Jamie: This is Tape JL 82.4, the date is July 23, 1982. I am interviewing Mrs. Eliza Kneller. My name is Jamie Lee.

Jamie: You were telling me, Mrs. Kneller, last time we talked, that you were from quite a large family. Was it nine? Where do you fall in the sequence of the children?

Eliza: Oh, I was second from the eldest.

Jamie: Second.

Eliza: My sister passed away though. Her picture is up there. She passed away in '71, and she was the eldest. And, of course, I was next. We did have another one but he died at I don't know how old, but anyways I was the second oldest.
Jamie: Did you live all nine together as a family for a long time?

Eliza: No, no you see our father died and my mother was single for quite a while. She was a widow. A widow I guess you call them. Then she remarried again so we had a stepfather. So with that family, he had six. I think they were seven in that family. One passed away, as I said, and so my sister and I were the ninth, eighth and ninth. So really there was just with one gone, two of them gone, I guess, would make it seven of us now. And I wasn't home too much with the younger family, because I was at school. And then my sister, when I got old enough, she thought I was old enough to go and work. And my brother-in-law, George, and her came out and they brought me some clothes that they bought and they said, "It's time you left home and go and work. You don't want to hang around home here working on the farm." So they brought me back to Toronto and I got a job here.

Jamie: That was for the doctor?

Eliza: Yeah, Doctor McCullough, and I worked there. So now I was oriented to the white man's world, you see. So it wasn't the trying days for me. To me it was a new experience, getting away, because I'd always been on the reserve on the Mohawk. So I got used to living amongst the white folks, you know. They were kind to me. I mean everybody that I met was very good to me, and it was a new experience and it was exciting too. And you didn't get much wages in those days; I only got about $25 a month. And the wages, men worked for $18 a week, the one in an office. Maybe a mechanic might make $25 a week. The wages were very, very small, but also rents weren't that high either. You could get a whole house for $20 or $25 a month in that period of time.

Jamie: What year would that have been?

Eliza: Oh, I don't remember. It was after World War II anyway. World War I, rather, because that started in 1916, or '14, '15. Up to '18 anyways. The war was over in November, and I was just... And then we had the smallpox epidemic, you know, on the Nation and around Ontario. But the Indians seemed to have got it first then anybody else. So at the time they rushed, the government rushed and they gave everybody vaccinations, you know. And that took a few months, but they hurried it up just so they wouldn't... it was, I guess it was very bad time, but I don't remember too much of it, but I just remember the vaccinations.

Jamie: And that was before you came to Toronto?

Eliza: Oh, that's when I was very small, like him.

Jamie: At Number Seven?

Eliza: No, at the Mohawk.
Jamie: The Mohawk.

Eliza: Yeah, the Mohawk school. So that's where they rushed to and they also rushed on the Six Nation to vaccinate the ones that were down there. So then I was at the Mohawk Institute then, and we used to go to school four hours, like nine to twelve, and the rest of the time they would teach us sewing or whatever you had to do. And it was always go to school half a day and work the other half. Then maybe the next week you would go, if you worked in the afternoon you went in the morning. So it was reversed, you know. And there was about seventy-two or seventy-five girls there at all times from various different reserves that would come to the Mohawk.

Jamie: Were they all Six Nations?

Eliza: No, no, that's what I say, from different reserves they were all from... No, they weren't all from Six Nation. They covered the whole area of different reserves, so they would come there to school. Their parents would bring them. Sometimes... it really was started out as one parent. See, if she was widow then there was a place for the children to go to school. But after a period of time, not too long, then everybody brought their children there to school, and we lived there day and night. We got summer holidays in July and August -- if you were fortunate to have parents. And if you didn't you stayed at school; you had your holidays at the Mohawk Institute. So then the ones that went home to where they came from on the reserve they went back. Then they'd come back maybe in September, or the end of August. You always had to be back before the school term opened. Some of them didn't come back, they stayed home. So they went to the schools right on the reserves, but we were always brought back.

It was my sister, my oldest sister that passed away, she didn't want to go back one summer. So my dad says, "Okay, if you don't want to go back you don't have to." So she didn't go back. So she stayed home and then she came to the city of Toronto and she got a job here, worked in Toronto and met other girls that were at the same school too, this Mohawk school the same as she was, but they were in her age group. So they were all friends, you know, and they chummed around together so they were company for one another. There wasn't too many Indian people at that time in the city. So the young women they stuck together. They went out together and they didn't have the Indian Club in those days, because there wasn't that many, but the girls used to work whatever jobs they could get.

And then after a few years when I was home, I was very young, and then my sister came home with a club bag full of clothes, clothes that she brought that would fit me. And they were new, you know, and she says, "Now it's time for you to come out and work too. It's time you earned your living." So my brother-in-law, George, and her, they came down with an old Oberland. In those days they used to have Oberland cars, you know, the
top would come down. So he had that type of car. He came and picked me up on my mother's, and they drove me back to Toronto.

So I stayed with them. They have a two bedroom all on the one floor, and I stayed with them. I had a nephew, Teddy, and he was very small then, about two years old or something. So her and I, we used to go out with the baby buggy. She'd put him in the buggy, in the stroller, and we'd go out and we'd try to find a job for me.

And I wasn't really trained to do very much, because they didn't train us at the school. They never thought of things. They weren't advanced, you know. It was just going to school for a half a day and then you sewed in the afternoon, and that was about it. And then they taught you how to do the laundry and if you were fortunate, well, you alternated. So sometimes you'd be in the sewing room and another time you'd be in there ironing starched clothing, you know, for the boys. And then maybe another time you would be in the sewing room. They sewed the boy's clothing too. I mean new pants and stuff. You know, some women would be there. They'd cut them out and then, of course, the girls would have to, on the sewing machine, learn how. And some would baste them up for to be ready for the girls that was learning how to sew. So that's how they manufactured their own clothes at the Mohawk. Sewing the new pants. And then one time we sew them but we sewed the wrong (laughs); legs, you know. We sewed the opposite to the other so we had to unrip the whole thing again. Well, Naomi did a good job all right. We done a lot, but they were all sewn the wrong way. So there was always something. She was always too busy sitting there, you know, and she, the sewing teacher, always had a red dress on. Wasn't red, it was like a peach color, you know, and it's the same dress she wore about five days a week. And that's all she ever did, but she wasn't a very good teacher; so we used to make a mess out of our sewing, then we'd have to do it over again. But most of all she'd teach us how to darn so if you didn't want to learn how to sew she gave you the darning. So we'd have to darn socks, I guess, for the boys -- their socks and stuff.

Jamie: These were boys that were at the school as well?

Eliza: Boys and girls were both there. The boys weren't as many as the girls. Maybe the boys were sixty and the girls would always be seventy-four or seventy-five girls on the girls' side. We had dormitories, large dormitories. And the boys did. On the other side of the same building, that's where the boys were. And we could never look at the boys. No, not even in the classroom -- it was forbidden.

Jamie: But they had the same classes as you?

