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Words to Live By: How Experience Shapes our Information World at Work, Play and in Everyday Life

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Library & Information Science

WORDS TO LIVE BY: HOW EXPERIENCE SHAPES OUR INFORMATION WORLD AT WORK, PLAY, AND IN EVERYDAY LIFE

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

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Graduate Program in Library and Information Science

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Abstract

Background: A considerable amount of effort has been spent studying information behaviours and practices associated with formal, professional contexts and documentary, tangible sources of information. Comparatively, relatively little is known about non–documentary and experience-based information found in informal, nonformal, blue collar and rural contexts. Experiences of everyday life are often neglected from a research standpoint because they are seen as common, familiar, and unremarkable. **Research Question:** By exploring familiar experiences of everyday life in one specific, marginalized context, my goals were to contribute to the body of interdisciplinary literature describing non–problem–based phenomena and non–documentary, experience-based sources of information; to extend our understanding of work, leisure and everyday life information practices in informal and non-professional contexts; and to elevate these less frequently studied experiences and information sources above the trivial theoretically. To address this gap, the present study asks, what is the nature of experience in the remote, rural village of Whitney, Ontario, Canada across the domains of work, leisure and maintenance activities? **Method:** I interviewed 24 adult residents of the village ranging in age from their early twenties to their late eighties using a semi–structured interview protocol. I also gathered data through several photo–methodologies including documentary photography, photo–voice, and photo–elicitation. Printed documentary evidence reflecting experiences in the village were obtained through environmental scanning. I analyzed data using qualitative thematic coding methods from the perspective of everyday life information seeking theories, drawing support from serious leisure, lifelong learning, and experiential education theories where appropriate. **Discussion:** Reinforcing previous Information Behaviour theory, results show that informal information channels and interpersonal sources are frequently preferred over formal ones, and that contextual factors continue to influence information seeking and use across the domains of work, play and everyday life. More study is required to explain the characteristics and qualities that insulate small worlds like this from information poverty, as well as the effects of interruptions in the network of interpersonal sources relied on heavily in this context. This research also highlights how the social characteristics of information seeking and use add depth to discussions of leisure experiences. A working definition of experiential information is provided.

Keywords:

Experiential Information, Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS), Informal Information Behaviours, Information Poverty, Information Seeking Behaviours, Information Seeking and Use (ISU), Rural Information Seeking, Tacit Knowledge, Leisure Experience, Everyday Life Experience

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Kelly Fuller
Larry Fuller
Tania Jermol
Anna Belle Jocko
Fred Kmith
Marcia Jermol Kylie (1939-2012)
Edward Lentz
Josephine Lentz
Peter J. Mask (1895-1972)
Jacqueline Mask
Hazel Mask (1904-1962)
James R. Mask
Roger Mask (1931-2009)
Monique Mason
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Edward McGuey
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To my parents, Emil and Monda Michel, you taught me about the importance of place, hard work, and education. I love libraries, learning and small towns because of you. I hope you see yourselves inside these pages. This is probably also a good time to apologize: Sorry mom. I'm certain this isn't what you had in mind when you said you wanted me to be a doctor. Or to write a book about Whitney. But I hope you approve anyway.

To my uncle, Adolf Michel, a man not inclined toward gambling but who nevertheless delights in taking a chance now and again. In your garden between the neat rows of potatoes and tomatoes, I saw you sow the seeds of possibility. When you thought no one was looking, I watched the example you set, and I wanted to be like you. The time you have shared with me has been a gift without measure.

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Dedication

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Cheers…

To those who believed I could do it;
To those who helped me do it; and
To the obstacles that came in between.
In negotiating the lift, thrust and drag,
I learned how to fly.

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1 Everyday Life Information Seeking

1.1 Introduction – Parsing the Everyday

Standing in a crowd of well wishers attending the visitation for Marcia Jermol Kylie (1939–2012) in the basement of St. Martin of Tours Catholic Parish in Whitney, Ontario at the close of December 2012, I watched two old friends meet up. One gave the other a good–natured pat on the shoulder and asked, “So what are you up to these days?” The other replied with a smile, “Oh, not much.”

It was a casual scene I watched play out several times that evening, and many times over the years in different places and on different occasions in town. Superficially, it was just a common greeting between friends; a perfect example of an everyday life exchange of information. What makes it remarkable, however, is the meaning that lies under the surface: the meaning you can’t know from simply parsing the words.

What you can’t know, for example, is how many different things “not much” really means, or how enormous “not much” actually is. In years past, it has meant caring for a dozen children or more and operating a business, often while dad worked away from home for months at a time lumbering or in the mines. It has meant buying a home, disassembling it and moving it one stick at a time to rebuild it in a different location on your own property. It has meant rebuilding life after devastating losses due to fire and accident. In modern times, it means retiring from decades of work in a career that feeds your family to another full time career that feeds your family and your soul. Sometimes it means, more astonishingly yet, maintaining two or more careers simultaneously for your entire life. It means providing care and compassion for the elderly, the injured, the disabled and the dying – not only among members of your own family, but among those in your neighbours' families as well.

It is one thing to witness a conversation of this sort; to interpret the words literally and to remember only its completely forgettable nature. It is quite another to understand the experiences that constitute the lives lived behind it; the experiences that give the exchange of words meaning. Having had the privilege of attending to both and of recognizing the difference, I believe that examining experience in everyday life constitutes not only a challenging task, but also a worthwhile contribution to studies of information seeking and use (ISU). Discovering what you can't know from simple observation or content analysis of the ordinary everyday is the heart of this dissertation.

1.2 Purpose – Wrestling with Paradoxes

The heart of this dissertation is everyday life, and as the opening narrative illustrates, this also includes the two paradoxes that lie therein. First, though everyday life is composed of "events that are characterized as regular, repeated, familiar, quotidian, banal, and even boring," (Savolainen, 2008a, 2) familiarity with these everyday experiences shields from an awareness of their ambiguous and elusive nature. And second, though the activities and experiences of everyday life are natural, inescapable, and critical to human existence, everyday contexts are "often seen as something trivial that is not worth talking about" (Savolainen, 2008a, 2).

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore such familiar experiences of everyday life in one specific context, to recognize and understand the ambiguities in those experiences, and to elevate their relevance above the trivial.

1.3 Research Questions – Digging Deeper

Since experience as a source of information is not well understood either generally or in this context in particular, this study can be characterized as exploratory. The primary research question I set out to answer was: *What does experience look like in the rural village of Whitney, Ontario?* Note that this question purposely avoids use of the word "information." To obtain a more nuanced sense of what does or does not constitute experience, how it may cross boundaries between work, leisure and maintenance activities, and what the relationship is between experience and information, I kept a number of supporting ideas in mind. Additional research questions around the concept of the (in)formality of information, and multiple uses of information included:

- What tangible information sources are available to and consulted by rural residents of this Township (print, electronic, other, current)?
- What are the intangible information sources that are part of rural life in this Township (historical, current, anecdotal, experiential)?
- Where does the information originate, and where is it applied? How is it transferred? Who participates in the exchange?
- How is information valued in this environment? What does cognitive authority look like?

I examined the characteristics of experience in the remote, rural village of Whitney, Ontario across three facets of everyday life: at work (time traded for pay), during leisure time (play time), and in maintenance activities (caring for self, home, family and friends). To facilitate my goal of finding out what experience means to the people of this village from their own perspective, I opted for a broad research question and emergent, qualitative, ethnographic design, which allowed for a fuller exploration of the topic both in directions I could anticipate and in those I could not.

1.4 Significance of “Not Much”

On some level, exploring familiar experiences of everyday life in this setting satisfies a personal desire to elevate the experiences of ordinary citizens through non–fiction narrative, a form of writing with which I am very comfortable. It allows me to tell faithfully the stories of others in their own words, in my own way, without appropriating their stories as my own. More significantly, however, doing so in the context of this dissertation allows me to elevate the relevance of these stories above the trivial theoretically as well; to comment on what can be learned from the stories. In particular, this study seeks to address five theoretical gaps that emerged during the preliminary stages of investigation.

1.4.1 Non–problem–based Phenomena

Scientific investigation – including information research – has a long history of focusing attention on problems and anomalies (Kari & Hartel, 2007; Seligman, 1988). Problems and anomalies are, almost by definition, easy to identify precisely because their consequences can be intense. They are the outliers; unusual instances; sources of grief and consternation. Driven by the noble desire to correct deficiencies, the study of pathology in all its forms and in all disciplines gets the lion’s share of resources because it is universally accepted that the potential for discoveries to remove constraints is valuable. Investigation of this nature yields more easily to specificity, conclusivity, and the scientific method in general.

Studying the ‘trivial’ world of everyday life, on the other hand, is neither obviously extraordinary, specific in its findings, nor inherently valuable according to contemporary prevailing thought (Savolainen, 2008a). While it may naturally include examining problems, it also includes a distinctly non–pathological element as well. It is, in many ways, the study of things we see all the time, but don’t recognize; the things we hear often, but don’t listen for; the things we touch or that touch us, but which we remember only in their absence. Naturally, studies of this variety are significantly more nebulous, often less conclusive, and consequently, frequently underfunded.

However, if scientific study has taught one thing, it is that prevailing thoughts change as knowledge develops and grows. Likewise, an interdisciplinary movement afoot to broaden the assumptions that privilege problem–based research suggests that studying common and/or positive occurrences, in fact, has a great deal of scientific potential (Gilham & Seligman, 1999; Kari & Hartel, 2007; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It helps to better recognize and understand things taken for granted. It highlights elements of current experience that contribute positively to society in general and to well being individually. It builds strength, rather than removing weakness. It offers the opportunity to learn from each other in very organic ways.

Examining experience in the remote, rural village of Whitney, Ontario provides a unique context from which to make such a contribution. I am not motivated to study information seeking and use in this context because something is not working, but rather, because personal knowledge of life in this community suggests that there are many things that work not only very well, but also quite differently than in other urban, formalized environments with which researchers are more familiar empirically. The first contribution of this study, therefore, is to add to the growing body of interdisciplinary knowledge describing non–problem–based phenomena.

1.4.2 Privileging Informal and Nonformal

Beyond studying common and positive phenomena then, this study also seeks to privilege less familiar, informal and nonformal information seeking and use contexts, channels and sources.

In describing ten assumptions about information and information seeking “that have unwittingly hindered efforts focusing on the information ‘needs’ of average citizens” Brenda Dervin (1976, 329) placed at number four the myth that “information is acquired only through formal information systems.” Case (2007, 8) points to the reality that “people use formal sources rarely, instead gathering and applying information from informal sources, chiefly friends and family, throughout their lives.” Burnett also notes a gap in our understanding of informal leisure information behaviours (IB). He suggests that “people’s interaction with information is not limited to formalized encounters with information systems such as databases and library catalogs, but is embedded in day-to-day interactions and activities, whether goal-oriented and related to “serious” concerns like work or with shared leisure or entertainment. Information behaviour is intrinsically socially embedded, and the values of information are socially determined” (2009, 696).

While much IB research focuses on formal systems and elite occupations (Veinot, 2007, 158), this study follows in the tradition of the above researchers in its aim to discover more about the nature of information seeking and use that occurs in informal, non–urban, blue collar environments. While I make no claim that the results are generalizable, I expect that the findings will not only ring true for those of you with personal small town experience, but also provide empirical insight into a context which ISU researchers know very little about theoretically.

1.4.3 Understanding Leisure Information Contexts

Thirdly, I believe this research project has a contribution to make in extending our understanding of information behaviours and practices specifically in leisure contexts, further cementing the relationship between Leisure Studies (Serious Leisure in particular) and Information Studies forged by Jenna Hartel and Robert Stebbins beginning in 2003 (Hartel, 2003a).

Although the body of literature on the topic is still small in Information Studies, interest in leisure aspects of ISU is growing. In a special issue of *Library Trends* published in 2009, Crystal Fulton and Ruth Vondracek (2009, 613) identified three themes present in current LIS research in the area of leisure activities at that time, and which still are valid today. Themes included:

- Associating information with leisure.
- Examining pleasureful information exchanges, rather than need–based exchanges, and
- Using information rich leisure activities to encourage lifelong learning and increased social inclusion.

A coincidentally similar call has come independently from the Leisure Studies discipline where Gallant et al. (2013, 93-96) noted the following three challenges associated with the current Serious Leisure framework.

- Its focus on leisure *activities* unnecessarily limits the complexity with which leisure can be viewed.
- Unacknowledged, socially constructed dichotomies limit the study and interpretation of serious leisure.

- A lack of attention to the social context in which leisure pursuits are undertaken inhibits examination of other benefits associated with leisure, such as the potential for it to nurture social ties and to build relationships.

This study is poised at the theoretical intersection of these calls to action. In addition to addressing all three of Fulton and Vondracek's themes above, it also responds to Gallant et al.'s call for "alternative methodologies and expanded theorizing to capture the ideologies and discourses that shape and construct [leisure] experience" (Gallant et al., 2013, 95).

1.4.4 Shifting from Document to Experience

Specifically of interest to me are the unique, and often undervalued, experience–based information skills I believe exist in rural populations, such as storytelling, ethnic heritage skills, wilderness survival, foraging, quilting, arts, crafts, and animal husbandry. This information is rarely contained in documents, but rather is learned and absorbed by hand, over time, and in social environments.

Most importantly, because experiential information isn't based on formal, documented methods of information exchange and credentialing, examining what experiential information looks like and how such information is transferred can potentially preserve and highlight not only the informal/nonformal information channels (Spink & Cole, 2001, 303), but also the information itself (arts, crafts, ethnic heritage and so on). In rural communities across Canada, such information sits on the precipice of disappearing forever, as new technologies make the old obsolete. As a case in point, I recall Zita Cobb's declaration in 2013 that knowledge of how to build a traditional Newfoundland Punt (fishing boat) was within "seven funerals of being lost" on Fogo Island (Fogo Island Inn, 2013). This information and these skills may not be needed on a daily basis anymore, but arguably, Canadian culture loses something important when they become extinct. Information professionals, particularly public librarians, have a critical role to play in supporting, preserving and maintaining access to community heritage of this nature.

These experiential information behaviours, apart from their intrinsic value to the people who use them, are particularly interesting from a theoretical perspective because they challenge traditional Library and Information Science (LIS) ideas of what constitutes information. And so, just as the call has come to move the examination of serious leisure from the study of activity to the study of experience, the results of this study seek to make a case for shifting the examination of information from a study of documentary artifacts toward a study that also includes experience as an information source.

1.4.5 Highlighting a Little Known Population

Finally, it is my desire to make a personal contribution to the heritage of a community that, while mostly invisible to the world at large, has nevertheless influenced the lives of millions of people over a period of time spanning more than a century. From cutting trails into and out of Canada's oldest and most well–known national park, to guiding, camping and playing host to international visitors, to search and rescue of wayward travelers, to manning the home fires, to raising children who grow up to perform all of these tasks and more, these mostly unknown and forgotten people deserve a sincere nod for their contribution toward building our national identity and infrastructure.

Unfortunately, rural towns all over the country await such acknowledgement, and the task of studying all of them is all but impossible. Yet, without further and deeper examination of some sort, it also seems somewhat inequitable that information found in environments like this, derived primarily from the ‘school of life,’ should somehow be deemed pejorative, particularly when academia has long acknowledged the fundamental connection between experience and education (Dewey, 1997).

1.5 A Snapshot in Time

Just as a photograph captures its subject at one particular moment, the story I am relaying here is also a snapshot in time. It is the culmination of many individual choices made over an extended period, some by me and some by others, each of which influenced the content present in or absent from the following pages. And so, the significance of what you will *not* find here is worth mentioning as well, particularly for those readers who are intimately familiar with small town living, and who may be hoping for, or expecting, extended discussions of less savoury aspects of experience in this kind of environment as well.

As researchers, though we may idealistically hope that a story of experience in this context would cover all aspects thoroughly and presently, the reality is that examining such an elusive phenomenon requires tremendous tolerance for imprecision at every turn. While I did not avoid sensitive topics during data collection, I left the research questions purposely broad in order to discover what my participants wanted to tell me. Ultimately, the information I present here samples the elements of small town life experience that participants were so kindly willing to share with me under the terms of the research design I presented to them. This is their story, as they told it to me, within these constraints. Having it all, it seems, doesn’t necessarily mean having it all at once.

Despite the limitations, fuzziness and gaps do not represent a flaw with the design, the data or the analysis. The simple fact is that the story of rural and remote populations has never been told before in Library and Information Science studies in any fashion, and as such, telling even a smaller portion of it, incomplete as it may be, still adds to the body of literature in a meaningful way simply because it puts this group and others like them on the map. It offers them a presence at the discussion table that has thus far been inaccessible to everyone. At the very least, identifying some portions of experience in this context reveals more things that we didn’t realize we didn’t know, which invites more research. This is progress.

A fulsome description of community life in this or similar contexts is necessary and will require the use of many different study designs, conducted in many different places, definitely by many different researchers and over a longer period of time. I encourage anyone with an interest in the subject to champion the cause, and to fill in the blanks in whatever ways they are able.

1.6 Outline of Dissertation

The following chapters and pages describe both the discoveries and the process of discovery resulting from exploration of the above research questions and ideas. Chapter 2 describes in more detail the review of relevant literature and the theoretical foundation from which I examined the data. I present my ethnographic research design, including sampling methods, and data collection methods in Chapter 3. Using the metaphor of the canoe, I then move into the findings chapters. Since remote, rural contexts have not yet been described in Library and Information Science literature, I make no assumptions about basic knowledge on the part of the reader about everyday life in this community. Consequently, Chapters 4 and 5 focus almost entirely on historical and specific aspects of context in the remote, rural village of Whitney, Ontario, ending with a summary of the features relevant to this study. In Chapter 6, I move toward a discussion of those experiences in the context of Information Seeking and

Use theory. Finally, Chapter 7 offers conclusions about the contribution of this research to LIS theory. References and appendices contain supporting material, including advertising samples, informed consent, and a bibliography of selected published works about or by people from this geographic location.

Although intended primarily for an audience of ISU and Leisure students and scholars, I hope that parts of this document may appeal to several other groups as well, including potentially the residents of Whitney and other small rural villages like it, public librarians who serve these communities, as well as anyone interested in ethnography or the human heritage of Algonquin Park and surrounding area.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In the introductory chapter, I set out to achieve three goals. First, to identify the primary research question for this study (What does experience look like in the rural village of Whitney, Ontario?) Secondly, to position the question and findings across three domains of experience (work, play and everyday life). And finally, to narrow the focus theoretically (non–problem–based, informal/nonformal channels, context–based study, experience as information, marginalized populations.)

The purpose of a literature review is to determine, before undertaking a study, what exactly is known about the research question(s) at hand. Like graduate school in general, it’s an activity that sounds a lot more tidy and linear than the muddy reality of the exercise. It also sounds, unfortunately, much less creative and inspiring than it actually is. The process is a little bit like shopping, but for ideas instead of merchandise. In this particular case, with previous degrees in the humanities, I set out to learn more in general about social sciences, in particular information behaviour, leisure experiences and positive psychology. At each point of interaction along the journey, I stopped to look at different disciplines, theories and theorists. Guided by my questions, which have evolved over time and with the process, I followed whichever idea caught my fancy, ‘trying on’ models and theories, judging them for fit, asking myself, “Do I buy that?” I actively sought out some ideas, while other ideas serendipitously appeared. I kept the ones I could work with, discarded the ones I couldn’t, and each decision informed where I went to look next. Every now and then I came across a spectacular piece that filled a gap perfectly. On many occasions, I tried to make something work that just wouldn't fit, and subsequently abandoned the effort in favour of other more promising leads.

Although the business of reviewing the literature began with my doctoral course work, including a course in the University of Waterloo's Recreation and Leisure department as a visiting scholar, and continued well into data collection and analysis, the bulk of the task was completed during a two–credit independent guided research project where I explored information aspects of leisure activities in both LIS and other disciplines. The result is a database of references that numbers over 1500 items. What follows is a highlight of the relevant and interesting points in the literature that provide a deeper understanding of the most important theoretical ideas upon which this study is built. Its decisive, succinct and linear format represents many hidden twists and turns and difficult decisions to exclude. It is not the only way of reconstructing the ideas I examined, but it is one way, and it makes sense given the variables and constraints at play.

I've divided the relevant findings across domain (work, play, everyday life), and then subdivided by relevant theoretical topics. Theories are drawn primarily from Library and Information Science studies of Information Seeking and Use which try to explain how and why people actively or passively seek, avoid or encounter information in different contexts. Secondary consideration comes from other related disciplines, including sociology (recreation and leisure Studies, psychology (positive psychology), and education (lifelong learning). I begin with a brief review of the importance of information seeking in context.

2.2 Information Seeking in Context (ISIC)

Over time, I have discovered that examining the literature on any given topic is likely to reveal more questions than certainties, and rarely is found a term with only one, clear, unambiguous, conflict–free definition. Such is the case here in trying to determine the meaning of the term *context*. Yet, beginning with an understanding of what context means to this study is imperative, as it grounds not only the micro geographic and social environment in which the research takes place, but also the macro western and theoretical climate underpinning the nearly invisible assumptions that invariably influence interpretation of findings. I am speaking here, in particular, of the commonly held (and I believe flawed) belief that leisure experiences are frivolous, unproductive and wasted, particularly when compared with what are generally considered more valuable work–related experiences.

Although the relevance of context to any kind of empirical study has long been accepted by both quantitative and qualitative researchers, and by LIS researchers specifically (Kari & Savolainen, 2007), there is significantly less agreement on how to define the term. Dervin notes that trying to define context requires “extraordinary tolerance for chaos” and results in only one possible conclusion: “that there is no term that is more often used, less often defined, and when defined defined so variously as context” (2003, 112). Despite the “fairly amorphous and elusive” nature of our descriptions of the term (Savolainen, 2009, 38), “context is pivotal for comprehending all sorts of information processes (e.g., organizing, providing, and seeking information), so consciously selecting and theorizing about context should be one of information scientists' top concerns” (Kari & Savolainen, 2007, 48).

Consequently, attempts to define context in the literature abound and range from very broad (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; T. D. Wilson, 2000) to quite granular, particularly when context is taken to mean specific physical environments such as digital/online environments (Kari & Savolainen, 2007), information encountering environments (Erdelez, 2005) or information grounds (Pettigrew, 1999), for example. A multitude of other terms also represent different types of context in the LIS literature including setting, situation, information use environment (Taylor, 1991), small world (Chatman, 1991b), information horizons (Savolainen & Kari, 2004), work–related environments (Stokes & Urquhart, 2011), and everyday life (Savolainen, 2005).

Since this study is first and foremost a study of everyday life information seeking, I opted to follow the constellation of explanations derived from Savolainen's line of research, including input from other theorists as appropriate to challenge, support or explain findings. In this model, context is recognized to be not only "as pervasive as the air that we breathe," but also impossible to separate from information behaviour itself (Kari & Savolainen, 2003, 157). It includes "all those things which are not an inherent part of information phenomena, but which nevertheless bear some relation to these" (Kari & Savolainen, 2007, 47).

There are essentially three philosophical approaches to viewing context as defined broadly in this manner: objective, perspective, and realist–pragmatic. While objectifying research philosophies tend to view context as a stable set of delineated activities independent of the participants (Savolainen, 2006a, 3), in perspective–based approaches, context is understood to be "emergent and fluid," or in a constant state of being "constructed and reconstructed through human action and interaction" (Savolainen, 2009, 38-39). Finally, realist–pragmatic philosophies run the middle ground between the two; acknowledging the "objective existence of constraining structures," while allowing for subjectivity and change (Savolainen, 2009, 38-39). While objectifying philosophies of context often derive new knowledge through carefully controlled studies that manipulate desirable and undesirable contextual variables, Fisher notes that perspective–based philosophies instead reveal the subjective nuances and 'benefits' associated with contextual variability in ways that objectifying philosophies cannot (Fisher, 2005, 755). Thus, context can be viewed as fixed, fluid, or both fixed and fluid, each of which lends a slightly different flavour to the discussion. Ethnographic investigation, including this study of experience, naturally lends itself to the moderate realist–pragmatic philosophy that understands context as both fluid and fixed.

Finally, Savolainen identified three primary qualifiers as relevant to discussions of context, and which together provide a framework to organize my research and interpret the findings: spatial factors, temporal factors, and social factors. **Spatial factors** (2006a, 3) include three dimensions: the external, physical, geographic characteristics of the immediate environment, accessibility of information sources (for example, the distance between information seeker and information source) and the comparative value between information sources. **Temporal factors** (2006b) include influences having to do with the passage of time (measurement or value in terms of clock time, seasonal time, linear, cyclical, and stages). And finally, **social factors** (2005) include the written and unwritten rules that govern social interactions such as norms, rules, culture, networks, and politics. Essentially, all contextual variables that influence information seeking behaviour, including such things as “socio–economic conditions, work roles, tasks, problem situations, communities and organizations with their structures and cultures” (Talja, Tuominen, & Savolainen, 2005, 752), can be organized into one of these three categories.

In summary, context in the frame of this study is taken to mean any fixed or fluid factor that may influence information behaviour, whether spatial, temporal, or social. The literature around contextual ISU relevant to this study is divided among three primary social domains, including work, leisure and everyday life. While categorizing research into domains makes understanding the qualities of each area easier, it also makes it easier to unwittingly assign assumptions of value, for example according to different taken–for–granted cultural norms or the amount of empirical attention paid to one area or another. Such judgments are continually in flux, generally a matter of coinciding or colliding opinion, and arguably incorrect at least some of the time. I present the three domains here, grounded in Savolainen's assertion that work and leisure are both distinct from and related to everyday life (2010a, 1781).

2.3 Information Seeking at Work

To begin with, a general definition of 'work' is warranted. Unfortunately, work is another example of a word so universally accepted by every author, audience and discipline that definitions of the term and its synonyms – even in publications that are primarily about the topic of 'work' or in which 'work' plays a fundamental role – are rare. When they do occur, definitions are as varied as the contexts in which the term is used. In most publications reviewed for this study (representing the disciplines of LIS, psychology, and sociology), while specific work–related contexts were frequently identified, an explicit definition of the terms work, workplace, job, or labour was usually absent. It appears that the authors assumed the term so fundamental and basic as to be understood by all.

In the few texts that attempted a definition of any sort, several themes emerged. Leisure texts often used the term 'work' as a foil for leisure: as in "unfreedom" (Sayers, 1986, 80). In publications describing the history of leisure, it was also often characterized in terms of its value, as in "socially necessary productive activity" (Sayers, 1986, 80) or worthy, productively consumed time (Veblen, 2007, 19). Interestingly, Cross (1990, 74) notes the constructionist element in this conceptualization of work. He argues that industrialization, along with the concomitant move to urban centres and advent of consumerism, changed our understanding of work from being "a way of life" traditionally belonging to craftspeople and farmers, to the “selling of time.” In quoting Soule, Anderson (1961, 26) elaborates on the consumer–based notion of work as time traded for pay:

> “People sell time primarily so that they may acquire enough money income to buy products sold by others.’ What one does in sold time is ‘the job’. Time sold is commonly thought of as work.” (Soule, 1957, 16)

In LIS research, despite the fact that “quite a bit of effort has been invested in trying to understand what work is, what distinguishes one kind of work from another, who is likely to engage in that work and why, and what the doing of that work actually means” (Leckie, 2005, 158), clear, concise definitions of the term beyond ‘paid work’ did not emerge. Nevertheless, ISU researchers have demonstrated interest in studying workplace information behaviours.

The study of workplace information behaviors and practices in LIS has historically focused on scientific and professional environments. As a result of decades of interdisciplinary work dating back to the 1960s by researchers working independently to examine information seeking and use within various scientific and professional occupations, Leckie et al. (1996) undertook a meta–analysis of the literature to identify patterns and common trends. Consequently, they produced a landmark article in 1996 describing the information seeking of professionals that still today ranks among the most cited LIS articles of all time, earning on average ten citations per year nearly seventeen years after its publication. This article is particularly important to the present study not only because it represents an excellent review of research on the subject of work–related information seeking up until that time, but also because it presents a largely uncontested model of professional work–related information seeking and use based on its findings. I present in the following sections the highlights of this study, along with notes on how the body of knowledge has evolved since that time, and why the findings are relevant.

2.3.1 Scientists and Researchers

Leckie et al. (1996, 159) note that examinations of workplace information seeking and use originate in studies of scientific and research occupations in the early 1960s. According to Leckie et al., scientists and researchers are engaged primarily in academic contexts where they pursue new knowledge through current and future research agendas, often using highly structured, objective scientific methods of investigation. Surprisingly, results of early investigations of scientist and researcher occupations by Price (1963), Nelson (1970), and Crawford (1971) illustrated that, despite the rigid, objective framework within which scientific information seeking and use occurs, it nevertheless exhibits distinct communal qualities, including both formal and informal communication channels. With the publication of Crane's *Invisible Colleges* (1972), it became well known and generally accepted that scientists and researchers "considered the informal channels to be equally or more important than the formal in their information seeking" (Leckie et al., 1996, 162).

Study of scientific and research occupations since the Leckie et al. article has seen a great deal of diversification in both the scope of individual occupations and the variety of dimensions of information seeking and use examined. Considering the growing number of researchers that claim interest in the phenomena, and the ubiquitous technological changes that have taken place with the introduction of online communication tools, internet search capabilities and powerful database technologies, this is not altogether unexpected. Recent scientific and research occupations examined include workplace practices of doctoral students (Vezzosi, 2009), interdisciplinary humanities scholars (Palmer & Neumann, 2002) academic public health research scientists (Blake & Pratt, 2006), metadata practices of scientists, (White, 2010), TED Talk presenters (Sugimoto et al., 2013), as well as a host of scientists who work in international contexts including Europe (Abramo, D'Angelo, & Murgia, 2013; Eisend, 2002), the Middle East (Aytac, 2010), Asia (Manjunatha & Asundi, 2004) and Africa (Bankole, 2013).

While the information seeking and use habits of scientists and researchers is a world away from the remote, rural, blue collar context of this study, it nevertheless influences our understanding of the value ascribed to various information channels. In particular, it speaks to the nature and value of informal communication channels in all forms of information seeking and use, and which are central to the topic of experience as an information source. Knowing that informal information channels are significant in formal, scientific contexts invites inquiry about the role of informal information channels in informal contexts.

2.3.2 Professional Occupations

Building on the expanding understanding of information seeking and use of scientists and researchers, Leckie et al. examined the literature for information seeking and use behaviours among people employed in professional occupations, which they define as "service–oriented occupations having a theoretical knowledge base, requiring extensive formal postsecondary education, having a self–governing association, and adhering to internally developed codes of ethics or other statements of principle" (Leckie et al., 1996, 162). In particular, they examined three groups of professionals: engineers, health care professionals and lawyers.

These groups of professional occupations differ from scientists and researchers in that their information seeking and use revolves primarily around producing services rather than producing new knowledge. Their work is "necessarily more task–oriented, continually requiring the setting and achieving of goals to provide service to clients in the most efficient manner possible” (Leckie et al., 1996, 162). Also of contextual interest to this group is the fact that many of those daily tasks involve the use of information not related to their subject matter specialty, including “managing, counseling, supervising, planning, and even certain types of research” (Leckie et al., 1996, 163).

Based on their meta–analysis, the resulting model of the information seeking of professionals is driven primarily by the different roles each professional adopts during the course of a work day. Roles can include service provider, administrator/manager, researcher, educator, or student, each of which gives rise to specific tasks that must be accomplished, and each of which may cause an information need. The characteristics of the information need depend on individual variables which might include personal demographics, contextual factors, frequency, predictability, importance and complexity of the need. Information to satisfy these needs can come through formal and informal channels, and may be internal or external to the organization, or take oral or written forms. They may also arise through personal channels including the professional’s own prior knowledge and personal experience. Which specific sources a professional consults to satisfy their information need depends on direct or indirect knowledge of the information source, as well as assessments of its value, which may include trustworthiness, cost and availability. The information seeking process continues in an iterative ‘feedback loop’ until the information need is satisfied. The self–correcting nature of the process indicates not only the complexity of the information behaviour, but also leaves open the possibility that information seeking to satisfy one need may have unexpected benefits that inform previously unsuccessful information searches or which may potentially influence the outcome of future searches.

Likewise to the ISU of scientists and researchers, in the intervening time since the Leckie et al. article was published, professional occupations have seen a similar diversification in both scope of individual occupations examined and the variety of dimensions of information seeking and use examined. Examples of other professional occupations investigated since include primary care staff (Ayre, 2006), junior doctors entering the workforce (Cullen, Clark, & Esson, 2011), healthcare professionals (Fourie, 2009), and critical care nurses (McKnight, 2007).

While the information behaviours and practices of professional engineers, health care workers, and lawyers may bear no more resemblance to the everyday context of this study than that of scientists and researchers, the significance of personal knowledge and experience in the ISU process of professionals stands out. Leckie et al. (1996, 184) lament that neither personal knowledge, nor personal experience are “adequately recognized as a primary source of information.” Both of these qualities result from the “advanced body of specialized knowledge that an individual must master to practice a particular profession” (1996, 184). Leckie et al.’s observation, in the context of this study, opens the opportunity to inquire about the nature of personal knowledge in rural, everyday life contexts, where there is less emphasis on formal systems of education and credentialing, and how it is acquired.

2.3.3 Non–professional Occupations

Although professional, elite occupations have by far received most of the theoretical attention within LIS work–related information seeking literature and are reasonably well developed, the majority of people who work are employed in non–professional occupations. In the present study population, ‘paid work’ includes such occupations as service in the tourism industry (for example, food preparation, waiting tables, sales, guiding, and self–employment), trades (carpentry, road construction), logging, and employment by the Ministry of Natural Resources, all of which would be considered non–professional. In looking through the literature, I gave special attention to articles that discussed this class of worker. In total, I encountered three researchers who describe the information environments of non–professional occupations and which contribute to our understanding of work–related information contexts.

First, Elfreda Chatman examined the information environment of a group of janitors, whom she called low–skilled workers. In particular, Chatman wanted to know what role the employer played in providing workplace information, what the janitors' workplace information needs were, and whether they viewed the library as a source of information. Chatman (1987, 266) defines low–skilled occupations as positions exhibiting the following five characteristics: requires a physical rather than information contribution, holds a place of low status or esteem, requires little or minimal training, characterized by social scientists as 'dirty work,' and are compensated with low wages. While low–skilled work is only one variety of non–professional occupation, this definition provides discrete criteria with which to compare workplaces with Leckie et al.'s definition along a professional/non–professional continuum. See Figure 1: Occupational Characteristics for an easy reference comparison.

Scientists and Researchers (Leckie et al., 1996)	**Professional Characteristics (Leckie et al., 1996)**	**Non–professional Occupation Characteristics (Chatman, 1987)**
New knowledge oriented	Service–oriented	Requires a physical rather than information contribution
Has a theoretical knowledge base	Has a theoretical knowledge base	Requires little or minimal training
Requires extensive formal postsecondary education	Requires extensive formal postsecondary education	Holds a place of low status or esteem
Distinct communal qualities	Has a self–governing association	Characterized by social scientists as 'dirty work'
Adheres to objective, scientific method	Adheres to internally developed codes of ethics or other statements of principle	Compensated with low wages

Figure 1: Occupational Characteristics
Comparison of the characteristics of scientific, professional and non–professional occupations.

Beyond providing a definition of non–professional occupation, Chatman confirmed that "human sources are used when it is believed that their information is derived from personal experience" (1987, 275), once again validating experience as a preferred source of information.

In the second study, Tiffany Veinot (2007, 158) used a qualitative, case–study approach to investigate the information environment of a vault inspector at a hydroelectric company. The author applied social practice theory as a framework to the job and argues that "vault inspection is an information practice" (2007, 173) since these blue collar workers are both producers and consumers of information at work, and since the information they produce and consume can take many forms. Given the dearth of studies of non–professional occupations in the LIS literature, one of Veinot's main contributions to this study is to confirm Savolainen's everyday life information seeking paradox in workplace settings: the reality is that information behaviours and practices in blue collar environments are often overlooked as research contexts because they take place in common, mundane, everyday life settings (Veinot, 2007, 174). Veinot's research thus invites further study of both non–professional occupations, as well as exploration of experiential information sources.

Finally, a case–study presented at the Canadian Association of Information Studies Conference in 2009 investigated the information practices of a master electrician (Pollak, 2009). Evidence of complex information structures consistent with theories of Life in the Round (Chatman, 1999), and Information Poverty (Chatman, 1996) and Social Dilemma/Collective Action (Smith, 2005) emerged. An interesting finding was the number of protective information behaviours present in trade–based workplace experiences, including secrecy, deception, withholding of information, and gatekeeping. Also significant was the introduction of the 'Red Seal' trades to studies of workplace information seeking and use, which marks another point on the professional/non–professional continuum: highly skilled, yet non–professional occupations (Pollak, 2009). Such occupations do not yet have a place in the framework.

Together, these articles suggest that the information worlds of non–professional occupations are unique and complex information worlds worthy of study. They also offer insight into "perspectives beyond those of middle–class life and people" (Chatman, 1990, 1).

2.4 Information Seeking at Play

Generally considered to be the time left over in the day or week after the 'important' tasks are finished, leisure is often theoretically conceptualized simply as time away from paid employment, self–maintenance activities (like eating, sleeping or grooming), and domestic obligations (like cleaning or shopping). This devalued conceptualization of a very important part of human experience (Stebbins, 2001, 53), along with the challenges associated with studying and measuring largely informal/nonformal and sometimes spontaneous activities, explains to some extent why the study of the 'leftover' portions of our time has historically garnered less theoretical attention.

In the 1970's, however, a growing disappointment with both the problem–based nature of scientific investigation, and a genuine curiosity about this 'fun' sphere of life gave rise to a new domain of academic investigation focused on "the ways in which health and well–being are enhanced through the effective use of leisure" (University of Waterloo, 2014). Leisure researchers draw on interdisciplinary fields such as sociology, psychology, economics, and environmental studies to examine "how individuals, groups, and societies plan, organize, and use resources for leisure" (University of Waterloo, 2014). As Robert Stebbins points out, the study of leisure is one of the few ‘happy sciences’ that may actually pre–date the advent of the positive psychology movement (Stebbins, 2006).

Although the domains of Leisure Studies and Information Studies have developed independently, they have occasionally flirted with each other dating back to at least the 1980s around topics like the leisure use of libraries (Johnson & Smale, 1988), and more specifically, leisure reading practices (Kennedy, 1989; Swanton, 1984). The first significant effort to bring the two disciplines together from a more holistic research perspective occurred when Jenna Hartel (Hartel, 2003b) connected the pleasurable pursuit of information through hobbies with Robert Stebbins’ serious leisure theory.

2.4.1 Serious Leisure Theory

Stebbins’ serious leisure framework typologizes three primary categories of free time activities: serious, casual and project based leisure. It generally focuses on pleasurable activities undertaken without obligation or coercion in one’s free time, ranging from relaxation, to sports, to volunteering, to making and tinkering. It can also include negative or fringe topics like deviant leisure (graffiti, for example) and leisure abandonment (Stebbins, 2008). On the Serious Leisure website maintained by Stebbins and Hartel (Stebbins, 2014), they present the following conceptual diagram of serious leisure theory.

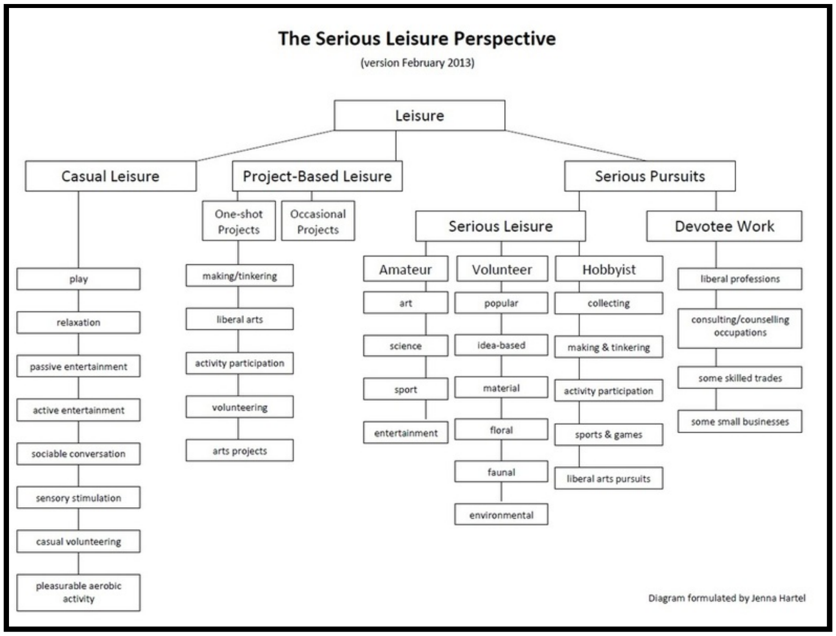


Figure 2: Serious Leisure Framework Diagram
Stebbins' serious leisure framework diagram (February 2013, created by Jenna Hartel, available at http://www.seriousleisure.net/slp-diagrams.html).

This framework is based on three landmark conceptual papers Stebbins published in which he defines each category of leisure activity. The most involved and committed type of leisure, serious leisure, he defines as "the systematic pursuit of deep satisfaction through an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centred on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (1992, 3). Although casual leisure has been dichotomized with serious leisure, Stebbins clearly explains that it is necessary, pleasurable, and no less valuable than other types of leisure. Casual leisure is "immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short–lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it. In broad, colloquial terms, it could serve as the scientific term for the practice of doing what comes naturally" (1997, 18).

In 2005, Stebbins added project–based leisure to this framework, which he considers "a short–term, moderately complicated, either one–shot or occasional, though infrequent, creative undertaking carried out in free time. It requires considerable planning, effort, and sometimes skill or knowledge, but for all that is neither serious leisure nor intended to develop into such" (2005, 2). Participants in project–based leisure activities "generally use the talents and knowledge that they have at hand, even though for some projects they may seek certain instructions beforehand or even read a book or take a short course. And some projects resembling hobbyist activity participation may require a modicum of preliminary conditioning. Always, the goal is to undertake successfully the one–shot project and nothing more" (2005, 5).

Over the course of some thirty years in the disciplines of sociology and psychology, the serious leisure framework has been applied to a broad range of leisure activities, and an equally broad variety of populations who engage in them, including for example, tourism (Kane & Zink, 2004), lifelong learning (Jones & Symon, 2001), Second Life (Urban, 2007), dog enthusiasts (Baldwin, 1999), sports enthusiasts (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2002), aging populations (Brown, McGuire, & Voelkl, 2008; Heley & Jones, 2013), and populations with intellectual disabilities (Patterson & Pegg, 2009). Based on Stebbins' typology, the Serious Leisure Inventory and Measure (SLIM) (Gould, Moore, McGuire, & Stebbins, 2008) ranks various activities to determine whether they can be classified as serious leisure for a particular individual.

Apart from its versatility in both method and the range of populations to which it can be applied, Stebbins framework is noteworthy to this study for several reasons. First, despite recent theoretical re–evaluation, it is still the most well developed and widely accepted typology explaining how people occupy their leisure time. Secondly, it is consistent with the purpose and intent of this research to privilege non–problem–based phenomena, and informal and nonformal domains of life. Finally, a growing body of LIS research suggests that most activities represented by this framework have significant informational components. Indications are that not only is leisure time a highly creative, personally fulfilling time, but also that it is highly regenerative (Stebbins, 2001, 53-54), and no less so in terms of its ability to facilitate information experiences, both positive and negative.

2.4.2 Leisure as Information

Stebbins' work was introduced to LIS by the information–focused study of leisure activities by Dr. Jenna Hartel, who wrote her doctoral dissertation on the information activities, spaces and resources encountered in the hobby of gourmet cooking. Presenting a "case study of a domestic leisure realm," Hartel's research "extend[ed] everyday life information seeking research beyond its typical focus on public settings and problem situations and offer[ed] a theoretical framework and methodology to study information in the context of pleasurable and profound human experiences" (Hartel, 2007, xx). Shortly thereafter, a special issue of *Library Trends* edited by Crystal Fulton and Ruth Vondracek (2009) and dedicated to elements of leisure in LIS, represented the first thematically centred publication discussing information aspects of leisure. The number of studies examining information behaviours in leisure contexts, while still small in number, has grown steadily since the introduction of leisure to this discipline in 2003.

The Serious Leisure framework (Stebbins, 2007) and the continuum of participation in those activities from hobbiests, to amateurs to professionals (Stebbins, 1992) provides a theoretical foundation for two concepts fundamental to this study; first, that serious leisure involves the transfer of information, often in the form of experiential learning; and secondly, the idea that information can be both work and play simultaneously in different contexts (Savolainen, 2010a).

2.4.3 Leisure as Experience

Serious leisure theory has recently come under examination by Gallant et al. (2013), who note three challenges associated with the current framework. To overcome some of these limitations, Gallant et al. propose “envisioning serious leisure as an *experience*” (2013, 94). These challenges, and the proposed solution, are noteworthy because they extend to the development of information behaviour theory as it relates to leisure as well, and provide theoretical support for approaching the study of information behaviour, particularly leisure information behaviour, from the perspective of experience.

First, serious leisure’s focus on leisure *activities* unnecessarily limits the complexity with which leisure can be viewed. Indeed, the current catalog of serious leisure activities tops 300 in number, with many more casual leisure activities yet to be identified (Stebbins, 2001, 54). Many of these activities have been studied from sociological and psychological perspectives to determine the characteristics of the activity that make it ‘serious leisure’. Although it is now widely acknowledged in both LIS and leisure studies that leisure activities facilitate a rich assortment of information behaviours (Stebbins, July 2012), empirical investigation into leisure information behaviours has also been primarily limited to activity–based contexts and their enthusiasts, for example gourmet cooks (Hartel, 2007), quilters (Forster, 2010), serial collectors (Case, 2009), photographers (Cox, 2013), and backpackers (Chang, 2009). While examining both leisure and information behaviour from the perspective of activity is a functional, valuable and necessary way to begin the discussion, there is an evolutionary need to simultaneously deepen our understanding of not only what happens in the leisure domain, but also of how and why it happens, and what role we have in its evolution.

Secondly, unacknowledged, socially constructed dichotomies limit the study and interpretation of serious leisure. Theoretical innovation, just like any innovation, emerges and evolves in particular social and political climates, which inevitably give shape and form to the research on which they are based. Such is also the case with serious leisure theory, which emerged at a time when work was viewed as the most important or valuable activity one could undertake. Consequently, leisure has been considered predominantly as a foil for work, and in terms of the recuperative and restorative benefits it provides for our ability to engage in ‘meaningful’ work (Gallant et al., 2013). Similarly, associating (serious) leisure with positive psychology traps leisure and work in an unnecessarily limiting positive/ negative dichotomy. Ironically, information behaviour research has welcomed studies of leisure in part because of the refreshingly positive viewpoint it brings to our frequently problem–based perspective in studies of information seeking and use. And although LIS researchers have been careful to acknowledge and avoid value judgments inherent in these dichotomies (Savolainen, 2010a, 261), it is difficult to do so entirely in any field that contextualizes categorically, as comparisons inevitably arise when trying to understand the relationship between groups. I speak of this all in past tense here, but of course, the reality is that both the social climate and the paradigms persist yet today, and unavoidably, LIS shares at least some responsibility for accepting and perpetuating the status quo, even in as much as it tries to change it. Guilty of this also, I am choosing to acknowledge the challenges rather than to attempt to break free of them at this time.

Finally, Gallant et al. note that a lack of attention to the social context in which leisure pursuits are undertaken inhibits examination of other benefits associated with leisure, such as the potential for it to nurture social ties and build identity. Limitations associated with funding, researcher interest, and accessibility mean that studies of leisure information practices and experiences in unique cultural contexts are currently not well distributed in LIS research. It is warranted, however, particularly in situations that have the potential to “provide a context for [both] individual empowerment and community development” (Arai & Pedlar, 1997, 170). In this area, leisure studies and information studies are near perfect companion disciplines. Museums and libraries often cater to tourist clientele, and are continually concerned with preserving local heritage information. Non–profit tourist operations have successfully commodified knowledge from everyday life or work contexts like the one in this study and packaged it for leisure consumption in the form of tourist experiences in several remote, rural locations, for example, Fogo Island Inn (Fogo Island Inn, 2013) and the John C. Campbell Folkschool (John C. Campbell Folk School, 2013). And community–benefit tourism projects that market experiential information appear to not only preserve elements of culture at risk of disappearing, but also to create cultural awareness among groups of people who might not otherwise meet (Simpson, 2007). Further investigation of such crossover leisure and information behaviour experiences is very much in line with library science values, and would benefit both leisure studies and information behaviour research.

This study therefore answers Gallant et al.’s call to move toward a study of leisure as experience, representing an initial attempt to bring together the disciplines of leisure studies and information behaviour studies in a way that privileges the experiential nature of information behaviours in everyday life. While examining leisure information behaviours from the perspective of activity reveals micro–level detail about particular activities, examining leisure information behaviours from the perspective of experience – broadly defined and across the work–maintenance–leisure spectrum – can potentially reveal macro–level detail and connections between activities that might otherwise remain hidden. Macro-level research stands to produce a more nuanced understanding of leisure information experiences than can be obtained by examining individual activities in isolation.

2.5 Information Seeking in the Everyday

The growth of a scientific discipline is organic and slow, building on a patchwork of previous research and existing knowledge, and developing in the future according to sometimes unpredictable combinations of labour, interests, resources and accessibility. This is not to say that scientific investigation is disorganized or fickle. It is, however, a good explanation for how it comes to be that multiple (and sometimes overlapping) trains of thought emerge converge, and diverge, in tandem and alone. Everyday life information seeking is one such example, and it is the reason I began with discussions of work related information seeking and leisure related information seeking before turning now to what is actually the larger umbrella term *everyday life information seeking* (ELIS).

According to Savolainen, everyday life “refers to a set of attributes characterizing relatively stable and recurrent qualities of both work and free time activities” (2010a, 1781). Although work and leisure are both arguably part of everyday life, models of work–related information seeking have developed independently of ELIS studies due in large part to the defined characteristics and purposeful nature of what is considered work. Work is generally accepted as an activity where people dedicate set periods of time to specific tasks, with a specific goal in mind, often in a geographically distinct location. Such characteristics make ‘work’ an ideal context for study from many thematic angles, including from the perspectives of different populations, different roles, and different settings (Savolainen, 2010a, 1780).

By the time studies of leisure information behaviour entered mainstream research, however, the ELIS model was already well into development and provided an excellent theoretical bed upon which to build. Studies of free time are distinct from studies of work because their characteristics are often more challenging to pinpoint definitively. Although different activities, populations and locations are easily associated with leisure, these three qualities interact in a more fluid and spontaneous way in free time than in work time, and frankly, in a way that isn't generally documented as a regular part of participation. They are "familiar, ordinary, and routine, and they qualify the structural conditions of action (e.g., the recurrent 'rhythms' of work and leisure hours)" (Savolainen, 2010a, 1781).

Presenting the three domains in this order situates both work and leisure information seeking in relation to each other and to ELIS, and allows an explanation in greater detail of contexts outside of work and leisure under the heading of everyday life. Here I rely on Savolainen's description of everyday life information seeking (ELIS), since he has been the primary champion of the model. Support from other theorists is provided as appropriate.

