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Life as "Half and Half": A Grandfather and Granddaughter's Sharing of Story

Kalley Armstrong, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: McKinley, Gerald, *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Anthropology

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Abstract

I have grown up vastly intrigued by the stories of my Indigenous Grandfather, George Armstrong. Known to the public as the “The Chief”, these stories provide context into the private life of an individual who recognizes himself as “half and half”, that is, half Indigenous and half Irish. This thesis documents our intimate conversations as Grandfather and Granddaughter and explores small stories, particularly those of his Indigenous mother, as sites of identity construction. Further, his stories shed light on a very public narrative of Indigenous-Settler relations and offer personal perspective of the impacts of colonialism on a family divided by the legal constraints of the Indian Act. With his six status cousins attending Spanish Residential School¹, my Grandfather’s experience as a non-status Indian may have contributed to his success as the first Indigenous hockey player to play in the National Hockey League (NHL)². However, he faced his own experience of racism and colonial influence that, to this day, impacts his perceptions of himself and formulate his own understanding of his Indigenous identity. My hope is that this thesis inspires both Indigenous and Settler populations to reach a level of understanding that allows us to see how the experience of one individual identifying with both worlds can impact our understanding of a shared Canadian story.

Keywords

Indigenous, Residential Schools, Narrative, Oral History, Short Stories, Hockey, Experience, Memory

¹ Spanish Residential School was located in Spanish, Ontario located 115 km west of Sudbury. It was open until 1962. The residential school was divided into St. Peter Claver School for the boys and St. Joseph’s School for the girls. My Grandfather vividly remembers the two separate buildings when going to visit his cousins. (<http://nctr.ca/School%20narratives/EAST/ON/SPANISH%20BOYS%20AND%20SPANISH%20GIRLS.pdf>)

² Maple Leafs News, George Armstrong: The Chief (<https://www.nhl.com/mapleleafs/news/george-armstrong-the-chief/c-753980>)

Summary for Lay Audience

This thesis takes an ethnographical approach to explore the oral narratives of my half Indigenous Grandfather, George Armstrong. This approach depends on the collaboration between my Grandfather and I, and is reinforced by our bond, relationship, and trust, offering rich qualitative data. Our conversations have been recorded and transcribed into this thesis. They present themselves as small stories, that share a collective meaning. In the analyses of these stories, as his Granddaughter, I can see how identity formation transforms across generations, as my Grandfather's experiences of identity directly impact my own. Further, this research has the potential to transform public perceptions of Indigenous people and the impacts of colonialism in effort to initiate a shared understanding into the Canadian public consciousness.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my awesome supervisor Gerald McKinley, for his unrivaled guidance and support. This thesis would not have been possible without him. I owe so much to him for his encouragement and belief in me. Thank you so much Gerald.

To Regna Darnell for her constant positive reinforcement and sharing of knowledge. I have learned so much from you.

To my Grampa, you are my hero. The stories you have shared with me will always be held close to my heart. We shared laughs, tears, and perfect silences together. I cannot thank you enough for trusting me to tell your story, and if this thesis gives the reader a glimpse of your endearing charm, humor, wisdom and character, then I have completed my wishes for it.

In honour of my Grandfather, I would like to use this space to speak about an issue that is very important to him, my Grandmother. His wife of 64 years, Betty, is currently sick and suffering the depleting effects of Alzheimer's disease. Her memory may be gone, but she lives on gracefully in ours. My Grandfather's current life revolves around going to visit her every day in the hospital. He refuses to miss a single day by her side. It is a testament to the loyal and genuine human being he is, and his way of being there for her to make up for all the times he was travelling as a professional athlete. My Grandfather and I discuss the potential of taking trips up north to Sudbury together or to his cottage, however, while these thoughts are exciting, they do not parallel his devotion to staying in Toronto to be with his wife, my Nanny.

To Dad, Mom, and Jessie, thank you for being there for me and supporting me through everything.

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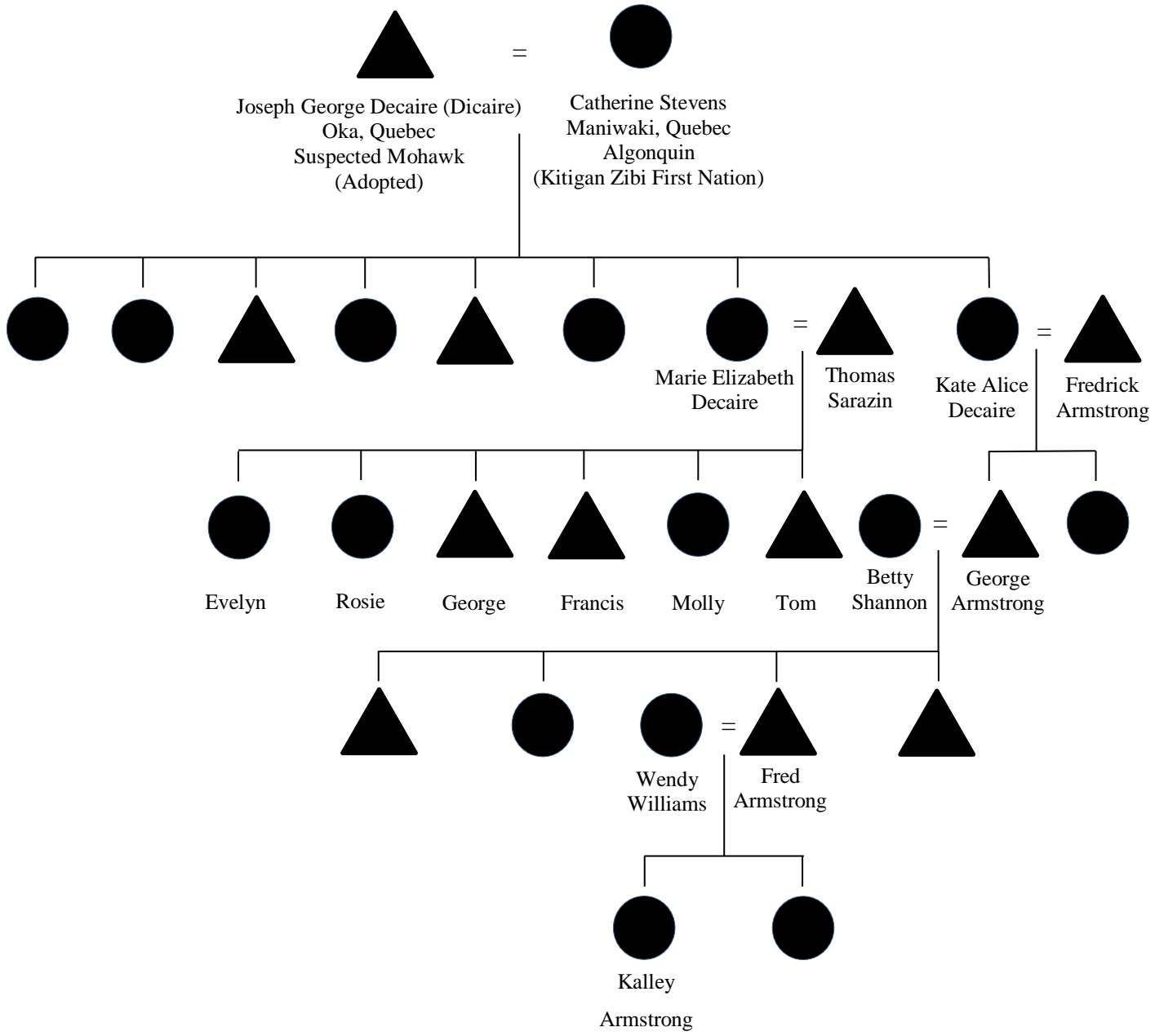
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Kinship Diagram



Chapter 1 : Stories and Methodology

1 Personal Introduction

I am sitting by my Grandfather's side in his basement in Toronto. Around us are reminders of the fullness of his life. Behind him, a picture hangs of the 1967 Stanley Cup winning team. To the left of us on the wall behind the couch, pictures of all his children and grandchildren wrapped around the Stanley Cup when my Grandfather was given the Stanley Cup for a day during the 2004-2005 National Hockey League (NHL) lockout³. In front of us, a picture of his cottage up north. A place once lively with laughter and bustling with excitement. His getaway. A home away from home. Everything that surrounds us encapsulates life. His life as a family man and a famous hockey player. Together, we sit there as Grandfather and Granddaughter, appreciating the life we have been given and reminding ourselves of it through story.

This thesis will explore how the relationship between a Grandfather and Granddaughter impacts identity formation, but further provides context into a shared story of colonialism in Canada. My Grandfather, George Armstrong, grew up a half Indigenous boy in a white community. As we sit, he shares with me his stories. Some are his own, but others belong to his own mother, who had shared her experiences with him. Together, we explore and share stories spanning across five generations of our family. My Indigenous great-great grandparents, Joseph Decaire and Catherine Stevens, my Indigenous great-grandmother, Alice Decaire, my half-Indigenous grandfather, George Armstrong, my father, Fred Armstrong, and then myself, Kalley Armstrong. In the span of these generations, the stories provide a reminder of the importance of family and how we are all connected to each other. But further, we begin to understand the deteriorating process of colonialism

³ Hockey Hall of Fame: Stanley Cup Journal (https://www.hhof.com/htmlSTCjournal/exSCJ05_18.shtml)

on our Indigenous ancestry, and the confusion that comes with our perceptions of our identity. Who are we?

1.1 Research Question

The primary goal of this thesis is to ask: how can small narrative theory be applied to study the impact of storytelling, particularly as a site of identity formation across generations? What impact does the story have on each generation?

The themes explored in this thesis include collaboration through storytelling as anthropological methodology, how identities are shaped through the sharing and interpretation of narrative, and how experience and memory play out in the telling of story. Further, this multilayered text presents the life of my Grandfather as both a public and private individual, to show how media informs our perceptions of figures and can also drip slowly into perceptions of ourselves.

My goal in this paper is trying to get people to see how my Grandfather's life story can contribute to a potential unity rather than a division of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. But I want to extend this beyond the settler-Indigenous binary and do not want to fall into that trap because it is rather constricting and takes away from some of the complexities of the figure my Grandfather was to people outside of the Indigenous-settler binary. Below my Grandfather discusses his wishes for the thesis and the message he wants communicated. He refers to himself as an "in-between". This is the best way for him to describe himself to the reader as a half-Indigenous and half-Irish individual. However, what is more is the state he describes himself in – a state of being "in-between". Both worlds, Indigenous and white, have pulled at him throughout his life but he remains in this feeling of in-between. This is a state that only can be communicated and understood through story and meaning, and it is what the bulk of the thesis tries to get at. The power of story.

Although this story centers on the narratives of one individual, George Armstrong, it delivers a mass of meaning that quantitative data cannot provide, and in fact tells the story of several generations. Victor Turner writes in *Anthropology of Experience* (1986)

“Obviously there is much that can be counted, measured, and submitted to statistical analysis. But all human act is impregnated with meaning, and meaning is hard to measure, though it can often be grasped, even if only fleetingly and ambiguously” (Turner 1986:33). It is up to the reader to see if these stories present any meaning to them, and if not, that is okay. This thesis is not intended to project meanings onto the reader or force them into a corner. It is meant to bring together rather than divide, as someone living in the in-between represents a potential unifier between Indigenous people and settlers in Canada. This story has the potential to bring a new version of understanding into the consciousness of Canadians.

1.2 Terminology

In this thesis I use several different terms interchangeably, but they are not without purpose. In some of the stories I refer to my Grandfather as Grandpa and sometimes Grampa. This is done to express how I refer to my Grandfather and the closeness of our relationship. Further, the use of the word “Indian”, while a sensitive word particularly within the academy, is used: a) to describe the legal status of an “Indian” under the Indian Act; b) to reveal the categorization of Indigenous people by the government; c) to highlight that my Grandfather continues to use this word to describe himself and his ancestors. The use of this word is not intended to offend, and I understand the circumstances surrounding the use of this word. However, it is used in story by my Grandfather, and it is in his own right to do so. Further, the word Indianness, as used by Philip J. Deloria in *Playing Indian* (1998) ties in quite fittingly to the ideas I attempt to communicate throughout this thesis. This term, also used with no desire to offend, is necessary for me to describe the complexities of identity formation, as does the word Indigeneity. I may refer to my Great-Grandmother as Nanny Alice throughout this thesis, as that is what she goes by within our family, her name and her spirit live on. We identify Nanny Alice as Algonquin. Her father, Joseph Decaire, also a full-blooded First Nations man, we suspect was Mohawk. However, the constraints of poor documentation of Indigenous peoples and the fact that he was adopted, have kept our family in a continual search for lost information.

1.3 A Note from My Grandfather (Part 1)

Well you could write the book with a preface in there or something. This is not a book about how badly Natives are treated, this is not a book about uhhh being white.. this is a book about somebody in-between.

So let them know what it is. Not Native, not white. But you gotta put that idea in their [the reader's] head. Don't let them try and find it. Put it in there early. So that when they start to read the book, they know what they're going at. Yah, the message has got the be, this essay is not about how badly Natives were treated. This is a book about an in-betweener. Yes that's the message of your book. It's not about how badly Natives were treated, or how good whites had it or anything. This is about being an 'in-betweener'. Or not about being an 'in-betweener'. This is a book about being in-between. If it's about an in-betweener that's one person. 'In-between' is about many people. If you say this is about being in-between that can include many in-between people. And yeah, I'm sure a lot of people might find it interesting. I'm sure there is a lot of people in the same boat. A lot of people are in the same boat, I am sure.

1.4 Development of Research

The methodology for this thesis is derived from the process of listening to stories. I have grown up my entire life vastly interested by my Grandfather, his wisdom, his approach on life. I have always been curious to understand how he came to be the person he is, the experiences he encountered before he became such a celebrated athlete, and how after everything he endured, he became the best Grandfather a kid could ask for. I was always intrigued by his stories. The way he told them offered such a rich experience as a listener, stories about his Indigenous family, his childhood spent in a small northern community, and his love for the game of hockey. Although he never explicitly said how much he loved the game, stories have the power to make us feel and understand beyond what is said. As his Granddaughter, my love for hockey was both inherited and inspired by my Grandfather's experience of it. We have spent countless hours together, him telling me stories, me listening - his story slowly becoming mine. As a child I would try so hard to remember everything he told me word for word and then I would rush home after and try

to write down all the stories and facts I remembered. It was important to me, to keep these stories and be able to share them one day with the important people in my life. They helped me to gain a deeper understanding of myself. I felt like a little private investigator on some of our lost family history, trying to piece together information lost in the litter of colonialism. There are not many records to be found on my Indigenous family, and this in part has contributed to our current state as non-status Indians. My Grandpa's memories have undoubtedly been the largest contributor to uncovering the missing pieces of our First Nations family, providing intricate details that are uncovered through story. Together, long before the initiation of this thesis, this has been a collaborative project for both of us. My Grandfather recalling family details through story and memory, and I using these details to uncover information through databases or contact with band offices. My Grandfather's past memories and my contemporary methods of research made us a great team. As my graduate studies began, I started to think about my Grandfather's stories in a far more complex way. The stories, while told the same as they had been for years of my life, had peculiarly changed in meaning to me. The collaboration continued, but with an added facet of reflexivity on both of our parts. In our discussions, we challenged each other to turn the stories and memories back on ourselves. Many of the questions I asked my Grandfather, strategically made him think differently about the details of a story he had repeated several times to many different people. Interestingly enough, I started to sense the stories changing both in my own lens and the lens of my Grandfather, particularly as we started to see that the stories did not just give a glimpse of our own family history, but a Canadian history of colonialism and assimilation on Indigenous people.

1.5 Conversations with My Grandfather

This thesis will use an ethnographical approach to record and retell the stories told to me by my Grandfather. My method of research veers from traditional ethnography in that I am not an "outsider" studying "the other" or "otherness". My project relies heavily on a collaborative effort and the shared and trusting relationship between myself and my Grandfather. Unlike many ethnographical projects, I have not had to form a relationship and partake in participant observation. Instead, this research is unique because it has

naturally unfolded as a lifetime project. My methodology, under these circumstances, focusses instead not on building relationships, but by acknowledging why this specific Grandfather-Granddaughter relationship brings a new flavour of contemporary research to the academy. As both his Granddaughter and the investigator, my analysis of his stories offer a perspective that many ethnographies may neglect based on the investigator and subject relationship.

When I first had the idea to write this thesis about the stories of my Grandfather, my main concern was his degree of comfort with making his personal stories public. When we discussed the possibility of our collaboration on this project, he accepted without hesitation. When we began to record his stories over the spring of 2018, the presence of the tape recorder was at first unsettling. For me, as someone who is very protective of my Grandpa, it felt invasive. Because our conversations can sometimes take very personal turns, the tape recorder felt like a third party was listening. Our first conversations were very regimented, almost interview-like. Me asking the questions, and my Grandfather responding appropriately with his answers. However, as we started to get used to the tape recorder, we both understood that since I was the transcriber of the stories, I knew which stories both of us felt comfortable to share in this thesis and which ones we wanted to keep to ourselves. The recordings turned from question and answer, to natural and flowing conversation quite quickly. We allowed the long pauses to be long pauses, and the conversation began to flow as it naturally did in our interactions. This is when I started to get the best pieces. The tape recorder transitioned from third party to an invisible device, that I started to appreciate for preserving my Grandfather's way of telling stories. This might be something I can play to my own children and grandchildren one day, I began to think to myself. The recordings were unconventional and unplanned. We would just begin by starting a regular conversation and seeing where it would take us. Sometimes my Grandfather began the conversations with his own questions or ideas, often pulling out scrap pieces of paper out of the drawer next to his chair in the basement. Many of his ideas had to do with the title for this thesis, "What about the stories of a half and half?" he'd suggest. "I love that Gramps", I'd say.

The goal of this thesis is to show why this specific methodology, a Granddaughter's recording and transcribing of the oral narratives told to me by my Grandfather, adds layers of meaning because of our relationship. Further, I am looking to not only recognize this multilayered text as sites of personal identity formation, but further expand its meaning onto Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships, offering a communal experience. Why is this story important for a family, but also for a country?

1.6 Methodology

My method is framed within the approaches by ethnographers who have worked closely in community-based research and oral narrative history. I have grounded my work in ethnographies like that of Dennis Tedlock, Julie Cruikshank and Edward Bruner. My methodology follows Julie Cruikshank's *Life Lived Like a Story* (1990) where she engaged in ongoing collaboration with three Yukon Native Elders to tell their life histories in order to contribute to explanations of cultural process. I engage in an ongoing collaborative process with my Grandfather. This story is ours, shared together. The process of telling it is ours, together. The relationship with the stories, is ours, together.