Eliza: We had the same classes. Like, the boys sat on the one side and the girls sat on the other side, and the teacher would sit in the centre. We wouldn't dare look at this way and smile, you know. So anyways, there was one girl there, her
name was Elsie. She was from a Raven town, from a Raven Reserve; and she liked this guy. He was a cute guy. His name was Michael, and so she wrote him this letter. She wrote him a little note, you know. So when the boys were sitting on that side and she was sitting on this side, she threw the note. They were looking and smiling at one another, so she wrote the note and threw it. And the teacher saw, saw the note go across. I guess she just looked there at the proper time, not that she was expecting the note; so she made them bring up the note. And you know, to the embarrassment to both of them, on the Monday night they called the whole class in. It was a night time and so they called the seniors and the juniors all together. They filled up this large room of the classroom and they read that letter to everybody -- instead of dealing with it alone for her, or them, they read the letter to the whole class. And I guess that's what he did it for is to embarrass them. And there was nothing in the letter, you know. The only thing bad about it, as he thought, was "Dear Pie Face," you know, and then of course there was nothing else in it. But that was the only endearment she had that she said was "Pie Face." And of course that stuck with him. Every time they saw him -- Pie Face. (laughs) You know how it is when the young, a nickname will stick with you. And so the little incidents like that at the school, in boarding school. But knowing it as it was it had its good points, and it also had its bad points. I think that at that period of time, I think the children should have been left with their parents. I mean, I don't think the truant officers should have come around and picked up the children and put them at the Mohawk. Because it was really funding. You know, the more children they had the more funding they got for the school.

Jamie: So was that virtual kidnapping then, just taking these children?

Eliza: Well, they didn't call it that. They just, you know, their argument was that the children were never at school. Well, I think they were at school, but maybe they didn't go regular. I don't know. I can't speak for the rest, I can just speak for our family, for my family, for my mother. And my mother, she always had us out berry picking time, which is over, but there was always cherry picking time, and there was always something else, you know. So that continued for the summer. From the time we came out of summer, summer holidays, we were either out pulling flax... As I mentioned to you before, it grows like wheat and it grows very thin and you can just pull it; it comes out very easy. And well, we used to be out pulling flax someplace, $42 an acre. It took you a week to pull an acre of flax so I didn't have an easy life. But it didn't do me any harm, it just showed me that life wasn't easy. We knew what work was, I mean, at a very early age. Well, they used to give me a box, when I was a smaller than him, to make bread. I used to stand on a wooden box to reach the table and make my bread. So I wasn't deprived of bread making. I mean, they gave me a stool or a box. I'd stand on
there and they gave me the stuff on the table and I'd make the bread, you know. And I learnt how to bake bread when I was very, very young; so that didn't stop them from depriving me of knowing how to make bread, you know. And so I was taught things like that. It was a necessity, I guess.

The women in my time we were taught how to make baskets, like that was supposed to be our job, like making baskets and we'd have to pound the log, the hickory or whatever it was. And the back of an ax, not the sharp edge, that back part of it, we'd stand it on where you cut the wood and you always had a space if you lived on the reserve, you know. Then you hold your log there. Well, we would have to pound that log and it would be sometimes this big around. We'd have to go straight down and pound it with the back of a big ax and pound it. And finally, eventually that would split. Each strand would come up and then you pull it and you skin the log then; now you've got that piece off. Then you keep on doing it and then you get quite a bit. Then you take it in the house and now you have a certain type of knife, maybe could be a kitchen knife, some kind of a knife -- not what you eat with -- it may be a utility knife or something. Then you scrape it like this. Then it comes shiny, you know, then you keep pulling it and you keep doing it all the way down, and then you turn it over and you reverse it, and you still do that with this strand. It's always about this wide, you know.

Jamie: About an inch and a half?

Eliza: Yeah. And then if you were making the basket -- I used to be able to make baskets -- so then you do that. You scrape it and clean it and it gets really shiny, you know, very, very... then you know it was ready. Then after you got a bunch of those, handful or whatever, then you already formulate in your mind what type of basket you're going to make, by these things. And then, of course, you just lay them down, you know, then you do every other one. And then when you do all the bottom part -- if you're going to make a small basket you make that much -- then you turn the edges up. Then you just go all the way around again and you press it down as you go along. You're continuously doing that until you get to the top. Now the man around the house, your father or your brother, whoever it is, they'd go and get the hickory. Yeah, that's what you use. Then, he knows what kind of basket, he gets that for you. Then you have to... it's pliable and you can bend it yourself as you go along. Then the thinner part you just roll it around like, you know, you go in and out like you would with wool. And oh, sometimes we used to buy the thing, we used to call it Majenti. I don't know if that's an Indian or not, but you mix it and you get a little brush or a rag. If you didn't have the brush you put it on with a rag. You dip it and then you paint maybe the top part. Maybe you saved one strand, maybe you saved the widest part. If you wanted to make it fancy then you'd paint that first. Then when it dries, then when you come to that part, then you add that part and that's how they paint the
baskets. Sometimes you might see a basket that's painted, and that's how they would do it. But now I guess the paints are different, you know, but the paints we used to use in the olden day was called Majenti.

Jamie: Yeah, I've heard the word too.

Eliza: Yeah, I don't know. I didn't look too much about it, you know, but we used to mix it and paint it. Then it would make the basket colorful then. If you had one strand around there and if you want to put two on, two narrow strips, that would be fine -- it depended on the individual how they wanted their baskets to look. And then after we had several baskets, maybe six or seven, we'd keep them and then we'd hook up our horse and buggy...

(Interruption as grandchild leaves.)

Eliza: Anyways that's how. And then after we got several baskets it -- we'd never make a trip with just two or three -- we always managed to have whatever we had and then we'd go, hook up our horse and buggy, then we'd go. Then we'd always go around the white man's side. It was several miles up this way. We'd have to start out quite early in the morning. So then the white folks used to buy the baskets and if they didn't have the cash on hand then they would barter. Well, maybe they'd say, "Would you like this piece of bacon?" They'd give us a great big piece of bacon about that long and about that, and then they'd smoke it. I guess they'd do it themselves still.

Jamie: How big would that have been?

Eliza: Be about this big.

Jamie: About a foot and a half?

Eliza: Oh, I guess so. I don't know the measurements. I guess it would be about that and about that wide, maybe this square all the way around, you know. So it was always nice. I don't know how they ever smoked it, but it was always delicious. And so we would barter. Whatever they had we would trade. In those days the Indians used to trade, see, and if the people didn't have money they'd say, "Well, I'll barter, I'll trade with you." So then they would trade, you know; my mother always traded.

Victor: Yeah, bartered, trade, that's it.

Eliza: Yeah, and sometimes they would give her, "Well, how much do you want for the basket?" My mother would look at it for a while, you know. She was wondering how much she should charge; maybe she would say $2. It was really worth much more, but at that time in the olden days was much cheaper. You had to sell your wares cheap. So then she would barter and trade; that's what they would do. And then she'd come home with some
things. And we'd get out of the buggy, you know, look around. I'd stay outside looking around, because every farm was always different in the white man's, you know. And then they'd show you around. They'd have a swing there, you know, while they were busy doing whatever they were doing and then she'd come out with some things. And then one place we went she traded for sunbonnets. They used to wear these old-fashioned sunbonnets. It was made out of straw this way and right at the back here, at the back part was cotton. So she got a couple of those one day for her trade and, of course, that one was for me and one was for my sister; so she got two. She didn't pay for... that was bartered too. So she got... these people used
to have these hats so they gave her two hats for myself and they were quite nice. They would come right out the straw, and back here was cotton and you tied it, of course, here, you know. There were a lot of little things that they used to do, you know, trade.

