"The Story of the Country": Imbert Orchard's Quest for Frontier Folk in BC, 1870-1914

by

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of CBC radio journalist, Imbert Orchard (1909-1991). Between 1959 and 1966, Orchard compiled one of the largest oral history collections in North America—interviews with 998 'pioneers' of British Columbia. The collection consists of 2700 hours of audio-taped interviews, parts of which were aired on programmes entitled, "Living Memory," "From the Mountains to the Sea," and "People in Landscape." Housed at the British Columbia Archives, the Orchard collection has never been systematically studied. This thesis sets the Orchard collection in its cultural-historical context, and assesses how the material can be used to provide insight into the settlement era (1870-1914). This work historicizes this significant amateur historian. Its goal is to show how the 'pioneers' whom Orchard interviewed conceived of their own roles in British Columbia's history. In Orchard's narrative, Aboriginal people are cast, along with non-Aboriginal peoples, as active participants in the settlement of the west. The Orchard Collection serves as a lens on this 'country.'
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Chapter 1: Imbert Orchard, Oral History and Recording Technology

Oral history is a history built around people. It thrusts life into history itself and it widens the scope. It allows heroes not just from the leaders, but from the unknown majority of the people.¹

Imbert Orchard (1909-1991) was one of the most significant contributors of oral history Canada has ever known. Over the course of his rich and varied career, he produced three radio series for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC): “Living Memory,” “From the Mountains to the Sea,” and “People in Landscape.” In all, these series amounted to approximately two hundred episodes that, according to the finding aid at the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, served to form a “remarkable chronicle of British Columbia’s history.”² The programs were historical documentaries based upon interviews that Orchard recorded with the ‘pioneers’³ and Aboriginal peoples of British Columbia. The raw materials for these programs comprise almost one thousand interviews, and these recordings are increasingly becoming prized as a rich source of information and primary documentation about the settlement and pre-settlement period of British Columbia’s history. Moreover, Orchard, who was an explorer and theorist in the medium of recorded reminiscences and sounds, influenced the field of oral history by exploring the uses of the human voice in radio.

This thesis is structured around four themes. This introductory chapter will serve as a basic introduction to Orchard and the Orchard Collection by offering a relevant historiography which includes an examination of the recording technology available to

² From the *Detailed Finding Aid for the Orchard Collection*, BC Archives.
³ The term ‘pioneer’ is the one Orchard used when he referred to the group of people whom he interviewed.
Orchard. Chapter two will situate the Orchard Collection in its socio-historical context. Chapter three will examine Orchard's agenda and biases in order to understand his subjectivity, and how that affects the lens through which his collection can be utilized and understood by historians today. Finally, chapter four will examine the collection as a whole in order to show its value for further study.

Born Robert Henslow Orchard in Brockville, Ontario on April 20, 1909, Orchard was the only son of the former headmaster at Trinity College in Port Hope, Dr. Francis Graham Orchard. Orchard studied history and English literature in England at Harrow School and at Cambridge University before returning to Ontario to pursue a career in education and in theatre. Orchard's life changed when he first came to British Columbia with the armed forces during the Second World War:

I'll never forget the impression that B.C. made on me. I remember it very vividly, approaching the Rockies, and then going over the Rockies; it was in the month of May. And I felt that I was in a completely different country, a country that I somehow felt was my own ... And I fell in love with it right away.4

It was at this time that Orchard became intrigued by the varied landscapes and relative newness of British Columbia's history in comparison with that of Ontario.5 After the war, Orchard taught at the University of Alberta where he founded the Studio Theatre Program that thrives to this day.

Orchard's interest in British Columbia led him to return in 1955, when he was hired by the CBC in Vancouver as a regional script editor responsible for receiving and reading television scripts.6 Orchard's oral history collection found its genesis in 1959,

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4 The words of Imbert Orchard, found in “A Note On Sources,” edited by David Mitchell and Dennis Duffy in Bright Sunshine And A Brand New Country: Recollections of the Okanagan Valley 1890-1914, Sound Heritage vol. VIII, No. 3 (Victoria: Aural History Program, 1979), 75.
5 Ibid.
6 Mitchell and Duffy, 76.
when an elderly Aboriginal woman from Hazelton named Constance Cox came to his office to discuss a television program she had seen on the Klondike Trail of 1898. Intrigued by her background, Orchard began to interview her. Initially he had a biography in view. After several interviews with Cox, however, he decided to make interviews the nucleus of a series of fifteen minute radio programs entitled “Living Memory.” They were broadcast in 1961. Public reaction to the series was positive and so, that same year, Orchard made a trip through the Skeena River and Bulkley Valley regions to record interviews with local ‘pioneers.’ This trip resulted in a second “Living Memory” series. A third and fourth series about Victoria and the Fraser Valley followed, as well as a number of longer special programs. Orchard’s next series, “From the Mountains to the Sea,” consisted of 13 one-hour programs, each based on a specific region of British Columbia. These were broadcast nationally in 1967 to celebrate Canada’s centennial year. Orchard’s final series, “People in Landscape,” consisted of half-hour programs, over ninety of which were produced and broadcast between 1968 and 1972. Within “People in Landscape” there were four series: “Life in the Gulf of Georgia,” “The Queen Charlottes and Bella Coola,” “Fraser River Country” and “New Caledonia Country.”

Although the interviews were recorded for use in radio programs, Orchard was highly sensitive to the long-term value of the material. He thus went on recording expeditions without a specific purpose. Eventually he gained support for this work from

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8 Mitchell and Duffy, 76.
9 Mitchell and Duffy, 77.
10 Ibid.
11 Mitchell and Duffy, 78.
the CBC through convincing them that it was better to record material before old-timers died off. By the time Orchard had stopped recording the bulk of his material in 1966, he estimated that he had traveled more than 24,000 miles and interviewed almost one thousand people on tape.\textsuperscript{12}

Orchard eventually left the CBC to join the Communications Studies Department at Simon Fraser University in 1974. That same year, when the Provincial Archives of British Columbia established an Aural History program, Orchard donated approximately twelve hundred tape recordings (all of the original master tapes of the interviews, as well as the original master tapes from the completed episodes from each of the three series mentioned above) to the Provincial Archives where they are still housed today. In all, the Orchard Oral History Collection (not including the finished radio programs) amounts to 998 interviews (in excess of 2,700 hours) conducted with several Aboriginal people and numerous other 'pioneers': the miners, ranchers, fur traders, ship captains, missionaries, farmers, totem carvers and road builders of British Columbia. Orchard died at the age of eighty-two, on June 2, 1991. He was survived by his wife, Rosalind, three sons, a daughter, seven grandsons and three granddaughters.

The majority of the material Orchard collected for his radio-documentaries was never broadcast. What has been left behind is an enormous and potentially influential oral history collection. Orchard placed great value on the human voice as a medium for communicating thought and feeling and, as a result of his influence, many Canadian

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
archival institutions have collected and cataloged oral records complementary to the written records of local history.  

In the 1980s, the Sound and Moving Images Division (SMID) at the British Columbia Archives created a catalogue system for the Orchard collection whereby the individual tapes were allotted inventory numbers, and a finding aid was created that organized the tapes according to the twenty-seven regions of British Columbia that Orchard recognized. The tapes were stored in a light-and temperature-controlled environment after ½ track copies had been made onto 5-inch reels at 3-¾ ips (inches per second). With a complete backup of the entire collection intact, the master tapes were rarely accessed until the summer of 2000. In that year, the CBC sponsored funding to all Provincial Archives for a complete cataloging and digitization of all holdings that were linked to the CBC. Under the supervision of long-time British Columbia Archives director of SMID, Allen Specht, Charlene Gregg and I were hired to compile database entries (to a program called PROLOG) and to transfer the master tapes of these collections to compact disc. The project took four years to complete. The CBC now has a copy of the complete contents of the unedited individual interviews and the finished CBC programs of the Orchard collection, in the form of PROLOG entries; the compact discs are housed at the British Columbia Archives. The archivists at the British Columbia Archives are continuing to transfer the contents of the database entries onto their website so that the public can now easily access the Orchard collection database as a research tool.

The goal of this thesis is to set the Orchard collection in its cultural-historical context, and to assess how the material can be used to provide insight into the settlement era (1870-1914) of British Columbia's history. The objective of this thesis is unusual: it will not only historicize a significant amateur historian, but it will also comment on the subjects of that historian – the ‘pioneers’ whom Orchard interviewed.

The discipline of oral history is an enormous field with many practitioners and audiences (oral history is practised by professional historians, amateur historians, family and local historians, journalists, broadcasters, educators, folklorists, ethnographers, sociologists, writers and dramatists). Orchard undertook oral history as a radio-journalist. Because his work does not easily fit into any existing academic framework, many historians and anthropologists have ignored it. I argue that it is now time for scholars and others to turn to this important resource. Unlike print records, it offers a completely new lens on the history of the province. We now have actual voices of men and women on the ground talking about what it was like to live in British Columbia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Orchard was not interested in complexity. And he was not interested in the urban intellectual elite. He was interested in rural working classes, and other people involved in the post-contact settling of the province. He wanted to know their perspectives on their past. For British Columbia, this was a novel project.

The thesis will highlight the importance of his project.

14 Relevant readings to the notion of 'settlement era' employed in this work are:
Cole Harris, Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance and Reserves in British Columbia (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines oral history as tape-recorded historical information obtained in interviews concerning personal experiences and recollections. The dictionary definition also includes the study of such information. Oral historians categorize their subject-matter into two areas. The first is oral history (also called oral reminiscence): the first-hand recollections of people interviewed by a historian. The second is "oral tradition": the narratives and descriptions of people and events in the past that have been handed down by word of mouth over several generations. Historian John Tosh further specifies that oral tradition can be "the collective property of the members of a given society." While the Orchard collection does contain several interviews with Aboriginal people, less than twenty interviews deal specifically with oral tradition. Instead, it focuses on personal reminiscences. Orchard was interested in peoples' stories of their first-hand experiences and observations. This kind of oral history is as old as the discipline itself. Herodotus and Thucydides (regarded as the first historians), the chroniclers of the Middle Ages (and Renaissance writers as well) were all dependent on orally-delivered personal reminiscences: "the method of Herodotus, for example, in the fifth century BC was to seek out eyewitnesses and cross-question them." By the 1920s and 1930s, the interview method was well established as a research tool in the social sciences. The techniques of social anthropology and sociology have proved helpful to historians, especially where few written resources are available:

19 Tosh, 182.
20 This number was arrived at by assessing the inventory of the Orchard collection housed at the BC Archives. Oral tradition in this case is conceived of as the collective property of the society from which it originates.
21 Thompson, 27.
recent political history, the social history of everyday life (particularly aspects of working-class life in the family), and the history of non-literate societies that have generated no written evidence of their own and are, thus, known only through the documents of outsiders (who are usually prejudiced, as will be examined in chapter three). Orchard’s collection offers an example of the second of these areas: the social history of everyday life, within a specific time frame (approximately 1870-1914), and in a specific geographical area (within British Columbia). Orchard would have agreed with historian John Tosh: “oral history allows the voice of ordinary people to be heard alongside the careful marshalling of social facts in the written record … since social history aspires to treat the history of society as a whole, not just the rich and articulate.” It is, as Tosh states, “history [that] tries to give social history a human face.” Orchard’s collection also fulfils a didactic purpose that is often explicit among oral historians: as Donald A. Ritchie puts it, the role of the oral historian is “to make people more aware of their own history.” Orchard’s agenda was identical: he tried to make the Canadian public more aware of a specific period in the history of British Columbia.

In *The Voice Of The Past*, historian Paul Thompson argues that all history depends on the social purpose that it performs. For many oral historians, including Thompson, oral history is by definition popular history and a source of empowerment. The challenge of oral history, he says, is to allow ‘ordinary’ people the ability to understand the upheavals and changes they experience in their own lives. Oral history

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22 Tosh, 174.
23 Tosh, 175.
24 Tosh, 176.
26 Thompson, 2.
differs from histories based on written records, which reflect the perspective of those who hold authority or power. Oral history “provides a more realistic and fair reconstruction of the past, a challenge to the established account... the chronicle of kings has [to take] into its concern the life experience of ordinary people.”

The Orchard collection serves such a function. By including ranchers from the Cariboo, for example, the Orchard collection offers testimonies from the people who lived through the changes to that area, as opposed to just focusing on the policy makers in Victoria. The Orchard collection is an alternative to the political history of British Columbia, which typically features a lower-mainland or coastal focus.

Orchard was using oral history as a window on place and as a means of nourishing a community identity. While academic oral historians may share such a purpose, there are specific ways in which Orchard’s work was that of a dedicated amateur – he was, after all, first and foremost, a radio journalist. Orchard believed, for instance, that the community identity – the shared sense of common interest and self – already existed, prior to anything contributed by the historian. It was the role of the historian/interviewer to uncover that which already existed. Underlying this practice of oral history is the assumption that, “personal reminiscence is viewed as an authentic instrument for re-creating the past – the authentic testimony of human life as it was actually experienced,” and thus oral history is understood as a means of engaging with

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27 Thompson, 6.
28 ‘Amateur’ is being used in the context of Orchard in a specific way. The term comes from Tosh who would argue that Orchard was not collecting for a scholarly purpose. Indicating that Orchard is an amateur is not meant to diminish from his vital contribution to the field of oral history. Nor am I arguing that a specialized University education in oral history theory is necessary to conduct an important oral history project. However, since his work was intended for public history on the CBC, he necessarily had to limit his scope of interviewees and lines of questioning, as will be examined in chapters three and four.
29 Tosh, 177.
‘how things were.’ In this way Orchard differs from the scholarly historian, who is deeply conscious of his/her role in the process of constructing history and creating a shared knowledge. Orchard does not reflect much on his power or role as author. He fits more closely in the older tradition of salvage ethnography.

In the United States in the 1890s, anthropology came to the fore as scholars such as Franz Boas and others realized that Aboriginal cultures were disappearing and that, in the name of science, their traditions needed to be documented. Boas’s colleague Marius Barbeau transported some of these ideas to Canada. Determined to document the ‘prehistorical’ past of the Aboriginal peoples of northern BC and Quebec, he ignored their recent historical past. Barbeau was a prominent public figure based at the Victoria Museum (now the Canadian Museum of Civilization) in Ottawa. Through his films, his books on totem poles, his articles in magazines and his lecture tours, Barbeau popularized the salvage paradigm. Barbeau was keen on recording songs and stories and often aired these on radio programmes. By the 1950s, he had become the spokesperson for Canadian Aboriginal cultural history.

Orchard came on the scene at the height of Barbeau’s public life. Undoubtedly he was influenced by him. Barbeau had made numerous field recordings among the Tsimshian. He had drawn in other prominent Canadian artists, for example, Sir Ernest MacMillan. His films had identified colourful Aboriginal elders who were in touch with the stories of their deep past. It was no accident, therefore, that Orchard seized on the

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32 Nurse, 444.
33 The Tsimshian live along the Skeena and Nass rivers and along the many inlets and islands of the coast of British Columbia.
notion of salvage; his goal, for example, was to interview his informants before they died out.\textsuperscript{34} The notion of salvage was the talk of the times. And British Columbia was a haven for it.

Paul Thompson clearly indicates what he believes to be the \textit{modus operandi} of an oral historian: “the historian comes to the interview to learn: to sit at the feet of others who, because they come from a different social class, or are less educated, or older, know more about something.”\textsuperscript{35} Orchard was the kind of oral historian Thompson describes.

The third section of this thesis will cover Orchard’s interviewing philosophy - which held that his goal was to learn from his informants.

The study of an oral historian and his collection raises the issue of subjectivity. Today the notion of oral testimony as ‘objective’ – an unmediated window onto a past reality – no longer exists. Instead, most oral historians understand that recorded testimony cannot be a pure distillation of past experience because in an interview each party is affected by the other. Oral historians must accept responsibility for their role in creating new evidence: “the end-product is contained both by the historian’s social position vis-à-vis the informant, and by the terms in which he or she has learnt to analyze the past and which may well be communicated to the informant.”\textsuperscript{36}

Allessandro Portelli illuminates the relationship between interviewer and interviewee in his essay “Research as an Experiment in Equality.” While doing field recordings in Tuscany in 1974, Portelli learned that “there are always two subjects to a field situation, and that the roles of ‘observed’ and ‘observer’ are more fluid than it might

\textsuperscript{34} In an interview conducted by J.J. McColl in June of 1973, Orchard states, “I was going to have to go out and get a lot of these people before they died.” (BC Archives accession No. 990, Tape No. 1, Track No. 1, 9 of the transcription).

\textsuperscript{35} Thompson, I I.

\textsuperscript{36} Tosh, 178.
appear at first glance.”37 Portelli offers an experience in which he was playing the role of “objective researcher,” but was rewarded with biased data because his informant had responded to him “not as a person, but to a stereotype of my class, manner, and speech.”38 Portelli thus argues that in order to achieve equality in an interview some kind of mutuality must be established. For Portelli, equality does not depend on the researcher’s goodwill or on how much research the interviewer has prepared, but on social conditions. The paradox is that “the very need for anthropological research in Western societies implies the recognition and observation of otherness in subjects who are not on the same social plane with the observer.”39 The interview process, then, must encourage open communication in both parties and power must be dealt with openly.40

Chapter three will examine Orchard’s methodology for achieving a mutual relationship with his interviewees. Nevertheless, it is clear that Orchard’s work was done prior to the understanding of interviewer-informant relations and of subjectivity developed by recent oral historians. He knew that he had to create an empathetic relationship with informants; but he did not attempt to analyze his own subject-position or the effect of his questions or deportment on his subjects.

Like Tosh and Thompson, Portelli recognizes that oral history is an essential element for the acknowledgment of all human history, not just the political or military elite. Portelli draws on the work of Italian socialist historian Ernesto De Martino who, in 1949, wrote, “the masses of the people are struggling to break into history, to free

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38 Portelli, 31.
39 Ibid.
40 Portelli, 32.
themselves of the chains that bind them to the old order [the history of the elite]."\textsuperscript{41}

However, not all oral historians need to have an overtly political agenda. Thompson adds a potent point to this issue that will help situate Orchard:

Oral history is not necessarily an instrument for change; it depends on the spirit in which it is used. Nevertheless, oral history certainly can be a means for transforming both the content and the purpose of history.\textsuperscript{42}

The Orchard collection is different from the collections considered by Portelli and De Martino in that it does constitute an alternative to the history of the political elite, but it is not meant to serve as an instrument of political change. The second chapter of this thesis will address the intentions of the Orchard interviews and radio programs, but it is clear that Orchard, unlike many scholarly historians, shows no interest in the political content or implications of the testimony of his informants.

