Jamie: Your name is Eliza Kneller?
Eliza: Yes.

Jamie: Tape number JL 82.3. Jamie Lee is interviewing Mrs. Eliza Kneller in her home in Scarborough, on July 21, 1982.

Jamie: And you're married right now?
Eliza: Yes.

Jamie: And your husband's name is Victor?

Jamie: And what about your parent's people. Where did your... your mother was a Mohawk/Tuscarora?
Eliza: My mother was a Tuscarora. She was a mother of the clan. This I told you, Tuscarora clan.
Jamie: And your father was a Mohawk?

Eliza: Right.

Jamie: And were they from a different area?

Eliza: No, I think they were on the Six Nation. I think they both were from the Six Nation.

Jamie: Down at the reserve down at Brampton?

Eliza: Yes, Ohsweken.

Jamie: And what about your parents' occupations. Did your father work?

Eliza: Farmers.

Jamie: They were both farmers?

Eliza: Yes.

Jamie: And do you practice religion today?

Eliza: I do sometimes, but I like to practice my own Indian religion here at home.

Jamie: So what was the religion you were educated with?

Eliza: Well, when I was at the Mohawk we were brought up, we were taught Anglican, and then when I was on the reserve I was Baptist.

Jamie: So the Mohawk Institute was somewhere separate from the reserve?

Eliza: Anglican. Yes.

Jamie: Where was that situated?

Eliza: Brantford, Ontario.

Jamie: In Brantford?

Eliza: Yeah.

Jamie: And do you belong to any clubs or associations today?

Eliza: Yeah, the Indian Centre of the Seniors.

Jamie: So are you active in the Ladies' Auxiliary?

Eliza: I haven't got the time. I've been much too busy around here. I haven't got time for club works and things like that. I mean I feel I'm more valuable here at home, because my family and my grandchildren live with us so they need me. And
they're adults there so they don't really need me, unless they need help in the evening and Mr. Kneller doesn't go so he stays home with the children.

Jamie: You were educated to grade eight at the Mohawk Institute?

Eliza: Yes, grade eight.

Jamie: And then did you go on to high school?

Eliza: Yes, I went to school, I continued to... my grandfather sent me to Chicago to school.

Jamie: Where in Chicago?

Eliza: Mundelein College.

Jamie: Is that a college?

Eliza: Yeah.

Jamie: And how old were you when you graduated from there?

Eliza: Oh, I must have been about seventeen. I was quite smart. (laughs)

Jamie: Was that a private school college?

Eliza: Yes, it wasn't a public high school. You had to pay some, and I guess he got the grant too for me. My grandfather.

Jamie: Was that for women only?

Eliza: Well, yes. I don't know about today, I can't speak about today.

Jamie: And what about the places you've lived. Have you travelled around?

Eliza: Yes, I've travelled quite a bit in my younger day. I would work possibly here and stay for a year, and maybe truck off to Buffalo and work there, and come back home again, and things like that, you know. I would never stay over a year at one place, because I was young and I wanted to see part of something anyways, you know. But however, when I got married we lived in East York, for about how many years, Vic?

Victor: Around fifteen.

Eliza: Fifteen. Yeah, we bought our first home, we bought our first home in East York, and then from there we lived there and then I got big ideas...

Victor: Around twelve years, I guess.
Eliza: Yes, twelve or thirteen years. And then we came over here, and we've been here ever since.

Jamie: What year did you move into East York?

Eliza: 1938 or '39 we looked at our first home, didn't we?

Victor: Yes.

Eliza: Yeah, we bought our first home was in East York around about '38, '39.

Jamie: And what about the jobs that you've held?

Eliza: Well, I don't hold any job now. I'm just a housewife right now.

Jamie: That's a pretty big job.

Eliza: Oh yes, that takes up a lot of time.

Jamie: So have you ever worked for wages around town before?

Eliza: No, no. I've been asked, because I'm pretty well known and they always ask me and I say, "No, I don't want to." And he won't let me work; he feels I should be home, you know. And then when he was working he felt, "I make enough money, you look after the house." So that's what I did, I stayed home and looked after my home and my family. As long as he was working and making good money he didn't feel it was necessary for me to go out. So you have to do sometimes what they want you to do.

Jamie: And what...?

Eliza: And it was nice staying home.

Jamie: What did Mr. Kneller do?

Eliza: He was a railway...?

Victor: All my life I've been railroad. Two different railroads, the CN and the CPR.

Jamie: Were you working on the trains?

Victor: No, the shops there. Car inspecting and car repair work.

Jamie: And that's always been in Toronto?

Victor: Oh yes.

Eliza: About forty-seven years of it.

Victor: Yeah, I guess I had forty-seven years.
Eliza: Yeah, a few more years and he would have had fifty. Probably would have won a gold watch or something. (laughs) Yeah, he's a steady worker, you know. Vic was always a steady working, and besides he served overseas four and a half years, you know. He is a returned vet.

Jamie: Can you tell me anything more about your parents' people?

Eliza: Well, they were farmers and my mother made baskets, you know, and she used to go round trading on the reserve among the whites, you know. You get off the reserve and they would trade for different things; they'd barter, you know. And she would never take money so she would get what she wanted and they would get the baskets, you know. And of course hers would be painted like on the top, or the big part; she'd put a big, bigger ash or oak, whatever it was -- hickory rather -- and she would paint that around the basket and it always went well, you know. They always wanted her baskets so she always went around in the horse and buggy days, amongst off the reserve and (inaudible) just a next concession or it would be a white man's parts. So she'd go around there and they'd trade, you know. Barter and trade.

Jamie: And her parents were farmers as well?

Eliza: Yes, yes. My grandfather, he was a medicine man. See, he could go out in the bush and get the herbs and the different weeds, and different things off the trees and make liniments and stuff. And people would come all around. He'd even go to the States and travel and take his medicine. And he'd always get money for that too, you know, and they always would write to me a lot of letters of compliments and what good it done them, you know. "It was good for my joints," or whatever, you know. And anything he made was always good. Liniments was very strong, whatever how he made them. My sister, my older sister, she was the one that always went with him, you know, and she learnt quite a few things with him going into the bush and stuff, and there's always someone who had to stay at the house; so I was always the one that chose and I didn't like trucking through the woods with those big snakes and all that. So him and my sister Minnie they'd go in the bush and pick up different things and come home and he'd make the medicine, you know, liniments and salves and stuff. And then off he'd go after he'd get part of it and he could never make them fast enough.

Jamie: So he would travel quite a distance then?

Eliza: Yes. Yeah, in the States. Rochester, wherever he was asked to go he'd take his medicine.

Jamie: And was this to other reserves?

Eliza: I don't know, I imagine it was the white man's places, you know, because the Indians didn't always have the
money; so he always had to trade with the whites, you know. You do need the whites to a degree, you know. (laughs) They need us, and we need them. So that's where he'd always go, pack his bag and his stuff and he'd go, you know. And then it would be my mother and my sister and I, and he'd have his medicines. At that time they didn't bother with the Indians (inaudible) medicines, but you can't do that today, you know, because the laws and the things have changed. But he always made nice strong liniments. Especially if you had aching legs, or something, or whatever, joints, or something it was always good. I'm not saying that because he was my grandfather I'm saying it because it was true. You know, whatever it was.

And he was also magician, and every time we had farmers' picnics, or picnics on the Six Nation he would always entertain. And he could do a lot of white man's tricks too, you know. He could get tied against with chains on the trees, like Houdini, and he could get out of it, you know. And then he would put the flame in his mouth. That's a trick in itself too, you know. And a lot of things he did. And when my sister and I used to stay with him we used to like to get in his bag of tricks, especially if he wasn't around. (laughs) If he went across down the road, you know, from his house to go and get something, we'd get his bag of tricks and then we'd be doing it too in the house. And then one of us would be looking out of the door or out of the window, you know, "He's coming now." So we'd put it all back. So we used to get a lot of fun out of that, because there were a bag of tricks because that's what he done to entertain.

