

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

JOSEPH ELLIS ZAYTOUN

INTERVIEW 1049

This is Dr. Joseph Patterson representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. I am interviewing Joseph Zaytoun of Cary, North Carolina at my home at 604 East Front Street in New Bern. The number of the interview is 1049. The date is March 21, 1993. My number is 1000.

DR. PATTERSON: I want to tell you that I'm delighted to have you here in our home, coming down from Raleigh to the Tryon Palace Symposium then coming here to talk to us about your memories of New Bern. As I said to you on the phone yesterday, the folks down here are very happy that you're back on the Tryon Palace Commission.

MR. ZAYTOUN: I thank you.

DR. PATTERSON: They remember what a great job you did in earlier years. So, let me just get started and ask you some questions, Joe. What were the names of your mother and father?

MR. ZAYTOUN: My father, Ellis Zaytoun, and my mother's name was Isabelle DaKash.

DR. PATTERSON: How do you spell that?

MR. ZAYTOUN: D a K a s h. It's a capital K. DaKash.

DR. PATTERSON: Now where were they born?

MR. ZAYTOUN: My father was born in Hammanna, Lebanon and he came here in 1903, at a very, very young age. Let's see, he was born in 1886, so that's, he came here when he was 16, 17 years old.

DR. PATTERSON: He came to New Bern?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah. His sister had lived here, was living here. Her name was Latifi Zaytoun.

DR. PATTERSON: Would you spell that?

MR. ZAYTOUN: L a t i f i. She came, they tell me, back in 1880 sometime. So she'd been here a long time. And of course their mother was born in 1843. So, you know, Latifi was pretty old when she was here.

DR. PATTERSON: Joe, why did your folks come to New Bern?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, my dad came because of his sister. You know, 1903, the turn of the century, I guess it was the vogue to come to America. You know, to come make your fortune. My mother came in 1913. Now, my mother was born in Lebanon; however, she left there when she was six months old to go to South America. And at that time there were a lot of Lebanese people migrating to Brazil, and so her father was trying to make his fortune down in South America. She was only six months old when she got there, so she grew up down there. She has a Portuguese background. Now my grandmother, her mother, had to come to America to get an operation at the Roosevelt Hospital in New York for gallbladder. At that time, they probably didn't do things like that in South America. So prior to going back home, she came down to New Bern where they had kin folks to recuperate for a month. Well, my mother never left New Bern again because my daddy spotted her and he said he was gonna marry that girl, and he did in 1914.

DR. PATTERSON: How did your father's sister come to New Bern? What prompted them to come to this part of the world?

MR. ZAYTOUN: My father's sister?

DR. PATTERSON: Your father's sister.

MR. ZAYTOUN: That I don't know, except that I believe there was

a contingent of Lebanese people who came to Greenville. I don't know. I don't have the history on her.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, Joe, your folks, your mother and father then, were together in New Bern from 19...

MR. ZAYTOUN: 14 on. Uh huh.

DR. PATTERSON: And you were born when?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I was born in 1920 in Kinston. Three of my older sisters were born here. But then my dad moved to Kinston and opened up a merchandise store and I was born in Kinston and so were my younger brother and younger sister.

DR. PATTERSON: So there are six of you all then.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Six - was.

DR. PATTERSON: What's your full name, Joe?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Joseph Ellis Zaytoun.

DR. PATTERSON: Junior?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, because Pop had only one name, Ellis. Let me tell you about the word Zaytoun. Of course that means "olive" in Arabic.

In the old country when you asked somebody who you are, they would say I am the son of Somebody. You've seen the name "IBN" "IBN SAID" or something, he's the son of SAID. Well, my dad upon coming through Ellis Island was asked what his name was. He said, "My name is Ellis, son of Zaytoun." Zaytoun is the first name of my grandfather. His name was Fairheart. So they slapped the name Zaytoun on the passport, stamped it, and said move on. So that's how the name Zaytoun came into existence.

DR. PATTERSON: I don't think I understood that, Joe. Say it again.

MR. ZAYTOUN: All right. In the old country when they asked you your name you told them, "I'm the son of Somebody."

DR. PATTERSON: Yes, I got that.

MR. ZAYTOUN: But you say the son of that person's first name.

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, the first name of my grandfather was Zaytoun, so he said, "I'm Ellis Zaytoun", and so in lieu of giving his real name, Ellis Zaytoun Fairheart, or something like that. So the name Zaytoun stuck with the family right on through.

DR. PATTERSON: When your father first came to New Bern, he was a young man?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Oh yeah. Sixteen years old.

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh. What sort of business did he start in then?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, he started at Central School. He went to school three years to learn the English language, and of course living with my aunt. After that, they tell me he sold stuff on what they call the cache'. You know, go around the country selling stuff on foot to the farmers; like, socks, hose, you know, hats, whatever, to make a little money. Then he opened up such a store in Kinston.

DR. PATTERSON: He was living in New Bern when he would do these sales around the county, is that right?

MR. ZAYTOUN: That's right.

DR. PATTERSON: And he'd just do this on foot?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Oh yeah, or bicycle. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: And when you moved to Kinston, he opened a merchandise store.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: How long did you all live in Kinston?

MR. ZAYTOUN: We stayed in Kinston four years or so and then moved to Roxboro. And heavens to Betsy, I don't know how he found Roxboro, but he moved to Roxboro and that was where I started school.

DR. PATTERSON: How long were you there?

MR. ZAYTOUN: We stayed there in Roxboro for two years, three years, 1928 I believe. And as I remember, I'll have to put this in about my mother: Naturally there was no Catholic church in Roxboro back in the twenties, but my mother wanted us to know the Lord, so all the children were sent to the First Baptist Church and that's where I learned the Bible, in BYPU, and stuff like that. I can recall Dr. West, who was the Pastor, coming to my house when I was sick, visiting me, and those memories have stayed with me a long time.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you come back to New Bern from Roxboro?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No. We moved to Durham for a little stay, about a year, merchandise business, and you know they were getting to be hard times, and after that we moved to Mebane. You know where Mebane is?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah. Um huh.

MR. ZAYTOUN: We stayed in Mebane two years, and they were very

enjoyable years. My mother made sure we all took piano or violin or something. I took violin. The other children took piano. I don't know where she got the money from, but we had a cow all that time. We'd sell milk and I'd deliver milk. Raw milk in those days, or butter. We all had to churn for punishment. If you're bad at home, you had to churn. Then we moved back to Roxboro for another couple of years, and then from Roxboro we came here.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, when you returned to New Bern, did your father open another merchandise store?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No. My dad then opened a hot dog stand.

DR. PATTERSON: A what?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Hot dogs, hamburgers, down at lower Middle Street. All those buildings are gone now you know.

DR. PATTERSON: You mean below South Front Street?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah, below South Front Street. He also sold insurance for the Life of Virginia on the debit. He had sold some insurance prior to going to Kinston really, you know, just on the debit, you're just collecting a nickel or dime a week from people. So then he started pursuing more the insurance business during those thirties, early thirties. He got in with the John Hancock people and eventually became district manager for John Hancock in New Bern. In the meantime I started selling newspapers.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, when you came back to New Bern, you were about ten years old were you?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, I was twelve. 1932.

DR. PATTERSON: All right. Where did you all live?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, it was a funny thing. You know, Graham Barden Jr.'s outside here now fixing his boat. Well, his dad was my dad's friend, and his law firm had a house out on Spencer Avenue that they were trustees for and it was empty. So he told my dad ya'll move in that house. They fixed it up and so we lived on Spencer Avenue, second block. Big house on the corner.

DR. PATTERSON: You lived there for quite awhile?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Lived there three or four years I imagine, then moved further up Spencer Avenue. And finally my dad bought the house on Rhem Avenue. Carrawon people used to live in it. Their whole family was wiped out in a wreck at one time.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, Joe, you started selling newspapers you say.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Sun Journal?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, I never did sell the Sun Journal. I sold the News and Observer and out-of-town newspapers like the Sunday News, Sunday Mirror.

DR. PATTERSON: Was this a delivery type thing or did you have a store?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, I was delivering in those days.

DR. PATTERSON: You were just a youngster then.

MR. ZAYTOUN: I had customers. Then eventually sold the News and Observer, or carrier delivery in the mornings. I worked for Gaskins

Soda Shop.

DR. PATTERSON: You were going to Central School during that time?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I came here in the seventh grade to Central School. That's where I made all my initial acquaintances in New Bern. You want me to...

DR. PATTERSON: Well, we'll hold off on reading this right now. We'll just follow you through school a little bit. Who were some of your buddies that became important to you?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, one of my first friends was Dr. Charlie Barker. He took me right in. His dad knew my dad when they were young. Also his uncle in Charlotte was a good friend of my dad's. My dad was a real mixer, Joe. He didn't know a stranger, so that helped the family out a whole lot. Other friends of mine at that time were Henry Whitehurst. You recall Henry.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. ZAYTOUN: And Billy Blow was a friend of mine. Albert Willis was one of my close friends in those days. And I always heard of the Patterson boys. I admired them very much.

DR. PATTERSON: We were a little bit older.

MR. ZAYTOUN: A little older, but I admired them. And of course, of the Lebanese people that I knew was a good friend, Albert Ellis. I admired him so much too because of what he was doing.

DR. PATTERSON: You went right through Central School and finished school here, did you?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I went right through Central and New Bern High

School. You know those days, only eleven grades.

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah. Were you working all that time too?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I was selling newspapers the whole time.

DR. PATTERSON: The whole time.

MR. ZAYTOUN: I never had another job.

DR. PATTERSON: And when you finished high school, then what?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, you know I was in the Hand "gang", Dr. Hand's outfit. And Doc never let one of his boys graduate from high school that he didn't make sure went to college. So one day he packed me in the car and drove me to Raleigh. I was going to North Carolina State and I was gonna be a textile engineer. He introduced me to Robert L. Stallings, Jr. who at the time was the self-help student person on the campus. They gave me an NYA job and also I got a job delivering the Greensboro News around State College campus. But unfortunately, Joe, I got malaria and it got so bad that fall, I had to come home. At Thanksgiving I had to drop out. During the interim, I happened to go to Chapel Hill to visit my sister's brother-in-law who was a freshman there, Robert Farris from Wilson, and I liked it so well I said, "I believe I'll transfer", just like that. So after Christmas, I started at Chapel Hill.

DR. PATTERSON: As a freshman?

MR. ZAYTOUN: As a freshman. Didn't get credit for anything at State. And Albert Ellis came to my rescue. He got me a job at the Greek cafe there by the post office. I worked from eight o'clock at night until twelve for my food. I did that the first year.

DR. PATTERSON: Were the years at Carolina good years for you?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Oh, they were the best years of my life, 'cept when I married my wife. Yes, I enjoyed Carolina. This next year, Doc Hand wrote a letter to Ed Lanier who gave me a job, a very sensitive job, mimeographing the examination papers on the campus up on the third floor of South building. You might recall two or three years prior to that they had a big scandal on exams, so they had to have somebody they could trust. Doc told them they could trust me, so that was my job my sophomore year.

