- General account of reservation life and life while trapping in the bush.

Jocelyn: This is Jocelyn Keeshig. I'm interviewing Mrs. Dora Meawasige in her apartment on 14 Blevins Place, Apartment 1016, Toronto, Ontario. The date is July 12, 1982. This is tape number JK 82.1. Throughout the course of the tape there is a thumping noise to be heard -- this is due to background disturbance. This, however, is not a technical problem, so please do not adjust the recorder.

Jocelyn: Mrs. Meawasige -- is that how you pronounce your last name?

Dora: Yes.

Jocelyn: I'm thinking it's a little bit of a tongue twister. What nationality is that name?

Dora: Well, it's really Ojibway, I'm an Ojibway. I'll tell you, my husband was Ojibway, I married an Ojibway; but myself I'm an Algonquin.
Jocelyn: You're an Algonquin?
Dora: Yes.
Jocelyn: And where are the Algonquin people situated?
Dora: Maniwaki, Quebec.
Jocelyn: Is that right? Oh, that's interesting. But you married an Ojibway?
Dora: Yeah. Well, I was raised over there in Maniwaki, Quebec. My mother was born in... my mother was born over there, her parents are from Maniwaki, Quebec. And my mother was just a little, a baby when her parents moved to Canada, so she was raised here in Canada.
Jocelyn: Could I ask what reason they moved to Canada?
Dora: I don't know that, I couldn't answer, because my mother didn't know too much about it herself, because she was just a baby when her parents moved to Canada. But I think it's on account of hard times.
Jocelyn: Oh yeah. Can I ask what year you were born?
Dora: 1915, February 22.
Jocelyn: What does your last name mean -- Meawasige?
Dora: A lot of people asked me that, "Do you know what that means -- Meawasige?" I don't know, to me it sounds as if the sun was shining against something, you know, and that's what it sounds like to me, but I don't know if I got it right or not.
Jocelyn: And what was your maiden name before you married?
Dora: My mother married a, a man by the name of, Boulanger.
Jocelyn: Boulanger, that's French.
Dora: Yeah, and it's... and I think in English it's Baker.
Jocelyn: Baker.
Dora: I think so, yeah.
Jocelyn: Okay, did you ever have another Indian name besides Meawasige?
Dora: No.
Jocelyn: No. Well, having an Indian name wasn't common in your family? Like, I know, for instance, someone who has the Indian name of Beaver, or, you know, some traditional Indian
Dora: No. My mother, my mother married, she married, my father died when I was about five years old. And she married again, and the man she married was James Jacob, that was my step-father. And he's the one that raised us -- there was three of us in the family when my mother was married. She never had any more children from her second marriage. And they used to call him (Indian).

Jocelyn: (Indian), what does that mean?

Dora: I don't know what that means (Indian) that was his, his grandfather's name I guess. And then he had to say (inaudible) by their father's first name, Jacob (Indian), was their father's, Jacob was their father's first name. (Indian) was the last name, they carried their father's first name, I don't know why. (both laugh) Maybe because it was easier.

Jocelyn: So how many years did you live on the reservation?

Dora: Let me see now from, from 1930 till 1958.

Jocelyn: Yeah? And can you recall what reservation life was like?

Dora: Well, it was very hard.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Dora: Like, for me, I got married in 1931. And I married this man by the name of Meawasige. He died fifteen years after we were married; so I was left alone with the children, six children.

Jocelyn: This is while you were on the reservation?

Dora: Yeah, while I was on the reservation. We used to get a little bit of welfare, we used to call relief fund, twenty dollars a month. That's what you had to live on, it wasn't very much. Then I'd make a lot of baskets and go selling baskets maybe to Sudbury, or Sault Ste. Marie, house to house. Buy a little bit of clothing with the money I used to earn.

Jocelyn: Baskets, who taught you how to make the baskets?

Dora: My mother and grandmother.

Jocelyn: Yeah, so it was sort of, it's an Indian custom to make baskets?

Dora: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Were you taught anything else?

Dora: No.
Jocelyn: No craftwork?
Dora: No.

