Gazette Project

Interview with

Hugh Patterson,
Little Rock, Arkansas,
17 February 2000

Interviewer: Roy Reed

Roy Reed: This is Hugh Patterson and Roy Reed on February 17, 2000, in Little Rock. Mr. Patterson, we do have your permission to record this interview, is that right?

Hugh Patterson: Yes. Yes.

RR: All right. Why don't we just start at the beginning and tell us your background before the *Gazette*.

HP: Well, I'll try to make it very brief. My parents had come from families who had been in Mississippi for some time. My father's — the Patterson people — had come in the early part of the, I guess it would've been the eighteenth century. And from the best information that I've been able to get, in part from research that Margaret Ross did of the genealogical nature, and she thinks that they came in through Philadelphia at the time when a number of Scotch-Irish people had come in that way. Then, in the course of time, they came down the eastern seaboard through Virginia and the Carolinas and my immigrant great-grandparents ended up in Elbert County, Georgia.

RR: I'm sorry, where?

HP: Elbert County.

RR: E-L-B-E-R-T?

HP: Yes, E-L-B-E-R-T.

RR: Like the peach.

HP: Yes. No. That's Alberta.

RR: [Laughs.] That's right. So Elbert County.

HP: Elbert County, Georgia, which is right on the South Carolina line. Well, they were Associate Reform Presbyterians, and they came along where a number of the little ARP Presbyterian churches had been founded. And he was a member of a church, in South Carolina I suppose, called "Generostee"; I don't know — I've tried to spell it phonetically. I don't know that I've ever seen it.

RR: "Generostee" was the church?

HP: "Generostee." G-E-N-E-R-O-S-T-E-E, I think.

RR: Oh, not "Generosity."

HP: Not "Generosity."

RR: G-E-N-E-R . . .

HP: . . . O-S-T-E-E. That's the best I could do. At any rate, it was the next generation who started the western migration though Alabama, through Georgia and Alabama and into Mississippi. My forebears arrived in Mississippi at about the time the Indians were being pushed out. There were still some Indians living in the area. So they went to a place in Tippah County, a little town called Cotton Plant. I don't think it is any longer in existence because there is no landmark of any significance there anymore. At one time there were a couple of general stores

and a cotton gin and other things that made a little cluster of the town. Of course, the mechanization of farming and so many other things caused the town to wither, but the house where I was born still stands there.

RR: Is that northeast Mississippi? Where is it?

HP: Just sort of north-central.

RR: Okay.

HP: It is in — Well, Tippah and Union Counties are side by side. I suppose it was all Tippah County and probably got divided during the Civil War.

RR: Tippah's T-I-P-P-A-H.

HP: Tippah. T-I-P-P-A-H, that's right. New Albany is the county seat of Union County, and Ripley is the county seat of Tippah County.

RR: Is that where William Faulkner was born?

HP: Yes. And my father knew William Faulkner's grandfather.

RR: Is that right?

HP: Yes. Good ol' Faulkner. Good ol' Faulkner. [Laughs.] I've not read too much about him, but he kept trying to become a general. And he volunteered with a group early on and didn't make general, so he opted out for a time. Then he organized a group and got back in the war, thinking that that way he could be a general. But that's very interesting about the family. Then my mother's older sister was married to a man named Hugh Wiseman whose first wife had died.

RR: Is that W-I-S-E?

HP: M-A-N, yes. Wiseman. And he was of the same general background, I guess.

One of his daughters, whose name was Martha Ida, went to the University of Mississippi and was quite a basketball star. When she was graduated, they asked her to stay on and coach the girls' basketball team and work for the business manager of the school who was Bill Faulkner's father. They taught her to play bridge, and they would get Bill to come over to make a fourth. I think that's when he got in bad with the post office department for neglecting his duties! [Laughs.] But she stayed on and George Healey, who became the editor of the *Times Picayune,* was a classmate of hers and helped her coach the girls' basketball team. Then my cousin went on to New York and when I lived there, back in the late '30s, she was the secretary and registrar of a fine girls' school called the Mills School for Kindergarten Teachers, but it was the kind of school that Princess Diana went to, I think.

RR: Mills?

HP: Mills.

RR: M-I-L-L-S. Did George Healey spell his name L-Y or L-E-Y?

HP: H-E-A-L-E-Y, I believe.

RR: I haven't thought of him in years.

HP: I knew George and his wife pretty well.

RR: You were born in Cotton Plant in 19 . . .

HP: 1915. February 8, 1915.

RR: And your parents' names, before we get too far, were Hugh B. Patterson . . .

HP: Senior, yes. And my mother was Martha Rebecca Wilson.

RR: Is Rebecca the usual spelling?

HP: Yes.

RR: Wilson.

HP: The biblical names.

RR: Yes. Wilson, okay.

HP: Yes. Now her parents, her family were Methodists, and my mother was the youngest of eleven children. Let's see, there were one, two, three girls, I guess, and the other eight children were men, two of whom became Methodist ministers and had pastorates in Arkansas at one point. One of them was pastor of a church in Pine Bluff for a time.

RR: Your father, was he a minister?

HP: No, he wasn't. He always ended up teaching the Bible class. He liked to read the Bible. He attended a boarding school for a brief time in Holly Springs, Mississippi. He and a younger brother were orphaned when they were really quite young, and a twin sister died at birth, and the family had to split up. So they were sort of farmed out to family friends who helped raise them, and older brother, Robert, and sister, Margaret, had moved away by then. My father's younger brother, who was about two years younger, went on to theological seminary, and he became a Presbyterian minister and was really a pretty outstanding man. He got good theological training and education, and he was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Morrilton for quite a long time. He had gone west at one time for health reasons and came back to Arkansas.

RR: Now, your father was a businessman, wasn't he?

HP: He was a businessman, yes. He was a merchant and all and had experience working in the general stores back at Cotton Plant and other places in Mississippi. But he and my mother and my uncle Hugh Wiseman, who had married my mother's sister, went to Monticello at one point, where they had connections, old family connections. So they lived there for a time, and my sister, who was born probably around 1902 or '03, she was twelve years older than I, was born there. After they were there for a time, they went back to Mississippi and then made a further trip back to Monticello for a while, and my brother was born there that time. That was a good ten years later, and he was about two and a half years older than I.

RR: Tell me about your education a little bit.

HP: Well, I, of course, went to public school. When I was, soon after I was born, I guess, I was less than two years old, the family moved back to Arkansas, to Russellville, where my father had a good friend who had become the pastor of the ARP Church at Russellville. His name was Snipes.

RR: Snipes?

HP: Snipes. I've got a little history of the family somewhere where I could get these names [?]. Anyway, Snipes had a son who became something of a figure in Arkansas and ended up someplace over like in Devalls Bluff or Clarendon or someplace like that. But, anyway, that is neither here nor there. We lived in Russellville from about 1917 to 1921. My father was in partnership there with a

man named Patrick — in the hardware business — an older man who was a member of Dr. Snipes's church. Then my mother had three brothers and a sister at Pine Bluff. So after they had lived in — I suppose for reasons that, I think, family relationships for one thing, but also I think my parents thought the schools might be more attractive in Pine Bluff — so my father went there and for a brief time was in partnership in a grocery store with one of my mother's brothers. We moved there in 1921, and I started in elementary school and all of my public school education was there.

RR: In Pine Bluff.

HP: In Pine Bluff. I was, I guess, a pretty bright student, but our family was pretty seriously hit by the depression, and my father was in ill health for a time, but I went to work when I was about twelve years old for the corner drugstore. I used to say I delivered drugs on a bicycle, but I [laughs] had to amend that and say "prescription drugs" — when I was twelve years old. So I went to work when I got out of school and worked till close to midnight. And I stayed at that for some time. I might have neglected some homework, but at any rate, I guess I was a pretty good student because I was good in math and good in English and the general subjects, sciences and things of that sort. And I went on through high school there. At that time, at the Pine Bluff High School, we had some excellent instructors, ones who went on to be involved in higher education, and our English teacher, Nanny Mae Roney . . .

RR: What was that name, Nanny?

HP: Nanny Mae.

RR: N-A-N-N . . .

HP: N-A-N-N-Y, I suppose, Nanny Mae, M-A-E, Roney, R-O-N-E-Y. She was from Dumas, but she was an excellent teacher and loved English literature. So a sequence of students came to really admire her. And she ended up teaching at Henderson State University, it is now. In school, I had excellent teachers. I had good English teachers, that is, in just the use of language, and I learned to parse sentences early on. And then I was good at math, and we had good instructors for that.

RR: Did you go to Henderson?

HP: I went to Henderson for a short time, I was going to say, but Alfred Lile, "Brick" Lile, who had a CPA firm here was the teacher at that time. He taught in the tenth grade, and I had an accounting course with him. He was an excellent teacher, and he taught accounting and psychology.

RR: This was at Pine Bluff High School?

HP: At Pine Bluff High School. I was good at math, made top grades in that, and learned bookkeeping.

RR: I never knew that Brick Lile had been a teacher.

HP: Oh, yes. He was a good teacher, and he wrote a textbook for high school.

RR: Brick did?

HP: Oh, yes, Brick did. Ol' Alfred, ol' Brick. He was quite a burly, big fellow, and he wouldn't put up with any shenanigans from the football players, and So he

could toss them around! [Laughs]. But you know, then he had a brother who was Vice President of the Worthen Bank.

RR: Did you play any sports in high school?

HP: No, I played in the band.

RR: In the band. What . . .

HP: I played the first horn in the concert band and played the horn – and then I was the drum major in my senior year in high school and so that, you know, was an achievement that I was proud of. Of course, everybody knew who the drum major was!

RR: Football games.

HP: Oh, yes. And we had an excellent band director who came down from Little Rock. His name was R.B. Watson, was called "Scrubby" Watson, but he had spent his career up to that point in theater orchestras and was an excellent musician. He played the violin and he played the trumpet and was really a virtuoso. He was just excellent. He had a treatment for a rash on his hands that turned out to have caused some troubles because at that time they didn't know how to use x-ray and that sort of thing, so he lost some use of his fingers and that caused him to have to stop playing the violin, but he could still play the trumpet. He was an excellent musician. There were about — oh, I guess we had about forty members of the band, forty or forty-eight — and he had us playing well above our heads. He knew how to get it out of us. So when I was nearing — by then I was working after school for a printing firm. I guess I started doing that

when I was about fourteen or fifteen, I suppose. The Depression was coming on and they had to cut down on staff some. And Walter Adams was the Adams of Adams Lithographic and Printing Company, and Walter Adams was [an interesting?] man, and he had printing and office supplies, office furniture and things of that sort. So I melted type metal and washed the platen presses, and I was the shipping clerk. But then as the . . .

RR: Did you say melted type?

HP: Melted type metal, yes.

RR: They wouldn't know what that is today, would they?

