

**Westman Oral History Collection**

<b>Interview Date:</b>	<b>1983-06-28</b>
<b>Narrator (interviewee)</b>	<b>Irene Wasylyshyn</b>
<b>Interviewer:</b>	<b>Eva Cassils</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Deloraine, Manitoba</b>
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Question [00:00:55]

[static sounds] This is Eva Cassils for the Westman Oral History Association Project “Voices of Yesteryear”. In May 1983 Mrs. Irene Wasylyshyn of Deloraine, recorded for us this story of Lake Metigoshe, which is located in the beautiful Turtle Mountains on the border of Manitoba and North Dakota. And here is her story.

Answer [00:00:55]

[sound of tape player] My name is Irene Wasylyshyn, daughter of Fletcher and Grace Stephens of Deloraine Manitoba. I was born and raised in Deloraine, as was my father. There is a beautiful lake about 20 minutes southeast of Deloraine, lying mostly in North Dakota, that I would like to tell you about. It was like a second home to me and I’m the third-generation spending most of the summer there. This lake is called Metigoshe, which is an Indian name for “large body of water surrounded by beautiful oak trees.” It’s in the Turtle Mountain area which adds to its beauty. In 1918 some land was

cleared on the Canadian end and some folks from Deloraine area tented there. My grandparents were one of the campers at that time. This lasted 4 or 5 years then the site was abandoned but I never really found out why. In the spring of 1931, interest in the site sprung up again and consent was obtained from the Department of Interior to occupy the area, now known as the Deloraine Beach. The camp was placed under the authority of the town of Deloraine and remained that way until the fall of '82. This is the southwest quarter section 3- 1-22. The first log cabin was built on this site by Mr. M.S. Colquhoun and the same summer my dad moved out an old icehouse from town and began to converting it into a cottage. At that time, you were able to sign a 99-year lease with the government. ah. It was a very small cabin and our family enlarged as the years went by, and many a weekend it was overflowing with friends and relatives. And the result was we pitched tents or made up beds in cars. But they sure were happy times. And as Mother often said, "The more the merrier." The outside of the cabin was covered with shingles, and though they had been painted many times, they remained on the building 'til the summer of '82. That's a total of 50 years. Last year, 1982, my husband began to enlarge and remodel with intentions of making it our future home. The main part which was the old icehouse still stands and we enlarged around it. Sentiment took over and I just couldn't see it all being torn down, I guess. There hasn't been a summer since ...1932 that the cottage wasn't used by a member of our family. Its a treasured spot. There are now 50 cottages on this part of the lake.

[00:03:51] In the year 1945 two local men secured a lease on another section of land – southeast quarter 4-1-22 for camping purposes when it came up for sale, and eight cottage owners on this land shared in the purchase. And the Lake Metigoshe Investment Limited was organized in 1963. I think there are about over 100 cottages are on this quarter today. There are two smaller lakes...ahh... adjoining. They are also filled with cottages now. Although the waters do not join, there is only a road that divides them from the main, from Lake Metigoshe. There's called Lakes Dromore and Hasselfied and they have a total of 40 cottages on them today. This makes a total of about 190 cottages and more lots being

cleared by Bill Rolston, owner of Holiday Hills. And that's another portion of the lake. A Lake Metigoshe Improvement Association was formed a number of years ago, and representatives from each of the areas serve on this committee. This portion of the lake, that's Holiday Hills is the most [unclear] ah ... significant commercial operation. Here there is a golf course, a ball diamond, marina, trailer park, boat and cabin rentals, playground, a small airfield, nature trails and a store with eating facilities. The golf course was first started by Ted and Enid Murray and later purchased by Jim...um... Bill Rolston, I'm sorry, who enlarged and added other facilities. When the Murrays started this venture of a nine-hole golf course, there was no vehicle access from the Deloraine Beach to the Murray property. So Ted walked through the bush ahead of the bulldozer to mark out the clearing of the road.