2.5.1 Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS)

Savolainen's model of Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS) attempts to explain people's ways of "preferring and using information sources" (2005, 1430) during activities "we do in our daily lives, such as shopping, taking care of our homes, and pursuing our hobbies and other personal interests" (Case, 2007, 130). Savolainen purposefully chose the term *everyday life information seeking* to describe this type of information seeking and use, asserting that "these activities and contexts are seen as important in their own right, and not only as residuals of work–related phenomenon. Hence, the positive term ELIS indicates that ELIS is not inferior to work–related information seeking" (Savolainen, 2010a). Dichotomous terms such as non–work were inaccurate and unsuitable, since information seeking and use clearly overlapped in multiple related everyday contexts (including work). For example, “seeking information about computer courses may serve both professional ends and hobbies” (Savolainen, 2010a, 1781).

Everyday life information seeking refers to “the acquisition of various informational (both cognitive and expressive) elements, which people employ to orient themselves in daily life or to solve problems not directly connected with the performance of professional tasks or full–time study” (Savolainen, 2010a). Studies of everyday life information seeking, sometimes also called citizen information seeking, date back to the 1970s, and consisted at that time of large scale surveys listing “the most common information needs and the most frequently used information sources and channels” (Savolainen, 1995). In the 1980s, however, studies of information seeking and use began to shift from system–centred approaches toward user centred approaches which conceptualized “information seeking and use as situationally bound” (Savolainen, 1995, 261). Since that time, many researchers have been occupied in the study of different aspects of everyday life information seeking. Among the most well known are Brenda Dervin and sense–making (1983), Marcia Bates and berrypicking (1989), Elfreda Chatman and small worlds (1991b), Sanda Erdelez and information encountering (1999), Karen Fisher and information grounds (Fisher, Durrance, & Hinton, 2004; Pettigrew, 1999), Carol Kuhlthau and the information search process (1991), Pamela McKenzie and information practices (2003) and Pamela Sandstrom and optimal foraging (1994). Although working independently on their own models and theories, all of these researchers have added in meaningful ways to the discussion of how and why people seek and use information in everyday life.

The ELIS model is this study's main theoretical underpinning. Motivated "primarily by the need to elaborate the role of social and cultural factors that affect people's way of preferring and using information sources in everyday settings," there is an underlying assumption that "source preferences are ultimately socially conditioned" (Savolainen, 2005). To open the door to a social and psychological interpretation of everyday life information behaviours, Savolainen introduced the concept of 'way of life'.

2.5.2 ELIS in the Context of 'Way of Life'

Savolainen based his theory of everyday life information seeking and use on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus. Consisting of a cultural component (social, objective), and an individual component (psychological, subjective), habitus is a "system of thinking, perception, and evaluation, internalized by the individual [that] renders a general direction to choices made in everyday life by indicating which choices are natural or desirable in relation to one's social class or cultural group" (Savolainen, 1995). The theory of everyday life information seeking includes three primary associated concepts: way of life, order of things, and mastery of life.

Way of life includes not only the different activities people choose to participate in during the normal course of daily or weekly life (for example, work, leisure and maintenance activities), but also the objective and subjective preferences with which people attach priority to these activities. For example, the amount of time dedicated to work may be specified (objective), while what individuals choose to do during leisure time is not (subjective.) The way individuals balance the objective and subjective demands constitutes the *order of things*.

"Because the meaningful order of things may not reproduce itself automatically," Savolainen explains, "individuals are required to take active care of it. This caring activity can be defined as *mastery of life*” (2010a, 1784). Successfully maintaining a consistent balance generally involves passive information seeking and results in the perception that life is operating normally which allows the optimal chance for planning and acting in meaningful ways. Disruptions to the balance result in active information seeking designed to eliminate the “continual dissonance between perceptions of ‘how things are at this moment’ and ‘how they should be’” (2010a, 1784). Tools to help with mastery of life are both culturally determined (for example, through attitudes, social class or generational demographics, and mores) and individually determined (through, for example, personal experience or habits) (1995, 264-265). Intentional variations to the normal order of things are generally sought in controlled ways (1995, 263-264).

Savolainen’s conceptualization of way of life provides a theoretical framework from which to examine social and cultural factors influencing information seeking and use in the context of this study across all three domains of life including work, play and everyday life.

2.5.3 ELIS in the Context of Marginalized Populations

Elfreda Chatman’s theoretical contributions to our understanding of everyday life information seeking and use focus on marginalized populations and serve as both inspiration and framework. Her research gave voice to groups who, like the rural population in this study, are in many ways invisible in larger society. In turning her eye to janitors (1996), retired women (1992), and prison inmates (1999), she validates the ordinary, commonplace experiences of everyday people.

Although Chatman’s studies involved urban environments, her study populations shared one similar characteristic with each other: they existed under the radar of society operating in what she called *small worlds*. A small world, in the simplest terms, is a community of people who share one or more significant factors in common; perhaps a geographic location (residence or workplace), role (occupation or status), demographic (age or stage of life), interests or expectations (values or fears), or economic status (income tier) (Savolainen, 2010a). Small worlds consist of “communities in which inhabitants’ cultural, social, and conceptual frames form a way of life [that] is different from the ways of life lived by members outside the community” (Chatman, 1999, 261). Describing Chatman’s view of small worlds, Savolainen indicates that “activities are routine and fairly predictable, and everyday information seeking and sharing are oriented by generally recognized norms and role expectations based on beliefs shared by members of the community” (Savolainen, 2010a, 1783).

Small worlds are associated with protective and strategic information behaviours such as risk taking, secrecy, deception and decisions based on situational relevance. Although they are characterized negatively as ‘information poor’ because they tend to close down information channels rather than open them up, these information behaviours are driven by the worldview of the community and are accepted as normal in that environment. Chatman described this type of existence as a ‘life in the round’ consisting of ‘normative behaviours’ (1999). Decisions to seek information (or not) are “based largely on approximation [in a context where] things are understood implicitly, […] imprecision is largely accepted and inexactitude is tolerated” (Savolainen, 2010a, 1783-1784). Since information seeking and use decisions are driven by community norms, populations who live in small worlds tend to:

- not search for information if there is no need to do so
- ignore information if they perceive that their world is working without it, and

- cross information boundaries only if 1) information is perceived as critical; 2) there is a collective expectation that the information is relevant; and 3) a perception exists that the life lived in the round is no longer functioning” (Savolainen, 2010a).

Chatman’s work is notable because of not only the insight it provides into everyday life contexts, but particularly because of the insight it provides into the information behaviours of groups that live and work on the fringe of society. “The problem for our field,” Chatman wrote in 1990, “is not in generating new data about middle–class information needs, but rather with gaining insight into a lifestyle in which members live on the periphery of institutional services.” Her observation remains a relevant challenge to our field all these years later. Chatman’s work speaks to this investigation in terms of both the marginalized population confined by geographic location, and the small–world social dynamic present within it. While there are many reasons to believe that similar protective information behaviours exist in this environment, there is also reason to believe that findings may also diverge from associations with information poverty.

2.6 Information as Experience

Finally, the fields of education and LIS overlap significantly in that educating, learning and teaching implicitly involve the transfer of some variety of information and the varying degrees of formality with which that can happen at different stages from childhood through to adulthood (Aittola, 1999; Astroth, 1996; Coombs, 1976; Grandstaff, 1976; Hager & Halliday, 2009; Knowles, 1990). The strongest connections between lifelong learning, serious leisure and everyday life can be made around the concept of experience. In this matter, John Dewey, who was described as the “modern philosopher precursor of the lifelong education movement" (Wain, 2009, 390) is the most enduring voice. Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy – the study of adult learning – completes the discussion.

2.6.1 Learning (Information) as Experience

Dewey described experiential learning according to five characteristics: continuous, interactive, democratic, contextual and collateral.

According to Dewey, *continuity* means that "every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (1997, 35). The learner is situated not only within the immediate context of their physical environment, but also in the context of all of the experiences that came before the present moment which inform the learner's ability to act on and absorb new information. Experiences of the present moment, then, "wholly independent of desire or intent…live on in further experiences" (1997, 27). Experiential information therefore encompasses not just independent data or facts, but also the past, present, future, temporal and spatial contexts in which the learner discovers the data and facts. Continuity is a process of engagement, growth, practice, feedback, and reflection, rather than simply the process of transmission of information.

Challenging a number of philosophical dichotomies frequently taken for granted that also speak to the idea of experiential information, Dewey rejected formalized notions of theory and practice as opposite, espousing a '*logic of action*' instead. Hager & Halliday explain further that, "in a logic of action, vocational (or professional) knowledge is no longer placed at the periphery of knowledge" (2009, 165) as the two become intertwined in context. While dichotomizing theory and practice tends to modify the value structure attached to each, bringing the ideas together consequently implies that information obtained through vocational pursuits (experiential information, practice) has no less importance than information obtained through schooling (academic information, theory).

Dewey defined *democracy* in terms of freedom and control. He was speaking about more than simply political freedom or “freedom of outer movement” which he considered “a means, not an end” (1997, 61). Rather, he advocated for “freedom of intelligence” which he considered “freedom of observation and judgment exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worthwhile” (1997, 61). Learners should be able to choose if, when, what, how, why and where to acquire information such that the information absorbed becomes meaningful to them individually.

Dewey also took great pains to situate his theory of learning as *contextual*. While many LIS researchers also acknowledge that “information activities are inextricably interwoven with context” (Kari & Hartel, 2007, 1131), Dewey presents the old idea of acknowledging assumptions in a slightly new way: the idea of implicit vs. explicit contexts. In exploring information behaviors in the everyday world, Savolainen and other ELIS researchers have tried to tease out the invisible, the taken for granted, and the ‘way of life’ assumptions attached to common, fundamental, work and non–work activities. The root of this is how people implicitly experience information in explicit situations. Context also absorbs both ends of the dichotomy of education viewed as product or as process (Hager & Halliday, 2009). Formal education, according to Dewey, focused on external factors such as subjects, content, evaluation, goals and objectives, choosing to value the inputs and outputs of education (education as product). Dewey advocated for the process of creating meaning with the argument that “there is no such thing as educational value in the abstract” (1997, 46). The purpose behind the learning and the meaning constructed by the learner in the situation are paramount. As Dewey put it, “an experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment" (1997, 43-44).

Collateral learning is all of the other learning that happens while you are trying to absorb the subject at hand. This suggestion is supported by Csikszentmihalyi, who also notes that the "cycles of rest, production, consumption, and interaction are as much a part of how we experience life as our sense – vision, hearing, and so forth – are" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, 5). These also could be considered collateral experience and collateral information.

2.6.2 Lifelong Learning and Experience

Above physical, intellectual and moral growth of the student, Dewey prized the ability to 'learn how to learn' highest of all. Thus, the quintessential purpose of education is "open–ended growth; the openness to more learning" (Wain, 2009, 391). Dewey's philosophy underpins the lifelong learning, adult education, or andragogy movement, and focuses on self–directed learning with a curriculum of challenges and characteristics more palatable to adult learners. While the term is often used specifically in the context of adult learning, its broader meaning includes learner–focused (rather than teacher–focused) curriculum, and can be applied to both children and adults.

Malcolm Knowles, a pioneer in studies of andragogy, conceptualized adults in four ways. A biologically adult human is one who has matured physically to the point where they can reproduce. A legally adult individual has reached a chronological age at which the laws of the land acknowledge their rights and responsibilities as a full member of society. Social adulthood is reached when individuals take on adult roles (worker, parent, community member). Finally, psychologically adult individuals have taken responsibility for directing their own lives.

Each of these representations of adulthood are reached by individuals at different times (except of course, the chronological definition), often as a result of their experiences in life. Further, the psychological definition is most important to the learning context, and learning to become self directing is a process that “starts early in life…and grows cumulatively as we become biologically mature” (Knowles, 1990, 57).

The andragogic model also acknowledges that adult learners are motivated to learn by needs. They prefer to direct their own learning, and gravitate toward the analyzing of experience rather than rote memorization. As well, adults are life–centred, and require flexibility to meet style, timing, place and pace needs that are unique to the individual (Knowles, 1990, 31). Finally, such learning is regularly based in practice, and many instances of andragogical teaching eschew formal methods of evaluation such as testing and certification, which significantly reduces a number of learning blocks, including fear and inhibition thus improving motivation.

2.6.3 Lifelong Learning and Serious Leisure

Lifelong learning is often conceptualized in terms of the human capital it generates: vocational ‘skilling’ of people, along with the economic benefits to an individual, family, or community that result from it. Benefits are discussed in terms of independence and less reliance on public support systems for daily subsistence. People pursue lifelong learning activities, and the government encourages such activities with the support of policy, as a way of improving their station in life – their career, their expertise, their credibility. This improvement naturally translates into an economic benefit such as better pay or benefits, which ultimately allows people to be more active, meaningful participants in society. As is typical in many disciplines, study in this area usually focuses on problem–based areas of investigation such as the need for better education, better employment or better policy, to the neglect of the lifelong learning activities done primarily for personal enjoyment and pleasure where the economic benefit to society is more difficult to quantify, and thus marginalized.

Lifelong learning acknowledges that education is not restricted to the childhood years. It represents a philosophy of continuing growth and development that extends beyond formal education, often encompassing work–related learning (training courses), life–experience learning (first aid, or internet usage), and pleasure learning (hobby courses). Espousing a lifelong learning philosophy is seen as a vehicle for improving the functioning of both individuals, and of society on social, political and economic levels. Further, it shares with leisure activities the aspect of being a form of uncoerced activity having a high degree of intrinsic motivation.

Some research into the benefits of non–vocational lifelong learning for pleasureful purposes does exist. In particular, Jones and Symon's article *Lifelong learning as serious leisure: Policy Practice and Potential* studies lifelong learning from a non–vocational perspective that focuses on the development of social, rather than human capital (2001, 270). Drawing from the work of Stebbins (1992; 1998), Jones and Symon suggest that there exists

> *A reciprocal relationship between lifelong learning and serious leisure. Lifelong learning has the potential to be instrumental in the development of serious leisure, which in return may provide key experiences that may be otherwise absent for certain social groups, especially for those at the lower ends of the socio–economic spectrum, where both key work and leisure experiences seem more likely to be absent. Secondly, if lifelong learning is encouraged as a serious leisure activity, the potential exists for benefits not only for the individual but also the wider community and society with enhanced self–efficacy, citizenship, participation and social capital. This, of course, is not a new observation as advocates of adult education have espoused this for many decades. However, within the context of the 'new capitalism', lifelong learning for serious leisure may also yield indirect economic returns, and this should also not be understated (2001, 270).*

Lifelong learning happens around a specific body of knowledge and many of the information seeking behaviors discussed earlier apply to these instances of information seeking as well. In terms of social capital construction, lifelong learning as serious leisure has the potential to benefit populations that are marginalized by current economic policy because they don't contribute to the economy in an easily measureable way (i.e. income or profit generation) including the unemployed, the unwaged, the elderly, women, contract workers and the disabled.

2.7 Summary

The research reviewed for this study is intentionally broad because it facilitates emergent design and exploratory discovery around a number of subjects about which LIS researchers know very little. It is significant because the results have the potential to improve our understanding of three key areas of need in information behaviour studies. First, it advances ELIS research in contexts that are currently underrepresented in the literature, namely in non–professional work, leisure and maintenance areas of everyday life. Second, it moves LIS research from the study of urban, formal and 'elite' populations and contexts toward the study of informal, nonformal, and rural populations and contexts. And finally, it proposes to define information as experience thereby broadening not only studies of information seeking and use, but also the relationship between serious leisure theory and LIS research to include both the study of leisure as activity, and also leisure as experience.

Thus, although the theoretical foundation of this study originates in the discipline of library and information studies where examination of information seeking and use is well established, the conceptual agenda also draws proportionately on elements of leisure theory to address notions of information use in leisure, and the work of educational scholars to inform the idea of experience as a source of learning and information in all domains of life. Together, they create a suitable interpretive framework not only from which to examine experiential information but also from which to validate it as an important and unique area of inquiry.

3 Research Design Methodology

3.1 Overview

The present study uses qualitative, naturalistic research design and methodologies to collect and analyze data on the topic of experience as an information source in the village of Whitney, Ontario, Canada. Through semi–structured interviews, photo–visual methods, and environmental scanning conducted over the course of 18 months, I interviewed 24 adult participants with experience living, working and playing in Whitney, Ontario. Interviews lasted between 32 minutes (for a single interview) and 107 minutes (for a double interview). Discussions included elicitation with pre–selected images of local landscapes, and/or by asking participants to share with me photographs or images from their personal collections. Interviews were audio–recorded and transcribed. I also conducted environmental scans looking for other documentary sources of data describing life experiences in this community. Transcripts, images and documents were coded and analyzed using Atlas.ti and qualitative thematic coding methods to identify themes associated with the research questions.

3.2 Naturalistic Paradigm

Experience is highly subjective and contextually bound to characteristics like time, place, and culture, necessitating flexible methodologies that not only explore events, but also the way individuals reflect on and reshape these events later. A qualitative line of inquiry forgoes the need to identify and measure variables, instead optimizing data collection for deep exploration of ideas and concepts. Also known as naturalistic research because it takes place in the natural surroundings of the subject (Lofland, 2005, 1; Miles & Huberman, 1994, 1), qualitative research is common to the social sciences, including Library and Information Science in general (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 12; Cresswell, 2009, 13), as well as Everyday

Life Information Seeking (ELIS) (Savolainen, 2008a), and Serious Leisure research (Raisborough, 2006, 248) specifically.

Naturalistic research approaches have a number of distinct advantages over quantitative approaches for an exploratory study of experiential information. First, the flexibility inherent to the naturalistic research process is extremely important when investigating a phenomenon about which LIS researchers know very little. Since variables often appear or evolve "contextually in response to the lived realities encountered in the field setting" (Cresswell, 2009, 13), it allows the researcher to "discover rather than test variables" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 12-13). Additionally, qualitative research:

- Is fluid and dynamic in nature
- Includes elements of serendipity and discovery
- Offers connections with participants at a human level
- Privileges humanistic perspectives
- Involves creativity, and imagination
- Is modifiable and open to negation

3.3 Ethnographic Methodology

This study uses an ethnographic research design as a framework from which to gather and interpret data about experiential information. Ethnography is "a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational and interview data" (Cresswell, 2009, 13). Data can also be obtained from a variety of technical and non–technical sources, including "videos, documents, drawings, diaries, memoirs, newspapers, biographies, historical documents, autobiographies" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 27), thus allowing for data triangulation, improved trustworthiness of the data, and more in–depth descriptions of the phenomenon in question. Interpretation and analysis is designed to “elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 1). The goal of the methodology is intimacy and engagement with the subject and study population to allow for the collection of the “richest possible data” composed of “a wide and diverse range of information collected over a relatively prolonged period of time in a persistent and systematic manner” (Lofland, 2005, 15).

A hallmark of ethnography is that it takes place in natural settings and focuses on “naturally occurring, ordinary events” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 10) in everyday life. Collecting data at the site where the phenomenon occurs is preferable because it also gives the researcher the opportunity to observe what real life is like for the population under study. LIS research commonly grounds data collection in the local environment (Case, 2007, 10), providing further support for this methodology both in terms of examples to follow and the usefulness of the process.

Another hallmark of ethnography is the element of ‘co–construction’ (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 10), where data collection and analysis are influenced both by the way the population under study makes sense of their lived experience, and also by how the researcher makes sense of their observations. Knowledge is created by both parties “in light of [their] own biography or experiences, according to gender, time and place, cultural, political, religious, and professional backgrounds” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 10). Constructivist viewpoints take for granted that the resulting analysis is simply one possible description of the data. Although the story evolving from this project at this time is naturally expected to be different than the story that might be told in a future time or a different place, or by another researcher, “the fact that these are constructions and reconstructions does not negate the relevance of findings nor the insights that can be gained from them (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 12). Lofland et al. point out that “much of the best work in sociology and other social sciences – within the fieldwork tradition as well as within other research traditions – is probably grounded in the past and/or current biographies of its creators” (2005, 12).

Ethnographic methodology requires a significant commitment of time, and is considered labour intensive work. However, presentation of the analyses in the form of words organized into stories or by events provides “thick descriptions that are vivid, nested in a real context, and have a ring of truth that has strong impact on the reader.” The resulting “concrete, vivid, meaningful flavor …often proves far more convincing…than pages of summarized numbers” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 10).

3.4 Site Selection

One of the major presumptions of naturalistic research is that “a person’s behaviour has to be understood in a specific context” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 102). Miles and Huberman point out that “focusing solely on individual behaviour without attending to context runs a serious risk of misunderstanding the meaning of events” (1994, 102). Context is important because it identifies the “sets of conditions in which problems and/or situations arise and to which persons respond through some form of action/interaction and emotion” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 88). Savolainen identified three primary qualifiers as relevant to discussions of context. Spatial factors (2006a) include the external, physical, geographic characteristics of the immediate environment (size, distance, access, availability, proximity, home, office, public space). Temporal factors (2006b) include influences having to do with the passage of time (measurement or value in terms of clock time, seasonal time, linear, cyclical, and stages).

Social factors (2005) include the written and unwritten rules that govern social interactions (norms, rules, culture, networks, and politics).

I opted to study experiential information in the village of Whitney, Ontario, Canada. This location is an ideal setting because the spatial, temporal and social contexts of this environment indicated a high potential to provide insight into research questions revolving around experience. Personal knowledge of the way of life in this village suggests that experiential information behaviours like storytelling, ethnic heritage skills, wilderness survival, foraging, quilting, arts, crafts, and animal husbandry are common. These behaviours and skills revolve around everyday life and are learned and absorbed informally, by hand, over time, and in social environments. Also of interest is the fact that they appear to be present not only in everyday life and work life for residents, but also in their leisure time as well.

3.4.1 Setting

I recruited participants from the village of Whitney, Ontario, Canada, which is located approximately 100 km east of Huntsville, Ontario along the Highway 60 corridor of Algonquin Park. The village's proximity to Algonquin Park is significant due to the influence of the tourism industry on the local lifestyle and economy. Algonquin Park is one of the oldest, largest, and most renowned provincial nature reserves in the country. Activities in Algonquin Park influence many of the surrounding Townships as far west as Georgian Bay, north beyond North Bay. Several government bodies track economic activities in the region, primarily tourism.

3.5 Data Collection

Ethnographic data collection and interpretation is based on action and interaction, on fluidity, on iteration, on variety and on reflexivity. Regardless of whether the expected outcome of ethnographic research is to describe a phenomenon or to create a theory about it, the researcher is “the primary instrument or medium through which the research is conducted,” (Lofland, 2005, 3) and “concepts are the basis of analysis” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 144).

3.5.1 Researcher as Key Instrument

Ethnographic researchers “strive to be a participant in and a witness to the lives of others” (Lofland, 2005). The role of the researcher in this process is sometimes referred to as ‘key instrument’ since issues of instrument validity and reliability ride largely on how skilled the researcher is at “observing, interviewing, and recording, while modifying the observation, interviewing, and recording devices from one field trip to the next” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 38). Apart from mechanical tools such as an audio recorder and a computer, ethnographic researchers enter the field armed with a protocol designed to seek out and expose to them the topic of interest.

Naturalistic researchers are sometimes compared to detectives, whose task is to “follow the leads of the concepts, never quite certain where they will lead, but always open to what might be uncovered” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). “At each step along the evidential trail,” say Miles and Huberman, “we are making sampling decisions to clarify the main patterns, see contrasts, identify exceptions or discrepant instances and uncover negative instances – where the pattern does not hold” (1994, 29).

3.5.2 Advantages of Naturalistic Data Collection Methods

Naturalistic data collection methods are reflective of “a world that is complex, often ambiguous, [and] evincing change as well as periods of permanence” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 6). Corbin and Strauss suggest that, although naturalistic inquiry “builds upon natural ways of thinking,” it is a more “self–conscious and systematic approach to knowing” (2008, 20).

3.5.3 Sampling Techniques

Decisions around whom and what to sample are critical (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 29) as they guide the relevance, quality and ultimately, the value of the data collected. Because ethnographers are less concerned with generalizability and equal representations of people, and more concerned about “concepts and looking for incidents that shed light on them,” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 156) the flexibility required by the researcher–as–detective can often be achieved only through nonprobability sampling techniques. I recruited participants using primarily three non–probability techniques: snowball sampling, theoretical sampling and maximum variation sampling. These methods can be achieved either “systematically (going from one person or place to another on a list) or by sampling on the basis of convenience (whoever walks through a door or whoever agrees to participate)” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 153).

3.5.3.1 Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling allows ethnographic researchers to generate “a field sample of individuals possessing the characteristics of interest by asking initial contacts [to] name a few individuals with similar characteristics who might agree to be interviewed” (Lofland, 2005, 43). It can be convenience–based, where the researcher “gain[s] access to settings or persons through contacts they have already established” (Lofland, 2005, 42), or systematic, where the researcher asks each and every participant to refer other potential participants. Although snowball sampling techniques run the risk of having the sample shaped by the social networks of early informants (thus excluding people outside of those networks), it is nevertheless “useful for hard–to–reach or hard–to–identify populations for which there is no sampling frame, but the members of which are somewhat interconnected (at least some members of the population know each other)” (Schutt, 2004, 151).

Lofland et al., recommend employing the ‘connection’ strategy as a way of expediting obtaining permissions to interview (2005, 41-42). Schutt notes that “finding a participant who can make introductions is often critical” (2004, 287). Participants who can make such introductions are often called ‘key informants’, or “knowledgeable insiders who [know] the group’s culture and [who are] willing to share access and insights with the researcher” (Schutt, 2004, 289).

3.5.3.2 Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling is a data collection technique “whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (Glaser & Strauss, 1999, 45). Researchers thereby have the flexibility to specifically seek out “places, persons, and situations that will provide information about the concepts they want to learn more about …purposely looking for indicators of those concepts so that he or she might examine the data to discover how concepts vary under different conditions” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 144). Although theoretical sampling is a spontaneous technique (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) it is nevertheless a valuable data collection method. Conceptually driven, this sampling method “puts flesh on the bones of general constructs and their relationships” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 27).

3.5.3.3 Maximum Variation Sampling

Maximum variation sampling is “a deliberate hunt for negative instances or variations” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 29). It involves “looking for outlier cases to see whether main patterns still hold” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 28). Rewards attached to seeking out both typical and atypical cases are three–fold. First, it “increase[s] confidence in conclusions” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 28). Secondly, it “gives you both the limits of your conclusions and the point of greatest variation” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 34). Finally, searching for “exceptional or discrepant instance[s]…allow[s] you to qualify your findings and to specify the variations or contingencies in the main patterns observed” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 34).

3.5.3.4 Recruitment Process

My recruitment process can best be described as tiered, involving elements of all sampling techniques described above. First, in May 2012, I used Canada Post’s unaddressed admail service to deliver advertising postcards (see section 9.3.1 Advertising – Invitation to Participate on page 293) to all households in the K0J 2M0 postal code announcing the study and requesting volunteers. This postal code includes all residents of the village of Whitney, Ontario. At roughly the same time, I also left copies of the postcard at the local branch of the public library and at the community centre. Within about three days of the Canada Post delivery, this mail–based advertising strategy produced appointments for five interviews. Although it may have increased awareness of the study, thus assisting recruitment indirectly, to my knowledge I did not recruit any volunteers directly because of the publicly posted notices.

Secondly, I also sought participants from among people with whom I already have a relationship, including relatives, family friends, and acquaintances. This produced four additional interviews.

Thirdly, at the end of each interview, I asked participants if they could recommend others who might be willing to share their time with me. I began to notice patterns among these discussions. First, each time I approached a potential volunteer, the initial response resulted in a ‘brainstorming deferral’. Usually, the potential candidate would think of names of other residents that I would be much better off interviewing because they had so much “more interesting” experiences. In these cases, I made an effort to increase the comfort level of the candidate by assuring them that *everyone* has experiences I was interested in hearing about. Finally, I noticed that some of the same names recurred in these referral conversations. Although the conversations didn’t always result in immediate access to the person, I was able to interview at least two of the individuals through the other sampling methods.

When convenience and systematic sampling failed to produce additional volunteers, I relied upon key informants to introduce me to potential volunteers. Not surprisingly, this connection–based sampling method proved most effective. Several individuals made heroic efforts to help me recruit volunteers from among people they knew, and provided me with valuable introductions that opened conversations. Attending public functions where people were mingling also helped facilitate introductions.

In total, I obtained interviews with 24 adult volunteers, which represents approximately 4.5% of the adult population of Whitney. Participants were evenly split between male and female, and ranged in age from 20–24 years to 80–89 years. The follow table allows for some general and approximate comparison to demographic census data.

Category	**Characteristic**	**% of participants**	**% of 2011 population**
Age	20–24	8	30
	40–44	8	6
	50–54	17	11
	55–59	8	10
	60–64	13	10
	65–69	4	7
	70–74	17	6
	75–79	4	5
	80–84	4	3
	85+	13	2
Sex	Male	50	52
	Female	50	48
Marital Status	Single	25	19
	Married	50	55
	Widowed	21	7
Education level by highest certificate, diploma or Degree	No certificate, diploma or degree	29	42
	High school certificate or equivalent	8	23
	Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	4	10
	College, CEGEP or other non–university certificate or diploma	46	0
	Bachelor’s degree	4	0
	Master’s degree	4	0

Figure 3: Population Comparison
Comparison of the sampled population to the census population in the Township of South Algonquin, based on 2011 and 2006 census data. Note that values are approximate (Statistics Canada, 2006a).

3.5.3.5 Emergent Design

Originally, I had proposed to increase the homogeneity of my sample by narrowing the candidate pool to those people who:

- have attained the age of majority (18 years or older) on or before when the interview took place
- have the ability to consent to participate
- spent their childhood years in the Township of South Algonquin
- have lived in the TSA or surrounding rural area for at least the last 5 consecutive years

- are current residents (as defined for census purposes) of Airy Ward (postal code K0J 2M0)

The first and second criteria were required as part of the ethics protocol. I assumed that the population represented by criteria 3–5 had several major characteristics that would be strategic in accessing memories of experience in this environment. First, people with these characteristics would represent those who had spent the most time in the area, and a greater amount of time spent in Whitney would naturally lead to more experiences on which to draw during the interviews. Secondly, I believed that having spent formative years in the area could lead not only to older memories, but also to memories that informed everyday ‘lifestyle’ decisions later on. Thirdly, I was aware that many people from small, remote, rural towns make the choice to leave home and then return later, or come to live for a short time and then leave. I had hoped that limiting the pool of candidates to those who had lived in Whitney for at least the most recent five years would highlight candidates who exhibited a strong current commitment to Whitney. Taken together, these criteria would create a concentrated candidate pool with a high degree of homogeneity in the areas I wanted to explore.

During the process, I maintained the first and second criteria, but soon realized that homogenizing my potential list of interview candidates unduly narrowed the variety of data I was able to collect. Diversity in my population was more valuable than homogeneity. Thus, I turned to maximum variation sampling, making exceptions to criteria 3–5 on at least five occasions. Connections to the area based on time spent living there, which I had thought would be important going into the recruitment process, were actually less important than the affective connection to the place and the people across different personally significant time periods and events. Time spent away from the area also allowed some participants to better articulate the differences in experiences associated with living in Whitney. By relaxing the selection criteria, I encountered similar topics from different perspectives, thus enriching the quality of the data.

On a mechanical note, I had planned to conduct interviews individually. I discovered, however, that it was somewhat easier to recruit volunteers when the protocol could include two people at a time, for example in the case of married couples or friends. In total, I conducted 14 interviews individually, with the remaining ten participants interviewed in pairs.

3.5.3.6 Saturation

Saturation is understood as an event in time characterized by the lack of new emerging themes. Corbin and Strauss explain that it “also denotes a development of categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, including variation, and possible relationships to other concepts.” Thus, saturation is the result of sufficient data collection, but also of sufficient analysis when “all the concepts are well defined and explained” (2008, 145). For the purposes of this study, saturation was achieved at 24 interviews, plus examination of supporting documentary material.

3.5.4 Semi–structured Interviews

Ethnography privileges the semi–structured interview protocol. Semi–structured interviews use ‘an interview guide consisting of a list of open–ended questions that direct conversation without forcing the interviewee (usually referred to as the ‘informant’) to select pre–established responses” (Lofland, 2005, 17). Open ended questions allow the informant the freedom to discuss the topic at hand in terms they construct and which are meaningful to them. The goal of the interview process is to acquire “rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis” (Lofland, 2005, 17).

Interviews were audio recorded, lasted between 32 minutes (for a single interview) and 1 hour 47 minutes (for a double interview), and took place at a location chosen by the informant, most frequently at the informants’ home. As recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2008, 153), the interview structure consisted of a number of questions about the nature of their experiences living, working and playing in Whitney, while still being sufficiently flexible to allow the conversation to move in directions initiated by the participant thus accommodating unanticipated topics. I also asked each participant for some basic demographic information to facilitate comparisons between my sample, and census data about the local population.

I included a component in the interview based on a modified critical incident technique. In the critical incident technique, respondents are asked “to relate a ‘critical incident’ that illustrates an important type of event or change in the life of the respondent or an organization” (Case, 2007, 205). Near the end of each interview, I asked each participant what they liked best about living in Whitney, and what one thing they would change for the future to make it a better place. Finally, when possible, I introduced visual methods with the goal of encouraging more in–depth descriptions with greater variety. For more information about the nature of the visual methods used, see section 3.5.6 Visual Methods on page 61.

3.5.5 Environmental Scanning

Studies of information behaviour often “require significant attention to material resources and physical context” (Hartel, 2007, 24). Knowledge of the tangible information sources, in many ways, serves to define the properties, dimensions and limits of the intangible information being explored. It also provides the opportunity to improve the trustworthiness of the data through triangulation. During the course of 2012 and 2013, I collected a variety of documentary evidence and social artifacts, including printed and electronic publications, and personal documents including photographs, letters, receipts and images. Private documents were obtained with permission from the person with physical ownership. Images included in the findings were selected for relevance.

3.5.6 Visual Methods

Visual methods provide an array of valuable, appropriate, and currently underutilized choices not only in the social sciences generally, but specifically in LIS research. Visual research involves “the production, organization and interpretation of imagery” (Prosser, 2007, 13). This definition encompasses both quantitative modes of visual inquiry and reporting, as well as qualitative modes that represent primarily non–numerical characteristics of the physical, affective, social, scientific and political realities of an item or subject. I used visual methods in this study to collect primary data and to improve the interview data I collected. I also felt that collecting visual data would open the door to non–standard opportunities for dissemination of the research findings.

3.5.6.1 ‘Camera as Eye’ Metaphor

Wilder notes that metaphorically “linking the human eye with the acquisition of knowledge is a practice as old, if not older, than the philosophy of Plato” due in large part to the amount of information processed visually (2009, 167). Other metaphors and ideologies that supported this empirical use of imaging include metaphors to vision, eyes, mirrors, reflections, windows and eyeglasses. The metaphor of the camera as eye, however, is as much about “the way knowledge is gathered with photography, and the way that knowledge is valued” (2009, 166) as it is about the science behind mechanical reproduction. The viewpoint from which the camera collects its images is central to our growing understanding of when, where, and why visual methods are useful and appropriate in qualitative research in all disciplines, including LIS. Visual methods fall essentially into two categories – non–participatory, where the researcher ‘sees’ the data to collect, and participatory, where the participant ‘sees’ the data to collect.

3.5.6.2 Non–Participatory Visual Methods

Non–participatory visual methods have a long history in scientific research due in large part to the epistemological belief that the camera is a tool of realism and can capture physical truths with objectivity. Often involving purposes related to the content of images (record–keeping or factual description for example), non–participatory visual images are intentionally captured by the researcher. Both creation and interpretation remain under the control of the researcher at all times.

3.5.6.2.1 Photography

Using standard photography (also known as photo–survey, photo–inventory, filmography, or videography), the researcher makes a visual record of objects, people or locations using still or moving images. The value in images of this variety tends to be content–based. Their purpose is to document, describe or compare items under study; to provide evidence; to help prod the researcher’s memory of field experiences; or to immerse the researcher in the context under examination. In this case, the researcher both creates and interprets the images.

There are several recent LIS examples of photography used as a data collection method. Jenna Hartel's dissertation on the hobby of gourmet cooking uses still photography to document the information spaces of the hobby gourmet cook in a "photographic inventory" (2006, 1). Marshall, Burns and Briden (2007) used photo–survey methods in a qualitative ethnographic examination of the information behaviors and activities of students at Rochester University Library. McKenzie and Davies (2012) collected photographs of tools people use to keep track of information in everyday life. And Huck, Al & Rathi (2011) used 'documentary photography' in a study of knowledge management needs in a volunteer–operated bicycle repair shop in Canada.

During several field trips to Whitney over an eighteen month period, I gathered photographs of various landmarks in town including public buildings, business establishments, places of worship, and environmental features. The purpose of collecting these photographs was to document the visual appearance of the town during the four distinct seasons of spring, summer, fall and winter. A collateral benefit of this activity is that certain features changed modestly according to current events. For example, the text on some signs changed, and a flag was lowered to half mast to recognize the passing of a long time resident. I also collected images of artifacts and objects the participant wished to discuss so that I would have an image to consult during transcript analysis and write up. Images of this variety captured such items as snowshoes, blacksmithing tools, axes, canoes, art and a hunting trailer, for example.

3.5.6.2.2 Salvage Photography

In salvage photography (also known as domestic photography or ordinary photography), the researcher collects pre–existing photographs that were created for reasons unrelated to the current research project. This can include images from personal, institutional or archival collections, or images published in the media for example. The purpose of using existing images in research studies is to “catalogue and order historical persons, objects, and actions, to document what happened during historical periods, to understand how people in the past viewed their world, and to analyze contemporary society by examining how we visualize our history” (Perlmutter, 1994, 1). Salvaged images can be used in combination with elicitation techniques (for more information, see section 3.5.6.3.1 Elicitation on page 66) to enhance the interview process with more detailed descriptions of historical people, places or events. Interdisciplinary examples of the use of salvage photography include Kuhn (2007), who used salvaged personal photographs to examine cultural memory, and Arreola and Burkhart (2010), who used historic postcards to examine urban landscape change. To date, the present study is the only LIS example of this method in use that I am aware of. I collected photographs salvaged from the personal collections of participants. Images included photographs of people, events, locations, and activities.

It is interesting to note that old photographs of any variety were rare. Some people owned personal cameras, and some were able to take advantage of the services of a travelling photographer who would visit the village periodically. However, photography was an expensive luxury that many people in Whitney could not afford historically due to the high cost associated with the camera equipment, film, and in particular the cost of sending the film out by mail to be processed. Thus, there were a limited number of old photographs available to begin with. Surviving photographs were fewer still, as many homes suffered partial or complete loss due to fire at various times in the community’s history. Consequently, people in town tended to share photocopies of old photographs and it was common for me to encounter the same photograph in different collections. Although the images contain important details of the experience of living in Whitney, particularly in the early years, the quality is somewhat compromised due to reproduction. In many cases, it was impossible to determine the origin or copyright for most of these historical images.

3.5.6.3 Participatory Visual Methods

Participatory visual methods by contrast, involve the researcher commissioning images as part of the research project. Informants are provided with the tools, instruction for how to use them, and asked to photograph aspects of the subject under study in their environment. Participant–generated images are generally introduced for their contextual value, and allow the researcher to metaphorically see through the participants' eyes as a result of negotiated interpretation. Not surprisingly, participatory visual methods lead to highly personalized, subjective data that might not otherwise be available. Although participatory visual methods are seen as a way of neutralizing power differentials that inherently exist between researcher, participant and other hegemonic institutions, it is generally understood that it is impossible to remove the researcher from the facilitation process entirely. Data obtained through participatory visual methods often go hand in hand with inductive and emergent methodologies precisely because they support research designs with a high degree of variability and uncertainty.

My use of participatory visual methods of producing photographs was incidental. However, I used salvaged photographs generously as a form of elicitation. Since elicitation and photovoice are participatory visual methods, and one begets an understanding of the other, following is a description of the features of both.

3.5.6.3.1 Elicitation

Based in part on principles of participatory communication, and sharing similarities with the critical incident technique used in semi–structured interview processes, elicitation methods use images during the interview process to direct discussions. Although images can originate from any number of sources, they are likely assumed to be participant–generated as the term elicitation is most frequently associated with the term photovoice (see section 3.5.6.3.2 Photovoice on page 67). Other terms signifying similar methods of data collection involving different media include photo–elicitation, film–elicitation, graphic–elicitation, and art–elicitation. The term auto–driving is also used on occasion, and derives from the fact that the participant is seen to control or ‘drive’ this type of interview. This method was pioneered by anthropologist John Collier Jr. (1986), and inspired in part by the works of Paulo Freire (1994; 2000), who theorized about empowering disadvantaged communities.

The purpose of elicitation is to invest people individually and collectively in the research process; to allow “a dynamic, interactional, and transformative process of dialogue between people, groups, and institutions” (Singhal, Harter, Chitnis, & Sharma, 2007, 213); to gain access to perspectives on the research topic that otherwise might be unavailable to the researcher; to improve participants’ recollection; to enrich the quality of verbal descriptions; and to equalize power imbalances inherent to the research process. In LIS, Haberl & Wortman (2012) used photo–elicitation methodology to study client perceptions of space at the Edmonton Public Library.

I used salvaged photographs from both the public photo–sharing site Flickr and from personal collections of the participants to explore the historical information experiences represented in the images. I searched Flickr for images with tags related to Algonquin Park, Galeairy Lake, Whitney, Airy, and Township of South Algonquin, eliminating images with people (for privacy reasons), and selecting images from among those with Creative Commons licenses that allowed for non–commercial use (for permission reasons). I introduced the resulting eight images to my participants, indicating that these images were taken by tourists, and represented how visitors view the community. I asked the participants what they saw in the pictures, and if there was anything missing. After several interviews, I discovered that the most frequent answer was that ‘people’ were missing from the images, and that the images represented familiar and loved places. Occasionally, a participant would attempt to examine details more closely to determine if they could identify local residents. After several failed attempts to generate any noteworthy information, I abandoned this line of elicitation in favour of discussion around salvaged images from participant’s collections, which proved much more useful and interesting. Not everyone who volunteered to be interviewed provided pictures, however, those who did were visibly engaged in describing to me the significance of the images they shared. Digitized images were transferred to my computer for analysis.

As well, two participants had spent a great deal of time preparing personal biographies that included images and text, both of which I was permitted to take an electronic copy of. A third participant was deeply involved in a genealogy project, and had prepared a copy of my own personal family tree to discuss during the interview. All three of these documents provided wonderful opportunities for elicitation.

3.5.6.3.2 Photovoice

Photovoice is a combination of elicitation and, specifically, participant–generated images. Participants are given the responsibility of creating images that represent specific aspects of the subject under study. This method is generally followed by elicitation and discussion of the images during individual and/or group interviews. Wang and Redwood-Jones note that the participants' "familiarity with their surroundings gives community members a distinct advantage over professionals in their ability to move through the community, [and to] portray its strengths and concerns" visually (2001, 561).

Also known by a range of other terms (photo–projective, photo–interviewing, photo–diary, auto–photography, reflexive photography, photo novel/novella, photo–essay, photo–narrative), the purpose of photovoice is to assess a community from the perspective of members; to communicate participant views to policy makers (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001, 566); to highlight and neutralize power and agency imbalances in research and policy (Wang & Burris, 1997); the photo–projective method attempts to "understand the individual's internal mental world" based on their reflection and relationship with the external context illustrated in their photographs (Okamoto et al., 2006, 321). As well, the broad term 'collaborative methods' are related to the proportion of responsibility assigned to researcher and participant for co–creating visual images. For example, the researcher may take the photographs under the direction of the participant (Hall, 2009). It can also include other mediums such as pictures, paintings or comics.

Wang, Burris & Ping (1996) pioneered photovoice/photo–novella in public health research examining rural women in China, and have subsequently developed the methodology in more detail. It has been used across disciplines in a variety of qualitative applications, including Allen (2008), who used the 'photo–diary method' to examine agency in the representation of sexuality among New Zealand teenagers. In LIS research, Gabridge, Gaskell & Stout (2008) reported on a study using photo–diaries to examine the information seeking behavior of 32 academic students at MIT. Finally, Keller (2012) used photo–diaries and photo–interviews to examine reading habits of undergraduate students.

In one instance, I requested that a participant provide me with a photograph of a handcrafted item we had discussed during our interview, but which I was unable to photograph at the time personally. She used her smart phone to capture and send me the image. While this is incidental, I include it here in the interest of disclosure, and because the explanation of photo–voice is still relevant to a better understanding of the visual methods I relied on more heavily. I opted not to give photovoice a heavier methodological role due to the increased workload attached to orchestrating a study where images are a focal data source. Rather than acting as the main feature, instead, images play a supporting role in my data collection. Including photovoice more prominently would have resulted in a much different study.

3.5.6.4 Advantages of Visual Methods for this Study

The fact that visual methods of data collection are gaining in popularity across disciplines suggests that they present some unique advantages over traditional non–visual methods of qualitative data collection.

Better Data: Proponents of visual methods claim they result in better data, although a definition for ‘better’ is somewhat elusive. Researchers dating as far back as John Collier in his seminal book Visual Anthropology note that the use of photos “elicited longer and more comprehensive interviews but at the same time helped subjects overcome the fatigue and repetition of conventional interviews...This was its compelling effect upon the informant, its ability to prod latent memory, to stimulate and release emotional statements about the informant’s life...” (1986, 856, 858).

Hartel’s examination of information spaces in the hobby of gourmet cooking, and her subsequent reflection on non–participatory photographic methods supports the idea that better means ‘more complete’ and ‘more accurate’ in situations where data can be hard to obtain. For example, Hartel and Thomson argue that photographic methods are useful in “busy research environments in which the fieldworker is not able to observe everything of relevance in a limited timeframe.” In such cases, visual methods help the researcher establish “scale, size, and layout, among other things, and to survey, quantify, characterize, and typologize the artifacts therein” (2011, 2221).

In the case of this study, interviews supported by images tended to be longer and more enthusiastic than discussions without images. In some cases, images prompted discussion on topics that would not have arisen in conversation without them. Discussion around images also allowed for data triangulation (Bishop, 2006; Catalani & Minkler, 2010; Hartel & Thomson, 2011).

Multiple Perspectives: One of the significant differences between participatory and non–participatory visual research is the point of view from which the data is collected. Some researchers note that non–participatory research methods are well positioned to “situate the [researcher’s] own observation at the heart of the research process, promoting an active engagement with the subject studied” (Hall, 2009, 455). As Singhal explains, however, participatory methods mean “working with and by the people, as opposed to working on or working for the people” (2007, 213).

Visual methods used in this study not only introduced topics and ideas grounded in the everyday experience of my participants, but also opened a window into the everyday experience of historical figures in the community. In many cases, people were represented in these images who have been deceased for many years. Figuratively speaking, these images gave a presence and voice to people who can no longer represent themselves, and for whom the archival record is often lacking or absent. The experience of using images to highlight these people in conversation was, in many ways, like looking through a keyhole into a different dimension; a dimension of which local residents were fully aware, but of which outsiders could never know. The fullness of this data would have been impossible to retrieve without visual methods. The images also allowed me to understand these historical contexts and figures much more vividly than I would have been able to without them.

Supports Inductive Methodologies: Although photo methods are not new to naturalistic research, they have been slow to gain acceptance, and many researchers report that their research design changed as a result of feedback during the data collection process. Catalani and Minkler (2010, 443) explain that “photovoice discussions varied in frequency and in style,” and that “the more participatory projects tended to engage community photographers in a cycle of photography or documentation and discussion over several months.” Hall supports this finding, suggesting that “in many cases, researchers have found the process to be iterative and fluctuating as the research develops” (2009, 455).

The flexibility of both the naturalistic research design and the visual methods influenced the evolution and outcome of this study. I found that some ideas I brought to the proposal did not work as well as I had imagined (using Flickr photos for elicitation for example), and others worked very well (using salvage photography). Pairing flexible study design with the flexibility of visual methods allowed me to optimize the amount and quality of data I was able to collect, whereas a more rigid framework could have easily derailed the project.

Diffusion of Findings: Most scientific research is communicated to specific stakeholder groups through text. Visual methods, however, are uniquely positioned not only to “arouse interest and curiosity within the larger population” (Wang et al., 1996, 1394), but also to support new, creative methods of reporting, including “photo–essays, exhibitions, mixed media or experimental texts [which] look very different from the academic texts …[we] are familiar with” (Hall, 2009, 459). A primary advantage of using visual methods in this study is the potential for visual research to be understood and appreciated by audiences outside academic circles. The opportunity for the results of this study to be shared with the community who provided the data in a visual exhibit is both unusual and highly attractive.

3.5.6.5 Other Advantages of Visual Methods

Other advantages of visual methods include:

Access to the physical and social context the researcher wishes to study is often a difficult prospect (Wang et al., 1996, 1393). Participatory visual researchers claim that treating their participants as experts in their own right overcomes access issues because they do not need to “adopt any role to legitimize or justify their presence, since they are members of the community, not outsiders” (Wang et al., 1996, 1393). Visual methods have also been shown to promote rapport between researcher and subject (Meo, 2010).

Empowerment: One of the primary tenets of participatory visual methods is the potential for the method to shift the balance of power from researcher to participant by mobilizing communities (Wang & Burris, 1997, 373) and providing the opportunity for meaningful dialogue (Catalani & Minkler, 2010, 448).

Alternate Modes of Expression: Non–textual and non–verbal methods of communication invite non–textual and non–verbal modes of expression. Bishop indicates that “visual methods begin to honor graphic expression as an alternative form of knowing” (2006, 35). This is particularly well suited to research with groups of differing ages, abilities, and languages.

Diverse Populations: Visual methods have also found successful applications working among diverse populations, including homeless people, immigrant women, indigenous groups, and older individuals (Novek, Morris-Oswald, & Menec, 2012), and children (Clark, 2011). Image or art–based visual methods have shown particular promise in populations requiring therapeutic interventions (Pink, Hogan, & Bird, 2011).

3.5.6.6 Disadvantages of Visual Methods

The use of visual methods as a research tool faces a number of challenges including inconsistent terminology, and poor methodology descriptions in published studies. Hartel and Thomson point out the terminological inconsistency, indicating that visual methods, visual research, and visual approaches are essentially the same thing, and can be both methodology, thus “steer[ing] an entire research design” , and “one data–gathering technique [or method] within a multi–method study” (2011, 2215). Further, multiple visual methods can be combined within a single study, and are subsequently given independent names to describe the use of a particular group of techniques. Studies often lack explicit detail, tending instead to focus on either descriptions of the procedures used to collect the photographs, or the theory justifying the method. Methodological descriptions have been noted to be either absent, or as brief as “photographs were taken” (Huck et al., 2011, 30). Patterns of evolution in method are reserved mainly for sequential investigations carried out by the same researcher and presumably result from experience with the chosen method over an extended period of time.

Visual methods are often accused of being “inevitably partial” and representing “the choices made by those responsible for their construction and the constraints they were working within” (Hall, 2009, 456). Thus, power dynamics are inherently part of the context, and control of resources may inadvertently reinforce social inequalities. Power and control issues associated with, for example, finance, authority, and editorial rights that determine ownership, evaluation, inclusion, and exclusion must be dealt with. Recruitment, often limited by knowledge and access, further enforces hidden issues of power and control, as does its ability to “exoticize or objectify ‘others’ of various kinds” (Buckingham, 2009, 635), by representing a falsely neutral reflection of reality. Even providing instructions for how to use the equipment can change power dynamics (Packard, 2008). These criticism are something to be aware of, however, it should be noted that they are also associated with more traditional qualitative research methods as well.

Visual data can often be easily collected in great quantities, but it is complex, difficult and time consuming to analyze. It also requires more financial commitment, time, planning, and technology (Meo, 2010), although “the cost of conducting such research has fallen dramatically in the past decade” (Packard, 2008, 64). In the present study, interviews involving images lasted longer, as did the transcription and analysis afterward. Cost, however, was not prohibitive of engaging in collecting either current photographs, or taking copies of salvage photographs.

