

The following transcript of
Harold Haas's interview
on

Memories and Music

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWEE: Harold Haas, 1916
POSITION: 1) *Hired farmhand*
DATE: 2) *Retired Inco Employee*
INTERVIEWER: Don MacMillan

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THEME: - *roots in Bruno, Saskatchewan*
- *Travelling from coast to coast.*

D.M. Now we have another most interesting guest with us on Memories & Music Mr. Harold Haas. Let me assure you, he's got a great story to tell. But now Harold let's get to know you a little bit better. When did you retire from Inco?

H.H. In January of 1974.

D.M. And how long had you been with Inco?

H.H. 32 years, Creighton underground.

D.M. You were telling me as we got ready for this show that you were doing 32 years underground at Creighton?

H.H. Yes, that's right.

D.M. And I commented that looking at you, you looked practically the picture of health. So, so those years underground can't have done you all that much harm, then, eh? Harold.

H.H. I feel good.

D.M. What you were telling me is that, as far as you were concerned you thought you'd lived a pretty good life at Inco. Is that right?

H.H. That's right. I have no regrets ever coming here.

D.M. *well* No. It's interesting to have you say that. Now I made a little note here when we were talking and I just forget why, about Fred Burnside. Now who's Fred Burnside and where does he come into this? *(?) where*

H.H. Well he is, he used to work for him, and he used to be my shift boss, and he was Captain out there, and he was kidding me about

being on pension, retired at 32 years, and he was still there 35 years. I told him well, maybe he didn't work as hard as I did.

D.M. Well Fred, I, I've been told that you're probably listening to this show, so you can give Harold a call, after this program is over. But now let's, let's get to know Harold Haas a little better. Where're you from Harold, where's your home town?

H.H. Bruno, Saskatchewan.

D.M. And where is Bruno, Saskatchewan?

H.H. It's located about 56 miles east and north of Saskatoon.

D.M. I think I mentioned more or less Gordy Howe country isn't it? Or the Beverlies or something?

H.H. Yes, Gordy Howe comes from around in there somewhere, Floral, Saskatchewan, I guess and the Bentley brothers are just a bit further west of Saskatoon from Delisle, Saskatchewan.

D.M. That's right. There was Doug and Max Bentley.

H.H. Yes, played for Chicago.

D.M. That's right. The good hockey players.

H.H. Yeah, very well. Yes.

D.M. The, were they also the Bentleys I think started, I didn't see it but in a movie called the "Paperback Hero" or something, I don't know whether you saw it or heard about it.

H.H. No, I, I haven't heard about that.

D.M. There was a movie made out there about that.

H.H. Yeah.

D.M. Doug died a while back I'm told.

H.H. Yes, I'd never heard that he'd died.

D.M. The, did you not tell me that they had quite a ball team too, it was featured . . .

H.H. Ah yes, there were quite a few brothers in the family; and they, they had a pretty strong ball team out there. It was quite a ball country out West there at that time, earlier years.

* Gordon (Gordie) Howe
Born: Floral, Saskatchewan, March 31, 1928
Famous hockey player

D.M. Yeah, well now let's get down to the point what, what year were you born out there, Harold?

H.H. In 1916.

D.M. Okay, 1916. In Bruno, Saskatchewan. That's up in northern Saskatchewan. Well now let's give us a little background here, you're Haas.

H.H. Yes.

D.M. That's a German name, I guess eh?

H.H. Yes.

D.M. H-A- double s?

H.H. Yes.

D.M. Where'd your father come from?

H.H. Come from Minnesota.

D.M. I thought there were just Swedes in Minnesota? There were some Germans too, eh?

H.H. Yeah, a lot of them I guess.

D.M. Alright. And ever tell you about his life in Minnesota before he came up to Bruno?

H.H. No, not too much. Just that he went to school there and then they immigrated up there to--both my mother and father's folks--
...

D.M. Well that's interesting, and oh, his family came up, and traveled with them, eh?

H.H. Yeah, Yes. And then my grand-parents, and his two brothers, and this is a sister younger than him, they went back and settled around Portland, Oregon.

D.M. I'll be darned. About what year did your father come up here? Do you, do you happen to remember?