Jaime: And what sort of things...?

Eliza: Well, a lot of things, you know. He'd even have things that you could put in your nose, your mouth and you could make anybody think it's coming over there, you know, talking over there. That's what we liked the best. But he also had card tricks with big cards you could do this way (inaudible) a lot of little things, you know. But we weren't as good as he. But we used to practise it, you know, whenever we could. But I don't think he would have minded if we told him. Oh, I liked living on the... (phones rings) Excuse me.

Jaime: On what sort of occasions would your grandfather perform these tricks?

Eliza: Oh, a lot things like entertaining at farmers' picnics and that's when I used to see him, because it was on the Six Nation. But when he went to the States I don't know what he would do.

Jaime: Were there whites at these farmers' picnics as well?

Eliza: White people? Oh, they were quite welcome. But at that time when we had the farmers' picnics all the farmers all around would bring the food. Everybody bring and then they'd
have long picnic tables. And everybody would combine and then put their food on the table -- share and share alike. So if you didn't bring anything you still had a lot of food to eat, you know. And then they'd have sports and games in the forest or wherever they have it. It was always in somebody's bush. A setting, you know, where they always held it every year. And then they would just... like they do like field day in the city, you know, only it was on the reserve. Everybody brought food. All the women brought food, whatever they wanted. And then, if it was around corn time, they'd boil the corn at home and bring great big pots of corn, you know, and just put them on the table piping hot. And everybody would help themselves. You could have as much as you want, you know. And that was always the good part too was those picnics, because it was always enjoyable -- not the food itself, it's what they did.

Jamie: What did they do?

Eliza: Well, they'd have women's races, and I don't mean running like they do here. The women would have to perform as they were running, you know. Like throwing off their shoes, or something, you know. Whoever threw the furthest of their shoes as they were running, well, I guess... And then they'd have potato races. You know how that's done with a spoon and... oh, a lot of things. Well, with that, with the women, when we were children we weren't that much interested. We wanted to get around the rides (laughs), do things that children like to do. But we'd stand and watch what the older ones were doing. Well, they weren't that old. They were young married people, you know. You know, twenty-five and thirty and they'd be doing those. That was theirs, you know, their game. And the men would be horseshoeing, you know, and they'd do the horseshoeing.

Victor: You mean throwing the horseshoes, pitching, tossing.

Eliza: Whatever. I don't know what you call it, they just sort of, on those two poles.

Victor: Well, it was forty feet between the...

Eliza: I don't know. (laughs) That's a game to me, because they had a lot of fun with it. Well, it is a game, isn't it?

Victor: There's pitching horseshoes.

Eliza: I'd call it a game for the men.

Victor: It's quite a pastime.

Eliza: Oh yeah, I don't know. I just always called it a game. What other name do you know it by?

Victor: Yeah, well, you toss the shoes.

Eliza: Yeah, I know that (laughs), sure they do. (laughs)
And if it rings you know you got it, you know. Some of them couldn't do it, some of them -- depends.

Victor: It's forty feet between pegs.
Eliza: Yeah.

Victor: That's supposed to be the distance.
Eliza: I couldn't tell you.

Victor: Well, you don't call it horseshoeing. That's only one man can do that.
Eliza: I know (laughs), the blacksmith, I know that. Well whatever you call it -- it don't make no difference.

Jamie: And what about the children, what would they be doing?

Eliza: Oh, they had games of their own. They'd always have supervisors for their games like races, and whatever the supervisors would have them do, you know. Sometimes it was the hoop, you know, and games, sports like baseball, and the boys they would play lacrosse. That's a rough game too. Well, they would go into their game of lacrosse, you know. The Six Nation men they like to play lacrosse. It's with that stick that's like this way, you know, and they run with it.

Jamie: I know. It is a very rough game.

Eliza: And they can hit you on the head too, you know. It's a good game. And then in the wintertime you can play snakeshoes. And what they do is they all have their own, I think it's their own, a long -- made out of hickory thing. I used to have one around here but somebody stole it off of me, and it's a long one and it's shaped like a... Well, it's straight, you know.

Jamie: How long would it be?

Eliza: I beg your pardon.

Jamie: Is that about three feet?

Eliza: Oh, it depends on your size, I guess. Usually about six feet. As long as you can take it and throw it, you know. And they banked up the snow quite a ways. They all worked on it, I guess, and they bank it up, and that's where they throw it -- the men throw, and I don't know how they do it. And then it shoots right down, you know, like that. That's why they call it this, whatever the game's... I never watched it because it's a man's game. And the women don't hang around when the men are playing it. That's what we were taught -- men are men, you know. We didn't want them to think we were bold
or anything like this so we couldn't go to their games. That was a men's game. And even at the church years ago the men would sit on one side and the women on the other side even though they were married. So I think some of them still do that today. I think the old-timers do, but I don't think too much of the young do that. I think they sit together now; but they didn't in the olden days.

Jamie: And that was the Anglican church?

Eliza: That was the Baptist, that was the Baptist church. I told you my mother was a Baptist and my dad was an Anglican. And the only reason why he was an Anglican was because he went to the school too. So you had no choice of your religion whatever. If you went to the institute, well, you were brought up as an Anglican. But when you come home you could practise your mother's religion. If she was a Baptist there you were back again; it doesn't mean anything. I mean you can practise whatever religion you want after you leave, you know. But my mother was always a Baptist.

Jamie: So when you came home from the school...

Eliza: Summer holidays. I always had to work. It was a holiday away from school, but it was work when we got on the farm just the same, you know. We worked on the farms, or we'd go and pull flax.

Jamie: What's pulling flax?

Eliza: Well, it grows like wheat only it doesn't get much dirt on the ground to make it heavy so you can, you just go like this way and it pulls up. So you go around and do that and it pulls up. And after you get an armful then you take a little bit and you tie it around and you throw it. Then you go around and you have to... if you're going to pull flax you have to get an acre. They measure out an acre so it takes you about a week to pull that by hand.

Jamie: For one person?

Eliza: For one person. You know, so they gave you an acre so you pull your flax, but if you're a child, like we were, so you worked with your mother. So the two, if she has two or three children, you're all on that acre starting up from the foot and you go right up to the end of the acre. So the more family you have the faster you pulled the flax.

Jamie: Was this your own flax, or was it owned by some other farmer?

Eliza: It was owned by some other farmer.

Jamie: And he would have been an Indian farmer as well, or a white farmer?
Eliza: Always a white farmer. I've never seen an Indian man grow flax.

Jamie: Do you know what they used the flax for?

Eliza: Oh, clothing, you know, like cotton shirts, and they... like your shirts, and anything with cotton. Tablecloths, whatever, whoever they sell it to -- a factory or something. Then they make it into clothing, and that, cloth and stuff.

Jamie: And where would that farmer have sold it? Would that have been in Brantford, or somewhere else?

Eliza: Well, I guess around Tavistock, or Stratford, around that area, Seaforth all in that area. That's where they used to grow them, grow the flax, not so much on the Six Nation. They just grow oats and wheat, and barley, and what's the other one that they make buckwheat, oh buckwheat.

Victor: Buckwheat, buckwheat flour.

Eliza: Yeah, buckwheat flour, yeah.

Jamie: Were there farmer's markets somewhere around the area that they would sell it to?

