

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: ELMIRA MCLEOD #3
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: 55 PARK STREET EAST
MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO
INTERVIEW LOCATION: 55 PARK STREET EAST
MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO
TRIBE/NATION: MOHAWK/MISSISSAUGA
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 07/20/82
INTERVIEWER: RANALD THURGOOD
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: HEATHER BOUCHARD
SOURCE: TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY
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TAPE NUMBER: IH-OT.008B
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 106
PAGES: 33
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Account of ghost stories and superstitions.

Ranald: Tape number RT 82.3. This is a continuation of an interview with Mrs. Elmira McLeod, of Port Credit, Ontario, on June 30, 1982. I am Ranald Thurgood.

Ranald: We were just talking about ghosts.

Elmira: Well, we believed in ghosts so... I don't know how you say it, so much, that nearly every one of the old houses -- they're all torn down now and new ones replaced them. But every one of them had a ghost at some time. We used to say, "Oh, we went by there and there was a light on in there, there was somebody peeking out of the window right in the daytime." And, you know that's real scary. We'd say, "Well, maybe there's somebody hiding." "Oh no," they'd say, "we went toward it and it disappeared." Things like that, you know. I think we all believed in ghosts at one time.

Ranald: Did you ever have an experience like that yourself?

Elmira: I was careful that I wouldn't. But I have had some real stories told where one girl said she was supposed to go for milk -- I don't like telling this, it's so true -- that she

had to go for milk about a half mile away. And when she opened the door to go out -- her father was very ill, and he would never get better and she said just as she got out of, out of the door -- she had to close it really tight -- and she heard some music like chimes. And she looked and there was like a boat went right past her, with white sails, and she could see her father sitting in that, and a little man driving it. It went right past her. She said she could hear the sail in the wind. And she was so scared they said, "Shut that door and go," you know, her mother. So she shut the door and went. And when she got to the neighbors there was a bunch of little boys

-- about four little boys -- and they walked, she coaxed them to walk up to that next house. So she got her milk and they walked back, and she said, "Come on home with me and I'll give you an apple." So the little boys brought her right to the house and she come inside and she gave them apples, went down to the cellar and got a little basket of apples and she gave it to them. But she said she was so afraid to go to bed. Well, the next day she went and told an older lady, you know, and old grandmother living alone, and told her. And the person said to her, "Don't be afraid," she said. "That's your father. He's going to leave you. He's going to get on something and ride away some night, and he'll never come back. He's going to leave, he's going to die, you see." So she said, "Just don't go too far from home, help your mother." And her father did die. She said she saw that boat's sail. "God," I said, "if I ever seen that I would be dead too." But that was just a young woman who told me that and she was so... She says, "I don't tell everybody."

Ranald: Was that at Alderville?

Elmira: Yes.

Ranald: And how long ago was that?

Elmira: Well, when I left Alderville, I was... never went back to live... about 1939, I guess, when I left and we came up this way. Everybody used to come up here to pick strawberries. It was like a holiday, trucks used to come down and bring you up. And then after the strawberries were gone you went home and you stayed, so we stayed and never went back. Times got good, there was lots of work, so it would be before then. I wasn't married, I was young, younger, running around, and this girl told me that. She said, "I haven't been able to go out alone at night from the... for a while... I'm getting more used it." That happened about, maybe two years before that, her

father died. And this old lady said to her, "You know, when you worry too much, you build up, you build up something, and keep it so in your mind that it will come true." So she said, "Don't think, if you think somebody's not going to get better, don't think about it." But I think there is such things as the spirits. But it's not like they're drawn, with a white sheet or, you know, you always have a white sheet. But I don't think

they come back on earth to scare us. My dad used to tell us they come back for some reason, maybe they left something, or wanted to tell you something, but he said, "There's, there's never one will come back to scare you or kill you. So if you think there's something close by," he said, "speak their name and they will disappear and won't come back." I was sleeping in a house, my aunt, another aunt, I was staying with my cousin and we heard something bang in the basement. So my aunt and I went and it was an iron fell off of the side of the, going down you know...

Ranald: A railing, or...?

Elmira: No, a little shelf. And we didn't how that might been easy to fall, it was for years -- the old irons you'd heat on top of the stove. We don't know how that fell, or why, unless somebody moved it too close to the edge and didn't know. My house shook and it fell, that's what I told them anyways. My aunt took that one pretty bad. So if some crazy fellow came we'd tell him, "Maybe you'd want to iron his shirt." (laughs) Couldn't persuade him, you know, that we were telling the truth. But I was so scared, I never was so scared as when I heard that fall. That's the closest I ever really seen or heard anything, but I've heard a good many ghost stories. I've heard of a place on Rice Lake where you put up your tent and camped there -- a lot of men camped up shooting time, and for a

few days, you know. I should say, trapping season. And they said, when they went to put your camp up there, you'd go to sleep, and you'd wake up, you'd hear a canoe come to the landing, and pull it up. The things inside of it would shake and inside of the canoe there's floor boards; and when they'd turn their canoe over for the night you'd hear those boards fall. You'll hear it anytime but if you were there you'd peek out and there's nothing there. And I have heard different native men say that they've heard it. You want to hear the ghost stories.