Jamie: So where were the white people living that they would trade with?

Eliza: Well, you'd have to go off the reserve, see. You'd have to, as I say, we used to get up early in the morning. If she had things to do we'd get the horse and buggy ready and we'd put the hay, little bit of feed, or a little feed bag of the horse, and we'd put maybe a little bit of oats in there or wheat, whatever. Whatever my dad had, well, he would put it back in the buggy. See, there was always a place at the back about this wide, you know, behind this seat there was always this big. And when we were smaller they used to put straw underneath there and we used to lay underneath there when they were driving. If we were late at night, like, you know, ten o'clock, there was no street lights or nothing; it was dark. Well to us it was very late even if it was eight o'clock. It was past our bedtime, because we'd go to bed as soon as it got dark. The oil lamps. We had no electricity; it was always oil lamps. And so in the buggy they always had straw. Then the top of the... where the dashboard is -- here's the dashboard and they'd always have a board across in front of the dashboard, and we would be sitting here like I'm facing you. We would be sitting on the little piece of board and we'd be facing our parents while they were driving, you see, and we'd be facing them. And the horse, we could touch the horse right behind here, you know, but which we never did.

And so that's how we used to get around and if we were going into Brantford from her house, as I've told you before, it was always four o'clock. We had to be ready by four-thirty, because it would take us hours to go on those country roads -- now it takes you just half an hour. But in those days if it was a heavy rain or anything and the roads dried up, it was hard for the narrow wheels of the buggy, you know, going through there. Because they was rough roads; they didn't pave them in those days. Or if they did have a road scraper maybe they scraped it, but if a rain came it was still rough roads
and muddy roads.

And so it used to take us that long to get back and forth. But she always bartered for her stuff. Baskets, it was mostly baskets. She didn't make blankets or anything like that. She made quilts, handmade quilts out of old clothing. And sometimes the white people would give her clothes for the quilts, you know, things that they didn't want, and she'd cut them up or we would cut them up, whatever design she had. It was mostly we always just cut the squares, you know. And of the squares she could, she was making a blanket, a quilt, she would face them any way she wanted, you know, triangle, or this way, and then each one. That's why they get the different designs. And so that was really our job was to cut them out sometimes for her, you know.

Jamie: Did you do these things when you were home from school in the summer?

Eliza: We were always berry picking and flax picking. You know, as I mentioned to you before. And there wasn't much to do. She always had her own garden -- cucumbers, and her own potatoes and stuff. The women in our family, we always had to look after our own garden. You had a certain amount of garden around near the house so you could go out there and dig up your potatoes, and go and get your corn and it was always a vegetable garden. And we were allowed to grow anything we wanted. We had a plot of land and, you know, they didn't give us very big, because we were only children, we might fool around with it. But they gave us anything we wanted to plant, you know, just to learn what we were doing. They didn't tell us what to do, or how to do it. They just said, "If you want that land, learn how to do something, because some day you may have to learn." So we used to get mostly popcorn and we'd plant it. You plant it like corn, you know. So it comes up like corn only it's smaller. So that's what we planted was the popcorn. I never saw popcorn grow and the reason why I grew popcorn was the trading. The one place that my mother traded baskets for they threw in a few ears of popcorn. They're just little, but they're like corn, you know. So they said, "Let the children grow these." They figured we would eat popcorn, see. And so when we got home we did. We planted the popcorn and it grew up like corn -- it was our first experience too. So when it grew we popped corn, and we never had popcorn previous to that, because we never ate what you call junk food, what they call junk food. It was always vegetables, and fresh vegetables and we grew our own, you know, on the farm. So we never had to buy anything.

The only thing my mother used to buy was sugar, maybe. Not even flour, because we would go with the horse and buggy to the mill and we would take a bushel of wheat and the mill would grind it up and we'd get a flour out of it. So we'd go to the mill and they'd put it in a clean white bag and that was our flour; so we used to go to the mill and have our own flour. And we had our own oatmeal. We used to take the oats down and
they'd grind that up like they did with the flour, and we'd have our own oatmeal; so we always had oatmeal. I was practically raised on oatmeal, because even at the school -- we called it the mush hole. (laughs) Because we always had oatmeal too. So nothing changed from the farm to the residence school. And there was a lot of other things we did on the farm. Of course, we had our own apples. And we didn't have no refrigerator, not in those days, not an ice box neither. So we would have a granite pail, they used to make granite pails in those days, and we'd put our stuff in the granite pail and put a long rein on it, or a long rope, and we'd put it down in the well -- and that's how our butter and stuff used to be kept the way it should be. It was down in the bottom of the well. Anything we had we would put it down in the well.

Jamie: Could you put meat down there as well?

Eliza: Oh yeah. Because the water was icy cold, see. The deeper the well the colder the water. You didn't need to add half ice water in your glass, because the water was cold enough. But if you had another kind of water, well of course it wouldn't be just the same, you know, but that's how we used to keep some of our stuff cold was in the well. And the apples, of course, in the fall, which would be the Spys and another kind -- greenings I think it was. I've never seen another Greening tree around like that no matter what orchard I go to. I guess they didn't have it any more; that was a long time ago. I don't think they produce trees like that. Anyways we used to make a pit outside. My dad used to dig a deep pit going where it gets just, like I told you before, digging like a grave, deep, deep, deep. And then he would put straw underneath on the flooring, on the ground, and then we'd put apples in it. We'd make sure that the apples were not spoiled in any way. They had to be perfect. And you couldn't go and shake a tree to get the apples down, you had to hand pick. We had to hand pick them so... And then he would put them down and put straw over them continuously until it got up, and then he would cover the load of straw the top, then he'd cover it all up with dirt. So that would stay there all winter until coming around April or May then they'd dig them up again. They'd remove the top layers. And then my mother again would get in her horse and buggy and then we'd peddle our apples in the six quart baskets. And then we'd cover the whole reserve. Well, it's a big reserve, you couldn't cover the whole reserve, but we'd cover certain parts. And everybody would go for these apples, because they were so crispy and so juicy and nice, because they were coming from the good earth, you know. And so again another time we would go again and peddle some more apples only take a different concession and everybody would buy those apples, you know, because they didn't have apples themselves and she was very unique. We were the only ones that ever buried our apples, but nobody knew how we kept them crisp. I don't think she ever told anybody. You know, I don't think nobody knew how we... how they were, but they used to buy them. She didn't have no trouble selling them.
Jamie: And these were Indian people that would buy them?

