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**FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978**

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Isaac Newton Haas  
September 21, 1972

Betty M. Berry

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INTERVIEWEE: Isaac Newton Haas

INTERVIEWER:

DATED: September 21, 1972

I: What is your name?

H: My name is Isaac Newton Haas, and I was born in Houghton, in an old building back of the Methodist Church, it has been gone for years. I went to school in Houghton and I graduated from that school about 80 years ago. I was one of eleven children.

I: Were you the oldest or the youngest?

H: Oh no, there were six or seven older than me. I was one of the younger ones.

I: You had a lot of people telling you what to do, your brothers and sisters.

H: When I was about five or six or seven years old, father started a store for my oldest brother, I remember that. That was where a taxi stand is now, in that building. That's where we started that store, that's quite a few years ago.

I: Yes, you'll be 98 years old in September

H: After I graduated from High School, I went to work for my brother in his store, in fact, I worked long before that. Cleaning up you know, I went to work regularly helping out.

I: Are you the oldest graduate in Houghton High School?

H: I'm probably the oldest one living, I don't know of any more. I graduated in a class of five, and four of them were Haases. Two were the Brewery Haases, and two were my brother and I, and the third was Mrs. Ferris's sister.

I: Where was the Brewery that the other Haases had?

H: It was down on the street, I don't know where, I don't know how to describe it now

I: Was it near the Court House?

- H: No, it was on the main street, somewhere near the place where the Hamar-Quandt put up their new store.
- I: Was it down near Ristell's near the water front, from Sheldon Avenue down to the water front?
- H: I wish I could hear better.
- I: What did you do in your brother's store?
- H: I was a clerk
- I: Did you do any buying from the Drummer's who brought in the goods?
- H: Well later on of course, I owned the store. After my brother quit, the store was mine, I finally turned it over to my grandson Bob.
- I: How did the styles change, were there many different styles while you owned the store? Were there the cut-away, or the long frock?
- H: Of course the cutaway was very, very stylish, you wore that only on Sunday. Otherwise there hasn't been much change. Of course the blacks were the favorite color. I remember I once had a Prince Albert, do you remember what a Prince Albert was?
- I: It was striped pants.
- H: No, it was a silk hat, I had ----- fit me when I was in Chicago one time. It did not collapse. I loaned it to one of the students at the college for some party, and I never got it back.
- I: Were most of the suits made of wool?
- H: yes.
- I: Did a tailor make them in your store?
- H: No, the tailor shop was very close, for repairs etc.
- I: How did you enjoy your free time? What did you do for fun?
- H: Me, say, I had the best time in the world, I was a fisherman and a hunter, I went deer hunting every winter. We had hunting lodges out in the woods in different places. A party of five went deer hunting every winter during the deer season. I also fished on all the rivers around here.
- I: What did you catch?

H: Brook trout. I had a sailboat and a row boat, we used to sail in the races at the Yacht Club.

I: Did you have races every week?

H: We had races and during one race out on Big Portage, our boat sank. Little bits of spar stood up out of the water and we all clung to that until another boat came along and picked us up.

I: Who were some of those who sailed with you?

H: My older brother Ed., and Charlie Mills and Charlie Rouleau (? , nobody would know them now.

I: When was the Yacht Club started?

H: Oh, about eighty years ago.

I: Did you go anywhere except Big Portage with the Club?

H: Just Big Portage. Personally I've sailed all over Lake Superior. On one trip we chartered a big sailboat from Ontonagon, there were several women aboard with their husbands, there were about a dozen aboard. We sailed all over Lake Superior, over to Port Arthur, Fort William, and Duluth and back. We were gone a couple of weeks.

I: That sounds like fun. Did you do this often? Did you get other sailboats and do it again?

H: There weren't many others around

I: Where did your sailboat come from? Did you get it from Chicago?

H: It was made right here, Allen Reese ?) had a beautiful boat that came from outside. The other boats all were local.

I: Who made them, the shipyards that were here?

H: I don't know.

I: Did you have a special group that you went with? When you went out, did you play cards or do anything special?

H: I played cards anytime I could, in bar rooms. My father and mother moved to Cleveland and we had rooms up over the store and we used those as sort of club rooms.

I: Did you have dances, did you have big balls and fancy dances?

H: In the Winter, about November, all I looked forward to was to go deer hunting for a couple of weeks. Otherwise why, it wasn't -----it.

I: Were there any big storms that you remember?