In *Life Lived Like a Story* Cruikshank transfers the narrative authority from herself, the anthropologist, to the three Yukon women she is working with. I intend to do the same with my Grandfather. Similarly, to Cruikshank's method of storytelling, I want to contend with popular frameworks of storytelling, such as those that occur chronologically, and allow my Grandfather's story to unfold in a natural way. His stories are often communicated in ways that appear unstructured to the reader, however, the way in which they are communicated are structured in his own style. It is important to allow him to communicate the events of his life in a way that makes sense to him, often being told in a non-chronological or non-linear way. What is more important than placing his stories in a chronological pattern, is to see why certain stories come out at certain times and the reason for their surfacing. The content of the stories told, while important, can often reveal itself as more meaningful placed in the context of why the story is being told and how it comes to light. Unlike most biographies that place events of the lead character's life in chronological order, the telling of my Grandfather's stories will contest with this common Western approach. As Julie Cruikshank writes, "Those of us raised in a

Western tradition tend to approach life history with certain preconceptions about what constitutes an ‘adequate’ account of a life. The familiar model comes from written autobiography- an author’s chronological reflections about individual growth and development, often presented as a passage from darkness to light” (1990:ix). As my Grandfather tells his stories, as he has always done, they often present themselves in a harmonious disorder where the connection makes sense if you take the time to think about it, but often can be overlooked as a random selection of another story. When my Grandfather transitions between the telling of his stories, you can see the expression on his face transpire as his own self-approval like he is saying to himself, “I am thinking of this now, and it makes sense to tell this or talk through this idea”. Cruikshank says, “such thwarted expectations should remind us that autobiography is a culturally specific narrative genre rather than a universal form for explaining experience” (1990:x).

In sum, the purpose of this thesis is to engage in a collaborative process with my Grandfather, to tell the stories of his life, while making sense of his experiences and using them to gain an understanding of contemporary issues between Indigenous and settler populations. My Grandfather’s story presents a unique perspective, born half Indian and half white, his interpretations and feelings surrounding his own identity can be mirrored quite effectively to help understand the relationship as it existed between Indians and whites during his life, and interpret it with a deeper understanding to recognize why things are the way they are now. A lot of people still do not understand or fathom many of the atrocities that occurred in Canadian history in the handling of Indigenous populations. There are many stories out there. This is just one of them.

As this project began to unfold, my relationship with my Grandfather did not change. However, we were able to hold very intimate discussions that we might not have, given the goals and outcomes of working together on this project. For example, while conversations took place where they always do, many of them in my Grandfather’s basement, in his kitchen, or in his car going to visit my sick grandma, the content of our conversations sometimes entered new territory that I had not entered before. My Grandfather knows I look up to him, but in our discussion of where we want to see his stories go, I began at times to get emotional trying to articulate how important it was to

me to not expose or reveal intimate details of my Grandfather's life that he feels uncomfortable with and would not want to share with anyone else but his family. Most writers would not be able to sort through my Grandfather's stories and understand which ones to tell and how to tell them to properly articulate who my Grandfather is, and his wishes for what should be told. There is space for my Grandfather's stories to be interpreted differently by different people.

When I am talking to my Grandfather I do not see us as equals. In Indigenous contexts, if you are talking to an Elder, you are not equals. Anthropology without hierarchy is important, but we have to embrace the moments where hierarchy must be respected - this is one of them. This is not a situation where the anthropologist has more power or hierarchy, it is my Grandfather that holds such power. My own role is not considered a position of power, but as a responsibility to create a public text from private one on one storytelling. The responsibility of the author to the narrator is key here. Our relationship exists beyond the on/off switch of the tape recorder and I am engaging in an ongoing search for meaning.

1.7 The Big Impact of Small Stories

George Armstrong's life story is comprised of many small stories, offering insight into the complexity of colonial Canadian history at the family level. To define what I mean by small stories, I am going to reference Bamberg and Georgakopoulou's (2008) explanation of small stories. They write, "we have been employing 'small stories' as an umbrella term that captures a gamut of underrepresented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, and shared (known) events, but it also captures allusions to (previous) tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell. These tellings are typically small when compared to the pages and pages of transcript of interview narratives. On a metaphorical level, though the term locates a level and even an aesthetic for identification and analysis of narrative: the smallness of talk, where fleeting moments of narrative orientation to the world can be easily missed out by an analytical lens that only takes fully fledged ('big') stories as the prototype from where the analytic vocabulary is supposed to emerge" (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008:381). These are the types of stories told by my Grandfather that have been transcribed by myself, into

narrative text for the reader. With small stories, being told from the perspective of a public figure's experience of his private life, we gain insight into a world not offered on the back of a hockey card. As such, these narratives offer us a lot to think about if we acknowledge my Grandfather's story as unique but also typical at the same time.

The short stories, as told through everyday conversation with my Grandfather, offer a way to think about how small stories contribute to a sense of self and a representation of identity. As Bamberg and Georgakopoulou suggest, the telling of small stories can be used as a point of entry into identity analysis and identity construction that may have otherwise remained unnoticed (2008:392). Further, Julie Cruikshank's collaborative approach to ethnographic research and her acknowledgement of the oral ownership of her subjects is fundamental to this project. Her collaborative model veers from the conventional method of the investigator initiating and controlling the research. Such a model, she writes "begins by taking seriously what people say about their lives rather than treating their words simply as an illustration of some other process" (1990:1). Cruikshank's approach is modelled in my own work, because this project has become a way for my Grandfather and me to work together to further understand ourselves, but also share the experience of collaboration in the telling of our story. Bamberg and Georgakopoulou write, "we are interested in the social actions/functions that narratives perform in the lives of people; how people actually use stories in everyday, mundane situations in order to create (and perpetuate) a sense of who they are" (2008:379). While this is a facet of this thesis, my Grandfather's stories are not just confined to sites of personal identity construction, but also offer perspective into how memory and experience inform our stories. Outside of these personal parameters, a larger and more shared story emerges; the story of colonialism and assimilation in Canada.

My Grandfather's stories are important because they give a glimpse into the private life of a public figure to gain an understanding of the history of colonialism in Canada. In many ways, my Grandfather's story is the story of a whole population; it is a story that is shared by Indigenous people who have been impacted by the structures and systems of colonialism. What makes his story unique, however, is the potential that it carries in creating a willingness and eagerness to listen. As a hockey legend, his popularity adds a

dimension of credibility to his stories. The key here is, what story do we want people to hear? By “we” I am referring to myself and my Grandfather, as this is his story and I am interpreting, translating and amplifying it. There are the stories of the locker room, stories of the hard-fought victories, of the tough losses and the good times in-between. But there is another story here that is bigger than hockey and more important to our future as a nation. A story to bring the experiences that Indigenous people have suffered in the past into a Canadian consciousness, in order to initiate an understanding of why things are the way they are today. This is the story that should be made public.

1.8 Private Stories of a Public Figure

My Grandfather has always been a private person, and as a family we have grown up respecting that, because it is important to him. His modesty sometimes appears as shyness, but he surely is not shy. He has always downplayed his success. Humbleness is embedded in him. But the stories that are being told in the thesis are not centered around his accomplishments. Instead they involve his Indigenous family, and are told with pride, appreciation, and remembrance. These stories have the potential to inform readers of a side of my Grandfather they do not know. The public for so long has occupied the power to define him. This is his turn to tell his story himself.

What people know about my Grandfather is based on their own interactions with him, coupled with his storied hockey history. Twenty-one seasons in the National Hockey League (NHL); Twelve years as Toronto Maple Leafs Captain, the most of any Leaf in history; 1187 games played in the NHL, the most of any Leaf in history; four Stanley Cups wins the last Leaf captain to hoist the Stanley Cup; the first Indigenous person to play in the NHL⁴. These achievements, however, are not how I know and understand my Grandfather, and they certainly do not provide an accurate chronicle of his life. While many think, and rightfully so, that he has not lived the same life as an average Canadian,

⁴ NHL: George Armstrong (<https://www.nhl.com/player/george-armstrong-8444971>)

his story is important because it is analogous to the experiences of many Indigenous people, and can serve to bridge a gap between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. My Grandfather is one of many unregistered Indians, in accordance with the Indian Act⁵. Publicly he is known as “the Chief” or “an Indian”, legally he never could be, until the 1985 amendments⁶, however. He still remains a non-status Indian⁷. Consequently, he is more complex than what sports writers and media make him out to be. Admired by many, he has been an object of adulation for hockey fans but as his family we have had the privilege of understanding him far differently.

Joan Scott writes in “The Evidence of Experience” that documenting the life stories of those ignored in the past can produce “a wealth of new evidence previously ignored about these others and has drawn attention to dimensions of human life and activity usually deemed unworthy of mention in conventional histories” (1991:776). If we can understand my Grandfather’s experience as historical evidence of the ongoing impact of colonization, then we can give meaning and credibility to the stories of other Indigenous people who have experienced similar discourse. Bruner (1986:143) writes of Geertz (1973), “What had previously been personal becomes historical; a ‘model of’ is transformed into a ‘model for’”. The reader of these stories has the agency to interpret the meaning within them as they wish. My hope is that the reading of these narratives can offer to the reader, an opportunity to understand instead of a pressure to reconcile. Understanding, as I see it in the politics of reconciliation, is a far more constructive approach to generating empathy and awareness of Indigenous lives.

⁵ The Indian Act was enacted in 1876 and is a Canadian federal law that governs Indian status, bands, and reserves. Government of Canada: Justice Laws Website (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/>)

⁶ The 1985 amendment to the Indian Act, or Bill C-31, was introduced to remove discrimination against women in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/>)

⁷ A non-status Indian is a non-registered Indian under the Indian Act.

The telling of my Grandfather's story is an attempt to understand what happens to an Indigenous family divided by the social and legal structures of a colonial system. His story will address how it has happened and the long-term impacts into the future. What happens to individuals who have their identities stripped, molded and challenged by the colonial system? Importantly, this research takes place during a time of potential reconciliation in Canada. My Grandfather provides a unique model because his experience occupies a historically antagonist space. Whites versus Indians. As a child, he recalls playing "cowboys versus Indians" in his small northern town. As the only Indian boy in a white community, he opted alongside his peers, out of playing the Indian. His stories will give insight into why a boy, born to a First Nations mother and Irish father, experienced difficulty in understanding his identity. This chapter will address how stories can be used as a transformative tool to dismantle the dominant narratives currently present in Canadian historical discourse and offer new insight to understanding as a fundamental precursor to reconciling.

This scholarship intends to promote mutual understanding and communication over reconciliation because I am still unsure of the use of the word "reconciliation" and its capacity for instilling change. I see understanding as a precursor to "reconciliation" and what it hopes to achieve, because if people do not understand what is being reconciled then we lack a genuine response and authentic interest in Indigenous-settler relationships. Sophie McCall problematizes the use of the term reconciliation when she writes of the contemporary politics of reconciliation, "This shift to 'reconciliation demands careful attention: reconciliation for whom and to what?" (2011:109). She continues to write, "The term 'reconciliation' suggests a return of order between two equals, thereby downplaying power asymmetries, and naturalizing an imagined past of unity, cooperation, and friendliness. It also produces an illusory sense of resolution that conveniently brackets ongoing colonial injustices" (2011:111). This suggests the term reconciliation as potentially craftily chosen to appear to prioritize Indigenous lives and relationships, when in fact it materializes as a colonial apparatus, to suggest a prior harmonious relationship did once exist between settlers and Indigenous people. Instead, McCall postulates that reconciliation "must follow a process of 'truth-telling', understood

here as a process of creating space and legitimacy for first-person accounts of individual experience” (2011:112).

1.9 Guilt vs Understanding

Reconciliation, in some respects can work to further polarize Indigenous-settler relations, especially when we think about it in terms of settler guilt. Deena Rymhs (2006:107) in “Appropriating Guilt” questions the performative process of reconciliation and asks “...if reconciliation is a largely performative process, how might otherwise genuine feelings of guilt become merely the performance of guilt? Can guilt be turned into tangible political action?”. If guilt is the response to practices of reconciling, I wonder whether we produce the desired outcome of reconciliation. Guilt as a colonial construct, might further polarize settlers from Indigenous people in that it gives agency to and reinforces potentially antagonistic relationships. McCall (2011:112) writes, “While reconciliation prioritizes the expiation of the colonizer’s sense of guilt, it places the onus upon the colonized to end longstanding conflicts”. Stories, in this thesis, are not intended to generate guilt in the reader. They are not told that way by my Grandfather. Instead, the stories are meant to produce an account of experience and initiate understanding.

Rymhs uses Basil Johnston’s *Indian School Days* (1988) as an example of a residential school narrative that operates as a movement away from guilt. She writes of Johnston, that by “focusing on the social bonds formed in this place, his work refuses to tell a story [as] a trauma” (2006:113). This resonates closely with my Grandfather’s stories. They are not told to create settler guilt, they were told within the intimate relationship of Grandfather and Granddaughter, they are told to be told - to offer a perspective of my Grandfather’s life as it happened, instead of “feel bad for the way things are”. Why are things the way they are? How did they come to be that way? My Grandfather does not want listeners to feel guilty. His story deserves more than that. In this telling, listening and understanding operate far more effectively as tools to decolonization and strengthening the Indigenous-settler relationship. Building this relationship, through story, is the purpose in the telling of my Grandfather’s narrative. McCall writes, on Mohawk legal scholar Patricia Monture-Angus “Her key terms – relationships, responsibility, relations of connection – establish the importance of the listener

responding to and accepting a sense of responsibility for what he or she hears. By prioritizing testimony in the dynamic relationship between speaker and listener, a politics of reconciliation may emerge” (2011:121). This seems far more productive than inducing guilt within the reader.

Alongside reconciliation, the term ally is becoming standardized in academic language and literature. I want to think about this term and try to understand it, possibly reconceptualize it. I read the book *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline (2017) from a unique position as I am currently in a place of working through my own identity, often feeling unsure about who I am. I am left to wonder about non-Indigenous people who read *The Marrow Thieves* and I am torn between how they would react if they were not an “ally” to Indigenous people. I consider how some literature that shows an antagonist relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people might further divide rather than create an understanding. Does literature force people to “pick a side” when reading something? Neither my Grandfather nor I want sides to be “picked” because of his stories. We want to create an understanding of sides, and that they exist and that we need to decolonize our thinking. With this in mind, it seems unfitting to use the term ally because in trying to understand the word, ally has an implication of picking sides as it constitutes being on a side. I am not asking you to take my Grandfather’s side or to be an ally, I am just hoping that we can understand together why there are certain issues that exist in Indigenous populations and why colonialism has caused us to misinterpret these issues. I want to spark a conversation or illuminate some sort of understanding or eagerness to learn more.

1.10 Do Colonial and Indigenous Stories Need to be Brought Together?

Stories are special because they offer new perspectives as a way for us to think about things differently. Engaging with a story can add to us, change us, but it does not restrict us or force us into a corner. This narrative is not meant to give an answer or constitute guilt. This narrative rests in a space of understanding. What my Grandfather and I offer here is a story that does not ask you to take a side but instead to see how the life of an individual experiencing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous lifestyles might allow us to

see how divergent histories between two populations can unfold into a narrative of complexity, that is, a life story that shows the complexities and intimacies of not wanting to choose a side because he lives in both.

The Indigenous-settler binary is something to which we should pay attention as storytellers and story listeners. Often, the binary thinking of our nature to stick things into pairs is common. Stories written in certain ways can create a divide when we juxtapose Indigenous and settler groups. In this, some Indigenous-settler literature can be polarizing rather than unifying. Instead, we should think of the binary as a tool rather than an answer. By this, I mean, we should think instead not about the binary as opposition, but rather why the two of the pair are related to one another. What happens between these binaries. Tim Schouls (2003:113) writes, “relations are described in terms of binary or oppositional encounters between Canadian state and Aboriginal nations or between Aboriginal nations and Aboriginal individuals”. Binary thinking is present amongst settlers who pin the state and Aboriginal communities as antagonistic. The thesis intends to veer away from this thinking and instead implement ways to think about the binary as relative rather than hostile.

Cruikshank postulates, “Storytelling does not occur in a vacuum. Storytellers need an audience, a response, in order to make the telling a worthwhile experience” (1990:16). When listening to the words of my Grandfather, there is a uniqueness to his articulation and presentation of his stories. Dennis Tedlock writes, “If anthropologists, folklorists, linguists, and oral historians are interested in the full meaning of the spoken word then they must stop treating oral narratives as if they were reading prose when in fact they are listening to dramatic poetry” (1983:123). The tellability of his story is dependent on our personal interaction. When talking to me he is not “presenting” but rather there is a common understanding that as my Grandfather, he is aware that his audience is me, his granddaughter. And his stories may have more stake in that he wants me to learn from them, to take them to my children one day, and to use the meanings within the stories to understand who I am, who he is, and to connect us as Grandfather and granddaughter. I have been witness to my Grandfather’s stories being told to different audiences. I have also witnessed his stories being told differently to me as I have grown up. But there is a

certain tenderness and understanding to our storytelling time together, he knows how much his stories mean to me, because they are a part of my own history and their retelling one day will come from me.

Bruner suggests, “Although stories may be universal, they are not necessarily linear, because narrative structures are culturally specific” (1986:17). Indigenous stories are often described as being disjointed narratives. My Grandfather tends to disjoint his narratives in his process of storytelling, often interjecting in the middle of his stories to insert some other piece of information and thought process. Bruner continues, “As we can only enter the world in the middle, in the present, then stories serve as meaning-generating interpretive devices which frame the present within a hypothetical past and an anticipated future”. As my Grandfather takes me into the past through his stories, for me, they are truth-telling rather than hypothetical, however, for other readers they can be understood as indeed hypothetical given their own agency to understand the stories as they wish. These stories, as they work for me, construct the past, make sense of the present, and create a hope for the future.

Non-linear Narratives

Well when she was young I think she was born into the transition, not one way and then want to be white. I mean they weren't on the reserve, they lived in a white man's [world]- I mean they lived in the bush, but the dealings were with white men. They sold the furs to the white man, the train went by was all white people on it, yah know. The only coloured person she ever saw was the porter stepping off the train. He'd step out of the door and watch people get off, and then get right back on. But she never saw coloured people before that. Except later on in life Bob Thompson came to the area - a coloured guy. Yeah, they always had a canoe, my Grandfather- I told you the story they went up to see their son in Timmins- they paddled half-way yah know, they paddled 150 miles, they left after three days [we laugh together because he is referring to another short story we both already know] and later he died - the brother, the son they went to see - he died around, in the 1950s sometime, he was a veteran in the First World War, not

the second, but he died in the early 1950s. And when he died, he lived in a little shack up in Kirkland Lake in the bush, he was living like a little hermit in the shack in the bush. No kids or nothing.

Let me give this story some context. We begin this conversation by me asking my Grandfather, “When do you think Nanny Alice ‘transitioned’ to being proud to be Native?” My great grandmother grew up in a time and place where being Native was not popular. She faced racism and had a desire to be white. Under the Indian Act, after her marriage to my great-Grandfather, she became Mrs. Fred Armstrong. Losing her Native identity on paper, she still retained it and felt it. The government deemed her white, but she was not seen as white in her community. This prompted my question. My Grandfather addresses my question by pointing out that she grew up in a dominant white town, where her family (the only Indians) served white people. Her father was a guide for wealthy white American men, her mother and father were caretakers of wealthy American cabins, they sold their furs to the white man. Similarly, to what I am doing here, my Grandfather provides context to his stories by connecting his small story to other small stories from another time or place. To make meaning out of these non-linear narratives, stories centered on place and time might provide clarity. Places such as northern Ontario and Spanish Residential School, where the layering of other non-linear stories create and surface chaos. There are moments in my Grandfather’s stories where time creeps in relative to place. Further, time becomes significant in my Grandfather’s and my great-grandmother’s identity formation, particularly in their transition towards being proud to be Indigenous. When chaos is created through the layering of non-linear stories, I attempt to extract the underlying meaning, and there may be more than one. For example, we can see the ways in which my Grandfather’s mother and her parents, used their traditional ways (hunting, trapping, fur trade) to help the white man. But also, he interjects with a story about my Nanny Alice’s brother, who grew up a hermit in the bush. The story below, as told by my Grandfather, adds content and meaning making to the story above.

