

**Helen Peterson
Narrator**

**Heidi Haukebo
Interviewer**

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HH: Okay, I am Heidi Haukebo and I'm going to interview Helen Peterson. Helen, let's just start with where you were born.

HP: In Kenmare, North Dakota.

HH: In Kenmare?

HP: Yes.

HH: Okay. Ah, when were you born?

HP: April 24, 1924.

HH: 1924.

HP: God...1904!

HH: 1904!

HP: [Chuckles]

HH: Okay.

HP: Trying to get away with something!

HH: Okay. Ah, did you go through school?

HP: Hmmm, high school. Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: High school. Finished in there in Kenmare, then?

HP: No, no. In Alexander, North Dakota.

HH: Oh, okay. Okay. Where did your parents come from?

HP: You mean originally?

HH: Well, did they...? Yeah, did they....hmmm...? Were they immigrants or were their parents immigrants or...?

HP: No. No.

HH: No. Okay.

HP: No.

HH: They...they grew up...

HP: Well, my mother in Wisconsin, my father in New York.

HH: Uh huh. Uh huh. Okay. What was the area of communications that you got involved in?

HP: Well, it...when my husband was in the newspaper business, I helped. I mean...at times helped in that.

HH: Okay. Now your husband was Wayne Peterson.

HP: Wayne Peterson.

HH: Okay. Tell me a little bit about...about your husband's involvement then?

HP: Well, of course, all of his life he was in the news from the time he was a young boy in Arkansas, he was involved in newspaper business.

HH: He grew up in Arkansas.

HP: Yes. Yeah.

HH: Do you remember when he was born?

HP: 1896, I believe it was.

HH: 1896.

HP: Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Eight years older than you then.

HP: Yes. Mmmm-hmmm. That's right.

HH: Okay.

HP: And he came up to North Dakota early in the...then in...he was in [unclear] for a short time and then went back. And hmmm...then later he came to Williston, where I lived at that time.

HH: Mmmm! Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And did...and ran the *Farmer's Press* there. And that's where we were married.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: In...and that there at that...

HH: Did he go to school at all?

HP: In Arkansas.

HH: He did.

HP: Yes, he just...

HH: He finished high school there?

HP: It was just high school. Uh huh.

HH: And then how did he actually get into the communication or newspaper business?

HP: Well, as...as a boy in Fordyce, Arkansas, after his father died when he was about nine, then he moved in from the farm and he got involved being a little printer's devil [chuckles] and worked up in that...

HH: Ah...

HP: So he spent all his time from...

HH: At nine years old he started.

HP: Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Ah ha. And then he moved up here and then that's where you met him in Williston.

HP: Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Okay. Do you remember the dates that he actually moved to North Dakota, around the year? Did he...?

HP: Well, he...

HH: How old he was?

HP: He came to...to Williston when he was...hmmm...in 1920.

HH: 1920.

HP: And hmmm, and he was...I think, twenty-four then, I believe. Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Uh huh. Uh huh. Okay.

HP: And we were married there the next year, 1921.

HH: Okay. When he...and so you were out in Williston. Then how did you come to this area?

HP: Well, we...when we left there, we went...from...we went from there to Hillsboro.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: And got into business for himself. And then the place burned down. So were out and...for a while he traveled for the Western Newspaper Union. And then we came to...we went down east expecting to go into business there and decided not to. We came back here and went into the *Daily News*. We bought the *Daily News*, or Mr. Lum, E.D. Lum of Wahpeton had just bought it, and we went in as a partner, and then a few years later, why we bought it...bought him out.

HH: Okay. Do you know any history of the *Daily News* before you got here? Was it...like when it might have been started? Or who was the owner before you came here?

HP: He bought from...hmmm...excuse me, I can't remember the name, but...

HH: No, that's fine. That's fine.

HP: It was back...I'd say it was in 1930 when we came here.

HH: When you came here.

HP: And bought the *Daily*, and went into...

HH: Did you purchase then...you and your husband purchased the *Daily News*?