Today, oral historians often begin, very self-consciously, with a historical-political agenda. They are very conscious of how that agenda, and their own subject-position, may influence the outcomes in an interview. Portelli, for instance, describes introducing himself as a ‘comrade’ to an informant in his hometown and explains that the motivations of his research were political rather than academic. Nonetheless, “he still always introduced me a ‘professor’ rather than ‘comrade.’ I had stressed political homogeneity; but he was foregrounding my cultural and professional difference as otherness.”\textsuperscript{43} Once again the dynamic of the relationship between the observer and observed is highlighted. As Portelli’s extreme case suggests, “my informants developed subtle counter-interviewing strategies to find out who I really was … the pattern of sameness and otherness was reproduced by the fact that I had gone to the same schools,

\textsuperscript{41} Portelli, 37. 
\textsuperscript{42} Thompson, 2. 
\textsuperscript{43} Portelli, 39.
had grown up in a working-class neighborhood, yet I came from a middle class family."

Orchard attempted to give plenty of freedom to his informants, but he never reflected on how his professional position as a CBC interviewer or his own questions might promote "counter-interviewing strategies" or how his subject-position might shape the content of his interviews.

Portelli's article is useful for an examination of the Orchard collection because it exposes the complex relationship between the interviewee and interviewer. Portelli shows how the role of the interviewer influences the kinds of data that are obtained in fieldwork. Orchard walks a fine line between the role of researcher and the role of interviewer because radio journalism had to be at the forefront of his project. Clearly, Orchard was the organizer of the testimonies he received because he used the material to form radio programs. Orchard would take issue with Portelli who claims that it is the researcher who plays the role of teaching the public about themselves; the third chapter of this thesis will address Orchard's conception of his role of interviewer-as-teacher.

The oral historian today is prepared to reflect on the relationship between individual experience, as delivered in oral testimony, and history, conceived as changes beyond the individual level. For instance, Tosh argues that oral evidence offers an inadequate representation of the past because historical reality comprises more than the sum of individual experiences. Therefore, "one of the historian's functions is to advance towards a fuller understanding of the reality of the past; access to a much wider range of evidence than was available to anyone at the time, together with the discipline of historical thinking, enables the historian to grasp the deeper structures and processes

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44 Ibid.
45 Tosh, 178.
which were at work in the lives of individuals."\textsuperscript{46} The vividness of personal recollections is thus both the strength and weakness of oral evidence. Tosh states, "the problem with collective oral history is that it is likely to reinforce the superficial way in which most people think of the changes they have lived through, instead of equipping them with deeper insights as a basis for more effective political action."\textsuperscript{47} Tosh emphasizes the essential use of critical evaluation by means of comparing the oral evidence with all the other available sources. Tosh's position is clear: oral testimonies "are not 'history,' but raw material for the writing of history."\textsuperscript{48} These current scholarly distinctions were likely beyond Orchard's understanding of his role as interviewer. But today our understanding of his collection may reach beyond his. He was collecting a particular kind of raw material that historians may use – so long as historians understand the context and framework of his collecting.

As an amateur salvage collector, Orchard believed that he was recovering an authentic past, or at least parts of that past. In his collection, however, we may find not only fact or unmediated evidence, but rather a specific, shared historical consciousness - a mental world shared by Orchard and his informants: "unlike primary documentary sources, [an] oral [source] does not convey the original words and images from which the historian may be able to re-create the mental world of the past."\textsuperscript{49} Orchard would not have agreed with what the modern professional historian takes for granted: that oral history is not an unmediated window on 'the past,' and that oral history does not present the authentic immediacy of the past 'as it really was.' In fact, Orchard believed that he

\textsuperscript{46} Tosh, 179.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Tosh, 180.
\textsuperscript{49} Tosh, 186.
was uncovering the voice of the past—this is the very characteristic that defines him as an amateur. The demarcation of Orchard as an amateur does not take away from his accomplishment as an educated man who conducted nearly one thousand interviews. The professional historian would argue that oral testimony is a window onto memory, which is not the same as ‘the past.’ The dichotomy is quite clear: the professional, in this case, is aware that he/she is receiving testimony ‘now’ about ‘then’—the focus is on ‘now.’ The amateur perceives the testimony received ‘now’ as a voice which represents ‘the past’—the focus being on ‘the past.’ The third chapter of this thesis will delve deeper into Orchard’s perspective on what he was trying to accomplish through his collection of interviews.

In 1980, Renato Rosaldo published a paper entitled “Doing Oral History,” in which he challenged the notion that spoken testimonies should be equated with written archival records. Rosaldo’s paper offers the key to understanding how the Orchard collection can be used today: Rosaldo addresses the issue of how to understand and interpret oral evidence once it has been collected. Furthermore, Rosaldo is concerned with the medium of oral history as an aural artifact. This is a significant point for Orchard because he too agreed that the aural quality of the interview was paramount.

Rosaldo collapses the distinction between narrative and analysis. Narratives can be a form of analysis: they put events into a structure of time and place. They allow

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In an interview with J.J. McColl in June of 1973, Orchard states: “I’m very interested in the fact that this way of doing things... you get them [the old-timers] to tell you the story of the country and the stories of their experiences in the country,” on 7 of the transcription.

In this article, Rosaldo specifically compares himself to historian Jan Vansina: “whereas my methodology attends most centrally both to the historians’ purposes in collecting testimonies and the narrative form of evidence used, Jan Vansina restricts himself primarily to the job of archiving oral traditions.” Renato Rosaldo, “Doing Oral History” Social Analysis. 4 (1980), 89.
readers to see the unfolding of events. Narratives are, or can be, synoptic appraisals of events and historical subjects. Rosaldo begins his argument by stating that one prominent way to reconstitute bygone lives is through analytical narratives, because narratives allow readers to follow events in their unfolding and make synoptic appraisals of sociohistorical subjects. Instead of making a distinction between analysis and narrative, Rosaldo states that “much of what goes under the name of analysis is crucial to the story being told,” and thus analysis and narrative can be identical.

When analyzing stories, Rosaldo employs two principles: first, what one says is closely connected with how it is said; second, narrative conventions must be studied in order to be used creatively. Rosaldo advocates an historiographical approach for developing a method of conducting oral history. The initial step is to appraise existing practices before recommending what should be done and begin by examining what has been written. Historiography, Rosaldo argues, “should study the strengths and limitations of compositional modes.” By employing an analytical narrative approach “stories can simultaneously encompass a number of distinctive plot lines and range yet more widely by describing the lay of the land, taking overviews of the situation, and providing key background information.” Unlike the case of Barbeau, Rosaldo argues, “the job of cultural analysis is to provide a circumstantial account of how [peoples from cultures being studied] conceive their histories rather than to deny their version of how their lives have changed over the years.”

52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Rosaldo, 97.
56 Rosaldo, 91.
57 Rosaldo, 92.
than Barbeau’s approach (in which the researcher teaches the culture), the culture can be represented from the perspective of how it sees itself. Representations of culture that are applied by an external individual can have disastrous results, as was the case for the Huron-Wyandot with Barbeau.\(^{58}\)

Rosaldo argues that the form of evidence matters as much as examining the goals and techniques of historical writing: “historical documents, whether oral or written, not only contain facts to be mined, but they also organize perceptions in ways that require interpretation.”\(^{59}\) Simply stated, both written and oral documents contain information that embody cultural conceptions. Rosaldo criticizes historians who skip over the narrative form of texts because “it is rather like attempting to study sonnets while ignoring their poetic form.”\(^{60}\) Furthermore, he attacks historians who want to examine narratives on the grounds of facticity - true, possible, probable, false - because the actual meanings of stories are important: what people say is inseparable from how it is said.\(^{61}\) Oral sources are cultural documents that organize perceptions about the past, as opposed to just being containers of brute facts. Instead of studying oral accounts as facts, “one must study historical consciousness because it is the medium through which oral testimonies present the shape of the past.”\(^{62}\) It stands to reason, then, that analytical narratives should use convergent lines of evidence, a method used successfully by

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\(^{58}\) According to Andrew Nurse, Barbeau’s early twentieth-century Huron-Wyandot ethnography was one in which Barbeau not only challenged his subject’s conceptions of their own culture, but he also created a standard of cultural authenticity to which the existing Huron and Wyandot cultures could not conform. Barbeau concluded that the Huron nation no longer existed, and the Canadian state, using Barbeau’s research, forcibly enfranchised the entire population, thereby abolishing their Amerindian status. Andrew Nurse, “But Now Things Have Changed: Marius Barbeau and the Politics of Amerindian Identity” *Journal of Ethnohistory* 48, 3 (Summer 2001), 443.

\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.

\(^{61}\) Ibid.

\(^{62}\) Rosaldo, 97.
historians such as Julie Cruickshank. Rosaldo arrives at the conclusion that knowing, appraising, and linking the multiple factors as events unfold is precisely what historical understanding involves.

Rosaldo’s position can be applied to the Orchard collection. Orchard was not particularly interested in a formal analysis of the mentalité or consciousness of his informants. But the historian today can perceive an implicit structure or analytical framing of experience within the narratives that Orchard collected. Essentially, when Rosaldo’s scope is applied, the Orchard collection can be utilized in a number of different ways. The collection can be examined to determine what kind of historian Orchard was, and it can expose (through an analysis of the stories of the interviewees themselves) how this specific generation of people conceived of themselves and their place in history.

However, as argued above, various factors can influence the kinds of testimonies offered by informants, and thus scholars cannot make an assessment of this consciousness based on the ‘face value’ of the stories offered. Every testimony communicates a subjective version of the events told: there is no narration without interpretation. How ought historians to sift through these personal subjective accounts? In order to achieve an understanding of how to examine the Orchard collection for the historical consciousness it communicates, a deeper understanding of the role of subjectivity in oral history needs to be attained.

Alessandro Portelli points out in his chapter “Philosophy and the Facts,” that “in oral history and autobiography, the sources are persons rather than documents or artifacts,

63 Julie Cruikshank’s article “Glaciers and Climate Change: Perspectives from Oral Tradition” openly addresses the incorporation of local knowledge into scientific research, and the way in which oral tradition contributes to historical understanding in areas where written documents are a recent innovation. Julie Cruikshank, “Glaciers and Climate Change: Perspectives from Oral Tradition” Arctic no. 54, 4 (Dec 2001).

64 Rosaldo, 96.
and persons have an (un?)fortunate reluctance to reducing their lives to data for someone else's interpretations."^65 Portelli points out that most people insist on telling both their life and their opinions and, thus, philosophy is implicit in the facts. Autobiographical discourse is then always about the construction and expression of one's subjectivity: "to ignore and exorcise subjectivity, as if it were only a noxious interference in the pure data, is ultimately to distort and falsify the nature of the data themselves."^66 Portelli suggests that the recognition of subjectivity in oral history has met with two orders of objections. The first is that "subjectivity is immaterial and beyond our control; therefore it cannot be the foundation of a serious analysis."^67 The second is that "subjectivity is individual and idiosyncratic, while history and social science are concerned with shared, public, social facts and cultural traits."^68 On these grounds, Portelli argues, social and historical research has (to a large extent) limited itself to measurable data. The result is an abstraction which, although helpful, is often an oversimplification. Subjectivity is in itself a fact, an essential ingredient of our humanity: "rather than excluding it from our field of observation because it is too difficult to handle, we need to seek methods and guidelines for its use and interpretation."^69 Being aware of the narrator's subjectivity is the essential link necessary to piece together personal narratives into a larger picture. Thus, chapter three will be focused on understanding Orchard's subject-position. And chapter four will offer comments on the subjectivity of Orchard's interviewees.

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^66 Portelli, 80.
^67 Portelli, 81.
^68 Ibid.
^69 Portelli, 82.
Imbert Orchard was, therefore, a dedicated collector of personal reminiscences. He worked in a specific place and he targeted specific informants. He did not reflect on his methods and evidence as a scholarly oral historian would today – he was, after all, not a scholar, but a radio journalist – but the historian can examine the consciousness and the subjectivity of his informants. This analytical opportunity exists because Orchard’s salvage project was made feasible by, and must be understood as the product of, a specific technology.

Much of the discussion of oral history over the past several decades tends to omit the significance of recording technology to the discipline. This omission is significant because, as Ritchie points out, “oral history owed its existence to mechanical equipment, from tape recorders to transcribers and video cameras.”\(^7\)\(^0\) Furthermore, it is impossible to examine an oral historian or his/her collection without considering the technology available to him/her: technology limits the material in a variety of ways. Ever since 1877, when Thomas Edison and his technicians created a device “with a diaphragm having an embossing point and held against a paraffin paper moving rapidly,”\(^7\)\(^1\) recording technology has been tied to the discipline of anthropology. In fact, the very night Edison first demonstrated his phonograph to the world at the Smithsonian Institute, physicist Joseph Henry, head of both the U.S. National Academy and the Smithsonian Institute, was in the audience. Subsequently, the Smithsonian created the new Bureau of Ethnology, which focused on the science of studying human cultures, languages and artifacts. The direct connection between Edison’s invention and the Bureau of Ethnology occurred when Harvard naturalist Jesse Walter Fewkes travelled to the Zuni: “in the

\(^{70}\) Ritchie, 11.
summer of 1889 [the trip] had inspired me to wish to attempt to record on the cylinders the songs, rituals, and prayers used by these people, especially in those most immutable of all observances and sacred ceremonies." On March 15, 1890, while in Maine, Fewkes came to a settlement called the Camps where one of three remaining bands of the Passamaquoddy people lived. It was here Fewkes made what would become the first field recordings consisting of thirty-six wax cylinders of Passamaquoddy songs, folktales, vocabularies, and conversations.

Whereas Edison promoted his phonograph as a machine for parlor games or storing the voices of loved ones before they died, Fewkes recognized that he could use recording technology to record the voices of entire cultures. Orchard reveals the importance of this new technology in a 1973 interview: "[recording] relies on the human being, with all his fallacies, with all his feeling. We record feelings." Although in the past people’s voices had to be transcribed into words on a page, now a voice could convey its own story, with all of the vivid inflections and emotions that cannot be related in written word. It is thus impossible to contextualize the Orchard collection without an understanding of the technology that made it possible.

The potential for this technology to transmit recorded feelings took time to develop. Early ethnographers and folklorists were more concerned with writing down the words that were recorded than with preserving the recordings themselves for what they could intrinsically communicate. Barbeau’s work exemplifies this point. Even though his Northwest Coast collections constitute a major resource for the number of disciplines and Aboriginal groups with interests in that area, only a handful of his recordings have

72 Hart, 26.
73 Hart, 27.
74 Imbert Orchard, Documentaries in Sound (Victoria: BC Archives, 1973), 5.
survived in a manner that can be played back due to deterioration, overuse and poor preservation practices.\textsuperscript{75} For Barbeau, the recording’s worth was in the transcriptions, the priority was not the sounds, tones, or soundscapes that were also conveyed.

In addition, American folklorist Alan Lomax’s contribution to the recording of culture was both monumental and influential. Lomax lived from 1915 to 2002, and for seven decades he substantially contributed to the collection, study, understanding, and promotion of folk music on a world scale. Lomax’s first recordings, in 1933, were conducted on a Dictaphone machine before he made the switch to a portable disc-recording machine.\textsuperscript{76} Early in his career, Lomax took down interviews on a typewriter, but eventually he used the most sophisticated tape recorders to which he had access. Marking a dramatic shift away from recording for the sake of having the words transcribed, Lomax realized that recording interviews allowed him to preserve not only the words that were sung or spoken, but the context and style of performance as well.\textsuperscript{77} Lomax claimed in 1942 that he had contributed twenty thousand songs to the American Archive of Folk Culture. According to scholar Ed Kahn, “one of the things that set Lomax apart from many other field workers of the time was his innate understanding of the dynamic quality of folksongs. He knew that folksongs were born, had a life, and then faded into obscurity.”\textsuperscript{78} Lomax’s approach was revolutionary: as exemplified above, his contemporaries only searched for survivals of ‘traditional’ culture rather than the repertoire their informants chose to offer. Even though Lomax wrote books, he frequently presented his work in lectures in which he “often interwove pictures of the

\textsuperscript{75} John J. Cove, \textit{A Detailed Inventory of the Barbeau Northwest Coast Files} (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1985), 3.
\textsuperscript{77} Lomax, 2.
\textsuperscript{78} Lomax, 3.
context of the material with the songs themselves. It was Lomax's purpose in these lectures to change the way an audience listens to this material in the future.” In presentations, Lomax augmented the recordings with pictures but did not take away from the recordings by presenting them in writing or in his own voice. This is a stark contrast to the recordings that survive of Barbeau singing various songs he heard over the years that he worked as a salvage oral historian.

The transition from the Magnetophone stereo technology to magnetic cassette had a profound impact on the discipline of ethnography. According to historian Rosalind Morris, the 1950s featured a revolution in “the development of light-weight cameras, high-speed film, and high fidelity recording equipment, all at reduced prices.” Similar innovations occurred in the technology of audio recording. In 1945, Paul Klipsch patented the Klipschorn folded horn speaker. The innovations in speakers and amplifiers and tape recorders after World War II contributed to the birth of a "Hi-Fidelity" era that produced stereo and transistor radios and cassette tape players. Then in 1951, Stefan Kudelski in Switzerland built the first Nagra portable, self-contained tape recorder with wind-up motor. In 1954, RCA Victor sold the first prerecorded open reel stereo tapes for $12.95. In 1958 the world standard for stereo records was established as the first stereo LPs sold and a new generation of Hi-Fi components featured the adaptation of stereo as the standard. Finally, in 1963 Philips demonstrated its first compact audiocassette recorder, using high-quality BASF polyester 1/8-inch tape that ran at 1-7/8 ips. The subsequent demand for blank tape for personal music recording was enormous.

