath of the Fireweed clan) and Walter Harris, (Geel also of the Fireweed clan), Willis included the voices of female Indigenous speakers Doreen Jensen, and tour guide Frieda Diesing.⁴¹⁶ Diesing explained the meaning and construction of the long houses, and the purpose of tools and artifacts and how each was made.

Doreen Jensen described the role played by dances in the promotion of the Ksan project, but more importantly, the language, cultural revitalization and protocols that were not well-known to her generation. As Jensen explained to Barry Willis:

We have [elder] Ernest Hyzemiques from Gitsegulka instructing the dancing and when he first started he found that none of us knew anything about the feast or what went on at the feast or any of the songs. We hadn't even heard a lot of songs so he felt that we should learn songs first so, he was, very good to

⁴¹⁵ Ronald Hawker, 2006, 137.

⁴¹⁶ By the 1980s both Doreen Jensen and Freda Diesing would later be recognized for their work as Aboriginal artists, cultural teachers, and advocates.

let us tape some of his own family songs. So we have permission to practice with them. [It only] has been in the last couple of years ... to be able to tape anyone's songs, to be able to use it even. ... Earnest has given us permission to use his chief's song and that had been handed down for seven generations, or seven chief's its been handed down. ... So it's quite an old, old song, and some of the words in the song – well we can't make out what they are,- and they're from our language! Its so old that the words are not intelligible.⁴¹⁷

Barry Willis's 1970 documentary is in sharp contrast to the totem pole raising feature created by John Must just ten years before. Willis highlighted Indigenous female voices, the sound actuality (for 'on location' feel) and also provided a very long concluding narration, referred to as an "extro," that explained his sympathetic views on the plight of First Nations. Willis commented

It is a foolish culture that does not assimilate into its way of life all the good and useful parts other cultures with which it comes in contact. This is no less true of the Native Indian cultures. In this, the northwest section of British Columbia, many truly advanced lifestyles were in existence long before the arrival of the white man.

Perhaps it is not too late appreciate and preserve this culture. Perhaps it is not too late for our Indian People to pass down to their children and grandchildren the arts and crafts which are quickly becoming a lost art. Further, perhaps we can help to regain the proud and prosperous race known as Indians from the dehumanizing and demoralizing role which [sic] was foisted upon them by the advance of the white man's culture.

Barry Willis was both impressed by his experience at Ksan historical village, but also took a keen interest in promoting better cross-cultural understanding as a way of advancing all of Canadian society.

An important historical context must be added to account for this shift in style and position between the two CBC announcers, both based in Prince Rupert. The federal Liberal government, elected in 1968 under the leadership of Pierre Trudeau, had just

⁴¹⁷ "K'san," *Between Ourselves*, CBC/CFPR Archives tape 196, CD 79 (Airdate May 20, 1971).

created a dramatic stir with the release of the White Paper on “Indian Policy” (June 1969). The Liberals proposed to abolish the Indian Act within five years in order to remove the government’s perceived barriers to Indigenous status “individually” as full-fledged Canadians and “collectively” as with other Canadian ethnic minorities.⁴¹⁸ As historian J.R. Miller explains, the White Paper galvanized Indigenous people in their outright rejection of it: “Indian organizations ... were politicized to fight the federal government” and were “sufficiently united to do so in a disciplined and effective way.”⁴¹⁹ This documentary reflects how this period became a pivotal historical point in that the remaining CBC/CFPR productions included more First Nations content after 1970. Most documentaries and interviews were far more political in tone, and centred Indigenous voices and identity in relation to land and natural resources as well.

Part of the reason for this politicization was the CBC’s national radio program *Our Native Land*, which had started production in 1965. Based in Winnipeg, the production of the program carried on for more than twenty years, and according to the CBC archives’ listing, the program “focused on native issues and cultures, [and] chronicled the rejuvenation of Indigenous literature, art, culture and political activism.”⁴²⁰ Interestingly the CFPR archives did not follow or keep recordings of what would be considered local First Nations political stories of the day. For example, there is no recording of the Nisga’a taking the provincial government to court or the final proceedings of the landmark decision by the Supreme Court in 1973. Nisga’a MLA

⁴¹⁸ J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* 3rd ed. (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 2000), 333.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 336.

