ISLANDS IN AN OCEAN OF CHANGE

An Examination of Cultural Change in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, Through the Lives and Experiences of its People

by

DONALD ANTHONY MORRISON

B.A. (International Relations),
The University of British Columbia, 1994.

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ABSTRACT

Culture is a dynamic entity that changes and adapts over time. However, as our world grows increasingly interconnected, indigenous cultures throughout the world are being assimilated into a ‘global’ culture, and losing many of the attributes that keep them unique. For instance, the traditional culture of the Outer Hebrides of Scotland is being squeezed between the need for increased development and modernization, and the desire to remain distinct and separate from the cultures of Britain and the world beyond. The Outer Hebrides is an archipelago lying off the northwest coast of Scotland, and is the last stronghold of Gaelic cultural heritage. This thesis examines the cultural changes that have taken place in the Outer Hebrides, as a result of development and modernization throughout the past century. It undertakes this investigation through the eyes of those who have witnessed the changes firsthand, by using research methods that have not yet become common in the planning profession; namely, the use of story and life histories to gather data for further analysis. A quantitative questionnaire was also employed to determine which elements of the traditional culture Hebrideans consider most important, and to provide balance to the qualitative research data. The data generated through the Hebridean field research reveals how the traditional culture of the islands has changed over the decades, and also points to ways that planners can aid development while fostering cultural preservation at the same time. Recommendations for innovative strategies are then made based on the collected data. Ultimately, this thesis reveals that the use of story and life histories represents valid methodology for planning research, while the collected stories from the elderly informants represent an act of cultural preservation on its own.
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DEDICATION and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is humbly dedicated to the Glory of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and in thankfulness for His provision and sustenance throughout every step of my life. I have learned that He is trustworthy and faithful in all circumstances, and that His Mercy and Grace in Jesus Christ is the living water that flows to eternal life.

I also dedicate this thesis in loving memory of my grandmother, Margaret Morrison (1913-1999), who passed away the evening before I began my first classes at the School of Community and Regional Planning at U.B.C. She demonstrated the love of Christ throughout her life, and taught me invaluable lessons about what it means to be a Christian, and also what it means to be a Hebridean at heart.

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Lastly, I thank my parents for their ongoing support, and my sister for her encouragement and prayers. To the rest of my family and friends, thank you for your part in seeing this thesis through to its completion. May God bless each and every one of you.
CHAPTER 1: Islands in an Ocean of Change

1.1 Introduction:

On the northwest frontier of Europe lies an archipelago comprised of windswept islands of austere natural beauty, and encompassing a cultural heritage of great distinctiveness. The islands of the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, also known as the Western Isles, remain the last stronghold of traditional Gaelic culture in the world. While there are still Gaelic-speaking communities in some places on the Scottish mainland and on Canada's Cape Breton Island, the Outer Hebrides have retained the traditional lifestyle of the Gael in its most pristine form. However, with development pressures being exerted throughout the Hebridean region, and globalization affecting even the most isolated societies in the world, it is not surprising that the traditional culture of the Outer Hebrides is being squeezed between the need for prosperous growth and the global trend towards cultural assimilation.

Culture itself has been defined as “the sum total of all contributions of a group of people, in a designated area within a given time.”\(^1\) It is further described as, “The aesthetic or intellectual achievement or appreciation of an individual or a society, and also the lifestyle of a society as passed on from generation to generation.”\(^2\) Taking these definitions into account, one might see why culture and its preservation is an issue that has implications for the planning profession. Simply put, the traditional culture and lifestyle of a community go far in supporting that community with a strong and vibrant ‘sense of place.’ There is also the importance of ‘memory’ and shared communal experiences in the cultural development of such ‘places’.
Cultures are dynamic, and naturally change and evolve over time. In fact, for a culture to flourish, it must be allowed to adapt to the changing conditions which act upon it. Historically, the changes which affect cultures have been comparatively slow and gradual, thereby allowing cultures to adapt and change accordingly. But during the past number of decades the forces of globalization and modernization have greatly accelerated the changes that traditional cultures encounter. Rather than adapting to change gradually and still remaining distinct, many traditional cultures and lifestyles are disappearing, and are increasingly assimilated into a more generic ‘global’ culture.

Over the past one hundred years, but especially during the past fifty, the Outer Hebridean islands of Scotland have undergone a significant increase in their level of modernization. The population today enjoys most of the modern amenities that the rest of Britain possesses. But one of the unfortunate costs of modernization has been the steady erosion of traditional Hebridean culture, lifestyle and community. For example, the Gaelic language is spoken by fewer and fewer people, and the distinctiveness of the Hebridean ‘crofting’ township is in similar decline. However, this does not suggest that the region be preserved as some sort of ‘cultural time capsule’, whereby residents need to forsake the benefits and convenience of modernization for the sake of outside observers. Rather, traditional ways of life can be preserved and celebrated within the context of development and modernization. Planning for communities with significant cultural distinctiveness can be difficult and complex if there is a desire to preserve cultural heritage within development strategies. Planning can be much easier and less impeded if it is allowed to proceed without regard for a region’s traditional lifestyle and values. However, this is an irresponsible approach to planning, and one that elevates the value of
material progress far above the importance of the actual societies that are trying to benefit from development. With innovative planning initiatives, the Outer Hebrides has the potential to become more prosperous and modern, while still retaining the traditional values and lifestyles that have set the region apart as a distinct cultural space. Traditional culture and knowledge can even be used to inform planning strategies, giving direction to development which benefits the inhabitants on a greater number of levels.

However, for traditional knowledge and culture to be used at all, there must be a willingness for officials to recognize and embrace the potential contribution of local individuals. Some years ago, plans were drawn up to build a pier for a fishing village on the Isle of Lewis. Engineers were brought in from other parts of Britain to undertake the planning and construction. When the engineers arrived, some of the local fishermen tried to give their input regarding the proposed construction, since they were concerned that it was being built at the wrong angle. The fishermen did not want to stop the construction, but rather, they wanted to ensure that the structure would be beneficial. However, the engineers refused to take the fishermen’s suggestions seriously. Even though these locals had lived all of their lives in the village, and had fished the waters for decades, their experiential knowledge was disregarded in the face of a university engineering education and degree. Construction was completed, and the moorage for the boats became even less safe than it had been before. Not only was a lot of money wasted, but the fishermen were left even worse off than they had been before the structure was built.

For planning to be effective, it is also important for planners to have a strong understanding of the place in which they are working. This, in my opinion, must go beyond recognizing topographical, geographical and economic opportunities and
constraints, to also include the social factors of history and culture. In this way, the planner can approach his or her job with greater knowledge and understanding. Combined with professional knowledge and training, this should allow the planner to develop innovative strategies which move beyond purely pragmatic solutions to those which are more holistically beneficial for the community in question, and are grounded in the cultural values of a particular ‘place’ and ‘people’.

One of the best ways for a planner to access the history, traditional knowledge and culture of a ‘place’, is to speak directly with area inhabitants. In this way, the planner not only gains firsthand insight into what makes a region or area unique, but also invites the inhabitants to become players in the development process. Participatory planning does not have to be limited to public meetings and round table discussions. Rather, it can and should include the more transactional approach of one-on-one conversations with area residents, whether at their front yard hedge, outside the grocery store, or over a cup of tea. By taking this approach, the knowledge of the individual is validated as being worthy and important, and the resident can have a more personal degree of input with regards to planning initiatives. At the same time, the planner is able to enrich his or her own knowledge, develop more creative and innovative planning strategies, and be more socially responsible with regards to their chosen profession.
MAP 1: THE OUTER HEBRIDES OF SCOTLAND

1 From the Anderson, MacArthur & Co. (Real Estate Agency) website:
www.anderson-macarthur.com/Main_Pages/maps.htm
1.2 Purpose of Research:

The purpose of this research is to answer the following question:

*How do individual Hebridean people perceive the changes that development and modernization have brought to their traditional culture and lifestyle, and how might these inform the development of innovative planning strategies for the region?*

The research itself is essentially two-fold in its line of inquiry. First, the research is aimed at providing a greater understanding of the traditional culture and lifestyle of the Outer Hebrides, with particular emphasis on the largest and most populous island – the Isle of Lewis. Second, the research records the living memories of several elderly inhabitants of the Isle of Lewis as an act of cultural preservation. This particular research is also used to gain an understanding of the cultural changes which have taken place at a personal level, and for generating useful information for potential development initiatives in the future.

1.3 Why the Outer Hebrides?

The Outer Hebrides of Scotland was chosen as the context for this research for a number of reasons. As already mentioned, it is a region with a very distinct cultural heritage, and with a population that, for the most part, wants to see this distinctiveness retained. Moreover, the entire region is also in need of sustainable strategies for growth and development. This combination has created a region that is well suited for studying how traditional cultures can be affected by development over time. The Isle of Lewis was chosen as the prime focal area for research because it is the largest and most
populous of the Hebridean islands. In fact, it is the only island in the archipelago with a settlement large enough to be considered a town (Stornoway, pop. 8132). Thus, it is also the island with the greatest number of amenities and modern conveniences, and it has also experienced the most changes to its culture and traditional lifestyle over the past century. Furthermore, the local government of the Outer Hebrides has recently made a greater commitment to sustainability and the development of more sustainable planning initiatives. This includes the recognition of traditional cultural heritage as being very important to regional sustainability and community planning, and it also includes the desire for more local participation in future development schemes and initiatives. A more personal reason for choosing the Outer Hebrides as a research area is that my paternal ancestors are of Hebridean extraction. My grandfather was born on the Isle of Lewis in 1904, and my grandmother was born in Vancouver to immigrant parents from the island of North Uist. Furthermore, I hope to spend time in the Outer Hebrides after graduation, working in some aspect of the planning field.

1.4 Theoretical Approach:

This thesis is not grounded in any one particular planning theory, other than the somewhat nebulous and general ‘theory of sustainability’ which influences many aspects of the planning field today. Rather, this thesis is based on a synthesis of ideas and principles found in various social science disciplines. On the one hand it looks towards cultural studies and development theory, but without becoming an exercise in strict ethnography or anthropology. On the other hand, this thesis draws upon principles found in other planning theories such as bioregionalism, communicative and transactive
planning. Bioregional principles argue that a ‘place’ is defined by much more than its political boundaries. That is, a ‘place’ consists of the physical geography of an area, as well as its history, its culture and its inhabitants. These principles emphasize the importance of gaining and using local knowledge, and understanding a community on a variety of levels. The planner ultimately gains a deeper understanding of the ‘place’ he or she is working in, and can approach planning issues with increased confidence and a greater capacity for remaining faithful to the needs and values of the community in question.

Participatory, communicative and transactive planning elements have also influenced the research portion of this thesis, through the use of a questionnaire and in depth interviews with island residents. These methods were used to generate data, and to foster participation by ‘regular’ Hebridean residents, by utilizing their opinions, knowledge and memories. While library and internet research provided significant information and understanding about the Outer Hebrides as a ‘place’ and the Hebrideans as a ‘people’, it was the participation of residents in the form of interviews which truly brings the research to life.

1.5 Research Approach and Methodology:

Since this research concentrates on a current topic within a relatively narrow geographical scope, the choice was made to use a case study approach for conducting the research. Each of the interviews with elderly Hebrideans also represents individual and personal case studies of cultural change in the face of modernization and development.
The case study format also facilitates future comparative analysis with other cultural sustainability studies focusing on other parts of the world.

1.6 Data Requirements, Sources and Research Techniques:

For many years I have heard stories about the Hebridean lifestyle from my grandmother and other family members, and thus my interest in the region developed at an early age. Over the years, I have read numerous books about the culture and traditions of the Outer Hebrides, and have become very interested in the various development issues facing the islanders and their culture. The specific data requirements for this thesis investigation include both primary and secondary information. Primary data was obtained during a five week research trip to the Outer Hebrides of Scotland in May and June, 2001. Prior to the trip I read extensively about the culture and history of the Outer Hebrides and its people. My interest in the region was longstanding, but I wished to increase my understanding of the factors which have shaped the Hebridean communities, and gain insight into the various challenges faced by planners working in the islands. Since I have numerous family members living in the Outer Hebrides, I was able to utilize these contacts to facilitate the field research. With the help of family members I was able to arrange interviews with a number of individuals once I had arrived in Scotland. I also made use of the message board on the Free Church of Scotland website to make additional contacts. Even though I did not have a set schedule of appointments made prior to leaving Canada, I remained confident that the research would proceed smoothly and effectively during the five weeks of my trip.
In the Outer Hebrides I conducted in-depth interviews with four elderly Hebridean people living in various places on the Isle of Lewis. Two males and two females were interviewed, with the youngest informant being eighty-five years of age and the oldest being ninety-seven. Each informant gave me their informed consent verbally. I explained the purpose of my research, and all informants eagerly agreed to be interviewed. Prior to leaving Canada, I had prepared a number of written consent forms for informants to sign. But after speaking with these people preliminarily, it became very clear that they were willing to speak because they trusted me. Asking them to sign a form could have damaged that trust, so I chose to receive their consent verbally instead. The last thing I wanted to do was upset these people in any way, and I feared that asking them to sign forms would have seemed 'suspicious' to these kind and trusting people.

The interviews were conducted in the homes of the informants, and lasted from two to seven hours (the seven hour interview was held on two consecutive days). For the most part the interviews were semi-structured in nature. Guiding questions were asked of the informants, such as “What was your life like growing up compared to today?” and “What aspects of your traditional lifestyle have changed over time?” The informants were invited to relate any stories or memories that seemed relative to their lives as Hebridean people, and each was encouraged to provide as much detail as they could. I also wanted to capture their perceptions about the state of development and modernization on the island at various stages of their lives. If any were away from the island for extended periods of time, they were asked what changes to the island and island life, if any, were observed upon their return.
I also met with a number of other elderly individuals, one of whom was one hundred years of age. However, in-depth interviews with these individuals were not attempted due to the informants' level of overall health, and their subsequent inability to engage comfortably in potentially long interviews. I also attempted to lead a group discussion at a senior's center in Stornoway, but unfortunately this did not result in useable data. In the group setting it seemed that the seniors had more difficulty remaining focused on my questions and guidance, compared with one-on-one interviews and discussions.

I also conducted a number of shorter and more structured interviews with individuals from various sectors of Hebridean society. Interviews with a number of 'experts' on traditional culture helped form a deeper understanding of the region's history and cultural heritage. This included interviews with local historians, an island archaeologist, and a professor at Lews Castle College in Stornoway. To discover more about development and planning initiatives I spoke with people at the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council), which is the local government for the Outer Hebrides. I also visited a number of families involved with the crofting system of land use, and asked about the present state of crofting on the Isle of Lewis, and what the future may hold for this unique lifestyle.

In addition to interviews, I also distributed questionnaires to island residents in order to elucidate which aspects of the traditional culture each considered most important. A list of ten cultural elements, including language, religious beliefs, food and music were listed on the survey. The respondents were asked to rank each element in order of personal importance, with number 1 signifying the most important element.
Observational visits were made to a variety of sites with cultural and historic value. The Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway was an invaluable source of information pertaining to the traditional lifestyle of the region, and the Stornoway Library and its staff were also very helpful. I was able to observe efforts aimed at preserving the cultural heritage of the islands through visits to a restored traditional village at Gearrannan, and to a restored traditional dwelling at the Arnol Blackhouse Museum. Visits were also made to other sites having posted information or interpretive centers, such as the Callanish Standing Stones and Dun Carloway Broch (fortress tower). I also visited a number of historical societies where local people are involved in preserving their own histories. These site observations proved valuable in deepening my knowledge about the local culture, and in understanding the efforts being made to preserve the cultural heritage of the islands.

Secondary research was undertaken prior to, during, and after the trip. A number of books were consulted regarding the balance between culture and development, the history and culture of the Outer Hebrides, and the collection of life histories for research purposes. The sources used will be outlined in greater detail in the second chapter of this thesis. The Stornoway Library provided documents pertaining to the crofting system of land use, as well as reports published by the various bodies involved with Hebridean development initiatives. The internet was also used extensively as a research tool, offering recent reports and planning documents from the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Several websites focusing on the Outer Hebrides were also visited as sources for more general information. I also subscribed to the island newspaper, The Stornoway Gazette,
to keep apprised of the various issues being confronted by planners in the Outer Hebrides.

1.7 Thesis Organization:

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 addresses some of the concerns regarding the use of life histories as a research tool, and how these concerns have been mitigated for the purpose of this thesis. This chapter also provides a literature review, summarizing the various books and reports used as secondary research. Internet sources are also identified in this chapter.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the Outer Hebrides as a ‘place’ and the Hebrideans as a ‘people’. The geographical and environmental nature of the Isle of Lewis is examined in particular, as is the history of settlement and human activity on the island. A history and description of the ‘crofting community’ is provided, since this form of land use is central to the traditional Hebridean culture and lifestyle.

Chapter 4 examines the history of development in the Outer Hebrides, characterized by long-term stresses and short-term shocks. Some of the planning and development bodies operating on the island today are also highlighted, to provide an institutional context for this thesis.

Chapter 5 is a short chapter focusing on the results of the survey questionnaire. The rationale for the questionnaire is briefly revisited, and the data is displayed in tables. Further explanation of the results is also given in written form.

Chapter 6 may be considered the ‘heart’ of the thesis. In it, I have written the information given by the elderly informants in a narrative form. This style was chosen in
order to present the collected data in an easy-to-read format. It also allowed me to group like events and stories, even if they were not provided sequentially by the informant during the interview.

Chapter 7 offers a synthesis of the main points derived from the in-depth interviews. These are summarized and drawn together to show how the traditional lifestyle of the Hebrideans has been affected by development and modernization over the years. From this information, a number of proposals and recommendations are made for future development initiatives and strategies. These recommendations aim to facilitate further development in the region, while still strengthening the local community and preserving its cultural heritage for future generations. The recommendations are followed by sections examining implications for the planning profession, and possible avenues for further research. The thesis concludes with some closing thoughts.
CHAPTER 2: Challenges in Research and Literature Review

2.1 Challenges of Using Life Histories in Research:

In conducting the research for this thesis, a number of challenges and difficulties had to be overcome. As already mentioned in the first chapter, the primary research consists of a number of interviews with individual informants. However, the use of life histories as 'proper' methodology can be questioned on a variety of levels. But while these questions and concerns may be valid, appropriate safeguards were undertaken to ensure that the collected data for this thesis would remain as free as possible from any potential corruption. Some of the primary concerns regarding the use of life histories are outlined below, as well as the reasons why I am confident that the collected data has remained uncompromised.

Perhaps the most significant 'problem' is that the researcher relies heavily upon the personal memories of individual informants. Therefore the question must be asked, "How reliable are the memories of the individuals involved?" In the case of this particular thesis topic, I am interested in how individual islanders perceive changes to their traditional community and way of life, as a result of modernization and development over the years. This required informants to recall memories that stretched back more than eighty years in some cases. Since the informants ranged in age from their mid-eighties to their late nineties, it is understandable why some might question the accuracy of the memories themselves.

However, in choosing informants to interview, I required that each individual be of strong mental clarity. Furthermore, each informant needed to possess good physical
health, since physical weakness and malady can negatively affect the mental capacity of an individual. Since I could not independently and medically verify the condition of the informants, it was necessary to rely upon the guidance and testimony of their relatives and friends. Even then, I was unable to make a final decision until first meeting and speaking briefly to each prospective informant. Each individual interviewed for the research was both physically and mentally strong, considering his or her age. Each also lived in their own home, with little or no outside support. Each remained active within their respective communities, and each recalled past events and situations with great ease, and with considerable detail.

Another concern about using life histories is that memories can be compromised over time by life changes, and changes to each individual’s personal values. What an individual may have deemed ‘good’ or ‘correct’ as a youth, might be remembered as ‘bad’ or ‘incorrect’ eighty years later. Also, there can be a tendency for memories to become polarized over time. That is, as a person ages, he or she might remember some memories as being unrealistically positive or negative, as the case may be. Thankfully I did not seem to encounter these tendencies, and there was considerable consistency between informants when each was questioned about similar events and situations.

It is true that the personal memories of a small group of individuals cannot accurately represent those of an entire population. If I had enough time and resources to interview each person of the chosen age-group on the Isle of Lewis, a more accurate picture would have developed about how the island population as a whole has perceived changes to its traditional lifestyle and culture. However, this was never the intended scope for this thesis. Rather, it is to look at individual experiences and memories, and to
gauge how a small group of elderly Hebrideans perceive the changes brought through
development and modernization during the twentieth century. From the gathered data, I
was able to draw common ideas and trends into a picture of what community life was like
for these same individuals back then, as compared to the present. Any projection of the
data to include the greater island population was done only in conjunction with further
research based upon historical documents and other written records and reports. I made
use of these resources to gain a better understanding of the history and culture of the
island, beyond the scope of the interviews themselves. The research was further enriched
by undertaking shorter interviews with a variety of islanders who are well acquainted
with specific areas of island life, culture, development and history.

