CR: This is a Star Island History Project interview, I’m Carol Ryan and I’m interviewing Margaret Silknitter. We’re on the south shore of Star Island and it’s August 4, 1976. Sallie Silknitter is also present.

I wonder if you can tell me a little bit about the history of the cabin?

MS: Well we purchased the cottage from Mr. and Mrs. Hagnaw and she was a Larson girl.

CR: When did you purchase the cabin?

MS: In August of 1952.

CR: About how long did they own it? Do you know?

MS: That I am not sure. I do not know.

CR: Did they build - did they have it built do you think?

MS: They ah - they added to a two room cottage. I think that was here on the premises. I know that they added two rooms.

CR: When you say she was a Larson girl, were they Larsons from Cass Lake or from somewhere else?

SS: She was a Larson…

MS: They were the Larsons from Fosston, Minnesota, because the parent owned a very large dry goods department store there. It was the only, ah and I think there were five girls, five or six girls, and they were all more or less raised here on the island in the summer time.

CR: Oh – uh-huh.
MS: Her sister, Mrs. Lund lives next store to me.

SS: Mrs. Hagnaw's husband was a lumberman. So that when they added on to this Carol, this redwood paneling was all done in the living room and I don't know how extensive this was.

MS: When we purchased the property, we did make some improvements. Such as putting a concrete foundation in and closing off the back screen porch and making a kitchen. Turning it into a kitchen and also, two years later I made this into a sun room. This was an L screen porch. It was just where wind came through and blew us every direction, and it's a two bedroom home. And last year we completed it by putting in the windows and enclosed the porch completely.

CR: How did you ever hear about Star Island?

MS: Um, we had friends here by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Edwards, and he was in business in Sioux City, Iowa where my husband had, and we were invited to come up some time and be their guests. We took our son to Dollfield, Wisconsin to attend St. Johns for this summer camp, and Mr. Silknitter, myself and Sallie came on over here And ah…

CR: When did you…

MS: …we stayed, we stayed at the lodge. The Star Island Lodge and ah went back and forth.

CR: Oh, I see.

MS: And it was there where Mr. Edwards induced Mr. Silknitter to look at some property and we did. We went on up the other direction, but ah the house that we first went into is where Mrs. Brenkenship lives and it was much too small and I wasn't very much in favor of it. We came back and we then heard about this place, and it was - I didn't know he had bought it until that night when we had dinner with the Edwards. He sprung the news on me then.

CR: Oh! What year did you first visit the Edwards?

MS: It must have been prior to 1952.

SS: Yeah - I'd say '59.

CR: Huh?

SS: '49.

MS: Something like that.

SS: We probably came up here. We'd come up on the Fourth of July, Carol, and then the weather would get rough and the waves would start rolling in and they'd say, "No you can't go back tonight, it's too rough to cross the lake." And they always brought their clothing in barrels which got right inside the front door and so there was something always right available if you stayed.

CR: Oh for heaven’s sake. I was going to ask you to describe the Edwards a little bit because several people have commented on what wonderful people they were and…
SS: They were you just know wherever there was less than a dozen people ah - between guests and their family. Terribly relaxed.

MS: They had a, well she was their cartered help in Sioux City but they brought her here because ah - asthma and hay fever. And her name was Erma. She was a prize, and that whole household was a prize and you could get up in the morning and there were, nothing was imposed. And if they were playing cribbage, including Mrs. Edwards…

SS: Well Connie used to come over and play cribbage with Mrs. Edwards.

MS: ...they'd never move, you'd have to go on and get your own beautiful breakfast and help yourself and if you didn't you were just without. I mean it was, that was it.

CR: That's how relaxed we had it.

MS: And they never wanted Erma to get breakfast because she was the person who had an ailment in the morning. She didn't know just what it was but she always had an ailment. And there was three girls in the family and ah if she, Mrs. Edwards, never knew who he invited to come.

CR: Oh my!

MS: Some way a lot of people would be there. When he would get ready to break up or close the cottage, he, "Come on,“ her name was Gilberta at one time I guess, but he called her, "Bird, Come on Bird," and bird would try to hurry up and she wouldn't get her own mind together to see what was being done and what was not being done. And everything was out in the boat and he was ready to start and she just put her raincoat on over her petticoat and took her dress with her ad put it on when she got over to the dock.

CR: People said sitting down at a meal in their house was always fun because there was so many different expressions of opinion and...