⁴²⁰ *Our Native Land*, CBC website - CBC Archives website accessed Nov. 14, 2015 <http://archives.radio-canada.ca/programs/535/>

Frank Calder and lawyer Thomas Berger argued the Nisga'a had not ceded title to the land in the Nass Valley. Historian Olive Dickason wrote that the "BC Supreme Court ruled, however, that any rights Amerindians had at time of contact were overruled by the mere enactment of white man's law, in spite of the fact that none of the legislation stated that fact."⁴²¹ Calder then appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme court ruling was a close one, but this time the ruling was tied because of technical point rather the substance of the Nisga'a claim and was thus a perceived victory.⁴²²

This case as well as other land issues in Canada at the time, such as the Cree struggle for rights to James Bay region in Quebec, created greater caution and concern by resource companies, and optimism among Indigenous peoples, according to political scientist Paul Tennant. He wrote that "Indian confidence increased" in British Columbia since "many Indians took it for granted that the provincial government would now recognize Indigenous title and proceed with a negotiated settlement."⁴²³ By 1973, the federal Liberal government, in light of the ruling of the Calder case,⁴²⁴ re-evaluated its position on Indigenous title and land claim negotiations.

On the international front, the oil crisis, brought about by lack of domestic crude production and control by foreign suppliers (OPEC), increased demand for getting North American supplies to refineries and then to market. Oil and natural gas pipelines from northern Canadian regions in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and the Mackenzie regions now seemed economically viable. Prime Minister Trudeau asked BC provincial

⁴²¹ Olive Dickason, William Newbigging, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations* (2nd ed.) (Don Mills On.: Oxford University Press, 2010), 287.

⁴²² Thanks to Susan Neylan for this clarification.

⁴²³ Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal People and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989*. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), 166.

⁴²⁴ Miller, *Skyscrapers* 344.

court Justice Thomas Berger to lead a commission to consider the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. Berger broke new ground by holding hearings not only in urban centres, but more significantly, in the northern communities most directly affected by the projects, primarily the regional First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities along the Mackenzie River. He held hearings in communities throughout the north and requested CBC Northern Service (radio) to broadcast the proceedings. Many of northern people tuned in, and were brought into the Canadian sphere of discussion for the first time. Patrick Scott was a CBC journalist who came north to cover the event. In his 2012 study, Scott wrote that he “witnessed the power of storytelling” during the hearings, as a “tool for revitalizing Dene culture.”⁴²⁵ Storytelling is more than presenting legends or traditional ways of being. It is an expression of a personal truth and cultural identity in the present, and in this way, radio can be a more natural bridge for people to express their ideas through the spoken word.

The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry’s 1977 landmark report called for a ten-year moratorium for the settlement of Indigenous claims before northern development commenced. For some, the Berger Inquiry established a new baseline for community hearings, while for northern media, specifically CBC radio, the lasting impact was one of recognition of the benefit for northern Indigenous peoples to hear broadcasting in their own languages. Thus, in 1977 when another pipeline proposal was put forward, this time across northern British Columbia from Alberta to tidewater at Kitimat, there was the

⁴²⁵ Patrick Scott, *Talking Tools: Faces of Aboriginal Oral Tradition in Contemporary Society*. (Edmonton: CCI Press, 2012), 7.

expectation that all stakeholders, particularly regional First Nations, would participate fully in West Coast Oil Ports Inquiry led by Commissioner Andrew Thompson.⁴²⁶

Perhaps the most concentrated grouping of Indigenous voices to be found in the CBC Prince Rupert collection is tied directly to the aforementioned Oil Ports Inquiry. Dating from 1978, there are fourteen separate half-hour weekly programs that followed the Thompson Inquiry around British Columbia, particularly among the southern coastal communities. In the same style as the Berger Inquiry, radio staff members were hired in Vancouver, most of them involved with the fledgling co-operative radio CFRO and most of them had broadcasting experience.⁴²⁷ This collection, according to producer John Daly, was not owned or produced by the CBC.