HP: Oh, no. [Laughs] So I really — and so one day, we worked a half day on Saturdays then, on Saturday morning. Mr. Adams called the stationery department manager, who also was the bookkeeper. His name was Thad Watkins. So we went into his office, and he said, "You know how tough it has been collecting enough money to make the payroll, and I've got to cut down on the staff." He said, "Thad, you've been making twelve dollars a week, and I've got you a job, starting Monday, at the National Bank and Commerce as a teller for ten dollars a week." And he said, "Hugh, I understand that you are qualified to be a bookkeeper. And so as of Monday you become the bookkeeper and help run the stationery department and your salary will be three dollars and a half a week." [Laughs]

RR: Was that a cut in salary for you?

HP: I think I'd been making four dollars up to that time.

RR: Four dollars!

HP: Oh, boy, I tell you! But actually I was permitted to learn a whole lot. At one time soon after I'd started working there, I asked Mr. Adams some question about how to do something and he said, "Well, Hugh, if I am going to have to tell you all these answers, I really don't need you back there." So I learned that I had to ask somebody else and not the boss! [Laughs] At any rate, I had a remarkable experience there, and I came to know a lot of good people of Pine Bluff.

RR: Now, my guess is – you were still in high school, a senior.

HP: Yes.

RR: What did he have you doing? Bookkeeping, sales . . .

HP: Bookkeeping and keeping up with the inventory on the stationery supplies and bookkeeping supplies.

RR: My guess is that you knew quite a lot about how to run a printing business by the time you left there.

HP: Well, I did. Yes, I did. When I was graduated, in the spring of, I guess, 1933, from high school, and at that time I had won the state drum major contest, and I had inquiries from the University of Mississippi and Ol' Miss at Starkville and Henderson about coming as a drum major. In each case — well, the Mississippi thing would've been an ROTC appointment, I guess, that would not have carried any money compensation, and it would've required some money and we just didn't have any money. I suppose from the time I started working at the drug store, any money I ever had to spend was money I had earned. I had just given up

pretty much on the prospect of going to college, but just late in the summer — well, I had been at the state band contest, and I'd met various people, including John Dornblaser, who had been . . .

RR: Dornblaser?

HP: Dornblaser — D-O-R-N-B-L-A-S-E-R — Dornblaser. John played the flute and the piccolo and was an excellent musician. And Little Rock had a splendid, big band. But just [down to the blue?], John arrived with A.B. Bonds, Jr., who was an upperclassman at Henderson State Teachers' College at that time. And they had come to Pine Bluff specifically to try to recruit me to come as a musician and as a drum major. And so they said that there was some construction work going on at that time. There'd be an opportunity for me to make some money doing whatever odd jobs there might be. And then they had arranged it so that I could stay at the bandmaster's home and I could work in the college dining establishment for meals, and my books and other stuff would be furnished. That seemed to be too good an opportunity to pass up, so I signed on. And at the time I was in the process of painting the house we lived in as a part of the payment for rent on the house and what not, so I had a half a bucket of paint to go, I guess, and got in with them and went on to Arkadelphia. Well, I stayed on through the first trimester and could not find any kind of a job that would give me any cash money. And I was taking a pretty general course that I figured at one point was really not qualifying me in any skill that I could use, and I felt that it would be better if I just stopped it all and went back to Pine Bluff. And by that time,

Walter Adams had moved his little printing firm to Chattanooga, but the Perdue family owned a really bigger, more substantial business in printing.

RR: I'm sorry, Perdue?

HP: Perdue. P-E-R-D-U-E.

RR: Yes.

HP: And it was called at that time the Smith Company, but the Perdues had bought it, presumably, from somebody named Smith. But, at any rate, I had come to know them when I had worked down there. And so I went to work, assisting and doing various things. They didn't need a bookkeeper, but I worked in the stationery department, filling orders. And then I was to do sales work in Pine Bluff, so I got busy doing that, you know, to earn my keep. And, at the time, I suppose what I was being paid was about whatever the going rate would have been. During that time, I, of course, got to call on people from Pine Bluff and the offices of the banks and what not and develop broad acquaintanceships. Well, I kept on with that and in the course of time, I was still trying to decide just what course I might follow. I continued to learn more about estimating and more about printing, questions and problems and things of that sort. And a man that they had traveling in south Arkansas and north Louisiana decided to resign and take a job with a firm in Louisiana, and I asked if I could have that territory. By then, I was nineteen, I think, and had not yet reached my majority. They said fine, I could do that, but I'd have to have a car. And I [?] that I could buy a 1931 Chevrolet sedan for, I think, $75. So in order to do it on the installment plan, I had to go to court

to have my legal disabilities removed! [Laughs] And so I made a contract to buy the car. I started out traveling and there I could get my salary and an additional amount of commission where I could pay for my travel expenses. So I went on doing that for a couple of years, I suppose. Always looking for greener pastures, I decided that the Democrat Printing and Lithograph Company in Little Rock would be a step up the ladder. I had met Ben Hamilton, who was the sales manager with the Democrat Printing and Lithograph Company and who had called on some of the people I saw in Pine Bluff. And so on one of my trips — I by then was traveling not only in south Arkansas and north Louisiana, but I made a couple of trips up to Batesville and to northern counties, with county record books and supplies and things of that sort --- so on one of my trips to Little Rock, I called on Mr. Hamilton and asked him about it. He said he'd learned something about me at Pine Bluff and that he'd take it up with the people at the Democrat Printing and Lithograph Company. In a little while, they told me that they'd like to have me come to work and I could earn $20 a week.

RR: That was an enormous pay raise!

HP: That was in 1936, so I moved to Little Rock in the summer of 1936. This is all very thrilling. I'm not sure you'll find it . . .

RR: Well, no, but it tells me a great deal about your qualifications for the job you eventually held.

HP: [Laughs] Well, at any rate, I enjoyed that, and they were good people to work with and it was quite an experience. And it was quite an experience traveling

down in Louisiana at that time. That was when Huey Long was holding forth, and going through a political season in north Louisiana was really quite an experience. I was, you know, staying overnight at the hobo hotels and all, and I would visit with other traveling people and learned a good many of the stories about Louisiana politics. I remember one time in a little town called Rayville, just before an election day, I was advised to stay pretty much around the hotel lobby because they said it was not safe to be out on the street! [Laughs]

RR: Pretty rough politics . . .

HP: Yes. [Laughs] But I met some interesting people, and, incidentally, at that time, I was calling on the officials in a number of counties, including White County and Searcy. And I had called on Wilbur Mills because Wilbur had run for county judge on the platform of putting the county on a cash basis in his first year in office, or he said that he would serve a second year without a salary. Of course, at that time, few of the counties in the state were on a cash basis. They never knew what the cash would be until it came in, until the tax collection came in. And so every cost of the county — for wages for schoolteachers and everything else — was dependent — that is, the script they were paying in, the value of the script was dependent on what the tax collections were. And the banks would discount the script for some of the teachers and all of that. And so it was kind of a gamble and what not, but that was why it was important to get the county on a cash basis, so they'd know [?]. And I thought that experience with Wilbur Mills was an interesting one. And at that time, a friend of ours in Pine Bluff

named Clarence Pendleton Lee, C.P. Lee, Jr., whose father was a cotton broker but also pretty much a professional gambler — well, the cotton people in off-season played poker. Anyway, C.P. was a Rhodes Scholar and was home for the summer holidays. And he had written some magazine articles for the Sunday *Gazette*, and I thought that Wilbur Mills would make an interesting subject for an article. Wilbur had graduated from Harvard Law School and had run for office really not expecting, maybe, to win, but thought it would be a way of getting some publicity and all. But, at any rate, C.P. went with me to Searcy the next time I went over there to call on Johnny, and he interviewed Wilbur and the article ran in the *Gazette*. Soon after that, well, that was a little while after that, the man who had been representative from that district was appointed to a federal judgeship, and Wilbur decided to run for the Congress. Years later, after I became publisher of the *Gazette*, I'd go by to pay a courtesy call on Wilbur in Washington, and no matter how many people were stacked up waiting to see him, he'd usher me in and say, "Now, look, take your time." And we'd have a visit. So I could do no wrong with ol' Wilbur. He thought I'd given him a leg up, you see!

RR: That article in the *Gazette*.

HP: In the *Gazette*. It came right at a critical time. At that time, Les and Liz Carpenter were our people in Washington. Any time I was coming to Washington and Liz knew about it, she'd have somebody in for dinner, either the Fulbrights or Wilbur Mills or some of the other people in the congressional delegation. I don't

recall ever having John McClellan, which was just as well with me. [Laughs]

RR: You all were not exactly bosom buddies in politics.

HP: No! [Laughs] At any rate, going on back to the Democrat Printing and Lithograph Company, I, of course, had some good experience there and, of course, that was broadening because we had facilities for doing work beyond what we had before. And I came to be sort of a favorite of Roy Thompson, who was vice president and was pretty much running the Democrat Printing and Lithograph Company. Roy was a real political operator and quite a forceful personality, and people would call on him. He was a little round man who wore a pork-pie hat made out of the same material as his suit. They'd make his hat for him. He was an interesting personality, and he was president of the Baseball Club and, as I say, was very active in the state politics and all that. So he would sort of take me on as a protégée. He'd tell me to go get the car because he wanted me to take him for a drive-around to see some new developments and things like that. And in the summertime, he'd say, "Pull over under that shade tree," and we'd sit and he'd talk to me and tell me about personalities and give me suggestions and things of that sort. Along during that time, the Art Metal Construction Company, which made steel furniture and office equipment, filing cabinets, fireproof safes and all that sort of stuff . . .

RR: What company is that?

HP: They manufactured steel office furniture.

RR: The name of the company was?

HP: Art Metal . . .

RR: Art . . .

HP: Art . . .

RR: A-R-T

HP: A-R-T Metal Construction Company.

RR: Yes.

HP: Of Jamestown, New York. We had the dealership for that at the Democrat Printing and Lithograph Company. They made steel desks and fireproof safes and all that stuff, counter equipment and that kind of stuff. So they had told Thompson that he had an invitation to send someone up there for a period of — I don't remember how many weeks it was now. It might have been twelve weeks or something like that. But, at any rate, for a training program in office planning and design and systems and that sort of thing. They made the visible filing equipment and things of that sort. So Roy said that he'd like for me to go up there, and it was really quite an experience. And I would, of course, continue to get my pay while learning something. So I went up and had a good experience there and met their officers and principal people. We worked part of the day actually in the plant, doing, you know, part of the assembly of this equipment, but then we had also some classes in office layout and training and systems and that stuff. So I got to know, among other people, the man who was the vice president in charge of their direct sales branches which were located in several different cities, New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia. I don't remember where

else. At any rate, after coming back and having fair success in selling this equipment in Little Rock, I decided that if I could get a place in sales in one of their direct branches in one of those cities, I'd have the opportunity to go to evening school and pursue some more formal education. So I mentioned that to Mr. Thompson. At that time, he said, "I think you have the qualifications for advancement beyond anything that we are in position to give you here because much of the future is controlled by members of the Mitchell family, so I'd certainly encourage you to go on and do that." And he said, "I'll give you a little bonus to help you on your way."

RR: What a nice . . .

HP: So that's what I did. I hitchhiked a ride on up part of the way towards Jamestown and went on up and turned up in the office of Mr. Elofson, the vice president of direct sales, and told him . . .

RR: Elofson?

