

IRENE

Mrs. Haig (15)
TAPE GUIDE

Came to Bellegille from Down along St. Lawrence	1
Worked in income tax office	1
Start in radio show	1
Radio show- women's show	1
Start of Historical society	2
Canadiana room	3
Historical Society files	3
CJBQ	4
Daytime programming	4
Evening show with Lee Gerard	4
Arthritis Society	5
Library	(dlt.)
Growth of Belleville -east end	5
Dicken's Tea Room	6
Haig Road	6
Homes in Belleville	7
Sir Gilbert Parker	7
Corby's	7
Schools	8
Mr. Maclean -Husband's grandfather	8

October 8, 1974

Mrs. Irene Haig

Corby Public Library

H: Mrs. Haig

No. 15
VII/1/B

N: Nancy

N: When did you first come to Belleville?

H: Well I came to Belleville in March of 1939, just the year before the war started, well, the war started that year, later on.

N: Where did you come from originally?

H: I was from down along the St. Lawrence, born in Morrisburg, lived in Brockville, ~~when~~ went to school in Kingston for my university. Morrisburg of course is right near Upper Canada Village in which I'm very interested.

N: What did you do when you first came to Belleville?

H: Well, when I first came I just lived. Then when my husband went over seas I got a job at the income tax office and worked there for a while during the war.

N: Where they as complicated as they are now?

H: Well, no we were rather a small office and I don't think they were nearly as complicated.

N: What did you do after you left income tax?

H: Well now let me see. For a while I didn't do anything very much except to keep house you know, ordinary living and we moved east of Belleville down R R #4 and then I got connected with the radio station and found myself doing a woman's program.

N: How did you get started in that?

H: Well as a matter of fact I was just working at the station doing schedules and so on and so forth and at that time there were a couple of girls there who just tore things off

H: the teletype, you know, just general woman's things and just read them. One day, well one of them left, and one of them was ill one day and they ~~just~~ said you do it and I suddenly found myself upstairs talking to a microphone for the first time in my life and it didn't seem to bother me a bit. So I kept on, and on but I didn't do the teletype bit. I made my own program because I thought there was an area for that sort of thing in Belleville.

N: What sort of thing did you talk about?

H: Oh a little bit of everything. I interviewed people, I did kind of public realations work for bazars that were going to happen and I did things that, this may be selfish but I did things that interested me. But I found out that they interested other people to. I'd always been interested in history and then I found myself mentioning things that I had learned about the history of this area and I found that I got quite a bit of mail and telephone calls from people who were also interested in this sort of thing and this seemed to grow and grow and I was learning more and more about the district and then I was rather apalled to find that there was no Historical Society either in Belleville or in Hastings County. I kept some of these people together, we kept talking about it, having little meetings and so forth. It too k us a year maybe a year and a half to get somebody who would take on the job of being the first president. We eventually did that and set up an executive and that is how the Hastings Historical Society started.

N: Do you know what year that was?

H: I'M not sure of the exact year. I was doing the program in the fifties but I wouldn't say for sure what year that was.

H: But we were very, very lucky the next couple of years when Gerald Boyce came back to Belleville because he was a history teacher and very, very interested in history and he became the president and a real working president. It was Gerald who went into the old courthouse and went down into the basement, and I must say his wife went with him too, and they dug out old boxes with interesting files and all sorts of information and rearranged them and organized them and kept them in order and kept them in good shape and from that began the files that we have for the Historical Society as it exists now. And might I say that it's interesting that we are talking here in the library, in the Canadiana room and it is in this room that the Hastings County Historical Society files are lodged and I'm looking at them right now. There are quite a few of them and they are here and not at the museum because this is fireproof and the museum is not.

N: What sort of things are in the files?

H: Well, I couldn't give you a good comprehensive idea but there are histories and stories of old families who were first in this area and old buildings and probably how things have changed and the general steady growth of the community and the communities around in the county. There are also I know, lists of say the people who acted on school boards and not only school boards but county councils and all that sort of thing, and it's all kept here.

N: Can you tell us a little bit more about CJBQ? What kind of radio shows they had?