And I have heard another one that always happens around the Kennel(?) Campgrounds, you know. If you're lucky, you paddle quietly by this place, you'll see little ripples. And you look up and you'll see a little girl with a pail of water, and when you look good you'll see she's got no head, then she disappears. Now, I don't believe these, you know, and yet you sit and think about it, and if they tell you those at night, you go to bed and you're really nervous. You look under your bed to see if... Those are the kind of stories sometimes they would tell us. My dad, especially, would tell us those.

Ranald: You were saying you wouldn't tell them to, when you were little because it would scare you. Was there an age when he started telling you stories like that?

Elmira: Well, sometimes there would be some men sitting around the house and we'd go to, supposed to go upstairs to bed, and we'd come down quietly and we'd listen through a crack

in the door. And we could hear them stories, then we'd go upstairs and put them together and... I guess these old men were trying to see who could tell the wildest stories. And there used to be some awful ones told, they just couldn't happen. And then they'd say that little girl maybe was killed, somebody killed the little girl there and buried her or

something. And this is why you'd see her, maybe she wanted you to find her grave, and nobody ever found her. That is what they would say the reason you'd see these things. Sugar Island was full of ghosts -- There was a war there at one time, Indian war. I think the Iroquois and the Ojibway were in there. You'd find bones there, arrowheads, if you're lucky, you know, but they've pretty well been picked up.

Ranald: Where is Sugar Island?

Elmira: It's right in the middle of Rice Lake. But there, there's a ban on it now, there's... You're not allowed to go in and dig, but they had dug in there. And where the bank washes down -- this is quite a few years ago -- you could find bones that had washed down in the spring, and pieces of pottery, yeah. They'd have to gather a lot of it to put it together. And at that time we just skipped it out in the water, you know, which I would love to have a piece of it now. And you found old bones and arrowheads. I used to have an arrowhead, but I must have lost it at Morley's place. A man found it in the garden in Clarkson, and he gave it to me. You will find them along, what's that, Lorne Park(?), yeah. That's where they used to travel and land down over here in...

Ranald: Was the Park near the Alderville?

Elmira: Lorne Park(?) is a little town up there. And they travelled that... and down to the lake towards Credit, Credit... Let me say, that comes down... We said it in Indian, Credit, that means "let's go," like you go to get credit from the store. And they landed there and we would say (Indian) that means "let's go" (Indian) and they'd translate it into English, Port Credit -- where the Indians used to trade. Would you, we should have a landing over there. I know where it is. There's a reserve landing on the... every one of these, all

along the lake shores, you know, and you weren't supposed to travel... I think they came down the banks of the Credit River there, too. That was the Mississaugas.

Ranald: Where did you hear about that?

Elmira: Oh, it's pretty far back. Jack can tell you more about it. As I say, when I was a kid I didn't learn too much of that stuff.

Ranald: That's things he learned from books, was it?

Elmira: Books and... he used to get him to go every year to the Ecumenical Council in Alberta. And he got a lot of

teaching there from the... they've got elders there. Did you ever go over there?

Ranald: No.

Elmira: We had one come down and talk to us in Thunder Bay, further up from Thunder Bay, Quetico Park we met, and I flew over and Hettie... Do you know Hettie, runs the craft store?

Ranald: Yeah.

Elmira: Her and I flew over and... There was one came from the west, his name was Ernest Tootoosis; and he talked to us and held little meetings with us, set us straight on anything we didn't know. So I had some pictures and a little picture dropped out of the, I didn't know how it got in my pictures, tipis, picture of tipis. "Oh," he says, "I recognize that place. Were you ever there?" I said, "No. My son used to go there," I said, "John McLeod," and I described him. He said,

"I know him. He's not a boy to talk." I said, "Yes." He said, "Full of knowledge." And he said, "Thick, long curly hair and wears glasses." I said, "That's him." "Well," he said, "you should come." So I said, "I can't, I couldn't go, I couldn't lay on the ground." I said. "I can't sit on the ground. I'm too old, now." I said. "I'd have to have a bed to sleep in." "I'll lend you a buffalo robe." But he came and talked to us, you know, in bunches. And pretty well set us up on... And we could ask any questions we wanted to ask. So Jack knew him very well, and I've seen him on T.V. since. He has braids tied with buckskins. He wears moccasins with little rubbers pulled over them. And he wore a buckskin vest, but his coat was all trimmed with... his wool coat... and he wore a black western hat. Jack might go this year -- I don't know if he'll have the money to spare or not.

Ranald: The last time I visited you were talking about the Longhouses, and you mentioned that at one time there was no Longhouses on the reserve. I wondered whether you were referring to Alderville or your mother's reserve at Penawagen(?).

Elmira: Alderville.

Ranald: Were there Longhouses on the reserves other than Six Nations, do you know?

Elmira: Everyone of those Iroquois, you know, the confederacy, they have Longhouse. But then they have other churches too, you know, mostly Anglican, because it's the Anglicans... it was the English that put them on those, I think.

Ranald: Were there people other than, did people other than the Iroquois people worship in the Longhouse religion?