HP: Elofson. E-L-O-F-S-O-N, Elofson. I guess that's a Swedish name. They are Swedes for the most part up there. So I went up and told him I wanted to work in one of their major city offices. And he said, "Well, I'm going up to New York day after tomorrow, and I'll take you up there." So [laughs] two days later, I was on my way to New York with the vice president of sales. When I got up there, arriving in the dead of summer . . .

RR: In the city? In New York City?

HP: Yes, New York City. So the first two or three days before I . . .

RR: This would've been about 193 . . .

HP: '38. It would've been 1938.

RR: Let me digress for just a minute. Here you are, born in Mississippi, lived all your life in Arkansas, and you find yourself in New York City. What did your voice sound like?

HP: Well, I'll tell you. People have always had trouble figuring out where my speech came from, and I don't know because I was never conscious of it being any different from anything else. But I sang as a youngster in choirs. I was a member of a double quartet at the church and sang with a group of, really, professionals who had — you know, our contralto had studied with [Tetrazzini?] and our tenor [?] had sung in the Follies and had a marvelous tenor voice and all that sort of stuff. And [Margie O'Gallagher?] coached me some in singing about how to pronounce certain things that, when sung, gave a better understanding, you know, phonetically, of what you were saying. And I had always been interested in speech to a degree, I suppose. It didn't occur to me at the time that I was mimicking anything, but back in those days, when I was traveling down in Louisiana and around, the evening entertainment was usually a movie, if I could find one. And a lot of them were Gaumont British movies.

RR: What kind?

HP: Gaumont British were the producers of these movies. Gaumont, G-A-U-M-O-N-T, Gaumont British. And they had some of the actors who were famous British actors, and it may be that that had some influence. I was never trying to copy the

British, but I guess I just got used to hearing some of these.

RR: I assume that as a young person you probably sounded like a Mississippian.

HP: I don't know what I sounded like.

RR: You can't remember the accent now?

HP: [Laughs] Oh, no!

RR: Anyway, here you are in New York and, obviously, you fit in okay. Do you remember ever anybody ever talking about your accent from being from the South?

HP: No, actually not from that time, but after the integration controversy here, then I was called on to participate in activities around various parts of the country. Inevitably after I had spoken at one of these meetings, someone, usually a woman, would say, "I know you're the publisher of the *Arkansas Gazette* in Little Rock, but you're not originally from Arkansas, are you?" Then I was able to say, "No, I was born in Mississippi." [Laughs]

RR: No, I'm sorry about that digression, but I've always thought that you had a very clear way of speaking and when you said New York, I never knew you had lived in New York. When I was working for a New York institution, I put up with a lot of guff from those folks about the way I talked!

HP: [Laughs] Well, I was never singled out as being, you know, particularly Southern, I suppose.

RR: So here you are in New York . . .

HP: So I arrived there in, I guess, 1938, and that was just when the World's Fair was

being planned, and there was a good deal of activity connected with the Arkansas exhibition that was being put together. And a number of people from here were up there, people that I had met. And at that time, I think, M.C. Blackmon was spending some time in New York. Blackmon, you know, later worked for the *Herald* for a long time. Over the years after that, if I was in New York and had nothing better to do, I'd go around to Bleak's about ten o'clock.

RR: Bleak's, now that's B-L-E-A-K?

HP: B-L-E-A-K, Bleak's. What was it called? Bleak's Artists and Writers Club — something like that. I guess it was — what was it on? 41st?

RR: Right around the corner from the *Herald*.

HP: Yes. And Blackmon would always come and perch at the same stool at the end of the bar and drink his white wine and soda.

RR: He had been a *Gazette* reporter, hadn't he?

HP: Oh, yes. He had been a rewrite man on the *Gazette*. And that's what he was up there. He was a principal rewrite man.

RR: It's probably worth pointing out for any future scholars who might be wondering what a rewrite man did. Can you explain that? It was a very important role.

HP: Well, as I understood it, the reporters would call in and give the facts, and the rewrite man would make it readable.

RR: He'd put it into English. Because a lot of us old beat reporters couldn't write to save us in the English language!

HP: [Laughs] No! [Laughs]

RR: Anyway, Bleak's is where you hung out?

HP: Well, I'd run into Blackmon and sit down and drink with him, and get caught up a little bit. As I say, my first territory in New York was the area from 46th to 59th Street, east of 5th Avenue. And that happened to include the advertising district on Madison Avenue and all. And so in the course of calling on people — I'd always intended to get back into the graphics some way or another — so that way, of course, I could call on the ad agencies as prospects for what I was selling, but also, see if I could maybe interview with someone in production or something like that. But that was an innocent time. Howard Simon, who had married the woman writer who later married John Gould Fletcher, had lived here. He and what's her name?

RR: Charlie Mae?

HP: Charlie Mae Simon. She and her husband had homesteaded in Arkansas, I think, during the Depression, but he was living back at New York at the time. I remember going by with friends to see him and a number of others — golly, I'll have to try to rethink through all who was living in New York at the time — but we'd get together at times. Later on, people would come up to see the Fair, and I was sent a group from Arkansas who were invited out on a preliminary tour of the fairgrounds. And when we were out there that time, Einstein and his sister came parading through in an open convertible. And you couldn't tell which was which because they looked just alike! [Laughs]

RR: Did you stay in New York for a year or two?

HP: Yes, I was there for about two years, and, actually, I don't know whether I would've stayed longer had I remained in that area, that territory. I had actually made plans to go to Columbia and had actually signed up for a couple of courses in the evening school early in my time up there, but before leaving Arkansas, Clarence Fulbright, Mr. Fulbright, who was head of the Arkansas Flooring Company, had told me when I told him of my plans to go to New York, he said, "Well, Hugh, if I had thought you had any thought of changing from where you were, I would've approached you for a job with us because we are looking for someone to head up an office someplace. And if you get up to New York and find that you might like to do something else, let me know." Well, I didn't let him know, but I had a message from him after about two or three months, saying that they want to talk to me about heading up their sales office in Cleveland.

RR: What company was this?

HP: That was the Arkansas Oak Flooring Company. Oak flooring, they manufactured oak flooring. They had mills at Pine Bluff and at Alexandria, Louisiana, and in Mississippi, and they, you know, manufactured oak flooring and various other . . .

RR: That's not Bill Fulbright's family, is it?

HP: No. I think they might have been remotely related, but Clarence Fulbright was a very interesting man. His wife was a well educated, interesting woman. At any rate, he said that he'd like for me to consider heading up that office. And I thought, "Well, now, in Cleveland I can do the same thing that I planned to do in New York." And at a substantial guaranteed salary and what not. So I gave

notice in New York, and they expressed regret that I was leaving. So I came on down to Pine Bluff, and I was here just over Christmas. But I got back and to my great disappointment and dismay, Mr. Fulbright said, well, they had decided after talking to me that they could consolidate a couple of their offices in that region and not continue the office in Cleveland. And what they wanted me to do was to do a survey of the prospects of re-entering the southeastern area of the United States as a sales area because they had bypassed it for a while. And they wanted me to do that and mapped out an itinerary for me: to go to New Orleans and along the Mississippi coast and around and down through Florida and on back through the Carolinas and back to Pine Bluff. Well, that just struck the wind out of my sails, you know. A totally different prospect. But I went on and did it and managed to sell enough on the way to pay the expenses. But I figured that it was just not worth while for them to try to enter that market that they had deserted earlier because a number of new oak flooring plants had gone into business in there and they had the advantage of [trade rate?] and everything like that. So I came back and told Mr. Fulbright that I regretted it, but that was just not for me, and he understood. So I said, "I'm going back to New York and see if they'll hire me on again." So I went back. But that time someone else had taken my territory, and they said they would give me the insurance district, which was down by the financial district downtown. And I thought, "Well, my — you know, insurance, they need a lot of filing cabinets. So I decided to make the best of that. And then I found out that Art Metal was being boycotted by those stock insurance

firms because the Art Metal dealt with mutual insurance! [Laughs] And this insurance was mutual insurance company. So that was a fight, but I managed to do some trading and found that we were doing construction in various places for library equipment and stuff like that where we needed to make surety bonds, and we could give surety insurance to some of these firms that I wanted to break in with. But, then, I kept on at that. My brother had by that time been in Washington for quite a long time.

RR: His name?

HP: Ralph. My younger son is named for Ralph.

RR: Right. He'd been in Washington.

HP: Yes, he'd been in Washington. Ralph had been active on the — well, he had helped run the little Pine Bluff High School newspaper when he was in school and after that had gone to work for the Arkansas Power and Light Company in the promotion advertising business for the firm with a man named Whitten. And they worked with the [S.M. Brooks?] Advertising Agency, so he sort of divided his time between Pine Bluff where he did the [?] journal and the ad agency in Little Rock. Ralph, like I, had not been able to go on to college. Ralph had a good scholarship offer, two, but it was not fully . . . golly, what a difference it is today, you know? At any rate, he had gone to work, but he had become really quite talented as an artist and cartoonist and, particularly, as a caricaturist. At one point, about the time I moved to Little Rock from Pine Bluff, he had decided to make the next step and go on up heading for New York, I think. But he had done

a series of caricatures for the *Gazette* of prominent people from Arkansas business and politics and had thought this could be his meal ticket for going on up. And so he went to Memphis and did a few there, and went on to Chattanooga and did a few for the *Free Press*, which was just getting started, and ended up in Washington at the *Herald*, when they had decided to take him on for about three months to do a series of similar pieces. And he did the caricatures. And a man who wrote a book that was popular a little time after that, named Mr. Adams — I may have a copy of that someplace, but it was a story about a fellow who happened to be in a salt mine and caverns under somewhere in Mississippi, I suppose, when the atom bomb went off. And everybody else was [nuterized?] back then and he was the only one whose firm was [?], so he was going to be Mr. Adams again. [Laughs] At any rate, Ralph ended up doing those caricatures and doing not only the writing but the drawing for about three years on the *Washington Herald*. You know, that's when Cissy Patterson was the publisher of the *Herald*. He had always wanted to be at the *Post* and had talked to them about doing political cartoons.

RR: Do you happen to have any of Ralph's caricatures?

HP: No, I don't.

RR: I was thinking if we had some that we could copy to include with this material in the library, it would be interesting.

HP: I don't know whether any of them would be available in microfilm form.

RR: Well, it was just a thought.

HP: No, I think he kept them for a while, but, of course, he moved around a great deal. Incidentally, you know, he was married to a girl named Martha McCain of Pine Bluff, whose father had been the principal of the elementary school there at Pine Bluff and whose mother had taught math there. She was a marvelous mathematician and a good teacher. But Ralph's wife died while I was in the service, when I was stationed in Memphis. And she was down visiting, and their daughter Kay was just a young little girl, one or two years old then, but Martha died. Martha's mother went on, then, to Washington and stayed and took care of little Kay. But Kay went on and went to a good school in New England and worked in Boston for a time, then went into the Peace Corps and worked in Guatemala in the Peace Corps and ended up getting to know a young Guatemalan boy who was a serious student and wanted to be a marine biologist and all because he was interested in fish as a protein source for the Guatemalans who ate mainly beans. At any rate, they were married and had a little daughter who has since gotten a degree in structural engineering at Princeton.