Of the fourteen programs, four have significant First Nations' content and feature the voices of Indigenous men and women who came to present their generally universal opposition to the presence of oil tankers on the west coast. There are two programs that focus on the legal and political presentations by leaders such as George Manuel of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and lawyers about the First Nations land title and Indigenous rights. The most compelling voices, however, are the individual speakers, particularly elders, who respectfully explained to Andrew Thompson how their lives and identity depended on resources from the Pacific Ocean.

Ed Newman from Bella Bella described the territory of the Heiltsuk and then introduced Angus Campbell who is an elder "of eighty years."⁴²⁸ Newman said:

⁴²⁶ Andrew Thompson was faculty of Law professor from UBC and the initial project was a put forward by oil companies. The Inquiry stalled and was later adjourned as competing interests and oil companies changed their initial proposals and then withdrew completely.

⁴²⁷ John Daly, personal email communication, May 20, 2013.

⁴²⁸ *West Coast Reports*, Spring 1977. CBC/CFPR Archives, CD 108-113.

Angus has asked me to convey his concern about the proposed tanker ports on the coast. He is concerned that if... we have an oil spill, ... on the outside of the islands, it is going to affect our way of life. The types of seaweed we take for food... the herring eggs we take for food, spawn on kelp, that grow on the outside of the islands.” And he feels if we have something happen, a major oil spill... it will have a definite effect on the way of life [of] our people.⁴²⁹

Another voice from the Mount Currie presentation was that of an unidentified female elder who spoke in her Indigenous Language, which was then translated:

We do not want, a lot of oil. We do not need a lot of oil. We cannot eat it. We do not want the fish to die. Our lake is small and our nets are not very big. Still the white man comes and cuts up our nets. The fish did not come early this year and there were not very many. I did not fish because my net was not replaced. The net that was cut up. We do not want the oil to destroy our fish.⁴³⁰

Little has been written about the 1977-78 West Coast Oil Ports Inquiry, although the topic certainly resurfaced after the 2006 proposal by the energy company Enbridge for the Northern Gateway pipeline proposal to ship bitumen from northern Alberta to tidewater port at Kitimat BC. The route is essentially identical to the Kitimat Pipeline Project of 1977. This lack of scholarly background could be simply because commissioner Thompson, unlike Thomas Berger, did not present a final report due to the untimely adjournment of the hearings, but he did submit a document, *Statement of the Proceedings: West Oil Ports Inquiry*.⁴³¹ Commission Thompson was frustrated by the adjournment since he felt the work of the inquiry was incomplete. In his interim *Statement* Thompson expressed “deep concern” over the keen division between perceived

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ “Voices of Mount Currie” *West Coast Reports*, CBC/CFPR Archives, CD 112 track 2

⁴³¹ Andrew Thompson, *Statement of the Proceedings: West Coast Oil Ports Inquiry*, February 23, 1978. 3-4.

economic winners and losers and regional and national interests.⁴³² He explained that should a future port be built without a full and complete inquiry, Ottawa's perceived "indifference" to British Columbia, "will be interpreted as another example of arrogance on the part of central Canada."⁴³³ He continued,

British Columbians are not trying to limit alternatives for transporting oil to markets in other parts of Canada, or even the United States. That is not the focus of their concern. Rather, they want the importance of Canada's Pacific Coast and marine resources recognized and taken into account. People see no reason why "national" interests should necessarily be considered more important than their "regional" ones.⁴³⁴

Nevertheless, the voices of fishers and Indigenous people who presented to the commission are preserved in this radio series in an unlikely time capsule in Prince Rupert archives. The CBC does not technically own the copyright to the content or the reproduction of these voices; however, since they were produced through funding from the Kitimat Oil Ports Inquiry, they are therefore open for public use.

Additional First Nations content in the CBC/CFPR archive consists of the six episodes of *Talking Stick* that aired in the summer of 1978. This short-lived series was financed by a short-term grant from the federal government, but it is clear that the persuasiveness of radio was not lost on the host/producers Valerie Dudoward and Glen Watson.⁴³⁵ Valerie Dudoward witnessed a fundamental change in the way First Nations voices were included or excluded from the dominant media of radio over the next ten years. Between 1978 and 1988, beginning in Northern Canada, the federal government

⁴³² Thompson, 3.