SS: Uh-huh and of course everything was done. Ah he having his doctrine in meat curing, had such a gorgeous standing rib roast which may cook all day long in either the oil stove or the cook stove. Before it went out, someone would come along and start the other stove going and it would be shifted into that. Then maybe by ten o'clock at night you would be the most elegant piece of roast beef and…

MS: …not on a plate but a platter.

SS: …dinner was always served on platters. The...

MS: The original home of that place was Mr. Blankenship's brother as I understand it.

SS: It was the fourth one.

MS: The fourth one and he had bad health and he had just a one room cottage there and Vince, I don't know who the woman was that bought the place, and every time, she travelled all over the world, and she had stuff from the orient. There was stuff on the wall that she would just be appalled
to look at. There was a marvelous Indian collection on the walls. I’m sure they put it in a museum somewhere. But it was there, and that's all, they never bothered it, until one day they decided they might paint and they took it down and put it right back up again, and ah…

SS: The deers heads were covered with paper sacks for a long time.

MS: Oh yes, we didn't even know what...

SS: …until somebody finally decided to wall underneath you know.

MS: ...and she was a person who would if there was coming, and she didn’t have room, she'd have a carpenter come and build a part onto the house.

CR: This is Mrs. Edwards?

SS: No this is the woman previously.

MS: And that's how it derived the name Agmoore.

CR: Oh for goodness sake!

SS: Well the floors went uphill and downdale. The front southwest bedroom where the head of the bed was to the south had a box built up under it permanently and it was just...

MS: What are you shutting this in here for?

SS: …there in order to keep the bed level Carol, cause the house would just simply sag down and it was no idea of jacking up the house. He simply put a box under the bed.

CR: Good grief! Sounds marvelous. Well when you moved into this cabin didn't you have electricity?

SS: Yes

MS: Yes

SS: It was about two years after electricity had come onto the island. Most the cottages had it.

MS: Now we looked at where Shirley Martin lives and that did not have it. Mrs. Daniels from Otuma, Iowa owned it, and there was lamps all over and a heatalator fireplace which was marvelous. But ah - that house was one of the houses it that time that did not have electricity. They were slowly putting it on but she did have electricity, not in all places just a little bit. And she had a cook stove which was ah...

SS: ...standard

MS: Yeah, but I mean we didn't and I ah…

SS: Well this had the big cook stove in the kitchen, and what was in the kitchen was this little
brown mouse.

MS: Is that hull going down on that thing?

CR: Uh-huh, it's all right. It won't hurt anything. I'll edit it when I'm done.

SS: We used to get the giggles Carol, because Mother would put crackers up on top of the cook stove to keep them away from the mice. You could open that door to the cook stove and the crackers would just be all gone.

MS: All of them.

SS: I could never figure out how they got there.

MS: Oh I could tell you. The house was well insulated. Ben was one time helping me.

CR: Who was Ben?

MS: Well Ben belonged to the island practically. He came over and cut the lawn, the grasses and picked up all the, raked away all the leaves. The leaves – I'm sure you must have them don't you?

CR: Not much.

MS: Oh you aren't under many trees?

CR: No.

MS: Oh well they will blow up to the corner of the house or they'll blow up to the side of the building in some way and of course the moisture in the snow and everything in there. They’re pretty foul by the time you get up here in the spring. And ah the sand in them is pushed up pretty high. Ben used to, he was slow but he was very faithful. You could write, typewrite to him and he ah and tell him you'd be here by the twenty-eighth of June. Put your name on the list for the yard work, when you'd come up it would be just lovely. Until this year, he died shortly - suddenly last fall.

CR: Oh!

MS: Until this year, it's always been a low rate, but I didn't go into that because of the um - what they are planning to do with this new cesspool and all this sort of stuff. And there was a lot of bluegrass seed out here. So I said to the boys, “You have to pick up all the down brush and everything and clean up like that and rake in front, but let’s leave the seed to go to the ground this year.” Well it hasn't hurt it one bit.

SS: Plus there is not a lot of nice little seedling pines coming down there.

MS: Yeah well he used to cut it down on me and I used to just scream at him.

