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**Dora Husson oral history interview
1975**

**Cassette/CD#: C-07
Object ID#: 2017.083.0021**

Note: Moments where the speakers are unintelligible are labeled with the audio file name and timestamp for listeners' reference (i.e. C07_01.wav, 03:34)

MODERATOR: -- 1975.

HUSSON: I was born in Crow Hill in a little homestead in 1900.

MODERATOR: When you were younger, not necessarily when you were born, but when you were younger, what did you and your brothers and sisters do for fun?

HUSSON: Well, we used to have dances at that time on Saturday night. My father used to play for dances, and I used to play with him. My brother used to play for dances, and --

MODERATOR: How big was your farm or --

HUSSON: Just a small farm. My father had a wood lot, and he cut wood for a living, and he guided and he drove river in the spring.

MODERATOR: Was he gone when he drove river? Did he just leave for a certain amount of time and not come back until it was done or did he commute during the day?

HUSSON: I don't remember that. I was too young.

MODERATOR: How old were you when you first moved away from your farm up there in Crow Hill?

HUSSON: Well, I didn't move away until I was married, 1919, and then I moved over in the Hudson place, and then my husband and I moved in the Indian where we kept the camp for Finch and Pruyn, and we had fishermen there, and of course, in the spring, we kept the river drivers and in the fall, we kept the hunters.

MODERATOR: Excuse me. Was this camp members only or was it for any people who wanted to pay to stay there?

HUSSON: That was for everyone who wanted to pay to stay there. We weren't paid for staying there. We just had what we got out of people who came there to board.

MODERATOR: You said that you kept the loggers when they come down on river drive. Did they just stay overnight or were they there for a period of time?

HUSSON: They was there for a period of time until they got the logs far enough down the river so that they had to stay in camps along the banks.

MODERATOR: I see. What did your husband do for a living? Just run the camp?

HUSSON: Yes. He guided, and we run the camp, and then after we moved from the camp, we built our home and --

MODERATOR: When you were still at this camp, did you have light and electricity or how did you keep your house heated and eat, and so on?

HUSSON: Well, we kept our house heated by wood. We had no electricity, but we kept our house heated by wood, and we had gas lanterns. Of course, we had to make our own bread and when we made the dough in the evening, we got it ready to raise, we'd put a lantern in the sugar barrel or a flour barrel, and put the bread on top of it and cover it up, and let it raise overnight so it would be ready to knead in the morning. Of course, people wouldn't dare do that today. They were just like big iron cook stoves that just burn wood with a big reservoir on the side to heat our water. We carried our water from a brook. My husband guided the fall and the spring fishermen and hunters, and worked on the road, did any kind of work that he could find to do.

MODERATOR: Your son was born there? My father. At the mouth of the Indian?

HUSSON: Yes, in 1926.

MODERATOR: Did he go to school out here in Indian Lake?

HUSSON: Yes. We moved out from camp before he was old enough to go to school. We got out from camp, and then we rented until we built this house here, and he was about five years old when we built the home. At that time, the street wasn't as populated as it is now. There's been several new houses built. The schoolhouse burned, and there's been a new schoolhouse built. When my son was younger, he did some skiing, trapping, hunting for recreation. That's what about all the kids did at that time around here.

MODERATOR: Were you [C07_02.wav, 00:00]

HUSSON: Oh, yes. I think everyone was affected by the depression. We had food stamps for a certain amount of sugar. We used honey in place of sugar for much of the cooking.

MODERATOR: Did you have a problem getting gasoline at that time, and fuel oil because of the depression?

HUSSON: Well, we weren't affected so much with fuel oil because we didn't burn fuel oil at that time. We burned wood. We had wood stoves, and I don't think we were affected too much by the gasoline because we didn't travel that much.

MODERATOR: Did you keep any livestock down there at the mouth of the Indian? Did you have houses or work horses or anything to help pull wood and stuff out of the woods with?

HUSSON: Oh, yes. We had horses. We had a team of horses.

MODERATOR: Did you use them to like for a sled to pull you to town and stuff for supplies or just for working purposes?

HUSSON: Oh, for working purposes. We had a big tractor and tires. The road was available, so we could travel by car and trucks, and shovel our way into woodland to get the ice for the icehouse.

MODERATOR: How did you keep your ice in the icehouse? Did you cover it with something to keep it from melting?

HUSSON: Covered it with sawdust.

MODERATOR: How did you get the sawdust from? Just where you cut up your wooding and wood materials?

HUSSON: Well, that I don't remember where they did get the sawdust from.

MODERATOR: Where did you stay when you came out to town in the wintertime?

HUSSON: Well, one winter, we rented. Well, several winters, we rented, and one winter, I stayed at home up at my father's home.

MODERATOR: Where did you rent when you came out or don't you remember?

HUSSON: Yes. We rented at the Washburn Place up at Indian, up at Seville, and we rented where my husband lives now. Not my husband, but my son. Where my son lives now, we rented that place one winter.

MODERATOR: Did you work at any place besides the mouth of the Indian?

HUSSON: Yes. We worked at the Indian Lake Hotel for Bonesteels. My husband worked at the riding stable, and I worked at the hotel.

MODERATOR: What kind of a riding stable did they run? For recreation?