Equal at war, not equal after war...

Like my six cousins, the Sarazins, three boys and three girls, they were older than me, all of them. And they had gone to those schools. And when Frank and George had come out of there they had joined the service. So you know, there was intelligent people who had gone to those schools. They [the schools] had gone on until the '90s but there was people who after they came out of those schools, the very odd one that took up public life on the reserves, learned how to... elected chiefs were coming in... the Indians petitioned to the government to let them elect their chiefs... the chiefs before that were handed down. And so it was around the time where, I would suspect, the election of the Indian chiefs on the reserves became popular. I suppose people before that tried to fight for the same thing, but as time went on people more and more started to desire more fair play and that, and their voices were beginning to get heard, and knew it wasn't right what they did [they being the government putting kids in residential schools]. What had been done. When some of them got to be educated they started to complain, yah know. And my cousins, when the war was on they were over 18. They joined the army, they didn't have jobs, so they joined the army. And in the army they became equal. The whites, and blacks and everyone became equal. They were all fighting together and trusted each other. But when they came home among civilians, they were again no good.

As my Grandfather was telling me this story, I had to write down the following thoughts. It is always interesting when my Grandfather's stories align with literature I have read as a part of my graduate program. War, for example. I have read about Indians fighting in the wars, and how the government appreciated and exploited the idea of the "warrior" in the Indian. This thought took me to the movie *Forrest Gump* (1994). When Forrest goes to serve the United States Army in the Vietnam War, he becomes close friends with an African American soldier who goes by the name "Bubba". During the war, Forrest and Bubba are treated as equals, alongside all of their other comrades. After the war, Forrest goes to visit Bubba's family and sees how outside of the war, their families are not very equal at all. This storyline in the movie runs parallel to my Grandfather's version of the same idea, but with Indians in Canada instead of African Americans in the United States. Indians fought in several wars for the country, and while they were equals alongside

settlers in the war, their return home did not change their designation as “no good” Indians.

My Grandfather’s telling of Indians being equal in war highlights how the post-war Indian came back home to being “no good”. As I align this story with the telling of his Grandparents going to visit his uncle, it brings meaning to the possibility of why his uncle died alone in Kirkland Lake. We found his lone grave, resting with no one beside him, “SAPPER FRANK DECAIRE”⁸. As I put my Grandfather’s stories together, he is teaching me through our family stories. Teaching me about why things were the way they were, and why there are the way they are today. His stories from the past provide an understanding of the present. Where we have come from, and what happened. What happened to our Indigenous family members that passed away lonely, sad, and mistreated? I can hear it in his voice when he talks about his cousins and how their lives took much different course than his.

1.11 Methods in Translatability

There are challenges in the translatability of oral stories, as the performative dimension of telling is eliminated when words are put onto paper. There is a difference between reading and seeing a play. As a witness of my Grandfather’s ability to capture an audience, the content of his stories is often enhanced in his ability to tell stories with a unique and encapsulating performative dimension. During my transcription process, in listening to the distinctiveness of my Grandfather’s voice and expression, I was frustrated with the performative dimension of the stories that would be lost. I feared the stories would not translate to the reader in the way they were told to me, and in this, they might lose their meaning. Since, I as the original listener and transcriber, have witnessed my Grandfather’s prose for many years, I am able to read the text and naturally apply his spoken features to it. Dennis Tedlock suggests that if readers are interested in the full

⁸ Kirkland Lake Cemetery (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/146501015/frank-decaire>)

meaning of the spoken word, they must not read oral narratives as if they were prose and instead recognize they are listening to dramatic poetry. “Professor Vansina has rightly said that one cannot properly understand a text without understanding its form, and I submit that the oral features I’ve been talking about are part and parcel of that form. Once the importance of these features is accepted then it is clear that tape-recordings are infinitely preferable to texts taken down in dictation. Dictation hopelessly distorts delivery especially in the case of a narrative that does not have fixed wording” (1983:122-123). Further Tedlock highlights the importance of silences in prose, that are often missed in translation to text. He writes, “The worst thing about written prose is that there is no silence in it” (1983:115). My Grandfather’s silences are essential to the telling of his narratives. They articulate what cannot be said in words or translated to text. His pauses are key because they signal transitions of thought and reformations of past memory. Further, they deliver to the listener a perception of his feelings or sensitivities to certain stories untranslatable in text. Tedlock writes, “I departed from the common practice of media tape editors, who frequently destroy the proper timing of speech by shortening silences without making proportionate cuts in the words; in effect, they make people sound as though they were rushing through a classroom recitation (or reading from a prompter) rather than talking on their feet to a live person who might care what they say” (1983:108). As I have acknowledged earlier, when we first began this project together, as an inexperienced “interviewer” I had questions prepared for my Grandfather that produced a very rigid and structured response from him. Once I returned the “interviews” back to our normal conversation as Granddaughter-Grandfather, we together generated comprehensive and emotional dialogue.

Similarly, William Labov and Julie Cruikshank have highlighted their own personal dissatisfaction in the transability of stories. In Labov’s book, *The Language of Life and Death* (2013) he writes, “I am at a disadvantage in this printed format. Some part of Jacob Schissel’s personal style that comes through in oral retelling will be lost. You yourself will have to judge whether I am right in saying that this narrative – the substance of the matter and the way it is told- is inherently interesting. If you agree, we can proceed to the next question: why does Jacob Schissel’s story have such a profound effect upon us?” (7) Labov places agency in the reader to comprehend the substance of the story

itself. I realized that while my Grandfather's telling of the story might be lost in transcription, the content of his stories remains. Cruikshank in her work shares her challenge in translating the stories of Yukon elders. "The finished product lacks the flavor of real telling which emerges in a narrator's own energetic translation" (1990:17). While I share this concern with Cruikshank in putting the words of my Grandfather onto paper, the rich performative dimension of his stories are lost. However, as Cruikshank suggests, some aspects of stories do survive translation. While the performativity of my Grandfather's stories is not translatable on paper, the focus instead is on why the stories are important and contribute to an understanding of the contemporary issues this thesis addresses. Further, connecting personal stories to public events, as my Grandfather does so naturally, places great significance on what he is trying to tell and why he is telling it.

Grey Owl

Oh the Grey Owl story, is a very simple story, uh my mother went down to Matawa where she was born and my Grandparents used to live in Matawa for a while so she went to visit them. And there were many cousins around at the place of my grandmothers. They're not close cousins yah know, but like fourth and fifth down the ladder and they're related yah know, to a degree of course. And um I dunno, there was a gathering at one of the house one afternoon there and my mother went to the gathering with the ladies to have tea, and there was this guy there and he was with, he came in with one of my mothers cousins, and the cousins last name was Green, I don't know what the first name was, but that name Green stuck in my head. And he was introduced around, he was dressed in buckskins- like a buckskin jacket- and long hair, anyways um when they left, Green and this man, the remaining people were there and they said 'oh yah know nice man' but he says he's Indian and they were not sure and my mother looked at them and says 'he's not Indian!' [Grampa's gritty voice]. And like my mother know like, she says 'he's not an Indian!' and they says 'well he's quite famous, he writes books and uh, yah know he's quite famous. He's written stories about Indians and being an Indian, and liking his land' and she says 'he's not Indian!' and every time they tried to say something about him she'd say 'he's not Indian!'

[Grampa's chuckling] *And of course, umm, he had 99% of the white people that he associated with, believing that he was Indian, or something. But anyways, that was the end of the story except that he went on through life fooling publishers who published book, and telling stories for Indians... he got to be quite famous around North America for being an Indian scholar or something [giggles] and my mother knew! When she was around there was no way. It went along for a while until about 10-15 years later he got exposed. What happened was his true wife from England came to together looking for work or whatever, and she was in England and he was here and they stayed in communication I guess, writing letters saying you know whatever, he'd say like don't bother coming here its too hard or whatever.. he didn't want her to come here because he got married to a couple of Indian women here! [laughs] She decided to come to Canada and somehow she went to one of the addresses of the letters, and she knocked on the door and there was his true wife from England! And so he was exposed as being a white guy pretending he was Indian. He was sun tanned and had long hair and I do recall seeing some pictures of him around that time and he didn't strike me as looking Indian, but he didn't, I guess, strike some Indians as looking white. I guess some of the things he said, were perhaps true but he was exposed [laughs] and taking advantage of the Indian women here. And my mother, when she said he was not, she'd fight to the end to prove she was right. I remember rooming with Johnny Bower and we'd be talking about Indians, and Bower would bring him up and I'd say 'what are you talking about, he's not Indian!' but Grey Owl was doing this thing when it was becoming famous to help Indians and to do things for Indians, and people wanted to believe it.*

The illustrated biography titled, *Grey Owl: The Many Faces of Archie Belaney* (Billingshurst 1999) tells the true story of Grey Owl but also exposes some problematic logic from the media during the discovery of his true identity. Archie Belaney, an Englishman born in Hastings, England, left the country for Canada in 1906. Living in parts of Northern Ontario and Quebec, he passed himself off as the son of an Apache woman and sprouted into popularity amongst Canadians as an Indigenous writer and conservationist (Billingshurst 1999). While the facts of the book are indeed well

documented, some of the media commentary on Grey Owl is unsettling. For example, the author includes a section titled “Press Commentary” where we see how newspaper writers felt about the issue of his sincerity versus his fake identity. A piece from the *Winnipeg Tribune* (1938) says, “The chances are that Archie Belaney could not have done nearly such effective work for conservation of wild life under his own name. It is an odd commentary, but true enough, that many people will not listen to simple truths except when buffered by exotic personalities” (Billingshurst 1999:136). These writers do not have a problem with Archie Belaney “playing Indian”, and in fact dismiss the idea because if he did identify as an “exotic” Native, then his work would not have been received as well as it was. It shows the perceptions of Indianness at the time and the disregard and contradiction of Indigenous identity. As a time when Indigenous people were actively targeted by the government to be absorbed into a Canadian national identity, it appeared, according to the media, okay for a white man to play Indian because his ideas of conservation far outweighed, and benefitted from, an Indigenous identity that was currently under assimilation. What a contradiction. Philip Deloria in his book *Playing Indian* (1998) writes about the authentication experience of ‘playing Indian’ and the historical practices of Indian play in the United States that catered to American identity formation. For example, he writes in particular about Indian play being popular in the early 1900s (around the same time as Grey Owl) for boy scout camps and youth recreational programs because Indianness and savagery was associated with developmental stages of children. Deloria writes, “To reaffirm modern identity, Americans needed to experience that which was not modern” (1998:105). He continues, “Modern/antimodern Indian play occurred at the confluence of these three interconnected bodies of thought. The ethnographer saw Indians as primal, distant Others; their premodern character could, nonetheless, be possessed intellectually through ethnographic details and perceptually through the photograph” (1998:119). Grey Owl similarly created a perception of authentic Indigeneity through Indian “dress-up” and pictures capturing him living amongst a beaver colony in the bush. He played the part, and he played it well. Deloria writes, “In fact, play proved to be an appropriate vehicle for these contradictory longings for freedom and fixed truth. Play was powerful, for it not only made meanings, it made them real. The donning of Indian clothes moved ideas from brains to bodies,

from the realm of abstraction to the physical world of concrete experience” (1998:184). The Grey Owl biography ends with this segment from the *Liverpool Daily Post* (1938), “What, after all, does his ancestry matter?... When a man has devoted his best years to such a cause it is surely unfair that he should be dubbed an ‘imposter’ because he may, if certain evidence is correct, have been an Englishman and not a Red Indian. Those who have read Grey Owl’s books or heard his broadcasts cannot doubt his sincerity, and the record of his work speaks for itself. In these circumstances it would seem that Grey Owl should be accepted for the nature-lover which he undoubtedly was, and that controversy over his ancestry may be dismissed as unnecessary gossip” (Billinghurst 1999:139). The story of Grey Owl, as represented in the media and documented in books, and the story told to me by my Grandfather presents some meaningful contradictions. We get a glimpse into how Indian identities are exploited and the power of settler bodies. It is okay for a white settler to ‘play Indian’ however, this was occurring at the time when Indian dress and identities were actively being assimilated. I am proud of my Great-Grandmother for recognizing that she was witnessing a settler trying to play Indian, during a time where she felt the pressure of colonization on her own identity.

In the telling of these stories I am not attempting, nor is my Grandfather, to reconstruct history. Instead he is telling what life was like from his perspective, and from the perspective of his ancestors as told through story. Cruikshank writes, “Gradually, I came to see oral tradition not as “evidence” about the past but as a window on ways the past is culturally constituted and discussed” (1990:14). This “window” is a fitting metaphor. I began to comprehend the stories not as testimony, but instead as pure lived experience. How did my Grandfather experience this and understand this then? How does he understand it now? How do I understand it now? I began to understand the impacts of colonialism more intimately, as family experience of them. These stories present the opportunity to give the reader a contemporary understanding of the colonial project by showing the elements of power relations through generations linked by story: the life of his grandmother, the life of his mother, and his own life.

And and the Catholic church was doing nothing to help them. They would just move them to another area or to another school or church. They would just move them...

Power runs the world. The reason men were accepted more than women was because they were stronger. They knocked them over and said 'were gonna do this'. Before that, the British Empire had the power... they ran the world. It works in the bush. The animals eat each other, and the stronger ones eat the younger ones. Power rules the world, like it or not. But it's true.

When people read my Grandfather's story I want them to gain an understanding of the feeling of being torn between two worlds, the colonial world and the Indigenous world. I think my Grandfather's story and his life, shows us that we can live together. But living together requires understanding on both sides - understanding why Indigenous people are under the circumstances they are under today and understanding why colonialism has imposed ethnocentrism and judgement upon the lives of Indian people. Some people just do not know and some just do not understand. My Grandfather being a public figure, celebrated by settlers and Indigenous people alike, gives us an opportunity to understand each other better and a desire to do so.

1.12 Conclusions

As my Grandfather tells me his stories, he is well aware of his audience. Sitting before him listening intently is his granddaughter. Not a reporter, not a stranger, not a typical Leafs fan. I am a part of him and he is a part of me because we are both part of the story. In my Grandfather's stories as he is recalling memories to his granddaughter, there is potential for him to tell them in a certain way as to reflect them in way that makes it clear to who he is talking to. We always consider the roles we play in the stories we tell, and the telling of the stories is dependent on the audience. I tell myself to think about my Grandpa in context of the role he plays for me, as my Grandfather. He is speaking to me, but he also knows that our conversations might be transcribed onto a sheet of paper. I have learned how to ask my Grandfather certain questions, for example when I ask "Grampa what is your opinion of this?" versus "Grandpa, tell me a story about this". For

example, “what is your opinion of residential schools” versus “what did you think of your cousins attending residential school?” I have gotten this concept from Labov in *The Language of Life and Death*: “I noticed that the level of formality was distinctly reduced when people were talking about their personal experience- events that had actually happened- rather than their general opinions. When the narrative centered on really important experience, the level of formality dropped even further” (2013:2)

When I have talked to my Grandfather about his stories and the ways we want to present them into a book, we have had several conversations about what makes a good story and what makes people want to read a good story. The following is one of them:

Grandpa: But you got to grab them early, and you can tell all your stories afterwards. They're reading the book to see how an in-betweener was treated, yah know. Or how their life was. And my life wasn't a normal one I wouldn't suspect either yah know.

Kalley: You definitely do not have a normal life (laughs).

Grandpa: No. My life's not a normal life. I played hockey in the National Hockey League yah know. And recognizable and stuff. Takes you out of the normality in a way, kind of, yah.

My Grandfather, on the back of a scrap piece of paper, wrote to me: “*Remember that these stories are all true from his eyes and ears and he saw it and felt them. Not anybody else. Remember he was raised in a white community, his mother being the only adult Native in the community. My sport skills made me popular. I do not remember that being half and half was detrimental as I was maturing. But somehow, I got the feeling I would rather be white. I got the message somehow. Maybe I did not feel discrimination because I was never looking for it.*” This is how my Grandfather wants his story to be understood in his thesis, and in honor of him this is the story we will tell together.

The goal of this thesis is to provide an account of the small stories that accurately depict my Grandfather's life, outside of what is public knowledge. Working in collaboration with my Grandfather will ensure that the stories communicated are those he feels

comfortable telling an audience outside of myself. The stories of private experience which can be understood as a public Canadian story or history. Stories that have spent generations suppressed by the colonial mechanisms and which are later circumscribed and interpreted through the lens of hockey's national discourse. In conclusion, this thesis is meant to answer the question I presented at the beginning of this chapter. Why is this story important for a family, but also for a country? First, this chapter highlights the importance of stories, and why we should think about them critically. While the telling of stories offers a direct experiential aspect to the listener, we need to understand these stories for their context and layers of meaning. My hope is that we can see how a personal conversation can transform into communal experience and understanding. Our family story is now shared with you, the reader, and now we share it together. This thesis gives power and legitimacy to a story told by many Indigenous people but listened and accepted by few. On dominant narratives, Bruner and Turner (1986:19) write "Power, as we know, is not simply a question of manipulation of the media. It has a much broader base, for it depends on what most people are predisposed to accept and what they consider legitimate and appropriate". If Stanley Cup victories are legitimized through story and records, the effects of colonialism on the lives of Indigenous people can be as well.

Chapter 2 : Identity

2 Introduction

My Indigenous Spirit

“The government can put me in jail, they can take away my land, and money, our ways and almost anything. But they cannot kill the Indigenous spirit within me.”

- George Armstrong

The following chapter will address my Grandfather’s experience of his Indigenous identity and how it transformed but remained intact under distinctive circumstances influenced by both internal and external forces. His stories offer rich insight into the complexities of Indigenous identity both individually and intergenerationally. Indigenous identities, as described in this chapter, are in accordance with what I have learned from my Grandfather. I do not claim to possess any traditional Indigenous knowledge, as I myself am on a journey to reconnect with my Indigenous ancestry and tradition. My personal struggles with my Indigenous identity are a consequence of the detrimental effects of colonial society and their ongoing effects on those who want to immerse themselves back into traditional and contemporary Indigenous culture. I am proud to have Indigenous roots and hope to one day understand the space I occupy as an individual who remains unsure of not only how to comprehend my Indigeneity, but how to refer to it, particularly in an academic setting. Amongst family and close Indigenous friends, I feel comfort in using the term Indian and Native because it is always how we have referred to ourselves. However, the space I occupy as an academic adds an extra layer to my identity and has not only influenced me to critically think about the use of certain references and terms, but also to recognize where I stand within the academy and amongst my academic peers. My usage of certain terms, and the way I identify myself, changes based on the environment in which I find myself in.

The stories, as told below, cover four generations of my Indigenous family. They are told to me by my Grandfather, George Armstrong, whose Algonquin mother lost Indian status

under the assimilative laws of the Indian Act. In 1869, the Gradual Enfranchisement Act⁹ was an amendment to the Indian Act. Its purpose was to assimilate Indians into Canadian settler society by controlling who was deemed a status Indian and who was not. The patriarchal supremacy of Western society removed status from Indian women who married white men, in effort to slowly eliminate the Indian. This process materialized in the lives of several Indian woman, one of them being my Nanny Alice. The story of removed status is a shared story for many families, however, the loss of status is particularly relevant when examining the life my Grandfather lived in relation to his status Indian cousins. This will be revisited later in the chapter, but it is important to acknowledge the detrimental impact and effects of the Indian Act on Indigenous families.