H.H. No, I just don't know but he was married in up at Bruno, and the way I understand he was only what, 21 years old then, so he was quite young.

D.M. And, and didn't you tell me that his, your grand-father like your wife's grand-father or something came up in a covered wagon

or something?

H.H. Yeah that was my, my mother's folks they came up in 1904, Saskatchewan wasn't even a province then . . .

D.M. That's right. That was the year . . .

H.H. 1904, yeah.

D.M. The year before it became a province.

H.H. Yeah.

D.M. You know we, we think that the covered wagon days are a long time ago, but they weren't all that long ago I guess, eh?

H.H. No. No. I guess my mother'd be just maybe a year or 2 old then.

D.M. Right. Well now you said you were born I think around 1916, in Bruno, you'd go to school wherein, in Bruno?

H.H. In Bruno, yeah. They had a big school there.

D.M. Yeah you were telling me that it was quite a jumping school or how many pupils in the town?

H.H. Oh, about a 120 pupils I'd say, it was a 2, 2 storey building and four rooms in it.

D.M. Real lively place.

H.H. Yeah. And it was a real growing town . . .

D.M. This ed' be about 1922, we're talking about when you were still in school I guess, eh?

H.H. Yeah. Yeah that's what I always remembered.

D.M. Yeah.

H.H. I'd say from '22 to oh, in the '40s, it was a booming town.

D.M. Yeah. But another point you made is that you couldn't speak any English when you went to school.

H.H. No, we talked German at home all the time, especially the older people. My grand-mother couldn't hardly talk English but then when us kids got older she had to learn.

D.M. Well now, now Harold that is very interesting in view of some of the things we have been reading in the papers these days

249 about some people are abdicating that oh, if you are presumably Portuguese and you come here, you should get taught in Portuguese, or that, that keep the Portuguese culture, or the Italian culture or the presumably ~~Filth~~ Finnish culture or whatever name it, eh? I don't think you entirely agree with that, do you?

H.H. No. It's nice to keep your own culture at home if you want to keep your own culture, and learn the children from young on.

D.M. Yeah.

H.H. For when their born like you know, and talk your mother tongue at home if you like to keep it, that's okay, sure. But apparently Canada's English

D.M. Canada's an English, this is, that's right. Canada is at least half English.

H.H. Yeah.

D.M. Then it is pretty much an English speaking continent.

H.H. The majority . . . yeah.

D.M. Yeah, that's, that's the way I feel about it. But you were telling me that you, you nonetheless by the time you had finished your first grade reader you could manage in English alright.

H.H. Oh yes. Yes. It was an English speaking school in with playing with the kids the young it don't take long to learn.

279 D.M. Well there you have it folks right from somebody's who's, who's been right through it, eh? I guess you would pick up words from the kids, eh?

H.H. Oh yes, well you play with them you had to learn it.

H.M. I guess so. You'd be playing ball, and playing this and that, you'd learn how to pitch and run, eh? And . . .

H.H. Oh yeah.

D.M. And whatever. Well that's interesting, it really is, to hear the, to hear you say that. Now, well now you then went to school in Bruno until Public school, finished Public school then you hired out. Is that right?

H.H. Yes. On the farm, working on the farm till I came to Sudbury.

D.M. Well by golly you know, they talk about the hired man, but

your father of course, he wasn't on the farm he had . . .

H.H. No.

D.M. An implement.

H.H. He was in business all the time. Implement business most of the time, and later years he was in the oil business up further north of Saskatchewan, then he retired and went to Colona, B.-C. (?)

D.M. Ah yes, yes. Well now a hired man on a farm in northern Saskatchewan would that wouldn't be easy work but I guess you would learn to cope with it after a while, eh?

H.H. No, it was, you kept going steady it was long hours because in those days you worked with the horses, and you had to get up at a quarter to 5 for 7 months a year.

D.M. Right.

H.H. And by the time you were done it was 8 o'clock in the evening, looking after the horses and that.

D.M. If you were coming down to Sudbury, later to do some work this wasn't too bad apprenticeship, is what you're telling me, eh?

H.H. It didn't take too long to get used to it.

D.M. The thing, the thing Harold that interests me though in a way, is that here you were working as a hired man, and you'd be saving some money, not a lot I suppose, a little, but nonetheless you, you got yourself married, eh?