HP: Well, yes, Mr. Lum had...had purchased this. But we went in as a partner. And then...at that time.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: And then later, hmmm, bought...bought him out just a few years later.

HH: Okay. In what capacity then did your husband start? Was he the writer and editor?

HP: He was editor and manager. Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Okay. How...? Tell me a little bit about the conditions when he first got into the *Daily News* here?

HP: [Coughs] Well, it was...

HH: Can you remember some of that?

HP: It...it wasn't very good. Ah, the paper was not too much...and I think there was about a nine hundred, hmmm, subscription list at that time.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And...but he built it up to through the years and it became very...very good.

HH: Uh huh. Hmmm...how many employees would you say there were back then? Or how many people started on the paper when you were there?

HP: Oh...

HH: Were there three or four?

HP: Oh, there...there were more than that, there were...

HH: Were there twelve, were there sixty?

HP: No, there weren't that many. There were, I would say, fifteen or twenty-some. Where...

HH: Fifteen, twenty.

HP: Between the mechanical and the editorial, you know, the editorial staff.

HH: Sure. Sure. Okay. Ah...what kind of news would they cover then? Or what...? Do you remember some of the features or columns?

HP: They...at that time they covered...they went...they were up against opposition from...a bigger city, of course, was Fargo.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: And they did very much on local news. Because they got the...the world news, and state news, and so on came in over...over wires, you know.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: [Unclear] information, and they got that, but it...they...they made it very much local, so the people were interested.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: Names as...that's the first thing, is to get names in the paper! [Chuckles] That was it.

HH: To get names in the paper.

HP: Yeah. So...

HH: Uh huh. Uh huh. Would you say that most of the subscriptions were...was right here in Moorhead? Was it...?

HP: Moorhead and Clay County, I would say.

HH: In Clay County. Yeah.

HP: But I'd say through the years, well then, it...it gradually grew all the time.

HH: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about some of the changes that came about. How many years then was your husband and...was...how long were you then associated with the paper?

HP: Well, of course, I didn't work in the paper after I came here.

HH: Right.

HP: Except to...when they...in an emergency when the wires would break down or something, I'd have to take it over...the news over the telephone or shortwave...shorthand, or something like that.

HH: Oh, yeah.

HP: But we...we had it...we sold it in 1944.

HH: Okay.

HP: So it was fourteen years.

HH: Fourteen years.

HP: Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Okay. Do you remember what the subscription was later then? Then in like the...at the point that you ended up selling it?

HP: Well, it was well over seven thousand, which was up in there.

HH: Awful lot!

HP: Uh huh. Yeah. That.

HH: Yeah.

HP: And he had also put in this “Farmers News” and which...was a great deal to help and which now is a big moneymaker for the *Forum*. [Chuckles]

HH: Uh huh.

HP: It’s...it’s the [unclear] in there on Fridays.

HH: So he developed the “Farmer’s...”

HP: “News,” I don’t know what they could...

HH: “Farmer’s News,” okay.

HP: Can’t remember what they call that now.

HH: And what did that consist of?

HP: Well, it was ads from farmers mostly. And where the farmers got ads very cheaply, and could run them...

HH: Uh huh.

HP: It went over in...and a...or a big circulation.

HH: Uh huh. Uh huh. What were some of the other features? Was there a gossip column or was there a place that just reported on city politics or what were some of the things that...?

HP: Well, of course, city politics would go in the general city news.

HH: Right.

HP: But of course there was a personal column, which you'd...no longer runs in any of the papers.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: And there was more made of weddings and funerals. I mean they were done in greater length.

HH: Uh huh. Would you say that the...that some of the content that was in that paper is very similar to maybe some of our smaller town papers now? I know sometimes you can go to smaller towns and they have got their social columns. And they are talking about so and so is visiting so and so, and they did...A lot of that was important?

HP: Yeah. Well, not only that, they had...they had a country correspondence that sent in news to it.

HH: Oh...

HP: From various smaller towns and so on.

HH: Uh huh. Uh huh. How many pages were there to the paper around then? Do you remember?

