

TAPE H 102.1
SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW WITH LILLIAN RALPH HICKS
April 1, 1977
Interviewer: Catherine Dittman

Lillian, Mrs. Earl Hicks, was born in 1895. Lillian's parents, the Ralphs, ran Spruce Lodge for guests. She and Earl married in 1915. The Hicks resided in three places. First they rented the Davis place of about 350 acres on Bear Mountain for five years, keeping 20 cows. They produced milk, sweet cream and butter and Earl had a milk route. Then they rented the Simmons place for three years. The Simmons place had been homesteaded around 1876 by Earl's grandfather, Mr. Simmons. By the time they rented it Earl's Uncle, Mr. Hicks, had it as his ranch. The uncle also owned a large ranch near the Evans ranch and Hicks Peak was named for the Hicks family.

The Simmons place had two meadows, one of which they occupied. They had dairy cows there as well. They had no cow barn but milked the cows in the corral. In winter they kept the cows in stanchions for the milking. They had their own bull and kept Jersey, Holstein and other milk cows. They had horses but used a pickup for deliveries. A gasoline-powered engine operated their milk separator. They hand-churned the butter. They had a separate milk room and cut their own ice on Turkey Creek. Every day Lillian scrubbed and sterilized this room and all the equipment and bottles. Water was brought in from a spring near the house.

They raised mostly oats plus a little alfalfa, rye and wheat. They were able to raise most of the animal feed. Between them, the couple took care of the animals. Earl delivered milk and cream to Mountain Parks and Forest Hills homes. If they did not have sufficient cream, they bought more from neighbors, including the Herzman family (see Anna Herzman Erickson interview). Lillian also raised chickens and dressed and sold the fliers for sale. Eggs were for their own consumption. She had a kitchen garden that produced onions, lettuce, radishes, turnips, beans, green onions and some potatoes. On the Davis place they had been able to raise huge potatoes. Lillian describes a typical day on the farm, including reading aloud at night on the Davis place and the types of books they read.

In 1924, Earl and Lillian sold their cattle and moved because the owners wanted the place back. They built a house on Little Cub Creek Road. Earl served as county road overseer for several years. He then decided he and Lillian could do better with their own business. Her job was to keep their books. By then they had three sons who eventually worked with their father in the construction business before going off to fight in World War II. They resumed working with Earl when they returned from service. Son Ernest had to quit the business because the dust affected his lungs, so the other two ran Hicks Brothers. For eighteen years Earl was secretary of the Evergreen Cemetery Association. He died in 1965.