H.H. Yes.

D.M. This was to a local girl out there.

H.H. Yes.

D.M. And got a family started.

H.H. Yeah, we had one boy when we came out here ^{he} was 3 years old.

D.M. So being married and having a child, the hired man route had to change, so you headed east to Sudbury, right?

H.H. Yes.

D.M. Well now, what brought you down here? Was there must have been some other people from Bruno come down here.

- H.H. Yes. ^{my wife} Well I've had a cousin here who's working at the open pit, and there were a few other people that we knew here; and the wife's cousin in Bruno told me, why don't I get out; and go down to Sudbury; and try it there. So another fellow and I by the name of John Wilky we left Bruno; and came down here; and never left.
- D.M. Right. Now I, I was going to ask you about John Wilky he came a little bit later now, did you say you had a couple of sisters? Where are they and what are they doing now?
- H.H. I have one sister is in Beauty Parlor business in Saskatoon; and I have another sister is in Ottawa, and her husband retired from the army a few years ago he's with the Immigration Department now.
- D.M. Ah yes. Now and also 3 step-brothers. Is that true?
- H.H. Yes I have 3 step-brothers who, on the island in B.-C. One is in the navy, the other is just retired from the navy a little over a year ago, and the other one is an engineer in the pulp mill down there.
- D.M. Right. Well folks we're having a chat here with Harold Hass, who was born out in Bruno, Saskatchewan, went to school there, worked as a hired man on farms in the area, got married started a family; and decided he had to earn a little more money, or look for more worlds to conquer, and as I think you came down here as you said I believe in late '41, and started in January '42. Is that it?
- H.H. Yes, we left Bruno on the 27 of December in '41, started to work on the first day was the 9th of January '42. now
- D.M. Now why would anybody leave anywhere on the 27 of December?
- H.H. Well we just decided we were gonna go and . . .
- D.M. So you picked up and left, eh?
- H.H. Just picked up and left, yeah.
- D.M. That would take a fair amount of courage, I mean what'd you drive down in?
- H.H. Well we had an old, I had an old '29 Pontiac that we left in; and we had to sell it in Winnipeg, it was too cold, no heater. Then we continued on by train.
- D.M. Well there you are folks, there's, there's true, true history as was lived. Now you've spoken very, you've some very nice

- things*
to say about your original super down here. Who was that?
- H.H. It was Mr. Ted Gates. *(?)*
- D.M. Ah yes.
- H.H. He was a good man to work for; and if you had any problems he was always willing to listen to you.
- D.M. Well we can't ask for too much more than that I guess, eh?
- H.H. No.
- D.M. Now I guess around Inco, there were a lot of people looking for jobs at those times, but they, they seem to hire westerners, eh? The farm boys, thinking that you could take the work?
- H.H. They seem to be that way, I guess had good luck with them; and I don't know they seem to hire westerners.
- D.M. Right. Now Creighton underground this would not be, this would be tough work, you were on the end of a shovel there for a, for quite a time, eh?
- H.H. Yes, it isn't like today there's a lot of machines, it's mostly machine work, but in those days the biggest part was hand work; and then they had the heavy machines to drill with, they had the liner machines which were pretty heavy to cope with, and everything was different than today, you can't hardly imagine the change that's underground today to what it was then, and . . .
- D.M. And I take it that after you put in a shift you didn't feel like going for any 20 mile hikes or anything.
- H.H. No, that's for sure, like I said that shower that really spruced you up *(it was like taking a pep-pill.)*
- D.M. But you got in condition, you hardened to it after a while, eh?
- H.H. Oh yes. I didn't . . .
- D.M. How long would it take you to get in shape?
- H.H. Well I'd say till you were really hardened on, probably about a month, but then you use to work all the time, it's just that it was a different type of work that's all.
- D.M. Right.
- H.H. You had to get used to it. *Yeah.*

D.M. Well, so then here we have you growing up, where were you living then?

H.H. Lived in, on Frood Road at Sudbury for about 7 years.

477 D.M. And this, did you worry or not ^{what} that your friend was it Rookie at the time? (2)

H.H. Yes, we came out here together, and started here together. Lived together for 7 years.