2.1 Indian Eyes

My Grandfather's memories and oral narratives cover the life of his mother, and his Grandparents, all of whom were off-reserve Indians, moving around the outskirts of Sudbury, Ontario. His memories depict an essential narrative, one that sheds light on the impact of colonialism on generations of family and the implications of white domination and influence on Indigenous identity. This narrative is a shared narrative, as many families have suffered the effects of colonialism. These effects continue to linger today, as I feel them within myself: uncertainty; whom am I? In my conversations with my Grandfather, we grapple with our identity together as Grandfather and granddaughter, sometimes confused about who we are, working to understand a fragmented family history. And just when we think we have the answer, we learn something new about ourselves- another piece to our complex puzzle. This project is a collaborative effort between myself and my Grandfather, dependent on our relationship and reliant on our trust. It is a story than only we both can tell together. It is my hope that his stories and memories bring our family closer to its truth, helping us to better understand who we are.

⁹ The Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869 (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/>)

“You have Indian eyes” my grandmother always used to say to me. I desperately cling onto these words. My eyes reassure me of my Indigeneity, they help me feel connected to my Native ancestors. But through the eyes of others, I appear white. I have not faced the same judgement and racism that my Nanny Alice and Grandpa faced. But at the same time, I wish I looked more Native. Appearances are a funny thing. Why do I have this desire to look different, to feel authenticated through my appearance? Philip Deloria writes that authenticity is a category that is culturally constructed in opposition to a perceived state of inauthenticity (1998:101). This feeling of inauthenticity lingers, but why? My intention for this chapter is to present the complexities of Indigenous identity as it is experienced by myself, my Grandfather and my Great-Grandmother. Identity in this section will be addressed through story and lived experience. I will explore the idea of authenticity, as it is a theme that emerges in our shared family history, our collective story. Why is it that I need to feel authenticated through appearance when I can rely on story? How does story impact my perceptions of my own authenticity? How can these stories contribute to a wider understanding of Indigenous identity?

2.2 Perceptions of Indianness

The stories that follow all speak to perceptions of Indian identity, particularly based on appearance. However, they also offer a way to “see” things differently. My whiteness has provided for me a life void of the racism and judgement. Although I appear white, however, how I choose to see things far outweighs the perceptions of appearance. I am always attempting to decolonize what I see by applying the Mi’kmaq concept of two-eyed seeing. Iwama et al. (2009) in the article “Two-eyed Seeing and the Language of Healing in Community Based-Research” suggest the concept of two-eyed seeing as a way to look at the world through two eyes or views, Western views and Indigenous epistemologies. It is based on the teachings of chief Charles Labrador who once said “Go into a forest, you see the birch, maple, pine. Look underground and all those trees are holding hands. We as people must do the same” (Iwama et al. 2009:3) This is beautifully articulated and currently relevant. If we can see through both Indigenous and Western perspectives, then we can attempt to understand each other and ourselves better. Naturally, my Grandfather’s lived experience puts into perspective a life seen through

two eyes. The purpose here is to make sense of identity and understanding through story. They validate and help me feel connected to our Indigeneity while making sense of it and attempting to understand our world through both eyes, Indian and white. Because of my appearance and the lingering impact of assimilation on my Indigenous family, stories are what connect me to my Indigenous ancestry.

The collective experience of my Grandfather sharing stories with me, connects us both to our Indigenous heritage. In his telling and my listening, we are both perceiving what life was like for my Great-Grandmother and her reality of being Indian and comparing it to our own. In this exchange, I have learned from him the richness of experience that can be achieved simply through listening. As I take in his words, I ask myself: what do these stories mean and what can I learn from them? My hope is that the stories offer the reader a similar richness of experience and contribute to a deeper understanding of Indigenous-settler relationships. The stories must be interpreted by their context, as the transcription of conversations removes the intimacy and emotion from the dialogue. The stories are intended to be read and comprehended in a way that works for the reader.

This is the power of storytelling, we can absorb the words in a way that works for us. The attempt to see through a different lens is a testament to how we perceive things and the understanding we apply to our perceptions. In most of my Grandfather's stories I try to understand how he felt in the moment the story occurred, and how he makes sense of it now. It adds a layer to my own understanding of my own identity, as well as his. My Grandfather recalls a vivid memory of him as a young boy and the influence of his Algonquin grandmother on his mother and his young self. The memories come from different times, but they connect through experience of identity.

Traditional Medicine

The Native way was passed on, yah. And when it was passed on to my grandmother, it was the Native way. Like a medicine doctor. But, she knew all those things. And of course she tried to teach my mother, and my mother had come in contact with the whites, and she wanted to be white because they got everything going for them. And so my grandmother tried to encourage her to

learn that. And my mother said 'ah I don't want to learn that', my mother didn't want to learn it. And even she says - my mother told me the story I told you the other day about my mother making the beautiful Indian outfit out of rawhide, and my mother wore it once or twice and she didn't like it because it was Native, she wanted to be white eh, and so my grandmother sold it - she says 'Alice do you want that or not' after about a year or so and she says 'no, not really mom' and she says 'okay I'll sell it' because a number of people asked her 'oh wow I'd like to buy that'. And so my grandmother sold it. But her mother grew up in a real Native tradition and she learned all that and so she knew all those things. And I remember stepping on a nail around the house, they were building houses all around Garcon [Ontario]. And we were kids playing there, and there was a nail sticking out of the board and I stepped on it and the nail went right through, right there [my Grampa points at the bottom of his foot] and then we went out to visit my Grandparents, and my grandmother goes to my mother 'look at George out there, he's limping' and my mother says 'oh he stepped on a nail there' and of course she says 'come over here' and I had to take my sock off and she says 'oh, I have to put something on that' yah know, and so she grabbed a pair of scissors and went out into the bush and she came back with some leaves and I don't know what they are and she comes back with a little pile of leaves like that [gestures a handful] and she just wrapped them around there [he showing me with his foot] and in about three days, and after the third day the swelling had gone down and there was a scab there and I was walking normal, and it was yah know 90 percent better! And I was the recipient of that, of that medicine that she knew she was doing. Yah I remember that, that special thing. And out in the bush by herself, she says 'don't let him walk around on that' to my mother. And I had put my foot in hot water or something and kind of cleaned it off and dried it. And she wrapped in with a rag and tied it around my ankle yah know. With a nice white clean rag.

My Grampa tells his stories in connected ways, often introducing one story in the middle of another as he did above. In telling the story of his mother's hesitancy to learn traditional medicine, he interjects with the story about her mother making her a "beautiful Indian outfit" as a girl. While the stories occur at different times, both highlight the

struggle my Grandfather's mother had with her Indigenous identity. A struggle very opposite from mine, which I will speak to later. Katherine Alice Decaire, who I will refer to as "Nanny Alice" in the remainder of this thesis, is the mother of my Grandfather, George Armstrong and my great-grandmother. She was born in 1907 in Mattawa, Ontario to Joseph Decaire, an Indian trapper from Oka, Quebec, and Catherine Stevens¹⁰, born in Maniwaki, Quebec¹¹. My attempts to discover the lineage of my Indigenous great-Grandparents have been a struggle but have come with some success. Catherine Stevens, I have found with the help of my Grandfather's stories and memories and my own research, comes from Kitigan Zibi Algonquin First Nation¹², located in Quebec. Joseph Decaire, however, has been a challenge to track down as my Grandfather says he was adopted as a boy. Lack of records have made it difficult to uncover my great-great-Grandfather's background, however we suspect he came from a community near Oka, Quebec.

2.3 The Stories that Define Us

My Grandfather tells me that Joseph Decaire knew how to speak several languages, Italian, French, and English alongside a couple of Indigenous languages. Because Joseph knew Italian, my Grampa suspects that he was adopted from his Indigenous family into an Italian family, though we do not know under what circumstances this happened. However, my Grandfather's memories and stories do paint a picture of Joseph Decaire inheriting traditional practices, as he spoke Indigenous languages, had a bible translated in an Indigenous text, and lived in the bush as a guide and trapper.

¹⁰ Retrieved documents spell my Great-Grandmother's name as "Catherine" or "Catharine" or "Katherine". My Grandfather and I remain unsure of the exact spelling and use it interchangeably.

¹¹ This knowledge comes from within our family.

¹² Over the summer of 2018, I travelled to Kitigan Zibi First Nation and spoke with the band office. We confirmed that my Great-Grandmother's family comes from this community.

The Bible

I remember my mother talking about my Grandfather's bible. He had a bible written in Cree or some Indian language. I've heard about that from my mother, yah know, just like in conversation and it's in the back of my head, and I heard them talking about my Grandfather's bible, and it was in Native, it was written in Native. And it was a Christian kind of bible, written in Native. And of course, if he had it written in Native, he could understand it. He could read that. And he wasn't dumb of course my Grandfather, because as I told you, he talked Italian, French and English and two or three Native tongues of course because languages were different with different tribes.

Unfortunately, my Great-Great Grandfather's knowledge of Indigenous languages, as well as my Great-Great Grandmother's knowledge and healing practices were not passed down. Colonization presented its corrosive wear on my family. Indistinct from other Indigenous families, this occurred in waves of deterioration, slowly removing Indigeneity from each generation of our family. Slowly chipping away at identity and sculpting a freshly assimilated Indian, less Indian than the past. Language washed away through generations, Westernized identity cultivated. It was not until later in her life that Nanny Alice realized what had been taken away and had regretted not learning from her parents. To no fault of her own, my great-grandmother grew up immersed and influenced by white society. As a girl, she did not want to be an Indian in a white man's world. Her parents did not live on a reserve, they followed work around the northern Sudbury region, often finding themselves in places where they were doing jobs for white men. Often, in hearing my Grandfather retell these stories, I remember engaging with them in a way that saw my Indigenous family members as their own entity and unit, using the land and the resources around them to survive. As I have further engaged with these stories in an academic setting, my perception has changed. It becomes clear to me, how influential the Western world was on my Indigenous family. In these stories I often see now, a complex entanglement of two worlds. Slowly, as time progresses, I feel witness to the impact of Westernization on Indigenous families, through the stories of my own family. The bible my Grandfather recalls seeing, is an example of the slow removal of Indigeneity from my

family. The translation of words in the bible, can appear to be preserving Indigenous language, when they are in fact assimilating. The stories show me that the Western influence on my family operated under a crafted guise.

The bible story is a story of assimilation. My family stories, as they are told through generations, show the slow chipping away of culture, and I see three generations my Grandfather, my father, and myself as the product. Am I a product of Duncan Campbell Scott's wishes for Canada's "Indian Problem"¹³ to be solved? In 1920, Scott the deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs wrote of Canada's Indian Problem, "I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone... Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of the Bill" (National Archives of Canada)¹⁴. While I do not want to see myself as a product of colonization, it becomes difficult not to when understanding the meaning behind events embedded in these stories. The two worlds, Indian and white often collide, and fighting for space, the white world seems to triumph within the life of my Nanny Alice and the life of my Grandfather, leaving my father and myself with only a white world to live in. There is no clash between worlds in our life.

The story that follows offers an example of Indigenous epistemologies operating within a Western world. His mother and his Grandparents avoided a potentially fatal bushfire that swept through Temiskaming District in October of 1922. The wildfire is considered one of Canada's worst natural disasters. Within two days, the fire destroyed 1700 square

¹³ A term Duncan Campbell Scott used to describe his dissatisfaction with Indians in Canada, and his desire to assimilate them into Western society.

¹⁴ National Archives of Canada (Record Group 10, vol. 6810, file 470-2-3, vol. 7, 55 (L-3) and 63 (N-3).

kilometers of land, damaging 18 townships and causing 43 fatalities¹⁵. These details however, are not the ones my Grandfather tells. Instead my Grandfather tells the story, as it was told to him by his mother. Immersed in white society, his Grandparents, while they lived traditionally, moved often around the northern Sudbury region following work. One particular job brought them to Englehart, Ontario, which is located approximately 265 kilometers north of Sudbury.

The Great Fire of 1922

Well they were nomads, in a way. Cause wherever there was work, they went. They never lived on a reserve. If there was work, my Grandfather was gone, looking for a job yah know. That's how he got that job in Englehart where the fire was. Yah know, up there. He was up there on a log drive, and all of a sudden the doctor in town was looking for somebody to cut wood for him and to tidy up around the grounds and shovel snow and somebody to cook. So it was in the fall you see, he was getting ready for the winter. And so my grandmother was a cook and my Grandfather was the chore boy. So they decided to stay there. But then of course, my grandmother said to my mother- like I told you she had an intuition of some sort, I don't know what you call it- but she said 'I don't like it here, we have to go away' and my Grandfather apparently said 'what are you talking about' and my grandmother said 'well something bad is going to happen here' and she says 'I don't know what it is, but something bad is going to happen here and we have to leave here' and he told her 'oh you're crazy and all that' apparently, but she wouldn't give up and after a week or so he finally said 'ok, we'll leave here but I can't leave the man that hired us, I can't leave them cold. You and Alice go back to North Bay.' So they got on a train, I guess they had enough money to get on the train, they went to North Bay and he said 'I'll stay here until I get a man

¹⁵ Torontoist, Historicist: The Great Fire of 1922 (<https://torontoist.com/2014/10/historicist-the-great-fire-of-1922/>)

to replace us, because the doctor needs somebody here' so he stayed for a number of days and when the guy got somebody there he took off and went home to that crazy lady. And two or three days after he left, that big fire came through and that it still is the biggest bush fire that ever happened in Canada or something. Yeah so my Native grandmother, between the two of them, my Grandfather could speak all kinds of languages, and my grandmother, my mother said she could do anything. She had a pipe she liked to smoke. The smoking of a pipe, I think meant in the olden days, that they had a big pow wow or a meeting, and they might have made a couple deals, it was a signing of 'okay the deal is done' the smoking of the pipe kind of sealed all the deals that the Natives, or the chiefs, made with each other. And some tribes, the women smoked the pipes as well to seal the deal, yah know. The women some of the times were very strong, apparently yah know. They were allowed to give opinions in very intense situations. The women's opinions were valued a great deal by the men, yah yah. By the elders yah know.

My Grandfather's use of the word "nomads" to describe his Grandparent's way of living presents a complexity under which Regna Darnell's (2005) concept of "nomadic legacies" can be applied. For Darnell nomadic legacies "are carried over from hunter-gatherer subsistence patterns into contemporary decision-making strategies about how to exploit new resources that now include education, employment, and access to social or medical services. The emergent, dynamic lifeways of nomads remain functional and adaptive today, 'traditional' rather than 'modern' because they are continuous with the past, as transmitted orally through the words, stories, and memories of the elders" (Darnell 2008:104) . The choice to use the word nomad to describe his Grandparent's way of life, suggests that he understood them as unsettled in comparison to "reserve"-based Indians in the Sudbury region at the time. I think I want to describe how my Grandfather interprets his Grandparents in relation to their Native relatives and friends on Nipissing reserve. They were a part of Benedict Anderson's (1983) notion of an "imagined community" and would frequently visit the Nipissing reserve, however, their life was one unsettled, going wherever they needed resources to survive. Darnell writes, "It is a community from which the mainstream might learn much through bridging misconceptions and the implicit devaluation of nomads in relation to settlers" (2008:111).

My Grandfather's reconstruction of this account is taken from the words of his mother, who lived this experience. As I attempt to understand what these stories mean to my Grandfather, I make a connection through pipe smoking. As a child, one of my fondest memories of my Grandfather is the smoking of his pipe. Sitting alone in the middle of his garage on a stool, the sweet smell of tobacco, and the effortless and smooth puffing of his pipe there emerged within me a feeling of calmness and harmony. As I bring myself back into those memories, I attach them to the stories my Grandfather would tell me of his Algonquin grandmother walking into the bush alone to smoke her pipe. Pipe smoking for him, seems to be an act of embodiment of his grandmother, perhaps one that evoked his connection to his grandmother. When my Grandfather stopped smoking his pipe a few years ago, the sweet smell of his garage faded. I asked him for his pipe one day, and as we opened the garage on a dark summer night, he reached up into the rafters and pulled out the pipe wrapped neatly in an old cloth and handed it to me. The pipe was now mine and was a symbol not only of my cherished childhood memories of my Grandfather, but now one I could attach and connect with my Indigenous great grandmother. In the telling of this story, as he recalls the ability of his grandmother to have foresight, he is linked to the memory of his grandmother smoking her pipe. In his retelling of this account, he is teaching me. Teaching me what he knows about pipe smoking, what it means to him, and the roles of the women in traditional Indigenous society. He has told me several times that the most influential people in his life have been women, his mother and both of his grandmothers. His mother an Indian woman, his grandmother also Indian, and then his white grandmother. I have learned from him in his one story how much the women were trusted, his Grandfather listening to his grandmother perhaps saved their lives. As I listened to my Grampa talk about the memories of his mother and his Grandparents, I try to understand my positionality throughout his discourse. I attempt to place myself in the times of his mother, and in the times of his childhood, and while doing so I am embodying what it means to be Indigenous for me, by way of understanding my family history and the ways in which my Indigenous family lived. Similar to my new ownership of the pipe, I am embodying the meaning of the pipe to my Grandpa, as presented to him through his own grandmother. The object has a story, the story shapes my identity, and now I am beginning to embody the stories much like my Grandfather has.

2.4 Dark Skin, Dark Words

Embedded within the memories of my Grampa, I become witness to two individuals that experienced self-doubt when they were younger, much like the self-doubt I am encountering now. This process becomes personal for me, essential. Colonialism is still very present today, but I am curious as to how it is embedded in our current society in relation to the way colonial structures worked during the time of my Nanny Alice and my Grandfather. Has colonization changed over time, making itself less recognizable to those living in current society? This is where the stories across generations play a role. As I dive into the past with my Grampa's retelling of stories, I become witness to the different ways colonialization materialized in society, and how it functioned. It becomes clear that structures of colonialization remained present but changed and adapted in an attempt to blend in with mainstream society. Colonization continues to manifest itself today, embedded inside structures and hidden within systems that are not recognizable to many. My Grandfather's stories show the different ways colonialism is embedded in everyday life across generations.

Dark Skin, Dark Words

I just know that she [Nanny Alice] didn't like when a bunch of kids called her 'Hey Blackie' cause she had dark skin, right. I knew that she didn't like that. It wasn't likeable to hear that. And she told me, that that's what she heard. And from that day on too, that when she put makeup on, every morning, every day, until the day she died. That feeling of being white... never... it was the acceptable thing for society. Our society. Where we live.

[Same story told on a different day]

But she never ever denied or tried to pretend she was not Native, she never, yah know, she says the only time, 'when I was young, I wished I was white' because I used to feel what people said, yah know. But aside from that, yah know she says one time some guys went by when she was on the road, and the truck was going by and uh they said "hello blackie!" Nanny [Alice] had darker skin, and they said

“hello blackie” and she felt bad, and she kinda wished she had whiter skin, yah know. And so she started putting powder on her face, flour! Yah know, to make it whiter.

[Similar story told a different way]

My mother, in a way, I know... that to you and to me... but secretly every day when she got up, she put her powder on first. She used to put her powder on first, first thing. She'd wake up and before she came down, she got engrained into her... that uhh people would look at her more favourably if she was white, I guess. And we all like to look nice, let's face it. But, she was proud to be Indian, but she wished she was a whiter one.