RR: I gather Ralph was already at the *Washington Herald* before the war, then.

HP: Oh, yes. He was there.

RR: Is that where you headed next?

HP: Yes. And during the war, he worked for a time in publications at the Social Security Administration and various things of that sort. He was not accepted for military service, which is just as well because he had responsibilities here.

RR: Did you end up living in Washington for a while?

HP: Well, yes. I was going to say that all that time in New York, I was trying to figure out a way to get back into graphics. One time I had a pretty good prospect lined up with this big printing firm in New York, where they were interested in me because one of their principal people in sales and service was ill and they didn't think he'd recover. But, fortunately for him and not for me, he did recover. [Laughs] I got down to Washington over the weekends sometimes when I was working there. Ralph, at one time, urged me to see what might be available for me in Washington, so I ended up applying at three different places and had offers at each one. One was a firm called Rufus H. Darby Company.

RR: Rufus?

HP: Rufus H. Darby. Darby had started in the business doing stet, printing time tables for [?] Southern Railroad, and they had plants in Washington and Atlanta, Georgia. Well, by then, they were doing a big business in commercial printing and publishing and printed broadcast magazines. And they printed a number of different journals for the National Education Association and things for Masonic Orders and advertising material and things like that. So they asked me to come and manage production and do estimating, and so I did that and was [?].

RR: That would've been about 1940, wouldn't it?

HP: That would've been '40 or '41. At that time, of course, the war was heating up. As a matter of fact, the war was sort of heating up, and that was one of the interesting things about being in New York at the time I was there. One of the first places I lived was a brownstone on West 73rd Street, about half a block off of

Central Park West, and in the same building there was a very young man named Philip Pollard who had, of course, been in the states for a very long time at that point, but he had grown up in Hungary and, of course, was familiar with that whole area that was involved and what not. And so as the war was heating up, he would talk about these things and about what the next move might be on the part of the Germans and that kind of business. So it was quite an education itself to have that kind of contact. At any rate, I stayed on then, and I came to Little Rock for a visit back — I don't remember just — it probably was in '41, early '41, along in there sometime — I know I was here before December 7th, but that was the Democrat. And by that time there had been quite a reorganization at the Democrat Painting and Lithographic Company. The Parkes had come in, the Parke-Harper people, Frank Parke and Armitage Harper.

RR: Parke without an "S"? Parke or Parkes?

HP: P-A-R-K-E.

RR: P-A-R-K-E.

HP: Parke. There are two families, Parke and Harper.

RR: Lawrence Harper I remember.

HP: Yes, Lawrence's father was Armitage.

RR: I remember him.

HP: Yes. So they had modified the business a good deal, and Ben Hamilton was still there, but he had sort of specialized in developing a label printing business. Of course, I had learned a great deal with the Darbys while I was there because we

were doing book printing and a number of other things, so I had developed quite a skill at estimating and working on production arrangements and things of that sort. So the Democrat Printing and Lithographic Company said they would like for me to come on in and do that. And I didn't know just where the war was going to take us or what was going to happen to me in that connection, so I decided to stay and be there. And I got to work. There was plenty to do at that time. They wanted me to negotiate several possibilities, including a trip to San Antonio where they had basic training headquarters for pilots and all. They thought maybe we could get in the business of putting out little annual type books for the graduating classes down there and what not, and I met some interesting people, including a Lt. Knuckles, who some years later after I became publisher of the *Gazette*, I ran into again at a specialized depot, such as the one I was stationed at in Mobile, over at Tulsa, Oklahoma, and he was then a brigadier general! [Laughs] And, incidentally, about a year ago, we were coming back from a South America trip, and a girl who had been a classmate of Lid's at Miss Porter's school at Farmington, Connecticut, had married Joe Kingsley, who had been my division chief when I was the deputy chief of all of the Military Training Operations at Mobile and what not. So we stopped off to see them in Naples, Florida, and my former chief, who had been a Lieutenant Colonel, had retired as a Major General.

RR: Mmm. How do you spell your wife's name?

HP: Olivia is actually her name.

RR: Olivia. And you call her?

HP: Lid. L-I-D is . . .

RR: . . . her maiden name.

HP: Yes. She was the daughter of Grover Owen.

RR: Grover Owen.

HP: Grover Owen, who was a lawyer and quite a swashbuckling character in the law business here.

RR: Hugh, this might be a good time to . . . .

[End of Tape One, Side One]

[Beginning Of Tape One, Side Two]

[At this point, the tape picks up with the interview as it was continued the next day, 18 February 2000.]

HP: [Speaking of Hubert Humphrey in 1968,] ". . . I think [worse than all?] for you. And I just think that you've got to somehow manage to cut yourself off from Johnson." And he said, "I know. I know. The practical matter that would be the strategic thing to do, but there's just no way I could bring myself to do it."

RR: He was so loyal.

HP: Yes.

RR: This would have been in the early . . .

HP: And, you know, people thought Hubert was just so glib. Well, of course, the trouble was that Hubert knew what he was talking about! [Laughs] He was [first?] at whatever he was rattling on about!

RR: Yes. He had as many ideas as Bill Clinton.

HP: Yes!

RR: I just wanted to get that recollection on the tape. And let me just say for the benefit of the tape that this is Hugh Patterson and Roy Reed, continuing our interview from yesterday, and this is February 18th. Hugh, I'm going to move this over there on the pad it because I find it rattles, the cup rattles and . . .

HP: Yes.

RR: We were talking yesterday about your years before you came to the *Gazette*, and we had reached, we were on the threshold of World War II, and I know you were in the war. Could you tell me about your war years and how you came to go in the service?

HP: Yes. But, just a minute, if I could go back a little bit to my time in New York and Washington . . . I, of course, thought it was an opportunity while I was there to get as much exposure to different things as I could. So I regularly went to the museums and to the theater. That was a great day in the theater in New York because that was when so many of the real classic plays were being performed for the first time: *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and *Death Takes a Holiday*, and so many of the different things. Tallulah Bankhead was so active, and ol' Tallu was something to see. So I saw practically all of the plays of significance at that time, and I also went to each change of show at the Radio City Music Hall because I loved the orchestra. The orchestra played a lot of familiar things that I loved hearing: Tchaikovsky [symphonies?] and a number of the symphonies and things of Beethoven and others. So I just tried to take the opportunity to do as much as I

could with various things that way. Then the same thing was true in Washington. At that time, I mentioned that A.B. Bonds had been with John Dornblaser when they picked me up at Pine Bluff to go to Henderson back in 1933. Well, I kept in touch with A.B. over the years. He served in the Navy in World War II and after the war had remained in the Navy in some educational project they were going about at that time. And I met the sculptor who did the Marine flag-raising memorial.

RR: Oh, yes. Iwo Jima.

HP: I came to know him. The Bonds had me out to dinner one evening, and this sculptor arrived. A.B. had said that if he was sort of on his uppers, he — you know, the sculptors of great monuments go a good while between commissions and what not — so they had thought that it was a [favor?] to him to give him a good meal! [Laughs] Well, he arrived in a Rolls Royce limousine.

RR: [Laughs]

HP: Well, someone was watching him and they had sent him out. Felix Deweldon was his name.

RR: What was his name?

HP: Felix Deweldon.

RR: Wonder how you spell Deweldon, do you know?

HP: D-E-W-E-L-D-O-N. D-E, weldon. Felix Deweldon. D-E-W-E-L-D-O-N.

RR: Is that D-E-capital W?

HP: I don't remember. He's probably in . . .

RR: He's in *Who's Who* or . . .

HP: *Britannica* or someplace. But at any rate, that was an interesting evening. Then I learned that he had a model down in one of the World War II temporary buildings on the Washington Mall. I went down the next day and saw the model of that monument. That was interesting.

RR: You were back in Little Rock before the war when we left yesterday.

HP: I was back in Little Rock. Well, among other things, and I am thinking of A.B. Bonds . . . I was trying to remember the sequence, but, at any rate, A.B. during that time had been asked by Henderson to celebrate some anniversary and had got him to get in touch with a number of Southern historians to get them to contribute articles for a book. I have that book someplace here. At any rate, A.B. called me and said he wanted me to print it. I had learned how to do the estimating and found something that I could adapt as a matter of design and what not, and I made the choice of typefaces and all that sort of stuff. So I did it and in that way sort of had my hand in doing something that the Democrat Printing and Lithograph Company was happy to learn that I knew how to do.

RR: Right.

HP: A..B., after that, went on to — well, he had done graduate work at LSU and then was on some mission for the U.S. government on an exchange program to Egypt for a while. Then he came back and went to the Baldwin Wallace College at [?] Cleveland and in time became the president of that college and stayed on there for the rest of his active career. I stayed in touch with him. He was a very good

friend of Sid McMath.

RR: I know that name from our state's past, but I never knew him.

HP: His father was a railroad man here in Little Rock.

RR: So he was important in your time at D, P and L . . .

HP: Yes.

RR: . . . in getting your — How long did you stay at D, P and L?

HP: Well, until the summer of 1942, because I had — I don't know whether I had deferment, but I had not been subject to the draft right then. After Pearl Harbor I knew I wouldn't be comfortable staying out. I had become very friendly with Carrick Heiskell.

RR: Mr. J.N.'s son.

HP: Mr. J.N.'s son. I had started courting Louise about then. Louise had gone to Vassar and had dropped out because, after her sophomore year, she just didn't think that was preparing her for anything she wanted to do. Lid ought to get that [referring to phone ringing in background]. . . .

RR: Stop there and tell me how you met Louise.

HP: Well, when I first came to Little Rock at D, P, and L, I was looking for a place to live. Will Mitchell was the nephew of Horace Mitchell, who was head of the Democrat Printing and Lithograph Company. Will's mother had died not too long before that, and he and his father had this big house at 1404 Scott Street that had been in the Roots family. His mother had been one of the Roots daughters and so they had taken in some young men, among them Ed Cromwell and Cooper

Jacoway and several others. And so I moved there, and that's the only place I ever lived in Little Rock before Louise and I were married after the war, or during the war. At any rate, I got swept up into the social activities through them, and I could not have had a better introduction to the community because they either knew or were related to everyone of any significance in town! So I was there when they were all courting the girls who became their wives. And after I came back, before getting into the service, I went back there. Let's see, where were we?

RR: Do you remember the first time you ever met Louise?

HP: Oh, yes.

RR: . . . where it was . . .