79 Lomax, 45.
82 Huber, 23.
83 Huber, 27.
Suddenly new voicing strategies were employed and the number of recordings made also rapidly increased. In the words of Orchard, “not only was the sound quality of recorded tape superior to that obtained by disc recording, but the apparatus itself was much more flexible, both for editing and recording.” This flexible technology would transform the discipline of recording oral history.

The most significant ramifications of the new recording technology were twofold: it expanded the effective geographic range of the oral historian, as well as the amount of material that could be recorded. Historian Ian McKay’s The Quest Of The Folk exemplifies this point when he examines the work of maritime folklorist Helen Creighton. McKay describes a trip Creighton took to Devil’s Island in 1929 to record the songs of the people there as a critical moment in her career. Unfortunately, McKay misses a key feature of her project by failing to comment on the technology Creighton used to record songs there. The fact is that in 1929, wax cylinders were the chosen method of making live recordings. Wax cylinder recorders were not easily durable or portable, so she would have had to stabilize her machine and invite her informants come to it. Furthermore, if Devil’s Island was remote enough that it did not have electricity, Creighton would have had to wind up the machine by hand in order to make her recordings. Hence, in 1932 when Creighton told her publishers that the CBC was going to broadcast twenty programs on the folksongs of Nova Scotia, she stated, “we will have two songs in each broadcast, and I will talk on the songs, the lore surrounding them, the

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84 Morris, 121.
86 Hart, 24.
singers and the district from which they came."  

She was limited by the technology of the time for two main reasons. First, Creighton would have had to record her informants in an environment that was foreign to them; they would not have been used to singing into machines in a contrived locale. Second, the length of the recordings would have been fixed as wax cylinders ran approximately two to two and a half minutes of playing time. In this case, Creighton did not have a technology available to her that would have allowed her to record as much material as her informants wanted to offer. She would have had to record her two minutes’ worth, and then use her own voice to fill in the rest of the record at a later date. 

By the 1960s, when Orchard conducted his interviews, the invention of inexpensive portable recorders had expanded the sphere of possibilities. With battery-powered recorders, travel into remote areas to record informants in their own home settings became possible. Furthermore, since reel-to-reel tapes were inexpensive and could record at a high quality for a half hour, researchers could record as much material as they wanted and then edit the content at a later date. With the advent of directional microphones, an informant no longer had to speak into a cone; a microphone could be placed in a room and then ignored by an informant to make the testimony less affected by the recording process. The development of such recording technology had an enormous effect on the discipline of oral history. Simply stated, the Orchard collection would not have been possible just a few years earlier simply because the technology did not exist for him to record so much material in so many remote places in a comfortable setting.

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88 Hart, 25.
89 To demonstrate the fragility of the wax cylinder recordings, the British Columbia Archives, the repository for one of the largest audio collections in Canada, holds only six wax cylinders.
There is no doubt that Orchard was part of a wider trend to record folk songs and stories among peoples in rural regions everywhere. Some of the collectors are very well known: Alan Lomax in the USA; Cecil Sharp in Britain; Maud Karpeles in Newfoundland; Helen Creighton in the Maritimes; Marius Barbeau in Quebec and British Columbia, and; Edith Fowke in Ontario. Since there is no biography of Orchard, and he did not leave behind any known papers that mention any mentors in his field, there is no evidence of a direct influence. It is likely that Orchard was aware of the work of other people doing similar salvage work. It is possible that he was in contact with anthropologists at the University of British Columbia, such as Harry Hawthorne.\textsuperscript{90} Given his educational background, he may well have been aware of local scholarly work. However, since he was not a scholar, he may not have sought guidance of others in his field and may not have known that he was in a particular field of knowledge with antecedents.

Studs Terkel may have been influential. A radio journalist who tape-recorded ordinary Americans in the 1940s, Terkel became a household name. Everyone listened to his Chicago-based radio programme, ‘Studs Terkel’s Wax Museum.’\textsuperscript{91} According to biographer James T. Baker, like Orchard, “Terkel began interviewing people, capturing their words and music on wire and tape, for his radio shows.”\textsuperscript{92} Over time, Terkel began to see that his work could be used not just for radio broadcasting, but also for the writing of oral histories. Baker argues that “to write his oral histories, Terkel would search out not just musicians, writers, and public figures, but also America’s elusive ‘common

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{90} In the 1950s and 1960s, Hawthorne influenced the development of native affairs in Canada and contributed to development of Canadian anthropology by providing practical and research experience for a number of young scholars.
\bibitem{92} Baker, p. 36.
\end{thebibliography}
Eventually, Terkel’s radio programs were syndicated nationwide throughout the United States.94

Orchard and Terkel had many similarities – both were radio journalists who focused on interviewing ‘common people’ in an oral history project - and Orchard must have been aware of, and likely influenced by, Terkel’s work. It may have occurred to Orchard that no one was doing this sort of work in Canadian broadcasting journalism. And Barbeau’s films and lectures suggested that British Columbia would be a potential goldmine. It was the wild Canadian west, after all.

In conclusion, Orchard was a radio journalist who became an amateur oral historian by using the recording technology of his time. Furthermore, while Orchard did have an agenda, unlike many later oral historians he did not see his work as a means of political and social empowerment for his subjects. The collection is unique in the following way: it is the first, and by far the largest, oral collection focusing on British Columbians who had memories of the period from 1870 to 1914. My aim, in the pages that follow, is to determine how this remarkable collection can be interpreted and utilized by modern historians. Orchard’s collection is an invaluable primary source in which the personalities of those who established British Columbia’s communities and workforce are communicated in their own voices. Hence, the following points need to be understood in the context of this collection: Orchard’s role in influencing the data he received; how this resource should not be mined for factual accounts of the past, but should instead be perceived as an indicator of historical consciousness; and, how the subjectivity of the story itself must be contextualized in order to gain an understanding of the material. In

93 Baker, 37.
94 Baker, p. 29.
the end, the Orchard collection provides a window into a generation’s consciousness about themselves as first-generation British Columbians. The next chapter will highlight the work that Orchard undertook within the CBC.
Chapter 2: The CBC and Nationalism

In an interview with CBC radio personality J.J. McColl in June of 1973, Imbert Orchard described his early relationship with the CBC. He began with an account of his oral history project in 1959/1960. He explained how he was given ‘carte blanche.’ He stated, "I had this special interest and I was allowed to evolve it." This chapter will discuss the circumstances that allowed Orchard such freedom of choice within the CBC.

Why did the CBC supply Orchard with a technician and fund his project? To answer this question, this chapter will begin with an examination of the CBC’s mandate at the time.

The Massey Commission was key. As historian Paul Litt argued in his The Muses, the Masses and the Massey Commission, in 1949 "it seemed that Canada had come to age constitutionally, diplomatically, and militarily. A cultural nationalism that cultivated a unique cultural identity was an appropriate capstone for the nation-building process." The Massey Commission was formed to help develop and solidify the framework of a Canadian national identity. The Massey Commission looked to traditional ‘high culture’ as the source of humanistic values upon which Canada could build a "unique and independent liberal democratic post-war society." Essentially, Litt argued, the Commission was on "a crusade for Canadian cultural nationalism," because there was a fear that dependence upon American culture would stifle Canadian cultural development. Litt also argued that the members of the Commission formed a "cultural

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3 Ibid.
4 Litt, 2.
elite” that shared fundamental values: “nationalism, a belief in cultivating democracy through education, and a faith in government intervention under expert guidance.”

The relationship between the Massey Commission and the CBC was solidified in 1949. The CBC at this time was unable to make long-term plans because the corporation was never assured of enough money to implement them. Members of the Massey Commission “were strong supporters of public broadcasting [and] wanted the CBC to get secure funding, insulated from political influence, so that it could adequately fulfill its mandate.” In the opinion of members of the Massey Commission, the CBC was “the single greatest agency for national unity, understanding and enlightenment.” The CBC was to be the main stage upon which much of the propagation of Canadian culture over the next several decades would be manifested. With the backing of the Massey Commission, the CBC declared “we believe radio has the responsibility of ‘leading’ the listener to a certain extent.” With the context for how the Massey Commission supported the CBC as a tool for the promotion of Canadian nationalism, the mandate of the CBC can be better understood.

In 1966, historian Frank Peers published “The Nationalist Dilemma in Canadian Broadcasting,” offering a perspective on the CBC’s nationalist agenda, as it was perceived in Orchard’s time. Peers’ thesis was that “nationalism has been a potent force in creating a distinctly Canadian broadcasting system.” Peers praised the CBC because “it has given its public – many of whom are immigrants, many of whom have been

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5 Litt, 22.
6 Litt, 24.
7 Ibid.
8 Litt, 215.
9 Litt, 131.
making the difficult transition from farm to city – a sense of a national awareness without glossing over the schisms in Canadian life and without imposing a narrow doctrinaire nationalism.” More importantly, Peers argued, the CBC “has given regions of Canada a chance to know about each other, if not necessarily to like one another better.” Peers implied that the CBC was trying to fit regional diversity within its nation-building agenda. In Peers’ opinion, the nationalism conveyed by the CBC in the 1960s was easily defined: “it has illustrated the Canadian concern for survival but has not tried to deny that Canadians are part of a North American society … the nationalism of the CBC has been of a particularly pragmatic kind, with all the strengths and weaknesses that implies.” Finally, Peers concluded that, “surveys show that an overwhelming majority of Canadians approve of the goals which they identify with the CBC, and a substantial majority think that the CBC is fulfilling those aims well.” The pragmatic recognition of diversity within the nationalist agenda also appeared in the official record. The 1968 Broadcasting Act clearly outlined the broadcasting policy for Canada. Section F stated that “there should be provided, through a corporation established by Parliament for the purpose, a national broadcasting service that is predominantly Canadian in content and character.” Furthermore, Section G stated that the CBC must aim at:

iii) … serving the special needs of geographic regions, actively contributing to the flow and exchange of cultural and regional information and entertainment, and;
iv) contribute[ing] to the development of national unity and provide[ing] for a continuing expression of Canadian identity.

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11 Peers, 263.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Peers, 265.
16 Ibid, v.
The mandate of the CBC was clearly stated in CBC submissions to the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission): “Forty-two years after its inception the CBC is still engaged in the same mission ... what the CBC is all about: the creation of a national consciousness.”17 The CBC portrayed itself as militant in this undertaking: “broadcasting can be, must be, an instrument for the defence of our identity as a nation.”18 The sentiment was that Canada needed to distinguish its cultural identity from that of the United States:

Our values are as divergent as the constitutional goals spelled out in the documents that gave each nation its birth. The American goal was “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” – an essentially romantic ideal, and in sharp contrast to the sensible but more understated goals enshrined in the British North America Act: “Peace, order and good government”.19

The transmission of a Canadian national identity was thus at the core of the CBC’s mandate.

The CBC – A Perspective (1978) reveals the CBC’s official view of pluralist identity. The book argued that “there is a detected trilogy of pluralism in Canada,” which consisted of “two major linguistic communities and many other native and ethnic identities,” and a strong sense of regional identity because “each region, virtually every province, has its own history, its own economic preoccupations, its own perspectives and its own institutions.”20 Moreover, the sense of Canadian identity was comprised of the contradictions that united all the people from these regions: “our similar philosophical

18 Ibid, 3.
19 Ibid.
20 The CBC – A Perspective: Submission to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission in Support of Applications for Renewal of Network Licences, 4-5.
beginnings, our unique capacity to accept pluralism and diversity, our common psyche, shaped by a terrain and climate that are both our anthem and our adversary.”21 The CBC had engaged in ‘cultural protectionism’ from the United States since the 1920s when it was discovered that “English speaking Canadians were listening, in overwhelming numbers, to US networks.”22 Ever since that time, the mandate of the CBC consisted of “producing programs that reflect and interpret Canada to Canadians; expressing the Canadian reality in song and story” and “bringing Canadians together, enabling them to share the rich cultural expressions of their diverse heritage.”23 Specific elements in this nationalist agenda relate directly to Orchard’s radio programs.

Since the CBC was designed to reach a mass public, the biases of the Massey Commission toward ‘high culture’ had to be compromised. According to Litt, “rural Canadians in particular regarded the CBC and the NFB [National Film Board] as their cultural lifeline.”24 Indeed, the significance of the role that the CBC played in promoting Canadian culture in the 1950s and 1960s cannot be understated. Historian Douglas Cole clearly states, “the most important cultural vehicle [in British Columbia] was doubtless the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.”25 Furthermore, Cole argues, “although it [the CBC] was an important instrument linking the province with the outside world, its strength lay as much in local production as in network broadcasting.”26 Consequently, the CBC had to adapt its programming in order to keep this enormous

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21 Ibid, 5.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid, 6.
24 Litt, 49.
26 Ibid.
audience interested. If the CBC were to recognize the diversity of region and ethnicity, it could only do so by drawing upon elements of popular culture:

Music and drama were the cornerstone of regional CBC programming from the 1940s to the mid-1960s... the quality of its productions, rivaled in the English-speaking world only by the BBC, caught the attention of the national network. Regional radio thrived even after the advent of television.27

As a result, the CBC gathered within its fold producers who were eager to tap into marketable sources of regional popular culture.

The CBC in the late 1950s allocated a great deal of freedom to its employees. With a focus on regional needs, it was able to fund projects specific to individual stations. In an interview with archivist Derek Reimer, Orchard stated that: “the CBC in those days [the late 1950s, early 1960s] was much more of a regional thing than it is now. The big power complex, the big centralizing forces of both the Federal government, echoed by the CBC, had not taken place... so they were open to new ideas, and there seemed to be spots which the local heads of radio had control of.”28 Orchard also explained that he was given great freedom:

By that time, producers had permission to do two very important things: they could go out and gather material for themselves, which meant that it was just a little bit more flexible than having to depend on a technician – though I always enjoyed working with Ean Stephen [the technician he worked with for most of the interviews] – but it meant that I could do a thing on the spot right there whether the technician was with me or not, and I could travel around to very odd places, you know, and it had a sort of spontaneity about it; the other thing was that we were permitted to edit the tapes for ourselves instead of having to use the technician’s hand, which was pretty boring and terrible for the technician and pretty frustrating for us too.29

27 Ibid.
28 Derek Reimer interviewing Imbert Orchard, February 1978. BC Archives accession No. 990, Tape No. 3, Track No. 1, page 13 of the transcription.
The sequence of events that led to Orchard’s work was very simple, and it involved just two other people in the decision making process. After Orchard’s experience with Cox, his colleague John Edwards “saw a sort of series that we could do. And so we did a fifteen minute series on the Skeena River, really on her [Constance Cox’s] experiences, plus one or two others.”30 Doug Nixon, the program director of CBC Radio Vancouver at the time, “was very interested in British Columbia, and he backed those [a radio series based on interviews with old-timers] ideas.”31 Thus it came to pass that with the backing of the local program director, Orchard began to collect material for his radio programs.

Orchard began to collect his interviews in the wake of the 1958 British Columbia Centennial. An examination of the Centennial illustrates an intensifying search for sources of provincial identity and a provincial culture. The 1958 Centennial was the first of a series of centennials for the province, which aimed at marking significant events in the history of British Columbia.32 According to art historian Brenda Lee Weatherston, “these centenary events played an influential part in the construction of British Columbia’s sense of identity, at a time when the province was undergoing rapid modernization.”33 The 1958 Centennial provided an opportunity for the production of numerous local, as well as province-wide celebrations and projects, to commemorate history or to establish permanent legacies for the province. Furthermore, Weatherston

argues, “the 1958 Centennial celebrations were designed in a broad perspective to make British Columbians more aware of the history of their Province, and to increase interest in British Columbia’s heritage for both residents and outsiders.”34 Most significantly, according to a booklet that was published and distributed by the Centennial Committee called A Guide to Community Organization of the British Columbia Centennial Celebrations, the primary purpose of the Centennial was “to honour those pioneers and early settlers who have been largely responsible for the tremendous progress made in our first 100 years.”35 In order for this goal to be fulfilled, the Centennial featured various ceremonies in honour of the ‘founders’ and ‘pioneers,’ and special projects to designate or preserve historic sites or to compile local histories.36

In accordance with the aims of the Massey Commission, Weatherston argues, “the 1958 Centennial celebration was an example of a major government initiative designed to honour the culture and history of the province, and to create a greater sense of unity among its residents.”37 The Centennial was quite successful, or so its organizers believed. After the event Lieutenant Governor Lawrence J. Wallace, Chairman of the Centennial Committee, stated:

It is most pleasing that British Columbians are more aware of the past of their Province, and that an increased interest in British Columbia’s heritage has been created in both the young and old. The celebrations, too, have focused many thousands of eyes upon the Province from beyond its borders.38

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, there was a significant quest for identity in British Columbia. One way of doing this was to focus on the ‘pioneers’ or settlers of the

34 Weatherston, 2.
35 Weatherston, 8.
36 Weatherston, 9.
37 Weatherston, 14.
38 Weatherston, 11.
province. Not only were the people of British Columbia becoming increasingly interested in their unique heritage, but the rest of Canada was becoming interested as well. Wallace’s comments aside, Canada’s curiosity about British Columbia at that time was evident in the interest garnered by the 1958 Canadian silver dollar in celebration of the Centennial. According to Weatherston, “in total, over three million coins were produced, almost ten times the usual number produced for the silver dollar.”

This awareness of the heritage of British Columbia was booming when Orchard began his project.

With these three historical circumstances in place - the CBC being supportive of programs that were focused on Canadian content and focused on Canadian nationalism, the excitement generated by the provincial centennial celebrations, and inexpensive and high quality portable recording technology being available for use for recording oral histories – Orchard was able to collect his interviews with the financial backing of the CBC. Nevertheless, there remained a tension between the celebration of local or regional identities and the promotion of a unifying national consciousness. How would the CBC resolve this apparent contradiction?

The answer lies in the shifting conceptions of Canadian identity in the 1950s and 1960s. In the end, the CBC of the 1950s and early 1960s never resolved this incongruity. However, the construction of provincial symbols of identity has served to help Canadians ‘know’ about their fellow citizens in other Provinces.