Eliza: Oh yeah. That's what I mean covering the reserve. We didn't cover all of it, but different concessions, roads, you know. But the amount of apples you could carry in a buggy wasn't that many. But she would always want the money. If they didn't have the money she'd say, "I'm sorry you have to have the money." And if they said, "We'll pay you next week," she says, "Oh no, the apples will be gone and no money." You know, she believed she should have her money, because apples is what you can eat, you know, and if they haven't got it it's gone, too bad. So she would never leave the apples. But they'd always go in the house and scrounge their money up and come and give it to her. It was just that maybe they didn't have enough or something but they always... You met a few that was like that, you know, otherwise saying jewing them down; but my mother would never be jewed down. You know, she always wanted her money, but they felt they would always tell her a long tale that they didn't have. But even if she was driving away then they'd come out with the money. Oh, we have some Indians like that, you know, they would try. They weren't always... In those days there wasn't old age pension either. So I guess what money they had they wanted to keep it, because they felt that maybe apples wasn't that important; they could do without, you know. So it was always little things like that. We were always doing something, you know. Pounding logs for the baskets and it was a hard job; you swung your ax all day long, you know. If you didn't want to do it in the afternoon, well, she had enough there then to work on to keep her busy for a couple of days, you know. But she was busy making baskets and we were busy pounding the logs.

Jamie: Did you ever have any time just to amuse yourselves, spare time?

Eliza: Well, that was the amusement to us. (laughs) That was work and play. No, we never went around playing. My dad did fix wagon wheels, the wagon, and he put some kind... He put spokes in the ground and it would pivot; so that was like we'd hang onto it and we'd run around with it, you now, and then the last one that was swinging it would sit on the last. And then maybe the other one would take their turn and they'd swing the wagon. I don't know how he did it, but it was sitting and it was going around, you know. He was smart in things like that too. So he made that for us to play, but mostly we were back in the bush trying to ride the cows. And we'd pick up the horses that was back there, and we'd pull them on the mane and ride the horses back in the bush. So I guess that was a lot of amusement to us. We had a lot of fun out of it anyways, but we could never touch the horses on Sundays.

Jamie: Why is that?

Victor: Well, you'd ride them bareback, eh?
Eliza: Well, on Sundays we couldn't, because my dad said, "Those horses needs a rest because they worked all week, so don't touch them, not to ride them." The work horse anyways, the Clydes, he would never let us touch those horses at all. He says, "They need their rest." Now if he used them on like Monday through Saturday, well, we could ride the horses back while they were harnessed up working if we wanted to. That was fine, but not on Sunday. He felt he needed a rest and the horses needs a rest. Don't bother with them, you know.

But we did have one horse, Flossie we called her. She was a shiny black horse and she was a mean bugger. She would always kick up her legs. She wasn't that mean until my brother got smart and he used to take a long piece of stick and go like this way to her, you know, and he got her cross. We used to catch him at it. That's my brother Alton, the one, the evangelist. And he used to do little silly things like that, you know. He thought it was a great kick. He was a spoiled monkey anyways. They say horses don't know their colors --

this horse did -- he didn't like red. Anything red he would jump right away, any other color didn't bother him. You could show him the blue, nothing. So one day I had a red corduroy tam on so I come along. I was so high, you know, and I heard my sister say, the one that, she says, "Take off your hat, she's going to get you." I said, "Oh, Flossie won't do that." "You'll find out. Stay away, stay away." Oh I went up in the air there and I got to playing around and finally I went in front of the horse. Her head was that way and of course her rear end was this way, and I was near the head and I forgot about, you know, and she turned around with her head, like this way and she turned around and she bit me right here. Just because of the red hat, just because of the red hat.

Jamie: On your knuckles she bit you?

Eliza: Yeah, took the skin off. It's kind of gone but you could always see the little scar there. And lucky it didn't get me on the vein then. Of course, my vein wasn't sticking up in those days, but lucky she didn't get me. But she just turned around, she just turned her head so damn quick and got me because of that color of a hat I had on. So when I went around her after that I never wore that hat. She says, "I told you she didn't like that color." And that's stupid, because to other people you'd say that was stupid, but that horse knew that color. You couldn't even put it in front of her or anyplace, she just didn't like it. But you put blue, or anything else, it didn't bother her, green, you know, but just that one color. I don't know whatever happened to her. Whatever happened to her maybe when it was young, I don't know. I was forewarned anyways, but I didn't obey, you know. So then, and I told you about this.

Jamie: About the wolf.

Eliza: Yeah, and people say they don't attack you. I was
going through that bush with a granite pail, I never did find out what was in that granite pail, and I had to cross this godforsaken place.

Jamie: You told me, yeah, with the logs across.

Eliza: All the way I had to climb and I was scared stiff. And how do I know whether water moccasins were in there, or any other kind of... because I'm deathly afraid of the snakes too, you know. But I didn't slip and fall.

Jamie: And did the wolf attack you while you were on the logs then?

Eliza: No, no, that's when I was on the forest. It was wild and wooly in those days. That's why they had that thing crossing the water. I don't know. Yeah, just with a little granite pail, and I never know what was in there. Maybe it might have been a lot of money in there. (laughs)

Jamie: What did your parents tell you when they sent you off?

Eliza: They never said a thing. They said, "Deliver this to so and so. You go across to Springfield and you go there and you can't miss it. You come to the clearing and that's their house." They never told me what for or nothing.

Victor: And that was the right place you went, eh.

Eliza: Yeah, I got to the right place all right.

Jamie: Springfield is a long way away. That's about...

Eliza: Yeah, I guess it was, but I made it. I got there when it was dark and they were quite shocked those white folks; they didn't like it.

Jamie: How long were you away?

Eliza: Oh, I was gone for a whole day. I started out way hours early, oh yeah.

Victor: What did you eat all the way?

Eliza: Didn't eat a thing. Eating wasn't my pastime. My pastime was to get to the place and that was all that was on my mind, you know. I didn't stop to fool around or look at anything. I might have. I don't remember that part, nothing exciting anyways. But I just had to do what I had to do until things happened to me, that's all. You know, it was an experience anyways. Took me all day. It was all nothing but field, bushes, and bushes, and that's all that I remember. It's a long ways now that I think of it, but when you're a child you don't think at the time. Time doesn't mean nothing. You know, you don't have a watch to worry about the time.
You're just told to do something and that's it.

Jamie: Were you with the Number Seven school at that point?

Eliza: No, I was much younger then. I don't think I was going to school then; although, those white people wanted me to get to school there. They offered, I remember that part, but I didn't feel right in the white man's world. I didn't feel... I didn't feel like I had to be there. You know, I just didn't. Oh, I suppose... I did go to the school. Yeah, I went there and I saw all those white faces there instead of looking at brown faces -- this time I saw white. Yeah, I did go down there for a couple of days, and I didn't like it.

Jamie: This was at the school of the people in Springfield?

Eliza: Yeah, I went there for a couple of days.

Victor: Springfield?

Eliza: Yeah. And I didn't like the school, because they were all strange to me. But mind you, they were good to me, you know, all those. They were all in the one classroom too, and I sat in the second seat from the front.

Victor: You were in the schoolhouse then.

Eliza: I don't remember that.

Victor: Well, you said you sat in the second seat.

Eliza: It was in the schoolhouse but in the second seat, but I didn't stay there long because I didn't like it. I didn't enjoy myself there. I was a novelty too, you know. I was like on exhibition. That's how I felt, like they were all gawking at me. They were all very nice to me, mind you. They hung around me, you know, and want me to play their games, whatever they had outside for those two days. I don't know, it just wasn't my setting somehow or other. And then finally I left. What was her name? Mrs. Mundy, I think it was. I think the people that I was staying with was, name was Mrs. Mundy.