Eliza: No, they would have to either go to Hagersville, or at Brantford in my time. And then if you had a load of hay you would take it... you would have to get up about four o'clock. We'd always leave about four-thirty in the morning. In that time there were no paved roads. Don't forget this was a rough roads, and you know, if it had been raining the day or a week or so the roads would be rough. There'd be marks all the way down the road. So you'd have to get up pretty early. We'd always have to leave about four-thirty and we'd get there around about eleven-thirty in the morning just in time to go into the restaurant and have our dinner. And then you stand, the wagon stands at the market place. The market place in Brantford used to be owned by Indians, the Six Nation. I don't know about today. Same with the Mohawk park there. That belongs to the Six Nation Reserve in Brantford. And so I don't know what happened because I don't live there any more so I don't really know the history of what happened to the Mohawk Park; I still call it the Mohawk Park in Brantford. And I think someone had mentioned it to me about two or three years ago that Indians still owned it, but last time I went to Brantford I saw houses in that park. So I don't know. So it's a question mark there.

And so we used to have to leave about four-thirty in the morning so we'd get into Brantford around about eleven-thirty just in time to go in this restaurant. They always served a beautiful hot meat for twenty-five cents. You got your good mashed potatoes, and your meat and gravy, and a vegetable, and besides your dessert -- nice pie, whatever you had. All for
twenty-five cents. Those were, they say, the trying times, but it was good years too, you know. But everything else was reasonable, you know. So we stopped there for dinner then we'd walk up the hill on to, down to the... look around and maybe we'd go into the show, which was ten cents, to get into the show.

And when I first went to the movie, I don't know how young I was, but I didn't know what the Sam Hill was going on. All I could see was all these things, you know, talkies, then off, and they'd come on again, then the writing would come on. (laughs) You'd go like this then it was gone before you even had time, because the old-fashioned show -- well, what can you expect for ten cents. But it's not like it is today. They're not going to wait because they want to hurry up and get out at four-thirty and the same show but more people coming in. And that was ten cents to go in. I never enjoyed the shows myself, you know. I'd sooner have bummed around downtown (laughs), looked around in the Woolworths store. At that time it was called ten to a dollar store and that you never paid any more than anything you got there, or any more than a dollar at that time. But now that the times have changed now and you pay just as much there as you do any other store. But at that now you couldn't pay much more than a dollar; you got a lot of nice things too for that price. It was what it said, you know, five and ten.

Jamie: What sort of things did you get?

Eliza: Well, I never had that much money. I used to go in and get myself a big bag of candy (laughs) -- about this much -- and it used to say "I love you," and all this. This kind of lozenge or candies, you know, with all the writing on it -- because I was only about eight or nine. That's what we got the most for our money so everybody would go in there and get that, because you got a big bag full. And they didn't weigh them out in those times. They just filled up the bag and tied it and that was it, and you just come in and take the bag and give our ten cents, and they had a big bag of candies. And it would last you for a long time -- that is if you wanted it to last that long, you know.

Oh, there was a lot of good things for the Indian children. And then we had the fairs. Carnivals would come into Ohsweken and the rides were cheap, you know, and of course the other things went around, just like any other carnival. It's just that it would come right on the reserve and right on the fairgrounds. And I think it has improved since then, you know. I think at fall fairs, which is always interesting there is that everybody shows their handicrafts that they have done through the year, and they display all their -- all the things that they have made in the winter, like. And then for the winter, before then they bring it in at the fall around about August. It's usually around August or September. In the olden times it was always in October and they found it was always
rainy and cold weather so they moved it up. I think they moved it up earlier now where it's a nicer weather, you know. So then you'd go into their hall, on their exhibit hall and it's really surprising how talented they really are. They combine them all together and you see beautiful quilt that's made and it's worth two or three hundred dollars now, you know. You get a handmade quilt, you can't get it for no ten, or fifteen, or twenty dollars now. They're asking two hundred and fifty dollars. I went to the Markham fair down here, right in Markham. You know, you go up this and down that way. We went. There was three or four us went and we looked at their displays and their blankets. That handmade quilts was four hundred dollars. And they are lovely designs, beautiful designs and it is a lot of work, because they have to cut each one. And it's the same thing with the Indians and they have beautiful quilt display too in there, you know. Sometimes they say, "Not For Sale," because it's so unusual, some of the designs, and they're very smart. They are very good with their needle and their designs. They think about it and they put it on this curtain frame and it's a lot of work to it, you know. So if a person pays four hundred, that's a small pittance for the amount of time they put in. And besides, their eyesight. You can't sit all day and sew that all fine by hand and not put a great strain on your eyes.

Jamie: This was a fall fair that was held regularly?

Eliza: Yes, it's held every year.

Jamie: And did they have a permanent building then that they used?

Eliza: Oh yes, they have an agricultural building, and it's quite a large, quite a large place and they have a lovely display in there.

Jamie: And who owns the building?

Eliza: Six Nation, yeah, the Six Nation. Anything that's on, that belongs to the Nation, belongs to the Nation.

Jamie: And was that building there when you were younger and you used to go to the fair?

Eliza: I think they had a small one. But not as large as the one they got now.

Jamie: And when was this one built, or do you know?

Eliza: I don't know when. That's been there for quite a few... What year do you think that was built, Vic? It's been there for quite a while, hasn't it? When Minnie used to display her stuff.

Victor: Oh yes.
Jamie: Your sister used to make things?

Eliza: Oh yes, she passed away, yes. Oh, I think it's longer than that. You mean when Minnie died?

Victor: No, when she opened up her business.

Eliza: Oh, when she opened her shop. Well, let's not get technical. I don't know. I think it was before that, anyways. She didn't have it in World War Two, did she?

Victor: I guess not.

Eliza: Yeah, I think she did.

Victor: Did she?

Eliza: Yeah, I think she did, when she went out there like in... when she bought it she was planning, anyways... Yeah, she had it in World War Two. Yeah, because Teddy was in the navy, remember he was in the navy?

Victor: Yes.

Eliza: And he was one of the first to join up in 1939 for the Canadian Navy.

Jamie: Who was Teddy?

Eliza: My nephew, my sister's boy. Well, he's not a boy, he's a man, but he's still a boy to me. (laughs)

Jamie: Do you mind if I just close the door, because there's quite a bit of noise coming in.

Eliza: Yeah, sure.

Victor: Yeah, that's right.

Jamie: What about the reserve itself?

Eliza: I used to have the measurements of that. I've got it all written down, but I didn't know you were going to ask that, otherwise I would have got it out. It gives the area of the whole reserve. It's quite a large... it's one of the largest reserves in Canada.

Jamie: Yeah, it is very big. But at the time you were living there was it mostly farm, farm land?

Eliza: Yes, it was all farm land. Everybody was farming then. And yeah, that's right, everybody farmed.

Jamie: Was there any time when everybody on the reserve got together to celebrate?
Eliza: Well yes, as I've said, farmers' picnic. That was always the big event. And of course they went to churches and everybody went to church at that time.

Jamie: What churches were there on the reserve?

Eliza: Well, there's the Anglican, there's St. John's, and then there's Pentecostal. I don't think they were there then in my time. They've been there just last few years, the Pentecostals. But they had always had the Baptist and the Anglican. And there's another one.

Jamie: Methodist.

Eliza: Yeah, but they didn't fare too well. Free Methodists years ago. Yeah, they tried, I think, when I was very small, Free Methodist. But there are some that come down to our churches, they like to... last time I was there. They've been coming some time. They wear the little black hats, you know, bonnets and...

Victor: Quakers? No, not Quakers.

Eliza: No, they weren't the Quakers.

Jamie: The Mennonites?

Eliza: I guess so. They come there to the churches occasionally. They always like to recruit, you know, but they don't get too many of them. They usually stick to their own down there. Because they're right there they don't feel they should go off and, off to their... at least that's what I think. That's why don't.

Jamie: And did they come around even when you were small?

Eliza: I've always seen them with bonnets, but I was never on the reserve that much. As I've said, we were at the Mohawk, at the institute, and we just came home on summer holidays.

Jamie: So you didn't live on the reserve after you came home for a little while?

