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**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NATIVE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AND THE  
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF IN CANADA**

**BY:  
Fern Elgar**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of Anthropology**

**Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

**Carleton University**

**September 19, 1997**

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and Research Acceptance of the thesis

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NATIVE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AND THE  
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF IN CANADA

submitted by Fern Elgar, B.A. Hons.  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts

  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyze the role the Deaf residential schools play in the development and maintenance of Deaf culture using a cross cultural comparison of the Deaf and Native residential schools in Canada. In addition to the available literautre, interviews with former Deaf residential school students are used.

Chapter One addresses the problem inherent in a "multicultural" federalist country that works to further the liberal democratic ideal of "equality" and what this means in terms of Deaf identity. Chapter Two discusses the effects of the residential schools on "Deaf culture". Chapter Three compares and contrasts the function of the Deaf and Native residential schools. In this chapter, the creation of Deaf culture in the residential schools is explored using Van Gennep and Turner's "Rite of Passage". In conclusion this thesis argues that the Deaf need to play a more active role in both policy and decision making for the Deaf. This requires that Deaf culture be publicly recognized as a culture and not just a disability.

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## INTRODUCTION

Currently within anthropological discourse there is a great deal of emphasis placed on the "positionality" (Sen, 1994) of the author. Positionality, simply put, means the perspective from which the author is viewing his or her research question, data and analysis.

It is my belief that the positionality taken by myself as the author of this thesis is of extreme importance for several reasons. First, as a Deaf Canadian who attended a Deaf residential school from the years 1961 to 1971, I have first-hand experience with the administration, curriculum, staff and many other issues surrounding the workings of the Deaf residential schools. Second, I have attended a hearing school for one year of junior high and throughout highschool as well as completing an undergraduate high honours degree at a hearing University (Carleton University). Third, I have worked in both a mainstream hearing school as an interpreter and a teaching assistant and a Deaf residential school as a houseparent.

My extensive involvement in both the Deaf and the hearing community, my competence in both American Sign

Language (ASL) and English, makes me one of the relatively few "Bi-Bis". Bi-Bi means Bicultural-Bilingual and refers to someone who is linguistically and culturally Deaf and yet has also managed to integrate into the hearing society through both competence in the English language and through functional interaction with the hearing culture (Mason, 1993; Carver, 1989; and Lane, 1992:167-172).

My identity as a Deaf Canadian, both linguistically and culturally (not to mention physically), offers a unique perspective to the subject matter of this thesis. This is because within the existing literature there are very few Canadian Deaf authors, with a few notable exceptions (see Carbin, 1996; Carver, 1989; and Roots, 1995), and therefore, much of the information available on Deaf culture or Deaf residential schools is provided by the hearing.

The problem is that the information that is largely provided by the hearing is used to influence policy and decisions made regarding the Deaf. It is necessary that the Deaf themselves play a more active role in formulating policy and making decisions regarding the Deaf in order to ensure that the choices made will benefit those they are meant to serve. In fact, until

very recently, most task forces addressing Deaf education placed no emphasis on including Deaf people in the decision making process and only promoted the use of ASL as far as it could be used to help facilitate the acquisition of English. For example, the Saskatchewan Report of the Task Force of the Education of the Deaf in 1989 states:

Since the English language is essential to enable success in the general society, acquisition of English language competence (vocal, visual, and written) to the maximum extent possible, should be the focus in the education of deaf students. (35)

However, more recently, those in decision making positions have come to recognize the necessity for both a Deaf perspective and the need for Deaf participation in the formation of government policy pertaining to the Deaf, especially in terms of Deaf education (Roots, 1995; and Canadian Association of the Deaf, 1994(b)).

The controversy surrounding the education of the Deaf in Canada has a familiar ring to it. By this I mean that over the past few decades most Canadians have become familiar with the issues and problems surrounding the Native residential schools in Canada. In the 1980's an extensive amount of media attention was drawn to the Native residential school system when a number of charges of sexual abuse were laid by the students against members of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches (Furniss,

1995). Today, there is an abundance of literature from a variety of perspectives pertaining to virtually every issue surrounding the existence, the role of and the effects of the Native residential schools. Yet, in terms of the Deaf residential schools, little is known, published or heard.

Recognition of the perspectives of those who will be directly affected by residential school policies is a key consideration in this thesis. Therefore, interviews have been conducted with thirteen people. Of the thirteen people interviewed nine are Deaf and former residents of a Deaf residential school. Of the nine Deaf people interviewed, two were also Aboriginal. Of the four hearing people interviewed, three are former Deaf residential school professional staff members and the fourth is an Inuk survivor of a Native residential school. Deaf people were interviewed in favour of Aboriginal people because there is already an abundance of literature available on Aboriginal survivors of residential schools in Canada and I have drawn on this literature throughout this thesis. However, there is very little information in the literature on former residents of Deaf residential schools.

Interviews with Deaf people were conducted in ASL

because it is the first (and in some cases the only) language of the interviewees. In order to record these interviews video cameras were set up instead of the usual audio tapes in order to record the signing. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format. A list of questions were developed (see Appendix I) to act as a guide in the interviewing process but the questions were not fixed and rigid. If the conversation led off in another direction it was allowed to go, as is the way with unstructured interviews. This methodology was chosen mainly because I saw it as the best way to attain specific information while at the same time leaving room for the development of new knowledge (Mirchina and Richards, 1996).

This thesis will compare the residential schools for the Deaf with the residential schools for Natives in terms of the role they play in the formation of, and/or destruction of the cultural identity of the students who have attended them. Furthermore, similarities in how these schools have acted as tools of the state to attempt to assimilate both Native and Deaf peoples through attacking their cultural base at various angles will be demonstrated. This thesis will compare the experiences of Deaf and Native residential schools in the format of a cross-cultural comparison.



This thesis is comprised of three chapters. Chapter One will address the problems inherent in a "multi-cultural", federalist country that works to further the liberal democratic ideal of "equality" to all citizens. This raises the question: To what extent should one's identity in a particular cultural group publically matter? How do or how should public institutions (such as schools, hospitals and corporations) deal with an individual's special needs that arise from that person's membership in a particular cultural group? Next, this chapter will describe the methodology for a cross-cultural comparison of Deaf and Aboriginal. Finally, this chapter will define and discuss Deaf culture and language.

Chapter Two will first look at the history of the Native residential schools, how and why they were formed and what they mean to Native people in terms of the effects on their culture. Next, the Deaf residential schools will be discussed through the history of their development and their effects on "Deaf culture" and how these schools, the Deaf individual's family, community and society as a whole influences and perpetuates the existence of the Deaf culture. Chapter Two will then discuss the Deaf identity, using the interviews conducted, in terms of how the Deaf define themselves and

how the hearing professionals working with the Deaf define and perceive of the Deaf. Furthermore, the importance of the Deaf identity to the Aboriginal Deaf will be discussed.

Chapter Three will compare and contrast the Deaf and Native residential schools using data gathered both from interviews with students from the Deaf residential schools and the available literature. This chapter will demonstrate that while there are many similarities in both the practice, purpose and methods of the two residential school systems, the effects of each in terms of their influences on both Deaf and Native "culture" have been significantly different. Chapter Three will then explore the creation of the Deaf culture within the residential schools through a theoretical analysis using Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner's "Rites of Passage" to understand the Deaf residential schools as first a liminal place and later a place for the development of *communitas*. Finally this chapter will discuss the current role of Deaf and Aboriginal cultures in a "Multicultural Canada".

The conclusion of this thesis will not only summarize the arguments made but also make recommendations for methods of developing more

culturally-sensitive policies regarding the Deaf, for involving the Deaf in decision making roles and for the general empowerment of the Deaf population in Canada. It is hoped that this thesis will act to educate the educators, employers, doctors and medical staff, policy makers, and parents and family of the Deaf. These people must publically recognize Deaf culture as a culture and not just a disability, otherwise the ignorance of others will continue to deny the recognition of the Deaf identity.

## CHAPTER 1

One of the most common misconceptions about the Deaf is that they are disabled members of the Hearing community. However, this is not by any means true. The Deaf do not perceive of themselves this way, instead they see themselves for what they are - members of a unique culture of their own (Nash, 1981 and Lane, 1992).

The word Deaf is spelled with a capital "D" instead of a small "d" because an important part of the Deaf culture is to know your own identity as a Deaf person. Deaf (or hearing, for that matter) people who spell Deaf with a small "d" indicate that they do not acknowledge their deafness as a part of their identity. The capital D is indicative of the pride felt when one acknowledges this important part of their character (Lane, 1992). Small "d" deaf, on the other hand, refers mainly to the medicalized description of hearing loss.

In dealing with educational policy regarding the Deaf there are many issues that are brought to the surface. Primarily, the distinctness of the Deaf community from any other "disabled" group makes them a very special case for special needs educational policy. In fact, according to Roger Carver's 1989 study on the

literacy of Deaf Canadians "there is a real question as to whether education of the deaf should be regarded as "special education" or "minority education" (6). Despite the general tendency of the general public to view the Deaf as disabled, the Deaf themselves commonly reject this description. The Deaf community is very different, and very much separate from the Hearing community, but the difference is not in terms of ability but rather language, values, norms - that is, of culture. In fact, the "politically correct" usage of the term "hearing impaired" is considered offensive to many Deaf people who do not perceive their deafness as a disability but as a cultural distinction.

Both The Canadian Association of the Deaf and the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association have rejected the term "hearing impaired" because it treats all Deaf people as one homogenous group without recognizing the cultural significance of Deafness (Roots, 1995:9). Instead, the difference between the Deaf and the hearing as perceived by the Deaf is simply in lifestyle, as stated by Lane (1992):

Because there is a Deaf community with its own language and culture, there is a cultural frame in which to be Deaf is not to be disabled; quite contrary, it is, as we have seen, an asset in Deaf culture to be Deaf in behaviour, values, knowledge, and fluency in ASL (21).

Many Deaf individuals recognize their difference from members of the Hearing community, but do not feel the difference is detrimental to their lifestyle:

Many have never known or would not remember what it is like to be able to hear...'I don't know what it is to be a hearing person. I was born that way (deaf). I don't feel handicapped at all (Higgins, 1980:86).

For these people, Deafness has simply become a major part of their identity; their identity as different from the Hearing culture.

Furthermore, the disabled rights movement has, for the last quarter of this century, been pushing toward the educational mainstreaming of all children. The government is responding to this pressure because they believe that mainstreaming is much cheaper than running special schools. However, the manually Deaf are the only "disabled" group to fight against the "mainstreaming" movement. This is because the Deaf find the hearing schools restrictive and ineffective mainly because they remove the Deaf children from their cultural environment.

The most common studies of the Deaf community come from government surveys usually conducted by hearing people with little or no understanding of Deaf culture. The current use of government surveys and reports fails to give an understanding of Deaf issues because the

surveys do not address the Deaf as a culture. In fact, it has been claimed that "not a single accurate or reliable statistic on Deaf Canadians exists " (Roots, 1995:8). This is further illustrated through surveys which lump the Deaf and the blind together as though these two classifications were interchangeable (Carbin, 1996:477). There is, therefore, a real need for information about the Deaf that takes an emic perspective, that is from the perspective of the Deaf themselves.

## **THE MULTICULTURAL ISSUE AND THE DEAF IN CANADA**

### ***Federalism versus Nationalism in Canada***

Who we are depends on our own individual model of reality which is largely influenced by the broader context in which we live our lives. This includes any groups that we associate ourselves with or use to define who we are including, but not limited to, nationality, religion, race and language. Basically all those things that we use to construct our identity define who we are as an individual. However, in Canada, as in any country, there is a status quo that does not reflect the values and beliefs of a large portion of society. This is because the status quo in any given society depends upon which interest groups have the most power and what the

cultural models and ideologies of these dominant interest groups are. This is especially true in a "multicultural" society such as Canada.

Canada officially declared itself a multicultural country in 1988 when the Canadian Multicultural Act became law. This act was to recognize that Canada is a culturally diverse country in terms of ethnic, religious and linguistic identities. The dilemma posed here is that while Canada maintains that it is a multicultural country and that all cultures should be both promoted and respected, this works in direct contradiction to the liberal notion of individual equality. In terms of the Deaf, it is especially interesting to witness the dilemma posed by Canada's notion that in order to be consistent with the ideals of democratic liberalism, public institutions should be "culture free" in order to treat all individuals as equal. The belief is that these public institutions can be "culture-free" by treating everyone as individual equals, and therefore institutions can operate in an objective and quantitative manner and not adhere to any one particular cultural belief system. However, this is a very naive notion as the dominant (or core) group will always be the one to determine what is equal and how that equality can be measured.



In Canada it is obvious that the currently practised system does not adequately treat all groups within its population. A perfect example of this is the situation faced by the Aboriginal peoples in Canada - for example, the average age of death for Aboriginal people in Canada is more than thirty years younger than it is for the rest of Canada, the level of education is significantly lower and access to resources are limited when compared to the Canadian population as a whole (Frideres, 1988:140). Therefore, one central question remains: *How do we, as a multicultural society, balance the demands of minority groups with the desire of the central government to promote the interests of the majority and consequently set general standards for everyone?*

Canada is a federal state which claims to believe that if we have shared traditions, geography, or common economic space then we can agree to share a single state while retaining substantial degrees of sovereignty over matters essential to any individual's membership within an ethnic or cultural group. As such, federalism seeks to reconcile the ethnic principle, according to which strangers wish to come together to form a community of equals, by basing one's identity not on ethnicity but on citizenship (Taylor, 1994). A large part of the unwillingness of Canada to recognize the existence of its

various nations comes from deeply rooted liberal democratic political ideal of emphasizing individual rights above collective rights. Federalism is naive in the sense that it does not consider the wide range of historical and cultural experiences that make up a nation and as a result, Canada has been unable to deal with the "nationalist problem" with any success. For example, First Nations in Canada have had their citizenship imposed upon them under the auspices of federalist equality, however, most Aboriginal people see this as an oppressive measure - not in the spirit of equality.

Federalists see the danger in Native self-government and a sovereign Quebec as giving them the power to recognize their right to exclude others in order to preserve their cultural integrity as one would become defined not only as an individual but also as a member of a specific cultural group. The collective goals of most national movements violate the liberal model which places individual rights above collective rights and sees the equal treatment of everyone as necessarily ignoring their membership and identification with certain groups be it political, religious, cultural or ethnic. However, cultural survival is dependent on the recognition of collective rights as ascribed to ethnic groups. Otherwise, as argued by Taylor (1994:71), by invoking our

standards to judge all civilizations and cultures, "the politics of difference can end up making everyone the same".

Within the Deaf community the simple example of majority rules is strongly felt. The majority group (in this case, hearing) that make the rules, establish the factors of importance within the society. That is, if the majority within a society can speak and hear, it will be important for all members to either speak and hear, or find some other way of getting around this barrier. "Members of the Deaf community have been a dominated group. They have been repeatedly held up to the standard of the larger world and told that they have not measured up" (Higgins, 1980:101).

At the same time it is important not to assume that just because a given cultural group values its collectivity that this culture is therefore homogeneous. To assume homogeneity is to ignore the relationship between the individual and the greater culture. Taylor (1994) criticizes sociologists as well as anthropologists for ignoring the role of the individual in society, and ignoring the importance of individual relationships in the formation of an individual's identity.

Taylor's article "The Politics of Recognition" (1994) focuses on the role of the individual and emphasizes the various factors that help to make up the individual's experience:

And so the discourse of recognition has become familiar to us, on two levels: First, in the intimate sphere, where we understand the formation of identity and the self as taking place in a continuing dialogue and struggle with significant others. And then in the public sphere, where a politics of equal recognition has come to play a bigger and bigger role. (37)

People, according to Taylor, define themselves by their social roles and way of being and this is not socially derived but inwardly generated: "if some of the things I value most are accessible to me only in relation to the person I love, then she becomes part of my identity" (34). So, if some of the things that Deaf people value are only accessible to them in relation to a particular institution (i.e. residential schools) then is it not also a part of their identity?

Furthermore, within the Deaf community, as in any community, communication is a key element in the construction and maintenance of cultural identity. The common misconceptions of Sign Language as simply an ordered set of gestures with no real grammatical structure or cultural concepts works to further the misrepresentation of the Deaf community in the broader public sphere. In actuality, Sign Language is a complete

language and this medium of communication is an essential factor in the cultural identities of Deaf individuals.

Taylor (1994) describes nonrecognition or misrecognition as a "form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (25). Misrecognition shows not just a lack of respect but also it can inflict its victims with self-hatred. I agree wholeheartedly with Taylor when he says: "Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need." (26)

Deaf people are often misrecognized. Instead of being recognized as a culture, as they define themselves, often the Deaf are defined as being "disabled". They are seen as lacking in some ability to function in the everyday world and so to treat them as "equal", within the Canadian liberal democratic society, the deafness becomes medicalized -its cultural attributes are ignored and as a result the Deaf are not recognized as culturally distinct members of the Deaf community but as members of the culturally dominant group only suffering with some unfortunate condition. Despite this misconception, the Deaf do not see themselves as "disabled" (Higgins, 1980 and Lane, 1996). The fact that the Deaf continue to insist that theirs is a cultural difference and that they

are still identified as having a medical difference goes to demonstrate the lack of political power that the Deaf community holds within Canada (Lane, 1992 and Foster, 1996).

As a result, the child who rejects conventional society and embraces Deaf culture, is rejecting "marginalized inclusion" (Doe, 1988:4) and is choosing full inclusion in a marginalized group. Culturalizing Deafness moves the location of the problem to society and its inequities - it becomes a political issue. To medicalize deafness places the power in the hands of hearing doctors and audiologists. In fact, according to the Canadian Association of the Deaf:

Deaf people have virtually no presence in the policy-making and decision-making arena of Canada: even where they do have a presence, such as in Government Advisory Councils, it is a voluntary and frankly powerless presence -- powerless not only in that they are usually but one deaf representative amongst fifteen or more hearing representatives, but also in that such Councils realistically have little clout. (1995:52).

### **The Nationalist Problem in Canada**

In social science the ideological reasoning of nationalism has been pushed aside and within sociology the studies of nationalism have emphasized it as an

ideological construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). In modern nationalism emphasis is placed mainly on religious intensity and quality and yet this is not always a central factor of identity for every nation. Kapferer (1989) states that concentrating on the argument of nationalist ideology and the structure of nationalist reasoning leads to an understanding of the direction and force of nationalism.

According to Purvis (1995), the nation is defined by nationalism, and nationalism is the drive for individual statehood. This leaves social theory unable to cope with claims to nationhood that don't aim at the establishment of nationstates as can be evidenced in the work of Gellner (1983) and Giddens (1991).

According to Gellner (1983) all peoples must live in social units defined by a shared culture as cultural pluralism is no longer viable and so nationalism arises as a response. This nationalism, as Gellner sees it, is the end process of historical evolution (Purvis, 1995). Furthermore, Gellner (1983) claims that if nations are to remain functioning in the contemporary world, they must aim toward the achievement of independent statehood. Gellner argues that the European-style nationstate is the only model capable of sustaining the cultural uniqueness

of peoples who feel they have a distinct identity that they want to preserve (Purvis, 1995).

First Nations peoples in Canada have a unique cultural identity under a different political climate and different definitions of nationalism than which they themselves have internalized throughout their history. The Eurocentric attitude of Gellner, and others that follow his line of thinking (ie. Giddens - who only acknowledges nations that have been a product of nationstate formation) are faulty in their assumption that state and nation are inseparable. Gellner is adhering to a form of modernization theory when he inaccurately asserts that in order to gain recognition as a nation that nation must follow the same steps as the European nation-states once did. In the case of First Nations peoples in Canada (or any other part of the world for that matter), the nation was preexisting before academic theories and definitions of what is and what is not a nation arose.

### ***Denial of a Nationstate to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada***

Historically Canada attempted to assimilate all its citizens into the dominant culture. Initially this was



done through racist immigration policies and the Indian Act (discussed more in Chapter Two). With the repetitive failure of various assimilation programs, Canada still remains a far cry from a homogenized nation. In regards to First Nations peoples, the failure to assimilate led the government of Canada to simply refuse to acknowledge First Nations as nations. Despite the fact that First Nations people are not just an "ethnic group", repeatedly call for a "multi-nationalism" in Canada, and constantly express their wish to negotiate on a nation-to-nation basis, Canada does not give treaties with First Nations peoples the same status as international treaties.

The focus on land ownership in the "First Nations-Nation of Canada" discourse has been predominant but it is far from being the only important issue in addressing the recognition of First Nations, as stated by Dyck (1985):

Indigenous communities are not, then, simply aggregates of separate individuals belonging to a category, but rather distinct groups that are usually associated with particular territorial bases. Indeed the attachment of Indigenous peoples to particular localities is one of their most notable and politically significant features, whereas... identification of self with locality is anathema to the logic of modern political economy (7).

This control cannot be successful. Canada, not for a lack of trying, cannot make First Nations disappear.

## **METHODOLOGY**

*The objective of my thesis* will be to reveal the similarities in the practices of both residential schools for the Deaf and Native residential schools. It is hoped that by revealing the similarities in the structures of both types of residential schools it will be demonstrated that the problem is not limited to individual cases but rather is an epidemic inherent in the very system of residential schools.

Secondary research was conducted in the areas of both Native and Deaf residential schools. One interesting point that has surfaced is that while there is a vast literature available on virtually every aspect of Native residential schools, this is not the case with residential schools for the Deaf. Therefore, I easily managed to collect a lot of information on Native residential schools but the search for relevant information on Deaf residential schools was far more challenging. Most of the information available on the Deaf residential schools is very recent as it is a problem that has only very recently been addressed.

Selecting a research methodology for any sociological study can itself be a difficult task. A fairly wide variety of methods have been developed that aim at providing researchers with a format to facilitate the collection of data. When it came to deciding how to best understand the experiences of Deaf students in the residential schools it was important to take into consideration the needs and

constraints of the subject matter.

Clearly traditional quantitative research methods are not a suitable approach. First and foremost, an analysis of an existing data sets was not possible because this research area is as of yet largely unexplored in sociological literature. Therefore, any quantitative data set would have to be obtained solely through me. Such a project is beyond the scope of any Master's thesis.

Much of the data used for analysis in this thesis comes from interviews with Deaf and Aboriginal peoples. Generally there are two types of interviews in anthropological research. The first is a highly structured interview in which the questions are read to the respondent with little room for diversion or probing. The second is semi-structured or unstructured interviews. This research method is more open to exploration and elaboration. Rather than seeking brief finite answers the questions are read in a manner that allows the interviewer greater freedom to explore questions in detail.

Unstructured interviews can be conducted in group format (focus groups) or on an individual basis. In an unstructured or semi-structured interview with an individual, there is further negotiation of knowledge that is allowed to develop without being confined to the strict boundaries imposed in a structured interview.

Furthermore, since conducting interviews is expensive and time consuming, especially for Deaf interviewers, semi-structured interviews are most frequently done in research projects with a small sample size. For these reasons semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most suitable research method for this study.

This is not to say that semi-structured interviews are problem free. There are several disadvantages to personal interviews. First, they are time-consuming. As a Deaf interviewer, the interview process involved a significant amount of sign language. Thus the process of transcription involved watching a videotape of the interview and recording on paper what was signed. This was not simply recording word for word either - it was translating one language into another.

Another pitfall of the interview process in general was obtaining access to respondents. Travelling costs, applications to research agencies and making connections were all a part of the process. But there was an additional problem that was very particular to this project. The anthropological ethical guidelines suggest that interviews be conducted with people that the researcher does not know personally. However, since I am a member of the Deaf community, a small and close-knit group, it was very difficult for me to find Deaf people that I did not know. This required much searching and networking through both hearing and Deaf people that I do know.

Obtaining the interview with the former Native residential school student was another difficult task. I wrote a letter to several Aboriginal organizations locally and out of province requesting interviews with individuals who had attended one of the residential schools. I only had one response. Furthermore, while I received several referrals, none of them responded.

According to Michrina and Richards (1996) the researcher must not divorce him or herself from the individuals nor the reality or realities being studied. This method of distance is not desirable as biases are uncontrollable and in order to achieve maximum effectiveness, the researcher must tear down their own mental structure or initial understanding through a negotiation with individuals. This is because reality cannot be known objectively but must be understood and participated in inter-subjectively as truth itself varies with time, the individual participants and the individual researcher.

During an interview, people:

interact in relation to each other and reciprocally influence each other. The questions and statements of one person can cause the other to reflect on and analyze issues in new ways (Michrina and Richards, 1996:20).

Therefore, unstructured interviews allow the issues to develop through mutual

participation and negotiation by the researcher and the interviewee. This method aids the researcher because those being interviewed are engaged in every stage of the knowledge formulation and data collection. This involvement of research subjects is also favourable in that it assists in the alleviation of power structures between the researcher and research participants as their role is key in the formulation of knowledge.

For the purposes of this thesis, I interviewed a total of thirteen people. Of the thirteen people, nine were former residents of Deaf residential schools (two of those were Aboriginal), one was a former resident of a Native residential school, and three were former hearing staff of Deaf residential schools. All of the people interviewed were Canadian.

I will also be taking a phenomenological approach as I will be relying heavily on my own experiences and knowledge of Deaf culture. Because I have had my own set of experiences with Deaf residential schools which have unavoidably played a large role in the construction of my own perceptions on the subject matter of this thesis, the interviews conducted with other former students of Deaf residential schools serve the important task of acting as a check against my own biases.

One important theoretical consideration in which to situate my thesis is the

theory of structural violence as described by Johann Galtung (1990). Galtung describes structural violence as repression and exploitation. This violence arises as a symptom of political structures, be it capitalist or socialist. This violence has a special type of destructive power, exercised by persons or by structure, over persons or things (or both), by inflicting "bads" or denying "goods". This idea of "structural violence" provides a good conceptual framework whereby the systematic oppression in all its various forms that occurs within residential schools of any kind may be studied.

The method of cross-cultural comparison is one of the most valuable heuristic tools available to anthropology and yet the current trend of post-modern critique within the social sciences has focused much of its condemnation on this particular method. However, cultures are not closed systems, they are mutually influenced, developed and changed by each other and are becoming more so in this age of increasing globalization. Therefore, it may be argued that cross-cultural studies, instead of becoming obsolete, are in fact more valid today than ever before.

### **What is Deaf Culture?**

In order to understand Deaf culture we must first have a definition of culture itself. Clifford Geertz (1973) defines culture as:

The concept of culture I espouse...is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning (5).

I have chosen Geertz' definition because he emphasizes the importance of interpretation and meaning to the individual within the culture. While the Deaf and the hearing may live side by side giving the illusion of belonging to the same community or culture, language, experiences, and lived realities separate the two in a way that only be accounted for by seeing them as two separate cultures.

In studying the social forces within a community (which is what the Deaf refer to their culture as: the Deaf community), or between communities, it is important to remember the effect of the individual. Both Geertz (1973 and 1983) and earlier, Georg Simmel (1949) wrote extensively on this topic. Their interests are in the belonging that the individual feels as a member of a particular community, and also the effect of the community on the individual. Simmel states that: "individuality ...tends to be defined by the extent to which one approximates a social type" (in Wolff, 1965:119). That is, the individual is defined in terms of the extent that he/she can conform to the traditions of his/her community or culture.

Culture is based on similarities between individuals. People who choose



not to, or cannot, conform to these necessary qualifications are excluded from the group. Since the Deaf do not conform to the "qualifications" of Hearing culture (i.e. shared language) they are to a very large extent, excluded. According to Roots (1995) "biological inheritance" is the Deaf person's "single most important factor influencing his/her socialization" (21). The social and political status of Deafness has increased recently because of identity as a culturally Deaf people but Elshtain (1993) questions to what extent this can be profitably pursued.

Therefore, a Deaf person is a member of the Deaf community and although this community exists within the larger hearing community, the boundaries surrounding the Deaf community are strong and specific. Due to the tremendous oppression that the members of the Deaf community face from the Hearing culture (and also within the Deaf community itself), some Deaf members have difficulty recognizing their identity as separate from the Hearing culture. Instead, they feel like inferior members of the Hearing community. Others use technology and special services to function within the hearing environment.