I am using multiple versions of the same story above to show the different ways a story can be told by a storyteller. While the wording of the story changes, the content remains consistent. My Grandfather is using different versions of the same story to communicate the impact of white society on his mother's understanding of herself. Here, we can return to the story of Grey Owl and the ideas that Deloria (1998) presented on “playing”. Unlike Grey Owl, my Nanny Alice did not want to appear white to stand out or to play the part. She wanted to look white to fit in, to make her dark skin unseeable. My Grandfather notes, “she was proud to be Indian, but she wished she was a whiter one”. The irony of this statement embodies the difficulty and confusion that my Nanny Alice faced throughout her life. How do our multiple identities intersect?

I remember as a kid idolizing my Nanny Alice. She had this presence about her that is difficult for me to describe. As young woman, my Nanny Alice would powder her face with flour in attempt to make her skin look white. She continued that habit until she passed away. That feeling of wanting to look whiter lingered throughout her entire life. As a child, I remember sensing the strength and wisdom that my Nanny Alice projected so naturally and unintentionally. How could this lady possibly have any self-doubt? What is interesting about my Nanny Alice, is how I interpret not her identity changing throughout her life, but her perceptions of herself changing as certain events occurred. Each new circumstance added an extra layer to my grandmother's identity, speaking to

the multiple identities we can carry. Since I do not have access to Nanny Alice's own interpretations of herself and her life, I have to really listen and think about the stories. My interpretations of my Nanny Alice are based on my Grampa's projections of what she told him. When did her perceptions of her Indigenous identity change? For my Nanny Alice, one event in particular sticks out.

The Switch

Shortly after they were married, she had moved with your great Grandpa to Garson, and Garson had a soccer team. And Grandpa Armstrong was one of the real tough soccer players that not many of the players on the other team liked because he played the, rough all the time. Anyways [laughs] and not many of the fans liked either, they didn't like Grandpa, from the other team of course. Every team that had him, loved him. But anyways, uh they were in Sudbury playing a game. And Garcon was beating a team from Coniston [Ontario]. 3-1 or 3-2 or something like that. And Grandpa Armstrong was bumping them around and they were getting beat, and largely because Grandpa was bumping them around a little bit. And so they didn't like that, yah know. Anyways, so this woman is going by and she didn't like Grandpa of course... and she was going by and uh I guess it was widely known that Grandpa had married an Indian girl... in the soccer community it was known that my dad had married. And so my mother was standing on the sideline, on this side of the white chalk... and they used to double chalk it to so that the people couldn't be right on the line yah know. Anyways, she come up behind Nanny and she had a switch in her hand for some reason or another and she started hitting my mother in the back of the leg with the switch... a switch is like a stick yah know, like a long stick, and she was hitting Nanny in the back of the leg with it yah know. And yelling at Nanny that her husband was no good and was running Grandpa down at Nanny. And saying that Nanny was no good either cause she was an Indian and she called her a 'Squaw', and anyways.. she says 'he got what he deserved...he got you' or something like that yah know. Anyways, this had nothing to do with the game this was on the sidelines. After the game my dad come over to where they were to say hello, and

he had two or three brothers at the game and my Aunt Pete and Aunt Ellen were at the game and everyone was at the game yah know, and uh he started talking to them and he come to my mother and says 'you don't look happy' yah know. And she says 'well I'm not' and he says well 'why are you not happy', so she told him the story of what happened yah know. And Grandpa says to her [my Grandpa's voice gets gritty], 'yah should have hit her'. Well that's all she needed [we laugh together]. She turned around, half turn, and there was that woman coming down the sidewalk. Nanny walked over to her and smacked her one and down she went, Nanny on top of her. And there was a big gathering of people around eh watching the fight and that. And then the police came over and had to break them up yah know. And then of course, the woman charged Nanny with assault. And the judge found her guilty. He said something like, Mrs. Armstrong what happened to you was a terrible thing but the law says that you are allowed to hit somebody if its uh just kind of spontaneous.. yah know.. you can't plan something like that. So with the time between he figured there was a plan to hit the woman. So she got charged and he says I have to charge you, so you get two years suspended sentence. He says Mrs. Armstrong it is terrible what happened to you but I have to go by the law. But he said to my mother, next time that happens don't wait. That is why I have to punish you, because you waited.

I heard that story a few times throughout my lifetime. I saw a write up in the Sudbury Star about it. And I don't know what year it would be, I am not sure when... I saw it later in life when I was 15 or something. Just a small little article, 'Woman gets two year suspended sentence' and it wasn't the sports page she was on [giggles]... she was on the police page. [We laugh].

[Continuation of the story told in a different conversation with my Grandpa]

From the day that my dad told her, I think, the women hit her with a switch in the back of the leg, and uh from the day my dad said to her, uhh yah know, you shoulda hit her [gritty voice] and from that day on she never took any lip from nobody. In her life. In her life. Prior to that date, she was finding her way in the

white community. But from that day on, in the white community, or any place, she never took lip from anybody. And ummm, I mean she had respect for people who did well and were nice. So no, my mother took no guff from anybody from that day on. Like when my dad died, I remember, umm my mother coming into the church in Garson, yah know, and uhh she was dressed, she didn't dress in black, she dressed very nicely in some red and colours, and then a lot of people were talking back and forth and then when she appeared everyone just stopped and looked. She drew attention yah know, when she walked in her presence was known. This woman who never went to school in her life. They all had good respect for her. You better toe the line, yah know. And she was a good person. She was a very god-fearing person.

I had a father that was for my mother 100% in every way. And anybody that did anything to harm her verbally or physically they would not do it because they knew Fred Armstrong would kick the shit out of them [we're both tearing up]. He was a good father [long pause]. And he was on our side on every occasion.

[More from this story told at a different time]

And my dad told her 'yah shoulda gave it to her' [gritty voice] and all that and when that woman was going by in the parking lot 'POW!' she nailed her, and down she went. My mother on top of her and all that, yah know. And my dad said, 'holy jesus!' and heard some yelling and looked all around and he says, 'there was my whole family'. They were all there. Anyone wanted to fight Nanny, and that gang was there to take them on. They were there so fast it was unbelievable. Yah know, Tom, Alf, Ellen and Pete, she says they were all there yah know. Bango. And that was my mother yah know, they were there to protect my dad's wife. Yah know, the Native woman. They were there to help her and protect her.

This event had a major impact on my Nanny Alice. One of the reasons I think this had such a profound effect on my Nanny Alice was the way she was empowered in the situation. Her empowerment came in the form of her standing up for herself and having the support of her husband, my great-Grandfather Fred Armstrong and his family. I often

wonder when I think about this situation and hearing it be told by my Grandfather, who had heard it from his mother, what was it about that situation that changed her feelings towards herself that day. Instead of breaking down and succumbing to the racism, she stood up for herself. However, the support of her white husband and her white family adds a curious complexity to the situation. Was it the support and backing of “white” people that had helped her or was it just the support of people in general. Did she need “white” approval to approve of herself. My Grandfather, however, had the most profound effect on Nanny Alice’s identity. My Grandfather, born to an Indigenous mother and an Irish father struggled with his own identity. Similar to his mother, he grew up in a white community constantly witness to the advantages that the white population had.

Kalley: Right so, say I were to ask you... What right now do you consider yourself? Who do you think you are? Do you consider yourself white? Do you consider yourself Native?

Grandpa: No, like uh... I’m white.

Kalley: You think you’re white?

Grandpa: Yeah, I’ve lived a white life. I can’t... I haven’t walked in those guys moccasins. I’ve walked in the white guys moccasins... but I’ve never walked in the Indian’s guys moccasins. [pause]... I’ve walked in Indian moccasins part time [laughs]

Kalley: However, you have... you did grow up thinking you were Native though.

Grandpa: No no, I grew up knowing I was half white and half Native. I didn’t think I was one or the other. I knew I was... I knew there was two there. I grew up KNOWING that. There was no, but I didn’t like being the Native part at the time. Because it was not in fashion to be a Native, and umm there were not umm... Natives were considered second class people, yah know. We all wanted to be treated like first class people, and then we were treated like second class people. And if there was a white hockey team, and they only wanted whites on there, they’d take me on their team. And if there was an Indian team, that only wanted

Indians, they would probably take me on their team too! Because I could play. So, the circumstances dictated what I was considered.

Kalley: Right!

Grandpa: The circumstances dictated what I was considered.

2.5 The Chief

It is interesting the profound effect that other people's perception of my Grandfather had on his own perception of his identity. It still lingers today, it seems, when he looks at the lives of his cousins. Their experience as Indian children differed greatly from his own, impacting his impression of himself. What is interesting about my Grandfather's storytelling is that he never projects himself as a victim or as at a disadvantage. And as I listen to him, he is not trying to extract sympathy. He does not want sympathy. The following story is a very important one.

One Long, Very Important Story

Hey, I wanted to be a white man too. By then. I wanted to be white too [my Grampa's voice gets low, soft and slow] I can remember around... I would be 11 maybe. And I remember my grandmother was at our place in Falconbridge on a visit. Anyways, my grandmother said she needed some kind of ingredient to cook with at the store. And so she was going to go to the store, and my mother says to me 'well you go with her'. And so I said 'okay' - and like I didn't want to go with my grandmother. My grandmother was nice and a good person, in my opinion, when we were amongst all the Indians. But I didn't want to be with my grandmother amongst all the whites - I remember walking down the road with my grandmother, like a quarter of a mile to the store and back yah know, and walking on that road there with my grandmother, I was 11 year old and saying to myself and looking at her and walking, and I was courteous and nice to her but in the back on my mind I was saying 'I wish you weren't Indian. Why [to my mother] did you make me walk with her', yah know. I didn't want to be seen with my grandmother. I thought I could pass off as white as long as I didn't have an

Indian with me [he chuckles]. Just as a kid! Being white was uhh, I saw that whites got everything and that Indians got less. The Indian as a minority wasn't very popular. And I was the minority because I was the only one. Just my sister, my mother, and me yah know. There was not one in the whole town besides us. We went to the white school, my dad was there and worked in the mine and rented the house and it was his children, and we went to the white school, that's all. But they took them out of the bush. The other ones yah know, and they ruined them [long pause]. But I'm sure that story has been told many times by other people. I began to... as I went through my life as a hockey player... uhhh as I got recognition for being good... uhhh society began to... the society around where I lived began to think about the Indians and what had happened to them, a little bit yah know. And some of them went out of the way to try and help Indians do better. And so it was uhhh, for the white man who did that, he was kind of a hero in the white community, yah know. And as I went on to play hockey, bantam and midget, and when I got to Stratford- like yah know I was the best player in the small district where I lived- but when I went to play hockey in Stratford that was all southern Ontario district yah know, Oshawa, Niagara Falls, Stratford, Windsor, yah know around there, so my world started to expand. And with my success, they started to call me 'Chief' and I did resent that.

Kalley: You did? [I am a little shocked].

Ya. I never told anybody, but I did resent that inside. Yah know. I did resent that. But a year or two later when I did become 18 and 19 years old, uhh I was uh I was conscious of how proud my mother was, and my dad... and yah know of how they were. And I was conscious of being considered a good player amongst all my relations yah know, Indians, whites, everything. But I kind of figured in my mind that my dad was white and he was a good soccer player but uh he had it pretty, yah know, he was accepted and had kind of some good things going for him in our small community and my mother was Indian and she had friends and all, but it wasn't as easy for her. So I began to lose that desire not to be called an Indian out of respect for my mother. I wanted her to feel... to have something more going

for her. I wanted to have something going for her. My dad was white and had things going for him, but she was Indian and going against the wind yah know. And so I started to accept that and I used to say 'yes' with more enthusiasm than I would have said before yah know. I started to realize that I was doing kind of good and my mother would be proud. And so from that day on, those times on... I never once ever said that I didn't want to be Indian. I'm just as much white as I am Indian but I always lean towards the Indian side because it's the underdog... and I wanna be with the underdog. I lean that way because I want to be with them. 95% of the people would only know I'm a half breed yah know. And uh, I don't look for... I like being in the background yah know... I like to be recognized but not pampered, or whatever you call it, I dunno. Like the guy wrote a book out west, yah know, a sports book¹⁶, and guy from Winnipeg, and he wrote a book and it was about Reggie Leach¹⁷ and Saskamoose¹⁸, and all these other Native guys... and he had written chapters on these guys and he had wanted me... and the phone rang and it was this guy and somehow he had gotten my number and phoned me. And he says 'I wrote you a letter but you never answered', and I says 'well I'm not interested'... he says well 'you're the big champion, you're the first guy to play in the National Hockey League' yah know, and this is Indian writer¹⁹ and all that, and I says 'yah know, I'm proud of the fact of that, but I don't have to brag about it' I could live my life without bragging about it yah know. I'm

¹⁶ *They Call Me Chief: Warriors on Ice* (2008) written by Don Marks is a book about Native hockey players and went on to become a Canadian best-seller.

¹⁷ Reggie Leach is a Native hockey player who had a very successful career in the NHL. I am very lucky to know Reggie, he is an amazing individual, and I look up to him and consider him a mentor. (<https://www.hhof.com/LegendsOfHockey/jsp/SearchPlayer.jsp?player=13337>)

¹⁸ Fred Saskamoose is the first Indian with treaty status to play in the NHL. He is a residential school survivor and deserves immense recognition for his success. (<https://www.hhof.com/LegendsOfHockey/jsp/SearchPlayer.jsp?player=14221>)

¹⁹ Don Marks was adopted by a First Nations family but is not of Indigenous decent himself. Many people thought he was Indigenous, but he was not.

proud of it, but I don't have to go and shove it down everybody's throat, and he says 'but my book, you're the number one guy' yah know anyways, I says no I'm not going to do it yah know. And so... Then, he wrote the book with Fred Saskamoose being the first Indian in the National Hockey League, that's the guy who wrote that book. He was going to do me, but I said no, no thanks.. Yeah, the guy was going to put me as the primary person, and he wanted to do the interview and all kinds of stuff but I said thank you but no thank you.

My Grandfather addresses some very important aspects of his life here. Let us start with his first story about his grandmother. As my Grandfather told me that story, we were both flooded with emotion. His voice began to get shaky and I could feel what he was feeling. That was a very important moment for me as his granddaughter, because I felt like we shared the intensity and emotion of that story together, as family. As my Grandfather talks about being a proud Indian for his mother, it becomes clear how he takes control of his own and his mother's perceptions of themselves. He had to. What was different about my Grampa's experience of being an Indian, however, was like unlike his mother, he was half Indigenous and half white. This turned about to be quite a challenge for him, given he often felt caught in what he describes as an "in-between". This in-between is a struggle that I have come to understand my Grandfather still struggles with today. External categories force Indigenous people to define themselves. Authenticity is a problematic word when defining an Indian. You need to look Indian to be Indian. You need to live like an Indian to be an Indian. Why does Indianness have these implications of authenticity? What external forces embed these uncertainties in Indigenous identity? "...outside ancestry and a shared experience of communal historical continuity, what it is to be Aboriginal cannot be resolved by referring to some obvious or universally agreed upon culturally authoritative source" (Schouls 2003:84).

Some of this confusion can be attributed to the presence of media in my Grandfather's life. As a public figure, my Grandfather became subject to intense media attention, who started to make their own impressions and judgements of what an Indian was. The media removed the complexity from my Grandfather's ancestry and transformed his Indigenous identity into a simple objectifying story. Media has the tendency to turn people like my

Grandfather into public property. Under this representation, the public began to define my Grandfather's identity themselves, often recreating him through their own versions of Indianness. Below is an example of a cartoonist's sketching of my Grandfather. He was widely known as the "Chief" for his Native ancestry and as the captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs, this name became popularized. Indians were often viewed as symbols, as seen in the figures below. Deloria postulates, "Unlike many symbols, however, Indians were also real people who could think, speak, imitate, act, and thus manipulate their own symbolic meanings" (1998:124). He continues, "In the early twentieth century, Indian people participated in the making of Indian Others as never before. Yet the fact that Native people turned to playing Indian – miming Indianness back at Americans in order to redefine it- indicates how little cultural capital Indian people possessed at the time" (Ibid:125). Deloria points out the symbolism associated with being Indigenous, but also the power dynamics of the settler-Indigenous relationship. It becomes clear in this statement, and in the examples below, that settlers had the power to define, categorize, and symbolically produce what it meant to be an Indian. Further, Deloria's notion that Indigenous people attempt to redefine their own symbolism by miming Indianness, still remains true today.



Figure 1: A cartoonist impression of George Armstrong. Most likely drawn in the 1960s. (Source: George Armstrong)

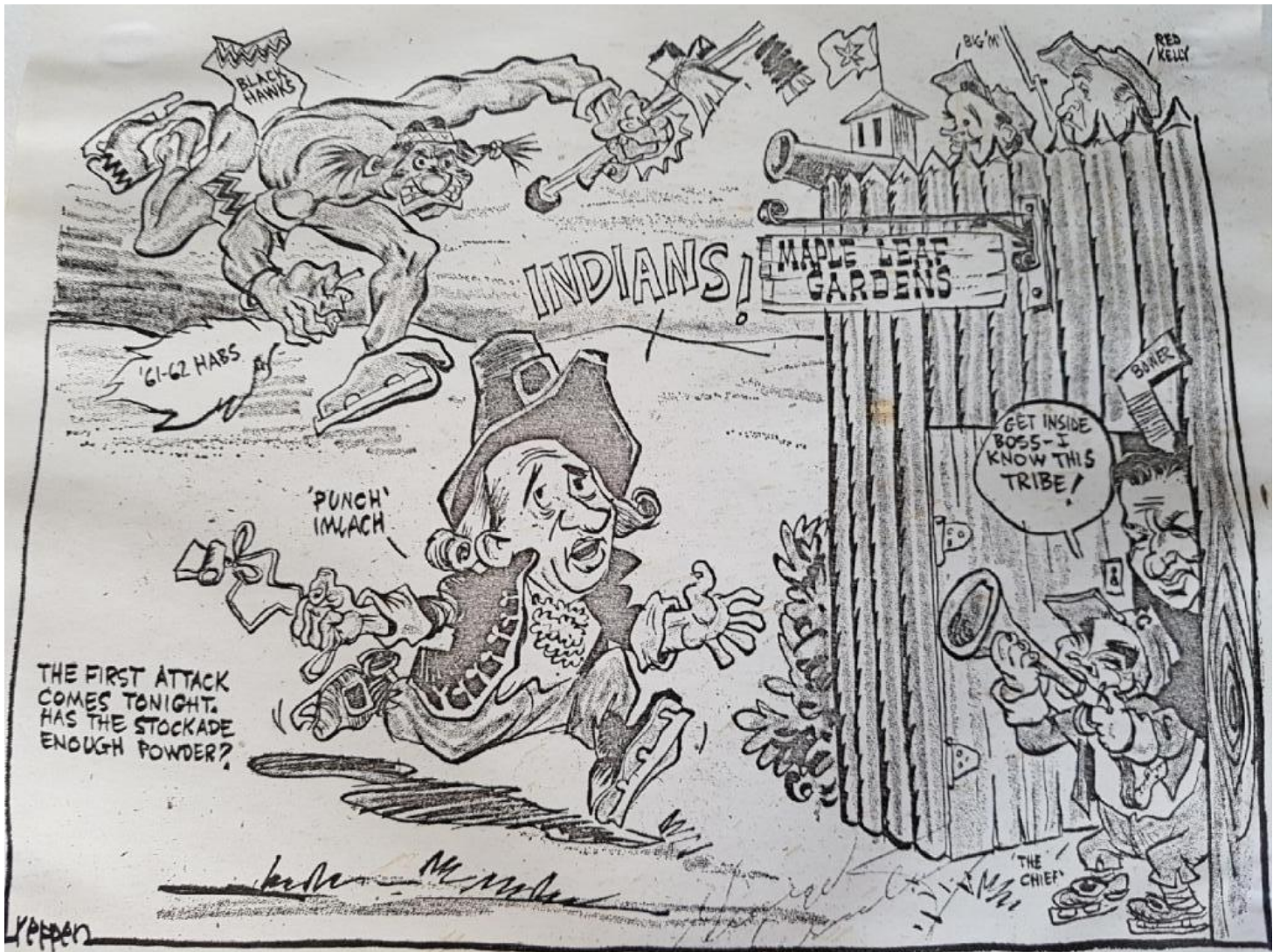


Figure 2: A cartoonist impression of Toronto Maple Leaf coach Punch Imlach running back to the Leaf fortress, away from an Indian. At the bottom right corner, there is a cartoon depiction of my Grandfather “The Chief” next to Johnny Bower. (Source: George Armstrong)

When I ask my Grandfather what these images mean to him, it seems he has not really thought about them much outside of what they are, a cartoonist impression.

