Jamie: This is tape JL 82.5, the continuation of my second interview with Mrs. Eliza Kneller, on July 23, 1982. My name is Jamie Lee.

Jamie: I wonder if I can ask you about your grandfather again?

Eliza: Yes, my grandfather was a grand old man. He was kind, he was kind and everything a good man should be. And he had bees too, he always had kept bees, five hives it was always five, or six boxes.

Jamie: You told me about them the last time.

Eliza: Yeah.

Jamie: With the mirrors and...
Eliza: And the mirrors and they'd, they'd come down and I guess they'd rid of the old ones and the workers, you know, whatever. And he always had honey, and he had about twelve acres, he had a good piece of land, and he always grew his own vegetables. And he had the best well, practically, at the Silver Star, they called his area Silver Star. And they had a lodge down at the Silver Star too, which was the Orangemen’s, they had the Orangemen's Lodge down there and he was the, he wore the purple -- he was the head man at that lodge. I guess, he started that down there.

Jamie: But wasn't he a Catholic?

Eliza: Yes. He was, he was just about everything he wanted to be. (laughs) He never stuck to one thing.

Jamie: But an Orangeman and a Catholic?

Eliza: That's right! He was an Orangeman on the reserve, but I think he got away from the, from the religion part, I don't think that... (break in tape) So where were we?

Jamie: Your grandfather, the Orangeman and the Catholic. (laughs)

Eliza: Yeah. (laughs) That's right, he was a Grand Master. Oh, he loved to be in anything. Religion didn't stop him. He's an old-fashioned Indian, you know. And he wanted, if he wanted to be this, he wanted to be that he would -- one didn't strain the other one. That didn't bother him. He just liked to be number one. So he also, when we had picnics, he always was the entertainer. He was always the entertainer, he was a magician. I told you in his house he had a trunk full of tricks, and he could lock himself to a tree, any kind of a tree, and he would, somebody would come along and he'd tell them, "Now you, John, come over here and you lock me up with this chain and I'll, etc., etc." And then he would unlock himself. He'd put his hands, whatever trick he had. Well, he always done things like that.

And besides making medications like for liniments, and sauves he'd get from the woods. He'd go to the bush and he'd get things and pulperize them and make liniments and medicines, and for coughs, and colds, and for cuts and bruises; and it always worked. And it was strong, any liniments, to me it looked like horse's liniment, you know, it used to be so strong and he didn't have anything to... It was everything from the woods, everything he got was from the woods, you know, and from the leaves. Well, even Mr. Kneller saw how they worked it on the reserve, and he goes down there, even when the horses are sick he could tell you what trees they give to the horses, the leaves, and it clears their stomach up. Even a dog knows what to do, Indian dog, we call them Indian dogs. But they know too, to clear up their stomach if they are sick, because the Indian... If he knows he will show, but the dog automatically
knows, especially a country dog. I don't know too much about city dogs -- they take them to the vets -- but a country dog on the reserve knows what to do with his own initiative. And he's got brains, he knows what grass to take, whatever to take in his mouth, what to clear him up. He doesn't have to be shown. I don't think all dogs that, but as people that take an interest in the dogs on the farm did...

Jamie: So you said last time that grandfather knew some of these white man's tricks like the chains and that sort of thing. Did he know any, anything that was particularly Indian?

Eliza: Oh, I think he knew a lot of things that was Indian, but as I say, I was much younger than my sister. She spent more time with him than I did, that's why she knew... Even he could tell you, my husband, that she was always looking at things like that. And they would get together too, and he spent his time, a lot of times, when she was alive on her place when we'd go up in the country, we'd be there all summer. Or, when he had summer holidays he was always with her. But also he done a lot of work out there too, such as haying, and helping with the wheat, and the threshing, and wherever he was needed he was always working on her farm, helping his brother-in-law. So those were the ways he spent his summer holidays. He's never much to gad about, but he enjoyed himself out there. And besides she's by the Grand River, so then if you had a boat you could go in the boat, too, when everything was done. And I told you when my sister fell in the well, didn't I?

Jamie: No.

Eliza: Well, she fell in my grandfather's well. It's one of these wells where it has a board on top and you remove the board, and you always was, was a pail with a long rope on it already tied. And you had another pail that you brought in from the house that you would fill the pail of water with. So the pail that had the rope on, you'd dangle it in the bottom of the well, and then it would turn over on its side and then the water would drip in and fill the pail up. And so that's what she was doing and she wasn't any bigger than the other lad that, or a little bigger I guess. And I guess she got a little too close and she fell in the well. So I didn't see her, you know. And I looked around and I said, "Where's Minnie?" My grandfather, she went got, "Where'd she go?" I was playing outside so we rushed out of the house, he rushed out of the house, rather, and the boards were removed from there, and he looked down -- there she was at the bottom of the well hanging on a stone, hanging on those stones from the bottom of the well. And he got something else, he got a long pole -- (telephone rings) So anyways he got a long thing and he, he says, "Hang on to the stones." You know in the well, where there's stones, it can be slippery too, you know. So he says, "Whatever you do hang on and kick you feet, but don't kick it too hard, just so you'll stay." And so she did and he run and he got this long pole that he always had and he put it down
and he says, "Now you grab that pole. Don't let it go." So she did, and that's how he pulled her up was from this long pole. I don't know, he was always a smart man, I guess he'd just saved that purposely, but he could have used the rope too. But he didn't know whether she could hang onto it or whether she'd slide off of it or not. I don't know what his thoughts were, but I imagine it had something to do with that. And anyways he pulled her up, and he took, he carried her into the house and he wrapped her up in a blanket, and he gave her hot soup or something, and I think she was more frightened than anything else. But if, had he not been home and in the bush picking up his medicines and stuff, I probably couldn't have saved her. You know, just thank goodness he was there. And I told you my mother had been in the hospital -- that's why we were with our grandfather. And, so that anyways he wrapped her up and fixed her up, you know. And he was always a calm man -- nothing excited him, you know. He didn't believe in getting excited and all this. He lived to be ninety-nine, you know, ninety-nine years old. And he was active right up until the day he died, he always had his own garden.