HP: Well, there was around, you know, depending on how much...

HH: Sure.

HP: ...advertising you got [chuckles] how much you had to fill in.

HH: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Ah, after you sold the newspaper, hmmm, did your husband retire? Did he go on to work someplace else?

HP: No, he went...he bought some smaller papers down in South Dakota (there was several of them) intending to run them as a chain, and then he got involved in the newspaper brokerage.

HH: Ah.

HP: Selling and buying newspaper properties.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And which he just covered about five states in that.

HH: Yeah.

HP: But then he finally sold the papers in South Dakota, too, and just stuck to the newspaper brokerage.

HH: Now here in Moorhead, was the paper...was it a weekly, was it a daily?

HP: Oh, it was a daily.

HH: It was a daily.

HP: In fact, it was just...no Sunday edition, but daily otherwise.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Can you remember any of the big changes that took place during that time? Anything that changed in the way that they printed? And any things that helped advance...? Now the wire with, you know...

HP: Well, of course, there were many mechanical changes, I mean, with the additional linotypes, which they needed as the paper got larger.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And a bigger press and that, and things of that kind. And they also had an addition to the building.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Okay. So the working conditions were...when they started on the job it was a smaller paper, and after...when you ended up selling it, it got larger and got quite a bit better?

HP: Well, it was larger when he sold it. [Chuckles] By the time...

HH: Larger than he sold it.

HP: No, it was larger *when* he sold it. See, he had built it...it had been built up by that time.

HH: Right.

HP: Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Right.

HP: And that was during the war, which was...he was just not able to...his health wouldn't allow him to keep...keep going.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. As your position as a...as a wife then, in this career or industry, were there things expected of you? Hmmm...other things aside from just helping out, say, when the wire went out? Hmmm...did you have to be real sociable? Was a person...? Did you have to play a lot of politics as a part of being in the newspaper and things like that?

HP: Well, of course there's always...you have to be...tread carefully and lots of those things like that.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: And of course I...not as much in the *Daily News* as in when we were in Rolla, for instance, in northern North Dakota where we had a paper in there. And there it was...you had to be very careful about...[Laughs]

HH: Careful in what way?

HP: Well, that you...if you went to a dance, and somebody asked you to dance, well, even if you didn't want to, you had do it, and so on and so forth! [Laughs]

HH: [Laughs]

HP: You know, all those things that went into that.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: That wasn't...that wasn't the case here, of course.

HH: Uh huh. Now your husband started out working on the printing press, and then he worked into writing for the paper? And...

HP: Well, of course, he did that all...when he...

HH: Oh.

HP: As he went into papers, he always had...you always have to do that little bit of everything when you're the owner or manager. [Chuckles] And...

HH: Uh huh. Uh huh. But when he first started out, when he was nine years old, that was...

HP: Oh, well, that was just picking up...helping around the plant, of course.

HH: Sure.

HP: Uh huh.

HH: Okay.

HP: And that was more...was during his...through his high school years.

HH: So he basically went through all the different positions?

HP: Yes, that's right.

HH: Did you ever hear him comment on what he liked to do best in the newspaper business?

HP: Well, I don't know. I think he liked it all, because that was his life, I mean from...

HH: Yeah.

HP: Oh, and he had made up his mind early, he said, that that's what he wanted to do. And that's what he did.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Do you remember how the salaries were back then in conjunction, say, with other jobs or careers?

HP: Well, of course, they were rather low, especially in Moorhead to begin with, because that's the only way he could make it go, you know.

HH: Right.

HP: And he used to object very strenuously sometimes, because he'd get them all well trained and then...and the *Forum* would take them away! [Chuckles]

HH: Uh huh.

HP: Because they were trained, you know.

HH: Uh huh. Uh huh. Do you remember when...when they did a lot of hiring during that time, was...were most of the people starting out just like he started out? Just starting out fresh in the business and kind of being trained? Had some gone to school?

HP: Well, a lot of them came from the college. Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. A lot of came...

