

CATALOG NUMBER: **OH57.1**  
INTERVIEW: Austin, Sheryl  
YEAR: 1998

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Sheryl Austin, Shari LaBine, and Bonnie Upham  
**DATE:** August 11, 1998  
**PLACE:**  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** This interview is with three employees of the First National Bank of North Dakota in Grand Forks. At the time of the flood, Sheryl Austin was security officer for all branches of the bank, Shari LaBine was safe deposit clerk, and Bonnie Upham was an internal audit employee.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The women discuss their activities connected to the bank's recovery efforts after the flood. They describe the bank's work to provide service to customers after the flood, restore computer equipment at the branches, restore ATM machines in the community, and to recover and restore property in safe deposit boxes at the branches that were flooded. They explain the security measures that were taken to remove flooded safe deposit boxes and to secure the contents of those boxes. They also describe the procedures that the bank followed in contacting box holders so that they could reclaim valuables and documents.

They also describe some the difficulties they encountered in dealing with their own homes after the flood. All three women still worked at bank at the time of the interview.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
                                  **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**   1 hour, 20 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**    none

**TRANSCRIPT:**               44 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**       AV 1999.66.1

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.2**  
Barrett, Mary  
1998

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Mary Barrett  
**DATE:** June 19, 1998  
**PLACE:** East Grand Forks, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Mary Barrett was born and raised in Grand Forks, North Dakota. After several years raising a family, in 1981 Barrett became a migrant school nurse connected to the Polk County Head Start program in Crookston. In 1996, when an office of the Head Start program was opened in East Grand Forks, Minnesota, she became the director of that new office. As of 1999 Barrett remained as director of the East Grand Forks Head Start program and continued to live in her rural home east of the town.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Barrett discusses the flood of 1997 in the Red River Valley and its impact on East Grand Forks. She devotes special attention to the difficulties that the residents of East Grand Forks faced in obtaining child care after the flood receded. She describes in detail the steps that her office took to provide temporary child care during the summer of 1997, and the role of the Head Start Program in helping regular day care businesses reopen after the flood. She explains how the flood affected young children and describes the ways in which child care was connected to how successfully families were able to rebuild after the flood. She concludes the interview with some speculations on the future of East Grand Forks as it rebuilds.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**     2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**       2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**     1 hour, 25 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**     none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                 38 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**       AV 1999.66.2

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.3**  
Bauer, Timothy  
1998

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Timothy Bauer  
**DATE:** June 11, 1998  
**PLACE:**  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Timothy Bauer was born in Kenyon, Minnesota. After receiving his divinity degree, Bauer undertook his first pastorate at a Lutheran church in Grenora, North Dakota. Since that time, he has had several pastorates, including his current one, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Hendrum, Minnesota. Bauer began his pastorate in Hendrum in October, 1996.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Bauer describes the harsh winter of 1996-97 in Hendrum, and the events in the town during the April, 1997 flood. He describes how his church was used as an emergency shelter when power failed in Hendrum in early April. He also describes the activities in the community after the town was largely evacuated while those who remained maintained the emergency ring dike around the town. He explains many of the tasks he was involved in during that period, including dike patrols, meals for the emergency crews and national guard troops, and maintenance of morale while the town was surrounded by flood waters. After the flood waters receded, Hendrum's population turned to recovery efforts. Bauer describes the role of Lutheran Social Services in those efforts. He also discusses the only fatalities that occurred in Hendrum related to the flood, when two brothers died in an accident while building a new home after the flood. He concludes his interview with some speculations on the long-term effects of the flood on the community.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original:**        1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      55 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                    27 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 1999.66.3

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.4**  
Bertschi, Timothy  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Timothy Bertschi  
**DATE:** August 26, 1997  
**PLACE:** Moorhead State University  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** A native of southwest Minnesota, Tim Bertschi graduated from Mankato State University and went to work with the Army Corps of Engineers in St. Paul. In 1987, he moved to Fargo, North Dakota, as operations project manager for the Western Flood Control Project area. In this capacity, he acted as the area flood engineer for the Corps during the flooding that occurred in the Red River basin in 1993, 1995, 1996, and 1997.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Bertschi describes his tasks during the flooding that occurred in the valley in April 1997. He discusses various pre-flood efforts to deal with the flooding through permanent and temporary dikes, various emergencies that the Corps responded to during the flood, and ways in which the flooding may alter future Corps planning for the Red River basin. He also discusses some of the water management issues that arose as a result of the 1997 flood.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour, 25 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                    39 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 1999.66.4