In cases where researchers are attempting to examine historical or salvage photographs, availability issues must be addressed. Arreola and Burkhart (2010) indicated, for example, that the extent of historical images is often a concern. Researchers also note the tendency of participants to opt not to complete the process once recruited (for example, accepting, but not returning cameras). In this study, the size and scope of personal historical photographic collections among my population had been compromised over time. As well, only a subset of participants opted to share images. This was an accepted and acceptable limitation to this study. However, in a study where sharing images is integral, requiring images may limit the pool of potential interview candidates or increase the dropout rate of participants.

3.6 Data Analysis – Qualitative Thematic Coding

Theoretical sampling techniques work hand in hand with theory development to support comparison of data. Similarities and differences among data points highlight concepts and focus (or refocus) the ongoing process of data collection until the researcher has a well–rounded understanding of the phenomenon. Theory development, therefore, inductively and reflexively generates theory from data.

While quantitative methods such as experimentation require the same procedure each time the experiment runs, for ethnographic research "it is only the linear logic of the narrative representation of the process, culminating in articles or books, that makes these cornerstone tasks appear to follow one another and to be separated in time" (Lofland, 2005, 1). Rather, ethnography is based on the principle of emergent design where the study design can respond to and evolve from the real life experiences that take place in the field. The success of ethnographic methodology depends on the researcher's ability to move frequently, flexibly and intuitively between collecting and analyzing data. "…[L]ike any thinking process," suggest Corbin and Strauss, "[it] should be relaxed, flexible, and driven by insight gained through interaction with data rather than being overly structured and based only on procedures" (2008, 12). Further, it is interpretive in nature, allowing for a variety of perspectives to be taken into account.

Qualitative thematic coding is ideal for this research project because it supports emergent design and exploratory research. The comparative element reveals the texture of the subject of study in terms of "similarities and differences that will demonstrate dimensional range or variation of a concept and the relationships between concepts" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

3.6.1 Description of Data Collected

During the data collection phase, I collected and analyzed the following information:

Data Source	Description	Quantity	Data Type	Scope/Length
Interviews	Individuals	14 people	Audio	15:54:00 (h:m:s)
			Transcripts	97,877 words
	Pairs	10 people	Audio	7:56:50 (h:m:s)
			Transcripts	41,957 words
Images	Historic, from participants	285 images	Photocopies and photographs	285 images
	Current, taken by researcher	382 images	Digital photographs	382 images
Correspondence	Personal Letters	77 documents	Original/primary, handwritten	1-7 pages each
School Records	Airy School Registers	5 books	Original/primary, handwritten	359 pages

War Service Records	**Book of Remembrance, medal records, service/discharge papers**	**20 items**	**Primary and secondary sources**	**20 pages**
Self-published works	Autobiography, genealogy, town histories	From 7 different sources	Primary, including images and handwritten notes	473 pages
Newspaper articles	Historical newspaper articles	1909-Current	Barry's Bay This Week, The Globe and Mail, Daily Observer, Sudbury Star	27 items
Statistics Canada	Village Profiles	3 census periods	Government of Canada	2001, 2006, 2011
Official Plan (OP) focus group data	Results of focus groups with residents in preparation for Whitney's OP	22 pages	Text document	7264 words

3.6.2 Coding

Each interview resulted in one or two audio files, and sometimes multiple images and/or documents. Images and documents were scanned into digital format on site during the interview where possible, and off site where not possible. I made use of audio recorded field notes to document anomalies that happened during the interview process, or questions which arose afterward, and which I knew I would have difficulty remembering later. For example, during one interview, I discovered ten minutes into the interview that I had accidentally pressed ‘play’ on my audio recorder instead of ‘record’, and had thus lost the first ten minutes of the interview. Audio field notes were an attempt to recapture some of the data, and the order in which we discussed incidents. Thankfully, this was the only such incident and it served its purpose, teaching me to be very cautious about double checking electronic equipment going forward. The balance of the interview was not otherwise compromised.

Interviews were transcribed by hand using a standard audio file player and Microsoft Word. To accommodate distance issues between my personal residence and the setting for this study, I conducted interviews and transcribed the audio recordings in batches. Between site visits, I conducted electronic searches for documentary sources of data and read material (monographs, documents) that I had gathered on my previous visit.

Resulting documents and images were imported into Atlas.ti qualitative analysis software to facilitate coding and analysis. I examined transcripts, images and artifacts retrieved through environmental scanning for recurrent themes related to the research questions. The learning curve associated with coding and use of the software was slow and steep, and I consulted a number of technical resources during the process to improve my understanding of not only how to use the software, but also the way in which the software conceptualizes and influences the coding process.

Coding the data obtained from interviews extracts patterns, themes and "concepts from raw data and develop[s] them in terms of their properties and dimensions" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 159). In particular, this involves a technique Corbin and Strauss call the constant comparative method, or "comparing incident against incident for similarities and differences" (2008, 195). Using the constant comparative method, I assigned codes to relevant incidents in the data set to collect the incidents under thematic headings. Each new incident receiving the same code as a previously coded incident "adds to the general properties and dimensions of that code, elaborating it and bringing in variation" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 195). The constant comparative method allows the researcher to examine properties of the data including "causes, conditions, consequences, dimensions, types, processes" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 104).

I began the open coding process by applying generic, overarching codes that would allow me to sort the data in meaningful ways at a later stage. For example, I coded all transcripts according to the age demographic of the participants, and then according to gender. In the case of interviews conducted in pairs, I coded each paragraph according to both gender and age. I took this approach because it would later allow me to differentiate between ideas and experiences that were both shared and different between genders. Using batch coding options in the software, and transcription techniques involving identifying the speaker of each paragraph I was able to code at this level very quickly with only a few keyboard strokes. Although gender did not play a prominent role in my data analysis in the end, this step was beneficial because it helped me become acquainted with the software capabilities. I believe this technique has potential to be a much more useful tool for studies with a larger number of participants.

I continued to open code transcripts and images, moving on to a very detailed descriptive indexing level. For example, I coded instances of dates, place names, names of people, names of businesses, in addition to emerging thematic elements. See Figure 4: Sample Initial Coding Structure for examples.

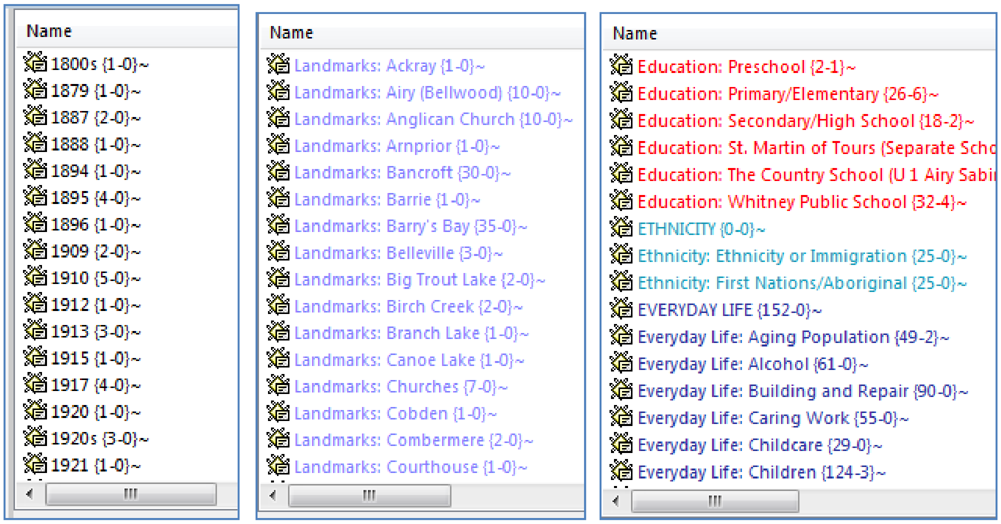


Figure 4: Sample Initial Coding Structure

As the coding process evolved, I added layers to the complexity of the coding taxonomy to group similar ideas into emerging themes. For example, I added the word “Landmarks” to the front of every code involving a place name. This created a “main category” by grouping the place names together alphabetically in my list so I could easily locate them and avoid adding duplicates. I also assigned colours to each group to differentiate them from one another visually. I added, deleted, merged, separated and otherwise adjusted codes continually during this process until I reached a stable set of codes. Adding code descriptions (notes about what to code in that category) facilitated this process.

It could be argued that coding to the level of names and dates is not necessary for analysis purposes, and it did certainly add to the amount of time it took to analyze the data. In fact, I paused several times during the process to reflect on whether the benefit was worth the time and effort. Each time, I made the decision to stay the course because of the potential benefit to future projects and the difficulty of undertaking this step at a later time when I will presumably be more removed from the data. In the end, the exercise yielded some interesting information relevant to this study as well. For example, I could tell at a glance that my data spanned the entire history of the community (from pre-settlement times) which I believe adds to the credibility of the data I uncovered. I discovered that place names outside of the community are mentioned as frequently as place names within the community, which indicated to me that I should look more closely at interdependence and communication channels between these communities. And I discovered that the 24 people I interviewed, along with the process of environmental scanning, generated over 600 names of different people in the community's history. All of this information is important not only to this study, but it also has a great deal of potential to inform future studies and/or publications relating to this community. Frequently as data analysis continued, I referred back to this list of names to remind myself of individuals and their connection to the community.

The fine level of coding resulted in 1050 descriptive codes, and was an iterative process involving collocating ideas, ensuring consistency of the code taxonomy, and consistent application of codes to the text. Each transcript and image was reviewed at least twice during the process, and many more frequently than that as questions of consistency arose. Figure 5: Coding Structure Including Descriptions highlights some of my codes and their accompanying descriptions.

Tourism: Tourist Behaviour
Comment:
References to tourist behaviour.

Tourism: Travel Outside Whitney
Comment:
References to Whitney residents travelling outside of the community for leisure, vacation, etc.

TRAGEDY
Comment:
References to tragic or devastating events in the lives of individuals or the community.

Tragedy: Fire
Comment:
References to fires as tragedy (house, forest etc.)

Tragedy: Injury
Comment:
References to injuries as tragic. For references to injuries that result in death, see Death: Accidental.

WEATHER/SEASONS
Comment:
References to weather patterns in the community.

WILDLIFE
Comment:
References to wildlife, animals in and around Whitney, Algonquin Park.

WORRY/FEAR
Comment:
Experiences that cause worry/anxiety among residents.

Figure 5: Coding Structure Including Descriptions

As open coding progressed, I moved toward axial coding as well, or establishing more complex relationships among data points using what Atlas.ti calls "code families" and "super families." Code families are compilations of individual codes that are related to one another thematically. While adding a term to the beginning of a code (such as the word "Landmarks" in front of place names) collocates codes alphabetically, creating a code family in Atlas.ti relates the codes together programmatically as well, which facilitates more complex query and visualization techniques later in the process. Super families group overlapping ideas that exist in, among and between codes and code families. Individual codes then become the properties and dimensions of the code family or super family. See Figure 6: Code Families and Super Families for examples in my data set.

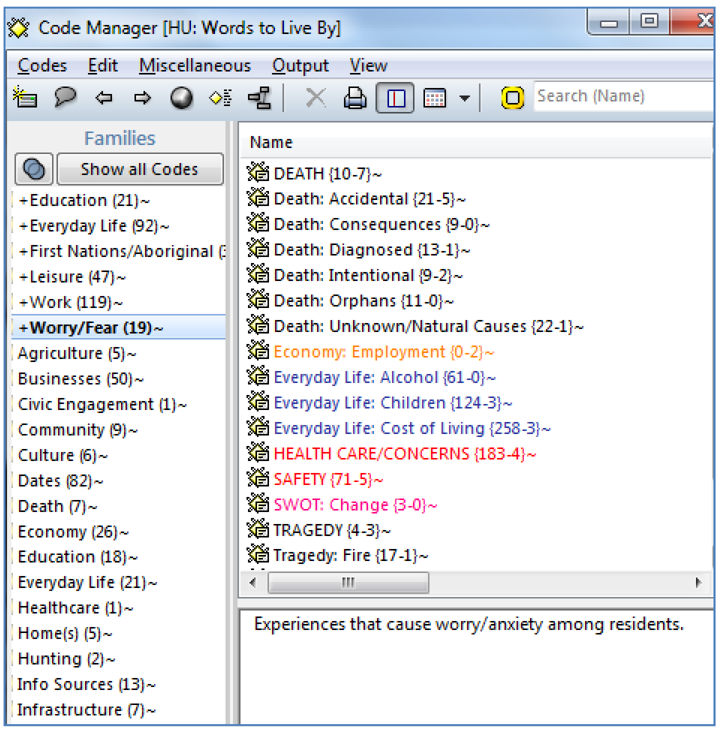


Figure 6: Code Families and Super Families

In the above example, code families appear in the left column. Super families are indicated by a preceding + sign and appear first in the list. Individual codes belonging to the code family or super family appear in the right column. The numbers that appear in brackets represent the number of codes or quotations that had been indexed under that particular code or code family at the time of the screen capture, and the number of relations between codes.

The super family "Worry/Fear" includes nineteen dimensions such as death (in various forms including twenty-one references to accidental death), unemployment, alcoholism, children, cost of living, healthcare, safety and so on. The description of this category is listed as "Experiences that cause worry/anxiety among residents". In total, I established twenty-six code families and six super families. The following examples show the diagrammatic visualization of the super family "Worry/Fear", and the organization of individual quotes from the "Hunting: Firearms" code.

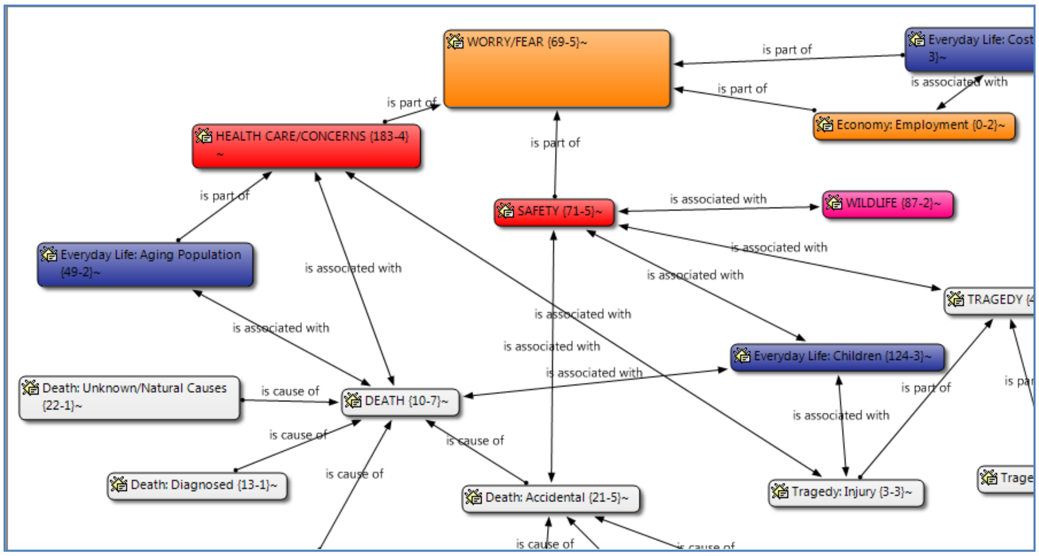


Figure 7: Visualization of Code Families Associated with "Worry/Fear" Super Family

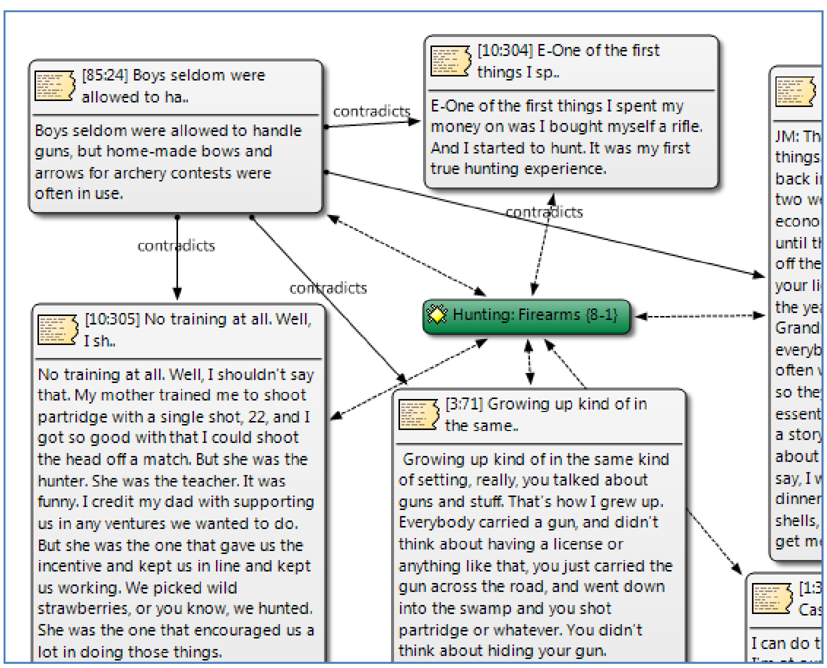


Figure 8: Visualization of Quotes Associated with Code "Hunting: Firearms"
Notice how the quote in the top left corner taken from a printed publication is contradicted repeatedly by the experiences related to me by my participants.

Atlas.ti offers highly specialized tools for making detailed comparisons and connections, and displaying them visually. I used these tools to create super codes which take the researcher deeper into the data via queries. I found super codes cumbersome and difficult to master because of my inexperience and the large data set. The computer manipulation process was time consuming, primarily due to the amount of time and effort it took to master the software. Thus, I made extensive use of handwritten sticky notes, diagrams and drawings during this process to support my evaluation in more familiar ways as well.

When my analysis began to reach conceptual saturation (operationalized as the need to make fewer and fewer changes to my codes, code families and super families) I made the decision to move into the writing phase. I began to assemble, organize and describe the data and relationships textually according to the code families, super families, and super codes I had established, referring frequently to my Atlas.ti data structure to guide me and to identify relevant examples in the form of textual and image-based quotations. I returned frequently to Atlas.ti to query the data set as new questions arose during the writing phase. The back and forth between analysis and writing continued until I had sufficiently described the data and analysis.

3.6.3 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the accuracy and credibility of findings in qualitative research (Cresswell, 2009, 192). The following research design elements increase the trustworthiness of qualitative data in general, and this study in particular:

Multiple Data Sources and Triangulation: I compared data from multiple sources, including participant interviews, photographic images, documentary artifacts, personal knowledge (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Schutt notes that “a sample that allows for comparisons involving theoretically important variables is better than one that does not allow such comparisons” (2004, 153). Overlapping data points confirm the trustworthiness of data.

Rich, thick description: Cresswell recommends using rich, thick description to "transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences" (2009, 191-192) and realism. Employing elicitation techniques with salvage photographic methods lengthened the interviews and improved not only the content but the scope of data retrieved (Collier & Collier, 1986).

Bias: Presuming that the researcher can never be completely objective, it seeks rather to make explicit the researcher's role in both process and perspective (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 4). A qualitative, naturalistic, ethnographic research paradigm, therefore, allows me to acknowledge and privilege the researcher as instrument and acknowledge the personal preference and biography I have brought to the project, both of which influence the final results. Although I did not grow up in Whitney, my maternal family has lived there since about 1920, and so I bring a unique position and perspective to this study as a 'known investigator'; one where I am 'insider' enough to gain access to certain members of the community and yet 'outsider' enough that I do not know many residents personally or well, and therefore required assistance in gaining access to a sufficient number of participants to reach data saturation.

Prolonged time: The research was conducted over an extended time frame from January 2012 to December 2013 allowing for interactions with the community over several seasons, and collection of documentary data over almost eighteen months.

Variety in Sampling Techniques: Non–probabilistic sampling (snowball, theoretical and maximum variation) allows for small samples of people, nested in their context and studied in–depth, as well as purposive sampling that evolves as data collection and analysis progress.

The appropriateness, adequacy, accessibility and relevance of the final sample (Schutt, 2004, 290), therefore, are more significant to the trustworthiness of the data and the overall outcome of the research than are the limitations associated with small sample sizes.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are "relevant to the entire research process, from its inception through publication of the findings" (Lofland, 2005, 28). Miles and Huberman point out that ethical considerations apply to "the people whose lives we are studying, to our colleagues, and to those who sponsor our work" (1994, 288). Ethics approval for this research project was granted by the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at Western University according to SSHRC Guidelines (2010) and the University's Policy on Research Involving Human Subjects.

With regard to the people whose experiences I studied, the risks were few and limited. I engaged in overt research where I was a known investigator, thus eliminating risks attached to covert methods. I explained to participants the purpose of the study and my intentions for how to use the data. They were advised that they could withdraw at any time. Since the subject I am investigating has no legal ramifications that I am aware of, I did not anticipate requesting or uncovering any highly sensitive information for which my informants or I could be held accountable in the justice system.

Although issues of oppression are not relevant, in any case where one individual attempts to obtain information from another individual, there are always micro–power relations to consider. I included elements of reciprocity in the study design to help compensate for this imbalance. I consider my participants subject matter experts on the topic of experiential information, and listened with interest to their stories. Further, informants were pleased to know that the information they shared with me would be published at some point in the future, and they appeared happy to contribute. Additionally, I offered participants financial compensation in the form of $20 cash as a thank you for participating. Finally, I hope at some point to return to the community not only with a printed copy of my final dissertation for installation at the public library, but also to explore the feasibility of creating an exhibit of my findings for public display.

Remorse is always a potential risk when participating in research. Should participants disagree with my analysis or reporting of the findings, I may face accusations of “writing unflattering portraits of them, not getting the story right, or getting the story right but not telling it in the right way” (Lofland, 2005, 32). It is possible that some informants could regret participating after publication.

3.7.1 Anonymity and Confidentiality of Participants

Confidentiality is also a risk to be managed. As noted by Lofland, “confidentiality, like secrecy, is a matter of degree” (2005, 51). He explains that “in studies of stable communities or ongoing groups…pseudonyms are unlikely to prevent either interested participants or knowledgeable observers from recognizing or at least making pretty accurate guesses about, the presumably camouflaged communities, groups, or individuals” (2005, 51). He cautions that “interest in lifting the veil is especially likely when the researcher’s claims call into question, or contradict, those of the group or community being studied” (Lofland, 2005, 51).

Offering confidentiality to participants was neither entirely possible nor desirable. I asked for – and received – permission from every single participant to waive anonymity and to participate under their real names, due at least in part to the perceived collective benefit of preserving biographical and community information. This is a design element of which I am particularly proud. Naming the community allows not only a fuller appreciation of the specific context under study, but also highlights a predisposition in that community toward social benefit over individual interests. It was a selfless gift, and I offer each participant my sincere thanks for their trust.

To further increase participants' comfort level, I offered each the opportunity to review the transcript of our interview and add, remove, or clarify any of our discussions. Several participants offered clarifications or corrections to their transcripts. Some participants requested that I redact a portion of their interviews, which I gladly did.

3.7.2 Risks Associated with Visual Methods

Visual research methods involve a special degree of risk due to the increased possibility of identification of both photographers and subjects. Photography is an inherently political act, and individuals who participate may face uncertain or unpredictable outcomes, especially when combined with audio–recorded interviews.

Researchers have identified legal risks to participants that emerged from visual study designs. This can include situations where identification of individual participants might place them in a 'false light' (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001, 566) or where participants' input may be valuable specifically because they participate in illegal activities (Barrett, 2004). Legal issues can also involve ownership and copyright issues for the photographs that are taken, and protecting individuals from use of their images for commercial benefit (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). To my knowledge, none of the images I collected put anyone in a false light, or depicted illegal activities. The ethics review protocol required that I obtain written permission from the owner of the image, as well as from anyone pictured in the image before the image is subsequently printed. In all cases, the owner of the image maintains the copyright.

Because visual methods of research may be conducted in a wide array of geo–political contexts, Wang admonishes researchers to “hold the safety of the participants above the spontaneity or power of the image” (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). Barrett also notes that occasions may arise where, even with permission of the participant, it may be prudent not to use certain photographs due to the potential of repercussions at some future time (Barrett, 2004, 148). Safety risks of this nature were minimized through study design. Since the majority of images were salvaged photographs, in many cases their age and original purpose shielded both the participant and researcher from undue safety risks.

As is standard with all research protocols involving human subjects, both participatory and non–participatory visual methods require consideration of whether and how to preserve the anonymity of all parties involved. Anonymity protects both photographers and the people photographed from intrusions into personal space (Hartel & Thomson, 2011) and from “disclosure of embarrassing facts about individuals” (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001) that may be apparent from inclusion in or exclusion from selected contexts. Since participants in this study had waived the right to anonymity, images were shared with the understanding that they may be published, and presumably the participant vetted them accordingly. Although I do not recall any instances of images that could prove problematic, I have taken great care with regard to which images I have chosen to reproduce in this document.

4 In the Canoe – The Community Experience

When I pulled into Frank's driveway I saw in the back of the Dakota a sixteen–foot fiberglass canoe, patched from bow to stern, including one long strip in the middle. Frank was sitting on the bottom rung of the fire escape, drinking coffee and waiting.

"Is this the canoe we're taking?" I asked.

"Right on."

I felt a heartbeat go missing

"Frank, are you sure that canoe is going to work?"

"Been workin' fine for pret' near forty years. Do ya believe someone threw it out?"

I believed. The canoe, I would learn later, had once been owned by Camp Arowhon. When it showed up, split in two, at the dump at Lake of Two Rivers, someone phoned Frank – who practically has people on retainer at every municipal dump in the highlands – and he rescued the boat, brought it home and patched it up.

Frank has acquired dozens of canoes in this way: including nineteen that are cached on lakes throughout Algonquin Park. The man hates to throw anything away."

…

"It may not look like much," said Frank, "but it's a good canoe. When the wind comes up I'd rather have this canoe 'stead of those lightweight Kevlar ones with no keel. Those canoes will kill ya."

(Corbett, 2001, 51-52)

4.1 Introduction

Even though it is entirely possible to go through life today without ever setting foot in one, the canoe is an iconic symbol of the Canadian experience. In a mythical or epic sense, it connects people with aboriginal and imperial heritages. As a form of transportation, it symbolizes mobility, and independence. Figuratively, it personifies strength of body and mind, and a spirit of exploration. It reflects both solitary and social aspects of remote and rural, northern Ontario living.

While the idea of the canoe symbolizes experience in general, Frank's canoe typifies a specific variety of experience found in the village of Whitney. The opening quote is among my favourites encountered over the course of data collection, and comes from Ron Corbett's book, The Last Guide (2001). Although it is the story of Frank Kuiack, a guide and lifelong resident of Whitney, it mirrors the specific type of experience present in this community. It reflects a unique sense of value, pragmatism, durability and ingenuity. It embodies information seeking and use in a number of fundamental, visceral ways. While I can *say* that a forty year old canoe with load–bearing patches represents both an experience and an information source, knowing what that means can only come with an understanding of how that canoe came to be.

Thus, analysis of experience as an information source in Whitney requires first and foremost an understanding of what constitutes experience and what constitutes context, and how the two are intertwined. For those not familiar with Whitney, it means that the discussion begins with a story; more specifically, with a series of stories that offer a sense of how this community evolved, and what living, working and playing here has meant over time. At least in part, I attempt to answer the research question, *"What is the nature of experience in the* *remote, rural village of Whitney, Ontario?"* The material comes from print sources that describe the history of the village, and from personal observation. It is interspersed with supporting commentary obtained directly from participants during the interview process. These affective descriptions put flesh on the bones of the factual structure.

The purpose of this section is not to tell the entire story, or even necessarily to tell 'the true' story, simply because there are just too many stories to tell and the decisions behind which stories to leave out betray the existence of other truths and stories as well. Nor is it to relate the story to information seeking and use at this time. Rather, the purpose is to highlight elements of life and experience in this community, with a particular emphasis on those that are important to further discussions of information seeking and use in future chapters. For a more detailed description of the history of the village or the logging industry in this area, see (Lyons, 1986) and (Lloyd, 2006). To move directly to discussions of experience and information seeking and use, see Chapter 6 Among the Green Canoes – Information Seeking and Use in Whitney on page 195.

4.2 Organizational History

Whitney is part of the Township of South Algonquin (TSA) (Township of South Algonquin, 2010). The TSA occupies 871 square kilometers, 80% of which is Crown land and subject to ownership, usage and development restrictions. It includes the communities of L'Amable, Aylen Lake, Cross Lake, Gunters, Madawaska, McKenzie Lake, Murchison, Opeongo, Wallace and Whitney. For municipal election purposes, these communities are divided into the wards of Airy, Dickens, Lyell, Murchison and Sabine, and each ward includes not only residents of each village–proper, but also the surrounding farms and homesteads serviced by that village.

The TSA is considered remote and rural according to Fullerton. It is a substantial drive to any major urban centre (2009b, 2):

- 250 km to North Bay
- 237 km to Kingston
- 223 km to Ottawa
- 307 km to Toronto

Figure 9: Map of Whitney and the Township of South Algonquin
Location of the town of Whitney (star) in relation to Algonquin Park (labeled), the Township of South Algonquin (red line), and major urban centres including Toronto, Ottawa, North Bay and Kingston (source: Google maps).

4.2.1 Federal and Provincial Organization

The TSA belongs to the District of Nipissing, which encompasses Algonquin Park, stretching as far north as North Bay. The land mass included within this geographic boundary totals over 17,000 square kilometers, and includes a population of approximately 84,000 people. In terms of density, the proportions are equivalent to the population of Milton or North Vancouver living in an area more than triple the size of Prince Edward Island.

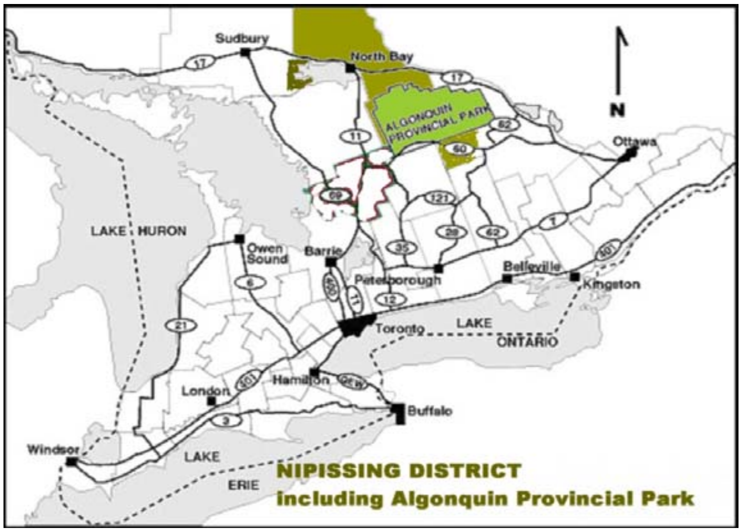


Figure 10: Map of Nipissing District
Nipissing District encompasses the green portion of the map, extending north past North Bay. The Township of South Algonquin is located south of the portion labeled "Algonquin Provincial Park (eCottageCanada, 2014).

4.2.2 Organization for Tourism Tracking

The District of Nipissing is part of the larger Regional Tourism Organization 12 (RTO12), also called Muskoka Parry Sound District, which includes Algonquin Park, South Algonquin Township; Nipissing Unorganized, South Part; Papineau-Cameron and Muskoka District (FedNor, 2010, 5). Although statistics for this designated area represent the entire area, not just the TSA, they are nevertheless important for understanding the larger tourism picture.

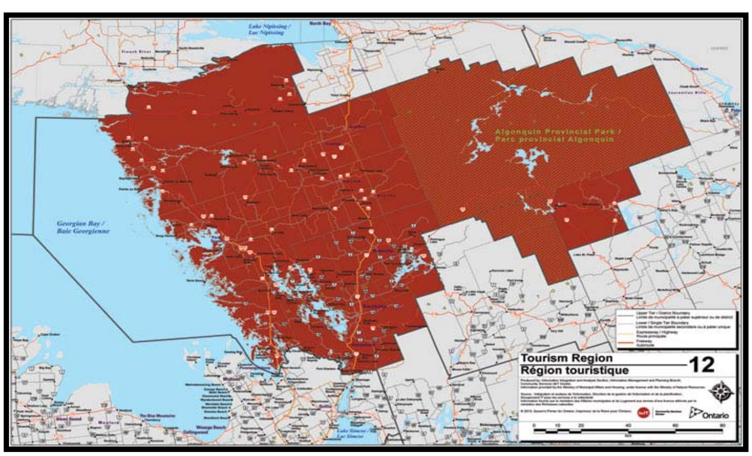


Figure 11: Map of RTO (12) Muskoka-Parry Sound District
Map showing tourism region RTO12, Muskoka Parry Sound. Whitney and the TSA are located in the southeast corner of Algonquin Park. (Source: http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/regions/regions12.shtml)

4.2.3 Impact of Tourism on the Community

According to a 2010 report by the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor), the Muskoka Parry Sound District hosts approximately 3.82 million people who visit for pleasureful purposes each year. Approximately one million of those visit for day trips, while the remaining 2.8 million stay an average three nights per visit. Campers and people who stay in commercial lodging account for just under one third of that total (FedNor, 2010, 16-17). A more recent report issued by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport placed the total number at 4.8 million as of 2013, indicating that these visitors add over $600 million dollars to the local economies annually (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014, 5). For more information about tourism activities in Muskoka Parry Sound District RTO12, see (Government of Ontario, 2014b).

In the spring of 2014, the Government of Ontario issued a report for Nipissing District (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014), highlighting notable statistics relating to tourism in this smaller geographic area. Information released included the following facts:

- There were 1.3 million visits to Nipissing District in 2013 representing an annual revenue of about $150 million dollars, most of which is spent on food, transportation and lodging.
- Most visitors originate from within Ontario, come during the summer months and stay an average of 2.6 nights per visit. They frequently stay in unpaid accommodations, choosing instead to visit friends and relatives (VFR).
- Almost 80% of visitors engage in some sort of outdoor sport while in the area (boating, fishing, ski/snowboarding, other) (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014).

There are no published tourism statistics relating exclusively to the TSA. However, Whitney is the closest community to Algonquin Park's East Gate along the Highway 60 corridor. As such, it is also both the first stop for tourists when leaving the Park heading east, and the last chance to find lodging, refuel or purchase supplies before entering the Park heading west.

Figure 12: East Gate of Algonquin Park
View of the East Gate of Algonquin Park, facing west into the Park. Oncoming traffic is heading toward Whitney. Pictured in autumn (left) and winter (right).

Statistics issued by Ontario Parks reflecting actual tourism visits in Algonquin Provincial Park could be considered most closely representative of the actual tourist flow in the village. Statistics published in 2010 indicated that Algonquin Park received approximately 831 000 visitors. Approximately 220 000 visited for the day, with the remainder staying overnight (Ministry of Natural Resources, 2010).

Since these numbers cover multiple access points to the Park from other locations in the district and province, it is reasonable to assume that a smaller portion of this group would have visited Whitney in any given year. Similarly, other traffic passing through the Park's Highway 60 corridor toward another destination elsewhere in Ontario may have made stops in Whitney not accounted for in these numbers. Although an accurate number of how many tourists visit Whitney is a matter of speculation within these parameters, it is safe to say that tourism exponentially increases demands on the village during the summer months, and makes up a large part of employment opportunities in the area.

Figure 13: Tourist Traffic in Algonquin Park
During the summer months, it is common to see lineups of traffic in both directions through the Highway 60 corridor of Algonquin Provincial Park.

4.3 Temporality of Experience – "There was nobody any better"

> *"School kids now, some of them they never seen that, stuff like that, eh. But this is how that, how we lived before, eh. And there was nobody any better, cause nobody had anything any better. There wasn't a car here in Whitney. Wasn't a car – everything was horses. From the farm there to Whitney was about a mile, and I was 12 years old, eh, I was drivin' horses and plowin' and everything, my dad was sick half the time. Go down to town, hitch the horse to the sleigh. Oh, we thought that was good, isn't that there…cause we didn't have to walk. But now, half tons and cars and ATVs, boats and motors… (Fred Kmith)*

Capturing the essence of life in Whitney requires a discussion of the past and the present, the factual and the affective. To write only about the past is to write the history of days gone by; an account of the way things were. To focus entirely on the present is to lose the understanding that comes from knowing the people, places and events that shaped and formed the community as it is today. Just as the quote above dances between the historical and the contemporary, mixing fact and perception, so also does this chapter.

Though there were differences in step and rhythm, it is a dance I saw played out repeatedly throughout the interview process as participants shared with me not only how life in Whitney both was, and is, but also how it came to be that way for them. Information people shared with me was continually placed along this temporal continuum. Every participant attempted to tell the stories of times past as far back as they could remember.

4.4 Origins of the Community – “Mundane material”

The village of Whitney, Ontario, Canada has a unique history inseparable from both its geography and the experiences of the people who live there. Not only is it a geographic ‘strategic point’ (Lyons, 1986), but it is also situated at a spectacularly beautiful location in the Canadian Shield. In the centre of town is the mouth of the Madawaska River. Fed by several large lakes, the Madawaska River runs east and joins the Ottawa River at Arnprior.

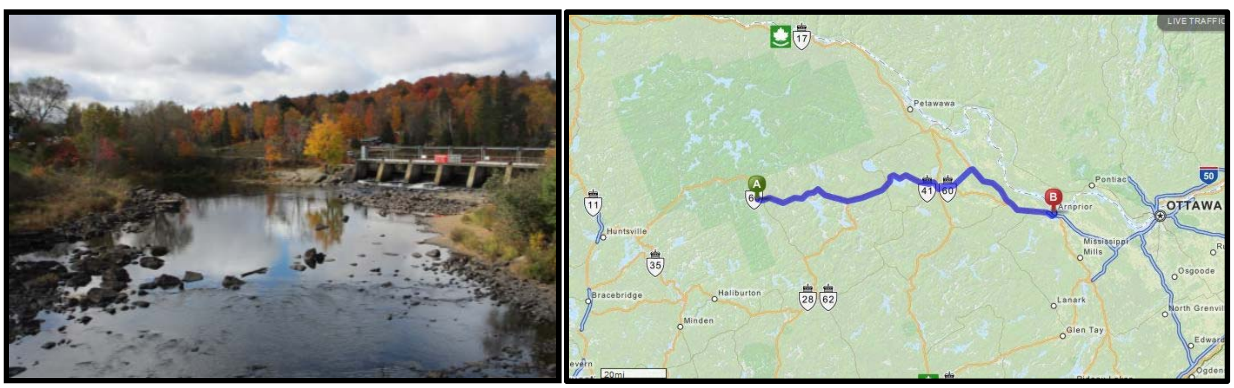


Figure 14: Madawaska River in Whitney, and in Relation to Ottawa (Map)
Madawaska River facing dam with Galeairy Lake behind, in autumn 2012. The Madawaska runs east from Whitney (A) to join the Ottawa River at Arnprior (B). (Map source: mapquest.com)

The convergence of these waterways made it a terrific transportation location in its own right, but with the addition of the railway line in 1888 by lumber baron J. R. Booth, it became an even more desirable logging location. It provided not only an abundant supply of softwood timber, but also the means by which to transport it great distances, primarily to the east coast where it could be shipped back to England (Lyons, 1986).

4.4.1 A Company Town

In 1895, the St. Anthony Lumber Mill, owned by E. C. Whitney, established the first softwood timber mill in the area. The town was completely company owned in its early years.

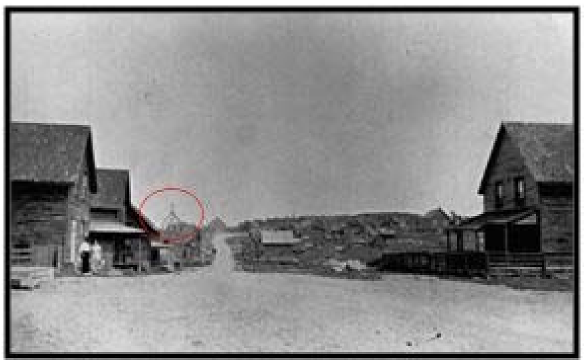



Figure 15: Church Street
View up Church Street from Highway 60. Note the Catholic Church in the background of both images (circled). Left image circa 1910, right 2009. The village was completely company owned at the time of the photograph in the left. The image on the right shows the only sidewalk in the village (Source: Left image courtesy of Clifford Olmstead. Right image courtesy of Floella Putterill.)

The workers who came to work for the mill lived in company owned homes, and shopped at the company store. Payments for rent and groceries were deducted directly from the workers' salary. 'Outsiders' were not permitted on company property, and a prohibition on alcohol was strictly enforced.

Along with the mill and the millworkers came other settlers as well. If they didn't work directly for the company they often supplied other goods and services to its operations, including raw food (vegetables, meat, oats and so on) to feed the bushmen and their horses. People who didn't work directly for the mill, or those who wanted to own their own land, established homesteads outside of the town.

Until 1928, the only way into or out of Whitney was by foot, by canoe or barge, or by railway (Lyons, 1986, 17). The journey by foot or water was long and difficult. The addition of corduroy roads (roads made of logs placed side by side) improved access somewhat, although passage was still difficult, slow, and sometimes dangerous due to shifting logs.

Information sources available to the early settlers of Whitney would have consisted of primarily knowledge they brought with them, information acquired from others who lived in the community (including those with connections to outside the community), and information available through formal sources, including the company and the elementary schools. Early census data (1901, 1911, and 1921) showed that many people self–reported as being able to read and write in English or French. Church services were held at the local Catholic Parish in both French and English dating back to 1896 (Lyons, 1986, 11).

4.4.2 Feudal System Continues

A series of mill ownership changes occurred between 1895 and 1922 in conjunction with the availability of different types of timber and the progression of the lumber industry from pine to spruce to hardwood. In each case, the village remained ‘owned’ by each successive company. In 1922, the Dennis Canadian Lumber company owned the local mill. They decided to shut down operations due to the declining availability of softwood, and the government of Ontario took back the village. It was subsequently leased to Mr. O. E. Post, who had been operating it on behalf of Dennis Canadian Lumber up until that time (Lloyd, 2006, 21).

Post covered the cost of the $1100 per year lease through the funds generated by operating the store, and taking over the leases to the homes in the area. According to Lyons, Post rented the small homes for $2.50 per month, and the larger homes for $5.00 per month (Lyons, 1986, 19-20). With the loss of a significant amount of local employment, however, he was often unable to collect payment. Many people left town looking for better economic conditions elsewhere. Residents who stayed experienced a period of extreme difficulty leading up to and beyond the depression (Lyons, 1986, 14).

The status of the village as a company town remained thus until the local Catholic Priest, who blamed the abject poverty in Whitney on the existing ‘feudal’ system of land holding, began a campaign to petition the government to cancel the town’s lease. Amidst objections from the residents of Whitney who had an affinity for Mr. Post, Father Tom Hunt hired legal counsel, and in the early 1940s succeeded in having Post’s lease terminated. Residents of Whitney, for the first time ever, had the opportunity to own their own homes (Lyons, 1986, 19-20).

Figure 16: View from the Bridge into Town
View into Whitney heading east towards Highway 127, (left circa 1952, created by postcard photographer Annabelle Studios in Huntsville. Scanned image courtesy of Robert Montpetit of the Toronto Postcard Club TorontoPostcardClub.com. Right image taken in 2014). Notice the difference in vegetation between the two images. A series of forest fires in the area during the early part of the 1900s had destroyed most of the trees.

4.4.3 McRae Lumber

In 1922, J. S. L McRae bought the timber rights and took over the local lumber industry. By this time, the landscape had been picked over of its softwood, and their survival depended on devising a solution for transporting hardwood (Lloyd, 2006, 32, 63-64). While it was easy to float softwood down the river, hardwood was too heavy and usually sank. Despite the difficult and labour–intensive work, the McRae lumber mill succeeded. It has been owned and operated by successive generations of McRae's for over 90 years, making it one of only two major, stable employers in the area for almost a century.

Many of the families who live in Whitney today have been there since the early days (Lloyd, 2006, 216). This is a sentiment reflected in the conversations of participants who referred to the longevity of residents in the community: "We're still some pretty old families here."

4.4.4 Algonquin Provincial Park – Cultural History

Set against the backdrop of an infant nation (Canada was barely 25 years old at the time) industrialization and a booming logging industry in full swing, depletion and preservation of national resources became a growing concern among politicians and citizen advocates. In 1893, at about the same time that J.R. Booth was pushing the railway and logging industry northward towards Whitney, a 3797 km^2 parcel of land west of Whitney was "reserved and set apart as a public park and forest reservation, fish and game preserve, health resort and pleasure grounds for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the people of the Province of Ontario" (Clemson, 2006, 7). Known at the time as Algonquin National Park, it was renamed Algonquin Provincial Park in 1913. Over its 121 year history, the boundaries have been increased several times, and today it spans 7630 km^2 (Algonquin Provincial Park, 2014).

From the beginning, the Park was a draw to tourists, particularly sport fishermen who came from all over North America to try their hand at catching what seemed by any standards like prehistoric–sized fish in the virtually untouched lakes. Artists also found their reward in the scenic natural landscapes, most famous among them Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven. A number of commercial leases were issued to provide lodging to accommodate the influx of tourists. These business ventures were further supported by many ‘locals’ who worked as hired help and guides.

At first accessible only by train, the addition of Highway 60 in the 1930s (Globe and Mail, 1936) made the Park an attractive destination to even more people, who could now travel there by automobile as well. Parcels of land on a number of lakes, particularly those nearest the railway and Highway 60 corridor, were also opened up and offered to interested parties on a private lease basis.

Today, over 800 000 people visit the area annually, most of whom travel various stretches of the Highway 60 corridor between Huntsville and Whitney to visit the many trails, campsites and museums open to the public (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014, 10). Although most of the initial lodging businesses faced their demise when the railway disappeared, three commercial accommodation facilities still operate today, including Bartlett lodge (Bartlett Lodge, 2010), Arowhon Pines (Arowhon Pines Summer Resort and Restaurant, 2010) and Killarney (Killarney Lodge, 2010). Eight summer camps, most dating back to the early years, welcome campers annually instilling an interest in nature and preservation in successive generations (Camp Ahmek; Camp Arowhon; Camp Northway; Camp Pathfinder; Camp Tamakwa; Camp Tanamakoon; Camp Wapomeo; Camp Wendigo). Although leaseholders continue to advocate actively on their own behalf, changing policies on development and naturalization within the Park administration have unfavourably affected their options to extend their residency. Existing leases are set to expire in 2017 (Algonquin Park Leaseholders Association, 2015).

4.4.5 Algonquin Provincial Park – Geological and Research History

> *Rocks and gravel may not seem particularly awe–inspiring, but when you stop and think about it, everything we come in contact with on this planet – even our oceans and lakes – is ultimately sitting on such mundane material. What's more, rocks, sand and gravel go to make up the living layer of soil which supports all plant life and consequently all animal life – including our own. There is, in fact, hardly anything more fundamental to our world, and all its life, than the rocks we normally take so much for granted. Seen in this light, questions about our rocks, gravel hills and valleys are of great interest and importance. (Strickland, 1996, 2).*

Geologically, the Park is considered Precambrian shield. In addition to most of the topography having been formed through the movement of ice and water billions of years ago, geologically significant features include the Brent Crater just inside the northern boundary and the Barron Canyon at the east boundary. The Brent Crater was formed when a meteor approximately 150 meters wide hit the earth some 450 million years ago with an impact four times the size of the largest man–made bomb. The crater is 4 km wide, and 600 meters deep (Strickland, 1991). Barron Canyon represents a fault in the earth made larger over time through erosion. Scientists estimate that at one time water flowed through the canyon with the force of a thousand Niagara Falls' (Strickland, 1994).

One of the primary functions of nature preserves like Algonquin Park is to provide an outdoor, living laboratory from which to study indigenous species of flora and fauna. Most recent surveys indicate that Algonquin is home to over 7000 insect species, 1000 plant species, 54 fish species, 31 species of reptiles and amphibians, 272 species of birds and 53 species of mammals. They are cared for and studied at four different research sites throughout the Park (Algonquin Provincial Park, 2014).

A lot of the research undertaken in Algonquin is done with the goal of improving our ability to manage our natural resources wisely. Occasionally, investigation produces surprising results with other benefits as well. On February 14, 1945, for example, the Globe and Mail published an article describing how Squadron Leader F. E. J. Fry improved the design of an automatic oxygen valve that relieved pilots of having to manually adjust the flow of oxygen at high altitudes. Incorrect oxygen flow resulted in pilots losing consciousness mid–flight, an obviously dangerous situation. Fry's design suggestions came from observations of fish breathing mechanisms conducted at the Harkness Laboratory in conjunction with the University of Toronto at Opeongo Lake (Globe and Mail, 1943). And in 2011, The Raven (Algonquin Park's Natural and Cultural History Digest) published an article describing the discovery of the Blackfin Cisco in two Algonquin Lakes. The Blackfin Cisco is now informally known as "The Lazarus Fish" because it was considered extinct at the time of its re–discovery (Steinberg, 2011).

Although local residents of Whitney play a fundamental role in this work, their names seldom appear in the history books, and they do not appear on any published research studies at all to my knowledge. They have historically been, and are now, the people who cut the trails into and out of remote sites, who repair the machinery, who build, maintain and clean the structures, and who serve the guests. They are, metaphorically, the mundane 'rocks and gravel' of the cultural and social history of Algonquin Park.

4.5 The Place – "We've got the loveliest scenery"

The most striking feature of the community to those visiting it for the first time is frequently not the village itself, but rather the spectacular scenery all around it and the opportunities for wildlife sightings including birds, bears, wolves, moose and deer. With its proximity to

Algonquin Park and the associated repertoire of nature–based resource opportunities such as camping, hiking, and canoeing, for example, visiting the area is a bucket–list item for many world–wide, and a yearly ritual for many more.

4.5.1 Geography

The aesthetic value of the geography is a treasured asset for local residents. Participants in this study almost unanimously described the profound beauty of the area and access to nature–based resources as among their favourite reasons to live in Whitney. The open space, wildlife, lakes, foliage, and serenity that come with living remotely in such a visually appealing location – one that experiences four measurably distinct seasons – generally add to perceptions of quality of life. A certain amount of pride of home was evident as well, particularly when discussing how tourists experience the local flora and fauna for the first time:

> *They'll take a leaf that's orange or red, and they're just amazed by that one little leaf... like there's a thousand of them on the tree. But they'll take just one and just take pictures, and focus right in with their big zoom things on this little leaf. But yeah, it's lovely. This is a lovely scene. Where do you get a lovelier scene than that [note: pointing out window]? (Edward McGuey)*

4.5.2 The Pioneer Experience

In many ways, the 'pioneer experience' in Whitney lasted well into the second half of the 20th century. Although the village now has most urban technological amenities including hydro, cable, telephone, satellite and cellular services, the introduction of these services was delayed in comparison to urban centres. For example, Toronto Island airport opened in 1939, offering passenger flights to and from the city at around the same time residents of Whitney received reliable, four season road access into and out of town.

Figure 17: Highway 60, Frank McDougall Parkway
Highway 60 near Lake of Two Rivers (left circa 1935 under construction, courtesy of Clifford Olmstead, right image taken in 2012).

People living in downtown Toronto had access to hydro and appliances like televisions, laundry machines, fridges and stoves for nearly 23 years before the first electric lights turned on in Whitney in the 1950s (Lyons, 1986, 14). Homesteads outside of town received hydro only a few years before the Darlington Nuclear Generating Station came into service in 1989. Private investment in cellular infrastructure began in 2008, and although “some places in the Township still don’t have good access,” participants tell me “it’s getting better.”