H: Well when I went there it was a couple of years after the

H: radio station had started and there were the, shall I say, the regular ordinary shows, We had the morning much the same as you do now and the morning show varies with the personality of the person who does it and of course everybody knows Tom, Tom Hookings has been there a long time and does a terrific job. Many of the boys are still there, Phil Flagler and so on. Phil used to do the farm program and some of the boys who used to be there are gone now. Jack Devine with the sports and I believe he's in Russia right now or on his way back from Russia. And the regular local programs. My program was between ten and eleven in the morning and so I had to get my work done mostly the day before to be ready. I did alot of public relations for the radio station. I think I spoke to probably every woman's group in the area, church meetings, W.A.'S, all sorts of organizations, women's organizations. The thing I found disconcerting was the fact that because I was on the air, speaking on a radio, they seemed to feel that I knew everything about everything and so they would ask me to speak on a subject and then I would have to go and do all the work and get it ready, you see I didn't know but I had to find out alot and it was good for me to.

N: What kind of shows would they have in the evening?

H: They did mostly recorded shows. Of course there were sports shows, hockey and so on and... now that has left me, I'm not quite sure what I should say about the evening shows, mostly recording shows. For a while Lee Gerard and I did a half hour evening show which was, people phoned in and asked us things. That was alot of fun.

N: What kind of things would they ask you?

H: Everything! I can't begin to tell you, but everything. Even the history bit came up. We had people phoning in and asking bits about history. We had children phoning in and asking things about homework. It was lots of fun.

N: What did you do after you left CJBQ?

H: Well there seemed to be always gaps between things. After I left CJBQ I did nothing for a while, had a rest maybe, then I did a short stint with the Arthritis Society. That is the Ontario Arthritis Association and they were trying to organize in this district Both in Belleville and in the whole area. I found myself going from Coubourg right down to Ottawa and speaking to people in different communities to try to get them to try to organize and Arthritis Society so arthritic patients could be looked after in a better way. Now I wasn't with the Arthritis Society to long. And then it was, ~~around~~ let me see, around 1963 that I came to, I was just doing part time at the library and then started full time in 1964 because, maybe because I enjoyed it so much and I still ~~do~~ enjoy it and I'm in the children's room which I like very much. I think I like the children better than the adults if you don't mind my saying so.

*Next question and answer deleted at the request of Mrs. Haig

N: Can you tell us something about how Belleville has changed since you've been here?

H: OH, goodness yes, it has changed. I don't know whether that I can give you a good picture of it, but when I came here, say Macdonald Ave. was very.. the houses were very sparsley ~~at~~ situated, big gaps between them. Dufferin wasn't all built up the way it is. I suppose at that time Bleeker Ave. was

H: the street in the east that was completely built up then. Duffrin some houses, and Macdonald some houses. East of that ~~there~~ was very little, and how of course you know where it goes.

N: What about downtown Belleville?

H: Oh, well of course there are many, many changes.

N: Can you remember any old, outstanding stores that have since gone?

H: Oh, I think the store that everybody would remember and regret that it has gone is Dicken's. And that of course was a bake shop, a food shop, a restaurant. They had the most delicious candies you could ever imagine, and all kinds of.. the most beautiful luscious tarts, and a very lovely dining room, too and the meals were always good. I think if there's one thing that anybody would say ^{they} missed in old Belleville it would be Dicken's Tea Room. It was a delightful place.

N: I know there's a Haig Road east of Belleville. Is that any connection with your name?