W.L. Morton’s *The Canadian Identity* sheds light on the construction of Canadian national identity. In accordance with the Massey Commission and the views of the CBC, Morton distinguished Canadian identity from that of the United States and he sought to

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39 Weatherston, 31.
ground Canadian identity in a northern geography and interactions with that geography. He also stressed the relevance of focusing on Canadian history as a means of distinguishing Canadian cultural identity from that of the United States:

The argument of this chapter is equally simple. It is that the relevance of Canadian history takes its rise in the relations and orientations which result from four permanent factors in that history. These are a northern character [geography], a historical dependence [on world markets for economy and politics], a monarchial government [the symbol of association with the British Commonwealth], and a committed national destiny, committed, that is, to special relations with other states.40

In Morton’s opinion, Canadian history is not a duplicate of American history. Rather, Canadian history is “an important chapter in a distinct and even an unique human endeavor, the civilization of the northern and arctic lands.”41 It is, thus, the creation and celebration of a Canadian history that is both separate and distinct from the United States that is essential for the solidification of a Canadian cultural identity. Furthermore, the “preservation of Canadian integrity in that alliance [with the United States] will depend upon the relevance of Canadian history, on its cultural and moral significance in universal history, and on American recognition of that relevance.”42 For Morton, the relevance of Canadian history lay in the morally defensible character of the Canadian purpose of maintaining a northern nation in the circumstances of an increasingly globalizing world.

In 1966, historian Carl Berger argued that even though racism and crude environmentalism had been discredited, the effort to explain Canadian uniqueness in terms of the north had not. Berger points once again to Vincent Massey who, in 1948, claimed: “climate plays a great part in giving us [Canadians] our special character,

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41 Morton, 93.
42 Morton, 108.
different from that of our southern neighbours.”43 Berger argued that John Diefenbaker utilized the same sentiment as part of his 1958 electoral campaign when he declared, “I see a new Canada, not oriented east and west – a Canada of the North!”44 It was Berger’s contention that “to this compelling theme, which runs so persistently through Canadian nationalist thought since the days of D’Arcy McGee, Canadians responded eagerly and with conviction.”45 Though misguided, a pride in the northern character of Canada was part of the Canadian national identity in the 1960s. Inevitably, the CBC – or some within it – also shared in the quest for Canada’s northern identity.

There were many addressing this issue. For example, toward the end of the 1960s, Canadian historian Ramsay Cook wrote: “in the judgment of many Canadian intellectuals and politicians, past and present, Canada has suffered for more than a century from … the inability to develop a secure and unique identity.”46 A large problem in the search for a Canadian national identity in the 1960s was that there were no legendary father figures. In 1966, historian Craig Brown wrote: “there is no great national hero who cut down a maple tree, threw a silver dollar across the St. Lawrence and then proceeded to lead a revolution and govern the victorious nation wisely and judiciously.”47 According to Brown, a necessity for a secure national identity in Canada requires heroes from the past to emerge: “Canada has asserted its nationalism by looking for it.”48 In the effort to secure a national identity for Canada, Cole Harris argued in 1966 that “Canadian historians … have most frequently turned to the land to explain the

44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
character of Canada.” Harris argued that this tendency is mirrored in Canadian popular culture, which is why “no one objected that the Group of Seven should be considered the most Canadian of our painters because they painted a part of the country with which few Canadians were familiar.” In agreement with Ramsay Cook’s observation, Cole Harris claimed, “a sense of being a northern people, a consciousness of the Shield and the rest of the empty north, and an assumption that the unsettled north is a reserve for riches, have been important ingredients for Canadian nationalism.” In the opinion of both Harris and Cook, the ambiguity of Canadian national identity comes right back to Morton and Brown’s notions of ‘the north.’

So, by the 1960s, a firm Canadian national identity had yet to be forged. A strong notion of identification with a vast northern geography was a large part of Canadian national ideology, but an even larger aspect was the continual search for a unique identity. The CBC was serving as a key tool for the creation and reflection of a Canadian national identity and was doing so by highlighting the diversity from region to region within the country’s borders. The CBC’s ability to cover such a wide range of regions and local topics was received with praise by the Canadian population. As we shall see, Orchard fit securely within this conception of national identity by focusing on how ‘nation’ and ‘identity’ were being propagated in British Columbia in the late 1950s. Orchard shared and responded to the contemporary myth-building of Canadians as a northern people. The focus of Orchard’s work was the nature of the relationship of British Columbians with the northern landscape of the province.

50 Harris, 29.
51 Harris, 40.
In a sense Orchard was the right person in the right place at the right time. The search for British Columbia's 'pioneers' was already under way before Orchard brought the regional CBC into that search. As mentioned, Franz Boas, Marius Barbeau and others had been part of this. Yet, there is no direct evidence to suggest that Orchard was caught up in the 'Centennial-mania' that was occurring in British Columbia. When he first arrived in British Columbia during the Second World War, Orchard claimed, "I fell in love with it right away. I remember going to a library and trying to find a history, and there wasn't anything, hardly."52 Here Orchard revealed his historical interests. His view was that in order to know a place, you needed to know its history. Hence, when he stated above that he had a "special interest" it was not coincidental that this was part of a larger trend. This increase was directly linked to a federally supported initiative, sparked by the Massey Commission, to find a way to create a Canadian national identity. By New Year's Day of 1959, there was a strong identification with Canadian heritage and culture everywhere. The CBC played an essential role in the dissemination and solidification of Canadian culture.

By the time Constance Cox walked into Orchard's office in 1959 there was already a budget and, more importantly, a market for the programs Orchard and his producers wanted to pursue. More specifically, Orchard was able to satisfy the CBC's mission to 'serve the special needs of geographic regions' because, in his own words, he "was doing really the story of that part of the country."53

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52 Derek Reimer interviewing Imbert Orchard, February 1978. BC Archives accession No. 990, Tape No. 3, Track No. 2, page 5 of the transcription.
There is no doubt that Orchard’s vision of British Columbia, as an area with a rich and distinct history, would excite Craig Brown who argued above that the Canadian national identity is in need of heroes from the past to emerge. Orchard stated, “I’m surprised how few people know about our great characters and the people who are semi-historical, semi-legendary that are in BC. We’ve got just as rich a background as any part of this continent in that way, but we don’t know it yet.”

Orchard would find heroes among his ‘pioneers’ of British Columbia. And he would transport salvage ethnography directly into the nation-building mandate of the CBC. With a firm understanding of the cultural-historical context from which Orchard was collecting in place, the following chapter will scrutinize Orchard’s work.

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54 J.J. McColl interviewing Imbert Orchard, June 1973. BC Archives accession No. 990, Tape No. 1, Track No. 1, 9 of the transcription.
Chapter Three: The Aural Historian

My contribution was to come from the sound side and get people to see that ... the sound of a person's voice is an historical thing in itself. And the feeling that's in that voice, as voice, not that comes on the page afterwards, is historically important.'


In the 1970s, Orchard was interviewed several times by various CBC and Provincial Archives employees (J.J. McColl in June of 1973, Derek Reimer in February of 1978, and Dennis Duffy in July of 1978) about his work and his philosophies on sound recording. These interviews help us to define the key elements of Orchard’s technique. This chapter will analyze Orchard’s interviewee selection process, his goals and subsequent methodology, and his notions about preserving history.

Between 1959 and 1966, Orchard conducted 998 interviews with various ‘old-timers’ who could “tell [him] something of the story of B.C.” Even though this is an enormous collection, Orchard did have to employ a selection process to draw from the vastly larger number of those who could be considered to be ‘old-timers’. Since Orchard was a CBC radio producer at the time, his first criterion was that his interviewees had to be “worthwhile as far as broadcasting was concerned.” Orchard explains that he would go into a community, ask around to establish who the ‘old-timers’ were, and then who the ‘characters’ were from within that group. Often he would go into a post office, a garage, or a library and ask, “Who are the old-timers?” As he explained, he would go into a community as a student, not yet knowing who his subjects were or the kinds of testimonies he would receive. Orchard remarked, “there’s many a time I’ve gone into a

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1 Dennis Duffy interviewing Imbert Orchard, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 6, Track No. 2, page 12 of the transcription.
3 J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 1, page 4 of the transcription.
community and hadn’t the foggiest notion who to go to; but within a very short time you found those people.”\textsuperscript{5} Orchard described himself as being subtle in his approach: “I had to go in and say, ‘Look, you tell me.’ This was my attitude really. And I didn’t assume that I knew anything.”\textsuperscript{6} Orchard cited the American ethnographic filmmaker Robert J. Flaherty, who made the groundbreaking 1922 movie \textit{Nanook of the North} in Canada, as a key influence:

I don’t like to have preconceived notions about going into... Like the way Flaherty would make a film: he would go into a country and be there for some time, and then he’d decide that, yes, this is the story. He let the story come out of it. He didn’t have a preconceived story.\textsuperscript{7}

Orchard’s perspective was very different from that of salvage ethnographers like Barbeau, who took a very judgmental role in relation to the community.

In fact, Orchard did have some preconceived notions and biases about the material he wanted, and he crafted mechanisms for getting this. For one, he was interested first and foremost in ‘pioneers.’ This alone excluded many others. Typically, he would establish who the ‘old-timers’ were and then he would seek them out. He often narrowed down his sample even further: “[I ended up recording] about two in every ten, I suppose, possibly, that I met,”\textsuperscript{8} he explained in an interview. This accounts for why people were excluded:

Well, you go and visit these people, and you find that one’s memory isn’t half as good as other people think it is. You find that his speech is really too poor for broadcasting purposes. It’s too slow, too rough, whatever it happens to be. But then you find the really good people who have marvelous recall, and are still quite bright, and feel like talking to you.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{5} Derek Reimer interviewing Imbert Orchard, February 1978. BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 3, Track No. 2, page 4 of the transcription.
\textsuperscript{6} J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 2, Track No. 1, page 6 of the transcription.
\textsuperscript{7} J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 1, page 15 of the transcription.
\textsuperscript{8} Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 3, Track No. 2, page 3 of the transcription.
\textsuperscript{9} J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 1, pages 5-6 of the transcription.
Orchard clearly showed his preferences here. He had set notions of the perfect interviewee: strong recall, clear speech, a defined personality, and willingness to speak with him. Clearly, therefore, Orchard did have well-defined and pre-conceived criteria. Orchard believed that his interviewees could reveal the ‘story’ of their part of the province, a notion to be unpacked later.

Orchard’s interview criteria can be seen in a theoretical context, specifically Alessandro Portelli’s observations of the two key ways in which the interviewer influences the kinds of testimonies received. While Portelli is primarily concerned with the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, he also recognizes that the very presence of a recording device can affect the kinds of testimonies offered.\(^\text{10}\)

Similarly, Orchard was aware that recording devices were foreign (or at least not common) to most of the people he recorded so he needed to establish a rapport in order to make his subjects feel comfortable. In 1973, he recalled that:

> You go in there, you have a tape recorder but you don’t bring it out or anything like that, you talk about things and after a while you say, “Well, look why shouldn’t we just try a little recording. After all it doesn’t matter, we just let the thing run and have a conversation like we’re having now.” And sure, they find it’s fine, and you get wonderful things.\(^\text{11}\)

As with Flaherty, the key to the quality and volume of Orchard’s work was rapport. Orchard assumed that if his subjects were comfortable with him, they would be more inclined to share testimonies.

The second way in which Portelli observes how the interviewer affects the testimonies received has to do with the relationship between the two parties. Portelli


\(^{11}\) J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 2, Track No. 1, page 5 of the transcription. All of Orchard’s interviewees signed a consent form so that their testimonies could be used for broadcast on the CBC.
remarks, “there are always two subjects to a field situation, and the roles of ‘observed’ and ‘observer’ are more fluid than it might appear at first glance.” As argued in chapter one, Portelli contends that in order to achieve equality in an interview some kind of mutuality must be established between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interview process, then, must encourage open communication in both parties and power must be dealt with openly. Orchard believed that his work was more successful if he did not begin introducing himself along with the impression that he wished to record people. However, this was not because he was mindful that this information might affect how his potential interviewees would react to him, but rather because “they get all excited about the idea, and then they’re terribly let down if after your first interview you’ve decided not to record them.” Orchard did, however, deal with the power relationship in the interview right from the moment of introduction:

So you’re always careful to say, “Well, I’m just looking; I’m from the CBC,” I would say, “and we’re doing the story of this country and we’re looking for people who can tell us this story.” I wouldn’t say anything about recording. “And we’d like to talk; I’m just making a kind of survey, you know.” And then in the course of the thing I’d realize that they were terrific, I’d say: “Well, I’m coming back in a few days’ time.”

There certainly is a power-dynamic at play in the relationships Orchard established with his interviewees. First, Orchard was working for the CBC, as shown in chapter two, a corporation that carried an enormous cultural weight in Canada. Moreover, Orchard was highly educated which separated him by class from many of his interviewees. To overcome this barrier, Orchard spent time introducing himself to his interviewees. His mission was to reassure them that what he had in store for them was not intimidating.

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12 Portelli, 30.
13 Portelli, 32.
14 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 3, Track No. 2, page 5 of the transcription.
15 Ibid.
Mutuality, as Portelli calls it, was established because Orchard would spend time with his interviewees, developing a rapport. There was a higher chance that his interviewees would respond to him as a person, rather than as a highly educated representative of the CBC, when they became more comfortable with him. He undertook his formal recorded interviews a few days later, after he had broken the ice, with the help of his sound technician, Ean Stephen.

Orchard had to deal constantly with his interviewees’ fears about being recorded. Using the rapport established from previous meetings, Orchard would reassure the interviewees. His voluminous results indicate that he turned this strategy into a fine art. Orchard claims that he would tell his informants,

“Look, there’s nothing to it. It’s just talking as we’re talking now. This will run, we will let it go. If you want to cough we’ll take the cough out. If you want to think, we’ll take the think out. You know what I mean, it’s a... If you decide that you don’t want something you’ve said... something you didn’t want to say, we’ll erase it, you know.” And [I would] just explain how very, very easy it is.16

Orchard was aware of the influence he had on the testimonies offered by his interviewees. He argued that the interviewer has to be relaxed in order to make the other person relaxed.17 In light of Portelli’s observation about the fluidity of an interview, Orchard’s experience was much the same. He noted that the most important thing for him to do was “establish a rapport with people, a personal rapport; and it wasn’t long before [he] soon began to feel quite close to the people [he] was interviewing, and a number of them became very good friends.”18 Orchard went on to say, “And so you learn that you know that your rapport with them is every bit as important as their rapport

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16 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 3, Track No. 2, pages 6 and 7 of the transcription.
17 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 3, Track No. 2, page 7 of the transcription.
18 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 3, Track No. 2, page 9 of the transcription.
was with life earlier on, with the people that they met. It’s all a matter of that kind of flow.”

The dynamic Orchard described is significant for analyzing his views on what his interviewees were giving him access to:

Orchard revealed that his role was to establish rapport with his interviewees so that he could tap into his interviewees’ memories of life ‘earlier on’ and bring that experience into the present. Orchard perceived a relaxed attitude as the key to unlocking their experiences from the past. Orchard claimed that in a situation of relaxed rapport, the informant was able to project the past into the present: “[when you are recording an interview,] what you are really doing is that they are themselves, as they’re talking to you and the tape recorder there, they’re bringing all this form from the past into the present, into their present.” The scholar would argue that what Orchard was accessing is memory, not ‘the past,’ but Orchard did not reflect on the larger philosophical issue of memory and its problems.

When Orchard described his methodology of conducting interviews, a tension was revealed. Orchard claimed, “I’m not looking for any particular subject, as a rule.” While this may have been the case upon arriving in a particular region about which he knew very little, inevitably, as he began to learn, he started to form impressions and opinions and began to seek information about specific subjects. In fact, the contradiction is apparent when Orchard stated,

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19 Ibid.
20 BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 8, Track No. 1, page 16 of the transcription.
You are after specific things. So you keep listening, you bring them back to the subject, or let them wander into interesting things if they are going that way … But, back to a certain subject that you want to hear more about so you are plying your mind to it, and it’s this thing that’s going to help it up a little bit to the end that you want as well, but you’ve got to have this flow first of all.22

However, in many of the recorded interviews, Orchard said very little as he allowed his informants to speak in a stream of consciousness. Occasionally if an interviewee would stray into a topic that had nothing to do with British Columbia or if they ran out of things to say on a particular subject, Orchard would prod them. However, it is not uncommon for five minutes to pass in an interview without any intervention by Orchard. It is therefore difficult to assess what questions he would ask his informants. In his initial meetings with informants, prior to the recorded interview, he may have prompted informants with specific questions. Unfortunately we do not have sources to tell us about these prior conversations. Many interviews would start simply with Orchard saying, “Now, why don’t you tell me how you came to be in this country and the impressions it made on you.”

What is ‘the end’ Orchard is aiming for? Orchard sought what he referred to as the ‘story’ of the province. More specifically, he stated, “I’m very interested in the fact that this way of doing things, going through the country in that way, you find the story of the country; you get them to tell you the story of the country and the story of their experiences in the country.”23 He continued,

Now maybe I do go to a certain person, shall we say, because I know he had an experience on the building of the Grand Trunk Pacific, or something like that, so I want to get the Grand Trunk Pacific story, but I’ll get his story too, if I can, to tell me the broader story of his life. But it is true: you do go for certain specific

22 J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 2, Track No. 1, pages 5 and 6 of the transcription.
things because somebody has worked within that particular field. It's only because it's part of the story of the country that I'm interested in it.24

It is therefore evident that Orchard wanted what would best suit his needs for his programmes: the same subject as the title of his final radio series, 'People in Landscape.' Orchard wanted to know, from region to region, what the interviewee could tell him of their experience in that specific region, and he found this work so fascinating because of the diversity among, and within, regions. Therefore, he pursued the sorts of people who could tell him of their specific experience in those regions – for example, building railway lines, working in mines, or other anecdotes. Furthermore, Orchard's British Columbia reflected a microcosm of the notion of 'Canada' as a land consisting of many diverse regions – the same notion as the one propagated by the CBC.