Elmira: Oh, they might have, you know, I can't, I should... Jack has books, picture books, you know, he could tell you that. They may have before they were placed on reserves and took their religion over. And I just seen... some still go to Longhouse, and they're very good people, they're very... The government has recognized their marriage now, if you were married in there you're as good as married by a minister. And I think their marriage was forever, like... I don't know, some might slip off from one another and part. But they promise forever. They have feasts and, oh, they are nice. They're starting to bring back the old religion in the Centre, there, you know. Joe Sylvester and Bobby Woods. Do you know Bobby Woods?

Ranald: Yes, I do.

Elmira: I like Bobby.

Ranald: Yeah, he's very nice.

Elmira: They're teaching it -- whether it will last or not -- it's just maybe so long and they'll all forget it again, or it might...

Ranald: How do you feel about them?

Elmira: Well, I wouldn't stop anybody if they wanted to join that, it's... To me, religion is your own business, you know, whatever you do, whatever you practice. There's a way we used to say that now, something about "respect your brother's religion," you know, it said in a way that you respect your brother's religion. But I've had so many religions that it's pretty hard to get in... They knock on the door, different ones, you know, and you can't get rid of them.

Ranald: Were there any people who practiced traditional religion at Alderville?

Elmira: No. They're strictly (inaudible) at Alderville, a few in Curve Lake, I think they're young people, you know.

Ranald: But when you were young, there weren't any old people who were still practicing the old way?

Elmira: No, there was just Methodists as far back as I can remember. You know beyond that, beyond... from the time we had this religion and that, our own... I don't know what they done before that, I never was told, really. And they must have practiced something. You see before we were taught the Bible, and that, we didn't know anything like Jesus, or devils. We had (Indian) that's, some say my Maker, some say he was the Great Father. Until we were told what the, you know, men were -- we always had prayer -- they prayed towards the sun. You will see them with their hands up facing the sun and asking for grace on something, you know. And then there was the older religion, there was the Thunderbirds, the Gods' Thunderbirds,

and there was... There were clans, Eagle clans, and Turtle clans, you'll see them on those necklaces.

Ranald: Was this among the Ojibway or the Mohawk?

Elmira: All Indians, I think -- the Wolf clan. I remember my mother telling me she belonged to the Wolf clan -- her people did, not her, her people. And she objected, you know.

Ranald: Are these things that you learned about from your mother and from...

Elmira: Just from mother and father. These are symbols, but I don't know what they mean.

Ranald: Are they bead, beaded circles?

Elmira: Jack has a lot of them, that's... Some, you know, there's the old Thunderbirds. These need repairing. I'm going to get them repaired for Jack.

Ranald: Do you do beading?

Elmira: No. That all, that all means something, the old people know what it means, you know, and Jack... I don't really study them but I should, you know. I just figured I was too old to be studying anything. Jack has a lot of, I used to bring them home when I would go travelling.

Ranald: Okay, I think I just have one more question I want to ask you about for today. I'd better clarify for the sake of the tape there that those were some beaded medallions with different designs on them, one had a Thunderbird, one had a star, and other designs around the edge. You said that you were named Elmira Victoria after your grandmother and I was wondering if you had any idea where she got that name?

Elmira: I don't know.

Ranald: Did, did other grandparents... It would seem that English names were in the family for a long time then?

Elmira: A long time, and sometimes you had a baby and some nice white lady would have done something nice for you, and you would take her name, such as Jane, or you know. And we all have these names. Maybe I was Queen Victoria, I don't know.

(laughs) I didn't like it that much though, because all little girls years ago had Indian names, it was said in the Indian language. But I suppose after we got, become Christians... I know a lot of boys, little boys that had names from these Americans that they... Our dads paddled around, and he, well, they had a baby born while they were around, they'd give it a big... some money or something, and they'd get Fred or some name, you know, from this. I don't know where, where... I don't know anything as far back as, further back than that.

Ranald: Was this your father's mother?

Elmira: Yes.

Ranald: Okay, well, thank you very much. And this tape, like the others, we'd like to be put into the library for the, by the library staff, and the public. Do you agree that this tape can be used there without any restrictions on it?

Elmira: Oh yes, I don't think, I don't think I've said anything I shouldn't.

Ranald: No, I don't think so.

Elmira: What was I going to tell you now?

Ranald: We were talking of names.

Elmira: Names and where you get them. My father's name was Herb. My uncle in that picture is Samuel. And some of our names come from the Bible, biblical names, you know. Like every reserve family had their John. Oh yeah, I was going to tell you that Roman Catholics... whatever religion picked the reserve first and started to claim the people as their... like

the Jesuits landed on Cape Croker, and they become all Roman Catholics, but there is some Protestants. I suppose in Alderville I think that John Wesley and John Sunday, the old Billy Sunday, I think, the old missionaries, or evangelists, started baptizing us. And I imagine before that we didn't have the... traditional ways of living. But I don't know what year they hit the, I know our church was built -- pass me that box, I have a plate from that with our church on it -- 1870 to 18-- One time it was a hundred years old so we... I used to go down to all these things, we all went down and had a big feast and a big service. We could call back as many of the ministers we ever had. And they all come back and said a few words, and... those that were still alive, as far back as we could get them. But now we are on a circuit... that... we don't have a minister stationed there anymore.

Ranald: But there was when you used to...

