**Rose Noonday Childhood Memories**

I grew up in a big family. I had seven brothers and one sister. I was the second-youngest. Now I’m the only one left.

I was born and raised in Isle. We all managed to live in a two-room house. I often wonder how we all were able to live in such a small house. It’s a big difference from now and then.

But I was also gone a lot, gone away to an Indian boarding school for six years in Pipestone. We were all sent away to school, all except my sister, because she was smaller than the rest of us. I would come home in the summer and didn’t remember a word in Ojibwe because we had to speak English at school. But Ojibwe would come back to me during the summertime, and I’d learn it all over again.

Me and my siblings were crazy! There were days when all of us kids used to play together. We used to push a big wheel up the hill, and then all get in and ride down. We could do that all day. We didn’t have anything else to play with. The kids now want everything they see. I tell my great-grandchildren that when I was young, we didn’t have anything, but look at all the toys you have now.

During my younger years, we didn’t have much. When I would get a dime, I thought that was a lot of money. I always had to work. I think of all the work years ago, hauling water and firewood. Now you can just turn on the faucet or the heat.

In the summertime, I would go with my mom and aunt to pick berries of all kinds – Juneberries, raspberries, chokecherries, blueberries. My mom would can all that stuff, and sometimes we would sell it. In the fall, we would harvest wild rice. It was hard for me at first. My mother wanted me to guide her in the boat. I started out good, but I couldn’t steer the boat and I kept going towards open water. But eventually I learned how after she told me how to go into the rice paddies. I thought that was fun, and it gave me something to do. Then when we got back, we would bring the rice in and dry it, then parch it, and then my dad and brothers would thrash it with their feet while me and my mother would fan it.

I learned a lot of stuff in my younger years. I used to go with my mom when she would pick roots for medicine. That was many years ago. Now I only remember what sage looks and smells like. Somebody taught me that raspberry root helps with pink eye. You clean it up and let it dry, then take a little bit and put it in warm water and let it dissolve, and then put it in the person’s eye.

We were also taught some things not to do, like whistle at night, because when you whistle at night, you’re calling spirits. I always listened to my parents when they told me things like that. One of my grandsons says he whistles at night, and I told him, "One of these days you’re gonna hear something back when you whistle!"