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.5**  
Birkemeyer, Jim  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Jim Birkemeyer  
**DATE:** September 3, 1997  
**PLACE:** Moorhead, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Jim Birkemeyer grew up in Comfrey, Minnesota. He studied radio and television in vo-tech school in Austin, Minnesota, and moved to Ada, Minnesota, when he purchased radio station KRJB (then KMCA). Birkemeyer acted as a public information officer during the flooding of Ada.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The radio station and its format; slight flooding in the late 1980s; early concerns about flooding; expected floods along Marsh River; overland flooding; radio coverage; ice and snow storms taking out power lines; the struggle and need to continue radio broadcasting during the flood; evacuations; evacuating his wife and children to Borup, then to Fargo; the National Guard; dealing with regional and national media (CNN, CBS, ABC); sleeping at the fire station; water in his basement; using generators to run the radio station; lack of flood insurance; frustrations with FEMA; support of the Small Business Administration (SBA); economic recovery; community work and organization of flood recovery; the people of Ada; frustrations with news media trying to get scoops and presenting not necessarily accurate information; concerns about the coming winter.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
                                  **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**   1 hour, 25 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**    none

**TRANSCRIPT:**               38 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**      AV 1999.66.5

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.6**  
Buck, Michelle  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Michelle Buck and Amber Waltman  
**DATE:** September 11, 1997  
**PLACE:** Buck and Waltman's home, Moorhead, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Michelle Buck lives in north Moorhead, Minnesota, with her husband. Buck's daughter, Amber Waltman, also participated in the interview.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The flooding that threatened the family's home in Moorhead; Buck's decision to send her daughters to stay with their grandmother in East Grand Forks; the situation in East Grand Forks when the dikes collapse, and Buck, her mother and her daughters having to be evacuated from the city; spending time in Crookston with other relatives; the flood's effect on an extended family; and post-flood cleanup and repairs to the family home, which Buck and her husband were able to save.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original:**            1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      55 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                    37 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 1999.66.6

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.7**  
Buckalew, Craig  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Craig Buckalew  
**DATE:** October 28, 1997  
**PLACE:** Buckalew's home, East Grand Forks, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Craig Buckalew moved to East Grand Forks, Minnesota, when he opened a Hardware Hank franchise there. He and his family built a home in the northeastern part of East Grand Forks, well away from the normal course of the Red River. The 1997 flood damaged the home, but today, with the damage repaired, Buckalew and his family continue to live there and operate their hardware business in East Grand Forks.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Buckalew discusses his and his family's experiences during the 1997 flood. He describes how he evacuated his family to Crookston, Minnesota, after the dikes broke in East Grand Forks, then returned to protect his store as the flood waters spread eastward. He explains how he and several others built an emergency sandbag dike to prevent the water from inundating the building, and how he was able to live at the site of his store until the flood receded.

While several of Buckalew's friends and neighbors decided to leave East Grand Forks in the aftermath of the flood, he and his family chose to stay. He describes the damage that the flood did to his home and explains the difficulties he, his wife, and their three children faced in repairing their home, including some of the insurance details connected with financing the repairs. He also discusses the flood's effect on his hardware business and the repairs and new construction that followed the flood.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
                                  **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**   1 hour, 30 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**    none

**TRANSCRIPT:**               40 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**      AV 1999.66.7

CATALOG NUMBER: **OH57.8**  
INTERVIEW: Dahl, Greg  
YEAR: 1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Greg Dahl  
**DATE:** July 25, 1997  
**PLACE:** National Guard office, Moorhead, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Greg Dahl was born in Wisconsin. After graduating from high school he joined the Wisconsin National Guard, and he remained in the Wisconsin Guard until he moved to Minnesota. At that time, he joined the Minnesota National Guard. At the time of the interview, Dahl was a major in the Moorhead Headquarters Unit, with primary responsibilities in communications and administration.

