The following transcript of George Passi's interview

on

Memories and Music

(broadcast February 24, 1974)

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INTERVIEWEE:	George	Passi	TAPE	NO:
INTERVIEWER:	D.M.			

THEME :

D.M. Now friends and neighbours we have a very welcomed guest on "Memories & Music" today, Mr. George Passi. George retired just on October the 1st, 1970. Now first of all g George what were you doing when you retired and how long have you been t with Inco?

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- G.P. Well I actually, my continuous service with International Nickel is about 42% and the last 2% years that I worked, I worked in the Electrical Mechanical Engineering office as a supervisor on installations.
- D.M. Right now you mentioned also before the ke broadcast that you, something about the difference about when did you retire and when you officially retired something like that, what was that?
- G.P. Well I had accumulated, of course, quite a bit of time on special leave and of course vacation time was added on so I, with my last days in June.
- D.M. Right now well George Passi, P, a, double s, i, I think that's a Finnish name, is that true?
- G.P. Yes it is, yes.
- D.M. And the first impression that I get of you is that you were in good condition, do you, do you make a good effort to keep in good shape.
- G.P. Oh yes, yes I do quite a bit of working and I do the Royal Canadian Airforce (unintelligible) exercises quite often.
- D.M. Now this is starting to give a little truth to this, you've seen these ads on, on T.V. about the average 21 year old Canadian is about as good shape as the 20, the 62 year old sweed or something, something in that.
- G.P. Oh I definitely agree with that.
- D M. ALL All right Geologe now you are Finnish you were not actually torn in Finland, you were born in Canda.
- G.P. Yes I was born in Samanar in Britisha Columbia.
- D.M. In what year?
- G.P. 1909
- D.M. And . . . did you grow up in Samanar?
- G.P. No I was just a baby when I was brought into the Sudbury area. Actually to the little place called the Mond Mine out 25 miles west of Sudbury.

D.M. Your father, of course, and mother would be Finnish right?

G.P. Yes

. .

- D.M. What did your father do?
- G.P. My father worked for the C.P.R. when he came to this country and he actually when I was born he was the a section foreman out west for the C.P.R. and when we came to this area. He started working in the mines, at the Mond Mine.
- D.M. Well now one thing that occurs to me, wkiz what, what brought your father to, to Canada. Just sort in search of adventure or what?
- G.P. I from what, w from what I can remember he, the, the possibilities of bringing up a family in Finland was not so good in those years and he, we had some relatives in Canada and through correspondence he began to **rela** realize that the **wppOm** opportunities for bringing up a family were much better, **ma** much better in Canada.
- D.M. Right well then as you say he, was he was a section foreman I think you said and he came to Mond and went to work in the mine. I guess this would be the, the money maybe the difference here, eh?
- G.P. Well it was, one reason that he left the railroad was there was a f difference in money. I think it was a difference of about 25 cents a day at that time. But the other reason, of course, was he was a young section foreman out west and he would have been transferred into a very **xxx x** remote part of the country out west and he didn't quite agree with that. He was a young man bringing up a young family and this **qui** kind of when against his way of thinking and he planned these moves about
- D.M. He was a, he was a thinker, eh? He (unintelligible) in his head.
- G.P. That's right.
- D.M. He might have made a good chess player. Well now George you would then go to schoolx in Mond. Any school mates or anything anybody around that you went to school with.
- G.P. Well there's not too many, it was a small village on the, there weren't too many actually going to the school. But a, in this particular area, in the Sudbury area there's not too many. There's . . one fellow, of course, that's Earl Mackfor who went to school at the time I went to school. Mona Anderson Mrs. Mockford also we were going to school together and there are a few, not too many around.
- D.M. Maybe some of them maybe be listening to this kors broadcast. Maybe bring back some memories.
- G.P. Yes it could be.
- D.M. Were you, I'm going to ask you now. Were you a good student?