Jamie: What was his name?

Eliza: Silas.

Jamie: Silas?

Eliza: Silas Seal. Yeah, his name was Silas. And he used to make medications for a lot of people, but they always wrote to him and compliment him, that it helped them, his medicine helped them such and such, or whatever it was for, you know. And, and I told you he was a sort of a magician too, you know, and he had all these weird things we used to fool around with, you know. But when he passed away he was ninety-nine, but I wasn't at his funeral, I didn't even know he passed away. I was in Chicago then when he passed away. I was kind of mad about it because they didn't tell me, you know. And there's nothing I could do about it, I guess, but I would have liked to have been there before he passed away, you know, just to have a last word with him, because he was always good to us.

Jamie: You said he used to tell you stories when you were younger.

Eliza: Yeah, that's right, he used to tell us some weird stories like things going down the road, you know. Indians had a way of telling you old, old time stories, you know.

Jamie: Do you thing you could remember any of them for me?

Eliza: Oh well, oh some of them he used to talk about... I couldn't tell you all of it because I don't remember, I never thought of them, you know. But they used to tell about a story where you could hear something going down the road, but you couldn't see it, you know. And then they were, some of them as
I say, were superstitious and you should never look in the mirror. If anybody passed away you should turn your mirror, pictures off in the, turn it around, and that's not done so often now; but I've, I've seen it done, you know. And they'd cover up their mirror, and I've seen a Hebrew home do that too. They cover up their mirrors, I noticed that in one home. My husband and I knew these people, they were very good to me. And so when someone, their mother passed away they covered all the mirrors, turned them over. And when I saw that done I thought of the, some Indian families do that. They done it when I was smaller, of course, and I've often thought of that. And I was going to ask this Hebrew person -- I knew them quite well, too -- why they did that? Why did they do it? And why did the Indian people do the same thing as the Hebrews, you know? When anybody died they covered up the mirror or turned it over, or if it was a small one they would take it down and put it someplace else. But I don't think that's done anymore, I think it was just with the old timers. There were some, there was some reason for it but I never found out. There's only one person that is old enough that would tell me, I don't know.

I haven't been out in the reserve, the only time that I would be going out, my brother asks me to come out, but, I have a car in the garage, but I can't drive it so... If I could drive and get around I would be out there most of the time, you know. And then they need me here now with the boys being here. It's different, you know, and I'm stuck around the house whereas before I was, I could go in the morning and if I wanted to go I'd go for a couple of days and come back, but now I can't. But then, oh, I could take them with me, you know, but... they'd enjoy those days too out there, because they had fields, and fields... They have the hydro here too, but they'd enjoy it more out there. They've never really seen chickens, you know, and my brother has one bad rooster out there, you know, he'd probably chase them and peck them; and he has one duck too that will fly at you, you know. They're mean, you know, two mean ones. One rooster there who thinks he's something. He's got great big feet on him, you know. And when I saw it my brother told me to watch him, you know. When I saw that and I says, "You little rooster," I said. He made it worse, you know, my brother. He says, "Carry a big stick at him," he says, "and just hit him," you know. But he never bothered, but I guess some of them, I guess he did, I guess that's why...

And I don't know whether he was pulling my leg or not, but anyways I didn't carry this stick. But when I saw his legs and I was looking at them I said, "Good God would some of them like to eat his legs." (laughs) So when I got back to the house I said to my brother, "Why don't you kill that big rooster?" I says, "He'd make some nice soup." He says, "He's too tough." (laughs)

Jamie: What about, what about the stories that your grandfather used to tell you about his life? You said he used to tell about wartime and running from the bluecoats.
Eliza: Oh yes, that's what he always called it. They tried to get the men, I guess, in the army and... I think he did tell me some things. I don't remember very clearly. How they would try to get the big chiefs. Oh, he used to tell me about the famous chiefs, you know. I can't recall that too well. I don't know whether he knew them, or had known about them. Tecumseh. And... I'd have to think about that. I think he told me that Tecumseh, some of his own men betrayed him. That's going back a long ways. And they took his skin, they took his skin and made lamp shades out of them -- weird. Some of the soldiers, the bluecoats. That's why he always had a dislike for the bluecoats, being in the Confederacy, you know, in the States. I don't remember, I'd have to think about that, I don't know. But I think that's one of the things he used to tell, and how they tried to escape. They did escape, because they come from -- the Tuscaroras -- from the South Carolinas, see. They had a reserve out there, I think. I don't remember that too clearly because it's been a long time ago, I've never given it much thought.