H: Oh, I'm afraid it is because that's where we ~~used-to~~ lived after we went out of Belleville. We were outside, at that time it was outside the city and we bought down there. To get to our house you had to go down #2 highway, cross the railway tracks, back about three quarters of a mile and ^{turn} ~~then~~ west again and our house was just by itself, there wasn't a house around at all. Then there were a few houses down by #2 highway and you know what it is now, there are streets east of Haig Road, but Haig Road, I'm afraid is named after us although we weren't the original people in that house. ^{That} ~~It~~ was the old Cousin's house. We'll mind ~~th~~ ~~you the c~~

H: you the Cousin's house was not one ~~to~~ of the old, old houses. I think it had been built around 1875 But you know I remember being told after I came here and people realized that I was interested in old homes and in history that Sir Isaac Brock ~~was~~, I believe, was supposed to have spent a night in a home on..just to the west of Belleville where Lorne Macdougall now lives. And this is opposite ^{or} near Palmer Road ~~Opposite Palmer Road~~ I believe, the O.S.D. and that is a ~~very~~ very old house. The Ponton house, I think you know where that is, that stone house, well ~~that~~ the back part of the Ponton house was the first part that was built and that's very old, around 1800. I wish I knew more about the old houses around here because I'm very interested in . but those are a few things that I was told when I came here.

N: Do you know of any other famous people who either lived in Belleville or passed through.

H: Well I live on George Street right now and sort of diagonally opposite ~~is~~ a house, now I'm not going to be able to think of the name, isn't that awful, oh yes, ~~Sir~~ Gilbert Parker. Gilbert Parker was one of the first well known Canadian novelists. He became later Sir Gilbert Parker. He went back to England but there ~~I~~ is a house on George Street, on the west side of George Street and that was his home, that was where he lived.

N: I've seen where he is buried in the Belleville Cemetary.

H: Yes, he went to England and then came back. As a matter of fact I believe there is a picture or something of him right in the library.

N: Do you know anything about the Corby's?

H: Not really. As a matter of fact the house I live in now, it was next door to the Corby house which has disappeared

H: And the house that I have an apartment in ~~new~~ a home now that was built around 1850, 55 something like that.

N: Can you think of any other way that Belleville has changed since you've been here?

H: Well I can think of schools, naturally. When I came here there was just one collegiate, B.C.I.V.S., now there are many more as you know, and there were just a few public schools, comparatively few and now of course they have grown and so many more have been added. [There might be something interesting, it's a little odd maybe but my husband's grandfather taught in the Belleville Collegiate in 1890 and 1892 and he was, his name was Maclean and he was a very, very strict Scottish Presbyterian. And he had taught just in a small place north of Toronto, Markham. And he signed here for two years, 1890 to 1892 and he would not stay any longer because he said Belleville was too worldly.]

* * * * *

bo
ter
pa-
nd,
d).
ck-
le;
le;
er,
au
illy
17
eat
ter
Ar-
on
nd
by
nd,
ied
vs.
he
80
on
m.
he
at
fi-
ne-
thy
cer
ad-
the
he
er-
nt.
ME.

HAIG, ELIZA IRENE (Seymour) peacefully, at the Westgate Lodge on Tuesday, April 15, 2003 in her 95th year. Formerly well-known to listeners of CJBQ Radio and readers of the Intelligencer as Harriet Stevens. Later worked several years in the children's branch of the Belleville Public Library. Daughter of the late Charles Seymour and Ella Hummell. Born in Morrisburg and raised there and in Brockville. A graduate of Queen's University. Formerly active member of the University Women's Club and the Business and Professional Women's Club. Founding member of the Hastings County Historical Society. Represented the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women in 1959 at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. A former member of the Bridge Street United Church Choir. Predeceased in 1962 by her husband, John McLean Haig. Survived by her son, Charles McLean (Mac) Haig and his wife, Nellie of London, ON and sister-in-law Mary Haig of Belleville. Friends are invited to call at the **BURKE FUNERAL HOME (968-6968)**, 150 Church Street, Belleville on Monday, April 21st from 1-2 p.m. prior to the memorial service to be held in our Chapel at 2:00 p.m. Burial at Burnbrae Cemetery, near Campbellford. Memorial donations to the charity of your choice would be appreciated by the family.

207
Troy
Tayl
may
al H
levill
p.m.
the
2003
Wils
ville
symj
Strol
ciate
BUSI

MOI
at C
on 7
Mon
year
roug
doc,
ville
Gra
Leto
Mitt
frier
Han
19,
ice
Don
tion

The Intelligencer Apr. 17, 2003, p. 19