Elmira: We don't have a school on our reserve anymore either. We'd go into Roseneath. We bought a room in that school, a nice big modern school, so they have a native man on the trust, Board of Trustees. So that's where our children go, and higher up from there they go into Colborne on the bus, for high school. I guess grade seven and eight, I'm not sure. There wasn't enough little children to hire a teacher -- there has to be so many for one teacher. But the school I went to down there was a one room school.

Ranald: How many grades? Up to grade eight?

Elmira: To grade eight. We had one old missionary there that used to give the kids grade one for high school, and when they went into high school they could sort of catch up. They wouldn't be so backward, they could go right along, it give them a good start. Those that went to high school, there was no use going to high school. We didn't go by grades, you come out of there, you tried the entrance, they called it. You went to another school, seems they tried, they gathered in one school to try the entrance, I never tried it, you know. I started to work.

Ranald: Well, maybe we'll leave it there for today. Thank you.

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Ranald: I'm interviewing Mrs. Elmira McLeod at her apartment in Mississauga, Ontario, on July 20, 1982.

Ranald: Can you, can you tell me a little bit about Alderville, how big it is, what it looks like, that kind of thing?

Elmira: Well, it looks so different from when I was growing up there. The houses was all new, and some are brick houses, some are built with different materials; and they all have septic tanks, bathroom. Of course, it's close to a lot of work, you know, and they pretty well work and earn. There isn't any more than two hundred people on that reserve, and maybe it's ten miles square. I don't know, really, I never went into that.

Ranald: What kind of land is it?

Elmira: It's farm land, farm land; but there's nobody farms anymore. I don't... one man was ranching cattle, that's right, and they all had, most of them have a cottage at the lake shore -- they're about six miles from the lake.

Ranald: Is that Rice Lake?

Elmira: Yes, Rice Lake, and people go down there often on weekends. They all got these nice camps on the reserve.

Ranald: Does the reserve actually, does the reserve land go right onto Rice Lake?

Elmira: No, there's a little space between, but I think the... It would be our fathers', you know. They bought this strip of land, and it's called Vimy Ridge. A lot of our old First War vets fought in Vimy Ridge, so it was kind of a name for a... they bought it then. And you know they used to tell us that there'd be a day when we couldn't play anywheres, that

we wouldn't be welcome on the land that was... it would be all owned by people; so they were quite right. Now we have that little (inaudible) of land here. That's where we have a cottage.

Ranald: You were talking about at one time about people hunting on the island in Rice Lake. Do any of the islands belong to the reservation?

Elmira: Yes, one of the largest islands belongs to Rice Lake, it's known as Sugar Island. Rice Lake is quite a large lake, it's over thirty miles long and eight or ten miles at the wide... these are at the widest points, you know. But when I said hunting, there's a lot, there's an island there called Rice Island -- we don't belong, we don't own that. But there's a lot of black squirrels, and I was saying I guess about hunting and killing for nothing. One time a couple of... my other son and another man went over there and landed, and they picked up about twenty-seven black squirrels that were just shot and left there. See, they'd gather these nuts for the winter and that's what we'd call... Well, those were boys, tourist boys, you see, having fun killing, killing the little animals. We might kill them to eat, but we wouldn't kill them just to leave.

Ranald: Did you eat squirrel?

Elmira: They're really good to eat. They only eat nuts, you know, nothing else but nuts. I did when I was a little girl, my dad was a hunter and he fed us quite a lot of squirrel.

Ranald: How would you prepare squirrel to eat?

Elmira: Oh, I think they skin them and trim the fat, and soak them, marinate them for a while and put them in the oven with onions. But you eat anything that's vegetarian are good to eat. You don't eat a meat eater, because they're scroungers, they're scroungers.

Ranald: What kind of farming did people do on the reserve?

Elmira: There was an old gentleman telling me that he remembered twenty-five barns on that reserve. They did dairy, it's a dairy farming country down there. And there's a lot of corn and cattle raised. So they stopped because it was kind of hard on the native people. They... All they could do was, they raised a litter of pigs and go to sell that. We had to go to the Indian Agent -- he'd take the pay and send it to Ottawa; Ottawa would stamp the cheque, send it back -- you might get it six months after. The same way, well, they got so as they could get off the reserve and go to work, so they left the cattle and that go, and they would lease their land then to the white farmers, anyone wanted to lease their land. They got paid by the year for it, for to grow their grain on, you know, a pasture, whatever.

Ranald: Were people still farming when were you young?

Elmira: Yes. After the First War for years they farmed, and then the Depression hit and, I think that killed of it too -- that long Depression we had. That's when we left the reserve and come up here, and we've been here ever since.

Ranald: You said that there are all new houses there. What were the houses like when you were young?

Elmira: Well, the house I was born in just burned down about a year ago. They were just made of lumber and... what they call a frame house. That is, you know, maybe had an upstairs, a couple of bedrooms downstairs, a kitchen. Depends on the size of the family.

Ranald: Did people decorate them much, were the houses painted, or unpainted?