Jocelyn: I guess you learned that as a young girl, eh?
Dora: Yeah.

Jocelyn: What kind of things, what kind of other things did your mother and grandmother teach you? Any baking, or...?
Dora: Oh yeah, they'd like... baking bread, bake bread and how to make pies, and cakes, and native way of cooking.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.
Dora: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Did they ever, did they ever pass down any tales of anything? Any kind of, like, how a porcupine got its quills or anything?
Dora: No I never, no I never... my grandmother never, she wasn't much to talk about, you know, the old times.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.
Dora: Well, I think they lived in the bush most of the time, eh. They were always travelling, they were always trapping and hunting. I remember I used to go with them, like, when they used to go out hunting, trapping. They'd have, like, they'd camp back, way back someplace. And even my mother and my stepfather, they used to fix up a cabin someplace and, like, in the fall. And then he'd go trapping and we'd be out in the, out in the bush there with him, just by ourselves. And he'd leave us there and he'd go and visit his traps, like, during the week. Around Christmas time we'd come out again. And stay, come out like maybe, Gogama, live in Gogama. Yeah, different places.

Jocelyn: So they sort lived still very traditional, like, in their ways? Trapping, could you tell me more about that, like what kind of trap, like were they handmade or bought?
Dora: No, no you had to buy them.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.
Dora: Like the muskrat traps, and beaver traps, you know.

Jocelyn: So I guess you must have learned a lot about how to skin animals.
Dora: No, I didn't learn nothing about it. (laughs) You know the things I used to skin is little weasels. (both laugh)
Jocelyn: Yeah, I know my, my father, himself, he, he trapped and he used to teach me a little bit here and there. But did you always like, can you speak Ojibway?

Dora: Oh yes.

Jocelyn: Yeah. I guess you were taught that from, you know, from birth pretty well.

Dora: Yes from my mother and my grandparents, because my mother... My grandparents couldn't read or write, but... and my grandmother, my mother couldn't read and she couldn't write, she didn't go to school. And my stepfather was same, he couldn't read or write.

Jocelyn: They could all speak English?

Dora: Yeah they all spoke English, yeah.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Dora: Yeah, my grandparents used to speak French.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah?

Dora: But none of their children spoke it. They didn't, I guess they never spoke French to their children.

Jocelyn: How did you learn? Like, when you were growing up, you learned both Indian and English at the same time?

Dora: Yes, well my mother used to speak English, you know, some, and she'd use both English and Ojibway to us.

Jocelyn: So you, you knew both languages and you used them fluently when you were growing up?

Dora: Yes.

Jocelyn: What about in school, what was, what were you taught in school?

Dora: Well, the little bit I learned to school I, I learned how to say my ABC's, and count a little, that's about all -- I'd read some, and how to pronounce the words, you know. That's about all because I didn't go to school that much.

Jocelyn: I guess you were taught what you needed to know in the home?

Dora: Oh yeah, like housework, they taught us all that, yeah.

Jocelyn: There was really no need to go to school at that time, if times were really that hard, I imagine.
Dora: No, like years ago, it's not like today you got to have education, you got to have experience, and if you don't got experience they don't want you.

Jocelyn: Yeah, that's true.

Dora: But years ago you didn't need that.

Jocelyn: When your family got together when you were a child, what kind of gatherings did they have, like? To celebrate Christmas, and stuff like that? Christmas, Easter...

Dora: Yeah, stuff like Christmas.

Jocelyn: Were they big celebrations?

Dora: No, not that big.

Jocelyn: No?

Dora: No. Just a little get together.

Jocelyn: Like, for Christmas, did you have Christmas trees and...? I guess you must have.

Dora: No (laughs) we didn't. We didn't have no Christmas trees years ago.

Jocelyn: No?

Dora: No. I don't know why, because we were always on the go. Just stay here a little while and keep moving again, eh.

Jocelyn: What kind of foods were...?

Dora: I remember one Christmas Eve we were in Sudbury, we spent Christmas Eve in Sudbury when, when... That was a long time ago. I guess Santa Claus dropped in on us over there in Sudbury; we just got some candy, and apples, and oranges from Santa, a few ribbons and that was it.