DR. PATTERSON: What year did you graduate from Carolina?

MR. ZAYTOUN: My degree dates 1943. However, I go by the class of '41, because if I had started there as a freshman, that's when I would have ended up. But I had to go to the Marines, you know.

DR. PATTERSON: So you were really in the class of '41.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Really, that's the class I go by.

DR. PATTERSON: And then you went into the Marines.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Then I went in the Marines.

DR. PATTERSON: And that took you to the South Pacific I see by the things you brought.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah. I went into the Marines because they had Marines at Cherry Point and they had them in Jacksonville and I could just see myself being sent to one of those places and I'd be at home all the time, but that wasn't the case. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: And you ended up way away in the Pacific.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Went to Paris Island, then they sent me to Quantico,

Va., after which I was assigned as a 2nd Lt. to Charleston Navy Yard for guard duty. Then they sent me to Camp LeJeune. I was there only two or three months, and that's when I married my wife, by the way.

I met my wife during a black-out here in New Bern. She was visiting the former Rosa Rachide (Caton) up here from Columbia, South Carolina.

Shortly thereafter, I married her on Nov. 7, 1943..

DR. PATTERSON: Joe, let me interrupt. What was Thelma's name before you married her?

MR. ZAYTOUN: It was Thelma Knuckley. K n u c k l e y. The reason she was here, her older brother had married Marie Bellamah from New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: Spell that. How do you spell Bellamah?

MR. ZAYTOUN: B e l l a m a h. I hope I did it right.

DR. PATTERSON: All right. Well, Joe, I think I jumped ahead a little bit. Before we get you out in the South Pacific too far away, at Chapel Hill you were engaged in some campus activities that were important to you.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yes. I was very fortunate, my newspaper background, you know. I joined the Daily Tar Heel, but I couldn't write too well, so I went to the circulation department. Into my sophomore year I was appointed by the Publication Union Board as circulation manager of the Daily Tar Heel and all the student publications at Chapel Hill.

That relieved my economic condition quite a bit, Joe. It was the highest paid job on the campus for any student at the time. So I was able to get myself a car and just had a nice economic life after that.

It wasn't pressing. But I enjoyed that very much.

DR. PATTERSON: Joe, out in the Pacific, were you involved in any of the landings?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah. I was sent to Honolulu where they organized what they called a brigade. It's not quite a division. It had two regiments; 22nd Marines and the 4th Marine regiments, who were all experienced veteran combat people. So I was in the headquarters company and we went down to Guadalcanal and we picked these two regiments up and had a few maneuvers down there. And after that, we landed on Guam, June 20, 1944, or June 21st. That operation lasted maybe a month or so. But I recall the 4th Marine Division, or the 2nd, I forget which, was engaged in Saipan; We were not committed to Guam until we were sure they had secured Saipan. So we stayed on the water for forty days on a boat circling around the Pacific waiting for them to secure Saipan, and after that, we landed on Guam.

DR. PATTERSON: Fred was on Saipan, weren't you Fred?

FRED LATHAM: I got in the boats to go ashore and they didn't need us so we got back out of the boats, climbed up the side of the ship on those cargo nets and then we went to Guam.

DR. PATTERSON: This is Fred Latham talking.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Fred, did you land the same time we did?

FRED LATHAM: You were landing on, I would say the northwest corner of the island.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah.

FRED LATHAM: And I was on the eastern shore.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, I'm sure you remember the pyrotechnics display.

FRED LATHAM: Oh yes. Oh yes.

MR. ZAYTOUN: I've never seen a Fourth of July display like that in my life.

FRED LATHAM: And the Battleship North Carolina throwing, lobbing shells over the top at night.

MR. ZAYTOUN: It was absolutely fantastic! Nevertheless, General Shepherd at the time... I was still in headquarters company at the time. I was supposed to be the Signal Company quartermaster, and I'm telling you, that's a complicated job because everyone of our men were with the regiments. We didn't have hardly anybody in headquarters.

But one day I went with General Shepherd up to the front lines, "front" you know, and Joe, I saw a lot of casualties, men in ditches and everything. It was an awful sight. And I felt real bad that I wasn't there with them instead of back there. And I told General, I said, "General, you know, I'm at your disposal. If you want me to stay up here, I'll stay." He said, "I'm the commanding General of this outfit, and when I tell you you can come to the front, you come to the front.

In the meantime you just shut up!", and he brought me back. So I went back to HQs. (laughter) So I appreciated that. (laughter) But anyway, after the Guam thing was secured, we went back to Guadalcanal and we refitted our outfit and called it the 6th Marine Division. I was rooming at the time with the division personnel officer and didn't have a job really. So, they were starting the post exchange regiment,

they called it Service Troops, it's a regiment, and so they asked me if I wanted that since I had experience in merchandising and things, so I said, "Yeah, I'll take it." So I was the post exchange officer of the 6th Marine Division. But!, I had another officer named Bin Walker who lives right here in New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: Binford.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Benjamin Walker.

DR. PATTERSON: Binford Walker.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Binford Walker. He was in a weapons company. I said, "Bin," and we were preparing then to go to Okinawa, I said, "Bin, you want to come up here with me and help me in the post exchange?" He said, "Sure!" So I got him transferred from the weapons company, from another regiment to another regiment during the middle of the war, and I don't think that's ever been done before.(laughter)But we had a good time rooming together, he and I.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you go to Okinawa?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, time came to go to Okinawa and they sent a Captain in. I was First Lieutenant. He said, "Well, I haven't done anything. I want that job. I'm going to Okinawa." So they left me to take what was left of our organization back to Guam. And so I went back to Guam and set up there, and when the time came, after Okinawa was secured and they were going in to get the surrender of the Japanese at Tsing Tao China. Then we all bundled up and went to North China.

DR. PATTERSON: If you'd come to Okinawa, I would have welcomed you.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Were you there, Joe?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. ZAYTOUN: I swear!

DR. PATTERSON: As a physician.

MR. ZAYTOUN: How about that. I would loved to have seen you.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, did you come back to the United States after China then?

MR. ZAYTOUN: We stayed in China six months until everything was okay, we thought. You know, Chiang-Kai-Shek told us everything was okay. I got to do some visiting up there. I went to a town called Tientsin. They don't call it that anymore. I don't know what they call it. But Tientsin was just like the Paris of China. It was modeled after Paris. The shops are beautiful, and we had a very marvelous time up there. I felt like I was on Broadway.

DR. PATTERSON: Joe, when you got out of the service, what did you do?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, during the time I was gone, you know what happened here - Marines! Marines! Marines! Well, my business flourished because then the publishers up in New York of all the publications; (magazines, newspapers), at the outset of the war asked themselves; "Well, do we have an agent down in, where is that, New Bern, North Carolina where those bases are?" They looked in the book and, someone must have said "There's this fellow Zaytoun down there."

They didn't know I was a kid when they gave me the business. And so the business became a big distributorship because of the war and

our proximity to the bases.

DR. PATTERSON: For different magazines?

MR. ZAYTOUN: For magazines. All the magazines and newspapers that came into Cherry Point and Jacksonville and New River came through our agency.

DR. PATTERSON: What did you call that agency?

MR. ZAYTOUN: It was called Zaytoun News Agency.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was it located, Joe?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Down at lower Middle Street down below South Front. That was the wholesale. And of course it supplied all the places from New Bern up to Belhaven and down to Jacksonville and over to Morehead City and Beaufort.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you have a staff working with you then?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Oh yeah. Had eight trucks at the time.

DR. PATTERSON: And other people working in the office?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Oh yeah. A large contingent of people. Even had a manager. I hired a manager.

DR. PATTERSON: You were quite young then.

MR. ZAYTOUN: I was young, but I'll tell you what happened. Let's go back up to the late forties. There was a glut then of periodicals because many of the Marines were going home and there weren't people buying, so I began to look for something else to do. About that time, in the late forties, Dr. Billy Hand and I and about six or seven other folks, I think Laurence Stith was one of them, decided we wanted to put up a radio station. Do you remember that Fred? We were gonna

put up a radio station, a 5,000 watt station here. At the time we only had WHIT, which was a 250 watt small station. So we all put up money, \$5,000 a piece. Billy and I went up to Washington to talk to the Federal Communication and all those folks and we're about ready to go when the competition, not being asleep, changed their wattage to 5,000 and also started buying off some of our stockholders. So finally it got down to where we didn't have enough to go with it, so we disbanded. But I'm really sorry, because a little while later, even our lawyer, L. T. Grantham, he started with another fellow the station that we abandoned. I forget the name of the call letters now. They're still here I think. But I would have enjoyed radio broadcasting.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, when that venture didn't materialize, what did happen?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, at that time, New Bern wasn't too progressive as far as economics were concerned, so we decided to open up a toy and gift shop business along with the other business, the magazines.

DR. PATTERSON: In the same location?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, no. Next door. Remodeled the building next door. That's what that blue book is.

DR. PATTERSON: Now this is still all below South Front Street toward the river.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Oh yeah, right. We did a fabulous business down there, but we found out that it was off the beaten path during the off season, from Christmas or Easter or something like that. So we

moved to upper Middle Street about two doors from the Williams Cafe and opened up a shop there.

DR. PATTERSON: Called it Zaytoun's Toy Shop?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Zaytoun's Toy and Gift Shop. Sold books, toys, costume jewelry, bicycles, all kinds of things. Did a fabulous business. But still, it wasn't what I was looking for. And at the same time, we became censors of the magazines. By the early fifties magazines started putting out articles and things that just weren't becoming to my style of doing things and I became a censor. When the magazines would hit the loading platform, before the truck driver would drive away, the express company, I would say, "Hold it." I would break open a batch and look through it real quick, and if I saw anything that looked off color I stuck it back in the bundle and had labels printed right away and shipped them back collect. So then I started getting in trouble with the publishers in New York because they, you know, weren't gonna stand for that, and we had a big battle going then.

I can recall, they had road men that would come to town to check on you, see how you're doing. They said they could cross the Craven County line blindfolded and know where they were, Zaytoun territory,. They would know they were in my territory by the contents of what was on sale at the newstands. So I really knew that that wasn't gonna be the business for me for the future, so we started the gift shop as a sideline and we sold the magazine business out. I would like to put this in the record, because at the time, Monsignor Michael Irwin was the pastor at St. Paul's. And as you know, I'm Catholic. The

Bishop came down one day and the Bishop called me to the rectory and he said, "Come over here, Joe", and mind me now, I'm just, what, about thirty-two years old, thirty-three. He said, "Look out the window, Joe. You see all those buildings out there? See all that property out there?" He said, "If you were lucky enough to gain all the wealth in New Bern, every building here, but, you were the cause of some youth, because he picked up one of your magazines, and committed a crime and went to Hell, then you're going there, too." Well, when he told me that I said, we're getting out the magazine business. It was a very lucrative business at the time but we got out. We sold it to the circulation manager of TV Guide. Now I'm not trying to be a judge of anybody, but I didn't want it on me, and I got out.

DR. PATTERSON: Now did the gift shop stay in the same location then?