D.M. Very good old Bruno eh? And Fred is he, ⁽²⁾ and I right when I call him Fred Wilky? (2)

H.H. That's John. (2)

D.M. John Wilky, was it? Alright, was John a pretty good worker? (2)

H.H. Oh yes, he was a good man. He worked in the stokes practically all the time, till he had leg trouble the last few years, that's why he had to retire.

D.M. Oh yeah. Well John we just got that little dig in the tube because we, we knew you'd be listening. Now what about family? What family have you now Harold?

H.H. Well one boy and 2 girls.

D.M. Okay. First about the girls. Where are they now, what are they doing?

H.H. Well the youngest one was married the past August. She's a nurse and her husband works in St. Catharines, she works there; and the second one is, lives in Lively, she's receptionist at the medical center in Lively; and the oldest one is also a nurse in Lively, medical center; and Russell has worked for the company for about 18 years.

D.M. Well that's, that's the Hass have become quite a, quite an Inco family, eh?

H.H. Yes..

D.M. With the ^{Imitations} ~~Ontario Bois~~ or something we call it, eh? ^{as}

H.H. Well this is home now.

D.M. This is home right. Now going back to those earlier days I think you played a lot of soft-ball. Is that right?

H.H. Yes, we had . . .

D.M. You liked to play soft-ball?

H.H. We started in Lively, we started on the Athletic Association there, through the company; and then we started a ball league with the outlying small communities there; and we had quite a good league. We played ball there, We had a league there let's say for about 10 years; and we had a little trophy donated; and we played for that trophy every year.

D.M. Now as we were talking ball, you have said first of all you played a lot of soft-ball, then some pretty good hard ball played around thispart of the world then. . .

H.H. Oh yes, and when we first came here it was a real baseball community here. They had the nickel belt ball club here; and then represented most by the mines; and the city of Sudbury; and then they had the Gold Belt up north; and then winning teams from each side would play-eff in the fall; and they had some very very good players here, we never missed a game on Sundays.

D.M. Right. Well now about, tell us something about this is Hass now where, where does she fit into all, into all this. She, is she a club woman. Does she have any particular hobbies of her own, or . . .

H.H. No, she's more ^{home} home type. She does quite a bit of knitting, and home-type, and raised the kids quite a bit, and . . .

D.M. I guess so. She's a ^{at} I use this in the best sense--the old fashioned . . .

H.H. That's, that's for sure, yeah.

D.M. Yeah, well the old-fashioned and the, I would say to you Mrs. Hass that Harold is very fond of you; and says so; and she also cooks I guess, has she not for wedding anniversaries; and one thing or another?

H.H. Oh yes. She helps out quite often when they have wedding anniversaires, or weddings, or (unintelligible). She helps cook, and . . .

D.M. Well now, show me an again on your friend Mr. Wilky here. You started to talk about John Wilky now, gimme that story again now will you, the story of Wilky. You came out here when?

H.H. Yes we were chums out West, he, in fact he wasn't married

yet, and they, they use to come over and visit us we worked off for a farmer not too far from where he was; and him; and it was his girl-friend then use to come over and visit us; and he was married on Armistice Day the, on the 11th of November.

D.M. Well that's a good time to get married, if you've got arms to stand (unintelligible) on your anniversary, eh?

H.H. Yes, he was only married from then 'till December when we left.

D.M. Oh yes.

H.H. Then John and I came out here, and he was in the same shape as I was married and had to look for something to do.

D.M. Not too much money in your pockets, I guess, eh?

H.H. That's for sure. Then we came out here together and started together, and lived together in the same house for 5 years; and then moved to a Duplex in Lively; and we lived in this same Duplex for 21 years, then when the company sold the houses in Lively, John bought his half of the Duplex, and I moved out to Naughton with my 2 children out there, and I bought a mobile home out there.

D.M. Yeah. That's a great story.

H.H. Yeah.

D.M. It is. I mean you, friends all those years, and things like these still do happen.

H.H. Oh yes. They still visit quite often.

D.M. Well now this moving into a mobile home, how come, what brought this on?