CR: This was Ben Rood then right?
SS:  Yes.
CR:  R-O-O-D.
SS:  Yes - no, R-U-D.
CR:  R-U-D?
MS:  Ben Rud from LaPorte.
SS:  Benedict Rud and he would write a letter each spring to people that he would work for. He would write it to Dear Friend and this would be a long letter telling what he had been doing all winter, and he would write...
MS:  ...you widows. He would always say "you widows".
CR:  Oh dear!
MS:  Well he was a very dependable person and where we got acquainted with him was up at Edwards’. He worked for them and they'd just walk out and left him to shut their place up, and he had, the last time I look back he was picking up two-by-fours to keep the roots up on the kitchen. And then he used to come back the next day to work. He made a home for his mother and she was aging but they didn't want to take him to town and he had to go to bed there, and that was it. So he kind of knew what to plan on it for that, but he took care of old people’s homes up and down here.
CR:  What was the island like when you came here in the fifties as compared to today? What would you think some of the changes are?
MS:  Well ah there's been changes. Mr. and Mr. Peterson were operating the lodge. There were many that came their and there were several cottages occupied. There was two couples that I made acquaintances with. That was Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, who is a mother to Mrs. Wintermole.
CR:  Oh yes.
MS:  And it was very well kept and a good dining room and a play place for the young folks and everything. Ah - this home was not occupied until we came because they were in the man - Mr. Banton was in the service. This home was occupied by Mrs. Hagnaw alone. She was a widow as well as her sister Mrs. Long, but she had relatives and they all used to come. Then Mrs. Becker was here with her children, they were small. The boys were small and we were intrigued at watching them ski out here on a chair.
CR:  Oh!
MS:  Oh well they were just marvelous skiers on a chair. And Dr. and Mrs. Flansberg were here and they were neighbors. I think we were - had a different neighbor attitude. Not so much cocktailing. That's the only time you would see your neighbors here is if you have a, and that attitude was so much different you know, and ah Mrs. Davis, Florence Davis was living. That's Grace's mother she had the home up here. The Castles were living up there. And we never did get
to make too many friends beyond the Orthweins and all those families on back up that way.

CR: Were the boats different then?

MS: Simpler - they weren’t yours is better than mine.

SS: They were just an open wood boat.

MS: Yeah - and I don't think there was a covered boat on the island at the time.

SS: Well there were some, ah usually it ah - like the Edwards old Crest Raft.

MS: Oh they had that old thing. If they could steer it then they would run it. But...

SS: There were a few covered boats like that but they were wood boats. Your trails were open and they were well marked.

MS: Oh beautifully kept up.

SS: You could see any place and they were wide roads and...

MS: Oh I wouldn't hesitate anytime to go out and go out and go up that trail up here and they were just beautiful. We've got pictures to show how nice they were and how - what fun it was to walk all the way back to Windigo and all. Windigo is to my, I haven't been back there for a couple years, but when I was there it was very desolate walking back there.

SS: But they, there would be maybe three boats maintained back there Carol, they belonged to people on particularly on the south shore. At that time of course there were no cottages on the north shore. There was no portaging in by people from resorts to fish on Windigo. Only people fishing on Windigo were islanders who maybe kept a boat over there.

MS: And I can say that there was no telephones. The only telephone was down there at the lodge and we could, they could phone a message anytime and they delivered it. Fifty cents for some of these cottages and dollar maybe thereafter, and we just thought nothing of it - there was no phone. We didn't have all the paraphernalia that goes on today. And ah...

SS: We could always get transportation from them.

MS: …and if you didn't have a boat, or if you couldn't go over by running your boats, or something, you could go down - always plan to go with them always. They were very very cordial people.

SS: But the two men over at the marina, that was you know the boat dock is what they called it. J.D. Ellen and Karahoff would take you anytime if you came with a large load. They took you to your cottage with the whole load for two dollars at the most. Which was unbelievable and you always knew that in an emergency, anytime of day or night they would come.

MS: We used to, we would, we used to come to Park Rapids a lot before we came - before we came over here. We used to and we felt like we had to go back if we'd go back to the dances and
things out in the woods down there and just have a heck of fun. And ah, it would be one o'clock or later and all you would have to do was go up and rap on the window and one of them would get up and bring us home. Now you can't get anyone after five o'clock out hardly over there.

CR: Yeah that's right. Well why do you think the lodge finally failed?

MS: Well I would be given to say that trailer camps you know - people coming from trailer camps and things. Would you?