Elmira: Well, some of them were. They'd paint them maybe when they first built them. It was a different time, that was a different kind of a life. The houses now, you get a grant. If you want to build a new house, if you qualify, you get a grant. And as soon as you pay up your grant you can revolve, they're revolving grants. Even single girls are getting them. And what you put up has to meet certain standards of basements -- they would have to have basements in them. And there are no taxes. The grants aren't taxed and they are very easy to pay back.

Ranald: Did people wallpaper them and paint them indoors, that sort of thing?

Elmira: Oh yes. That's one thing, we used to wallpaper and scrounge around and get enough paint to paint the wood inside and the ceiling every so many years. But we didn't have

broadloom, and like that. We might have a bit of linoleum. As I say, we were living in a different standard, or whatever it was.

Ranald: How were the houses furnished?

Elmira: Oh, we had everything, really. We had beds, and table, chairs -- the necessities, you know, a great big old stove with oven in it, and, and maybe couches, and rocking chairs.

Ranald: Were things store bought or did people make furniture?

Elmira: Some might have. My brother was very handy; he could make a nice table, chairs, sell it very cheap. And we used to make our quilts, put quilts together. And some lived above that -- they had more money, they had farms, as you say, and they lived a little better.

Ranald: Where did you get material for quilts?

Elmira: Oh, my mother would save up for a while -- enough to put a quilt together.

Ranald: Worn out clothes?

Elmira: Sometimes, and... We worked very hard, but we were satisfied with very little, you know. We canned a lot of wild berries, we raised gardens, some of us kept a pig and killed it around the wintertime. And they worked whenever they could, they trapped -- fur was quite a lot of money then, you know, not like now. Nobody traps -- it isn't worth it. Some raised a few chickens that you had to buy the food if you didn't have grain planted, you had to buy the food for them, so you didn't

keep too many. My mother kept about a dozen, maybe, and we'd have eggs instead of meat sometimes, you know. So it got, when the war came on they got a lot of transients, you know, going through, travelling and Depression time, looking for work. And they went through the reserve, sometimes they'd knock on our door and ask you if you could give them something to eat.

And that just reminded me here the other day, Jack and I were getting the meal ready and I was buttering toast, and he said, "Let's have toast and beans." And an old fellow knocked on the door and he was selling those war veterans' calendars, so John took one, and he said, "Are you going to eat?" "Well," I said, "we're planning on it." He said, "Is that toast you're making?" "Oh, yes," I said. He said, "Could I buy one?" I said, "No, I'll give you some." So I buttered two slices for him. And had some cold ham in there, you know. I said to John, "Give him a piece of ham between that toast." Oh, he was, "God bless you," and all that stuff, you know. Well, I said, that's fine but you might be cooler if you went under a tree -- this place is very hot. "Can I pay you? I would like to pay you, you know." "Oh, no," I said, "we're Ojibway Indians, we share our food." "Well, God bless you again," you know, and he went. Jack says, "He must have money to buy it." "Well," I said, "it probably it smelled good." Toast always does. "Anyway," I said, "poor old guy." I said, "He must have fought in the War when he was selling calendars." That's the way it was then, you know, somebody'd knock on your door and whatever you could give them to eat, you gave it to them.

But the houses were... no one suffered for wanting a house. There was some shabby looking ones, you know, tacky looking. But that's all the past now. Were you never down to Alderville?

Ranald: Yes, I've been through there. When people were building a house, would neighbors help them or was it kind of a family thing, or did the parents help them?

Elmira: No, it was sort of a project, and one head carpenter,

I think. Hiawatha was always a very nice reserve. That's pretty near across from Alderville. But they dealt more on the lake with the tourists; they had cottages, and... But Curve Lake -- that's not, that's the other way, they lay like that, you know. They've got all nice houses in there too, that new housing project. You might see some old houses there, I don't know. And our cemetery, they fixed that all up -- it's really peaceful, you know. They keep a man there now, they keep the grass cut, and keep everything clean and nice when you go in there. And there's somebody looks after the monument down there, they keep that cleaned up.

Ranald: The War Memorial?

Elmira: Yes. And in our churches, we have a nice church there and a community hall. They play ball, they come to Toronto and play with them, you know the Toronto boys baseball teams. The ball teams and hockey teams. Don't take them very long to get them together, anyway. They would just say, "Do you want to play ball or play hockey?" And they were very good at whatever they do, like, in the line of that sport.

Ranald: What kind of furs did people trap?

Elmira: Muskrat in the spring; beaver, mink, fox. Of course the cheaper thing was a skunk, or a coon. You didn't go too much for them unless they needed to.

Ranald: Where would they sell them?

Elmira: Oh, there was always, especially a Jew will always buy them. When the spring comes around they would come all over the houses and see if you got any fur. Not now, I think there's always a storekeeper will take them, or... But they used to come around and the men would heap up their muskrat, count them, argue while they were culling them, you know. And it used to be fun. My dad would be... money, and we had an old Ford car. Take us all into Peterborough, give us some money to spend, and he felt so big. And my brother used to get cross with him. He'd had this terrible old Ford car, maybe there would be no windshield on it even. And he'd pull up to one of those great big stations for gas. Red Indian, as they used to be called, Red Indian gas. A picture of an Indian head would light up at night with feathers and... I don't think that exists, I don't know what it would be now. He'd pull up to one of them and he'd say, "Fill her up." And they, of course they done it, you know. And they'd say, "How about your windshield?" And there was maybe no windshield on it, so they'd talk and laugh. And my brother would rather be somewhere else, you know. He'd say, "Why don't you go to one of those side streets, pull up with this old wreck of a car?" Well, my father would say, "It's paid for." So we had a lot of fun like that, and...

