

Marian Petersen

9/21/04, T1, S1

BL: Hello.

MP: Hello.

BL: I would like for you to tell me your full name, please.

MP: I am Marian Nancy __ Petersen.

BL: And what's your date of birth?

MP: December 11th, 1918.

BL: And that makes you how old?

MP: Eighty-five. Approaching eight-six.

BL: Can you tell me about your parents coming to Union County?

MP: Yeah. I could give you a slight description, I guess. My father was from F__, Scotland. He was coming out to the States bringing another lady, woman, to marry a friend of his that was residing in Dayville area. That was his ticket in coming. He ended up in Dayville and was working for Jim Kamp and there were Scotch people around in John Day __ used to be many, anyway. I don't know if there is now. My mother lived in John Day. My grandmother on my mother's side had remarried and had moved down below John Day about half way between John Day and Mount Vernon. There was a Scotch family that lived just a short distance from there that my father became acquainted with and had helped them out quite a bit with hunting and etcetra. My mother was working there as a cook after she was out of high school...not high school, pardon me, out of grade school because they only went to the eighth grade then. In the eighth grade she didn't have the opportunity to go off to high school so she was working and that was where he met her. __ months later they married and came out to Baker and stayed all night and then they came on into La Grande and he ended up working for the Union Pacific Railroad. They lived in a rental house just below __ department store. That was where my brother was born was there in this rental house behind the __ apartment house on Adams. Then they moved to another rental house down on U Avenue and that was where I was born two days later.

BL: You were born in the home?

MP: Yes. Me and my brother __.

BL: Were you ever told anything about your birthing experience at home?

MP: No, not really. One thing that I remember about is the...my grandmother was over here with her __ taking care of Mother because my father was in bed with the flu, this was an epidemic at that time in 1919. So many people had died. My father was down with it and also my brother. I was born into that.

BL: Was your grandmother from this area?

MP: John Day.

BL: She was from John Day. So when your parents moved her she came along, or she just came to help out?

MP: She just came over to help because Mother was having me and her husband, my father, was ill and also my brother with the flu. They were pretty ill.

BL: Was there a hospital in La Grande during that time?

MP: Yes. The Grande Ronde Hospital. Up on... The old Grande Ronde Hospital up on the end of Adams.

BL: Do you know why your mother decided to have a home birth instead of hospital birth?

MP: Just one of those things they all used to do, I think, at that time. Very few, I think, went to the hospital.

BL: And what about seeking treatment for the flu at the hospital? Would that have been custom or was it more custom to treat that at home as well?

MP: The doctors used to come to our home. Dr. __ was a baby doctor. Dr. __ Richardson was a medical doctor that served our family. He was the one that was treating my dad.

BL: Were there other doctors in town?

MP: I'm sure there were, but those were the only two that I knew of at that time. Of course Richardson was the one that was the head of the hospital up here. You know that big cross that's in the Grande Ronde Hospital right now, that huge big cross? That was his.

BL: Where was the home located that you were born in?

MP: Down on U Avenue.

BL: U Avenue.

MP: Yes.

BL: Is it still there today?

MP: Yes. What is it? 15-0-something on U Avenue. But it's still there.

BL: So that's the home that you grew up in?

MP: Yes.

BL: How many years did you live in that home?

MP: Probably about five or six years and then they bought a home down on 811 Spruce and that was where I was raised up there.

BL: What would be your earliest memory while living on U Avenue?

MP: Earliest memory? When we were little kids growing up I had probably started to school. I know we used to have lots of fun playing Kick the Can and Ante-Over and things like that, which kids don't do anymore.

BL: Where did you play those games?

MP: At our house.

BL: At the house.

MP: You threw the ball over the top of the roof of the house and said "Ante-Over." Then after the people on the other side caught the ball then they'd come around and catch you if you didn't run. [laughs]

BL: And it was Ante-Over or Annie?

MP: Ante.

BL: Ante-Over. What other things did you do as a child for fun?

MP: Roller skate and ride a bicycle. We only had one bicycle and roller skates. We did have two pairs of those, one for both of us. But we had to share the bicycle when we were growing up.

BL: Was there a roller skating rink in La Grande?

MP: Yes, but it was...I remember it, but I was older, probably in the upper grades, like eighth grade or something like that and in high school. There was a roller skating

rink, it was upstairs over...probably it was upstairs probably where the Masonic Hall is now. They have a large ballroom up there and that was probably where it was.

BL: Do you know what business was in there during that time?

MP: There wasn't any business up there, but it was... It was just a roller skating rink up above. Down below I think the __ dress store.

BL: Was the roller rink owned by the dress store then?

MP: No.

BL: It was owned separately?

MP: Yeah. I don't remember who had it.

BL: Were there roller skates available for rental or did you have to have your own?

MP: They had rental skates. Didn't get to go there very often, maybe only two or three times is all. Didn't have the money.

BL: I would imagine you had some responsibilities at home. Can you tell me about the responsibilities?

MP: Feeding the chickens and whatever pets we had, which were numerous off and on. Sometimes... We always had a dog or a cat, but we also had a wild duck that we used to feed. Then we used to have a big goose that we kept care of. We were supposed to kill it for Thanksgiving or Christmas, but it never happened. But they were stole from us. Our wild duck was stole from us and our goose was stole from us.

BL: Really?

MP: Yes.

BL: Were they stolen right before the holiday for someone else's dinner?

MP: No, they were just...they just strayed out too far from our house and we knew who had them both, but there was nothing you could do about it.

BL: Did you raise chickens for the eggs?

MP: Eggs and meat both. Used 'em for both.

BL: Did you live in a large neighborhood?

MP: Yes, there were houses all the way around and then the mill was behind our house, the mill yard where they piled lumber. It was one of the mill workers going back and forth to work that chased the goose off. It was a man across the street from our house that got the duck.

BL: Where did you go to school?

MP: We went to grade school at Greenwood Elementary, which was the old Greenwood School. There's a new school there now. The old one was the basement level and then two stories high.

BL: What was it like inside?

MP: About...if you're familiar with Riveria very similar to that. We had recesses down in the basement and then they had the kitchen, too, which they served lunches in. But the lunches weren't like they have today. It was mainly cocoa and soup. You were supposed to bring your sandwiches.

BL: The soup was homemade, though, cooked right there in the kitchen?

MP: Yes.

BL: Then did you buy a lunch ticket so you could get that or was that just part of going to school?

MP: I don't remember. I think Mother had to pay for it. I don't remember if they ever...I'm sure we had to pay. Probably ten cents or fifteen cents, something like that.

BL: Were you involved in any activities in school?

MP: Just with sports.

BL: What kind of sports?

MP: Baseball and we used to have games with a ball like a basketball or a volleyball, either one, that you just played in lines. There would be probably eight people in the line and you'd pass the ball and run up to the post and back and the first ones done from front to back and things like that. Then baseball.

BL: Was baseball popular?

MP: Yes.

BL: Was it acceptable for boys and girls to play?

MP: Oh yes.

BL: Do you recall what your subjects were in school?

MP: Arithmetic, reading, writing, history, art.

BL: What was your favorite?

MP: My favorite? Do I have a favorite? Oh, I forgot, song. We always had song. That was one of my favorites, was spelling and music.

BL: Why music? How were you involved in music?

MP: There you just had group music. I just like to sing, I guess.

BL: Were you involved in the church when you were growing up?

MP: Mother took us to the South Methodist church and we were members there. I remember being baptized there in the South Methodist church because it was closer to our home. We went to Sunday school there. I don't think we were faithful members like going every Sunday. We did partake in that.

BL: You mentioned that your father was working for the railroad during that time. Can you tell me more about that?

MP: He was what they used to call a boiler maker. He was one that repaired the engines. At that time it was the coal burners when he started and then they advanced to the oil burners. But when he was there the reason it was called a boiler maker was because they had to replace the inside where the heat and steam...when they went into the steam engines. They'd start leaking and so they'd have to repair them. I remember going inside of one of 'em one time.

BL: When you were young child?

MP: Yeah. No, I was older by then.

BL: What was it like?

MP: Just a big cavity, a round... I don't know what to tell you. It was just a great, big, round barrel-like thing with ribs, which were pipes. Then they had bricks inside of it, too, to keep the heat, I guess, inside.

BL: Did your father talk about his work?

MP: Not so much. No. Not really.

BL: Did your mother work outside the home?

MP: Not very often. Once or twice during the wintertime at Christmastime she used to go down and help in the toy department at Bill Carr's furniture store, which used

to be Zimmerman's and I don't know what it is now, there on the corner of Fir and Adams.

BL: Can you tell me more about that store? What was it like going into the toy department as a child?

MP: Oh, heaven! [laughs] It was a lot of fun to go down there. We didn't get to go very often. Once in a while we got to go down where the toys were and play with 'em.

BL: They had places actually where you could actually hands-on with the toys?

MP: Yes.

BL: So your mother did seasonal work at the store?