Eliza: Oh yes. I lived there, but I had a sister that passed away. She came and she said, "I think it's time that you got out and got to work." Everybody has to go to work and get away from home, and go out and work and do things, you know. And so her and my brother-in-law came and they brought me clothes. Like a doctor's satchel, you know, full of clothes, clothes to come back to the city with. So I came back with them to the city, and got a job. I was very young, but she felt I should be away from home and to work. So we hustled around looking for jobs. At that time it was only twenty-five, or thirty dollars a month, or whatever. So I went to work for a well-known doctor, Doctor McCullough.
Jamie: And this was in Brantford?

Eliza: No, right here in Toronto, because they lived in Toronto now, see. They brought me off the reserve to come into the city to work. She always said, "You're old enough now to get out and be on your own and work."

Jamie: How old were you?

Eliza: Oh I was, I don't really know how old I was. I was very young anyways, you know. And I never would tell. I was always thirty-nine for years, and years, you know. (laughs) But however, I worked for this Doctor McCullough on Bloor Street West, and it was very nice. You can still see the building. The building still stands, but now they made doctors offices out of it. The family used to own the whole house, but now it's offices, offices, offices, offices there. I passed it one day and I looked. Doctor McCullough was very smart man. He used to like to work in the garden; so he used to have all kinds of vegetables. He owned the whole lot, see, right on the corner.

Jamie: Where was that, Bloor and what?

Eliza: It was just 394 Bloor West right on the corner house there.

Jamie: What's the major cross street?

Eliza: I don't remember that, but you can't miss the building, because if you're on the bus just look around for the number after you pass and you're coming to this 394. It's offices now. And I looked one day as I was going by. Of course, the bus was going by a street car, and I looked and I always liked their front door -- it's pure crystal and no one has ever removed that door. I was on the bus, I looked and I said, "Oh my God, that glass is still there!" You know, crystal, real crystal and I guess they'd spoil the building if they ever took it down. Doctor McCullough, I remember he had that put in.

Jamie: What sort of things did you do there?

Eliza: Well, I was helping around the old lady. (laughs) I'm an old lady too, but at that time I was very young, and she was sick in bed, Doctor McCullough's wife. So I'd have to bring her her breakfast. She never got out of bed, you know. I guess she was an invalid. And I wasn't there very long anyways. I don't know how long I was there, but the job was easy. You didn't do any heavy work or nothing, you know, just mostly looking after her. Because he was a doctor and his son, young Jack, was a doctor. So they had all these floors, so Jack lived on the top floor. I guess he lived on the top floor, him and his wife. So I stayed there until I saved... I got twenty-five dollars a month, I think it was, six dollars a week. But I didn't really work for it. It wasn't hard -- it
was really mostly helping her. And they were getting cheap labor too, you know. (laughs) But I was happy there because it wasn't work. It was a nice home.

Jamie: Did you live there as well?

Eliza: Yeah. Oh, for that price I couldn't go out and pay room and board. That's what my sister and I talked over before I even applied. She says, "What do you want to do, live in?" And I said, "Well, I'll try living in." You know, I felt it was much cheaper for me, because I felt I would have more money for myself. So money was the objective, you know. So anyways I lived in and I had a nice room, and they treated me very nice. But I stayed there until I saved enough money then I decided I don't like staying in one place. Now I had wandering feet, the wandering spirit was in me, you know. So I said to my sister, "I think I'll take off." She says, "Where are you going?" I said, "I don't know. I think I'll go to Buffalo."

So I shuffled off to Buffalo, and I got a room there someplace and I got lost, because I didn't know Buffalo. And I didn't have sense enough, being so young, to take the number of where I rented my place and (laughs) got lost. "I'm going to look around." So I walked out and went down Buffalo and I was walking around looking at the stores, and all of a sudden, I think it was getting on five o'clock, I said, "I better get on home where I live. Where the hell am I going?" (laughs) I was lost, because I hadn't taken the address, you know. I was only a kid. So I thought I better walk on. So I was walking around and finally it poured. A summer rain came down. I thought now -- this was getting on now six o'clock, see, in the summertime -- and I thought, "I'm going to go in this restaurant and sit down there for a while until it stops raining." So I sat down there and ordered something and just took my time eating, and I was wondering, "Now what the Sam Hill happened to me -- I didn't even take the address." I said, "How dumb can you get?" (laughs) I was saying all these things to myself, you know; so finally I looked and the sun started shining like it is now, just like, you know, summer rain. So I got up and I paid and I went out. And I thought, "Now, I'd better retrace my steps. That's the only way to find them."

So I went out from where I stopped in the restaurant and I went back and I walked around, and I was looking, you know, looking around. I said, "This is beginning to look familiar." This is after walking my feet off for a little while, you know. And I had sandals on, but I didn't have no stockings on, you know. I finally got past a big glass window, you know, and I looked at my feet and were they ever dirty from the rain (laughs) and the mud. You know, when it rained it splashed. I said, "Oh my goodness, what am I going to do? Look at those feet." What I saw in the mirror, you know, on this shop. So I kept on walking, and I thought, "Oh my goodness, I better hurry home." And I said, "Where am I going?" I got lost, you know, and I start thinking. So I start taking my time. So finally it hit me. I had to go down this street, you know. All of a sudden I
hit the familiar street and I looked up there; it was Franklin Street. Anyways I went down that street and I said, "That looks familiar." So I went down there and I kept on walking then I had to turn this way. Now, now I was back home again on this street. So I finally saw the house. I went up to the landing and the lady was sitting on the veranda. She says, "Oh my," she says, "did you get rained on? We had a little shower." I says, "Oh, a little bit." I didn't want to tell her what happened to me, you know, until later on. Then I told her. Then I got cleaned up and everything. I says, "You know I got lost. I didn't know where I was." She says, "Oh my goodness!" So she got me a card and she wrote the phone number on and gave me a card and she says, "Now you keep this in your purse. You call me. I'll come and pick you up the next time." And I said, "That's awfully kind of you, but I don't think it will happen again." (laughs) Once is enough.

Victor: How old were you then?

Eliza: Oh, I was very young. As I've told you, Minnie told me it's time I made my way working, in the working world, you know.

Jamie: How long were you back on the reserve from the school before you left?

Eliza: From the Mohawk... I was there for quite a while. Because you see I got pulled out of school when I was about nine or ten.

Jamie: So did you stay there for a few years?

Eliza: Well, I was from the age of five up to nine. You could go as young as you wanted, you know.

Jamie: Yes, but on the reserve after you've come back from the school?

Eliza: Oh, as I said, we worked on flax and pulling flax, and strawberry picking, and raspberry picking. They'd come on the reserve after Indian people, and they'd bring a truck down and they'd pick up the mothers and children, whatever, who wanted to pick. And they'd drive you back home again. They'd come in from Waterford, Ontario, which is near the reserve. So they'd come and pick you up and drive you home, and that was quite a big job for the owners too, because they'd have to drive us home at night, you know.

Jamie: Do you remember how much they paid you for the job?

Eliza: Oh, you got paid by the boxes you picked, and it wasn't any more than a dollar even if you picked fast. It was so much a box. Two cents, two and a half cents, three cents, four cents, finally it went up to five cents. And, oh yes, they gave you tickets. You had a ticket and they punch it, you know, how many boxes you brought in. And the most I ever made in two weeks was thirty-four dollars and some odd change, which
was like seventeen dollars a week, you know. But previous to
that I had always turned my money over to my mother, and my
tickets, until this one owner man and his wife said to me,
"Eliza," she says, "why..."

(END OF SIDE A)
(SIDE B)

Eliza:    ...four dollars and I didn't offer my mother any
money.

Jamie:    She didn't say anything?

Eliza:    No, she never said a word. Never said a word.

Jamie:    What would she have used the money for?