Jamie: You had, you mentioned briefly last time we talked, some other stories of, was it a Mrs. Wright that you used to talk to?

Eliza: Yes, Mrs. Hanna Wright, yeah.

Jamie: Who was she?

Eliza: She was a Tuscarora. She was raised on the reserve too. She lived there all her life, I think she has passed away now. I spent the night with her one year around Christmas time, it was after Christmas, it was between Christmas or was it after New Year's? It was in the wintertime anyways and I spent a couple of nights with her, my daughter and I, Mary Rose, this one here, not her. She was smaller then and we spent the night there; and she used to tell me stories. She knew about stories that happened to them when she was young, they were escaping too. I don't know, I don't remember where she said they were going. And they were going, it wasn't built up, the reserve wasn't built up wherever she was, and she was chased too. And she'd run, she was running through the bush, or the woods, or the forest, like I told you about mine, and she was carrying her child. I don't know which one it was, the eldest I guess. And they... wild... well I don't know what animals it was and I don't remember that part. But we were spending the night with her in February at that time, one night or two nights, I just forgot, and that is when she was telling us. And she said she had to grab her child and run as fast as she could, and these wild animals would pick at her, the child's feet, and I guess she had moccasins on, small moccasins on, but she says they'd try to get at the feet, you know. When she was carrying them, she'd have to pull them this way. I don't know, that must have been around the reserve before it got built up, you know. And I don't remember all of
it, you know, and I guess I used to fall asleep halfway in her story, you know, I think, I think that's what it was, I'd never remember. But she was good at telling, telling us the old time things, you know. And things that used to happen, different things in different places, I guess.

And then finally they decided to settle on the Six Nation Reserve, I guess Joseph Brant had his choice, and he chose the Grand River, because he always wanted the part by the river. So he chose the Grand River and that was, that's what they granted him, the government. And he sold a lot of the land on the other side of the river, which a lot of Indians resented. But he was the chief and they didn't go too much against him. I guess they figured he was supposed to be wise and that's what he did. But they, today when they talk about it, they get mad about it -- to think that he sold some of the land the other side of the river, but that's old history -- you can't do anything about it.

And when you read about them they might have been leaders, some of them, but... And my mother was the mother clan of the Tuscaroras, I told you. She could elect the chiefs in those days, anyone that used to come, it was like election year, you see. They would gather around the house, one would come around the house, he would say, "I can do this for our people," and go on talking what is best for his people, for the, for the Tuscarora clan. And she'd listen to everybody and then after he'd leave, maybe a couple of days later, somebody else would come. They all wanted to be elected chief, you know. Because at that time they used to elect the chiefs -- the women -- and hers was the Tuscarora clan.

And so we'd have to feed them, too, when they'd come. They'd always know when the smoke was coming out of the chimney when it was mealtime and they'd say, you know... We'd see them coming down the road, walking down the road, we'd say, "Ma, heres come Simon," or Simeon -- instead of saying Simon it was Simeon. "There comes Simeon, he's coming for lunch, he's coming for dinner." Dinner was at noon and dinner was at supper, because you had a heavy meal at noon, because the men were working in the fields, so you had to cook your potatoes, meat, and vegetables. If it was corn time you brought in the corn and you put a big pot of corn on, and your potatoes, and then you had to make bread every day. I don't mean from yeast -- the biscuits you -- we had to make a big pan of biscuits like that, about that long and about that wide, the same length. That was three times a day, morning, noon, and night, was biscuits. And maybe you got twenty-four in a pan, and maybe, whatever. And you'd cut them out of the sealer tops, you didn't have a cutter. You used the top that comes on the old-fashioned sealers, you used that metal top and then you put it in flour. Then you cut it round like this so it makes some nice big ones, you know, and then you put them down in your, in your pan. And then the fire would be going really hot and so you put them in there, and then they rise up pretty good, you know, and they used to always say, "If a woman could make good
biscuits she's going to get a smart husband." So they'd praise you in that way. So then you, so you try your best to make the good biscuits, you know. So they still make it too, you know, on the reserve. We were there, there about two months ago and my brother made them this time and oh, they were high again, you know. And you just take and you split them, and you just soak them with butter, you know, and they're really nice. And it's filling, you know. My husband says you don't need anything else to eat when you get through with that, because it fills you up so much, you know. He enjoys it. When I make them he says they are too heavy. (laughs) I don't make them as good as they do, because I don't make it everyday, you know. And they usually put buttermilk in it, you know, and I use just plain milk, you know, but they use buttermilk mostly.

And on the farm we used to make our own cheese too, you see. When you, you had no refrigerators -- I told you we used to put them in the well. So the milk got sour, that's how you make your cottage cheese. You just put it, and if you have enough sour milk, and if you have a wood stove -- they have now modern things, but in my time they used to have wood stove. And if you kept burning all day you just set your milk at the back of the stove.

