

Picture with a Thousand Pieces: Archival Research on Missionaries and the Waorani
Dr. Kathryn Long
October 5, 2017

Introduction

Thanks to the BGC Archives for the invitation, also for prayers and encouragement from many in the audience during a challenging year. Tonight, I want to talk about using archives, and specifically the Graham Center Archives, to do research for a book I've written that is in the final stages of editing (I hope!). Its title is *God in the Rainforest: Missionaries Among the Waorani in Amazonian Ecuador*. It traces the story of missionary interaction with the Waorani, an isolated group of indigenous people in the Ecuadorian Amazon, between 1956 and about 1994. Contact between missionaries and the Waorani, then called "aucas," began with an event familiar to many people in this room: the deaths of five young missionaries in 1956, speared as they tried to make peaceful contact with the Waorani. Two years later, two missionary women—Elisabeth Elliot, the widow of one of the slain men and Rachel Saint, the sister of another, with the help of a Waorani woman named Dayuma—successfully contacted the Waorani and began efforts to introduce them to Christianity and end the violence that was destroying their culture.



[Slide 1] The sacrificial deaths of the five men and subsequent efforts to Christianize the Waorani became the defining missionary narrative for American evangelicals during the second half of the twentieth century. It certainly was the most widely publicized. Here are a few of the books, and, more recently, the films, that told the story. Looking back 40 years later, Christianity Today magazine described the story as serving at the time as a “primary narrative for the young evangelical movement, reinforcing and illustrating to the world our core ideals.” CT, Sept. 16, 1996.



Missionaries ruin or exploit indigenous cultures.

[Slide 2] While many evangelicals—certainly not all, but many—cherished this inspirational narrative, a significant number of people outside the evangelical fold criticized the missionaries. They viewed what happened in Ecuador, especially efforts to Christianize the Waorani, as “Exhibit A” of how missionaries destroyed indigenous cultures. There was a need for a book that would address these issues and update the missionary/Waorani story. Also, there were missionaries, especially staff from the Summer Institute of Linguistics, but others as well, who had worked with the Waorani between the late 1960s and the mid-1990s, whom most people had never heard of.

Before I launch into the main part of the lecture, let me quickly go over a few important terms: [terms on S3]

A few terms:

Waorani, Waodani, Huaorani – “the people” – indigenous group living in Amazonian Ecuador, known for their hostility toward outsiders and for the violence of their culture.

“auca” – “savage” (Quichua)

Wao tededo – “the people’s speech,” the language spoken by the Waorani.

Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT), Wycliffe USA, Wycliffe Global Alliance – mission organization dedicated to Bible translation around the world.

SIL International, Summer Institute of Linguistics – NGO made up of linguists, translators, literacy personnel and support staff actively engaged in language work, including Bible translation, around the world. Not a religious organization.

WBT partners with SIL, but the organizations are legally separate. In the past, connections often blurred. Most other missionaries, as well as later historians, considered SIL staff “missionaries.”

I wanted the story to be based on original sources, for the most part unpublished, to get a fresh perspective. This wasn’t always possible—in the end the book is based on published sources, interviews, private papers, and archival materials. Still archival sources played an important role. Fortunately for me, many the sources I needed were housed here at the Graham Center Archives and a few at the Wheaton College archives. Here, for example, is a sample of some materials housed here that include sources related to missionaries and the Waorani:

[Collection 136: Records of Mission Aviation Fellowship](#)

[Collection 277: Papers of Jim Elliot](#)

[Collection 278: Papers of Elisabeth Howard Elliot](#)

[Collection 349: Papers of Clarence Wesley Jones](#)

[Collection 599: Ephemera of the "Auca Incident](#)

[Collection 657: Papers of Kenneth Fleming](#)

[Collection 670: Papers of Kathryn \(Rogers\) Deering](#)

[Collection 684: Papers of Herbert I. and Colleen Collison Elliot](#)

[Collection 687: Papers of Theophilus Edward Jr. "Ed" and Marilou G. Hobolth McCully](#)

[Collection 701: Papers of Olive Ainslie Fleming Liefeld](#)

Accession 08-36: Papers of M. Catherine Peeke (closed)

For the book, I also did research in collections that are not here at Wheaton, especially the archives of the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the papers of SIL's founder, William Cameron Townsend.

I never tried to total up the number of actual documents that I read from these and other collections—counting letters, reports, notes, transcribed interviews—I would guess the total would easily be more than 2,000 unpublished documents.