Ranald: When did he get the car?

Elmira: Oh, we always had one, but when I was very young we had these old Ford cars, you know. They weren't very much money, I don't think. I think during the Depression he would go and get one in the old wrecking yard, put it together for about twenty-five dollars. And when one wanted to tear it all apart there would be two to three boys get together and tear it apart and put it back together again. Go to the wrecking yard and buy parts; or walk out with them, either one of the two.

Ranald: Where did people trap furs?

Elmira: Well, Rice Lake and Trent River are muskrats, and I remember my father used to go way in the north someplace for big game.

You know, I bought one of those old cars for my other boy. It was very good, an old lady drove it. And she was very fussy about it and she said, "Do you want to buy a car for fifty dollars?" No, she said, "Do you want this old car, Elmira?" I said, "How much?" She said, "Fifty dollars." I used to work for the lady right next to her. So she died and I said, "I'd like that car for Morley." She said, "Tell her that they offered it to you for fifty dollars, I'll tell them that." So they come to me and they said, "Did she offer you that car for fifty dollars?" I said, "Yes." "Well," he says, "It's yours." That's all I gave him for it. It would have been... It was such good shape, it had the old running boards, and the old things over the wheels. That... It wouldn't taken much to get it all going again; but he got to many things going at once so he sold the old car. He got a little more money for it, but I, I always felt bad over that, you know, because you see all these nice old cars all fixed up. But he told me it would have ran into the thousands to fix the car. I said, "I'd just paint it and fix it up on my own, there's nothing lacking on it." Of course, she used to call it Old Bessy or something.

Ranald: When was that?

Elmira: Not too many years ago. Maybe twenty, twenty-five years, Jack was small enough to get in it -- big enough to get in it and go with Morley for a ride around the farm we lived on -- there was no license on it, they'd just go around the farm. I told Morley, "I'll never forgive you for selling that." He

said, "Elmira, it costs to get..." I said, "You could have put it away. You're not going to be, you could have put it away. Like now, he would have got antique cars, you know. Did you ever hear tell of the little people?"

Ranald: Yes.

Elmira: It's like the Loch Ness Monster, you know, to me. Or like the leprechauns -- that's the Irish, isn't it, has the leprechauns? But people used to believe there were little people and my dad used to tell us about how this old man -- there was a colony of people, Indian people living, you know,

like maybe in tents, tents or tipis, I don't know. And a lot of little kids got sick and they all wanted something sweet. So this man said, "I'll go to the settlement and do some trading with the trading post and I'll bring back some sweet stuff for them." So on his way there he got kind of tired and lay down and went to sleep. And when he woke up there was bags of maple sugar, little leather bags, you know, made of, by hand, and they were full of maple sugar cake. So he just turned and went back from there and fed the children, and there was plenty to keep for a while. And that's what he said, the little people brought it. You know, stories like that.

A lady I know took silk screening, an Indian lady, and she made Christmas cards. I tried to find one that I could have shown you, and she had the 'Merry Christmas' with the three languages there, French, English, and native on the back. Well, she had one with little people on it and that's what it said, "Merry Christmas from the little people." And I put some away, they're just for souvenirs, but I've moved so much since then that things get lost. So maybe they still believe in the little people.

Ranald: Did anybody, was there anybody around who claimed to have seen them?

Elmira: Oh yeah, it's just like those, as I tell you, leprechauns and that Loch... people always see them, but there's never any proof. They'd say that sometimes when you're in the berry patch you would hear somebody run or something, very light. And you'd see where there's been berries picked, or something and they'd claim the little people are around there. And we used to -- we heard different stories of the little people, you know. And when we were very young kids, when we'd be back where the tourists are, we'd go for walks looking for marks of the little people. We really believed in them. Maybe we could find a fireplace or something, but we never could. I don't know where it comes from, but it was kind of a nice little belief.

Ranald: Who would tell you about the little people?

Elmira: My father.

Ranald: Did he believe in them?

Elmira: I don't know. He was probably was told by his grandmother. The little people often left things for them, they said. If you were hungry they'd find something to eat. The stories ended like that, that you got what you were wishing for, it was left by the little people. But how big they were or... I don't know. I always picture them like Robin Hood, or something, you know, with a bow and arrow.

Ranald: Did they do mischief, or anything like that?

Elmira: Well, I don't know. They used to say you'd miss eggs, they took your eggs or... They're around all over, but I don't know. I think it's a myth, but I just wondered if you ever heard tell of the little people?

Ranald: Yes I have.

Elmira: So they must have made maple sugar, but where they made it -- you never seen a fireplace or anything. And I was telling you about witch stories, you know. My father said this old lady lived right there where the monument is, some place, there's a little house there. And he said this old lady lived in there and she had her little grandson living with her. And they used to have a hoeing bee, gather some, get a bunch to help you hoe your corn and potatoes; and then you'd go and help your neighbors. And this little boy, he used to pretend he was asleep, and she'd open a board on the floor and get a, a bird would come out of there, and she'd put it on top, then she'd say, "Let's go maybe visit somebody," you know.