What does Orchard mean by 'story'? How, in his perspective, do the stories told by individual 'old-timers' become the 'story of the country'? Orchard's frequent use of the word 'story' indicates that it was a central concept in his oral history. Orchard was aware of his own role in drawing out the stories he received, and he was also aware of the subjectivities of the people whom he was interviewing. Orchard stated, "if there's a good speaker... you're getting a life story, and the form of that, really, is the person's life; or certainly in that case, what they want to tell you about it."25 In asking for a 'life story,' Orchard was inviting his informants to tell him about their individual experiences - what later historians would refer to as their 'subjectivities.' As Rosaldo contends, "stories can simultaneously encompass a number of distinctive plot lines and range yet more widely by describing the lay of the land, taking overviews of the situation, and providing key

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
Orchard was explicit in seeking "the lay of the land" – the connection between life experience and landscape. He was even constructing, in his 'pioneers,' a new elite: an elite of 'old-timers' – who had a special relationship to the land in the British Columbia frontier. He states, "within a region, or a pocket, there is something much more interesting gathered there, and the old-timers are still living there and they can tell you about it." In this way, the personal life story of the individual old-timer equals "the story of the country" [in this case British Columbia], because that personal life story means the narrative of the individual's interaction with landscape.

Orchard's interest in the settlers' struggles to live with the forces of nature was part of a larger trend. Historian Ian McKay, for example, has examined the important work of Nova Scotian folklorist Helen Creighton, whose career will help situate Orchard as both an 'outsider' and as a member of a global anti-modernist movement. According to McKay, Creighton "was both an insider and an outsider, both a Nova Scotian exploring what she could imagine to be the roots of her Nova Scotian identity and a thoroughly modern city-dweller exploring the primitive Other on her doorstep." Orchard's experience as an insider and an outsider is much the same. Orchard was a highly educated, well travelled, upper class man who came to British Columbia to interview the rural 'folk'. Based in Vancouver, he traveled throughout rural British Columbia in search of the 'voice of the pioneer.'

McKay argues that Creighton was part of a worldwide anti-modernist movement: "practically everywhere in the interwar world, it seems, we find great refusals of capitalism's 'disenchantment of the world,' and an intellectual search for something more

26 Rosaldo, 91.
28 McKay, 37.
real, natural, authentic, and essential." Orchard, too, fits into McKay’s model.

Orchard’s work took place after the interwar period that McKay describes, but he lived through the interwar period and his interests and ideology were a product of that life experience. Orchard described his interest in British Columbia:

The development that took time in Ontario – from 1797, shall we say – from 1790 to 1970, if you like – that period is squeezed up in B.C., you see. [In] what’s about 100 years less of time, it’s come from the bush to the big cities. And this fascinated me; in other words, the development was more rapid ... and this country interested me because of that ... these people were touched with this primitive life. The Indian presence was much stronger here. It was a much more challenging life, therefore it produced a different kind of person. And I could feel that in the country, that the country was more on an epic scale.30

Orchard’s quest for the ‘primitive life’ reveals his anti-modernist agenda.

Orchard does not totally fit McKay’s anti-modernist model, however. For one, Orchard did not fully share the entropic vision of other anti-modernists. McKay states, “entropic anti-modernism ... could only describe the change simplistically in terms of cultural degradation and erasure.”31 Orchard’s worldview was not pessimistic; rather, he was an anti-modernist who saw bounty in both the modern and the pre-modern ways of life. Hence, for Orchard, the ‘story’ of British Columbia was about people living a ‘primitive life’ in relation to their relationship with the landscape. He was not casting his informants as primitive people. On the contrary, he sees them as fully functioning members of British Columbia’s social fabric. They are the people who, for example, built the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, a ‘story’ that he found fascinating. Orchard’s interest was in their ‘primitive’ lifestyles, the lifestyle that existed before the world, through technology and domestication, became ‘modernized,’ but he did not cast that

29 Ibid.
30 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 3, Track No. 1, pages 6 - 8 of the transcription.
31 McKay, 157.
modernization as entropic in the way Creighton did. It is the ‘epic’ nature of British Columbia’s landscape that produced what Orchard would consider ‘interesting stories’, as the people had to live in extreme, pre-modern landscapes and conditions.

In the 1997 article “Pioneers, Progress, and the Myth of the Frontier,” Elizabeth Furniss examines notions that are common in Canada’s frontier myths. Furniss argues,

The moral and symbolic landscape of the frontier is one of boundaries: the encounter between civilization and wilderness, man and nature, and Whites and Indians (although there are many metaphorical variations). The frontier encounter is characterized by moral opposition, conflict, and struggle; these relationships are eventually resolved through domination and conquest.\(^{32}\)

Orchard’s notion of ‘the story’ fits into this paradigm. Orchard claims, “it’s quite true that some parts [of the province] are more exciting than others. There’s a bigger sweep to the stories. There’s more of an epic feeling of the forces of nature being battled.”\(^{33}\)

For Furniss, the domestication of the elements and, consequently, of Aboriginal peoples constitutes the key feature of frontier myths. Orchard was finding stories of struggle and eventual domination or domestication, as his old-timers struggled and succeeded in taming or controlling a tough landscape. Orchard was asked by McColl: “Could it be that the areas that are the toughest to have survived in are the areas where you’re finding the most vivid characters?” Orchard replied,

I think that’s true, yes. I think very much that they were the areas that … they had to survive. Take the Bella Coola people or the Sointula people; they had somehow for many years to battle with their surroundings. And you get the Chilcotin ranchers, of course you get the [unintelligible] there. They’re pitting themselves against the elements of nature, working, animals, and things like that… right all the way along and still are, and so it is still a very rich area. And the same with the fishing people.\(^{34}\)

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\(^{33}\) J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 1, page 9 of the transcription.

\(^{34}\) J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 1, page 10 of the transcription.
Orchard revealed that he perceived the Chilcotin to be a rich area because the struggle with the landscape was still occurring.

Chapter two discussed the trend in Orchard’s time to discover and propagate the ‘pioneer,’ a word that has come to carry a heavy symbolic weight. Orchard constructed his ‘pioneer’ in ways that Furniss describes:

A simple evocation of the symbol of the “pioneer,” for example, evokes images of settlers arriving in remote regions, establishing homesteads and farms through their own hard labour, struggling against the forces of nature and, at times, “hostile” Indians, and “opening up” the wilderness for the advancement of civilization; in short, it evokes the master narrative of Canadian nationalism.35

The majority of Orchard’s interviews were conducted with immigrant settlers, rather than with Aboriginal peoples, and therefore the ‘story’ Orchard discovered about the interaction between people in the landscape was closely related to the ‘pioneer myth.’ For example, in 1973 Orchard described being very excited about a program he was putting together for the CBC:

This is very exciting. There’s a historical one, for instance, on Kitselas Canyon – that’s up in the Skeena River — and while I’ve done several programs about it, I’ve done a really full one in depth. It starts right way from 2 or 3000 years ago in the archaeological finds, through the marvelous Indian legends about the place, through the coming of the white man in the canoe, or the Indians coming up and down in the canoes through this narrow place, which was defended by the Aboriginals that lived there, you see, who exacted tribute, and right through the white man breaking through with his sternwheelers going up and down, having a great time there and one of them being wrecked there, and then the coming of the railway and the building of the tunnels through there. It has as much legend and story as any place on the Rhine or the Danube or the Thames. This is what I realized. We looked at this wild wilderness around us and really underneath there is this story. We don’t know it enough yet. We kind of think there’s so much history in Europe, you know, but it’s right here. We take all of the people that have lived there, you see. Our Aboriginal people have provided us with so many legends and stories and made this thing come alive for us, so it’s all part of

35 Furniss, 11.
This is very clearly a story about bringing civilization to a ‘wild wilderness.’ But there is a difference between Orchard’s frontier and the myth-making described by Furniss. Orchard’s purpose in unveiling the lives of settlers was not to justify the domestication of Aboriginal people, or to reveal them as ‘hostile.’ His treatment of Aboriginal people is consistent with his rapport with all of his interviewees. Orchard respected the fact that, in the case of Aboriginal ‘stories,’ “this is their property.” Rather than being ‘hostile,’ his Aboriginal people played an active role in the ‘domestication’ of the landscape and served to further his quest for the ‘story’ of British Columbia.

Orchard revealed that his favorite interview was with a non-Aboriginal man from Hope who spent a great deal of time in the Babine area – specifically near Hazelton – named Martin Starret. Together they generated twenty-five hours of interviews over several trips. Examining what made Starret so interesting to Orchard reveals many of the qualities Orchard valued in ‘the pioneer.’ Aside from qualities such as “wonderful recall, ... [and] a very vivid character,” which Orchard valued as key for any good interview, Starret was able to divulge in great detail the exact kind of ‘story’ Orchard was seeking. Furthermore, Starret had a really strong and clear radio voice. From his experiences as a fur trader, Starret took Orchard into an “Indian Village – Babine Village” and up around the lake to where it met with the river. At this point, Starret began to talk with many of the Aboriginal people who lived there and share the various songs and legends from the

37 Ibid.
area with Orchard. Orchard found Starret to be the perfect interviewee because of his ‘story-telling’ abilities, in particular his ability to convey multiple layers of history including his own and that of the Aboriginal people in the area. Clearly, for Orchard, Aboriginal people are part of the historical record, as opposed to being hostile figures in the wilderness. Hence, the ‘pioneer,’ according to Orchard, does not occupy land that was previously terra nullius. Instead, the ‘pioneer’ works with this land in spaces that are already rich in history, and can add another ‘story’ to this record.

Unlike Furniss’ model, Orchard’s frontier is not just about domination and conquest. Rather, Orchard’s image of the frontier was one of subtlety and nuance: it represents a time and a place of accommodation, and living with an environment that is both difficult and bountiful. As a result, newcomers also had to learn to live with and among Aboriginal peoples, unlike the stark frontier Furniss describes where Aboriginal people are simply ‘hostile’ to newcomer endeavors. In fact, from the 998 interviews that comprise the Orchard collection, over one third of the collection, specifically 373 interviews, contain references to Aboriginal Peoples. These include Aboriginal people talking about themselves, non-Aboriginals discussing experiences and interactions of and with Aboriginal people, and details about the lives of Aboriginal people during the ‘settlement era.’ For example, a Haida interviewee, Mrs. Agnes Russ, from the Queen Charlotte Islands, depicted her experience as the daughter of an American man who married the Chief’s daughter. Russ describes her experience in Thomas Crosby’s Girls’ Home, her work as an interpreter for the First Methodist Missionary, and her experience

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40 This number is based upon a search of the text of the Prolog entries for the Orchard collection. Prolog is the program used by the CBC and BC Archives as the database for which all individual interviews of the Orchard collection are described in detail, so as to be used as a finding aid for researchers. The word “Indian” comes up in 373 distinct Prolog entries, each representing one interview of any length.
farming in Sandspit. Clearly this interview serves as an example of how Orchard allowed Aboriginal people to cast themselves as active participants in the ‘settlement era,’ and did not relegate Aboriginal people to pre-contact standards of life experience.

Orchard states,

[In British Columbia] the Indian presence was much stronger here. It was a much more challenging life, therefore it produced a different kind of person. And I could feel that in the country, that the country was on an epic scale. The Indian story itself was epic; there was much more of it.

For Orchard, in this context, the Aboriginal experience was as much a part of the ‘story of the country’ as any other ‘story’ expressed by any other ‘old-timer.’

Orchard’s work also diverges from Furniss’ model in regard to focus. Furniss’ frontier myth is typically used to describe myths that aim at describing ‘why things are the way they are now.’ For Orchard, the end is not just the ‘domestication’ and ‘conquest’ – the end is accommodation and partnership with nature. In fact, for Orchard domestication is a consequence and product of the interaction of living with the environment. What he describes above is a partnership: the landscape has not been beaten into submission, so the ranchers have to accommodate with the ‘elements.’ For example, if the landscape had been tamed, he would not have insisted that the Chilcotin was “still a very rich area.” So, while Orchard’s work does describe the domestication of the landscape, the intrinsic focus of the ‘story’ of the province is the interaction of people with the natural environment from region to region.

41 BC Archives acc. # 1150. Imbert Orchard interviews Mrs. Grace Stephens and Mrs. Agnes Russ. Tape no. 1, Track no. 1.
42 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 3, Track No. 1, page 8 of the transcription.
Orchard conducted so many interviews with ‘old-timers’ that he was forced to confront a remarkable variety of people and memories while discovering his ‘story.’ He recalled,

“When I look back on these things, I can see how this incredible variety of people one runs into: all the way from judges and artists and musicians and politicians to trappers and drunks and every kind of person in between. And this incredible sense of B.C., its identity, that comes out of this, becomes more and more strong; I was always searching for what it is. And after a while you began to know what it was; you know what these currents were.”

How could Orchard find the ‘story of British Columbia’ among so many different accounts? The answer lies in his distinction between ‘event’ or ‘fact’ and ‘atmosphere.’ Rosaldo argues that instead of studying oral accounts as containers of facts, “one must study historical consciousness because it is the medium through which oral testimonies present the shape of the past.” Orchard was a radio journalist who collected stories—something told by a speaker. Orchard believed that the goal of these ‘stories’ was to “draw people into a sense of the time, a sense of the atmosphere. Even if the story is untrue, largely untrue and rather tall, it gives a sense of the feeling of the time.” This is not to imply that Orchard was not interested in factuality as well. In fact, Orchard claims, “a certain amount of research had to be done too. I tried to fit things, very briefly, into the historical context, you know, that I had to gather from other books or documents.”

The main purpose of the interviews, however, was not to verify facts, but to create a sense of atmosphere or the ‘feeling of the time.’ To find the stories that conveyed the atmosphere he was seeking, Orchard had to rely on sound—atmosphere was embedded in the aural record of many voices. Orchard states, “That is where the recording comes into

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43 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 5, Track No. 1, page 14 of the transcription.
44 Rosaldo, 97.
45 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 5, Track No. 1, page 6 of the transcription.
46 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 5, Track No. 1, page 4 of the transcription.
the picture, that it was able to intensify this very great interest that I always had in
landscape, and in people in the landscape." 47 In fact, working only with sound became
an integral part of Orchard’s philosophy.

Orchard’s fascination with sound has helped to influence the direction of oral
sound recording in British Columbia. Prior to Orchard’s work, the standard method for
recording an interview was to place a microphone on a table and record the interviewee
from a distance. The recording would inevitably pick up all of the other background
noises and other sounds from the room. Orchard was very committed to changing this
method to achieve a better quality. He wanted to highlight the voice behind the story.
The CBC technicians’ workshop developed a new microphone specifically for Orchard,
which consisted of a wire that was very lightweight and hung around the interviewee’s
neck. 48 In this way, Orchard could focus on attaining an extremely clear and bright
sound quality. Lapel microphones are now very common for recording voices.

Orchard had a deep interest in collecting both stories and sound documentation.
He thought that collecting stories was the same as doing history – which marks him again
as an amateur or antiquarian, as opposed to a rigid scholar. He stated, “My main interest
was history, was the background of British Columbia life, plus the techniques of sound
documentation. They’re two very distinct fields.” 49 Thus, Orchard felt very strongly
about the methodology and usefulness of recorded sound as a legitimate historical source.
When asked why he chose to work with sound over film, Orchard stated “To me, [sound
and film are] so utterly different, that [film] can’t do it any better … sound has this

47 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 3, Track No. 1, page 8 of the transcription.
48 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 3, Track No. 2, page 8 of the transcription.
quality of enveloping you, penetrating."\textsuperscript{50} Orchard believed that sound loses meaning when the visual aspect is involved and that he could get closer to his interviewees when he just focused on the sound.\textsuperscript{51} Orchard argued,

\begin{quote}
The justification of sound alone, [is] because it has this capability of sort of getting, sidestepping, the eye, which can so often just pick up the external. I realize this more and more vividly the more I work in sound, that it is its own justification, very strong, powerful justification.\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

Without devaluing Orchard’s perspective, it is, however, possible that Orchard was more comfortable working with sound because radio was a product of his generation. Television in his day was a somewhat newer technology. Furthermore, radio would have been more accessible to the people he was interviewing in the 1960s. More of his interviewees would have had radios than televisions (especially in the more remote areas). If his interviewees were already intimidated by a microphone, they would have been very concerned about a motion picture camera. Furthermore, working with sound allowed Orchard complete control over the material in a way that working with film could not. Orchard revealed, “I used to take a portable recorder home very often; I set up a workshop at home and edit.”\textsuperscript{53} The technology was simply not available in Orchard’s time for him to have been able to work with film in that way.

Finally, once the sound had been recorded, Orchard felt that it was just as legitimate as any other source for academics. Orchard states,

\begin{quote}
The historian sort of applies this rule of, well, “It’s all just hearsay; it’s just coming through memory, and I want facts,” you see. You know, you can turn around to the historian and say: “Yes, but you used that diary, didn’t you? Well, that was a very subjective thing. You used that newspaper report of 1850. How do you know that was accurate? If you look at newspaper reporters today, how
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{50} J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 2, page 3 of the transcription.
\textsuperscript{51} J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 2, page 4 of the transcription.
\textsuperscript{52} J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 2, page 5 of the transcription.
\textsuperscript{53} Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 5, Track No. 1, page 7 of the transcription.
accurate are they on what really happened? Are they any more accurate in those days?" What they have to go on is very often every bit, in its own way, as subjective as a tape recording. But as somebody pointed out, if you can apply ... get numbers of tape recorders, numbers of witnesses about one thing, then you're coming closer to the truth. But the same thing applies to any other historical source. You really have to back it up with all kinds of sources ... tape recording is a sort of cross-fertilization and the whole thing. But depth is there — in its own way — depth.54

This passage shows that in 1978, while teaching at Simon Fraser University, Orchard had an awareness of the methods of scholarly history. Even though modern academics deem Orchard to be an amateur, his sophistication, expertise, and ability to articulate his methods and beliefs are all worthy of tremendous respect. He had reflected deeply on the nature of primary sources, written and oral, and he was able to defend the historical value of his oral history against the methods of documentary and academic historians, whom he felt tended to privilege documentary sources. Hence, even though Orchard did not compile his corpus with scholarly uses in mind, he did see potential long-term value in his work for scholarly use. Orchard insisted that his students receive training in British Columbia's history and historical method:

the historical method, the approach to documentation, approach to source material; making up, writing, your own thesis or article or essay, whatever it happens to be. There needs to be some training, just in writing and literature — feeling for language — because there's a certain amount of narration, always, to do.55

Orchard was not an academic, and at times he understood that he was collecting raw material for historians rather than history itself. He knew that those with training as historians might be able to use what he collected in writing histories of the settlement period. At the same time he believed that he was a kind of time-traveler, receiving direct access to the past:

54 Dennis Duffy, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 6, Track No. 1, page 13 of the transcription.
55 Dennis Duffy, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 6, Track No. 1, page 10 of the transcription.
Every time that tape is played, just as it was played just now, that past has come into the present – that past has come into our present right now. This really is one of the most important functions of this whole business. This historical artifact that was created at that time is very valid still because it was expressive then, because it worked then, because of the kind of person. It’s now still valid, and will go on being valid, as we know, for many, many years.56

For Orchard, the sound of the voice was the historical artifact itself. Orchard believed that the past is accessible through the replaying of oral histories, because the past has been brought into the present by virtue of the original storytelling, and then once again, by listening to it at a later time.