MR. ZAYTOUN: The gift shop stayed, but as you know, it wasn't enough. I had four children and I wanted to educate them, and so I turned to my father's profession. And they used to tell me before I went into it that it's the last thing in the world. You're gonna jump off the cliff when you sold insurance, and it was the greatest jump I ever made in my life.

DR. PATTERSON: You started that what year?

MR. ZAYTOUN: In 1957 I went into the insurance business.

DR. PATTERSON: In New Bern.

MR. ZAYTOUN: In New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: And what company was that with?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I was with the John Hancock Life Insurance Company.

DR. PATTERSON: And you stayed with that then. When did you move to Raleigh, Joe?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, I'm still hungry, you know, so I said, "Well, you know there's just so many people down this way. If I could only get to a whole lot of people maybe I could do a whole lot better."

I had gone to a meeting in Boston, Massachusetts where the John Hancock's located and they pointed out to us at that meeting about their Research Triangle up in Boston. You know, they had a research triangle up there; Harvard and MIT and Boston University, and in between, they were doing a lot of business. They said you can really make a lot of money if you get in where there's something like this going on because there's a concentration of people. You could just probably develop a business in one little small housing development or something. But we didn't have things like that. So about that time, you know, I heard about the deals that were taking place in Raleigh, the Research Triangle. And so I happened to be at a retreat at Southern Pines, Catholic men, businessmen's retreat; and, the vice-president of State Capitol Life was there. He was also a Catholic, and he said, "Why don't you come to Raleigh? I know a friend that needs a life department. He doesn't have one. He's in the fire and casualty business." He said, "I can get you in with them." So I just went straight from Southern Pines back to Raleigh with him and they hired me that day as an associate. I told them, though, if I come, all the business I do would have to still be in my name. I wouldn't

assign my business to no one else. But we would let it be under their umbrella as far as the general public's concerned, as Associated Insurers. And so they made me vice-president of Associated Insurers in charge of the life department and that was my beginning of selling large amounts of life insurance.

DR. PATTERSON: And you moved your family on up there.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Moved my family to Raleigh.

DR. PATTERSON: What year, Joe?

MR. ZAYTOUN: 1962. I hated to leave New Bern, Joe. This is my home. But I needed to educate those children, and I knew that if worse came to worse they could walk from the house to State or St. Mary's or Peace or Meredith, and that was why we moved.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, you've had a very distinguished career in Raleigh. Would you like to comment on that?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I was very fortunate, because just prior to having moved, my friend Terry Sanford became Governor. He was a friend of mine in college.

DR. PATTERSON: Were you classmates?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, he's two years ahead of me. But as you remember, Joe, when you were there, the "poor man fraternity", they used to put on all the concessions and decorate the Tin Can and all that kind of stuff, well, they took me in, and that's how I made a little extra money. I can recall one day after one of the football games, in Steel Dormitory, Terry Sanford sitting on his bunk saying, "One of these days I'm gonna be Governor!" And we all said "yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah"

and laughed. But he did become Governor. And, he appointed me to the State Board of Elections after he became Governor. So I went to Raleigh with a little bit of clout and, you know, it helped me out.

DR. PATTERSON: And then a lot of doors opened for you. I've got in front of me a list of the things you accomplished up there. Why don't you speak to some of these honors that came your way.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, I was very fortunate. I had a lot of good friends in Raleigh and the business was very good. Where I was, it was the largest property and casualty agency in Eastern Carolina at the time. We even operated all over the state. So my insurance business prospered. As far as the other things I did, I was good friends of a couple of fellows who decided to put together a bank. I'd always been told that if you want to sell insurance, be friends with the man at the bank, you know, he'd give you referrals. I couldn't ever get any! So I decided I'd get in it myself. So we organized a little thing called Capitol National Bank. That was in 1972 or '73. We placed the bank down near the capitol thinking we'd get all the state employees do some banking with us. That was a very good stroke of luck for me because after five years I was chairman of that bank. After five years we were able to merge the bank with a large bank out of Whiteville called United Carolina Bank which didn't have a presence in the state capitol. And from then on things were pretty good. So I've been tied up with them ever since, and I'm still on their local board in Cary.

DR. PATTERSON: Then you were part of the Cary Arts Commission

too.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah, also on the Cary Cultural Arts Commission. You got that there?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. ZAYTOUN: That's been a very enjoyable affair, because over here in New Bern you had ten thousand places to restore, they had one, and that was the Page Walker Hotel, which was the home of Walter Hines Page who was Ambassador to Great Britain at one time. So we jumped on that in '85 and we've just about finished that restoration. It's now gonna be the Cary Cultural Arts Center.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, we've spoken about your being on the Tryon Palace Commission, this is the second time, and we'll get to that in greater depth in just a few minutes, but I just want to mention that in passing. You've also been on the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission and you're playing a role in the restoration of the William Gaston house here in New Bern. You've been a member of the board of the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, not the board, but I was a member of the Friends Board.

DR. PATTERSON: The Friends Board. These are just some of the things I happen to know about, but I know there must be other things.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, Hope Plantation holds right much of a part in my heart, up in Windsor. You ever been there, Joe?

DR. PATTERSON: No.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, it's the former home of Governor Stone and

it's a real plantation. It's a beautiful home. Jack Tyler, who is my good friend, is president of the Hope, chairman, and he brought me into Hope and I've enjoyed that very much.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, your interests certainly have been directed toward historical preservation and historical affairs to a great extent. The memories of New Bern have stayed with you in your heart and in some sense have stayed in New Bern and I know that and you've come back and everybody's glad to see you. Let's switch from this now that we've gotten you up in Raleigh, situated very successfully, and bring you back to New Bern and let's talk about some of the things you remember about New Bern when you were a young person here. You have written some of these things down and I think that the best way to do this is just let you go ahead and talk about your memories.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Thank you, Joe. I love New Bern, first of all, with all my heart. The people here have always treated me so warmly and they're just my kind of people and I'll never forget all my friends here. But nevertheless, the first day I came here, I went straight down to Central School with my three sisters, Evelyn, Vivian & Connie to register to go to school. (Henry & Agnes registered at Ghent School) So we had these papers from the principal in Roxboro, and fortunately for me my older sisters were very smart so he had glowing reports on them, and so I was able to get in a good section there at Central School.

The day after we, well, right after we registered we went, we had to walk, we didn't have a car, so we were walking back home to Ghent, so we went to the cemetery, Cedar Grove Cemetery. We started reading

all the tombstone markers, and that was the greatest experience of my life. We just couldn't leave there. We stayed there the whole day. I guess my mother and dad wondered where we were. But we got very much engrossed in that and found that some of the names, you know, to recognize them with the people in town now, and it was just a marvelous experience for us to learn who used to live in New Bern, just going through the cemetery. I recommend that to all newcomers.

DR. PATTERSON: I spent a lot of time doing that.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Do you?

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, nevertheless, that was a great experience. Then when I got to class in school, the history book, I turned to the page where they showed the Tryon Palace. Well, I couldn't believe that beautiful structure was in New Bern, so I asked somebody, "Where is it!? Where is it!?" They said, "Down here on George Street." So I got on my bicycle and went to George Street and I started looking everywhere for the Tryon Palace. I couldn't find it. I asked somebody down there, "Where is Tryon Palace? Somebody says it's right in here somewhere."

DR. PATTERSON: This is the George Street that existed then that went to the bridge.

MR. ZAYTOUN: That's right.

DR. PATTERSON: And it went right through the Palace.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Right through the Palace. The Palace is sitting right on the street, in the middle of the street now. Well, it turned

out to be an old run down apartment house, needed paint, repair, and everything else. That was the East Wing, or the West Wing, the carriage house. I was very, very disillusioned then because, you know, I thought I was gonna see this palace of grandeur. But thank God for the Kellenberger's and the Latham's and all the rest of the people in New Bern that put it together, I got to see what it really looked like before I die. So that was my first experience. And then I want to talk about, in those days, some how or another the water didn't taste good here in New Bern. Do you recall that?

DR. PATTERSON: Not really.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, we used to go to Sloan Spring out on Country Club Road and fill up gallons of jars of water, and that was drinking water.

DR. PATTERSON: That's on the Sloan Estate?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yes! I just recall, remember that. Talking about selling newspapers. I sold papers in Roxboro for the Baltimore American at the Roxboro Mills, Collins and Aikman. The man who was responsible for the sales in North Carolina followed me on down here to New Bern and found me and that's how I started selling papers in New Bern. He needed somebody to sell his papers. I think I sold about ten a week or something. That's big money. Made two cents on them, you know. Twenty cents a week was a lot of money back in those days. And that's how I got into the newspaper business. My big luck came because I used to sell on Sunday, on the corner. You remember a Mike Foster, soda shop right in the middle of the block in upper Middle

Street, it became Shaw's Soda Shop.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes, yes.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, they had the agency for papers. So one Sunday morning the fellow who used to run the sales down on the corner of Pollock and Middle turned up with appendicitis. I was at the corner of Broad and Middle, which is not big business. So they sent me down to the corner to take his place and that's when sales really picked up.

DR. PATTERSON: We were talking about your selling newspapers on the corner of Pollock and Middle Street and it was a great success.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, a success because I was able to meet and learn the people in the town and they learned who I was. I used to sell papers to the Latham's and to the Patterson's. I used to deliver The New York Times to your dad every Sunday. So I enjoyed that a whole lot. Some of my friends, though, back then were Henry Whitehurst.

I can remember Henry and I would go to his house and his dad would sit there and tell us stories way into the night, and I guess my folks wondered where in the world I was. Mr. Whitehurst would get into his car, ten o'clock at night, and drive me home.

DR. PATTERSON: Now their house was on Johnson Street.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Johnson Street, right around the corner from here. Through Henry is how I met the Hand "gang" people. And Albert Willis and I were both over in the C. Green Troop at the time. We transferred when C. Green's troop disbanded, over to Doc's troop. That's when my good times started, working in the scouts.

DR. PATTERSON: You had a good time though in Dr. Hand's "gang".

MR. ZAYTOUN: I enjoyed it very much.

DR. PATTERSON: What was that like, Joe?

MR. ZAYTOUN: There was nothing like it in the country. I don't know of anybody who was as dedicated to youth, and I've never met anybody since, as Doc was to those boys. He was our second father. He made sure that we were instructed in morality, leadership, and physical education, and did well in school, and above all, he didn't want none of us smoking. So, he was a great influence on me and my life; not only during those days, all through college, and after I came back to New Bern, until his tragic death in 1955.

DR. PATTERSON: Joe, you then transferred to Troop 11.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Troop 50.

DR. PATTERSON: Troop 50.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah. I came from Troop 11.

DR. PATTERSON: I'm a little mixed up. Troop 50 was Dr. Hand's troop, wasn't it?

MR. ZAYTOUN: That's Dr. Hand's troop.

DR. PATTERSON: But you were in Troop 11 first?

MR. ZAYTOUN: First.

DR. PATTERSON: And then you came to Dr. Hand's gang.

MR. ZAYTOUN: That's right.