- G.P. Oh I would say just average.
- D.M. I see, yeah, you're just playing it safe this time as so as
- GAP. Now I think you, that you took quite an interest in athletics at that time, is that right?
- D.M. Oh yes. Even in school years I played baseball, soccer. We used to px play when I was in the eighth grade. Our teacher used to be the pitcher and we used to px play against the man. I used to catch for him, and a, and a we done pretty well too at times.
- D.M. The year young, the young Finn takes up baseball in other words.
- G.P. That's right.
- D.M. Just sto think of it, what's the national sport of Finland? (unintelligible) what would you think,
- G.P. Winter sport, of course, is has always been skiing.
- D.M. Right.
- G.P. And that goes way back when that was about the only means of transportation.
- D.M. Right.
- G.P. Summer sport, of course, they play soccer.
- D.M. Yeah that's right.
- G.P. And they do track and field, of course, it has been quite popular in fact Finland and now, of course, they have hockey as well (unintelligible)
- D.M. (unintelligible) giving our, giving our clubs some fairly good agruments.
- G.P. They've taken up hockey and they're not doing too bad at all. They just ax have a very few of the artifical rinks in Finland and I would say in the coming years, that they could possibly . . . play hockey quite well.
- D.M. Well now George I zhappen to know that you were special interest in the, the (unintelligible) I think.
- G.P. Well when I was a young fellow yes I used to pick pocket and track and fi field sports and the facilities that they had well we didn't do too bad actually.
- D.M. Well jsut just so that we're x certain that everybody will know what we're talking about. This the Kalathon, that's a wide thing of a, of high jump, broad jump, shot put and things like that, eh?

- G.P. Yes there's 10 different events. Now there's the three jumps, in there's the three throws and the four runs.
- D.M. Now before the kor broadcast also we were talking a klittle bit about the amazing difference in the times, and in, in their jumps, in the run, in the run races and the heights in the jumps between now and katts say the, the 20's and 30's and you have some pretty diffinite ideas on that.
- G.P. Well definitely. Nowadays the, well take a young boy or a young man z and my maybe the coaches and the trainers will actually pick one event and w he will become a specialist in that event and of course, they've, the times and the distances have just gone way, way fantastic compared to what they were in the days that I used to take part in the track and field.
- D.M. Right **xloth** although I guess the, how about the, the distance runners and, and **kheir** (unintelligible) still rates pretty **kgh kgi**x high, doesn't he? Have they clipped) his marks?
- G.P. Oh they have, I, I'm not too sure whether he has any of his records left. The, the great part about that fellow was that he was so versatile. He could run the short distance as well as the longer did distances.
- D.M. Right.
- G.P. And, of course, he was one of the earlier runners that, that performed and I'm not sure whether his, whether he has any more records to km his name.
- D.M. But he's a still a national idiol in Finland.
- G.P. Oh dx definitely, definitely.
- D.M. Incidentally for any of our X myounger listeners we're talking about (unintelligible).
- G.P. That's right, that's right.
- D.M. Well now George, incidentally fix friends and neighbours we're chatting with George Passi, who retired for from Inco on October the 1st, 1970. George getting backk to your school days or your, your youth in Mond. I guess living in Mond and, and getting to Sudbury was quite an event. It wasn't quite as simple as these days, rg right?

G.P. No very much so. There was a railroad he that ran between Sudbury and Little Current. The Algoma Eastern and people would take the train to come into Sudbury to do some special shopping and a, there wasn't very many cars. There was only 2 or 3 in the village and of course the road was just a gravel (unintelligible) coming from Mond into Sudbury and it was almost a day's event if you . . . got into a car and attempted to make the trip. So the, the . . . transportation wasn't (unintelligible).