HP: Well, it was through some social affair, a dance or something of that sort. We got to talking. Of course, I had worked in New York, and she at that time was considering what she would do, having dropped out of Vassar after her sophomore year, I suppose. She had first wanted --- you know, her maternal grandfather was George R. Mann, who had designed the State Capitol and the *Gazette* building and a number of other structures of significance, and she had thought of trying to become an architect. He had been a graduate of the first graduating class in architecture at MIT. So she went to MIT and investigated that, and they said that she did not have enough math in her background and suggested that she consider going to Parsons to their school of architectural design and decoration. And that's where she ended up going. But during that

time, I had lived in New York, and when we dated some, we talked about that, and I encouraged her to think of going on to New York. And so she did. And in my relationship with Carrick, I learned that he and others were considering trying to get training as air cadets, and I thought that would be a good thing for me to think about. I investigated that. I think I qualified in every way except they had a physical restriction that had to do with the number of opposing molars. And I was lacking one opposing molar. I had had one molar removed, so that cleared my — Now, six months later, they changed the rule on that, but by then I had just passed the age of twenty-six and a half and, so, was out for that reason. I learned that there was a program called volunteer officer candidates, that if you passed the examinations and qualified in a certain way, you had the opportunity to enlist as a private and have basic training, and you were assured of the opportunity to be considered for officer candidates' school. The proposition was that if, for any reason, you didn't make the choice of the selection board, you could option out and await your turn at the draft. And so that's the way I went in. I went in in the summer of 1942 as a volunteer officer candidate. I went to Sheppard Field, Texas, and did basic training there.

RR: Sheppard Field.

HP: Sheppard Field.

RR: How do you spell Sheppard?

HP: I think S-H-E-P-P-A-R-D.

RR: Okay.

HP: I believe that's the way they spell that.

RR: Yes.

HP: At Wichita Falls, Texas. And that was very interesting. I arrived at the same time as a number of others in that program got there. We were assigned — since we were to be there and were not subject to being sent off someplace else as an enlisted man, we were given different jobs around. I was made assistant barracks chief of my particular barracks. We were getting a lot of draftees at that time, young people from all around the country and people from all kinds of backgrounds. I know in my barracks we had a young man who was a Ph.D. and a psychiatrist from Detroit, who specialized in some field of psychiatry for children, young people and what not. But he was a fantastic fellow, a Jewish boy and very interesting. At that time, we had a program for entertainment of the troops. There were about 45,000 people at Sheppard Field at that time, and we had a big service club and a woman from [grand opera?] was head of the service club. I can't remember her name. She was a marvelous woman. But, at any rate, I got assigned in part to the service club. It was fortunate because at that time I'd been away from education for some time, and I had learned that there were to be various questions in the exams we were to take there, you know, mathematical things, geometric things and all, and I had to brush up. I had forgotten how to extract the square root and that kind of thing, so that gave me the chance to get to the library at the service club and read up on all these things. When the time came for those exams, I went breezing through it!

RR: Oh, yes.

HP: Also, I helped supervise the groups who were sent over from the different school squadrons to help clean up the place in the mornings, so I helped with the field marshaling of that service detail.

RR: How long were you there?

HP: I was there from about mid July until October and went before the selection board then and was sent with the group, enough that we filled several cars of the troop train, to go to Miami Beach, their corps officer candidate school. Then I was there from about October 20th and my class finished on January 20th. I had qualified with, I was in the top, I think, top one and a half percent of my class in the grading. That was quite an experience. I was in the same squadron with Sheldon Luce, who was Henry's little brother. Clark Gable was in the squadron across the street from us, and Gilbert Roland was there. His wife was one of the actress sisters. I've forgotten their name now, but she was there and would be on the parade ground from time to time. So it was an interesting place.

RR: Yes!

HP: But, at any rate, when we finished, we were interviewed with the notion that assignment recommendations might be helpful, and our 201 files contained that information. I think they had learned that I had been in printing production and that sort of thing, and so recommendation was that I be considered as a printing officer. Well, I wasn't particularly keen on being a printing officer in the service in the air corps, but, I guess — I don't know how many of us ended up at Mobile,

Alabama, but it had just at that time been made the command headquarters for a four-state area, and there was a big depot at Mobile doing maintenance and supply work. And then there were specialized supply depots in a four-state area. And then we had also maintenance operations in some of the training fields like Jackson, Mississippi, and Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and Birmingham and other places around. So when I got there, I didn't — they had the depot groups and service groups in training there for overseas service, maintaining our combat troops and other air force operations over there. Most of my classmates who were sent there were assigned as supply or administrative officers in these different organizations, but I was selected to be on the permanent staff, on the headquarters' organization. My first assignment was as assistant chief of the military training branch of the training and operations section, where we were to work on the development and execution of the training plan for these depot groups and service groups. Well, of course, I had had experience in organizing stuff of that kind and had the good fortune of being thrown in with a group of people who had come in from industry and otherwise. The chief of my branch — I was assistant to him — was from the advertising business and had come from Minneapolis, and so we fit together very well.

RR: Was that a turning point in your life, being thrown with an advertising fellow? I mean, could you look back and see that that influenced your later?

HP: Somewhat. It turned out that I had experience with type that Sy Clark had not had, so we worked very well together. Actually, I did most of the coordination of

the work because in addition to that we had a German named Adolph Kroeber, who had been in industrial management in one of the big corporations. I've forgotten now whether it was General Electric or who it might have been, but Kroeber, who talked with kind of a German-accented lisp, was . . .

RR: Kroeber, like the . . .

HP: Kroeber. K-R-O-E-B-E-R. Kroeber, which he pronounced "Klover." He was married to a little German woman he called, "Mouse." [Laughs] But, then also, Robert Bliss was in the organization and he had come from an ad agency background in New York. He had gone to Cornell, and I recognized his name because when I was in New York, *P.M.* was still operating, Ralph Ingersoll's paper. And I'd been fascinated with that, and Bliss had done a lot of the promotion work that was signed, so I identified his name for *P.M.* Well, I asked him once what he thought about *P.M.* and the way it had turned out. And he said, "*P.M.* was the greatest paper in the world until Volume I, No. 1." [Laughs] But Bliss and I became very good friends, and so we worked together on developing this training plan. We had some very bright enlisted men who were, you know, master sergeants and things of that sort, who understood a lot of the nitty-gritty of the supply and maintenance propositions. So I presided over the publication of this training plan, which turned out to be about a seven-volume book of courses for all of these different specialties. At the time, the table of organization just consisted of a certain number of people, roughly categorized in terms of whether they were in mechanics or in supply, and we had to define that training. Most of

the training we ended up doing in our own plant there, where we overhauled the Pratt and Whitney radial engines, big 2820s, and the 1710 Allison in-line liquid-cooled engines, which were the major engines used in the military aircraft, the B-17s and the B-24s and the fighters like the B-51s and things like that, that we worked on. So in that factory there we disassembled those engines and did what manufacturing needed to be done on the parts and then reassembled them, put them back together and tested them. And so that was a kind of straight-line production operation, and so we worked it out — and that was manned by civilian employees — so we worked it out so that we could assign these service people in training to follow along with these civilian people who were doing the jobs, and under their supervision, they could take over the actual performance of these things. So it was on-the-job training. And that was the way that broke down. So we had to develop — in printing this plan, there were certain things in the background, with technical references and things like that, that were common to all of them. So we produced enough of those, and then they became more specialized for the different functions because the training had to be in greater detail because [unintelligible] in about six months, you know.

RR: What a vital part of the war effort, training, when you think about that.

HP: Oh, absolutely. And a lot of these people ended up going to Britain and ending up with the 8th Air Force support outfits in England, at big depots over there.

RR: Did you stay on there at Mobile?

HP: I stayed on practically the entire time, but after we developed this training plan, it

was about the time that the actual training was phasing down because most of them were in line to be shipped out. Oh, we also trained special floating air depot group units that went aboard specially equipped victory ships that were trained to support the B-29 island-hopping operation in the Pacific for the B-29s that were to be in the Japanese onslaughts. And I am sure that the one B-29 that we had down there that was sort of under wraps for some kind of a modification was the *Enola Gay*. I am sure it was. I never was able to confirm that, but . . .

RR: The one that dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima.

HP: Yes. But I came to know all those people, and then after we had pretty well wrapped up the development of the training plans — and I had moved up by then to be deputy chief of military training and operations, which was one of the three sections of the personnel and training division, and the other divisions were civilian personnel and military personnel. Well, about that time, I had a call from the commanding officer to come up and he said, "We've received an unsatisfactory rating for civilian personnel administration." We had 18,000 civilians at Mobile and about three to four thousand in each of these four specialized depots. And he said, "You've developed a reputation for having an unobtrusive way of getting things done." And so Col. [Snider?], Lt. Col. Joe [Snider?] from Little Rock, Arkansas, was what they called a "Retread." He had been called back into service from the National Guard or something like that. Joe was a kind of political operator in Arkansas, but he was a goof-up and a kind of political character and that had snarled up, I think, a whole lot because he had a

lot of second-guessers working around him. But he said — and at that time I was still a first lieutenant. I'd been promoted first lieutenant in three months after getting there — so he said, "So we've selected you to be the assistant chief of civilian personnel for the area command." [Laughs] And here I was a first lieutenant! He said, "You're in for Captain, and you'll have it in a couple of weeks, but you'll have some majors working under you and all of that. But everybody will know that you are not assistant to the chief; you are assistant chief, and we don't know who the chief is going to be because [Snider?] has got to go." Through working on other projects, I had come to know the chief of the military personnel section and that sort of thing, so I said, "Fine. I'll give it my best." So I went down and became the assistant chief and really had the support of everybody along the line, including Joe Kingsley, the young fellow I told you about running into in Naples, Florida, a while back, who became a major general.

RR: Yes.

HP: He had taken out one of these floating depot group units we had at Mobile. But I was able to find out who really knew the score. We had to do all kinds of management where we had an officer and a civilian head of each of the seven branches of the section. We had employment, training, placement, payroll administration, C.A.P. classification, safety and employee relations, all those different activities. So I found out we didn't need two bosses. That frequently worked at cross purposes. So working with the chief of military personnel, I was able to say, "I can release so-and-so because the civilian is adequate and good

there." And another place I'd say that we could move somebody else someplace else. And then I found two or three people who were very good. And the fellow who became the administrative man, who knew the rules and regulations and all that sort of stuff that I didn't want to have to fool with, was named Rassie Smith. Rassie was a . . .

RR: Rassie?

HP: Rassie, R-A-S-S-I-E, Rassie G. Smith. I think Rassie was his name, I don't know.

RR: You have an amazing memory for names.

HP: Well, these people were important people. [Laughs] So it took some months to get the thing really rolling because in the payroll section, for example, they had been out of balance for months on end. One of my other good men was Frank Duff.

RR: I remember Frank.

HP: He was in employee relations, but I found that Frank was just a splendid fellow. He had worked for a time on the Mobile paper and all.

RR: We should fast forward for just a second and say Frank Duff eventually came to the *Arkansas Gazette*. I'm sure that you're . . .

HP: Well, I brought him when I became publisher.

RR: Where were you at the end of the war?

HP: I had stayed on at Mobile through all of this business, and we were given a superior rating for civilian personnel management.

RR: After that glitch.

HP: Yes, after that. In the course of time, as I say, as a Captain I didn't have any open conflict with anybody in my organization, but at one point my division chief said, "You know, you really need somebody with rank to sort of protect you. Who would you like?" That was pretty interesting because here I was. And I said, "Well, you know, I worked with Sy Clark just fine in military training operations all that time. Why don't you give me Sy Clark?" So Sy came down to be my chief. [Laughs]

RR: Was he a major or a colonel?

HP: Well, he was a major at the time. So, in the course of time, as I say, we got the thing moving. A year later we got a superior rating, which is the highest rating for civilian personnel administration.