Currently, there are no underground municipal utilities, and homes have septic systems and wells. Although the original buildings have since been replaced, many of the current buildings are still decades old; well kept, but reflective of the eras in which they were built, lacking adequate insulation and frequently in need of repair. Driveways and parking lots are usually gravel. There is only one sidewalk in town (see A Company Town on page 100) and few curbs. Whitney does not have traffic lights.

4.5.3 Remote and Rural

Fullerton describes the Township of South Algonquin as “remote and rural.” This description is acknowledged in terms of public policy as well. The population of this Township is seen as disadvantaged because of its isolation, the degree of out–migration of the youth; the poor rates of post–secondary and continuing education for those who choose to stay, the disproportionately rapid pace at which the average age increases among this population compared to the provincial average, and high unemployment rates (particularly among women). As of the 2011 census, the population of the area includes 1211 people (Statistics Canada, 2011), which represents a decline of 3.4% since the 2006 census, and a decline of almost 10% since 1996 (Statistics Canada, 2001). Although full–time residents are scattered around the Township, slightly more than half of residents live in the villages of Whitney and Madawaska.

To support this Township, the political boundaries of the TSA fall within the boundaries of the District of Nipissing, which is considered Northern Ontario. It is also sometimes labeled ‘Near North’. This political classification means that the Township is eligible for some additional government funding programs to support residents, often through job creation and infrastructure.

One of the unfortunate consequences of this situation is that the Township is a “geographic orphan split up between various relatives” (Lyons, 1986, 3) in terms of access to government–funded public services. Lyons penned these words in 1986, indicating that Whitney “must hold some kind of record for being administered from everywhere else” (Lyons, 1986, 2). The table below shows some of the major public services, and the distance to the service and administrative offices today. Notice that education services alone (K–12, public and separate) are still administered from six different locations. Further, communities in the Township are often unable to meet minimum numbers for government funded programs, even when they pool their populations. Usually, residents simply do without these public services. On occasion, they have been able to privately collaborate among themselves to provide similar services for each other, though informally and unfunded.

Public Service	**Name**	**Distance**
Public School (K–8)	Whitney Public School	Services delivered locally, but administered from Pembroke, Ontario, 138 km
Public High School	Madawaska Valley District High School (MVDHS)	MVDHS is located in Barry’s Bay, Ontario 54 km, but administered from Pembroke, Ontario, 138 km
Separate School (K–8)	St. Martin of Tours Catholic School	Services delivered locally, but administered from Napanee, Ontario, 205 km
Separate High School	North Hastings High School	Services delivered in Bancroft, Ontario, 58 km, but administered from Belleville, Ontario, 170 km
Animal Control	Ministry of Natural Resources	Bancroft, Ontario, 58 km
Fire Control	Ministry of Natural Resources	Haliburton, Ontario 150 km
Public Health Department	Renfrew County and District Health Unit	Pembroke, Ontario, 138 km
Community Care Access Centre	CCAC Champlain	Ottawa, Ontario, 223 km
Land Registry	ServiceOntario	North Bay, Ontario, 250 km
Library	The TSA Post Memorial Branch	Locally delivered and administered

Figure 18: Distance from Whitney to Various Public Services

The first municipal Official Plan was adopted in 2012 in the Township of South Algonquin (TSA), making it one of the last municipalities in Ontario to do so. Some Crown land currently under jurisdiction of the TSA is part of the Algonquin Land Claim settlement negotiations which have been ongoing since the mid–1980s and which are expected to continue for the foreseeable future. When complete, it will be Ontario’s first modern–day constitutionally protected treaty (Government of Ontario, 2014a). Property will not be expropriated from existing land owners for the settlement but Crown land boundaries will change, and new relationships will be introduced. There is currently little Crown land for sale in the region pending the outcome of the negotiations, which puts pressure on the community's ability to grow both its population and local business. "Land has to be freed up," one participant told me. "There's no Crown land being turned over to the public to be able to offer places to live, to build homes, things like that. That's a bit of a difficulty." It also prevents the growth of industry, as investment in the area depends on first being able to find a location from which to operate.

4.5.4 Economic Survival

Effects of economic downturns like the Great Depression were, in many ways, magnified in remote areas across the country, and poverty, if measured by low income, was common. Although average incomes vary in Whitney as in any community, having enough resources to survive is and always has been an ongoing concern for many.

As an example of the depth of financial difficulty, in 1930, the annual cost of living for a family in the city was $1107 (Statistics Canada, 2009b), while the average public elementary school teacher earned $1270 (Statistics Canada, 2009a). In that same year, the Trustee's Report for Public School No. 2 in Airy Ward (Whitney) showed that the female school teacher earned just $900. Unemployed families of 8 and 10 people in Whitney who were lucky enough to receive some form of social assistance regularly survived on less than a dollar a day (Lyons, 1986, 17). Men compensated for the lack of local employment opportunities by travelling out for work while the women cared for home, family and business. Everyone became self–sufficient, an approach made possible by sheer determination and the sweat of their brows; they learned to be flexible, to hunt, to fish, to keep gardens and livestock, to preserve, to barter and to engage with tourists. Sometimes, incomes were even supplemented by underground or black market trade as well. Understandably, skill at these endeavors was essential, and acquired primarily through experience. Many of these trades, traits and skills continue to be in use today, although participants in this study differed on opinions as to what degree.

4.5.5 Passage of Time

Time passes in this area more according to a rural, agrarian model than an urban time–is–money model. Seasons are dramatically different in terms of weather and tourist patterns; winters are cold and long, and for many, marked by unemployment. Summers are warm, and very busy with tourist businesses, employment and outdoor recreational sports. Spring brings a rebirth of foliage and animal life (including black fly season), and fall is a highlight not only for the stunning beauty of the changing leaves, but also because of traditions like church suppers and hunting season. The passage of time is marked as much by seasons, religious holidays, and the births and deaths of friends, family and neighbours as it is by the calendar and the clock.

References to the passage of time were peppered throughout the interviews. Participants referred to enjoying the quieter, slower pace of life in Whitney compared to cities where you have to “wait for stop lights and people to cross, and cars to get out of your way.” As well, the nostalgia associated with living in a place associated with earlier times in their life was a source of reflection, joy and comfort to many. Joe Avery noted that a favourite pastime is “listening to the elders tell us stories about when they were younger. Everyone loves listening to that.” And of course, references were frequently made to time as an investment in various spheres of life, including work, play and everyday life. “I’d like to stay around home,” one participant shared. “And find some little jobs around just to do part time, and go fishing when I want to go fishing, like I did today. And probably tomorrow.”

4.6 The People – “None of us people are average in Whitney!”

None of us people are average in Whitney! (Laughter) You know that, don’t ya? (Ann Boldt)

A stoic pride and an abiding sense of faith exist among residents. They’re resilient people. Although I encountered many tales of hardship and struggle, interestingly, no participant described their own experiences as being poor. Rather, they characterized life in Whitney as hard working and self–sufficient, with many enjoyable memories. Despite the hardships – or perhaps because of them – many participants also describe the village as a strong community of “people helping people.” “If someone dies, or there’s a wedding, everybody is there. It doesn’t matter their religion, or their money – they are part of us” (Lyons, 1986). And even for residents who choose to leave for a time, returning to Whitney for pleasure or purpose afterwards always means ‘coming home.’

4.6.1 Ethnicity and Immigration – Past

It may seem obvious to state that almost everyone who has lived in Whitney, or who lives there now, came from somewhere else at one point. However, the role of the immigration experience is pivotal in understanding the social norms within remote and rural communities. In this particular community, immigration plays both an historical and a contemporary role.

In Father Tom Hunt’s memoir, The History of Whitney and Sabine, he notes that “socially the village has its own brand of biculturalism. A most unusual mixture of French Canadian and Polish townspeople make up the bulk of the population, with a smattering of Irishmen and Ukrainians to thicken the brew" (1981, 3). Genealogical research conducted by one of the participants suggests that some French families in the area may be able to date their Canadian roots back to the time of Samuel de Champlain in1608. Algonquin First Nations peoples lived in or near the area long before that. Today, nationalities as represented by languages spoken at home on the 2006 census also include German, Danish, and Finnish. Others would be included as well if ethnic origins were interpreted more broadly.

Hard work aside, many immigrants to the area at the turn of the 19th century found the ability of the land to support themselves and their families robust compared to where they had come from. Times were poor indeed in Ireland and Poland at that time. In another memoir, The Pioneer Review, Father Hunt admonishes parishioners to recognize the "considerable courage" it took for immigrants to "face the long voyage and unknown hardships of this new country" (1989, 7). He recounts the following letter he received from the Archbishop of Toronto:

> *We frequently notice the fine foreheads and comely countenances of children born in this country, where their mothers were not half–starved when they bore them and contrasting them with their parents, brothers and sisters born in Ireland, we conclude that good blood will tell when not starved (1989, 7)*

It is fair to say that political pressures played a role not only in who immigrated, but also in their integration when they got here. Even in Whitney, tensions between nationalities and religions encouraged personal decisions to seek homogenization with the perceived norms of the time. Despite their best efforts to fit in, the effects were arguably inconsistent, and stereotypes persisted. The French were considered good labourers in the mills; the Polish were cheap agricultural labour. Many immigrants anglicized their names to enable their families to better fit in and find work; Fournier became Fuller, O'Heggarty became Heggart, Maszk became Mask. Of course, this phenomenon is not unique to Whitney, but evidence exists that rural centres, this one included, were not immune to the experience.

Over the course of this study, references to almost six hundred different individual names were documented, representing all of the above nationalities and more. For a variety of reasons, many more names were encountered but not recorded. It is a necessarily incomplete list.

4.6.2 Ethnicity and Immigration – Current

In terms of current immigration/emigration, participants frequently recognized the natural ebb and flow of people in and through their community. Several offered broad categorizations of the choices people who "have roots here" make regarding whether they stay, leave or return. Some leave for better opportunity as soon as they can – for example young adults seeking education, employment or social opportunities, or to escape the remote and rural lifestyle. Some will never leave because they are not enticed by external opportunities, and are happy where they are. And some try to keep their feet in both worlds, leaving for a while with the intention of returning later, or taking work out of town for periods of time. Participants who returned after a long absence often expressed the enjoyment and pleasure they take from the familiarity and serenity of the place, and from the opportunity to contribute something meaningful to the community through different forms of civic engagement.

Still other participants noted the immigration of new people with no previous associations to the community that happens regularly these days also, "the strangers coming here to live." Many participants admitted they no longer know everyone who lives in town, which is a change from times past. These immigrants are rarely from out of country these days, and explanations for why they might choose to move to Whitney varied. There was speculation that some people move to town in a conscious effort to embrace the romance of the bush life, or possibly as a form of escapism from unhappy experiences elsewhere. Some claim to move to the area in search of work, or in an effort to obtain benefits associated with remote and rural life such as the bucolic lifestyle. And, although it is rarely discussed, there may be some financial incentive for inward migration, as the rules for qualifying for government/social benefits in rural areas are sometimes different than in urban centres – more reflective of economic patterns in the area and higher levels of need.

While some of these people remain long term, often this category of immigrant departs upon the discovery that the reality of day to day life doesn't measure up to their imagination. There is an unwritten expectation of social tradeoff required to coexist peacefully here, perceived economic benefit aside. People are expected to give as much as they take. One participant noted that the ones who stay longer understand that. "They learn from the people around that that's just the way you are. You help out. You pitch in." Still other participants noted that the passage of time is only one currency that buys you entry to the community, and only partial entry at that. The response to people who complain that they still feel like outsiders despite long term residence in the community is typically to recommend being more social, or friendly, or volunteering. "[They're] always trying to get people to work on [their] property, but [they] never go and help anybody else." In the end, the social norms bring life into balance. "It has a way of bringing people around, these small towns," said one individual. "You either come around or you go and move somewhere else. Because that's basically what it comes down to."

Reflections on the integration experience also took into account the role of locals in the process as well. As one participant put it, "We're hard to get to know. We're hard to penetrate."

Another expressed a type of skepticism among locals. “It’s kind of the end of the line in many ways,” they said. “When people come [here], you kind of just hold your breath waiting for them to leave. You don’t think they’re going to make it. And lots of times they don’t.”

4.6.3 Ages and Stages

Many participants commented on the changing demographics of the community. While neither the total number of residences in Whitney nor the vacancy rate has changed substantially in a long time, several participants noted the significant decrease in family sizes and increase in population age over time. “All the houses are full, and there’s probably more houses,” said one participant, “but they’ve got two people in them. And it’s an old town. It’s old.”

To put the concept of ‘old’ into perspective, Statistics Canada census data for 2011 reports that the median age in the Township of South Algonquin is 51.9 years, compared to a provincial average of 40.9 years. Children under the age of 15 represent only 10.1% of the population, compared to the provincial average of 17% (Statistics Canada, 2011). Feedback from public focus groups in preparation for the Township’s first official plan noted that both children and seniors are ‘at risk’ populations because not enough resources are available locally to help with special needs associated with both life stages. Special needs for the younger group may include such things as education, entertainment and employment opportunities. For the older group, specific assistance with housing, public transportation, specialist health care services, and accessibility issues are required (Fullerton, 2009a). Often, the younger people choose to leave the community for better opportunities elsewhere as soon as they are able. Often, the seniors are forced to leave when they can no longer be cared for adequately in their homes.

The community frequently has difficulty meeting minimums for different programs including census disclosure and funding. Specifically with regard to funding for Early Years preschool programming, one participant remarked that, “sometimes we’re just either one or two under. Or we’ve just made it because someone had a baby.” In 2012, there weren’t enough children aged 0–5 to qualify for funding (13 are required) for the Best Start program, even if they pooled all the children in the two largest communities together (Madawaska and Whitney).

The low birth rate in the community is a source of disappointment for many, particularly in a community well exercised in working together to achieve a common good, and where there is such willingness on the part of volunteers to both access the funding and to initiate services. The lament is true: if there were more babies, “we could get so much more for them.” The sad, unspoken corollary to that statement is that in the absence of enough children to warrant funding, they all suffer equally, doing without instead. It is another example of interdependence in this community. Success is a group activity, as is failure.

At the opposite end of the life spectrum, the number of baby boomers in or nearing retirement years is growing, including people who have returned to the community specifically to retire here. Data indicated a strong desire among residents to downsize in their retirement years, and a wish to age within their community near family, friends, and familiar surroundings. Unfortunately, with a dearth of resale homes on the market (perhaps as many as 2 or 3 at any given time) and the nearest retirement, assisted–living, or nursing home 50 km away, options for achieving either outcome appear to be limited at best right now.

Currently, basic care is provided to those in need by the local physician and nurse, family, friends, and travelling home–care services provided by organizations like ParaMed. The people are thankful for the good health care they receive and the resources to help them pay for it, but the desire for basic services urban dwellers take for granted is ever–present and a noteworthy part of the experience of both aging and parenting in this community.

4.6.4 Education

The school was the hub of local, formal education in the community of Whitney. According to Father Tom Hunt in his book, A Pioneer Review,

> *"The school was usually a log building with desks built around the walls, but no maps, no blackboards and few slates. The interior was low and dark. In spite of those and other handicaps the pupils obtained a good rudimentary and practical education. In localities where it was found necessary, Catholic separate schools were established. But in the country districts where the Catholics were grouped closely together they were content with the common schools in which they were able to teach religion" (1989, 19).*

Up until the 1930s, Whitney and the surrounding area were served by three small, one–room schoolhouses: the Country school, the Old Red school, and the Airy school.

The Country school was located out of town along Highway 60 near Highway 127 and served the rural families who lived east of the Madawaska River in the Sabine, McGuey and Highlands settlement areas. Recollections of Mrs. Mary Heggart explain the origins of this school. I can't be certain what year '54 years ago' refers to, however, in all probability, it was before 1904 when SS. No. 2 was built:

REference: Algonquin Story-Sanders page 40: 67-71.
Mrs. Mary Heggart, one of the pioneers and still principal of ul, 4, Airy and Sabind writes--

" About 54 years ago, the frist school in the township known as no. 1 Airy was built. Theesettlers cut the logs hayled them out of the bush made a bee and " raised the building about 24x 28 feet wide with long windows four on each side of the room. A meeting of the ratepayers was call ed. A School Board was elected with Mr. Robinson as the first Secretary-treasurer and assessor and tax collector was named to collect enough taxes to pay the teacher about $400.00 a year at that time. As it was unorganized at no land taxes were impos ed.

Mr, Whitney supplied the first maps for the school. This building, which was called Heggart's School for many years, served the community until about 1936t he school section was cha nged and was named Union One Airy and Sabine because half of the pupils were coming from Sabine. In 1956 this name became Ul and 4 Airy and Sabine.

Figure 19: History of Whitney
History of Whitney, compiled by grade 7 & 8 students of Whitney Public School. Document provided courtesy of Clifford Olmstead. (No date. Mrs. Hollet was principal at the school at the time.)

The Old Red school was located directly in town on the hill beside the church and exclusively served the children of those who were employed by the mill until the housing rules in town loosened. Although it's difficult to see pictured below, Clifford Olmstead noted that the bottom of the windows were painted over so the view outside wouldn't distract them from their studies.

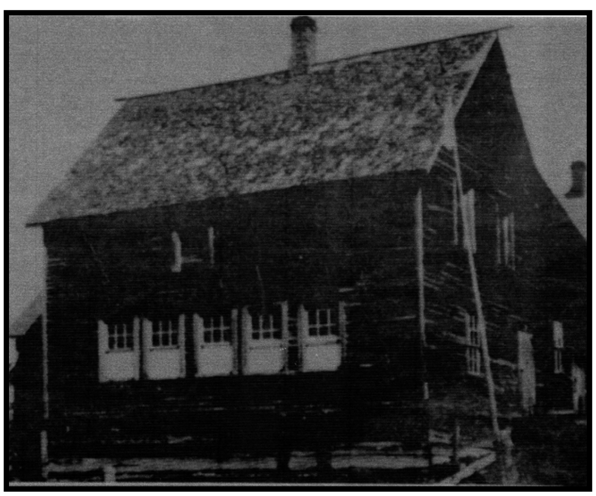
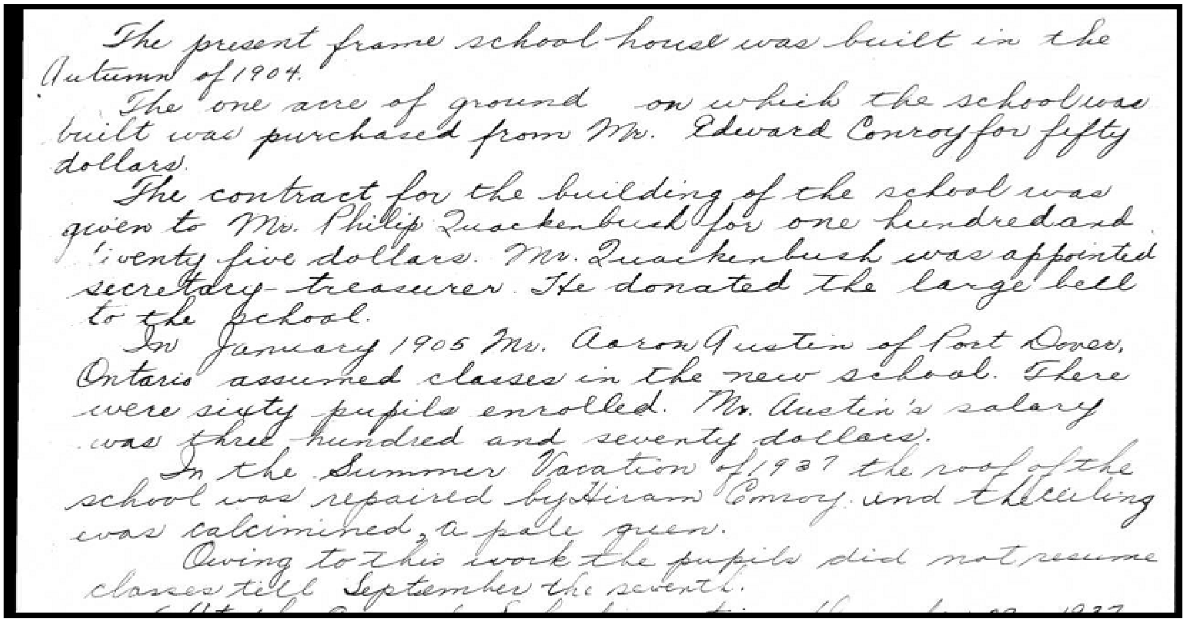


Figure 20: Old Red School House
Image of the Old Red School House, courtesy of Clifford Olmstead.

The SS. No. 2 Airy school was located high on a favourite tobogganing hill behind the home of Peter and Hazel Mask in an area known as Bellwood. It served families west of the Madawaska River. According to the SS. No. 2 Airy School logbook, the Airy school was built in 1904.



The present frame school house was built in the Autumn of 1904.

The one acre of ground on which the school was built was purchased from Mr. Edward Conroy for fifty dollars.

The contract for the building of the school was given to Mr. Philip Quackenbush for one hundred and twenty five dollars. Mr. Quackenbush was appointed secretary-treasurer. He donated the large bell to the school.

In January 1905 Mr. Aaron Austin of Port Dover, Ontario assumed classes in the new school. There were sixty pupils enrolled. Mr. Austin's salary was three hundred and seventy dollars.

In the Summer Vacation of 1937 the roof of the school was repaired by Hiram Conroy and the ceiling was calcimined, a pale green.

Owing to this work the pupils did not resume classes till September the seventh.

Figure 21: History of the SS. No. 2 Airy School
Explanation of the history of the SS. No. 2 Airy School, taken from the SS. No. 2 Airy log book dated 1933–1942.

During the era of these first schools, children walked to school, sometimes as much as six or seven kilometers or more each way through the bush. Gordon Palbiski recalls:

> *I started school in 1930. It was a 7 km walk to Whitney School. On a cold morning, we would have to stop in at Chapeski's farm to get warm. Mrs. Chapeski would pull down the oven door on the old wood stove and we would put our feet in to warm them up. (Palbiski, 2010, 4)*

Another participant recalled walking through "snow right up to our crotch" and the occasions when her dad would take the kids to school by horse and sleigh. "We'd have to cover our heads up, it was so dirty and cold comin' to school," she said. "He'd say, 'Ok, we're at the school!' and off would come the blankets and we'd all run into school." Still others who lived too far away to walk, for example children of families who operated lodges in the Park, were boarded in town during the week. Clover Palbiski grew up at Opeongo Lodge in the Park, which was owned and operated by her family at the time, and recalled her early school years. “We stayed with Agnes Bowers one year. And different people in Whitney over the years when we were just kids,” she said.

The schools were staffed by both male and female teachers, although female teachers were more common and customarily paid less than their male counterparts. Sometimes the teachers were local, and sometimes they were brought in from out of town. The schools were closed for Christian holidays such as Easter (Good Friday and Easter Sunday), Christmas break, Epiphany (January 6), Holy Day/Immaculate Conception (December 8), and Thanksgiving. Unscheduled holidays occurred due to teacher illness or absence, snow storms and impassable roads. On occasion, curious openings and closures occurred. For example, on May 14, 1942, the log book indicates “school was open, no pupils present.” The day was noted as Ascension Thursday. One wonders why the teacher would have opened the school if it was a known holiday. (Ascension was a scheduled holiday in other years.) School closures were warranted upon the Sovereign’s birthday, the death of King George V in January of 1936, the coronation of King George VI on May 12, 1937, and for the funerals of Mrs. Smith on March 24, 1931 and of O. E. Post on October 29, 1942. The records also show that, at times, individual students were required to not attend classes due to “quarantine” and “by school nurse’s order.”

In December of 1944 at a meeting of the ratepayers of the SS. No. 2 Airy school, the board of trustees voted to petition the government for a new building to be built on property belonging to Peter Mask near the site of the existing school. The log book doesn’t record the outcome of the petition, but documents I examined indicate that a new school was built in 1948 to replace both the Airy and Country schools. The new school – Whitney Public School – was located along Highway 60 in town near the Madawaska River and is still in use today.

Figure 22: Whitney Public School (K-8)
Whitney Public School serves children from kindergarten to grade 8. The library is housed in the portable to the right of the building. Reflective of the time in which it was built, there are separate “Boys” and “Girls” entrances on either side of the building.

According to Father Tom Hunt, the first Catholic school appeared in Whitney in 1932, when Father Matthew Doyle (who was a teacher himself) “outfitted an old boarding house of the lumber company and equipped a two room school and some sixty children were enrolled” (1981, 9). In 1948 this building, known as St. Martin of Tours Catholic School, was replaced with “a modern four room school” and an enrollment of 90 students under the direction of Father Deloughery (1981, 11). The current building, including a gym, was built in the 1980s.

Figure 23: St. Martin of Tours Catholic Elementary School (K–8)

In the first half of the 1900s, the Whitney schools went as far as grade ten, but it was common for children to stop attending in the primary or elementary years, and almost always by the age of fifteen regardless of grade. As soon as they could read and write, many girls left their formal education behind to help at home, and the boys sought employment, usually in the local mills. Formal education beyond grade ten – even public education – required leaving town and boarding out. Many families simply could not afford either the lost income or the cost of transportation and boarding.

In the 1960s, school bus service was initiated by the new Reeve, Phil Roche, which allowed children from Whitney to complete high school in Bancroft, and later, Barry's Bay, while still residing in Whitney. The buses would leave in the mornings around 7:00 am, and return around 4:00–4:30pm. In discussing the fortitude it required of the children in Whitney just to complete high school, one participant commented, "If I had to take that road all the way to Bancroft everyday and all the way back, I never woulda made it. I woulda quit at 16. It's just that driving back and forth woulda killed me. So I have a great deal of respect for the guys …and the girls that got a diploma and made it through high school, and proved they had that grit." Although it was extremely rare, a small number of families had the means to send the children to private boarding schools elsewhere in the province to complete high school.

Today, approximately 69% of the population aged 25–64 have completed high school, compared to a provincial average of just over 86.4% for the same age group (Statistics Canada, 2006b). Educational achievement for participants in this study ranged from grade four to post secondary.

Changing family demographics have also changed the demand for elementary education locally. Whereas St. Martin of Tours Catholic Elementary School used to accommodate over 100 students from kindergarten to grade 8, and buses taking students to schools both in and out of town used to sit three to a seat, decreasing family sizes and fewer families mean that current enrollment at both local schools now numbers only about sixty pupils in total between them. Also noteworthy is the fact that the resources at the schools are sometimes shared, with students from the public school being bused to the separate school for gym classes twice a week. Up until about 2007, the separate school was the only school to offer kindergarten classes locally, "so everybody had to go to the Catholic school at one point or another." Whitney Public School is now a site for Ontario's Full Day Kindergarten program.

4.6.5 Society and its "Characters"

> *"Yeah, we had our characters. You said somebody mentioned Billy Bennett to you. Well, Billy was a very intelligent man, but, uh, they said they were really just an ordinary family til the father died. And then him and his mother had to live and times were really hard because Billy wouldn't cut wood, and they had a house that was down over here on the main road. And I don't know about the food, like, I can't remember. I can remember her goin' around, you know, she'd pick flowers, like to pick flowers, and she'd sell them and stuff, and go from door to door. But people were good, like they would feed them, and give what they could. But then Billy was on his own. And finally the guy moved his house from there, and moved him down on the road to where you go to the Adventure Lodge. And, uh, he had a little shack down there. Well, he just literally, I guess, he got sick or he froze his feet or something and they took him out. But he was dark because he used to burn that old stove oil, eh. And so Billy was quite dark. He walked hunched over…and I don't know, maybe he had osteo? But I don't know, if it was that or he just got deformed. Cuz they took him out. And Myrtle…went down to see him and took pictures of him all cleaned up. You wouldn't know it was the same man. Whitney had its characters. We still have sometimes. But basically I find the people are very good hearted. And you know, if something happens, right away we're all banding together to help. And that's a good thing. (Ann Boldt)*

Figure 24: Billy Bennett
Left photo, Billy Bennett in the kitchen at the Mask homestead holding a violin (circa 1960, image courtesy of Monda Michel). People remember Billy as being very dark skinned because he burned the used oil from the service station in town as a heat source, and the soot covered him from head to toe. Right photo of Billy Bennett, after he moved to a senior's home (image courtesy of Clifford Olmstead).

“Characters” is a term heard often when describing memorable people from town, past and present. Sometimes the “character” in question was remembered for a sharp wit, a remarkable sense of humour or because they were a practical joker. Sometimes they were the ones who held, challenged or skirted authority and either won spectacular victories or suffered spectacular defeats. Sometimes they were the ones responsible for uncommon acts of kindness, bravery or longsuffering. And sometimes, they were just average people who made unusually memorable personal choices. Each story adds to the fabric of legend in the community in a unique and special way.

Billy Bennett lived as a hermit in Whitney. In a community with very little to begin with, he lived with even less. Everyone in town knew him by name, and many offered from their own meager households to help sustain and care for him. Although I’ve often heard reference to him in conversation over the years, the tone was always sympathetic. I don’t recall a single disparaging remark.

Billy is only one of many ‘characters’ who have lived in town, most of whom cannot be acknowledged individually by name simply due to lack of space and the fact that researching these stories comprehensively is a project unto itself. However, Billy’s story highlights the way of life in the community in the early part of the 20th century; in terms of working, independence, interdependence, and the anomalies of trying to live both inside and outside the community norms. For whatever reason, Billy opted not to participate in the local economy.

4.7 Significance and Summary

Taken together, these snippets of experience in Whitney illustrate the major factors influencing how this community came to be and how it has evolved over time. They confirm that Whitney is an excellent location from which to examine experience:

- Whitney has a history that spans almost 120 years, and the story presented here suggests that the environment is relatively stable, constant, and slow to change. This is a good indication that the information behaviours and practices observed here are also relatively stable and constant.
- The isolated and remote location of this community plays an important role in information seeking and use because it has insulated the community to some degree, at least historically, from many formal information channels common in urban environments. Barriers to accessing outside sources of information have not only preserved traditional information sources, but also prevented many urban information sources from taking hold, suggesting that previously unstudied information sources and channels may be more easily identified here. These sources and channels highlight the tacit and the informal.
- Unusual geographic, social, political and economic factors have combined to create an information seeking and use context here that is, in most respects, best described as ‘blue collar’. It is different than other contexts studied previously in LIS.

By describing historical and contemporary aspects of Whitney's history, this chapter has highlighted general elements of life and experience here, with a particular emphasis on those that are important to further discussions of information behaviour. The stories describe not only the chronology of important events, but also they explain why elements of the way of life and order of things exist as they do in this community. In the next chapter, I discuss in more detail typical experiences in the specific domains of work, play and everyday life. I also elaborate on the above points of significance.

5 After the Canoe – Work, Play and Everyday Life Experience in Whitney

5.1 Introduction

I met so many strange people say what a lovely place Whitney is. And [my spouse] always says, 'Yeah, let them stay here for a while and we'll see.'

The iconic connection between Canadian identity and our rugged wilderness landscape became permanent in the minds of many when author and historian Pierre Berton declared some forty years ago, that 'a true Canadian is one who can make love in a canoe'. Humour notwithstanding (and regardless of whether Mr. Berton actually spoke the words as there is some debate), most of the Canadian wilderness adventure narratives found in mainstream media stop at the canoe. The truth is that people imagine the wilderness, chase after it, and romanticize it for its bounty, beauty, and all the things we can learn from it. Then we come home (to our real homes) and poke fun at the experience and at our own ineptitude for the many inconveniences, hardships, and dangers we barely survived while there. But for those few who choose to stay, who decide to call the wilderness their real home and raise a family there, what comes after the canoe?

Answering the question 'what comes after the canoe?' highlights the well understood, but often unspoken contradictions associated with living not only remotely and rurally in Ontario, but also in a community that depends on tourism for its survival. As the quote above indicates, although there is a desirably bucolic, leisurely quality to life here, it's not all fun and games. "They may be here on holiday," someone said to me once regarding tourists, "but we're not."

I turn now to describing what comes after the canoe: the experiences of work, play and everyday life, both historically and today, in Whitney. A community that has always been primarily blue collar, the people who live here are no strangers to the experiences of hard work, long hours, personal sacrifice, and low wages in earning their daily bread. Nevertheless, they put as much effort into play as they do work. This chapter continues the work begun in chapter 4 describing the nature of experiences in this context across the domains of work, play and everyday life. The chapter ends with a summary discussion of their relevance to information seeking and use (ISU).

5.2 Working in Whitney – "There's not an easy job in the whole place"

> *They keep on saying, well, I came here because I thought I could get a job. But there's not an easy job in the whole place, you know. You don't go to McRae's and have an easy job. There's no easy jobs there. They go there, and they think they're crazy to work that hard. And they can't believe it. You've gotta be kidding. You don't do this every day? And sure enough, they come back the next day and they're doing it…Growing up there from day one, everything was hard. Lots of them were raised without running water and electricity, or any sort of formal education. (Father Jim Beanish)*

Historically, the logging industry provided the bulk of full time work for people in Whitney. Wage earners with full time employment were usually salaried, the work week lasted six days, and the work day didn't cease until the allocated work was done. Work days of 12–15 hours were common, and overtime pay didn't exist. Union work was available to some, with teamsters usually earning a slightly higher wage. Jobs in the tourist industry were equally demanding physically, but offered workers hourly rates, no benefits, and long periods of layoff during the winter season. Many opted for self–employment, which resulted in more autonomy, but sadly, even less security of income as they were entirely dependent on travel and spending patterns of the tourist industry over which they had little influence.

According to the 2006 census (Statistics Canada, 2006a), the most recent census for which occupational data is available, blue collar jobs are still over–represented in the community. At that time, the labour force in the Township of South Algonquin consisted of 610 individuals, 75% of whom were employed directly in blue collar and service–based occupations (including agriculture, logging, construction, manufacturing, retail and tourism services). This compares to a provincial average of 53%. Education, health care, and business represented 22% of employment locally, compared to 36% provincially. In the course of data collection, I encountered references to a wide range of paid occupations held by residents of Whitney over the course of its history, including the following:

artists	guiding	postal workers
arts & crafts	handymen	public service
barber	land surveyors	retail
blacksmithing	logging	self–employed
carpentry	mechanics	service/accommodation
clergy	midwifery	sport
construction	military	teaching
cooks	nursing	tourism
delivery/transport	online worker	trapping
domestic help	park rangers	woodcutting
farming	physicians	railroad
forestry	pilots	mining

Apart from the physically intensive nature of the jobs found in this environment, the major distinguishing feature of the job market in Whitney is that the work is often seasonal, leading to cyclical unemployment: periods of unusually long work hours stretching across the busy tourist season, balanced by periods of no paid work at all during the winter months. The unemployment rate for the Township of South Algonquin as of the 2006 census (before the 2008 economic crisis) was 18%, which is a “cause for concern, especially for females, for whom the rate is more than three times the provincial and national averages" (Fullerton, 2009b). At that time, there were 560 jobs in the Township of South Algonquin, 515 of which were filled by local residents. There are no public service employees in the TSA with salaries over $100 000.

When asked if they had one wish for the community, strikingly similar answers emerged: more tourists, more industry, more jobs. One participant explained that employing just 20–25 additional people in town with "good paying jobs" would be a huge lift for the community. When I asked what would qualify as a good paying job, they replied, "If somebody got $20 an hour they'd think they died and went to heaven."

Residents have developed a number of strategies to compensate for the lack of secure employment and lower wages. These strategies began in the early years of the town's history, and continue today.

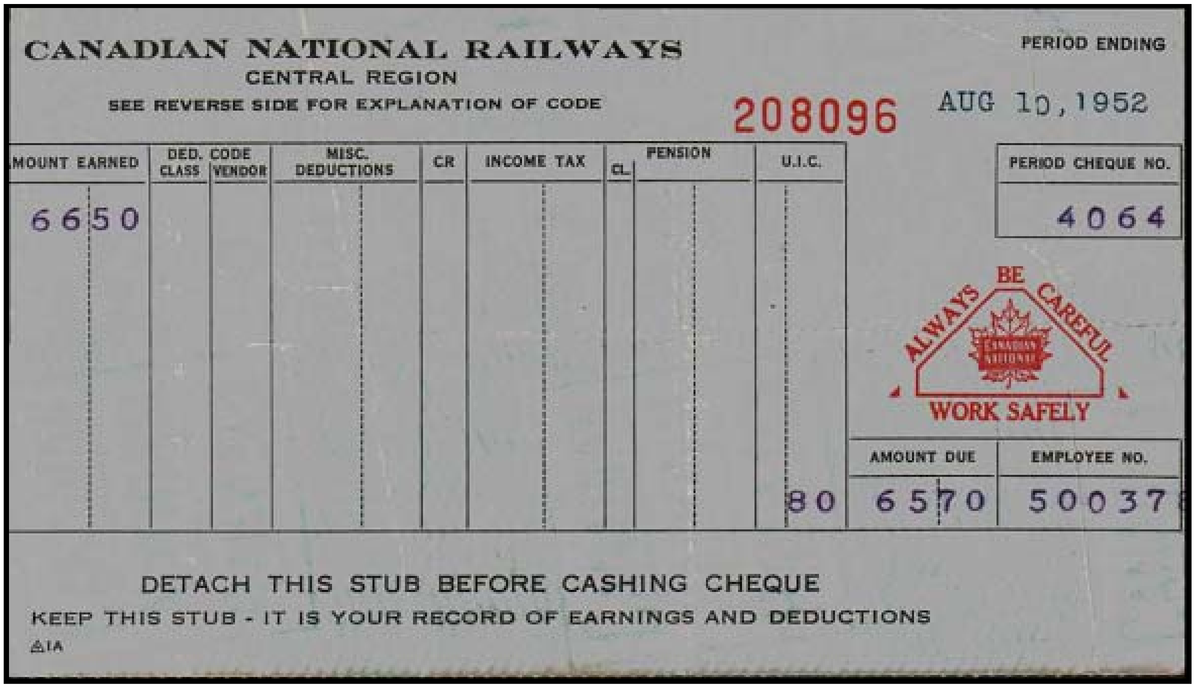
5.2.1 Multiple income streams

The primary strategy for managing insecure employment is to maintain access to more than one job. As one participant put it, "You gotta have a lot of irons in the fire." While the lumber mills used to employ hundreds of people, both McRae's and Murray Brothers in Madawaska work on a staff that now numbers a small fraction of that. And while the Ministry of Natural Resources offers stable employment, permanent full time jobs are still rare. More common are permanent part time positions where the employee gets called back each year to work for between six and ten months, followed by a period of layoff during the slow winter season. Despite the challenges and different approaches to hiring, both McRae's and the MNR rise to the top of employment options in the community. Comparatively, the Ministry of Natural Resources offered better wages, but “McRae had a better [insurance] plan. The wages were lower, but he had his men insured.” Most other jobs in the community had neither good wages, nor benefits.

Today, even those who have stable careers often keep jobs or income–producing hobbies on the side. For those without secure employment, side jobs and income–producing hobbies have never really been optional. Many people opted to go directly into self-employment at an early age, particularly those who grew up in an environment where their parents were self-employed. For example, Clover Palbiski recalled working for her parents “right from when we were all kids, right ‘til we got married. Then we started this business.”

My interviews were full of stories of men, women and children trying to cobble together a living wage working at whatever opportunity presented itself, whenever and wherever it presented itself. The example of Billy Bennett refusing to cut wood refers to one particular source of income among residents during the early to mid 1900s, where the men would cut firewood for the lumber camps.

> *What the railways would do, they needed firewood for their camps and stuff. So they’d park a box car on the side, and then they would hire people to fill the box car. So dad [Roger Mask] and grandpa, [Peter Mask], would usually do at least one run like that in the summer. They would go and fill a boxcar. It was about a week’s worth of work. They’d have to cut it all down by hand. This was out in the bush –on the side, eh – cut it all down, saw it all, cut it to lengths, split it. And I don’t know what it was, 25–30 bush cords when it was all said and done. That’s what they’d get for it. Sixty–six bucks…That’s for a boxcar. So they’d have two cars. They’d do two cars so they each got a paycheck. So that’s just an idea of how tight things were there. At that time, you know, people were making probably $80 a week in industrialized areas. (James Mask)*


CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS
CENTRAL REGION
SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR EXPLANATION OF CODE

208096

PERIOD ENDING AUG 10, 1952

MOUNT EARNED	DED. CLASS	CODE VENDOR	MISC. DEDUCTIONS	CR	INCOME TAX	CL.	PENSION	U.I.C.
66 50								80

PERIOD CHEQUE NO. 4064

ALWAYS BE CAREFUL
CANADIAN NATIONAL
WORK SAFELY

AMOUNT DUE	EMPLOYEE NO.
65 70	50037

DETACH THIS STUB BEFORE CASHING CHEQUE
KEEP THIS STUB - IT IS YOUR RECORD OF EARNINGS AND DEDUCTIONS

Figure 25: CN Rail Pay Stub
1952 CN Rail Pay stub belonging to Roger Mask for cutting wood for the lumber camps. (Document courtesy of James Mask.)

Other local sources of income for the people of Whitney include(d) hunting and trapping for fur (both legal and illegal), picking princess pine, berrypicking, making and selling crafts, baked goods, jams and preserves, boarding guests, and creating a variety of businesses to cater to the tourist industry. Some of these side jobs were quite lucrative, particularly hunting and trapping, and many locals participated. One participant recalled that when “they went trapping for a month, they would earn what an average breadwinner in a family would earn in a year working in a lumber camp.” Stories of the trap money financing the family Christmas were common, as trapping season ended in time to sell the furs in North Bay, usually in November. Said one participant, “Our Christmas, as children, depended on how much money dad got for the furs that he would sell.”

5.2.2 Guiding

Stories of guiding as an occupation were as abundant as stories of hunting and trapping. Guiding is the act of leading visitors on trips through the bush for pleasurable leisure purposes, generally by canoe and on foot. Trips could last from one day to several weeks, and involve activities such as planning routes and itineraries, preparing food and supplies, and securing permits and transportation. It requires an intimate knowledge of the terrain, habitats, and weather patterns, as well as practical ‘how–to’ information like how to set up shelter and how to catch and cook fish. It also often involves sharing information about the local flora, fauna and folklore with the visitors.

While guiding has been a licensed occupation in Algonquin Park since the early 1900s, there is no formal education path for learning how to guide. And so, while the occupation is regulated, the training is not credentialed in any way. It has historically been a hands–on skill acquired primarily through everyday life interactions with people and the environment, and both solitary and social experiences. Often the necessary guiding skills were acquired over time, by hand, either in trial–by–error fashion or by spending time in the company of others who had previously learned the skills.

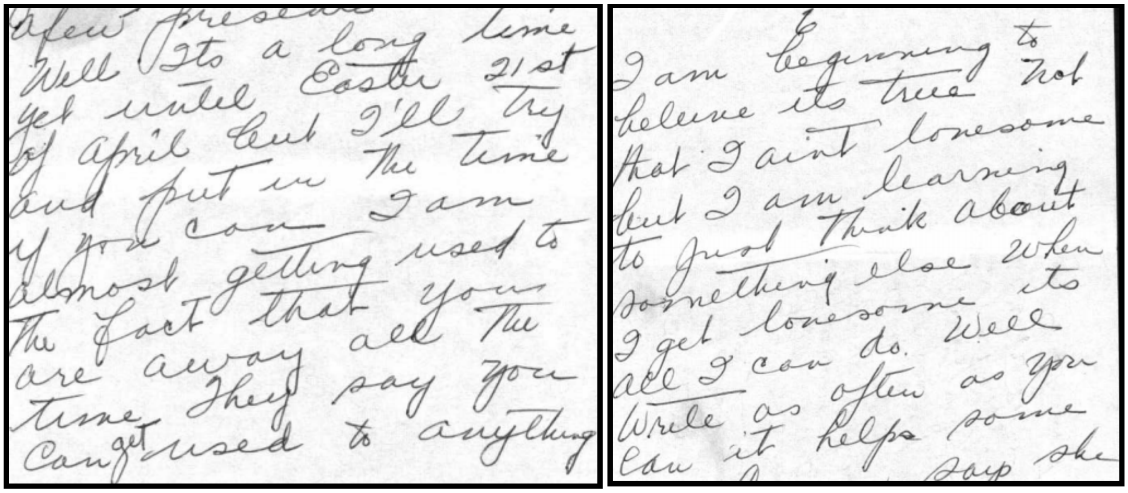
Historically, preadolescent boys as young as eight years old have been given guiding responsibilities. One participant noted that he was twelve when he began to take families out on trips, which could last as much as seven days at a stretch. “I was a late bloomer,” he said. In at least some cases, encouraging children to guide was a matter of self–preservation. “We had to ensure that our equipment wasn’t getting ruined, because it was rentals. So sending someone with the equipment was a good move, no matter how young they were.”

Although some visitors still engage local help, it is becoming easier to undertake such trips unaccompanied due to advances in infrastructure and technology. Nevertheless it's difficult to ignore the fact that guiding has changed over time. The fish have gotten smaller which changes the incentive for outsiders to come and means less guiding work in general. As well, the terrain is more easily accessible and less risky for the uninitiated. Gordon Palbiski explained his family's decision to sell their lodge and get out of guiding:

> *Then Clover and I was here all alone. And it come to the point we were getting slow on fishermen and stuff, eh…and the lumber company started building roads into my lakes…All them lakes you used to go up to, the lumber company started pushin' roads up in there. People started draggin' four wheelers. You know the way times change, every so many years. So you've gotta' change with it. (Gordon Palbiski)*

5.2.3 Working Away

Other residents opted to leave town in search of work and better wages elsewhere, often in construction or mining. The commitment ranged from a few weeks at a time to several months, and long absences left a gap filled by loneliness. In the following excerpt of a personal letter, Hazel Mask tells her husband Peter, "I am learning to just think about something else when I get lonesome." Peter, like many men at the time, was away working in the uranium mines of Elliott Lake. He was expected to be gone for roughly four months.


a few presents
Well Its a long time
yet until Easter 21st
of April but I'll try
and put in the time
if you can I am
almost getting used to
the fact that you
are away all the
time. They say you
can get used to anything

I am beginning to not
believe its true
that I aint lonesome
but I am learning
to just think about
something else when
I get lonesome its
all I can do. Well
Write as often as you
can it helps some
say she

Figure 26: 1957–01–28 Personal Correspondence (Hazel Mask to Peter Mask)
Letter dated January 28, 1957 from Hazel Mask to her husband Peter Mask, who was working in the mines in Elliott Lake.

Participants in this study also shared contemporary stories of family members leaving for work elsewhere in Ontario, out of province, and internationally. Irene Boldt noted the pattern of coming and going for employment. “They leave and come back and go again,” she said. “Some have not really settled down. Where ever to get work cuz there’s no work here, only seasonal, parks, and McRae’s mill, and they only keep the same.”

Sometimes the breadwinner would commute home to Whitney at regular intervals. Other times, the commute would be alternated with family members travelling to the loved one’s location out of town. Joe Avery recalled his dad working in the United States when he was a child. “He would go to work Monday to Friday,” said Joe. “One weekend he would come home and then the following weekend we would go down to where he was so he wasn’t doing all the travelling all the time. My mom did it. They took turns.” Joe spent time commuting as well, while he worked as a cook in a diamond mine in Yellowknife. “Yellowknife was very expensive. It was a lot cheaper for me to fly home for my two weeks off,” said Joe. “Cuz it was like $1500 for a one bedroom apartment, whereas I could get a flight round trip for $600. When you’re only there for one week a month, that’s how it worked out." Commuting for employment purposes spanned time periods ranging from a few weeks to entire careers.

5.2.4 Domestic Work

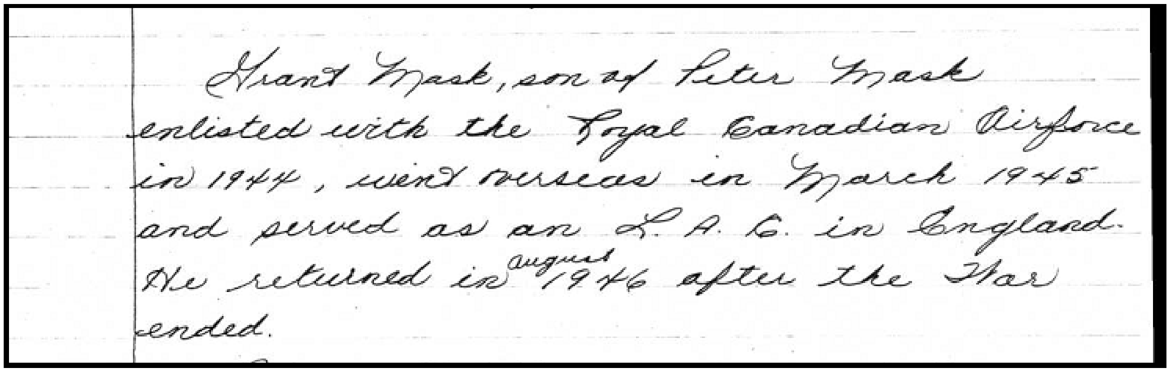
In the context of this study, domestic work includes "caring" work performed at a business location for pay. It includes service work like cooking, cleaning, and waiting tables. Most of the time, this work is seasonal, and although the tips usually make up for the low pay, "the employees work their guts out for five six months." Often the work – and the accompanying commute to the job requires the employee to leave by "5:30 in the morning to get to work for 7:00," and they "work all day til 8:00 at night, and …do the same thing week after week after week after week for six months and then it comes to an end." The hours in the summer months are long, and "not everybody's cut out for that," said one participant. Although there are records of men regularly performing cooking tasks, for example as cooks and cookees in the lumber camps, domestic jobs have been primarily filled by women, both historically and today. "The women are really hard workers. They really are. Like go go go go go," said a participant. "Really impressive."

Domestic help was required at local businesses (housekeeping cottages, motels, and restaurants for example) and in Algonquin Park at the various lodges, who in times past would hire girls as young as 13 to help. "If you were lucky you got work in town," said Josie Lentz. "If you didn't get work in town, then you went into the Park and worked at the resorts." Many recalled having started work in their early teens. "I wasn't the only one who started very young," continued Josie, "I probably was the youngest one that started at this specific lodge. But there were several girls from Whitney after I got initiated there. They wanted to go over there too." Josie explained how the girls would start in the kitchen with dishes and work progressively up to better jobs. “I didn’t really like that job. Then I moved to helping the cook. That was a lot more fun. I did that for two whole summers. Then I kinda graduated up to looking after the cabins.” Often the kids from Whitney were welcomed back year after year for these jobs because “they were kids who knew how to work.”

Historically, girls were available for work up until they got married and had children, at which point childcare became an issue and they usually stayed home with the kids. Not surprisingly, the daycare issue is still a challenge today. “We used to have a Wise OWL Daycare centre,” said one participant, but funding it was problematic. “A lot of people [here] don’t make a lot of money. There’s a lot of minimum wage jobs here. So we’ve closed down [because] it’s not used from October to April.” Seasonal employment leads to seasonal daycare needs, which the provincial funding solution – based on urban patterns – doesn’t fit. Without viable daycare options, employment choices for women are even more diminished.

5.2.5 Military Service and Awards

In the early part of the 20th century, military service was also a viable career option for young men and women in Whitney. References were found to military service during World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict, and in the militia. Popular reasons for enlisting included the opportunity to train, to earn a paycheck and to travel. While more substantial documentary records exist in the national archive, a few documentary records also exist locally of some of those who enlisted, particularly those who were injured or killed. Notations in the Airy School logbook and register, like the one below for example, identify former pupils of Section School No. 2 Airy who enlisted to serve and how so. Finally, the memorial in town by the dam recognizes the service of the six men from Whitney who died during World War II.



Grant Mask, son of Peter Mask
enlisted with the Royal Canadian Airforce
in 1944, went overseas in March 1945
and served as an L. A. C. in England.
He returned in August 1946 after the War
ended.