SS: No, I think the quality. They never did get the help over there to run the kitchen. Usually with any resort you have to run a good dining room. People will go where good food is and that's what was changing hands, rather they, ah different owners and not the quality of the dining room. I think without that you can't make it go.

CR: What do you think about the idea that people demand more now when they go to a resort? In terms of if they want the golf course nearby and if they want to pull their car up and open the door. Do they want more entertainment do you think?

SS: Ah no because I think people who are still going to resorts if they pick a plain fishing resort this is what they want. At least the people I know do you know. If they want that kind of resort where there's golf, tennis, and swimming then they pick that kind. But I think there still - the fishing is deteriorated very badly in the lake and this is more of a fishing type resort.

MS: No, there wasn't anything for Mr. - the Edwards or the Collins to just go out and bring out a forty or fifty pound muskie you know. Needless to say that is nothing, and we may have had an ordeal about that.

CR: Oh really! What did you do?

MS: Well, I have - took pictures and they went to town with it and all that and everything and ah…

SS: The Collins always sounded a siren when they caught a muskie and I haven't heard a siren for a good long time. The [unclear] muskie picture and of course Gib rang his bell and ah I don't know if you would have the history of the bell or where that came from?

CR: No - no I don't.

SS: But that engine bell was a present from my father to Gib Edwards and one Fourth of July, the men all put it up.

CR: Oh my word!

SS: Collected the rocks and split the wood.

MS: With a little spit and a little beer and a little sand.

CR: Why did he want a bell?
MS: Why did he?

SS: It was one of those things they joked about and then it became a thing for my dad to find one.

MS: And I know we used to stop at all the antique shops going down from here and especially at Willmar out there a distance and we did stop there one time and I found a gorgeous pin. I had card glasses on. I got down the road a ways and looked at the pin and I thought, "Oh my lord this is all fake." And no I didn't, I had all real sapphires and pearls.

CR: Oh my goodness!

MS: What did I give, about five dollars or less?

SS: Uh-huh.

MS: It's a bargain pin I guess. Well anyhow, Mr. Silknitter was very happy to stop there because he was going to get a bell for Gib right now.

CR: And did he find one there?

MS: Oh no. So he had to finally get a bell, Mr. Silknitter was president manager of Sioux City Stock Yards and Mr. Edwards was in the pig and syrup business. I don't know how, I don't know anything about the, how we got the bell or anything, but he had it crated and sent to Mr. …

SS: Through the yards terminal railroad.

MS: Yeah - but he had it sent to Mr. Edwards. Cost Mr. Edwards more to pay for the bell than to get the bell out of hock out here at the railroad. But we came back the next Fourth of July. We anticipated coming every time we ever came up here, then that got to be a… And there was another couple young boys and their father and mother from Onawa and I never had such a good Fourth of July in all my life., There were some of them out there getting nigger heads and making the monument to put the bell on. Somewhere out fishing, we were walking back to the thing there..

CR: Windigo

MS: …and ah Mr. Edwards he started the fire in the cook stove and he put this fifteen or twenty pound standing rib roast in the oven and sometime during the day he came in and it was out and oh he blew his stack about that. So then he took it out and put it in the…

SS: …broiler

CR: Oh yeah, a roaster.

MS: Oh, and he nicely thought he had it all going and they ran out of there was no more butane gas in the stove, in the tank. Well then he had to come back and start that. And that was the night we didn't have dinner until late at night. I'll tell, you it was just fine.
SS: Usually everybody had that big old fashioned cook stove, and then a small bottle gas stove, that uses auxiliary back and forth. I would imagine that when it was hot…

MS: And ah, there wasn't any - when the children were all, now there is a change in growth of children here and many of the young folks can't come anymore, aren't coming anymore because they want to work. They want a job. But in those days this whole group - the Jessies with their three grandchildren and all of… One day there was a whole platter full of chicken sitting on the table. The Jessie boy just walked on through the house, picked himself out a big chicken wing and out the back door and nothing was said. You know that's the way. We didn't have that so much here but that was, you didn't think of any, and it was a real pleasure to see the people going down to the lodge if they had company or anything. They'd walk past and see the company that was going by. Everybody spoke and I miss Grandma Martin about as much as I miss anybody because she would come on purpose to come past to see the pansies and this. We didn’t put pansies out this year. I used to have pansies out there about that big around. Blossomed so nice and ah it was - well it was fun. Well we had guests and we took them down there for dinner. Are you, you did a day’s work and you were tired and all go down and see if Mrs. Peterson could put on, put three more plates on for us or something like that. She'd tell you, and if she couldn't she'd tell ya. And that was, it was ah, kind of what you would expect to come over and live. You weren't trying to top notch beyond, trying to do the things you do at home is what I mean. Or have to do what you have to. You like to get away from the change of it, or break that mode…

CR: ...that routine huh?