H:

I: Do you remember any political activities? Do you remember J. Hubbell?

H: I remember Cleveland and Hendricks flags flying on top the flag pole downtown, opposite the Douglass House and across the street from Northrup and ----- Republican flag poles, I remember those.

I: Was that the first time you voted?

H: No, I don't remember

I: Do you remember any torch light parades, rallies, for any political figures?

H: No, they have all passed by.

I: Do you remember the Bull Moose party of Teddy Roosevelt?

H: Mr. Roosevelt came up here as far as Marquette, I guess I don't think he came to Houghton, I'm not sure. I remember Cleveland and Hendricks, Blaine and Rogan(?), I remember those two.

I: Do you remember Congressman Hubbell?

H: Oh yes, he was a fine old gentleman, he lived on the college grounds, where the college is now. He was a lawyer, of course, other than that, I never got close to him.

I: Do you remember anything about the strike of 1913? The copper strike in Calumet, do you remember anything that happened during that time?

H: No, not anything I paid any attention to. Congressman Sheldon, I knew very well. I remember when we got back from our honeymoon, Mrs. Haas was in the store with me, Congressman Sheldon and his son came into the store. Skip was his son. Oh, I suppose I could go back and think about a whole lot of things, but it's awful hard.

I: Do you want to tell me about your house here?

H: Oh, this home was built by Hooper and Sanders

I: Where is it? Is it on Prospect?

H: Yes, it is on Prospect and Houghton Avenue.

I: What was it like when you built it, was the big rock here then?

H: There's a shack or some kind of house back of my garden, two or three students lived there, they batched.

I: What did your father do?

H: He lived in Cleveland most of the time, when he was here he was in the wholesale liquor business.

I: How did they get the liquor in, by boat?

H: There was the China, Japan, and all these ran from Cleveland to Duluth and back. Later on there was the ----- oh, I forget the name of it, later on came the newer boats.

I: Did you play hockey?

H: No.

I: Did you go to the games, was it one of the big social events then?

H: Yes, I went to the games but it wasn't a social event necessarily, but it was a very popular game. We got a lot of Canadian players in here, among them was Dr. Gibson. There must have been several dozen Canadians playing here.

I: Where did the teams come from. where did they play? Teams from Boston or New York?

H: Pittsburgh was one of the first southern teams to come up here, they had a very good team, they used to come up and play the Houghton team, that's a long way.

I: Did you ever do any refereeing or take part in a game? Did you sell uniforms in your store?

H: No, I wouldn't know where they got them, it wasn't much of a uniform, britches and a sweater and a stick to defend themselves.

I: What about the Houghton Club?

H: Oh that was very popular, we had one room upstairs where we played poker and down in the basement where the bar-room was, they had another room where we played poker. They had a good cook who served good meals, we enjoyed the Houghton Club.

I: Who belonged to the Houghton Club?

H: Everybody, that is, any men who had anything, almost any you mentioned belonged.

I: Did they have big parties there?

H: Oh yes.

I: Do you remember your brother Ed.'s birthday party, his 50'th?

H: Oh yes, they celebrated my birthday there too

I: Was the cooking special, like a very special meal they would have?

H: No, good good meals that's all. They had nice, big rooms upstairs where they had these parties and -----.

I: Did you have any special things that you did for Fourth of July?

H: That's a long time ago, I used to go into every parade. We would have a callithumpian. We'd borrow an old horse from around town and put a rig of some kind on it imitating some kind of business, It was a big event.

I: Did all the towns have parades?

H: Oh I think so. The band was on the band stand all day long, fireworks at night. What kind of fireworks? Oh, rockets, and the kind that shoot up in the air, Roman candles, yes. Sometimes they would get a professional from Chicago.

I: Were these fireworks down on the sands or where?

H: Well I could explain to you, before the Douglass House was built, the old wooden Douglass House was up on the hill. I guess it was on Montezuma. The space from the top of the hill down to the street was probably 150 feet and on one of the levels, there was the band stand. That's where all the events took place.

I: The judges watched the callithumpians parade in front of that?

H: The callithumpians would start there, that's where they wanted everyone to start from, they would go through town, up and back and around.

I: The Douglass House was terraced from the porch down to the street at that time.

H: Well there were two rolling lawns, the Douglass House was on top of a hill, an old wooden building.

I: Yes, I've seen pictures, our house was just above there When was the new Douglass House built?