Figure 27: SS. No. 2 Airy School Record of Military Service
Notation in the SS. No. 2 Airy School log books (1942–1945) describing military service of former pupils.

Figure 28: Whitney War Memorial
Memorial recognizing the contribution of residents of Whitney who died during military service.

Voluntary, spontaneous personal references to military service from the soldiers themselves are rare, at least in part because many have already passed away. Reports of loved ones who served were mentioned briefly in a couple of the interviews. When prompted for more detail, participants were happy to oblige, and accounts were sometimes extremely candid in description, recollections and interpretation. For example, when asked why they decided to join the army, people reflected on the quest for work, the desire to be with friends or relatives, to travel, or simply to wear the uniform. In his Book of Memories, a self–published memoir, Gordon Palbiski recounted his squadron arriving on the beaches of Juno just after D–Day:

> *We started sailing across the channel. It was black with barges and ships and the sky full of fighter planes. We landed on a beach. It must have been at Juno. When we got on shore, we were at Bernières sur Mer. I remember we stopped at a church. There were some little sticks with helmets and dog tags from guys that got killed on D Day. There were a couple of guys from Whitney got killed on D Day. I think I came across one grave and looked at the tag. It's been so long, I can't remember who it was. I think it was Felix Shalla but I'm not sure. (Palbiski, 2010, 23)*

Wartime experiences of life, death, injury, imprisonment and survival left a profound impression not only on those who served, but in a cascading effect, also on the people back home to whom they returned. For some, return to civilian life was without incident, while for others it was very difficult and wrapped in challenges like alcoholism and brushes with the law. Many suffered as a result. Looking back at the situation with the lense of today's social norms, however, one participant described it succinctly, "They didn't do things about post–traumatic stress disorder back then." For a more complete description of war time service, including a complete list of Servicemen and Women from Whitney, see Lloyd (2006, 236-250).

5.2.6 Playing at Work

Though the work was hard, and the hours long, there were also indications that people took time to play at work occasionally, usually in the form of practical jokes. Practical jokes, in addition to being a form of entertainment, also seemed to have a teaching purpose. The information gained came at the price of a loss of some sort: a loss of face, a loss of time, a loss of energy, a loss of resources, or sometimes all four. Understanding the context in which these experiences occurred is important to understanding the value of acquiring some information early and learning it well. In this environment, residents must be able to sustain themselves through a variety of means. And while residents help each other in many ways, independence is a valued commodity, as even small mistakes and misjudgments have a history of costing people life or limb.

I encountered several examples of practical jokes being played on people at work. One of my favourites was shared by Gordon Palbiski in his Book of Memories. It took place in 1939, when he was 16 years old and working for his Grandfather who was a foreman for JR Booth's Railway.

> *This was my first job. I would listen to everyone older than me. One day, Simon Parks from Whitney said to me, "Go back to the office and tell your granddaddy we need a left–hand monkey wrench and a bag of chain holds. Now run along, young fellow." Away I went feeling real important to tell Grandpa. I had about two miles to get to the office. Grandpa and the clerk were there. Grandpa said, "What in [expletive] are you doing here this time of day?" I said Simon sent me here to get a left–hand monkey wrench and a bag of chain holds. He said, "You [expletive] fool," and he made for me. I ran back and could hear him yelling for a long way as I crossed the log cord road bridge on the end of Proulx Lake. I was scared* of *Grandpa. I caught him smiling at me when we came in at the end of the day. Anyway I learned a lesson. (Palbiski, 2010, 13)*

Interestingly, this same trick persists today, and is often played on new apprentices in the trades, almost as a rite of passage and manifesting in a myriad of context–specific ways. The primary lesson seems to be to teach the uninitiated to be careful whom they trust. Over all, the tales of practical joking at work illustrated a 'show, don't tell' attitude toward information and learning. Information acquired through making mistakes is not soon forgotten. Embarrassment, it seems, helps the memory.

5.3 Playing in Whitney – “There was lots to do if you wanted to do it”

The hockey rink was the centre of the winter exercise or sport. And both girls and boys. And we used to also shovel off the ponds and skate on those. Winter to me was just hockey. That’s what it was. I liked it, and I was good at it, and so I played it all the time. And then the public skating at the rink. My god, I remember the public skating at the rinks. Now there’s public skating here, but there’s not as many kids. But virtually every kid in Whitney would be at the rink. The lights came on at six o’clock and public skating was from 6–8, and everybody would be there – all age groups. All the kids at Whitney would be at the rink in the winter time. That’s all you waited for was when they got the ice in. And you hated it when they got that, the January thaw when it always rained for 3 or 4 days in January and ruined the ice and they had to rebuild. You missed your 2 or 3 nights of skating. That was the big deal when we were kids in the winter. (Peter Palbiski)

Although hard work is no stranger in this community, residents also enjoy and value their leisure time. Intentional and purposeful pursuit of leisure is part of daily life here, and just like in urban centres, the options change over time, with the seasons and with fluctuating demands of work. While some participants acknowledged that the types of leisure activities easily accessible in this community might not appeal to people who prefer the convenience of city life, there is nevertheless plenty of choice for motivated individuals of all ages, abilities and interests.

5.3.1 Working at Play

A few noteworthy characteristics of leisure experience in this environment developed over the course of data collection and analysis. Primarily, participants indicated that leisure is a lifelong practice, it can be both social and solitary, and it is increasingly influenced by technology.

5.3.1.1 Leisure as Intentional

Leisure experiences in this context are lifelong and intentional, despite the busy workloads people carry. Participants in all ages and stages described elements of leisure as part of their daily life experience across all time periods, including ‘fun’ found even in the many work–related tasks performed each day. Although participants indicated more than once that they seldom lack(ed) for things to do, there is definitely a balance to be struck. “We had to find time to play” said one participant.

5.3.1.2 Leisure as Social

Leisure experience has a distinctly social quality. Social leisure, whether organized and formal, or spontaneous and informal, involves groups of people participating in the same leisure activity at the same time. Arranged with the help of local organizations including the churches, the Recreation Committee, the Township, and other non–profit organizations (for example, the Scouts), motivated individuals come together to provide funding, material resources, and volunteer labour to plan and facilitate formal leisure opportunities generally intended to be accessible to all or most of the public. In these types of organized events, the community displays a social conscience through intentional efforts to maintain accessible, inclusive leisure opportunities and to minimize barriers to participation (for example costs or access to equipment), particularly for the children. Formal social leisure experiences of this variety create a unique opportunity for the sharing of cultural values and norms within the community.

Informal social events lack endorsement at an organizational level, and instead involve smaller social groups that develop and change spontaneously between friends, family and neighbours. Although a degree of planning may be involved in the leisure activity (for example, an annual visit to a hunt camp), it may just as easily develop spontaneously (for example, a group of friends having a bonfire). The guest list is usually limited, and often the leisure activity revolves around nature–based activities like outdoor sports, hunting or fishing. Skills and tacit knowledge may be exchanged during the course of these smaller group functions.

5.3.1.3 Leisure as Solitary

Leisure can also be solitary and exclusive. Despite a focus on inclusivity in social leisure experiences, many people choose to pursue individual leisure experiences compatible with their own personal interests and budgets as well. These leisure pursuits are sometimes possible mostly or entirely within the confines of the community, while at other times, they require participants to seek resources or involvement from outside the community in the form of other associations, relationships or access to information and material resources. Solitary leisure pursuits might include leisure reading for example, or making and tinkering activities such as crafting or knitting.

5.3.1.4 Leisure as Mediated by Technology

Decisions around whether, how and which activities to pursue is increasingly influenced by technology. New technologies in the form of sport equipment (for example the introduction of snowmobiles in the 1960s), advanced materials (for example fibre–glass, Kevlar and graphite for canoe–making), or the internet (for example access to Pinterest and other social media sites) regularly influence the evolution of leisure pursuits in this environment. “My generation,” says Peter Palbiski, “we were at the advent of the invention of the snowmobile. So when we became, you know, 10, 12, 13, 14 years old, snowmobiles were becoming popular. Everybody got snowmobiles. That was a new sport for us.”

Figure 29: Snowmobilers
Snowmobilers stopping at the Mad Musher restaurant for food in February 2012.

5.3.2 Leisure Activities

Data showed that residents of Whitney either have participated in or still do participate in all of the following broad categories of leisure activities in or near town:

ATVs
Arts & Crafts
Baking/Cooking
Baseball
Berrypicking
Biking
Biographies
Boating
Bonfires
Camping
Canoeing
Church Suppers
Clubs
Collecting things
Competitions
Computer/Internet
Conversation
Cottaging
Dogsledding
Dancing
Fairs/Festivals
Fishing
Foraging
Fundraising
Games
Genealogical research
Hiking
Hobby Farming
Hockey
Horseback riding
Hunting
Ice Fishing
Ice Skating
Knitting
Making things
Motorcross
Museums
Music
Playing
Quilting
Repairing things
Role play/theatre
Sewing
Shows and Movies
Small businesses
Snorkelling
Snowmobiling
Sports
Swimming
Tobogganing
Traveling
Visiting
Volunteering
Walking

Although leisure activities can be classified as primarily solitary or social, they frequently display characteristics of both. Leisure in all its varieties emerged as a personally rewarding way to spend time in many of the interviews. Many participants recalled learning to participate in leisure activities working side by side with someone who was already proficient at the activity. Leisure spanned ages and stages, and the social role in all activities speaks to the importance of neighbours, friends, family and intergenerational contact in passing on leisure experiences and specific skills.

5.3.2.1 Fibre Arts

For example, Tania Jermol shared the following story of how she learned to spin the wool that she used to make a pair of mittens. A relative in Barry's Bay gifted the material to her, and a neighbour showed her how to clean, dye and spin the wool.

> *When I was eight, we got wool from Raymond Mask on the Island, a couple bags of wool. And Granny Prince, do you remember she lived beside us in the other log cabin? She had a spinning wheel, and she had the carders for the wool. And she and I washed all the wool, and picked all the burrs and everything out. Then she taught me how to card the wool, she taught me how to dye the wool, and then she taught me how to spin the wool. And I spun a ball of yarn. Which was this. And I made these mitts about three years ago.*

Figure 30: Knitted Mittens by Tania Jermol
Image of a pair of knitted mittens knitted courtesy of Tania Jermol.

5.3.2.2 Carving

Jane Dumas shared examples of artwork created by her husband, Alexander (Sandy) Dumas, which included the following carving of a mallard duck. Each feather is individually carved out of separate pieces of wood. “The duck is…carved,” she said. “It’s almost like it’s been taxidermied. And he did actually a life size snowy owl with the wings out, but that one was sold. The feathers are carved. He’s done the individual feathers, and then he painted them.”

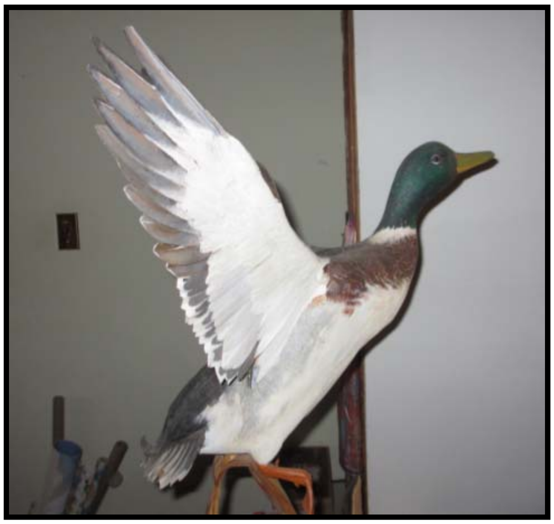


Figure 31: Mallard Duck Carved by Alexander (Sandy) Dumas
Carving of a Mallard duck created by Alexander (Sandy) Dumas. Each primary wing feather was individually carved, painted and placed by hand.

Sandy’s natural artistic talent, combined with formal study in taxidermy, has given him not only a good understanding of animal anatomy, but also an ability to observe and recreate the minutest detail. Inspired by the natural environment, his work appears in the Buckingham Gallery of Fine Art Ltd. in Uxbridge, Ontario (Buckingham Gallery of Fine Art, 2015).

5.3.2.3 Collecting and Repairing Axes

Fred Kmith shared stories of his axe collection, which numbers over 500 individual pieces he has collected and repaired over the years.

I always liked a axe. My dad was a railroad man. And we lived on a farm. He worked in the railroads all his life. He brought me a little wee axe one time, a small little axe, a little wee one. A tommyhawk, like that small one there. And I left it outside one night, must have been forty below, and I felt sorry for my axe. I went and got it. I wanted to see how cold it was and I stuck my tongue on the axe. And it stuck there, eh. And I run to the house, I couldn't pull it off. My mother had to put water there, warm water on it till it let go. I almost lost my tongue. Maybe I should have. So this is how I come to get my axes. And people come. They bring their own axes here with no handle, for me to put a handle. I do that yet, eh. And I put 'em all handles.

Local residents know that Fred collects axes, and when people find them, or break their own, they bring them to him to repair. He polishes and varnishes the heads, welds any breaks and replaces the handles. Making an axe handle takes Fred several hours, in addition to the time it takes to template and dry the wood, which typically sits for a minimum of one year before he makes a handle out of it. And when he receives an axe that he plans to keep, he signs the axe handle with the name of the person it came from. "Anybody that give me axes, I put his name on it," says Fred. Each axe has a story; a window into the history of the community. He can tell you where it was found, when, by whom, and of course the type of axe and what it was used for.

Figure 32: Fred Kmith's Axe Collection
Fred Kmith collects, refinishes and repairs old axes. The axe on the left came from Truman Sovie. The picture on the right shows some of the 500+ axes Fred has collected and repaired over the years.

5.3.2.4 Showing Cattle

Social leisure was also sought out of town by some residents. For example, when I asked what she enjoys doing for fun, Barbara Mastine talked about showing cattle. “The cattle shows. That’s my main thing’s the cattle,” said Barbara. “I like the people. I’d be lost if I couldn’t go to my cattle shows and see my breeders and everything you know, and take my cattle…” She described showing cattle as a lot of fun, but “hard work.”

Figure 33: Prize Winning Cattle on the Mastine Farm
One of the Mastine family’s prize winning cattle, pictured on their Whitney farm. The land was originally covered in trees, which were cleared to make room for a farm. (Image courtesy of Sarah Darraugh).

Much of the information involved in this hobby comes from sources outside of the community. They follow the showing circuit, which requires adherence to rules and regulations established by each organization they decide to show cattle with. They follow trends such as desirable qualities in breeding as well as how to prepare the cattle for showing. Barbara’s grand-daughter Sarah Darraugh explained part of the reason she came to like working with cattle as well, which shows the intergenerational link again. When I asked what makes a ‘favourite’ cow, she replied:

> *Normally the ones that are the quiet I guess, sucky, they come around. I had, when I was little, probably five or six, Sparkles. This cow calved, and*

she had a heifer calf, and grandpa said go pick out one of your calves. So I go to the calf that grandma and him described as the most homeliest looking animal that they'd ever seen, and I took to it. So when they were doing chores, they'd lock me in the calf pen because they knew I couldn't get out, and they knew I was safe with the calves because they were only this big. So they'd go do the chores, and …it was warm and I'd play with this calf all the time. And so I just continued to work with it, and I wanted to show it, and grandpa goes, 'Oh my god, what is she doing?' So then his nephew wants to buy her. And grandpa says, well, I can't really sell her, Sarah wants it. Anyway she turned out to be what our foundation of our cattle herd is. She turned out to be a champion. She won the Royal, she won so many shows all over. (Sarah Darraugh)

5.3.2.5 Making Canoes

Peter Palbiski makes Miller canoes. His story of how he learned to make the canoes shares similarities to other stories in that the opportunity to learn how to do it came through family connections. He keeps current on different processes and materials used in canoe making.

So Russ Miller brought his canoes into this area for years, and if you had a Miller canoe, you had something. Dad sold the lodge. Just before he sold it, he bought one last canoe from Russ. When he sold the lodge, he kept that canoe. And it was getting pretty beat up. And we thought Russ Miller was gone and dead… Dad sold the lodge in the late 70s. And then he [Russ Miller] shows up in Whitney. Come to visit my dad. And he saw my dad, saw the canoe and it was in bad shape. He never said anything. He come back with a brand new canoe and give it to my dad. So he was in his 70s then, and he's still building canoes, and he brought this canoe… So anyway, Russ comes back, I'm livin in Barrie and he brings this brand new canoe to my dad. And I see it and I said, would I ever like to build one of those. So I called him. Again, you know we're not afraid to call people. I called him. Told him who I was. And he only ever remembered me as a little kid. And I said, would he be interested in showin' me how to build a canoe. He said I'd love to. So he was in St. David in Niagara Falls. My brother was livin in Newmarket at the time, so him and I jumped into the vehicle, and we go down. I'd set up this appointment, and Russ shows us how to build a canoe. And we helped him build a canoe."

Figure 34: Canoe and Mold by Peter Palbiski
The mold Peter Palbiski uses to make the Miller canoe (left image). One of Peter's canoes (right).

5.3.3 Boredom and Fringe Leisure

Despite a consensus that there are lots of things to do in Whitney if one is looking, and that opportunities for accessing important resources have generally increased over time, participants described how available leisure options have changed. In times past, "There was more to do, anyway. Now it's so quiet. More quiet than ever," said one participant. Part of the challenge is attributable to changes in the available leisure options and the declining and aging population. Others commented on a simultaneous change in the motivation of youth to want to do things.

Fringe leisure has received a small but growing amount of attention in the leisure literature, and essentially no attention in studies of information seeking and use, save and except one study I found conducted by Tomasz Mrozewski as part of his MLIS degree at Western in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies (Mrozewski, 2010). Stebbins calls the phenomena deviant casual leisure, which he breaks into two categories: tolerable and intolerable. Tolerably deviant casual leisure positions the leisure seeker on the fringes of society because their behavior contravenes certain social norms of the community. However, the contravention "fails to generate any significant or effective communal attempts to control it"

(Stebbins, 2001, 65). Intolerably deviant casual leisure and deviant serious leisure tend to prompt more involvement from outside authorities, or have more serious consequences for the participants.

A number of references were noted in the documentary record of the town (media reports and other publications for example) to both tolerable and intolerable deviant casual leisure activities, including drug and alcohol use, theft, and vandalism. Participants acknowledged that these activities are part of the village's story, but were reluctant to go into detail except to express sadness at the negative effects these activities have on individuals and the community as a whole, and which, on occasion, have tragic consequences including death. Some went as far as to attribute fringe leisure activities to boredom and kids who "aren't busy enough," which is a notion supported by the literature (Iso-Ahola & Crowly, 1991; Stebbins, 2001, 66).

Still other participants shared stories of less harmful deviant leisure activities such as practical joking. The local teacher always seemed to be a good target.

> *They were young lads and they played a trick on the teacher. On Halloween night they went up on the school and took the bell from the school and rolled it down the roof, on the roof to the ground and took it in the bush. Teacher come the next day there and pulled the rope and the rope fell right down like that. Which one of you's guilty? And all of them were all big boys. Nobody said anything. So she ended up with a little bell, eh. (Fred Kmith)*

Although the above example was about a small school near Barry's Bay, practical joking happened locally as well. "The kids at school are very anxious to have it closed down so the majority of them are just staying home to see if the gag will work," said one senior elementary student in a letter dated 1962. "But Sister is on to it, so I suppose we aren't going to be lucky enough to have it closed." Yet another practical joke involved stealing someone's stash of moonshine and depositing it on the altar of the local church. Unlike the practical joking that took place in work settings, the purpose of leisure practical joking seemed to be more for entertainment.

In some ways, the price of deviant leisure activities in terms of reputation is greater in small towns than in larger urban centres, presumably at least in part because people in small towns know each other by name and consequently have long memories. Time and good behaviour are the only ways to shake a bad reputation in a small town, and even that's not a foolproof plan. This message was evident in particular with one publication I looked at that described a series of break–ins to leaseholder cabins on Whitefish Lake in 1935. The break–ins were attributed to three named men from Whitney, who the author noted were subsequently convicted of the offences (Clemson, 2005, 63). It remained unmentioned, however, that about ten years later, one of the men, by this time a Private in the Canadian military, received a Military Medal for bravery in battle during the Second World War. The SS. No. 2 Airy school records indicated that Private Michael Lavallee was given the award for taking a German machine gun nest single–handed. This was substantiated in public access service records (Library and Archives Canada, 1945).

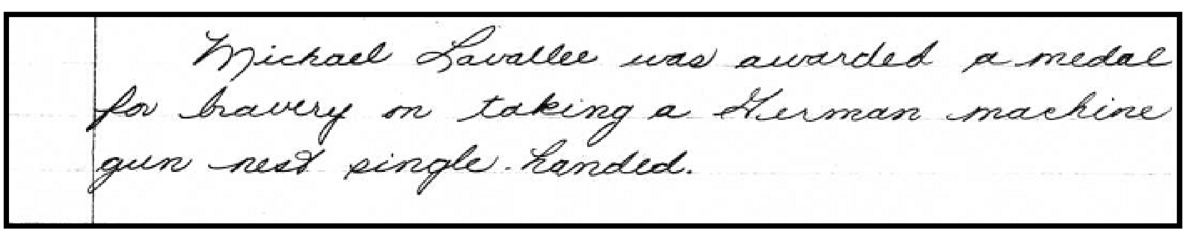

Michael Lavallee was awarded a medal for bravery on taking a German machine gun nest single-handed.

Figure 35: SS. No. 2 Airy School Record of Military Service, Michael Lavallee
Notation in the SS. No. 2 Airy School log books (1942–1945) describing military service of Whitney resident, Michael Lavallee.

Although his previous offence and the military award are two different stories at two different times and the author can easily be excused for editorial selectivity, this documentary record stands as an example that the biographies of both individuals and communities are often more complex than first understood, and that a single piece of information offered or excluded at just the right moment can change perceptions in dramatic and enduring ways.

5.3.4 Leisure Activities and the Serious Leisure Perspective

Although the aforementioned individual activities can be classified according to Stebbins Serious Leisure framework, where an activity belongs in the typology is generally a factor of how an *individual* perceives the activity in their own context, or of how groups of people who share a similar context perceive an individual activity in a similar way. Thus, one activity can occupy several places within the framework making it difficult to place ‘community’ leisure interests. Roughly speaking, the above activities map to the red/bolded categories below in Stebbins’ framework, suggesting that a significant variety of meaningful leisure opportunities and experiences exist in this context across the Serious Leisure spectrum. The framework is not able at this time to account for the social and solitary dimensions.

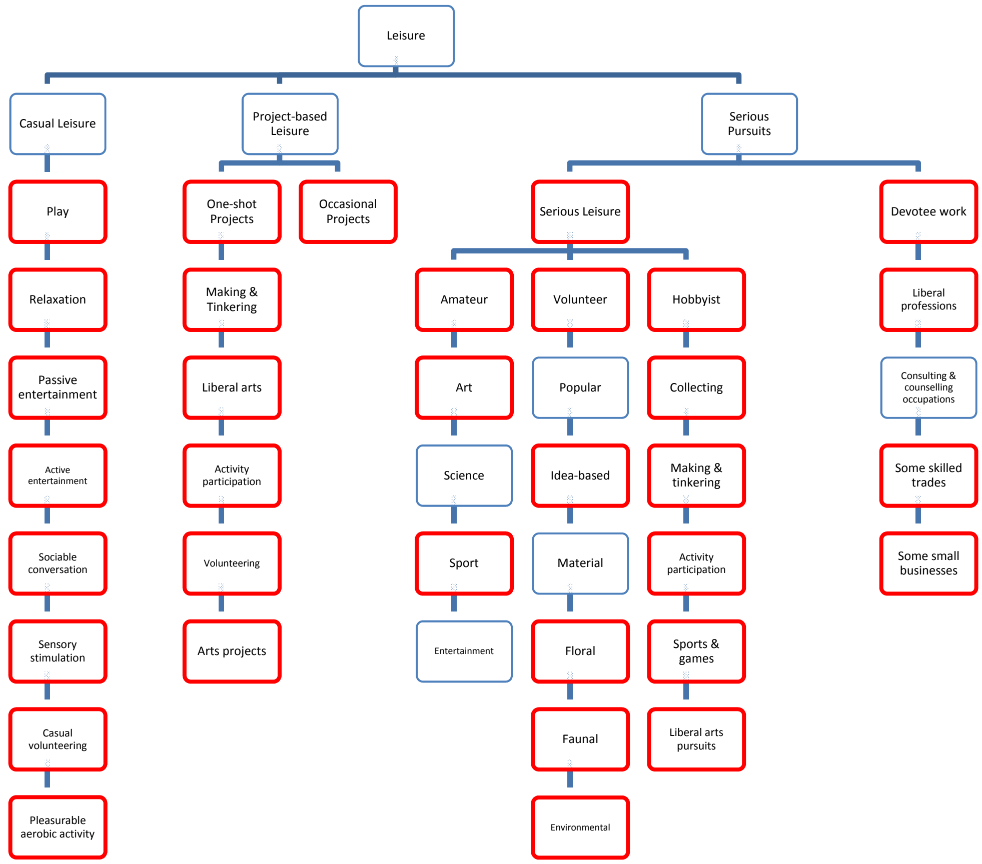


Figure 36: Community Leisure Experiences in Whitney
Stebbins' Serious Leisure Framework diagram highlighting community leisure experiences in Whitney, Ontario. (Diagram adapted from image by Jenna Hartel, available at http://www.seriousleisure.net/slp-diagrams.html).

5.4 Everyday Life in Whitney – "We're self–sufficient. We do our own stuff"

[The food] was split up. And it was kept at the old farm in the basement there, in the cool area. And there were potato bins, probably 75 bags of potatoes in there, you know, that would be that high, and we'd eat potatoes. And then next year we'd always have enough left over to replant, eh, to start up again. It was the same with turnips. We had turnip fields here, grew our own turnips. We grew everything. My grandmother had a garden down there. And it was a lovely garden. It was pretty well about an acre in size, maybe more. And it was just beautiful and everything in there. That's why people had to depend on self–sufficiency, like you know, for supplements and to make a decent living, you know. And I tell ya, it was lovely in the summer time going out and getting fresh cucumbers and mix them up with your own cream that you separated. And you'd turn the separator at night, eh, and you'd separate the cream, and you'd always steal from the cream can to put in with your cucumbers, or beans and cream, or whatever came along that was good. (Edward McGuey)

5.4.1 Self–sufficiency and Resilience

Insecure employment led to a variety of strategies for obtaining enough income to survive. Still, the best hedge of protection against a slow year – which was an all–too–common occurrence – was to become self–sufficient in other areas such as food production and to learn to maintain a frugal lifestyle. Thus, people learned to farm, to barter, to salvage and to make and repair their own belongings (clothing, tools, equipment, homes etc.) using the resources available at hand. Going back to the opening quote, Frank Kuiack's patched canoe(s) is a prime example. Long after items have lost value for mainstream use, they are preserved in this environment. These skills, and perhaps most importantly the self–sufficient attitude, persist today within the community. Said one participant, "The thing we do here as people in general, we're self–sufficient. We do our own stuff. We build our own things, we fix our things. In general, everyone's like that around here…We don't hire people."

This self–reliant attitude seems to have originated out of necessity, primarily because of the geographic isolation of the community. Said one participant, "If you didn't have the money, either you didn't have something, or you made it yourself." Another participant attributed it to the immigrants who settled in the area in the early years. "The people that would have come into this country, this area geographically, they would have been self–sufficient people. Because there wasn't anything here. So they'd build and grow. They had to do it themselves. And they just passed that on. It's still passed on." Other self–reliant strategies emerged, including:

Becoming producers– residents learned to become producers in terms of gardening, farming and foraging. Many tended small and large gardens where they grew potatoes, turnips, carrots, cucumbers, beets, tomatoes and herbs. Food supplies found in the environment were also foraged, including berries and other fruit, and items of medicinal value. Because buying meat was largely unaffordable, in addition to hunting, people also kept livestock like pigs, chickens, geese, sheep, cows and oxen. In some cases, the farming enterprises fed a single family. In other cases, families would come together to pick rocks, plow, fertilize, plant and harvest larger gardens, the produce from which was subsequently distributed between the families who helped. Along with skills at producing items necessary for survival, came an ethic of preserving, storing and saving items of value. Canning and preserving of fruit, vegetables and meat became an ongoing part of life. Many people used cold storage systems to keep food fresh through the cold winters and hot summers (for example, root cellars or ice houses).

Shopping Differently– When travelling out of town is required out of necessity, people learned to buy items in bulk. “You always have to have two of everything here, or you do without” said one participant. “It’s too far away to drive to get another one.” Other people buy groceries out of town on sale because the prices are better and so they don’t have to wait for local sales. Participants also noted the need to obtain food staples on sale out of town and store them so “you just have to buy the bare necessities here.”

Reciprocity and bartering– An ethic of reciprocity resulted in an informal system of barter where people would trade labour, food, and other surplus resources for items they needed but didn’t have. For example, one participant described a situation where a widow had about ten acres of hay fields, but was “too old to make use of it.” An arrangement emerged whereby a nearby widower “would go with his scythe and cut that hay field for her. And then she’d sell the hay, and that helped her with her money through the winter. And in turn, she used to make food and bring it over through the winter [to the widower]. Cuz he was alone.”

Sharing – Sharing involved multiple people using the same item at different times, but where ownership didn't change. Examples of sharing clothing between siblings came up in discussion several times. For example, one person explained how she and her sister shared a dress for a time. "We shared the one dress to go to funerals and wakes. One could go to the wake and one could go to the funeral." Another example recalled by Hazel Switzer told of how two neighbours shared a little handmade bonnet and outfit to bring their newborns home from the hospital in. There were 20 children between the two families, and they "just passed [the outfit] back and forth to each other. Kept it new…And it just looked as nice as anything. That was good. Nothin' wrong with that," she said. While I have every reason to believe that these stories are true, documentary evidence I encountered contradicts some accounts of clothes sharing recorded in published sources. I can't be sure whether it was the result of creative license on the part of the author, or faulty memories on the part of the storyteller. Several other participants noted that the passing of children's clothing back and forth happens yet today, though the younger generations prefer manufactured rather than homemade clothing.

Salvaging – Salvaging is an informal activity that included finding objects that were unwanted, going unused, or which were otherwise destined for disposal, and reusing, recycling or repurposing them. Common items held remarkable value. For instance, "the flour bags would come with a white background and little wee blue flowers," said one participant. "So my mom would make the skirt out of that, and the top out of the white part." Participants also described repurposing old and worn clothing into mittens, rescuing items from the landfill for reuse (which could be especially rewarding "if you got there at the right time…"), and recycling items (for example, building an ice hut out of old panels, or an oil change station out of old Highway signs).

Figure 37: Oil Change Station Made from Reclaimed Highway Signs
Fred Kmith made an oil change station out of reclaimed highway signs so he could do his own vehicle servicing.

Much larger projects included disassembling and building entire homes. “Dad and I, with some extra help, took it down and salvaged all the lumber,” said one participant. “I started to dig a basement and build a house on that property.” Building homes in this fashion appeared more than once in the data. Incidentally, the foundations were dug by hand, which is no small accomplishment given the rocky terrain of the Canadian Shield. Even items as small as broken pieces of glass bottles were claimed by children for use in outdoor games like hopscotch.

More recent examples of items being claimed before going to landfill include the stained glass windows reclaimed from when the original Catholic Church was torn down. “When they tore the old church down in Whitney, any [windows] that had religious [symbols] on them, they went back to the diocese,” said Jane Dumas, “But these were on the side… when they have their August dinner [and rummage sale], we bought those and he [Sandy] made the doors."

Figure 38: Reclaimed Stained Glass Windows
These stained glass windows were salvaged when the original Catholic Church was torn down, and subsequently sold at the August Church Supper.

Currently, no formal municipal recycling program exists within the Township, primarily due to the costs and logistics of implementing such a program. Residents who feel strongly about the issue make an extra effort to participate in recycling opportunities outside of the community to compensate. Though rules forbid it, lots of reclaiming happens at local landfills discretely, away from the eyes of those in charge, as illustrated by the example of Frank Kuiack's canoe.

Resourcefulness and Making–do – Several participants noted how the resources at hand were used to build and maintain everything from clothing, to tools, to furniture. When out in the bush, fishing line could be used to repair holes in clothing. Published accounts exist of guides using pine gum paste to repair holes in canoes and tin cans being turned into dust pans rather than being thrown out. Handmade or leftover nails were used to build furniture with little regard to size or aesthetics. Even buying fabric to make clothing wasn't always an option, because "there was just enough money to buy food and stuff and that." Said another, "You used what you had at the time."

5.4.2 Teaching and Learning

Parents, relatives and friends emerged as a primary source of teaching and learning in many situations. Most participants credited their parents with having taught them about everything from work ethic, to cooking and sewing to hunting and making things. Because of the seasonal work schedules, it was also noted that many kids have "their grandparents around and they learn from them." Still others learned trades or the ways of the bush by spending time "with the older guys." Bartering was also described as extending to include the exchange of information, skills, and knowledge. People call on friends who "might know something" or with whom they can "get it figured out" together. Father Jim Beanish, parish priest in Whitney for almost nine years, described the sharing of information and skills this way:

> *People are pretty handy to do things themselves. Because the option is to drive for two hours and then pay someone to do it. They often didn't have the money. [Or] they had the money to buy the parts, but not to drive down, and they didn't have the time to waste waiting. So you'd ask somebody. The neighbor, 'Do you know how to do this?' They'll say, 'oh yes, I know how to do that. I'll give you a hand.' They'll come over and show you. (Father Jim Beanish)*

5.4.3 The Technological Divide

When LIS researchers think of the divide, we often think about it in terms of the digital divide. The digital divide is described by Hersberger as the bifurcation of a population into two groups: those who have access to technology, and those who do not have access (Hersberger, 2002, 46). Importantly, technology is considered almost exclusively in terms of information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as internet access or access to personal devices like home computers, PDAs and so on. Typically, belonging to the ‘privileged’ group that has access means belonging to the more affluent portion of the population– those with stable incomes, stable housing, and those who live in an area with stable, accessible community infrastructure. Membership in the ‘underprivileged’ group is generally associated with economic insecurity and all that that lifestyle entails, including poverty and often, though not exclusively, geographic isolation.

5.4.3.1 Motive Technologies and Infrastructure

Residents of Whitney do indeed face a technological divide. But it is important to consider this divide in a broader sense, in terms of motive technologies and community infrastructure as well, not just individual or local ICTs. In some cases, the more pressing need revolves around networking to cross the physical distance, in addition to the communication distance. A time when ICTs will be able to comprehensively bridge the physical divide for people in this community is not yet on the radar. Realistically, it may not even be an optimal solution to the nature of the divide here.

Because of their geographic location, access to basic resources – including healthcare and education which in their own right make heavy use of technology in the digital sense – require physical access to locations and people outside of the community. Access to specialist medical doctors, allied health services like x–rays or labs all require traveling outside of the community. All secondary and most post–secondary educations require students to travel or relocate in order to participate. Even basic forms of entertainment for youth including league sports and movie theatres are unavailable locally. In all cases, these services, often taken for granted by urban populations, are accessible to the population of this community only after residents have solved the primary problem of how to physically cross the geographic divide.

Often the commute to these services involves a round trip of as much as several hundred kilometers. Thus, the burden of isolation and the digital divide is felt most acutely in terms of availability of transportation to access urban technological resources. As one participant put it, “If you lose your [driver’s] license in a place like Whitney, what do you do? You’re trapped.”

In the absence of public transportation (the last train left Whitney Station in the late 1960s), a remarkable, complex, and informal network of volunteer drivers and a patchwork of funding to cover fuel costs emerged to help eligible individuals who have to “hire rides out.” Some services, like the pharmacies in Bancroft and Killaloe run a weekly shuttle into town to deliver, which has been much appreciated by residents, particularly in the winter. A small pharmacy recently opened in the downtown area for the first time in the town’s history.

Figure 39: Whitney Pharmacy

The introduction of school bus services was a big deal, because it meant that, for the first time, all children in the community had equal access to secondary education. Still others manage to cross the divide by making lifestyle changes including carpooling to grocery shop, and abandoning spontaneous trips to the store in favour of planned shopping trips combined with entertainment to “make a night of it.”

While the introduction or proliferation of ICTs may help to some degree over time (for example, bringing medical specialists to the community remotely for consults), it is unlikely to do anything to help bridge the physical divide any time soon when it comes to activities of daily life like grocery shopping or seeking experience-based entertainment such as a night at the movies. The motive technology problem must still be dealt with first. As a case in point, even if 100% of the community had internet access to comparison shop the weekly grocery sales at all the major grocery chains in the province, *and* a way to place an order online, residents still have to figure out how to transport the purchased items home. While smaller specialty items can be mailed or couriered into town, unfortunately, there is no grocery delivery service to span the physical distance. In the best case scenario, access to ICTs in this example is nearly useless, except to inform residents of sales they cannot participate in. For other discussions of the role of motive and infrastructure technology in the community, see sections 4.5.2 The Pioneer Experience, 5.2.2 Guiding, and 5.3.1.4 Leisure as Mediated by Technology.

5.4.3.2 Bridging the Digital Divide

Although none of my participants made technology the focus of the experiences they wanted to talk about during the interviews, ICTs have arrived in the village of Whitney, and the digital landscape is on the cusp of changing. Residents share similar communications technologies with urban populations, but there are always tradeoffs to be made in exchange for the gains. For example, the technology is generally much slower to arrive in the area; landline telephones are now nearly ubiquitous, but such services didn't arrive until mid 20th century. Reliable cellular service arrived in approximately 2008. Internet has been available and many residents take advantage of it, but it comes at a premium cost. Free public internet is also available at the public library, which equalizes access, but the library is only open for 12 hours per week. Even where technology costs may be similar to urban centres, services are often subject to regular outages due to power fluctuations.

Residents are aware that these technologies exist in other locations, and they are accustomed to waiting for the infrastructure to reach them, though it often lags decades behind urban centres. Acceptance of technology varied among participants. Mobile technologies were more common among younger interviewees. A number of participants made passing references to their use of computers and internet technologies for personal, business and communication purposes. One participant noted the role of ICTs in terms of improving their ability to be self-reliant (see 6.3.5.6 Self–Awareness). Another participant noted that local small home businesses have so much more opportunity now to do business with clients outside of the community, that "unless they're out doing something in the community for someone" you'd never even know they were in business at all. In general, ICTs did not make up a significant portion of the experiences my participants wanted to discuss.

Whitney is currently a designated underserviced area and is eligible for funding under the federal government's Digital Canada 150 strategy. The program will provide $305 million in funding to Internet Service Providers across Canada to encourage infrastructure investment in rural and remote areas. The strategy's goal is to ensure that 98% of Canadians have reliable internet access at minimum download speeds of 5 mbps by Canada's 150th birthday in 2017. It is currently unknown whether Whitney will benefit from the program, although the Township supports infrastructure investment. Winning proposals are expected to be announced in 2015 (Government of Canada, 2014).

5.4.4 Mothering – Caring for Self, Family and Others

Not surprisingly, the bulk of the work of caring for home and family has traditionally fallen to the women – and mothers – of Whitney, which resulted in a number of common mothering themes inextricably woven into the experience of everyday living in the village of Whitney. The data collected tell a story of love, loss, resourcefulness, equality, surrogacy, and mothers trying to meet challenges of all varieties under very difficult circumstances.

Cultural explanations for the arrangement aside, this was largely a matter of practicality since the work cycle so often involved the men leaving home. Even those who were employed locally by the lumber mills spent most of the week away from home because they had to travel to the logging sites to work, and daily travel back and forth was not possible. "They'd maybe come out Wednesday night. Monday til Friday and maybe half a day Saturday in the winter time," said one participant. "You learned that the women had this responsibility for the children."

Although married women with children commonly opted not to seek outside, paid employment, they nevertheless "worked pretty hard" at tasks like cooking, baking, making bread, cleaning, cutting wood, gardening, preserving, washing laundry and sewing, animal care, health care, property maintenance and so on. On top of that work, many families had businesses as well, which often involved boarding people – either tourists or other people who had come to town for work. The bulk of this ‘double caring’ responsibility also fell to the women. “We had a lot of housekeeping cottages,” said one participant, “so [my mother] got all the laundry and cleaning” for that also.

Historically, families were quite large, and the children were expected to help with the personal and business workload in all areas as soon as they were able. Young children were expected to mow lawns, hang laundry, bail boats after the rain, chop wood and generally help around the house, with childcare, and with the family businesses. One participant recalled, “We’d have the old washing machine with the ringer and the tub, and the sheets would go in to be rinsed, and you’d hang them out on the clothesline. And I remember hanging up the laundry when I was old enough to put the pins on the clothesline, you know.” Another shared, “We were little workers as soon as you could be.”

The SS. No. 2 Airy School records indicate that in the 1930s and 1940s, some families even opted to keep their kids home from school temporarily, or even to withdraw their children from school entirely, in order to manage the work of caring for home and family, citing “Home Help” or “Farm Help” as the reason. This was particularly the case for children in their 14th and 15th year, who by that time were cresting the age where they were expected to contribute to the family income. Acceptable reasons for not attending school included, in order given by the province: Illness, Home Help, Parental Neglect, Physical Obstacles, Truancy, Privation, Irregular closing, and Other reasons.

Figure 40: SS. No. 2 Airy School Register – Student Withdrawal
Notation in SS. No. 2 Airy School Register, dated February 1939, describing the reason for withdrawing this pupil from school.

Today, caring for home and family is still a priority for people in town. Numerous examples surfaced of adult children caring for aging parents, parents caring for adult children who are ill or injured, and neighbours caring informally for neighbours. Comments also emerged about the lack of access to assisted living facilities to make the task of aging–in–place easier. The lack of facilities invariably means that when the need for care exceeds the capacity, individuals have to leave the community – and their families – in order to receive it. Although the burden of the work is not any less difficult than it was in times past, "People are pretty good at looking after their families," said one participant. "And that's why a lot of the hardships aren't noticed…because families take care."

5.4.5 Civic Responsibility – Caring for the Community

The work of caring extends to an ethic of civic responsibility within the community as well, and caring for others outside of ones' immediate family occupies a remarkable amount of attention from many people in town, not only in the past but also today. Formally, a great deal of volunteering occurs in this community to make the social activities happen and to help people live good lives. One participant noted that a "lot of the things that go on in Whitney is because of volunteers" who dedicate "time down at the rink, or at the canteen, or shoveling off the rink, or working out at the ball field, or doing this or doing that, or grooming the snowmobile trails. They did all that for nothing. They did it for the community, you know. It was good for the community." Data gathered for this study indicates that volunteers have a keen desire to "give back" and have also taken responsibility for the following elements of community life:

School board trustees have been staffed by volunteer parents – both men and women – dating back to at least 1904 with the arrival of the Country School (Heggart's school). These parent groups were permitted to petition the government for a school when enough children were present in the community to warrant it. They took an active role in bringing education to the children of the community through organizing the schools, hiring teachers and collecting taxes to pay the school expenses.

The Recreation Committee plans events for all age groups, including a focus on holiday activities for the children at little or no cost to participants. They organize and implement large–scale fundraisers (like roast beef dinners and pancake breakfasts) to provide resources for the community, including maintaining sports equipment. The current major project is fundraising to build a roof over the skating rink estimated to cost about $300 000. Annual events have included Canada Day festivities, parades and festivals. Volunteers also make sure that the Recreation Centre is open and available to the public.

Ride sharing program to take people to out of town medical appointments as far away as Peterborough, Pembroke and Ottawa.

The Library Board oversees the library services and resources.

Volunteers support the local schools and children's groups (for example Scouts), and other community organizations locally and nearby, including nursing homes or through home care support services. High school students help out at various events to obtain credit for their volunteer hours.

Whitney Animal Relief Committee cares for abandoned and feral animals, in particular, cats.

The Catholic Women's League (CWL) organizes events like church suppers, the annual rummage sale, bingo nights as well as coordinating food for funerals.

The medical committee brought the medical centre building to town and advocates for staffing requirements.

Finally, although not typically volunteer, **elected municipal government** may also be considered part of the work of caring in this community as well, since in many cases, holding municipal office is not a replacement for outside employment. Whereas in larger municipalities, holding an elected office comes with a full time paycheck, benefits and a staff, in the Township of South Algonquin "we have councilors…who are actually working full time at another job," said Jane Dumas, mayor of the Township of South Algonquin. "So that means our council has their meetings in the evening…It's hard to take time off work."

All of this, of course, is in addition to the many, many, many informal and usually unrecorded acts of kindness that fill individual and community needs and which not only take place outside of formal structures, but also are usually known only to the individual(s) involved. Examples of experiences of civic generosity described in the data range from picking things up for others when going out of town, to sharing produce and hand–me–downs, to providing manual labour, to caring for cemeteries, to remarkable acts of financial generosity.

Finally, an interesting civic engagement phenomenon seems to be evolving that rests in the demographic changes taking place in the community. The community is admittedly aging, and although this is often interpreted as a detriment to the community, the change is due in part to an influx of people who left the community in their youth coming back to retire. These people are bringing skills, time, resources, and a sense of civic responsibility with them. These are people who are committed to the community and who are looking for ways to contribute. Jane Dumas, mayor of the Township of South Algonquin remarked that these people "are coming back and bringing a lot back to the community. They're not youth, but those are the people. We've got retired teachers, and retired public health. And they may not be here full time, but they're back. And you can feel their interests in being back in their community. It's a good thing." Jane, who retired from a career in nursing several years ago herself, is looking forward to representing the township in all aspects of the position of mayor for her second term.

5.4.6 Civic Rules

One of the draws to living in Whitney is the laid back atmosphere compared to urban hustle and bustle. Simply put, "there aren't as many regulations as there are in the city" and residents like the freedom associated with that. Time and again, reference was made to rules in the community (or the lack thereof). Examples of experiences with rules included both formal laws and bylaws, as well as unwritten social rules generally accepted as normal behaviour within the community.

Formal laws in this environment are imposed through a variety of sources, and residents encounter them on a daily basis. For example, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are responsible for enforcing provincial laws in town and on the surrounding Highways as they are in other parts of the province. The Township of South Algonquin (TSA) is responsible for creating and administering the rules associated with the local services they deliver as well as the local bylaws. The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) administers all laws covering the use of Algonquin Park and land use elsewhere, including such things as wildlife control, appropriate use of facilities, permits for land use and so on. It all sounds very orderly, and not altogether that much different than in urban environments. Although the system enjoys a degree of stability, nevertheless, interesting practical conflicts still arise.

While there are rules that prevent people from killing nuisance bears, there is very little assistance to help relocate them. Bear complaints have to be directed to the MNR office in Bancroft (which is a forty–five minute drive away), and handled through a time consuming process. By the time someone would come to assess the situation (which could be days later) the bear would be long gone. Consequently, residents seldom call for assistance, opting instead to approach the situation with “common sense” solutions such as making their property less attractive to bears by keeping garbage receptacles tidy and not letting fruit from fruit trees rot on the ground. “You learn your lesson,” said one participant. “You just have to be careful. They still wander through, but there’s nothing to make them stop.” And although people seem generally to try to follow the rules for permits for stopping, fishing and camping in the Park, participants noted that the layer of permitting and licensing administration drives up the cost of participating in leisure activities they can enjoy outside of the Park nearly for free. “You either put up with,” said one participant, “or you don’t bother going up there.”

Many bylaw infringements are investigated and enforced only on a complaint basis, while others receive little or no emphasis at all. Because the population of the village is so small, complaints made anonymously rarely remain completely anonymous. Thus, complaints of this nature are usually interpreted with both good and ill intent in mind, depending on perspective. Consequently, visits from bylaw enforcement have a tendency to fuel speculation among residents with a stake in whatever is at issue. On the other hand, the absence of bylaw officers does not signal that everything is running according to rule. One participant shared a story about parking bylaws that are not enforced at all. “Wheelchair parking signs?” said the participant, “Don’t mean a thing [here]! There’s no fines in the Township for that. It’s all voluntary.” Upon making this discovery, the obvious question arose: what else is voluntary here?

Equally interesting observations arose around attempts to casually or purposefully skirt the formal rules and laws. For instance, removing animals from their natural habitat has always been a licensed activity, usually involving assigning of trap lines or a lottery to distribute moose and deer tags to hunters. Licensed individuals are permitted to remove animals according to their license and quota. For as long as there have been people in the area, however, poaching (the act of removing animals without a permit) has been not only a staple for providing meat for families, but also a lucrative way to earn money. Many humorous stories have been shared among residents over the years, and some recorded in print, about close calls, success and defeat at the activity. Doing it without getting caught requires a special skill set. In his memoire, Gordon Palbiski explained that, for anyone undertaking to poach, “a big job was to watch for signs of the Park rangers,” as they were actively trying to discourage and capture poachers. Capture for the offense was quite costly, as the poachers not only lost the furs, but would have been fined as well.

> *On one of his trapping trips, Dad, Harry Fuller and Stan Fuller were coming down Galeairy Lake in late fall in a canoe with their fur at night when the Park rangers were waiting for them at a narrow part down from Rock Lake Dam and forced them on a point of land. They caught Harry and Stan. There was a lot of flood wood on the shore and Dad hid in the logs with the fur. The rangers…stayed all night guarding the point of land. Next morning they searched until noon and found Dad in the log pile hiding with the fur which was worth $1,500.00 or more. (Palbiski, 2010, 11)*

Finally, unwritten social norms within the community create learning opportunities for new residents on occasion as well. Alarmed by the unexpected sound of gunshots, a resident new to Whitney immediately phoned the local police department to share the concern. Much to the person’s surprise, the officer who answered the phone was unphased, and replied that someone was probably just cleaning their guns. “Pardon me?” said the participant. “And then it happens again, and something hits the roof of my house. And so I called again. And they said, ‘Oh, don’t worry. They’re just scaring off bears.’ And I’m livid, because I’m just outside with my toddler, and there’s guns going off. But in the city, you report such things.” Examples of this nature highlight the re–alignment that takes place between ‘common’ urban information and ‘common’ rural information when the two collide.

Figure 41: Whitney OPP Detachment

5.4.7 Tourism

For more than a hundred years of documented history, Algonquin Provincial Park has played host to an annual migration of people who wish to enjoy the great outdoors. In 2010 alone, over 800, 000 visitors, mostly from Ontario, visited the Park (Ministry of Natural Resources, 2010, 10). Many of these people stopped in Whitney to pause, refuel, gather supplies, or otherwise obtain local services.

Residents of Whitney have an interesting relationship with the tourism industry that was highlighted during the recent Municipal Official Plan public meetings. On the one hand, they consider tourism their “bread and butter” and acknowledge that without the tourism industry, the village would likely cease to exist. Many expressed a desire to improve the tourism business as a way of increasing the prosperity of the town. Some local businesses, like the outfitting companies, survive almost exclusively on tourism, and bringing in more tourists is the only way to increase their market. “If there were no tourists, they would have no business. Because the locals don’t rent from them. We have our own stuff.”

However, residents nevertheless also appreciate their privacy and solitude, and do notice the change when thousands of people converge on their village in the summer season. Noted one participant, “When the roads are full in Whitney, full of summer traffic, I’d just as soon come home.” Said another, there’s a degree of conflict where people acknowledge that “we’d like full time work, but we sort of don’t want people to find us either so there’s masses here, you know.” And while meeting and serving the strangers who visit often creates outgoing adults out of young children, concern for the children’s safety rises in the summer “because then you don’t know who’s coming through town.”