Because Orchard was a radio journalist, the essential link to sound was paramount: “I centre on people – their experiences, their personalities, the qualities that come through in sound, in the way they speak, what happens to them, how their lives reflected.”57 As I have argued in chapter one, Orchard followed the same approach as Lomax – the recordings he made were both oral history and aural history. Orchard clearly defined the distinction between the two: in the case of aural history,

You approach a sound, partly for its own sake and partly for what it suggests, what it manifests of social history, of location, of all the things that are implied in the sound. The sound itself, therefore, is the pre-eminent thing. Whereas from the oral history point of view, speech — what people are saying — is the pre-eminent thing.58

Orchard realized that the two elements, oral and aural, were essentially linked:

My contribution was to come from the sound side and get people to see that this really was important, and it was complementary to the other [oral side], that the sound of a person’s voice is an historical thing in itself. And the feeling that’s in that voice, as voice, not that comes on the page afterwards, is historically important.59

56 BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 8, Track No. 2, page 1 of the transcription.
57 Dennis Duffy, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 6, Track No. 2, page 5 of the transcription.
59 Dennis Duffy, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 6, Track No. 2, page 12 of the transcription.
Clearly, Orchard shares the same philosophy as Rosaldo, who claims that what people say is inseparable from how it is said.\textsuperscript{60} At the time of his 1973 interview with McColl, Orchard was anxious about how his collection could be preserved so that the aural aspect could be kept intact – Orchard obviously did not want his interviews to survive as transcriptions:

We’ve got to have a means of preserving this tape so that 50 or 100 years from now these voices can still be heard – and it’s very, very important to do that. I discovered this early on. I knew that the tapes I was doing were going to – if I could preserve them – would play a part, a certain historical part, in preserving the history. Now we’ve got to move on. We’ve got to find somehow of preserving it, so we need a building to look after this. We need a proper archives where they’re preserved in the right kind of temperature, where they can be copied onto more permanent tapes. We need the facilities for research, not just simply research for the historian, the academic person who is only concerned with writing, but for people who want to go back to the original and listen and hear how it sounded and how this person’s meaning comes through in sound. They don’t come through on the written page; I wish the academics could realize that. They don’t seem to understand enough yet. You’ve got to go back to the original thing if you’re going to get the meaning of it.\textsuperscript{61}

Orchard had a defined historical agenda – to make sure his tapes were accepted and accessible to mainstream documentary historians. Orchard therefore declined several opportunities to donate his tapes to various Universities (the University of Victoria was particularly keen on acquiring the collection) before donating his collection to the Provincial Archives of British Columbia in 1974:

When the whole Aural History Division was developed within the Provincial Archives, that was the real solution, because there was a good place where it would be looked after, copied, preserved: all these kinds of things which have come out of Aural History, which nobody would have to time or money to do in a University.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{60} Rosaldo, 92.
\textsuperscript{61} J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 2, page 6 of the transcription.
\textsuperscript{62} Dennis Duffy, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 6, Track No. 1, page 6 of the transcription.
The tapes are housed at the British Columbia Archives to this day. Orchard’s vision of preserving the original source as a sound record has come to fruition. This ensures that Orchard’s collection will fulfill his objective that it be used as an important historical resource.

Orchard’s interviewing technique was heavily influenced by his journalistic background. Orchard recorded sound and voices, with minimal intervention by himself. The technique was consistent with his view of his own role. Always modest and self-effacing, Orchard claimed no proprietorship of the ‘history’ that he recorded. In this respect he was very unlike Helen Creighton. Since he did not own the stories he discovered, he was not a self-promoter. As a result, Orchard has remained largely unknown, even in British Columbia. For example, in a 1979 report for the Canadian National Museum of Man entitled Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and their Role in Canadian Culture, Carole Henderson Carpenter examines the pattern of folklore activities in Canada. In the first paragraph of the first chapter, Carpenter states,

the French Canadians in the east and the Canadian Aboriginal people, especially those in the west, have commanded the attention of prominent scholars, yet virtually no one concerned with oral traditions has studied other potentially interesting groups like the miners and western settlers.  

Clearly, neither Orchard nor his work were recognized or even acknowledged by folklorists and anthropologists. Once again, by comparing Creighton with Orchard, an explanation reveals itself. McKay describes Creighton as one who “had finely developed … [an] accurate sense of her own historical and cultural importance.”

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64 McKay, 3.
Creighton's work highly significant for the history of Nova Scotia and the folklore movement in general, but she perceived herself as a central figure in her work. Thus she had no problem promoting herself. For example, Creighton refers to the 'discovery' of the folksongs on Devil's Island as "my gold mine."65 Orchard, on the other hand, did not regard himself in the same light. Referring to his interviews, Orchard stated, "what I was collecting was not just for the CBC; I was collecting it for a story of the province, for an understanding of the life in those days."66 Orchard did not indicate that his project was self-serving in any way, and thus he never promoted himself the way Creighton did.

Orchard was deeply committed to the material, and often passed up higher paying and more reputable work. For instance, he described being offered a high paying job in a radio-drama series for the CBC: "Now, had I taken over the radio drama, I probably would have advanced much more, I would have made lots more money, and that sort of kind of thing. Whereas I remained a very minor producer, in a sort of by-line who was allowed to do his own thing."67 Unlike Creighton, in her twenties when she began her work, Orchard was a man in his fifties who was not looking to establish himself or his career; the project was of intrinsic value to him. In addition, Orchard garnered "a very great deal of cooperation at the local level with program directors and so on like that, and heads of radio and so on."68 However, Orchard describes how his program was pushed to the periphery:

Unfortunately a lot of the scheduling is made in Toronto, and gradually they pushed my program later and later at night till both the program director here and myself just said: "Well, this isn’t worthwhile. We’re not going to get anybody

65 McKay, 7.
66 J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 1, page 8 of the transcription.
67 Derek Reimer, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 5, Track No. 1, page 7 of the transcription.
68 Dennis Duffy, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 6, Track No. 1, page 4 of the transcription.
listening. The old people and the young people are not going to listen at that
time.” And so I stopped.69

For these reasons, Orchard’s work has been largely ignored up to the present. It exists as a
mass of tapes and accession numbers at the British Columbia Archives. The CBC has
not been replaying old programs, since the master tapes are also at the British Columbia
Archives. This is why Orchard is largely unknown by scholars and journalists.

In conclusion, this chapter has defined Orchard’s technique and his understanding
of his own role as aural recorder. During his lifetime, Orchard did not win the
recognition for his accomplishments that he deserved or earned. Moreover, by analyzing
Orchard’s perceptions of his work and by scrutinizing his method, a clearer picture of the
collection has emerged: the Orchard collection consists of 998 separate accounts from
broadcast-worthy ‘old-timers,’ giving individual personal life experiences, through
anecdotes and ‘stories.’ These accounts reveal perceptions of the landscape in the
various distinct regions of British Columbia, circa 1870 to 1914. Orchard’s work
paralleled the objectives of the CBC’s agenda to promote Canadian nationalism.
Furthermore, in order to accomplish his feat, Orchard employed a modest attitude, and a
relaxed rapport that encouraged open communication between himself and his
interviewees, and, of course, the recording technology available to him. Orchard’s work
was part of a trend of anti-modernism that emerged in the inter-war years, yet his work
diverged somewhat from typical ‘pioneer’ myths in his treatment of Aboriginal peoples:
in his collection they are not cast as hostile, but rather as active participants in the non-
Aboriginal settlement of the west. Nevertheless, Orchard’s work added much to the
public image of the ‘pioneer’ in Canadian folklore. As such it is compatible in many

69 Dennis Duffy, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 6, Track No. 1, page 2 of the transcription.
ways with typical frontier myths in the North American west. The following chapter will illuminate how the people Orchard interviewed collectively conceived of themselves and their accomplishments as they were interviewed in the 1960s.
Chapter Four: Living Memory

This chapter presents a detailed content analysis of the Orchard oral history interviews housed at the British Columbia Archives. Its goal is to present a clearer picture of Orchard’s selection process, and a better understanding of how Orchard’s interviewees viewed themselves and their role in his project to document British Columbia history.

The Orchard collection has been divided into twenty-seven distinct regions of British Columbia. There were several reasons why the collection was organized in this way. For instance, Orchard tended to focus his radio programs on regions, as opposed to themes. For example, within his “People in Landscape” series, there were four subsections: “Life in the Gulf of Georgia,” “The Queen Charlottes and Bella Coola,” “Fraser River Country,” and “New Caledonia Country.” Clearly, breaking the whole collection down into regions was a practical way of managing this enormous body of work. Table 1 breaks down the Orchard interviews by the numbers of interviews in each region, and, subsequently, by how many recorded reel-to-reel tapes exist for that region. However, many ‘old-timers’ interviewed by Orchard lived in, and discussed experiences in, places other than those where they were located when they talked to Orchard. The following analysis of Orchard’s regional preferences is necessarily imperfect - a measure of his general tendency rather than a precise regional breakdown of the locations discussed in the interviews. The number of tapes is important because if Orchard only interviewed three people, for example, in a region, but those three interviews amount to fifteen hours, this indicates that there is a significant ‘story’ in those few interviews. It

1 Mitchell and Duffy, 78.
should be noted that each tape is approximately thirty-two minutes long, though a few
tapes are longer or shorter.

Table 1: The Orchard Collection by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Tapes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Arrow Lakes</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>67</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Boundary</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>3. Cariboo-Chilcotin</td>
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<td>205</td>
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<td>4. Coastal Boats</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>5. Fraser-Thompson</td>
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<td>166</td>
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<td>6. Fraser Valley</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>238</td>
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<td>7. Gulf Islands</td>
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<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Kootenay East</td>
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<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Kootenay West</td>
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<td>95</td>
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<td>10. Lower Coast</td>
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<td>88</td>
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<td>11. Middle Coast</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Nechako</td>
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<td>87</td>
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<td>13. Northwest-Atlin</td>
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<td>14. Okanagan</td>
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<td>140</td>
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<td>15. Peace River</td>
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<td>16. Pemberton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>17. Queen Charlotte Islands</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>18. Skeena</td>
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<td>181</td>
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<td>19. South Thompson</td>
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<td>20. Upper Coast</td>
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<td>51</td>
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<td>21. Vancouver</td>
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<td>22. Victoria</td>
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<td>23. Rest of Vancouver Island</td>
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<td>24. New Westminster</td>
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<td>25. Yukon</td>
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<td>26. Background sounds</td>
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<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Miscellaneous</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>998</strong></td>
<td><strong>2090</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The pre-World War One period of British Columbia’s history is the focus of the
Orchard interviews. Hence, by comparing the data from the Orchard interviews with that
of the pre-war Census of Canada, many details can be elicited about the collection.

According to the 1911 census, the population of British Columbia in 1911 was 392,480
people. There were 188,796 people living in rural British Columbia, and 203,684 people living in urban British Columbia, indicating that more than half of the population lived in towns or cities. Clearly Orchard was employing a selection process, since only 76 of his 998 interviews are from British Columbia’s major urban centres. In 1911, there were only four cities in British Columbia with populations of over 4,000 people: Nanaimo, with a population of 8,306, New Westminster, with a population of 13,199, Victoria, with a population of 31,660, and Vancouver with a population of 100,401. These four cities account for 153,566 people out of the total 203,684 that lived in cities, leaving a remainder of 50,118 people scattered throughout British Columbia’s smaller urban centres. In the Orchard interviews, New Westminster is directly represented by only 1 interview (though it is briefly mentioned or discussed in 39 others), and Victoria garnered more attention than Vancouver with a ratio of 43:29 interviews, despite its significantly smaller population. Clearly, the Orchard collection was not meant to represent this phase of British Columbia’s history by a representative population density sample. Orchard was not seeking the ‘story’ of how British Columbia’s urban centres came into prominence; there is clearly a rural – or at least a small town – bias. Remarkably, however, Orchard still does include the larger cities in his sample, thus indicating that he was not totally opposed to all urban experience. He gave the larger

3 Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, 530.
4 There are 3 interviews from Pemberton, 29 from Vancouver, 43 from Victoria and 1 from New Westminster, equaling a total of 76.
5 Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, 537.
6 For example, in tape #1082:1, Mrs. Ada Bartholomew recalls early days in the Kelowna area. She describes how her family came to the Okanagan via Port Arthur and New Westminster. That is all that is mentioned of New Westminster in this interview.
cities less weight than other areas, such as the Okanagan, which clearly offered Orchard more of the ‘story’ he was seeking.

The area that garnered the most attention from Orchard was the Fraser Valley. He broke this region down into nine sub-sections at the British Columbia Archives. For example, the Abbotsford section consists of fourteen interviews. However, according to the finding aid,

There are 14 interviews in the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford section. Although the section is titled “Abbotsford,” few tapes deal with that city. Rather, most concern Matsqui, Sumas, Peardonville, and Mission, which were all established much earlier than Abbotsford. The time period covered is generally from ca. 1860 to ca. 1914.7

Hence, Orchard’s focus was more on community history, rather than urban history.

Smaller towns such as Chilliwack, Delta, Point Roberts, Harrison Lake, Langley, Mission, Maple Ridge and Surrey are represented in Orchard’s survey of the Fraser Valley. Remarkably, the only one of these small towns to have a population sizable enough to be singled out by the 1911 census was Chilliwack, with a population of 1,657 in 1911, compared to only 277 in 1901.8 Furthermore, since there was an abundance of what the British Columbia Archives’ finding aid terms ‘pioneer life’ happening in this region, it is clear why Orchard covered it so extensively. The longest of the 103 interviews from the Fraser Valley section is with Mr. Cornelius Kelleher (210 minutes, plus an additional interview with his wife Julia Mathilda Kelleher, nee Wells, that is 60 minutes long). Mr. Kelleher’s interview begins with a discussion of his father, Mortimer Kelleher, who was one of the original non-Aboriginal settlers of Mission City in 1868.9

7 This is taken from the detailed finding aid for the Orchard Collection housed at the British Columbia Archives, entitled Fraser Valley, Abbotsford – Matsqui, Sumas, 20.
8 Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, 537.
9 BC Archives acc. #750. Imbert Orchard interviews Mr. Cornelius Kelleher. Tape no. 1, Track no. 1.
Mr. Kelleher proceeds to describe the mills in Mission City, the Oblates Of Mary Immaculate Mission, Father Fouquet, the settlement of the mission in 1862, and talks about how the first CPR trains came through in 1886. He also speaks about Aboriginals at the mission, mentioning Aboriginal place names and describing their hunting and fishing techniques. Orchard's interest was clearly focused on 'what life was like then' he sought to capture a level of detail of a way of life that was much harder to access in Orchard's own time. However, Orchard still saw traces of this more 'primitive' life in his own time. This is clearly shown when Orchard recalled how he would go “into the Skeena, [and travel] all the way from Prince Rupert to Prince George. I decided to sail up by boat. I wasn't going to fly up there; I wanted to get a feel of the coast; I did that.”

Orchard covered virtually the entire province, ranging from the Arrow Lakes region, to the Upper Coast, and from the Nechako and the Northwest-Atlin region, to the Peace River area. He also spent time with people who had lived on coastal boats. If Orchard was only superficially interested in community history, this extensive survey would not have been necessary. Moreover, instead of merely acquiring details about people of distinct vocations, Orchard's vast survey has drawn out details about the beginnings of, and lifestyles in mining and smelting communities, ranching communities, fishing communities, railroad communities, logging communities, Chinese mining and other communities, Aboriginal communities and reservations including social lives and customs, missionaries and missionary communities such as Metlakatla, and life on steamships and other boats. The collection also offers details about areas where people

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10 BC Archives acc. # 750.
had to trap their food to survive, packing and freighting lifestyles, life in extreme winter conditions, and life during the gold rushes. Historians can also find details about prospecting, artistic endeavors such as carving, labor relations, agriculture, education, river transportation, the role of women, Japanese fishing, other ethnicities, road building, other industries, and struggles to survive. In essence, Orchard was trying to account for and display the variety and complexity of lifestyles in British Columbia's 'pioneer' period.

Orchard did not limit his sample to the experiences of men alone. He valued the experience of both men and women. However, the balance of gender distribution varies from region to region. Table 2 offers a break down of Orchard's selection process in each region by gender. In some cases, if an interview with both a husband and wife was long enough, they were considered separate interviews. However, in some cases, Orchard interviewed one person, and then asked a second person for some information on the same tape. Interviews considered as 'both' often include both a man and a woman on the same tape. If Orchard interviewed, for example, a husband and wife and allocated a different accession number for each interview - meaning that there is no overlap of the interviews on the same tape - then this is considered to be two separate interviews.
### Table 2: The Orchard Collection by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Arrow Lakes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Boundary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cariboo-Chilcotin</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Coastal Boats</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fraser-Thompson</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fraser Valley</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gulf Islands</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Kootenay East</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Kootenay West</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Lower Coast</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Middle Coast</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Nechako</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Northwest-Atlin</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Okanagan</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Peace River</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Pemberton Valley</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Queen Charlotte Islands</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Skeena</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. South Thompson</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Upper Coast</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Vancouver</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Victoria</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Rest of Vancouver Island</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. New Westminster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Yukon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Background sounds</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Miscellaneous</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 580 290 68 70 miscellaneous

There is an exact 2:1 ratio of interviews with men over those with women. The 68 interviews with both men and women serve to boost the number of interviews of both men and women respectively, but do not change the ratio. According to the 1901 Canadian Census, there were 114,160 men and 64,497 women living in British
Columbia. This number represents a ratio of just less than 2:1, the same ratio for gender divisions in the province in 1891. In this way, Orchard's collection is reasonably representative of the population disparity between women and men during this time period. The 1901 census only offers details on gender distributions for a few regions of British Columbia, so it is difficult to assess if the ratio of men to women in 1901 was more skewed in some areas than others. However, 16,968 men and 11,203 women lived in Vancouver in 1901. Coincidentally, the ratio in the Orchard collection is also 16:11, though there is no reason to believe that Orchard planned this on purpose. In fact, there were 14,275 men and 9,413 women living in Victoria at the same time, and Orchard’s collection accounts for more women than men in this region. It is essential to note that interviewees in urban places may have reminisced about rural areas where they lived many decades before. Equally, in some cases, interviewees living in large urban centres may have said little about those urban centres. Nonetheless, it is apparent that Orchard was keenly aware of the roles women played in this part of British Columbia’s history, and in each distinct area he allows these women to give voice to their experiences.