H: I don't know

I: Where did you go for picnics, to the Canal, out to Freda Park?

H: That wasn't there then, that was later on. The Canal was a very popular place and Portage Entry down here. They had pleasure boats and barges on the lake here. They had Hendersons on one with a tug, and Crozes on one with a tug and they would gather on these barges and dance and go up and down the lake.

H: Was that before you were married?

H: It must have been, I don't ever remember taking Mrs. Haas on any of these trips.

I: Did you go to White City then?

H: Sure White City and the Canal.

I: Where did you meet Mrs. Haas?

H: In Cleveland, her home was in Cleveland. I was invited down there one Sunday, I forget where it was, there were four or five girls, and four or five boys, we took a street car down there. They had boats to rent and this girl Florence got in the boat with me, I liked her from the start and we rode up the river and back, and that was my girl after that.

I: Did she come to live in Houghton then? Did she learn to like the difference in climate? Your children were born in this house. What were some of the things that you did? Did you play Bridge?

H: Oh yes, very much. I was President of the Club for a while.

I: Was it the Houghton Bridge Club?

H: I don't remember, we played in the Douglass House most of the time, in the dining room. There would probably be eight or ten tables of Bridge.

I: This was Auction Bridge?

H: I don't know, it was Bridge anyway.

I: What about Prohibition? When there were bootleggers, and people made their own wines around here, remember when you couldn't sell whiskey? What was it like? You don't know any stories from around here?

H: I suppose there's a lot of them, I don't think about them.

I: Did you ever hear of Helltown?

H: It was up on Quincy Hill wasn't it?

I: I don't know, I wondered if you had known about it. They say that they couldn't sell anything in the mining communities, so they developed Helltown. Did you ever hear of Sack Riders? They say there was a big gambling place in Montgomery Ward's, called Sack Riders.

H: Mr. Sack Rider came up here from Ishpeming and he bought out a saloon, it became a very popular place, especially for the Poker crowd. Then Jim Reed built that big place that's on the corner now, and Sack Rider started a saloon and restaurant, and in the basement, they played cards, Poker most of the time. He was a very nice gentleman, good looking, and always well dressed, and a good card player.

I: They say that he lost his place one time, at the turn of a card, that Honest Bartel won his place from him.

H: I can't place Bartel at all, don't know anything about him. Sack Rider had the barroom, in the back of the barroom, there was a big room with palm trees growing around the room. They had an organ and a piano in there, tables to sit around to play cards, it was a very popular place, a swell place. Downstairs was the restaurant.

I: Who built the Amphidrome? Whose Amphidrome was it?

I: I don't know, it was down where it is now. I remember going to these graduation exercises, they had a platform in the middle of the room and students all around the platform. I know because I had two brothers graduate from Tech.

I: They were formal, did they wear gowns?

H: I imagine so, I don't remember.

I: In some places they wore frock coats and tall hats

H: No, I think they had gowns though.

Tape 1 Side 2

I: Was this a social occasion for the town?

H: No, not especially.

I: Did the people of the College mix with the townspeople?

H: Yes, oh yes, the instructors and the townspeople got along very well.

I: How did you celebrate Christmas when you were a young boy?

H: Well first we went out in the woods and cut down a Christmas tree and brought that in, trimmed it up and so forth.

I: How did you trim it?

The same as they do today, candles and trinkets of different kinds that you hang up. Of course we always hung up our stockings to be filled with candy and nuts. I suppose they do that today yet.

I: Yes, was there any special food that you remember for Christmas? Did people visit back and forth on Christmas?

H: No, I think they were pretty much family gatherings, families would get together.

I: You had a large family to get together, too. Do you remember Houghton Fairs? Houghton County Fairs?

H: I was the manager for five years. It was in the Amphidrome and the barns back of it for the cattle.

I: Tell me about it

H: Well the farmers with their cattle would have to bring in all their supplies, then we would have judges who would judge different departments. They were very popular Fairs, and they did get out the crowd. They were held in August or September. I don't think we had much for the kids, it was for the older folks. In the Amphidrome they had booths where the merchants had merchandise on display, and of course the farmers brought in their good stock, they had two or three barns back of the Amphidrome for the cattle.

I: Were new cars shown there? Did people from outside bring in merchandise?

H: Oh yes, that is, Lake Linden, South Range, Calumet, Baraga, and L'Anse.

I: How long did it last.

H: It lasted a week.