At no time does the skill set of the residents of this community more obviously have value though, than when contrasted with the skill set of tourists. While many visitors manage just fine, there is a category of visitor at a severe disadvantage due to lack of awareness of and familiarity with the surroundings. On occasion, the term citiot has been used to describe them. According to the Urban Dictionary, the term ‘citiot’ combines the words ‘city’ and ‘idiot.’ A term that appears to have originated in the New York area, it’s used to describe people who leave urban or metropolitan lives to holiday or live in rural places, bringing a certain degree of snobbery, arrogance or entitlement with them.

Not all tourists are citiots, and participants were clear to indicate that it’s not intended to be insensitive or derogatory. Rather, in this context, it describes a specific type of tourist who fails to adapt to the local environment. The term identifies people who are most likely to get into trouble because of a lack of information or awareness or experience in the local setting. In LIS terms, ‘citiots’ are the visitors who fail to adapt to the information demands of the local environment. Several classic examples came out of the data describing this type of discrepancy including occasions when misinformed visitors ask locals what time the animals come out, as in ‘what time do they let the animals out?’ One exasperated participant exclaimed, “My god, this is not a zoo!”

Evidence of another common information gap among visitors also existed. The unknown unknown – or the state of being unaware of what you don’t know – sometimes causes visitors to make poor decisions. In one case, a large family, including elderly members and young children, went into the Park for a walk on one of the trails in the fall at about 5pm. Unfortunately, the trail was 2 km long – too long to complete before dark. The family diverged from the path and got lost in the bush when the sun went down. They failed to understand the size of the Park, and the danger of going into the bush at dusk.

Measures in place to protect visitors from what they don’t know include permit requirements (forcing visitors to make contact with representatives at various information provision stations), an Algonquin Park radio station for public service announcements, and availability of printed literature about the Park at all museum locations. Also, local residents employed by the Ministry of Natural Resources provide guidance and watch for signs that someone may be in need of help. In the case of the lost family, search and rescue located them and returned them to safety.

Another participant described a case of a visitor who paid for and received information from a local resident about how and where to fish, but who was unwilling to listen to it. “My friend and I fished with him all day [on a guided trip],” he said. “I told him a bunch of times his lure wouldn’t work because it would sink too deep, but he just wouldn’t listen. You couldn’t tell him nothin’. We caught our limit, and he didn’t even get a bite. That’s a citiot.”

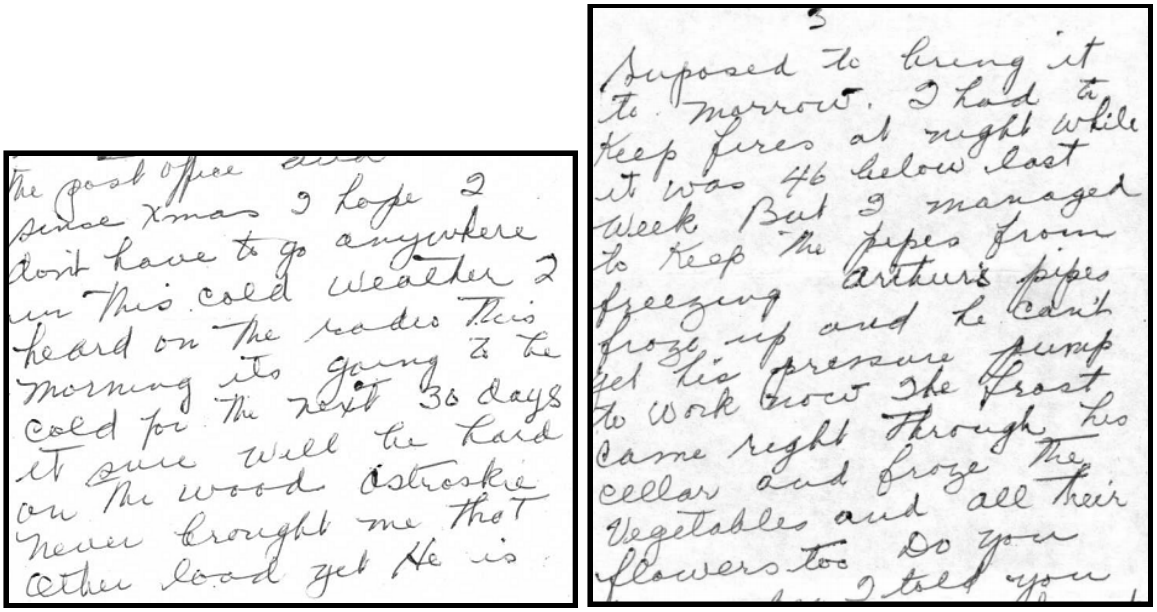
These examples of information gaps are sometimes humorous, however, not all cases are funny. Each year in Algonquin Park, lack of awareness of everything from boating safety to animal behavior claims lives. As a case in point, in May of 2014, Jeremy Marrows (age 21) and Tim Kolder (19), cousins from Ontario, drowned at Opeongo Lake when their canoes capsized (CBC News, May 30, 2014). Newspaper archives report dozens of similar fatalities over the history of Algonquin Park. Information gaps in this environment can be deadly.

5.5 Other Common Experiences – "A lot of crying, you know?"

Some experiences associated with living in Whitney don't fit nicely into categories of work, play, or everyday life. These experiences are broader than my categories allow, affecting the community in general, or individuals across the work–play–everyday life spectrum, and often in profound ways. Experiences of this variety include weather conditions, emergency services, worry/fear, loss and survival, and spirituality.

5.5.1 Weather Conditions

Although weather patterns are changing, extreme winter weather conditions in Whitney have always been part of everyday life. Heavy snowfalls, ice, and low temperatures affect everything from home heating costs to travel, and it is often described as "nothing" to see temperatures drop to between minus 35–40 degrees Fahrenheit for a week at a time. As the following excerpt from a letter Hazel Mask wrote to her husband Peter in January of 1957 shows, temperatures dropped to minus 46 Fahrenheit on this occasion, which caused notable losses both in terms of property and food supplies. Keeping the home fires burning under these circumstances was clearly more than just a metaphor.


the post office and
since Xmas I hope I
don't have to go anywhere
in this cold weather I
heard on the radio this
morning its going to be
cold for the next 30 days
it sure will be hard
on the wood. Ostroskie
never brought me that
other load yet He is

3
supposed to bring it
to morrow. I had to
keep fires at night while
it was 46 below last
week But I managed
to keep the pipes from
freezing arthur's pipes
froze up and he can't
get his pressure pump
to work now The frost
came right through his
cellar and froze all their
vegetables and all their
flowers too Do you
I told you

Figure 42: 1957–01–19 Personal Correspondence (Hazel Mask to Peter Mask)
Personal correspondence from Hazel Mask describing the cold temperatures and the consequences of those temperatures.

SS. No. 2 Airy School logs, which recorded classroom temperatures fifteen minutes after class had begun in both the morning and afternoon from the years 1930–1945, show that during the coldest winter months of January and February, the children attending this one–room school house often began their day in temperatures ranging from 30–40 degrees Fahrenheit (+1 to +4 ^{o}C), with temperatures sometimes only climbing as high as 12 degrees Fahrenheit (–11 ^{o}C) in that first fifteen minutes. In order to get the room up to this temperature, one student would have the responsibility of coming in an hour early (or more) to start the fire in the wood stove, and making sure there was sufficient wood for the day to keep the room warm.

In more recent times, participants recounted stories of local and out of town schools being cancelled due to high snow falls and unsafe roads. Edward McGuey explained his experience of school bus travel as a child. “We had to go into Sabine, McKenzie Lake area, and that road was never plowed out very good, if it was plowed at all, and turn around in there and get stuck with the bus," he said. "And then they'd make all us boys get out and push at the back of the bus. Frozen, and the like, you know?" As well, the geographic distance between where the students live and where they attend secondary school sometimes means the two locations experience different weather patterns entirely and are consequently subject to different decisions for school closures. Joe Avery recalled, "Sometimes we'd get a lot of snow, and Barry's Bay would get nothing. But our bus would be cancelled. Or we would get nothing and Barry's Bay would cancel it because they would have a big snowstorm. There were many different days we missed a lot of school."

Keeping the roads and driveways plowed was a massive undertaking without the assistance of plows, although strategizing about how to do it helped. According to Edward McGuey, before the arrival of snow plows, "They'd make two trails using a home-made plow pulled by a team of horses, and let one drift in full so the other one would stay open longer. [But even then] cars couldn't get in. Most of the time it was a walk from the Highway," which could be as much as several kilometers, as in the case of the McGuey homestead. In the mid to late 1950s, things improved somewhat because "We started getting snow plows, you know. You might get a winter out of them. You'd buy some old snow plow, you know, with a big plow on the front of it. If you could get it started..." In the 1950s, the McGueys also relocated to Whitney, and Edward recalled his experience with snow removal in the village. "We were so happy when we'd see our acquaintance and neighbour Bob Mask come up with his green jeep because he'd have a plow on it…He'd take a run down our road and plow it and help us out a lot."

5.5.2 Emergency Services

Access to emergency services is taken for granted in most urban centres. Three key strokes on the phone will get you to the fire, police and ambulance. And if you hang up, or can't give your location, emergency services personnel can find you anyway. In Whitney, however, accessing emergency help is a little more complicated. Up until the introduction of the first official plan in 2012, Whitney had no civic addressing system, which meant that although some streets had names, many homes essentially had no address. "[We] couldn't dial 911," said one participant. "They wouldn't know where [we were]."

Calling for assistance required residents to dial the ten digit phone number of the specific service requested; fire, ambulance and police had three different numbers. "You'd have to dial the police station. Or the fire department or something like that. If it was a fire, we'd dial up the fire department. If it was something else, we'd dial the police department." This system requires residents to memorize or have access to a larger repertoire of emergency numbers, as well as the judgment to know which one is appropriate to call in time of crisis.

For people in town, who knew not only who lives in which house now, but frequently the history of who lived there previously as well, lack of addressing system was not a barrier to daily functioning. Even local emergency services "knew where everybody was. You said it was Post street or Church street. They knew where it was."

Lack of addresses did present a problem, however, when residents were required to describe where they lived to someone from out of town, for example, couriers or emergency services personnel that were accessed through an out of town number or call centre. Such services required the caller to provide an address to which to dispatch services. In most cases, providing an address was necessary, but meaningless. “We just made it up,” said one participant. “We just picked a number out of the air and that’s what we went with for years, you know. Nobody even questioned it. They just assumed you knew where you lived. Lots of people did that.” In the worst cases, residents found themselves offering a fictitious address to a third party, who would have to provide it to the Whitney location anyway, despite the fact that the people at the Whitney location would have understood the directions better by name alone. A new municipal addressing system has been implemented along with the new Official Plan. The Township anticipates receiving 911 services at some point in the future.

Figure 43: New Municipal Address Signs

5.5.3 Worry/Fear

There have always been plenty of things to worry about in Whitney. Mention was noted at different times during interviews and data collection to worry about or for the following: (un)employment, finances, stable food supply, alcohol abuse, other people (usually relatives or friends), health, safety, wildlife, injury, and death.

Although most of these worries and fears are touched on in other parts of this dissertation, the threat of fire warrants further comment here. Fire played an important part in the early history of the town and residents of Whitney on two fronts. First due to the threat of forest fires;

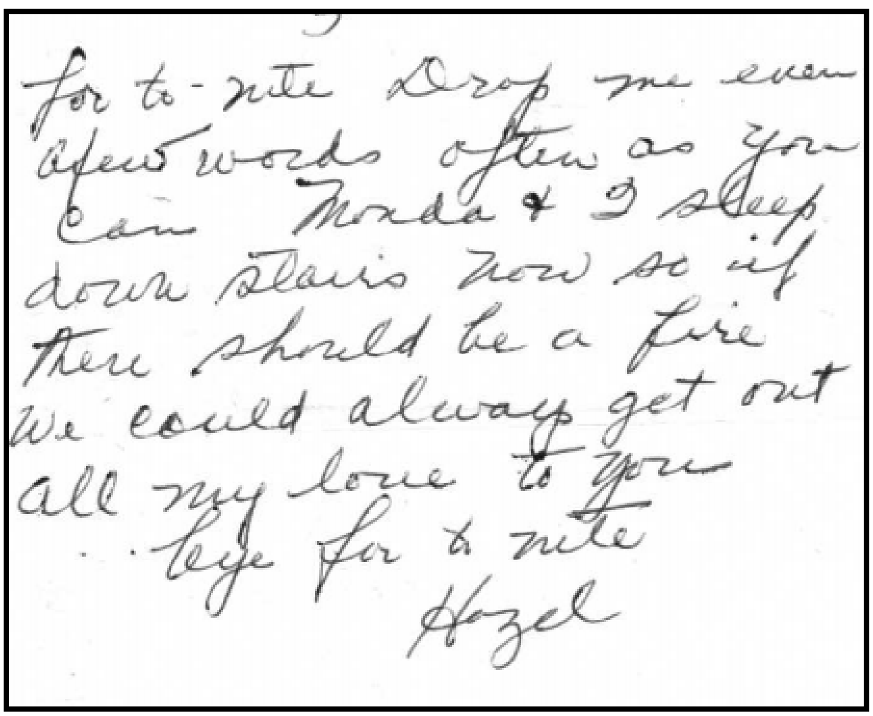
secondly, due to the threat of house fires. Prior to the 1920s, forest fire swept through the area burning almost the entire landscape around the town of Whitney at one point. According to one participant, the fires didn't take the town, but got most of the bush surrounding it "because they had no fire protection. They had a certain amount, but not enough to get back in the bush like you can now." Although the forest has long since re–grown, if you know where to look, you can still see evidence of burnt roots and stumps of trees. Local men employed by the Ministry of Natural Resources were often redirected to help fight forest fires when the need arose. Even one of the local mills, the Airy Mill owned by McRae Lumber, was lost to fire in 1933 (Lloyd, 2006, 84).

Historically, the threat of fire was more prominent in individual homes because the primary source of home heat in the winter time was wood. Most homes had at least a wood stove that served both as heat source and cooking source, while some homes also had other wood burning equipment like fireplaces or furnaces. Wood as a heat source posed a particular risk in the days before the volunteer fire department was commissioned. One participant, who marveled at the resilience of the people, recalled that the topic of house fires came up in conversation with older residents of town during unrelated discussions. The thread that connected two events was simply timing, which was measured by how long before or after a fire a specific event occurred.

> *A lot of people when they're talking about the past, they'll say things like, 'I think that was around the second time that we were burnt out,' you know. Well, what do you mean second time? You had a first time? And you mean to say you were burnt out a third time? Like your house burnt right to the ground? Twice? Where does that happen?*

Houses were small and obviously made of old, dried wood, so when they burned, they went quickly and took everything with them. Sometimes there was insurance to cover part of the loss, and sometimes there wasn't. Sometimes the occupants escaped, and sometimes they didn't. In most cases, the survivors rebuilt, often with the help of the community.

Fires were common during the early years and affected many residents in terms of increased sense of fear as well. Participants in this study referred to these events collectively as "the fires." House fires were cited as one explanation for why so few photos of the early days of Whitney persist; they were lost in the fires. And as the following excerpt of a letter from Hazel Mask to her husband Peter in February 1957 shows, there was enough concern about fire, particularly during the cold winter months, that sleeping arrangements were sometimes altered as a precautionary measure.



for to-nite Drop me even
afew words often as you
can Monda & I sleep
down stairs now so if
there should be a fire
we could alway get out
all my love to you
bye for to nite
Hazel

Figure 44: 1957–02–17 Personal Correspondence (Hazel Mask to Peter Mask)
Personal correspondence from Hazel Mask describing the threat of house fires.

Currently, the Township is serviced by a volunteer fire department that operates out of two locations: one on Hay Creek Road near the centre of town, and another in the village of Madawaska. It is expected that the new municipal addressing system will make it easier for all emergency services to locate and assist residents in distress quickly, and that 911 services will be implemented in due course. A Forest Fire Hazard sign is posted at the East Gate of the Park for residents and visitors to see.

Figure 45: Forest Fire Hazard Sign
The Forest Fire Hazard sign is posted at Algonquin’s East Gate.

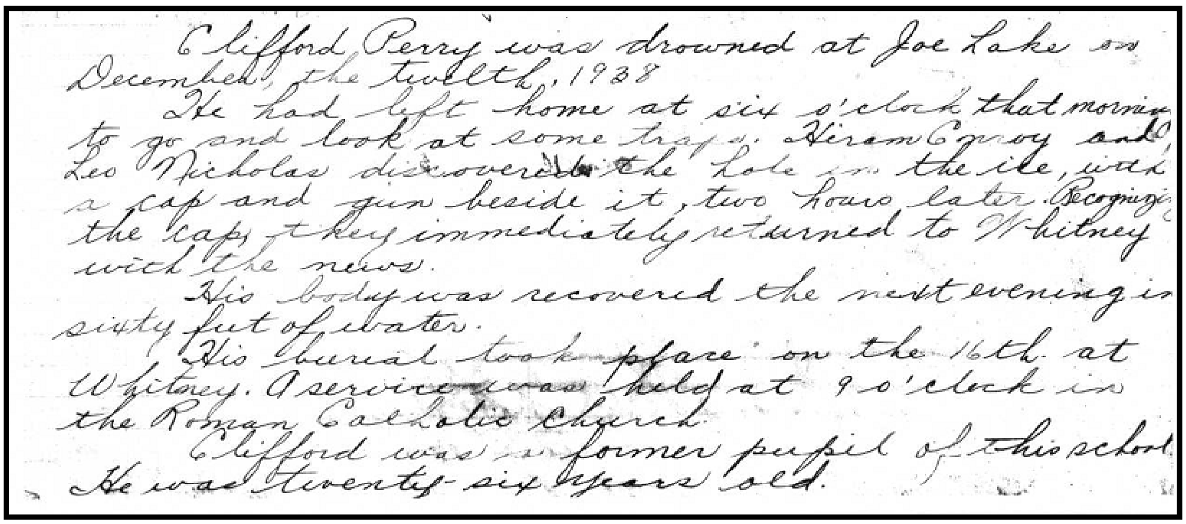
Interestingly, the one thing people don’t worry about generally is random attacks on personal safety, because everyone knows everyone else fairly well. For the longest time, people rarely locked their doors, although that has changed in recent times as well. One person recounted a story of how they usually just yelled ‘Come on in!’ when someone knocked. “One guy came in, and honest to God, I didn't know who he was," they said. "I just thought, don't ya tell them to come in any more. But I did it again (laughter)."

5.5.4 Loss and Survival

Rural and remote lifestyles often sit in the shadow of their big city counterparts – the poorer cousin in many ways. Data collected by Statistics Canada, for example, shows that isolated populations face challenges such as lower family incomes, greater poverty, lower levels of formal education, lower life expectancies, and more than double the number of incidents of unintended injury and suicide related deaths compared to urban populations (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2006). While rural areas in Canada cover most of our land surface and rank among the best destinations for travelers internationally, citizens who choose to live rurally in Canada do so at a price. Understanding the nature of loss and survival in this community is integral to understanding the experience of living in Whitney, as few families have escaped the sadness of one or the joy of the other.

Stories of serious injury and premature deaths date back to the origins of the community. Logging was a dangerous business, and it was common for men to be injured or die in the pursuit of employment if a tree fell the wrong way or if the logs rolled. "If you're cutting with a cross–cut saw like that, a tree would fall down and maybe hit... it always hit something hard, like a dry beech," said one participant. "That top would break off and you'd see it, but maybe the snow was that deep, that you couldn't run." Several people also mentioned traumatic injuries that occurred due to use of sharp tools, explosives or heavy equipment, and which included head injuries and the severing or loss of limbs, all of which were made worse due to the distance to emergency medical services.

Drowning was common as well, in all seasons and among all ages. “Now they have swimming lessons,” said one participant, “But then a lot of people drowned because they didn’t know how to swim. Go out fishing and flip the canoe, or something like that, go through the ice, and nobody knew how to swim. Had lots of deaths like that. Children too.” The SS. No. 2 Airy School log books recalled the drowning of one resident, Clifford Perry, in 1938.


Clifford Perry was drowned at Joe Lake on December, the twelth, 1938

He had left home at six o'clock that morning to go and look at some traps. Hiram Conroy and Leo Nicholas discovered the hole in the ice, with a cap and gun beside it, two hours later. Recognizing the cap, they immediately returned to Whitney with the news.

His body was recovered the next evening in sixty feet of water.

His burial took place on the 16th. at Whitney. A service was held at 9 o'clock in the Roman Catholic Church.

Clifford was a former pupil of this school. He was twenty-six years old.

Figure 46: SS. No. 2 Airy School notation pertaining to drowning of Clifford Perry
Notation in the SS. No. 2 Airy School log books (1933–1942) describing the drowning death of Clifford Perry in 1938.

Although Mr. Perry’s remains were recovered quickly, it was common for there to be delays of days, weeks or even months while waiting for the weather and ice to clear.

The consequences of serious injury and premature deaths were felt throughout the community, but nowhere as much as in the family circle. These accidents and illness had no regard for status, age or gender – children lost parents, parents lost children, and spouses, siblings and extended family were moved by the devastation. Many participants recounted stories of children left behind in single parent households, a particularly bad situation given that many of these households had five or six children or more. In some cases, kindly neighbours helped out, or help was hired in to care for children in place of moms who perished. In cases where fathers were taken, mothers stepped up and became “matriarchs” of the family. In other circumstances, children were sent away to foster care or to live with relatives, since it was impossible for the now single–parent fathers to juggle childrearing with long periods of employment working away in the bush. Friends, neighbours and loved ones who died in car accidents, house fires, and due to chronic illness, disease, suicide and even murder (there has only been one in Whitney’s history) were also remembered during my interviews. When I asked how families coped with the losses, one participant replied, “A lot of crying. A lot of crying, you know.”

Still, stories of remarkable survival were woven between and among the tragedies. One particular story of loss and survival comes to mind. Pregnant with twins, a mother and one infant died during home childbirth. But the surviving newborn, who weighed only two and a half pounds on delivery, lived to adulthood. The mother’s sister, who already had a family of her own at the time, adopted the baby. “You know the old [wood] stove with the warming closet?” said the participant who shared the story, “She put bricks in there, and put him in there like an incubator.” She saved the baby’s life.

5.5.5 Spirituality – ‘minister’ with a small ‘m’

The people who came to Whitney in the early days brought with them strong traditions of spirituality. In fact, for a village of a few hundred people, it is noteworthy that three faiths have their own buildings in which to worship, and several more religions gather in smaller, private locations and in other parts of the township. As one participant explained, “Church is a big thing in this community. It really is…There’s the United, Anglican and Catholic. It is a very big thing. People have strong religious beliefs. Old…Maybe old fashioned too, because of the older folks. But people don’t miss church.” I encountered several stories of people in the community’s history who made significant efforts to go into ministry in one form or another, and who expressed strong desires to “choose Christ” both early and later in life.

Socially, the competing religions share a collegial, community–oriented attitude that transcends specific faiths. They support each other and their neighbouring parishioners in different tasks ranging from helping with church fundraisers, to assisting at interdenominational funerals and weddings in some circumstances. At times in the community’s history, single buildings have even been shared by two denominations, and the Catholic Church has generously shared its space and resources with the Recreation Committee for public fundraising dinners when estimates suggest that the Community Centre is too small of a venue for the event. Examples also surfaced of interdenominational marriages, as well as generous contributions to church building funds by parishioners of other denominations. As Larry Fuller described it, to “minister in general means to minister unto people. So with a small ‘m,’ everybody’s a minister in one regard or another.”

SS. No. 2 Airy school logs indicate that, in the first half of the 20th century, the government believed that the schools should be a source of religious instruction and moral training for pupils. Education Act enforcement was ensured through a system of school inspectors who travelled around the province to the schools. The following figure details the act governing religious and moral instruction in public schools in the 1930s:

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Religious Exercises and Religious and Moral Instruction in the Public Schools

13—(1) (*a*) Every Public School shall be opened with the reading of the Scriptures and the repeating of the Lord's Prayer, and shall be closed with the Lord's Prayer or the prayer authorized by the Department; but no pupil shall be required to take part in any religious exercises objected to by his parent or guardian.

(*b*) (i) In schools without suitable waiting-rooms or other similar accommodation, if the parent or guardian demands the withdrawal of a pupil while the religious exercises are being held, such demand shall be complied with, and the reading of the Scriptures shall be deferred in inclement weather until the closing.

(ii) To secure the observance of this regulation, the teacher, before commencing a religious exercise, shall allow the necessary interval to elapse, during which the children or wards of those who have signified their objection thereto may retire.

(*c*) If the parent or guardian objects to his child or ward taking part in the religious exercises, but directs that he shall remain in the school-room during these religious exercises, the teacher shall permit him to do so, provided that he maintains decorous behaviour during the exercises.

(*d*) If, in virtue of his right to be absent from the religious exercises, any pupil does not enter the school-room in the morning till the close of the time allowed for religious exercises, such absence shall not be treated as an offence against the rules of the school.

(*e*) When a teacher claims to have conscientious scruples in regard to opening or closing school as herein prescribed, he shall notify the Board to that effect in writing; and it shall then be the duty of the Board to make such provision as it may deem expedient for the carrying out of the requirements of (1) (*a*) above.

(2) (*a*) The Scriptures shall be read daily and systematically. The parts to be read may be taken from the book of selections adopted by the Department for that purpose, or from the Bible, or from the list of the Selected Scripture Readings of the International Sunday School Association, or from any other list approved by the Minister, as the Board by resolution may direct.

(*b*) The Board may also order by resolution the reading of such parts by both pupils and teachers daily at the closing of the school, and in addition, the repeating of the Ten Commandments at least once a week, and the memorization of passages selected by the Principal from the Bible.

(*c*) If the Board does not pass the resolution provide for in (*a*) above, the teacher shall make the selection himself after duly notifying the Board of his intention, but such selection shall be subject to revision by the Board at any time.

(3) (*a*) (i) A clergyman of any denomination shall have the right, and it shall be lawful for the Board to allow him, to give religious instructions to the pupils of his own denomination, in each school-house, at least once a week, before the hour of opening the school in the morning or after the hour of closing the school in the afternoon, as the Board may determine.

(ii) Under the same conditions, a clergyman, selected by the clergymen of any number of denominations, shall also have the right to give religious instruction to the pupils belonging to such denominations.

(*b*) If the clergymen of more than one denomination apply to give religious instruction in the same school-house where the number of class-rooms is insufficient for all at the same time, the Board shall decide on what day of the week a class-room shall be at the disposal of each, at the time above stated.

Emblems of a denominational character shall not be exhibited in a Public School during regular school hours.

Figure 47: SS. No. 2 Airy School Log Religious Instruction (1)

Consequently, religion was a subject even in public schools. Scriptures were read in class, and prayers said regularly. In the following excerpt of the SS. No. 2 Airy log, the columns represent the school years from 1934–35 to 1942–43:

25. Re Religious Exercises and Instruction:								
(*a*) Are passages from the Scriptures read daily?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	y	yes
(*b*) Are passages from the Scriptures memorized?	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
(*c*) Is school opened with prayer?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
(*d*) Is school closed with prayer?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
(*e*) Is religious instruction imparted by a clergyman?	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no

Figure 48: SS. No. 2 Airy School Log Religious Instruction (2)

Religion was important to tourists as well, and it was common for sermons to be delivered in the Park by local ministers, or for transportation to be arranged to bring leaseholders and tourists into town for religious services. Clifford Olmstead recalled that:

> *The people that [were] living on Rock Lake, they wanted to get transportation down and out to Whitney by boat, because they couldn't, there was no roads, eh. So anyway, they built a little tramway across here. They could put their boat...It was on tracks, and put it on the little tracks down into the water, put the boat on and of course tied it down or whatever, and put it across the track in the still water here, jumped the boat and went on into Whitney to church or whatever.*

5.6 Significance and Summary

If you'll recall, the primary research question for this study is: *what is the nature of experience in the remote, rural village of Whitney, Ontario.* The first chapter of findings addressed that question in the broader historical context of the community. How did the community come to exist? What does the community look like? How has it evolved over time? Metaphorically, I related the Whitney experience to being "in a canoe"; epic in its symbolism to the heritage that built the community, strong in its representation of the resilience and endurance of the people who live there, and the embodiment of both solitary and social characteristics.

In this chapter, I moved the focus toward the data on a more fundamental, micro–level. What does day to day life experience look like for residents of Whitney across the work, play, everyday life spectrum? Metaphorically, I looked at what comes "after the canoe," or how does actual experience differ pragmatically from the idea or the romance associated with the bucolic rural lifestyle that entices people to the area? Data supports the choice of Savolainen's Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS), Chatman's Small Worlds theoretical framework, and Dewey's framework for Experience and Education and confirms that the theoretical underpinnings are relevant to interpreting the findings.

Whitney has a unique *way of life* as described by Savolainen, moderated by formal and informal rules, and characterized by efforts to maintain a meaningful personal order of things among both individuals and groups.

Geographic and social contexts create *barriers to accessing information* that are consistent with Chatman's small worlds. Whitney can be characterized as a small world because community members share an isolated geographic location, similar interests and expectations, personal qualities, and economic status. In many respects, Whitney is a classic 'blue collar' place in which the residents share a collection of similar physical experiences, personal qualities, and creative ingenuity across dimensions of work, leisure and everyday life.

Interestingly, the self–protective information behaviours found in Chatman's small worlds (described as Life in the Round) did not play a prominent role in information seeking in Whitney, except in isolated cases associated with fringe leisure or deviant behaviours. Significant community efforts to mediate barriers included sharing community resources and providing intermediaries to help navigate formal information systems.

A significant amount of *interpersonal information sharing* takes place informally, leading to an almost biotic network of information sharing channels. These channels often transfer information that is never recorded in any documentary form, and which is mostly lost to outsiders who rarely have access to it unless they know to ask. This active, circulatory system of information means that residents of Whitney interviewed for this study, while treasuring 'old' or historical information, overwhelmingly exhibited an openness to lifelong learning or ‘open–ended growth’ as well, characterized by self–directed learning, motivated by needs, and grounded in practice.

Cognitive authority is an important factor in determining who to ask for information. A balance of factors influence how or whether an individual might choose to consult another person for information, including depth of the need, the costs associated with the human source (for example whether they have to drive in from out of town), access to the human source, personal experience, and personal observations.

Although *temporal aspects* of life always involve the clock to some degree, changes in rural towns like Whitney are often still triggered by seasons and agriculture, by holidays, and by events. The skills that exist here have remained insulated from modern conveniences and technology, which leads to a different pace of life and different value system.

Isolation and marginalization have created a wonderfully unique, diverse environment that has managed to retain the flavours, skills and ways from times past. Information–intensive, hands–on skills such as storytelling, wilderness survival, foraging, canning and preserving, quilting, and animal husbandry are alive and well here, having been passed down hand to hand, person to person, in many cases without the advantages of technological and documentary support. As Chatman described it, rural and marginalized may mean folkish, but they do not mean primitive. They also don’t necessarily mean information poor; the scale of value simply shifts.

6 Among the Green Canoes – Information Seeking and Use in Whitney

6.1 Introduction

> (Peter *Palbiski*) *Local people only buy green canoes. You know why that is?*
>
> *(Me) No. Why?*
>
> (Peter *Palbiski*) *Because you can hide them. When they take them to their favourite lakes, they leave them.*
>
> *(Me) So the locals have little caches all over the place.*
>
> (Peter *Palbiski*) *Yeah…They put a rule in Algonquin Park that you can't leave a canoe. But a lot of them do. That's why they want them green. I mean, you can't find them.*
>
> *(Me) And they know where they leave them?*
>
> (Peter *Palbiski*) *Oh, they know where they leave them. They know where they leave them.*

In discussing the nature of experience in the remote, rural village of Whitney, Ontario in a broad, historical sense (Chapter 4, In the Canoe – The Community Experience on page 91), and then in more detail in the domains of work, play and everyday life (Chapter 5, After the Canoe – Work, Play and Everyday Life Experience in Whitney on page 129), I hope to have accomplished three things. First, I established that this context is an excellent setting in which to conduct not only a study of experience as an information source in general, but also specifically a study of rural, blue collar experiences. Secondly, I established the evidence to support my choice of theoretical frameworks on which to build this study (Savolainen's Everyday Life Information Seeking, Chatman's Small Worlds, Stebbins' Serious Leisure, and

Dewey's Experience and Education), all of which are valid and relevant interpretive frameworks to contextualize the phenomenon of experiential information as it emerged in my data. Finally, I told a version of Whitney's story, that, while not necessarily complete or chronological, introduces some specific, vivid, and important experiences that are familiar in their essence to most people who have lived in this community and others like it. Such a foundation, which has previously not existed in LIS literature, creates a common place from which to begin discussion of what constitutes experience as a source of information. In this chapter, I relate the pieces of this story – the specific experiences associated with living, working and playing in Whitney – to Information Seeking and Use. What do they mean individually? Collectively? What does this study say about experience as an information source? How can experience be defined as an information source?

6.2 Information Sources, Channels and Activities

To begin with, a discussion of the different types of information sources and channels present in the community of Whitney is warranted. Where does information come from and go to? How does it flow into, within, and out of this community? What kinds of information do people in this community need, seek, or avoid?

Definitions of information sources and channels are somewhat elusive in the literature. In Savolainen's writings about information source preferences, he does not define the difference between a source and a channel. In his book Looking for Information, Donald Case conflates the two terms with a reference in the index directing the reader from "Channels of Communication" to see "Sources of Information" (Case, 2007). For the purposes of this study, I will use Savolainen's model (2008b; 2010b) and elaborate on the difference with my own explanation. I'm using the term *information channel* to mean the broad category under which several types of individual *information sources* may be gathered. So while *human* or *interpersonal* is an information channel, *parents, siblings, friends, neighbours* etc. would all be considered individual information sources.

The following tables outline the different sources and channels of information described by my participants and encountered during the course of data collection. The intra–community column represents sources and channels found within the community; inter–community sources and channels are found between communities within the Township of South Algonquin, and extra–community sources and channels are those that connect Whitney to the other rural and greater metropolitan areas outside of the Township of South Algonquin. Note that I've designated personal experience as an intangible information source.

Without undertaking a survey approach to investigating channels and sources in this context, it's difficult to determine quantifiably how much emphasis is placed on either tangible or intangible sources. From my observations, however, I suggest that the two bear near equal weight in the daily life of residents. It would be difficult to exist here if either were missing in any substantial way. The tangible sources create the framework that supports the community, while the intangible sources form the organs, lifeblood and flesh around the skeleton.

6.2.1 Tangible Channels and Sources

Tangible channels tend to be formal, place–based or service–based and are provided at an organizational level. They may be obtained free or for a fee, and they are generally equally accessible to both insiders and outsiders to the community, although motivation to seek out these sources may vary depending on the group to which an individual belongs. For example, while residents of the community may attend religious services, use the post office, or visit the public library, non–residents are also welcome to do so. And while non–residents may also interact with local schools or clubs, it seldom happens as they generally have less reason to do so. I encountered examples of different tangible information sources and channels as part of the interview discussions. Others I observed within the community during several site visits or during environmental scanning. The following is a list of intra, inter, and extra tangible information sources that appeared in the data.

	Intra–community	**Inter–community**	**Extra–community**
Channels	Clubs/Organizations Elementary Schools Government (municipal, provincial, federal) Health Professions Internet Local businesses and organizations Personal technology Postal Service Public Library Religious Signage Transportation Infra-structure	Clubs/Organizations Health Professions Internet Local Media Municipal, Provincial or Federal Government Personal technology Postal Service Public Library Secondary Schools Transportation Infra-structure	Clubs/Organizations Health Professions Internet National Media Personal technology Postal Service Postsecondary schools Provincial or Federal Government Public Library Secondary Schools Transportation Infra-structure
Sources	Church services Health practitioners Laws and Bylaws Library materials Phone book/directories Physical environment	(Un)Addressed admail Health practitioners Local newspapers Newsletters	(Un)Addressed admail Library materials Major daily newspapers (Ottawa and Toronto) Specialist Health Practitioners Television/Radio

Figure 49: Tangible Information Channels and Sources
Tangible information channels and sources consulted by residents of Whitney, Ontario, sorted alphabetically.

As a case in point, Charlene Alexander, CEO of the Whitney Public Library, reinforced that visitors choose to engage actively with some of the tangible channels of information during a discussion of tourist use of the library. “It doubles my usage in the summer,” she noted of tourism. Clearly, visitors do make an effort to engage with at least some of these tangible sources of information.

Currently, schools play a significant role in information provision to children, and the media, businesses, government and health care providers are a significant source of information to adult residents. Technology, including the internet and personal devices like cell phones, is viewed as a channel for obtaining information not easily accessible from within the community, or where privacy is preferred to using human sources.

6.2.1.1 Transportation Infrastructure

The importance of tangible transportation infrastructure to information flow in this community cannot be understated. For the first half of this community's history, the primary way new information entered or left the community was through the interpersonal connections between residents and visitors who entered or left the community via pre–determined transportation routes. Whether people travelled for work, or for pleasure, or as part of migration patterns, the tangible transportation infrastructure affected everything from the places that messages could go to or come from, to the length of time messages took to arrive, to the actual content of the information delivered. In the early days, information was carried by foot, by canoe, by horses and sleigh or wagon, by railway, and eventually by car when the roads arrived. The area was also serviced regularly by float planes, which could land on Galeairy Lake, and took visitors and supplies into interior lakes in the Park.

Figure 50: Gordon Palbiski's Float Plane, 1977
Image courtesy of Gordon and Clover Palbiski.

Telephones and media arrived shortly thereafter, and the turn of the 21rst century saw the arrival of the internet. Ingenuitive locals have always found ways to fill in the gaps in coverage left by formal systems of transportation and communication. Reliability, consistency, speed and privacy of the available channel(s) are important considerations noted in the data.

6.2.1.1.1 Post Office

The formal postal service appeared several times in various interviews and in personal letters. The delay between sending and receiving news was important in decisions to choose the postal channel, particularly in the early days of the community. In her correspondence dating back to the 1950s, Hazel Mask indicated that she monitored delivery times. “It takes 4 days now for letters to come,” she noted on more than one occasion in letters to her husband, Peter Mask.

6.2.1.1.2 Wholesale Truck

Mrs. Mask, who operated a general store and restaurant near town, also noted that letters and parcels were sometimes sent out informally via the ‘Wholesale Truck’, which brought supplies to businesses in town and presumably made stops in other communities along a predetermined route as well. The wholesale truck drivers were willing to carry packages and letters and leave them for pickup in other communities along their route, and were able to do so more quickly than the formal post office channel, perhaps even in the same day. While formal postal channels had associated fees, there was no indication of whether the wholesale truck drivers were compensated for their efforts. Wholesale delivery trucks still service area businesses (particularly the restaurants), but there was no mention of outgoing mail being sent with the truck drivers anymore in the interviews I conducted.

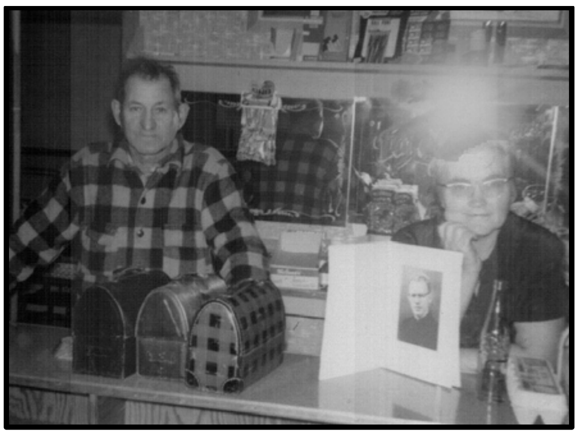


Figure 51: Peter and Hazel Mask and the General Store
Left image of Peter and Hazel Mask, circa 1960. Right image of the Mask homestead. The Masks operated a general store out of their home (window framed in white, lower left). The restaurant was in a building to the left of the home. Images courtesy of Monda Michel.

6.2.1.1.3 Train

In the early days of the community, the village enjoyed train service along the Ottawa–Arnprior–Parry Sound route, with a stop at the Whitney Station. According to Father Tom Hunt's memoir, "Prior to construction of the Canada Atlantic Railway, which later became the Grand Trunk and finally the Canadian National, the district of Whitney was served from Maynooth….The regular train service in 1895 only came as far as Barry's Bay and mixed trains came to Whitney" (1981, 3). Arrivals ranged from every twenty minutes at the peak of hauling wheat and freight, to twice a week near the end of its life.

Figure 52: Whitney Railway Station
Whitney Station, built circa 1895. Image courtesy of Clifford Olmstead.

According to Gordon Palbiski, there was also “a branch line from the rail station to near Opeongo Lake Dam that serviced four [lumber] camps” (2010, 13), and this branch line made up to three trips daily. In Phil Roche’s memoir, he recalled that the Whitney station was quite busy “as most passenger, freight and express and mail came by rail” (1995, 5) up until the closure of the station. Train service continued until at least the 1950s, and the tracks were lifted in the 1980s according to Clifford Olmstead. Ann Boldt recalled that “with the train coming in, we could have stuff shipped in…and you could buy a ticket and go to Barry’s Bay,” if you wanted to head out of town.

6.2.1.1.4 Private Delivery Service for Hire

Mention was also made in the interviews, existing literature and in personal correspondence to the formal, but privately owned, daily delivery service between Madawaska and Huntsville operated by Sandy Heggart *(b1882–d1957)* in the early to mid 1950s. Despite the fact that Mr. Heggart was illiterate, he is credited with consecutively starting a number of local businesses including Opeongo Lodge, a boarding house (which doubled as the Courthouse), and a service station. Several mentions were made to his role as a delivery person, where he built a business out of picking up and delivering mail, groceries, and even people along his route starting in approximately 1924. In a personal recollection of Mr. Heggart, his great–niece Floella Putterill described the situation.

> *For many years he ran the mail route from Whitney to Huntsville and picked up and delivered the Madawaska mail as well. Sandy had a keen mind and was able to remember where to place the bags of mail for each place on the route to Huntsville and all the mail for Huntsville Post office, which he had picked up in Madawaska and Whitney. He did the same on the return route. As I said, he couldn't read or write but never let this on. He was able to do all this and not make a mistake, quite a feat, year after year. He also took passengers to Huntsville and back, while carrying the mail. This was great for Whitney people who wanted to go out and shop in Huntsville or go to the dentist.*

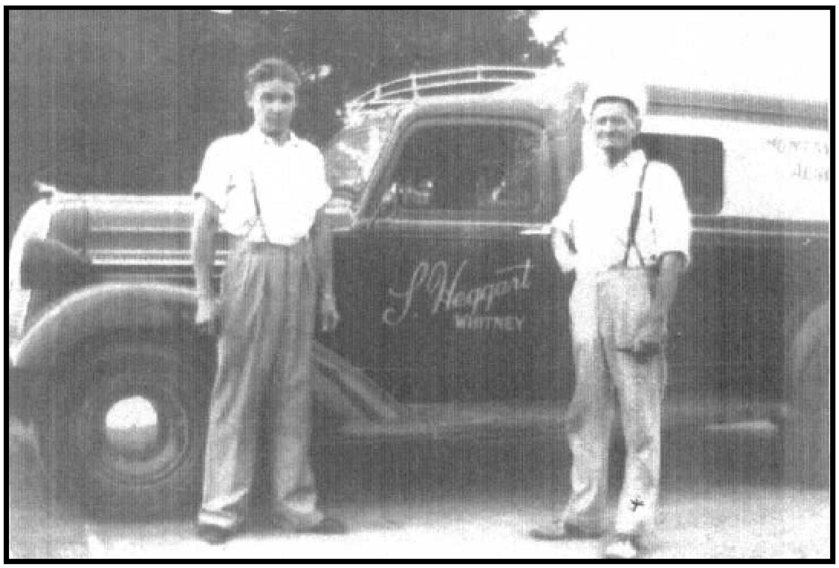


Figure 53: Heggart's Delivery Service
Sandy Heggart and his delivery truck (right). Sandy's nephew, Donald Shields (left). Image courtesy of Clifford Olmstead.

In her book, <u>Gertrude Baskerville: The Lady of Algonquin Park,</u> Gaye Clemson described in some detail how Sandy supported residents who lived outside of town, in particular, inside Algonquin Park along the Highway 60 corridor. These locations were even more remote and isolated than the village, and often the residents were in their retirement years and facing increasing personal needs. Gaye explained that Sandy

> *...was liked by all and was rarely stopped by bad weather. To facilitate matters she [Gertrude Baskerville] built a special bear–proof box out by Highway 60, which was hidden in the bushes. Every six weeks or so, Gertie would phone the IGA in Huntsville and place her food and equipment order. Sandy would pick up her grocery list and take her mail into Huntsville. In town he would pick up her groceries and anything else that she needed with her mail and pay the appropriate store keeper. He would then drop the supplies off on his way through the Park and pick up the money that Gertie would leave for him in the box. (2001, 49-50).*

This example illustrates that a complex system of formal and informal communication had evolved to allow residents to connect with outside communities via third parties. Components of this information system included pickup and drop–off points, notes, phone calls, coding systems, and exchanges of money. Sandy's delivery service, although taken over by his son Guy before Sandy's death in 1957, ceased to exist at some point in the interim, leaving a gap in personal pickup and delivery services for both goods and people.

6.2.1.1.5 Contemporary Mail and Formal Couriers

In current times, mail service is still important, and the village is serviced by one post office located in the downtown area. In addition to delivering advertising and regular mail, it also provides a channel to obtain material or commercial goods purchased elsewhere through the internet or mail order, which residents increasingly take advantage of.

Figure 54: Canada Post office in Whitney, Ontario.

Although service is reliable, the location poses an access problem for people who live outside of the village. “We’ve got to go out for our mail,” said one participant. “It’s an 8 mile drive from here to the Whitney Post Office, so it’s a convenience that a lot of other people have that we don’t have.” Considering that a return trip could exceed 30 kilometers, it is reasonable to assume that access to regular Canada Post deliveries are reduced for residents who live outside of the village. Courier companies will make deliveries to the area, but costs can be prohibitive. Until recently, lack of municipal addressing also complicated the process of finding specific locations. For more discussion about the challenges associated with locating addresses in town prior to municipal addressing, see section 5.5.2 Emergency Services on page 182.

6.2.1.1.6 Volunteer Driver Network

To fill the need for transportation, current residents have developed a number of strategies to maintain the inter and extra–community information channels. The lack of public transportation out of town means that residents needing non–urgent medical attention rely on a network of volunteer drivers who commit their time to transporting patients who need to see specialist physicians or otherwise seek medical care. Residents have learned to make such trips multi–purpose to maximize their benefit, for example, by doing their shopping or by seeking entertainment at the same time. Some residents are able to access funding for such trips to compensate volunteer drivers for mileage.

For urgent medical needs, paramedics are available through the local emergency service operation. As well, the medical centre has a helipad, which allows for air ambulance services to transport people in critical need.

Figure 55: Helipad for Medical Evacuations

6.2.1.1.7 Carpooling/Friends/Deliveries

Because “there’s not a lot of money in the winter time. Even for gas to go out of town,” for trips that are not funded, it’s common to see carpooling or offering to pick items up for friends and neighbours to save them a trip. One participant explained that “one week for groceries, two or three families will get together and take that wheel. And another week the next family will take it, and go buy groceries and go to No Frills in Bancroft. It’s cheaper.” Another participant described the situation a little more broadly, “We depend on friends a lot.” Other residents have things delivered through store–based programs, like medication from out of town pharmacies that deliver to Whitney once or twice a week, or vegetables from out of town markets. Knowing how to access affordable goods and services is an important aspect of experience in this community.

6.2.1.2 Depth of Tangible Channels

The pool of tangible channels and sources of information that exist in this community are common and familiar in that all sources and channels on this list can be found in larger urban centres as well. What is different, however, is that the depth of resources available in this community is significantly smaller in scale than what is typically found in the city, and the residents often have more direct involvement in opening channels. For example, while residents in an urban centre would have access to a large central library and several–to–many smaller branch libraries that are all generally open full time hours, Whitney residents have one library building that is smaller than a typical urban branch library. Also worthy of note is the fact that, unlike most urban libraries where a central municipal government makes funding decisions about library service, every resident of Whitney had a stake in bringing library services to town.

Figure 56: Whitney Public Library
Front view (left), rear view (right). Note that the library occupies only the upper floor, while the basement level belongs to the medical centre. The three windows under the roof on the top level (right photo) belong to the library.

The Whitney library dates back to 1967 and was originally housed in the Red Cross Outpost building. Between 1972 when the building was leased to a physician and 1978 when the current medical centre/library building opened, the community had nowhere else to place the books, so they were placed in storage under the stage at St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church

Parish Hall. During this time, a library board was established, land was donated by the Curling Club Committee, and an active group of volunteers applied for grants and fundraised in order to cover the final cost of the building. A document titled The Post Memorial Library found at the public library outlined the history of how the library came to exist:

> *During 1977 and 1978, the Medical Centre Committee assiduously fundraised to match the Wintario grant. The Committee held a beer garden, a walk–a–thon, a cross–country–ski–a–thon, bingos every second week, bake sales and rummage sales. Donations were requested from every household in town, and each store had a donation can. The final cost of the building was $108 000.*

Because the Wintario grant was earmarked for improvements to an existing library, the "library board moved all the books into a very old, dilapidated and musty building behind Roosters General Store, and proceeded to operate with Theresa Kuiack as the volunteer librarian" in order to meet the grant criteria.

Currently, the library is open 3 days each week for a total of 12 hours per week, and there are no weekend hours. The available space does not allow for private meeting or study rooms, art installations, programming, or community gathering spaces that might be found in a typical urban central or branch library. The library is staffed by one person, who is also the CEO of the local library system. Programming opportunities, including outreach, are limited due to restrictions imposed by the physical space, the hours of operation, and manpower, all of which are influenced by limited funding.

6.2.1.3 Scope of Tangible Channels

The scope and variety of tangible channels and sources available to this community is also limited. Limitations to the scope of information sources are harder to identify because they represent channels and sources that do not appear in the list above. One must think on or compare the list to what might be found in the city to discover these missing channels.

Urban populations enjoy much broader access to communities of practice (Cox, 2005; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), or social groups that develop over time in a specific geographic or virtual location, among a group of people who share an interest in a common theme or topic. Although communities of practice have evolved around task-based social functions in Whitney like fundraising dinners for example, and historically, around quilting, most notably absent are communities of practice associated with formal or subject–specific leisure organizations such as clubs, leagues, and recreational sports operated by municipalities or groups like the YMCA where you must commit cash/resources to become a member. Communities of practice are important to studies of information behaviour because they are known to be places where people create, co-create, and share information informally. Learning is situated within the group, and interaction leads to both personal and group identity building outcomes.

It might be argued that these belong in the ‘extra–community’ category because they are available out of town, and I did find evidence that some motivated residents make the effort to engage with these external sources and channels. However, by all reasonable measures, they are simply too far away geographically to be practically accessible to most residents on a casual basis, especially during the winter months when weather and road conditions are an ongoing concern. Because physical presence is often required at meetings or gatherings, or for use of facilities and equipment, technology is of little use in bridging the gap in either the short or long term. The population of Whitney is just too small to support such organizations locally, either financially or with membership.

The village does, however, rely on its community centre (Lester Smith Recreation Centre) as a space for local gatherings that cross a spectrum of events ranging from sports (skating, hockey, baseball) to fundraisers, to community spirit days for children (for example, Halloween activities, or March break camps). The community also has a Seniors Centre, designated for activities related to residents age 65 and older.

Figure 57: Lester Smith Recreation Centre
The recreation centre hosts community events like fundraising dinners and school break activities for the children. The public skating rink is behind the building to the right.

Figure 58: Seniors Centre, Township of South Algonquin Offices
This building, built as a seniors centre, is now also home to the Municipal offices of the Township of South Algonquin. The TSA occupies the upstairs floor, while the seniors make use of the downstairs floor.