Kalley: Why do you think it was necessary for them [the cartoonists] to show you were Native?

Grandpa: No no, I was the first one- so it's a significant point I guess. There weren't any other Natives that played yah know, it was the first one.

My Grandpa has made it very clear to me through story, that a lot of the racism he faced he tried to ignore or not go looking for it.

I had uhhh [pause] half of.. not half.. many of [pause] discriminating remarks that I may have taken offence to, when I was young because I didn't like remarks against me and I was looking for them.. and if you look for something, you find it. You find it, when you look for it. I dare to say, that much of the remarks that I thought was discrimination, was not meant. I read that discrimination into it. If I would have read.. like when Red Kelly²⁰ says to me.. or, or Eddie Shack²¹ says to me 'oh you stupid bastard Armstrong' or that, it don't mean nothing to me. Yah know, because I know those two guys and I don't read anything into it. It's just a comment eh. But if somebody else says that from another team, you think hey that guy is against me. Or somebody on the street or something. Like somebody just to come and stir at you like that. And so, I was looking for 'bastard' and when I heard that, that guy might have meant the same thing Eddie Shack said. I was looking for it. Much discrimination you get, because you look for it.

²⁰ Red Kelly was a teammate and friend of my Grandpa on the Toronto Maple Leafs.

²¹ Eddie Shack remains one of my Grandfather's best friends to this day. He played on the Leafs with my Grandfather.

However, I often think, what impressions did the media portrayals of my Grandpa have on everyone else? On the public? Did it associate my Grandfather with an identity? Cartoons are an interesting source of information, as they intend to communicate messages through humour, however, what we can see in these images is a projection of what Indianness was thought to be at the time, and the way it was represented. In Figure 1, my Grandfather over the fire, appearing to create bad luck for his on-ice rivals. In Figure 2, my Grandfather and his teammates defending their fortress from a savage Indian. These were how Indians appeared because it is how they were showcased. The way Indians were represented had effects on the labeling of my Grandfather while he played hockey.

Grandpa: I was good at hockey and I liked playing it. And I played hockey, although being good at hockey didn't help the members of the other team like me, yah know. Because I was good. But I played hockey basically because I was good at it and I loved it yah know. It wasn't to go 'yah, yah you see that' in someone's face or anything like that.

Kalley: Did you ever want to prove people wrong? Like when people called you a 'Chinaman'?

Grandpa: Well I didn't even know that happened eh. That was a story that was told to me after that happened eh. When I was played hockey you talking about? With my dad? Yeah... well, I was on the ice playing hockey over there and the guy was talking to my dad here yah know. And so he says, you don't have a very good team. And my dad says no they don't have a very good team. And the guys says there's one guy who scares me when he gets the puck, and my dad says well who's that, and he says I don't know his name.. but that Chinaman over there. Yah know, that's all. And my dad told me the story and some of his friends the story about it. It was kind of a neat little story and so my dad told me that. But it was only told because it was a neat little story.

Kalley: Did anyone else call you names?

Grandpa: Oh I was called uhh uhhh 'yah yah yah you goddam Chippewa' yah know or something like that, or 'you're no good' yah know 'all Indians are red' and uhh yah know I was called names with the attempt to get me riled up and off of my game. I was called names... and some people when they do get riled, they get off of their game, don't matter what they are doing, they don't perform half as well some people... some people perform better yah know. And I think my performance when I got called names.. I think it helped sometimes, as much as I didn't like it when I look back, it probably made me a little bit mad enough to be a little better than I was normally, yah know. To try harder and to prove that I was uh.. like that I was a decent player, a good player yah know. All I wanted to be was a good hockey player, that's all I wanted to be. And I just said, well... they called me names like that.. I never let it get me where it affected my performance, except to occasionally help me to elevate it, that's all. Occasionally it helped me to elevate it. It got me mad enough to occasionally help me try to be better yah know. Because I lived and played in a white community. I lived in a white community and played hockey against white communities you know. And so uh.. it was normal to get called a name in a way. And so when I got called a name... it helped me somewhat get motivated and motivate myself... unbeknown to me. Made me mad enough to play harder, that's all. Well, maybe two or three times during my life did I get mad enough to get physically mad yah know. (long pause). I got mad one time, we used to play... Louis Fontinato²² played for New York and he was a rough tough biscuit. That was his.. he was uh 40% hockey player and 60% tough yah know [chuckles]. And uh we got into a little scrum at center ice one time, and somebody got into a fight and I was there, and he turned towards me and washed my face with his hockey glove yah know. 'Don't do that!' yah know, and he washed it with his glove. There were other players around there

²² My Grandfather refers Lou Fontinato one of the toughest guys he played against in the NHL. (<https://www.nhl.com/news/lou-fontinato-dies/c-281115890>)

holding us yah know, but he had his hand free yah know and that. And I said to myself 'that son of a bitch, I'll get him' [gritty voice] yah know. And he did that and I couldn't move, I had enough guys holding me and he only one guy from his gang holding him and he had that one arm free. Anyways so we used to go in the same penalty box in those days, and I went in the penalty box, I said.. I'll get in there first' and I get in there first and when he come through the gate I knocked him back out on the ice [laughs], and we get back out there and I'm on top of him and the fight was on. But very seldom, did I get mad enough that it affected my game I think yah know. I got mad many times, getting mad is good, but you got to learn how to control that madness. You have to learn how to use that madness to your advantage. The madder I got out there, the better I played yah know.

*Note to the reader: Being labelled a “Chinaman” does not come as a surprise. If you take a look at Figure 2, the caricature of my Grandfather in the bottom right corner does not look like him. It is interesting what the artist chooses to do with my Grandfather’s eyes in the picture.

My Grandfather and I have always connected through our love of hockey²³. It is something that makes our bond very special, the inner competitiveness, the love for the game, the deep desire to perform, and our mutual experience as captains of our teams. We also share the self-doubt in our own identity. For someone unsure of their own Indianness, these sketches presented inner debate and skepticism for me. Even I took on my Grandfather’s public image as the ‘chief’ as a validation of who I was. I remember as a kid associating my Indigenous background with the nicknames and media portrayals of my Grandfather. I dug up a sweatshirt at home that I always used to wear as a kid (Figure 3).

²³ I played hockey for the Harvard University Women’s Hockey Team and was the captain of the team during my senior year. I owe my hockey skills and leadership qualities to my Grandfather and Father.



Figure 3: A sweatshirt I loved wearing as a kid because it made me feel proud of my Grandfather and made me feel like an Indian. (Source: Kalley Armstrong)

Looking at this sweatshirt, years later, I am not sure how I feel about it. The caricature of my Grampa looks absolutely nothing like him but has all of the stereotypical Indian features you would expect to see, the big forehead, large nose, war paint, headdress, and high cheekbones. Nothing, like my Grandfather. As kid I wore it all the time. And I wore it proudly. A sweatshirt, made by the Toronto Maple Leafs, made me feel more Indian. What is wrong with that? A lot. Colonialism removed from my Indigenous family members, an understanding and sense of who we are. Not being able to define ourselves

and authenticate ourselves, colonial machines and structures were in charge of defining who Indigenous people were and still continue to today. What adds to this confusing perception both myself and my Grandfather have of ourselves, is that we do not feel we are worthy of being called Indigenous sometimes. We have lived privileged lives and have not been directly affected by the same assimilatory structures that many Indigenous people have. My Grandfather words it perfectly well when he says:

Yeah, I've lived a white life. I can't... I haven't walked in those guys moccasins. I've walked in the white guys moccasins... but I've never walked in the Indian's guys moccasins [pause]... I've walked in Indian moccasins part time [laughs].

My Grandfather recognizes that he has not suffered the same fate as other Indigenous people. Because he was born to a white father, and an Indigenous mother, the government did not recognize my Grandfather and his sister as Indians and therefore they did not have to attend residential school. My Grandfather attended the white school in his white community, while at the same time his six Indigenous cousins were taken by the government to attend Spanish Residential School. Growing up with his cousins and seeing the challenges they went through seems to rest very uneasily with my Grandfather and always contributes to his perception of himself. When he says he has not walked in that guys moccasins, I associate that with the difficulties and struggles he witnessed his cousins encounter throughout their childhood and adult lives after attending Spanish Residential School. Their experiences had a direct effect on his interpretation of his own Indigenous identity. He seems to feel undeserving. This spoke to the high degree of empathy my Grandfather had for his cousins, and an acknowledgement of the privilege that he had. What is interesting is when he mentions walking in “moccasins part-time” and I believe that to be a testament to some of the struggles and racism he encountered being an Indian and playing hockey as the only one on his team. However, I can tell he interprets his own struggles as very negligible compared to those of his cousins.

Yeah, the challenges of half and half.. cause that's what it is! The stories in there eh? [we are talking about the potential title for my thesis] The challenges of being half and half eh, and those are true stories then eh. That's what it is, the

challenges of being half and half. They were not challenges such as the ones kids put up with being at school, I wasn't taken away and my hair cut off and uhh yah know.. I didn't go to bed at night scared that the priest was going to come through the door and grab me and take me out to the room with him or something yah know. I never went to bed like that... And yah know, we didn't have a castle, but nobody came through the door to get me. Yah know, we didn't have a 14-room house with servants and stuff like that but, nobody come to get me through the door like them poor kids did in those schools and stuff like that. And they worried about it and thought about it, and yah know I didn't have any of that stuff.. that's for sure. Its like I said in my uhh, I told ya, the great things that happened to me in my life eh. I had uh grandmothers and uh parents and aunts and uncles that did nothing but show me love.

I am conversing with my Grampa at a time in his life where he is reflecting back on his experiences based on where he is today. At 89 years of age and a list of incredible accomplishments, the struggles he encountered as an Indigenous person seem inconsequential to him now. But as he reflects back on the life of his cousins, a certain sadness and empathy looms over him, especially as he compares his childhood to theirs. The struggles of being “half and half” as my Grandfather words it, also came with advantages. His mother’s loss of her status, and my Grandfather’s last name, saved him from having to attend Spanish Residential School. His six cousins, the Sarazins, were taken by the government and put into Spanish Indian Residential School throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

Well they grew up at the Spanish school, and my mother and my father's place. They were born at Golden Lake, because they were living there at that time before the schools. But their mother died. My mother's sister Mary died before she was 30. She had six kids before she was 30. Mary Stevens, yeah. But Golden Lake was the home reserve for one parents. [their father was absent from their lives] When the holidays were on, the kids would stay at my mom's place with us ... 6 kids. The girls would sleep in the living room, and I would sleep on the couch or across two chairs there put together. And the boys slept upstairs in the attic. I never heard

many stories from the kids about their escapades at schools. Like the kids never talked about it when they came home in the summers- they were so glad to come home it was unbelievable. But they never talked about it. And the parents believed their kids were getting an education and that was good for them whether they liked it or not. The parents BELIEVED yah know, and that when they finished there it would be good for their life and help them in the future. They had a premonition I guess that the white people were in power and needed to learn their ways and get going. I remember going to the school in Spanish to visit the kids. My father and Lilian would be in Garson. I don't know how come it would just be my mother and I, I don't know how come my dad and Lilian were never there, but my mother and I went in the head office yah know. And they put word out that the boys were to come to a meeting place that people were there to visit them, which was seldom... occasionally, and uh that special room, it was a big room yah know, like a big banquet room. And we met in there and the priests were there and uh they were not big talkers. They were kids eh, and you're with your aunt and you hadn't seen them since June and it's not your mother and father. But you're glad to see them and know they're on your side. And they were glad and sociable.

As my Grandpa reflects back on his life in comparison to his cousins from Golden Lake, he cannot help but to feel lucky about the struggles he did not have to endure that they did. Their lives and their experiences at the residential school definitely impact my Grandfather's perceptions of his Native identity. It is as if he is not Native enough because he did not have to endure what they did. I often absorb this similar feeling, based on my relationship with my Grandfather and listening to his words carefully. I too, do not feel "worthy" of being called Indigenous, something I am so very proud of, because I have lived a white life and benefitted tremendously from my position in society. I have been extremely privileged. I often latch onto my Grandfather's identity as a validation of my own. "My Grandfather is Indigenous" I often say. There is something wrong with that, I think. Why don't I say "my dad is Indigenous"? Well my dad has lived a life very much like my own, and even more, he looks like me. The Irish side of the family is reflected in our appearance. But my Grandpa looks Native, and its well-known that he is Native, publicly. And so that is what I hold onto, grasp onto, very tightly. Identity is a

funny thing. As I look back on the life of my great-grandmother I cannot help but to laugh at the irony in her young life compared to mine. Nanny Alice grew up wanting to look white, she was a full-blooded Indigenous woman wanting to look white. Then comes me, her great-granddaughter, predominately white and wishing that I looked more Native. Isn't that funny?

2.6 Conclusions

The writing of this chapter has helped me to further understand my Grandfather and myself. Some of the contexts in these conversations, I have never heard before. I am thankful for my Grandfather's trust, and I hope that the reader understands the rare and rich contexts that these conversations offer. It was difficult to include some of our shared dialogue in this chapter, because it felt unique to my Grandpa and me. However, it offers a perspective that can reach populations who might need to hear this story as much as I do.

Chapter 3 : Experience and Memory

3 Introduction

I first started critically thinking about how words are used in a conversation I had with my Grandfather. Leaning forward in his chair, my Grandpa reached into the desk beside him and pulled out a booklet of scrap paper. One side scratched in pencil with his own writing, the other side printed scouting reports of players from his position as a scout with the Toronto Maple Leafs. His scrap paper has always fascinated me for some odd reason. It provides a glimpse into his professional life. I can picture my Grandfather sitting in the stands of hockey games like he used to do, dressed in his suit, glasses adjusted to read the stats of potential Leaf recruits, making marks on future prospects. The one side of the paper his past. The other side, once blank but now covered in his own writing, reveals the personal side of my Grandfather, his life after scouting and his new role of caring for my sick Grandmother. This side, his thoughts, ideas, poems, songs, and questions. The things he writes not in a suit, but in his track pants and t-shirt. The thoughts, to me, more important than any scouting report. As a sit across from him, I eagerly await what he has to say to me as we sit there together in silence. 'He's got something for me to listen to', I think excitingly to myself. Leaning back into his chair, I watch him gloss through the scrap pages looking for something he has jotted down. He finds it.

Grandpa: "What's a Metis? Do you know?"

Kalley: "Well from what I know, Metis are the children of French fur traders and Indian women that would guide the fur traders on their routes. So, they were half Aboriginal, half French."

Grandpa: "Well there! You can write on your book... you could name your book, stories of a Metis."

Kalley: "Yeah, but you're not really a Metis..."

Grandpa: "Half and half just like you said..."

Kalley: "Yeah but Metis, at least from what I know, Metis are born from fur traders and Native women. Because Canada categorizes Natives into three groups: First Nations, Inuit, and Metis. So, you are First Nations."

Grandpa: "Okay, so I'm a First Nations."

Kalley: "You are First Nations."

Grandpa: "Okay so... stories of a White-First Nations person eh? Or First Nations-White person."

This conversation will always be an important memory for me. Seemingly, it is a very simple conversation. However, embedded in this dialogue are layers of complexities worth consideration. We have had many conversations about the title of this thesis, it is a testament to how caring and aware my Grandfather is, and his desire to be involved in this project with me. It speaks to how he thinks about himself, and the ways in which he wants to be acknowledged, as a half and half. The impact of colonialism on Indigenous identity and self-understanding, projects out of this conversation. He is searching for a word to describe himself. His curiosity around the word Metis is validation of Canada's tendency to place Indigenous people into categories, as well as his own personal quest to understand to which category he belongs. Terms, in this case my Grandfather's attempt to use a word to describe himself, become a site of further exploration. But they also represent an influence to succumb to colonial constructs of external categorization. In our conversation above we use several words interchangeably to describe, arguably, the same group: Native, Indian, Indigenous, First Nations. How we choose to use keywords - in this case, my Grandfather looking for a term to represent himself - is a site of further investigation. Words do not have to have a universal significance, but instead can depend on the context in which they are used.

This chapter will address our intended use of keywords. Why do we use certain words to describe ourselves? Further, I will explore in-depth the concepts of experience and memory and how they inform our narratives. I have chosen these two concepts because

they are critical to the telling of my Grandfather's story: what has he chosen to remember, and how experience has played into the recollection of certain accounts. Further, experience in anthropological scholarship is thought about in different ways. What is experience and what does it offer us? In the case of my Grandfather, I look at for example, how his experience of his six Indigenous cousins not only acts as evidence of colonial constructs in Canadian history, but also how it impacts his own identity formation.

3.1 The Importance of Keywords

Raymond Williams in his book *Keywords* (1976), addresses why certain vocabulary, or keywords, are worth critical analysis and discussion. Williams encourages the reader to think consciously about the use of vocabulary. It is important, he suggests, to investigate and develop the meanings of such words, particularly when we are using them in different modes of scholarship. Williams writes about the social and historical implications on words and how these inspired his own analysis of them. He writes, "The emphasis of my own analysis is deliberately social and historical. In the matters of reference and applicability, which analytically underlie any particular use, it is necessary to insist that the most active problems of meaning are always primarily embedded in actual relationships, and that both the meanings and the relationships are typically diverse and variable, within the structures of particular social orders and the process of social and historical change" (1976:22). This thought by Williams struck me because as I have progressed throughout my research and processed my conversations with my Grandfather, I have come to learn how relationships impact and inform our meanings. They have initiated within me a way to think about how we construct our identities through the stories we tell and how we choose certain stories and specific terms to embody ourselves. In other words, I have begun to think about language far more consciously, and as Williams points out, as we choose to use certain words in different ways based on their different implications of meaning, "What can really be contributed is not resolution but perhaps, at times, just that extra edge of consciousness" (1976:24). My use of certain vocabulary, how I have chosen to approach these terms, is informed by the social and historical processes Williams highlights in his introduction in his book. "On

the contrary, it is a central aim of this book to show that some important social and historical processes occur within language, in ways which indicate how integral the problems of meanings and of relationships really are. New kinds of relationship, but also new ways of seeing existing relationships, appear in language in a variety of ways...” (1976:22).