Any community is based on a simple concept. That is, each member of the community shares with the other members some form of commonality. "Since sociability in its pure form has no ulterior end, no content, and no result outside itself, it is oriented completely about personalities" (Simmel, 1949:158).

The Deaf community is held together by the members' common interests and concerns. From this community, the members gain their identity as a Deaf individual. "Members of the Deaf community identify with fellow members. They give their allegiance to the Deaf community" (Higgins, 1980:101). Because the Deaf community is relatively small, the connection between its members is very strong. As stated by Wolff (1965): "The narrower the group, the less individuality its members have, but the more distinct the group itself is" (15). Similar rules established within the Deaf community form this link between its members across Canada. These ties begin in the residential schools for the Deaf, where members cultivate their belonging to each other, and provide support for each other. This common foundation establishes the community and identity for its members.

Despite the comfort that seems to exist in the Deaf community for its members, the fact that the Deaf community must maintain itself within the larger hearing community who usually make up their doctors, teachers, employers/ees and even their families creates a constant source of frustration and feelings of domination. The communication barrier which exists between the hearing and the Deaf can cause difficulties in interaction, while the pressure from the larger hearing community can cause the Deaf to feel inferior. This situation often causes the Deaf community to become even tighter.

The oppression felt as a result of the communication barrier between the Deaf and the broader hearing community can take many forms. The Deaf community is often left feeling inadequate within the hearing community, as stated by Higgins (1980):

Members (of the Deaf community) have grown up and still live within a Hearing world. They cannot easily forget the overwhelming importance that their Hearing parents and teachers gave to speech and lip reading. Nor can they overlook the significance of speech and hearing in a hearing world (101).

The Deaf culture within the Hearing culture is at a disadvantage. With hearing and speech as such integral parts of the Hearing culture in which the Deaf community resides, little is done to facilitate the lifestyle of the Deaf (Carver, 1989 and Marschark, 1997). The Deaf often must learn to function within the Hearing community without any help.

In order to be accepted by the Deaf culture, it is necessary to conform to what is accepted as proper behavior and attitudes. Usually only the profoundly Deaf are accepted in the Deaf community. The two communities should therefore not be defined in terms of ability and disability, but by their differences and uniqueness:

If we respect the right of people in other cultures... to have their own constitutive rules, which may differ from ours...then we must recognize that the Deafness of which I speak is not a disability but rather a different way of being (Lane, 1992:21).

Still, due to the size difference between these communities, the Hearing culture

still remains ignorant and insensitive to the needs of the Deaf.

The oppression of the Hearing community becomes a part of the Deaf person's identity. From the Deaf residential schools, where all positions of power were held by Hearing people, the Deaf learn to resent members of the Hearing community. In their own community, they tend to form systems of hierarchy which depend on Deaf leadership. In this way, the oppressive forces of the Hearing community play a part in the identity established within the Deaf community (Lane, 1992:22).

Within the last fifty years, Deaf culture in North America has dynamically been developing itself. Prior to the twentieth-century it is quite fair to say that there was not really a Deaf culture. A culture entails more than just the existence of a group of people, as mentioned there needs to be a sense of community, norms, and values. In other words, the difference between a Deaf person of the 19th century and an active Deaf person of the 20th century is that the latter has a cohort - they belong to a culture.

This is extremely important for all people. The need to identify oneself with a culture is practically a universal trait. However, for Deaf people this takes on a new significance because without active membership in a Deaf community they experience not only social isolation but communicative isolation.

## LANGUAGE AND DEAF CULTURE

Having no written record of a First Nation's history, anthropologists must rely on oral traditions of the present to "reconstruct" the past. In the wider political sphere oral traditions are often ignored or dismissed because of our own scientific bias of what is "empirical evidence". This creates a huge problem in translating cultural values and beliefs because by ignoring the nation's own form of recorded history the anthropologist is laying a value on the meaning of the "other's" conception of reality. This is a similar issue for the Deaf. Since Sign Language is a three-dimensional language it is difficult if not impossible to record its products in writing.

Simmel (1949) explains that: "contact, exchange, and speech...are the whole meaning and content of the social processes" (158). The term 'speech' should be replaced with the term 'communication', to further acknowledge the Deaf to identify as a culture. Although speech is not a part of the Deaf culture, communication, in the form of American Sign Language (ASL) or any other form of Sign Language, is the foundation of the Deaf community. According to Kannapell (1980), a Deaf person:

If you want to change ASL or take ASL away from the person, you are trying to take his or her identity away. I believe "my language is me". To reject a language is to reject the person herself or himself. Thus to reject ASL is to reject the deaf person (111-112).

Because Sign is a three-dimensional language it is not written. Many researchers have tried to develop a written version of Sign but have not been successful (e.g. Sacks, 1989 and Stokoe, 1980). Sacks (1989) claims that in developing a written form of Sign, the Deaf community and culture will be enhanced, however, others (e.g. Roots, 1995) have argued that the absence of a written language has actually served to reinforce and strengthen the Deaf community because in order to communicate the Deaf must meet face to face which increases interaction and thus keeps the Deaf community social.

Despite claims that Sign is not a "real" language, linguists have determined that Sign language's grammar, syntax, and semantics make it officially a "complete and distinct language which is articulated in space and time" (Kyle and Woll 1985; Stokoe, 1960; Klima and Bellugi, 1979). An individual who knows ASL can communicate through sign language very easily with almost anyone who also knows sign language around the world despite the different dialects. The languages from location to location are not the same among Deaf people world wide but they are similar enough to form a bond and a basis for communication. This form of communication is unique among the various languages in the world which for the most part often do not cross language boundaries. Spoken languages are therefore limited within their barriers. For a Deaf individual in one area of the world there are no barriers to communication with other Deaf communities due to the similarity between their languages.

Within the Deaf culture physical contact as a form of communication is very important. To get a person's attention, a form of physical contact is often used, whereas in the Hearing culture members would use a form of sound. When sound is removed as a viable form of communication, this contact becomes crucial. "Deaf people frequently hug on meeting and invariably hug on parting - - real hugs!" (Lane, 1992:18). The concept of 'real hugs' is used to differentiate the contact between the Deaf and the Hearing. Hearing people, too, hug each other, but often their contact is fleeting and/or insincere, for this hugging is not the same form of expression that it is for the Deaf. Also the Deaf rely on touch to get a person's attention. This is done by a light tap to the shoulder, forearm or the thigh depending on the position and height of the person - the face and back, (which may be acceptable in Hearing culture) are never touched to get attention, this is considered very rude and disrespectful. Likewise, if at a distance, a Deaf person may stamp their feet or bang a table creating a vibration to get another Deaf person's attention, something that may be seen as rude to a hearing person.

As can now be ascertained, the majority of Deaf people do not learn to communicate very effectively through speech because they cannot hear and so they cannot conceptualize the sound which is necessary to speak. With the loss of the sense of hearing, the visual sense becomes more articulated and is relied upon to a much greater degree than in a hearing person. But for the few Deaf

people that do know how to speak there is a strict code of conduct. For example, a speaking Deaf person must never tell other Deaf people that they can speak unless they are asked and if asked they MUST tell the truth, this is to avoid creating a condescending relationship between the speaker and the nonspeaker. Furthermore, if a speaking Deaf person is conversing with a Hearing person and a Deaf nonspeaker joins the conversation the speaking Deaf person must turn off their voice unless given permission to use it by the nonspeaking Deaf person. If a Deaf person can speak, they are placed at an advantage within the Hearing community, as stated by Higgins (1980):

Speaking...is highly valued within the Hearing world. It helps one navigate among the Hearing. It is an extra tool that some members of the Deaf community possess (93-4).



## HARD OF HEARING

The community of the Deaf and of the hearing provide a foundation for the identity development of their members. However, the hard of hearing are an often ignored group, not fully belonging to either group. The hard of hearing do not have the characteristics that would allow them to be members of one community or the other (Higgins, 1980:83). As Simmel (1949) suggests, it is the similarity between individuals which pulls them together to form such groups, and within such groups there is general conformity. For this reason, not only are the Deaf at a disadvantage in the hearing community, but the hard of hearing, too, are excluded.

The hard of hearing do not have profound hearing loss, and therefore they often cannot identify themselves within the Deaf community. This is also true of many people who were not born deaf but became deaf at some later point in their life (late deafness). One of the people I interviewed had "late deafness" and in describing his experience and interactions with other Deaf people he stated:

...I communicate with a few Deaf people sometimes but I don't get along with some of them. I communicate and understand a lot but I am always learning more. When my communication is compatible, it is good...When I see a group of Deaf people that I don't fit in with because I can't understand their way of communicating, I just leave them alone. Sometimes I find some Deaf people are very repetitive and boring and so I look for another group of people to hang around with.

Often the hard of hearing and those with late deafness are not accepted in the Deaf community because most Deaf people feel intimidated by their partial belonging to the hearing world (i.e. they can speak and they usually do not know sign language). While the hard of hearing can function well enough within the hearing community to be denied acceptance into the Deaf community, they also cannot hear adequately enough to be fully accepted by the hearing community. As a result, these individuals often feel some aspect of their self-identity is missing. Any strong difference between an individual and the community will tend to provide a basis for the individual's exclusion from the community and so the Hard of Hearing as well as those with late deafness find themselves neither a part of the Hearing culture nor the Deaf - they constitute a form of "subculture".

## **BARRIERS BETWEEN THE DEAF AND THE HEARING**

To function within the Hearing community, the Deaf must often rely on services and technology to allow for a free flow of communication between these two worlds. In this way, the Deaf can be a part of the hearing world. However, sometimes the stress from trying to adapt to a hearing world, and the 'nuisance' that living in this community creates for the Deaf, drives the Deaf members into depression about their situation. Higgins (1980) provides an example of this:

several Deaf (people) explained that if they could hear they could obtain a better job. They would have an opportunity to be promoted to foremen or, in one specific case, become a manager in a brother's business. But foremen and managers must use the telephone. Easy communication is assumed to be necessary for such jobs (87).

These Deaf individuals are aware of the limits set for them by the hearing community. Today, telephones and other forms of technology are offered to the Deaf community to allow for easy communication with the hearing and Deaf communities.

As indicated by a recent study (Vlug, 1995:2-3), when it concerns the Deaf, priorities are often focused on the increasing availability and quality of services and technologies now available for the Deaf to help them to function within the hearing culture. Among these technologies are closed captions for television programming, teletypewriter machine for the Deaf (TTY) or message relay service (MRS), and phone, alarm and doorbell flashers. But do these services and devices force the Deaf community to accept second class membership within the Hearing community, or are they simple items of convenience designed to allow independence within the larger hearing community, while still maintaining their Deaf identity and culture?

Another form of assistance comes from the service of the interpreters. These people allow for the translation of the hearing society to be described in

the words of the Deaf language.

Sign language interpreters are out in the open now at meetings, in the courts, in hospitals, and wherever members of the Deaf community need their services (Higgins, 1980:102).

Currently interpreters are also being used in schools and at academic conferences.

Sometimes, the Deaf choose to use a hearing aid to allow them to have partial access to the hearing culture. Often, though, this aid is not treated as necessary at all times:

Many choose not to use a hearing aid, even though they would benefit from it. Others use one at work when they must interact with hearing people, but take their aid off when they come home (Higgins, 1980:90).

Each of these conveniences are available for the Deaf to use when they feel they are necessary, or when they would feel more comfortable using them within the hearing environment.

However, these conveniences are not a part of the Deaf identity. Even when they are using these services and technological instruments, the members of the Deaf community are not adopting the hearing culture. Instead, they are still very strongly members of the Deaf culture.

When wearing a hearing aid, a Deaf person still identifies with the Deaf culture, and is still Deaf. This fact doesn't change because the person is able to

function within the hearing community. The two communities do not combine. Although members of the two communities may live together, they will always exist with separate identities. These separate identities provide the basis for the establishment of the Deaf community as a separate element from the hearing community.

It is my opinion that the recent emergence of many technologies that allow more accessibility of information to Deaf people will aid in breaking down the barrier Deaf people are faced with when trying to obtain information.<sup>1</sup> I believe that this will positively affect the current transition that Deaf people make from the residential schools to their position within the hearing world because as the technology increases so will education. However, this is not to say that technology is sufficient to replace the much needed education as the limits are still defined by the hearing community. Only those areas that the hearing community find to be of particular importance will be improved to suit the Deaf.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of these technologies are not so recent. As early as the late 1880's the Deaf were printing their own newspapers in order to communicate with each other relevant events that were occurring within the Deaf community. It is believed that these newspapers were instrumental in the development of the Deaf culture (see Haller, 1993).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **NATIVE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS**

#### **Background**

Smith (1995) outlines the distinction between residential schools and industrial schools. Industrial schools were located off the reserve instead of on the reserve as the residential schools were. In an industrial school Native students were taught trades and crafts, education was only a supplement to this. Furthermore, treaty obligations promised the providence of residential schools. For example, Treaty Number 6 stated:

And further, Her Majesty agrees to maintain schools for instruction in such reserves hereby made, as to Her Government of the Dominion for Canada may seem advisable, whenever the Indians of the reserves shall desire it (in Frideres and Reeves, 1993:41).

While the two types of schools were well defined and clearly distinguished at the end of the 19th century by missions and government, the distinction in later times in Canada became blurred in both administration and policy so that today what we refer to as residential schools incorporates aspects of both (Smith, 1995; 40). For the purposes of this paper I will be referring to the schools as they are commonly referred to now - residential schools.

There is some conflict in the literature over how the residential schools

originated (Smith, n.d.; Frideres, 1983; Friesen, 1983; and Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 1993). Many missionaries from various churches accept credit however, based on archival research conducted by Derek Smith (n.d.), Davin's 1879 report (only three years after the consolidation of the Indian Act) entitled "Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds" was the founding document which "specified the terms within which industrial schools functioned for almost a century" (Smith, n.d.: 3). Nicholas Davin was a journalist and a lawyer who was commissioned by the federal government to investigate the American Indian industrial boarding schools which were a part of President Grant's 1869 policy of "aggressive civilization", which

envisioned the consolidation of Indian tribes onto reserves, the abolishment of tribal society and traditions, and the permanent settlement of individuals in their own homes and on their own tracts of land (Furniss, 1995: 25).

It was Davin who recommended that the Canadian government help to establish three church-run industrial boarding schools (Bull, 1991; and Titley, 1986). It was finally decided that the residential schools were to be provincially run - usually by missionaries who placed less emphasis on education than they did religion.

In order to get Native children to attend the residential schools many coercive measures were used (Mallea, 1989; and Sealey, 1980). After losing control of their land, Native people had become largely dependent on the federal

government for their survival. The state of abject poverty in which they were living created a situation whereby many could not afford to feed or cloth their children. Residential schools provided Native children with food and clothing and thus presented itself as an attractive alternative. Furthermore, as maintained by Miller (1989), many Native peoples willingly sent their children to residential schools in the hopes that they would learn the skills necessary to survive in the changing world (Miller, 1989). As further incentive, the church would reward parents who sent their children to residential schools with tea and sugar (Sealey, 1980). Coercive acts increased in intensity in areas where the traditional way of life remained, as in these areas language, the traditional education system, and religion remained also. It was in these areas that the residential schools became the focal point of conversion (Sealey, 1980).

Smith (n.d.), borrowing from Tobias (1976), outlines three major stages in government policy in reference to Aboriginal Canadians. In the first stage, all government responsibility for Aboriginal peoples fell under the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which treated Aboriginal people as separate and sovereign nations under the protection of the British crown (if only in policy). In the second stage, from 1815-1900, there was a promotion of policies for the "civilization" of Aboriginal peoples. The third stage, from 1900 on, all policy was directed towards *assimilation*.



My research and the information gathered to date has shown that the residential schools for both the Deaf and Aboriginal have historically served as vehicles for the assimilation of Aboriginal and the Deaf into the dominant white, hearing culture. The result of being educated in a residential school, it was hoped, was to produce Aboriginal who were "almost like white people" or Deaf people who were "almost like hearing people". By doing this, it was hoped, both Aboriginal people and Deaf people could live and function within the dominant culture, hardly noticed. This is not only incompatible with the multi-culturalism myth within Canada but it also protects people from having to deal with the "other" in their own backyard.

### **The Indian Act**

The Indian Act was first created in 1850. Within this Act, the first definition of "Indian" was created:

First - All persons of Indian blood, reputed to belong to the particular Body or Tribe of Indians interested in such lands and their descendants;  
 Secondly - All persons intermarried with any such Indians and residing amongst them, and the descendants of all such persons;  
 Thirdly - All persons residing among such Indians, whose parents on either side were or are Indian of such Body or Tribe, or entitled to be considered as such; and  
 Fourthly - All persons adopted in infancy by any such Indians, and residing in the village or upon the lands of such Tribe or Body of Indians and their descendants (Frideres, 1988:27).

This definition may have been considered acceptable to most people, however, in 1851, the Indian Act was amended to change this definition, making it illegal for non-Indians to live among Indians, and creating status and nonstatus Indians. In 1857 the "*Act For The Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes*" was passed which included a policy of assimilation by enfranchisement. This policy influenced Aboriginal peoples to leave their tribe, giving up their status, in return for land and money. In 1869, the "Enfranchisement Act" was passed which included, under clause six, the provision that any woman who married a non-Indian man would lose her Indian status. All of this led to the first comprehensive Indian Act passed in 1876, giving the Secretary of State exclusive jurisdiction over all Aboriginal affairs (Frideres, 1988).

The purpose of the Indian Act was to promote individualism and self-reliance and discourage the communal living common to Aboriginal peoples. In 1886-87, amendments to the Act reduced food allotments, enforced mandatory school attendance (usually at residential schools), and extended the enfranchisement provisions - all in attempts to assimilate Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

In 1951, the Indian Act was rewritten; however, its policies and purpose did not change. It was not until 1985, with the passing of Bill C-31 which repatriated Aboriginal women and their children who lost their status through

marriage to a non-Aboriginal person, that any progressive change was made within the Indian Act. However, the fact that the government of Canada has ever legislated on paper who is and who is not an Aboriginal person is absurd and the definitions still existing today are comparably demeaning to the Aboriginal people of Canada.

The rights of Aboriginal people are determined by the Indian Act, the British North America Act (BNA Act), and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Indian Act cannot amend the BNA Act, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms overrules any statute that denies an individual equality before the law by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex but in practice the Indian Act continues to define the rights of First Nations peoples. According to Whiteside: the Indian Act was designed to:

1. Undermine our traditional religion, leadership, and culture.
  2. Sever our natural relationships with other Amer-indians.
  3. Ensure that the authority for all important decisions was removed from the influence of, and control of, our people ...
- As such it should be known as "The Efficiency Act" which has over time inflicted mind-rape among some of our people (in Frideres, 1988; 25).

The fundamental goal of the Indian Act was to assimilate. Initially this was done primarily through agriculture but in order to become farmer the Natives had to first become "civilized". This was attempted in two ways: isolation of

## **NOTE TO USERS**

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were very different from those of the government. Aboriginal peoples wished to learn in order to survive in this new culture but did not wish to lose or alter their traditional way of life (Bull, 1991; and Miller, 1989). This did not agree with the political nor the religious agendas behind the creation of the residential schools. Both Aboriginal spirituality and religion were forbidden in the residential schools (Coates, 1991) and the "souls" of the Aboriginal people were "up for grabs" as Catholics and Anglicans were very competitive in who could convert and assimilate the most people. Furthermore, Aboriginal languages were forbidden within the residential schools (Coates, 1991). As many anthropologists are aware, (i.e. see Edward Sapir and Whorf in Bohannan and Glazer, 1988), the loss of language results in the loss of a very important way of expressing one's culture.

In Davin's report, it was noted that the building of boarding schools in the United States was aimed at accelerating the assimilative process and that the day schools were not as successful because: "the influence of the wigwam was stronger than the influence of the school"<sup>2</sup>. The Indian and Eskimo Welfare Commission of the Oblate Fathers in Canada report entitled Residential Education for Indian Acculturation (1958) states that the residential schools operate more effectively than the day schools on the reserves. Of the residential schools they state:

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<sup>2</sup> From page 1 on Davin's "Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds", Ottawa, 1879; quoted in Sealey, 1980.

Oldest permanent institutions of the present federal school system, theirs is the longest tradition from which teachers and administrators new to the field can learn and do learn, one way or another. The fact that most of them have more staff and handle more pupils than the average day-school facilitates a higher degree of specialization and experimentation as well as a more constant formal and informal use of in-service training techniques and devices. Finally, because in most areas, by official policy as well as force of circumstances, their facilities are restricted to children whose parents either still live a more or less modified native way of life, or have failed to develop, individually or collectively, the socio-economic patterns essential to successful day-school attendance, the residential schools still carry the heavier load in the transculturation process which constitutes native education in Canada (5).

Expanding the boarding schools, however, was not cheap. Religious denominations financed most of the cost of the boarding schools but the churches, who were always pressed for funds, eventually developed a "half-day" system of instruction (Sealey, 1980). Within the new "half-day" system children would attend classes for half the day and the other half the day they would work at various tasks assigned to them by the church. Differentiated tasks were assigned to each sex and students soon acculturated themselves to roles common in white society. The result of their work assisted in financing the boarding schools while the students were to benefit by learning skills that would help them adjust to life on an agricultural reserve (Sealey, 1980: 30).

Sealey (1980) states that the government was so concerned with assimilating the Native people because of the greater Canadian context and the national concerns of the time, mainly:

1. The fear of more native uprisings (like the ones in 1868-70 and 1885);
2. The fear on the part of the dominant French and English that their positions would be eroded by the influx of other ethnic groups into Canada;
3. The continuing French-English conflict which threatened to divide the country; and
4. The rapid decline through disease of the Indian population, which indicated that if drastic action were not taken the race would become extinct (31-32).

The rapid increase in church operated boarding schools in the 20th century further increased the financial strain on the churches. In 1910, a general conference of the churches and the Department of Indian Affairs led to an agreement to enter into formal cost-sharing agreements. The contract lessened the authority of the churches, setting out regulations governing the schools. Included in the new regulations were: No grants were to be paid for half-breeds; English would be the only language used in instruction; schools would operate eleven months of the year; pupils might visit their parents during the holiday month but the parents must bear all costs of transportation (Sealey, 1980). As a result of this last regulation parents would often, due to poverty, not see their children from ages seven to eighteen. The new agreement also specified in general terms changes in the curriculum but in actuality there was little change from the past practices (Sealey, 1980: 32-33). Furthermore, government inspectors were

allowed to visit the schools although for many decades there were no inspection staff. These basic elements of the 1910 contract were retained in subsequent agreements and no major policy changes took place until 1948 (Sealey, 1980: 33).

Despite the agreement in 1910, it was not until 1938 when Manitoba provincial inspectors began visiting the residential schools. From this point on, inspectors submitted yearly reports on the academic qualifications of the teachers and the progress of the students to the Indian Affairs Branch (Sealey, 1980). These first reports indicated that many of the teachers lacked adequate education and training and, in most cases, the principals of the schools were actually ministers of the religious denomination operating the school (Sealey, 1980). The opinion of most inspectors was that this resulted in an undue emphasis on religious instruction to the detriment of academic work (Sealey, 1980).

Problems also arose for the Native children who had spent their childhood in residential schools when they had families of their own. Linda Jaine (1993) provides many examples of how the lack of parental role models, identity with their own culture, abuse, etcetera in the lives of the survivors of residence schools often resulted in an inability to cope with their own children, leading to frustration and abuse.

Likewise, in the residential schools for the Deaf, assimilation of the Deaf



into the broader hearing culture is the main goal. As it was in the Native residential schools with the refusal to allow students to speak their own language, the lack of role models, limited interaction with families, underqualified teachers, administration and staff - all of these issues are very familiar to the Deaf.

### **THE HISTORY OF DEAF CULTURE - The Deaf Residential Schools**

Deaf culture comes from the institution and not from the home. This is because 90% of Deaf children are born to hearing parents who cannot communicate with their children (Lane, 1992 and Higgins, 1988). In order to better understand Deaf culture, one must have a clear understanding of the role that the residential schools have played in the creation and maintenance of Deaf culture, for it is within these residential schools that Deaf culture is created and sustained.

Most Deaf children live in a Deaf residential school only returning home for holidays or the occasional weekend. The purpose of the residential schools is to teach the Deaf children how to speak, communicate and function in the greater society - in other words, to prepare the Deaf child for life in the hearing world. This, however, was not always the case and has, in fact, had disastrous effects for the Deaf culture as a whole.

The first residential school for the Deaf in America was established in 1817 as "The American School for the Deaf" in Hartford, Connecticut. The school was founded by Laurent Clerc, a Deaf man from France and Thomas Gallaudet, a hearing man who learned sign language while living in France. The school taught the Deaf students, who had self-made gestures so their families and friends could understand them but no systematic form of communicating with each other (language), how to communicate using a sign language that came from France (where sign language originated).

Throughout the years many people came to learn how to structure residential schools for the Deaf using "The American School for the Deaf" as a model. As a result, residential schools for the Deaf spread throughout North America very rapidly even resulting in the formation of the National Deaf-Mute College on June 22, 1864 by Gallaudet's son, Edward Gallaudet (Degering, 1964). Soon the education and the literacy level of the Deaf attending these schools began to rise to a level comparable to that of their hearing counterparts (Sacks, 1989; Lane, 1992). The first residential school for the Deaf in Canada was the MacDonald School for the Deaf which opened in 1831 in Quebec City. The existence of this school was short lived as it closed five years later in 1836. Later, more residential schools opened across Canada (see Table I).

Despite the great success the schools for the Deaf had in raising the

education and literacy level of its Deaf students, there were many people who lobbied for the replacement of these schools with schools that would teach the Deaf to speak and communicate using English. These advocates of "oralism", such as Samuel Gridley Howe and Horace Mann, saw the use of sign language as unprogressive and created the first oralist school for the Deaf known as "The Clarke School for the Deaf" in Northampton, Massachusetts which opened in 1867.

Alexander Graham Bell was the most important and influential of all oralist advocates, despite the fact that both his mother and wife were Deaf (although they never acknowledged this) and that he himself knew sign language. Bell threw all his authority and influence into advocating for oralism, until there was finally a complete turn over to oralism in the schools for the Deaf at the notorious International Congress of Educators of the Deaf held at Milan, Italy in 1880.

**Table I - Founding of Deaf Residential Schools in Canada**

Residential School	Founded	Closed
MacDonald School for the Deaf (Quebec City)	1831	1836
Deaf Boys School (Montreal)	1848	1978
Halifax School for the Deaf	1857	1961
McKay Centre (Montreal)	1870	on-going

Ontario Institute for the Deaf (name changed to Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf in December 1994) (Belleville, Ontario)	1870	on-going
Manitoba Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb (name changed to Manitoba School for the Deaf in December 1994) (Winnipeg)	1889	1940 (reopened in 1965 and on-going today)
Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf	1922	1993
Saskatchewan School for the Deaf (name changed to R.J.D. Williams School for the Deaf in 1982)	1931	1991
Alberta School for the Deaf	1955	on-going
Amherst Nova Scotia School for the Deaf (name changed to Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority - Resource Centre for the Hearing Impaired, Amherst in January 1995)*	1961	1996
Milton Ontario School for the Deaf (name changed to Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in December 1994)	1963	on-going
St. John's, NFLD School for the Deaf	1964	on-going
Robarts School for the Deaf (London, Ontario)	1974	on-going

(Information taken from Carbin, 1996) \*CAD, 1997

At this conference, Deaf teachers were excluded from the vote over whether to stick with the manualist programs or to restructure the schools to teach through oralist methods only. As a result of the vote which was in favour of the oralists, the use of sign in schools became officially prohibited as a resolution was passed stating "the incontestable superiority of speech over sign for restoring the deaf-mute to society" (Lane, 1992:119). Bell soon had almost all the Deaf teachers fired and replaced by hearing staff. As a result, by 1907 ASL was prohibited in

all 139 Deaf schools in North America and by 1960 only 12% of the teachers in Deaf schools were themselves Deaf (Sacks, 1989 and Lane, 1992). Likewise in France, where sign language originated, while in 1845 there were 160 schools using LSF, by 1900 LSF was not being used in any of the Deaf schools and all of the non-verbal Deaf teachers were gone (Lane, 1992).