Both buildings serve multiple purposes, however, and it is not unusual to see space in these buildings rented out on both short and long term leases. For example, the Seniors Centre is currently also home to the Township of South Algonquin Municipal Offices on the upper floor of the building. In addition, from May 2014 to November 2014, space in the Lester

Smith Building was leased as office space to an outside engineering firm (Township of South Algonquin, 2010). Redirecting the use of community space for Township or commercial business obviously impacts the ability of the community to use the space, consequently interrupting opportunities for communities of practice to develop.

6.2.1.4 Tangible Channels as Information Filters

Evidence of filtering information also appeared in the data with regard to tangible information sources. Residents have access to a lot of information where contingencies determine if the information is useful or applicable, particularly with regard to government information. So while residents may actively seek out information about funding or programming opportunities, a complex and semi–informal process of filtering takes place whereby individuals must try to determine what is useful information and what is not useful. The filtering process helps people determine whether the content applies to this community (Is the community eligible? Does it fall within the geographic boundaries of the program? Does the organization serve this community?) or to them individually (Do I qualify to be able to access the resource? Where is my family income in relation to the program boundaries?)

In some cases, filtering is provided by tangible channels, whereby a local organization may undertake to spread the word about a program or opportunity that they know applies at the community level. An example of this would be where the Township notifies residents of government funded home repair programs in conjunction with tax bills, or more recently, the LEAP program, which provides low–income households with up to $600 in relief toward energy bills that are in arrears (Township of South Algonquin, October 2014). It may also occur through intangible channels, whereby a friend, neighbour or relative serendipitously shares information they encountered that they think may be applicable, which could result in residents actively seeking more detailed information about the program.

6.2.2 Intangible Channels and Sources

By contrast, intangible information sources and channels tend to be informal, based on social or personal connections, and are generally obtained free of charge or they are incidental to other fee–based services. They are primarily accessible to insiders within the community, and in a limited way, to outsiders who have connections within the community. With the exception of tourists who contract guiding services, casual visitors to the community would not generally have access to or a need for this type of information.

	Intra–community	**Inter–community**	**Extra–community**
Channels	Heritage Interpersonal (local) Personal Experience Physical Environment Spiritual	Heritage Interpersonal (local) Personal Experience Spiritual	Interpersonal (locals with extra–community experience) Personal Experience
Sources	Faith–based knowledge Friends, family, neighbours Local events Observation Physical environment Social knowledge Tacit knowledge Trial and error		

Figure 59: Intangible Information Channels and Sources
Intangible information channels and sources consulted by residents of Whitney, Ontario, sorted alphabetically.

The intangible sources I encountered were remarkable in general because these types of sources are not usually discussed in LIS literature. Of the above intra–community channels, three warrant mentioning in more detail: interpersonal, spiritual, and tacit knowledge/physical environment.

6.2.2.1 Interpersonal Sources

There were many instances of interpersonal sources being consulted to satisfy information needs. Examples covered the spectrum from calling on a friend or neighbour to help with a task (for example, home or auto repair), to collective tasks performed communally, to seeking advice or support in other ways from family and friends.

6.2.2.1.1 Personal Project–Based Information Sharing

Stories of information exchanges around personal projects appeared several times. Jane Dumas recalled how building a home was often a family project. “They all did it together,” she said. “The fathers and the brothers [and the mothers] would come and everybody would work.” Clifford Olmstead recalled how he built his first house at the age of 22. When I asked how he learned to do that he replied, “Well, just by helping the carpenter work. And whenever I came to angles or something I couldn’t do, I got somebody here for a few hours.”

6.2.2.1.2 Collaborative Project–Based Information Sharing

Community–based information sharing was common as well. The Catholic Church supper is an annual fundraising event held on the August long weekend each year. Support is strong both from within the community and from outside of the community, and people come to reconnect with friends they haven’t seen in a while, to share in a meal of turkey and pie, to play games and to visit the rummage sale. Cooking tasks are performed not only by the Catholic Women’s League, but also by many donations throughout the community of volunteer time and resources. Participants commented that a lot of tacit information sharing happens at such events, particularly as it relates to learning to cook turkeys and bake pies. “I just learned along the way by hanging out with the men and women there,” said one participant. “Roasting turkeys and stuff like that, you know? You follow their directions and it will always work out.” Similar experiences are shared in non-religious community fundraising contexts as well.

6.2.2.1.3 Sources Based on Observation

Interestingly, interpersonal sources with unique or strategic positions in the community were sometimes acknowledged as channels to personal or private information as well. Participants were understandably reluctant to discuss this type of intangible information channel and source in contemporary times, but evidence in the documentary data identified situations related to times past. Reference was occasionally made to staff at the post office, some of whom had a tendency to share information inferred through work in casual conversation, suggesting that observations about letter writing patterns were ongoing. Two letters stood out in this regard. One person wrote, "[the postmistress] says she doesn't see so many letters from you now. Oh? I said. No, he must have other interests up there." A different individual included the following postscript in a letter dated around the same time. "I decided," she said, "that these envelopes are a bit thin and so that [the postmistress] won't satisfy her curiosity, I'll add an extra bit of paper." Interestingly, this example illustrates the delicate balance occurring, at least in times past, between seeking and obscuring access to information of a personal nature. Even though letters travelled through formal, tangible information channels, a complex process of informal and intangible mediation occurred. These examples seemed to be contained to an historical time period, as there was no indication in the data that this occurs at the post office today.

6.2.2.1.4 Valuing Formal and Informal Sources

I saw many examples in the data of where informal social sources of information were very important. I also saw occasions where social sources actually trumped longstanding, formal, tangible channels and sources of information common in other environments. This was most obviously so with real estate transactions. The real estate business is well established across

Canada in terms of commercial infrastructure to support vendors, purchasers and real estate agents, including through the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) guidelines, a network of real estate agents, and a national website to advertise properties for sale. The market in Whitney, however, is often quite slow in comparison to larger urban centres, with seldom more than two or three properties for sale on the Multiple Listing Service (mls.ca) at any given time. Land evaluation often relies on tax assessment values, because many of the real estate transactions that do occur are between family members and are not considered arm's length or reflective of fair market value (for example, when a property changes hands due to inheritances). The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) property assessments often list the most recent sales data as "No valid sale within the last five years."

Real estate agents are excluded from the information process when transactions happen privately, making formal systems like OREA, real estate agencies, mls.ca and MPAC of little help either in searching for or valuating properties. Yet, properties do change hands effectively through informal systems of communication. When I inquired about the subject, one participant explained further. "When you live here, you kinda know when things are coming up" based on relationships and personal knowledge of demographics and so on. "Lots of stuff never comes up," he continued. "Like the cottage I bought never saw the market. And if I ever go to sell, it will never see the market. There's always people that want it, and you just know that. So that happens a lot around here. Especially with local people that know."

6.2.2.2 Spirituality

The role of Christian–based spirituality in the community development and functioning is longstanding. Early Polish settlers brought with them strong Catholic traditions, and these traditions were supported locally by the Catholic Church in both infrastructure (church buildings) and in human ministry. Anglican and United Churches followed, establishing places of worship, as well as a number of other denominations whose parishioners meet in homes to worship.

Figure 60: St. Martin of Tours Catholic Parish
The new St. Martin of Tours Catholic Parish

Figure 61: Smith Post United Church
Smith Post Memorial United Church

Figure 62: St. Anthony's Anglican Church
St. Anthony's Anglican Church.

In the early days, children were taught Christian values at both public and separate schools according to provincial curriculum, and of course, in the home, where in at least one case, early birth records indicated that a newborn was welcomed into the faith through baptism as early as 9 days of age. There is no reason to expect that this was an unusual circumstance.

6.2.2.2.1 Influences of Geography and Demographics

Participants in the current study also indicated affiliations with spirituality, although it was noted that there are generational and geographic differences these days in the degree to which people practice spirituality outwardly. While general faith–based practices and traditions were described as 'strong', particularly in the rural areas like Whitney as compared to more urban centres like Bancroft, people acknowledged both a desire to see the tradition continue, and a quiet lament that circumstances are changing. The story is similar to that of many communities around the province and elsewhere experiencing declining attendance in all faiths, especially among the younger generation. “It would be nice to go to service on Sunday morning and see your children and their children and your great grandchildren. But you hardly see that any more. It’s sad,” said one participant.

“They just choose not to go,” said one participant of the younger generation. “You talk to them all the time about religion, you brought them here, and then they chose not to come…It’s too bad, because it would be nice to go to mass on Sunday morning and see your children and their children and your great grandchildren. But you hardly see that any more. It’s sad.”

6.2.2.2.2 Spiritual Leadership

Still other participants noted a strong desire to serve the community through spiritual leadership. Discussions of “being called” or making decisions to “choose Christ” emerged several times, and came to the recipients both early and later in life. Edward and Josephine Lentz, for example, shared the story of Edward’s father, who decided to fulfill a childhood dream and seek religious training in 1965. He was ordained a minister in the United Church in 1971 at the age of 55, serving his community as a spiritual leader for another thirty years before finally retiring permanently.

6.2.2.2.3 Seeking Moral Direction

Some participants indicated that spirituality played a role in their decisions to search for information, or to find their moral compass. “One day,” said one participant, “I woke up and said, there must be something better.” Another described a period of reflection where they consciously made an effort to “figure out what God was trying to say to me.” Although certainly not representative of the entire population of this community, nevertheless, examples of spiritual information seeking of this variety are clearly present in the data, and these experiences influence both the trajectory of individual lives and the shape of the community as a whole.

6.2.2.3 Tacit Knowledge and the Physical Environment

Finally, there is the example of tacit information – information that is generally accepted within the community, but rarely stated because it is commonly understood. Such information is often associated with the physical environment, and so to describe this type of information source further, I return to the example of the green canoe in the opening quote.

6.2.2.3.1 Accounts in Published Manuscripts

A number of examples of tacit information in this community came through examinations of non–fiction accounts by outsiders to the community who spent time with members of the community. In the book Joe Lavally and the Paleface in Algonquin Park, written by Bernard Wicksteed, he recounts two such examples. Joe Lavally, the son of an Algonquin Indian mother and French father, was a guide in the Park and also a resident of Whitney. Wicksteed describes Lavally's menu planning for the interior canoe trip:

> *There was plenty of canned beef stew in the store, but Joe said it was heavy to carry on portages, and would let me buy only six tins. For the rest, we took five loaves of bread, flour, tea, matches, salt and a huge cabbage. Joe insisted on the cabbage, and I couldn't think why until the next day when I saw him pulling off the leaves and wrapping them round the butter. "The bushman's refreezerator," he said. We never did eat the cabbage, but it kept our butter solid on the hottest day. (1948, 16)*

In another example, Wicksteed describes how Lavally patched the canoe they were carrying when a hole appeared.

> *Can't go places in a Chrysly old canoe with a hole in it," said Joe. He examined the tear carefully, spat on it and rubbed the dirt away. "It'll mend," he said, and going up to a balsam tree, cut away a pimple of gum with his knife and brought it back to the canoe. He mixed it with some of our precious cabbage–cooled butter, and stirred the result into a tacky mass which he kept fluid by the flame of a match. When the desired consistency was reached, he smoothed the mixture over the tear and left it to dry. The whole process took less than five minutes, but the canoe did not let in one drop of water throughout the trip, though we dragged it over rocks, sunken trees and countless beaver dams. (1948, 18)*

Although I had hoped to encounter more examples of this type of hands–on, how–to information in contemporary times, I realize now that doing so would have required substantially increasing or narrowing the scope of this study. Nevertheless, interesting contemporary examples did emerge around a number of themes.

6.2.2.3.2 Hunting Season

There exist community assumptions and expectations around hunting season, particularly as it affects attendance at school for the children. Several participants explained the importance of hunting in the community, acknowledging that "these children learn to hunt at their father's knees, you know…and some at their mothers." Another elaborated, "and even in grade school, when it comes to hunting season, the boys are gone, lots of the girls are gone hunting with dad, grandpa, mom. It's assumed that the school should know that that's hunting season and they'll be gone that week." Another participant explained, "that's just the rhythm of the year. That's when you go hunting for the moose. That's when you go hunting for the deer, you know. It's not like the school tries to say, oh, you can't go. It wouldn't work. It'd never fly."

Further, expectations around how one becomes a hunter exist as well. Beyond the formal training and licensing required, it is often a social and intergenerational activity, and people participate as much for the experience and tradition of belonging to the hunting group as they do for the thrill of the catch.

> *So everybody has their own piece of bush, you know and that's ours, and Patty's part of our camp cuz my dad's generation who started those camps, they're getting very old. We're losing some of 'em. And our generation's in there, and we're in the retirement age, my brother already is. So you need new ones comin' in. My kids, my son in law, my son hunt with us. And of course they've got little guys. They'll start to bring them to the camp in years to come. They'll keep that tradition. (Peter Palbiski)*

6.2.2.3.3 Survival – Food Supplies

Discussions of tacit information involved in producing and preserving food were abundant in the interview data. Participants recalled that locals used to "do all the canning and preserving they could" with reports of elaborate root cellar storage systems, and at least one person in town who had "close to a thousand jars" of jams and berries in her basement, most of which was given away as gifts.

Figure 63: Outdoor Root Cellar
This outdoor root cellar belonging to Fred Kmith is buried into the side of a hill. The wood on the left is where the access door is. The pipe emerging from the top is for ventilation.

The knowledge of how to preserve food "went from one generation to the next," said Anna Belle Jocko. "My mother learned from her mother, and I learned from my mother. And my kids learned from me." Although most of the discussion was about preserving in general, one participant noted that details were very important to quality as well. "You can't pick beans after a rain," Ann Boldt told me, "cuz they rust if you pick them when they're wet."

6.2.2.3.4 Survival – Cultural Heritage

Other examples arose of stores of knowledge that were lost to future generations. Anna Belle Jocko shared the story of her husband's First Nations heritage, and the knowledge gap between earlier generations and her four daughters who are status Indians. "If you seen a native person [when we were younger] you were wondering what do they do. Nobody seemed to know anything about them or their culture. And that was too bad because we lost out on that. If we hada known what all they had done, we would have been, maybe have known a bit more about our own culture." Still, she makes an effort to catch up on and reclaim elements of this type of cultural knowledge for herself and her family. "We went to Golden Lake [reserve]," she said. "We didn't know about this going on in Golden Lake until my daughter's friend found out and she let us know, and that's how we started to go and do different stuff like that. We made drums, a drum for ourselves, and moccasins. It's very interesting. We're going to go back in the fall when it starts up again."

It was clear to me that information is passed from person to person with a great deal of success in this context. Interestingly, however, it's not a foolproof process and many variables affect success and longevity of information from generation to generation. "Them were hard times," said one participant describing the early history of the community. "And I sometimes think that things could go back to them days, you know." I asked if there was enough memory of those skills within the community to survive if Whitney returned to “hard times.” The participant replied, “The young generation, I don’t think they could go back... Maybe they could survive. But I don’t know.” Yet, many occasions of contemporary “hard times” emerged from the data. In today’s terms, hard times were described as encountering difficulties “making ends meet,” providing food or clothing for children, covering utility bills, being on welfare and chronic unemployment topped the list. It seems that all generations have encountered hard times, but the available resources, solutions, and specific types of difficulties included in the list may have changed over time.

6.2.2.3.5 Animal Characteristics and Behaviour

The topic of animal behaviour came up several times in discussions. I learned that the eyes of pickerel reflect light (or “glow”) in the dark. I also learned that farmers keep donkeys, to, among other things, protect herds from the wolves which are an ongoing concern. “Their noise sickens the wolves. For whatever reason, wolves don’t come around,” said Sarah Darraugh. “They won’t come into the herd with a donkey.” She also noted that cows respond to animal threats in a way similar to elephants by moving the smallest or most vulnerable cows to the centre of the herd.

Another participant related a story of how someone from out of town announced to him one day, “Your dog just killed a beaver.” He asked for clarification and the informant repeated, “Your dog just killed a beaver.” The participant continued, “No! …a beaver will take on a pack of wolves. There’s no dog that kills a beaver. So I go out there, and it’s not a beaver.” Whether this is a scientific truth or not, the participant’s experience was such that he believed it to be true and generalizable, which demonstrates a clear understanding among residents of the existence of a natural order of things with regard to the predictability of animal behaviour, and this information is used to orient themselves to the environment.

6.2.2.3.6 Predatory Dangers

The natural order of things extends to (in)appropriate responses, particularly with regard to predatory animal behaviour toward humans. Bears are among the biggest threats in this environment, and ironically, also among the greatest attractions. People (tourists included) visit the local landfill at dusk especially to see them, and it's not unusual to see a dozen bears or more in an evening on any given day.

Figure 64: Bears at the Landfill
Bears visit the landfill daily, looking for a meal. People visit the landfill to see the bears. (Images courtesy of Frank VanBaal (left) and Emil Michel (right).)

"We went to the dump," said Frank Van Baal, explaining how he had taken some guests along for the ride to see bears one day.

> *One of them was very afraid of bears. So we put her in the middle and we walked up in a line of five. We were takin' pictures and that. And [she] started freakin' out…turned around and there was a bear comin' up behind us. And as soon as she started screamin' it started chargin'. I told her, whatever you do, don't panic. Well she kept screamin'. I told her [he whispers] be quiet! You're getting it excited. She just kept screamin'. She couldn't…I went like this [puts his hands up, yells back as if to the bear, Arggh!] and it stopped about five feet away and it was goin' like this [grunting] bouncing from one paw to another. He was doin' this challenging thing. And I said to her stop screamin' or I'm gonna let that bear come right at ya. And she still, so I shouted one more time.*

> *If this bear doesn't turn around I'm getting outa here. And it turned and started slowly walkin' away but it turned and looked over its shoulder like, 'I could take you.' But when I shouted at it, I had to have in my head and my whole body had to exude, 'I could kill you' to the bear. 'I could kill you. I'm lettin' you live'. And it took everything I could to convince myself I could do that. But that's what I had to have. You have to have that.*

When I asked where he learned that from, he said "My uncle. To make yourself look big [in front of bears]. My uncle Frank [Kuiack]. Yeah."

6.2.2.3.7 Outside knowledge in conflict with local knowledge

Examples also arose that highlighted the conflict between local knowledge (practical) and outside knowledge (theoretical). For example, the Ministry of Natural Resources makes decisions regarding how to manage invasive species of both flora and fauna, and although their decisions are presumably based on scientific research, it occasionally creates unanticipated results. Any particular course of action rarely involves formal consultation with local residents, who note the varying levels of success. "They try something for a while and find out it doesn't work," said one participant. "And they do more damage with their regulations, and they have to concede after a while and realize that you know, they were wrong and the ordinary locals were right. Shoulda listened to them, eh." Other examples of conflict appeared when outsiders try to navigate their way through the local economy. Gordon Palbiski recounts in his memoir how the new owner of Hay Lake Lodge wouldn't take his friendly advice. "They tried to stay open for winter," he said. "I told them when they took over that the cabins were not winterized and don't do it as there was no winter business to support the cost. You would have to gradually build that up. He said to me, 'I am running this now, not you'. I said, 'Good luck', and left. He was there about four years and he sold it."

6.2.3 Information Seeking Activities and Content

While channels and sources explain how the information flows in this community, information rich activities represent the topics residents actively or passively seek, avoid or share information about. The majority of information seeking is need–based, with leisure information seeking being the notable exception. Apart from employment or self–employment information seeking, the following list does not include many work–related information seeking activities due to the scope of this project. The following is a sampling of the topics people in this rural community seek information about.

Aging in place
Aboriginal heritage
Agriculture – Animal care
Agriculture – Farming, gardening
Agriculture – Shows
Animal control
Automotive repair
Boat building & repair
Building construction & repair
Business (starting, operating)
Childcare
Civic engagement
Commercial (out of town shopping)
Community events
Community service
Cost of living
Emergency services
Employment
Entertainment
Ethnic heritage
Crafting
Education
Fibre arts
Fiction & non–fiction books
Finances
Firearms
Food (shopping, cooking, preserving etc.)
Genealogy, family history
Geography (terrain, maps etc.)
Government funding
Guiding
Health and healthcare
History
Hobbies
Hunting & trapping
Laws and bylaws
Legal advice
Leisure activities
Mental health
Military
Municipal information
Oral history
Accommodations
Photographs
Poaching
Politics
Property
Recycling and salvaging
Relationships
Religion/Spirituality
Rules
Safety
Social Services
Sport and sport equipment
Substance abuse
Taxidermy
Tourism
Transportation
Travel
Weather
Wilderness related
Volunteering

6.3 Information Behaviours and Practices

According to Marcia Bates, information behaviour is “the currently preferred term used to describe the many ways in which human beings interact with information, in particular, the ways in which people seek and utilize information” (2007). While the term information behaviour takes a person–centred, cognitive approach to explaining human interaction with information, the concept of information practice has recently emerged in the literature to account for the external factors (social and contextual) inherent in information seeking and use. Although the two ideas are distinct, there is nevertheless a significant amount of overlap, and discussion of findings from this study must happen in both domains. The following sections highlight areas where results from data analysis converged with or diverged from existing theories of information behaviour and practice.

6.3.1 Way of Life

Savolainen's model of Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS) attempts to explain how people subjectively and objectively choose and use information sources to enhance their lives or solve problems during daily activities associated with leisure and maintenance (2005). A person's *way of life* consists of not only the activities in which they normally engage, but also the preferences with which they choose these activities. He suggests that people seek an *order of things* to maintain their way of life. When the order of things is in balance, the person has achieved a *mastery of life*. When it is not in balance, people actively seek information (which could be culturally determined, or individually determined) to re–establish a meaningful, stable order. The activities involved in maintaining this balance involve both active and passive information seeking behaviours and practices.

6.3.1.1 Formal Rules

Rules that govern and maintain a stable way of life for residents in this community exist, and run the spectrum from formalized laws embedded in the federal, provincial, or municipal government systems, to generally accepted rules for social behaviour, to personal preferences and choices in values and behaviour. On the whole, the rules that make up the way of life in

Whitney appear to be stable enough that people can choose to abide by them consistently to maintain a long term, personally acceptable or meaningful order of things in their lives with a manageable level of effort. They are also stable enough that residents can mount successful attempts to challenge or circumvent these rules when necessary, thus exerting deliberate effort to create an order of things in their lives that *is* personally meaningful, although in some cases, perhaps different from the norm. People who choose not to achieve mastery of life (or who are unable to), typically move elsewhere.

With the arrival of the Township's new Official Plan (OP), however, efforts to further formalize the way of life in this community come into conflict with informal tradition more frequently. For example, although the OP rules could be enforced strictly, there is nevertheless discretion in deciding which rules to enforce and when. At times, the Township appears to be seeking a balance between respect for the residents and progress. At others, actions taken to enforce the OP (or only parts of it) may seem heavy-handed, arbitrary, or out of the norm for residents who have lived for generations without the restrictions and formality imposed by organizing a Township under an OP. This has introduced a new degree of challenge to the formal information environment.

6.3.1.2 Informal Rules

In this rural, blue collar context, the informal is as important as the formal, since formalized mechanisms of creating and enforcing rules don't always apply. Information about where formal and informal rules diverge is rarely recorded in documentary form (for example the fact that parking bylaws are not enforced locally). When conflicts between formal and informal information sources arise, people tend to prefer informal sources as the primary way of obtaining the required information. Information behaviours and practices default to the pragmatic over the theoretical, and people rely on personal experience (their own and that of those close them) to determine where the boundaries between the two exist.

6.3.2 Barriers and Approximation

People in this rural community face barriers to accessing information in ways that advantaged populations typically do not face, and these barriers create a unique way of life in the community. Examples of how everything that happens here takes more time, costs more money, and requires traveling greater distances (which in turn takes more time and incurs more costs) came up in the research data over and over again.

6.3.2.1 Education and Employment

A significant amount of extra effort and time are required to maintain minimum standards in terms of education and employment. Education beyond grade 8 requires that students travel out of town, either commuting or relocating. Most people are employed in experience–based occupations requiring on–the–job training or no formal education. Some people are employed in trade–based occupations requiring college education. Many people are unemployed seasonally. Approximately 41% of the population does not have a high school diploma (Statistics Canada, 2011). Yet, lower levels of educational achievement have not impeded the desire or ability of people to undertake project–based leisure activities that revolve around writing and research. For example, several older interviewees have undertaken to write personal biographies, one of whom had achieved only a grade 4 level in formal education.

6.3.2.2 Mediating Content – Browsing and Berrypicking

Because Whitney is considered ‘near north’ in provincial government terms, it is eligible for an increased number of government funded programs to help residents achieve and maintain minimum standards of living. Accessing formal government–funded financial resources and services, however, is complicated and requires mediators to identify the available sources and sometimes also to help with filling out the paperwork required to obtain them which was described as a “very intimidating” process according to participants. There is usually a time component to applications as well; not just in terms of application deadlines, but also in terms of the funding being allocated. Said one participant, it’s “a matter of whoever is in charge at the time needs to be able to access these quickly. Because they go very quickly. Because it’s not just for us – it’s for allll of us. And we’re included with North Bay area. So once it’s out there, if it doesn’t…Once the announcement is made…[the funds are] gone. Pretty quick.”

Consequently, both tangible and intangible channels are used to monitor the flow of information in this context. For example, several participants mentioned the Whitney Resource Centre, which acts as a hub for this type of information. “You can get a lot of information from there,” said one participant. Staff at the Whitney Resource Centre are available to “walk [people] through the processes” of filling in paperwork which is helpful. Information is also shared informally among residents through word of mouth, or discussions of a ‘political’ nature. “I’m not really into the political,” said one participant. “but I do follow and I do know where the resources are. We tap into the resources if we have to.” Indications are that residents actively monitor both the formal and informal information environment, suggesting that information behaviour models of browsing and berrypicking (Bates, 1989) and monitoring and blunting (Miller, 1996) apply in this context as well.

Figure 65: Whitney Resource Centre
Government sponsored location to provide access to government services.

6.3.2.3 Mediating Distance

Outside sources of information are not always available or helpful. For example, farmers in this area who require veterinary care for their animals acknowledge that they call the vet only in emergency cases, since the closest large animal vet is in Combermere, which is a return trip of several hours. In some situations, the vet couldn't possibly arrive in time to help. In cases where the vet (or other specialist) does travel in to Whitney, the cost of compensation for the travel time is very high. Similar cases were noted with regard to other specialty services such as skilled trades (electricians or plumbers for example).

6.3.2.4 'Blue Collar' Leisure

Particularly with regard to leisure activities, the community has intentionally pursued, created and perpetuated leisure opportunities that display low barriers to entry (costs, resources etc.). For example, not only is public skating at the local arena free, but the Recreation Centre at one time kept skate donations on site so that children who do not have their own skates could borrow a pair to enjoy. Thus, there is a community emphasis on 'blue collar' sports and activities (free or nearly free activities like hiking, skating, tobogganing, swimming) over white collar or fee–based activities and sports (cost–prohibitive activities and sports, such as golf or league sports), which tend to be pursued more frequently on an individual basis by people who have the means to cover the costs associated with membership, equipment and travel.

Figure 66: Galeairy Lake Public Beach

Figure 67: Public Skating Rink

6.3.2.5 Approximation and "Making Do"

Chatman describes *life in the round* as a social world containing "an acceptable degree of approximation and imprecision," a "high tolerance for ambiguity," and in which "most phenomena are taken for granted" (1999). The natural order of things dictates which events and outcomes are reasonable and predictable (Hersberger, 2002, 213). While Chatman was discussing the social world of life in a women's prison, her observations can also be applied to the physical and material world of Whitney. This population has learned to provide for themselves the material goods and services they cannot access or afford in ways that urban populations take for granted. In learning to 'make do' with less or with substitutions for material goods and services of professionals, this population also lives a life of approximation in many regards.

Approximating, or 'making do,' requires a considerable amount of extra effort in terms of time, planning, procuring resources, and creativity in repurposing materials for a new task that were intended for another. It also requires pragmatic goals reasonable to the circumstances. Under these conditions, a complex network of tacit and informal information building and exchange has evolved in this context. The population, both individually and collectively, has become self–reliant, self–sufficient, resilient, independent, ingenious, and creative to circumvent access barriers whenever possible. Without formal training or credentialing, they learn to perform many of these tasks on their own, and to support neighbours who are unable to do so with volunteer time and skill. When you have a family to feed and neither money to buy groceries with nor a grocery store to buy them from, what do you do? "They had to hunt a lot to eat," said Larry Fuller. "They couldn't afford to buy it. So [they] learned" how to provide it for themselves by gardening, hunting, preserving and so on.

Although there were many instances of making do at a basic level of survival, other examples of making do surfaced with regard to both everyday and more pleasurable aspects of life. "When you live in the city, you recycle," said Frank Van Baal of waste disposal practices, "You come here and there's no [formal] recycling [program]. Well, you save everything. You can’t throw stuff out.” He went on to describe how he had collected and used over 200 empty cranberry jugs to collect sap for making maple syrup. “Direct recycling, you know? We’re all about that,” he said. Hazel Switzer recalled recycling as a child in her parental home as well, long before it was common in the city. When clothing was too worn to be used by another child, the items were stored in a bag or a box. “They wouldn’t last long. There was always something to make out of them,” she said. “But we had enough with what we had. We had enough.”

6.3.3 Risk Awareness

People in this community are very risk aware, and understand that the more an activity costs, the more that is at risk of being lost if the adventure fails. In a resource–limited environment, small costs can easily become catastrophic. Costs for pursuing activities across the work, leisure, maintenance spectrum can vary, ranging from loss of life or limb, to loss of time, to loss of financial resources, to loss of face, to lost opportunity costs. For example, a failure in business puts an entire family’s survival in jeopardy. A failure in the natural environment can result in death or injury. Disabilities among residents include age–related illnesses, childhood polio, accidental injury or death, substance abuse, and other mental health issues. Consequently, many activities are undertaken on a trial basis (or trial and error basis) until the risks and costs can be determined and assessed. Other strategies for mitigating the risks include taking into account personal observation, and observations of friends, colleagues and neighbours, putting a greater emphasis on cognitive authority and knowledge gained through personal experience.

6.3.4 Cognitive Authority

Theories of cognitive authority suggest that, because the entire body of the universe's knowledge is beyond the scope of any one person's individual experience, we must rely on secondary sources of information to satisfy much of our day to day information seeking need. Since not every secondary source is considered equal, decisions and judgments about who knows what they're talking about and who does not inevitably come to bear. Theories of cognitive authority explain how individuals assign trustworthiness to these secondary sources. As Rieh (2005, 83) points out, cognitive authority is a matter of degree, relative to a particular context, and related to credibility.

I noted patterns associated with cognitive authority both in interactions within the community, but also in the way participants managed my requests to insert myself into the community through interviews. My presence also highlighted some of the more subtle avenues of how people attribute cognitive authority in this environment.

6.3.4.1 Human Sources

Consistent with information behaviour theories posited by Chatman (1991a), Dervin (1983), and Wilson (1983) a great deal of information sharing occurs between people within the community. In particular, the strategies noted above to mitigate risks and losses, combined with fewer accessible outside channels of information, have led to a great deal of reliance on personal experiences of self and others. Consistent with Rieh's (2002, 157) findings, decisions about how to assign cognitive authority in this environment are subjective, relative, and situational and generally based on an individual's understanding of the other party's depth and breadth of experience in the subject of interest.

Human sources of information I encountered were frequently cited as sources of choice, and included family (parents, grandparents, siblings etc.), unrelated people who were either in close proximity, or who had practical expertise or experience in a given field, or trained specialists. Trained specialists were often, though not always, located outside of the community. People who have left the community and returned were also a growing channel for outside skills and information. Their age and experience level were seen as assets in the community. In cases where everyday life information was necessary (for example, information about the physical environment, local resource-based leisure activities, and everyday life) few people felt the need to seek authoritative sources outside the community. People were more likely to seek outside sources of information, who were perceived to have more cognitive authority, when interacting with organizations (for example hospitals or banks) or when the necessary information required service from a credentialed individual, for example medical personnel or licensed occupations.

6.3.4.2 Referrals & Deferrals

During the sampling phase of this project, almost every person I explained my project to in an effort to obtain an interview engaged in what I would describe as a ‘brainstorming deferral’. Usually, the potential candidate would think of names of other residents that I would be much better off interviewing because they had so much “more interesting” experiences. These people were selected for virtues that established their increased cognitive authority in the local community. For example, in some cases, the people named were senior members of the community, and so their range of experiences spanned a greater time period and they could provide primary accounts of life early in the community’s history. In some cases, the range of experiences was particularly deep in a given area (for example, guiding or mothering) and the participant felt this person could tell me a lot about one or two aspects of life in the community. In other cases, their experiences were particularly unusual among residents (for example, extensive travelling outside of the community, work or play related experiences, particular experiences based on demographics, or the prospect's ability to tell a good story).

This example of cognitive authority is interesting because it not only highlights how the community itself organizes and values experiences, but also because it was not just a matter of referring me to appropriate sources. The people who engaged in this behaviour were also self–selecting out of the process and deferring to friends and neighbours to whom they attributed more cognitive authority, almost hierarchically. It was a process of valuing self and humbling one's own experiences in relation to what that person knew and understood of the experiences of others. Some continued on to give me interviews anyway, while others opted not to. Some of the referrals ended with interviews, and others did not.

6.3.4.3 Cognitive 'Blending'

A number of participants engaged in friendly, informal conversational behaviours designed to enfold me within the framework of the community and place me within the context of the interview. For example, at different points in the interview, participants would mention a name or a place, and then pause to ask me for feedback. For example, one participant stopped part way through the interview and said, "Pete Mask, now that'd be your grandpa, right?" Although it happened in all age groups, I noticed it more deeply in discussions with those who had already situated me within the community due to my family relations. Often, these participants were among the older people in my group. They would not only volunteer information by mentioning family members by name, but also they would frequently offer kind memories as well. In the example above, this particular participant noted that my grandfather was a blacksmith, and then asked me if I knew that. He then said to me, “Oh, that Pete was a good blacksmith,” and continued on to describe the occupation in relation to the lumber camps.

This approach had multiple positive effects on the interview process and outcome. First, it helped me orient myself to their experiences in both temporal aspects and scope. Secondly, it established both their credibility and mine because they had first hand memories of people who have long since been deceased and of whom I have no personal memory. Thirdly, it resulted in some very vivid and specific recall of places and events and experiences. And finally, it put me at ease during the process. Interestingly, these are all tasks which researchers are generally responsible for managing during the interview process. Yet, among this group, there was an intuitive sense of not only where I fit in relation to the community but also of what I wanted to or needed to hear. It often resulted in a much more dynamic interviewer–interviewee relationship.

6.3.5 Information Poverty

Western cultures tend to equate less with poor; thus, LIS research defines information poverty in terms of insufficient economic, infrastructure, cultural, or behavioural resources. Chatman (1991b, 423), for example, highlights the following propositions that connect economic poverty to information poverty:

- Narrow world view, with a tendency to not be interested in information that exceeds scope of vision.
- Low expectations for success in unfamiliar surroundings.

- The primary source of information is other people who share similar demographic characteristics, and so the world view remains limited.
- The immediate present and the recent past are of primary concern temporally speaking.
- A narrow world view results in lack of exposure to, and sometimes hostility toward, outside sources of information.

Interestingly, Chatman makes no mention of the importance of accuracy of the information store itself, focusing rather on information seeking behaviours and strategies of the seeker.

Resources are certainly challenged in this environment for many people. As in any community with a varied population, there are community members who meet some, most or all of the above criteria. On the balance of the whole, however, the community remains functional because there are a great many community members who eschew most or all of the above characteristics. Results suggest that people who live here, in general, exhibit a vibrant and varied assortment of positive information behaviours and experience–based information skills. They are not information poor.

6.3.5.1 Economic Poverty and Isolation

Economic poverty and isolation are related to information poverty as described by Chatman (1999), Hersberger (2002) or Childers and Post (1975) because they add a financial and geographic barrier to access.

For an example related to the context of Whitney, one needs only to look as far as technology and education. The remote location, fewer financial resources and lack of infrastructure make accessing basic technology and continuing education difficult here. Historically, technologies like transportation (i.e. paved roads and the automobile), hydro, and communication infrastructure have typically been slow to become mainstream, in some cases arriving as much as twenty, thirty, or forty years after urban populations in Ontario enjoyed the same luxuries. Residents were aware that these technologies existed outside of their community, and essentially made due with the resources they had available within the community until their community could be serviced in modern ways. The community has embraced new technology as opportunities present and resources allow.

6.3.5.2 Literacies – Schooling vs. Education

Particularly among the senior members of the community, opportunities for formal schooling during the childhood years were limited. However, those who lack credentialing in the traditional sense are not necessarily illiterate or uneducated, and lack of education does not necessarily reflect a narrow world view. It is worth noting here in support of that statement the store of environmental and blue–collar information available within the community, which could be considered a type of literacy unto itself. Further, interviews brought to light a number of occupations requiring post secondary education, as well as a desire among residents to seek not only leisure related travel experiences, but also work related travel experiences.

6.3.5.3 Negative and Positive Affect

Negative attitudes toward life and information seeking have been associated with information poverty. Among information poor populations, levels of uncertainty tend to rise as one travels further afield from familiar experiences (Chatman, 1991b, 438). Feelings of fear, mistrust, resentment, hopelessness and alienation inhibit information seeking outside of familiar sources, in some cases leading to avoidance and blunting behaviours (Chatman, 1987; Chatman, 1991b).

Examples of negative affect toward work, play and everyday life were present, but I suspect minimized by participants due partly to a wish to show the positive aspects of the community, and partly to the study design. Limitations inherent to the snowball sampling technique may have precluded some participants who would have been inclined to share stories exhibiting more negative affective, particularly as it relates to informal information channels and sources. Study design – which did not guarantee anonymity to participants– may have further limited the negative affect expressed in interviews through self-censoring.

Primarily centred on experiences around accident, illness, death (including suicide), and substance abuse, stories involving negative affect were recounted of extreme poverty, extreme weather, and physically strenuous working conditions. Stories that revolved around themes of mothering were especially intense; female head of households trying to meet challenges of all varieties under very difficult circumstances, often while their partners were (and are) working away for long periods of time.

For example, Ann Boldt recalled her grandmother telling her a story about her grandfather returning from the lumber camps after being away all winter. “Gramma said grampa come to see her and they could only talk through the window because they were quarantined,” Ann said. “It was diphtheria at the time. They lost a daughter to it.” Although the Airy school records don’t speak to this particular incident, records do confirm that children were kept home at times during the 1930s and 1940s by order of the school nurse, with the reason listed simply as ‘quarantined’.

Stories of individuals, families and groups within the community struggling due to the loss of a parent or child were common experiences among an entire generation of residents, and continues to be an ongoing concern even today. One participant broached the subject of suicide in the community: “We lost so many people already…kids…I don’t even want to talk about it.” Another participant explained in a little more detail, “It’s sad,” they said. “Young people with their future ahead of them. And it’s basically all over.” This person noted a gap in resources to help these families, parents and children alike, and how the experience affects people. “Suicide is always looming…and if you’ve seen other kids, you’d do anything rather than lose your kids.”

Although examples of negative affect that limits world view were present in the data, positive affect was expressed as well and had a moderating effect on information seeking. People were positive about the willingness to help, simple, joyful experiences (long–term relationships, self–sufficiency, friendship, family, outdoor activities like sports, campfires, tobogganing etc.). Interestingly, no one expressed hopelessness about their situation or life in Whitney, even in the face of difficult challenges like substance abuse or suicide. On the contrary, the residents interviewed for this study showed overwhelmingly positive affect toward the many benefits associated with living in this context, and foregoing other ‘urban’ advantages in favour of these was generally perceived as worthwhile. Interviewees regularly and voluntarily stated that they wouldn’t trade their experiences for any amount of money.

6.3.5.4 Pragmatic Considerations

Although evidence of pragmatism appear in the results of many information behaviour research studies including those of Chatman and Savolainen (Chatman, 1991b, 444; Savolainen, 1995, 262), the concept is not well developed as a separate mechanism for explaining either information source selection in general or experience as an information source specifically. In the context of this study, however, it is worthy of elaboration because it plays a leading role in most information behaviours and practices. The OED defines "pragmatic" as:

> *Dealing with matters in accordance with practical rather than theoretical considerations or general principles; aiming at what is achievable rather than ideal; matter–of–fact, practical, down–to–earth(OED Online, 2014).*

Chatman associated this type of information seeking with lower socio–economic classes which she called 'first–level' lifestyles, and which are typically characterized by 'first order knowledge *of* things.' First–level knowledge "relies on either one's own experience or on hearsay from someone else who is accepted as having knowledge of the thing being discussed" (1991b, 440). She described the attributes of information in first–level worlds including "its need to respond to immediate concerns, pragmatism, its focus on concrete situations and its reliance upon first–level experience" (1991b, 440). By contrast, second level knowledge is "knowledge *about* that which does not yet exist in one's immediate awareness of things…or [that which] originates outside the world of one's own experience" (1991b, 440). Both the economically impoverished, and the information poor, tend to belong to first–order worlds according to Chatman.

Although the experiential information in this study could be categorized as first–order knowledge, results challenge whether these qualities are accurately or exclusively associated with economic and information poverty. In part the models match: decisions about which information sources to turn to or trust, goal setting, and courses of action overwhelmingly defaulted to pragmatic options over theoretical options. Further, the pragmatic options weighted information from personal and collective experiences quite heavily. Experience as a primary information source came to the forefront based on non–documentary information such as observations of cause and effect, the natural order of things, as well as understandings of the barriers and limitations imposed by context.

At the same time, consideration must be given to the fact that, in this context, personal experience constitutes a primary source that is much more efficiently accessed than other ‘theoretical’ information sources that might be considered superior elsewhere. It is perfectly reasonable to assume that if one finds themselves in the woods confronted by an aggressive bear, “hearsay” previously received from an experienced wilderness guide in casual conversation is an excellent source to recall. This remains true even if (or perhaps precisely because) the source is a family relation. In addition, although the information may be situational, it is possible to generalize the information so as to “respond to a number of problematic situations” (Chatman, 1991b, 440) involving wild animal encounters in general. Pragmatic decisions of this kind should not be confused with satisficing or poor information seeking skills.

6.3.5.5 Temporal Considerations

While information poor populations tend to focus on situations of current need and the very recent past, it is remarkable how many of the participants in this study had gone to great lengths to preserve the biographies of individuals and the history of the community in general for future generations. Over the course of this project, I encountered five separate individuals (out of 24 participants) who had personally taken intentional steps to collect photos, stories or other information related to the community or their own personal or family history. Further unpublished documentary records existed at the public library that had been undertaken as part of school projects, or by local residents. This is in addition to published monographs. These efforts to document Whitney’s story are especially noteworthy given the lower levels of formal educational present in the community. Lack of formal education or credentialing have not posed a barrier to undertaking informal information gathering activities designed to archive the community's history.

6.3.5.6 Self–Awareness

Although physical resources were often lacking, there was little evidence that the residents of Whitney perceived themselves as lacking information resources. On the contrary, as one participant explained, "I'm connected to the world with that computer there…I'm as good as I am sitting in the city…We have everything we want here." Although this participant indicated that their information needs are known and met, in some cases the perception could be a result of information needs that are unknown and unmet. "We didn't know we were worse off," said another participant explaining that they were able to find joy amidst the economic poverty, "because we didn't know any different." In some cases, lack of comparative information resulted in positive affect. Thus, positive attitudes toward information seeking compensated for lack of information.

6.3.6 Secrecy and Deception

Secrecy is a passive activity that involves withholding, concealing, or keeping information private. Deception, on the other hand, involves actively taking measures to confuse or disorient with regard to a truth or fact. Chatman defines deception as "a process meant to hide our true condition by giving false or misleading information" (1996, 196). Although secrecy and deception share similarities, the concepts are unique, and generally interpreted by the literature as negative information behaviours engaged in primarily for a perceived self-benefit. Unfortunately, the primary effect of secrecy and deception is to "shrink the possibility of receiving useful information. The fundamental result of deception," said

Chatman, "leads to a remarkably precarious position in which information sought is irrelevant" (1996, 196).

Secrecy and deception emerged a number of times in interviews and the documentary record examined for this study. Although some secret or deceptive behaviours aligned with Chatman's model, it is important to note that the behaviours and outcomes were not always negative. For example, some secret behaviours were not necessarily self–protective mechanisms, but rather examples of anonymous benevolence. Similarly, deceptive behaviours were often centred around humour and practical jokes, rather than a material personal gain.

6.3.6.1 Self–preservation

Examples of secrecy in the data emerged as a mechanism of self–protection to hide activities that are in contravention of laws or Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) policies, as well as socially stigmatized conditions and activities (for example, extreme poverty, substance abuse, mental health issues).

For example, the issue of poaching (taking animals without a permit) came up in conversation and surfaced in the documentary records examined several times. The consequences for this activity can be quite severe, and the more recent the activity, the more people are reluctant to talk about these subjects except in the most general of ways. Other examples of secrecy included:

- avoiding detection from the authorities when making moonshine and bootlegging.
- keeping locations secret in an effort to preserve a particular resource (minerals, medicinal plants etc.).

- intentional deception with the goal of preserving local knowledge. If guides noticed that their guests were paying too much attention to the route and landmarks as they travelled in the bush to a favoured fishing spot, the guides were occasionally known to make the journey longer by circling back and around to confuse the outsider directionally to safeguard location information and local guiding livelihoods.

6.3.6.2 Benevolence and Generosity

Evidence also emerged of positive aspects of secrecy, for example, people who, in helping others quietly, choose not to draw attention either to the individual in need or to their own generosity. “It’s hard,” said one participant, “But you make it work. Everybody makes it work…There’s a few people in town that still make sure that others [are taken care of]…I know [of one person who] puts three or four families through the winter, buying them oil. That’s not cheap.” Although this participant shared the story, they chose to keep the names of the parties involved a secret as well.

6.3.6.3 Convenience

Examples of secrets kept for convenience’ sake appeared as well. In these cases, keeping information secret was a benefit to the individual, without doing any significant harm to other parties. Accounts of convenient secrecy included caching objects like canoes, cooking instruments, and other supplies in the forest. Hiding objects in the Park is frowned upon by the Ministry of Natural Resources. However, with over 8000 square kilometers of space, policing the law is quite nearly impossible. People hide objects to make interior trips into the Park less physically taxing because they don’t have to carry the equipment with them.

Understanding secrecy in this context, sheds light on the opening quote from chapter 5, After the Canoe – Work, Play and Everyday Life Experience in Whitney on page 129. If you’ll recall, Ron Corbett was describing how Frank Kuiack had salvaged a canoe from the landfill and repaired it, noting Frank's intangible information channels that allowed him to have "people [practically] on retainer at every municipal dump in the highlands" (2001, 51-52). Salvaging old canoes and repairing them is preferable to buying new, as losing a canoe that didn't cost you anything is a safer risk. Knowing when and where valuable items show up at the landfill is best accomplished through a network of interpersonal sources of information.

6.3.6.4 Humour

Accounts of deceptive behaviour also appeared in the data, and frequently centred around humour, particularly practical jokes. In addition to the earlier example of the school bell being hidden in the bush by the students, Gordon Palbiski shared another example of how two neighbours moved his dad's crock of moonshine from its hiding place to a perch on top of the altar at the Catholic Church one night. Palbiski recalls, "Dad knew who did it, but he couldn't prove it. In those days, they played tricks" (2010, 10).

Although some evidence of elements of Chatman's information poverty theory existed, enough anomalies surfaced to indicate residents of Whitney are not information poor. The data suggest that living with less in this context actually requires many diverse information skills, including a network of informal, intangible channels and sources. Psychosocial attitudes such as optimism, creativity, curiosity, resourcefulness, and self–sufficiency continue to be important factors worthy of consideration in determining states of information poverty.

6.4 Characteristics of Experiential Information

Experience–based information skills found in this rural population are abundant. They are interesting from an LIS perspective, as they not only illustrate different techniques of passing information from person to person, but also cross the boundaries between work, play and everyday life. To identify the characteristics of experiential information, I've explored the ideas of tacit knowledge, experiential learning, and life world.

6.4.1 Tacit vs. Explicit

Tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1958) and its counterpart – explicit knowledge – provide some insight into what constitutes experience–based information. In its simplest form, tacit knowledge is defined as "the often–undocumented wisdom possessed by expert practitioners" (Crowley, 1999, 282). Explicit knowledge, on the other hand, is information that can be documented, stored, or otherwise given to or shared with other parties in a reproducible format. Although tacit knowledge has been explored sociologically in knowledge management and professional contexts dating back to at least the 1980s, regrettably, to date the term does not appear in the LIS literature in any capacity that explains information behaviour in non–professional contexts. According to Crowley, who examined the philosophical underpinnings of tacit knowledge and applied it to academic library contexts, the following dimensions are associated with tacit knowledge (1999, 283):

- Personal in origin
- Valuable to the possessor
- Job specific
- Related to context
- Difficult to fully articulate

- Both known in part and unknown in part to the possessor
- Transmitted, where transmission is possible, through interpersonal contact
- Operative on an organizational level
- Applied, in part, through “if–then” rules. “If certain conditions exist, then apply the following”
- Capable of becoming explicit knowledge

Dimensions such as ‘job specific’ and ‘operative on an organizational level’ underlie the assertion that tacit knowledge is considered primarily a professional phenomenon in the literature. From a sociological perspective, however, Collins adds to the discussion by suggesting that there are at least three types of tacit knowledge (Collins, 2010; Warde, 2010, 714-715). **Relational** tacit knowledge is based on social relationships between individuals. **Collective** tacit knowledge can only be understood, shared, or reproduced by individuals who understand the social context in which it exists. Finally, **somatic** tacit knowledge pertains to knowledge associated with the physical body. Although somatic knowledge can, in principal, be recorded, doing so does not assist in putting the knowledge into practice due to limits associated with the physical body (for example, there are ways to describe how a computer processes large quantities of mathematical computations, but humans cannot match the speed and accuracy). Although Collins describes several facets of tacit information, noteworthy for its absence, however, is the facet of quality, which is perhaps more difficult to operationalized and assess.

Examining the data from the perspective of tacit knowledge shows that many parallels exist in the remote, rural, blue–collar context of this study. Using the example provided earlier of knowledge of animal behaviour (beaver vs. dog), all of the non–professional dimensions apply. From personal experience, this participant knew that, were a beaver and a dog to engage, the beaver would win (1). Knowledge of the animal kingdom hierarchy/food chain was both valuable to the participant and related to the context in which they lived (2, 4). The story indicates that the participant is aware of more contextual information than they generally articulate unless there is a need (5, 6), but when there is a need, the information is transferred from person to person and can be made explicit (7, 9). Finally, this knowledge can be applied through if–then rules: if a beaver and a dog engage, then the beaver will win.

Although not all examples of tacit information in this context fit all dimensions of the model in such a tidy way, most examples exhibit multiple overlapping characteristics. Further, two minor modifications would make the model more appropriate for this blue–collar context. Point number three, *job specific*, could be changed to “related to everyday life or leisure.” Point number eight, *operative on an organizational level*, could be changed to “operative on a community level” (for example, the community awareness associated with school absences due to hunting season). Doing so would bridge the gap between the professional and the everyday, further incorporating Collins’ idea of community tacit knowledge.

6.4.2 Continuous, but Interrupted

Experience–based information in this community exhibits characteristics of continuity as described by Dewey. Continuity is a process whereby new experiences are scaffolded on previous experiences, and also whereby the student ‘learns how to learn.’ Kenneth Wain describes this phenomenon as ‘open–ended growth; the openness to more learning’ (2009, 391). Savolainen refers to this idea as sedimentation, which is the “process by which elements of knowledge, their meaning, and significance are integrated into an actor’s stock of previously acquired knowledge. The structure of sedimentation of experience depends on the relevance and typicality of the experience” (Savolainen, 2008a, 57). The process – by whichever name – is continuous, meaning that every current experience builds on previous experiences, and then serves to inform new ones.