MS: Uh-huh. Well that Mr. Jessie never walked by here but he had one of the boys, and the funniest, Nenkin and Rylie and the other two. And now one of them is a promising lawyer out in California and they changed all around here. Sallie’s sons finished at the University. So that changed, all those changes come. And along with it has come the modern form of...

SS: We were terrible with names when you asked about what kinds of boats sold when we first came up here. I think most of us had kind of an open wood boat and had no id... When we came, we had no idea how worthless they could get.

CR: That's right.

SS: And George one night had gone into town to go to a movie and the motor had killed on him, and started swamping. And he, they all - did he end up over at Pike Bay, or over in that area?

MS: No, a bakery man picked him up and brought him into town.

CR: Oh!

MS: And somebody was over there coming back and they brought him with them. Well you know that's the kind of, one of the things that you don't have happen. But ah...

SS: We didn't have boat buoys either. We had them stored on the beach, and those boats were not light. And then of course you couldn't leave them tied in the "L" because it could rip the dock out, and get really rough. Many a night we would suddenly discover that a storm would come up in the middle of the night. Get up at three o'clock in the morning and try to pull that boat in by the shore.
While the waves were rolling in.

MS: We were remodeling and of course the back end of the house was open and this porch was all out on the out - and everything else. Why Mr. Silknitter had to go to bed with his long undies because it would get, he would freeze to death. He would utterly freeze. And I can remember looking out and seeing him stand in that and his shirt tail and that out there trying to get the boat in. Course poor George was just a skid of a kid. But the wind blowing, we didn't - Carol we were so stupid. We didn't know how to take care of a boat or what to do with the boat.

CR: Well that sounds familiar.

MS: Connie Larson's father made our boat. It's still out here. It's a wood boat and it's still out here. And he also make the Jessie boat, which is Charlene and Bill's.

SS: And I think that was the last.

MS: Oh yeah we know that's the last boat made. We know that.

CR: Let me ask you a little about the Larson family. You saw, did you see him down - Arnold Larson building boats and...

MS: Oh yes.

SS: When they were, the building boats, the boys - the high school boys would come in after school and turn out wood duck decoys.

CR: Oh?

SS: And we got a couple. You know they would rough them out and the boys would finish them up. You would see rows of them in that big shed. Oh it was marvelous, the smell of fresh wood.

CR: And that was up town?

SS: Ah-huh. Watching those boats being driven...

MS: Yeah and that you know that big high boathouse that used to be, that's where they stored our boats. It wasn't, there was nothing down in the marina, only this old rouch house and it was right in front of the stone house. And Mr. and Mrs...

SS: ...Carahoff.

MS: ..Carahoff lived in that place and that's, I can't tell you how many years back that is. Then all this new stuff come on. Which isn't too wrong, but it's growing, it's just mushrooming.

CR: Yes, I noticed that they’re putting up another poor old building now this year, over on the side.

MS: Well they have to with some of these new boats that have been purchased. I know the county has old, a number of them.
SS:  I was asking mother if she can remember when it was, that years ago, she and my father had
been driving up north to Canada and she thinks that's when it was. That there was a dance
provided... [Tape cuts off]

MS:  No we didn't dance, we were just, we went through it. It was a gift shop and stuff with it. It
wasn't there, I know it was at The Chimney.

CR:  That's in Secotti?

MS:  It's in Secotti, that's right. We were, Mr. Silknotter was sent to Beaudette. Ah - to by the bank
to investigate some land there and on our way back, we stayed all night at, going and coming, at the
over in Bemidji. And I’m sure that I know that it was at the college. I know where the places, the
places are, it's just I didn't know there was a dance hall on top of the old one. No, I didn't know that
at all.

SS:  Not on top of there but you said that you remembered where. You didn't know how to get
there. You used to tell me that you don’t remember how you happen to be there. But you remember
going to the dancing at night.

MS:  Oh no I don't know.

CR:  Where's the Secotti?

MS:  That's where The Chimney still stands.