⁴³³ Thompson, 3-4.

⁴³⁴ Thompson, 4.

⁴³⁵ See chapter three for more on Valerie Dudoward.

recognized the importance of Indigenous voices in the broadcast medium in northern British Columbia.

The program *Talking Stick* began as a pilot project in the late 1977-8, and introduced the notion that radio was an important vehicle for social change in First Nations communities around the province. In the first episode host Valerie Dudoward began by describing the program: “This is *Talking Stick*, a program designed to keep you informed of news and events taking place throughout BC.” She then continued to explain the name of the program. “We have chosen the name *Talking Stick* for this radio program because it remains a symbol to Indian People in British Columbia.” Dudoward then introduced Oliver Adams as a “hereditary Eagle Chief at Massett” Haida Gwaii, and stated that his brother, Victor Adams had carved a talking stick for Oliver when he became chief in 1975.⁴³⁶ Oliver Adams explained the traditional importance of the talking stick to the Haida. Adams said,

Talking stick of the Haidas generally made of the only hard wood that can be found on the islands which is yew wood. ... And the talking stick is your, badge of authority, that you speak for this nation. You speak for your tribe. There was always carvings on it. To signify that you are of this crest, and you speak for this particular nation. It was also used to identify the chief. If ... children playing on the road, or the path see, the stick is coming, they make room for the chief. When it was banged on the floor, that was to command silence, to hear the speaker. During the chief's absence or illness, he can designate one of his nephews or one of his heirs to speak for him at any important function. And it was known to the executives, [the Chief] always had advisors, who would be speaking for the chief. That honour was jealously guarded so when the designated speaker, used it in a ceremonial function or in a gathering. Everyone knew he spoke with the chiefs voice and with his permission.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁶ *Talking Stick* #1, CBC/CFPR archives tape 97, CD 35 track 2 (Airdate June 30, 1978)

⁴³⁷ “*Talking Stick*” #1Ibid. (1978)

Talking Stick survived only for six programs during the summer of 1978, and was cancelled after that because of lack of government funding. Around the same time, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs initiated similar projects to train radio hosts, and a group of young First Nations students traveled from BC to New Mexico to experience Native radio production first hand.⁴³⁸ Without a dedicated station that had financial support or government subsidies, there was little opportunity for these students to fulfill the needs of Aboriginal communications in British Columbia.⁴³⁹

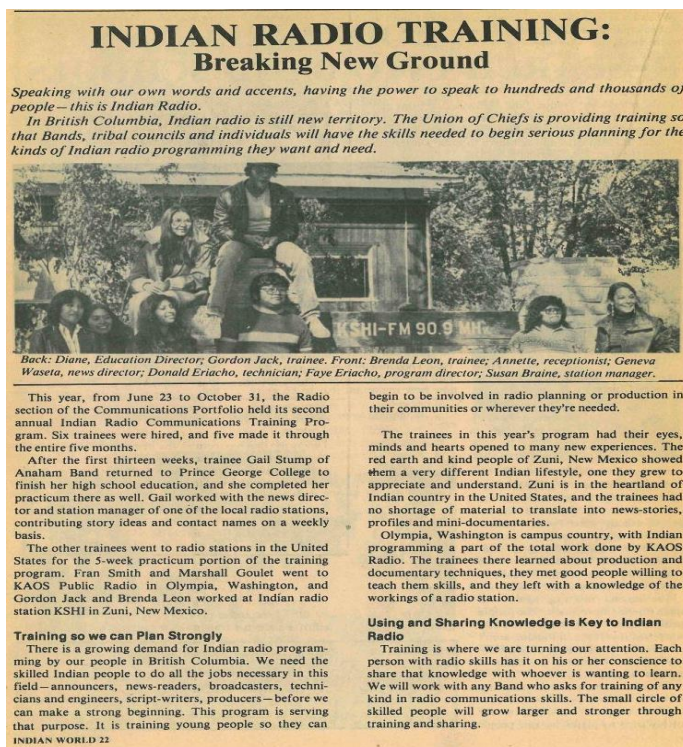


Figure 12) Article from *Indian World* on Radio Training for Indigenous Broadcasters 1980. Most likely written by Valerie Dudoward.