Jocelyn: He had a hard time chasing you around the country. (both laugh) What kind of things did you do at the gatherings, just talk, get together sort of thing?

Dora: Yeah, just get together with the older folks, eh.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Dora: Get together. A long time ago that was a, that was something nicer on the reserve, like New Year's Eve. At New Year's -- that's when I was growing up, like a teenager. We used to have those big home, like in private homes they'd have those gatherings in private homes, and they used to have square dances and everything, step dancing. It was nice, you know, not like today, they don't have them any more today.
Jocelyn: No.

Dora: And there'd be those guys that they'd play violins, some would play guitars, some would play pianos; but they were nice. We had somebody calling there like, calling square dancing. It was nice, we used to have a lot of fun.

Jocelyn: Just like a social get-together and talk, and have food there?

Dora: Yeah, have lunch at midnight, sandwiches.

Jocelyn: Was there any kind of Indian celebration that anybody... Like, did they ever have ceremonies of any sort?

Dora: No, like what I was talking about, that, they like, make our Indian chief, like every King's Day, we used to call it King's Day on the fifth of January. We used to make a big feast that day at his place. Everybody welcome, they'd go and have big, big meal at his place. And at night we'd make a big dance again wherever, someone who had the largest house. And then they'd, at midnight, you know, they'd have a special cake there with... there would be a nickel in the cake and a dime, and a penny. One was for a Prince, Queen and a King. They'd have that in the cake, and whoever found that, got that cake, that was the, that was the King, and whoever found the nickel was a Queen, and whoever found the penny was a Prince. Then they'd make big ribbons, great big bows and then they'd make another (inaudible) and then they'd pick out somebody that's going to be the next Queen; it went on like that for about four dances.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.

Dora: It was nice. Then we'd have a big lunch at midnight.

Jocelyn: Did you ever know anybody who got to be Queen or King....

Dora: Pardon.

Jocelyn: Were you ever chosen as the Queen?

Dora: No, no. And then they had those twelve, twelve corn in the cake too, and they used to call those soldiers. Whoever got the corn, they were soldiers; and they had to help them with, like, the lunch. Like if I got a corn in the piece of cake well, I had to help with the lunch. (both laugh)

Jocelyn: Where did, where did these kinds of the things come from?

Dora: Oh, I think that, that, that came on from a long time ago, years back, I guess. That's what they used to do. But
now they don't do that anymore.

Jocelyn: No?

Dora: No, they don't.

Jocelyn: So back on the reserve how did people make a living? Is it farming, fishing, trapping as you said?

Dora: Well, there was people, like, some people, they used to trap in the fall, and in the spring. And in the summertime they'd pick blueberries for a living. They'd pick blueberries every day and sell berries, and when evening come... then they used to stock up with, you know, flour, sugar, shortening, whatever, tea, like, for the winter. That's what they used to do. But those were hard times then.

Jocelyn: Yeah, I imagine so. What kind of world events would effect you, make times hard at that time?

Dora: Why it made times hard, I don't know. I think that was the Depression, no more work. That's why they made that Highway #17 going through, like, from Sudbury to Sault Ste. Marie. They made that Highway #17, I think it was 1930, 1931, 1932. They were only getting five dollars a month; there the guys that were working there -- five dollars a month.

Jocelyn: Not very much at all.

Dora: No.

Jocelyn: A lot of the Indians went to work?

Dora: Well, not that many Indians. They used to have camps along the highway there, the distance; men from all over, I guess.

Jocelyn: Yeah. So, money situation wasn't very good at all?

Dora: It was no good, no good, it was no good.

Jocelyn: So if you wanted to live well you had to, you know, sort of fend for yourself and get what you could from the land, and...

Dora: Yeah. And there's some people they had a little garden -- just enough for themselves, like, you know. Plant potatoes, and a bit of vegetables, and do some preserving.

Jocelyn: Were you ever taught how to preserve? I know from being on a reserve, I know that's what a lot of the Indian women do in the summertime, is always have their preserves for the winter.