Eliza:    Well, I guess whatever she needed it for. I never
asked her. I guess she used it for anything she needed. I
never questioned her.

Jamie:    Did you have to buy things in the town?

Eliza:    Well, they'd go once a week, which would be
Saturdays. I told you, we'd leave about four-thirty in the
morning, and maybe she'd buy things. I never really asked.
Well, she was my mother and I didn't feel like I should
question her what she done with the money. Just like he never
questions me what I do with the money when he gives it to me,
you know. And it's the same thing with my mother and I. I
never asked her. And when I kept my money she never asked me.
She felt that maybe I was growing up now and I could handle it.
See, there was nine of us, nine of us in the family. So what
they used to do, what the boys used to do -- I have three
brothers -- if they went out to work they'd bring their money
home and she always had a pot. The men would put their money
in the pot, so that was theirs. When the other boy would come
home and put his money in the pot, his earnings. And then if
anybody needed anything they would say, "Well, I need this."
They'd take the money out of the pot -- only just what they
needed. And then if the other boy wanted something, or anybody
else in the family they would say. But there was always money
in that pot. It was never empty. So each one, whatever they
wanted they would take it and no one ever said, "You can't
touch it. That's mine. I worked for it." It was never like
that. It was always -- it was there, if you need it, take it.
And then the next week again the pot gets filled up again. So
if the boys wanted -- they didn't smoke in those days, but they
did chew tobacco -- they'd get the five cents. It would cost
five cents, you know, a little plug and they'd cut it. They'd
cut a little piece and they'd chew it, or maybe they'd cut it
and then they'd grind it up and they'd go like this way.

Victor:    In a pipe.
Eliza: Yeah, and then they'd put it in their pipe, you know, whoever was smoking the pipe, you know. So, but they never questioned that pot, if anybody wanted any money out of that. But it was never taken for anything foolish. It was always something that was needed. So the boys never took any money out unless what they needed. If they needed tobacco or something they'd go and get it at the store, or they'd buy it before they come home.

Jamie: What sort of work did they do?

Eliza: Well, they worked on the farm mostly, but when things were slack they'd go and work on the white man's place. They might cut wood, so much a cord. Thirty-two dollars a cord, I think it was, they got; and if there was two of them they'd share, see. Thirty-two dollars a cord, so that would mean sixteen dollars each. How they would do it is put a stick there and put a stick and fill that cord up, you know, with whatever they did.

Victor: That wasn't four foot, boy. It was sixteen inch stovewood length, already cut and split, stovewood size.

Eliza: No. Not necessarily.

Victor: No.

Eliza: No. Sometimes there'd be this tall.

Victor: Oh well, that's a true cord -- four feet long and four feet high.

Eliza: I don't know about that, I don't know anything about measurements, but I know the size they used to pile it up, you know, and it would come high. And then sometimes if they were out there around the month of February -- that was the most of the time they would be doing it. And my dad caught a raccoon and it had a beautiful... February is a beautiful month for raccoon, you know. So they skinned it and everything and they got thirty-two dollars just for that one raccoon, raccoon skin.

Victor: Yeah, I used to have a raccoon myself.

Eliza: Yeah, thirty-two dollars they sold it to somebody. They took it in some place. Of course, they stretched it and whatever they did, and it was beautiful fur. It was really pliable; you could just twist it and everything. And at that time everybody was wearing raccoon coats, and they cost seven hundred dollars. College students used to be going, "Hurray, hurray, rah, rah, rah," they'd all wear these raccoon coats. So he got good money for it. But you didn't catch a raccoon every day, you know. We were just lucky. And then he decided after he skinned it, he says to my mother, he says, "How about cooking up this raccoon?" (laughs) He says, "Let's have a try at it." And, of course, we were playing around my brother and we
stopped and we looked. Talking, you know, and, "They're going to cook it. They're going to cook it." And we went on and we saw them -- they did cook it, they roasted it, and that was the first time I ever had tasted raccoon and it was good meat. It was all black, mind you. That's why they call a coon a coon. (laughs) You know, they call the blacks a coon, and it's the same thing with the raccoon. The meat is black. There's not a piece of white meat in a racoon; it's just black, you know.

Jamie: Did your brothers ever go out trapping at all, or hunting?

Eliza: Oh yes, they did. As I said, I didn't live on the reserve that long, but I remember they did when they were young. At my mother's place, at the back of her property -- she had seventy-five acres, and there used to be a stream. They used to trap and put those traps they just set apart, you know, that way. And whatever bait they'd put on and then they'd set it. Then they'd go out the next day to see if they caught anything. And yeah, they catch beavers too.

Victor: Yeah, there would be still some around, I guess.

Eliza: Yeah, well, in our time, yeah.

Jamie: Would these have been used to sell?

Eliza: Yes, sell the pelts, yeah. And he caught I don't know what kind of a pelt he caught one time, and my mother... oh yes, I forgot to tell you that. My dad, he caught a couple of raccoons. So instead of selling the skins to the white man he stretched it and cleaned it, whatever he had to do, and my mother made a raccoon coat for my oldest brother. He's still alive; he's down there with the Six Nation. He was the only one in the family having a raccoon coat, and he used to walk like he was a big shot on the road going to church, the three o'clock service at Madina, the Baptist church. He had this raccoon coat on and he even had gloves that come up to here, you know, and he was only a little tyke like one of my grandsons, about that size. He was walking like he was some big shot with this raccoon coat, and he looked nice in it too, you know. But my mother done a good job on that raccoon coat. I don't know how many skins. It was quite wide, you know, at the sides and the belly. You don't really get much out of the bottom part. But I don't recall how many pelts she had for that to be made for his coat. But she made, as I say, a very good job. I don't remember the hat. Now I don't know what hat he had.

Victor: He didn't have a raccoon hat with a tail on the back.

Eliza: They didn't believe. No, I don't think so. That I don't remember about that part.

Victor: They call them ringtails.

Eliza: Yeah.
Victor: Only a nickname.

Eliza: I don't think he had that kind of a hat, if I remember correctly.

Victor: No.

Eliza: I don't recall that much, but I just remember the hat and the fur gloves, the fur, she just had the thumb and then come up to here, you know.

Victor: I used to wear a raccoon coat that I made up and lined the jacket.

Eliza: I have, I still have a coat; I have a buffalo coat, fur coat. I still have it. I tucked it in a bag with mothballs.

Jamie: Where did that come from?

Eliza: That was my grandfather's; he used to ride in a cutter.

Victor: Was that buffalo or bear? It was buffalo.

Eliza: It was buffalo. It's a coat, made into a coat. You've seen it.

Victor: Oh yeah.

Jamie: What is a cutter?

Eliza: Well, a horse and buggy, it's like it turns this way, you know, like that way.

Victor: It's a sleigh for the wintertimes.

Eliza: Sleigh, yeah. Oh yeah, in those days they used to always, the men used to wear buffalo robes over here, made in different things, but I kept mine. Mine is upstairs.

Jamie: And this is your grandfather on your mother's side?