In his interview with McColl, Orchard indicates that one of his favorite interviews is with a woman named Phyllis Bryant:

It happened more or less by chance. I was going up the Cariboo Road south of Quesnel, and was doing really the story of that part of the country, and I dropped in to see somebody. And after recording with him, he said: “Well, you should really see this old lady who lives down the road there. She isn’t from this part of the world, she’s from the Chilcotin country, but she’s really got a lot of good

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12 Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, Volume 1: Population (Ottawa: Printed by S.E. Dawson, Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1902), 10.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
stories." So I went back there, and she sure had... She was Phyllis Bryant. She’s remarried, but she was the brother (sic.) of the Bryant family. She had such a wonderful way of telling the story, such a wonderful quality. And the story she told was so fantastic and great in a way – a story of a family – that I then and there followed it up with other members of her family. She had a daughter living nearby, and we went and recorded with her. Gradually I began to see what a great story this was, and I began to think: well, I must get it for broadcasting. And I did several programs related to this: one on the family as a whole; and then one with taking the old lady back again through the country.16

Orchard did not display a bias towards men in his selection process and did not see pioneering as primarily a masculine enterprise. His eclectic curiosity allowed him to record experiences that were specific to women; just as Orchard allowed Aboriginal people to cast themselves as active participants in his narrative, Orchard allowed women to do the same. Mrs. Bryant, who was named Phyllis Bryant Kellis at the time of the interview in July 1964, describes her experience as a homesteader, her experiences as a hotel employee in Riske Creek, her journey to Tatla Lake and her life on the family ranch in Soda Creek. She describes how the arrival of mail was a social event in the community, and details about her music, among other things.17 This interview is representative of the many interviews Orchard conducted with women. Mrs. Bryant Kellis illuminates details about geography and life in that area of the Chilcotin. Clearly, there are many resources in the Orchard Collection for understanding women’s roles in the family, economy and details about women’s thoughts or values as women. Certainly Mrs. Bryant Kellis proves that the women of this era considered themselves to be highly motivated, active people with important roles in the community. Mrs. Bryant Kellis’ testimony shows that it was acceptable for a woman to work in a variety of vocations, move around a lot, and be active in the arts. However, through her discussion of her life

16 J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 1, pages 13-14 of the transcription.
17 BC Archives acc. # 611. Imbert Orchard interviews Mrs. Phyllis Bryant Kellis.
on the family ranch, she also reveals her own essential role in the functioning of the family’s life and land. The interview with Mrs. Bryant Kellis embodies the kind of community-centred testimony Orchard was seeking, from the macrocosm of her role in the community, to the microcosm of her role within the workings of her family.

Even though women are well represented in the Orchard Collection, there is still a definite male bias among this generation. The word ‘mother’ appears in 139 separate entries in the PROLOG database, in which the collection is cataloged. This number indicates cases where interviewees either discussed their own mothers, or women discussed themselves as mothers. On the other hand, the word ‘father’ appears in 454 entries. In the majority of these cases, interviewees discuss their fathers, usually in the context of where they came from or what jobs they held. The discussions of people’s mothers or fathers are often very brief, but the discrepancy in the numbers of cases where each parent is mentioned is very revealing. There is clearly a bias among Orchard and his interviewees about the significance of the roles each parent played in the lives of the interviewees. Even though women have a voice in the Orchard Collection, there is no doubt that this is a patriarchal culture that tended to define itself through the experiences of its fathers.

The Orchard Collection contains interviews with people from a wide variety of ethnicities. It is very difficult to establish an accurate table of the ethnic breakdown of the Orchard Collection because the only way to ascertain an interviewee’s ethnicity is from listening to the interviews, or studying surnames. And this can often hide important details about ethnicity. In many cases, the interviewee’s ethnicity or place of birth is not mentioned. However, by examining the PROLOG entries of the individual interviews, a
Table can be created which indicates how many specific countries or ethnicities were discussed as subjects in individual interviews. For example, if a person discusses arriving in Victoria from England, the word ‘England’ will be flagged in the PROLOG search. Unfortunately, many interviewees do not discuss where they came from. Hence, Table 3 does not indicate a breakdown of the collection by the number of ethnicities represented within the collection. However, if a person discusses a certain person who, for example, he or she notes as coming from Denmark, ‘Denmark’ will be flagged in the PROLOG search. In some cases there is an overlap because several ethnicities can be mentioned in the same interview. Table 3 thus indicates interviewees’ awareness of the various ethnicities working and living in pre-war British Columbia.

Table 3: The Orchard Collection – the number of times a specific ethnicity or country is discussed as a subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic group or country</th>
<th># of interviews discussed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Aboriginal/Native/Indian</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. England/English</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chinese</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. American/USA/America</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ontario</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Scotland/Scottish</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Japanese</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. German</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Italian</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Irish/Ireland</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Quebec</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Norway/Norwegian</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Hindu</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Dutch</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Welsh</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Belgium/Belgian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Jew</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In contrast, according to the 1911 Census of Canada, the ethnic breakdown of British Columbia was as follows:

Table 4: Ethnicities in British Columbia in 1911, represented by more than 5,000 people\(^{18}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. English</td>
<td>133,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Scottish</td>
<td>74,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Irish</td>
<td>40,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Unspecified</td>
<td>22,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Indian</td>
<td>20,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Chinese</td>
<td>19,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Scandinavian</td>
<td>15,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. German</td>
<td>11,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Italian</td>
<td>9,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. French</td>
<td>8,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Japanese</td>
<td>8,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Austro-Hungarian</td>
<td>7,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Russian</td>
<td>6,896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 indicates that Aboriginal peoples were discussed more than those of any other ethnicity. There are several reasons why this population of only 20,134 (5.1% of the population)\(^{19}\) was represented in approximately 1/3 of the interviews. The scope of the Orchard Collection was narrowed to encompass life experiences in British Columbia. Orchard was not particularly interested in details about his interviewee’s pre-British Columbia life experiences. Life in England, for example, would not have garnered much discussion by Orchard. Orchard was looking for “the story of the country,” and by the number of Aboriginal references represented in table 3, Aboriginal people played a very large role in this era of British Columbia’s history. Heavily outweighed in the population by 1911, in 1881 Aboriginal people were still the largest ethnic group in British

\(^{18}\) Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, 340. 
\(^{19}\) Jean Barman, The West Beyond The West (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 379.
Columbia until the CPR allowed a massive influx of immigrants in 1886. In any case, the Orchard Collection shows that British Columbia's Aboriginal peoples were considered to have played a fundamental role in the 'pioneering' of the province. Moreover, Aboriginal people cast themselves as active participants in this endeavor, as will be shown later in this chapter.

The Chinese also occupy a great deal of the Orchard Collection. Yet, of the eighty-four interviews which include discussions of the 'Chinese', only one is with a Chinese person. Interestingly, the interview with Roy Mah was recorded in 1970 by a man named Bert Nelson in Vancouver, and was later donated to Orchard to complement his collection. Mah was a director and editor of the Vancouver Chinese Publicity Bureau, which publishes Vancouver's Chinatown News. Orchard did not include Chinese people in his project. Since Orchard was collecting with radio-journalism in mind, it is possible that he did not deem the English or the quality of Chinese peoples voices as being 'broadcast worthy.' Most references to the 'Chinese' in interviews occur as a part of the narrative, as opposed to an entire interview which focuses on the subject. For example, Mrs. Doris Smith from Revelstoke discusses her memories of Chinese New Years celebrations, how her father came from Switzerland to Revelstoke, parties at the Opera House, Halloween pranks, the Chinese district of town, how she viewed the Chinese quarter when she was a child, the red light district, miners and packers, Christmas celebrations, and the declaration of World War I, among other things. In the case of Smith, she was deemed by Orchard to have a 'broadcast worthy' voice to give recognition to the Chinese experience, even though she was not Chinese herself.

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20 BC Archives accession No. 1343.
21 BC Archives acc. # 461. Imbert Orchard interviews Mrs. Doris Smith.
Much information can be gathered in Orchard’s collection about how the Chinese people of British Columbia were perceived by non-Chinese people. To illustrate the attitudes of Euro-Canadians toward the Chinese, Jean Barman in *The West Beyond The West*, quotes a miner during the gold-rush period as follows: “it is the fashion on the Pacific coast to abuse and ill-treat the Chinaman in every possible way; and I really must tell my friends [that]... they are hard working, sober, and law abiding – three scarce qualities among people in the station.” To be sure, both positive and negative attitudes toward Chinese people are present in the Orchard Collection – there is certainly a complex racial consciousness among those interviewees who do discuss Chinese people. There are approximately sixty references in the collection to the Chinese as workers or settlers. Embedded in many of these references are racial assumptions; even if an interviewee defends the Chinese in the way Barman’s source did, this still reveals a larger tension among the culture. Workers of Chinese origin were segregated in British Columbia’s labor markets – they tended to compete with Euro-Canadians for low-wage manual laboring jobs. Of course, there were variations because some Chinese were also independent proprietors – mainly farmers. Orchard’s informants, who worked along side Chinese laborers, were acutely aware of the Chinese presence in the labor force. Within the Orchard Collection, the kinds of jobs the Chinese had were wide in scope. They were blasters, railway workers, blacksmiths, ranchers, fishermen, canners, miners, servants, laborers, hop pickers, and farmers. There are anecdotes about Chinese telegraphers, anti-Chinese agitation and race riots in Penticton and in Vancouver, intermarriage between Chinese men and Aboriginal women, social relations between Aboriginal people and Chinese people, Quesnel as a ‘Chinese town,’ Chinese gardens in Victoria, Chinese

22 Barman, 82.
theatre, Chinese lotteries, Chinese New Year’s celebrations, how Chinese people were smuggled across the American border for $300, the opium trade, Chinese ranches in Oak Bay at the turn of the century, and Chinese cemeteries in New Westminster and Revelstoke. The stories cover a wide geographical area from the Okanagan, to Vancouver, Victoria, the Fraser-Thompson area, the Cariboo-Chilcotin, Fraser Valley, Arrow Lakes and Gulf Islands. Therefore, although Chinese people are not directly represented in the Orchard collection, they are indirectly interwoven through it.23

According to Barman, people of British descent comprised 67.8% of British Columbia’s population in 1911.24 Those of Continental European descent made up 17.8% of the population.25 Orchard interviewed several people of Continental European origin. Perhaps one of the more inspirational interviews in the Orchard Collection is with Mr. Pasquale “Cap” Capozzi in the Okanagan, who offers his own story of how an immigrant from Italy started as a railway worker and ended up as a multi-millionaire.26 Another colourful example is that of Mr. Milo Fougner who characterized in detail the Norwegian colony at Bella Coola.27 However, the majority of interviews focus on peoples of British descent, which is fairly consistent with the demographic of the time. Hence, the western, British focus of the collection is understandable. There is no question that there was a consciousness among Orchard’s interviewees of the many diverse ethnicities living and working in British Columbia in various capacities and areas.

23 This concurs with the argument presented in Patricia Roy, A white man’s province: British Columbia politicians and Chinese and Japanese immigrants, 1858-1914 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989).
24 Barman, 379.
25 Ibid.
26 BC Archives acc. # 194.
27 BC Archives acc. # 1272.
Once again, Orchard may not have deemed many Continental European people to have had good enough English for broadcast on the CBC.

To augment the analysis of the geographic, gender and ethnic make-up of the Orchard Collection, Table 5 lists all of the jobs mentioned in the PROLOG entries. Just as is the case with ethnicity, vocation tends to be discussed as part of the narrative by interviewees, not as the overall subject of an interview. Orchard did not specifically interview a person because he was, for example, a miner. Orchard would seek that person's mining 'story' as part of the larger narrative. The following table, therefore, reveals that every major economic activity in British Columbia was covered in Orchard's survey. In many cases, vocations are specific to geographic locations because the varied nature of British Columbia's landscape meant that some places were more suited to different jobs.

Table 5: Vocations discussed as subjects in the Orchard Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocation/Subject</th>
<th># of interviews discussed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ranching</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mining</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Logging</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Farming</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fishing</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Homestead</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Captain</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Fruit</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Survey</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Canneries</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Missionaries</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Remittance Men</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Packer</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Owner</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Politics</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Trader</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Builder</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Carver</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By covering such a wide array of occupations, Orchard was able to cover extensively the differing lifestyles associated with most jobs in British Columbia. The value of his recordings is the way they bring life to the various ‘characters’ associated with these jobs. For example, the Orchard Collection reveals that the most famous packer of pre-war British Columbia was a man named Jean-Caux Cataline, who worked for the Yukon Telegraph Line. Cataline is mentioned in thirty-one separate PROLOG entries. In his interview with McColl, Orchard states:

Cataline... oh, he’s the great packer from the early gold rush days right through to within living memory. A number of people remember old Cataline. He’s a legendary figure. Yes, I’m surprised how few people know about our great characters and the people who are semi-historical, semi-legendary that there are in B.C. We’ve got just as rich a background as any part of this continent, in that way, but we don’t know it yet.28

There is an obvious contradiction revealed in this recollection. Even though Orchard portrays Cataline as a “great legendary character,” few people know about him. The problem is that these characters were better known at the time (1880s – 1910s), and therefore they ought to be better known today, in his view. Furthermore, Orchard is also referring to how few urban people know about Cataline. Obviously it was the rural interviewees who remembered and discussed him. In any event, the focus for Orchard was on the anecdotes which came out of the discussions of various characters and vocations. An interest in the jobs themselves was extrinsic to his purpose.

In 1981, the Sound Heritage Series at the British Columbia Archives released the book, Martin: Story of a Young Fur Trader, by Imbert Orchard. As I have argued in chapter three, Orchard himself thought the interviews with Martin Starret to be the highlight of his collection. Using the Starret interviews as a model for the entire

28 J.J. McColl, BC Archives accession No. 990: Tape No. 1, Track No. 1, pages 8-9 of the transcription.
collection, various themes, conceptions and mentalities of the collection as a whole can be drawn out. What the Orchard Collection offers is an insight into how British Columbia’s first (or second) generation non-Aboriginal newcomers viewed themselves during the pre-war years. There is certainly a disjuncture between the time the interviewees described, and the time of the interviews. The interviews reveal a simple, yet strong historical consciousness: the speaker often knows that the way of life that he or she remembers has largely passed away. His or her selection of memories, woven into story, is propelled by his or her sense of the distance between the present and the past. The following theme recurs: “the past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.”29 Thus, there is a tremendous nostalgia conveyed in the narrative.

In The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community, anthropologist Elizabeth Furniss presents an analytical construct of the British Columbia frontier that attempts to freeze, and thus make visible, a variety of disparate, yet thematically integrated, cultural practices.30 With a focus on the Cariboo-Chilcotin region, Furniss argues,

In contrast to the American master narrative of “regeneration through violence,” in the Cariboo region the dominant narrative is one of “conquest through benevolence,” a typically Canadian version in which benevolent paternalism defines assertions of Canadian national identity. Aboriginal people appear only in highlighted circumscribed roles – noble savages, hostile Indians – in these histories celebrating the “conquest” of the frontier. Histories that deviate from or challenge the terms of the frontier myth are exceedingly scarce. The frontier myth thus exists as a dominant mode of history by virtue of its ubiquity in the public domains of the city.31

31 Furniss, 23.
In the epilogue by Orchard, several key characteristics of Starret's remembered past, and by extension all Orchard's interviewees, emerge. The Starret interview is the lens through which the master narrative of Orchard's perception of the frontier is revealed. Orchard remarks, "How vividly he [Starret] conveyed his feelings for that huge, rather inhospitable land in which he spent 34 years of his young manhood!" The past, as conveyed in the Orchard Collection, is the story of the newcomer and his/her relationship with the frontier of settlement on the western Canadian 'frontier' – it is a story of people in landscape. British Columbia is conceived as a frontier consisting of an enormous inhospitable land. Relationships with Aboriginal people are key. Several of Starret's 'stories' can be used to exemplify the larger themes within this remembered past. Starret offers several anecdotes that reveal attitudes toward Aboriginal people:

Before the gold rush there was a fort here [at Hope] and a trading post and a few white people, and it looked like a very forbidding country up the canyon in those days, just rock walls and hostile Indians up there – they called them that, anyway. But these Indians here were always peaceful. They got along fine with the white people. There was never any trouble among these Indians at all. They strictly minded their own business, never begged, never bothered.

The 'forbidding country' in Starret's narrative consisted of rock walls and potentially hostile Indians. In this way, the Orchard collection is consistent with Furniss' frontier myth: even though Starret argues that the 'Indians' were not hostile, they are still conceived of as part of the 'inhospitable land.' There is a keen awareness of the dichotomy between the two ethnicities. Another Starret anecdote illuminates this point:

My mother had been hearing stories and reading a few items in the paper about the wild Indians of the interior, and she questioned my uncle about the dangers of living in remote places, away from any police or any law, you might say. She said: "Charles, is it not rather dangerous to have large sums of money on

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32 Imbert Orchard, Martin: The Story Of A Young Fur Trader. Sound Heritage Series Number 30 (Victoria: Ministry of Provincial Secretary and Government Services, Provincial Archives, 1981), 74.
33 Orchard, Martin: The Story Of A Young Fur Trader, 17.
a person? Would these Indians not prove mean at times? Might they not burn a person’s house down or seize the goods in the store if they were hungry and didn’t have the money?” - and things like that.