English had now become the official language of instruction and instead of producing literate and educated Deaf people the reverse resulted - a drastic decline in the level of education and professional skills that Deaf people were able to acquire (high illiteracy, high failure rate, high drop-out rate, and a huge increase in streaming into vocational training). Oralism and the suppression of sign has resulted in a dramatic deterioration in the education of Deaf children and the literacy of the Deaf in general (Sacks, 1989 and Lane, 1992). In fact, according to a study conducted by Carver (1988a), functional illiteracy in Deaf Canadians is at 65 per cent as Deaf schools moved from an academic focus to virtual training centres for manual labour and yet, The Canadian Association for the Deaf (1994d) has recorded an 85-92 per cent unemployment and underemployment rate for Deaf Canadians. Furthermore, today only 12 per cent of Deaf school enrollees finish highschool and only 2 per cent continue on to University (compared to 40 per cent of the general population) (Dolnick 1993:40).

Essentially the oralist position views deafness as a deficiency and that integration into the hearing world should be the goal of all deaf people and that this goal can be achieved through learning how to speak English. For most parents of Deaf children, oralism is the preferred course of action in the education of their children as since they are usually hearing they seek help from professionals such as doctors and teachers who buy into the oralism camp. As a result, while manualist children often develop a mistrust for hearing people and look to the Deaf to provide them with role models, the oralist child respects hearing role models because this is what they were taught through their parent's socialization.

A study by Zweibel, Meadow and Dyssegaard (1986) found that teachers of the deaf described their students as dependent, quick to give up, expectant of failure, demanding of attention, and requiring a disproportionate share of the teacher's time. Interestingly, these characteristics were found to be most pronounced in oralist children and much less prevalent in Deaf-of-Deaf manualist children (Roots, 1995). It is therefore important to point out that oralism does not save the Deaf individual from a life of marginalization, rather it transfers the marginalization from that of social/cultural to one of physical disability. As maintained by Harlan Lane (1992), oralists are essentially an extension of the medicalization of deafness.

For those who could not recognize deafness as a cultural difference, there was a huge push to use the residential schools as a source of manual labour. Even some deaf individuals supported this position, for example, in 1874 Thomas Widd, a deaf Englishman who was the founding principal of the Protestant Institution for Deaf-Mutes (now the MacKay Centre for Deaf children) in Montreal, wrote A Companion and Guide For Deaf-Mutes where he listed the common trades and professions available to deaf men and women in the late 19th century. All of the jobs listed in his manual were manual jobs involving the use of hands (1874:74-77). This trend continued (see Moores 1982 and Doe 1985) as researchers like Myklebust (1960), who stated that while the deaf are intellectually inferior their manual dexterity was normal, continued to perpetuate the idea that the deaf had no place in professional or academic careers.

However, modern educational linguists generally agree that early first language acquisition can predict one's success in learning a second language. This is also true of the Deaf - it has been shown that if the Deaf child learns ASL while young they will have a better chance of successfully learning English later (Carver, 1988a and Mason, 1993). This is further confounded by the fact that oral methods of teaching a deaf child at the preschool stage concentrate on getting a few syllables produced and lipread with the expectation being that by age five the child will be able to lipread and speak fifty words. Compared to the average five-year-old's vocabulary of five thousand words the problem is evident (Stokoe,

1980). As a result of such findings, many motions have been passed in regards to using ASL in Deaf schools and in recognizing it as the official language of the Deaf community but these motions are just "goodwill" statements and have no force in actual law (Roots, 1995).

Another approach tried within Deaf education is to teach what is called Manually Coded English (MCE)<sup>3</sup>. MCE is a direct translation of the spoken English language into hand signs. However, all such sign systems were devised by the hearing and avoid the unique grammar, syntax and structure of ASL. In fact, the generally shared view on MCEs is that they are slow, boring and confusing (Solomon 1994).

Because Deaf children rarely learn to speak, they end up interacting almost exclusively with other Deaf people and as a result are socialized into Deaf culture. The oppressive attempts to assimilate the Deaf children by forbidding the use of sign language in the classroom results in an atmosphere of mistrust among the Deaf children and the hearing staff which further tightens the bond within the Deaf cohort.

Doctors, teachers, audiologists, speech therapists and often even parents tend to guide the Deaf child to integrate into the Hearing society. This is a part of the oppression that the Deaf child has already started to experience from the

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<sup>3</sup> Other MCEs include: Seeing Essential English, Linguistics of Visual English, and Cued Speech.



### Hearing community:

As children, the Deaf were advised, encouraged, and even forced to develop their speech and lip reading skills because when they grew up they would have to make their way in a hearing world (Higgins, 1980:80).

These professionals believe that they know what is best for the children believing that the skills they will be taught will help them to survive in the hearing environment. However, the Deaf environment is not given due credit as a force of cultural support by these professionals.

Likewise, the residential schools for both the Deaf (after Milan) and Native taught the students trades as it was believed that their greatest chance at survival in the outside world was to become members of the working class. Both the Deaf and Natives were exploited as they were used as a cheap source of labour (Furniss, 1995 and Higgins, 1980 Cowden, 1990 and Carbin, 1996). Both Furniss (1995) and Lane (1992) argue in their books *Victims of Benevolence* and *Mask of Benevolence*, respectively, that the employees in the residential schools, the church supporters of the schools and even the Canadian government actually believed that they were doing the best thing for the students. They saw the assimilation of the Deaf and Native students as essential to their survival, acceptance into heaven or even to live peacefully as a "normal" member of society. However, residential schools failed to provide Native or Deaf (after Milan) children with the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to integrate successfully into the dominant society, largely because their attack on language

and culture often left the students confused, passive and without an adequate foundation for building confidence.

Now that the Native residential schools have closed, many more Native people are speaking out about their experiences in an effort to heal the wounds that the Canadian government's assimilation policies have inflicted (Linda Jaine's (1993) edited book Residential Schools: The Stolen Years is an excellent example). Today, solutions are actively being sought to preserve and retain Aboriginal cultures in Canada. For example, Robert Leavitt (1993), a professor at Concordia University in Montreal, offered a course on the cultural implications of teaching English and Aboriginal languages to Aboriginal and Inuit children. The emphasis was on how to teach in a way that is respectful and in accordance with the culture of the Aboriginal students:

The instructors emphasized the necessity of basing education *in* native culture (through the adaptation of traditional educational practices), rather than simply including components of material culture as content (4).

They emphasized the importance of oral tradition, interpersonal relationships, talking while doing, etcetera -- all various aspects of Aboriginal culture and language processes -- as a better more effective way to teach Aboriginal children.

This is one example of many solutions that are currently being attempted to rectify the wrongs of the past. With more such efforts we can be optimistic that

a better, more culturally sensitive education system for Aboriginal peoples is possible.

### **Hearing Professionals Working With The Deaf**

There have been a few closings of Deaf residential schools in Canada due to the mainstreaming of Deaf students and cut backs in provincial funding levels. However, there are still many Deaf residential schools open and operating throughout Canada. As already mentioned, the Deaf<sup>4</sup>, for the most part, support the existence of the residential schools as this is where the Deaf culture is developed, maintained and passed on. However, most Deaf people also recognize the great need for change in the way that these schools operate. One option that is heavily supported both within the literature and within the interviews I conducted, is the need for Deaf residential schools to hire more Deaf teachers and professional staff.

The primary reason why there are a shortage of Deaf teachers in the Deaf residential schools was a result of the Milan conference which, as already discussed, changed the focus of Deaf education from manualist to oralist (see Appendix IV for list of Deaf teachers at Deaf residential schools). As of very

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<sup>4</sup> Of the nine interviews conducted with former (and in one case, current) Deaf residential school attendants, all agreed that closing the Deaf residential schools was not a favourable solution to the problems inherent in Deaf education in Canada.

recently Deaf educators are being reintroduced into the Deaf education system but this change has been slow moving. I interviewed three hearing professionals that worked with the Deaf, two teachers and one social worker. The most astonishing findings in these interviews were that all three hearing professionals were not required to have any previous knowledge of, or were never required to learn ASL or about Deaf culture.

The first interview was with a teacher who taught the Deaf for eleven years (fall 1977 until spring 1989) at a Canadian Deaf residential school. This woman had a Masters degree in Deaf Education. This degree did not require any sign language or courses in Deaf culture. Once she was hired at the school she took classes in Signing Exact English (SEE). She told me in the interview that in 1984-85 she took some courses in ASL although during the interview she used SEE, which she called ASL.

When I questioned her about the difference in the relationships between the Deaf staff and the hearing staff with the Deaf students she replied that the Deaf students

had a better time relating to the Deaf teachers and house parents because communications were easier, better... there should be more Deaf teachers because they make good role models for the students.

She also observed that many of the Deaf children were often happy to return to the residential schools after holidays or weekends with their families because most

of their families did not sign. The communication barrier made the students feel lonely at home and they were happy to return to school so that they could communicate again. When I asked her if there was anything that she would like to change in the school curriculum or how the students were being taught, she replied that she would:

not push the use of voice because some will never be able to use it. I think there should be more emphasis on the importance of reading and studying to the kids.

The second hearing teacher interviewed worked for five years in a Deaf residential school (1980-1985). She reported that she never received any training in working with the Deaf or in ASL and had no previous knowledge or professional working experience with the Deaf. She said that once she began working at the school that she took lessons in ASL, however in the interview, she, like the previous interviewee, used SEE but called it ASL.

The third interview was with a hearing social worker who worked not at a Deaf residential school, but at an oralist school for the Deaf for one year (1980-81). She reported that she had no previous experience or knowledge in working with the Deaf and received no training in Deaf education, Deaf culture or in ASL. In the interview she stated that there were many problems in this form of education for the Deaf:

The bulk of the children were integrated into other schools. They had learned to read lips. The children in < sic > Oral School were having difficulties,

emotional, adjustment and communication difficulties because they weren't allowed to use their hands in any way. Children of fifteen and sixteen years old were not able to communicate! It was a tragedy and I was very distressed about it but we were not supposed to talk about it.

During the interview the woman repeatedly expressed her distaste for the oralist methods being taught at the school: "there was a low calibre of success", "None of the students were required to learn ASL or about Deaf culture.", "I feel strongly that the mindset of the Oral school and Oral approach was not a good one. Not signing was distressing". Overall, the school placed no emphasis on the cultural aspects of being Deaf, the sole purpose seemed to be to make deaf people more like the hearing. When questioned about the Deaf educational system she replied:

...there is a lot of work to do. We were not allowed to say things at the school. The average person knows very little of the world of the Deaf.

I, myself, have taught in a Deaf school for two years (fall 1983 until spring 1985) and then at a hearing school working with a Deaf child for two years (fall 1985 until spring 1987) and then as a houseparent for one month in the fall of 1987. My experience as a Deaf teacher of the Deaf was often frustrating. The source of the frustration was not from the students however, it was from the hearing staff at the school. I was forbidden to teach in ASL and I was in fact threatened to be fired unless I used Total Communication (TC) (voice, SEE and

lipreading). I found that for most children this was a very confusing means for them to learn and instead of making progress they were hindered in their learning abilities because of the school's inflexible teaching methods. I repeatedly tried to express my concerns over these teaching methods to the hearing staff but they were ignored or I was blamed for not doing my job properly. I then took a job working at a hearing school with a Deaf child.

At the hearing school I was permitted to communicate with the child in the way that was easiest and most effective for her. I was also required to teach hearing teachers about how to deal with and how to work effectively with Deaf children. I strongly believe that the open and flexible approach at this school was much more conducive to learning for the Deaf child and as a result she progressed much faster than the Deaf students at the former school. Likewise, when I taught three Deaf Inuit children in Northern Canada for almost two years (January 1988 until spring 1989), the flexibility in communication and teaching techniques that I was allotted made learning for the Deaf students much more effective.

Today, in Canada, only the province of Ontario requires the Deaf Education Teaching Certificate (which now requires functionality in ASL and courses in Deaf culture) in order to teach the Deaf. I believe that it is crucial that those involved in teaching the Deaf have knowledge of what it is to be Deaf and

of ASL. Deafness is the key factor in many Deaf people's identities - without this basic understanding the communication barrier between the teachers and the students will be too great to provide an adequate education to the Deaf. This issue is illustrated in Table II which shows the different responses of the hearing staff and Deaf interviewees to the question: "What does the word Deaf mean to you?" and "What does being Deaf/(Native) mean to you?"

**TABLE II - Respondents Definitions of the Word "Deaf"**

<p><b>1. Hearing Teacher (Residential School):</b> For me it is mostly about the family and the parent's ideas about their kids. I see that Deaf parents want their kids to have the same culture as the family - Deaf culture in family and community. But hearing parents want the kids to not be involved in the Deaf culture. All the kids were in Deaf cultural groups and the school was the family because of the distance and their hearing families.</p>
<p><b>2. Hearing Teacher (Residential School) (A):</b> The word... Um... OK. This may be different. One is that it means not hearing but the other one is social. It is bigger, broader in meaning, in the way that it has a culture, family, identity. Because some grand-parents are Deaf and so it is a lot more than just being deaf.</p>
<p><b>3. Hearing Social Worker (Oral Day School):</b> Someone who cannot hear sounds.</p>
<p><b>4. Former Deaf Residential School Student:</b> Well I could hear a little. Having a little hearing was better than nothing. It helped.</p>
<p><b>5. Former Deaf Residential School Student (LD):</b> Well I communicate with a few Deaf people sometimes but I don't get along with some of them. I communicate and understand a lot but I'm always learning more. When my communication is compatible, it is good...When I see a group of people that I don't fit in with because I can't understand their way of communicating, I just leave them alone. Sometimes I find some Deaf people are very repetitive and boring and so I look for another group of people to hang around with.</p>



**6. Former Deaf Residential School Student:**

Pride - I know who I am and I have accepted my own culture and my own identity. No one can prevent me from doing that. If someone does not accept my identity that is their problem. I know who I am - I am Deaf.

**7. Former Deaf Residential School Student:**

I am Deaf. I'm fine with being Deaf. Did I ever wish I was a hearing person? No way. Being Deaf is fantastic. For example, you get less headaches without all the background noise. You hear the radio. You hear the wars and the panic. For me, there is no panic. You Don't hear about it. And we are calm and relaxed. Another advantage is that we have a strong visual sense and we see just about every detail.... When I graduated, at the time - I realized that I had a dependency on visual skills, I was restricted. A lot of hearing people didn't know about Deaf culture. And I had a communication barrier that made me feel very frustrated. Up until now, I think that all hearing people should learn about Deaf culture... I wish that hearing people could know all about Deaf people. See, I have been really patient learning to read and write, and I have been trying. And the hearing people often keep on talking to me and I say, "Look, I can't hear you," And they force me to speak. You know, in my mind, hearing people seem to be very ignorant about Deafness.

**8. Former Deaf Residential School Student:**

When I started teaching ASL classes for adults when I was 26 or 27 years old, I started to question "who am I?" Before that I was in denial and I didn't know who I was. But after I taught ASL, I knew who I was. I knew what ASL means and I began to understand the meaning of Deaf culture. And then I began to learn and I became more proud of myself. Before that it was like wearing blinders for a long time....I am a Deaf person first. I am Deaf and there is nothing wrong with that.

**9. Former Deaf Residential Student:**

You mean my Deaf identity? ASL is my language and therefore I am Deaf. Deaf culture, Deaf bonding and socialization - these are all examples.

**10. Former Deaf Residential Student (DP):**

The Deaf community - they all know who I am and they recognize me. It is easy to get into Deaf school and let it become a part of who I am. But for sure it is different for some Deaf students, some have been mainstreamed or are recent transfers from another school and by the time they reach the Deaf school, it takes them some time to find their Deaf identity. Really, a lot of them received more respect when they found their Deaf identity.

**11. Former Deaf Residential School Student (A):**

Being Deaf - I have taken the Deaf culture workshops when I was learning about Deaf culture compared with hearing culture and I realized that there were differences or distinctions. I noticed in ASL in residential schools, we are all like brothers and sisters. We are a close knit family. Our values in Deaf culture include having a TTY, folklore - I noticed that I had taken these things for granted. I didn't think about it myself. I considered it as compared to the mentally retarded I was smarter. When I learned about Deaf culture and identity I was able to identify strongly with the rest of the Deaf people. Same intelligence, same communication, business administration, executive director etcetera. The difference is that we can't hear and that is it. I decided to get rid of my hearing aid until I had my baby daughter, when I realized that I had to wear one to hear her crying and to give her attention. That was the only important thing about when I would go out and meet Deaf people at meetings or socializing - I would remove my hearing aid.

Did I understand about being Native or Native identity? - NO.

**12. Former Deaf Residential School Student (A):**

I feel that I bother hearing people. You know how being Deaf is like that. I feel that hearing people's attitude is that they get so sick of Deaf people - that is how I feel. I feel that hearing people don't like Deaf people and I can tell by their expressions. Often, hearing people will say "forget it" and then walk away from me.

When I was growing up - age eleven, maybe ten or twelve - I was told that I am Native and I never knew that. When I was in Deaf school a lot of kids had asked me if I was Native and then they would start acting like a native warrior and they would say "you know, like the war between the whites and the Native people". And I asked them "What do you mean? What is an Indian?" I didn't know what it was and I still don't know anything about it. By the time I was grown up I knew that I was Deaf but I didn't know anything about my identity back then.

**13. Former Hearing Native Residential School Student:**

I guess at the time I was too young to understand those concepts. Then I remember learning about numbers and letters and we would look at these letters and I wondered 'Wow, what are these?' I remember having difficulty pronouncing some letters so when it came to that, I guess um, like other than all the strict rules, I used to wonder 'who are these people, these adults speaking this strange language?' And I guess I just spoke Inuktitut...the only thing I knew was my life and I didn't know enough about it yet to say...I don't know...it all gets lost in the background. Once I work through the other stuff I've been through, the issue of culture - I could probably talk about it then.

(A) = these people are also Aboriginal

(LD) = late deafness

(DP) = born to Deaf parents

The responses given from the three hearing professionals show an interesting comparison between the attitudes and knowledge available to employees of the residential schools as opposed to the Oral Day School. While both teachers from the residential school had an adequate understanding of what Deaf means, the third who worked in the Oral Day School defined Deaf as: "someone who cannot hear sounds". The difference between the responses is most likely due to the fact that the first two hearing professionals, while they had little or no formal training in Deaf culture or ASL, were exposed to Deaf culture every day by virtue of their being employed at a Deaf residential school. The social worker at the Oral School however, demonstrated in her answer her complete lack of knowledge about what it is to be Deaf despite the fact that she spent a year working in a school for the deaf. She readily admits to the fact that she is uneducated in Deaf culture and did not pretend to know anything about it. In fact, she continuously expressed her frustration with the school for not making this a priority. In fact, she stated that "working at that school did **nothing** to increase my awareness or understanding of Deaf culture."

### **Deaf Aboriginal' Self Identity**

Another interesting point that came out of the responses in Table II were

the answers given by respondents eleven and twelve, two Deaf Aboriginal students who formerly attended Deaf residential schools. While I asked both of them what being Deaf and Native meant to them, eleven responded only about her identity as a Deaf person and when asked about her Native identity she became visibly angry and said that she did not know about her identity as a Native person. Number twelve said that she was unaware that she was Native and was confused when she would be teased by her peers about her ancestry.

The lack of identification that both respondents showed towards their Aboriginal ancestry as opposed to their Deafness led me to question the reason why one cultural identity would predominate over the other. To answer this question I turned to the literature to see if other Deaf Aboriginal people shared the views of the two people that I interviewed. However, the literature was grossly lacking in this information. In fact, I came across only two obscure information sources.

The first was the "Aboriginal Deaf Needs Assessment Report" put out by the First Nations Technical Institute in June 1997. This document was a needs assessment for Deaf Aboriginal to determine how well their educational and training needs have been met. The Report summarized the responses of the nine people who filled out their questionnaires but unfortunately it contained no information or questions on identity or culture. In fact, the document was lacking

even in the areas that it was designed to address which was evident by the common response of "need more information" to questions about Deaf Aboriginal's educational and training needs.

The second source of information on Deaf Aboriginal people was a short article by Iris Heavyrunner written in the fall of 1992 in "Steps to Recovery - A Publication of The Minnesota Chemical Dependency Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals." Her article seemed to concur with the responses in my interviews. For example, she stated that while her substance abuse program deals with Deaf individuals from a number of racial and ethnic backgrounds: "it is easy to lose sight of cultural identity beyond the deafness" (1). She then drew a comparison between Aboriginal and Deaf cultures, defining four predominant similarities: First, the language used, which in all cases is very different from English, is a central focus of these cultures. Second, the issue of confidentiality - both Aboriginal and Deaf communities are comprised of small, close-knit groups where "everyone knows everyone" and gossip is common, making confidentiality a key concern for many people. Third is a knowledge and appreciation for the history of the culture. The fourth similarity is the learning styles of both Deaf and Aboriginal cultures which are very visually orientated. While these are very broad generalizations with questionable anthropological value, they are nonetheless interesting to note.

Heavyrunner concludes her article with a story about an elder from her nation who wore leather cuffs to outwardly symbolize his deafness to everyone. This was done, she says, because within Aboriginal culture Deaf people were greatly respected because it was believed that their deafness gave them a triple-sensitivity to their other senses.

This chapter has shown that despite the many differences present in the residential schools for the Deaf and for Natives, there are still some underlying similarities. Of primary importance to this thesis is the method by which both residential schools for the Deaf and for Aboriginal tried to assimilate its students making them disadvantaged members of the broader society instead of recognizing their distinct cultural differences. It is obvious today that these efforts have failed as Aboriginal people in Canada almost 400 years since the opening of the first residential school, are still a vibrant and strong cultural presence in Canada. Likewise, the residential schools for the Deaf have ironically served the opposite function of assimilation as they provide the space and the kenosis for the development and the survival of Deaf culture - in fact, without these schools many Deaf people believe that their culture will die.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

## **IDENTITY AND CULTURE FORMATION IN THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS**

Despite the many similarities found in both the Native and the Deaf residential schools, there are also many differences in terms of the effects the schools had on the culture and identity of Deaf and Aboriginal peoples. In terms of language, while both the residential schools for the Deaf and Natives prohibited the use of their languages, after leaving the residential school most Aboriginal people have lost the ability to communicate in their mother tongue whereas most Deaf people leave the residential school having learned their first language as most often they began school without a language at all. Likewise, many Aboriginal people who have attended residential school feel as though they were denied participation in their cultural traditions and subsequently felt as though they had lost much of their cultural identity as an Aboriginal person (Furniss, 1995 and Jaine, 1993 and n.d.) whereas for most Deaf people, their identity as a capital "D" Deaf person was developed within the residential school. In fact, most Deaf people claim that their culture is both developed and transmitted within the very residential schools that have historically worked to weaken the Deaf's cultural identity (Lane, 1984 and 1992; Lane et al., 1996; Higgins, 1980; Roots, 1995; Winzer, 1993; and Marschark, 1997 - to name only

a few).

Overall, despite the similar agendas of the residential schools, the Native experience has been one that is often translated as loss or disorganization of culture, identity and language, whereas the Deaf experience upon leaving the school is often one of newfound identity, language and membership within a community - membership within the Deaf culture. There are many reasons for these differences, but the most important outcome of all is the fact that most Deaf enter the residential school without a cultural identity as a Deaf person and leave with this newfound identity.

The main reason that most Deaf people find their identity within the residential schools is simply because most Deaf are born into hearing families who live within a hearing culture. As a result, the deaf child experiences feelings of isolation and ostracization because of the communication barrier the child has with the rest of the family. This communication barrier often results in the deaf child's occupation of a lower position of political power within the family (Roots, 1995). On the other hand, at the residential school the Deaf child learns their first language, sign language, from the older students or students whose parents are Deaf. This language acquisition provides the foundation for the development of a culturally Deaf identity which is formed through the interaction of the group of Deaf students.



Despite the fact that Deaf schools focus on oralism over manualism, the education provided from the Deaf residential schools is not interchangeable with the education provided through mainstreaming in hearing schools. This is primarily because the Deaf schools offer Deaf peer groups, culture, identity and role models as well as an atmosphere where manualism is the norm or at least tolerated. This is why, despite the oppression and patronizing atmosphere of the Deaf residential schools, the Deaf do not wish to see their schools close down in favour of mainstreaming as this would result in cultural extinction for the Deaf community. They fear they would become, as they are seen in the broader society, disabled members of the hearing community.

Therefore, Deaf residential schools are a place where culture is developed and passed on while the Native residential schools were a place where culture was disrupted and transformed. Although, the Native residential schools, while unquestionably destructive to the Native identity, both Miller (1990) and Bull (1991) argue that they had one predominantly positive effect being that they fostered a pan-Indian identity and culture which made the groundwork for many Native resistance movements.

## **Deaf Identity as A Rite of Passage**

The acquisition of Deaf culture from the residential schools for the Deaf can be analyzed using Turner's theory of the rite of passage. The rite of passage will be interpreted as the transformation in identity of the deaf individual from a "disabled member of the hearing community" to their identity as a "D"eaf person belonging to the Deaf community.

Given the complex nature of Deaf culture, it is very important to understand the Deaf culture "ethnographically", that is, by describing the world in which the various concepts make sense (Turner in Bohannan and Glazer, 1988). Victor Turner's concept of liminality is a crucial theoretical tool that can be directly related to the acquisition of the Deaf identity. Turner (1982) states that in liminality

profane social relations may be discontinued, former rights and obligations are suspended, the social order may seem to have been turned upside down (27).

This statement quite accurately describes what happens to the deaf child once they begin attending a residential school for the Deaf.

'Profane social relations are discontinued' in that the deaf child is removed from their family and their community as they go to live in a new place. Communication with the family is usually limited and often the separation

increases the Deaf child's feelings that their families do not really "know" them (Corker, 1996). 'Former rights and obligations are suspended' by simple virtue of the fact that the deaf child is now living by a new set of rules that are laid out by the school administration. Most Deaf people feel that the rules laid out by the residential school staff were very restrictive of their personal freedom. All nine former and current Deaf residential school students that I interviewed (and I agree based on my own experience) said that they felt the rules they were required to follow were too strict. For example, one person interviewed said:

The counsellors are very picky. Every morning the counsellor would kick the bed to make us get up. I wanted to take my time getting up and not be woken up so abruptly. If we didn't make our beds neat enough we had to make them over. It felt like we were always being picked on. We had to dust and mop and sweep all the floors before going to class. If they were not cleaned well enough then we had to do it again after school...

and another said:

...there were so many rules that restricted us. I could not go out as much as I wanted and I started to hate it. I could not wait to finish high school and get out...the houseparents were too authoritarian...they were like that woman on 101 Dalmatians (Cruella Deville).

'the social order may seem to have been turned upside down' as a result of both the new lifestyle imposed on the students and their new 'family' situation.

Liminality is the state between deaf and Deaf, it can last a long time, and

is often confusing and very challenging. This state is liminal because preexisting conceptions of how the world is are challenged and reevaluated to form new standards, values and beliefs that are in accordance with the Deaf culture and as a result, the individual emerges with a new identity.

Turner states that:

In liminality people 'play' with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them. Novelty emerges from unprecedented combinations of familiar elements (1982: 27).

Once the deaf person receives the new information they must "defamiliarize" themselves from the old perceptions they have of their deafness (i.e. that it is a disability, that it will prevent them from a fulfilling life, that they "can't" do things because of their deafness) and replace it with the new information (i.e. it is a **cultural** difference).