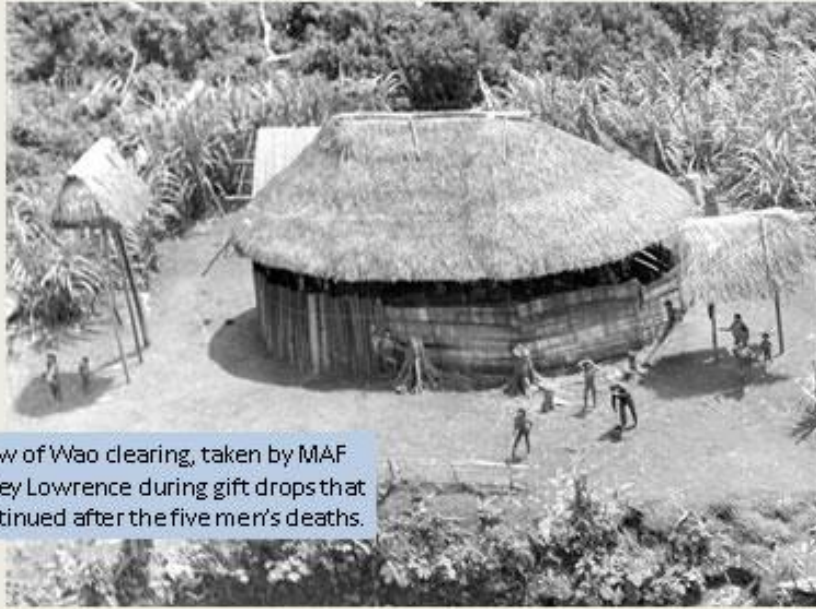
Picture with a Thousand Pieces Archival Research on Missionaries and the Waorani

[S5] This brings me to tonight's lecture, "Picture with a Thousand Pieces." I chose this title because for me the process of using archival materials to shape a historical narrative, to tell a story, seemed a lot like putting together a large and complicated jigsaw puzzle—the contents of a letter might represent one piece of the puzzle. The response to that letter from someone else might be another piece. A memo from other people could be yet another. What I'd like to do tonight is to sample a few sections of this puzzle that is the history of missionaries (and American Evangelicals more broadly) with the Waorani to show you some of the rewards as well as the frustrations and challenges, of this kind of archival research.

1. Records of Mission Aviation Fellowship

The first example comes from the Records of Mission Aviation Fellowship and involves reports and letters from two pilots: Johnny Keenan and Hobey Lowrance. If you know this story, you probably knew Nate Saint was a part of Mission Aviation Fellowship. What you may not have known was that MAF continued to play a significant role in the Waorani project even after Saint had been killed.

Mission Aviation Fellowship ("Alas de Socorro");
ongoing role in efforts to contact the Waorani



Aerial view of Wao clearing, taken by MAF
pilot Hobe Lowrence during gift drops that
were continued after the five men's deaths.

TO: J.G. Parrott
FROM: H.E. Lowrance

Shell Mera
August 30, 1956

Rev:
(1)
(2)
Dear Grady:
(4)

SUBJECT: Report of overall Auca situation

SEP 3 1956

Here is the much belated report you asked for. We just can't seem to get caught up with the situation here, and with so many people and interruptions its hard to write.

Enclosed are two or three of the last drop reports, which will bring you up to date on that aspect. Response continues to improve, at least at "George's" house. We are practically certain that it is George. We try to make drops every 3 weeks, though sometimes it is a bit longer. This was Johnny's idea...feels that if the period is longer they tend to lose interest.

The special fund, administered by Keith Austin, and composed of various gifts toward the Auca project has been carrying all the expenses...flights, gifts to drop, maintenance of Chapana station, etc. However it has been losing ground, and is nearly busted now.

Here is the current situation regarding "outsiders." Seems the whole world wants to horn in. If they realized what a small group they are (this group)...just 4 houses down in a valley, it wouldn't sound so glamorous. APPAX

Jane's husband. Apparently have moved on. No more word about them. Abe wrote to the Miami Herald to inform them of her ethics in gathering materials: Jane answered with a scalding letter. Guess she answered from Miami.

Canadian psychologist. Apparently still around. He's been gone for a while, but Don Burns saw him in Quito a while back. Told him he was going down to the beach to live about August, but was going to avoid S.M., so we wouldn't know about it! The danger is that he apparently is a bit off his rocker, plus having domestic troubles, so feels he has nothing to lose. His companion deserted him sometime back, saying he had been disillusioned.

R.G.s. Two priests went, or attempted to go down to the beach (see reports). They also announced starting a school across the river from Arajuno. Abe says they need some martyrs now anyhow, to steal back some of the publicity and prestige. They claim to have "Christianized" the Aucas 40 years ago!

We frequently have visitors...tourists, writers, and Christians, who want to be flown out there to take pictures.

Some big group in New York is supposed to be making preparations to come.

