

Farming in Rural Minnesota--Tera Guetter

As told by Tera Guetter

Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

Story Narrative:

This story was collected as part of a collaborative effort to record the state of American lakes, rivers, and waterways as well as an attempt to uncover what water means to Americans. Listen to other stories recorded for the [Be Here: Main Street](#) project, a collaboration with the MuseWeb Foundation to record stories from rural America.

“I am Tera Guetter, and I am a resident here in Becker County, Minnesota. I actually grew up just a few miles to the north of here, in a small town called Waubun and it's part of the White Earth Indian Reservation. I was born and raised on the White Earth Indian Reservation. My family are farmers and we grew up along the Marsh Creek in Mahnommen County. And as a farm girl, we loved to go out to the pasture to get our milk cows in and one of my favorite things to do as a child, my earliest memories are playing in the water and enjoyed that immensely.

And growing up on a dairy farm, we were always tied to the land and could rarely get away. But the times when our family, what I would call our family vacation, would amount to a Sunday afternoon driving about 20 miles to the east to Twin Lakes and some of the earliest pictures of me as a toddler, I'm holding a string with a little hook on the end and my sunfish on it.

So that was some of the bright spots of my childhood would be to either play in the creek as a leisure time activity or be able to go out with my family for a few short hours, either fishing or swimming in a nearby lake. And so I think that really affected you know, who I am as a person and how water was so important to us. And growing up on the farm, weather was always an important factor. Whether it was how much rain water we're getting, too much or too little, it was very important to the crops.

One of the things of being a little farm girl is that I'm able to, I call it Feel the Weather. You can smell it, feel it, whether looking in the sky, the color of the sky, whether it's gonna be a bad storm, humidity in the air. Water was always, we were very in tune to it, just not visually but how it felt in the air. It's a hard thing to describe to somebody who hasn't grown up in the environment, but it's very true. And this, I think affected me greatly with who I am as a person, as a parent and also as a professional.

Now, I have three children and we started raising our children in the twin cities area in Apple valley and as both my husband and I are farm kids, we decided after a few years that we really wanted to have our kids have more of a rural environment. And we were looking at places to live and it was either between the Detroit Lakes area which is where I'm from, or down in Red Wing, along the Bluff area. And I said,

‘Well, I've always loved the lakes, let's move up north and see how, you know, we like it.’ And we moved here 20 years ago and we have never looked back since.”

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