Article courtesy of Union of BC Indian Chiefs Digital archive, accessed Oct. 2015
http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/ubcic_digital_collections

Within three years of Native Media Society's *Talking Stick*, some northern Indigenous groups complained publically about the lack of media coverage on native

⁴³⁸ In 1979 and 1980 there were at least two cohorts of twenty week radio training provided through UBCIC efforts. Instructors were Beth Cuthand and Valerie Dudoward. See *UBCIC News*, July 1979, *Indian World*, issues for April, June and November 1980.

⁴³⁹ "Indian Radio Training: Breaking New Ground" *Indian World*, vol 3 no. 11 (November 1980), 22. Students went to various radio around the province and two went to Public radio station Washington State, and two students, Gordon Jack and Brenda Leon "worked that Indian radio station H\KSHL in Zuni, New Mexico."

issues in general. The lack of live broadcast coverage of the 1981 All Native Basketball tournament appears to have been the catalyst.⁴⁴⁰ The *Prince Rupert Daily News* reported in February 1981 that North Coast Tribal Council spokesman Frank Parnell complained about the lack of coverage and that “Indians receive media coverage in Prince Rupert only when they are newsworthy.”⁴⁴¹ The article was specific about the need for more training opportunities and Indigenous hosts on current affairs programs, particularly on CFPR, and CFTK the private radio station. Clarence Martin,⁴⁴² a “native educator and outreach” worker, implied that the lack of public information on Indigenous political structures led to misunderstandings and “prejudice and discrimination.”⁴⁴³

The efforts by the local CBC to meet these demands were explained by then station manager Jim Roache several days later. Roache itemized the CFPR’s initiatives that he and the staff had already attempted to get First Nations voices on the air. He stated that “before there can be native programming, there must be professional native journalists, like Brenelda Wheeler of *This Native Land*.”⁴⁴⁴ It was clear to Roache that a fourteen week training program was about two years too short to adequately train professional Indigenous journalists, yet government officials would not consider longer programs or even the CBC’s participation without Indigenous direction.

⁴⁴⁰ All Native Basketball tournament is an annual event that officially began in the late 1950s. The competition began as a local north Coast event, but has grown to include Indigenous teams from all British Columbia, Alaska as well. Team members often accompanied by large groups of family and friends who travel to Prince Rupert to cheer on them on during the week long competition. It is a huge economic boost to the Prince Rupert economy during normally slow winter months. According to the ANB social media, the tournament now has close to 60 teams playing in four divisions. https://www.facebook.com/pg/All-Native-Basketball-Tournament-117671068345797/about/?ref=page_internal

⁴⁴¹ “Native Groups Upset by media Coverage” *Prince Rupert Daily News*, Feb. 27 1981.

⁴⁴² Clarence Martin was later director at North Native Broadcasting/CFNR based in Terrace, circa 2000)

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ “On Native Coverage” Jim Roache, *Prince Rupert Daily News*, March 3, 1981.

Roache wrote

I have spoken with various members of the native community and the various groups representing them – NCDC, UNN, UBCIC, etc.. The ball was, and is, squarely in their court but nothing has happened. We honestly feel we have done all we can to accommodate their needs, but I am excited by the prospects of supporting any initiatives the native community may see fit to pursue in its own behalf.

Clearly, local CBC staff viewed they had fulfilled their responsibilities to regional First Nations, in terms of training and facilitating Indigenous voices on the air. The CBC's position was based on a standardized journalistic training and professional practice. It was assumed the local communication needs were the same for everyone in Northwest BC Coast and that it was up to First Nations to take on this issue themselves if more action was needed.

By the late 1980s, a non-profit society, Northern Native Broadcasting of Terrace, had become the first licensed Indigenous radio station in British Columbia, with the call letters CFNR. In the early years, the station played country and western selections, and had limited First Nations language programming. CFNR continues to broadcast from Terrace, BC today, with repeat transmitters throughout British Columbia and into Alberta (and on the internet). It is a commercial station, and most of the programming is mainstream classic rock format. However, there is still a dinner hour show that airs Indigenous content and current affairs interviews several days a week.