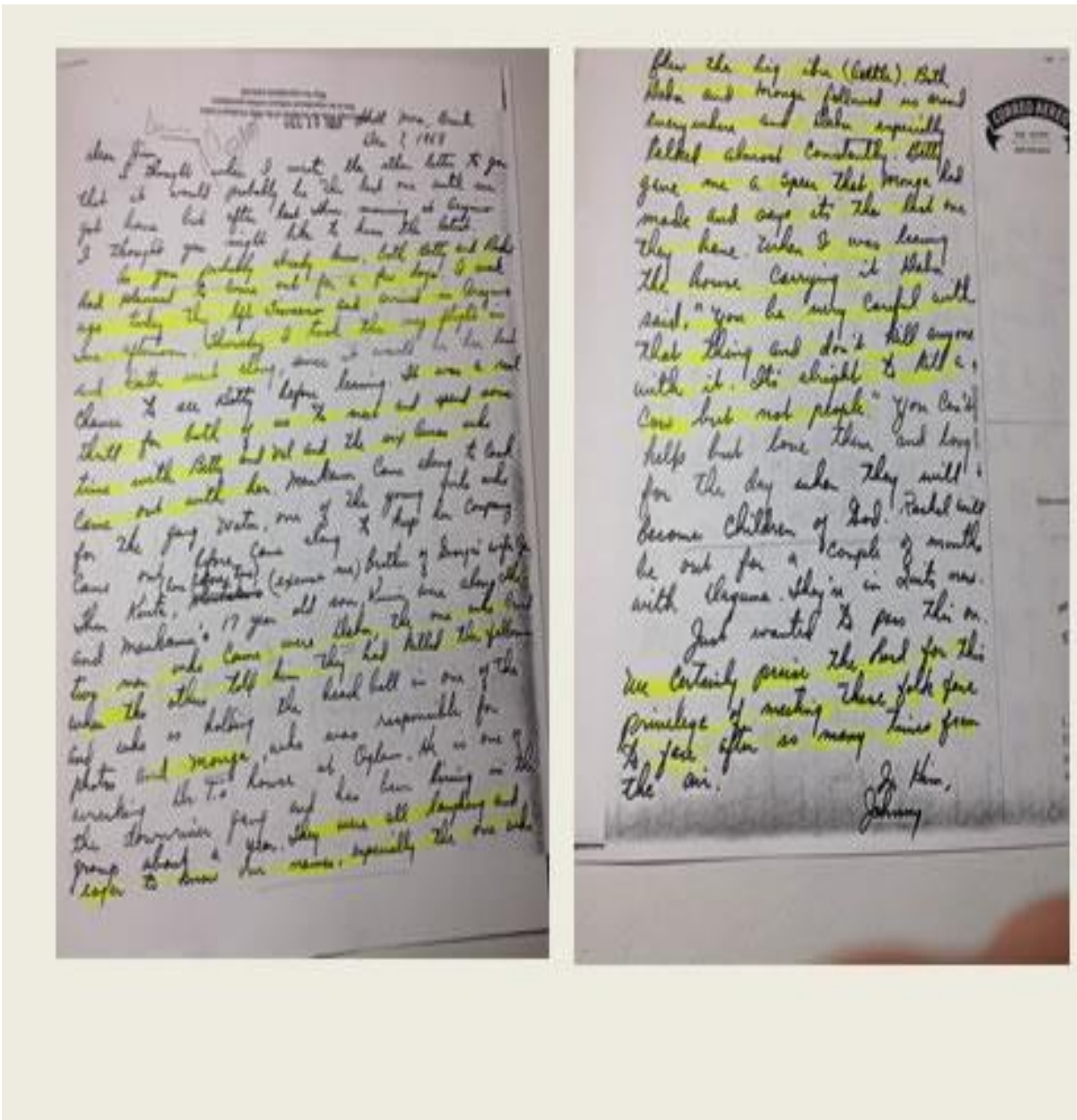
We've heard nothing about Landres. Abe thinks he is in the country, secretly making preparations.

The latest problem is Roger Youdarin's dad. Apparently he is about 65, full of vim and vigor and hard nails, but is not a Christian. He plans to come about the first of Nov., to go down and live on the beach... "not to revenge but to vindicate(?) his son." Says the beach is hallowed ground to him, and plans to be buried there himself. Said the boys big mistake was to do their own cooking, and to not accept the girl. He'll accept the girl and create a little love nest if they insist! Barb wrote mentioning a few problems, and he answered saying he asked for information not advice. He really lambasted Mr. McCulley for writing and suggesting that he should know the Lord before going down to reach the Aucas. (Barb's name was used if he found out she had revealed these statements).

Abe says friends in the government and also the American Embassy now see the problem.

Pilots did fly overs and dropped gifts every couple of weeks between February 1956 and September 1958. This picture was taken by MAF pilot Hobey Lowrance, not Nate Saint. The

letter above summarizes some of the activities during the first six or seven months after the men's deaths. Publicity brought a lot of people to the rainforest.



The above slide [S7] highlights a handwritten letter Johnny Keenan sent to MAF headquarters about meeting the Waorani in December 1958 when Elisabeth Elliot and Rachel came out of the rainforest for a break after making peaceful contact. A few Waorani came with them. Keenan had an opportunity to meet some of the Waorani whose clearing he had flown over so often. This is a .pdf of his original letter.

The paragraph below [S8] shows how, given some context, that letter became a part of my manuscript.

God in the Rainforest:

Two days after they [the Waorani] arrived, pilot Johnny Keenan, accompanied by his wife, Ruth, made the regular “vegetable run” to Arajuno. Despite official MAF reluctance, in May 1957 Keenan had invited Elliot to fly with him on a gift drop over the Wao clearing, an experience that had strengthened her desire to meet the Waorani face to face. Now it was Keenan’s turn for a close encounter with the Waorani he had flown over so often.