DR. PATTERSON: So you transferred out of 11 into 50.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yes. He made it a scout troop right about that time.

DR. PATTERSON: And that's when you really began to have a good time.

MR. ZAYTOUN: The Doc made it a scout troop so that we'd have a structured program to follow, and it was a great organization.

DR. PATTERSON: How long did Troop 11 last?

MR. ZAYTOUN: It must have gone out back in '38.

DR. PATTERSON: I joined that organization when it first started. I forget how old I was or what year it was, but it was quite a few years before '38.

MR. ZAYTOUN: It was. It went out in '33. I'm sorry.

DR. PATTERSON: '33.

MR. ZAYTOUN: About '33. But it was a great troop because they had a drum and bugle corps second to none.

DR. PATTERSON: I was the drummer.

MR. ZAYTOUN: You the drummer?

DR. PATTERSON: I was a drummer.

MR. ZAYTOUN: How 'bout that. Well, it was a marvelous bunch of people. I remember Teddy Shapou was one of the members of that troop. I believe he blew the trumpet.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you belong to either the drum or the buglers?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I was a drummer. I had one of those drums and I loved it.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you parade down the streets?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yes. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: At nighttime playing. (laughter)

MR. ZAYTOUN: Armistice Day. (laughter) You remember Armistice Day celebrations?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, I loved those days because we always had the parade, you know, but the best thing I looked forward to was going out to Kafer Park to the free barbecue that the American Legion put on. So that was one of the highlights of November. One thing I'd like to mention about the Masonic Theater, as you know the oldest theater in America. Each year during the winter ceremonials they had a fun thing where they also enjoyed, and not being a Mason I don't know exactly the story, but they needed baby carriages for part of their initiation ceremonies. So they told all of these school children, "You bring a baby carriage to us to use, we'll give it back to you afterwards, you get a free pass to the Masonic Theater for a whole week." So you know, we all got the baby carriages. What they did, I don't know what they did with them, but it was a lot of fun to get those passes. (laughter) We looked forward to that every year. Shorty Kafer, I'll never forget him. Joe, one of the things I remember very much was the time when the, at the height of the Depression, things were really tough and Mr. Abernathy, Charles L. Abernathy, the senator...

DR. PATTERSON: Congressman.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Congressman, announced the fact that New Bern was gonna get a new post office. I remember Will Rogers used to write a column in the paper every day and he blasted that thing wanting to

know why a little town like New Bern, maybe 10,000 people, was getting such a big appropriation from Congress for such a big post office!

Nevertheless, it was the greatest thing that ever happened to this town. They had to move the John Wright Stanly House from its location on Middle Street around the corner to New Street, and I used to go by there every day after school and watch them excavate that land to put the foundation of that post office up. But that was quite an accomplishment for New Bern to have such a beautiful building like that. Another thing we used to do, a lot of kids had to make extra money in those days any kind of way they could, they used to have what they call tobacco warehouses here, but they went out. They still had them back then in the early thirties and we used to all go out there and sell candy. Sometimes I would order from these mailorder houses salve,

s a l v e, some kind of mentholatum or something that you rub on your hand and rub it on your sore spots or your muscles. Now, can you imagine anybody buying something like that from a kid and putting it on their body? But anyway, they'd pay ten cents for it and that's what we sold it for, and we made money that way. That was real fun. How much more time we got?

DR. PATTERSON: Plenty.

MR. ZAYTOUN: I would like to talk about people other than me. For instance I'd like to talk about some of the Lebanese people who came here.

DR. PATTERSON: Have you finished, Joe, with these memories that

you...

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, I thought I'd kind of skip through that.

DR. PATTERSON: What might work better, if you would go ahead with these memories. I want to talk about the Lebanese people too, but I'd like to do that after we get these memories from you.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, okay. Why don't we talk about a little social deal. You know, in those days there weren't too many places for the youth to go. Mike Jowdy opened a place called "The Beacon" out here on Highway 70 just about where DeGraffenreid ends and that was the night spot for everybody to go. If you had ten cents you got a hot dog and a coca-cola and you got to socialize. You recall ever going out to The Beacon?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes!

MR. ZAYTOUN: That was the meeting spot. It's sort of like a drive-in, you know, and we used to congregate there every Friday night after scouts or whatever. And that was the social place for us to go in those days. I used to enjoy that. Then, you know, there was a place called "Crabby's" down on South Front Street. Well, you had to get voted in now, but practically anybody who wanted to get in.

Crabby was a machinist or something of that order, but he fixed this place up for kids to come and socialize, both male and female. And I remember playing many a game of Spank Tail Hearts down there on Sunday afternoons. And you know what it meant to lose! You got spanked!

(laughter) Another thing we used to do in those days was down at the foot of Broad Street on East Front was the Cutter Pamlico. It

was stationed out there. Right across from where your grandfather's house was, Senator Simmons. I used to go there and enjoy just hanging around. They'd show you the place and take you down in the engine room, and I just felt like I'd been aboard ship when I went down to the Pamlico. And on Sunday afternoons, if you didn't have enough money to get in somebody's car to go to Atlantic Beach, you'd go to Shady Beach. That's across the river over there at Bridgeton. Go swimming every Sunday afternoon. That was the thing to do.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was that located, Joe?

MR. ZAYTOUN: That was over in Bridgeton. As you get across the bridge you turn to the left. I don't know exactly how to tell you now how to get to it, but it was on Neuse River. They had a pavilion and dressing rooms. And then later on they made a new swimming hole up on the highway going to Morehead, 70, where Neuse Forest Church was. They called it Neuse Forest. They had a swimming hole there, dressing rooms, etc., and you used to go there on Sunday afternoons. Course it's pretty hard to get there if you didn't have transportation.

One little incident took place that I will tell you about. J. W. Burton, Jack Holland, and me, and one other person heard that there was gonna be a barnstormer. You know what a barnstormer is? That's a guy who has an old beat-up airplane that flies from town to town and takes up passengers and makes money. Well, we heard that there was gonna be one over at the Simmons-Nott Airport one day, so we all

thumbed a ride across the bridge. You had to have two dollars. And we got in this old dilapidated airplane, all four of us, no seats, sat on the floor, and that guy took off, and we saw New Bern from the air in 1934. And I'm telling you, that was a thrill. When I got home and told my dad I'd been up in an airplane, he liked to have killed me. He said, "Don't you ever do that again!!" (laughter) So I had a lot of fun. That's about right much about my life here in New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: Joe, that's fine. They're great memories and I'm probably gonna come back to this and ask you some more things in that connection, but it is important for us to talk about the Lebanese people in New Bern. Lebanese families have played a big role in this town and I remember so many of them by name and as friends. I would like to have you talk about them, and perhaps as you are going along I'll ask some questions. But what about the Lebanese people? Who all were they and what did they do and how did they get here? How did they come?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Let me put it this way, back in the days when we had our civil war, they had their civil war. They were under the Turkish empire, and at that time it was called Syria. They didn't become Lebanon until after World War I. When the French took over Lebanon, they divided Syria, and the French took over Lebanon as a mandate from the Armistice.

Most of the Lebanese people in Lebanon were Christians, and the Christian majority ruled the country, but they always had a Muslim vice-president. This is after World War I, now. They would rotate that every now and then, you know. But the majority of the country

was run by the Christians, and from World War I to World War II the country prospered pretty well. But, prior to World I it was a miserable place and people wanted to escape from the rule of the Turkish empire.

It wasn't too good in those days. Just like it was here. So they began to migrate all over the world. Many of them went to South America, South Africa, and to North America. It happened that my folks came to North America because of my aunt. But like my mother, her folks went to South America. They had connections down there with people who had migrated prior to that. But they needed to get out of the country of where they were because there was no food, poverty, etc.

And that's why they came here. They came here looking for a new life.

They had nothing when they came. We're indebted, very much indebted to the people, the good people in this area. They took them in! They put them in their homes! But they worked. They all knew they had to work, to eat. Now my forefathers didn't have much education. As you know, I told you my dad only had three years here at Central School.

But it was their ambition. They were gonna work and slave so that their children would have a better opportunity, and that's why I had such a good chance in this world. They worked that I'd have a better chance.

DR. PATTERSON: Joe, as I grew up, as we grew up, I remember the term "Assyrian" being used a lot.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Right.

DR. PATTERSON: But that does not correctly describe your heritage.

MR. ZAYTOUN: No. Most of the Syrians are Muslims. It's not Christian. Most of them.

DR. PATTERSON: Is there a group then, or was there a group of Syrians in New Bern at that time too?

MR. ZAYTOUN: There might have been one or two that I don't know of, but I think they, you know, turned, you know, Christian.

DR. PATTERSON: So really all the people we're talking about are Lebanese or Lebanese extraction.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yes, most of the people. Now there might have been some that I don't know of, so I don't want to discredit, you know, leave anybody out. But I can recall Chickery Salem for instance. You remember Chickery?

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Chickery Salem, he and my dad and I think Eddie Paul, or somebody, three of them went to Norfolk, Virginia to enlist in the service when World War I broke out, 1917, whenever it was. They found out my dad had three children, no, two children and one on the way, so they said, "You can't go. You go back home." Said, "You be in the home guard. You can be in the home guard. You can't go." Chickery's family was still in Lebanon, so he was free. So he joined what they called Battery A, the...

DR. PATTERSON: The National Guard.

MR. ZAYTOUN: National Guard. And the commander of that was Colonel Robert Hanes from Winston-Salem. Well, that Battery A became very famous in World War I in one of the great battles. They were

under fire one night and were gassed and had to withdraw from the area.

Colonel Hanes' was wounded and left on the battlefield. When they got back to their own lines, their trenches, they wondered where is the Colonel and nobody knew. So Chickery got back out there under fire and under gas and went and looked for him in the middle of the night and found him and dragged him back to the trench and saved his life. And from that time on, Colonel Hanes told Chickery, "Whatever you want in life that I can do, is yours." He became his friend, I mean, dear friend, he saved his life. You know who the Hanes were.

They owned Hanes knitting mills in Winston. Very wealthy people.

So they helped Chickery bring his family over here. Chickery had two sons. One of them, name was Joe, and the other was named Albert.

Well, Joe Salem distinguished himself in high school here and went to North Carolina State University and majored in electrical engineering and obtained the highest scholastic average that's ever been made at North Carolina State at that time. I don't know if it's been surpassed since, but he made high grades. So you see how industrious, how hard these children of Lebanese parents worked to better themselves. He went to work for Carolina Power immediately right out of school. Albert Salem was gonna go to Annapolis, he thought.

Was gonna try to get an appointment. So prior to going he got an appointment to some kind of Coast Guard school or something, but the appointment never came through so he went and joined the Navy. He was a very athletic person and he distinguished himself in the United States Navy, became a Lieutenant Commander and married my sister,

Vivian, and he's been a great brother-in-law all these years. He and I met up together in China not knowing each other were there. So he brought me back from China aboard his ship as a passenger when I came home. I had individual orders cut to come back aboard his ship. We roomed together coming back. Albert & Vivian now reside in Tampa, FL.