- D.M. (unintelligible)
- G.P. It wasn't like it is today.
- D.M. You couldn't make Sudbury in x 1/2 an hour I'm sure of that.
- G.P. That's right.
- D.M. 20 minutes like some k people maybe today, eh? Now tell me you started to work in then in the Mond Mine at a, what year?
- G.P. In 1923, it was in April. I believe it was April the 19th, actually we when I started.
- D.M. And how long would you be then?
- G.P. I was 13.
- D.M. And what were you doing, whit what was your job?
- G.P. Well in those days, they had rock pickers in the rock house and that wan was a job that I was assigned to dox was picking rock.
- D.M. Nothing, nothing like starting at the bottom. No one else would go from there, right George?
- G.P. That's right.
- D.M. What did you do as a rock picker?
- G.P. Well this **x** was quite an antique set up in that rock house. There was a large table **tx** that shook the muck that was coming down from the top **form**x**th**x from the crusher and so on. And there was about 8 or 10 of **x** us boys that would pick the rock from the table and, and put it into a trough that carried the rock away into the waste car and the ore, of course, would be left on the table that would drop into the bin.
- D.M. Would it be easy to distinguish the rock from the ore?
- G.P. Oh yes there would be no problem there. They
- D.M. You w learned that early.
- G.P. Oh yes, yes. There's no trouble in, in telling the difference,
- D.M. Right, all right then. We got you going to work as a rock picker in 1923 at age 13, was it you said?
- G.P. That's right.
- D.M. And then I gather things went along fairly well but in, something happened in 19 . . . but it closed down about that time, eh? Can you
- G.P. Yes the ma mine closed down ma on the fall of 1923 and, and

then the, the machinery was all taken away.

D.M. Right.

- G.P. The men were all transferred, at less most of them were transferred to another mine atka that the Mond Nickel Company owned at the time. A ma mine by the name of <u>Wellington</u>, 7, 7 miles west of Mond.
- D.M. And did you get some work at Worthington?
- G.P. Oh yes I worked there up until 10 1927 in the rock house as a rock picker and a crushermen.
- D.M. Right, all right and I think something very significant or memorable happened in 1927.
- G.P. Yes incidentally I might mention that the wages at Worthington for a rock picker were \$2.35 a day and we worked a 9 hour day for from 7 o'clock in the morning to 5 in the f afternoon.
- D.M. Fair enough, but I, I think as we, as we said before x our local bread didn't cost 40 cents in those days.
- G.P. No now that's right.
- D.M. Yes in the October of 1927, the Worthington Mine caved in and this was quite an event at that time.
- D.M. I love, why don't you tell us something about it, because none of the people that we've had on the, on kke this korx broadcast have told us about it that.
- G.P. Actually I would say that the incident could be **ZMM** considered as a miracle **x** that no one was injured. This . . happened in the **XMXY** early hours, I think around 6 o'clock in the mornin that the, that the mine foundry went down. There was some warning, the previous afternoon shift. My dad happened to be working down at the bottom levels and the superintendent **x** of the mine went down into the mine in the afternoon,**XMM** in the afternoon shift and he realized **XMX** that there was something definitely going wrong with the mine and he ordered all the **MM** men out. Now my dad came home around 11 o'clock that eveming and he too was, that there was something seriously wrong with the mine, that something was going to **x**happen. Well the **x**next morning
- D.M. Well wait a minute, what would make him think that. What were the signs, what
- G.P. Apparently, apparently the, the, there was an awful heavy dx draft through the upper levels of the mine and of course after the superintendent ordered the men out. The shaftmen begin to cave in, keesu kx began to sqeeze in so that the conveyances would only go up and down only about half way dwm down to the bottom. That subsequently my dad had to walk half way up from the bottom before we could pick up the conveyance to come up. So there were very definite indications that there's something seriously wrong.