“Kill a Cow but not People”

“They were all laughing and eager to know our names,” he reported, “especially [the name of] the one who flew the big ebo (‘beetle’).” Dabo and Monca followed the pilot wherever he went, Dabo talking almost constantly, completely unfazed by Keenan’s inability to understand anything he said. Before the Keenans left, Betty gave Johnny a spear Monca had made, telling him it was the last one the group had left. As Keenan walked out the door of the house, carrying the spear, Dabo spoke to him (Elliot translating). “You be very careful with that thing and don’t kill anyone with it,” he said. “It’s alright [sic] to kill a cow but not people.” Dabo’s statement was widely publicized in the missionary community and later in the US. To evangelicals it was a miracle—and sign of answered prayer—to hear a savage Waorani saying, in effect, “Thou shalt not kill” to an American missionary pilot.

This is a small sample of what I wrote about MAF’s involvement in the Waorani mission, but I hope these examples help to show how the MAF’s records provided the information to more fully develop MAF’s role in the Waorani project.

II. The Elisabeth Howard Elliot Papers

The Papers of Elisabeth Howard Elliot related to the Waorani: (mostly 1956-1961)

Letters from a fine writer and astute participant/observer

The challenge of copyright law for the historian

Brief summary of copyright issues: Can the pieces be *used* in the puzzle?

- **All letters are protected by U. S. copyright laws to a minimum of 70 years after the author’s death.**
- **Copyright can be held by: (1) the author; (2) his/her heirs or the executor of the estate; (3) the organization for whom he/she worked (“work for hire”); (4) the archive where the letter is housed.**
- **“Fair Use” criteria are difficult to apply to unpublished letters.**
- **The historian cannot quote from letters without permission; he or she can paraphrase.**

[S9] A second BGCA collection that I consulted extensively were the papers of Elisabeth Howard Elliot, a key figure in the early years of missionary outreach to the Waorani and one of the most significant authors in shaping public understanding of the Missionary/Waorani encounter, particularly through her books, especially *Through Gates of Splendor*, *Shadow of the Almighty*, and *The Savage My Kinsman*.

Elisabeth Elliot gave the first of her papers to the BGC Archives in 1985. Initially the collection consisted mainly of materials related to her books, supplemented by an oral history interview with Elliot conducted by Bob Shuster. At the time, copyright to the manuscripts and other materials in this collection was retained by Elisabeth Elliot, with her permission required until 2006. Additional materials—most important among them, Elliot’s personal letters to her parents and other family members—were added to her papers between 2004 and 2016.

Elliot’s papers are important, among other things, because she was an astute observer and a great writer. But to understand the challenges in using them, it’s important to understand the basics of U.S. copyright law. Copyright law determines whether the pieces the historian finds in archives can be used in the puzzle. Here are the basics:

- All letters, no matter who writes them, are protected by U. S. copyright laws to a minimum of 70 years after the author’s death.
- Copyright for unpublished materials can be held by: (1) the author; (2) his/her heirs or the executor of the estate; (3) the organization for whom he/she worked (“work for hire”); (4) the archive where the letter is housed.
- The criteria for “Fair Use” are difficult to apply to unpublished letters. “Fair use” refers to the guidelines that enable writers or researchers to publish some copyright materials without permission.
- The historian cannot quote from letters without permission; he or she can paraphrase.

MAF papers are records of an organization; most letters were written between various staff members as part of their jobs and so were considered “work for hire,” copyright MAF. Also, when MAF put their records in the BGC archives, they gave the archive limited ability to grant copyright permission. With permission, researchers like myself can quote from those letters.

In contrast to the MAF Records, Elliot’s papers are a personal collection, belonging to her or her estate, not work for hire. There are a couple of reasons for this:

- 1) Elliot wrote most of her letters to family and friends, and personal letters are usually not considered “work for hire.”
- 2) Also, because of the influence of her first husband, Jim Elliot, Elisabeth went to the mission field under the sponsorship of Christian Missions in Many Lands, the sending agency for a loose coalition of independent gatherings or assemblies that came to be known as the Plymouth Brethren. The Brethren rejected traditional denominations or any other organizational structure that they didn’t find in the New Testament. Missionaries were responsible to their home assemblies, but for all practical purposes were independent agents on the mission field. So Elisabeth Elliot was not a part of an administrative structure such as that of Mission Aviation Fellowship.

As a result, the papers belonged to EE, and even when she chose to house them in the BGC archives, she retained the copyright.

At the time of Elliot's death in 2015, copyright to her papers shifted to her estate. That left the executor of the estate with the authority to grant copyright permission. My hope was to get permission from Mr. Gren to quote his late wife's letters.

Most of my research involved the letters EE wrote during the six-year-period between her husband's death in 1956 and her decision to leave the mission to the Waorani in 1961. Elliot wrote about her sense of calling to the Waorani after Jim's death; about life among the Waorani during the first years after contact; and about her relationship with missionary colleague Rachel Saint, Nate Saint's older sister.

One early example of Elliot's writing was a vivid description of the way the Waorani ate. Unfortunately, I was unable to secure permission from Elliot's estate to quote her letters. It is, however, legal for an author to paraphrase copyrighted material within certain parameters. Here is the way I paraphrased Elliot's account, drawing, too, from some of her other writings. [S10]

Meals were another challenge in cultural adaptation. The Waorani ate rapidly and with plenty of sound—"a great slurping and sucking." In three or four minutes a group of men could demolish a pile of plantains and a pot of meat, without even a bare minimum of the social niceties expected by Westerners. When men were in the clearing and the hunting was good, monkey meat was standard fare. Elliot found it disconcerting to watch the creatures, shot with blow gun and poison darts, first singed to remove the hair, then boiled. They looked too human. The Waorani considered monkey heads a great delicacy, and skulls were licked and sucked with enthusiasm, including in a "mouth to mouth" position. After five or six weeks, Rachel confessed she had overcome her "prejudices" enough to eat some of the brains herself. However, she still "left the sucking of the eyes to Acawo." *From God in the Rainforest*. Kinsman, 120; *Dayuma Story*, 238, 239.