And at the back of the stove was always a thing that you lift up, a cover, and it lift up about -- the cover would be about that long, and the cover, you open it up, and that would keep the water warm in there. So if you wanted warm water to wash with, you just take a dipper and there was always a pail on the bench about the length, longer than this, you know. And there'd be a pail there for washing and a pan for washing. So you'd dip your pitcher, not a pitcher, a dipper, and then you fill it and then you wash with your hands when you're coming from the fields. And then you throw the water away and then maybe the other farmer, whoever you had there, the whole family washed outside. There was always a bench there with a pail of water and just for washing. When you're working in the fields you wash for lunch, or for dinner. But then the cheese was always made with the sour milk, because you had no refrigeration in those days. And so you set the sour milk at the back of the stove and it makes cottage cheese. And then you strain it, and then you put it in a dish and put it away, and you had your own cottage cheese -- you made you own cottage cheese, a lot of it too. And the buttermilk you use for making biscuits, and the sour milk you feed to the pigs so nothing ever got wasted, see.

And so you had pigs, and you had horses and as I say we couldn't use the horses on Sundays, because my dad always felt they worked all week, they need their rest too. But there was always one horse, or if there was cows in the back of the pasture we used to -- if we had nothing else to do after we come from Sunday school we'd go back there and fool around with the cows and jump on their backs, and, you know. They didn't know that, you know. So we used to fool around with that. And then we'd get into other things too, you know, like climbing
trees, and looking at ant hills, and why they were so high, you
know. You don't see them in the city that much, but you do see
them. And we also watched the red ants and the black ants go
like soldiers fighting, I've seen that. And you tell that to
somebody and they don't believe you. They think you're telling
a fantastic tale, but we saw that, you know. They come
together and they'd fight one another, you know. Funny, you
know, they'd drop dead; whoever is the strongest wins. There's
a lot of little incidents that city children don't have the
privilege to see, you know, like when you're raised on the farm
you see many things.

And also we used to have a trained owl. Joey we called him.
My brother got that, so he brought him back to the house. It
was always sitting on the veranda, on the beam. And if you
didn't know, and if you were eating anything coming up the long
lane, see my mother's lane was like from across the road coming
as you opened up the gates, you have to... It was a wooden
gate so you had to get out if you're riding a car, or a buggy
you have to lift it and put it on the side and then you get
back in the buggy, or the wagon and you'd drive in. And then

if you're coming down the road and if you're eating anything
Joey would know it from the house, see. He would fly and grab
the food, whatever you had off of you, you know. And it would
scare you if you didn't Joey was around, you know. He wouldn't
hurt you, but he would just grab the food. Even if you're
coming here he'd grab it right out of your hand. And so they
used to have, have Joey around until one of the neighbors dogs
got him. He thought it was our dogs, you know.

And I had a dog that would climb trees and everything, you
know. I trained him to do that because there used to be one
farmer's cat used to always come around, because... I didn't
like it, because we had our own Tiger, she was a yellow and
white cat. So I used to get my dog Jackie, and he wasn't as
smart as Prince. Prince was the smartest dog. And I used to
tell Jackie, "Now you sit down and Prince you go and get that
cat." He'd know what you said and he'd go and chase that cat,
and the cat would always run up this tree and that dog learned
how to climb that tree. Oh, he'd climb that tree and he'd go
up there like this wherever the cat, and the cat would be doing
the same way, thing you know. And, so everybody used to marvel
at him climbing that tree because no other dogs could climb it.
And then he'd know how to come down and without falling, and in
the narrowest branch he could turn right around and come back
down. And he just got used to doing it that's all, you know,
he was a smart...

And also we used to harness him up with the dog collar only we
didn't have it this way it was the other kind of harness that
you put on. And we'd harness him up and he'd drive us around in
the toboggan. It's still in the garage, we still have that for
years. And we used to put that harness on him just, and he'd
drive us around all over the place, he'd go and pull us, you
know. Two of us could go on that toboggan, there was always
two of us on there. You know and we'd go all over. He could
go as far he wants, you know. And then we brought him back in
to... we mated him with another dog like him. He was what you
call a Chow and his fur used to stick all out, you know. So we
got to... anyways someplace, New Credit I think it was, and...
But anyways we had that tame owl down in the reserve.

And then every month of August the farmers from all around
would have this picnic. I told you that, didn't I? They'd
have this big farmers' picnic and they'd have games, and
sports, and then everybody would bring foods and stuff. That
was a good time too. It was always a good time on those days,
not because of the feed bag, it was because of the sports, you
know. They done all kinds of things, and everybody could
participate in them. And then that was, that was the nicest
part, you know, you socialized because you didn't do much
socializing in the olden days. We were always told, "Always
stay in your own home and do what you have to do in your home,
and never go from house to house, and be like the wild animal
of the forest -- mind your own business."

Jamie: Who was it that would have told you that?

Eliza: My grandfather. Yeah, he used to always tell me, "Be
like a wild animal, stay in your own home. They mind their own
business, mind your own business." He always felt, he always
taught us a lot of things like that, you know. Sayings of what
he would say, you know, and the way he would say it, the way he
would say it would be different from the way I would say it,
you know, because I was only a little girl. But I used to
remember the things that he would tell us, you know. I didn't
remember everything, I didn't pay much attention to them, but
my sister always did. She remembered a lot of things even in
making medicine. She herself used to go into the woods when she
had her own place and look around. There's some things that I
can pick that you can eat.

I would never starve if I was ever lost in the woods in the
summertime, you know, in the spring, summer, and fall. If I
ever got lost in the big forest or in the woods and didn't know
my way out, if there was no way out I could survive, you know.
Whereas somebody else maybe wouldn't survive. I would know
what branches I could eat and what not to get thirsty on. If I
was thirsty and there was no water I would know what tree to go
to. And, but never go for slippery elm, because that puckers
up everything in your mouth, you couldn't... it's not a very
pleasant situation, you know, with that type, but any other
kind of trees or something, well, you could eat. A lot of
people now of... even with the mountain ash, we didn't have
many mountain ashes up on our reserve. I don't think there was
any or never was, and you could always...