As it turns out, the majority of Deaf people don't learn to communicate very effectively through speech. Therefore the Deaf children end up interacting almost exclusively with other Deaf people and are socialized into Deaf culture. In attempts to acculturate the Deaf children, sign language is forbidden in the classroom. This oppression leads to an atmosphere of mistrust among the Deaf children and the hearing staff. The Deaf students have a hostile relationship with the houseparents (hearing staff members who look after the children out of school hours) as well. There is a code of silence in front of the houseparents because of this mistrust which is further compounded by the fact that the houseparents are

known for reporting the conversations of the students to the dean or principal.

Within Deaf culture a major part of one's identity is defined by which school that person attended. When a Deaf person is asked "Where are you from?" the answer is not where they were born or where their family lives, rather, the answer is the location of the residential school that they attended (Padden, 1989). This fact emphasizes the importance of the schools in the learning and transmission of Deaf culture. In fact, there are even minor differences in dialect of ASL that are characteristic of each school (Lysachok, n.d.). Furthermore, by identifying oneself by the residential school attended, Deaf people can update each other on the news from the people they know or events that are happening.

Deaf children of Deaf parents hold a special role in the Deaf residential schools primarily because they are natural learners of ASL. These Deaf children of Deaf parents usually develop much better than the Deaf-of-hearing students because of their earlier exposure to their language (Erting 1994; Meadow-Orlans 1987). They become the teachers of ASL and the transmitters of Deaf culture to their schoolmates. In fact, they are considered among the Deaf to be the primary socializing agents of the Deaf-of-Hearing-parents fellows (Padden and Humphries, 1988).

Within the residential schools there is a strong sense of what Turner calls

"communitas". Communitas is a condition of social interaction that is both unstructured and homogeneous in that the individuals existing in the state of liminality are all undergoing a similar experience of self-reidentification that has not progressed to the point of a hierarchically organized social structure. Very strong social ties are formed among the Deaf peers during this time because of the outside threats to their ethnicity by the hearing world (Woodward, 1989). Deaf-of-hearing students most often do not see an escape from these threats to their identity even within their own families (Roots, 1995).

The bond between the Deaf child and their hearing parents is often lost once the child is sent to residential school (Becker, 1987). This presents a difficult dilemma for the hearing parents with a deaf child as they must decide what to do - they can keep the deaf child with them in their culture in which the Deaf child cannot adapt or they can surrender the child to an unfamiliar culture.

However, as pointed out by Roots (1995), allowing the Deaf child to learn ASL is granting the child political power within the family, it is showing the child that the family accepts his or her differences as it is then the family who adjusts to the child and not the deaf child being asked to adapt to the family. Furthermore, when an oralist approach is taken, instead of integrating or adapting to the hearing family what often happens is that the deaf child is further isolated and stigmatized and thus integration and acceptance are prevented. Lane (1992)

goes so far as to call this colonization of the Deaf because the hearing are effectively exploiting the Deaf, he equates oralism with political violence.

In expecting the deaf child to adapt to the hearing family, the hearing parents are unknowingly also setting a pattern of marginalization that conditions the deaf child to expect the same hearing-paternalistic treatment in other spheres. As a result, the child grows up believing that he/she has neither the power nor the ability to make decisions, to influence others, to argue a point of view or to negotiate and compromise (Erting, 1994: 56 and Roots, 1995:98). According to Dawson (1977) the early socialization of the Deaf child (as different from the rest of the family) when it requires the deaf child to adapt fails to teach the child where he/she fits in the social category system.

Parents feel a loss of control when their child is diagnosed with deafness and again when the child learns ASL and integrates into the Deaf community where deafness is not a handicap. Recently, a new and very controversial issue has further complicated the dilemma that the parents of a deaf child must face - the use of cochlear implants<sup>5</sup>. Parents of the deaf, since they receive most if not all of their information from doctor's (who have a huge financial stake in the use of cochlear implants) usually provide one-sided information to parents which

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<sup>5</sup> I will not be dealing with the issue of cochlear implants in this thesis as it is outside the scope of this project but for more detailed information on this issue see Harlan Lane's (1992) Mask Of Benevolence.

enforces the idea that deafness is a disability. The other side is that cochlear implants are improperly researched, the surgery is risky, expensive and usually irreversible.

Corker (1996) distinguishes between the family of origin and the family of choice for the Deaf individual. The family of origin is simply the biological family. The characteristics of this family will vary but the key factor influencing the individual's feelings of belonging to their family of origin is the quality of affectional bonds formed. The quality is primarily determined by the family's attitudes towards Deafness. Since most families of the deaf are hearing and as a result they often receive their information about deafness from hearing sources, for many deaf children the family of origin has been the source of identifications and patterns of bonding which:

have led to negative resolutions of psycho-social conflicts and a confused sense of personal and social identity. The family of choice is then seen as a place of retreat, where a sense of belonging, self-esteem and a positive self-concept can emerge. However, the family of choice may not always be available and the commitment cannot easily be predicted when there are several options to be selected from (Corker, 1996:189).

It is therefore extremely important that Deaf people have connections within the Deaf community as it is within this "family of choice" that the Deaf are more likely to find an answer to the question "Who am I?" It is within the Deaf community that most Deaf people develop a more positive self-identity in terms



of their deafness through learning about their history and communicating with people who share their cultural values and beliefs.

It is therefore obvious that Deaf culture is created within the residential schools. Most deaf children enter the residential schools feeling as though they are disabled members of the hearing world, they are isolated in their own families both culturally and linguistically. Yet, once in the residential school the deaf child is first removed from the labels or the identity originally attributed to him or her from early socialization with his or her family of origin as he or she finds that she or he is not an exception, is no longer isolated - there are others "like" him or her. The deaf child then replaces the old identity with a new one that is developed out of the *communitas* in the residential school. Once the Deaf person leaves the school, he or she occupies a place within a community that it is more familiar and more accepting. The deaf person becomes a Deaf person.

## **ABORIGINAL AND DEAF CULTURES IN A MULTICULTURAL CANADA**

### **The Deaf**

While the Deaf person's newfound identity is usually an empowering force for the Deaf individual, this identity can also work against the Deaf person if it is relied on too heavily. Often, Deaf people interact within the Deaf community and avoid any interaction with the hearing world unless it is absolutely necessary. They may see themselves as having nothing in common with the hearing world and so therefore do everything they can to separate themselves for it (Lane, 1992; Mason, 1994 and Doe, 1985).

Taylor (1994) warns against taking one's identification with a certain cultural or social group too far. This "celebration of marginalization", as he refers to it, can result in an individual being seen only for their membership within a certain group and can lead to identification from the public sphere through stereotypes and generalizations. Taylor suggests no solutions to the dilemma between the need for recognition as an individual and an equal and the need for recognition as a member of a cultural group but argues for the importance and necessity of both.

For the Deaf, equal treatment requires that they are provided with the

services necessary for access and participation in a world dominated by the hearing. Furthermore, in order to maintain Deaf culture the residential schools for the Deaf must remain open.

However, while it is unlikely that anyone in Canada has not heard of the abuse that Aboriginal people in Canada have suffered within the Native residential schools, the abuse that the Deaf have suffered in the Deaf residential schools is far less wellknown and talked about. It is only very recently that complaints of physical and sexual abuse in the Deaf residential schools have been made public (see Berger, 1995 and Constable, 1991 or Moore, 1993 for a popular account), undoubtedly due to the communication barrier that exists between the Deaf and the broader hearing society.

The general opinion coming out of the Deaf community in terms of how to proceed with complaints of sexual and physical abuse is very mixed. On the one hand, it is argued that these complaints must be dealt with and the perpetrators of these crimes must be punished, at the same time many Deaf people feel that in doing this the government will respond - as they have with the Native residential schools (and in that case rightly so) - by simply closing down the Deaf residential schools and thus putting an end to the institution where Deaf culture is cultivated (as evidenced in interviews; Stimpson, 1991; Adamick, 1993).

Action must be taken to stop the cycle of abuse which has been allowed to go on for generations, but this must be done in such a way that the existence of the Deaf culture is not threatened. Instead of closing down the residential schools and ignoring the problem we must improve them making them a safe place for Deaf children to receive an education. The best solution is to make sexual assault education a priority within the Deaf residential schools, more careful screening of staff and stricter punishments for perpetrators.

## **Aboriginal**

For Aboriginal people in Canada, recognition has taken on an even more controversial meaning. Negotiations for Aboriginal Self-Government have lead to controversial debates across Canada. The issue of Aboriginal Self-Government has fuelled the fires of the already divisive debates on the Constitution. Aboriginal became part of the Constitutional negotiational process only recently.

Previously, during the original creation of the Constitutional package of 1981, Aboriginal leaders were not invited to formal Constitutional debates. However, when the package was approved and Aboriginal leaders realized that they were not properly represented they launched a political protest against their

exclusion. Their protest met with little response by the government until, with growing public support, they became a part of the attempted revision of the Constitution at Meech Lake under the leadership of Prime Minister Mulrooney. The quest for proper recognition and acknowledgement by the Canadian government has been long and arduous for the Aboriginal people as Aboriginal issues have always been treated as peripheral to the issues of white Canadians. Being recognized and allowed into the Constitutional negotiation process is an important step in reclaiming the inherent right to govern themselves. To achieve Self-government would be to break away from the existing core group of white society and create a new and separate Aboriginal core.

Aboriginal have come to see the need for a drastic change in the existing system to remedy these ills. But the nature of the existing system demands that they work within it, so the only option that seems available is to break away from the system altogether. In theory, the way to do so is to provide for and govern one's own society. This is the conclusion which has been reached by many Aboriginal leaders today.

The political relationship between the Aboriginal Canadian cultures and the rest of Canada began with the "Treaty Act." In Galtung's terms, imperialism, or dependency, is achieved when "the Centre nation has power over the Periphery nation, so as to bring about a condition of disharmony of interest between them" (Galtung, 1990:83). This can be seen in Canada's original Constitution, The

Constitution Act of 1867. In it the Canadian government gained certain powers over Aboriginal peoples. The government had the "good intentions" of looking after housing, social welfare, education, and health care. However, Governmental control over these areas lead to social chaos for the Aboriginal peoples. The oppressive force began to dominate Canadian Aboriginal groups with their charity, and thereby changed the nature of their society to one more similar to European standards.

It was this introduction of traditional European values which allowed for the negative effects of forced assimilation to emerge in Native societies. Over time, Aboriginal dignity and cultural identity was lost. This was a result of the momentous changes caused by the integration of such fundamental things as new housing. Aboriginal peoples were forced to change from their traditional housing to the housing being provided by the Canadian government. Eventually, these changes spread to almost all areas of life and Aboriginal society was expected to adapt to these new ways. But they were unable to do so because the ways of life introduced into Aboriginal society came from a culture which evolved and adapted those ways over thousands of years. These ways were suddenly thrust upon another living culture with its own ways, similarly evolved over a large time period, and were incompatible with them.

Under the Constitution Act of 1982 Aboriginal people were "recognized

and affirmed" (Partners in Confederation, 1993:29). Thus it acknowledged that Aboriginal people specifically were included along with all other Canadians in the Charter and had, under it, all of the same rights. This acknowledgement of their rights is very general and does nothing to specify any special situation that Aboriginal have. And while they may have appreciated being recognized, Aboriginal leaders were not at all happy about being excluded from the process of creating the Constitution. Thus the recognition held little meaning: and the system remained the same in that the core group maintained full control over the peripheral group and in actual fact, nothing changed structurally:

The disharmony of interests between these two cultures produces (a) gap. This gap will continue to exist in the relationship between nations for as long as there is an imbalance of power" (Galtung, 1990:82).

The imbalance of power ensures that the interest of the powerful Centre group will take precedence. So, while Aboriginal society was "recognized" in the new Constitution, the gap remains because of the imbalance of power. And it was still being provided for by, and was still dependent on, the Canadian government. However, there is a positive side to Constitutional recognition. Aboriginal being recognized under Canadian law has led to their ability to establish and disseminate the concept of Self-government so that they may eventually break away from the core. In other words, the exclusion from the Constitutional negotiation process combined with recognition of their rights led Aboriginal to demand Self-

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Only by entrenching their right through law will Aboriginal's inherent right to Self-government really come to mean anything. The general view is that Self-government is necessary for achieving the changes that they need and they recognize their need for constitutional recognition to protect their special rights from administrative and legislative action. With Constitutional recognition they would be able to take forward steps towards finally setting up their own government. Only then would they be able to develop their own political agenda for their own communities, and would be able to bring back the traditions of their culture in order to break the cycle of social and economic problems.

Galtung would argue that the answer to the difficulties that the Aboriginal communities are facing would be to eliminate the imbalance of power inherent in the relations between the Aboriginal and White populations of Canada. Self-Government would be a step towards such equality. This would allow the Aboriginal population to have the power to remedy their difficulties in the way they see fit.

## CONCLUSION

James Clifford, in *Writing Culture* (1986), speaks of "partial truths" as we can never really know another culture that is not our own. This is why Aboriginal peoples are now studying themselves in anthropology. Referred to as "native anthropology", the study of Aboriginal peoples by Aboriginal people arose out of the desire and need of Aboriginal peoples for more accurate representation within anthropology. Native anthropology is characterized by a very deep level of identification and work that deals with current issues and problems facing Aboriginal peoples.

This type of anthropology is likewise greatly needed within the Deaf community.

Anthropology has changed and is coming through a crisis where objectivity is no longer a goal. We are free now to acknowledge our differences and our predispositions, we now realize that our interpretations will be different because we are different. The Deaf themselves can provide a unique perspective on their own culture, their needs and wants; a perspective that has all too often been ignored due to communication and cultural barriers.

When dealing with the controversial issue of Deaf education there is a great need for the perspectives provided by the Deaf. Antiquated views of what it is to be Deaf unfortunately still exist within every facet of government policy

referring to the Deaf. It is astonishing that despite the lobbying on behalf of Deaf activists to have the Deaf community publically recognized as a culture and not a disability, there has been slow and little change in the educational policies since 1880.

The solution to the problems inherent in the residential school system must be solved without closing them down. Closing the schools does not make the problem, the isolation and oppression felt in the Deaf community, go away. In fact, in closing the residential schools many Deaf feel they will lose their culture as the place that it is negotiated will be lost. Instead, work must be done to come up with real viable solutions to deal with issues oppression and abuse - to reform the residential school system from a place that while it produces also discourages Deaf culture, to a place that emphasizes a pride and respect for one's Deaf culture. In recent years the trend has been moving in this direction but progress is slow. What we need are solutions. Those solutions need to come from the Deaf.

Canada, in all its pride over being a multicultural society that claims to promote and respect all cultures, has not yet recognized the Deaf as a culture and as a result cannot treat the Deaf as equals. It is my contention that anthropology is in a good position to advocate for the rights of the Deaf. The role of anthropology has expanded in recent years to address many issues surrounding

human rights that were previously ignored as anthropology tried to create a so-called nonpolitical discipline (Moore, 1996). To date, anthropology has served well in this area. Messer (1993), has documented the role anthropology has played in the broadening of the international discourse on human rights, and concludes that anthropology has prevailed in the area of recognizing collective and indigenous rights and providing details for more specific content for social, economic, and cultural rights.

The recognition of the rights of the Deaf are important in determining the place they are assigned within society. The advocacy for human rights is

by now part of a broader applied anthropology agenda, merged with responsible or engaged anthropology, which contributes to and draws on the human rights framework (Messer, 1993:237).

In fact, the American Anthropological Association (AAA) now has task forces on famine, hunger and food security, AIDS, hunger and homelessness and a committee on refugee issues. In advocating for the recognition of the rights of the Deaf, anthropologists are in a good position to inform strategies for developing effective and sensitive policies.

This thesis has argued for the need for Deaf representation in educational policy making and for the recognition of the Deaf as a distinct culture through description and explanation of Deaf identity and how it is developed and maintained. By comparing the Deaf situation to that of Aboriginals in Canada a

clearer picture is drawn because the Aboriginal position can be used as a reference point to which many people can situate their understanding of the issues of identity.

It is my hope that this thesis will only serve as a part of the beginning of a long term discussion on the rights and needs of the Deaf. This dialogue needs to be headed by the Deaf themselves and I hope that in the present and future that Canada sees more and more Deaf writers using their knowledge to help empower the Deaf community through educating not only the Deaf but also the hearing so that hopefully both the Deaf and the hearing can work together to produce solutions that will result in a mutual respect and understanding for two different ways of life.

## APPENDIX I:

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORMER DEAF AND NATIVE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL STUDENTS

**PRIMARY RESEARCH:** Interviews will be conducted with nine Deaf people who have lived in residential schools for the Deaf and one Aboriginal person who have lived in Native residential schools.

A questionnaire will be made with questions that will address such issues as: relations with authority, methods of assimilation, bonding among the cohort, and sexual, physical and mental abuse.

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How old were you when you started attending residential school? What year was it? and for how long did you attend?
2. Were you the first person in your family to attend a residential school? If not, how many generations or other family members attended?
3. How far was the school from your home (or reservation)?
4. Where was the school and who was it run by?
5. How is it that you came to attend a residential school?
6. Were you ever told why you were being sent to residential school or what it would be like when you got there?
7. Can you tell me what it was like to live in a residential school?
8. What do you perceive to be the biggest obstacle in your initial adaptation to life in the residential schools?
9. Could you describe your relationship with the various authority figures at your residential school? ie. house parents, teachers, religious leaders, etc...
10. Did the school or those in authority positions try to install a sense of pride within you and the other students for your identity as an Aboriginal (or Deaf)

person? If not, what did they try to teach you about yourself.

11. Were your teachers Deaf/Native? If not, do you think that there would have been a difference had your teachers also been Deaf or Aboriginal? How important do you think it is that there be Deaf/ Aboriginal teachers in the residential schools for the Deaf/Aboriginal?
12. How would you describe your relationship with the other residents at the residential school?
13. How were everyday activities (like eating meals, waking in the morning, recreational time ...) handled by (the houseparents...)?
14. To what extent were you able to maintain communication with your family? i.e. visits, telephone calls, letters ...
15. Who did you look to for support when and if you needed it? Was it an individual or a group and what was their relationship to you?
16. How much of a role do you think that living in a residential school played in the formation of your own personal identity?
17. What does being Deaf/Aboriginal mean to you?
18. What are some of the most significant memories you have of living in the residential school (both positive and negative)?
19. Is there anything you would like to add or feel that it important to discuss?

**APPENDIX II:**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORMER DEAF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL**  
**EMPLOYEES**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Which residential school did you teach/work at?  
And for how long?
2. How did you come to get your position at the Deaf residential school?
3. Can you tell me what advantages there were to your career?
4. Did you receive any training or have any previous knowledge or professional working experience in Deaf education?
5. What was the job descriptions you had to meet in order to qualify you to work with Deaf children?
6. Did the administration at the residential Deaf school require that you have some knowledge of sign language (ASL or SEE/and or Deaf culture)?
7. Have you ever worked with Deaf employees, teachers or houseparents? If so, do you feel this experience has increased your understanding and awareness of Deaf culture? If not, do you feel that had you experienced working with (a) Deaf person(s) that this would have served to increase your understanding or awareness of Deaf culture?
8. Do you feel that there were any negative impacts on your professional career? If so, what were they?
9. If you could go back to your former job at the residential school, is there anything that you feel you could do now to make a difference of the Deaf student's lives?
10. Do you feel that being a professional hearing person played major role in the formation of your personal identity? - What I am looking for is to see if they have known the differences between deafness or have they ever



thought about thier role model in hearing world instill in thier thoughts to fit in a hearing world or is that thier expectation to teach the deaf students? There were many thoughts in my views.

11. Did the school have the curriculum being taught in the residential school for the Deaf? If so, who established the policy for this program. School Board or by teachers?
12. What did you like and or what did you not like about the school curriculum?
13. Are there any changes that you feel should be made to the school curriculum?
14. As a hearing individual, what does the word "Deaf" means to you?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add or feel that is important to discuss?

**APPENDIX III:**  
**CONSENT/AGREEMENT FORMS**

This is an agreement between \_\_\_\_\_  
and Fern Elgar concerning the use of audio and visual tape recorded  
conversations and written interviews conducted during the month of  
\_\_\_\_\_. These conversations and interviews centered around \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_’s life, experiences and perceptions, and are to be used as fieldwork  
research for a project conducted by Fern Elgar. \_\_\_\_\_ agrees to the  
use of these audio and visual tapes and transcripts solely for the purpose of this  
project. I, Fern Elgar agree that any further use of these tapes and transcripts  
can be made only with the express written permission and/or collaboration of \_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I, Fern Elgar, agree to safeguard \_\_\_\_\_’s character and  
privacy to the best of my ability, and to this end a pseudonym will be used, of  
\_\_\_\_\_’s choosing.

I, Fern Elgar agree that no information will be made public, in any form,  
which \_\_\_\_\_ feels will be detrimental to him/herself, his/her  
family or community.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Consent/Agreement Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give \_\_\_\_\_ permission  
to use the content of video tapes and transcripts of  
conversations made between us for the purposes of a Carleton  
University Anthropology research methods term project. I prefer  
and request that \_\_\_\_\_ use a pseudonym when referring to me  
and/or my colleagues in her/his writings and/or presentation.

Signature of Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX IV:

### LIST OF DEAF TEACHERS AT DEAF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IN CANADA

#### First Deaf Teachers in Canada, Earliest Deaf Teachers in Canada:

McDonald's School 06/15/1831 - Quebec City  
Antoine Caron, assistant teacher - school terminated 1836

Deaf Boys School in Montreal. Founded 1848 - closed 1978

No Deaf teacher recorded but school principal - Joseph Marie Young C.S.V.  
Director - 1856 - 1863.

As a residence few boarding students and nuns - Sister Gislele Desaulniers -  
Superior - 1875 - 1877 (?)

#### McKay - Deaf Founder and principal - Thomas Widd - 1870-1882

Deaf Educators/Teachers

#### McKay Centre, Montreal, Quebec - 1870 - present

1870-1882	**B.A., M.Ed(2), MA -1971-present
1870-1878	B.A., M.Ed - 1973-1984
1872-18??	B.A., M.Ed - 1976-1990
1876-1878	B.A., M.Ed - 1980-1990
1878-18??	B.A., M.Ed - 1981-1982
1885-1897	B.A., M.Ed - 1991-1994
1912-1933	
18??-1888 & 1889-1895	
1888	
1889-?	
1896-?	
1904-19??	
1908-1949	
1921-1934	
1934-1946 & 1949-1954	
B.Sc. 1940-1941	

1940-1943

1940-1961

1940-1943

**\*\*** There was a hiring gap of Deaf teachers between 1943 and 1971.

### **Ontario - Belleville - 1870 - present**

1870-1890 (B.A.)

1871-1872 & 1874-1880

1872-1901

1876-1878

1877-1880

1878-1882

1882-1920

1883-1894

1884-1890

1888-1892

1890-1916

1890-1929 (M.A.)

1891-1898 & 1899-1931

1894-1924

1897-1898

1898-1905 (B.Sc.)

1898-1929

**\*\***

1969-1976

1973-present (B.Ed.)

1976-present (B.A., M.Ed.)

1991-present (B.Sc.)

1991-present (B.A.)

1993-present (B.A.)

**\*\*** There was hiring gap of Deaf teachers between 1929 and 1969.

### **Milton, Ontario - Founded in 1963 to present**

**\*\***

1974-1975 (B.A., M.Ed.)

1976-1979 (B.A.)

1977-present (B.Sc., M.Ed., M.Sc.)

1977-present (B.Sc., M.Ed.)  
 1979-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1980-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1982-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1987-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1988-1990 & 1991-1992 (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1990-present (B.A., B.Ed.)  
 1990-present (B.A., M.A.)  
 1990-present (B.Sc., M.Ed., M.Sc.)  
 1990-1992 (B.Ed.)  
 1990-present (B.A., M.Sc.)  
 1990-present (B.A.)  
 1990-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1990-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1990-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1991-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1991-present (B.A., M.Ed., L.L.D.)  
 1991-present (B.Sc., M.A.)  
 1991-present (B.A., M.A.)  
 1992-present (B.A.)  
 1993-present (B.Sc.)  
 1993-present (B.A.)  
 1993-present (B.SW., M.A.)  
 1994-present (B.Sc.)  
 1994-present (B.A., M.Sc.)

**\*\*** There was hiring gap of Deaf Teachers from the opening in 1963 to 1974.

#### **London, Ontario - Founded in 1974 - present.**

1974-1975 (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1976-1979 (B.A.)  
 1977-present (B.Sc., M.Ed., M.Sc.)  
 1977-present (B.Sc., M.Ed.)  
 1979-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1980-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1982-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1987-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1988-1990 & 1991-1992 (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1990-present (B.A., B.Ed.)  
 1990-present (B.A., M.A.)  
 1990-present (B.Sc., M.Ed., M.Sc.)  
 1990-1992 (B.Ed.)

1990-present (B.A., M.Sc.)  
 1990-present (B.A.)  
 1990-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1990-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1990-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1991-present (B.A., M.Ed.)  
 1991-present (B.A., M.Ed., L.L.D.)  
 1991-present (B.Sc., M.A.)  
 1991-present (B.A., M.A.)  
 1992-present (B.A.)  
 1993-present (B.Sc.)  
 1993-present (B.A.)  
 1993-present (B.SW., M.A.)  
 1994-present (B.Sc.)  
 1994-present (B.A., M.Sc.)

#### **Halifax School - 1857 to 1961**

##### **William Gray - founding teacher. 1856 - 1857**

1857-1870  
 1870  
 1872  
 1876-1882  
 1885-1906  
 1886-1891  
 1907-1942  
 1920-1928  
 1926-1931  
 1931-1954  
 1942-1961  
 1951-1952  
 1956-1961 (B.Sc.)

#### **Amherst, Nova Scotia 1961 to 1996.**

1961-1968 (B.Sc., B.Ed.)  
 1964-1994  
 1965-1994 (B.A., B.Ed.)  
 \*\*  
 1973-1979 (B.Sc.)  
 1974-1994 (B.Sc.)

1990-present

\*\* There was a hiring gap of Deaf teachers between 1965 and 1973.

**St. John's, NFLD - Founded 1964 to present \*\***

B.Sc. 1979-present

\*\* There was a hiring gap of Deaf teacher from the opening in 1964 to 1979.

**Winnipeg, Manitoba - Founded 1889**

1890-1906 & 1906-1913

1891-1893

1891-189?

1893-1918

1893-1926

1906-1940 (B.A.)

1911 & 1913-1936

1913-1940 (B.Sc.)

1916-1940

1918-1919

1936-1940 (B.Sc.)

\*\*

1965-1974 (B.Sc.)

1972-1985 (B.A., M.Ed.)

1975-1976 (B.Sc., M.Ed.)

1982-1990 (B.A., M.Ed.)

1984-1990 (B.Sc., M.Ed.)

1985-1991 (B.A.)

1986-1987 (B.A., M.Ed.)

1986-1987 (B.A.)

1990-present (B.Sc., M.A.)

1991-present (B.A., M.Ed.)

1992-present (B.A., M.Sc.)

1992-present (B.A., M.Ed.)



**Vancouver, B.C. Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf -  
1922-1993**

1945-1978

1945-1972

\*\*

1970-1973 (B.A., M.Sc.)

1973-1993 (B.Sc.)

1975-1990 (B.Sc.)

1976-1993 (B.Sc., M.Ed.)

1977-1987 (B.A., M.A.)

1978-1982 (B.Sc., M.A.)

1979-1983 (B.Ed.)

1981-1993 (B.Ed.)

1983-1993 (B.A.)

1985-1987 & 1989-1993 (B.Sc., M.Ed.)

1987-1993 (B.A.)

1989-1993 (B.Sc.)

1992-1993 (B.Sc.)

\*\* There was hiring gap of Deaf teachers between 1945 and 1970.

**Saskatchewan School for the Deaf - Founded 1931-1991**

1931-1940

1931-1942

1931-1943

1934-1941 (B.Sc.)

1935-1940

1946-1980 & 1982-1983

\*\*

1974-1991 (B.A.)

1982-1984 (B.A., M.Ed.)

1982-1991 (B.A., M.Ed.)

1988-1990 (B.A., B.Ed., M.L.S)

\*\* There was hiring gap of Deaf teachers between 1946 and 1974.