Data in this study repeatedly highlighted the fact that information is passed from person to person, across time periods and generations, by sharing experiences and working side by side with people in this community. Information flows not only between individuals, but also among communities in close proximity, and into and out of far reaching communities as well. In this way, the store of experiential knowledge generally increases over time, showing continuity.

Yet, it also became clear during data analysis that this process is interrupted at irregular and unpredictable intervals at both the community and the individual level, which subjects the store of experiential information to decay and evolutionary modification as well. For example, people in the community become disabled or die prematurely, interrupting the ability for experiential information to pass from generation to generation within families. Fire destroys homes and personal treasures – including photographs – which interrupts the documentary record and collective memory of both families and the community as a whole. Increasing outside investment in transportation infrastructure makes remote lakes more accessible, which leads to overfishing and therefore smaller fish sizes, which consequently changes over time the desirability of ‘tried and true’ fishing spots known only to locals. Each generation must learn what spot is best during the current time period, since previous experience may no longer apply. Though there is an habitual quality to practices and actions, they are not to be construed as stable, and are not exclusively limited to physical actions or physical artifacts representing information. They include the “stock of knowledge, rules, and teleoaffectivities that organize them [and they] change over time in response to contingent events and different life world situations" (Savolainen, 2008a, 30).

While experiential learning is an iterative process of engagement, growth, practice, feedback, and reflection, it is always in response to a dynamic set of context–related information variables. Experiential information balances on a precipice: it is both stable and consistent, while simultaneously being highly adaptable in recognition of the fact that contextual change is unavoidable.

6.4.3 Contextual and Social

Savolainen set aside the idea of information behaviours (although he continued to use the term occasionally to frame other ideas) in favor of the term *information practices* (McKenzie, 2003) and *information activities* or *actions*, ideas which he repurposed from Schatzki and Schutz. Taking a constructivist approach, Savolainen indicates that information practices and activities are inextricably situated in the social, intersubjective, shared life world (2008a, 27). They are made up of actions which add a goal–oriented dimension to the equation, and which can include such activities as, for example, "childcare, cooking, shopping, and information seeking" (2008a, 30). The context in which these practices and activities occur he calls *life world*, or "the world of cultural objects and social institutions into which we are all born, within which we have to find our bearings, and with which we have come to terms' (2008a, 26). Savolainen argues that the concept of information practice, and in fact, knowledge itself, involves 'processes of information seeking and use [that are] are constituted socially and dialogically [and that in fact] all human practices…originate from interactions between the members of a community" (2008a, 4).

In Whitney, the life world is based on a combination of formal and informal information systems. Formal systems and tangible information sources support the community in the context of the province and the country, and also the residents in the context of their intra, inter and extra– community relationships. However, people instinctively turn to a complex network of intangible and informal sources and channels, including personal and community experience, to satisfy information needs. This happens not only when the formal systems are insufficient or otherwise fail, but in many cases, informal sources and channels are preferred. While some elements of experiential information may be shared between individuals who share some parts of the same context, the amount and quality of common knowledge is unique to each individual.

6.4.4 Sedimentation and Collateral Learning

An idea Savolainen brought forward from social phenomenology that both follows from the idea of habitus, and also seems particularly relevant to experiential information is the idea of sedimentation. Sedimentation is the "process by which elements of knowledge, their meaning, and significance are integrated into an actor's stock of previously acquired knowledge. The structure of sedimentation of experience depends on the relevance and typicality of the experience" (2008a, 57). It also depends on various forms of tacit information that are inherent to the experience, in particular tacit information that isn't generally shared or documented (for example emotions or sensations).

To draw on an example from the data, humour is a regular part of the information experience in Whitney with examples of practical jokes emerging that go as far back as the origins of the community. Incidents of humour, mockery, trickery and such played a unique role in transferring and retaining information. The perpetrators of the joke, the target and the onlookers participated either implicitly or explicitly in lessons of cognitive authority, independence, planning, trust and friendship. Lessons learned in this manner often came at the expense of a loss of some sort – loss of material, loss of face, loss of time – and were not soon forgotten. In some cases, learning these lessons along with an accompanying twinge of regret for having been duped saved the person from larger mistakes later where more substantial losses were possible – including life and death consequences.

While the raw information – the story – can be recorded and passed down, sedimentation, or the meaning attributable to the experience in this case, is retained most acutely by those who participated in the non–documentary elements of the experience – the emotions and sensations. Further, the nature of the informal context and tacit learning environment also highlights the richness and potential of experience in terms of collateral learning. “Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he is studying at the time,” said Dewey of formal education systems (1938, 48). “Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history that is learned” (1997, 48). This example suggests that informal, tacit, experience based learning is also accompanied by a deep and varied landscape of collateral information that aids in the process of sedimentation.

6.4.5 Working Definition of Experiential Information

In summarizing the characteristics of information as experience, I propose the following definition:

> *Experiential information is sensation, emotion, fact, skill, knowledge, or understanding acquired or otherwise derived from interactive participation in*

> *a social or solitary context, or occurring at some point thereafter as a result of contemplation and reflection.*

This definition captures both the tacit and explicit elements of experiential information from a variety of different input parameters including sensory, intellectual, and affective. It leaves room for the process of sedimentation to change the interpretation of experiences over time through internal processes and influences which allows for the process of sense making to continue even after the actual experience stops. Finally, it allows for this process to occur in physical or cognitive contexts, work or non–work settings, formally or informally.

7 Summary, Discussion and Implications

This section presents a review of the study goals, and a summary of the limitations, findings and implications of this study. Findings can be grouped into two categories: (1) those that confirm previous theoretical findings, and (2) those that diverge from previous findings or in some other way present new ideas or new ways of thinking about information behaviour theory.

7.1 Review

In review, this dissertation set out to answer the question, “What is the nature of experience in the remote, rural village of Whitney, Ontario, Canada across the domains of work, leisure and maintenance activities?” In addition to answering this question, I set out to achieve five specific goals:

1. To add to the growing body of interdisciplinary knowledge describing non–problem–based phenomena,

2. To privilege less familiar, informal and non–formal information seeking and use contexts, channels and sources,

3. To extend our understanding of information behaviours and practices, specifically in leisure contexts,

4. To challenge traditional LIS, document-based ideas of what constitutes information

5. To document the contributions of a marginalized population, and to highlight characteristics of ISU in their rural, blue collar context.

Results were documented in detail in Chapter 4: In the Canoe – The Community Experience, Chapter 5: After the Canoe – Work, Play and Everyday Life Experience in Whitney, and Chapter 6: Among the Green Canoes – Information Seeking and Use in Whitney. Being “in the canoe” represents the whole organism – the community of Whitney and the people who live there, and how they came to be there. Life “after the canoe” represents the fundamental, mundane, daily activities and experiences associated with work, leisure, and everyday life of the people in Whitney. Finally, “among the green canoes” represents the lifeblood of the organism. The green canoe is the information – often undocumented, experience-based information– that is created, used and shared by people within the community. In many cases, both the green canoe and this undocumented information sustain life, while remaining hidden to outsiders who wouldn’t otherwise know to look for it.

7.2 Limitations of the Study

Although this study achieved the goals of an exploratory study as outlined earlier in this section and in Chapter 1: Introduction – Parsing the Everyday, there are nevertheless some sampling and study design limitations that undoubtedly influenced the findings and which should be considered both when interpreting the findings, and also if future studies of this nature are undertaken. First among these is sample size. Although a sample of 24 people represented a healthy 4.5 percent of the population, it is still small. Designing future research questions to focus more deeply on a particular dimension of experiential information (for example, work or leisure or everyday life) would allow for more specific sampling techniques, a smaller target population, and provide a more in-depth discovery of that particular area. Second, by sampling almost exclusively current residents of a small town, people with dissenting views of the small town experience are necessarily excluded from the data collection. Therefore, a study design of this nature does not adequately represent the voices of people who didn’t like the small town experience and who chose to leave, or of those who otherwise made the difficult decision to leave a place they love for better opportunities elsewhere. Finally, asking participants to waive anonymity likely resulted in a degree of self-censoring, thus excluding another important and perhaps more intimate dimension of the small town experience. Suppression of this variety typically causes less reporting of negative information behaviours and experiences, such as secrecy, deception, gossip, misinformation and so on. Although discussions of negative information behaviours are therefore also necessarily incomplete, findings from this study that diverge from our current theoretical understandings of these behaviours are still valid, and suggest that more study would be beneficial.

7.3 Discussion: Findings that Confirm Theory

A number of key findings of this study confirm previous theoretical developments in a new, previously unstudied context. Consider the following:

Informal Channels: Previous research into the information seeking of students, scientists and professionals indicates that informal information channels are significant in formal contexts (Leckie, 2005). It is also known that informal channels are important in blue collar occupations (Chatman, 1987; Veinot, 2007) and among marginalized populations (Chatman, 1991a; 1992; 1996). This study confirms that informal information channels are also significant in the daily lives of this blue collar, remote and rural population across domains of work, leisure and everyday life as well. In many situations, informal channels are highly effective and successful where formal, tangible channels fail. For example, lack of public transportation in this community has led to a network of volunteer and collaborative driving options to take people to out of town information sources (for example, physicians). Similarly, while formal channels dictate which laws and rules could be enforced, informal channels more accurately describe the reality of which laws and rules are actually enforced.

Information as Contextual: LIS researchers have long acknowledged that information behaviour and practices are influenced by contextual factors (Savolainen, 2005; 2006a; 2006b). This study reinforces earlier findings that temporal, spatial and social factors influence not only the types of information people seek, avoid or encounter, but also the channels through which they do so. Emphasis on agrarian ways of modeling time sway information seeking behaviours as well, with the primary outcome being an expectation that information seeking in all its forms takes more time, particularly when that information is located out of town. Spatial considerations including rugged natural terrain, predatory dangers, and limitations to the breadth and depth of formal channels of information (libraries, and organized leisure for instance) increase the demand for experience-based information. Thus, contextual factors lead to a type of information push-pull. Residents use the information tools at hand to become self-reliant and insular in their day-to-day lives, and in some ways satisfice and approximate. At the same time, well-exercised informal social networks continue to compensate for naturally occurring and imposed constraints, helping residents avoid states of information poverty.

Information as Both Work and Play (and Everyday Life): Savolainen cautions that information is not static, but can serve to satisfy needs and desires associated with both work and play simultaneously depending on context (Savolainen, 2010a). This finding was also confirmed by the data collected in this study. In fact, information regularly crosses the boundaries between work, play and everyday life in this context. For example, the following table outlines several information rich activities identified in this study that result in different information experiences across the work-play-everyday life spectrum. I'm using the term *Information rich activity* here to denote skill-based activities built upon a core foundation of subject specific information that must be acquired in order to engage in the activity in a legal and/or personally meaningful way. In order to acquire this information, participants engage in a variety of *information activities*, defined by Hektor as searching, retrieving, browsing, monitoring, unfolding, exchanging, dressing, instructing and publishing, or by Hartel as imagining, reading, browsing, talking, experiencing, searching, seeking, using and reusing (Savolainen, 2010a, 47)

Activity	Work	Pleasure	Everyday life
Firearms	MNR officials/ Park Rangers/OPP	Hunting	Animal control
Fishing	Guiding/sport	Leisure/hobby	Food source
Hunting	Selling furs for income	Sport hunting	Trapping, hunting, poaching food
Building things	Carpenter	Making canoes, snowshoes, axes	Home repair and building
Crafting	Selling crafts for income	Making art, soap, lip-balm as a hobby	Making lip-balm, bug repellant soap for personal comfort
Cooking	Selling jams/baked goods for income	Baking/preserving food for self and others (inc. family)	Baking/ Preserving food for self and family
Knitting	Selling goods for income	Making sweaters as gifts for special occasions	Making mittens and sweaters to keep warm

Figure 68: Information Rich Activities Across the Work-Play-Everyday Life Spectrum

For example, activities involving firearms are information-intensive activities. Permission to use a firearm requires participants to complete a mandatory licensing and education program consisting of a minimum of 19 hours of in-class instruction on the safe and ethical use of firearms, as well as instruction in animal taxonomies and characteristics. Additional licensing and education requirements exist for hunting specific classes of animal, for example, turkeys. Firearms can be used for work purposes if one's occupation requires it (for example, the police or MNR animal control personnel). It can also be used for pleasure if one participates in hunting activities, or for personal protection in the case of nuisance animal control on one's own property. Certainly not all activities are regulated or licensed to this degree, but they all have a learning curve associated with becoming a skilled participant.

Small Worlds and Life in the Round: Although there are always individual exceptions, on the whole, the remote, rural location examined in this study displays qualities of a small world as described by Chatman. Whitney consists of a community of people who share significant factors in common including a geographic location, blue collar status, age and stage of life, interests, expectations, values and fears, and comparable economic status (Savolainen, 2010a). The way of life in this community is different than the way of life in other communities, particularly larger urban centres (Chatman, 1999, 261) along all three dimensions of context (spatial, temporal, social), and daily life generally consists of routine, predictable patterns predicated upon implicitly understood norms within the community (Savolainen, 2010a, 1783). Experiences of imprecision and approximation are common and lead to living ‘life in the round’ (Chatman, 1999). Identifying remote and rural locations as small worlds justifies small towns as an additional valid research context in which to examine a variety of information behaviours in more detail.

7.4 Discussion: Theoretically Divergent Findings

A number of key findings of this study diverged from or extended previous theoretical developments, suggesting that the following information behaviour concepts could benefit from more research and development:

Human Sources of Information: Time and again, information behaviour researchers have found that interpersonal sources of information are preferred sources, especially when “it is believed that their information is derived from personal experience” (Chatman, 1987). Results of this study confirm that this population regularly prefers interpersonal sources of information for a variety of reasons. In many cases, personal experience is undeniably the most accurate and most easily accessible source of information, for example, when dealing with needs pertaining to the local physical geography, predatory dangers or ethnic heritage. In some cases, it may be the only accessible source of information due to variables (such as cost, distance and time) that limit access to more formal or authoritative sources. From a theoretical perspective, what has not been explored in very much detail yet is the value attached to these transactions. Engaging in interpersonal information sharing in this context has both a price and a benefit. Reciprocation is expected. But doing so also builds social capital and cognitive authority.

Information Poverty: Small worlds are generally associated with protective and strategic information behaviours such as risk taking, secrecy, deception and decisions based on situational relevance. Populations who live in small worlds or who live ‘life in the round’ are often economically poor as well, and subsequently also characterized negatively as ‘information poor’ because they tend to engage in need-based information seeking activities only if there is a high degree of motivation to do so and the benefits outweigh the costs (Savolainen, 2010a). While this study population belongs to a small world in many regards including along dimensions of geographic isolation and economic disadvantage, they are not information poor. Rather, isolation has led to a unique environment where resiliency, self-sufficiency and work ethic are highly valued personal characteristics. Such beliefs and norms have also contributed to the way of life in this community, and preserved many traditional skills, typically without the advantages of formal, documentary support. Further, although examples of secret and deceptive information behaviours emerged from the data, they were frequently not intended as self-protective mechanisms and did not serve to close the door to further information seeking. Rather, withholding information allowed for acts of generosity to compensate for lack of resources, preserving the ‘face’ of both the giver and the recipient (Mon, 2005). Similarly, deceptive behaviours arising out of humour and practical jokes at least occasionally served a teaching purpose. Both of these anomalies suggest that more research into the relationship between small worlds and information poverty is warranted, particularly as it relates to remote and rural locations.

Experiential Information as Interrupted: Without a doubt, information in the context of Whitney is passed from person to person, often starting at a very early age, and often by example or by trial and error. Many participants shared stories of acquiring information in this fashion at their parents’ knees, or under the tutelage of friends, neighbours and relatives. Data repeatedly highlighted interpersonal and intergenerational sources of information as crucial to information flow, particularly in relation to passing on unique context-based skills and dispositions. While information behaviour theorists have often described processes of sharing and acquiring information as iterative or involving a feedback loop, to my knowledge, there has been little to no research into information sharing processes that are interrupted in the way information becomes interrupted in this community. In situations where information is acquired experientially, information flow depends on human sources. However, rural populations tend to have higher rates of injury and death, thus removing primary interpersonal sources of information at unpredictable intervals. Similarly, lack of access to resources taken for granted in the city (such as fire suppression infrastructure) means that fewer documentary treasures – including photographs – survive to preserve individual and collective memories. Finally, changes to fish and game populations mean that each generation must revise their mental maps of favoured hunting and fishing locations, since previous experience may no longer apply.

Further research into how people navigate disappearing information sources in the context of work, leisure and everyday life is necessary.

Information and the Serious Leisure Framework: Research indicates that many serious leisure activities create a high degree of information need among participants as they choose or progress through the novice, amateur, and professional levels of participation. Although the types of projects undertaken change in rural environments, results from this study confirm that casual and project-based leisure activities can also be information-intense activities at times (Stebbins, 2009). Perhaps more interesting, however, is the fact that results support Gallant et al.'s (Gallant et al., 2013) position that the study of leisure needs to move from a study of activities toward a study of experiences. Specifically, results suggest that the social experiences of information and leisure are particularly important to how and why people participate in various leisure activities and how they affect individuals and groups. For example, informal, closely connected interpersonal sources of information were strategic in introducing people to highly enjoyable leisure time activities, experiences and information sources across the serious, casual and project-based leisure spectrum. Participants recounted how activities such as hunting, cooking, fishing, knitting, crafting, making maple syrup, and collecting were all leisure activities they became interested in as a result of influential informal and interpersonal information channels and sources. Further, the role of traditions and relationships (for example, hunting traditions) also present an interesting context from which to study leisure and information sharing as a positive experience over the life course.

7.5 Other Implications

Following in the footsteps of Corbin and Strauss who suggest that "most researchers hope that their work also has some relevance for nonacademic audiences" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), I'd like to close with a discussion of the pragmatic considerations of the potential of this study to be applied in a practical, positive way to improve the lives of the people who live in rural communities, particularly those who have given their time to this study. Application of the findings is as important to me as the academic findings.

7.5.1 Library Services for Remote and Rural Populations

Although guidelines for service provision identified by organizations like the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), the American Library Association (ALA), and the Canadian Library Association (CLA) strive to encourage quality service provision across populations, information professionals who serve predominantly rural, remote, or blue collar populations must be aware that the needs and values of this group may be quite different than those of populations typically served by urban libraries.

Libraries should be prepared to service these populations in ways that are meaningful to this particular group, and may include such things as offering more library hours, and a healthy supply of nonfiction and how-to resources in a variety of easily accessible formats. This is not to say that rural, remote and blue collar populations don't enjoy pleasure reading or fiction reading. Rather, libraries that serve communities with a large population of do-it-yourselfers should be prepared to adopt a philosophy of also supplying a range of authoritative how-to sources. Similarly, where socio-economic conditions limit access to good quality private collections, libraries have an important contribution to make in material and technology purchases, outreach services and age appropriate programming.

Further, with interest in documenting the histories of individuals and communities unusually high in this study population, information professionals should also consider evaluating whether ongoing formal projects designed to capture and preserve local history would be warranted or welcomed. Having an institutionally based repository of local history helps offset losses of tangible historical artifacts including photographs, as well as ‘gray’ information lost through attrition. Many libraries already undertake such service provision. However, it is especially important in rural communities where the critical mass of corporate or media memory may not be available to compensate. The local library has an important role to play in this task.

7.5.2 Leisure Information Service Provision – Idea Tourism

With a little coordination and planning, leisure learning pursuits can be creatively satisfied in rural environments, capitalizing on the experiential information skills of those who live there, to the benefit of not only the individuals who seek the information, but also of the community who provides it. Simpson calls this type of business ‘community benefit tourism’ (Simpson, 2007). Community benefit tourism enterprises can be private or public, non-profit or for-profit. They can include the community in the planning and development stages or not. They work more productively if the community supports them in principle, but this is not a requirement. Regardless of the specific organizational format, however, community benefit tourism ventures satisfy at least one identified local, community need. Such needs can be economic (employment, for example), or social (gathering places, camaraderie) (Simpson, 2007).

Literature examined for this project in the fields of Library and Information Science, Education, and Serious Leisure, as well as material provided by the Ministries of Tourism, and of Northern Development and Mines also support the idea of community benefit tourism. At the centre of the overlap between these different disciplines and stakeholders, as well as the findings of this research proposal, is a phenomenon I call idea tourism. It is based on commodifying experiential information skills hidden in these rural communities, and marketing them to ‘information’ tourists who seek lifelong learning opportunities.

Idea tourism involves travelling away from one’s home for the purpose of acquiring information or learning for pleasure. It is similar to, yet distinct from, other subtypes of tourism such as eco, adventure, educational, cultural, and sustainable tourism, and voluntourism. It also shares similarities with what the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines calls Resource-Based Tourism. However, idea tourism is distinct from all these types of tourism in that it also crosses a boundary into the worlds of information behaviour, lifelong learning and serious, casual and project-based leisure experiences. Examples of idea tourism encounters include excursions offered by the John C. Campbell Folk School (John C. Campbell Folk School, 2013), North House Folk School (North House Folk School,), or Exploritas/Elderhostel (Exploritas, 2010). Idea tourism is an emerging and highly valuable leisure experience to an increasingly sophisticated, educated, aging, international tourist audience. It is tourism based on learning a skill through experiencing it in its natural environment.

Information and experience are the commodities of value in an idea tourism encounter. It is typically intentionally sought out in diverse locations, delivered informally, orally, non-competitively and experientially by subject matter experts, and serves to improve the tourist’s skill or satiate their desire for information on a subject of non-work-related interest. These non-work-related interests often take the form of serious leisure or project-based leisure activities. Possible ideas that can initiate idea tourist encounters are endless, ranging from a vast array of hobbies (as in the case of the John C. Campbell Folk School), to any combination of music, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, religion, politics, science, or geography contexts (as in the case of Elderhostel), to a range of physical activities (hiking, skiing, swimming, canoeing.) and nature experiences (wolf howls, bird watching, wildlife viewing.) like those supported by the Algonquin Provincial Park infrastructure. For those participants who may be considered dabblers in a particular hobby, idea tourism encounters offer a slightly more in-depth experience upon which they can base a decision about whether to pursue the activity with greater commitment.

While some locations are complementary to the ‘idea’ (such as Algonquin Park’s wolf howl occurring in the wolves’ natural habitat), the information, human, and social capital are frequently mobile. For example, observatories are a natural place to ply the hobby of amateur astronomy, however, backyard astronomers can share their skill set in any region using telescopes and other mobile equipment.

Idea tourists are typical of traditional tourists in that they engage in travel in their leisure time, and pay similar costs to participate in a travel experience. They are a-typical in that they also seek out a satisfying, enduring, social, and distinct informational or learning component in their travel experiences often as a way to further their serious or project-based leisure interest in a hobby activity. The ‘idea’ and its implementation as a tourist experience becomes a renewable resource for the community who shares it.

Simpson acknowledges that “tourism is simultaneously portrayed as a destroyer of culture, undermining social norms and economies, degrading social structures, stripping communities of individuality; and as a saviour of the poor and disadvantaged, providing opportunities and economic benefits, promoting social exchange and enhancing livelihoods” (Simpson, 2007, 1). I believe that the transaction of sharing experiential information with idea tourists has the potential to promote community growth and prosperity in small, rural towns in three ways: by increasing the number of tourists who visit an area (thereby increasing the size of the tourist market); by extending the length of typically short tourist seasons (thereby reducing seasonal unemployment); and also by attaching value and importance to real skills and knowledge that exist in a community, where those skills and knowledge have historically been under-appreciated. Finally, it presents an opportunity to acknowledge the human capital present in the community and promote the growth of social capital. I hope that the results of this research will contribute in a meaningful way to these goals.

7.6 Conclusion

Although I began this dissertation with an observation that took place at a funeral, this study of experience and information in one, rural, remote village in Ontario does not represent a story of death. Rather, it offers an account of resilience and resourcefulness, of persistence and determination, of creativity and hope. Highlighting the characteristics of information seeking and use in this context may provide the opportunity and method to connect artificially dichotomous groups (urban and rural, credentialed and uncredentialed, formal and informal) along a spectrum or continuum rather than at opposing ends of an idea. Bringing both ends together full circle may yet benefit both individuals who seek experience–based lifelong leisure learning opportunities, and also small communities around the country who have a wealth of undiscovered knowledge to share. At the very least, it should give everyone reason to pause a moment before accepting the answer “not much” at face value. There is almost certainly a great deal to be discovered by looking a little deeper.

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9 Appendices

9.1 Selected Bibliography

The following bibliography lists selected sources related to the community of Whitney, Algonquin Park and/or this dissertation, grouped according to themes. Where useful, annotations explain the reason for inclusion. Entries are drawn primarily from art, humanities, and social science sources. The list of natural science publications (including studies) numbers in the thousands, and so are not included.

References to Works Created By or About People from Whitney

The following sources are closest to the subject of Whitney, consisting of artists and authors who are from the community, work with subjects from within the community, or both. Several authors have more than one publication to their credit.

Corbett, R. (2001). *The last guide: A story of fish and love*. Ottawa, Ontario: Glen Ivy Media. (Ottawa resident Ron Corbett details the story of Whitney resident and guide, Frank Kuiack.)

Dumas, Alexander. (2015). Buckingham gallery of fine art corporate web page. Retrieved from http://www.buckinghamfineart.com/sculpture.htm (Gallery showing sculptures by Whitney resident, Alexander Dumas.)

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Kay, D. (2015). The art gallery of David Kay corporate web page. Retrieved, 2015, from http://www.davidkayartgallery.net/gallery.php (Gallery of paintings by Whitney resident, David Kay.)

Lloyd, D. L. (2006). *Algonquin harvest: The history of the McRae lumber company*. Whitney, Ontario. (Donald Lloyd wrote several books about Algonquin Park, including this publication about the history of the McRae Lumber Company in Whitney.)

Lyons, B. (1986). *Whitney: Island in the shield*. Bancroft, Ontario: Bancroft Times.

MacGregor, R. (1999). *A life in the bush. Lessons from my father*. Toronto, ON: Viking, Penguin Canada. (Born in Whitney, Roy MacGregor is a writer for the Globe and Mail and an Officer of the Order of Canada. He has a long list of publications to his credit.)

Palbiski, G. (2010). *Gordon's memories.* Unpublished manuscript. (Auto-biography chronicling the life of Whitney resident, Gordon Palbiski, self-published.)

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Westhouse, B. D. (1995). *Whitney: St. Anthony's mill town on Booth's railway*. Renfrew, Ontario: The Friends of Algonquin Park.

Wicksteed, B. (1948). *Joe Lavally and the paleface in Algonquin Park.* Toronto, Ontario: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. (Details the story of a canoe trip with Whitney resident Joe Lavally.)

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Berkeley Films (Producer), & Hayes, J. (Director). (2013). *Algonquin*. [Motion Picture] Canada: A71 Productions.

Borror, D. J., & Gunn, W. W. (1960). *A day in Algonquin Park* (Vol. 2 ed.). Don Mills, ON: Federation of Ontario Naturalists. (Sound recording of bird calls produced by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists for education and pleasure purposes.)

Conacher, C. (Producer), & Sebert, J. (Director). (1984). *Journey of discovery.* [Motion Picture] Toronto: Boardwalk Motion Pictures Ltd. (Film produced in IMAX and shown at Ontario Place in Toronto. Includes a scene filmed from the air during the autumn colours in Algonquin Park, featuring Whitney resident, Bob Mask.)

Holliday, T. (Producer), & Gorman, G. (Director). (Season 2, Ep. 24, 1964). *The forest rangers: The river (aka Joe runs the rapids).* [Motion Picture] Kleinburg: ASP (produced for CBC). Retrieved from http://forestrangers.bravehost.com/ (Rapid scene filmed on the Madawaska River at Whitney.)

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Shaftesbury Films (Producer), & McGowan, M. (Director). (2010). *Vacation with Derek.* [Motion Picture] Toronto, ON: The Family Channel (Can). (Filmed on-site at Camp Arowhon in Algonquin Park.)

Algonquin Park and Area – (Current Events)

The following links provide current information about Algonquin Park.

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Algonquin Park Leaseholders Association. (2014). Algonquin Park leaseholders association corporate web page. Retrieved from http://www.algonquinparkresidents.ca/leaseholders.html (For more information about the leaseholders bid to extend their Algonquin leases.)

Government of Ontario. (2015). Algonquin land claim corporate web page. Retrieved, 2015, from https://www-ontario-ca/aboriginal/algonquin-land-claim

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Algonquin Park and Area – (Contemporary and Historical Publications)

The following authors have written about different aspects of the social and natural history of Algonquin Park. Authors marked with (*) have several publications to their credit.

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*Clemson, G. I. (2001). *Gertrude Baskerville: The lady of Algonquin Park*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Globalinkage Publications.

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*Thorn, R. G., Friends of Algonquin Park, & Ontario. Ministry of Natural Resources. (1991). *Mushrooms of Algonquin Provincial Park*. Whitney, Ont: Friends of Algonquin Park ; Toronto : Ministry of Natural Resources.

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Research Relating to Algonquin Park

The following entries include scientific research publications relating to Algonquin Park (which may include Whitney), spanning the 20th and 21rst centuries. The purpose of including these entries is to show breadth of topics and place of publication. For a more complete research bibliography, see Tozer and Checko below.

Baker, J. (2002). Production and consumption of wilderness in Algonquin Park. *Space & Culture*, *5*(3), 198.

Brown, R., & Harris, G. (2005). Co-management of wildlife corridors: The case for citizen participation in the Algonquin to Adirondack proposal. *Journal of Environmental Management*, *74*(2), 97-106.

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Fry, F. E. J. (1949). Statistics of a lake trout fishery. *Biometrics, 5*(1), 27-67.

Glynn, C. J., & McDonald, D. G. (1994). Exaggerated differences between nations. *Journal of Social Psychology, 134,* 131-133.

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Rollins, K., & Wistowsky, W. (1997). Benefits of back-country canoeing in Ontario wilderness parks. *Journal of Applied Recreation Research, 22*(1), 9-31.

Simpson, J. A. (1979). Canoeing management in Algonquin Park. in: Proceedings of the fifth Trent parks and recreation conference, Trent university, November 11, 1978. *Occasional Paper, Department of Geography, Trent University,* (8), 109-117.

Six searches for extraterrestrial civilizations. (1976). *Science News, 109*(9), 132-133.

Theberge, J. B., Theberge, M. T., & University of Waterloo. Department of Geography. (2004). *The wolves of Algonquin Park: A 12 year ecological study*. Waterloo, Ont: Dept. of Geography, University of Waterloo.

Thompson, I., Simard, J., & Titman, R. (2006). Historical changes in white pine (pinus strobus L.) density in Algonquin Park, Ontario, during the 19(th) century. *Natural Areas Journal, 26*(1), 61-71.

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9.2 Ethics Approval

Western
Faculty of
Information and
Media Studies

Office of the Dean

Ethical Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

All non-medical research involving human subjects at the University of Western Ontario is carried out in compliance with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Guidelines (2010). The Faculty of Information Media Studies (FIMS) Research Committee has the mandate to review minimal-risk FIMS research proposals for adherence to these guidelines.

2011 – 2012 FIMS Research Committee Membership

1. R. Babe
2. A. Benoit
3. J. Burkell (alt)
4. E. Comor*
5. C. Hoffman
6. P. McKenzie (Chair)
7. A. Pyati
8. A. Quan-Haase*
9. D. Robinson
10. K. Sedig (alt)
11. L. Xiao

Research Committee member(s) marked with * have examined the research project **FIMS 2011-12-009** entitled:

Words to Live By: How Experience Shapes our Information at Work, Play, and In Everyday Life

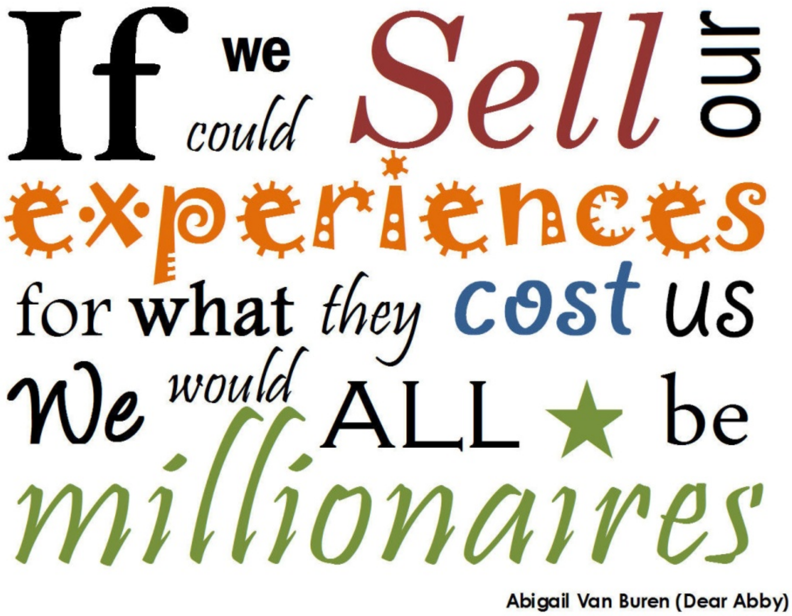
as submitted by: Lynne McKechnie (Principal Investigator)
Angela Pollak

and consider it to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects under the conditions of the University's Policy on Research Involving Human Subjects. Approval is given for the period 31 January 2012 to 31 December 2013.

Approval Date: 31 January 2012

9.3 Recruitment

9.3.1 Advertising – Invitation to Participate



Perhaps we can't sell our experiences, but…
If you have ever wanted to *share a story or two* about them,
I'd like to listen!

I am looking for people over the age of 18, who grew up in the Township of South Algonquin, and who have lived in Whitney for at least the last 5 years, to share with me a story or two about what it's like to live, work and play here.

What do you have to do?

I would like to meet with you for about 1 hour to interview you about your real life experience. We can talk about anything at all that you like. You might want to reminisce about old stories from a long time ago, or share your excitement about new experiences that surprised you recently. You are also invited to share with me a photograph (or two!) of something or someone who reminds you of your life in Whitney.

Who am I?

I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Western Ontario who is interested in learning about how our experiences become information. The results of these interviews will be published in my dissertation, called "Words to live by: How Experience Shapes our Information World at Work, Play, and in Everyday Life". I also have fond memories of time spent in Whitney at the Mask family homestead on Highway 60. My grandparents, Peter and Hazel Mask, lived there for many years.

9.3.2 Initial Contact Form

Initial Contact Summary Form

Date:	File #
Last Name:	First Name:
Phone #	Email:
Description of Initial contact:	

Sampling Criteria

Date:	Age:
Childhood in TSA? ❑ Yes ❑ No If only part, how long?	
Current resident of Whitney? ❑ > 5 Years ❑ < 5 Years	
Interested in participating? ❑ Yes ❑ No	

Preliminary Documentation

Participant would like to preview letter and consent form ❑ Yes ❑ No	Paperwork Sent by ❑ email ❑ post ❑ fax
Date sent:	Sent to (Address, email, fax #)
Follow-up:	

Interview Appointment Arrangements

Date appointment was arranged:	Time:
Date of actual appointment:	Time:
Location/Address:	Other important information or notes:

9.4 Interview Guides

9.4.1 Participant Demographic Data

Preliminary Interview Schedule and Questions

Introductory Questions – Socio-demographic information
I would like to collect the following information as a rough measure of representation to see how well my sample maps on to the general characteristics for this community.

Age (Taken from Census table "Population by Sex and Age Group" http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/demo10a-eng.htm)	❑ 15-19 ❑ 20-24 ❑ 25-29 ❑ 30-34 ❑ 35-39 ❑ 40-44 ❑ 45-49 ❑ 50-54 ❑ 55-59 ❑ 60-64 ❑ 65-69 ❑ 70-74 ❑ 75-79 ❑ 80-84 ❑ 85-89 ❑90 and over
Sex	❑ Male ❑ Female
Marital Status (Taken from Census table "Population by Marital Status and Sex" http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/famil01-eng.htm	❑ single ❑ married[1] ❑ widowed ❑ Divorced [1] includes legally married, legally married and separated, and common-law unions
Education level by highest certificate, diploma or degree (Taken from Census table "Selected demographic, cultural, educational, labour force and income characteristics http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/subject-sujet/result-resultat.action?pid=1821&id=1825&lang=eng&type=CENSUSTBL&pageNum=1&more=0)	❑ No certificate, diploma or degree ❑ Certificate, diploma or degree ❑ High school certificate or equivalent ❑ Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma ❑ College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma ❑ University certificate or diploma below bachelor level ❑ University certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor's level or above 75 ❑ Bachelor's degree ❑ University certificate or diploma above bachelor level ❑ Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry ❑ Master's degree ❑ Earned doctorate

Information Sources in the home (check all that apply. Circle the most frequently consulted)	print media: ❑ newspapers ❑ magazines ❑ pamphlets electronic media: ❑ television ❑ internet ❑ radio ❑ fiction books ❑ non-fiction books ❑ directories (i.e. phonebook) ❑ people (specify relationship ____________________) ❑ other (specify: ____________________)

9.4.2 Proposed Interview Questions

Opening Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about your family's history in Whitney.
   a. How did you (your family) come to live in Whitney?
   b. How many brothers/sisters/children do you have?
   c. Where did you go to school? What did you study?
2. What do you enjoy most about living in Whitney?
3. If there was something you could change to make living here better, what would it be?

Information at Work Questions

5. What kinds of paying jobs are there around here?
6. Do you know of someone (living or dead) who lived around Whitney, who had a really interesting job? Can you tell me a little bit about the job or the person?
7. Tell me a little bit about what do you do for your living?
   a. How did you come by this job/career?
   b. What kinds of skills do you need to do this job well?
   c. How did you learn these skills?
   d. Do you teach others these skills? How?

Information at Play Questions

8. What kinds of activities are there in Whitney?
   a. For kids?
   b. For adults?
   c. Annual community events?
   d. Seasonal special events?
9. If you find yourself with free time, what do you do with it?
   a. Do you have a favorite hobby? Sport? Volunteer work?
   b. How often do you participate in this activity?
   c. How were you introduced to this activity?
   d. Is there someone who helped you learn to do it?
   e. Do you engage in this activity alone or in a group?
   f. If you need to learn more about how to do this activity, where do you turn for help?
10. Are there any new activities that you would like to try?
11. Are there any free time activities that you've abandoned over the years?

Information in Everyday Life Questions

12. What activities make up the work of home and family in your life?
    a. What are your routines?
    b. Do you have any traditions?
    c. How are these affected by the seasons?
    d. Are any of these related specifically to your geographic location?
    e. Does living in a tourist destination affect your daily life? How?
13. If you need information about something or help with something, where do you look?
    a. Can you give me some examples of information sources you have at home?
    b. Or sources you might have to go elsewhere to find?
    c. Where would you go to look for information?
    d. Within the community? To nearby communities? To larger urban centres?

14. Do you ever travel outside of Whitney?
    a. For work or for pleasure?
    b. Where do you go?

Critical Incident Questions

15. Is there someone you can think of who taught you something that you value?
    a. Can you tell me a little bit about this person and what you learned from them?
    b. How did this person go about teaching you this?
    c. Could you have learned this in another way or by using other resources?
16. Do you have a photograph or object that reminds you of this person or what you experienced or learned?
17. Do you have a photograph or an object you could share with me that represents an important experience to you?
18. What is the best advice anyone ever gave you?
    a. Who gave it to you?
    b. What were the circumstances?
19. If you could take one of your life experiences and turn it into advice for someone else, what would it be?

Photovoice Questions (Show them photos from Flickr)

I'd like to understand a little bit about how you view the tourists who visit Whitney, and how those tourists influence your experiences.

20. What contact have you had with tourists coming to the area?
    a. What was the nature of your encounters?
    b. Is there an encounter that is particularly memorable for you?
    c. Did this experience provide lessons you pass on to others?
21. These are photographs taken by tourists who have visited the area. In some ways, they represent how others see your community.
    a. What story do you think they see?
    b. Is this a complete story? What's missing?
22. What is the biggest mistake tourists who visit the area make?

9.4.3 Flickr Images (Photo-Elicitation technique)

9.5 Informed Consent

9.5.1 Participant Information Letter

Western
Faculty of Information and Media Studies

Letter of Information

Words to Live By:
How Experience Shapes our Information World
at Work, Play, and in Everyday Life

About the Study: You are invited to participate in a research study that seeks to explore how experience shapes your information world. I would like to hear you tell a story in your own words about one or two events in your life that you learned something from. They can be stories about experiences at work, or in your leisure time, or in your everyday life. I am particularly interested in rural northern Ontario experiences, and so my project focuses on people who have spent a considerable amount of time living in Whitney. This study will involve between 15 and 25 people, over the age of 18, who grew up in the Township of South Algonquin, and who have continued to live here for at least the last 5 years. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information you require to make an informed decision about whether or not you would like to participate.

About the Researcher: I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies (FIMS) at the University of Western Ontario (UWO). My supervisor, Dr. Lynne McKechnie, is a Professor at FIMS at UWO. The information I am collecting will be used to write my thesis, and for future scholarly purposes.

Research Plan: If you agree to participate, I will interview you about your experiences living, playing and working in Whitney, Ontario. To help you think of things to talk about, I may ask you questions that remind you about different kinds of experiences you've had while living in this community. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. You will have an opportunity to review the transcript if you wish. If you read the transcript and would like to provide additional feedback, you can do so by contacting the researcher. We can discuss your feedback by email, over the phone, or in a second meeting/interview. If I have questions later while I am writing my thesis, I may contact you by phone to clarify my understanding.

Part of the interview will include looking at photographs. We will look at and discuss photographs taken by visitors to Whitney and Algonquin Park. If you are willing to share, we can also look at and discuss photographs you choose from your collection. If you allow me to, I will keep a scanned copy of the images you share with me, along with a description of what the picture is about. If you share photographs with me containing images of other people, I will ask you, if possible, to introduce me to these people so that I can obtain permission to use their image in my study.

Time Commitment: I anticipate that the interview will take approximately one hour (60 minutes). We can be flexible and make the time commitment longer or shorter according to your comfort level. Although you are not required to review the transcript of our interview, you may choose to do so, and you may also choose to provide additional feedback. If you choose to review the transcript, I expect that it would take not more than one hour. Therefore, the total time required to participate in this study is anticipated to be 1-2 hours (60-120 minutes).

Location: The interviews will take place at a time and location that is convenient for you. For example, we could meet in your home, or at the public library.

Compensation and Costs: Other than sharing your time with me, there are no additional costs to you for participating. To thank you for participating in my research project, I will provide you with your choice of a $20 gift certificate to one of three local businesses for fuel, groceries, or take-out food.

Publication of Results: The results of this study will be published in my doctoral dissertation. If you would like to receive a copy of the final study, please tell me during our interview. I will mail or email a copy of the report to you.

Risks/Harms: There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

Benefits: You will have the opportunity to share your life experiences with someone who values your story. You may also see parts of your story published. I also hope that learning about your experiences will help librarians and information researchers understand the role of experience in how we create, use and share information in everyday life, and at work and play, especially in rural and more remote areas.

Participants' Rights: Participating in this research study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time. You do not need to provide a reason to limit your participation or withdraw from the study. You do not waive any legal rights by signing the consent form agreeing to participate this study.

Confidentiality: It is my intention and desire to use this research project to celebrate the wealth of history and experience in the community of Whitney, and to give duly earned credit to the people who willingly share their time with me. It is my sincerest hope that all participants will be willing to share their names and stories openly in the final report.

However, I recognize that some people may prefer to remain anonymous. To protect those individuals who would like to remain anonymous, I will ask every participant to choose a pretend name to represent their story. I will also ask you to choose whether you prefer to be identified by your real name or your pretend name. If you choose to be identified only by your pretend name, I will use that name in all research documents. I will be the only person to have access to documents that link your pretend name to your real name, and all research documents will be kept in a locked cabinet or otherwise controlled by an electronic lock (in the case of online documents). The linkage between your real name and your pretend name will be destroyed when my research is complete.

You should be aware that, because Whitney is a small community and most residents are well-known to each other, that it remains a possibility that I will not be able to guarantee confidentiality of all participants who choose to remain anonymous, even if we use pretend names for these participants. If it becomes obviously impossible during the writing of the report to maintain confidentiality for only some participants, I may choose to substitute the pretend names for everyone, or to use only the data collected from people who are willing to be identified. If issues of confidentiality cause you concern, you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time before publication without penalty.

While unlikely, if I find information which I am required by law to disclose, I cannot guarantee confidentiality. The Research Board at the University of Western Ontario may contact you directly to ask you about your participation in the study.

Contact Persons:

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, or the conduct of research studies, you may contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Western Ontario at 519-661-3036 or ethics@uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this particular study, please contact:

Study Investigator:
Angela Pollak, BA, MA, MLIS,

Supervisor:
Dr. Lynne McKechnie, BA, MLS, PhD

9.5.2 Participant Consent form

Western
Faculty of Information and Media Studies

Consent Form

<u>Words to Live By:</u>
How Experience Shapes our Information World at Work, Play, and in Everyday Life

Participant's name:____

As a participant in the study, Words to Live By, I have read and discussed the letter of information. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study as explained to me by the researcher.

I understand that my permission is required for my participation, that I may withdraw my participation at any time for any reason, and that my participation is completely voluntary.

I understand that because this study is taking place in a small community where many people know each other, and because the location of the study will be identified in the final report, it may be impossible to maintain confidentiality of participants, in whole or in part.

I understand that I may give my permission for the researcher to identify me in the study. If I am uncomfortable with being identified, I understand that I may ask to remain anonymous instead. If I choose to remain anonymous, my name or identity will not appear in the final report. Any records that bear my name will be kept in a secure location, accessible only by the researcher, and that any data that connects my name with the information I provide will be destroyed upon completion of the research project.

I understand that if it becomes obviously impossible for the researcher to maintain the confidentiality of a subset of participants, the researcher may choose to anonymize all participants, or alternately, to exclude data from participants who wish to remain anonymous.

I hereby give permission to be interviewed by the researcher for the purposes of this research. I also consent to procedures associated with being interviewed for this study, including the audio-recording of the interview and the transcription of these recordings. I give my permission for educational and research use of the tape recordings, transcripts of the tapes, and field notes made by the researcher.

Participant's Signature: ________________________________

Researcher's Signature: ________________________________

Date: ____________________________

9.5.3 Identification and Permission Form

Identification and Permission Form

Words to Live By:
How Experience Shapes our Information World at Work, Play, and in Everyday Life

Real Name of Participant:	
Pretend Name:	

Anonymity	☐ I wish to remain anonymous. Please use my pretend name in your report.	☐ I give permission for you to use my real name in your report.
Letter of Information	☐ I received a copy of the study letter of information	☐ I did not receive a copy of the study letter of information
Transcript	☐ I wish to review the transcript of our interview (☐ print ☐ electronic)	☐ I do not wish to review the transcript of our interview.
Report	☐ I wish to receive a copy of the final report	☐ I do not wish to receive a copy of the final report
Photographs	☐ I give permission for you to retain and/or publish copies of the following photographs:	

The photographs above contain images of the people listed below.

☐ Please do not contact these third parties.

☐ I will introduce you to these people and I give you permission to contact them to obtain permission to use their image/names.

Participant's Signature: ______________________________

Date: ________________________

9.5.4 Third Party/Photograph Identification and Permission Form

UWO NON-MEDICAL RESEARCH REB SUBMISSION FORM (VERSION – JAN 2004) *Contract & Industry* Page 1

3rd Party/Photograph Identification and Permission Form

Words to Live By:
How Experience Shapes our Information World at Work, Play, and in Everyday Life

Date:	File #
Last Name:	First Name:
Phone #	Email:
Mailing Address:	
Description of contact:	
Pretend Name if applicable:	
How are they 3rd Party?	❑ Photograph ❑ Mentioned in interview

Anonymity ❑ I wish to remain anonymous. Please use my pretend name in your report. ❑ I give permission for you to use my real name in your report.
❑ I do not wish to be identified in your report (no names).

Letter of Information ❑ yes – please send ❑ No thank you

Final Report ❑ Yes ❑ No thank you

Photographs ❑ Please do not use my image in your study.
❑ I give permission for you to use and/or publish copies of my image in the following photographs.
❑ Person photographed is deceased. Indicate date of death and source used to verify.

Description of photograph(s)

9.6 Vita

Name:	Angela Pollak
Post–secondary Education Degrees:	University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada 1990–1993 BA The University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada 1993–1994 MA The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada 1995–1999 MLIS The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada 2007–2015 PhD
Honours and Awards	2014 ALISE/Proquest Methodology Paper Award 2013 Doctoral Colloquium Participant, National Science Foundation 2012 Canadian Association for Information Science, Best Student Paper Award 2012, 2013 Graduate Thesis Research Award 2010 and 2011 K. Patricia Cross Research Grant (Semi–finalist)
Related Work Experience	Limited Duties Sessional Instructor, Western University Faculty of Information and Media Studies 2012–2014 Teaching Assistant, Western University Faculty of Information and Media Studies 2007–2012

Select Publications And Presentations:

Pollak, Angela. “Reconceptualizing serious leisure: Defining leisure as experience in everyday life” *Bridging to the Future of Leisure*, presentation for the 14th Canadian Congress on Leisure Research (CCLR), Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 21-24, 2014. (Juried Abstract).

Pollak, Angela. “Visual methods primer: Complementary and alternative sources of data in LIS research” *Educational Entrepreneurship*, presentation for the Association for

Library and Information Science Education (ALISE), Philadelphia, January 21–24, 2014. (Winner: Juried competition).

Pollak, Angela. “I have to read the signs like you reads a book” : Examining experiential information through non–fiction accounts of guided trips into the interior of Algonquin Provincial Park Ontario. Scholarship in Action: Data, Innovation, Wisdom, proceedings of the annual iConference, Fort Worth, February 12–15, 2013. (Juried abstract). Found at: https://ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/42116

Pollak, Angela. “We didn’t know we were poor” : How living with less is an information rich activity. Always the Beautiful Question: Inquiry Supporting Teaching, Research and Professional Practice, proceedings of the annual Association for Library and Information Science Education Conference (ALISE), Seattle, January 22–25, 2013. (Juried abstract). Found at http://www.alise.org/assets/documents/conf_2013/abstracts/2013%20doctoral%20poster%20session.pdf

Pollak, Angela. Forester or Bushman? Experience as an information source in an Ontario logging and tourist community. Information in a Local and Global Context, proceedings of the annual conference of CAIS/ACSI, Waterloo, May 31–June 2, 2012. (Winner: Juried competition). Found at http://www.cais–acsi.ca/proceedings/2012/caisacsi2012_27_pollak.pdf

Pollak, Angela. “Like a boxer in a boxing match – punch drunk” : The information world of a master electrician. Mapping the 21st Century Information Landscape: Borders, Bridges and Byways, proceedings of the annual conference of CAIS/ACSI, Ottawa, May 28–30, 2009. (Juried abstract). Found at http://www.cais–acsi.ca/proceedings/2009/Pollak_2009.pdf

McKechnie, Lynne (EF), Christopher Dixon, Jana Fear, and Angela Pollak. Rules of (mis)conduct: User behavior in public libraries. Information Science Revisited: Approaches to Innovation, proceedings of the annual conference of CAIS/ACSI, Toronto, June 1–3, 2006. (Juried abstract). Found at http://www.cais–acsi.ca/proceedings/2006/mckechnie_2006.pdf