Ranald: They'd put it on top over her head?

Elmira: Yeah, it would take off, it would take her -- she'd turn into that. And so she said one night, one morning to the little boy, "Get up, we're going to go down here and hoe." "Oh, I don't want to go," he says, "I'll stay home." "Well," she said, "you be a good boy." And she covered him up. "Get up when you want to and come over there." So he thought he would go after a while and he opened the door and got that bird, and he put it on the top of his head and he talked, the way she talked to it, "Let's go to the hoeing bee." And he dropped down among all the people. And it scared her to death when his grandmother saw what he was doing. And I guess that's... the moral of that was 'don't practice witchcraft,' I

suppose, you know. We used to like that story too, you know. That would be a good trick to try, you know. But I never did believe in witchcraft. I think I lived off the reserve too much, and I grew up around the Kawatha(?) Lakes, that's Peterbough, (inaudible). And we'd just come home sometime to go to school; or sometimes my dad would leave us with somebody till we got old enough and we could stay home by ourselves.

Ranald: How would you live when you were around the Kawatha(?) Lakes?

Elmira: Oh, my dad was an Indian guide, you see, in the summer. He got lots of jobs guiding and, and up in the fall trapping. And then maybe he'd get some venison. My mother would go with him. They'd come home and every once in a while in the summer they'd come and see us, what we were doing, and if we were hoeing the garden, and how our money is lasting.

Ranald: When you were little you went up with them...

Elmira: When we were small, that they couldn't trust us alone.

Ranald: Where did they, where did they live when, when your father was guiding?

Elmira: In tents. There were... he'd have two, three tents. And sometimes he'd rent an old house -- that's when I lived in a log house -- he'd rent an old deserted house from somebody; it would be an old log house. And we'd live in there for the winter. And he'd take jobs, wood cutting jobs. That's when my brother got bigger and he could help him. We always had enough but we were never very well off people. We never stole from each other, or we never locked our doors. Now, you can't walk

out of your house, you've got to lock it. And these apartments -- if I only went for mail I'd lock my door, just to go down to the first floor and get my mail and come up. If not, I'd be scared that there's somebody hiding in here. Same way on the reserve -- they steal on each other now.

Ranald: What kinds of things did you buy when you were living like that? Did you have to buy from the store?

Elmira: We had our food to buy and store stuff for the winter. My dad used to get hundred bags of flour, maybe ten of them for the winter, hundred of sugar; and tea, even bars of soap in a box, and pretty well everything you need. It's a hard life you know.

Ranald: Would there be living off a lot of hunted food and wild food and stuff like that?

Elmira: No, you can't eat too much of that, you know. Even Jack goes out west and they eat buffalo and he can only stand it a little while, and he's had enough.

Ranald: Why is this?

Elmira: Pardon?

Ranald: Why can you only eat for a little while?

Elmira: It tastes different. If you... I was telling someone the other day, you go down among the farmers and they kill their own beef. And you eat your beef here, you can tell there's a difference in that beef there. Because that's raised on the grass and they lick from salt blocks, you know, that's

about all they get. But up here that red brand and blue brand, they're fed scientifically on certain foods they eat. They get substitutes and needles that... you can taste the difference right away. There was a butcher down near the reserve and I'd go in there and I'd buy a whole lot of beautiful roasts. I had to quit because the boys didn't like it. And he'd take a drink right off of the farm. Did you ever take a drink of milk?

Ranald: Yes.

Elmira: And then you'd come up at home and take a drink of pasteurized, you can get a difference there. I always visited down, when I used to go home, and she had one cow, or two cows. She'd make tea and I'd put sugar in my tea to kill that... I wouldn't take any milk, I told her I didn't take milk in my tea, because I could taste that... My husband said I was fussy, but no, I said, "I can. It's all right." I said, "There's nothing wrong with the milk because all dairy cattle are tested, you know, and they get needles." But there is a difference. I used to buy homemade butter and my husband would be wild over it, and I couldn't see any difference. I lost my taste for things, you know, I guess when I was kid. My mother often had a cow, not all the time. We used to churn it in glass jars, keep shaking it and there would be a big ball of butter in there. And there would be enough for two or three meals. She'd spin the cream off of the milk. And now I can't taste the difference in the dairy milk. We used to go down to St. Lawrence Market and there was some Mennonites selling their homemade butter. I said to Mel, "That's just dairy butter wrapped up in, I mean, that creamery butter wrapped up in dairy paper, this is dairy butter. Because," I said, "I just can't tell the difference." I guess it was more sweeter than... But you know the pasteurized milk, there's a lot of chalk and stuff in there, that's not really pure milk.

Ranald: When, when you were with your father and he was guiding and things, did he teach you anything about hunting, or about how to get around in the bush?

Elmira: No, we just played among ourselves. We used to paddle a canoe when we were very young, and play around with canoes. He taught my brother. There's no... unless some girls might today, as a sport, you know, or go shoot out of a gun. I was always afraid of guns.

Ranald: Were any of the women hunters when you were younger?