# **Alberta School for the Deaf - Founded 1955 to present**

**Joseph Robert McLaughlin, B.A., M.A - Acting Principal 1988 & Principal 1988 to 1995.**

1958-1993 (B.Ed.)

1962-1965 (B.Sc.)

**1963-1991 (B.A., M.Ed., Ph.d.)**

**\*\***

1969-1985

1971-present (B.A.)

1973-present (B.Sc., M.Ed.)

1975-present (B.A., M.Ed., M.Sc.)

1975-present (B.A.)

1976-present (B.A., M.Ed.)

1976-1992 (B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed.)

1978-present (B.A., M.Ed.)

1979-present (B.A., M.A.)

1980-1986 (B.P.E., B.Ed., M.Ed.)

1981-present (B.A., M.Ed.)

1981-1984 (B.A.)

1981-1984 (B.Sc.)

1982-present (B.A., M.Ed.)

1983-1987 (B.Sc., M.Ed.)

1985-present (B.Sc., M.Ed.)

1990-present (B.Sc.)

Source: Carbin, 1996

**APPENDIX V:**  
**FORMER DEAF/NATIVE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL STUDENTS**  
**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE**

Since the format of the interviews were semi-structured, questions listed in the questionnaire were not always asked in the order that they appear and most interviews contained additional questions and conversation and occasionally a question was left out.

**Interview 1:**

Former Deaf Residential School Student

**Interview 2:**

Former Deaf Residential School Student with Late Deafness

**Interview 3:**

Former Deaf Residential School Student

**Interview 4:**

Former Deaf Residential School Student

**Interview 5:**

Former Deaf Residential School Student

**Interview 6:**

Former Deaf Residential School Student

**Interview 7:**

Former Deaf Residential School Student born to deaf Parents

**Interview 8:**

Former Deaf Residential School Student who is also Aboriginal

**Interview 9:**

Former Deaf Residential School Student who is also Aboriginal

**Interview 10:**

Former Native Residential School Student

## Question #1

How old were you when you started attending residential school? What year was it? and for how long did you attend?

1. Well, at first when I was small, about seven-years-old, I went to a public hearing school. For four years my folks did not know I was deaf. They tried to find out what was wrong. They didn't know about deafness back then. My mother's sister and aunt and uncle took me to < sic > to see a doctor. The doctor examined me and discovered that I had been deaf since birth...My folks tried to help me to learn vocabulary and writing, to read books and everything. They sent me to public school and I found it very difficult to keep up. It was very difficult when the teacher was moving around and talking around the class. It was hard to hear them. I could only hear with my left ear and I could lip read. When I was struggling to learn the doctor told my aunt and uncle about the < sic > School for the Deaf. My aunt and uncle were very surprised and thanked the doctor for letting them know about the Deaf school. At first I went to hearing school. When I was fourteen-years-old I went to < sic > and that was in 1928 until November 17, 1935 because my father was killed by a train.

2. It was 1940, I was ten-years-old. I was there for seven years until 1947. I wanted to go to school longer but I got into trouble and the school didn't like me.

3. At the age of five. In 1964. How long was I there until 1974. That means I was there until the age of fourteen. I was there for ten years - yes. From 1974, - I was transferred to a co-ed mainstreaming Deaf school. At the Deaf residential school. From 1964 - 1974, I went to an all girls school. It was called < sic > . Now - it has changed to < sic > . That was in < sic > . Since 1974, it has been changed and I was transferred to another school - < sic > School for Deaf boys and girls. I was there temporarily while they were building a larger school. I was integrated with Deaf boys and girls and hearing in that school. At that time, when the larger school was not completed, I stayed at the smaller school for a short time.

While I was there, I got used to and learned to interact with the co-ed system. I stayed there for two years - from 1974 to 1976. And I didn't feel I was being educated at all. So I was transferred to < sic > for one year. And then from 1977, I went to Galludet College. I have been zig-zagging to and from different schools.

4. I'd say around the age of five. In 1971. Fourteen years. I think around there.

5. At 5 years old. Oh, I think... from 1962... yes 1962. And well, you know, in Deaf school, I went all the way ... from 1973 and then I was transferred to hearing school from grade 11 and 12. And I completed high school in 1975.

6. When I was five years old I went to < sic > School for the Deaf in the year of 1971. I graduated in 1985 which means I was in school for 13 years.

7. I was 7 years old. From 1984-1985 and one year in '84, I went to a regular classroom but really it was decided I would stay at the residential school in 1985. I was there for a half term. I was supposed to graduate last year in June but I needed one more year. So, I could concentrate more on math and english. I had to work at the co-op store. I work in the mornings and in the afternoon. I am an assistant for Phys. Ed. I am also involved in many clubs and I will be graduating in two weeks.

8. I have been Deaf from birth because of Scarlet Fever. In < sic > where I was born, that is in < sic > . I was about five or six years old but I'm not sure. I asked my parents how old I was when I started school but they can't remember. I remember that I went to Catholic school with my sister. We were in the same class, it was a hearing class but I am Deaf and the teacher didn't know how to communicate with me. They just gave me books to read and I never learned anything for many years. Then my parents decided to take me out of school. My other sister, the older one she would take care of me while my sister went to school. We are five years apart.

My parents always thought I was mentally retarded and I know that they were always frustrated with me.

When I went back to the same place where my sisters went to school - my sister and I are really close.

9. At the age of seven. From 1945 to 1956.

10. I was about six-years-old and I was there for about two years, six and seven, and seven and eight. I went home in between. I guess we would have a year of school, come back home for, in May, June and leave home to get to < sic > Residential School around August or September. So it was for those two years that I was there. This was in 1966 and 1967. I saw a photo of myself and it was a 1966 photo. That is how I know. Other than that I do not recall to well. Like I was not aware of the year but I saw the photo and that is how I calculate and I know I was there for two years.

## Question #2

Were you the first person in your family to attend a residential school? If not, how many generations or other family members attended?

1. I'm the only one. I don't have any brothers or sisters. When I was a child I had a sister but she was stillborn.
2. N/A.
3. My brother went to residential school.
4. No - my sister was also Deaf and she went to the Deaf school. I was the baby (the last one in the family.)
5. In the past, no. My brother - we were 10 years apart. And he joined the school 10 years later.
6. No. I was the first person to go to residential school.
7. No. My parents. Not at my school. At a different school. My mother went to Deaf school in < sic > at < sic > School for the Deaf. I think for my father, it was in the same area but they were separated in buildings for girls and for boys.  
And my uncle, mother's brother also went to Deaf school. And my father, he had two Deaf sisters and they also went to school but I think they later were mainstreamed into hearing school. But I am not sure if they went to Deaf school at all.  
I think I am in the third generation. I'm not sure...2nd or 3rd. Oh! I didn't realize, I didn't count my mother. My father's sisters are next. Then my mother is next. Then I am the third. I am next.
8. Yes.
9. Me and my brother are Deaf. Yes - two of us. And I was the youngest, yes.
10. No, I was probably the last one to go within my family. I had three older brothers who went there, two who drowned at different times, but we all went there. And I have an older sister who went there also.

### Question #3

How far was the school from your home (or reservation)?

1. From the < sic > School? I think it was about six hours.
2. From here to < sic > it is about two hours. From < sic > to < sic > it is another two hours plus about an hour of traffic in < sic > on the < sic > Highway. All together it is about five hours.
3. I stayed in the residential schools during the week days. During the week end, I went home to < sic >. The distance was like from your house to Ottawa University.
4. Five and half hours. It is pretty far.
5. Five hours - yes about five hours. We went by train to < sic >. It was a two hour drive. Sometimes my Dad would pick us up, and sometimes < sic >. Every Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, May long week end and summer.
6. Five hours by bus from < sic >. That is where my home is. There was a group of Deaf people from < sic >. We all went to < sic > by train. One year later we stop travelling by train and started taking the bus all the way home.
7. All together, three hours to commute to the < sic > School. Since I was seven until now, it was very routine - every Friday, I come home until Sunday. Every three hours back and forth.
8. About sixteen hours.
9. My home town is < sic >. It's about fifteen minutes from here < sic > to there (deaf school). From Deaf school to < sic > would be about twenty minutes.
10. About three hundred miles away.

### Question #4

Where was the school and who was it run by?

At the request of the interviewees, for the purposes of confidentiality, I cannot reveal the answers to this question.

### Question #5

How is it that you came to attend a residential school?

1. See question #1.
2. My mother received a letter that told her about the residential school that the government had established. There was some communication between them.
3. N/A.
4. I don't remember.
5. No. I don't remember that time. Nothing. All I remember was getting in the car and driving, and when we arrived with my parents. What I remember my aunt and uncle who lived in < sic > and I stayed with them. Now both my aunt and uncle are separated. But they are good friends. My mother recently told me that they might get back together later - maybe. My uncle just dumped his girlfriend. She was a long time girlfriend. Their relationship goes way back to when they were very young. My uncle's mother didn't want him to marry her, so he dumped her, then married my aunt until my uncle's mother died, and he met his old girlfriend at the funeral and ever since, they have been together (since my aunt and uncle were separated). And now he has just broken off with his girlfriend and he realizes that. Yes. You know.
6. My parents heard through a social worker that works with Deaf children. She contacted my parents and explained to them that there were facilities available like the school in < sic >. My parents were interested so they went to < sic > to check it out. They liked it and brought me there to check it out and I really liked it too. My parents watched me and saw that I really like it so they decided to send me to Deaf school when I was four years old. Oh yes, I really remember that.
7. My parents? Yes, they both took me to the Deaf school. I remember it was on Sunday and both my parents were talking to the staff and then they both left the school and I stayed behind. So, I was sent to and stayed at residential school and I have been there ever since.
8. One time the social worker told my parents that there were Deaf schools I could go to. My parents got really excited about that. My parents told the social worker that they thought I was too young to go to a residential school because I was only nine years old. The social worker said not to worry but it was very far from where we were. It was in < sic >. My parent didn't fully understand English and so they got my oldest sister to translate. My parents speak Cree and



just a little English and the social worker spoke only English. My sister interpreted for both of them so they could communicate. My parents said wait until she is nine years old then we will send her. The social worker said O.K. My parents did not want to send me away from home.

9. My mother would often drive me to school.

10. N/A

### Question #6

Were you ever told why you were being sent to residential school or what it would be like when you got there?

1. My mother came with me by train. When we arrived at the station, we took a taxi to the school. She then met with someone and they talked together for a while and then my mother took the taxi back to the train station and went home.

2. It was the end of July when my mother received this information. In the middle of September my mother, sister and I went shopping and bought a lot of new clothes, a suitcase, a trunk, etcetera. That was the first time I got new clothes but I didn't know what they were for. My father drove the car, my mother sat in the passenger side and I sat in the back. I didn't know where we were going. When I arrived at the < sic > School for the Deaf I was surprised, I didn't have a clue why I was there. My mother and father left and I cried but after that I got used to it. It was hard for me to learn sign language - I was awkward at it. Then all the boys and girls gave me a sign name ( a < sic > on the chest). I had never seen signing before but I learned it.

3. My parents. I went with my parents to school and on the first day, I felt culture shock, and I thought I was being sent to jail or something like that. And I had been really stubborn before I went to the school. I didn't want to stay there, and I cried, so I ran away. My parents had to find me and they tried to explain to me - "No, no, you have to go to school and learn." My father is deaf and my mother is hearing. Therefore, my father does sign. So my father explained - "this is your school" and I started to realize that this was my school. I learned signing and I really developed it overtime. So, I stayed there, and the rest of my time was O.K.

4. I - on the first day, I didn't understand why I was going there. When I met the peers, I didn't know what to do. The more I interacted with them, - I cried more. Most of the time, I spent my time with my sister.

5. Okay when I arrived at the Deaf school, I remember seeing a huge building and I didn't know what to think. I remember going inside and I saw a horde of Deaf people and I felt strange. And I saw all the people using their hands, and I felt naive. I didn't know what was going on. My mother was trying to take care of me and she kept telling me "Everything is going to be O.K., everything will be O.K." So I didn't know what to do and I wandered around the building. I remember I hated the houseparent - name was < sic >. Oh, I hated that houseparent. She was so strict and mean. Everyone hated that person. What I remember - the first night I went to bed and I saw rows and rows of bed in that room and I wondered why - all of us the same age and all of us girl so I went to bed. I remember I was screaming or yelling in bed - I think I had to go to the bathroom that night. At that time, I had a short bladder - don't we all have that problem? I yelled and I remembered < sic > was so mad at me. I didn't know if that was my first night or the second night. I just remember that < sic > used to be so mad at < sic >. She often spanked me and I used to feel awful when I saw her doing that. Our bedroom was right next to the hospital room. So, I went to the bathroom in the hospital room, rather than having to go all the way through the dorm. And as time went on, I had a good time growing up and until grade ten or grade eleven, then I felt I had enough schooling. At the residential school, I felt it was not the same as home. But when I was small, I felt O.K. But when I got older, there were so many rules that restricted us. Yes. I could not go out as much and I started to hate it. And I could not wait to finish my high school and get out.

6. Not really. The communication at that time was not very good because I was only four. So I went to school by the I got there it was very clear why I was there. I visited with all the Deaf kids and I understood why I was there. So I went to school...

7. No. My mother explained to me. We both could sign. My mom always explained things to me. I had a pretty good idea that most of the people in < sic > could sign compared to the < sic > School. There are two different kind of communication. Speaking and signing. In < sic >, everyone could sign compared to < sic >.

8. Another social worker discussed.... my favourite aunt I forget her name when I was eight, the two of us travelled to < sic > by bus. At that time I could not speak any English. You would think that I would be three or four when I started school but I remember I was eight and a half. I was eight and a half in January, 1975. when I was eight and a half I went to school and in the dorm, I saw a lot of hands flying and I grabbed onto my aunt and I started to cry. My aunt tried to calm me down. The counsellor talked to my aunt and explained everything about the school to her and then my aunt left. The next morning the counsellor took me somewhere and I kept asking for my aunt because I did not understand

what was going on. I remember that the first person I met was < sic > . < sic > took me to the cafeteria to have breakfast and then she took me class. I remember the teacher signed "Hello" at me and said her name was < sic > . I loved that teacher, she was very friendly. But I didn't understand sign language. I cannot remember how long it took me to learn sign language.

9. I often went with my parents for a drive. My mother introduced me to the school and told them I am Deaf and my name, so they know. Then they filled out the forms and then I knew I would be staying at the school. But I often cried and I didn't want to let go of my mother. It took a while for me to get used to the Deaf school, but after a while, I really liked staying there. I learned sign language, whereas I had never learned it before and throughout my time, I had a lot of fun at the school. I had more fun there than I had at home. At home, nobody could sign, not even my mother - ah well. And the hearing - they don't understand me and they would look upon me as a very quiet child. I was very quiet for most of my life at home, and I preferred to be at school because we understood each other. Yes.

10. Ummm. I had a chance to speak with my father just recently about this and its kind of hazy. I remember crying because I had seen my older sister who I was attached to at the time, she was older, three years. I wanted to go with, along with her. Then somehow I don't remember any explanation made to me, it must have been made to my parents, and um... but I don't recall anything being explained.

### Question #7

Can you tell me what it was like to live in a residential school?

1. It was OK. I went from grade five to ten and then I left.

2. I did well in history while I was in school. I know all about world geography and history. I had a really good memory for writing exams. My memory helped a lot in exams.

Yes. I really liked history and I was comfortable with it. Math ... I was O.K. in but not in other subjects. When I added three and three I got six. Yes I was O.K. in math but I was best the best in history.

No. Nothing. (interruption with the cat)

What was I saying?

Nothing. Nothing. I'm always in trouble. Many students were jealous that I was so good at history. They were always jealous. I had a reputation of being good in history but I was not interested in their problems. They always picked on me so I was not interested in them, so I just don't bother them.

3. At the residential school - the life style was like being in the military (militant). Yes, at the residential dorm. And I get mixed up whether to sign in French (LSQ) and ASL. And it was very militant, and even getting dressed, we had to all line up, we never had a shower, but we had a bathtub. And it was a very old fashioned thing. The nuns would bathe us with a water spray. While the nun sprayed us, we had to take turns going into the bathroom. When we were really young, the nuns would bathe us, but as we got older, we did it on our own. The nuns treated us like we were in an orphanage. They would make us wash from our knees to our feet each day and we had baths once or twice a week. We would brush our teeth in the line. There were rows of sinks and the girls would have to wash our hands and faces and brush our teeth every night. And there were rows of beds - just like a hospital. You know, what's strange about living in the dorm - I would estimate about three - four hundred.

To describe, how big it is. There were four floors, - no! - the one, two, and three stories were all classrooms and four, five, and six floors were all bed dorms - huge bedrooms. Oh - no - wrong - the fourth floor was the infirmary. Fifth and sixth floor were the bed dorms - huge bedrooms. I would estimate three hundred - four hundred people on the two floors.

It was all rows and rows. There were division between primary, intermediate and senior levels. There was a separate group for the youngest groups, and the rest intermediate. Approximately for that one group - it ranged from one hundred - two hundred. And the other division with the senior groups - it was a large group - from one hundred - two hundred. There was a small room for the primary, and the door to the intermediates. The upper level was for seniors.

And we all shared rows of beds in one room. I didn't think about it. We often felt the same. We often played around, and we'd sneak around. We would crawl under the beds through all the rows, and we'd get our pyjamas dirty from the floors. And I would have to hide in the bed before the nuns caught us. The nuns had their own private bedrooms. Sometimes at night, the nuns would come in with a flashlight and supervise us and make sure we were all sleeping. They would march up and down between the rows of beds. We would wait until the lights in the nun's bedrooms went out, then we would start to play. When we began to get noisy, we would rush back to bed. Another thing, in the classroom, they tended to teach us religious studies, and we had to memorize parts of the Bible. And I had no understanding and I learned nothing. Did I understand the language? - No! And I had to memorize the rosary. That's it. What's left of learning in my brain - nothing - it's gone! And I had to speak and learn orally. Sign language was forbidden in the class. With one exception - in the play room, we all signed. Same with our school, too. But in the classroom, we had to speak orally. They also made us put on headphones and they would have to use a paper in front of our mouth to ensure we are using oral speaking. We had to stand in line to use the water fountain. We had to make the "R" sound through the water. For hearing people, they could feel the vibration on their throat, but for the Deaf, we had to use the water to feel it with our tongue.

And in the school, they were very strict about cleaning the room, and everyone had to take turns being responsible for the cleaning. Every Wednesday was my day for the weekly cleaning assignment in the bedroom. After four o'clock, when we finished classes, we had to do our cleaning assignment. It was very rigidly scheduled duties. Every Sunday morning, we were supposed to go to the church and pray but I often snuck away.

Yes - but I had to get back to the dorm by Sunday morning, - my parents had to bring me back on Sunday mornings, and sometimes my father would sneak away from church too - that's how he influenced me. And my father doesn't believe in going to church and that's how he got away with it. A group of us were resistant to going to church, but we had to attend a smaller service/mass on Friday afternoon before we went home. The second thing - the name of the priest < sic > (fingerspelled the name on the forehead) - he told us we were required to confess our sins. I had to go into the confessional and slide open the window and I had to confess orally. And of course, the priest never could understand what we said, so he would just bless us anyway. And the priest would often say - "God bless you and forgive you." And we had to wait in a line and take turns going into the confessional. In the confessional, there was a little sliding door with a screen. I could see through the screen and I could see the priest was < sic > and that's how I knew who he was. Every time I opened the door, I would have to make up some confession and express it orally. And I would repeat the same confession over and over again. And did I get anything from it - NO - nothing. I learned nothing - what did they teach me? - Home Economics, sewing, cooking - that's it. I learned very repetitive grammar in French ... Je Suis .... I wasn't developing anything. And writing - I just learned to copy from the blackboard -- I was just like a trained monkey. And I copied things I was supposed to learn, but I understood nothing. I was forced to speak orally in the classroom. And the role for women's culture - we all had to do the cleaning. They 'prepared' us for the world by teaching us cooking and sewing skills - that was our preparation for the future generation. Their beliefs during our time there was very old fashioned. That was their philosophy and I learned nothing anyway. In the classroom, we had to learn about the bible. They taught us a little about geography, history, biology, but they never taught is science, physics - just a bit of basic math, but no algebra. I learned nothing except the basics, because they had the attitude that Deaf people can't achieve anything more. You know we all had our homework assignments - they were so boring because the work was so basic it was like a grade one and two level assignments. And what was so ironic - some of our peers - in the same age group as me - took algebra and more advanced subjects, but I wasn't given them. When I looked at my peers who did algebra, I couldn't understand the symbolic formulas. When my peers looked at my work, they would laugh at how basic it was. I found that I felt embarrassed and intimidated. When they found out about the level of my courses (math), they couldn't figure it out because they thought I was quite smart. At age ten or so, I started to become angry. For this reason, I feel I grew up

being abused/assaulted.

The nuns assaulted me. How did that happen? At the time, when I was growing up, I couldn't speak - I was rebellious - and my main method of communication was signing. My father and my brother were Deaf, so naturally we all sign. I have always been rebellious, and I was also a leader. And the nuns often assaulted me. For example: one night - I'm a story teller about how I saw the devil will get to you - all my peers were so fascinated and as I got more involved in the story, I started to play act like I was the character. And they all believed me, and I often made up stories. I got that from my father. My peers were fascinated because I was very creative. So that's how I took my advantage to get their attention. That's how I developed my interest in acting and I became an actress. I could act - most of my peers felt my stories were so real that they had nightmares (about the devil getting them). They all brought their own crucifixes and they would cross themselves to protect themselves. When I saw their reaction, I began to develop more creative stories and plays. When the nuns found out they were upset with me. They saw I was a leader and they noticed how my peer were so afraid at night. The nuns were very very angry with me. A second example: sometimes the girls were so afraid, one of them would jump into my bed and cuddle with me. At the same time, some of the girls began to make noise. This caused the nun to get out of bed and inspect the dorm with her flashlight. At the same time, several girls had jumped into beds together. As the nun come in, all the girls got out of bed and the nun made us stand in a line, and we were strapped on our hands. Every one of us who were strapped cried and I was the last one because I was the leader. The nun brought a rod - a stick - and I was strapped on my ass. I would try to get away by running up to the next floor. I would try to get away from another strapping - I would refuse to let them do that to me. Finally the nuns caught me and one of them punched me in the face. I tried to hold it in and not scream. The nun would reprimand me orally. I could feel the pain from the rod right through my bone (on my ass). The next day I went home because it was th week end - it was just the right timing. The next morning, it was extremely painful, and I had difficulty sitting down. My father came to pick me up, and when I got home, I continued to have a hard time sitting down. My father asked me 'What's wrong?' I just said 'Nothing. I just fell.' I refused to tell him the truth and I kept repeating 'I just fell.' My father was not convinced and he repeatedly asked me what was wrong. I kept telling him "It's nothing. There is nothing wrong with me." Then, my father slapped my bum in a teasing, friendly way. I told him - "Don't - it hurts." My father became suspicious, and he stripped my pants down to take a look - and he was very upset. He could see there were several lines across my bum. My father asked who did it and I panicked. I told him that if I squealed to you, they will do it again. I didn't want to go through that again. And my father asked "You mean you having been going through this since you started going to Deaf school at age five?" Between the age of five -ten, I have been assaulted by them. I confessed this to my father. My father was very angry. And my father said he

didn't know that I had been assaulted. It wasn't just once - I was assaulted many times. The reason it happened to me - maybe because I am smart and I signed pure LSQ? I already knew signing before I came to Deaf school. My father taught me to sign before I went to school. So the nun's view was so oppressive towards me. Plus I was short and small, and I had thick glasses. Before age five, I didn't wear glasses. At the time I was being assaulted - for this reason - I will give you an example: Every Friday, I would put on special clothes before my father picked me up. It was always before noon time. After lunch, I would put on a nice dress. We could identify between hearing nuns from Deaf nuns by their habits. The hearing nuns wore regular veils (went straight across) - the Deaf nuns wore pointed headdresses. The Deaf nun - we communicated fine because we had the same identity. It was before noon, and the nun said "go ahead and change into your nice clothing. I felt proud to be all dressed up and clean. I marched down for lunch and the hearing nun asked me why I was all dressed up before noon. I told her the Deaf nun said it was O.K. The hearing nun didn't say anything - she just reached out her arms with her two big hands and grabbed my shoulders. She squeezed me hard, and lifted me up. I was only five, and I was small and she picked me up in the air (off the floor). The nun was laughing at me and she shook me vigorously. When she put me down, I was numb and in shock. That was my first incident of assault. Since that time, they picked on me throughout the time I was there. This happened continuously while I was there.

4. As a child to begin with it was a very hard experience for me. But now, growing up, and as an adult, it doesn't bother me, and now I am enjoying it. To be with other Deaf people and that's all. Not really, you know - I like to stay at home more.

I really like to stay at home because my feeling is different. Do I really like being in that Deaf school? NO! My own life - I am happy now. I don't think about those people who are Deaf or Hearing. I am just happy being who I am. And that's it.

Oh I sign. Yes, some of the teachers are Deaf and it's great that they can sign ASL. Most of the time, when I understand the teachers when they sign. And some can sign fluent ASL, and some other aren't fully fluent ASL. Some of the hearing teachers, I feel I can't understand them and the communication is not even there. Yes, sometime I learn it, but not really. When I watch the lecture, and when the teacher tries to explain something, I have to know what they are saying and not memorize it. Some thing when I try to study - I try to remember and understand what the teacher was saying and make connection. That's it.

5. I remember we often played, went skating, to the park, to the store and became more independent. I don't know if residential school is a good thing. Yes - we had a good time. It's been so many years and I felt I had enough. I think the children and seniors should be separated, so we could have our own

boundaries. It's because it influences them as a role model. It's better to have a senior girls to come in the morning and encourage them. Or babysitting and teaching them - it's a good thing. But the rest of the time, the junior and senior groups should be separated. And it should be the houseparents responsibility to supervise the junior groups for the rest of the day. And that is part of their responsibility - to teach their discipline. In one building - the children and adult lived together without boundaries.

6. Oh I was very excited. Later I started to realize that there were a lot of rules and it was very strict and the way I communicated was criticized and sometimes I felt very discouraged and wanted to go home. But when I went home I just wanted to go back to school. The first time I went to Deaf school I was really excited and I loved it but after that it really changed.

Well, it was only on the week-end and it was very short visit. There were not as many rules at home.

I had a good experience going to school and being away from my family. I had many wonderful experiences and socializing with my Deaf friends was the best part of school. There was also a negative side. Our communication was always being criticized - ASL was discouraged. There were so many rules! Another negative side was that going away to school caused me to lose touch with my family and their values. That was a negative but sometimes it was positive. The positive outweighed the negative.

No. Most of the time I felt positive about the < sic > school but the negative part was feeling like I wanted to go home. Often because once in a while I would watch the other students who would go home every Friday and I had to stay. This made me feel homesick because I felt stuck in < sic > which was so far away from home. But I also liked staying in school because I could socialize and communicate but I hated the counsellors who would always criticize us.

7. Really, at residential school, it is supposed to be like a home environment. It is like a second home. Yes, my real home is on the week ends but my second home is the residential school during the week. What benefits me in the residential school is sports. I used to go swimming every day and I socialize with other Deaf people and we always talk or we watch T.V., play ping pong, a whole of activities. I am never bored. I am always playing and then by night time, my body burns out and I always get a good night's sleep. All the rigid activities causes my body to burn out and it was good. But I really did miss my parents but being busy helped me to forget that I was homesick. At supper time all the girls and boys would get together and have conversation which was always fun. There were lots of different activities and crafts, etc, etc...