About other people who were of Lebanese descent, or from there, was Teddy Shapou. Teddy Shapou was a great athlete. He was quarterback on the football team. New Bern did great things during the time he was playing. Teddy even got a scholarship to State and from there he went to some school in Tennessee I believe. But along came the war and Teddy volunteered prior to America's going into the war. He volunteered for Col. Chennault's Flying Tigers. They trained him and sent him over and he fought in China - distinguished himself. And came back here, and about the time that we were all going, you know, into the service, he became an instructor for one of the aircraft manufacturers as a test pilot, and he instructed. He had a big crash. They put steel plates in his head and saved his life. But he was a great military hero and one of our famous people.

DR. PATTERSON: When did he die, Joe?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Teddy must have died maybe ten years ago or so. I can't recall.

DR. PATTERSON: I remember him very well. Let me ask you about other members of the Shapou family.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, Mike Shapou was famous. Everybody loved Mike Shapou, that's Teddy's dad. Mike had a hot dog-hamburger place.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was it?

MR. ZAYTOUN: It was right there on Pollock Street across from what's now the City Hall, was the post office in those days. I used to love to go there and get a hot dog and a hamburger and a coca-cola all for ten or fifteen cents. That was a great treat for me. And have a dessert. He was famous for freezing bananas. You order a banana, chocolate banana; he'd dip it in hot chocolate, the chocolate would freeze right on the banana and that's one of the most delicious things you ever ate! It was on a stick. Nevertheless, Mike was a great guy and he educated all his children. One of his daughters married my cousin John. John worked in Mike's place until he opened up his own mill works and they made cabinets, he and his sons.

DR. PATTERSON: I wanted to interview John and I didn't know he had died. I went out to his place to make some arrangements and learned that he had passed on, so we missed him.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, he raised some fine children and they're so smart. I went through the plant one day and I was amazed. You start in the front office and you tell them what kind of cabinet you want, they start drawing pictures on a computer, and you go progressively through the thing until you get to the back room and the computer has already made the blue prints, and by the time you get to the back room, the cabinets are cut and everything is done and out the back door you go with your cabinets. It's a very modern way to do things.

Another great person that I had a lot of respect and admiration for is three or four, well, I guess he was about five years older than

I was, and that's Albert J. Ellis. Albert was a friend of yours and your brother Simmons. I don't know much about Albert's young life here in New Bern because I came when he was already in college. But Albert was a good mixer, a good talker, and a good student, and became one of the leading students at the University. He was a member of the Grail, the Golden Fleece, and he started the Inter-Dormitory Council. He was a great influence over me when I got to Chapel Hill.

He got me into the Inter-Dormitory Council and things like that. Opened a few doors for me. I remember Albert going on to law school after he graduated and then he came out and practiced, and he migrated to Onslow County. Married a very fine lady down there. Her father was I think one of the judges or something down there. But nevertheless, Albert distinguished himself in law and was later elected to the General Assembly. And he was one of the first Lebanese to be elected to the North Carolina General Assembly. And while he was there he even distinguished himself further. I can recall that he got sick, got cancer, and died. They had a state funeral for him in Jacksonville and all the distinguished people in the legislature were there. The Lieutenant Governor I think came, and it was quite an affair. They set up a foundation for Albert at the law school at Chapel Hill.

DR. PATTERSON: My brother was involved in that.

MR. ZAYTOUN: He was, in setting that up?

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, he was a very fine person, and unfortunately his life was cut short.

DR. PATTERSON: And the airport in Jacksonville is named for him.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Albert J. Ellis Airport.

DR. PATTERSON: Let me ask you about his uncle, Charlie.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Uncle Charlie. Everybody knew Uncle Charlie.

DR. PATTERSON: Uncle Charlie Ellis.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Uncle Charlie Ellis. He owned a nice ladies store down on Middle Street.

DR. PATTERSON: Was it a ladies store or an Army-Navy Store?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No. The one next door was the Army-Navy and that was his brother-in-law. See, that was John Rachid.

DR. PATTERSON: Okay.

MR. ZAYTOUN: John Rachid owned the Army-Navy store and you could find anything in the world in that store, you know. But next door was a fashion store and that was Charlie Ellis' store. And they all lived upstairs in those days and you could cross over from one building to the other if you wanted to go visiting. I can remember that. Uncle Charlie was quite a fellow. Everybody in town knew him and he did real well.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, how did that name, the Ellis name, come to be with them? That's not Lebanese.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yes it is. Elias.

DR. PATTERSON: All right. It's just been changed.

MR. ZAYTOUN: They changed it to Ellis. The word Elias means Ellis.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, Uncle Charlie raised Albert.

MR. ZAYTOUN: He did.

DR. PATTERSON: I don't know anything about Albert's parents.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, they died. Correction, his daddy died, and Uncle Charlie married Albert's mother and that's how he raised Albert.

DR. PATTERSON: I was with Uncle Charlie when he died at St. Luke's Hospital.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Were you?

DR. PATTERSON: I stayed up with him all night.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Is that so? Well, he was a great guy. I loved Uncle Charlie. And I loved John Rachid. And John Rachid did well by his children too. One of them was Joe Rachid, and I think he still lives in Havelock. He did very well in the men's furnishing clothes business down in Havelock. His son, Albert Rachid, became a pharmacist.

Well, correction. I gotta go back. Let me go back one little step before I tell about Albert Rachid. I want to talk about Tony Libbus.

DR. PATTERSON: All right.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Tony preceded Albert Ellis at the University. Tony Libbus went to the University. He was raised by his aunt. Heaven to Betsy, I don't know what happened to his parents, but his aunt, Miss Libbus, raised him. Not Miss Libbus, but, I can't recall her name. Anyway, she had a grocery store down on Broad Street. Mrs. Joe Ablen(Lizzie), Mrs. Ablen, she raised him and sent him to the University and he became a pharmacist. And as you know, he ran Tony's Drug Store and he really distinguished himself here in town. Everybody loved Tony.

DR. PATTERSON: I'd like to endorse that. Everybody loved Tony. And he was the man who loaned my brother and myself ten thousand dollars so we could start our surgical clinic and build it. If it hadn't been for Tony, we would have never been able to do it. And he charged us a very minimal interest rate.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, isn't that marvelous! He was a great guy. I loved Tony to death. And he had a friend too, by the way, named Ellis Fysal. Now Ellis Fysal was kin to Albert Jowdy.

DR. PATTERSON: F a i...

MR. ZAYTOUN: F y s a l. Ellis was a great athlete himself.

DR. PATTERSON: He was what relation to...

MR. ZAYTOUN: He was a brother to the woman(Genevieve Fysal Jowdy) that the Jowdy's married, Albert Jowdy. He was her brother.

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh. Yes.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Ellis also went to Chapel Hill. I think he went to Chapel Hill; but nevertheless, he became Peahead Walker's assistant football coach at Wake Forest. If you remember Peahead Walker.

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. ZAYTOUN: They were real tough guys in those days. I'm telling you, they put out football teams in those days. Nevertheless, that was his trade, and he went with the American Red Cross after that. That was his career. He ended up in Asheville. He married a doctor lady up there. But let's get back now to the Rachid story. Albert Rachid graduated from Chapel Hill in pharmacy and went to work at Cherry Point at the Cherry Point Pharmacy. I remember Albert telling me one

day that someday he's gonna own a drug store. I knew he didn't have no money.

DR. PATTERSON: Now this is Joe's son?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Joe's brother.

DR. PATTERSON: Joe's brother.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah, Albert. So about that time they were starting New River Shopping Center in Jacksonville and Albert heard about it.

The man that was gonna put it up was a fellow by the name of Ed Richards in Raleigh who started Cameron Village. It's one of the Cameron Village people. So Albert wrote a letter and called up and everything, and got an appointment. "Be here at eight o'clock in the morning they'd interview him." He wanted to put the drug store in at New River. Didn't have a nickel. But he had talked to all the drug salesmen and all said, "We'll help you get in and all that." So he went up there and he went into the office, and the receptionist told him to sit down and she'd announce him to Mr. Richards. Well, nine o'clock came, ten o'clock came, nobody came out. Albert's still out in the reception office.. Twelve o'clock came, he's still sitting there. Finally the old door opened, Mr. Richards came out the door with a bunch of his advisors and he says, "Who is that? Is that the guy we were supposed to see about a drug store?", and one of his men said, "Yeah, I think it is." He said, "I tell you what, tell him come on go to eat with us for lunch, we'll pay him off that way." So they took him to lunch.

No thoughts at all of letting him have the drug store! So Albert sold himself to Ed Richards at lunch that day on a drug store, New

River Pharmacy at New River Shopping Center. Ed said to Albert, "You think you can run a drug store?" He said, "Yes sir, and I got everything lined up to do it." He said, "Well, go to it!" And that's how he made him a millionaire, cause Albert ended up as a millionaire. He finally sold his drug store after many years of success to Kerr Drugs. They merged it in with Kerr Drugs, Banks Kerr up in Raleigh. You know how big a chain that is. So he's one of my favorite stories as far as success.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. Did you know that Joe Rachid's store got burned out?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, I didn't.

DR. PATTERSON: This happened about a year ago. There was a fire down there and it burned Joe out completely.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Is he out of business?

DR. PATTERSON: I don't know. I saw him on TV after that. He was pretty beaten down by the whole thing though. Joe and I were classmates at Chapel Hill and we've been friends through the years and I talk to him on the phone every now and then. But I haven't heard from him since then.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, I'll have to check him out.

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Let me go back to one of the earlier, earlier Lebanese immigrants to New Bern. I don't know too much about him, but I know this, he started a sewing room down across the street from the depot and he was highly successful.

DR. PATTERSON: His name.

MR. ZAYTOUN: His name was Farris Nassif. He was a pioneer manufacturer.

DR. PATTERSON: F a r r i s?

MR. ZAYTOUN: F a r r i s as I have it.

DR. PATTERSON: Nassif.

MR. ZAYTOUN: N a s s i f. He had a lot of relatives here too, brothers, sisters, and etc. That was a highly successful enterprise until a catastrophe struck. The big fire of the twenties. I think it was 19...

DR. PATTERSON: 1922.

MR. ZAYTOUN: '22. It burned out the whole place. And of course you know in those days they didn't have insurance, nothing like that, so that wiped him out.

DR. PATTERSON: What sort of business was it, Joe?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Needlework. They made cloth, clothes, dresses, or whatever. And it was the forerunner to Cohen-Goldman sewing rooms. Right after that, Cohen-Goldman built that building there, or whoever did, and that was one of the main industries here during the Depression. Everybody that got on at Cohen-Goldman, survived. Five dollars a week or whatever it was. So he's one of the early people.

Some of the later ones that came along like Dr. Joseph Diab who came here after World War II . He built a big practice. He was in practice with Dr. Francis King. A year after I moved to Raleigh he migrated to Raleigh. (laughter) He left. He's my first cousin.

And so, Joe just retired this year.

DR. PATTERSON: He did very well in Raleigh.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Very distinguished practice in Raleigh. My brother Henry went to dental school at the University of Maryland dental school.