HP: You know, came from...from MS [Moorhead State] and from those various...you know, the ones that had that...practice.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Do you remember some of the low points in the...and experienced...your husband's experiences with papers?

HP: Well, getting things going was very hard, that...that was a low point. It was just...when he came here in 1930, it was just the beginning of the Depression.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And I can remember when the banks closed, and that was no...no...no way to pay. And he...he had printed script and the...and then went around some of the stores and they would take it from the...our help to pay for what they bought, and then they would take it...that back out in advertising, and it would come back to us, so we didn't need the...the cash. [Chuckles]

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Was it hard to get loans and things like that then during the very beginning? Or would it be...he'd just have to have all the capital there and make it go from what he had or...?

HP: You...you made it...you made it go to some...well, no, I mean, like when they went build and everything, there wasn't any question about getting bank loans at that time to build.

HH: Yeah.

HP: [Unclear] and by...

HH: Where...where was the newspaper located?

HP: It was down on the end of Center Avenue. It was right next to the river.

HH: Oh...yes.

HP: In fact, during...when they took out all the old buildings, that was one of the oldest ones, but they left it there. [Chuckles] It was...

HH: So is that still there? That building still there?

HP: I don't know if they've taken that now. I think they did in this last deal, because between...Pete's Pizza[sp?] used to be in there a long time.

HH: Okay...

HP: Yeah. Way down there. Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: What were some of the high points in the career that you can remember in the industry, personally, or in...or in the industry in general?

HP: Well, it was...I'd say every time you got out a good edition, or when there was something big happened. And then, naturally, he had to be very active in the city things. He was president of Rotary. And like in the morning they'd go down...he go down at about six o'clock in the morning and work a little while, because he wouldn't be bothered. And a group of the businessmen would go over and have coffee at Brennan's[sp?] Café, which was where the FM [Hotel] is right now.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: And then they'd plan all these things to do, and that's the way they got started, for instance, built the country club. And you know, got...

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: Talked it over, and so on and so forth, and got things started there. And they worked on many other...he was involved in so many things in that, in the newspaper business. You always are.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And he worked behind...he was on all these committees for bridges, and post offices, and...well, all those things.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Do you think that was a part of being tied in with the newspaper? Or do you think that was a part of your husband's nature to just get real involved like that?

HP: Well, both, because he was always into some progress, getting something done, and improving the city, and so on.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: He always had been that way.

HH: Uh huh. Do you remember...? What was the most memorable event that was probably covered, locally, or nationally?

HP: Well, there were a couple of kind of peculiar ones here that...as it happened. Hmmm. Oh, it was seventy years ago. It was...hmmm...oh...I guess it was in 1941. Ah, well...or what...1931, there was a tornado out here.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm!

HP: And it blew a train off the track, which has caused quite a bit of excitement around here.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm.

HP: Which was a big story, of course, for the paper.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And my husband's sister [unclear] was up visiting here, and she was a writer. She went out and interviewed patients at the hospital, and so on and so forth, that were taken off. And...

HH: Was that here in Moorhead that there was a train that was derailed?

HP: It was just outside...not too far out of Moorhead. Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And it was a tornado that'd taken it off the tracks.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: And then in 1941, I remember he'd been out to some meeting, and he'd just gotten home. And the telephone rang, and it was New York calling that wanted to know about the airplane crash that had occurred here. [Chuckling] He said he'd had...didn't know anything about it!

HH: [Chuckles]

HP: And it had just crashed out...out by the cemetery, out there.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: And it... and he asked them to go out and get pictures and...and hmmm...take...get a cab and take them into Minneapolis so they could be in New York the next day.

HH: Ah ha...

HP: Which...which they did. [Chuckles]

HH: Ah ha.

HP: And thing like that which were big news events here, of course, then.

HH: Was that a big passenger plane that had crashed or...?

HP: Yes. Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Oh...

HP: Come in. Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: People were hurt in that?

HP: Yes. And I can't remember how many or what...what happened there.

HH: Yeah.

HP: But...but...