MP: Yes. She used to go out and pick our own fruits and things, too. In the fall she would go out and pick apples and pears for our own use. I remember going along watching her.

BL: Helping her? Did you have to help?

MP: No. I was too small. Too small to do really do much good to help.

BL: Where did she pick that fruit?

MP: Out in the valley. Farmers.

BL: Then would she can that fruit?

MP: Yeah. She used to can most everything like apples, applesauce and pears and peaches.

BL: Were you ever responsible for helping with the canning?

MP: When I was old enough, yes.

BL: What was that like?

MP: It's still fun. I still do it. You just prepare the fruit, get it washed and peeled and sliced or whole, halved and put 'em in the jars which you had to scald and wash real good.

BL: Have the canning methods changed over the years?

MP: No. Canning times have. Of course with the pressure canner coming on... We had a steam canner, what they used to call a washtub. It was elongated and it sat on two burners just like this with handles on both ends. They used to boil the fruit in that, the jars. You put your jars down in there and water over the top and then boil it.

BL: With a lid on it?

MP: Yes. Which is the same as we do now only they're in a round kettle that we set on our stove.

BL: So now it's on one burner and not on two.

MP: But then of course at that time they didn't have electric. Ranges they were just wood and coal stoves.

BL: So that's a big change.

MP: And then we had a steam canner, too, that we used to can beans in. It was double-decker. I still have it down in the basement. Had a couple of doors on it and you put...it had a little pipe that went down the back of the steamer, a little pipe, and then at the bottom was a tray the water was in. You set it on the stove – and I've used it on this stove here, too. It was just on one large burner if you had electric range. You boil that and then you could...if you noticed the water was getting

low you could more water down through the top there. It was really... It's a nice antique thing. I've never thrown it away.

BL: Did that belong to your mother?

MP: My grandmother originally.

BL: Wow.

MP: And then Mother used it and then I used it. In the meantime the pressure canner came on the market so that's why my daughter doesn't use the steam canner because it takes two hours for beans. She'd have to keep the burner...pressure on it.

BL: So you'd have to keep the fire lit in the woodstove during all this time.

MP: Yeah, keep the pressure up.

BL: Did you have to keep it at a certain temperature?

MP: No. They didn't have any...just so the water was boiling and you had steam.

BL: So you did that for green beans and did you use the steam canner for any other vegetables?

MP: The fruit.

BL: Oh, for fruit, too?

MP: Yes. That was for any canning. Then they had the water bath that came on. Mother used the water bath then also. The steam canner was more like we would use our pressure canner for now, make sure that it's really sterile and wouldn't spoil. Green beans are easily contaminated if they aren't sealed properly and all, just like meat. Grandmother used to can all her meats, too, down on the ranch. That was why she used the steam canner because it just was safer.

BL: Now did your mother also can meat?

MP: No. She didn't can meat. Never that I remember her ever doing. Neither have I. I've canned fish.

BL: You weren't living on a farm, you were living in town, but you had chickens.

MP: Yes.

BL: Did you buy your meat at the store or did you hunt?

MP: Both. Dad used to go hunting. He wasn't as successful as my husband, but he used to enjoy going. Most of our meat was bought from the grocery meat market.

BL: Did you hunt with your dad as a child?

MP: No. We were out and camped, but not...we wouldn't hunt with him. We could walk sometimes for a distance with him, but he'd always send us back to camp. I always had my cat in my bibs, biboverall. [laugh]

BL: So he would make you go home with the cat? Back to camp?

MP: Yes.

BL: Did you go camping a lot?

MP: No, not a great deal. Usually once a twice a year is all. Just fun camping and then in the fall would be him going out to see if he could find a deer.

BL: Did your family do any fishing?

MP: Yes, but it was different. We used to go salmon fishing up on Catherine Creek, but they usually gig for 'em.

BL: What does that mean?

MP: Like a spear, you'd hook 'em. They outlawed that, too, over the years because... It's the way the Indians fish. The Indians used to come up on Catherine Creek in the fall salmon fishing, too.

BL: Did you see the Indians there?

MP: Yes. They used to come along Catherine Creek and up the Grande Ronde River both. It'd be a lot of fun. We used to have spotting glasses, it was round tube about four, six inches and be about so long and had glass on the bottom. You look down in there and hold it under the water to try to find the salmon.

BL: Did it work?

MP: Yeah.

BL: What was that called?

MP: A spotting...

BL: A spotting glass. Where did you get that?

MP: To me it looked like it was homemade. Probably equipment, welding, you'd weld 'em. It was just a round pipe, a hunk of round pipe and then you'd weld the handle on it so you didn't lose it. I know I can remember seein' dad leaning off on the bridge lookin' down in the water with 'em and he'd get so excited he'd almost fall in the river. [laughs]

BL: So when you went fishing you had the spotting glass and a gig? Is that g-i-g?

MP: Yes.

BL: Were you catching large salmon then?

MP: Yeah. I have pictures of grandpa and Dad and us kids with salmon. They were probably about so long.

BL: About two feet?

MP: Two or three feet.

BL: Then did you eat those fresh or did you freeze or can the salmon?

MP: Fresh. I imagine my grandmother might've canned it because they would probably go back home. That was in touring car time.

BL: In touring cars?

MP: Yes.

BL: What do you mean?

MP: A touring car? That's just like a – do you know what a Model-A Ford is?

BL: I do.

MP: That's a touring car only this was a Chevy that Grandpa had. And the first car that Mom and Dad ever had was a Chevy, too. It was a two-seater, but open on both sides, canvas over the top.

BL: And that was your fishing car?

MP: That was everything.

BL: Do you recall anything else about fishing?

MP: Not then. Later. While I was growing up we used to go fishing a lot.

BL: You had mentioned briefly about the Indians fishing in this manner, using the gigs and also fishing in Catherine Creek. Were you friends?

MP: No, but you would speak to 'em, but not friends.

BL: Where did they live?

MP: They'd come from Pendleton area.

BL: From the Indian reservation?

MP: Yes.

BL: Do you recall that that was awkward in any way as a child, or was it acceptable to be...?

MP: Acceptable just like negroes were in La Grande. They were acceptable, too. We had a lot of foreigners that were in school. There were quite a few Japanese families and Chinese families in La Grande at one...[end tape]

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BL: The last thing you said there were Spanish people. Can you tell me more about the different populations living in La Grande?

MP: There were quite a few Japanese and they were connected with the railroad. They were maintenance people along the lines. They used to have two or three homes along the railroad track there about where the mill is now along through there just on either side of the railroad track. They were always maintenance people. The Chinese lived down on the lower end of Spruce that had a garden and they used to take their produce and deliver it door to door and peddle it.

BL: Did your family buy produce from them?

MP: No, 'cause we always had our own gardens. Then they had ice. The Young family that lived down by the river they had ice storage down there. They used to cut the ice off of the river every winter and put it in their storage...sawdust storage building and then they'd peddle ice then around La Grande. We bought ice from them. Then there were a lot of Chinese that lived where the old Safeway building used to be. There was a Chinytown at that area that went from where that Ford Motor...Ford tire company is across from the old Safeway store. That used to all be Chinese buildings all along through there.

BL: Did you visit there as a child?

MP: No. You weren't allowed to go in that district.

BL: You weren't allowed from your family or...?

MP: From the family.

BL: Were other members of the community allowed to be in Chinatown?

MP: If they wanted to go there. They worked in the restaurants and things here. Some of 'em had their own restaurants there on Jefferson and on Depot. In fact, there's supposed to be underground tunnels from some of those buildings.

BL: Still today?

MP: Yes.

BL: Where would those tunnels be then? Under Jefferson?

MP: Yes, along Jefferson and Depot where the Chinese restaurants used to be. It was just one of their ways of building, I guess, security. Just like Pendleton, you know, they have their own underground tunnels all over the place that were built by Chinese mainly.

BL: Were there many Chinese and Japanese children in your school?

MP: Not many, but we had some. We had Japanese and Ukomasa and Efakachakawa. Then we had... I know there was a Spanish...a boy in my class that was Spanish and several Italian children. But there was quite a few Spanish. There was Mary Sicobich and Mary Zupan. Zupan family... Used to be quite a few that lived

along Monroe Street. Used to be quite a few families lived along there that were Spanish.

BL: Were the non-white populations fairly segregated?

MP: No, they were just amongst... We had quite a few negroes, too, negro families that was in our school. But they just lived amongst the rest of us. In fact, I'd usually play with some of 'em, Bernice White. They lived just within a block of our home. There were quite a few negroes that lived around in La Grande. They were just amongst our school. They were accepted just like any other person. In fact, one of the teachers there was a big article in the paper here a while back, Ethel Torrance from Portland that passed away. I forget what her married name was. She ended up being a principal at Jefferson High School, I believe, in Portland. Made herself well-known.

BL: Tell me about living in La Grande as you got a little bit older and got into high school. What was it like to live here during that time?