Spent three years at Chapel Hill first. And Henry couldn't get in there. They told him don't come, they're filled up, you know. Only took a few people from out of state. My mother said, "Look, Henry, if you're there, they can't turn you back." So my daddy and Henry got in the car and drove to Baltimore in a snow storm and got there.

The registration lady said, "We sent you a letter. Didn't you get it? Telling you not to come. We don't have any room for you." He said, "Well, gosh, I'm here. I got to go to school." And they put on such a show up there, "poor mouthing", that they said, "Well, you're here, might as well go on and get registered", and they registered him and that's how he got in dental school up there. (laughter) But later on after the war, he went to Germany in dental work, and after the war he registered at Carolina and became an Orthodontist. And now he has two children who are Orthodontists.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you have memories of other Lebanese people?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, I've got memories of my family and my own children, I might as well say something about them.

DR. PATTERSON: Sure.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Family; My sister, Agnes, married a Coast Guard Lt. in their (Coast Guard) Air Force division who was stationed down at Pollocksville. Immediately after the war, Chuck Murman and Agnes

moved to Lakewood, Ohio, where he was from, and raised a great family there. Agnes was very active in our news business during the war, and participated crucially in New Bern prior to migrating to Ohio.

Children; I have an older son, Albert, who's a dentist in Kernersville (He has one daughter, Laura). He went to Chapel Hill.

I have another son who's a trial lawyer named Robert, and he's been very successful in the law business in Raleigh (He's married to Lucetta Dodd of Winston-Salem, and they have six children). And I have a daughter who's in the hospital administration business in Winston-Salem at Forsyth County Hospital. She's been there almost twenty years and runs the businesses that make a profit under the umbrella of the non-profit corporation. She's the general manager of that organization. (She has two children, Sara and Jack) And my son Steve is in business with me in the insurance business in Cary and he is the president of Zaytoun and Associates. And he's done very well in Raleigh and Cary. (Steve is married to the former Susan Sherrin of Lexington and they have 2 children, Matthew and Mary Susan). All my children were UNC-CH graduates.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, I know you're proud of those children. Joe, let me ask you about some folks. What about the Jowdy's?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, the Jowdy's are very successful immigrants who came here. A brother Al(Albert) and Mike. Mike was the youngest. They first got involved in the fire departments around here. You know they used to have a lot of fire department fraternities, companies they called them.

DR. PATTERSON: The Button and the Atlantic Companies.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yes. And they got involved in that. They were professional firemen too. I don't too much about what they did prior to my coming to New Bern. You know Helen Jowdy McWatters was in my class. That was Albert's daughter. And a younger brother named Albert Jowdy, Jr. and a younger brother named Rudy. These are the children of Albert Jowdy, Sr. They were very smart children, worked very hard in school, always on the honor roll. Albert went to Chapel Hill and he distinguished himself in pharmacy and later on taught at Chapel Hill. From there he went to the University of Georgia and became the Dean of the Pharmacy School in Athens.

DR. PATTERSON: I didn't know that. I knew Albert. I knew him at Chapel Hill.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah. Well, he did real well in his particular field. His brother Rudy (Rudolph) was an engineer. Educated at Notre Dame University, and Rudy did real well in his field. He's up north somewhere in that kind of work.

DR. PATTERSON: How about the Romanus family?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Albert Romanus, the Romanus family, there were two families; Albert was from one mother and then the other children from the other, you know, a second set. But Albert Romanus was much older than me. He was a very successful shoe representative, salesman for a company. Represented shoe companies. He travelled over the state and wholesaled shoes to department stores. And they tell me he was one of the best golfers around. Played always low scores...

DR. PATTERSON: And one of the best dancers.

MR. ZAYTOUN: He was a dancer too.

DR. PATTERSON: He was a great dancer.

MR. ZAYTOUN: He was of the Clark Gable era. Had one of those little mustaches I remember. He's one of the good looking boys.

DR. PATTERSON: Who was his wife?

MR. ZAYTOUN: His wife was one of the Kaleel girls, Kaleel, K a l e e l. Her name was Rose. And they raised a very nice family too.

DR. PATTERSON: I was gonna ask you about the Kaleel's.

MR. ZAYTOUN: You had Margaret who worked there in the hospital.

DR. PATTERSON: Elizabeth.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Elizabeth, excuse me. Excuse me. Yeah, Elizabeth.

DR. PATTERSON: She's made quite a name for herself at St. Luke's Hospital. She did such a fine job.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Did a great job. Worked in the office with the Sisters.

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh. Were there others in that family that you know of?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, one of them was called T. Kaleel, the boy.

DR. PATTERSON: "T"?

MR. ZAYTOUN: "T" "T". He ran a hot dog cafe down at Five Points with Louis Simon. They had a pretty successful business. He was a war veteran and I can remember he was always with the VFW. And poor fellow, his life was cut short early in life and he's gone.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you remember the Aaron family?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I sure do! He was a mysterious type of person to me. Short.

DR. PATTERSON: Now this is A a r o n?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah. Aaron Aarons.

DR. PATTERSON: Aaron Aarons.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah. I remember him well, but I forget now what he did, what kind of work he did.

DR. PATTERSON: He was considerably older than you.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Oh yeah. I remember the Suskin family.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, before we leave Aaron Aarons, one story my father used to tell me about him was that during World War I that of all the men in the United States Army, Aaron Aarons' name led the list. And it would have to, you know, double A's...

MR. ZAYTOUN: First in lines. (laughter) Got paid first and everything.

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah. (laughter) Well, I remember him, and Mrs. Aarons couldn't still be living now I don't think.

MR. ZAYTOUN: I doubt it. He has a son and a daughter, but I don't know what happened to them. They were real smart children in school.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, the Suskins were Lebanese also?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, no, they weren't Lebanese.

DR. PATTERSON: No.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Aaron Aarons was not Lebanese either.

DR. PATTERSON: Aaron was not Lebanese?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, uh uh.

DR. PATTERSON: I'm trying to limit this to the Lebanese family. You tell me when I make a mistake.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Okay. Well, the Suskins they were Jewish faith. But the reason I brought that up was that he was a professor of Latin at the University when I was there.

DR. PATTERSON: He became head of the romantic languages department. He was the dean of the department.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah. Made quite a name for himself.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. Very...

MR. ZAYTOUN: New Bern produced more leaders, more famous people, than any place I can ever imagine. It was just a hot-bed of scholars that came out of this town! Look at it - Pattersons! All of them! Great guys! How about the Lathams? Let's mention them. (laughter) Ha! Ha! Ha! You should have known that. They were my greatest friends.

DR. PATTERSON: Let me ask you about the Francis family, Hyceba Francis.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Hyceba, I think she's still living but...

DR. PATTERSON: She is.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Her daughter was Mary Francis and her daddy was Tom Francis. I remember that. They lived out on Broad Street.

DR. PATTERSON: Now they were Lebanese.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah, Lebanese.

DR. PATTERSON: (This is a continuation of the interview with

Joseph Zaytoun. This is the second tape. This is Side C.) Joe, we were talking about Mrs. Hyceba Francis. She still lives in New Bern and she's in her nineties now. I wanted to interview her but she wouldn't let me do it, but she did come around here to see me and talk to me a little bit. As I remember, she came over here as a young woman to marry someone. Do you know anything about that?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I don't know a bit of history on her. I knew that she was still living. I called my cousin's wife, Idell Zaytoun, and asked her to talk to Mrs. Francis, because I figured she's one of the oldest Lebanese still here, to get me some background on why and when the Lebanese came here, but she told me she couldn't make conversation with her.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. Well, we tried too. How about the Caprio family?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Let me go back to Mary Francis.

DR. PATTERSON: Excuse me. All right.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Mary Francis, her daughter married a man by the name of Lumley who was out of, not Wake Forest but Franklinton, Franklin, right up there above Wake Forest. Franklinton I think is the name of the town. He was quite a successful merchant up there. I think maybe at one time he represented them in the General Assembly.

DR. PATTERSON: I think Mrs. Francis and her husband had a store on Broad Street near where the fire station is now. She talked a little bit about that. The Caprio family is a Lebanese family.

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, the Caprio family is a mixture. They are Italian.

You know, Caprio is Italian, old man Frank Caprio. And the Hatem family married into the Caprio family. Then later on, you know, Isabel Caprio was from the Karam family - of Lebanese descent. One of Isabel's brothers, Thomas Karam, graduated from NC State and was head of Tryon Construction Co. A very fine young man, very active in civic affairs and in St. Paul's Catholic Church. He died in September of 1992.

DR. PATTERSON: You were saying that the Caprio's and the Hatem's married.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Merged, yeah. They had a shoe shop down on Middle Street called The Old Reliable Shoe Shop.

DR. PATTERSON: That was on the east side of Middle Street pretty much across from Williams Cafe?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Absolutely. Next door to that is where the Green Door used to be where Mrs. Waldrop had that nice tea room.

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. ZAYTOUN: But they lived up over the store at that time. I think Mr. Hatem went into the leasing of movie picture machines to schools over the state and educational films and things like that.

But his son didn't want to pursue that, Joe Hatem. He carried on The Old Reliable Shoe Store, or shoe repair business, and he's up on Broad Street right now and has a shoe store and a shoe repair place right now to this day.

DR. PATTERSON: And he has a very fine son named Mike.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, I don't know him. He's grown up since I left here.

DR. PATTERSON: Mike is a real fine young man. He's running the business now.

MR. ZAYTOUN: He is?

DR. PATTERSON: Joe is pretty sick. We wanted to interview Joe and I left word with his son to let me know if he felt up to it, but I'm not sure we'll ever get to.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, he's a mighty fine man. I'm sorry he's sick.

DR. PATTERSON: Now Isabel was a Caprio or Hatem?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, she wasn't that. She's a Karam, and her husband was the late Joe Caprio.

DR. PATTERSON: What was Joe Caprio's wife's name?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Joe Caprio's wife? Isabel. They called her "Izzie."

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah. She's still alive.

MR. ZAYTOUN: She's still here.

DR. PATTERSON: And she works in town some at Margaret Volney's place.

MR. ZAYTOUN: She does?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah. I see her every now and then. Well, how about the Khoury family? Did we talk about them?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, the Khoury family is kin to the Shapou family. Mitchell Khoury and his father are the only ones I remember from that group while I was growing up. I think Mitchell is still here, isn't he?

DR. PATTERSON: I'm not sure. What did the Khoury's do?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, old man Khoury worked in the shoe repair

business with Mr. Caprio.

DR. PATTERSON: And Mitchell, did he...

MR. ZAYTOUN: Mitchell, I don't know what Mitchell did. He is jack of all trades. He ran a parking lot for McCluarin Parking Company the last I heard. He has some children who probably have done real well. You know I left New Bern thirty some years ago, so I don't know.

DR. PATTERSON: We mentioned the Nassif's a little bit earlier but there are other Nassif's we didn't talk about. What about the Nassif family?

MR. ZAYTOUN: The Nassifs were very, very distinguished. John Nassif, for instance, he had a ladies ready to wear store. It was in the Williams Cafe building. Where Williams is today, it was on the corner there. And it was supposed to be a pretty nice store.