HH: Yeah, so he got his pictures published then in...?

HP: Yeah, they...he sent them down to New York, just the wire things...[Chuckles] Or down in Minneapolis they put them on the wire then, you see.

HH: Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Were there any kinds of competitions and awards that went on back then for story writing and pictures that he got involved in?

HP: No, I don't... not...

HH: Like did they have...?

HP: Probably...probably not him, particularly.

HH: Okay.

HP: Because he...it would be somebody else that was photographer.

HH: Sure.

HP: And hmmm...but, I mean, a lot of the pictures would be sent on, of course.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: [Unclear].

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And some of his help, now...his...hmmm...sports editor went to the Chicago...on the Chicago papers. And there was a lot of that that went on.

HH: Mmmm.

HP: They went...went up. [Chuckles]

HH: Yeah, they...yeah.

HP: Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Ah...did some of these bigger events now, like the train or the plane crash, did they affect his career in any way in that...? You know, New York was calling him for photographs. Did it advance his career in a way that he liked? Or do you see any big events...?

HP: Well, no. It was just something that went with...with the...

HH: With the territory.

HP: Yeah. [Chuckles] Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Yeah. Yeah.

HP: And he...hmmm...of course, he used to...through the years, too, he was...we'd...the Fargo-Moorhead Twins, the baseball team used to be out here.

HH: Mmmm.

HP: And he was...during the...hmmm...1935, he was president of that, and they worked hard on getting it going, a proposition.

HH: Mmmm. The Twins actually used to be here at Fargo-Moorhead?

HP: Well, that's what they were called then; having twins...it...it isn't the same Twins as down there.

HH: Oh, okay.

HP: But that's...in fact, they took that name down there. I mean, we had it first!

HH: Uh huh.

HP: But it was...it...they were in Moorhead first, and then...and they had an affiliation with a...

HH: A baseball team?

HP: Yeah. Yes. A big league team.

HH: Yeah.

HP: And they had an affiliation with a big league team, and they got some players that...players went here, and they put in a little bit of the money, but it was a struggle getting them going.

HH: Yeah. Yeah. Did the newsprint shortage ever affect the industry? Or I mean in...do you remember it affecting your husband?

HP: Oh, I'm sure it could at times, because during the war, especially, there was difficulty, you know, in getting print.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Were there times when the paper couldn't be printed because of it?

HP: No, I don't think so. And I don't...we were...

HH: Always got done.

HP: You'd probably cut down...cut down on the size, you know [unclear].

HH: Right. Right. How did you see some of the coverage that was in the paper, the definition of news change over the years? Certainly, what would have been news back in the 1920s was...was different than say the 1940s or the 1950s. Just as being a wife and kind of observer of some of that, what did you see as changing?

HP: Well, it...as it changed, as I say, it...because you didn't go into as much detail anymore. They cut out a lot of detail that had been in...

HH: There used to be more detail back in the 1920s?

HP: Yes. Well, in the 1930s, as I say, it's when we came here.

HH: Sure. Sure.

HP: And before that, of course, in the small towns, there's still detail. But in...in the larger...

HH: So longer stories, more detail?

HP: Yes. And you had a wedding, and they described every dress, and they described, you know...

HH: [Laughs]

HP: And the same...same in obituaries. It was all...every...was, you know, all of the relatives, and pallbearers, and so on, and so forth.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Why do you suppose they started shortening some of that detail?

HP: Space, because there were too many of them.

HH: Too many.

HP: You see, you just can't...can't cover all that.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. How about other kinds of news? Hmm...other things that you could see as changing as far as news coverage and things?

HP: Of course you...

HH: Headlines, what were headlines back in the 1930s? And what were they, say, in the 1950s?

HP: Well, of course you...

HH: Do you think it stayed the same?

HP: Headlines...headline writing was very important, because you...you have a good headline, you catch their attention for the story.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And of course there...as this...as this city developed, naturally, there were...I mean, here there were...it just...everything went long. I mean, they were working for new post offices, new big bridges...and those scraps went on for years and years, you know.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And to try and get...get them.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And there was always a little bit of competition with...with Fargo. They didn't want to cooperate too much. [Chuckles]

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Was there a lot of tension because of that in the newspaper? Was there a *lot* of competition going on between the two papers that you remember?

