

## Harry Chester Peterson History

Harry Chester Peterson was born August 23, 1902, in Pleasant Grove, Utah. He was the fourth child and second son of Martinus Pedersen [Martin Peterson] and Nicolena [Lena] Jensen. As an adult he stood 6'3". He had dark brown hair and blue eyes.

Harry was the son of Danish immigrants. The families knew each other in Denmark and they married here in Utah. Martinus changed his name at the emigration check point in Europe. He saw that the Danish quota was filled so answered that he was a Swede. His name was then spelled "Peterson". He never did change it back once he entered the United States.

Martinus attended a dance in Salt Lake City with his brother, Christen, and met Nicolena. They dated and married. Martinus (Martin) was Lutheran. The children born to Martin and Lena (Nicolena) were Arthur Martin (June 23, 1887), Cora Mary Ann (May 15, 1892), Ethel Jennie (March 3, 1898), and Harry Chester (August 23, 1902). Ethel died at the age of one month. Lena died of gall bladder complications when Harry was only ten months old. Martha Larson was a daughter of friends that Martin had known in Denmark. She came into the home to take care of Lena and the children the last few months of Lena's life. Martha and Martin later married a year and a half after Lena's death. Harry never knew that his step-mother was not his birth mother. He found this out in a rather traumatic manner. Harry recorded this event himself. He wrote:

Another time the bigger kids in the neighborhood were tormenting him. He said, "I'll tell my mama on you." A larger girl said, "You haven't got a mother. Your mother is dead." He asked his mama if it was so but she told him not to listen to what kids say. But he still remembered it and later, found out it was so. When still a small boy he was missing at dark. All the neighbors were called to help find him. One man remembered seeing a child go into the cemetery in the afternoon. The man crossed the street and found him asleep on his mother's grave.

However, Harry loved his step-mother and paid her great tribute. On the occasion of her becoming Mother of the Year in 1962 he wrote:

I feel, Mother, you are something very special to me --- Someone told me my mother died when I was ten months old. Of course I know nothing of this but I can see you were willing to come in and treat me as your own. You have certainly shown that you have been more than willing to share your life with others, yes, many others.

I couldn't have had a finer mother and sometimes wonder if you haven't been too good and made too many sacrifices for me and mine...

It is foolish to try to put on paper my feelings for you, Mother Dear, and I speak for Mada, our children and grand children as well, so will once more pay tribute to the greatest little mother a man ever had or could hope to have as an inspiration for the better way of life.

## Harry and Family

Martin and Martha were the parents of six sons. They were George Thomas, Leonard Eugene, Raymond Franklin, Marion Dale, Jesse Gordon, and Dan Willard. Eugene drowned in a ditch at the age of two. This was a very sad event for the whole family and Harry remembered it well.

The home was one full of love. Martha's living room became a small basketball court or a large marble ring on which the boys were permitted to play. In the evenings, there were always books to read and plenty of delicious red apples to eat. Musical instruments were always in evidence in the living room which could be quickly converted from a basketball court to a library to a music studio.

Harry was raised Lutheran. He was baptized Latter-day Saint on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1914, at the age of 12. Times were hard and it was common to send the older children out to find their own way in life at an early age. The Peterson house was small and the income of Martin was not extensive. Harry left home at age 14. This was the year 1916, just prior to America's entry into World War I. He worked odd jobs during those years such as a carpenter to help remodel Lindon High School, a car shop in Idaho, and at Bingham Canyon for two years. He helped his father in his work in the Farmer's market in Salt Lake City. Harry helped his father dig graves in the Pleasant Grove Cemetery as his father was the sexton. He was always willing to work and worked hard.

Harry met Mada Peck Sunday afternoon at the Alpine Tabernacle in American Fork. They dated one week and then Harry left to work in Idaho. He and Mada corresponded seven years. They married in the Salt Lake Temple on January 6, 1927.

Harry began working for the Fleischman Yeast Company in 1923. They made their first home in Salt Lake City. Because of his selling skills he became the Northwest Representative and was transferred to the north, selling their products all over the northwest. He was an excellent salesman, driver, and logged many thousands of miles. He received several awards for his skills and abilities by the time he retired. Mada rode with him at the first of their marriage before the children came.

Because of his work in the northwest they lived in Corvallis and Eugene, and Portland, Oregon. They also lived in Reno, Nevada. Other homes were Boise and Seattle. In 1941, war with Japan broke out after the attack at Pearl Harbor. Because of the war with the Japanese and the fear of those on the West Coast from attack from Japan, they welcomed the transfer back to Utah in 1943.

He worked 28 years for the Fleischman Yeast Company. In an effort to avoid paying retirement benefits to thousands, Fleischman released (fired) thousands of long-time employees. There was no one to help or change the situation. Harry went to Geneva Steel to work and found work in the blast

furnace and the coke plant, but the manual labor was something he really hated. He quickly secured a job at Hamstreet Brothers, a dry goods company in Salt Lake City. He spent his last working years as a traveling salesman for the Minnesota Woolen Company. He became a manager over six sales people. This employment shift made the retirement years difficult financially. He retired from all sales in 1971.

Harry had great love for his country. He joined and served the Civil Defense Council's Ground Observer Corps. This organization was formed to use citizen help to protect the west coast during World War II and the Korean War. He was released from this service in 1959.

Harry and Mada had three children. They are Mada Jilene (May 2, 1928\*), Harry Donl (February 17, 1930), and Peggy LaNae (March 31, 1943). Each of these children was endowed, married in the temple, and are the parents of 16 grandchildren for Harry and Mada.

When the family moved to Lehi in 1943 there was a severe housing shortage. World War II created a market where even rentals were scarce. The family moved to Uncle Bernell Bateman's house next to the Peck farm. It was a small, old home, not like the home they had known in Seattle. Jilene was a sophomore, Donl in the ninth grade, and Peggy a baby. The family lived there four years. Donl dug a high jump pit on the property so he could practice. At the end of the war the family built the three-bedroom basement home off their home which they later finished and occupied until their deaths.

Harry served in the church throughout his life. He was in the Sunday School superintendency, a Priesthood teacher, taught the adult Aaronic Priesthood class, and served faithfully as a home teacher throughout his life.

Harry's father, Martin, never joined the LDS Church. He did visit Harry and Mada when they lived in Oregon a year prior to his death. He asked them to do his temple work when he died. This pleased Harry to do this for his father. Martin gave them many names and dates so that the work for other relatives could be done also.

He was an avid fisherman, enjoyed singing and playing the harmonica. He was a good juggler. He also had a delightful sense of humor. He was a meticulous gardener and his home and yard reflected his sense of order and beauty. He took great pride in doing quality work and expected quality work from others.

Harry and Mada spend some of the retirement years attending the "Know Your Religion" series. Donl was one of the speakers and they were able to travel a few times with Don; and Mary Lou.

Harry had learned from his father the character trait of honesty. It was so important to Harry that one be completely honest. This attribute has passed

down through the family. He was a loving father and grandfather. He had a way of making you feel you were very important to him. He always had a hug for each one of us and told us he was proud of us. He commented many times during the last few years of his life, although he was not very well, that they were the happiest, as he witnessed his children and their spouses serving the Lord and raising honorable families.

He passed away in Orem from cancer and lupus on March 11, 1984. He is buried in th Lehi Cemetery.

This information for this history is taken from notes made by Harry and mada and histories of relatives. Jacque Peterson wrote this. If there are corrections or changes, let her know so that it can be corrected.