For the purpose of this chapter, I have chosen to highlight the words “experience” and “memory” to inform the reader, a) how I choose to think about these words and, b) the purpose they serve in communicating my Grandfather’s story in a way that allows the reader to think about the vocabulary differently as well as inform them of social and historical processes they might not have previously understood before. It is not my intention to isolate the words, as I would like to highlight how both experience and memory are co-dependent. As Williams points out, “It can of course be argued that individual words should never be isolated, since they depend for their meanings on their actual contexts” (1976:22). Further, I will discuss how different scholars think about experience, particularly in anthropological contexts, and how stories contribute to new meanings and ideas. In *Anthropology of Experience* (1986), Roger Abrahams in his essay on “Ordinary and Extraordinary Experience” writes, “As I see it, this drawing on experience in anthropology is a part of the process of internal monitoring of basic terms and concepts that must take place in every professional discipline. In the social sciences- especially sociology and anthropology- we have unique problems in taking stock of special terminology as key words are derived from everyday talk” (1986:55). Additionally, as Edward W. Bruner writes in his essay, “New narratives yield new vocabulary, syntax and meaning in our ethnographic accounts; they define what constitute the data of those accounts” (1986:143). This thesis not only depends on the use of keywords to describe identity, but further looks to understand why we choose the words we do to describe ourselves. I will look specifically at how different scholars think about “experience” and “memory” and what they mean in relation to my Grandfather’s telling of his narratives.

3.2 Narrative Coherence

Experience, as Joan Scott (1991) describes it, can be used as evidence - evidence of historical events or happenings, for example, that have otherwise been hidden from dominant mainstream narrative. As I have been listening to the stories of my Grandfather, his experiences growing up as half Indigenous and half Irish are told through many small stories to provide context to a larger narrative. It is important to acknowledge the stories as their own entities, but also bring them together into a coherent narrative for readers to understand a shared Canadian story. Paul Ricoeur in *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004) talks about the concept of narrative coherence. Narrative coherence, he writes, “is rooted in the former and articulated through the latter. What it itself brings in is what I have called a synthesis of the heterogeneous, in order to speak of the coordination between multiple events, or between causes, intentions, and also accidents within a single meaningful unity. The plot is a literary form of this coordination... A logical content can be assigned to these transformations, what Aristotle characterized in the *Poetics* as the probable or reasonable, the reasonable constituting the face that the probable turns toward the readers in order to persuade them; that is, to induce them to believe precisely in the narrative coherence of the told story of history” (2004:243). My Grandfather’s stories should be read in coordination with each other. His stories pull from multiple events to construct an idea or formulate a message. Further, his small stories, such as the story of Grey Owl or the Great Fire of 1922, operate as evidence of an event. Because these stories are situated in factual Canadian history, the narratives provide the reader with an intimate perspective paired with persuasive context. His status as a public figure and NHL hockey player also lends to the validity of his story.

3.3 Experience vs. An Experience

As discussed above, Williams (1976) encourages the reader to think consciously about how vocabulary is used. In his book, Williams divides the term “experience” into two different concepts: the idea of “experience past” as lessons learned and “experience present”. Experience past operates as the lessons we have learned, whereas he identifies experience present as an active awareness (1976:127). It is interesting to think of experience this way, particularly as it relates to the process of narrative storytelling my

Grandfather and I have gone through. I have been conscious that my Grandfather is recalling memories from his past and describing them to me in the present, this is obvious. However, it is worth acknowledging experience and its relationship to time, as this is clearly a concept crucial to ethnographic work. Wilhelm Dilthey's interpretation of time and experience speaks to this. The dichotomy suggested by Wilhelm Dilthey (1976) separates "experience" from "an experience". I read about this in Victor Turner's essay "Dewey, Dilthey, and Drama", where he writes, "Mere experience is simply the passive endurance and acceptance of events" whereas "an experience... stands out from the evenness of passing hours and years and forms what Dilthey called a 'structure of experience'" (1986:35). This structure has a beginning, a middle, and an end. It seems, to me, that Dilthey's idea of "an experience" has structures similar to Williams' concept of "experience past". Similarly, his notion of "experience" runs parallel to "experience present" offered by Williams, where the active self is conscious of events that have transpired and chooses to act based on that awareness. Observing this, I ask myself, why is this interesting? Well, when I think of my Grandfather's recollections, he tells the story of "an experience" either experienced by him or told to him through story. All of these collective individual experiences surely inform how he acts today, and further might have informed how he chose to act in the past. In other words, he has embodied the experiences into his self. They inform how he acts in the present day, and therefore contributes to constructs of his identity formation.

3.4 Dominant Narratives

This structure of experience, Dilthey (1976) acknowledges, can be correlated to the same dimensions and structures of a story, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. As Bruner writes in his introduction to *Anthropology of Experience* (1986:8), "Experience and meaning were in the present; the past was a memory, a reproduction; and the future was always open, linked by expectation and potentiality. However, present experience always takes account of the past and anticipates the future". Bruner points out what has been popular in anthropological narratives and how experience in the past, present and future informs the way the story is told. Bruner (1986) claims of the following of Indigenous narrative in his chapter "Ethnography as Narrative", "My claim is that one story- past

glory, present disorganization, future assimilation- was dominant in the 1930s and a second story- past oppression, present resistance, future resurgence- in the 1970s, but in both cases I refer to dominance in the anthropological literature, in ethnographic discourse, not necessarily an Indian experience” (Bruner 1986:143). Bruner is acknowledging the power of a metanarrative – how the dominant story can encapsulate all others and sculpt one mainstream narrative. Bruner (1986:143) continues, “The new story articulates what had been only dimly perceived, authenticates previous feelings, legitimizes new actions, and aligns individual consciousness with a larger social movement”. I argue that while parts of my Grandfather’s story do indeed align with the concept of the metanarrative Bruner suggests above, that it also offers another unique perspective. My Grandfather is clear in his intent - to communicate a story that does not fall under the current Indigenous-settler metanarrative, a narrative that shows how badly Indians were treated, but instead shares his story of the “in-between”, a story that does not just capture his own situation, but might rest in a space that other “in-betweeners” can understand. This is a space we must acknowledge because it is a space that Canada, as a nation, currently occupies today.

What also must be considered is how my interpretation of my Grandfather’s narratives differs from his own and why. I myself have a different set of experiences from my Grandfather which influence my perception of his own experience. While as his Granddaughter, understanding his experience relative to my own contributes to my own sense of selfhood; Geertz (1976:225) points out, and fittingly so, that “Rather than attempt to place the experience of others within the framework [of “person” or “self”] we must... view their experiences within the framework of their own idea of what selfhood is”. At the same time it is important to understand my Grandfather’s experience as influential to my own, it is also necessary to think of his experience within his own framework and conceptualization. This guarantees a fruitful and comprehensive analysis of my Grandfather’s experience within his own lens and further, within mine. We can see how our interpretations of his experience might be the same or might differ and use this to ask why we reach those same or different interpretations.

3.5 Expressions of Experience

The anthropology of experience deals with how individuals actually experience their culture; that is how events are received by consciousness (Bruner 1986:4). We can only live our own experiences, but we can attempt to understand the experience of others via the ways they express their own experience, whether it is through stories, or actions, or behaviour. When we acknowledge the validity of another's experience, then we attempt to try and understand it. For example, the common phrase "I am speaking my truth" in the telling of one's story might help to provide some clarity on this concept. Lived experience becomes truth. Bruner postulates, "Lived experience, then, as thought and desire, as word and image, is the primary reality" (1986:5). Since we cannot fully live or understand another's experience, we instead try and interpret and understand another's expressions of their experience, which is told through story. The lived experience of a popular figure, such as my Grandfather, becomes appealing to the public because people have a desire to understand the lives of public figures in whom they are interested in or to whom they have looked up to.

What further contributes to the experience of listening to these stories, and their contingencies, is expression. Geertz (1986:373) writes "Whatever sense we have of how things stand with someone's inner life, we gain it through their expressions, not through some magical intrusion into their consciousness". This is true, to understand someone is to engage with their expression. Bruner (1986:9) adds, "Expressions are the peoples' articulations, formulations, and representations of their own experience. Although expressions are not necessarily easy places to start, because of their existential complexity, they usually are accessible and isolable, in part because they have a beginning and an ending". This is why stories are important for understanding, we are all a collection of stories. We cannot impose our definitions onto others, especially given people and cultures have different frameworks of thinking about things. "By focussing on narratives or dramas or carnival or any other expressions, we leave the definition of the units of investigation up to the people, rather than imposing categories derived from our own ever-shifting theoretical frames." (1986:9). This has the potential to transpire in the ethnography of an outsider, who might not entirely understand the framework and

epistemologies of the group with whom they are working. In writing this thesis, I wanted to ensure that I would be working within a framework I could understand, because I have lived in it.

Bruner (1986:6) proposes, “The relationship between experience and its expressions is always problematic and is one of the important research areas in the anthropology of experience. The relationship is clearly dialogic and dialectical, for experience structures expressions, in that we understand other people and their expressions on the basis of our own experience and self-understanding”. Luckily, for me, I have lived my entire life trying to embody my Grandfather. While there is space for the projection of my own self-understanding onto his own, I remain mindful of this risk. But on the contrary, such a layering of experience might manifest as something of value. Because I am his Granddaughter, parts of our experience and self-understanding are already shared. Under this circumstance, we might gain valuable understanding in recognizing why our self-understandings differ in the interpretation of his story. Generationally, if my interpretation of his stories differs from his own, we might be able to recognize the influence of Indigenous and Western influences on multiple generations of our family. Bruner (1986:10) continues, “Our anthropological productions are our stories about their stories; we are interpreting people as they are interpreting themselves”. While this is true, the telling of my Grandfather’s story does not operate as a production for me, but instead is an enduring journey to further understand myself through him.

3.6 Experience as Evidence

I will now address how experience can operate as evidence. Experience, in this light, is expressed as truth through expression and behaviour. Joan Scott (1991:78) writes,

“It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experiences. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced. To think about experience in this way is to historicize it as well as to historicize the identities it produces. This kind of historicizing represents a reply to the many contemporary historians who have argued that an unproblematized ‘experience’ is the foundation of their practice; it is a historicizing that implies critical scrutiny of all explanatory categories usually taken for granted, including the category of ‘experience’”.

It is clear, that upon recollecting my Grandfather's experience, it is not his intent to make his versions historicized or authoritative in any manner to the reader. Instead, his experience is told to unfold as his version of seeing or feeling, and in that he allows me to draw my own inferences and embody his experience in a way that works for me. Thus, I attribute his experience as evidence of the deteriorating effects of colonization on our family. His stories, for me, operate as truth - my truth, my family's truth, and Canada's truth. Scott (1991:77) writes, "When the evidence offered is the evidence of 'experience', the claim for referentiality is further buttressed – what could be truer, after all, than a subject's own account of what he or she has lived through?" An individual's account, or recollection of how they experienced something is validation enough, Scott writes, as evidence of an event. The story below operates as just that. This story, which I have heard many times, is evidence of the impact of residential schools on my Grandfather's cousins. Further, it represents a sad truth in our family. My Grandfather who did not have to attend Spanish Residential School, sees the detrimental effects the schools imposed on his cousins.

After Residential School

My mother was the one that all those kids [his six cousins] went to, yah²⁴. [Their mother, my Nanny Alice's sister, had passed away] Yah, and she went to visit them on occasion at Spanish. I went with her a couple of times. I went with her to see Rosie here at 333 Lakeshore Boulevard, here. There used to be an insane asylum there. She was in there for 30 or 40 years. And I went there with my mom to see her. And they give her about 6 or 7 shock treatments at the end of 30-40 years. She wasn't totally normal. But she was normal enough that she could live out of that place, and live in a group home, say. Yah know, yah. And she lived in a group home around Trout Creek. Up north there, not far north of Sudbury up there, Trout Creek. For a long time. But they all went to my mother for - Molly

²⁴ Refer to kinship diagram to see the six cousins he is referring to.

and Rosie and Evelyn, Frank, Tom and George - young Thomas didn't stay around, yah know. He was kind of a loner. The youngest one was a loner at the end, yah know. We used to see him occasionally, but not a lot. Well he was over here, I was talking to him, we found out he worked for years around the corner. The hardware shop there. I didn't even know he was there [laughing].

But Thomas was the one who was on the street. Like he was on the street but he wasn't on the street, yah know. He was down here in Toronto at a place that looks after homeless people and drunks and that, and I went to see him. Somebody told me he had been beat up or something, and apparently, he almost died but he pulled through. And he had gone to a hospital down here and I went to see him. And it was Christmas week coming up. And I said to Thomas, I says 'why don't you come to my place for Christmas' yah know. 'Oh no' he said, 'thanks George, but no'. And I said 'come' yah know and 'no' he says 'I'll just be alone' yah know. And he wouldn't come yah know, he just wanted to be alone. And he was laying in the bed when I walked in the room, and I hadn't seen him for 15 years or so... 'Hi George' he knew me and everything. 'No, no' he says, he wouldn't come. And he had no place, he had no wife, no kids, no nothing yah know. He wasn't a bad person.

My Grandfather's experiences with his cousins after their days at Spanish Residential School are crucial to understanding how the lives of these kids were impacted by the schools. He tells this story because, I learn how the residential schools vastly separated their experiences of growing up and through life into their adulthood. It is interesting to place my Grandfather in these stories, because he becomes witness to the lingering effects of residential school on his cousins. His experience of his cousins' changes and time moves on, and we can see how their own narratives build within his own. These narratives illustrate how survivors of residential school are part of the dominant narrative Bruner (1986) suggests. They have been told before. Residential school children continue suffering as their lives resume after their experience of the schools. Homelessness, drugs,

alcohol, shock treatments, mental institutions. They are sad stories. But they are real. My Grandfather was a witness to the damage these schools caused, seeing what they did to his cousins. Joan Scott (1991:776) writes, “Seeing is the origin of knowing. Writing is reproduction, transmission-the communication of knowledge through (visual, visceral) experience”. Because my Grandfather witnessed how the lives of his cousins played out, their experience translates to knowledge. My role is to reproduce the memories of my Grandfather in hopes that it produces new or supporting insight into the lives of Indigenous families, that many people choose to ignore. Scott (1991:776) describes this as a challenge to normative history and “calling old narratives into questions when new evidence is discovered” she continues, “these histories have provided evidence for a world of alter Native values and practices whose existence gives the lie to hegemonic constructions of social worlds...”. My Grandfather’s experience of seeing the ways his cousins’ lives played out, makes visible the existence of mechanisms of assimilation; however, it does not provide explanation for those structures, it just shows that they were there. Scott (1991:779) argues that “the project of making experience visible precludes analysis of the workings of this system and of its historicity; instead it reproduces terms”.

3.7 Experience and Identity Formation

There are patterns that are worth highlighting when looking at the lives of my Grandfather’s cousins and comparing them to his own. My Grandfather often shows his empathy when he says things like this:

Yeah, I’ve lived a white life. I can’t... I haven’t walked in those guy’s moccasins. I’ve walked in the white guys moccasins... but I’ve never walked in the Indian’s guy’s moccasins...I’ve walked in Indian moccasins part time... [laughs].

My Grandfather recognizes that he has not walked in an Indian man’s moccasins. A lot of it has to do with his knowledge of residential schools and the treatment his cousins endured. However, my Grandfather, was not aware of the implications of attending residential school until later in life when it was starting to come out what had happened. My Grandfather, witnessed his cousins in school, witnessed their lives after school, but as Joan Scott (1991) suggests, he was not aware of the mechanisms and processes of

colonialism in place at the time that made these things possible. After learning about the details of the school by the stories that have been told since, my Grandfather is aware of what happened behind those doors, and this in turn has an effect on how he thinks about his life growing up half Indian.

That's what it is, the challenges of being half and half. They were not challenges such as the ones kids put up with being at school, I wasn't taken away and my hair cut off and uhh yah know... I didn't go to bed at night scared that the priest was going to come through the door and grab me and take me out to the room with him or something yah know. I never went to bed like that.

This reflection of his life and his Native identity is informed by what he has learned about residential schools and personal supported by his experiences with his cousins. Similar to how I have embodied the experience of my Grandfather, he too is embodying his cousins' experience. In other words, he has projected onto his own identity their experience. It has changed how he interprets himself, and how "Indian" he believes he is. He moves from witness to embodiment within these stories, which influences his perception of himself. It is possible that his career as a hockey player was in many ways achievable because he was not a legal Indian. Witnessing how his cousins' lives during and after school were affected, he knows that he never experienced what they did. This plays out as embodiment because it influences his perception of himself as "in-betweeners" and potentially not an "experienced" Indian because he has not "walked in an Indian's moccasins". It seems, that he thinks he hasn't experienced "enough" to be a Native in comparison to his cousins. Accordingly, my Grandfather says to me:

There are many books written about how bad Natives were treated and many books written about how good the whites had it and this book is not about that. This book is about the in-betweeners. But you got to grab them early [in reference to me writing this thesis and capturing the reader's attention], and you can tell all your stories afterwards. They're reading the book to see how an in-betweeners was treated, yah know. Or how their life was. And my life wasn't a normal one I wouldn't suspect either yah know.

3.8 Memory and Reproduction

Memory is key to experience, as experiences not remembered are lost. Paul Ricoeur (2004:21) writes, "... we have no other resource, concerning our reference to the past, except memory itself. To memory is tied an ambition, a claim – that of being faithful to the past". Many of my Grandfather's include the phrase "I remember", often appearing repeatedly in prose or used to start a new thought. Further, the injection of 'I remember' adds a flavour of validity to the story. In the stories throughout this thesis, my Grandfather uses 'I remember' countless times, however, this one story, struck me because of the details my Grandfather remembered. This story is significant, not so much for its content, but to show the validity of my Grandfather's detailed memory. This is a story of the first happenings of the player's union in the National Hockey League.

I wasn't fussy, I didn't want to be the players union guy... but I was the captain. If I wasn't the captain I would have said no. So I went in there to Conn Smythe²⁵ and Dicky Duff²⁶ was on there... and after practice Conn Smythe said [to me] "come on upstairs after practice today I wanna talk to yah" and I said, "well can I bring Dicky Duff" and he says "yah, bring him" so Dicky Duff and I went up. And we said 'well, we'd like money for training camp for these things... [yah know cause we used to go to training camp and never get paid a cent yah know. They paid for our meals and that... but we said "we have to have laundry, we gotta buy toothpaste, we gotta buy..." yah know simple things like that] and Conn Smythe says [Gramps is laughing]... I can remember what he said, he says "well how much would you guys like?" yah know we said, "well how about \$25 a week?" [Gramps is still laughing]

²⁵ A long-time owner and general manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs during the time my Grandfather played.
(<https://www.hhof.com/LegendsOfHockey/jsp/LegendsMember.jsp?mem=b195806&type=Builder&page=bio&list=ByName>)

²⁶ Dick Duff was a good friend and teammate of my Grandfather on the Toronto Maple Leafs.
(<https://www.hhof.com/htmlInduct/ind06Duff.shtml>)

yah know “uhhh” he says “\$25 a week?” he says “I’ll tell yah what I’ll do... I’ll give yah \$12.50 when you’re at training camp!” [we both laugh together].