HP: Well, of course, oh...I say as far as the *Daily News*, that they tried to build up on this side of the river in Moorhead and forget about Fargo. They couldn't compete over there on Fargo news.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: But they built up so that they had to have the Moorhead paper in order to get the Moorhead news! [Chuckles]

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: You know, because they covered more of that.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. The *Forum* used to cover more world news and things like that and then but...and the *Daily* used to be more local?

HP: Well, they tried to cover all...everything, too, but I mean they didn't want to give that...as much space to Moorhead as...

HH: Sure.

HP: And so it was...we are two different cities and in two different states, and it made a difference.

HH: Yeah. Yeah. Did that ever create problems or tensions that you can remember? The fact that we were two different states and two different cities, and yet we're just sharing a riverbanks?

HP: Well, when that's...and there always is...I don't know about tension, but there's always competition.

HH: Yeah.

HP: Bound to be between them.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. What memories do you seem to cherish most overall of this? Do you have some fond memories of working in the paper industry, or your husband's involvement with the paper?

HP: Well, yes, I mean he...he always was active. As I say, his interest was in building up...whatever happened to be. And he took on a lot of different jobs, of course. And...but he was more to work in the background, and get things started, push a little bit. [Chuckles]

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: But he was...like he was president in this Rotary, and he was...you know, in all those things during the years. And...but he...and when he...for instance, when they were going to start the beet plant, that was after he was out of the paper even, you know. But he went and bought the land

without...on the quiet. [Chuckles] So they didn't...you know, they didn't want the prices...they didn't want it to get out before they had the land bought up. And...and they'd bought that to...so the beet plant could come in without it's being held up too much, you know, industries and...

HH: Mmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: See, so he did that. And he was...he worked with St. Ansgar's Hospital, one of the first ones to try and get funds to get that built, rebuilt.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And it was...there were a lot of things like that that went on.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Was there a lot of excitement involved in starting a paper? Or was it more excitement in selling a paper and knowing that you have grown it to a certain point?

HP: Well, no, I...

HH: Or what are some of your memories there?

HP: Of course, he always enjoyed the building up.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: That's because he'd gone through them two or three times, you know. And hmmm, like when we went to Rolla, it was just a handset paper, and the city had no water and sewage. It was the county seat, but...in Rolette, North Dakota.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And he built...he went in [unclear]. It...we...it was. [Chuckles] You know, [unclear].

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And he did the same thing in Moorhead. He was very much of a worker for the city and locality.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. If you could look back on your lives with the newspaper and stuff, anything that you wish would have been different?

HP: Oh, I don't know. No. I thought it was very satisfactory. And I mean, we cooperated, and he was very...I had [been] you know, quite active in politics, and he was very helpful in that, and so on. He was...he didn't...not himself, he didn't want to be in...busy in that, but he...it was very nice for me.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And he had...there were...something a little funny. He was...my husband has his name, Peterson, but he was English...of English and French descent.

HH: Mmmm.

HP: He...he wasn't Scandinavian.

HH: Oh.

HP: And he a little bit of the English temperament of being a little bit stubborn, you know. [Chuckles]

HH: Uh huh.

HP: And then there has always been kind of a joke about...ah...when...then this was after he was out of the newspaper and into the brokerage business, but he said they were...he had his office up over Waterman's Store, which was here at that time, I mean, and on Center Avenue. And he was traveling all the time, and was there very little. And they tried to charge him for...for...oh, it was a dollar minimum for water...or for electricity, which he was perfectly willing, but then they tried to charge him for sewer, or was...garbage and so on. There wasn't any. [Chuckles] You know, it was an office.

HH: Oh...

HP: There wasn't any. And so everybody else paid it, it was in a big building. And he wouldn't pay it. He went...he went up to this...[chuckles] the committee...the commission, and he wouldn't pay it. [Chuckles]

HH: Uh huh.