I: Did they have something different every day?

H: That's right, we'd get a troupe of some kind from Chicago to perform during the Fair, they had different acts, it was quite interesting. People up around here never had an opportunity to see those things.

I: What were some of the acts, juggling and tight-rope? Were they much like vaudeville acts?

H: Yes, that's what it was, vaudeville.

I: Did you go to the Kerredge Theater? What do you remember about it?

H: Different socials that were put on, that's all. The inside looked the same as any theater, it was very nice.

I: Do you remember hearing Madame Schumann-Heink, or any of the great singers there?

H: Well I wasn't very much interested in that, I kind of sing myself, and I don't think I ever went to hear one, even though they were here.

I: In Winter how did you get around?

H: In Winter I put on a pair of arctics and walked

I: How did they clear the streets?

H: They had great big rollers, about six or eight feet in diameter that were horse drawn and instead of taking the snow away, they packed it down. They had metal scrapers that were horse drawn that they used to clear the sidewalks. The street car lines had to take care of themselves. I think they had electric plows that went over the rails.

I: Would the snow bank on the side and leave a hole down the street where the street car line was?

H: When the snow got too deep, they used to haul it away down on the ice.

I: Did anyone ever fall into the street car line?

H: I wouldn't know

I: How far did the street car go?

H: Well it ran from East Houghton to this alley right below here, down Sheldon Street and out to Calumet.

- I: How much did it cost for a ride to Calumet?
- H: About 25 or 35 cents, I suppose.
- I: That was 12 miles, you got a 12 mile ride for 25 cents. Was it a day's ride?
- H: Oh no, they were good street cars and it didn't take long to go out there.
- I: Did they have straw seats or were they wooden?
- H: I don't remember. I think they were cane. They were the same as they have in the cities. I wouldn't know how often they ran.
- I: Did you ever go to Electric Park?
- H: imagine so, I went around the Copper Country quite a bit
- I: In your store, did you sell to all kinds of people, or to the carriage trade?
- H: To anyone who wanted to buy anything, it was mostly men's clothing.
- I: What were some of the special outfits you ordered, do you remember any special wedding or reception, or suits that you ordered?
- H: There were but I don't remember.
- I: Do you remember the white gloves that they wore to the Houghton Club? They were very stylish, where did they get them?
- H: From Ed. Haas and Company.  
Where did Ed. Haas Company get them
- H: Oh. ----- Manufacturing in -----(?)
- I: We had some that were from Frank Van Orden, and some of the boiled shirts, how much did they cost you?
- H: The shirts, we thought they were quite expensive, about two dollars.
- I: How did they do them up?
- H: The Chinese Laundry, we called them all, Sam Wa. That's the only laundry we had in those days, Sometimes there were three or four men in the shop. In Houghton, where I wouldn't know.

I: Did they do their collars too?

H: Yes, and we wore paper collars also. They were made of stiff paper of some kind, we used to buy a box for 25 cents, twelve collars for 25 cents.

I: Each day a clean collar, didn't people change their shirt? How many shirts did they have?

H: They had one.

I: Their Saturday bath and their Saturday shirt. Did they wear these pleated stiff shirts very often?

H: I don't think so, I think they wore plain ones, short bosom and the long bosom with the full dress. With our photograph suits when we were dressed up, we had the long shirts.

I: You wore a fancy vest with it?

H: Not necessarily but a low-cut vest, about three buttons down here. With a big U shape and a very narrow lapel.

I: Yes, we have some of Mr. Van Orden's.

H: That was before the days of the tuxedo, we all had tail coats and I remember when I got my Prince Albert, boy that was swell, I was afraid to wear it. I was in Chicago one time and I went into the hat maker's and had him make the black circle hat to fit my head, I don't know if I ever wore it up here. I loaned it to one of the students for a parade and I never got it back.

I: When would you wear a Prince Albert? A lot of ministers wore them.

H: On Sunday, I remember my Prince Albert and my cane. It was just a walking stick. I was afraid that I was about the only one with all those things and you know you hate to be the only one wearing them.

I: You had to be an example for Ed. Haas and Company. Did you wear cuff links and the studs? What were the cuff links made of, metal?

H: They were made of gold, different kinds of stones, and diamonds and things.

I: How large were they? The same as they are today, they haven't changed that much, what about stick pins? You wore them on your ties, what were they like?

H: Oh I have a dozen of them up there in my room, they had stones in them, sometimes a little diamond.