Dora: Yes, well, I used to make, I used to get my recipes
from other, from other women -- how to make pickles, and different preserves, and...

Jocelyn: What about corn soup, was that ever a big thing?

Dora: They used to make it once in a while. Like, my, my, the older folks, the ones who had corn used to make corn soup all the time. My sister-in-law used to always make corn soup, and other women; my mother used to make it once in a while.

Jocelyn: So was anybody on the reserve, well, I call them traditionalists. Did they, like, did they ever practice any Indian dancing?

Dora: Not on our, not on our reserve. Not until later, like. Oh, now it wasn't too long ago, maybe twenty years ago they started.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Dora: Yeah, they started dancing.

Jocelyn: Could I ask why, why it wasn't practiced then, back in those days?

Dora: I don't know. I never even heard of it years ago, about the Indian dancing. I don't know why -- maybe because our reserve -- there isn't that many people there, maybe the reserve was too small.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Dora: Maybe that's why they didn't bother. Like at Whitby there was (inaudible) that's a, there's quite a few native people over there and they do a lot of dancing.

Jocelyn: Yeah, they do a lot of dancing. They also... Down here at the Native Centre they do a lot of drumming, dancing and that, a lot of sweetgrass and cedar burning. I was told they never really did it either, like do any dancing, or anything. The first time he seen it was when he came down here.

Dora: That, that's the same thing with me. The first time I seen that was down here. Once when I, I forget, about 196-, 1960 I think, or 1961, they had, over at the Casa Loma, they had an Indian village over there that summer. And that's where I first see that Indian dancing, that powwow.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Dora: Yeah, (inaudible).

Jocelyn: What was your thought when you seen them?

Dora: I thought it was nice.
Jocelyn: Yeah.

Dora: I thought it was very nice.

Jocelyn: So... what... like... How did you spend your free time on the reserve, like, as a little kid? Like, what kinds of things did they used to do if you didn't go to school, or you had...

Dora: Oh, I just played around, played around. Most of the time I'd be up in the rocks in the summertime picking blueberries, when we were, you know, children. We were old enough to pick berries, pick berries, we liked to help. And evening comes we'd get down to the highway there to sell our blueberries. It was a big treat for us, like, one bottle of pop -- it used to be only five cents a bottle, eh. Big treat. Yes, times were very hard, I'm telling you. It wasn't easy at all.

Jocelyn: A lot of people, when it comes to talking about the hard times, they don't really like to talk about them, but, you know, they always say, "Well, this is what I, this is what makes me so strong." Do you feel that made you strong during those times?

Dora: You know, like my stepfather, like, where we used to live, we were living up north there, north of Sudbury. And where we were, where we spent the winter at that time, he used to trap over there late in the fall. He used to go and visit his traps and sometimes he'd get a beaver, eh, take his beaver and he'd go to Gogama over there, go to town and sell his fur. And he'd come back at night with a packsack full of groceries. Well, that had to do us for the, for the next week until he gets another, another beaver or whatever to sell. That's how he made our living.

Jocelyn: What about other families?

Dora: Well, the other families were the same too.

Jocelyn: All trapping?

Dora: Yeah, well, some of them, not every one of them. I don't know how the others lived on the reserve and in Cutler before we moved in 1930. I don't know what they were, what they were doing before. I suppose the same -- trapping and picking berries. That's about all there was. Years ago I guess they had, they had a saw mill over there, years ago. They had one in Cutler. I don't know what happened to that, but I guess they tore it down. There was one in Spragge and that burned down; there was one in Blind River -- a saw mill -- and the men used to work out there in the summer. And there would be big boats coming in, you know, like from the States, I guess.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.
Dora: Used to call them barges. They used to load lumber on there. It would be a couple days job there for them.

Jocelyn: I heard people talk how they used to, the men used to go out and go to lumber camps.

Dora: Some used to go out to the lumber camps, not every one of them, some. They used to go in the fall and they'd come back around Christmas time; and same with some guys from Cutler over there, the trappers, they used to leave in October and come back just around Christmas; they'd be gone from October until just before Christmas. They'd come down with a load of furs, those were big trappers, I guess.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah?