III. Papers of M. Catherine Peeke

Finally, I want to talk about Catherine Peeke and her papers. She was the linguist whose photograph was on the postcards and other materials advertising this lecture.

**The Papers of M. Catherine Peeke:
Parts of the puzzle
few people have known about
(A whole box of puzzle pieces!)**



How archives can help to preserve the papers of people traditionally considered unimportant

Catherine Peeke (1924-2014):

- Linguist and translator, who served with WBT/SIL in Ecuador 1953 until her retirement in 1992. One of hundreds of often-unrecognized single women who were pioneers with SIL among indigenous people in Latin America from the mid-1940s on.
- The missionary who spent more time among the Waorani than any other outsider, except for Rachel Saint.
- The lead translator, with colleague Rosi Jung, who translated the New Testament into *Wao tededo*.
- Prolific letter writer and astute observer who analyzed Wao language and culture, and who provided an invaluable record of missionary work among the Waorani, 1955-1992.

[S11] Catherine is little known outside of the Summer Institute of Linguistics circles—and even by many within SIL—but she was one of two linguists (along with German healthcare worker and linguist, Rosi Jung) who translated the New Testament into Wao Tededo.

By the end of her life Peeke also was one of perhaps a handful of outsiders fluent in the Wao language and who really understood the Waorani and their culture, although she always downplayed her ability. She served with the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the Wycliffe Bible Translators for more than forty years, and spent at least twenty-five years working directly with the Waorani. She was with Rachel Saint in 1955 when Rachel met Dayuma; she was eyewitness to more of Waorani/missionary interaction than anyone except Rachel Saint. She was part of a team of SIL staff members who worked with the Waorani beginning in the early 1970s.

Catherine Peeke and Elisabeth Elliot were contemporaries—Cathie was two years older than Betty and died two years earlier. Elliot was famous among evangelicals in the US and elsewhere for her courage and faith; Peeke accomplished what Elliot originally had hoped to do as a linguist/missionary living and working among the Waorani.

In the context of constructing a picture with a thousand pieces—if the MAF Records and Elisabeth Elliot's papers each represents a portion of the picture, Catherine Peeke's papers represent maybe half the box of puzzle pieces, and they help to create a part of the picture few people have seen.

Cathie Peeke was born and raised on a farm outside of Weaverville, North Carolina, not far from Asheville. She was a quiet, introverted person, who laughed about what she described as her

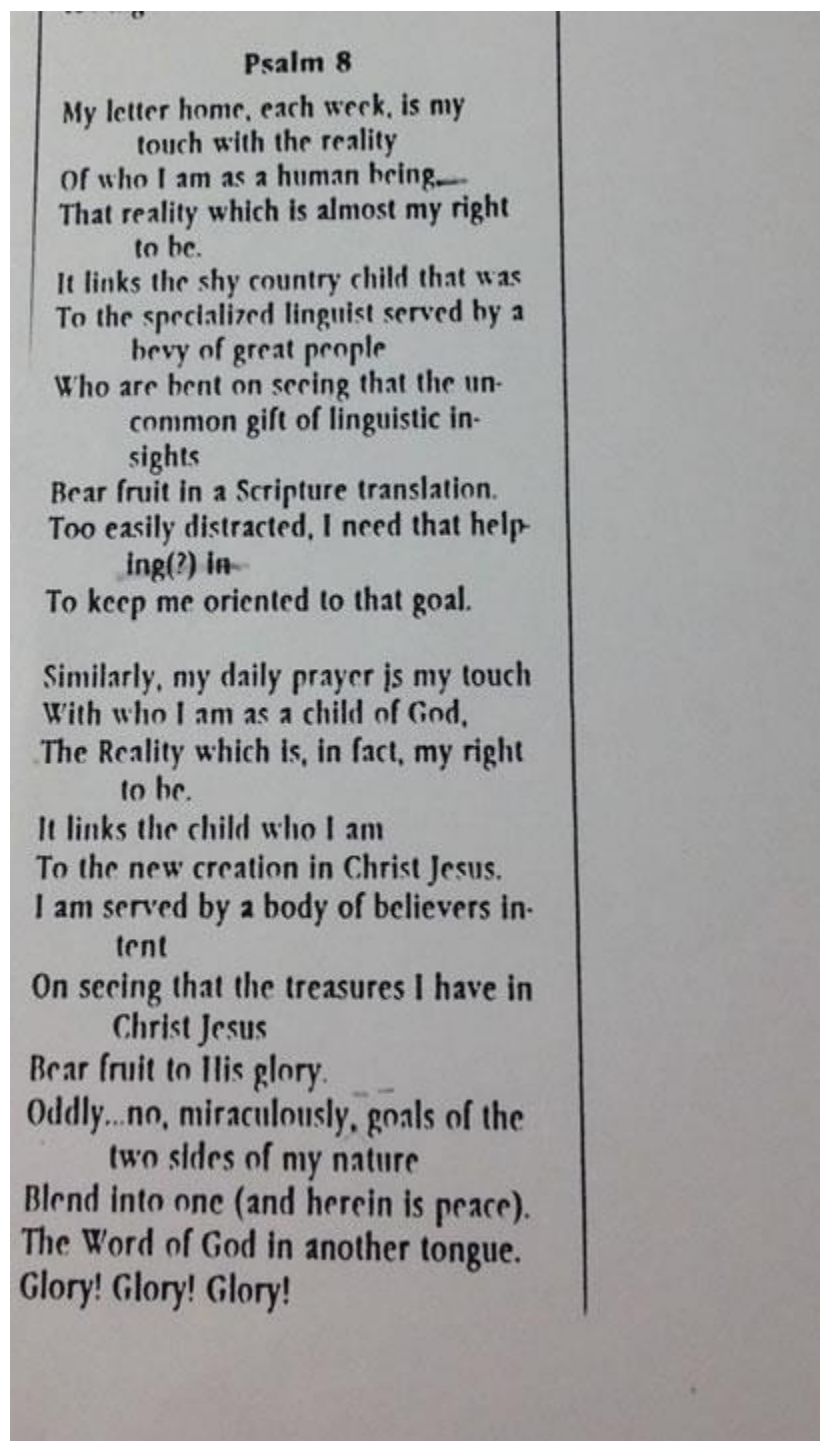
“hillbilly accent” from the North Carolina mountains. In 1949, she joined the Wycliffe Bible Translators. After training, and then a few years in Peru, Catherine was assigned to Ecuador in 1953 and helped to establish SIL in that country. She had a gift for languages, and she quickly became a language consultant for the Ecuador SIL—she would visit the different translation teams in the country and help them to trouble-shoot their problems with indigenous languages. In the early 1960s, she decided to pursue a Ph.D. in anthropological linguistics at Indiana University.