Jamie: And these are the people to whom you took the pail?

Eliza: Yeah, Mrs. Mundy. I remember now, Mrs. Mundy. And he had a lot of land, and that rings a bell. I had to think for a while. Her name was Mrs. Mundy and Mr. Mundy. They had no children of their own, and they had a hired man, of course, but he had a lot of, as I say, a lot of bush. And sometimes the Indians would come and cut wood for him. He'd hire maybe one or two and then he would... Not far away there was, not far away from his home -- I couldn't tell you how far that would be -- there was a sawmill and his wood... He used to go over to the sawmill, you know, and they drove me over there one day. I went with the woman, Mrs. Mundy. She was a big woman.
And she took me for a walk. She said, "Would you like to see the...?"

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Jamie: You were telling me, Mrs. Kneller, about going to see the sawmill.

Eliza: Yes, they had a sawmill on their own property and they owned a lot of, I guess, trees and stuff that the men used to cut down. They didn't have too many there, but they had this big outdoors in the sawmill was a big machine and they'd take these logs and they'd put them in and it would slice them up. And the noise it used to make, it used to kind of frighten me, you know, but I would never tell them that it frightened me. But I'd stand around and I was curious, because I'd never saw this large machine, wheel that cuts this thing, you know, and sliced them. And they'd have a lot of lumber piled up. I guess that was his business was the lumber business. Because he did have large trees there.

And so then a few days later he went and got my father to come over there and work for him. This was after I'd been there a couple of days. I think he asked me, was my dad working or something; so I must have told him that he wasn't. I must have told him something, you know, like a child would. So I must have told that he wasn't. So anyways he went around there and he asked me if I want to go home, and I said, "No." I wanted to stay a little longer. And so he brought my dad over, so he started working for him. So now he was out in the forest cutting these great big trees down. And then there was another man, another Indian man with him. He brought another man with him, so those two worked as partners. They had a long saw with two handles at the end; so they sawed. They didn't have the... they have now. So they sawed these trees down, and whatever they had to do. And then when they cut all the branches off, now that was ready for the mill, for the man, you know, for his on his property. So I don't know how much his wages are, but they had houses there. They had one or two houses there that was given to the men that worked there. So now he could go home whenever he was able to bring my mother back, see. So I stayed there. I stayed with the lady, Mrs. Mundy, and so on the weekend, Sandy, my stepfather, my father, he went back and he brought my mother back. So now we were all there, the whole family was there, my brother, and my sister. There's two girls and my brother then; and so we used to always play around, you know. And so they were there for quite a while it seemed to me, I guess until the job got finished and that took quite a while. And the wages then was $36 a cord. I remember because they talked about the $36, $36. So I figured that was the $36 for the cord they got. So sometimes they'd do two cords, or maybe one cord. It depends on the size of the trees and how they felt like
working, I guess. And so we enjoyed ourselves there, or rather we did, because it was something different from the reserve. And then that's when they tried to put us into their school; that's when we went. My brother was too small then to go so he played around.

And then my dad made bow and arrows for us. He made my two oldest. Didn't give any to my brother because he was like Jason and Brian. He was too young to have it, so in case he done damage. So he made one for my sister and I. So we used to go out with bow and arrows. And at that time there was flying squirrels they had. You don't see them any more. And in his bush there was, and we used to go get after them, you know. And we used to practise with our bow and arrows. Fix it up, go out there, pull it with your left hand and nobody would say anything to us. We killed song birds, you know. And so one day my sister said to me -- we killed this whatever kind of bird it was -- she says, "Let's eat it and see what it tastes like." I said, "No." She says, "Come on." I says, "Okay." You know how you agree. So anyways we start feathering it like a chicken. (laughs) I remember that, you know. I don't know what kind of a bird it was and there we were, you know, doing that. We threw the feathers down. We'd look around once in a while, see if our family wasn't around. And then we start doing it and we cooked it, we cooked it.

Victor: Well, was it dark meat?

Eliza: Oh yeah, there wasn't no white meat on there. So anyways, that stove would always be on in the house, you see, the fire was always continuously burning. So we said, "How should we put it in?" So we just put it in the pan and shoved it in the oven. And so it was such a little thing, it didn't take long to cook. No, it didn't take long to cook this little one. So we took it out and we washed the pan on the pump, you know, and then we run in the fields. So let's try -- we just give it a taste and we just threw it to the dog. (laughs) But it was something that we were doing and tried out, you know. That's all. It was just for trying.

Victor: Was it a small bird like a robin size?

Eliza: I couldn't tell you what kind it was, like we were just shooting with bow and arrow. And then that's when we got it, you know. It was a good shot. I don't think it was me. I think it was my sister that got it. And then we'd always be in the bush there. There was a lot of bush. We'd be there shooting at anything we could with our bow and arrows. The main thing was we'd have to run after the arrow afterwards, you know, but we didn't mind that because we didn't think of that. We were just thinking about the fun we were having. And they made it specially for us; one for her, and one for me, you know -- it was a good one too. So finally, anyways, we finally got into an accident with it one day. Then that finished that -- they took it away from us, put it in the fire. That was the end of our bow and arrow. We didn't have it any more after
that. Oh, I guess we disobeyed something and done something with it. I don't remember. They took it away and burnt it. So they said to us, "No more bows and arrows for you two." So that was it. And then we had other things then to play with, you know.

Victor: You never got a flying squirrel, you never shot one, eh?

Eliza: Never shot one. Bow and arrow we had. Oh no. It was one of those things that you never see again anyways.

Victor: Oh, the days of the flying squirrel are gone.

Eliza: Oh yeah, there wasn't very many and the white man used to take it for their... they done that, not the Indians. And then also my dad got a raccoon, I told you that.

Jamie: Oh, you told me that story, yeah.

Eliza: On February it was. They come out in February. That's when their furs are the nicest, their coat. Yeah he got $32 for the one skin, you know. It was beautiful.

Jamie: How long did you stay with the Mundys then?

Eliza: Oh, we were there all winter. Yeah, we were there all winter.

Victor: Well, after you got in touch with your family and your father, stepfather come...

Eliza: Well, we were in their bush.

Victor: Yes.

Eliza: They were working there.

Victor: Oh.

Eliza: But I went to school and stayed at her house, because they wouldn't send me to school so I had to stay with Mrs. Mundy. She was responsible for the Indians, see. So her responsibility was us, to see that we were in school, and to get acquainted with other young people so they could show us, walk to school. So that was the idea, I guess. So they made us feel right at home. It was nice. They were nice people. Oh yeah, I can't say anything against them. They were kind. Yeah, but we went to school from their house.

Victor: That had nothing to do with that Springfield trip. Mundys (inaudible).

Eliza: Well, you're confusing me, Vic, just dummy up. We went through all that. Why do a repeat? I don't like repeating, repeating.
Jamie: Did you go back to your home then on the reserve?

Eliza: Well, after, yes. In the spring of the year then we went back.

Jamie: And did you...?