Dora: Yeah.

Dora: I guess they used to make pretty good, I guess. What I had, you used to make about three, four thousand dollars, like, and that was big money.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.

Dora: Yeah, like around Christmas time when they'd come down. And then you'd, they'd go back again after the New Year's there. They'd go and put their traps away, I guess, for the next, for the next fall.

Jocelyn: I imagine they'd come back with some really good stories.

Dora: Yeah.

Jocelyn: It's like hunting.

Dora: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Did they ever, I guess when then they came back, did they all, you know, seem to gather and share these stories?

Dora: I don't think so, no, not that I know of.

Jocelyn: No?

Dora: No.

Jocelyn: Because I know now back on the reservation when we go hunting we come back and everybody sits around, and the older men that are there will sit and they'll talk about these stories, about who shot the biggest bear, in what year. (both laugh) Who got lost in bush, and just different things like
Dora: Yeah.

Jocelyn: I guess a lot of funny things happened to them when they were in the bush. Some aren't funny, but you know...

Dora: Yeah.

Jocelyn: But, you know, everybody says, "Well, that's the good life, you know." Go up to the bush as much as they can. So education, like we were talking about you going to school and you didn't go very, very often; was the school on the reserve, like, did you have to leave...

Dora: Well, we didn't live on the reserve years ago, like when we were younger. We lived in Gogama -- that's not a, that's a town, a little town, there was no reserve there. There was two schools. They built a public, there was a public school and a separate school. So we didn't live in Gogama that long that... Then they built a saw mill at, about three miles on this side of Gogama. Then we moved to that place again, where the saw mill, where they built the saw mill. And that's where my, my dad worked, I guess. And there was schools there, there was a school there but I didn't go to school there. I had two sisters, well, they went to school there. You know, I was thirteen years old and I start working, working. They had a great big boarding house there, and that's where I worked -- at the boarding house.

Jocelyn: What kind of tasks did you do when you were working there?

Dora: Well, I, well, we washed dishes, and then'd we wait on tables, and set the tables. It was great big boarding house. There was a cooker, cooker right in the middle and those dining rooms on each side, three long tables on each side, each dining room. So I had one side to look after, and my girlfriend had another side to look after; we were working for Coley McCracken then. We were getting twenty-five dollars a, twenty-five dollars a month, working for Coley McCracken. Every two weeks we'd get our pay -- twelve-fifty every two weeks. That was a lot of money.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah, I imagine.

Dora: We'd have a bottle pop (inaudible). (both laugh)

Jocelyn: So I guess you must have travelled, you know, quite, quite often.

Dora: We did a lot of travelling, you know, like mostly bush travelling, and out in the little towns once in a while.

Jocelyn: What was is it like when you were in the bush?
Dora: It was quite lonely for us kids. (laughs)

Jocelyn: Yeah, I should think so.

Dora: It was lonely, like there was only three of us in the family and my mother, well, we'd be alone all the time. My dad would be gone visiting his traps -- he'd be gone for a couple of days, couple of nights. So there was just the three of us there... nobody, no other children to play with.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.

Dora: Yeah, just the three of us, and my mother would be inside. It's a lonely life for children -- that's no life for children at all.

Jocelyn: You didn't have any animals or something, like a dog?

Dora: No, we had a dog, a couple of dogs, but my father used to have those, take the dogs with him, you know, like. When he went straight trapping, he had them hitched up, you know.

Jocelyn: Hitched up. He had a sleigh?

Dora: He had a sleigh, yeah.

Jocelyn: Is that right?

Dora: And a team of dogs.

Jocelyn: How many dogs did he have?

Dora: Two.

Jocelyn: Two. What kind of dogs were they? Were they just like...?

Dora: I don't know what, I don't know what you call them dogs, but they were a good sized dog. But I don't what, what they were. I know they were sleigh dogs, anyways.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.

Dora: They weren't Huskies or anything like that.

Jocelyn: How did, did he have to buy them, or did he train them himself?