Her dissertation was a grammatical analysis of the Wao/Waorani language. She had learned a little of the language from Dayuma and Rachel. Elisabeth Elliot gave Peeke her language notes, and while Peeke was in grad school, she did linguistic research in Ecuador among the Waorani in Tewaeno, where Rachel Saint lived.

Her story and the collection of papers that tell much of that story illustrate, among other things, how archives provide a place to preserve the records of people whose papers traditionally have not been considered worth saving. There's a difference between Cathie Peeke and the MAF pilots I mentioned earlier. Hobey Lowrance and Johnny Keenan may not have been fully included in earlier versions of this history, but their letters were available. In Catherine's case, nobody thought her papers—or the papers of other pioneering missionary women like her—had much value.

Like Elisabeth Elliot—although their styles were different--Catherine Peeke was a good writer. And she wrote a lot. During the years she was in Ecuador, Peeke wrote a letter home to her family in North Carolina every week, usually to her mother or her sisters. Of course, they contained family news, but also news about her life and work. At some point—I don't have the date, she wrote a personal "psalm" expressing the importance of the letters home to her identity, alongside her calling to translate the New Testament [S13].

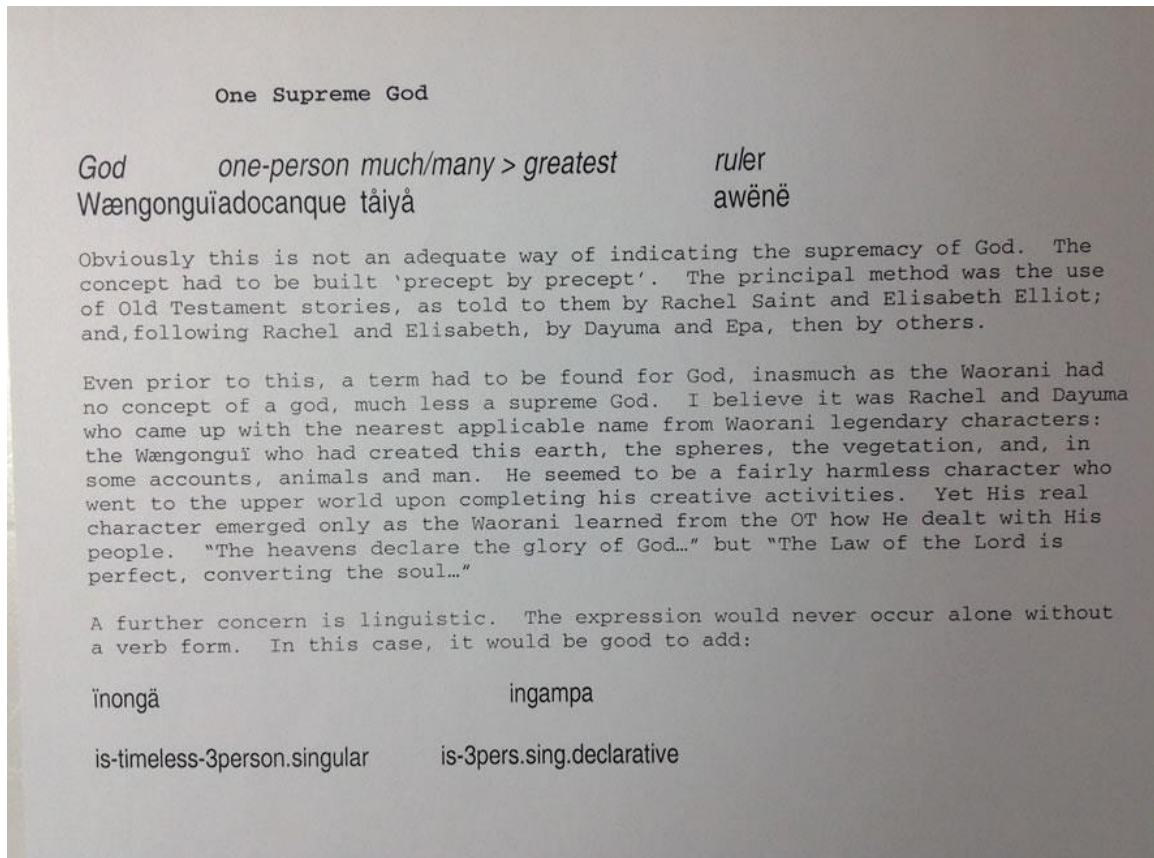
Shy country girl, Committed Christian, Linguist and Translator To Glorify God