Eliza: We had our own job at home then. You see, there was the farming to do. And my dad would never neglect his farm. It was all right for the winter because there wasn't that much to do.

(Interruption while Eliza talks to grandchild.)

Jamie: And did you return to the school on the reserve in the winter?

Eliza: No. They sent me back to the Mohawk. I don't know whether I liked it better at the Mohawk or at the school there. I don't know. I think you learnt more at the resident school. You learnt various different things, you know, where you only got the schooling at the... And there was always one school teacher for the whole class from one to eight. They had no kindergarten and you went into what we call the first book, second book, and when you got to fourth book you were ready for high school.

Jamie: That was at the institute?

Eliza: No, that was on the reserve. And that's how they graded you when you were on the reserve was first to fourth book. And fourth book was like grade eight. So you were ready to go to high school when you got the fourth book. And they didn't fool around with cutting papers, and cutting out this, and coloring this, and doing that. You went right in and you just sat right down and learnt how to read and write, and arithmetic. The three things: reading, writing, and arithmetic. Those were the first things you got. They didn't fool around with you do this and do that, cut out this and color this, and that now -- it was never nothing like that. They didn't give us any of those artistic talents. We just had to go and... three things, you know.

Jamie: And how long did you spend at that school before you went to the institute?

Eliza: Oh, not very long, I think the first term, like in the spring and fall. Then I think I went, I think I went in the fall to the Mohawk, I think. You have summer holidays. They close the schools up on the reserves too like they do in the city for two months, July and August. So I must have went there like February, January there, and then in the fall they took me to the Mohawk, I think. You know it was nice weather when I went there. You're driving along circular driveway, and they stop and you go up those steps. It's a Cultural
Centre now in Brantford. It's no longer used for a school, and they do various different things. It still belongs to the Six Nation, see. They owned all that land too. And the Mohawk Chapel, The Royal Chapel of the Mohawks is in Brantford; that's the Six Nation. And when any queens or royalty would come, that was the first church that they'd go to, is the Royal Chapel of the Mohawks. They always want to see that. Because that chapel was given to them by King George the III and Queen Anne. They still had the Queen Anne communion service. It's in the museum now I think. The Six Nation, it belongs to the Six Nation. As I told you before, they had the War of 1812 and they buried it and only the three chiefs knew it was, where. There's three of them. In case one of them died, the other two could still know where it was. Nobody else knew where it was buried but the three. So when the war was over then they picked it up again and put it back in the church and it was still intact as it was when it was buried. It never done it no harm. I guess they knew what to do when they were doing it. And we used to have communion out of it, us children that were confirmed. But after, when my sister was still alive -- previous to that she was in a council house in Ohsweken -- so if they decided to pull it out, pull it out of there in case they got a principal that would take it, you know, take some of the things that they had, the chalice and stuff. So they decided, the Six Nation decided to give it to the museum. It's in the museum now. That's where it is. It's in safekeeping anyways. Whereas, we had so many principals at the Mohawk school that you got some good ones and some bad ones, you know. And when we got a good one they didn't keep them long. They stayed maybe a year then they would remove them, because they were too good to the Indians, to the Indian children.

Jamie: So these would be white people?

Eliza: Yeah. There was no Indian principal at that time. It was always white, white minister, Anglican minister and his wife. So the best one we had they only stayed a year and then they removed them because they were too good; they were spending too much money. We used to have to go to school with blankets, like a horse blanket and a great big pin that they used and that's what pinned up our blanket. That's what we had to go to school with at the church, at the Mohawk. From the Mohawk Institute to the Mohawk Chapel, that was our coats. And I don't know what they done with all those blankets when they collected them, because they were plaid blankets. They looked like Scotch blankets, green plaids. Depends on what clan you belong to. (laughs) Let's put it that way. Yeah, like Scottish, you know, the kilts and stuff, well that's what it was like. It was a big blanket to go on a whole bed and we had to put that -- it was heavy, you know -- and then we had to pin it. And it had a fringe on it. Until finally we got this new principal, Mr. and Mrs. Turnell, then they outfitted us with tams, coats all the same, and uniforms. They gave us navy blue pleated skirts and blouses with the big ribbons on, and ribbons for our hair. They really outdone us, outdone all the rest.
that we ever had, you know. And then we got oranges, which we never had before. Although, it was in the books that we received all this stuff, but we only got it when they arrived, you see, whatever was done with the funding for it. Because my sister told me about ten years ago, when she worked in the office, how much she had to write in the books to give to the government, but which you never received. You know, she was the one who told me, and I says, "You mean to tell me..."

Victor: Which sister?

Eliza: Sara.

Victor: Sara, yeah.

Eliza: She worked in the office there when she went to school and she had a list, and she was the one that told me when I was out there one year. And I says, "You mean to tell me you're sitting on your butt now and telling me that? Why didn't you report that when you were at school?" But she didn't. I guess you'd be kind of afraid to, you know. We were only youngsters. She was young too one time, but she worked in the office and saw the requisitions she had to put and which wasn't so. There's always a nigger in the woodpile someplace. There's always some, specially like that, I always say, and nothing is ever honest. I guess they defrauded the government of a lot of money too. But it's not a very nice thing to say. Just because she said it, it doesn't make it so. You know, because when she was there I wasn't there, so.

Jamie: She would have been there after you?

Eliza: After me, yeah, because I'm the oldest, see. We were put there first. And then a few years later when she got old enough she was there for a while. Yeah, she was there. I couldn't tell you what year she was there. But the other sisters weren't; they went to school down home. So I don't know if they missed anything or what. (laughs)

Jamie: What about the school that you went to after that in Chicago?

Eliza: Oh, that was very nice. That was different. That was entirely different. That's where you got your education there. That was -- well, you got educated. You could go as far as you wanted if you wanted, you know. But to me work was always in my mind. I could have continued -- I was a fool. But I always wanted my own money, you know, to work. So then I went to work for Catholics. They had an ad in the Chicago paper. My grandfather was a Catholic, my mother was a Baptist, and my father was an Anglican; so the three mixtures. So to choose I'd have to choose whatever I wanted, you know.

Jamie: Was it a Catholic school that you attended then?

Eliza: I attended it for a while in Chicago. That's when I had the learning of what the Catholic religion was. I was at
the Mohawk for the Anglican, and I was on the reserve for the
Baptist. So between the three of them, out of the three, I
found the Catholics was the best for me.

Jamie: How long were you at that school?

Eliza: Oh, about two years. And I found they done
everything for me. And they never liked for you to get away
from their religion. When you want to get into their religion
they want to hang on to you, keep your faith. Faith for the
millions in the Catholic, you know. And I found, one time I
felt very low and I was walking. I wanted to go out in this
very bad weather and I had no rubbers. I was from a poor
family, you know, nothing wrong with that. When I was working
I didn't make that much wages either. So one day I felt very
dejected and Mother Theresa saw me coming down the hall. She
said, "What's the matter? You look down in the mouth." I
says, "I am." She says, "What's the matter? What's your
problem?" "Oh," I said, "everybody is going out and I can't go
out." She says, "Why not?" I said, "Well, it's bad weather
and I can't go." She says, "Why? What's the problem?" I
said, "I got no rubbers." (laughs) I said, "I can't afford
any rubbers." "Oh," she said, "is that all the problem?" I
said, "Yeah, that's big enough for me." So, you know, next
day I had a new pair of rubbers.