RR: So you had some experience in problem-solving before you ever became a publisher.

HP: [Laughs] Well, that's right, as a matter of fact. I was not very fearful by the time I got to that point. [Laughs]

RR: Let me back up just a moment and be clear in my mind. You mentioned Carrick Heiskell and Louise. Would it be right to assume you met Carrick through Louise? Or had you known Carrick independently?

HP: I knew several people at the *Gazette*, and I had met Carrick somehow. I don't know. I don't remember how. His wife was the former Bertha Forbes, and they were in the social activities that I was involved in by then.

RR: You see why I'm asking that. I'm looking ahead to your official connection with the *Gazette* and wondering how . . .

HP: Yes. Well, I can go right on to that, and then we can fill in anything you'd be interested in. So after having straightened things out pretty well, I had developed a further reputation as a troubleshooter, so they had a couple of assignments for me. One, they were having trouble organizationally at the sub-depot we had at Gadsden, Alabama. And so I was given the assignment of going up there and straightening that out. That was a woebegone kind of a place because that was really in the boonies. I had thought that having largely engineered the superior rating then the next assignment for me would've been at command headquarters in Dayton, Ohio, at Wright-Patterson Field, but that wasn't to be. They decided to make a troubleshooter out of me, and I was sent up to Gadsden where a light colonel was in command and, there again, he was told that I was to be key to reorganizing what was wrong up there. So I went up there and spent about three months. Col. Dunlap, who was then in command, had told me that as soon as I felt the thing was right, he'd relocate me to a more suitable place. In the meantime, Louise and I were married in 1943, I guess, in the spring of 1943 — I woke up last night trying to remember the date. At any rate, it was just as she was finishing her studies at Parsons. She was the top student up there. Carrick has a collection of her drawings, the colored drawings that she'd done, and they are beautiful works. I probably should have encouraged Louise to go on and do something with her training, but she was not particularly too keen about doing

that.

RR: She was good at art.

HP: She was, yes.

RR: You were married in the spring of . . .

HP: We were married and, of course, there were not suitable — well, in Mobile when we were married, we had to have an apartment that was a part of a house. The owners of the house lived in a section of it and then others, a man who was on the staff out at Mobile, at [Brookley?], and his wife lived upstairs, and we had a section of the downstairs. Louise through her Junior League connections was able to meet some people in Mobile and also we knew the people at the paper there. I was not connected. And when I was married to Louise, I really had no idea that I would ever be in the paper. As a matter of fact, through this experience at Brookley Field, I had decided that I could take that group of key people that I had built with and form a management consulting operation. And I thought there were many opportunities for an organization like that in the South, going into old family businesses that needed restructuring and that sort of thing. And I had also become interested in Latin America, and I thought that there would be opportunities there for such an activity and what not. But while I was at Gadsden on that assignment, V-E Day came along, so that reduced the pressure somewhat. And after I told Col. Dunlap that I thought they had those things in shape, I was moved to Memphis to become the chief of civilian personnel operations there at the specialized depot in Memphis, which was a much more

genial place to be. So I was there. And the man in command there was a lieutenant colonel who, for some reason or another, had a Martin Marauder assigned to him. It was out at the air base.

RR: A what?

HP: A Martin Marauder. That was one of the combat armors.

RR: Yes, I remember that.

HP: So Col. Shock had that, and the fellow who had been in command there just was a sort of, well, he had run a wholesale lumber company or something like that, and things were pretty bumfuzzled there. A lot of it had to do with just simplifying matters and straightening things out in a watchful way. And then V-J Day occurred while I was in Memphis. There again, we were not able to find adequate quarters, and Louise was pregnant with Carrick by that time. She did come over a couple of times, and we had access to an apartment a couple of times over in Memphis.

RR: Was she living back home in Little Rock in this period?

HP: Yes, she was at home with her parents. After V-J Day, I could take off after they shipped on Friday and come to Little Rock and then go back early Monday morning. So that was pleasant enough, you know. So after V-J and after the countdown, it looked as though I was going to be released early in 1946. Then I found — well, Mr. Heiskell, on one of these weekend trips to Little Rock, he said, "You know, you are the only male in the family who has had related experience." And, at that time, he was in his seventies.

RR: And Carrick had been lost in the war.

HP: Carrick had been lost in the war by then, yes. I'll never forget Mrs. Heiskell was coming to Memphis back then. She had a periodontist who was doing some work on her mouth. And she'd come over on a Monday and I would have dinner with her and have an evening and all. And I remember she was over just after V-J Day, and I knew how that must have affected her. I had become very close to her, and I was very fond of her. So we had dinner together on that occasion. But, at any rate, Mr. Heiskell said, "You are the only one with related experience and as soon as you can get out, I'd like for you to come to the paper." And I said, "Well, you know, I had other thoughts about what I would do, but you're talking about an opportunity that would be a great one. But I think I could only come and feel right about it if you recruited me for my ability as a manager and not because of any family connection. And I would want to be given the opportunity to have responsibility because I've had a lot of it." And he said he thought that would be all right. So that worked out, and there was a new regulation that permitted a person to be released if they had the adequate time in and adequate scoring and that sort of stuff and that there were an adequate replacement. Well, I had a young assistant at Memphis from Hershey, Pennsylvania, who had not had a really responsible job and he was not anxious to get out. And I thought he was an adequate replacement. And I said, "If you are interested in staying on, I'm sure you'll be up for promotion," — I think he was a first lieutenant at that point — "and I think Col. Shock would consider you an adequate replacement and would

permit my release." So that's the way it worked out.

RR: Yes.

HP: Well, I would say also, sticking out my chest a bit, that in all my time and I suppose the semi-annual efficiency ratings, only one time was I ever rated other that superior, which was the top rating, and that time it was excellent because Sy Clark, who was the chief at that time, said that the new head of the division, who was a retread from overseas who had been sent back in, had said nobody in his section was superior, that he had never had a superior rating. [Laughs] So that one time, I didn't get superior. Well, when I was released, I was released at the base in East St. Louis, and at that time, I had been put in for major every six months from the time I was eligible, but they had had so many people returning from overseas duty with field grades, but they had run out of field grade allotments there, and so they kept saying, "Well, you'll make it the next time," but I didn't make it until in my terminal leave I was promoted to major.

RR: Yes. It probably is worth a sentence of explanation that we've been talking about the Army Air Corps. It didn't become the air force, the U.S. Air Force, until after the war.

HP: After the war, yes. That's right.

RR: What was your first title at the *Gazette*?

HP: I was made national advertising manager when I came. And I had assumed that that would just be for a period of sort of orientation, but it was where I could just take right over and do that. But, at that point, of course, Will Allsopp was in line

to inherit the business manager role from his father who was well along in years and was quite ill; he was recovering from a rather extensive operation. I had known Will, not too well, but I had called on him from the Democrat Printing and Lithograph Company and I had sold him some furniture, some office system stuff and all that. He had a man named Ed Murphy, who was kind of a black Irishman, working for him, and Murphy was an aggressive fellow who had sort of brainwashed him. Will, unfortunately, just was not too well equipped certainly. Well, by then it was pretty evident that his father was sort of an old school, and, boy, if there was ever a Dickensian situation, that was it. [Laughs] It was ol' Dickens himself. Well, I learned pretty soon that Will had no intention whatsoever of sharing any kind of responsibility or even sharing any necessary information that I would need if I was to prepare in any way to represent the majority ownership. At the time, Roy, I had assumed that Mr. Heiskell had absolute control of the 75% that the family didn't have, the Allsopps. The Allsopps were there when the Heiskell family bought the majority interest.

RR: And they had the twenty-five percent.

HP: They had the twenty-five percent. But, later on, I learned that Mr. Heiskell had really maybe just about twenty-five percent, and his late brother's estate had a lesser amount, and the rest of it was divided among his two maiden sisters and his two widowed sisters because his father, who had been the major owner, had left equal amounts to the six children. And that's the way it worked out. So the J.N. Heiskell family did not even have a majority. When I learned that, boy, it sent a

chill up my spine. But we rocked along there, and Will just wouldn't give me any kind of consideration for anything progressive that I wanted to do in my role as national advertising manager. We needed to put out a grocery list. We needed to set up a bulletin that would advise retailers of national advertising campaigns that were coming up for things that they were selling, that kind of business. But he wouldn't grant me any kind of budget for anything of that sort and would just not give me the time of day to discuss them because he was determined that I was not to invade any of that. Well, that went on for some time, and on two or three occasions, I would go to the Heiskells to see him after his dinner and take this up with him. And he'd say, "Well, be patient with him." Finally, after a year, I said, "Well, now, you know, we had an understanding, I thought, about what my role was going to be, and I've been totally thwarted, and I am not gaining anything. I have never seen a balance sheet; I have no authority, and I had other plans when you ask me to come here. And unless we can get this worked out, I've got to see if I can resurrect those plans and see if I can do something else because I can't take this kind of stuff home with me." And he said, "Well, what would you require, do you think?" And I said, "At least the title of assistant business manager. I need to see the books and have complete access to the financial records and reports. I need to become the advertising director in fact. And I need to have some business access to all the operating things at the paper." And he said, "Well, all right." That was, I think, on a Saturday. And he said, "Well, I'll get Allsopp in tomorrow." So on Sunday he had him in and apparently laid the

law down. So he shifted around, and we shifted some desk locations and one thing or another, and I started doing things. I brought in Bill Moffett, who had run the little depot paper we had over at the Memphis thing as national manager. I got in touch with Frank Duff to come up and be my personnel man. I started moving some things around, and pretty soon Will recognized that things were not going to be the same. I've forgotten how long it took, but about September of 19 . . . whatever it was.

RR: '46? '47?

HP: No, '48.

RR: '48.

HP: '48, yes. He had a lawyer named [Burrow?] approach us with the proposition that he would sell the Allsopps' stock to us for a million dollars. Well, a million dollars was a lot of money back then, but I found, by then, that he had been presiding over an accumulation of earnings that amounted to about a half million dollars, which he had just in a non-interest . . .

RR: Per year, you mean?

HP: No, total. Total accumulation. You see, about that time, about 1946 or '7, some of the excess profits taxes of the war had been taken off and was really the first time the *Gazette* had really made any money of significance. And that was before the taxes were raised and other things tightened up. But he had that accumulation of money not in any kind of interest-bearing investment, but just purely in a checking account. And they had him on the Board of Directors at the Bank, you

know. That was characteristic of the way things were done.

RR: There was a little conflict of interest there, wasn't there?

HP: Hm?

RR: Conflict of interest?

HP: Well, not that so much as just stupidity.

RR: You don't think he was just looking out for the interest of the bank over his own?

HP: Well, I guess that was the price he was willing to pay to be a director of the bank. But, at any rate, Mr. Heiskell and I discussed that and I said, "Well, I think we should take it very seriously and I think, you know, what's accumulated is a significant amount of that sum." And he said, "Well, I'd like for you to go over to Oklahoma City and talk to my friend E.K. Gaylord," who was his age and a contemporary, you know. And I said, "Well, fine." Well, I'd come to know by then who was the personnel chief over there, and I had gone to a couple of newspaper meetings by then and had met young Ed Gaylord, and Bob [Spawm?] was the other one. But I went over and told Gaylord what was concerning Mr. Heiskell, and he said, "Sure, go on and do it." And I said, "Well, I thought that we'd agree."