Catherine's papers are a rich record of what it was like to live among the Waorani; what it was like to be a single woman and a missionary linguist in the Ecuadorian Amazon; what it was like to be a little-known participant in one of the most famous . . . and on occasion controversial . . . missionary ventures of the twentieth century. . . what it was like to translate the New Testament into the Wao language . . .

Here are some samples of the many kinds of materials in the Peeke Papers:

- Report on translation and on the spiritual response among the Waorani.
- Translation choices in deciding on a word for God, then communicating that this was the one, supreme God



Explanations of translation work. [S14]

**Scripture memory cards in Wao
tededo and Spanish.**

Top left:

"I will bless you, and you will be
a blessing."
Genesis 12:2

Middle:

"Blessed are those who dwell in
your house."
Psalms 84:4

Bottom:

"I stand at the door and call; if
anyone hears my voice and
opens the door, I will enter him
and have dinner with him and
he with me."
Revelation 3:20

Bitō Ybite botō
waa oobo ate, bitō
wadidi Tōdite waa
dē cobi baquTbi.

Eēdeti 12:2

Te bendeciré y
serás bendición.

Génesis 12:2

Bēpo kōgōguT, bitō
weca wocōō cūwē
owocō watabō
quēwōguTē.

Tadēbo 84:4

Bienaventurados los
que habitan en tu
casa.

Salmo 84:4

Bitō bTōōdo te te
hābo; wocōō botō
bē wōdōquōda, botō
pō guito ate,
gōōpātā cōguTōōda.

Apocadipiti 3:20

Yo estoy a la puerta
y llamo; si alguno
oye mi voz y abre
la puerta, entraré
a él, y cenaré con
él, y él conmigo.

Apocalipsis 3:20

- Translation memory cards. [S15]
- Prayer requests that included balanced descriptions of Wao believers. Catherine respected the Waorani and knew some of them quite well. Her observations and descriptions help make the Waorani multi-dimensional human beings
- Peeke's reflections on Wao culture, in response to outside inquiries

Woorani acculturation

Casual observations by Catherine Peeke

May 1994

Material culture

A glance at pictures from "then and now" will suffice to point up substantial change in housing (now patterned after that of the surrounding Quichua); dress (introduced by Dayuma in 1959, and received with great appreciation by the Woorani); and hardware, which Woorani had previously killed in order to obtain. These material changes in themselves have scarcely affected the hunting, fishing, gathering, and swidden agriculture practiced at the time of contact -- not to mention the probability that the practice had existed for centuries beforehand. It is not appreciably different from subsistence practices of the Quichua, Záparo, and Shuar around their borders.

Granted, guns have made a difference. See Yost and Kelley.

Quality of life:

As I make these observations regarding the quality of life at the time of my first contacts, I must ask that you recognize that I was hampered (and still am, to a great extent) by lack of knowledge of the language. You will also recognize that these are but generalizations, not true in individual cases.

From my first visit to Tewaeno until the present, I have found the Woorani to be a free, approachable people -- which was certainly not the case during prior decades, even centuries. Certainly they were unassuming and unsophisticated, yet self-confident and uninhibited, characteristics which they still display, as you have undoubtedly observed.

The Woorani were obviously warlike, but, from personal accounts from persons on all sides of the turmoil, it is clear that they were, at the time of peaceful contact, tired of fleeing, hungry from lack of peace to plant and harvest, and devastated by killings, each person mourning for members of his own group.

Beyond all this, they were all aware of their lack of viability as a people. The growing scarcity of available marriage partners, within their own well-structured norms, was taking its toll. Members of one group told us that they had deliberately broken their own system for survival's sake, expecting to right the pattern within the next generation.