When I was driving someplace in here, in Scarborough -- I was
with someone -- and I saw from a distance, I said, "Good God,
that's the only tree I've ever seen." And they said, "What
tree?" I says, "The hickory tree." I says, "That's the only
one in Scarborough." And I was driving and I could see the branches up and I said, "That's a hickory tree." And I said, when we were coming back, I said, if we're coming back this way -- we're going out to, we were going to a man that has an apple orchard and we're going out for a bushel of apples. And that was the only hickory tree I've seen in Scarborough, of all of Scarborough that was the only hickory tree left standing. And it was growing on the road, on the county road, you know. And I looked at that as I was going by, you know, and I says, "Gee, look at the axes you can make out of that." (laughs) Or other things, or axe handles I mean, and baskets, you know, and I looked at that, you know, from back and I don't know whether it is still there or whether the township cut it down -- they wouldn't know the value of that tree anyways, for other people to use, for what good... many uses it could have, you know. And that surprised me, you know. And I hardly ever go up that way, you know, and I think it was Linda that drove me up that way. We went, we were going up to get some apples in an apple orchard, and I happened to see that tree and I looked at it... the only one living in Scarborough. All the rest is all gone. Yeah, and Mr. Kneller, well when he go, when he used to go to the farm every summer, when he got his holidays, a lot of things he learned too. There are somethings that you can eat, I see growing even in the garden and out in the front, you can pick and eat it, you know, it's like a vegetable. There's many things you can get that you can eat as a vegetable, you know, that we learned when we were youngsters. You never be short on greens, because I just give them a good wash and cook them... I see the Italians going around in the spring picking up dandelions, dandelion greens.

Jamie: For the wine.

Eliza: Yeah, you can eat them too, you know, and we use the little green things for medication, you know. You can use that and make medicine out of it -- not the leaves, the little green things that come on it. You have to get them, and you can use that for medicine too, you know. It's good for some things. I think it's good for headaches and stuff, I think, if they take it. And there's also some things, certain kind of roots that you can get... My sister used to go when she lived in the city, she used to go to Hyde Park and you can pick some kind of white roots there too, and you can home and eat them -- they taste like radishes, and they grow wild up there if you know where to look. And there are certain types of fern too that you can get that you can use for different things. And then if you got a boil, or anything, some kind of leaves you get -- they come a little bigger -- well, you can put that on your boil and it brings it to a head, and you're all rid of your boil. You don't hear of that too much, in the olden days a lot of people were getting boils. I guess it was their diet, you know, or something or other that caused them to have boils. I don't think I've ever heard of anybody in the last fifteen years having boils, but in our time everybody was getting them. I think if was, as I say again, I don't think that in that time
they ate enough greens. Today everything is green vegetables -- it must be with your diet, you know, one or two in a day, I guess it had to be important. But the Indians were never sick with a lot of things -- only with T.B. many years ago, but that's all stamped out. And...

Jamie: Were these all things, uses of these plants, were these things that were taught to you by your granfather?

Eliza: Yeah.

Jamie: And he taught you about the bees?

Eliza: Oh yes. He had bee hives.

Jamie: What else did he teach you?

Eliza: Bee hives, and leaves... Well, even my husband knows, when he was on the reserve, there, he knew what to give the horses, he learned it by being out there. If the horses were sick you didn't get a vet, you just went and got some... Even the Indian dogs know what to do. (laughs) You know, we call them Indian dogs because they live with the Indians, so they know what to do even up in the country. I don't know if the, I never showed my Prince what to do. He just used to follow the other dog and my sister's... whatever she did -- he did, you know. If she went to a certain plant he would get to the certain plant. They were always travelling together, you know.

Jamie: Did your grandfather ever show you any of those tricks that he used to do?

Eliza: No. No, I wasn't really that much concerned, because we never asked him, I never asked him... That was his secret, to entertain, whenever he was asked to. You know, like at Christmas time for the children at the churches, if they were... They always had a Christmas tree at Christmas time and they'd give little bags of candy out, or whatever. If they were a regular attendance at the Sunday school, well, maybe they would get something special, you know. But everybody always got a bag of candies. But then there was always someone there to play, maybe some instrument or... But it was always given to the children to do -- it was their program. So after they were all through... Well, each child would get up if they could recite anything -- they would practice this for weeks -- and maybe some of them would do something else. It was always a quite an entertainment. A lot of Indian children were quite talented.