MP: The depression years, that's what it was. I went through high school during the depression days. It was... It certainly isn't like it is today, that's for sure. But we had a lot of fun in high school. It was a real nice school and then it caught on fire, or was set on fire. I don't remember which, but I think it was set.

BL: Were you in school during the fire?

MP: No, it was always at night that we were in high school. We had to go around to different like the Mormon church, they had some of the classes there. We could still get into part of the school.

BL: What year was that?

MP: I'm not exactly sure what year it was.

BL: Were you an underclassman or older, do you think?

MP: It was either the freshman or sophomore year. Might've been my freshman.

BL: So many of the classes were diverted to places around town?

MP: Yes.

BL: How long did you have to be displaced?

MP: Oh, just that one year.

BL: For the whole year?

MP: No. Not for the whole year. That's kind of vague, but I do remember going through it.

BL: Since the kids had to be transported to these other places was that done by bus?

MP: We walked.

BL: You just walked?

MP: We didn't have busses. We walked.

BL: So you may have English in one building and then have to go to another building for math?

MP: Yeah. You didn't have to... We had part of our school. Part of the high school was available, but not all of it. It was just those area that we weren't allowed in until they got it cleaned up.

BL: Do you remember what that was like? Did you see the damage?

MP: I'm sure I did, but I don't remember it now.

BL: Were you allowed to be anywhere near that or was it roped off from the kids?

MP: I'm sure it was probably roped off from the kids.

BL: What did you do for fun when you were in high school?
MP: Sports was a major enjoyment for me.
BL: They were organized through the school?
MP: But it was just inner-class. We didn't travel to various towns like they do now. It was just between our classes that we had a competition.
BL: What sports did you play?
MP: Volleyball and basketball and track. That was about all we really had.
BL: So the freshmen competed with the sophomores and the juniors competed with the seniors and so on and so forth?
MP: You competed against them all.
BL: Did you have practices?
MP: Yes.
BL: After school?
MP: Yeah, you practiced after school.
BL: And were the games after school or on the weekends?
MP: No. Just mainly at school, during school, after school. The boys had out of La Grande competition. They played Pendleton and Baker, but not too far away.
BL: Were they bussed or were they driven by parents?
MP: If they were bussed I don't remember because we didn't have busses then. If it was it was a rented bus.
BL: Did you play any of the other rural high schools in the area?
MP: No.
BL: You had mentioned to me one time that there were names for those other schools. Maybe some competition going on?
MP: Oh, in grade school? There was always competition in grade school. Riveria was River Rats. I don't remember what we called Central, but we always considered them kind of uppity. They used to call us the people from the north side of town, north of the tracks. [laughs]
BL: And that was when you were at Greenwood?
MP: Yeah. If you lived down there afterwards you were still from the wrong side of the tracks. Just one of those things in school which after you get out of high school and you go to your class reunions I guess everyone mellows because they're just real happy to see one another even if you were from one side of the town or the other. It's just part of growing up.
BL: You mentioned some other activities that you would do perhaps during the winter in La Grande?
MP: Sleigh riding, you mean? In the winter, yes, we used to have a lot of fun sleigh riding.
BL: Was that a popular activity for the whole community?
MP: Lots, yeah. Lots of people used to take their kids and go sleigh riding. The streets are blocked off so you could sleigh ride in town, too. We used to go out past the park and out along the foothills towards Mt. Glen because there wasn't too much traffic and the snow would be over the top of the fences so you can dangle your rope from the back end of a car and ski along the side of the road. Then they also... One of the families had a toboggan and they pulled it along

behind a truck. Load everybody onto this toboggan and head out the road. It was a lot of fun.

BL: How many people would fit on the toboggan?

MP: About ten. The rest of you ride in the truck, on the back end of the truck.

BL: Did your dad do that with you?

MP: No, this was just kids in the neighborhood.

BL: So would you do this after school or would this be a weekend event?

MP: Weekend and usually nights.

BL: Wow. Was there a bonfire anywhere to warm up?

MP: No, you'd go back home, to one of the homes or other. Mom and them used to pull us with our own sled behind the car out along the Foothill Road. It was a real easy to travel to because there wasn't as much traffic as there is now. Even when our daughter was small we used to take she and one of her friends and pull her along the Foothill Road on the sled. But you don't dare do that anymore.

BL: Were there any other hotspots for sledding?

MP: There were several places in town. Eighth Street used to be a real good hill to ride on. Spring Street was the other one that we used because they're steep to start with.

BL: What about Deal's Canyon?

MP: Deal's Canyon that was a... The group I went up there with one time sleigh riding was sports, gals that were involved with sports. I think that they just decided they wanted to do it and so we went up. I figured how far we went up there it seemed like it took us forever to get down. I know that Faye Walker Weimer and I came down together. I was on the bottom and she was on top of me stretched out. I don't think either one of us caught our breath until we got to the bottom, which was down on the flats. It was exciting. I don't know how we ever made it. I think we were probably the only ones that made it clear to the bottom without spilling. [laughs]

BL: But then you had to walk back up to the top.

MP: You'd do it. We used to have a place at Grande Ronde River that we used to go to way, way up where there used to be an old mill. It was sawdust pile. When the snow got real deep on it we used to take inner tubes up there and slide down off of this sawdust pile. It was a lot of fun.

BL: Did you do any ice skating?

MP: Ice skating? Yes, down underneath the bridge, Spruce Street bridge. We used to go down there and my mother was usually involved in that, too. Whether she didn't trust us or what I don't know, but she used to go along with us quite a bit. We'd gather underneath the bridge and build a fire on the gravel because the gravel was kind of high on one side and down to the water. So we'd build a fire down there. There used to be a Mr. McFarland that lived down further on that foothill road toward Mt. Glen. He and his sons used to skate down there a lot so he would help us, teach us how to skate better. We had old-fashioned skates then. They were strapped around just like roller skates.

BL: Strapped onto your feet?

MP: Yeah, around your ankle.

BL: Did you have games that you played on the ice?

MP: Just Pop the Whip.

BL: Pop the Whip?

MP: Just a bunch, you've seen 'em, all lined up in a line and you head down and then all of a sudden you turn and then the rest of 'em would just whip around. We used to do that on Catherine Creek Slough, too. It wasn't a slough, it was regular Catherine Creek. It went down through the valley. Faye and I used to go with my brother and her brother and some of the other boys that liked to play hockey, make believe hockey, I guess, 'cause it was just sticks and tin cans. We used to want to play with 'em so they'd let us. They used to do that to us, too. They'd put us on the end of the line and whip us just so we'd go sailing out someplace and collapse. [laugh] But it was a lot of fun, fun that didn't cost anything.

BL: Do you recall... You mentioned before that this was during the depression years. Do you recall that that was a drastic change in the economy or was it gradual?

MP: Just gradual. Actually, our lives were much simpler, I think, when we were growing up than what they are now. There's so much activities, so many activities for everyone now that we didn't have so therefore money wasn't involved like it is now to become active in all those sports and things. What money was spent on our sports in school would probably be just for our initial clothing we'd use and our gym clothes.

BL: Where did you purchase those?

MP: Locally from a department store.

BL: Do you recall what department store you would have used?

MP: No. Most of the time it was Penny's or Faulk's. Faulk's department store or Penny's were the two most popular in our life anyway. Mainly because you...and Sears. Montgomery Wards used to be one of the best department stores here in La Grande, too.

BL: It sounds like you've spent most of your time using your imagination and playing outside.

MP: You made your own fun. Neighborhood fun. There was a tombstone place just about a block away from us and we used to play in their yard hide-and-go-seek. I know one time my brother head and he happened to be – why I would never know – but he used to have an old-fashioned buttonhook dangling in his mouth and he fell and hit one of those tombstones with his face and ran the buttonhook into his mouth. Mom had to take him to the doctor to get it taken out. [laugh] Stupid brother!

BL: Did you spend very much time in the shops downtown?

MP: No. It was a treat to get to go to town with your parents then. One real hot day I can remember going to town with my mother and went up into Faulk's department store and they had a hat department upstairs. We were up there and I guess I just was overheated or something and I fell over and knocked all their hats down. [laugh] It was too hot for me. Didn't have air-conditioning then either.

BL: Was there an ice cream place in the store?

MP: Not in Faulk's department. It was a clothing...

BL: It was just clothing?

MP: Clothing, yeah.

BL: No snack counter or anything?

MP: No. Payless used to have a fountain in their store at that time. Also Moon Drugstore they had a fountain.

BL: Moon Drugstore?

MP: Yes. That's where Claudson's sewing center is now on the corner of Adams and Fir.

BL: Adams and Fir?

MP: Yes. Used to be the Moon Drug. Then Wright's Drug was up toward the Liberty Theater. We had three movie places in La Grande, Granada and State and the Liberty.

BL: Did you go to the theater often?

MP: That was a treat to get to go and it only cost twenty-five cents. We'd stay for two shows to get our full money's work. It was only a treat and sometimes on Saturday.

BL: Do you recall what the theaters looked like?