Dora: He trained them himself. They come when they were little pups.

Jocelyn: So he must have been doing it for years, and years, and years.
Dora: Oh yeah.

Jocelyn: When you, what, what, what kind of a house did you live in in the bush, just a cabin?

Dora: Just a little, sometimes, most of the time where we lived, there were old camps, eh. Like, maybe a camp where our men used to go, like in the winter, like, when they go up barking, cutting timber, or something. Well, he used to fix one of those, like one part of the old camps -- there was nobody living in them then. He'd fix one of those and that's where we'd put in most of the winter. Then after Christmas, or after New Year's, then we'd go to town and find a place to live in town until the... We'd spend the summer there again, wherever it was maybe like in Gogama, or Alsace, it's called Alsace. I don't know. It must be nice where, it must have been... It must be nice where there's two, three families together, you know.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.

Dora: Not when you're by yourself, oh, really lonely, for kids anyways.

Jocelyn: What kind of work did you have to do, like, any kind of chores?

Dora: Oh yeah. We would bring wood in, haul some water for my mother. Sometimes my mother used to go and split wood outside and then we'd haul the wood in for her.

Jocelyn: What kind of food rations would there be? Like, what would you take into the bush with you?

Dora: Well, we used to take like flour, sugar, and tea, and things like that -- all dried. Maybe beans, peas, something that would keep.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.

Dora: And then they'd get, well, we'd get most of our meat up there, eh, like, in the bush, you know. Moose, deer or rabbit, fish we caught some nice fish.

Jocelyn: You make me hungry. (both laugh)

Dora: They get some nice fish over in Cape Croker, eh.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.

Dora: You know Mrs. Johnson, Verna?

Jocelyn: Verna, yes.
Dora: She was up there too, used to go up there and get a load of white fish, trout.

Jocelyn: Yeah, there's some nice fishing.

Dora: Yeah.

Jocelyn: So is there anything that stands out, you know, in your childhood? You know, share anything, you know, anything at all is valuable, like nicknames. I know a lot of people, elders, that talk to me they tell me about really crazy nicknames they used to come up with, you know, nickname each other.

Dora: Oh.

Jocelyn: Did you have one? Did you ever gain a nickname?

Dora: No, not me. My sister had a nickname, why, she still has. She started off on with we used to call her Kimmily.

Jocelyn: Kimmily?

Dora: Kimmily. (both laugh) I guess when my father was visiting he used to call her Kimmily, and then we start calling her Kim after. Now nobody calls her Kim now, everybody calls her Molly now. So she lives at Wigwamen Terrace over there, her name is Mrs. Johnson, Molly Johnson; but her right name is Julia.

Jocelyn: Julia?

Dora: Yeah, it's not Molly at all.

Jocelyn: Not Molly at all? (both laugh)

Dora: Back when they started Kimmily, Kim, and now it's Molly. (laughs)

Jocelyn: Can you think of any other nicknames that you sort of remember?

Dora: I guess I called one of my sons Punch.

Jocelyn: Punch?

Dora: Yeah sometimes I call him Puncho, Punch. Then I have a son, we call him, I started calling him Manny when he was a baby, little man, and start calling him Manny, right till today everybody calls him Manny. Nobody calls him Jerry -- his right name is Jerry, Gerald. But nobody calls him that, it's always Manny. And that's about all, I guess.

Jocelyn: One thing that I'd like to ask you about, what kind of, like, did you go to church when you were young?
Dora: Oh yes, we always went to church. Like, that, that's if we were near, near, near one, you know, but when we were out in the bush we couldn't. Like after we moved back there, or when we were in Gogama we used to go to church quite often. We used to go to mass there quite often, every Sunday. But if we weren't near a church, well, we couldn't get, get to one. I can remember on the reserve we used to... the missionary would come along about once a month, they used to go there, eh. But now they have mass over there every Sunday.

Jocelyn: So, like, when you were, when you were camping in the bush, doing your trapping, was there other families?

Dora: No, there was no other families. That's why I said it was very lonely.

Jocelyn: Yeah. I thought maybe there would be another family about a couple miles around.