And even with my son, Brian, up there, I gave him violin lessons, you know. And he passed away, we lost him -- and I gave him violin lessons. He had the best teachers, he used to go downtown I used to take him after school -- he used to get out of school early for that day, and he got so that he could...
barcarole, and play anything at all. He was getting to be really good, and when we'd go to the pageant, or to -- on the reserve -- he would always entertain. He'd always, my sister, you know, my sister Minny up there, she'd always have him in on the program, and he'd always do something -- it was always playing his instrument, so he always managed to take his instrument, his violin, when he'd go home, you know. And he'd play up there and of course he used to like to get applause too, and the more applause he got, he always was wise, you see, he'd bow once, once should be enough; but he'd get down there and bow this way again. (laughs) But I never once said anything to him, he shouldn't bow that way. But that was his way, he'd bow here, bow here and then he'd carry the violin in a certain way and then he'd walk off stage. And he'd be smiling all the while -- he was only a little guy, he was only six when he started to play. And he was about seven then, you know, when summer came along and he was playing good then, he could play barcarole and different little pieces, you know. They were never long, but he was playing pretty good, you know. I didn't think it's an instrument -- a violin shouldn't be an instrument for a child to play, because it take five hours of practice every day and it deprives them of playing. But that's what he asked for. I said, "Do you really want to play that instrument?" And he said, "Yes." So I said, "We'll give you what you want." First of all he got a small violin for his little arms, you know. And then after that, when he got a little older, he graduated to a big one, and it's still upstairs. No one's ever decided to play violin so it's still upstairs. It's a good one, it's a very good violin. I never could play, but I could always play the piano, the piano is my start.

Jamie: Where did you learn that?

Eliza: I, my mother used to play, but we never had a piano so I used to go over to my aunt's... was she my aunt? That was my mother's sister, they had a piano... yes, she was my aunt. She had a piano, everybody in her family took piano lessons, so if we wanted to play we'd go over there and play on her piano. And so I played by ear, you know, just listening to the... if they played and I was in the room there, I could come and sit down and play the same piece they played -- that's how good I was. And so I never would hear... So I'd play the same piece over and over again because then I got it really down pat. And they'd wonder, they'd say, "Where did you learn that?" And the music book was in front of me, but I couldn't read it because I was never given music lessons. And then my cousin would come back again -- we'd be playing outside -- and then she'd have to come and practice. If she played another piece then I could sit and play the same piece again.

(END OF SIDE A)

Jamie: You were telling me about the piano.

Eliza: Oh yes. I never had music lessons, because we never
had a piano. But if anybody played anything I could go there and play right the same piece, maybe a couple of mistakes, but I guess I was really was scared to play piano, you know. But I never had the opportunity because we never had the piano, we never had an organ.

Jamie: Where would your mother have learned?

Eliza: I don't know, I don't know. She must have learned it when she was younger, where I don't know. And my grandfather could play, he could play the violin. When my sister -- the one that died -- she took violin lessons. And one day she came home from the city -- she was newly married then with my brother-in-law -- and she was taking these lessons. So he saw her with a violin and he says, "Minny," he says, "granddaughter, let me try your violin." So she gave it to him. You know, he sat there and (inaudible) it up and he played. We were all stunned, because we didn't realize he could play. And he played that violin like the old fashioned way. And he held it down low, not like they do, and he just played like that way, you know. He played one or two pieces and we just sat there and listened to him, we never said a word. And here my sister was taking violin.

And then when we went over to my cousins', they had a piano, then my mother sat down there and she played the piano. I never realized that she could play, you see. And so she played and I never asked her where she learned how to play, I never asked my grandfather, because, I guess, being a child it just slipped my mind. But then when I would hear someone at the piano I could go to the piano and play. Same way, and I could play the old fashioned songs. I can still go -- I have a piano now, somebody gave me that piano -- so occasionally, I haven't touched it for a long time but I can go in there and give my fingers exercise. But I have never taken lessons and my husband told me I should take lessons, even at my age. And I said, "Oh, who's going to teach me?" "Oh," he says, "you'd be surprised. Maybe you can join the seniors," you know. He plays the mouth organ, he plays it really well. That's his entertainment is his mouth organ. And, but I can sit and play several pieces, but if anybody came and sat there and played the piano I think when they left I could play the music, even today. And I was never given that opportunity to play, to take lessons, but that's not saying that I haven't got the opportunity now -- they say you're never too old to learn. And I might take it up in the wintertime, go, have someone come into the house and maybe if the boys are still here, maybe she can teach them too. Have the two star pupils and then throw me in with it. (laughs) You know, but I think I'd like to start them off with something. But I think it's good for children, you know, to learn some instrument and understand music, you know. I think sometimes there's talent there but it's never brought out. I think everybody has a talent and it's to find out what it is, what talent they have.
Jamie: Did your mother and your sister ever play at social functions, or gatherings?

Eliza: No. No, my mother was always too busy on the farm. As I told you, her father told her, her home was her home. Just like what they told me, and I'm always home, I never gallivant, I never have.

Jamie: You mentioned Christmas a little while back.

Eliza: On the reserve?

Jamie: Yeah.

Eliza: Oh, yes, when I'd go after Christmas, day after Christmas, which was always the twenty-sixth of December. When my sister was alive there, I always went there after Christmas day, after... I spent my holidays with my husband and then a day after Christmas, because he'd be working, and...

Jamie: This is when you were living in the city?

Eliza: Yeah. Then I would go to the country and I would stay with her. But when I was living on the farm that was different. We never celebrated Christmas, I told you, it was New Year's day. Newyahvay(?) was always the day for the Six Nations people, it was always their big day -- for the children anyways. But I think they do, I think times have changed with the times, and I think they celebrate, well they celebrated Christmas too, but the big day for my time was New Year's, was the Newyahvay(?).

Jamie: What about as a child on the reserve? Wouldn't your mother as a Baptist have a...