- D.M. That's interesting. Now what, what, what would **EXEME** cause that draft? Did anybody ever find out or anybody ever say?
- G.P. I would imagine that there were some cracks developing up in the upper part of the mine and, and it was creating the drafts.
- D.M. Right then you said you were telling us early that you got to the point, to the following morning or something like this.
- G.P. Yes max the, and of the mine did cave in, there was a passenger train that was new, to come through from Sudbury to the Sault. Around 8 o'clock or between 7:30 and 8 o'clock and of courde this had to be stopped. So the superintendent's son, Earl' Mockford and a fellow by the name of Norm Anderson got into the car and they flagged the train down about 4 miles east of Worthington.
- D.M. Well that's a, that's a fine story. Probably very well known by, in and around Sudbury and, and Copper Cliff and this area.
 But it's the first time, I've heard the story.
- G.P. Yes oh x I'm, I'm sure that all, most of the newspapers carried it at that time because
- D.M. All the old timers would know about it.

when

- G.P. Oh yes, all the old timers would know about it.
- D.M. Well then I believe George that after you, shortly after this that you quit mining for a while and whe went into another business.
- G.P. Yes a, most of the men from Worthington were transferred to other Mond company properties but I thought I was going to leave the mining game and I cames to Sudbury and started working in a clothing store as a clerk.

Yes

- D.M. (unintelligible) what were you selling men's fx suits and stuff and ties like kxk that?
- G.P. Socks and shirts and shoes and what have you.
- D.M. That's just like the American president Harry Truman, he did that for a while a I believe and how did you like that work?
- G.P. Well a, it was fine fun, fine as far as I was concerned excepting that the money, of course, wasn't too good.
- D.M. Who were you working for, what was his name, what store?
- G.P. I believe it was Jake Winsole, it seem to me that, that Jake Winzokax Windokal or Windsole, one of the two, one of the
- D.M. Where was his store?
- G.P. It was on Arm Street.

D.M. Oh right and a, but you didn't stay too long in this

- G.P. No I worked about x am month in the clothing store and I had a very good friend working at Frood mine for International Nickel and he came one evening to see me and told me that there was an opening if I wanted to work with him at X Frood mine and of course he told me **xkowt** what the money was. It was 47 cents an hour and that was much better than what I was making in the clothing store so
- D.M. Right
- G.P. I, thought that while this is an opportunity I, I
- D.M. You can't turn it down, an offer you can't refuse.
- G.P. That's right. So I went to, to Mond the mine the next day and of course I was hired right away by the master mechandic whose Mr. Joe Butler at the time.
- D.M. Right.
- G.P. And just to give you a little bit of difference about the hiring procedures those days, he told me to come to work the next morning and I went to work and I had the medical that afternoon.
- D.M. They, they didn't fuss very much, too much over these things eh?
- G.P. That's right.
- D.M. What was this fellow's name that offered you the job? Is he still alive? Is he around?
- G.P. I believe he is, he's not living in the area. He, I believe he's in "oronto. He's a fellow by the name of Art Warren.
- -D.M. Xax He's probably known, some of the old timers here would know them and I think also earlier you mentioned a Lorne Masterx?
 - G.P. Lorne Maley
 - D.M. Lorne Maley, gyeah.
 - G.P. Oh yes he a, I see him for from time to time. He's living in the area.
 - D.M. He is , and he was working with you then at this work at that time.
 - G.P. Yes he actually worked together for quite some time.
 - D.M. Oh golly that's, goes back a long time.
 - G.P. It is.
 - D.M. That, that, it does. Well, well now sir we've . . . what year

are we talking an around 1927 about there.

- G.P. 1927, 28, 29.
- D.M. You're, you're working then . . . what, as a rigger, rigger's helper something like that.
- G.P. Yes I, I started as a rigger's helper at Frood.
- D.M. Oh yes. Well now also around about, in the early 30's I think you met a certain young lady, now is that true?
- G.P. Yes, yes that's right.
- D.M. Now & how did that come about?
- G.P. Well, of course, being a young man I would go to dances and I met herm, she was living in man a Sudbury at the time and in 1932, of course, we got married.
- D.M. Well now given us a little his, first of all what was her name then?
- G.P. Her name was Helen (unintelligible) at the time.
- D.M. Do you remember the specific dance you were at, or any of the music that was being played? Now you can make yourself in very xold solid if you can remember this story.
- G.P. I doubt, of course most tof the music was played those at the dances with an accordian those days.
- D.M. Right.
- G.P. And of course the dances were much different to what they are today. Not they were Finnish dances.
- G.P. They were (xix unintelligible) waltzs and polkas
- D.M. Oryeah
- G.P. And shotees
- D.M. Right
- G.P. And what have you.
- D.M. Right
- G.P. But it was lots of fun.
- D.M. Well now the young lady that whom you married, give us a little of here background, I gather that she was born in Finland.
- G.P. Yes she was born in Finland but she was brought to the United States, Minnisotaz actually when x she was a young girl and she got herz education in Minnisota but she was taken back to