Eliza: Yeah, my mother's, yeah my grandfather and my mother, my mother's father. And he always wore that coat, and I got it tucked away in moth balls. And I had a Jewish girl here staying with us here for a little while, and in the wintertime she went to school down here and she saw that coat. I thought, "Well, I'll take it out of moth balls." You know, she wore that coat to school. Yeah, she was really funny. She just grabbed it, you know. "Mrs. Kneller," she said, "I'm going to wear this coat to school." "Don't you dare lose it," I said, "if you do I'll tan your hide." "No I won't lose it." So she wore it to school. She stopped traffic. They stopped and that's what she liked. She was a show off, you know, she wanted attention. (laughs) And she went down there, all the
cars, and they looked at her as she was going down the street and it was long too, you know. Oh yeah, that Natalie, she was funny. And I said, "If you don't come home with the coat, I'll go to the school." She even wore it to school. Even the principal stopped. He stopped what he was doing. It was Mr. Annis and he said, "Natalie, what are you up to now?" He wanted to see what she had on, you know. He called her in the office, and that's what she wanted, that little rascal. So anyway she came home again. This time I watched for her, you know. So I phoned Mr. Annis. I said, "Mr. Annis, if you notice Natalie leaving, will call me?" "Sure," he said, "she's leaving now, Mrs. Kneller." So I opened the door, you know. I looked out and there I saw her coming down with this big, this buffalo coat way down to here and she was holding it like this way. She was red head, too. And I said, "Natalie, you shouldn't wear that coat to school." She says, "Well, I had a lot of fun. I stopped traffic." I said, "I can see you did. They wondered what was that coming down with the... all they could see was a little red head." (laughs) Yeah, and my grandfather used to have that.

Jamie: Do you remember your grandfather on your father's side at all? What about his people?

Eliza: No, I don't remember. He died very, very young. I think when I was three, as I've been told. But my grandfather, we stayed with him most of the time, because my mother was in the hospital in Hamilton for quite a while. So we made our home with my grandfather.

Jamie: What year would that have been?

Eliza: I don't know. We were small anyways. We were very small. I imagine 19, be in the 1900s, maybe 4, 5, 6, something like that. And he used to have bees. He had six little white houses of bees, beehives, and that was his hobby. He always had honey, you know. And we used to like to be in his house, because, as I say, he used to have these magic things, you know, a magician. And he was quite a clever man -- his name was Silas, his first name was Silas. And we never would go near the bees, and he'd always tell us it could be dangerous and we never went around there, but he'd go every day. And he'd put his hands in the beehive. He had six of them, and he'd bring out the thing and put another empty box in there, and he'd bring the honey out, see. And then maybe the next hive -- it was in the summertime that time of year -- they'd come out and swarm. And he'd always have a big mirror and he'd always go like this with the reflection, you know, and they'd go as high; and I guess the old crones [drones?] would die off, you know. I guess they'd drop dead because they couldn't compete with the young ones that's cleaning all these hives. So then he'd go like this way with his mirror and then the bees would... the reflection would bring them back down again. Then they'd go back in their hive. He always had this mirror, and
he'd bring them down and they'd go back in their hives.

Jamie: And he'd just shake it from side to side?

Eliza: Yeah, the reflection, you know.

Jamie: Because it's...

Eliza: Yeah, he'd go like that way, and then I guess they could see, I guess that was to get rid of the old crones [drones?] that didn't work, you know. And then they're very clean, the bees. I learned some things from my grandfather, was from there, you see. But he'd never let us go near so he'd always explain things to us too. If we asked he never said, "Oh get away," or "Be off," or "Haven't got the time." He always took time out for us. Anything we asked he always was there to give us an answer if he knew. And so it was always to my grandfather that we went to if we wanted to know something that was unusual, you know. He would always explain the best way he could.

Jamie: What sort of things do you remember him telling you?

Eliza: Oh, now, like for the bees, (laughs) you know, things they'd do, and what did they do in his time when he was younger, and that they had wars. And he told us one story how they tried to escape with the wolves after them.

Jamie: From where?

Eliza: Well, whatever war they were having here in Canada, escaping, you know. And the redcoats, we call them the bluecoats, and that's all...

Victor: Probably the War of 1812, I guess.

Eliza: Yeah, and he always said the bluecoats. So that always stuck with us every time, you know. You know, he'd tell us about things like that and some things I don't remember.

Jamie: Do you remember the story with the wolves? Could you tell it to me?

Eliza: Well, oh, I was bit by a wolf -- see.

Jamie: Yeah. Just below your chin there.

Eliza: It grabbed the throat -- see.

Victor: The War of 1812. No, it was 1912 not 1812, wasn't it?

Jamie: Well, in his time if he was her grandfather it would have been, probably would have been 1812, especially if he was talking about bluecoats and redcoats.
Eliza: Yeah, they always said the bluecoats.

Jamie: So what happened with the wolves and your grandfather?

Eliza: Oh, well I was asked when I was very small, like my grandson's age, I guess they thought I, just because I was short I guess they always thought I was short, but old, but I wasn't. I was short, but young. (laughs) You know, I was like a child like Jason, or Brian.

Jamie: Are those your grandsons?

Eliza: Yeah, my daughter's two boys. And so one summer day early in the morning... the night before they asked me, they said, "Take this granite pail." I never looked in it; I never knew what was in it because I wasn't asked to look in it. So anyways they told me to deliver this granite pail and to cut across and go to Springfield.

Jamie: How far was that?

Eliza: I don't know, I was only little, I still don't know. But all I remember was Springfield; so I had to leave the Six Nation, I had to cut across back of my mother's over to Beaver's. And over to Beaver's was, back of their house and you go down the hill, and that's where I cut through. And they had logs, years ago. Cut post, like you're making a fence past, was stuck in the ground in the water every so often. And on top of these posts was another one laying on top to make a trail, you know. So that's where I had to cut through in the jungle, in the bush. Well, I was only small, but I was asked to do this man's job; so I left and I had to cut through. So I walked on those. Well, the water was below, you know, and that was quite high. I don't know how I found my way there anyways, but anyways I cut through there and I had to walk on these logs on top of the... the water was beneath me and good heavens, I don't know what kind of snakes or something. But anyways I walked and I was making sure I wouldn't fall in, you know, because I was frightened but I never told them I was frightened. So anyways I walked through on these things, you know. It was quite high and the water was deep underneath, and I cut through and it seemed like I was going a long time. And I started out in the morning, it was around about this time of the day in the summertime. I thought it would never end. I thought, "Where am I going? How far is this? How much farther do I have to go?" I'd never been there before, but I remember, you see, because to me I remember things that are very unusual that happened to me in my life time. That's why I remember. If it was an ordinary things I probably wouldn't care to remember -- but this one here always frightened me, because I was very young. I crossed those logs just like Eliza on the ice, and there I was on top of that, going, you know.
Victor: It wasn't a dam was it?

Eliza: No.

Victor: No.

Eliza: It wasn't a dam, it was in the bush. I was surrounded by bush and water underneath. In those days that's how the tree grew I guess, because it was wild. And the water. There was always water underneath where there was a bushy thing, you know, and water, and here I was walking on this for a long, long time. Whoever was ingenious in those olden days knew what they were doing when they were making a track to cut through that water. I never did find out who it was because I was glad to get out of there. So I had to walk there. It was a long trek, like I was walking above the water and, you know, just a log about... just enough where I could go put my feet this way, you know.

Jamie: That would have been maybe about a foot wide?

Eliza: Yeah, yeah, that's right. Out of trees, you know, cut out. And it was done pretty nice. It must have been done way back in wartime maybe. So anyways I cut across and I was walking on there and I thought to myself, "Gee!" I'd look down, you know, I'd hear a "glunk, glunk." You know, every so often you'd hear that, different noises in that. And what I was always afraid of was a screech owl. They would only come on a clear night. So I thought, "Well, I hope I'm not here walking through this bush at that time of the night." So I thought, "Well, I better walk fast." But I couldn't walk very fast because I was walking like this way -- and I was scared that there was nobody there to help me. I still have this little pail. I never did find out what was in that damn pail that I had to go from the reserve up to Springfield; and that was long ways in those days, wherever Springfield is. But I remember, that stuck with me, you see, Springfield. So instead of going down I suppose by the road... They could have given me a horse, you know. (laughs) You know, they could have given me a damn horse and to go around on the... but the damn fools didn't. (laughs) They made me walk through the bush. So I walked through, through, through, you know, through this damn thing and oh for the longest -- seemed like for hours I was in there. Finally I saw where it was coming to an end and I thought to myself, "Boy!" you know. So finally it come, it slanted down and you landed on the ground. So I looked to see I wouldn't step on anything, you know, with my granite pail. I was still holding it up. So I got down then I had to walk some more.