HUSSON: Yes. I think they had about ten horses and in the summertime, they had to cut the hay for the horses. Of course, they had to use horses then to draw the rakes and wagons, and so forth. They had a big barn up there that they stored the hay in. At that time, it wasn't bailed. They didn't have bailers.

MODERATOR: Were you affected by the war?

HUSSON: Well, I think everybody was affected by the war.

MODERATOR: What was one of the things you looked forward to doing in the summer?

HUSSON: Well, I think the trip to visit our grandmother and grandfather in the summer was one of our greatest pleasures. Of course, travel in those days was quite different than it is at the present time. My dad would take us to the village in the morning, and we would get on the stage, and of course, it was drawn by horses. We would go as far as north river and stop there for dinner. It was a treat to go into a hotel to eat because we didn't do that very often. Then after dinner, we get on the stage again, and go to north creek, and then we would take the train, which, of course, was quite excitable to us then, and we'd go as far as Riverside. Then our grandfather would meet us at Riverside with horse and wagon and take us on to Wevertown. It was an all day's trip, and today, it takes probably a half an hour.

MODERATOR: What was your grandfather's name?

HUSSON: My grandfather's name was William Eldridge.

MODERATOR: Was he born around here?

HUSSON: I'm not quite sure just where he was born. He was born around the northern part of the country, but I'm not sure where. My great grandfather built the place known as the Starbuck Place up in Big Brook, and they work for -- I don't know whether it was Finch and Pruyn or Finch or Pruyn at that time, and later, my grandfather and grandmother moved up there where they worked in the lumber camps for many years.

MODERATOR: Did most of the men around at that time work out at the lumber camps in Big Brook?

HUSSON: Well, I expect they did because that was --

MODERATOR: -- camp service?

HUSSON: I think in those days, the women used to keep the lumber camps, cook for the men.

MODERATOR: Travel at that time was mostly by horse back and forth from the lumber camps?

HUSSON: Yes, it was all by horses. The backroads were not available for cars, and at that time, I guess there wasn't any cars in the northern part of the country anyway. Well, naturally, we looked forward to Christmas, and our Christmas was different, too, than Christmas today. We always hung up our stocking Christmas Eve, and we always each got one nice gift, and then the stocking was filled with just little things and candy and nuts. At that time, we didn't have fresh fruit in the wintertime. If someone happened to go where they could buy an orange, why, we would have an orange in the stocking, but usually, it was just candy and nuts, and everybody wanted a pencil box with a lock and key. That was something to look forward to. Some picture books, and then as I grew older, maybe one nice piece of jewelry or a manicure set or brush and comb, or something of that kind. We didn't have all the many, many gifts that children expect today, but we appreciated what we had, and thought we were pretty well off to get the things that we did because there were many children that didn't have that much. We had just the normal things that people had in those days. Of course, we went to church on Sunday and to Sunday school, but in those days, we children, we had one nice dress, but that was kept for Sunday and for school exercises, and things like that. We didn't wear our best clothes every day and our worst clothes the next day. We had good school clothes, but our one nice outfit was kept for Sunday and for entertainment if it was a play in the school or whatever. See, most of our shopping, of course, was done through catalogs, and I can remember, each winter, my father used to send an order to Sears & Roebuck, and in each order, he would get us a box of fancy cookies. And that was a real treat because in those days, people didn't buy cookies or our cookies were homemade, which of course were better, but it was just a treat to have cookies that were bought in those days.

MODERATOR: How did the things that you ordered come from Sears & Roebuck?

HUSSON: Well, they had to come by stage, by mail. That's why we didn't have fresh fruit. We didn't have lettuce and cucumbers, and all the things in the wintertime they have today because they would freeze coming. It took so long to draw the freight from north creek to Indian Lake.

MODERATOR: How did people keep most of their vegetables then without big refrigerators and freezers?

HUSSON: Most everybody had cellars, and they kept them in the cellars in the wintertime. Most of the cellars were dirt bottom, and vegetables kept better than they do today. And of course, the fruit, everybody canned fruit. Raspberries and strawberries, blueberries.

MODERATOR: Did you grow berries on your farm or were they wild berries?

HUSSON: Oh, they were wild berries, and we used to start out in the morning, maybe two, three in the family, or some of the neighbors, take our lunch, go way over in the wood lot, stay all day and pick raspberries or go into the blueberry field and pick blueberries, or go in the fields and pick strawberries. Come home at night. We each had our own jobs to do at that time before we had gas lanterns. We had kerosene lamps, and every so often, the chimneys had to be washed. That was, especially, one job on Saturday that when we were out of school, we had to do. Of course, the boys had to bring in the wood, and they with my father, took care of the cows and the horses. We usually had a hog to kill through the wintertime and froze it, and a beef or a venison at that time, and froze it. And so we had good balanced meals always.

MODERATOR: Did your father go out to kill the deer whenever he needed one or did they just keep one through hunting season?

HUSSON: Well, no. They didn't go out and kill a deer whenever we needed one, but during the hunting season, he would kill a deer, and usually at that time, it was cold enough so we could freeze it, and keep it through the wintertime.

MODERATOR: When you froze the meat -- what do you mean when you say froze it? Did you put it in the ice house or just hang it outside?

HUSSON: We usually cut it up and put it in bags, and hung it on it -- and hung it outside. Perhaps, on the back porch or in a shed or someplace where it was very, very cold.