Elmira: My mother was very good. She could go and kill a partridge or something like that, but not too often. That's the way she grew up, I guess -- she could go hunting any time.

Ranald: What kind of work did the women do?

Elmira: Just look after their families and my mother used to... When she was about... Maybe there was another one or two, but she was one of them that used to tan deer hides, and make Indian jackets. Tourists would order them, they'd come over at Christmas and pick them up. Twenty-five dollars for a jacket, they get about a hundred and fifty for it now.

Ranald: When was that?

Elmira: If you went to buy an Indian jacket today, and when we made them at that time, we got about twenty-five dollars for it.

Ranald: What time was that?

Elmira: Oh, in the '30s, you know.

Ranald: Did they do bead work and that kind of thing on them, or quill work?

Elmira: Oh, a little. She didn't do quill work. There were some other ladies... women did, because that wasn't the kind of... She did the ash baskets, you know, like little packs, she did them.

Ranald: For sale?

Elmira: Oh yes, when my father would be working among the tourists she'd be at home making these to sell. He'd bring them home or take them, he'd sell them, you know, or take her out to wherever they are. And she'd sell them.

Ranald: Did a lot of people help out their income by selling these crafts?

Elmira: Oh yes. But I seen a basket my mother used to make, it was pure white with all fancy little trim on it, you know, little twists and that. And I think she, if she could get a dollar and a half for that. And I seen the Sportsmen Show, the people from Cornwall Island, they wanted fifty dollars apiece for that basket. "Oh boy," I said, "I'm born about sixty years too soon, too late, or whatever." Anyway, springtime a lot of women used to go to the surrounding farms and houseclean. They did housecleaning them days in a very different way. I guess there was no vacuum cleaners. They used to drag the mattress outside and clean it, you know, and wash every bit of the bedding. Throw the rugs over a clothes line and beat them with a whip or a... there's what you call a rug beater, you

know. It was round like a big fly swatter and you'd beat the rugs. And I used to go and help my mother. I'd put the paste on the paper and she'd paint ceilings and we'd pick up quite a lot of money that way. A dollar a day from breakfast time to supper time. I always like to sit back and think of those things, you know, it's kind of a laugh. But we were all so happy. I think we were more... we used to gather in houses and pretty near any boy could pick up a violin or guitar, banjo and sing. Some places there would be a piano in the house, play the piano; and they were all good singers. But nowadays I guess our children would be bored to death to be like that, if they had to live like that.

Ranald: What kind of songs did they sing?

Elmira: Oh, you often hear them now -- western songs, you know. They'd go to town and buy a cowboy book, of cowboy songs, and come home and play them and sing. And we'd have little square dances. I guess they're quite a lot like that down in Nova Scotia, eh?

Ranald: Yeah.

Elmira: Yeah, it was quite a different... Our children today got so much, so much and yet they don't know what to do when the school holidays come, they say... Oh, they're full of life for about a week and then, "We got nothing to do." I know when John was little he'd play for a while and after that he didn't know what to do. So when he become fifteen years old I put him with the Lands and Forests, junior boys you know. So he was there before first of July they... the Forest Rangers come and picked him up, and he didn't get back till Labor Day. He was just up at Lake Huron and I start... It was the first time he was ever away from home, so I said, "We should go and see him."

I was worried. I said, "You know, I called the Forest Ranger and he told me they're making a road. He saw him yesterday and they were making a road." I said, "Is that all they're going to pay those kids?" I could see bulldozers and, you know. So I went up there. Oh heavens, they were just moving a big stone, or cutting a long big branch and cleaning it off. So John says to me, "Don't come here again. Mothers don't come here." "Thanks a lot," I said. So two, two, three years after that, next year he couldn't go back there so we put him with the Lorne Scots Militia. So every summer he went to Petawawa. And they really get paid good, you know, learn good manners, and as I say, they had to scratch by themselves. So when he come out of there and had to go to work, and we'd have to stop for him down there. You see, he was raised so much different than my brother would have been raised. Like, even the oldest boy, he took us there and he went down to the lakeshore. He just fell in love with it. He said, "Why didn't I do this when I was kid?" He said, "All I ever got to do was plant trees for Shurd(?) Nursery." Well, I had to explain to him that I didn't think there was such thing as junior boys, Forest Ranger camps. And I said, "You wouldn't go to Scouts Camps, you didn't like the Scouts, so what else was there?" I said. Then I said, "You had to help your grandmother because..." He had to work in the holidays. It was different with John, he had a father to keep him. I guess Morley is not sorry now, he's, he's doing so well and...

Ranald: You were telling me that the men used to gather at the store and talk to the natives.

Elmira: Oh yeah, we used to call it the corner. Right there at that monument there was.... That's about the centre and in the evening they used to gather there, and the young people would go down to the school yard and play ball. And there

would be lots of old men sitting around there. And Depression -- what else could they do but visit each other?

Ranald: Did the women go there to?

Elmira: Oh no, no.

Ranald: Did the children go down with them and talk very much?

Elmira: Oh no. Only that old man, George Beaver, I guess. I told you about one of the elders. He was great for the kids, and the kids were great for him. He could tell these old crazy stories, you know. He was always good for a piece of licorice or something.

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