Find and then she was there as a young lady doing some professional acting in Finland and she came back to this country in 1924.

- B.M. Well that took a good deal of courage and a good deal of enterprise I guess, eh the
- G.P. Yes
- D.M. Did x she come specifically to Sudbury or why or
- G.P. She came to Toronto and she worked a while in Toronto and, then she went to Port Arthur and finally came to Sudbury.
- D.M. Well interesting. "id she x do any acting or at less, what type of acting would be done in Finland? You were telling us something about that.
- G.P. Oh, oh yes they, I think the Finnish people like the possibly historical plays about the, the (unintelligible) people. Something, they like musical, light operic type of . . . stage plays. But I think that that they do it enjoy looking up part of their own national history that's been r written into stage plays.
- D.M. Well now this, I know this isn't exactly an unfair question maybe you haven't studied it but England if you like sort of came, you heard about the time of the Roman invasion, we . . then William the Conqueror came over and, and got Englandx as we know it now. Why, I know very little about the early history of Finland. Do you know, have you studied that at all?
 - G.P. No I, I, I haven't studged it, it's just what I've heard of people talking. Of course, Finland we was under the Swedish rule for a long time and then of course it was under the Russian rule for a long time, until 1917 or 18 when they were driven out. But as far as then history of Final Finland, I have very little knowledge of it.
 - D.M. That's interesting you know, do you, do you know just what, what the country was like or who was in, we was there say back in the 1300's x or the 1200's. I'm thinking back to, as I have to know x English history, if you like then (unintelligible) back in 1215 and that sort of thingx you know.
 - G.P. YES Of course, as I said that it was under the Swedish rule for a long time and of course there are alot of, alot of Sweeds in Finland and there are alot of communities that YENXMAXXER are entirely, which you may say Swedish. Indix Incidentally it's a bilingual country and, and you
 - D.M. Is that, right?
 - G.P. Oh yes, they, they have there own language. It's, x it's, t's bilingual and if you got to Helsinkee you will see that the street names are both in Swedish and Finnish.
 - D.M. How about the government does this, they, they civil servants

do they speak both languages?

- G.P. I would say that more of themy do. **xx** The a, one of the, one of the, the, the . . . members of parliament are of course **xxx** Swedish. That is and there are communities in Finland that are entirely Swedish.
- D.M. Very interesting a, everyday we learn something. Everyday. No. I also gather here George that you did some acting yourself in Sudbury, is that true?
- G.P. Oh yes I done a little bit.
- G.P. What a, any play or any thing stick out in your mind particular
- G.P. Well not particularly, of course, these were all amateurs plays and . . and they were alot of fun. But there's no particular one that comes to my mind.
- D.M. All right we leave you working then through the, married in the 30, in 1932, working through the 30's. Times got a little rough there for a while, didn't they? through the, through the 30's?
- G.P. Yes there, they were yeah for even for those that were working like myself, working partix part-time but they managed to make enough to buy the an necessities.
- D.M. Right.
- G.P. Of course, things were pretty cheap
- D.M. (unintelligible), yes.
- G.P. You could, you could buy enough groceries with \$5 to last you for a couple of weeks.
- D.M. Now a, what about family George? Have you any family?
- G.P. Well we've one daughter and she had has three children, two boys and a girl.
- D.M. Where's, what's her name now, where is she living?
- G.P. Mira Perrainn is living on Southview & Drive.
- D.M. Oh in Sudbury
- G.P. In Sudbury.
- D.M. Oh yeah she married that, another Finn.
- G.P. She married a Finn boy that was, actually . . . Joat was born in Cobalt I believe. Cobalt is just north of North Bay.
- D.M. But you, you (unintelligible) stick together though, is that the case?