MP: About the same. Plain old hard... At that time it was hard chairs. We didn't have soft chairs like they have now.

BL: Hard fold-up chairs?

MP: Yeah. Otherwise they're practically the same, the screen. Now there's, what, three screens in there where there used to be one!

BL: Do you recall what movies you saw?

MP: No, not really.

BL: So it was always a double-show?

MP: Now, it wasn't a double-show. We would just stay and see it twice.

BL: So it was the same movie, but you saw it twice?

MP: Yes.

BL: Did they serve refreshments in there?

MP: Sometimes your parents would call you out, have them call you, get you out of there.

BL: Did you take in your own refreshments or did you just do without?

MP: No, we didn't have refreshments. It wasn't necessary. Just getting to go to the show was joy enough. [recording paused] ...probably high school. When did that change? The bakery, the Dutch bakery was opened by H__ L__. He was the one that had the bakery, baked real good goodies.

BL: Was that a favorite place to go for a treat?

MP: Yes. And they also had ice cream. I have a picture of it.

BL: What a neat building! Where was that located?

MP: You know where the Credit Bureau is now, don't you? There in that triangle and that great big tall fir tree was there in the corner. Then the ground was...he built up a rock wall. That used to be a fish pond and then the bakery sat right behind it.

BL: What was the bakery like on the inside?

MP: They had one or two tables or so in there and then a counter. Then all their baking and stuff was done behind...

BL: Was anything in that __ upstairs?

MP: No.

BL: It was just for decoration?

MP: Yeah.

BL: The window in the front of the bakery was that for display?
MP: Display. You can see there's something in it.
BL: It looks like a cake.
MP: Did you frequent the bakery?
BL: No, not a lot. We had no money as kids. I found some pictures I thought you might want to look at. [recording stopped]

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BL: Hello again.
MP: Hello there.
BL: We were talking about some of the fun things that you liked to do in La Grande when you were growing up and do you think you'd like to tell me some more about that today?
MP: Let's see __ I didn't mention about when we were smaller and we used to play in the mill yard out behind the house. It used to have a __ back there, pond, and we used to go back there and catch pollywogs. That was one of our pastimes. It was fun to watch 'em.
BL: Did you keep them in the house?
MP: Keep them in a jar for while, yeah, in baby jars.
BL: That sounds like fun.
MP: Then we used to play hide-and-seek amongst the __ piles , too.
BL: Amongst the what?
MP: Piles, __ piles. We called 'em __ piles, but they were piles of lumber.
BL: Why did you call them __ piles?
MP: Just a name.
BL: Did you ___?
MP: There's lots of rocks over there on the ground, lots of rocks in that area 'cause the river used to run through that area, a long time ago the riverbed, and then they moved it and kept moving it down farther. Anyway, lots of rocks in that area. Just __ I guess.
BL: What were some of the other things that you did in the area?
MP: We used to hike up Rooster Peak, Devil's Fly. A lot of people went up it. My mother went up it sometime and she got up there better than I did. Up at the very top of it there was a divide and Mother wanted to go up to the right side and I wanted to go to the left. Going up I wasn't watching and here was this division between Mama and I. She had to go back down, slide down, and get around the edge and go back up on the left side so she could get a hold of my hand and pull me up by it. It was quite exciting. We only did it once. That was enough. They finally put a __ no one was supposed to try to climb it because there were some that fell. They'd get up there quite a ways and then just fall. Of course if you started sliding you just slid.
BL: Were there snakes up there?
MP: No. None that I know of anyway. But that was a lot of fun, excitement. I don't know if it was fun, but it was some of the time, I guess. Kind of scary, too. Then we used to hike into Morgan Lake. One way to get there was to go up Deal's

Canyon, a canyon up here, and then go across the top and over to Morgan Lake. I only did that once. It took too long for me, I preferred the road. [laugh]

BL: How long would that take you?

MP: Oh, two or three hours to make it over there.

BL: That road is quite steep, though. It's not an easy hike up the road.

MP: No, it isn't. We did it when we were younger. You almost need a pickup, you know, to really get up there it seems. Too bad a road for cars, I think.

BL: So what did you do once you got up to the top?

MP: Just fooled around at the time. When we went up Deal's Canyon across we took our friend ___ along and I had my dog, too, of course. It was just something to do to kill time and enjoy, just enjoy being up in the mountains.

BL: Sounds like fun.

MP: I think we usually had something to eat, too, ___ to hike. I've been up there several times, but that's the time I hiked up there up the road we just went up for the day just to hike. Then we had snacks up there before we turned around and came back.

BL: You had a lot of roller skating adventures, too, didn't you?

MP: We used to roller skate down to Riverside Park. A group of us would go down there in the evenings and build up a big bonfire in the fireplace and roller skate. Mother went along with us several times, too. She liked to roller skate. She was with us the time when we roller skated to Island City and back.

BL: That's quite a long ways?

MP: Yes, but during that time there wasn't traffic at night like there is now. You wouldn't dare do anything like that anymore around La Grande. But at that time I don't think we... I don't remember even meeting a car going or coming.

BL: Were there sidewalks?

MP: No. You mean going out to Island City?

BL: Yes.

MP: No. There was just a two-lane where what is it now, five-lanes?

BL: You were just on the highway?

MP: Yes. Roller skate in the highway. It was smoother then. You didn't have the traffic then like you do know. I don't think roller skating would be too much fun on the streets nowadays because they're too grooved from traffic.

BL: They're awfully rough. Did you do any swimming?

MP: We'd go swimming also in the river mainly. We didn't have the money to go to the pool. There used to be a swimming pool across the viaduct on Second Street, just at the end of the viaduct on the west side of it. There was Crystal Plunge.

BL: Crystal Plunge?

MP: Yes. It was quite a popular swimming place, really. We used to get to go there once in a while when we could afford it.

BL: Was that an outdoor swimming pool?

MP: Yes. ___ I don't know what ever happened, but it wasn't there too many years, but it was there for quite a while. Then we would swim once in a while over at Cove in the swimming pool, but most of our swimming was done in the river or over at Grandmother's in the ditch. [laugh]

BL: Where were the popular river swimming holes?

MP: One was the Orodell bridge, underneath Orodell bridge, and the other one was up underneath the bridge at Perry. We preferred the one up at Perry because the one at Orodell if you didn't keep your legs goin' the eels would come up and try to attach to your legs. [laugh] I didn't like that. They wouldn't hurt you or anything seriously, you know. But they did have eels in the one there at Orodell bridge.

BL: What river was that?

MP: Grande Ronde River.

BL: And that's the same river that flows under the Perry bridge?

MP: Yes. Same river. It comes down from Starkey and winds around and down past Perry and through La Grande and through Island City and on out through the valley to Elgin until it finally meets up with the Wallowa River out of ___.

BL: Did a lot of kids use the swimming hole?

MP: Quite a few. I think it's still popular. The one up at Perry I think is still popular. Then there's one up at what we called the N. K. West ranch up along the Grande Ronde River after you turn to go to Starkey. There was a very popular one up there where you could really dive into it. It was big enough you could dive into it. I think it's probably the only one that's really popular now.

BL: Would you ever ride the train?

MP: I had the opportunity once to go on the engine. It was a freight train and some friend of my mother and dad was an engineer and he made arrangements for us to sneak on the backside of the engine just before it snuck out of the yard. I think there was a friend of my family that had a son that was about my age but he wanted to go too. His step-father was an engineer also on the road so we felt pretty secure getting a chance to go. So they snuck us on and hid us until the engine went out and then we got to sit there and act like we were engineers.

BL: What was that like?

MP: ___ train. Oh, it was a thrill! Dirty, but a thrill.

BL: Why was it so dirty?

MP: Just hanging out the windows to see what was coming and where...and then you'd always want to look back and see the train coming along behind you. When you did that then you got cinders and all the smoke. It wasn't very clean. So we were sort of grimy when we got off and had our mothers meet us.

BL: These were coal engines on the train?

MP: I'm not positive. Can't remember now if that was a coal burner or an oil burner. It was one or the other. Big O'Malleys.

BL: Do you recall any other events that have to do with a train?

MP: Used to drive the Sumpter Valley train over to John Day. It was one that you could run from one end of it to the other 'cause you knew everybody that was on it, the conductor, Tony, I still remember his first name, but not his last. We had boarded at Baker and then ride it over to Prairie City. Grandmother would always meet us there at the depot to take us on down to the ranch. It was always fun. We went over there one time...any time I took my dog along. The Sumpter Valley...going over the mountains and you get about halfway over there and then they'd have to back up on the ___ and load up the ___ again so they could keep the power. While they were loading up my dog jumped off into the snow bank and

sunk clear out of sight. I had to get down there and get him back onto the train. It was a character. But it was fun riding it because you could run from one end to the other. The conductor would even take you. He was real fun. Otherwise it was kind of a boring trip for kids. Unless your mother made you were supposed to. But normally there wasn't many people on there so you could do whatever you wanted to.