It is important to note that despite the inherent difficulties of using life histories as
a means of research, the Outer Hebrides of Scotland remain an excellent place to conduct
research of this type. This is especially true regarding elderly informants, who grew up
with a ‘traditional’ Hebridean upbringing. The passing on of oral histories has been an
integral part of the traditional Hebridean culture for centuries. Members of the
community would gather regularly in a village home to spend an evening of eating,
singing and telling stories. These gatherings, known as ceilidhs (pronounced CAY-lees),
were the opportunity for the younger generation to learn from the older. Family histories
were passed down from generation to generation in this way, as well as community
histories and cultural information which would otherwise have been lost. Accuracy was
of prime importance, as it was considered very bad form to pass along anything which
could be construed as a lie or a fabrication, unless it was clearly an island legend or myth
that was being told. Not surprisingly, many of the islanders who grew up with these
ceilidhs also developed excellent memories for detail, with an emphasis on accuracy and fact. The devout and genuine religious convictions of most older islanders also results in a desire to relay information in a very truthful and unexaggerated manner. In fact, when interviewed about things they were unfamiliar with, or could not remember accurately, each of the informants would answer honestly, “I don’t know,” or “I cannot remember,” rather than speculating or even venturing a guess. I was once told by a Vancouverite of Hebridean background that there was a village on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis that locals knew as the village of ‘I don’t know’. This was because many of the inhabitants were so concerned with being truthful in what they said, that they rarely answered a question in any other way. Thankfully, I did not encounter such extremes in 2001; otherwise the interviews would have been quite unproductive! It is the character and integrity of the Hebridean people that continue to encourage me that the collected data is both truthful and accurate.

Another point I believe strongly, is that gathering the stories of the informants represents much more than just the collection of research data for the purpose of writing a thesis. The act of interviewing these elderly Hebridean people was also undertaken as a means of cultural heritage preservation. Sadly for the informants, the days of getting together at a ceilidh to pass knowledge to the younger generation have all but disappeared. Understanding this, I believe it is extremely important for the knowledge held by these individuals to be recorded and presented in a documented form. While it would be more honest to the traditions of the Hebridean people for the information and

ii From discussions with Margaret Morrison (my grandmother) who was born to immigrants from the Hebridean island of North Uist in 1913 and passed away in 1999. She was speaking of the village of Borve, Lewis, where my grandfather was born in 1904.
knowledge to be passed along by word of mouth, the reality and practicality of the day
dictates that it at least be preserved in written form. In this way, the information so
generously provided by the informants may remain as a cultural resource and legacy long
after the informants themselves have passed away.

2.2 Literature Review:

2.2a Literature on Theory and Life Histories:

The vast majority of research undertaken for this thesis was primary research
gathered on the Isle of Lewis through in-depth interviews with elderly Hebrideans, and
shorter, but more focused interviews with other islanders. A short questionnaire,
personal observations, and visits to various sights and locations of cultural and historical
interest were also utilized. But it was also important to make use of secondary research
to build a ‘knowledge foundation’ and enrich the primary data collected in the field.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this thesis is not informed by any one particular
planning theory, but rather, by a blend of various planning principles. Community-based
planning, participatory planning and elements of bioregionalism have each influenced the
research process. I was perhaps most influenced by bioregional principles, though this
thesis is not an exercise in bioregional theory. Douglas Aberley’s Community-based
information about bioregional principles and responsible, inclusive planning for
communities. Aberley stresses that a community or ‘place’ is much more than an area
defined by political boundaries, but rather, is an accumulation of environmental,
ecological, geographical, and historical elements. More importantly, communities are
composed of people and their cultural heritage. While this thesis does not emphasize the environmental and ecological aspects of bioregionalism, it does support the idea that places consist of many threads which are woven together to form communities. Thus, it is important for planners to gain an understanding about the various threads or layers that make up communities in order to plan effectively and responsibly. This includes the use of traditional knowledge and memories, and the incorporation of data provided by community residents. This is one reason why I chose to examine cultural changes in the Outer Hebrides as perceived by those who have witnessed the changes over the years, rather than relying completely on information provided by planning authorities.

Aberley's Boundaries of Home (1993), and Giving the Land a Voice (1999), reinforced my commitment to researching the Outer Hebrides as a place consisting of many layers of identity, though both of these works are primarily concerned with bioregional mapping and its application in the planning field. The use of stories in planning strategies also influenced the research for this thesis. To better understand this aspect of planning, I consulted works written by Leonie Sandercock, including Cosmopolis II (2003). Chapter 8 of this book provides considerable insight into the use of stories in planning practice, and Sandercock also encourages planners to embrace various 'ways of knowing'.

Several resources were also consulted with regard to the methodology of data collection, especially the gathering of personal memories from informants. Even though the interviews did not cover the entire life stories of the informants, I consulted works which dealt specifically with life histories and their collection. The book, Interpreting Life Histories: An Anthropological Inquiry (Watson, 1985), provides useful information on this topic. Especially helpful are the first three chapters which explain the use and
importance of life history research, as well as the subjective nature of life histories themselves. The examination of the inherent subjectiveness of stories made me aware of the potential limits and difficulties in using this type of data, and how best to address these challenges. Another book which proved to be a valuable research asset is *Oral Historiography* (Henige, 1982). In it, the author provides a strong foundation for the use of oral histories in research. Not only is the use of oral history put in a useable context, but the author provides guidance on planning the research, the collection of data, and its later interpretation. This guidance was very helpful, and reinforces the need to balance life histories with archival and literature research. Henige’s work is quite comprehensive, and even provides information and guidance about staying healthy while in the field.

Much like Henige’s work, Thompson’s *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (1978), provides knowledge about the importance of oral history as a tool for research. He effectively links history to the sense of community, which from a bioregional planning perspective is critical. Thompson also provides guidance on developing interview questions and conducting the interview process. There is also information about ‘sifting’ the data, to synthesize the information collected for its subsequent analysis. Another work consulted is *Listening to History* (Lummis, 1987). This book complements the information found in both Henige’s and Thompson’s books. The most valuable contribution, for the purpose and scope of this thesis, are the chapters focusing on the creation of the interview itself.

In addition to books focusing on the importance, methods and use of life histories for research, I also used sources pertaining to the balance between culture and development. *Society, Culture, Development* (Mukherjee, 1991), examines this delicate
balance, and Cosmopolis II (Sandercock, 2003), likewise explores various development issues with regards to culture. Even though these books concentrate on the multicultural and urban aspects of planning, each remains helpful in understanding the necessity for equilibrium between development, modernization and cultural identity. Culture and the City in East Asia (Kim et al., 1997) handles culture as a dynamic entity that greatly influences development and social transformation. And while it focuses on Asia’s large urban centers, this book remains useful for understanding less–urbanized areas in the west and elsewhere. It asserts that culture is relevant to the present and the future as well as to the past, and that the various elements of ‘culture’ work together to provide a region or society with its unique ‘sense of place’.

2.2b Literature on Hebridean History and Culture:

The majority of literature and archival research for this thesis pertains to the history and culture of the Outer Hebrides. In order to understand the region as a ‘place’, it was vital to examine the various factors which have influenced the traditional lifestyle of the inhabitants, as well as the factors which have contributed to cultural change over the decades. I was able to discover historical patterns and trends which have impacted not only the cultural heritage of the Hebridean people, but also the development and modernization of the region as a whole. Lewis: A History of the Island (MacDonald, 1983) is an invaluable resource for anyone wishing to learn more about the history and culture of the Isle of Lewis. MacDonald covers many topics in an informative and concise manner. This book is an excellent starting point for any researcher, as it gives a comprehensive overview of many topics pertaining to island life. There are various
figures and tables throughout the book, and a number of interesting pictures to help the reader visualize the Isle of Lewis as a ‘place’. This is perhaps most important for those who have not been able to visit the island in person.

Also of interest is Innsegall: The Western Isles (Barber, 1985). This book does a good job of providing the physical setting for where this thesis research has taken place. It offers considerable information on the geology of the entire Outer Hebrides as a region, as well as a history of settlement in the islands and the various man-made artifacts still to be found throughout the windswept landscape. Barber includes a chapter entitled ‘In Living Memory’, where he outlines some of the aspects of traditional Hebridean culture that are eroding due to modernization schemes, and being quickly forgotten by what he considers, “a largely uncaring generation.” He stresses the need for cultural preservation, the importance of recording oral histories, and offers assurance that oral histories from the Outer Hebrides are indeed reliable resources of accurate historical information. For those with an interest in the cultural inventory of the region as a whole, Barber also provides a useful gazetteer of archaeological sites. The only drawback to this resource is that it focuses on the early history of the Outer Hebrides. While still useful for the scope of this thesis, Innsegall: The Western Isles is even more appropriate for those studying medieval island life and history.

Two books by Francis Thompson were also used as sources for research. Crofting Years (1984) and Harris and Lewis: Outer Hebrides (1973) are both very readable accounts of the history and culture of the Outer Hebrides. Harris and Lewis: Outer Hebrides is comparable to MacDonald’s book on Lewis in terms of its scope and content. However, Crofting Years delves specifically into one aspect of the Hebridean
heritage – that of the crofting township and lifestyle. Crofting, a system of land tenure, will be covered in greater detail later in this thesis, but for the purpose of reviewing the literature, it is important to recognize that the crofting system lies at the center of the traditional Hebridean way of life. Thompson does an excellent job tracing the history of crofting up to the 1980’s. He also provides interesting detail about the working dynamics of this type of settlement, once common throughout the Scottish Highlands.

Further to the topic of crofting, is The Making of the Crofting Community (Hunter, 2000). This book, recommended to me by one of the elderly Hebridean informants, explores crofting in much greater detail than does the Thompson book. However, most of the material addresses pre-twentieth century crofting history with a comprehensiveness that goes beyond the scope of this thesis. But the conclusion of the book includes information pertaining to crofting in the late twentieth century, and also gives some insight into what the future may hold for this particular type of land use.

With regards to the traditional lifestyle of the Outer Hebrides, Highland Folk Ways (Grant, 1997), is a very interesting and useful resource. It examines all manners of traditional daily life, with particular emphasis on the crofting communities. In conjunction with information given by the elderly Hebrideans, this book (along with the others mentioned), provides a clear picture of the traditional culture and lifestyle of the Outer Hebrides. Furthermore, it also helps construct a foundation from which an exploration of cultural change can be made, and how development and modernization factor into the equation.

Numerous reports, brochures and pamphlets pertaining to cultural heritage were also utilized. These include a very comprehensive study on the future of the Gaelic
language, along with a list of recommendations for preservation initiatives. Several booklets produced by the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Islands Council) address various aspects of the traditional island lifestyle, including the history of settlement, employment information, Celtic culture in general, and information about the natural environment. These booklets offer considerable information for their size, and are excellent for gaining a broader understanding of the topic each covers. I was also able to collect research material at the various historical societies (Comainn Eachdraidt) throughout the Outer Hebrides. One report, entitled History Tomorrow is especially valuable because it addresses the loss of traditional culture and heritage from the perspective of the organizations whose aim is to protect and preserve it. It includes interesting survey results which shed light on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Comainn Eachdraidt, as well as the perceived opportunities and threats. A periodical published by the Comainn Eachdraidt Nis (Historical Society of the Ness district) called Criomagan provides further glimpses into the traditional lifestyle of the Lewis people, with particular attention paid to the Ness district at the island’s northern end. Several issues of this magazine were obtained for research purposes. Lastly, a variety of pamphlets were collected during site observations and visits. Most visits were to places of historic and cultural interest that have been preserved formally as heritage sites. Information was collected at the Blackhouse Museum in Arnol, the Traditional Blackhouse Village at Gearrannan, and the Standing Stones at Callanish.
2.2c Literature on Hebridean Development and Modernization:

I was able to consult a number of resources regarding development goals and strategies in the Outer Hebrides. The majority of these were in the form of reports and planning documents found in the Stornoway Library, and also at the offices of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Since much of the island culture is connected to the system of land use known as ‘crofting’, of particular value were reports by the various bodies associated with crofting and local development. I consulted the annual reports of the Crofter’s Commission, as well as reports published by the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). The latter provided information on general development issues for the islands, and also explored specific issues regarding culture and heritage.

A visit to the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar office in Stornoway also proved beneficial. In addition to speaking with members of the Council, I was also able to bring a variety of reports and pamphlets back to Vancouver. These include the 1999 Annual Report of the Comhairle, and a Landscape Character Assessment produced in 1997. The assessment provides insight into the physical constraints to development in the Outer Hebrides, and also includes considerable information pertaining to crofting. Also of interest is a 1989 report by the Comhairle on its official tourism strategy. This report was of particular importance because it helped generate ideas about how cultural heritage preservation might be coupled with tourism in new and innovative ways, to mutually benefit island heritage, tourism initiatives and Hebridean development in general. A booklet produced by the Western Isles Enterprise (WIE) looks at the efforts being made to strengthen communities through the growth of new businesses and the development of
skills at the local level. Another booklet, produced by the Crofters Commission, addresses the various schemes available to crofters for improving their livestock.

Lastly, I also subscribed to the only newspaper published in the Outer Hebrides, The Stornoway Gazette. The Gazette provides regional and local news, including articles pertaining to development, traditional culture and the balance between the two. The editorial section provides insight into the opinions of islanders on many topics, including those which are addressed in this thesis.

2.2d Internet Sources:

The internet was also used for gathering research material. Of particular note are the websites pertaining to island development. The website for the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is very informative, and provides a considerable amount of material in an easily accessible format. It also contains links to many other sites that provide useful information about development in the islands. The websites for the Crofters Union and the Crofters Commission were also consulted as research sources. Since the primary research was undertaken in 2001, it was important to be able to access more recent reports and updated information from the various development bodies operating in the Outer Hebrides. These include the newly developed Structure Plan for the Outer Hebrides, the Quality of Life Initiative, and other pertinent documents and data. The 'Virtual Hebrides' website provides a good general overview of the Outer Hebrides, its people, and its culture, but is more useful as a travel planning guide than for academic research. Additional sites were accessed for a variety of information, including the 'Weatherbase' website for climate data.
CHAPTER 3: The Land and its People

As a means of understanding the Outer Hebrides as a 'place' and as a 'people' it is important to understand the various elements that contribute to its distinctiveness as a region. This chapter provides an overview of these elements so that the reader gains a deeper appreciation and knowledge of the Outer Hebrides and its population, thereby acquiring a more complete understanding about the context of this thesis.

3.1 Physical Geography:

The Outer Hebrides is a windswept archipelago lying off the northwest coast of the Scottish mainland. With the exception of Iceland and the Faeroe Islands, the Outer Hebrides also constitutes the most northwestern frontier of populated Europe. There are dozens of islands in the Hebridean archipelago, from tiny uninhabitable rocky outcrops and islets to the 2000 square kilometer island mass of Lewis and Harris.

The Isles of Lewis and Harris can be thought of as the 'conjoined twins' of the Outer Hebrides. Lewis and Harris actually form one large island, but because the Lewis and Harris portions are separated by a range of very high hills, their populations have developed as distinct island societies. Most research was undertaken on the more populous Isle of Lewis, though I also made observational trips to the Isles of Harris, North Uist, Benbecula and South Uist.

The Isle of Lewis is a low-lying island dominated by rolling moors and small hills. The hills gradually rise in the southern part of the island, reaching almost 800

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iii It is true that Danish territory of Greenland is further north and west of the Outer Hebrides, but most people would not consider Greenland to be a part of Europe.
meters in height at the border with Harris. The most common rock type on the island is Lewisian Gneiss, which is a very ancient metamorphic material. Samples have been dated to more than four billion years of age, making it some of the oldest known rock on Earth.

3.2 Soils and Fertility:

One of the most characteristic features of the Outer Hebrides, and the Isle of Lewis in particular, is the abundance of peat and the general absence of trees. Archaeologists have determined that Lewis was once covered with temperate forests, but due to Ice Ages, climatic shifts and human activity, most indigenous forest has disappeared. Island legend states that marauding Vikings burned most of the woodland as some sort of medieval scorched-earth policy. While invaders certainly contributed to the destruction of the forests, the biggest factor in denuding the landscape was the gradual development of peat bogs due to climate change. As the climate cooled and moistened over the past several millennia, conditions began to favour the formation of peat and peat bogs, rather than the continued sustenance of forests. Thus, when tree stocks began to disappear both naturally and by human actions, climatic conditions prevented their re-growth in a sustainable way. Consequently, peat has accumulated throughout the lower elevations of the island, and in some places to a depth of five meters. Due to the widespread and acidic nature of the peat deposits, the Isle of Lewis does not possess large expanses of arable land.

One notable exception is the comparatively fertile ‘machair’ land which can be found in several coastal areas of the island. Machair is a mix of soil, sand, sea-minerals
and crushed shell, thrown up from the sea and forming deposits along some coastal areas. The Isle of North Uist possesses extensive areas of machair land that can be farmed quite intensively, or used for grazing livestock. But the deposits of machair on the Isle of Lewis tend to be quite shallow and small, and therefore cannot be used for any sustainable economic activity.

3.3 Climate:

Despite its northerly location, the Isle of Lewis and the rest of the Outer Hebrides enjoy a very temperate and moist climate. Located just south of the 60\textsuperscript{th} parallel North, the town of Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis experiences temperatures that are significantly milder than settlements at similar latitudes around the world. The following table compares Stornoway's climate to that of several other settlements in the Northern hemisphere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: CLIMATE COMPARISON</th>
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<td>Latitude (degrees)</td>
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<td>Stornoway</td>
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<td>Fort Nelson</td>
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The Outer Hebrides owes its moderate climate to its proximity to the mild Atlantic currents that flow north from the sub-tropics and then curve westward off the

\textsuperscript{iv} The data in this table was taken from the Weather Base website, www.weatherbase.com.
Hebridean coastline.\(^{17}\) The temperature throughout the year is quite mild, with few hot spells in the summer and relatively few days below freezing in the winter. The rainfall average in Stornoway is comparable to that of Vancouver.\(^{y}\)

But because of its exposed position at the ‘frontier’ of Europe, the Outer Hebrides experiences heavy gales that develop in the North Atlantic. Even summer windstorms can be strong, but it is the regular gales of winter that can be particularly fierce. In the month of January, the northern areas of the Isle of Lewis can experience more than 375 hours of wind at gale-force or stronger.\(^{18}\)

One factor which has shaped the traditional lifestyle of the Hebridean people is the amount of daylight experienced in the islands, and its variability from season to season. Because of its northern latitude, the Isle of Lewis experiences long hours of daylight throughout the spring and summer, and long periods of darkness throughout late fall and winter. In fact, Stornoway can receive more than 18 hours of daylight during the summer solstice period, with several additional hours of ‘twilight’ each day.\(^{19}\) But at the winter solstice the sun does not rise until after 9am, and it sets before 3:30 pm. The wide variation of seasonal daylight hours has even affected the traditional pattern of human activity throughout the region. Activities such as farming and fishing were traditionally done on long summer days, while activities such as tool making and repairs were left for the long hours of darkness in winter.\(^{20}\)

\(^{y}\)According to the Weatherbase website (www.weatherbase.com), Stornoway’s annual precipitation averages 112 cm per year, compared to 111 cm for Vancouver.
3.4 Flora and Fauna:

Despite its windswept landscape, indigenous plant life in the Outer Hebrides is surprisingly diverse. Studies show almost 500 species of plants living on the Isles of Lewis and Harris alone. There are a number of species of heather native to the region, as well as wildflowers which bloom across the moors each spring and summer. Mosses and lichens are also common, as are ferns and a variety of grasses. As previously mentioned, there is a notable absence of trees in most areas, though Stornoway itself enjoys a 300-acre planted ‘forest’ on the grounds of Lews Castle College. Most of these specimens were planted under the auspices of Lady Matheson, whose husband owned the Isle of Lewis in the mid-19th century. Due to mild island winters and their more sheltered ‘urban’ locale, domestic gardens in the town of Stornoway can support fruit trees of various types and even imported palms. In less sheltered parts of Lewis, where exposure to the wind is a constant reality, any trees which manage to grow do so with a considerable lean. The marine waters surrounding the islands also support a bounty of plant life, and the local population has benefited nutritionally and economically from the various species of seaweed growing offshore.

The Outer Hebrides is also home to a number of animal species. Scientists have recorded 15 species of mammals and 114 species of birds throughout Lewis and Harris. There is even a species of bumblebee that exists nowhere else on Earth. The majority of indigenous land animals are small mammals, with no large native land animals on the islands except for a modest number of deer. Certain introduced species of mammal have become quite common, such as hedgehog and mink. Unfortunately, the proliferation of mink in recent decades has become a threat to native birds and their nesting sites.
The waters surrounding the islands are home to various species of seal, porpoise and whale. Historically speaking, fish have been plentiful as well, with herring forming the backbone of the island economy at one time. Cod, ling, haddock and other food-fish are also found in the local waters, with lobster, crab, scallops and other shellfish available along stretches of the coast. Winkles (sea-snails) are regularly harvested by locals as a favourite snack.

3.5 The People:

The islands of the Outer Hebrides have hosted human habitation for thousands of years. There are visible signs of ancient human activity throughout the islands in the form of ruined tower forts (brochs), burial cairns and standing stones. For instance, Dun Carloway Broch, a stone fortress near the village of Carloway on Lewis, was likely erected 2500 years ago by Iron Age inhabitants. The Callanish Standing Stones, even more complete than the circle at Stonehenge, are even older. It is estimated that these stones were placed more than 4000 years ago. As impressive as these dates may be, archaeological excavation has proven that human habitation began in the Outer Hebrides much earlier than this. The discovery of various artifacts has pushed the date of settlement back to at least 7000 years ago.