Oh yes, yes. I learned a lot. English and Math and Phys. Ed. Phys. Ed was my most favourite subject. They taught me coaching and I have improved teaching skills and how to set up the program. Secondly I have been involved with student politics about a year or two ago. I was appointed a student rep. for my school and



so I had to go around to all the different schools and explain about politics. Now it is becoming more like local schools. It was a good experience. I learned about agendas and so on. Now in sports, I travelled quite a bit and recently our school, nine of us, we played basketball in Maine. We stayed there for one week for a tournament. It was good experience. They also have a really good Deaf school there. We played volleyball, hockey, and they also had specifically 4 provincial teams. The four provincial teams were baseball, ball hockey, swimming and volleyball - all four. Number five is the .... basketball. The third division is the best... depending on the area,... there are two different groups from the East... in the third division, that is the one I am involved in for the tournament. So, next year, I might compete with the third year competition. It is really beneficial for me to be able to attend all these sports tournament. Oh yes, I play soccer and the Deaf sports association have a tendency to compete in both the U.S and in Canada. We take turn hosting the tournaments. It is very beneficial. Now, in the school, we have three important subjects. In Elementary school, they are now being provided with "Bi-Bi", Deaf culture and Deaf studies. It is a very good course and I know a lot about it. All about grammar, etc....

8. Yes. I went to < sic > for one year. I discovered, to tell you the truth, this school was so easy. For a whole year, I received straight A's. For sure, I considered that school more like junior school, not high school. To tell the truth, it's so easy, but math and science are a little bit advanced. At that time, I was in grade seven. Before I went to < sic >, I was about grade three and four level, and they put me into the advanced level. Not again. I misses several grades but I was picking up. But Deaf socialization and communication in < sic > was better.

You know, when I went back home, I wasn't worth it for me because I felt alone and isolated. I wanted to go back to the Deaf school. When I was home, I felt I had no control there. So I proved to my family back in 1988 - in January to August... and I graduated. So I decided to go to Gallaudet College. And in the summer of 1989, I was a sophomore, I took up English skills. When I write my English I was criticized. I realized the teachers in < sic > lousy teachers - they didn't teach us. I started to realize that teachers who teach English think that Deaf people cannot learn English up to their level. We can - we can do it. It's very important to learn and study and read a lot. I started to realize that and I stayed for one and a second semester and I left. I changed my mind later and that year then I came back and stayed two and half years and I left in December, 1992. I was so happy to discover that my English and reading has improved but there is something wrong in < sic > .

9. In the school. I did fair, but I excelled in sports. And sports were my favourite, but as for schooling, - I did so-so.

10. At the residential school, um we call it now the < sic >, there was a hostel

where we stayed at called the < sic > and it was run by, managed by nuns and Christian brothers and then there was the school. < sic > . It has a long title or a name, but those were the schools we went to. I saw the school in 1993 at the former student reunion we had. It is not big at all. It is small. It used to look so big compared to the houses we had and the distance used to look so far from the hostel, but it is very close. And um, I don't, so it was... yes it gets very discouraging trying to talk about it because it brings back flashbacks.

### Question #8

What do you perceive to be the biggest obstacle in your initial adaptation to life in the residential schools?

1. N/A.

2. < sic > at the school, strapped my hand at it was very painful. Someone told the superintendent that I did something bad but I was innocent. Normally I would be walking around as usual and the Deaf kids would pick on me. They went and reported that I did something wrong. I could read their body language so I would just leave them alone.

3. N/A.

4. Communication.

5. I had experience living in one building and I'm sure other people had their experiences living in a different building. I've been told that some residential schools had different building - one for eating, one for sleeping, one for classroom. So, in comparison, they went in and out, but in our school, we stayed in one building. Oh well. I think it made it more isolating.

6. The communication - Yes. Sometimes I felt frustrated communicating but other times I felt good about it. It depends.

7. N/A.

8. No, I didn't understand. I act like a dog.

9. Sometimes, teacher would get mad at me and tell me to pay attention. It was difficult for me to read it and write it at the same time. I don't really remember what the teachers said to me at all. Yes. Sorry - the teachers said to me at all. Yes. Sorry the teacher. The sign - I am signing with an old dialect. It's very new to me with the new sign.

10. The first when um... I remember this very nice nun. She put this coat over me because I was cold and there was this other nice nun that I would remember and um but she was like the rest. She would clean, wash my hair, practically drilling it into my head.

### Question #9

Could you describe your relationship with the various authority figures at your residential school? ie. house parents, teachers, religious leaders, etc...

1. There was one Deaf teacher named <sic>. She was from <sic>. She taught at the school for many years until she died. There were two superintendents who died and then we got a new superintendent from the United State, <sic>, he wouldn't allow Deaf girls to sign. This made us very unhappy because we could not hear and were forced to speak because signing was forbidden. It is very hard for Deaf people to speak when they cannot hear. When <sic> saw Deaf boys signing he would walk up to them and slap their faces. <sic> from <sic> was not allowed to sign in the school. In June he went to the Deaf Organization and told the President about what was happening. They held a convention to discuss it. And the president held a secret meeting to discuss it and they wrote a letter to the government and sent it to them. The letter requested that the government fire <sic> and the government agreed and fired him. He was fired because he refused to let Deaf students sign.

2. N/A.

3. Yes. I was picked on by three or four of the nuns. When I was lifted off the floor, my Deaf peers saw what was happening. They were numb, too. When she shook me, my head was smashed against the wall. When she dropped me on the floor, my arm got cut and was bleeding. The blood got onto my dress, so I had to change my clothing. They made me take off my dress, and I had to stand in the middle of the street in public view, wearing only my undergarments. They made me walk around the school yard like that - and the public could look at me in my undergarments. I was very humiliated. I felt cold - it was in the fall and for sure I was very cold. The nun kept pushing me - and she told me I had to keep the incident to myself, and I wasn't to tell my father. I said "O.K.", and I kept it to myself. I did not cry, and I continued to keep it to myself. I was so shocked and numb, and this caused me to keep it to myself. When I got dressed, I put on another dress with long sleeves to cover the bruises. When I got home on the week end, my father asked me how did that happen. I would lie - I told him I had a fight with one of my peers. So I would cover up the true stories. You know, as a kid, I always thought it was normal for adults to assault us. That's what I thought - because I didn't know my parent well.

Another example: There was a rule that we had to put our hair up in pigtails if it was longer than shoulder-length. But the Deaf nun said it was O.K. to wear my hair down, while the hearing nuns said I couldn't. One nun suggested to me to play it safe and put on an elastic band to keep my hair up, in order to avoid problem with nun < sic > (who always assaulted me). I said O.K. and ran up to the third floor to pick up the elastic band, and when I got on the elevator, after pressing the button. The door opened and the < sic > nun, who was always picking on me was there. I was alone - without other peers nearby - we were supposed to be in pairs, but I had gone by myself. Nun < sic > asked "What are you doing here?" and I told her i was getting my elastic band. She smacked my ears and I was shaking and the nun laughed at me. She went on to shake me physically, and she dragged me to the floor, and I started to cry. She pulled my hair through the elastic way too tight. It felt like the back of my hair was being pulled out, and that was extremely painful. I was screaming and I told her - "It hurts - it hurts," but she continued to pull it tighter and tighter. I felt like I could shoot her. She slapped my face. I felt that there was no reason to assault me, and that I was a target for assault. They continued to slap my face. I got disorientated and confused, and they continued to tightened my pigtails. I tried to hold my hair (and keep them away) and they said not to touch my head. The back of my head was bleeding by them. They squeezed the back of my head, and clawed at it so there were scratches on the back of my head. She dragged me to the elevator and pushed me in. The Deaf nun was in the elevator and saw what happened and she told me that she didn't mean for this to happen. She tries to explain to the hearing nun that she had permitted me to go upstairs for the elastic band. Another example: In the classroom. Sometimes when I sat down, I was so bored. So I would close eye contact with the teacher and started talking to my classmate. I would ignore the teacher, and the teacher would tell me to shut up and pay attention. What they did - they kept on assaulting me. By the time I was eight - nine years old, when the teacher told me to shut - up, she would pull me up and drag me to the corner of the room. She would put masking tape over my mouth and tied my hands behind the chair. (Hands are the main communicators). That goes on every day - sometimes it could go on for an hour or two. Sometimes I would make funny facial expressions to my classmates, and I was sent to the bathroom and I was made to sit on the toilet seat, while all the other girls went by me. They said I was a bad girl. You can imagine the smell of urine in the toilet ... and I was made to sit there for an hour or two. I got very angry - I was to hold my bladder - I couldn't pee, so I would wet my pants because there was no way I could control my bladder. Maybe by the time I was ten - I became more angry by the way I was treated. And I got my peers to be on my side and agree with me. What we did? - We broke the windows in the basement - all twenty four windows in the basement were broken. A whole bunch of us threw things through the windows. Nobody discovered who did this. What was worse - they called the police and the police asked us 'Who did this?', but nobody would squeal (We were a team). Ever since then, they never found

out who did it.

I felt really good that we were able to get it out of our system, and every one has a mutual feeling about the situation. You know, just < sic > and I were strong leaders - just the two of us - and you know, the nuns had the tendency to assault just Betsy and me. It caused both of us more rage and anger, in exchange. With all the police reports - they had no evidence who did it. And all of us sit quietly and kept it to ourselves. They would try to get us to confess who did it - we'd pretend and say 'None of us did it.' During bedtime, at night - the nuns had the habit of putting their shoes into a shoe box and a small box for their possessions - you know - the little things - I would slam the lid up and down, and the nuns would get angry about the noise. She was really pissed off and she would come into the dorm to find out who was doing it. We all stayed in our beds and pretended to sleep.

When we made noise, the nuns got very angry. The nun woke us up and said "Who did it?" Then the nun was inspecting back and forth, and I began thumping on a shoe box. The nun came to the door and caught me. I tried to pretend to sleep. You know what she did? She pulled on my bed post and moved my bed close to the stairwell. She moved my bed to a public area, where everyone could see me, and taunt me. For example, by the stairwell - in one corner was the living room, and in another room was the dormitory (with rows of beds) and I was made to sleep in the hallway by the stairwell. I was in the open where all the other kids could see me - and that was the nun's way of punishing me.

Nun < sic > was shocked by the red marks on my face - she also could see that the back of my head was bleeding. She was so shocked and numb to discover I had been assaulted by them. I have always been the target and I don't know why. The Deaf nun felt disgusted, but numb, and she felt sorry for me. That's just one of the many incidents.

4. Not really - not really. I don't even bother about the houseparents who reprimanded or scolded me, or even explained and taught me discipline. I just wanted them to leave me alone, - this my own life. Sometime, the teacher or houseparent reprimanded me. And sometimes the other persons who were reprimanded more harshly than I was, and I felt sorry for those persons. And when I saw some kids received severe reprimanded and there was sometimes no reason for the reprimand - it was unreasonable.

Wow. Yes. It depends on the individual houseparent. Some are very strict, while others are lenient, and others can be very understanding - others are wishy-washy. There were some houseparents I really liked - maybe two or three of them. And the rest - I didn't get too involved with them.

5. < sic > - < sic > - the houseparent. She was so good to us. She was so good to all of us. She treated each of us as a person -not as a Deaf person. It's not like < sic > - she thought we were all stupid. We never looked up to her, but we

looked up to < sic > . < sic > treated us equally, and took us to her apartment for dinner. And she would buy us drinks and she would take us to the park - she was a special woman. I was so impressed and I felt so bad when I heard someone murdered her. It was such a scary time. That woman - she really impressed me and she treated us well.

She was a wonderful woman - she wasn't married; she wasn't a mum, but she was so wonderful.

And she was very flexible - we would watch TV late at night. Oh yes. yes. Right. And you know, she took us out of the isolation cycle. That's right. When we were younger we were isolated. But as we got older and became more and more independent, and she encouraged us and she often took us out of the Deaf school environment. I think she was fifty years old. Oh. Was she sixty-five years old when she died? She's sixty-five! Time to retire. Oh boy.

The houseparents were too highly authoritarian and too much regulations. But to compare with teachers, they were just teaching us - nothing else.

Yes. But I still know that both are equal. But the houseparents were too authoritarian. I like the teachers - they weren't as strict. Oh yes, < sic > . He was a fine teacher, but the houseparent - no way. You know it; s equal like 101 Dalmations - you know that woman on 101 Dalmations - she's very much like the houseparents. (Cruella Deville) You know the couple - like a teacher, < sic > I was so impressed with her as a teacher and she taught us very well. She was very patient, but < sic > , - no, nothing like that. And he had no patience. And in math, he would write things on the blackboard and he would be talking towards the blackboard and not towards the students. We couldn't hear him - he was so stupid so we would make fun of him. And he would often reprimand us and scold us, too. < sic > - he's a great guy. He taught us Science and he worked with us. He used a lot of test tubes. But, < sic > - NO!

Yes. That's right. O.K. The teachers forbade us to use sign language in the classroom. We all had to use Oral. They forced us to wear hearing aid. I often ignored that and left my hearing aid in my bedroom. We would often hide our hearing aid cord inside our bras. There was one teacher who caught me, and I had to go back to my bedroom, and attach the body aid. I lost a star on my class chart for that. Do you remember < sic > , who transferred to < sic > . He's the one who had thick glasses and the big round shape. He used to be so restless - I've tried to remember the name of his teacher - that teacher put a rope around him to keep him in his chair. He was stuck in the chair and he couldn't sign. And < sic > and < sic > I didn't realize that our hands made noise when we sign. And that while < sic > was facing the blackboard with the students behind her. We were so bored, me and my classmates - and we started to make fun of her behind her back.

6. Most of the time my relationships were O.K. but when they start to criticize me they turned me off. If they respect me then I respect them back. Most of the time the teachers were good but I would get sick of how they criticized me and

that would ruin our relationship.

Yes. I recall in 1971 when I went to Deaf school I felt a lot of Deaf pride and later on I started to realize what was going on because the teachers would not allow us to communicate in sign in the class, we had to put our hands under our legs. We were made to speak orally. We had to wear black and white uniforms. A white shirt with a black jumper and our hair had to be cut short. The boys had to have a crew cut and the girl's had to have their hair cut above their shoulders. I was bitter about having to keep my hair short but I had to accept it.

One time I was visiting a friend in her dorm and we were signing and a counsellor came in and started to criticize us for signing. I was confused because this is our language so why was she criticizing us?

She was a hearing counsellor and she was very old-fashioned. She made me very frustrated. When I went home I wanted to go back to Deaf school and when I was at Deaf school I wanted to go home. One year later when I went back to Deaf school in the fall, some changes had been made. We no longer had to wear uniforms and in our classes we started to use fingerspelling but OH GOD! Fingerspelling in class!? My eyes got so tired from watching the fingerspelling. It was very hard to catch everything that was being said and so often I would miss a lot of the information. A few years later things changed again and they started "Signing Exact English". This was confusing. Then later they added more stuff, for example LOVELY and Love + ly. Another example is GOOD MORNING and Good Morn + ing. Another example is Going or Go + ing. Another example is using the past tense ( motion over the shoulder). I didn't like the way they added so many unnecessary things. I felt it was too much. It was so over exaggerated and I got tired watching. It was waste of time.

7. So far when I was growing up, I never had a problem with the hearing staff and teachers. I am one of the best role models in the school because I have been very involved with a lot of activities.

8. Most time, it's negative. They didn't teach us English skills. Second, they take over and control us. It makes us feel like we are slaves and they are the king. Many of us Deaf people are frustrating with them because they don't know ASL or Deaf Culture. For example, when we stomp our feet on the floor, they would tell us to stop stomping on the floor. They said we had to learn to yell. We are Deaf ...

No, I don't remember, but they are two different senior supervisors named < sic > and < sic >. < sic > is so sweet, but < sic > is strict. But one of them believed we are all equal, but whenever we did something she didn't like, she would explode at us and give us shit. But what was strange was that she gave shit to others but not to me. I don't know why. I used to be as mischievous, and a little devil, just like the rest of the students. I think the supervisor didn't know my background, and they advised her to keep an eye on < sic >. < sic > was a very sweet woman. I don't know if she is still alive today. I love her anyway.

She was very nice and a good communicator. She often tried to keep me. I often ignored her, and I know she loved me, but I didn't want to get that attention. I worked it through. She gave me lots of attention, and whenever I don't like the way things are going, she gave me "time out". She is so down to earth. Most teachers are strict. Many teachers are only there for a short time, but < sic > has been there for a long time - for about five-six years, and compared to many other counsellors - many other counsellors - maybe they lasted two-three years. Some of them stayed two-three years. retired or went somewhere else.

Most of them are very sweet to me. The Home Economic teacher was good and I had a fun time there. I remembered I threw a cake one time, and the teacher exploded at me and I was sent to the principal's office. I was a real devil at fifteen-sixteen years old. I was sent to the office. They had interpreters at that time.

Most of the time, the communication was through fingerspelling, not signing. It was oral as well. When I signed, they would interrupt and tell me "I don't understand you." I was a bit of a teen age rebel. I kept signing and tried to get out of it, and I was told "You don't do that".

I was told to stay and sit down. I was sitting there, staring around the room for an hour. Then I went back to the classroom.

9. I feel that I bother hearing people. You know how being Deaf is like that. And I feel that hearing people's attitude is that they get so sick of Deaf people - that is how I feel. I feel that hearing people don't like Deaf people and I can tell with their expressions. Often, hearing people will say "forget it" and they walked away from me.

10. There was no relationship. Well, I saw them as adults, as people I didn't understand. That is all I saw them as. But they were the authority somehow and that's how I regard them - they were authority and i didn't understand them. And um the only communication I guess I had with them was through the older boys.

#### Question # 10.

Did the school or those in authority positions try to install a sense of pride within you and the other students for your identity as an Aboriginal (or Deaf) person? If not, what did they try to teach you about yourself.

1. They taught me how to look for a job but I mostly worked in a factory.

2. N/A.

3. Never. Because when I was three years old, I was looked after by a baby-sitter. My father went to work and my mother was < sic > . So, I didn't get to



know them very well. So, it was very confusing - I had two different identities. When I went to the babysitter's - I had a mother and father there. When I went home, I had another set of parents there. As a result, I was very confused, and I kept it to myself. I have been silent, too.

4. Yes. I would say. There are four Deaf teachers and I am content with them. But with the hearing teachers, - they are just O.K. I have not received motivation from them. From 1970's, and that time it was orally. For me, it wasn't that clear, and I didn't understand. But then after that, it (communication) improved. After a few years, because of the signing. At that time, Signing Exact English was taught. Where is ASL instructions? - And I prefer this.

5. No. Never. Oh yes < sic >, < sic >, and < sic >, - all. When I got older, in grade eight or nine, - O.K. that's right - seven and eight. I was surprised because they all could sign and that was so neat and I had conversation with them. But they had to restrict themselves and follow school rules. They were not allowed to use sign language in classes, and for sure, if then had been signing in the classes, I would have had much better education, and be more on par with hearing. Oral teaching was way over my head and I lost interest in classes. Signing was wonderful, but the teachers couldn't use it because they were afraid of losing their jobs. Until I was in Grade Nine when we began to protest for total communication. What happened then was there was a group of us who went to < sic > for sports and we competed with other Deaf people. I realized there were more Deaf people, and we hung around them - it was during the week ends. Thus the week after, a whole bunch of us went back on the bus. After the events - I think we arrived on a Wednesday or Thursday - I can't remember. And I think we did see the classes. I can't remember it all. I do remember seeing the classes, and I was shocked that the young children, - even the juniors - all used sign language in the class. In my school, we weren't allowed to do that - it was all oral.

They however, signed. I felt that their approach to education was more intelligent compared to my school. All of us felt resentful. When we all went back home - < sic >, < sic >, < sic > - across the < sic >. They had a small house then and we often went to their house on the weekends. We discussed the whole thing and they suggested we protest/picket. We said - "No way." But they said - "Many people take action by protesting. It should work." So we made the pickets and this went on for the next two week ends at their house. When we finished making the banners for picketing, we discussed plans. Before that, when we had a student council, - all of us got involved with the student council after our trip to < sic > - me, and < sic >. We brought forth a motion at the student council that sign language should be allowed in the class. I thought we should have the same thing in < sic > as there was in < sic > when we brought it forward at our school, they rejected our motion. < sic > rejected it. So, me, < sic >, < sic >, - all three of us went to < sic > at the principal's office and negotiated, but again,

our motion was denied. That made us more angry, and we felt oppressed and we began to realize they were very controlling. Then, we went to the Deaf adult's home and they helped us to draw the banners. At that time - < sic > - his father knew nothing about what was happening. So < sic > had been using the car and he came to school. We stayed in the lounge and while we were watching and waiting. When we saw < sic > drive up, we organize the other girls - you know - we got them together, and we all marched outside. The houseparents were curious, and they didn't know what was going on. All of a sudden, all the students were outside of the building. And < sic >, one of the houseparents grabbed and hold of me and would not let me go out of the building. She told me I could not go out while the other students went to < sic >'s car and picked up the banners, and went to the front of the building and handed out flyers. And I remembered < sic > came to my rescue and I got away from houseparents. That's right - it was < sic > who tried to hold me down in the Deaf school. After an hour, I had to go to the bathroom, but they would not let us in to use the bathrooms. There was a < sic > - I forget his name -- < sic > - that's right - < sic >. When he heard about it and came and got involved. He helped us make more copies and hand out the flyers. More people took notice and read our flyers. The flyers listed the reasons for picketing - it was because we wanted total communication, and the inclusion of sign language in the classroom. That went on for two days or maybe one and a half days, - and < sic >, the principal had flown somewhere in < sic > for a meeting, and she heard about it and she had to fly back to < sic >. She was very angry - and she met me and < sic >. I was confronted by her and she demanded to know the reasons for our picketing. We told her that we wanted sign language in class. We said that compared to < sic >, where they have sign language in their classes. There were also other Deaf schools where sign was allowed, and we wanted that too.

I wanted it badly. Children would have a better chance to understand the language and have access to a better education. Oral teaching was always over our heads. < sic > still resisted our protest, so we had to stay outside. We were denied our lunch, bathroom access, and we all had to go to the store to buy stuff. The protest continued, and we were denied supper. < sic > - I don't know how he did it, but he got the money and brought us Mcdonald's to eat. They let us to sleep. But the next day, the houseparents - they did not say a thing to us. Yes. On the second day, they left us alone and let us do what we wanted to do and again, we stayed outside. We continued to picket, and I think that was when < sic >, the principal flew back. < sic > said we would negotiate and talk about it. So we went back to the class again. We went back to normal schedules - use the bathroom, eat, use the classroom. And our motion passed, and we were very jubilant and excited that we won. We were interviewed on television with reporters and < sic > was involved and he was great. You know, I asked < sic > to use her carbon copier machine for the flyers. At that time, she didn't realize what we were using her machine for. She thought it was for classroom purposes and when she found out it was for the protest, she was really pissed off

at us. Now, when I look back, I think she felt threatened because she could have lost her job. And some of the other staff thought < sic > was being involved with our plans, but she wasn't. She was really mad at us and told us that she wished we had told her advance.

6. Most of the time when they tried to attack my self-esteem. I would resist and that made me stronger. When we had a Deaf counsellor, she would help us to ignore the attacks on our self-esteem and that would help us as well. I became stronger because of the Deaf counsellor otherwise my self-esteem would have been diminished. I probably would have become a negative person had not the Deaf counsellor not helped me to ignore them and not let the hearing counsellors control us or criticize us. I learned to rebel more and this made me stronger in my identity and my values.

7. Really, most Deaf teachers recognize that I can do it and that I can be anything I want to be. They always give us empowerment by saying we can do it and so on. For example compared with the hearing teachers they always tell us "No, you can't" and I tell them "I can, really, I can do it" and I tell them that I know Deaf people can do it." Deaf people always tell us that we can do it. This shows the hearing teacher's negative attitude toward the Deaf. Sometimes hearing teachers support us and help us with some positive attitudes.

If there was no Deaf role models, I probably wouldn't have good skills, such as in gestures and grammar. I think it would have been really hard and I think I need to know all the Deaf exposure in order to fully understand before I leave high school. It is really important. If we don't get it, how are we going to understand and get the answer from it? It is very important that all the Deaf schools have the same ideas so we can build better networking for the future. It is very important that we keep updated about current events, for example: < sic >, the first Deaf teacher at < sic > and we all should have a special day for all of us and get together for a variety of activities and we should also have a Deaf children's festival and Deaf people should take up these ideas. This is the key, if there are no Deaf leaders then our deaf community, our culture would collapse for sure.

8. Never.

9. N/A.

10. I guess um at the time I was too young to understand like those concepts then I remember learning about numbers and letters and we look at these letters and I wondered wow what are these? You know I remember having difficulty pronouncing some letters so when it came to that, I guess, like other than all the strict rules I ummm... used to wonder who were these people? These adults speaking this strange language and um.. I guess I spoke... I just spoke my

language, Inuktituk then so I guess I had, I guess I was... the only thing I knew was my life and so I didn't know enough about it yet to say... I don't know...it gets lost in the background, I think because the other stuff that happened. Once I work through most of the other stuff I have been through, the issue of culture, then I could talk about that... We were there to learn English, become educated I guess. I think they were around some cultural teachings, like um.. French, going out for walks, looking at things outside. It was (sign) it was difficult to explain, the major focus was to get us to pray.

### Question #11.

Were your teachers Deaf/Native? If not, do you think that there would have been a difference had your teachers also been Deaf or Aboriginal? How important do you think it is that there be Deaf/Aboriginal teachers in the residential schools for the Deaf/Aboriginal?

1. All of them were oral/hearing.
2. Yes it makes a difference. It would make a difference for all hearing teachers to sign in class. Someone told me in the past there were Deaf teachers and hearing teachers signed. This make the level of education superior to what is now. But the government excluded all Deaf teachers from the Residential Schools. The government should network with Deaf people so they can work together.
3. No. Never. I never had any Deaf teachers - all of my teachers were hearing. And of course, we had one or two Deaf houseparents. And what one of the sisters - Sister < sic > - her job is to help and clean and make our beds. And she was treated like she was a servant or a slave. She had lower status than the other nuns (because she was Deaf). They would never allow her to be a teacher. Yes. Because we both have the same Deaf culture and Deaf identity, and we understood each other, and we had the common experience of going to Galluadet College. What makes me feel good is that we all sign each other - no barriers - and we all have a common understanding of our weakness and our strengths, and what our needs are - And being with Deaf people, - we are so compatible with each other. To interact with a hearing teacher - it was a barrier because we did not understand her oral speaking and their view of us that we had a low status, and inferior language abilities - they were very oppressive. There was never an understanding of our Deaf Cultural or identity - it has never been that way. Whenever I interact with hearing people, I had low self-esteem because they didn't understand Deafness. But when I spoke to my brother, he understood, and that helped me build my own self-esteem. He is very supportive, and we both have a very strong Deaf identity. But to expect to have all the Deaf teachers to

have a high quality of teaching - no - you will find some can be bad, others O.K., and some others can be very good. And that's so true - it's the same about the hearing world, too. You know, it really makes no difference, but I would rather have Deaf teachers because we have the same bonding. With signing, we are very comfortable amongst ourselves.

Yes. But when I left, they all of sudden recruited several Deaf teachers. At < sic > , yes, there were two Deaf teachers. And one had gone to Galluader College. Their names were < sic > and , sic > . They were the two - yes.

I feel it is very important to keep the Deaf residential schools - yes. But not unless there are Deaf teachers there- if they are run by hearing nuns. no thank you!

And I will never trust the nuns - no thank you! If there is a hearing teacher. - no thank you! I prefer Deaf teachers, Deaf principal and all Deaf staff, but if they hire hearing people who know sign language and know Deaf culture, that would be O.K., but I would really prefer to have Deaf professionals.

4. I had a Deaf adult as a role model. Yes.

5. The Deaf teacher in Deaf school. Yes - Yes. As a role model. So, we could feel comfortable and we were all right. So and we are not at a low par or standard because we are Deaf. And we are not stupid, compared with hearing people. You know, the houseparents and teachers, they feel we are like mentally retarded. But being with other Deaf peers - we feel we are alike. We are very much the same. And we understood each other the way we signed together. You know, the hearing staff, they don't sign - they use oral language only. Yes. It's a better role model. Yes. They showed me that we can be proud of ourselves as Deaf people. O.K. - with hearing teachers and hearing supervisors - they looked down on us as deaf people. But with the Deaf instructors - they look upon us as a Deaf person - not as a 'deaf.' Me, I am a Deaf person first. I am Deaf and there's nothing wrong.