DR. PATTERSON: That was a long time ago.

MR. ZAYTOUN: A long time ago. Yeah, I remember coming down to New Bern in '28 as a kid from Roxboro, you know, and I remember that store.

DR. PATTERSON: It was a ladies store?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Ladies ready to wear. Very fashionable. He had two sons. One was Eddie who went to World War II in England and distinguished himself, and came back with a bride (Margaret). She's still here. She's one of the guides at Tryon Palace today. And then you have his brother, Louis, who ran an appliance store in Washington, North Carolina. He did real well.

DR. PATTERSON: Now is Eddie still alive?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, Eddie died. He died very young. Had polio or something. Worked at Cherry Point.

DR. PATTERSON: Was the Caroon family of Lebanese extraction? Do you remember the Caroon's, Billy Caroon?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah, I knew them, but they weren't.

DR. PATTERSON: They were not.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Not that I know of. Let's see, who else was here. There was a big colony here at that time. Well, my cousins, I had four cousins. They came in two shifts. Two of them, three of them, a daughter, Marie, she lives in New Jersey today, she's still alive, their father was a Marionite Priest, Father Elias. That's my uncle. He came over first, mainly because his sister was here, and he was looking for a church. Bishop McGinnis, well, before Bishop McGinnis even, North Carolina was under the jurisdiction of the abbey at Belmont in those teen days, back in the teens, and my dad and Uncle Elias went to Charlotte to talk to the Abbott; they called him Abbott, to try to get uncle placed in a church with a Marionite order. You know the Catholic Church has various sects, and he was of the Marionite order from Lebanon, St. Paul and all that. And while they were sitting on a bench in the park in Charlotte, probably no where to go to sleep, you know, a person came along and saw them sitting there. Said, "What you doing here?" This person was a Lebanese. His name was Knuckley. He said, "Come on to our house." He took them to his house, fed them, put them up for the night. His wife was my wife's mother and he was my wife's father. And they never saw my dad again, that was in the

teens, until my engagement in 1943. Mr. Knuckley had died by then, but Mrs. Knuckley knew the story and knew about it. They lived in Columbia, South Carolina.

DR. PATTERSON: Isn't that an amazing story!

MR. ZAYTOUN: That is. They put my dad up back then. My dad and my mother and I drove down to Columbia for the engagement party.

DR. PATTERSON: Joe, did the Lebanese form a group here in New Bern that stuck together pretty closely?

MR. ZAYTOUN: They sure did. It was called a Syrian-Lebanese-American Association.

DR. PATTERSON: In New Bern.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, it was all over Eastern Carolina. They had chapters all over Eastern Carolina. They would get together on Sundays, various Sundays during the year, and have a big dinner and they called it the Maharajan.

DR. PATTERSON: You'll have to spell that for our typist.

MR. ZAYTOUN: If I can spell it. I'll spell phonetically. M a h a r a j a n. Maharajan. Someone could research that and get the correct spelling, you know. I recall that's how I got to know other Lebanese people over Eastern Carolina. Unfortunately for me, it started to fade away as I got old enough, you know, to really take a part in it, so I didn't, I wasn't too active in it.

DR. PATTERSON: Was there an attempt made in that time to preserve customs from the old country?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, they would dance. They would bring in Arabic

musicians, mostly from New York at the big meeting, the annual meeting.

And they would have that kind of music, dancing to that kind of music.

DR. PATTERSON: You remember that?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Oh yeah, I remember it. I can speak Arabic you know because my grandmother taught me. I can't write it, but I can speak it and hold my own.

DR. PATTERSON: Is that organization still in existence?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yes. Not in Eastern Carolina that I know of. I think they have a pretty good organization in Fayetteville because they have a Marionite church in Fayetteville catering to Lebanese people.

DR. PATTERSON: Are the Lebanese in New Bern still a pretty close knit group, or don't you know?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I think they were.

DR. PATTERSON: They were then, but are they now?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I think they are, but there's a lot of mixture now because all the third generations have inter-married and it's kind of fading away.

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. ZAYTOUN: But I can recall an incident that happened with the Marionite priest they sent to Fayetteville. This is back, I'd say, in the sixties, some time in there. He would go around to various towns and contact Lebanese families to get contributions to his church, you know. He was sent here out of a diocese in Detroit. The bishop of Raleigh welcomed him because it helped him because he didn't have

many priests here, but he wasn't under his jurisdiction. He was under his jurisdiction but not under his rule. In other words, he had to keep an eye on him. But anyway, he went to Rocky Mount to talk to my sister. My sister married a pretty wealthy man in Rocky Mount.

They had the Ford agency there.

He was asking her why she didn't support and contribute to the Marionite church. He said, "Evelyn, do you know your heritage? You're a Marionite!" She replied, "I do know my heritage, father! It's Southern Baptist!" (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Now that leads up to a question I was gonna ask you. You remember your heritage because you were very close to it and you can remember your parents and where they came from. What about your children? Do they value their Lebanese heritage a great deal?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, they ask me about it a lot. But, you know, they never learned the language. They never learned the customs. They know that their heritage is Lebanese, but they've all inter-married and you wouldn't know...

DR. PATTERSON: It gets pretty diluted as you go on.

MR. ZAYTOUN: That's true. It's sad, but that's the way it ought to be.

DR. PATTERSON: Yep. Sure.

MR. ZAYTOUN: That's where we are.

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah. Can you think of any other folks in this group that we have failed to talk about?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I'm certainly worried that I've missed some people

that I don't want to over look.

DR. PATTERSON: There's a young man here that's related to you, Kelly Zaytoun, who's a very good friend of my son's.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Now what kin is Kelly to you?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Now Kelly, he's a son of my cousin. His dad was Kelly. Kelly's done real well. He's a nice fellow. I enjoy meeting, seeing him, every time I come here. He has a spa I think.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes, The Courts Plus.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Is that what it is?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. And also, he's got the Greenbrier Golf Course.

MR. ZAYTOUN: He does? Well, I gotta check him out while I'm here. This trip, maybe I can see him. But I always love to see Kelly. He's a nice young man. And also, I don't want to leave out George, his brother. George has done real well in the construction business. I have some friends up in Raleigh that came back one day and said, "Heck, we were down in Harker's Island and saw Zaytoun's Construction Company", or Zaytoun and Raines, or whatever the name is, and said, "That name's everywhere!" I said, "Well, you know, there's a lot of us." My mother had thirty-three grandchildren and the rest of them had a lot of children. So the name is spread around a whole lot. Let's see, who else they have? Johnny George, you remember Johnny George?

DR. PATTERSON: I'm not sure.

MR. ZAYTOUN: George George. Emily George married Kelly, my cousin. And then you got Fred Zaytoun's family mostly down in Florida, Orlando. He's my other cousin. And Louis Zaytoun, his son went to Citadel, played football, was very successful in the service. After he got out of the service he stayed where he was up in Ohio and did the same kind of work as a civilian he did in the military. And he stayed up there. He had a sister who became a Nun. She's a Catholic Nun now up in Pennsylvania. And they've unfortunately lost a sister. And you have Rosa Rachid. You know Rosa, Albert's sister, Joe's sister.

DR. PATTERSON: That's who we forgot.

MR. ZAYTOUN: And they run the Army-Navy store right now, downtown.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Her name is Caton, Mrs. Hubert Caton.

DR. PATTERSON: Let's talk about the Rachid's. Joe Rachid was my contemporary. Well, we talked about Joe.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah, yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, before..., you have some others?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, he's got a son who's a pharmacist also.

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh. Before we wear you out completely, I would like for you to talk about Tryon Palace a little bit. You've had such close connections with the Palace. As a young person you saw it before it developed and you've helped it develop as an older person. You've been on the commission twice. Tell me a little bit about your career with Tryon Palace.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, you know, it's one of my hobbies. Being in the preservation business, I like it very much. But I grew up wanting to see it, you know, reconstructed, restored, and I was so glad that Mrs. Edwin Latham made the first contribution. I can recall right now the headlines in the Sun Journal when they revealed her will that she was gonna leave money for the Tryon Palace. But in her will, her original will, she's gonna leave her money first for her daughter.

She was a very wealthy woman. She married a cotton broker and they lived in Greensboro. So she was gonna leave her money to her daughter, Mrs. John Kellenberger. Mrs. Kellenberger tells a story that her friends would go around whispering and wondering, you know, "it's gonna be a long time before we get a hold of the money to restore Tryon Palace because she's gonna leave her money to Mrs. Kellenberger then it would be years before, you know, we get the money". So Mrs. Kellenberger heard that. She knew that. And of course, the daughter and the mother both wanted to restore the Palace. So she went to her mother and said, "Mom, just don't wait for me to die for us to start Tryon Palace. Let's change your will now and make some money available to Tryon Palace to get it going." So she changed her will, and I think she just left part of her money to her daughter, and set up the Latham Foundation.

That was a big step, because the then Governor, Ehringhaus, all these women and people around the state, those women clubbers that had been working so hard raising a few dollars here and there on projects for the commission, I mean for the, you know, starting the Palace, that gave them a new light. So he put legislation through the state

legislature to enact the bill for Tryon Palace Restoration. In the bill it stated that the state would buy the land, make it available, if Mrs. Latham would put the money in to build the Palace, and that was also her stipulation. The legislature, the act, said that the people that were appointed to the Tryon Palace Commission to oversee the restoration would receive no remuneration from the state in the way of per diem, mileage, or anything like that. And that holds true to this day. That was all voluntary with absolutely no remuneration paid to any of the commission members. Well, all during this time, I'm watching the Palace go up. Day by day I'd go down and look at it and marvel at what was going on down there. About that same time I had the gift shop going, so I had a plate commissioned. I got Mrs. Carraway's permission to have a plate commissioned with the Tryon Palace on this dinner plate that we sold in the gift shop. And we promoted something else, I've forgotten now what it was. That was before the Palace got opened. So when the Palace got opened, we, you know, didn't do that anymore. They took over the selling of the memorabilia. But, having moved to Raleigh, I stayed pretty close to the Palace. Prior to moving, they opened the Palace in I think 1959, and the following year Terry Sanford became governor and we, as stated before in the tape, were good friends. So he and Skipper Bowles brought the Conservation and Development Board to New Bern to meet, and the Tryon Palace entertained them at the Governor Tryon Hotel with a dinner and then they went out and had festivities at the Palace. Later on, when I moved to Raleigh, I kept in touch, but for some unknown reason

I didn't ask Terry to appoint me to the commission. I thought, you know, that was somebody else's job. But he had put me on the Board of Elections. That was enough. I didn't even ask for that. I didn't know what it was, you know. They sent me word that I was on it. But when Governor Hunt became governor, and I was sort of looking around for extra-curricular activities, I put my name on the sheet as, you know, if there ever became an opening, I'd like to be put on it. And so thanks to him and Bert Bennett and some of my cohorts, they appointed me to the commission back in '79 and I served until the middle of '85.