At some point in the distant past, the Outer Hebrides became dominated by ancient Celtic peoples. It is believed that the Celts migrated from Eastern Europe and Western Asia more than 1000 years before the time of Christ, ultimately spreading to the

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I was able to go ‘winkle hunting’ in the tidal pools on the West Side of Lewis with a crofter from the village of Melbost Borve. After an hour of scrambling across the wet rocks and slipping into one of the deeper pools, I was rewarded with gumboots filled with seawater and a meager number of winkles. The crofter collected at least five times as many winkles, and these were boiled by his wife for a delicious snack. We ate them the traditional way, using a sewing needle to pry the meat from the shell.
Atlantic coast of Europe. While Celtic settlements eventually disappeared from most of Europe, Celtic populations remained in regions that still possess a notable Celtic heritage today; namely Brittany in France, the country of Wales, Northern and Republican Ireland, the Isle of Man, Cornwall in England, and portions of Western Scotland including the Outer Hebrides.

While Celtic in character, the Hebrideans have also been influenced by Scandinavian culture and society. This is because the islands faced numerous raids by Vikings throughout the early Middle Ages. Though many raids were very destructive, evidence shows that the Vikings also settled in areas they visited, and that there was a reasonable degree of assimilation with the local Celtic people. In fact, most place names on the Isle of Lewis are Norse in origin, and even the design of the domestic dwellings that dominated the island until the early 20th century, has been traced back to the Viking invaders. The Outer Hebrides were even ruled by the Norse from the 11th century until 1266, when the islands were ceded back to the Kingdom of Scotland by Norway.

After the islands became part of Scotland once again, the clan system of societal organization dominated regional and local affairs. The dynamics of this feudal system are too complex for a thorough examination within the scope of this thesis, but simply put, a number of families (clans) rose to various levels of power and prominence throughout the region. For instance, the MacDonald clan became the ‘Lords of the Isles’, the Beatons were involved with healing and medicine, while the Morrisons became the hereditary brieves, or judges for the islands. Each clan had its own leader or chief, and there was a hierarchy which followed downward from that point. Clans did not ‘own’ the land they lived on, but rather, they governed it. The chief would administer the
landholdings, permitting fellow clan members to farm and fish in the area. In return for military service, the peasantry received protection from the chief. During the years that the clan system dominated Hebridean affairs, there were many rivalries and battles (some of them particularly bloody) between the various clans. Nevertheless, the system seemed to work fairly well until the mid 18th century, when the English Parliament systematically dismantled the clan system in response to the attempted overthrow of the English monarchy by Scotland’s ‘Bonnie Prince Charlie’ in 1745. The Highlands and Islands supported the rebellion and were subsequently regarded as ‘hotbeds’ of anti-English sentiment. Even the wearing of tartan was outlawed. Nevertheless, vestiges of the clan system are still evident in the Outer Hebrides today. The kinship relationship that exists within clans and families is still extremely important to many islanders. In fact, rather than asking someone where they are from, a Hebridean will usually ask, “Co leis thu?”, which is Gaelic for, “Who do you belong to?”

3.6 Language:

The Outer Hebrides is easily distinguished from much of Scotland by its linguistic heritage. The Gaelic language was once spoken throughout many parts of Scotland, but Anglicization of the population over the past 1000 years has relegated Gaelic to the Outer Hebrides and a few isolated pockets on the Scottish mainland. Scottish Gaelic is an ancient language, and is part of the Indo-European language branch. It is most closely related to Irish Gaelic, but is also in the same family of Celtic languages as Welsh, Manx, Cornish and Breton.
Based on a 1991 census, the majority of Hebrideans are fluent speakers of Gaelic,\textsuperscript{42} with minor variations in dialect present from island to island. Some individuals believe that the Lewis dialect is the least ‘pure’ because it is the least isolated of the islands, having assimilated words from other cultural groups which have visited the island over the centuries.\textsuperscript{43} Fluency in written Gaelic is less common than spoken fluency, and for unfortunate reasons. Many members of the older generation were never taught how to read or write their own language.\textsuperscript{44} Schools did not permit the teaching of Gaelic, which left the children to learn it at home. These policies resulted in a population that could speak the Gaelic language, but could not read or write it with fluency.\textsuperscript{45} Some elderly Hebrideans may recall being punished for using Gaelic in class, or shamed by the teacher for speaking it in the schoolyard. By the 1970’s it became clear that Gaelic was in serious decline, and efforts were made to preserve it. Since 1980, children in Gaelic speaking areas of Scotland are provided with Gaelic instruction as part of the school curriculum,\textsuperscript{46} and today, Lews Castle College offers Gaelic programs with theses defended in the Gaelic language.\textsuperscript{47} Television and radio stations offer Gaelic programming to the population, and since legislation was passed in 1984, many street signs in the Outer Hebrides are now bilingual.\textsuperscript{48}

3.7 Religious Beliefs:

The religious history of the Outer Hebrides stretches back to the pagan beliefs of the prehistoric population. It is likely that druidic beliefs were present, due the large number of stone circles found throughout the region. But by the 8\textsuperscript{th} century A.D., changes took place after Christianity was introduced by monks from other parts of
Scotland and Ireland. St. Columba established a monastery on the Inner Hebridean island of Iona as early as 563 A.D., but there is no evidence that he ever visited the Outer Hebrides. Being far removed from Rome and the Pope allowed Christian practice to develop along uniquely Celtic lines. Celtic Christianity was organized around the monastic system of governance under the leadership of Abbots, unlike the Roman Catholic diocese which are administered by Bishops. Celtic Christianity held a great appreciation for God’s creation, with much less emphasis placed on the material world. Celtic Christian communities observed the Sabbath strictly, promulgated learning and education, and were very active in evangelism. The Roman Catholic Church gradually exerted its influence over the Celtic communities, in an attempt to bring them under Papal authority. By the end of the 12th century the Celtic Church effectively ceased to exist as a separate entity. Interestingly, many characteristics of the Celtic Church would later be reclaimed during the Protestant Reformation and the break with Rome.

Despite the spread of Christianity, local populations still held on to various pagan beliefs and rites. Even after the Reformation in the 16th century, when the northern half of the Hebrides embraced reformed Calvinist theology, there was a tendency for people to blend their Christian faith with pagan superstition. Offerings to the pagan sea-spirit ‘Shony’ were made regularly until the mid-19th century, and many islanders possessed a strong belief in elves, fairies, and other mystical creatures.

However, by the 1840s the islands entered a period of Christian awakening and revival. These years were characterized by strong Evangelical witness; that salvation is an undeserved gift of God (grace) that is not based on our own works, that salvation comes through our personal faith in Jesus Christ alone, and that the Bible is the inspired,
inerrant and infallible Word of God. Entire households were inexplicably driven to their knees in prayer, and churches were filled with people professing their faith in Jesus Christ. These revivals continued into the 20th century, and are remembered by many of the older Hebridean people. Today, congregations in North Uist, Harris and Lewis are predominantly Protestant and evangelical in nature, and generally belong to one of a number of Presbyterian denominations. The islands to the south have retained their affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church. Despite these differences, religious tension appears absent from the lives of most islanders.

Generally speaking, many Hebrideans possess strong Christian convictions. On Protestant islands, many people keep the Sabbath as a holy day, forsaking any work or household chores unless it constitutes a work of necessity or mercy, such as making a meal for a sick neighbour. Church is normally attended twice on Sundays, with weekly meetings for prayer groups and Bible studies being well-attended. To a visitor, services may seem quite different, since most Presbyterian churches in the islands lack both a choir and an organ. Hymns are not used, but instead, the Psalms of David are sung unaccompanied by the congregation. They are led by a man known as the ‘precentor’, who sets the tune and tempo for the Psalm being sung. Most churches do not use musical instruments in worship, since the human voice is considered the greatest instrument for praising God. Services center on the preaching of God’s Word (the Holy Bible), and most ministers are evangelical in character. There is considerable activity in overseas missionary work, and the people of the islands support their churches both spiritually and financially. For instance, in the Free Church of Scotland (Presbyterian), congregations

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vii The Church of Scotland is also a Presbyterian denomination, and does permit the use of musical instruments and the singing of hymns in services. However, it is not as common in the Outer Hebrides as ‘stricter’ forms of Presbyterianism like the Free Church and Free Presbyterian denominations.
in the Outer Hebrides contribute more money to church work per capita than any Free Church congregations in any other part of the world.57

Non-Christian beliefs are also found throughout the Outer Hebrides, and especially on the more ‘cosmopolitan’ Isle of Lewis. There is a significant Muslim population of Pakistani descent, as well as members of the Jehovah’s Witness. New Age followers are also present, and pagan ceremonies are sometimes performed at various ancient sites. One of the elderly informants recalled the annual visit of a ‘witch’ who performed a dance around her family’s well during each summer solstice.58

3.8 Traditional Community Character:

For more than 200 years, most Hebridean people have built their society around a system of land use known as ‘crofting’. Simply put, the ‘croft’ is a piece of land owned by a landlord and worked by a tenant called a ‘crofter’. It is a system that remains the primary form of community and social structure throughout the Outer Hebrides⁸ and its influence stretches far beyond the issue of land organization and assemblage. Crofting has developed into a way of life, becoming one of the defining elements of Hebridean culture and society.

The crofter pays an annual rent to a landlord for the use of the land constituting the croft, but must provide his own shelter and amenities. The crofter also enjoys rights to communal grazing lands within the crofting township, and engages in other communal activities such as sheep shearing and the cutting of peat for fuel. Farming and livestock rearing on the croft do not generally provide enough income to support a crofting family,

⁸ Crofting is also found in other parts of the Highlands of Scotland, and in the Orkneys and Shetland Islands as well. However, it is in the Outer Hebrides that crofting has had its greatest influence upon the lifestyle of the people, and remains such a strong influence even today.
so other means of employment are usually combined with the activities on the croft itself. Some crofters chose to have a second job in town, while others may engage in seasonal fishing or the weaving of tweed to supplement their crofting incomes. Due to the fact that crofting itself is not a full-time occupation, crofters can use their entrepreneurial creativity to improve their own livelihoods through any number of home-based industries. Extra money earned can be used by the crofter to improve the croft, through the construction of out-buildings, fences or renovations to the croft house. Any buildings or improvements made by the crofter are owned by the crofter, and if the crofter wishes to leave his croft in the future, he has the right to sell these structures and improvements to the next crofting tenant. Thus, while crofting certainly has a number of communal characteristics, it is also a system that encourages free enterprise and economic growth by individual crofters.

To understand crofting today, it is helpful to explore how this land use system developed. To do so, one must look back to the late Middle Ages and the dominance of the clan-based system. As mentioned earlier, the clan was organized with the chief as its head, and this chief administered how the occupied land was used by clan members. The system of land use at that time was called 'run-rig,' and had much in common with other European feudal systems of the time. However, unlike feudal lords in other areas, the clan chief did not own the land he administered. Rather, the land was shared by all clan members, with the clan chief dividing the land into parcels. Since not all parcels were equal in size and soil fertility, the tenure of the plots was rotated each year so that all clan members could benefit accordingly. This system was equitable, and strong communal characteristics rose from the sharing of the land by the entire clan body. Fair
treatment and proper management by the chief was guaranteed through the sacred kinship ties that bound each clan together.\textsuperscript{63}

As mentioned earlier, following a series of Scottish rebellions and uprisings against British rule, the British Parliament cracked down on the clan system. Clan chiefs were encouraged to assume ownership of the clan lands, and in essence became landed gentry. But as their economic conditions deteriorated and the land base grew increasingly unproductive, many chiefs sold their land to Lowland Scots and English aristocrats. By selling the land, the chiefs broke the sacred bond of trust that had existed within the clan, and more importantly, they had removed any security of land tenure that the clan members had possessed.\textsuperscript{64} This left the people as tenants who were exposed to manipulation and exploitation by the new landlords.

There was little effort made to preserve the system of run-rig. Those clan chiefs who still held onto their land also searched for ways to gain greater profit and increase their own aristocratic ambitions.\textsuperscript{65} The land was divided into crofts, and each croft had a single tenant or tenant family. The crofts were not rotated, so some tenants enjoyed comparatively fertile crofts, while others were left to struggle with very unproductive land. It has been suggested that the general degradation of land resulted from poor management practices and the lack of manure used on fallow fields, and as fertile tracts became more scarce, these were increasingly overworked by the crofting tenants.\textsuperscript{66} Eventually, many landlords started to seek new ways to use the land that they owned, since holding the land as crofts was becoming less and less profitable. It was believed that sheep-rearing would be a better venture, so entire crofting areas were given over to this activity. Since the rent paid by the tenants was much less than the money earned by
raising sheep, entire communities of crofters were forcibly evicted from the land to make more room for livestock.\textsuperscript{67} There was nothing that the crofters could do to avoid being cleared from the land, since they did not have any land security rights under the existing system. The ‘Highland Clearances’ occurred across the Highlands of Scotland, and constitute one of the saddest chapters in the history of the Outer Hebrides. It was not until 1886, and the passing of the Crofting Act, that land tenancy was legally guaranteed for the Scottish crofters.\textsuperscript{68} In addition to tenure security, the Act had further implications.\textsuperscript{69} Rental prices for crofts were kept regulated by the Scottish Land Courts, to reflect the quality of land provided to individual crofters. The crofters also had the new freedom to bequeath their croft and crofting rights to family members, and for the first time, crofters could sell any structures or capital improvements they had made on their croft. Since dwellings had gained a marketable value, this gave a new incentive for crofters to make improvements to their homes. This subsequently led to a general improvement in living conditions throughout the islands.\textsuperscript{70}

Crofting continues to play a large part in Hebridean society today, and the Crofting Act of 1886 has been replaced by a series of other legislated acts and the creation of additional bodies to help regulate and support the crofting system. Most recent is the Crofting Act of 1993, though a new Act may be drafted now that Scotland has its own Parliament once again.\textsuperscript{ix} The legal intricacies that govern crofting are quite complex, and are beyond the scope of this thesis. However, some general observations can be made to shed light on the crofting situation as it exists today. The crofter is still a tenant who pays an annual rent to a landowner. The crofter’s dwelling, other buildings

\textsuperscript{ix} The Scottish Parliament was disbanded in 1707 when the Act of Union created the United Kingdom. In 1999 the Scottish Parliament was formally reopened, following a 1997 referendum on Home Rule.
and additional improvements still must be provided by the crofter himself. However, financial assistance in the form of loans and grants are now available to help individual crofters upgrade their dwellings and improve their croft amenities.\textsuperscript{71} As of 1976, crofters also have the right to purchase their croft from the landlord. The price of the croft is negotiated between the crofter and the landlord, and may not exceed the total of 15 years rent.\textsuperscript{72} If a price cannot be reached, the crofter may seek help from the Scottish Land Court.\textsuperscript{73}

The present Crofters Commission was set up in 1955 to develop and regulate crofting, and to promote the interests of crofters and their communities.\textsuperscript{74} The Commission also reviews crofting matters and advises Scottish Ministers about crofting, and the various issues faced by crofters. Communication between the Commission and the crofters is facilitated by Assessors, who are often chosen by the crofting townships to represent their concerns.\textsuperscript{75} This builds a higher degree of trust between the crofters and the Commission, since the crofters' representatives are not chosen from outside of the community. The Commission also liaises with other bodies, such as the Crofter's Union and various development boards, to protect the future of crofting and its place within society. The preservation of crofting as an element of cultural heritage is likewise important to the Commission. As explained by the Commission in its 1998 Annual Report, "crofting offers a social focus, shapes a unique lifestyle, offers continuity with the past and opportunity for the future."\textsuperscript{76} Young people are central to the continuance of the crofting system and lifestyle, and the Commission has recognized this by encouraging young adults to enter the crofting life. A 'Crofting Education Pack' and other
publications have been introduced to provide young people with information about crofting and the benefits of rural living.\textsuperscript{77}

The focus of agricultural activity on the croft has changed over the years. During the first half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, production on the croft was quite diverse, including the cultivation of various grains and vegetables. Most crofters also kept a number of animals, including cows, goats, horses, sheep and chickens.\textsuperscript{78} However, in recent decades, most crofters have abandoned crop cultivation and have turned to raising sheep.\textsuperscript{79} This has changed the face of crofting in significant ways, making the system much less diverse than it had been before. In response, the Crofters Commission has recommended ways of diversifying croft production, and some individuals who have recently become crofters are trying to operate in more innovative ways. This has included raising trees, growing shitake mushrooms and incorporating tourism ventures into the crofting system.\textsuperscript{80}

Any changes to the health of crofting will have repercussions for the general health of the Outer Hebridean economy as well. This is because crofting is much more common in these islands than anywhere else in the country. In 2003, the Commission recorded a total of 17,709 crofts across Scotland. However, 6,023 of these were located in the Outer Hebrides, representing 34\% of the total.\textsuperscript{81} But even more telling is that the population of the Outer Hebrides constitutes just 0.5\% of Scotland's total population.\textsuperscript{x} This certainly reveals the comparative importance of the crofting system to the Hebridean region. Within the Outer Hebrides, the Isle of Lewis has the most crofts with 3611 (1998), or 20\% of Scotland's total.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{x} According to the 2001 census, the population of the Outer Hebrides was just over 26,000 individuals, compared to slightly more than 5 million people in the whole of Scotland.
But while more than 19% of all crofts in Scotland are owner-occupied, the rate of croft purchase by tenants in the Outer Hebrides is far lower. In Lewis, for example, only 18 of the 3611 crofts are owned by the crofter, representing a tiny 0.5%. The reason for this likely rests in the productivity of the land itself. The soils in Lewis are less fertile than in most parts of the mainland, which results in less productivity and less incentive for a Lewis crofter to purchase his croft.

Today, crofting faces an uncertain future. While the crofters are much better off than they were prior to the 1886 Crofting Act, the regulations and legislation which help protect the crofter and the crofting system might also be hindering its development and future health. Innovations and change will certainly be required, but the question remains whether or not the regulations that govern crofting will allow these innovations to be implemented.
CHAPTER 4: The Economic and Development History of the Outer Hebrides: A Story of Long-term Stresses and Short-term Shocks

4.1 The Economic History:

The Outer Hebrides of Scotland is a region in need of innovative and sustainable development initiatives. To fully appreciate the necessity of sustainability throughout the islands, it is important to first understand the various factors which have led to the region’s present state of need.

As mentioned in the last chapter, crofting has been the dominant form of land-use and community structure throughout the Outer Hebrides for more than two centuries, and has also been an integral part of the local island economy. But since the agricultural output of a croft has rarely met the full economic needs of a crofting family, crofters have had to engage in other economic activities as well. There were various other industries that crofters were able to enter to supplement their crofting income, but most of these held short-term gains, and did little to strengthen sustainability at either the village or regional level.