6. It would have been a wonderful experience and it would have raised our level of education to par. It would have been more efficient especially in regards to communication skills and I am sure our English would have improved greatly. For sure because in the past the hearing teachers would always criticize us. They would waste our time. They should have focused on sign language but they only criticize for not using Signing Exact English when we signed ASL. This affected our ability to learn English. There was also too much focus on oral which was a waste of time. What is the purpose of learning to speak? If there were no speech classes we would have definitely caught up in our English. Our education would have been of a much higher quality.

7. Yes. There are three teachers named < sic > , < sic > and < sic > , they are all Deaf. We also have three Deaf assistants and about five Deaf counsellors.

Two males and two females and one male, who is just starting his training to be a counsellor.

Always, but really it depends on the individual. What courses you want to take. When I knew about the Deaf teacher and the specific subjects so that I could take what ever I want.

No. When I was growing up, I didn't have a Deaf teacher but when I got older when I was in grade eight, they hired a new Deaf teacher. At that time the Deaf teacher taught elementary school. They had Deaf teachers for grade nine, ten, eleven. In Grade Eleven? Yes in Grade Eleven, there is no Grade Twelve. This year I am in Grade Thirteen and I am taking 2 courses from Deaf teachers.

Yes. Some hearing teachers are really good teachers but I always enjoy having a Deaf teacher because of communication understanding of each other. When I slam the table or use physical contact to get attention, the Deaf teacher understands that this is the norm. What's more is the Deaf teachers are offering more subjects and I get more out of them. I know what to do and we often discuss things with the Deaf teacher compared with the hearing teachers who lectured us and with little interaction.

8. I think so - yes. If there were Native Deaf School teachers. They would be able to explain native culture to Deaf Native students. Then they would teach about policy, system, and for sure I would have participated. I would have established a Deaf Native Association back in 1988. Can you imagine I am the only one - and no one else. Where are the other Cultural identities?

If there were Native Deaf teachers in < sic > today, I would be so thrilled. And for sure they would be teaching Deaf students there, and encourage them, and influence them.

For sure, if < sic > decided to establish a Native Deaf school there, I would be very happy. Maybe have small classes. In the past, there used to be a school run by the non-native people in my home town until 1985. Now the school is run by the Native people. What they have now is a school for young children. Pretty soon, they are going to build a high school. And this is so late. And I hope this will be the same for Native Deaf people as well (establishing their own school).

9. I don't know - I think I hear them now. No. I think it would be good if they all have Deaf teachers for Deaf students. They would have a better understanding and a clearer understanding - better. With hearing teachers - they always complain because it is very difficult to read lips and we don't understand them. It's difficult, and I prefer it that they sign. That way, we could learn faster and have more new information. I think it would be better to have Deaf teachers for Deaf children, so they could have the same identity. It is better for them to be the same. I would think so. It would be better.

10. I think it would have made a big difference because it would have allowed more for our freedom. I guess somehow they would have allowed more for our

freedom. I guess somehow they would have become more aware of what was actually happening behind, in the rooms within the rooms at the hostel. The ones that were not in the curriculum. They would have noticed that something was not right that...they would have realized that something was wrong...it, all the abuse was going on all the time. I was surprised that no one found out.

## Question #12.

How would you describe your relationship with the other residents at the residential school?

1. N/A.

2. Well I need three or four more years of school in <sic>. I was not interested because I always got in trouble in school. As you remember, I was very good in history and all the other Deaf boys and girls were jealous of me. It was a good school and when I worked I was very quiet and all the other girls and boys were jealous of me because I was really good at history.

3. Yes, when I am with Deaf friends, it's really neat and we interact well. The communication is wonderful. Often, when we communicate, I create drama and story - telling, and I often create and produce the characters for most Deaf students. It was a lot of fun to make the set for the play. And you know, today, more Deaf people have been mainstreaming and they don't have their own identity within Deaf culture. And they don't have the confidence. For example, when I hang around with the Deaf group half have experienced abuse and other half are very supportive, and it balances the group. We had a lot of fun being together, and there has been no problem with that.

4. O.K. There was a part where I had bad experiences. I was O.K. with my Deaf peers, but when I was hanging around with hearing people, it was not all that positive. I would interact with them at home - made gestures and sign. And sometimes I would teach them to sign and fingerspelling and they were learning it. And those days, - the hearing teenagers - they were awful when they interacted with the Deaf.

I used to be involved with a gang at that time when I was a teenager. At that time over the years, our gang membership grew. And there was one Deaf guy who accused me for no reason, and I was branded and blacklisted. And I was innocent that time, and at that time I was hanging around with a Deaf group. At that time, I was really out of the Deaf group. I didn't care about how they hurt me. So, I left the group and I had another group of Deaf friends who were older and joined this group of Deaf people. And it went well. Then it changed, - we started getting into drugs. And then I started to look at them - they weren't "growing up"

and they were so fucked up with the drugs. And I noticed they were a bad influence. And often they would pick a fight on me, and I didn't care. And throughout the time I was growing up, and by the time I graduated, I didn't care to keep up the contact with friends. And after all those years, they started to realize that I didn't do that on purpose in the past. And they discovered it was another boy who had caused the bad influence. And now, they apologized to me, and I didn't care about it then. Up till now, I lost those friends, and I now hang around with hearing people in my home town. And I am happier. Most of the time, when I hang around with hearing friends, we played sports, like hockey, etc.

5. You know, it's like having a second family in Deaf school. But you know we always signed 'Deaf school' but we had to change the sign to residential school instead. And we always played with girls, - we often skated - and we often stayed inside. The whole school has dorms, classroom - so we didn't get to go out often. So, we played often inside. At night, we didn't often go outside, and then it's a bedtime. Yes. Right. That's right. Yes. I think it's because we are all Deaf - we are all the same. We are like brothers and sisters. That's right. < sic > and < sic > .

6. We were so bonded. We grew up together for so many years and there was a strong bond between us like brother and sister.

7. Often many of my classmates would come to me to help them learn as much as possible from the hearing teachers. Now there are more and more hearing teachers who are taking courses on Deaf culture so that they now know better what to do with the education of the Deaf. It has been progressing ever since they began to understand "Bi-Bi". They have improved the quality of education. They have also benefitted from more Deaf people (teachers). Also, really, Deaf culture and Deaf studies are not required as a credit but maybe in the future. It will become mandatory for all Deaf students before they can graduate from High School. I think it should be mandatory for all the Deaf to take courses in Deaf studies and Deaf culture. It is just like with the French group to their own school and being required to learn French. It is the same idea.

- 1) I am a student rep. and I contacted and go to different schools.
- 2) I am a founder of the student parliament which is a very good thing to have.
- 3) I give empowerment to the students. For example, one of the staff, a Deaf counsellor, was being laid off and I lobbied for the Deaf counsellor to be rehired.

8. I would sneak out in the middle of the night. We would play with the lights. We'd flick them off and so on, and do other mischievous things. The counsellors would have a fit when we were mischievous. From that time until now, I have



been discussing this with my old friends. We talked about the counsellors who don't understand us and don't use ASL, etc. etc. They don't meet our needs. Deaf people have a tendency to talk for a long periods of time (in detail). It takes a long time to say good bye (or greet each other). It's like our feet are on a sand paper floor - we can't move. It's hard to move away from a conversation). The Deaf community is very small. The hearing community is large. It's like a basketball thing. In the Deaf community, we are like brother and sister. Compared to the Deaf Community, where we are strongly bonded together. - the hearing community is not strongly bonded together.

9. I don't know. What do you mean? Well, no. Sometimes we would fight. Sometimes they would squeal on me. Sometimes we would have some disagreements and then we would forget about it. Sometimes we would have a lot of fun and we'd go crazy but it was fun. It was good but I don't remember what this was about.

10. I'm finally starting to understand why... like some were pretty rough...some were OK. I remember some traumatic experiences. I'm just starting to deal with stuff now and I'm realizing how some of the other kids were affected, and how the only way to deal with it was to deal with those closest to them at the time, us, each other and because of the nature of the abuses and the imprinting and the conditioning it was pretty scary sometimes, ahhh it was... I remember at the time I was too young...It was a natural defence against to understand what was happening... To all the sudden change I took it as it came. Years later I got this feedback from my family. It was not all that good. How I was like before I went and when I went. It was hazy and after I returned home the family situation was terrible and got worse. When I left home for High School I told myself I was never going back home. I thought it was because of all their problems but I didn't realize it was the after affects of Residential School that they had... there was no more communications whatsoever. And so now since the reunion and therapy I'm starting to connect again with my family and we started to make amends, most of us, with each other and its a real turnaround, it's a lot of work, it's not something that changes right away, it's takes a lot of work but it's changed so much now... I guess I'm lucky being down here having access to resources like the centre for treatment for childhood trauma and sexual abuse ... I have access to professionals. That's what I'm working with personally and at the same time trying to get the centre for treatment to go North to several communities and to get survivors to know this is available, we can arrange it, if you want it, it's here. If you want to come down to Ottawa for counselling therapy, specialized, focused attention. There are healing circles up there now and community wellness initiatives set up by the government but this is personal to us. To deal with in the healing circles, go to the core of the trauma. So that's where we are at, that's where I am at.

### Question # 13.

How were everyday activities (like eating meals, waking in the morning, recreational time ...) handled by (the houseparents...)?

1. You mean school? Well every morning at 6:30, we would go to the washroom, get dressed, make our bed. Everyone did their own jobs on their own.

The superintendent inspected the room and our clothing. Then we would all gather in the dining room for breakfast, lunch and dinner. They are all the same. The superintendent took us to the school bus to go to a movie or to church in the city. Everyone went to their own church.

2. The Supervisor would wake up all the boys in the morning. After that we would wash up and shave then we would make our bed. We were all responsible for cleaning our room. After that we'd all get on the wagon to go do our laundry. Then we would have breakfast. All the boys would have to march in a line to the cafeteria to eat. There were separate tables for the girls and the boys. In < sic > today the boys and girls eat together and I think it's better that way. The food is also much better today than in the past. Back then the food was ok but I like coming home in the summer because the food was better at home. At the Deaf school ...so-so.

On Fridays the Catholics would eat fish but the Protestant didn't eat fish, they ate meat. Now these days it doesn't matter, there are choices.

3. Oh yes, Food. There are some certain kinds of food I hate - meat: you know, in the school cafeteria, the foods are always strange. My other peers ate really fast, but I am like a turtle because I eat very slowly. The nun would ask - "Are you done eating?" and I would say "No". That was a major area where I was a target - my eating habits. One of the nuns would force large portions of food into my mouth, and I almost cut my tongue with knife. Another time, I was choking when she did this to me. The nun slapped my back and the food came out, then she shoved the food back into my mouth. I would cry, and I didn't want to eat like this. But when I was assaulted, I would not cry. Every time I was force-fed, I would cry, and the nun would taunt me and say "Oh, you are a cry-baby". So I kept it to myself and kept silent. There were things I hated to eat, but if I didn't eat them, the nuns would shove it into my mouth. They forced me to drink - they would pour it down my throat and that caused me to choke. That went on almost everyday. Since then, I could not eat, and I refused to eat. I was really thin and I lost interest in eating. I often would scrape my food from the plate into the garbage. Every time I had to clean the plate, I got scared and it brought back bad memories of all psychological abuse. Ever since then, my stomach has not been comfortable about eating habits.

Another example: A Cake. A nun < sic > dropped my cake on the floor, and she

forced me to eat the cake off the floor. I was forced to kneel on the floor and eat the cake. I also was made to lick the floor, and the floor was dirty. I also had to lick the shoes as well. And the nun often laughed at me, pulled my hair and hit me. She would use force to push me down to the floor - I hit my face so hard that it caused my nose to bleed. She would yank me up - and lifted me in the air. That was one of the many incidents, and you know, it was clear that the nun always felt so good about it. They would take out their problems on me. I was treated like a dummy. Yes, with the houseparents - every morning, the nun would wake us up. She would wake up one of the leaders, and then she would take on the responsibility of waking up the others each morning. And another way - we would sometimes take turns to wake up the other girls. We would take turns - according to each bed by bed. As soon as we got up from bed, we immediately had to start to pray, first. Then we would get dressed and washed. And we had to wait in a line for the nuns to spray our feet. When the hours was up, we had to rush into another room and pray again. Then we could go down and eat breakfast. Before we could eat breakfast, we had to pray again. After breakfast, we all had to go to class by nine o'clock. The first lesson at nine o'clock - we had to learn about the Bible and Jesus, and we learned nothing. And by noon, we all lined up again to go downstairs - it was like the military and we ate lunch there. And the houseparents who were nuns would order us to eat everything on our plate. If we had some left that should have been put in the garbage, I would throw it under the table onto the floor. We would then go back to the class until three o'clock. We would go outside and play - skating, tobaganning. If it was spring, we could go on the swings, and the same thing in the fall, we would swing. And also we had a round - about. Then we would go back to the cafeteria at five o'clock and eat supper. Between six-seven p.m., we would go upstairs to play, or we would go outside. At night, we would sometimes go out and skate for an hour. By eight o'clock, we had to change our clothing and put on pyjamas, and get ready to go to bed. Sometime we would go into the lounge and we would play card games, or we would watch TV, but I don't watch much on television, except when there is a lot of action. Most of the time, I would act out the play involved. By nine o'clock, we all had to go to bed and stay there. Every year it was the same routine and nothing changed.

4. I remember when I was a little boy, they would turn on the light, and I hated that because it was so bright first thing in the morning. And I would go back to sleep for another five minutes and the houseparents would shake me to get me up and tell me to get out of the bed. And I had to get up over those years until I went into Senior. Then you are responsible to wake up on your own. And I didn't care because the houseparents only turn on the light once and wake you up, and then you are on your own.

Yes. I remember that. The houseparents. Yes. On Saturdays and Sundays. Mostly, on Saturday and Sundays, everyone had fun time on the week end. We always would get up in the morning to play and the houseparent would prefer us

to get up at seven. Some of us wanted to get up and play at five or six in the morning. One of us would peek out the door, and we'd all rush back to bed. We went back to bed and would pretend to sleep. And each person got strapped on the bum. And I used to get strapped. Some of them did not participate, but were accused and still got strapped, too. And that's what happened.

I see. I remember the houseparent's name - Ooh - what's his name? I remember that houseparent - he was thin, with moustache. He was a really mean person. To describe how mean he was - compared to the others. Other houseparent were O.K. - they were nothing - but that guy - my God.

Yes. Yes. I remember when the lights go on in the morning and the first thing - we had to clean our room and bathe ourselves - you know brush our teeth, comb our hair - everything had to be clean before we marched down for breakfast. At the time, it was very rigid, and I always hated that.

5. O.K. - In the morning during lights on and while we were sleeping. You know, the most I detested was when I was sleeping soundly and the light would go on. Sometimes the houseparent would poke us in the shoulders (very painful). We had to wear a robe to go to the bathroom, then wash our hands, then go back and change and get dressed. We had to make our beds and clean the room. Then we had to stand in line and wait until it was time to march down to the cafeteria. That's right, they would serve us and we would take our tray and sit down. And every morning we would have to take the pill - cod liver oil - remember that? I stress that because it is important it kept us healthy. But some of the food - they forced us to eat it and would often vomit. And after breakfast, we would march back to our dorm to the classroom. Then again at noon, we would have to stand in line to march to the cafeteria. then after lunch, we would play outside. I think that went on for half an hour, then we went back into a line and marched back to the class. Then in the afternoon, we had a break (morning and afternoon) - we had two - fifteen minutes breaks. Then back in the class until four o' clock. Then we played sports - basketball - that's all I can remember. That's right.

6. The counsellors are very picky, every morning the counsellor would kick the bed to make us get up out of bed. A lot of times I wanted to take my time getting up and not be woken so abruptly. If we didn't make our beds neat enough we had to make them over. It felt like we were really being picked on. We had to dust and mop and sweep the floors before going to class. If they hadn't been cleaned well enough we would have to do it again after school. After school we wanted to rest but twice a week we had to go to the gym and exercise after school. Sometimes I didn't feel well enough for physical activity and I just wanted to rest or watch T.V. I worked hard in school all day and I just wanted to rest after but the counsellor said I had to go - it's a must. Otherwise we would be punished and have to stay in our bedroom. I often clashed with the counsellors over silly things.

Later on a group of us got together and discussed the problem and then we confronted the counsellor. At that time I was about thirteen or fourteen years old. We made a list of grievances and got everyone to sign our petition. The counsellor would not support and did not agree with our petition which said that the counsellor could not force us to go to the gym after school. We had enough activity in school all day and why do we need more after school? Also we had homework to do after school. We were told that we still had to go anyway. We argued with them that they could not force us to use our time this way. Later they decided to respect us and we were given the choice to go to the gym. All the counsellors had to ask us if we wanted to go. At the time we became more rebellious and the counsellors realized this and decided to give us more rights - now they can't force us to do anything.

7. Really, when I was seven until first year, I was a resident student. Until recently, just this year, I am no longer a resident, I am called off-campus. I have had enough of being in school. I have been there too long. You know, when I was growing up the counsellor's responsibility was to wake us up in the morning and make sure we all got out of bed. They would turn on flashing lights in the room. Then we all had to get up and take a shower, make our bed, which was mandatory. We would get penalty if we didn't make our bed and no one could leave the bedroom until our beds were made. No one could have a messy bed, it had to be made very neatly. Then everyone had to do thier own duty like sweeping the floor or washing the dishes, cleaning the toilet and sink. Everyone had a different responsibility, someone had to take out the garbage. Everyone was responsible for cleaning everything.

When we were all done, everyone could relax and sit down and watch T.V. until eight o'clock and then we could all go down to the cafeteria and have breakfast. After breakfast we would go back to the dorm and brush our teeth and then when we were done, we were all ready to go to school and then we would go outside and play until it was time for classes.

It has been like that, the same routine, for most of my life. In High School, it was the same thing. The lights turns on but we got up ourselves. The houseparents only woke us up once, not like in the elementary school when the houseparents would wake us all up all the time. Many of us had to get up and take a shower, etc... It was the same routine until very recently. There has now been a change. From now on, we are to make our own breakfast because there were cuts to the staff in the cafeteria. So, we would all make our own breakfast and then when we were done, we would all head to classes and that's just about it.

8. I remember eating the food - Indian food bannock, meat. We don't measure it. We eat caribou, fish, beaver meat, but as I got older and watched my parents, I could not eat again. And it was awful - I can't describe it. What's the other meat I tasted - you know. I can't describe the taste. It's a meat, but I have tasted

other kind of meat, and they are O.K. But the beaver meat, it tasted like vaseline. I could not swallow it and I had to spit it out.

Right. I eat vegetables and meat and different meat like chicken and hamburger, and I got used to them. When I went home I was very reluctant to eat my parent's cooking. My sister was learning to cook spaghetti, and that was okay. I love Mexican food; I love Chinese food and variety, but my family - NO!

I have tried different varieties from < sic > and Gallaudet, and they all tasted different. One thing is a problem - some spicy food. The Mexican have some spicy food and I don't like them. It's nothing but burritos and tacos - they are not bad. I like them. But strong, spicy - no way! When you taste it, it burns - your face get hot.

9. No - They would flick the lights (flashing light) on and off - and when I was sleeping, they would turn a flashing light on and off. I was so tired getting out of bed in the morning. Sometimes some of the students would not get out of bed. The housemothers would walk over and shake them up and told them to get out of bed, and they would get up then. The housemother would be talking orally - but no signing.

And it was a very repetitive pattern - we'd all get up at the same time - go to the washroom at the same time, - then get dressed and lined up - all at the same time. Then we marched to the cafeteria but we had to go outside the residence building to another building to get to the cafeteria. Then, we would march to another building to get to the classrooms after breakfast. First, when we went into a line up and were marched to the cafeteria. We all had to go into the cafeteria in a line, then be seated in groups at the tables. When we were all finished our meal, when then got up to leave at the same time. Then we all marched down to the basement, to wash our hands together. Then when we were done cleaning ourselves up, we then marched upstairs and to the classroom. We all formed into groups depending on the first alphabetical letters of our last names from A, B, C, D, E, F....

When you go into the classroom, you were instructed where you were to go. Maybe you were supposed to go to hairdressing classes or cooking classes, sewing classes... everyone had their own duty to learn, and I liked that system. But, you know, I got so sick of all the teacher who communicated orally and it made it so difficult to learn. Today, the younger Deaf students are very lucky because they have the advantage of being able to use sign language and they are able to understand things much better. And they understand more clearly and it is easier for the Deaf. They are lucky. Oh well.

10. (laughs) I remember one of the first times when I went to Residential School I woke up I saw these boys getting ready for mass um so it's kind of difficult to determine where the line was. The older boys were the main means of communication. I was watching all this stuff going on. It was something that I'm receiving therapy for now. It was something I was told not to speak about and I

said "Why?". It was told by an older boy. So, I grew up with this notion that it was his fault. But I started to remember to not speak of it where after he was talking to this Christian brother whose room we were in and um so I started making all these connections and I used to blame the older boy because he told me not to speak but I finally made the connection that it was not him but the Christian brother that was telling me not to speak. Miscommunication. I guess misunderstandings for what happened. I was blaming the wrong individual. Something with the nun... I thought she had ... I woke up once and she was actually helping me out but because I had to be put back to consciousness for having blacked out for being attacked and assaulted and she who was trying to wake me up and it had to be done pretty roughly and I thought she was hurting or scolding or mistreating me for no reason that's what I saw. I saw her first. I was blaming her for that time when apparently she was saving my life. Those are the things that I'm dealing with now.

#### Question #14.

To what extent were you able to maintain communication with your family? i.e. visits, telephone calls, letters ...

1. My mother wrote me a letter every month. Everything was O.K. I would just write the letter and sent it home.

2. In the residential school I wrote a letter to my mother and father every 2 to 3 weeks, sometimes only once a month - that was how we corresponded with each other.

Yes I always wrote the letters myself but the teachers would correct my writing. My mother would always write really long letters.

About three, four to six pages. I would read them ... wow.

3. Never. I never wrote a letter home, never had phone calls.

4. N/A.

5. Yes - with a letter. One thing that really impressed me was my mother. My mother was a teacher and she always corrected my grammar in my letters. I began to wonder what was going on with the teachers (at my school) who were supposed to be checking my writing. What kind of standards - I began to wonder about the kind of standards my teachers had. My mother was a teacher. And I was really impressed with my mom.

We never - we never used to telephone and we were never used TTY in the past. I really don't remember why - I don't remember.

You know the old TTY machine. I don't remember if they had it by the time I

graduated from Deaf school. O.K., when I was eighteen, when the school was about to expel me, when I was living in an apartment on my own. The social worker funded me for room and board. At that time I was going to hearing school for Grade eleven and twelve. But first, when I started grade eleven, I was in the residential school, until Christmas. Then my mother told me I would be moving in with < sic > - One of the teacher's home - because I was eighteen years old. So, then I thought I had better get out of the residential school. It was fantastic - I became independent. Then < sic > and I joined in with a dark skinned teacher. I don't remember her name, but anyway, about two or three months later, they kicked us out. We started partying and smoking. So, they kicked us out. And my mom knew my father's cousin's daughter lived in < sic >, so I went to live with her. Her name is < sic >. < sic >'s father was my Dad's half cousin, so I moved in with her until my second year, I stayed with her and it went really well, and then I got out of school.

6. Sometimes when I tell my parents sometimes they say they didn't know about it. The school never told them and would be puzzled. I went to an infirmary and I saw the prescription for penicillin and in the past I have gotten sick from penicillin and so I just got worse and later the hospital found out I was allergic to penicillin. When I went home my parents took me to see the doctor and I told them to make sure they tell him that I am allergic to penicillin and my mother said "No you're not allergic to penicillin" and I said "Yes I am". And my mother asked "How do you know that?" I told her that I saw the paper at school from the infirmary that said I was allergic to penicillin. My mother said "No" but I said "Yes". I proved it to her because I had the paper with me. When I showed it to her she was very surprised and wanted to know why the school had not informed her. There was no communication between the school and home. I could not figure it out what was wrong or what that meant. There was no follow up report of my health from the school to home. I feel that the school should be more responsible.

I also think they should be informing my family about all the events in my life while I am at school. Sometimes my parents would ask me to write in a journal and bring it home. But I stopped writing in my journal as I got older. As I got older I could communicate more. Sometimes when I got in trouble at school, the counsellor would threatened me that if I did not behave... for example: at one time I misbehaved and the counsellor said I had to do what I was told and if I behaved she would not tell my parents I had gotten into trouble. It was like a bribe so I had to keep quiet. Then the counsellor just dropped it and never reported it to my parents. I did not understand the reason why the counsellor was trying to bribe me but I took advantage of it of course.

I told the story to my parents later and they never knew about it but they did not think it was a big deal.

You know they should not use that as a punishment - saying they will tell my parents and then just dropping it.



Many have had these experiences and told their parents about being punished. The counsellor would threaten us by saying if we told our parents anything we would be punished.

No. But sometimes the Deaf counsellor would say it is no big deal. It is just a normal thing to do. But the hearing counsellor had a tendency to use bribes. They would threaten us to tell our parents. I felt they should not. I felt a lot of conflict over this because I did not want to jeopardize my relationship with my parents because we were so far away from each other and let the hearing counsellor would often pick on me and criticize me. I was afraid of my parents would reject me because I was so far away from home. They found out I was in trouble at school later on but the whole time I was in school I thought my parents would reject me if they knew I had gotten in trouble.

7. It depends. In elementary school, you can only call during a school day if it is an emergency. During my residency, I often make a phone calls in the evening. Sometimes my mother would call me here. It really didn't matter, it was up to the students to decide if they want to make a phone call.

In high school, you can make a phone call during the day even skipping classes to make a call. In high school, we are responsible. We were not spoon-fed babies.

No, it's private.

No. I would have to inform the staff that I would be making a long distance call. The houseparents would say "Fine, go ahead". Any student could do that but some students would have to get staff to make a call for them because of their problems with English.

The counsellor would help them to relay what they want to say, especially for younger children. When they get older, they get more independent and don't need help but young often need help. While in my high school at the residence there were quite a few Deaf people who also had learning disabilities or low functioning. They would ask the houseparents to do the TTY relay for them and the counsellor would try to train them to say "Hi, hello, how are you?" It is a good thing.

Really, in the past I would write letters to my mother. Usually I would send her Christmas card or a Birthday card or an Easter card, but letters? I didn't write that much but most Deaf students do but that was because I went home every week end. When I went home on the week end, there was no need to write a letter because both my parents are Deaf.

8. Before 1981 - 1982, everyone was free to go out and visit our parents, or visit the boys and girls dorm without supervision, - until two Deaf girls got pregnant. The school teacher and counsellors both thought the girls had sex at school, but they had sex outside the school.

Until 1982, this incident caused the school to change visiting hours to Monday - Thursday from 7 pm to 9 pm only, with supervision.

The boys visitation to the girls dorm was only on Thursday nights. They could visit together in the basement with supervision. We cannot go outside of the building - we had to stay in the dorm living room. Same thing when we visited the senior boys dorm - it was supervised. And all this because two girls got pregnant. There have only been two incidents and yet the schools are so strict. If we talk dirty, or have a private conversation, or talk about where we want to meet - it's supervised. It's terrible as we don't get any privacy at all. I don't like the way they discuss it. You know, everything was fine throughout the years, but everything changed in 1981, because of the two girls.

9. I would write a short letter. The teacher would often correct my writing and often tell me I was wrong and try to explain it, and how to fix the sentence, but I would just end up copying from the teacher's writing. After re-writing the final draft, then I would send the letter to my mother.

The teacher would often help me to fix my writing and they often told me that the grammar structure was often backwards. And I had trouble understanding the present, past, and future tenses of verbs. The teachers would often try to help me, but it was very difficult.