BL: Could you get up and move around?

MP: Yeah. You could walk around, but it's usually just a one passenger car and a baggage car and then the engine. Sometimes they might have more than one car or they might have more than one mail car, too. It'd just depend on the amount of business that they had going over. It was fun. They finally took it off and just had a regular ___ automobile ___ kind of truck-like thing. I guess you would call it like van is today, one of the larger ones.

BL: And that was carrying mail?

MP: The van...car? It carried passengers and mail, mainly mail. But they always had room for at least two or three passengers, something like that. We had to... I remember riding that once going over to my grandpa's funeral. My mother was already over there so my cousin and I rode over on it.

BL: Were there any train wrecks in this area?

MP: Lots of train wrecks. I would say at least...not...I shouldn't say lots, but, yes, there were several train wrecks with coal and oil burning engines. Why, I wouldn't know, but they did have 'em. It could've been... I don't know, it could've been maybe tracks or something like that would cause them. I don't remember the exact reason except for the one that was a head-on wreck up towards Telocaset between here and North Powder. It usually was when they were climbing.

BL: Did you see that wreck?

MP: Yes. We went up and saw it. We had to walk quite a little ways across to the place...area, but we did get to go over there to where it was.

BL: Do you remember when that occurred?

MP: In the '30s.

BL: And your father wasn't working on that railroad or working for the railroad during that wreck?

MP: Yes, he was. That's probably why we knew that it was up there. Then they used to have 'em up here between La Grande and Pendleton, too, but we didn't get to go to those. We didn't go up near those. It was usually in the mountains and a little harder area to get to. But the one up there was a lot easier to get to.

BL: What was it like to see that?

MP: It was scary. That one was on the bridge. It looked like maybe the bridge might have...maybe the bridge had given away or something, maybe high water or something 'cause there was one lying on it.

BL: Was anyone injured?

MP: I don't remember. I'm pretty sure that somebody...yes, I do remember that some...once in a while there were some killed, yeah. They weren't too lucky. I suppose ___.

BL: Were you able to get pretty close to the wreckage?

MP: You could go as close as you dared get without getting in the way of the machines, the wrecker machine that was up there to pull everything back up. You didn't dare get too close or they'd probably 've told you to get out.

BL: Were there a lot of people from the community watching them try to clean up?

MP: There were quite a few people that went out there.

BL: Was you dad involved in this wreck at all?

MP: He just did repairing and help 'em tear 'em up after they got back into the yard, into the roundhouse. Sometimes they were destroyed so much to be much good. ___ there might. [recording interruption] ...we were in high school. Dancing? Saturday night dances were something that we gals looked forward to 'cause in those days you wore formals when you went to dances. My mother used to make Faye Walker Wiemer dresses alike. She and her brother offered – their last name was Walker and my brother-in-law's folks were Walkers so we used to say we were brother and sisters, but we were no relation at all. At a lot of people fooled, though, all through high school. [laughs] They were both ahead of my brother and I in high school. Mother always made us dresses alike for many, many years. We used to go to... The Eagles Lodge used to be down beside the Elks Lodge, they had a building right next to the Elks Lodge. They had dances on Saturday night and Faye and Alfred's parents belonged to the Eagles Lodge so we got to go there to their dances. The main place was the Zuber Hall. That was down on Washington in back of the Sacagawea Hotel annex. That was the big dance hall in this valley. It was called the Zuber Hall.

BL: Do you know where it got its name?

MP: It's named after the people that ran it. There was a man and woman and they used to always be there. He took tickets and she was in the hat and coat room.

BL: This was a formal affair?

MP: No, not especially.

BL: No?

MP: No. You could go in just street clothes or whatever. They had formal dances there, yes, but mostly Saturday night dances were just nice clothes, dresses. You never saw girls in slacks and stuff.

BL: Was there an age requirement?

MP: If you were very young you had to be attended by your parent. A lot of parents came and sat in the balcony. There used to balcony around it on three sides. You could sit up there in the balcony and watch.

BL: What was the dance floor like?

MP: It was really smooth, nice floor and benches all around that you could sit on and restrooms. Then up in one corner was where the band played and it was a local band.

BL: What kind of music did they play?

MP: Dick Lindsey had a band. There were quite a few. Must've been five or six maybe, or more, that played with him. He also played for the old-time dances on Thursday nights, too. He had an old-time dances for our parents. [laugh] But that's where I used to go with my parents when we were older. We could go and watch 'em. At that time young girls they could dance together on the floor amongst the parents. They didn't mind.

BL: Did they serve food at the Zuber Hall?
MP: No.
BL: Drinks?
MP: No. Didn't need 'em. We just enjoyed dancing.
BL: Did they charge admission?
MP: Definitely. I don't remember now, but it wasn't the fee that you have to pay now, of course. It was there for many, many years. Really a nice dance hall. I hated to see them close it down.
BL: When did they close it down?
MP: I'm not positive of the date now. I'm not positive.
BL: Were there any other dancing experiences that you had in La Grande?
MP: No, just those two places. And kitchen ___. [laugh]
BL: Kitchen ___?
MP: We'd call it Kitchen ___. It was out at Imbler sometimes out at Blue Mountain Grange and they'd have box socials. You'd take boxes, you know your lunch, fix a lunch and put it in a basket or a box and take it. They made a little bit extra money for the groups, too. Men would bid on the boxes or the baskets. They still do that, the square dance bunch here in La Grande. They had one here just like Saturday night where they bid on the baskets or whatever they were brought in, the lunches were brought in.
BL: Why did you call 'em Kitchen ___?
MP: That was more or less...originally they used to be ___ in homes. People that had larger homes they would get a bunch of 'em and dance so they called 'em Kitchen ___ 'cause it was hot. To get that many bodies swinging around. It's just what we ended up calling 'em. It probably wasn't the proper name. When I was younger I think used to be held in...it was held in one of the halls out there, lodge halls, I think. Usually it was in the fall around harvest time.
BL: You mentioned once that you danced at a hotel? Was that a school activity that you danced?
MP: Oh, you mean the ___ banquet?
BL: No, where you danced the minuet?
MP: Oh, that. That was in grade school down at Greenwood.
BL: Can you tell me more about that.
MP: Yes. Our whole class was involved in it. We learned to do the minuet and we had costumes with white hair and everything, cotton hair. We really thought we were something. We were invited to put on this minuet down at the La Grande Hotel, which was where the old Safeway store used to be on the corner of Adams and Fourth. It was just super. When you walked into the place, the lounge or whatever you call the entrance of the hotel, the lounge was all draped, the drapes were all red velvet and the furniture was red velvet. I think the carpet was even red sculptured, you know. Then upstairs in the hallway where we were dancing the drapes were all red velvet, too. It was just plush.
BL: Did they have chandeliers?
MP: Yes, they had chandeliers. But it was a beautiful hotel.
BL: That was the La Grande Hotel?
MP: Yes.

BL: Tell me more about the Jolly Beggar Burns celebration. What is that?
MP: It was just a group of Scotch people that lived here in La Grande that decided to celebrate the ___ of Robert Burns, a famous poet from Scotland. They celebrate it in various places all over the country. Baker used to celebrate it. I know La Grande used to have it. It's supposed to be around January 25th, which is his birth date. Just a bunch of them got together and they invited anyone who was interested. It was open to the public if they were interested. It was mainly to get the Scotch people to come.
BL: Where was this event held?
MP: In the Sacagawea Inn. It was upstairs in the dance hall is where they set it up. There were normally quite a few people there.
BL: Did they serve dinner?
MP: Yes, they served dinner. They had a program. Usually they had a piper. They always had a piper because one of the dishes they brought in was called haggis. It was a special dish for the Scotch people. It had to be piped in because it was so special.
BL: Can you tell me more about that? What did it taste like?
MP: It just tasted like a pudding to me. It didn't have a ___ taste of any.
BL: Was it sweet like a dessert?
MP: Sort of in between, a little. It was molded. It was cooked in a klute.
BL: Cooked in what?
MP: Cooked in the klute.
BL: What is a klute?
MP: It's a...[end tape]

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BL: It was a large organization, you said?
MP: They had a good attendance usually. One of 'em you can see the number, quite a few people. That was...
BL: What was it like at the Sacagawea Hotel?
MP: It was a very pretty hotel. You went into the lobby, I guess I should say, and then it had a big winding stairway that went up one side of the lobby up to the upstairs. It was all marble, the stairs were all marble. It was pretty. Coffee shop off to the side of it and dining. Then they had a dining... They had places for people to dine there, too, I think, you know, more than what they had ___. Then at the backside of the lobby they had another area that was quite large and it was more like...places you could eat in there, too, I guess. I wasn't familiar with that section, but later on the American Legion that's where they had a hall there and they met there. They had that section of the lobby was for a meeting area. Then upstairs was the big dance hall and then they had a small hall also off to the side.
BL: Do you recall the dishes from the hotel?
MP: Yes. I have some here. I have one dish up there and I have...[recording paused]
BL: Can you describe or explain some of the items on the menu?
MP: Yes. I can try to tell you anyway as much as I know not being a thoroughbred Scotchman, just part. The menu consisted of toast and ___ was a little Scotch

frank, Scotch whiskey. Haggis was piped in, the main dish. They also had a toast to it, toast with the _____. See we toast...[laugh] And ___ is another we toast and b___ was their meat and I'm trying to remember what kind of meet it was. B___ was their meat dish. Hash patties was potatoes and buttered kale was kale and kale was a vegetable, a regular vegetable. The hashed meats was turnips and then, of course, another _____. And rolled scones that was your bread and oat cakes was also like a bread only they were a little coarser. Trim___ was their dessert and trifle was a like a pudding. They still make trifle, I think a lot of people do. It's made in a round kind of tall bowl and it's layered with cake and fruit and jello and stuff like that. And then fruit cake and shortbread. Fruit cake was usually the dark fruit cake with fruit, candied fruit and things in it. Shortbread is the Scotch shortbread and that's just made out of flour, sugar and butter and very good. We make it all the time. It's like a cookie. And then tea and coffee, of course.