HP: And he got quite a bit of publicity on that. And...and they said, "Well, please pay it. We will...we won't say anything." And he said, "Nope." [Laughing] He wasn't going to...

HH: [Laughs]

HP: So he was quite...

HH: And after he got into the brokerage, how long was he in that?

HP: Well, until just...hmmm...three or four years...oh, maybe three or four years before he died. Because when he got not able to handle...you know, couldn't get out so much anymore.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And of course, in the meantime, did have a loan company here in Moorhead, too, afterwards, the industrial loans.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: So...and he was president of that.

HH: What year did he pass away?

HP: 1977. 1977.

HH: 1977.

HP: Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: So going on ten years.

HP: Well, it'll be...ah...

HH: Eight.

HP: Eight years. Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Yeah. Right.

HP: But we had been married sixty...fifty-six years when he died. So...

HH: Fifty-six years.

HP: Yes.

HH: Isn't that marvelous. Yeah.

HP: So that was very...very nice.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Did you keep a lot of memorabilia and things from the newspaper business?

HP: Yes, and we have quite an assortment. Doris has most of them now. But...

HH: Right.

HP: Because I have no place to keep them, of course. But she brought up a lot things for me to look over now to bring back my memories.

HH: Yeah.

HP: Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Yeah. Yeah. Any last things you'd like to talk about? The newspaper, or lifestyle of being a wife of an owner and editor, or...?

HP: Well, it was...I think it was a good life. [Chuckles]

HH: Uh huh.

HP: I've...I always felt it was. And in later years we spent a lot of time in Florida in the wintertime, and the lake in the summer, and we had...I still have a very good circle of friends that have been here for all the years.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: And of course our son, he was in the newspaper business, too, for a while, afterwards...too, and so on.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. So it's all in your blood.

HP: Yes. Well, my dad was, too.

HH: Your dad was, too!

HP: Yes, it was...it's always been newspaper.

HH: How about when your dad was in the newspaper industry, and how that changed from when your husband got into it?

HP: Well, of course, when he was there, he was just...it was little tiny towns in North Dakota. And his first press...one that he had for himself was...it was one of those Washington hand presses, you put down the...hand-set the...

HH: Mmmm.

HP: ...type by hand, and ran a ruler over the paper. [Laughs]

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. So it took a lot longer.

HP: Yes. It was little tiny towns, and it wasn't much, you know.

HH: Yeah. Yeah.

HP: But of course later on it was more.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Yeah. Well, very good. Unless you've got anything else you'd like to talk about the newspaper? Anything you can think of as being significant times, or tough times, good times? I see you have lots of notes there.

[Shuffling paper noises]

HP: I know...[turns pages] I don't think I have anything in particular that...

HH: Okay.

HP: I...of course, he was president of the Minnesota Press Association. He went through so he was top of the Press Association, too, in the State of Minnesota.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: Which...which was an honor. And...

HH: What part did the press association play then in the state, and what all did they do at that time?

HP: Well, they sent out advertising, got advertising, sent it out, and some of those things. And it gave them a lot...of course, most of them in that were weekly papers, but there were a few dailies. And they...hmmm...kept going on all at that...contact.

HH: Uh huh.

HP: And they...the yearly meetings and such. So...

HH: Do you remember what years he was president there?

HP: That was in...hmmm...

HH: Was that when he still had the paper here in Moorhead? Or was it afterwards?

HP: Yeah...No, he still had the paper when he was...

HH: He still had paper here.

HP: When...yeah, when he went...yeah, when he went there.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm.

HP: Mmmm-hmmm. Uh huh. He was president in 1943.

HH: 1943.

HP: And he sold...we sold the news in 1944.

[Paper shuffling noises]

HP: Mmmm-hmmm.

HH: Mmmm-hmmm. Well, very good, Helen. I sure appreciate you doing this.

HP: Well, I'm sure I wasn't just...

HH: Yeah.

[End of interview]