Dora: No, like sometimes I wonder what would have happened, like, when I think back, eh. What would have happened, like, if one of us would have took sick. Like my father was gone, like visiting his traps and he'd be gone for two, or three nights; if one of us would have took sick and we were way out, we weren't even near a doctor, or a town. I don't know how my mother would have, have got out, got out to town, and like one of us if we happened to got sick.

Jocelyn: Yeah,

Dora: Or even my, my, if my mother was sick, I wonder, sometimes I wonder what would have happened. I think about it now, eh. (both laugh) I guess we were just lucky, we were just lucky I guess. Yeah no, no neighbors close by, nothing.

Jocelyn: You must have been quite a ways out, you know.

Dora: We were quite a ways out, yeah, all by ourselves.

Jocelyn: Were, I guess, the winters at that time, were they bad, like, did you have some really bad years?

Dora: Yeah, we had real bad winters there. A lot, a lot of snow like, like now we don't have much snow. We used to have about three, three feet anyway, and cold, and stormy days. Oh, my goodness, we don't have those kind of weather anymore.

Jocelyn: Was it cold, like, how was your cabin heated, was it by a wood stove?

Dora: Wood stove, we used to have wood stove, sometimes we used to have those great big, like when my dad used to fix up a place out way, way back in those old camps, he used to get one of those great big round, what do they call them? Jumbo something, or (inaudible). We used to make a stove out of
those things, they were heavy tin.

Jocelyn: A barrel?

Dora: From a barrel, it must have been a barrel, tin, tin barrel. Is that what they were, I guess?

Jocelyn: Maybe, yeah.

Dora: I guess it wasn't wood because you couldn't make fire in that! (both laugh) It was some kind of tin and strong, because we used to, that's where we used to make our fire in, eh. And he made a door there you can open. (laughs)

Jocelyn: Never confuse things! Tin and wood! (both laugh) So your mother, your mother must have did the cooking right on a...

Dora: I think so now I, I can't think, think what she did, or maybe, I don't know, maybe she had... And most of the times they used to have those little, a little cook stove, they're for campers, I think.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.

Dora: And they were very light them things, maybe that's what she used, I don't remember, can't remember just what...

Jocelyn: What about lighting? Candles, coal oil lamps...?

Dora: Oh, yeah, we used to have oil lamps, or sometimes candles.

Jocelyn: So you never took sick at all when you were in the bush?

Dora: No, we were lucky. That's what I think now, when I think of it now, we must have been lucky. When I think back I wonder, I wonder what my mother would have done if some of us, one of us would have took sick; no neighbors close by or... I don't know how far back we were. Well, maybe the people were much healthier those days than they are now.

Jocelyn: Oh, yeah, I think so.

Dora: Strong, strong and healthy. I don't think... If you did that today, I don't think the children would last, (laughs) probably take sick, or die of loneliness. (laughs)

Jocelyn: Probably -- no T.V., eh?

Dora: No T.V. in them days. No theatres. (laughs) No radio.

Jocelyn: So how long have you been living here in the city, in
Toronto?

Dora: Since 1958, I think. Well, from 1958 I used to come and go, but I've been living here steady since 1960.

Jocelyn: And I guess you must have worked around different places?

Dora: Oh yes, I did, yeah. Day cleaning, that's hard work, though.

Jocelyn: Day cleaning, like, in a big building or what?

Dora: Yeah, like private homes.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.

Dora: Like, I'd go to the unemployment office and you'd get sent to different places. And sometimes we used to have... like, after they get, if you get to know so many, you know, families, they ask you back like maybe the next week again, when they want you to go back. And then the first thing I knew you got your days filled in, you don't have to go to the unemployment office any more.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah. Could you make good money doing that?

Dora: Well, we used to make five dollars a day, but now I think they make good money.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah, right.

Dora: It was five dollars a day then, which was good! That was very good money.

Jocelyn: So I guess you would have never have had to adjust to, to sort of like, a country way of life and then the big city way of life -- you never really had to experience everything.