Victor: They fit you too, eh.

Eliza: Oh, of course, she knew what my size was. Anyway she
gave me a pair. She says, "Oh, I got something for you," when
I met her in the corridor. She had a box and she handed it to
me. I said, "What's this? This is a surprise!" "Oh,
something you really need and wanted," she says. And she says,
"The Lord found it that you should have them." So I opened
the box and there was a pair of rubbers, brand new ones. And
in that time, the way the rubbers were, they used to come up to
here. It wasn't those slip-on rubbers that they make. It had
those kind of, different kind of buckles. It had two or three
buckles up there. It was different type of buckles and it used
to spread out quite a bit here, and then you'd have to fold it
and then... You've got rubbers with those kind of buckles,
Vic.

Victor: Yeah.

Eliza: And so I tried them on. She says, "Put them on. See
if they fit." And so I tried them on. "Oh," she says, "the
Lord knew the size you had, what size feet you had." It was
always -- they were very religious people. And naturally, she
was nun. So I tried them on and I said, "Oh, thank you." I
was so pleased with those rubbers. She says, "Now you have
them to keep your feet dry." And I took them; I was very
pleased.

You can't run in the halls in the convent, you had to walk.
And I used to forget once in a while. Being raised in the country, I'd want to whistle. So one day I forgot; I was whistling. Sister Carmella, she came out. She was in an office just as you come in the front doors. She came out, "Oh," she says, "shhhh." And I forgot that I was in the corridors. You shouldn't whistle or sing and make a noise. So I said, "I'm sorry," and I apologized, and I went on. I always forgot because I was raised in the country and you could whistle when you want, and sing when you want. But you couldn't do it in the convent -- above all not whistling. Not right for ladies anyways. I always tried to remember. I'd go like this and whistle down the hall. (laughs) I'd always cross my finger because I was so used to living up in the country and I'd cross my finger down the hall; that would mean, "Don't whistle." I had these little queer quirks to remind me, you know, because it was all strange to me. But I got used to it after a while -- just wearing off the country living and back to another kind of living. It was a good way of living, but you're confined too.

Jamie: You were in dormitories then?

Eliza: Yes. There were six beds to a room, sometimes four. And if you were really senior, sometimes there was two. And they were always white bedspreads, everything was white, you know, clean looking. And between the beds you had a screen. It's a venial sin to watch another undress. So we had to put a... this screen was for each room, for the two beds. So you would just tilt it, the three-way screen, and you undress. So it was a venial sin. You mustn't look at another person undressing. I guess it was supposed to be complete privacy.

And then the bells would ring certain times. You had to be up at a certain time and dressed to go to the chapel. And then the priest would come into the chapel in the morning. If it was five-thirty chapel the sisters would go up at five to five-thirty, and then the bell would ring from five-thirty to six. The seniors if you wanted to go in there are six to six-thirty. The chapel would ring again, the bells would ring and then you'd go up to your prayers. And then when you were through you'd go down to breakfast. Then when you got breakfast then you'd do what you had to do, and then you went into your class.

Victor: Was that the Mohawk?

Eliza: No. And that was nice too, you know. Was a different type of life entirely. And then if you wanted to become a nun, if you wanted to and you really decided you wanted to, you had to give up a lot of things, you know. And then they would send you to some other place, maybe to St. Louis, Missouri, or whatever destination they would have for you, or what openings there were. Then you'd get your train fare and everything. Then you were there, and if you stayed there for a period of time, and if you change your mind, you
still can change your mind and come out after a period of time. But maybe if you come out and visit your family maybe you'd look around and it isn't the thing you want even though you love your family. You'd want to go back. If it's really in you you'd go back, see. But I never had that urging. I didn't think that in my heart, I didn't think I'd be strong enough for that. You'd have to have it within yourself to really want to be that, because it's so many things you have to give up and you really have to be, you have to really feel that that's what you want for the rest of your life, is to be behind the enclosed walls and do what you have to do. It's a lot of giving up and a lot of thinking to do, and you can't think it over in a year or two years. It really has to be a calling for you, really that strong calling that you foresake everything else and everybody, even your own mother and your own family. You've got to foresake them for that type of life. And I never had, I don't think that I ever had that calling.

It's a good life, mind you, if you want it. One or two went in it, the girls that I went to school with. One, her name was Virginia and she retained that name. You have to give up your name that you have had, but she kept Virginia; Sister Virginia was her name. She was allowed to keep that for some reason or other. I think something in the order that had to do with some Saint maybe, you know, or something like that, that's why she was able to retain that name. Theresa, it was always a lot of Theresas, you know, around. Josephine. You had to change your name anyways. All family ties go; you can't retain them. But I think they're allowed to visit you, but not when you're under cloister you can't; you have to foresake. And then maybe once in a while when the time come maybe you can see them. They will maybe come to see you, but you can't go to see them. It's a sacrifice, you know. That was never my calling. I was never really a true Catholic anyways. Now my grandfather was but I wasn't.

Jamie: He sent you to this school, did he?

Eliza: Yeah. He always thought, he was always... he was like a medicine man. I told you that before, yeah.

Jamie: You told me, yeah. Was that an unusual thing for him to have sent you that far?

Eliza: No, I think he felt that we should get away from my mother. She would never send us to school. She was the other type again. She felt that you worked around the home and made baskets and get married. The old way of living like in the olden days that the women stayed home and got married, and helped around the home, and picked berries, and sew baskets, make quilts, and weaving of a rug.

You can weave a rug out of cornhusks, you know. Be the shape of that at the foot of the door, and you make them out of cornhusks. Now when the corn is in, when you're cleaning your corn and husking it, you use that for a rug. Now you braid it
all together and you start from the centre. It starts out like this way, just like that rug is right there only that's made out of... that would be made out of cornhusk. You have to shape it like that in the centre then you keep going around with the cornhusk after you take the husks off the corn. And then you make a rug like that. And when you turn it up it sticks up like that see, the cornhusks, then you're making the rug. (Break in tape) We used to use it as you come in the door to wipe your feet on, you know, the side door, on the kitchen door. So the men would come and they'd take their boots off and they line them up if they're working around out in the field, but they always wiped their foot on it. It's a little rough but that's what really cleans the shoe off. But some people now today they make it as a wall covering. Today, in this day and age, they'll husk, make it and they'll put it up. And people, white people, come around and they love to buy this, this thing now, because of the handmade rug, cornhusk rug. And we also have cornhusk dolls. There's one up here. That's made out of cornhusk and (inaudible) anyways. Yeah, here it is. See, and it's a doll without a face. That's how we used to play dolls, something like that.

Jamie: Were these made for you when you were a child?

Eliza: Yeah. And that's the pants the ladies used to wear. You've seen that before.

Jamie: Yeah.

Eliza: And this one here, this is the music we had. (Makes some clacking noise.)

Jamie: Is that a gourd?