10. No, no I couldn't write then. No I don't think we had mail. I remember one of the older boys was trying to write a letter for me. I was talking and saying that an older boy was always picking on me ... so ... that's all I can remember ... saying ... and about trying to say something to my mother about it. We had ... there was one radio. You know those C.B. and um but I didn't understand what it was ah, we were at the church and we were ah.. I was there with my older sister. She was sitting way over there and um there was this crackling you know ... big gadget you know like they were big back then I guess and um I could hear this voice. I didn't understand it. My older sister said um that's your mother, that's mother. I didn't understand I couldn't see her you know and um she said if you talk to that piece your mother would hear you. It was totally new to me, it wasn't explained to me before hand, so it didn't make sense what it was about and um I just didn't want to be there. I guess it was around that time when um... when umm we started ... I guess by then the abuses were, were um, started to have an effect on me too, about not telling people about not saying anything and um ... it was um.. yeah ... so that's um ... we didn't have any connections.

### Question # 15.

Who did you look to for support when and if you needed it? Was it an individual or a group and what was their relationship to you?

1. N/A.

2. N/A.

3. The houseparents never supported us emotionally. We were only supportive amongst ourselves - between peers. When we were young, when we didn't understand our Deaf feelings, we would go to our older Deaf peers because they understood us. For example, one of the nuns considered me to be a bad example, and I used to be very stubborn and rebellious. Whenever I got into trouble with the houseparents, my peers would grab me and give me support I needed. Without them, I would have felt lost. So I had to work hard, and I made lots of good friends and was supported more. And the whole idea, the way the nun treated me affected the way my peers treated me. I was singled out by the nun and had to work harder to re-establish my links with my peers.

4. It's hard for me emotionally. I was on my own a lot and I am always fighting myself. Most of the time, - my sister supported me. And often when I talked with my sister, she would tell me what to do, or how to deal with it. Yes, part of it. When I was fourteen or fifteen years old, I was fed up with the Deaf school, and I moved in with my sister in < sic > . I lived with her until the day I graduated.

5. I don't remember if I have one. The supervisors were so strict. You know when we try to talk about our emotions (feelings), no one would listen to us and we remained silent. I can't even remember if there was a counsellor back then. There was no one. But I think I remember. A guy named P.E. - he became the Dean - he was so good looking and his wife was so attractive. Dean of Residence and before him, a guy named < sic > and then after that, < sic > , the guy with the limp - I used to hate that guy. He was there for a short time. And the guy after that - I loved him. It was the same as < sic > - he spoiled us and was so good to us, too. You know that guy - dark hair and very good in sports - Phys. Ed. when we got older - in our teen age years and our bodies changed, our emotions changed - he and his wife listened to us and comforted us. Those people were the best.

They (the houseparents) were too strict. They weren't good parental role models. Nothing like that. No matron like that - nothing like that.

6. The counsellor sometimes but when I got my period I went to my friends first. I was so shocked when I first got my period but I got support from my friends and they showed me how to use a tampon, etc... Later on when the counsellor found out I got my period she asked why I didn't tell her and I said it was because I was too shy. I was told that I had to inform the counsellor. She gave me a calendar so I could circle the days. I had to record it but they didn't tell me the reason why. Later I realized the reason was so they could know if someone got pregnant. If you miss your period then there was a chance we were pregnant and so they wanted to keep track of it.

Before this girl got pregnant they never gave out a calendar but two girls got

pregnant and so they handed out calendars. The school decided to change the rules after the pregnancies. Before that we were allowed to go into the boy's dorm anytime we wanted but at the same time we had to tell the counsellor when we were going in and it used to be anytime of the day but now the time is restricted as to when we can go into the boys's dorm. We used to go to boys's dorm after school or some activity.

When I go home I don't remember, I just played, I think. For emotional support. My mother would read my school grades and ask me why I got those grades and then I would have to tell my mother about all the problems I was having in school. I would tell her about how the teachers would criticize me and my mother would listen. She would just listen but if there was anything of real concern - nothing! My mother would just think "Oh that is normal for a kid, just being rebellious" So she never really bothered with it.

For emotional support? At home? No. But mostly with my peer group at school.

7. O.K. Up until this year they have a primary counsellors. When the school starts, they have a teacher who is responsible for four students. The counsellors work together with the teachers with the same four students. I happen to meet my teacher, the same one who worked with me all year.

If there were some letters for the students. The letters would be delivered by their teachers. Sometimes they would give the letters to me so I could help distribute them and help people to read the letters from their parents. It is the same thing for the night counsellors. They have a group that they are responsible for. We all have the tendency and preference to go to a Deaf counsellor so we can share our feelings and problems. The Deaf counsellors could help us a lot through communication and even the Deaf teachers, it was the same thing.

8. To be honest, I can't remember when I first got my period. I can't remember. At one time, the counsellor went out to < sic > - but it's not there any more - and she bought me a bra. Did I understand what a bra is for? - NO. I was very shy. The year after, I understood and I got used to it. Emotional support - I don't remember. Sometimes when I communicate with my parents, I am limited. But when I compare myself with my brothers and sisters, they have a better relationship with my parents. When I compare my English with my brothers and sisters, they are better than I am. Within Deaf culture, I feel I am part of their norms. We understand each other, emotionally. But with my parents, it's different. When I am with the Deaf, I feel strongly bonded to them and I know who I am.

9. At one time, when I had my first period at the Deaf school and there was one senior Deaf girl at school whose responsibility to act as a role model for all the students, and she would call me and we would go into another private room and she would advise me not to hang around the boys when I had my period and they showed me how to use napkins and pads and how to attach them, and then later

on my mother never showed me how to do it nor did she tell me anything about it. Then one weekend, I went home and I told her that I got my first period. My mother said "Now you are a big girl", and that was it and it was only a small talk. In the Deaf school - I had more communication there but with my mother - not much - not there. But in the Deaf school, it was a lot easier to communicate. Yes.

From the Deaf. Yes. Because when I was a child, I was very quiet, and the rest of my family would keep talking. I didn't have a clue what was being said. While I was growing up, I found out about my identity as a Deaf woman through the Deaf school. Sometimes hearing children would laugh at me because I am Deaf. They would also make fun of my sign language. Sometimes I felt I was being insulted by the young hearing children.

10. There were these older boys assigned to look after us smaller ones, and um he was around the most so he was the one I interacted with. I don't know it was hard for me to find anyone I could be close to.

#### **Question #16.**

How much of a role do you think that living in a residential school played in the formation of your own personal identity?

1. The school should be kept open for the Deaf - it should not be closed. It is very important for Deaf people to get an education. If the government is going to cut funding then where will the Deaf people go.

2. I stayed in < sic > in 1941 for Christmas. I didn't have a good time. I wrote a letter to my parents saying that I wanted to go home for Christmas and New Years. Finally the head house parents decided to send me home for two weeks at Christmas and for two months in the summer.

3. I never knew about Deaf culture until I went to Galluadet College. I didn't understand my identity. I always thought I was not normal. I didn't know who I was, and I always was told that "I can't, I can't" - a negative vision. And I was told that's who I am - I was a below average student. The way the hearing look at us - they feel they are superior and that we are inferior to them. Being at Galluadet College - they woke me up.

4. Going to the residential school - it was a very positive experience. I remember, during the summer time, when I went home, it was O.K. But when I went back to Deaf school, I remember I would get very excited to see my Deaf friends and I am very content. And I learned a lot from the senior boys - I learned a lot from them. No. From outsiders.

5. Well, I had a good life in school but in other ways, I wish I had experienced the integration into hearing school. But I prefer to have a good special education for me, so I could go through and be more comfortable and not to have to deal with so much frustration. Because in Deaf school, it is too isolating and too controlling - too many restrictions - for twelve years of my life. And that was too long. And, it's always teaching us orally, instead of a broader education. and their system is not very good - NO.

6. It is very important. The residential school gives us identity, Deaf Culture and superb social skills. It allows the Deaf to develop their own experiences and shows us what the future can hold for us. If there was no Deaf residential school then I would not know who I am and I would probably just have been told "You can't", "You can't". That is how we are being controlled. We are told that we can't. The Deaf counsellor served as a role model for us. It is important to have an institution for the Deaf.

7. Really, the Deaf community they all know who I am and they recognize me. It is easy to get into Deaf school and let become part of who I am. But for sure Deaf students it is different, some have been mainstreamed or are recent transfers from another school and by the time they reach Deaf school, it takes them some time to find their Deaf identity. Really, a lot of them received more respect when they find their Deaf identity. When the new Deaf student comes in, they usually pair with someone who is familiar with the Deaf school and then later they learned to sign.

Well, there are many things. As a student rep. I had a lot of experience meeting a lot of Deaf people in < sic > and < sic > . I knew so many Deaf people and a lot of Deaf people knew my parents too. I used to work on the week ends and there were a lot of families who participated in the workshops and we learned a lot about many different courses on Deafness. We often bring in a lot of leaders to expose us and teach us more about things. Many Deaf people remember me when I was seven years old and now they realize I have been a very successful student and they were proud to know that thier son/daughter can make achievements in school. In sports, especially in sports - I have been so involved in sports since I was seven years old and still today, I am doing it. I have been involved a lot in sports and sometimes we win and sometimes we lose and more and more people are beginning to recognize me from sports events. It was a good experience, especially when the Japanese people came to our school to observe the school. I was asked to give a presentation and to talk about everything and the Japanese people were so impressed. There were a lot of doctors with Ph.ds. It was a good experience and a lot of exposure.

8. Being Deaf - I have taken the Deaf Culture workshops when I was learning about Deaf culture compared with Hearing Culture, and I realized there was differences, or distinctions. I noticed in ASL, residential schools, we are all like

brothers and sisters. We are all close knit together. Our values of Deaf culture, includes having a TTY, folklore, and I noticed that I had taken for granted. I didn't think about it myself. I considered that compared to mentally retarded students, I started to realize I was smarter. When I learned about Deaf culture and identity, I could identify strongly with the rest of the Deaf people. Same intelligence, same communication, business administration, executive director, etc. But the difference is that we can't hear, and that's it. I decided to get rid of my hearing aid until I had my baby daughter. When I realized I had to wear one to hear her crying and to give her attention. That was the only important thing when I go out and meet Deaf people at meetings or socializing - I would remove my hearing aid.

9. Maybe. I think so.

10. It affected my identity, I guess drastically cause it confused my notion of sexuality. To the point where at this time I'm learning how to make my life whole after thirty years. Like my family knows who I am and I hardly know them. I put on a mask, it was my survival mechanism. I used to believe everyone went through what I went through and no one talked about these things and when the topic of child abuse came up I would get a strange and uncomfortable feelings. Now I'm learning to speak about it. I'm becoming a lot better, I learned to write about it first. Speak about it to my therapist first and then my close friends and even then I had to explain it to them three or four times because what I went through was a shock for a lot of people to hear about, it's hard to absorb. It's a shock. So, I do a little bit at a time. I know now it has affected my life seriously but I'm now taking control of that umm it's um yeah I'm doing well.

#### Question #17.

What does being Deaf/Aboriginal mean to you?

See Table II.

#### Question #18.

What are some of the most significant memories you have of living in the residential school (both positive and negative)?

1. No. Nothing. But one of the school teachers was jealous of my handwriting. She was very jealous. When my father died the teacher said she was very sorry and sent me condolences. My God she was so two-faced!

2. I did well in history while I was in school. I know all about world geography and history. I had a really good memory for writing exams. My memory helped a lot in exams.

3. What was the best memory of the Deaf residential school? - Oh - I know I remembered the best memory was that after being in a transition period from the residential school to < sic > and one of the nuns, named < sic >. We all got together and went to a farm in < sic > and we stayed there for one week. They taught us about teen age life skills. It was very relaxed atmosphere and compared with the residential - all I remember was being assaulted constantly - but being at the farm - it was very comforting - it was like being at home. I learned a lot - within a week, it was like the equivalent of one year schooling. And I developed self-confidence and I learned about becoming a woman. And I was told that I should consider an acting career. But I denied it back then, and thought, "no, not me!" At that time, I did not know about my identity, not at that time. At the time they told me I had acting skills and great facial expression, and they told me I should write a book or something, but back then I thought no way. But today, when I look back, I realize, they were right. And I remember that.

It was like dark years - everything was all fuzzy. When I went to Gallaudet College, I was very thankful for my Dad, who is very good and very supportive of me. My father always told me that I would get a good education at Gallaudet. And I could not believe what he told me about it. I could not believe there was a Deaf world there. And my father kept telling me, for a lot of good reasons, to go to Gallaudet. My father's best friend had a son who went to Gallaudet too.

4. There is one hearing houseparent named < sic > and he is really superb. And we were strongly compatible. One weekend, a whole bunch of us were playing and all of us really liked < sic >. And he signed very well. And we decided what game to play, and we decided on hide and seek. And while we were playing that game, and later < sic > found me. And both < sic > and I decided to challenge the rest of the boys. It was really late at night and there was a bed time curfew but < sic > didn't care. His job was to supervise all the boys and he didn't care about the curfew. We even went out at night and played at night. Until really late at night - the rest were looking for us and didn't find us until really late at night. Can you imagine about the game of coins? You know how Deaf people can be obsessed about money. I had some coins and when I threw them in the air, the Deaf boys came rushing over to grab the money. And while the boys were busy grabbing the money, < sic > and I took off (escaped), and we hid that night. By the time the boys finished picking up the money, they then looked up and realized we were gone. They began to look for us. They finally found us in the dorm. It was bed time. And by the time the game was over, everyone was satisfied with the evening's game, and they were ready to bed and slept very well. And that was one incident I will never forget.



5. I remember when I played volleyball and joined a league and we would compete with hearing people and it was fantastic. It was like a new world. While we were confined in the Deaf school, but the minute we were out of the building, when we competed at hearing schools, we always looked forward to that.
6. The best time was when I was an intermediate. When I was a senior I had an O.K. time but the best was when I was an intermediate. At the old dorm building they had a basement with three floors that used to be for showers and bathrooms but it was closed and all the doors were locked. The basement wasn't used any more it was such an old place. We used to always play in the basement and let the water flood everywhere. There was a bat down there that used to fly around. We loved playing in the basement, it was always an adventure. It was one of the highest points for us at that time.  
They were always criticizing us and it created a very negative feeling. They always said "Don't do this", "Don't do that", "You can't", "You can't". They said everything was wrong. They said my English was wrong. For example in English class I consider myself to be good at writing English and the teacher noticed that I was good at writing English and one time there was a question and I answered using ASL and the teacher said "Your language is terrible". I felt so insulted and shocked. She said my language was terrible and that my sentence structure was not correct. She said I should not use ASL and that I have to use English. So I had to change it into English structure and the teacher said "That is much better. I am so proud of you." I felt that was very negative telling us not to use ASL. How can we learn if we are always being criticized?
7. I look back and I won three awards, one is for sports - for a male competition award for the year and second, I won the < sic > Award for people who encourage others and became involved in Deaf culture, awareness, etc. as a Deaf person. I was always helping other Deaf people not to be embarrassed that they are Deaf and I was always supporting them. The third was for having the best leadership that night was one of my most wonderful experiences.
8. N/A.
9. N/A.
10. I remember the ones that I have, negative ones are with me forever and I'm learning to deal with those considerably and they leave me stronger ....

### Question #19.

Is there anything you would like to add or feel that it important to discuss?

1. No. You're welcome.

2. No, no more. I think that's enough for now. Thank you.

3. No, that's it.

I'm sorry I got off track. In the Deaf residential school - I think I've covered it. One thing, for most students who grew up in residential Deaf schools - most of their dreams have been destroyed. Many of them - at the age of thirty - only recently have discovered their identity and feel it happened too late. So, it took a few years to work at it. And for me - some felt it's not fair. Some got out of the system of oppression - others couldn't get out of it. Some feel that they made a mistake growing up, in their lives but to me; I have been through serious situations and they feel it just a human waste. They had their goals, but nobody supported them to achieve these goals.

They felt very unhappy all their lives until they die, so what's the point? What has God gives to us as human beings? We should try to help them and support their dreams. I have been very lucky that my father is Deaf and life is not fair. I have questioned it over and over - "Why should it happened to them?" And hearing people made excuses like - I made a mistake and I didn't know about it. I looked at them - they are bullshitting and that's no excuse. And I told them - "you know what you have done in the past." You know, they knew they were oppressive but they make excuses and say they didn't realize it at the time.

4. Can I come back for a second time. I can think about it and come back with more information. O.K. And I will add more information or the next visit. Right now my brain is numbed. O.K.

5. I think we are done. It's been a long day.

6. Well I think that's it. If I think of something more I will let you know. I know the video tape can only hold two hours but if it could hold ten hours I am sure I could talk from the beginning until the end.

7. Really, in closing remarks, I want to say that the Deaf schools should hire more Deaf staff, counsellors, teachers and janitors. It is a must because Deaf people have such a hard time getting hired and then they are the first one to get laid off. You know very recently they laid off the only Deaf counsellor. There are too many hearing people who can find jobs so easily but for the Deaf it is very difficult and I always encourage Deaf people to get a job in a Deaf school. Really, Deaf janitors, the staff, they need more Deaf teacher. We need

a Deaf principal, it is my goal to change that. Hearing teachers never leave the Deaf schools they always stay there, they stay and stay. I think they all should leave and be replaced by the Deaf staff.

One of my goals is that they should hire Deaf employees. I don't know why they keep hiring Hearing people.

Really, there is no reason to hire them. Maybe in the past but today there is no reason. It is good for Deaf students to have exposure to the Deaf staff. They can be positive role models.

I believe it should be short comments not too long or exaggerated. It should be short and sweet. Sometime I can make short statements but with a lot of information. That's it!!

8. I'll think about it when we are at the restaurant, and I will try to put down some more information.

9. No, O.K. - Thank you.

10. No, not really.

## APPENDIX VI:

### FORMER HEARING EMPLOYEES AT RESIDENTIAL/ORAL SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Since the format of the interviews were semi-structured, questions listed in the questionnaire were not always asked in the order that they appear and most interviews contained additional questions and conversation and occasionally a question was left out.

**Interview 11:**

Hearing Teacher from a Deaf Residential School for eleven years (1977-1989).

**Interview 12:**

Aboriginal Hearing Teacher from a Deaf Residential School for five years (1980-1985).

**Interview 13:**

Hearing Social Worker from an Oral School for the Deaf for one year (1980/81).

**Question #1.**

Which Residential School did you teach/work at?

At the request of the interviewees, for the purposes of confidentiality, I cannot reveal the answers to this question.

**Question #2.**

How did you come to get your position at the Deaf residential/oral school?

11. My mother worked in the residence at the school, and I had worked for 2 years at a regular school and was bored as I was not using my imagination. So I decided to try and teach deaf kids. So I began substitute teaching for a year and later there was a one year contract available but if I wanted to continue teaching I had to go to < sic > and study to be a teacher of the Deaf...this program closed two or three years ago.

12. I was a swimming teacher.

13. Through contacts. I was working with < sic > in < sic > and a friend of my husband, who had a Deaf son and who was on the board of the school heard that I was thinking of leaving my job and wondered if I would take the new position of social worker because theirs was leaving.

### Question #3

Can you tell me what advantages there were to your career?

11. It helped me to understand my students better, how they were thinking and their communication.

12. I learned sign language and how to work a little bit with the Deaf community, but not much.

13. None, except that I began to learn about the two different approaches to teaching the hearing impaired. Often problems related to learning were related to family problems so I would do home visits and I think the children who had problems were not getting the attention they needed.

### Question #4

Did you receive any training or have any previous knowledge or professional working experience in Deaf education?

11. Yes, I did my Masters in Deaf Education at < sic > . We were part of the University of < sic > .

12. Never.

13. No I did not.

### Question #5

What was the job description you had to meet in order to qualify you to work with Deaf children?

11. We had to have our Masters to continue working at < sic > .

12. I had to have lots of swimming certificates and experience, but in the water there was no sign language.

13. Well, there you are, in a sense they were not thought of as Deaf, they were to set it aside and learn to function. So, I, as a social worker, was thought qualified to work with them without any additional training.

#### Question #6

Did the administration at the School require that you have some knowledge of sign language (ASL and/or SEE) and/or Deaf culture?

11. In the beginning I had no sign but by the second week of school there were three new teachers and we had classes in sign language at the end of the day with the Vice Principle < sic > . She was a teacher and just beginning as Vice Principle...In the beginning it was signing Exact English and nothing about Deaf culture until later. Around 1983 or '84 there was a new principle, < sic > . He came from the States and brought some ideas about Deaf culture and we began to have classes in ASL, no SEE. He invited Deaf adults to come in and talk with the teachers and taught sign language and about their lives.

12. No.

13. No.

#### Question #7

Have you ever worked with Deaf employees, teachers or houseparents? If so, do you feel this experience has increased your understanding and awareness of Deaf culture? If not, do you feel that had you experienced working with (a) Deaf person (s) that this would have served to increase your understanding or awareness of Deaf culture?

11. Yes, maybe a little bit. I know that the students had a better time relating to the Deaf teachers and house parents because communications were easier, better. Some.

12. No.

13. Yes, I had a Deaf employee. She communicated orally. I didn't have close relations with her. I was in management and she was a computer operator. I don't think this increased my understanding or awareness of Deaf culture.

**Question #8**

Do you feel that there were any negative impacts on your professional career?  
If so, what were they?

11. Nothing. no.

12. No. But I played, I played and I had a good time.

13. I felt I was in a vacuum. I was frustrated and disturbed that I felt that I didn't accomplish anything and was of little help.

**Question #9**

If you could go back to your former job at the residential school, is there anything that you feel you could do now to make a difference of the Deaf student's lives?

11. I think I would try to have more of the kids see how important studying and learning how to read is and how it would help them in the future.

12. No I don't think so, no.

13. I feel strongly that the mindset of the oral school and Oral approach was not a good one. Not signing was distressing.

**Question #10**

Do you feel that being a professional hearing person played a major role in the formation of your personal identity?

11. Because I was hearing, it was important to my identity... yes, very much so.

12. Yes because language is important to the way that we see ourselves...Maybe if I compare...if I compare it with Native culture. I think that from the outside people disallow other cultures to be strong. The same with the Deaf people.

13. N/A.

**Question #11**

Did the school have the curriculum being taught in the residential/oral school for the Deaf? If so, who established the policy for this program. School Board or by teachers?

11. In the beginning no, but when < sic > arrived he brought a curriculum and many new ideas. We built a whole curriculum for the school and for the residence very quickly. He believed that it was very important to have the whole curriculum for the school and residence programmed.

12. O.K. at that time I thought it was the school board. One thing is that in < sic > there was a Deaf community that was very strong in their ideas. They forced their ideas because it was important for their children.

13. Yes. I believe it was the director. I am not sure though.

**Question #12**

What did you like and or what did you not like about the school curriculum?

11. Yes, the behaviour of many of the older students, especially the boys improved because they now had evening programs which fit in with the curriculum in school so one helped the other. There was a big change and improvement with the little kids.

12. I think it had to have more Deaf teachers and more Deaf board members.

13. At the kindergarten level it was perfect. At higher levels it was at a different level because it was hard for the other kids to learn to read and write. This learning portion around language was lacking.

**Question #13**

Are there any changes that you feel should be made to the school curriculum?

11. I hear they are still pushing the students to use their voices and sign. I think I wouldn't push the voice. I taught T.C. but with ASL it is one then the other. I was comfortable with both but not most students - they didn't want to use their voice but the teachers pressured the kids to use their voices. Some kids sounded good others sounded poor.



12. Yes (laughs). OK. I think when children don't have a place of their own and if children have to go to main schools, after a while they will lose their identity and language. Right now Deaf children are being taught by hearing people not Deaf people. This is a bad idea.

13. N/A.

#### Question #14

As a hearing individual, what does the word "Deaf" means to you?

See Table II.

#### Question #15

Is there anything else you would like to add or feel that is important to discuss?

11. I think the time for now to be a teacher of Deaf children is in the past. I think now it is important for Deaf children to have Deaf teachers and role models. I think the time for me to work for hearing impaired children is still OK. If parents and the child want to go to the community school and talk and wear hearing aids and the FM system but that is fine. But not to be pushed if they don't want to.

12. Again comparing Native culture. I think that sometimes we are looked at as angry people. The same with some Deaf people. But we are not heard. We have the right to be angry.

13. Maybe I could speak a bit about a teacher who had been to Gallaudet College and spoke about it. They were able to sign and didn't use it. I appreciated learning about it and we saw a wonderful play about Deaf people and their relationships. Children of a Lesser God.

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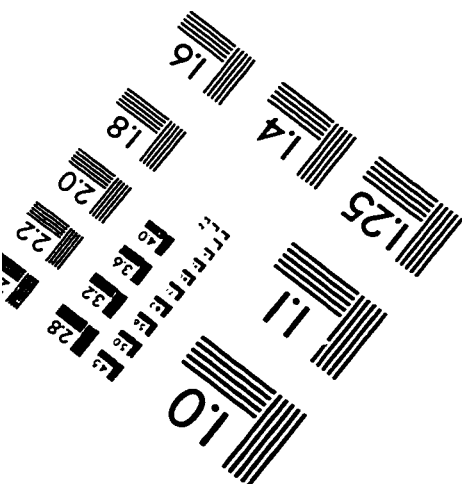
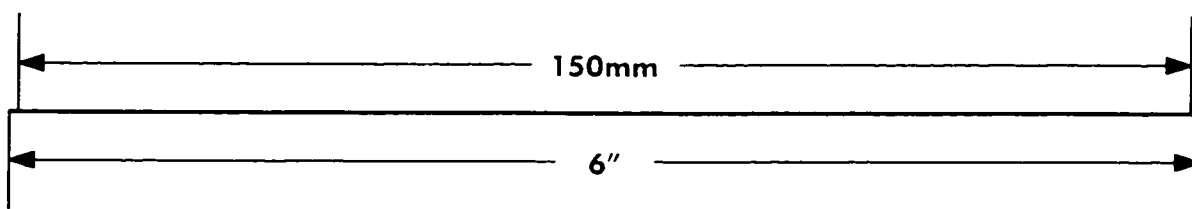
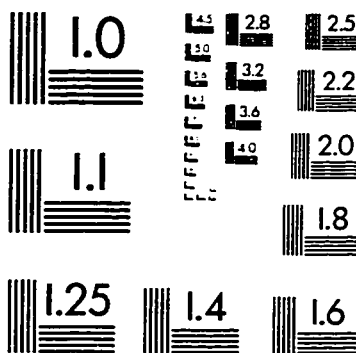
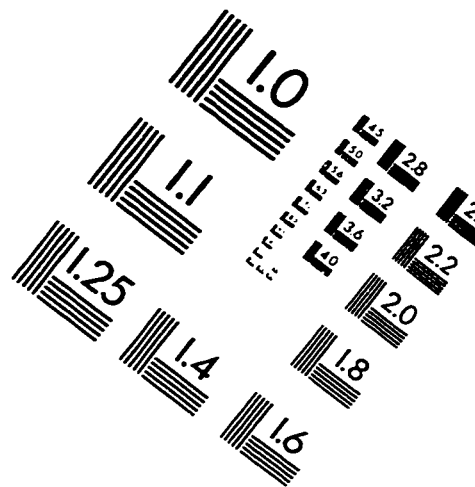
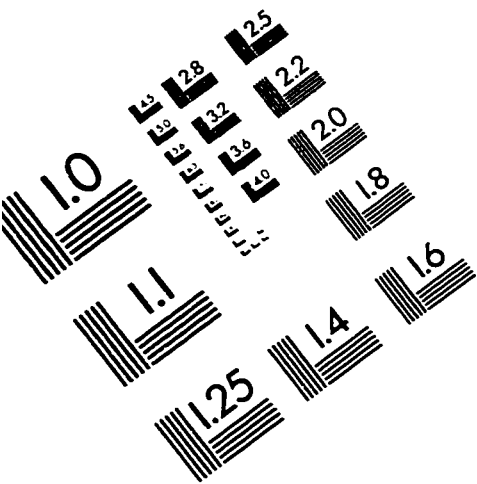
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