- G.P. Yeah. I suppose.
- D.M. I'm just kid, kiding you George on that one and a couple of your other x children your have.
- G.P. Randy's in Toronto, he's working for Postal department in Tornto and Robert M he's completing a teacher's course in Kingston university and our youngest grandchild, is Jamie shais she's in Western University at the time.

Continued on tape 2.

D.M. Ha ha, that beats starting out as a rock picker then I take it.

- G.P. Ha ha. Yes, the opportunities are much better today.
- D.M. They are all in as good of shape as you are, at your age. Why, good for them. Maybe there's something to be said for working and getting in shape.
- G.P. Yes, well of course I'm hoping they will be in just as good of shape as I am at this age.
- D.M. Ha ha. All right George. For the usual thing I gather you have done a fair amount of traveling in Canada. You've gone where?
- G.P. Yes, I have made two trips out to the pacific coast. I went out in the Vancouver Island and of course I traveled quite extensively in the United States. We made three trips to Florida.
- D.M. Right, and to Minnesota?
- G.P. Oh, and various trips. My wife's sister is living in Minnesota and we've made a number of trips into Minnesota.
- D.M. Do you know whether or not she was a fan of the Minnesota Viking football team?
- G.P. Ha ha. I'm not sure. She has been a fan but she has nothing to cheer about.
- D.M. Ha ha. I also here George that you made a few trips to Finland. When was the first trip you made back there?

- G.P. When I retired in 1970, we made a trip to Finland.
- D.M. Can you tell us a little bit about that trip? Some of the problems?
- G.P. This was quite a trip. We flew from Sudbury on a chartered flight with a DC6 plane. There was 86 of us I think in the plane, plus the crew, and I think we were about 22 hours all together on that trip. We were in the air about 18 hours. Mind you, they, we,. our treatment was quite good. We came down in Gander and had dinner there and we flew from Gander to Shannon. We were supposed to fly to Keflavík but there was trouble at the airport with strikes or something and of course we flew directly across the Atlantic to Shannon. And something went wrong with the plane. They had to do some repairs on it and we finally got up after about three hours and flew from Shannon to Helsinki.
- D.M. And, what did you do over there? Was this your first trip to Finland?
- G.P. Yes. This was my first trip.
- D.M. How did you find it? What did you think of it?
- G.P. Actually, the country was quite nice. It's very often you think you are traveling in Northern Ontario when you are traveling in Finland. Most cities, as a rule, are quite clean. Not much different to us it is here. The city that we were stationed in called Pori. Maybe a thousand people. The only difference that you would find going into the city of Pori and going into Sudbury, is that the language is different.
- D.M. Ha ha than Sudbury?
- G.P. That's right. The window displays are similar. Some of the appliances are smaller than ours such as stoves, refrigerators and so on. They are smaller. But, apart than that people dress

much the same as they do here. The girls are in their miniskirts and the young gentlemen have their long hair. The same as they have... Ha ha

- D.M. Over here. George, I would like to keep talking but I think we are getting near the end of our time on the show here. The, friends, we are talking with, chatting with George Passi who retired in October, the first of October, 1970. How many years were you with the company, George, when you retired?
- G.P. I was given 42 years and 5 months of continuous service credit.
- D.M. George, as you listen to the show, you people will be listening, you will gather that George started as a rock picker back in the old Mond mine, I believe it was, and he was there in some of the early days. He has built himself quite a career out of working with the company. And George, thank you very much for come and talking with us on Memories and Music.
- G.P. My pleasure.

00:30:36 Track ends.