H.H. Well I, I don't know, I liked it, and looked at it once, and I thought it was more like a trailer first, but when we saw them, we fell for them, and we bought one, our family was just about gone, just the two of us, and we had plenty of room, and it's a nice place; and my son and daughter lived just across the highway from us; and so we just thought . . .

D.M. Well you, you've got it made, eh? As far as your concerned, eh? Now, what about travelling, I think you've made a trip a while back to the old East coast. Is that right?

H.H. Yes, a few years back I just forget when it was, about 5 years ago we had 5 weeks holidays, a fellow by the name of Harry

(1)
Haddoe, and I, my son's father-in-law and moter-in-law, and the four of us took a trip out to the East coast, we spent the whole time camping, and just looking at anything we could see, and then my brother happened to be stationed at Halifax in the navy, we spend a week there, and by the way (the Summer

Olympic Games were on. When we were there.

D.M. Yes. Oh yes. I had^{to} ask you about your, your brother's family hadn't I? Is your brother still alive? Is he . . .

H.H. He's, he's still in the navy yeah.

D.M. And seems to me that you also made a trip out to the West coast in sort of record time. Now tell us something about that.

H.H. Well we left here last year in a little after Christmas; and we went to near 750 miles the first year; and stopped at a motel, and then went to Defarge, Regina; and stayed there with our niece, over there in the night; and went to Medicine Hat; and visit with my sister for a few days; and then went on to Vancouver. Stayed there for 3 and a half months.

D.M. I don't think that I can recommend that to everybody, that's doing, that's covering an awfull lot of miles in a day. What are you driving Harold?

H.H. A '71 Buick R.

D.M. Well that's a pretty good car, but that's still, that's still pushing it a little bit. Well tell us about life on the, as you say, the life going around on the West coast. What's it like out on the island there?

H.H. Oh, it's really beautiful there. They get a bit of snow now and then but then the next day it disappears, especially on the island, coldest it was there was 27° above for a few days, at night and then it'd go back up to 30°, 35°, and up to around 40°, 45° most of the winter.

D.M. Well you can't complain about that, What about the sun, and so on, did you get any sun? Or was it . . .

H.H. Yes, till about the last ³few weeks we were there, the end of around March is their rainy season, they get quite a bit of rain then. When we pulled out it was raining, and we had that rain for about 3 weeks.

D.M. Alright. Tell you though Harold having seen the East coast pretty thoroughly and a good look at the West coast, southern Ontario still looks pretty good to you. Is that a fair statement?

Northern

H.H. Ah yes, it's a beautiful country here, for anybody that has loves hunting, fishing, and different sports, we've got it all here.

D.M. Right. Just as we were talking here it occurred to me that you, you left Bruno, Saskatchewan in the first place on about the 27 of December, and also around in there it was the 26th or 27th you left to go out to the West coast . . .

H.H. That's right. Yes.

D.M. What do you do? You put in Christmas, and then you take off, is that your attitude?

H.H. Well we did ditch Christmas, last Christmas the wife hadn't been home with her, and she has three sisters out there yet, and a brother, and we hadn't been home for Christmas for a year or so, we flew out for Christmas last year, a year ago.

D.M. Right.

H.H. And spent Christmas and New Years out there.

D.M. Well now Harold I don't know how to phrase this exactly but here, here you are a young fellow who started out as a hiredman, on a farm up in northern Saskatchewan, you got yourself married, you got a family started, you came east here, you put in all those years underground with Creighton, you I know your health is not all that great now but it was, you look great, you look as healthy as anybody I've seen around for a long time, you got a philosophy or what I'm getting at, you haven't had it easy, but you, you've done well..Have you got a philosophy of life or advice you would give to a young fellow or anybody like that starting out. Is that a fair question to ask you?

H.H. Well I just ~~don't~~ know. As long as if, let's say if you're married and you get along good; and you get a good job; and *Kind of* ~~try to~~ watch it a bit, you can make a good life for yourself. It's up to you. You are an ordinary person himself to make his life, and enjoy it at the same time.

D.M. Thank-you very much. There, there you have it folks a philosophy, and I would say a very good one, expressed by Harold Hass, our guest today on Memories & Music. Thank-you Harold for being our guest.

H.H. You're welcome.

(END OF TAPE)