[00:05:59] There isn't a store operating at the Deloraine Beach area today but there has been a number of stores at different locations since the early 30s. The first store even had an outdoor dance floor. This was owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Thompson. This store, ah, burnt down. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Marten then built another store and a log house, and they operated the store and had a mixed cattle herd where Hasselfield Lake is now located. They were followed by Mr. and Mrs. Rosentreder. Mr. Rosentreder had retired from town police. They owned a cottage prior to this, so they were very familiar with the area. Paul and Ellie Jansen were the next owners and they remained for about 10 years. They kept the store open year 'round and they were well patronized by the people living out in that area. The store was next owned by Ross Dujarden, and many different people ran it for him. There were the Newtons, the Loggits [?], the Grobbs [?], the Leveringtons, Hazel Hainsworth, Marg Plante, the Chambers, and the Manzuiks [?]. This store was closed in 1977 and it has now been torn down. The following year the Doffneys from McCreary, built a modern store and an eating place in a different location. As I record this today the building is up for sale.

[00:07:36] As I look back its hard to believe there had been so many changes over the years. I think back now of the many trips to the lake on that dirt road when you could hardly see the car in front of you for

dust. And if it should start to rain you had to head for town because the roads would become treacherous or slippery. I think of the many scary trip we had into town. My dad was a master at the wheel of a car I'll tell you. Now with the paved roads and the 60 mile per hour speed limits it's so different. You never give the rain a thought.

[00:08:13] In 1981 the provincial government decided to no longer hold on to many of it's, the resort areas, to put the lots up for sale. Deloraine Beach and Haselfied Lake area came under this plan. As a result, the town of Deloraine made the initial purchase and then they resold each lot back to the cottage owners. This was very favorably accepted by the majority of the people and now, in March 1983, the plan has been completed and the lots are sold. The property is now under of the Rural Municipality of Winchester. Although the other quarter, known as the Syndicate quarter, is still owned by the Investment Corporation, the lots have been offered to the cottage owners for sale if they wish to purchase them. Bout twelve families now make their home at the lake, and many more use their cottages for both winter and summer recreation.

[00:09:14] Time has brought about many more changes to this beautiful spot. It's a hub of activity on weekends now with high powered boats, skiers and swimmers. I recall when I was in my early teens my father purchased the first motorboat and he would spend all day Sunday giving boat rides at 25 cents and 50 cents per person depending on the distance. 25 cents would take you around the Canadian site. 50 cents was a super ride all around the whole lake. It was a large boat and seating about 8 to 10 people. Many families would head for the lake as soon as school was out for the summer and stay for the full two months without a thought of going back into town. We never seemed to want to. Course there wasn't the pressures there is today, and I believe families were a lot closer together then. Some of the families that I recall sharing these wonderful summers with the Mainards, Nairns, McBrides, aah...Gauls, and the Clarks. We seemed to be able to keep busy and entertain ourselves. Turtle races on the beach was an event almost every evening. Kick- the -can was another favorite. Theres likely an old

[chuckles] turtle in the lake somewhere with my initials carved on its shell. Many a tear was shed by the younger children when their prized sandcastle would collapse, or someone's family dog would run through it. A campfire on Sunday evening was a must as all the fathers and sometimes the grandparents were out for the weekend. You could always depend on Dave and Alice Henry to lead the sing song. All families weren't like us though. We would get picked up from school the last day, trailer loaded high behind the car and not return until the morning school resumed. We even took our cow out with us for a couple of summers. One of my brothers, being born in May, began his camping when only a month and a half old. Sailboat racing was another popular sport amongst the kids, but the mothers weren't so enthusiastic as I recall, because the sails were sheets held up by one of the braver kids standing in the front of the boat. There was many a spill but no tragic accidents.

[ 00:11:45] You know, I really owe that spot a lot. Fish and berries were very plentiful then and we lived on them during the tough years in the 30s. In fact, the lake was better known as Fish Lake than it's right name of Lake Metigoshe. [the sound of page turning] We didn't mind, as kids, going fishing, but berry picking was a chore for most of us. But between the fish, the berries, and the 50-cent boat rides we weathered the storm in the 30s.

[00:12:19] There has been a great change in the past 50 years, and things will continue to change as the years go by. But there is one thing that will never change. And that is the beauty and serenity of a late summer evening sitting out on the patio looking at the sunset and the beautiful still water. Everything is so calm, and the water is so still that you can see the reflection of the trees and the buildings. And I really feel awed by it all. There are still a number of beautiful spots like this in our country and I hope we can treasure them enough to preserve them.

**End of Interview**