RR: He was looking for Mr. Gaylord's advice on if this was a good proposition?

HP: Yes, on whether it was wise, first, to do that, whether it was worth while. Well, I didn't think we had any option. We had to do that. And I thought we could make our way out of it all right. So I came back and went to the bank and found that we could finance the rest of it. At that time, Gaston Williamson was my lawyer and

Allen Gates, who had the general insurance agency for Penn Mutual, was a friend and advisor. We were able to work out a loan, but at that time, I don't remember just how much money we were to borrow. It was a significant part of the million, perhaps $400,000, $500,000, something like that. And at that time, that was beyond the limit that the Worthen Bank could do on its own, so they brought in the bank in St. Louis headed by Mr. Hemingway, who had married one of the Roots girls, and so not too long after that we settled the proposition, I was made vice president, secretary and treasurer, with the title of publisher.

RR: And that would've been in '48?

HP: In '48. In November of 1948.

RR: That thing with the Allsopps was rather dicey, wasn't it? Mr. Fred Allsopp was still alive but not in good health.

HP: Well, and by then, I think he had died. A very pathetic and touching thing, after he'd come back to the office for a little while — he'd had some kind of operation that left his fanny sore or something like that so he had to sit on a rubber inner tube and all. One time I was passing his door — he had an office off the main business office there --- so he saw me and called me in. I had, you know, come to know him in passing and was congenial enough in that respect. And he said, "How are you getting along?" And I said, "Well, I won't bother you with my problems." And he said, "No, come on, tell me about it." And I said, "Well, I'm having a problem with your son. He doesn't seem to want to share any problem, and I just want to be an effective lieutenant for him. I can work well in that

relationship, I think." And he said, "Well, Hugh, try to be patient with him, you know, he's sort of young at this." Well, by God, at that point he was fifty-five or six, spending most of his time up the alley at the pool hall.

RR: Oh, yes. When did he finally die, Will?

HP: Oh, much later.

RR: In the '60s, maybe?

HP: I'd have to sort of try to piece it together.

RR: I tell you what that just triggered — the business about when the *Gazette*, or the owners of the *Gazette*, at one time, for a brief period, owned the *Democrat*. Can you tell me that story?

HP: Yes. I don't know in detail. At this point, Roy, I can't tell you how much I ever did know.

RR: It would've been the early part of the century.

HP: I knew more about it than I can recall right at the moment, but I think Mr. Heiskell just didn't want to be responsible for creating a monopoly or whatever. But I just don't know right now what it was.

RR: I wonder how he happened to buy the *Democrat* in the first place.

HP: I don't know that either. And I don't know whether it was before Elmer Clark came. You see, Elmer Clark had been at the *New Orleans*, what, *News*, or something like that, and he came to Little Rock to live and head the paper. And it was he who brought up August Engel, who had worked for him on the paper in New Orleans. The supposition was that he had brought up August as a potential

husband for his daughter, Hortense, but I don't know that to be the truth.

RR: So Elmer Clark was the owner of the *Democrat*?

HP: Elmer Clark was.

RR: And then August Engel . . .

HP: . . . took over. I don't know the sequence there. Margaret Ross may know that.

RR: Margaret one time told me that she had managed to be totally confused about the whole business because she had heard it one way and then she heard it another way.

HP: Well . . .

RR: And, apparently, Mr. Allsopp in his book about the *Gazette* mentions that the *Gazette* Company once had owned the *Democrat* for some period of time.

HP: Well, I might be able to reconstruct it somehow, but I . . .

RR: That's all right. What can you tell me about Fred Heiskell? I know he was dead before you came in, but from family lore and that kind of thing.

HP: Well, he was a kind of a swashbuckling fellow. I think he had been secretary to Luke Lee, who was — well, I think it was Luke Lee. I guess Luke Lee was the Tennessee political figure who was the — something that had to do with the Philippines. I think he was the — I don't know whether they had some kind of a title like Maharaja or something. I don't know what he was of the Philippines, and Luke Lee was his secretary. But Fred Heiskell had had some newspaper experience somewhere along the line somehow, I think. How much do you know about Mr. Heiskell's family background?

RR: Well, a fair amount. I know, for example, that he worked as a reporter for several years before he . . .

HP: Actually, he worked after graduation from the University of Tennessee at, I guess, at Knoxville. No, not necessarily Knoxville. I don't know where, but at any rate there was a history in his family of newspaper people before him. I think his grandfather had been a newspaper man in Tennessee or Virginia, or someplace back there. Margaret Ross would know about that, I think.

RR: I have wondered whether his six or eight or ten years of work as a reporter might have influenced the way he performed . . .

HP: I don't know that he worked that long as a reporter because he went from Tennessee to work for the Associated Press in Chicago. He filed a Southern wire from Chicago, I think, when he was there. And I think he was there at the time of the sinking of the *Maine* or whatever. Then he went to Louisville and was sort of the equivalent of bureau chief for the Associated Press at Louisville, and that's where he was when the family learned, I mean, when his father learned that the *Gazette* could be bought, I think.

RR: That was a great day for the state of Arkansas when the Heiskell family decided to buy the paper.

HP: Oh, I mean! And, apparently, his father kept a pretty rigid hand in the thing for a time because he was only thirty when he came to the *Gazette*. I got to be all of thirty-three when I got to be publisher! [Laughs] I said one time that I understood Elmer Clark had brought August Engel to the *Democrat* to become the husband of

Hortense, but he got the paper without having to marry the boss's daughter! [Laughs]

RR: What kind of a man was J.N. Heiskell?

HP: He was a very interesting man. I really liked him tremendously. He was not given to much show of emotion in the ordinary sense. Now, I don't mean he was without emotion because I think the death of his son had really been a very damaging thing. And I, at no point, ever tried to suggest I was any kind of, you know, replacement there, but we became quite close. I must say that from the time the responsibility was passed on to me for running the business of the *Gazette*, he never questioned it for a moment. He never lacked any faith in me or my judgment, and that was very rewarding.

RR: I think of the word "gentleman" when I think of Mr. Heiskell.

HP: He was that, yes, indeed.

RR: How did that spell out in his ordinary, daily life, being a gentleman? What did that mean to him?

HP: Well, he certainly liked to avoid direct conflict and going back and reading a few of the editorials as of the time he and Davis were having their differences . . .

RR: Jeff Davis.

HP: Jeff Davis. There was nothing in his editorials that I found provocative, you know, in that sense. I don't remember how carefully I may have read them, but he was, you know, very pleasant company. We, in the spring each year, drove to the newspaper meetings in Washington and New York. He and I sitting in the

front seat and Louise and Mrs. Heiskell sitting in the backseat. And it took us a couple of days to get to Washington, and then after the editors' meeting, we'd drive up over the weekend to New York for the publishers' meeting, which was always the next week. And so he and I would have our conversations in the front seat while the ladies would discuss whatever they wanted to in the backseat. And then we went on some trips — I'll never forget he was in his nineties by then. I think one of the early meetings that I attended for the Inter American Press was in, I guess, in Buenos Aires. We had flown down to Lima, Peru and were there for a couple or so days. He had a friend who was editor/publisher of one of the papers in Lima. And then we flew on over, making a stop in Bolivia on the way to Buenos Aires. One evening Louise and her mother went to an opera performance in Buenos Aires, and he didn't feel up to that, so we went to a restaurant in the neighborhood and, you know, by then, on encouragement from his doctor, taken to nipping a little on the sherry and all. So that evening, we had just a very warm, marvelous evening, but he was a pleasant person.

RR: That thing about the sherry. I've read somewhere that in his early years he was very much opposed to strong drink. When did he start taking a little wine?

HP: Well, I think, perhaps — I don't know exactly when. He might have done a bit of it before I had knowledge of him doing it, but I think he may have had a little experience with having a bit of beer. And at one time, I think that I had learned that he had — well, I guess, one time after some newspaper publishers' meeting at Boca Raton, just the two of us had driven up to West Palm Beach and went

someplace for lunch. And he ordered, I guess it was a gin drink of some sort. It was a tall drink. And then one time we were coming back from a newspaper meeting and came back through Birmingham, and Clarence — what was his name? He was publisher of the paper over there, Clarence — his father had been publisher. At any rate, they took us to dinner at the country club, and Clarence was asking around who would like what to drink. And Mr. Heiskell said, "Well, I'll have a glass of sherry," and then we got around to me, and I said, "Could I have a stinger?" And he said, "Oh, yes, we'll fix a stinger." And then Mr. Heiskell said, "Well, I think I'll have one of those."

RR: I bet he liked it!

HP: [Laughs] So he was almost like Brooks Hays, you know. Brooks Hays was a teetotaler for a long time, but he got to where he liked — you know, one time, the Hays lived in Washington on the same street where my brother Ralph had a home. He was just a few doors up the way, up on Capitol Hill . And so Brooks and Marian Hays, one time when we were there, asked us over for cocktails and so he said, "I understand you drink bourbon." And I said, "Yes, that's what we drink." And he said, "Well, I think I'll have a 'Martin-eye'" [Laughs]

RR: He was a funny guy, wasn't he?

HP: Brooks was a delightful man.

RR: Oh, yes.

HP: God, I'll never forget just one of the most fascinating evenings I've ever experienced when Brooks's son Steele was president of the bar association, the

Arkansas bar. They were having a meeting in Hot Springs, and Brooks persuaded Adlai Stevenson, who was our U.N. ambassador at the time, to come down and make a speech for Steele. And so we got Brooks to persuade him to come on down a day early, so we could have a dinner party. And we did. So Brooks and Marian were here, and we had Raymond Rebsamen and his wife, Martha Jane, and Fred Darragh and Nancy [Papafus?] and who else? Oh, and the Heiskells. I think there were fourteen of us altogether. And I'll tell you, of course, Brooks had the most remarkable collection of anecdotes and illustrative anecdotes. He had an appropriate story for any occasion, you know. Well, of course, Adlai was quite a raconteur himself, and Mr. Heiskell, once he got going, you know, he was great. And I wish I had taped that.

RR: Oh, yes.

HP: Oh, God, that would've been something to remember. [Laughs]

RR: I need to change this.

[End of Side Two, Tape One]

[Beginning of Side One, Tape Two]

RR: We were talking about Mr. Heiskell, and I was going to ask you about Mrs. Heiskell, Mrs.Wilhelmina Heiskell. Tell me a little about her.

HP: Well, she was very talented in a number of ways. She, of course, I think, was largely responsible for forming the Little Rock Garden Club. Of course, she was brought up in her father's home. Her mother was just a marvelous woman. And they were, you know, quite an artistic family, talented in different ways.

RR: Was she pretty lively?

HP: Oh, yes. And she was a great golfer.

RR: Really?

HP: Oh, yes. She played golf.

RR: Better than he was at golf?