4.1a The Hebridean Herring Fishing Industry:

Fishing has been an important part of Hebridean life for many centuries, which is not surprising since the Outer Hebrides constitute a chain of islands. Fish was used as a source of protein for the locals, and various sea creatures and sea plants were used by islanders for their medicinal properties.83

Despite the fact that foreign fishing boats have plied the Hebridean waters since the 16th century,84 the Hebridean people did not engage in an export fishing industry until
much later. It was not until the 18\textsuperscript{th} century that fish merchants in Stornoway began to export herring to Inverness, on the Scottish mainland.\textsuperscript{85} A fishing industry quickly developed in and around Stornoway, with many individuals becoming involved in various aspects of the trade. Aside from actually fishing for herring, people could find work on the docks and in the warehouses. Others found employment as coopers, making the sturdy barrels used for packing the fish, while the gutting, salting and packing of fish became an important economic activity for island women.\textsuperscript{86}

The herring shoals seemed to hold endless economic opportunity for the Outer Hebrides, and especially for the Isle of Lewis where the export trade was centred. But as we know today, fish stocks are susceptible to over-fishing, exploitation, and the natural cycles of growth and decline. Nevertheless, the fishing industry became an anchor for the Hebridean economy, and by the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the industry had become more profitable than it had ever been before. Unfortunately, the prosperity was not indefinite. The industry eventually over-exploited the fish stocks, and the Hebridean fishery spiraled into decline by the 1930s.\textsuperscript{87} Today, there are still many Hebridean fishermen who operate out of Stornoway, but the days when island prosperity was intimately linked to the herring have never returned. Ling and whitefish are still fished in the Hebridean waters, but the focus of the industry today is upon shellfish. In 1994, the value of the shellfish catch was £9.17 million, and represented more than 87\% of the entire Hebridean fishery.\textsuperscript{88} Regardless, today it seems more difficult for fishermen to earn enough money to support a family and maintain a boat, than it ever was before.\textsuperscript{x1}

\textsuperscript{x1} From an interview with Roddy Morrison, who once operated a fishing boat out of Stornoway. Some years ago he sold his boat, and now works off-island for a dredging company.
Some might consider fish-farming to be the next boon for the Hebridean fishery. There are currently several hundred people employed in this industry, and more than 236 tons of salmon were being produced annually, as early as 1988. But with various environmental concerns linked to fish-farming, and an international preference for wild salmon, it is unlikely that fish-farming will ever grow to become the dominant island industry. Nevertheless, fish-farms can be found in many of the lochs throughout Lewis, and in some Lewis districts, fish-farming appears to be the only economic activity taking place.\textsuperscript{xii}

4.1b Kelp-making Industry:

One of the saddest chapters in the economic history of the Outer Hebrides began in the middle of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. At that time Britain was industrializing at a rapid pace, and there was a constant demand for raw chemicals to fuel industrial processes. It was discovered that a variety of chemicals, including soda and iodine, could be extracted from seaweed when it was burned under controlled conditions.\textsuperscript{90} The processing of seaweed was known as ‘kelp-making’, and it quickly became an important part of the Hebridean economy. Even though kelp-making depended upon the hard work of crofters, it was still the most economic way to obtain the chemicals needed for Britain’s continued industrial growth and expansion.\textsuperscript{91}

Kelp-making was a very labour-intensive activity, and it was often undertaken by entire crofting families. Even young children would scour the beaches as their parents

\textsuperscript{xii} From Angus McLeod, one of the elderly Hebrideans I interviewed. He was born in the district of Pairc, on the Isle of Lewis. Over the past century, the district has steadily depopulated, with mostly seniors living there today. According to Mr. McLeod, fish farming is the only industry operating in the Pairc district today.
loaded baskets, called ‘creels’, with seaweed harvested from tidal areas. And the amount of seaweed harvested by the crofters is staggering. Between 1764 and 1772 alone, more than 2000 tons of kelp was ‘made’ in the Outer Hebrides on an annual basis.\textsuperscript{92} One needs to remember that these quantities were gathered by hand, without the aid of mechanized tools, and in a kelp-making season that usually lasted only six weeks.\textsuperscript{93}

As widespread and important as the kelp-making industry had become in the islands, by the second quarter of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century the industry was in rapid decline.\textsuperscript{94} Perhaps ironically, the Industrial Revolution which created this industry ultimately brought its collapse. As industrialization expanded and technology and scientific breakthroughs advanced, it became possible to produce many chemicals synthetically.\textsuperscript{95} The synthetic chemicals were more economical and efficient to produce, and eliminated the need and cost of transporting the chemicals from the islands. By 1836, kelp-making as an industry had disappeared on the Isle of Lewis, and was greatly diminished on the other islands as well.\textsuperscript{96}

4.1c The Harris Tweed Industry

By the middle of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, attention drew towards another Hebridean commodity for wide-scale production and export. Named for the Isle of Harris, Harris Tweed is a woven wool textile that has been produced throughout the Outer Hebrides for centuries. Woven by crofting families, the tweed was originally manufactured as clothing for the Hebridean people. Wool would be sheared from the sheep, dyed with natural plant extracts, carded to remove tangles, spun into yarn, and then woven into fabric.\textsuperscript{97} As the economy of the islands struggled after the collapse of kelp-making, some
enterprising landlords began to consider the potential of producing this durable textile for export. In 1842, the Earl and Countess of Dunmore began to export excess tweed produced by the crofters on their Harris estate, representing the birth of a new export industry for the Outer Hebrides.\textsuperscript{98}

By the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, tweed production had increased markedly throughout the region, especially after Stornoway merchants began securing overseas markets for their product. The production of tweed increased further after mills were built for the carding of the wool and the spinning of the yarn.\textsuperscript{99} These two steps in the production process were very time consuming when done on the croft. So to improve overall efficiency, the dyed wool was carded and spun in mechanized mills, and then returned to the crofters for weaving.\textsuperscript{100}

Much of Scotland's textile industry had already moved south to England for cost-effectiveness purposes by the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, and there was concern that the same might happen to Harris Tweed production.\textsuperscript{101} By the early twentieth century there were already manufacturers on the mainland who were copying the patterns and weaves of the Harris Tweed producers.\textsuperscript{102} However, the Harris Tweed Association took action to prevent the industry from being moved from the islands. A stipulation was made that \textit{true} Harris Tweed had to be produced entirely within the Outer Hebrides, and that only Scottish wool could be used.\textsuperscript{103} The H.T.A. also developed a trademark for the Harris Tweed, and if any part of the production was undertaken outside of the islands, it would not receive the official stamp. These initiatives protected the Harris Tweed industry, and preserved it as a uniquely Hebridean commercial venture. With its strict production
guidelines and its increasing popularity, Harris Tweed became “the cloth against which all other tweeds were measured.”\textsuperscript{104}

The Harris Tweed industry continued to grow and advance technologically throughout the first half of the twentieth century, with the peak year of production being 1966.\textsuperscript{xiii} But unfortunately for the producers, fashion trends change from time to time, and the popularity of wearing tweed has steadily declined since the 1970s. Today, there is still a Harris Tweed industry in the Outer Hebrides, but it is less productive than in years past. It is estimated that approximately 750 crofters still engage in the production of tweed throughout the islands, in a part-time capacity to supplement their crofting incomes.\textsuperscript{105}

\textbf{4.1d Potential New Industries:}

In recent years the economy of the Outer Hebrides has become more diverse. While extractive industries based upon primary resources such as fishing remain central to the economy, there has been a general move towards greater sustainability for the economic base. The attitude of island inhabitants also seems to be focused on finding more sustainable ways of improving the region’s economic health. Only a few years ago, a British company applied to construct a giant super-quarry on the Isle of Harris, at Lingerbay.\textsuperscript{106} The quarry was to supply gravel for road construction in England, and would likely operate for 60 years.\textsuperscript{107} Up to 100 jobs would be created, which might have seemed attractive to the local population. However, the Hebridean people were keenly aware of the full costs of the project; damage to the environment, destruction of the

\textsuperscript{xiii} According to Angus McLeod, more than 7.6 million yards of Harris Tweed were produced in the Outer Hebrides in 1966. The vast majority was not home-spun.
scenic beauty and peace of the Lingerbay area, and potential threats to their traditional communities. This, coupled with the fact that the quarry would operate for 60 years at most, prompted the local government to deny the application. It was clear that the quarry would only provide short term benefits, and that these were outweighed by the long term costs of the project.

One of the industries that seems to show promise as a sustainable venture is the field of telecommunications and high technology. According to the Western Islands Council, a concerted effort is being made to improve the standard of communication systems throughout the region, and to provide people with the necessary education and training for sector positions. If these plans succeed, fewer young Hebrideans will have to leave the islands to obtain work in a technology field. And with overhead costs being much lower than in other parts of Britain, it has become advantageous for companies to locate their call-centers in the Outer Hebrides. Additional industries being developed include small-scale publishing ventures, media broadcasting, and even the production of pharmaceuticals. The long-term sustainability of each of these industries has yet to be determined, but at least they are helping to diversify an economy that has been dependent on primary resources for most of its history.

Tourism is arguably the most promising of the newer industries being developed in the Outer Hebrides, and may likely prove to be the most sustainable. As the world becomes wealthier, people are traveling more each year. With improvements in transportation, even areas once considered remote are opening up to the tourist dollar. Tourists are attracted to the safe and peaceful character of the islands, and the outstanding natural beauty that is found throughout the region. There are several good hotels in the
town of Stornoway, and there is a thriving bed and breakfast industry in many Hebridean villages. Eco-tourists can choose from a multitude of activities, including hill-walking, bird watching and beach combing. The Outer Hebrides has also become a haven for those with an interest in Celtic culture. There are a variety of festivals held each year in the islands, and these showcase the Gaelic language and culture. A myriad of historical sites can also keep a tourist busy for days. Whether visiting ancient stone circles, ruined forts and towers, or spending time in island historical societies and museums, visitors to the Outer Hebrides become exposed to a history that is both vast and unique. Cruise ships visit the islands regularly in the summer months, bringing tourists with money to spend. And even though shops are closed and most services are unavailable on Sundays, tourists should not view the region’s religious heritage as an inconvenience. Rather, they should acknowledge and appreciate it as one of the differences that set the Outer Hebrides apart from the rest of Britain.

Tourism today is a growing industry, and the various services which support tourism are increasing as well. Restaurants and cafes dot the islands, and the transportation system includes planes, buses and ferries. More than 700 individuals are employed in the industry. Tourism might also become a catalyst for more sustainable development in the region, since it is the unique character of the islands that attracts so many visitors. Thus, it is wise for development to proceed with preservation, conservation and sustainability as its focus.
4.2 Significant Social Upheavals that have Impacted Development:

By examining the economic history of the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, it is clear that the islands have been plagued with unsustainable industries that have not contributed to long-term economic stability. But there have been other factors which have contributed to economic stresses, development difficulties, and ultimately, population decline. Social upheavals and shocks to the island population have been as detrimental to the region's future as any of the economic challenges over the past two centuries. Following is an overview of several 'shocks', or social calamities, which have befallen the Hebridean people. Some produced effects which are still being felt in the region today.

4.2a The Highland Clearances and Lasting Prejudice:

The Highland Clearances represent one of the most tragic periods of Scottish history. As mentioned in the last chapter, after the breakdown of the clan system, crofters across Scotland were left without any tenure security. Once landlords discovered that wide-scale sheep farms held more economic potential than crofting, thousands of crofters were cleared from the land. Many were placed on ships for North America and Australia, while others ended up in the slums of Glasgow. Some were moved to other parts of their island, but always to land which was less arable and productive than what they had lived on before. For those who were cleared but remained in the islands, many could not obtain new crofts and had to live as cottars (squatters) on the crofts of others. Some clearances were comparatively 'humane', but others were harsh and brutal. There is the sad account of a 105-year-old woman who was being cleared from her croft. She was
bedridden and could not leave her small stone cottage. The authorities lit her thatch roof on fire, and pulled the walls down upon her. Other members of the village rushed and pulled her from the burning rubble, but she died soon afterward.\textsuperscript{114}

The lasting psychological effects of the Clearances should not be underestimated. When people were cleared from their crofts, they were also removed from the land which their families had occupied for generations. The Hebrideans' connection to the land runs very deeply, and under the clan and crofting systems the land did not belong to the people, but rather, the people belonged to the land.\textsuperscript{115} It may be difficult to understand, but ancient ties to place were severed completely when crofters were cleared from their crofts. Moreover, the subhuman treatment of the crofters represented a form of institutionalized prejudice, since it was sanctioned by the British government. The crofting population became increasingly demoralized and apathetic during the 150 years of clearances, since there was nothing they could do to provide themselves with any hope or security.

It has been 120 years since the last clearances, but people in the Outer Hebrides are still denigrated by others in Britain. The Gaelic culture has been considered 'inferior' to that of England, and even that of mainland Scotland. Often the prejudice is subtle and concealed, but at other times it has been quite blatant. For instance, in 1998, an English newspaper characterized the Hebridean people as uncouth boors who did not have proper table manners, and insisted that most of the population also lacked eating utensils.\textsuperscript{116} Such reporting only reconfirms the prejudice that many Hebrideans have encountered outside of their islands, and highlights the general ignorance many people have about the
Outer Hebrides and its people. xiv Sadly, the culture of the Outer Hebrides is often taken for granted, and as Angus McLeod stated in our interview, “we were never taught to appreciate our culture, we had to come to that by ourselvess.”

4.2b The First World War:

When war broke out in Europe in August 1914, few people may have expected the conflict to last for four years. It is commonly known that men signed up to serve overseas by the thousands, fully expecting to be home by Christmas. Yet despite its geographic isolation from the frontlines of the war, the Outer Hebrides was hit especially hard during the years between 1914 and 1918, as young Hebridean men signed up to join the war effort in vast numbers. In fact, of any part of Britain, it was the Outer Hebrides which sent the most men into armed service. More than 6200 men were sent from the Isle of Lewis alone, representing more than 20% of the island’s total population. 117

While many initial recruits may have expected a short and glorious war, the reality of trench warfare and mustard gas proved that they had been far too optimistic in their expectations. Many of the men who were not killed were maimed for life, while others succumbed to illness and disease. 118

During the war, the village communities struggled to manage without the young men who had gone to war. The burden of work fell on others, as the island waited for the conflict to end. Many families lost sons, brothers and husbands in the war, and this placed added pressure on the society. Those who returned from war as invalids had to be supported by their village and could not contribute much to the livelihood of the

xiv When I traveled to Glasgow and Edinburgh in the days before my first trip to the Outer Hebrides in 1998, I was surprised by the number of Scottish people I encountered who had never heard of the Outer Hebrides.
community. Many who returned physically healthy were plagued by fear and anxiety for many years to come. In essence, the Outer Hebrides had to cope with the effective loss of an entire generation of young men – men who would have been the future of their island communities.\textsuperscript{xv}

4.2c The \textit{Iolaire} Disaster:

When recalling the major maritime disasters of the twentieth century, it is easy to remember the Titanic, the Lusitania and even the Halifax Explosion. However, there is one disaster that is hardly ever mentioned, despite being the worst peacetime marine disaster in British waters to date.\textsuperscript{120} In the early hours of New Year's Day, 1919, the transport ship \textit{Iolaire} sank in waters just outside Stornoway harbour, taking with her the lives of 205 men.\textsuperscript{121} Only 79 men survived, many due to the heroic efforts of John F. MacLeod from the village of Ness, in the north of Lewis. MacLeod was able to swim ashore and secure a line, so that several dozen men could be rescued.\textsuperscript{122}

It was tragic enough that 205 men had perished, but what made the disaster particularly cruel was that the majority of dead were returning to Lewis after years of fighting in World War I. It was less than two months since the war had ended, and these young men were returning home to start living their lives once again. After surviving years of combat, bloodshed and disease, they drowned within mere yards of their island home.

The \textit{Iolaire} disaster only amplified the effects that the war had on the island economy and society. Almost every village in Lewis was touched by the disaster, and

\textsuperscript{xv} During World War II, more than 4000 Lewis men and women were involved in the war effort, with Lewis men present at famous battles such as the Dunkirk evacuation. However, World War II did not have the same social impact as World War I. (Macdonald, \textit{Lewis: A History of the Island}, p. 123)
some elderly Hebrideans still find it difficult to talk about today. Many of the Iolaire widows never remarried, and many of those who lost boyfriends or fiancés in the sinking remained single for the rest of their lives.

4.2d Mass Emigration:

In the years following World War I, many parts of the Outer Hebrides experienced a downturn in the economy. Development schemes from the previous two decades had either failed or been abandoned, so there were very few employment opportunities beyond the croft. Communities were still trying to recover from wartime losses and the Iolaire disaster, and the social fabric of the islands was being strained. In the early 1920s, a mass exodus of young people began, and in certain ways this exodus has continued to this day.

Emigration from the islands was nothing new in the history of the Outer Hebrides. For more than 200 years people have left the Hebridean islands to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Many were forced to leave during the Highland Clearances, while others left voluntarily. Gaelic communities grew in places as diverse as Vancouver, Quebec, Cape Breton, Australia, and South Africa, as Hebridean migrants settled in their adopted homes. But when a new wave of emigration hit the islands in the early 1920s, it compounded the stresses already being experienced throughout the region. In April 1923, the steamer Metagama left Stornoway with 300 islanders, and in April 1924, the Canada left with 270 more. Several weeks later, the Marloch sailed with 290 passengers, bringing the total to 860 migrants in the space of one year. Most of these were young people – part of the demographic already diminished by war and disaster.
For the past eight decades the Outer Hebrides has continued to depopulate. While recent emigration may not be as dramatic as that of the 1920s, it still affects the islands and the islanders. Today it is almost expected that the young and educated will leave the Outer Hebrides, and it has been said that the most valuable export the region has to offer is its young people.\textsuperscript{128}

Few young people seem to want a career in one of the traditional island industries, so without new and innovative measures aimed at making the island lifestyle more attractive to the younger generation, depopulation will only continue. Thankfully, this has been recognized by local authorities, but no one can be sure if newly developing industries will be able to keep the young people at 'home'. The population of the Outer Hebrides today is significantly smaller than it was at the turn of the twentieth century. According to the 2001 census figures, the population of the entire region was 26,502 people, compared with a population of 46,172 individuals in 1901.\textsuperscript{129} This represents a 43% decrease in the population in just one century. Perhaps even more disturbing is that the population is expected to continue to decline, to just 21,725 people by the year 2018.\textsuperscript{130} Moreover, as young people continue to leave the islands, the percentage of elderly residents increases each year. Currently, the Outer Hebrides has the highest percentage of households with pensioners (39%) in all of Scotland.\textsuperscript{131}

4.3 Development Initiatives:

4.3a A Short History of Development:

When examining the history of development in the Outer Hebrides, and the Isle of Lewis particularly, one can make three general statements. First, that there was very little
guided development throughout most of its history. Second, that beginning in the mid-19th century, various modernization schemes were developed and implemented; and third, that the most rapid changes with regards to modernization and development have occurred since the late 1940s.

The history of ‘modern’ development on the Isle of Lewis can be traced to the year 1844, when Sir James Matheson purchased the island from the Mackenzies of Seaforth for £190 000. He began making improvements to the island’s services and environs almost immediately. The town of Stornoway received a number of upgrades, including a new system of gas and waterworks, a jail, a new school, and upgraded harbour facilities. Matheson constructed a large castle for his family, just outside of Stornoway. But to do so, he had to use land which was being used by local crofters as their common grazing grounds. Not surprisingly, this upset local crofters, and it contributed to the growing unrest and land agitation that came to characterize Matheson’s ownership of the island.

During the height of the Highland Clearances, a number of villages had been cleared by the former owners of Lewis for the extension of sheep farms and deer hunting grounds. The cleared people were moved to less-arable land or already crowded villages, where many became cottars (squatters) because they could not obtain crofts of their own. Adding insult to injury, once Matheson purchased Lewis, he instituted strict regulations to manage his estates. These were extensive, and included the restriction of dog ownership by crofters. Crofters were even forbidden to walk off of designated paths and roads. These restrictions and the memories of clearances left the population with a
fierce hunger for land – a hunger that Matheson was never willing to recognize and assuage.

The Matheson era ended in 1918 when the island was purchased from Matheson’s descendants by Lord Leverhulme, the soap magnate who had built the town of Port Sunlight in England. Leverhulme undertook a number of improvements including the introduction of motorized transport, but his real focus was on the industrialization of the island and its fish trade. However, his efforts were generally opposed by a largely rural population which still desired land for crofts. There were a number of very large farms on Lewis at that time, and this productive land was not part of the croft system. The crofters wanted these farms to be broken up into crofts, but Leverhulme wanted to retain these tracts to support Stornoway’s population, which he hoped would swell with industrialization. After several years of struggle with the island people, Leverhulme eventually gave up his aspirations for industrializing and modernizing Lewis. In 1923, he tried to gift the island to the people. Stornoway and its surrounding district became administered by the Stornoway Trust, and the rest of the island was offered to the Lewis District Committee. However, the vast majority of crofters did not want to be land owners, so Leverhulme’s gift was refused. Instead, the ownership of most of Lewis was sold to a number of individuals, companies and syndicates.

After World War II, the Outer Hebrides experienced its most significant wave of modernization. Transportation routes were developed and improved, and electricity was brought to the villages. Piped water service was finally extended to the rural areas, more than 100 years after Matheson had provided it to Stornoway. Services and amenities

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xvi According to Angus McLeod, a retired crofter, the reason why the crofters did not want to own the land was because of the taxes they would have had to pay, and the generally poor quality of the soil on most crofts.
continued to improve throughout the islands in the 1960s and 1970s, with one of the most significant developments coming in 1975 with the formation of the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council). Local governance was finally granted to the Outer Hebrides. Since 1975, local people have been charting the path of development for the islands, rather than having decisions made on the Scottish mainland. Thus they have gained a greater degree of empowerment with regards to their own future and its various possibilities.

4.3b Development Today:

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is the dominant actor in Outer Hebridean development. Not only does it supply more than 2600 jobs throughout the region, it also formulates and implements many of the planning initiatives that affect the islands. There are other organizations at work in the Outer Hebrides, such as the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (H.I.E.), but the Comhairle is actually centered in the islands, and exists for the islands specifically. In December 2003, the Scottish Executive approved a Structure Plan for the Outer Hebrides that was developed by the Comhairle, with input from other stakeholders and administrative bodies operating in the islands. This plan is expected to guide planning initiatives for the next ten years.

In the Structure Plan, the Comhairle has made a strong commitment to sustainability as a necessary part of future island development initiatives. The Comhairle has defined sustainable development as:

"...development which can be shown to improve the quality of life through the integration of social, economic and environmental factors, while conserving resources for future generations."
Of particular significance to this thesis, the Comhairle has recognized the importance of cultural heritage as a part of community sustainability and future sustainable development in the islands. According to its Structure Plan, the Comhairle will “seek land use and development solutions that sustain and enhance the cultural traditions and heritage of the islands, including the Gaelic language and historic environment, by respecting local cultural circumstances (such as building design, settlement patterns and promoting the use of bilingual signage).”

But the Comhairle’s commitment to the sustainability of cultural heritage goes even further. According to the draft of the Community Plan for the Western Isles, the Comhairle has several aims. One aim is, “to preserve, enhance and promote the culture and heritage of the islands, and ensure that opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation are readily available to all.” Furthermore, the Comhairle recognizes that participatory action by the local population is also crucial in providing true ‘community planning’.