Robert Lee Stallings was chairman. They put me on the commission as Chairman of the committee for publicity and promotion. I'm really a promoter by heart, so the first thing I did in that job was call together public relation organizations from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia to make a presentation before my committee to see who would be selected to be the promotion company for Tryon Palace.

We held the session in the state highway building in Raleigh on the day that that missile was suppose to fall on the earth that was up there flying around. You remember?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. ZAYTOUN: And it fell in Australia.

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, one of the women of the committee wouldn't come because she was worried it might hit Raleigh. (laughter) But anyway, we had that meeting that day and everybody made their presentations. We had ten organizations that submitted bids. The

best presentation was made by a person who headed this company, who used to live in New Bern, Harry Jacobs. We selected his company out of Richmond, Virginia, and it was the best thing we ever did, to start promoting Tryon Palace. We started with a budget of \$250,000 made available by the foundation, Kellenberger Foundation. We immediately started putting Tryon Palace on the map; new brochures, new advertisements in various publications across the United States, catering to the school children, to the history departments, bringing them in, giving them special deals to bring them here. We felt, though, we needed something more for the children and that's when we discovered that we ought to have a living history program. So we hired an outfit that put on programs in Virginia up around Williamsburg and various places like that to do the first living history program and it went over so big for the children. Because, see, a lot of children came here to see the old building, sure, but they're not too interested in old furniture and things like that. So we brought the place to life with the living history program and it's been very successful ever since.

DR. PATTERSON: Is that done now with bus loads of children who come in?

MR. ZAYTOUN: That's right, during the summer.

DR. PATTERSON: And did you take this to the schools too?

MR. ZAYTOUN: We take skits to the schools also across the state. We use television in all the various places, even in Charlotte and Raleigh and Greenville and Washington. When I was here on the

commission, we started trying to get together something called the Friends Program. You know, all non-profits have Friends Programs.

Everybody can't be on the commission, but we can bring in people into the Friends Program and they can do just the same thing as we're doing and we'll have a whole lot of support from across the state and increase the visitation and increase the interest in the things for your school children. You have to do it with the school children because they're the future. And if they don't know their heritage, you know, it's gonna be bad for us. And so, they're learning through that. And the new Friends Program is gonna be launched officially at the April meeting this year. I was one of the ones that started it. They finally brought it to fruition in November of this past year with the charter and incorporation papers. It's gonna be a non-profit corporation. I gave the first contribution to the Friends of Tryon Palace in honor of my sister Connie who was a guide there, Connie Lamar, who died in 1971.

DR. PATTERSON: I remember Connie. Joe, you were on the commission until '85.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: And that's when the administration changed.

MR. ZAYTOUN: That's when political plums changed.

DR. PATTERSON: And so as long as the Republicans were in Raleigh you were not on the commission.

MR. ZAYTOUN: I wasn't on the commission, but I was there in heart and I worked for the commission as though I were a member. I recall that they needed a microscope that could see through wood so they could

examine the furniture to see if it was deteriorating or could see through textiles. The thing cost about \$25,000 - imagine! Well, they didn't have that kind of money and the state wasn't gonna appropriate it. But they wanted to get this microscope so that they could not only use it for Tryon Palace but other organizations around Eastern Carolina could also use it in their restoration processes to preserve the furniture and the textiles that were in these buildings. After all, those curtains have been up there twenty-five years! Imagine! you know, preserve them. So I was instrumental in getting a contribution from the R. S. Dixon Foundation (in Charlotte) to help kick it off - a \$1,000 this past year. I don't know what the standing is right now. I'll find out when I get over there tomorrow.

DR. PATTERSON: You have just been reappointed by Governor Hunt again.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah, I was reappointed by Governor Hunt. His first appointment to the commission, he appointed me. That's the only one that's been made so far. Now I want to make this plain, you know, I want it on record. During the first Hunt administration, there were no witch hunts. No Republicans who were serving on the commission were let out. There was no politics in that area. Now maybe I got there through politics, 'cause he knew me and he appointed me there. But there was no one let off the commission during the Hunt administration because of political affiliation. Unfortunately that didn't hold true under the new regime, because we had what we called

the Friday Night Slaughter and about ten of us got our nice little letters and certificates at the same time.

DR. PATTERSON: Joe, I know you have plans that you'd like to see carried out for Tryon Palace in the future. One of them is a new Visitor's Center.

MR. ZAYTOUN: That's exactly right! I'm glad you brought it up 'cause I was gonna talk about that next. Well, you know the present Visitor's Center is in a filling station.

DR. PATTERSON: Let me ask you if that was Kenneth Jones old filling station.

MR. ZAYTOUN: No. This was the old Shell station. Kenneth Jones, the AMOCO station, is where the Stanly House is sitting today. It's on his property. And, Joe, who knows what's underneath the ground? You know. The Visitor's Center today is on probably an old filling station ground. The Stanly House is on top of one. Who knows?

DR. PATTERSON: Who ran that Shell station?

MR. ZAYTOUN: I wish I could remember his name. I can remember his face. He was baldheaded and he was in the American Legion. Very active in the American Legion. I can't remember his name.

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh. But the present Visitor's Center is that old Shell station building?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yes. Remodeled filling station. And you know, we need something better than that. We need to build a building that could accommodate people for restrooms and lunches, educational rooms, libraries where people can come here and study. We just need a brand

new Visitor's Center and that's what we're gonna do. It's gonna be a big undertaking, and together, with the Friends and the legislature, we hope to build it over there near the parking lot, where the parking lot is today. I've been in close touch with Kay P. Williams, the Palace administrator, all these years on that, and that's one of the paramount things we need.

DR. PATTERSON: That's gonna be something you're gonna pursue pretty...

MR. ZAYTOUN: I will be on that committee to try to get the Visitor's Center, also the Friends and also my other committee, old committee, the publicity and promotion committee.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, it's easy to see, Joe, why folks have admired the work you've done on this commission. Your thoughts are just great and your plans.

MR. ZAYTOUN: If I can be somehow instrumental in helping them up in Raleigh get the appropriation for that Visitor's Center, I'll be happy.

DR. PATTERSON: What other thoughts do you have about Tryon Palace, Joe?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, you know, when I think of Tryon Palace, I think about the marvelous leaders and people they've had all these years. And of course, you know the number one person I think about is Miss Gertrude, Dr. Gertrude Carraway. She's been such an inspiration to me over the years. I can recall that when she used to work on the New Bern Tribune with Billy Arthur. You remember when Billy was the editor?

Somehow or another Miss Carraway never missed noticing anything I did. She always put it in the paper. I always saw my name in the paper. And she followed me all my life and I just admired her for thinking of me. Well, as luck would have it, I got appointed to the commission and I got to work with Miss Carraway during those years and we had a marvelous time working together. She's a great leader and New Bern owes her a great deal.

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Because if it wasn't for Miss Gertrude, there wouldn't be no Tryon Palace. She was the leader.

DR. PATTERSON: Didn't Minette Duffy play a major role in this too?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Mrs. Duffy was marvelous. I can recall that Minette Duffy, when I was a kid, well, I wasn't living here, but I read about it, put on a show back in 1929, or something, some kind of pageant was held here, all the women's clubs all over the state. I think your mother was involved in this thing too and she played a part in it.

They did a marvelous thing back then. That was the forerunner of getting all the women's clubs together in the state to promote this thing.

DR. PATTERSON: She was also active in the Palace restoration, was she not?

MR. ZAYTOUN: Mrs. Duffy?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. ZAYTOUN: She was on the first commission that was appointed

here. Played a very important part. And I can say this, her daughter now is on the commission.

DR. PATTERSON: Which daughter is that? Is that Minette?

MR. ZAYTOUN: That's Minette.

DR. PATTERSON: Who lives up in Pennsylvania?

MR. ZAYTOUN: No, correction. It's not Minette, it's Mrs. Duffy Beasley.

DR. PATTERSON: Emma Duffy.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Emma Duffy. Yeah. Emma Duffy. She's on the commission today and doing a marvelous job. I'd like to also praise Kay Williams if I may. She doesn't need my praise. But Kay Williams, before she became a Williams, was Kay Phillips and her father was a police officer here in New Bern. They lived here in New Bern and Kay I recall was a Miss North Carolina Dairy Princess for New Bern. Was in the parade right here in New Bern. During the fifties I had the gift shop, I was fortunate, for Kay to work there in the afternoons and on Saturdays and during Christmas. So I've known Kay Williams since she was a little girl and I knew that girl was going places. She was smart and she was very industrious and she's done a marvelous job here with the Tryon Palace. I can't believe the various programs they got here now since I left in '85.

DR. PATTERSON: Kay started out with Swiss Bear.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: As head of Swiss Bear, the executive director of Swiss Bear when they moved into Tryon Palace. I think that's right.

MR. ZAYTOUN: I see. Well, I'm so happy that happened.

DR. PATTERSON: Kay and my daughter Priscilla were friends in college days.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: That's how I first knew her.

MR. ZAYTOUN: By the way, I'd like to put this on tape, I was fortunate enough to see Priscilla and your youngest daughter...

DR. PATTERSON: My youngest daughter is named Alice.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Alice. They were here for the home show.

DR. PATTERSON: That was Debbie.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Debbie.

DR. PATTERSON: That was the middle daughter. Priscilla and Deborah.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Okay. Of course, I didn't see little Joe because he was over in England at that time.

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. ZAYTOUN: But I hear he's come back and I'm glad he's here.

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. ZAYTOUN: I haven't mentioned my wife Thelma. Thelma didn't grow up in New Bern but she became a New Bernian. She went to South Carolina schools, but she became a Tar Heel. And she is a very ardent Tar Heel today! But I want to say one thing about Thelma as far as her volunteer work is concerned. Thelma has been a volunteer at Rex Hospital for the past twenty-seven years. She has more hours chalked up as a volunteer for Rex Hospital than any other person there. It's

her second home. She loves the hospital, and whenever she gets any praise for it, she says, "Don't praise me. I thank the hospital for what they've done for me." It's kept her young and vibrant and she just loves it. So I wanted to say a little something about Thelma.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, I think you should. Thelma is a great lady.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Oh, she's been the backbone behind us, and this November 7, we will be married fifty years and I'm thankful for every year, every minute of it.

DR. PATTERSON: Nice going Joe.

MR. ZAYTOUN: And I want to thank you, Joe, for the phone call to come down here and do this thing. I had heard that my friend Al Ward did it, and Charlie did it, Charlie Barker, my other good friend, but I never dreamed that you'd ask me, so I thank you very much. You've been one of my heroes too by the way. Especially when I was at Carolina, you were president of the senior class. I'll never forget it.

DR. PATTERSON: Thank you Joe. Well, this has meant a lot to us to get you down here and get information from you that we haven't gotten from anybody else about a very major portion of our population and our heritage, and it's really, really going to help this story a great deal.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, I appreciate it.

DR. PATTERSON: And, Joe, I thank you for the Memories program. We've had fun doing this. It's going to be a great thing, and you've added a lot to it.

MR. ZAYTOUN: Well, I look forward to seeing the finished product

whenever it comes out. Thank you so much.

END OF INTERVIEW