The First Nations' voices of Northwest BC as recorded in the CFPR archive moved from silent social participants as wards of the state to active artistic experts and agents of their own cultural and political expressions, but in limited terms on CFPR. The expression of First Nations voices in the late 1970s began to articulate political presence

that had long been in the background of Northwest British Columbia. The Indigenous People knew who they were, and despite the assertion of the Crown and agents of social change such as the missionaries, the First Nations did not lose their deep sense of social understanding of the connectedness between the arts and culture as political expressions.

The CBC radio archive has preserved some significant experiences of unknown Indigenous individuals, but specific personal achievements were not necessarily the goal of First Peoples' voices. The students and adults of Miller Bay Indian Hospital wanted to send messages home to their communities and families, some to assert former public standing, while others just wanted to say hello and give words of encouragement and comfort to their loved ones back home. By the late 1960s, the CBC provided an avenue for cultural exchange where dominant Euro-Canadian society could learn something from the First Peoples, while supporting the rejuvenation of artistic expressions as cultural mediators for the future. It is interesting to note that even those artists such as Bill Reid, who would become Canadian icons of First Nations art, were skeptical about this cultural revitalization, proving once again that the personal perspective is subject to the historical realities of life.

The audio record cannot reflect the full lives or history of Indigenous peoples who have lived on the Northwest Coast for thousands of years.⁴⁴⁵ The cultural exchanges and political transformations of the 1970s and 80s are truly evident in the audio archive of CFPR, not only through the *Talking Stick* selections by Val Dudoward, but also by the voices from the Kitimat Oil Ports Inquiry of 1977-78. Few audio recordings capture the

⁴⁴⁵ Interview with George McDonald circa 1967, estimate occupation of 4000 years. This was an early estimate and by McDonald's own research can put the Tsmishianic cultural tradition back another 2500 years. Sites of human occupation (tools and midden sites and aquaculture sites) have pushed the dates of occupation back about 15000 years.

moments of the birth of social movements, yet both of the elements of the root of Canada's environmental movement and support for Indigenous voices are present in this collection. Once again the CBC Prince Rupert audio illustrates how important radio is in interpreting the past in new, intimate and engaging ways for all Canadians. A great deal can be learned from historic audio selections, especially from a marginal space, where voices expressing a different perspective, showing all Canadians importance each of voice, even in their silences.

Conclusion

This dissertation explores how the voices of northern British Columbians located in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation regional radio archives challenge and refine the long-held narratives of northern BC history. While the CBC may be a significant force in shaping the archive, the collection reveals far more complex political and cultural interchanges and relationships between citizens of a mid-northern region. It also speaks about the regional role of a large national entity that was mandated to make all Canadians proud of their country in the post war years. The individual voices of men, women, and children provide an intimate connection between a moment in the past with the present. This thesis recognizes that researchers can interact with the past in new ways and connect with the people of another generation, in this instance northerners from forty to sixty years ago. These voices have been organized and situated in a wider context of Canadian and international histories to better explain the significance of the recordings. These audio selections and voices are moments on a continuum and should not be held up as examples of a specific truth. They reflect the trends and social movements and politics of the post war years in northern BC and not the sensibilities of the present day.

The CBC's mandate was sometimes at odds with the managerial styles and complex local relationships, but overall, staff members wanted to provide an important communications service to northerners. Through *Message Time*, and at moments of crisis such as the Granduc disaster, CFPR was key in communicating important information to locals and national and international audiences. At CFPR, however, between the mid 1950s to late 1960s, personalities and dictatorial managerial style was generally

problematic, and the corporate hands-off approach isolated the station and staff further from the Canadian mainstream.