Eliza: Well, that didn't interfere. That didn't make any difference. You could be what you want to be. There was no restrictions, and there was no set rules that, "You do as I say you do, is what we want you to do." There was never nothing like that. You went your way, the way you wanted to be and nobody said anything, as long you were there worshipping the one God. It didn't make any difference how you did it. You know, it was, it was up to you -- we weren't disciplined in that way and we chose whatever we wanted to do. If we wanted to go to the three o'clock service we'd go to the Baptist, and if you wanted to go the Anglican you went in the morning for the eleven o'clock service. So if you went to the evening service it might be Baptist again at seven. So whatever you enjoyed the most.

Jamie: You mentioned the last time that I talked to you, although you've been both to the Baptist church and also the...

Eliza: Anglican and the Catholic.

Jamie: To the Anglican, that you practiced a sort of an
Indian religion.

Eliza: Well, the Indian religion was you pray in your own way. You worship to the Great Spirit, "Oh Great Spirit, Father of my Fathers," and then you go on. Pray the way you want to, and the way you feel that you should. Each individual prays in their own way. If you want to pray silently you pray silently, and it was always 'Ode to the Great Spirit,' you know, 'the Fathers of my Fathers' -- they prayed that way. So therefore, if you want to get back to that, you pray in their way, but if you want to go to your fathers, 'Our Father Who Art in Heaven,' you know. But some of the Indian prayers are, are very good, they are a little long but they come to the point too. They're all worshipping the one, when they say, "Oh, Great Spirit," it's the one, it's the same spirit, the same God, you know, only you say it in a different way. But, you know, you pray you want to be like the, the beasts of the forest, you know, things like that, you know, the deer, and the bear -- they mind their own business, learn to mind your own business and all this sort of stuff, you know. You say it in the way you want to say it, it's up to the individual, you know. But not too many people pray, some people do, some people do, you know. If they, if they wanted to practise to praying to the Great Spirit -- it's the same thing, it's the same God, it's the same person only you don't say, "Oh, my God," you know, you say, "Oh, Great Spirit," because you see it means the same God. Only you say it in an Indian way. Indians were always religious, even Tecumseh and Sitting Bull, they had prayers of their own.

Jamie: Yeah, you were telling me before.

Eliza: Yeah, they always went up the hills and told their warriors, "I'm going up to pray for our people." Sitting Bull was clairvoyant, very clairvoyant. I remember the old time Indians talking about him when they used to have the war, the old timers. He always went up and prayed, prayed to the Great Spirit. I have one of his prayers, I don't know where I put it, I probably put it in the attic.

Jamie: Where did you hear the old timers speaking?

Eliza: The old prayers?

Jamie: You said that you've heard the old timers talking about Sitting Bull?

Eliza: Yeah. Well, they lived in their time, just like I'm living in my time.

Jamie: But was this, did they used to gather around at any particular point?

Eliza: Yes. Some of their religious persons can be very clairvoyant. I mean, I'm talking now about the Indians, the good Indians. (laughs) As they say, "A good Indian is a dead
Indian." No, I don't mean it that way, I mean the great chiefs like Chief Joseph. And now I've been told these things, but I have never thought of them until you came along, see. If I had thought of them I could have had it all ready for you, see, but I have never given it that thought.

Jamie: Well, that's the idea of me coming back every so often.

Eliza: You know, but I probably wouldn't remember it, you know, I'd have to think, I'm old, you know, I'm seventy-seven. And your mind is not as alert as it would be if you were twenty. I was always told by professor, what's his name? Kenyon(?), he'd always say, "Mrs. Kneller, how far is it you go to school? Now don't tell me you only went there to grade eight?" I said, "No, I went higher than grade eight." Like, I worked with him at the, the burial grounds up here, the archeologist, you know. He always thought I was smart, oh yeah, at least I thought he thought so anyways, but anyways we...

Jamie: You were telling me about Sitting Bull.

Eliza: Yeah I know, I know what I was talking about. I just happened to think of, I never thought of my grandfather in years, you know. But anyways, yeah, Sitting Bull, he was very clairvoyant. Whenever he had a battle with that Long Hair -- he always called him Long Hair, which was Custer -- he always had long golden hair. I can visualize him, he had long golden hair, kind of curly, wavy, Custer.

Jamie: Did somebody tell you these stories?

Eliza: No, I see it in my mind when I'm talking.

Jamie: But about, did your grandfather tell you about Sitting Bull and Custer?

Eliza: He told me about Sitting Bull, because my grandfather was in the War, too, of 1812. But I don't remember everything he told me. But I can go back in his time and think of many things if I think long enough. I probably could think of things that I would never think of today. My sister was the same.

My sister and I used to play this game, when we were children -- that's my sister Minny -- Vic my husband can tell you, he can tell you too, he's not here, he's outside. He could tell you too. And my sister -- when he was overseas in England, or France, or at the front -- he would always know when he was getting a letter from her, because she would think about him and he would think about her. Her mind was so strong she could get him no matter where he was. He'll tell you, he's a white man, and he can tell you that himself. And he would sit and think. And he would never tell anybody but he's told me and my sister, you know. He said, when they'd get together, you know,
and they used to talk before she passed away, after he came home from overseas too. Mostly when he came home from overseas. He always knew when he was going to get a letter from her, he always got it that day when he thought, when he knew he was getting it. Because mental telepathy, and my sister and I practiced mental telepathy for my grandfather, see.