The Minnesota Guard's units in the northwest sector of the state consisted at that time of the battalion headquarters in Moorhead, plus four companies of the 2nd battalion of the 136th Infantry: A company, located in and Wadena and Fergus Falls; B company in Crookston and Thief River Falls; C company in Bemidji; and D company in Detroit Lakes. Together with most of the other Guard members, Dahl has returned to his normal duties since the flood.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Dahl discusses the roles of Guard units in dealing with the emergencies that arose during the 1997 flood. He describes the various duties undertaken by the Guard in the flooded communities of Ada, Breckenridge, and East Grand Forks, as well as Guard activities in the rural areas of the region. These duties consisted of such things as traffic control (including the guarding of roads permitting access to evacuated neighborhoods), dike patrol, delivery of emergency supplies including gasoline and fuel oil, and even occasional work to reinforce dikes. The most common and well-publicized duty of the Guard was assisting homeowners and residents to evacuate as the flood waters rose. Dahl discusses the transportation equipment used during the evacuations and the communications system for organizing and directing the units' activities. He also provides details on some of the difficulties that Guard members—some of whom were themselves victims of the flooding—encountered while carrying out these tasks. Dahl concludes the interview by describing the steps that have been taken since the flood to repair Guard transport and other equipment.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original:**            1 60-minute cassette



**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 55 minutes  
**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none  
**TRANSCRIPT:** 31 pages  
**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1999.66.8

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.9**  
Dohman, Pamela  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Pamela Dohman  
**DATE:** July 8, 1997  
**PLACE:** Dohman's home, Breckenridge, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Pamela Dohman was born and raised in Breckenridge, Minnesota, and attended Breckenridge High School. She served as volunteer coordinator during the 1989 and 1997 floods. Dohman works in the Breckenridge High School library, and her husband is the city's fire chief.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The 1989 flood; the first flood of April 5 and 6, 1997; where the flood started; ease of flooding in the city; who volunteers; communication and cell phones; prioritizing dike building; sandbagging; effect of the flood on the elderly; the first flood (the Otter Tail River); initial failure of the radio station to broadcast news of flooding; the ice; weather hampering travel in town; rumors of flooding at Tyler; the crisis of the dikes breaking on the north side; no water or sewer available at home; evacuation centers at fire hall; no evacuation of pets; preparing food; the work of teenagers; boats; volunteer help from outside Breckenridge; the Salvation Army; FEMA; accuracy of flood forecasting; being on national news; preventing future flooding on this scale; getting new facilities for volunteer services in the future.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
                                  **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**   1 hour, 30 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**    none

**TRANSCRIPT:**               34 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**      AV 1999.66.9

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.10**  
Dunlevy, Mary Ann  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Mary Ann Dunlevy  
**DATE:** October 22, 1997  
**PLACE:** Moorhead State University  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Mary Ann Dunlevy was born in North Dakota. She moved to East Grand Forks, when she and her husband, Leo Dunlevy, Jr., moved into a newly built house near a major bend in the Red River. Dunlevy lived there for 41 years, but after the 1997 flood she decided to sell her home and leave East Grand Forks.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Experiences trying to protect her home during the flood; steps she and her neighbors took to try and raise sandbag dikes to protect property; difficulties in the early days of the flood; the ultimate flooding of their homes; description of damage the high water did to her home, one of the first lost in the flooding of East Grand Forks; loss of personal property due to flood; an extensive recovery period after the flood; and the decision to sell her home and leave East Grand Forks.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**     2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**       2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**   1 hour, 15 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**    none

**TRANSCRIPT:**               34 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**      AV 1999.66.10

CATALOG NUMBER: **OH57.11**  
INTERVIEW: Ebner, Lynne  
YEAR: 1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Lynne Ebner  
**DATE:** June 26, 1997  
**PLACE:** Moorhead State University  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** A native of western North Dakota, Lynne Ebner attended the University of North Dakota and received a degree in nursing. After teaching nursing at UND and at hospital training programs, she joined the staff of Moorhead State University as the college health nurse. She became director of the university's Hendrix Health Center, and in 1989 she earned a master's degree in public and human services administration. Ebner retired from the university in 1997.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Ebner discusses the Red Cross shelter established at Moorhead State University during the 1997 flood. The shelter was used for several weeks by people who left Grand Forks, North Dakota, and East Grand Forks, Minnesota, when those cities were flooded. Ebner describes the shelter's operation and various issues that university personnel dealt with in connection with the shelter. She also provides information on the efforts of faculty, staff and students at the university in fighting the flood in the Fargo, North Dakota-Moorhead area.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
                                  **Original:**        1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**   50 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**    none