BL: How long did the celebration go on in La Grande?

MP: It started in '35. It only lasted I would say probably about four years before it fell apart. The one in Baker I don't think it lasted that long because the Scotch people different ones coming and going and then war came along so there was nothing like that hardly done around anyplace, I don't think, during the war time.

BL: After the first year was your family looking forward to this celebration?

MP: You always looked forward to it. Nan Thornburg she was more or less instigator of it. Mrs. Neil that used to be in La Grande here she and her husband ran a nursery up on Tenth or Eleventh Street. It was down below the college hill. I think you're familiar with that area down below the hill. You know where that road winds up to the back end of the college? It used to be right down in that area below that hill. It was quite a wooded area. There's evidence of it a lot of it around that big, white, two-story house over to the left that used to be called... J.C. Penny store manager lived there. I can't think of his name right now. Neil's ran that nursery and they were both Scotch people. He was a brick mason and he helped build the Westminster Hotel in Vancouver, B.C. You've probably heard of it. Where they have high tea. She and Nan Thornburg were the main ones that started this Jolly Beggar Burns banquet here in La Grande. Of course Dad being a Scotch was in on it, too, with their insistence, and their husbands. I think McKenzie, a farmer out in the Imbler area, he was one of the members and one of the big helpers, too. Those were the main ones here in La Grande that were behind it. W___ Wilkins, a real estate man, he lived to go to 'em, too. He was one of the biggest wee _____. [laughs]

BL: It sounds like it was a lot of fun.

MP: They did have fun. It sounded like... He said what he'd like was the wee nippies and near nippies. [laughs] [recording stopped]

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BL: ...tell me some about the high school you attended in La Grande?

MP: I could tell you a little bit about it. It wasn't like it is today, I'm sure. Our high school had two floors and a basement. In the basement was our study hall and library and some classrooms were down there also. The principal's office was in

- the basement. What I call the basement was ground level. It wasn't down under. Then there were two stories above. In the center of the basement they had a small gym and that was where we held our gym classes and games with different classes, basketball and volleyball and everything and tumbling was there and was held there in the basement.
- BL: Was there a baseball field and a football field?
- MP: We had the same field that they have now at the present school, the middle school. That field was also our field. That was where the boys had their football games against other schools. The girls used to play against each class. We didn't go from...have competitions between schools from out of town for the girls, it was just the boys.
- BL: How did you feel about that?
- MP: It was nothing. It was just one of those things. That was all there was and you didn't expect anything more. You accepted it. I guess it was just the way we were brought up, that you accepted what you had and didn't even think about not being the same as other schools, which they weren't probably in those days because we didn't have competition with other towns like the boys. But we always enjoyed watching their games. I went out of town once or twice. During my high school games I think I attended some games at Baker and then over at Pendleton. It was kind of hard to travel to get to those things.
- BL: So when you did get to those events did you travel with friends or would your parents take you?
- MP: Parents usually take you or a friend. I know my mother was with me up at Baker at the one that we had up there. Friends took us over to Pendleton to the one that I went to over there.
- BL: How important were social events at the school during that time?
- MP: Not as important as they are considered now. It was just part of the school. I don't know. I think there's just too much pressure put on sports nowadays instead of sticking to your curriculum.
- BL: Was there a lot of community support?
- MP: Oh, to a certain extent. I think the parents and the community supported them there. Not like they have now today because I think parents are more into it now. In fact, I think a lot of 'em are probably go overboard. My own personal opinion.
- BL: Perhaps the parents were not available to come them, not as available with work on the farm or work on the railroad?
- MP: I don't think parents were as involved in the schools as they are now. Today you find parents helping in the classrooms and helping with reading and different things like that where they were never in the school like that before. I just don't remember parents being involved like they are now.
- BL: Can you say more about the physical building, the high school itself? You were talking about the second floor.
- MP: Mainly the second floor was just all classrooms. Then over in the building next to it – it was an enclosed walkway between the two so you didn't have to go outdoors to get into the other building. They had an enclosed walkway, overhead walkway going over to the other building. That's where they had the girls – some boys took it also – domestic arts, which was cooking, and then domestic science,

which was sewing. And then in the basement, or down on the first floor, of that building was where the boys had...what did they call that...where they built things out of wood.

BL: A woodworking?

MP: Yeah. I don't remember the correct name for it, but I know they did some beautiful work.

BL: Did they also have auto mechanic classes available?

MP: Not that I remember. It was mainly just the woodworking shop. Shop is what I think it was called.

BL: Was there anything on the third floor?

MP: They hadn't... Just classes. Classes and kind of an auditorium was on that.

BL: Was there a theater in the high school?

MP: Just the auditorium.

BL: Would that be the auditorium?

MP: Yes.

BL: So it was more of a multi-purpose room?

MP: Yes. Music room. It was for a music room also. ___ Lenny was the music director at that time.

BL: Were you involved in music?

MP: No, I wasn't. I was forced. I should've been involved in music, more to the point.

BL: Were there many students who did participate in more or the arts, or do you think as a whole the school was more involved in athletics?

MP: It was probably about half and half. It wasn't overly done on either like they have... It seems like it's more involved in sports this day, to me anyway. I think it was pretty evenly divided amongst the sports and the music department. I think it was more just evenly divided. Also then during the...those were depression days, too, so things weren't as easily to obtain. Some of those kids went to school half a day and then did on-the-job training downtown.

BL: Were you involved in any programs like that?

MP: No. I wasn't, but my brother was. He went to school in the morning and then went down to the Radio Music Supply store in the afternoons and on weekends.

BL: So he was getting paid for that work?

MP: Yes.

BL: But it was...

MP: Minimal. But it was an experience that he got from it that was more important because it was in the radio, repairing radios and things like that which helped him because he ended up building his own ham station at home. Then when he went into the service that's where they put him was into the Navy in the radio department. He was an instructor in radio and whatever he did at that time. So it all came in handy. They even sent him to school at Oklahoma ___ college for one year while he was stationed in the Navy to learn more about it. That was his profession then eventually. It did turn out the same as going to college to secure a degree in something.

BL: When did you graduate from high school?

MP: In 1937. Both of us, my brother and I both.

BL: Graduated in the same class?
MP: Yes.
BL: What were your plans?
MP: To be a nurse, I guess, at that time, 'cause I went into nurses' training the following fall. I was in nurses' training for two years.
BL: That was in Baker?
MP: Yes.
BL: So when you got back to La Grande two years later did you work at the hospital?
MP: I worked at St. Joe's Hospital then for about two years.
BL: Can you tell me more about that?
MP: It was fun. Sister... It was the sisters' hospital at that time, St. Joseph's Hospital over there where the building is, now the St. Joseph Building. That used to be the hospital at that time. Sister Patrick used to be the head sister at Baker when I was up there. In the meantime she had been transferred down here to help this hospital. When she found out I was back in La Grande she hired me to come to work up there. So that's where I landed.
BL: What were your responsibilities?
MP: Just a regular nurse. They had me on the second floor most of the time taking care of the patients, helping take care of the patients.
BL: What kind of patients did you have at that time on the second floor?
MP: It was medical on the second floor and surgery. One end of the hall was medical and one end was surgery. Then there was a first floor too which was mainly men on the first floor at that time. Once in a while they'd have a man up on the second floor, but most of the time the men were on the first floor and the women were on the second floor and the babies on the third floor.
BL: Do you know anything more about that separation of gender? What was the purpose of it?
MP: No, not really. It was just natural for us anyway. I thought nothing of it.
BL: So the babies were born on the second floor also?
MP: No, third. It was all... The surgery was in the one end of the building and then of course where they delivered 'em was on that...all on one end of the building and in the rooms. A nursing station was on the rest of the building on the third floor.
BL: How large of a staff was required at St. Joseph's during that time?
MP: There was always a sister on the floor supervising. Then there were usually two or three nurses and an aide.
BL: Do you know overall how large the staff was?
MP: You did most of the work. Up here they had the nurses, but then they also had nurses' aides up here that did the bathing and all. St. Joe's at that time you did it all.
BL: You did all of the bathing and delivering meals?
MP: Yes.
BL: Did you have any volunteers that helped?
MP: No.
BL: I know they have the Pink Ladies now, but they didn't...?
MP: They had a gift shop on the first floor, but they weren't out on the floors doing any of the work like delivering newspapers and things like that or flowers and the

juice cart like they have up here. No, they didn't have that over at St. Joe's at that time. They probably would've eventually.