The details of this story become further validated when my Grandfather interjects with “I can remember what he said”. Ricoeur (2004:21) writes, “The truthful ambition of memory has its own merits”. My Grandfather is recalling exactly what he remembers. Ricoeur (2004:23) continues, “the memory-event is in a way paradigmatic, to the extent that it is the phenomenal equivalent of the physical event. The event is simply what happens. It takes place. It passes and occurs. It happens, it comes about”. There is no doubt in the telling of this story, that my Grandfather is genuinely and legitimately recollecting the details of this story. It is a distinct event with specific details, expressed through story. Abrahams (1986:59) in *Anthropology of Experience* writes about John Dewey (1929) saying, “He encouraged us to link two notions of clear importance for anthropology: life is best conceived as being carried on by individuals who have a capacity to remember and thus to build a future patterned on the doings of the present’ and existence is thus describable on a common-sense level, as an active unfolding process.” I will close this thought with an idea taken from Dilthey (1986:8), “the past was a memory, a reproduction...” Memories are reproductions. Reproductions manifest through story. The following is another memory from my Grandfather, the word to describe this memory is ‘vivid’, as it communicates the space and stake that this memory takes up in my Grandfather’s recollections.

A Return to a Story

And I was led to be ashamed of it because of the way I was treated more by my peers, not by the community, by my peers as different. Like more kids my age. Because the peers made me feel like that. Yah know just the way they would talk to yah and you get a feeling in you and that feeling persists whether you like it or not and you know you shouldn’t have that feeling but its there whether you like it or not yah know. You get a feeling and you know it shouldn’t be there and you don’t like it but it’s there whether you like it or not. I could say I was Irish all I wanted, but I looked like a Native. And being a Native was like being coloured

nowadays or worse, maybe worse than being coloured today or tomorrow. Yah know? But the worst part was when I think of it and I remember more vividly than anything, was walking to the store with my grandmother and, saying under my breath, 'Oh grandma I wish you weren't an Indian, people see me walking with you.' I was ashamed to walk with my grandmother, imagine that. Imagine that, yah? I got over it of course. And I never showed it to anyone or anything, but I remember it being there.

[On his cousins recalling their time in residential school]

Well, they never even told me. I just heard them joking about it, yah know. I just heard, and well they told my mother kinda. I was younger and I just overheard the conversation, yah know. After they were out of school and they had been in the army, and they came home from overseas yah know. They were 24 and 25 years old and had been in the service, and had been in the army, and the war was over, and they had survived the war... and they were just talking about their lives at school and having a few beers and stuff like that, 'remember the priest used to come in there yah know' and yah know 'oh yah I remember, oh boy, I was lucky he never came to see me'. [Grandpa is kind of saying this with a lightness in his voice, like they would almost joke about it]. Frank Sarazin said that.

Here we see an activation of the double consciousness of experience manifesting through memory. Bruner (1986:14) postulates, "We participate in the action but also report about it; we are part of the experience but also detached witnesses to the experience". Bruner is speaking about this double conscious as essential to the practice of an ethnographer, who must recognize their own experience of the self in the field but must also recognize an understanding of the subject's experience of themselves. I postulate here that, in fact, although my Grandfather is not engaging with his cousins as an ethnographer, he is in fact reporting his double consciousness, as both experiencing and witnessing his cousins' testimony of residential school. This double consciousness can also operate in the re-telling of stories, as when we re-tell we place ourselves in the framework of the original teller's past performance, but also infuse our own substance of experience into the

retelling. In consulting Bruner (1986:12) on the concept of re-telling, he writes, “At any given time there are prior texts and expressive conventions; and they are always in flux. We can only begin with the last picture show, the last performance. Once the performance is completed, however, the most recent expression sinks into the past and becomes prior to the performance that follows. This is straight Dilthey. Life consists of retellings”. My Grandfather’s retellings of the stories are his responsibility to the family. As our family’s elder he is the last generation that has this library of stories embedded deep into his memory. It becomes a fun task to try and get him to recollect new memories or stories he has not told before. In listening, I am taking on the task of embedding the stories and my Grandfather’s expression and delivery of them into my own memory. Bruner (1986:17) writes, “There is a continuity from one story to the next; after the Ilongot have told a story and say ‘It’s yours to keep now’ – just as Hamlet says ‘Tell my story’ – they are giving others the opportunity for a retelling, for retellings are what culture is all about. The next telling reactivates prior experience, which is then rediscovered and relived as the story is re-related in a new situation. Stories may have endings, but stories are never over”. In the example of my Grandfather retelling the story above, his story is doing just this. It is being re-related into a new context, to give meaning to a different idea. This plays into my Grandfather’s retellings of his mother’s stories. In these stories, I can sense her expression being carried into his own. It is clear he has embodied her stories and actively chooses to tell them in a way that was told to him. He often adds into these stories ‘and my mother used to say’. He uses her words and expressions in storytelling to give me a sense of who she was and the way she spoke about things. When I asked my Grandpa about listening to my Nanny Alice’s stories he said:

I used to attempt to get her to talk about her life as a young Native girl. And that’s when she would talk about the bear, and the blue jay and the beaver. Those stories came out at different times yah know.

My Grandpa has told me this story several times. His mother had told it to him several times as well. It is the story of her growing up with different pets, often her dad bringing them home because they were injured from his trapline and my Nanny Alice would help

them recover. I knew these stories so well, that I myself could retell them. They have been the stories I have heard since a child because of their friendly content. These stories, specifically, contributed to my Indigenous pride growing up as a child, much like that Toronto Maple Leafs sweater did. One day, as I was going through my dad's collection of old family photos and articles for the purpose of this thesis, I came across an article I had never seen before: "First 90 years of life a delight" an article written in the Sudbury Star about my Nanny Alice. There, in the article, was the story of the beaver and the blue jay.

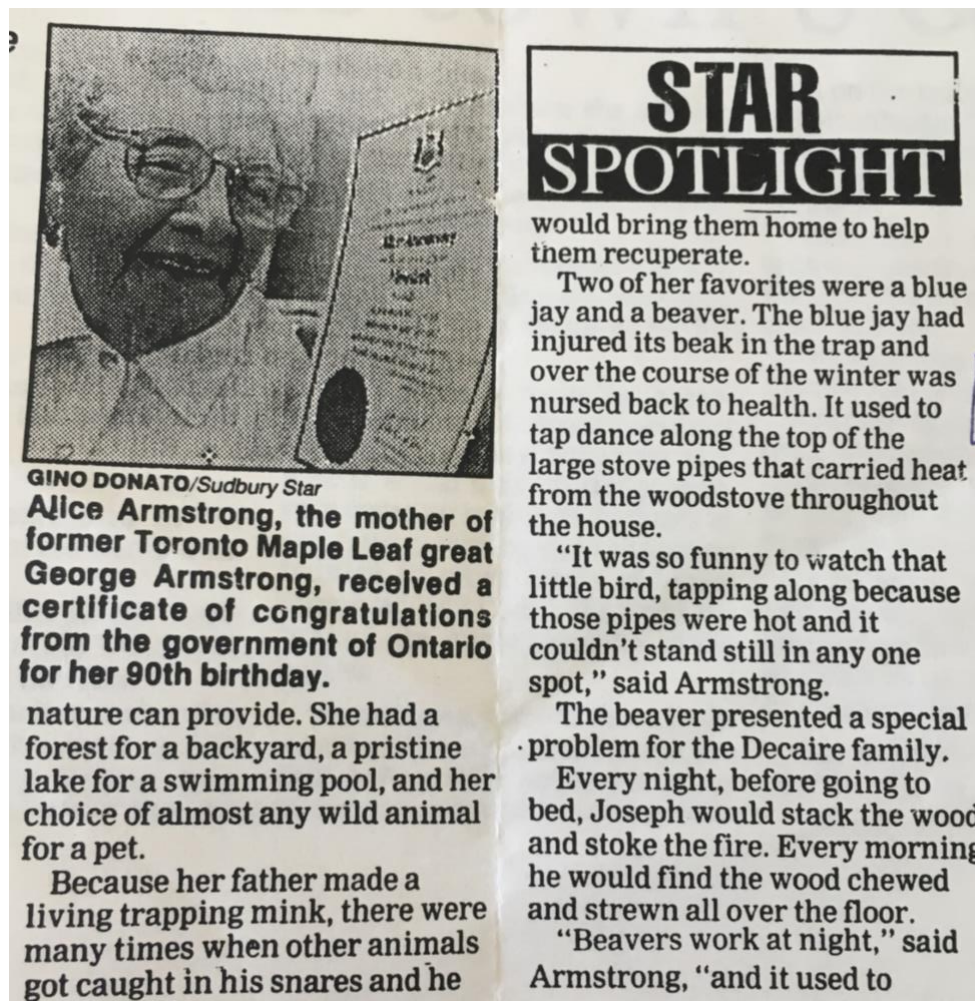


Figure 4: An article from the Sudbury Star "First 90 years of life a delight" written by Cheryl Charette. Date unknown. (Source: The Sudbury Star)

Similarly to my Grandfather's relationship with his mother, I too have invested myself in getting to know my Grandfather's stories far before the initiation of this thesis. I attempt to understand his own relationship with his Indigenous Grandparents, relative to my relationship with him. Was it similar? What does he remember from his interactions with his Native Grandmother and Grandfather?

Kalley: Did your Grandparents try and teach you any words in Native?

George: There was no teaching of the language, yah know? (Long pause) They didn't want... the government didn't want anyone speaking it. They wanted the Indian wiped out. They didn't allow it to be spoken in school. They wanted to take the Indian out of the person out all-together ya know because they wouldn't let them speak their own language, yah know. They'd cut their long hair off, which was kind of religious, uh-hh when they went to the schools, which was part of their Native life, ways, yah know? [long pause] Yah, it was a genocide almost, yah know. Like the great Geronimo, down in the States, he was a great warrior in some of the books I read. They were very brave warriors, he was a great leader. And he had about two-three hundred Native warriors with him and he was fighting thousands of soldiers, and he wanted to fight right till the end and he was wise enough to say 'I have to give up, I don't want to give up to the Americans, I'd rather fight until I die, but if I don't give up my tribe will be gone because they will wipe us out. The only way I can save my tribe a little bit is give up' because yah know, and so they gave up and he gave himself up too and they promised he could go to a reserve, and when they got a hold of him they put him in jail and that was of course one of the many promise they had broken... but yeah it was a genocide yah know, Sir John A MacDonald. [long pause]. Anyways, uh yeah my Grandfather was a young lad when much of that stuff was going on, so it's not that far back in my mind eh, cause I can look at my Grandfather like you look at me. Yah know, its not that far back. My grandmother was a very strong person. My mother said that her mother was often very grouchy yah know. My mother said she was strong, she was grouchy [Grampa using his gritty voice]. She says when she laid the law down, that was it.

3.9 Conclusions

Experiences can be ordinary and extraordinary. Roger D. Abrahams (1986:50) in his chapter “Ordinary and Extraordinary Experience” writes the following, “Because our experiences are so central to the ways in which we put together a sense of our own identity, to underscore the typicality is to confront one of our dearest held beliefs; that having been made individuals, we should do everything we can to hold on to our sense of uniqueness... Without the deep investigation on our own part of how our experiences reflect our deepest cultural concerns, and the patterns we unwittingly impose on developing peoples, we have just another Western ethnocentric models of analysis”. The purpose of this chapter is to be witness to how experience can act as a validation or evidence of an event. However, we learn that experience, whether ordinary or extraordinary, is dependent on memory. We choose to remember events that are unique to our experience of living. The memories of my Grandfather have contributed to my perceptions of him, as my Grandpa, but further to my understanding of myself. For the reader, it is my hope that experience is understood to impact identity, but further that the experiences of my Grandfather might generate a shared understanding of why certain personal memories, amongst all of his unique hockey stories, stand out to him.

Chapter 4 : Conclusion

4 Concluding Thoughts

I have learned much from the writing of this thesis. At the beginning of this paper I asked, how can small narrative theory be applied to study the impact of storytelling, particularly as a site of identity formation across generations? What impact does the story have on each generation? To start, I have learned that in listening to stories, we can learn a lot about the storyteller. Small stories operate as sites of identity construction, that is, a storyteller tells a story in a way to bring meaning to the listener, but also to communicate who they are. Further, there also exists an agency in the listener to not apply their own experience to interpret the experience of the teller. In listening, we have a responsibility to the story, as well as the teller, to understand the story within the same framework in which it is being communicated in.

Further, I have realized the power in storytelling, but more specifically the power in sharing story across generations. Listening to the narratives of my Grandfather, I have learned much about him, his perception of himself, his perception of me, and my perception of myself. This rich experience would not have been achieved if it were not for the connection and relationship that I have with my Grandpa. His stories have taught me about the life of my Indigenous ancestors across five generations. I have learned the connection of family through story, the embodiment of identity through story, and the influence of story on identity across generations. My Grandfather, in the telling of these stories has embodied his Grandparents, his parents, and his Indigenous cousins, projecting on to himself an identity informed by experience and memory. This gets passed on to me through the sharing of our narrative history.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the larger impact this story has outside of my relationship with my Grandfather and our connection to our family. My Grandfather as a public figure has had labels imposed on him by the media and public. While he might not be sensitive to this, it is worth pointing out that his telling of his story gives him the power to identity himself, as he does, referring to himself as being ‘in-between’. Further,

he wishes to not impose his stories on anyone or contribute to a division of Indigenous and settler people. Instead, he just wants to tell a story of an “in-between” that might resonate with other people who feel the same as he does, occupying this “in-between” space.

My goals for this paper run parallel to my Grandfather in that, I hope this story can create a sense of understanding for a population that might not understand yet. I want to protect the privacy of my Grandpa, and although the stories shared are personal, they are part of a shared Canadian story. It is my hope that this story creates understanding rather than division and might inspire a unified Indigenous and settler relationship.

4.1 Contributions Outside of Scholarship

This thesis has produced a wonderful story, but outside of the text it has made the bond my Grandfather and I share much stronger. He has passed down to me, story, knowledge, and further inspired me to take this project into other capacities. Our shared experience of hockey and the way the game has influenced and transformed our own identities, has inspired me to give back. In this I have started a hockey development brand, dedicated to Indigenous youth and providing them with the same opportunity my Grandfather had to thrive through the sport of hockey. When I am working with Indigenous youth, I see within them the same eagerness and passion that my Grandfather and I shared for the sport. Together, we have created this thesis, but he has inspired something far bigger. In dedication to him, Armstrong Hockey, has manifested out of his shared story and experience.

4.2 Note from My Grandfather (Part 2)

As my Grandfather tells me of his life experiences, he thinks about where he is now – his current state. He is happy with his life, he knows he has lived a good one. I would like to end with his wishes for this thesis.

And they're just stories yah know, and you can make comments on the way, and you have to kind of think of an ending to it. And an ending could be, uhhh... “he's still living a... (pause) a healthy, happy life.... except he's sad about his wife” ... but uhhh “he is still

kind of living". And then you could put 'these are some of the reasons he told me... the following are some of the reasons he told me that he was happy with his life 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.' and at the end of it.. you put, 'the end'. And yah know, you could put "he [George Armstrong] had a pretty good life. And these are some of the reasons he says he's had a pretty good life yah know. And you could list them and put them down and then right at the bottom and have.. the end. And that's how you end your book kind of, yah know?

“My Wonderful Life, As I Look Back”

1. Had everything I needed, not everything I wanted. I was never hungry.
2. Had wonderful Grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles and relations. Native and White sides. 1954 married to beautiful, wonderful girl Betty Shannon.
3. Loved hockey, at 11 years became captain of champions Falconbridge Bantams.
4. 15 years old made Copper Cliff Jr. Redmen Team (alongside best friend Tim Horton)
5. Toronto Maple Leafs signed me to contract (thrilled to death)
6. 17 years old won scoring championship in Ontario Hockey Association, OHA (now Ontario Hockey League, OHL)
7. Won Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award OHA
8. Set goal scoring record OHA (at the time), won MVP OHA at 19 years old
9. 19 years old member of Sr. Marlies that won Allan Cup (Canadian Senior Hockey Championship)
10. 1952 became member of the Toronto Maple Leafs
11. 1956 became captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs
12. Captain of team 1962 Stanley Cup Champions
13. Captain of team 1963 Stanley Cup Champions
14. Captain of team 1964 Stanley Cup Champions
15. Captain of team 1967 Stanley Cup Champions
16. 1973 Coach of Memorial Cup Champions (Toronto Marlies)
17. 1975 Coach of Memorial Cup Champions (Toronto Marlies)
18. Elected to enter Hockey Hall of Fame, 1975

19. My banner was raised in Maple Leaf Gardens in 1997 (my number 10 was retired in 2016)
 20. Met many good, kind and generous people during my lifetime. I am now honoured to have a Native background and I am extremely pleased that my Mom and Dad were proud of me. I have 8 wonderful, beautiful grandchildren, that anyone would be proud to have. I could ask for more, but I have received more than I deserve already.
- George Armstrong

4.3 Note to My Grandfather

Dear Gramps,

Thank you for this beautiful, unforgettable, and beyond comparable shared experience. You have impacted and inspired me more than words can describe. I love you!

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Appendix I: Ethics Approval



Date: 20 August 2018

To: Dr. Gerald McKinley

Project ID: 112069

Study Title: Receiving My Grandfather's Memories

Application Type: NMREB Initial Application

Review Type: Delegated

Full Board Reporting Date: 07/Sep/2018

Date Approval Issued: 20/Aug/2018 13:36

REB Approval Expiry Date: 20/Aug/2019

Dear Dr. Gerald McKinley

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

Documents Approved:

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Surveys LOI Plus Consent Form-Armstrong-REVISED REB	Written Consent/Assent	25/Jul/2018	

No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazard(s) to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Katelyn Harris, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).

Kalley Armstrong

EDUCATION

- 2019-present **The University of Western Ontario**
Ph.D. Candidate in Sociocultural Anthropology
London, ON
- 2017-2019 **The University of Western Ontario**
MA in Sociocultural Anthropology
London, ON
- 2010-2015 **Harvard University**
BA in Government
Minor in History of Science
Cambridge, MA

TEACHING

- 09/2017-present **Teaching Assistant, The University of Western Ontario**
Department of First Nations Studies/
Department of Anthropology
FNS 2218F (Contemporary First Nations Issues in Canada)
ANTHRO 2281G (Anthropology of Development)
ANTHRO 1025F (Introduction to Sociocultural
Anthropology)
ANTHRO 2101B (Great Archeological Sites)

RESEARCH

- 01/2019-present **Member, Indigenous Hockey Research Network**
Western University/Queen's University
London, ON/Kingston, ON
- 05/2019 **Researcher,**
National Aboriginal Hockey Championships
Whitehorse, Yukon
- 09/2017 **Research Assistant, Walpole Island First Nation**
Western University
London, ON

CONFERENCES

- 03/2019 **Invited Panel Speaker, Roundtable on Racism in Hockey**
Queens University
Kingston, ON
- 12/2018 **Assistant, Land, Language, Locatives**
Western University, Social Sciences
London, ON
- 02/2018 **Assistant, Aboriginal Sport Circle (ASC) Research Initiative**
Workshop for Indigenous Sport National Research Agenda
Gatineau, ON
- 09/2017-11/2017 **Facilitator, Indigenous Youth Futures Partnership**
First Nations Youth Transitions: Promoting Success and Wellness
Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, ON
- 08/2017 **Invited Panel Speaker, See the Line Concussion Symposium**
Western University, Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry
London, ON