**TRANSCRIPT:**               22 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**       AV 1999.66.11

CATALOG NUMBER: **OH57.12**  
INTERVIEW: Evert, Jon  
YEAR: 1998

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Jon Evert  
**DATE:** January 21, 1998  
**PLACE:**  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Born and raised in Clay County, Minnesota, Jon Evert owns a farm near Moorhead, Minnesota, and has held several local offices, including terms as a member of the county commission. He has also served on various boards in the region, including an area basin water board, the International Coalition for Land and Water Stewardship, and the Northwest Disaster Response Network, a group that was formed to consider flood recovery work in the northwestern Minnesota counties affected by the 1997 flood. In addition to maintaining his own farm, Mr. Evert remains active in a number of community organizations in Clay County and throughout the northwest region of the state.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Evert discusses the impact of the 1997 flood on his own farm, the damage to his water supply and property, and the costs he had in recovering from the flood. He also discusses in detail the impact of the flood on many rural areas in the region. He describes the difficulties farmers have had over recent years with crops and finances, and how the flood damage may have accelerated the decline of many small farms. He explains that rural buy-out programs may result in rural townships having no population, and that both town and county tax bases have been severely damaged by flood losses. He discusses some of the international implications that have been brought forth over water management issues after the flood. And he discusses the impact of the flood on the emotional health of many rural residents in the region. He concludes his interview with some observations on the future of smaller farms in the region.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:** **User copy:** 2 60-minute cassettes  
**Original:** 2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1 hour, 30 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none

**TRANSCRIPT:** 37 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1999.66.12

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.13**  
Holmvik, Greg  
1998

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Greg Holmvik  
**DATE:** January 13, 1998  
**PLACE:** Ada, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** A native of Fertile, Minnesota, Greg Holmvik joined the Ada police force after leaving the United States Army. In 1975, Holmvik became the chief of the Ada police department. As of 1999, two years after the flood, Holmvik continued to live in Ada and serve as its police chief.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Holmvik describes the course of the 1997 flooding in and around Ada. He explains the role of the police department in the evacuation of most of Ada's residents during the heavy flooding and loss of power early in April. He also discusses the many activities that occurred in Ada while the town was largely evacuated. He describes some of the earliest recovery actions taken in Ada, to restore power and services, and to provide food and shelter to the emergency workers in the town during April. He explains some of the impact of the flood on such issues as police work, funding for flood recovery, and rebuilding the infrastructure of the community, including the equipment of the police force. He concludes the interview with some thoughts on the long-term recovery of Ada as a result of the flooding.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour, 25 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      37 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 1999.66.13

CATALOG NUMBER: **OH57.14**  
INTERVIEW: Holtman, Laurie  
YEAR: 1998

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Laurie Holtman and Susan Weber  
**DATE:** June 18,1998  
**PLACE:**  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Both longtime residents of East Grand Forks, Susan Weber and Laurie Holtman have been daycare providers in the community for more than fifteen years. As of two years after the flood, Weber and Holtman still remained in East Grand Forks and continued to operate their daycare businesses.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Holtman and Weber explain the impact that the flooding had on their daycare activities in April, 1997, and how the flood interrupted daycare services throughout the community. They discuss how daycare was offered through the East Grand Forks Head Start program while many of the established daycare operations in the community were unavailable after the flood. They explain how the aftermath of the flood, which damaged both of their homes, affected their own businesses during the summer of 1997. They also offer observations on how the flood and the recovery efforts affected the children under their care. They conclude the interview with some speculations about the long-term affect of the flood on residents and future of East Grand Forks.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:** **User copy:** 1 60-minute cassette  
**Original:** 1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 55 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** Holtman's statements should not be used in direct quotations.

**TRANSCRIPT:** 36 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1999.66.14



CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.15**  
Huseby, Lincoln  
1998

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Lincoln Huseby  
**DATE:** May 19, 1998  
**PLACE:**  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Born in North Dakota, in 1948, Lincoln Huseby attended the University of North Dakota and graduated before becoming an insurance agent. After working with American Family Insurance for many years, Huseby formed a partnership to form his own agency, H & H Insurance. H & H Insurance is an independent agency, offering a variety of insurance types, from a number of insurance companies, to customers around the central Red River valley region. Since the flood, H & H Insurance has remained busy with a number of flood-related cases.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Huseby discusses the impact of the winter of 1996-97 and the flood of 1997 on the insurance business. He describes the events of the flooding and the difficulties the flood raised for both insurance companies and insurance customers. Among the topics he takes up in his interview are the possible effects of the flood on insurance coverage in the Red River Valley, particularly federal flood insurance; the effect of the flood on businesses, especially business losses; and the possible impact of the flood and the flood's aftermath on future health coverage in the region. Huseby also discusses the impact of the flood on his own business.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**            2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour, 15 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                    32 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 1999.66.15