They felt that this was in their power to control. But the revenge spearings? How could they leave off avenging the death of

Reflections on Wao culture. [S16]

The good news is that Catherine kept everything. The bad news was that she wasn't particularly organized. When I first met Catherine, her papers were in boxes, file cabinets, drawers— wherever she could put them in the upstairs bedrooms of family farmhouse where she lived. She put most things in file folders or manila envelopes but, again, often in no order or subject, and the label on the folder didn't necessarily match what was in the folder.

I spent a week at Catherine's home in 2005, going through papers and taking notes like crazy. We corresponded by email over the next few years. Then in 2008, she sent me an email saying

she was downsizing. Did I want any of her papers? Otherwise—apart from a few things she might give to colleagues, the bulk of the papers would probably end up tossed in a ditch. At that point, the Summer Institute of Linguistics had a linguistics archive—a place to keep documents related to the academic and scientific aspects of translation work—but they did not collect the papers of individual staff members (that has changed in recent years).

I contacted Bob Shuster and asked him if the BGC Archives would be willing to give the Peeke Papers a temporary or, if needed, a permanent home (they would). Bob gave me eight or nine archive quality storage boxes, and my sister and I made a quick trip to North Carolina to collect Catherine's papers. They've been here in the archives ever since with the stipulation that I could use them as long as I needed to (neither Catherine nor I ever imagined it would be this long). At that point, if SIL had a place for them, they would be sent there. If not, they would stay in the Graham Center. Based on the accession agreement with Peeke, these papers are not yet open to the public. Probably the Summer Institute of Linguistics will determine when that will happen. Nonetheless, even if Catherine's papers aren't yet open, they are safe. They've been preserved.

* * *

I want to conclude with two brief documents, each of which represents a small piece of the missionary/Waorani puzzle but an important one. They also offer insights into mission work and the value of archives.

Particularly during the 1970s and the 1980s, SIL staff were criticized for their work among the Waorani, criticisms that fed into the broader debates about missionaries and indigenous cultures. In more recent years, scholars and others have begun to appreciate the positive contributions missionaries have made.

Still, even some Christians have raised questions about the genuineness of Wao Christianity because aspects of their ecclesiology or doctrine don't seem quite right, at least in the eye of the observer.

What struck me in reading Catherine's papers—apart from all the information that's there—is that sometimes, with no fanfare, missionaries and indigenous people simply become friends and love each other.

This was the experience of Catherine and one of her language assistants Oba, Yowe's wife. Yowe and Oba were among the first Waorani to become Christians. Catherine and Oba worked together for years—Catherine praised Oba's efforts to make sure Catherine's translation was grammatically correct, even if Oba wasn't as strong with comprehension. When Catherine retired and left the Wao village of Tewaeno after the New Testament was translated, Oba was so upset to see her go that she couldn't come to the airplane to say good-bye. A few years later, it was Peeke's turn to grieve when news came that Oba had died in a chicken pox epidemic.

Remembering her friend and the years they had known each other, Catherine wrote the rough draft of a poem. [S17]

Cathy and Oba: Friends who loved each other:

OBA

- My first acquaintance: Q skirt with babes, early 20's
sweet smile, big brown eyes
~~Church in her home, Yowe singing~~ kinship
- At jungle center: Yowe & Oba to check; only she did
wouldn't go to Shell "tomatoes"
- At home: Hard worker, so nettled kids
"I don't enter others' houses"
quietly visit outside, always cheerful
- Translation helper: her prayers: Lord, I went to field etc
faithful, always twisting, netting
repeat repeatedly - right or wrong
who went into far country & spent all?
why did the priest & Levite pass on by?
frustrating? you bet? so reproached
apologize. "I just sat here..."
yet valuable for accurate pronunciation
- Dear person: feeding others
beautiful and good kids - but don't marry!
When we left, Oba couldn't come say goodbye
- Cosmology: Man on moon? absurd. Obviously solid, no pierce
- Chickenpox epidemic: many dangerously ill, we heard
Oba to hospital, died
"Oh, Lord, I should have gone first!"
What self conceit! as if I knew God's cosmology!
"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

It was a lament for a dear friend . . . remembering Oba as a young mother, a hard worker, a prayerful translation assistant, a dear person, a woman certain about cosmology as the Waorani understood it.

The poem ended with the cry, “O Lord, I should have gone first” from the 69-year-old Peeke before Catherine surrendered her grief to God’s perfect will.

“They will know that you are my disciples if you love one another,” Jesus said. This love can be a reality on the mission field as well as at home.

Finally, here is an excerpt from an e-mail Catherine Peeke sent, thanking my sister and me for helping to preserve her papers. It summarizes some of my own gratitude for places like the BGC Archives:

[S18]

“I am, indeed, greatly blessed to have you and Jan come and pack up all of this unorganized accumulation, doubly blessed to know that it might be of some use to youThen the triple blessing for me is to know that my ‘life’ is safely stored in the Billy Graham Center Archives with the assurance that these papers are to be routed to the promised SIL archives (in case they materialize)—just where I have wanted them to be.”

Many “pictures” from Catherine Peeke’s papers remain to be assembled.

Catherine Peeke's life was much more than her papers, of course, but the BGC Archives and the SIL archives have made (and will make) it possible for the record of her life and of the Waorani she worked with to be preserved for future researchers and historians.

Many "pictures" remain to be assembled.

Thank you.

--Kathryn Long