Dora: You know before I ever came to Toronto, when I used to live in Cutler -- it's just a little reserve, eh -- and I don't think there was even three hundred people on that reserve. I used to hear word of Toronto, I used to think, "Gee, that must be a big city." I never thought I'd ever be, ever get to Toronto, to live in Toronto. (both laugh)

Jocelyn: And here you are.

Dora: Yeah. (laugh) I used to hear a lot of, we used to get those catalogues, you know, from Eatons, and Simpsons, and do our, like, order from the catalogue and maybe a week after we'd get our order. (both laugh)

Jocelyn: Yeah, seems like a pretty big place, but it's not much once you get here.
Dora: No, once you get, you know...

Jocelyn: A lot of people find it hard when they first come here.

Dora: That's what I thought when I first came to Toronto. I had this lady friend. She says, "I'll go ahead," she says. I said, "Okay." I said, "I'll wait for you on Tuesday," because I had a lot of jobs over there. That must have been around '58 I think, 1958, 1957. So anyway she was at the Union Station to meet me, that's where I got off. And I was wondering, "I wonder how I'm going to get around here?" you know. I didn't know the city, and the first time I've been here, I didn't have much money on me. So anyways that must, that was on Tuesday morning I think when I got in, so she took me to the unemployment office the next morning. And then she tells me, "Well, Dora," she says, "you'll just have to find your way around," she says. "That's what I did when I first got here." (both laugh) "I was, nobody was with me," like you know, showed her how to get around. She says, "If you get a job you'll have to find your way, how to get there and how to get back again." And anyways they have, like when they give you a, when they give you a job at the unemployment office, they give you that slip of paper, and they tell you where to go, and where to transfer, eh. And they show you right to -- it was pretty good.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah. Did you find it hard, though? I imagine...

Dora: No, I didn't find it hard. I was really nervous, like, when she told me that. "How am I going to find my way around?" you know. "I'm going to get lost for sure." But no, it wasn't, I just, you know, I went and I thought to myself, "Well, if I get nervous maybe I'll get lost." But I did get lost twice. (laughs)

Jocelyn: Yeah?

Dora: I did. I think, I must have been on Yonge Street one time; instead of coming this way I went the other way. And I said to the driver after, "Am I going the wrong, the right direction to get to downtown?" He says, "No," he says, "you're out of the city limits now."

Jocelyn: Is that right?

Dora: Yeah.

Jocelyn: I imagine you must have been frightened.

Dora: It was getting, it was getting later in the evening, too, you know, that's after work. Then I says, "Well, I don't know the city at all." I said, "I just (inaudible) around here." And then he gave me a transfer, he says, "Well, catch
the next streetcar back." So that's what I did. The other thing is that I don't remember where I got lost. I got off too, soon anyways. Anyways, I found my roommate's place. So I don't think I'd get lost anymore, I don't think so. (both laugh)

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INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX TERM</th>
<th>IH NUMBER</th>
<th>DOC NAME</th>
<th>DISC #</th>
<th>PAGE #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEREMONIES</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-statutory holidays</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>12,16,23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILDREN</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>30-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-work of</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITIES</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-impressions of</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRAFTS</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-basket making</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>14,23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPRESSION (1930s)</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>3,24,25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>21,22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-accounts of</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>6,7,16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOOD</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>20,29,30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-preservation of</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-traditional</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>14,23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAMES (PERSONAL)</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>3,24,25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-origins of</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPORTATION</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>20,29,30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-dog team</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>21,22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAPPING</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>6,7,16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-as livelihood</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>20,29,30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>20,29,30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-for wages</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>20,29,30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROPER NAME INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROPER NAME</th>
<th>IH NUMBER</th>
<th>DOC NAME</th>
<th>DISC #</th>
<th>PAGE #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CUTLER, ONT.</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>17,30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOGAMA, ONT.</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>7,16,19,22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANIWAKI, QUEBEC</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAULT STE. MARIE, ONT.</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>5,13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUDBURY, ONT.</td>
<td>IH-OT.009</td>
<td>D. MEAWASIGE</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>5,10,13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>