In formulating its Community Plan, the Comhairle wants the quality of life to be improved in a meaningful and sustainable way. A ‘Quality of Life Initiative’ was developed and outlines fifteen ‘themes’ of sustainability for the region. These not only include the sustainability of the economy and environment, but also the sustainability of the cultural heritage, and a desire for greater participation by islanders. One theme is, “that cultural and historical heritage is enhanced and promoted,” and another is, “that all sections of the community are empowered and encouraged to participate in decision making.” This not only reveals the Comhairle’s commitment to cultural sustainability, but also shows the Comhairle’s desire to involve all Hebrideans in achieving that goal.
To efficiently implement the Structure Plan and apply initiatives and services to Hebridean communities, the Comhairle has organized the region in an innovative way. Rather than grouping communities according to population number or land area, the Comhairle is using an approach that has certain ‘bioregional’ characteristics. The Comhairle has divided the region into thirteen Sustainable Community Areas, based upon shared natural geographical features and common identities. The divisions recognize the human history and cultural identity of each area, in addition to geographical differences. While all parts of the Outer Hebrides have shared cultural attributes, the region as a whole is not entirely homogenous. For instance, the population of the Ness district in Lewis has a distinct heritage based on fishing and seafaring, while the Stornoway area has a commercial heritage and a more diverse ethnic history. The Comhairle understands that proper planning and the delivery of initiatives is as much about the people of the islands, as it is about the islands themselves.
CHAPTER 5: Questionnaire and Results

5.1 Purpose and Design

The purpose of the questionnaire is to determine the relative importance of various elements of the traditional Hebridean culture, based upon the personal beliefs of selected informants. In compiling a list of ten cultural elements, I used knowledge gained from books and conversations with other Canadian people with Hebridean ancestry. The resulting list includes elements which I know to be important aspects of Hebridean culture, such as the Gaelic language, religious faith, and the crofting system. Other elements, such as bagpipes and sheep rearing, certainly have their place in traditional Scottish culture, but are not specifically 'Hebridean' in nature. I have also acknowledged that there may be additional elements which were not included on the list, but might still hold great importance to individual Hebrideans. Therefore, each informant was also asked to list any additional elements that they believe were missing from the questionnaire. Following is a list of the ten chosen elements, though a sample of the full questionnaire can also be found in Appendix I, on page 136 of this thesis.

1. Tweed Weaving
2. Gaelic Language
3. Puirt a Beul (literally 'mouth music' – a style of Gaelic singing)
4. Bagpipes
5. Salted Herring
6. Religious Beliefs
7. Crofting System
8. Using Peat for Fuel
9. Sheep Rearing
10. Ceilidh Parties (pronounced CAY-lee)

The informants were asked to rank each cultural element with a value from 1 to 10, with 1 being the most important to them personally. If there were two or more
elements having the same relative value to the individual, the respondent was asked to
give the same numerical ranking to each of these elements.

The informants were chosen randomly during the field research on the Isle of
Lewis. Twenty-two questionnaires were distributed to both males and females, and
nineteen questionnaires were completed and returned for analysis. Each informant was a
native Hebridean, and each ranged from 35 to 88 years of age. Of the returned
questionnaires, nine were completed by people under the age of 60, and ten were
completed by informants over 60 years of age.

In analyzing the data, I added together the values given for each cultural element,
and then divided this number by the number of returned questionnaires. This provided an
average value for each cultural element, and allowed me to rank the elements in order of
relative importance. The elements with the lowest numerical value are those which hold
the most value to the informants. The analysis was done for the total number of
questionnaires, and was then repeated to find separate results for those under and over 60
years of age. This was to see if age is a factor in determining the importance of cultural
elements. If people under the age of 60 value a completely different set of elements than
the older generation, this could suggest a generational shift in values. It could also
suggest that different cultural elements will remain important in the coming years and
decades, compared to those of the past. Therefore, it could have repercussions for future
development and cultural preservation strategies and initiatives. To note, the various
elements listed in the questionnaire were not gender-specific, so I did not tabulate the
results according to the sex of the informants. The tabulated questionnaire results can be
found on the following two pages.
### TABLE 1: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS FROM THE 19 RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONDENT AGE</th>
<th>35</th>
<th>39</th>
<th>41</th>
<th>43</th>
<th>52</th>
<th>53</th>
<th>58</th>
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<th>64</th>
<th>66</th>
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<th>73</th>
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<th>Total</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Crofting System</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Ceilidh Parties**</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>7.22</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: The highlighted blanks occurring in various places on the field of data refer to cultural elements that the respondent does not personally consider to be an element of the traditional Hebridean culture. After adding up the values for each cultural element, the total was then divided by the number of respondents to find an average value for the element. However, the total for any element that included ‘blank’ responses was divided only by the number of respondents who placed a value for that particular element. For instance, to find an average value for Puirt a Beul, its total was divided by 17 instead of 19, since only 17 of the 19 respondents believed it to be an element of the traditional culture.

* Puirt a Beul is Gaelic for ‘mouth music’, a traditional type of Gaelic singing.

** The term ‘ceilidh party’ refers to the modern form of ceilidh, with modern music and dancing, and not to be confused with the traditional form of ceilidh which consisted of families gathering at each other’s homes for visiting and story-telling.
TABLE 2: RESULTS FROM RESPONDENTS UNDER 60 YEARS OF AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Ave.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tweed Weaving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaelic Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puirt a Beul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bagpipes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salted Herring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Faith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crofting System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peats for Fuel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep Rearing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceilidh Parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3: RESULTS FROM RESPONDENTS OVER 60 YEARS OF AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Ave.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tweed Weaving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaelic Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Puirt a Beul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bagpipes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salted Herring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Faith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crofting System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peats for Fuel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheep Rearing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceilidh Parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4: RANKING THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL ELEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>UNDER 60</th>
<th>OVER 60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gaelic Language</td>
<td>Gaelic Language</td>
<td>Religious Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Religious Faith</td>
<td>Crofting System</td>
<td>Gaelic Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Crofting System</td>
<td>Religious Faith</td>
<td>Crofting System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Sheep Rearing</td>
<td>Tweed Weaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sheep Rearing</td>
<td>Tweed Weaving</td>
<td>Peats for Fuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Peats for Fuel</td>
<td>Ceilidh Parties</td>
<td>Sheep Rearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Salted Herring</td>
<td>Peats for Fuel</td>
<td>Salted Herring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ceilidh Parties</td>
<td>Salted Herring</td>
<td>Bagpipes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bagpipes</td>
<td>Bagpipes</td>
<td>Puirt a Beul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Puirt a Beul</td>
<td>Puirt a Beul</td>
<td>Ceilidh Parties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Discussion of Questionnaire Results:

Not surprisingly, the cultural elements with the highest average value amongst the total number of respondents are the Gaelic language, religious faith and the crofting system. It is interesting to note that the two age groups were also quite consistent in their results. Those under 60 years of age listed these same three elements, but ranked their religious beliefs below the Gaelic language and crofting system, whereas the most important element to those over 60 years of age was definitely their religious faith. They also ranked the Gaelic language and the crofting system as part of the three most important cultural elements.

As one can see in Table 4, none of the elements received the same average value or ranking by both age groups. However, the average results are still surprisingly consistent. The only exception is that the younger group placed ‘ceilidh parties’ as the sixth most important element, while the older group listed this element as being least important. As explained in the notes below Table 1, the word ‘ceilidh’ has two definitions. For this questionnaire, ‘ceilidh parties’ suggests a gathering of young people at a hall or other venue, where modern music and dancing is enjoyed. The other definition of ceilidh is more traditional, meaning a gathering at someone’s house for tea, conversation and storytelling. Had ‘ceilidh’ been listed instead of ‘ceilidh parties’, it is possible that this element of culture might have received a higher ranking by the older group of respondents.

To note, among individual respondents of all ages, there were variations between the rankings of specific cultural elements. And in certain cases, these variations were very wide indeed. For instance, the cultural element ‘Salted Herring’ received a ranking
of '1' by one respondent, while another respondent ranked it as '10.' The variances and deviations from the averages reveal the personal values of each respondent. Perhaps the person who ranked 'Salted Herring' as most important is someone with a family history of fishing, or perhaps 'Salted Herring' is that individual's favourite food. Likewise, the person who ranked it as 'least important' may have a particular aversion to seafood. Similar reasoning can be used for the other cultural elements, but without a more detailed questionnaire examining why each individual ranked the elements as they did, we can only speculate why this is so. However, it is interesting that the cultural elements that received the three top rankings (Gaelic Language, Religious Faith, and Crofting System), also demonstrate considerable consistency between individual respondents. For the Gaelic Language in particular, 16 of the 19 respondents ranked this cultural element with either a '1' or a '2'.

Other cultural elements not appearing on the list, but added by individual respondents, were not analyzed as part of the data set. Four of the respondents listed 'fishing' as an important cultural element, and two listed 'family relationships' and 'visiting family and friends' (the traditional ceilidh). Two respondents also listed 'Gaelic music and songs' (other than puirt a beul), and one listed the traditional 'Gaelic singing of Psalms' (in church) as being personally important.
CHAPTER 6: The Life Histories of Elderly Hebrideans

6.1 Annie Smith:

Annie Smith was born on February 25th, 1913, in the village of High Borve, in the West Side district of the Isle of Lewis. She is affectionately known to most people as ‘Annie Suilag’. ‘Suilag’ is the Gaelic nickname by which her father was known, though Annie is not sure of the name’s exact meaning or origin. The word ‘suil’ means ‘eye’ in Gaelic, and Annie thinks that one of her ancestors may have been known for his strength of vision. It is also possible that the name is associated with the eyes of potatoes, since the word ‘suilag’ has this meaning in Uig – a region of Lewis where some of Annie’s family came from.

Annie’s parents were Mr. and Mrs. MacKenzie, and she was the youngest of their six children. In 1917 her older brother Malcolm was killed in World War I at 24 years of age. By the early 1920’s Annie and her family moved from High Borve to the neighbouring village of Melbost Borve, which was settled following World War I. The land had once been part of the very large Galson farm, but this was broken up after the war to provide parcels of land for returning veterans. Annie spent her childhood, youth and young adulthood in and around Melbost Borve, until her marriage to Kenneth Smith. They lived in London, England until 1975, at which time they retired and moved back to Melbost Borve. A widow for a number of years, Annie remains fit and active, and is a vibrant member of the local community.

Annie Smith has been blessed with a wonderful memory, and is able to recall events and details from more that 80 years ago. She remembers her childhood with great
fondness, though life was certainly more difficult in those days. She remembers a time when the local village communities were much stronger and more cohesive than they are today, when everyone helped one another according to each person’s needs. Money was never taken or even expected when one person helped another. Goods and labour were shared between members of the community so that nobody suffered or went without. In Annie’s own words, “they were good times, but hard times.”

One example Annie gave with regards to the sharing of labour, was the annual cutting, lifting and bringing home of ‘peats’. All homes in those days relied on peat as the primary source of fuel. With so few trees on the island, wood was too scarce and valuable to burn. Therefore families would cut slabs of peat from the peat beds, to burn upon their hearths. Families would go out to the moor each spring to cut the peats with a special tool called a ‘peat iron’. The small blocks of peat would be lifted from the bed and laid out to dry. After the peats were dry enough they would be arranged in little stacks so they could dry even more. After a period of weeks, depending on the weather, the peats would be taken home and stacked for use throughout the coming year. Bringing home the peats was a community effort, and was a cause for great celebration throughout the village.

People had to be very versatile in their skills in order to provide for their families, and to sustain the community. Many of the men were not only skilled at raising crops and livestock, but were also adept at fishing and tool making. Since money was scarce, it was important for the men to be able to fashion the tools they needed from the materials they had at hand. Women also had a wide variety of skills, from spinning and knitting wool, to tending the animals and preserving food. Certain women also possessed other
skills which were of great importance to the village community. For instance, Annie’s mother was well known for her skill as a midwife. She did not develop this skill by any formal training, but rather, through her experience of watching and helping at births from the time she was a girl. Annie believes that her mother also possessed a special gift for midwifery, beyond what training or experience could provide. She was often able to tell if a woman was carrying twins, and could recognize the earliest signs of a difficult delivery. When Annie’s niece was about to be born, Annie’s mother was present and believed that the umbilical cord was wrapped around the baby’s neck. She explained this to the attending nurse, but nobody would believe her because she did not have any formal nursing training. In any case, the baby was born with the cord around her neck, and she thankfully survived. Even though her assessment of the situation was correct, Annie’s mother felt she could not assert her opinion in the face of the nurse’s condescending attitude. Even today, Annie remembers the prejudice against her mother’s knowledge with sadness.

During Annie’s younger years, domestic life centered on the family croft. The croft was the parcel of land that the family rented from a landlord, and upon which the family had built a house, barn and other outbuildings. Most of these crofts were cultivated with a variety of crops, and a number of farm animals were kept by each family.

Like most families, one of the crops that Annie’s family grew was potatoes. The potatoes were cultivated annually, and sustained the family throughout the year. If the growing season was longer than normal and the plants were especially productive, the family would be left with excess potatoes that they could not consume by themselves. In
such cases the excess would be fed to the livestock. Turnip and cabbage were also
grown, as were corn and oats. Hay was grown for animal fodder, and Annie remembers
how her family would stack their hay once it had been dried in the sun. The hay had to be
‘bone dry’ before it could be stacked, otherwise it would begin to rot and compost itself.
Annie’s mother would thrust her arm deeply into the haystack, and if the interior felt
warm, it meant that the hay had not dried sufficiently and was beginning to decompose.
In these cases the stack would be disassembled, and the hay would be spread thinly on
the ground to continue the drying process. Annie recalls how each croft had its own
stacks of hay for winter use, and how the stacks were tied down with crisscrossed lengths
of coir or heather rope. These ropes were not smooth like commercial rope made today,
but had a roughness which helped hold the pieces of hay in place. In later years, Annie
remembers that most people used fishing nets weighted with stones, rather than
depending on homemade heather ropes.

Corn was also grown on the croft, but its cultivation was treated differently from
that of other crops. First, the ground had to be ploughed twice, to make the soil fine and
crumbly. When the corn was harvested, the stalks would be pulled out of the soil so that
the roots could be cut off and used as thatch on the village roofs. If the soil was not
ploughed twice, the crofters could not pull the stalks because the soil would be too heavy.
The stalks of the corn were saved, boiled until soft, and then fed to the livestock.

Corn to be used right away, or ground into meal, was removed from the cobs with
a flail. Then the kernels were winnowed in a cross breeze to carry any chaff away. A
certain amount of corn was stored for the winter as well. This corn was not removed
from the cobs, and the cobs were not removed from the stalks. Annie remembers how
her family layered the stalks in round tiers with the root ends facing outwards. The stack would be built up so that the stalks and foliage would protect the cobs of corn in the center of the pile. Once the pile was complete, it was covered with ropes much like the stacks of hay. However, these ropes were tied to large stones. As the corn dried and the ropes slackened, the family would tighten the whole apparatus by winding the ropes tighter around the stones. Unlike the hay, there was little chance that the corn would rot, because air was able to circulate quite easily through the stack. These stacks were very secure, and Annie remembers that they could withstand most winter gales. On calm winter days, the family would unmake the stack and take a supply of corn to the barn as animal fodder. Then the stack would be remade once again.

The family also had an effective method for over-wintering the potato harvest. A pit would be dug in the soil about eight inches deep. The potatoes would then be placed in this hole and piled up to several feet in height. Then the entire pile would be covered in sods, with the grass-side lying against the potatoes. The next step was to cover the entire pile with a further six to eight inches of soil. Annie remembers that the men would tamp the soil on the pile with their spades until it was very compact. A small ditch would be dug around the base of the rounded potato ‘pit’, to provide drainage. After this was done, the project was complete. When it rained, the water would run off the sides of the mound, and be taken away by the drainage ditch. A potato pit could hold the equivalent of 20 sacks of potatoes, and when the pit was opened in the spring, Annie recalls that the potatoes looked and tasted as if they were freshly dug.

Annie’s family also raised a number of different animals on their croft. They had one horse which was primarily used for working the fields and bringing home the peats.
Two cows were also kept for milking, and a dozen sheep would also be raised each year. One or two sheep would be slaughtered in the fall, and their meat was then cured by Annie’s mother for storage. Most of the other sheep would be sold for cash. Chickens were also raised for their eggs, and egg production seemed to vary from season to season. In the winter, Annie remembers that egg production usually dropped, and the family attributed this to the cold and damp weather. To counter the dampness, Annie’s family would place a cast iron pot filled with hot peat cinders in the chicken coop, to keep the chickens warm, dry and productive. Before the chickens became old and tough, they would be butchered and eaten by the family. Some eggs would be allowed to bear chicks, and these would replace the birds which had been used for food. Roosters were usually killed and eaten between 3 and 6 months of age.

Family meals would be taken three times per day. Oatmeal porridge was the staple breakfast food, with eggs eaten quite often as well. After animals were slaughtered in the autumn, black puddings would be made by combining oatmeal, finely chopped onions, suet and animal blood, and then stuffing this mixture into a sheep’s intestine so that it could be simmered. The casing could not be stuffed too tightly or else it would burst when cooked. To ensure this did not happen, Annie’s mother would prick the casing as it cooked, to let out any steam that was accumulating inside. This delicacy could then be eaten warm from the pot, or else cooled, sliced and pan-fried for breakfast throughout the fall season. Annie remembers that her mother often diluted the blood with a little water before adding it to the other ingredients to produce a softer pudding, and she also remembers that her mother was well known for the quality of her black puddings.
While breakfasts were certainly hearty, Annie remembers the noontime meal as being the biggest of the day. For lunch, herring was served almost daily. The fish would be either fresh or salted, depending on the season. Annie remembers many meals of herring, often served with boiled potatoes, cabbage and turnip. Fresh milk was almost always available to drink on the croft. Sandwiches were not eaten very often in those days, but scones and oatcakes were usually prepared as a daily snack. Dinner was usually a light meal taken around 6 pm. Soup was eaten quite often for dinner, especially on Sundays when all work had ceased for the Sabbath. The soup would be made on the Saturday, and then reheated for the Sunday meal.

The Sunday Sabbath was strictly observed when Annie was growing up. No work would be done on a Sunday, and everyone in the village attended church. In fact, the churches were filled with people of every age in those days. Annie and her family attended the Borve Free Church, and she remembers fondly how everyone walked to and from the services. She remembers that walking to church was an important time of social interaction, as various families would meet along the road and walk to church together.

While Sundays were certainly a day of rest for the people of the village, the other six days of the week were filled with a variety of tasks and responsibilities. On the croft, many of the necessary jobs and duties rotated according to the season. For instance, the lifting of peats and the preparation of the fields were springtime jobs, while the harvest of crops and the slaughter of animals were jobs done in the fall. The short days of winter were the time for indoor duties such as mending and making tools, while the long summer days were spent at the summer pasture, or shieling. Each summer the cows would be taken out onto the moors where they could graze on heather until the end of
July, thereby building up strength and fat reserves for the coming winter. Annie remembers that the cows seemed to ‘know’ when it was time to go out to the shieling, and when it was time to return to the croft a number of weeks later. The cows even seemed to know their way to the shieling, though they were always accompanied by the family. While the cows grazed, the family lived in a very basic shieling house on the shieling itself.

Life on the shieling was a carefree time for children, who would spend their days running on the moor and playing along the banks of the streams. But it was a time of hard work for the women, who had to milk the cows each day and then carry the milk back to the village. For some women this amounted to several miles of walking each and every day. Most of the women would knit as they walked, carrying pails of milk in creels (baskets) strapped to their backs. Annie remembers that village women always seemed to be knitting something, even when they were visiting and socializing amongst themselves.

Many other chores were done in the summer months. Annie remembers that one of the yearly chores was washing blankets. This would happen in June, and take place along the Borve River. The Borve River was the best for washing because it had a strong flow and was less ‘peaty’ than other streams in the area. It was always the village women and children who did the blanket washing together. They would have to wait for a heavy rain to fall, so that the river would rise and flush out any peat and debris from the riverbed. A peat fire would be built along the side of the river to boil river water in a large metal tub. Soft soap would be added to a number of other tubs, along with a mixture of cold and boiled water. Then the blankets would be placed in the tubs and the women and children would stamp them with their feet. Once the blankets were clean,
they needed to be rinsed. To do this, the women would build a small dam of rocks in the river. The dam would partially block the flow of water and create a deeper pool behind the dam itself. Then the blankets would be added and stamped by foot again. Enough flow from the pool would be maintained to wash the soapy water away. After the rinsing was completed, the blankets would be spread across large, flat stones to drain. Then they would be spread over the grass and heather to dry in the sun. It would usually take three days for the drying to be complete. Annie remembers this washing process being used for any large cloth or woolen item.