HP: Well, I am sure she was at one point. [Laughs] Though I don't know. He must have been reasonably good, I suppose. He played golf at one time a little bit with August Engel.

RR: Is that right?

HP: But I don't know who his regular golf . . . because he was no longer playing golf when I came.

RR: Did they live out near the country club?

HP: At last they did. They lived down on Louisiana Street, 1708 Louisiana for the best part of time. They owned property in Edge Hill at one time, but they never built there and, I think perhaps in the depression, — of course, the *Gazette* just never made a hell of a lot of money. Allsopp made some money through real estate speculation and that sort of thing. Mr. Heiskell sort of scorned the notion that Allsopp was much of an intellectual, I suppose, because I think he thought he took a lot of valuable time away from business to write stupid poetry. [Laughs]

RR: Was Mr. Heiskell — there's a building called the Heiskell House on Second Street, what connection is that to the . . .?

HP: That was his brother's.

RR: That was Fred Heiskell?

HP: Fred Heiskell, yes. Chester Street, Second and Chester, yes. In a row of houses that had been built, I think, by somebody named Ward, who, I suppose, had access to prison labor or something like that.

RR: Let me get back to the *Gazette* a little bit more. You spent how many years altogether at the *Gazette*?

HP: From '46 to '86.

RR: Forty years.

HP: Forty years.

RR: During that period of time . . .

HP: Thirty-eight years that I was president and CEO, I mean.

RR: Yes. You saw a lot of people at that institution. We've been talking about Mr. Heiskell and his family. Who were some of the other figures you might say that you have a memory of?

HP: Well, on the business side, the circulation man at the time I came there was named Nicholson. And prior to that time, the circulation man had been — oh, what's his name? It was this man who had an abstract company and had a big house off of Vine or Cedar Street or something like that over here. It is a name that I should be able to think of because he, I think at the time, I don't think business practices had been too well refined in the newspaper business at that time. As I recall, the story was that he just sort of had bought the *Gazette*'s circulation as a kind of a franchise and had gone into the business himself of

distribution and that kind of thing.

RR: Was that a common practice in newspapers?

HP: I don't know whether it was or not. But, I think, somehow or another, they brought Nicholson into the picture. When they brought Nicholson into the picture, he revealed to the Allsopps that this fellow was making a killing on it, and Allsopp then said that they should have fired him for not recognizing that at the time. But Nicholson, of course, had been there a good while when I got to the *Gazette*.

RR: And, I presume, had done away with that practice, contractor or whatever.

HP: Yes. But Nicholson, it turned out, had some failings, too, as were revealed when I brought Leon Reed into the picture. Leon was one of the best executives I ever had because he probably was directly in charge of a broader number of vital activities having to do with distribution and dealerships and all that sort of stuff, but he also found that Nicholson was on the payroll of some of the people that the *Gazette* was doing business with, including the distribution of the film, I mean, the papers through an outfit called Film Transit, which also distributed movie films around.

RR: Why would he want to do that? What was the advantage to him?

HP: Well, just because that way they could have a favorable treatment from the *Gazette* for the charges for distributing the papers to the dealers, the papers. You see, they were delivering the papers to the same towns where they were taking the films for exchange at the movie houses, just piggybacking on that operation.

RR: Would that be a kind of bribe?

HP: Yes.

RR: Well, I know from reading histories of journalism, in years past, generations ago, circulation was always kind of the soft underbelly of the ethics of our trade, if you might . . .

HP: Yes, a new breed of circulators came along, and Leon was certainly one of them. He had a fine operation by the time he got it reorganized because he insisted that it be the kind of experience where young people, mainly newsboys, that was good for them and was a classic bit of training for them in business.

RR: Right. Did he come in about 1950?

HP: '50, '51, along about then.

RR: And by 1957, he really had a test of how good a circulation manager he could be.

HP: Oh, yes, absolutely.

RR: Tell me a little about how he performed during that crisis, in circulation.

HP: Oh, well, he had reorganized all the distribution, the contractors. He'd replaced Film Transit. They were not in the picture. It was during that process that he learned of all these nefarious practices they had engaged in before with Nicholson because they were offering him stuff, and he said, "Out the door." But he was responsible for a number of innovations, including the two-way radio business that was really a great help for dealing with complaints and things of that sort because we could have direct communication with the district managers and all that.

RR: During the desegregation crisis, wasn't he kind of on the hot seat?

HP: Well, his people were confronted. I remember one particular driver who had a big distribution area down through Stuttgart and that way, was confronted once when he was on his way down by a group on the highway who hailed him down and told him not to go there and distribute the papers. And he said, "Well, now, let me tell you something. I don't have anything to do with the content of the paper. I'm in the business of distributing these. And that's my business and what I'm going to do is to back up about 500 yards and when I get here again, I'm going to be going about fifty miles an hour and I'm not going to stop." [Laughs] So that was the kind of thing they ran into.

RR: I've heard that Clarendon was a place where they'd meet the truck and try to get the guy not to throw the papers off.

HP: Well, I don't know right now about the details or any of that.

RR: The loss of circulation in that period has been written about a good bit, including by me and others. A couple of years ago, the *Democrat*, one of the reporters at the *Democrat*, wrote a story about whether the *Gazette* lost money or simply failed to make as much profit as usual during that period, '57, '58, '59. Can you recollect what the situation was in that regard?

HP: Oh, yes, I can very well. And I think, maybe, — we talked about this a little, that at the time there was something in your Faubus book — but the thing was that the livelihood of the dealer depended on a combination of things: his own cost, of course, and the number of papers he distributed, and it took a certain number of

papers to bring in enough income that in the spread, you know, was sufficient amount to reward them for their time. So when the volume reduced, it had a play on whether the person could really afford to do that. So not only was there reduction in the total amount of revenue, but the narrowing of the profit margin in it. In order to maintain a distribution organization in those circumstances, you had to reduce the wholesale price as well. So it got to where it was almost an even trade if you were to keep representation in that area. So that's the way that formula worked.

RR: Looking over the forty years of your connection with the paper, can you remember what the circulation was when you joined the paper and what it was at the end of that forty-year period?

HP: I don't . . . we had charts on that. Probably they are rolled up someplace. [Laughs]

RR: There had to be an enormous gain over that period of time.

HP: Oh, considerably. Yes, yes, indeed. I just at this point can't say. Now, Leon can tell you that.

RR: What about the profitability over that same period of time? Was there an increase in the rate of profit?

HP: Well, I'll digress a minute to say that having had experience in cost accounting and doing estimating of printing, particularly at the Darby Company in Washington where I was really in charge of estimating the estimates for the printing of a number of different publications and things, I was acutely aware of

the cost accounting aspects of it. And in publishing a book, for example, you have the cost of the composition to begin with. Then there is what's called "imposition and lock-up." If it was a book, you had to set it out and, usually, you printed in signatures of about sixteen pages or multiples of eight. So you had to know how you arranged those pages in a form and, usually, you arranged it in such a way that you printed, we'll say, sixteen pages, which would be the equivalent of eight pages on one side and eight pages on the other side because you ran it through so many impressions; then you turned the paper over and ran it through again. And then you cut it to part and then you folded those. So you had the composition, the imposition, the lock-up, the make-ready-for-the-press, your running time on the press, then the bindery operations to fold all those things and organize them in signatures and put them together in a book and then trim them and that sort of thing. Of course, then you added on your overhead and your profit. Well, when I came to the paper, Will Allsopp would keep a big record book of the amount of newsprint used today compared with the amount used a year ago today, with no reference to what the use of the space was in the paper, whether it was for news, for advertising or what. They had no idea of the relationship between costs and revenues in any respect. It was, as I say, just green eye shade and nothing else. Well, I was just distressed about that, and it was a waste of time to keep these other things without having any relationship to what the cost was and how it applied to revenues. I thought somebody in the newspaper business should know about that. And I had come to know the people

in the different newspaper organizations and what not, and I started asking around, and I found out that nobody seemed to have any theory. In the course of that time, I learned that a group of larger newspapers, the financial officers, had found the Stet Controller's Institute made up the top financial people in a number of big corporations. The membership required that the participant have a certain amount of capitalization, that is, the business had to be capitalized a certain amount, and few newspapers were capitalized in that manner and so they were not eligible. So these people decided to form the Institute of Newspaper Controllers and Finance Officers, and I became a charter member of that group. And I met with the group first in Chicago, and there were the treasurers of *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the Louisville *Courier Journal*. A number of the larger papers were represented there. And, there again, I found that there was no clear cut notion that any of them had about this set up. And I thought, "My Lord, what kind of business is this?" Well, I came back from that first meeting and just was frustrated because I knew what the functions were and, of course, in a job in a job shop, you knew precisely what the publication was to be and how it was to be printed and the per-thousand cost of the impressions and that sort of thing. And in a newspaper, you had this gigantic press back there that was kind of a behemoth when you got it going. It was sort of like a railroad locomotive. But how do you apply these things when you don't know which section of the press you are going to run and what the cost of that is? And the product varies so much from day to day in size and content and the difference between advertising and

editorial matter. So I would go back to the office at night with a big piece of paper and start diagraming and doing those things, trying to apply the kinds of things that I knew from commercial printing. Well, I was at that for some time, and I'd do a lot of these schematic diagrams and, finally, as I suppose it happens in any circumstance, the light came on, and it became really a relatively simple matter of realizing that you had to deal in averages and that you had two sources of revenue: advertising and circulation, and you could relate the circulation revenue to the desire of the reader for editorial matter. And, of course, you related the cost of the advertising portion to the advertiser, and then you had the overhead factor and you had to deal in averages. So once you figured that out, you could isolate those different segments. And your whole press was sitting there, whether you were using it all or not, so, there again, you had to sort of average it. And, of course, to the degree that you could define the payroll, you did that. And then for the rest of the operation, you had to decide it in terms of space occupancy with respect to what, in effect, you were paying in rent for this part of the editorial operation, this part of this, that, and the other. Then you had your other utilities, like you had your telephone, you had your heating and air conditioning, all that stuff. By that time, I realized that the accounting machines we had were the old Burroughs devices that had a maximum of about eight different registers that you could be carrying totals in. And I drew up a sheet that had each of the elements that you had to keep account of, the details of overhead, payroll and all that sort of stuff, the fixed costs of phones and other things, and

then the things that depended on variance in cost. And then I found that the National Cash Register Company had come out with a system that had about twenty-four registers and that way you could make a spreadsheet to contain those different things. And there was a man who worked for them, and I brought him into the business. And my friend John Dornblaser, whom I had known back at Henderson and in the Little Rock High School Band, had become a CPA by then, and we were using him. And so I brought John in and said, "We're going to [unintelligible] the system based on this theory." And he said, "Fine."

RR: Sounds like something new in the newspaper business.

HP: And it was absolutely new. And so I developed this thing, and I wrote a paper on it, and it was adopted by the Institute of Newspaper Controllers and Finance Officers and Lyle Baker, who was the general manager at Louisville, had been pursuing something of the same thing, and he said, "You really did it." And so it, in effect, was adopted as the formula.

RR: This is fascinating. I wish every reporter could hear you talk about this because news people don't . . .

[End of Tape Two, Side One]

[End of Interview, Part I]