CATALOG NUMBER: **OH57.16**  
INTERVIEW: Jurgens, Paul  
YEAR: 1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Paul Jurgens  
**DATE:** July 24, 1997  
**PLACE:** Moorhead State University  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Paul Jurgens was born in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. He joined the news staff of KFGO radio and later was director of the five-person news division. KFGO has been recognized for its outstanding coverage of weather emergencies. Jurgens lives in North Dakota.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The coverage of the flood at KFGO; difficulties the news personnel had in traveling to sites during the flood; strains placed on radio staff to maintain full-time, live coverage of the events. Jurgens feels that the flood emergency was a "career high point," but he also acknowledges that "the human tragedy and destruction was difficult to experience." Partly due to its flood coverage, KFGO was named the News-Talk-Sports station of the year for 1997 by the National Association of Broadcasters.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour, 50 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      35 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 1999.66.16

CATALOG NUMBER:                   **OH57.17**  
INTERVIEW:                             Knighton, Karen  
YEAR:                                     1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:**                             **Karen Knighton**  
**DATE:**                             September 23, 1997  
**PLACE:**                          Moorhead State University  
**INTERVIEWER:**               Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:**   The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Karen Knighton was born in North Carolina and spent most of her time in that state through her college years. She later moved to the Moorhead area. Her Fargo home in the Oak Grove neighborhood was located about 150 feet from the west bank of the Red River.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The events of flooding around her home; subsequent flooding of the Oak Grove neighborhood in mid-April; flood-fighting efforts of the faculty and students of Moorhead State University in Oak Grove as well as other parts of Fargo-Moorhead; and the circumstances behind her and her husband's decision to give up their North Terrace home after the flood.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**           2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**            2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**   1 hour, 20 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**     none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                   43 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 1999.66.17

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.18**  
Laken, Neoma  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Neoma Laken  
**DATE:** August 20, 1997  
**PLACE:** Laken's home, Breckenridge, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Born in North Dakota, Neoma Laken is a resident of Wilkin County, Minnesota. She served as Wilkin County recorder, and has collected and written county history for many years. In the summer of 1997, after the flood, she was appointed to the Breckenridge, Minnesota, City Council, where she is involved in a number of flood-recovery projects.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Laken describes her many activities and contacts with people in Breckenridge during the spring 1997 flood.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**         2 60sminute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour, 20 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                    36 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 1999.66.18

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.19**  
Manske, Joel  
1998

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Joel Manske  
**DATE:** June 19, 1998  
**PLACE:**  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Joel Manske was born in North Dakota. During his college years, he did some part time work with the Office of Urban Development in Grand Forks. Following his graduation from the University of North Dakota, Manske became a full-time employee with the Office of Urban Development. After administering programs for low-income families, he became the Director of the Grand Forks Housing Authority. Manske lost his own home in Grand Forks from the flood. Two years after the flood, Manske was living on a farm southwest of Grand Forks and continuing to direct the Housing Authority in the city.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Manske discusses the flood of 1997 and its impact on housing availability in both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, Minnesota. He describes the damage that the flood did to homes and apartments in the communities. He also briefly discusses his involvement in the "Angel Program," through which flooded residents were provided \$2000 per family by an anonymous donor. He also explains how the flood affected his own property.

In the major section of the interview, Manske describes the activities of the Housing Authority in repairing and restoring low-income housing after the flood, and the steps taken to restore the Learning Center program connected to that housing. He also discusses the role of the Housing Authority in planning the construction of new single-family homes in the western part of Grand Forks. This construction program, designed to provide new housing to residents who lost homes either to the flood or the planned dikes for future flood protection, is explained in detail. Manske describes the system of low-interest loans that was developed to permit residents to buy a home that would be more expensive than the one they lost because of the flood. Finally, Manske offers observations about the flood's impact on housing costs in the communities and on the future population growth of the communities.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1 hour, 25 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none

**TRANSCRIPT:** 35 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1999.66.19

CATALOG NUMBER: **OH57.20**  
INTERVIEW: Martin, Bob  
YEAR: 1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** **Bob Martin**  
**DATE:** October 1, 1997  
**PLACE:** Martin's office, Moorhead, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Bob Martin was born in Nebraska. He received a degree in civil engineering from Iowa State University and later worked as a city engineer in Oklahoma. In 1986, he became the public works director for Moorhead, Minnesota. As director, he supervises the engineering, public works, sanitation and wastewater operations of the city.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Impact of the flood on Moorhead; difficulties faced by the city's government and services in coping with the volume of water the flood created; the planning the city did prior to the flood to meet the situation; emergencies during the flood; solutions his personnel devised to protect city services and property; how the strain of dealing with the flood affected him and other city employees; the flood mitigation project the city has developed to repair flood damage and strengthen the dikes and water system against potential future flooding.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:** **User copy:** 2 60-minute cassettes  
**Original:** 2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1 hour, 20minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none