Annie’s family felt very blessed to have a well on their croft that produced clean and clear water throughout the year. The well is known locally as St. Bridget’s Well or Bride’s Well, and some believe that its waters have curative properties for such maladies as jaundice. To ensure that the well would flow properly and produce water that was safe for human consumption, it was necessary to clean the well on a regular basis. Annie remembers happily how a well was traditionally cleaned in Lewis. First the well had to be emptied of its water. After it was empty, the stones lining the bottom of the well were removed, along with any material that may have accumulated between cleanings. Then the stones lining the walls of the well were scrubbed vigorously with a brush made of heather. Once the sides had been sufficiently scrubbed, it was time to place a new layer of stones on the well’s bottom. Annie remembers gathering small, white pebbles from the beach for this purpose. The layer of stones would stabilize the dirt floor of the well, and filter the water as it rose through the bottom of the well from underground. Without the stone layer, the well water would have been quite turbid and unfit for human use.
Annie would normally clean the well on a Saturday, and it would take until Monday for the well to refill and be ready for drawing water.

While most days were devoted to the necessary work of maintaining the croft, there was also considerable time for socializing and fun. Annie remembers that visiting was an integral part of community life when she was young. People could visit their neighbours at virtually any time of the day or evening without worrying that they were being an imposition. The doors were “always open”, and families found great happiness in extending their generous hospitality to others. Time would be spent by the fire, passing along oral traditions and stories. The older generation would recall events of the past, and would teach the younger generations about their family histories and lineages. In those days it was very important to know “who you belonged to,” and most people could name all the members of their extended family. It was normal for people to know their second and third cousins, and even more distant relations.

As Annie remembers, “we used to make our own entertainment.” For fun, people in one village would usually make up humorous stories about people in other villages. This was always done in good spirit, and was never meant to be hurtful. One example that Annie remembers is a story about a woman living in the Lewis district of Ness, and her reaction at seeing a motorized vehicle for the first time. Prior to World War I, letters were delivered to villages by a postman who used a horse and carriage called a ‘gig’. But in the years following the war the postman began using a motorcar. When he drove into the Ness district for the first time, one of the local women saw the car go by. According to the story, she apparently screamed to her neighbours, “the postman’s gig has gone wild, and there’s no sign of the horse!” Stories like these were told across the island,
with each village coming up with new jokes and stories to tell about neighbouring villages and districts.

Even though the village lacked material wealth, Annie remembers that it was blessed with a wealth of community and family relationships. Money was not necessary for happiness, and the lack of money did not prevent people from gaining enjoyment from their lives. Annie remembers that her family, like most, did not have excess money to spend on toys or dolls. If given a penny, she would save it for the celebrations held at New Years. Each village would usually have a New Years party, and the children would go from home to home wishing the residents a happy New Year. Each family they visited would give small gifts of food, or sometimes even money. This would then be pooled together by the children, and taken to another house to begin another party. Men from the village would go from door to door with a bottle of whiskey, and everyone in the house would have to take a small sip. Annie remembers that even the children were given a little drink when the men came by.

Fishing had been the mainstay of the Hebridean economy for many years, and herring was one of the chief export items of the islands. Many young women of Annie’s generation worked seasonally in the herring industry, gutting and packing the catch. Annie began working as part of a herring crew when she was 17 years of age, and spent three herring seasons in various parts of Scotland. There were many women who worked the whole season in Stornoway itself, but these jobs were usually given to women who were older, or who had young families of their own to care for. Younger, unmarried women like Annie were usually sent away from the island, to places such as Lerwick, Wick and the Yarmouth area.
Annie remembers her herring crew with great fondness, though the work itself was quite monotonous and tiring. The women were not paid until the end of the season, and their pay was based upon the total number of barrels of herring they had packed. The women also had to bring their own bedding and personal supplies from home. Despite its difficulties, the herring industry offered the women a chance to see the world beyond the island, and Annie remembers that many close and enduring friendships formed between those who worked in the industry.

The young women formed teams, or crews, of three individuals. Two would gut the fish, while the third would pack the barrels. Annie remembers that the tallest of the three would be the packer, since she would be the one who had to bend over the rim of the barrels. Annie worked as one of the gutters, using a small knife with a very sharp blade.

There was a distinct method for packing herring, and Annie happily recalls the steps involved. First, the women would wait at the docks for the herring boats to unload their catch. The ‘gutters’ would take the individual herring and make a clean cut just behind the gills. In one motion, all of the innards would be pulled out of the cut. This method required considerable skill, and left the fish virtually unblemished, except for the cut behind the gills. The packer would then take the fish and carefully lay them side by side in the barrel, belly-side down. A layer of salt would be sprinkled liberally between each layer of fish, until the barrel was filled to its rim. The filled barrels were left to sit for up to a week, during which time the salt would start dissolving and the fish would begin compacting themselves within the barrel. When the level of fish had stopped dropping, two additional layers of herring and salt were added to each barrel. After a few
more days, the top layer of fish was carefully packed, only this time the herring were laid
belly-side up. This was done for aesthetic purposes, so that whoever opened the barrel
would be greeted with the smooth, white appearance of the herrings' bellies, rather than
the dark grey appearance of their backs and fins.

Once the top layer of fish was in place, coopers would come around to lid the
barrels and properly seal them. At this point the barrels were ready for export throughout
Northern Europe. Annie remembers that it was also the job of the women to transport the
heavy barrels to the ships. The barrels were tipped onto their sides, and rolled to the
waiting vessels with a long, wooden pole called a 'putter'.

In the mid 1940s Annie MacKenzie married Kenneth Smith, and relocated to the
bustling city of London, where they managed an apartment block. As already mentioned,
they eventually retired back to the Isle of Lewis in 1975. Having lived in London for 30
years, Annie noticed many changes which had taken place in Lewis during her time
away. For instance, there were many more cars being used on the island, and fewer
people walked to church. Instead, they would drive to and from church without spending
time talking with their neighbours as they had in the old days. The cars meant that people
could travel farther distances on the island, making villages less isolated than in the past.
Villagers could travel regularly to Stornoway to shop, whereas a trip to Stornoway in
earlier years was a rare occurrence. The villages had been quite self-sufficient, and the
villagers did not need to go to town very often in the past.

Electricity came to the villages in the years following World War II, and with the
electricity came other modern conveniences. But not everyone embraced electricity right
away. Annie’s mother was very suspicious of the new technology, and did not want to
have it because “she could not trust it.” When storms caused power outages, some village people believed that the fuel source had run dry, like an oil lamp that had burned all of its oil. Despite some people’s misgivings, electricity soon became standard in most villages, and by the time Annie returned to Lewis in 1975, she noticed that a number of people in her village even owned television sets. Sadly, most people stayed indoors in the evenings to watch television, rather than spending time visiting with neighbours and friends.

People also had more money to spend, which meant that they could purchase goods instead of making them by hand. Tools and rope were now bought items, instead of being made at home from local materials. By the 1970s, few crofts had horses anymore, because most crofters were using tractors to do the heavy work. Likewise, there were fewer cows, because most milk was bought in grocery stores. There was less need to preserve meats and fish, because most homes now had some form of refrigeration.

Annie also remembers that she was never raised to be proud of her language or her culture. This was not peculiar, since most people growing up in Lewis at that time were taught that the Gaelic language and culture were inferior to English. Gaelic was not allowed in schools, and English culture was touted as being more progressive. Sadly, many Hebrideans ended up looking outside of the islands to find their identity, rather than celebrating the unique and wonderful culture they already were a part of. Even when Annie visited places off the island, she tried to avoid speaking Gaelic at all. She can remember being overheard speaking Gaelic when visiting Glasgow as an adult, and actually feeling a sense of shame because of it.
The general increase in the island's prosperity made life easier in many ways, but Annie believes that the character of the community changed for the worse. People are not as integrated as they were before, and they are less dependent upon each other as they had been in the past. By the 1950s, people began trying to outdo each other with material possessions, and a sense of greed became apparent even at the village level. Even though Annie is thankful for the practical benefits that modernization has brought, she is saddened by what this has also done to the traditional sense of community she remembers from her youth. Nevertheless, she still believes that the island is the best place to live, and she would never want to live anywhere else again.
6.2 Angus McLeod:

Angus McLeod was born in Calbost, Lewis on August 25th, 1916. At the turn of the century Calbost was a vibrant Hebridean village of 200 people. Calbost is located in the district of Pairc, on the southwest coast of the island, and was hit particularly hard by the Highland Clearances in the 19th century. According to Angus, there were 40 villages in Pairc in the early 19th century, but by 1886, 30 of these had been cleared of their inhabitants. Calbost was one of the 10 villages that was left. But by the time Angus was born, his village had already started to decline, and by the 1920s, less than 180 people lived there. In 1997, the last indigenous person still living in Calbost passed away in his nineties, and today (2001), the only person still living full-time in Calbost is that same gentleman’s daughter.

Angus remembers his young days in Calbost as being filled with wonder and joy. The village had a beautiful setting, and the population was very close-knit as a community. Most of the village men engaged in fishing to supplement their crofting income, and one reason Angus attributes to Calbost’s population decline was the decrease in herring stocks during the 1920s and 1930s.

As a child Angus spent many days outdoors, exploring the land surrounding the village. He would run after birds and rabbits, trying to catch them so he could keep them as pets. For added fun, he would make small boats out of paper and float them on the lochs, sometimes even ripping sheets of paper out of books to do so. It was a generally carefree time for a young boy, and one filled with happy memories.

Nevertheless, living off the land was not an easy task. Angus remembers that Calbost had many cattle, but very few horses. Horses were used in other villages to
plough the crofts, but because the terrain around Calbost is quite steep, horses could not be used for croft work. Instead, the people of the village had to do all the ploughing by hand.

There were many old thatched cottages occupied in those years. These cottages have become known as 'blackhouses' because they did not have the light coloured masonry of modern homes, and they were also dark on the inside. Traditional blackhouses did not have windows or a chimney. A peat fire would be built in the center of the floor, and the peat smoke would rise into the thatched roof above, where the soot would accumulate. The thatch would be stripped off the house each year, and spread on the garden so that the soot could improve the soil. The peat fire was kept lit at all times, and at night it would be 'banked' so that it would not go out. Angus remembers visiting people who still lived in blackhouses when he was a young man. He was amazed at how warm and cozy they were. The houses were never damp, despite having a compressed dirt floor, and the thick stone walls kept out all drafts, even during harsh winter storms. The family's livestock lived in the house as well, in a separate area known as the 'byre'.

Angus did not live in a thatched cottage himself, but rather, in one of the newer homes that were built after the 1886 Crofting Act was ratified. After this date, many crofters began to construct newer homes, because any improvements they made to their croft had gained a marketable value. Thus, there was an incentive to make improvements by adding windows, extra rooms and free-standing byres to existing cottages, or building new homes from the ground up. Even though the newer homes were touted as being progressive and modern compared to the primitiveness of the blackhouse, Angus still
believes that the island blackhouse was “miles ahead of its time.” It was a dwelling that was completely suited to its environment.

When Angus was young, everyone in the village went to church. Communion was held in each district twice per year, usually in the spring and in the fall. When Communion was observed in another district, people from Calbost and other villages would travel to where the Communion was being held. They would stay over for the night, and be guests of the other village. It was an enjoyable time of fellowship and socializing, and people were able to get to know others from different parts of the island. When the Communion season came to Calbost, people from other villages would come and enjoy the hospitality of the Calbost people. Angus remembers that during one Communion season, more than 20 people stayed over on his family’s croft.

Even though Calbost was quite an isolated village, Angus knew about the outside world at an early age. This is because many people had immigrated from the village to live overseas. Angus’s older brother, Donald, volunteered for the army in 1914 and then moved to Canada in 1920. Another brother also moved to Canada in 1923, leaving Stornoway on the liner Metagama. This was one of the ships that left the island in the early 1920s, filled with young Lewis people who were searching for a better life in North America. Angus remembers that the island was in an economic depression during the early 1920s, and that many of its young men had been killed in the war several years earlier. Faced with bleak prospects, it is not surprising that many young people chose to seek their fortunes elsewhere. And when these people left, it provided the remaining villagers with family ties to the outside world. Angus remembers that he always had “an
awareness of something over the horizon.” His dream as a boy was to go to Australia, but this dream was never realized.

In the early 20th century Calbost was still geographically isolated from much of the island, with a road to Stornoway not built until 1928. Even though this road opened Calbost to the “world beyond,” most Calbost people preferred to travel to Stornoway by boat. The distance by boat was 8 miles, which was shorter than the road distance, and with a good wind, the boat trip was considerably faster. Angus remembers that almost all the boats were powered by sail throughout the 1920s. But by 1930, some boats were being converted to paraffin-powered engines.

When Angus was 13 years old, he visited Stornoway for the first time. Until that time he never had a need or reason to leave Calbost – everything he required could be found or made in the village. He went to Stornoway on the first Tuesday in July, 1930. The Town Fair was in full swing, and Angus moored his boat at the pier. The herring boats were in port, and some were unloading their catch at the dock. Angus remembers that when the nets were lifted, a number of herring would be tangled on the outside of the net. These were usually larger herring, which would then fall off the net and be lost in the water. Angus used a ‘skimmer’ to catch these herring as they fell. Then he sold his ‘catch’ to the local fish mongers, since these fish were usually the best herring in terms of size and overall condition. Angus remembers earning enough money in the course of one week to purchase a new suit for himself.

At the age of 14 Angus left school and began to work as a cook on a large fish boat named ‘Honour Bright’. He recalls that his pay for the entire season amounted to £8. At the age of 20, he joined the Merchant Marines like many young island men, and
traveled to Jamaica on a ship used for transporting bananas. As Angus states, he was "just following the pack." The Merchant Navy expanded greatly during the 1930s in response to the rise of Hitler in Germany and the uncertainty of international relations on the Continent. In 1938, the naval reserves were called up when Prime Minister Chamberlain went to Munich to meet with Hitler. Angus left Calbost for Stornoway, where he hoped to board a ship and enter the service. However, when he got to town he was told that the ship was already full and that he would have to come back the next day. The crisis was over by the next day, so Angus went back to Calbost. He decided he would finally go to Australia, but he needed to go to Glasgow to work and earn money first. The Glasgow ship yards were very busy during those years, so Angus did not have any difficulty finding a job when he arrived.

But within a number of weeks, he began to experience a pain in his side. Angus was hospitalized, and the doctors discovered that he had a 'hole' in his lung. He was diagnosed with tuberculosis, and was kept in the hospital for more than two years. In 1941 he was discharged from the both the hospital and the Navy, and returned to Calbost. He arrived to find that his village had been devastated by tuberculosis – every croft except for one had been affected by the disease. Even though Angus was doing much better, he still expected to die, because as he remembers, "no one seemed to survive tuberculosis."

At this point in his life Angus became involved in the Harris Tweed industry. Harris Tweed is a woolen fabric that was first woven in the Outer Hebrides hundreds of years ago. It was spun and woven on the crofts as a 'cottage industry', and was never a completely industrialized process. As a child, Angus had helped his mother collect the
various plants that were used for dying the sheep’s wool. One of the more popular colours for the tweed was the reddish-brown that resulted from a dye made with a lichen called ‘crotal’. Excess crotal that Angus collected was sold to other villages for a small profit. Angus remembers that his mother would purchase wool from the village of Gravir, and then bring it home to dye. She would layer the wool and crotal in a large iron pot, until the contents reached the top. A peat fire was made, and the pot was placed on top of it, with enough water to cover the contents. The mixture was boiled for most of the day, until the wool assumed a dark, reddish-brown colour. Angus’s mother usually dyed the wool darker than necessary, and then mixed it with undyed wool as it was being carded to separate the fibers. This resulted in a batch that had a lighter and more desirable colour. After carding, the wool was spun and then woven into tweed fabric.

Spinning was done by hand with the assistance of a spinning wheel, and the weaving was accomplished on a loom. The most popular and efficient loom was the Beart Mhor (Big Loom) that was brought to Calbost in 1895, and produced a tweed that was 28.5 inches in width (single width). Angus recalls that it was his grandfather, Kenneth Nicolson, who built the second Beart Mhor in the village. By 1911, Angus says there were approximately 300 of these looms being used on the Isle of Lewis, with each producing tweed to feed a growing offshore market.

Since the production of tweed was becoming a profitable enterprise, it was not long before mills were opened to streamline the process. According to Angus, there was a carding mill in Stornoway as early as 1900, and a mill for carding and spinning by 1909.
With the increase in demand for Harris Tweed, it is not surprising that various companies tried to duplicate the cloth in great quantities. However, as Angus states, the Harris Tweed Association instituted an 'orb' trademark in 1910, to protect the producers of true Harris Tweed. To be eligible for the mark, Scottish wool had to be used, it had to be spun, woven and hand finished in the Outer Hebrides, and it could only be woven in the standard 'single width'. The location of production was also stamped on the cloth, whether it was Harris, Lewis, the Uists or Barra.

Angus remembers that Harris Tweed remained a popular commodity until the 1960s and 1970s. Being a heavy fabric, tweed was traditionally used for men's clothing. To make tweed more attractive to women, producers began to weave lighter weights after World War II. Angus remembers that some producers even tried to sell Harris Tweed as a new upholstery fabric, but the idea did not really catch on. By the 1950s and 1960s man-made fibers overwhelmed the textile industry throughout the world, and woven fabrics like Harris Tweed began to lose favour.

Today, Angus recognizes that the tweed industry is facing a difficult future. As he puts it, "you can't force public opinion. You have to wait for the public to appreciate Harris Tweed again, and then you can go back to the basics. For Harris Tweed to survive, the public must buy it." Members of the Harris Tweed Association are currently looking for new markets, and are advertising and exhibiting the product in Asia and elsewhere.

Today Angus lives in a comfortable home on the outskirts of Stornoway, and has witnessed many changes in Lewis over his long life. Some of the more obvious changes are those associated with the crofting lifestyle. For one, the primary crofting activity is
now the raising of sheep, whereas crofting used to be a much more diverse enterprise.
Also, fewer crofters are engaging in tweed weaving as a means of supplementing their
crofting income. But perhaps most disturbing to Angus is that there are fewer young
people interested in becoming crofters. Many are leaving the island after they finish
school to seek success on the Scottish mainland or in London. What Angus finds
particularly frustrating is that too many civil servants have defined crofting as ‘farming,’
and this definition may be discouraging young people from entering the crofting life.
Angus believes crofting is a lifestyle, and not just an occupation. He says that there are a
number of crofters with PhDs on the island, and that you can be a crofter in addition to
anything else. He also stresses that despite the communal nature of crofting, it is
definitely not a form of Communism, since each crofter owns his own dwelling and any
other improvements that are made on the rented property. Regardless, many young
people today are seeking a level of wealth that crofting cannot provide. Angus has
noticed that Hebridean society has become much more materialistic in recent years, and
that it is ‘greed’ which lies at the root of many of the island’s difficulties.

Angus is a very devout Christian man who is saddened by the decrease in
religious commitment seen throughout the island today. In his own words, “it is now
fashionable to be atheistic – people always want to argue that there is no God.” While he
admits that there are some Christians on the island who might be considered ‘extremists’
and favour man’s legalism over God’s grace, he stresses that the majority of believers are
not of this type. As Angus states, “the Gaelic and Hebridean culture is tied to the Bible,
and our religious beliefs.” However, after World War II the island became exposed to
increasing secular influences, and many young people have decided to follow a ‘worldly’
path. Even though Lewis is separated from the mainland by miles of ocean, Angus recognizes that geographical isolation does not mean much in the age of television and the Internet.

Angus notices that far fewer people attend church or read the Bible today. As he states, the islands were once home to many superstitions, but over the past 200 years most of these superstitions have been "cast aside by Scripture." Nevertheless, many young people do not attend church or take Communion any more. Church-goers may still travel to other villages during the Communion seasons, but they now do so by car. People no longer stay overnight and get to know each other, since they can drive to another district for Communion and return home all in the same day.

The Sabbath is still kept in the islands, though some people see it as a 'laughing matter' these days. Angus is also concerned about the number of divisions that have happened within island churches during the second half of the twentieth century. This is especially disappointing because many people already question why they should even go to church, and seeing churches split over seemingly minor issues may encourage them to stay away.

Despite the changes that have occurred over the past century, Angus says that he would never want to live anywhere else. And he believes that the crofting lifestyle still offers many benefits for those who pursue it. As he puts it, "crofters are independent people who have tenancy on a small piece of land. They can build a house, run a business, and be close to nature and the land." It may not be a rich existence, but as Angus sees it, it is a good existence. When asked what the biggest contribution the Hebridean culture could make to the rest of the world, Angus returns to the faith that is so
close to his heart, and the Catechism that he learned as a child: "What the world could learn from our culture is that man's chief end (purpose) is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."
Sheonag MacKenzie was born in High Borve on November 19th, 1909. She was born in a traditional blackhouse and was one of eight children in her family. There had been more than eight children, but some of them did not survive infancy. She remembers her childhood fondly, but also remembers always being busy helping on the croft.

Nothing was automatic in those days, and none of the houses had any electricity. Candles were sometimes used, but paraffin lamps broadcast a brighter and wider light.

Sheonag remembers going to school in the village of Siader, which was a long walk from her home in High Borve. Each day she and the other children had to carry one peat to school for fueling the school stove. No matter what the weather was like, the students had to carry the peats, as well as their books and papers. Most children like Sheonag only attended school until the age of 14. Other children who came from more prosperous families would also leave the village school at 14, but then go to Stornoway to receive further education at the Nicolson Institute. Sheonag remembers that her family did not have much money, but they were happy nevertheless. It wasn't an easy life, but they did not know any other lifestyle.