SS:  Yeah.

MS:  It burned down.

CR:  Ah, what about the Anderson family? Were they still coming to their place?

MS:  Yes, ah mother Anderson was still living when we were here, and she used to have her
family come here and they all lived in different cottages. But they cooked, they took turns and
cooked and served meals in the dining room. I never had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Anderson,
nor really any of them. I do know that they ah, when Andersons’ came up for sale, that I think the
islanders have - I don’t want to be quoted on this, because I’m not sure of it. I think they tried to buy
that. Then there were several, didn't she give it to a church?

CR:  Uh-huh,

SS:  She gave it...

MS:  She gave it to a church and it come on down because twenty-two years ago Isaac Fisherman
and Dr. Cligett and he and Mrs. Cligett used to come over here and were great friends of the
Andersons. So that's how I know about that. The boat that Tom Collin is now running is the old
Anderson boat. That looks familiar to me to see that running back and forth. But they were quite a
secluded family over there on the point. But she came up here for all of five years of maybe longer
that I know about. And was very liked person by everybody. I don't know, I don't know there was
some discussion about buying it, some discussion about giving it to the church, and it ended up she gave it to the church. She gave, I think, the islanders a chance first.

CR: Was the grocery boat running when you first came?

MS: Oh yes. We could get our groceries, you could call anytime if you needed a tank of gas, not no more. See that's what the thing is. I mean it's a different standard of living. Entirely different.

CR: In some ways it's harder.

MS: Oh you know I know that. I just know that, and the mail always came, and as I said the grocery boat came you could always, and if you had lists they would bring it the next time. If you didn't get any groceries that day, they'd stop and get your list and bring it back to you the next time.

CR: Yeah. Can you remember the name of the boat? The mail boat or the grocery boat?

MS: Well the Phyllis Ann was the large boat that ran back and forth, and what was the small one? That Jane used to...

CR: I've heard of a couple that came in. One was Helen L. and the other one was the Harriet.

SS: The Harriet was the littler one.

MS: The Harriet was the little one. That was really a taxi boat.

CR: I see.

SS: But if you had a large load, why they'd use the Phyllis Ann which was a large…

CR: And which one brought the mail?

SS: Ah, the Harriet I believe.

MS: I think the Harriet used to come. Now they had, this is some of the things they would do. Some couple went out fishing, from over there and they never came back, and they never came back, and they never came back. And most of the night Jay and Harriet, in the Harriet boat, searched that shore until they found them. But there was a storm that came up that drove them, and brought them in. Now then those little things…

SS: They would keep track. You see there wasn't that much going on down at the marina. So if somebody went out and didn't come back that was supposed to, they knew to go looking for them. And they kept that kind of watch on them.

MS: And I didn't know much about what was across the lake other than that there was quite a boys camp over there. And I mean I didn't get that far away from here when we'd come up here. We didn't seem to have to run to Bemidji and run here and run there and up shore someplace, to get something to eat or a night club or anything. That was kind of something that we left at home.

CR: What kinds of animals have you seen on the island over the years?
MS: Deer…
CR: Uh-huh.
SS: Raccoons…

MS: …Raccoons. I, we used to, our garbage wasn't so pickonish about our garbage and they used to be. We had a place to burn papers and we had a garbage pit. When we burned our cans and our garbage of any kind, and ah, so that was back up there on the other side of the line. And I sent, the first encounter we had with raccoons is I sent George out with a sack of garbage and two of them were up in a tree looking down at him. And he was paralyzed. He came running back. I don't know if he brought the garbage back with him or not. "What are those mother,” he said, “they are up there looking down at me." Poor kid, I felt so sorry for him. But ah, we used to see eagles and we knew where the eagles nests were on the island. I don't know if there’s one of them on the island? Maybe, but that's about all. And ah - let's see...

SS: That makes me think one of the big things you did every year when you lived on the south shore, was to get in the boat, and go around the island at least once, and especially to see the Chinese pagoda.