BL: What kind of a shift did you work?

MP: Ten hour.

BL: Ten hours?

MP: Two hours off. You were there for twelve hours, but you had two hours off for rest.

BL: Two consecutive hours?

MP: Yes.

BL: So what did you do during your time off? Did you have to stay in the hospital or could you come home and rest?

MP: At night... I was on nights quite a bit to begin with. I just went into one of the rooms and got in a chair and went to sleep.

BL: Can you walk me through a typical day in the hospital?

MP: A typical day? It was just bathing... When you went on shift first you had to feed 'em, get their trays out, depends on your shift of course. Normally we were there...went on shift at seven-thirty and you fed 'em their breakfast and then put their trays back into the kitchen to go down to the basement. Then you did the bathing and cleaning up every room and the beds, changing the sheets and all. Then when the doctors came around you went with them to their patients to see what their new medications were. Then you headed to the chart room to get all this down. Then if there were any special things that the doctors ordered you'd have to do that. Then eventually there came lunch and then you had to take their trays out to the patients and then go back later and pick 'em up. In the afternoon it was about the same and then our shift usually went off and then the other shift came on.

BL: Do you recall what the injuries were... If you saw injuries or different cases with a patient? I guess what I'm trying to say is living in this area, in a rural are, did you ever see things kind of repeated over and over, a certain type of injury or a certain type of illness that maybe you wouldn't see in another location?

MP: No, not necessarily. Not because of the area.

BL: None of the logging community or farming community would you see more incidents related to those kinds of work?

MP: No. Accident wise there weren't a lot like that. It was mainly surgeries, different types of surgeries. There might be some accidents, but most of 'em would be from car accidents or something like that. I couldn't say that there was anything that was due to the area. Baker, I think, used to...a long, long time ago used to get in some accidents from the mines, but they were closer to the...Baker was closer to the mining area than La Grande.

BL: So you stayed at St. Joe's for two years?

MP: About two years and then the war broke out. Before that, though, I worked for them for two years and then Dr. Gillstrap, one of the doctors at that time, needed a nurse in his office and he doubled my salary so I went down there, naturally. [laughs] Worked for him for... I guess I worked for him for about the same length of time and then the war...

BL: Was he a general physician or did he have a specialty?

MP: No, he was just general. Most of 'em were all general at that time. They did it all. They did surgery and medical both.

BL: Did he do any house calls?

MP: Yeah.

BL: Did you have to go with him on the house calls?

MP: Oh no. They didn't do a lot of house calls. Doctors during, oh, from the time I was born until...I don't know when they got to that point where they refused house calls. They used to all do them, but not to a great extent, but they would in emergencies where someone was just too sick to come in they would go to their homes.

BL: So your routine changed, I would imagine, going to a doctor's office setting. You no longer had the daily care of patients.

MP: No. Just admitting them and keeping records and doing urinalysis and x-rays and keeping everything sterile, instruments that the doctor might use in the office. It was less work.

BL: And more money!

MP: Right. That was the main thing. Then I left him and went to work for the railroad. The railroad needed more help over there and they put on a ladies crew. It wasn't what I would call a very fancy job, but it paid a lot more money. You were washing engines, keeping them shiny. There was about twelve, I guess, ladies that went to work over there for that job. Then two of us when that crew after we'd been there for a while were offered work in the offices so we went to work as secretary then in the railroad during the war. She stayed with the roundhouse department in the office down there. I was there for quite a while and then they opened up a new office down the rip track and so I went up there to that one and stayed until they abolished __ job.

BL: Can you tell me what the roundhouse was?

MP: Roundhouse? It was just kind of a half-circle, you might say, and then the turntable was out in front of the half-circle so it was all round. It was called the roundhouse and it had stalls all the way around. The roundhouse stalls where they would run the engines in over the pits so they could be worked on underneath or up above, either one.

BL: And so it had an office where you worked?

MP: They had an office, but it was just outside. It was a separate little building out in front of the roundhouse where the office was. They had three steno clerks in there.

BL: What's the responsibility of a steno clerk?

MP: Mainly just... During the way they had lots of investigations when anything happened on the railroad, accidents or broke down. Then they'd have a big investigation because they were trying to keep the road running to ship equipment back and forth from one end of the country to the other. It was important to keep them rolling and so they would have a big investigation and they'd have to take all that investigation down and type it up and send it into the main office in Portland, Albina. So they just did work like that. Then you kept track of the time also, the hours of each employee for them. That had to be sent in, too, daily.

Called it in. To Albina. Or else they would call you so you could get it there quick enough.

BL: You also mentioned the rip track office. How was that different from the roundhouse? I guess start by telling me what a rip track is?

MP: Rip track was where they repair the box cars and anything that needed repaired was sent down there and then they also painted 'em when they needed to be repainted. They had a line there that they'd run 'em into and the men painted them. I guess that's why they called it the rip track, they tore 'em up and rebuilt 'em. I was the only one down there along with the... Our office down there had the main car foreman and then we had two men that were your boss so you had two to answer to.

BL: What was that like switching from nursing to the railroad?

MP: Kind of exciting. Different. Kind of scary, too, because all I'd had had been shorthand and typing in high school, but it came in handy.

BL: I want to back up just a little bit to the first job at the railroad the engines. You said there was a crew of twelve?

MP: Yes.

BL: Can you tell me more about what that entailed?

MP: Mainly just going out and washing the wheels, you know how they get kind of dirty and greasy and grimy or something. You had to wash those wheels to make 'em shiny.

BL: With regular soap and water?

MP: No. They had a cleaner type thing that you used and rags, lots of rags.

BL: Did you have gloves and coveralls? What kind of uniform did you have to wear?

MP: I've probably got a picture of it someplace, maybe, amongst this junk. Yeah, right there. It was a dirty job.

BL: I bet it was.

MP: But at that time you got good wages. This one here was our foreman, this one over here.

BL: And where are you?

MP: This is me. This was a lady... a friend of my mother and dad's and she was workin' there, too, so we worked together. They chose the two of us to clean up the engine that was taking the president through. So we had to shine it all up. That was really neat.

BL: How long did you do that?

MP: It seemed like I was always working a couple years and movin' on, but that's the way the world was movin'. I worked there probably a couple of years, too, and then that was abolished. When they abolished 'em you had to either quit or else go to wherever they wanted you to go. They wanted me to go to Portland and I didn't want to go so I quit.

BL: So when they abolished the job then nobody washed the engines? They thought it wasn't necessary anymore?

MP: Apparently not. It was the end of the war, you know.

BL: So maybe they just didn't have the money anymore to pay for it.

MP: Wasn't as important. They probably still had investigations, you know, from the derailments and things like that or if someone let a flat wheel go through, you've

heard ‘em, they do it yet, bang, bang, bang when the train’s running along the track? That’s a flat wheel ‘caused from the brakes grinding ‘em flat. You weren’t supposed to let ‘em have those because they figured that eventually that might cause an accident, a derailment.

BL: So by keeping all of that equipment clean you could prevent accidents.

MP: Our job was keeping them clean wasn’t pertaining to accidents especially, it was just to keep ‘em lookin nice. I don’t know why they ever thought it because I didn’t think it was that important anyway. It wasn’t, but it was just one of those things that came up during the war.

BL: Did your group have a name or even a nickname that you went by?

MP: No. It might have had lots of nicknames from people. [laugh] But, no, we were just women railroaders. I don’t remember any particular name. Some of ‘em...[end tape]

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MP: ...they could’ve changed clothes more often.

BL: Solid grease is what you were saying before the tape was over. Hard to keep the uniforms clean.

MP: A lot of the men were the same way.

BL: And I see that you kept your hair covered, most of you.

MP: Yeah. You kept your head... You were supposed to keep your head covered with a bandana and wear gloves.

BL: Did you wear any masks?

MP: No.

BL: Any protection for your eyes or anything like that?

MP: We really weren’t around anything dangerous where we would need anything like that. Some of us, too, worked...if we weren’t busy out on the engines – a lot of the times they didn’t have engines in where you could wash their wheels, the gears – they would have you working in the back shop. The back shop was where they turned rods and made parts that they needed. It was the mechanical end of it. They had machines back there, lathes that was cut the things down and have all kinds of little metal shavings. Some of us worked in the back shop. I was in there quite a bit jus sweeping, keeping the shavings swept up from around those machines.