Sheonag grew up on a traditional Hebridean croft where her family raised a variety of livestock and crops. All of the useable land on the croft was ploughed and cultivated with oats, barley, corn, turnips, potatoes and cabbage. These were the staple vegetables and grains available at the time. The landscape in High Borve is relatively flat, so the family used a horse to do most of the field work. The family also had a cart, which was pulled by the horse to bring the peats in from the moor each year. This was a
family activity, and Sheonag enjoyed going out with her family to bring the peats back to
the house.

Life on the croft required strength and endurance. Sheonag recalls going down to
the Borve River to do the family washing, even as late as the 1940s. Her family took its
drinking water from a well, and some people in the village still preferred this source over
the piped water that was available after World War II. No one in the village had a car
when she was a child. If a person needed to go somewhere, they would walk. Everyone
walked to church, and to school, and sometimes people would even walk to Stornoway if
they needed to go there. The first vehicle Sheonag remembers ever seeing was the
postman's mail car. She recalls that he graduated from a horse and carriage sometime
around 1920.

Since very few people had money in those days, families depended greatly on one
another. One household would help another without expecting anything in return. Some
families were in worse financial condition than others, but the whole village would come
together to support those families who could not survive otherwise. The government also
provided some financial aid. Villagers over the age of 70 years received a pension of 10
shillings (50 pence) each month, which was helpful since many elderly could no longer
work their crofts productively. Sheonag also remembers that parents of a child killed in
World War I also received a pension of 6 shillings per month. Even though Sheonag's
family did not have much money, they were still able to help others as needed. And
every year Sheonag and her siblings would each receive a new pair of shoes.

Since there was little money available, crofting families had to make their own
entertainment. Families took great pleasure in visiting neighbours, and sharing their
hospitality with those who visited them. It was common to go visiting almost every night of the week, except on Sundays because that day was the Sabbath. Even on Saturday night, activities would draw to an early close because the Sabbath was at hand. But on other nights of the week it was common for people to stay out quite late. Sheonag remembers that many people would not return home from visiting until after 11pm.

When people visited each other they would engage in story-telling and simple games. Sheonag recalls that one of her favorite things was sitting with the other children and being told ghost stories by people visiting their house. If the weather cooperated, young people would also meet at the stone bridge on the Borve River to dance in the moonlight. A villager would play a melodeon (accordion) almost every evening, except on Saturdays and Sundays.

Sheonag remembers that crofting families were very resourceful and wise in their use of the natural environment. Since High Borve is quite close to the sea, it was common to use the resources that the sea provided. Sheonag’s father would often walk down to the sea at the village of Borve to fish for dogfish. The dogfish would be brought home where they would be dried, salted or smoked for preservation. Family members would hunt for small fish called ‘cuddies’ amongst the tidal pools and rocks, and salmon were also caught in the local rivers. The women of the village would also go down to the shore to pick seaweed. And while some varieties were used to enrich the soil as a fertilizer, other types were used for food. One type of seaweed that Sheonag can remember was used by the women to set puddings. Another called ‘dulse’, was eaten like a salad right at the seashore. Dulse also had medicinal properties, and was often given to invalids and others who were suffering from stomach and digestive problems.
Another product that was consumed as medicine was fish liver, and it was quite common to eat the liver of a dogfish between slices of bread. It was important for the villagers to have at least some notion of healthcare and disease prevention, since there was only one doctor serving High Borve when Sheonag was young. And he not only served the villages surrounding High Borve, but also all of the villages in the district of Ness to the north, and the district of Barvas to the south.

Some of Sheonag’s happiest times were spent on the shieling, or summer pasture. Her family usually had four or five cows, and there were often a number of calves as well. During most years, Sheonag’s family would take the cows and calves to the shieling on May 10th. Usually by this date the weather would be much drier and warmer than earlier in the year. Even though there was always some wind, it was less likely to develop into a large gale. However, Sheonag does remember one year in particular when snow fell while the family was on the shieling. They had to bring the cows and calves back to High Borve and stay there for a week until the weather had sufficiently cleared.

The shieling that Sheonag’s family used was approximately 3 miles from their house in High Borve. Almost every day she would walk back to the coast and fetch fresh seaweed to feed the cows. Despite the bounty of sweet grass and heather, the cows that Sheonag’s family owned would not give much milk unless they were also fed seaweed. To increase the production of milk, the calves had to be kept away from their mothers. If they were allowed to suckle, the cow would slow its milk production once the calf let go. Sheonag and her sisters acted as surrogate mothers for the calves by feeding them a portion of the milk collected each day. However, it was not as simple as just placing a bucket in front of each animal, because the calves were too young to feed that way.
Rather, Sheonag and her sisters had to dribble the milk down their hands so that each calf could suck it off of their thumbs.

Sheonag remembers that the milking was often done in the evening. The milk would be placed in pans so that the cream would rise to the top. In the morning, the cream would be skimmed off the top, and churned into butter. The remaining milk was either transported back to the village, or left to sit in the pan. After some time, the milk left in the pan would thicken and sour. It would then be turned into 'crowdie', which is like a Hebridean form of cottage cheese. The crowdie would be whipped with cream to become a delicious topping for warm scones.

Sheonag remembers that her mother was a very hardworking woman. Each day she would take the milk from the shieling to the village. This was not easy because the milk was heavy and the village was a three mile walk over rolling terrain. Sheonag remembers that her mother walked there and back each day, knitting all the way. The milk and other supplies were carried in a creel basket on her back.

Sheonag has lived her entire life on the Isle of Lewis, but she has seen places beyond the island’s shores. When she was a young woman, Sheonag joined the throngs of other girls who entered the herring industry. She was active in this occupation through the 1930s and worked the herring in places as far away as the Shetland Islands. The girls were moved from location to location according to where the herring shoals were migrating, and it was not uncommon for a herring girl to visit several ports of call in a single season. In 1939, Sheonag returned home from the herring fishery in Stromness in the Shetland Islands. Only this time she did not come home by boat. Instead, she and a number of others were chosen to fly home on the first commercial plane to land on the
Isle of Lewis. Sheonag recalls that the pilot’s name was Captain Fresson, and that he landed the plane on a golf course outside of Stornoway.

Many changes have happened on the Isle of Lewis since Sheonag was a young child. The blackhouses have all been replaced by more modern dwellings, though the roofless ‘skeletons’ of the old structures often remain on the croft as a relic of the past. Sheonag misses the days when families would go visiting in the evenings. Even though many people still visit, it is not the same as it used to be. The values of the people have changed over time, and many of the old ways and behaviors are being discarded and forgotten. Sheonag believes this has accelerated because people can now afford more worldly forms of entertainment. She thinks that most people would rather stay at home alone and watch television these days, rather than walking across the village to visit their neighbours.

The introduction of the car altered other aspects of the traditional lifestyle. The automobile made it much easier to travel throughout the island, and made the villages less isolated from the outside world. When Sheonag was younger, there was rarely any reason to travel the long distance into Stornoway, but now people can travel there in less than half an hour. The villages were quite self sufficient in earlier years, but now people go outside the village to obtain the things they need.

Few people ever fish off the coast of Borve anymore, and herring are difficult to find even in the market. Sheonag has noticed that there are hardly any cows left on the island, and even fewer horses. Everything seems to be automatic today, and younger people have little appreciation for the old methods of getting things done.
Sheonag is especially bothered by the change of attitude towards religion. She remembers a time when everyone believed in God, and everyone went to church if they were able to do so. In past years churches would be filled twice on Sundays, and many of those who attended were young people. Sheonag has noticed that faith no longer seems to have the same importance or presence in the community as it used to. Some of the churches that were once vibrant and alive are now struggling to maintain their Gospel witness. Today (2001) the church in Borve does not have any elders left, and the remaining congregation does not even have a minister of its own. Congregants must now travel south to Barvas in order to worship at church.

Despite being sad about some of the changes that have happened on the island during the past century, Sheonag MacKenzie remains thankful for others. She is happy that she no longer has to cut peats for her fuel, and is grateful for the technology that has brought running water into her home. She says that she would not want to walk down to the well to fetch water anymore, and it is nice to be able to do her washing by machine instead of by hand at the river’s edge. Today she can take a bus to almost anywhere on the island, which has made her life much easier than it had been before motorized transport. All in all, Sheonag is happy with the ease of her life today, and says that life is generally better now than what it was before. But she laments the erosion of community cohesiveness, and the growing lack of respect for her Christian faith. Nevertheless, she would never want to live anywhere else.
6.4 Angus Graham:

Angus Graham was born in the village of Borve, on August 26th, 1905. He was born and raised in a traditional blackhouse, along with his six siblings. Each of his siblings lived into their eighties, except one sister who died in her seventies. His mother lived to the age of ninety-six, and his older sister is still living on the family croft, at one hundred years of age.

Like many youngsters, Angus was given a nickname. An old woman by the name of Annie Morrison gave Angus the nickname ‘Mishon’ when he was still a child. Angus doesn’t know what the name actually means, but it is the name most people still use for him today.

Angus remembers that there were blackhouses all over the Isle of Lewis when he was a child, except in Stornoway, which had more modern dwellings. People were exceptionally kind, and were always willing to help one another as necessary. It was a close-knit community where families took care of each other. Angus’s father passed away when his mother was only 35 years old. She received 10 shillings (50 pence) per month from the government, and boots for her children in winter. It was very difficult for her to raise seven children on her own, but the village always helped out with extra food and goods. He doubts that his mother could have provided for them all if it wasn’t for the generosity of the other villagers.

Angus lived on a croft that was much the same as others in the village. His family grew potatoes and turnips, and grains such as oats and barley. Some people grew barley for whiskey, and almost everyone grew oats for oatmeal. Oatmeal was one of the staple foods, as Angus remembers. He notes that the barley and oats were harvested differently.
The oats would be cut with a scythe or a sickle, but the barley would be pulled from the ground. The roots would then be trimmed off and saved for thatching the homes. Oats were easier to work with, because they did not have the sharp 'needles' that were found on the barley.

Once the grain was harvested it had to be ground. Borve was fortunate to have its own mills for grinding. In fact, Angus remembers that the village had six. They were all powered by water, and had walls of stone and roofs of thatch. The people called this type of mill a 'Norse Mill', since the design was thought to have come with the Vikings many centuries earlier. The mills straddled a small canal that was dug along the side of the Borve River, and each mill had a horizontal grindstone which was turned by paddles extending below the structure and into the canal. Whenever the stones needed to be turned, the river water was temporarily diverted from the river and into the canal. The rush of water would turn the paddles, which would then turn the stones and grind the grain that was fed between the stones by a wooden hopper. Angus remembers that the grain would first have to be dried before it could be ground. This was done in a drying kiln. It also had stone walls and a thatched roof, but inside it was quite different from the mill. There was a thick stone platform, with space underneath or in the middle for a small peat fire. The grain would be spread evenly around the platform, and the fire would gently warm it until most of the moisture had been evaporated. Angus remembers that these mills and kilns were used throughout the fall and winter, up until World War II. By that time, a larger, mechanized mill was operating in the district of Ness, so most people abandoned the smaller mills in the villages and took their grain to Ness instead.
Angus and his family also had a number of animals on the croft. Most crofts at the time had horses, cows, sheep and chickens. But Angus’s grandfather always kept a large hog as well. He would fatten the hog throughout the spring and summer, and then he would butcher it in the fall. Angus remembers that almost every croft had at least one horse, used for field work and for carrying peats home from the moor. Most of the horses in Borve were bought from a horse breeder on the island of North Uist.\textsuperscript{xvii} Angus’s family also kept three or four cows on the croft, in addition to about 20 sheep. The cows were used strictly for milking, but when they became old and unproductive they would be butchered for beef. Angus remembers that female calves were allowed to grow into mature females, but male calves were usually butchered for veal when they were just one week old.

When Angus was 15 years old he made his first trip to Stornoway to sell four or five of the family’s sheep. He can remember that the price he received was 25 shillings (£1.25) for the lot. The walk to Stornoway took six hours, and he was concerned that he might get lost in the ‘big city’. He remembers that Stornoway was very different from the village. There were gas lights along the streets, and many fine buildings and stores. In the village, people’s houses were much simpler and most still had thatched roofs. There was no electricity in the village until after World War II, and most people used lamps that were fueled with paraffin oil. Running water did not arrive in the village until the 1950s, so village people had to get their water from wells or streams before that time. The town of Stornoway possessed many amenities that the villages would not have for several more decades.

\textsuperscript{xvii} I discovered that the horse breeder in North Uist was actually my great-great grandfather.
Gaelic was the only language Angus knew until he went to school. At school, English was the only language spoken, and Gaelic was not allowed. So any Gaelic that Angus learned was learned at home. Like all village children, Angus had to carry a peat to school every day to supply fuel for the school stove. He recalls that if he forgot to bring the peat one day, the teacher expected him to bring two peats the next day. Angus attended school until he was 14 years of age, which was the usual age to finish school unless a family had sufficient funds to send the child to Stornoway, for additional education at the Nicolson Institute.

Angus remembers that childhood summers were filled with fun. In the late spring his family would take the cattle to graze on the shieling. Their shieling was 4 miles away from Borve, and if the school year was still in session, Angus would only be able to visit the shieling on the weekends. He enjoyed running across the moors, finding grouse nests and other interesting things. Angus says that he spent the entire summer in bare feet, since there was no need to wear shoes on the shieling. He remembers that it was an enjoyable time for the children, but a time of hard work for the women of the village. They had to walk back and forth from the shieling each day, no matter what the weather was like. He remembers that most of the women wore woolen socks without shoes, and each pair of socks had a hole for the big toe. Angus still has great admiration for the village women, who he says, “worked like slaves.”

It was quite common for people from Angus’s village, and surrounding villages, to fish in the Atlantic off the coast at Borve. Angus can remember fishing for cod and ling, and for dogfish which was then salted or smoked for winter storage.
In the winter, Angus and the other children enjoyed playing in the snow. He remembers that the island was colder during the winter than it is now, and there was quite a lot of snow each year. The winter also brought the enjoyment of Christmas and the New Year. Christmas wasn't as large a celebration as it is today, but the children of the village always took part in a festivity known as Christmas Callin'. Children up to the age of 14 years would gather at one of the village houses. Then they would travel as a group to visit other homes in the village. One of the children would wear a sheep's skin on his or her back, and walk around the peat fire found in the center of the floor of each home. As the child circled the fire, the residents of the house would hit the sheep skin as the circling child sang a rhyme. Then the children would receive food or a little bit of money from each house, and pool it together to have a party of their own. Angus remembers that this tradition disappeared by World War II.

Another cause for celebration in the village was the occasion of a marriage. In those days weddings were much simpler, but still a lot of fun. The ceremony was not held in the church, but rather, it was held at the home of the bride. The house would be decorated with flags, coloured paper, and sometimes even balloons. Guests would come to the house with a hen, which was then used for the wedding feast. Angus remembers how the village women would sit together and pluck the chickens as a group. Then the chickens would be boiled for soup, and the meat would be served cold on plates. Various vegetables and potatoes were also served, and tea and cakes would follow the main meal. 'Conversation Sweets' were also eaten at weddings. Each sweet had a special message folded inside, and a person would throw the sweet to an individual they might be
interested in. Angus remembers that courting had to be done very late at night, so that no one in the village would find out about it.

Following the wedding and the feast, festivities moved to the barn where there would be dancing until the early hours of the morning. One of the village men who could play the melodeon or accordion would provide the music. The men would drink beer and whisky, while the women would only drink tea. Angus remembers that the women wore dresses and the men wore suits – no one wore a kilt at weddings in those days.

In later years it became more popular to be married in a big church, and have a reception at one of the hotels in Stornoway. The grooms now wear kilts, as do many of the male guests. The meal is catered, and the dancing usually ends sooner than it did in the past. The last village wedding in Borve took place in the late 1950s. Angus remembers that my grandparents were visiting the island at that time, and attended that particular wedding. He also recalls that my grandmother, Margaret Morrison, took part in the festivities by singing old Gaelic songs during the barn dance.

Funerals were also a time for members of the village to come together. Mourners would gather at the home of the deceased, and some of the men would stay over at the house to give emotional support to the grieving family. Angus remembers that this tradition of staying over continued in the island until the 1970s. The body would be kept at the house for two nights, followed by a funeral service at the house that was led by a minister and church elders. Following the service, the body would be taken from the house and carried by the men of the village to the appropriate cemetery. Deceased individuals would be buried in the same cemetery as the rest of their relations, so they
could remain 'with their people'. Even if the deceased lived a good distance from the
cemetery that held the relatives, it was still important to bury the body there.

Since the cemetery could be six or seven miles away from the house, the men of
the village would take turns carrying the coffin. The coffin was placed on a wooden bier
that had two long poles on either side. Four men would lift each side of the bier, so that
eight men were carrying the coffin at all times. After a certain distance, the men would
shift their grips backwards, to provide room for a new man to take hold on either side at
the front of the procession. The men in the other positions would fall back, and the two
at the very end of the bier would let go altogether. These men would then walk to the
back of the line of pallbearers and wait to carry the bier again. This intricate rotation
would continue until the procession reached the cemetery, allowing each man to have the
privilege and honour of carrying the deceased to their final rest. Only men took part in
the procession to the cemetery and the burial of the dead. Women were not allowed to go
to the burial, and had to stay inside the deceased’s house during the procession. Even
though there are very few traditional village funerals today, it is still uncommon for
women to attend a burial.

The years following World War I brought significant changes to the Isle of Lewis.
The economy was particularly bad in the 1920s, and Angus remembers that many people
left the island to work overseas. People left Borve for places like New Zealand and
Australia, but a larger number immigrated to Canada. Some of these people came back
to Lewis eventually, but Angus remembers that most stayed in Canada. Jobs were scarce
on the island during the interwar period, but Angus was able to find work as a fisherman.
He later joined the Merchant Marines, and spent 45 years “seeing the world,” even visiting Vancouver several times prior to World War II.

In 1934, Angus married for the first time. One son passed away at five years of age from diphtheria, and the grave marker carved by Angus still stands in the Galson cemetery, more than 60 years later. Some time after the death of his first wife, Angus remarried, but she has also predeceased him.

Angus has seen a lot of changes on the island during his 96 years of life. Most of these changes occurred after World War II, when greater efforts were made to modernize the island. Electricity and piped water came to the village during this period, and families began purchasing radios and later, television sets. Angus remembers that the advent of television brought an end to many traditional forms of village entertainment. Visiting gradually grew less common as people became content to stay at home with their radios and television sets.

Government grants have also increased, and housing has been further improved and modernized. There is less reliance on peats for fuel, since many houses now have oil stoves. The agricultural output of the crofts has also changed over the years. Angus has seen how the tractor has replaced the horse on most crofts, and bought milk has replaced the fresh milk from family cows. Crops are no longer grown in large quantities, since most people buy their food at grocery stores in Stornoway. There was a time when each croft was fully cultivated, but today most crofters only plant a small vegetable patch for their personal use.

Angus has also noticed a change in people’s values and attitudes over the decades. When he was young, people respected each other much more than they do today. And
most people attended church twice on Sundays, whereas many people today do not go at all. Angus is happy that the Sabbath is still kept in most of the island, even though there seems to be fewer people going to church than ever before. People's attitudes towards money have also changed. When Angus was young, everyone in the village was relatively poor. Some families were better off than others, but for the most part, the entire village was at the same economic level. However, once families became more prosperous after World War II, significant changes began to occur. A new materialism entered the local community, and Angus remembers how some families began competing with other families to see who had the most modern conveniences and amenities. This led to a cycle of one-upmanship, which is something that the village had never experienced before. While increasing prosperity was beneficial for those who possessed it, Angus believes that it also contributed to the breakdown of community bonds and spirit. Generally speaking, after World War II people began looking out for themselves, rather than considering the needs of their neighbours.

Today Angus lives on his own in the village of Barvas, approximately six miles south of where he grew up. He lives in a modern home, and he plants and tends an immaculate vegetable garden each year. He is very spry for his age, and eats anything he wants to. He says that he never had a problem with his weight, and enjoys eating the fat on pork chops. He does not suffer from arthritis, and is thankful that he was raised with "lots of good homemade food and fresh milk." Each day, Angus enjoys a dram of whiskey. He takes cod liver oil daily between September and April, because the short hours of daylight in the fall and winter prevent the body from making enough vitamin D.
He also smokes a pipe, and has done so for 80 years. But Angus insists that he has never
smoked a cigarette.

Despite any negative changes that modernization has brought, Angus Graham
would never want to live anywhere else. He traveled the world with the Merchant Navy,
and visited many nice places. But he never found any place that could compare to the
Isle of Lewis. Though he is saddened by the deterioration of the traditional culture and
way of life, Angus is happy that the island remains a safe and clean place to live. There
hasn't been a murder in living memory, and all other forms of crime are rare or non-
existent. The faith of believing Christians is as strong as ever, even if society is generally
moving away from church. Angus considers Lewis to be his home – a peaceful and quiet
place where he can happily spend his remaining years.
CHAPTER 7: OBSERVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 General Observations:

As stated in Chapter 1, the main purpose of this thesis is to understand the changes that have occurred to the traditional culture of the Outer Hebrides as a result of development and modernization, as perceived by individual Hebridean people. In the most general sense, it can be concluded that the culture has indeed been affected by development and modernization, especially during the years following World War II. The histories provided by elderly informants leave no question that change has occurred. However, not all of the changes have been perceived as negative.