MS: The what?
SS: The pagoda.
MS: Oh yes. I want to go back to see that, it…
SS: There's always something to show to anybody who came to visit.
MS: I want to go back to see that the league meeting was always held at the...
CR: …lodge?
MS: …lodge, and ah Mrs. Peterson would put on a very good dinner, very good dinner. And we had our meetings outside and Mr. Sword would come over and it was...
CR: He was the ranger?
MS: Uh-huh and it was just delightful get together. Just a delightful get together. They must knew, and nobody used to rush home or anything. All stayed around and visited. Children had the playground out there and it was quite different.
CR: Did you ever have entertainment at those meetings?
MS: No, not to my knowledge.
SS: One water show. That was where you were talking about Woody Hicker skiing - waterskiing. They would do a water, some of the teenagers would do a water show.
MS: Oh yeah - that, maybe something like that. As I said, watch them on the chair. And the loons
were much thicker than they were used to be to. We had more loons here and the mama ducks came up with their little new hatch, and I think there was a little more wildlife.

CR: What kinds of plants and trees have you identified on the island that you particularly like?

MS: Oh I love them all. Anything that's green. I love the birch and the pine. Thus the birch and the pine and I've tried awful hard to get some to grow out here but it doesn't come out of the woods and survive out in front.

CR: Ah, were your family, did they enjoy the fishing here? We've talked a little about the fact that the fishing has changed a little bit.

MS: Oh yes we did. We always had a nice pan full of fish. Mr. Silknitter and I would, well Sallie improved then. She'd have to go out and row the boat for us. No we had a... We were out here at the drop-off, off of Pinesburg, was a good perch hole in years back and further over you could get your walleyes. He didn't fish for muskie because, well he just never had and he had to do it.

CR: How about Windigo? Did your family fish on Windigo?

SS: Some.

CR: I think there were...

MS: I think once or twice.

SS: Every few years we would be up and we would come back to Windigo.

CR: Do you think Windigo has changed over the years? You said you thought it was more desolate.

MS: Well it's, I think it's changed.

SS: Well until we asked for the ban on motors over there, it became very, very active. Which is one of the reasons the league asked for the motors to be stopped. We never had a boat from an outside resort in there at all. That's something totally new and don't know how the fishing is there Carol?

CR: Ah, what about lake water levels over the years? Have you seen quite a variation?

MS: Yes I would say. I would say there is considerable changes in that.

CR: Were there any special gears that you remember that?

MS: No I can't say that because that's something that just didn't quite interest me any more than we can tell it out front here now.

CR: In the early fifties, there was one year when the water was high and the wind was from the northeast and it took away the bank on the east shore and so some people didn't go over there course, especially conscious of that.
MS: Well you see, we see didn't get that over here.

CR: No, that's right.

SS: Yeah, was that when Starr's point started to float over?

CR: Yes, part of it.

SS: Yeah I remember that now that you mentioned it.

MS: Now, I ah - the Edwards are not here but when they came up here to look at this property, they came up in the winter time and came across in a truck. Somebody brought them in a truck and before they could get to the edge they dropped off. Mrs. Edwards can tell that story. Now they bought that property in the winter. Snow was on the ground and they came over here a lot. And a lot of people.. I don't think they did a lot of hinting on the island years back. There were bears on the island but I don't know if there are any more or not.

CR: What about, well we talked about island personalities on some of the people you remembered. You mentioned that you missed seeing Grandma Martin. Could you describe her a little bit? Her own children are having a hard time with that.

MS: In what way?

CR: Well what was she like as a person? What did she...

MS: Well she was, I think she was outgoing, well-read, strong person to my way of thinking. She was just, and enjoyed people. I've been a guest here now for meals and she made no issue of fun about it, but she put on a delightful meal. And as I said she enjoyed coining down because Mr. Silknitter - I was the only one along the line then that had flowers I guess. And we both sat around an old summit tree because we were tired of looking at it, and ah we put the pansies in because they were little flowers. And she didn't keep it to herself, she was glad to tell me that she enjoyed walking by and seeing how my pansies were getting along, or something like that. As I said, she was an outgoing person and well, I enjoyed her very much. I don't know why they had any trouble with her because...

SS: Too close.

CR: Well it's hard to describe your own family.

MS: What?

SS: Too close.

MS: But she was, I don't think she was ah matriotic person with her family or anything. I think she was gentle as she was to me. Very gentle, but still a strong person. What I mean is she was no "willy nilly" or couldn't make up her mind or anything.

CR: Well she must have come up to the island by herself when she was younger?
MS: Oh yes, oh yes. She was here - many, all the time I ever knew her she was here all by herself. In that old brown home, and the children lived elsewhere. They didn't live...

SS: Margarie [unclear] stayed with them.

MS: Margarie is the one, but the boys were married.