**TRANSCRIPT:** 34 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1999.66.20

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.21**  
Mikkelson, Steve  
1998

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Steve Mikkelson  
**DATE:** February 20, 1998  
**PLACE:**  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Steve Mikkelson was born in Minnesota and worked for one year for a radio station in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, and later worked in Moorhead, Minnesota, for the International Coalition for Land and Water Stewardship in the Red River Basin. He currently works for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Mikkelson discusses how the MPCA handled pollution and water contamination issues related to the flood. More specifically, he talks about his early work for the water coalition; what the water coalition does and how it operates and is funded; work for the MPCA; issues the MPCA deals with; work with other state agencies; concern about below-ground tanks during the 1997 flood; working with North Dakota agencies; dealing with media calls; worries about industrial spills; water purification since the flood; and final post-flood inspections and working with the Department of Health.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original:**        1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      25 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**            AV 1999.66.21



CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.22**  
Montplaisir, Annette  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Annette Montplaisir  
**DATE:** October 10, 1997  
**PLACE:** Montplaisir's home, Moorhead, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Born in Minnesota, Annette Montplaisir lives with her family north of Moorhead in a section that was to be incorporated into the city in 2000. Her home and those of her neighbors are situated very close to the Red River. She works as a communications officer for the Moorhead Police Department and the Clay County Sheriff's Office.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Montplaisir describes her experiences, and the experiences of her family, during the 1997 flood. She discusses how the flood affected her duties at work and describes many of the problems that both the police and the sheriff's office faced in helping people protect—and in many cases, evacuate—their homes during the flooding. Some understanding of the extent of the flood's impact on law enforcement may be gleaned by the fact that during the flooding, Montplaisir and her colleagues were working twelve-hour shifts, seven days a week; in many cases, they were on duty even as their own homes were threatened by rising waters.

Montplaisir also describes the impact of the flood on her own home and family. She discusses how her husband chose to remain at the home when it was nearly surrounded by flood waters, while she and their two children moved into Moorhead so she could continue to work at the police communications center. Although the Montplaisirs were able to save their home, it did sustain damage, and Montplaisir describes the efforts they have taken to repair the home and protect it from potential future floods. She concludes her interview by discussing how the flooding destroyed the homes of several of her neighbors.

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1 hour, 20 minutes  
**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none  
**TRANSCRIPT:** 37 pages  
**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1999.66.22

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.23**  
Pearson, Wendy  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Wendy Pearson  
**DATE:** October 29, 1997  
**PLACE:** National Weather Service office, Grand Forks, North Dakota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Wendy Pearson was born in Iowa. She studied meteorology and worked part-time for the U.S. Weather Service in Des Moines and then Springfield. She did an internship at the River Forecast Center in Chanhassen, Minnesota, specializing in hydrology, then began work at the Grand Forks, North Dakota, Weather Service office as the staff hydrologist in June of 1996.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The techniques used to estimate the flood crests; the manner by which both the River Forecast Center and the Grand Forks office issued flood forecasts; the problems that developed in estimation and communication of the flood forecasts; post-flood controversy over the Weather Service's role in flood predictions; how the flooding and the ensuing controversy affected her and others in the Grand Forks office; and changes in prediction forecasts implemented by the Weather Service as a result of the flooding.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**            2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour, 45 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      The Minnesota Historical Society has granted the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) a non-exclusive license to use the tapes consistent with NOAA's mission.

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      49 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**            AV 1999.66.23

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.24**  
Pederson, Ron  
1998

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Ron Pederson and John Stumpf  
**DATE:** June 30, 1998  
**PLACE:**  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Ron Pederson has worked at the Northern States Power Company for some 35 years, and at the time of the 1997 Red River Valley flood, he was the manager of natural gas operations in North Dakota for NSP. His associate John Stumpf began working at NSP in 1980 as lineman. At the time of the flood, Stumpf was superintendent of power lines for the company. At the time of the interview, Pederson and Stumpf continued to direct gas and electrical power operations at Northern States Power.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Pederson and Stumpf discuss their activities in restoring electrical power and natural gas service to flooded communities. Stumpf discusses the difficulties involved in restoring electrical lines that had been brought down by a severe blizzard in early April of 1997, knocking out power for large number of communities and rural customers in the Valley. The largest part of the interview is devoted to the problems of restoring services after the flood to Grand Forks, North Dakota. Pederson discusses the problems with restoring natural gas service to homes in the community, and in replacing natural gas lines that were flooded or otherwise damaged. Stumpf describes the many steps involved in restoring electrical service. Both men also describe in detail the steps taken by NSP to protect power and gas facilities during the flood and steps taken to provide greater protection in any future flooding. They describe how employees of NSP were housed and fed in Grand Forks while the flood waters were receding, and in the weeks following. They conclude the interview by discussing how the flood and the recovery efforts affected employees of Northern States Power.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original:**            1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      55 minutes  
**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none  
**TRANSCRIPT:**                    27 pages  
**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 1999.66.24