BL: Did the men give you any hassle?

MP: Yeah, there were some that would give you a bad time. I got along pretty good. Most of us got along pretty good, but there were some of ‘em, of course, that liked to throw their weight around a little bit. But my dad worked down there, too, you know, so I had protection. [laugh] They knew it so they didn’t bother me much.

BL: After the railroad what kind of work did you do?

MP: I went to work then for the government. It was a civil service job in veterans contact office.

BL: Was this an office position?

MP: Yes. Still clerical.

BL: Did you continue doing clerical work at that time?

MP: That was just typing and taking shorthand and typing and filing out forms. As you well know, the government has nothing but forms to fill out for any type of job. So that's what I did then. I worked there for, gosh, I must've been in the contact office for a year or two. Then they abolished the contact office and I transferred up to the education and training office at the college, it was up there.

BL: In what building?

MP: In the main building.

BL: Inlow Hall?

MP: Inlow Hall, yes. That was a good job. You had...there's two sections of it. One half of the office was education and the other side was a training. I had two fellows that I worked for over on the training side. That was on-the-job training for the veterans when they came home. The other was the ones that were going to go onto school, the educational side. That was a real good job and a real good deal for the veterans. The contact office was just contacting veterans to see if they needed help in any way, steering them in the right direction to securing whatever they need like loans for homes or dental work, medical work, most anything like that. It was interesting.

BL: What did you do next?

MP: I worked up at the college then for a couple years or so until they abolished that job and I would have had to have gone over to Bend to continue working for the Veterans Administration. But I had married then about six months or so prior to that time.

BL: What was that date?

MP: July 22, 1948.

BL: So you got married.

MP: Yeah. When my job was going to be abolished I decided it was time to just stay home. I could've went to... My boss at that time had contacted a bank, U.S. Bank, downtown and had a job for me down there if I wanted it, but I decided I was going to stay home. I was getting to the age if you're gonna have a family you'd better have it. So that's what I did, I just quit working and stayed home.

BL: Did you indeed start a family right away?

MP: A while. I finally had a little gal in 1950, two years later.

BL: What kind of work did your husband do?

MP: When I married him he was a lumber grader over at the Mt. Emily mill. At that time it wasn't Boise Cascade, it was the Mt. Emily. He accepted a job... We'd been married about two years, I guess and he accepted a job as a traveling lumber inspector with Western Wood Products in Portland. So he took that job. We were supposed to have moved to Spokane, but we didn't. We kept our home here in La Grande and he would just travel more to get back to see us.

BL: What was your husband's name?

MP: Howard. Howard Morris Petersen.

BL: Was he born and raised in this area?

MP: No. He was born in Spokane and raised in Wallowa and then they finally moved up here to La Grande and went to work for the mill.

BL: Where was your first home when you got married?

MP: Close to the mill. It was on Q Avenue. If you cut through it was just about two blocks at the most over across the railroad tracks to the mill.

BL: Was it a very large neighborhood that you lived in?

MP: No. Not really. It was in the Willow School district at that time. It was... The Island City Strip, as we call it, it was just about a block over from it.

BL: What were your responsibilities as a stay-at-home mom?

MP: Take care of your home, take care of your child, make sure you had meals on time. You usually tended to the yard, quite a bit of it. And can in the fall.

BL: You had done a lot of that growing up so that was second nature then.

MP: Yeah. Then we went hunting quite a bit too when seasons came along we'd go hunting. We usually had our own meat.

BL: Did you hunt for deer and elk?

MP: Yes. Deer and elk and birds, usually pheasants and grouse and ducks. I didn't especially care for ducks, but he enjoyed hunting them.

BL: Did you hunt locally?

MP: Yes. Usually you hunted deer in the Medical Springs area or...let's see, we used to hunt deer out of Wallowa, too, on Day Ridge. That was a pretty popular area and had some nice deer out there. And bear.

BL: Did you do all of your own cutting and wrapping?

MP: Yes. We did our own skinning and deboning, took all the bone out of the meat, and cut it up and wrapped it and stuck it in the freezer. At that time we didn't have a freezer at home, but we rented a freezer at one of the meat markets.

BL: Can you tell me more about that? The meat market lockers?

MP: Most of 'em... They used to have one down on Fir Street that we used. It was just a separate room in the backend of the meat market. It had just like a cage, cages for each one and each one had a separate door on 'em and a lock, your own lock and key. But they were all kept real cold. I don't know if they still have it down there or not. I think that market went out of business at least...across from the habitat building...Holly Habit.

BL: Hobby Habit?

MP: Hobby Habit, whatever it is called. It was right across from that on the corner.

BL: Did they only sell meat? Or was it a regular grocery market?

MP: I don't think they had too many groceries, but I think they had catering lunches and things like that that they sold out of there and had all kinds of meat I know they sold. I don't know how extensive their grocery line was. When we were there it was a regular... When we were using it it was a regular market, grocery market and then a meat...a little meat market in there, too.

BL: Can you tell me more about some of the other businesses you may have frequented?

MP: There's not too many, I don't think. Richardson's __ and Gift Shop was a store that I liked to go into because they had all kinds of jewelry and pictures and just pretty things.

BL: Where was it located?

MP: It was in the second block...let's see, where would it be...it'd just be about two doors up from where Don's Jewelry store is now. It was in that area between the

old Faulk's department store – which is being repaired, a new building put up there.

BL: This is right on Adams?

MP: Yeah. It was a fun place to go to. Then we had several nice dress shops in La Grande at that time, Ann Johnson's and the Cinderella shop up in the next block had a nice dress shop. The Top Shop, it was a nice dress shop. Just fun things, I guess.

BL: Did you have a favorite restaurant?

MP: China Mary's.

BL: China Mary's?

MP: Yeah. It was an upstairs. It was up over the top of Ann Johnson's, I believe.

BL: What was it like?

MP: You just had to climb up this long narrow stairway to get to the top of it and then inside was just booths on both sides of the room it was all booth. It was ran by Chinese people. They had five people, a waitress and I think... The first name of the lady that waited on us all the time was Pearl. I think her last name was Westenskow before she passed away. Pearl Westenskow.

BL: What did the restaurant look like on the inside?

MP: Nothing fancy like they are now. Had a few Chinese things hanging around. It was just a plain ol' restaurant, but good food. Everybody in town, I think, catered there. It was just a hangout more or less, especially on paydays.

BL: Do you remember your favorite dish?

MP: Chop suey, I guess. [laugh] That's usually what I had. Then what they used to call Denvers, a Denver sandwich, which was similar to egg fu yung.

BL: Can you describe that a little bit more?

MP: It was just a combination and to me was just like scrambled eggs with vegetables and things like that thrown into it.

BL: But it was made onto a sandwich?

MP: In patties.

BL: Oh, made into patties. And then did it have some sort of a sauce on it?

MP: Sometimes they had a little gravy-like that they would put over the top of it. It was good. It was just a fun place to go to and lots of people went.

BL: You said especially on payday. Was that...

MP: Railroad payday. My dad having worked there always on paydays that was a treat. He took Mother and I to Chiny Mary's for dinner. He'd go get his check and cash it and we'd go there for dinner. He'd usually get a bag of candy and a little bottle for himself. [laugh]

BL: So after you married did you husband and yourself continue that tradition of going to dinner on payday?

MP: No. He didn't. Howard just didn't operate that way.

BL: What kinds of things other than hunting did you do with Howard after you were married?

MP: We had a little group that we ran around with. We usually got together and played cards on weekends. He belonged to the Elks Club so we would go there off and on especially on their special...special celebrations we always tried to go to 'em. Then at that time he also belonged to the National Guard. They met, too.

They had regular meetings and parties for the women off and on. We belonged to those.

BL: Can you tell me about any other clubs that you may have been involved in?

MP: That we were involved in? Just Beta Sigma Phi. I belonged to that for, gosh, it must be getting close to forty-five years, something like that, maybe more.

BL: What sorts of events happened as a result of that club?

MP: In Beta Sigma Phi we just have four chapters in La Grande now and a city council. Each chapter has their own socializing. We also do community work. During Christmastime is usually when we help out with the community. The children that go shopping, we usually donate money for that, for the children to go shopping. Then we have a founder's day every year, April, the last day of April is usually founder's day nationwide, worldwide I guess it is now. There's Beta Sigma Phi all over the world. We usually have a big banquet for that and change of officers. It's just a socializing group that does some community work. I think our chapter is the largest here in La Grande. It's just nice to have that feeling that you have sisters out there that you can turn to if you want to for help.

BL: Were there any other organizations that you were involved in, that you spent a lot of time with?

MP: No. I volunteered with Home Health Hospice. I have worked with that about ten, eleven years now. I enjoy that. You are sent out to give relief to care givers that are taking care of sick people. It's just a real good feeling.

BL: Now were you involved in the beginning stages of that when it first started here in La Grande?

MP: No. It's been effect for a number of years. Mine has just been since my husband's been gone to fill up time. [recording stopped]