Before conducting the field research, I wrongly expected that the majority of informants would lament the changes that development has brought. I thought that these people would express a sentimental longing for the ‘good old days’ on the family croft, and a return to the ‘idyll’ of the early 20th century. However, I was surprised to discover that the elderly people I spoke with were quite content with the benefits brought by modernization. Sheonag MacKenzie does not miss fetching water from the creek or well, and is happy that the standard of health care today is far better than what was available in her childhood. Angus Graham remembers the difficulty of raising a family in earlier years, and he greatly appreciates the large amount of work that village women had to do for their families to survive. Neither Annie Smith nor Angus MacLeod would want to give up the conveniences of electricity or modern transportation and communication, and none of the informants desire a return to the lean years of the interwar period.
Development and modernization may have even had positive effects for the traditional culture, but in an indirect way. That is, as the culture has eroded, there has been an increased acknowledgement by residents and authorities that the cultural heritage of the islands is worthy of preservation. For most of the past 200 years, the Hebridean people have not been encouraged to value their traditional culture. Rather, the culture was generally deemed as being inferior, backwards, and even shameful. As the research shows, the Gaelic culture was under attack since the breakdown of the clan system in the 18th century, with Britain attempting to systematically deconstruct the Gaelic identity. The increasing demoralization experienced by many islanders following the Highland Clearances and World War I also contributed to apathy regarding their cultural heritage. Thankfully, the days of Gaelic being banished from the classroom are long gone, though the memories of many Hebridean people still hold a lingering sadness about those times. But efforts are now being aimed at preserving cultural heritage, and these continue to be successful, as seen by the growing number of historical societies, museums, and cultural programs operating in the islands. While there is always room for improvement, it is promising that these endeavors are being pursued and supported by the local planning authorities, and that the planning focus for the region includes the preservation of traditional Hebridean cultural heritage.

While development and modernization have had definite benefits, the elderly informants also expressed sadness about some of the changes that have occurred at the community level. For one, the close ties of loyalty and solidarity within the villages have certainly declined over the past several decades. Increased prosperity has led to competition between neighbours, and the proliferation of television has undermined the
long tradition of family visiting and household ceilidhs. Angus Graham and Angus MacLeod both note that greed has played a large role in the deterioration of the traditional culture, and that increasing self-sufficiency has diminished the need for community members to support one another as they did in the past. Each informant also expressed deep concern about the general decline in church attendance during recent decades, and how many young people now place their faith in worldly desires rather than in the Lord.

With respect to the questionnaire results, the consistency found between the two age groups is promising. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the three cultural elements which received the highest rankings in each age group were the same. Even though there was a difference in their order, each group named the Gaelic language, the religious beliefs of the islanders, and the crofting system as being the three most important elements of their culture. This consistency is promising because it suggests that the younger and older generations of Hebrideans retain shared values with regards to their culture. Thus, planners can confidently incorporate information from older Hebrideans when developing initiatives pertaining to culture, without losing relevance for future generations. Had there been a significant difference in the rankings between older and younger respondents, this would have suggested a greater discrepancy in personal values. In that case it would be unwise to use data from older Hebrideans to inform future initiatives that would ultimately affect the lives of younger members of the society.
7.2 Recommendations:

The research shows that the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is concerned about the preservation of cultural heritage in the Outer Hebrides. The council states this as one of its objectives for future development, along with a desire for greater public participation in the planning process. By using the information provided by the questionnaire and by the elderly informants, several recommendations can be made regarding future development initiatives, and the preservation of the traditional cultural heritage of the Outer Hebrides. The life histories and opinions of the informants strongly suggest that the preservation of cultural heritage is a worthy endeavor, while the questionnaire results reveal which elements the respondents consider most important for preservation. According to the questionnaire, the cultural elements that deserve the greatest protection are the Gaelic language, the religious faith of the population, and the crofting system.

However, from a planning perspective it is difficult to make recommendations to preserve the language and religious beliefs of the island population, since these aspects of island life are very personal in nature. Whether a person wishes to speak Gaelic or have a particular religious faith is not something that can be directed by the planning process. Nevertheless, there are ways that planners can address these elements with care and respect when developing initiatives.

For instance, the Gaelic language is being actively promoted by the Comhairle through its use in signage and official documents. There are also Gaelic broadcasts on radio and television, and the language is being taught again in island schools. While the Comhairle cannot force the population to use Gaelic, it can certainly make the language more accessible for those who wish to see it preserved. By actively promoting the
language, the planning authorities are also validating an integral part of the culture which had been officially suppressed for many years. The shame once associated with being a Gaelic speaker has hopefully been extinguished once and for all.

Unfortunately, the future of Gaelic as a language cannot be guaranteed. Even though the language is taught in the schools, the viability of Gaelic greatly depends on its use in everyday life. Gaelic is still heard in the stores and on the streets of Stornoway, but usually from older individuals. As archaeologist Mary McLeod states, “Gaelic may be spoken in the classrooms, but is rarely heard in the schoolyards.” 151

Even more difficult to address from a planning perspective is the religious faith of the islanders. Religion is an intensely personal matter, whether or not a person is part of a particular faith or tradition. Nevertheless, in formulating initiatives, planners must respect the faith of the islanders. Almost all of the Hebrideans I spoke with are pleased that Sundays are still recognized as a day of rest in the islands. Even non-Christians who were asked, wanted to see Sunday preserved as the Sabbath, because they believe it is important to have one day each week which is separate and distinct from the rest. These individuals may not go to church, but they still appreciate the Sabbath as a day for family togetherness and relaxation. There are others who would like to see shops open and other services available on Sundays, but these individuals seem to be part of a small minority. All said, preserving the Sabbath appears advisable for a number of reasons. For one, it represents the desire of most islanders. Furthermore, it helps keep the Outer Hebrides distinct from the rest of Britain, and greatly contributes to its unique sense of ‘place’. It has also been suggested that the genuine Christian character of the islands is one reason why the region is such a safe place to live and visit. 152 Thankfully, the Outer Hebrides is
a place of religious tolerance, where the belief or non-belief of individuals is at least respected by the majority of islanders.

The crofting system is one aspect of Hebridean culture which planners can impact and facilitate. The Comhairle recognizes the importance of crofting to the islands and the islanders, and various bodies such as the Crofters Commission continue to promote crofting as an attractive lifestyle. However, for crofting to have a bright future, it is important to develop more creative ways of promoting it to the younger generation. By reading the histories of the elderly informants, it is clear that the nature of crofting has changed in fundamental ways over the years. In earlier times, crofting was a much more diverse enterprise, with crops being cultivated in addition to the raising of livestock. But today crofting is almost exclusively about the rearing of sheep. And while sheep rearing is undertaken by most crofters, it is probably too limited a lifestyle to attract younger people. The lack of diversity also makes crofting much more vulnerable to market shifts and other outside forces. Had foot and mouth disease reached the Outer Hebrides it would have had disastrous consequences for the crofting system and the island economy. Thus, for crofting to survive and thrive, it is important that the system become more diverse. But while the Comhairle has encouraged crofters to engage in new crofting ventures, it can be risky to attempt innovative crofting activities. That is, it is ‘safer’ for a crofter to continue raising sheep, than to pursue innovative and untried crofting activities.

Therefore, I recommend that a system of ‘demonstration crofts’ be developed in various parts of the Outer Hebrides. These crofts would be administered by the Comhairle, and would allow experimental crops to be grown, new livestock to be raised, and other crofting ventures to be attempted. These new ventures could include artisan
activities, such as pottery, painting, and weaving. The products of these could then be
sold to visitors and tourists, or even exported overseas as Hebridean products.

A system of demonstration crofts would remove much of the pressure and
financial risk of diversification from the crofters, and transfer it to the Comhairle and
other bodies which have a greater capacity to absorb potential failures. New crofters
would learn which activities hold the most promise for profit before making a financial
and personal commitment to the crofting lifestyle. Island teenagers could be hired to
work these crofts during the summer months, which would cut operational costs and
teach the young people more about crofting and what it might offer for their own futures.

With appropriate on-site accommodation, these crofts could also draw upon the
manpower of tourists, who would pay for the opportunity to spend time living and
working on a croft. ‘Agro-tourism’ already exists in other parts of Europe, and some
crofters in the Outer Hebrides already offer ‘crofting holidays’ to visiting tourists. By
promoting this aspect of the demonstration crofts, authorities would build linkages
between the traditional Hebridean industry of crofting and the comparatively new
industry of tourism that they are trying to foster and expand.

The development of demonstration crofts could also be a catalyst for additional
cultural preservation and participation by community members. Since it has been many
years since crofting has been a diverse enterprise, much of the knowledge and experience
in operating a diverse system has been lost. Older Hebrideans would have much to offer

\[\text{xviii} \] Some travel agencies offer brochures highlighting agro-tourism in Italy and France. Rather than
staying in a hotel, tourists stay at a local farm and take an active part in the agricultural lifestyle by helping
with farming duties. While this is not every tourist’s preference, it certainly provides a deeper
understanding of the local culture and lifestyle of a region.

\[\text{xix} \] I was able to stay at a bed and breakfast croft on the island of Berneray, between the Isle of Harris and
North Uist. The owner, ‘Splash’ MacKillop, offers visitors the opportunity to do work on the croft. This is
also the croft that Prince Charles stays on when he does his crofting holidays.
in this respect, and by passing their knowledge to younger crofters, they would also be actively involved in the preservation of their own cultural heritage. This knowledge would not just end up recorded in a book or a thesis, but would be applied in a meaningful and practical way. The application of traditional knowledge is perhaps the most effective and lasting way of preserving the knowledge of an individual or community.

In addition to using demonstration crofts to test new crofting ventures, the Comhairle could also use one or more crofts for more traditional crofting practices. For instance, a croft could be developed into a ‘working museum’ where all sorts of traditional crofting activities would be preserved. Such an enterprise would also benefit from older crofters, who would again teach younger people about traditional crofting methods and practices. And like the demonstration crofts, traditional working crofts could also be marketed as a resource for cultural tourism. While crofting history can already be observed and studied in island museums and village historical societies, the development of ‘working museums’ would allow locals and tourists to actually see and experience traditional crofting in practice. Of course, the development of demonstration crofts and working museums would require the cooperation of various administrative bodies, and might be limited by the strict regulations which govern crofting activities. The Crofters Commission would need to be involved, and the Scottish Land Courts might also require input before either of the recommended ventures could be initiated.

There are also other ways that cultural heritage could be linked to the growing tourist industry. Each of the elderly informants fondly remembers the time each year that families spent at the shieling, or summer pasture. The families would live on the pasture
in small dwellings or ‘shieling houses’. Since the 1940s most shielings have been abandoned, since very few crofts continue to support cattle. Thus, the remains of shieling houses are scattered throughout the islands, and it might be possible to put these simple dwellings to use. Some are already used by islanders as weekend retreats, but others are completely vacant. These shieling houses could be refurbished and used as rest stops for hikers and hill-walkers. A network of walking trails could be developed to link the various shielings, thereby providing a more organized system for outdoor enthusiasts visiting the islands. Each shieling house could provide a watering station and toilet facilities, with information posted at each dwelling regarding local flora, fauna, history, geography and culture. This could lead to a formalized network of interpretive trails that would educate those using the paths, and facilitate the preservation of local heritage.

Walking holidays are popular throughout many parts of Britain and Europe, and the development of interpretive trails and rest areas could enhance the marketability of eco-tourism in the Outer Hebrides.

7.3 Implications for the Planning Profession:

It is hoped that this thesis will have positive implications for the planning profession and its interaction with members of society. More specifically, this thesis demonstrates the value of story in the planning process, as described by Leonie Sandercock in Cosmopolis II (2003). Listening is an important part of responsible planning practice, whether it is listening to community desires and concerns in a formal public meeting, or listening to the life story of a community member over a cup of tea. The collection and use of stories told by members of a community also allow the planner
to incorporate voices that might otherwise go unheard. In the context of this thesis, I focused on the stories told by elderly Hebridean informants. Not only have these people witnessed cultural change over a very long period of time, they also represent a segment of society that seems generally ignored by planning authorities. I believe it was important to seek the knowledge and input that this demographic could offer. And it is also important for planners in other situations to listen to the voices of marginalized segments of the societies that they work within.

Moreover, this thesis also shows the importance of understanding the factors which act together to provide a community with an identity of place and being. For the Outer Hebrides and its people, it is important for planners to have some understanding of the history, geography and culture of the region. By building layers of understanding, a deeper knowledge about any community and its physical area can be achieved. Then, initiatives can be formed which stay true to the ‘sense of place’ that community members wish to maintain. This approach highlights certain elements of bioregional thought by viewing planning through a more holistic lens that pays respect to the many variables that contribute to the unique sense of place enjoyed by many communities throughout the world.

This thesis does not suggest that elements of communicative planning, bioregional ideals, and the collection of stories, are the only responsible avenues for the planner to pursue. Rather, each of these elements of planning should be added to the planners repertoire of methods and practice, to be used when most appropriate. In this way the planner can accumulate the ‘tools of planning’ in what Doug Aberley has described as the ‘planner’s toolkit.’
7.4 Avenues for Further Investigation:

While conducting and analyzing the research for this thesis, it soon became apparent that there are many additional avenues available for future research and investigation. For instance, it would be interesting to isolate one or two of the traditional cultural elements and examine in greater depth how planning initiatives are being utilized for their specific preservation. For instance, a more in-depth study could be undertaken to examine how the Gaelic language is being affected by mass media and the forces of globalization. Or, perhaps an analysis could be done to assess the social and economic costs and benefits of maintaining the Sunday Sabbath. Feasibility studies could be performed regarding any of the recommendations made in this thesis, such as the development of demonstration crofts or the reuse of shieling houses as a part of interpretive trails. Another avenue for investigation could be a comparative analysis of the Hebridean case study with the plight of other distinct cultural groups throughout the world. For instance, the Hebridean study could be compared with those involving the Lapp population of Finland, or the indigenous populations of the Amazon Basin. It would also be very interesting and beneficial to conduct community mapping projects, and to ultimately construct a bioregional atlas of the Outer Hebrides. In any case, while attempting to answer the question of how individual Hebridean people have perceived cultural change in the face of modernization and development, this thesis has generated more questions that future researchers may wish to investigate.
7.5 Final Words:

While undertaking field research in the Outer Hebrides, I came to realize the importance of ‘understanding’ in the planning process. That is, to be a responsible planner it is vital to understand and acknowledge the many factors which contribute to a community’s sense of ‘place’. This is why I have provided significant background information about the Outer Hebrides and its people within this thesis; so that the reader may come to know this special place as I know it. It was important for me to understand the physical geography of the Outer Hebrides as well as the cultural history of its people. I needed to acquire an understanding of the history, to more fully understand the present condition and needs of the region and its inhabitants. The more levels of understanding I was able to access, the more confident I became in my observations and recommendations, and the more responsible I felt as a researcher. I also gained a greater appreciation for the various ‘ways of knowing’ available to the planner, especially the more transactive use of dialogue and personal histories that were provided by the elderly informants on the Isle of Lewis.

I am thankful that I was able to conduct the research for this thesis, and I am hopeful that it might have practical applications for future planning initiatives in the Outer Hebrides. But at the very least, the collection of data represents an act of cultural preservation on its own. The elderly informants provided information that might otherwise have been lost to history, such as Annie Smith’s traditional method of cleaning a well, or Angus Graham’s recollections of Christmas Callin’ as a child more than 90 years ago. The significance of this aspect of the research has become even more profound for me during the last two years, following the deaths of three of the elderly
Hebrideans I had the pleasure of interviewing. In 2002, Angus MacLeod passed away in his 87th year, and Sheonag MacKenzie passed away the following year, at 94 years of age. Angus Graham passed away in the spring of 2004, several months before his 99th birthday. At present, Annie Smith is still living independently in Melbost Borve, and will turn 92 years old in February, 2005. I can only hope that this thesis honors the lives and experiences of each individual I had the privilege of interviewing, and the memory of those who have since passed away.
ENDNOTES

2 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Interview with Angus McLeod, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
10 Ibid., p. 4.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Thompson, p. 24.
15 Ibid., p. 27.
16 Ibid.
18 Barber, p. 18.
20 Information displayed at the Museum nan Eilean, Stornoway.
   Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
21 Barber, p. 20.
22 Thompson, p. 19.
23 Interview with Sheonag MacKenzie, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
24 Barber, p. 20.
25 Thompson, p. 21.
26 Interview with Angus McLeod, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
27 Macdonald, pp. 103-106.
28 Information displayed at Dun Carloway Broch, Isle of Lewis.
   Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
29 Information displayed at the Callanish Standing Stones visitor’s centre, Isle of Lewis.
   Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
30 Barber, p. 22.
31 John MacLeod, p. 38.
32 Barber, p. 70.
33 Ibid., p. 83.
34 Thompson, p. 39.
35 Interview with Angus McLeod, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
37 Interview with Angus McLeod, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
38 John MacLeod, p. 162.
43 Interview with Angus McLeod, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
44 Interview with Angus Graham, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
45 Interview with Angus McLeod, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
46 Taskforce on Public Funding of Gaelic, p. 27.
47 Interview with Annie MacSween, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
48 Taskforce on Public Funding of Gaelic, p. 27.
49 Barber, p. 63.
50 Ibid.
51 John MacLeod, p. 49.
52 Ibid., pp. 56-57.
53 Macdonald, p. 110.
54 John MacLeod, p. 220.
55 Interview with Angus MacLeod, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
56 Ibid.
58 Interview with Annie Smith, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
59 Interview with Angus MacLeod, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
60 Ibid.
61 Perrott, p. 41.
62 Interview with Angus McLeod, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
63 Perrott, p. 41.
65 Ibid.
66 Perrott, p. 41.
67 Interview with Angus McLeod, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Interview with Chrissie and Angus Morrison, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
72 Interview with James Morrison, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
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76 Ibid.
77 Crofters Commission, Crofters Commission website, www.crofterscommission.org.uk/p_downloads.htm
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81 Crofters Commission, Annual Report 2003-2004. From the Crofters Commission website:
www.w-isles.gov.uk/annualreport/200203/profile.html, p. 45.
83 Interview with Sheonag MacKenzie, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
84 Perrott, p. 50.
85 Ibid.
86 John MacLeod, p. 170.
87 Interview with Angus McLeod, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.
88 Perrott, p. 52.
89 Ibid., p. 56.
90 Macdonald, p. 88.
91 Ibid., pp. 88-91.
92 Ibid., p. 89.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid., p. 91.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
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Idem

Idem

Idem

Perrott, pp. 48-49.

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Interview with Mary Margaret Morrison, during Outer Hebrides field research, May-June 2001.


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Idem

John MacLeod, p. 304.

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147 Ibid., p. 4.
149 Ibid.
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Virtual Hebrides website, www.virtualhebrides.com

Weatherbase website, www.weatherbase.com

PEOPLE INTERVIEWED
DURING FIELD RESEARCH (MAY-JUNE 2001)

Angus Graham, retired crofter. Barvas, Isle of Lewis.

Ken Kennedy, Development Manager. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.


Catriona MacLean, Development Manager. Iomairt Nis, North Dell, Isle of Lewis.

Angus McLeod, Retired crofter and Historian. Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

Mary McLeod, Archaeologist. Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

Annie MacSween, Gaelic Development Officer. Lews Castle College, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

Angus Morrison, retired ferry captain. Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

Chrissie Morrison, retired cook. Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

James Morrison, crofter. Melbost Borve, Isle of Lewis.

Mary-Margaret Morrison, Librarian. Melbost Borve, Isle of Lewis.

Peggy Morrison, crofter. Melbost Borve, Isle of Lewis.

Roddy Morrison, former fisherman. Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

Annie Smith, retired. Melbost Borve, Isle of Lewis.

Dolina Smith, resident. Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

Donald Smith, resident. Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.
APPENDIX I: SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Respondent’s Gender _____  
Respondent’s Age _____

Following is a list of cultural elements which may or may not pertain to traditional cultural practices in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland.

Please add any elements you believe are missing from the list, and remove any you believe do not belong.

Then, please rank each cultural element according to its personal importance to you. Begin with ‘1’ for the element having the greatest importance, ‘2’ for the second most important, and so forth. If any elements have equal importance to you, please note this on the questionnaire.

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<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>CULTURAL ELEMENT</th>
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<td>Tweed Weaving</td>
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<td>Gaelic Language</td>
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<td>Puirit A Beul (Mouth Music)</td>
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<td>Bagpipes</td>
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<td>Salted Herring</td>
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<td>Religious Beliefs</td>
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<td>Crofting System</td>
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<td>Using Peat for Fuel</td>
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<td>Sheep Rearing</td>
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<td>Ceilidh Parties</td>
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<td>OTHER (Please specify)</td>
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OTHER (Please specify)
APPENDIX II: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ELDERLY INFORMANTS (2001)

Annie Smith (1913-)

Angus McLeod (1916-2002)


Angus Graham (1905-2004)