My grandfather was good at that too. So if she was in, I didn't know she was ever in New York... so she was in New York one day, and we lived in (inaudible) and we owned another house up in East York. And so I think about her, you know. And then I guess I'd get her mind wherever she was, and she would think about me. And then maybe I would sit down, the minute that I would think in my mind so strongly, I would sit and write a letter, you know, and I'd run to the post office and... "Get away from there, Guy." (She calls to someone) And I would write a letter at the time, when I would be thinking so strong, I'd run out and mail it right away. Sure enough I would get a letter this way, and she says, "I was thinking about you Thursday night. I was in the park in New York and I thought about you." She said, "Were you thinking about me, such and such a thing?" And she would get my letter and I would answer the same thing when I'd get her letter, she got my letter; so we used to look at one another when we'd see one another up at the farm. And she says, "You know, I think we're a couple of witches." (laughs) And we'd laugh over this, and even with Vic, even my husband, he knew when he was getting a letter from her when he was overseas even. He was in France, and Germany and he knew when he was getting a letter from her; because somehow or other his brain would go like that and right away he'd think about my sister. And the man would come in with the mail, army man, and hand him the mail. He'll tell you that himself. How it was done, I don't know, but he told strange things, you know, he'd start -- so it was clairvoyant, and I think we sort of got that from my granddaddy, my grandfather. Because he was that way, you know.

Jamie: Were there stories of that sort of thing that used to go on in the reservation?

Eliza: Well, he used to tell us many things, he was in the War of 1812, I think, he was a young man. I don't know what happened to him, whether he liked the War or not, I couldn't tell you, I never asked that, that didn't interest me. He didn't like certain things, I don't think he did, some things he didn't like. He always described them as the bluecoats and the redcoats, and all this sort of jazz. (laughs) That's where I got that from. And I know he remembered when they buried the chalice of the, belonging to the Mohawks, the Mohawk Chapel. That was the War of 1812.

Jamie: Was he there?

Eliza: I guess so, he must have -- but I don't think he saw
it buried, but there's only three of them knew, three chiefs. But I think, I think the Mohawk warriors knew, knew what was going on. So when the war was over then they dug it up again and they took it back to the Mohawk Chapel. And then, now it's in the museum under lock and key, I think, in Six Nations. I think because they were afraid somebody would, somebody would take it. It was given to King George III and Queen Anne, see, that was donated at that time. And I guess to the Chapel of the Mohawks -- the Royal Chapel of the Mohawks, that's what it is. I think it's because of thinking that -- they had a fire, see, vandalism, somebody, they had vandalism there a few years ago, but it was restored -- the part that got burned almost the same as it was originally, you know. Some people, you know, they don't know who it was, they just called it vandalism. It's one of the oldest churches in Ontario, is the Mohawk Chapel.

And yeah, my grandfather used to tell us a lot of things that happened, but I don't remember them all, because I'd never given it a thought, excepting when my sister was alive. Then we would talk about grandpa, you know. So the other family, my oldest, my next brother to me would remember, but he was only like one of the boys, he wouldn't remember too much. He wouldn't even remember the bees, you know. But he always had, as I told you before, always had honey, and he always was a smart man, he always made medicines for other people -- we went through that.

And we always picked berries, you know, wild berries. And he picked some, even today he goes out in the woods, my husband, and brings home six quarts of raspberries, and strawberries, or when it's picking -- he didn't do it this year, but we, our daughter that was in now, we went strawberry picking, but it was in Agincourt, it wasn't wild. I don't like picking wild strawberries, because you're on the ground, well you're on the ground too in the city in the strawberry patch but it's cleaner, it's sand; whereas in the country your picking wild... maybe you pick up some snake underneath there, you know, and I don't like those things. You know, that's when you're picking wild strawberries it's always snakes, so therefore I didn't like that. But we did it, we did it back up, back in the pasture there was always a lot of wild strawberries; and not so much wild raspberries. What the birds threw down they'd come up in other seeds.

And there was mostly, always what my mother wanted to do, we were always doing something around the house -- it was our job to do. I don't mean housework, it wasn't that. It was making baskets and, and rugs made out of corn husks, like. In the summertime you get them when they're green. And you can even make seat covers, you can even make, you can do them just right and make it for the seat. You know, you get a frame and you put it on there and it's strong. You know, it depends on how you do it. I've never done that too much, but I have known some to do it. I never thought I was talented enough to make it. I figured if I made it I'd fall through it. It's all
right -- if you put it on top it's pretty rough sitting on it anyways. (both laugh) It's all right for, just for a show, like -- a little mat, and stuff, you know, something. I used to make a lot of these underneath, here. We used to make these. This here, this is the pipe of peace.

Jamie: Is that, that's just a decorative mat?

Eliza: Yeah, that's all. Or you can put it in a frame if you want to, if a person wants to, you know, frame it and it might look nice under glass, as they say. (laughs) Pheasant under glass.

Jamie: And what's that underneath there?

Eliza: It's just a filling that you put in. And you fill it with padding, or something. Not, not cotton batting or something that wouldn't last.

Jamie: Well I, I sort of have to run now.

Eliza: Yeah.

Jaime: Is there some time next week when I could maybe come back?

Eliza: Yeah, that would be fine.

Jamie: Okay, I'll just shut this off.

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