I: Did the men up here wear spats?

H: Not very often, we used to sell them though.

I: What about the high lace shoes? They were about through the First World War, weren't they?

H: That was all they could get, it was a long time before oxfords came in, everybody wore high shoes.

I: Were you ever in a military organization? Was your brother Ed.?

H: He was in what they called the Cadets in Houghton. Brother Mart(?) belonged to the Militia and he went to camp with them in Grayling, I think. Most of the time they went to Grayling.

I: Were they in the Spanish American War?

H: I think so, I remember quite a crowd from here went to the Spanish American War, the local company.

I: Were they active when they came back? Did they stay together as a militia?

H: I don't think so, I think the militia companies died out after the War.

I: Do you remember anything about President Roosevelt?

H: He was up here on election tours, I think he spoke in the Amphidrome, that was Theodore Roosevelt.

I: Did you go to hear him, that was during his Bull Moose?

H: I was a Democrat.

I: Therefore you couldn't associate? Who were some of the leaders in Houghton?

H: I remember one of them who came as far as Marquette and my father went to hear him, my father was a good Democrat. It might have been President Cleveland.

I: I think he was the only one who got in for a long time, the only Democrat who made it to the Presidency. Did you know the James Dee family, who was he?

H: Oh yes, I knew him, he had the telephone lines, the telegraph office, and he was president of the Amphidrome.

- H: He was a very popular fellow and he built a lot building s in town here, he built the present Gazette building and the building where our store is. He had a brother Tom who went to Boston, he was with some Stock Broker's Concern there and the other brother was a telegraph operator with the telephone company.
- I: Where did he live?
- H: I don't know, he was never married, probably in rooms somewhere.
- I: Were there a lot of rooming houses?
- H: I don't remember
- I: Was there any other big hotel besides the Douglass House?
- H: The present Miller Hotel, I don't know what it's called now, do you?
- I: I think there's a restaurant in there and a taxi stand
- H: That's right, that taxi stand is where the Ed. Haas and Company first started. They had quite a ballroom on the second floor, I remember my sister was married there. Terry was married there in the ballroom.
- I: Did you have the Jewish ceremony?
- H: Oh no, it was a civil ceremony.
- I: When did you get your first car?
- H: I don't know, it was a Reo, I remember that. It was after I was married.
- I: Could you run it only in Summer?
- H: Yes, in the Winter we put it in the garage.
- I: How long did it take you to go to Marquette?
- H: Well it took a long time before we could get our roadways opened up, it was all swamps through there, we could go to L'Anse, that was about the end of it. I don't know, it took a long time to get to Marquette with a car, I remember that.
- I: You went to Cleveland as a young man, would you take a boat?
- H: We either took a boat or a train, but the boats were nice, the China, and Japan, and after that came the Octorora.

I: How much did it cost to go to Cleveland?

H: I don't have any idea, I don't think it was much over twenty five dollars, in a cabin.

I: How long did it take, a couple of days?

H: Yes, I remember one time taking the boat trip on the Japan, we left here and went to Marquette, Cleveland, and even to Buffalo, there was some kind of Fair there.

I: There was an Exhibition in Buffalo, that's where President McKinley was killed, that was in 1901. Did you go to the World's Fair in Chicago, to see the electric lights turned on? The Century of Progress Fair.

Oh yes, I never missed much.

I: How did you go to Chicago, by train?

H: I never went to Chicago by boat, I always went by train.

I: What was the train that you took, did you have a sleeper?

H: Oh yes, and it was the Duluth South Shore and Atlantic.

I: That's the one they have today, they have freight trains. How many trains did you have coming in?

H: We had good traveling facilities, the Duluth South Shore, and Atlantic, the Milwaukee, Chicago, and St. Paul Railroad, and all those boats coming in.

I: What do you remember about the depression in 1930?

H: I don't remember anything about it, really I don't.

I: Do you remember the WPA, when they built the Keweenaw Club, and the Brockway Drive?

H: We had a nice deer camp, John Pryor, Paul Swift, and Lee Swift. We went hunting every year and we always got a lot of deer, I have pictures of the deer hung up all over.

I: How long were you in camp, and did you ever get caught by the snow? Who did the cooking?

H: Charlie Mills and Paul Swift were good cooks. No, the weather never bothered us, not when you're young.

I: You were enjoying life and you still are. What is your mother's name?

H: Her name was Teresa.