Canada in the mid to late 20th century was portrayed as a progressive modern nation. Radio was particularly well suited and mandated to convey that message far and wide. The local content of CBC radio, however, oft-times countered or at least clarified this narrative somewhat with its voices and perspectives of residents of a small Pacific coastal port city and associated region. Women in northern BC were active in public and private spaces as leaders and community activists. They were active in business, the media, and local politics, and they often served as role models. Even within the CBC, its corporate mandate to not hire women announcers was unrealistic, since women actually performed these functions anyway as part of designated women's programming. Indigenous peoples of BC became more vocal and politically active at the same time that cultural traditions resurfaced. Radio had more practical appeal to First Nations people (certainly through Message Time) than print media. Artists were hard-pressed to find monetary compensation. Where non-Indigenous announcers saw art and culture, First Nations artists were perhaps more practical in their approach. Finally the anti-American sentiments that were part of the national identity were not systematically reflected in northwest BC and its Alaskan neighbours. The audio recordings of celebration of cultural events such as the Alaska Music Trail, the experience of World War II in the area or the rescue of workers at the Granduc mine underline how the local relationships between people in neighbouring communities did not buy into this negative view.

Sometimes staff and experts imposed themselves on the northern BC airwaves, alienating the locals with high-brow musical content or their assumption that residents

were parochial in their outlook. Surprisingly to the CBC staffers, Prince Rupert citizens were well read and held cosmopolitan outlooks. At other times, some announcers such as Norman Newton promoted the interesting and diversity of the people of northern BC, but again the CBC personality was always the host or announcer, never identified as a northern BC resident themselves. The importance of seeing the region as home, was also a central theme. People like Craig Oliver, Iona Campagnolo and Valerie Dudoward certainly understood the role of local radio and television has had in the reflecting and perhaps re-shaping northern BC and its history.

The national corporation had professional standards and the political mandate to provide a critical communications network to outlying areas. That justified the creation of CFPR as a CBC radio station. But when these standards were imposed externally, they seemed at best impractical and, at worst, ridiculous. The staffing requirements for example, for a studio director, announcer, and producer did not really reflect the daily needs of a small northern station. New and novel approaches to how staff could be trained were brought in from far away places to improve the quality, but they were not necessarily connected to the corresponding technical equipment advancements. Certainly efforts were made to make local content relevant and interesting, especially for the shows that had an advertising sponsor, until 1974 when this too done away with.⁴⁴⁶ Though most announcers did not have formal journalism training, they did the best they could with the skills and technology they had at hand. This was not unique to Prince Rupert station. CBC had standards for the quality of production and the tone, pacing and expressive ability of the announcer's voice, yet few for the actual content of the stories,

⁴⁴⁶ Canadian Communications Foundation website <http://www.broadcasting-history.ca/index3.html>

and interviewing techniques. Regardless, it is clear that personal histories and stories certainly impact the local and regional histories, thus researchers must be cognizant of the local power dynamics when considering local/regional primary sources, including audio and video recordings.

As in any small town and rural region there are influential people, or those who think they are, and daily interaction with the station staff, ad sales or announcers, and on-air personalities went a long way to form the sense of local identity. Special programs such as *Rupert Calling*, or *Northwest Journal* or special feature programs, such as the one hour documentary on Ksan Village for *Between Ourselves*, certainly provided that connection between communities on a regional level, sometimes at the cost of stepping away from the modern Canadian national identity.

CFPR in Prince Rupert remains a CBC bureau with a staff of one announcer and researcher, co-hosting a morning show based in Prince George that spans right across northern BC. Gone are meandering interviews of Prince Rupert muskeg, or the local pioneer narratives that are still part of the CFPR radio archives housed in the City of Prince Rupert Archives. This is an audio collection with diverse voices of northerners covering over two generations, it continues to provide a unique, and intimate connection with the history and peoples of northern British Columbia. Like photographs, audio recordings provide a very tangible and most often, very personal connection to the past. Some of the CBC staff members interviewed said that they have reel to reel tapes and cassettes in storage that they do not know what to do with, as there remains no simple yet comprehensive archival process for converting such tapes into a digital format in Canada. Another issue is that copyright to this material is in question: legally these audio

recordings might belong to the CBC, or other broadcasting organizations where the individual worked decades before. Indeed, these issues can be overwhelming to seniors or even smaller institutions like local historical societies or museums faced with possible cost of digital formats or worse, the legal uncertainties of ownership and use. Sadly, the energy required to clear these hurdles, then promote and preserve these unique recordings is still too great for many people. The CBC radio archive in Prince Rupert is a rare local audio collection and, in sum, a remarkable gift to northerners and a lasting legacy of the CBC for the remote region that they served.

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