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.25**  
Reimer, Herb  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Herb Reimer  
**DATE:** July 11, 1997  
**PLACE:** Reimer's office, Moorhead, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Herb Reimer, the city engineer and assistant public works director for the city of Moorhead, is a graduate of North Dakota State University with a B.S. in civil engineering. He worked for the city of Fargo for about five years after graduating, then went to work for Moorhead.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The work of a city engineer; the toughness of the winter before the flood; planning for flooding; community meetings; flood insurance rate maps; deciding where to dike; overland flooding; early flooding of drainage ditches; the need for a comprehensive water management plan in the valley; creating a channel for the ditch flooding; help from the National Guard; the Emergency Operation Center; working with the city of Fargo; failure of mechanical gauges; misinformation about cresting; trying to save the country club; using garbage trucks to hold down storm sewer covers; Oak Port; crisis of false cresting rumors; relief after the final crest on the eighteenth; flood threats to his family; 133 hours of overtime during two weeks; willingness of public to pitch in; prior preparation for a one-hundred year flood; the value of the Army Corps of Engineers; differences between 1969 and 1987 floods.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original:**        1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      24 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 1999.66.25

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.26**  
Schwandt, William E.  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** William E. Schwandt  
**DATE:** June 27, 1997  
**PLACE:** Schwandt's office, Moorhead, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** William (Bill) Schwandt is general manager of Moorhead Public Service. Schwandt joined Moorhead Public Service in 1985 and worked as a project engineer until he was named manager of technical services, a position he held until being appointed general manager.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** His work at Moorhead Public Service; how Moorhead deals with emergencies; precautions taken to prevent power shutdowns; preparations at the Emergency Operations Center; dealing with the ice storms and flood; controlling the storm sewers; work with Army Corps of Engineers; sandbagging; flooding in his own home; effect on his family; sections of Moorhead that flooded; problems with gauge readings; working towards recovery; plans for the next flood; encouraging prudent water usage during the flood; and the need to improve communication in case of emergencies.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour, 25 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      34 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 1999.66.26

CATALOG NUMBER: **OH57.27**  
INTERVIEW: Stennes, Greg  
YEAR: 1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Greg Stennes  
**DATE:** October 28, 1997  
**PLACE:** Stennes's business, East Grand Forks, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Greg Stennes was born in Minnesota. He grew up in East Grand Forks, and took a job at Whitey's Cafe while attending the University of North Dakota. Established in the early 1930s by Edwin "Whitey" Larson, Whitey's Cafe and Lounge became a landmark in the East Grand Forks community. When Larson retired, Stennes became the manager of Whitey's and ultimately became one of three persons to own the establishment.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Stennes discusses the flood of 1997 and its impact on Whitey's Cafe, which was located just beyond the East Grand Forks downtown dikes. He describes the steps he took to try to protect the building, and he relates the events that occurred after the town was flooded in mid-April. He explains the extensive damage that the flood had on Whitey's, and why the town's decision to extend its dike system made it necessary to tear down the original site of his restaurant. Stennes also discusses the flood damage to his East Grand Forks house, and the steps he took to move his home east of the town and well away from the Red River.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:** At the end of the interview, Stennes indicated that, at the time he spoke, he planned to reopen Whitey's in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Since the interview, however, he changed his mind. After further negotiations with the East Grand Forks city government, he and his business partners decided to remain in Minnesota. Whitey's was slated to reopen at a new location in East Grand Forks in late September, 1998.