Now I was on dry land which was much safer for me so I kept on walking, and finally in the distance I saw a house like a farm, you know. I saw a barn and I looked again and I saw some cows; so I thought, "This is the place I suppose I'm supposed to be coming in." So anyways I got there. By the time I reached the
house and everything they were having supper. They had a big table, people were sitting around it, and so I went in and they were so surprised to see a little girl come in. So what they did, the lady, she took me -- I don't know, maybe I was dirty, I don't know -- but she took me upstairs and gave me a nice hot bath, put nice clean clothes on me, and she carried me downstairs and she sat me at this table, long table. And people were sitting around there, you know. I don't know how many there were, but they were all looking at me, you know, and talking away. And they sat me right next to this man with an iron arm. You know, he was working there and that's the first time I ever seen one. In those days I guess when he had no arm it was a metal arm and that he moved it some way, you know, and that's how he... and I was sitting there and I was scared. I just come out of one ordeal and I had to sit beside this hired man with this iron hand; and I couldn't eat because I kept looking at him and he could move these things and use it. And, of course it was a marvel, but I didn't think of that then because I was scared, because I saw his hands moving, you know. Whatever invention he had was good. And so they gave me my supper and they were talking, they didn't pay much attention to me, you know, but I guess they'd look at me from the side once in a while and I'd be sitting there looking at that hired man with his arm. And finally they came with the dessert, and I sat with them for a while, you know, and then they took me back up to bed, and they said, I heard them say, "How many miles did she walk?" You know, they were discussing me.

Victor: You wouldn't know how many miles you walked.

Eliza: No, no they were talking amongst themselves; they weren't talking to me. But I could hear what they were saying, you know. They were saying, "Imagine that. Putting a little girl like that to come way over there to deliver that little pail of something." Whatever it was. I never did find out what was in that granite pail.

Jamie: What's a granite pail?

Eliza: It's a little... it's not aluminum.

Victor: Well, we call them galvanized.

Jamie: Galvanized.

Eliza: Galvanized, yeah. It was speckled. They were speckled blue, blue and little white dots, and it had a cover on it, you know. What was I carrying in there? I don't know. I never looked; I wasn't that nosey. I was just darn anxious to hurry up and get out of that darn forest, the bush. You know, and it was a long ways. That's when I got attacked. That's the part I didn't tell you.

Jamie: On the way?
Eliza: On the way. And I had nothing with me and all I could grab was a stick, you know. And that's what made... they fixed me up, those people, you know. I couldn't move my head. They said, "What's the matter?" So when she was giving me a bath, that's when she saw it. Because I was short, see, and so it grabbed me right away, because I was short and the dog, or the wolf there -- it was a wolf, the man said. Because they were hunting them there, the white man said. They were getting into their animals, eating their livestock, whatever he called it. And to me it could have been anything, you know, but that's when... they fixed me up there. When she gave me a bath she noticed it, see, and then they put something on it and done some things to it, you know. They didn't put a bandage on it. But I stayed there until a few days and it went away.

Jamie: Stayed there with the family?

Eliza: At their family's, yeah.

Jamie: Was your family worried about you?

Eliza: Well, they were far away. My mother was on her farm on the reserve so I don't know how many miles away I was. I know it was Springfield.

Jamie: What was the big body of water that you were crossing?

Eliza: I don't know. I didn't know because I was small, you know. I don't remember, but it was on these...

Jamie: Tressles.

Eliza: Yeah, it was all made out of wood, you know, like they cut a tree down and they put it in there. It might have been used for the redcoats, or the bluecoats or something, you know.

Jamie: Oh yeah. What was the story that your grandfather told you about escaping with the wolves chasing him?

Eliza: Yeah. His wife, him and his wife, they were coming from some place, I don't know where they were coming from. But he too... they were plentiful and I guess... I don't know whether... where he was. I don't know. I don't remember that too well, and I wouldn't want to say in case... Well, they used to escape, you know, from the white man too in his time. And they picked them up and torture them, you know. Some of the Indians, you know, from his story, the bluecoats used to skin them and make different things out of the Indians' hides. And there are some still around today. They'd skin the Indian and use his skin. There's quite a few things he'd tell me. I never thought of them until, you know, I'm talking about it now. And they were tortured too. He remembered a lot of things; same as some of the women. Mrs. Wright, when I used to
spend the time with her, she scared me one time and I almost fell out of bed.

Jamie: What did she tell you?

Eliza: Yeah, the things that happened to them, you know, in the olden days. And I spent the night with her one time around a little after Christmas, and she was telling us and how they used to have to escape too. Escaping, I guess, from the Americans -- must have been the revolution, whatever. And I guess they figured they were spies, or whatever the Americans thought. I guess it was quite rough too, if they saw you. I don't know. I don't remember too much what she told me on that. And they'd make corn bread. Oh yeah, she told me that when she used to... when they were running across the bush, or the forest in those days, because it wasn't built up, she said, sometimes they'd get chased. And then if they had their grandson or their children, sometimes their legs would be eaten off, one leg, or the toes or something as they were rushing through the bush.

Jamie: By, by wolves?

Eliza: Whatever, you know. And a lot of people say they don't attack -- but don't you ever believe it. You know, if they're getting mighty hungry, maybe they just like dark meat. (laughs) Maybe they just like the taste of Indian, good clean Indian food.

Jamie: Well, I've heard that too, that wolves would never attack a human being.

Eliza: Yeah, I've heard. Yeah, people say that. Yeah, they say that, but I think if they... something wrong with them, just temper or something, I think they would.

Jamie: Yeah, they could be rabid or something.

Eliza: Yeah, you never know. Oh yeah, a lot of people will argue on that point.

Jamie: But you don't remember the story that your grandfather told you?

Eliza: Not all of it. He used to tell us stories. They were true stories too, in his time. I guess of the War of 1812. Sometimes they'd dig a hole and they'd hide too, because the white man would kill them. You know, they just say, "A no-good Indian -- a good Indian is a dead Indian." See they would always have a saying. Or they would give them maybe, they called it, white man's way of fire water. If they wanted anything off an Indian they'd give him whiskey. And then they'd dilute that with something else. It was never always pure whiskey that they gave them; that's what make them go a little bit off their rocker. I don't mean crazy -- they get
drunk quicker. And that's what they used to mix the drinks for the Indians. And then sometimes they'd put gunpowder in there. The gunpowder that they used -- my grandfather had one, was made out of cows horns, you know, that they take off and they make a cover for it. And then they'd put their gunpowder in there, because in those days they used to use guns, not with the bullets, where you'd have to powder it in and go like this with it, you know, with a stick and put cotton batting in there and clean it, and then you'd use that. And that's what they used to give to the Indians was a little bit of that gunpowder and drive them nuts for real. That's what they used to do.

Jamie: Did your grandfather tell you that as well?

Eliza: Oh yeah. The white man always did that. They still did it. They still did it in the States too. When they had war with Custer they done the same thing to the Indians, they gave them powdered thing. Oh yeah, I guess, and then even the famous chief over there, there was three famous chiefs. And one of them was very religious; he was clairvoyant. He'd go up to the hills and he'd tell his warriors, "I'm going up to pray." They always claimed that Indians were heathens, but they really weren't. They had their own spiritual God in their way of praying. I have a book on, like my grandfather had, on Indian prayers, you know. I have it locked up... sort of it gets... some things get taken, you see, and that is very valuable to me, because it has Indian prayers.

Jamie: Is it in the Indian language?