CR: Indians on the island, do you have any knowledge of the Yellowhead Camp on O'Neil’s Point or Anderson's point?

MS: That they did? Well, they had a great... They had a superstition about Windigo, that's the first thing. Not this younger generation but back, back and they never came to the island. And when there was, there was quite an alarm out because, well they'd take anything. And go in any place and enter your home at anytime or anything, and that only happened a few times and they were ah perhaps out in the water and got upset and came in like that. But other than that - no we had never had any trouble. However, they say that they are getting braver to come over here more and more.

CR: Well what was the superstition that they had about Windigo?

SS: We don't know that story.

MS: I don't know but there were superstitions about that: That, was that the Princess that raised out of the water or what was it?

SS: I don't know the story.

MS: Yeah, I don't know either. But you couldn't get near.

CR: Did you ever here Windigo called by any other name?

SS: Darn that's the name, and I don't, that's the first time I heard it. Was that the Helen?

CR: Yes

MS: What?

SS: Lake Helen or...

MS: Oh.

CR: That was Windigo to you over the years?

SS: Yes.

MS: It's always the Indian name. Now what does Windigo mean?

CR: Syrup.
MS: That's it, that was it.

CR: Ah do you have any information concerning the lost cabins on the northwest corner of the island?

MS: No I don't.

CR: Ok, what about Pete's Place? Any information concerning Pete's Place?

MS: No.

CR: Ok.

MS: Was he on the island?

CR: Well it's just what they call that place way up in the northeast corner before you get to the...

MS: Yeah. I know where that shed is or whatever.

CR: Yes oh no it's long gone but I've been asking people if they...

MS: It's that old building down down?

CR: Yeah the foundation is there but that's all. I've been asking people what it is and it's kind of a personal thing. What is it that makes this place special to you?

MS: Do you know?

SS: Not me. What it makes it special to you.

MS: Well I suppose I carry on, Mr. Silknitter loved the outdoors and he liked seclusion. I mean he had a brother who lived in the northwest in let's see now... Seattle?

SS: Portland.

MS: Portland and he was out on a peninsula you know. The brother retired and lived out on the peninsula and I think that always was something. Mr. Silknitter, he liked to hunt and fish when he was young and in his own home and that's because he liked it, then I liked it. Well we kept it in the family and ah there's something about it when the summer comes. Well let's go to the lake and that was it. I don't know how the children feel about it, but we liked it because it didn't have a telephone, radios and all that. We had been pretty near twenty-five years and this year is the first TV, and that was because of the convention and we couldn't have gotten it in here other than that. Well I like it for the children because I think their strung up watching all those boobie things and the phone is ringing and there... You should go without those things once in a while to appreciate what they mean to you as well as the annoyance that they are sometimes.

CR: Are you saying you could live without them?

MS: Huh?
CR: And seeing if you can live without them.

MS: Oh that's right.

CR: Sallie, what do you think? What makes it so special to you?

SS: Well I remember from the first time I came up here when we stayed at the Edwards that the lake got very rough and it was the closest feeling that I had to standing on the seashore watching the ocean.

MS: To what?

SS: To standing on the seashore and watching the ocean roll in. I was as close to the Midwest as I could possibly come. Carol, that's a feeling that I just dearly love, and I like the idea of being on an island where its ah children more or less have to make their own fun.

MS: And the car isn't right outside the back door.

SS: It's a completely different environment. Everything is not readily available. Not so easy.

MS: They can't go to town at night and see late movies and all that sort of stuff. And that's why we felt that road coming in here. That road would be in here if the islanders didn't hang on and fight it.

SS: It was a complete change from city living.

CR: Ah who do you think wanted the road?

SS: I think it came from the mainland, Beltrami County. I know it was north so it had to be Beltrami County but I think it was easier access for the county.

MS: Would you want a road?

CR: No.

SS: But I don't think any islander wanted the road?

MS: Oh no, and you wouldn't want to know that there were hot rods running around back of the highway here and at your door at night and everything. That’s what it would all amount to.

SS: They did have a jeep down at the lodge. Which was a very strange sound going up this south trail every once in awhile, and it's the only sound of a car being around.

MS: If it was men that came there to go fishing he would take them. He would take any of us if we wanted to go you know. I mean his quests he could take back to Windigo to fish and go back and get them. So...

CR: Well I thank you very much for all your help.