**SOUND RECORDINGS:** **User copy:** 2 60-minute cassettes  
**Original:** 2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1 hour, 20 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none

**TRANSCRIPT:** 34 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1999.66.27

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.28**  
Thomas, Audrey  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Audrey Thomas  
**DATE:** July 2, 1997  
**PLACE:** Ada, Minnesota, Public Library  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Born in North Dakota, Audrey Thomas moved to Ada, Minnesota, and became director of the Ada Public Library in 1987.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Thomas describes the flooding of Ada in the spring of 1997. She discusses the damage wreaked by the flood on her own home and the destruction of the Ada Public Library. She also describes efforts to rebuild the library, along with other recovery efforts in Ada during the summer of 1997. Ada's rebuilt library opened in October of 1997, with Thomas engaged in rebuilding the library's collections.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
                                  **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**   1 hour, 25 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**    none

**TRANSCRIPT:**               45 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**      AV 1999.66.28

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.29**  
Thronson, Myron  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Myron Thronson and Kevin Ruud  
**DATE:** September 12, 1997  
**PLACE:** Norman County Courthouse, Ada, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Both men are officials of Norman County, Minnesota. Thronson, a native of the county, has been with the sheriff's department since 1988 and has been the county sheriff since his election in 1994. Ruud has been living in Norman County since 1959. He was hired by the county government in 1992 as the county environmental services officer; in this capacity he was the emergency management director during the flood crisis.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The flooding in Norman County, specifically events in Ada; the onset of flooding in and around Ada; difficulties encountered in evacuating most of the residents of the city; subsequent problems before the flood receded; the decision to restrict air space over Norman County in order to deal with the increase in helicopters and aircraft that appeared during the flood; the steps involved in coordinating the flood fighting efforts with various state and federal agencies; and some of the difficulties that Ada residents and others living in Norman County experienced during the lengthy recovery period after the flood receded.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour, 40 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      48 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 1999.66.29



CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.30**  
Tobias, Nanci  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Nanci Tobias  
**DATE:** August 27, 1997  
**PLACE:** Breckenridge, Minnesota, Public Library  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Born in Chicago, Nanci Tobias moved to Breckenridge, Minnesota in 1974. Her husband built their home in the southern part of Breckenridge in 1977. Nanci Tobias works at the Breckenridge Public Library.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The course of flooding in Breckenridge; damage done to the public library; detailed discussion of the several days during which her home was surrounded by flood waters that engulfed much of south Breckenridge; effects of the flood on her family; repairs that need to be made to the library and her home; possible long-term problems Breckenridge will face as a result of the 1997 flood.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**    2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**     2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**    1 hour, 25 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**    none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                51 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 1999.66.30

CATALOG NUMBER: **OH57.31**  
INTERVIEW: Tobias, Randy  
YEAR: 1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Randy Tobias  
**DATE:** October 8, 1997  
**PLACE:** Breckenridge, Minnesota, Public Library  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Randy Tobias was born in North Dakota in 1948 and grew up in the Breckenridge-Wahpeton area. In 1977, Randy built a home for his family, which is located in southern Breckenridge.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The impact of the harsh winter of 1996-97 on the contracting business; preparations made by the government and Breckenridge businesses for anticipated spring flooding; Randy's involvement as a volunteer flood fighter in sandbagging and other efforts; the severe damage to school buildings in town; damage sustained by many friends and neighbors to their homes and businesses; threats to the Tobiases' home in mid-April, when the rising waters essentially surrounded the street on which they lived; the drawn-out efforts to protect their home from the flood; and difficulties people in Breckenridge have been having in rebuilding after the flood.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**    2 60-minute cassettes  
                                  **Original:**     2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1 hour, 20 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none

**TRANSCRIPT:** 42 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1999.66.31

CATALOG NUMBER:  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

**OH57.32**  
Visser, Wanda and Ken  
1997

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Wanda and Ken Visser  
**DATE:** September 19, 1997  
**PLACE:** Immanuel Lutheran Church, Hendrum, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Terry Shoptaugh

**PROJECT SERIES:** The Red River Floods of 1997 Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Ken Visser was born in Minnesota, and grew up on a farm near Ada. He began farming in the 1970s, growing small grains and raising pigs and cattle. He is president and member of the Norman County Farm Bureau.

Wanda Visser is a native of Fertile and earned a nursing degree in the Fergus Falls practical nursing program.

The Vissers and their children were involved in the flood efforts on the farm. At the time of the flood, Wanda Visser worked at Bridges Medical Facility in Ada.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The farm being surrounded by flood waters for nearly two weeks in April; losses to their farm property and livestock; and the flood's effect on the future of their farming operation. Wanda Visser also discusses the damage that the flooding did to the Bridges Medical Facility in Ada and the effect of the flood on her occupation as a licensed practical nurse.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour, 20 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      49 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 1999.66.32