Eliza: Yeah. You dry them out, you see, and that's what you make music out of after it dries. This is a Tuscarora costume; they always wear the pants long. Yeah, and that's a gourd. Yeah, and they dry them then you use them for dance, you know, make music.

Jamie: Were there times on the reservation when families got together and...?

Eliza: Oh yes.

Jamie: Did you have drumming and dancing there?

Eliza: Oh, they do occasionally, but I'm never down there to attend to these functions -- they do at the Longhouse. Now my niece Diana, she's married to a Longhouse man, and they'd go down there and do things, like they dance, and they do whatever they have to do. I've never... we went to the Longhouse once. It was to a wedding, wasn't it, Vic?

Victor: Yes.
Eliza: They get married in a Longhouse; they're the Longhouse people. And their customs now are a little bit different so therefore I can't tell you too much about that, because I hardly ever attended that. But my niece married a Longhouse man, from the Longhouse. So that's how I know some of the things, but I never went into it too far with her, you know.

Jamie: So when you were a child what were the big social occasions? Were they religious holidays?

Eliza: New Year's, New Year's was the day celebrated. Everybody made cakes, cookies and we went from house to house like the white people do in the cities, like Halloween. We used to carry a pillowcase because we used to run for miles from house to house, because the farms were far apart. So we never carried any paper bags or anything. It was always a pillowcase. And we'd rap on the door and we'd say, "Newyah, Newyah." That's an Indian, you see, that's "Happy New Year, Happy New Year." So we'd say, "Newyah, Newyah," and then they'd come to the door. They'd give you whatever they had -- it's a custom. So we'd open our pillowcase and they'd put in maybe an orange, maybe an apple, or maybe cookies, or whatever, you know. Whatever they gave you was always graciously received, because it was just the thing for children to do on New Year's Day. It's a big celebration for the children. And when my son was alive he always lived in the city. This one year we went out there for Christmas holidays with my sister and I was still there. So him and my niece Diana, they went out. That was his first year he went out Newyahing, you know. So he took his pillowcase. My sister gave him a pillowslip and then all the girls went out and he went along yelling "Newyah." After we came back, after the holidays were all over, because he had to go back to school, he was all excited and he was telling all his friends. He said, "Oh, I had a new day." He called it a new day. He forgot it was Newyah, you know, so he said, "I had a new day up on the reserve." And the boys and his friends want to know, "What's a new day?" So I heard him saying new day, you know, so I didn't want to interrupt his storytelling so I called to him. I said, "Oh Brian, you forgot your glass of milk," which was just an excuse, you see. I said, "It's not a new day, it's Newyah, Newyah." (laughs) So he went out there again and he said, "Oh yes, they called it Newyah." They wanted to know what it was all about. So he said, "We go from house to house and carry our pillowslips and we get a lot of goodies. And some of them come with a big case, it depends on how far they go." So that was always a big day for him, and it's a big celebration for the Indians too. That's their day is the Newyah.

Jamie: And that was done when you were a child?

Eliza: Yes, when we used to go from door to door too, but we didn't go as far as they did, we would just go from one
concession to... one corner to the other corner and that was enough houses then, you know. And especially if the snow was deep. If the snow was very, very deep, well, you walked in the middle of the road, but they didn't have road things like they have in the city. Sometimes you get covered up with deepest snow, you know, and then you get cold and you say, "What am I doing this for?" (laughs) But you're going with the rest of the neighborhood friends and relatives.

And then also we'd go for a sleigh ride. I mean a great big sleigh with two team of horses. They'd start from one end wherever the horses were coming from, and then they'd gather all the young people and there'd be straw in the big, in the sleigh. The horses pull it. It's a great big... it's like a big wagon only it's on runners, you know. And they'd gather... All the young people would run, go in with their rubbers and scarves and stuff, and they go run there. And then they'd stop at the next farm, collected whoever, the other young people that were there. They'd run down to the gates and they'd get in the sleigh. And then the bells on the horses would be ringing; they always had bells on the horses. It was great big bells like, you know, maybe six on the harness. It was always a regular thing. You can't find them these days; they're antique. So the horse, when they go, the bells would be ringing, you know, a nice chimes going down. And so then they'd be waiting in the next farm. Maybe they had a boy or a young girl, well they'd run and go in the sleigh too. Finally the sleigh would be full and they'd go on and whatever they did, and they turn around. It was a sleigh ride pulled by a team of horses. And there was always someone that would get that up for the young people, so that was their...

Victor: It would be a regular, a big wagon box, like a wagon box sleigh, eh.

Eliza: Yeah. And then the sleigh bells... that was the nicest part of it was to hear these horses when they'd be running slightly, trotting, you know, and these bells would ring then. They wouldn't ring so much if they were just walking slow, but whoever was driving would always give them a little pep and they'd run again; just to hear the jingle bells, you know. And then at the end, wherever they stopped, it was always the place called George Miller's. He used to have a big store, grocery store. And two of his daughters used to always have cocoa or something for them and cookies. Because they had this store, so they always had all kinds of cookies. And they'd stop there and have their cocoa and cookies, and they'd visit, and then they'd go on again and drop them off on their way home again. And whoever had the wagon, the horses, and whatever it was, they'd go home. And then it was a sort of like a little enjoyment for the young people.

Victor: Did you go on any of those trips?

Eliza: No, I never went. Minnie went once. I didn't go, I was much too young. They were a little older than I was.
Victor: Too cold anyway in the wintertime.

Eliza: No, it wasn't the cold, it was a certain age group, and you didn't put the little youngsters in with this certain age group, you know. It was their day. The youngsters' day came at another time.

Jamie: So how old would your sister have been when she was doing that?

Eliza: Oh, she probably was thirteen, fourteen. When you're thirteen you're a little more privileged, you know. And with some parents -- now I don't say all of them -- when the boy reaches thirteen they give him some things and they say, "You spend the night someplace out in the woods, or something, and see how brave you are," or whatever. They don't do that any more, but they did in the olden times. And then I guess he'd have to make his own way in the woods whatever he did. He'd have to find his own bedding. Sometimes if they were smart, if they knew they had to... they don't insist on it now. But I think they did many, many years ago. As they say, many, many moons ago, I think they did that.

Jamie: Did your brothers ever have to do that?

Eliza: My oldest brother, I think, did. But he liked the bush anyways. It didn't bother him. He was all ready in the afternoon. He was always the smart one; you never caught him unawares. (laughs) Oh yes, he used to take a harness and make a hammock. Picked out a good tree and put the harness up on it, you know, that you use for the horses. And the reins, I guess. And there's always rubber straps about that wide and maybe the length of this room. Well, he'd take two of those...

Victor: The reins, yeah.

Eliza: And then he'd put them on the tree, whatever tree; so he'd take the longest reins he could, and then he'd take a blanket, horse blanket, and you make a hammock, you see. You turn your blanket this way and that way and fold it over this way, and underneath the strap you fold it over and then it comes up this way, and then you fold it over this other strap. And then you get a stick and put them both in on each top, you know, at this head, at the foot and the top. And then you'd lay it, and then you had a hammock. It was a good strong hammock, but you always took the reins if you didn't have rope. They mostly all took the horse's buggy reins, and they'd make a hammock out of a, maybe a horse blanket. (knock at the door) Just a minute.

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