Eliza: Not in the Indian language, it's in the English language, because Chief Joseph... I have one of Chief Joseph's prayers and Tecumseh, he was a religious man. He's another one was clairvoyant. He'd always pray. He was a religious man in his way too. So was Chief Joseph. They'd go up and he'd pray, Tecumseh always. Even Sitting Bull. Sitting Bull was religious in his own way. He'd always go up and he'd tell his warriors, "I'm going up to this little hill and I'm going to pray to our Great Spirit." And he'd go up there and he'd pray and he'd be so clairvoyant it would tell him how to... how he was going to win this war, how he was going to win it. And he'd come down after he said his prayers, he'd come down. He'd stay up there and meditate for quite a while, and then he'd come down. Then he'd tell his warriors what he was going to do, what is the best way. And that's how he knew. He got the answer and he'd always win when he done his prayers, Sitting Bull. So was Chief Joseph. They were all religious in their own Indian way, even though the white man said they were heathens, but they weren't.

Jamie: Where did you learn that?

Eliza: I always knew that. Who else is going to tell me?

Jamie: Did you read it, or did somebody tell it to you?
Eliza: Well, handed down. Well, everything with Indians it's always handed down. If you had someone that was smart enough in your family, they'd talk to you and you talked sometimes. When I'd go and visit my sister we'd sit up there two o'clock in the morning on a weekend and we'd talk.

Jamie: What sort of things did you talk about?

Eliza: Well, many things. We talked about different...

Victor: Well, Indian affairs, and...

Eliza: Yeah. We talked about different things, and then they'd be always be a circle, a ring. We'd always have a ring of people sitting around there, not only us. And we'd sit there on a clear night, you know, be nice. We'd sit there with blankets and tell stories, and sometimes somebody would get kind of a little off the beam. They'd go, leave us, you know, and they'd say they were going for a drink of water, and they'd come back and say, "BOO!" (laughs) And scare the wits out of us right in the midst of this story, but different ones had different stories. And it was always interesting, because it was always so different. And most of it is by handed down stories and by word of mouth. I mean the stories they told was always had to do with Indians, and some weird tales too were told. You know, some of them are very superstitious. Some tribes are very superstitious. I mean different parts of Canada and United States too. They tell unusual stories. They used to tell about stories they could hear horses coming down. Oh yes, another thing, talking about horses... we were taught how we could listen for miles on the road. Were you ever taught that?

Jamie: By listening to the ground?

Eliza: Yeah. And we could hear the horses. In those days it was horse and buggy days. We'd put our ear to the ground. It was not asphalt or anything, it was just dirt road, and we used go down and listen. We could hear buggies and the horses coming. You could sort of judge how many miles away they would be. So then that was one of the things we were taught too, you know, was listening to the ground. That's how the Indian warriors used to know when the redcoats were coming, or the bluecoats was coming. The white man didn't know that then; it was only the Indians that knew that.

Victor: I imagine the sound of a galloping horse would be heard farther.

Eliza: Could be, yeah, but the white man didn't know about listening to the ground. They learnt that from the Indians.

Victor: Well, in the movies they're always on the go, gallop.
Eliza: Yeah. I was in the movies too.

Jamie: You told me, yeah, in "The Last Of The Mohicans"?

Eliza: Yeah, in "The Last Of The Mohicans," my daughter and I.

Jamie: What was the part?

Eliza: Well, we were only about three or four women in the group. It was man's picture, Lon Chaney. Lon Chaney and John Hart.

Jamie: Well, was that series that was on television?

Eliza: Well, it was... I think it had thirty-six episodes on there, but the women were only in on a few. It was a man's picture, you know. But they had to use some women. All we done was get up early in the morning, they picked us up and had us in Pickering. The man that owned that farm owned the Paramount Theatres. He's the one that put on the shows. So they used to pick us up here at five o'clock in the morning, six below zero and we had to go. You had to work when it was six below, ten below zero. If it was an outdoor shot you had to work there just the same. The first time we didn't dress properly. The second time we knew. The next day we put on woolies underneath, because you're out all day, but they do give you nice meals. You know, they do give you a nice hot meal. And they were very nice people, but I didn't pursue it. I was asked, but you see you had to belong to a union too. C.R.T.C., you know, you had to belong to that. But I never. I belonged to it for a year but I dropped it. I couldn't have the time, but I would now, but now they're here, see. But when school starts it's different. And it's an easy money and an easy job. You don't do nothing.

Jamie: What did you have to do?

Eliza: Nothing very much. Just stand in the audience and tell us to do, and making like we're chopping corn, and, you know, like this thing even though...

Jamie: What is that?

Eliza: Oh this is what we do on the reserve. We have these only they're big. It's made out of a log; they cut it out.

Victor: You see, that's what they call a (inaudible).

Jamie: And that's what you mashed the corn in?

Victor: Something to do with a pestle, I guess.

Jamie: Right, sort of like a mortar and pestle?

Eliza: Yeah, but it isn't. That's a corn thing. You put your dry corn in there and you take that and you pound your
corn. You see, you hold it in the centre and you put your corn in. Then you pulverize that. The corn gets very pulverized then you make corn bread out of it.

Jamie: Yes, I've seen these up at the Huron Village.

Eliza: Oh yeah, this is from our Six Nations only we have big ones for corn bread.

Jamie: Right.

Eliza: You know, they are bigger ones. It's cut out of a tree, but no design.

Jamie: Would you actually use that size?

Eliza: Oh no.

Jamie: That's just a little model?

Eliza: It's a big one. It sits about this high.

Jamie: So that's about three feet?

Eliza: About two feet, yeah, two feet. And it's dug out like that, only a big thing there, and then you get the same thing like this -- you hold it in the centre then you pound your corn.

Jamie: Yeah.

Eliza: That's what we had to do. And your corn is dry. You have to husk it, you know, take the corn off the cob when it's dry. Then when you get enough of it then you put it in this pot, and then you pound it. And then it takes you about an hour or so, depends, you know. That was one of our jobs on the reserve when we were young. That's what we had to do was do the corn. And then after it's all finished you put it in a bowl and then you make corn bread out of it, because the corn bread and corn soup was made. The warriors used to run for miles on the corn bread. He's had corn bread. It sticks with you doesn't it?

Victor: It's awful, it's good (inaudible). I couldn't eat much of it.

Eliza: No, it's heavy.

Jamie: It's very dense isn't it.

Eliza: It's very heavy, because it's pure corn, because it's chopped, because that's all the Indians had in the olden days. The men could run for miles on that corn, you know, if they were running, which they did, from maybe from one Longhouse to the other. You know, the Longhouses were in the olden days
was where many families lived in. That's why they called it the Longhouse. But today the Longhouses where they hold maybe a dance, a traditional dance, or a feast of some kind, Feast of the White Dog, which is in February. And they don't eat on the dog, but a lot of white folks think they do in there, but they don't. They just call it that; it's just a name. And so therefore, I mean, that's when they eat a lot of the corn bread and corn soup. And they mix it with pork, or ham, whatever. They put that in there and they boil the corn. In fact, how they used to do it was get a bushel of corn, which was handmade, maybe bigger than that basket underneath the table there. Maybe a little larger than that. And they would put the corn in there, and then they put the ashes in there, see, from the wood stove. Then they would put the corn in there, and wash it with ashes and then they'd go down to the river, whatever they had, and then they'd wash it you know with ashes, and that would make them real, real white corn. It would turn really white, and I guess it softens them too, I think. I think there are a lot of reasons why they did that, and then they'd wash it really clean. Then they'd come back and then they have a piece of ham, or certain kind of pork, they'd put it in a big pot, and then they'd add the corn in there and make corn soup -- and it's really nice. He's had it, but he says it sticks with you. When he has it he doesn't want nothing else to eat.

Victor: Oh, there's so much to it. It's a solid meal.

Jamie: Filling.

Eliza: Yeah that's why in the olden days that's why the men...

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