He said: “Clara, these are the easiest people to get along with that we have in British Columbia. They wouldn’t harm anybody. They welcome any white people to their country. But they will try a thousand ways to get goods from you without paying for them. You have to guard against that. That’s a habit they have.”

This short anecdote touches on ignorant fears about Aboriginal People, those with experience vouching for the kind nature of these ‘others,’ and character traits of Aboriginal people as intelligent barterers or traders.

Orchard produced a second volume for the Sound Heritage Series, entitled Floodland And Forest: Memories of the Chilliwack Valley. In this, he tells the ‘story’ of the Fraser Valley of British Columbia through legends told to him by the Aboriginal people he interviewed. Orchard demonstrates a nostalgic sensitivity for the Aboriginal way of life that has largely been lost. With a keen awareness of the dichotomy between Aboriginal history, which is that of oral tradition, and that of white people, Orchard observes:

And so it fades – that age old wisdom - and with it the whole meaningful environment of legends and unseen forces, spells and visions, Slalakums*, ghosts and guardian spirits. The valley itself, almost all of it now, is a white people’s midden, where for over 120 years they’ve been shedding the artifacts of their own everyday life – their letters and diaries, official documents and newspapers, their drawings, photographs, tape recordings – year after year, layer upon layer. Such is the stuff of history, which only began in these parts, so we have decreed, when the first whiteman to appear on the scene took out his pencil and made an entry in his journal.

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34 Orchard, Martin: The Story Of A Young Fur Trader, 43.

35 Imbert Orchard, Floodland And Forest: Memories of the Chilliwack Valley, Sound Heritage Series 3 (Victoria: Ministry of Provincial Secretary and Government Services, Provincial Archives, 1983), 7.
Orchard proceeds to describe how the Sto:lo people used the river as a highway for both salmon and men. Orchard also describes how the Aboriginal people who lived in this area became increasingly dependant on white people’s tools and economy. He portrays the transition from Aboriginal economy to a western economy as a two-way exchange. He stresses the dependence of westerners on Aboriginal people. Dan Milo (1864-1966), an Aboriginal elder from Chilliwack told Orchard:

> When I first came to hear them speaking about a white man, Kwah-lee-turn, that’s what the Indians call the white man, because in them days those white people traveling on the way to the gold rush, they were starving. Kwah-lee-turn, that means “starving.” Well, the Indians began to feed them, feed them till they get all right. They say the Indians here in this valley, the Chilliwack Valley, are about the kindest Indians that’s living - that’s what the white people said.

The dependence of newcomers on Aboriginal people, and gradually the dependence of Aboriginal peoples on newcomers, is a dominant theme in the Orchard Collection. This stands in stark contrast with the position taken by Furniss: “the subtle images of the paternal benevolence of the colonizers and settlers, and those of the savage primitiveness or childishness of Aboriginal people, implicitly affirm the legitimacy of European expansion and settlement.” Moreover, ‘dependence’ does not fully encapsulate the relationship between Aboriginal people and the newcomers. Starret indicates that the relationship between the two groups had a subtlety of camaraderie and respectful co-existence. In the following anecdote, Starret discusses a pack-horse trip that he and his mother made with Cataline and several Aboriginals. Orchard remarks,

> We had with us a fly, about eight by eight – what I mean is a sheet of canvas – and this could be pitched by sharpening some stakes, probably ten feet long, and punching them into the ground, if there was no frost on the ground … and that’s

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36 Orchard, Floodland And Forest: Memories of the Chilliwack Valley, 8.
37 Ibid.
38 Orchard, Floodland And Forest: Memories of the Chilliwack Valley, 9-10.
39 Furniss, 69.
what we intended to camp with. But the Indians had already pitched a tent of their own, which had walls on it and just the front thrown open to let the heat of the fire in, and they realized that my mother, being a woman: “It would be better for the lady and you to sleep in the tent, and we’ll take the canvas.” And that’s the way we made out.  

Friendships and co-existence between Aboriginal peoples and westerners is a common theme in the Orchard Collection. His interviewees also frequently recalled the first white settlers. As Jonathan Reece expressed it, it was key to invoke the “first person to take up land in the valley.”

Furniss draws attention to the frontier myth in Eric Collier’s *Three Against The Wilderness*. A “classic Canadian wilderness tale,” consisting of “the conflict with and struggle against dark forces,” it depicts nature as something to be feared and respected. According to Furniss, this view of nature is quite common in the frontier myth. In contrast, Orchard’s interviewees depict nature not as the domination of an inhospitable and fearsome terrain, but rather a challenge of learned accommodation. As Orchard puts it:

[W]e are made to realize what it was like to move around in it [the inhospitable land]: how you could be grateful for a night on a farmhouse floor, or between lousy blankets in a so-called stopping house, or under a fly tent in all weathers: how every means of travel, whether by sternwheeler or canoe, on horseback or slogging it out on foot, had its own rhythm and timing.

Means of travel is central to the theme of ‘learned accommodation,’ which is precisely why Orchard chose to travel by pack horse, boat, horseback and on foot (among many

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41 Orchard, *Floodland And Forest: Memories of the Chilliwack Valley*, 11.
42 Furniss, 66.
43 Ibid.
44 Furniss, 67.
other means) when he was collecting his interviews; he wanted to experience the country in the way his informants had described.

Two key aspects of the ‘story’ of accommodation featured in the Orchard Collection are navigation in the environment and change over time. Both of these themes are directly related to the concept of the ‘inhospitable land.’ One anecdote that describes change over time and the necessity of travel is that of the wagon Starret’s father built in Hope in the late 1800s. Starret says:

I remember my father having an old horse – a cayuse* - and a wagon he had made himself. He’d got boards – I suppose some old house fell down, or warehouse, along the road somewhere, and he’d salvaged these boards, nailed them together and then trimmed off around, so it was round like a wheel; and for axels he used a piece of crabapple seasoned, wild crabapple cut from the swamp, or yew that he’d picked up from the Coquihalla**. The front wheels were probably two feet and a half high, and the rear wheels maybe were three feet high. And he’d drive that thing to Hope and he didn’t seem to be ashamed of it. He had a kind of a box on it, and he’d often take us along with him. The seat was nothing but a darn piece of wood across the top of this huge box affair, but we thought it was all right as long as we got a ride. We didn’t seem to mind how much it jolted.  

Starret depicts a pre-modern past in which a relationship with the landscape was the essential ingredient for survival. The landscape offered the tools necessary to navigate the terrain, and the ‘accommodation’ of the terrain is perceived by Starret as a success story.

The Orchard Collection offers the ‘story’ of a country in transition; there is a profound sense of change over time communicated by the informants. The focus on

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* - From Orchard’s notes on this page: “Some of the fellows would have a team of cayuses,” said Martin. “They were Indian ponies; they couldn’t afford horses. The Indian ponies were smaller, but they were tough. You didn’t have to feed them so much grain.”

** - From Orchard’s notes on this page: The Coquihalla River flows fiom the northeast and joins the Fraser River at Hope.

46 Orchard, Martin: The Story Of A Young Fur Trader, 16-17.
transportation is an essential ingredient of the narrative that communicates this change.

Horatio Webb describes how Jonathan Reece moved his butcher shop to Yale in 1862:

Coming down from Yale this trip the steamer went up the Chilliwack River to what was always known as Mark’s Place... they went back down the river as far as Squihala leaving the boat and taking the Hudson Bay trail to the log cabin on the Reece place ... From Yale [the cattle leader] would start back alone and he would swim the Fraser and other streams, getting home in two or three days... In 1864 a wagon road was built from Yale to Cariboo, a distance of 400 miles.47

The underlying ‘story’ in this anecdote is not that of domestication of the landscape, but of navigation through it. Furthermore, the construction of the Cariboo Road is presented as a major break-through for navigating this part of British Columbia’s terrain; the river was no longer the only travel route. The necessity of travel routes continued to be an essential part of the narrative far past the gold-rush era. For example, Starret describes the Babine area of British Columbia in the early 1900s:

I noticed before the day was out other pack horses leaving town. Well, Hazelton was just about the top of the river that was navigable for steamboats, and there were valleys coming in. You could continue on up the Skeena River a long way. You’d get up there ten miles and there was the village of Kispiox and the Kispiox valley coming in. Then you’d go along another fifty or sixty miles and the Babine River came in from the Babine Lake country. The Bear River came in nine miles or so from Hazelton from the direction of Babine; that would be to the east. And to the south and east of there is what they call the Bulkley Valley. All these valleys led into Hazelton, that meant there had to be a town there, like a hub for everyone to come into.48

The terrain Starret describes is so extreme that the town of Hazelton is established as the hub for survival. Moreover, a detailed knowledge of local geography is also shown to be essential in order to navigate and survive in such an environment.

The Orchard Collection offers a detailed series of recordings with a group of people who successfully learned to live in accommodation with British Columbia’s ‘epic’

47 Orchard, Floodland And Forest: Memories of the Chilliwack Valley, 12.
48 Orchard, Martin: The Story Of A Young Fur Trader, 44.
landscapes, in a time when this was a challenging feat. In a sense, it is a story of ‘we
came, we struggled, we learned, we conquered,’ with a large degree of sensitivity. The
narrative is a story about learning to accommodate an ‘epic’ landscape. The interviewees
convey a great respect for the landscape; the ‘domination’ was a gradual process as
accommodation to the landscape became more refined over the years. This, in essence, is
the story of ‘change over time’ conveyed in the Orchard Collection. Hence, the narrative
of the Orchard Collection is not the ‘story’ of conquest; it is the story of this era of
accommodation. The onus is therefore not on domestication, but on navigation. The
Orchard Collection constructs the pioneering era as a success story. This parallels
Furniss’ point. In order to communicate this story, the Orchard Collection covers
virtually the entire province, from the perspectives of both women and men, and it
includes many diverse occupations. The Orchard Collection serves as a lens into this
‘country,’ a tool for understanding and navigating within an ‘epic’ landscape at a time
when navigation was not taken for granted the way it is in the ‘modern’ era.
Conclusion

The value of Imbert Orchard's collection for historians today is directly linked with Orchard's objectives. The significance of this collection cannot be understated. However, the collection's shortcomings must also be recognized. Orchard was a radio journalist and so he was pursuing colour - a clear voice, articulate responses, and good English - that would project well on the radio. Consequently, the qualities he valued in interviewees included: strong recall, clear speech, a defined personality, and willingness to speak with him. The interviewees he selected had to provide the kinds of stories that would appeal to a broad general audience. The collection had to be largely a story of success. Otherwise the CBC would not have aired or supported the work.

This collection was not primarily intended for academics and so there are many omissions from the 'story of the province.' For example, there are few interviews with Aboriginal men and women - the older ones would not have spoken English and if they did, it would have been broken and not suitable for public radio in the 1960s. The same scenario would also factor into his exclusion of many first-generation Europeans - French, German, and Italian - and Asians, as most would not have spoken 'good enough' English. Since Orchard was not an anthropologist or an ethnographer or even a professional historian, he was able to eliminate these interviewees from the 'story' he was seeking. He was, however, very conscious of the value of Aboriginal testimonies, which is exactly why interviewees like Starret, who could provide these accounts in a more radio-friendly manner, are prized by Orchard.
The topics covered in the collection also had to be ‘safe.’ Orchard was not seeking accounts where extreme racism, rape, or family violence, for example, were disclosed because it simply was not suitable for public consumption on the CBC. There are accounts of murder cases and occasional clashes with the Chinese, but these are not large themes in the narrative. In the cases of murders, they tend to be based on more widely known cases, such as that involving Simon Gunanoot.¹ Likewise, labour historians cannot use his collection to learn much about the growth of trade unions and other labour organizations, an essential element to the growth of British Columbia; nor will they learn much about stressed worker-employer relations, or strikes. Due to his obligation as a radio journalist, Orchard had to offer the ‘pretty’ picture of British Columbia. It is a romantic success story of hardship, struggle, and accommodation.

That being said, the collection will serve as an invaluable resource for social historians, community historians and historians looking for a multiplicity of details about British Columbia’s settlement period. For example, the collection includes accounts of prominent historical figures such as James Douglas, Bill Miner and Lord Tweedsmuir. Family members can also access personal family histories if, for example, a great-grandparent was interviewed. However, since the collection was intended for use as popular history in the form of edited radio programs, as opposed to academic history, the real potential for this material is in the public realm: the collection can be used as a source for popular histories and for many fascinating accounts of life in the settlement period.

¹ Gunanoot is referenced in 9 separate PROLOG entries. Simon Gunanoot was a Gitksan man accused of murdering two men in 1906, in the Hazelton region. Gunanoot vanished with his family of eight into the wilderness and 13 years later he emerged out of the bush and turned himself in, igniting a media firestorm.
The Orchard collection was propelled by a sense of nostalgia, both from Orchard and his informants. There is no doubt that Orchard’s nostalgia was part of a global anti-modernist trend. Furthermore, Orchard must have been influenced by other folklorists: Bela Bartok with Hungarian folk, Cecil Sharp with rural England, and Edith Fowke in rural Ontario, to name a few. These people published and lectured widely, and some even aired on radio. Orchard, if not directly influenced by them, was at least aware of their work, especially that of Studs Turkel, a national icon just south of the border. However, since he was not a scholar, there is no evidence that Orchard sought guidance of others in his field.

Nostalgia was also an essential part of the testimonies within the Orchard collection: his informants were, for the most part, ‘old-timers,’ looking back over their lives, and the lives of their parents, with emotion and strong feelings. In this respect, they will be of interest to social historians who would not otherwise have access to such information. The speaker often knew that the way of life that he or she remembered had largely passed away. There was nostalgia about everything – even relationships with Aboriginal peoples. The relationship with Aboriginal peoples was remembered as an experience of camaraderie and respectfulness. Furthermore, rather than being ‘hostile,’ Aboriginal people were seen as playing an active role in the ‘domestication’ of the landscape. They are, thus, a large part of the narrative. In many cases, Aboriginals aided the newcomers in understanding how to survive in a relationship of accommodation with the landscape.

The Orchard collection contains a historical epistemology that consists of a set of narratives about the settlement of British Columbia that can easily be used to further the
dominant modes of historical consciousness among the public about the ‘frontier.’ After all, this is a collection consisting mostly of Euro-Canadians and those of British descent describing their relationship with British Columbia’s ‘epic’ landscape. It would, however, be irresponsible to do so because the collection also contains variants on the typical ‘frontier myth’ described by Furniss. The testimonies also convey the experience of partnership – that of community partnership and the relationship between people and the landscape. Orchard’s collection is a ‘story’ of a country in transition in which a detailed knowledge of local geography is shown to be an essential skill in order to navigate and survive in an inhospitable environment. In the end, what modernity - railways, highways, automobiles, agriculture, and hydroelectric power - brought to the inhabitants of British Columbia was much easier access and mobility through transportation. There is a tremendous amount of respect for the landscape conveyed in the collection; the ‘domination’ was a gradual process as accommodation of the landscape became more refined over the years.

Certainly, class too plays a key role in the collection. Orchard was a highly educated, classically trained upper-middle class man whose interests took him to the rural workers of British Columbia. Many of his interviewees were not as highly educated, most were labourers, though some were also of his own class. In many cases, the essential condition of living on the frontier meant these people had to accommodate with the environment in order to survive; if they did not build ‘it,’ grow ‘it,’ or work with ‘it,’ ‘it’ was not provided. Many of these people contributed to the settlement of the province. However, within the lifetime of these people, the methods and technologies they embraced largely became obsolete in the wake of modernity. This sentiment relates, of
course, to anti-modernism, which is all about nostalgia for a remembered and cherished past - even an invented or mythical past. Yet, as a success story, the role these people played in the development of British Columbia is not perceived as being insignificant.

It is the very work of these people that comprises one important foundation on which modern British Columbia stands. This is the very aspect that separates Orchard from McKay’s anti-modernists: his vision is not entropic. Anti-modernism is, by definition, entropic - it assumes that modern urban and industrial civilization exhibits decline or moral degradation. Orchard exhibits some characteristics of anti-modernism, in his celebration of an earlier frontier society and its representatives. He perceived a disjuncture between a ‘modern’ and a ‘pre-modern’ way of life and believed that he could access the past through the voices of those who lived and experienced this past. He was fascinated with the way of life that progress and technology had made obsolete, but he did not claim that the past was ‘better’ than the modern. He included urban centers in his survey, but he clearly valued small community perspectives over urban perspectives. He is not like a Helen Creighton anti-modernist because he welcomes many of the changes that came with industrialization - especially the technology which pioneers used to adapt to the frontier (e.g., railways, steam power, etc.); and neither is the sentiment conveyed by his interviewees. Anti-modernism in this case would not be a story of success if the nostalgia were to be cast as a series of insignificant lives and accomplishments.

The true value of the Orchard Collection has yet to be realized. A mass of reel to reel audio tapes and cloned compact discs, it currently sits on the shelves of the British Columbia Archives, accompanied by a series of individual database entries that can be used by researchers as finding aids. Other than a few brief articles and books, many by
Orchard himself or by archivists, Orchard's work largely has been ignored. In fact, this MA thesis is the first academic analysis of Orchard's legacy.

What is the future for the Orchard Collection? It will gain currency as a research tool for both popular and academic history as it ages - the tapes feature testimonies from key personalities who were active participants in the 'settlement era' of British Columbia. As such, they are extremely rare. As 'stories' become more accessible to the public they will add to the wealth of information that is known about this early period. Despite the topics its recordings do not include, the collection offers an abundance of unparalleled stories depicting the settlement era of British Columbia.

Orchard was a significant radio journalist and dedicated intellectual of the British Columbian past who has not yet been recognized for his contribution to the history of British Columbia. He fully knew the value of his work, and that in his own mind, he was not working in the margins of British Columbia history, but right at the centre. So, even though he was not a scholar, he was a formidable cultural force whose historical reputation will grow exponentially with time. His cultural and historical value will also result from the fact that he regarded people in all regions of the province, unlike many scholarly historians who tend to focus on the lower mainland and Vancouver Island. Scholars, by using the material he left behind, can begin to give Orchard the recognition that he deserves.
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